

**Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board
held at 3.00 pm on Thursday, 3 September 2020
MS Teams**

Present

Pat Bailey (Chair)
Craig Barker (Vice Chair)
Alessio Corso
Carrie Rutherford
Deborah Johnston
Gary Francis
Geoff Cox
George Ofori
Harriet Tollerson
Helen Young
Jane Wills
Jenny Owen
Kate Ellis
Marc Griffith
Md Fazle Rabbi
Nadia Gaoua
Nicki Martin
Patrick Callaghan
Paul Ivey
Sarah Moore-Williams
Steve Faulkner
Steve Hunter

Apologies

Asa Hilton Barber
Gilberto Buzzi
Ian Albery
Janet Jones
Luke Murray
Rosie Holden
Tony Roberts
Warren Turner

In attendance

Charles Hamilton (*for items 1-3*)
Dominique Phipp (Secretary)
John Cole
Richard Duke (*for item 4*)

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed the 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. **Revised Policy for Lecture Capture**

The Board considered the role of staff representatives in consulting colleagues on the policy before its implementation. The Chair explained that staff representatives are not responsible for collecting or sharing feedback from colleagues with the Board, and were nominated to the Board to express their own views, but would be formulating their opinions through informal discussions with colleagues. Where formal staff consultation is necessary, the paper author and sponsor are responsible for this process. The Board noted that the policy has not been shared more widely yet to enable it to consider any pedagogic issues before discussions with staff and Unions begin.

The PVC (Education) outlined the benefits of introducing a policy on lecture capture, which included improved transparency and assurance around use of recordings, an option to opt out of lecture capture, and improved consistency and access to course materials for our students.

The Board discussed why recorded lectures will not be used in performance management processes. It was suggested that their use might ensure a high quality of blended learning is delivered to students. The PVC (Education) explained that managers could use recordings to provide supportive feedback for improvement of teaching quality, but they would not be used as evidence in disciplinary matters or performance management proceedings. The Chair supported this approach, noting that lecture capture is not needed to improve performance assessments as the current evidence available to managers is sufficient to understand any performance issues.

The Board considered the length of time that recorded lectures should be available online for and discussed legal issues related to the copyright of material. The Board noted that, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the majority of staff are already recording their lectures and therefore the context in which this policy is being implemented is very different from previous years. The Board agreed that a lengthy consultation with staff about the policy will not be necessary, as has been done at other universities in the past.

The PVC (Education) explained that there are two separate concerns at play regarding 'in perpetuity' online storage of lectures. Firstly, whether keeping lectures online is pedagogically appropriate, and secondly a disagreement between the university sector and UCU about the legal ownership of lectures. She requested that Board members keep these concerns separate in their minds when considering the policy.

It was noted that the policy only covers scheduled lectures that would normally be delivered in a classroom, not seminars or other kinds of interactions with students. The intent is not to stifle exploration of teaching

methods, but to capture only core sessions and ensure that students do not fear participating in class discussions as a result of lecture capture. It was noted that some staff may not require lecture capture as their course is delivered in another way. For these staff, permission to opt-out of lecture capture will not be required as only scheduled lectures typically delivered in a classroom are covered by the policy. The Board agreed that its scope could be made clearer in the policy.

The Board discussed captioning of recorded lectures. It was agreed that captions will be beneficial to students, particularly foreign-speaking and certain disabled students. The Director of Quality and Enhancement explained that functionality to edit captions automated by the lecture capture system should be possible where needed, or we could pay for professional captioning services.

The Chair commented that nationally the Unions are opposed to lecture capture. Their view will be taken into account in discussions of the policy, particularly to address concerns that staff might have about their intellectual property rights. The Chair explained that, if the Board is happy to proceed with implementation of this policy subject to amendments, he will collaborate with colleagues in HR to engage with the Unions and decide how to consult staff on the policy.

The PVC (Education) commented that the Board would need a very clear rationale as to why it would not implement this policy, as lecture capture is now standard practice at many other universities. She added that approval of the policy is only the first step on a longer journey towards improving the quality and access to our lectures.

The Board considered whether the approval level required for opting out of the policy is appropriate. Whilst staff do not need to opt out of the policy if they do not deliver any scheduled lectures, there may still be practical issues with the number of requests to opt-out. It was also noted, however, that many modules (e.g. labs) do not have scheduled lectures. Where this is the case, the policy would not apply. The Board agreed that a practical and easy opt out process should be possible.

The Chair commented that for almost all courses keeping lectures online in perpetuity will not be a concern, as staff will revise their recorded lectures annually. He proposed that recorded lectures should only be available to students for the length of their course, and perhaps a year or two beyond that for students who defer their studies. The PVC (Education) agreed.

The Board noted that whilst the intellectual property rights of the University for recorded lectures are 'in perpetuity', which lectures are in scope of this ownership would be up to the lecturer to determine, as staff can remove and edit uploaded content. Access to recorded lectures is also password-protected. It was agreed that the tone of the policy should be amended to reflect more clearly that colleagues would be trusted to manage their own course content.

The PVC (Education) voiced that a common concern amongst staff is a lack of trust in the future of the university sector. Some colleagues fear that they could be made redundant if the University delivering their courses through only their pre-recorded lectures. She reassured the Board that lecture capture would never replace real live teaching, and noted that this debate is not about those worries but about the value and quality of lecture capture.

The Board approved of the policy, subject to a review of the changes discussed by the Chair, the PVC (Education) and others as needed. It was supportive of a short period of consultation with staff and the Unions led by the Chair.

Charles Hamilton left the meeting.

4. Review of academic KPIs for 2019/20

Richard Duke, Director of Strategy and Planning, joined the meeting.

The Director of Strategy and Planning introduced the report. He explained that the institutional KPIs presented have been designed to align with the 2020-25 LSBU Group Corporate Strategy and include core measures for the Student Success pillar, broken down by School. The Board noted that data for some 2019/20 metrics is not yet available, for example progression and awarding gap data.

The Board discussed the presentation and selection of the KPIs included.

It was suggested that an international student barometer could be added, as LSBU aims to invest and grow its international markets.

The Chair suggested an undergraduate course completion metric could be included. The Director of Strategy and Planning replied that an estimated 55% of students complete 3-year courses, noting that this figure deems students who complete in four years as non-completions. He added that this data would be difficult to capture, as there is a significant delay between students enrolling and completing.

The Chair proposed instead that a Y2 to Y3 progression figure is included, which would indicate if LSBU is supporting students sufficiently to enable them to progress to their final year of study.

The Board noted that, though a metric is not included to show the rate of students that pass their course assessments first time (i.e. no resits, uninterrupted progression), commentary on this is included on module feedback.

The Board discussed whether to add an average NSS score. It acknowledged that this is a crude measure showing only how students feel but not why they feel that way, and often only those students with strong or specific feedback

complete the NSS Survey. Despite this, some Board members agreed that it can be a useful measure in the long-term to indicate any periodic issues.

The PVC (Education) flagged that currently LSBU is not meeting the targets set in its existing suite of academic KPIs. She questioned if the Board needs more data, or if any members think that it is monitoring the wrong data to inform decisions.

The Chair requested that the Director of Strategy & Planning provide the KPIs for the other three Strategy pillars, as this data will impact upon the academic framework.

It was agreed that the Chair would constitute an Academic Board sub-group to agree the Student Success measures. The Director of Strategy and Planning agreed to provide a report on measures for the other three Strategy pillars as well as on additional measures, such as those in the TEF metrics.

Richard Duke left the meeting.

5. OfS conditions of registration

The Board noted that this item will be brought to the next meeting. The Chair requested that the Board familiarises itself with the conditions, in particular B1-B6, as the Board must demonstrate that LSBU is compliant with them in its annual assurance report to the Board of Governors.

6. Revised Degree Outcomes Statement

The Board noted that the Statement was produced and reviewed at the end of July, and has now been published on LSBU's external website. The Director of Academic Quality Development explained that the Statement outlines how LSBU will use its degree algorithm going forward. He recommended that the Board reviews the algorithm soon to satisfy itself that the rationale and calculation of degree classifications using this algorithm is acceptable.

It was agreed that the Chair, the PVC (Education), and the Director of Academic Quality Development would work together out of committee to set up a Task and Finish Group. The Group's purpose would be to agree how the algorithm should be reviewed in this academic year.

7. Semesters 1 and 2 delivery update

The Board noted the S1 report, which provides assurance to the GARC of the provision for S1.

The Board discussed the S2 report, which outlines the approach for planning course delivery in S2 despite the uncertainty surrounding the development of the coronavirus pandemic. The PVC (Education) asked the Board to approve the proposed approach to decision-making, the release of an announcement

in October explaining our expected course delivery approach, and delegation to the Academic Delivery Group to explore any course, assessment and regulation changes that may be needed.

She explained that if the UK has another local or national lockdown LSBU may need to take difficult decisions to limit the impact on students, for example extending the academic year. Such decisions would be outside the scope of decisions the ADG could take, therefore approval at key stages would be requested from the Quality and Standards Committee and this Board.

The Chair agreed that key decisions about the approach to delivery and timeline of decision-making should be referred to this Board for approval. He noted that the scheduled meetings may be insufficient to respond to such issues, as we cannot control the national timeline for these concerns, and therefore extraordinary meetings may be required.

The Board was supportive of the proposed approach.

8. Set up of Academic Development Working Group

The Board noted the proposal to set up a formal Academic Development Working group. The purpose of this group would be to review staff concerns about their working environment, the support offered to colleagues, and what more could be offered to support staff to invest in their learning and development. For example, such support could include teaching recognition, PG certification, and short courses. It was noted that a similar group had existed in the past and had worked well.

The Board noted that the Academic Development Working group would differ from the Academic Delivery Group, which is responding to issues arising due to COVID-19.

9. Return to face-to-face research proposal

The Board noted that this proposal was reviewed and approved, subject to minor amendments, by the Executive on 26 August.

The Dean of the School of Applied Sciences proposed that the University Ethics Panel (UEP) is authorised to treat each research project separately, and have discretion to approve or not approve projects requiring close contact subject to staff and participants using NHS-levels of protective equipment. If the UEP had the discretion to approve close contact projects by exception, it could do so irrespective of the research activity level agreed by the University. The Dean of the School of Applied Sciences clarified that it is not proposed that all projects would have face-to-face contact irrespective of social distancing.

The Board discussed the proposal. It was noted that the proposed approach would apply to research undertaken outside LSBU, for instance in non-LSBU laboratories.

The Board questioned who would decide which research activity level is in operation. The Dean of the School of Applied Sciences replied that the Executive, following national guidelines, would align the research activity level with the national risk level.

The Board agreed that it did not want to take a more conservative approach than other universities. It approved of the proposal.

10. Any other business

The Chair suggested that all reports brought to this Board could be available to share with staff going forward, unless they are marked 'confidential' by exception.

The Chair advised that the full report pack for meetings should not be circulated around the University, but Board members who want to raise awareness with colleagues of particular papers or issues to collect their thoughts before attending each meeting could do so. The Board was supportive of this approach.

It was agreed that paper authors would mark their papers with an "internal" level of confidentiality as standard practice going forward. If a report is more sensitive and the author would prefer it not to be shared with colleagues, they should mark their paper with a "confidential" or "confidential – members only" rating.

**Date of next meeting
3.00 pm, on Wednesday, 28 October 2020**

Confirmed as a true record

..... (Chair)