UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Standards and Audit Committee held on 7 December 2021.

PRESENT: Professor Frank Haddleton (Chair)

Dr Mairi Watson  Dr Marjolein Groefsema  Veronica Earle
Catherine Rendell  Syeda Zara Haram  Dr Barbara Henry
Karen Barton  Dr Susan Grey  Peter Thomas
Janette Bowyer  Dr Barbara Brownie  Dr Stefanie Schmeer
Dr Jo Cahill  Dr Mariana Lilley  Dr Sherael Webley
Liz Gormley-Fleming  Alison McLauchlin  Scott Isaacs
Jackie Hulse  Dr Cheryl Holman

IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr Michaela Cottee  Lisa Uttley  Mel Golder
Faith Goligher  Tony Rosella

25 APOLOGIES

The Committee received apologies from Julie Kelly and noted that Tony Rosella from the School of Creative Arts had been invited to observe.

26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

27 MEMBERSHIP

The Committee congratulated Dr Barbara Brownie on her two year secondment as Associate Director of Academic Quality Assurance and also noted that she would represent category 5 and 9 in the interim until her replacement had been found within the School of Creative Arts.

(Agenda paper 3, refers).

28 MINUTES - 12 OCTOBER 2021

The Minutes were approved subject to a correction of attendance. Dr Cheryl Holman had been present at this meeting.

(Confidential Agenda paper 4, refers).

29 MATTERS ARISING

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

(Confidential Agenda paper 5, refers).

30 CHAIR’S OVERVIEW

The Committee received an update from the Chair.

30.1 The Chair informed the Committee that the QAA TNE review of the University’s provision at GAF, Egypt would be ready to submit by the QAA deadline of 20 December 2021. (Minute 85.1, refers).
SCHOOL EDUCATION AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE ACTION PLANS

(Minutes 31-38 are confidential and available to members and Officers in attendance only.)

31 SCHOOL OF CREATIVE ARTS

Dr Barbara Brownie Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance) presented the paper.

(Confidential Agenda paper 7, refers).

32 SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORK

Dr Cheryl Holman Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance) presented the paper.

(Confidential Agenda paper 8, refers).

33 SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Alison McLauchlin Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance) presented the paper.

(Confidential Agenda paper 9, refers).

34 HERTFORDSHIRE BUSINESS SCHOOL

Veronica Earle Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance) presented the paper.

(Confidential Agenda paper 10, refers).

35 HERTFORDSHIRE LAW SCHOOL

Dr Barbara Henry Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance) presented the paper.

(Confidential Agenda paper 11, refers).

36 SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

Peter Thomas Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance) presented the paper.

(Confidential Agenda paper 12, refers).

37 SCHOOL OF LIFE AND MEDICAL SCIENCES

Dr Stefanie Schmeer and Dr Sherael Webley Associate Deans of School (Academic Quality Assurance) presented the paper.

(Confidential Agenda paper 13, refers).

38 SCHOOL OF PHYSICS, ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

Dr Marianna Lilley Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance) presented the paper.

(Confidential Agenda paper 14, refers).
The Chair thanked the report authors and summarised some of the raised issues concerning support and administration. He acknowledged that Academic Registry needed further review. The Chair would merge and provide a response at the next meeting. The Annual School reporting process would be changing next year however, the action plan would continue, and the new process had yet to be agreed.

Chair

AUDITS

39 ONGOING AUDIT OF THE OPERATION OF BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

The Committee received a report from Jan Bowyer, Associate Director of Academic Quality Assurance and Lisa Uttley, Assistant Registrar.

39.1 During the 2020/2021 academic year, 39 Board of Examiners (BoEs) were observed across all Schools, by 14 out of 17 observers. There were approximately 530 board events, so this sample represented 7% an improvement on 2019/20 of 4%. This had been achieved by the increase in nominated observers and use of online Boards. Only six observers attended three or more Boards. It was recommended that each observer should continue to attend a minimum of three BoEs in the 2021/22 academic session.

39.2 Areas of good practice included:

- Extensive preparation by Chair, Clerk and programme leader, including significant importance of pre-Boards;
- Summary of student performance and consideration of module statistics;
- Facilitation of clear, joint decision making inclusive of all Board members;
- The adoption of exception reporting to enhance efficiency of BoE proceedings;
- The effective use of MS Teams and associated functions, such as screenshare, for online Boards;
- Identified lead person from partner organisation to guide proceedings from their perspective;
- Positive working relationship between Chair and Clerk.

39.3 Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action by</th>
<th>i. Review list of nominated observers, each observer to attend a minimum of three BoEs in 2021/22</th>
<th>CAQA/AS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Schools to continue to identify and propose specific BoEs for observation using a risk-based approach</td>
<td>ADoS(AQA)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>iii. Ensure that staff are aware of, and compliant with UH policy – Managing personal, sensitive and confidential information to comply with GDPR</td>
<td>ADoS(AQA)/Clerks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>iv. Promote use of appropriate reports containing data relating to outcomes of SACs, appeals and academic conduct offences and provide guidance on the application of the 'fit-to-sit' policy at BoEs.</td>
<td>LU/ADoS(AQA)</td>
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</table>

39.4 Assurance level - From the start of this academic year, all audit teams included in the report to the Committee the level of assurance that the audit team considered to have been met. This audit had been awarded Substantial Assurance (Minute 41, also refers).

39.5 The Committee thanked Jan and Lisa and all observers involved in this ongoing audit.

(Confidential Agenda paper 15, refers).

40 AUDIT OF THE USE OF INITIAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN THE APPRENTICESHIP PROVISION

The Committee received a report from Dr Jo Cahill, Associate Director (Academic Quality) Liz Gormley-Fleming Associate Director (Academic Quality) and Sarah Flynn Associate Director (Learning and Teaching).
40.1 This audit was to evaluate the extent of compliance with the University’s Initial Needs Assessment (INA) process and examine the robustness of the initial assessments undertaken to recognise the prior learning and experience of students applying to undertake an apprenticeship programme at the University.

40.2 Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action by</th>
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<tr>
<td>i. To consider reviewing UPR AS 17 Appendix 1 Section 3.4 to make explicit the INA requirements and monitoring arrangements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ii. To consider reviewing how programme leaders and admissions tutors in the schools are trained and supported to undertake a robust INA ensuring that all are fully cognisant of the need to produce a robust INA and comply with due process. Training should include encouraging programme leader attendance at the Apprentice Academic Group. Due consideration needs also to be given to the workload of apprenticeship programme leaders.</td>
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<td>iii. To consider reviewing the INA Guidance to: a) make explicit that the initial Needs Assessment has two component parts, labelling appropriately* or b) merge the two INA templates (Part 1 and 2) to include all information on one form*. c) reduce the repetition that exists between the two forms e.g., record of formal learning sections. d) include some anonymised INAs as exemplars of good practice on the CAQA StudyNet site. &quot;It should be noted that recommendations a, b and c can be addressed as part of the DAMs Degree Apprenticeship Management System Project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. To consider reviewing how apprenticeship applicants/employers are guided and supported to complete their self-assessment – Part 1 of the INA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. Schools to consider developing a system for the monitoring of the quality of the initial analysis assessments completed and the level of compliance with the INA process ensuring the assessment is conducted by the programme leader/admissions tutor in a timely manner and submitted to the ARDA Team for recording keeping.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

40.3 Assurance level - This audit had been awarded Substantial Assurance (Minute 41, also refers).

40.4 The Committee thanked Jo, Liz and Sarah for the thorough audit.

40.5 Recommendation iv would be actioned by Gilmar Queiros. Confidential Agenda paper 16, would be updated following the meeting. (Confidential Agenda paper 16, refers).

41 THE REVISED SCHEDULE OF AUDITS FOR THE 2021-22 ACADEMIC YEAR

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

41.1 An additional audit had been added to the list of audits for academic year 2021/22. Audit of Grading/Marking criteria would be audited by Catherine Rendell, Karen Barton (or nominee) and Dr Mariana Lilley to be discussed at the meeting in March 2022. (Confidential Agenda paper 17, refers).
SUMMARY OF AUDIT PROGRESS

The Committee received a report from Catherine Rendell.

42.1 The ADoS AQA were thanked for updating the document and it was noted that all actions had now been completed and the action table would be removed.

(Confidential Agenda paper 18, refers).

ANNUAL REPORTS

43 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP COMPLIANCE AND OPERATIONAL STRATEGY GROUP (DACOS) 2020-2021

The Committee received a report from Lisa Uttley.

43.1 The Committee accepted the annual report of the DACOS group 2020/21 and considered the risks highlighted within the Risk Register, included as Appendix A.

43.2 The action plan and risk register would be updated; the Committee would be updated with progress at the next meeting.

(Confidential Agenda paper 19, refers).

44 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM QUALITY AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (CQMC) 2020-2021

The Committee received a report from Scott Isaacs, Chair of Hertfordshire Higher Education Consortium Quality and Management Committee.

44.1 Overall satisfaction rates had improved at two of the four Colleges when compared to 2019/20. North Herts College (NHC) had recorded a significant improvement but remained 11% below benchmark, however following the significant work from the new Collaborative Partnership Leader (CPL) an increase was expected next year.

44.2 Satisfaction rates for question 26 of the National Student Survey regarding the Students’ Union, continued to be an area for improvement across all colleges.

44.3 The results of partners were included within the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). This was targeted by the Schools and the CPL.

(Confidential Agenda paper 20, refers).

OTHER BUSINESS

45 STUDENT PERFORMANCE MONITORING GROUP (SPMG) REPORT 2020-2021

(Minute 45 is confidential and available to members and Officers in attendance only.)

The Committee received a report from Catherine Rendell.

(Confidential Agenda paper 21, refers).

46 ACADEMIC REGISTRY UPDATE

The Committee received a report from Julie Kelly, Academic Registrar, and noted the resource and staff turnover challenges for the team.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 22, refers).

47 APPRENTICESHIP PROVISION CONTINUOUS ACTION PLAN

The Committee noted the report from Liz Gormley-Fleming, Associate Director of Academic Quality Assurance.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 23, refers).
AMENDMENT/ENDORSEMENT OF THE ACADEMIC REGULATIONS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2021-2022

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

(Confidential Agenda paper 24, refers).

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

This item was deferred to the next meeting. The Associate Deans Academic Quality Assurance were asked to give attention to the re-accreditation due items highlighted in red in the report.

(Confidential Agenda paper 25, refers).

REVIEW OF SERIOUS ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE OPERATION OF COURSEWORK EXTENSIONS

The Committee received a report from Catherine Rendell.

A review of the operation of serious adverse circumstances (SACs) was necessary to address a change in culture for both students and staff. The review progress would be reported to the PVC Advisory (ESE), ASAC and ESEC after each meeting and final recommendations would be brought to this Committee in May 2022.

(Confidential Agenda paper 26, refers).

CHECK LIST FOR COMMUNICATIONS

The Committee agreed the outcomes of this meeting.

PEOPLE DEVELOPMENTS

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

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 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 31, refers).

ACADEMIC SERVICES

The amendments/revisions to the Academic Services publications for the period 30 September 2021 – 23 November 2021 (Part 2)
55.2 **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 21 April and 28 September 2021 with the summary of conclusions and recommendations. (Part 3)

55.3 **MATTERS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION**

**UH Awards and module grade data, 2018/19 to 2020/21**

The Academic Registry (SIP) published internal awards data for 2020/21. (Part 4)

**Academic Standards and Audit Committee Audit Activity 2020-2021 and 2021-2022**

The summary of the audit activity of the Committee and emerging recommendation progress. (Part 5)

**Quality and Standards Assurances to The Board of Governors 2021**

The Annual Assurance Statement. (Part 6)

55.4 **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND DEADLINES 2021/22** - 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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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 January 2022</td>
<td>11 January 2022</td>
<td>4 January 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 March 2022</td>
<td>1 March 2022</td>
<td>22 February 2022</td>
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<td>3 May 2022</td>
<td>19 April 2022</td>
<td>12 April 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 June 2022</td>
<td>7 June 2022</td>
<td>31 May 2022</td>
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56 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Academic Standards and Audit Committee will be held on Tuesday, 25 January 2022 from 09:30 hours via MS Teams. Items for the agenda should be notified to the Clerk, Mel Golder, ext. 3285, email: m.golder@herts.ac.uk by Tuesday, 4 January 2022. Supporting papers should be lodged with the clerk no later than Tuesday, 11 January 2022.