

## THE SENATE

### Minutes

This paper presents the Minutes of the last meeting of the Senate held on Wednesday 25 January 2012 at 2.00 pm in the Hub Theatre, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes.

The Senate is asked to **approve** these Minutes as a correct record of the meeting.

Fraser Woodburn  
University Secretary

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## THE SENATE

Minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on Wednesday 25 January at 2.00 pm  
in the Hub Theatre, The Open University, Walton Hall.

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### Present:

#### 1) Ex officio

Mr Martin Bean, Vice-Chancellor  
Professor Alan Bassindale, Acting Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Quality)  
Professor Alan Tait, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum and Qualifications)  
Professor Tim Blackman, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship)  
Professor David Rowland, Dean, Faculty of Arts  
Professor Rebecca Taylor, Dean, Faculty of Business and Law  
Dr Sharon Ding, Dean, Faculty of Education and Language Studies  
Professor Hazel Rymer, Dean, Faculty of Science  
Professor Anne De Roeck, Dean, Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology  
Mr Will Swann, Director, Students  
Professor Josie Taylor, Director of the Institute of Educational Technology  
Mrs Nicky Whitsed, Director, Library Services  
Ms Anne Howells, Director of Learning & Teaching Solutions

### Appointed

#### 2) Central Academic Units

##### Faculty of Arts

Professor Anne Laurence  
Dr Lynda Prescott  
Dr Bob Wilkinson  
Professor John Wolffe

##### Faculty of Business & Law

Mrs Keren Bright  
Mr Mike Phillips

##### Faculty of Education and Language Studies

Dr Jane Cullen  
Ms Felicity Harper  
Dr Steve Hutchinson  
Professor Karen Littleton

##### Faculty of Health and Social Care

Mrs Sue Cole  
Professor Jan Draper  
Dr Verina Waights

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

Dr Leonor Barroca  
Dr David Bowers  
Professor Joyce Fortune  
Mr Derek Goldrei  
Professor Uwe Grimm  
Professor Andy Lane  
Dr Nicolas Moss  
Dr Shirley Northover  
Dr Toby O'Neil  
Dr Sally Organ  
Dr Gareth Williams  
Dr Helen Yanacopulos

**Faculty of Social Sciences**

Dr Troy Cooper  
Dr Anastasia Economou  
Dr Helen Kaye  
Dr Hugh Mackay

Dr Raia Prokhovnik  
Professor Michael Saward  
Dr Jason Toynbee

**Faculty of Science**

Dr John Baxter  
Dr David Rothery  
Dr Robert Saunders

Dr Terry Watson  
Professor Ian Wright

**Institute of Educational Technology**

Dr Robin Goodfellow  
Professor Agnes Kukulska-Hulme

Professor Eileen Scanlon

**Other Central Units**

Dr Liz Marr

**3) Associate Lecturers**

Mr Paddy Alton  
Dr Isobel Falconer  
Mr Bruce Heil

Dr Roma Oakes  
Mr Stephen Pattinson  
Dr Walter Pisarski

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

Mrs Marianne Cantieri  
Mrs Pippa Doran  
Mr Sandy Garrity

Mr David Reed  
Mrs Tania Rogers  
Mr Carey Shaw

**5) Academic-related Staff**

Ms Pat Atkins  
Mrs Lynda Juma  
Mr Martin Kenward  
Mr Billy Khokhar  
Dr Christina Lloyd  
Mrs Bethan Norfor

Mr Tony O'Shea-Poon  
Ms Hilary Robertson  
Mr Ian Roddis  
Ms Gill Smith  
Mr Michael Street  
Ms Elaine Walker

**6) Co-opted members**

Mrs Lynda Brady  
Mr John D'Arcy  
Mr Rob Humphreys  
Dr David Knight

Dr James Miller  
Dr Peter Scott  
Dr Petrina Stevens

**In attendance**

Dr Kate Clarke, Director, Open University Validation Services  
Mr Andrew Law, Director, Open Media Unit  
Mr Lucian Hudson, Director of Communications  
Mr Martin Jackson, Assistant Director Student Casework and Policy Co-ordination (for minute 13)  
Mr Guy Mallison, Director of Strategy (for minute 11)  
Mrs Vicki Smith, Head, Credit, Qualifications and Ceremonies Centre (for minute 14)  
Mrs Rachel Basi, Interim Senior Manager, VC Communications  
(to the end of minute 4)

**Apologies:**

**1) Ex officio**

Professor Denise Kirkpatrick, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Quality)  
Dr Simon Bromley, Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences  
Mr Jeremy Roche, Dean, Faculty of Health and Social Care

**Appointed**

**2) Central Academic Units**

**Faculty of Arts**

Professor Suman Gupta Dr Graham Harvey

**Faculty of Business & Law**

Dr Jacky Holloway Mr Alessandra Saroli  
Ms Carmel McMahon

**Faculty of Education and Language Studies**

Dr Regine Hampel Dr Peter Twining  
Mr Pete Smith

**Faculty of Health and Social Care**

Professor Monica Dowling Dr Sarah Earle

**Faculty of Science**

Dr Payam Rezaie Dr Nick Rogers

**Regional/National Centres**

Dr Liz Manning

**5) Academic-Related Staff**

Mrs Liz Armitage Ms Fiona Carey

## 1 APOLOGY

The Vice-Chancellor apologised for the late arrival of the Senate papers. There had been several factors behind this, including some late breaking news that had to be incorporated into one of the papers, but the importance of providing members with sufficient time to prepare for the meeting was acknowledged. The Vice-Chancellor assured the Senate that the protocols would be reviewed to ensure a more timely circulation of the papers in future.

**Action: CenSec**

## 2 MINUTES

**S-2011-04-M**

- 2.1 The Vice-Chancellor informed the Senate that a member had requested an amendment to Minute 17.2 of the minutes of the last meeting. The minute should read:

The Faculty of Business and Law (FBL) had been discussing with Human Resources (HR) the impact that this would have on an international business school that needed to evidence its international presence. This was a particular issue as FBL prepared for EQUIS re-accreditation, which would be the most difficult to retain. The decision to decommit from the employment of ALs in continental Europe would be welcomed by the Business School, **if an alternative process was put in place for maintaining a team of ALs resident in Continental Europe** as the previous arrangement had not been satisfactory

- 2.2 The Senate **approved** the minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on 19 October 2011, subject to the above amendment.

## 3 MATTERS ARISING

**S-2012-01-01**

- 3.1 The paper reported on matters arising from the last meeting: the action taken to review the process for changes made to the constitution of the Research Committee (Minute 13.1); and the response to a question regarding how associate lecturers (ALs) as assessors could highlight the personal development needs that they observed within students' work and how the University could improve the satisfaction rate for those questions in the National Student Survey (NSS) (Minute 16.1).
- 3.2 An associate lecturer member said that he was pleased to see a progress report on this matter. However, the report could be more specific as to how the OU would deal with the issue in terms of linking the Learning and Teaching Strategy with the specific outcome of the question regarding the NSS. For example, with reference to how evidence might be obtained on students' response to communications, there were some relevant points in the Learning and Teaching Strategy. Would it be possible to have a further report to the Senate on how this information would be gathered in the future? The Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Quality), Professor Alan Bassindale, replied that he wanted to ensure that ALs worked very closely with the University on such matters, and that this would be covered further in the item on the Learning and Teaching Strategy (S-2012-01-09).
- 3.3 The Director, Students, Will Swann, provided an oral report on matters arising from the Plagiarism Project Final Report (S/2011/04/12). With reference to Minute 14.8, the Plagiarism Project had considered the provision of access to Turnitin for associate lecturers. It had been decided that ALs would need extensive guidance in how to interpret the reports from the software, and in how to reach conclusions about whether the report indicated that a student had plagiarised. Concern had also been expressed at the risk of

a lack of consistency in interpretation. For these reasons, the project team had decided not to provide access for ALs to Turnitin at this stage. However, the option would be kept under review.

3.4 The Dean, Mathematics, Computing and Technology (MCT), Professor Anne de Roeck, commented that the best way to deal with this would be to provide access to Turnitin for students too. It would be perverse to give access to ALs, together with the necessary staff development, but not to have it in place for students. Mr Swann said that the University had been piloting student access to Turnitin and that this pilot had recently been extended. The University was close to confirming that Turnitin should be made available to all students, but the issue of software licences had yet to be resolved.

3.5 Referring to Minute 14.9, Mr Swann confirmed that the development of policy and procedures for students studying through collaborative schemes was in the work plan for the Academic Conduct Support Office (ACSO) for this year.

3.6 Referring to the confidential minute 4.3, which stated that Business to Business (B2B) would not be within the scope of the UK Market Strategy but would be reviewed separately by the Business Development Unit, a member asked what progress there had been with the review and how the Senate would be kept informed of further progress. Many regional staff in the Faculty of Health and Social Care (HSC) were involved with a considerable amount of external engagement and needed further information when submitting bids to employers. The Vice-Chancellor said that good progress was being made and there was much collaboration with the faculty. At the appropriate time, the Commercial Director, Mr Steve Hill, would present a progress report to the Senate. He would also be made aware of HSC's specific issue in order that he might provide the necessary support within 24 hours.

**Action: SH**

3.7 With reference to Minutes 10.7 and 10.8, which concerned consultation and communication about the Principles of the Undergraduate Qualification and Modular Delivery Models (S/2011/04/08), a member said that some students in the transitional group had been concerned about some of the communications that they had received, where decisions had been changed and the message had been unclear. It was essential that such communications were clear and maintained. The Director, Students, Will Swann, said that there had been one decision affecting transitional students where the communication on the subject of whether or not a student could declare more than one qualification had been unsatisfactory and where the policy for students had been changed. There were a number of matters that were still unresolved, such as deferral and fee refunds, but which were being actively worked on. The 'Ready for 2012/13' team (Project Manager: Caitlin Harvey) would be happy to receive any feedback, for example on whether the University was providing enough information on curriculum for new framework students, and would endeavour to provide a fast response.

3.8 The Senate **noted**:

- a) the outcome of the review of the Research Committee process for constitutional changes;
- b) the response to the queries regarding the NSS and students' personal development.

## 4 REPORT FROM AND QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIR

- 4.1 The Vice-Chancellor said that 2012 would be a fascinating and challenging year for The Open University. New models and estimates were in place, but the environment was fast paced and unpredictable.

### Strategy

- 4.2 The top priority was to get the new Strategic Plan in place and to apply the University's collective efforts to executing it effectively. The Strategic Plan (S-2011-01-08) would form an important part of the discussions at this meeting and would then go forward for discussion at the Strategic Planning and Resources Committee (SPRC) and the Council meetings in February 2012.

### Go-to-Market

- 4.3 More immediately, the University had to prepare for the major changes that would take place in 2012-13. The new 'Go-To-Market' strategy had started on Boxing Day 2011 with advertisements on the television, in the national press and online. The University was aiming to generate 500,000 enquiries from new students in order to hit its registration targets for October 2012. Initial results were promising, and reports on progress would be brought to future meetings of the Senate.

### Ready for 2012-13

- 4.4 At the same time, the 'Ready for 12/13' project, which had been set up in July 2011, was making good progress and was on track for the opening of registrations on 27 March 2012. A number of activities had already been completed around the introduction of the new academic framework. For example, the undergraduate academic year had been redesigned and the Level 1 modules had been migrated to the new schedules. All undergraduate qualifications had been reversioned for the new academic framework and pathways had been created through each of them. The academic regulations had been rewritten for the new framework and would be discussed later in the meeting (S-2012-01-10); and the first two years of the Access to Success Programme had been redesigned.
- 4.5 Other activities were under way to make sure that the University was ready to advise and register students who would be joining under the new loan arrangements in England. The University was also making sure that continuing students in England would have access to information, advice and guidance on their options during the transitional period, as well as making sure that students outside of England were also clear on their options. The Vice-Chancellor thanked the members of the project team - from the faculties, Student Services, Marketing and other units across the University - for their tremendous help in dealing with such a big and wide-ranging set of changes, and also Senate members, acknowledging that the academic community had invested considerable time and effort in the project.

### Funding and Student Support

- 4.6 At the same time as the University was preparing for changes internally, it was also working externally to improve arrangements for funding and student support. In England, the OU was continuing to seek a commitment from the Government and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to retain the Widening Participation allocation and the Part-Time Student allocation, which provided the University with substantial funds each year. In Wales, the Assembly Government had said it would extend tuition fee loans and grants to part-time students from 2013/14, a year later than in England. In Scotland, the Government had completed the consultation on the post-16

education landscape. The response was due soon and legislation was expected later in the year. In Northern Ireland, the University was pressing ahead with plans to transfer its funds for teaching from HEFCE to the Northern Ireland Assembly. This would enable the OU to play a more direct and proactive part in helping to shape higher education (HE) provision in the Province.

## Research

- 4.7 Another major task for the year was to get the University in good shape for the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF). The strategy was to be selective, and would demonstrate the excellence of the OU's best research. The University would be testing the strategy over the next few months as it undertook an OU-wide mock REF exercise that would continue through until November 2012. Details had been cascaded to academic staff through the Deans and Directors, but more information would be available at the Open Forum being held on 26 January 2012, where the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship), Professor Tim Blackman, would talk about Preparing for the REF.

## Good news roundup

- 4.8 The Vice-Chancellor concluded with some items of recent good news. First was the announcement that the OU was to lead a global centre for practical science teaching with the help of a £1 million grant from the Wolfson Foundation. The Wolfson OpenScience Laboratory, as it would be called, would allow users across the world to obtain data from real physical instruments and equipment that will enable them to carry out authentic and rigorous science investigations. This was an inspired innovation and kept the OU at the cutting edge of new techniques in online education. The Vice-Chancellor paid tribute to colleagues in the Science Faculty and the Development Office for creating, and securing funding for, this exciting new development.
- 4.9 The Vice-Chancellor also thanked Dr Peter Twining, who had sent his apologies to the meeting, and his team on the Vital Professional Development Programme. They had been picked out for a special mention in Michael Gove's recent ministerial speech about ICT in the school curriculum, and had been awarded a further £1.25 million by the Department for Education to extend the programme until at least the end of March 2013. This brought their total government funding up to £9.4 million, which was a great achievement in the current climate.
- 4.10 Apple had recently announced the new iTunes U. Colleagues in Learning and Teaching Solutions (LTS) and the Knowledge Media Institute (KMI) had ensured that the OU was at the front of the pack with 51 of the 100 new iTunes U courses at launch, remixed from its existing Open Educational Resources. At the end of the first day, 5 of the top ten downloads had been the OU's.
- 4.11 On the research front, there had been some strong knowledge transfer partnerships with the Halle Orchestra and others. In January 2012, the University had submitted the largest ever number of grant applications to a single EU call, with 30 consortium applications involving OU staff going forward under the Framework 7 programme on ICT. This brought the value of all research grant applications submitted this month to a staggering £23 million, which was a major step forward in starting to turn around the recent decline in bids for external funding.
- 4.12 Finally, the Vice-Chancellor encouraged members to look out for the landmark TV series on 'The Story of Wales' that had begun on BBC1 Wales on the 27 February 2012 and would be transmitted across the BBC UK network later in the year. This was the first direct collaboration between the OU and BBC Wales and was a truly brilliant production.



- 4.13 The Vice-Chancellor concluded that there was much to celebrate already in 2012, and much still to do in the months that lie ahead.

**5 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE S-2012-01-02**

- 5.1 Referring to the need to change the University systems in order to focus quality assurance processes at qualification, rather than module, level (Minute 4.6), a member asked if there had been any progress on this issue and whether the Senate would receive a report on the matter. The Vice-Chancellor said that there had been a number of subsequent conversations on the matter and that the Senate would be kept informed. The Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Quality), Professor Alan Bassindale, said that the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) had released another document for HE on the way in which quality should be addressed, where quality enhancement would take on an even higher profile than it did currently, whilst not losing the emphasis on quality assurance. Work had already begun in the Quality Office to ensure that the University addressed all of the quality issues in all of the right places. It was likely that a paper would come to the Autumn 2012 meeting of the Senate.
- 5.2 The Senate **noted** the unconfirmed Minutes and Confidential Minutes from the meeting (SPRC-2011-04-M; SPRC-2011-04-CM).

**6 RESEARCH COMMITTEE S-2012-01-03**

The Senate **noted** the report from the meeting of the Research Committee held on 2 November 2011.

**7 CURRICULUM AND VALIDATION COMMITTEE S-2012-01-04**

- 7.1 An associate lecturer member commented that there were aspects of the meeting held by correspondence that had been unsatisfactory. It had not been possible to see the comments made by other members of the Curriculum and Validation Committee (CVC), and consequently to know whether the minutes reflected these comments. A significant number of meetings were now being held by correspondence and were all using different protocols. It would be timely to produce some guidelines for best practice in order to ensure that such meetings were held in a coherent and transparent manner. The Vice-Chancellor said that this was a task for the Central Secretariat, who would develop such guidelines and provide them to committee chairs. There were many collaboration tools available that could aid the process.

**Action: CenSec**

- 7.2 The Senate **noted** the report from the meeting of the Curriculum and Validation Committee held by correspondence between 16–23 November 2011.

**8 LEARNING, TEACHING AND STUDENT SUPPORT COMMITTEE S-2012-01-05**

- 8.1 The Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Quality), Professor Alan Bassindale said that since the Learning, Teaching and Student Support Committee (LTSSC) had last met, there had been a significant number of changes to the way in which the University's strategic priorities were to be addressed in the Strategic Plan (S-2012-01-08). Following discussion, Professor Bassindale had decided to withdraw the appendix to this paper, The Open Media Policy, and not to seek its approval by the Senate, in order to avoid the confusion of having two approved documents with

overlapping, but slightly different, emphases. The key document was the Strategic Plan, with its priority mandate on 'Journeys from Informal to Formal Learning'. The document that was the appendix to the LTSSC report would stay as a working document in the Open Media Unit and would be used to guide some of their activities

- 8.2 The Senate **noted** the report from the meeting of the Learning, Teaching and Student Support Committee held on 21 November 2011.

**9 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE S-2012-01-06**

The Senate **noted** the report from the meeting of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee held on 29 November 2011.

**10 SENATE MEMBERSHIP PANEL S-2012-01-07**

The Senate **approved** the following appointments to:

- a) the Academic Staff Promotions Committee (ASPC) until 31 December 2014:

*Dr Stephanie Taylor, Psychology, Social Sciences*

- b) **noted** the matters for report.

**11 STRATEGIC PLAN 2011-2015: UPDATE S-2012-01-08**

- 11.1 The Director, Strategy, Guy Mallison, introduced the draft Strategic Plan. The Senate now had another opportunity to comment on the paper before it went forward to the Strategic Planning and Resources Committee (SPRC) for recommendation for approval, and then to the Council for approval at the end of February 2012.

- 11.2 Since it had last been presented to the Senate, there had been changes to the document that reflected the feedback from the Senate and other groups, including SPRC and the Council, further thinking about the individual priorities and the development of the narrative around the plan as a whole. Primarily these changes were to ensure that there was clarity of focus around the University's priorities, that the language used was transparent and unambiguous, and that there was a clearer sense of the 'story' end to end. There were four main areas to highlight, which did not materially change the direction of travel, but altered how the University thought about what it was doing:

- 11.3 In order to ensure clarity about what was to be achieved under each priority, the mandates had been reorganised and restructured to include statements on the overall objective, the end state by 2015, specific outcomes and also specified targets. There was more detail beneath each mandate that the priority teams would be working to.

- 11.4 The number of strategic priorities had been reduced. There were four activities that were no longer being taken forward as institutional priorities, but would be dealt with by individual units within the portfolios of the Planning and Resource Officers (PROs): the Learning Experience, Go to Market (as much of the activity would be completed by the autumn 2012), Student Number Planning and Influencing Government. This did not mean that these, and activities such as Business-to-Business, International and others in individual units, were not important. The Strategic Plan did not describe all of the OU's activities, but rather those which were most critical to the achievement of the strategic

intent for the period to 2015, and which involved the most change and work across a large number of units within the University.

- 11.5 The narrative described why the OU was taking this particular course of action in the context of changes to the external environment and other drivers for change. The strategic intent had also been reshaped, describing more clearly the focus of effort on helping and supporting students to achieve their long-term study goals.
- 11.6 There were now two inter-related groups of priorities: one concerned with ensuring that students had an outstanding experience and achieved the outcomes they are looking for, and the other with making certain that the capabilities necessary to support this were put in place.
- 11.7 As the document was still 'work in progress' and might be subject to further change, it had been marked as confidential. It was important to ensure that communication around the plan was consistent and that people referred to the version that was finally approved by the Council.
- 11.8 Several members congratulated the Strategy team for the clarity of the document, the excellent narrative and the helpful use of a template for the mandates.
- 11.9 The Director, the OU in Wales, Rob Humphreys, welcomed the incorporation of the four nation issues into the Strategic Plan. However, it was unclear whether there was a narrative or 'silver thread' running through the whole document about the wider social and cultural purposes of HE and what the OU in particular had to offer. Although the document was not necessarily for an external audience, the University was not emphasising its values strongly enough. For example, widening participation and the University's relationship with the BBC could have been flagged in slide 6: The University Today. Developing measures for such things was difficult, but the mandate on Research and Scholarship (slide 15) dealt with such benefits in a very nuanced way. It mentioned the University's contributions to wider society, whereas other mandates were focussed on providing the OU with a competitive advantage. Many of the University's priorities were in place because they were concerned with the OU's values, social justice and social mobility, and cultural contributions to wider public life and civic society. This 'silver thread' should run through the whole document, not just stated at the beginning, and could be strengthened. The long-term values of the OU should outlive any government in any of the four nations, were things that the University should be proud of and be able to rally around, and should be given greater emphasis in the document.
- 11.10 An associate lecturer member said that the University's commitment to maintaining widening participation as part of its mission and, in particular, the current diversity of students, had been reaffirmed at the beginning of the Strategic Plan, but could be given a higher profile throughout the remainder of the document. For example, paragraphs 13-14 on Monitoring Progress referred to measures of success, but it was important to ensure that these targets were met whilst also maintaining the current diversity of students. This would make the measures more difficult to achieve, but the underlying issue was key. The second bullet on slide 4: Values, stated that 'we contribute to social justice through the development of knowledge and skills'. This had been a stronger statement in the past, when there had been more emphasis on driving change or improvement in social justice. On slide 6: The University Today, the second bullet stated that 'we have a unique model of supported open learning', but an important aspect of that was that it supported widening participation students. Similarly, on slide 10: How we will measure success, an additional bullet point about maintaining the diversity of the student population in terms of the socio-economic mix could be added to the heading 'Deliver an outstanding experience for students'. Another member agreed that the mission had previously stated that the OU

promoted social justice, and that the OU's mission and values had been watered down in the document.

- 11.11 Referring to the Communication of the Strategic Plan, a member observed that paragraph 15 stated that the 'engagement and commitment of staff is vital to the success of the Strategic Plan'. However, the emphasis thereafter was largely about one-way top-down communication and not about consultation and listening to feedback. It was important that mechanisms that drew on the great breadth of expertise of staff throughout the OU were detailed in the communications strategy. The Vice-Chancellor responded that there had been a considerable amount of consultation, which should have been surfaced in the paper. Mr Mallison added that some of the changes to the Strategic Plan reflected the feedback that had been received through such channels. The activity had taken place, but had not been expressed clearly enough in the document.
- 11.12 An associate lecturer member said that whilst paragraph 16 detailed the communications that had already been put in place, it did not identify where they were on the intranet. It would be helpful if these, and the planned communications, were flagged, for ALs in particular, via TutorHome. Mr Mallison thought that there had been a link on the University intranet, OULife, through to the SharePoint site for the Strategic Plan, and said that he would investigate.
- Action: GM**
- 11.13 With reference to paragraph 17 d), a member said that it would be helpful to identify the key points for future Cascade and Team discussions as early in the year as possible, in order to identify the best mechanisms to communicate with teams and ensure that this communication was a two-way process. The Vice-Chancellor agreed that the rhythm of the business was critical and such comments would be fed back to the Director, Communications, Lucian Hudson.
- Action: LH**
- 11.14 With reference to slide 4: Values, an associate lecturer member observed that the first bullet point under the 'Responsive' heading said that 'we respond to the needs of individuals and employers and the communities in which they live and work'. However, the actions of the past few years, particularly in England, had reduced the University's ability to respond to community needs or to participate in the activities of communities. The removal of Regional Directors had meant a diminishment of this external role. However, the University did have ALs in all of the communities in which the University delivered. If the University was to deliver on that value, then the paper should demonstrate how it would do so, through either the People and Culture or the Journeys from Informal to Formal Learning mandate.
- 11.15 Referring to slide 7: The importance of qualifications, which stated that many students were 'studying in order to improve their career prospects and to obtain valued qualifications', a member said that there were also a significant number of students who had career aspirations, but who were not necessarily seeking a qualification. These people might already have a professional qualification, but were seeking professional continuing development. Slide 6: The University Today, referred to students that the University was 'well placed to serve' and in particular 'Adults, generally older, looking to enhance their knowledge by studying modules'. It would be helpful to add 'and skills' to the sentence, as some students, studying individual modules, were finding that they were improving their skills and understanding. This category of student was significant and should not be forgotten in the Strategic Plan.
- 11.16 A member suggested that where the slides referred to qualifications, modules should also be mentioned, as the University would continue to offer them. Mr Mallison said that the aim was to demonstrate the effort that was going into developing qualifications and why:

the qualification offer was intended to complement that for modules, not to replace it. The Vice-Chancellor said that the intention was to reflect the active support for both modules and qualifications in the new world. However, the biggest change for the OU was in the area of qualifications.

- 11.17 Referring to slide 9: Our University Priorities, and the bullet point 'a study experience that maximises students' chances of success in achieving their study goals', an associate lecturer member suggested that something like 'whilst maintaining quality and standards' should be added. Mr Mallison agreed that this was an important point: This priority would not be delivered at the expense of academic standards or reputation.
- 11.18 A number of members commented that it was important to get the measures of success outlined in slide 10 better aligned with the measures specified in the mandates. Staff did not appear at all in this list of higher measures, although some were detailed in the People and Culture mandate. Staff appeared in the Research and Scholarship mandate, but most staff in the University were engaged with teaching. If the objective was around improving engagement or agility or performance, then some high level measures should be included in this slide.
- 11.19 The Dean of Science, Professor Hazel Rymer, said that it was encouraging that the key deliverables appeared to be achievable. However, tangible output 10 on slide 13: Study Experience, gave the date for the Curriculum Support Teams (CSTs) to be implemented as 31 August 2015. This seemed to be contrary to the paper on the Student Support Review – Phase 4: Curriculum Support Team Implementation (S-2012-01-17), which said that the CSTs would be in place at an earlier date. The Director, Students, Will Swann, said that it was the University's intention that all CSTs would be live by 1 August 2013. There would be a period of bedding in, followed by an extensive period of evaluation. The date in 2015 was the one by which the full evaluation should have been completed.
- 11.20 The Dean, Mathematics, Computing and Technology (MCT), Professor Anne de Roeck, commented that the Study Experience mandate was quite different to the other mandates in the Strategic Plan in that it was a very large and complex programme. Consequently, parts of the mandate as written seemed insubstantial, for example 'the study experience will adapt and evolve, developing practices that are not only fit for purpose but leading edge'. Whilst it was hard to express exactly how the study experience would evolve over time at this point, this also had an impact on the performance measures, which seemed sparse in the current document. This was due in part to the space constraint and in part to the complexity of the programme. This priority mandate was also the one most likely to set the rhythm, pace and business of the Senate over the next few years. With this in mind, would there be an opportunity at a later date for the Senate to see how the mandate was decomposed into sub-projects, with outcomes and timescales, in order that the business of the Senate and its substructure could be predicted in greater detail and that the direction of the programme was more apparent? The Vice-Chancellor said that a deconstructed version, with an update on the components and some key deliverables for 2014, would be returned to the Senate.

**Action: GM**

- 11.21 Referring to slide 14: Journeys from Informal to Formal Learning, a member asked what was meant by tangible output 4: 'Initial' Social layer' launched on Open Media online channels (bringing innovation and power of crowds to open media)'. The Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Quality), Professor Alan Bassindale, said that discussions were currently ongoing regarding the use of SocialLearn. The Director, Open Media Unit, Andrew Law, added that there would be further discussion regarding SocialLearn within the next few months. Material that had been released during the previous week had demonstrated the beginnings of social layers for the first time in an Apple 'app'. The BBC was also looking at more socially generated material and

connected activity around learning. Within the next 6-8 weeks, a decision would be made as to whether to bring SocialLearn into the public sphere during next year and to trial it, looking for data on its impact and contribution not only to the social mission of the University, but also to its business.

- 11.22 With reference to slide 16: People and Culture, an associate lecturer member commented that ALs could not be identified within this priority mandate. The language tried to be all inclusive, but the measures, starting points and targets were mostly applicable to Walton Hall or other permanent staff, not to ALs. For example, measure 1 (iii) 'My unit's management compares well to the sort of management I would like to have' was irrelevant to ALs; the relevance of 'Career' in Career Development and Staff Appraisal (CDSA) for ALs was currently under debate, and there were separate staff surveys for Walton Hall and permanent staff, and for ALs. It was unclear how this mandate would affect ALs other than from a top-down perspective. The Vice-Chancellor said that the University Secretary, as the PRO for this area, would take these comments on board.

**Action: AFW**

- 11.23 The President, The Open University Students' Association (OUSA), Marianne Cantieri, observed that a comparison of the People and Culture mandate with that of the Study Experience (slide 13), seemed to indicate that students were far more satisfied than staff. The University Secretary, Fraser Woodburn, said that on most of the measures, some of which could be benchmarked against other organisations, the OU achieved relatively high scores. However, there were a few measures where the University did not do so well and these were the ones which were of primary focus in the People and Culture mandate,
- 11.24 A member, on behalf of an absent colleague, expressed concern at the measures that were being used for the People and Culture mandate. A high level of dependence was being placed on the staff survey as a source of data about complex subjects such as leadership capability. There would be a long lead time before results were issued, which would limit the potential for prompt management response.
- 11.25 Another member said that the measurements were not sufficiently nuanced towards the people who were working at the OU or to the University's strengths. The staff survey was applied to a huge range of staff of different grades and with different types of tasks, and who were then conflated into one group. Individuals would answer questions very differently depending on their particular needs and circumstances. When the answers were collated across such a broad set of people, the survey would give very simplistic results. There was far too much emphasis on one instrument for collecting information. For example, staff views on the state of morale within the University were not captured by the survey. Moreover, it was possible to structure a survey in order to produce a particular result. It was a difficult thing to manage and further thought was necessary if it were not to be too simplistic. The University Secretary, Fraser Woodburn, agreed that the measures were a weakness. Reification, where one condensed a complex set of ideas into a single measure, was an issue with the narrow set of measures in this mandate. However, when the University interrogated the staff survey, it did not simply rely on the high level measures and it did break down responses by staff category and by unit. The survey was underpinned by considerable research and was a complex instrument. If considered in its full breadth and depth it could reveal much of what was going on in the University, and its findings correlated quite well with anecdotal evidence about emerging problems. Any suggestions as to what high level measures might be better than those currently documented would be very welcome.
- 11.26 The Vice-Chancellor thanked the Senate for the excellent input and said that such thinking would be incorporated into the further work necessary to conclude the new Strategic Plan.

**12 REFRESHED LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY****S-2012-01-09**

- 12.1 The Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Quality), Professor Alan Bassindale said that the previous version of the Learning and Teaching Strategy had been approved by the Senate in 2009. It was a requirement of HEFCE that all universities in England had a Learning and Teaching Strategy.
- 12.2 The Learning and Teaching Strategy was integrated with the Strategic Plan. While it was not presented as a specific programme or priority within the mandates, it was an important part of the OU's overall strategy. Slide 4: Values, of the Strategic Plan said that the University was innovative and led the learning revolution; that it sought new ways to inspire and enable learning; and that it was responsive to the needs of individuals and dedicated to supporting its students' learning success. It was impossible to see how this could be achieved without concentrating on improving learning and teaching across faculties, Student Services, and the units in the Learning, Teaching and Quality portfolio: the Institute of Educational Technology (IET), Learning and Teaching Solutions (LTS), the Library, the Quality Office and the Knowledge Media Institute (KMi). The Pro-Vice-Chancellor's office had started to join the dots together by taking this Strategy and the Learning Systems Roadmap and putting them together as an action plan for implementing the Strategy and supporting the Strategic Plan. The implementation of the Strategy would be discussed with the faculties, who had contributed to it.
- 12.3 With reference to an earlier comment, the contribution of ALs to the quality of the learning experience was recognised, and part of the action plan formulation would be to see how ALs could support the implementation of the strategy, including matters relating to the National Student Survey (NSS) where the value to students of the AL role was very apparent.
- 12.4 The introductory paragraphs of the paper explained how the Strategy had changed since the earlier version. There were four particular drivers:
- a) Major funding changes that would require the University to deliver high quality, flexible learning as economically as possible;
  - b) The move from a Module world to a Qualification world in the OU;
  - c) The even greater need to relate to the national agendas within the UK and beyond;
  - d) The lower emphasis on *moving* to a more on-line environment to *using* the on-line environment to greater effect.
- 12.5 The Strategic Objectives were described in Section 5.1 (page 5) of the Strategy. In 5.1.1 the emphasis had changed towards enhancing the student experience using a wider range of tools and approaches to assessment. Skills' training in assessment design and delivery was newly included. References to CETLs had been removed, but building communities of practice had been included.
- 12.6 In Section 5.2, Staff Development, there had been some changes in emphasis and a particular mention of Curriculum Business Model training.
- 12.7 Section 5.3 on Quality Processes had been refined to relate to newer requirements and a greater emphasis on enhancement.
- 12.8 Section 5.4 on Technology had been amended. Previously there had been a desire to balance proprietary and in-house solutions. However, it was not the balance that was important, but getting the best solution.

- 12.9 There had been relatively minor changes made to the words of the Strategy, but significant changes in emphasis characterised the refreshed plan.
- 12.10 Several members welcomed the link between the Learning and Teaching Strategy and the Strategic Plan, and the creation of an action plan. Referring to the earlier comments about the potential domination of the Senate's business by the Study Experience programme (minute 11.20), one member suggested that a similar emphasis should be given to monitoring and reporting the programmes or projects within the Study Experience programme against the Learning and Teaching Strategy action plan, so that the two were aligned.
- 12.11 An associate lecturer member said that there were several places, for example paragraphs 1.3 and 1.7, where the phrase 'designing, developing and delivering education' was used. In order to tie this in with the University's values about supported open learning, the word 'delivering' might be amended to 'supporting' or 'facilitating' or something else that was more interactive. Professor Bassindale said that he would review the language, but there were University protocols about the way in which things should be expressed.
- Action: AB**
- 12.12 Referring the Strategic Objectives in paragraph 5, a member observed that most of the themes highlighted the priority for that area, which was extremely helpful. The exception was 5.1 Pedagogy, Learning Design, Assessment and Student Support, and some thought should go into a priority statement for this area.
- 12.13 A student member asked whether it would be possible to restructure paragraph 5.1 so that it started with the points on learning rather than with the point on assessment. Professor Bassindale said that he would review this section.
- Action: AB**
- 12.14 Referring to 5.1.1, another member commented that the paragraph referred to assessment in a very operational way, but the best measure of good assessment was achievement and retention. This was not reflected in terms of developing the best assessment practices, which would be key for the University. Professor Bassindale said that this tied in with the previous comments about revised emphasis.
- 12.15 With reference to 5.1.1 b) reduce over-assessment, a member was concerned that the use of assignments would continue to be cut back in order to reduce costs. However, such assignments provided opportunities to give feedback to students that was essential in order for them to develop.
- 12.16 A member said that whilst the strategy had been refreshed rather than rewritten, it was surprising that there had not been more change. One of the factors that had altered the landscape in the past three years was the way in which social learning had moved up the agenda. Paragraph 5.1.3 said that the University would 'support both independent and collaborative approaches to learning'. However, in paragraph 3.2, which described what pedagogic technologies would be used for, the separation of 'encourage learner independence' and 'provide opportunities for students to develop their skills in communicating, collaborating and teamwork' obscured some of the tensions that students experienced around these two objectives. The 'independent learner' was a familiar OU theme, whereas 'collaborative learning' was quite new. It would be helpful to recognise the possible tensions, but also the relationship between these two facets of learning. Professor Bassindale responded that VLE2 was starting to address aspects of collaborative learning and earlier Mr Law had identified some other areas where this was being considered. The matter was high on the agenda.



- 12.17 Referring to paragraph 5.1.6 regarding 'developing competence and confidence in learning in the digital environment', particularly e), 'enable students to use technology to enhance their student experience', a member suggested that this statement should be less passive as it was important that students were more actively engaged with the technology. Professor Bassindale said that discussions were ongoing as to how to improve information literacy.
- Action: AB**
- 12.18 With reference to paragraphs 5.1.6 and 2.1, the use of digital and on-line technology, an associate lecturer member said that it was important for the University to ensure that software was fit for purpose.
- 12.19 A member said that not only had learning become more social over the past few years, but it had also become more mobile. In section 5.2.1 there was much reference to online learning, but the world was moving on rapidly and the developments in mobile learning should also be reflected. Professor Bassindale responded that KMI, LTS and parts of IET were already working on post personal computer mobile learning.
- Action: AB**
- 12.20 Referring to 5.2.1 b), which stated that professional development for learning and teaching should develop an approach that was environmentally sustainable, a member said that the University should celebrate the environmental sustainability of the whole of its Learning and Teaching Strategy, as it had a positive and unique story to tell about its environmental impact through its teaching methods. This was demonstrated by the Factor 10 and SusTeach projects. Professor Bassindale responded that the previous version of the strategy had mentioned environmental sustainability, but as the University was moving along the right lines, the view had been taken that it was no longer necessary to be explicit in the strategy. This would be reviewed.
- Action: AB**
- 12.21 A member suggested that, in order to support the Strategic Plan, it might be helpful to add another bullet point to paragraph 5.2.2 'Focus the scholarship of learning and teaching on the following themes', that was concerned with student retention, progression and completion. Professor Bassindale agreed that this should be incorporated.
- Action: AB**
- 12.22 Referring to the paragraph 5.3: Quality Assurance, Enhancement and Evaluation, an associate lecturer member said that, when guidance was provided regarding the implementation of the strategy, there should be an emphasis on quality enhancement and on monitoring the effectiveness of the innovations proposed in the policy. Then, when the overall indicators in the strategy showed that something was going well or not so well, more nuanced information was available to demonstrate why this was the case. The Director, Institute of Educational Technology, Professor Josie Taylor, said that IET were taking up this issue and hoped to provide a draft quality enhancement approach for comment and feedback.
- Action: JT**
- 12.23 A member commented that the underpinning principles in paragraph 2.2 started with the 'quality of the learning experience' and there was much emphasis throughout the document about enhancing quality, echoing QAA's revised requirements. Paragraph 5.3 had several lines on quality assurance (5.3.2), but only two on quality enhancement (5.3.3). With limited resources, would there be sufficient emphasis on quality enhancement without quality assurance getting in the way? Professor Bassindale said that quality assurance was very important, but quality enhancement must also be high on the University's agenda. In future, when QAA audited the University, its judgements

would be broader than 'meets specifications'. The OU would be aiming to achieve 'commended' status.

- 12.24 The Senate **approved** the Refreshed Learning and Teaching Strategy, with the enhancements mentioned.

### 13 STUDENT REGULATIONS

S-2012-01-11

- 13.1 The Director, Students, Mr Will Swann, said that the introduction to the paper provided the rationale for the changes to the regulations. Most importantly, the regulations gave effect to the Principles of the Undergraduate Qualification and Modular Delivery Model (S/2011/04/08) that the Senate had approved in October 2011. It would define the future relationship between the University and all its students, whether they were students in the new world who would register for qualifications, or students from both the new and the old world, some of whom would be continuing transitional students, who would register for modules. The regulations were required in order that the University could register students from 27 March 2012 as they formed the foundation for the contract that would be established between the students and the University in 2012/13 onwards. They were not intended to be primary documents for communicating with students about their study experience, but were reference documents that needed to be easily accessible by students particularly if they were concerned about aspects of their study. Martin Jackson, the primary author of the paper, was in attendance for this item on the agenda and would provide support in answering any questions on the paper.

- 13.2 The President of OUSA, Marianne Cantieri, said that OUSA had no problems with the content of the paper, but wanted to know if it was possible to submit drafting amendments in order to make the regulations clearer to future students. Mr Swann said that the Senate needed to concentrate on issues with or ambiguity about the intent of the regulations. Suggestions about how the intent could be expressed more clearly to all the audiences for the regulations could be sent directly to Mr Jackson, who would make any amendments as appropriate. The Chair would then approve the final version.

**Action: All**

- 13.3 A member observed that the introductory box referred to qualifications that would start on or after the 1 August 2012, and there were also a number of references to this date as the starting point throughout the paper. However, the information regarding the 2012 fees had referred to 1 September 2012 as the starting point. Was this a further change to the new academic year? Mr Swann confirmed that the University's internal academic year was 1 August to 31 July. However, the academic year as defined in the Government student support regulations ran from 1 September to 31 August. Consequently, when the OU spoke to students about matters regarding fees and financial support, then it had to use the year referred to in the student support regulations. The University had considered aligning these dates, but had decided that it would not be worthwhile, as it had managed with the difference for many years.
- 13.4 With reference to OU 8.2 in Appendix 1 [OU 3 (e), Appendix 3], a member asked how a student might 'pay or agree to pay' if they were waiting for the outcome of a loan application. Mr Swann said that the OU would accept a loan as a payment method. The student would apply for a loan from the Student Loan Company (SLC), whereupon they would be given a unique SLC number, which they would then provide to the University to confirm that they had made the application. At that point, the student would become registered with the OU and would be able to receive materials and be assigned a tutor. If, subsequently, the loan application were turned down, then the student would be deregistered unless they were able to meet the fee in some other way.

- 13.5 The Dean, Mathematics, Computing and Technology, Professor Anne de Roeck, asked for clarification of the relationship between OU 4.1 b), OU 7 b) and OU 8.3 c) in Appendix 3, all of which referred to qualification registration, together with the time limits on the attainment of qualifications as detailed in the General Qualification Regulations (S-2012-01-10). It was unclear what the intent was regarding the arrangements for students cancelling their enrolment. When students successively cancelled their enrolments and it became clear that they would not be able to complete their qualification in the time limits specified, what would the University do to assist the student towards a successful outcome? Mr Swann said that the time limit specified in the General Qualification Regulations was the time limit regardless of what students did during that period. If a student were to take a year out, this would not extend the time limit. The University needed to have arrangements in place that made it possible to demonstrate flexibility for students when they experienced circumstances that forced them to change their plans and defer their study. However, the clock would continue to count down towards the time limit of the qualification. The University was currently developing the detail of the deferral proposals, which were closely tied in with fee discounts and refunds, and which would fit within the framework of these regulations. The three regulations appeared to be consistent with one another, but it was a complex issue. Mr Swann proposed that Professor de Roeck, Mr Jackson and he met after the Senate meeting and, if a contradiction or confusion was exposed, the matter would be resolved and any amendments approved by the Chair.

**Action: AdR/WS/MJ**

- 13.6 Referring to MS 1.2.1 b) in Appendix 4, which stated that a student 'may not enrol on a module that is not specified as available within your registered qualification', a member asked whether this meant that a student registered on a particular qualification would not be able to study a module outside of that qualification. Mr Swann replied that this was not the case. The intention was that, once a student was registered for a qualification, any module that counted towards or was specified for a particular qualification had to be done as part of the qualification registration. If this was not the case, there was a risk that students might effectively subvert the qualification regulations. However, if a student undertaking a particular qualification wanted to take a module outside that qualification for personal development reasons, they would be allowed to do so.
- 13.7 The member commented that the distinction between registration and enrolment was confusing. Mr Swann explained that, in the new world, the process by which a student would be linked to a qualification was registration. Registration for a qualification would be an annual process in which a student would declare how many credits they intended to study for over the next year. The total number of credits might be made up from up to four separate modules, some of which the student might commence after the start of the year. The process by which a student would link to a module within the qualification for which they had registered would be called enrolment. However, the process by which a student would be linked to a module outside of their qualification would be registration, as it would have a separate fee associated with it. Registration for a qualification and registration for a module were different, and the distinction was fundamental to the way in which the new world would work.
- 13.8 Referring to MS 2.7, which stated that 'if you have been awarded credit for a module, you are not allowed to repeat that module', a member said that he was concerned about the interaction between possible thresholds. The Mathematics and Statistics department had requested that it be allowed to have thresholds on its Level 1 modules. The consequence of this was that a student might pass a module on the basis of both continuous assessment and exam, but fail to achieve the appropriate threshold on the continuous assessment component. Mr Swann agreed that if this regulation was confirmed a student who passed a module, but at a level that would not allow them to progress to the next stage of the qualification, would be prevented from repeating that module. This was not

the intent, so the regulation would have to be amended to make this possible.

**Action: WS/MJ**

- 13.9 Referring to MS 3.3 1, which stated that undergraduate students in England who had studied with the OU before 1 August 2012 and who were eligible for transitional fees might only count credit towards their declared qualification, a member asked whether this regulation might stop students who wished to start study towards a declared qualification under transitional fees doing any kind of modular study if they were prepared to pay separately under the modular arrangements. Mr Swann responded that a student was only eligible under the student support regulations for study that counted towards their declared qualification. This was a constraint imposed by the Government. Consequently, a student would not be able to study a module outside of their declared qualification under the transitional fee arrangements, but there appeared to be no reason why they could not do so under the new fee arrangement. It was not the University's intention to prevent this happening, so the situation would be clarified.

**Action: WS/MJ**

- 13.10 The Senate **approved**:

- a) the Student Regulations 2012
- b) the Module Regulations 2012

to take effect for all student registrations on or after 27 March 2012 for modules and qualifications which start on or after 1 August 2012, subject to any amendments to the wording, which made the meaning clearer without changing the intent, that would be approved by the Chair on behalf of the Senate.

## **14 GENERAL QUALIFICATION REGULATIONS**

**S-2012-01-10**

- 14.1 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum and Qualifications), Professor Alan Tait, introduced the paper. Vicky Smith, Head, Credit, Qualifications and Ceremonies, the primary author of the paper, was in attendance for this item on the agenda and would provide support in answering any questions on the paper. The Senate had supported the Principles of the Undergraduate Qualification and Modular Delivery Model (S/2011/04/08) at its October 2011 meeting, and this paper translated those principles into new regulations for new qualifications. The regulations applied only to students registering for a qualification. It was essential that the University had the qualification regulations in place by the opening of registration for the new qualifications on 27 March 2012. Comments on improving the drafting or clarification of the regulations were welcomed. Any substantive changes that the Senate wished to incorporate would first be drafted by Mrs Smith and then put to a sub-group of the Curriculum and Validation Committee (CVC) for endorsement. These changes would then be agreed by the Chair on behalf of the Senate.

**Action: All**

- 14.2 The President, OUSA, Marianne Cantieri, referring to GQR 1.1.2, asked whether a student who registered for one qualification, such as a degree, and who later decided not to continue studying for that degree, but to accept a lower qualification, such as a certificate, would be counted as a non-completion by outside bodies, as they would not have completed their original declared qualification. Mr Swann said the concern was about how the Government, the Student Loans Company (SLC) and the Funding Council would view the performance and achievement of those OU students who gained loans. The registered qualification would be the one that appeared in the SLC records, unless the University informed SLC to the contrary. If the student did not complete that qualification, there was a risk that accepting a lower qualification would be counted as a

non-completion. This would seem an unreasonable position to hold against someone who exited with a qualification that was less than a degree, but that still had significant value. If the SLC and the Government were to act in this way it would undermine the principle of flexibility. However, the rules had not yet been defined and it was the University's responsibility to advocate that if a student decided that a particular qualification was sufficient for them, then its value should be taken seriously and it should be counted as success.

- 14.3 A member asked if there were any circumstances in which a student could fail to complete their initial qualification goal and also fail to complete an intermediate goal, for example a Diploma in Higher Education (DipHE), but have satisfied the requirements for a DipHE Open, which was not a subordinate qualification to the named degree. Professor Tait said that he would investigate and return with an answer.

**Action: AT**

- 14.4 Referring to GQR 2.2.7, which listed the reasons for exemption from 2.2.3, a member observed that there was an 'and' at the end of (a) i, but nowhere else, and enquired whether a student would have to satisfy one of the criteria or all four? Professor Tait said that this was a drafting issue that would be rectified.

**Action: AT/VS**

- 14.5 The member asked whether, if there was a suite of qualifications with a common first level, it would be straightforward for a student initially registering on one such qualification to transfer to another at the end of the first level. Professor Tait confirmed that students would be able to change their qualification intention once per year.

- 14.6 A member observed that GQR 2.2.8 stated that 'where the same profile of modules leads to more than one designation of a qualification, the designation will be determined by your preference expressed at registration'. However, if a student was allowed to change their qualification intention, then the designation should be the one that the student had most recently expressed. Professor Tait replied that the aim of this regulation was not to take away the right of students to change their qualification intention, so the draft would be reviewed.

**Action: AT/VS**

- 14.7 Referring to GQR 3.1.1, a member said that a time limit of 16 years did not make commercial sense, particularly in respect of the Open Degree. This qualification had a unique selling point in the market place and had proved very popular with students transferring credit from previous study who wished to top up and achieve a degree. However, many of these students would fall outside this time limit. At a time when the University was concerned about student numbers, it did not make sense to curtail the market. Professor Tait responded that there was a rationale behind the time limits: 16 years was the maximum period that the Student Loan Company would allow for study against a loan. This provided a critical set of parentheses within which the University had to organise its qualification time limits. The validity of the University's qualifications in the marketplace was another important factor: any degree taken over a longer period would have its currency questioned. The Open Degree was a hugely important qualification for the University, and had significantly more students studying for it than any other degree. It was important that it should have the same standards and currency as all of the other qualifications if it was not to be perceived as second rate.

- 14.8 A number of members were concerned about time limits and credit transfer. Referring to GQR 6.12 and 6.13, one member said that it appeared that a student could have studied 30 points of credit at another university 16 years previously and then be given a further 16 years to complete an OU degree, a maximum of 32 years in total. Whilst the validity of qualifications was important, the University was in danger of providing credit transfer

students with unfair advantage over those who studied exclusively with the OU. Another member asked whether a student who had completed 120 credits with the OU, then took a break for almost 16 years before returning to study, would have another 12 years to complete their qualification. The Vice-Chancellor said that this would not be the case. Professor Tait said that the view had been taken that if a qualification life of 16 years was acceptable within the University, then the same currency could not be denied for credit that was transferred in. If the Senate did not think that this apparent discrepancy was acceptable, then it could be reviewed. The Vice-Chancellor proposed that the question be taken back to the sub-group of CVC for further consideration and that he would then take Chair's Action as appropriate.

**Action: AT**

14.9 The Vice-Chancellor said that the issues raised would be considered further and the regulations modified accordingly, with the exception of any extension of the 16 years maximum.

14.10 The Senate **approved** the changes to the General Qualification Regulations and to Schedule A To The General Qualification Regulations, subject to the amendments agreed and any subsequent changes recommended by the Curriculum and Validation Committee sub-group being approved by the Chair on behalf of the Senate.

## 15 EMERITUS PROFESSORS

S-2012-01-12

The Senate:

- a) **approved** the recommendation from the Chair and Readership subcommittee that the title Emeritus Professor is awarded to Professor Gordon Wilson and Professor Peter Walton.
- b) **noted** that Chair's Action has been taken in respect of the award of the title of Emeritus Professor to Professor Janet Grant, Faculty of Health and Social Care and Professor John Naughton, Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology.

## 16 ACADEMIC STAFF PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE: REVISIONS TO THE GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES FOR PROMOTION TO SENIOR LECTURER

S-2012-01-13

The Senate **approved** the proposed changes to the Academic Staff Promotion Committee's (ASPC's) guidance and procedures for promotion to senior lecturer (or equivalent) for implementation for the 2012 senior lecturer review (paragraph 12 and appendix).

## 17 COMMITTEE TIMETABLE

S-2012-01-14

17.1 An associate lecturer member asked whether, in a time of enormous and rapid change, it was appropriate to reduce the number of decision and discussion points in the committee year. The University Secretary, Fraser Woodburn, replied that the key issue behind this paper was that the University had lost the sense of a cycle of business over the years. It was important to maintain this cycle, as most of the business had to be digested and prepared for, sometimes in the governance substructure before the Senate, sometimes less formally in consultation groups with associate lecturers, students and faculties, before the cycle ended with a meeting of the Council. Consequently, it did not make sense to have more than three meetings per year. The current year, where there were four

meetings of the Senate, was the period of greatest activity and there was likely to be less business in the following year. Even in the current cycle, the business scheduled for the Easter meeting, which was the least well attended, could have been dealt with in the other meetings of the Senate.

- 17.2 Another member said that whilst the desire to smooth the flow of business through the Senate and its substructure was understandable, the argument concerning the number of items for discussion at past meetings of the Senate was not convincing. The Senate was not just a discursive body, but was also a body for scrutiny, review and approval. A better measure might have been the number of items that had been starred for discussion or even the length of the minutes. The removal of one of the meetings might result in longer sessions where the quality of the scrutiny deteriorated. Mr Woodburn said that the items that required scrutiny were the very items that had to go through the business cycle. Only the discussion items could go outside of the cycle and, even then, a period of consultation would generally be required before they were presented for a decision at the Senate and beyond.
- 17.3 Mr Woodburn said that the change meant that the Senate would not have to have more than three meetings per year, but it did not prevent it from doing so. If the Senate wished, a fourth meeting could be scheduled for Easter-time and a decision could be taken at the previous meeting as to whether or not it would be necessary. It was important, however, that this extra meeting was not part of the normal cycle of business, but was used for business outside that cycle.
- 17.4 A student member said that the number of meetings was not an issue, provided the changes in timetabling resulted in a more efficient and effective process. Papers should be received well in advance so that members could come to the meeting well prepared and properly informed. The Vice-Chancellor's earlier reassurance that there would be changes to the process to ensure that members would have access to papers in a timely manner had been welcome, as some student members had received the papers only a few days before the meeting.
- 17.5 Another member asked whether, if there were fewer meetings, there would be adequate time to cover the business properly: not just the discussion items, but also those that members chose to star. It had been known for meetings to go on beyond 6.00pm, which had meant that some members had had to leave before important items had been discussed. An earlier start might be considered: 1.00pm would allow for pre-meetings, whilst also providing extra time if needed. Mr Woodburn said that the timings would be reviewed.

**Action: CenSec**

- 17.6 The Vice-Chancellor asked the Senate to vote on whether there should be a move to three meetings of the Senate per year, with an option for a fourth, which would be agreed at the previous meeting.
- 17.7 The Senate **approved**:
- a) the amendment to the Senate Standing Orders to read that 'the Senate shall meet at least three times each year';
  - b) the amendment to the Strategic Planning and Resources Committee (SPRC) constitution to read 'the Committee shall normally meet three times a year', subject to the approval of SPRC and of the Council.

**18 COMMITTEE MATTERS****S-2012-01-15**

The Senate **approved**:

- a) The recommendations for constitutional changes for the following committees:
  - i) Curriculum and Validation Committee (Appendix 1);
  - ii) Vocational Qualifications Committee (Appendix 2);
  - iii) Research Committee (Appendix 3);
  - iv) Research Degrees Committee (Appendix 4);
- b) the recommendation for the constitutional change to the Strategic Planning and Resources Committee (Appendix 5) arising from the annual effectiveness review.

The revised constitutions are attached as appendices to the minutes.

**19 ANNUAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW:  
SENATE SUB-STRUCTURE****S-2012-01-16**

The Senate **noted** the annual effectiveness reviews for the committee year 2010/2011 of the Academic Staff Promotions Committee, the Honorary Degrees Committee and the Strategic Planning and Resources Committee.

**20 STUDENT SUPPORT REVIEW – PHASE 4:  
CURRICULUM SUPPORT TEAM IMPLEMENTATION****S-2012-01-17**

- 20.1 A member said that although Curriculum Support Teams might seem a good idea in principle, difficulties could arise in the detail of the implementation. There had been particular concern about how the arrangements would work for the Faculty of Health and Social Care (HSC) since, although the faculty had separate programme areas, the curriculum was highly integrated and interdependent (eg with modules shared across programmes). Taking together Section 2 paragraph 5 (page 2), Table A on page 3 and Section 5 paragraph 17b (page 5), which referred to the principles for determining the location of teams, this had been interpreted to mean that HSC might have three CSTs, formed around three curriculum areas, and that these might be located in different geographical areas, fragmenting the support available. However, the two Assistant Directors working closely on the implementation of CSTs for HSC, Caroline Malone and Tina Miller, had clarified that this interpretation was not what was intended for the faculty. The intention was that HSC would have one overarching CST, with sub-teams, and that this would be in one geographical location. This was felt to be crucial given the interdependence of the HSC curriculum and the need for flexibility. The matter had been taken up directly with Nikki Bolleurs, Programme Director, Student Support Review, but it had been suggested that it would be helpful for the matter to be clarified at the Senate meeting.
- 20.2 Another member said that the way in which the Science teams had been described, as parallel teams A and B, was contrary to the way in which the faculty wished to work. The faculty wanted one integrated team to support the curriculum, although this might be across two locations if the staffing needs of Student Services made this necessary. A duplication of work across the curriculum would not be efficient or effective. It was



understood from the Assistant Director in Science that this was the line being taken by the faculty in discussions at a higher level.

- 20.3 Mr Swann explained the next steps. The paper defined the three biggest issues that had been unresolved when the Senate had last discussed the matter in June 2011: the position of the postgraduate curriculum, the position of the nations, and the curriculum areas to be covered; and the next task was to map the curriculum areas to locations. The Student Support Review (SSR) programme team would not be doing this in isolation: there would be a process of negotiation and discussion about the location and structure of CSTs, beginning with a discussion with the Deans in early February 2012. In parallel there would be a discussion with the Student Services Leadership Team in order to take account of the perspective of the locations. The matter should finally be resolved at the mid-March 2012 meeting of the Extended Leadership Team (ELT), which consisted of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive (VCE) and all of the Deans. It was inevitable that there might have to be some compromise, since the preferences of every faculty might not be practicably deliverable against the current arrangement of the OU's locations. However, the optimum solution for all concerned would be sought.
- 20.4 A student member said that curriculum support was important to students, and they viewed this paper as an interim report. When the Student Support Review Final Report (S/2011/3/07) had been discussed at the June 2011 meeting of the Senate, it had been stated that a range of issues regarding the implementation phase would be brought back to the Senate (S/2011/3/M minute 9.29). However, the paper detailing future items of business (S-2012-01-21) indicated that a paper on the locations of CSTs only would be on the agenda at the next meeting. The discussion should not be limited to location and based on the assumption that everything in the current report had been accepted. If the proposals were viewed in the context of circumstances in the other nations and continental Europe, it might alter Senate's views. The implementation as a whole should be discussed. The Vice-Chancellor said that the next meeting would be clear about what had already been approved by the Senate and what issues remained unresolved. All of the open issues would be brought back to the Senate in their entirety, including the location of CSTs. However, it would be inappropriate to cover matters that had already been considered and approved by the Senate. If there were specifics that should come back to the Senate, then these should be raised with the Director, Students.
- Action: WS**
- 20.5 Another member said that a paper on implementation issues had been promised at the June 2011 meeting of the Senate. It would be a matter for concern if only the locations were discussed at the next meeting, as the decisions regarding the detailed operation of the CSTs were important. Mr Swann said that it was entirely appropriate that the key points for discussion should be presented to the Senate, particularly with regard to the blueprints that would govern the general way in which CSTs would work. It was unlikely that the Senate would want to control the detail, but periodic reports could come back to the Senate for comment.
- Action: WS**
- 20.6 The President, OUSA, Marianne Cantieri, said that OUSA had requested that Europe be given nation status, on a par with the UK nations, to recognise the specific knowledge and experience required to support students in Europe. This should be reflected in the report as Section 4: Five Nations, rather than Four Nations. Mr Swann said that there were specific issues about the expertise required to support students in Europe, in particular the recognition of degrees. Previously, this expertise had principally been based in Gateshead. It needed to be available and distributed to all CSTs, but at present it was unclear how best to facilitate this. However, the solution was not likely to be found by constraining it within the rules followed by the nations, as they were driven by the reality of the devolved governments and funding bodies. It was important to ensure that if a student

needed support for a specifically European issue, then their CST would be able to handle that request.

- 20.7 A member asked whether, so long as Scotland remained within the UK, Scottish students would be better served by having an Edinburgh number as their first point of contact rather than one based south of the border. Mr Swann said that the University had sought to achieve the benefits of curriculum led student support for all students, not just those in England. However, the support needs of students in the three Celtic nations depended in part on the fact that they were part of a different jurisdiction and had different funding arrangements. It was also important to recognise that the governments outside of England might make specific requirements of the University, for example on retention targets, which would apply to students in one nation but not the others. Consequently, there had to be a means by which the nation director could ensure that these targets were delivered by the CST. The solution to these issues was that all students, wherever they resided, would be supported by a CST; that all CSTs would include virtual members in the nations; and that the blueprints under development would govern CST practice across all nations to ensure consistency. There would be a single contact telephone number that all students would call. The new telephone system would detect where those students were calling from and route that call to Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland as appropriate. The enquiry might then be re-routed to the main CST if necessary. There was flexibility to change this arrangement as required. This combination of practices would be the best way of providing the benefits of CSTs to all students, whilst also meeting the specific needs of students in the devolved nations and ensuring that the University delivered the necessary accountability to the funding bodies in those nations in relation to student performance and progression.
- 20.8 With reference to Section 5: The Location of Curriculum Support Teams, paragraph 17 e), which stated that ‘the size of each curriculum area will be measured using student module count at registration’, a member said that it was difficult to see how this would work in practice, as the size of a curriculum area measured in this way would not remain static over time. Mr Swann said that the University was moving into a period of considerable turbulence in student numbers. In the process of deciding the location of CSTs, a number of scenarios in terms of student volume were being modelled. However, the blueprints to which all teams would be working were being developed in a manner that would ensure a smooth and easy move if it became necessary to reallocate a team from one area to another.
- 20.9 Referring to paragraph 17 i), a student member said that as the UK was part of Europe, the sentence should refer to ‘Continental European’ students.
- 20.10 Referring to paragraph 19, which said that some one or two curriculum areas would be ‘early adopters’, going live with CSTs in (October) 2012, a member commented that this was an ambitious timetable, particularly in the light of all the other changes taking place at present. Mr Swann agreed that the schedule regarding early adopters was ambitious, but it would be adhered to because the University needed to learn on a modest scale the lessons that would have to be applied when all the teams went live. There was currently an active debate about how many early adopters there should be, and the Deans were expressing their views with clarity and vigour, but it would not be resolved until the ELT meeting in March 2012.
- 20.11 An associate lecturer member said that the formation of CSTs would not be an easy process. As well as having geographical challenges, each team would include many and varied people, including those from region or nation offices who would play a prominent role, central academics, and ALs, who would perhaps have a more minor, peripheral role. The easy thing to do at the start would be to focus on the core team and then bring in those on the periphery. However, the danger of this approach was that the culture of the

team would already have been established. It was important to consider everyone from the beginning to ensure that there was an inclusive culture and that the best was achieved from all. Mr Swann agreed and welcomed this contribution to the discussion.

- 20.12 The Vice-Chancellor said that it was clear that many people had given great thought to and had strong opinions on the matter of CSTs. The Student Support Review programme team would appreciate such input, and members were encouraged to feed back such views outside of the Senate meeting. This should ensure that the next paper, on the blueprints and the locations, would raise as few issues and questions as possible.

**Action: All**

- 20.13 The Senate **noted** the contents of the paper.

**21 INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY (IET) REVIEW: ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE AND RESTRUCTURING FINAL REPORT S-2012-01-18**

The Senate **noted** that having redesigned its structure and ways of working to be strategically aligned, and with the establishment of a strong management focus on high levels of performance in both learning and teaching, and research, IET had completed the organisational change and restructuring process as required by the Senate.

**22 THE COUNCIL S-2012-01-19**

The Senate **noted** the report from the meeting of the Council held on 22 November 2011.

**23 ACTION BY THE CHAIR S-2012-01-20**

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

**24 FUTURE ITEMS OF BUSINESS S-2012-01-21**

The Senate **noted** the list of potential items for the agenda for the Senate meeting in April 2012.

**25 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

Meetings would be held on the following dates:

Wednesday 18 April 2012  
 Wednesday 20 June 2012  
 Wednesday 17 October 2012

Fraser Woodburn  
University Secretary

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

Attachments:

S-2012-01-M Appendix 1: Curriculum and Validation Committee constitution  
S-2012-01-M Appendix 2: Vocational Qualifications Committee constitution  
S-2012-01-M Appendix 3: Research Committee constitution  
S-2012-01-M Appendix 4: Research Degrees Committee constitution  
S-2012-01-M Appendix 5: Strategic Planning and Resources Committee

Key:

All	Senate members
AB	Prof Alan Bassindale, Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Quality)
AdR	Prof Anne de Roeck, Dean, Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology
AT	Prof Alan Tait, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum and Validation)
AFW	Fraser Woodburn, University Secretary
CenSec	Central Secretariat
GM	Guy Mallison, Director, Strategy
LH	Lucian Hudson, Director, Communications
MJ	Martin Jackson, Assistant Director, Student Casework and Policy Coordination, Student Services
SH	Steve Hill, Commercial Director
VS	Vicky Smith, Head, Credit, Qualifications and Ceremonies
WS	Will Swann, Director, Students

**CURRICULUM AND VALIDATION COMMITTEE**CONSTITUTION – UPDATED ~~19.10.2011~~25.01.2012**Purpose**

The Curriculum and Validation Committee is responsible to the Senate for strategy, policy and standards relating to curriculum and qualifications, including collaborative offerings, and associated and partner institutions; for monitoring the delivery and review in respect of qualifications based on occupational standards and to monitor the framework for the approval of qualifications of this type. It has delegated powers to approve assessment policy.

**Terms of Reference*****Legislation: setting policy and strategy frameworks, agreeing plans and priorities***

1. To promote the strategic objectives and priorities relating to the University's curriculum in consultation with central academic unit committees, and to recommend the strategy to the Senate for approval.
2. To determine frameworks and guidelines to achieve the agreed strategic objectives and priorities, for the examination assessment and classification of qualifications which involve taught modules (with the exception of research degrees and higher doctorates) acting on advice from the Learning Teaching and Student Support Committee where necessary.
3. To monitor and review the curriculum aspects of central academic unit plans, encouraging collaboration between central academic units and sub-units in their curriculum planning and development activities and setting the overarching terms of reference for the programme committees reporting to the central academic unit committees.
4. To delegate to the Qualifications Committee the approval of the introduction of all standard qualifications and their regulations, the approval of the withdrawal of all qualifications and their associated amended regulations, and the approval of amendments to existing qualifications and their regulations, where these conform with the University's Qualifications Framework and other existing policies, and to make recommendations to the Senate in cases which fall outside these limits.
5. To delegate to the Qualifications Committee the approval of new modules and packs recommending the frameworks and guidelines to the Senate for approval.
6. To approve the introduction of new non standard qualifications and their regulations, where these are referred to it by Qualifications Committee, where these conform with the University's Qualifications Framework and other existing policies, and to make recommendations to the Senate in cases which fall outside these limits.
7. To formulate and interpret regulations that apply to the qualifications of the University generally.
8. To approve, on the advice of the Curriculum Partnerships Committee, the introduction of partnerships, leading to an award of the University, and their quality and contractual frameworks and the closure of existing partnerships, and to make recommendations to the Senate in cases which fall outside these limits.

9. To approve, on the advice of the Validation Committee, partner or associate status for institutions, the terms of their approval, and where appropriate, the termination of their approval and to make recommendations to the Senate in cases which fall outside these limits.
10. To interpret and approve exceptions to the policies and regulations relating to examinations and assessment and qualifications.

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

11. To monitor the implementation of policy on all matters within the Committee's remit, including collaborative arrangements, and to ensure that activities are monitored against the standards set.
12. To monitor the annual review of qualifications, and the annual review of curriculum partnerships and institutional partnerships to identify areas of the University's curriculum and qualifications structure requiring attention or development, and to draw these to the notice of appropriate officers and committees for review or development activities as appropriate.
13. To contribute to the Senate's annual academic review of the University.

***Assuring Quality and Standards, including approving regulations***

14. To ensure that standards are set for the qualifications, modules and assessment offered by the University, that they are consistent in standard and are compatible with those offered by other UK HEIs, that they support recognition by other organisations, and that they are in alignment with national and international qualification frameworks.
15. To approve recommendations for the recognition and inclusion in the qualifications of the University of modules and periods of study undertaken under the auspices both of the University and of other institutions.

16 To maintain and monitor the University's procedures for the monitoring and review of University qualifications based on occupational standards, ensuring that they are consistent and comparable to those awarded by other awarding bodies throughout the United Kingdom.

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

- ~~16~~17. To advise relevant areas of the University of significant market opportunities which the market may present, in order to inform University strategy.
- ~~17~~18. To advise the Senate on the introduction or withdrawal of specific categories of qualification.
- ~~18~~19. To report to the Senate of new partnerships and new approved institutions (including refusal to approve) or any changes in the status of approval.

***Making governance arrangements e.g. appointing to other committees***

None

***Matters of public record e.g. ratifying appointments of staff or external examiners***

None

**Judicial: deciding individual cases**

None

**Membership**

1. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum and Qualifications), Chair, *ex officio*.
2. The deans of faculties and schools or their nominees, and the Director of the Institute of Educational Technology or his/her nominee, *ex officio*.
3. The chairs of any committees reporting to the Committee.
4. The Director, OUVS, *ex officio*.
5. The Director of Assessment Credit and Qualifications or nominee, *ex officio*.
6. ~~The Director of the Centre for Professional Learning and Development~~ One nominee of the Commercial Director, *ex officio*.
7. The Director of the Centre for Centre for Inclusion and Curriculum, or nominee, *ex officio*.
8. One nominee of the Director, Students.
9. One nominee of the Director of Marketing.
10. Four members of staff, elected by the Senate, of whom at least two shall be members of the central academic staff.
11. Two associate lecturers appointed by the Associate Lecturers Executive.
12. Two registered students appointed by the Open University Students' Association.
13. Four external members. These may be drawn from the following bodies: the University's partner institutions, external members of the Validation Committee, employers who are University partners, or external assessors. Members in this category are to be appointed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum and Qualifications) on the recommendation of University officers.
14. 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.

**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.
  6. The Chair shall have executive authority to act on the Committee's behalf, in consultation with the Secretary, in particular for the approval of modules and packs.
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## VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTION – UPDATED ~~14.04.2010~~25.01.2012

### **Purpose**

The Vocational Qualifications Committee is responsible for recommending to the Curriculum and Validation Committee (CVC), strategy, policy and standards in respect of vocational qualifications offered by the University; for recommending the introduction of new types of qualifications, aligned with the National Framework for vocational qualifications; for approving, and keeping under review, the awarding body's operating frameworks; for authorising organisations to deliver the assessment of vocational qualifications, in line with ~~Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)~~the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) policy; and for monitoring the approval of individual new vocational qualifications.

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

1. To approve the awarding body's operating framework, in line with QCA-Ofqual policy, for authorising organisations (or divisions within organisations) as centres suitable to deliver assessment for vocational qualifications.
2. To approve the awarding body's operating framework for the approval of new vocational qualifications.

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

3. To monitor the development and approval of individual vocational qualifications and services.
4. To maintain and monitor the University's procedures and processes to meet regulatory requirements.

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

5. To ensure that quality assurance is in place for all vocational qualification approval and assessment activity.
6. To review regular reports from the awarding body on their qualification approval and assessment quality assurance processes, with reference to the current QCA-Ofqual criteria.

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

7. To recommend for approval by Curriculum and Validation Committee any new types of vocational qualifications based on occupational standards to be offered by the University.
8. To advise the Curriculum and Validation Committee on the provision of feedback to regulatory bodies and vocational standards setting bodies on the University's vocational qualifications.
9. To advise the Curriculum and Validation Committee on new areas of vocational qualifications which might be developed, or new relationships with, or progression opportunities to, higher education qualifications.

**Membership**

1. The Chair appointed by CVC.
2. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum and Qualifications) or nominee.
3. The Director, OU Validation Services.
4. The Director of Assessment, Credit and Qualifications or nominee.
5. Up to five members drawn from staff in the Open University.
6. Up to five members drawn from industry, commerce, appropriate professions and other organisations having experience in delivering and/or quality assurance of vocational qualifications including representation from major external partner organisations.

Secretary

**In attendance**

1. Members of OUVS.

**Mode of Operation**

1. The Committee shall report at least annually to the Curriculum and Validation Committee.
  2. The Chair shall have executive authority to act on behalf of the Committee in consultation with its Secretary.
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**RESEARCH COMMITTEE**CONSTITUTION – UPDATED ~~19.10.2011~~25.01.2012**Purpose**

The Research Committee is responsible to the Senate for strategy, policy and standards relating to research, research degrees and higher doctorates in the University.

**Terms of Reference*****Legislation: setting policy and strategy frameworks, agreeing plans and priorities***

1. To maintain and promote the University's strategy on research, in consultation with central academic unit committees, and to recommend the strategy to the Senate for approval.
2. To determine policies and guidelines within the agreed strategy for research, making recommendations to the Senate in cases which fall outside these limits. Matters of strategy and policy relating to research degrees and higher doctorates are delegated to Research Degrees Committee.
3. To oversee the processes for preparation approval and review of the research aspects of central academic unit plans, encouraging collaboration between central academic units and sub-units in their research activities.

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

4. To monitor the implementation and operation of policy in all matter within the Committee's remit.
5. To contribute to the Senate's annual academic review of the University.

***Assuring Quality and Standards, including approving regulations***

6. To ensure that standards are set for research activities within the context of external research quality monitoring.
7. Responsibility for the recruitment, admission, registration, supervision and progress of research students, and for research degree and higher doctorate examinations is delegated to the Research Degrees Committee.
8. The approval of recommendations of examiners for research degrees and higher doctorates and the award of research degrees and higher doctorates is delegated to the Research Degrees Examination Result Approval Committee.
9. To approve applications from organisations wishing to become affiliated research centres after guidance and recommendation from the Research Degrees Committee.

**Advising other governance bodies or management**

10. To advise the Senate, the Strategic Planning and Resources Committee and Central Academic Unit (CAU) Committees on all aspects of the development of research, and research degree activities in the University, including resources and priorities for strategic development.

**Making governance arrangements e.g. appointing to other committees**

~~None~~ 11. To appoint the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Research Degrees Committee.

12. To appoint the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee.

13. To appoint the regionally/nationally-based Senate representative of the Research Committee to the Research Degrees Committee.

**Matters of public record e.g. ratifying appointments of staff or external**

None

**Judicial: deciding individual cases**

None

**Membership**

1. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship), Chair, *ex officio*.
2. The relevant associate deans or equivalent of faculties, *ex officio*.
3. A representative of the Knowledge Media Institute (KMi), nominated by the Director of KMi.
4. The Directors of the Research Centres, *ex officio*.
5. The Chair of the Affiliated Research Centres Management Group, *ex officio*
6. The Chairs of any committees reporting to the Committee.
7. Four representatives of the Senate, elected by the Senate, of whom at least one shall be a member of regionally/nationally-based staff.
8. One registered full-time research student and one registered part-time external student, appointed by the Open University Students Association.
9. Two members of the research staff elected by and from such staff.
10. A representative from an affiliated research centre.
11. The Research School Academic Co-ordinator, *ex officio*.
12. A Dean or Director, to be nominated by the Deans and Directors Group.
13. Such others as the Committee may co-opt up to a maximum of four.

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.
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## RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTION – UPDATED ~~19.10.2011~~25.01.2012

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### Purpose

To be responsible to the Research Committee for all policy, regulatory, and procedural matters relating to research degrees and higher doctorates.

### Terms of Reference

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

1. To determine specific ~~policies~~ arrangements for the admission, registration, progress and examination of research degree students and higher doctorate candidates, including the recruitment of full-time and part-time research students, the appointment of supervisors and examiners, and the approval of research topics.
- ~~2.~~ To decide matters of strategy and policy relating to research degrees and higher doctorates, referring them to the Research Committee where appropriate.
- ~~3.~~ To make recommendations to the Research Committee for the approval of new Affiliated Research Centres.

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

- ~~24.~~ To monitor the implementation of agreed policy on research degrees and higher doctorates, ~~and to report to the Research Committee as appropriate.~~

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

- ~~35.~~ To be responsible for the admission, registration, progress and examination of research degree students and higher doctorate candidates, including the interpretation and waiver of policy and regulations.
- ~~46.~~ To ~~be responsible for~~ delegate to the Research Degrees Examination Result Approval Committee the approval of recommendations of examiners for examination results, and the award of Open University research degrees and higher doctorates ~~and the award of research degrees and higher doctorates,~~ to individual students registered to such degrees.
- ~~7.~~ To oversee the effectiveness of the Quality Assurance Framework for the Affiliated Research Centres Programme and the Sponsoring Establishments.

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

- ~~5.~~ To recommend policy on research degrees and higher doctorates to the Research Committee having consulted central academic units.
- ~~6.~~ To make recommendations to the Research Committee on the approval of new affiliated research centres (ARCs). None

#### **Making governance arrangements e.g. appointing to other committees**

- ~~8.~~ To appoint one or more External Examiners to the Master of Research (MRes) Award Board.

- ~~79.~~ To appoint the Chair of the Master of Research (MRes) Award Board.
- ~~810.~~ To appoint ~~up to two co-opted members and~~ the Chair of the Research Degrees Examination Result Approval Committee.

**Matters of public record e.g, ratifying appointments of staff or external examiners**

- ~~911.~~ To appoint research degree supervisors and examiners.
- ~~10.~~ ~~To appoint one or more external examiners to the MRes Award Board.~~

**Judicial: deciding individual cases**

- ~~11.~~ ~~As outlined in terms of reference 3 and 4 above.~~ None

**Membership**

1. A Chair and Deputy Chair appointed by the Research Committee.
2. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship), *ex officio*.
3. The Research School Academic Co-ordinator, *ex officio*.
4. The Chair of the Research Degrees Examination Result Approval Committee, *ex officio*.
5. The Chair of the Master of Research (MRes) Award Board, *ex officio*.
6. The Chair of the Affiliated Research Centre Management Group, *ex officio*.
7. The Chair of the Life Sciences and Biomolecular Sciences Advisory Group, *ex officio*.
8. The Chair of the Theology and Religious Studies Management Group, *ex officio*.
9. The Chair of the Master of Research (MRes) Management Group, *ex officio*.
10. The Chair of the ~~Architecture~~ Architectural and Urbanism Association Management Group, *ex officio*.
11. The student members of the Research Committee.
12. A representative from an ~~affiliated~~ Affiliated research ~~Research centre~~ Centre.
13. One of the regionally/nationally-based Senate representatives on the Research Committee, appointed by the Research Committee.
14. ~~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), and one member from the Knowledge Media Institute nominated by the Director of the Institute~~ The Associate Dean, Research (or equivalent) or nominee, from each CAU.
15. One member of the Knowledge Media Institute, nominated by the Director of the Institute.
1516. Up to two co-opted members appointed by the Research Committee other members, co-opted by the Committee, chosen for their expertise in research degrees matters.

~~16. If the Chair of Research Degrees Committee is not already a member of Research Committee, the Chair will become a co-opted member of Research Committee.~~

**In Attendance**

17. The Director of Library Services or nominee
18. The Head of Research Degrees office
19. The Manager of Research Degrees Team
20. The Manager, Affiliated Research Centre Programme

Secretary

**Mode of Operation**

1. The Committee shall meet as and when required, and shall report to the Research Committee at least annually.
  2. Its Chair or, by delegation, the Deputy Chair of the Committee shall have executive authority to act on its behalf in consultation with its secretary.
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## STRATEGIC PLANNING AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTION – UPDATED ~~23.11.2010~~25.01.2012

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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 planning proposals for strategically significant developments and business opportunities and to ensure that the proposals are viable in terms of the staff and non-staff resource available to support them.
3. To advise the Senate of the financial and planning assumptions influencing the academic plans and priorities of the University
4. To recommend, for approval by the Council, the allocation of resources.
5. To recommend for approval by the Council University Fee and Financial Support ~~Policy~~ Strategy and guidelines, ~~having taken account of the comments of the Senate,~~ and subsequently to approve the University fees on behalf of ~~the Senate and~~ the Council.
6. To review progress against strategic priorities.
7. 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).
8. To exercise such powers as may be delegated to the Committee by the Council or the Senate.

### Membership

1. The Pro-Chancellor, Chair, *ex officio*.
2. The Vice 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 ~~of Business Development~~.
12. The Finance Director.
13. 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 four times a year.
4. The Committee shall be quorate if four 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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