

# 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 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018. The Board of Governors is asked to note this report.

1. The Board noted under Matters Arising: that the Students' Union's complaints arrangements had been updated, that student characteristic data at module achievement level was not yet available and that the Tier 4 Sponsorship Policy had been updated and approved by Chair's Action.
2. The Board considered a paper outlining key student indicators at an institutional level. The Board endorsed the recommended action in hand and agreed additionally that the University should investigate whether action planning arising from National Student Survey and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey data (both normally available in August) could be used to inform change in time for the start of term in the same calendar year, given the deterioration in some indicators, notwithstanding an overall positive outcome, in relation to overall satisfaction levels. The Board noted a significant improvement in overall first year progression rates and excellent final year achievement outcomes. The Board also noted the challenging admissions environment although significant staff effort had resulted in acceptable levels of new undergraduate enrolments, following higher levels of late cycle activity than normal.
3. The Board received a report on student outcomes (access, on-course success and progression beyond graduation) scrutinised by student characteristics, including of under-represented or disadvantaged groups. The Board noted a positive picture overall, with almost all metrics moving in the right direction and gaps between student groups closing, albeit some at a slower pace than others. It was noted that the gender performance gap in terms of attainment still required attention across course areas.
4. The Board considered and endorsed an annual review paper from the Careers Service. The Board noted that the Destination of Leavers of Higher Education Survey had now ended and would be replaced with the Graduate Outcomes survey, with the first results reported early in 2020. The University's graduates continue to perform strongly.
5. The Board received and approved a paper outlining the Annual Course Monitoring headline data from 2017/18 and for the 2018/19 entry cycle. Each course team had met with the Director of Learning, Teaching and International and the Student Data and Planning Analyst to develop an action plan based on their individual set of student characteristic data within the context of institutional statistics.

The Board noted that the validation partnership arrangement with [REDACTED] was to end soon and that data need not be presented in the future.

6. The Board received and endorsed an update on the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy. The Board questioned whether the action points within the strategy could be ranked in terms of priority as their relative importance was currently unclear, in light of the large numbers of activity streams.
7. The Board noted an update on Access and Participation Planning. The Board noted that the University's Access and Participation Plan for 2019/20 had been approved by the Office for Students and that the Institution would be initially subject to enhanced monitoring in light of observed low enrolments of students of Black, Asian or Minority Ethnicity or from a Low Participation Neighbourhood. This scrutiny would reinforce the University's own agenda to diversify the student base.
8. The Board considered and endorsed the Tier 4 Visa Sponsorship Status Report. Student numbers remained fairly static as a drop in the number of students from [REDACTED] had been offset by an increase in students from [REDACTED]. The Board noted that there would be a Home Office audit in mid-December.
9. The Board received and endorsed the Register of Collaborative Provision for 2018/19, which is reviewed and revised annually. The Board noted that the University was required to formally notify the Office for Students of any amendments to collaborative partner arrangements.
10. The Board received a cost-income analysis of the University's international partnerships. The Board noted that the figures would need to be recalculated due to a disparity between the numbers of international students on campus in 2018 and the forecast used in the analysis, although, importantly noted that the

provision normally returns a small surplus. The information would be presented again at a later date, including for Governor consideration.

11. The Board received and endorsed a progress report on the Risk Analysis and Action Plan 2018/19. The Board noted that Risk 22 relating to the University's relationship with the Students' Union had been increased from low to low/medium.
12. The Board received and endorsed a paper summarising new course development and suspension recommendations from the Programme Approvals Committee (PAC) meetings held on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 24<sup>th</sup> July, 20<sup>th</sup> September and 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018.

Of most significance, the Board noted:

[REDACTED]

13. The Board received a paper which outlined the full portfolio of the University's validated courses. The Board noted the usefulness of the new live document.
14. The Board received and approved the terms of reference for the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.
15. The Board received an oral report from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, covering strategic matters of relevance to the Academic Board. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor noted that:
  - The Office for Students had stated that it would not bail out institutions in financial difficulties but that approved Student Protection Plans were intended to protect students in the event of course or institutional closure.
  - The Augar Review had indicated that undergraduate fee levels might move both upwards and downwards, depending on the course.
  - The upcoming Open Day on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2018 was set to attract approximately 600 potential applicants. This was a promising outlook in the context of an increasingly competitive marketplace.
  - The funding shortfall for the Teachers' Pension Scheme would represent a significant financial pressure for the University in 2019/20 and beyond.
  - [REDACTED] was the first member of the institution to receive a National Teaching Fellowship award and congratulations of the Board were passed on to her.
  - The University would welcome Sam Gyimah on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2018, when it was hoped that the Minister for Universities and Science would meet with staff and students, take a tour of the University and open the Agri-Epi Centre.

Dr Abigail Hind  
Director of Academic Services  
November 2018