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## Senate

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### Open Minutes

Date of meeting: **Wednesday, 13 December 2017**

Duration of meeting: **2.00pm to 4.15pm**

Location: **G5.05 High Wycombe Campus**

### Attendance

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Rebecca Bunting	Vice-Chancellor's Office	Ex-officio (Chair)
Miriam Moir	Academic Registry	Secretary
Nick Braisby	Vice-Chancellor's Office	Ex-officio
Sean Mackney	Vice-Chancellor's Office	Ex-officio
Sue West	Society & Health	Ex-officio
Ellie Smith	Academic Registry	Ex-officio
Julie Irwin	Learning & Teaching	Ex-officio
Phil Wood	Design, Media & Management	Ex-officio
Frazer Mackenzie	Design, Media & Management	Ex-officio
Paul Morgan	Society & Health	Ex-officio
Karen Buckwell-Nutt	Society & Health	Ex-officio
Florin Ioras	Research	Ex-officio
Colin Martin	Research	Ex-officio
Tim Coole	Design, Media & Management	Elected
Lyndon Buck	Design, Media & Management	Elected
John Hathaway	Design, Media & Management	Elected
Lee Curtis	Society & Health	Elected
Karen Harrison-White	Society & Health	Elected
Ciaran O'Keefe	Society & Health	Elected
Margaret Rioga	Society & Health	Elected
Penny Farrelly	Society & Health	Elected
Ben Parmar	Students' Union	Student Member
Lauren O'Shea	Students' Union	Student Member

## Apologies

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Carlo Lusuardi	Design, Media & Management	Elected
Lois Drawmer	Design, Media & Management	Elected
Nic Fryer	Design, Media & Management	Elected
Gulen Addis	Society & Health	Elected

### Welcome / Apologies for absence

17.146 The Chair welcomed members to the Senate meeting.

17.147 Apologies for absence were received. It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

### Minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2017

17.148 The open minutes of the meeting were approved as an accurate record.

### Status of actions from the 27 September 2017 meeting

17.149 The Action Sheet with status updates was noted.

### Chair's Actions taken since the previous meeting

17.150 Senate endorsed the Chair's Actions taken since the last meeting as noted on the summary sheet provided.

### Minutes of the joint Senate/Council meeting held on 20 November 2017

17.151 Senate was reminded of the importance of the joint meeting, the culmination of the Annual Monitoring process, where Council is given the opportunity to challenge the University over its assurance of academic quality and standards. It was reported that Council members had found the joint meeting very helpful in that it enabled discussions with staff from across the University. The structure of the meeting had followed the same format as in 2016, and while this had worked well, it was suggested that this should be reviewed for 2018 with a view to providing more direction to each table over the items for discussion.

17.152 It was noted that the wording on p4 of the Minutes under Question 2 should be reviewed to ensure the experience was satisfactory for all students. With this amendment agreed, the open minutes of the joint meeting were approved as an accurate record.

### Student Achievement Annual Summary Report 2016-2017 (SEN17.52)

17.153 It was noted that the Student Achievement Report had been presented with the joint Senate/Council meeting papers, but was brought to Senate so that a number of areas could be given more scrutiny. These were highlighted as follows:

- Rates of withdrawal increasing in terms of total student percentage – there was a need to be mindful of this and provide support for students at risk of leaving their programmes.
- Overall progression had marginally increased

- Progression from Level 4 to Level 5 has improved, but has declined from Level 5 to Level 6.
- The overall pass rate has declined and the distribution of good honours is variable across the University.
- While BME achievement has improved, there is still a gap between BME and white students in attainment of good honours.

17.154 It was reported that the issues raised by the Report would underpin the work of the Education Committee and drive a number of initiatives focused on retention, progression and achievement.

17.155 Senate queried whether there was a correlation between entry qualifications and achievement: it was noted that the University reflected the sector benchmark in this regard, and that the tariff had increased slightly. It was also noted that greater consideration needed to be taken of the fact that an increasing number of students entered the University with BTEch qualifications rather than A' Levels.

17.156 Senate noted that some of the University's academic partners had outcomes which were lower than expected, and was reassured that this had been noted by Education Committee and that plans were in place to address the issues.

17.157 It was reported that a review of the Annual Monitoring process would be undertaken following its first year, and that as part of that review the targets set for retention, progression and achievement may need to be revisited.

17.158 Senate expressed its thanks to Academic Registry Officer David Hancock for compiling the report.

### **Recommendations to Senate on the outcome of Annual Monitoring 2016-2017 (SEN17.53)**

17.159 It was noted that the Education Committee Report on the outcome of Annual Monitoring had been presented to the joint Senate/Council meeting, and Senate's attention was drawn to the commendation, good practice and recommendations in it.

17.160 The first round of the Subject Annual Monitoring Meetings (SAMMs) were reported to have been of value in bringing together cognate areas, sharing good practice and recognising challenges. It was noted that the SAMMs had been most effective where there was greatest attendance and engagement of staff: good practice in the form of pre-meetings was noted.

17.161 Senate commented that engagement with the SAMMs had made staff aware of activities beyond their own remit, and had been very positive in that respect. It was also noted that in some cases the timelines for preparation for the SAMMs had been very tight, and that would need to be reviewed for future meetings.

17.162 The question of how to monitor the outcomes and actions from the SAMMs during the year was raised. It was noted that in the Survey of participants, there had been a number of suggestions for meetings to be held throughout the year, and this would be considered as part of the overall review of the process.

17.163 It was noted that development was required generally in the area of action planning, and in the production of SMART action plans.

17.164 Senate noted that there was a need to disseminate the good practice identified at the SAMMs, and it was suggested that there could be some practitioner presentations at staff development events.

17.165 The recommendations to Senate in the Report were agreed to be consistent with outcomes from the SAMMs and from the Student Achievement Report, and it was noted that these would be taken forward and monitored by Education Committee.

17.166 Senate recorded its thanks to Academic Registry for facilitating the Annual Monitoring process.

### **Vice-Chancellor's Report to Senate (SEN17.54)**

17.167 The Vice-Chancellor referred to the paper distributed to Senate and highlighted the following:

- The position of Erasmus+ post Brexit and opportunities for Bucks students
- Opportunities arising from the Government's Industrial Strategy, particularly in terms of skills development initiatives
- Review of finance and funding, and the opportunities arising from accelerated degrees and apprenticeships
- The remit of the Office for Students

17.168 It was noted that opportunities for students to transfer between institutions was high on the Government's agenda, and that while the University had APL processes in place for facilitate this, it needed to promote such opportunities.

17.169 It was suggested that the four grand challenges identified in the Industrial Strategy should be explored to ensure their integration into the curriculum. The emphasis on cyber-security in the Strategy should be exploited, and it was agreed that operationalisation of the computer/software resources to promote this at Bucks should be made a priority and discussed with IT.

**ACTION:** Deputy Vice-Chancellor

### **TEF 3**

17.170 It was reported that the metrics showed a slight improvement in the University's position. Consequently an investigation was being undertaken to explore relevant data in more detail in order to inform a decision over whether to submit to TEF3 by the deadline of 18 January 2018. Senate members were asked to ensure that requests for data were given priority and to assist in the analysis as required.

### **QAA Quality Code consultation (SEN17.55)**

17.171 Senate was informed of the consultation on the review of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education currently underway. The Quality Code provides guidance for the University in its quality policies and processes.

17.172 The purpose of the review is to streamline the Code into a smaller number of "expectations", underpinned by "core" and "supplementary" practices. A number of consultation workshops have been held where feedback from the sector had been gathered, focusing on the need to clarify the language of the "expectations" and the requirements for the "supplementary" practices.

17.173 Senate asked about the effect the review would have on the University, and was assured that Academic Registry would ensure that Bucks was aligned to the expectations.

17.174 The Academic Registrar confirmed that she would respond to the consultation on behalf of the University. The new Code would be published in spring 2018.

## **REF 2021 (SEN17.56)**

- 17.175 Senate was referred to the paper provided for note which gave background to the Research Excellence Framework 2021 exercise. It was noted that this would be a more challenging exercise for Bucks than in 2014 due to the changes made to the expectations, particularly around the requirement to enter all academics with “a significant responsibility for research” rather than allowing a selective submission. There will also be a greater emphasis on impact.
- 17.176 It was stressed that it is important for Bucks to participate in REF2021 as a measure of quality. Plans are in place for a steering group to be led by Professor Florin Ioras, and for Unit of Assessment leads to be appointed.
- 17.177 Senate noted the REF2021 paper.

## **OFSTED Visit and Report (SEN17.57)**

- 17.178 Senate was informed of the OFSTED short inspection visit which took place on 17 and 18 October 2017 in relation to Diploma in Foundation Studies in Art Design & Media. It was confirmed that the judgement was “good” and that safeguarding is effective.
- 17.179 A number of recommendations were made in the report which will feed into an Action Plan, to be monitored by Education Committee.
- 17.180 Senate noted the positive comments in the report, and thanked all involved in preparing for the visit and attending the meetings which had resulted in a good outcome.

## **Foundation Year Programmes**

- 17.181 A verbal update on progress with the Foundation Year programmes was given to Senate, specifically noting:
- 27 students had been recruited to 11 programmes starting in September 2017
  - A total of 38 programmes had now been validated through the Course Amendment Panel for start dates in February and September 2018 at all campuses.
  - The three core modules are delivered by the Learning & Teaching team, and the one course-related module by the various programme teams.
  - FAQs have been circulated
- 17.182 It was noted that accelerated delivery for the February cohorts was not possible because of the funding implications for students. Once the numbers joining in February have been confirmed, changes to delivery for subsequent years for the programmes concerned will be undertaken.
- 17.183 The importance of allocating single points of contact for the Foundation Year students had been recognised, and plans were in place to implement these in terms of a Year Lead and designated Registry member.
- 17.184 Senate expressed its thanks to those involved in launching the Foundation Year programmes.

### **Programme Suspension and/or Closure Policy (SEN17.58)**

- 17.185 The updated Programme Suspension and/or Closure Policy was presented for approval. The policy had been streamlined, enabling informed decisions to be made in a timely manner whilst ensuring that the quality of the student experience remained high.
- 17.186 It was noted that guidance may need to be developed over communicating with students affected by programme closure, and on establishing the costs of delivering programmes.
- 17.187 It was also noted that comments were awaited from UCU.
- 17.188 Senate approved the policy, subject to comments from UCU.

### **Code of Practice for Research Students (Staffordshire University) (SEN17.59)**

- 17.189 The Code of Practice for Research Students under the validation arrangement with Staffordshire University was presented for approval.
- 17.190 Senate approved the Code of Practice for Research Students.

### **Approval of Academic Provision Policy and Procedure (SEN17.60)**

- 17.191 Amendments to the Approval of Academic Provision Policy and Procedure were presented to Senate. It was noted that a number of changes had been made to incorporate Academic Planning Committee's requirements, specifically to allow marketing of programmes after the initial proposal stage and prior to consideration of the full business case.
- 17.192 It was confirmed that APC had reviewed the changes at its meeting on 7 December 2017, and with a minor amendment (now incorporated) recommended the updated document to Senate for approval.
- 17.193 Senate approved the amendments to the Approval of Academic Provision Policy and Procedure.

### **External Examiner Appointments (SEN17.61)**

- 17.194 It was noted that the External Examiner Approval Panel was now chaired by the Academic Registrar. The Panel had raised with Faculties where external examiners had not yet been replaced and had given notice of those external examiners due to complete their terms of office in July 2018.
- 17.195 Senate received the update from the External Examiner Approval Panel and endorsed the decisions made in each instance.

### **Validation: recommendation of awards for approval**

- 17.196 Senate reviewed the outcomes of validation events held since the previous meeting.
- 17.197 It was confirmed that conditions for BSc (Hons) Nursing Degree Apprenticeship and BA (Hons) Business Management – top up (Regent's College) had now been met.
- 17.198 Senate approved programmes for delivery where Conditions had been satisfactorily completed.

### **Report from Education Committee 1 November 2017 (Minutes)**

17.199 The Minutes from the meeting held on 1 November 2017 had been circulated. The business of the committee included:

- A presentation on General Data Protection Regulations compliance
- A report on the TEF Bronze award and future plans
- Retention initiatives – reassessment and examinations at Level 4 to be reviewed by a working party
- The Assessment Workload Toolkit approved for immediate roll-out to curriculum teams

### **Report from Education Committee 9 November 2017 (Minutes)**

17.200 The Minutes from the meeting held on 9 November 2017 had been circulated. The business of the committee included:

- Subject Annual Monitoring Meeting Records and Action Plans 2016-17
- Quality and standards reports 2016-17

### **Report from Research & Enterprise Committee 22 November 2017 (Minutes)**

17.201 The Minutes from the meeting held on 22 November 2017 had been circulated. The business of the committee included:

- Research Degrees Annual Summary Report 2016-17
- Postgraduate Research Student Experience Survey – areas for development noted including suitability of working spaces and computing resources
- Professional Doctorate Degrees – a framework was now available through Staffordshire University.
- University Research Ethics Panel Annual Summary Report 2016-17
- Research and Enterprise bids – positive enterprise income was noted
- REF update
- Academic Professional Apprenticeship – plans to launch in 2018.

### **Report from Academic Planning Committee 19 October 2017 (Minutes)**

17.46 The Minutes from the meeting held on 19 October 2017 had been circulated. The business of the committee included:

- Consideration of the Programme Suspension and/or Closure Policy
- Consideration of amendments to the Approval of Academic Provision Policy and Procedure
- Consideration of a number of initial proposals

17.47 Senate was reminded that the Minutes of this meeting were confidential and business sensitive.

### **Date of next meeting**

17.48 The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 14 March 2018 at 2pm.