

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held on 29 November 2017

Present: Professor G McCormac (Chair), Mr M Adie, Professor S Bolton, Professor A Bowes, Professor C Caldwell, Dr P Coffee, Prof M Cusack, Dr P Dimeo, Professor J Donaldson, Professor A Green, Ms J Hagerty, Ms K Howie, Professor M MacLeod, Professor H Nehring, Professor R Oram, Dr T Parkes, Professor J Phillips, Professor M Priestley, Professor S Punch, Ms A Smallenbroek, Professor L Sparks, Ms J Stevenson, Professor T Whalley

In Attendance: Ms I Beveridge, Ms E Hensens (Secretary), Mr J Rogers, Ms J Morrow, Ms E Schofield

Apologies: Professor L Bauld, Professor K Boyle, Dr A Desbois, Professor H Migaud, Dr D McArdle, Mr M McCrindle

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING **AC (17/18) Minutes**
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The minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2017 were approved.

Thanks and best wishes were extended to Professor K Boyle, in absentia, at her last meeting of Academic Council.

2. MATTERS ARISING NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA

Council noted the following:

Minute 12. Court approved the Annual Report on Institution-led Review and this had subsequently been submitted to the Scottish Funding Council.

3. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR **AC (17/18) 11**
Industrial Strategy

The UK Government had recently launched the Industrial Strategy which provided for £4.7bn in funding to stimulate development of the economy and boost productivity and earning power throughout the UK particularly through business, 3rd sector and education organisations. The 'Grand Challenges' identified within the strategy were:

- Artificial Intelligence
- Clean Growth
- Mobility
- Ageing Society

A full briefing of the impact of the strategy on the HE sector and the University of Stirling would be issued shortly.

Student Visas

The outcome of the ongoing review by the Home Office in relation to the management of student visas remained pending.

Knowledge Exchange Excellence Framework (KEF)

The introduction of a new framework to measure knowledge transfer and business

engagement in England had been announced. The outcomes of the KEF would not be directly related to resource or income flows within Scotland, and participation would be voluntary. The University of Stirling would not be participating at present.

4. REVIEW OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL EFFECTIVENESS AC (17/18) 12

Council received the report of the Review of Academic Council Effectiveness.

The review had been undertaken in light of the Scottish Code for Good Higher Education Governance and in order to consider a comprehensive review of effectiveness, in addition to the annual reflection which is completed and provided to University Court. The review had covered key aspects of effectiveness of Academic Council arrangements and had included external input and oversight. The review had demonstrated that Academic Council operated in a way that is effective and in line with expectations and the report made a number of recommendations to build on the current approach.

Council discussed how Recommendation 7 could be implemented to ensure effective communication of Council business.

Council approved the recommendations.

Action: Academic Registrar and Committee Manager

5. ANNUAL REPORT TO COURT AC (17/18) 13

Council received the Annual Report to Court from Academic Council for the period 2016/17 for consideration and approval. The report would be updated to reflect the approval of the recommendations from the Review of Academic Council Effectiveness (Item 4.)

Council approved the report pending the inclusion of a summary of the Review of Academic Council Effectiveness, for onward transmission to Court.

Action: Academic Registrar and Committee Manager

6. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

6.1 EDUCATION AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE AC (17/18) 14 (i)

Council received the report from the meeting of the Education and Student Experience Committee held on 25th October 2017.

In particular it was noted that the technical implementation of the new Learning Management System, Canvas, had been concluded successfully. It was reported that issues had been reported in regard to the SpeedGrader system for the provision of assessment feedback, however these had since been resolved. Members were encouraged to continue to report any issues as they arose.

It was noted that work was continuing to ensure that all Undergraduate modules were included within the Listen Again scheme with positive results. Work would extend to the postgraduate taught modules in the new year.

An update was provided on the development of a Fitness to Study policy. Existing sector approaches had been reviewed and a consultation draft would be circulated for discussion in due course.

Professor Sharon Bolton left the meeting.

6.2 RESEARCH COMMITTEE

AC (17/18) 14 (ii)

Council received the report from the meeting of the Research Committee held on 8th November 2017.

In particular it was noted that three major project submissions had been made to the Stirling City Deal with responses expected in early 2018.

Academic Council was advised that performance remained below target in relation to research funding awards and a range of actions had been undertaken to support improved performance including the implementation of a new research hub system and external consultancy. These actions had been underpinned by a restructuring of the Research and Innovation Services team to align with the agreed research themes.

Research Performance Improvement Group (RPIG) meetings had continued to take place and an action plan developed as a result.

It was reported that a range of strong applications for the 'Anniversary Fellowships' had been received and the potential of an increased number of awards along with a transition from 2 to 3 year contracts would be considered.

6.3 UPDATE ON RESEARCH PERFORMANCE

AC (17/18) 14 (iii)

Quarter 1 results indicated an improved performance against the same period in 2016/17. Performance would continue to be monitored.

A range of external support had been made available to improve intelligence regarding the research funding environment and to support the development of large scale funding bids. A series of workshops had been provided.

Academic Council noted that only funding channelled through the University of Stirling contributed to the achievement of Research Performance targets.

7. RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK

AC (17/18) 15

Academic Council received an update in regard to the Research Excellence Framework 2020. Previous announcements by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) had included information relating to the unit of assessment, impact profile and open access. Most recent reports confirmed the criteria for the inclusion of staff in the REF submission, impact case studies and the identification of outputs.

All independent Research (R) and Teaching and Research (T&R) staff above 0.2 FTE would be included in the submission. It was confirmed that post-doctoral staff would be excluded from the submission and that consideration of the role of Teaching and Scholarship (T&S) staff who had submissible outputs would be undertaken.

Discussion followed regarding the role of the codes of practice for the REF and the 'testing' of institutional connection.

Impact champions had been appointed in all areas to support the development of the required impact studies.

Future updates from HEFCE were expected to include information regarding interdisciplinarity, equality and diversity, the use of metrics and finer details regarding the sub-panels.

Council members were reminded that a call for REF panel members had been issued. RPIG would continue discussions with Faculties and the mock REF would take place as planned early next year.

8. INTAKE TARGETS 2018/19

AC (17/18) 16

Academic Council noted the report on intake targets for 2018/19.

9. HONORARY APPOINTMENTS

AC (17/18) 17

Council endorsed proposals by the Senior Deputy Principal for the approval of Honorary Appointments under the terms of Ordinance 22.

Action: Academic Quality and Governance Coordinator (Quality)

Erica Hensens
Head of Academic Quality and Governance
Academic Registry
November 2017