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| **CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2023** | | | | | | | |
| **Present (via Zoom):** | |  | | | | | |
| Professor Jeff Bale (Chair)  Angela Foulkes | | Dr Claire Ketnor  Professor Julietta Patnick | | Professor Keith Ridgeway | | | |
| **Apologies:** | | |  | | | | |
| Jeremiah Abiola Fasipe | | | | | | | |
| **In attendance:**  Professor Rory Duncan, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation)  Professor Sir Chris Husbands, Vice-Chancellor  Ben Machin, Governance Senior Adviser (Secretary)  Claire Marlow, Deputy University Secretary and Head of Legal Services  Professor Helen Scott, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning, Teaching, and Student Success)  Ruth Thei, Head of Governance and Sector Regulation  Alison Wells, Director of Academic Services | | | | | | | **Agenda items**  All  All  All  All  Items 6 – 7.2  All  Item 7.3 |
| **Minute Ref** | **Item of Business** | | | |  | | **Paper ref** |
| AAC/2023-11-09/1 | **OPENING OF THE MEETING** | | | |  | | Verbal |
| 1.1 | In opening the meeting, the Chair:   * Noted the apologies received. * Welcomed the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) as an attendee. * Thanked the departing Vice-Chancellor for his contributions. | | | | | | |
| AAC/2023-11-09/2 | **DECLARATION OF INTEREST** | | | |  | | Verbal |
| 2.1 | There were no declarations of interest. | | | | | | |
| AAC/2023-11-09/3 | **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** | | | | | AB/2023-06-14/M  AAC/2023-06-14/M | |
| 3.1 | The committee **approved** the minutes from the joint meeting with Academic Board and the action record from 14 June 2023 as an accurate record. | | | | | | |
| AAC/2023-11-09/4 | **MATTERS ARISING / ACTION TRACKER** | | | | | AAC/2023-11-09/4 | |
| 4.1 | There were no identified matters arising. | | | | | | |
| 4.2 | The Chair reported on the updates provided against the listed actions. | | | | | | |
| AAC/2023-11-09/5 | **DEPUTY COMMITTEE CHAIR** | | | | | Verbal | |
| 5.1 | The Committee **elected** Professor Julietta Patnick as Deputy Chair for the 2023/24 academic year. | | | | | | |
| AAC/2023-11-09/6 | **COMMITMENT TO THE CONCORDAT TO SUPPORT RESEARCH INTEGRITY** | | | | | AAC/2023-11-09/6  **Confidential** | |
| 6.1 | The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) introduced the Committee to the paper on the University’s Commitment to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, which is revised on an annual basis, and outlined Academic Board’s scrutiny. Key points were as follows:   * The Concordat is a condition for receiving funding from the Research Councils’ (UKRIO) and the higher education funding bodies since 2013. * It includes five commitments that will provide assurances that research in the UK continues to be underpinned by the highest standards of rigour and integrity. * The scope relates to all research undertaken within the University, including undergraduate taught projects. * Detail was provided on eight actions updated in this latest iteration to reflect internal developments. | | | | | | |
| 6.2 | In discussion, the following points were noted:   * There were no substantiated misconduct cases in 2022/23 * Common errors such as citations reviewed through other University processes. * Growing concerns in the sector around reproducibility and research integrity is being monitored. * The University’s commitments are closely aligned with staff and student development activity. | | | | | | |
| 6.3 | The Committee **recommended** the concordat for publication. | | | | | | |
| AAC/2023-11-09/7 | **DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENT** | | | | | AAC/2023-11-09/6  **Confidential** | |
| 7.1 | The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Success) introduced the Degree Outcomes Statement, which sets out the University’s current position in relation to the institutional classification profile. The statement outlines a continued focus on improving student outcomes through portfolio and pedagogical developments, and highlights the significance of the Access and Participation Plan in delivering the University’s strategic aims and objectives regarding attainment. | | | | | | |
| 7.2 | In discussion, members:   * Noted the statement has been recommended by Academic Board. * Recommended that consideration is given to maintaining consistency with the institutional recommended terminology ahead of publication. * Received confirmation the proportion of good honours degrees awarded in 2022 has returned to pre-Covid levels, with some flux amongst courses, and will continue to be monitored. * Received assurances that work was ongoing to understand and address outcome differences between groups of students and in types of provision and subject areas. * Suggested datasets are reviewed with further education partners to explore outcomes through the progression from secondary to higher education. * Requested further information on the impact of plans to address the attainment gap through planned updates in the forward schedule (paper ref: AAC/2023-11-09/9).   **Action: Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Success)** | | | | | | |
| 7.3 | The Committee **approved** the Degree Outcomes Statement. | | | | | | |
| AAC/2023-11-09/8 | **STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND STUDENT VOICE** | | | | | AAC/2023-11-09/7 | |
| 8.1 | The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Success) presented the paper which provided an overview of the student academic experience items considered by Academic Board. It comprised of outcomes and action being taken in response to the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), National Student Survey (NSS), Student Voice: University Response, Postgraduate Research Experience Survey and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey. Members were informed:   * An overall gold rating was achieved in the TEF. * Improving the student experience is an institutional priority and a collective approach is being taken across academic and professional services. * A combination of tactical short-term focussed actions and longer-term strategic approaches are being deployed through the NSS institutional improvement plan. * There is a focus on subjects with the most ground to recover, with actions and approaches calibrated the address the identified areas for improvement. * Principles have been developed for a deep dive into ‘organisation and management’, as it remained the most challenging area of feedback from students. * Action is being taken to enhance communications with students, particularly to enhance the visibility and understanding of action taken in response to feedback. | | | | | | |
| 8.2 | In discussion, members:   * Congratulated the University on the TEF outcome. * Highlighted and reinforced Academic Board’s comment on the importance of effective communications in ensuring that students could see what has changed because of their feedback. * Recommend the University is alert and responsive to issues identified at a modular level which can impact the wider results. * Received details on actions identified to improve the student experience across ‘organisation and management’ and on areas of provision with the most ground to recover. * Clarified the timelines associated with the 2023/24 NSS and that 2022/23 NSS data could impact future TEF exercises. * Requested a progress update on the NSS improvement plan at the next meeting.   **ACTION: Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Success)** | | | | | | |
| AAC/2023-03-16/9 | **CURRICULUM STRUCTURES: SCHEME ‘E’** | | | | | AAC/2023-11-09/7 | |
| 9.1 | The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Success) presented the paper which detailed Academic Board’s scrutiny and approval of curriculum structures to support the University’s online portfolio. Members were informed:   * The curriculum structures workstream is designed to introduce greater consistency, more rigorous planning, and efficiency into the delivery of the University’s curricula. * The scheme has been designed in consultation with the University’s online partners and is intended to be delivered through a carousel model with multiple start dates. | | | | | | |
| 9.2 | In response to a member’s question, the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Success) outlined the rationale and principals for adopting the proposed model, which differs from approaches taken across the sector but is more conducive to different modes of study. | | | | | | |
| AAC/2023-11-09/10 | **STUDENT CASEWORK: ANNUAL STATISTICAL REVIEW** | | | | | AAC/2023-11-09/7  **Confidential** | |
| 10.1 | The paper provided the Committee with an overview of the annual statistical review of student casework which presents the headline figures from individual reports on the operation of student regulations and policies in 2022/23.  In outlining the key components of the paper, the Director of Academic Services detailed the volume, complexity, and trajectory of casework activity against benchmark. Members were informed the University is proactively reviewing complaints and recalibrating policies and procedures in response. | | | | | | |
| 10.2 | Key points from the discussion were as follows:   * Members explored the continued impact of the pandemic and sector changes on expectations and behaviours. * Trend data is reported to be consistent with the sector and will continue to be monitored. * Regulations and policies are more visible due to improvements in student communications, which impacts on the level of engagement with the student complaints and appeals policies. * Thematic areas of casework activity are expected to be positively impacted through delivery of the NSS institutional improvement plan and pedagogical redesign. | | | | | | |
| AAC/2023-11-09/11 | **ACADEMIC ASSURANCE COMMITTEE:**  **ANNUAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW** | | | | | | AAC/2023-11-09/7.4  **Confidential** |
| 11.1 | The draft annual report reflected on the effectiveness of the Committee’s operation during 2022/23 academic year. The Head of Governance and Sector Regulation introduced the report, outlining the scope of the review, the emerging themes, and the supplementary companion report for Academic Board. | | | | | | |
| 11.2 | In **considering** the review, members commented that actions delivered in response to the Academic Governance Review have enhanced the clarity and focus of the Committee’s role, and that new delegations will support efficiencies for the Board of Governors. | | | | | | |
| AAC/2023-11-09/12 | **OFFICE FOR STUDENTS REGULATION UPDATE** | | | | | | AAC/2023-11-09/8 |
| 12.1 | The Committee **noted** the report. | | | | | | |
| AAC/2023-11-09/13 | **HONORARY AWARDS COMMITTEE: ANNUAL REPORT** | | | | | | AAC/2023-11-09/8  **Confidential** |
| 13.1 | The Committee **received** and **noted** the unconfirmed minutes. | | | | | | |
| AAC/2023-11-09/14 | **ACADEMIC BOARD UNCONFIRMED MINUTES** | | | | | | AAC/2023-11-09/8 |
| 14.1 | The Committee **received** and **noted** the unconfirmed minutes from the meeting held on 11 October 2023**.** | | | | | | |
| AAC/2023-11-09/15 | **ANNUAL BUSINESS CYCLE** | | | | | | AAC/2023-11-09/9 |
| 15.1 | The forward schedule of business was **noted.** | | | | | | |
| AAC/2023-11-09/16 | **OTHER URGENT BUSINESS** | | | | | |  |
| 16.1 | No urgent business was raised. | | | | | | |
| AAC/2023-11-09/17 | **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** | | | | | |  |
| 17.1 | Thursday 28 February 2023, 13:00 – 15:00 | | | | | | |