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LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

MEETING OF ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th December 2022

PRESENT: Dr P Haughan (in the Chair), Professor D Bolt, Dr W Bignold, Ms J Egerton, Professor P McGrail, Ms S Murray, Mr N Thorley, Dr K Wagner, Professor C Wakefield, Dr C Walsh

Secretariat: Mr D Dykins

Apologies: Mr I McKenna, Professor S Kelly

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

Members had received the minutes of the Academic Committee held on 19th October 2022. These were **APPROVED** as an accurate record.

2. Matters Arising

- (i) Attendance Monitoring System: Members had received Mr Beecroft's update. The feedback so far has been positive and Mr Thorley said that when there were issues with the QR code, alternative measures to get around these were working. There were some concerns that the QR code is being uploaded to WhatsApp groups for absent students to scan so they appear as though they have attended.
- (ii) Review of ARE Reports: Members had received a summary of the ARE Reports and noted that a great deal of good practice has been highlighted, with common threads between many Schools and Departments. It was agreed that the University needs to consider a repository facility so that evidence such as this is captured for reference, particularly where evidence for OfS submissions is required. It was noted that Subject areas are working more proactively to support students who do not submit assessments. Ms Murray confirmed that there were items in the document that could be used in the TEF.

Action: Dykins to include the summary on the agenda for the next ALT meeting.

- (iii) School/Department External Examiner Reports and Responses: Members had received the Science report and response for information.
- (iv) TEF: Ms Murray reported that the Group had reviewed all the metrics and that with the assistance of Dr Walsh and Ms McGarry, they had identified that there were areas of strength which could tip some elements towards a Gold award, with at least a Silver in most categories. This was particularly true with good practice in areas concerning feedback and the Student Voice. Continuation and completion were satisfactory and employability matters are now more classroom focussed. It was noted that the time lag for the Graduate Outcomes survey is problematic; it is also an unwieldy document for a student to complete which may be putting off students engaging with the survey. Combined Honours courses are a significant success story and should help with the submission.

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The current draft document has had wide ranging input and consequently has expanded considerably. Some HEIs have paid an external company to write their TEF but the University did not think this was appropriate for its submission. Dr Walsh agreed to look at ways of making the document more succinct as a priority; once this is done, the final draft will be circulated soon. However, any input from staff will be valued. Mr Thorley confirmed the Students' Union is working on the student section of the submission.

Members noted that there would be an Extraordinary Meeting of Senate on 18th January 2023 to discuss the document, before the final version is ratified by Council on 19th January. Results will be notified to the University in July/August 2023 and there will be a window to respond. Final results will be published from September.

- (v) Review of placement issues in Education from Professor McGrail: Professor McGrail said that he had looked into the matter, which was around single parents and the location of the placement provider. Professor Carroll-Meehan is leading a review, though it was noted that currently it affected only one student, and a solution had already been agreed with them.
- (vi) Scheduling of appointment of student representatives. Mr Thorley said that the last term of the academic year will be used this year.
- (vii) Additional Detail on the Student Journey from MCSE: MCSE confirmed that they had discussed the Student Journey in item 5 of their agenda, under Learning, Teaching and Assessment.
- (viii) Timeline for course evaluations: Members had received the evaluations schedule for information.

Members **APPROVED** the schedule.

3. Course Approval and Review

- (i) Course Approvals (Approvals and Reapprovals)

The BAC/BScC Major Sport and Physical Education (Reapproval) was **RECOMMENDED TO SENATE to go forward with the reapproval process**. It had already been considered by USET.

- (ii) New Course Proposals

Members had received the MA Safeguarding proposal. The Chair explained that this will be redrafted with two versions, one for Children and the other for Adults, and there would be PLD opportunities via PG Certificates, including for University staff. It was recommended that the School of Education be represented at the co-design stage.

Members **RECOMMENDED THAT THE PROPOSAL BE TAKEN FORWARD TO CO-DESIGN**

- (iii) Withdrawals/Suspensions

Members noted the following courses.

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- PG Cert Sport Management (withdrawn)
- *MSci Data Science (suspend)
- *BSc Data Science (suspend)
- ITE Study Abroad Provision (suspend)

It was noted that ITE Study Abroad is a temporary suspension while work is ongoing with ITE Accreditation for 2024. There was only one application last year but this will be reviewed when the curriculum is finalised.

4. Learning, Teaching and Assessment: Peer Enhancement Policy

Members had received the Peer Enhancement Policy which had been developed at the Learning & Teaching Day in September and had already been recommended for approval by ALT. The Policy allows for a conversational element and broadens activities that might be covered. Training needs and good practice can be recorded which can feed into the staff development programme and uploaded to the institutional repository, once established. It was suggested that reciprocal observation arrangements should be avoided, and members noted that the policy should be different from the standard observation for new staff where a mentor is appointed.

Members **RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL** to Senate the Peer Observation Policy, with the above amendments.

5. The Student Journey

(i) Graduate Outcomes Report

Members had received the Graduate Outcomes Report for information. As previously reported, there are inherent flaws in the process, including the 15-month post-graduation gap, which could be skewing statistics. Mr Thorley said he would consider ways the Students' Union could raise awareness; the use of ambassadors, reminders when references are requested, and course representatives could also be considered.

Action: Mr Dykins to forward suggestions to Ms Mair

(ii) Data Group

Dr Walsh said that she had set up the working group which will focus on continuation. Professor Wakefield and Associate Professor Su are the other members of this group. The Registrar has created a plan which will provide data on continuation rates compared to the University norm. Dr Walsh said that she wanted all Heads during the L&T day in January to create 10 action points that could increase the continuation rate; she will then use these to develop a plan. It was important to acknowledge that issues surrounding continuation from C to I, and I to H, plus combined versus single honours students are different and it will be helpful to be able to cite examples of good practice that can be promoted to all staff.

(iii) Access and Participation Plan (APP)

Members had received the update on progress with the APP. Dr Walsh said that the OfS originally validated the University's plan from 2020-25, though this was then shortened to 2024 and for the last year, 2023-24, the University will have to implement variations. These variations were recently approved and are available on the University website. The OfS have already signalled that there will be a new plan from 2024 to 2028. More details should be

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available in February with the publication of an Equality of Opportunities risk register which will reflect what the OfS are looking for nationally and an expectation that universities will produce their plan for 2024 to 2028 in approximately four weeks.

Dr Walsh highlighted Table 1 which includes attainment rate differentials. The category of black/global majority students compared to white students is problematic, though other commitments made are progressing well. She said that she had reviewed AREs and noted work done in decolonising the curriculum and Open Days, but it is doubtful this will impact quickly enough in this category. The University has small numbers of black/global majority students and it is difficult to ensure that the correct students are being targeted. She is considering sending a general email to all students highlighting initiatives, which could help to target support. The Chair suggested looking at a university in the Cathedrals Group to see how they are targeting such students. Student societies could also be accessed, and role models with ambassadors or academic staff could be used. It was noted that “evaluation” for virtually all initiatives is expected by the OfS.

Action: Ms Murray to work with Dr Cheatle to consider a range of potential initiatives to promote these on the L&T day in May 2023

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

Members had received details of changes to NSS 2023, including the number and type of responses. Dr Haughan noted that Freedom of Expression had been added and the Overall Satisfaction question removed. Social Work students will also have a separate bank of questions. She said that she had established a Working Group who were looking at how to market the survey whilst meeting the expectations in terms of undue influence and good practice issued by IPSOS.

7. Registrar

(i) Registrar’s Business

Members had received a summary which covered a commitment to amending assessment descriptors in 2023/24 to meet OfS regulation B4.2 (English Language Technical Proficiency). The summary also proposed interim arrangements for the Academic Misconduct Policy to be extended to cover PGR students in the research phase while the draft of a bespoke policy is finalised for these students; and the inclusion of reference to a “light touch” approach for first case Level F/C students in the Policy.

Members **RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL** to Senate the proposal to amend assessment descriptors and to extend Academic Misconduct Regulations.

The Registrar also outlined in her paper confirmation of the approach by the University Accreditations Collaborations Officer, requested at the last meeting of Academic Committee, to ensure that accreditations are included on degree certificates, transcripts and the HEAR.

Dr Walsh gave feedback on the external examiner presence at boards and modes of access to scripts. She said that not all examiners were in attendance, either virtually or in person, but as the University was in transitional regulations in 2022/23 this may have contributed to the Examiners assuming a degree of flexibility since the regulations clearly state “In the transitional year the University will adopt a flexible approach to Externality”. For 2022/23 the University has returned to its Universal Assessment Regulations and therefore it is important that External Examiners are reminded of their responsibilities.

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(ii) Undergraduate Awards, Progression and Completion (Revised)

Members had received the revised regulations which have been amended so that Level C AND Single Honours students at all Levels of study, who have successfully completed a block of study, can retain this and do not have to do all 120 credits again. This means that such students only pay half their fees but can be classed (for funding purposes) as full-time students albeit with a part-time mode of study. For some of these students who request a place in residential accommodation, there may need to be a small amendment in policy to allow them to do so. Dr Walsh noted that the use of supplementary examinations has been removed; reassessment will be conducted via the mode of the original assessment.

On reassessment, it was agreed that the University reverts to setting the bar at which a student becomes entitled to complete reassessment at 25. Reassessments will be capped at the level of the individual assessment but there would be no cap on the outcome of the block or level. The University and School/Department Continuation and Assessment Boards will be asked to monitor any disadvantage to students who pass the subject/level overall but have fails in individual assessments. This should help with continuation and could be considered for inclusion in the TEF.

Academic Committee was also asked to consider how these regulations should be amended to indicate whether the award title is *BA/BSc with Honours* or *BA/BSc with Honours (with Placement Year)*. It was agreed that the latter would appear on relevant certificates.

Members **RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL** to Senate the change to UG Awards Prog and Completion, and the change to certificates. This will be presented at the Extraordinary Meeting of Senate in January 2023

(iii) Academic Calendar for 2023-24

Members were presented with alternative models for the first term for the Academic Calendar for 2023-24. The Chair explained that ALT had requested that this be reviewed to ensure that the date for the start the academic year later was practical, and did not disadvantage the University in its withdrawal of students before the December return. Members agreed that the preferred model would be to start with Induction starting on 25th September, and Reflective Weeks 30th October to 3rd November, and 4th to 8th December.

Members **RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL** to Senate the preferred model. This will be presented at the Extraordinary Meeting of Senate in January 2023

(iv) Assessment Calendar 2022/23

Members had received the Assessment Calendar for 2022/23.

Members **RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL** to Senate the Assessment calendar. This will be presented at the Extraordinary Meeting of Senate in January 2023

(v) External Examining

Members had received the revised Handbook 2022-23 (QH12) and revised forms EXN1, EXN2 and External Examiner Report pro forma. The amendments had been made after consideration of the OfS Good Practice Guide in this area. It was noted that a fee for Foundation Year external examiners needs to be agreed; it was felt this could be the same as

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for Single Hons. A supplementary fee for those mentoring could also be considered during the first-year mentoring period.

Members **RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL** to Senate the amendments to QH12 and the forms list above.

(vi) ROG and RAG

Members had received the RAG Minutes of 12th October for information. Dr Walsh noted that the request to review regulations for Undergraduate Awards, Progression and Completion (item 7ii above) had been received after the RAG meeting so had not been reviewed by the Group. In terms of the effectiveness of the two groups (RAG and ROG), Dr Walsh explained that historically there had been issues with communication and previous Groups had felt communication would be better via separate groups. However, the move to Schools/Departments had meant that this was not always the case. Members agreed that the roles of RAG and ROG be reconsidered prior to the start of the 23/24 academic year.

Action: The Chair and the Registrar to meet to reconsider RAG and ROG.

(vii) External Examiner Nominations

Members had received for consideration the following new nominations:

Subject	Name	Institution	Commence	Comments
BSc Sport and Physical Education (plus third year Sport Psychology)	Professor Mark J Campbell	University of Limerick	October 2022	APPROVED
Theology (Major); Religious Studies (Major); Philosophy, Ethics and Religion (Religion components); MA Res (TPRS)	Dr Angus McNeish Slater	University of Wales Trinity St David	November 2022	APPROVED
PG Cert National Award for Special Educational Needs Co coordination	Claire Vuckovic	University of Cumbria	April 2023	APPROVED

Neither Professor Campbell nor Dr Slater have external examiner experience but the School have already arranged for mentoring.

The following requests for existing examiners were also approved:

Subject	Name	Nature of Request
PG Certificate Learning & Teaching in HE	*Professor Lydia Arnold	EXTENSION OF TENURE
MA Youth Work & Community Development	Dr Fiona Cullen	EXTENSION OF TENURE
BA/MA Criminology (and joints)	Dr Melanie Flynn	REALLOCATION OF DUTIES

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BA Hons Early Childhood	Dr Jo McNulty	EXTENSION OF TENURE
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**To note as Chair's Action already taken*

8. School Academic Committee Minutes including Network of Hope

Members had received minutes as follows:

Business School 12th October 2022; CAPA 20th October 2022; Education 16th November 2022; Geography 5th October 2022; Health and Social Science 12th October 2022; Maths, Computer Science and Engineering 23rd November 2022; NoH 2nd November 2022; Psychology 12th October 2022; Social Sciences 23rd November 2022.

Professor McGrail noted that in Humanities the issue of anonymised marking was raised. The Chair said that Psychology were using anonymous marking and requested that Professor Donnelly be approached to write a paper on the subject, and for Mr Thorley to consider student position.

Action: For the next meeting, Mr Dykins to contact Professor Donnelly; Mr Thorley to feedback on the student position

9. Partnership & Accreditations Committee Minutes

Members had received the minutes of the meeting held on 12th October 2022. Dr Bignold highlighted the decrease in partnerships over the last 12 months; this is mainly due to maturation of partners who are applying for TDAP and RDAP and is not a reflection on the University. There had been a significant increase in the number of accreditations and all Schools and Departments have some form of accreditation, except for Law (following the introduction of the SQE exam). Dr Bignold also noted that the Network of Hope currently has only one partner, Holy Cross College. There are no reportable events to OfS and no loss of any accreditations. There has been a significant increase in international study abroad and Maymester courses. It was agreed that all Carmel provision will be withdrawn from Overview.

10. Library Steering Group Minutes

Members had received the minute of the meeting held on 26th October 2022 for information.

11. Dates for Future Meetings: can be found [here](#)