



ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on the 14th October 2009

09/01 Attendance

1.1 Present

Professor D Green (Chair), Mr D Antell, Mr W Bowen-Jones, Mr M Collins, Mr M Donovan, Dr M Doughty, Professor G Elliott, Mr D Flint, Professor R Foskett, Ms M Gamble, Ms A Hannaford, Ms K Hanson, Mrs L Jones, Dr J Keene, Mr J Martin, Professor J Newbury, Mr M Newitt, Mr K Pickess, Mr R Prout, Mrs J Quallington, Mr M Richardson, Professor C Robertson, Dr I Scott, Professor D Upton

1.2 In Attendance

Ms H Johnstone, Mr J Ryan

1.3 Apologies

Dr N Evans, Mr T Maxfield, Professor A Payne, Dr M Stowell

1.4 Membership

The Chair welcomed Professor Rosalind Foskett, Deputy Vice Chancellor, to her first meeting of the Board.

09/02 Minutes

2.1. The minutes of the meeting held on the 14th October 2009 [AB09/01] were confirmed as a correct record.

2.2. Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the Agenda

2.2.1 Reassessment [minute 44.2.4. refers]

The Chair acknowledged that the discussion had been difficult at the previous meeting of the Board. The proposals had been made on a shared desire to encourage a greater rate of submission but no consensus had been reached and this position had remained over the summer break. There have been a number of initiatives introduced in recent months to encourage students to submit work and therefore it has been decided to remain with the status quo and to monitor the impact of the new initiatives. Members noted that the new initiatives had already resulted in more students submitting reassessment over the summer.

09/03 Chair's Business

- 3.1 The Vice Chancellor presented his report [AB09/02] for information.
- 3.2 The Head of Student Services reported that the Student Loan Company had advised that it anticipated clearing the backlog of student loans by December 2009. Members noted that the Students Loan Company had also taken over processing DSA payments and therefore some students were facing a double delay. The staff in Student Services and Finance were working together to provide students with short term loans until the situation was resolved.
- 3.3 The Director of Regional Engagement reported that as at the beginning of October 28 graduate internship posts had been filled and another 22 were in the process of being filled. The original target had been 50 graduate internships and it is anticipated that this will be exceeded. The scheme has been endorsed by the leader of the TUC and also the Director General of the CBI.

09/04 Student Recruitment [AB09/04]

- 4.1 The Registrar presented a headline report on student recruitment for 2009/10 to the Board. It was noted that all NHS funded courses had met their recruitment targets. Recruitment to PGCE Primary had been successful with 135 students recruited against a target of 125. PGCE Secondary had recruited better than for many years with 208 students being recruited against a target of 222. There will be further recruitment to the PGCE courses via the flexible routes in January and at Easter.
- 4.2 Recruitment to HND and Foundation Degree courses remains strong, particularly HND courses in Sport. Recruitment to the Foundation Degrees in the South West is particularly buoyant with a combined first year of 158.
- 4.3 The majority of BA/BSc programmes have achieved or exceeded targets. First year recruitment to the UMS is anticipated to be very close to 1400. Members noted that this was the first year that the University had withdrawn from clearing at such an early stage.
- 4.4. Members noted that as a result of the recent appeal to HEFCE the University's new baseline after provision for wastage was 4089.
- 4.5. The total number of newly registered non-UK students is 291 (151 EU and 140 international). Whilst this is a modest number compared with other institutions it is an excellent achievement for the University and compares favourably with 179 in 2008.
- 4.6 The Registrar reported that the Recruitment Action Group and the Executive Management Board had both discussed the University's recruitment position and the possibility of the institution becoming more selective and the implications for the institution should additional student numbers continue to be scarce in the future. Meetings will be held with individual Heads of Institute to review targets for 2010/11.
- 4.7 The Vice Chancellor commented that the University needed to be as successful with retention as it had been in recruitment.
- 4.8 The Board received the report.

09/05 National Student Survey [AB09/05]

- 5.1 The Head of the Academic Quality Unit presented a report on the University's result in the National Student Survey. It was noted that overall the University' position had slipped slightly although the response rate had improved to 63%. Particular areas of concern are feedback and organisational focus.
- 5.2 It was noted that a NSS Working Group had been formed to look at the key issues arising out of the survey and to work specifically at addressing and communicating the results back to students.
- 5.3 There is a pilot underway looking at how the University secures feedback from students and more emphasis is being placed on the course representative scheme and encouraging students to feedback on modules. Members commented that it was often difficult to get committed course representatives as it was crucial that they needed to understand the role and the timing of training was essential. It was noted that course representatives will now report to student institute representatives and two per institute will be part of the Students' Union Council.
- 5.4 The Student Experience Task & Finish Group, established by the Vice Chancellor, has held its first meeting. Initiatives have been identified which will hopefully have an impact on future NSS results and improve retention. One of the 6 work-streams identified by the group was communication with students and this will be taken forward.
- 5.5. The Head of Student Services commented that he felt that the results for career related matters were disappointing. The service will carry out more customised work with individual institutes.
- 5.6. The Deputy Vice Chancellor reminded the Board that how the University responds to issues arising out of the National Student Survey will be considered as part of the Institutional Audit in Spring 2011.
- 5.7 The Board received the report.

09/06 Review of Academic Year [AB09/06]

- 6.1 The Registrar presented the semester dates for 2010/11 to the Board. The Board was reminded that at its May meeting it had been agreed to relocate reassessment from September to July with effect from the 2010/11 session. The Board had also established a task and finish group to prepare for the implementation of the change and to prepare a detailed calendar.
- 6.2 The group had met twice and had looked in detail at the points raised through the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee and other forums. Additional time has been provided for marking at the end of semesters 1 and 2 and the details for Feedback and Academic Advice weeks have also been discussed. The detailed dates will be emailed to members of Academic Board for consultation and the results of this will be discussed by the task and finish group on the 23rd November when an implementation plan will be devised.
- 6.3. Members agreed that it was important that the changes were communicated clearly to staff and students.

09/07 Reports from Committees

7.1 ASQEC [AB09/07]

- 7.1.1. The Head of the Academic Quality Unit presented the Committee's report. It was noted that the Committee had been updated on the QAA preliminary investigation into the RCVS complaint concerning the FdSc Veterinary Nursing and Animal Behaviour delivered in partnership with Warwickshire College. Further information has been requested by the QAA and it has been agreed that in the meantime the course will not recruit any further students. Monitoring of the progress of current students is ongoing.
- 7.1.2. The Committee recommended to Academic Board for approval a partnership with the Lithuanian Academy of Physical Education and the also a partnership with the Business Development Consultancy. The Board approved the recommendations.
- 7.1.3. It was noted that a request had been made to amend the membership of Audit & Review Committee to include a representative from all institutes. This will be considered by the Academic Governance Committee at its next meeting but in the meantime the Chair of the Board agreed representatives from all institutes could be invited to Audit & Review Committee meetings in an observer capacity.
- 7.1.4. The Board received and noted the report of the Committee.

7.2 Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee [AB09/08]

- 7.2.1. The Vice Chancellor advised the Board that the RDAP assessment appeared to be proceeding smoothly although further evidence of staff engagement with research and related matters had been requested. The assessors have clarified some of the definitions being used and this has allowed the University to provide more information as requested. The deadline for the additional information is the end of November 2009. The assessors will then prepare a report after which the University will have an opportunity to check it for factual accuracy before it is submitted to the March ACDAP.
- 7.2.2. The original Research and Knowledge Transfer Framework had been superseded by two new strategies for Research and Knowledge Transfer. The Committee recommends to the Board that the spirit of the existing documents is adopted but that further work is carried out to finalise the documents for Academic Board's approval at its February meeting. The Board approved the recommendation.
- 7.2.3. The Committee recommended to the Board that the Centre for Ceramics Research be undesignated. The Board approved the recommendation.
- 7.2.4. The Board received and noted the report from the Committee.

09/08 Honorary Appointments [AB09/09]

- 8.1. The Board received the revised procedures for the award of honorary titles and noted that these had been checked by the University's lawyers and also considered by EMB.
- 8.2. The Board approved the revised procedures and noted that the Head of Registry Services would amend the University's Regulations and Procedures to reflect them.

09/09 Effectiveness of Academic Board

9.1 Summary of Individual Responses [AB09/10]

9.1.1. The Board noted the summary of the individual responses to the effectiveness questionnaire. The results of the questionnaire will be presented to the Academic Governance Committee and a report will then be received from the Committee on the overall effectiveness of the Board and its sub-committees.

9.1.2. The Board noted that some responses indicated that the Board was not working as effectively as it might when dealing with challenging or controversial issues and ways of addressing this would be sought in the current session.

9.2. Review of Terms of Reference [AB09/11]

9.2.1. The Board considered its terms of reference and how it had discharged its responsibilities against them over the preceding year.

9.2.2. Members agreed that research needed to be identified specifically in its terms of reference and this would be referred to the Academic Governance Committee.

09/10 Professorial Titles [AB09/12]

10.1 The Board noted the conferment of the title of Professor of Higher Education on Dr Rosalind Foskett, Deputy Vice Chancellor.

09/11 Date of Next Meeting

11.1 Wednesday 4th February at 1:45pm

..... (Chair)

..... (Date)