

HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

Board of Governors

Summary Report on the Business of Academic Board

This report provides a summary of the meeting of the Academic Board held on 15th November 2017. The Board of Governors is asked to note this report.

1. The Board welcomed new members, [REDACTED]
2. The Board noted under Matters Arising: That the Student Success and Retention Task Force would provide an update at the next meeting of the Board, and that work was underway to ensure that the complaints policies of the Students' Union and validation partners were in line with good practice published by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.
3. The Board received a paper outlining the key student indicators at an institutional level and a second, short, supplementary paper showing the University's performance in the 'Student Voice' section of the National Student Survey (NSS).

The Board noted that many of the actions identified as a result of the review of key student indicators were already in hand. The additional proposed actions required in the paper were endorsed, and it was agreed that:

- Options would be explored to reduce the pressure on timetabling.
- The Freshers' Challenge would be reviewed following feedback in 2017 from a more diversified student intake.
- The training of Student Representatives would require a review further to disappointing scores in the 'Student Voice' section of the NSS.
- The next meeting would consider a summary action plan arising from taught postgraduate monitoring meetings, given the relatively poor satisfaction levels of part-time students.

The Board agreed to consider the addition of a taught postgraduate student to its membership.

4. The Board received a paper reviewing under-represented student outcomes, including access, on-course success and progression beyond graduation.

The Board noted that the University can be better prepared for increased scrutiny from external stakeholders by monitoring data focussing on detailed student characteristics, as well as enabling work to be focused on any groups in particular need of attention.

The Board noted that more first year students with disabilities had continued with their studies than the University average, and that first year examination failures had dropped significantly. It was noted that the relative underperformance of males and students from Beijing University of Agriculture would require attention.

5. The Board received a paper outlining the key findings from the Careers Service Review and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey 2015/16 and planned action.

The Board noted that the final DLHE survey results will be published in July 2018, before being replaced by 'Graduate Outcomes' data, due to be published in December 2020. This will result in the outcomes of the 2016/17 DLHE remaining with us for two, rather than one, year. The shape of Graduate Outcomes is still unclear but is planned to be conducted externally, albeit with significant support from HE providers in the maintenance of alumni contact details.

The Board noted that students had been successful in networking with employers early in their student careers, through the activities of the Careers Service, with support from some course teams.

6. The Board received a paper outlining the Annual Course Monitoring headline data from 2016/17.

The Board noted that the new course-level performance indicator data reports which had been designed to reflect the 'negative flag' metrics of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and to take into account the University's Access Agreement commitments, is due to be responded to as part of the annual Course Monitoring process.

The Board noted that actions are in hand to address the discrepancies between full-time and part-time student satisfaction scores in the Taught Postgraduate Survey.

7. The Board received the Tier 4 Sponsorship status report.

The Board noted that there had been a drop in Tier 4 sponsored students in 2017, due to lower numbers arriving from Beijing and the Dominican Republic, and no students from Huazhong. This was expected to recover in 2018.

The Board also noted that the refusal rate had improved because of more rigorous checks by the University to incorporate bank statement scrutiny, prior to committing to visa sponsorship.

8. The Board received and approved revisions to the University's Tier 4 Policy and Procedures for Managing Overseas Visa Sponsored Students, which is reviewed and revised annually.
9. The Board received and approved the Register of Collaborative Provision for 2017/18, which is reviewed and revised annually.
10. The Board received the preliminary partnership review of the proposed [REDACTED]

The Board noted a declaration of interest from [REDACTED].

The Board noted that, in light of the standing of the proposed partner, the Programme Approvals Committee, rather than a separately convened partnership approval panel, had scrutinised and endorsed the documentation provided by [REDACTED], having sought the Chair of Academic Board's prior approval to vary procedures appropriate to the situation.

The Board noted that Academic Board would be asked to consider any consequent joint review body that might be required to jointly manage the programme, which will include, for the first time in its history, the University pooling its degree awarding powers. It was noted that the respective Boards of Governors would be asked to approve the Business Model in early 2018.

The Board approved the request to begin formal collaborative partnership arrangements, and noted the proposed 2020/21 first cohort enrolment date.

11. The Board received a paper outlining the minor revisions to the terms of reference of sub-committees of Academic Board.

The Board agreed that, due to the fact that the Programme Approvals Committee (PAC) now meets less frequently, proposals to suspend or terminate courses would now be discussed by the University Executive, which meets every fortnight, and includes the Heads of Departments and PAC Co-Chairs in its membership. The University Executive's decisions will be actioned immediately where required within new consumer protection regulations and its decisions will be referred to Academic Board for endorsement and advised to the PAC so that it continues to maintain oversight of the taught curriculum offer.

12. The Board received the risk analysis and action plan 2017/18.

The Board noted that the ratings of the 11 risks reported to Academic Board had not altered significantly.

The Board approved the suggestion to include the UKVI risk in the set presented to Academic Board, in light of the Board's revised terms of reference.

13. The Board received a paper summarising new course development recommendations from the Programme Approvals Committee (PAC) meetings held on 28th April 2017, 25th July 2017, 21st September 2017 and 11th October 2017.

The Board endorsed the recommendation of PAC at its meeting held on 25th July 2017 to grant full Developmental Approval to deliver for the following proposed undergraduate courses as part of the [REDACTED] at Harper Adams University from October 2018:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

The Board endorsed the recommendation of PAC at its meeting held on 25th July 2017 to grant Preliminary Developmental Approval to develop [REDACTED] for proposed delivery at Harper Adams University, whilst noting that the proposal was likely to be revised and resubmitted, with a view to a 2019 start.

The Board endorsed the recommendation of PAC at its meeting held on 21st September 2017 to grant full Development Approval to deliver the following proposed undergraduate programmes at Harper Adams University from October 2018:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

The Board endorsed the recommendation of PAC at its meeting held on 11th October 2017 to grant Preliminary Development Approval to deliver the following proposed taught postgraduate programmes at Harper Adams University from September 2018, subject to the Course Team meeting an internal deadline of early December to respond to questions raised by the Committee, noting that the programmes would not be externally promoted until those questions had been addressed:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

The Board endorsed the recommendation of PAC at its meeting held on 11th October 2017 to grant full Development Approval to deliver the following proposed taught postgraduate programmes at [REDACTED] from October 2018:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

14. The Board received a report outlining the recommended course suspensions and terminations in relation to student enrolments and resources base.

The Board noted that three taught postgraduate courses would be withdrawn as they had not recruited well in recent years, and that the [REDACTED] suspended for 2018 entry would be withdrawn permanently.

15. The Board received an oral report from the Vice-Chancellor, covering strategic matters of relevance to the Academic Board. The Vice-Chancellor reported that recruitment, retention, resources and regulation would be key University priorities for this academic year, and that the Office for Students (OfS) would come into play in January 2018, replacing HEFCE in April 2018.

Dr Abigail Hind
Director of Academic Services
November 2017