

Minutes

Title:	Academic Council
Date:	13th July 2022
Time:	3:00pm
Place:	Room

Present:

Charles Hunt	Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
Sharon Potter	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)
Steve Vogel	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Francesca Wiggins	Head of Clinical Practice
Sophie Tweedie-Smith	President of the Students Union
Mark Waters	Director of Teaching, Learning and Assessment
Kevin McGhee	External Academic Representative
Heather Batten	Head of Quality
Ian Sanderson	Registrar (Secretary)

1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence

1.1 Noted: That apologies were received from:

Hilary Abbey	Head of Research
Jas Verdi	Head of Student Services
Marvelle Brown	External Healthcare Representative

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting – 30th March 2022 (AC-21-03-02)

2.1 Agreed: the minutes of the meeting of 30th March 2022 with the amendment off 11.5 to read:

*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 course 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.*

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

3.1 Noted:

<i>Actions from meeting on 30th March 2022</i>			
Responsibility	Minute/s	Initial action/s	Outcome/s
Head of Student Services	3.1	Freedom of Speech Policy That an updated Freedom of Speech Policy would be brought back for approval at a future meeting.	Ongoing and postponed to next meeting due to staff absence
Head of Student Services	8.7	To review the Health Policy to reflect the above recommendations noted in Minutes 8.3, 8.4 and 8.6.	Ongoing and postponed to next meeting due to staff absence

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Head of Student Services	11.2	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.	Completed and on agenda.
Head of Quality	11.10	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.	Completed; feedback has been reflected in the policy as discussed by Academic Council. The Panel procedures were directly linked to the Policy and therefore have not been removed, however standalone Panel Procedures are in development to provide guidance where panels are convened in other policies, e.g. disciplinary, etc.

4. Chair's Actions

- 4.1 Noted That, given Dr Godfrey had been approved as the external examiner at the meeting on 30th March 2022, there were no Chair's actions required since the last meeting.

5. Vice-Chancellor's Report

- 5.1 Noted The Vice-Chancellor's verbal report

a) Chair of the Board

- 5.2 Reported That Professor Jo Price had been appointed as Chair of the UCO Board from June 2022. Professor Price was previously the Vice-Chancellor at the Royal Agricultural College with a strong background in Higher Education Management and is currently on the Board of the Dyson Foundation.

- 5.3 Agreed That the Academic Council thanked Professor Jankowski for his support as the outgoing Chair of the Board and his support to the UCO during some challenging times

b) Hallsville Quarter Project

- 5.4 Reported That the prospective purchasers of the two main UCO sites had pulled out of their offers for the building due to the current economic uncertainty which meant that the UCO was not able to move ahead with purchasing the Hallsville Quarter site at this time. There has been other interest of the UCO sites but the inability of the UCO to confirm the purchase meant the developers were therefore looking to put this site out to market with other organisations. The UCO was looking at other sites in the same area which would bring clinic and teaching back together.

- 5.5 Reported That the Office for Students capital funding to support the project could not go ahead because of this, but the UCO had been encouraged to bid for funding in the future. The maximum amount that institutions could apply for to this scheme had increased from £2m to £6m.

- 5.5 Agreed That the Chair would provide an update on the Hallsville Project to staff and students on SharePoint.

c) NSS results

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- 5.6 Reported That the NSS results were released recently, and these were very negative, particularly in relation to the part-time course. The overall satisfaction on the full-time course was 62% falling to 18% on the part-time course.
- 5.7 Reported That the UCO was currently analysing both the scores as well as the comments to work out the reasons for this response. There were some positive comments on the way the UCO had adapted to Covid-19 and in response to the clinic fire, as well as improvements to the clinic tutoring. However, organisation and management were down to 4% on the part-time course, which was a serious concern, and the Board of Directors were monitoring the action plan to address the findings, which could have an impact on future funding.
- 5.8 Reported That the AECC had experienced similar difficulties with the results, which was reflected on organisation and management. It appeared that students had noted some improvements in areas covered by their previous action plan, for example timetabling, but the students had reflected over the full period of registration and their experience had been affected by issues such as Covid-19 impacting on their experience as well as the impact of changes to expand the range of courses in previous years. With the expansion in new courses, it was felt that it may be a gradual process of improvement as those new courses developed.
- 5.9 Reported That the student feedback was that a high number of students had deferred their assessments as they did not feel they were ready to take these, and these reflected that they had not been taught as well as in the previous year. FT2 Students also felt that they were not ready to provide clinical treatment and had not been briefed about how their summer clinic block would work until late in the year. Students only received clinic exposure late in the year. FT3 students have also experienced a specific issue with their RAE3 assessment, which has now been resolved but not necessarily to the student's satisfaction. Both these appeared to demonstrate challenges with organisation and the communication of information, as had an issue with 1st year students seemingly receiving incorrect marking criteria.
- 5.10 Agreed That the NSS action plan would be shared at the next Academic Council meeting.
- 5.11 Agreed That the UCO and AECC could share experiences and their responses as it appears that both organisations were experiencing similar challenges in this area, so sharing of good practice may be helpful.
- d) Student Recruitment
- Reported That student recruitment numbers were down on recently years, and it would be a challenge to recruit to target. This reflected the situation at AECC, which was also lower in several courses including the main Chiropractic programme.

6. Nominations for Honorary Degrees, Awards and Titles

- 6.1 Noted That several applications had been received and were in the process of being considered.

7. Critical Incident: CICM Board of Examiners (AC 21-03-07)

- 7.1 Noted That the report described an incident arising from the Institute of Chinese Medicine (CICM) Board of Examiners, which had reported results of a unit that had not been approved by the UCO and in fact was a unit that had been approved by the previous validating organisation. CICM had not put in a modification formally to have these approved by the UCO. It transpired that there was no real impact on students, as they had been made aware of the correct information although this had not been formally approved by the UCO.

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- 7.2 Noted That the main action was to ensure that examination board paperwork would be checked closely prior to the meeting. CICM had also been asked to confirm that all other units reflected UCO approval and had done this.

8. Major Course Modifications (AC-21-03-08a-d)

a) CICM BScAcu RRP2 Unit & CICM BScAcu Course Handbook (Progression Criteria)

- 8.1 Noted This modification was to bring the assessment scheme for the unit in line with what was already happening, as described in the Critical Incident Report considered under item 7. The modification was introducing an assessment that had previously been used when the programme was validated by Kingston University. The progression handbook had been revised to make it clear how the Board of Examiners applied progression decisions, particularly in relation to passes and condoned passes, as well as the timings of re-sits, which occurred automatically and prior to the Board of Examiners
- 8.2 Approved The modification was approved, subject to external examiner reflection on these changes in their annual report.

b) SMUG PGCert MSKU Course Delivery Mode

- 8.3 Noted This was a modification to amend the mode of study from part-time to distance learning, which was more in line with current Office for Students definitions. This would enable SMUG to accept international students to attend on a distance learning basis under a general visitor visa, as the current part-time mode of study over a period longer than six months would require a student visa and would make the course prohibitively expensive.
- 8.4 Approved The above modification.

c) SMUG PGCert Ankle & Foot Diagnostic Musculoskeletal Ultrasound

- 8.5 Noted This is a modification of the existing PGC award to place a particular emphasis on ankle and foot musculoskeletal ultrasound, for which there is demand. Therefore, although this is a new award and modules, this has been put forward as a major modification as the structure of the units has now changed, just the title to reflect the focus on the subject area.
- 8.6 Approved The above modification
- d) UCO PGCert SPOP Unit 1 Delivery Mode
- 8.7 Noted That this was a modification to deliver the safeguarding aspect of the “Developing Specialist Paediatric Practice in Osteopathy” unit online. This had been a temporary Covid-19 measure but had been well-received by students so was being permanently retained.
- 8.8 Approved That modification to the unit.

9. AIMO-SICO BSc (Hons) Osteopathic Sciences (Professional Pathway) Arrangement Course & RPL Policy Modifications (AC-21-03-10)

- 9.1 Reported That this was a modification to adapt the current AIMO BSc Professional pathway, which is used by students with a Diploma in Osteopathy to upgrade to a BSc for professional registrations purposes, to be able to apply to Switzerland who are undergoing similar changes. The Swiss authorities have recently introduced changes that require Osteopaths with a Diploma to obtain a BSc with work with a mentor and an MSc to work independently and these changes will come into effect in 2025.
- 9.2 Reported That originally, the Swiss International College of Osteopathy (SICO) approached the UCO to deliver such a course, but it was felt that the current AIMO model was more in keeping with their requirements, so the arrangement would be that AIMO staff would teach the course that had been validated by the UCO at SICO.

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- 9.3 Reported That, as a validated degree, it would be important for the UCO to have directly oversight of the delivery. Therefore, it was suggested that the UCO should visit SICO to ensure that the delivery of the programme was feasible.
- 9.4 Reported That the programme should be taught and assessed in English to meet the Swiss regulatory framework. Therefore, it would be important to ensure that AIMO teaching faculty had sufficient English Language qualifications of their own to be able to deliver the course satisfactorily. AIMO should be asked to provide a list of teachers delivering the course and their English Language qualifications so the UCO could be assured on that point.
- 9.5 Reported Whether there was any assurance that the proposed programme would meet the Swiss professional requirements. It was noted that the programme was only designed to deliver the BSc component of the revised framework, not the Masters level education required, which was the point at which candidates would apply for registration as an individual Osteopath, and registration was an individual requirement, but it would be important to confirm that the proposed BSc programme would at least make students eligible to apply for registration to work as an Osteopath in Switzerland with mentoring.
- 9.6 Reported That because the course was being taught and assessed in English, AIMO had added an English Language test requirement of 6.5. However, they were seeking approval to enable students to provisionally enrol if candidates had not completed the test, to avoid delays in students meeting the professional requirement. It was noted that Swiss university students were already taught and assessed in English, and Switzerland was not a majority English Language country, but it was also noted that some D.O students may have been away from education for a while so may struggle. Given the requirement to be taught in English was one of the main changes to the programme, it seemed anomalous to waive the English requirement.
- 9.7 Reported That it was noted the BSc Professional pathway worked on an RPL model and it was questioned whether AIMO had knowledge of the Swiss system to be able to conduct this effectively. It was however noted that AIMO were rigorous in applying RPL and all RPL decisions were subject to review by the UCO. It was also noted that students entering the BSc Professional Pathway would tend to have the same qualifications so, provided they provided a transcript of achievements, it was thought that AIMO would be able to quickly develop a knowledge of the Swiss system, if indeed there were gaps in knowledge in view of the proximity of the two countries. Students not meeting the requirements were required to undertake qualifying
- 9.8 Agreed That the programme would be approved by Chairs Action subject to completion of a site visit, the confirmation of a list of AIMO staff delivering the course and their English Language qualifications, and confirmation that the course was consistent with Swiss professional requirements.

10. Major Regulation Modifications (AC-21-03-10)

a) AQF04 Course Approval and Modification

- 10.1 Reported That the proposal was to modify the approval process to have just one stage approval events rather than two, which was based on the University of Bedfordshire process, to amend the approval forms to have just one course proposal form covering the academic and business case, which would include marketing and include revised course approval criteria.
- 10.2 Reported That changes to the modification process included introducing a risk-based approach as well as introduce CMA guidance to the process. The modification form was also updated and merged into one rather than a major and minor modification form.
- 10.3 Reported It was noted that the forms would still be seen by SMT, TQSC and Academic Council.

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- 10.4 The amendments to the course approval and modification process.
Approved
- b) AQF06 Periodic Review
- 10.5 That the periodic review process was also proposed for review to have one event rather than two,
Reported which also was a move away from the format that was previously in place at the University of Bedfordshire
- 10.5 The amendments to the periodic review process.
Approved
- c) AQF07 Scrutiny Process
- 10.6 That the academic scrutiny process of assessments had been modified to make it clear that it was
Reported the responsibility of unit leaders, liaising with other unit leaders on the course team and the course leader, to ensure academic scrutiny was completed and followed up, as the Registry was unable to provide this academic oversight. The unit leaders were best placed to ensure that the assessment, marking criteria matched the learning outcomes and assessment criteria on their own UIFs. The scrutiny board would also meet formally to ensure scrutiny was completed.
- 10.7 That it was suggested that the process could be updated to clarify some issues, such as when the
Reported scrutiny process needed to be completed by for differing assessments, whether the same assessments should be used across both FT and PT programmes if these were completed at different times of the year, and guidance for recycling questions. It had been noted that assessment issues had featured in the low NSS score so it was hoped this could be addressed partly through more rigorous scrutiny. It was noted that an assessment handbook had previously covered some of these questions. It was also noted that the marking criteria document was not reflected on Bone for online grading, so some work may be required to align this more clearly.
- 10.8 That it would be important to monitor the scrutiny process was happening and the revised procedure
Reported envisaged returning to some sort of scrutiny board meeting to monitor and formally record completion of this by unit leaders.
- 10.9 The amendments to the academic scrutiny process.
Approved
- d) AQF09 Learner Support
- e) AQF10 Student Voice
- 10.10 These sections had both been reviewed and updated to reflect current practice. These had been to
Reported TQSC for review and been out for student consultation.
- 10.11 The changes to both sections of the AQF
Approved
- f) AQF11 External Examiner Annual Report Form
- 10.12 The external examiner report form had been amended to update terminology inherited from the
Reported University of Bedfordshire that was no longer considered as relevant and was confusing to external examiners. The draft form had been sent to external examiners for consultation, who had provided feedback which had been incorporated in the final draft. This would come into effect for the end of 22-23.
- 10.13 The changes to ACQ11.
Approved
- g) AQF16 Partner Periodic Review Process

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- 10.14
Reported That AQF16 has been revised to include the new Partnerships Manager as well as to introduce a risk-based approach to partner periodic review. Partners would complete a reflective report form which would be assessed by a member of the TQSC or Collaborative Programmes Committee which further review only required if areas requiring further detailed consideration were identified. It was hoped to pilot this approach on partners due for review during the current year, which had been postponed due to Covid-19.
- 10.15
Reported That this risk-based approach reflects the current recommended practice in Higher Education and is a feature of the quality code. This also reflects the fact that the UCO has a close working relationship with its partners.
- 10.15
Approved The amendments to the partnership periodic review process.

11. Major Policy Modifications (AC-21-03-11)

a) Special Circumstances Procedure

- 11.1
Reported That the special circumstance procedure had been revised and updated to reflect the OIA good practice guidelines as well as best practice in force at other institutions. The evidence students would be required to provide in support of special circumstances would be in proportion to the request, which was in keeping with the OIA guidelines. This would hopefully address a current barrier to students benefitting from the procedure although this would require students to provide detailed information regarding their requests, to ensure these were genuine.
- 11.2 Agreed That the revised procedure would be approved, subject to clarification of the number of self-certified requests that would be permitted before a student was required to submit a full special circumstances application with evidence. (6.1.4)

b) Academic Appeals Policy

- 11.3
Reported That this procedure had also been updated in line with OIA guidelines, mainly to ensure the upper time limit for the conclusions of appeals reflected that considered reasonable by the OIA, although it was acknowledged in most instances appeals would be completed far more quickly.
- 11.4 Agreed That the revised procedure be approved, subject to removal of the tracked changes in the document.

c) Academic Discipline Policy

- 11.5
Reported That the policy had been re-written to be more straightforward and remove areas that seemed to be duplicated. These revisions removed the two separate processes for plagiarism and more serious offences that needed to be reviewed by the Academic Conduct Panel, but there would still be a light touch penalty for minor cases of plagiarism. The definitions of various academic discipline offences had also been updated in line with OIA guidance.
- 11.6 Agreed That the revised policy be approved.

d) Student Protection Plan

- 11.7
Reported That the policy had been updated to reflect some minor updates to the UCO Terms and Conditions, which had been revised to be more explicit around partner arrangements
- 11.8
Approved The revised Student Protection Plan

e) Support to Study Policy (Managed Support Plan)

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- 11.9 Reported That this policy had been revised to align with the recently revised Fitness to Practice policy, which had been approved at a previous meeting of the Academic Council. It was noted that some additional links needed adding as well as some further edits before the final version could be published. This had been discussed extensively at TQSC and broad outline was agreed.
- 11.10 Reported It was suggested whether this would be the correct area to provide support for students who were struggling in clinic, as these was something that had been highlighted because of the NSS. It was however thought that supporting students was more of an academic support issue rather than something that was something the scope of this procedure, which focuses more on specific support for students facing specific barriers to study.
- 11.11 Agreed That this policy should be approved subject to a final revision by Student Support and Quality.

12. Student Pulse Surveys Proposal (AC-21-03-12)

- 12.1 Noted That this was a change to the UCO policy on obtaining feedback from students and entailed a move from larger end of year surveys, which students found hard to complete when focusing on examinations, to shorter surveys throughout the year. It was hoped that this would improve the response rate and enable more quick action to be generated in response to the outcomes, which would mean current students get to see and benefit from the outcomes
- 12.2 Approved The revised proposal

13. External Examining (AC-21-03-13)

a) AIMO BScOsctSci External Examiner Nomination

- 13.1 Reported That Ms Francesca Lanfranconi was being nominated as the external examiner for the BSc Osteopathic Sciences course from 2022 to 2027.
- 13.2 Noted That appropriate mentoring would be arranged with an existing experienced UCO external examiner as part of the induction process, to ensure that Ms Lanfranconi was aware of the UK Higher Education system to broaden the base of potential external examiners
- 13.3 Approved The nomination of Ms Lanfranconi as external examiner of the AIMO BSc from 2022 to 2027.

a) Partner External Examiner Annual Report Synthesis 2020-21

- 13.4 Reported That this synthesis report had previously been generated for undergraduate internal programmes but was being produced for the first time for our partner programmes. This was helpful in identifying possible areas to be addressed at institutional level.
- 13.5 Noted That no main themes requiring action had been identified and therefore the report was accepted without further comments.

14. Course Approvals (AC-21-03-15a-c)

a) OCA PGCert Animal Osteopathy Periodic Course Review Outcome

- 14.1 Reported That the UCO had completed periodic course review of the PGC Animal Osteopathy, with re-approval conditional on several relatively minor conditions that were under review. These related to the utilisation of Bone, some CMA-linked issues and programme succession planning
- 14.2 Agreed The re-approval of the PGC Animal Osteopathy.

b) AIMO BSc Osteopathic Sciences Periodic Course Review Outcome

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- 14.3 Reported That this programme was being recommended for re-approval from September 2022, based on a revised course structure that had been developed to take into account anticipated future regulatory requirements in Italy.
- 14.4 Noted That the regulatory changes in Italy may in future require degrees to be validated by a home institution, therefore the UCO's role as a validating institution may no longer be required in the future
- 15.5 Approval The re-approval of the AIMO BSc programme from September 2022.

c) College of Esports New Course

- 14.6 Reported That a range of College of Esports undergraduate programmes had completed course review and were being recommended for approval subject to several conditions, including the completion of a site visit, clarification of certain CMA related issues, for example information included on the website, and the status of a Level 3 Sports Leadership qualification that had not been fully implemented.
- 14.7 Reported That the CoES had made progress on several issues, such as sending in CVs of teaching staff and their IT infrastructure
- 14.8 Approved The College of Esports undergraduate programmes in International Esports Business (with and without a Foundation Year), Esports & Coaching Management (with and without a Foundation Year), International Esports Business & Events Management (with and without a Foundation Year), International Esports Business & Digital Marketing (with and without a Foundation Year), International Esports Business & Digital Media (with and without a Foundation Year).

15. Research Excellence Framework Results 2021 (AC-21-03-6)

- 15.1 Noted That the Research Excellent Framework outcome had recently been released and had classified some of the UCO's output as work-leading which was a very good outcome and a first for an Osteopathic Institution. It was noted that AECC University College had also had a similar outcome and congratulations were extended to Professor McGhee
- 15.2 Reported That huge thanks were offered to Dr Abbey and Mr Vogel for their efforts in developing the REF submission, which was a considerable area of work over a sustained period in the run-up to the exercise

16. Update on Knowledge Exchange and ERC funded activities and budget (AC-21-03-07)

- 16.1 Noted The report on the Knowledge Exchange and ERC funded activities following the receipt of £200k funding from UKRI.
- 16.2 Reported That several activities had been completed, with another event due next week. It was proving a challenge to arrange knowledge exchanges events within the relatively small period of time that the funding could be spent.

17. GOsC RQ Annual Report Outcome (AC-21-03-18)

- 17.1 Noted The GOsC RQ Report outcome, which was broadly positive.
- 17.2 Noted That the GOsC review visit had been confirmed for May 2023.

18. Partner Institutional Annual Report 2020-2021 Summary (AC-21-03-19)

- 18.1 Noted The partner institutional annual report for 2020-21.

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19. Periodic Course Reviews 2022-2023 (AC-21-03-20)

19.1 Noted The periodic course review schedule for 2022-2023.

20. Sub-Committee (AC-21-03-21a-d)

a) Teaching Quality and Standards Committee

20.1 Noted The minutes of the meeting dated 7th June 2022

b) Widening Participation Subcommittee

20.2 Noted The minutes of the meeting dated 23rd March 2022

c) Research & Scholarship Strategy Committee

20.3 Noted The minutes of the meetings dated 14th February 2022 and 6th June 2022

21. Any Other Business

a) Dr Hilary Abbey

21.4 Noted That Dr Hilary Abbey was retiring at the end of July and the Academic Council wishes to put on record its thanks for her many contributions to the UCO during her time here, which had culminated in contributing to a successful REF outcome and ongoing involvement in the development of Knowledge Exchange activities, which were still ongoing

22. Dates of the Next Meeting

24.1 Noted: 14th September 2022, 3pm
7th December 2022, 3pm
22nd March 2023, 3pm
21st June 2023, 3pm