

University of Suffolk

SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 15 June 2022 at 14:00 hours via Teams

Chair: Professor Mohammad Dastbaz (Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

Present: Dr Suha Al-Naimi (School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology, Vice-Chancellor nominee), Professor Emma Bond (Director of Research), Dr Ellen Buck (Director of Learning and Teaching), Aaron Burrell (Associate Director, Digital Learning and Innovation, Vice-Chancellor nominee), Dr Adam Clayden (School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology representative), Dr Paul Driscoll-Evans (Dean, School of Health and Sports Sciences), Fiona Fisk (Academic Registrar and Director of Student Life and Registry Services), Alex Gooch (Students' Union President of Education), Rachel Heathershaw (University wide representative, School of Health and Sports Sciences), Dr Wendy Lecluyse (School of Social Sciences and Humanities representative), Dr Rachael Martin (University wide representative, School of Social Sciences and Humanities), Professor Alistair Mathie (Dean, School of Engineering, Arts and Science and Technology), Professor Brian McCook (Dean, School of Social Sciences and Humanities), Abigail Morgan (OSACC Manager) (Professional Services representative), Sean Preston (University wide representative, School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology), Reilly Willis (University wide representative, School of Social Sciences and Humanities)

Apologies: Tim Greenacre (Chief Operating Officer), Professor Gurpreet Jagpal (Pro-Vice-Chancellor Business and Entrepreneurship), Dr Ross Kemble (Suffolk Business School representative), Emily Kilkenny (Students' Union School Officer, School of Social Sciences and Humanities), Professor Helen Langton (Vice-Chancellor), Connor Parish (Students' Union Officer, School of Health and Sport Sciences),

Secretary: Alison McQuin (Head of Quality)

In attendance: John Cavani (Interim Director of External Relations), Ruth Flaherty (Representative, University and College Union), James Nial (Head of Planning and Management Information)

Minutes shown in bold italics should be treated as confidential and will be removed from the published set on the University website.

Minutes of previous meetings held on 16 March 2022

21/134 The minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2022 were approved as an accurate record to be published on the website.

Matters arising

Any other business (from minute 21/131)

21/135 It was confirmed that the 2022/23 Senate meetings would be held on campus.

21/136 All other matters arising were included on the agenda.

Students' Union report

21/137 An interim CEO has now been appointed to support the SU Presidents, with interviews for a permanent CEO taking place later in the week.

21/138 The Students' Union were looking forward to being fully back on campus in 2022/23, which would further help build the student community.

Chair's report

21/139 It was reported that the outcome of the Office for Students (OfS) consultations were still awaited, although the OfS had confirmed the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) timeline had been delayed, with the submission moving from November to Spring 2023, which would allow more time to review data sets.

21/140 The Universities Minister, Michelle Donelan, has written to all Universities confirming that the government was expecting all institutions to return to a pre-pandemic approach of face-to-face learning. While the University of Suffolk had returned to an on-campus experience, the use of live streaming would be removed to encourage in-person attendance. Members queried the use of live streaming for students with reasonable adjustments and it was confirmed that course teams could discuss exceptional use with the Director of Learning and Teaching.

21/141 The University was shortlisted in two Whatuni award categories, showing significant improvements in rankings. The University had also climbed 26 places in the Complete University Guide.

Growth at Ipswich

21/142 While the University was in a financially stable position, it was critical to grow student numbers at Ipswich over the next five years, with international and postgraduate markets key areas to focus on. It was explained that the Executive and Senior Leadership Team had discussed potential growth areas, with a paper going forward to the July Board meeting.

21/143 Future areas of growth were identified.

Policies and procedures

Admissions Policy

21/144 The Admissions Policy was reviewed annually, with minor amendments proposed. Members queried what monitoring took place, referred to in paragraph 8, and it was confirmed that training for new academic staff was monitored through a checklist, along with cyclical mandatory training. It was confirmed that the version number and date would be updated prior to publication.

Outcome: Approved.

Extenuating Circumstances Procedure

21/145 The Extenuating Circumstances Policy was reviewed as part of the normal cycle of policy reviews. It was recommended that it be made clearer that postgraduate

research students would follow the policy of their validating institution and that the self-certification route be included within the definitions.

Agreed action: Prior to publication, the Academic Registrar to make explicit that postgraduate research students would follow their validating institution procedure and to include self-certification within the definitions.

21/146 It was queried whether paragraph 25, self-certification, should come after paragraph 26, as self-certifications could apply to both extensions and deferrals. It was confirmed that this had previously been discussed, with potentially a different approach taken in the quick reference guide for students.

21/147 As courses were moving to one assessment component per module to better deliver block learning, it was queried whether students would be able to self-certify for two modules. It was confirmed that students would be able to do this, and it was considered a conservative approach, which would be kept under review.

Fitness to Practise Procedure

21/148 The Fitness to Practise Procedure was reviewed as part of the normal cycle of policy reviews and had been through considerable discussion with Schools and course teams who use this.

Outcome: Approved.

Framework and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Awards

21/149 Following concerns raised by partners at the removal of classifications for master progression routes, it was proposed to re-introduce these into the assessment regulations.

21/150 The discussion at Quality Committee regarding retrospective implementation was noted, with members supporting the recommendation by Quality Committee that the change was only implemented for students who commenced their studies from September 2022 onwards.

Outcome: Approved.

Framework and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Awards delivered in partnership with Unicaf

21/151 Updates to the Framework and Regulations specific for Unicaf were proposed, so that they aligned with the changes made to the University's standard regulations. It was confirmed that the changes had been discussed and supported by the Partnership Management Group before being submitted to Quality Committee and Senate.

Outcome: Approved.

Freedom of Speech Code of Practice

21/152 The Freedom of Speech Code of Practice was reviewed as part of the normal cycle of policy reviews. It was confirmed that it was incumbent on the member of staff to support external visitors to go through any necessary processes. It was noted that the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill was currently being debated in parliament and so further changes to the Code of Practice may be required.

Outcome: Approved.

HEAR Additional Information Protocol

21/153 Minor changes were proposed to the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) Additional Information Protocol as part of the normal cycle of policy reviews. Members were supportive of the changes.

Outcome: Approved.

Learning Session Recording (Lecture Capture) Policy

21/154 The new Learning Session Recording Policy reflected the principles used during Covid and reflected the approach taken by other institutions.

21/155 While it was recognised that live streaming had been removed to encourage on-campus attendance, members queried whether it could still be in place for students with reasonable adjustments. A number of options were discussed, and it was agreed that live streaming should be made available where students had a reasonable adjustment, and that the three-day delay in uploading recorded content should be reduced to 24 hours.

Agreed action: The Associate Director, Digital Learning and Innovation to update the policy to allow live streaming for students with reasonable adjustments and the recording being made available within 24 hours.

Agreed action: The Director of Learning and Teaching to communicate the live streaming changes to students prior to the 2022/23 academic year.

21/156 Members queried whether it was possible to record sessions on Bongo without live-streaming at the same time. It was confirmed that it was a manual process to switch off the live-streaming functionality and guidance would be shared with course teams. It was noted that alternative platforms to Bongo were being explored and that training would be available to course teams should a new system be released.

Student Charter

21/157 The Student Charter was reviewed annually. It was agreed that reference to a safe campus should be updated to also include 'digital' and the first paragraph updated to show that the Charter was reviewed rather than updated annually.

Agreed action: Prior to publication, the Academic Registrar to update the reference to a safe campus to include 'digital' and to update the first paragraph to show that the Charter was reviewed annually.

Work-based and Placement Learning Policy

21/158 The policy was reviewed as part of the normal review cycle, noting this had been through extensive consultation to further incorporate apprenticeship requirements, whilst also being flexible for other PSRB requirements. Members were supportive of the changes.

Outcome: Approved.

21/159 It was noted that all policies, procedures and frameworks were for guidance and any questions on interpretation or application should be directed to the Academic Registrar, Deputy Academic Registrar or Head of Quality.

Partnership proposal

21/160 A new partnership with Rushmore Business School was proposed, this would start with a small number of courses but had the potential for growth. Members were reassured that this partner was a well-established and highly rated private provider. Members noted the current unrest in Mauritius, but were reassured that the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships were experienced with supporting other international providers in similar situations.

Outcome: Approved.

Senate elections

Senate election results

21/161 Elected Senate members for 2022/23 were confirmed, noting that the election for the outstanding School of Health and Sports Science representative would conclude at the end of June. The Senate representative to Board would be confirmed at the beginning of the academic year.

21/162 Members thanked all those whose term of office was ending in 2022.

Vice-Chancellor member nominations

21/163 It was confirmed that once all the elected Senate member positions had been filled, the Vice Chancellor would seek their member nominations.

Honorary Awards Committee update

21/164 Members were supportive of the proposal, but requested that further information on the nominated person be provided in the future.

Outcome: Approved

Block learning

21/165 An analysis of all block learning modules delivered in 2020/21, compared against conventional delivery, found that block learning had a lower proportion of referrals, a higher average final grade and better engagement with Brightspace. There was no significant difference in retention. It was confirmed that analysis of the 2021/22 modules would be undertaken following the completion of the assessment boards.

21/166 Some members noted a trend for grades to lower between block one to six for all levels. It was agreed that further analysis was needed, along with conversations with other higher education institutions (HEIs) and ensuring that courses were designed effectively for block delivery. Members also queried whether the data could just be attributed to block delivery or whether other factors, such as the more flexible approach to extenuating circumstances and Covid regulations, also impacted on the results.

Agreed action: The Director of Learning and Teaching to provide further analysis and feedback from other institutions at the next Senate meeting.

Student recruitment

21/167 The latest student recruitment figures were reported, noting that the decline by default date had now passed.

21/168 It was confirmed that the Clearing campaign would start shortly. As well as a direct campaign to potential applicants, there would also be a campaign targeting parents and teachers to help improve their understanding of the process and the opportunities available. It was recognised that certain courses would recruit better in Clearing than others.

Withdrawal data

21/169 The latest withdrawal data was presented, noting that overall attrition at Ipswich was higher than the same point last year, but this could be due to the different assessment points with block delivery and there may be a shift in the timing of when students withdrew.

21/170 The School level data was discussed, with the School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology (EAST) as the only school where the attrition rate with a similar attrition rate to the previous year. It was noted that the pandemic had a delayed effect on the School of Health and Sports Sciences data as students weren't in practice during Covid. Further analysis of module attrition would be undertaken to help gain a better understanding of any trends.

21/171 Personal reasons remained the main reason for withdrawal, and while every effort was made to categorise these, this was difficult as it relied on being able to contact students and students being forthcoming in providing further detail.

21/172 It was confirmed that a separate dashboard in Qlik would be created to show continuation data from level 4, to reflect the data used within TEF.

REF and RDAP

21/173 The detailed Research Excellence Framework (REF) outcome was provided to members, who congratulated the Pro-Vice Chancellor and colleagues who had put together a successful REF submission. It was noted that the REF submission only took into account activity up to December 2020, with considerable activity taking place since then, a further eight possible areas could be submitted for REF in the future.

21/174 A Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP) working group had now been established, noting this was a large-scale project.

Access and Participation Plan

21/175 It was noted that variation requests to meet the new areas of focus needed to be submitted by 31 July 2022 and a draft presentation of the variations would be provided to the Senior Leadership Team at the end of June. A number of workstreams had been established to support this work.

21/176 Progress against the targets for 2020/21 were provided, noting that some of these reflected a small proportion of students and so the performance percentage could be misleading.

Quality

OfS quality and standards conditions

21/177 The mapping document to the revised OfS quality and standards conditions was shared with members.

Refreshed quality processes

21/178 An update on the work of the Quality team and Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) to refine quality related processes was provided to members.

Graduation 2022

21/179 The dates of the annual graduation ceremonies, along with the detailed schedule for graduation at Ipswich was provided for information. This information had already been published on the University website.

21/180 Members were reminded that graduation was a university wide activity and support from teams across the institution would be sought to help support the event. Deans had already been informed of the requirement for academics to be present at the ceremonies. It was confirmed that further communication to staff would be distributed in August.

Covid-19 Good Practice

21/181 A list of good practice identified during Covid was provided to members for information.

Partnerships

Partnerships update

21/182 An update on existing and new partnerships was provided to members.

Partnerships register

21/183 The University's register of partnership arrangements was received.

Course proposal forms

21/184 The list of course proposal forms approved since the last meeting was received.

Course suspension and discontinuation forms

21/185 The list of approved course suspension and discontinuation forms was provided to members.

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) reports

21/186 The recent reports received from PSRBs were shared with members.

Reports from sub-committees

Quality Committee

21/187 The minutes from the Quality Committee meeting held on 16 February 2022 were provided for information.

Research and Enterprise Committee

21/188 The minutes from the Research and Enterprise Committee held on 24 November 2021 were provided for information.

School Academic Committee

21/189 The minutes from the School Academic Committees were provided for information.

Any other business

21/190 Members thanked the Associate Director, Digital Learning and Innovation, for their support and work as this was their last meeting before they left the institution.

Date of next meeting

21/191 The next meeting of Senate is to be held at 14:00 on Wednesday 12 October 2022 on campus.

Alison McQuin
Head of Quality