

Academic Board

3 June 2020



Actions

Ref	Action	Lead	Due Date
20/10	Deputy Principal (Academic) to respond to queries raised in email requesting to unstar paper AB/20/51	KN	Complete
20/14 20/41	Secretary to add the following to the agenda for the October meeting – SU Digital Survey Outcomes Update on delivery of College’s Enhancement Plan	JHE	Complete
20/16	Circulate summer term Council Minutes to Academic Board	JHE	Complete
19/167	Correct the minutes of the meeting of the Board on 23 October 2019 as noted.	RH	Complete
19/170	Refer this matter [the length of papers for Academic Board and the timing of the circulation of these] to the Academic Board Executive meeting in February for further discussion.	RH	Complete (paper presented to ABE, needs to be actioned)
19/175	The Secretary and VP Education to review the election of academic representatives and present a report to Academic Board in March 2020.	RH/KR	Complete
19/179	Circulate the PowerPoint presentation on KEF to Schools.	RH/KN	Complete
19/182	Reword Section 2 (a) (iii) on page 7 of the Access and Participation Plan to clarify what is being measured: <i>Brilliant Club: support 599 pupils to improve their written communication, subject knowledge and critical thinking skills by 5% or more.</i>	DA	Complete
19/183	Academic Board to receive a regular update on progress in meeting the Access and Participation Plan targets.	PJL/ RH	Ongoing
19/185	Present a draft Degree Outcomes statement to the March meeting of Academic Board.	DG	Complete (Considered in June)
19/195	DDS to review the guidance and report to the Executive Committee for Assessment in the Spring term.	RH	Complete
19/196	Review the wording of Proposal 3 on regulatory changes with colleagues.	RH/MB	Complete
19/119	Put a note on the Academic Board website about the decision made to amend the terms of office of elected members to one year.	RH	ASAP

19/121	Correct the minutes of the meeting of Academic Board on 5 June.	RH	Completed
19/129	Take forward the provision of support for students studying in London in the Academic Development and Resources Committee.	KB	ASAP
19/131	Check with the interim Director of Human Resources whether recommendations from UCU were considered as part of the review of the Gender Pay Gap.	RH	ASAP
19/137	Present a 'lessons learned' paper on lecture recording to Academic Board in December.	KB	Complete (moved to March meeting)
19/143	Provide an update to Academic Board later in the year on work undertaken to close the attainment gap.	JK	March/ June 2020
19/147	Link the Committees Handbook page to the Terms of Reference for new School and College committees, currently published on the academic restructuring pages.	RH	ASAP
19/148	Add the casualization of staff to topics to be considered as part of the redevelopment of the College strategy given the number of staff in the College on causal contracts.	KB	ASAP

Action from current meeting

Action completed since last meeting

Academic Board

3 June 2020

Min. 20/01-20/69



Minutes

Present:	Prof P Layzell (Chair); Prof K Normington, Prof K Badcock, Prof J Knowles, Prof M Humphreys, Prof J Parker-Starbuck, Prof J John, Prof S Boogert, Prof T Pincus, Prof B Rankov, Prof S Wright, Dr V Greenaway, Dr A Whitelock, Dr B Lease, Dr M Berry, Prof B Langford, Prof A Chevalier, Dr R Jago, Prof O Heath, Dr J Nuri, Prof A Jashapara, Prof C Grey, Prof A Bradshaw, Dr S Wagner, Prof V Jansen, Prof P Crang, Prof J Adam, Prof P Dalton,	Prof D Howard, Prof R Schack, Prof P Komisarczuk, Dr S West, Dr C Matos, Prof R Fitzgerald, Prof E Schafer, Prof S Ansari, Prof C Bradley, Prof A Ganz, Prof M Gold, Dr D Brown, Prof S Murphy, Prof V Boisvert, Dr R Cruickshank, Prof S Gerke, Dr R Hemus, Mr S Kendrick, Prof D Gilbert, Prof H Nicholson, Mr J O'Neill, Ms K Roberts.
Secretary:	Mr R Hall	
In attendance:	Dr D Ashton, Ms M Ennis, Mrs A Wallis, Prof R Deem	Miss C Munton (Assistant Secretary)
Observers:	Mr A Alway, Ms C Cartwright, Mr J Conix	

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair WELCOMED all members to the Board, noting that this was the first meeting for Dr Mark Berry and Professor Barry Langford. Apologies were received from the following members: Professor Gloria Agyemang, the Student's Union Vice President Societies and Media, the Students' Union Welfare and Diversity and the Student's Union Vice President Sports and Development. 20/01

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2019 were APPROVED. Members received the update circulated with regards to the March 2020 meeting, which was affected by COVID-19. 20/02

3. Matters arising

The Chair REPORTED that the actions in *min. 19/167, 19/175, 19/179, 19/182, 19/185, 19/195 and 19/196* had been completed. In response to *min 19/195*, the Disability and Dyslexia Services advise that the standard arrangement for extra time for those with a mental health condition has been in place for a number of years and is a starting point, like the 15 minutes per hour for specific learning difficulties which again can impact one individual very differently to another. Where further arrangements are requested DDS consider the medical evidence provided on a case by case basis, for example, a separate individual room. 20/03

Min 19/170, the length of papers for Academic Board and the timing of the circulation of these, was discussed at the Academic Board Executive meeting. There has been no further 20/04

	progress since the last meeting due to COVID-19, and discussions w resume in the next academic year.	20/05
	<i>Min 19/183</i> , Academic Board to receive a regular update on progress in meeting the Access and Participation Plan targets is ongoing.	
4.	Actions taken by the Chair	
	The Chair NOTED that, as per the agenda, he had APPROVED the following since the last meeting:	20/06
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An amendment to the Academic Board Standing Orders to enable committees of Academic Board to meet virtually; • In principle the appointment of an institutional Principal External Examiner. This appointment would be with effect from the 19-20 academic year and until the end of the 2020-21 academic year in the first instance. 	
5.	Academic Board Membership	
	Paper AB/20/26, proposal for the membership of Academic Board in 2020-21 was RECEIVED.	20/07
	The Secretary REPORTED that the membership proposal had been revised since discussions at Academic Board Executive in February, and the paper intended for discussion at the meeting on 18 March.	20/08
	The first paragraph of AB/20/26 indicated that paper AB/20/01 had been withdrawn, and the Board considered that this was not an accurate reflection of the situation as the March meeting had been cancelled. The Board welcomed the clarification that those members elected in 2019 were eligible to stand for two full terms of office in 2020. The Board APPROVED the membership proposals in AB/20/26. The Secretary CONFIRMED that elections for ten elected members would be held over the summer.	20/09
	One member REPORTED that they had not been provided with a satisfactory response to an email sent regarding the presentation of the 2019 election results. The Chair asked that the email be resent and he would reply.	20/10
6.	Unstarring of items	
	The Chair NOTED that there had been a request to unstar paper AB/20/51 Research and Impact Committee Minutes of 4 December 2019. The Deputy Principal (Academic) REPORTED that she would respond via email to the queries raised.	20/11
7.	Reports from the Senior Management Team	
	The Chair REPORTED that following George Floyd's fatal arrest, College has issued a statement condemning injustice and inequality, reaffirming Royal Holloway's view that there is no place for intolerance, injustice or racial harassment, all which do not accord with our founding principles.	20/12
	Paper AB/20/27, update from the Senior Vice Principal (Academic Strategy, Partnerships and Resources) was RECEIVED.	20/13
8.	Report from the Students' Union President	
	Paper AB/20/28, update from the Students' Union President was RECEIVED. The Chair thanked the Students' Union for conducting the Digital Experience Survey and NOTED that the Board were looking forward to receiving the survey outcomes at their next meeting.	20/14

9. **Report from the Council**
- The confirmed minutes of the Council meetings held on 22 November 2019 and 8 January 2020, and the unconfirmed minutes of the Council meeting held on 20 February 2020 (AB/20/29) were RECEIVED. 20/15
- The Chair REPORTED that the minutes from the most recent Council meeting were not available for this Academic Board meeting but that the focus of that meeting had been on the College's response to the challenges presented by COVID-19. The minutes would be circulated to Academic Board members over the summer. 20/16
- One member NOTED that section 12 of the minutes circulated from the meeting on 20 February has since been updated. 20/17
- The Deputy Principal (Operations) CONFIRMED that from February 2020 he replaced the Director of Legal and Governance as Secretary to the Council. 20/18
- The Chair REPORTED that work on the Charity Scheme and the application to the Department for Education for University title is currently suspended. Academic Board would receive an update when consideration of these matters is resumed. 20/19
10. **College Strategy**
- The Senior Vice Principal (Academic Strategy, Partnerships and Resources) REPORTED that Council have asked for work on the development of the College Strategy to be paused to enable Council and staff to focus on arrangements for the 2020-21 academic year. The College is likely to need a three year plan focussed on recovery from the pandemic, and the Council will provide further information in due course. 20/20
11. **Coronavirus (COVID-19): College response in relation to the 2019-20 academic year**
- 11.1 The Chair PROVIDED an overview of the national context for Higher Education in light of COVID-19, including the current financial situation facing the sector. The job retention scheme is being used for College staff working in catering and residential as these areas are not supported by money from public funds. The Government have also made additional funding available to universities for grant extensions, along with low interest loans for research active HEIs. Universities have made a bid to government for access to bank lending schemes. 20/21
- Following the publication of government guidance on delivering a safe return to work, the Deputy Principal (Operations) and relevant members of Professional Services are reviewing how best to shape up the campus for a safe return. 20/22
- The Senior Vice Principal (Academic Strategy, Partnerships and Resources) REPORTED that it is difficult to predict student numbers for next academic year but a shortfall in overseas student numbers was expected. The College has received confirmation of its temporary student number control for 2020-21 for Home/EU students, calculated using 2019-20 student numbers and the College's forecast for 2020-21, and allowing for 5% additional growth. The Senior Vice Principal considered that limiting the number of Home/EU entrants is unlikely to present any problems for College in 2020-21. 20/23
- 11.2 Paper AB/20/30, a summary of the guidance published by the Office for Students regarding quality and standards during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was RECEIVED. The Senior Vice Principal (Education) REPORTED he is confident that the adjustments made by College are in line with OfS and QAA guidance. 20/24
- 11.3 The Board RECEIVED and APPROVED paper AB/20/30a, the Emergency Regulations. 20/25

	The Vice Principal (Quality and Standards) REPORTED that the Assessment Hub on the Student Intranet provides students with clear information on the key aspects of these regulations, and that the regulations had been developed with input from key members of the Students' Union.	20/26
11.4	The Director of Academic Services PROVIDED an update on work in relation to Student Wellbeing and Mental Health, which the Board NOTED was a key part of the OfS guidance summarised in paper AB/20/30. Student Advisory and Wellbeing Services were being provided online, and support would continue over the summer. All students living on campus during lockdown were being offered help and support to minimise isolation, and the on campus GP Surgery remained open. There had been good engagement with virtual events offered during Mental Health Awareness Week. Students with Exam Access Arrangements had these adapted as appropriate by Disability and Dyslexia Services, and College level support was made available to students without access to IT equipment or internet to ensure they were not disadvantaged by the move to alternative assessments.	20/27
	The Senior Vice Principal (Education) REPORTED that uptake of alternative assessments was high, and comparable with registrations for examinations in previous years, and he was unaware of any substantial student complaints.	20/28
	The Board responded positively to the support arrangements in place for students, noting also that there must be investment in student support during the next academic year. The Director of Academic Services REPORTED that new appointments in the Student Advisory and Wellbeing team are in post and are working closely with the NHS and other local providers, and that he and the Deputy Principal (Academic) are leading a work stream focussing on student experience, wellbeing and engagement. The Board NOTED that the Principal would be chairing a Universities UK seminar on addressing the impact of COVID-19 on student progression and retention, providing a useful forum for sharing best practice. The President of the Students' Union shared the Board's view about ensuring students are well supported next year, noting also that a reduction in part time job opportunities was anticipated and this may lead to an increase in financial concerns among students.	20/29
	The Principal thanked colleagues for their work in supporting students throughout the pandemic.	20/30
11.5	The Deputy Principal (Academic) PRESENTED paper AB/20/31, a Recovery and Growth plan for shaping and developing the excellence of College research, taking into account the demands of the flexible education pattern and financial effects of the pandemic. The Recovery and Growth plan proposed the creation of thematic catalyst research and knowledge exchange hubs in areas where the College already holds significant funding and research clusters aimed at developing partnerships with other HEIs, industry and cultural organisations to grow success in upcoming areas of research.	20/31
	Board members were supportive of the emphasis protecting research, and finding new areas of funding to support growth. The Board DISCUSSED the proposal, NOTING in particular the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that research must be viewed in the context of its contribution to the student experience and other activities and not just the direct income generated from it • some of the language used in the plan would benefit from greater clarification, for example what does 'catalyst research and knowledge exchange hubs' mean for individual researchers and how will the College define what is considered to be 'relevant' post Covid research • that the criteria for choosing the research hubs and clusters needed to be clearly defined. Several departments already have strong research clusters that should continue to be supported, even though some of these do not appear to fit into the thematic catalyst hubs presented in the paper 	20/32

- there must be careful consideration of issues around staff workload given the current shift in focus to preparing for the flexible education model, and the impact on specific staff groups such as Early Career Researchers and those with protected characteristics
- whether there should be more focus on building upon research strengths rather than a recovery, as not all research has been impacted by COVID
- the paper does not mention PhD students, and many rely on teaching contracts as financial support
- that the pandemic has provided an excellent opportunity to reconsider our approach to communications and an opportunity to draw digital and performance skills to showcase our research in new ways

The Deputy Principal (Academic) REPORTED that the Research Team would carefully consider the issues raised by the Board, and that there have already been discussions about making appropriate adjustments to the academic promotions and probationary criteria that protect quality whilst reflecting current circumstances. 20/33

The Doctoral School Director (Quality, Enhancement and Inclusion) REPORTED that the funding challenges faced by postgraduate research students in the next few years are a significant concern to the sector and the matter is being discussed nationally. 20/34

12. **Coronavirus (COVID-19); Flexible Offer and Planning for the Academic Year 2020-21**

Paper AB/20/32a, Flexible Offer 2020-21 was RECEIVED. 20/35

The Senior Vice Principal (Academic Strategy, Partnerships and Resources) REPORTED that the pandemic has caused significant uncertainty to College Education and Royal Holloway's financial situation for the next academic year and beyond, and the paper sets out the College's approach to protecting the student experience, maximising recruitment and mitigating any income reduction. An immediate priority was communication with applicants, viz promoting a January start option on selected UG and PGT programmes and offering reassurance on the flexible study plan, and reassuring UG Home applicants that the College is committed to ensuring they can engage with their studies in 2020-21. The timetabling of classes raises some particularly difficult questions and the Senior Vice Principal (ASPR) welcomed any comments from members after the meeting on how to balance three sets of considerations: offer of an on-campus education to students, staff workload and virus related restrictions, and Estate limitations. 20/36

The Chief Information Officer PROVIDED a presentation outlining the key aspects underpinning the delivery of flexible teaching in 2020-21, including validation and assessment, an overview of the individual work streams supporting the Flexible Education Board cluster, timetabling considerations, teaching and learning enhancement including aspects of the IT programme and a high level timeline for delivery. 20/37

The Senior Vice Principal (Education) REPORTED that it was very unlikely College would be able to schedule mass teaching next academic year and programmes would need to be reviewed and adapted to combine face-to-face on campus and online teaching and learning support, with content running synchronously and asynchronously. He confirmed there would not be a diminution in contact hours under this approach, and that defining a contact hour is a matter for discussion within Schools. Assessment types and deadlines would also need to be reviewed, reducing where possible the dependence on a single piece of assessment and end of year assessment to make programmes more resilient and less susceptible to disruption. A timeline and draft process for completing this work would be considered at Executive Board and then circulated to departments by the end of June. The College would work closely with the Students' Union and academic course representatives on these changes to teaching and learning. 20/38

	The Deputy Principal (Academic) responded to concerns over staff workload, especially around possible impact on research time, noting that promotions criteria would be adjusted reward the new needs and opportunities of teaching and research. Current processes allow for consideration of particular circumstances and College would be mindful to include the impact of COVID on those with protected characteristics. Heads of School have been asked to consider workloads for staff involved in teaching January starters to ensure there is capacity in the year for them to take annual leave. The Senior Vice Principal (ASPR) was unable to confirm if offering a January start is a one off arrangement for 2020-21 or if it will continue if it proves to be very successful.	20/39
	Paper AB/20/32b, a proposal for Committee Reform 2020-21 was RECEIVED and NOTED. A member of the Board commented that there are no Trade Union Representatives on the staff experience group, to which the Deputy Principal (Academic) responded that she meets fortnightly with the Trade Unions, and they are presented with a summary of discussions from all of the work streams at those meetings.	20/40
	Paper AB/20/32c, interim report on the College's Education Enhancement Plan was RECEIVED. The Senior Vice Principal (Education) REPORTED that the Enhancement Plan would be delivered by the Flexible Education project and that he would present an update to the Board at an autumn term meeting.	20/41
	The Deputy Principal (Academic) REPORTED on preparations for the Student Experience. Academic and welfare support would be available to students on and off campus and work was underway to the identify appropriate study skills provision for students starting in 2020-21, recognising that they will not have completed their final year of school and may need additional support. Work groups were considering what the campus experience might look like in 2020-21, including Fresher's Week, and how best to create a sense of community taking into consideration the social distancing guidelines that might be in place. It was hoped cafes and sports facilities would be available by September, albeit at reduced capacity. The Students' Union were reviewing activities offered by clubs and societies.	20/42
13.	Student Numbers for 2020-21 entry	
	Paper AB/20/33, Student Numbers for 2020-21 entry was RECEIVED. The Deputy Principal (Operations) REPORTED that the UCAS deadline for responding to offers had moved from 2 May to 18 June, making it difficult to compare data with previous years, and that the November count would be a key milestone in determining the College's position against the target.	20/43
14.	Research Excellence Framework	
	Paper AB/20/34, update on REF progress was RECEIVED. The Deputy Principal (Academic) REPORTED in particular the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that the paper summarised the feedback from the external reviews of each Unit of Assessment completed in January • that the areas highlighted in red in table 1 are not a cause of significant concern as these reflect first time submissions to a Unit of Assessment and reflect the difficulty in building up research and impact in these areas, and these units are expect to grow in the next REF. 	20/44
15.	Quality and Standards Report	
	Paper AB/20/35, Quality and Standards Report was RECEIVED. The Vice Principal (Quality and Standards) REPORTED that this is an annual report to the Council on reflecting primarily on quality assurance in the previous academic year but with some reference to 2019-20. He	20/45

NOTED specifically that 2019-20 has been a challenging year with new processes in place to reflect the restructuring from Faculties into Schools, and that Annual Reviews, for example, had been held later than usual due to industrial action and the pandemic. The five yearly cycle of revalidations of taught programmes, to replace the Periodic Review process, would be delayed by a year, with work expected to commence in spring 2021, enabling colleagues to focus on the validation work required to ensure programmes are resilient to any further COVID-19 related disruption in 2020-21.

16. Regulations Changes for 2020-21

Paper AB/20/36, changes to the Research Degree Regulations for 2020-21 was APPROVED. 20/46

Paper AB/20/37, changes to other academic regulations for 2020-21 was APPROVED. 20/47

17. Degree Outcomes Statement

Paper AB/20/38, Degree Outcomes Statement was RECEIVED and APPROVED. The Vice Principal (Quality and Standards) advised that subject to final approval at the Council Academic Quality Assurance Committee, the Degree Outcomes Statement would be published over the summer. 20/48

18. Annual Report on Complaints and Appeals

Paper AB/20/39, Annual Report on Appeals and Complaints 2018-19 was RECEIVED and NOTED. 20/49

19. Governance

Paper AB/20/40, Council membership was RECEIVED. The Deputy Principal (Operations) REPORTED that a number of recommendations were under discussion following a Council Effectiveness Review. These included reducing the overall size of Council, which would mean decreasing the number of Academic and Professional Services staff sitting on Council from three to two in each category, and moving to an appointment instead of election process for staff members sitting on Council. 20/50

The Board REPORTED concerns over these proposals, particularly the introduction of an appointment process for staff members, and considered that they had not been given enough time to reflect on the recommendations. The Board contested the notion that an appointment process for staff members would increase the diversity of Council, advocating strongly that there must be an opportunity for staff Council members to express views that may not always accord with those put forward by Senior Management. The Board were INFORMED that the elected members of the Board have written to the Chair of Council expressing their concerns about the proposed appointment process. 20/51

The Deputy Principal (Operations) CONFIRMED the role of Academic Board in the process for the changes recommended in AB/20/40, viz. that the Board must be consulted on any Statute changes, and that Council has to consider what they say in response to that consultation, but that the final decision would rest with the Council. All Council members have received the full report from the Effectiveness Review, and although this has not been published to the wider College community, the Minutes of Council meetings are available on the website as a record of discussions. He REPORTED that the Chair of Council has met with all members of Council on multiple occasions, including staff members, to discuss the shape of the proposals, and that Council were looking forward to hearing the views of Academic Board members at their next 20/52

meeting. He further advised that the Council are committed to having a broad breadth of skills across their membership.

It was AGREED that the Deputy Principal would articulate the concerns by Academic Board at the Council meeting the following evening. He REPORTED that if the Council support the recommendations arising from the Council Effectiveness Review, there would need to be some amendments to the College Statutes. 20/53

20. **Honorary Awards**

Paper AB/20/40 Honorary Degrees 2021 was RECEIVED. 20/54

The Board

- RECOMMENDED the names listed for the award of Honorary Degrees of the University of London, to be conferred in 2021, and 20/55
- NOTED the name listed for the associated award of an Honorary Fellowship of the College, to be conferred in 2021. 20/56

Items for formal approval

21. * **Entry Requirements for 2021-22** 20/57

Paper AB/20/41, Entry requirements for 2021-22 was RECEIVED and APPROVED.

22. * **Student Protection Plan** 20/58

Paper AB/20/42, Student Protection Plan (AB/20/42) was RECEIVED and APPROVED.

23. * **Student Maternity Policy** 20/59

Paper AB/20/43, Policy on Support for Pregnant Students and Students with Very Young Children was RECEIVED and APPROVED.

24. * **Annual Reviews** 20/60

Paper AB/20/44, the composite reports of the review of undergraduate provision in 2018-19 from the School Education Committees was RECEIVED.

Paper AB/20/45, the composite reports of the review of postgraduate taught provision in 2018-19 in the Schools of Business and Management, Humanities and Law and Social Sciences from the School Education Committees was RECEIVED. 20/61

Paper AB/20/46, the composite reports of the review of postgraduate research provision in 2018-19 from the Research Degree Programmes Committee was RECEIVED. 20/62

25. * **Periodic Departmental Review** 20/63

Paper AB/20/47, the updated PDR action plan from the Department of English was RECEIVED.

26. * **Academic Board Executive** 20/64

Paper AB/20/48, Minutes of the meetings of the Academic Board Executive held on 10 February 2020 and 4 May 2020 was RECEIVED.

27. * **Academic Portfolio and Partnerships Committee** 20/65

Paper AB/20/49, Minutes of the meetings of the Academic Portfolio and Partnerships Committee held on 11 December 2019 and 21 January 2020 was RECEIVED.

28. * **Quality Assurance and Standards Committee**
Paper AB/20/50, Minutes of the meetings of the Quality Assurance and Standards Committee meeting held on 13 November 2019 and 13 February 2020 was RECEIVED. 20/66
29. * **Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee**
Paper AB/20/51, Minutes of the meetings of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee held on 10 October 2019 and 4 December 2019 was RECEIVED. 20/67

Other Matters

30. * **Date of next meeting**
Wednesday 21 October 2020, venue to be confirmed. 20/68
- The dates of the other meetings in 2020-21 are 9 December 2020, 17 March 2021 and 2 June 2021. 20/69