

# Academic Board

25 November 2022

## Minutes

### 1 Welcome and Apologies

#### 1.1 Present:

Scott Wildman (SW)	Acting Academic Dean (Chair)
Naomi Goulder(NG)	Dean for Academic Development and Innovation
Alison Statham	Associate Dean Teaching and Learning
Rebecca Harrison(RH)	Academic Registrar (Secretary)
Brian Ball (BB)	Head of Faculty of Philosophy and Head of Research
Catherine Brown (CB)	Head of Faculty of English
Diana Bozhilova (DB)	Head of Faculty of Politics and IR
Marianna Koli (MK)	Dean of Education in Business and Economics
Lars Kajer (LK)	Head of Faculty of History
Saxony Anders (SA)	NCHSU President
Bex Morrison (BM)	Registrar, Director Academic Services
Kasim Randeree (KR)	Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs
Sarah McAdam (SMA)	External Board Member
Sandy Morrissey (SM)	Executive Assistant Academic (Minute Secretary)

#### In attendance

Michele Longhurst (ML)	Head of Quality Assurance
Chiara Alfano (CA)	Director of Undergraduate Studies
Patricia Kunihira-Davidson (PKD)	Head of Admissions

#### 1.2 Apologies

Stephen Dnes      Head of Faculty of Law

### 1.3 Welcome

The Chair opened the meeting. SW confirmed that he had opened up Academic Board meetings to all faculty and professional service staff to observe. This is to ensure openness and transparency of decision making.

SW also welcomed the external board member Sarah McAdam (SMA) to her first meeting. SMA introduced herself and was welcomed by the Board Members.

### 1.4 Conflict of Interest

The Chair asked the membership if there were any conflicts of interest for any items on the agenda. There were no declarations of conflict.

## 2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

2.1 The Minutes of the Last Meeting were **APPROVED**.

## 3. Matters Arising

The Matters Arising were reviewed and all actions were updated.

## 4. Chair's Report

The Chair was happy to report that there were no chair's actions since the last meeting. The Quality Team is working to update the Chapters of the Academic Quality Framework and Academic Policies to reflect the University's name change from New College of the Humanities to Northeastern University London. The Chair has given his approval for the team to amend the documentation where needed to reflect the name change without each document coming to the Board for review and approval. The Chair asked if there were any objections from the Board for the University name to be updated with the new name without the documentation coming to the Board. There were no objections raised.

## 5. NSS Enhancement Log

AS has prepared an NSS Enhancement Log. The Log identifies the areas for improvement highlighted by the NSS survey and the actions to be taken. The Log will be a live document which can be used to maintain ongoing oversight of the work to improve the student experience.

SMA commended this work. She commented that her institution used the NSS to inform the development of their student strategy. She encouraged the Board to continue to ensure faculty and staff have conversations with students.

It was recommended by the Board that the Log should also be monitored by TLEC where it should become a standing item

**ACTION: RH to add the NSS Enhancement Log as a standing item to the TLEC agenda.**

## **6. Project 23 approval introduction**

The Chair wanted to thank Michele Longhurst for all her hard work supporting the development and approval of the new programmes and courses for Project 23. Flowers have been sent to show the Board's appreciation.

The Chair then handed over to NG who briefly explained to the Board the process for the development of the new programmes and highlighted some of the USPs of these new degrees.

### 6.1. University Approval Event Outcome Report for BSc (Hons) Business

**Programme Approved**

### 6.2. University Approval Event Outcome Report for the BSc (Hons) Data Science Programme

**Programme Approved**

### 6.3. University Approval Event Outcome Report for the BSc (Hons) Economics Programme

**Programme Approved**

### 6.4. University Approval Outcome Event Report BA (Hons) English

**Programme Approved**

### 6.5. University Approval Event Outcome Report LLB (Hons) Law

**Programme Approved**

### 6.6. University Approval Event Outcome Report for the BA (Hons) History Programme

**Programme Approved**

### 6.7. University Approval Event Outcome Report BA (Hons) Philosophy

**Programme Approved**

### 6.8. University Approval Event Outcome Report for the BSc (Hons) Politics and IR Programme

**Programme Approved**

### 6.9. University Approval Event Outcome Report for the BA (Hons) Psychology Programme.

**Programme Approved**

6.10. University Approval Event Outcome Report for the BSc (Hons) Computer Science & Business, BSc (Hons) Politics & Data Science, BA (Hons) Philosophy & Computer Science

### **Programmes Approved**

MK asked if there was a timeline on when the University website will be updated with the new programme information.

ML was able to confirm to the Board that she will have a new staff member joining the team next week who will be completely dedicated to updating the website. The new programmes and their courses will be up on the website by the end of December.

The Chair thanked the Heads of Faculty and the other members for all their hard work to deliver Project 23.

## **7. Items Referred from the Teaching, Learning and Enhancement Committee**

### 7.1 Library Fines Policy

RH explained that this Policy has been updated to reflect changes to the University name and to staffing changes. It has also been updated to reflect the University's relationship with London public libraries.

This Library Fines Policy was **Approved**

Concerns were raised that while the public libraries provided valuable study space, they did not necessarily have collections which supported academic work. Students would likely still need to travel to Senate House to access relevant collections. With the cost of living crisis there were concerns that some students might find it difficult to afford to travel to Senate House.

SA advised that students had raised concerns about cost of travel in the past but she had not had this raised recently and so was unsure of the scale of this as an issue for students.

**ACTION: SA to find out from students if the cost of traveling to Senate House Library was still an issue. SA to contact SW if she found that cost of travel was still an issue so that he could work with key colleagues to identify a response.**

### 7.2 End Point Assessment (EPA) Independent Assessor Nomination.

RH advised that the End Point Assessor was required for Degree Apprenticeships. The first cohort is nearing completion and therefore it is now time to appoint the End Point Assessor. The Nomination was reviewed at TLEC and it was recommended to the Board

The End Point Assessor Nomination was **Approved**.

## 8. Academic Governance

### 8.1 Acceptable Assessment Recycling

The Chair asked the Board whether they felt able to review this item in the absence of AS who had developed this guidance.

CB expressed concern that the guidance referenced a five-year cycle for papers. This was felt to be a substantial change to current practice.

DB requested that the Board postpone the discussion of this paper. She asked that AS discuss the guidance with the Heads of Faculty and consider revisions before it was brought back to the Board at a future meeting.

**ACTION: AS to discuss the guidance with Heads of Faculty and consider revisions before bringing it back to the Board.**

### 8.2 External Moderation Process.

The Chair asked if the Board felt able to discuss this paper in the absence of AS.

The Board members had questions about the purpose of this paper and what appeared to be proposals to change current practices.

The Chair agreed to defer this item until AS has had a chance to discuss the paper with Heads of Faculty and she is available to present it.

**ACTION: AS to speak with Heads of Faculty and consider revision before bringing back to the Board.**

### 8.3 AQF Chapter 9 Student Guidance and Learner Support

RH was able to inform the Board of the recent changes.

BM asked when this guidance will be published and was it is fit for the purpose of Project 23. BM would like to review this AQF to confirm the changes were in line with Project 23 Double Degrees. If further small changes were required for compatibility with Project 23 it was asked if the Board would be happy for further minor changes to be approved by Chair's Action. There were no objections to this proposal.

AQF Chapter 9 was **Approved**.

**Action: BM to review AQF 9. If minor changes are required it should go to SW for Chair's Action to agree to additional amendments.**

### 8.4 AQF Chapter 11 External Examining and End Point Assessment.

RH referred the Board to the earlier discussions for item 7.2. The Change to AQF 11 was to add the End Point Assessor.

AQF Chapter 11 was **Approved**.

### 8.5 Annual Programme Reviews

#### 8.5.1 Edge Annual PG Programme Review

**NOTED** by the Board.

#### 8.5.2 Edge Annual UG Programme Review

**NOTED** by the Board

#### 8.5.3 Mobility Programmes Annual Monitoring Report 2021-22

**NOTED** by the Board.

CB commented that the programme reviews from Edge did not align with the style used for programme reviews for domestic degree programmes.

Several members of the Board expressed concerns that programme reviews across the University should utilise the same template to ensure consistency.

**Action: SW will speak to the EDGE team about utilising the same template for programme reviews as used elsewhere in the University.**

### 8.6 External Examiner Reports

#### 8.6.1 Response Letter to Subject External Examiner Annual Report 2021-22 - BSc (Hons) Bioscience with Digital Technologies

The letter was **Noted** by the Board.

#### 8.6.3 External Examiner for Politics and International Relations (UG) Response Letter 2021-22.

The letter was **Noted** by the Board.

#### 8.6.4 Response Letter to Subject External Examiner Annual Report 2021-22 - MSc Digital & Technology Solutions (DA) & MSc Applied Artificial Intelligence and Data Science (DA)

The letter was **Noted** by the Board.

## 9. Policies, Procedures and Strategies

### 9.1 Academic Engagement Policy.

The Academic Engagement Policy has been amended to reflect that under Project 23 students will be permitted to undertake a semester of study at another NU campus. Paragraph 50 has been added to the Policy which sets out that study abroad is permitted for Visa students and the measures the University will take to ensure continued compliance with UKVI requirement.

The Academic Engagement Policy was **APPROVED**.

### 9.2 Admissions Policy

BM introduced to the Board the new Head of admission Patricia Kunihira-Davidson (PKD),

BM and PKD explained to the Board that the Admissions Policies have been updated to ensure they reflected current good practice and were fit for purpose for the expected increase in student numbers.

BM wished to draw the attention of the Board to the revision of the Policy to reflect that students must be 18 years of age on 1st September of the year they start study in order to be admitted. If this change is approved then the University's Under 18 Policy will become redundant and should be withdrawn and retired.

A question was asked whether the requirement for students to be 18 would impact on summer schools or other outreach activities. BM advised that the Admissions Policy only covered people seeking to undertake degree study. Participants in outreach activities were not covered by this Policy so it would have no impact on this work.

The Admissions Policy was **APPROVED**.

It was **AGREED** that the Under 18 Policy should be withdrawn and retired.

The Chair raised to the Board that admission was an academic activity and it was his view that this area of work should fall more clearly under the auspice Academic Board. He proposed that PKD as Head of Admissions should be added to the membership of the Board. There was general consensus of the Board that this change of membership would be appropriate.

**ACTION: SW will amend the Academic Board Terms of Reference to include the Head of Admission.**

#### 9.2.1 English Qualifications Equivalencies

BM and PKD explained that the English Qualifications required for admissions have been updated. This is because COVID restrictions had necessitated acceptance of a wide range of tests. The ending of COVID restrictions now makes it possible to return to limiting English Qualifications to those previously accepted.

There were no questions from the Board.

The Policy was **APPROVED**.

#### 9.2.2 Feedback, Complaints and Appeals Policy

BM and PKD advised that an appeals mechanism has been added to this Policy so that there is a process for applicants to ask for an admissions decision to be reviewed.

There were no questions from the Board

The Policy was **APPROVED**.

#### 9.2.3 Fraudulent Application Policy and Procedure

BM and PKD explained to the Board that there has been a recommendation from the University's legal council that there should be a policy in place in order to address where it came to light that an application was fraudulent.

There were no questions from the Board.

The Policy was **APPROVED**.

#### 9.2.4 Internal Interview Policy

BM and PKD said that the Interview Policy had been written to set out the interview process so that it was clear to all.

The Policy was **APPROVED**.

### 10. Programme/Course Approvals and Modifications

#### 10.1 Programme Modifications

##### 10.1.1 Degree Apprenticeships

RH explained that the Degree Apprenticeship Programmes listed on the Agenda were all modified to reflect a change in the number of teaching hours that was required by the regulator.

The programme modifications were **NOTED**.

##### 10.1.2 Programme Modification

RH advised that the MSc Computer Science (Software Development) has been modified to reflect delivery with a January rather than September start.

The programme modification was **NOTED**.

#### 10.2 Course Approvals

RH introduced the course approvals and explained that all of the courses on the agenda 10.2.1-10.2.8 were new mobility courses which Northeastern Boston wished to be delivered in the second term/semester this year. All of these new courses have completed the course approval process overseen by the Quality Assurance team.

The courses were **APPROVED**

### 11. Research

#### 11.1 Research Leave Approval Process Proposal

Brian Ball (BB) introduced the paper and talked the Board through the process that was being proposed.

Several members of the Board expressed support for the proposed process.

DB and NG raised concerns that some of the data included in the paper about eligible faculty was not correct and they asked if this could be corrected.

SW said that it was important for the decision about approval of leave to be made on the basis of business requirements.

BM expressed concern that the process timeline was too late and that decisions would be taken after professional services would need final information about which courses would run to enable student advising and timetable planning. She said that the process needed to take into account the negative impact on student experience if a course was canceled due to the unavailability of faculty.



Several members of the Board agreed that it would be important for Heads of Faculty to be advised in good time of who was eligible for research leave to enable appropriate planning and recruitment of cover tutors if required.

CB felt that there was not sufficient guidance as to what research leave entailed. In particular, whether faculty were excused from service responsibilities.

BB and KR advised that the Process Paper needed to be considered alongside other Research Leave Policies, but it was agreed that further clarity might be needed within the suite of policies so that faculty has full clarity about research leave.

**ACTION: BB to review and amend the paper on the basis of the Board's discussions.**

**ACTION: BB, BM & AS are to meet and review the timeline for approval of research leave to ensure it did not impact on the student experience .**

**ACTION: KR to make contact with the faculty members who are currently eligible for research leave this year to ensure requests are made and considered in good time for course offer planning for next academic year.**

## 12. Any Other Business

### 12.1 Multiverse

Redacted

### 12.2 Examination Arrangements for Third Year Students

The Chair advised the Board that it had been brought to his attention by the Students Union that many students were anxious about the return to closed book hand written examinations. The Students Union had collected detailed information from students to support the case for a change to examination arrangements. In particular final year students were concerned that they had not sat exams in this manner throughout their time at the University and they were worried of the impact this might have on their final year exams which counted heavily towards their degree classification. The Chair has discussed these concerns with Heads of Faculty and the Registrar.

The Chair wished to propose to the Board that for this academic year only all examinations for final year students be open book.

SA said that this proposal was very much supported by the Students Union.

The Board discussed the possible impact and issues of moving from closed book to open book exams for the final year student,

SMA advised that her university was continuing with open book exams

It was agreed that it was important to provide clear and consistent information to students about the requirements for their examinations as soon as possible.

The Board **agreed that all examinations for final year students would be open book and word processed.** The Board agreed that examinations for first and second year students would remain as planned, which for most students would be a mix of open and closed book examinations and some might be handwritten. These decisions should be communicated to students within the week.

**ACTION: Chiara Alfano (CA) to work the SU, Registry, and with the Chair to draft messages for final year and second year students reflecting the Boards decisions.**

**ACTION: Once the messages to students had been drafted RH will send them out via Registry's email.**

### 12.3 Coronation Bank Holiday

Due to the coronation of King Charles III, the government is giving the country an additional bank holiday on Monday 8 May. Trinity undergraduate exams and one PGT exam for domestic students are scheduled to run from 8 May - 2 June, 19 working days. The University will need to consider how best to schedule exams in light of the additional Bank Holiday.

Three possible options were tabled by BM for consideration by the Board. The proposal that was recommended to the Board was that exams start a day later on Tuesday 9 May a day later and extend an additional day to Monday 5 June.

The Board **APPROVED** the proposal to start the exams a day later and extend them by one day at the end.

The Chair thanked the Board and closed the meeting.