

Meeting of the Academic Board

2.00 pm on Wednesday, 17 June 2020
via MS Teams

Agenda

<i>No.</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Pages</i>	<i>Presenter</i>
12.	Reports from sub-committees	45 - 48	PB

Date of next meeting

2.00 pm on Wednesday, 28 October 2020

Members: Pat Bailey (Chair), Ian Albery, Asa Hilton Barber, Craig Barker, Gilberto Buzzi, Alessio Corso, Geoff Cox, Kate Ellis, Steve Faulkner, Gary Francis, Nadia Gaoua, Marc Griffith, Sajjad Hossain, Steve Hunter, Paul Ivey, Deborah Johnston, Janet Jones, Nelly Kibirige, Nicki Martin, Sarah Moore-Williams, Luke Murray, George Ofori, Jenny Owen, Carrie Rutherford, Warren Turner, Helen Young and Shushma Patel

Apologies: Patrick Callaghan and Tony Roberts

In attendance: Dominique Phipp, John Cole and Sally Skillett-Moore

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	CONFIDENTIAL
Paper title:	Sub-committee reports
Board/Committee:	Academic Board
Date of meeting:	17 June 2020
Author(s):	Dominique Phipp, Secretary to the Sub-Committees
Sponsor(s):	Pat Bailey, Provost
Purpose:	For Information
Recommendation:	The Academic Board is requested to note the reports.

Executive Summary

Quality and Standards Committee (Emergency Meeting), 10 June 2020

The committee held an additional meeting to discuss the effect of COVID-19 on quality and standards, including a proposal for enhanced hybrid delivery of courses in Semester 1 of 2020/21, but a report could not be brought on the matter.

An update on apprenticeship achievement rates was given. It was noted that Ofsted and the ESFA are concerned as rates are very low nationally. We hope to achieve 50% completion rates overall at LSBU. The committee discussed the barriers to achieving greater completion rates, improvements to our predictors, and how we plan to raise our apprenticeship standards across the University.

The committee agreed that reporting on matters relating to apprenticeships is insufficient. A systemic flow of information and a clear timeline for reporting is needed. Over the summer work will be undertaken with the Apprenticeship Group to build in the QSC's reporting expectations and consider if adequate resourcing is in place in this area.

The HSC Director of Education and Student Experience (DESE) provided an update on a review of partnerships in her School.

The Interim Head of the National Bakery School brought a proposal to pilot a three term-based course structure for 2020/21. The pilot was approved by the Committee and a report will be brought to the next meeting following consultation with staff and students.

The committee reviewed changes to two student policies. It agreed that greater oversight of changes to policies is necessary, possibly through a compulsory online training module or annual update.

- The revised Student Disciplinary policy was approved.
- The revised Student Interruption and Withdrawal policy was not approved. It was felt that the policy did not correctly reflect management of apprenticeships. The policy will be recirculated for approval out of committee once inaccuracies are rectified.

Quality and Standards Committee, 3 June 2020

The committee discussed the revised academic regulations, COVID-19 addendum and changes to assessment and exam procedures.

- Overall the amendments were welcomed, but the committee was concerned that inexact wording in some areas may cause conflicts with course guides and existing policies on compensated progression.
- It was proposed that a sub-group of the Committee is set up to carry out a holistic review of the regulations to avoid conflicts between Schools' implementation. It was requested that the group includes a student and PGR representative.
- The committee approved the change to the assessment and exam procedure and the COVID-19 addendum, subject to the inclusion of an additional sentence for clarification.

The committee agreed that an Emergency QSC meeting is needed to scrutinise issues arising due to COVID-19 that are affecting quality and standards of LSBUs course delivery. Work to resolve these issues is ongoing in Academic Delivery Groups.

An update on academic planning and the validations process was given. The committee noted that the validations process has been made available online and is under constant review.

The committee received an update on the status of apprenticeships. It noted that, according to a survey with 650 student responses, 70% of apprenticeship students have been furloughed and the remainder have had pay cuts, their hours reduced, or been made redundant.

The committee also received updates on:

- Transnational collaborations. The committee noted that Level 6 BUE exam regulations require exams to be onsite and will take place in August.
- UK collaborations, which emphasised that we should not enter formal partnerships without exploring alternative collaborative arrangements, ensuring the returns are worthwhile and that the partnership is properly resources.
- Status of course monitoring from Schools.

- Updated schedule for School Quality Standards and Assurance Reviews.
- External Examiners Approval Panel inductions.
- Minutes from the Schools' Academic Standards Committees.

Research Committee, 20 May 2020

The committee noted that the final consultation on the LSBU Research Strategy will be held during the Staff Conference in July.

The committee received an update on the research landscape. It was noted that:

- Funders are generally being flexible around deadlines due to COVID-19, but they do not plan to offer cost extensions. The committee discussed how the impact of this decision may be mitigated. There is some scope to repurpose funding for COVID-19 related projects.
- Teams on MS Teams have been set up to provide updates on external funding matters affected by the spread of COVID-19, and to identify projects where there might be opportunity for collaboration.

An update was given on research grants and awards which noted that:

- Research Income is down on target as The Welding Institute is underperforming. This is partially mitigated by the Schools, which are outperforming against their budgets.
- 39 (2018/19: 34) new grant awards have been won at a value of approximately £2.4m (2018/19: £3.4m);

The impact of COVID-19 on PGR students was discussed. Some students are facing difficulties due to caring responsibilities or sickness, and a small number with specific are struggling with noise disturbance during Viva webinars. It was noted that the impact of caring responsibilities appears to be particularly gendered, with the burden falling primarily on women. The committee will receive updates on this matter as a standing item at future meetings.

The committee received a presentation on the REF preparations. It was agreed that a draft strategy focusing particularly on inclusion of ethnic minorities should be developed.

The committee noted that Open Access compliance remains high despite the impact of COVID-19, with a rate of 82% compliance since mid-March, and compliance with research integrity standards also remains high.

Additionally, a presentation was provided on the KEF concordat which summarised its purpose, audience and timeline.

Quality and Standards Committee (Emergency Meeting), 28 April 2020

The purpose of this meeting was to approve revisions to the academic regulations and procedures, required because of the impact of COVID-19 on students and the University.

The committee discussed in detail the proposed addendum to the academic regulations. The overall principle of the addendum is that students undertaking

assessments should suffer no detriment due to the pandemic. The committee agreed that the calculation for the minimum benchmark was appropriate for undergraduate, postgraduate and apprenticeship courses, subject to a minor amendment on the wording. It was noted that there is flexibility in applying the guidelines. There is opportunity to review again as the situation progresses. The committee approved the addendum subject to a minor amendment.

The committee discussed the proposed changes to assessments, examinations, and rules around compensation. It was noted that the proposed revisions had the potential to slightly advantage first year courses. The committee approved the proposals subject to an amendment relating to first year courses.

The committee discussed the proposal to amend the remit of the Academic Planning Panel, which exists to scrutinise all proposed new courses prior to validation. The proposed changes were approved, subject to some refinements before re-launching the panel for the new academic year.

The committee discussed the proposed credit requirements for major/minor combined degrees. It approved the proposed requirements.

Out of committee, a temporary validation approach had been approved by the Chair. The temporary approach allowed both validations and revalidations to continue during lockdown. Student input is being sought and the revised approach will be circulated to relevant stakeholders. The committee was supportive of the temporary validation approach.