

THE SENATE

Minutes

This paper presents the confirmed Minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on Wednesday 5 June 2013 at The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes.

The Senate **approved** these Minutes as a correct record of the meeting on Wednesday 16 October 2013 following some amendments (S-2013-04-M minute 2).

Fraser Woodburn
Secretary to the Committee

Julie Tayler
Working Secretary to the Committee
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Attachments:

S-2013-03-M Appendix 1: Curriculum Partnership Committee constitution
S-2013-03-M Appendix 2: Learning Teaching and Student Support Committee constitution

THE SENATE

Minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on Wednesday 5 June 2013 at 2.00 pm
in the Hub Theatre, The Open University, Walton Hall.

PRESENT:

1) Ex officio

Mr Martin Bean, Vice-Chancellor
Professor Tim Blackman, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research, Scholarship and Quality)
Professor Musa Mihsein, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Professor Belinda Tynan, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)
Professor Anne De Roeck, Dean, Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology
Professor Kevin Hetherington, Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences
Professor Mary Kellett, Dean, Faculty of Education and Language Studies
Professor David Rowland, Dean, Faculty of Arts
Professor Hazel Rymer, Dean, Faculty of Science
Professor Rebecca Taylor, Dean, Faculty of Business and Law
Professor Josie Taylor, Director of the Institute of Educational Technology
Mrs Nicky Whitsed, Director, Library Services
Ms Anne Howells, Director, Learning and Teaching Solutions

Appointed

2) Central Academic Units

Faculty of Arts

Dr Ole Grell
Professor Suman Gupta
Dr Graham Harvey

Dr Lynda Prescott
Professor John Wolffe

Faculty of Business & Law

Mr Phil Bates
Mr Alessandro Saroli

Mr Mike Phillips
Dr Sharon Slade

Faculty of Education and Language Studies

Dr Jane Cullen
Dr Tim Lewis
Mr Pete Smith

Dr Steven Hutchinson
Professor Karen Littleton

Faculty of Health and Social Care

Mrs Sue Cole
Miss Christine Taylor

Professor Jan Draper
Dr Mary Twomey

Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology

Dr Leonor Barroca
Dr David Bowers
Mr Derek Goldrei
Dr Nicholas Moss

Ms Maggie Holland
Dr Mark Woodroffe
Mr Brendan Quinn
Dr Peter Robbins

Faculty of Science

Dr John Baxter
Dr Arlene Hunter

Dr Nick Rogers

Dr David Rothery

Professor Monica Grady

Dr Claire Turner

Faculty of Social Sciences

Dr Troy Cooper
Dr Helen Kaye

Dr Hugh Mackay

Dr Raia Prokhovnik

Institute of Educational Technology

Dr Robin Goodfellow
Professor Agnes Kukulska-Hulme

Professor Eileen Scanlon

Other Central Units

Dr Liz Marr

3) Associate Lecturers

Dr Isobel Falconer
Mr Bruce Heil
Mr Stephen Pattinson

Dr Walter Pisarski
Ms Janet Dyke (alternate)
Mr Ronald Macintyre (alternate)

4) Students Appointed by Open University Students Association

Mrs Marianne Cantieri
Ms Pippa Doran
Ms Jacqui Horsburgh

Mr David Humble
Dr Sandra Summers
Dr Barbara Tarling

5) Academic-related Staff

Ms Pat Atkins
Miss Karen Bradbury
Mr Mike Christensen
Mr Martin Ferns
Ms Sandi Guest
Mr Martin Kenward
Mr Michael Street

Mr Tony O'Shea-Poon
Ms Clare Riding
Ms Hilary Robertson
Ms Gill Smith
Mr Jake Yeo
Mr Billy Khokhar

6) Co-opted members

Mr John D'Arcy
Mr Christopher Goscomb
Dr David Knight

Dr James Miller
Professor Peter Scott
Mrs Lynda Brady

In attendance

Mr Lucian Hudson for Minutes 1 - 14
Professor Peter Taylor for Minutes 5 - 14
Ms Sue Thomas for Minute 15

APOLOGIES:

1) Ex officio

Dr Christina Lloyd, Acting Director, Students
Mr Jeremy Roche, Dean, Faculty of Health and Social Care

Appointed

2) Central Academic Units

Faculty of Arts

Dr Bob Wilkinson

Faculty of Business and Law

Ms Carmel McMahon

Faculty of Education and Language Studies

Dr Uwe Baumann

Ms Felicity Harper

Faculty of Health and Social Care

Professor Monica Dowling

Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology

Professor Joyce Fortune

Dr Tony Nixon

Professor Andy Lane

Dr Toby O'Neil

Faculty of Science

Dr Robert Saunders

Faculty of Social Sciences

Dr Anastasia Economou

Mr Matt Staples

Dr Richard Heffernan

3) Associate Lecturers

Mr Paddy Alton

Dr Roma Oakes

6) Co-opted members

Mr Rob Humphreys

In attendance

Mr Andrew Law

1 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching), Professor Belinda Tynan and the Dean and Director of Studies, Faculty of Education and Language Studies (FELS), Professor Mary Kellet, to their first meeting of the Senate. Mr Michael Street from the Faculty of Science, was welcomed back to the Senate as an academic-related member.

2 MINUTES

S-2013-01-M

The Senate **approved** the minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on 6 February 2013.

3 MATTERS ARISING

S-2013-03-01

- 3.1 Members asked whether the teaching and learning strategy for Global Direct would be coming to the Senate in October 2013. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) (PVC (L&T)) responded that the agreements being made with the Deans were within current policy requirements. However, an extended group, led by the PVC (L&T) and including Dr Sharon Ding, Business Development Unit, would be reviewing the University's overall tuition policy, encompassing Global Direct, and a paper would be brought to the Senate in the first half of 2014. Any issues raised by faculties regarding the Global Direct offering should be fed into this group through the Deans.

Action: PVC (L&T)

- 3.2 The Senate **noted** the responses to the matters arising.

4 REPORT FROM AND QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIR

- 4.1 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (PVC (A)) gave advance notice that the University would be making an announcement the following day of the decision to end the formal partnership of The Open University Law School and The University of Law (formally known as the College of Law). Over the past 15 years, this partnership had proved that law could be taught successfully and to a high standard by distance learning. However, the partnership had now reached maturity, and both organisations wanted to be able to pursue opportunities for expansion separately and independently. The Senate was assured that current students would experience no interruption to their studies and the quality of their learning experience would continue to be of a high standard. Modules delivered through the collaboration would be gradually phased out until 2018 and replaced by modules developed by the OU over the next 18 months. Much of the subject matter of the LLB was compulsory, so the need for ALs to teach these subjects would remain the same. This information should remain confidential until the announcement was made.
- 4.2 The Vice-Chancellor reported to the Senate on:
- a) the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) conference, where he had delivered the opening keynote address, which had been focussed on developing student engagement. The new Student Charter, which had been foremost in the University's efforts to improve student engagement at the OU, had been launched on Charter Day;
 - b) the OU's first annual Charter Day celebration, on 23 April, which had marked the University's 44th birthday;
 - c) the English in Action programme, which was helping 76,000 teachers in Bangladesh to pass on the gift of the English language to their students, and had scooped a

prestigious ELTon award from the British Council. The OU was a key partner in this project;

- d) the award of a government grant to Blaine Price, Arosha Bandara, Marian Petre and Bashar Nuseibeh from the Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology (MCT) to help develop cyber security research and education in Ghana;
- e) the collaboration with the Royal College of Music on a project, led by Professor David Rowland from the Faculty of Arts, that would create a massive public database of people's experiences of listening to music of all kinds, from all historical periods and cultures. The project had secured £750,000 from the Arts and Humanities Research Council;
- f) the visit of Prince Andrew, the Duke of York, to Walton Hall to learn more about the OU's work;
- g) the progress of Dr Ben Rozitis from the Faculty of Science towards becoming the first OU employee in space. Dr Rozitis had made it to the second round of a nationwide competition to win a seat on a commercial spaceflight in the not-too-distant future.

- 4.3 Referring to Charter Day a member asked whether it could be extended to become an Open Day that would provide an opportunity for students to come to Walton Hall. The Vice-Chancellor agreed that it would be good to bring students on to campus and that this suggestion would be given further consideration. Some thought had been given running the Milton Keynes degree ceremony on campus. However, the University Secretary said that students had indicated a lack of interest in this option.

Action: Comms

5 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**S-2013-03-02A
S-2013-03-02B**

- 5.1 A member asked for further information on the matter of staff tutors and OU Business School (OUBS) regional managers not having time allocated specifically for research and the implications for the research intensity profile of the University (paragraph 7.3). This matter had arisen in previous Research Assessment Exercises (RAEs); if it was an issue, why had a strategy not been put in place some years ago?
- 5.2 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research, Scholarship and Quality) (PVC (RSQ)) said that when the University made its submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) it would be required to state the proportion of the total academic workforce who had been submitted. As staff tutors and regional managers were on academic contracts, they had to be included in this calculation. This had the effect of bringing research intensity down to 33-34%, whereas the figure would be over 60% if only central academics were counted. For the first time in 2014, the REF results would be published on the same day as the quality profiles. A university which did well in the quality profiles, as the OU had done in 2008, but had low research intensity might receive unfair criticism about game-playing and selectivity over REF submissions. The lobby, particularly from the Russell Group, to add research intensity as a factor in the funding formula was a further issue. If this were to happen, it would have a major impact on the OU in reducing the quality related (QR) funding that followed from the REF exercise. The OU's Scholarship Strategy stated that academics would be engaged in different types of scholarship according to the needs of the University. The way in which the University organised its academic effort and the type of contract used for staff tutors and regional managers would not be changed to satisfy the REF exercise. However, the University would be working with Communications to prepare a clear explanation for the OU's profile when the data was published.

5.3 The Senate **noted**:

- a) the confirmed Minutes from the meeting held on 27 February 2013 (SPRC-2013-01-M);
- b) the unconfirmed Minutes from the meeting held on 1 May 2013 (SPRC-2013-02-M);
- c) the Confidential Minutes from the meeting held on 27 February 2013 (SPRC-2013-01-CM).

6 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE S-2013-03-03

The Senate is **noted** the report of the meeting of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) held on 26 February 2013.

7 RESEARCH COMMITTEE S-2013-03-04

The Senate **noted** the report of the meeting of the Research Committee (RC) held on 27 February 2013.

8 CURRICULUM AND VALIDATION COMMITTEE S-2013-03-05

- 8.1 Associate Lecturer (AL) and student members asked whether further guidance was required with regard to the issue of committee confidentiality and the reporting of committee decisions, particularly to the AL and student communities (paragraphs 11-13). There was a tension between the principle of openness in governance, which sought to involve the academic, AL and student communities in the decisions made, and the speed with which information could get circulated through social media with the potential to cause alarm and protest amongst staff and students if misinterpreted.
- 8.2 The PVC (A) responded that non-confidential items could be discussed by committee members with their colleagues immediately after the meeting, so long as it was in context. However, confidential items should not be discussed until the minutes were available to confirm the committee's decision and whether there were any conditions attached to that decision. Otherwise, there was a risk of misinterpretation in communications with other parties, including students or the media. There was a particular issue where decisions taken in the subcommittees of CVC were then required to come to CVC for final approval. It was important that any communications that took place in the interim period were accurate and carefully handled. Since the meeting, in an attempt to find a mechanism to handle this problem, the secretaries to all the committees reporting to Curriculum and Validation Committee (CVC), together with Marketing, had agreed to create a curriculum blog on which to report decisions, and any conditions attached to them, so that no misinformation could be circulated.
- 8.3 The University Secretary said that there was a distinction to be made between consultation on issues coming up for decision, which if non-confidential did not present any problems, and the discipline necessary to ensure that these issues were presented in a balanced manner. The Academic Governance Review (AGR) could consider the wider issue and perhaps produce some more detailed guidelines. In the interim, the discussions between PVC (A) and President, OUSA to find a mutually acceptable solution would be helpful.

Action: PVC (A)

8.4 The Senate **noted** the report.

9 LEARNING TEACHING AND STUDENT SUPPORT COMMITTEE S-2013-03-06

9.1 Members raised the following issues:

- a) the role of ALs in Personal Development Planning (PDP) and how this would fit within the curriculum (paragraph 15);
- b) the gap in gathering data about why students did not attend the examinations, which was a significant issue with some courses (Appendix 1, Review of Data on the Quality of the Student Learning Experience, paragraph 38).

9.2 The following responses were given:

- a) The PVC (L&T) said that the Careers and Employability Project had been tasked to address the issues surrounding PDP, including facilitation and curriculum integration. Consultation would take place as appropriate, and this would include ALs;
- b) The Vice-Chancellor said that the PVC (L&T) and the Director, Institute of Educational Technology (IET) would take note of this issue. A member reported that considerable work was already being done to find out why students withdrew at the point of examination, and further discussions with ALs were planned in order to review specific interventions that might be introduced.

9.3 The Senate **noted** the report.

10 SENATE MEMBERSHIP PANEL S-2013-03-07

The Senate **noted** the report on the business undertaken by the Senate Membership Panel (SMP) outside its scheduled meetings.

11 CENTRAL DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE S-2013-03-08

The Senate **noted**:

- a) the findings of the annual report covering student misconduct cases referred for Central Disciplinary Committee (CDC) consideration arising between 1 May 2012 and 30 April 2013;
- b) this report only included information about academic misconduct in relation to cases and appeals heard by CDC. The Academic Conduct Services Office would report to the Assessment Policy Committee on the number and type of academic misconduct cases dealt with by Academic Conduct Officers.

12 SPECIAL APPEALS COMMITTEE S-2013-03-09

The Senate **noted** the findings of the report of the Special Appeals Committee of the Senate (SAC) for the period June 2012 to May 2013.

13 HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE**HONORARY AWARDS 2013 AND FELLOWSHIP DRESS S-2013-03-10**

The Senate:

- a) **noted** the arrangements for conferment of awards at degree ceremonies being held in 2013;

- b) **approved** the proposal for introduction of an outfit for Fellows of the University to wear at degree ceremonies.

HONORARY DEGREES 2014

S-2013-03-11

The Senate **approved** the recommended list of nominations from the Honorary Degrees Committee for the award of honorary degrees of Doctor of the University (DUniv) and Master of the University (MUniv) to be conferred in 2014.

14 NEW POLICIES FOR AN ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK FOR QUALIFICATIONS AND MODULES

S-2013-03-12

- 14.1 The PVC (A) introduced the paper, which had had full and extensive consultation with stakeholders and had been through the Assessment Policy Committee (APC), Qualifications Committee (QUC) and the Curriculum and Validation Committee (CVC) for discussion and approval. A decision was required by the Senate to enable students registering in October 2014 to follow the new framework. The Dean and Director of Studies, MCT, Professor Anne De Roeck, added that it was essential to introduce these policies in order to focus on and facilitate student qualification completion.
- 14.2 Members asked the following questions about the **application of the new policies**:
- whether the policies only applied to new framework students in England starting study in autumn 2014 and, if not, whether some clarification was necessary in the document (paragraph 25);
 - whether the policies extended to existing students progressing to further study in 2014, as well as new students registering for study in autumn 2014;
 - whether transitional students who did not complete by 2017 would have to transfer to a degree within the new framework. Students who had almost completed 360 credits might then be delayed by not having credits at the prerequisite Level.
- 14.3 Professor De Roeck responded:
- the policies would apply to students enrolled on new framework qualifications from October 2014 onwards, wherever they were studying;
 - the consequences for individual students moving from the framework under which they had registered to another was a concern. It would take time to understand who would be affected and work out a plan for the transfer. However, the framework for 2014/15 appropriately captured the 2012/13 and 2013/14 pathways, so it was unlikely to be a problem.
 - transitional students would not be affected by this set of rules and regulations for the new academic framework.
- 14.4 A member asked how prepared the OU was to think differently about qualifications, and learning outcomes at a qualification level, and whether it had sufficiently robust systems to make the transition. Professor Peter Taylor replied that the University had to move in this direction as soon as possible and the creation of the Vantage system for 2014 would support this. However, further work was necessary, within faculties and elsewhere, to ensure that there was a focus on qualifications and an understanding of the role of stages in enabling a student to progress to the successful completion of a degree.
- 14.5 Some members raised concerns about the **curriculum offer**:

- a) that the Stage 1 offering from some faculties was not good enough. It was possible to acquire most of the required skills though one 60-credit module at Level 1. Consequently, students would be required to do modules that did not develop them further;
- b) whether there would be a strategic curriculum review to consider the skills and knowledge developed in each module, to ensure cohesion, articulation and appropriate support between each Level.

14.6 Professor De Roeck responded that the Senate principles approved in 2011 required students to study 120 credits at Level 1. Faculties were now creating a Stage 1 offering that developed both knowledge and the skills necessary to prepare students for study at Stage 2 across those 120 credits. Work was still in progress and discussions were taking place both within and between faculties. Levels and learning outcomes already built upon one another in order that a student might achieve a degree. The University would not commit students to degree schemes where this was not the case.

14.7 Several students thought there was a **loss of flexibility** in making Level 1 study compulsory, rather than advisory (paragraph 15). Professor De Roeck responded that, for students who registered in 2012/13 and 2013/14, the policies would not constrain flexibility any more than pathways had; there had been a prescribed order for some modules, although not for others, which the framework modelled exactly. Another member observed that many students valued the flexibility that smaller point courses, particularly 30 points, provided and that these should be maintained.

14.8 Members raised the following issues about **progression**:

- a) whether marking resit examinations, convening award boards and informing students of the results could be managed in time to allow students to progress to the next level of study;
- b) that different faculties were already providing different versions of the requirements for a student to register for their next module, so clear, timely and consistent information was required;
- c) that the University-wide progression rule (paragraph 31) should be defined before agreeing the policy on the requirement that students have successfully completed a 120 credit stage (or be in the process of achieving this) before moving on to the next stage (paragraph 15). This was an issue for students who enrolled in February for two 120-point Level 1 modules on the understanding that they could move onto Level 2 in October, only to discover that they could not progress because they would not have successfully completed those modules.
- d) the experience of students allowed to register for 120 credits in February and the gap that they would now have in their study as a consequence. In conjunction with these policies, the University should be much clearer about what students should do and perhaps make it clear that only part-time study can be offered for February starts, ie 60 credits;
- e) whether the exception to the progression rule (paragraphs 30 ii) and 35) would cover a student starting their first Level 1 course in October and moving on to the next in February, but who had not got the results by the time s/he wanted to start Level 2 studies in the following October. If not, what scenarios would it cover?
- f) paragraph 32 referred to qualification specific progression rules, for example the need to achieve above-pass thresholds on specific modules. When considering outcomes for students who had passed their exams but achieved an overall continuous assessment score (OCAS) of 30-39 without special circumstances, the

old procedures would have meant that the students had failed the module, but in the interests of enhancing progression a recent exam board was asked to review this for the first time. There might be policies pulling in different directions, so how would this be made clear for students.

14.9 The following responses were made by Professor De Roeck and Professor Taylor:

- a) Project 4 of the Study Experience Programme (SEP) was reviewing the award of results, the role of progression and how decisions about progression would be made. Consideration had to be given as to how those students expecting to commence the next stage, but who had not actually achieved the progression requirements, could have their resit results turned around quickly enough for a decision to be made before the next stage commenced. From September 2013, within the new academic year, there would be a quick turnaround for resit examinations: the student would sit the exam, it would be marked, a decision would be made and a result issued within 10 days;
- b) the issue of registering for the next module was a consequence of the Ready for 13/14 Project, which had required students to complete a certain number of credits before they could express an interest in a module. This issue was being resolved by allowing students to express an interest in a module, but not actually allowing them to start it, and by clarifying the conditions under which the module could be started;
- c) the University progression rule stated that a student should pass all modules in a stage before progressing to the next stage. This was the current situation and the paper did not propose any changes, although it could be amended in the future. This was different to the rule regarding when registration could be opened, which was a practical issue constrained by a set of business constraints. If a student started in February and wished to pick up another module in October, it created problems with regard to loan eligibility, and the size of the fee that the University was able to charge was capped by law. However, these had nothing to do with this framework, which tried to capture the academic structures of the current curriculum;
- d) some of the concerns around February starts were historic. Student Services had cleared up the situation by contacting students to advise them about their choices. Students could not start in February and then continue on a 120-credit cycle in the next February. This was not possible under the current principles agreed by the Senate in 2011, and it should not be possible with the principles currently under discussion. A member confirmed that Learner Support was working with affected students to address their concerns. This might be resolved by a reconfiguration of the curriculum, but it was important to ensure that it did not happen in the future;
- e) Professor Taylor confirmed that the inclusion of 30 ii) was to ensure that students would not be held back who were in the process of finishing off one particular stage, but in terms of study intensity needed to start the next. If the student commenced in October, then they ought to have one result and be in the process of completing stage 1 with the module they commenced in February so they would be able to start on Level 2 in the following October
- f) The University already had qualification specific progression rules to ensure that students were appropriately prepared to move to specialised stages 2 and 3 on certain qualifications. These rules did not prevent students progressing to any qualification, but it might stop them from moving on to a particular qualification where we know they are unlikely to succeed. This was not new, but the framework needed to capture such mechanisms. Professor Taylor said that the review of the OCAS was trying to sort out a separate issue. The examination process provided an opportunity to look at the whole student and, if the student had not done well

enough in the exam, to allow a second chance. Alternatively a student could do very well in the exam, but have just failed the continuous assessment, and yet previously would not have got a second chance. The change in policy on 2012 brought the continuous assessment component in line with the examinable component in that the student could get a second chance. This was to try and make the process fairer.

14.10 Several members raised concerns about **credit transfer**:

- a) whether the new policies might be too rigid in some circumstances, for example for those students who commenced OU study having previously developed Level 1 skills through their employment or previous education. Exemption through equivalent transferred credit was possible with regard to stage progression (paragraph 30), so might this be applied to the compulsory pre-requisites for modules (paragraph 39)? The University needed to get to grips with Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) as a way of providing flexibility for students who had already acquired some of the required skills;
- b) the practicalities of credit transfer in the new framework. It was important that APL should be dealt with in a timely way in order to ensure students did not start a module unnecessarily;
- c) that the arrangements for credit transfer should be amplified in the paper and in the communications that followed.

14.11 The following responses were given:

- a) the Vice-Chancellor agreed that APL would become increasingly important in the future and Dr Liz Marr was reviewing this area. Professor De Roeck said that the issue of credit transfer and the recognition of prior learning would have to fit within the context of modules, stages and progression within the OU. The framework was entirely suitable to accommodate APL, but the University did not currently have the mechanisms to deploy it within the curriculum. Professor Taylor added that the longer policy paper presented to CVC explained how Programme Directors would be allowed to use prior learning to allow a pre-requisite to be used for the study of another course;
- b) a member observed that students were already given a clear deadline, via the OU's website, by which to claim credit transfer; the University promised to process claims in good time if this deadline was met. However, many of the students who raised complaints about tutors or course materials came from a credit transfer background. Such students might have the knowledge to claim 240 points, but this did not necessarily mean that they were ready for study at Level 2 or 3 in a distance learning institution. It was important to think about the structures in place for such students and to signpost the resources available to help students engage with OU materials. This would be even more important if the University went down the APL route;
- c) the Vice-Chancellor said that credit transfer would be amplified in subsequent work and communications.

Action: PVC (A)

14.12 Following a vote, the Senate **approved**, by an overwhelming majority, the proposed policies on:

- a) stages;
- b) progression;

- c) pre-requisites and co-requisites;
- d) modular assessment.

15 PRINCIPLES FOR PROMOTION TO SENIOR LECTURER, READER, SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW AND PROFESSOR **S-2013-03-13**

- 15.1 The PVC (RSQ) said that the Academic Staff Promotions Committee (ASPC) had been looking at new promotion criteria to address a number of issues that were outlined in the paper. After a number of consultations, APSC had agreed to present the Senate with a set of 15 principles which were proposed as a framework for further detailed work on a new academic promotions scheme. The overall aims were to improve clarity on what achievements count towards promotion; to take account of individual circumstances as they might affect equality of opportunity to gain promotion; and to align the promotion criteria with existing policies, frameworks and quality standards in the OU and across the sector.
- 15.2 Some members indicated broad support for the paper:
- a) there was a need for greater clarity and transparency in the promotion procedures and the principles set out in the paper provided an excellent framework for further development;
 - b) the emphasis in the criteria on quality not quantity was welcomed. There was much to be learned from REF process, which had looked at individual circumstances and made allowances for individuals who had exceptionally high quality outputs to be included in the REF to advance the University's good standing and their own reputation;
 - c) whilst not having the background knowledge to comment in detail on the paper, students thought that the demonstration of excellence in teaching and student support was important.
- 15.3 Members raised the following issues regarding the focus on **leadership** and the **frameworks** to be used:
- a) if 'leadership' was to be one of two key areas on which promotion cases should be based, then it should be clearly defined. There were intangible forms of academic leadership that were not characterised by administration and management, but that should be appropriately recognised;
 - b) why leadership appeared to have been promoted to out-rank teaching, research and knowledge exchange. It had been decontextualized and was now expressed in terms of generic competencies. This was a significant change from the current criteria, and might put the OU at odds with the rest of the sector;
 - c) how the Competency Framework for Senior Leaders (CFSL) could be applied to academics who did not have experience of senior leadership roles or the opportunity to gain it. The responsibilities of staff tutors varied greatly across the University. The lowest level of the CFSL might be modified for those who were line managers, but more work was needed to modify the system in order for it to be suitable for staff tutors in terms of career development and promotion. Administration, which was a significant part of a staff tutor's role was not actually present in this set of principles;
 - d) how the University would apply both Valued Ways of Working (VWW) and CFSL through the Career Development and Staff Appraisal (CDSA) process, to inform the consideration of promotion cases. Staff usually engaged with one or other of the frameworks, but not both. There was a tension between the two different

approaches that did not sufficiently allow for the many different aspects of an individual's role as a line manager and/or as part of one or more teams;

- e) the danger of producing a box ticking culture, particularly if performance was assessed on the basis of the professional standards framework of the Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) rather than being appropriate to the specific nature of OU teaching, curricula and student support (principle g). It was important to consider how this framework might be phased in, as those coming forward for promotion in the near future might not yet meet some of the HEA requirements.

15.4 The PVC (RSQ) responded:

- a) The intention was that the definition of leadership should mirror the University's competency framework for senior leaders, which now formed part of the CDSA scheme, and to align promotion with the principles and criteria already adopted throughout the University in the form of VWW and CFSL. VWW was presented as a baseline, which demonstrated what was required for good performance; but the Leadership Competencies allowed a gradation. Detailed work was necessary to ensure that the criteria were appropriately expressed in terms of exercising leadership in an academic context, particularly for Senior Lecturers. The criteria should not imply the need to have a management role and should not remove administration from the promotion criteria;

Action: PVC (RSQ)

- b) Other areas of work would not be ignored. The principles outlined in the paper would require candidates coming forward for promotion to demonstrate good performance across all aspects of their role and duties. The requirement to demonstrate excellence in two areas was similar to the current scheme; however, one of those areas should be leadership, and this was a major change. In other promotion schemes, leadership expectations were usually integrated into teaching or research; but in these principles, the two areas had been separated in order to improve the clarity around the expectations in a promotion case;
- c) The Director, IET, added that the potential for professional development to be aligned with a framework in a way that would support individual ambitions was greatly facilitated by the paper. IET had become accrediting agent for HEA and was rolling out an institutional scheme that would enable staff to engage with a scholarship project and use it as the basis for HEA accreditation. This would become increasingly important for the University, as it was now part of the Key Information Set (KIS) data. The use of the REF criteria (principle l) was specific, but it would provide a useful framework for colleagues to present themselves for promotion.

15.5 With regard to the proposal that Senior Lecturer, Senior Research Fellow and Reader should be **equivalent grades** (principle f), members raised several issues:

- a) that this would be out of line with other higher education institutions (HEIs), where Reader was generally considered to be higher than Senior Lecturer;
- b) the fact that the career track for those focussing on teaching was Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, then Chair; whereas the track for research was Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Reader, then Chair. There were a group of people in the University who had already been promoted from Senior Lecturer to Reader.
- c) whether this proposal would present problems when the OU was recruiting externally, as someone joining as a Reader would typically expect to be seen as more senior than a Senior Lecturer, even though they were on the same pay scale

15.6 The following responses were given:

- a) The PVC (RSQ) said that this principle reflected the fact that Senior Lecturer and Reader were essentially different career trajectories. The proposed alignment was to ensure that Reader was the research equivalent to Senior Lecturer, where a Senior Lecturer's claim to excellence was in teaching or knowledge exchange plus leadership. The two roles were on an equivalent pay grade, so research should not be given special status by making Reader a specific grade between Senior Lecturer and Professor. Many HEIs were struggling with Reader status, and some were moving towards the American system of Associate Professors in order to deal with it;
- b) the principle of equivalence should be revisited to ensure that there was no loss of status for those who had already accepted Reader as a promotion from Senior Lecturer;
- b) the University Secretary said that Senior Research Fellow and Reader were on the same salary scale and therefore, according to the Higher Education Role Analysis (HERA) scheme, were recognised as being on the same grade. In the sector as a whole, Reader was recognised as a promotion on the basis of research only; Senior Lecturer was recognised on the basis of other criteria, which might include research. Some universities were explicit about according Readers higher esteem than Senior Lecturers, whilst others left it open to interpretation.

15.7 Members raised the following issues about the **impact on the culture and staff profile** of the University:

- a) the principles were more than an attempt to clarify the situation regarding promotion, but represented a major culture change in the way the OU viewed academic work and identities. A model based on these principles would have important consequences on the range of capabilities that the University needed to develop and the extent to which this could be built into staff development. Consequently, the consultation should be wider than ASPC and the senior team, and should include early career academics, researchers on fixed term contracts, and any others who might be affected by these proposals;
- b) the proposal to reward excellence in only one area of the academic portfolio, backed by evidence of leadership, would affect the drivers and behaviours of the academic, as there would be no reason to pursue excellence across a wide portfolio. This would have consequences on staff profiles, and affect the ability of staff to move to other institutions (principles a, b, c, d, e and f.);
- c) the separation of careers in teaching and research would have repercussions on teaching in the University and on the recruitment of new young staff. In the time of the REF, there was a tendency to focus recruitment on individuals who already had experience of or who were promising in research. There would be little incentive for these people to contribute to the teaching in the University, so staff reaching retirement age would not be replaced;
- d) the staff survey had demonstrated dissatisfaction with promotion opportunities. The contribution of younger colleagues did not appear to be recognised or valued by the OU as much as by its competitors, and their departure had an impact on the staff age profile and morale. There appeared to be a discrepancy between the promotion criteria applied to internal candidates and the criteria used to hire external candidates at a senior level. Some clarity about what individuals might do to lift their performance from good to excellent would be welcome.

- 15.8 The PVC (RSQ) responded that the commitment to all round performance was strengthened by these principles; there was no intention to create a generation of research only or teaching only academics.
- 15.9 A member said that it was unclear how to consistently apply quantified criteria or evidence. The REF criteria applied to disciplines, but academic portfolios were not rigidly bound to one discipline; it was unclear how quantified evidence could be benchmarked against the three areas, knowledge transfer, teaching and research excellence; and the contribution to teaching was impossible to quantify, particularly in team teaching scenarios (principles h, i, j and k). It was also unclear how principle (n), regarding the assessment of achievement relative to opportunity, would be referenced.
- 15.10 The PVC (R&S) said that the need for clarity inevitably entailed some quantification, not only so that promotion committees could view a sample of work from which judgements about quality could be made, but also to enable the sample to be calibrated for people who, for equal opportunity reasons, could not demonstrate the same quantity of work for the committee to make a qualitative judgement about. The principles presented a link between quantification and equity.
- 15.11 Members also raised the following issues:
- a) principle (m) was inconsistent with the OU's current scholarship policy. Also, it was difficult for staff tutors to meet the requirement for scholarship to be effectively shared as published outputs as a means of demonstrating performance in teaching, research or knowledge exchange. Staff tutors' scholarly outputs were often published for internal use and this should be taken into account in promotion cases using such criteria;
 - b) principle (o), which suggested that ASPC could condone some criteria for promotion, contradicted any intention to improve clarity;
 - c) The promotions process was at the end of a period of time where individuals have either had opportunities, training and development, and encouragement or have not; so the implementation was key.
- 15.12 The PVC (RSQ) said that these and earlier comments on matters of detail, and the way in which the principles were put into operation, would be reviewed and incorporated in the final paper to come back to the Senate.

Action: PVC (RSQ)

- 15.13 Summarising, the PVC (RSQ) said that there appeared to be some fundamental disagreement regarding the principle that leadership was a mandatory part of the promotion process. This issue could be reviewed in terms of whether it was appropriate to map the criteria to the current leadership development scheme within the promotion system, but it was a key principle. The Senate had to agree whether or not to approve the principles as a whole: if not, the principles would have to be reconsidered; if so, it would be on condition that the leadership criteria were carefully reviewed and that the comments made by members of the Senate were taken into account.
- 15.14 Following a vote, the Senate **approved**, by 39 votes to 24, the principles for a new promotion scheme, as set out in the paper, as a framework for further work, subject to a careful review of the leadership criteria.

16 VISITING ACADEMICS AND HONORARY APPOINTMENTS

S-2013-03-14

16.1 Members raised the following issues:

- a) whether the significant reduction of visiting titles from 16 to 3 indicated that there had been something fundamentally wrong (paragraph 4 a));
- b) whether the title Honorary Associate (paragraph 6) could be expanded to include staff who had left the OU who might not be working in an academic environment, but who had not necessarily retired, and who wanted to maintain links with the University because they were still working on teaching or research projects;
- c) the pedigree of Honorary Associate and whether the title was used in other institutions;
- d) how Research Students might maintain links with the OU once they had completed their PhD;
- e) whether any of these titles would cover a foreign PhD student undertaking a sandwich course for a period of 6 – 9 months.

16.2 The PVC (RSQ) and University Secretary made the following responses:

- a) that the reduction in titles represented a simplification and consolidation of existing criteria; it was not a reduction in scope. The number of titles had grown over time, but the review had indicated that only 3 were necessary;
- b) if individuals were working, they would not have to be academics to be visitors. There was provision to award visiting status to non-academics of appropriate standing. Individuals who were not working (such as a full-time carer) might present an issue, and the criteria would have to be expanded if they were to be included. The Vice-Chancellor said that this adjustment would be made;

Action: PVC (RSQ)

- c) the pedigree of Honorary Associate was unknown, but the title was used elsewhere, and this type of policy was common in the sector;
- d) the issue of Research Students would be given further consideration;

Action: PVC (RSQ)

- e) the student doing a short PhD programme would be a Research Student.

16.3 The Senate **approved** the revised Visiting Academics Policy with an implementation date of 1 July 2013.**17 AWARD OF THE TITLE OF EMERITUS PROFESSOR**

S-2013-03-15

The Senate:

- a) **approved** the recommendation from the Chair and Readership Subcommittee that the title Emeritus Professor was awarded to Professor Linda Jones.
- b) **noted** that Chair's Action had been taken in respect of the award of the title of Emeritus Professor to Professor Colin Pillinger and Professor John Zarnecki,

Faculty of Science, and Professor Keith Attenborough, Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology.

18 ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE REVIEW

S-2013-03-16

18.1 A student member asked that, following the success of the consultation process on the Student Charter, students be consulted at an early stage in this review. This was particularly important with regard to the issue of confidentiality and communication of committee business raised earlier in the meeting. The University Secretary said that it was the intention to consult extensively and throughout the process.

18.2 The Senate **agreed**:

- a) to establish a Group to review the effectiveness and performance of the Senate and its sub-structure (paragraph 4);
- b) the composition of the Academic Governance Review Group (paragraph 8).

19 COMMITTEE MATTERS

S-2013-03-17

The Senate **approved** the recommendations for the constitutional changes to:

- a) Curriculum Partnership Committee (Appendix 1);
- b) Learning Teaching and Student Support Committee (Appendix 2).

20 CHAIR'S ACTION

S-2013-03-18

The Senate **noted** the report on action taken by the Chair since the last meeting of the Senate, which included approval to changes in the Module Regulations; and approval to the appointment of a graduate and the Director, Knowledge Media Institute (KMi) to the Senate.

21 THE COUNCIL

S-2013-03-19

21.1 A member asked whether a 20% decline in student numbers was really anticipated. The University Secretary said that the planning assumptions for England were based on the UK Market Strategy, which had been shared with the Senate at a workshop in September 2011. Based on market research, there had been an assumption that the University would lose certain categories of student, particularly those with an equivalent or lower qualification (ELQ) and those who did not wish to study for a qualification. The decline was not a prediction or a forecast, but a planning assumption that demonstrated that if the University lost 20% of its student population, it would still be viable. The UK Market Strategy had indicated that the OU might lose 30% of its student intake in the short term, but it had not; the University was currently ahead of these assumptions. The Strategy had indicated that student numbers would drop between 2011/12 and 2012/13, but they had not; transitional student numbers were 12% above planning assumptions and new regime students had been 5% above assumptions. It was not known if numbers would drop in future years, but if the University continued to perform better with regard to recruitment, and the work of the Student Support Teams (SSTs) and the Study Experience Programme (SEP) succeeded in improving progression rates, then the numbers would decline by less than 20% or perhaps not at all.

21.2 The Senate **noted** the report on matters discussed at the meeting of the Council held on 17 May 2013.

22 AMENDMENT TO MODULE REGULATIONS

S-2013-03-21

The Senate:

- a) **approved** the proposed amendment to the Module Regulations;
- b) **noted** the consequential changes to be made to relevant qualification regulations.

23 FUTURE ITEMS OF BUSINESS

S-2013-03-20

- 23.1 In response to a request from a member, the Chair agreed that an update on Student Support Teams be added to a future Senate agenda.
- 23.2 The Director, IET suggested that a high level view of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) accreditation should also be presented to the Senate.
- 23.3 The Senate **noted** the potential items for the agenda for the Senate meeting on 16 October 2013.

24 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

Meetings will be held on the following dates:

- a) Wednesday 16 October 2013
- b) Wednesday 5 February 2014
- c) Wednesday 2 April 2014 (tbc)
- d) Wednesday 11 June 2014

Fraser Woodburn
Secretary to the Committee

Julie Tayler
Working Secretary to the Committee
Email: j.d.tayler@open.ac.uk
Tel: 01908 332729

Attachments:

S-2013-03-M Appendix 1 – Curriculum Partnership Committee constitution
S-2013-03-M Appendix 2 – Learning Teaching and Student Support Committee constitution

CURRICULUM PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTION – UPDATED ~~01.09.2012~~05.06.2013

Purpose

On behalf of the Curriculum and Validation Committee (CVC), to provide detailed scrutiny of proposals relating to curriculum partnerships, to approve amendments to existing partnership arrangements, to approve joint curriculum development partnerships and to make recommendations to the CVC on the approval of the introduction or closure of curriculum partnerships leading to an award of the University.

Terms of Reference

Legislation: setting policy and strategy frameworks, agreeing plans and priorities

1. To approve amendments and extensions to existing curriculum partnerships, where they lead to a direct award of the University.
2. To approve, in consultation as appropriate with the Qualifications Committee, the introduction and closure of collaborative credit agreements with other institutions.
3. To approve the introduction and closure of joint curriculum development partnerships.

Monitoring, and reviewing, actions and institutional performance

4. To monitor and review established curriculum partnerships under regular review, particularly through the annual monitoring process, working in consultation as appropriate with the Open University Worldwide Board of Directors, Validation Committee, and referring any major issues arising from the reports to the CVC.
5. To monitor the use of Open University modules by other organisations, especially those involving 'licensing' arrangements, in programmes leading to the awards of other institutions, both in the United Kingdom and elsewhere.
6. To monitor the demand for collaborative credit schemes with other institutions and to receive an annual report on the number of awards of credit made under each arrangement.
7. To monitor and review the effective operation of credit rating arrangements.

Assuring quality and standards, including approving regulations

8. To maintain and monitor the University's procedures and processes for curriculum partnerships, with reference to the current guidance from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and to determine the institutional policy guidelines, good practice and enhancement within which areas of the University should operate when embarking upon new curriculum partnerships, managing existing partnerships, or terminating partnerships.
9. To ensure, in consultation as appropriate with the Qualifications Committee and the Assessment Policy Committee, that the curriculum and qualifications-related aspects of collaborative provision satisfy the University's own quality assurance requirements and those of appropriate national and international agencies.

10. To ensure that proposals for new collaborative partnerships involving the use of the University's curriculum have been properly appraised, and that they carry the endorsement of the relevant faculty committee and (in the case of international partnerships) of the OU Worldwide Board of Directors.

Advising other governance bodies or management

11. To provide detailed scrutiny of proposals for the introduction of new curriculum partnerships leading to an award of the University, taking into account the QAA requirements relating to collaborative provision, and to make recommendations to the CVC on the approval of such partnerships and their quality and contractual frameworks.
12. To provide detailed scrutiny of proposals for the closure of a curriculum partnership leading to an award of the University, ensuring that commitments to continuing students are protected by the partners to the completion of their studies, and to make recommendations to CVC on the closure of the partnership.

Making governance arrangements e.g. appointing to other committees

13. To nominate a member of the Committee to serve on the Validation Committee.

Membership

1. A Chair appointed by the Curriculum and Validation Committee.

2. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching or nominee.

- ~~23.~~ One associate dean or equivalent with a relevant portfolio from each central academic unit (or the dean/director's nominee if no suitable portfolio exists).

- ~~34.~~ The Director, Global Partnerships, Business Development Unit or nominee.

- ~~45.~~ The Director of Academic Planning and Resources or nominee.

- ~~56.~~ The Head of Quality.

- ~~67.~~ The Director of Assessment, Credit and Qualifications, or nominee.

- ~~78.~~ The Director of the Centre for Inclusion and Collaborative Partnerships or nominee.

- ~~89.~~ One registered student appointed by the Open University Students' Association.

- ~~910.~~ One associate lecturer appointed by the Associate Lecturers Executive.

- ~~4011.~~ One member of the Validation Committee, nominated by that Committee.

- ~~4412.~~ One member of the Research Degrees Committee who is a members of the Affiliated Research Centre Management Group, nominated by the Research Degrees Committee.

- ~~4213.~~ Up to two members co-opted by the Committee, to include external expertise in collaborative provision.

Secretary

Mode of Operation

1. The Committee shall meet as and when required, and shall report at least annually to the Curriculum and Validation Committee.
 2. The Chair of the Committee shall have executive authority to act on its behalf in consultation with its Secretary to recommend proposals for approval by the Curriculum and Validation Committee, where a scheme fits identically with an existing model.
 3. The Chair of the Committee shall have executive authority to act on its behalf in consultation with a sub group of Committee members, to recommend new schemes of collaboration for approval by the Curriculum and Validation Committee.
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LEARNING, TEACHING AND STUDENT SUPPORT COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTION – UPDATED ~~01.08.2012~~05.06.2013

Purpose

Learning, Teaching and Student Support Committee is responsible to the Senate for strategy, policy and standards relating to the student experience in the University, including learning, teaching, and student support. The Committee's remit covers enquirers, clients, sponsors and alumni as well as registered students. Its responsibility for teaching spans centrally-produced resources and regional/national activities including the work of associate lecturers.

Terms of Reference

Legislation: setting policy and strategy frameworks, agreeing plans and priorities

1. To promote the strategic objectives and priorities relating to learning teaching and student support.
2. To determine policies and guidelines within the agreed strategic objectives and priorities relating to learning teaching and student support.
3. To approve proposals for new methods and forms of teaching delivery and student support, having assessed their impact on all stakeholders.
4. To formulate and interpret contractual and other non-academic policies, regulations, and practices relating to the admission and progress of students, including the consideration of exceptions to policies.

Monitoring, and reviewing, actions and institutional performance

5. To monitor the quality of students' experience of the University in comparison with the experiences offered by other providers, to identify areas of the student experience requiring attention or development, and to refer these to the appropriate officers and committees.
6. To contribute to the Senate's annual academic review of the University.

Assuring Quality and Standards, including approving regulations

7. To monitor and advise on the mechanisms by which the experience of enquirers, students and clients is evaluated.

Advising other governance bodies or management

8. To advise relevant areas of the University on the collection of evidence about the experiences of OU enquirers, students and alumni, about the student support potential of resources and networks beyond the University, and about the experiences offered by competitor institutions.
9. To advise the Senate and/or its other committees on new developments in the University, in particular assessment policy and strategy, and on developments in the external environment.

Judicial: deciding individual cases

10. The power to decide individual student exceptions to general policies has been delegated.

Membership

1. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching), Chair, ex officio. ~~and~~
- ~~2. the~~ The Director, Students, Deputy Chair, ex officio. ~~Joint Chairs: each shall take the Chair for a year, with the other as Deputy Chair.~~
- ~~23.~~ The deans of faculties or their nominees, and the Director of the Institute of Educational Technology or his/her nominee, *ex officio*.
- ~~34.~~ The Chair of the Student Experience Advisory Group reporting to the Committee.
- ~~45.~~ The Director of Learning and Teaching Solutions, *ex officio*.
- ~~56.~~ The Director of Library Services, *ex officio*.
- ~~67.~~ The Director, Learning and Teaching Office, *ex officio*.
- ~~78.~~ The Director of Teaching and Learner Support, *ex officio*.
- ~~89.~~ The Director of Assessment, Credit and Qualifications, *ex officio*.
- ~~910.~~ The Director, Associate Lecturer Services, *ex officio*
- ~~1011.~~ The Director, Learner Support Services, *ex officio*
- ~~1112.~~ Four members of staff, elected by the Senate, of whom at least two shall be members of regional/national staff.
- ~~1213.~~ Two associate lecturers appointed by the Associate Lecturers Executive.
- ~~1314.~~ Two registered students appointed by the Open University Students' Association.
- ~~1415.~~ Such others as the Committee may co-opt up to a maximum of three, to include members with expertise as necessary in HE issues in Scotland, Ireland and Wales if not otherwise elected or nominated.

Secretary

Mode of Operation

1. The Committee shall meet in accordance with the University's Committee Timetable, not less than three times a year, and on such other occasions in the year as have been approved by the Senate. It shall report to each meeting of the Senate.
2. It shall be permitted to delegate tasks to a duly constituted executive committee or committees of itself; or to specific individuals; and may make rules relating to its own procedure, but should not further delegate powers delegated by the Senate without the Senate's agreement.
3. The Committee should designate a Deputy Chair. The Chair shall have executive authority to act on behalf of the Committee and any of its executive committees, in consultation with any body designated to assist in this capacity by the Committee.
4. The Committee shall review each year according to agreed University criteria how efficiently, effectively and economically it is working in respect of participation, the conduct of business and production of high quality decisions, the schedule of the review to allow for implementation of improvements from the beginning of the next committee year.
5. The Committee shall ensure that strategies, policies plans and priorities within its remit are compliant with relevant University-wide policies implemented or being developed, particularly those relating to equal opportunities, environmental management and health and safety.

Secretary
