Academic Board

ACTIONS

Action from current meeting

Action completed since last meeting

Ref	Action	Lead	Due Date
23/011	Invite the Students' Union sabbatical officers elected for the 2023 24 academic year to observe the June Academic Board meeting	CM	June AB
23/018	Add a discussion item on artificial intelligence tools and academic integrity to the next agenda of Academic Board	CM	June AB
23/039 and 23/053	Elected member to send detailed queries on the proposed amendments to the College Statutes to Academicboard@rhul.ac.uk Principal to review comments	SM and JS	June AB
23/040	Update Academic Board on analysis of the responses to the Committee Effectiveness Review	CM	June AB
22/193	Add Foundation Year Degree to a future agenda of Academic Board	CM	End of autumn 2023
23/061	Clarify the timeline for the publication of the Emergency Regulations outside the meeting and update the Board in October.	MH/CM	October 2023
23/68	Circulate the proposed Terms of Reference and membership of the Schools review group	TB	October 2023
23/097	further update on progress with Assessment Futures should be provided to the 29 November meeting of Academic Board	MH	November 2023
23/101	Set up working group to scope future developments in Al	MH	Summer 2023
23/109	Update Academic Board on the implementation of recommendations arising out of the effectiveness review	CM/AB	Autumn 2023
23/118	Discuss with the University Secretary whether the Committees Handbook, last published in 2015, should be re-introduced	CM/AB	October 2023
23/122	Inform the Secretariat and Events Manager that AB approve the recommendations in the Honorary Degrees paper	CM	June 2023
23/124	Advise the Secretariat an the Events Manager that AB recommend references to marital and parental status are removed from appendix 2 of the Honorary Degrees paper as a matter of urgency.	€M	June 2023
23/137	To hold an information/ drop in session for academic staff interested in applying for one of the elected member positions	AB/ CM	
23/156	Present Regulatory Addendum for 2023/24 and timeline for review of academic regulations	MH	November 2023
23/159	Update the timeline of the Emergency Regulations to include the date of the announcement of the Marking and Assessment Boycott and the instruction from the Office for Students issued on 12 June	MH	November 2023

23/279 Receive final update on the last year of the current strategic plan (June 2024) MF/AW June 2024 23/211 Provide an update on discussions at AQUASC about degree outcomes in Economics, Electronic Engineering and Geography 23/224 Provide update on implementation of a mark management system and MH Assessment changes as part of Assessment Futures project 23/238 Give further consideration regarding input into the AB governance review awider pool of staff than those sitting on the Board. Present report and recommendations from external AB governance review AB March 2024 23/240 Present recommendation on additional Honorary Degree to Council for approval 24/24 To note that any discussion of Artificial Intelligence and the sector includes reference to PGR 32/25 is developed 24/31 To include item on June agenda on prioritises emergening from academic governance review and approval of terms of reference for implementation working group 24/58 To receive an update on the processing times referenced in the Admissions MF June 2024				
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	24/31	governance review and approval of terms of reference for implementation	AB/CM	June 2024
	24/58	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	MF	June 2024

ACADEMIC BOARD

Wednesday 20 March 2024 2pm

EWD 1-04 (in person) or MS Teams (online) [hybrid]

Min. 24/01-24/71



Minutes

Present: Prof J Sanders (Chair), Prof T Bhamra, Prof

M Fellowes, Prof Z Khan, Prof A Gupta (on MS Teams) Prof R Mock, Prof G Pieri, Prof G Shaddick (on MS Teams), Prof C Tsinopoulos, Prof K Dodds (on MS Teams), Prof R Hemus, Prof A Roberts, Prof D Beer, Prof C Kremmydas, Dr E Cox (on MS Teams), Prof S Rose, Dr N Hall, Prof R Barn,

Prof L Sjoberg, Dr P Wu,

Prof S Hosany (on MS Teams), Prof T Wainwright (on MS Teams), Prof J McEvoy, Dr K Clemitshaw (on MS Teams), Prof V Desai (for Prof D Schreve), Prof A Palombi, Prof H Zagefka, Prof C Matos, Dr S Alty, Prof I Moffatt, Prof S Gibson, Prof R D'Alton-Harrison, Dr S Dissanayeke, Dr J Murdoch, Dr S Nield, Dr M Ribary, Prof L Rinaldi, Prof S Shah, Ms H Hockin, Ms S Sivarajah, Ms N Bundhun, Dr D Brown, Prof B Fitzgerald, Prof V Greenaway, Prof M Humphreys, Prof R Livesey, Prof D Watling.

Secretary: Mr A M Boggs

In attendance: Dr N Barratt, Mr S Kendrick (on MS Teams),

Dr N Rata (on MS Teams), Ms A Wallis (on MS Teams), Ms Clare Gough (for item 12), Ms Alice Wilby (independent consultant)

Apologies: Prof D Anderberg, Dr A Bown, Dr M Bentley,

Mr A Copland, Dr S Portugal, Dr C Paltrinieri,

Trade Union Mr A Alway (on MS Teams), Mr Daniel

Observers: Elphick

Miss C Munton (Clerk)

Prof D Schreve, Prof H Tregidga, Dr C Tsai,

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, noting that this was the first meeting for Dr Vicky Greenaway as the newly appointed Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Inclusive Learning and Teaching) and five of the six newly elected members: Dr Michelle Bentley, Professor Rita D'Alton-Harrison, Dr Shobana Dissanayeke, Dr Jenny Murdoch and Dr Marton Ribary. Dr Carlotta Paltrinieri sent apologies.

The Chair reported that this was the final meeting for Professor Zainab Khan and Professor Gavin Shaddick who were both leaving the University to take up Pro-Vice-Chancellor roles at other institutions. The Board thanked both for their contributions during their tenure as Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) and Executive Dean (Engineering, Physical and Mathematical Sciences) respectively.

Clare Gough, independent Higher Education Consultant joined the meeting for item 12 Academic Governance review.

24/02

24/03

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 29 November 2023 were APPROVED. Professor Iain Moffatt contacted the Clerk in advance to advise that he was present at November's meeting and this was duly corrected in the formal record.

24/05

3. Matters arising

The Board NOTED the following actions have been completed since the last meeting:

24/06

23/240	Present recommendation on additional Honorary Degree to Council for approval	AB/CM	November 2024
23/224	Provide update on implementation of a mark management system and assessment changes as part of Assessment Futures project See item 13	МН	March 2024
23/238	Give further consideration regarding input into the AB governance review a wider pool of staff than those sitting on the Board.	AB	January 2024
	Present report and recommendations from external AB governance review See item 12	АВ	March 2024

The Board RECEIVED an update on other actions due:

24/07

23/174 and 23/175	To receive a verbal update from the Pro- Vice-Chancellor (Academic Strategy, Planning and Resources) on progress with the review of Academic Restructuring Professor Fellowes reported that several challenges in the spring term caused a delay in setting up the working group. He thanked those expressing an interest in sitting on the working group and hoped to start the review after Easter.	MF	June 2024
23/209	Receive final update on the last year of the current strategic plan (June 2024) Noted that this will be presented to the next meeting of Academic Board.	MF/AW	June 2024
23/211	Provide an update on discussions at AQuASC about degree outcomes in Economics, Electronic Engineering and Geography Noted that the Board will receive an update at their meeting in June.	МН	June 2024

4. Actions taken by the Chair

None. 24/08

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5. Unstarring of items

Paper AB/24/15a Admissions Policy.

24/09

Formal Reports

6. Vice-Chancellor and Principal's Report

The Board RECEIVED and NOTED a written report from the Vice-Chancellor and Principal (AB/24/o1).

24/10

The Board requested an update on student recruitment, noting there had been teething issues with the implementation of the new application system and concerns about the impact of the delays in processing applications. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Strategy, Planning and Resources) reported that the processing time for undergraduate applications is back to normal speed. There is a commitment to ensuring that there is a back up process in place before Clearing starts. It was noted that the SNAPPs reporting data is not always comparing data at same point in this and last year's reporting cycle. It was acknowledged that this had been a challenging time and the focus was on clearing the UG and then the PGT backlog.

24/11

The Head of the Department of Biological Sciences asked about the timeline for setting up the project board and various working groups reviewing the situation with the Bourne Building. In response, Professor Fellowes advised he would be able to share the proposed constitution and hierarchy with colleagues during the last week of the spring term, along with a timeline for action.

24/12

The university was in active discussion with CARA via Universities UK about potential future fellowships and what more the university can do to support in this area.

24/13

The Head of the Department of Law and Criminology reported that there is a disconnect between the SNAPPs admissions reporting data and the offers the department thinks it has made on PGT courses. The Director of Strategic Planning advised that SNAPPs takes information from Banner and refreshes daily, however, it currently excludes data from Study Group applications. An interim solution would be implemented in the next few weeks to incorporate the Study Group data, with further development work planned. Prof Barn suggested PGT application processing should be kept open during August.

24/14

An elected member asked what communication there had been with applicants about the delays in processing their applications. Professor Fellowes advised he thought there had been keeping in touch emails and that academic teams had been reaching out to applicants where possible.

24/15

An elected member reported a concern that the poor state of teaching labs in Bourne was not being adequately addressed during recent discussions, that this was impacting on student recruitment and staff morale and that members of the senior leadership team (SLT) had not met with affected staff. The Executive Dean of Life Sciences and the Environment confirmed that all options are being considered but resolving the situation was incredibly complex and needed to be part of a broader longer term Estates Strategy. The Vice Chancellor and Principal advised that SLT had met with colleagues and would continue to keep the dialogue open, which could include receipt of updates from the Programme Board.

24/16

7. Regulatory and Legislative update

Paper AB/24/02 Regulatory and Legislative update was RECEIVED.

In response to questions from Board members, the University Secretary confirmed:

1. the Office for Students (OfS) are proposing that individuals can raise a complaint, if they feel they have been unduly impacted as a consequence of their freedom of speech being impacted, up to 10 years after the alleged incident. It remains unclear how this will play out but the institution needs to be aware that if this is implemented, the university could be dealing with a constant string of allegations.

2. The OfS intends to define in the Act of Parliament what will constitute an infringement of freedom of speech but that universities will have opportunities to steer the discussion via the UUK response to the OfS consultation and to develop the university's complaints process to incorporate this. There was concern within the sector that OfS are proposing a 30 day turnaround time for dealing with an internal complaint and that they would accept a complaint before waiting for the internal university process to be completed.

8. Report from the Students' Union President

The Board RECEIVED a report from the Students' Union President (AB/24/03).

24/19

24/18

The Board recorded their congratulations to Sharanya Sivarajah who had been elected as Students' Union President for 2024/25.

24/20

24/21

Paper AB/24/04 Postgraduate Taught Student Policy Inquiry Survey Infographics and Recommendations 2023 was RECEIVED. The Executive Director of Student Journey advised that the analysis has been useful in the student journey mapping work currently being completed across various sections. He reported that the Head of the London Campus role was moving into the Student Journey directorate, which should address, but others such as a Careers and Employability Framework were longer term projects. The full report would be published in due course, with the Students' Union keen to see the recommendations implemented.

help address some of the engagement and belonging concerns raised in the report. The report listed a series of recommendations, some of which were straightforward to

Report from the Council

23/22

The Board RECEIVED minutes from the Council meetings held on 5 October and 23 November 2023.

23/23

Report from Schools 10.

9.

The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Postgraduate Research Degrees), Professor Dawn Watling, PROVIDED a presentation (paper AB/24/06).

24/24

The Board thanked Professor Watling for her presentation. In response to a question from the Head of Law and Criminology regarding guidance for PGR students on using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, Professor Watling advised there is university guidance about when use of these would constitute academic misconduct but that the Doctoral School would also be providing a training session and discussion group about using Al in a positive way. The Chair noted that one of the Topics for Discussion is 'Artificial Intelligence and Higher Education' and asked the Clerk to note the specific PGR point for inclusion on a future agenda.

Strategy Discussion

11. Strategic Update

The Board RECEIVED paper AB/24/07 update on RH2030s. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Strategy, Planning and Resources) thanked everyone who had contributed to the strategy development so far and encouraged members to drop into next week's open sessions in EWD.

24/25

Major Items of Business

12. Academic Board Effectiveness Review

The Board RECEIVED paper AB/24/08, initial findings from the external review of academic governance. Clare Gough, independent reviewer, was in attendance to present the brief and approach, key findings, new resources, conclusions and recommendations set out in the paper.

24/26

In response to a question from the Head of Biological Sciences, Ms Gough confirmed the academic governance operating model used at Newcastle University was highlighted in the report as a comparison case study from an institution outside of Royal Holloway's standard competitors.

24/27

An elected member considered that the initial findings appeared limited on revisiting the diversity of membership with reference to contract types, expressed concerns about limiting the size of the paper pack, noting that Academic Board is a vital part of governance and needs a full set of papers to interrogate, and emphasised the need for the papers to be accessible. In response, Ms Gough confirmed that awareness had been raised during interviews about the need to review the membership and that it was referenced in the full report and presentation. She advised that she had read three years of papers and found the narrative was repetitive between meetings. She therefore recommended some consideration is given to avoiding duplication and ensuring the story is moved on between meetings.

24/28

A member asked Ms Gough if she had any further reflections on the appropriate size of Academic Board membership, to which she replied that in her opinion the minimum viable number of members would be 30 but it was for Royal Holloway to determine what is right for the institution and to consider if there are any groups missing from the current constituency.

24/29

The Board thanked Ms Gough for conducting the review and for attending the meeting to present her findings. Ms Gough left the meeting.

24/30

The University Secretary reported on the next steps, which would be to invite Board members to attend a voluntary session to discuss the recommendations and agree and priortise which ones to take forward. It was proposed to align the discussions around the three themes of constitution, induction and communication and interrelationships, as presented in paper AB/24/08. A paper outlining the Board's views on the priorities for implementation of the recommendations would be presented to the meeting on 5 June along with the terms of reference for a Recommendations Implementation Working Group.

13. Assessment Futures

Paper AB/24/09 Assessment Futures Initial Results was RECEIVED.

24/32

The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Quality and Standards) thanked those involved with the implementation of the Assessment Strategy strand of the Assessment Futures project, noting the milestones set out in the paper.

24/33

He REPORTED there was a delay with agreeing a new mark management system because of a technical issue at Ellucian, however progress was being made. Changes to the structures of the examination boards were being implemented for 2023/24 as discussed at the previous meeting. The Head of Classics raised a concern about the delay with being able to implement a new system, reflecting on the issues with the implementation of the application process at the start of the year purchased from the same provider. Professor Humphreys responded that the university is constrained by a lack of mark management system providers and there was confidence that the preferred solution is viable, but the point about timely implementation and ensuring a contingency is in place was noted.

24/34

The Board were asked to reflect on whether there are further obvious efficiencies and simplifications relating to assessment processes still to be made and which other areas of the student journey could be made more consistent and effective for the benefit of students and staff.

24/35

13.2 Paper AB/24/10 Extenuating Circumstances improvement project update was RECEIVED.

24/36

Professor Mock, Project Board Chair, REPORTED that there had been a robust co production with academic schools, professional services and students to work through the details of the transition from the existing to the new mitigation proceedures. There was a slight delay in the timeline, however, the new mitigating circumstances policy would be presented to the June Academic Board meeting. In response to a query from an elected Board member, Professor Mock confirmed that there would be a review of the impact of the new policy, including impact on academic staff marking workloads, after the first year of implementation.

24/37

14. Access and Participation Plan (APP)

Paper AB/23/11 update on development of the university's new Access and Participation Plan (APP) was RECEIVED.

24/38

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) REPORTED the focus of last term's work was on analysis of student data to identify the targets set out in the paper as the university's priority areas for commitment under the APP. Each target requires an intervention strategy and these strategies would be developed from consultation with a broad range of staff and student stakeholders via a series of workshops. The next steps are for the invention leads to develop a high level description and Theory of Change by the end of term to be included in the new APP.

24/39

The Chair noted it would be helpful for the Board to delve into some of the inventions in more detail at a future meeting.

15. Portfolio review and diversification

Professor Alice Wilby, independent consultant, PROVIDED the presentation circulated as paper AB/24/12 update on the development of application to the Institute for Appenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) for Higher Technical Qualifications.

24/41

The university is making an application to iFATE to offer Higher Technical Qualifications in Early Intervention Practitioner (FHEQ Level 4 and mapped to the first year of the BSc Health and Social Care) and Assistant Practitioner (FHEQ Level 5 and mapped to the first two years of the BSc Health Studies). Subject to a successful application and course validation, it was anticipated these qualifications would welcome their first cohorts of students from September 2025. These would provide a test case for technical education at the university and consider if this is something to explore further with other subjects. HTQs would be eligible for Life Long Learning (LLE) funding from 2025/26 with LLE funds expanded to all eligible courses from 2027/28. The opportunities for Royal Holloway created from LLE would become clearer post the autumn term consultation to establish the curriculum areas eligible for funding.

24/42

Professor Wilby advised that the university is undertaking early investigations into offering accelerated degrees, noting that these should become an attractive option post LLE implementation. These degrees are subject to full fees but support costs would be theoretically lower as the students are here for only two years. It was emphasised that two year degrees are not about squashing three years of content into two. These degrees require careful design and should provide opportunities for blended and placement based activities. Preliminary market research shows the market is currently dominated by post 92 teaching focussed providers, presenting a unique opportunity for Royal Holloway to enter the market as institution excelling in research and teaching.

24/43

Professor Wilby invited members with an interest in HTQs, LLE and/or accelerated degrees to contact her for further discussion.

24/44

In response to a query from the Head of Biological Sciences, Professor Wilby confirmed the institutions listed on slide 5 are the top 15 subjects and top 15 universities.

24/45

An elected member asked how many additional staff would need to be hired to support these portfolio diversifications. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor responded it was too soon in the explorations to answer resourcing questions. There were a variety of delivery models being carefully investigated and the university may wish to work with industry partners to support delivery of some of the course given that accelerated degrees are usually offered in career focussed subjects. Professor Khan advised accelerated degrees should be seen as part of the broader conversation about the future of delivering a financially sustainable portfolio.

24/46

An elected member advised that the costs of diversifying should balanced against the costs of delivering the current portfolio before any decision is taken, noting that some of the institutions known to be experiencing financial sustainability challenges are already in the market of offering accelerated degrees and therefore this should not been seen as a way of ensuring a guaranteed income boost.

24/47

In response to a question from the Head of Politics, International Relations and Philosophy about whether there is a relationship between the development of the different types of courses referred to in the discussion and the development of executive education, Professor Wilby concurred there could be if there is a broad range of subjects in scope for Life Learning Entitlement funding as this would cover undergraduate modules only. The

Executive Dean (Business and Management) noted there is an indication that these different types of education are also attractive to international students.

16. Research

The Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) PROVIDED the presentation circulated in Paper AB/24/13 REF2029 Update and Governance Outline.

24/49

Professor Livesey REPORTED there are a number of changes affecting REF2029, including a consultation on open access to REF with potential serious implications to long form publications which had launched in week commencing 18 March. The university was keen to be involved in the pilot study for People, Culture and Environment which was expected to launch before the Easter break. A key priority for the university this term had been developing a new annual research planning cycle to sit alongside the planning round to support staff to deliver on research when they can, annually capture areas of good practice to underpin the REF submission and to embed research, research grant income targets and Knowledge Exchange into School plans. It was noted that transparency, engagement and inclusion were pivotal to REF planning and Schools would be invited to give feedback on the research planning cycle. It was also was intended to set up an inclusive group of research leaders for termly consultation on implementing the research strategy. Professor Livesey summarised the investments in Research Culture and Environment and gave an overview of the governance and reporting timeline for the rest of the year as set out in the paper. Full guidance on the shape of units of assessment was anticipated by summer 2025.

24/50

The Head of Politics, International Relations and Philosophy noted that REF2029 relies on more quantitative methods of research culture than REF2021. The university's half way data indicates the institution is performing less well over several of these quantitative measures than in the last REF and Professor Sjoberg questioned whether it would be difficult to catch up. Professor Livesey advised that the next meeting of the REF Steering Group would start a review of spending over the last three years and that the university was keen to join the People, Culture and Environment pilot to gain a better understanding of the performance indicators.

24/51

The Head of Psychology asked about the focus of activity between department and School level, noting that the units of assessment when published are unlikely to match the university's School structures. Professor Livesey advised it was challenging that the institution is often measured in activities than happen more in department shape alongside a strategy managed at School level and that there needed to be more discussion about how to manage asymmetry within Schools. The decoupling of staff and outputs provides more flexibility but there will need to be parity in units of assessment with named leads to lead the work locally.

24/52

Professor Livesey invited suggestions for the inaugural Festival of Research Culture 10-14 June 2024, noting there are four festival themes; outward facing, collaborative, enabling and inclusive. 24/53

24/54

17. Department Name Change

Paper AB/24/13a Department Name Change was RECEIVED. Academic Board AGREED to recommend to Council to change the name of the Department of Digital Innovation and Management to the Department of Information and Operations Management.

Items for formal approval

18. * Academic Regulations

The Board APPROVED the proposed amendments to the Regulations on the Conduct of Assessment, the Academic Misconduct Regulations, the Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedures, Ratification and Revocation of Awards and Regulations on Access Arrangements for Assessment from 2024-25 (AB/24/14).

24/55

19. *Research Degree Regulations

The Board APPROVED the proposed amendments to the research degree regulations from 2024-25 (AB/24/15).

24/56

20. *Admissions Policy

The Board RECEIVED paper AB/24/15a, the Admissions Policy and Terms and Conditions 2024-25.

24/57

24/58

This paper was unstarred by an elected member, reflecting that the paper includes a timeline for processing applications and for submitting complaints, both of which are longer than the university's turnaround times. In response, Professor Fellowes advised that the admissions team were confident the timescale for submitting complaints does not present an issue as long as the university communicates with complaints to manage expectations. He agreed to discuss further with the admissions team the point about processing times. The policy was APPROVED pending confirmation that the processing times do not need to be amended.

Items for report

21. *Student Number Count

The Board RECEIVED paper AB/24/16 February Student Number count.

24/59

22. * Annual Review

The Board NOTED that the composite School report from the annual review of undergraduate provision in 2022-23 in the School of Engineering, Mathematical and Physical Sciences is being finalised and will be remitted to Academic Board in June 2024.

24/60

The Board received paper AB/24/17, the composite School reports from the annual review of postgraduate taught provision in 2022-23 in the Schools of Humanities, Law and Social Sciences and Performing and Digital Arts.

24/61

It was noted that the reports from the Schools of Business and Management and Life Sciences and the Environment will be circulated with the June Academic Board papers.

24/62

The Board received paper AB/24/18, the Principal External Examiner's Report of Postgraduate Taught provision in 2022-23.

24/63

The Board received paper AB/24/19, the Postgraduate Research Annual Enhancement Review Report for 2022-23.

24/64

24/65

23. * University Education Committee

The Board RECEIVED paper AB/24/20, minutes of the University Education Committee meeting held on 20 November 2023.

24. *Assessment, Quality Assurance and Standards Committee

The Board RECEIVED paper AB/24/21, minutes of the Assessment, Quality Assurance and 24/66 Standards Committee meetings held on 20 February and 29 February 2024.

25. *Doctoral School Committee

The Board RECEIVED paper AB/24/22, unconfirmed minutes of the Doctoral School 24/67 Committee meeting held on 16 Februray 2024.

26. *Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee

The Board RECEIVED paper AB24/23, minutes from the Research and Knowledge 24/68 Exchange Committee meeting held on 16 January 2024.

Other Matters

27. Any other business

None. 24/69

28. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 5 June 2024. 24/70

29. Topics for Discussion

Suggested topics for discussion at future meetings were NOTED as

Topic	Timeline
Assessment Platform	Tbc
Artificial Intelligence and HE	Tbc
Global Strategy update, including the	Tbc
international student experience and	
reflections on the recruitment of	
international students (Executive Dean	
of Humanities)	
Research Leadership and Research	Tbc
Catalysts	
Research Culture	March 2024 and to become a regular
	item for the spring term agenda
REF 2029	To become a regular autumn and
	summer term update