

SENATE

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SENATE HELD 24 FEBRUARY 2016

Present: Prof J Vinney (**Chair**)
Ms M Barron; Mr G Beards; Dr M Board; Dr M Bobeva; Dr E Borkoles; Prof J Fletcher;
Ms M Gray; Dr R Gunstone; Mr A James; Prof S Jukes; Ms J Mack (Secretary);
Prof I MacRury; Prof C Maggs; Ms E Mayo-Ward (SUBU); Prof S McDougall;
Dr S Minocha; Ms J Northam; Prof T McIntyre-Bhatty; Prof S Page; Ms S Ponsford;
Prof E Rosser; Ms C Schendel-Wilson (SUBU); Dr R Southern; Ms A Stevens;
Prof S Tee; Dr H Thiel; Dr S White; Prof M Wilmore; Prof T Zhang

In attendance: Ms M Frampton (Policy & Committees Officer); Dr A Main [Agenda Item 5.1];
Dr C L Osborne [Agenda Item 5.2]; Prof K Phalp [Agenda Item 5.1];
Ms C Symonds [Agenda Item 5.1]

Apologies received: Mr J Andrews; Mr K Pretty; Mr G Rayment; Prof K Wilkes

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted as above.
- 1.2 Prof Stephen Jukes was attending his last meeting of Senate and the Chair gave thanks for his valuable contribution to Senate.
- 1.3 The Chair welcomed Prof Michael Wilmore, the new Executive Dean of the FMC and Ms Susan Ponsford, the new Professional Services Staff Representative who replaced Ms Jane Forster who stepped down from Senate following her appointment as Policy Adviser to the Vice-Chancellor.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 OCTOBER 2015

- 2.1 The minutes were approved as an accurate record.
- 2.2 The action listed in Section 5.5 of the previous minutes was completed on 30 October 2015.
- 2.3 At the last meeting, Senators were advised of the vacancies on the Academic Standards Committee (ASC), Education & Student Experience Committee (ESEC) and the Honorary Awards Committee.
- 2.4 The Chair confirmed that Dr Sonal Minocha and Dr Erika Borkoles had both been appointed to the Honorary Awards Committee. Prof Christine Maggs would join the Committee next year when the next vacancy arises.
- 2.5 The Chair confirmed that Dr Richard Gunstone and Dr Sara White had both been appointed to the Education & Student Experience Committee (ESEC) as Senate Representatives, and Dr Milena Bobeva had been appointed as Senate Representative to the Academic Standards Committee (ASC). Senators were requested to contact the Deputy Vice-Chancellor to register their interest in being one of the Senate representatives on the Academic Standards Committee.

ACTION: Senators were advised to contact the Deputy Vice-Chancellor if they wished to register their interest in becoming a member of the Academic Standards Committee.
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ACTION BY: Senators

2.2 Ratification of Chair's Action: New Integrated Masters Award Title: MAccFin (Hons)

2.2.1 The rationale for the new Integrated Masters award title - Master of Accounting and Finance with Honours (MAccFin(Hons)), was circulated to Senators on 17 December 2015 for comment and approval. No negative comments were received by the Chair of Senate.

2.2.2 **Approved:** Senate approved the new Integrated Masters award title - MAccFin(Hons).

3. REPORT OF ELECTRONIC SENATE MEETING 4 TO 11 FEBRUARY 2016

3.1 The report of the Electronic Senate meeting of 4 to 11 February 2016 was noted.

3.2 The comments received with regards to Section 2 – Streamlining of the Ethics Approval Process had been forwarded to the University Research Ethics Panel for consideration.

4. VICE CHANCELLOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 BU 2018 and HE Sector Update

4.1.1 The University was now over half way through the delivery of the Strategic Plan up to 2018. The clear vision and direction set was now serving the University well considering the external changes universities were now facing. At the BU Leadership Conference in February, the launch of Delivery Planning had focused on maintaining our focus and momentum whilst responding to the external environment.

4.1.2 The University now had three years' progress against its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and further work would now take place to ensure the targets were achieved, and a good trajectory was required by 2018 to propel us through to 2025-30. The Delivery Planning Process would continue to inform our budgeting and join up cross university activity.

4.1.3 KPI1 – Academic Strength, had improved considerably over the last 12 months and had now reached 70% which was a positive step towards the goal of 100%. Another two highlights were the increase in the number of staff who had Doctorates, and the increase in the PGR student population. All of the University's achievements would combine to build academic strength and define the University's journey, whilst responding to the external environment. Work would continue to build momentum and realise the University's vision.

4.1.4 For the first time, the University was now listed within the Top 500 Universities in the world according to the latest Times Higher Education World University Rankings. Bournemouth University had also been ranked in the Times Higher Education Top 200 list of the most international universities in the world. This significant achievement reflected the University's growing international reputation. Competition would be key in future, and the University aspired to be within the top 50 of the aggregated three UK University League Tables.

4.1.5 The ULT Away Day planned for 25 February 2015 would focus on the different challenges and themes from each planning unit within the University. Discussions would focus on the University's positioning capital but would also concentrate on three key themes; academic and pedagogic innovation, employability and Postgraduate Research students (PGRs) in terms of culture and physical space requirements. How the University intends to accommodate PGRs, would be part of the planning process for budgets for the next three years.

4.1.6 The University had recently submitted its response to the Higher Education Green Paper. The Green Paper had contained the government's proposals for wide ranging and controversial reforms to Higher Education. Some of the proposed changes may require legislation. The Chair thanked those staff members who had contributed to the discussions and the response was expected in June 2016. A Technical Consultation on implementation of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) was expected later this year, however as the EU Referendum had been arranged to take place on 23 June 2016, this could impact on the timing of the consultation.

- 4.1.7 The recent Higher Education Green Paper suggested that the Higher Education Funding Council for England's (HEFCE) functions may transfer to other bodies such as the Office for Students (OfS) which would then include responsibility for quality assurance, TEF functions and the Office for Fair Access (OFFA). One of the perceived risks to the proposals was the risk of an artificial separation of teaching and research, with QR research funding possibly becoming part of the Research UK (RUK) mechanism. The outcomes of the Green Paper would be monitored closely.
- 4.1.8 Following the Comprehensive Spending Review in November 2015 which had alluded to cuts for the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) across the sector, Senators were advised that the receipt of funding letters would be delayed this year. HEFCE were expecting their funding letter in March 2016 and Bournemouth University expected to receive their funding letter on 19 April 2016. This letter would feed into the University's planning process in due course. Cuts were expected to 2015/16 funding and for the following two/three years. Overall, the University was in good financial shape and there was confidence that we would be able to adapt to respond to these funding pressures.
- 4.1.9 The Students' Union were uneasy with the effects of the cuts on students and were also concerned about student experiences and the fairness of access to education, particularly around the increase of fees and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) metrics, although it was noted that any improvements to teaching were a good move forward.
- 4.1.10 Prof Maggs questioned whether academic staff were permitted to discuss the forthcoming EU Referendum and state their personal views to students. Senators agreed that academic staff were free to state their views and staff should always provide a balanced argument.

5. DEBATES

5.1 Student Achievement and Progression: The Implications of Trailing Fails

- 5.1.1 The Chair advised Senators that following a discussion regarding student progression following failure at the October meeting of ULT, it was agreed that a review of the University Academic Regulations related to trailing unit(s), condoning (marginal) failed unit(s) and degree classification algorithms (preponderance principles) would be undertaken to inform a debate at the February Senate meeting. The issues had also been discussed at Faculty Academic Board meetings and the February Academic Standards Committee meeting.
- 5.1.2 Ms Symonds provided an overview of the University's current position, with input from Prof Phalp and Dr Main. The University currently does not allow students to trail failed units and students are required to successfully pass a repeat unit(s) before progressing to their next level of study. In practice, this means that students have to take a year out to complete their repeat unit(s), and on successful completion are eligible to progress to the next academic Level, and re-join a different cohort. This extra year of study would mean that students have extra financial expenditure and their student experience may be affected. By allowing failed unit(s) to be trailed, students would be able to progress to the next Level of a programme with their existing cohort whilst concurrently undertaking the failed unit(s) but this does increase the pressure on students who are academically weaker as they will be undertaking more than 120 credits.
- 5.1.3 The paper included sector research and whilst it was not possible to quantify some but not all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) allow the trailing of failed units, often with restrictions with regards to which units could be trailed e.g. core or non-core units, or option units. It was noted that many HEIs used different language to explain compensation and condoning marks, making comparisons difficult. Where trailing failed units was permitted and documented, the consensus appeared to be a small number of credits could be carried forward, with 20 credits being the preference.
- 5.1.4 The University was concerned about the number of students who reached the end of their first year of study and decided to leave. Analysis of the 2014/15 undergraduate cohort found 191 students (from a total of 3,955 Level 4 students) had an outcome where they failed one 20 credit unit and were required to repeat the unit with attendance. Of the 191 students, 169

students re-enrolled at the start of the 2015/16 academic year to complete a unit, and 22 students did not return. A more detailed analysis revealed that 3 of the 22 students had already repeated the unit and were not eligible to repeat again and were therefore withdrawn from the University, and 2 students enrolled late. Therefore, of the 22 who did not re-enrol, only 17 were actually eligible to re-enrol. 8 students had a mark of 30% and could therefore potentially be included in the definition of 'marginal fail'. It was this group who could potentially benefit from being allowed to trail a fail into the next year of study. The remainder had fails with unit marks of less than 30%.

5.1.5 An analysis was then carried out of the previous year (2013/14) and the figures were comparable. It was noted that 153 students failed one 20 credit unit in 2013/14, and of this 153, 130 re-enrolled in 2014/15 to complete the repeat unit, and of those, 100 subsequently re-enrolled on their programme full-time in 2015/16. 30 students did not return to continue their studies in 2015/16. Of those 30 students, some would have already had two attempts at passing the unit, which meant they had each attempted the assessment on 4 occasions and would have been withdrawn.

5.1.6 Senators were requested to consider a number of options and the possible timescales for any changes. Ms Symonds stated that in her view, there were 4 options available:

- Continue with the current approach; the processes were academically sound and suitable measures were in place to deal with students with mitigating circumstances;
- To reconsider the compensation regulations; the discussion at ASC agreed that the current percentage level associated with the University's compensation regulations was harsh compared with practice elsewhere in the sector, although the amount of credit that can be compensated in our regulations is more generous than elsewhere;
- Allow trailing a failed unit at Level 4 for marginal fails. The concept of a 'fast-track' and/or an alternative assessment as an exceptional opportunity to repeat a unit could be considered. This would need to take into account whether the unit was taken with or without attendance and the extent to which this impacted on attendance on other units. A benchmark for a definition of a marginal fail would need to be agreed – 30% was suggested. This fast track approach would, if the unit was successfully completed, enable students to remain with their original cohort.
- At Level 5 students on sandwich awards are normally allowed to trail one or two units whilst on placement. For students not on sandwich awards allowing them to trail a fail into Level 6 would need careful consideration as it could impact on their final degree outcome.

5.1.7 Dr Southern advised that if the trailing of failed units was implemented, and students were able to continue with attendance, consideration should be given to timetabling and every effort should be made to ensure the units were able to take place and any timetable clashes should be avoided. If a student passed their continuous assessment in the first year of study but failed their exam, the student should be able to stay with their cohort and then resit the examination only.

5.1.8 Dr Borkoles agreed that the suggested 'fast-track' option was worthy of consideration. She advised that whilst working as an external examiner at other institutions, she had observed an 'in unit recovery' system, which allowed students to have a further attempt at the assessment if students believed they had not performed well before the unit was completed. This re-assessment was marked as it normally would be, but the mark was not released to the student. Students could not achieve a better mark as a result of this re-assessment, it would only become 'live' if the student failed the unit. If the student passed this reassessment, a mark of 40% would be recorded. They also provided an opportunity for alternative assessment to students if the exam was only taken once a year. This alternative reassessment task had to be equal in terms of weighting, but it was not time bound (e.g. once a year exam). Students were able to submit reassessment during the summer and if the student passed, then they were able to join their original cohort in September. This system appeared to work well within other HEIs.

- 5.1.9 Discussions had taken place at Faculty Academic Boards. The FMC Faculty Academic Board had been in agreement with the suggestion of implementing the trailing of failed units from Level 4 to Level 5, and Level 5 to the placement year, but not in agreement to any failed units being trailed to the final year. After hearing about the debate which had taken place at the February Academic Standards Committee meeting, Prof Jukes did support the 'fast-track' suggestion along with the DDEPP for FMC and he believed the Faculty could cope with the administrative consequences. Within the FMC the proposed system of trailing failed units could only work without attendance.
- 5.1.10 Within the FHSS, the Faculty would have to consider any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies' (PSRB) requirements as well as core or optional units. The suggestion of the 'fast-track' could be accommodated within the FHSS for those students who were motivated to continue and would put in the extra effort to 'fast-track'. It was noted that if a student failed a unit twice, they would need additional academic support at the start of the academic year.
- 5.1.11 Prof MacRury advised that the work involved in establishing which units were core units and which units were optional was a significant amount of work, but believed the introduction of the failing of trailed units would be good for student experience, in particular for international students. Prof MacRury agreed with the suggestion of the 'fast-track' option and thought it may align with another catalyst of inputting a more coherent level of blended learning over the summer.
- 5.1.12 Prof Rosser suggested that with the constraints of the current situation, the existing structure should be examined further, and suggested the possible introduction of exam boards in early Spring, which would provide those students with a semester 1 fail with an opportunity to be reassessed earlier.
- 5.1.13 Prof Phalp advised that if a student was unable to remain with their cohort, this would have a significant impact on their student experience, and noted that BU compensation regulations were significantly more harsh than other HEIs, as other institutions go as low as 25% (although not for all units), particularly with Level 4 students, and further thought should be given to this area.
- 5.1.14 Dr Main agreed with Prof Phalp's comments and believed that looking at core and non-core units and applying a revised compensation regulation would be appropriate. If this type of regulation were agreed the number of marginal fails would decrease reducing a requirement for trailing failed units.
- 5.1.15 Ms Schendel-Wilson believed each student should be dealt with on a case by case basis and if a failed unit was important to their degree, the student should be advised why they failed. If a student failed by just a small number of marks, they should be allowed to continue and make good that failure in such a way as to ensure the student did not withdraw from the University. If a student met with their Academic Adviser for possibly just one hour to discuss the failed unit and areas for improvement, they may be able to improve their mark considerably upon repeating the unit.
- 5.1.16 Ms Symonds advised that over the past years, the University had been asked to reduce its flexibility of assessment boards in response to a comment that boards could exercise discretion.
- 5.1.17 Prof Maggs proposed that if the University felt passionate about introducing the trailing of failed units, then the logistics of the processes could be worked through. Prof Wilmore questioned whether the figures provided could be drilled down further to discover the patterns and the types of units which were leading to fails as it may well be fundamental elements of assessment that could be dealt with. It was important to deal with the root causes and this would require further analysis.
- 5.1.18 The discussion turned to the issue of non-attendance at lectures and the relationship with students failing. It was thought that if a student did not attend lectures and failed their unit again, it was agreed that a student repeating a unit with non-attendance would be likely to fail. Students needed to be aware they must engage with their unit. Senators suggested the introduction of attendance registers, although it was noted this would be a large task.

- 5.1.19 Prof Maggs gave an example from her previous institution whereby students could graduate by passing 16 out of 18 units, 16 being the minimum number of units to graduate. This process was never questioned by academic staff or external examiners and could be considered.
- 5.1.20 Prof McIntyre-Bhatty gave an overview of the areas discussed and which would need further consideration before the trailing of failed units were introduced to the University:
- Logistical and operational issues would need to be considered and mechanisms as to how they could be developed;
 - Would students who fail 20 credits be academically able to continue and would they be able to achieve their learning outcomes;
 - It was suggested that the trailing of failed units could be seen to be a better solution than compensation as the latter could mean that the University 'condones' that students had not achieved their learning outcomes.
 - The introduction of 'fast-track' would be very useful to students if they could repeat within the year without attendance.
- 5.1.21 Senators agreed to support the principle of trailing up to 20 credits at Level 4 and Level 5. The Chair agreed that further discussion would take place at the next Academic Standards Committee meeting and would return to Senate for final approval. Ms Symonds commented that the further discussions would need to examine Level 4 and Level 5 separately as the implications and how they would be managed would be different.

5.2 Summary of ESEC Debate on Placements and Further Deliberation Requested of Senate

- 5.2.1 Dr Osborne introduced the paper which summarised the discussion held at the February ESEC meeting. The three key points discussed and agreed upon by ESEC were:
- The deadline by which a student should secure a placement for Undergraduate sandwich degrees should be brought forward from mid-December to the end of August to enable those unplaced to progress to Level H on programmes where this was possible.
 - Placement and relevant work experience would be certified and the mechanism to do so was likely be through the implementation of the HE Achievement Record (HEAR).
 - Greater use of Academic Advisers to support dialogue with students regarding placements and work experience, and greater use of Placement Development Advisers and student communication campaigns should be made to ensure students on placement remain part of the BU community.
- 5.2.2 The final key point discussed at ESEC was with regards to the 40 week duration of placements. Further discussion on placement durations had focused on the achievement of Indicative Learning Outcomes and therefore quality, not quantity. Following discussion by Senate, it was anticipated that students should be advised of the decisions made before Easter 2016 in order to be compliant with the Competitions and Markets Authority guidance in order to be implemented for the 2016/17 cycle. Senators were reminded that national guidance did not recommend a 40 week placement and the HE landscape had changed significantly since the 1990s when the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) had originally determined the 40 week placement duration.
- 5.2.3 Ms Barron advised that not all students secure one 40 week placement and some students had already been securing two shorter placements. Prof Rosser suggested the minimum length of time for a placement should be 30 weeks as a year of study on campus is comprised of two 15 weeks semesters, but the final decision with regards to the length of the placement should be made personally by each student. Senators agreed that as professional placements within FHSS were 29 or 30 weeks in length, there was no strong rationale as to why other placements should be longer in length.

- 5.2.4 Following discussion, Senators agreed that prospective students would not be concerned having a shorter placement, and it was recognised that students could find it easier to secure a shorter placement as from an employer's perspective, it would result in having to pay a student for a shorter period of time which was believed to be favourable. With the introduction of shorter placements, students may also have the opportunity to build a portfolio of shorter placements. Prof McDougall believed the time was now right to consider this suggestion further.
- 5.2.5 Dr Osborne explained that a formal placement certificate would be provided to document the names of the companies and the length of each placement, linked to implementation of the HE Achievement Record (HEAR). Dr Minocha suggested that further work should be carried out looking at placement certification as there may be other routes available.
- 5.2.6 Following feedback received from students, Ms Schendel-Wilson reminded Senators that the level of support and contact students received from the University whilst they are on a placement was very important and should be focused upon more moving forward. In addition to the support provided, the cost of the placement year should be fully explained to students as historically students did not understand how the monies were used. Ms Barron advised an explanation of what the fee covers was on the BU website.
- 5.2.7 **Noted:** Senate noted the three decisions made by the Education & Student Experience Committee.
- 5.2.8 **Approved:** Senators approved the duration of a placement should be a minimum of 30 weeks in length.

6. OTHER REPORTS

6.1 Global BU Update – Quarter 2

- 6.1.1 Dr Minocha introduced the second quarterly Global BU update which included the key highlights of the last quarter and set out the key priorities for the next period. The report provided highlights of the external environment context for Global BU and structured the internal updates around the 1-6-3 framework of the Global Engagement Plan. The report would be available to view on the staff intranet from 9 March 2016.
- 6.1.2 Dr Minocha played a short film of a student who had recently visited Macau. The student shared her experiences, which included increasing her confidence, learning to work with and build relationships with others and improved team-working. The whole experience had been very positive and the student talked about how she felt it had made her more thoughtful, considerate and confident and she was now working much more closely with international students upon her return to the University.
- 6.1.3 The Global Festival of Learning would be piloted in 2016 and the event would take place in China and Malaysia and would occur over two days in both locations between 25 and 29 June 2016, which would coincide with the BU Festival of Learning. The Pro Vice-Chancellor Global Engagement would attend both locations and would be accompanied by staff, students and colleagues. Senators were advised to contact Dr Minocha for any further information.
- 6.1.4 **Noted:** Senate noted the Global BU Update for Quarter 2.

6.2 **Amendment to the definition of Higher Doctorate in 2A – Awards of the University: Policy and 8C – Higher Doctorate Awards at Bournemouth University: Procedure**

- 6.2.1 In October 2015 and February 2016, the Academic Standards Committee considered and approved the new academic procedure, *8C – Higher Doctorate Awards at Bournemouth University: Procedure*. The procedure outlined the formal process for awarding a Higher Doctorate at the University and was submitted for note.

- 6.2.2 The procedure incorporated an amendment to the current award title of Higher Doctorate which was defined in the *2A – Awards of Bournemouth University: Policy*.

The change to the definition for the Higher Doctorate was proposed as follows:

Original Definition: *‘Such an applicant shall be a holder of at least seven years’ standing of a first degree or a holder of at least four years’ standing of a higher degree’.*

Proposed new Definition: *‘Such an applicant shall be a holder of at least four years’ standing of a higher degree (normally Doctorate)’.*

This change had been made following the unanimous agreement of the Graduate School Research Degrees Committee.

- 6.2.3 Prof Zhang advised that Higher Doctorates were prestigious awards and were normally reserved for those with a Doctorate who were leading figures internationally, however it was acknowledged there would be exceptional cases. The updated wording did not exclude those with exceptional circumstances.
- 6.2.4 Dr Gunstone advised there had been inconsistencies in relation to the award titles listed within the *2A – Awards of the University: Policy* and *8C – Higher Doctorate Awards at Bournemouth University: Procedure*. •EDQ agreed to check the documents accordingly before republication.
- 6.2.5 **Approved:** Senate approved the amended definition of Higher Doctorate for inclusion in *2A – Awards of the University: Policy* (section 7.7.1). The revised definition would also be included in *8C – Higher Doctorate Awards at Bournemouth University: Procedure*.

7. FACULTY OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SCIENCES MINUTES OF 4 FEBRUARY 2016 (UNCONFIRMED)

- 7.1 **Noted:** The Faculty of Health & Social Sciences minutes were noted.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 8.1 Ms Stevens raised an issue about the timing of Senate meetings and the proposed requirement for Faculty Academic Board (FAB) meetings to take place prior to Senate meeting dates in order that the minutes could be submitted to Senate in a timely manner. Prof Maggs advised that it was difficult to hold the Faculty of Science & Technology FAB meeting in October as it was not possible for Student Reps to attend, and therefore suggested the October Senate meeting be held later in the year in order that Student Reps could have their training and attend the FAB meeting. It was noted that Student Reps are elected in October each year and then receive training at the end of October.
- 8.2 The Chair advised that the timing of FAB meetings had been examined and were required to take place prior to each Senate meeting in order that the FAB minutes were available to Senate and that any issues raised could be considered in a timely fashion. Prof McIntyre-Bhatty advised that each Faculty would have business to discuss from the end of the previous academic year at the October meeting, therefore each FAB should manage its business moving forward, irrespective of when the meeting takes place.
- 8.3 Following discussion, it was agreed the matter would be discussed outside of the meeting in order to try and find a solution.

9. DATES OF THE NEXT MEETING:

Electronic Senate – 9.00am on Wednesday 18 May 2016
Senate Meeting – 2.15pm on Wednesday 8 June 2016