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| Title: | **Academic Council** |
| Date: | **2nd December 2020** |
| Time: | **3:00pm** |
| Place: | **Microsoft Teams** |

**Present:** Charles Hunt Vice-Chancellor (Chair)

Sharon Potter Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)

Steve Vogel Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)

Hilary Abbey Head of Research

Demir Mitchell President of the Students Union

Mark Waters Chair of Foundation Portfolio Board

Heather Batten Head of Quality

Will Podmore Head Librarian

Soran David Faculty Representative (Part-Time)

Thomas Stewart Student Representative (Full-time)

Julie Greenwood Student Representative (Part-time)

Sara Wazifdar Student Support Manager

Alex Bols In Attendance

Ian Sanderson Registrar (Secretary)

1. **Welcome & Apologies for Absence**

1.1 Noted: That apologies were received from:

Graham Sharman Dean of Academic Development

Francesca Wiggins Head of Clinical Practice

Jas Verdi Head of Student Services

Marvelle Brown External Representative (Healthcare)

Robert McCoy Faculty Representative (Full-Time)

1. **Minutes of the Last Meeting –10th June 2020 (AC-20-01-02)**

2.1 Agreed: The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

1. **Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Last Meeting (AC-20-01-03)**

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| ***Actions from the Academic Council meeting on 4th December 2019*** | | | |
| **Responsibility** | **Minute/s** | **Initial action/s** | **Outcome/s** |
| **Vice-Chancellor** | 7.8 | **CWSH Partner Approval**  Vice-Chancellor to report to AC on CSWH Partner approval following addressing of outstanding issues | **Ongoing:** final issues of transfer and ownership still ongoing and launch of CWSH put on hold to September 2021 due to cap on new student number arising from Covid. Dean of Academic Development and DVC (Education) had recently met to review progress. |

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| ***Actions from the Academic Council meeting on 19th June 2020*** | | | |
| **Responsibility** | **Minute/s** | **Initial action/s** | **Outcome/s** |
| **All Members** | 6.3 | **HDAATC**  Forward suggestions for one member of an external Higher Education Provider to the Vice-Chancellor | **Ongoing:** no recommendations received. ACC Bournemouth suggested as a possible HEI to target. |
| **Dean of Academic Development** | 7.4 | **AIMO Major Modifications**  Advise AIMO Course Team to consider re-wording some of the learning outcomes during future modifications | **Ongoing:** Dean of Academic Development progressing with AIMO |
| **Course Leader** | 11.3 | **Compensation and Condonement Policy**  Complete consultation and forward final version of the policy for consideration by Academic Council | **Ongoing:** student consultation will occur after Christmas to bring to June 2021 meeting of Academic Council |
| **Head of Quality** | 12.4 | **Board of Examiners Terms of Reference**  Update membership to include explicit reference to the unit leaders separately from internal examiners | **Ongoing:** Head of Quality will make final updates suggested by Academic Council |

1. **Chair’s Actions**

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| a) | Northern College of Acupuncture (NCA) | |
| 4.1 Noted | | The UCO had approved a partnership arrangement with the Northern College of Acupuncture after an approach at short notice following the previous meeting. This arrangement had been fully approved following two approval events in line with the partnership procedures. Students began registering with the UCO at the start of the 2020/1 academic year and approximately half of the students across six distinct programme options had elected to transfer to the UCO approved awards. |
| b) | Approval of External Examiners | |
| 4.2 Noted | | That Chairs action had been taken to approve the existing external examiners for the Northern College of Acupuncture programmes following the approval of the partner agreement. Chairs action had also been taken to extend the Colm Gregory’s external examiner duties from the MSc Osteopathy (Pre-Registration) to include external examiner duties for the research units on the M.Ost (DCO, RAE) |

1. **Vice-Chancellor’s Report (AC-20-01-05)**

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| 5.1 Noted | The Vice-Chancellor’s report |
| a) | Modifications to Course and Clinic |
| 5.2 Reported | It was noted that significant adjustments had taken place to ensure clinical work and teaching could continue during periods of restrictions due to Covid-19. Significant efforts had gone into delivering the programme remotely and on a face-to-face basis and thanks were extended to the course team for their efforts in achieving this. The Academic Council also extended thanks to clinic and estates staff for the way they had reacted to the recent fire in the clinic building on Southwark Bridge Road by relocating the clinic to refurbished rooms on the Borough High Street campus in short time. The UCO was continuing to explore options for the temporary location of the clinic, as the Southwark Bridge Road building was out of use for at least nine more months. Options included looking developing a presence in Canning Town in advance of the planned move or securing space for more clinic rooms closer to the UCO campus. |
| b) | Covid-19 Testing |
| 5.3 Reported | The UCO had secured agreement with London South Bank University (LSBU) to conduct rapid lateral flow testing of students intending to return to their home for the Christmas break. Students had commenced testing and it was hoped this would continue for the return to campus phase in January. Thanks were extended to LSBU for their support in helping with testing. |
| c) | Change Management Process |
| 5.4 Noted | The change management process was ongoing and had caused some disquiet amongst students. This had not been helped by the intervention of an individual member of staff, who had emailed students outlining their concerns on the process. This was unfortunate, as the main aim of the process was to improve the student teaching experience by increasing staff engagement with the UCO, as currently a high proportion of staff were on very short hours contracts. These part-time staff working in practice are a benefit but also a risk given potentially small levels of engagement. This would mean those staff could engage with teaching, learning and assessment enhancements that delivered the consistency that students had highlighted was a concern. Teaching staff would also benefit as under the changes most staff be paid more for reduced time commitment. Cost savings were small amount of the changes, but this would free up resources that could be invested elsewhere for the benefit of students. Some of these improvements were already underway, with the appointment of a Deputy Course Leader (Patrick Gauthier) as well as the appointment of a Deputy Osteopathic Skills Unit Leader (Chris Williams), both of which provide more support and take forward enhancements that would benefit students. |
| 5.5. Noted | Students had noticed that staff were also talking about changes in class which was potentially damaging to student morale. It was suggested that a message to the student body outlining the aims behind he changes would be helpful in countering these views as some students, particularly younger students, may be hearing only one side of the debate, as it was recognised that some disruption was the inevitable consequence of change. Email with summary of main aims will be sent this week |
| 5.6 Agreed | That a message would be sent to students outlining the reasons for the changes immediately. |
| d) | Quality and Standard Review |
| 5.7 | The Office for Students and QAA were reviewing how they monitored quality and standards at Higher Education Institutions and the phase 1 of this process had been announced. One of the key changes was to have more clear baselines by which those applying to register and those already registered could be monitored, for example in terms of employability into graduate level jobs. It was noted that one concern of the Office for Students was that not many institutions had adapted to the registration process to review and change the way it looked at its own monitoring processes |

1. **Membership of the Honorary Degree, Awards and Titles Committee – Election of Academic Council and External Members**

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| 6.1 Noted | That Robert McCoy had been nominated as the Academic Council representative on the Honorary Degree, Awards and Titles Committee at the previous meeting in June 2020. |

1. **Major Modification to RPL Policy *(AC-20-01-06(a-c))***

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| 7.1 Noted | That a major change was proposed to the RPL Policy to increase the number of credits that can be recognised to include 120 level 5 credits. This had been reviewed following requests after requests from partner institutions to allow candidates to apply to transfer into the final year of three-year degree programme. This had been reviewed against the practice at other institutions and was in line with accepted practice. This was also consistent with QAA codes, which permitted the institution to make an academic decision on the matter and in line with government priorities to increase flexible learning and student choice. |
| 7.2 Noted | The Academic Council was unable to approve the change formally at this meeting as it was not quorate This could be approved for introduction in September 2021 although the partner institutions were looking to apply to changes to the current admissions cycle. Each partner had been quality assured to implement to policy appropriately. |
| 7.3 Agreed | That the policy would be approved by Chair’s action for adaption from September 2021 subject to feedback and/or approval from the external representative. |

1. **GOsC Annual Report 2019-2020 *(AC-00-00-00)***

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| 8.1 Noted | This item would be deferred to the March meeting as the report was still in draft format |

1. **Annual Summaries: *(AC-20-01-08)***

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| a) | Student Academic Appeals | |
| 9.1 Noted | | The annual summary of student academic appeals. Academic Appeals. |
| 9.2 Noted | | Three cases were pending due to delays in assessments or evidence being submitted due to Covid-19. All appeals had been upheld. Three of the appeals related to the application of the published marking criteria which could have been resolved had the students sought feedback earlier, as they have been recommended to do so. As a result, it was agreed that the appeals procedure would be updated to require students to seek feedback before submitting a formal appeal, as the current policy does recommend issues at resolved as quickly as possible. The use of Student Support in providing evidence was questioned as this was not referred to in the appeals policy. It was noted that Student Support signposted students to external sources of support where possible and would only act as a source of evidence if this could not be achieved. A letter of support from Student Support was considered simply as a form of evidence in support of an application but this would not be explicitly stated to ensure this was restricted to genuine cases. |
| b) | Student Academic Discipline | |
| 9.3 Noted | | The annual summary of student academic discipline. |
| 9.4 Noted | | That Turnitin had always been used for assessments but previously the Registry had submitted the assessments to Turnitin directly and sent the originality score to the unit leaders. Markers now had accessed to the full originality report through Bone, which enabled them to identify cases of plagiarism or bad academic practice in connection with individual sections of the work as the overall score did not address this. |
| 9.5 Noted | | That it would be helpful to have guidance on use of Turnitin consistently applied in case some markers were not using it consistently. |
| 9.6 Agreed | | That the Registrar and Head of Quality would develop guidance for staff on use of Turnitin. |
| c) | Student DBS Cases | |
| 9.7 Noted | | The annual summary of student DBS cases. |
| 9.8 Noted | | That the DBS procedure had been updated following an audit by the Disclosure and Barring Service. This update had considered best practice guidance available from UCAS in conjunction with Unlock, which was a charity for individuals with convictions. All cases were cleared as low risk without a detailed risk assessment being required. |
| d | Student Complaints | |
| 9.9 Noted | | The annual summary of student complaints. |
| 9.10 Noted | | Most of the complaints had been resolved at the informal stage, including some cases which could have progressed to academic appeals. The timing for the appeal process was quite lengthy so the complaints process had been used to ensure the issues could be resolved as quickly as possible. One complaint had escalated to the OIA which had found it partly justified. |
| 9.11 Noted | | That the wording of one case in the summary seemed to imply that a student had been dissuaded from taking a complaint to the formal stage because their grade was not affected. It was clarified that action had been taken despite the case being closed at the informal stage and that the information on grades was provided to reassure the student |
| e) | Student Fitness to Practice Cases | |
| 9.12 Noted | | The annual summary of student fitness to practice. A slight typing error was identified and would be corrected. |
| f) | Student Misconduct Cases | |
| 9.13 Noted | | The annual summary of student misconduct cases |
| 9.14 Noted | | That the case highlighted the importance of considering Support to Study mechanisms in cases where a student’s behaviour was a cause of concern, but there may be underlying reasons. |

1. **External Examiner Annual Report Synthesis 2019-2020 *(AC-20-01-09)***

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| 10.1 Noted | The External Examiner Annual Report for 2019/0: |
| 10.2 Noted | That this was the first year that reports from external examiners of partner programmes had been included. This report would also be considered by SSLCs. |
| 10.3 Noted | That some of the main issues highlighted that needed addressing were the timing of assessments sent to external examiners for scrutiny as well as inconsistency in the use of academic references in assessments by students. It had also been recommended that students have the option to use Turnitin to submit draft assessments and to learn from this. One external examiner had suggested that it would be helpful to have access to the full range of marks rather than just the sample sent in line with the Academic Quality Framework regulations. Finally, one external examiner on a partner programme (AIMO) had suggested a meeting with the UCO. |
| 10.4 Noted | That external examiners had been sent Covid adaptations for comment. |
| 10.5 Agreed | That the report would be approved by Chairs Action following receipt of comments from the external representative. |

1. **Revised Periodic Course Review Self-Evaluation Document Template & Appendices *(AC-20-01-10)***

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| 11.1 Noted | The periodic course review templates had recently been reviewed in advance of the forthcoming review period as these had not taken place since the UCO had acquired degree awarding powers and the previous review templates reflected University of Bedfordshire requirements that were not applicable to the UCO. The review had taken into consideration good practice at similar institutions. The revised documentation included additional templates to ensure course teams provided required documentation that had been highlighted in previous review events, for example marketing information and competitor analysis. The review documentation also made clearer the requirement to map provision again course approval criteria and the UCO’s teaching learning and assessment strategy, as well as include impact assessments on students with protected characteristics. |
| 11.2 Noted | That it was intended to trial the revised self-evaluation documents with Postgraduate Certificates in Animal Osteopathy (ACE) and Academic and Clinical Education (ACE). Trial with pilot with PGC ANI and ACE. To approve. The process of periodic review has not changed just the actual information required. |
| 11.3 Noted | That the Periodic Course Review procedure had not changed, just the actual information requested as part of it. |
| 11.4 Noted | That a risk-based approach could be considered to the review process. |
| 11.5 Approved | The revised self-evaluation document templates. |

1. **Revised Periodic Course Review Schedule *(AC-20-01-11)***

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| 12.1 Noted | That it was proposed to delay the MSc Osteopathy (Pre-Registration) course review until 2021/2 as due to Covid-19. In addition, the PGC Specialist Paediatric Osteopathic Practice (SPOP) was recommended for deferral because of delays in commencing the course due to Covid-19 in 2020/1 and because discussions were being had over whether it could be adapted as a MSc with enhanced digital learning elements. being delayed Periodic review schedule – change schedules. Delayed MSc to 2021/2 due to Covid. Agreed. PGX SPOP deferred to 2021/2 conversations about developing as MSc and considering use of digital learning. Start also delayed to January. AIMO BSc Conversion – bring forward due to concerns over course credits and mapping of D.O. MSc AIMO bringing forward to 2021/2. |
| 12.2. Noted | That it was proposed that the reviews of the AIMO BSc Osteopathic Sciences Conversion course be brought forward to 2020/1 due to questions over its structure, as well as and MSc Osteopathic Sciences be brought forward to 2021/2 to align with the three-year BSc programme. |
| 12.3 Reported | That there was no confirmation of the arrangements for ECTS following Brexit although this was being discussed within government. |
| 12.4 Approved | The changes to the periodic course review schedule. |

1. **a) TQSC of 20th Oct 2020 and 21st November 2020 *(AC-20-01-12a-b)***

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| 13.1 Noted | The minutes of the meetings held on 20th October 2020 and 21st November 2020. |

1. **Any Other Business**

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| 19.1 Noted | There were no items of any other business. |

1. **Dates of the Next Meeting**

24.1 Noted: 24-Mar-21 at 3.00pm

16-Jun-21 at 3.00pm