Academic Board

M15/062-M15/113

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2015

Present:	Professor P Layzell (In the Chair), Professor T Armstrong, Dr J Bennett, Professor R Deem, Professor T Evans, Professor J Fiadeiro, Professor D Gilbert, Professor P Hogg, Dr J Hughes, Professor J John, Professor A Kahane, Professor R Kemp, Mr S Kendrick, Dr C Kremmydas, Professor P Leman, Mr S Massiah, Dr E McGirr for Professor D Rebellato, Professor J McKee, Professor R Meek, Dr A Miskimmon, Professor S Murphy, Professor K Normington, Professor B O'Keefe, Professor J Phillips, Professor J Powell, Professor E Schafer, Professor A Sheppard, Dr G Smith, Professor M Spagat, Professor P Teixeira-Dias, Professor M Thirlwall for Professor P Burgess, Professor D Tourish, Mr J Tuck, Professor J Unerman, Dr D Watling, Professor K Willis
Secretary:	Mrs A Sendall
Observers:	Dr A Bradshaw, Mr S Higman, Ms S Holmer (item 10 only), Professor B Langford (item 7 only), Mrs J Roberts, Mrs D Salsbury, Ms E Wilkinson, Professor J Zanker
Apologies:	Professor P Burgess, Mr A Clarke, Professor J Crampton, Professor A Gange, Professor M Gold, Mrs C Newsome, Miss E Peagam, Professor D Rebellato, Ms S Simon

1. **Welcome and Apologies**

   The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted apologies. 15/062

   The Board noted that this was the last meeting before the current terms of office expire for the following Representative, Elected and Student members: 15/063
   Professor Ahuvia Kahane, Head of Department of Classics;
   Professor Dan Rebellato, Head of Department of Drama and Theatre;
   Dr Jon Hughes, Head of School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures;
   Professor Alan Gange, Head of School of Biological Sciences;
   Professor James McKee, Head of School of Mathematics and Information Security;
   Professor Anne Sheppard, Member of Council Elected by the Academic Teaching Staff;
   Miss Emma Peagam, Students' Union President (Education and Campaigns);
   Mr Alexander Clarke, Students' Union Postgraduate Officer;
   Mr Christopher Wall, Students' Union Academic Affairs Officer.
   The Board thanked them for their contribution to Academic Board.

2. **Minutes**

   The Minutes of the last meeting held on **Wednesday 25 March 2015** (M 15/01 - M 15/61) were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting. 15/064

3. **Matters Arising**

   The Board noted that Mr Massiah, Director of Information Technology, will retain his status as an *ex officio* member of Academic Board until the introduction of the new Statutes. 15/065

4. **Actions Taken by the Chair**

The Board noted that no actions have been taken by the Principal on behalf of the Academic Board since the last meeting held on 25 March 2015. 15/066

5. Unstarring of Items

The Board noted that the following items in Part C and D had been unstarred for further discussion during the meeting: 15/067
Item 25: Minutes of the Academic Board Executive Committee (AB/15/45).

6. Formal Reports

6.1 Principal's Report

The Board received a written report from the Principal (AB/15/24). The Principal highlighted the following: 15/068

Teaching Excellence Framework
The introduction of a Teaching Excellence Framework is a commitment of the Manifesto, and the Vice-Principal (Education) is currently involved in discussions about possible models for the Teaching Excellence Framework. 15/069

Publication of Graduate Earnings by Subject of Study and Institution
The Board noted that the current and former coalition government wants to gather graduate earnings data, providing information about graduate earnings by subject studied and by institution attended. 15/070

6.2 Reports from the Deputy Principal and the Vice-Principals

The Board received an oral report from the Deputy Principal on the Estates Development Plan. 15/071
  (i) The old tank room in the Boilerhouse is being converted into a new seminar room;
  (ii) The College is awaiting formal approval to commence building student residences for 600 students on the land North of the A30;
  (iii) The College has received planning permission for the new Library, but is currently awaiting financial approval from Council.

The Board received an oral report from the Vice-Principal (Education). 15/072
  (i) The Proofreading Policy will be piloted on PGT students next year;
  (ii) The College has been considering ways to encourage equality and diversity in the curriculum;
  (iii) The *Code of Practice for the Academic Welfare of Postgraduate Research Students* has been updated to include new sections on the supervisory team, placements, and jury service.
  (iv) The process for incorporating published work in a monograph style thesis was clarified;
  (v) The EThOS embargo on publishing theses has been increased to two years.

The Board received an oral report from the Vice-Principal (Research and Enterprise) on the REF2020. Planning the process for impact development has begun. The Research Committee will review the REF Code of Practice for REF2020. 15/073

6.3 Report from the Students' Union President

The Students' Union President was unable to attend the meeting, and no report was provided. 15/074

6.4 Report from the Council

The Academic Board representative on Council reported on the Council meeting held on 13 May 2015. Council noted that the private placement to raise £80m is now a matter of public record. Other items considered at the meeting were the Prevent Duty, the Statutes in relationship with Academic Board, and a further update on the Estates Development Plan.

15/075

The Board received the minutes of the Council meeting held on 4 March 2015 (AB/15/25).

15/076

7. **PGR Students and the Doctoral School**

The Board received a presentation by the Dean and the Associate Dean of the Doctoral School to introduce the Doctoral School. The Associate Dean of the Doctoral School reported that the Doctoral School was established to create a physical home for PGR students. The Doctoral Hub, situated on the ground floor of the International Building, provides a combined social and study space for PGR students. It has 24 workstations, lockable lockers, a small kitchen area, and 24 hour card swipe access by College card, and has a group of students to oversee it. The Doctoral School launch in January was attended by 120 students and staff. The Doctoral School has a website and a research degree administration team headed by Alex Borrett. The climactic event of the first year of the Doctoral School will be the PGR Summer Conference and Garden Party on Monday 8 June. The Doctoral School will increase the visibility of PGR students in the College and provide a programme of events for PGR students covering subjects such as employability. Once the new Library has opened it will provide dedicated PGR silent study space with 70 workstations allowing the Doctoral Hub to be a social / networking space.

15/077

The Dean of the Doctoral School asked the Board to consider three strategic questions for research degree programmes and the Doctoral School: (i) How should we be preparing research students for the labour market and for their role in society? (ii) As Research Councils UK (RCUK) Doctoral Training Partnerships grow and more matched funding is required, there is less College funding for those ineligible for RCUK awards. How can we grow high quality research students with only minimal other internal funding? (iii) Can we do more to widen participation in doctoral education? Suggestions from the Board included developing charitable fundraising through the Alumni Fund to support PGR students, and developing employability skills by offering teaching opportunities to students.

15/078

8. **Meeting Our Compliance Obligations**

The Board received an update on recent compliance issues for the College (AB/15/26). The Registrar and College Secretary reported that the paper contained a series of points of information of what the College has to do to be compliant with various external bodies. The paper summarised the following areas:

15/079

Prevent Duty
The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a requirement on a number of specified authorities, including universities, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The College will have to provide minimum training to all staff who have student contact.

15/080

Health and Safety
A recent inspection of pressure systems and lifting equipment found that a number of these were overdue for their statutory examinations.

15/081

Consumer Protection Regulations

15/082

The Board was asked to note that care must be taken to ensure that information presented to prospective students verbally at Open Days and during interviews is accurate, and that the College can deliver what it has committed to deliver in that information.

9. **Draft Statutes and Standing Orders**

The Board received the draft Statutes, the Standing Orders of Academic Board, and a commentary on the current Statutes (AB/15/27), along with a response to the draft Statutes prepared by some members of Academic Board. A member of the Board requested further discussion on the following areas: (i) Composition of Academic Board, (ii) Academic Assembly, (iii) Definition of Academic Units, (iv) Academic Board Executive Committee, and (v) Proposal to have an Elected Chair of Academic Board.

15/083

The Registrar and College Secretary noted that there was some confusion in Statute 6 between faculties, schools and departments. He clarified that faculties are not academic units, but are groupings of academic units. He confirmed that Statute 6 would be reworded to correctly define academic units. A member of the Board expressed concern that smaller academic groupings, such as Distance Learning, may be under-represented at Academic Board. The Registrar and College Secretary responded that larger or long-term groups would go to Council for recognition as an academic unit, or could petition Council to be represented on Academic Board.

15/084

Some members of the Board suggested that a larger Academic Board with more academic elected members would provide greater representativeness. However, other members of the Board did not agree that a larger Academic Board would necessarily be more representative since there is a lack of engagement in the College's academic staff with Academic Board. There was general agreement that a larger board would be difficult to manage. It was also suggested that Heads of Department should not necessarily be members of the Board. The Board recognised that Heads of Department have a central role on Academic Board, and serving on the Board is an effective way to fulfil their Head of Department responsibilities. The Board also noted that non-academic senior posts, such as the Director of Library Services, provide integral services for Academic Board. It was suggested that more diversity and representativeness on the Board could be addressed through the choice of co-opted members.

15/085

The Principal asked for the draft Statute governing the membership of Academic Board to be reworded and brought back to a special meeting of Academic Board before the final version is considered by Council at its meeting on 1 July. The Board agreed that the composition of the Board should have a minimum number of elected members. It was suggested that this number should be 10. It was agreed that a small group of members would draw up a final version of the statute to recommend to Academic Board at its special meeting. The Group would include the Academic Registrar, Prof Anne Sheppard, Dr Graham Smith, Prof Jeffrey Unerman, and one other Head of Department/School (*Secretary's Note*: Prof James Bennett agreed to join the Group).

15/086

A member of the Board noted that Statute 17(4), which states, 'The Faculties meeting severally or jointly shall have power to advise the Academic Board on all academic matters and may advise on other matters relating to the general management of the College,' is not included in the new Statutes. He suggested creating an academic staff assembly Statute in its place to provide a means by which staff can feel connected with the Statutes. The Chair asked that the Vice-Principal (Staffing) and the Director of Human Resources take a view on this with regards to staff engagement.

15/087

The Academic Registrar reported that the Academic Board Standing Orders are a work in progress and will be recirculated to Academic Board at its next meeting.

15/088

10. **Electronic Exam Paper Management**

The Board received a presentation by the Senior Faculty Administrator (SFA) of the Department of Economics on using Departmental SharePoint Sites for the shared electronic management of examination and assessment papers (AB/15/29). The new system has been successfully trialled in the Department of Economics and the aims of the new system are to: (i) remove the inefficiencies of using USBs and hard copies, (ii) increase the security of the process, (iii) increase accessibility for users, and (iv) bring the College in line with other HEIs. The system was developed with the help of staff in IT (Nigel Rata and Huw Michael), and allows internal staff and external examiners to work on a document all at once, keeping only one master copy. The feedback to the trialled system has been positive. It was noted that exam scripts would be scanned in and uploaded to the system. A question was also raised about the impact on users with visual stress who may experience difficulties working with the glare of white backgrounds on a computer screen. The Director of Information Technology responded that this was a wider issue for the College about the use of screens. | 15/089

11. **Teaching and Learning Strategy**

The Board received a report on the College's Teaching and Learning Strategy for 2015-2020 (AB/15/30). The Vice-Principal (Education) reported that this was the final version of the strategy following wide consultation. Some minor amendments had been fed back to the Vice-Principal (Education) outside the meeting and will be incorporated into the strategy. The Board approved the College's Teaching and Learning Strategy for 2015-2020 subject to incorporating the minor amendments. | 15/090

12. **Student Recruitment**

The Board received an oral update on applications received to date for admission in 2015. The Deputy Principal reported that the next stage will be the publication of students' examination results to ascertain which students have met their offer conditions and which departments will go into Clearing. The Deputy Principal acknowledged the hard work and expressed thanks to all staff involved for their efforts in increasing applications and conversion. | 15/091

13. **Postgraduate Entry Requirements**

The Board approved the entry requirements agreed by the Academic Planning Committee for PGT, MRes and Masters by Research Degrees for 2016/17 entry (AB/15/31). The Board noted two errors in the paper: (i) the Department of Classics and Philosophy no longer exists – the correct name is the Department of Classics; (ii) the Centre for Professional Studies has been included under the School of Management, but is a separate academic unit under the Faculty of Science. | 15/092

14. **Regulations Working Group**

The Board received proposed changes to Undergraduate Regulations, Postgraduate Taught Regulations, Regulations on the Conduct of Assessment, Regulations on Assessment Offences, Regulations on Access Arrangements for Assessment, Research Degrees Regulations and the Ratification and Revocation of Awards to come into force from 2015-16 (AB/15/32). There was some concern expressed that there had not been sufficient consultation with Chairs of Sub-Boards to approve the proposed regulations. It was therefore agreed that the proposed changes would be circulated to all Chairs of Sub-Boards for consultation, and once responses had been considered the proposals would be taken to the special meeting of Academic Board proposed for later this month for approval. | 15/093

15. **Student Academic Appeals and Complaints**

The Board received a report on the student academic appeals and complaints in relation to the 2013-14 academic session from the Head of Academic Quality and Policy (AB/15/33). The Academic Registrar reported that the number of appeals submitted in 2013-14 had decreased from the previous year from 93 to 55. The number of appeals upheld had fallen in the same period from 11 to 2. However, there is an emerging problem with appeals against assessment offences where some departments have not been following the correct procedure for dealing with cases of assessment offences. It was noted that the majority of complaints were submitted by postgraduate taught and research students and mainly concerned supervisory arrangements of PhDs or projects. Following changes to the OIA *Good Practice Framework for Handling Complaints and Academic Appeals*, the complaints procedure has been revised to ensure it is compliant with the framework and to remove sole responsibility for investigation cases from the Head of academic department/school of Professional Service area.

15/094

16. Honorary Degrees

The Board considered recommendations for the conferral of Honorary Degrees in 2016 (AB/15/34). The Board supported the recommendation received prior to final approval by Council.

15/095

17. Honorary Titles and Academic Promotions

The Board received a paper on the award of honorary titles and noted the list of academic promotions conferred throughout 2013-14, and for 2014-15 (AB/15/35).

15/096

18. Academic Board Standing Orders and Procedures

The Board received proposed amendments to the current Standing Orders of Academic Board and procedures to support their operation (AB/15/36). It was agreed that this would be discussed at the special meeting of Academic Board proposed for later this month.

15/097

19. Annual Report to Council

The Board noted that the annual report of the business of Academic Board will be circulated for approval following this meeting. The report will be submitted to the October meeting of Council.

15/098

Starred Items

20. Periodic Departmental Reviews

20.1 The Board received the Periodic Departmental Review report, together with the Action Plan following the Periodic Departmental Review of the Centre for Criminology and Sociology held in November 2014 (AB/15/37).

15/099

20.2 The Board received the Periodic Departmental Review report, together with the Action Plan following the Periodic Departmental Review of the Department of Computer Science held in December 2014 (AB/15/38).

15/100

20.3 The Board received the updated Action Plan following the Periodic Departmental Review of the Department of Earth Sciences held in March 2014 (AB/15/39).

15/101

21. Proposed Changes to Constitutions and Terms of Reference

The Board approved the minor changes to the membership of Research Degrees Programmes Committee (AB/15/40). 15/102

22. Publication

The Board agreed that no items required broad dissemination around the College. 15/103

The Board confirmed that no papers needed exemption from the Freedom of Information Act requirements. 15/104

23. Annual Reviews

The Board received the Faculty Scrutiny reports of the Annual Review of Undergraduate programmes for 2013-14 (AB/15/41). 15/105

The Board received the Faculty Scrutiny reports of the Annual Review of Postgraduate Taught programmes for 2013-14 (AB/15/42). 15/106

The Board received the Faculty Scrutiny reports of the Annual Review of Postgraduate Research programmes for 2013-14 (AB/15/43). 15/107

24. Faculty Boards

The Board received the combined report from the meetings of the Faculty Boards held in May 2015 (AB/15/44). 15/108

25. Academic Board Executive Committee

The Board received the unconfirmed notes of the meeting of the Academic Board Executive Committee held on 13 May 2015 (AB/15/45). A member of the Board asked for clarification as to whether the Academic Board Executive Committee is a standing committee of Academic Board as according to the current Standing Orders, 'Appointments to standing committees of Academic Board will be made by the Academic Board on the basis of recommendations from the Principal, the Deputy Principal, the Vice-Principals and the Deans of Faculties, drawn from nominations made by the Faculties.' The Secretary confirmed that the Academic Board Executive Committee is not a standing committee; it is an executive group. 15/109

26. Academic Planning Committee

The Board received the minutes of the meeting of the Academic Planning Committee held on 9 March 2015 (AB/15/46). 15/110

27. Research Committee

The Board received the minutes of the meetings of the Research Committee held on 17 March and 30 April 2015 (AB/15/47). 15/111

28. Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee

The Board received the minutes of the meeting of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee held on 11 March 2015 (AB/15/48). 15/112

29. Dates of the Next Meetings

The meetings of Academic Board for the 2015/16 academic year will take place on: 15/113

Wednesday 9 December 2015, 3pm
Wednesday 9 March 2016, 3pm
Wednesday 1 June 2016, 3pm