

HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

Minutes of the 160th meeting of the

ACADEMIC BOARD

Held on Wednesday 8th March 2017

Present: DG Llewellyn (Chair) G Higginson
S Barnett F Hammond
CE Baxter AM Hind
P Chima AC Jones
C D Cowap D Miles
A Creedon P R Mills
L Harper RG Wilkinson

In attendance: M Crook (item 4205)
J Melia (observer)
V Miller (minutes)

4202 Board membership, welcome and apologies for absence
Apologies were received from Prof Ormerod, Prof Early, Dr Behnke, Mrs Hunter, Ms Meyrick and Mr Fromant.

The Chair of Academic Board welcomed the new representatives, Dr Annette Creedon and Mrs Laura Harper and the newly appointed Deputy Academic Registrar, Mr John Melia, who attended as an observer.

4203 Minutes of the meeting held on 9th November 2016
The minutes of the meeting held on the 9th November 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

4204 Matters arising from the minutes

4075 Office for the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Good Practice Framework for Handling Complaints and Appeals

Noted: That Dr Hind and Mr Hammond will continue to liaise with the SU Commercial Manager to ensure the SU has a complaints procedure in line with SU sector good practice and that is easily accessible to students.

AMH/FH

4136 Minutes of the Academic Standards Committee

Noted: The Chair of the Academic Standards Committee will report on progress with revising the external examiner reporting forms for the next meeting.

RGW

4182 Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy: to consider progress against performance indicators and approval of extended performance indicator metrics

Noted: Professor Ormerod will be asked to provide a copy of a recent successful submission to the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme, for information, as agreed at the previous meeting.

AJ/MO

- 4183 Proposal on governance of the Virtual Learning Environment: to consider and approve
 Noted: A Task and Finish group involving staff and student representatives has been established and has held an initial meeting to progress the effective use of the VLE in support of inclusive teaching, assessment and learning.
- 4186 Update on work completed and pending in relation to Competition and Markets Authority guidance to the HE sector
 Received: A paper to propose updates to section 3 of the Academic Quality Assurance Manual (Quality Assurance of Teaching & Learning: Validation, Accreditation, Review & Monitoring Procedures).
 Noted and Endorsed: The following key principles which would form the basis of a detailed paper to be considered by the Academic Standards Committee in March 2017:
 - The removal of the provision for Course Committees to implement course changes under delegated authority from the Programme Approvals Committee;
 - A revised schedule for revising validated course structures, and;
 - The adoption of a mechanism to allow for swift changes in exceptional circumstances to allow revision of a programme due to exceptional events outside of the control of the University.
- 4188 Proposed revisions to the Tier 4 Policy and Procedures for Managing Overseas Visa Sponsored Students
 Noted: Minor revisions have been made to the Tier 4 policy and uploaded to the website.
- 4189 Annual review of the Register of Collaborative-Provision: to note and endorse
 Noted: That the University's Register of Collaborative Provision has been updated to reflect the new contact details for MDS, verified by Mr Cowap, prior to publication on the University's website.
- 4195 Review the subcommittee structures of the Academic Board
 Noted: That the review of terms of reference of the Academic Board and some sub-committees was to shortly commence.

AMH/AJ/
SB/LA

4205 Report on Taught Postgraduate cross programme and course level actions to address identified problems

- Received: A paper setting out planned actions to address identified issues identified in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES).
- Noted: That taught postgraduate (PGT) part-time students were less satisfied with their student experience in comparison to PGT full-time students in 2015/16.
- Noted: That course teams recognised the need to improve the experience of part time students in the delivery of their courses and that a series of small adjustments aimed at making the part-time provision more "customer-facing" may help in this regard.
- Noted: That the different needs of, and competing demands on, part-time students should be recognised by managing the expectations of part-time students, in

relation to balancing these demands as both students and/or employers/employees and/or carers.

Noted: That a common theme was communication between the University and part-time students, including the unhelpful volume of irrelevant emails received.

Noted: That a small Task and Finish group be set up to collect practical examples of irrelevant email communication and to then consider how to engage with part-time students more effectively. This is likely to assist with communication with all students. In addition to Mr Hammond, Mr Crook and/or Mrs Hogan, Ms Hayhurst, Mrs Harper, Ms Green and Mr Reid are to be invited to participate.

AMH/ FH/
MJC/ HH/
RH/LH/
JG/ MR

Noted: That the PTES 2016/17 survey will provide a further opportunity to gauge part-time students' satisfaction with their experience.

Noted: Thanks to Dr Crook for his Paper and the Board's expectation that the actions set out therein would lead to improvements in 2016/17.

4206 Course Committee responses to Academic Board identified concerns

Received: A paper summarising the action requested by Academic Board and the associated course team responses.

Noted: That the Academic Board was reassured that teams are responding appropriately and progress is being made.

Agreed: That confirmation will be sought from the Countryside, Environment, Wildlife and Geography course team in connection with personal emails sent to students after attendance at an interview day to ensure these are in line with other University pre-enrolment correspondence.

LH

Noted: That the new timetabling arrangements for 2018/19 will enable the University to put in place an automated attendance monitoring system; tutor time can then be directed further towards student support, where problems of poor attendance, as a flag for other difficulties, are identified.

PRM

Noted: That the REALM/RPM resource facility has not been progressed as no proposals were forthcoming from the course team.

Noted: That an update on progress will be collated in October/November 2017 and presented to Academic Board.

SB

4207 Academic overview report summary: arising from annual course monitoring

Received: A paper to note the action arising from the Annual Academic Overview Report for 2015/16.

Noted: That our programmes are generally in good health and actions have been identified to tackle areas where improvement is required, such as in relation to improving first year progression further for Foundation Degree students.

Noted: That the overview report for FE partners and Workforce Development partners will be presented to the next Academic Standards Committee meeting.

Noted: That Academic Standards Committee has endorsed a systematic review of the level 5 and level 6 modules within Curriculum 2010, to be undertaken by July 2017.

Noted: The review will attempt to work proportionally to reduce the burden of over-assessment for staff and students within level 5 and 6 modules particularly those modules where students are under-achieving.

4208 Research and Knowledge Transfer Strategy: monitoring and evaluation of 2015/16 activities for note and discussion

Received: A paper to summarise the research and knowledge exchange activity in 2016.

Noted: That there has been substantial breadth in research and knowledge transfer activity.

Noted: That the Research Excellence Framework (REF) assessment occurs every five years. The University has undertaken an interim audit to assess our position. Under the current rules, where the University can select the number of people to submit, the University is performing at a satisfactory level.

Noted: That during the last REF audit, the University selected 17 academics to submit. However, there is a suggestion that the next REF exercise may require every member of academic staff to be submitted for assessment.

Noted: That a consultation exercise will shortly be completed for the next research assessment exercise on the new rules which will include whether academic staff have to account for publications in the place where they were first published or if they remain portable to the place of employment at the point of assessment.

Noted: That some key appointments have recently been made including a Statistician for Agri Data Analytics to support PhD students with experimental design and analysis and also to work with industry on data analysis.

Noted: That a Chair has been offered in Agri-Tech Applied Economics and a second offer may also be made, having secured external funding for the post. This will help to position the University as a Global Centre for Agri-Tech Economics.

Noted: That the University would like to have a Doctoral Training Centre for 15 PhD students in applied subjects. This may be assisted by the Government announcement on the availability of student loans for PhD students from 2018/19.

Noted: Thanks to Professor Mills for the report.

4209 Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy: proposed outcome metrics

Received: A paper in response to Academic Board's request to provide some metrics at academic departmental level to highlight where attention needs to be focused, with reference to inclusive practice within the VLE.

Noted: That the metrics provided were intended to apply to all departments. Therefore this paper, (an appendix to the Paper produced for the 9th November 2016 Academic Board), details the data in terms of support for inclusive practice through effective use of the VLE.

Noted: The data is designed to capture issues that are important to students. The students are asked to rate modules in terms of inclusive practice within the Learning Hub.

Noted: That the data presented in this report is a snapshot of views extracted one day in October 2016. The data is continually collected and it is hoped that the scores will improve in terms of inclusive practice as the VLE is refreshed by tutors.

Noted:	That future data sets should differentiate between undergraduate and taught postgraduate courses, for monitoring purposes.	AJ
Noted:	That the rating system needed to be more fully explained to colleagues with reference to effective use of the VLE, so that all tutors could use the feedback to improve VLE use, where necessary.	LA via AJ
Noted:	That the University Executive will be asked to liaise with HODs to discuss how the group can better engage with oversight on the effective use of the VLE.	AJ
4210	Proposed revisions to the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy for Students with Disabilities and Guidance for Staff, Students and Applicants	
Received:	A paper to update existing guidance and policies due to a change in responsibility for the funding of some Reasonable Adjustment requests from disabled students.	
Noted:	That funding received through the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) has been reduced. The University now has the responsibility to fund many of the Reasonable Adjustment needs of disabled students.	
Noted:	That the University receives a significant allocation through the Student Opportunity Fund which recognises our high proportion of disabled students.	
Noted:	That confirmation will be sought as to how the University will manage applicants who make a request for a Reasonable Adjustment and clarify this within the policy.	JH via AMH
Endorsed:	The revised policy including the procedure by which Reasonable Adjustment requests are considered, where they are no longer funded through the DSA.	
Noted:	Thanks to Mrs Hill for her paper.	
4211	Proposed Plans for the 2018/19 Access Agreement	
Received:	A paper to provide the basis for decision making and action in relation to the preparation of the 2018/196 Access Agreement.	
Noted:	That in order to access HEFCE grant or high level fee income from undergraduate students the University is required to have an approved Access Agreement which is renegotiated each year with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA).	
Noted:	That the guidance issued for the 2018/19 entrants' enrolment reflects a "step change" in the level of increased expectation placed on the University to support the access of students from disadvantaged or under-represented backgrounds into higher education.	
Noted:	That the Director of OFFA considers our access record as mediocre. This is predominantly due to the University's rural national catchment and, thus, the relatively low number of students we attract from Quintile 1 postcodes which are predominantly located in urban wards.	
Agreed:	That consideration will be given to the creation of a standing item report on outreach activities, reporting to the University Executive.	AMH/SP
Noted:	That HODs have agreed a mechanism to capture the range of Outreach activities that have previously been unrecorded.	

Noted: That consideration could be given to the creation of a Working Group to look at student success and progression. Alternatively, consideration of these aspects, may be more explicitly reflected in the terms of reference for Academic Board and its sub-committees when these are revised.

AMH

Noted: That the University will be monitoring the success and progression of students with various characteristics that are deemed to be disadvantaged or under-represented in higher education, at both institution and course level.

Noted: The Access Agreement will include consultation with the Students' Union President.

AMH/FH

Noted: Thanks to Dr Hind for her work in this area.

4212 Update on progress with Curriculum 2017 implementation

Received: An oral report from Mr Jones.

Noted: That the majority of course validations have been completed. The outstanding courses are the Chinese collaborative programmes. These are scheduled to undergo re-validation in April 2017.

Noted: That the Curriculum Steering Group is working to ensure that appropriate formative assessment activities and feedback are incorporated into schemes of work for each module in 2017/18 and beyond, in order to support students to achieve at the highest possible level.

Noted: That within the VLE environment, there is substantial work in keeping content updated and relevant. The recent appointment of the Head of Enterprise Solutions and the planned appointment of a Media Developer provides extra resource to work on this agenda.

Noted: That HEFCE guidance on webpage content for every course requires the inclusion of an explanation on how formative assessment supports student learning.

Noted: Thanks to the Steering Group and all tutors involved in this significant development project.

4213 Progress report on Academic Components of the Corporate Plan 2016/17

Received: A paper to provide a summary of progress made towards achieving the objectives in the Corporate Planning Statement 2016/17.

Noted: That the University is experiencing delays in completing both the Agri-tech Centre Project and the STEP Project. The University Secretary thanked staff and students for their patience.

Noted: That there is a potential partner for funding the Laboratory Project - Phase 3 remodelling.

Noted: That in relation to the objective to create a demonstration farm, the University has jointly funded, with ABP, a Chair in Beef Production.

Noted: That ABP has purchased a farm in Bromstead and the University will be working with them to develop it. In addition, the University is in discussions over various land holdings locally. Access to farm land is a constraint for both research and educational activities.

Noted: That the application with Aston University for funding from the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership has been successful. This will help fund the management of the Agri-tech Centre. This reinforces investment sourced from the Government.

Noted: That the Government may announce further local developments in the Agri-tech sector shortly.

Noted: The first apprenticeship programme delivered at the University is likely to be the BSc (Hons) Rural Enterprise and Land Management Degree programme.

Noted: That the University should be able to draw down from the Apprenticeship Levy fund when the Higher Education Academic Apprenticeship level 7 apprenticeship scheme is approved by Government; the University has several academic staff undertaking the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning which is likely to be incorporated into the apprenticeship framework.

Noted: That the University is ranked seventh in England for the number of teaching staff with teaching qualifications or HEA accreditation.

Noted: Thanks to Dr Baxter for her report.

4214 Update on Risk Analysis and Action Plan

Received: A paper to provide an update on work associated with the key risk areas identified in the University's Risk Analysis and Action Plan 2015/16 for monitoring and review by Academic Board.

Noted: That the local Neighbourhood Plan's development has finished the Consultation stage

Noted: That the Register lists "Poor relationship with Students' Union and poor student services" as a risk area. This risk is now considered low, due, in part, to the work of Mr Hammond, the Students' Union and Student Services.

Noted: That where students encounter health and safety issues on Placement, the liability is generally with the Employer. Notwithstanding the legal position, the University has a moral duty to support students in their preparation for placement, in all regards, and this risk is assigned to Professor Mills.

4215 Review of complaints and appeals 2015/16: for note and discussion

Received: The annual report which reviews student appeals and complaints in 2015/16.

Noted: That the risk associated with appeals and complaints is being actively managed.

Noted: That a small number of appeals on the grounds of material irregularities were upheld due to poorly constructed assessment instructions for students.

Noted: That all departments should be consistent in their application of University regulations when marking assessments.

Noted: That marks are provisional until they have been considered through moderation process and confirmed by subject assessment boards.

Noted: In response to a question from Ms Meyrick, tutors will be reminded to apply published guidance on dealing with over-length assessment submissions.

SB

Agreed:	That the Student Academic Group should be asked to consider whether word limits/guides for assignments, should be replaced with page limits/font and margin size, allowing exceptions where appropriate. Tutors will be consulted on any change advocated by students.	SB
4216	To note the policy concerning responsibility for overseas academic visitors	
Received:	A copy of the procedure for inviting and subsequently managing visiting research staff and students to the University	
Noted:	That the procedure is to be updated due to changes in the Erasmus Exchange Agreement and to ensure that responsibilities align with staffing changes.	AJ/MC
Noted and Agreed:	That the update should include liaison with the Head of Registry.	AJ/LH
4217	To consider and approve proposal to amend the constitution of the Research Degrees Awarding Board	
Received:	A paper presented by Professor Mills on behalf of Dr Hare, Chair of the Research Degrees Standards Committee (RDSC), to amend the constitution due to the increase in the research student population.	
Noted and Agreed:	The proposed changes of wording in the Constitution to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “That the membership of the Research Degrees Awarding Board shall be not less than one and no more than three from each academic department, to be determined by the Chair”; and • “The Chair of the Research Degrees Standards Committee, the Research Postgraduate Programmes Manager and the Postgraduate Research Administrator shall be ex-officio members.” • The Research Degrees Standards Committee’s request, in addition to the amendments presented in the paper, to delete the words: “or at another institution of higher education,”. 	
Noted:	Thanks to Professor Mills for the presentation.	
4218	Honorary Awards	
Received:	A confidential paper from the Honorary Awards Committee proposing recommendations for awards of Honorary Degrees and University Fellowships to be made at the Graduation ceremonies in September 2017.	
Noted:	That there will be two graduation ceremonies this year and the honorary awards are intended to be made to at least one individual at each ceremony.	
Endorsed:	The Honorary Awards Committee’s recommendations.	
Noted:	That colleagues are thanked for their suggested nominations, some of which will be placed on the University’s waiting list.	
Noted:	The Student Union will also be specifically approached next year to encourage nominations from student representatives.	CEB
Noted:	The University’s request for the nominations to remain strictly confidential.	
4219	New course developments and suspensions approved by the Programme Approvals Committee	

- Received: A paper summarising new course developments from the Programme Approvals Committee (PAC) meeting held on 26th July 2016.
- Endorsed: The recommendation of the PAC to grant Full Development Approval for the following undergraduate programmes, for proposed delivery from October 2017:
- i) MEng Mechanical Engineering
 - ii) MEng Automotive Engineering (Off-Highway)
 - iii) MEng Agricultural Engineering
 - iv) BEng/BEng (Hons) Mechanical Engineering
 - v) BEng/BEng (Hons) Automotive Engineering (Off-Highway)
 - vi) BEng/BEng (Hons) Agricultural Engineering
 - vii) BSc/BSc (Hons) Product Support Engineering (and top-up)
- Endorsed: The recommendation of the PAC to grant Full Development Approval for the proposed re-validation of the following programme, for delivery from February 2017:
- i) University Diploma Land and Utilities Management
- Endorsed: The recommendation of the PAC to grant Full Development Approval for the proposed re-validation of the following suite of AMTRA modules, for delivery from January 2017:
- i) AMTRA SQP Base
 - ii) AMTRA SQP Farm Animal
 - iii) AMTRA SQP Equine
 - iv) AMTRA SQP Companion Animal
 - v) AMTRA SQP Avian
 - vi) AMTRA Veterinary Nurse: Base
 - vii) AMTRA Veterinary Nurse: Companion Animal
- Endorsed: The recommendation to approve the extension of the approval period for the suite of existing AMTRA modules, from September 2016 to February 2017, to enable the continued assessment of current candidates to take place.
- Received: A paper summarising new course developments from the Programme Approvals Committee meeting held on 18th January 2017.
- Endorsed: The recommendation of the PAC to grant Full Development Approval to the following postgraduate programme, developed in conjunction with Improve International and the ESVPS, for proposed delivery from May 2017:
- PgC Equine Medicine
- Endorsed: The recommendation of the PAC to grant Preliminary Development Approval for work to continue on the development of the following suite of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, in conjunction with Improve International:
- University Diploma in Sustainable Salmon Production
 - PgC Sustainable Salmon Production
 - University Diploma in Sustainable Trout Production
 - PgC Sustainable Trout Production
 - University Diploma in Sustainable Tilapia Production
 - PgC Sustainable Tilapia Production
- Endorsed: The recommendation of the PAC to grant Provisional Development Approval for the proposed re-validation of the following programmes (in conjunction with Beijing Agricultural College), subject to the Course Team addressing agreed

conditions, which must be met before full Development Approval can be considered:

- BSc/BSc (Hons) Food Quality with Retail Management
- BSc/BSc (Hons) International Business Management

Endorsed: The recommendation of the PAC to grant Provisional Development Approval for the proposed re-validation of the following programme (in conjunction with Huazhong Agricultural University), subject to the Course Team addressing agreed conditions, which must be met before full Development Approval can be considered:

- BSc/BSc (Hons) International Agri-food Marketing and Supply Chain Management

Endorsed: The recommendation of the PAC to grant Full Development Approval for the following suite of undergraduate programmes, for proposed delivery from October 2018:

- BSc/BSc (Hons) Applied Zoology
- BSc/BSc (Hons) Zoology with Environmental Management
- BSc/BSc (Hons) Zoology with Entomology

Endorsed: The recommendation of the PAC to grant Full Development Approval of a part-time delivery model for the BSc (Hons) Rural Enterprise and Land Management programme, to enable delivery within a Degree Level Apprenticeship Framework, from 2017-18 academic session onwards.

Endorsed: The recommendation of the PAC to grant Full Development Approval for the development of three new Level 7 modules by the Agricultural Centre for Sustainable Energy Systems (ACSES), as both CPD modules and to also contribute towards the following programmes, for proposed delivery from 2017-18 academic session:

- PgC Renewable Energy
- MRes Renewable Energy

Endorsed: The recommendation of the PAC to approve a twelve month extension to the approval period of the following Veterinary Nursing programmes, to enable recruitment in the 2017-18 academic session, whilst work is completed by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) on the development of a new post professional framework:

- BSc/BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing (top-up)
- Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing – RCVS accredited
- Diploma of Higher Education in Veterinary Nursing
- PgC Veterinary Oncology Nursing
- PgC Veterinary Rehabilitation Nursing
- PgC Veterinary Nurse Practitioner
- PgD/MSc Veterinary Nursing

Endorsed: The recommendation of the PAC to approve revisions to the BSc/BSc (Hons) Business Management with Marketing (top-up), BSc/BSc (Hons) Agri-business (top-up) and BSc/BSc (Hons) Agri-food Marketing with Business Studies (top-up) programmes, for 2017-18 entry onwards to:

- i) Incorporate the Level 6 Strategic Management module as a core module
- ii) Revise the BSc and BSc (Hons) top-up programmes to align with Curriculum 2017 and, thus, enable all learning outcomes to be met with a 120-credit route (previously 150 credits).

Noted: Thanks to Mrs Barnett for collating the papers, which represented the culmination of a huge amount of work over an extended period.

4220 Oral Report on Strategic matters of relevance to Academic Board's terms of reference

Received: An oral report by the Vice-Chancellor, covering strategic matters of relevance to the Academic Board.

Noted: That the University has allocated some of its HEFCE institution specific funding to a project called Delivering Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Achievement (DELTA). This programme aims to enhance provision through planned work in relation to people, technology and spaces and is expected to last several years.

Noted: That the submission for the Teaching Excellence Framework, ("TEF 2"), has been completed. This is an institution based assessment. The results are expected in May 2017.

Noted: The House of Lords has proposed amendments to two elements of the TEF proposals in the Higher Education and Research Bill:

- The relationship between TEF and the ability to increase fees, and
- The approach to subject level assessment.

Noted: There will be a consultation on a nationwide taught postgraduate survey in the Autumn. This is probably to prepare for the incorporation of postgraduate data into TEF.

Noted: That there had been a proposal that the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey (DLHE) is to be moved to a fifteen month survey point, as opposed to the current six month survey point. It has also been proposed that the data might be collected centrally, rather than by institutions.

Noted: That the University had been encouraging discussion in connection with Brexit. In particular, the University has invited views from outside the institution but also hoped to influence Government policy in relation to the impact that Brexit has on the UK's agricultural and food sector, including issues concerning research and innovation.

Noted: The University had recently welcomed: Meurig Raymond, NFU President; Guy Smith, the NFU Vice President; the Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP, The Viscount Ridley DL; Ms Clare Moriarty, the Permanent Secretary from DEFRA, and Sir Lockwood Smith, the High Commissioner of New Zealand. All had been able to discuss the potential effect of Brexit on the sector.

In addition the University will welcome: Ross Murray, Country Land and Business Association President, on the 5th May, and Ms Lesley Griffiths AM, Welsh Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, on 8th June. The University also hoped to invite Justin McCarthy, Editor of the Irish Farmers' Journal in November 2017.

Noted: That the Treasury is planning to send up to ten representatives to the University in May. This will be an opportunity to discuss issues such as placement as an alternative to apprenticeships, high cost subjects and specialist institutions.

Noted: That the University had made various new staff appointments but also hoped to appoint a Chair in Beef Production and someone with expertise in sub-Saharan agriculture; this is due to the University's link with AGCO and their demonstration farm in Africa. A bid has been made to a UK aid programme which looks at

strengthening higher education in sub-Saharan Africa. There are also other opportunities to work with AGCO.

Noted: That Askham Bryan College had appointed a new Principal, Catherine Dixon, the former Chief Executive of the Law Society. Ms Dixon joins Askham Bryan in April.

Noted: That Writtle University College is seeking a new Vice-Chancellor and an appointment is likely to be announced shortly.

Noted: The Royal Agricultural University's Vice-Chancellor and Chair are expected to shortly confirm their visit to the University on 30th March.

Noted: That the Vice-Chancellor had been invited to speak to the HEFCE Board in February about the work of the University and what makes it special in the sector. There is a further session planned with their catalyst fund group, chaired by the Chief Executive of the Funding Council. This is to report upon the funding given to the University from the National Centre for Precision Farming, through its investment into the Agricultural Engineering Innovation Centre.

Noted: That in the What Uni? Student Choice Awards, the University had been shortlisted in nine out of twelve categories. The results will be announced on 6th April 2017.

Noted: That there are many changes in the rural sector but the University lacks information as to how these changes are going to impact upon the University's core subject areas and the industries the University works with. The University is waiting to see a Green Paper on the proposed new Agricultural Policy.

Noted: That the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is seeking feedback in the five core areas that will shape future strategy: namely Trade, Productivity and Innovation; Sustainability, Consumer Trust in the agri-food system; Animal Welfare; and Resilience. It is hoped that it will be recognised that universities have a role, and that we will be able to influence policy.

Noted: That the Government has announced that they want more state schools to be sponsored by universities and independent schools. This is difficult for smaller institutions already engaged in similar work. The University already works with the JCB Academy.

Noted: That the Government has also announced its intention to address technical education and proposed "T levels". The latter are to include a three month work placement. There are fifteen routes proposed. This qualification is likely to impact upon admissions arrangements if higher "T levels" are introduced.

Noted: That the Government has extended the student loan system to include PhD students from 2018/19.

Noted: Maintenance loans will also be available for part-time undergraduate students.

Noted: That the Government has planned a renewed emphasis on life-long learning. Forty million pounds has been invested into education for retraining.

4221 Minutes of the Programme Approvals Committee

Noted: The minutes of the Programme Approvals Committee meetings held on 12th October 2016 and 18th January 2017.

4222 Minutes of the Academic Standards Committee

Noted: The minutes of the Academic Standards Committee meetings held on 19th October 2016 and 14th December 2016

4223 Minutes of the Collaborative Programmes Management Committee

Noted: The minutes of the Collaborative Programmes Management Committee meeting held on 20th October 2016

4224 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Academic Board will be held on Wednesday 3rd May 2017.

Please note that all paperwork for consideration by the Committee should be forwarded to Veronica Miller, Academic Services Officer **by no later than noon on Monday 24th April 2017.**