UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Standards and Audit Committee held on 4 May 2021.

PRESENT: Professor Frank Haddleton (Chair)
Dr Mairi Watson  Karthik Bonkur  Veronica Earle
Catherine Rendell  Dr Susan Grey  Dr Michaela Cottee
Karen Barton  Julie Kelly  Dr Barbara Henry
Janette Bowyer  Dr Barbara Brownie  Dr Marjolein Groefsema
Dr Jo Cahill  Dr Mariana Lilley  Dr Stefanie Schmeer
Liz Gormley-Fleming  Alison McLauchlin  Dr Sherael Webley
Jackie Hulse  Dr Cheryl Holman  Scott Isaacs

IN ATTENDANCE:
Lisa Uttley  Stephanie Keegan  Mel Golder

102  APOLOGIES
The Committee received apologies from Naomi Hewitt, Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance) School of Life and Medical Sciences.

103  DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (IF ANY)
There were no declarations of interest.

104  MINUTES - 16 MARCH 2021
The Minutes were approved.
(Confidential Agenda paper 3, refers).

105  MATTERS ARISING
All remaining actions were identified for consideration at this meeting, or for consideration at a meeting later in the Academic Year.

106  CHAIR’S OVERVIEW
The Committee received an update from the Chair.

106.1  The recent cyber-attack had presented challenges to the delivery of the Semester B schedule, due to the postponement of teaching, delays in the ability to mark and moderate online, delays in accessing certain specialist software and delays in the ability to process Serious Adverse Circumstances (SACs). Registry had worked hard to clear the backlog of SACs cases however the cyber-attack had created further issues.

106.2  Most schools had been able to agree to the Semester B board schedules with the exception of the School of Creative Arts and School of Physics, Engineering and Computer Science due to their specialist software.

106.3  The Committee were reminded that any delays in Boards needed to be communicated to External Examiners and Students.

106.4  Following measures put in place as a result of the cyber-attack, some external examiners had raised concerns regarding the compatibility of Pulse Secure with their own university systems.
AUDIT OF THE USE OF THE INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM AND GUIDED LEARNER CHECKLIST

The Committee received a report of the audit undertaken by Dr Jo Cahill, Associate Director of Academic Quality Assurance and Dominic Bygate, Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre.

107.1 The aim of the audit was to examine the extent to which module and programme teams use the Inclusive Curriculum and Guided Learner Journey Checklist in their module design, delivery, teaching, learning and assessment practice. The audit focused on areas of good practice and also sought to identify areas of practice that module/programme/school teams may need support with to enhance further inclusive practice within their provision.

107.2 The overall impression was positive and gave a clear indication of student diversity. 32 canvas sites had been reviewed and although they had not met all 28 audit statements, nearly all had been partly met and no concerns had been highlighted.

107.3 The recommendations within the report were all enhancements and specific feedback had been given to Schools for action.

1. The use and value of the Inclusive Curriculum and Guided Learning Journey checklist and the resources within the GLJ module should be reaffirmed to all programme and module leaders/teams including visiting lecturers.

2. Programme Leaders should encourage and support all module leaders to self-audit and/or peer-review their own module sites on Canvas using the checklist. Amendments should be made as is necessary. Specific focus should be placed on the Module site Homepage and Assessment Unit (EN). Module leaders should also be encouraged to access a module review support session offered by LTIC.

3. Schools should consider developing a strategy whereby good practice aligned specifically to the Inclusive Curriculum and Guided Learning Journey audit statements can be shared between module leaders on the same programme and beyond. This might involve sharing good practices at the proposed Continuous Enhancement Planning (CEP) Annual Event.

4. LTIC should consider how the sharing of good practice associated with inclusive practice could be promoted further within and between schools. An action would be added to this recommendation to include a discussion with LTIC.

107.4 The Committee passed on their thanks to Dominic Bygate, for his contribution to the audit and report.

107.5 Further discussions would take place to ensure the full uptake of toolkits.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 6, refers).

SUMMARY OF AUDIT PROGRESS

The Committee received a report from Catherine Rendell, Deputy Director of Academic Quality Assurance.

108.1 The updates were noted by the Committee and also that there were no essential recommendations outstanding.

108.2 Ongoing auditing of the University’s Public Information – The Committee received an update to the report, items 7 and 8 had been completed.

108.3 Audit of QAA Quality Code Advice and Guidance: Work Based learning – Most Schools had now completed this action.
Audit of the University's UPRs, practices and guidance against the Advice and Guidance in the Revised QAA Quality Code on Partnerships – CAQA had produced a document which provides a clear typology of partnerships and perceived associated risks. This was now available on the CAQA website and had been included in the periodic review and validation handbooks.

(Confidential Agenda paper 7, refers).

UNIVERSITY RESPONSES TO ITEMS IDENTIFIED FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY FROM THE ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORTS

The Committee received a report from the Chair and noted the University’s responses to the Annual School Reports on Academic Standards and Student Experience for the academic year 2020-2021.

(Confidential Agenda paper 8, refers)

ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORTS ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The Committee noted the updated action plans and received the relevant section 1a of School Annual Business Plans:

This item is confidential and available to members and officers in attendance only.

SCHOOL OF PHYSICS, ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

The Committee received a report from Dr Mariana Lilley, Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance)

This item is confidential and available to members and officers in attendance only.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 9, refers).

SCHOOL OF LIFE AND MEDICAL SCIENCES

The Committee received a report from Dr Stefanie Schmeer, Dr Sherael Webley and Naomi Hewitt, Associate Deans of School (Academic Quality Assurance).

This item is confidential and available to members and officers in attendance only.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 10, refers)

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

The Committee received a report from Dr Marjolein Groefsema, Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance).

This item is confidential and available to members and officers in attendance only.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 11, refers).

HERTFORDSHIRE LAW SCHOOL

The Committee received a report from Dr Barbara Henry, Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance).

This item is confidential and available to members and officers in attendance only.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 12, refers).
115  **HERTFORDSHIRE BUSINESS SCHOOL**

The Committee received a report from Veronica Earle, Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance).

*This item is confidential and available to members and officers in attendance only.*

(Confidential Agenda Paper 13, refers).

116  **SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORK**

The Committee received a report from Dr Cheryl Holman, Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance).

116.1 This item was deferred to the next meeting on 22 June 2021.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 14, refers).

117  **SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

The Committee received a report from Alison McLauchlin, Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance).

*This item is confidential and available to members and officers in attendance only.*

(Confidential Agenda Paper 15, refers).

118  **SCHOOL OF CREATIVE ARTS**

The Committee received a report from Dr Barbara Brownie, Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance).

*This item is confidential and available to members and officers in attendance only.*

(Confidential Agenda Paper 16, refers).

119  **UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND REGULATIONS (UPRS)**

**THE IMPACT OF THE CYBER INCIDENT ON 14 APRIL 2021 ON ASSESSMENT DEADLINES**

The Committee noted a report from the Chair concerning the impact of the Cyber Incident on 14 April 2021 on assessment deadlines and noted the Chair’s action of the Vice-Chancellor’s approval.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 17, refers).

120  **RE-DEFINITION OF ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS**

The Committee received a report from the Chair and approved the proposed amendment to UPR AS17, section D2.1.

120.1 Articulation agreements are put in place where students on a collaborative partner’s course are, upon successful completion, guaranteed entry to a UH course. In the past, QAA considered this form of articulation to require the University to have in place robust arrangements for assuring the academic standards and quality of the partner’s provision (as it considered the partner’s provision to be stage 1 and therefore an extension of the University’s provision).
120.2 QAA no longer held this view on articulation arrangements. Furthermore, the University considered the partner to be primarily responsible for the academic standards and quality of its own provision, as it awards credit for its modules and awards any relevant qualification. It had therefore been agreed that the University’s Academic Development Committee was no longer required to formally approve and re-approve articulation agreements with partners (with the exception of certain Chinese Collaboration Agreements and Hertfordshire International College, HIC, which was classified with OfS as sub-contracted provision of the University).

(Confidential Agenda Paper 18, refers).

121 SERIOUS ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES AND FIT-TO-SIT CLAIMS

The Committee received a report from Catherine Rendell and agreed to the proposed amendments to UPR AS14, UPR AS12 and UPR AS13.

121.1 All the changes proposed were either to remove inconsistencies in the UPRs that had developed over time or for clarification. The changes were approved by the Committee.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 19, refers).

OTHER ITEMS

122 ACADEMIC REGISTRY UPDATE

The Committee received a report from Julie Kelly, Academic Registrar.

122.1 The Committee were asked to be patient whilst systems returned following the Cyber attack and the added pressure that this had created for the AR Team. Any questions concerning the report were invited by email to Julie directly.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 20, refers).

123 CONTINUOUS MONITORING WORKING GROUP

The Committee received a report from Catherine Rendell

123.1 The University had commissioned a SUMS Report to advise on a way forward for programme monitoring. The report recommended that the University considered:

- the withdrawal of annual monitoring reports for programmes above an agreed threshold.
- the introduction of continuous monitoring.
- the introduction of annual enhancement events.

123.2 As the direction of travel was developed, the Working Group had shared the proposals with Deans of School, at two Associate Dean of School Forums and at two specially convened Programme Leader meetings, attended by more than 80 programme leaders. Feedback from these events had been taken on board.

123.3 It was proposed that there would be a live action plan and at least one annual enhancement event. The idea behind the enhancement event was to share good practice and student feedback and ensure that Programme Action Plans reflected (i) student feedback (ii) School/Department wide enhancement actions; and (iii) the University’s strategic direction.

123.4 Reassurance had been given to Deans that the data-driven part of the system was not asking for more data analysis and withdrawal data was now available. Training would be made available on how to use the data base.
123.5 The Committee accepted the revised processes proposed and suggested that:

- Associate Deans of School Forum discuss how to make the module action plan work.
- Consideration be given to the timings around the full implementation.

123.6 The June meeting of ASAC would receive a report on progress.

123.7 The Committee expressed their appreciation for all the continued work involved.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 21, refers).

124 CHECK LIST FOR COMMUNICATIONS

The Committee agreed the outcomes of this meeting.

125 PEOPLE DEVELOPMENTS

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

126 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.

127 EMERGENCY BUSINESS

127.1 All programme leaders were invited to take part in the 2021 Programme Leader Symposium to be held online on Wednesday 16 June 2021.

127.2 The Committee congratulated Dr Marjolein Groefsema on her new appointment as Associate Director of Academic Quality Assurance and noted that she would attend the Committee under this Membership category from the next meeting.

128 CLERKS REPORT

The Clerk’s report substituted part II of the Agenda.

There were no indications that Members wished to comment on any item in the Clerk’s report which had been received and therefore the report was taken as noted and approved.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 26, refers).

129 ACADEMIC QUALITY

Programmes, Courses and Collaborative Agreements

The reports confirmed by the Chair of the Education and Student Experience Committee and ratified by the Vice-Chancellor for the period 04 March 2021 – 20 April 2021 with the summary of conclusions and recommendations. (Part 2)

130 ACADEMIC SERVICES

The amendments/revisions to the Academic Services publications for the period 15 January 2021 – 27 April 2021 (Part 3)

Publications are available for inspection online at: [http://www.studynet1.herts.ac.uk/ptl/common/ago.nsf/Homepage?ReadForm](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.

131 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND DEADLINES 2021/22

The schedule of meetings to take place at 09.30 hours:

<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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132 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Academic Standards and Audit Committee will be held on Tuesday, 22 June 2021 from 09.30 hours via MS Teams. Items for the Agenda should be notified to the Clerk, Mel Golder ('e'-mail m.golder@herts.ac.uk) by 1 June 2021 and reports submitted by 8 June 2021.