

Academic Board

ACTIONS

Action from current meeting

Action completed since last meeting

Ref	Action	Lead	Due Date
23/011	Invite the Students' Union sabbatical officers elected for the 2023-24 academic year to observe the June Academic Board meeting	CM	June AB
23/018	Add a discussion item on artificial intelligence tools and academic integrity to the next agenda of Academic Board	CM	June AB
23/039 and 23/053	Elected member to send detailed queries on the proposed amendments to the College Statutes to Academicboard@rhul.ac.uk Principal to review comments	SM and JS	June AB
23/040	Update Academic Board on analysis of the responses to the Committee Effectiveness Review	CM	June AB
22/193	Add Foundation Year Degree to a future agenda of Academic Board	CM	End of autumn 2023
23/061	Clarify the timeline for the publication of the Emergency Regulations outside the meeting and update the Board in October.	MH/CM	October 2023
23/68	Circulate the proposed Terms of Reference and membership of the Schools review group	FB	October 2023
23/097	further update on progress with Assessment Futures should be provided to the 29 November meeting of Academic Board	MH	November 2023
23/101	Set up working group to scope future developments in AI	MH	Summer 2023
23/109	Update Academic Board on the implementation of recommendations arising out of the effectiveness review	CM/AB	Autumn 2023
23/118	Discuss with the University Secretary whether the Committees Handbook, last published in 2015, should be re-introduced	CM/AB	October 2023
23/122	Inform the Secretariat and Events Manager that AB approve the recommendations in the Honorary Degrees paper	CM	June 2023
23/124	Advise the Secretariat and the Events Manager that AB recommend references to marital and parental status are removed from appendix 2 of the Honorary Degrees paper as a matter of urgency.	CM	June 2023
23/137	To hold an information/ drop-in session for academic staff interested in applying for one of the elected member positions	AB/CM	January 2024
23/156	Present Regulatory Addendum for 2023/24 and timeline for review of academic regulations	MH	November 2023
23/159	Update the timeline of the Emergency Regulations to include the date of the announcement of the Marking and Assessment Boycott and the instruction from the Office for Students issued on 12 June	MH	November 2023

23/177	To present the terms of reference for an external review of Academic Board	AB	November 2023
--------	--	----	------------------

ACADEMIC BOARD

Wednesday 18 October 2023

2pm

Windsor Building 0-03 (in person) or MS Teams (online) [hybrid]

Min. 23/136-23/189



Minutes

Present:	Prof J Sanders (Chair), Prof T Bhamra, Prof M Fellowes, Prof Z Khan, Prof R Mock, Prof G Pieri, Prof A Gupta, Prof C Tsinopoulos, Prof K Dodds, Prof G Shaddick, Prof C Kremmydas, Prof R Hemus, Prof A Roberts, Prof D Beer, Dr E Cox (on MS Teams), Prof S Rose, Dr N Hall, Prof R Barn, Dr S Alty, Dr P Wu	Dr C Tsai (on MS Teams), Prof S Hosany, Prof T Wainwright, Prof J McEvoy, Dr K Clemitshaw, Prof H Zagefka, Prof C Matos, Prof A Palombi, Prof S Gibson, Dr S Nield (on MS Teams), Dr S Portugal, Prof S Shah, Ms H Hockin, Ms S Sivarajah, Ms N Bundhun, Mr A Copland, Dr D Brown (on MS Teams), Prof M Humphreys, Prof R Livesey, Prof D Watling
Secretary:	Miss C Munton (acting)	
In attendance:	Prof G Knight, Mrs T Jones, Dr N Barratt	Miss C Cartwright (minutes)
Apologies:	Prof D Anderberg, Prof L Sjoberg, Prof L Rinaldi, Prof H Tregidga, Prof D Schreve	Prof I Moffatt, Dr A Bown, Prof B Fitzgerald, Mrs A Wallis, Mr S Kendrick, Mr A M Boggs
Trade Union Observers:	Mr A Alway (on MS Teams) Dr D Elphick	

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, in particular the new members of Academic Board, and noted the updated membership list (AB/23/49). 23/136

The Chair noted that the elections which had been held recently had not filled all of the vacancies and therefore in the event of a vote being called while the vacancies remained, only she, Prof Tracy Bhamra, Prof Zainab Khan and Prof Mark Fellowes would vote from the senior leadership team, to retain the balance. 23/137

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 22 March 2023 were APPROVED with the adjusted wording at Minutes 23/039. 23/138

The Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 7 June 2023 were APPROVED. 23/139

3. Matters arising

The Board NOTED the following actions have been completed since the last meeting:

23/140

23/039 and 23/053	Elected member to send detailed queries on the proposed amendments to the College Statutes to Academicboard@rhul.ac.uk Secretary's note: the Board are asked under agenda item 2 to approve the proposed wording added to minute 23/039, page 8	SM and JS	June AB
23/101	Set up working group to scope future developments in AI	MH	Summer 2023
23/122	Inform the Secretariat and Events Manager that AB approve the recommendations in the Honorary Degrees paper	CM	June 2023
23/124	Advise the Secretariat and the Events Manager that AB recommend references to marital and parental status are removed from appendix 2 of the Honorary Degrees paper as a matter of urgency.	CM	June 2023

To receive an update on other actions due:

23/141

22/193	Add Foundation Year Degree to a future agenda of Academic Board <i>This will be included as an agenda item at November's meeting. The Course Director is on extended leave until 23 October.</i>	CM	End of autumn 2023
23/061	Clarify the timeline for the publication of the Emergency Regulations outside the meeting and update the Board in October. <i>Will be discussed under item 13</i>	MH/CM	October 2023
23/68	Circulate the proposed Terms of Reference and membership of the Schools review group <i>Will be discussed under item 17</i>	TB	October 2023
23/097	Further update on progress with Assessment Futures should be provided to the 29 November meeting of Academic Board <i>To be actioned in November</i>	MH	November 2023
23/109	Update Academic Board on the implementation of recommendations arising out of the effectiveness review <i>Will be discussed under item 19</i>	CM/AB	Autumn 2023
23/118	Discuss with the University Secretary whether the Committees Handbook, last published in 2015, should be re-introduced	CM/AB	October 2023

4. Actions taken by the Chair

The Board NOTED that the Chair had approved an amendment to the postgraduate research degree regulations to provide an additional format for submitting the MPhil and PhD thesis with effect from 24-25. This was in response to meeting the conditions for a ESRC DTP bid.

23/142

5. **Unstarring of items**
- The Board had received a request to unstar paper AB/23/46 and AB/23/66. The request for the first paper was approved and was declined for the second paper. The reasons for which were stated verbally during the meeting and in writing to the requester, notably that no policy change relating to module surveys was proposed or noted in the starred paper.
- 23/143

Formal Reports

6. **Vice-Chancellor and Principal's Report**
- The Board RECEIVED and noted a written report from the Vice-Chancellor and Principal (AB/23/51).
- 23/144
7. **Regulatory and Legislative update**
- The Board RECEIVED a written update from the University Secretary (AB/23/52). Owing to the Secretary's absence from the meeting, questions on the content of the paper should be directed to the Secretary via email.
- 23/145
8. **Report from the Students' Union President**
- The Board RECEIVED a report from the Students' Union President (AB/23/53).
- 23/146
- The Executive Dean of Life Sciences and the Environment commended the President for the officers' work on environmental sustainability which had not been included in the report and for their recent contributions to a recent visit by Universities UK.
- 23/147
- The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience asked about the implementation of the new student representatives system and noted the importance of student voice for the National Student Survey.
- 23/148
- The Vice President Education advised that the recruitment process had been successful and more support had been put in place to enable student representatives to succeed including individual meetings with School Representatives to highlight concerns earlier.
- 23/149
9. **Report from the Council**
- The Board RECEIVED the minutes of the Council meeting held on 18 May 2023 and 6 July 2023 (AB/23/54a and b).
- 23/150
10. **Reports from Schools**
- The Board RECEIVED a presentation from the Executive Dean of Engineering, Physical and Mathematical Sciences on the aims, education and research impact goals of the School (AB/23/55).
- 23/151
- The Board discussed the School's success in sharing REF allocations, connections with local partners and sharing expertise and plans to integrate the communities of academic staff and Professional Services.
- 23/152

Strategy Discussion

11. Strategic Projects Update

The Board RECEIVED an update on the work which had started to devise the new strategy, and that a series of colleague and student engagement work was now underway. 23/153

A steering group for the new RH2030s strategy had been formed and would be co-chaired by Prof Mark Fellowes and Alison Wallis our Director of Strategic Planning, and the timelines was for Council to sign off on the new strategy in the summer of 2024. 23/154

Major Items of Business

12. Report from the Marking and Assessment Boycott

The Board RECEIVED the timeline of events which preceded the approval of the MAB Emergency Regulations (AB/23/56a) and reflections on the delivery of assessment in light of the boycott (AB/23/56b). 23/155

It was noted that AB/23/56b presented an interim position and a final reflection would be presented to the Board in November, along with a Regulatory Addendum for 2023/24 to reflect any continuing impact of the Emergency Regulations for Covid and the boycott in this year. 23/156

It was noted that use of the mitigations varied between the departments and it was hoped that the Regulatory Addendum would assuage student concerns about the impact of the mitigations on their final classification. 23/157

It was noted that the results process had highlighted areas where the functioning of the the Department Assessment Boards and the School Progression and Awards Boards could be improved and this would be addressed for the results process in the summer of 2024. 23/158

The Board agreed to update the timeline to include the date on which the marking and assessment boycott was announced and the date of the communication received from the Office for Students. 23/159

13. National Student Survey Results

The Board RECEIVED the summary report of the NSS results from 2022/23 and the plan to respond for the 2023/24 survey (AB/23/57). 23/160

It was noted that while large parts of the sector had recovered from the depressed results caused by the impact of Covid-19, our results did not follow suit and work was now underway to focus on the areas where improvements would have the greatest impact on our scores. 23/161

Areas of statistical concern had been identified and were being addressed through actions under the Response and Readiness Plan. 23/162

The Board discussed the importance of engaged student representatives and that this was an area which Schools could have little impact. It was noted that student representatives had signed a partnership agreement which they could be held to but the Students' Union was also exploring ways in which they could reward representatives for giving their time. 23/163

The Board received an update on the outcome of the Teaching Excellence Framework which had resulted in an award of Silver in all three categories. The Chair recorded her 23/164

	thanks to all who contributed to the TEF submission, noting in particular the contributions of Professor David Gilbert, Katie Green and Professor Gill Knight. It was noted that while there were areas of excellent practice, there needed to be greater consistency of this across the University and the impact of this practice needed to be demonstrated. Systems will be developed to ensure the impact and breadth of good practice will be captured for the next submission.	
	The Board noted that a new metric of educational gain and value added would be considered at the next iteration of the TEF and direction from the Office for Students on this was still to be provided.	23/165
14.	Access and Participation Plan	
	The Board RECEIVED an update on the Access and Participation Plan (APP) work (AB/23/58). The Board noted that five students had successfully been recruited to work on the development of the next APP and would be working with the team for the next four months.	23/166
	The Board discussed the success of the Turing plan in supporting disadvantaged students and whether this consideration should be part of developing future strategic partnerships.	23/167
	The Board discussed the challenges of identifying how deprivation impacted students when they reached university and the challenges universities face in identifying these students without certain data sets available such as free school meal eligibility.	23/168
	The Board noted that students from IMD Q1 and Q2 were a growing proportion of our student body and Risk 10: Cost Pressures, as identified by the Office for Students, was a particular concern for this group of students.	23/169
	The Board discussed the importance of raising awareness of the awarding gap and the types of assessment which can have a disproportionate impact on this, as well as ensuring data on the awarding gap was made available to the right groups of staff with the ability to improve it.	23/170
	The Board noted that the conversations taking place in relation to the new strategy and that being inclusive by design would help all students and would lessen the need for topical solutions for particular groups of students.	23/171
15.	Extenuating Circumstances Working Group	
	The Board RECEIVED an update on the work of the Extenuating Circumstances working group (AB/23/59). It was noted that the work on extenuating circumstances would be overseen by the Assessment Futures project board to ensure dates and effort were aligned.	23/172
	The Board discussed the involvement of the student voice so far and how it would be included during the next phase of design and implementation.	23/173
16.	Review of Academic Restructuring	
	The Board RECEIVED a paper (AB/23/60) outlining the scope and timescale for a review of the academic restructuring which had taken place for the 2019/20 academic year.	23/174
	The Board noted that the opportunity to express interest in sitting on the review group would be made available after the meeting.	23/175

17. **Effectiveness review**
 The Board RECEIVED an update (AB/23/61) on the recommendations following the effectiveness review conducted in 2022/23. 23/176
- It was noted that many of the actions had required the arrival of the new University Secretary, but that work was underway to address these actions and a further update, including a proposed external review of Academic Board, would be brought to the next meeting. 23/177
18. **Annual Report of Academic Board**
 The Board APPROVED the annual summary of business report for 2022/23 (AB/23/62). 23/178

Items for formal approval

19. *** Nominations to Committees**
 The Board APPROVED the list of nominations to Statute 9 and the Student Discipline Committees (AB/23/63). 23/179

Items for report

20. *** Library Services Content Strategy and Information Resources Policy**
 The Board RECEIVED the revised Library Services Content Strategy and Information Resources Policy (AB/23/64). 23/180
- The paper was unstarred for discussion. A Board member asked if there was recognition that change, whether to limit cost or standardise reading list lengths could cut across the pedagogic expertise of the module convenor and whether this policy was the appropriate place to institute a change impacting on the academic delivery of modules. The Executive Deans assured the Board there had been considerable discussions with academic colleagues before the changes were agreed, however concurred that depth of this consultation had not been captured within the paper. The Chair reported that the comments about the visibility of the information would be raised with the Vice Deans (Education and Student Experience) as there was a broader piece to consider around how students access and navigate learning materials. This would be a source of ongoing discussion during the year. 23/181
21. *** University Education Committee**
 The Board RECEIVED the the unconfirmed minutes from the University Education Committee held on 28 September 2023 (AB/23/65). 23/182
22. *** Quality Assurance and Standards Committee**
 The Board RECEIVED the minutes from the (now disbanded) Quality Assurance and Standards Committee meeting held on 17 August 2023 (AB/23/66). 23/183
23. *** Doctoral School Committee**
 The Board RECEIVED the unconfirmed minutes from the Doctoral School Committee meeting held on 16 May 2023 (AB/23/67). 23/184
24. *** Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee**
 The Board RECEIVED the minutes from the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee held on 26 June 2023 (AB/23/68). 23/185

Other Matters

25. **Any other business**
- None. 23/186
26. **Date of next meeting**
- Wednesday 29 November 2023 at 2pm – venue to be confirmed 23/187
- The Board noted the dates of the remaining meetings in 2023-24 as: 23/188
- Wednesday 20 March 2024 at 2pm
 - Wednesday 5 June 2024 at 2pm
- 26.2 The Board noted the ideas for discussion at future meetings. Members were invited to submit further suggestions for inclusion at meetings in 23-24 by emailing the [Clerk](#). Suggestions for the November meeting must be emailed before close of business on Wednesday 25 October 23/189