

## Confirmed Minutes

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Academic Committee</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Friday 26 May 2023</b>
<b>Time:</b>	12 pm – lunch 12.30 - 2.00 pm: Meeting of the Academic Committee 2 pm – 3 pm: Joint meeting of the Board with the Academic Committee
<b>Venue:</b>	Room G16, Malet Building, Birkbeck College.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>
John Fairhurst	Principal and Chief Executive Officer (Chair)
Joan O'Mahony	Deputy Principal
Slawomir Grzybek	Head of Quality
Sarah Bailey*	Director of the Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success (SEWS)
Nnamdi Obiosa	Head of the School of Accounting and Finance
Marcus MA. Astley	Head of the School of Business
Tom Ironmonger	Head of the School Foundation Year Studies
Ian Miller	Director of Bloomsbury Law Clinic and Head of School of Law
Eleonora Affronte	Head of Academic Administration
Dr Michelle Morgan	External Academic Advisor
Professor Gwyneth Pitt	External Academic Advisor
Carol Cook	Non-Executive Director (Chair of the Board of Directors)
Ammar Syed*	Student Representative (Student President)
Abrahan Alejandro Burgos Ayala	Student Representative (MBA)
Marcia Barrant	Student Council Student Representation from LLB
Svetlana Zbirnea	Student Council Student Representation from AFM Year 1 - GU
Abidur Rahman*	Student Council Student Representation from AFM
Johana Petit-Frere	Quality Executive (Secretary)

### In attendance

<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>
Maria Jackson	Head of Governance and Company Secretary
Shabnam Karim	Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer
Cal Courtney	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Keith Bartlett	Non-Executive Director
Trevor Bolton	Non-Executive Director
Melanie Fellowes	Non-Executive Director
Victoria Holbrook	Non-Executive Director
Abdultaiyab Pisavadi	Non-Executive Director

<b>No.</b>	<b>Item</b>
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>
*Sent apologies	
The Chair welcomed everyone and in particular our External Academic Advisors, Student Representatives and the Non-Executive Directors to the May Academic Committee (the Non-Executive Directors would join the AC meeting as observers only).	

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Minutes for approval and Action Tracker/Matters Arising:</b>
	2.1 <i>Minutes from the previous meeting: 25 January 2023</i>
The minutes of the January AC meeting were agreed as a true record of the meeting and were <b>approved</b> by the Committee.	
	2.2 <i>Matters Arising/Action Tracker</i>
	2.2.1 Minutes of 25 November 2022
2.2.1.1 Item 14.0 refers.  <b>Completed:</b> A clarification on the new OfS methodology has been provided in the Action Tracker. The new KPIs 2023 (to be approved) take into account this new methodology.	
	2.3 <i>Chair's Action</i>
<p>Document approved by Chair's action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 2.3.1 Course Outline Proposal – MSc Accounting and Finance</li> <li>– 2.3.2 Course Outline Proposal – MSc Finance and Wealth Management</li> </ul> <p>The Chair informed the Committee that he took chair's action for the MSc Accounting and Finance and MSc Finance and Wealth Management course proposal, with both programmes having been submitted to a validation event at Wrexham University. A validation event is planned to take place later in June. He also added that both courses, subject to approval, would be intended to commence in October 2023, and (with Wrexham University's approval) they have been advertised on our website subject to final approval.</p>	
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Academic Principal's Business</b>
Nothing to consider.	
<b>Part 1: Academic Regulatory, Policy and Procedural Documents for Approval, and Information</b>	
<b>4.0</b>	<b>For approval by AC</b> <i>No further approvals required</i>
	4.1 <i>Change to UG provision</i>
<p>Document received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– - 4.1.1 OfS Condition B3 – Data Analysis at March 2023</li> <li>– - 4.1.2 FY Course Closure</li> <li>– - 4.1.3 FY Teach-Out Plan</li> </ul> <p>The Chair informed the committee that at its March 2023 meeting the Board of Directors recommended the closure of the Foundation Year (FY). This recommendation was made <u>firstly</u> because the Board considered the FY was no longer financially viable because of low student numbers. Secondly, the Board also had consideration to continuation and completion rate data for the FY alongside the OfS Condition B3 thresholds for continuation and completion rates.</p>	

Under the Corporate and Academic Governance Framework (CAGF), the Board makes the final decision with regard to matters that could result in a significant financial risk. The Board is also required to ensure Bloomsbury Institute's solvency.

To formally close the Foundation Year, we have to follow the procedures set out in the *Course Approval, Withdrawal and Suspension Procedures*. The final decision has to be made by the Academic Committee.

In order to approve the closure of the Foundation Year, the Academic Committee has to approve a Teach-out Plan.

#### FY Course Closure

The Chair noted that the decision to close the FY was a difficult one but remarked that such decision would not mean abandoning our purpose and values, and in particular our commitment to widening access to higher education. The closure of the FY, if approved by the Academic Committee, would constitute a "change of approach" rather than a "change of direction" to our widening access agenda.

We typically recruit first generation students onto our undergraduate programmes, and there is no doubt that this will continue.

Our newly designed degrees, with their clear vocational element, are eminently suited to students who have completed Access to HE and T-Level qualifications. Typically, such students are under-represented in UK higher education.

Over the short term we will seek to recruit first generation home students directly.

However, our "change of approach" to widening access will see us actively engage with further education colleges, through which we will work with them to raise aspirations for their students and provide a smooth transition to higher education (and we could provide, free-of-charge, our Transition to HE course). Our success will be measured by the increase in the number of students who enter higher education as first-generation students. We will develop meaningful and active progression partnerships with further education colleges that deliver Access to HE and T-Level qualifications. We will provide their students with access to higher education, and we will promote our partner colleges to potential students who do not meet our entry criteria.

Our Head of Marketing, supported by our Deputy CEO, will develop our active progression partnerships. However, it has to be recognised that it does take time to develop active progression partnerships. However, by limiting undergraduate recruitment to one intake each year, it does provide time and space to develop such partnerships.

The Chair invited comments and a discussion took place on the factors affecting the FY at a sector and internal level, including the challenges we are facing in recruiting students in the domestic market.

Following a lengthy discussion, the committee and the Board members present acknowledged the work the FY team has put in place to provide excellent teaching and a quality experience to students and were delighted to see how connected the FY team are and how it has developed as a whole.

The Chair moved on to a formal vote to approve the closure of the FY Course after the June 2023 intake. The Academic Committee voted unanimously in favour of the closure of the FY.

#### Teach-out Plan

Following an approval by the Academic Committee of a request to close the FY course, the Committee was required to consider and approve a Teach-out Plan which sets out arrangements for informing applicants and supporting students already registered on the course. It was clarified that the closure of the FY would not affect our current students or those students who have applied to start the course with us in June 2023.

<p>The Committee was of the view that the Teach-out Plan would benefit from including more detail with regards to its implementation. The recommended changes were discussed, and it was agreed that they would be incorporated in a revised version of the Plan.</p> <p>The Teach-out Plan was <b>approved</b> by the Academic Committee subject to the above amendments which it was agreed could be approved by Chair's action, subject to Dr M Morgan's prior approval.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> The Deputy Principal to amend the Teach-out Plan based on the recommendations raised in the Academic Committee and, subject to receiving the approval of Dr M Morgan (External Academic Advisor), the Teach-out Plan can be approved by Chair's action.</p>	
	<p>4.2 <u>Admissions Policy</u></p>
<p>The Academic Committee noted the changes made to the Admissions Policy.</p> <p>There were no substantial queries raised concerning the changes made. The Committee <b>approved</b> the Admissions Policy.</p>	
	<p>4.3 <u>Course Approval, Withdrawal and Suspension Procedures</u></p>
<p>The Head of Quality presented the revised Course Approval, Withdrawal and Suspension Procedures and outlined the changes made.</p> <p>Minor amendments were offered by the Committee including the distinction between course withdrawal and course closure.</p> <p>The Committee <b>approved</b> the Course Approval, Withdrawal and Suspension Procedures subject to the above amendment.</p>	
	<p>4.4 <u>Curriculum Modification Procedures</u></p>
<p>The Head of Quality presented the Curriculum Modification Procedures and outlined that the major changes made to the document reflect the transition of our validated degrees from the University of Northampton to Wrexham University. It was added that we no longer accept changes to the curriculum with regard to our Northampton degrees due to the teach-out status.</p> <p>The committee <b>approved</b> the Curriculum Modification Procedures.</p>	
	<p>4.5 <u>Research Ethics Code of Practice</u></p>
<p>The changes made to the Research Ethics Code of Practice were noted by the Committee.</p> <p>The committee <b>approved</b> the Research Ethics Code of Practice.</p>	
	<p>4.6 <u>Research Strategy</u></p>
<p>The amendments made to the Research Strategy were noted by the Committee.</p> <p>There were no queries raised concerning the changes made. The Committee <b>approved</b> the Research Strategy.</p>	
5.0	<p><b>For information only</b> <i>AC approval is not required</i></p>

	<u>5.1 Annual Course Evaluation Reports</u>
<p>Documents received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 5.1.1 AFM Annual Course Evaluation Report 2022-23</li> <li>– 5.1.2 BM Annual Course Evaluation Report (UoN) 2022-23</li> <li>– 5.1.3 BM Annual Course Evaluation Report (GU) 2022-23</li> <li>– 5.1.4 BM MBA/MSc Annual Course Evaluation Report 2022-23</li> <li>– 5.1.5 FY Annual Course Evaluation Report (GU) 2022-23</li> <li>– 5.1.6 FY Annual Course Evaluation Report (UoN) 2022-23</li> <li>– 5.1.7 LLB Annual Course Evaluation Report (UoN) 2022-23</li> <li>– 5.1.8 Law and Legal Practice Annual Course Evaluation Report (GU) 2022-23</li> </ul> <p>The Committee received and noted the Annual Course Evaluation Reports.</p>	
	<u>5.2 External Examiner Report 2021-22 and External Examiner Response Form 2021-22</u>
	5.2.1 LLB Law: Barry Goldstone
The Committee received and noted Barry Goldstone's Report and Response Form 2021-22.	
	<u>5.3 Annual Planning Cycle 2023-24</u>
The Committee received and noted the Annual Planning Cycle 2023-24.	
<b>Part 2: Standing Items</b>	
<b>6.0</b>	<b>KPIs 2022-23: May 2023 Update</b>
<p>The updated May Academic KPIs were considered, and the following was noted:</p> <p>KPI 11b – The Deputy Principal informed the Committee that the data for Term 2 first sit would require clarification.</p> <p>A query was raised on whether the Institute has experienced an increase in mitigating circumstances and it was confirmed that we had not see any marked increase.</p>	
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Admissions and Recruitment</b>
	<u>7.1 Student Recruitment</u>
<p>The following was flagged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Our quality process for international applicants has been strengthened: applicants from the Indian Subcontinent and the UAE take an interview through CAS Shield (to be extended to all applicants for the October 2023 intake).</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Qualification Check has been introduced and implemented for the June intake 2023 through which all qualifications/transcripts are verified directly with the awarding body (we also verify English Language Tests/qualifications internally or through Qualification Check); we no longer accept Medium of Instruction English Language as an exemption from our English Language requirements.</li> <li>– All applicants from the Indian Subcontinent have to pay a 100% deposit of Year 1 fees (to be applied to all applicants for the October 2023 intake).</li> </ul>	
The Committee received and noted the Student Recruitment report.	
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Internal Student Complaints</b>
It was reported that all complaints have been resolved internally. To date, the Institute has had no student complaints escalated for consideration by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.	
<b>9.0</b>	<b>OfS Updates</b>
There were no updates to report on.	
<b>10.0</b>	<b>Wrexham University</b>
There was nothing to report.	
<b>11.0</b>	<b>TDAP</b>
There was nothing to report.	
<b>12.0</b>	<b>Confirmed minutes from other forums or committees for information, consideration, or action.</b>
	12.1. <u>Accounting and Financial Management Course Committee: 10 November 2022</u>
There were no actions referred to AC.	
	12.2 <u>Business Management Course Committee: 10 November 2022</u>
There were no actions referred to AC.	
	12.3 <u>Foundation Year Course Committee: 11 November 2022</u>
There were no actions referred to AC.	
	12.4 <u>LLB Law Course Committee: 11 November 2022</u>
There were no actions referred to AC.	
	12.5 <u>SSCF: 9 December 2022</u>

There were no actions referred to AC.	
<b>13.0</b>	<b>Actions referred from other forums/committees where the minutes are unconfirmed/not yet available.</b>
	13.1 <u>Accounting and Financial Management Course Committee: 24 February 2023</u>
There were no actions referred to AC.	
	13.2 <u>Business Management Course Committee: 24 February 2023</u>
There were no actions referred to AC.	
	13.3 <u>Foundation Year (UoN &amp; GU) S2 T1 and T2 Course Committee: 22 February 2023</u>
There were no actions referred to AC.	
	13.4 <u>LLB Law (GU) S2 T1, T2 &amp; T3 Course Committee: 21 February 2023</u>
There were no actions referred to AC.	
	13.5 <u>LLB Law (UoN) S2 Course Committee: 21 February 2023</u>
There were no actions referred to AC.	
	13.6 <u>SSCF: 10 March 2023</u>
There were no actions referred to AC.	
<b>Part 3: Joint meeting of the Academic Committee and the Board of Directors 2PM</b>	
<b>14.0</b>	<b>For consideration and action</b>
	14.1 <u>Strategic Framework Actions 2022-23 Interim Progress Report</u>
The Committee and the Board received and noted the Strategic Framework Actions 2022-23 Interim Progress Report.	
<b>15.0</b>	<b>For approval</b>
	15.1 <u>Strategic Framework 2022-25</u>
The Deputy CEO presented the Strategic Framework 2022-25.	
The Committee flagged the importance of the implementation of the Alumni Strategy. It was added that the Alumni Strategy was approved by the SMT in April and would be uploaded on the QEM. The Marketing, Communications and UK Student Recruitment (MCSR) Department is leading on the implementation of the strategy.	

<p>A query was raised that related to the relationship between the KPIs and Strategic Framework (SF) and the need to reflect on how the KPIs are designed to meet the aims of the SF and help to understand our performance towards the SF goals. Further to the query, it was mentioned that this relationship would be reviewed and discussed again during the review of the SF for 2024.</p> <p>The Academic Committee <b>recommended</b> to the Board of Directors the <b>approval</b> of the Academic Strategic Goals.</p>	
	<p><u>15.2 KPIs from 1 September 2023</u></p>
<p>The Chair presented a new set of KPIs that would apply from 1 September 2023 (that had been recommended for approval by the Strategic Leadership Team). He explained that the role of the Academic Committee was to recommend the approval of the Academic KPIs 10 to 18 to the Board of Directors.</p> <p>The Chair invited the AC attendees to consider the proposed Academic KPIs and it was noted that the Academic KPIs relate to the OfS Condition B3 Metrics, OIA, NSS and External Examiners.</p> <p>Following a discussion on the Academic KPI 16 it was agreed that we should amend the KPI to capture more than the number of student complaints submitted to the OIA and the outcome. This would involve including data on formal internal student complaints: submitted; upheld/resolved and not upheld. It was also agreed that a new KPI be added in relation to the number of Academic Appeals.</p> <p>The Academic Committee <b>recommended</b> to the Board of Directors the <b>approval</b> of the academic KPIs subject to the above amendments.</p>	
<b>16.0</b>	<b>For information</b>
	<p><b>16.1 OfS Condition A1 Action Plan – Update Reports</b></p>
<p>Documents received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 16.1.1 OfS Condition A1 Action Plan – February 2023 Update Report</li> <li>– 16.1.2 OfS Condition A1 Action Plan – March 2023 Update Report</li> <li>– 16.1.3 OfS Condition A1 Action Plan – April 2023 Update Report</li> <li>– 16.1.4 OfS Condition A1 Action Plan – May 2023 Update Report</li> </ul> <p>The OfS Condition A1 Action Plan – Update Reports were received and noted by the Committee.</p>	
	<p><u>16.2 Internal and External Intelligence Report</u></p>
<p>The Committee received and noted the Internal and External Intelligence Report.</p>	
	<p><u>16.3 Update on internal governance review</u></p>
<p>The update on internal governance review was agreed to be discussed at the Board of Directors meeting.</p>	



	<b>16.4 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Update Reports</b>
<p>Documents received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 16.4.1 EDI Update Report for February 2023 SMT</li> <li>– 16.4.2 EDI Update Report for March 2023 SMT</li> <li>– 16.4.3 EDI Update Report for April 2023 SMT</li> <li>– 16.4.5 EDI Update Report for May 2023 SMT</li> </ul> <p>The Committee received and noted the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Update Reports.</p>	
	<b>16.5 Overview Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report 2021-22</b>
<p>The Committee received and noted the Overview Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report 2021-22.</p>	
	<b>16.6 Overview Annual Course Evaluation Report 2022-23</b>
<p>The Committee received and noted the Overview Annual Course Evaluation Report 2022-23.</p>	
<b>Part 4: Any Other Business and Date/Time of Next Meeting</b>	
<b>17.0</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>
<p>There was nothing to consider.</p>	
<b>18.0</b>	<b>Date, Time, and Venue of Next Meeting:</b> 26 July 2023, 2PM - 4PM, Euston Road, Room 304