



**Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board
held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday, 1 November 2017
1B27 - Technopark, SE1 6LN**

Present

Shan Wareing (Chair)
Sodiq Akinbade
Ian Albery
Craig Barker
Janet Bohrer
Charles Egbu
Patricia Godwin
Mike Molan
Jenny Owen
Lesley Roberts
Tony Roberts
Warren Turner
Shân Wareing

Apologies

Pat Bailey
Patrick Callaghan
Kirsteen Coupar
Paul Ivey
Gurpreet Jagpal
Janet Jones
Shushma Patel

In attendance

Sally Skillett-Moore
Claire Freer
Joe Kelly
Saranne Weller

1. Welcome and apologies

In the absence of Pat Bailey, Shan Wareing chaired the meeting.

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. The above apologies were noted.

2. Declarations of interest

No member declared a conflict of interest in any item on the agenda.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2017.

4. Matters arising

The Board discussed the matters arising. An update on the action under minute 10 of 7 June 2017 would be provided under AOB.

5. Terms of reference and membership

The Board noted its terms of reference.

The Board approved the proposed changes in membership to include the Director of Centre for Research Informed Teaching, currently Saranne Weller, and noted that Ian Albery had been appointed as the Research Staff representative. Both were welcomed to the Board.

6. Annual work plan

The Board noted the annual work plan.

7. DVC's report

The Chair presented the DVC's report.

- Due to under-recruitment the income for the 2017/18 academic year was forecast to be below target but manageable. The Executive was assessing how best to manage this.
- LSBU had been selected for a subject-level TEF pilot program. While it would result in a higher workload for those involved it would provide LSBU with more time to prepare and strategically was a good opportunity.
- The Board agreed the proposed Chair's action to appoint the three Academic Board professorial representatives on the Associate Professor/Professor Panel (stage 2).

8. Quality assurance return to HEFCE

The Board discussed the Quality Assurance Return to HEFCE which would be submitted to the Board of Governors to provide assurances that LSBU was meeting its requirements. The annual meeting with HEFCE had gone well and the extensive body of supporting evidence put forward by LSBU had been well received.

The Board confirmed that the appropriate internal quality assurance processes had been completed and that standards were appropriate. Accordingly, the Board confirmed that the Board of Governors could approve the quality assurance statement to HEFCE.

A DfE consultation on the new regulator, the Office for Students, and proposed new regulatory framework was now open for comment. The new framework would incorporate some of the existing Annual Provider Review processes but assessment would be based on student outcomes. A task and finish group, consisting of academic, legal and governance representatives,

had been formed to work through the consultation and draft LSBU's response. The group would also consider the implications for LSBU of implementation of the new framework commencing April 2018.

9. **Annual Academic Board report**

The Board discussed the Annual Academic Board Report and approved its submission to the Board of Governors.

10. **Academic portfolio and environment**

The Board discussed the new approach taken to course approval and validation in 2016/17. It was acknowledged that the process included improved elements on the previous process but had still been challenging in its first year. Further work was required to ensure that the process was fully effective to ensure that programme development maintained or increased growth and recruitment. The capacity to adapt to changes in the market was limited by the complexity of the course offer, and the ability to improve existing provision was compromised by the scale of new developments. It was noted that as part of the validation of new provisions it was important to consider what was already offered, and what would be replaced, to minimise duplication.

The Board identified areas where improvements could be made; these included:

- Extending the planning cycle from 1 year to a 3-year cycle;
- Bringing forward the timing of the review and initial approval process to before the Easter break;
- Providing more detail in feedback to Schools on the rationale regarding which courses were included or excluded;
- Separating out validations and revalidations;

The Chair provided an update on the work done to date to better define and support the Course Director role. It was noted that the role varied by school and by course and the level of support offered to the role also varied. Feedback from the NSS survey had also indicated that some Course Directors felt that they did not have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities.

The Board discussed possible steps that could be taken to better support the role including possible leadership training, the inclusion of Course Director forums at the annual Staff Conference, and the development of additional materials/handbooks/manuals. It was noted that it would be important to ensure Deans, Heads of Division, and Course Directors were all included in future discussions.

The Board discussed assessment innovation and the need to review and develop alternative forms of assessment. It was noted that traditional exams cost LSBU in excess of £350,000 per year – based on the costs of invigilators, printing costs, room requirements etc. An assessment audit was planned for

the 2017/18 academic year to start the review process. There was also a need to critically assess Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies to clearly understand the assessment requirements. It was noted that LSBU could take an active role and add value to discussions with PSRBs to ensure that assessment requirements were appropriate and inclusive.

11. Taught Postgraduate courses funding

The Board discussed the issues around student funding in relation to full time masters courses that extended beyond 12 months in duration. The Student Loans Company categorised any course between 12 months and 24 months as two year course and therefore loan funding was allocated across two years. LSBU was unusual in offering 13 month masters; and at other institutions it appeared that 12 month masters were more common for 180 credit courses. It was noted that for taught masters that exceeded 180 credits, courses may need to be longer than 12 months. It was also very difficult to run 12 month masters courses starting in January so these would be reviewed separately.

It was agreed that from the start of the 2018/19 academic year postgraduate taught courses of 180 credits starting in September would be 12 months in duration.

12. Student academic outcomes

The Chair provided an update on the work underway to address LSBU's attainment gap. It was noted that although the results were not out of line with the sector this was a very important area for LSBU to actively address.

13. National Student Survey: analysis and planning

The results of the 2017 NSS survey had been shared with the Schools and all relevant PSGs and work was now underway to prepare for the 2018 survey. Deans would promote the survey with all final year students and stress the value of the feedback which would be acted on to improve the student experience. Asking second year students to complete a version of the survey provided a useful tool to inform students about the survey and how it worked.

The Board discussed the importance of the student voice. It was noted that the next scheduled away day for the Directors of Education and Student Experience would focus on this topic and a report would be brought back to the Academic Board.

14. Academic Framework

The Board discussed the recommendations put forward regarding the role of the Link Tutor. The Board agreed the Link Tutor role description needed to be updated to reflect the range of TNE relationships and assure that standards of LSBU awards were maintained. Questions were raised regarding the scope of the recommendations and if they would apply to all TNE relationships or just those of a similar scale to the British University in Egypt relationship.

The Board agreed that because Academic Board did not have the authority to approve resourcing, for the purposes of the Academic Board paper, the commitment to 'workload allowances' would be replaced with the phrase 'appropriately resourced'. The Board raised concerns regarding the partnership and the potential risk to LSBU if the Link Tutor provisions being put forward were insufficient to resource the relationship with BUE given the size of the partner institution.

15. Sub-committee reports

The Board noted the Sub-committee reports.

16. Institutional Examiner report - update

The Board noted the Institutional Examiner report update. It was noted that collaborative provisions would be addressed next year.

17. Academic KPIs

The Board noted the Academic KPIs.

18. Part-time student issues report

The Board noted the issues report which included feedback on progress made.

19. Any other business

Minute 10 from 7 June 2017: Review the provision of technical support in supporting research developments.

The Deputy Director of Technical Services provided an update. Technical Services required more information to identify PhD students and their requirements. Schools had also been requested to provide feedback on their requirements at a high level but there had been limited response. It was noted that individual requirements were included on the RES1 form but were not always reviewed to confirm if requests were appropriate and achievable. The RES1 forms would be uploaded to Haplo and provided to Technical Services in future. The Board requested that the high level requirements be reviewed and agreed and an update be provided at the next Academic Board meeting.

**Date of next meeting
2.00 pm, on Wednesday, 21 February 2018**

Confirmed as a true record

..... (Chair)