

Confirmed minutes

Meeting:	Academic Committee
Date:	28 September 2022
Time:	2pm – 4pm
Venue:	Ballroom, 7 Bedford Square

Name	Designation
Joan O’Mahony	Director of Academic Development (Chair)
Ahmed Junaid	Academic Registrar
Maria Jackson	Head of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
Sarah Bailey	Director of the Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success
John Fairhurst *	Managing Director and Academic Principal
John Adjei	Senior Lecturer and Academic Lead for Employability
Donna Leonard	Foundation Year Deputy Course Leader Academic Lead for Learning Enhancement
Dr Joe Stevens	Principal Lecturer in Law and LLB Course Leader
Dr Nandini Canoo	EDI Academic Lead and Lecturer, FY
Mubashir Qurashi	Accounting and Finance Course Leader and Principal Lecturer
Tom Ironmonger	Deputy Head of School; FY Course Leader
Anna Krajewska **	Head of School of Business and Accounting Director, CETL
Dr Achila Amarasinghe **	Course Leader BM
Arif Zaman **	Lecturer, Business
Dr Michelle Morgan	External Academic Advisor
Slawomir Grzybek	Head of Quality
Prof Gwyneth Pitt	External Academic Advisor
Dr Nnamdi Obiosa	Deputy Head of the School of Business and Accounting
Knowledge Mpofo **	Chair of Research Ethics Committee / Lecturer, Business
Charlayne Lewis-Thomas	Admissions Manager
Carol Cook	Non-Executive Director, Chair of the Board of Directors
Cordelia Gartside	Senior Lecturer Academic Lead for Student Employability
Tatiana Veiga Das Neves *	President of the Student Guild
Marcia Barrant **	Student Council Student Representative from 2-Year LLB Law
Anudi Ponnampereuma **	Student Council Student Representation from 4-Year LLB BM
Niromy Rajan **	Student Council Student Representation from 4-Year LLB Law
Ian Miller *	Head of School of Law Director, Bloomsbury Law Clinic
In attendance	
Nadia Michail	Disability and Wellbeing Manager
Abul Hashem	Peer Mentoring Coordinator

No. Item

1.0 Apologies and welcome

S Grzybek informed the committee that J Fairhurst was currently away on business and that the September Academic Committee meeting would be chaired by Dr J O’Mahony. He also took the opportunity to welcome Dr M Morgan, the committee’s new External Academic Advisor.

J O’Mahony welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.

*Denotes apologies

**Did not attend not having sent apologies

2.0 Minutes for approval and Action Tracker/Matter Arising:

2.1 Minutes from previous meeting: 27 July 2022

The minutes of the July AC meeting were agreed as a true record of the July meeting and were approved by the committee.

2.2 Matters Arising/ Action Tracker

There were no outstanding actions to report on.

3.0 Academic Principal's Business

There was nothing to report.

Part 1: Academic Regulatory, Policy and Procedural Documents for Approval, and information.

4.0 For approval by AC 4.1 Assessment Procedures: Validated Degrees 2022-23

The Assessment Procedures – University of Northampton Validated Degrees 2022-23 were recommended for approval by QAEC.

On the basis of the changes reported to the committee the Assessment Procedures – University of Northampton Validated Degrees 2022-23 were approved.

Part 2: Non-academic Regulatory, Policy and Procedural Documents for Approval Amendment, Discussion, and Information.

5.0 For discussion by AC

5.1 NSS Results Summary report

Following a verbal update in the July AC, A Junaid presented the NSS Results Summary report. The following were mentioned:

- Achievement of an 8% higher response rate when compared to the sector
- Since 2018 we have had an upward trend in the satisfaction rating
- High levels of satisfaction were seen in Law and Business

The committee noted the results and considered them positive when compared with the sector average. It was flagged that with the small cohorts of students resulting from the gap in recruitment, we may not be eligible to take part in the NSS over the next two years.

The committee noted that the KPI pertinent to NSS results was not met and recommended for the benchmark relevance to be considered.

5.2 OfS Condition A1 Action Plan Evaluation Report (SEWS)

S Bailey presented the OfS Condition A1 Action Plan Report that was produced in February based on the data collected from the September cohort.

The committee was informed that the Specialist Evidence, Evaluation and Research (SEER) was working with SEWS to measure and assess the outcomes of their APP activities.

The committee welcomed the report, but agreed that further data could inform future decisions, and lead to a better understanding of the impact of interventions on submissions.

It was noted that figure 33 provided such evidence for students who did not attend PAL sessions compared to those who did, and there is a significant difference in submission rates.

The committee acknowledged the process put into action to help students such as travel bursary, PAL workshops, disability support, and laptops.

5.2.1 EDIC Observation on the SEWS APP Evaluation Report

M Jackson flagged that the original OfS Condition A1 Action Plan Evaluation Report (SEWS) has been amended based on the feedback provided by EDIC. This feedback is contained within the document that has been shared with the Academic Committee. 5.3 Disability Office Annual Report 2021-22

The committee received and noted the Disability Office Annual Report 2021-22. N Michail highlighted the following from her report:

- The younger generation was more open to speaking up about their needs and disability.
- This year “Togetherall” was launched for staff and students.
- Results show that some students have had difficulty evidencing their disability.
- A large number of FY students declared having a disability this year.
- The Law programme has the highest percentage of students with disabilities.
- Throughout the year partnerships have been formed with different organisations to help students who have mental difficulties.
- Semester 2 has shown great success with the wellbeing workshop.

Following a discussion, S Bailey and the committee suggested exploring opportunities to further embed wellbeing into the classroom and to look at combining workshops with the re-submission campaigns.

5.4 Peer Assisted Learning Review 2021-22

The committee received and noted the Peer Assisted Learning Review 2021-22.

The PAL scheme captured the interest of new students and there has been organic growth in PAL sessions with FY students becoming PAL leaders.

There has been a decrease in the number of students attending from Level 4 and Level 5 although this can be attributed to low numbers of students on courses.

The scheduling of sessions was challenging; however, the SEWS team worked closely with the Timetabling Manager to enable the maximum number of students to attend.

There was a discussion around the possibilities of reducing the quantity of sessions offered and looking at embedding some PAL work into lectures.

5.5 Annual Research and Outputs Report 2021-22

The Annual Research and Outputs Report 2021-22 was received and noted by the committee.

5.6 QAA Collaborative Enhancement Project update

M Jackson informed the committee that Bloomsbury Institute was involved in the improvement of student learning by linking inclusion/accessibility and academic integrity in a collaborative project with Oxford Brookes, the University of Southampton and the University of Westminster.

M Jackson informed the committee that the deliverables resulting from the QAA collaborative enhancement project have now been published and were available for all HEIs.

6.0 For information only.

6.1 Maintaining the credibility of degrees

S Grzybek informed the committee about the work the OfS was doing around maintaining the reputation of English higher education in a bid to reassure the public that the degrees that universities and colleges award, and the classifications they give to these awards, are reliable and consistent.

S Grzybek flagged that although the focus of the OfS was on grade inflation the Office has been clear that those providers that consistently recruit students from underrepresented groups, whose performance has historically been lower, should improve outcomes for these students rather than tolerating lower ones.

Bloomsbury Institute would be expected to comply with the Condition of Registration F1 by publishing the following:

- a. The number of students who attained a particular degree or other academic awards, or a particular level of such an award, on completion of their course with the provider;
- b. Include those numbers by reference to one or more of the following:
 - i. the gender of individuals to which they relate
 - ii. their ethnicity
 - iii. their socio-economic background.

The committee received the report and acknowledged the requirement for publishing relevant data.

6.2 In-Bloom

D Leonard informed the committee that there were two applications submitted to the In-Bloom panel this year and they resulted in the award of an Associate Fellowship and a Fellowship of HEA.

The committee was made aware that the In-Bloom scheme was accredited for another year and currently consideration is being given to extending the scheme in its current form or designing a new one under the revised UKPSF.

6.3 Access and Participation Committee Terms of Reference

M Jackson flagged that the Access and Participation Committee (APC) has been created to monitor and evaluate our commitments made in the Access and Participation Plan. The first meeting was held on 16 September.

The committee noted that the APC would be responsible for the development of our new APP which would be expected to be submitted in 2023 and come into effect in 2024-25.

M Jackson flagged that in addition to internal members, an external adviser (SEER) is also a member of the APC.

Part 3: Standing items.

7.0 KPIs 2021-22: September 22 Update.

A Junaid presented the KPIs update to the committee and explained that the updates for KPIs 10, 11 and 12 reflect the final submission results.

A lengthy discussion followed on the continuation rates, the rules guiding students' continuation and possible mitigations for non-continuing students.

The committee proposed a number of questions that would help to determine what further actions could be taken before the end of the enrolment period to increase our continuation rates.

The committee requested immediate action; however, it was noted that a broader discussion on the context surrounding the students' performance should be had in the new AY. This would help to assess whether our current KPIs require further refinement.

Action: A Junaid to meet with J O'Mahony to respond to questions from the Academic Committee to inform a decision on actions required to address our continuation rates for September 2021 and January 2022 cohorts.

8.0 Admissions and Recruitment.

The following was flagged:

- For the June intake, the recruitment target was exceeded, in particular for international students.
- For the October intake 400 offers were made to international students across different courses.
- We are facing challenges in the market for domestic recruitment.

9.0 Internal Student Complaints.

There were no complaints to report on.

10.0 OfS Updates.

10.1 OfS Condition A1 Action Plan – September 2022 Update Report

M Jackson reported that we remain compliant with our Financial Support Strategic Measures and other Strategic Measures as well as Strategic Measures 1,2,3,4,5 and 6. However, she flagged that we will not be able to implement all elements of Strategic Measure 5.

10.2 OfS Compliance Register – September 2022 Update Report

It was noted that we remain compliant with all OfS Conditions of Registration.

11.0 Glyndwr University.

Aulay McKenzie (PVC) visited J Fairhurst a couple of weeks ago for a catch-up, and it is likely that they will establish a formal partnership group.

12.0 TDAP.

There was nothing to report.

13.0 Confirmed minutes from other forums or committees for information, consideration, or action.

13.1 SMLT: 6 July 2022

The minutes of the July SMLT were received and noted by the committee.

There were no actions were referred to AC.

13.2 QAEC: 15 June 2022

The minutes of the June QAEC were received and noted by the committee.

There were no actions were referred to AC.

14.0 Actions referred from other forums/committees where the minutes are unconfirmed/not yet available.

14.1 SMLT: 7 September 2022

No actions were referred to AC.

14.2 QAEC: 21 September 2022

No actions were referred to AC.

Part 4: Any other Business and Date/Time of Next Meeting.

15.0 Any Other Business.

Nothing to consider.

16.0 Date, Time, and Venue of Next Meeting: 25 November 2022 @12:00pm – 3:00pm, TBC.