



Academic Board

29 October 2021

MINUTES

1. Attendance and apologies

1.1. Present:

Naomi Goulder	Acting Dean of Faculties (Chair)
Brian Ball	HoF for Philosophy and Head of Research
Rosalind Barrs	Registrar (Secretary)
Diana Bozhilova	HoF for Politics & IR
Chris Gallagher	Vice Chancellor for Global Learning Opportunities, NU
Lars Kjaer	HoF for History
Marianna Koli	Dean for Education in Business and Economics and HoF for Economics
Peter Maber	Acting HoF for English
Phi Mackness	President NCHSU
Bex Morrison	Director of Academic Services
Alice Schneider	HoF for Law
Scott Wildman	Assistant Vice President for Digital Innovation & Enterprise Learning

1.2. Apologies

Catherine Brown	HoF for English [On leave]
Mollie Charge	Head of Admissions
Uta Poiger	Dean of College of Social Sciences and Humanities, NU

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.

1.4 External Board Member

The role had previously been an unpaid one, with reasonable travel fees reimbursed. It was thought that this should be reviewed.

SW recommended that a process of scrutiny and consideration be followed.

ACTION: BM to ask the Head of Quality to investigate arrangements at other institutions, using QM network/GuildHE.

DB and BB made a couple of suggestions for people or networks to consider.

ACTION: Board members to send RB details of suggestions.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

2.1. The Minutes of 24 September 2021 were **APPROVED**.

3. Matters arising

3.1. Matters arising were updated.

3.2. [18 May 2021 Action Number 12] It was **NOTED** that faculty illness had also increased and there might be an increase for access to wellbeing support. In addition, Faculties had requested more administrative support.

ACTION: NG to discuss faculty illnesses and support with the Director of Resourcing and Operations.

4. Shape of Academic Year from 22/23

A project manager at NU has taken this on, and the plan for 2022-23 will be included in a wider Strategy Update for discussion at next Academic Board.

5. Assessments

5.1 Interim Graduation Results 2021

[Redacted – restricted information]

5.2 October 2021 Third sitting

As part of the no-detriment package, students, who were unable to complete and pass their assessments at the second sitting in July 2021, were offered the opportunity to sit in October 2021 so that they would have the opportunity to graduate in this calendar year. The third-sitting period had been from 25 to 29 October 2021. [Redacted- Restricted information] The Progression and Award Board would be sitting on 24 November 2021.

5.3 Examinations 2022

It was **AGREED** that end-of-year exams in Trinity would be held online in regular (not 24-hour) time windows and under 'open book' conditions. This was in recognition of the evolving pandemic and the importance of early clarity in relation to final assessments. Subject to the pandemic and government guidance, quiet space would nonetheless be made available for students to sit their exams in Devon House if they chose.

There would need to be further discussion of how exams would be conducted in summer 2023 because there was support for some sit-down exams.

ACTION: NG to take the lead on a communication going out to faculty and students.

6. Academic Quality Framework

6.1 AQF4 Programme and Course Approval and Modification (revised)

It was agreed that the indicative agenda (#4.17) could remain as it is. The revised AQF chapter was **APPROVED**.

7. Policies and Procedures, and Strategies

7.1 Extenuating Circumstances Policy (revised)

The revised policy had been taken to the Teaching, Learning and Enhancement Committee (TLEC) for consultation on 27 October 2021. RB and BM highlighted the substantive revisions and RB reported TLEC's recommendations to Academic Board.

Students would now have one EC application per academic year (for one or multiple assessments) where they could self-certify and would not need to provide the evidence. This was in recognition that Covid-19 was still around. If, at any time, students applied for more than one assessment, Student Support and Development would be notified. The Quality Team would draw up a flow chart so that the process was clear for students and staff.

ACTION: RB to draft wording for presentations and suggest the best document for publication.

The revised policy was **APPROVED**, subject to any comments or objections being made by close of play on Tuesday, 2 November 2021.

7.2 Student Disability Policy (revised)

The revised policy had been approved by Chair's Action, but the document which had been circulated showed track changes post Academic Board on 24 September 2021.

7.3 Student Retention Strategy

Academic Board had been asked to view the current SRS, and to consider the report written for the NCHNL Board which had met on 29 October 2021.

NG reminded Academic Board of the work on the formal system of who gets appointed to committees and asked that we be mindful of workloads.

SW said that EDGE cover their own retention, so while this can be added to the strategy, they do not need to be involved in the working group.

DB pointed out that, in Section 5, only a couple of students had been identified by their major subjects. RB accepted this observation and, for consistency and clarity, would amend this for the Working Group's consideration.

It was **DECIDED** that the cross-College working group would consist of: Registrar (Chair); another member of Registry; member of Student Support and Development; member of Recruitment and Admissions; the Widening Participation Officer; the Lead on Academic Engagement; Academic Advisor (mobility students); a member of faculty from EDIG; NCHSU President.

ACTION: RB to convene a meeting of the Student Retention Strategy Working Group.

8. Programme/Course Approvals and Modifications

8.1 Naming Convention for Courses

In order to improve quality and reduce the risk of human error (from permanent and sessional faculty, and professional staff), which could have major consequences for the College, the Head of Quality Assurance had proposed the following when deciding a name for a new course: a) a course must not exist in the NCHNL portfolio with the same name regardless of level, b) titles of 60 characters or fewer, as these work best when using a search engine.

BM would provide further guidance and parameters for creating similar course names (as may be appropriate, e.g. where there are several close variants of a course, across levels and validating institutions).

DB said that if courses are generally different this would be easy to follow, but if courses are the same and at the same level, she had significant concerns; and she suggested that we follow Boston's practice of concentrating on the course codes. RB said that we would need a strong shift to a 'code-culture' because students and faculty do not use course codes (or correctly), for example on EC applications, Course Descriptors, Assessment Briefs, etc. and this leads to confusion. BM said that the issue could become one for the CMA and OIA.

MK asked for clarification whether the 60 characters had come from marketing, and whether it was also an issue for CELCAT.

CG asked for clarification as to the 'sameness' and the 'difference'. NG said that, typically, it would be same basic content and topics,

different levels of independent study, and different pedagogical approaches and assessments. CG suggested that if the courses were at different levels, the names could include 'Introductory', 'Intermediate', 'Advanced'; or 1, 2, 3; or 'Principles of', 'Applications of', 'Studies in'.

NG said that, as there was genuine disagreement over the proposal, there would need to be further deliberation, including with marketing, and so Academic Board was not able to make a decision.

8.2 Programme modification: MSc Digital Politics and Sustainable Development

It was **NOTED** that the change, to reflect one course being taught in Hilary, rather than in Michaelmas, had been a Category 2 modification and had been approved by the Head of Quality Assurance.

9. Quality Assurance

9.1 Annual Faculty Reviews

9.1.1 Art History

The review was **APPROVED**.

9.1.2 Economics

MK queried the need to review course reviews if there were no actions in them. She also asked why there was a need to innovate every year. If there are to be new courses, then faculty need help and support to innovate. MK noted the support for open-book exams. The review was **APPROVED**.

ACTION: BM to ask Head of Quality Assurance to clarify the value of course reviews in the guidance given to faculty.

9.1.3 English

PMA said that Catherine Brown had written the review before she went on leave, but he wished to highlight the development of online resources, more inclusive practices, and a diverse curriculum. The review was **APPROVED**.

9.1.4 History

The review was **APPROVED**.

9.1.5 Law

AS reported that faculty had not completed their course reviews, but that the general message had been a positive one. Remote teaching had worked surprisingly well; the remote exams had turned out fine, as opposed to the number of academic misconduct cases the previous year; faculty had been asked to do extra work to prepare for online learning and teaching and they had taken pride in their materials.

9.1.6 Philosophy

The review was **APPROVED**.

9.1.7 Politics & International Relations

DB highlighted the good practice of accessibility; the continued review of the assessment strategy; more research skills in new courses; updated courses with current events, enriching the curriculum. The review was **APPROVED**.

9.1.8

NG reminded Academic Board that themes from the reviews would be included in the College Report, which would come to the Board.

9.2 Award External Examiner Reports

The AEE's reports for 11 June 2021, 29 June 2021, and 30 July 2021 were considered.

The positive feedback was **NOTED**.

RB reported that, for the Boards from 2021/22, access to data sheets would be provided to the AEE in advance of the PABs because it was appreciated that it is difficult to follow a lot of data on screen for the first time. While comparative data on Academic Misconduct and Extenuating Circumstances had not been provided for 2021, the practice of doing so in previous years would be reinstated from 2021/22, but it would be highlighted that exams had been taken under extraordinary conditions in 2021. Overall summary statistics on the levels of awards at PAB would be provided from 2021/22.

RB asked that, while it was recognised that faculty are busy, marking and moderation must be given higher priority in 2021/22 so that this is completed in a timely manner.

The AEE had requested an analysis of the number of deferrals and referrals compared to previous years.

ACTION: RB to provide an analysis of the number of deferrals and referrals compared to previous years.

DB wished it to be clarified for the AEE that the Politics Dissertation is in fact not mandatory and that there are another four course options which are not dissertations at this level.

ACTION: RB to add consideration of Level 6 Dissertations being a must pass course and not one for consideration of compensation to a future agenda.

10. Admissions

10.1 Admissions Policy (revised)

The revised policy was **APPROVED**.

10.2 Widening Participation Contextual Admissions (revised)

[Redacted – restricted information]

BM thought that it would be better to have a progress report on how the contextual admissions has been working and the rationale for the modifications proposed.

ACTION: RB to feedback the comments to the Widening Participation Officer.

11. Any other business

11.1 Careers

SW proposed that a Careers Report from the Director of Careers, Alumni and Employer Partnerships be included in each Academic Board meeting. This was **AGREED**.

ACTION: SW to advise the Director of Careers, Alumni and Employer Partnerships about the provision of Careers Reports.

11.2 Use of teaching rooms

MK asked that faculty be reminded to observe the Oxford hour so that there is time for a turnaround between teaching events. NG said that this is in the Faculty Handbook, but she would build it into the next faculty communications. BM asked that they also be reminded to be quiet when leaving rooms near the quiet study areas.

ACTION: NG to remind faculty of the Oxford hour and the need to be quiet in the next faculty communications.

12. Chair's Actions were **NOTED**.

12.1 Senior Status Degree Classification

All 180 Level 6 credits weighted at 3 and the best 120 Level 5 weighted at 1.

12.2 Subject External Examiners

12.2.1 MSc Digital and Technology Solutions Degree Apprenticeship

Nomination of Dr Alexander Brownlee, University of Stirling, to replace Professor Tom Crick, Swansea University

12.2.2 BSc Project Management and Digital Transformation

Nomination of Dr David Biggins, Bournemouth University

12.3 Programme and course approvals and modifications

12.3.1 NCHNUPIR447M Introduction to International Relations

New course

12.3.2 NCHNUEN439M Cultures of London Mobility

Amendment to the Presentation assessment element to ensure assessments could be carried out smoothly during timetabled classes.

12.3.3 MSc Artificial Intelligence and Data Science Programme Specification

Category 1 change: Additional text to make programme suited to sponsored learners as well as apprentices.

13. Dean's updates

13.1 Academic Strategy (update on cross-college and cross-network discussions)

An update would be shared for discussion at the next Academic Board.

13.2 Academic Structures (update, further to consultation)

An update would be shared for discussion at the next Academic Board.

14. Work related learning

14.1 Update on Multiverse Partnership

SW reported that there had been no new starts in September 2021. They had recently held their first Course Assessment Board (CAB). They are currently exploring entry into Level 5 of their Level 4 to Level 6 degree apprenticeship.

14.2 Update on EDGE activity, including apprenticeship provision

SW reminded Academic Board that there would be more detailed content provided by the WRL Programmes Committee Report (due in two weeks). [Redacted - restricted information] The apprenticeships CAB and Progression and Award Board would be meeting on 3 November. Employers are, largely, Apprenticeship Levy payers, and the learners (i.e. their employees) are mainly up-skilling.

15. Subject External Examiner Reports and Responses

15.1 Art History

15.2 Economics

15.3 English

15.4 History

15.5 Law

15.6 Philosophy UG

15.7 Philosophy PG

15.8 Politics & International Relations

15.9 Data Science

15.9.1 Undergraduate

15.9.2 Postgraduate

15.10 Psychology

The reports were **NOTED** and the responses were **APPROVED**.

16. Dates of next meetings

28 January 2022

18 March 2022

16 May 2022