UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Standards and Audit Committee held on 25 January 2022.

PRESENT: Professor Frank Haddleton (Chair)

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Faith Goligher    Lisa Uttley    Mel Golder

57 APOLOGIES

The Committee received apologies from Julie Kelly and Dr Sherael Webley.

58 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.

59 MINUTES - 7 DECEMBER 2021

The minutes were confirmed.

(Confidential Agenda paper 3, refers).

60 MATTERS ARISING

60.1 An update of the new Annual School Reports on Academic Standards and Student Experience reporting process would be reported at the next meeting. (Minute 38.5, refers). Chair

60.2 A review of the operation of serious adverse circumstances (SACs) was underway and subgroups had been set up to make the progress more efficient. A review progress report would be reported at the next meeting. (Minute 50.1, refers). CR

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

(Confidential Agenda paper 4, refers).

61 CHAIR’S OVERVIEW

The Committee received an update from the Chair.

61.1 OfS consulted on changes to the ‘Quality and Standards’ ongoing conditions of registration (on all B conditions except B3) last year, and a consultation on ongoing condition B3 has now been published on 20 January 2022. In summary minimum requirements for ‘student outcomes’ would be set, based on three indicators:

1. The proportion of students continuing a HE course
2. The proportion of students completing a HE qualification
3. The proportion of students progressing to managerial or professional employment, or further study

61.2 Indicators would be produced for full-time and part-time modes and apprenticeships, as well as different ‘levels of study’ (including PGR). There would also be ‘split indicators’, to disaggregate performance by subject, student characteristics, etc. Awarding bodies would also take responsibility for courses delivered by their partners.

61.3 Regulatory action would take the form of an Improvement Notice, which would specify the indicators requiring improvement, require a provider to act or provide evidence of sustained improvement. This action would not be taken with every provider with an indicator below a threshold but instead providers would be selected by a prioritisation exercise. These changes come into force in July 2022, the publication of all indicators in September 2022 and the identification of providers for assessment by October 2022.

61.4 OfS also published their consultation on the details of how the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) would work on 20th January 2022. In summary:

1. It would be at provider-level only, with no subject-level TEF.
2. It would revert back to being called the ‘Teaching Excellence Framework’.
3. TEF awards would be based on two criteria, Student Experience and Student Outcomes, based on a mix of qualitative and quantitative evidence from the NSS and condition B3.
4. The Gold, Silver and Bronze categories remain unchanged, with a fourth category of ‘requires improvement’.
5. Submissions would be made by November 2022, with outcomes announced in May 2023.

61.5 The deadline for responses to the consultations was 17 March 2022, and there would be a UH-level response.

ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORTS ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE

62 THE CHAIR’S RESPONSE TO THE ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORTS ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE.

The Committee received two reports from the Chair and noted the items of good practice identified for dissemination from the Annual School Reports on Academic Standards and Student Experience for the academic year 2021-2022 (Annual School Reports) and the items identified for consideration by the senior management of the University from the Annual School Reports. Responses to these items would be received at the next meeting of the Committee.

(Confidential Agenda paper 6, refers).

AUDITS

63 SUMMARY OF AUDIT PROGRESS

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

63.1 The recommendations were noted by the Committee. All audits had been identified as requiring enhancements except for the Use of Initial Needs Assessment in The Apprenticeship Provision which required essential changes to be made.
Ongoing Audit of Boards of Examiners - To ensure that staff were aware of, and compliant with UH policy a link to the guidance would be emailed to Clerks and ADoS(AQA) in advance of the Semester A Boards.

(Confidential Agenda paper 7, refers).

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND REGULATIONS (UPRS)

CONTINUOUS ENHANCEMENT PLANNING (CEP) PROCESS

The Committee approved the proposed amendment to UPR AS17 Section C2 to incorporate the Continuous Enhancement Planning (CEP) Process for Academic Boards approval.

Reassurance was given that the AMER process would still exist for some provision and progress had been made with developing the process for collaborative provision. However, further discussions on how to support collaborative partners would need to take place.

An update concerning the school’s process for module evaluation would be received at the next meeting.

(Confidential Agenda paper 8, refers).

APPRENTICESHIP POLICY: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND GUIDANCE FOR APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMMES

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

The Committee supported and approved the update to Appendix 1 UPR AS17 the wording of which had been agreed by The Degree Apprenticeship Compliance and Operational Strategy Group (DACOS) and would be taken forward by the Standing Working Party.

(Confidential Agenda paper 9, refers).

STUDY RATES

The Committee received a report from Jan Bowyer, Associate Director of Academic Quality Assurance.

The Committee were asked to approve an amendment to UPR AS14, section A4 for September 2022. The changes were made to clarify the minimum and maximum study rates. The financial implications and importance of defining the minimum study rates for both full and part time students had been taken into consideration.

The Committee approved the amendments subject to the following suggestions:

1. update the wording of section A4.1 from calendar year to three semesters
2. To explore and add a statement change for study rates (credits) from 45 to 30.

(Confidential Agenda paper 10, refers).

OTHER BUSINESS

THE DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP COMPLIANCE AND OPERATIONAL STRATEGY GROUP (DACOS)

The Committee received a report from Julie Kelly, Academic Registrar and Liz Gormley-Fleming.
The Apprenticeship Quality Review provided a summary of the recent Quality Review that had taken place by an external consultant to assess the University’s preparedness for an Ofsted inspection. The Ofsted Steering Group had created an action plan and were working through the recommendations.

The existing QIP Action Plan provided an overview of the headline actions for improvement within the apprenticeship provision and ensured the university fulfilled the mandatory requirements of an apprenticeship by School and were RAG rated. Those identified as red RAG rated were in hand. The action plan generated following the Quality Review exercise has some overlap with the QIP. It is not intended to amalgamate both at this point.

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITY SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR OFSTED

The Committee received a report from Liz Gormley-Fleming.

The aim of the process was to ensure that the University would be able to produce timely and accurate Self-Assessment report for Ofsted.

The production of the school based self-assessment report (SAR) and quality improvement plan (QIP) would be informed by the Continual Enhancement Process. The University SAR and QIP will be developed from the school based reports.

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

The Committee received a report from Jan Bowyer.

The Committee considered the information concerning the programmes to be delivered during the academic year 2020-2021 by the Schools of the University of Hertfordshire or its partner organisations which had been accredited, re-accredited or were in process of accreditation by professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies.

Four schools still needed to respond. The importance of accuracy was highlighted following a slight decrease in the percentage of students on UH-delivered undergraduate degrees who were on accredited degrees (circa 80%). Schools were reminded to inform changes as soon as possible so that literature and HESA data can be kept as up to date as possible.

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATIONS

The Committee received a report from the Chair.

The committee noted that the revised Programme Specification templates, amended to meet accessibility requirements, had been published on the CAQA website for use with immediate effect.

STANDING ITEMS

ACADEMIC REGISTRY UPDATE

The Committee received a report from Julie Kelly, Academic Registrar, and noted the challenges facing the team which included a number of staff vacancies and the issues concerning the high number and delay of Serious Adverse Circumstances cases.
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 20, refers).

ACADEMIC SERVICES

The amendments/revisions to the Academic Services publications for the period 24th November 2021 to 11th January 2022 (Part 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 24th November 2021 to 11th January 2022 with the summary of conclusions and recommendations. (Part 3)

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>
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<td>15 March 2022</td>
<td>1 March 2022</td>
<td>22 February 2022</td>
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<td>19 April 2022</td>
<td>12 April 2022</td>
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<td>21 June 2022</td>
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<td>31 May 2022</td>
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THE NEXT MEETING OF THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE WILL BE HELD ON TUESDAY, 15 MARCH 2022 FROM 09:30 IN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE ROOM.

Items for the Agenda should be notified to the Clerk, Mel Golder (‘e’-mail m.golder@herts.ac.uk) by 22 February 2022 and reports submitted by 1 March 2022.

Chair……………………………… Date………………………………...