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| **CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 JUNE 2024** | | | | | | | |
| MEMBERS PRESENT: | | | | | | | |
| Prof Liz Mossop (Chair)  Helen Best  Dr Sadiq Bhanbhro  Dr Marjory Da Costa Abreu  Angela Foulkes  Dr Iain Garner  Dr Sam Giove | | | Dr Claire Ketnor  Dr Neil McKay  Martha Mitchell  Dr Christine O’Leary  Prof Julietta Patnick  Dr Alison Purvis  Dr Alan Ruddock (until item 8.1) | Prof Helen Scott  Seun Seidu  Prof David Shepherd  Prof David Smith  Tim Smith  Prof Chris Wigginton | | | |
| IN ATTENDANCE: | | | | | | | AGENDA ITEM |
| Nikki Davies, Head of Student Policy, Casework and Compliance  Dr Luke Desforges, Academic Director - London Campus  Leopold Green, Head of Academic Quality and Standards  Sarah Lahreche, Incoming Students’ Union College Officer (observer)  Ben Machin, Governance Senior Advisor (Secretary)  Abi Marchant, Incoming Students’ Union College Officer (observer)  Gaynor Miller, Head of Researcher and Innovator Development Academy  Molly Pemberton, Incoming Students’ Union College Officer (observer)  Tom Russell, Head of Strategic Insight and Data  Ruth Thei, Head of Governance and Sector Regulation  Alison Wells, Group Director of Student and Academic Services | | | | | | | Until item 8.2  All  All  All  All  All  Item 5  All  Item 6.1  All  All |
| APOLOGIES: | | | | | | | |
| Roger Bateman, Prof Neil Bricklebank, Prof Claire Craig, Olivia Collis, Prof Rory Duncan, Jeremiah Abiola Fasipe, Tina Harness, Clair Marlow, Prof Conor Moss, Dr Rebecca Peake, Prof Keith Ridgeway, Dr David Rogerson, Prof Toni Schwarz. | | | | | | | |
| Minute | | Item of Business | | | Paper ref | | |
| **CHAIR’S BUSINESS** | | | | | | | |
| 1.1 | | In opening the meeting, the Chair:   * Noted the apologies received. * Thanked, on behalf of Academic Board, outgoing members for the contributions. * Informed members that an urgent item of business had been raised for consideration under the corresponding agenda item (min ref: AB\_2024\_06\_24\_17.1) | | | | | |
| **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** | | | | | | | |
| 2.1 | | Academic Assurance Committee (AAC) members confirmed there were no declarations of interest. | | | | | |
| **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS** | | | | | **AB\_2024\_04\_24\_M** | | |
| 3.1 | | Academic Board **approved** the minutes of the meeting on 24 April 2024 as a correct record. | | | | | |
| **MATTERS ARISING / ACTION TRACKER** | | | | | **AB\_2024\_06\_26\_4** | | |
| 4.1 | | Under matters arising, the Chair informed members the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) had issued its 2023 Annual Statement for the University. The annual report and analysis of student complaints will be presented at the autumn meeting. | | | | | |
| 4.2 | | Academic Board **noted** updates to the action tracker. | | | | | |
| RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT CONCORDAT ANNUAL REPORT | | | | | **AB\_2024\_06\_26\_5** | | |
| 5.1 | | The paper presents an annual report (April 2023-24), as part of the University’s commitment as a signatory to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. It details the University’s strategic objectives, measures of success, implementation plans and progress, to improve the employment and support for researchers and researcher careers.  The Head of Researcher and Innovator Development Academy (RIDA) informed members:   * The Concordat applies to all research staff, with specific obligations for the institution, managers of researchers, and researchers. * It has three overarching goals that cover:   + Environment and culture.   + Employment.   + Professional and career development. * RIDA was launched in January 2024 and aligns with the University’s Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange priorities and anticipated preparations for the Research Excellence Framework exercise in 2029. * The approach to supporting and developing all staff through RIDA will ensure that the University continues to grow academic capacity and capability. * An internal landing page is being developed to articulate RIDA’s offer, along with information included in academic staff inductions. | | | | | |
| 5.2 | | In discussion, the following points were noted:   * New system functionality aimed at supporting researchers to develop Narrative CVs and Research and Innovation Plans was welcomed. * A review is being undertaken of the support obtained when developing plans. * The establishment of the RIDA aims to ensure researchers and innovators at all career stages are supported. | | | | | |
| 5.3 | | Academic Board and AAC **recommended** the report for publication. | | | | | |
| **ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN** | | | | | **AB\_2024\_06\_26\_6.1** | | |
| 6.1 | | The paper presented the final draft of the University’s Access and Participation Plan, following scrutiny of an earlier iteration at Academic Board (min ref: AB/2024-04-24/5.1) and AAC (min ref: AAC/2024-05-16/5.1).  The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Success) and Head of Strategic Insight and Data reminded members of the University’s approach to developing the plan and of the regulatory context, as previously introduced. The Plan was being considered concurrently by the University Executive Board with feedback incorporated into the final documents.  The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) informed members the Teaching and Learning Committee had received a performance update against the Office for Students (OfS) Condition of Registration B3 indicators which are critical to inform the development of the Access and Participation Plan. Due to sector-wide data delays, an internal analysis of the University’s position has been undertaken utalising indicative data. | | | | | |
| 6.2 | | Members considered the plan, noting:   * The evaluation methodology will continue to be developed and refined in the lead up to implementation to ensure the intended outputs are being realised. * Deliverables will be allocated within existing resource. * Synergies with the postgraduate provision will be explored. * The report will be further refined prior to submission to the OfS.   A confidential minute was taken.  Members suggested the narrative and institutional target for reducing the degree awarding gap is revisited to achieve an equilibrium between reflecting the University’s ambition and realistically achievable outcomes, based on sector trends and data. | | | | | |
| 6.3 | | Academic Board and AAC **approved** the plan, subject to the inclusion of revised content relating to the degree awarding gap. | | | | | |
| **STUDENT PROTECTION PLAN** | | | | | **AB\_2024\_06\_26\_6.2** | | |
| 7.1 | | The paper presented an updated Student Protection Plan which is a requirement of OfS Condition of Registration C3. The Head of Governance and Sector Regulation informed members the latest iteration reflects changes to the internal and external contexts and has been streamlined to align with the Corporate Risk Register and the University’s approach to Reportable Events. | | | | | |
| 7.2 | | In considering the plan, members suggested refinements in language to reflect Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Body terminology.  **Action: Head of Governance and Sector Regulation.** | | | | | |
| 7.3 | | Academic Board and AAC **approved** the plan, subject to the suggested refinements. | | | | | |
| **ANNUAL QUALITY REVIEW: MID-YEAR UPDATE** | | | | | **AB\_2024\_06\_26\_7** | | |
| 8.1 | | The paper presented an in-year position on areas of risk relating to the quality and standards of the University’s taught provision, as identified in the Annual Quality Review (min ref: AB/2024-01-31/5), and the mitigating actions. The Head of Academic Quality and Standards guided members through the updates:   * The University continues to comply with the OfS B Conditions of Registration. * The Sheffield Institute of Education has achieved an ‘Outstanding’ Ofsted outcome. * The Office for Students has completed an External Quality Assurance of End Point Assessment audit which judged the University to be delivering in line with the framework. * The diversification of the University’s portfolio continues to be monitored during the implementation of Portfolio Redevelopment and remains stable. The capability of systems and the impact of staff changes and capacity will need to be carefully monitored.   A confidential minute was taken. | | | | | |
| 8.2 | | Academic Board **noted** the update | | | | | |
| **STANDARD ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS AMENDMENTS AND STUDENT POLICY REVIEWS** | | | | | **AB\_2024\_06\_26\_8.1** | | |
| 9.1 | | The paper, presented by the Head of Student Policy, Casework and Compliance, proposed revisions to the Standard Assessment Regulations, approved at the previous meeting (min ref: AB/2024-04-24/6.1), along with revised student policies for the 2024/25 academic year. Key points were as follows:   * Removing In-Module Retrieval would improve the consistency and equitability of assessments across the institution. * Removing of Regulation 10 (Withdrawal for Non-Engagement) is required to ensure consistency within the Regulations. * The new Withdrawal Policy articulates existing regulations about university-led withdrawal and incorporates provision for Withdrawal for Non-Engagement. * The Teaching and Learning Committee had approved minor revisions to the Capacity to Study Policy and Student complaints and academic appeals policy. | | | | | |
| 9.2 | | In considering the proposals, members focused on the removal of In-Module Retrieval, noting:   * The Teaching and Learning Committee’s robust scrutiny of the benefits and drawbacks. * The limitations of undertaking an impact analysis. * The updated Standard Assessment Regulations will apply to all students, with risks to student progression and outcomes managed exceptionally through exemptions. | | | | | |
| 9.3 | | Academic Board **approved** removals from the Standard Assessment Regulations, **approved** the Withdrawal Policy and **noted** the policy changes. | | | | | |
| **ACADEMIC AWARDS FRAMEWORK** | | | | | **AB\_2024\_06\_26\_8.2** | | |
| 10.1 | The paper presented the latest iteration of the Academic Awards Framework (AAF) to supersede the previous version (April 2023) and included a summary of amendments. The Head of Academic Quality and Standards informed members:   * The revised AAF was recommended by Teaching and Learning Committee. * Amendments were limited in scale, with revisions capturing changes already agreed through leadership and governance groups. | | | | | | |
| 10.2 | Academic Board **approved** the revised framework for immediate implementation. | | | | | | |
| **SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRS UPDATE** | | | | | **AB\_2024\_06\_26\_9.1** | | |
| 11.1 | | The paper provided an overview of recent meetings of the Research and Innovation (RIC), Teaching and Learning, and Student Experience sub-committees, including the approvals actioned under delegated authorities and links to the minutes.  The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) presented a revised RIC term of reference for consideration that reflected the committee’s business and recent leadership changes. Members were informed that broadening the membership would enhance scrutiny and challenge through a clearer delineation from the research leadership group. | | | | | |
| 11.2 | | Academic Board **noted** the update and **approved** the revised terms of reference. | | | | | |
| **MILITARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE: TERMS OF REFERENCE** | | | | | **AB\_2024\_06\_26\_9.2** | | |
| 12.1 | | The paper presented proposed revisions to the terms of reference for the Sheffield Universities’ Military Education Committee following a cross-universities governance review. The Committee Secretary informed members that revisions were focused on delivering consistency across both organisations, to simplify associated processes, and to provide a more appropriate escalation route for matters relating to education and student experience. | | | | | |
| 12.2 | | Academic Board **approved** the terms of reference. | | | | | |
| **ACADEMIC BOARD RECRUITMENT** | | | | | **AB\_2024\_06\_26\_10** | | |
| 13.1 | | The paper presented a membership update following conclusion of recent recruitment activity (paper ref: AB/2024-01-31/6), comprising six College Dean nominees and three Selection Panel appointments. In addition, the Committee Secretary informed members that member of Academic Board had recently left the University, resulting in a further appointment by the Selection Panel. | | | | | |
| 13.2 | | Academic Board **approved** nominees and **noted** the appointments. | | | | | |
| **STUDENT VOICE: UNIVERSITY ACTIONS PROGRESS REPORT** | | | | | **AB\_2024\_06\_26\_11** | | |
| 14.1 | | Academic Board **noted** the report. | | | | | |
| **ONLINE TERMS AND CONDITIONS AND KEY TERMS SUMMARY** | | | | | **AB\_2024\_06\_26\_12** | | |
| 15.1 | | Academic Board **noted** the report. | | | | | |
| **ANNUAL BUSINESS CYCLE** | | | | | **AB\_2024\_06\_26\_13** | | |
| 16.1 | | The forward schedule of business was **noted**. | | | | | |
| **ANY URGENT BUSINESS** | | | | | |  | |
| 17.1 | | The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) informed members that work was being undertaken to enhance UK Visas and Immigration compliance which may necessitate Academic Board action over the summer.  Academic Board **agreed** that Chairs action would be taken, where required, to support business continuity. | | | | | |
| **DATES OF THE NEXT MEETINGS** | | | | | | | |
| 18.1 | | Academic Board: Wednesday 9 October 2024  AAC: Thursday 7 November 2024 | | | | | |