

ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on

20 MAY 2008

Present:

Mr J Anderson	Professor R Mears
Ms A Baud	Professor F Montgomery
Mr J Cooper	Professor F Morgan (Chair)
Dr P Davies	Professor N Sammells
Mr A E Dewberry (Secretary)	Professor G Smith
Mr A Dyson	Dr A Thomas
Mr C Ellicott	Professor D Timms
Professor R George	Professor S Ward
Dr B Griffin	

In attendance: Mr J Brady, Mr D Hamilton

Unable to attend: Dr T Hill, Professor T Middleton

07/25 MINUTES : 11 MARCH 2008

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2008, which had been circulated, were received as a correct record.

07/26 MATTERS ARISING

07/23 Validation of Academic Board Committee Minutes

Mr J Cooper referred to approved minutes of the meeting of the School of Historical & Cultural Studies held on 6 December 2008. These contained an incorrect reference to the Sion Hill / Somerset Place campus. The Secretary was requested to arrange for a correction to be made via the Head of School.

The Board agreed Mr Cooper's proposal that to facilitate easy reference, discrete paper numbers be included in file names used in Sharepoint.

07/27 BUDGET PROPOSALS 2008 / 09

The Director of Finance & Resources, Mr J Brady, presented an overview of the key issues informing the preparation of the Budget for 2008 / 09. He expanded on Paper D326 inviting the Academic Board to consider the draft budget and to advise the Vice Chancellor on the distribution of academic budgets.

The Board noted in particular the general increase in funding for academic delivery in Schools and the Library the proposed investment in the Sion Hill campus and the considerable increase in staffing costs if appointments are made to all vacancies offset to some extent by additional income from tuition fees.

Following discussion, the Academic Board:

- a) received Paper D326, and
- b) noted that the annual revenue budget will be presented to the Board of Governors for approval on 25 June 2008.

07/28 UNDERGRADUATE MODULAR SCHEME REVIEW

Professor N Sammells referred to Paper D327 seeking the Board's approval for the proposed principal features of the revised Undergraduate Modular Scheme and for a timetable for its implementation in September 2009.

The Board conducted a wide ranging discussion on the principal features described in section 3 of this report. The following issues were identified:

- the proposals involved a minimal change in the choice available to students and offered more flexibility than the current scheme
- the potential advantage of changes in the form of assessment rather than in module content
- the concern of the Registrar regarding the timing and resourcing of fundamental changes to the academic timetable for 2009 / 10
- the concern of the Registrar regarding the ability for students to redeem failure particularly in the final year
- the development of 40 credit modules based on both internal consultation and best practice in the sector
- the essential maintenance of both academic credibility and affordability with regard to contact hours particularly in the third year
- the ability of larger modules to contribute to the social coherence of groups and thereby student learning and retention
- the need for compatibility in timetabling with those courses in Art & Design outwith the Modular Scheme
- the need to establish a balance in the contact hours between different modules
- the need to ensure Masters course delivery is kept in step with the new modular scheme

Following extended discussions, the Academic Board:

- a) received Paper D327:
- b) approved the principal features of the revised Undergraduate Modular Scheme (as described in Section 3 to that report) and the proposed timetable for its implementation in 2009 / 10;

- c) noted that the final form of the revised Scheme will be submitted to the Academic Board in July 2009 with subject level approvals subsequently devolved to AQSC, and
- d) urged the Modular Scheme Committee with the support of the Academic Office to consider all those matters raised in the Board's discussion of this critical review alongside those identified in Section 3.9 as 'unresolved issues'.

07/29 QAA : PROGRESS AGAINST RDAP ASSESSORS' REPORT

The Head of Graduate Studies and Research Management, Dr P Davies, expanded on Paper D328 providing the Academic Board with a progress report against procedural or other matters flagged up by the University's RDAP assessors as worthy of consideration.

The Board noted that the RDAP assessors' (original) *Final Report* had been received but overtaken by events. The QAA now proposes a further review in the week commencing 26 May 2008.

The Vice Chancellor reminded the Board of the need to adhere only to the original QAA published criteria for RDAP and not to be drawn into other, irrelevant, discussions.

Following consideration, the Academic Board:

- a) received Paper D328, and
- b) noted the Graduate School update on progress following receipt of the Final Report of the University's RDAP assessors to the QAA ACDAP.

07/30 RESEARCH STRATEGY 2006 / 09 : UPDATE

Professor D Timms referred to Paper D329 updating the University's strategy for research and advanced scholarship 2006 / 09 in the light of the achievement of two major objectives and of the Academic Board's discussion of the terminology used in the strategy following receipt of the assessors' report on BSU's application for research degree awarding powers.

The Board noted that the report represented clarification of the institution's research strategy established over many years. The underlying mission and key aims of the strategy remain unchanged.

Following consideration the Academic Board:

- a) received Paper D329, and
- b) unanimously approved the update of the University's research strategy for 2006 / 09.

07/31 OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

07/32 ITEMS FOR RECEIPT

The Academic Board formally received 'confirmed' minutes of the following meetings which had been posted on Sharepoint:

L&T	:	11 December 2007
SECS SB	:	5 December 2007
SS SB	:	14 December 2007
H&CS SB	:	6 December 2007
RCSC	:	10 January 2008
A&D SB	:	17 January 2008
HDC (R)	:	6 February 2008

AQSC	:	7 February 2008
D&P	:	4 February 2008
HDT	:	20 June 2007
HDC (R)	:	26 March 2008
SECS SB	:	26 February 2008
L&T	:	26 February 2008
MPA SB	:	11 February 2008

The meeting closed at 1055 hrs.

Anthony E Dewberry
Secretary
21 May 2008