

## Confirmed Minutes

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Joint meeting of the Academic Committee and the Board of Directors</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>9 June 2021</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>12.00 – 15.30</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	MS Teams

Name	Designation
<b>John Fairhurst</b>	Managing Director and Academic Principal (Chair)
<b>Gwyneth Pitt</b>	External Academic Advisor
<b>Colin Raban</b>	External Academic Advisor
<b>Ian Brooks</b>	Academic Representative from UoN
<b>Maria Jackson</b>	Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
<b>Anna Krajewska</b>	Director of CETL, and Head of School of Business and Accounting
<b>Dr Knowledge Mpofo</b>	Chair of Research Ethics Committee
<b>Dr Joe Stevens</b>	Course Leader LLB
<b>Mubashir Qurashi</b>	Course Leader AFM
<b>Arif Zaman</b>	Lecturer, Business
<b>Asare Amaning**</b>	Lecturer, AFM
<b>Donna Leonard</b>	Academic Lead for Learning Enhancement
<b>Cordelia Gartside</b>	Academic Lead for Employability
<b>Ahmed Junaid</b>	Academic Registrar
<b>Amanda Jeram</b>	Head of Quality and Compliance
<b>Sarah Bailey</b>	Director of the Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success
<b>Charlayne Lewis-Thomas</b>	Admissions Manager
<b>Nasser Kazinda</b>	President of the Student Guild
<b>Rajan Sandhu*</b>	Student Council Student Representative from 3-Year LLB Law
<b>Ana Maria Silochi</b>	Student Council Student Representative from 2-Year AFM
<b>Ionut Enache*</b>	Student Council Student Representative from 3-Year BABM
<b>In Attendance</b>	
<b>Carol Cook</b>	Non-executive Director and Chair of the BoD
<b>Tom Mortimer</b>	Non-executive Director
<b>Johan Forsblad</b>	Non-executive Director
<b>Noor Jhaveri</b>	Non-executive Director
<b>Shabnam Karim</b>	Finance Director

No.	Item	Lead Paper
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### 1.0 Welcome and Apologies

J Fairhurst welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the joint meeting of the Academic Committee and the Board of Directors would take place after the Academic Committee only business on the agenda would be concluded. All directors have been invited to observe the Academic Committee meeting.

There were no apologies submitted for this meeting.

### 2.0 Minutes for approval and Action Tracker/Matters Arising:

2.1 Minutes from the previous meeting: 24 March 2021

The following amendment was requested to the minutes of 24 March AC:

- To include information in Section 12.0 that the SMLT did not meet in December 2020.

The minutes of the March meeting of the Academic Committee were approved as amended.

## 2.2 Matters Arising/Action Tracker

### 2.2.1 Minutes of 24 March 2021

#### 2.2.1.1 Item 4.2 refers

**Completed:** The finalised version was submitted to AC to evidence the changes made. See agenda item 4.2.

#### 2.2.1.2 Item 4.3 refers

**Completed**

#### 2.2.1.3 Item 4.5a and b refers

**Completed**

#### 2.2.1.4 Item 4.6a and b refers

**Completed**

#### 2.2.1.5 Item 4.7a and b refers

**Completed**

#### 2.2.1.6 Item 5.4a and b refers

**Completed**

#### 2.2.1.7 Item 5.8 refers

**Completed:** AMER amended as per AC request.

#### 2.2.2.8 Item 7.2 refers

**Update:** The committee agreed to defer to the September AC meeting the deadline for the Head of Action Planning to consider how our current arrangements for academic risk management could be enhanced.

### 2.2.2 Minutes of 16 September 2020

#### 2.2.2.1 Item 7.2 refers

**Update:** 1 new application received in April. Final total of 2020-21 DSA applications will be reported on in the Annual Disability Office Report in July 21. Questions on the DSA and the application process were posed at the Disability SFG held in March 21 and this feedback will inform our planned actions and activities for the 2021-22 academic year.

## **3.0 Chair's Actions**

None taken.

## Part 1: Academic Regulatory, Policy and Procedural Documents for Recommended Approval, Approval and Information

### 4.0 For approval by AC

#### 4.1 In Bloom Appeal Procedures 2020-21

J Fairhurst reminded the committee that the In Bloom Appeal Procedures came before it for approval in March. A Krajewska outlined the changes made and the committee agreed that the recommendations were incorporated and **approved** the In Bloom Appeal Procedures 2020-21.

#### 4.2 Managed Observation of Teaching Scheme Guidance 2021-22

A Krajewska explained that the Managed Observation of Teaching Scheme Guidance 2021-22 was recommended for approval by QAEC. She outlined the changes made and noted they were all minor. She flagged the addition of an extra outcome to recognise outstanding teaching.

The committee **approved** the Managed Observation of Teaching Scheme Guidance 2021-22.

#### 4.3 Peer Observation of Teaching Scheme 2021-22

A Krajewska presented the Peer Observation of Teaching Scheme 2021-22 and explained that the changes made were minor and textual. She flagged that participation in the scheme would also be mandatory for sessional staff.

The committee **approved** the Peer Observation of Teaching Scheme 2021-22.

### 5.0 Confirmation of minor amendments

#### 5.1 Admissions Policy 2021-22

J Fairhurst explained that the Admissions Policy 2021-22 had been approved at the March 2021 meeting of the AC, subject to minor amendments. It was now being submitted to the committee to evidence that these minor changes had been made. A Jeram outlined the minor changes made and the committee agreed that the changes were incorporated as requested.

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

### 6.0 For discussion by AC

#### 6.1 Research Strategy 2021-24: Research Goal 3

J Fairhurst explained that the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) considered the Research Strategy at its May meeting and recommended that Research Goal 3 should be further considered before recommending that the Strategy be approved.

J Fairhurst informed the committee that Research Goal 3 would be discussed at the June Research Forum but invited the committee to share any ideas to inform the future discussion, bearing in mind that the AC would ultimately approve the Strategy.

J Fairhurst stated that Research Goal 3, as currently drafted, provides for an evaluation of the quality of research outputs, the internal and external impact of research outputs (including the development of 2 case studies), and the vitality and sustainability of our research environment. This was modelled on the REF21.

He explained that the discussion in QAEC was centred around the fact that although we were undertaking this evaluation, there was no explanation as to why we were doing this.

He further explained that initially when the REF21 eligibility criteria had been published, we would not have been eligible to enter the REF. However, they had subsequently been amended which meant, once we had

been registered by the Office for Students, we would have been eligible to make a submission. If the post-21 REF has the same criteria, then we will be eligible to make a submission.

I Brooks stated that Goal 3 should be linked to a future REF submission and noted that the evaluation should relate to improving the quality of the potential submission and to inform which Units of Assessment we would enter.

G Pitt suggested that gathering evidence of internal and external impact is important, and it should be considered at an early stage.

J Fairhurst responded that every Research Development Plan (RDP) requires a researcher to explain what the intended impact is going to be, and agreed that there should be a focus on the gathering of evidence. This could be incorporated into the RDP to ensure focus on this at the outset.

A Krajewska said that we have established a Widening Participation Forum (to complement the Teaching and Learning Forum) and we expect quality teaching and learning research to be undertaken.

J Fairhurst welcomed the comments and said they would be passed on to the Research Forum where the discussion would continue before the Research Strategy would be submitted to QAEC for recommended approval in July 2021.

## **7.0 For information only** *AC approval is not required*

### 7.1 Corporate Risk Register with Commentary: June 2021

J Fairhurst reminded the committee that the Senior Management and Leadership Team review the Corporate Risk Register every quarter before it would be considered for approval by the Board of Directors prior to which the Audit Committee would consider the recommendations.

This written commentary includes the rationale for the impact, likelihood and overall risk ratings; and the actions that are being taken, or will be taken, in response to the overall risk rating.

He explained that this was the first time a written commentary had been provided, at the request of the Audit Committee and the Board of Directors.

The Academic Committee received and noted the Corporate Risk Register and the June Commentary.

### 7.2 LLB Annual Course Evaluation Report 2020-21

The Academic Committee received and noted the LLB Annual Course Evaluation Report 2020-21.

### 7.3 AFM Annual Course Evaluation Report 2020-21

The Academic Committee received and noted the AFM Annual Course Evaluation Report 2020-21.

### 7.4 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Reports: April 2021 – June 2021

The Academic Committee received and noted the April, May and June EDI reports.

## **Part 3: Standing Items**

### **8.0 KPIs 2020-21 (June 2021)**

J Fairhurst explained that there were no updates to academic KPIs since the March meeting.

A Junaid informed the committee that the date was issued for publication of the NSS results. They would be available on 15 July 2021. NSS results relate to KPI 7.

### **9.0 OfS Updates**

J Fairhurst informed the committee that the OfS Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21 was published and would be available on the OfS's website.

## **10.0 TDAP**

J Fairhurst informed the committee that the ACDAP meeting, where our application was being considered, took place on 1 April and was being further considered at its meeting in June.

We submitted an informal update report for consideration by ACDAP at its June meeting.

## **11.0 Cambridge House and Great Portland Street**

J Fairhurst informed the committee that, subject to Board approval, we will be entering into a ten-year agreement with Birkbeck for the use of Cambridge House on Euston Road. This building would be used for teaching but 1 permanent office space would also be available for use by the Disability Office.

Tours for staff would be organised.

J Fairhurst also informed the committee that, subject to Board approval, we will be entering into a 10-year lease for 305 Great Portland Street (above the tube station) and this would be used as office space for academic staff, Registry and SEWS. This building is a 2 minute walk from Cambridge House.

## **12.0 Student Recruitment and Admissions 2021-22**

A Jeram provided an outline of our recruitment strategy and said that the initial phase would focus on direct applicants. She informed the committee about changes in admissions related to assessments and interviewing the candidates. Psychometric testing, operating on an opt-in basis, would also be available to all non-standard applicants.

J Fairhurst informed the committee that in addition to an in-house campaign (that includes social media and tube adverts) led by the Head of Communications, we are working with House of Education on a social media campaign.

## **13.0 Staffing 2021-22**

J Fairhurst informed the committee that a number of vacancies had been recruited to or are currently advertised for both academic and professional services.

Appointments have been made to the following positions:

- Head of Action Planning - Graeme Slater
- Head of Governance and Legal Services - Leroy Bunbury.
- Head of Operations and Strategic Planning - Tracey Boston.
- Director of Academic Development – Dr Joan O’Mahony.
- Deputy Head of the School of Business and Accounting and Foundation Year Course Leader – T Ironmonger. It was noted T Ironmonger would take the lead on our Annual Teaching and Learning Conference.

The first four appointees listed will also be members of the Senior Management and Leadership Team (SMLT).

With regards to future academic appointments, J Fairhurst said that two Principal Lecturer posts had been advertised for Deputy Head of the School of Business and Accounting. One of the Deputies will undertake the role of Course Leader for Business and Management, and additionally undertake some duties as Academic Lead for Research (along with 2 other permanent Senior Lecturers). The other Deputy Head will have a specialism in Accounting and Finance (there is a separate Course leader for Accounting and Finance).

We have also advertised three Senior Lecturer posts for Business and Management, and an additional 7 for the Foundation Year. Senior Lecturers will undertake the additional role of Academic Lead (e.g. for Research; Learning Technology; Employability; Learning Enhancement).

J Fairhurst also said that we are committed to decreasing the number of sessional lecturers and appointing module leaders on permanent contracts. These new posts, at Lecturer level, will be determined once the new academic posts have been filled.

At Agenda item 19.3 we will have a further discussion on our approach to academic staffing, specifically with regards to the workload model, contract of employment and job descriptions.

A Krajewska informed the committee that with regards to the Annual Teaching and Learning Conference that is being organised by T Ironmonger, it would (subject to any new Covid-19 restrictions) take place in-person with limited capacity, and it will also be streamed live online. It is also going to be broadcast over our Bloomsbury Radio.

G Pitt welcomed the commitment to appoint module leaders on permanent contracts. She also welcomed the news about the annual Teaching and Learning Conference being planned for in-person and live stream delivery.

The committee agreed that this approach to academic staffing was appropriate for both current and future needs.

**Note:** A Krajewska to ascertain whether invites to the Annual Teaching and Learning Committee have been sent out to the external members of the AC.

#### **14.0 COVID-19**

J Fairhurst informed the committee that the government's guidance for higher education providers has changed, and students have been allowed to return on campus from 17 May. He said that a letter from Michelle Donelan, Minister for Universities, was sent out to HE providers and it was recommended that providers organise on-campus activities for students where possible, if there was no further teaching taking place.

J Fairhurst said that because our teaching has now ended, other activities would be delivered for students under the umbrella of Get Ahead.

A discussion followed and the student representatives present said that any on-campus activity would be welcomed by our students. J Fairhurst said that we would aim to deliver the activities face to face but also online, where possible, so that everyone would have the opportunity to participate. He continued to say that in addition to activities for our continuing students, events related to employability were planned for graduating students and that was well received by the student representatives.

With regards to the phased return to work for members of staff, J Fairhurst said that our Safe Return to Work Guidance had been reviewed. The phased return would be monitored and subject to any changes in the government's guidance, it is anticipated that a full return to work and face to face teaching would take place in September.

It was noted that a contingency plan had been put in place with various models to be implemented depending on the scenarios. The contingency plan would cover any changes in the government's advice, as well as any restrictions imposed by our partner, Birkbeck College.

#### **15.0 Confirmed minutes from other forums or committees for information, consideration or action.**

##### **15.1 SMLT: 3 March 2021**

The minutes of 3 March SMLT meeting were received and noted by the Academic Committee. There were no actions referred to the committee.

15.2 SMLT: 7 April 2021

The minutes of 7 April SMLT meeting were received and noted by the Academic Committee. There were no actions referred to the committee.

15.3 SMLT: 19 May 2021

The minutes of 19 May SMLT meeting were received by the Academic Committee. It was noted that the Strategic Framework 2021-24 and Divisional/Departmental Actions 2021-22 together with the KPIs were recommended for approval by the Board of Directors, subject to the Academic Actions 2021-22 and the academic KPIs being recommended for approval by the Academic Committee. See items 17.0 and 18.0.

15.4 QAEC: 17 March 2021

The minutes of 17 March QAEC meeting were received and noted by the Academic Committee. There were no actions referred to the committee.

15.5 QAEC: 21 April 2021

The minutes of 21 April QAEC meeting were received and noted by the Academic Committee. There were no actions referred to the committee.

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

16.1 SMLT: 2 June 2021

There were no actions referred to the Academic Committee from 2 June SMLT meeting.

16.2 QAEC: 14 May 2021

There were no actions referred to the Academic Committee from 14 May QAEC meeting.

**Part 4: Joint meeting of the Academic Committee and the Board of Directors**

J Fairhurst opened the joint meeting of the Academic Committee and the Board of Directors and explained that the focus of this meeting is for the Academic Committee to make a recommendation to the Board for approval of the academic KPIs and the Academic Actions 2021-22 (that are within the Strategic Framework 2021-24). A formal decision on approval of the Key Performance Indicators 2021-22 and the Strategic Framework 2021-24 would be made in the Board of Directors meeting that will be taking place at the conclusion of this meeting.

The following members of the Board were present for this part of the meeting:

Carol Cook	Non-executive Director and Chair of BoD
Tom Mortimer	Non-executive Director
Johan Forsblad	Non-executive Director
Noor Jhaveri	Non-executive Director
Shabnam Karim	Finance Director

**17.0 Key Performance Indicators 2021-22**  
(Academic Committee to recommend for approval the Academic KPIs)

J Fairhurst invited comments on all KPIs but explained that the committee's recommendations would be confined to academic KPIs only.

J Fairhurst informed the committee that there were a number of academic KPIs that relate specifically to targets set out within our Access and Participation Plan (APP).

J Fairhurst presented the academic KPIs and invited comments from the committee. The following was noted:

- It was welcomed that final degree classifications was not included as a KPI (although some of the academic KPIs connected with the APP do relate to closing performance gaps). It was suggested that having such a KPI could risk creating a perverse incentive.
- C Raban observed that, for new students, we are measuring pass rates rather than continuation rates and that it is continuation rates that the OfS are measuring. J Fairhurst explained that the module pass rate was used for new students, to provide accurate and timely data, because continuation rates as defined by the OfS and provided by HESA look at those who continue with us or another provider.
- G Pitt queried how withdrawals would be dealt with under the KPIs. J Fairhurst explained that HESA would capture in its continuation rate only those students who have not withdrawn within 6 weeks of the course start date, and continue in higher education 1 year and six weeks after their course commenced. The OfS calculates its continuation rate differently, using 2 weeks for both rather than 6 weeks. This is why we use the two-week rule as a baseline for calculating the pass rate. J Fairhurst suggested that this could be clarified in the document (to read "excluding students who withdraw within the first two weeks"). The committee agreed to this amendment.
- J Fairhurst explained that KPIs 14 to 17 would be measured with the use of internal data.

The committee **recommended approval** of the academic KPIs to the Board of Directors subject to minor amendments to KPIs 10a, 10b and 12a, 12b.

**Action:** J Fairhurst to amend KPIs 10a, 10b and 12a, 12b to clarify that in calculating pass rates, this would exclude students who withdraw within the first two weeks.

## 18.0 Strategic Framework 2021-24 (Academic Committee to recommend for approval the Academic Actions)

J Fairhurst informed the committee that a review of our Strategic Framework was overseen by the SMLT. All staff input into this review.

The SMLT recommended approval of the Strategic Framework at its May meeting.

J Fairhurst presented the Goals and Sub-Goals with the associated Academic Actions and asked for any comments to be raised. The following was noted:

- Goal 1, Sub-Goal 1.2, action 2 – action update notes to be corrected.
- Goal 3, Sub-Goal 3.1, action 1 - A Zaman emphasised the importance of interdisciplinary learning noting that major events would be interpreted differently by students based on their area of study. He carried on to say that interdisciplinary studies would be valued by employers and should improve the students' employability. J Fairhurst noted this comment and said that we would look closer at interdisciplinarity when redesigning our degrees.

The committee **recommended approval** of the Academic Actions to the Board of Directors.

## 19.0 For discussion

### 19.1 Student Profile Update March 2021

M Jackson explained that the Office for Students published new datasets in March, covering 2018-19 and 2019-20 and a report for SMLT was prepared based on the results. She said that our results were positive



and show improvement with three areas where a significant gap had been identified. The gaps related to gender and combined gender and socio-economic deprivation in the context of continuation rates.

M Jackson explained that the datasets enabled her to assess our performance and provide updates in relation to four of the targets from our Access and Participation Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25 but noted that there is not enough data to establish any long-term trends.

M Jackson flagged from the report that disability at Bloomsbury Institute does not affect students' attainment and continuation rates.

J Fairhurst welcomed the report and said it would be useful not only for evaluation of current APP targets/actions but also when we work on the next APP. Members of the Board of Directors commended the report and the work done in this area by M Jackson.

The Academic Committee received and noted the Student Profile Update March 2021.

### 19.2 Interim Report on KPIs 8 and 9

A Jeram informed the committee that the Interim Report on KPIs 8 and 9 returned to QAEC after it was discussed at the March AC meeting. The recommendations made by the Academic Committee were discussed and agreed upon by QAEC. The amended report would be submitted to the Board of Directors meeting for consideration but was submitted to the joint part also to enable dialogue between the Academic Committee and the Board of Directors.

A Jeram highlighted the Good Practice section of the report where ideas from other programmes were listed that could tangibly be used on the LLB course. She also explained that a final report would be prepared when the results would be available. The final report would assess the impact of actions taken in response to results presented in KPIs 8 and 9 in March.

M Jackson queried whether the results from the Law assessment and feedback project with Advance HE would be included in the final report. J Fairhurst explained that the report was only shared with us on 8 June and would require more time to be considered, but it was his view that it was a very generic report that did not identify specific issues. C Cook and J Stevens, who had both seen the report, agreed.

T Mortimer explained that the Interim Report was considered by the Audit Committee on 8 June and summarised the three key points as follows:

- The Audit Committee felt that the report was too long, and that valuable information got lost in it.
- In places, the tone was not appropriate.
- The structure should be reviewed. The following was recommended to be used in the final report:
  - Identification of issues.
  - Reasons behind the issues.
  - Planned strategies to address the issues.
  - Evaluation of the strategies used.

J Fairhurst noted the comments and recommended for them to be considered in the final report. The final report would be considered on that basis for submission in September when all the data would be available.

### 19.3 Future approach to academic staffing

Having considered the current and future approach to academic staffing at Agenda Item 13.0 above, and the committee agreeing with the approach, J Fairhurst explained that a meeting with all academic staff had been held where changes to the proposed workload model, contract of employment and job description were discussed. The main changes were to incorporate the workload model into the contract of employment and a review of the pay scale for academic staff where part of the salary would be linked to the workload model. A survey was sent out to academic staff and a clear majority agreed with the proposed changes. Final versions of the contract of employment and job descriptions were drafted taking into consideration the responses from the survey.

The following documents were considered:

- Academic Workload Model 2021-22
- Lecturer Contract of Employment Template 2021-22
- Senior Lecturer Contract of Employment Template 2021-22
- Principal Lecturer Contract of Employment Template 2021-22
- Lecturer Job Description – May 2021
- Senior Lecturer Job Description – May 2021
- Principal Lecturer Job Description – May 2021

A discussion ensued and the following was noted:

G Pitt queried the rationale behind incorporating the workload model into the contract. J Fairhurst explained that it was two-fold, one reason was to link it to pay and the second was to show our commitment to the workload model.

G Pitt stated that it was her view that the workload model should not be incorporated into the contract because it could make it difficult to amend in the future. J Fairhurst welcomed this comment and noted G Pitt's specialism in employment law. G Pitt offered to share her additional comments outside the meeting.

C Cook picked up on the point made by G Pitt and said that a "lean" contract of employment supported by clear policy would be a preferred model.

I Brooks recommended that a Senior Lecturer should have course leadership responsibility. J Fairhurst explained that we had decided Course Leaders should be appointed at the Principal Lecturer level and that the additional role for Senior Lecturers was to act as an Academic Leader in, for example, Research.

J Fairhurst welcomed these comments and explained that we would reconsider the contract and whether or not the workload model should be incorporated into the contract. Whether or not it is incorporated, some element of pay could still be linked to it.

## **20.0 For information only**

### 20.1 OfS Condition A1 Action Plan

M Jackson informed the committee that the deadlines for some actions were amended as reported in May SMLT and that all the actions were on track.

The June OfS Condition A1 – Action Plan update was received and noted by the committee.

### 20.2 Strategic Framework 2019-22 - Actions for 2020-21 Interim Report

The Strategic Framework 2019-22 - Actions for 2020-21 Interim Report was received and noted by the committee.

## Part 5: Any Other Business and Date/Time of Next Meeting

### 21.0 Any Other Business

- J Fairhurst explained that the external review of our governance has been completed and that a draft report was received. A full report would follow for consideration by the Board of Directors at its July meeting.
- J Fairhurst informed the committee that two new Non-executive Directors had been appointed for an initial term of 4 years from 1 July 2021. He requested for their CV's to be circulated to members of the Academic Committee. He also told the committee that Noor Jhaveri would be leaving the Board now that these two new directors have been appointed.
- J Fairhurst paid tribute to David Malachi who passed away last week at the age of 54. David was a "critical friend" to Bloomsbury Institute and a great supporter of our widening participation quest.

**Action:** M Jackson to circulate the CVs of the two recently appointed non-executive directors to the external advisors on the Academic Committee.

**22.0 Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting:** 28 July @ 2.00pm – 4.00pm, TBC.