

ROYAL HOLLOWAY
University of London

ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board, held on 28 November 2012

- Present: Professor P Layzell (In the Chair) Professor P Leman
Dr S Ansari Dr J McKee
Mr K Aruwa Professor K Normington
Professor B Cowan Professor B O'Keefe
Professor R Deem Professor J Powell
Professor J Fiadeiro Dr R Pym
Professor A Gange Professor D Rebellato
Dr N Gascoigne Professor A Sheppard
Mr D German Professor M Thirlwall (for Professor J Morgan)
Ms L Gibbs Mr J Tuck
Professor D Gilbert Professor J Unerman
Professor P Hogg Dr A Varty
Professor J Johnson Professor J Wann
Professor A Kahane Dr N Widder
Professor R Kemp Professor J Zanker
- With: Dr M Beck (Secretary) (for Ms A Sendall)
- In attendance: Ms J Roberts Director of Strategic Development
Mrs D Salsbury Academic Development Officer
Ms S Waud Trade Union Observer (UNITE)
Ms E Wilkinson Head of College Careers Service
- Apologies: Dr B Baker
Professor C Bradley
Professor J Davison
Dr F Fordham
Mr J Green
Dr A Gupta
Mr S Higman
Ms A Sendall
Ms S Simon
Professor G Ward

1. MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 The Board received the membership list (AB/12/55) and noted the apologies received by the Secretary in advance of the meeting. 12/123
- 1.2 The Board noted that this was the last meeting as Representative member before the current term of office expires for Dr Richard Pym as Head of School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures. The Chair thanked Dr Pym for his contribution on behalf of the Board. 12/124

Dr Jon Hughes was appointed successor to Dr Pym as Head of School and will attend future Academic Board meetings in this capacity.

- 1.3 The Board noted that Professor Anne Sheppard continues as an Elected Member of the Board for a second term, by virtue of her election to the Council and that her term of office runs to 30 September 2015. 12/125
- 1.4 To note that this was the first meeting (in their current capacity) for the following Representative and Student members: 12/126
 Professor José Fiadeiro as Head of Department of Computer Science;
 Professor Jason Morgan as Head of Department of Earth Sciences;
 Dr James McKee as Head of School of Mathematics and Information Security;
 Professor Brian Cowan as Head of Department of Physics;
 Mr Doug German, Mr Kenny Aruwa and Mr Jamie Green from the Students' Union.
- The new members were welcomed and congratulated on their new posts.
- 2. STATUTES AND STANDING ORDERS**
- The Board received the Statutes and Standing Orders of the Board (AB/12/56). 12/127
- 3. MINUTES**
- The Minutes of the last meeting held on **Wednesday, 30 May 2012** (M 12/053 - M 12/122) were confirmed as an accurate record. 12/128
- 4. MATTERS ARISING**
- 4.1 Centre for Criminology and Sociology
- Arising from Min 12/075, the Board noted that the Centre for Criminology and Sociology will not be changing its name to the Centre for Criminology and Social Studies as originally intended. This was approved by the Dean (Management and Economics). 12/129
- 4.2 Conduct of the Research Degrees Viva
- Arising from Min 12/099, the Board noted that guidelines on the audio recording of vivas and the appointment of independent chairs have been published and circulated to departments. The new process came into effect for students whose intention to submit was received after 1 November 2012. 12/130
- 4.3 Review of the Membership of Academic Board
- The Board noted that there had not been agreement with the proposal to include the Associate Deans as ex-officio members of Academic Board because this raised questions about the Statutes, so the decision has been deferred. There will be a formal review of governance effectiveness which will include the statutes and standing orders of key governance committees. 12/131
- 5. ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE CHAIR**
- 5.1 The Board noted that the Principal, on behalf of the Academic Board, approved some minor changes to the *Regulations on Assessment Offences* for 2012-13 (AB/12/57). 12/132
- 5.2 The Board noted that the Principal, on behalf of the Academic Board, approved the name of the new School of Mathematics and Information Security effective 31 August 2012. 12/133
- 6. UNSTARRING OF ITEMS**
- There was no unstarring of items. 12/134

7. FORMAL REPORTS

7.1 Principal's Report

The Board received a written report from the Principal (AB/12/58). 12/135

The UK Border Agency recently visited the College and had recommended that the College continues to have Highly Trusted Status. The College must remain vigilant in ensuring compliance with the UK Border Agency requirements. 12/136

The Principal reported that although there had been a good response to the Dean of Science vacancy, no appointment had been made. The recruitment process had been suspended indefinitely following discussion with the appointed recruitment agency and an announcement on future arrangements would be made in due course. 12/137

Following the recent departure of a number of other institutions from the 1994 Group the Group is in the process of repositioning itself and would be meeting later this month to refocus and consider their relaunch. The Principal considered that it was important for smaller, research intensive institutions to be represented nationally as a group. 12/138

A query was raised about the fact that the block grant awarded to the College from the Research Councils for open access 'article processing charges', would not cover open access publishing costs. The Vice-Principal (Research and Enterprise) explained that the block grant should be regarded as money for publications that could not obtain funding through other channels. The Vice-Principal (Education) added that there are many journals that will publish articles without charge. 12/139

7.2 Reports from the Deputy Principal and the Vice-Principals

The Deputy Principal reported on the following: 12/140

(i) The Planning Round with academic departments was currently taking place and that planning for Professional Services would follow.

(ii) The College will be entering into a formal agreement with ULIP and the University of London to formalise the current Quality assurance and operational provision, and to enable the launch of the three year BA French degree with effect September 2013. 12/141

(iii) The College is currently discussing providing distance learning programmes more generally. 12/142

(iv) The lease on Gower Street is due for renewal in 2013-14, affecting those who teach in central London. The Deputy Principal asked for feedback from staff affected as the College will need to make a decision in the coming year on how to proceed 12/143

(v) The Academic Planning round and Strategic Plan will have a knock on effect on Estates with respect to new builds etc. This will be addressed next year. 12/144

The Vice-Principal (Education) provided an update on discussions about A-Level reform since the last meeting of the Academic Board. A consultation revealed that universities do not want to run the A-Level system. She welcomed engagement of academic staff in the ongoing discussions but emphasised that such staff are representative of their discipline, and not the College. 12/145

7.3 Report from the Council

The Board received the minutes of the Council meetings held on 28 March and 20 June 2012 (AB/12/59a, b). The Principal provided an update arising from minute 12/143 onwards from the meeting held on 20 June regarding the possible purchase of the former Brunel campus site. Planning permission had already been granted to the College for a 528 bedroom Hall of Residence on the former Brunel campus, but negotiations had not been successful and the College is now in discussion with the University of London about the provision of additional student bedrooms. 12/146

8. ROYAL HOLLOWAY STRATEGIC PLAN OUTLINE

The Board received an update from the Deputy Principal and the Director of Strategic Development on the Royal Holloway Strategic Plan outline (AB/12/60). The Deputy Principal reported that this was not a definitive plan, but a draft for discussion by Academic Board. The document had been developed from the work of the Academic Strategy Groups and from discussions at College Executive and Senior Management Team away days, and at Council. The document sets out the high level aims for the College over the next few years, but needs further development to relate to KPIs. 12/147

The Board was asked to consider, in particular, *Section Two, Academic Strategic Aims*, which had already been circulated to Working Groups. The Deputy Principal asked for feedback on how the College might measure success on three key measures: NSS, REF, and Employability. A fourth theme, Internationalisation, was also considered, but it was decided that it should be embedded in the other three themes. The focus on interdisciplinarity had also been lost in the wording, and the document will be reworked to include it. Academic Board was also asked to consider ways to improve the College's standing against that of other institutions through the implementation of the Strategic Plan. 12/148

One member of the Board commented that whilst departments do their best at departmental level to improve NSS results they are dependent on the resources available to them. The Deputy Principal acknowledged that the strategic plan would be for the whole College, and that responsibility would be placed at both departmental as well as College level. 12/149

Another Board member also considered that it is important for the College to accentuate its distinctive characteristics as a small institution. 12/150

The Principal added that there are many emerging opportunities for working in partnerships, and institutions are moving towards collaborative partnerships for funding. 12/151

The Deputy Principal thanked the Board for comments and will consult more widely and consider refinements to the objectives. Members were asked to forward any further comments to either himself or the Director of Strategic Development. The updated document will be presented at the meeting of Academic Board in March. 12/152

The Board agreed the key principles and progression of the Strategic Plan outline. 12/153

9. STUDENT RECRUITMENT

9.1 *Report on provisional student numbers for 2012-13*

The Board considered a report on the provisional student numbers for 2012-13 (AB/12/61) based on the count taken on 1 November. The final count is due on 1 December. The Deputy Principal gave credit to the Strategic Development Unit for achieving final UG numbers very close to the set student number control limit (SCNL) of 1,223 students. There was no SCNL imposed on students achieving AAB+ at A-Level. However, recruitment of AAB+ students was below that of previous years and the College will need to put more emphasis on conversion to improve recruitment. The position of overseas UG students is more promising. 12/154

The recruitment of PGT students is below target because ambitious targets were set last year while. Postgraduate research student numbers are close to the target.

9.2 *Proposal on ABB Equivalence and Student Targets for 2013 Entry*

The Board noted that the item on ABB Equivalence and Student Targets for 2013 Entry (AB/12/62) was removed from the agenda. The paper was superseded by Planning Round discussions. 12/155

9.3 *Report on UG applications received to date for admission in 2013*

The Board considered a report on UG applications received to date for admission in 2013 (AB/12/63), based on the SNAPPS report of 19 November. The Director of Academic Services and CIO gave an update based on more recent data received from UCAS on 28 November. As of 19 November College applications were down by 11% on this time last year compared with the sector trend of 9% down. However, on 28 November the position had improved with the College down 7% compared with the sector trend of 8% down. 12/156

It was noted that the reason why no offers had yet been made to Physics applicants was that the first round of interviews were being held on 28 November. 12/157

Members of the Board expressed concern that the central Admissions process had slowed with more applications waiting to be processed than this time last year. The Director of Academic Services and CIO assured the Board that staff in Admissions is working hard to process applications. A couple of members of Admissions staff had recently left but will be replaced shortly. The Principal emphasised the importance of monitoring the Admissions process to maintain a fast turnaround. He thanked colleagues who had been involved in the College Open Days. There was an extra Open Day this year, and there will be an extra Open Day next year to bolster recruitment and conversion. 12/158

9.4 *Amendments to the entry requirements for 2013-14*

The Board received the amendments to the entry requirements for 2013-14 (AB/12/64) as agreed by the Academic Planning Committee, including an increase in entry criteria for Economics and the formal introduction of GCSE requirements. The Head of Computer Science noted that the entry requirements for Computer Science should be BBB not ABB. 12/159

The Board approved the amendments to the entry requirements for 2013-14 subject to investigating the entry criteria for Computer Science. 12/160

Secretary's Note: It was clarified after the meeting that the entry criteria for Computer Science will remain at BBB, as confirmed at the meeting of the Academic Planning Committee meeting on 19 November. 12/161

Members of the Board queried whether the College had an agreed process and timelines for agreeing entry requirements. The Deputy Principal undertook to discuss this at the December meeting of the Academic Planning Committee. 12/162

9.5 *Progression requirements for students on the International Foundation Programme for 2013-14*

The Board ratified the proposed progression requirements for students on the International Foundation Programme for 2013-14 (AB/12/65) as approved by the Academic Planning Committee. 12/163

9.6 *Admissions Policy and Handbook*

The Board received the Admissions Policy and Handbook (AB/12/66), which had been drafted to formalise the existing practice, policy and procedures. 12/164

Queries were raised about two sections: firstly section 3.4 which states that the minimum entry requirement for admission to a Postgraduate Research degree at the College is normally a Masters degree, whereas some departments would accept a first or upper second class honours degree. The Vice-Principal (Education) explained that this wording was discussed at LTQC to accommodate vocational degrees. Secondly in section 3.25 it is not clear what is meant by the phrase 'plagiarism excepted'. 12/165

The Director of Academic Services and CIO agreed to resolve these issues outside the meeting. 12/166

The Board approved the Admissions Policy and Handbook subject to the changes and clarifications discussed. 12/167

10. RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK

The Board received an oral update from the Vice-Principal (Research and Enterprise) on preparations for the REF, which are progressing well. All departments had loaded outputs profiles onto Pure. The Vice-Principal (Research and Enterprise) will be meeting with Heads of Departments in a week's time to discuss the data and the associated preliminary modelling. 12/168

The data collected so far does not indicate any significant gender imbalance in submissions - there is a difference of 5% in favour of males, which the College can justify – but the data does indicate an ethnic imbalance, which is within REF tolerance. The College will have to address this imbalance in the longer term. 12/169

The data also indicates that a number of staff are just below the cut-off and in many cases require only one more paper to meet reach the required level for submission. The College is submitting between 60 and 80% of published work rather than 90% as in the RAE, but needs to maximise the percentage of three and four star submissions. The College's position, in line with that of Russell and 1994 group institutions is to focus on quality rather than quantity of submissions. 12/170

The Head of Research and Enterprise is reading Impact case studies to review them from a user's point of view. It is evident as this point that some work will need to be done to improve these particularly as this can impact on the College's position in leagues tables. 12/171

11. TEACHING PROMOTIONS

The Board received a paper on Senior Teaching Fellows and Lecturer Teaching Focused promotions (AB/12/67). A working group drawn from departments across the College had developed new draft generic job descriptions and person specifications for Teaching Fellows, promotion routes to Senior Teaching Fellows, and a new Lecturer (Teaching Focused) and Senior Lecturer (Teaching Focused) pathway. The aim of these proposals was to provide a new progression route for Teaching Fellows and those whose main area of excellence is teaching. The Vice-Principal (Education) emphasised that this did not represent a shift away from the College's commitment to research-led teaching. She also clarified that the role holder would not necessarily have to undertake pedagogic research; it would be sufficient for the member of staff to be familiar with it. In response to concern that role holders may have to give up research, the Vice-Principal (Education) said they may conduct research in the 10% of their role allocated to other duties. 12/172

The Board approved the paper on Senior Teaching Fellows and Lecturer Teaching Focused promotions, which would bring the College in line with emerging practices at other institutions. The Principal stated that these roles should be monitored and reviewed after a few years to ensure they are serving their purpose. 12/173

12. PERIODIC DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW

The Board noted the current schedule for Periodic Departmental Reviews as agreed by the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee at the meeting held on 24 October 2012 (AB/12/68). 12/174

13. REGULATIONS

13.1 The Board considered an amendment to the Research Degrees Regulations to introduce the outcome of 'moderate changes' for PhD and MPhil degree programmes (AB/12/69). The Vice-Principal (Education) explained that the current regulations permit two resubmission outcomes: the first allows for minor changes which must be completed within three months and the second which gives students up to eighteen months to carry out more substantial changes. The Research Degrees Programmes Committee (RDPC) has recommended there should be an outcome for moderate changes within a reasonable timeframe of six to nine months. 12/175

The Board suggested rewording the timeframe for moderate amendments to '*up to nine months*' rather than '*six to nine months*'. This would be consistent with the wording of the other outcomes and would also give the examiners the discretion to decide on the required timeframe. The Board also considered the examples of minor amendments listed were too minor to justify taking three months, so this outcome should also encompass other changes. 12/176

The Board approved the amendment to the *Research Degrees Regulations* to introduce the outcome of 'moderate changes' for PhD and MPhil degree programmes, subject to: 12/177

- (i) Amending the wording for moderate amendments to nine months;
- (ii) Expanding what is encompassed by minor amendments.

13.2 The Board considered a report on the suspension of undergraduate and postgraduate regulations in 2011-12 (AB/12/70). It was noted that requests for waivers of regulations had continued to increase over the last few years, more recently with a rise from 228 in 2010-11 to 244 in 2011-12. Many requests were related to extensions to the MPhil/PhD submission deadlines, and the Vice-Principal (Education) added that the number of repeat extension requests was a cause for concern. Last year it was anticipated that the number of waivers for undergraduate provision would fall in 2011-12 given changes in the *Undergraduate Regulations*, but this did not materialise. The number of waivers required as a result of administrative errors was also a cause for concern, and the College Board of Examiners will be looking at measures to reduce the number of waiver and extension requests. 12/178

STARRED ITEMS

14. DATES OF TERM

The Board approved the dates of terms for 2014-15 and considered provisional dates for 2015-16 and 2016-17 (AB/12/71). 12/179

15. PROPOSED CHANGES TO CONSTITUTIONS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

15.1 The Board approved the proposed changes to the constitutions for the three Faculty Boards (AB/12/72). 12/180

15.2 The Board approved the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference and the membership of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (AB/12/73). 12/181

16. NOMINATIONS FOR STATUTE 25 COMMITTEES

The Board approved the nominations for the Statute 25 Committees for 2012-14 (AB/12/74). 12/182

17. HONORARY TITLES

- 17.1 The Board approved the proposal to confer the Honorary Title of Visiting Professor on: 12/183
Professor Claudio Minca, from the Department of Geography (AB/12/75a);
Professor Xingmin Meng, from the Department of Geography (AB/12/75b).
- 17.2 The Board approved the proposal to renew the Honorary Title of Visiting Professor: 12/184
Dr David Grimshaw, from the Department of Geography (AB/12/76).

18. PUBLICATION

- 18.1 The Board agreed that no papers required broad dissemination around the College. 12/185
- 18.2 The Board confirmed that no papers needed exemption from the Freedom of Information 12/186
Act requirements.

19. FACULTY BOARDS

The Board received a combined report from the meetings of the Faculty Boards held in 12/187
November 2012 (AB/12/77).

20. ACADEMIC BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Board received the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board 12/188
Executive Committee held on 12 November 2012 (AB/12/78).

21. ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Board received the minutes of the meetings of the Academic Planning Committee held 12/189
on 24 May and 26 June 2012 and the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 26
September 2012 (AB/12/79a, b, c).

22. COLLABORATIVE PROVISIONS COMMITTEE

The Board received the minutes of the meeting of the Collaborative Provisions Committee 12/190
held on 17 May 2012 and the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2012
(AB/12/80a, b).

23. DEPARTMENTAL GRANTS GROUP

The Board received the minutes of the meetings of the Departmental Grants Group held on 12/191
15 May and 15 October 2012 (AB/12/81a, b).

24. RESEARCH COMMITTEE

The Board received the minutes of the meetings of the Research Committee held on 23 May 12/192
and 25 June 2012 (AB/12/82a, b).

25. LEARNING, TEACHING AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

The Board received the unconfirmed minutes of the meetings of the Learning, Teaching and 12/193
Quality Committee held on 24 October 2012 (AB/12/83).

26. ACADEMIC AWARDS GROUP

The Board received a report of the awards and prizes awarded during the 2011-12 academic 12/194
session (AB/12/84).

27. CONFERMENT OF TITLES

- 27.1 The Board received the list of the conferment of titles for 2011-12 (AB/12/85). 12/195
- 27.2 The Board noted a paper on the conferral of honorary titles and the award of titles to Royal Holloway staff (AB/12/86). 12/196

28. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Academic Board will take place on **Wednesday 6 March 2013 at 3pm in MX001.** 12/197

*Dr Marina Beck
Deputy Head of Academic Development Services
06 December 2012*