



## MINUTES of the 17 April 2019 meeting

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### Present:

Professor Peter Slee (Chair)

Dr Andrew Abraham

Professor Cathy Barnes

Barbara Colledge

Dr Rasha Ibrahim

Stratis Koutsoukos

Pete Mackreth

Professor Chris Prince

Sue Sherwin

Dr Nicole Whitworth

Professor Akintola Akintoye

Frances Bostyn

Professor Chris Gorse

Sherry Iqbal

Tracey Lancaster

Jo Norry

Nicola Queenan

Dr Lisa Stansbie

Professor Emma Wood

Professor Andrew Cooper

Dr Oliver Bray

Charlie Hind

Helen Jones

Professor George Lodorfos

Professor Ruth Pickford

Dr Duncan Sharp

Professor Rhodri Thomas

### In attendance:

Kate Harvey (Secretary)

Dr Caroline Bligh

Jan Daley

### Apologies:

Hanzla Asghar

Professor Phil Cardew

Jack Harrison

Professor Damien Page

Dr Laura Ashley

Deveral Capps

Bryan Hughes

Priscilla Preston

Dr Lauren Duckworth

Professor John Craig

Professor Jeanne Keay

Dr Robin Redhead

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## Part A: Preliminary Items

### Declarations of interest

066.2018.ACB No declarations of interest were made.

### Minutes

067.2018.ACB The Academic Board **AGREED** that the minutes of its meeting held on 07 February 2019 were an accurate record (paper reference ACB-2018-030), subject to a minor amendment to the attendance list, to include Sherry Iqbal.

### Matters arising

068.2018.ACB There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

CONFIRMED

## Part B: Reports from Officers

### Report from the Vice Chancellor

- 069.2018.ACB
- a) The Committee received a verbal report from the Vice Chancellor providing an update on recent developments at the University and across the wider higher education sector. It was **reported** that the publication of the outcomes of the Augur review of post-18 education and funding had been delayed once more. Additionally, the delay to the UK's exit from the European Union could in turn delay the Chancellor of the Exchequer's planned three-year spending review, currently due in September 2019. As some outcomes from the Augur review could have implications for public spending, they would feed in to such a review.
  - b) It was still anticipated that the Office for National Statistics' review of the treatment of student loans in public sector finances would report before the summer.
  - c) A key issue of focus for Leeds Beckett currently was the National Student Survey outcomes, which would influence the metrics of the subject-level Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). Work had begun in schools to draft the narratives which will accompany the TEF 2020 submission, led by the Deans and Heads of Subject.
  - d) Preparations for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) were also ongoing, following the recent consultation on the developing Code of Practice.

### Report from the Students' Union

- 070.2018.ACB
- a) The Committee received a report from the Students' Union Vice President for Education (paper reference ACB-2018-031). It was **reported** that turnout for the recent leadership elections had been approximately 2000 students. A total of 24 candidates had stood for election across the five roles, of whom 46% were BAME. The elected Students' Union Officer team for 2019/20 would be:
    - i. Charlie Hind – Union Affairs Officer (which would replace the title of Students' Union President)
    - ii. Sherry Iqbal – Education Officer
    - iii. Jess Carrier – Welfare & Community Officer
    - iv. Ahmed Ali – Equality & Diversity Officer
    - v. Barbara Pereira – Activities & Events Officer
  - b) The My Racist Campus campaign had recently been launched, led by the Vice Presidents for Education and Equality & Diversity. The launch event had included speaker events, stalls and opportunities for students to audit their reading lists to assess the diversity of their curriculum.
  - c) The most recent round of school forums had been held in the week preceding the Academic Board meeting. There had been a marked increase in

attendance in both April and February, which was mainly due to their inclusion on students' timetables. Particular improvements had been seen in Schools where it had been previously difficult to engage students. The action plans resulting from forum meetings had been circulated with the electronic Academic Board papers, and set out the feedback received from students as well as responses received from staff. Where relevant, feedback would be fed through to the relevant sub-committees of Academic Board in order to close the feedback loop.

## Student Recruitment Update

- 071.2018.ACB
- a) The Committee received a report from the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Corporate Communications) providing an update on undergraduate, postgraduate and international student recruitment for the 2019/20 year (paper reference ACB-2018-032). It was **reported** that the UCAS decline by default date would be 01 May 2019, with the Admissions team working to process all offers by this date.
  - b) UCAS data suggested a number of changes in the ways students had been applying to universities. It was possible that as many as 20% of applicants for September 2019 entry would apply by direct entry in June, rather than via clearing in August. This shift to direct entry, and to students putting in applications via UCAS much closer to the final deadline, suggested a growing number of students were waiting until they were more certain of their results before applying to university.

*Secretary's note: Minute 072.2018.ACB is exempt from publication under section 43 (2) (Commercial Interests) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.*

- 073.2018.ACB
- a) Colleagues noted that attendees at Leeds Beckett's applicant and open days were noticeably more informed, and keen to open dialogues with academic staff. This enabled any issues with the application and conversion process or preparing for university in general to be discussed prior to arrival, and it was hoped this in turn could help retention.
  - b) The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Corporate Communications) proposed that options for online applicant days hosted by individual schools could be considered, in order to increase accessibility.

- 074.2018.ACB
- Academic Board also discussed options for promoting Leeds Beckett's postgraduate provision to current undergraduate students, as studies had shown that 80% of students preferred to continue into postgraduate study at their own institution. It was agreed that a working group with representation from each school would be established to consider a promotion campaign for postgraduate studies, including options for related postgraduate programmes in other schools where appropriate.

- 075.2018.ACB It was noted that following the recent intervention by the Secretary of State for Education, who had released a list of those institutions who had been making use of “conditional” unconditional offers during the current recruitment cycle, UCAS had commissioned a report into the issue. The report had found that when used correctly, unconditional offers could have a positive effect on applicants and reduce pressure and anxiety. While there was evidence that a small minority of applicants did achieve lower grades than initially predicted, after having received an unconditional offer, UCAS had noted that projected grades were over-predicted in some cases.
- 076.2018.ACB The Secretary of State had released a list of those institutions who had been making use of “conditional” unconditional offers during the current recruitment cycle, which the Secretary of State has also referred to as “pressure selling”.

*Secretary’s note: Minute 077.2018.ACB is exempt from publication under section 43 (2) (Commercial Interests) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.*

- 078.2018.ACB The Academic Board:
- (a) AGREED** that the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Corporate Communications) would look into the potential reasons behind the change in the international application rate and report back to Academic Board on 03 July 2019.  
**Action: TL**
- (b) AGREED** that a working group with representation from each school should be established to consider a campaign to promote Leeds Beckett’s postgraduate programmes to current undergraduate students.  
**Action: TL**

### Conferral of Emeritus and Visiting Titles

- 079.2018.ACB The Committee noted the report, which set out recent conferrals of Visiting Titles, made since the last meeting in February 2019 (paper reference ACB-2018-033). It was **reported** formal offers of the title of Visiting Professor for a period of 3 years had been made to:

School of Computing, Creative Technologies and Engineering  
Dr Reinhold Behringer

School of Clinical and Applied Sciences  
Dr Isabelle Schöffl

Leeds Business School  
Professor Christoph Stückelberger

In addition, a number of Visiting Professor appointments had been extended, including JA (Fred) Coalter (Carnegie School of Sport); Dieter Lange (Business Engagement); Sean Connolly (Business Engagement); Paul Joyce (Business

Engagement); and Paul Johnstone (School of Health and Community Studies), each for a further 3 years.

Visiting Professors Philip Tagg (School of Film, Music and Performing Arts) and Christopher Boos (Carnegie School of Sport) had been extended for a further 2 years and 1 year respectively.

The formal offer of the title of Visiting Fellow for a period of 3 years had been made as follows:

Leeds Business School  
Mr Robert Minton-Taylor

School of Clinical and Applied Sciences  
Mrs Caroline Baker

## Part C: Quality and Student Matters

### Academic Assurance Report

- 080.2018.ACB a) The Committee received the Academic Assurance Report from the University Registrar, which set out a range of evidence in respect of academic standards and quality (paper reference ACB-2018-034).

*Secretary's note: Minute 081.2018.ACB is exempt from publication under section 43 (2) (Commercial Interests) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.*

- 082.2018.ACB a) The report confirmed that the taught postgraduate external examiner cycle had been completed for 2017/18 with all reports received for both on-campus and collaborative provision. The reports provided assurance that:
- i. the academic standards set for Leeds Beckett's awards were appropriate;
  - ii. the standards of student performance were comparable with similar courses in other UK institutions; and that
  - iii. the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards were sound and fairly conducted.
- b) The AQSC would consider the full report and annual review of postgraduate taught provision 2017/18 at its next meeting.

- 083.2018.ACB a) It was **noted** that the report had been previously endorsed by AQSC. Academic Board were also satisfied that it supported the assurance, affirmation and maintenance of academic standards, academic quality in respect of Leeds Beckett's taught and collaborative provision and the action underway where necessary for ongoing enhancement.

084.2018.ACB The Academic Board **AGREED** that the Academic Assurance Report contained adequate assurances relating to the University's compliance with sector expectations and of the effectiveness of its institutional oversight and management of academic quality and standards and ongoing enhancement. Academic Board agreed the report and should be **RECOMMENDED** to the Board of Governors at its meeting on 03 May 2019.

### Amendments to Academic Regulations

- 085.2018.ACB
- a) The Committee received a report from the University Registrar providing an overview of planned amendments to the University's Academic Regulations. (paper reference ACB-2018-035).
  - b) An update was provided on a proposed Inclusive Learning, Assessment and Feedback Framework, which had been amended following feedback from Academic Board at its February meeting, and was out for consultation until 30 April 2019. In support of this work, it was reported that the regulations and guidance relating to supporting disabled students and the proactive responsibilities relating to inclusive practice were also being reviewed.

*Secretary's note: Minute 086.2018.ACB is exempt from publication under section 22 (Information intended for future publication) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.*

087.2018.ACB The Academic Board **ENDORSED** the proposed principles for a structured assessment calendar, subject to the amendment set out at 083.2018.ACB (b).

### Leeds Beckett Students' Union's Hidden Fees Recommendations

- 088.2018.ACB
- a) The Committee received a report from the Students' Union providing an overview of an analysis of over 200 student interviews undertaken by colleagues in the Students Union into hidden fees on courses, along with a series of recommendations aimed at increasing transparency and reducing costs where feasible to do so (paper reference ACB-2018-036).
  - b) It was **reported** that the Students' Union defined these "hidden fees" as "exceptional costs students are expected to pay, that they were not made aware of prior to starting University". This could include the cost of buying text books, renting whilst on placements, or materials for art & design courses. The research also suggested that students considered such costs to be mandatory, in that they must be paid in order to achieve a good grade.
  - c) Academic Board recognised that the Students' Union executive and its members believed hidden costs to be an issue of concern, and endorsed the proposal to establish a working group in order to look at the issues in more detail, and to take action where appropriate.
  - d) It was agreed that representatives from the Students' Union would be invited to join the Published Information Group led by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Corporate Communications), in order to incorporate the student voice and

consider any overlapping issues in this area. A further sub-group would also be established to look at these costs in more detail, with student and school representatives.

089.2018.ACB

The Academic Board **AGREED** that representatives from the Students' Union would be invited to join the Published Information Group led by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Corporate Communications), with a view to establishing a further sub-group of student and school representatives.

**Action: TL**

## Securing Language Learning Options for Students

090.2018.ACB

- a) The Academic Board received a report from the Students' Union setting out its "Languages for All" policy, which passed at Student Council in 2018 (paper reference ACB-2018-037). It was reported that the policy asked for the reinstatement of language provision following the cancellation of the Languages for All programme. The paper asked that the University promote the importance of language learning to all students. Additionally, schools were asked to evaluate their courses and consider which would be suitable for language pathways modules.
- b) Members acknowledged language learning as a key aspect of global engagement and the changing jobs market, as well as its potential usefulness in student development. However, it was also recognised that while credit-bearing language pathways had potential to be incorporated into some programmes, such as International Business, they would not be appropriate for all degree programmes.
- c) Academic Board agreed that it should be for individual schools to consider whether their programmes could potentially support credit-bearing language pathways, and that options including signposting students to opportunities outside their degree programme, such as part-time courses offered by the Department of Languages, could also be useful.

091.2018.ACB

The Academic Board **RECOMMENDED** that individual schools consider whether their programmes could potentially support credit-bearing language pathways for their students.

## Part D: Research Matters

### REF Code of Practice Update

092.2018.ACB

- a) The Committee received an update on the development of the REF Code of Practice and preparations for REF 2021 from the Director of Research & Enterprise (paper reference ACB-2018-038). It was **reported** that the most recent draft of the Code of Practice had been subject to staff consultation between 11 March and 05 April 2019. This process had included opportunities to comment by email, via an online survey, and at Unit of Assessment

meetings hosted by the Directors of Research. There had been a good level of staff engagement with the consultation process, with 818 individual visits to the dedicated web page and a 50% open rate on the consultation email. Over 200 members of staff had attended the Unit of Assessment meetings.

- b) The next steps would be to seek input from UCU, and following any final amendments the final draft would then be considered for endorsement by Research & Enterprise Committee on 30 May, with approval sought from Academic Board via correspondence by the 07 June submission deadline. Research England would review all submissions and institutions would have two opportunities to make any requested amendments.

093.2018.ACB The Vice Chancellor emphasised that the Code of Practice was being developed to ensure that the decision-making process for REF entry was undertaken fairly, and that those academic staff with significant levels of independent research were entered correctly for considering in the REF.

## **Part E: Reports from Committees and Groups**

### **Academic Quality & Standards Committee**

094.2018.ACB Academic Board received a summary report from the meeting of the Committee held on 18 March 2019 (paper reference ACB-2018-039).

### **Research & Enterprise Committee**

095.2018.ACB Academic Board received a summary report from the meeting of the Research & Enterprise Committee held on 21 March 2019 (paper reference ACB-2018-039).

## **Part F: Other Business**

### **Schedule of meetings and business for 2018/19**

096.2018.ACB Academic Board received its schedule of meetings and business for 2018/19 (paper reference ACB-2018-041).

### **Date of next meeting**

097.2018.ACB The next meeting of the Academic Board would be held at 14:00 on Wednesday 03 July 2019 in G02 Broadcasting Place, City Campus

### **Other business**

098.2018.ACB No other business was raised.

Confirmed by the Committee/Board as a correct record and signed by the Chair:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_