



Academic Board

28 January 2022

MINUTES

1. Attendance and apologies

1.1. Present:

Naomi Goulder	Acting Dean of Faculties (Chair)
Saxony Anders	President NCHSU
Brian Ball	HoF for Philosophy and Head of Research
Rosalind Barrs	Registrar (Secretary)
Diana Bozhilova	HoF for Politics & IR
Mollie Charge	Head of Admissions [in attendance]
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
Bex Morrison	Director of Academic Services
Alice Schneider	HoF for Law

1.2. Apologies

Catherine Brown	HoF for English [On leave]
Uta Poiger	Dean of College of Social Sciences and Humanities, NU
Scott Wildman	Assistant Vice President for Digital Innovation & Enterprise Learning

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 10 December 2021 were **APPROVED**.
3. Matters arising
 - 3.1. Matters arising were updated.
4. NCH (non-EDGE) Degree Cohort '22

The degree cohort that joins the College in September 2022 will transition to the semester College calendar in their second year, i.e. September 2023. These students have been recruited to the current NCH programmes and we are required, under the CMA regulations, to deliver those programmes.

 - 4.1 The proposal that all reference to terms such as Michaelmas, Hilary and Trinity be removed from core programme documentation was **APPROVED**.
 - 4.2 The courses, credit weightings, and patterns of teaching and assessment for Cohort '22 students on these programmes will be in other respects as currently validated, but at levels 5 and 6 - and the end of level 7, for part-time PG students - they will be set within semester dates.

The following approaches were **APPROVED**:

 - 4.2.1 Credit weightings and spread of teaching would be kept as close as possible to how it is (e.g. 30-credit long-thin courses stay 30-credit and long-thin; 30-credit short-fat courses stay 30-credit and short-fat; for PG programmes with taught courses in Trinity, put those courses into Summer 1).
 - 4.2.2 Summative assessment elements would be kept as they are (e.g. if a 30-credit course is assessed by a single end-of-course exam, then still assess it with a single end-of-course exam).
 - 4.2.3 Reference to terms and timings of all teaching and assessment would be removed from all our validated programme and course documentation, to give flexibility.
 - 4.2.4 The existing pattern of teaching and summative assessment across the year would be followed fairly closely, with the qualifications:
 - For Autumn-only courses, typically place final summative assessments at the end of Autumn
 - For other courses, typically place final summative assessments at the end of Spring.
 - 4.3 The College is set to review its Strategies and Policies related to teaching, assessment, marking, moderation, and feedback this Spring, to ensure a sustainable approach for the 2023-entry ('Project

23') degrees. It would seek to optimise arrangements for the transitional cohorts too, including through careful distribution of faculty workloads around 'crunch' periods.

Academic Board **DECIDED** to adapt the teaching weeks for Cohort '22 each semester, so as to enable an appropriate spread of exams and appropriate marking periods ahead of the start of each vacation.

- 4.4 AS said that it would be helpful to have clarification for all faculty of what can be said to students and applicants. BM reported that the Marketing, Admissions, Recruitment and Visa Team have a Cohort '22 crib sheet which can be shared with Admissions Tutors.

DB suggested that a note was required to accompany the mapping spreadsheet.

ACTION: BM to provide appropriate guidance to faculty and professional staff.

5. Assessment

5.1 Assessment of technical proficiency in written English

Following the paper published by the OfS in October 2021, the Head of Quality Assurance, the Head of Student Support and Development, and the Director of Academic Services made recommendations to the Board.

5.1.1 The following recommendations were **APPROVED**:

Recommendation 1: That each course has a transferable skills learning outcome reflecting the assessment of technical proficiency in written English, set at the level of the course.

Recommendation 4: The College works with Global Learning Support to extend English language development for non-native speakers to be delivered in-person on the College campus. This provision should lead to the employment of someone who can provide specialist support for students who are non-native speakers of English as well as support for native English speakers who have gaps in their knowledge of grammar and spelling. Additionally, support would be provided to non-native speaking faculty.

Recommendation 5: The College identifies and provides students with a directory of on-line English language resources to enable self-directed learning. This may include utilising Northeastern resources, with a recognition that American resources may be less helpful to UK based students wishing to improve areas such as spelling.

Recommendation 6: The College works with the Disability Resource Centre at Northeastern to share resources in relation to accessibility features of standard software to ensure students are able to maximise these facilities.

Recommendation 7: The College employs a qualified SpLD tutor to provide individualised advice and support to students in building their strategies for meeting the requirements for technical English proficiency.

Recommendation 8: The College considers whether additional examination adjustments may be needed for students with SpLDs such as an increase in the 25% extra time or the permission of additional aids in examinations such as a dictionary or use of a computer with assistive software.

Recommendation 9: During the induction sessions in Freshers' Week, Orientation and the Welcome Back sessions held during Michaelmas/Autumn semester, Student Support and Development will inform students of this change to the College's assessment strategy and will introduce the professional staff who will be able to support the students.

Recommendation 10: During the induction sessions in Freshers Week, Orientation and the Welcome Back sessions held during Michaelmas/Autumn semester, Library and Learning Services will provide students with an overview of any electronic resources for improving English writing both at the College and through Northeastern.

Recommendation 11: Students can be told during their Faculty induction during Freshers' Week, Orientation Week or Welcome Back sessions about the inclusion of the assessment in the technical proficiency in written English in their courses, and the faculty can again sign post the resources available to support students.

Recommendation 12: Assessment of a student's technical proficiency in written English will need to be included in the marking of their formative assessments, in order to support the student in the development of these skills, and ensure the student is meeting the standard required. Faculty should be provided with guidance on the nature of the feedback to be given and a guide to the resources to which students can be directed for further developmental help.

Recommendation 13: Faculty will need to undergo training to ensure that there is consistency across the marking of the technical proficiency of written English, training will be required for all faculty with marking responsibilities. This training can be included in the Staff Training Event, at the start of Academic Year 2022-23. This session should be recorded and made available to faculty for reference.

5.1.2 The following recommendation would be taken to TLEC for consideration:

Recommendation 2: For written assignments, where use of word processing and associated tools is available, (coursework,

portfolio, reports, etc) 10% of the assessment element mark will be allocated for the assessment of technical proficiency in written English and for handwritten examination, 5% of the assessment element mark will be allocated to the assessment of technical proficiency in written English.

ACTION: RB to take Recommendation 2 to TLEC for consultation.

5.1.3 Recommendation 3 - the marking of the technical proficiency in written English will be based on generic descriptors - was approved in principle but Chair's Action would be taken to approve the revisions made in order to link the writer/reader context and communication within marking criteria.

ACTION: BM to revise the descriptors for Recommendation 3 and obtain Chair's approval.

5.2 Spring 2022 Assessment

In Michaelmas 2021, examinations in the following courses had been held as in-class and closed book: Calculus; International Business and Global Responsibility; Introduction to Marketing; and International Relations: Theory and Practice. It was **DECIDED** that it would not be appropriate to hold these as in class, open-book and online in Hilary, in order to maintain parity with Michaelmas students. If students were unable to attend in person, they would need to submit an Extenuating Circumstances application for a deferral.

5.3 Assessment Administration

5.3.1 Coursework Cover Sheet

It was **DECIDED** that the Cover Sheet would no longer be required to be attached to coursework submitted via Turnitin/Canvas because it had been cumbersome for students and staff to use.

Faculty would be asked to continue marking up comments on the work, and then to add comments under 'Areas where the student performed well' and 'Areas that need developing' in the 'Assignments comments' box.

On the submission link, text would be added to remind students about the various forms of academic misconduct and not to write their names on their work.

ACTION: RB to brief faculty about the discontinuance of the Cover Sheet.

BB commented that there were differences in the amount of feedback that faculty gave to the students. NG said that she would work with faculty on this.

ACTION: NG to work on the requirements for giving summative coursework feedback.

5.3.2 Marks Sheets for assessments marked in Canvas

It was **DECIDED** that, where the mark for an assessment is determined by one mark, the marker is not required to complete a marks spreadsheet. Marks would be downloaded as a report from Canvas by Registry, and these would be used for checking as well as recording ECs, late penalties, academic misconduct, etc., and to send to the External Examiners, where required.

Where an assessment has several parts (e.g. Section A and Section B and these have different weightings), a marks sheet would be supplied by Registry with automatic calculators.

ACTION: RB to brief faculty about the use of marks spreadsheets.

- 5.4 Level 6 Dissertations are a 'must pass' and not an assessment element for consideration of compensation (action arising from PAB EE's report)

MK commented that not all Level 6 courses are assessed by a Dissertation and, if they are, they are still only worth 30 credits.

It was **DECIDED** to refer this matter to TLEC for consultation.

ACTION: RB to take to TLEC for consultation.

6. Procedures, Policies and Strategies

- 6.1 Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures (revised)

DB sought reassurance that frivolous or vexatious appeals would be able to be taken under the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures. BM gave the reassurance.

The appeals procedures for Extenuating Circumstances now sit within the Extenuating Circumstances Policy.

The revised policy was **APPROVED**.

It was noted that further revisions would need to be made to account for mobility students, for whom a Progression and Award Board is not held.

- 6.2 Marking, Moderation and Feedback Policy (revised)

The revisions were **APPROVED**. #17 would need to be deleted, following the decision made under 5.3.1 above.

- 6.3 Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (revised)

The procedures had been revised to bring them into line with the Complaints Procedure for Students. 'Reporter' replaces 'Accuser', and 'Respondent' replaces 'Accused'.

DB raised queries about: #23 Where a student has been convicted of a criminal offence, the conviction shall be deemed conclusive evidence that the offence has been committed – i.e., the College should not seek to 'go behind' the conviction or reach another conclusion in relation to the matters that led to the conviction. She feared that the paragraph is inapplicable in cases of no contest plea

convictions (including attached custodial penalties), which by their nature are not legally an admission of guilt and have extremely limited applicability in the sense the para is written. With a majority of US students for the foreseeable future, the College probably should consider aligning in some interpretative legal aspects with Boston colleagues than only with Commonwealth law, to avoid being challenged in the future. In every case, while it would be hope that this will always be a paragraph of limited application, nevertheless, since we desire to have it, perhaps the College would consider it in light of our global network engagement. She suggested not to have it at all and to take any arising instances on a case-by-case basis.

The revisions were **APPROVED**, subject to any revisions being made to #23 and approved by Chair's action.

ACTION: RB to pass to the Quality Manager to take forward.

7. Programme/Course Approvals and Modifications

7.1 NCHNUDS501M Experimental Data Science Project; NCHNUDS453M Intermediate Programming with Data; NCHNUDS469M Programming with Data

The Panel had recommended that Academic Board review AQF7 and the use of group projects as an assessment. BB said that AQF7 provided for these as long as students were individually assessed, but the chapter could still be reviewed.

The courses had been approved by Chair's Action for delivery in Hilary 2022.

7.2 NCHNUEN406M Global & Intercultural Communication; NCHNUCW458M Introduction to Creative Writing; NCHNUN459M Organisational Communication

PM reported that the conditions had been met.

The courses had been approved by Chair's Action for delivery in Hilary 2022.

8. Research

8.1 Research Leave Allowance

BB reported that Research Committee had had concerns about the change of procedures whereby a Head of Faculty is to unilaterally decide whether a faculty member can take research leave at their annual review.

8.2 Research Expenses

BB said that research expenses can vary year on year. He would ask Research Committee to consider a specific proposal, to include the management of the expenses, and the opportunities for rollovers with any conditions. He would work with the Director of Finance in its preparation.

ACTION: BB to draft a proposal for research expenses for the Research Committee to consider before onward submission to ExCo for approval.

9. Admissions

9.1 Admissions Report

The proposed entry requirements were **APPROVED**.

9.2 Contextual Admissions Annual Report

9.2.1 The following recommendations were **APPROVED**:

Recommendation 1: College considers enhancements to its widening participation and outreach activities to support school students to develop core academic skills.'

Recommendation 2: College takes steps to ensure that faculty identify at the earliest possible opportunity where entering students appear to be struggling academically and refer them for additional support.'

9.2.2 The following recommendations were **APPROVED** subject to it being made specific that the 'academic' support is being provided by Student Support and Development. BM reported that a full-time Academic Writing Adviser is being recruited.

Recommendation 3: College considers enhancement to academic support to ensure students with deficits in study and writing skills can obtain appropriate remedial support.

Recommendation 4: College reviews staffing levels within Student Support to ensure adequate academic support can be provided for the more intensive needs of contextual admissions students.

9.3 Widening Participation – Contextual Admissions Recommendations

9.3.1 The recommendation that the following criteria will apply to assess whether an applicant is considered a care leaver was **APPROVED**:

Applicants who have been in Local Authority Care for any period of time within their secondary school studies.

9.3.2 The recommendation that for the 2022-23 admissions cycle, the following estranged student criteria should be used in assessments for contextualised admissions was **APPROVED**:

Applicants under the age of 25 who are estranged from their parents/guardians and are thus independent.

10. Any other business

BB asked it to be minuted that the Philosophy Faculty wished to ensure ongoing membership of Senate House Library for research and educational purposes.

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

11.1 Learner Voice (ToRs) (revised)

Deletion: 'Finance and Assistant Operations Manager (Secretary)

Additions: 'Programmes Director'; 'Operations and Quality Assurance Manager'; 'Apprenticeships Operations Assistant (Secretary)'

11.2 Students Under 18 Policy

Addition: For students who are 17-year-old student route visa students, the College will require parental permission for travelling and to live independently in the UK.

DB asked the College to consider and add to the policy:

- requirement for extended DBS checks for anyone working with said students (legal requirement)
- would said students have access to 1-1s and if so, what safeguards would be in place (open door policy, something else)?
- should said students have access only to 2-1s and larger classes?

ACTION: RB to pass DB's suggestions to the Policy Manager to take forward.

11.3 Assessments Regulations for Taught Awards

Where a student fails an assessment element, they are only required to resit the failed components.

11.4 AQF1 Welcome and Introduction

Minor changes to titles and roles.

11.5 Extenuating Circumstances Policy (revised)

Minute 29 October 2021: The revised policy was APPROVED, subject to any comments or objections being made by close of play on Tuesday, 2 November 2021. Track changes show approved revisions since 29 October.

12. Dean's update

There was no new business.

13. Work related learning

13.1 Update on Multiverse Partnership

There was no new business.

13.2 Update on EDGE activity, including apprenticeship provision

There was no new business.

14. Careers Report

The 'Graduate Outcomes Survey Results 20 January 2022' was **NOTED**.

15. Dates of next meetings

18 March 2022

16 May 2022