

University of Suffolk

SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 16 March 2022 at 14:00 hours via Zoom

Chair: Professor Helen Langton (Vice-Chancellor)

Present: Dr Suha Al-Naimi (School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology, Vice-Chancellor nominee), Holly Bowen (Admissions Manager) (Professional Services representative), Dr Ellen Buck (Director of Learning and Teaching), Aaron Burrell (Associate Director, Digital Learning and Innovation, Vice-Chancellor nominee), Dr Adam Clayden (School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology representative), Professor Mohammad Dastbaz (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Dr Paul Driscoll-Evans (Dean, School of Health and Sports Sciences), Fiona Fisk (Academic Registrar and Director of Student Life and Registry Services), Alex Gooch (Students' Union President of Education), Professor Gurpreet Jagpal (Pro-Vice-Chancellor Business and Entrepreneurship), Dr Ross Kemble (Suffolk Business School representative), Dr Wendy Lecluyse (School of Social Sciences and Humanities representative), Dr Rachael Martin (University wide representative, School of Social Sciences and Humanities), Professor Brian McCook (Dean, School of Social Sciences and Humanities), Dr Stuart McErlain-Naylor (School of Health and Sports Sciences representative), Connor Parish (Students' Union Officer, School of Health and Sport Sciences), Sean Preston (University wide representative, School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology), Reilly Willis (University wide representative, School of Social Sciences and Humanities)

Apologies: Professor Emma Bond (Director of Research), Bernard Harrison (Students' Union Officer, School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology), Rachel Heathershaw (University wide representative, School of Health and Sports Sciences), Emily Kilkenny (Students' Union School Officer, School of Social Sciences and Humanities) Tim Greenacre (Chief Operating Officer), Laura Pennie (Deputy Academic Registrar),

Secretary: Alison McQuin (Head of Quality)

In attendance: Stuart Agnew (Representative, University and College Union), Polly Bridgman (Director of External Relations), James Nial (Head of Planning and Management Information),

Minutes shown in bold italics should be treated as confidential and will be removed from the published set on the University website.

Minutes of previous meetings held on 13 October 2021 and 23 November 2021

21/059 The minutes of the meeting held on 13 October and 23 November 2021 were approved as an accurate record to be published on the website.

Matters arising

Policies and procedures (from minute 19/165)

21/060 The streamlining quality processes would be brought to a future meeting of Senate.

21/061 All other matters arising items were completed.

Students' Union report

21/062 Members congratulated the Students' Union President and Vice-President for being re-elected for 2022/23 and noted that this provided good continuity while the new CEO was being appointed.

21/063 It was reported that the SU Shop was currently being subsidised by the University and it was hoped that footfall would increase once the new Health and Wellbeing building opened.

21/064 The Ready to Graduate Week, which helped prepare students ready for life after university, was a positive initiative and it was hoped that this continued next academic year.

21/065 It was confirmed that the Students' Union were exploring increasing the number of staff to support the additional case load work undertaken.

Chair's report

21/066 The Chair's report was received, thanking staff for the uptake in appraisal and mandatory training.

OfS consultations

21/067 A presentation was provided on the recent Office for Students (OfS) consultations (student outcomes; Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF); and constructing indicators).

21/068 A number of sector discussion events had been attended, noting that the University's response was in line with views from across the sector and with the Universities UK (UUK) response that had recently been published. There were a number of concerns with the OfS proposals including the use of 'requires improvement' within the TEF; the short timelines for implementation; and the potential duplication between the OfS and Ofsted review processes for apprenticeships.

21/069 It was recognised that the timelines to implement the proposals were challenging and a TEF task and finish group was being established that would report to Quality Committee, the Senior Leadership Team and Executive.

21/070 It was queried how long these proposals would be in place, it was explained that while there may be some evolution in the mechanics of how providers would be monitored, it was felt that the focus on data would remain.

21/071 The proposals would require significant resources from the University to analyse the data and produce the contextual documents.

21/072 It was confirmed that student outcomes would cover both undergraduate and postgraduate provision, so all course teams would need to be aware of the thresholds

set. The importance of disseminating the consultations across the institution and partners was highlighted to members, noting that the Quality team were able to attend any team meetings to support this.

- 21/073 University partners had been involved in the consultation discussion that had taken place at Quality Committee and would be discussed further at the Partnership Management Groups.
- 21/074 A student submission would also be required as part of the TEF and while the University would support the Students' Union with this, it was recognised that this would need to be owned by students.
- 21/075 Members thanked the Deputy Academic Registrar, the Head of Quality and the Head of Planning, Management and Information for drafting the institutional response.

University apprenticeship self-assessment report and QIP

- 21/076 The institutional apprenticeship self-assessment report (SAR) had been developed from the School SARs and was reviewed by the Apprenticeship Board and Quality Committee.
- 21/077 The SAR was shared with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), who commended the content and the distance travelled by the University.
- 21/078 The quality improvement plan (QIP) was updated and reviewed regularly by the Apprenticeship Board prior to the six-weekly meetings with the ESFA.
- 21/079 Members were reminded of the importance of both documents, which would also be shared with members of the Apprenticeship Management Group. Members approved the SAR and QIP.

Outcome: Approved.

- 21/080 It was reported that Board also reviewed the apprenticeship provision through the Audit and Risk Committee.

Degree outcomes statement

- 21/081 The degree outcomes statement had been updated to include the degree outcomes data for 2019/20 and 2020/21.
- 21/082 Members discussed block and blend learning and while noting that there had been positive feedback from the majority of students, there was ongoing discussion about how block learning could be best implemented for part-time students. The Learning Services team were able to support course teams to think creatively about course delivery.
- 21/083 The data fluctuations for partner institutions, particularly East Coast College, was noted, although it was recognised that East Coast College had smaller cohort sizes and so any changes can have a significant impact.
- 21/084 It was queried whether the differences between domestic and international students was reviewed when looking at degree classifications by ethnicity. It was confirmed that this data was not currently available within the Qlik dashboard but could be explored for implementation in the future.

21/085 It was noted that the Suffolk Business School had a lower rate of good honour degrees compared to other Schools, however it was noted that, for some students, the distance travelled from when they started University was an achievement.

21/086 Members thanked the Head of Partnerships for their work and approved the document for publication.

Outcome: Approved.

Student protection plan

21/087 The revised student protection plan was updated to reflect current terminology and to cover all partner institutions and apprenticeships.

Outcome: Approved.

Framework for Operational Management of Partnership Provision

21/088 A new Framework for Operational Management of Partnership Provision was proposed.

21/089 It was confirmed that academic link tutors were available for new partners and would be introduced for all partners in the future. It was also confirmed that it was expected that partners would issue the CAS.

21/090 Members discussed the development of the portfolio at partner institutions and how this linked with the portfolio at Ipswich. It was confirmed that all course proposals were submitted to the Portfolio Oversight Committee, which included representation from each of the Schools through the Deans and PVC. All new partners were subject to a due diligence process and the type of courses, validation or franchised, was discussed.

21/091 It was noted that the University provided progression opportunities for local FE institutions, with course teams trying to work closely with FE providers to market University courses. The Chair met regularly with local colleges to support this message.

21/092 It was queried whether the proposal should wait until the Director of Partnerships had been appointed, but it was confirmed that the framework reflected current practice and that there would be a delay in appointing to the Director of Partnerships vacancy as a further recruitment round was needed.

Outcome: Approved.

Honorary Awards Committee

Honorary awards 2022 nominations

21/093 Members approved the honorary award nominations for 2022, noting that it would be good to consider further diversity in the future.

Outcome: Approved.

21/094 Members were encouraged to submit nominations for the Honorary Awards Committee to consider.

Nominations forms

21/095 The revised nominations form was received, noting that any changes to awards would be notified to the Academic Registrar. It was noted that the honorary doctorates would be used, where possible, and Master of the University would be used sparingly.

Outcome: Approved.

Terms of reference

21/096 Members supported the proposed revisions to the Honorary Awards Committee terms of reference.

Outcome: Approved.

Student recruitment

21/097 An update on student recruitment was provided, noting that, overall, the University had received more applications than at the same point last year. The proportion of applications from 18-19 year-olds had increased along with an increase in national and regional applications.

21/098 It was expected that Clearing numbers may increase this year compared to numbers during the pandemic. Conversion and clearing remained important for the University.

21/099 It was reported that in-person UCAS fairs had returned. The University had also completed an on-campus Open Event since the Covid restrictions, with the next Open Event scheduled for 9 April 2022.

21/100 It was requested that further information on postgraduate applications was also provided.

Agreed action: The Director of External Relations to include further information on postgraduate applications in the next student recruitment update.

Withdrawal data

21/101 The 2020/21 year-end student withdrawal data was provided, noting this data would be used within the TEF and APP.

21/102 It was highlighted that there had been a significant shift in people withdrawing later in the academic year, with personal reasons the growing reason for student withdrawal.

21/103 There were a number of positive outcomes within the paper, including the improvement in withdrawal rate for Games Programming.

21/104 Work would be undertaken, with the Partnership Management Groups, to break down partner data into cohort groups due to the multiple intakes in an academic year. Discussion had also taken place with the London School of Commerce (LSC), Global Business School (GBS) and LD Training about recording of withdrawal data.

Annual OSACC report

21/105 The annual Office for Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct (OSACC) report was received, noting that the OSACC team welcomed invitations from Schools and teams to discuss the report. Members thanked the OSACC team for a comprehensive report.

- 21/106 It was queried whether there would be any increase in staffing resource, and it was confirmed that a business case had been submitted to support the digitisation of the OSACC work, which would help streamline process for the team, academic staff and students.
- 21/107 It was queried whether there had been any consideration given to restructuring OSACC to be an independent body. It was confirmed that while discussions had taken place, the team were already semi-autonomous but were not yet at the size or complexity of requiring a proctor.

Covid-19 Good Practice

- 21/108 Feedback from Senate sub-committees on areas of good practice learned during the pandemic was received. It was agreed that while some of it had already been embedded into processes, it would be useful to explore the feedback by key themes.

Agreed action: The Chair and Secretary to submit to the next Senate meeting a list of good practice areas by theme.

Access and Participation Plan

- 21/109 An update on expectations from the OfS along with research activity undertaken, including looking at the data against all protected characteristics, was provided to members.
- 21/110 Further guidance was expected from the OfS on expected changes to the APP, including development of a new plan for 2024. There would also be an increasing focus on providers working with schools and early years.
- 21/111 A new Director for Fair Access and Participation, John Blake, had been appointed at the OfS. Members noted that while the University wanted to support all the activities that were being requested by the OfS, Universities were increasingly asked to carry out additional activities without any additional funding.

Annual OfS compliance report 2020/21

- 21/112 Relevant extracts from the University's annual OfS compliance report to the Board were received, which represented a culmination of the annual RiME processes. Members were reminded of the importance of the document and encouraged to share it with their teams.

Annual assessment board report 2020/21

- 21/113 The annual observation of assessment boards report was received for information, confirming that assessment boards were carried out in line with the policy.

External examiner report 2020/21

- 21/114 The annual report summarised the work of a broad range of external examiners. Members were pleased to see that feedback to students was highlighted by external examiners as an area of good practice, which also reflected the satisfaction rates from the NSS.

Senate elections

- 21/115 The process for the 2022 Senate elections was presented to members. In addition to the usual periods of tenure coming to an end, it was noted that the School of Health and Sports Sciences representative and Professional Services representative would also become vacant prior to the next meeting. It was confirmed that replacements would be elected prior to the next meeting. It was suggested that there could be further staggering of tenures to ensure more consistency in membership.
- 21/116 Members were supportive of the proposed timelines, noting that while it reflected the requirements in the terms of reference it also provided an additional allowance for the Easter break.
- 21/117 The Vice-Chancellor nominations would be proposed at the next meeting, once the outcome of the elections were known.

Graduation 2022

- 21/118 The graduation ceremonies at Ipswich were scheduled to take place from 15-22 October 2022. The schedule would be shared with Schools to ensure attendance from academic teams.
- 21/119 An additional conferral point had been introduced in April 2022, allowing graduates from partners with multiple intakes and from some health courses to receive their certificate earlier. It was confirmed that this was not an additional graduation ceremony.
- 21/120 The first graduation ceremonies for LSC in Malta and the British School of Commerce in Sri Lanka had been held overseas. While representatives from the University were unable to attend in person, due to Covid, there was video representation.

Partnerships

Partnerships update

- 21/121 An update on existing and new partnerships was provided to members.

Partnerships register

- 21/122 The University's register of partnership arrangements was received.

Chair's action

- 21/123 The list of items approved on Chair's action and approved by correspondence was received.

Course proposal forms

- 21/124 The list of course proposal forms approved since the last meeting was received.

Course suspension and discontinuation forms

- 21/125 The list of approved course suspension and discontinuation forms was provided to members.

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) reports

21/126 The recent reports received from PSRBs were shared with members.

Reports from sub-committees

Academic Appointments and Promotions Committee

21/127 The minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2021 were provided for information.

Quality Committee

21/128 The minutes from the Quality Committee meeting held on 1 December 2021 were provided for information.

Research and Enterprise Committee

21/129 The minutes from the Research and Enterprise Committee held on 24 November 2021 were provided for information.

School Academic Committee

21/130 The minutes from the School Academic Committees were provided for information.

Any other business

21/131 Members were requested to confirm whether they wanted the Senate to continue to online or to return to in-person meetings.

Agreed action: All members to confirm to the Secretary by 13 May 2022 whether they preferred online or in-person meetings.

21/132 Members noted that this would be the last Senate meeting for Stuart McErlain-Naylor, Polly Bridgman and Holly Bowen. Members thanked the individuals for their contribution to Senate.

Date of next meeting

21/133 The next meeting of Senate is to be held at 14:00 on Wednesday 15 June 2022, via Teams.

Alison McQuin
Head of Quality