

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CARDIFF UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY COMMITTEE (ASQC) HELD ON TUESDAY 18 MAY 2021 AT 09.30 AM HELD VIA ZOOM**

Present: Ms Claire Morgan (Chair); Ms Jane Chukwu; Ms Hannah Doe; Ms Judith Fabian; Dr Kate Gilliver; Dr Robert Gossedge, Dr Julie Gwilliam; Professor Martin Jephcote; Professor Dai John; Dr Andrew Kerr; Dr Emma Kidd; Dr Rhys Pullin; Mr Sebastian Ripley; Dr Andrew Roberts; Dr Hannah Shaw; Professor Helen Williams; Dr Robert Wilson.

In attendance: Mr Rhodri Evans (Secretary); Ms Sian Ballard; Ms Helen Cowley, Ms Kath Evans; Ms Tracey Evans; Dr Catherine Horler-Underwood, Ms Sian Lewis; Dr Amanda Rouse, Ms Tracey Stanley, Ms Martine Woodward; Mr Simon Wright.

1305 **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were reported.

1306 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Standards and Quality Committee held on 19 January 2021 (paper 20/443) were confirmed as a true record.

1307 **MATTERS ARISING**

Received and considered paper 20/600, 'Matters Arising'.

Arising therefrom:

1307.1 Regulations (Minute 1295.1)

NOTED that the equality impact assessment of all academic regulations had been unavoidably delayed and a report would be submitted to the next meeting.

1307.2 Framework for Programme Changes (Minute 1297)

NOTED that, following further consultation, the Framework for Programme Changes 2021/22 had been approved and communicated to Schools (paper 20/605).

1307.3 Overview of Taught External Examiner Reports for 2019/20 (Minute 1299)

NOTED

1. the Examining Board Framework report from has been updated for 2020/21 and was available on the [intranet](#) for all Schools; (Minute 1299.3.6)
2. high-level institutional principles related to reducing the volume of assessment had been communicated to schools as guidance for the planning of assessments held during 2021/22 (paper 20/606); (Minute 1299.5.5.1)

3. a series of workshops, organised by CESI, to look at practical steps Schools can take to revise methods of assessment had been scheduled; (Minute 1299.5.5.1)
4. Chairs of Examining Board training had been updated to advise that, at meetings of Examining Boards, there should be sufficient opportunity to discuss opportunities for the enhancement of teaching and assessment and this was clearly articulated in the Examining Board Framework. Briefing sessions for Chairs of Examining Boards were being held on 13<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021; (Minute 1299.5.5.1)
5. the review of the structure of Examining Boards and consideration of the appointment of a Chief External Examiner were ongoing. (Minute 1299.6.7)

1307.4 Review of Chair's Action (Minute 1300)

NOTED that a report on the further areas for review by the Deputy Head of Registry:

- the use of Microsoft teams for recording some decisions; and
- consultation with College Deans on executive actions relating to variations to regulations.

would be submitted to ASQC at its next meeting.

1307.5 Other Matters Arising

NOTED that other matters arising would be considered elsewhere on the agenda:

- .1 Education Governance (Minute 1295.5)  
See Minute 1309.
- .2 Collaborative Provision Report (Minute 1302.1)  
See Minute 1315.
- .3 Degree Apprenticeships Review (Minute 1296.3)  
See Minute 1317.

1308 **ITEMS FROM THE CHAIR**

1308.1 Covid Complaints Procedure

NOTED

- .1 that the University had adapted its student complaints process (paper 20/608) to give students an opportunity to raise specific issues concerning disruption relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. The adapted process:
  - removed the informal stage of the complaint procedure as the University had taken a range of actions to address

disruption relating to COVID-19 and asked students for feedback on the actions taken;

- enabled the University to address complaints more quickly;
- introduced a COVID-19 student complaint form to help students provide the University with the essential information and evidence;
- clarified how the University would deal with group complaints;

- .2 that students had been advised that if, at the end of the academic year, when their teaching and assessment activities were completed, they were dissatisfied with the actions taken, or if the learning opportunities were not what they might have reasonably expected based on the information received at the start of the academic year, they could submit a complaint;
- .3 that the deadline for the submission of a complaint was no later than 28 days after teaching and assessment has been completed e.g. by 16 July for most students.

1308.2 Academic Integrity Charter

NOTED

- .1 that the QAA had developed an Academic Integrity Charter which was launched earlier this academic year. The Charter was intended to provide a baseline position upon which universities could build their own policies and practices to ensure that every student's qualification was genuine, verifiable, and respected;
- .2 that the University had signed up to the Charter to pledge to implement its principles and commitments which included working with staff and students and, in collaboration across the sector, to protect and promote academic integrity, and take action against academic misconduct;
- .3 that the University was confident that its established policies and procedures align with the principles detailed in Charter and a formal review would be undertaken to map our current practices against the principles and to identify areas for enhancement.

1309 **EDUCATION GOVERNANCE**

Received and considered paper 20/601 'Education Governance'.

NOTED

- 1309.1 that a review of the governance arrangements for education and students was being undertaken, to enhance the current arrangements and to address several matters, including:
- the Quality Enhancement Review (QER) report highlighted the need for further clarity on the decision-making structures;
  - the Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC) was the only sub-committee which formally reported to Senate and only on matters relating to academic quality and standards;

- many information groups, project groups, and networks were in place with no clarity as to how such groups reported to Senate and how decisions were taken on matters other than academic quality and standards;
- an internal audit report identified that sources of the student voice sit under separate structures, with separate monitoring and reporting;

1309.2 that the proposals detailed in the paper had been published on the staff intranet for [consultation](#), with staff invited to comment by 12 noon on Friday 21 May 2021. The proposal included:

- the establishment of an Education and Student Experience Committee reporting to Senate, to provide strategic direction and oversight on all matters relating to education and students;
- retention of the existing arrangements for the oversight of academic standards and quality - the Academic Standards and Quality Committee and Awards and Progress Committee with terms of reference unchanged;
- the development of a clear structure for the effective oversight of education and student matters, confirming the relationship between Senate and sub-groups and committees, including Boards of Studies and School committees;
- the establishment of a PGR Strategy group to provide oversight of all matters relating to postgraduate research studies, including the Doctoral Academy, and reporting to groups in the relevant portfolios;
- changes to education governance structures at College and School level, including the establishment of a School and College Education and Student Experience Committee;

1309.3 that early feedback on the proposals had suggested the establishment of a Student Life group, alongside the Student Voice and Partnership group, to ensure that the broader range of student services were included in the governance structures;

1309.4 that the agreed terms of reference of committees would provide clarity on the responsibilities of each committee/group and decisions which should be reported both upwards and downwards, and that the responsibilities of the School Education and Student Experience committees would be aligned with the extant responsibilities of School Boards and Heads of School;

1309.5 that the agreed governance structure would be implemented during 2021/22 on a phased basis to ensure that appropriate support and training was made available to key stakeholders;

1309.6 that further consideration would be given to establishing an appropriate cycle of business which could operate within a matrix structure.

### **RESOLVED**

1309.7 to endorse the proposals for changes to the education governance structure.

## 1310 REVALIDATION

Received and considered paper 20/602 'Revalidation'.

NOTED

- 1310.1 that it was an expectation of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, and section 1.5 and 1.9 of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for internal quality assurance, that the University had in place a revalidation process;
- 1310.2 the proposed revalidation process would replace the Periodic Review process and was designed as a developmental activity; highlighting areas of good practice and identifying any aspects of provision that may benefit from enhancement;
- 1310.3 that two task and finish groups had been established, chaired by Dr Rob Gossedge (AHSS College Dean Postgraduate), to discuss the proposed approach to revalidation including:
- the purpose and scope of the revalidation process at Cardiff University;
  - the overarching principles of a two-phase approach;
  - the timings and content of School/College discussions for both phases;
  - the interconnectivity with Annual Review and Enhancement and other monitoring and review process to avoid duplication and effort; and
  - the potential for unintended consequences;
- 1310.4 a two-phase process was proposed: an initial portfolio review, led by the School and College and informed by University education and recruitment strategies; and subsequently a review of programme structure, content, and delivery, undertaken by the School, College Education and Academic Quality teams;
- 1310.5 that feedback from both task and finish groups had been positive highlighting that there was the opportunity to develop a shared vision going forward and the built-in flexibility to allow Schools to group programmes/disciplines for review;
- 1310.6 that the Colleges would agree with Schools a revalidation schedule, starting in 2021/22, with all Schools commencing the revalidation process no later than 2025/26;
- 1310.7 that careful consideration would be taken of Schools undertaking significant accreditation reviews with the aim to co-ordinate the revalidation and accreditation activities to avoid duplication of effort;
- 1310.8 that specific training would be provided to staff reviewing and updating programme information, and support would also be provided by CESI to ensure Schools were implementing up-to-date institutional frameworks and guidance on [programme design, structure and delivery](#), including [graduate attributes](#) and [assessment and feedback commitments](#);

1310.9 that consideration should be given to the development of a revalidation process to monitor, review and evaluate postgraduate research programmes.

**RESOLVED**

1310.10 to **recommend to Senate** the revalidation process for taught programmes.

1310.11 that the College Deans Postgraduate consult and bring forward proposals for a revalidation process for postgraduate research programmes for consideration by ASQC during 2021/22.

1311 **CHANGES TO ADMISSIONS REGULATIONS FOR 2021/22**

Received and considered paper 20/617 'Proposed changes to Academic Regulations for 2021'.

NOTED

1311.1 that amendments to section 7, applicant responsibility, were being proposed to clarify the University's commitment to equality and diversity policies and the expectations of applicants in relation to these;

1311.2 that the following Admissions policies and procedures had been added to the list of associated admissions policies under section 8.3 of the Admissions Regulations:

- High Performance Sports Programme policy;
- Admissions Interview and Audition policy;
- Oversubscription policies;
- School-level policies.

**RESOLVED**

1311.3 to **recommend to Senate** the approval of amendments to the Admissions Regulations from 2021/22 as detailed in paper 20/617.

1312 **CHANGES TO AWARD, PROGRAMME, MODULE AND ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS FOR 2021/22**

Received and considered paper 20/611 'Proposed changes to Award, Programme, Module and Assessment Regulations for 2021'.

NOTED

1312.1 the proposed changes to the Award, Programme, Module and Assessment Regulations from the 2021/22 academic year, as detailed in paper 20/611, intended to correct or clarify areas of the regulations which had been flagged by colleagues as requiring revision rather than substantial change;

1312.2 that the designation of 'elective core' had been removed as it was widely misunderstood and inappropriately implemented in practice. The change would not preclude the opportunity for Schools to group optional modules requiring at least one to be pursued from the group which offered a more appropriate solution to programme structures;

- 1312.3 that in addition to the awards listed in paper 20/611, three postgraduate research degrees should also be listed as historic awards which would no longer be conferred;
- 1312.4 that the MSci should be added to the list of Integrated Master awards as the designation had been recently approved for use in EARTH to align with award designations used by comparator universities;
- 1312.5 that the amendment to paragraph 3.3 of the Regulations for Modular Taught programmes relating to the opportunity to repeat should specify that a student 'will be' permitted to repeat rather than 'may be'.

### RESOLVED

- 1312.6 to **recommend to Senate** the approval of the amendments to the Award, Programme, Module, and Assessment Regulations from 2021/22 as detailed in paper 20/611 subject to the below revisions:
- .1 include the following in the list of awards no longer conferred:
- |          |                           |
|----------|---------------------------|
| DDS      | Doctor of Dental Surgery  |
| DNursSci | Doctor in Nursing Science |
| DNurs    | Doctor of Nursing         |
- .2 insert the following award as a new award under 'Integrated Master':
- |      |                   |
|------|-------------------|
| MSci | Master in Science |
|------|-------------------|
- .3 revised amendment to paragraph 3.3 of the Regulations for Modular Taught programmes:
- If the amount of credit failed is more than permitted by the relevant resit rule, students will be permitted to repeat ...

### 1313 **CHANGES TO POLICIES INTRODUCED IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

Received and considered paper 20/612, 'Changes to Policies in response to Covid-19'.

#### NOTED

- 1313.1 that the safety net policy contained a package of measures, including variations to policies, to ensure students should not be disadvantaged in terms of their achievement because of the disruption resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019/20 and the ongoing constraints in the delivery of on-campus provision in 2020/21;
- 1313.2 that the package of measures and policies contained in the safety net policy required review and updating prior to 2021/22;
- 1313.3 that all policies would be kept under review and, if required, updated to reflect latest Welsh Government and Public Health Wales guidelines and legislation.

1313.4 Remote Study Policy

## NOTED

- .1 the proposed remote study policy revised the criteria for eligibility, supported absences of up to 4 weeks only and therefore no longer required schools to provide equivalent access to learning remotely but to support students' learning during a short-period of absence;
- .2 that schools would be asked to confirm which programmes would permit students to study remotely for a period of up to 4 weeks if they satisfied the remote study criteria;
- .3 that there were concerns that restrictions on travel and quarantining requirements on arrival could have an adverse impact on international recruitment and there may be a need to support initiatives to enable students to study online only/distance learning for a prolonged period;
- .4 that if schools wish to support students studying online only/distance learning for a period longer than 4 weeks, requests would be considered on a case-by-case basis (for individual students/cohorts of students/programmes) to ensure that the academic standards, student experience, and financial/recruitment requirements were assured;
- .5 that the remote study policy would be updated to refer to a process for considering requests for offering online only/distance learning provision.

**RESOLVED**

- .6 to **recommend to Senate** a revised version of the remote study policy to take account of members comments.

1313.5 Extenuating Circumstances

## NOTED

- .1 that the extenuating circumstances policy approved for 2020/21 represented a change of approach and its implementation required extensive support, consequently a period of stability was required before its impact and effectiveness could be reviewed;
- .2 the opportunity for students to self-certify and the clarity provided on the outcomes permitted on receipt of a declaration of extenuating circumstances had been welcomed by students and the policy was similar to practice at many other universities;
- .3 the concerns which had been raised regarding the high number of declarations of extenuating circumstances submitted by students and the impact on the workload of staff in schools;
- .4 that at present it was not possible to conclude that the increase in the number of extenuating circumstances declarations related



solely to the policy change as the number may have increased due to the impact of the pandemic;

- .5 that a process review was being undertaken to improve the extenuating circumstances process and there would be a review of communications to students regarding the application of the policy;
- .6 that schools would be advised to ensure that students were made aware of the consequences of deferring assessments as failure of the deferred assessment could delay progression or the conferment of the award.

**RESOLVED**

- .7 to retain the extant extenuating circumstances policy for 2021/22.

1313.6 Variation to Regulations for the Classification of Degrees

NOTED

- .1 that a commitment had been made to students that an average mark B would be calculated, excluding assessments completed in 2019/20 after 16 March 2020, until students who studied modules in 2019/20 which contributed to the calculation of the degree classification had completed their studies;
- .2 that as there had been significant disruption in both 2019/20 and 2020/21 it would be appropriate to retain the variation to the secondary rule which removed the requirement to achieve a final mark within 2% of the degree classification boundary.

**RESOLVED**

- .3 to retain the variations to the regulations for the classification of degrees for 2021/22.

1314 **POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH: PROPOSED NEW AND UPDATED REGULATIONS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR 2021/22**

Received and considered paper 20/613, 'Postgraduate research: proposed new and updated regulations, policies and procedures.

NOTED

- 1314.1 the proposed changes to the postgraduate research regulations, policies and procedures from the 2021/22 academic year, as detailed in paper 20/613, intended to correct or clarify areas of the regulations which had been flagged by colleagues as requiring change;
- 1314.2 that a new Procedure for the Re-Registration of Former Research Degree Students for Examination was proposed enabling a School's acceptance of a thesis more than a year after the submission deadline had passed;
- 1314.3 that students extending their doctoral programme by a period of no more than 12 months following the award of their degree would

maintain their student registration, and consequently the student conduct regulations would continue to apply;

1314.4 that policy development work was planned in the following key areas:

- placements/internships/work experience;
- supporting students returning from a period of interruption;
- transferring between programmes and modes of study.

#### **RESOLVED**

1314.5 to **recommend to Senate** the approval of the new and amended regulations, policies and procedures relating to postgraduate research as detailed in paper 20/613 from 2021/22.

#### **1315 REPORTS FROM GROUPS**

Received and considered paper 20/614, 'Report from Programme and Partner Standing Panel'.

#### **NOTED**

1315.1 that the quality and standards of collaborative taught provision is monitored in accordance with the requirements of the Collaborative Provision Policy, with the Programme and Partner Standing Panel receiving moderator reports on an annual basis;

1315.2 that the Programme and Partner Standing Panel had received moderator reports for collaborative provision arrangements currently operated by the University, although the impact of Covid-19 pandemic had precluded moderator visits to the partner organisation during 2020;

1315.3 that the relevant Head of School had been asked to provide all outstanding responses to issues identified by Programme and Partner Standing Panel for consideration at its next meeting in June 2021 and that the College Education Deans would ensure that responses would be submitted in time;

1315.4 that a full report of the issues identified in the moderator reports and agreed responses would be reported to and considered at the next meeting of ASQC;

1315.5 that many of the collaborative provision arrangements were in teach-out mode and consequently required significant time and attention to ensure that the student experience was protected until all students had completed their studies;

1315.6 that the Panel received and considered the University register of Progression, Articulation and Study Abroad agreements (Erasmus and International Exchange) and their current status;

1315.7 that the introduction of the Turing Scheme, to provide funding for international opportunities in education and training across the world, afforded the University the opportunity to revisit and renew its strategy for student exchange partnerships, which should be undertaken alongside the strategic development of international partners;

1315.8 that a strategic approach was required for the development of taught collaborative partnerships, as detailed in the Collaborative Provision Policy, with appropriate due diligence and resources confirmed before any formal negotiations were undertaken with partner organisations to avoid reputational risk and ensure efficient use of staff time and resource.

**RESOLVED**

1315.9 to endorse the requirement for a strategic approach to the development of taught collaborative partnerships and that the Committee would welcome the opportunity to consider proposals for a revised institutional approach for establishing formal taught collaborative partnerships, progression, articulation, and study abroad arrangements.

1316 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

1316.1 Membership

NOTED that the terms of office of sabbatical officers terminated at the end of June and consequently this would be the final meeting attended by Jane Chukwu and Hannah Doe. Members thanked both for their valuable input and contribution throughout the year.

1317 **DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP REVIEW: OUTCOME REPORT**

Received paper 20/603, 'Degree Apprenticeship Review Outcome Report'.

NOTED

1317.1 the QAA, on behalf of HEFCW, completed a Degree Apprenticeship Review for the University on 18 March 2021. The Review was designed to be a developmental review focused on higher education providers' delivery of the programme including work-based learning through visits to employers providing apprentices;

1317.2 that the QAA review team identified the following features of good practice:

- the close dialogue between the employer, University and apprentices which leads to meaningful opportunities to engage in specific business projects as live briefs that allow the apprentices to demonstrate the appropriate learning outcomes (Design and development of programmes);
- the comprehensive way the University and employer has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and their combined response, adaptability and flexibility which has successfully enabled continued apprentice progress and maintenance of the Degree Apprenticeship Characteristics (Learning and teaching);

1317.3 that the QAA review team identified the following areas for development:

- the opportunity for even greater involvement in the development and design of the programme, and decisions regarding delivery, by the employer (Modes of delivery);

- the formalisation of the progress review process in order to strengthen the University's monitoring arrangements (Assessment);
- 1317.4 that the report had been produced for the University and shared with the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) and would be used to inform a sector-wide report that shared learning and development of Degree Apprenticeships across all providers in Wales;
- 1317.5 a number of staff had been involved in planning, co-ordinating and preparing the required documentation and the Chair thanked Martine Woodward and Lloyd Hole, the staff and students who participated in the review, and staff at Admiral who met the review team.
- 1318 **REVIEW OF THE DELIVERY OF TAUGHT PROGRAMMES IN 2020/21**
- Received paper 20/604, 'Review of the Delivery of Taught Programme sin 2020/21'.
- NOTED
- 1318.1 that a review of the delivery of taught programmes was being undertaken to ensure that students have:
- the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of programme learning outcomes; and
  - received a learning experience they could have reasonably expected based on information they were provided by from the School and University at the beginning of the academic year;
- 1318.2 that all submissions received were being reviewed to identify any gaps which had not been addressed and risks identified, and also to ensure that the information was complete and could be used to support the student complaint process;
- 1318.3 that many staff had contributed to the review and the Chair recognised the significant contribution of staff in academic schools; the College Deans and Education Managers; and staff in the Quality and Standards team in Registry to ensure that the review was completed.
- 1319 **FRAMEWORK FOR PROGRAMME AND MODULE CHANGES 2021/22**
- Received paper 20/605, 'Framework for Variation: Taught Programmes 2020/21'.
- NOTED that the Framework for Variation had been introduced for academic schools to consider the education provision we can confidently deliver in 2021/22 and to review how education provision would be delivered in 2021/22, taking into consideration our obligations under consumer protection law.
- 1320 **GUIDANCE ON ASSESSMENT FOR 2021/22**
- Received paper 20/606, 'Cardiff University Assessment Principles'.
- NOTED

- 1320.1 that the principles form part of a developing suite of broader principles of assessment and feedback at Cardiff University e.g. the Cardiff Assessment and Feedback Commitments and the Programme structure, design, and delivery principles;
- 1320.2 that the Transforming Assessment group was currently reviewing the full suite of institutional documentation around assessment and feedback more generally and a detailed review of the University's assessment policies formed part of this work. The group planned to develop a revised assessment policy that would incorporate these principles, and submit the policy for consideration by ASQC during 2021/22 for implementation from 2022/23.
- 1321 **PLACEMENT AND STUDY ABROAD GUIDANCE FOR 2021/22**
- Received paper 20/607, 'Guidance for delivering placement learning and study abroad opportunities for students in 2021/22'.
- NOTED that the guidance had been developed to ensure schools provided students with appropriate advice regarding placement and study abroad opportunities in 2021/22 as opportunities may be limited due to travel restrictions, social distancing measures, and the economic impact of the pandemic, and there was a risk some students may be unable to undertake placement or study abroad opportunities.
- 1322 **STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCESS RELATING TO COVID-19 DISRUPTION 2020/21**
- Received paper 20/608, 'Student Complaints Process Relating to Covid-19 Disruption 2020/21'.
- 1323 **INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE TEF REPORT**
- NOTED the Independent Review of the TEF [Report](#), submitted to the Secretary of State for Education, which contained the outcomes and recommendations of the independent review of the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF).
- 1324 **UNIVERSITIES UK BRIEFING ON DEGREE CLASSIFICATION IN 2019/20**
- NOTED the Universities UK [Briefing](#) on Degree Classification in 2019/20 which examined the various factors which may have contributed to an increase in the proportion of good degrees awarded in 2019/20 across the UK higher education sector.
- 1325 **ACTION TAKEN ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE**
- Received and NOTED paper 20/609, 'Routine Actions Taken on Behalf of the Committee', and paper 20/610, 'Approval of variations of arrangement as a result of Covid-19'.
- 1326 **DATE OF MEETINGS: 2020/21**
- NOTED the date of remaining meetings to be held in 2020/21: Tuesday 20th July 2021 at 9.30 a.m.