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Senate

Open Minutes

Date of meeting: **Wednesday, 10 June 2015**

Duration of meeting: **13:30 to 15:45**

Location: **G5.05, High Wycombe Campus**

Attendance

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Rebecca Bunting	Vice-Chancellor's Office	Chair
Miriam Moir	Academic Quality Directorate	Secretary
Marcus Wood	Academic Quality Directorate	Minute Secretary
Ian Plover	Vice-Chancellor's Office	Ex-officio
Vicky Vass	Vice-Chancellor's Office	Ex-officio
Sue West	Society & Health	Ex-officio
Barbara Dexter	Learning & Teaching Directorate	Ex-officio
Ruth Gunstone	Student Services Directorate	Ex-officio
Ellie Smith	Academic Quality Directorate	Ex-officio
Frazer Mackenzie	Design, Media & Management	Ex-officio
Phil Wood	Design, Media & Management	Ex-officio
Lauren Griffiths	Society & Health	Ex-officio
Carol Pook	Society & Health	Ex-officio
Jo Rixon	Society & Health	Elected
Sue Axe	Society & Health	Elected
Allen Stroud	Design, Media & Management	Elected
Richard Jones	Design, Media & Management	Elected
Matt Gilbert	Students' Union	Student Representative

Apologies

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Alison Chambers	Society & Health	Ex-officio

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Lorraine Watkins-Mathys	Design, Media & Management	Ex-officio
Jake Kaner	Design, Media & Management	Elected
Piers Worth	Society & Health	Elected

Absent

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
None		

Welcome / Apologies for absence

15.100 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

15.101 Four apologies for absence were noted. Senate also noted the resignations from the University of four members of staff and one student representative who were members of Senate. It was, however, confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

Minutes of the previous meeting

15.102 The minutes of the meeting of 18 March 2015 were approved as an accurate record.

Status of actions from the previous meeting

15.103 Senate reviewed the action sheet and noted updates as follows:

- a) Minute 15.77: It was noted that two responses to external examiners were still outstanding. Faculty representatives confirmed that these had been completed although they had not been received in AQD. The Dean would ensure that these were forwarded after the meeting.

Action: Sue West

Chair's Action taken since the previous meeting

15.104 It was confirmed that the Chair had taken action to terminate the appointment of one external examiner following the completion of due process. Details were available in the External Examiner's Update provided to Senate (Paper SEN15.32).

Vice-Chancellor's Report to Senate

15.105 The Vice-Chancellor gave a verbal update to Senate.

Government priorities for Higher Education

15.106 Members were reminded of the Conservative Party manifesto commitments for Higher Education which may influence the direction of the University. These comprised:

- a) The introduction of a national postgraduate loan system for post graduate taught and research students
- b) A strong emphasis on value for money from the University sector as a whole;
- c) A new framework to recognise universities offering the highest teaching quality;
- d) Encouragement to universities to offer more two-year courses;

- e) A requirement for more data to be openly available to potential students so that they can make decisions informed by the career paths of past graduates;
 - f) Encouragement for the development of online education as a tool for students whether studying independently or in universities;
 - g) Continued support for world-leading science;
 - h) Support for the development of three million apprenticeships.
- 15.107 The Vice-Chancellor also noted that HEFCE is researching demand by employers for HNC, HND and Foundation degree qualifications as these were slowly disappearing from the sector.

Update on senior University appointments

- 15.108 Members received an update on the appointment processes currently underway for two new Pro Vice-Chancellor positions with responsibility for Education and for Research and Enterprise respectively, and for a new Director of Finance.
- 15.109 Interviews have taken place for the position of PVC Education. Interviews for the PVC Research and Enterprise would be taking place in the next two days. Interviews for the Director of Finance were scheduled for the week commencing 15 June 2015.

Institutional Audit Action Plan (Paper SEN15.21)

- 15.110 The Director of Academic Quality reminded members that the University had been audited by the QAA in March 2010. The audit had identified three advisable actions and a further five desirable actions with a number of additional comments identified in the report necessitating follow-up.
- 15.111 Of the three advisable actions, Senate noted that action had already been taken in a number of areas but further work was still required as follows:
- a) Alternative formats of assessment:- An anonymous marking policy had been agreed and processes were in place to expand this policy to other formats, e.g. the assessment of digital artifacts. The University is reliant on third party providers to support these due to the file sizes involved.
 - b) Work-based and work-related learning:- development was being undertaken by the Academic Enhancement Team in the Learning and Teaching Directorate and tracked by the Learning and Teaching Committee.
 - c) Management of academic workload:- there is a lack of clarity over where institutional policy has been developed. SMT guidance was requested on this issue.
- 15.112 In relation to the five desirable actions, Senate noted:
- a) The need to improve the consistency of collection and use of data is ongoing and is being progressed by the Strategic Development and Planning Directorate. This has been linked to issues of data cleanliness and accessibility and usability by Faculty staff.
 - b) Dissemination of external examiner reports for discussion by programme committees and by student representatives has been achieved. Reports (together with their responses) are now uploaded to the Programme Committee Blackboard Organisation for students to access.
 - c) A review of the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) has been undertaken but this is kept under constant review.

- d) The Enhanced Student Experience Package (ESEP) allows for transparency over resource allocation; this is currently being evaluated.
 - e) Research degree students are now given opportunities to undergo relevant development in preparation for teaching, prior to their engagement in teaching and assessment roles. Students are made aware of this possibility during an induction carried out by the Research Unit and throughout the student lifecycle. More recently, this issue has been incorporated into the HEA accreditation route.
- 15.113 Members were reminded that QEC is undertaking a parallel exercise to map the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which has also identified some minor areas for action. It was agreed that this work would be undertaken alongside the work on the audit action plan.
- 15.114 The University is scheduled for its Higher Education Review (HER) in 2016-2017. There was some uncertainty over the precise review process to be used given the recent decision by the Government to put UK quality assurance out to tender. The University was working on the assumption that any review mechanism would be along the same format, but could expect to hear more in due course.

HEA Accreditation (Paper SEN15.22)

- 15.115 The University is designing a CPD framework for all staff who teach or support learning to enable the University to be accredited by the HEA to award Fellowships. The framework has been approved subject to some minor changes. Drivers for the University are to improve the quality of teaching, especially given the likelihood of needing to report on qualified teaching status in future.
- 15.116 The paper noted the number of HEA Fellowships currently held by the University as follows: 4 Associate Fellowships; 90 Fellowships; 6 Senior Fellowships; and 1 Principal Fellowship. In addition one member of staff held a National Teaching Fellowship.
- 15.117 The report made three recommendations:
- a) A target of 95% of academic staff should be set either to be recognised as HEA Fellows or to be holders of an equivalent teaching qualification;
 - b) HEA Fellowships should be embedded in the criteria for all academic appointments, promotions and PDR processes;
 - c) Line Managers should continue to encourage HEA Fellowship for PSEs who directly support student learning.
- 15.118 Senate noted the following comments:
- The status of the PGDip Learning and Teaching in Higher Education should be confirmed, as to whether this contributed to the number of staff with an equivalent qualification;
 - The ability to recruit staff for clinical practice might preclude any requirements for criteria for appointment;
 - Criteria might also impact on the recruitment of senior staff within the University;
 - Fractional appointments could apply towards the overall target but this would depend on the number of hours being allocated as there was a minimum requirement;
 - Partner College staff should be included with expectations to be built into partner agreements.

15.119 It was confirmed that data cleansing is being undertaken in consultation with HR to review the criteria for teaching related courses (e.g. the MA Education) to identify those staff eligible towards any target.

15.120 It was agreed to add the rider 'or equivalent' to Recommendation 2 to enable the appointment of staff without an HEA Fellowship but with an equivalent teaching qualification or status.

Action: Barbara Dexter

15.121 The Chair noted an overall intention within the University for all staff with a 'significant' level of teaching to be suitably qualified. PSE staff holding an Associate Fellowship did not contribute to the overall target set as this related to staff on a teaching contract; however, this was desirable in terms of levels of professionalism across the University.

15.122 Senate endorsed the Recommendations in the paper, albeit that there was a need further to align the criteria against the target set in Recommendation 1.

Principles for Committee Structure (Paper SEN15.23)

15.123 Senate noted a proposal to revise its committee structure following a request by the Vice-Chancellor. The Paper outlined a possible 'direction of travel' and a series of principles to be adopted as well as a draft structure for further consultation. In particular two new Boards for Education and for Research and Enterprise were proposed (mirroring the new PVC roles) while Academic Planning and Faculty Boards would be reintroduced. New committees would be implemented from September 2015. Comments were welcomed.

15.124 Members welcomed in particular the reintroduction of Academic Planning and Faculty Boards and the intention to restrict the recent growth in committees. It was felt that Academic Planning Board in particular was critical as it focused on the development of programmes internally and with Partners.

15.125 Senate also welcomed the increased centralisation within the structure and the use of operational panels that could meet more frequently. It was noted that there would be a need to revisit some procedural documents to align with the new structure.

15.126 Members identified the need for central service involvement currently seen through the Student Experience Committee and sought reassurance that sight would not be lost of these discussions.

15.127 There was some concern over the overlap between aspects of the current Executive and the Deliberative structures and in particular the move of Operations Board to report to Senate. In addition, there was a query as to the positioning of Faculty Boards within the proposed structure, and it was agreed that this would be re-considered.

15.128 Taking these comments into account, Senate endorsed the draft proposal for further development.

15.129 The Director of Academic Quality noted that AQD would revisit the structure in the light of Senate's comments to produce a more detailed structure with terms of reference and suggested memberships. Frequency of meetings would also be looked into with the suggestion from members that some Boards may need to meet less than others. A brief consultation exercise would be undertaken (within the time available) with an intention to move forward by Chair's Action to meet the deadline for implementation.

Action: Ellie Smith

The revised FHEQ: Principles for assessment and exit awards (Paper SEN15.24)

- 15.130 Senate noted an updated paper summarising recommendations from QEC around principles for adoption to amend the University's assessment regulations for taught courses. This would ensure that the University remained aligned to the FHEQ. The paper also outlined an 'accelerated' approach for amending existing courses similarly to align to requirements.
- 15.131 Senate noted the pragmatic approach, especially for existing awards. The Academic Enhancement Team in the Learning and Teaching Directorate would be able to facilitate curriculum teams with the changes required. This would be communicated internally with some briefings arranged.

Action: Barbara Dexter

- 15.132 With regard to the introduction of the new assessment regulations, Senate was mindful over an issue of communicating the changes to students, particularly over the changes to progression regulations. It was confirmed that students were not being disadvantaged by the changes being proposed. Academic Quality representatives would be available to attend Faculty Quality Days in September; meanwhile, a communications strategy for the changes would be agreed.

Action: Ellie Smith

UCAV: Update on academic provision

- 15.133 Senate was scheduled to receive an update on academic provision at the University Campus Aylesbury Vale (UCAV). This was removed from the agenda at the meeting in favour of a communication to the University as a whole to cover this issue in detail. This could be anticipated within 5-10 working days.

UKVI: Situation updated

- 15.134 Senate noted a verbal update on the University's ability to recruit international students through the UK Visas and Immigration Service (UKVI) following the suspension of its Tier 4 Sponsor Licence.
- 15.135 The University will shortly be submitting its representation, following which the UKVI has 20 working days to respond. Outcomes of this process are either that the licence is revoked for between 6 months and 2 years (during which period the University demonstrates its eligibility for a new licence) or the licence is reinstated.

Validating partner for research degrees: Update (Paper SEN15.25)

- 15.136 Senate noted the paper updating the process for the University's research degree programme to be validated by Staffordshire University.
- 15.137 Documentation (including details of supervisors to be approved) was submitted to Staffordshire on 8 June 2015 and a validation event would take place at Bucks on 29 June. A successful validation would enable the University to recruit postgraduate research students from Spring 2016.
- 15.138 It was confirmed that additional supervisors could be approved at a later stage.

Amendments to the Academic Appeals, Fitness to Practise, Academic Misconduct and Mitigating Circumstances procedures (Papers SEN15.26-29)

- 15.139 Senate was asked to approve changes to the above-mentioned procedures. These had all been considered by QEC and recommended for approval. Of overall

significance, the changes included the introduction of a consolidated appeals procedure. Best practice had also been incorporated into process documents where this has been identified through implementation.

- 15.140 Senate queried the highlighted wording on page 9 of 28 of the Academic Misconduct procedure relating to the exceptional inclusion of an additional panel member to provide foreign language provision. It was clarified that foreign language support would only be provided for programmes which were delivered in that foreign language, e.g. programmes in Ghent and Milan (see Senate minute 15.64-67). Foreign language support would not be permitted for programmes delivered in English, i.e. the vast majority of the University's provision. This was accepted.
- 15.141 An amendment was agreed to paragraph 83 of the Academic Appeals procedure to read "If the student does *not* request a review..."
- 15.142 Senate queried why in the Academic Misconduct procedure the timescale outlined for a formal response to an allegation must be received within five working days and not ten working days to be consistent with other processes (paragraph 44 point 6). This would be clarified outside the meeting.

Action: Ellie Smith

- 15.143 Subject to the amendments noted above, Senate approved the amendment.

Amendment to UAFAR Appendices 1 and 2 (Paper SEN15.30)

- 15.144 Senate was asked to approve amendments to the Pre-registration nursing regulations which were appended to the University Academic Framework and Assessment Regulations (UAFAR). Changes made explicit the regulations governing failure in clinical practice. They also incorporated a changed submission process for Practise documents following the outcome of an NMC review. The changes were requested for immediate implementation.
- 15.145 Senate queried the immediate implementation and how this change would be communicated to students. It was noted that this was already outlined in the programme handbook provided to students but was not explicit in the regulations. Asked whether the change might lead to student complaints, the Head of School indicated that it would not and was simply an issue of providing clarity across documentation.
- 15.146 Senate approved the amendment.

Amendment to the Learning Partnership Agreement (Paper SEN15.31)

- 15.147 Senate was asked to approve amendments to the Learning Partnership Agreement between the University, the Students' Union and Students of the University. Changes had been recommended by SEC, QEC and LTC and had been widely consulted upon across the University. A communications strategy was also included in the paperwork submitted and students were working on visualisation of the strategy across the University.
- 15.148 Senate approved the amendment.

Appointment of External Examiners (Paper SEN15.32)

- 15.149 Senate noted the report on external examiners and endorsed the 12 Chair's Actions taken and approved the three changes to remit noted in the paper.
- 15.150 Senate noted the exceptional case submitted for approval of the nomination of Shirley Jacobs as external examiner for the BA (Hons) Dance Performance (Paper SEN15.32G). Senate accepted the case for Ms Jacobs to be reapproved after a gap of five years noting that this was a difficult area from which to recruit; however,

Senate considered that this situation should not be repeated and confirmed that no extension to term of this appointment would be permitted in future. The nomination was approved.

- 15.151 Senate also noted the exceptional case submitted for the approval of the nomination of Lawrence Moores as an external examiner for the FDA Animal Welfare and Behaviour programme at Berkshire College of Agriculture. It was noted that Mr Moores had not previously externally examined but would be supported in this role by the outgoing external examiner. Senate received assurances that Mr Moores had experience of delivering programmes at HE level. The nomination was approved.
- 15.152 Senate approved a further six external examiner nominations as indicated in the paper.
- 15.153 It was noted that there are still some gaps to be appointed for September 2015. A number of nominations and changes to remits had been received in AQD since the circulation of paperwork to members and these would be completed by Chair's Action. Processes were in place to secure a number of other appointments.

Validation: Recommendation of awards for approval (Paper SEN15.33)

- 15.154 Senate received the report on new programmes of study and revalidations undertaken since the previous meeting and approved the recommendations arising from Validation Panels as outlined.
- 15.155 Senate noted a number of updates to the paper:
- a) Updated papers to meet Conditions for the BA (Hons) Exercise, Health and Fitness Management, BA (Hons) Sports Business and Coaching, BA (Hons) Graphic Design, BA (Hons) Illustration, and MSc Psychosocial Interventions programmes have been received and are with the Chairs of the validation panel for approval.
 - b) Documentation for all UCFB programmes with Conditions had also been received, and will be distributed to Panel Chairs. Two UCFB courses were required to be resubmitted to another validation panel. This has been rescheduled for 3 July.
 - c) The outcome of the BSc (Hons) Sports Therapy was reported separately as a resubmission: this has been scheduled for 8 July.

Extension to validation term (Paper SEN15.34)

- 15.156 Senate received a request to extend the validation term for three Business programmes delivered overseas with partners. These programmes needed the extension to allow them to align to the UK-based provision.
- 15.157 The Head of School was not aware of any risks with the provision; AQD has checked PRE-SURE and external examiner reports which have also not highlighted concerns.
- 15.158 Senate approved the extension as an exception and asked that partner provision is fully considered when courses are submitted for validation to avoid such situations recurring.

Reports from Senate Committees (Papers SEN15.35-38)

- 15.159 Senate received executive summaries from QEC, SEC, EDC and LTC.
- 15.160 Attention was drawn to the proposed changes in the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) considered at the Equality & Diversity Committee (Paper SEN15.37). As

indicated in the paper it had been hoped that the ESEP might contribute funding towards this. Instead, a sum of £10,000 has been ring-fenced within the student hardship fund which will be used to support individual cases.

- 15.161 Attention was also drawn to the development of the Careers & Employability Policy considered at the Learning and Teaching Committee.

Any Other Business

- 15.162 Senate noted that this was the final meeting for Piers Worth and Jo Rixon, both of whom had come to the end of their elected terms of office. Senate thanked both members for their contributions to Senate's work over the last two years. Elections will be held for new representatives.

- 15.163 Senate also thanked (in their absence) those members who had left the University since the previous meeting. It was noted that Linsey Taylor was additionally Senate's representative to Council. Accordingly a replacement will be needed.

Action: Secretary

- 15.164 Finally Senate formally thanked Matt Gilbert and Connor Baker (who had already left the University) as President and Vice-President: Education and Welfare of Bucks Students' Union respectively. Senate wished both of them well for the future.

Date of next meeting

- 15.165 The date of the next meeting was currently scheduled for 23 November to comprise a joint meeting with Council, with the next meeting of Senate itself in December. It was noted that the December meeting may be brought forward following changes to the Committee structure; members would be informed of changes in dates and membership lists accordingly.

Action: Secretary