

ROYAL HOLLOWAY
University of London

ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board, held on 20 November 2013

Present:	Professor P Layzell (In the Chair)	Professor J Morgan
	Ms S Bertrand-Shelton	Professor S Murphy
	Professor C Bradley	Professor K Normington
	Professor J Crampton	Professor B O'Keefe
	Professor R Deem	Professor J Powell
	Professor T Evans	Professor D Rebellato
	Professor J Fiadeiro	Professor E Schafer
	Professor A Gange	Professor A Sheppard
	Ms L Gibbs	Ms S Simon
	Professor D Gilbert	Mr A Singh
	Mr J Green	Dr G Smith
	Professor P Hogg	Professor M Spagat
	Dr J Hughes	Dr P Teixeira-Dias (for Professor B Cowan)
	Professor A Kahane	Mr J Tuck
	Professor R Kemp	Professor J Unerman
	Professor P Leman	Professor J Wann
	Dr J McKee	Dr D Watling
	Dr A Miskimmon	
With:	Ms A Sendall (Secretary)	
In attendance:	Dr A Bradshaw	Trade Union Observer (UCU)
	Mr S Higman	Registrar and Secretary
	Ms C Newsome	Director of Human Resources
	Mrs D Salisbury	Academic Development Officer
Apologies:	Professor B Cowan	
	Dr H Stobart	
	Ms E Wilkinson	

1. MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 The Board received the list of members of the Board (AB/13/43) and noted apologies. The Board noted that Dr Bruce Baker was still on the list as an elected member, but had now left the College. Nominations for an elected member would be sought if the Board agreed the amendment to the Standing Orders of the Academic Board with regards to the timing of the notice of elections in item 10 below, subject to approval by Council. 13/099
- The Board noted that Ms Sheryl Simon remains a co-opted member but with a new portfolio of Director of Recruitment and Admissions; she was previously a co-opted member as Director of Royal Holloway International. The Board also welcome the new Director of Human Resources, Ms Cheryl Newsome, who had been invited to attend the meeting as an observer as part of her induction programme. 13/100
- 1.2 The Board welcomed the following Representative, Elected and Student members to the first meeting in their current capacity: 13/101
Professor Jonathan Phillips as Head of Department of History;

Dr Henry Stobart as Head of Department of Music;
 Dr Alister Miskimmon as Head of Department of Politics and International Relations;
 Professor Tony Evans as Head of Department of Social Work;
 Professor Jason Crampton, Elected Member;
 Professor Sean Murphy, Elected Member;
 Professor Elizabeth Schafer, Elected Member;
 Dr Graham Smith, Elected Member;
 Dr Dawn Watling, Elected Member;
 Mr Amarbeer Singh and Miss Sidonie Bertrand-Shelton from the Students' Union.

1.3 The Board noted that the following Elected and Student members had been elected for a second term: 13/102
 Professor Patrick Leman, Elected Member;
 Mr Jamie Green from the Students' Union.

1.4 The Board noted that Professor David Gilbert has been elected as a member of Academic Board to serve on Council. The term of office is for three years and runs from 1 October 2013. 13/103

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the last meeting held on **Wednesday, 29 May 2013** (M 13/045 - M 13/098) were confirmed as an accurate record. The confirmed minutes would be published on iQuad following the meeting, and the Secretary and Registrar would investigate whether the minutes of the Academic Board should be made more publically available. 13/104

3. MATTERS ARISING

UG Progression and Award Requirements for 2014-15 entrants 13/105
 Arising from Min 13/079, the Board noted that the new UG regulations will be introduced in 2015-16 to allow time for the new marks management system to be put in place. The Vice-Principal (Education) asked colleagues to note that there was no consensus on the suggestion that the first year of the undergraduate degree should count towards the final degree classification. However, to ensure that students engaged fully with their first year of study the new regulations require students to pass all course units within their programme in order to be eligible for the degree award.

4. ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE CHAIR

The Board noted that the Principal, on behalf of the Academic Board, approved the revised criteria for PhD and MPhil degrees in practice-based Drama and Theatre Studies. 13/106

5. UNSTARRING OF ITEMS

The Board noted that the following items in Parts B and C were unstarred for further discussion during the meeting: 13/107
Item 15.1 Minor amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Academic Board Executive Committee (AB/13/61)
Item 18 Combined report from the meetings of the Faculty Boards held in October 2013 (AB/13/64)
Item 21 Minutes of the meetings of the Collaborative Provision Committee (AB/13/67)
Item 23 Minutes of the meeting of the Research Committee (AB/13/69)
Item 24 Minutes of the meetings of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (AB/13/70)

6. FORMAL REPORTS

6.1 Principal's Report

The Board received a written report from the Principal (AB/13/44). The Principal highlighted the following:

<p><i>National Awards Nominations</i> – Professor David Cohen from the Department of Computer Science has been nominated for <i>Most Innovative Teacher of the Year</i> for the 2013 THE Awards. Additionally, the Chinese Academy of Science awarded a Distinguished Professorship to Professor Martin Menzies of the Department of Earth Sciences in recognition of his contribution to Chinese Earth Sciences. He has also been nominated for the <i>Chinese Academy Medal 2013</i> for International Co-operation.</p>	13/108
<p><i>REF 2014</i> - The Vice-Principal (Research and Enterprise) reported that the College REF submission had been made on Monday 18 November 2013. Thanks and congratulations were extended to all those who had worked on the project.</p>	13/109
<p><i>Major Projects</i> – A project was underway to refurbish Bedford Square. The project would be overseen by the Deputy Principal. It was noted that the College now has access to space in Senate House in replacement of 2 Gower Street.</p>	13/110
<p>6.2 <u>Reports from the Deputy Principal and the Vice-Principals</u></p>	
<p>The Deputy Principal and Vice-Principals did not have anything to report separately from the items for discussion on the agenda.</p>	13/111
<p>6.3 <u>Report from the Council</u></p>	
<p>The Board received the minutes of the Council meeting held on 26 June 2013 (AB/13/45).</p>	13/112
<p>7. JOINT HONOURS STUDENT EXPERIENCE</p>	
<p>The Board received a progress report on improvements to the experience of Joint Honours students (AB/13/46). The Vice-Principal (Education) reported that a working group had been set up during the last academic year in response to ongoing concerns that the student experience for students studying Joint Honours programmes was not comparable to that of single honours students. The recommendations from the working group were set out in the paper with one of the key recommendations being to re-establish the meeting of departmental staff responsible for timetabling in each department to ensure that core courses do not clash. Other recommendations included: (i) co-ordination between departments to establish which department takes responsibility for the student, (ii) Joint Honours talks at Open Days setting out the advantages and disadvantages of Joint Honours studies, and (iii) co-ordination between departments to ensure that induction sessions do not clash. It was noted that there had been an increase in applications to Joint Honours degrees programmes and it was therefore important that the measures identified to enhance the student experience for students on such programmes were put in place.</p>	13/113
<p>The Student Union Vice-President (Education and Welfare) noted that there had not been a student representative on the working group. It was agreed that when the policy is reviewed there would be student involvement. There was also support for the recommendation that the proposal for students to be members of departmental boards should include Joint Honours students and that they should be permitted to sit on the boards of both departments in which they were studying. It was recognised that Joint Honours students should also catered for more effectively at applicant Visit Days and colleagues were encouraged to send ideas to the new Director of Admissions and Recruitment on how this might be achieved. It was suggested that one option might be for all departments to hold drop-in sessions for Joint Honours candidates at Applicant Visit Days. The possible need for increased administrative support to manage the co-ordination of administrative support for Joint Honours students was noted and this would considered further by the Registrar and Secretary.</p>	13/114
<p>The Board approved the proposal that for every joint honours programme, one of the departments must appoint at least one member of staff to act as a personal advisor to students on the programme to be responsible for the student's academic and pastoral welfare on the programme as a whole.</p>	13/115

8. ENABLING WOMEN THROUGH THE PROMOTION PROCESS

The Board received a proposal to introduce a scheme to achieve better gender balance at professorial level from the Vice-Principal (Staffing) and Dean (Arts and Social Science) (AB/13/47). The paper showed that whilst a gender balance was achieved at lecturer level at the College, at professorial level only 24% were women. However, since the paper had been written the percentage of women professors had risen to 31%, placing the College in the top quartile published by THE. In light of this, the target would now be revised to 35%. It was highlighted that whilst there may be a concern that the scheme appeared to create opportunities for women not offered to men, there were more opportunities naturally existing for men to gain the experience required for higher positions. 13/116

It was contended that it might be short-sighted to suggest that mentoring was the only solution to the issue. The Vice-Principal (Staffing) and Dean (Arts and Social Science) reported that mentoring was just one of a number of measures which had been highlighted in the proposal. A further issue was raised that the 2012 Equal Pay Review indicates a possible glass ceiling for women at the top of the readership scale in the form of a gender gap in pay favouring women in that pay scale: there is therefore no shortage of women who could be promoted. It was explained, however, that the proposed scheme was not aimed solely at readers, but for all women capable of promotion to professor in the next two to three years. The Principal asked the Vice-Principal (Staffing) and Dean (Arts and Social Science) and the Director of Human Resources to reflect further on how other issues raised by members of the Board could be addressed. The Principal asked the Board to approve the proposal subject to the changing the aim of the project to increase the percentage of women professors at the College to 35%. A member of the Board called for a vote to be taken. The Principal declined to take a vote on the grounds there was a consensus within the room and that this was a strategic plan for which the Board was invited to provide a steer so a vote was not appropriate. 13/117

9. STUDENT RECRUITMENT

9.1 *Report on student intake numbers for 2013-14*

The Board considered a report on the provisional student numbers for 2013-14 (AB/13/48) based on the count taken on 1 November. The final count is due on 1 December. 13/118

9.2 *Report on UG and PG applications received to date for admission in 2014*

The Board considered a report on UG and PG applications received to date for admission in 2014 (AB/13/49), based on the SNAPPS report of 25 October. The Director of Recruitment and Admissions explained that the next SNAPPS report was due to be published on 22 November which would give more up to date figures. It was suggested that it would be useful to include comparator data. It was agreed this could be provided in future reports for undergraduate applicants from UCAS data. It was noted that the first applicant Visit Day had been held on the day of the Board meeting and the importance of paying attention to the early candidates was emphasised. 13/119

9.3 *Standard entry requirements for 2014-15*

The Board received the proposed standard undergraduate entry requirements for the 2014-15 admissions cycle. In response to last year's recruitment performance it was decided that the standard entry requirements should include whether interviews are held and if so, at what stage of the application process interviews are held. Since the paper had been written the BSc and MSci Earth Sciences requirement had changed so that all applicants will be interviewed pre-offer. The Board approved the proposed standard undergraduate entry requirements for the 2014-15 admissions cycle. 13/120

9.4 *English language entry requirements for 2014-15*

The Board approved the English Language entry requirements for entry in 2014/15. The 13/121

only change from the previous year was the required sub-scores in IELTS for UG Geography.

9.5 *Progression requirements for students on the International Foundation Programme for 2014-15*

The Board noted that the proposed progression requirements for students on the International Foundation Programme for 2014-15 would be approved via Chair's Action and reported to the next Academic Board meeting. The progression requirements had not been finalised as they were dependent on the approval of the entry requirements (above). 13/122

9.6 *Report on possible new programmes to increase student numbers*

The Board received an oral report from the Deputy Principal on possible new undergraduate degree programmes as part of the work being carried out to increase student numbers. The challenge of increasing ABB+ students had been discussed at the Senior Management Team Away Day the previous day. Increasing the College's ABB+ numbers by improving the total number of applicants would require a significant increase in the total number of HEU undergraduate applications. Similarly, increasing the College's ABB+ numbers by improving conversion by a 5% increase would require a substantial improvement to the current rate. The College's ABB+ applicant pool is small, partly due to the subjects on offer, and one option identified at the Senior Management Team Away Day to gain a larger proportion would be to consider offering subjects in other disciplines, such as Digital Engineering/Digital Media, Law, Liberal Arts, Natural Science and Sports Science. There was broad support for the continuation of work to develop these and other proposals. 13/123

In addition to extending the College's portfolio, members of the Board suggested other ways to increase applications, such as: (i) offering distance learning, (ii) extending the recruitment target area geographically, (iii) improving the targeting of relevant schools, (iv) advertising the College at a general level more effectively to raise consciousness, and (v) recruiting candidates with BTEC qualifications. The Deputy Principal reported that work had been commissioned through the Strategic Development Unit to analyse the performance of students who entered the College with BTEC qualifications so that they could be considered for admission with greater confidence. 13/124

10. REGULATIONS

10.1 The Board received the regulations for the proposed new award of PhD by Prior Publication (AB/13/52). The Vice-Principal (Education) explained that the award was being introduced as a number of staff had expressed an interest in the applying for the award. It was particularly relevant where professionals entered academia in mid-career, as it would enable publications and other outputs to be utilised in place of a conventional thesis. The PhD would lead to an award of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College as the University of London academic statutes do not include such a degree. The Board approved the new award and regulations for the PhD by Prior Publication to come into effect from 1 December 2013. 13/125

10.2 The Board considered a report on the suspension of undergraduate and postgraduate regulations in 2012-13 (AB/13/53). The Academic Registrar reported that the additional powers granted to Sub-boards of Examiners to make decisions such as waiving the resit cap and granting exceptional third attempts to students, had reduced the numbers of requests for waivers of regulations. However, there was concern over the number of requests for waivers which arose from administrative errors, such as students being misadvised. The report on the waivers to regulations would be reviewed in detail by the College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee. The Vice-Principal (Education) highlighted that the number of PGR extension requests was an ongoing concern. There was agreement that the number seemed high and it was suggested that the four year completion limit was possibly not being taken seriously by PhD students. The Vice-Principal (Education) explained that it was important to communicate to supervisors that four years is the limit for completion. Students should be aiming to complete within three years, and would only be granted an extension in exceptional circumstances. It was noted that the ESRC 1+3 scheme provides funding for 13/126

compulsory generic research training in the first year linked to a three year PhD so students receiving this funding would not be able to complete within three years. The Vice-Principal (Education) would investigate the implication of funding conditions on the completion limit further.

11. PERIODIC DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW

11.1 The Board considered the Periodic Departmental Review report, together with the Action Plan following the Department of Economics Periodic Departmental Review held in November 2012 (AB/13/54). The Vice-Principal (Education) reported that the department's responses had been well considered, and the department had made good progress in implementing the action plan. 13/127

11.2 The Board considered the Periodic Departmental Review report, together with the Action Plan following the Department of Geography Periodic Departmental Review held in February 2013 (AB/13/55). The Vice-Principal (Education) reported the review had been positive and the department's responses were well considered. 13/128

The Principal suggested that whilst the implementation of action plans was monitored by the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee, it would be useful for the Board to receive an annual report on the progress of PDR action plans. It was agreed to put this in place. 13/129

11.3 The Board noted the current schedule for Periodic Departmental Reviews as agreed by the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee at the meeting held on 9 October 2013 (AB/13/56). An error was noted in Annex 2 of the schedule of review of reports and action plans; the Computer Science and Criminology reviews are scheduled for Autumn 2014. However, the schedule stated that the reviews would be considered at Faculty Boards in February/May 2014, but should read February/May 2015. 13/130

12. DATES OF TERM

12.1 The Board considered the proposal to extend the summer term by one week (AB/13/57). The Vice-Principal (Education) reported that the College currently has one of the shortest teaching years in the sector. An additional week in the summer term would enable the examinations to begin a week later and for there to be a week of revision activities at the start of the term for all students. The paper identified that it would be challenging to find a way to accommodate the additional week. Extending the summer term so that it ends a week later would have a significant negative impact on conference income, estimated to be £750K, and preparing accommodation for pre-sessional students. The other option would be to reduce the Christmas vacation so that the summer term begins a week earlier. Where it would not be possible to reduce the Christmas vacation due to the timing of public holidays, the Easter vacation would need to be reduced. 13/131

Members of the Board welcomed the principle of holding a revision session in the summer term. However, there was concern that shortening the Christmas vacation or the Easter vacation would put stress on students who were trying to complete course work or exam revision during the vacation. It was also noted that beginning the spring term a week earlier may be problematic for international students returning from overseas so soon after the Christmas and New Year period. Concern was expressed that shortening the summer vacation by one week would reduce the time available for research, but the general consensus was that the priority should be to support the students by extending the summer term and one week would have minimal impact on time staff had for research. It was noted that it would be preferable to review the proposal together with the option of running an additional round of formal examinations at the end of the Autumn Term teaching. 13/132

On a show of hands, 27 members supported the principle to extend the summer term by one week, with 3 indicating they did not support the principle. The student representatives opposed the suggestion that the additional week might be accommodated by shortening Christmas or Easter vacations. The Board recognised that in supporting the principle, there were implications which would affect both the College finances, if the summer term extends 13/133

into the conference season, and student finances, possibly requiring an extra week's rental for accommodation to be paid. In light of this, the College's Council would be asked to consider the matter before implementation of the proposal could be planned.

- 12.2 The proposed dates of terms for 2015-16 and provisional dates for 2016-17 and 2017-18 (AB/13/58) would be considered at the next meeting of Academic Board. 13/134

13. ACADEMIC BOARD EFFECTIVENESS SURVEY

The Board received a proposed Academic Board Effectiveness Survey (AB/13/59) for approval. It was explained that the survey would be conducted online and completed anonymously. The deadline for submitting the survey would be Monday 16 December. The results would be analysed and then considered by the first meeting of the Academic Board Governance Working Group in January 2014. The Board approved the survey and deadline for completion. If colleagues had suggestions for amendments to the questions these should be passed to the Academic Registrar after the Board meeting. 13/135

14. STANDING ORDERS OF THE ACADEMIC BOARD

The Board agreed to the amendment to the Standing Orders of the Academic Board with regards to the timing of the notice of elections, subject to approval by Council (AB/13/60), which would remove the reference to the Summer term and would allow for vacancies to be filled without delay. This would enable the vacancy to be filled following Bruce Baker's departure from the College and to rebalance the representative and elected/ex-officio members. It was also noted that as Professor Gilbert had been elected as the representative of Academic Board on Council, he would be invited to appoint a member of the academic staff from the Geography Department to represent the Department. 13/136

STARRED ITEMS

15. PROPOSED CHANGES TO CONSTITUTIONS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 15.1 The Board received the minor amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Academic Board Executive Committee (AB/13/61). It was agreed that the Terms of Reference would be updated to stipulate that members could only sit on Academic Board Executive Committee for as long as they are members of Academic Board. 13/137

- 15.2 The Board approved the proposed changes to the constitutions for the three Faculty Teaching Committees (AB/13/62). 13/138

- 15.3 The Board approved the proposed amendments to the constitution of the Staff-Student Committee (AB/13/63). 13/139

16. PUBLICATION

- 16.1 The Board agreed that no papers required broad dissemination around the College. 13/140

- 16.2 The Board confirmed that no papers needed exemption from the Freedom of Information Act requirements. 13/141

17. NOMINATIONS FOR STATUTE 25 PANELS

The Board approved the nomination of Professor Brian Cowan, Department of Physics, by the Faculty of Science to serve on Statute 25 Panels for a second term during 2013-15. 13/142

18. FACULTY BOARDS

The Board received a combined report from the meetings of the Faculty Boards held in October 2013 (AB/13/64). The comparatively high number of exemptions from anonymous marking in the Science Faculty in relation to the other two faculties was raised as a possible concern. It was agreed that the Academic Registrar would follow this up and provide a 13/143

report to the next meeting of the Academic Board.

19. ACADEMIC BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Board received the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board Executive Committee held on 4 November 2013 (AB/13/65). 13/144

20. ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Board received the minutes of the meetings of the Academic Planning Committee held on 25 June and 24 September (AB/13/66). 13/145

21. COLLABORATIVE PROVISION COMMITTEE

The Board received the minutes of the meetings of the Collaborative Provision Committee held on 22 January and 16 May 2013 (AB/13/67). A question was raised about the costs of the College collaborations listed in the minutes. The Deputy Principal and Chair of the Collaborative Provision Committee reported that there was no net cost to the College as the income created from collaborative arrangements exceeded expenditure. Moreover, the financial position of individual collaborations was monitored by the Committee. It was agreed to summarise the principles applied to collaborations at the next meeting of the Collaborative Provision Committee. 13/146

22. DEPARTMENTAL GRANTS GROUP

The Board received the minutes of the meeting of the Departmental Grants Group held on 14 May and 14 October 2013 (AB/13/68). 13/147

23. RESEARCH COMMITTEE

The Board received the minutes of the meeting of the Research Committee held on 23 May 2013 (AB/13/69). It was queried why the minutes of the meeting held in September were not included in the Academic Board papers. The minutes from the last meeting on 25 September had not yet been approved and therefore would be included in the papers for the next Academic Board meeting. 13/148

24. LEARNING, TEACHING AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

The Board received the minutes of the meetings of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee held on 14 May and 9 October 2013 (AB/13/70). One member of the Board had queried an item in the minutes with the Academic Registrar before the meeting, and the matter had satisfactorily been answered. 13/149

25. ACADEMIC AWARDS GROUP

The Board receive a report of the awards and prizes awarded during the 2012-13 academic session (AB/13/71). 13/150

28. HONORARY TITLES AND ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS

The Board noted a paper on the award of honorary titles and noted the list of academic promotions for 2012-13 (AB/13/72). 13/151

29. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Academic Board will take place on **Wednesday 5 March 2014 at 3pm in MX001.** 13/152

30. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Academic Registrar reported that given the unprecedented number of requests to unstar items, a number of which were for clarification only, it was proposed that the deadline for requests to unstar items be moved to the close of business the Friday before the meeting. In order to facilitate this, no papers circulated after this deadline would be starred. The Board agreed, subject to the papers being circulated one week before the deadline. 13/153

Anna Sendall
Academic Registrar
25 November 2013