UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE OF THE ACADEMIC BOARD

SCHOOL ACADEMIC COMMITTEE – SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

Minutes of the School Academic Committee of the School of Humanities held on 27 February 2019.

PRESENT: Professor A Murphy (Chair)

Dr M Groefsema  Dr A Maunder  Dr P Pritchard
Dr R Hughes  Mrs S Maxwell-Magnus  Dr A Rico-Alberto
Ms J Hulse  Dr C Meehan  Ms J St John
Dr S Kersten

IN ATTENDANCE:  Mrs B Lyons  Mr A Penn

APOLOGIES:
Dr L Calvert  Ms M Tessier  Dr P Sutton
Ms N Duplain  Mr P Thomas  Ms C Tong

NOT PRESENT:
Mr L Footman  Ms G Olive  Ms L Uttley
Mrs E A Hedges  Mrs J Ratcliffe  Ms R Wainwright

ACTION

667 MEMBERSHIP

To note the membership of the committee (Agenda Paper 2 refers).

667.1 Membership category 4: Associate Deans of School

667.1.1 Noted: the term of office of Dr R Hughes as Associate Dean (Research and Commercial) commenced on 1 February 2019.

667.1.2 Noted: the term of office of Ms M Tessier as Associate Dean (International Development) commenced on 1 February 2019.

667.1.3 Noted: the term of office of Dr C Meehan as Associate Dean (Student Experience) commenced on 1 February 2019.

667.2 Membership category 10: An Admissions Tutor nominated by the Admissions Tutors for a term of office of three (3) years

Noted: the appointment of Mr P Thomas commenced on 1 February 2019.

667.3 The Chair expressed disappointment that the student representatives once again did not attend.

668 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no any declarations of interest by members, Officers in Attendance or others present in any of the matters to be considered during the meeting.
MINUTES – 5 December 2018

The minutes were confirmed and signed (Confidential Agenda Paper 4 refers).

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Any matters arising not taken elsewhere on the Agenda.

Minute 649

Noted: the restructuring of Humanities degrees had been processed accordingly and the issue with teaching rooms had been resolved. There was no intention of taking forward the provision of Arabic. This would be reviewed with the new Head of Subject for languages at the appropriate time.

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGY – Minute 650 refers

Noted: there were no updates to the School Academic Standards and Student Experience Action Plan.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT – Minute 651 refers

Received: a report from Dr M Tessier, Associate Dean (International Development), concerning recruitment to the programmes offered by the School (Confidential Agenda Paper 7.1 refers).

It was unclear how the drop in the number of students was calculated last year as a breakdown was not available. Applications had dropped again this year due to a variety of reasons.

Restructuring had been ongoing during the recruitment period. The benefits of the changes made would not be seen until next year.

Conversion rates appeared strong and recruitment in terms of overseas and postgraduate students was good. Politics was holding up well. Work would be undertaken to ensure conversion occurred and additional students were recruited through clearing.

There was no significant drop in overseas applications.

ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS – Minute 652 refers

Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance)

Received: a report from Dr M Groefsema, Associate Dean (Academic Quality Assurance) concerning matters relating to academic quality and standards which should be brought to the particular attention of the Committee or should be discussed at the meeting (Confidential Agenda Paper 8.1 refers).

Periodic reviews of the Mass Communication programmes at INTI had been very satisfactory. Recruitment in Penang was a concern, Subang looked more healthy.

A proposal would be submitted to next the Academic Development Committee to introduce two new programmes in Journalism and Communications.

New external examiners had been appointed due to the introduction of new programmes or contract amendments. Four external examiners out of 32 had not attended any meetings.
673.1.4 Of the 928 responses to statements on external examiners’ reports the vast majority had expressed agreement. There were some partial disagreements but nothing significant.

673.1.5 Programme specifications has been completed for all new programmes. Ongoing programme specifications were still to be updated by the end of March.

673.2 Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Reports (AMERs), Annual Short Course Monitoring Reports and Annual Subject Monitoring and Evaluation Reports

673.2.1 Noted: the completion and approval of the AMERs (including, as appropriate, Annual Short Course Monitoring Reports and Annual Subject Monitoring and Evaluation Reports) for the Academic Year 2017-18 for the School and noted that the AMERs would be held in the electronic archive of the Committee’s business as from the date of the meeting (Agenda Paper 8.2 refers).

673.2.2 All AMERs had now been received and audited. Subject Monitoring and Evaluation Reports would go to the Dean for signature once formally noted at SAC. A Workshop for authors would be held in September.

673.3 Academic Standards and Audit Committee (ASAC)

673.3.1 Received: a report of the business discharged by ASAC at its meetings on 4 December 2018 and 29 January 2019 (Confidential Agenda Paper 8.3.1 refers).

673.3.2 Summary of External Examiner Reports for the academic year 2017-2018

Noted: summaries of the external examiner reports for the School for the academic year 2017-2018:

i A UH-wide summary of external examiners’ reports from 2017/18, showing where they had ‘partly agreed’ or ‘disagreed’ with the statements in the report template (Confidential Agenda Paper 8.3.2,i refers).

ii A UH-wide summary of external examiners’ reports from 2017/18, showing where they had ‘disagreed’ with the statements in the report template (Confidential Agenda Paper 8.3.2,ii refers).

iii A more detailed report summarising the responses for each of the external examiners for the School (Confidential Agenda Paper 8.3.2 iii refers).

674 STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND LEARNING AND TEACHING – Minute 653 refers

674.1 Associate Dean of School (Learning and Teaching)

Received: a report from Dr A Maunder, Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching), concerning matters relating to learning and teaching which should be brought to the particular attention of the Committee or should be discussed at the meeting (Confidential Agenda Paper 9.1 refers).

674.1.1 The peer review of the teaching process was ongoing. There had been a low take up from colleagues and there would be another push to Heads of Subjects to encourage sign-up.

674.1.2 There had been an encouraging take up from the School for the BAME conference. Students would be encouraged to sign up.

674.2 Student Educational Experience Committee (SEEC)

Noted: the reports of the business discharged by SEEC on 2 October 2018 and 27 November 2018 (Agenda Paper 9.2 refers).
674.3 Student matters

674.3.1 Feedback remained an issue for students. Drop in hours would be highlighted.

674.3.2 There was a perceived lack of support for mental health and wellbeing on the de Havilland campus. Resilience was important and students should be made aware of the difference between having a bad day and the symptoms of depression. In addition expectations should be managed around the resources Student Support could deliver. Students should be made more aware of the self-help resources available on StudyNet.

674.3.3 Students were keen on lecture capture. There was no mechanism available yet to monitor who was clicking and watching.

674.3.4 A list of courses with a zero response to MFOs would be circulated.

675 RESEARCH DEGREES – Minute 654 refers

Associate Dean’s Report

675.1 Received: a report from Dr R Hughes, Associate Dean (Research and Commercial), concerning matters relating to research degrees which should be brought to the particular attention of the Committee or should be discussed at the meeting (Confidential Agenda Paper 10 refers).

675.2 University preparations for REF 2021 were ongoing. This year would be largely devoted to developing impact case studies.

675.3 The Research Office had invited applications for impact development grants. Several successful applications had been submitted from within the School with a particular focus on evidence gathering.

675.4 A meeting with the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research and the Head of the Research Office was scheduled for May to review environment statements and the general state of play with REF preparations.

675.5 This was the last year that research groups would have devolved control of QR funds. Next year funds would be constrained. Staffing commitments to QR would continue to support core research within the School but the amount of extra funds that could be applied for would be reduced to around £60k.

676 ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO – Minute 655 refers

676.1 Academic Development Committee (ADC)

Noted: that at the meeting on 30 January 2019 there were no matters to report.

676.2 Programme Specifications

Noted: that there were no amendments to programme specifications to consider on this occasion.

677 EXTERNAL EXAMINERS – Minute 656 refers

677.1 Noted: amendments to External Examiner appointments (Confidential Agenda Paper 13.2 refers).

677.2 Received: oral assurances from Dr Groefsema that any issues of concern raised by the School’s External Examiners had been addressed by the School.
PROGRAMME COMMITTEES – Minute 657 refers

Matters referred by Programme Committees

To note that there were no matters referred by Programme Committees for consideration by the School Academic Committee on this occasion.

COLLABORATIVE PROVISION – Minute 630 refers

Collaborative Partners

Noted: the School’s collaborative partners and the dates on which those partners required re-approval (Agenda Paper 15.1 refers).

Matters referred by the Collaborative Partnership Leaders

Noted: that there were no substantive items that the Collaborative Partnership Leaders wished to draw to the attention of the School Academic Committee.

Collaborative Partnership Annual Activity Agreements

Noted: the Annual Activity Agreements (Confidential Agenda Paper 15.3 refers).

VALIDATIONS, PERIODIC REVIEWS AND REVALIDATIONS – Minute 659 refers

Noted: the schedule of validations, periodic reviews and revalidations (Confidential Agenda Paper 16.1 refers).

Received: oral assurances from Dr Groefsema that none of the School’s validated or re-validated programmes had failed to commence within six (6) months of the date of approval.

AGENDA - PART II

Noted and approved: the remaining items in Part II of the Agenda (Items A to C, refer).

UNIVERSITY POLICY AND REGULATION – COMPLIANCE

There were no matters concerning compliance with University policy and regulation which had not already been considered during the meeting.

RISK

There were no further risks inherent in the matters dealt with by the Committee during the meeting not discussed when the item was taken.

EMERGENCY BUSINESS

There was no emergency business.
DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 22 May 2019, 14.00 hours, Woburn Room, MacLaurin Building.

Items for the Agenda should be notified to the Clerk by 1 May 2019. Supporting papers should be provided to the Clerk by 8 May 2019 (e-mail: b.lyons@herts.ac.uk, Telephone: 4372).