

Academic Board

12 July 2024

Minutes

1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1. Present

Professor Scott Wildman (SW) Dean (Chair)

Rebecca Harrison (RH) Academic Registrar (Secretary)

Bex Morrison (BM) Associate Vice President for Academic Services and Student Engagement, Registrar

Dr Naomi Goulder (NG) Deputy Dean for Academic Development and Innovation

Dr Carolyn Barker (CB) Associate Dean for Research and Knowledge Exchange

Dr Kasim Randeree (KR) Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs

Dr Alison Statham (AS) Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning (Student)

Dr Alexandros Koliouisis (AK) Faculty Director for Computing, Mathematics, Engineering & Natural Sciences

Dr Sara Raimondi (SR) Faculty Director of Humanities

Dr Niamh Ballah (NB) Director & Assistant Dean Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Sarah McAdam (SMA) External Board Member

Sandy Morrissey (SM) Executive Assistant Academic (Minute Secretary)

Also attending

Simon King (SK) Senior Quality Manager

Joseph Mullin (JM) Head of Student Regulatory Resolution

Dr Alistair Robinson (AR) Academic Director Centre for Apprenticeships

1.2. Apologies

Dr Diana Bozhilova (DB) Associate Dean of Global Impact and Sustainability

Dr Chiara Alfano (CA) Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning (Faculty)

Dr Marianna Koli (MK) Faculty Director of Social Sciences

1.3. Welcome

The Chair welcomed the members & those who had joined in attendance. He also welcomed the wider members of the community who were observing the Board meeting. The Chair reminded all present that only Board members and those in attendance who were invited to speak should participate in the discussions. The Chair confirmed that the Board was quorate.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes from the previous meetings were reviewed. **The Minutes were Approved.**

3. Matter Arising

The matters arising were reviewed and all actions were updated.

4. Chair Update including Actions

There have been six Chair's actions since the last meeting:

Approval End Point Assessment Nomination Fehmida Mohamedali DTSS as referred from 3 May Academic Board. There was an error in the paperwork which was corrected.

Approval for two Graduation Ceremonies to be held each year for 2025-2027 in October and May. Specific dates are not yet set.

Approval of Raluca L. Pahontu as the EE for Undergraduate Politics and IR. Request for Chair's action as there had been a gap between EEs and a backload of external moderation needing attention before PAB.

Approval Modification to LMATH4138 Differential Equations and Linear Algebra- reweighting of assessments.

Modifications to course descriptors that are shared between BSc Biomedical Sciences with Clinical Trials and BSc Bioscience with Digital Technologies.

Appointment of Dr Liang Chen as an External Examiner for the BSc (Hons) Data Science (apprenticeship) and the BSc (Hons) Digital and Technology Solutions programmes.

Chairs Update

The Chair advised the Board that he had recently given a series of faculty updates on many areas including student numbers, targets and strategies.

The Chair expressed his thanks and gratitude to RH the Academic Registrar, and Secretary to the Board, who will be leaving the University and will be greatly missed.

5. Research

5.1. Research and Enterprise Report

CB gave a verbal update on the recent research activity.

CB confirmed that end-of-year reviews for the second cohort of PhD students were underway prior to their starting their second year. This cohort will shortly be undertaking teaching training and will be exposed to some classroom teaching next year.

CB confirmed that the University performed well in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) across most categories. The University exceeded or was in line with the benchmarks across most areas. The survey highlighted that more development in research skills was desired. This will be addressed in the Autumn with more training.

CB advised that the Doctoral School was recruiting a research ethics consultant and a research impact manager.

The Chair thanked CB and asked if any undergraduate students were engaging in research at this time. CB confirmed that there has been a small amount of engagement and she has requested budget support for more undergraduate research projects. NG commented that the University has undergraduate students engaging with areas of faculty research through various mechanisms of the curriculum, whether directed studies or projects embedded in courses.

The Chair asked that this data be captured and reported

ACTION: NG & CB to work together to capture data of undergraduate students engaging in research.

5.2. Research Integrity Annual Statement

CB requested that the Research Integrity Annual Statement be held over for the next Board meeting as, due to a cancellation, it had not yet been considered by the Research Committee. The Chair agreed.

Item deferred to next Board meeting.

6. Faculty Matters

6.1. Faculty Recruitment

KR advised that he was still working on the promotion outcomes which have gone to the committee.

KR confirmed that the University now had 40 faculty member affiliations across 8 Boston Colleges.

KR congratulated Alistair Robinson who has been promoted to Academic Director for the Center for Apprenticeships and confirmed that Vasilena Vasilev is the College Ambassador for CAMD and Balgiisa Ahmed is the College Ambassador for Law. Toby Chai has been promoted to AD, DEI Social Sciences.

KR also updated the Board on the AdvanceHE awards.

The DB advised that it has been raised that not all faculty profiles on the website were up to date. KR stated that the faculty web pages had been updated and that faculty could request changes to their bio if needed.

ACTION: KR and DB to work with the web team to ensure faculty information is fully updated

7. Student Numbers

The Chair advised on the projected student numbers for 24/25:

8. Student Voice

8.1. NSS Response Rates AS gave a verbal update on the NNS results that were recently published, confirming that the University response rate was 75%, and the sector average in 2024 was 72%. The University is significantly down in some categories, such as learning opportunities, learning resources, opportunities to explore ideas in depth and whether students have the right balance of direct and independent study in their courses.

AS confirmed there were some good results in Politics, Psychology and Creative Writing, teaching and learning, assessment feedback and academic support.

The Chair reiterated the importance of the NSS as it is a great indicator of how the University is doing and the student experience. He summarised that of the 27 questions, there were 10 areas where the University was below the benchmark, which he felt was unacceptable.

There were only 5 areas in which the University were above the benchmark, and they were: We challenge our students; We provide future skills for our students; Our assessments are good; Assessment and feedback are extraordinary; Our feedback allowing students to improve on their work is good.

The Chair expressed the importance of being more proactive in the 3 other areas where the University was below the benchmark: Organisation and management; Learning resources; Student Voice

The Chair recommended creating an action plan to resolve these issues.

NG commented that these results were very specific per discipline or programme and that there will be mechanisms by which individual programme-level digging in and reflections will occur.

ACTION: AS to ensure that an action plan is drawn up from NSS with clear action owners.

8.2. Student Satisfaction Report

AS summarised the report, advising that the report shows the average response rate for each discipline, including apprenticeships.

SK was called upon to share with the Board his interpretation of the report. He advised that one of the recommendations would be forming a student voice working group as recommended in the next item.

8.3. Student Voice Working Group Proposal

SK was invited to present this proposal. SK advised the Board on the proposed membership of the working group and proposals for new ways of managing student voice. One recommendation was that the Quality team set up, send out, and monitor response rates for CSSs but promotion and chasing students to complete them would become the responsibility of faculty. In this way, the SVWG believes faculty will take more responsibility for improving response rates and take a more active approach to promoting them in class. This will also prevent students from receiving blanket emails from the Quality Team chasing them to complete the survey which feedback indicates annoys students. This

will hopefully give more time for the Quality Team to promote the programme-based surveys and improve its reporting of them

The Chair opened this proposal to the Board for comment. The Board was supportive of the proposed change to the way of managing course surveys.

It was also proposed to reduce the number of Discipline Meetings (with Student Reps) from two to one per semester which was supported by the Board.

This proposal to form the SVWG was supported but there were comments on the reporting line of the SVWG, its membership and how responsibilities for completion of actions would be managed. The Board considered that some further work was required on the terms of reference for the SVWG.

ACTION: The Chair to review the proposal and confirm ToR for the Student Voice Working Group and its reporting line.

9. The Teaching, Learning and Enhancement Committee

9.1. TLEC Report

The Chair requested that this report be held back until the next meeting.

Report Referred to next meeting.

9.2. TLEC Draft Minutes

The Chair requested that these draft minutes be held back until the next meeting.

Minutes Referred to the next meeting.

9.3. Faculty Resources - DEI & Inclusion

NB summarised the four faculty resource documents. The purpose of these documents was to guide faculty to meet the varied needs of diverse learners.

SMA commented that the documents were very detailed and covered a lot of bases, but wondered if there's anything that could be added around resilience and any kind of strategies for self-help,

SR advised that these documents will be available for faculty to access on Canvas.

9.4. LMATH4213 Report

AS summarised the report. LMATH4213 is a pre-requisite for LECON5213, a required level five course for BSc Economics, and runs in the Autumn Semester. Twelve of the 23 students taking the course either failed or had a deferred assessment after the first sitting. Of those 12 students, nine failed at the second sitting, all of whom are registered on BSc Economics, and unable to progress to level five until they have passed the course.

The Conclusion was that the key factor impacting failure rates for this course is poor performance in the AE2 summative assessment (weighted at 85%).

Recommendations were made in the report to carefully review the scaffolding of the teaching of the material, support for student learning and the assessments. It was also recommended that the faculty should consider how to identify students struggling earlier and refer them to the Maths tutor.

ACTION: The Chair requested that a meeting be arranged with the Course Tutors, relevant Heads of Disciplines, and AS for next week to discuss the review of this course.

10. Academic Governance

10.1. Academic Regulations

10.1.1. A) AQF 7 Academic Regulations Part C Assessment

Regulations for registrations from September 2024

RH led the Board through the significant areas of proposed change. The Board reviewed and discussed the points with some suggestions for slight amendments to the wording.

The proposed changes were agreed with the exception of the following paragraphs which the Board considered further discussion was needed before a final decision was taken as to whether or not the changes should be approved:.

Paragraph 40: Assessments with multiple sub-elements will have a single submission deadline. Where this is not possible, such as a presentation with slides, all sub-elements must be submitted by the published deadline with no late submissions permitted.

Paragraph 78: Amended to reflect that submissions made in the wrong format will not be automatically failed. However, they can be failed, marked down or discounted.

Paragraph 178: Amended to reflect that students who put their names on exams are likely to have them discounted and marked as a 0 rather than automatically receiving a 0.

ACTION: The Chair requested a follow-up meeting with BM RH, CA and AS to consider the proposed changes which were not agreed to resolve the outstanding concerns.

B) AQF 7 Academic Regulations Part C Assessment Regulations retrospective change previous cohorts. RH summarised the table paper which recommended the retrospective change to earlier versions of AQF 7 Part C to ensure that students across all years were treated equitably. This included clarification of regulations as to which submission would be marked if a student made multiple submissions and changes to Late Penalties and Exit Awards.

The Chair was concerned that every effort be made to ensure returning students were made aware of these changes. He requested a communications plan be drafted and its delivery monitored and recorded to ensure full delivery.

ACTION: AS to prepare a communications plan to communicate the changes to AQF7 Part C to returning students and that delivery of this plan is monitored and recorded.

10.1.2. AQF10 Student Voice

AS summaries the amendments proposed to AQF 10 Student Voice.

This AQF Chapter was Approved

10.2. Nominations of External Examiners

10.2.1. Dr Cornelia Wilson for External Examiner for the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Sciences programme.

Nomination Approved

10.3. Nominations of External Panel Members

10.3.1. Dr Christopher William Coles for External Panel Member for the BSc (Hons) Applied Accounting and Finance.

This was noted

NB asked how External Examiners and Panel Members were selected and asked if the University was satisfied that sufficient work was being done to attract externals with a diversity of backgrounds.

RH advised of the process and expressed concern that there were often few candidates applying for roles.

NB suggested that recruitment should encourage applications from suitably qualified applicants of all backgrounds. She recommended adding the same DEI wording used when recruiting to permanent posts.

10.4. Terms of Reference

10.4.1. Teaching Learning and Enhancement Committee

BM wanted confirmation of AR's new title and asked for KR to update his faculty structure deck. KR confirmed AR's title.

ACTION: KR to update Faculty Structure Slide Deck with current role titles and role holders

The terms of reference were APPROVED with an amendment to the title to Academic Director Centre for Apprenticeships

10.4.2. Terms of Reference - Work-Related Learning Management Board

The terms of reference were APPROVED.

10.4.3. Terms of Reference- Fair Access and Participation Strategy Group

The terms of reference were APPROVED

10.4.4. Terms of Reference- Academic Board

The terms of reference were APPROVED

11. Course and Programme Modifications and Approvals

11.1. Course and Programme Modifications and Approvals

11.1.1. LADES4139 Fundamental Architecture Design Category 2 Modification. **Endorsed**

11.1.2. LCOMM4110 Introduction to Communication Studies Category 2 Modification **Endorsed**

- 11.1.3. LCSCI4212 Discrete Structures Category 2 Modification **Endorsed**
- 11.1.4. LDSCI5207 Experimental Data Science Project Category 2 Modification **Endorsed**
- 11.1.5. LDSCI7234 Programming for Data Applications Category 3 Modification **Endorsed**
- 11.1.6. LENGR4117 Cornerstone of Engineering I, Category 2 Modification **Endorsed**
- 11.1.7. LENGR4128 Cornerstone of Engineering II, Category 2 Modification **Endorsed**
- 11.1.8. LHIST4219 In the Shadow of the Tower Category 3 Modification **Endorsed**
- 11.1.9. LLAW5227 Tort Law Extensions and Development Category 3 Modification **Endorsed**
- 11.1.10. LLAW62123 Property Law in Context: Extensions and Development; LLAW6232 Property Law and LLAW5223 Equity and Trusts Category 3 Modification **Endorsed**
- 11.1.11. LMATH4118 Mathematical Methods II Category 2 Modification **NOT ENDORSED**
- 11.1.12. LMATH4204 Mathematical Methods I Category 2 Modification **NOT ENDORSED**
- 11.1.13. LMATH5101 Mathematical Methods III Category 2 Modification **NOT ENDORSED**
- 11.1.14. LPHIL4227 Early Modern Philosophy Category 2 Modification **Endorsed**
- 11.1.15. LPINT4232 Foundations of Western Political Thought Category 3 Modification **Endorsed**
- 11.1.16. NCHNAP787 Communication in Business Category 3 Modification **Endorsed**
- 11.1.17. LCWRI5250 Electric Frontiers: Digital Creative Writing Category 3 Modification **Endorsed**
- 11.1.18. LPHYS4115 Physics I for Science and Engineering with Lab Category 2 Modification **Endorsed**

- 11.1.19. LPHYS4115 Physics II for Science and Engineering with Lab Category 2 Modification **Endorsed**

ACTION: Chair to liaise with the Quality team to ensure any needed amendments were made to the Mathematics Courses not endorsed by the Board.

11.2. New Course

- 11.2.1. University Approval Event Outcome Report for LECON4151 Applied Statistics **This course was APPROVED**
- 11.2.2. University Approval Event Outcome Report for LBUSI4149 Innovation and Enterprise **This course was APPROVED**
- 11.2.3. University Approval Event Outcome Report for the LBUSI4150 Profit Analysis for Managers and Advisors **This course was APPROVED**
- 11.2.4. University Approval Event Outcome Report for University Approval Event Outcome Report for LENG4148 Global Literatures to 1500 **This course was APPROVED**

11.3. Programme Periodic Reviews

- 11.3.1. Periodic Programme Review Outcome Report for MSc Digital Politics and Sustainable Development
- University Approval Event Outcome Response MSc Digital Politics and Sustainable Development
- Periodic Programme Review Confirmation Form – MSc Digital Politics and Sustainable Development
- BM gave an update from the Quality Team they've made good progress, There's no part-time offering, and they're hoping to get the documentation published by the end of next week.
- This programme was APPROVED**
- 11.3.2. Periodic Programme Review Event Outcome Report for MA Philosophy and Artificial Intelligence
- MA Philosophy and AI Periodic Programme Review Outcome Response Form
- MA Philosophy and Artificial Intelligence_04 Periodic Programme Review Confirmation Form

BM gave an update from the Quality team. The mapping of the programme for students starting in January was not yet completed.

This programme was APPROVED pending completion of the mapping of January starters.

11.3.3. BSc (Hons) Data Science Periodic Programme Review Outcome Report

Periodic Programme Review for BSc (Hons) Data Science Outcome Response

BSc (Hons) Data Science 04 Periodic Programme Review Confirmation Form

BM gave an update from ML from the Quality Team “This is being completed and subject to the usual cleanup they're holding off on publishing this one as the new Degree Apprenticeship standard will be published shortly, so they just want to map it to that before they publish”.

This programme was APPROVED

11.4. New Programmes

11.4.1. University Approval Event Outcome Report Applied Biomedical Sciences with Clinical Trials Specialist.

University Approval Event Outcome Response - BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Sciences.

BM gave an update from ML from the Quality team The documentation is almost ready for publication. The course descriptors shared with bioscience and digital technologies have all been reviewed and modified and should be published shortly. Two of the course descriptors did not get circulated with the original paperwork which was noticed two days ago. This is being circulated now.

Approval deferred. Due to timelines, it will be by the Chair's action once the panel has had sight of and is satisfied with the two courses.

ACTION: Chair to approve programme once Head of Quality confirms that the panel is satisfied with the two courses not previously circulated for review.

11.4.2. University Approval Event Outcome Report (2nd) for MSc Project Management

University Approval Event Outcome Response MSc Project Management

AS summarised the table report

This programme was APPROVED

11.5. Programme Modifications

11.5.1. Digital and Technology Solutions Specialist (DTSS)

This was Endorsed

12. Regulations, Policies and Procedures

12.1. Course Withdrawal Policy and Procedure for Mobility Students.

BM raised that it was inappropriate to include in the Policy what would appear on Boston-generated transcripts. Requested removal of this information from paragraph 15.4

This policy was APPROVED with an amendment

12.2. Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Policy and Procedure

This policy was APPROVED with small amendments

12.3. Academic Misconduct Policy KR asked if Faculty Directors could be added as panel members in paragraph 35.1

CB stated that it is the student's supervisor's responsibility to gain ethical approval, to it is the student's responsibility to follow all requirements of the ethical approval. CB recommended amending 17.11 'Failure to follow' rather than 'Failure to obtain'

This policy was APPROVED with amendments

12.4. Student Discipline Policy and Procedure

This policy was APPROVED

12.5. Complaints Procedure for Students

This policy was APPROVED

12.6. Degree Apprenticeship End Point Assessment Policy

This policy was APPROVED

12.7. Export Control Policy

For the same reason cited earlier in the meeting, this Policy has not been reviewed by the Research committee as expected and CB requested it be deferred.

This policy will be referred to the next meeting.

13. Other Matters

13.1. Proposal to join HeDD Scheme

RH advised that HeDD is a service owned by Jisc, as such the service discussed in this proposal is covered by our Jisc membership.

This document was APPROVED.

13.2. Report from Work Related Learning Management Board (WRLB), 11 June, 2024

This report will be carried over to the next meeting.

14. Dates of Academic Board Meetings 2024/25

The following dates were proposed for Board meetings in the 2024-2025 Academic Year: Friday 4 October 2024; Friday 6 December 2024; Friday 21 February 2025; Friday 9 May 2025; Friday 11 July 2025.

The Chair posed the question that due to the number of items on the agenda if more Board meetings per semester were needed. The Board considered that there was not a need to schedule more meetings because extraordinary meetings could be called if necessary.

The meeting dates were APPROVED.

The Chair thanked the Board and closed the regular business of the meeting.