

Academic Board

ACTIONS

Action from current meeting

Action completed since last meeting

Ref	Action	Lead	Due Date
23/011	Invite the Students' Union sabbatical officers elected for the 2023-24 academic year to observe the June Academic Board meeting	CM	June AB
23/018	Add a discussion item on artificial intelligence tools and academic integrity to the next agenda of Academic Board	CM	June AB
23/039 and 23/053	Elected member to send detailed queries on the proposed amendments to the College Statutes to Academicboard@rhul.ac.uk Principal to review comments	SM and JS	June AB
23/040	Update Academic Board on analysis of the responses to the Committee Effectiveness Review	CM	June AB
22/193	Add Foundation Year Degree to a future agenda of Academic Board	CM	End of autumn 2023
23/061	Clarify the timeline for the publication of the Emergency Regulations outside the meeting and update the Board in October.	MH/CM	October 2023
23/68	Circulate the proposed Terms of Reference and membership of the Schools review group	TB	October 2023
23/097	further update on progress with Assessment Futures should be provided to the 29 November meeting of Academic Board	MH	November 2023
23/101	Set up working group to scope future developments in AI	MH	Summer 2023
23/109	Update Academic Board on the implementation of recommendations arising out of the effectiveness review	CM/AB	Autumn 2023
23/118	Discuss with the University Secretary whether the Committees Handbook, last published in 2015, should be re-introduced	CM/AB	October 2023
23/122	Inform the Secretariat and Events Manager that AB approve the recommendations in the Honorary Degrees paper	CM	June 2023
23/124	Advise the Secretariat and the Events Manager that AB recommend references to marital and parental status are removed from appendix 2 of the Honorary Degrees paper as a matter of urgency.	CM	June 2023
23/137	To hold an information/ drop in session for academic staff interested in applying for one of the elected member positions	AB/CM	
23/156	Present Regulatory Addendum for 2023/24 and timeline for review of academic regulations	MH	November 2023
23/159	Update the timeline of the Emergency Regulations to include the date of the announcement of the Marking and Assessment Boycott and the instruction from the Office for Students issued on 12 June	MH	November 2023

23/177	To present the terms of reference for an external review of Academic Board	AB	November 2023
23/211	Provide an update on discussions at AQuASC about degree outcomes in Economics, Electronic Engineering and Geography	MH	June 2024
23/224	Provide update on implementation of a mark management system and assessment changes as part of Assessment Futures project	MH	March 2024
23/238	Give further consideration regarding input into the AB governance review a wider pool of staff than those sitting on the Board. Present report and recommendations from external AB governance review	AB AB	January 2024 March 2024
23/240	Present recommendation on additional Honorary Degree to Council for approval	AB/CM	November 2024
24/24	To note that any discussion of Artificial Intelligence and the sector includes reference to PGR	AB/CM	Will be included as an agenda item in March or June 2025
24/31	To include item on June agenda on prioritises emergening from academic governance review and approval of terms of reference for implementation working group	AB/CM	June 2024
24/58	To receive an update on the processing times referenced in the Admissions Policy	MF	June 2024
23/209, 24/76	Receive final update on the last year of the current strategic plan (June 2024)	MF/AW	October 2024
24/84-85	Update Costing and Pricing policy to either replace 'man' or insert 'sic' against the Frascati definition of research quoted in the policy.	RL	Summer 2024
24/154	Update on non submission of External Examiner report 2022-23 for Clincial Psychology	MH	Autumn 2024
24/160	Add agenda item on strategic vision for London campus and enhancing the student experience for students based there	AB/CM	During 24-25

ACADEMIC BOARD

Wednesday 5 June 2024

2pm

Wettons B (in person) or MS Teams (online) [hybrid]

Min. 24/72-171



Minutes

Present:	Prof J Sanders (Chair), Prof T Bhamra, Prof M Fellowes, Prof W Morgan, Prof A Gupta, Prof R Mock, Prof G Pieri, Prof C Tsinopoulos (until 3.15pm), Prof K Dodds, Prof D Beer, Prof R Hemus, Prof C Kremmydas, Prof A Roberts, Prof S Rose, Dr N Hall, Prof R Barn, Prof L Sjoberg (until 4pm), Prof S Hosany, Dr C Tsai, Prof T Wainwright, Dr P Wu, Dr K Clemitshaw, Prof J McEvoy, Prof A Palombi, Prof D Schreve, Prof H Zagefka,	Prof C Matos, Dr S Alty, Prof E Coles-Kemp, Prof S Gibson, Prof I Moffatt, Dr M Bentley, Prof R D'Alton-Harrison, Dr S Dissanayeke, Dr J Murdoch, Dr S Nield, Dr M Ribary, Dr C Paltrinieri, Prof L Rinaldi, Prof S Shah, Ms H Hockin, Ms S Sivarajah, Ms N Bundhun, Dr D Brown, Prof V Greenaway, Prof M Humphreys, Prof R Livesey, Prof D Watling.
Secretary:	Mr A M Boggs	
In attendance:	Dr N Barratt, Dr E Cox, Prof B Fitzgerald, Madelaine Gray, Mr S Kendrick (on MS Teams), Mr S McAuliffe, Dr N Rata (on MS Teams), Sue Starbuck, Ms A Wallis (on MS Teams), Ms Alice Wilby (independent consultant)	Miss C Munton (Clerk)
Apologies:	Prof D Anderberg, Dr A Bown, Mr A Copland, Prof G Pieri, Dr S Portugal, Prof H Tregidga	
Trade Union Observers:	Mr A Alway, Dr D Elphick	

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Vice-Chancellor thanked outgoing members for their contributions. It was noted that Professor Danielle Schreve was leaving the university in July and the Board wished her well in her new role at Bristol. 24/72

New members were welcomed, including Professor Wyn Morgan, interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience), Carlotta Paltrinieri, newly elected member, Professor Lizzie Coles-Kemp, Head of Information Security, and Stephen McAuliffe, Executive Director of Business and People Services. The Students' Union sabbatical officers elect were also welcomed as observers. 24/73

Apologies are noted in the section above. 24/74

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 20 March 2024 were APPROVED. 24/75

3. **Matters arising**

The Board RECEIVED an update on the following actions:

23/209	Receive final update on the last year of the current strategic plan (June 2024) Professor Bhamra reported that the three-year strategic plan had ended, noting a number of successful projects including the HR Excellence in Research award, increased strategic partnerships in India and China, improved Knowledge Exchange Partnership success, strengthened relationships with our recognised University of London Teaching Centres, Ask Royal Holloway, and phase 1 of creating a Data Warehouse. A paper would be presented to the October 2024 meeting detailing achievements and projects that will be either closed or carried forward.	TB	June 2024	24/76
23/211	Provide an update on discussions at AQuASC about degree outcomes in Economics, Electronic Engineering and Geography Professor Humphreys reported it had been agreed at AQUASC to take this forward in the undergraduate annual review process.	MH	June 2024	24/77
23/174 and 23/175	Update on review of creation of Schools Professor Fellowes reported that the working group had taken place with the aim of bringing a paper to an autumn term meeting of AB. He thanked colleagues for their patience in starting this process.	MF	Initial deadline completion of review was June 24 but noted in March 24 that this would be extended	24/78
24/24	To note that any discussion of Artificial Intelligence and the sector includes reference to PGR This action remains under review whilst the AB schedule of business for 24/25 is developed.	AB/CM	Ongoing	24/79
24/31	To include item on June agenda on priorities emerging from academic governance review and approval of terms of reference for implementation working group. Discussed under item 13.	AB/CM	June 2024	24/80

24/58	To receive an update on the point raised at the March AB meeting on the processing times referenced in the Admissions Policy Professor Fellowes reported that Admissions have provided assurance that applications will be processed within the publicised times. Any complaints received are triaged daily and escalated to the Director of Strategic Communications and Marketing to ensure a prompt response.	MF	June 2024	24/81
-------	---	----	-----------	-------

4. **Items considered by circulation**

The Costing and Pricing Policy (paper AB/24/24) was circulated for approval by circulation. Board members raised queries, and insufficient responses were received to confirm approval. 24/82

The Director of Research and Innovation advised there had been no substantive changes to the policy and it had been expanded to include annexes providing operational guidance, confirms that departments should be using Full Economic Costing (FEC) methodology which is standard across the sector and sets out responsibilities which were missing from the previous policy. The only change was to define how the university constitutes pricing exception to remove the ambiguity from the previous policy. 24/83

It was agreed to amend the policy to either replace 'man' or insert 'sic' against the Frascati definition of research quoted in the policy, noting this refers to 'man, culture, and society' which was no longer acceptable as gender-neutral language in academe. 24/84

The policy was APPROVED subject to the above amendment. 24/85

5. **Actions taken by the Chair**

It was noted that the Chair approved two amendments to the Statute 9 and Student Misconduct Panel membership in the School of Performing and Digital Arts (paper AB/24/25). 24/86

The Chair recorded her thanks to those sitting on these panels for their contributions. 24/87

6. **Unstarring of items**

The following papers were unstarred- 24/88

- AB/24/44 UG Annual Review Report, EPMS
- AB/24/45 PGT Annual Review Reports, SBM and LSE
- AB/24/46 University Education Committee minutes, 27 February
- AB/24/48 Doctoral School Committee minutes, 14 May
- AB/24/49 Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee minutes, 5 March

Formal Reports

7. **Vice-Chancellor and Principal's Report**

Paper AB/24/26 Vice-Chancellor and Principal's Report was RECEIVED. 24/89

Highlights included -	24/90
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Planting Resistance lecture delivered by Professor Judith A Carney, a collaboration between Royal Holloway GeoHumanities Centre, the British Academy and Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; • Royal Holloway joining the Breaking Down Barriers Communication and Purpose Coalition, noting this is important for the university's inclusion and widening access work. Staff interested in learning more about this work and how to engage with it were asked to contact Jo Pinson, Director of Strategic Communications and Marketing; • an update from the Rankings and Reputation Group, noting that whilst the university had not achieved as well as expected in the recent QS rankings, there were encouraging signs that recent work is slowly paying off, but it was important for Schools to maintain focus, provide relevant data when requested and keep pushing in this space; • recommendation from the Migration Advisory Committee Rapid Review that the Graduate Route visa remains in place; • a number of successful international visits to Royal Holloway and planned trips to strategic university partners. 	
It was noted that Professor Sanders has become a formal trustee of The Conversation UK and sits on the Advisory Board for the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI).	24/91
The Head of Biological Sciences advised there is a typographical error on page 5 and references to Dr Antonio Malerba should be corrected to Dr Alberto Malerba.	24/92
8. Regulatory and Legislative update	
Paper AB/24/27 Regulatory and Legislative update was RECEIVED.	24/93
The University Secretary reported that the Office for Students (OfS) are unlikely to issue any new guidance until after the General Election results on 4 July.	24/94
Members were reminded about the call for nominations to fill vacancies the elected member categories on Academic Board and Council. Drop-in sessions were scheduled for 7 and 14 June with the offer of meeting separately with the University Secretary if interested parties were unable to attend on either of these dates.	24/95
9. Report from the Students' Union President	
The Board RECEIVED paper AB/24/28 election manifestos from the Incoming Sabbatical Officers.	24/96
The Board RECEIVED paper AB/24/29 Report from the Students' Union President.	24/97
Highlights included –	24/98
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at a recent referendum, students voted in favour of enabling the Students' Union to become an incorporated organisation; • sabbatical officer handover; • engaging students in the upcoming general election • end of year celebration events 	
The Chair thanked the President and sabbatical officers for their fantastic work, also noting the successes of the WonkHE event with Jim Dickinson, the Festival of Languages and Cultures and the Cost-of-Living Campaign.	24/99

10.	Report from the Council	
	The Board RECEIVED the minutes from the Council meeting held on 22 February 2024 (AB/24/30).	24/100
	The Chair reported that at their meeting on 17 May, Council approved two new members to replace members retiring on 31 July:	24/101
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Denise Brown</i>, CEO and Principal of South Essex College of Further and Higher Education – she is currently a co-opted member of Council’s Students Education and Research Committee. She has a long professional history of leadership in the FE sector. ▪ <i>Dr Jenny Laird</i>, Vice-President, Search & Evaluation Neuroscience at Eli Lilly. Dr Laird is an experienced researcher, having started her career in academe in the UK and Canada, and specialises in knowledge exchange. 	
	The University Secretary and Chair of Council were undertaking ongoing recruitment activities as there remain two independent member vacancies after 31 July 2024.	24/102
11.	Report from Schools	
	The Executive Director of Student Journey provided an update on the Student Experience Strategic Framework and associated plan and Mapping the Student Journey (AB/24/31).	24/103
	Dr Barratt reported that the Service Evolution Programme (SEP) provides the university with the tools to understand the student journey from UCAS application through to graduation from a student perspective, helping to identify barriers and challenges facing students and create a common framework and approach for addressing these systematically. The key stage in the student journey map for Academic Board focus was the ‘Belong’ stage and the blending of the educational experience with wider campus life such as wellbeing and employability as part of a holistic student experience.	24/104
	Students thinking of leaving the university have reported the cost of learning as a significant factor in their decision, noting that wider peer support schemes such as Permentos have been crucial in supporting them to continue with their studies. Dr Barratt reported that the SEP allows the university to spend some focussed time thinking about issues such as sense of belonging for commuter students in a common framework.	24/105
	The Board were reminded that the SEP is currently operating on a pilot basis which enables the university to evidence gather about potential impacts on student experience and institutional efficiency.	24/106
	In response to a query from an elected member, Dr Barratt confirmed that there are incentives for current undergraduates to continue into postgraduate study at the university.	24/107

Strategy Discussion

12. Strategic Update

Paper AB/24/32 Strategic update was RECEIVED. 24/108

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Strategy, Planning and Resources) PROVIDED an update on the strategy development, highlighting the development of the vision statement and strategic ambitions. The next stage of the process is to turn the high-level ideas into an action plan. Alison Wallis, Director of Strategic Planning was thanked for her leadership of this work along with the wider student and staff community for their input. An elected member commented that the paper cover sheet records that the introduction of the new strategy will have a significant impact on staff and students, however, the type of resource required to deliver it is yet to be determined. They asked that the leadership team remained mindful of staff workload during this process. Professor Fellowes acknowledged that implementing change poses a significant challenge for the university. He emphasised the need for the institution to improve in this area. One of the critical discussions revolves around enhancing collective understanding of governance and processes related to change, as well as identifying ways to streamline workloads. 24/109

Major Items of Business

13. Academic Board Effectiveness Review

The Board RECEIVED paper AB/24/34 Academic Governance Review Implementation Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference. 24/110

The University Secretary reported that he was seeking the Board's approval to set up a Task and Finish Group to consider the recommendations from the external governance review report presented at the previous meeting. The proposed membership included two elected members and one of Department to be nominated by Academic Board members. Details about submitting a nomination would be circulated by the Clerk and Secretary by the end of June. 24/111

Paper AB/24/34 was APPROVED. 24/112

14. Access and Participation Plan

The Board RECEIVED paper AB/24/35 draft Access and Participation Plan (APP). 24/113

The interim Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) reminded the Board that the APP is an important piece of work for the institution, required by the Office for Students as part of the university's ongoing conditions of registration and that the OfS may require amendments on our submission before approving it. 24/114

Professor Morgan added that the APP is part of the university's broader efforts in widening participation, focusing on specific challenges, and continuing successes from the previous plan. Dr. Wilby highlighted the curriculum and transition frameworks as key areas of focus to ensure student success. The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Inclusive Learning and Teaching) advised that intervention leads have been appointed and the next step is to collate implementation plans for each named area. 24/115

	The Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) asked if consideration should be given to costing teaching staff time to know and embed consciously inclusive practice and ensure staff understand and can become advocates for inclusive education, noting this is crucial to delivering change in this area. In response, Dr Wilby reported that the university must use OfS methodologies, and this means only direct staff involvement is costed with the plan itself, however separate calculations had been made about nominal indirect staff costs. She advised that the APP is due for implementation from September 2025 and therefore whilst the university might start some of the work, for example the curriculum framework, in 2024, the bulk of the activity was over a year away and would span 5 years. The Chair reported that the Education and Student Experience Strategic Action Plan would help colleagues achieve recognition for this type of work.	24/116
	An elected member noted that institutional sign off sits with Council and the APP will help them to understand how the university will improve student outcomes in the context of a changing student demographic. Professor Morgan agreed that freeing up staff capacity by stopping certain activities is essential to reallocating resources without compromising student outcomes and success. Dr. Greenaway reported she will seek input from Heads of Department to ensure workload is directed where it will have the most impact.	24/117
15.	Assessment Futures: Conclusions	
	The Board RECEIVED paper AB/24/36 Assessment Futures: Conclusions.	24/118
	The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Standards) thanked staff for their input into the project, noting the work undertaken by academic leads and the Academic Quality and Policy Office. He reported that since the paper circulation, a validation meeting has been held for the School of Engineering, Physical and Mathematical Sciences. The assessment strategy project had ended and transitioned to business as usual. Further development of the assessment strategy would be absorbed into the Curriculum Framework project. It was noted that there was further work to be completed on improving university systems, for example implementing a mark management system.	24/119
16.	Academic Regulations	
	The Board RECEIVED paper AB/24/37 Regulations changes for 2024/25.	24/120
	It was agreed to take this item after item 17: Mitigation Policy proposal.	24/121
	In response to questions from members of the Board about changes to the Regulations on the Conduct of Assessment, the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Quality and Standards) confirmed the university expects the Chief External Examiner to review information provided by Departmental Assessment Board External Examiners before attending the School Progression and Awards Board (viz change to 1.c.iv) and that Vice Deans (Education and Student Experience) are not ex officio Chair of the School Progression and Awards Board (viz change to 8.3).	24/122
	The changes set out in the paper were APPROVED except for the proposed regulatory changes pertaining to Extenuating Circumstances. Regulatory outcomes for Extenuating Circumstances would be reverted to current practice before publication to reflect the Board's decision not to approve the changes presented in item 17.	24/123
	The Chair acknowledged the collaborative working with the Students' Union, despite the Mitigation policy not being approved and the commitment to exploring potential improvements in this area.	24/124

17. **Mitigation Policy**

The Board RECEIVED Paper AB/24/38 Mitigation Policy.

It was agreed to discuss this policy ahead item 16: Academic Regulations, noting that a decision on whether to approve the policy would impact the academic regulations for next year. The paper was introduced by the Executive Dean (Performing and Digital Arts) as chair of the working group tasked with reviewing the university's existing Extenuating Circumstances regulations and policy. It was acknowledged that there had been considerable consultation with key stakeholders, including the Students' Union, about the proposed policy. 24/125

Some Board members raised concerns that staff may need to restrict leave over the summer period, or struggle with caring responsibilities, to manage the volume of potential deferred assessments. It was noted that, under the proposed policy, students would be permitted to defer three pieces of assessment only to the Summer Vacation Assessment Period (SVAP), which was in line with sector norms for similar policies. Student Administration, who manage the submission of extenuating circumstances applications, would track the number of deferrals throughout the year and provide this data to departments. This would enable staff to understand several months in advance how many assessments had been deferred from the first term. It was noted that under the existing policy any module could have students resitting during SVAP and staff already need to ensure that they are available if required to mark work over the summer. It was noted that a review of SVAP is needed to bring clarity and a more consistent approach to results processing. 24/126

It was noted that the proposed policy provided for deferral of assessment only and not a deferral of teaching, and, while students will have access to the general support services across university during SVAP, the expectation is that students will have already received the teaching and supervision. 24/127

Concern was raised that the proposed policy may lead to an increase in the number of deferrals and that in some cases a new assessment would need to be developed for those students deferring to avoid those students having an advantage over those students completing an assessment at the scheduled time. The potential impact on distribution of staff workload, in particular research time, was queried. It was observed that while challenging to model exactly what will happen with the introduction of a new policy, institutions with similar policies to the one proposed have not experienced a significant increase in deferral requests. 24/128

The current workload relating to extenuating circumstances was noted: the university currently processes over 5000 Extenuating Circumstances applications per year, 56% of which are rejected. It was noted that the new policy should free up staff time that could be reinvested in support structures for the students and alleviate the stress from the students in a system that currently demands evidence that students cannot easily obtain. It was also noted that a move away from requesting evidence from students applying for a deferral aligns with a shift in Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OiA) guidance away from expecting students to supply evidence. The OiA had recently upheld a student appeal, describing the University's current policy as "unkind" in the outcome letter to the University. 24/129

It was noted that many complaints processed through the Students' Union Advice Centre are about how to navigate the current Extenuating Circumstances system and that students can often find preparing the evidence required by the current policy very difficult. 24/130

	in a period of personal crisis. It was also noted that the proposed policy was co-created with students from the outset.	
	The Board were invited to vote on implementing the mitigation policy from 2024-25. 13 members voted in favour of implementing the policy, 20 voted against and 7 abstained.	24/131
	The policy was NOT APPROVED.	24/132
18.	Research	
18.1	Annual Research Planning Cycle	
	The Board RECEIVED and DISCUSSED paper AB/24/39 Annual Research Planning Cycle.	24/133
	The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) thanked colleagues for their input into this process to date. The policy was being proposed to support School decisions relating to the resourcing and development of research. The annual data set gathered during the research planning cycle would be used to inform central decisions about resource allocation, strategy and to identify areas of research excellence, noting the intention to align it to the university's planning cycle and budget allocation. Professor Livesey reported that REF 2029 takes a more data driven approach to the research environment and this process will support the university to evidence how it has invested its time and resource. The next steps were to confirm the data pack and to run the SCOPE (Start, Context, Options, Probe, Evaluate) workshops discussed in the PowerPoint slides in paper AB/24/39.	24/134
	The Board APPROVED the Policy subject to the ongoing consultation with Schools.	24/135
18.2	University Publications Policy	
	The Board RECEIVED and APPROVED paper AB/24/40 University Publications Policy.	24/136
	The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) REPORTED that the policy had been developed to ensure journal publications are compliant with funder requirements on open access. There were no changes to the university's copyright policy.	24/137
18.3	Festival of Research	
	The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) PROVIDED an overview of the upcoming Festival of Research taking place 10-14 June and encouraged members to publicise and attend the event. Professor Livesey recorded thanks to colleagues for their help in organising the event, in particular to Anna Ramberg, Research Culture Development Manager.	24/138
	The Chair reminded members about the upcoming Education Conference on 26 June.	24/139
19.	Honorary Awards	
	The Board RECOMMENDED the nominations listed for the award of Honorary Degrees of the University of London (AB/24/41).	24/140
	Members were reminded that the information in the paper was confidential and should not be discussed outside of the Board.	24/141
	The Chair REPORTED that work was underway to increase student involvement in the decision-making process for honorary awards.	24/142

20. **Annual Report on Quality and Standards**
 Paper AB/24/42 Annual Report on Quality and Standards was RECEIVED and NOTED. 24/143
21. **Annual Report on Appeals and Complaints**
 Paper AB/24/43 Annual Report on Appeals and Complaints was RECEIVED and NOTED. 24/144
- The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Quality and Standards) REPORTED that an increase in the number of appeals and complaints over recent years means that the university is not always able to meet the review timeframes recommended by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OiA). In mitigation, the university provides regular status updates to students. The Chair requested that compliance with the timeframes be monitored during the year. The Executive Director (Student Journey) noted that extenuating circumstances significantly contribute to the appeals and complaints submitted by students and investigating these cases is resource-intensive for central professional services. The Chair acknowledged that, although the Board had not approved the mitigation policy, there is a commitment to further discussions on improving the process. 24/145

Items for formal approval

None

Items for report

22. *** Annual Review**

22.1 Item unstarred.

Paper AB/24/44 Annual Review of undergraduate provision in Engineering, Physical and Mathematical Sciences 2022-23 was RECEIVED. 24/146

The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Quality and Standards) informed the Board that the reports for this school were circulated later than those for the other four schools due to the unavailability of key staff for the spring AQUASC meeting. 24/147

The Board noted that one External Examiner report was still pending submission. Professor Humphreys reported that the School is actively attempting to contact the examiner and, if the departmental report is not submitted, the Chief External Examiner will be asked to confirm standards for 22-23. 24/148

The Board also noted concerns regarding the assurance of standards by the External Examiner for the MSc Engineering, Geology, and Hydrogeology. Professor Humphreys assured the Board that the department has implemented measures to address these concerns for the current cohort, and the situation is being closely monitored by the School. AQUASC will request further information at its autumn term meeting. Recruitment to the course is suspended for 24-25. 24/149

One member noted that papers AB/24/44 and AB/24/47 both highlight concerns about the late return of work. The member suggested that the university should focus on providing support to enable markers to meet deadlines and produce high-quality marking, rather than treating it as a disciplinary issue. 24/150

	In response, the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Inclusive Learning and Teaching) acknowledged that while this is a potentially complex solution, it would be beneficial to consider the frequency of assessment points and the marking load as part of module allocation in departments. It is hoped that the review of assessment load, undertaken as part of Assessment Futures, will positively impact the workload in departments that have fully engaged with the project during terms 1 and 2.	24/151
	The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Quality and Standards) clarified that AQUASC monitors compliance with the deadlines set by Schools for the return of marking and feedback, using data provided by the Schools. Detailed reasons for late returns are not discussed, as this is needs to be managed within Schools.	24/152
22.2	Item unstarred	
	Paper AB/24/45 Annual Review of postgraduate taught provision in Business and Management and Life Sciences and the Environment 2022-23 was RECEIVED.	24/153
	The paper highlighted issues raised by students on the London campus. Given the strategic importance of the London campus to the university, it was suggested that a presentation on the future direction of the campus and the measures being taken to ensure these students feel integrated into Royal Holloway and have a positive experience would be beneficial. The Chair asked for this to be added to the Academic Board schedule of business.	24/154
23.	*University Education Committee	
	Item unstarred.	
	Paper AB/24/46 University Education Committee minutes 27 February 2024 were RECEIVED.	24/155
	A member highlighted that the cover sheet discusses quantitative data on commuter students and Council have discussed how getting the definitions of a commuter student right may impact several university policies. The member suggested that including such a definition in relevant documents would provide greater clarity for readers. In response, the Executive Director of Student Journey confirmed that the Office for Students recognizes multiple definitions of commuter students. The paper presented to UEC used data for two definitions to give a more balanced view:	24/156
	1. RH Student Count dashboard – this is based on distance and defines a commuter student as an individual with a term-time postcode between 3-50km from campus	24/157
	2. Online sign-up data – this is provided by students at the start of each academic year and provides self-declared information on the method of travel and the journey time to campus	24/158
	Dr Barratt advised that it clear in the data that the number of commuter students varies by school and by course and therefore the university needs to think about how that impacts patterns of study.	24/159
	He further noted that HEPI report released in May identified that the cost of commuting is challenging, and often exacerbates the cost of learning crisis facing students, given the widening gap between maintenance loan and minimum income standard for students.	24/160

- The Chair advised this is a very dynamic area for the university and leadership continues to work with the students' union, noting the intersection with international students is particularly interesting. 24/161
- The minutes record that module surveys are useful for evaluating teaching performance. A member noted that the information provided in these surveys can be subjective and prone to bias, and therefore using the information can be risky. 24/162
24. ***Assessment, Quality Assurance and Standards Committee**
- Item unstarred, although the requester advised no further discussion was required as the query had been responded to under item 22.1. 24/163
- Paper AB/24/47 unconfirmed minutes of the Assessment, Quality Assurance and Standards Committee meeting on 13 May were RECEIVED. 24/164
25. ***Doctoral School Committee**
- Paper AB/24/48 Doctoral School Committee minutes 14 May were RECEIVED. 24/165
- A member noted that making supervisory training mandatory for new staff was, in principle, a good idea but only if consideration was given to ensuring staff have workload capacity to complete the training. The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Postgraduate Research) advised that Schools were in support of introducing this training. It is anticipated that the training will be delivered online, with discussions ongoing regarding the content. Approval will be sought through the appropriate governance structures prior to implementation. 24/166
- In response to a request for further detail about the anti-casualisation working group, the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Postgraduate Research) advised that she has recently become a member of this group, which has been created to support postgraduate research students with teaching activities. 24/167
26. ***Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee**
- Paper AB/24/49 Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee minutes 5 March 2024 was RECEIVED. 24/168
- A member expressed concern that the minutes lacked sufficient detail for Academic Board members to understand the discussions. In response, the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) committed to collaborating with the Secretary to find a balanced solution. The Chair noted that further efforts would be made next year to refine the style of meeting minutes and to utilise action logs for effectively recording decisions. 24/169

Other Matters

27. **Any other business**
- None. 24/170
28. **Date of next meeting**
- The dates of Academic Board meetings in 2024-25 are: 24/171
- Wednesday 16 October 2024
 - Wednesday 4 December 2024
 - Wednesday 19 March 2025
 - Wednesday 5 June 2025