

Academic Board

4th May 2023

Minutes

1 Welcome and Apologies

1.1 Present

Scott Wildman (SW)	Dean (Chair)
Rebecca Harrison (RH)	Academic Registrar (Secretary)
Naomi Goulder (NG)	Dean for Academic Development and Innovation
Brian Ball (BB)	Head of Faculty of Philosophy and Head of Research
Diana Bozhilova (DB)	Head of Faculty of Politics and IR
Marianna Koli (MK)	Head of Faculty of Economics
Edmund Neill (EN)	Head of Faculty of History
Bex Morrison (BM)	Associate Vice President for Academic Services and Student Engagement, Registrar.
Kasim Randeree (KR)	Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs
Alison Statham (AS)	Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning
Emma Kelly (EK)	Interim Head of Apprenticeships
Carolyn Barker (CMB)	Associate Dean for Research and Knowledge Exchange
Sandy Morrissey (SM)	Executive Assistant Academic (Minute Secretary)

1.2 Apologies

Sarah McAdam (SMA)	External Board Member
Stephen Dnes (SD)	Head of the Faculty of Law

James Heard (JH) Students' Union President

1.3 In Attendance

Catherine Brown (CB) Director of the Graduate Research School

Yu-Chun Pan (YCP) Work Related Learning

Jakub Ujhazy (JU) Students' Union Representative

1.4 Welcome

The Chair welcomed the members.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Chair asked if everyone had access to the minutes and if there were any comments.

There were no comments from the Board members and the minutes of the last meeting were **APPROVED**.

3. Matter Arising

The matters arising were reviewed and all actions were updated.

4. Chairs Actions

The documents approved by the Chair's action since the last meeting are as follows:

- Approval of an End Point Assessor for Apprenticeship
- Approval of a Subject External Examiner for Business

4.1 Chairs Update

- The Chair provided an update on all the projected student intake figures for the coming academic year, explaining the changes to Mobility, London Scholars, Global Scholars, Double Degrees, Postgraduate Taught and work-related learning. The Chair said that everyone's input and support

will be needed in marketing and promoting next year's courses to improve the intake figures to meet our targets.

- The Chair requested that should anyone have any concerns regarding any possible issue before the start of the new academic year they make them known to him asap.

5. Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

5.1 TEF Action Plan

The TEF Action Plan was considered to be completed and no review was needed.

AS Advised the Board that the Graduate Outcome Data for this cycle was now available.

5.2 Student Voice Mechanism Map

AS presented The Student Voice Mechanism Map which was produced by the Quality Officer who is responsible for managing Student Voice. AS explained that the Map showed the different elements of student feedback and consultations.

JU advised the Board that feedback and information to students was lacking in consistency and clarity.

The Chair summarised that the map indicated that the feedback of information to students needed to be more precise and that we needed better communication.

BM suggested that AS work with the Quality team to ensure that requests and actions were communicated to the students.

6. Zoom Delivery

AS presented a paper to the Board and explained that this request came out of a most recent Heads of Faculty meeting where it was requested that Faculty members could use Zoom to deliver under certain circumstances. BM suggested that there could be an issue with Visas and KR advised the Board that this could create an issue under Employment Law.

JU raised the concern that previously some professors did not have materials prepared for classes in advance that could be used instantaneously and requested that this could be looked into as a requirement. AS confirmed that this

was one of the minimum requirements, and will follow this up with Faculty members.

The Chair requested that KR followed this up and come back to the Board with a workable action plan.

Action: KR to discuss hybrid delivery with the Visa team and Timetabling once the employment law compliance has been reviewed. KR is to report back to the Board on whether hybrid delivery could be feasible and, if so, provide proposed guidance.

7. NCH Diploma Withdrawals

RH presented a paper to the Board highlighting the number of students withdrawing from the NCH Diploma.

BB asked where this data came from and if he could get some clarity on where it is held.

The Chair was concerned and wanted to know what were the implications of this data as we move to phase out the Diploma, and asked the Board for their advice with clear actions.

NG advised the Board that a few years ago, there was a similar tendency, which informed the decision to move away from a non-credit-bearing programme alongside the degree and that this is partly why the University's strategy has evolved.

AS advised the concerns that there has been a noticeable increase in the lack of engagement with the level 4 students at a programme level.

MK advised that there is already a review of the launch elements and how that translates into the new experiential, interdisciplinary courses of the syllabus, in light of the current feedback.

The Chair summarises that the action was that the importance of the Diploma should be reiterated and get some more feedback to see if there is more action needed for the 2nd and the 3rd years.

Action: NG to talk with Vaibhav Rustagi and update the Board on any actions to be taken to support student engagement.

8. Student Wellbeing Oversight Group Report

RH presented a paper to the Board and explained that the report highlights the observations and concerns with recommendations. The Board discussed the possible actions going forward.

The Chair summarised the observations and advised that new faculty members should be informed at the beginning of the term of these recommendations in regard to the timings of formative assessments and early flagging of students not engaging with coursework.

ACTION: KR to include the recommendations in the report in faculty training as good practice.

9. Academic Governance

9.1 AQF 7 Part C Amendment Apprenticeships 2022-23

BM explained to the Board that this amendment was bringing the University in line with the apprenticeship standard. The current pass mark in the University regulations for UG is 40%, however in some degree apprenticeship standards, and also in the one being delivered the pass mark is higher. The proposal is to have a generic statement which enables the pass mark to change in accordance with the relevant degree apprenticeship standard.

The Chair asked YCP for input, and YCP was happy with the changes which he felt were essential and he thanked the team for all their help.

The paper was **Approved**

9.2 2023-24 AQF 7 Part C Assessment Regulations

BM tabled a draft version of AQF7 Part C to the Board and explained the changes to the document which will make it easier for faculty, staff and students to follow. BM highlighted the small changes around compensation, the marking scheme and late submission penalties.

PM had reviewed the document and will send his minor points by email.

This paper was **Approved**

9.3 AQF 9 Student Guidance and Learner Support

This paper was deferred to the next Board Meeting

9.4 AQF 11 External Examining and End Point Assessment

BM tabled a proposal and explained the proposed changes to this AQF including clarifying roles of the End Point Assessor and External Examiners. The removal of CABs, and updating for the Subject External Examiner to sit on PABs.

The Board had no questions or comments on the proposed changes.

This paper was **Approved**

9.5 AQF 14 Academic Policies and Procedures

NM explained that this document had been updated to reflect the new framework and makes clear how the University will manage and approve policies.

The Board had no questions or comments on the proposed changes.

This paper was **Approved**

9.6 Annual Programme Reviews 2021-2022

AS presented the Annual Programme Review paper to the Board and summarised the Annual Monitoring and Review Reports and explained the Action Plan confirming that the external examiners are extremely satisfied with the teaching and assessment which takes place at NU London, noting that we may need to strengthen the integration of employability skills.

The action plan is already in motion and working on the recommendations, with a special mention of the good work in Art History, English, Politics and International Relations and the Bedford Square Reading Group. Also, Law where they are using Apps for online contract formation, and consumer protection in the digital economy, and very clear correlation in Philosophy with AI and ethics.

JU raised the concerns that students have regarding the marking of exams to ensure that students understand that exams will always be marked the same way and fairly and that they need not worry about tailoring to a particular Professor's style.

AS confirmed that this was a valued point which she will follow up with a student reminder to all students.

DB raised the concern that students are not reading and engaging with the subjects which will otherwise alleviate many student concerns and queries.

ED felt that the assessment briefs really need to make students aware of how important these are.

JU explained his concerns about assessment briefs which the Chair will follow up on.

Action AS to prepare an action plan for Annual Programme Reviews to be brought to the next Board meeting.

9.7 External Examiners

9.7.1 Request for Extension of External Examiner Contract.

This paper was **Approved**

9.7.2 External Examiner Nomination Form

This paper was **Approved**

The Chair asked if everyone had read all the documents in advance, and it was confirmed that many of these documents had been seen before in TLEC and they also all had plenty of time to read the document before the Board Meeting.

BM thanked NM for the use of the cover sheets which help with understanding of the papers coming to The Board.

10. Policies, Procedures and Strategies

10.1 Academic Engagement Policy

BM presented the Academic Engagement Policy to the Board and explained that this was the attendance monitoring policy for students on study visas.

This paper was **Approved**

10.2 Timetabling Policy

BM tabled the Timetabling Policy to the Board and confirmed that this is a tidying up of the policy.

This paper was **Approved**

10.3 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Strategy.

BM explained that this paper was a review of our Quality Assurance Processes and our Strategy.

This paper was **Approved**

10.4 Research Integrity Policy

CMB explained that this policy outlines what research integrity means from the University's perspective. It's been seen and approved by the Research Committee, and it's also gone to the UK Research Integrity office, which is an external charity.

This paper was **Approved**

11 Programme Approval

11.1 MA Contemporary Creative Writing

RH/BM has some concerns about the January start and part-time programme.

This paper was **Approved** for a September start but not January start as the programme structure across the year needs to be reviewed.

11.1.1 University Approval Event Outcome Report

This paper was **Approved**

11.1.2 University Approval Event Outcome Report Response

This paper was **Approved**

Action: CB to lead a review of all online January start and part-time programme with the help of AS and BM.

12 Programme Temporary Suspension

12.1 LLB Senior Status

The Chair explained the reason for the temporary suspension of this programme

12.2 MS Project Management

The Chair explained that this programme was suspended due to low uptake.

12.3 BA (Hons) History

This is a temporary suspension due to the low intake on this programme.

BB asked if there was an informed plan of action to improve intake for next term

The Chair confirmed that marketing will be increased and improved for History as these are challenging times for the Humanities. However, with the support of Boston and the mobility programme, this will be a temporary low.

The chair advised that should anyone have any ideas for promoting their programme that they contact him or Marketing when the new structure is in place.

13 Course Approvals

13.1 University Approval Event Outcome Report for the Interdisciplinary / Experiential / Directed Study and Special Topics Courses

NG explained that these are a suite of course descriptors for elective courses for 2023 double degrees. They are designed to provide personalised and interdisciplinary learning.

A toolkit will be created to ensure these courses are offered in a considered way. Not all courses will be offered in each year. Consideration is needed of resourcing for these courses and KR is looking at this.

This courses were **Approved**

14 Faculty Promotions

KR congratulated the following faculty members who have been promoted to Associate Professors :Niamh Bhalla, Pablo Calderon-Martinez, Kate Grandjouan, Claire Griffiths

The Chair congratulated them and commented that he was happy to see these promotions and that people had pathways to further their careers.

15. **Research**

CMB gave the Board a verbal update from Research confirming that the newly appointed Director of Graduate Research School is Dr Catherine Brown and that the Director of Research Ethics is Helen Dawes. CMB also confirmed that an offer has recently been accepted for the new post of Director of Research Services and that a successful candidate from the University of Westminster will be starting with us within the next three months.

The Chair commented on the high calibre of candidates who applied for the role and said he was impressed with this candidate's ability to answer the questions which were specific to the University's needs regarding funding from the US, mainly because of the similarities between Westminster and NU London.

CMB updated the board on the Tier One Research projects, where Northeastern University supports Pilot Research Projects, of which there are currently four. CMB expressed that she was pleased that we were partnering with 6 Northeastern Colleges in these 4 research projects, and that they each have a \$50,000 value.

CMB was able to also inform the Board that there were 2 more small pilot successful projects and that so far this financial year the university has won 2 awards totaling £25,000. CMB confirmed that we have also had 9 applications to external funders totaling 4 million.

CMB confirmed that they have recently launched the 7 research centres, and urged everyone to please share that information with their faculty and get people involved.

CMB then handed over to CB for an overview of PhD Studentships.

CB confirmed that she will update the PhD Supervisors on the new processes and the online canvas page which will be shared shortly. The University has had 2 students start already with more starting in October with the rest starting in January 2024. The University hopes to be in Moretown by mid-June, where there will be a dedicated desk for every PhD student, plus hot desking available for their supervisors or anybody else who wants to get research or scholarship work done. However, that building can't be used for teaching because it is an office to be used for commercial use only and It doesn't have educational use permission, therefore, actual supervision which is by default to be in person will need to be done at Devon House.

CB confirmed that the closing date for presenting a PhD proposal was Tuesday 2nd May, and a total of 48 PhD proposals were received. With Philosophy being the largest submitting faculty.

The chair reminded the Board to update him weekly on any Good News to add to the President's weekly letter.

16. **Prize Giving**

RH presented a proposal to the Board on Prize Giving which will be opening shortly and awards will be confirmed by the Board at the July meeting. Awards will be announced in CruNCH and will be presented during Graduation in September.

The Board agreed to change the College Prize to University Prize and agreed to review the prizes for the coming year.

Action: SW and RH will consider changes to the prizes for next year to reflect programme changes.

17. **Any other business**

The chair reminds the Board that the department called EDGE will be changed and integrated into the rest of the faculty.

The next meeting will be Friday 7th July

The Chair thanked members and closed the meeting.