UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Standards and Audit Committee held on 28 January 2020.

PRESENT: Dr Frank Haddleton (Chair)

Karen Barton                                      Rob Wright                                      Veronica Earle
Catherine Rendell                                Amy Holloway-Smith                            Dr Barbara Henry
Dr Helen Barefoot                                 Dr Susan Grey                                  Dr Marjolein Groefsema
Janette Bowyer                                    Dr Barbara Brownie                            Dr Stefanie Schmeer
Dr Jo Cahill                                      Susan Murray                                  Dr Stephen Kane
Liz Gormley-Fleming                              Dr Hilary Lee                                  Dr Cheryl Holman
Petros Khoudian                                   Dr Michaela Cottee                            Lisa Uttley

IN ATTENDANCE:

Karen Clark                                      Dr Michaela Cottee
Faith Goligher                                    Mel Golder

48 APOLOGIES

The Committee received apologies from Jackie Hulse and Phil Shaughnessy.

49 CHAIR’S OVERVIEW

49.1 The Committee congratulated Karen Barton, Director of Learning and Teaching, for her recent appointment as Interim Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education and Student Experience). Her appointment commenced on 27 January 2020 and would remain in post until the substantive post-holder was in place.

49.2 The Committee congratulated Helen Barefoot, Deputy Director of the Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre, who would temporarily be acting as Director of Learning and Teaching.

49.3 The Curriculum Management project (which started out as the Programme Specification database project and had expanded to include the content of DMDs) was progressing. By the deadline for the submission of tenders for the project on 24 January 2020, a number of organisations had submitted tenders which were currently being evaluated and the successful bidder would be chosen at the start of March. This database would become the single authoritative source of data for a range of business needs, including for quality assurance, academic planning, marketing, reporting and compliance, and would significantly reduce the bureaucracy involved in the approval and maintenance of Programme Specifications and Definitive Module Documents.

50 MINUTES - 10 DECEMBER 2019

The Minutes would be signed at the next meeting following a correction.

(Confidential Agenda paper 3, refers).

51 MATTERS ARISING

Received: the actions arising from the meeting of 15 October 2019

(Confidential Agenda Paper 4, refers).
ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORTS ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE

(Minute 52 is confidential and available to members and Officers in attendance only.)

52.1 School of Engineering and Computer Science

The Committee received the School of Engineering and Computer Science’s Action Plan for 2019-2020 from Susan Murray, Associate Dean of School (AQA).

(Confidential Agenda paper 5, refers).

UNIVERSITY POLICY AND REGULATIONS

53.1 QAA Degree Classification Descriptors

The Committee received a report concerning UPR AS14 – incorporation of QAA degree classification descriptors into the University’s Assessment Regulations from the Chair.

The University’s Grade Descriptors were contextualised at School, subject or programme level. In doing so, it was proposed that Schools should take account of the QAA outcome classification descriptions.

The Committee agreed to the proposed amendments.

An internal audit would be planned for 2020/21 to check alignment to the descriptors.

(Confidential Agenda paper 6, refers).

QAA - QUALITY AND STANDARDS REVIEW

54.1 The Committee received an oral report on the Academic Quality Review from the Chair.

54.2 The Office for Students identified the need for the review due to the low continuation and/or satisfaction of part time students.

54.3 The QAA Quality and Standards Review (QSR) was expected in 2020.

54.4 A further update would be made to the Committee at the next meeting in March 2020.

EXTERNAL EXAMINERS REPORTS 2018-2019

55.1 Received: a summary of External Examiners reports for the academic year 2018-2019 from the Chair.

55.2 Noted:

i the summary was a compilation of responses to questions on the External Examiners report template, analysed by Academic Services to identify any significant recoccurring themes. The analyses had grouped separately responses (i) with which each External Examiner disagreed, and (ii) those with which he/she had disagreed or only partially agreed, on a School-by-School basis. As in previous years, all external examiners’ reports had been RAG-rated;

ii the School-specific information would be considered by School Academic Committees at their next meetings;

iii Schools were reminded that a report was required by the School on any Red RAG-rated reports for the Chair and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience);
iv the Board of Governors had asked why the attendance of Exam Boards by some External Examiners had been so poor. External Examiner attendance via tele- and video-conference was encouraged and there were many teleconferencing facilities across the University. External Examiners were encouraged and had the opportunity to meet students before an exam board however this was not compulsory every year unless they wanted to do so;

v as part of the AQ review a trial of all exam boards for two partners would take place through video conferencing with the aim of saving time, money and reducing the University’s carbon footprint;

vi all issues raised by the External Examiner required an appropriate response or explanation, even if the School had decided not to act on the external’s recommendation.

55.3 **Agreed:**

i that separately provided School summaries be presented to School Academic Committees for consideration, detailing what the External Examiner’s concerns were and attendance clarification;

ii the attendance statement would be amended to clarify that External Examiners attendance of Exam Boards via Tele/Video conferencing was classed as attendance.

(Agenda Paper 6, refers.)

56 **AUDITS 2018-2019**

56.1 **Received:** actions arising out of Academic Standards and Audit Committee audits from Catherine Rendell, Deputy Director of Academic Quality Assurance.

56.2 **Noted:** that many of the actions marked EN were feeding into either the STAR review or the AQ review for consideration. These would now be marked as completed. Actions marked ES must be completed as soon as possible.

(AConfidential Agenda Paper 10, refers)

57 **AUDITS 2019-2020**

The schedule of audits for 2019-2020 had been presented at the previous meeting.

58 **ONGOING AUDIT OF THE OPERATION OF BOARDS OF EXAMINERS AND SAPS**

58.1 **Received:** a summary report from Jan Bowyer, Associate Director (Academic Quality Assurance) concerning 2018-2019 data.

58.2 **Noted:**

i the observation of 20 Boards of Examiners had been undertaken;

ii around 60% of Boards were still paper based with a plan to reduce this further;

iii in 2019-2020, Boards highlighted by Associate Deans would be observed along with some video conferenced Boards;

iv the extent to which Module Boards considered module statistics, cohort performance and benchmark figures for failure rates was found to be variable. This was an area for enhancement;
v a larger proportion of boards required observation to ensure a clearer overall picture;

vi a significant change to the Boards of Examiners was expected following the StAR review appointments to be made by the end of March 2020 and the Committee highlighted this as a risk.

58.3 **Agreed:**

The recommendations of the on-going audit of Boards of Examiners as follows would be identified as Essential (ES) or an Enhancement (EN):

| i | Each observer to attend a minimum of three BoEs in 2019/20 | CAQA/AS |
| ii | To introduce a risk-based approach to enable Schools to highlight specific BoEs for observation | ADoS(AQA) |
| iii | To amend standard agenda to include deletion of all downloaded files and consider additional strategies for the wider dissemination of the agenda template for 2019/20. | Complete |
| iv | To promote the use of module statistical data to inform constructive discussion around learning, teaching and assessment strategies. | ADoS(AQA)/Chairs |

(Confidential Agenda paper 11, refers).

59 **ACCREDITATION OF UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE PROGRAMMES BY PROFESSIONAL, STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BODIES**

59.1 **Received:** a report from Jan Bowyer, Associate Director (Academic Quality Assurance).

59.2 **Noted:** the accreditation/approval/recognition status of all UH programmes by Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) were considered by the Committee. A large proportion (almost 85%) of the University’s Bachelor’s degrees were accredited, approved or recognised by PSRBs. However, there were a small number of UH Bachelor’s programmes that were not currently PSRB-accredited that could be. Schools were encouraged to consider these programmes for accreditation which were important for the University’s TEF submission and its students’ employability.

59.3 **Agreed:** Associate Deans were asked to review and liaise with Jan Bowyer on any items highlighted red in the report.

(Confidential Agenda paper 12, refers).

60 **CHECK LIST FOR COMMUNICATIONS**

The Committee agreed the outcomes of this meeting.

61 **PEOPLE DEVELOPMENTS**

There were no people development needs identified as requiring referral to the Manager of People Development, Department of Planning, Development and Change.

62 **RISK**

There were no risks identified as inherent in the matters dealt with by the Committee during the meeting but not discussed when the item concerned was taken.
EMERGENCY BUSINESS

There was no emergency business.

CLERKS REPORT

The Committee received the Clerk’s report and noted the information detailed therein on the following matters:

Matters Arising

Summary to School Academic Committees

That matters for report and consideration by the School Academic Committees from the meeting of the Committee held on 10 December 2019 were circulated to Deans of School and Associate Deans (Academic Quality Assurance) by the Chair on 23 December 2019. (Part 2)

ACADEMIC SERVICES

The amendments/revisions to the Academic Services publications for the period 19 November 2019 – 14 January 2020. (Part 3)
Publications were available for inspection online at: http://www.studynet1.herts.ac.uk/ptl/common/ago.nsf/Homepage?ReadForm
Members and named alternates wishing to view or obtain copies should refer to this site.

ACADEMIC QUALITY

Programmes, Courses and Collaborative Agreements

The reports confirmed by the Chair of the Student Educational Experience Committee and ratified by the Vice-Chancellor for the period 2 October – 14 January 2020 with the summary of conclusions and recommendations. (Part 4)

STUDENT EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE (SEEC)

Publication of the minutes of the meeting of the Student Educational Experience Committee held on 26 November 2019.


SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND DEADLINES 2019-2020

To note the schedule of meetings for the academic year 2019-2020, to take place at 09.30 hours in the Central Committee Room:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of meeting</th>
<th>Date for receipt of papers</th>
<th>Date for notification of items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 March 2020</td>
<td>03 March 2020</td>
<td>25 February 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>05 May 2020</td>
<td>21 April 2020</td>
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<td>23 June 2020</td>
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