

ROYAL HOLLOWAY
University of London

ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board, held on 4 June 2014

Present:	Professor P Layzell (In the Chair)	Dr A Miskimmon
	Professor C Bradley	Professor S Murphy
	Dr K Brickell	Professor K Normington
	Professor P Burgess	Professor B O'Keefe
	Professor J Crampton	Professor J Phillips
	Professor R Deem	Professor J Powell (Classics)
	Professor S Downes	Professor J Powell (Media Arts)
	Professor T Evans	Professor E Schafer
	Professor J Fiadeiro	Professor A Sheppard
	Professor A Gange	Ms S Simon
	Ms L Gibbs	Mr A Singh
	Professor D Gilbert	Dr G Smith
	Mr J Green	Professor M Spagat
	Dr J Hughes	Professor P Teixeira-Dias (for Professor B Cowan)
	Professor A Kahane	Mr J Tuck
	Professor R Kemp	Professor A Varty
	Professor P Leman	Professor J Wann
	Dr J McKee	Dr D Watling
With:	Ms A Sendall (Secretary)	
In attendance:	Dr A Bradshaw	Trade Union Observer (UCU)
	Dr R Meek	Head of Criminology and Sociology
	Mrs D Salsbury	Academic Development Officer
	Ms E Wilkinson	Head of College Careers Service
Apologies:	Ms S Bertrand-Shelton	
	Professor B Cowan	
	Mr S Higman	
	Professor P Hogg	
	Ms J Roberts	
	Professor J Unerman	

1. MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 The Board received the list of members of the Board (AB/14/23) and noted apologies. 14/054
- 1.2 The Board noted that this was the last meeting before the current terms of office expire for the following Representative and Elected members: 14/055
Professor Anne Varty, Head of Department of English;
Professor Jonathan Powell, Head of Department of Media Arts;
Professor Brian Cowan, Head of Department of Physics;
Professor John Wann, Head of Department of Psychology;
Professor Clare Bradley, Elected to sit on Academic Board through Council elections.
- 1.3 The Board noted that this was the last meeting for Ms Laura Gibbs who will be leaving the College to take up the position of Registrar at the School of Oriental and African Studies. 14/056

- 1.4 The Board noted that Mr Amarbeer Singh and Mr Jamie Green demit on 31 July 2014, and Miss Sidonie Bertrand-Shelton has been re-elected for a second term. The new Students' Union President, Miss Emma Peagam, who will formally take her place on the Board in 2014-15 and who had been invited to attend as an observer, was welcomed in absentia. A Postgraduate Student Officer will be elected by students in October, and will be a student member of Academic Board. 14/057
- 2. MINUTES**
- The Minutes of the last meeting held on **Wednesday, 5 March 2014** (M14/001 - M 14/053) were confirmed as an accurate record subject to the clarification in relation to the issue raised regarding the Terms of Reference of the Academic Board Executive Committee (M14/042) which it was noted should highlight that the Secretary and Registrar is not a member of Academic Board, however, he is a member of the Academic Board Executive Committee. It was agreed that the Academic Registrar would ensure that the composition of the Academic Board Executive Committee is considered at the Academic Board Working Group. 14/058
- One member questioned whether there had been a ruling that the Principal is an ex officio member of Academic Board. It was reported that whilst it was not explicit in the Standing Orders, it was implicit in the Council regulations and, moreover, it is standard across the sector for the Principal or Vice-Chancellor to be an ex officio member of the academic governing body. 14/059
- 3. MATTERS ARISING**
- Min 14/010 Academic Board Effectiveness Survey 14/060
- The Secretary reported that a consultation on the draft revised statutes and standing orders for Academic Board had taken place through focus groups and via the Governance Project website. Feedback from the consultation will be considered by the Academic Board Working Group at its meeting on Thursday 12 June, and the statutes revised accordingly. The revised statutes will be submitted to Project Board for consideration. The outcome will be reported to the next Academic Board meeting. Members of the Board who had not taken part in the consultation were invited to send their comments to the Academic Registrar.
- Min 14/015 Publication of Academic Board Minutes 14/061
- The Secretary reported that the minutes of Academic Board meetings are now available on the external College website:
<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/aboutus/governancematters/academicboard.aspx>
- 4. ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE CHAIR**
- The Board noted that no actions have been taken by the Principal, on behalf of the Academic Board. 14/062
- 5. UNSTARRING OF ITEMS**
- There was no formal unstarring of items. However, it was noted that Item 28 Conferment of Honorary Titles (AB/14/51) is actually a report from the Academic Staffing and Titles Committee, and whilst the report includes the award of Honorary Titles it also lists academic promotions. The Chair congratulated all staff who had received promotions and noted that for future meetings this item should not be starred. 14/063
- 6. FORMAL REPORTS**
- 6.1 Principal's Report 14/064
- The Board received a written report from the Principal (AB/14/24). The Board noted a typing error in the last sentence of paragraph 31 of the report relating to the provision of student services in London following the withdrawal of support for the University of London Union (ULU). It was clarified that the University of London is being encouraged to provide the student services for Royal Holloway students who are based in London.

- It was reported that HEFCE had undertaken a review of the School of Advanced Studies which had resulted in a 3% reduction in HEFCE funding. This had led to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of London recommending the reorganisation of a number of institutes which would result in the loss of separate Schools for English and for Music. An online petition had been submitted to the Vice-Chancellor and subsequently the recommendation had been put on hold pending further consultation. Members of the Board were invited to send any comments to the Heads of the Departments of English and Music in relation to the matter. The Board thanked the Head of the Department of English for all the work she has undertaken to support the case for retaining separate Schools. 14/065
- 6.2 Reports from the Deputy Principal and the Vice-Principals
- The Board received a written report from the Vice-Principal (Education) (AB/14/25a). It was additionally reported that David Willetts had announced cuts to the disabled students' allowance (DSA). From September 2015, the DSA would only be paid for conditions such as dyslexia if the students' needs are complex. The Students' Union Vice-President (Communications and Campaigns) reported that the NUS would be lobbying against the cuts on Friday 6 June. 14/066
- The Board received a written report from the Vice-Principal (Research and Enterprise) (AB/14/25b). The Board noted that in addition to the reported research grants in the pipeline, the Health Psychology Research Unit had grants amounting to half a million pounds for which applications had been made. It was suggested that the report might be extended to include other areas, such as Departmental Financial Analysis (DFAs). 14/067
- The Board received the draft Research Data Management Policy (AB/14/25c). The Director of Library Services reported that the policy had been put in place to ensure that data funded by public money is reusable and stored in an open access format. It was asked how the policy relates to informed consent. The policy contains a clause relating to data protection, however, it was agreed that this needed to be clearer. The Board suggested that consideration should be given to curation as well as to how the College will implement the policy. Consideration should also be given to the consequences for recruitment. The Director of Library Services would report the feedback to the Director of Research and Enterprise. 14/068
- The Board received a written report from the Deputy Principal outlining modifications to the roles of the Associate Deans to provide more appropriate support to the education and research portfolios (AB/14/25d). Some concern was raised at the decision not to align each Associate Dean for research to individual Faculties. It was explained this was to ensure that there is a spread of expertise across the disciplines. One member felt the increase in remuneration for the Associate Dean posts is disproportionate to that of the Heads of Departments. It was noted that this would be a matter for the Remuneration Committee. There was also concern at the impact of the combining of the Vice-Principal and Faculty Dean roles which it was felt was not adequately compensated for by the Associate Deans who do not have managerial powers. In response to a query regarding how the 'buy-out' of duties would be managed, it was confirmed that each case would be considered individually through discussion between the individual and their Head of Department. 14/069
- It was reported that an Associate Dean (Doctoral School) is to be appointed. The International Building will house a new social and hot-desking space, as well as a desk for a Student Services Centre representative for the Doctoral School. 14/070
- 6.3 Report from the Council
- The Academic Board representative on Council Professor David Gilbert, reported on the Council meeting held on 21 May 2014:
- Grievance Policy* - The Grievance Policy and Procedure for non-academic staff was presented to Council and approved. 14/071

	<i>Governance</i> –The interim Council regulations relating to the change of statutes introduced in 2011 were approved. At the meeting scheduled for July, Council will discuss the impact of the new statutes.	14/072
	<i>Academic Development</i> – Council was briefed about the nine new undergraduate degree programmes which were in the process of development. Some questions were raised about the resource implications, but the initiatives were supported.	14/073
	<i>Strategic Risk Register</i> – The main business of the meeting focused on updating and maintaining the Strategic Risk Register, which it was agreed would be circulated to members of the Academic Board. The main risks to the College identified included: (i) the risk of under recruiting students; (ii) the College’s visibility; (iii) the College’s research record if the College does not perform in the REF; (iv) the current condition of the College estate, which it was noted would be addressed by the Estates Strategy.	14/074
	The Board received the minutes of the Council meetings held on 28 November 2013 and 19 March 2014 (AB/14/26a,b).	14/075
6.4	<u>Report from Academic Board Executive Committee</u>	
	The Board received the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2014 (AB/14/27) and noted the discussion regarding the enhancement of support and training for student-facing staff in dealing with bereavement and other matters relating to the wellbeing of students. It was reported that the Students’ Union Vice-President (Education and Welfare) would be working with the Head of Student Advisory Services over the coming academic year to enhance the training for personal advisors and student-facing staff in responding to students with such issues.	14/076
7.	POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT PORTFOLIO	
	The Board considered the questions relating to the development of the postgraduate taught provision (AB/14/28). The Deputy Principal’s report identified several issues associated with developing the College’s postgraduate taught portfolio, and he invited comments from the Board. A number of points were made including: (i) the PGT market and recruitment methods differ from UG, and departments would benefit from guidance on how best to recruit PGT students; (ii) the significant piece of individual written work undertaken by students over the summer may be unappealing, and it was suggested that the College could offer more vocational Masters degrees; (iii) programmes might be structured on a modular basis; (iv) the College’s scholarship provision should be reviewed in relation to comparable institutions; (iv) departments should be supported and encouraged to form links with companies who may be willing to offer bursaries; (v) PGT placements opportunities, such as those offered on the MSc ‘Big Data’ Computer Science programmes, are attractive to applicants; (vi) offering block mode delivery may be challenging in terms of timetabling though it was acknowledged this would be addressed with centralised timetabling; (vii) the lack of funding is detrimental to PGT recruitment. There is recognition at government level that there is a lack of funding for PGT students though there are no known plans on how this might be addressed.	14/077
	The Deputy Principal thanked colleagues for their feedback and agreed that it was clear that the PGT market differed from the UG market and as such, would require a more flexible approach. Increasing bursaries, however, was challenging since the PGT tuition fees are considerably less than UG fees although the academic year is longer and on the face of it, it was not cost effective for the College to offer scholarships. It was acknowledged that PGT teaching would need to be included in the workload model.	14/078
8.	SCHOOL OF LAW	
	The Board received a paper on the establishment of a School of Law (AB/14/29). The Vice-Principal (External Engagement) reported that the proposal to establish an academic unit to house the LLB degree had been highlighted in his report to the last meeting of Academic Board. The LLB had been approved for validation for 2015 entry, and the paper proposing the School of Law would be considered by Council at its meeting on 2 July.	14/079

Some concern was raised that the establishment of the LLB degree had not been considered at Academic Board. The Chair reported that the authority to approve (and withdraw) degree programmes was delegated to the Academic Planning Committee (APC) and that the law programme had been approved by APC. Moreover, there had been a discussion at previous meetings of Academic Board relating to the plans for developing the undergraduate portfolio, including the establishment of a law degree. In answer to a question, it was confirmed that the market appraisal for the law degree had been considered by APC as part of the approval of the programme and it demonstrated that there is strong demand for the LLB in the UK. It was noted that the reference in the paper to the Centre for Criminology and Law was an error and that the name will remain the Centre for Criminology and Sociology. 14/080

The question was raised as to whether the School would be research-intensive or teaching-focused. It was reported that initially mainly teaching-focused staff would be recruited but that research would develop once the programme had bedded in for a couple of years. The Head of the Centre for Criminology and Sociology confirmed there was existing expertise amongst staff in the Centre. She also confirmed that staff in the Centre had been consulted about the establishment of a School of Law and there was widespread support. Members of the Board were asked to indicate whether they supported the creation of a School of Law. On a show of hands, 25 members supported the proposal with 3 indicating that they did not. There were 8 abstentions. 14/081

9. STUDENT RECRUITMENT

The Board considered a report on UG and PG applications received to date for admission in 2014 (AB/14/30) based on the SNAPPS report of 16 May. It was reported that applications and firm acceptances had increased at both UG and PGT level. There had also been an increase in HEU PGT numbers. It was noted that the departmental position relating to UG numbers for the Physics Department was reported as both up and down. It was explained that the number of applications to Physics had decreased, but the number of firm acceptances to Physics had increased. 14/082

The Director of Recruitment and Partnerships reported that PGT applications had increased since the College had introduced vocationally-focused PGT programmes. The increase in UG applications could be attributed to the large amount of work undertaken by academic departments in engaging with schools and by targeting a wider geographical area. The number of firm acceptances had been increased by working to encourage students holding offers to visit the campus on Applicant Visit Days and through focusing on online campaigns that were initiated this year. Thanks were given to all staff involved, particularly the Director of Recruitment and Partnerships and her team as well as the staff in academic departments who support recruitment. 14/083

10. DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNDERGRADUATE PORTFOLIO

The Board received a report on initiatives to develop the undergraduate academic portfolio (AB/14/31). The paper had been considered by Council. It was noted that the student intake targets were ambitious but achievable. Not all programmes were at the same stage of development; some have yet to be considered by the Academic Planning Committee. The targets would be discussed further with relevant academic departments as part of the planning round. A question was raised about the cost to the College of any additional staff required to support the new programmes. The business plans had not yet been analysed for all the new programmes so it was not possible to estimate at this stage how many additional members of staff would be required. 14/084

11. ALTERNATIVE FORMAT THESES

The Board received a proposed amendment to the Research Degree Regulations to enable an alternative format to the conventional PhD thesis (AB/14/32). This would allow research students to submit a thesis in the form of papers or other outcomes, rather than as a monograph. A number of UK institutions already have provision for alternative format theses, and the Departments of Earth Sciences and Economics in particular have requested that this provision is made in the regulations. It was noted that not all departments will wish to offer 14/085

alternative format theses, however the proposal would enable departments who wish to offer alternative format theses to do so. The Board approved the proposed amendment to the Research Degree Regulations.

12. REGULATIONS WORKING GROUP

The Board received proposed changes to the Undergraduate Regulations, Postgraduate Taught Regulations, and Regulations on Assessment Offences for 2014-15 (AB/14/33). The Vice-Principal (Education) outlined the proposals detailed in the paper to the Board. A query was raised regarding proposal 6 of Appendix B which recommended setting the pass mark for Stage 4 MSci courses at 50%; part 2 of Proposal 6 states that fails of 0-39% may be condoned and the Board sought clarification as to whether this should read 0-49%. The Academic Registrar will verify this. 14/086

It was questioned why Proposal 14 of Appendix D suggested assessment offences relating to first year undergraduate students in their first term of study would be treated as minor offences. The Vice-Principal (Education) will investigate this. 14/087

Some concern was raised that the proposed changes were very detailed and would have benefitted from more discussion and time to consult with departments before the meeting of Academic Board. It was explained that more fundamental changes are widely consulted upon in advance, but that the proposals presented were primarily for consistency. Moreover, the membership of the Regulations Working Group includes academic departmental representatives who are familiar with the academic regulations and who consult colleagues as part of the process of revising the regulations. The Board approved the changes to the regulations subject to confirmation in relation to the queries raised. 14/088

13. STUDENT ACADEMIC APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

The Board received a report on the student academic appeals and complaints received in relation to the 2012-13 academic session (AB/14/34). The Board was asked to note a number of points contained in the paper, in particular that the numbers of appeals are on the increase, appeals are becoming increasingly complex and that there is an increase in appeals and complaints relating to dissertation supervision. The number of formal complaints has remained stable whilst other institutions are reporting increases in complaints. However, the number of complaints to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) is disproportionately high in relation to similar sized institutions. The OIA levies additional financial penalties for institutions who exceed their quota in terms of the numbers of appeals and complaints received by the OIA and the College was already above its limit. 14/089

The OIA is proposing that institutions respond to appeals within one month, which presents considerable challenges for all institutions. The sector has made representations to the OIA as this is not considered to be practicable. The way in which appeals are dealt with by the College will need to be radically reviewed in light of the recommendation from the OIA and also to address the recent fines which have been received for slow processing. These fines are a result of the submission of the majority of appeals in the summer which conflicts with the Academic Development team's core business to validate new programmes and courses. 18/090

14. CENTRE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC SKILLS (CeDAS)

The Board received the development plan for the new Centre for the Development of Academic Skills (CeDAS) following the recent restructuring of Royal Holloway International (AB/14/35). CeDAS was established from Royal Holloway International (Teaching) to broaden the provision of academic study skills. CeDAS aims to establish a hub to coordinate the activities of existing skills training providers in the College. The priorities of CeDAS in the first instance will be to expand the provision of academic study skills, and to deliver mathematical and statistical support to students. 14/091

15. HONORARY DEGREES

The Board considered recommendations for the conferral of Honorary Degrees in 2015 (AB/14/36). The Board supported the recommendation received prior to final approval by Council. 14/092

16. PERIODIC DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW

The Board considered the Periodic Departmental Review report, together with the Action Plan following the Periodic Departmental Review of the University of London Institute in Paris (ULIP) held in April 2013 (AB/14/37). The Vice-Principal (Education) reported that the review had been challenging as the College provides the regulatory and quality assurance framework for ULIP, whilst Queen Mary contributes to the delivery of postgraduate teaching. There were a number of concerns with the response from ULIP to some of the recommendations. The Action Plan had been returned on two occasions to ensure that it addressed the requirements and recommendations of the PDR panel. It was reported that the College's arrangement with ULIP is currently under review. 14/093

17. DATES OF TERM

The Board considered the proposed dates of terms for 2015-16 and provisional dates for 2016-17 and 2017-18 (AB/14/38). At the meeting held in March the Board had acknowledged the challenges arising from Easter 2016 which fell at a very early date in the calendar. There was concern that the 4 January 2016 might be too early to begin the term, however the alternative would be to end the term on Thursday before Good Friday which would mean losing a day of teaching. Two options for the spring term dates were considered. It was agreed on balance to begin at a later start date on 11 January 2016. 14/094

STARRED ITEMS

18. PROPOSED CHANGES TO CONSTITUTIONS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

18.1 The Board approved the minor amendments to the terms of reference of the Academic Board Executive Committee (AB/14/39). 14/095

18.2 The Board approved the proposed minor changes to the membership and terms of reference of the Research Degrees Programmes Committee (AB/14/40). 14/096

18.3 The Board approved the proposed changes to the membership and terms of reference for Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (AB/14/41). 14/097

18.4 The Board approved the proposed amendment to the constitution of the Science Faculty Board to include the Head of Information Security as an ex-officio member (AB/14/42). 14/098

19. PUBLICATION

19.1 The Board agreed that no papers required broad dissemination around the College. 14/099

19.2 The Board confirmed that the following paper was exempt from Freedom of Information Act requirements: AB/14/36. 14/100

20. ANNUAL REVIEW OF UNDERGRADUATE, POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT, AND POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH PROGRAMMES FOR 2012-13

The Board noted that the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee considered the reports of the Faculties' scrutiny of the departmental annual review of undergraduate programmes and postgraduate taught programmes for 2012-13 at its meeting on 20 May 2014, and that the Research Degrees Programme Committee considered the reports of the Faculties' scrutiny of the departmental annual review of postgraduate research programmes for 2012-13 at its meeting on 13 May 2014. The Board received a summary of the good practice identified (AB/14/43). 14/101

21. FACULTY BOARDS

The Board received the combined reports from the meetings of the Faculty Boards held in February and May 2014 (AB/14/44a,b). 14/102

22. ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Board received the minutes of the meetings of the Academic Planning Committee held on 23 January, 4 March and 10 April 2014 (AB/14/45a,b,c). 14/103

23. COLLABORATIVE PROVISION COMMITTEE

The Board received the minutes of the meeting of the Collaborative Provision Committee held on 21 January 2014 (AB/14/46). 14/104

24. DEPARTMENTAL GRANTS GROUP

The Board received the minutes of the meeting of the Departmental Grants Group held on 12 February 2014 (AB/14/47). 14/105

25. RESEARCH COMMITTEE

The Board received the minutes of the meetings of the Research Committee held on 5 March and 23 April 2014 (AB/14/48a,b). 14/106

26. LEARNING, TEACHING AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

The Board received the minutes of the meetings of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee held on 29 January and 19 March 2014 (AB/14/49a,b). 14/107

27. STUDENTS' UNION

The Board noted the results of the March 2014 election for sabbatical officers (AB/14/50). 14/108

28. CONFERMENT OF HONORARY TITLES

The Board noted a paper on the conferment of honorary titles and academic promotions (AB/14/51). 14/109

29. DATES OF NEXT MEETING

The meetings of Academic Board for the 2014-15 academic year will take place on **Wednesday 10 December 2014 at 3pm in MX001, Wednesday 25 March 2015 at 3pm in MX001, and Wednesday 3 June 2015 at 3pm in MX001.** 14/110

*Anna Sendall
Academic Registrar
13 June 2014*