UCEM | UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF ESTATE MANAGEMENT

ACADEMIC REVIEW COMMITTEE
19TH JULY 2022

REDACTED MINUTES FOR PUBLICATION

A meeting of the Academic Review Committee was held via Zoom video conference from 10.00-12.00noon on Tuesday 19th July 2022.

Present:	Tony Burke [TB]	
	Helen Edwards [HE]	
	Wendy Finlay [WF]	
	Dr. Stephen Jackson [SJ]	
	Hazel Lobo [HL]	
	Prof. Kenneth Miller [KM]	(Chair)
	Nick Morton [NM]	
	Joe Orrell [JO]	
In attendance:	Stephen Bartle [SB]	(for item 2.1 only)
	Laura Bell McMillan [LBM]	(Board Apprentice, observing)
	Gavin Dellman [GD]	(for item 2.2 only)
	Lynne Downey [LD]	(for items 2.2 - 4.1 only)
	Gethin Edwards [GE]	(for items 2.1 and 2.2 only)
	Jane Fawkes [JEF]	(University College Secretary)
	Lyndsay Hughes [LH]	(Clerk to the Board of Trustees)
	Mike Speight [MS]	(for items 2.2 and 4.2 only)
Apologies for absence:	Grant Alexander [GA]	
	Susan Dawson [SD]	
	Ashley Wheaton [AW]	

1) GENERAL MEETING GOVERNANCE

1863   **1.1/ DECARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

1864   There were no conflicts of interest declared.

1865   **1.2/ APOLOGIES FOR ABCENCE**

1866   There were apologies for absence from Grant Alexander, Susan Dawson and Ashley Wheaton.

1867   The Chair welcomed Joe Orrell to his first meeting of Academic Review Committee as Student Trustee and Laura Bell McMillan, Board Apprentice, who was observing the meeting.

1868   **1.3/ MINUTES AND REDACTIONS OF THE MEETING HELD 21ST OCTOBER 2022**

1869   The minutes and proposed redactions (highlighted grey) of the Academic Review Committee held 21st October 2021 were **APPROVED** as a true record. The redacted minutes will be published on the UCEM website in order to maintain compliance with Office for Students Conditions of Registration.

1870   1.4/ MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT INCLUDED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

1871   An actions summary from the previous meeting was circulated as Paper 1.4 and the Committee noted that the actions from the last meeting were now closed.

1872   1.5/ THE ACADEMIC REVIEW COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

1873   Following the appointment of a new Student Trustee to the Committee, the resignation of the Staff Trustee and the appointment of Susan Dawson to the Committee as External Representative (Apprenticeships) the Terms of Reference have been updated once more. The Committee was also advised that Tony Burke will retire from the University of Westminster this summer and therefore also cease to be an External Representative on the Committee. The proposed changes to the Terms of Reference and membership of the Committee were presented in tracked changed mode in paper 1.5a for the Committee to consider.

1874   The Committee **APPROVED** the Academic Review Committee Terms of Reference V12.01 for approval as the new V13.

        ACTION: Finalise and publish the updated Terms of Reference for the Committee as the new V13.0. [LH]

1875   The Committee **NOTED** the retirement of Tony Burke from the Committee after this meeting and that recruitment of a new External Representative would take place through Autumn 2022. The Committee thanked Tony for his contributions and wished him well for his retirement.

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

1876   The Chair reminded the Committee of the role of all Sub-Committees of the Board in monitoring ongoing compliance with OfS Conditions of Registration and that the A and B Conditions are the responsibility of the Academic Review Committee. As such, the Committee is presented with full updates on compliance at each meeting.

1877   2.1/ A1: ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN

1878   Stephen Bartle [SB] and Gethin Edwards [GE] joined the meeting to update the committee on the latest activities and progress against targets in UCEM's Access and Participation Plan 2020-2024.

1879   GE reported that UCEM has continued to work hard on its Access and Participation Plan this year. UCEM will shortly submit a variation request in response to new priorities set out by the OfS and to ensure ongoing compliance with Condition A1. A consultation on proposals for new APPs is expected in the autumn for a new UCEM APP to be submitted for approval by summer 2023 for 2024/25 onwards. UCEM's

APP Project Board has overseen planning for how UCEM will achieve the work required by the OfS deadlines during this coming year.

1880   In relation to Part One of condition A1 and in response to a previously submitted variation request and at the request of the OfS, UCEM recently submitted its evaluation of UCEM's use of fee waivers, which concluded that the fee waivers offered do meet the needs of students covered by the APP.

1881   UCEM continues to comply with part two of condition A1 (complying with the provisions set out in the Plan) through the work of the APP Project Board's oversight which itself has helped to integrate APP activities with the wider institutional objectives and projects underway. UCEM is making good progress towards meeting the targets and OfS confirmed in May 2022 that through recent monitoring it had no matters to draw attention to UCEM's attention. Overall, therefore, UCEM remains fully compliant with condition A1.

1882   The workload demands related to this condition have been heavy and there is a lot of work to come. UCEM has a rigorous governance model now in place for this workstream and the benefits of the Project Board approach are paying off.

1883   The Chair opened the floor to discussion on the update provided. The Committee noted that there was just one significant red in the RAG rating of progress towards meeting AP targets outlined in Appendix A and queried if there was scope to change the milestones given UCEM's performance to date. GE reported that the target related to an extremely small number of students in terms of headcount and just one or two students can swing the percentage target significantly. It is therefore the target UCEM is least worried about as even if it is not met it is explainable and will not raise OfS concerns. The Committee's External Representatives were impressed with UCEM's performance on APP and commented that the performance on milestone targets looks healthy to them. Many institutions are suffering a slow return to full engagement post-Covid.

1884   Where students fall into multiple categories of APP targets, UCEM does not look at these in a particularly nuanced way because the numbers are so very small – this is highlighted in the plan to the OfS.

1885   The forthcoming summary document and APP variation request was approved internally recently, and the Board will be provided with copies of the final submission at its next meeting in September for information. The summary focuses on UCEM's apprenticeship provision and UCEM's work to support student success.

1886   The Committee **NOTED** that UCEM remains compliant with Condition of Registration A1and the progress against the APP targets in the 2021-22 year. The Committee particularly welcomed and commended the clear integration of this workstream into UCEM's operations and the governance model put in place with the APP Project Board. The Committee thanked SB/GE for their leadership on this work.

1887   The Chair thanked SB and GE for their contributions and invited them to leave the meeting.

1888   **2.2/ B3: DELIVER SUCCESSFUL STUDENT OUTCOMES**

1889   Mike Speight, Lynne Downey, Gethin Edwards and Gavin Dellman joined the meeting to present to the Committee on UCEM's work to deliver successful student outcomes and the latest student results data. The item focused on three separate elements of student outcomes – completion targets, latest data on module success and outcomes by protected characteristics.

1890   WF explained that UCEM's CX Strategy sets out stretching targets for student outcomes. By 2024/25 70% of UCEM students will be successful on their programmes (defined as the percentage of achievement of a full award from first registration, all programmes by the end of the maximum registration period) and an additional 15% will achieve a partial or intermediate award. The targets are stretching given UCEM's current performance so how UCEM defines and measures its progress is important.

1891   The paper sets out how UCEM will define the CX Strategy Student Outcomes target. It also proposes that UCEM should monitor several indicators on a semesterly basis to inform progress towards achieving the defined target – these indicators would include retention rates, rates of actively studying students, module success rates and cohort success rates per semester. Reviewing semesterly will allow identification of risk and will inform interventions. The aim is also to focus on timely completion (two years for postgraduate, four and a half years for undergraduate) so UCEM can understand its progress towards the overall targets.

1892   The Committee welcomed the paper and noted that it had been approved through due internal processes.

1893   WF/MS presented slides on UCEM's latest module and award success data from autumn 2021 (final results) and Spring 2022 (first assessment data only). The presentation was shared on the Trustee Portal following the meeting.

1894   WF reminded that Committee that UCEM's in-year target was for 65% full award with a further 10% partial award (lower than the full CX strategy targets). UCEM tracks award success by cohort and data was presented on the completion and non-continuation rates by student intake. The data revealed UCEM still has a higher proportion that desirable of students leaving UCEM without any award at all, which is uncomfortable both morally and financially for the institution. This includes students on apprenticeships.

1895   UCEM also tracks module KPIs, aiming for 87% module success rates across all levels (with individual targets by levels too). Module success data is based on students registered on the module so does not capture those who might already have left UCEM.

1896   The Autumn 2021 full results post resubmissions show a flat level of achievement despite the Transform enhancements but also show that resubmissions did have a positive impact on the data – without them the performance would have been even lower. However, the overall performance against KPIs show a significant gap to close to meet target.

1897   UCEM believes the targets are still achievable, particularly as the targets are being achieved by apprentices. UCEM has identified that there are challenges with other groups of students such as non-=apprenticeships and Hong Kong that will need to be addressed.

1898   REDACTED

1899   In summary, UCEM considers engagement is key. The focus in the coming year will be to focus interventions on the right students, ensuring they are on the right journeys and receiving the right experience with UCEM to lead to the right outcome.

1900   JO commented that apprentice success rates being higher than non-apprentices is no surprise and mirrors other feedback received. Apprentices receive a higher level of support from both their employers and UCEM and have a defined 20% of their weekly time dedicated to their studies. UCEM is considering how enhanced support may be made available for other groups of students too.

1901   The Committee queried whether UCEM has analysed why students do not continue and complete with UCEM. Many students do have complex personal situations that contribute to engagement issues. Once students disengage it can be difficult for them to re-engage. UCEM will be seeking to focus on students whose engagement can be impacted by early intervention from UCEM.

1902   NM commented that the sector generally saw improved student outcomes in the first phase of lockdown in 2020 as students had more time to study, however first-time pass rates declined post-covid. UCEM's results mirror this wider experience in the sector where student behaviour is manifested as poor attendance and lack of engagement resulting in predictively poor performance and driven by passivity. REDACTED

1903   The Committee queried what action UCEM takes with the modules that fail to reach the KPI. WF reported that UCEM has undertaken deep dives into these modules to identify delivery issues that can be removed. UCEM has also undertaken assessment reconstruction work to ensure assessment is relevant and has done a lot of work to launch in autumn on workload and duplication within modules given how time poor UCEM students are which is providing two clear weeks in every module to every student

1904   The Committee **NOTED** the student outcomes data presented and the work UCEM is doing to address issues within its delivery and to support its students to succeed. The Committee encouraged NM/WF to continue discussions about student engagement after the meeting.

         ACTION: Have separate conversations outside of ARC about student engagement and NM's research findings. [NM/WF]

1904   GE/GD presented a report on student success rates by protected characteristics – data originally requested by the Nominations and Governance Committee given that the proportion of underrepresented groups have been increasing but considered more appropriate for Academic Review Committee to review in detail. The report was collated using the latest module success data and data on completion and retention.

1905   GD reported that the data shows there are gaps in success rates between the various groups of students. There is a relatively high module success rate amongst young students for each level but only 29% of the active student population is in this group. Female students are marginally more successful, and the gender performance gap is

the closest of all the comparisons being made. Those from an ethnic minority (UK only) were less successful but this is a small proportion of students at 16% and those who have declared a disability have not performed as well as those without one.

1906   In terms of completion and continuation, rates are generally higher amongst female students (particularly at postgraduate level) and young students and are lower in ethnic minorities and those with a declared disability.

1907   GD/GE concluded by saying that the data presented no real surprises and reinforced trends UCEM is seeing commonly and in the data and performance on the APP. UCEM is working to close the performance gaps and is cognisant of where focus is needed on this.

1908   The Committee **NOTED** the student success rates by protected characteristics report.

1909   The Chair thanked MS, GE and GD for their contributions to the Committee and invited them to leave the meeting.

1910   **2.3/ B6: PARTICIPATION IN TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK AND STUDENT OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK**

1911   Helen Edwards presented paper 2.3 to the Committee on UCEM's activities to prepare for being part of the Teaching Excellence Framework. The Committee was reminded that UCEM has not engaged in previous rounds of TEF due to not meeting the data criteria and carried only a provisional rating. UCEM aims to achieve a full TEF rating in 2022/23 and as a result has established a TEF Working Group to lead this work. The group is currently focussed on understanding TEF expectations, considering what needs to be done and developing a strategy and plan to achieve this, engaging the relevant staff members institutionally as necessary. The Lead Student Representative is part of the Group membership and will be vital to the Student Submission.

1912   UCEM has gathered data from recent years to give an indication of how it is tracking against current TEF expectations, noting that the consultation outcomes regarding how TEF will evolve have yet to be published by the OfS. UCEM has challenges on student experience and student outcomes but preparing for TEF provides an opportunity to focus on strengths and outlining how UCEM will seek to address perceived weaknesses.

1913   The Committee commented that many traditional universities have struggled to adapt to TEF and the external measures/league tables associated with it - UCEM's preparations seem comprehensive and appropriate.

1914   The Committee discussed the concept of 'learning gain' in TEF, which is considered to be the distance travelled by students between point of entry and point of exit, though this is challenging to measure in a quantitative way. It is similar to the historic concept of 'value added'.

1915   The Committee also discussed the shift in emphasis in TEF from processes and teaching quality to outcomes, student achievements and employability. UCEM should fare well on the employability side given the student base is largely mature and in employment already. UCEM is considering what can be provided as additional

evidence for TEF, particularly around student satisfaction and apprenticeship students beyond the small numbers included in NSS each year. There should also be evidence to draw on from the impact of enhancements to UCEM provision, External Examiners feedback and from recent re-accreditations with professional statutory regulatory bodies.

1916   The Committee **NOTED** the work that UCEM is undertaking to prepare for engagement in the next round of TEF scheduled to take place from autumn 2022.

3) ACADEMIC PROJECTS

1917   **3.1/ TRANSFORM EVALUATION**

1918   Wendy Finlay updated the Committee on the evaluation work that has been undertaken on the UCEM Transform Project and the conclusions, recommendations and next steps as a result (paper 3.1).

1919   WF reminded the Committee that Transform was a cross institutional project aimed to simplify the UCEM student journey and drive profitability. WF also reminded the Committee that Transform had a major rescope in summer 2019, just thirteen months ahead of project launch. In those thirteen months, every single UCEM programme was revalidated and Covid impacted the institution. All programmes were still built for launch in autumn 2020 and all current students were transferred onto the new programmes (there was no legacy runout).

1920   The paper highlights that there were many achievements through Transform but ultimately the project has, as yet, failed to have the impact on student success rates originally aspired to and there is a sense of disappointment and fatigue amongst staff about this. Resubmissions were a significant success and UCEM continues to work on the remaining issues of workload within its modules. UCEM will learn lessons from Transform for future institutional projects.

1921   The Committee welcomed the honest evaluation and commented that often, positive outcomes from and the benefits of major transformational programmes are not realised in such a short timescale and take many years to come to fruition. The Committee urged staff not to be despondent. UCEM might wish to consider the evaluation from the perspective of what the business would be like if Transform hadn't been undertaken.

1922   The Committee queried what student outcome led design was. LD explained that this was a focus on learning outcomes on the modules and a drive to ensure that additional content or activities that were not directly related to the core student outcomes were not included – a focus on the core elements of what a student really needs to know for their assessment in each module given how time poor UCEM students are. All new modules have been built with this ethos and model in mind as the UCEM approach for the present and the future.

1923   UCEM initiated take home exams during Covid and is now reviewing how they can be adopted more widely within UCEM programmes. UCEM aims to be more considered in its approach to assessment in future validations, potentially with programme level assessment.

1924   The Committee **NOTED** the Transform evaluation report and outcomes.

4) ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND MONITORING

1925   **4.1/ NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY RESULT 2022**

1926   Lynne Downey provided an update to the Committee on the UCEM NSS Result 2022, released on 6th July 2022, and provided some initial analysis of the data (paper 4.1).

1927   LD reported that there was a drop in the UCEM response rate to the survey of 8.8% (total responding population of just 214 students), but UCEM scored 74.88% overall satisfaction, a marginal increase of 0.2% on last year and in line with the relevant benchmarks. UCEM also modelled its scores against other Built Environment provision around the country and would have been ninth out of twenty institutions.

1928   The data also shows that mature students are more satisfied (78.64%) than younger students (71%) and that non-apprenticeship students are more satisfied (82.19%) than apprentice students (71.1% - a 2.68% increase on last year but still a gap of 11.18% between the two cohorts). UCEM's biggest increased scores were on feedback on my work and feeling part of a community of staff and students and the biggest decreases were on staff making the subject matter interesting and the course being intellectually stimulating, with clear gaps between apprentices and non-apprentices responses once again. Also, of note this year, is the reduction in the numbers scoring an answer of 3 to any questions and the increase in responses of 1 and 2, where 4 and 5 have stayed relatively flat. The largest gaps between apprentice and non-apprentice scores were seen on questions relating to marking and assessment being fair (22%), receiving helpful comments on work (21.32%) and feeling part of a community (20.77%).

1929   UCEM is undertaking more analysis on the results and the qualitative comments. UCEM will also be tracking scores for both apprentices and non-apprentices in all areas separately from now on as the gaps are substantial, yet the apprentice student population is becoming increasingly significant to UCEM. UCEM will also be continuing its work on developing the student community further this year.

1930   It was recommended that UCEM tracks the response rate and not the absolute number of respondents in the future.

         ACTION: **Include the response rate in the NSS analysis in future years and not just the absolute number of respondents. [LD]**

1931   JO reported that he had discussed the NSS results with some students following publication and those that he spoke to were very positive about the academic provision. His discussions resonate with the results that it is non-apprentice students who struggle more with their studies yet score UCEM higher than non-apprentices. His conversations reflected the results on student community where apprentices feel this is lacking, probably because they are so time poor and because workshops are no longer face to face.

1932   REDACTED

         ACTION: **Discuss how to secure student feedback on potential enhancements to final year apprenticeship programmes. [JO/WF]**

1933   The Committee **NOTED** the UCEM NSS results 2022, and that further work is now planned to address some of the findings and to analyse the data in more detail.

1934   The Chair thanked LD for her contribution and invited her to leave the meeting.

1935   **4.2/ APPRENTICESHIP KPIs**

1936   Mike Speight joined the meeting to provide an update on the Apprenticeship KPIs that UCEM monitors, and which provide an overview of performance, as well as highlighting particular strengths and areas of focus for enhancement (paper. 4.2).

1937   MS highlighted that UCEM consistently scores well in employer satisfaction and for the Level 3 programme. Its key areas of concern are around retention and achievement – consistent themes for UCEM. The data looks at overall apprenticeship achievement and not just the degree component.

1938   MS reported that the ESFA is launching its new Accountability Framework from 1st August, which takes a scorecard approach to monitoring provision looking at rates of withdrawals, progression and overstaying. In anticipation of the Framework going live, the ESFA has held discussions with individual providers on areas of potential concern to them and again it was retention and achievement that were raised with UCEM. UCEM has held positive and constructive discussions in response about how it is working to address these matters for its apprentices, and this was positively received.

1939   The issue of achievement rates for UCEM is partly about timeliness. UCEM's apprentices often secure the degree component of the apprenticeship in the desired timeframes but are not proceeding to their RICS APC End Point Assessment within the required timeframe. This can be as a result of furlough, covid or them not being ready in the opinion of their counsellors, for some students it is also about their employers not appreciating that completion of the apprenticeship relies on securing the APC and not the degree element. UCEM is working on communications around this to support more timely completion overall.

1940   The Committee **NOTED** the areas of strength in the programme and the areas of focus that are RAG-rated red or amber.

1941   The Chair thanked MS for his contribution and invited him to leave the meeting.

1942   **4.3/ UCEM ENHANCEMENT PLAN**

1943   Helen Edwards presented the updated UCEM Enhancement Plan to the Committee, highlighting progress with the institution's 2021/22 enhancement priorities at Quarter 3 of 2021/22. HE reported that the plan now also tracks actions related to the APP and the Learning Teaching and Assessment Action Plan and there is a column to measure the impact of completed actions which will be completed over the summer and will form part of the TEF narrative. The aim next year is to refocus in this single plan all enhancement activities/projects across the business.

1944   Key areas of focus in the next academic year will be around student community, the work on student outcomes and the resolution of some challenges in the semester structure.

1945   The Committee **NOTED** the 35 completed enhancement actions; the 26 enhancement actions still in progress but rated as green and on track for implementation; the 9 enhancement actions showing as amber and behind target; the 3 actions showing a red, 1 action not started and another action on hold; the 6 new actions added to the plan to address areas for improvement identified in the Ofsted inspection; and, the steps being taken to strengthen UCEM's approach to enhancement planning.

1946   The Committee thanked HE for her role in leading on enhancements at UCEM and engaging all staff in delivering on the plan.

1947   **5/ ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

1948   The Chair asked if there were any comments on the papers for noting and report at item 7 and none were raised.

1949   The Chair formally thanked Tony Burke for his support to the Committee over the last few years and wished him well for his retirement.

1950   The Chair thanked all the external representatives for their continued commitment to the Committee and the valuable perspectives they bring to the academic matters it reviews.

1951   There were no additional items of business reported.

1952   **6/ MEETING CLOSE**

1953   KM thanked the Committee for their contributions and called the meeting to a close at 11.50am.

1954   **7/ MATTERS FOR NOTING**

1955   The following matters were circulated in a separate pack for noting or comment via email in advance of the meeting. They were not discussed in the meeting.

1956   **7.1/ OFSTED INSPECTION OUTCOME**

1957   The Committee **NOTED** that a full Ofsted inspection of levels 3, 6 and 7 (the first ever for UCEM) was conducted from the 9th – 12th November 2021, following 48 hours advance notification to UCEM. The final inspection report was published on 14th January 2022. The Committee **NOTED** that UCEM had received a rating as Good for overall effectiveness with behaviours and attitudes commended as outstanding.

1958   **7.2/ APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL MEMBERS TO ACADEMIC BOARD**

1959   The Committee **NOTED** that Kate Ross was appointed to the UCEM Academic Board under the employer representative category.

1960   **7.3/ ACADEMIC RISK REGISTER**

1961   The Committee was provided with the latest details of the primary academic risks in paper 7.3. The Committee **NOTED** the two risks that had increased since the last meeting (E1 – ESFA and E2 – Ofsted) due to the potential for regulatory attention.

The Committee **NOTED** the three new risks on the register (E18 – failure to achieve TEF, E19 –failure to meet quality requirements for EPA, E20 – how the RICS treats EPA which creates risks of timely completion for UCEM, and SO6 – political instability in Hong Kong). The Committee **NOTED** the two closed risks (E4 – Transform Project and E7 – failure to meet expectations for Quality and Standards set out by the QAA – which was merged with E3 (meeting ongoing OfS Conditions of Registration).

1962   **7.4/ EXTERNAL EXAMINERS REPORT 2020-21**

1963   The Committee **NOTED** the formal feedback received from the UCEM External Examiners via their 2020-21 academic year reports (paper 7.4). The Committee also **NOTED** the overview and comparison of External Examiners feedback across the last five years that shows that overall UCEM has maintained academic standards over the period and conveys a culture of continued improvement with enhancements made in the areas of marking, feedback to students, programme development and student support.

1964   **7.5/ ACADEMIC DELIBERATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATES**

1965   The Committee **NOTED** the deliberations of the Academic Boards on 16th November 2021, 8th March and 9th June 2022.

1966   The Committee **NOTED** the deliberations of the Quality Standards and Enhancement Committees on 12th October 2021, 14th December 2021, 8th February 2022 and 16th May 2022.

1967   The Committee **NOTED** the deliberations of the Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committees on 5th October 2021 and 3rd February 2022.

1968   The Committee **NOTED** the deliberations of the Research Committees on 9th November 2021 and 29th March 2022.

Date of next meeting:

Thursday 19th January 2023 from 14.00-16.00pm, via Zoom videoconference

Signed:

Name: **Kenny Miller**

Position: **Chair, Academic Review Committee and Independent Trustee**

Date: **19th January 2022**