

University of Suffolk

## SENATE

### Minutes of the correspondence meeting held on Wednesday 25 March 2020

**Responses (Members)** Professor Helen Langton (Vice-Chancellor and Chair), Professor Emma Bond (Director of Research), Holly Bowen (Admissions Manager (Professional Services representative), Dr Ellen Buck (Director of Learning and Teaching), Dr Sam Chenery-Morris (University wide academic representative (School of Health and Sports Sciences)), Dr Daba Chowdhury (University wide academic representative (Suffolk Business School)), Adam Claydon (School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology representative), Professor Mohammad Dastbaz (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Georgia Downs (Students' Union President), Paul Driscoll-Evans (Dean, School of Health and Sports Sciences), Fiona Fisk (Academic Registrar), Marianne Flack (Director of Quality, Teacher Development, Student Progress and Foundation Learning, Suffolk New College), Rachel Heathershaw (university wide academic representative (School of Health and Sports Sciences), Dr Rachel Kirk (Assistant Principal (Higher Education), West Suffolk College), Dr Wendy Lecluyse (School of Social Sciences and Humanities representative), Professor Brian McCook (Dean, School of Social Sciences and Humanities), Dr Stuart McErlain-Naylor (School of Health and Sports Sciences representative), Kerry Payne (Head of Higher Education and Access, East Coast College), Robert Price (Suffolk Business School representative), Reilly Willis (University wide academic representative, School of Social Sciences and Humanities)

**Responses (Non-members)** Stuart Agnew (University and College Union representative), Tim Greenacre (Registrar and Secretary), Dr Mark Lyne (Head of Quality Enhancement), James Nial (Head of Planning and Management Information),

**Secretary:** Alison McQuin (Head of Validation and Exams)

19/069 As a result of Covid-19, the 25 March 2020 Senate meeting was conducted by correspondence. In line with the terms of reference, 75% of the total membership (20 members), excluding vacancies, provided a response to allow approval of relevant items.

### Minutes of previous meeting held on 25 November 2019 and 11 December 2019

19/070 The minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2019 and 11 December 2019 were approved as an accurate record.

### Matters Arising

Partnerships – Partnerships management review (from minute 18/192)

19/071 A Partnerships Review Task & Finish Group had been established with an update on partnership governance provided at a future Senate meeting.

**Agreed action:** The Deputy Vice-Chancellor to provide an update on partnership governance at the July 2020 Senate meeting.

Degree outcomes statement (from minute 19/027)

19/072 The degree outcomes statement would be considered at the July 2020 Senate meeting to allow a full analysis of the data to take place.

**Agreed action:** The Head of Quality Enhancement to provide the degree outcomes statement for approval at the July 2020 Senate meeting.

Student attrition (from minute 19/035)

19/073 An update on the withdrawal data for academic failure was included on the agenda. See minutes 19/104 to 19/106.

Academic calendar (from minute 19/037)

19/074 The timing of the exam weeks for 2020/21 were agreed by the Academic Registrar and a representative from the Students' Union. The revised academic calendar for 2020/21 was approved on Chair's action.

Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Framework (from minute 19/045)

19/075 Due to the number of changes proposed to the Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Framework, the Framework was included on the agenda for approval. See minutes 19/090 to 19/091.

### **Students' Union report**

19/076 The Students' Union report was received. An update to the paper was provided by the SU President, noting that Daniel Goulbon had been elected as SU President and Mauro Cardoso had been elected as SU Vice-President. Vacancies remained for the School Officer positions within the School of Social Sciences and Humanities and the Liberation Officer for Students with Disabilities. There has been a yearly increase in the number of candidates for the role of Liberation Officer for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students, along with an increase in voter turnout.

19/077 Due to Covid-19, the SU Summer Ball has been cancelled. However, depending on time available, the SU would be exploring alternative arrangements within the budget that was allocated.

19/078 The review of the SoFIA pilot would be presented to CELT and the Student Experience Group, with one member highlighting that they felt the system was operating well.

### **Chair's report**

19/079 The Chair's report was received.

### **Annual academic report**

19/80 The Annual academic report was received, noting that in future it would be submitted to CELT during its development prior to submission to Senate.

**Outcome:** Approved.

19/081 Thanks were offered to the team in developing a comprehensive report containing relevant action points.

## Policies and procedures

### Academic Appeals Procedure

19/082 The Academic Appeals Procedure was reviewed as part of the standard cycle of policy and procedure reviews.

19/083 It was noted that the proposed change to use the OIA terminology of justified, partially justified or not justified in paragraphs 41 and 48 was supported by the Students' Union Council.

19/084 Members were pleased to see the use of Skype attendance was allowed but suggested that this be broadened to 'online' attendance or 'video conferencing'. It was confirmed that this referred to students attending an academic appeals panel only as how the panel met was not stipulated within the procedure to ensure the procedure was not restrictive.

**Agreed action:** The Academic Registrar to consider the terms 'online attendance' or 'video conferencing' as an alternative to Skype. The revised procedure should be submitted by 24 April 2020 for consideration by Chair's action.

19/085 Clarification was sought in paragraph 45 on the use of a further attempt at an assessment component when an appeal was upheld but the student had already resubmitted work whilst the appeal was being considered, paragraph 14. It was confirmed that students were expected to continue with any reassessment as scheduled while the appeal remained unresolved. For example, a student may appeal a referred mark (either as no work submitted or as it did not meet the pass standard) but would be expected to submit any work in accordance with reassessment deadlines. The outcome of the appeal would determine whether or not the mark was capped or whether a further assessment opportunity should be granted (if the re-submitted work still did not meet the pass standard.) It was noted that this approach allowed students to resubmit whilst the learning was still fresh and would not impede progression.

19/086 Members were pleased to see that the pool for those eligible to act as Chair of panels had been widened and queried whether training would be available for all new panel members. It was confirmed that the Office for Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct (OSACC) were working on methods for providing training for panel members with arrangements in place for the 2020/21 academic year.

### External Examiners Policy

19/087 The External Examiners Policy had been reviewed as part of the standard cycle of policy and procedure reviews.

19/088 Members were supportive of the revisions including formalising the use of virtual attendance at Assessment Boards.

**Outcome:** Approved.

### Framework and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Awards

19/089 Members were supportive of the proposed changes to the Framework and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Awards and in particular the introduction of the MRes award.

**Outcome:** Approved.

### Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Framework

19/090 Following a review of the Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Framework by an external consultant the proposed changes were considered by Senate.

19/091 In light of the current Covid-19 situation, members queried whether additional information about a break in learning should be included to cover apprentices who were furloughed or where a break in learning had been forced upon an apprentice.

**Agreed action:** The Head of Quality Enhancement to update the framework to include information on a forced break in learning and submit by 24 April 2020 for consideration on Chair's action.

19/092 It was noted that the use of the flowchart in the appendix should be commended.

#### Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

19/093 The Recognition of Prior Learning Policy was reviewed as part of the normal cycle of policy and procedure reviews.

19/094 It was queried whether prejudice and procedural irregularity should be merged into one category in paragraph 34 to align with the revised Student Complaints Procedure.

**Agreed action:** The Head of Quality Enhancement to consider aligning paragraph 34 with the categories used within the Student Complaints Procedure. A revised policy should be submitted by 24 April 2020 for consideration on Chair's action.

19/095 It was noted that the diagram in appendix A was particularly helpful and it was confirmed that Visio was used to create the process diagram.

#### Student Charter

19/096 The Student Charter was subject to annual review. While the proposal to include a statement to challenge and address behaviours that were disruptive to academic activities was welcomed, it was queried whether this should be extended to cover behaviours beyond academic activities to be in line with 'British values' outlined in apprenticeships.

19/097 It was suggested that the statement regarding working with the Students' Union to respond to student feedback and the student experience be separated into two distinct statements.

19/098 **Agreed action:** The SU President and Academic Registrar to correct any grammatical errors and to consider expanding the statement to challenge disruptive behaviour to non-academic activities and separating the student feedback and student experience statement. A revised Student Charter should be submitted by 24 April 2020 for consideration on Chair's action.

#### Student Complaints Procedure

19/099 The Student Complaints Procedure was reviewed as part of the standard cycle of policy and procedure reviews.

19/100 Further clarification was sought as to when covert recordings would be accepted, paragraph 25, and whether it needed to be made more explicit within paragraph 32 that members of staff would not receive a copy of the final report. It was confirmed that, at this stage, covert recordings would not be accepted but were referred to within the policy to help future-proof it. It was confirmed that explicit mention of receipt of the final report was not included within the policy to better align with any HR procedures, should the matter be taken further.

19/101 It was queried whether it may not always be beneficial to release the name of the complainant to the alleged perpetrator, paragraph 14. It was confirmed that this aligned with advice from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) and ensured that the alleged perpetrator could properly and fully defend themselves. It was noted that appropriate action would be taken to protect the complainant.

19/102 It was queried whether the pool of investigating officers could be expanded and what training and support would be available. It was confirmed that the OSACC team were reviewing options for training for investigating officers and that they met with anyone new undertaking the role to discuss the process and expectations.

**Agreed action:** The Academic Registrar to consider the wording within paragraph 29 to ensure that it sufficiently widened the pool of investigating officers. The revised procedure should be submitted by 24 April for consideration on Senate Chair's action.

19/103 It was noted that there was an inconsistent use of 'University' and 'Provider' within the policy and it was suggested to append a flowchart to the procedure. It was confirmed that the use of the term 'provider' in paragraph 4 was to reflect the definition provided by the OIA, as not every provider of higher education was a university, while the other references to 'University' were to reflect what the institution would do to handle complaints.

#### **Academic failure**

19/104 Following discussion at the previous meeting, further detail about academic failure within the retention figures was provided to members.

19/105 It was queried whether consideration should be given to changing attendance monitoring from seven days consecutive absence to less than 25% attendance. It was confirmed that this would be considered as part of the Attendance Policy review, due in 2020/21.

19/106 It was requested that any future updates provide academic failure data as a percentage against overall enrolment figures.

#### **Partnerships update**

19/107 An update on current and future partnerships was provided to members.

#### **Quality Code mapping**

19/108 The Quality Code mapping to the revised QAA Quality Standards was received by members for information, noting that this was a 'live' document that would be updated regularly.

#### **Honorary Awards Committee**

19/109 An update on work by the Honorary Awards Committee was provided to members.

**Course proposal forms**

19/110 The list of approved course proposal forms was received.

**Course suspension and discontinuations**

19/111 The list of approved course suspensions and discontinuations was received.

**Course validation/re-approval outcomes 2018/19**

19/112 The list of validated and re-approved courses, approved on behalf of Senate, was received.

**Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) reports**

19/113 Recent correspondence from PSRBs was received for information.

**NCFE Approved Centre**

19/114 Confirmation of the University becoming an NCFE Approved Centre for the delivery of Functional Skills was provided to members.

**Partnership register**

19/115 Members received the list of international and UK partners, outside of the Partner Colleges, that have signed or were proposing to sign a memorandum of understanding.

**Chair's action**

19/116 Items approved on Chair's action were received by members.

**Reports from sub-committees**

Academic Appointments and Promotions Committee

19/117 The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2020 were received.

Research and Enterprise Committee

19/118 The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2020 were received.

School Academic Committee

19/119 The 2019/20 minutes from the Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology School Academic Committee were received for information.

19/120 The minutes from the Health and Sports Sciences School Academic Committee held on 14 November 2019 were received for information.

19/121 The minutes from the Suffolk Business School Academic Committee held on 27 November 2019 were received for information.

**Any other business**

19/122 An update on the institutional strategy was requested and it was confirmed that a virtual presentation would be provided to Senate members.

**Agreed action:** The Deputy Vice-Chancellor to provide a virtual presentation to Senate members by the end of May 2020.

19/123 It was queried whether there was a leadership resilience plan in place during the Covid-19 situation. It was confirmed that the Executive and the Senior Leadership Team had planned alternative leadership arrangements and that Senior Leadership Team members would be reminded to cascade this information to their teams.

**Date of next meeting**

19/124 The date of the next meeting is to be held at 2.00pm on Wednesday 8 July 2020 in the Boardroom, Waterfront Building.

**Alison McQuin**  
**Head of Validation and Exams**