

## Confirmed Minutes

**Meeting:** Academic Committee  
**Date:** 30 March 2022  
**Time:** 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm  
**Venue:** 373 Euston Road, Room 201

Name	Designation
John Fairhurst	Managing Director and Academic Principal (Chair)
Dr Gwyneth Pitt	External Academic Advisor
Dr Colin Raban*	External Academic Advisor
Maria Jackson	Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
Anna Krajewska	Director of CETL, and Head of School of Business and Accounting
Dr Knowledge Mpofu**	Chair of Research Ethics Committee
Dr Joe Stevens	Course Leader LLB
Mubashir Qurashi**	Course Leader AFM
Dr Achila Amarasinghe	Course Leader BM
Tom Ironmonger	Course Leader FY
John Adjei**	Academic Lead for Employability and Lecturer, FY
Nandini Canoo**	EDI Academic Lead and Lecturer, FY
Arif Zaman	Lecturer, Business
Dr Nnamdi Obiosa	Deputy Head of the School of Business and Accounting
Donna Leonard	Academic Lead for Learning Enhancement
Ahmed Junaid	Academic Registrar
Amanda Jeram*	Head of Quality and Compliance
Sarah Bailey	Director of the Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success
Charlayne Lewis-Thomas**	Admissions Manager
Dr Joan O'Mahony	Director of Academic Development
Tatiana Veiga Das Neves**	President of the Student Guild
Veronica Wilson**	Student Council Student Representative from 3-Year LLB Law
Ana Maria Silochi	Student Council Student Representative from 2-Year AFM
Niromy Rajan	Student Council Student Representative from 4-Year LLB Law
Anudi Ponnampereuma	Student Council Student Representative from 4-Year BM
Slawomir Grzybek	Secretary

\* Denotes apologies

\*\* Did not attend not having sent apologies.

### No. Item

#### 1.0 Apologies

J O'Mahony welcomed everyone to the meeting and in particular the External Academic Advisor and the newly nominated student Representatives. She informed the committee that J Fairhurst would join the meeting for Part 2 and that she would chair the meeting until his arrival.

Apologies from C Raban and A Jeram were noted.

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

2.1 Minutes from the previous meeting: 22 November 2021 (there was no AC meeting held in January 2022)

J O'Mahony reminded the committee that the January meeting was cancelled and therefore only the minutes from the joint meeting of the Academic Committee and the Board of Directors would be considered for approval. It was noted that the joint part of the minutes had previously been approved by the Board of Directors members who were present (and the Academic Committee is also required to approve them).

The committee **approved** the minutes of the November Academic Committee meeting.

## 2.2 Matters Arising/Action Tracker

### 2.2.1 Minutes of 22 November 2021

#### 2.2.1.1 Item 6.4 refers

Completed: The Corporate Risk Register Commentary was circulated to the Academic Committee.

#### 2.2.1.2 Item 12.3 refers

Completed: The External Governance Review Report (excluding the action plan) was circulated to the Academic Committee.

## **3.0 Chair's Actions**

### 3.1 Admissions Policy

J O'Mahony explained that in the absence of the January meeting the Admissions Policy was approved by Chair's action to allow for the recruitment activities to commence at the earliest possible date.

The document was brought to the committee for formal approval at the March meeting, see item 4.1 below.

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

## **4.0 For approval by AC**

### 4.1 Admissions Policy - Glyndwr

The committee noted the changes made to the document but questioned the references to Section 5.4 still appearing throughout the document. It was further queried whether the information pertinent to international student entry requirement (English language) was sufficient and A Junaid explained that this was outlined in Section 5.1 and that more detailed information was available on our website.

The committee requested the reference to Section 5.4 to be removed from the Admissions Policy and that it is stated that more detailed information with regards to international entry requirements is available on our website.

Subject to the above changes, the committee **approved** the Admissions Policy.

**Action:** A Junaid to amend the Admissions Policy as recommended by the committee and recirculate to evidence the changes made.

### 4.2 Annual Planning Cycle 2022-23

J O' Mahony presented the Annual Planning Cycle on behalf of J Fairhurst and explained that the SMLT previously considered and recommended approval of the document.

The committee **approved** the Annual Planning Cycle 2022-23.

#### 4.3 Course Approval, Withdrawal and Suspension Procedures

A Junaid presented the revised version of the Course Approval, Withdrawal and Suspension Procedures and explained that the major change was the removal of the reference to the University of Northampton and its replacement with a reference to awarding partner. This approach would allow us to utilise the same internal procedure for both awarding partners we currently work with.

The committee requested for the Course Outline Proposal Form to be amended to reflect the change in our delivery, namely, to incorporate Level 7.

The committee **approved** the Course Approval, Withdrawal and Suspension Procedures subject to minor amendments.

### **5.0 For information only**

#### 5.1 Internal and External Intelligence Report

The committee received and noted the Internal and External Intelligence Report (IEIR).

It was flagged that the IEIR was one of the key documents used to inform our Annual Planning Cycle.

#### 5.2 Overview Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report 2020-21

J O'Mahony informed the committee that the Overview AMER would be submitted to the Board of Directors and invited A Krajewska to outline key points from the report. The following was noted.

- The Overview AMER is focusing on the fifth year of our validated delivery.
- Our National Student Survey results were very positive in 2020-21.
- Overall, the retention/completion rates at Levels 5 and 6 in most disciplines/courses remained high.
- We consistently see more students graduating with a good honours degree than other honours degrees.
- Our External Examiner reports for 2020-21 are positive.
- Student engagement is an area of concern.

The committee noted the role of surveys deployed during the pandemic in improving our provision for students. It was also noted that the lessons learned from the last year's delivery were incorporated into the design of our new courses for delivery with Glyndwr University.

The committee received and noted the Overview Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report 2020-21.

#### 5.3 Annual Course Evaluation Reports 2021-22

J O'Mahony informed the committee that the Annual Course Evaluation Reports were considered by relevant Course Committees as well as the QAEC where they were approved. The reports were submitted to the committee for information.

##### 5.3.1 AFM ACER

The committee received and noted the AFM Annual Course Evaluation Report.

##### 5.3.2 BABM ACER

A Amarasinghe flagged the following from his report:

- Module Leaders continue their efforts in communicating with students and encouraging their engagement.
- More guest speakers were invited to deliver lectures across the course.
- Level 4 and Level 5 modules were flagged.
- Level 6 modules recorded normal distribution of passes.

The committee received and noted the BABM Annual Course Evaluation Report.

### 5.3.3 FY ACER

T Ironmonger flagged the following from his report:

- The first cohort of students took the new assessment format in LSBM002 and LSBM004. It would be required to allow for at least another cycle to assess whether the changes made were effective.
- Student feedback indicates that our students found group work difficult and this has been discussed in various forums to explore possible solutions.
- The FY is increasingly digitally focused and a need for additional resources in the area of IT was highlighted.

The committee received and noted the FY Annual Course Evaluation Report.

### 5.3.4 LLB ACER

J Stevens flagged the following from his report:

- The Law Clinic was successfully launched.
- Level 6 students were very engaged, and this was reflected in their results.

The committee received and noted the LLB Annual Course Evaluation Report.

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

### **6.0 For information only**

#### 6.1 Corporate Risk Register March 2022

The committee received and noted the March 2022 update to the Corporate Risk Register.

#### 6.2 Corporate Report March 2022

The committee received and noted the March 2022 Corporate Report.

#### 6.3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Monthly Report:

M Jackson presented her EDI monthly reports and flagged the following:

##### 6.3.1 EDI Update Report: December 2021

- OfS APP Outcomes Monitoring Report

Students largely deemed the APPs inaccessible in terms of language and data presentation.

Approximately 60% of total statistical targets were reported as having been met.

Access and success progress was good for disabled students, but issues were reported in the area of gender.

#### 6.3.2 EDI Update Report: February 2022

- Revisions to the NSS questions are currently at the consultation stage and it was noted that action might be needed now in anticipation of any changes to the questions.

#### 6.3.3 EDI Update Report: March 2022

- The Head of EDI intends to revisit the need for having a policy around drug use drawing upon advice and guidance from the Universities UK initiative.

#### 6.4 Access and Participation Plan Next Steps

M Jackson informed the committee that she attended a meeting with the OfS's Director for Fair Access and Participation, where he communicated his vision for access and participation.

She flagged the following key points from the meeting:

- No new APP would be required to be submitted but providers are expected to produce a variation to their APP to address the provider's priorities.
- APPs need to be more accessible going forward (e.g. to include an APP executive summary and more accessible language and presentation).
- There was a commitment to the continued development of non-traditional pathways and modes of study.
- The OfS will adopt a risk-based approach to the monitoring of APPs for 2020-21 and onwards. Monitoring returns will be substituted with a desk-based assessment based on intelligence including reportable events to identify an early warning sign of an increased risk of providers not meeting their ongoing conditions of registration.
- There is going to be a very heavy focus on evaluation. It is anticipated that evaluation will require an external input and that the results of evaluations should be published. External evaluation might be required and that could take the form of "peer-to-peer" evaluations.
- Providers should not just dismiss initiatives for not working. They need to evaluate the initiative properly to understand what exactly didn't work and why it didn't work.
- The timeline of key actions for the OfS and providers including the availability of the new datasets from the OfS.

J Fairhurst reminded the committee that our students were involved in the development of our APP and through their participation in focus groups and committees, the student voice considerably shaped the measures we included in the Plan. This would be repeated if we amend the Plan or when we develop new Plan.

#### 6.5 Annual Review of Accredited Continuing Professional Development Scheme "In Bloom"

The committee received and noted the Annual Review of Accredited Continuing Professional Development Scheme "In Bloom".

#### 6.6 External Examiner Report and Response to External Examiner Report – B Goldstone

The committee received and noted the B Goldstone External Examiner Report and Response to External Examiner Report

6.7 External Examiner Report and Response to External Examiner Report – K Afawubo

The committee received and noted the K Afawubo External Examiner Report and Response to External Examiner Report.

6.8 APP Assessment of Performance Update Report

The committee received and noted the APP Assessment of Performance Update Report.

6.9 Attainment Data Report 2018-19 to 2021-22

M Jackson informed the committee that the report is an abridged version of a full report that went to the February 2022 SMLT meeting.

M Jackson flagged from the report that where attainment gaps continue to exist, steady progress is being made to further reduce/eliminate them.

The committee commended the report for providing a very useful insight into the effectiveness of our approach to reducing/eliminating gaps as well as a source of data that could be utilised elsewhere in the Institute. J Fairhurst requested for the report to be shared with the Head of Action Planning, G Slater, who is not a member of the committee.

It was also discussed that the report provides useful intelligence related to the effectiveness of the measures implemented at a course level that has led to improvements in attainment, and the Course Leaders could use it to carry out their evaluation.

The committee received and noted Attainment Data Report 2018-19 to 2021-22.

**Action:** M Jackson to share the report with G Slater.

### Part 3: Standing Items

#### 7.0 KPIs 2021-22

7.1 March 2022 Update

The updated Academic KPIs were considered, and the following was noted:

KPI 10a – first sit data for Semester 1 (pass in both modules) indicate that the KPI was not met, and the pass rates fell below 80%, a threshold that warrants a provision of a separate report. A pass rate on the modular level indicates that in addition to those who passed both modules, some students passed one module in Semester 1.

KPI 11 – first sit data for Semester 1 (Level 6 module pass rate) indicate that the KPI was not met.

7.2 Action from the Board of Directors [14 March 2022]

J Fairhurst informed the committee that the Board of Directors received the March 2022 update to the KPIs 2021-22 at its meeting on 14 March 2022.

Both KPI 10a and KPI 11 were flagged.

KPI 10 relates to module pass rates for new students, and KPI 11 relates to module pass rates for continuing students.

The rationale for having KPIs that relate to module pass rates is to provide an indicator of whether or not we might be at risk of not meeting OfS numerical thresholds for continuation rates and subsequently completion rates.

The Board of Directors agreed that there should be a formal review of KPIs 10 and 11 and that the review should be conducted by two persons, to be led by the Head of Action Planning, that will report to the Academic Committee (and subsequently to the Audit Committee and the Board). The second member would be one of the Academic Committee's external academic advisors or an External Examiner – preferably a former External Examiner.

The purpose of the review is to seek to make recommendations that will have a positive impact on module pass rates, because this will naturally have a positive impact on continuation rates and completion rates.

The Terms of Reference for this review will be as follows:

- Review student performance in the context of KPIs 10a (and 10b once data becomes available) and 11 to consider whether any specific issues and/or practices could have a negative impact on module pass rates at first sit (and resit), to include:
  - The time that a student enrolls, and specifically when a student enrolls after the course has started
  - The time when we confirm the student's registration with the SLC (this is when the student's maintenance payment is released)
  - Receipt of travel bursary payments (for eligible students)
  - If a student is admitted as a non-standard applicant (together with actual performance in our admissions tests/interview)
  - A student's entry qualifications
  - [For modules taken in Year 2 and beyond] whether the student failed to pass modules at first sit or resit opportunity in previous years (i.e. if a student passes all Year 1 modules, do they perform consistently better in subsequent years; this can be further broken down to consider future performance for students who fail one Year 1 module, two Year 1 modules, three Year 1 modules and all Year 1 modules)
- Consider the following activities alongside the data related to specific issues/practices, and make recommendations with regards to each activity (if appropriate) where it is considered implementation of the recommendation will have a positive impact on module pass rates:
  - The admissions, enrolment and on-boarding process [including measures that we had intended to introduce in 2021-22 but because of only having a limited time to recruit new students, they were not implemented – for example, 4-week pre-entry course for non-standard applicants; psychometric testing]
  - Teaching, learning and assessment
  - Support provided to students through our professional services
  - Interventions policy and practice
- Provide a report to the Academic Committee (and subsequently to the Audit Committee and the Board of Directors).

J Fairhurst invited the committee to share any useful data or information that could support the review with G Slater.

## **8.0 OfS Updates (if relevant)**

### **8.1 OfS Condition A1 Action Plan – March 2022 Update Report**

M Jackson reported that we are assumed to be compliant with the overall strategic measures based on the returns from the Action Leads. Delays in completing individual actions were reported, however, those were not deemed to be cause for concern and were being monitored.

It was noted that the first set of evaluation reports was submitted to the EDIC in February. The Head of Action Planning is currently advising on how to approach evaluations going forward.

### 8.2 OfS Compliance Register – March 2022 Update Report

J Fairhurst informed the committee that based on the report in March SMLT we remain compliant with the OfS conditions of registration.

### 8.3 OfS Consultations

J Fairhurst reported that we made an individual submission to the OfS's three recent consultations with a deadline of 7 March 2022. These consultations included proposed changes to Condition of Registration B3 pertinent to setting minimum baselines for continuation rates, students' completion rates and the ratio of students going onto graduate-level employment or further study.

## **9.0 TDAP**

We are still awaiting the decision on our application for Taught Degree Awarding Powers.

## **10.0 University Partnership**

J Fairhurst confirmed that the validation event with Glyndwr University was successful and from June 2022 Glyndwr University will be our new awarding partner. University of Northampton degree teach out would run in parallel.

It was noted that the current FY students would be eligible to transfer onto Glyndwr University degrees from October 2022.

Transfer arrangements and info sessions are currently being worked on by the Registry team and the FY Course Leader respectively.

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

### 11.1 SMLT: November 2021

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

### 11.2 SMLT: December 2021

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

### 11.3 SMLT: February 2022

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

### 11.4 QAEC: November 2021

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

### 11.5 QAEC: January 2021

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

### 11.6 EDIC December 2021

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

11.7 BoD: 25 October 2021

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

11.8 BoD: 22 November 2021

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

11.9 BoD: 17 January 2022

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

11.10 Law Course Committee Semester 1

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

11.11 BABM Course Committee Semester 1

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

11.12 FY Course Committee Semester 1

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

11.13 AFM Course Committee Semester 1

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

11.14 SSCF: 12 March 2021

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

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

12.1 SMLT: 2 March 2022

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

12.2 QAEC: 16 March 2022

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

12.3 EDIC 23 February 2022

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

12.4 BoD: 14 March 2022

Actions referred to Academic Committee: See Agenda Item 7.2 above

12.5 Law Course Committee Semester 2

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

12.6 BABM Course Committee Semester 2

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

#### 12.7 FY Course Committee Semester 2

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

#### 12.8 AFM Course Committee Semester 2

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

#### 12.9 SSCF: 10 December 2021

There were no actions referred to Academic Committee.

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

#### **13.0 Any Other Business**

Nothing for consideration.

#### **14.0 Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting:** Joint meeting of the Academic Committee and the Board of Directors 27 May 2022 @ 12.00 pm – 3.30 pm, TBC.