



ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2024 in 1L01, Frenchay Campus

Present: Steve West (Chair), Yvonne Beach, Georgie Benford, Amanda Coffey, Wendy Colvin, Georgina Gough, John Griffiths, Bernhard Gross, John Hancock, Sabiha Khan, Jessica Lamond, James Lee, James Macdonald, Elena Marco, Jo Michell, Jo Midgley, Oluwadamilola Okeyoyin, Kolawole Samuel Olure, Kezia Paul, Jackie Rogers (*for* Cathy Minett-Smith), Kos Siliafis, Jim Smith, Nicola Temple, Emma Weitkamp, Heather Moyes (Secretary)

Apologies: Adele Drew-Hill, Cathy Minett-Smith, Logan Smith.

In attendance: Jodie Anstee, Rachel Cowie, Nicky Pavitt (item Ab.24.06.04.1)

Observers: Grant Mansfield (Board of Governors)

AB.24.05.1	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES
AB.24.05.1.1	Members were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were noted.
AB.24.05.1.2	No declarations of interest were received.
AB.24.05.2	MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING
AB.24.05.2.1	Previous minutes <i>Paper AB.24.05.01 was received.</i>
AB.24.05.2.1.1	Members approved the minutes of the meeting held 13 March 2024 as a correct record.
AB.24.05.2.2	Action sheet and matters arising <i>Paper AB.24.05.02 was received.</i>
AB.24.05.2.2.1	Members noted the record of actions in progress and completed.
AB.24.05.2.2.2	<u>AB.23.12.4.1.2 Student communications campaign on uncapped resits</u> The Deputy Registrar reported that it was difficult to provide evidence of a clear link between the campaign to discourage students from using uncapped resits as a routine way of managing their workload and the

	<p>number of students not submitting at the first opportunity. However, advice from the BI Team was that the proportion of students in 2022/23 undertaking a resit after receiving a mark of zero for a module at first sit had fallen by eight percentage points compared to 2021/22, which could indicate that the campaign had had some effect. Members requested further clarification and the Deputy Registrar agreed to circulate the advice received.</p> <p>[Action: Deputy Registrar]</p>
AB.24.05.2.2.3	<p><u>AB.24.03.2.3.3 Late arrivals of international students</u></p> <p>The Deputy Registrar reported that she was working with the College Deans for Learning and Teaching on how best to support international students who arrived late and would provide a further update in due course.</p> <p>[Action: Deputy Registrar]</p>
AB.24.05.2.2.4	<p><u>AB.24.03.3.2.3 Students' Union representation of issues affecting students</u></p> <p>Members noted that the Reimagining Student Representation project on which the Students' Union and University were collaborating was exploring how best the Students' Union could capture the views of the diversity of the student body. It was noted that international students were currently more likely to seek Students' Union support with issues than other groups of students.</p>
AB.24.05.2.2.5	<p><u>AB.24.03.2.6 Student access to Blackboard</u></p> <p>The Students' Union President confirmed that the issue regarding students regaining access to Blackboard after tuition fee debt payment had been made was resolved. Members heard that the University and Students' Union would be working together closely in the coming academic year to ensure students understood the implications of non-payment of tuition fees.</p>
AB.24.05.2.3	Chair's actions
AB.24.05.2.3.1	<p>The committee noted items approved under Chair's action since the last meeting as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. <i>AB.24.05.03</i> - Minor revisions to terms of reference for University Quality and Standards Sub-Committee and the Apprenticeship Board. ii. <i>AB.24.05.04</i> - Appointment of Steve Poole to the title of Emeritus Professor. iii. <i>AB.24.05.05</i> - Appointment of David Ludlow to title of Emeritus Professor.
AB.24.05.3	STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

AB.24.05.3.1	Vice-Chancellor's Report <i>Paper AB.24.05.06 was received.</i>
AB.24.05.3.1.1	The committee received a report from the Chair on matters of relevance to members.
AB.24.05.3.1.2	<p>Members noted the publication the previous day of the outcome of the Migration Advisory Committee's rapid review of the Graduate route, which had found no evidence of abuse. It was not clear yet how the government would respond but UUK was lobbying on behalf of the sector and the University had also written local MPs to stress the importance of international students for both the regional economy and the UK's global standing.</p> <p>Members heard that the ability to recruit international students was important for UWE's sustainability and that plans were in place for a campaign to support international applicants to make positive choices. The Registrar and Deputy Vice-Chancellor agreed to investigate a particular example raised where there appeared to have been delays in processing a particular applicant [Action: Registrar & DVC).</p>
AB.24.05.3.1.3	With regard to undergraduate recruitment, members heard that applications were down 7 percentage points, but offers were up by 8 points and every effort would be made during confirmation and clearing to explore options with applicants. There was a narrative in the local area that applicants were finding it harder to get offers, but that was not supported by UCAS data and perhaps reflected the media's tendency to focus on highly selective institutions and subject areas.
AB.24.05.3.1.4	<p>Members also noted recent work within the University on developing a culture of anti-racism, including the recent publication of data analysis and a staff journey report. Members heard that the staff networks had been involved the development of the reports. It was suggested that further work might be needed to ensure that all staff felt the approach was being co-created meaningfully.</p> <p>[Action: Chief People Officer]</p>
AB.24.05.3.2	Students' Union Report <i>Paper AB.24.05.07 was received.</i>
AB.24.05.3.2.1	<p>Members noted the report from the Students' Union on matters of shared interest.</p> <p>Members noted the importance of the partnership between the Students' Union and the University and how having a shared agenda in areas like sustainability, mental health and harm reduction had enabled UWE to become sector-leading in its approach.</p>
AB.24.05.3.3	Strategy 2030: Implementation 2024-26

AB.24.05.3.3.1	The Registrar and Deputy Vice-Chancellor delivered a presentation on the University's priorities for attention over the next two years, taking into account the overall ambition set out in Strategy 2030 and the challenging context in which the University currently was operating.
AB.24.05.3.3.2	<p>Members heard that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The University's purpose remained focussed on delivering outstanding learning and research with purpose within a culture of enterprise ii. The 2024-26 plans assumed no increase in the undergraduate fee in the next few years, approximately 500 fewer international students per year, greater competition from the Russell Group and continued pay and other cost pressures iii. There were still opportunities to diversify income streams, but the University would need to be selective in its approach and to focus on those most likely to deliver benefits at scale.
AB.24.05.3.3.3	<p>In this context, the key objectives were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Financial sustainability, reducing costs by at least £35M per year (against turnover in 2022/23 of £380M) ii. High performance, remaining focussed on excellence in the student experience, in high impact research and in strong graduate outcomes iii. Ensuring cultural alignment to values, with anti-racism at the core iv. Delivering a stronger, more resilient, more agile institution.
AB.24.05.3.3.4	<p>Members heard that the priorities for the next two years, which were drawn from Strategy 2030, were therefore:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. <i>Purpose</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UWE-Programmes as the core project ▪ UWE-Research – building on the Research Readiness Review and aligning to areas of strength ▪ UWE-Enterprise – embedding commercial thinking, costing and contribution models, and new modes of delivery online provision ▪ UWE-Foundation – developing a positive, confident route into higher education for non-traditional students ▪ Continued growth of transnational education provision, focussed on emerging opportunities in parts of Africa and Asia with growing middle classes and including exploration of a UWEIES model for Africa ▪ Revisiting the University's approach to continuing professional education to reduce costs and maximise potential benefits of the new Lifelong Learning Entitlement ii. <i>People</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reshaping the operating model, including reorganising professional services to address silos, handoffs, layers and overlaps ▪ Weaving anti-racism throughout the organisation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthened focus on well-being, including in programmes themselves ▪ Looking a leadership capability and professorial development <p>iii. <i>Place</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintaining a clear focus on climate and sustainability ▪ Investment in new systems and process automation as critical enablers of efficiencies ▪ Building centres of excellence such as the Integrated Care Academy and through the Institute of Technology to underpin UWE's position in the region ▪ A revised capital programme ▪ A creative and cultural plan.
AB.24.05.3.3.5	<p>Members noted in discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. That there appeared to be a lot of priorities for "place" as compared to "purpose" because elements of the operating model work had been presented in detail and that it might be beneficial to revisit that for a wider audience to ensure the focus on learning and teaching was clear, whilst not downplaying the scale of wider work required ii. The importance of ensuring that the key messages around "people" were foregrounded sufficiently iii. Some concerns that the plan did not recognise sufficiently existing issues with basic infrastructure, systems and processes. It was noted that recent journey mapping work had captured key pain points and that analysis of service effectiveness data via the recent Nous Cubane survey was informing phasing of work to ensure a focus on fundamentals iv. A suggestion that the University's approach to digital learning was overcomplicated currently, for instance in relation to UWE's response to AI and assessments and to online provision. Members noted that this would be explored further as part of the UWE-Programmes workstream v. The need to ensure students were involved in shaping discussions and that the implications for students were clear. It was noted that significant student insight had fed into the plan to date, including a cohort tracking project initiated before the Covid-19 pandemic.
AB.24.05.3.3.6	Members welcomed the update and noted that there would be further opportunities for feedback and engagement as plans evolved.
AB.24.05.4	ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR ENDORSEMENT
AB.24.05.4.1	Annual review of academic regulations <i>Paper AB.25.04.08 was received.</i>
AB.24.05.4.1.1	The Student Voice and Academic Policy Team Manager presented proposed changes to the academic regulations for 2024/25, on the

	recommendation of the University Quality and Standards Sub-Committee and the Doctoral Academy Sub-Committee.
AB.24.05.4.1.2	Members heard that most of the changes reflected the timing out of transitional arrangements from the previous academic regulations, as well as the integration of the new postgraduate taught algorithm approved at the previous meeting and some changes to rules governing postgraduate research degrees. There were also some minor updates to simplify wording in response to student and/or staff feedback.
AB.24.05.4.1.3	Members noted that the revisions would take effect from 1 August 2024, with the exception of any students commencing on UWE Online programmes for whom the regulations would take effect from 29 July 2024.
AB.24.05.4.1.4	During discussions, members were reminded that all provisions set out in the regulations, other than the changes being presented in the meeting, had already been approved and that the major academic regulations review project was now complete. Whilst there would be a workstream within UWE-Programmes to consider the regulations, it was not anticipated that this would lead to further significant changes. The regulations would, however, remain subject to routine review as part of standard good academic governance.
AB.24.05.4.1.5	The committee endorsed the changes proposed.
AB.24.05.4.1.6	Members agreed that it would be important to ensure effective communication of the changes to staff. [Action: Student Voice and Academic Policy Team Manager]
AB.24.05.4.2	Variant regulations as required by Engineering Council PSRBs <i>Paper AB.24.05.09 was received.</i>
AB.24.05.4.2.1	The committee considered a proposal from the University Quality and Standards Sub-Committee to extend existing variant regulations concerning the application of compensation to a further five programmes accredited by the Engineering Council.
AB.24.05.4.2.2	The committee endorsed the change proposed.
AB.24.05.4.3	University of Finance – Marketing, Vietnam (UFM) <i>Paper AB.24.05.10 was received.</i>
AB.24.05.4.3.1	The committee endorsed the recommendation of a Special University Validation Panel to designate the University of Finance -Marketing, Vietnam, as an affiliated institution of the University.
AB.24.05.4.3.2	The PVC: Head of College of Business and Law noted thanks to colleagues in the Academic Quality and Partnerships Enhancement Team for their support in facilitating the approvals process in a very tight timeframe.

AB.24.05.4.4	Board of Governors nomination <i>Paper AB.24.05.11 was received.</i>
AB.24.05.4.4.1	The committee endorsed the Chair's nomination of Professor Georgina Gough to the Board of Governors, succeeding Professor Jim Smith whose term of office would end at the end of 2023/24. [Action: Clerk to Board of Governors]
AB.24.05.4.5	Academic governance elections <i>Paper AB.24.05.12 was received.</i>
AB.24.05.4.5.1	The committee considered the proposed timeline for elections to fill elected positions across academic governance committees that would become vacant at the end of the current academic year.
AB.24.05.4.5.2	Members agreed to trial extending the standard voting period from two to three weeks, to see whether this increased engagement with the process.
AB.24.05.4.5.3	The committee approved the timeline, subject to extending the voting period to three weeks. [Action: Secretary]
AB.24.05.4.5.4	Members were asked to encourage eligible colleagues to stand for election, recognising that elected positions were a key means by which to increase diversity of thought in academic governance.
AB.24.05.4.6	Academic governance committee calendar, 2024/25 <i>Paper AB.24.05.13 was received.</i>
AB.24.05.4.6.1	Members approved the committee calendar for 2024/25.
AB.24.05.4.6.2	Members agreed that the Board would continue to meet from 1-4pm.
AB.24.05.5	ITEMS FOR INFORMATION
AB.24.05.5.1	External review of governance briefing <i>Paper AB.24.05.14 was received.</i>
AB.24.05.5.1.1	The committee noted a briefing on the forthcoming external review of governance.
AB.24.05.6	SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTING
AB.24.05.6.1	Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee <i>Paper AB.24.05.15 was received.</i>
AB.24.05.6.1.1	Members noted the summary report of the meeting of 17 April 2024.
AB.24.05.6.2	University Ethics and Integrity Committee

	<i>Paper AB.24.03.16 was received.</i>
AB.24.05.6.2.1	Members noted the summary report of the meeting of 16 April 2024.
AB.24.05.6.3	Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee
AB.24.05.6.3.1	Members noted that minutes of recent RKEC meetings were now available for review on the committee's SharePoint site.
AB.24.05.6.4	Strategic Academic Portfolio Group
AB.24.05.6.4.1	Members noted that minutes of recent SAPG meetings were now available for review on the committee's SharePoint site.
AB.24.05.7	DATE OF NEXT MEETING 3 July 2024, 13:00-16:00, 1L01, Frenchay Campus