

Academic Council Minutes of 30th Mar 2022

Title:	Academic Council
Date:	30 th March 2022
Time:	3:00pm
Place:	Room 2.08 / Microsoft Teams

Present:

Sharon Potter	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)
Steve Vogel	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Francesca Wiggins	Head of Clinical Practice
Mark Waters	Chair of Foundation Portfolio Board
Heather Batten	Head of Quality
Jas Verdi	Head of Student Support
Sara Wazifdar	Student Support Manager
Kevin McGhee	External Representative (AECC)
Alex Bols	In Attendance
Ian Sanderson	Registrar (Secretary)

1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence

1.1 Noted: That apologies were received from:

Charles Hunt	Vice-Chancellor
Soran David	Faculty Representative (Part-Time)
Graham Sharman	Dean of Academic Development
Hilary Abbey	Head of Knowledge Exchange
Robert McCoy	Clinic Representative
Nina Vasco	Student Union Representative

1.2 Noted It was noted that the absences meant that the meeting was not quorate and there was no student representative able to attend. This was the second time this had occurred during 2021/2. Strategies to improve student engagement might include payment at student ambassador rate. The Head of Student Support would contact those student representatives who had volunteered to attend previously to follow this up.

1.3 Noted AECC did not pay students but had benefited from an active student union. There were however precedents in other institutions to pay students. The student union chair could also nominate a deputy if unable to attend meetings.

1.4 Agreed It was agreed that a note would be added to the minutes of this meeting and the previous meeting confirming that the Academic Council was not quorate and what was agreed at the meeting would be circulated to student and external representatives for comment.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting – 1st December 2021 (AC-21-02-02)

2.1 Agreed: the minutes of the meeting held on 1st December 2021 were approved with the inclusion of the statement above.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Last Meeting (AC-21-02-03)

3.1 Noted:

<i>Actions from the Academic Council meeting on 16th June 2021</i>			
Responsibility	Minute/s	Initial action/s	Outcome/s
Vice Chancellor	6.3	Nominations for Honorary Degrees, Awards and Titles That the Honorary Awards scheme would be promoted in a future staff newsletter to make staff more aware of this.	Completed – in March newsletter
Head of Quality	7	Amendments to Committee Terms of Reference That student representatives would be asked to confirm that there were no comments on the proposed terms of reference.	Completed
Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education)	9.6	External Examiner Annual Report Synthesis 2020-2021e That the report would be submitted as an appendix to the next Board of Directors meeting	Completed
Head of Student Services	12.3	Freedom of Speech Policy That an updated Freedom of Speech Policy would be brought back for approval at a future meeting	Ongoing
Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)	15.4	Revised Research Misconduct Policy	Completed
Secretary	20.1	GOSC Annual Report 2021 The completed report would be circulated to the Academic Council at a future meeting	Completed

4. Chair's Actions

a) AIMO BSc (Hons) Osteopathy Conversion Course Periodic Course Review Outcome (AC-21-02-04 (a))

4.1 Noted That the revised programme arising from the review (BSc Hons Osteopathic Sciences (Practising)) had been recommended for approval by TQSC and had been approved to commence January 2022. This programme was now aligned with the HE Qualifications Framework.

5. Vice-Chancellor's Report (AC-21-02-05)

5.1 Noted The Vice-Chancellor's report.

6. Nominations for Honorary Degrees, Awards and Titles

6.1 Noted That there have not been any nominations coming to Academic Council although there were applications that have been submitted to be considered and are in process. These will come back to a future Academic Council meeting for consideration after going through the Honorary Degrees Awards and Titles Committee.

7. Period of Adaption Process and Documentation (AC 21-02-07)

- 7.1 Noted This short-term programme was designed for overseas students qualifying outside UK who do not meet the grounds for GOsC registration. Typically, students will have completed a portfolio with GosC, and they can then complete a clinical assessment or a Period of Adaptation. This programme is therefore designed to get eligible students into the clinic, where they are mentored for approximately eight weeks. The clinical duties are similar to a final year student. This procedure had been reviewed by SMT and TQSC who had made suggestions for amendment which have been added.
- 7.2 Reported That it might be helpful to send the package to GOsC for information to show what the UCO was doing and possibly so that GOsC can refer potential candidates to the scheme.
- 7.3 Approved The programme documentation.

8. Revised Student Health Policy (AC-21-02-08)

- 8.1 Noted This update to policy was designed to reflect current practice. All M.Ost years were asked to complete a health update, so Student Support were aware of any health issues. The policy had also been made less Osteopathic specific with the addition of Nutrition.
- 8.2 Reported It was queried whether the outcomes could be recorded on the new student database that was currently being implemented to allow students to be tracked. This would be decided as the system is implemented and the additional functionality was explored although individual staff could have access to specific parts of the system. Currently information was currently stored confidentially in Student Support and was referred to the OHC.
- 8.3 Reported It was queried whether the revised policy adequately covered risk in a practical setting. For example, if students elected not to take part in a practical class or did not disclose a temporary health condition or communicable disease that might be a risk to others or the student. It was suggested that the policy could include reference to the needs for tutors reminding students of the need to be aware of such matters at regular intervals or within teaching to ensure students were reminded. Matters relating to health should be discussed and raised in practice teaching regularly to that students were continually reminded of the need to consider their own health in relation to what was being taught. Issues disclosed by students are raised and discussed either in OHC or with Course Team.
- 8.4 Reported It was suggested that a section should be included to make clear students had a duty to consider and disclose their own health on a short-term basis, linked to the Fitness to Practice procedure. It was noted that this was linking health with disability issues, which can differ, and it was considered whether the reference to disability should be deleted. The current procedure could cover both disability and more short-term health issues as it was sometimes difficult to distinguish between health and disability (e.g. broken leg is short term disability). This could also be combined by including reference to students declaring a disability that affected their health.
- 8.5 Reported If implementation was from September 2022 it would need to be finalised and sent to students quickly, as well as offer holders with enrolment information. It was noted that students do not complete the health questionnaire until enrolment.
- 8.6 Agreed It should be confirmed that the Enable Group had looked at the revised policy.
- 8.7 Action: To review the Health Policy to reflect the above recommendations noted in Minutes 8.3, 8.4 and 8.6.

ACTION: Head of Student Services

9. Proposed M.Ost External External Examiner Model (AC-21-02-09)

- 9.1 Noted The UCO had found it difficult to recruit external examiners and had looked at a range of models to reduce the number of externals required. A range of models had been looked at including recruiting by cohort, but the proposed procedure involved having externals approve level 6 and 7 assessments only. They would not be required to review levels 4 and 5, although these would be made available for information. This would place increased emphasis on internal scrutiny of those assessments. External examiners could look at levels 4 and 5 if they wanted.

- 9.2 Noted That having externals looking at levels 6 and 7 only meant only 50% of the course was covered which might be problematic. Externals at AECC looked at levels 5 to 7 in the Masters in Chiropractors which was most closely aligned to M.Ost. It was therefore suggested that if moving to levels 6 and 7 only there should be a pilot year where externals and internal scrutiny took place side by side to ensure parity. AECC also recruited outside the profession as they could also comment from a more general educational perspective.
- 9.3 Noted The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) reported that one of his external examiner roles entailed attending one day prior to the examination board scrutinising papers before the meeting occurred in the afternoon, so the role does vary. It was suggested that sampling could take place so that externals could look at a range of assessments across levels each year as well as meet with students at level 4 and 5. Additional measures could be for the external to sample internal examiner processes. This would place more emphasis on the internal examiner process and be helpful for career development, although this would require mentoring of those staff.
- 9.4 Noted The PGC in Academic and Clinical Education was suggested as a source of mentoring support although it was felt that this might be at a less advanced level and was not appropriate for the needs of new teaching staff undertaking that course.
- 9.5 Agreed The proposal was approved subject to the trialling of projects suggested during the discussion.

10. CWSH New Course Proposals (AC-21-02-10)

- 10.1 Approved Four new programme proposals, which added a Foundation year to each of the 3-year Bachelors programmes which had been approved previously. It was noted that the Foundation courses could support widening participation.

11. Revised Fitness to Practice Policy (AC-21-02-11)

- 11.1 Noted This policy had been updated following consideration at TQSC. Some of the main changes involved amending the course leader role in cases they had previously been involved with to avoid risk of bias and also clarified the DVC level so that either Education or Research can act. This also made clear that the award of the G Grade was not automatically a FTP issue. It was noted that the G Grade was never meant to be reported to the GOSC but only if a case was found after going to a panel. There were some comments and typos, which would be sent to the Head of Quality. It was noted there were references to the Managed Support Plan Policy which was not in place. The Support to Study Policy is due to be reviewed and approved. It would be helpful to have this approved in time for September so both could be launched together at induction.
- 11.2 Action To review the Support to Study Policy with a view to replacing this as the Managed Support Plan referenced in the Fitness to Practice Policy and bring this to the next Academic Council meeting.
Action: Head of Student Services
- 11.3 Noted It was noted that the G Grade would be retained and identified for assessment purposes but would be subject to further discussion when the course was reviewed. It was noted this is included within the Academic Quality Framework which would need to be revised if changes were to be made.
- 11.4 Noted It was noted that the policy was still closely mapped to the Osteopathic Practice Standards rather than adapted to reflect an educational setting, as other HEIs policies seemed to do. This might be something to look at in a further review.
- 11.5 Noted In section 4.2 there is a reference to students abiding by the OPS at all times, but this would be difficult to apply if students had not yet met the outcomes. It was suggested that this could be revised to state students should not be expected to meet all requirements prior to the award but should abide to the principles of regulation. This was intended to ensure that students were aware of the principles of regulation at the outset of the procedure.

- 11.6 Noted In 12.8, there are references to transcribing rather than note taking as well as providing recordings, which could lead to problems with process. The emphasis should be on summary notes from the meetings.
- 11.7 Noted That a lot of process information was included within the policy. It was suggested that a future development could look at procedures for panels generally with a set of generic panel processes which meant that these sections could be taken out of the specific policies so that only details of the specific sanctions that could be considered needed including.
- 11.8 Noted The Head of Quality had been working on this in addition to the guidance for investigators, which also needed updating. These guidelines needed to make clear that it was the investigating officer only that could be questioned by a student and not witnesses, as was currently stated in the Fitness to Practice policy and not witnesses, which was currently stated. The panel should also have the right to ask questions, but all questions should be directed through the Chair.
- 11.9 Noted It was not clear who defined the charges when a complaint had been made, is it the investigator, case handler or panel. In addition, it was suggested that there should be space for staff to raise lower-level concerns as these could lead to Fitness to Practice. It was that this was something that would initially be included under the Managed Support Plan. It was sometimes not clear who made these decisions, but this should include feedback to those raising the concerns.
- 11.10 Action To review and revise the policy in light of this discussion, with panel procedures removed to reflect the new guidance when available and the proposed Managed Support Plan Policy.

Action: Head of Quality

12. External Examiner Nomination – RAE Units (AC-21-02-12)

- 12.1 Dr Nicki Godfrey as the external examiner for the RAE units.
Approved

13. Major Modification – PGC Musculoskeletal Ultrasound (AC-21-02-13)

- 13.1 Noted This modification was to add additional teaching days to deliver the course and split the days up to enable students to build on their learning. This was approved.

14. Briefing on Higher Education Innovation Fund and Enhancing Research Culture

- 14.1 Noted This was an opportunity to develop knowledge exchange and had arisen from funding from the Higher Education Innovation Fund. Several projects had gone through the VCs Group and related to CPD, working with community partners. The funding also meant the UCO could also change roles to deliver some of the Knowledge Exchange projects. It was noted that it was challenging to spend the HEIF funding allocation in the time allowed although most institutions were experiencing this.
- 14.2 Noted The Knowledge Exchange day was well received.

15. GosC Annual Report and Feedback (AC-21-01-14)

- 15.1 Noted This had been reviewed by Mott MacDonald on behalf of GOsC and the feedback was positive. The action plan was being considered but included student surveys, handling complaints, clinical supervision and feedback and the diversity of patients through special clinics.
- 15.2 Noted In relation to feedback, it was suggested there should be a requirement to improve the service provision but we are looking at incentivising rather than stick as well as making surveys more accessible. The emphasis was on using Pulse Surveys with the onus on getting a short turnaround so that students can see how the work is actioned to close the feedback loop.
- 15.3 Noted Thanks were extended to all involved in production of the Annual Report

16. Guild HE Briefings on Quality Standards and TEF and Auger and Admissions (AC-21-02-15)

- 17.1 Noted That the new framework set minimum thresholds for progression - from year 1 to year 2 and also the graduation. Students completing. Therefore, it was important that institutions looked at their own data to map onto these thresholds to identify areas of concern.

17. Meetings of Sub-Committees (AC-21-02-16)

- 18.1 Noted The minutes of meetings of TQSC held on 25th January 2022 and 8th March 2022 and the minutes of the meeting of the WPSC held on 2nd November 2021 and 12th January 2022

18. Dates of Future Meetings

- 19.1 Noted 15th June 2022, 3pm 1.01 and Microsoft Teams.

AGREED