



Minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2015

- Present: Professor P Layzell (Chair), Professor S Ansari, Professor T Armstrong, Ms F Badmus, Dr J Bennett, Professor P Burgess, Ms N Cheema, Professor J Crampton, Professor R Deem, Professor J Fiadeiro, Professor D Gilbert, Professor P Hogg, Mr S Kendrick, Dr C Kremmydas, Ms C Mason, Professor E McGirr, Professor J McKee, Dr A Miskimmon, Dr D Morritt, Professor S Murphy, Professor K Normington, Professor B O'Keefe, Dr G Pieri, Professor J Phillips, Professor B Rankov, Professor K Rastle, Professor E Schafer, Ms S Simon, Dr G Smith, Professor M Spagat, Professor P Teixeira-Dias, Professor D Tourish, Mr J Tuck, Dr D Watling, Professor K Willis
- Secretary: Mrs A Sendall
- Observers: Miss C Cartwright, Mr D German, Mr S Higman, Ms J Roberts
- Apologies: Professor S Downes, Professor T Evans, Professor M Gold, Professor J John, Professor R Kemp, Mr S Massiah, Professor R Meek, Professor J Powell, Professor J Unerman, Dr A Bradshaw, Mr J Brannan, Ms S Waud, Ms E Wilkinson

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted apologies. 15/137

The Chair brought forward item 22 and the Board held a minute's silence to mark the passing of the College's friend and colleague, David Cesarani OBE. The Department of History advised that a memorial service would be held in early June, and the annual Holocaust Lecture would also reflect Professor Cesarani's contribution to the field as it coincided with the posthumous publication of one of his books. 15/138

2. Membership

The membership of Academic Board for 2015-16 was noted. 15/139

Members were reminded that they were all required to complete the Register of Interests return which had been sent to them, and any outstanding returns should be sent to the Secretariat before Christmas. 15/140

A member of the Board asked whether this was the same as the register they been asked to complete by an audit company, but it was confirmed this was not the same document. 15/141

The College will be reviewing the Conflict of Interest policy during 2015/16, which will be discussed by Council and other relevant committees. 15/142

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the last meeting held on **Wednesday 3 June 2015** (M 15/62 - M 15/113) and on **Wednesday 24 June 2015** (M15/114-M15/136) were confirmed. 15/143

4. Matters Arising		
	There were no matters arising.	15/144
5. 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 24 June 2015.	15/145
6. Unstarring Of Items		
	Item 19.1 Faculty Board Constitutions was unstarred.	15/146
7. Formal Reports		
7.1	<u>Principal's Report</u>	
	The Chair referred the Board to his report and advised that further to paragraph 23, a Chief Financial Officer had been appointed and the public announcement would be made shortly, with the successful candidate taking up the post at the end of March 2016.	15/147
7.2	<u>Reports from the Deputy Principal and the Vice-Principals</u>	
	The Deputy Principal was unable to attend the meeting, and there were no updates from the Vice-Principals.	15/148
	The Registrar and Secretary updated the Board on a recent inspection visit from the UKVI. The Board was advised that an audit of our compliance with UKVI Tier 2 and Tier 5 employment licence conditions had recently been conducted and although the official report was yet to be issued, it was felt that the visit had been reasonably successful. An area of concern had been identified however, concerning overseas students working in excess of the maximum of 20 hours per week which is permitted. This primarily has arisen as a result of having multiple internal contracts of employment. Control mechanisms would be put in place to ensure this would not happen in the future.	15/149
	The UKVI inspection team would be returning in January to conduct the audit for students who were in possession of Tier 4 visas and Heads of Departments was asked to check that they had robust attendance monitoring records for undergraduate, postgraduate taught and particularly for postgraduate research students. An improved system for logging PGR supervisory sessions was in the process of design.	15/150
7.3	<u>Report from the Students' Union President</u>	
	The Students' Union President updated the Board on the term's activities which included inducting their new Chief Executive Officer, drafting a 4 year strategic plan and revising the constitution of the Union.	15/151
	High levels of student engagement were reported. Over 3000 students were registered for sports teams and societies, and students were also responding positively to a weekly online communication from the Union.	15/152
7.4	<u>Report from the Council</u>	
	The Board received an overview of the three meetings of Council which had taken place since the last meeting of the Board. In July, Council discussed the Magna Carta celebrations, student	15/153

experience, financial matters, estates progress and the statutes. In October, Council discussed financial matters, the announcement of the Teaching Excellence Framework, the Strategic Development Fund and estates matters. In November, Council discussed the Green Paper, the statutes, financial matters and ethical investment.

8. Academic Skills Support

The Board received a presentation from the Head of the Centre for the Development of Academic Skills (CeDAS). This covered the various different services offered by the Centre, and highlighted the beneficial impact that attendance at offered sessions can have on students' marks. 15/154

The Board were informed about upcoming services which would be offered from January 2016 which included a writing café, sessions to help students edit their own work, sessions on numeracy and psychometric testing within departments as well as updating and expanding the webpages. 15/155

The question was raised about how the Centre coped with the different types and styles of work brought to them for the proofreading scheme. The Head of the Centre responded that the staff in the Centre have a wide range of backgrounds, including humanities and the sciences, so students would always be able to speak with someone from a similar academic field. 15/156

9. The Green Paper and Teaching Excellence Framework

The Chair gave an oral report to the Board on particular items of note from the recent Green Paper, 'Higher education: teaching excellence, social mobility and student choice'. This included the assurance of dual funding which would be managed by Research UK although there were no guarantees of how much money would be available from each of the aspects of dual funding. 15/157

The Chair noted that barriers to entry as a university for new providers were being lowered, and the sector had to be prepared that both old and new providers may fail. A new infrastructure may be implemented to ensure there were mechanisms in place to cope with failing providers. 15/158

The Chair noted that the Office for Students would be introduced which will have a more explicit emphasis on promoting and protecting the student interest than HEFCE currently has. 15/159

The Vice Principal (Education) was invited to speak on the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). It was noted that the Green Paper seemed to focus more on transparency and Widening Participation than teaching and that selective use of data had informed the writing of the Paper. 15/160

It was noted that the TEF was due to be introduced in 2016-17 to influence university fees from 2017-18, but it was unclear as to how this would be possible in light of the recent requirements dictated by the Competition and Markets Authority to publish information for prospective students well in advance. 15/161

It was noted that there was no definition of 'teaching excellence' but that it would be measured by performance in three key aspects – teaching quality (although no definition of this has been provided), learning environment, and student outcomes and learning gain. The latter would be measured by a test administered before and after completing a degree to look for improved performance. A pilot of this test was currently being run. 15/162

In preparation for the introduction of the TEF, the College has already taken a number of steps. A Strategic Development Fund was announced for which departments could bid; the possession of a teaching qualification was now considered desirable for promotion to certain posts; academics would be encouraged to become fellows of the Higher Education Agency; College would look to create additional Teaching Professorships and a number of working groups were being established to look at various aspects of the student experience. These included the implementation of the Teaching & Learning Strategy, supporting students with mental health difficulties or protected characteristics when they are on field trips or years abroad and greater use of lecture capture technology especially as the Disabled Students' Allowance is being cut and this technology could reduce the significant sum of money the College needs to spend on note takers. 15/163

10. Regulations

The Board noted that overall, the numbers of requests to suspend regulations had dropped, and this trend should continue with the changes to Postgraduate Taught Regulations which will empower Sub-boards to make more decisions without having to refer to the College Board of Examiners Executive Committee. 15/164

The Board noted that there continue to be a number of cases where students have been misadvised and the Secretary encouraged academic colleagues to refer to their Assistant Registrars if they have questions. 15/165

The Board noted that the requests to suspend regulations for postgraduate research students were particularly concerning as these were often for repeat cases. Of particular concern was the number of retrospective requests to interrupt study which has serious implications for students in receipt of funding, Tier 4 visa UKVI compliance requirements and the accuracy of institutional statutory returns. 15/166

The Vice Principal (Education) noted that on occasion students needed to switch from full-time to part-time study due to financial pressures, but these could be averted by providing better financial advice at the time of admission. 15/167

11. Department of Electronic Engineering

The Board recommended the creation of the Department of Electronic Engineering to Council. 15/168

12. Dates of Term

The Board approved the term dates for 2017-18 and provisionally approved those for 2018-19 and 2019-2020. 15/169

13. Student Recruitment

13.1 The Board received a report on the student intake numbers for 2015-16. 15/170

A question was raised regarding the admissions figures for 2016-17. The Director of Recruitment advised that there was an early drop in undergraduate applications for 2016-17, though we were currently 1% up on applications when compared with data from two years ago. It was acknowledged that postgraduate taught application figures were down 27% on this time last year. However, the offer rate was much higher for both undergraduate and postgraduate taught, as a result of the centralisation of the admissions process. Potential undergraduate students were now receiving a response from the College within five days of application. 15/171

	The Chair advised that the Head of UCAS had recently confirmed that they were not expecting an increase in the number of applications for 2016-17, as the number of 18 year olds was beginning to decrease.	15/172
	The Board discussed concerns they had regarding student recruitment and recruitment strategy. It was agreed that this would be considered at the next meeting of Academic Board.	15/173
13.2	The Board noted the standard entry requirements and the English Language entry requirements for UG entry in 2016-17.	15/174
	Some concern was expressed that the lowering of required entry grades for some programmes would result in potential students not considering Royal Holloway as an option. It was noted that a new process for setting entry requirements would be put in place for 2017-18. Departments would be contacted about this new process early in January. The Directorate of Student Recruitment and Partnerships would circulate a schedule for this new process.	15/175
14.	Periodic Departmental Reviews	
	The Board received a summary report on the good practice and key issues arising from Periodic Departmental Reviews considered during 2014-15.	15/176
15.	College Board of Examiners Executive Committee	
	The Board received a report on the key areas of business considered by the College Board of Examiners Executive Committee during 2014-15.	15/177
16.	Academic Board Standing Orders	
16.1	The Board received the proposed Standing Orders but agreed that they would need further time to consider this document. The Secretary would meet with or receive comments from members who wished to contribute. It was agreed to bring the Standing Orders to the meeting in March where they would be finalised.	15/178
	The Chair invited those members with queries and suggestions regarding the proposed Standing Orders to meet with the Secretary.	15/179
	A question was put to the College Secretary regarding the Governance Review website, and whether it would be updated to reflect the most recent developments. The College Secretary acknowledged the request.	15/180
16.2	The Board deferred consideration of this paper to the next meeting.	15/181
17.	Academic Promotions	
	The Board noted the updated list of academic promotions conferred in 2014/15.	15/182
18.	Periodic Departmental Reviews	
18.1	The Board received the PDR Report and Action Plan following the School of Biological Sciences Periodic Departmental Review held in March 2015.	15/183
18.2	The Board received the updated Action Plan arising from the Periodic Departmental Review of the Department of English held in October 2013.	15/184

- 18.3 The Board received the updated Action Plan arising from the Periodic Departmental Review of the Department of Criminology and Sociology held in November 2014. 15/185
- 18.4 The Board received the updated Action Plan arising from the Periodic Departmental Review of the Department of Classics held in November 2013. 15/186
- 18.5 The Board received the updated Action Plan arising from the Periodic Departmental Review of the Department of History held in February 2014. 15/187
- 18.6 The Board received the updated Action Plan arising from the Periodic Departmental Review of the Department of Computer Science held in December 2014. 15/188

19. Proposed Changes To Constitutions And Terms Of Reference

- 19.1 One member of the Board asked why the approval of sabbatical leave was being removed from the Faculty Board constitutions.' 15/189
- The Vice Principal (Staffing) confirmed that due to the committee meeting structure, it was not practical for Faculty Boards to approve every request, and this had not happened in practice for some time. The requests will now be approved by a Sabbatical Leave Sub-Group which will be run by Human Resources, and will be comprised of all four Vice Principals. 15/190
- The Board approved the proposed minor changes to the constitutions of all three Faculty Boards and requested an annual summary report of business from the sub-group. 15/191
- 19.2 The Board approved the changes to the Terms of Reference for Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee 15/192

20. Nominations For Committees

- 20.1 The Board noted the nominations for the Statute 25 Committees for 2015-16. 15/193
- 20.2 The Board noted the nominations for the Student Discipline Committee for 2015-16. 15/194

21. Publication

- 21.1 The Board agreed that no items required broad dissemination around the College. 15/195
- 21.2 The Board confirmed that no papers needed exemption from the Freedom of Information Act requirements. 15/196

22. Professor David Cesarani OBE

The Board noted with sadness the passing of their colleague, Professor Cesarani. 15/197

23. Faculty Boards

The Board received a combined report from the meetings of the Faculty Boards held in November 2015. 15/198

24. Academic Board Executive Committee

The Board received the unconfirmed notes of the meeting of the Academic Board Executive Committee held on 16 November 2015. 15/199

25. Academic Planning Committee

The Board received the minutes of the meetings of the Academic Planning Committee held on 12 May and 16 September 2015 15/200

26. Collaborative Provisions Committee

The Board received the minutes of the meeting of the Collaborative Provision Committee held on 20 January 2015 and 21 May 2015 15/201

27. Departmental Grants Group

The Board received the minutes of the meetings of the Departmental Grants Group held on 14 May and 2 November 2015. 15/202

28. Research Committee

The Board received the minutes of the meetings of the Research Committee held on 27 May and 30 April 2015 15/203

29. Learning, Teaching And Quality Committee

The Board received the minutes of the meetings of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee held on 12 May 2015. 15/204

30. Date of the Next Meeting

The Board noted that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 9 March 2016 at 3pm in Munro Fox Lecture Room. 15/205