

Monday 23 September 2013
Roscoe Room, Egerton Court

Present:

Professor H Al Nageim	Mr P Killen
Mr M Ashall	Professor R Leatherbarrow
Professor L Bishop	Professor D Meehan
Professor P Byers	Dr R Murphy
Dr V Canning	Mr C Reid
Mr D Cole	Professor M Riley
Ms J Craddock	Professor P Vickerman
Professor S Davies	Professor N Weatherill (Chair)
Ms S Davys	Professor R Webster
Mr R Dawson	Professor P Wheeler
Mr P Evans	Dr J Yates
Ms K Johnston	Professor A Young
Professor S Kenny	

In Attendance:

Ms J Gresham	Miss L Sutcliffe (Minute Secretary)
Ms J Hargreaves	Mrs D Tipping (Committee Secretary)
Mr M Power	

Apologies:

Dr E Harcourt	Ms J Murphy
	Ms P Uwamaliya

AB 13.43

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2013 were approved as a correct record pending the following amendments:

AB 13.35 Academic Framework Review

It was agreed that the minutes would be amended to read that the Registrar and Deputy Chief Executive would approve any suggested alternative chair of an assessment board in the absence of the Director.

It was commented that consistency of approach in line with the Academic Framework was needed.

AB 13.39 Research Degree Committee (RDC)

The Maternity Leave Policy had been extended to include all students rather than a separate policy created solely for postgraduate research students.

AB 13.44

MATTERS ARISING NOT SHOWN ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

AB 13.29 On behalf of Academic Board, the Chairman sent a message of congratulations to Lynne Condell for her outstanding achievement of being recognized in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

AB 13.35 **Academic Framework Review**

Academic Board had requested that marking practice in relation to rounding of final marks was reviewed and any proposed recommendations be presented to Academic Board.

Following discussions outside of the meeting, it was concluded that rounding up was not repeated when calculating final marks. An overview of the calculation of marks was to be developed and circulated amongst staff and students to ensure clarity and transparency.

AB 13.37 **Collaborative Partnership with the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA)**

That the report was deferred from the previous meeting of Academic Board pending further consultations. The consultations were on-going and would be reported to Academic Board when appropriate.

AB 13.45

VICE CHANCELLOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

RECEIVED

The oral report of the Vice Chancellor & Chief Executive.

REPORTED

Graduation

That the graduation ceremonies held in July were a success and, as with previous years, attracted positive feedback from parents and external visitors.

Sir Brian Leveson attended his first graduation ceremony as Chancellor of LJMU and used the opportunity to visit staff and students.

A further three graduation ceremonies would be held over a two day period in November 2013, each with an Honorary Fellowship award.

It was becoming increasingly challenging to manage the attendance of LJMU's 225 Honorary Fellows. Therefore, a dedicated dinner was to be held on 25 November 2013, which would give LJMU the opportunity to welcome back its many "friends" and to provide an update on its activities. The University's aim was to be more strategic when interacting with its Honorary Fellows and "friends".

Re-alignment

REPORTED

That the re-aligned University structure, operational from 1 August 2013, established a clear Faculty and Division structure. The structure provided a clear and consistent structure which would assist compliance with regulatory bodies in addition to supporting staff, students and external visitors to the University.

The University had now recruited to the Associate Dean positions and the new committee structure was in place.

Recruitment

REPORTED

That in general recruitment had progressed well. The process was delivered to a high standard and all staff involved were thanked for their efforts. However, caution was advised until enrolment was complete.

Some categories of recruitment did not perform as well as expected and further action would be taken to address any issues for future recruitment cycles.

League Tables

REPORTED

That LJMU's position in the combined Times and Sunday Times league table, the Sunday Times Good University Guide 2014 had moved up ten places to 83rd.

Although not the primary focus, the strategic plan was devised to support upward movement within league tables.

AB 13.46

ESTATE PLANNING

RECEIVED

The oral report of the Vice Chancellor & Chief Executive.

REPORTED

That Academic Board was expected to play a key role in the Estate Planning of the University. The plan had been developed to create a 'Connected University Village' in the heart of the city centre and a prospectus sharing that vision had been published with the support of the Board of Governors. The plan, in its early stages of delivery, was progressing well.

A tender process undertaken had appointed BDP Architects to assist the University with mapping out its vision by engaging with staff and students. A consultation exercise had taken place with the Board of Governors and the results would form the basis of BDP's staff and student engagement activities.

Academic Board members were encouraged to send any ideas for the new facilities to the Director of Estate Management as it was imperative to capture the ideas of those using the facilities.

AB 13.47

GRADUANDS' REPORTS

RECEIVED

The oral report of the Vice Chancellor & Chief Executive.

REPORTED

That the Vice-Chancellor & Chief Executive, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Academic Board, had approved the Graduands Report 2012/2013 – May 2013 to July 2013.

AB 13.48

NSS 2013 OUTCOMES

RECEIVED

The report of the Academic Registrar.

PURPOSE

To provide Academic Board with a summary of the 2013 National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes.

REPORTED

That LJMU had continued to achieve improved NSS results, however it remained behind the sector and would need to continue its efforts.

The University achieved a 2% rise in the 2013 response rates when compared with 2012 but was still 5% below the sector response rate.

That LJMU's full time student overall satisfaction rates had improved by 1% from 2012, bringing it just 1% below the sector. However, the overall satisfaction rates for part time students remained 3% below the sector despite an increase of 3%. Of the 120 England institutions, LJMU was ranked 78th for overall satisfaction.

Satisfaction had improved in all categories, with LJMU outperforming the sector satisfaction rates in Learning Resources (4%), Assessment & Feedback (2%) and Academic Support (1%). LJMU aspired to overtake the sector in the area of Teaching and would continue its efforts to achieve this goal. LJMU's level of satisfaction with Teaching remained 1% below the sector. The University remained level with the sector in the Personal Development and Organisation & Management categories.

Question Six – ‘Assessment arrangements and marking have been fair’ experienced a drop of 1% from the 2012 results, which was of concern. It was noted that the issue was spread across all faculties and was focused on oral assessments as these were seen as less transparent.

Detailed analysis of the free text comments had yet to be performed. However, generally free text comments were more positive in comparison to those in 2012. University; facilities; placements; degree; resources; and lectures had become favourable in the 2013 results as opposed to the 2012 survey. Newly built facilities were being praised by students.

Timetabling continued to be an unfavourable concept, attracting comments that timetabling was not well organised or communicated.

Lack of enthusiasm amongst some members of staff was a persistent thread in negative comments relating to teaching.

The University would begin devising action plans to address areas for immediate attention. In addition, immediate analysis of data relating to timetabling would be carried out to identify whether the negative comments are University-wide or linked to particular faculties.

COMMENTED

The 2013 NSS results were a positive improvement and supported the recent University-wide re-alignment activities. However, given the competitive nature of higher education it was important that LJMU reflect on the results and plan for further improvements. It was vital that good practice was embedded across the University.

Detailed guidance on assessment and feedback was available on the Academic Enhancement Unit website, which all staff were encouraged to familiarise themselves with to address issues surrounding assessment and feedback. Analysis of the 2012 results found that issues relating to assessment were linked to group work. However, it was acknowledged that it was difficult to avoid group work in assessment for some programmes. The University had successfully implemented the 15 day feedback deadline and now needed to explore the quality of the feedback provided.

That timetabling had been discussed by the Strategic Management Team (SMT) at length. Changes to timetabling must be communicated to staff and students.

That over-recruitment to programmes was, at times, resulting in timetabling, accommodation, resourcing and teaching issues. A

risk analysis was needed when making decisions to over-recruit to programmes to ensure that plans were in place to cope with larger student numbers. Academic Board was assured that the SMT had a resourcing plan which was reviewed against recruitment figures and NSS results. The SMT were committed to investing in additional permanent staff so that effective investment in individuals could take place.

That peer observations across the sector would be useful to teaching staff to develop best practice within LJMU. A systematic approach of reviewing good performing programmes to embed best practice across the University was needed.

Recognition of excellent practice was vital to embed 'excellence' within the culture of the University rather than focusing on the negative aspects of the NSS results. The criteria for the awarding of Professorships and Readerships needed attention to allow staff with excellent teaching and learning to be recognised.

AB 13.49

RECRUITMENT FIGURES – 2013 ENTRY

RECEIVED

The report of the Director of Student Recruitment and Widening Access.

PURPOSE

To provide Academic Board with an update on anticipated 2013 recruitment figures based on the final recruitment reports before enrolment. Information was provided for home full-time undergraduate students, postgraduate full-time students and indicative figures for international recruitment.

REPORTED

That the 2013 application cycle was complex and challenging due to a number of sector-wide factors:

1. The first year of the new fee regime saw some institutions experiencing considerable under-recruitment. It was anticipated that certain institutions would adapt their offer-making strategy in 2013 to address the situation.
2. In 2012, the Government introduced a new model concerning student number controls, whereby highly qualified students (AAB+ or equivalent) were removed from an institution's student number control. In 2013, the Government changed the high grades threshold to ABB+ and requested that the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) allow universities some flexibility in the student number control. LJMU's student number control was 4,506 (the range being 4,281 to 4,643).
3. Despite the flexibility range, the use of penalties from Government for over-recruitment and the risk of losing numbers if failing to recruit to the lowest student number control level still existed.

This paragraph has been removed under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, Section 23, Commercial Sensitivity. Governors may request a full copy of the minute which will become publicly available when no longer commercially sensitive. You may request further information from the University's Secretariat at secretariat@ljmu.ac.uk.

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The University met its undergraduate full-time target by 102%, with a further 166 students who were partially engaged. 930 students with grades ABB+ or equivalent had been recruited and sat outside of the student number control position. Targets for returning students at levels five and six had also been met.

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COMMENTED

That numbers for the Teacher Training programme would be a continuing risk and was a sector-wide issue. The Department of Education had changed the entry requirements mid-cycle which meant that many applicants were no longer eligible. Over-staffing had been addressed without the need for compulsory redundancies.

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That it would be helpful, as much as reasonably possible, to issue some clarity about undergraduate targets to schools as early as possible to enable planning of timetables and resources. However, this was difficult due to the complexity of the funding sources.

RECEIVED The report of the Academic Registrar and the Assistant Academic Registrar.

PURPOSE To provide a summary of the changes made to the Academic Framework for 2013/14.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Academic Board formally approved the changes.

REPORTED That following approval the Academic Framework would be published immediately.

APPROVED That the changes made to the Academic Framework were approved.

AB 13.51 **CONSULTATION ON THE REFERRAL TIMETABLE AND THE 2014/15 ACADEMIC CALENDAR**

RECEIVED The report of the Head of Academic Registry.

PURPOSE To summarise the outcomes of the consultation on the referral timetable to facilitate the Board's decision on this matter.

RECOMMENDATION

Academic Board were asked to note the outcomes of the consultation and take a view on the scheduling of referral assessments in 2015. It was noted that preliminary discussions would be conducted to explore a later start to the academic calendar in 2015. Therefore, it was suggested that the Academic Board approve maintaining the status quo.

REPORTED That an exercise was undertaken to establish views on the length of time students should be given to prepare for referrals. One faculty (TAE) reported overall support for the proposal. The other faculties reported mixed views with Science marginally in favour and Arts and Professional Studies marginally against. The response from Education, Health & Community differed amongst colleagues running programmes within and outside the standard academic year. On balance there appeared to be more support than opposition for the proposal to schedule referrals in July rather than late August.

COMMENTED That deferrals were included within the scheduling of referrals.

That a strong case outlining the educational reasons to bring forward the referral dates to July had not been made. However, it was the opinion of some Academic Board members, including LiverpoolSU, that engagement with students was vital and bringing forward the referral date would ensure that academic

staff were available to offer support when needed. This viewpoint does make the assumption that all staff were physically available during this period, something which is not always possible due to research and leave commitments.

That students would benefit from more time to prepare for examinations and dissertations with a later referral date.

That the University should address the issue of why students could not get out of accommodation contracts rather than changing the academic calendar for a small number. This was possible for University contracted accommodation but it was outside the University's control for private accommodation providers.

That more detailed information on how students cope with referrals and how many credits on average each student was referred for would be useful to make a more informed decision following the planned review.

That the scheduling of referrals needed to be reviewed in line with the Academic Framework.

AGREED That the status quo would be maintained for the 2014/15 academic calendar pending the review of the Registrar & Deputy Chief Executive.

ACTION That the Registrar & Deputy Chief Executive would discuss the direction of the review at the next meeting of Academic Board.

AB 13.52

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic Standards and Enhancement Committee (ASEC)

RECEIVED Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2013.

NOTED Academic Board noted the contents of the minutes of the last meeting of ASEC.

COMMENTED That the Academic Standards and Enhancement Committee (ASEC) had split into the Quality, Assurance and Enhancement Committee and the Education Committee as part of the minimal committee structure.

University Research & Scholarship Committee (URSC)

RECEIVED Minutes of the meetings held on 5 June 2013 and an oral update on the meeting of 2 July 2013.

REPORTED That planning for REF2020 was underway.

That the July meeting of the committee continued with meetings continuing to be held in locations across the University to inform its members of local areas.

That the Research Impact Framework had been developed.

Commercialisation of research had been discussed.

Staff who are able to take time to complete research that is externally funded remains a concern and will continue to be considered.

Research Degrees Committee (RDC)

RECEIVED

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2013.

REPORTED

That RDC had considered proposals to revise the timetable in relation to registration and milestones, which would be reported to the next meeting of Academic Board.

ACTION

To report the proposals to revise the timetable in relation to registration and milestones to the next meeting of Academic Board.

Research Ethics Committee (REC)

RECEIVED

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2013.

NOTED

Academic Board noted the contents of the minutes.

AB 13.53

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items to report.

AB 13.54

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 2 December 2013, 9.30am

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC BOARD

Action Point Control Register – Status of Open Action Points as at 2 December 2013

Minute	Action	By Whom	By When	Status
AB 13.51	<u>Consultation on the referral timetable and the 2014/15 academic calendar</u> A discussion would take place at the next meeting relating to the academic calendar and the timing of referrals.	Registrar & Deputy Chief Executive	2 December 2013	Active
AB 13.52	<u>Research Degree Committee (RDC)</u> Proposals to revise the timetable in relation to registration and milestones.	Head of Research & Programme Development	2 December 2013	Active