



## Academic Board

7 December 2020

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### MINUTES

1. Attendance and apologies

1.1. Present:

AC Grayling	Master (Chair)
Brian Ball	HoF for Philosophy and Head of Research
Rosalind Barrs	Registrar (Secretary)
Diana Bozhilova	HoF for Politics & IR
Catherine Brown	HoF for English
Chris Gallagher	Vice Chancellor for Global Learning Opportunities, NU
Andrew Ginger	Dean of Faculties
Naomi Goulder	Dean for Academic Development & Innovation
Susan Green	HoF for Art History
Lars Kjaer	HoF for History
Marianna Koli	Dean for Education in Business and Economics, HoF for Economics
Rebecca Morrison	Head of Quality Assurance
Maria Payro	President NCHSU
Indrajit Ray	External Representative
Martin Smith	Executive Dean
Alice Schneider	HoF for Law
Scott Wildman	Director of Apprenticeships

1.2. Apologies

Uta Poiger	Dean of College of Social Sciences and Humanities, NU
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- 1.3. Notice of meeting
  - 1.3.1. Notice of this meeting had been given to all members.
  - 1.3.2. No members declared any conflict or potential conflict of interest.
  - 1.3.3. The meeting was quorate.
2. Minutes of the last meeting
  - 2.1. The Minutes of 7 December 2020 were **APPROVED**.
3. Matters arising
  - 3.1. Matters arising were updated.
4. Chair's Actions
  - 4.1 English Language Equivalencies

Revised paragraph to read: Undergraduate applicants who have taken higher level English as part of their secondary school examinations (please see list below), may be exempt from these requirements. International students who have studied in the UK for the past two years to obtain for example A-levels may also be exempt from these requirements. Any English grades in qualifications not covered below will be considered on an individual basis.
  - 4.2 AQF10 Student Voice

RM reported that minor changes had been made such as title roles, typos and formatting.
  - 4.3 Student Voice Strategy

RM reported that minor changes had been made such as title roles, typos and formatting.
  - 4.4 Mitigate the Risk of Student Non-engagement and Assessment Failure Policy and Procedure

The final version was approved after NG had conducted extensive consultation.
  - 4.5 Extenuating Circumstances Policy

As the current policy is based on calendar days and not working days, an approved Covid-19 related application with an original submission deadline of 14 December would have given an extended deadline to 28 December. The deadline was extended to 30 December to take account of the two UK Bank Holidays of 25 and 28 December.
  - 4.6 Declaration of Criminal Conviction and Risk Assessment

RM reported that minor changes had been made such as title roles, typos and formatting.
5. Academic Quality Framework, Policies, Strategies and Guidance
  - 5.1 AQF12 Assessment Boards

This was **APPROVED** subject to the following:

12.2.2 and 12.4.1: It was thought that there needed to be a workable definition of outlying courses, taking into account small cohort sizes.

**ACTION: RM to propose a definition for outlying courses.**

12.2.3: viii: It was **AGREED** that level averages and award averages would be calculated to one decimal point.

12.3: Chairs and Deputy Chairs of PAB, CAB and CABA would need to be revised or added so that this section aligned with the three ToRs.

**ACTION: RM to revise 12.3 to align Chairs and Deputy Chairs with the ToRs.**

12.4.3 RB pointed out that the nine possible decisions were not quite accurate.

**ACTION: RB to advise RM of the possible decisions.**

5.2 Course Assessment Board Terms of Reference

RB pointed out that the CAB is not concerned with progression rates and so references to these need to be removed.

**ACTION: RM to remove references to progression rates.**

The Terms of Reference were **APPROVED**.

5.3 Progression and Award Board Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference were **APPROVED**.

5.4 Course Assessment Board (Apprenticeships) Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference were **APPROVED**.

5.5 Progression and Award Board (Apprenticeships) Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference were **APPROVED**.

5.6 Writing References for Students Guidelines

DB had provided the extensive notes of her research and recommendations. A decision to approve was pending the legal advice being sought.

5.7 Student Welfare Policy

The revised paper had not been received in time for consideration, so Chair's Action may need to be taken.

5.8 Student Confidentiality Statement

General clause would be needed to indicate that this applies to undergraduate and postgraduate students and apprenticeship learners. This statement was **APPROVED**.

5.9 Support to Study Policy

Apprenticeship learners would need to be added at #2. This policy was **APPROVED**.

5.10 Student Charter

This was **APPROVED**.

5.11 Student Under-18 Policy

The minor changes recommended by the Head of Admissions and International Recruitment were accepted and the policy was **APPROVED**.

5.12 Admissions Feedback Policy

The recommendations that requests are addressed to the Admissions Office instead of the Registrar and that feedback letters be sent via email to applicants were accepted and the policy was **APPROVED**.

5.13 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Strategy

This strategy was **APPROVED**.

6. Assessment

6.1 Examinations 2021

After extensive discussion, including the consideration of the period of notification for students, the difficulties for some students of returning to the UK for May, whether open or closed book examinations were to be across or Faculties or Faculty-specific, the possible use of a proctoring platform, such as Examity, it was **DECIDED** that all examinations would be conducted online, but that the details of the mode of examination, and the delivery and conduct of the examinations would be decided at an Extraordinary Academic Board Meeting, to be held by 18 December.

**ACTION: RB to convene an Extraordinary Academic Board Meeting by 18 December, and to provide relevant data.**

6.2 Final 2020 Graduation Data

The data previously circulated by RB, including comparisons with all years since 2015 and the OfS degree attainment data from 2010/11 to 2018/19 were **NOTED**. Two students' results were still pending.

**ACTION: RB to provide data on entry qualifications at the next Academic Board Meeting or the College Report.**

6.3 Award External Examiner

It was **NOTED** that Award External Examiners for the various 2020/21 Progression and Award Boards need to be appointed. Suggestions were to be given to RB by 4 January so that there would be sufficient time for nominations to go to TLEC on 11 February 2021.

**ACTION: RB to field nominations for Award External Examiners and to take to TLEC on 11 February 2021.**

6.4 Nomination for Subject External Examiner for Data Science (UG minor), MSc Computer Science (Software Development) from

September 2021, and MSc AI with a Human Face (from September 2021)

The nomination of Dr Nkaepe Esoetok Etteh Olaniyi, Kaplan Open Learning Leeds, was **APPROVED**.

#### 6.5 Deficit Course Assessment 2020/21

On 10 June 2020, Academic Board decided that students transferring with deficit credit to NCH degree programmes would not be disadvantaged by discontinued or modified courses, therefore the following assessments were **APPROVED** for 2020/21:

- 6.5.1 NCH406 Britain and the Wider World AE1 Essay 2,500 30%
- 6.5.2 NCH414 Logic: formal and philosophical AE1 Exam 3 hours 100%
- 6.5.3 NCH503 Economic Development AE3 Exam 3 hours 60%
- 6.5.4 NCH630 Ancient Philosophy AE2 Essay 2,500 50%
- 6.5.5 NCH602 Political Economy AE1 Essay 20%; AE2 Essay 20%; AE3 Exam 60%

#### 6.6 Peer Review of Assessments

##### 6.6.1 Assessment Briefs

6.6.1.1 It was **AGREED** that two or more coursework assessments (i.e., any non-examination assessment) for a course would be reviewed using one form.

6.6.1.2 It was **AGREED** that the procedure would be revised so that the External Examiners would not need to sign a multitude of forms.

**ACTION: RB to devise revised procedure so that External Examiners sign fewer Assessment Brief Peer Review forms.**

6.6.1.3 RB asked the HoFs Group to discuss and recommend a timeline so that Assessment Briefs and Peer Review Forms can be made available to FASBs before week 1 of Michaelmas term.

**ACTION: NG to add timeline for peer review and approval of Assessment Briefs for 2021/22 to a HoFs meeting.**

##### 6.6.2 Examination Papers

A timeline for the setting and peer reviewing (internal and external) of papers, and the approval at FASBs needs to be set.

**ACTION: RB and RM to propose timeline for the setting and peer reviewing (internal and external) of papers, and the approval at FASBs.**

6.7 Art History External Examiner's Report 2019/20

The very favourable report was **NOTED**. Dr Aymonino would be serving for his final year in 2020/21, and so a new External Examiner would need to be appointed from 2021/22.

**ACTION: SG to consider possible candidates for an External Examiner nomination to be taken to TLEC on 11 February.**

6.8 Disability Cover Sheet (DCS)

While the principle was approved, NG's and CB's concerns had not been addressed. RM commented that DCSs are standard across the sector, and in addition for coursework. CG and MK raised queries about the effects of the policy as drafted in relation to its aims. AG commented that the issues seemed to invite consideration of how further to enhance the inclusivity of our assessment regime.

ACG sensed that there was no consensus for a DCS and so it was **NOT APPROVED**.

7. Faculty Reviews 2019/20

ACG said he had found them very interesting, and that it was useful for HoFs to be able to read those of other Faculties to share good practice and enhancements.

RM said the Quality Team had found the reflective parts really useful. Thought would need to be given as to how the review of postgraduate programmes feeds into these reviews, and how the reflection on data could be enhanced.

LK still found the analysis of the data a hard process and asked how it could be made easier – would it be possible for the Quality Team to interpret the data and for the HoFs to reflect on this.

BB suggested we explore the use of Qualtrics, a platform used by NU to collate research data, for the purposes of keeping and analysing data for these reviews. CG said that it was a robust platform and produced readable reports. NU has the site licence.

**ACTION: RM to ask the Quality Manager whether an analysis of data could be provided for 2021/21 reviews.**

**ACTION: CG to put RM in contact with the relevant NY department about the use of Qualtrics.**

CB questioned the durability of repeating some sections year on year, and so would like clearer guidance on this.

It was recognised that Course Reviews helped HoFs to write the Faculty Reviews.

RM welcomed further comments on how the process and review template could be improved.

Michele Longhurst, Quality Manager, was thanked for all her hard work on the reviews.

7.1 Art History

The Review was **NOTED**.

7.2 Economics

The Review was **NOTED**.

7.3 English

The Review was **NOTED**.

7.4 History

The Review was **NOTED**.

7.5 Law

The Review was still work on progress.

7.6 Philosophy

The Review was **NOTED**.

7.7 Politics and International Relations

The Review was **NOTED**.

8. Decolonisation of the current curriculum

8.1 MP spoke to the three suggestions in her paper.

NG welcomed NCHSU's intervention and pointed out that they realised the College is undertaking a systematic curriculum review of our operations from admissions to assessments methods so that any improvements are not tokenistic.

8.1.1 Hiring more faculty from underrepresented backgrounds

AC said that his work on the recruitment of faculty would need to take a broader view, considering the nature of resources, a persuasive approach, aspects of globalisation, and a deeper reflection on the curriculum.

8.1.2 Implementing a quota system on core curriculum for all subjects

LK thought the overall principle was immensely valuable and gave impetus for a further push; and there would be discussions within Faculties. He pointed out that, for some courses, quotas would not be helpful for their design because of the subject matter. DB commented that her Faculty had been trying to do this but for some courses there are constraints. However, the suggestion would go forward for consultation at Faculty meetings. CG said that NU thinks this is a very important topic and ways are found for unheard voices to be experienced and viewed. SG said that Art History had already introduced introductory lectures.

8.1.3 Hold sensitivity training for all university members at the beginning of each academic year

BB commented that an element of this is appropriate for professional development on curriculum design. AS commented that the proposal is really important and worth supporting, however we would need to be careful that reading lists, arising from innovation and development, did not become too long.

MP thanked the Board for all the points and discussion.

**ACTION: HoFs to share the Decolonisation of the current curriculum paper with their Faculties.**

9. Governance

9.1. The role of the Gunning Principles of Consultation in Academic Decision Making

There was discussion of the relevance of these principles and of consultation, with contributions from ACG and BB.

9.2. Proposals

This item was **DEFERRED**.

10. Apprenticeships

10.1. SW reported that the WhiteHat validated Partnership is progressing well and [redacted – restricted information] the programme approval documentation will come to the March meeting of Academic Board.

11. Loan period of books from NCH Collection in Senate House Library

11.1. This would be deferred until the College moves to its new building.

12. Admissions

12.1. Turkish Entry Requirements

The recommendation to accept the Lise Diploması qualification on a case-by-case basis, in particular from private and Anatolian high schools, with grades of overall 80% was **APPROVED**.

The recommendation that, for Economics major students, grades in Mathematics in the final year of 80% will be required and that this will be on a case-by-case basis and discussed with the Economics Faculty was **APPROVED**.

12.2. US Entry Requirements

The recommendation that NCH should adopt a test optional approach for 2021 entry as below (website copy) was **APPROVED**.

Due to COVID-19, we recognise that many standardised tests used in the Admissions process have been cancelled. Therefore, for applicants applying for 2021 entry, NCH is test-optional and does not require a form of standardised testing. You will be able to choose whether to submit standardised testing or not. If you do not submit



standardised testing, you will not be disadvantaged. We will continue to review your high school transcript and look at a GPA of 3.3 overall (unweighted, out of 4.0), achieving As and Bs in an academically challenging college preparatory environment. We will also in particular look at your grades in your AP, Honours and dual enrolment classes.

13. Programme/Course Approvals

13.1. Bridging courses for MSc Business Analytics and MS Quantitative Finance

DB asked whether these would be mobility programmes and asked about the mode of delivery. NG explained that they had been designed in Boston and would be run there, although two courses would be run from London. DB questioned the recommendation that Course Leaders consider providing optional reading. RM would advise.

The bridging courses were **APPROVED**.

14. Student Retention and Student Engagement

14.1. RB reported on 11 withdrawals to date [redacted – restricted information].

15. AOB

There was no other business.

16. Date of next meetings

Tuesday 26 January 2021 14.00 – 16.00

Monday 15 March 2021 14.00 – 16.00

Tuesday 11 May 2021 14.00 – 16.00