

ACADEMIC REVIEW COMMITTEE

19TH JANUARY 2023

REDACTED MINUTES FOR PUBLICATION

A meeting of the Academic Review Committee was held via Zoom video conference from 14.00-16.00pm on Thursday 19th January 2023.

Present:	Prof. Nick Braisby (NB)	
	Susan Dawson (SD)	
	Helen Edwards [HE]	
	Dr. Wendy Finlay [WF]	
	Jon Hubert [JH]	
	Dr. Stephen Jackson [SJ]	
	Hazel Lobo [HL]	
	Prof. Kenneth Miller [KM]	(Chair)
	Prof. Nick Morton [NM]	
	Paula Shaw [PS]	
	Ashley Wheaton [AW]	
In attendance:	Lynne Downey [LD]	(for item 2.1 only)
	Jane Fawkes [JEF]	(University College Secretary)
	Ruth Grindey [RG]	(for item 2.1 only)
	Jess Handley [KH]	(for item 2.1 only)
	Cathy Higgs [CH]	(for items 2.1 and 2.2 only)
	Lyndsay Hughes [LH]	(Clerk to the Board of Trustees)
	Prof. Ange Lee [AL]	(for item 2.1 only)
	Mike Speight [MS]	(for item 2.1 only)
Apologies for absence:	Joe Orrell [JO]	

1) GENERAL MEETING GOVERNANCE

1969 **1.1/ DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

1970 There were no conflicts of interest declared.

1971 **1.2/ WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

1972 The Chair welcomed Nick Braisby, Jon Hubert and Paula Shaw to their first meeting as new members of Academic Review Committee.

1973 **1.3/ APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1974 There were apologies for absence from Joe Orrell, Student Trustee.

1975 1.4/ MINUTES AND REDACTIONS OF THE MEETING HELD 19TH JULY 2022

1976 The minutes and proposed redactions (highlighted grey) of the Academic Review Committee held 19th July 2022 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.

1977 1.5/ MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS SUMMARY

1978 An actions summary from the previous meeting was circulated as Paper 1.5 and the Committee noted that the actions from the last meeting were now closed, excepting a further discussion to take place between Nick Morton and Wendy Finlay which they will seek to still organise.

1979 The Committee noted that in November 2022, the Executive made a decision not to participate in the Teaching Excellence Framework 2023 and that this had been endorsed by the Board of Trustees. UCEM was given the option to participate or not by the Office for Students (OfS) as its data sets are extremely small. Based on the risk factors and the workload involved it was considered best to defer participation and use the next four years to prepare fully for TEF at that stage. The Committee also endorsed this decision, particularly the External Representatives who are cognisant of how much work is involved. The welcomed the early preparations for TEF in four years that UCEM will commence undertaking now as a very sensible approach to adopt.

1980 1.6/ THE ACADEMIC REVIEW COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

1981 Following the appointment of new members to the Committee since the last meeting, the Terms of Reference have been updated to reflect the new membership. The updates to the Terms of Reference and membership of the Committee were presented in tracked changed mode in paper 1.6a for the Committee to consider.

1982 The Committee **APPROVED** the Academic Review Committee Terms of Reference V14.01 for approval as the new V15.00.

ACTION: Finalise and publish the updated Terms of Reference for the Committee as the new V15.00. [LH]

1983 1.7/ ACADEMIC REVIEW COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

1984 The Committee reviewed the Annual Report for 2021-22 as presented in paper 1.7. The report provides an overview of the work and role of the Committee in 2021-22 and forms part of UCEM's evidence of good governance practice.

1985 It was agreed that the report clearly demonstrated the outputs of the Committee over the year and its scrutiny of key academic matters on behalf of the Board. The Committee agreed that the report plays an important role in giving the Board of Trustees assurance that UCEM complies with all OfS Conditions of Registration and institutional academic standards.

1986 The Committee **APPROVED** the Academic Review Committee Annual Report 2021-22 for presentation to the Board of Trustees for their review and approval in March 2023.

2) ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND MONITORING

1987

2.1/ STUDENT OUTCOMES

- 1988 Lynne Downey, Ruth Grindey, Jess Handley, Cathy Higgs and Mike Speight joined the meeting to update the committee on work at UCEM in the last year relative to enhancing student outcomes at UCEM and focussed on Right Student, Right Journey, Right Delivery, Right Experience and how this is intended to drive the Right Student Outcomes.
- 1989 WF introduced the item, highlighting that the overview paper 2.1 provided the last two full sets of module success rate data available from autumn 2021 and spring 2022. WF reminded the Committee that Student Outcomes is a core part of UCEM's institutional strategy and a major focus of the academic team. Ensuring students remain on programme and on track, progressing through modules is essential to UCEM's business model and income. UCEM has KPIs set in this area which it is not currently meeting, despite small incremental gains, and has therefore been working to improve this position through a focused project over the last twelve months.
- 1990 MS shared a presentation on this project work with the Committee which was circulated via the Trustee Portal following the meeting. The project work has been broken down into separate initiatives that focus on keeping students engaged, as UCEM knows that where students engage, they do typically succeed. The aim has not been to make programmes themselves easier but to ensure the experience and journey for each student is easier and better. The team summarised the interventions made, which include the HELP workstream (Higher Engagement, Lower Pressure) which sought to reduce weekly workload issues, reduce guided learning hours and spread the workload better across all modules), enhancements to re-registration and mitigating circumstances processes, enhancements to UCEM's academic support, enhancements to UCEM processing, such as batching submissions for marking to help with consistency, and development of a new data dashboard to allow for more timely interventions.
- 1991 CH reported that following the HELP project students have been more able to submit their assignment by the due date – the rate was at 49% in autumn 2021 and had increased to 65% in autumn 2022. JH reported that 334 mitigating circumstances submissions had been made for assignment 1 in autumn 2022 vs 868 in autumn 2021 which has led to reduced processing and fewer students on non-standard programme routes. RG reported that student submission by due date improvements has positively impacted pass rates, for example the MAN4POM module pass rate is 91% for autumn 2022 and was 78% in autumn 2021. RG also commented that first assessment results show 83.9% student success, up from 81.4% in autumn 2021. Engagement is up at all levels of learning by 3.8% to 90.3%.
- 1992 WF reported that the real success to this project has been the collaborative work to address multiple factors simultaneously that would not have worked in isolation. Some extremely positive feedback has been received from students, external examiners and staff. Finally, WF shared some new data on engagement with first assessment. UCEM typically finds that where students do engage with first assessment, they normally do pass the module. The data showed that in the last year engagement with first assessment at level 4 was up 5.9% and up overall by 3.8%. The pass rates are also showing an upward trajectory with an 8.2% increase at level 4

and 5.2% overall year on year. Further granular analysis of the data will take place next. The team is delighted their work seems to be having this positive impact.

- 1993 The Committee welcomed the presentation and the benefits the work is bringing to UCEM and its students. It was noted that performance is even exceeding pre-Covid which is encouraging and shows sustainable fundamental change.
- 1994 The Committee queried whether and how UCEM is supporting those students who continue not to succeed and whether UCEM identifies reasons for non-submission and non-completion. The reasons are often complex and varied and UCEM will seek to identify the nuances within the data now it has sought to address the major item previously cited of workload and clashing assignment deadlines through this project. There are also further specific groups of students where UCEM sees issues of engagement, success and satisfaction which it will also be addressing, such as final year apprentices.
- 1995 UCEM is undertaking a granular review of assessments to ensure they are fit for purpose and modules are assessment led.
- 1996 The Committee queried how UCEM balanced the removal of content and taught delivery in order to create breaks in the semester and if this had been positively received by staff. CH responded that the approach was programme led and that academic staff were instrumental in the decisions taken, ensuring that duplication was removed but academic rigour retained. The collective, collaborative approach between all relevant teams ultimately ensured success and has led to team growth and development as a result too.
- 1997 The Committee queried whether UCEM had seen any increase in academic offences through the impact of this project. The team responded that this had not been a major problem given the authentic assessment methods in place. Academic misconduct rates are monitored, and the impact of Artificial Intelligence will continue to be assessed. Academic misconduct cases often result from pressure and stress and UCEM has sought to reduce this and ensure appropriate levels of tailored support are available for any student who needs it. Academic integrity has been a core consideration in all decisions made through this project.
- 1998 The Committee queried what changes UCEM plans for final year apprentices to help reduce their workload challenges. MS responded that whilst all students are benefitting from the HELP initiatives, UCEM is considering frontloading some delivery into earlier years for apprentices in order to further reduce final year workload and avoid duplication. Ensuring the right student is on the right journey with the right employer is part of this, as is the wider provision of support, for example to line managers of apprentices.
- 1999 The Committee **NOTED** the positive impact and improving results to date and congratulated the team on the project, especially following the disappointment of Transform not having the impact desired at the outset. The Committee is looking forward to tracking the results through future semesters and will report to the Board the impact of the changes to date and the positive energy and focus this has brought to the UCEM academic team. The Chair also particularly thanked the external representatives for their insights and external validation of the work UCEM has undertaken.

2000 The Chair thanked LD, RG, JH and MS for their contributions and invited them to leave the meeting.

3) ACADEMIC PROJECTS

2001 3.1/ RICS RE-ACCREDITATION

2002 Helen Edwards and Cathy Higgs presented to the Committee on UCEM's work to become re-accredited by RICS. A visit to UCEM took place w/c 9th January 2023 and a verbal update on the indicative outcomes of the visit was provided to the Committee.

2003 **REDACTED**. The visit was a 3-day panel with intense deep dives, often focussing on how UCEM can provide an equivalent or better student experience with online delivery vs face-to-face. The panel left knowing that online can indeed provide outstanding teaching excellence.

2004 The Principal and Deputy Principal commented that UCEM's Academic staff, led by CH, did a fantastic job showing how UCEM teaches and demonstrated how UCEM staff are valued and how their workloads managed, and the wide-ranging provision of student support UCEM offered across a myriad of student types and needs.

2005 The Committee **WELCOMED** the update provided on the re-accreditation visit and the successful outcome for UCEM. The Committee thanked the whole team involved and congratulated them on this achievement. The Committee **NOTED** that the visit provides good external recognition for TEF preparations in the future.

2006 The Chair thanked HE and CH for their contributions to the Committee and invited CH to leave the meeting.

2007 3.2/ ROADMAP AND PROGRESS TOWARDS RESEARCH DEGREE AWARDING POWERS

2008 Ange Lee joined the meeting to present to the Committee on UCEM's roadmap towards Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAPs) as outlined in paper 3.2.

2009 Ange provided a brief overview of UCEM's plan to offer and expand its portfolio to research degrees in the near future alongside growing research activities, which are both integral components to UCEM's CX9 Strategy. The paper outlined some potential challenges UCEM may face on this journey and the planned risk mitigations for these.

2010 **REDACTED**.

2011 **REDACTED**.

2012 The Committee recognised this is a long-term ambition of the institution and this is the logical time to take this next step in the strategy. It will require a detailed resourcing and funding plan, some of which may be through operational budget or UCEM investment funding, but it can also come through industry partnerships, match funding opportunities and through buying out the existing academic team time for teaching responsibilities so they can focus on this. Bringing in the right skills

and talent at the right time is crucial. AL's leadership and enthusiasm for this strategic goal has helped accelerate progress and is putting in place the structure around how it can be achieved in a high quality, low risk way.

- 2013 The Committee queried the timeline for the project as a whole, as the paper only outlined the required next steps over the coming year. UCEM will require 30 completions in order to apply for the Research Degree Awarding Powers and this is anticipated to take an absolute minimum of five years, probably slightly longer. REDACTED. Retaining focus on progress and momentum through this period will be essential. A core element of this will be the development of the research culture and the attraction of academic staff into the School. Development of an Academic Career Framework is also part of the staffing strategy.
- 2014 The Committee **ENDORSED** the plan to proceed with UCEM's RDAP ambition and wished the team every success in pursuing it.
- 2015 The Chair thanked AL for her contribution to the Committee and invited her to leave the meeting.

4) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2016 4/ ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 2017 The Chair asked if there were any comments on the papers for noting and report at item 6 and none were raised.
- 2018 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. The Committee will look forward to following more trends in UCEM Student Outcomes at future meetings.
- 2019 There were no additional items of business reported.

5) CLOSE

2020 6/ MEETING CLOSE

- 2021 KM thanked the Committee for their contributions and called the meeting to a close at 15.30pm.
- 2022 The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 18th July 2023.

6) MATTERS FOR NOTING AND REPORTING ONLY

- 2023 The following matters were circulated as a separate pack for noting or comment via email in advance of the meeting. They were not discussed in the meeting.

2024 6.1/ APPRENTICESHIP KPIS

- 2025 The Committee considered the update on Apprenticeship KPIS which provide an overview of performance, as well as highlighting particular strengths and areas of focus for enhancement (paper 6.1).

2026 The Committee **NOTED** the areas of strength in the programme and the areas of focus that are RAG-rated red or amber.

2027 **6.2/ ACADEMIC RISK REGISTER**

2028 The Committee was provided with the latest details of the primary academic risks in paper 6.2. The Committee **NOTED** the Risk Register has been substantially revised since the last meeting under the direction of the Audit Committee. The Committee **NOTED** the primary aspects of strategic risk relate to the market and UCEM's position within it. The Committee also **NOTED** the risks around potential government policy changes, the political instability in Hong Kong, and compliance with regulatory requirements, as well as some area of operational risk which will continue to be monitored and mitigated.

2029 **6.3/ APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL MEMBERS TO ACADEMIC BOARD**

2030 The Committee **NOTED** that Victoria Davoren was appointed to the UCEM Academic Board under the employer representative category and that Professor Fiona Grant, Associate Principal (Student Learning Experience) at Heriot-Watt University would continue as external academic member of the Academic Board for a further three years.

2031 **6.4/ ACADEMIC DELIBERATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATES**

2032 The Committee **NOTED** the deliberations of the Academic Boards held on 13th September, 28th September and 22nd November 2022.

2033 The Committee **NOTED** the deliberations of the Quality Standards and Enhancement Committees held on 9th August, 6th September, 11th October and 2nd November 2022.

2034 The Committee **NOTED** the deliberations of the Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committees held on 22nd June and 25th October 2022.

2035 The Committee **NOTED** the deliberations of the Research Committee held on 6th October 2022.

Date of next meeting:

Tuesday 18th July 2023 from 10.00am-12.00noon, via Zoom videoconference

Signed:



Name:

Kenny Miller

Position:

Chair, Academic Review Committee and Independent Trustee

Date:

18 July 2023