ACADEMIC REVIEW COMMITTEE
26TH FEBRUARY 2020

REDACTED MINUTES FOR PUBLICATION

A Meeting of the Academic Review Committee was held at UCEM, Horizons, 60 Queen's Road, Reading RG1 4BS and via Zoom video conference from 1.30-4.30pm on Wednesday 26th February 2020.

Present:	Helen Edwards [HE]	(from item 2.5a)
	Phoebe Farrell [PF]	
	Wendy Finlay [WF]	
	Stephen Jackson [SJ]	via Zoom
	Hazel Lobo [HL]	
	Kenneth Miller [KM]	(Chair)
	Nick Morton [NMo]	via Zoom
	Ashley Wheaton [AW]	
In attendance:	Hannah Al-Katib [HAK]	(for item 2.3c only)
	Nikki Bulteel [NB]	(for item 2.2 only)
	Gethin Edwards [GE]	(for item 2.5 only)
	Jane Fawkes [JEF]	(University College Secretary)
	John Pratt [JP]	(for item 3 only)
	Eliza White [EW]	(note taker)
Apologies for absence:	Chris Maguire [CM]	

1) GENERAL MEETING GOVERNANCE

1424   1.1/ DECARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

1425   There were no conflicts of interest declared.

1426   1.2/ TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABCENCE

1427   There were apologies for absence from Chris Maguire.

1428   1.3/ TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 21ST MAY 2019

1429   The minutes of the Academic Review Committee held 21st May 2019 were **APPROVED** as a true record.

1430   1.4/ TO APPROVE THE REDACTED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21ST MAY 2019

1431   The Academic Review Committee **NOTED** the proposed redactions from the minutes of the meeting held 21st May 2019. The minutes, including the redactions, were **APPROVED** by the Committee.

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1432 **1.5/ TO CONSIDER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT INCLUDED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA**

1433 An actions summary from the previous meeting was circulated as Paper 1.5 and all matters were either closed, due to be discussed further during the course of the meeting, or for review at another meeting.

1434 **1.6/ TO REVIEW THE COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1435 The Committee reviewed the Academic Review Committee Terms of Reference, as included at paper 1.6. JEF outlined the recent review at Nominations & Governance Committee in January to add item 3, which clarifies Academic Review Committee's remit, and also noted the changes to membership.

1436 KM proposed adding OFSTED explicitly to the Committee's remit. The Committee **AGREED** to add an explicit reference to OFSTED under item 1.

1437 HL noted the requirement to ensure representation of Level 3 on the Committee, to which the attendees **AGREED**. AW additionally suggested that the external view represented at the Committee adds value and should be included in the Terms of Reference. KM highlighted the importance of this.

1438 JEF noted that CM had served the Committee for three years. Therefore, the Committee **AGREED** to end his term of office as an external adviser to the Committee, and to seek a new member.

> **ACTION** **To write to CM to thank him for his service and commence the search for a new adviser. [JEF]**

1439 JEF noted that CM's comments which he supplied in his absence should be adopted as the required practice in the event of a Committee Member being unable to attend the meeting.

2/ COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION WITH THE OFFICE FOR STUDENTS

1440 **2.1/ TO NOTE THE ACADEMIC REVIEW COMMITTEE SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS**

1441 The Committee noted papers 2.1 and 2.1a, which outlined the Schedule of Business for upcoming Academic Review Committee meetings. JEF explained that the Office for Students (OfS) requires sight of these elements.

1442 **2.2/ TO REVIEW UCEM'S MONITORING OF THE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN**

1443 Nikki Bulteel [NB] was invited to present on the monitoring of UCEM's Access and Participation Plan.

1444 NB provided a summary Report of the 19-20 Access & Participation Plan. She clarified those actions on the plan set at red, some of which are in their infancy of implementation, with

others slightly behind schedule, with a view to progress them to amber within a month. The Committee noted the in-progress actions, with the intention to monitor them going forward.

1445   WF enquired into the OfS requirement of producing an impact report, with guidance from the regulator yet to be published. JEF noted the challenge of evaluating & presenting the impact of the Plan. She stressed that the OfS is looking for impact, not implementation and she highlighted this as an area of risk. NB proposed interviewing students to gain feedback in order to assess impact. JEF updated the Committee that the data set on Access & Participation from the OfS will be publish in April or May.

1446   HL noted that there is synergy with the degree outcomes statement.

1447   KM thanked NB for her contribution and invited her to leave the meeting.

1448   2.3a/ TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON PROGRESS WITH NSS AND SES

1449   WF noted that this year's surveys launched in January. Referring to papers 2.3a.i and 2.3a.ii, she noted the aim to significantly increase output. She referred to the action plan with both short-term projects, which were implemented prior to this year's survey launch, & longer-term projects. The plan is tracked and monitored on a monthly basis.

1450   She explained that there had been a change to the approach in communicating the surveys to students, with an emphasis on closing the feedback loop. Programme leaders & module leaders have been encouraging participation, and UCEM is currently 8% ahead of last year's response rate. HL added that Programme Support Tutors also engaging and reminding students. She noted that module marks release is an excellent time to ask students to fill out the survey.

1451   WF notified the Committee that during the process, in-survey learning points are being tracked, in order to improve next year's drive.

1452   PF observed the positivity in the student community regarding these enhancements, and that she had noted a trend of positive feedback from the Student Community. She added that the implementation of Unitu will be a useful feedback platform.

1453   2.3b/ TO REPORT ON UCEM'S COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

1454   JEF reported to the Committee on UCEM's process for Complaints and Appeals, as included at paper 2.3b. She noted that oversight of complaints and appeals is a requirement for the Office for Students. JEF noted that no complaints had been escalated to OIA, and few complaints had been made overall in the last academic year.

1455   2.3c/ TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON PROJECT TRANSFORM

1456   Hannah Al-Katib [HAK] was invited to present an update on the Transform Project to the Committee. She explained that Transform has been adapting to the re-scope made in the last quarter and the current focus is on the re-validation of programmes.

1457   Along with the re-validations, a Draft Assessment strategy has been in focus. Undergraduate module development has been progressing since the re-validation of these programmes. She highlighted some benefits of the Project, including re-submissions and quicker results release.

1458   She explained that some important decisions had been taken, including postponing opt-out re-registration, and instead work is being done to enhance the current system. REDACTED.

1459   AW noted the success of delivering the Project under budget.

1460   HAK explained the student communication plan, with Emma Kearsey liaising with student-facing teams.

1461   **ACTION   To discuss change communication to students with Emma Kearsey. [PF]**

1462   **ACTION   To raise Transform at the next Board Meeting. [JEF]**

1463   KM thanked HAK for her contribution and invited her to leave the meeting.

1464   2.3d/ TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON PROGRAMME VALIDATIONS TO DATE

1465   WF updated the Committee on the progress to programme re-validations during this academic year, as included at paper 2.3d. The re-validations were a key element of the Transform project, and these programmes were enhanced for Transform from the Current Academic Offer (CAO).

1466   She explained that all undergraduate programmes and the Access programme were re-validated in December, including apprenticeships, for a 5-year period.

1467   AW announced during the meeting that the postgraduate re-validation, having taken place on the same day as the Committee meeting, had been successful, with no conditions. KM expressed congratulations on behalf of the Committee for this outcome.

1468   3.3/ TO REVIEW UCEM COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITION F1 – TRANSPARENCY RETURN

1469   WF outlined UCEM's intention to provide a full-time offer, as included at paper 2.3e. She explained the intention to launch this offer in Autumn 2021, and it had been captured in the 5-year Access & Participation Plan. She noted the expectation for 100 students in the first intake. The aim of these programmes is to reach a different market of students, particularly the emerging commuter student market.

1470   She explained an initial project team had been convened to research how to deliver these programmes, with a focus on the subjects to offer, the types of students interested in a full-time offer, the correct pedagogical approach, including how to blend the use of the VLE and face-to-face teaching, and the optimal semester structure. A full project plan and business plan will be developed based on this research, which is informed from the existing intake data UCEM records.

1471   WF noted the short timeframe for implementation, given the requirement to have the programmes listed on UCAS in September 2020, for an Autumn 2021 start. She explained that Academic Board will approve the plan, and validation would be scheduled in June. She also noted availability of resources as a risk factor, particularly with Transform.

1472   2.4a/ TO REVIEW THE ADMISSIONS ANNUAL REPORT

1473 JEF presented the Admissions Annual Report for the year 2018-2019 to the Committee. She noted that it had been approved by QSEC.

1474 JEF also noted the conversion to registration rate was the highest for years, which is due to the increase in personal contact with students. Other enhancements included the live chat service on the website and the module registration portal developed by Tribal. She explained that apprenticeship admissions would soon be integrated into the same process. She also noted Mauritius being an emerging market.

1475 **ACTION   To find out where withdrawing students were then applying to. [JEF]**

1476 AW explained some of the challenging aspects of student recruitment, noting the market conditions, and the effect to business with the postgraduate apprenticeship standard not being approved.

1477   2.5a/ TO REVIEW THE RETENTION AND PROGRESSION RATES

1478 Gethin Edwards [GE] was invited to present on the Institution's Retention and Progression Rates to the Committee.

1479 REDACTED.

1480 He noted that the OfS only monitors continuation of students based in the UK and highlighted the need for strong module pass rates. He explained that programme completion rates were improving, along with module pass rates. Postgraduate programmes had achieved the target programme completion rate.

1481 GE also explained that the OfS' choice of methodology for analysing continuation and success rates, and that CX Student Outcome targets were aligned with the OFS requirements.

1482 He added that module success rates have been analysed in the context of demographics, which has informed the work of Academic Support. This data is used to predict which students may require additional support. AW highlighted that apprentices were succeeding at a higher rate than non-apprenticeship students, which points to support from employers.

1483 KM thanked GE for his contribution and invited him to leave the meeting.

1484   2.6a/ TO REVIEW THE EXTERNAL EXAMINERS REPORT

1485 WF presented the External Examiners Report for the year 2018-2019, at paper 2.6a. She noted that the report overall is positive, that UCEM is maintaining quality standards, and has addressed areas from previous feedback supplied.

1486   2.6b/ TO APPROVE THE UPDATED ACADEMIC RISK REGISTER

1487 The Committee was advised that the Risk Register had recently been reviewed to align with the new CX Strategy. JEF noted that many risks have been re-categorised. She highlighted that the OfS has been featured for the first time and is rated as high-risk due to the implications if UCEM were no longer to meet a condition of registration.

1488 JEF noted that Audit Committee would be discussing the risk registers the following day and feedback from Academic Review Committee would be taken to Audit Committee.

1489   The Committee **APPROVED** the updates to the Academic Risk Register.

1490   2.6c/ TO REVIEW THE UCEM ENHANCEMENT PLAN

1491   HE presented paper 2.6c to the Committee, which detailed UCEM's enhancements in Learning and Teaching for the current academic year. She noted some significant items relating to the Learning, Teaching & Assessment strategy, Transform and the apprenticeship provision.

1492   JEF explained that the Enhancement Plan was now embedded in the scorecard along with the targets and is reviewed at the monthly OC meetings.

1493   2.7a/ TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON PERMANENT DEGREE AWARDING POWERS

1494   JEF introduced Paper 2.7a to the Committee, which gave an overview of UCEM's progress with applying for permanent Degree Awarding Powers (DAPS).

1495   She noted that securing permanent DAPS will ensure UCEM's future. She explained the procedure involves the OfS undertaking desk-based exercise and assessing the level of risk. They then contact the QAA, who assesses the provider submission. JEF notified the Committee that UCEM has asked the OfS to assess the institution's risk. Therefore, she estimated that UCEM will likely engage with the QAA in Autumn 2020.

1496   AW noted the decision to apply for Permanent DAPS was in line with Year 1 of the CX Strategy.

1497   2.7b/ TO REVIEW THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW AND PROVIDER SUBMISSION

1498   HE presented on UCEM's Institutional Review and Provider Submission. With the Institutional Review commencing on 31st March, she noted the focus will be on 3 programmes: BSc Building Surveying, BSc Quantity Surveying and MSc Real Estate. An external panel from the sector will undertake the review. The panel will create a report after the event, where areas for enhancement and commendations will be included.

1499   **ACTION   To report back to the Academic Review Committee on the Provider Submission, with the report from the review. [HE]**

1500   2.7c/ TO REVIEW THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW AND PROVIDER SUBMISSION

1501   HL introduced paper 2.7c, which explained the Degree Outcomes Task and Finish Group's purpose of producing a Degree Outcomes Statement.

1502   She drew attention to the review process, which she noted is more significant than the statement itself. UCEM is required to publish this on the website by the end of this academic year, with the Board of Trustees having ultimate responsibility to sign off on the statement.

1503   HL recommended viewing a webinar by the QAA for sign-off groups. She also recommended supplying the report to a different group prior to submitting it to the Board.

1504   SJ noted that the purpose of the statement was mainly to mitigate grade inflation, which is not an issue for UCEM. He noted that this statement will confirm this fact with UCEM's

regulators and can assist UCEM in its pursuit of permanent DAPS. HL added that the statement will be helpful in demonstrating the impact of Transform.

1505   HE explained she had been conferring with the QAA regarding UCEM's grade profile and clarified that the statement should address the last 5 years, which means it should also include legacy degree outcomes.

3/ COMPLIANCE WITH OFSTED

1506   3.1/ TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE OFSTED QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (QIP)

1507   John Pratt [JP] was invited to present on UCEM's progress with the OFSTED Quality Improvement Plan, included at paper 3.1.

1508   JP explained that the Plan was initially informed by the outcomes from the MOCK-STED review in 2018/19. He highlighted three themes included in the plan: tutor development (in terms of quality of feedback and delivery), progress management and curriculum implementation.

1509   REDACTED. He added that UCEM was on target to complete all enhancements by their stated completion dates.

1510   **ACTION   To supply the RAG-rated Quality Improvement Plan at the next Academic Review Committee meeting in April. [JP]**

1511   KM thanked JP for his contribution and invited him to leave the meeting.

1512   4/ ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1513   With no additional items of business reported, KM thanked the Committee for their contributions, and called the meeting to a close.

Date of next meeting:

Thursday 30th April 2020 from 13.30-16.30pm, Reading and videoconference