

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 7th March 2018. The Board of Governors is asked to note this report.

1. The Board noted under Matters Arising: That the Students' Union complaints arrangements remained under consideration, and that the appointment of a taught postgraduate student to the Board's membership was being progressed. Since the last meeting of the Board, the University Executive had endorsed the suspension of the following courses for 2018/19 entry:

- [REDACTED]

2. The Board received a paper containing extracts from the University's Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Year 3 submission.

The Board noted the decision to submit an application to the optional TEF Year 3 (TEF 3) cycle. This would enable the University to hold its (yet to be confirmed) rating until 2021, rather than until 2020 had an application not been submitted and the TEF Year 2 (TEF 2) result retained. The University's metrics had improved slightly versus the TEF 2 submission, which it is hoped will be a good indicator of another Gold rating.

3. The Board received the outline proposed approach to the 2019/20 Access and Participation Plan, based on the Access Agreement for 2018/19.

The Board noted that the new guidance from the Office for Students (OfS) indicated that there was no fundamental change for 2019-20, although there was a planned reform for 2020-21 onwards, to be determined in the latter part of 2018.

The Board noted that the Access Agreement would be replaced by an Access and Participation Plan for 2019-20 onwards. A condition of OfS registration and access to both the teaching grant and designation of courses for student support up to the fee cap would require the approval of an Access and Participation Plan; this must be submitted by 23rd May 2018, with a decision on approval, conditional approval or rejection by the Director for Fair Access and Participation made by mid-September, to align with fees publication for 2019/20.

4. The Board received and endorsed the academic overview report summary and list of actions arising from annual course monitoring.

The Board noted that the Quality and Standards Committee had reviewed the summary for both Harper Adams University and its partners, and that quality of learning opportunities was deemed to be generally high and that academic standards set at the appropriate level.

The Board noted that the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee would further explore the difference in academic achievement between male and female students. It was confirmed that no underlying cause had as yet been identified to explain the under-performance seen across male students.

5. The Board received and approved the annual monitoring report for Research Degrees 2016/17.

The Board noted that the drop in student registrations was a concern. This was largely attributed to the [REDACTED]. New partnerships, including [REDACTED], were in the pipeline in an attempt to bridge this gap.

6. The Board received the action plan for taught postgraduate provision.

The Board noted that further consultation was required with the stakeholders mentioned in the report to establish the feasibility of some proposed actions and timeframes.

7. The Board received a snapshot of the live Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy spreadsheet which tracks performance against agreed indicators.

The Board agreed that a schedule would be developed by the LTSEC to outline the steps, including timescales, for the University to move to solely online submission of coursework assessment.

8. The Board received an oral report on the work of the Student Success and Retention Task Force.

The Board noted that progress had been made; a number of activities were now rated 'green' in the group's action plan.

9. The Board received a progress report on Academic Components of the Corporate Plan 2017/18.

The Board noted that many items were progressing into 'yellow' as would be expected at this point in the year.

10. The Board received and endorsed an update on the risk analysis and action plan 2017/18.

11. The Board received and approved the nominations for Honorary Awards to be made at Graduation in September 2018.

12. The Board received a review of Student Appeals and Complaints in 2016/17.

The Board noted that the University's performance had been exemplary in the context of the rest of the sector.

13. The Board received and approved the outline term dates for 2018/19 – 2022/2023 and the draft academic calendar for 2018/19, with Board approval to make minor changes, in-year, as required.

14. The Board received and endorsed a paper summarising new course development and suspension recommendations from the Programme Approvals Committee (PAC) meeting held on 16th January 2018.

The Board endorsed the recommendation of PAC at its meeting held on 16th January 2018 to grant full Development Approval to deliver the following proposed postgraduate programme from September 2018:

- [REDACTED]

The Board endorsed the recommendation of PAC at its meeting held on 16th January 2018 to grant full Development Approval to deliver the following proposed Degree Apprenticeship programmes, for two entry cohorts in the first instance, from September 2018:

- [REDACTED]

The Board endorsed the recommendation of PAC at its meeting held on 16th January 2018 to grant full Development Approval to deliver the following proposed postgraduate programmes, including a Postgraduate Degree Apprenticeship programme, from September 2018:

- [REDACTED]

The Board endorsed the recommendation of PAC at its meeting held on 16th January 2018 to grant full Development Approval to deliver the following proposed workforce development programmes, to replace the PgC Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education, from September 2018:

- [REDACTED]

The Board endorsed the recommendation of PAC at its meeting held on 16th January 2018 to grant full Development Approval to deliver the following proposed programmes from September 2018 (PgC/PgD/MSc) and July 2019 (University Diploma):

- [REDACTED]

The Board endorsed the recommendation of PAC at its meeting held on 2nd March 2018 to grant full Development Approval to deliver the following proposed postgraduate programmes from September 2018:

- [REDACTED]

The Board noted that there was a query regarding the start date of the [REDACTED] courses listed above which may be delayed beyond September 2018. This would be confirmed at the next meeting of the University Executive [post-meeting note: was delayed to September 2019].

The Board noted and endorsed the approval granted by PAC at its meeting held on 16th January 2018 of revisions to Year 2 and Year 3 (both undertaken at Harper Adams) of the BSc/BSc (Hons) International Agri-food Marketing and Supply Chain Management (with Huazhong Agricultural University), for implementation in 2018-19 and 2019-20 academic sessions (applicable to 2017-18 entry cohort only).

The Board noted and endorsed the approval granted by PAC at its meeting held on 16th January 2018 of revisions to the Certificate of Higher Education Livestock Market Operations and Management, for implementation from 2018-19 academic session (applicable to 2015 entry cohort onwards).

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 the University had performed exceptionally well in the QS World University Rankings 2018, that an application to register with the Office for Students would be submitted by 23rd May 2018, and that the Board would receive an update on progress with the [REDACTED] at its next meeting. Dr Llewellyn also encouraged staff and students to read and respond to the government consultation on 'Health and harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit'.

Dr Abigail Hind
Director of Academic Services
April 2018