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LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

MEETING OF ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 21st October 2020

PRESENT: Dr P Haughan (in the Chair), Professor D Bolt, Associate Professor S Kelly, Mr I McKenna, Ms S Wills (representing Mr H Pearce), Associate Professor C Wakefield, Dr C Walsh

By Invitation: Dr J Bennett, Ms S Anton (item 4)

Apologies: Associate Professor P Bamber, Ms J Egerton, Ms C Harvey

Secretariat: Mr D Dykins

1. Terms of Reference

Members had received the Terms of Reference for the newly constituted committee and the Chair emphasized the remit reminding members that they are not representing their Schools as such, but rather looking closely at strategic matters. Members introduced themselves.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

Members had received the minutes of the Joint Meeting of Learning & Teaching and Academic Committees held on 10th June 2020. These were **APPROVED** as an accurate record.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Course Approval and Review

i) Course Approvals (Validations and Revalidations)

Members had received approvals documentation for: BA Early Childhood & Master of Education; Doctor of Education (EdD), Doctor of Social Work (DSW) and Doctor of Health & Social Care (DHS); and PG Cert Education Leadership & Management. As this was an online for PG Cert it was agreed that care needs to be taken regarding the award title, as this was missing from documentation. Dr Walsh noted that she is not currently automatically alerted when new programmes are approved which may require new regulations.

Post-meeting note: PG Cert Education Leadership & Management is a revalidation of all the provision, not just the approval of the online PG Cert - this provision presented is both in PG Cert and 60C Block form.

Action: Mr Dykins to include Registrar in future notifications

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Members **RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL** all the above validated courses.

ii) New Course Proposals

Members had received course proposals for the following courses:

- MEng/BEng in Software Engineering
- Major in Conservation Biology
- MA by Research - English Literature
- PGCert Data Science (online)
- PGCert Sport Management (online)

She also noted that the MA by Research does not fully align with current PGT regulations which may cause issues in future. She agreed to discuss this further with colleagues. There was also concern that it was unclear when the MA by Research in History had been approved. Dr Bolt queried whether these courses align with the work of University Research Centres.

Action: Mr Dykins to seek clarity from Mr Rooney regarding the Major in Conservation Biology and how this aligns with other provision

She also noted that the MA by Research does not fully align with current PGT regulations which may cause issues in future. She agreed to discuss this further with colleagues. There was also concern that an MA by Research in History was running but had not been approved. Dr Bolt queried whether these courses align with the work of University Research Centres.

Post-meeting note: Mr Dykins ascertained that the MA by Research was an overarching framework that allowed for different disciplines to use the same framework and did not need validating for individual subjects.

Action: Dr Walsh to discuss the MA by Research further with colleagues regarding regulations; and to see whether courses currently running align with the work of Research Centres within the University

It was noted that MEng/BEng in Software Engineering document states general entry requirements but some (not all) similar programmes in the subject area require an A level Maths or Science for entry.

Action: Mr Dykins to seek clarity from the Department on entry requirements for the MEng/BEng

It was noted that start dates for the PGCert courses needed clarification.

Members **RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL** all the above proposed courses.

iii) Suspensions

Members had received the list of current suspensions. Dr Wakefield noted that there are two courses at Carmel College that are both suspended. These are: Sport and Exercise Science (Foundation Year); and Physical Education and Sport Science (BSc - evening provision).

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iv) Curriculum Overviews

Members had received the Curriculum overviews for information, which gave an overview of proposed provision for 2021-22. The Director of Enrolment had noted some minor changes which would be rectified outside the meeting.

v) BSC Accreditation

It was noted that Chair's action had been taken to approve compliance with the requirements of BSC.

vi) Quality Handbooks

Members had received three handbooks: CPD Credit-Bearing Handbook; CPD Non-Credit-Bearing Handbook; and Seeking and Maintaining Professional Accreditations.

Members **RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL** to Senate all three handbooks.

5. Learning, Teaching and Assessment

i) Director of Learning and Teaching: Update on Communities of Practice Update, PG Cert LTHE and Advance HE and Learning and Teaching Day

Members had received the update on Communities of Practice and the latest statistics for membership to Advance HE. Dr Bennett explained that much of the business of the Communities was evolving in the online environment. He noted that the PG Cert had now been revised to a two-year format to help address drop-out rates and the format had been agreed with Advance HE. This is already proving successful with 17 staff currently on the course. Figures for Advance HE fellowship have improved with 73% of staff now having fellowship. 92% of staff now have a formal teaching qualification. Dr Kelly noted that staff are incentivised to apply for senior fellowship with tie-ins to promotion opportunities.

Action: Dr Bennett and Ms Anton to raise the profile of Advance HE over the coming week via the Learning and Teaching Newsletter and other platforms.

Action: Dr Bennett and Ms Anton to raise the profile of workshops for senior fellowship over the coming weeks through the L & T newsletter

ii) Identification of staff training and development need

No specific needs were highlighted as a great deal of development has been planned and delivered since the start of the pandemic and is ongoing, relating mainly to online delivery and deep learning.

iii) Equality & Diversity Annual Report

Members had received the report. Dr Walsh noted that this contains student and staff data and includes the new Equality & Diversity objectives. These reflect ambitions around the University's Access and Participation Plan (APP) and other areas that have come to the attention of the Committee. Dr Walsh noted that all systems are in place to monitor the various aspects highlighted in the report and that the Committee now has a meaningful road map. Work remains to be done on both Staff and Student ambitions.

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6. The Student Journey

(i) Access and Participation Plan

Dr Haughan noted that this is key document for the University and has already been approved by the OfS. Dr Walsh explained that the document gave an evaluation of where the University currently is in relation to the Plan following the OfS introduction of a 5-year plan. She noted that the original one-year plan which preceded this was also still in operation. The aims of the Plan are tied into E&D objectives and in order to ensure that these objectives are met, APP Implementation Groups (APPIGs) were formed earlier in the year. Due to the pandemic, the OfS had allowed a diversion of funds to support the wider needs of students but in November they will be starting once again to monitor the Plan and should be releasing more information over the coming weeks.

Dr Walsh has been analysing data closely to know where to target activities and as much progress has been made as possible under the circumstances. She noted that there was not an attainment gap but an award gap. The Chair said that she was grateful for all the hard work that was going into the plan. Dr Walsh said she was always looking for more projects and support to ensure all elements of the Plan are realised. She noted that there would be consultation with students and that the Students' Union are involved in relation to curriculum development. Professor Bolt suggested reviewing matters of access within the curriculum itself and Ms Wills suggested having guest speakers from minority groups to further enhance the University's profile. Dr Bennett noted that the pandemic had created platforms which enabled greater access to speakers from more diverse backgrounds. Dr Kelly said that diversification is already happening in some areas of the curriculum but it was felt that mechanism for Heads of School to address such curriculum matters should be put together, including in co-design events. Dr Wakefield suggested capturing the curriculum element in annual review and enhancement exercises.

Action: Dr Bennett to progress ideas around curriculum development in relation to the APP and matters of diversification.

(ii) Student Protection Plan (SPP)

Members had received the plan for 2019-20 which would be updated for 2020-21. The Chair explained that the SPP serves to address issues around continuity for students. It was noted that some courses present particular continuity challenges, such as the Foundation Year and those delivered through the Network of Hope. Dr Haughan said these would need to be addressed in the SPP.

Action: Dr Haughan to update the SPP for 2020-21

(iii) Registration and Retention Data: Student Achievement and Final Degree Results

Members had received for information a detailed analysis of the final degree classifications, presented with comparison against 2018/9 and 2019/20. The data was presented in different ways, including whole University; by School and Subjects; by Campus, School and Subjects; and PGT. Dr Walsh said that the annual report looked at achievement, and noted that the University is required to publish a degree outcome statement on the web. She highlighted that the number of students achieving a 1st classification had increased steadily over recent years. However, previously the University's ratio of good degrees had been below sector norms, and the creation of a standardised mark scheme and changes to borderline regulations mean that increases to the University norm are to be expected.

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Dr Walsh advised that the Emergency Regulations which covered progression without full credits and included a no detriment approach meant that the data is now in line with the sector, though there is a need to maintain this and ensure that the award gap does not re-emerge. It was noted that the number of Foundation Year students had increased but were not always progressing and Mr McKenna said that care was needed in resourcing and staffing these courses with appropriately qualified and motivated staff.

The Registrar noted that guidance on good practice in degree algorithms had been published by QAA and the University would need to take careful note of these.

Dr Walsh advised that the Emergency Regulations which covered progression without full credits and included a no detriment approach, meant that the data is now in line with the sector, though there is a need to maintain this and ensure that the award gap does not re-emerge. It was noted that the number of Foundation Year students had increased but that progression was less than in other cohorts and Mr McKenna said that care was needed in staffing these courses with appropriately qualified and motivated staff.

Action: The Chair to discuss future staffing of the Foundation year with the DVC.

Action: Dr Walsh to make a recommendation to the University in respect of the current dual algorithm and the good practice guidance issued by UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment in July 2020.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

(i) NSS 2020: Members to review the report and analysis

Members had received the report and analysis. The Chair noted that Heads of Schools are addressing their areas and were required to have action plans for their subjects. She highlighted Organisation and Management as a recurring issue for most disciplines but it is hoped that the new Schools structure would help to improve scores in this criterion. Certain subjects had results which were of concern.

NSS 2021 will start as planned in the current academic year, though as universities have not yet received the survey questions it is unclear whether a focus on online delivery will be included.

(ii) Online Learning Experience Survey

Members had received the initial analysis from the survey. Dr Bennett said it had been a useful exercise, though feedback was limited due to the number of respondents. The areas of main concern are student engagement and mental health, plus issues around students' reticence in use of cameras to be present in sessions.

8. Registrar

(i) Registrar's Business

Members had received the Registrars summary. She noted that the emergency regulations had served all stakeholders well, using a no detriment policy based on the last available point of achievement. She has updated these regulations to clarify that students whose final outcome is impacted by more than one case of academic misconduct during their final level of study will be excluded from the application of the no detriment policy.

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Members **RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL** to Senate the change to the regulations.

(ii) Assessment Calendar

Members had received the calendar for information. Dr Walsh will take this forward with Assessment Coordinators

Members **RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL** to Senate the Assessment Calendar.

(iii) Supplement to the Emergency Academic Regulations

Dr Walsh said that she wanted to clarify how the University would transition back to standard regulations once the emergency regulations are withdrawn. There was no evidence that students in Year 2 were disadvantaged nor that the use of 90-credits for judgements has been unfair. She advised that students who were on assessment-only in May would remain under emergency regulations to ensure parity and MA students registered in 2019/10 will fall under emergency regs.

Members **RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL** to Senate the Supplement to the Emergency Academic Regulations.

(iv) Minutes of the ROG meeting held on 6th May 2020

The minutes were received for information. The Chair noted that RAG and ROG Committees will be reviewed in due course.

(v) External Examiner Nominations

Members had received for consideration the following new nominations and extension of tenure/reallocation of duties:

Subject	Name	Nature of Request
UG History programmes (Levels, C, I and H) & MA History programme	Dr Roisín Higgins	Reallocation of Duties
BA Music (Single Hons & Major) and BA Popular Music	Dr Rob Wilsmore	Reallocation of Duties
BA SH Theology & Religious Studies (Religious Studies Component) BA Major Religious Studies MA Theology & Philosophy of Religion	*Professor Melissa Raphael	Reallocation of Duties

**Approved via Chair's Action between meetings*

Members **RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL** all the above amendments to Examiner appointments.

vii) Amendments to Entry for SCITT courses:

It was noted that Chair's action had been taken to approve the application of PGCE rather than generic PGT entry requirements for SCITT courses.

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9. School Boards including Network of Hope

Members received the summary of items for note from School Boards. The Chair said that she and the Registrar were reviewing the role of the Faculty Senior Academic Advisor so that it aligns with the new Schools Structure. Learning and development needs from the School of Education were noted. The virtual graduation for PGCE students will take place next week. All other graduations will be delayed until July 2021.

Action: Dr Bennett to meet with School of Education to discuss Learning and Development needs.

10. Library Steering Group

Members received for information the minutes of 7th October 2020.

11. Any Other Business

Members were asked to raise any Covid-related Matters not already covered by the agenda; none were raised.