

**THE SENATE**

**Minutes**

This paper presents the confirmed Minutes of the last meeting of the Senate held on Wednesday 28 January 2015 at The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes.

The Senate **approved** these Minutes as a correct record of the meeting on Wednesday 22 April 2015.

Fraser Woodburn  
University Secretary

Sue Thomas  
Working Secretary to the Senate  
Email: [sue.thomas@open.ac.uk](mailto:sue.thomas@open.ac.uk)  
Tel: 01908 655083

Attachments:

S-2015-01-M Appendix 1: Strategic Planning and Resources Committee (SPRC)  
S-2015-01-M Appendix 2: Qualifications Committee (QuC)

## THE SENATE

Minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on Wednesday 28 January 2015 at 2.00pm  
in the Hub Theatre, The Open University, Walton Hall.

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### PRESENT:

#### 1) Ex officio

Professor Tim Blackman, Vice-Chancellor (Acting)  
Professor Alan Bassindale, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research, Scholarship and Quality)  
(Acting)  
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  
Dr Richard Brown, Dean, Faculty of Arts  
Mr Jeremy Roche, Dean, Faculty of Health and Social Care  
Professor Hazel Rymer, Dean, Faculty of Science  
Mr Keith Zimmerman, Director, Students  
Professor Patrick McAndrew, Director of the Institute of Educational Technology  
Mrs Nicky Whitsed, Director, Library Services  
Mr Chris Rooke, Director, Learning and Teaching Solutions

### Appointed

#### 2) Central Academic Units

##### Faculty of Arts

Dr Ole Grell	Professor John Wolffe
Dr Graham Harvey	Dr Cristina Chimisso
Dr Lynda Prescott	Dr Naoko Yamagata

##### Faculty of Business & Law

Dr Sharon Slade	Mr Mike Phillips
Dr Kristen Reid	

##### Faculty of Education and Language Studies

Dr Uwe Baumann	Mrs Annie Eardley
Dr Tim Lewis	Professor Regine Hampel
Mr Pete Smith	

##### Faculty of Health and Social Care

Mrs Sue Cole	Dr Mary Twomey
Miss Christine Taylor	Professor Jan Draper

##### Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology

Dr Leonor Barroca	Dr Rachel Hilliam
Professor Joyce Fortune	Professor Andy Lane
Ms Maggie Holland	Dr Toby O'Neil
Dr Peter Robbins	Mr Brendan Quinn
Dr Hayley Ryder	Dr Magnus Ramage

Dr David Bowers

**Faculty of Science**

Dr Arlène Hunter

Dr Claire Turner

Dr John Baxter

Dr Janet Haresnape

Professor Hilary MacQueen

Professor David Rothery

**Faculty of Social Sciences**

Dr Troy Cooper

Mr Matt Staples

Dr Catriona Havard

Dr Helen Kaye

Dr Sharon Pinkney

**Institute of Educational Technology**

Dr Anne Adams

Mr Chris Edwards

Professor Eileen Scanlon

**Other Central Units**

Dr Liz Marr

**3) Associate Lecturers**

Mr Stephen Pattinson

Mrs Frances Chetwynd

Dr Walter Pisarski

Dr Clare Spencer

Dr Tricia French (alternate)

Dr Linda Walker (alternate)

**4) Students Appointed by Open University Students Association**

Miss Ruth Tudor

Mr Josh Brumpton

Ms Alison Kingan

Mr David Humble

Mr John Murphy

Mr Jeferson de Oliveira

**5) Academic-related Staff**

Dr Donna Smith

Mr Jake Yeo

Ms Pat Atkins

Ms Clare Riding

Mr Phil Berry

Dr Victoria Crowe

Mr Mike Innes

Mr Michael Street

Dr Christina Lloyd

Mrs Joanne Smythe

Mr Simon Horrocks

Mr Billy Khokhar

Miss Barbara Poniatowska

Dr Linda Ward

**6) Co-opted members**

Mr Christopher Goscomb

Mr John D'Arcy

Mr Rob Humphreys

Dr David Knight

Dr James Miller

**In attendance**

Mr Fraser Woodburn, University Secretary

Mr Andrew Law, Director of Open Media Unit

Mrs Dawn Turpin, Head of Governance

Ms Sue Thomas, Senior Manager, Governance

Miss Teresa Coyle, Manager, Governance

Dr Rachel Cragg, Director, Academic Planning and Resources (Minute 11)

**Observing**

Mr Lucian Hudson, Director of Communications

Ms Edith Prak, Director of Development

Mrs Louisa Allen, Senior Manager, Academic Policy and Engagement, Office of the PVC  
(Academic)

Mrs Susie Palmer-Trew, Portfolio Manager, Office of the PVC (Academic)

**APOLOGIES:**

**1) Ex officio**

Professor Rebecca Taylor, Dean, Faculty of Business and Law

**Appointed**

**2) Central Academic Units**

**Faculty of Business and Law**

Ms Carmel McMahon

Miss Carol Howells

**Faculty of Education and Language Studies**

Dr Jane Cullen

Dr Indra Sinka

**Faculty of Health and Social Care**

Mr Mick McCormick

**Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology**

Dr Tony Nixon

**Faculty of Science**

Professor Monica Grady

**Faculty of Social Sciences**

Dr Jacqueline Baxter

Dr Anastasia Economou

**3) Associate Lecturers**

Ms Janet Dyke

Mr Bruce Heil

**6) Co-opted members**

Professor Peter Scott

**1 WELCOME**

The Chair, Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Tim Blackman, welcomed Dr Catriona Havard, Faculty of Social Sciences and Dr Hayley Rider, Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology (MCT) to their first meeting of the Senate.

**2 MINUTES**

**S-2014-04-M**

The Senate **approved** the minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on Wednesday 15 October 2014.

**3 MATTERS ARISING**

**S-2015-01-01**

**Group Tuition Policy**

3.1 An Associate Lecturer (AL) member commented that for the University to be able to take full advantage of the tutor student allocation (TSA) process being brought forward, it was important that Student Support Teams (SSAs), associate lecturers and module teams all worked closely together to ensure success. The Director (Students) supported this and reported that the pilot scheme referred to in the paper was being extended for October 2015J presentations.

3.2 A member drew attention to an example within her own Faculty where a significant number of students had registered for a module less than one week prior to the start date and had early allocation been in place then this would have resulted in unnecessary redundancy notices being issued to ALs. The Director (Students) Keith Zimmerman, explained that the results of the pilot which was based on eight modules would be analysed. In response to a question, he confirmed that an examination of the current redundancy process for associate lecturers would also be included in the analysis. Progress with the new policy would be steady and existing processes would require adaptation. The overall outcome would be similar to that of a conventional university where timetables were set in the spring and subsequently adjusted.

3.3 The Senate **noted** the responses to the matters arising.

**4 REPORT FROM AND QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIR**

4.1 The Chair invited the University Secretary, Fraser Woodburn, to report on student numbers.

4.2 Mr Woodburn reported that in October 2014 numbers of UK undergraduate students had been in line with targets set although recruitment of post graduate and international students had fallen short of the targets set. However, students registering under the new fee regime had the right to withdraw without financial penalty up to 14 days from module start and the effects on numbers and thus fee income had been uncertain at that point. It had subsequently become apparent that the University would not achieve its fee income budget and two areas of activity had had a major impact on the situation. Firstly, students who had indicated they would be taking out a student loan to fund their studies but records showed that no application had been made had been de-registered. The students had been contacted and some subsequently had made the necessary arrangements but approximately 4000 students did not set in place any funding provision and as a result were removed from the University's records of registered students. Secondly, the University had not claimed student loan fee income from those students who had registered but had not demonstrated any evidence of engagement with their studies, that is, had passively withdrawn from their studies. It was acknowledged that insufficient provision had been made for this within the budgets.

- 4.3 With respect to February 2015 registrations, indications were that registrations for new students in England and Northern Ireland would show a shortfall against targets. The Vice-Chancellor's Executive (VCE) would be considering the impact of this prediction on the University's financial position.
- 4.4 The Acting Vice-Chancellor reported on his oversight of the Student Success Portfolio under which a number of cross-unit initiatives had been prioritised as essential to delivering improvements particularly to improve module and qualification completion, building on the work of the Study Experience Programme. Professor Blackman commended the expertise and commitment of those involved in this work to achieve the best outcomes for students.
- 4.5 Attention was also drawn to the results of the Research Excellence Framework (REF). The Acting Vice-Chancellor commented that the results had given him great pride as they had demonstrated the opinions of the University's academic peers on its achievements in producing new knowledge. The University had considerably improved the quality of its research compared to six years ago with an impressive 72% of its research being rated as 3 star or 4 star, indicating that the research was internationally excellent. Professor Blackman reported that these results showed that the University was leading the field among universities with widening access missions. The details of the University's position were presented separately to the Senate but key successes included a ranking of joint first in the UK for 3\* and 4\* research in Music and on grade point average, rankings in the top twenty institutions for Art and Design and for Education. The University was also ranked in the top third for Business and Management and Computing Science and Informatics.
- 4.6 The Acting Vice-Chancellor also reported on the following successes for the University and members of its staff and congratulated all those involved:
- a) award of over £1 million by The Leverhulme Trust to the Institute of Educational Technology (IET) and the Faculty of Education and Language Studies (FELS) for 15 PhD studentships for interdisciplinary studies in Open World Learning;
  - b) the Rosetta project being awarded Physics World 'Breakthrough of the Year' prize;
  - c) the first presentation of the Introduction to Cyber Security Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), developed in the Faculty of Maths, Technology and Computing (MCT) with support from the UK National Cyber Security Programme. This MOOC was certified by the UK National Technical Authority for Information Assurance, and the first presentation had over 23,000 registered learners;
  - d) confirmation from the Government that the University would receive funding for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) teaching capital projects during 2015-16. A successful bid from the Faculties of MCT and Science had brought the University over £2.5m to transform teaching of experimentation through the development of online laboratories;
  - e) the OpenScience Laboratory winning the Outstanding ICT Initiative of the Year award at the Times Higher Education (THE) Awards;
  - f) the Business School celebrating 25 years of its Masters of Business Administration (MBA) degree and being shortlisted for the Times Higher Education (THE) Business School of the Year for the second year running;

- g) accreditation of the re-developed Psychology Honours degree and for three new Psychology Honours degrees. The Psychology Programme overall was commended by the British Psychological Society for innovation in curriculum design;
- h) appointment of Les Budd, Reader in Social Enterprise at the Business School, as a Specialist Advisor for Economic Policy to the Northern Ireland Assembly;
- i) award of Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit of Hungary for services to the Hungarian people to John Oates, Senior Lecturer in FELS;
- j) development of a series of short, free online digital skills tutorials, Being Digital, by the Library Services team which had won an OU Teaching Award for Excellence.

4.7 The Acting Vice-Chancellor also acknowledged the work of colleagues in the OU in Wales who arranged for a special graduation ceremony to be held at short notice to award a Foundation Degree in Paramedic Sciences to a student, Adrian Cook, who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness.

4.8 The Acting Vice-Chancellor reminded the Senate that the new Vice Chancellor, Peter Horrocks would be joining the University in April for his induction, before taking up his duties in May.

## 5 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

S-2015-01-02A  
S-2015-01-02B

5.1 A member expressed concern over the views expressed in minute 5.4 and felt they were at variance to the discussion on the Taught Postgraduate Strategy at the meeting of the Senate in October 2014 which had been very positive. The University Secretary confirmed that the minute accurately reflected the views expressed. The taught post graduate market was in decline across the higher education sector and was particularly challenging for the Open University as unlike other universities, it did not attract large numbers of full time postgraduate overseas students. The University had performed relatively well in this declining market but there was an acknowledgment that the University did not support postgraduate students adequately and improvements needed to be made. The newly appointed Director, Taught Postgraduate would be leading the process of improvement.

5.2 Another member commented that in relation to minute 8 on Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), he was surprised that the debate had not included reference to information previously presented to the Senate on innovation in learning. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) (PVC LT) confirmed that the information had been presented to the Strategic Planning and Resources Committee (SPRC). Work was underway in the light of previous approvals of strategies and policies by the Senate for the University to adopt an innovative approach to delivering postgraduate curriculum.

5.3 A member commented that it was very encouraging to see reference to positive outcomes from the University's MOOCs and asked if data would be available to Senate members. The University Secretary commented that the effect of MOOCs on module registrations was not yet clear. However, MOOCs were being developed which were better targeted to recruit students, similar to the content offered via OpenLearn.

5.4 The Senate **noted** the unconfirmed Minutes and Confidential Minutes from the meeting held on 4 November 2014.

- 6 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE S-2014-01-03**
- The Senate **noted** the report of the meeting of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) held on 3 November 2014.
- 7 RESEARCH COMMITTEE S-2015-01-04**
- 7.1 A member sought further information on paragraph 3 of the report and the reference to access to University systems and support for part time post graduate students. The Acting Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research, Scholarship and Quality (PVC RSQ) commented that the Postgraduate Research Student Experience Survey had shown satisfaction levels amongst postgraduate research students had fallen but within the sector, the University had been rated highly. The PVC (RSQ) confirmed that work had begun to enhance part-time students' access to IT systems and support and the improvements would be implemented during this academic year.
- 7.2 The Senate **noted** the report of the meeting of the Research Committee held on 12 November 2014.
- 8 CURRICULUM AND VALIDATION COMMITTEE S-2015-01-05**
- The Senate **noted**:
- a) the report of the meeting of the Curriculum and Validation Committee held on 9 November 2014;
  - b) that the following items appeared separately on the agenda for consideration:
    - i) Curriculum fit for the future (S-2015-01-08);
    - ii) the compilation of current OU assessment policy (S-2015-01-11);
    - iii) proposed amendments to the membership of the Qualifications Committee (S-2014-04-12).
- 9 LEARNING, TEACHING AND STUDENT SUPPORT COMMITTEE S-2015-01-06**
- The Senate **noted** the report meeting of the Learning, Teaching and Student Support Committee (LTSSC) that took place on 1 December 2014.
- 10 SENATE MEMBERSHIP PANEL S-2015-01-07**
- The Senate **noted** the report on business conducted by the Senate Membership Panel (SMP) since the last meeting of the Senate.
- 11 CURRICULUM FIT FOR THE FUTURE S-2015-01-08**
- 11.1 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (PVC A) introduced the paper and explained that in June 2014 the Senate agreed to review and update the 2009-14 Curriculum Strategy and to align this work with both the Research Shaping the Future outcomes and the Learning and Teaching Vision and Plan. Following consultation with internal and external stakeholders, the aspiration for a curriculum fit for the future has been defined through a number of curriculum principles. Professor Mihsein emphasised that the University's curriculum should be the pivotal mechanism to enable the University to strengthen and maintain its dominant position as a world leading university. This should be set within a framework which had the potential to be transformational in nature. A number of principles had been developed to achieve this aim. These would underpin the



decision making processes and act as catalysts for change to take the University forward from its current position. Key activities had also been identified which included communication and cultural change, policy and practice change and evaluation and continual quality enhancement. If approved by the Senate, work would commence with central academic units (CAUs) to support and enable the principles to be embedded and encourage the sharing of best practice.

- 11.2 A member commented that he found the paper incomprehensible and was not convinced that if approved it would make any tangible difference to the University. Another member commented that he found very little in the paper upon which anyone could disagree and felt it had been written to suit all stakeholders. Another member expressed disappointment that the aspirations and principles did not appear to capture the uniqueness of the University and believed that references to widening participation should have more emphasis.
- 11.3 A student member commented that students made conscious decisions to study at the Open University and he welcomed the aspirations and principles for the University's future curriculum. Another student member also welcomed the aspirations and principles, especially principle 6 which referred to the curriculum striking a balance between facilitating student choice and providing academic coherence to support student progression. He did however believe that paper lacked detail on the implementation of the principles.
- 11.4 Members also expressed some reservations about the references in principle 8 to equipping students and society to understand and engage with the social and global challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, such as the 'megatrends' articulated by the Oxford Martin Commission. They felt students would have differing views on this perception of citizenship and their engagement with it. Another member was concerned that the future action listed in paragraph 44 did not connect to the plan for implementation defined in appendix 2 to the paper.
- 11.5 The Director, the OU in Wales expressed his support for the aspirations and principles and found them to be very thoughtful and reflective of the University's social mission. The aspiration reflected how the University needed to respond to changes in the external environment and be responsive to student demands. Although another member had commented that English regional offices had not been included in the list of stakeholders, he believed that issues relating to the four nations had been well covered within the paper. The Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences also welcomed the aspiration and principles and hoped that implementation of them would lead to the development of clear synergies between the Research Shaping the Future outcomes and the Learning and Teaching Vision and Plan.
- 11.6 A member commented that although he supported the paper, he felt the authors had missed an opportunity by not consulting with alumni of the University. This group could have provided valuable input particularly in relation to progression between qualifications and carrying forward the aspirations of the curriculum into society generally.
- 11.7 The PVC(A) thanked members of the Senate for their comments and explained that there would be a consultation on the implementation process. He offered to liaise with alumni representatives and reaffirmed a willingness to be informed by stakeholders including central academic units and students.
- 11.8 The Senate **approved** the aspiration and principles for the University's curriculum.

- 12 RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK (REF): OUTCOME S-2015-01-09**
- 12.1 The Acting Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research, Scholarship and Quality (PVC RSQ) informed the Senate that in the results of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014 published by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) on 18 December 2014, the University had considerably improved the quality profile of its research since last assessed in RAE 2008 (Research Assessment Exercise 2008). Overall, 72% of Open University research was assessed as being 4 or 3 star quality indicating that the research was 'worldleading' or 'internationally excellent' in terms of its outputs, impact and environment. This compared to an equivalent figure of 51% in RAE 2008. The University saw a significant increase in its Grade Point Average (GPA) score across the majority of its submissions, but so did many other universities, which resulted in the University's overall ranking not increasing.
- 12.2 The PVC(RSQ) explained that at this stage the figures in the report were for the Senate's information. Further scrutiny would be taking place at an extraordinary meeting of the Research Committee on 30 January 2015 and a report of that analysis would be presented to the Senate.
- 12.3 The Senate **noted**:
- a) the overall REF2014 results;
  - b) the Open University REF2014 results:
    - i) the overall quality profile and rankings for the OU;
    - ii) the quality profiles and rankings of each of the 18 Units of Assessment (UoAs) submitted by the OU to the exercise.
- 13 THE OPEN UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PLAN: RESEARCH SHAPING THE FUTURE S-2015-01-10**
- 13.1 The Acting Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research, Scholarship and Quality (PVC RSQ) introduced the Plan and explained that it had developed from work devising a University-level roadmap to sign-post the future strategic direction of research at the University (OU Research 2020 Roadmap). The Research Plan complemented the Learning and Teaching Vision and Plan, and the curriculum strategy, 'Curriculum Fit for the Future'. Views expressed at a pre-Senate briefing session on the Plan had been very supportive and there was evidence of a desire to build a strong research community at the University.
- 13.2 Members of the Senate expressed their support for the Plan. One member commended the areas selected as Strategic Research Areas (SRAs) as exciting points of focus but urged the University to invest in a breadth of research which would require additional funding. He believed that regional and national offices could play a key role in disseminating the impact of the University's research and encourage public engagement with it. Another member commended the Plan but emphasised the importance of preventing decline in certain areas. She felt that this was not presented clearly enough in the Plan to provide confidence.
- 13.3 The Director, the OU in Wales congratulated academic colleagues on their performance in the REF. He supported the Plan though expressed caution over the references to investment in research (paragraphs 6 and 29) and suggested that further thought be given to the cross subsidisation of research from funding from the national Funding Councils.
- 13.4 A member commented that references to the University's values in relation to openness and accessibility were missing from the Plan. He also pointed out that alumni of the

University had not been included in the consultation on the early stages of the Plan and could have provided valuable insight.

- 13.5 The Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences strongly supported the Plan and the proposed SRAs. He commented that cross-Faculty research initiatives had been a feature of the University for some years and were now well established, however some curriculum areas were not included in the REF and research needed to be developed in these areas. He also commented that many regional colleagues aspired to carry out research that was eligible for submission to the REF and consideration should be given as to how they could be supported.
- 13.6 A member requested that the University ensure that decisions and plans in respect of the the Graduate School were linked to relevant aspects of the Research Plan to provide consistency and cohesion.
- 13.7 The Senate **approved**:
- a) the Research Plan (including the OU vision for research),
  - b) the three initial Strategic Research Areas:
    - i) International Development and Inclusive Innovation;
    - ii) Space;
    - iii) Citizenship and Governance;

## 14 ASSESSMENT POLICY

S-2015-01-11

- 14.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) introduced the paper and explained that it was a compilation of current University assessment policy. It had been compiled following an extensive audit of all assessment policy created between 1970-2014 and marked the first stage in compiling an assessment policy library that would be developed during 2015. It was intended that the library would be an online resource which would enable staff to access all the approved policy, regulations and guidance regarding assessment in a single place. It contained policy that has been agreed by Assessment Policy Committee or its predecessor Exams and Assessment Committee and did not include changes such as the new process for external examining which would be implemented in 2016.
- 14.2 Associate lecturer (AL) members drew attention to some discrepancies between the compilation of policy and the current Assessment Handbook in both language and content. The PVC(LT) commented that the handbook might reflect what action was taken in practice to implement a policy, but further work was ongoing in this area.
- 14.3 Members commented that the compilation was very useful in bringing together all the University's rules on assessment. However concern was expressed that information on websites, particularly internal ones, was often out of date and a considerable amount of work was required to check and update the information.
- 14.4 Student members agreed that information should be easy to locate. They also welcomed the reference in section 4 to assessment being accessible to all students regardless of any disabilities wherever practicable but suggested that alternatives might be included at this point. In relation to paragraph 6.4, module teams should give careful consideration to the timings for submission of final assessments if completion of the end of module assessment (EMA) was dependent upon the content of the final assessment.

- 14.5 The Dean, Faculty of Education and Language Studies (FELS) commended the significance of the work but commented that it needed to acknowledge the role of Student Support Teams (SSTs) going forward. At present there were a number of inconsistencies in this respect in the document. Reference to monitoring of assessment required strengthening too.
- 14.6 The PVC (LT) thanked members for their comments. She confirmed that work was ongoing to identify discrepancies and she would forward members' comments in respect of the intranet to the appropriate colleagues.

**15 COMMITTEE MATTERS**

**S-2015-01-12**

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

- a) the Strategic Planning and Resources Committee arising from the annual effectiveness review (AER) (Appendix 1);
- b) the Qualifications Committee (QuC) (Appendix 2).

**16 LOCATIONS ANALYSIS**

**S-2014-04-13 REVISED  
S-2015-01-13A**

- 16.1 A member commented that she was pleased to see that the paper had been revised to incorporate the correct wording of the motion carried at the meeting of the Senate in April 2014. She was concerned however that the plans for consultation and engagement set out in the additional paper (S-2015-01-13A) did not relate to the motion carried and were vague in terms of the contribution to be made by the Senate itself. Another member sought clarification as to how the two processes identified as running concurrently (paragraph 5 of paper S-2015-01-13 Revised) would work in practice.
- 16.2 Another member asked for further information on the proposed open meeting for Senate members and reiterated the view that the report from the Project must be presented to the Senate itself. Another member welcomed the proposal for an open meeting but believed it must be prior to a meeting of the Senate. He emphasised the concerns of colleagues working in regional offices and asked for transparency in the review. Another member enquired as to what student data had been analysed in the course of the review.
- 16.3 Concern was expressed by another member that the comprehensive work of the regional offices during more than 40 years had not been fully taken into account in the review. Information gathering had focussed on the current position with Student Support Teams (SSTs) and she did not believe that their value and efficiency had been proven at this point.
- 16.4 The Director, Students apologised for the drafting error in the paper presented to the Senate. He informed members that significant analysis of student data had been undertaken and evaluation of SSTs was ongoing. Consultation and option appraisal would run in parallel to allow for option appraisal to be altered as a result of consultation. The process of consultation would also be informed by appraisal of the options.
- 16.5 Mr Zimmerman assured the Senate that the consultation phase set out in the update paper reflected the motion carried by the Senate in April 2014. The arrangements for the first open meeting for Senate members to consider the content of the report would be confirmed by the end of February 2015, and an update on this and other consultation activities would be reported to the next meeting of the Senate in April. It was anticipated that the Project would report on this phase in autumn 2015 though this was still subject to confirmation.

16.6 The Acting Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the Vice-Chancellor's Executive was committed to a transparent consultation process across the University. It was also conscious of the anxieties of staff in respect of the review. In response to a question, Professor Blackman confirmed that the report presented to the next meeting of the Senate would be an item for discussion.

16.7 The Senate **noted** the update on the progress of the Locations Analysis project and the additional information circulated.

**17 ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION: PROGRESS REPORT S-2014-04-14**

17.1 A member drew attention to paragraph 10 of the report and the reference to the MRes Award Board. He commented that there was an ongoing need for training in research methods in a number of faculties. Further information was sought on the plans for the replacement of the MRes and on the consultation planned with stakeholders in the relevant Faculties.

17.2 The Acting PVC(RSQ) agreed that there was a need for training in research methods but explained that the M Res in its current form was outdated with few students registered. Several options were being considered and consultation would be starting with Central Academic Units imminently.

17.3 The Senate **noted** the report on the progress of the implementation of the approved recommendations of the Academic Governance Review 2013/2014.

**18 QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY: HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW S-2015-01-15**

The Senate **noted**:

- a) the revised schedule for the Higher Education Review of The Open University in December 2015;
- b) that members of the Senate would be invited to comment on a draft of the self-evaluation document for the review in April 2015;
- c) the options for the thematic element of the Review and arrangements for selecting a theme.

**19 COMPLAINTS AND NON ACADEMIC APPEALS PROCEDURE S-2015-01-16**

19.1 The President, OUSA reported concerns over the time limits stipulated in the procedures for the receipt of complaints, ie, within 28 days of the issue occurring, as students might wish to wait until after completion of a module to submit a complaint. Ms Tudor explained that OUSA had raised these concerns during the drafting of the procedure. In the absence of any changes to the time limits, OUSA hoped that information could be included in the procedures to support students submitting a complaint. Student members wished to see more explicit reference on page 16 to the assistance available to disabled students wishing to submit a complaint, such as information on telephoning with the details. Student members also enquired as to whether students who submitted a complaint outside of the time limits due to exceptional circumstances would be reimbursed for the costs of providing medical evidence relating to the circumstances if the complaint was upheld.

19.2 The Director, Students, assured the student members that reasonable adjustments would be made to assist disabled students. These were not detailed in the procedures but the University would be open and accessible in its approach. Mr Zimmerman emphasised

that the inclusion of time limits in the procedures were required to ensure the University was compliant with the requirements of the appropriate regulatory bodies. They were also essential to enable the University to manage complaints and take appropriate action. Work was continuing on the provision of support to students who submitted complaints and the University would work closely with OUSA to achieve this. The position in respect of reimbursement of expenses for medical evidence to support late submissions would be ascertained

**Action: Director, Students**

19.3 The Senate **approved** the revised Open University Student Complaints and Administrative Appeals Procedures

**20 ACADEMIC REGULATIONS: RESTRUCTURING APPROACH S-2015-01-17**

The Senate **noted** the report on the restructuring of the University's Academic Regulations.

**21 EMERITUS PROFESSORS S-2015-01-18**

The Senate **approved** the recommendations from the Chair and Readership Subcommittee that the title Emeritus Professor was awarded to:

- a) Professor Donald Burrows;
- b) Professor Chris Earl;
- c) Professor John Law;
- d) Professor Kathryn Woodward;
- e) Professor Raphael Kaplinsky;
- f) Professor Rose Barbour.

**22 SCHEDULE OF DELEGATION S-2015-01-19**

The Senate **approved** the changes to its schedule of delegation to reflect changes to the remuneration process for professors.

**23 THE COUNCIL S-2015-01-20**

The Senate **noted** the report on matters discussed at the meetings of the Council held on 25 November and 10 December 2014

**24 ACTION BY THE CHAIR S-2015-01-21**

The Senate **noted** the report on action taken by the Chair since the last meeting of the Senate.

**25 FUTURE ITEMS OF BUSINESS S-2015-01-22**

The Senate:

- a) **noted** the potential items for the agenda for a Senate meeting on 22 April 2015;
- b) **agreed** that a meeting of the Senate should take place on 22 April 2015.

**26 DECLASSIFICATION OF PAPERS**

The following paper remained confidential after the meeting:

S-2015-01-2B Strategic Planning and Resources Committee – Confidential minutes

The following paper was declassified after the meeting:

S-2015-01-18 Emeritus Professors

**27 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

Meetings of the Senate will be held on the following dates:

Wednesday 22 April 2015

Wednesday 10 June 2015

Fraser Woodburn  
University Secretary

Sue Thomas  
Working Secretary to the Senate  
Email: sue.thomas@open.ac.uk  
Tel: 01908 655083

Attachments:

S-2015-01-M Appendix 1: Strategic Planning and Resources Committee (SPRC)

S-2015-01-M Appendix 2: Qualifications Committee (QuC)

## STRATEGIC PLANNING AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTION – UPDATED ~~23.10.2013~~28.01.2015

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### Terms of Reference

1. To recommend, for approval by the Council, the broad strategy and priorities for the University having, where appropriate, taken account of the view of the Senate.
2. To approve proposals for strategically significant developments and business opportunities to ensure that proposals are viable having, where appropriate, taken into account the view of the Senate.
3. To review the allocation of resources to inform future strategy.
4. To recommend for approval by the Council University Fee and Financial Support Strategy and guidelines, and subsequently to approve the University fees on behalf of the Council.
5. To review progress against strategic priorities and to advise the Council on the sustainability of the institution.
6. To recommend, for approval by the Council, the redundancy of:
  - a) academic-related staff, where the recommendation is agreed by SPRC;
  - b) academic staff, where the recommendation is agreed by a redundancy subcommittee of SPRC (Mode of Operation 6 sets out the membership for this academic staff redundancy committee).
7. To exercise such powers as may be delegated to the Committee by the Council or the Senate.

### Membership

1. The ~~Pro~~Vice-Chancellor, Chair, *ex officio*.
2. The ~~Vice~~Pro-Chancellor, Deputy Chair, *ex officio*.
3. The Treasurer, *ex officio*.
4. A dean, to be nominated by the deans.
5. Two members of the Council, who shall not be members of staff or students of the University, appointed by the Council.
6. Three members of the Senate, elected by the Senate.

### In Attendance

7. The Pro-Vice-Chancellors.
8. The University Secretary.



9. The Director, Students.
10. The Chief Information Officer.
11. The Commercial Director.
12. The Finance Director.
13. The Director of Development
14. The Director of Strategy

### **Mode of Operation**

1. The Committee is a joint committee of the Council and the Senate and will report to the Council and the Senate as appropriate. Where issues being considered by the Committee require the approval of the Council, the Committee will, where appropriate, take account of the views of the Senate in making its recommendations.
2. Subject to the University's rules on the confidentiality of committee business, the Committee shall take appropriate steps to keep members of the University informed about its work.
3. The Committee shall normally meet three times a year.
4. The Committee shall be quorate if three members, of whom at least one from categories 1, 3 or 5 are present.
5. The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee shall have executive authority to act on its behalf in consultation (as appropriate) with other university officers and with the Secretary of the Committee.
6. The academic staff redundancy committee is a Council-appointed subcommittee of SPRC and will meet when necessary. Its membership consists of the Vice-Chancellor or nominee from the University Executive as Chair, two lay members of the Council and two members of academic staff from Senate, drawn from the membership of, or those in attendance at, SPRC.

Secretary: A member of the University Secretary's Office

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## QUALIFICATIONS COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTION – UPDATED ~~01.08.2014~~28.01.2015

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### **Purpose**

On behalf of the Curriculum and Validation Committee (CVC), to provide detailed scrutiny of proposals relating to individual qualifications, to approve the introduction of standard qualification proposals, and their regulations, to approve proposals to withdraw qualifications, and their amended regulations, to approve amendments to existing qualifications, to approve credit transfer schemes and to make recommendations to the CVC on the approval of non-standard qualifications, including where such qualifications involve a partnership dimension; where any aspect of the qualification is being funded from strategic/central funds; where the qualification is the first example of a new type of qualification; where the qualification has non-standard elements, or where the qualification is in a subject or sub-subject that is new to the University.

### **Terms of Reference**

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

1. To provide detailed scrutiny of proposals for the introduction of individual taught qualifications, and their regulations, taking into account the QAA requirements relating to programme specifications, learning outcomes and subject benchmarking, the balance of such awards between Open University originated credit and credit originated outside the University, and taking into account of the University's validated programmes and qualifications; where appropriate, to refer proposals for classification schemes to the Assessment Policy Committee.
2. Following scrutiny, to approve new qualifications and their associated regulations where the proposals are standard.
3. To approve proposals for the withdrawal of individual taught qualifications, and amended regulations, ensuring that students are given reasonable notice of any changes.
4. To approve amendments to existing qualifications and their regulations.
5. To approve the introduction of new modules and packs.
6. To approve the award of general and specific credit, specific credit transfer schemes and, in consultation as appropriate with the Curriculum Partnerships Committee, collaborative credit agreements with other institutions, for the University's taught qualifications, which do not require regulatory changes.

#### ***Monitoring, and reviewing, actions and institutional performance***

7. To monitor the demand for the University's taught qualifications and to receive an annual report on the number of qualifications made of each type.
8. To monitor the process for the annual review of qualifications.
9. To have oversight (on behalf of the Senate) of the award of credit to applicants and students towards the University's taught qualifications based on study undertaken outside the University in accordance with established regulations.

10. To receive regular reports on the approval of awards of general and specific credit and to monitor the annual review process for such awards.

***Assuring quality and standards, including approving regulations***

11. To monitor the University's procedures for the approval and review of its qualifications, ensuring that they are in accordance with the current guidance from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).
12. To keep under review the credit structures and requirements for the University's taught qualifications, having regard to the relationships between such qualifications, their comparability with the University's validated qualifications and the relevant national qualifications frameworks.
13. To make recommendations to the Curriculum and Validation Committee for new or revised general regulations, including credit transfer regulations, for the University's taught qualifications.

***Advising other governance bodies or management***

14. To make recommendations to the CVC on the approval of proposals for the introduction of individual taught qualifications, and their regulations, particularly where such qualifications involve a partnership dimension, where any aspect of the qualification is being funded from strategic/central funds; where the qualification is the first example of a new type of qualification; where the qualification has a non-standard element; or where the qualification is in a subject or sub-subject that is new to the University.
15. To identify and consider credit accumulation and transfer issues particularly those involving the status and recognition of the University's modules and qualifications arising from discussions with other institutions and from national and international developments, to co-ordinate the University's response to consultative documents and reports on such issues, and where appropriate to propose the introduction of new types of qualification or changes to existing curriculum policy to the CVC.

**Membership**

1. A Chair appointed by the Curriculum and Validation Committee.
2. 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).
3. The Director, Centre for Inclusion and Collaborative Partnerships (CICP) or nominee, *ex officio*.
4. The Director of Assessment, Credit and Qualifications or nominee.
5. One member of the Communications Team, Student Services
6. Two members of Student Services support staff, nominated by the Director, Students.
7. One member of staff based in Scotland, nominated by the Director, Scotland.
8. One member ~~of the Learning and Teaching Centre~~, nominated by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching).

9. Two registered students, one of whom should be a postgraduate student, appointed by the Open University Students' Association.
10. One associate lecturer appointed by the Associate Lecturers Executive.
11. Two external members.
12. The Chair of the Credit Rating Panel, *ex officio*.
13. The ~~Head of the Learner Advisory Service~~Director, Student Support Teams or nominee.

#### **In attendance**

One member of the University Secretary's office, with oversight of the University's general and specific qualification regulations, nominated by the University Secretary.

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.
  3. The Committee shall delegate to the Credit Rating Panel the authority to approve and review awards of general and specific credit.
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