

**ROYAL HOLLOWAY**  
University of London

**ACADEMIC BOARD**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board, held on 2 November 2011**

Present:	Professor P Layzell (In the Chair) Dr S Ansari Dr B Baker Professor G Blair Ms K Blow Professor C Bradley Dr G Bush-Bailey Professor R Deem Dr F Fordham Professor M Fowler Professor A Gange Dr N Gascoigne Ms L Gibbs Professor D Gilbert Dr A Gupta Professor J Johnson Professor A Johnstone Professor R Kemp	Professor P Leman Mr D Lemberger Cooper Professor K Normington Mr P Phillips Professor J Powell Dr R Pym Professor R Schack Professor A Sheppard Ms S Simon Professor C Smith Professor M Spagat (for Professor J Frank) Mr J Tuck Dr A Varty Professor J Wann Dr D Waltham Professor G Ward Dr N Widder Professor J Zanker
With:	Dr M Beck (Secretary)	
In attendance:	Dr A Bradshaw Mr S Higman Mrs D Salsbury Ms E Wilkinson	Trade Union Observer (UCU) Registrar and Director of Administration Academic Development Officer Head of College Careers Service
Apologies:	Professor P Beesley Professor J Davison Professor J Frank Ms S Honeycombe Professor J Unerman	

**1. MEMBERSHIP**

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| 1.1 | The Board received the membership list (AB/11/43) and noted the apologies received by the Secretary in advance of the meeting.   | 11/088 |
| 1.2 | The Board approved the Terms of Reference (AB/11/44).  | 11/089 |
| 1.3 | The Board noted that since the last meeting Professor Philip Beesley has been appointed Vice-Principal (Research and Enterprise), Professor Rosemary Deem has been appointed Vice-Principal (Education), Professor Mary Fowler has been appointed Dean (Science), and Professor Chris Smith has been appointed Acting Dean (Management and Economics). | 11/090 |
| 1.4 | The Board noted that Professor Clare Bradley has become an Elected Member of the Board for a second term, by virtue of her election to the Council, and that her term of office runs to 30 September 2014.   | 11/091 |

- 1.5 The Board noted that Dr Bruce Baker has been re-elected as an Elected Member of the Board for a second term, and that his term of office runs to 30 September 2014. 11/092
- 1.6 The Board noted that this is the first meeting (in their current capacity) for the following Representative and Student members:  
 Professor Jeffrey Unerman as Head of School of Management;  
 Professor Alan Gange as Head of School of Biological Sciences;  
 Professor Adrian Johnstone as Head of Department of Computer Science;  
 Professor David Gilbert as Head of Department of Geography;  
 Professor Grahame Blair as Head of Department of Physics;  
 Professor John Wann as Head of Department of Psychology;  
 Mr Daniel Lemberger Cooper, Miss Katie Blow and Miss Sarah Honeycombe from the Students' Union.

The new members were welcomed and congratulated on their new posts.

- 1.7 The Board noted that this is the last meeting for Professor Anne Sheppard as Head of Department of Classics and Philosophy and Dr Gilli Bush-Bailey as Head of Department of Drama and Theatre, who are stepping down as they have reached the end of their terms. The Chair thanked them on behalf of the Board. 11/094

## **2. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on **Wednesday 1 June 2011** (M 11/046 - M 11/087), were confirmed as an accurate record. 11/095

## **3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

There were no matters arising from the Minutes. 11/096

## **4. ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE CHAIR**

- 4.1 The Board noted that the Principal, on behalf of the Academic Board, approved the proposal to confer the Honorary Title of Visiting Professor on Professor Jan Fook (Department of Social Work). Professor Fook has been an instrumental part of the SWan arrangement, but had now left the College. The Honorary title would enable the College to maintain a link with Professor Fook. 11/097
- 4.2 The Board noted that the Principal, on behalf of the Academic Board, approved the final version of the College Regulations for 2011-12. Some minor amendments have been made after the last Academic Board meeting and were included in the final versions, which came into effect at the start of the current academic year. 11/098
- 4.3 The Board noted that the Principal, on behalf of the Academic Board, sought approval from the University of London for the College to exercise its own degree-awarding powers for the award of degrees, where necessary, in collaborative provisions. The Chair noted that some issues relating to identity and branding had been raised in this regard. The Director of Communications has been asked to conduct market research on this over the coming year. 11/099

## **5. UNSTARING OF ITEMS**

There was no unstarring of items. 11/100

## **6. FORMAL REPORTS**

- 6.1 Principal's Report 11/101  
 The Board received a report from the Principal (AB/11/45). The Government published the *Higher Education White Paper* introducing its proposed policy to attempt to free up student numbers. In response to concern expressed by the College and others about the potential damage of the AAB+ policy to Science subjects, the Government now proposed to protect

vulnerable subjects such as Mathematics, Physics and Modern Languages from the proposed cut in student numbers.

The Secretary of State had defended the omission of research from the *White Paper*, indicating that there would be a *White Paper* on research and innovation at the end of the year. The Spring term meeting of Academic Board will focus on the implications of this, and it is hoped that the new Vice-Principal (Research and Enterprise) will be able to attend the Board meeting even though he will not take up the post until April 2012. While the focus at present is on preparing for the REF, the College also needs to focus on steps that need to be taken to strengthen areas of research beyond 2013.

The NSS identified ongoing concerns relating to the Library. 25 new study spaces were created in the Library over the summer by rearranging space and there are further plans to restructure staff space over the Christmas period to create 100 more new student study spaces with hard-wire IT. Although there are still some issues to be addressed, such as power into the building, fire safety, etc, there should be a significant increase in study space for the new term. The 'Space to Study' campaign will also be re-launched in January. The Board thanked the Director of Library Services and his team for doubling up offices to create more study space. There will also be a programme of refurbishing centrally booked teaching space over the Christmas period. However, to fully address the issue of teaching space, the quality of the departmental teaching rooms also needs to be addressed. To this end the Registrar and Director of Operations will be contacting departments to ascertain what rooms they have. The Students' Union and the Library will also be running a student space survey at the end of term.

At its recent meeting the Academic Board Executive Committee considered issues arising from Departmental Board meetings across the three faculties. One of the issues flagged was the Personal Advisor system. The Principal indicated that there would be a preliminary discussion on this topic later in the meeting to ascertain views of the members of the Board and the topic would then be addressed more fully at the Spring term meeting of the Board.

A review of the effectiveness of Academic Board was conducted over the summer. As a result of responses steps are being taken, amongst others to, structure the agenda in such a way to allow more time for debate at meetings, and discussion of themes relating to academic provision and research.

The Principal also reported that Professor Paul Hogg, who has previously held posts at Queen Mary and the University of Manchester, has been appointed Vice-Principal (Research and Enterprise) and would be taking up his post in the New Year.

Finally, the Principal congratulated the recipients of significant grants that have recently been awarded.

## 6.2

### Reports from the Deputy Principal and the Vice-Principals

The Deputy Principal reported that the planning round in relation to the second year of academic departments' five-year plans had begun with documents distributed and a timetable established. Information Dashboards - a way to provide management data in a user-friendly way – will be piloted in the Faculty of Management and Economics and, if successful, will be extended to all departments in 2012-13. A planning process is being planned for the professional services departments in collaboration with the Registrar and Director of Operations. The Deputy Principal is also working on developing strategic partnerships with external providers to diversify the College's income streams. Within the College he is working with Finance on DGGs and DFAs, and with Estates to develop an Estates Strategy.

The Vice-Principal (Students and Staff) reported progress on enhancing the student experience, the emphasis in the *White Paper* on giving new attention and equal prestige to teaching, whilst preserving research, consultations with departments and students about the NSS outcomes and the steps being taken by the College to identify the costs incurred by students for activities such as field trips, which are an integral part of certain programmes

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and make a decision on whether such costs are covered by the higher fees or whether students will be expected to pay.

The Vice-Principal (Education) reported that firstly she wanted to focus on teaching and assessment (how staff teach, assess, and deliver the curriculum) particularly in the light of higher fees. She has set up a *Futures Group* to be chaired by the Associate Dean (Science), Professor Leman, to take this forward. Secondly, HEFCE is introducing the requirement for institutions to publish Key Information Sets (KIS) from next autumn for all undergraduate courses with more than 20 students registered. A group has been set up to consider the collection of data relating to contact hours, the mix of assessment method, professional body accreditation, etc. The group has already met once. Thirdly, attention needs to be given to employability in the curriculum. Mr Howorth is chairing a group on employability, which will focus on placements and how they form part of the curriculum. The fourth area of concern is assessment. The Associate Deans (Education) will be working with her to develop an Assessment Strategy to encourage varied innovative assessment, and developing procedures to allow a change to assessment within a course for one year on a trial basis before validating it. The fifth area is the quality of teaching rooms and as mentioned above some refurbishment will take place over the Christmas vacation. The sixth area is e-resources and the capacity of Moodle to support teaching. The Library's Associate Director (e-strategy and Technical Services) and the Head of Analysis and Design (IT services) are taking this forward. The Regulations Review Group will continue to meet and will focus largely on PGT regulations. Possible changes to the Research Degree Regulations will fall within the remit of the Research Degrees Programme Committee. It is hoped in both cases that proposed changes can be presented to Faculty Boards earlier in the year than was the case last year. Finally, the Vice-Principal (Education) has been talking and will continue to talk to departments about what they feel proud of, what they do well in terms of teaching and types of assessment, etc.

The Vice-Principal (Research and Enterprise) was not present but submitted a written report (AB/11/46) outlining the key milestones in the run up to the REF.

The Chair explained that the purpose of these reports was to ensure that staff were aware of what the Deputy and Vice-Principals' portfolios entailed, particularly given the recent changes. There were several questions relating to the reports. In response to a query about the way in which REF appointments would be joined up with the planning round, the Deputy Principal explained that this would need to be discussed with the Faculty Dean so that s/he could include it in the relevant Faculty plan. The Vice-Principal (Students and Staff), in response to a question on whether staff could be promoted on the basis of exceptional teaching, explained that consideration was being given to a career pathway for teaching fellows, to underline the high regard the College had for excellence in teaching.

The Deputy Principal was asked to explain how the College intended to help individual departments meet recruitment targets. Last year's targets had been used for planning and had then been split to establish two targets, one for AAB+ and one for non-AAB numbers, in line with HEFCE's AAB+ policy. There would, however, be flexibility closer to Confirmation and in clearing to move numbers between departments so that targets could be achieved. The Director of Communications and her team will be supporting recruitment by, amongst others, working to make the College website more dynamic

Board members emphasised the value of field trips and asked what the timetable was for deciding on field trip fees for 2012. This will be discussed at the College Executive meeting on 14 November and it was hoped that a decision would be reached at this meeting.

### 6.3 Report from Council

The Board received the minutes from the meetings of the Council, held on 13 April and 29 June 2011 (AB/11/47a,b). At the meeting in June the Council appointed Stephen Cox as a lay member of the Council and recommended that he be elected as Chair. As the Council meeting was not quorate, his appointment was approved at the Council meeting held in October.

## 7. ACADEMIC RESTRUCTURING

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The Board received updates on current academic restructuring proposals. The Vice-Principal (Research and Enterprise) presented a written proposal on the integration of Computer Science, Information Security and Mathematics into a School (AB/11/48a). A Steering Group has been established with representatives from each department concerned to consider this with a view to reporting back with a proposal at the March meeting of the Academic Board. The Vice-Principal (Research and Enterprise) and the Dean (Faculty of Science) have met with all concerned and will be holding the first meeting of the Steering Group later this month.

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The Dean (Faculty of Arts and Social Science) presented a proposal for the restructuring of the Department of Classics and Philosophy (AB/11/48b), which includes the incorporation of Philosophy into the Department of Politics and International Relations (PIR), and the formation of a School of History and Classics. The Head of the Department of History expressed the History department's concern over the proposal and its impact on the Department in terms increased administrative burden. Concern was also raised about implications for REF planning. The Chair suggested to the Dean that the impact of REF and future assessment exercises be included as issues to be considered as part of the Terms of Reference of the Steering Group.

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Academic Board voted on the proposal to incorporate Philosophy into the Department of PIR. Of the 36 voting members present, no members voted against, whilst five abstained. The proposal was therefore approved.

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## **8. ROYAL HOLLOWAY PASSPORT AND EMPLOYABILITY**

The Board received a report on the Royal Holloway Passport and Employability (AB/11/49). The Vice-Principal (Students and Staff) explained that, in terms of employability, there is no problem with the quality of the College's students or the availability of employers, but rather the issue is the barrier of anonymity, the student lifestyle, and the fact that many students are leaving it too late in their UG studies to think about searching for employment. Students need to start thinking about job hunting and work placements in their second year, rather than in their final year. The Vice-Principal outlined a number of key strategic employability initiatives being taken by the College to support students. The first is the introduction of the Royal Holloway Passport, a co-curricular skills award which recognises activities desirable to employers such as volunteering. Royal Holloway currently has 1,386 students registered as volunteers. The second area in which the College needs to strengthen its provision in relation to employability is placements. Academic departments were encouraged to contact the Careers Service for information about, and support for, running placement schemes. The third area is the enhancement of personal adviser intervention, which will be taken forward by the Vice-Principal. The fourth area is enhancement of curriculum, which is being taken forward by Mr Howorth as Chair of a group considering employability in the curriculum. Alumni, many of whom have secured positions in well-known national and international organisations, are enthusiastic champions for Royal Holloway and are currently called upon to attend campus as part of Careers Service events. Finally, the Careers Service has recently launched a consultation for an on-campus Recruitment Agency and has employed a new employer engagement officer from January 2012.

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The Careers Service can also support departments at Open day events by providing relevant data on graduate destinations to show prospective students.

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## **9. STUDENT RECRUITMENT**

- 9.1 The Board considered a report on the provisional student numbers for 2011-12 (AB/11/50). The final count is due on 1 December. The December count will largely reflect the October count as reflected in the paper. The Deputy Principal congratulated the Vice-Principal (Students and Staff) and the Faculty Deans for achieving final numbers very close to the set student number control limit (SCNL) of 2,117 students. It was noted that overseas recruitment figures were above target due to the School of Management PGT programmes

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over-recruiting. Undergraduate overseas students were, however, 10% below target. Despite this the overall performance across the College was encouraging. The Chair thanked all involved in the Admissions process, especially departmental Admissions tutors.

- 9.2 The Board considered a report on the implications of the AAB+ policy (AB/11/51). The changes in HEFCE rules are detailed in the first few paragraphs of the paper. There will be increased competition, especially for universities like Royal Holloway, in the ‘squeezed middle’ tier and the College may therefore lose out to universities seeking to expand. The College will therefore need to increase its recruitment efforts. The College’s current SCNL will be reduced, so recruitment of an extra 860 AAB+ students, 200 more than achieved in 2010-11, will be needed to reach the original target set for 2012-13. Various groups throughout the College are working together to meet challenges, that is, in deciding how the different recruitment abilities of departments will form the basis of targets and what steps need to be taken to enhance AAB recruitment, e.g. financial incentives,. The Chair invited members of the Board to put forward suggestions to secure the extra 200 AAB+ students. One suggestion was to use AAB+ equivalencies to tactically increase the numbers. 11/122
- 9.3 The Board considered a report on UG applications received to date for admissions in 2012 (AB/11/52). It is early in the cycle but at this stage although applications are down, the College is currently faring better than the UCAS sector average. Early indications are that EU numbers and Science Foundation Year numbers are down, as predicted, due to higher fees. Overseas applications are holding up better. More representative figures would be available later in the cycle. 11/123
- Various changes and initiatives have been put in place to improve recruitment/ admissions in the coming year. The Communications team will visit departments to support them in drawing up a marketing plan to support recruitment. As part of the Admissions restructuring an Enquiry/Conversion team has been established to handle student queries Departments have been contacted regarding conversion activities, the importance of UCAS days, and sharing good practice. The application system has been improved with the introduction of a new paperless ARC system for undergraduate admissions. The Bond report will be replaced by the interactive report that departments can consult to see their progress in terms of FTEs, head counts and information on offers. 11/124
- UCAS has conducted a review of the admissions process, which the Vice-Principal (Education) has sent out to Heads of Departments and Admissions tutors for consultation at institutional level. The deadline for response to UCAs is 10 January 2012. One aspect of admissions that UCAS is hoping to simplify and streamline is the many different UCAS application deadlines. The review also suggests introducing post-qualifications applications (PQA), which would bring to an end conditional offers. This would be problematic for universities as admissions decisions would have to be made in a very short period, and also problematic for schools as the impact would be a loss of about 10% of A-Level teaching days. 11/125

## **10. INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT**

The Board considered a report on the outcome of the Institutional Audit (AB/11/53). The QAA confirmed that confidence could be placed in the quality of provision and standards of awards and identified three points of good practice. There were no mandatory conditions to be met. Two advisable and two desirable recommendations were identified, which have been responded to, with the exception of one which will be considered further during the current academic year. 11/126

## **11. PERIODIC DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW**

The Board considered the Periodic Department Review report of the Physics Department, together with the associated Action Plan (March 2011) (AB/11/54a,b). The Physics Department was commended particularly on the high quality of research-led teaching and the excellent relationship between staff and students. Noteworthy areas of good practice that particularly impressed the Panel were the programme of summer internships, the range of 11/127

outreach activities, and the various mechanisms to advance the position of women in Physics.

## **12. REGULATIONS**

The Board considered a report on the suspension of regulations in 2010-11 (AB/11/55). It was noted that requests for waivers of regulations have increased by more than 100% on last year's figures. As a result of changes to the *Undergraduate Regulations* it is anticipated that there may be a decrease in some categories of requests over the coming year. Changes to the *Postgraduate Taught Regulations* may, however, lead to an increase in the number of waivers in some areas such as waiving the cap on resits.

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The number of requests for extensions to the MPhil/PhD submission deadline is a cause for concern as is the point at which they are submitted, in many cases very close to the submission deadline. The Vice-Principal (Education) has already raised this at the Research Degrees Programme Committee and will be monitoring it closely.

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## **13. PERSONAL ADVISER SYSTEM**

The Board considered the practical implementation of the Personal Adviser system across the College and issues for discussion in this regard at the March meeting of Academic Board. The following points were raised: (i) some students say that they do not know who their Personal Advisers are; (ii) Personal Advisers' office hours may not be suitable for all their advisees; (iii) academic staff are concerned that students do not meet with them; (iv) the system operating in some departments placed high demand on staff time; (iv) some Personal Advisers with high numbers of advisees see their students in groups, which is more efficient and less intimidating for the students; (v) some Personal Advisers use social media rather than face-to-face contact; (vi) some departments timetable a slot during induction week for students to meet with their Personal Advisers to review the previous academic year; (vii) there is a need to separate out academic issues from pastoral issues in relation to the Personal Adviser system. The SU VP (Education and Welfare) expressed the need for Personal Advisers to not take on pastoral issues themselves, but to direct students to the appropriate student support areas in the College.

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## **STARRED ITEMS**

## **14. PROPOSED CHANGES TO TERMS OF REFERENCES AND MEMBERSHIPS**

14.1 The Board approved the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference and the membership of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (AB/11/56).

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14.2 The Board approved the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference and the membership of the Regulations Review Working Group (AB/11/57).

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## **15. DATES OF TERMS**

The Board approved the dates of terms for 2013-14 and considered provisional dates for 2014-15 and 2015-16 (AB/11/58).

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## **16. ROYAL HOLLOWAY AND BEDFORD NEW COLLEGE REGULATIONS**

The Board approved the regulations for the award of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College Degrees (AB/11/59).

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## **17. REGULATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES**

The Board approved the proposed changes of regulations to international programmes

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(AB/11/60).

**18. UKBA REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS 2011-12**

The Board noted the UKBA reporting arrangements for 2011-12 (AB/11/61). The arrangements have been approved by the Points Based System Steering Group and have already been circulated to Heads of Departments.

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**19. ACADEMIC BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Board received the minutes from meeting of the Academic Board Executive Committee held on 17 October 2011 (AB/11/62).

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**20. COLLEGE BOARD OF EXAMINERS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Board received the minutes from the meeting of the College Board of Examiners Executive Committee held on 22 June 2011 (AB/11/63).

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**21. ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

The Board received the minutes from the meetings of the Academic Development Committee held on 3 May and 31 May 2011 (AB/11/64a,b).

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**22. ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The Board received the minutes from the meeting of the Academic Planning Committee held on 5 September 2011 (AB/11/65).

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**23. COLLABORATIVE PROVISIONS COMMITTEE**

The Board received the minutes from the meeting of the Collaborative Provisions Committee held on 28 September 2011 (AB/11/66).

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**24. DEPARTMENTAL GRANTS**

The Board received the minutes from the meetings of the Departmental Grants Group held on 11 May and 3 October 2011 (AB/11/67a,b).

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**25. RESEARCH**

The Board received the minutes from the meetings of the Research Committee held on 30 March, 12 May and 23 June 2011 (AB/11/68a,b,c).

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**26. LEARNING, TEACHING AND QUALITY COMMITTEE**

The Board received reports from the meetings of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee held on 5 July and 19 October 2011 (AB/11/69).

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**27. ACADEMIC AWARDS GROUP**

The Board received a report of the awards and prizes awarded during the 2010/11 academic session (AB/11/70).

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**28. CONFERMENT OF TITLES**

The Board received the list of the conferment of titles for 2010/11 (AB/11/71).

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**29. HONORARY TITLES**

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| 29.1 | The Board approved the proposal to confer the Honorary Title of Visiting Professor on Professor Clive Gamble, from the Department of Geography (AB/11/72). | 11/147 |
| 29.2 | The Board noted a paper on the conferral of honorary titles (AB/11/73).  | 11/148 |

### **30. PUBLICATION**

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| 30.1 | The Board agreed that no papers required broad dissemination around the College.                      | 11/149 |
| 30.2 | The Board confirmed that no papers needed exemption from the Freedom of Information Act requirements. | 11/150 |

### **31. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of Academic Board will take place on **Wednesday 7 March 2012 at 3pm in MX001.** 11/151

*Dr M Beck  
Deputy Head of Academic Development Services  
November 2011*