



Academic Board

4 July 2022

MINUTES

1. Attendance and apologies

1.1. Present:

Naomi Goulder	Acting Dean of Faculties (Chair)
Alison Statham	Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning
Jacqueline Shorrocks	Interim Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs [co-opted]
Brian Ball	HoF for Philosophy and Head of Research
Bex Morrison	Director of Academic Services
Inger Hansen	Vice President NCHSU
Scott Wildman	Assistant Vice President for Digital Innovation & Enterprise Learning
Diana Waters	Executive Assistant [Minute Secretary]
Rebecca Harrison	Head of Student Support and Development [Secretary]

1.2. Apologies

Peter Maber	Acting HoF for English
Saxony Anders	President NCHSU
Diana Bozhilova	HoF for Politics & IR

Lars Kjaer	HoF for History
Alice Schneider	HoF for Law
Marianna Koli	Dean for Education in Business and Economics and HoF for Economics

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 20 May 2022 were **APPROVED**.

NG - The board is quorate. Although papers can be approved some still have to be circulated to the HoFs for their input or questions.

3. Project '23

4.1 Degree Structure and Disciplines

NG – this is to outline the principles we are working on for the Project 23 double validated degrees. We are here to focus on the UK validated components but we had to work with Boston and think about their framework to make sure that the degrees are fit for purpose. When it was put to the AcB before it was set out as working principles that would need to be potentially adjusted in light of conversations with Boston. The main document adjustments relate to the conversation we had at the AcB and with Boston. NU prompts us to adapt our degree plan but not to adapt general principles.

Some amendments have already been discussed at the last ACB meeting and are all noted in the document:

Further discussions/amendments were made during the meeting to the following:

- o Elective (discipline- or theme-based) pathways

- Pathways typically to be composed of 3-6 courses (45-90 credits), and to span across at least 2 levels.

The reason for range in credits was in recognition that the requirements on the students are relatively high. Therefore students needed some flexibility for them to be able to take a defined pathway alongside their required degree in order to meet other requirements.

- o Directed/depth study courses - typical availability (for discussion):

- At level 4 -

There was a discussion about whether or not it would be appropriate for Level 4 students to be able to take directed/depth study courses. There were some concerns expressed that it might be difficult for entering students to have the self-direction and study skills necessary to undertake this type of course. However it was felt that there could be some level 4 students for which such a course would be appropriate.

There was consideration of how many directed/depth study in any given year - e.g. typically max 2 per year (plus final project at level 6)?

NG - For Validation event, require a statement on rationale where proposing more than a few, or L4, cases of Directed Study.

It was felt that there could be a free-standing Directed Study course descriptor template, but have it normally be a condition of sign-off for any specific instance that it be related to another course content.

The general feeling of the Board was that the College should not rule out the possibility of directed/depth study, but seek to limit it, especially at level 4 (and focus on second semester if include it at L4).

Liberal in registration but cautious in application.

For Validation event, require a statement on rationale where proposing more than a few, or L4, cases of Directed Study.

Enable free-standing Directed Study course descriptor template, but have it normally be a condition of sign-off for any specific instance that it be related to another course content

BM – We could include the Academic variation form

NG / BB / AS – we might require a core course descriptor per level. This should take further discussion and to be shared with wither HoFs group.

4.2 Core Competencies and Writing

The paper was already shared with the AcB last time. Part I was approved then, but Part II wasn't. The proposal has now been updated in light of comments.

The students in order to get their double degree have to take quite a few writing courses outside their NCH credits. There were concerns about how this might work in practice and whether this might cause students' difficulties in pursuing the double degree. There was a suggestion that changes could be made to courses for splitting courses in some way between discipline and writing faculties as happens in Boston

BM – we are approving programmes next week but these are not in our regulations

There was then discussion of how students might have their writing within discipline specific courses recognised.

NG – Writing and communications would be in the requirements for the degrees for programmes and we have got the core competency. Not in the regulation on the institution level but at the programme level as it would be written into programme specification.

SR – Final project course descriptors could include further information about the writing required.

NG – In the proposal where 25% of the assessment involves public and professional communication of the final project there might be some generic learning outcome that relates to public and professional communication which then would be put into all dissertation course descriptors

We could push back the 25% assessment requirement for writing.

BB – This might affect some courses, typically computer science, where perhaps we can freeze this in some of the subjects to avoid too much writing. Also as far as he knows we don't have the writing faculty, so who do the philosophy colleagues collaborate with? Can this be specified?

ACTION: NG – to look into the adaptation of the text to give it more flexibility internally but still compatibly with the Boston requirements. Will also run this by CG.

5. Assessment Strategy 2022-25

AS – The paper has been redrafted and recirculated. She would appreciate any feedback via email until this is given to the AcB for final approval.

There was general support expressed but there was there was some unnecessary prevarication.

A minor amendment was agreed as follows:

*For these reasons, [whenever possible **to be deleted**], our assessments will prioritise the application of knowledge and skills to public and professional settings, thus engaging students in, and preparing them for, employment, citizenship, and personal fulfilment.*

6. AoB

6.1 Mobility Resit Exams

BM – With the planning group for the mobility students and the mobility courses/programmes for spring courses, we need to get a clear decision on whether we are prepared to allow these resit exams to be remotely proctored? Some exams can only be assessed as the closed-book exam and many students will not be in the country to resit their exams.

There was a discussion in the past about remote proctoring when we had online exams and the AcB decision was that we wouldn't use that software, and there was a lot of pushback from students and faculty.

However there is currently a strong feeling from Boston that it unreasonable for mobility students to be expected to return to London or Boston to sit exams.

We are therefore in a position where we think we might need to bring in recorded proctoring in order to enable mobility student resita and the Board was asked permission for this.

This will be in relation to next year's exams. The numbers are going to be small (predominantly for maths and science courses) and there are no costs involved as the College would use the NU software

The final possibility would be to use other international institutions that can proctor for us but we did not calculate the expenses for this.

NG – to her knowledge NU is against using remote proctoring, but not sure whether that is totally universal. Her issue is also if we will be pushing students to have remote proctoring where they can do it in person.

BM – New mobility courses have not been approved yet because of the resit issue. All courses are at level 4. A decision is needed to enable course descriptors to be finalised and published

SW – we should avoid remote proctoring at all cost. Suggested a small urgent working group to explore this to see if a suitable alternative to closed book assessments could be identified. Course leaders will need to be a part of this working group.

Due to the pressure of time the Board agreed to permit the use of invigilating software for the 2022/23 year only if needed but it asked that alternatives are explored one final time so as to avoid using the software if possible, The Board directed that alternatives are explored through an immediate working group including Michael Peplar, Scott Wildman and Amil Mahanan.

ACTION: for the group to explore remote proctoring. SW to represent board concerns about this.

7. Date of next meeting
22 July 2022