**THE SENATE**

**Minutes**

This paper presents the Minutes of the last meeting of the Senate held on Wednesday 20 June 2012 at The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes.

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

Fraser Woodburn
Secretary to the Committee

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**THE SENATE**

Minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on Wednesday 20 June 2012 at 2.00 pm
in the Hub Theatre, The Open University, Walton Hall.

**Present:**

**1) Ex officio**

Mr Martin Bean, Vice-Chancellor
Professor Alan Bassindale, Interim 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 Allan Cochrane, Interim Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences
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

**Appointed**

**2) Central Academic Units**

**Faculty of Arts**

| | |
|---|---|
| Professor Suman Gupta | Dr Lynda Prescott |
| Professor Anne Laurence | Professor John Wolffe |

**Faculty of Business & Law**

| | |
|---|---|
| Mrs Keren Bright | Ms Carmel McMahon |
| Dr Jacky Holloway | Mr Mike Phillips |

**Faculty of Education and Language Studies**

| | |
|---|---|
| Dr Jane Cullen | Dr Steve Hutchinson |
| Dr Regine Hampel | Professor Karen Littleton |
| Ms Felicity Harper | Mr Pete Smith |

**Faculty of Health and Social Care**

| | |
|---|---|
| Mrs Sue Cole | Dr Verina Waights |
| Dr Sarah Earle | |

**Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology**

| | |
|---|---|
| Dr Leonor Barroca | Dr Toby O'Neil |
| Dr David Bowers | Dr Sally Organ |
| Professor Andy Lane | Dr Gareth Williams |
| Dr Nicolas Moss | |

**Faculty of Science**

Dr John Baxter                                      Dr Nick Rogers
Dr Payam Rezaie                                Professor Ian Wright

**Faculty of Social Sciences**

Dr Helen Kaye                                      Dr Hugh Mackay

**Institute of Educational Technology**

Dr Robin Goodfellow                         Professor Eileen Scanlon
Professor Agnes Kukulska-Hulme

**Other Central Units**

Dr Liz Marr

**Regional/National Centres**

Dr Liz Manning

## 3) Associate Lecturers

Ms Janet Dyke (alternate)                 Mr Bruce Heil
Dr Isobel Falconer                             Mr Stephen Pattinson

## 4) Students Appointed by Open University Students Association

Mrs Marianne Cantieri                       Mr David Reed
Mr Sandy Garrity                               Mr Carey Shaw
Ms Laura Murphy (alternate)             Ms Sandra Summers (alternate)

## 5) Academic-related Staff

Mrs Liz Armitage                               Mrs Bethan Norfor
Ms Pat Atkins                                    Ms Hilary Robertson
Ms Fiona Carey                                  Ms Gill Smith
Mrs Lynda Juma                                Mr Michael Street
Mr Martin Kenward                            Ms Elaine Walker
Dr Christina Lloyd

## 6) Co-opted members

Mrs Lynda Brady                               Dr James Miller
Mr John D'Arcy                                 Dr Peter Scott
Mr Rob Humphreys                           Dr Petrina Stevens
Dr David Knight

## In attendance

Dr Kate Clarke, Director, Open University Validation Services
Mr Lucian Hudson, Director, Communications
Professor Trevor Herbert, Faculty of Arts (for minute 14, S-2012-03-11)
Miss Kirsty Snapes, Manager, Curriculum Development, Curriculum & Qualifications (for minute 13, S-2012-03-10)

**Apologies:**

**1) Ex officio**

>Mr Jeremy Roche, Dean, Faculty of Health and Social Care
>Ms Anne Howells, Director of Learning & Teaching Solutions

**Appointed**

**2) Central Academic Units**

>**Faculty of Arts**
>
>Dr Graham Harvey                     Dr Bob Wilkinson
>
>**Faculty of Business & Law**
>
>Mr Alessandra Saroli
>
>**Faculty of Education and Language Studies**
>
>Dr Peter Twining
>
>**Faculty of Health and Social Care**
>
>Professor Monica Dowling            Professor Jan Draper
>
>**Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology**
>
>Professor Joyce Fortune             Dr Shirley Northover
>Mr Derek Goldrei                    Dr Helen Yanacopulos
>Professor Uwe Grimm
>
>**Faculty of Science**
>
>Dr David Rothery                    Dr Terry Whatson
>Dr Robert Saunders
>
>**Faculty of Social Sciences**
>
>Dr Troy Cooper                      Professor Michael Saward
>Dr Anastasia Economou               Dr Jason Toynbee
>Dr Raia Prokhovnik

**3) Associate Lecturers**

>Mr Paddy Alton                      Dr Walter Pisarski
>Dr Roma Oakes

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

>Ms Pippa Doran

**5) Academic-Related Staff**

>Mr Billy Khokhar                    Mr Ian Roddis
>Mr Tony O'Shea-Poon

**In attendance**

>Mr Andrew Law, Director, Open Media Unit

**1      WELCOME**

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed Kirsty Snapes, Project Manager for the Postgraduate Review who would be in attendance for paper S-2012-03-10 Postgraduate Review; and Professor Trevor Herbert, Chair of the Review Group who would attend for paper S-2012-03-11 Review of the Validation Model Final Report.

**2      MINUTES                                                                    S-2012-02-M**

The Senate **approved** the minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on 18 April 2012.

**3      MATTERS ARISING                                                      S-2012-03-01**

3.1      Referring to paragraphs 10 – 11 of the paper, and the need for study calendars to be available at an early stage, a student member said that referring the matter back to Learning and Teaching Solutions (LTS) did not seem appropriate.  The interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Quality), Professor Alan Bassindale, said that he would discuss the matter with the Director of LTS, Anne Howells, who was not present at the meeting, and then decide where further action might be taken to address the problem. The matter would then be brought back to the Senate.

**Action:  AB**

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

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

**Social Mobility and Widening Access**

4.1      The Vice-Chancellor commented that the issue of social mobility had recently had a high profile in the news and in the minds of Government ministers.  The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) had been consulting on its future role in supporting widening participation and promoting social mobility.  The University and the OU Students Association (OUSA) had each responded to the consultation by urging HEFCE to continue to fund some of the additional costs associated with recruiting and supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds.  These allocations were extremely important to the OU's finances and the University had been fighting to retain as much of them as possible in the face of public expenditure reductions, with some success.  In England, HEFCE had increased the OU's allocation for widening participation and retention by £2.5 million for 2012/13; and in Wales, the University's success in opening up higher education (HE) to some of the country's most disadvantaged communities, as well as its success in student recruitment generally, had been recognised by a 19% increase in the OU's grant allocation in Wales for 2012/13 - the largest single increase amongst all institutions in Wales for this year.

4.2      However, the future of these funds remained uncertain in England.  Even whilst the HEFCE consultation was in full swing, David Willetts, Minister of State for Universities and Science, had asked the Funding Council and the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) to work together on a joint strategy for widening participation.  Mr Willetts was looking for a new, more selective approach and had said: "I want the HE sector to concentrate on delivering

and developing programmes that are proven to support applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds – and [to] stop those where the measurable impact has been limited". It was clear that the University had to be rigorous in focussing scarce, and probably declining, resources in areas where they would have the greatest impact. Consequently, the University should not just draw more people from disadvantaged backgrounds into higher education, but also provide them with the knowledge and skills that would enable them to progress and succeed in their chosen careers.

4.3    This issue had been emphasised by Alan Milburn's report on social mobility, which had urged that entry to the professions should be opened up to a wider variety of people with different qualifications. The OU had a role to play here, as widening access to education and the professions was not just about improving the attainment of 18 year olds, but about improving the talents and contribution of those already in work. Rajay Naik, Director of Government and External Affairs, had emphasised this point when he had given evidence to the All Party Group on Social Mobility recently. This year, there had been significant drop in applications for full-time places from mature students. UCAS figures had shown that applications from people aged 21 or over for full-time degree courses starting in 2012/13 had fallen by 11.4% since last year, compared with a drop of 6.6% from applicants aged 17 to 20. A recent report from the National Union of Students (NUS) and the million+ university group had warned of a collapse in the numbers of mature students in England. If true, this would present a grave threat to social mobility, unless mature students, who would previously have entered full-time higher education, were now considering part-time study, and perhaps study with the OU.

4.4    A member said that she had just analysed the Milburn and NUS/million+ report for the next editorial of *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*. The data indicated that the biggest employers in the UK targeted just five universities. A review of these five institutions in the context of the NUS/million+ report had shown that they had the lowest proportion of mature students. This supported the view that the University should not just be concerned with widening participation and widening access, but what this meant beyond increasing educational opportunity. Employability was key, and the OU should emphasise the employability of OU graduates to employers.

**Funding and Student Numbers**

4.5    The Vice-Chancellor said that  the Government had done very little to explain or promote the fact that new part-time students would be eligible for student loans for their fees. The OU's research had shown that just over 70% of the people interested in entering higher education in England were unsure about, or felt they did not have enough information about, the funding options available. Consequently, the University had launched an online video, called *Ways to pay for OU study in England*. It highlighted the range of options available to those who were considering studying with the OU, including tuition fee loans, instalment payments through OUSBA, and fee support for those on low incomes who enter through the Access to Success route. The video was available on the OU website or on YouTube. A similar video had also been produced potential students in Scotland.

4.6    The Independent Task Force on Student Finance Information, which was backed by UCAS, Universities UK and the NUS, had also produced a new guide and video for prospective part-time students, together with a part-time student finance calculator. They had also produced a summary of the support available for part-time students across the four nations of the UK. It remained to be seen whether this improved flow of good quality information would lead to an increase in registrations.

4.7    The OU had already exceeded its target number of enquirers and more than 15,000 new students in England had registered for qualifications in 2012/13 to date. Over 87,000 existing students in England had linked their previous study to a qualification, which was a

necessary first step towards registration for 2012/13 and beyond.  These were promising signs, but it was still too early for the University to make informed estimates about overall student numbers for next year. However, over three-quarters of the people who would study with the OU in 2012/13 would be studying under fees and financial support arrangements that were unchanged from this year.  Postgraduate students, undergraduates in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and many continuing students in England and continental Europe, would be paying fees that were not very different from the 2011/12 fees.

4.8     There might also be improvements in support for some of these students in 2012/13 and beyond.  It was anticipated that the Scottish Government would be announcing an extension of the Part-Time Fee Grant later this year.  In Wales, the Assembly Government had promised to extend tuition fee loans and grants to part-time students from 2012/13. The Northern Ireland Government's new strategy on higher education promised changes to the higher education funding model that would support modular learning and an increase in part-time provision.  While there were risks to student numbers and threats to social mobility in England, there were also opportunities to be seized across the UK.

**Awards and grants**

4.9     On behalf of the Senate, the Vice-Chancellor congratulated Professor Monica Grady, Faculty of Science, on being honoured with a CBE for her outstanding contribution and services to space science; and Professor Gillian Rose, Faculty of Social Sciences, who had been selected by the Royal Geographical Society to receive this year's Murchison Award for 'publications judged to have contributed most to geographical science in recent years'.

4.10    The University had also achieved some success in its aim to develop larger and more collaborative research bids. The OU had recently been awarded seven EU research grants totalling £1.4m, and three further EU grants were currently in negotiation. Amongst other successful bids, the University had been awarded major grants by the Science and Technology Facilities Council and the Natural Environment Research Council to support the OU's contribution to the Rosetta Space mission and its work in environmental science.

4.11    The OU in Wales's Access to Education for Carers' project had won the main prize at the Universities Association for Lifelong Learning annual conference this year.

**International Activity**

4.12    The University had just signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the China Academy of Space Technology, and the OU would now engage in programmes of joint research in space science, as well as helping to train postgraduate students, scientists and engineers attached to the Chinese Academy.  A Memorandum of Understanding had also been signed with the Rector of Universitas Terbuka in Indonesia to support a continuing dialogue on distance learning and quality assurance. This formed part of a wider relationship forged between the Governments of the UK and Indonesia to support knowledge exchange programmes between the two countries, as well as to build capacity in Indonesia, where the Government had set a goal of providing higher education to 25% of its university-age population by 2020.

4.13    The Vice-Chancellor had described the University's work overseas to Andrew Mitchell, the Secretary of State for International Development, when he had visited the University at the end of May 2012.  Mr Mitchell had heard about the OU's programmes to train teachers and health workers in Africa, India and Bangladesh and seen a demonstration of the portable mass spectrometer that was being developed by OU scientists to improve the diagnosis of tuberculosis In Africa.

4.14    These activities illustrated the University's power to widen participation, to develop and apply innovative teaching and research, and to transform lives, both in the UK and internationally.

**New Qualification Framework**

4.15    A member asked when the University would review the position and possible future role of short modules of 10-15 credits.  There had been a number of successful programmes that had included such modules, but they were now becoming a casualty of the drive towards qualifications.  The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum and Qualifications), Professor Alan Tait, said that he had not intended to consider short modules separately from other issues of curriculum.  Faculties had been taking their own decisions based on business needs with regard to these shorter modules, which were threatened by the funding regime in England, although they would continue to make a contribution in Scotland.  It was not proposed that this should be returned as an item to the Senate.

4.16    Referring to the decision to end all 'B' degrees by the end of 2017, when the transitional funding would also come to an end, a member said that since students had started to plan their studies for the transitional period it had become clear that this date would cause some complications.  It would be a particular issue in those areas of the curriculum where there were a significant number of 30, rather than 60, credit modules.  Some students would be unable to complete their study by the end of 2017 and this would leave them in a very difficult position.  Whilst some might decide not to continue with their studies, others might attempt to transfer to the new qualifications only to find that the credits they had already achieved were not compatible.  In order that these students were able to successfully complete their qualifications with the OU, would it be possible to extend the withdrawal of the 'B' degrees beyond 2017, or alternatively find a simple way to transfer students to the 'Q' degrees with as little disruption to their study as possible?  The member observed that students in Scotland might not be aware that some qualifications would not be available after 2017 because they were not subject to the transitional arrangements.

4.17    An associate lecturer (AL) member said that although a student who had started a qualification in February 2012 appeared to have a 6-year period in which to complete, many students took a year out and would not be able to finish their studies by the end of 2017, even if they were able to do 60 points per year.  A current student might decide to continue with the existing qualifications for a few more years with the intention to complete, but then find it necessary to transfer to a new qualification.  If that student had made the wrong decisions, they might then lose a significant amount of credit.  In some cases, modules that students had only started on in February 2012 were no longer in the 'Q' qualification.  Even if these students were to transfer immediately, they would lose any credit that they had already achieved in terms of the qualification.

4.18    Professor Tait said that the University had reviewed the OU's 300 or more qualifications in order to ensure that they were fit for purpose in the new fees regime, in England in particular, and with a view to improving student progression.  The OU would maintain the qualifications currently in place until 2017, so from 2012 onwards the University would be running two sets of qualifications.  As agreed by the Senate, the University would normally provide 4 years notice of the withdrawal of a qualification, but in this case there had been 5 years notice.  The University had also undertaken to develop an exceptions policy and faculties had been asked to add suitable discontinued modules to help students with existing OU credit to migrate more easily from the old qualifications to the new.  In these circumstances, it would not be in the University's best interests to change the end date of 2017, as it had more than met its commitment to students regarding the withdrawal of qualifications and because it would be complex and costly to maintain two large qualification databases for longer than necessary.  The solution should be pragmatic and

evolutionary. The University should ensure that it was in a position to offer information, advice and guidance (IAG) to students as appropriate and the situation should be reviewed annually to see how many students were in this position. However, as the end of the transitional period drew nearer, it was likely that there would be relatively few. Students were able to transfer to a new qualification now, but if they did not wish to and subsequently found themselves in a difficult situation the University would consider individual cases on an exceptions basis.

4.19    Another member commented that there was a similar concern with regard to Diplomas, which was more urgent as they were due to be withdrawn long before the end of 2017. Whilst the complexity of having two systems running simultaneously was understood, perhaps the existing Open Degree could be allowed to continue for a longer period. In Mathematics, for example, attendance at a residential school was compulsory for students wishing to obtain a named degree. Students who did not want to attend the residential school, currently had the option to study 360 points in mathematics and then claim an Open Degree. Professor Tait replied that the Senate had agreed that the University should phase out non-standard intermediate qualifications by 2014, because of the concern that students might take out loans for qualifications that were not recognised outside the OU. However, although many Diploma qualifications could be completed before 2014, many others, such as the Diploma in Statistics, could not. Consequently, the situation with regard to non-standard intermediate qualifications would be reviewed and the outcomes reported to the Senate. However, Bachelor degrees should be managed through exceptions, rather than by having a general policy to extend qualifications in the old framework beyond 2017.

**Action:  AT**

**Open Educational Resources**

4.20    A member commented that there had been reports in recent weeks about a select group of American universities providing free online courses. One such institution had already signed up 500,000 students for these courses. In comparison with the OU's open content, such as iTunesU, the courses provided 10 hours of assessment. The future development of these courses was unknown, particularly whether they would remain free, but what was the University's response to this initiative? The Vice-Chancellor responded that the situation had been recognised and the Strategy Office had a watching brief. The initiatives had been documented and a comparison made with the OU's provision. In many cases, the University was already offering more through OpenLearn, although there was some concern about the matter of assessment. Open Education Resources (OER) were starting to have the impact that the OU had always predicted. These developments had been discussed with the Council and the Extended Leadership Team (ELT), and would be a key strategic item for discussion at the next Away Day as the University tried to formulate an appropriate response.

## 5    STRATEGIC PLANNING AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE          S-2012-03-02

5.1    Referring to item 7.2 of the minutes, an associate lecturer member observed that the Global Direct Business Plan appeared to have been based on a particular tuition strategy using online tuition. The Council report had referred to a discussion around the recording of tutorials, face-to-face contact being designed out, and regular correspondence between tutors and students designed in. The report had also indicated that the Vice-Chancellor had suggested that the overall tuition strategy might come to the Senate for discussion and clarification was sought on when this might happen. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that there would be an update for the Senate on the Global Direct strategy as it evolved, particularly as it related to the University's future teaching model. The OU's starting point

was to deliver a minimum standard of teaching to all students, that was fit for purpose wherever they were located. There were already 15,000 students outside the UK who were studying with and receiving services from the OU. In order for Global Direct to implement its strategy, it would have to ensure that the OU did not provide any programme in any locality where the University could not deliver this minimum standard of teaching to its students. The member asked if this minimum standard could be shared with the Senate. The Director, Students, Will Swann, replied that the University undertook to provide an equivalent experience to all students regardless of where they lived, but it did not promise that it would be through exactly the same means, even within the UK. It was important that there was equality of learning opportunity, but this might be delivered through a range of channels. The member said that what had been discussed at the Council meeting appeared to conflict with the minimum standard. The Vice-Chancellor said that it was difficult to understand the strategy through the minutes of another meeting, but that there would be a report that would provide clarity at a future meeting.

**Action:  SH**

5.2     A member asked if information could be provided about the relationship between the strategy and the business plan. There was no sense of the purpose of the University's international engagement or how the Global Direct plan connected with the aims and values of the OU. The Vice-Chancellor reiterated that it was difficult to understand through a set of minutes the full nature of the business plan/strategy that was presented, so more information would be provided to Senate members in due course. In summary, the paper had been in two parts:  the first part, Global Direct, which was being run by the Business Development Unit, was concerned with attracting new fee paying students to the University from outside the UK; the second part, being run by the International Development Office, was about creating opportunities for HE, largely through programmes such as TESSA, HEAT and English in Action, which broadened access to HE as and when resources became available, because there were no government resources to do so outside the UK.

5.3     The Senate **noted** the unconfirmed Minutes (SPRC-2012-02-M) and Confidential Minutes from the meeting (SPRC-2012-02-CM).

**6        LEARNING, TEACHING AND STUDENT SUPPORT COMMITTEE        S-2012-03-03**

6.1     Referring to paragraph 2 of the report, a member requested further information on what was meant by students in Scotland, Ireland and Wales having 'dual affiliation' to both their curriculum area and their nation. The Director, Students, Will Swann, said that the purpose of dual affiliation was to ensure that the University achieved two objectives:  the first to provide students across all four nations with the benefits of being part of their student academic community; and the second to ensure that students in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales had an experience that was appropriate to the specific features of their nations, for example with regard to financial support and professional recognition. The initial plan was that there would be members of staff in each of the three national centres who would be virtual members of other Curriculum Support Teams (CSTs), as well as the CSTs hosted by their own centre. All CSTs would be based in one place, but would have virtual members in 3 other places. Student calls would be directed to a single number, but where possible would be re-routed to the virtual CST member in the appropriate nation, who would answer the call as a member of that team and provide an appropriate response for a student in that nation. If necessary, the enquiry would be referred on to the core team. This plan might evolve over time. A detailed blueprint for dual affiliation was currently being developed and was likely to be available for discussion in the early autumn. The member observed that this model meant that the calls from students in Scotland would be triaged in Scotland and might then be sent on to the CST.

Some of the pilots had worked slightly differently: the calls were triaged wherever the CST was based and then sent out to the nations as appropriate. Mr Swann said that both options had been discussed and the first had been the one presented to the Senate. However, there were still opportunities for further discussion.

6.2 The President of the OU Students Association (OUSA), Marianne Cantieri, commented that whilst the four nations were discussed in relation to CSTs, there was no mention of European or global students. OUSA believed that these students needed a 'region' dedicated to their support, in other words a 'nation of nations'. Mr Swann replied that the University had agreed the principle that students would be supported by the appropriate CST wherever they were located. However, the University had also recognised that the students in the three nations, as well as Europe, had specific requirements around issues such as examination centres and qualification recognition. These issues were currently dealt with by the North region. This arrangement was currently under review, but the University's aim was to maintain the current level of service. There had been no decision as yet to where to locate such specialist advice, but it was possible that the University would decide that it should be focussed in one area.

6.3 The Senate **noted** the report from the meeting of the Learning, Teaching and Student Support Committee held on 14 May 2012.

## 7    QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE    S-2012-03-04

7.1 A student member said that whilst OUSA was pleased that the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) had agreed in principle that there should be student representation on the Committee, the requirement for a student member to have expertise in this area would limit the number of potential candidates. It was generally accepted that OUSA representatives on University committees represented student opinion, rather than a professional opinion. The interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Quality), Professor Alan Bassindale, said that the Committee had discussed this matter at length. Unusually, for OU committees of this type, QAEC members were experts with specialist experience of quality procedures, so this committee might not be the right place for student opinion. However, a Quality Enhancement Group was being set up to advise the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Quality), which would include student representatives and would feed into QAEC. The matter would be raised again at the next meeting of QAEC, but this would not take place until September 2012. The Vice-Chancellor suggested that OUSA followed up the matter with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Quality) outside the meeting.

**Action: AB/OUSA**

7.2 The Senate **noted** the report from the meeting of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee held on 28 May 2012.

## 8    RESEARCH COMMITTEE    S-2012-02-05

8.1 With regard to external grant income, a member commented that it was becoming apparent that the Research Councils UK (RCUK) were likely to be looking at a considerable degree of demand management. How would this affect the University's target setting for external grant income? The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship), Professor Tim Blackman, said that this issue had been recently discussed by the Research Committee, as it had implications for the way in which the University approached such things as peer review. Success rates were going down and Research Council budgets were very tight, and might become tighter after the next Comprehensive Spending Review. Diversification was part of the OU's response: not all funders were

reducing their budgets, for example Horizon 2020 was likely to be much better funded than Framework 7; and the OU was getting much better at attracting funding from the EU. The University would not just seek funding from RCUK, although it had a good track record with them, but it should still be concerned about what was happening to the RCUK budgets and would lobby with regard to the Science budget . The OU had some prospects to increase its external research funding: comparisons had been made with other institutions, there had been a review of the level of external income compared to the level of internal investment (staff time) put into the activity, and consideration was being given as to how the proportion of the central academic community engaged with this activity could be grown. All pointed to the possibility of some increase in the University's aspirations. The central academic units (CAUs) had been set some challenging targets in this area, which had been back-loaded so that they came into play in 2013/14 and 2014/15. The Research School would work actively with the faculties to understand how these targets could be achieved. The University had to be analytical and realistic, but should not be too intimidated by the environment.

8.2     The Senate **noted** the report from the meeting of the Research Committee held on 30 May 2012.

## 9     SENATE MEMBERSHIP PANEL                                  S-2012-03-06

The Senate:

**a)**     **noted** the matters for report from the meeting of the Senate Membership Panel held on Monday 23 April 2012.

**b)**     **approved**

i) the appointments to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee:

> Dr Jacky Holloway, FBL
> Professor Duncan Lawson, Coventry University

ii) the reappointments to the:

Academic Staff Promotions Committee:

> Mrs Julie Messenger, HSC
> Dr Linda Price, IET
> Ms Maggie King, MCT, London
> Mrs Annie Eardley, FELS, North West
> Dr Lynda Prescott, Arts, West Midlands

Academic Staff Promotions Appeals Committee:

> Dr Jacky Holloway, FBL

Chairs and Readership Promotions Appeals Committee:

> Professor Marie-Noelle Lamy, FELS

Disciplinary Tribunal and Grievance Committee Panels:

> Dr Uwe Baumann, FELS
> Professor Jan Draper, HSC

Special Appeals Committee of the Senate:

Dr Graham Harvey, Arts
Dr Jacky Holloway, FBL

## 10      CENTRAL DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE                    S-2012-03-07

10.1    A student member, who was also a member of the Central Disciplinary Committee (CDC) panel, said that OUSA had welcomed the meeting between the members of CDC and the Academic Conduct Officers (ACO's), which had clarified many issues.  The fact that cases had to be evidence based was particularly important, even though it was a large resource requirement.  If such a meeting were to be held in the next session, it might be helpful to invite staff members of the Special Appeals Committee of the Senate (SAC), as they were part of the same process. The Director, Students, Will Swann, said this was an good idea and it would be actioned.

**Action:  WS**

10.2    The student member observed that the Turnitin software used by the University was still in pilot mode for student use and that the pilot did not appear to have made much progress.  The software should become mainstream as to help prevent some inadvertent plagiarism.  Mr Swann said that he had not yet seen the report from the pilot, but he was aware that the ACO's involved had concerns about the ease with which students could interpret the output from the Turnitin software and thought there was a risk that students might make bad decisions based on its feedback.  It was unclear at present whether the University could manage these concerns by requesting changes to the software or by simplifying the outputs.  The report was expected soon and feedback would be provided to the next meeting of the Senate.

**Action:  WS**

10.3    The Dean of Mathematics, Computing and Technology, Professor Anne de Roeck, observed that other universities had enabled students to engage with Turnitin.   Now that students were registering for qualifications, it should be less of a task for the OU as it would not be necessary to educate every student on every module in its correct use.  There was pedagogical merit in a student finding out where a system might catch them and this should be taken seriously.  Academics were increasingly using software such as Copycatch and Turnitin to detect suspected cases of plagiarism.  However, such software was tuned for high recall and was not optimised for precision, so it produced a lot of false-positives.  Consequently, module teams were going through the Turnitin results before passing on cases to the ACOs.  With an ever increasing number of modules being put through Turnitin, there would be an enormous pressure on academic time if students were not given the opportunity to manage this themselves.   Mr Swann stressed that the pilot was not to consider whether the software tools should be provided to students, but rather to ensure that it could be done effectively.

10.4    Referring to the membership of CDC (page 8), a student observed that there should be three registered students for each case.  However, it would appear that many of the past CDC panels had only had two students which, whilst still quorate, should not be the norm.  Mr Swann said that he would investigate how often this had happened and what the normal practice was and feed back to the member directly after the Senate meeting.

**Action: WS**

10.5    The Senate **noted** the findings of the annual report covering student misconduct cases referred for potential Central Disciplinary Committee consideration arising between 1 May

2011 and 30 April 2012.

## 11     SPECIAL APPEALS COMMITTEE                             S-2012-03-08

The Senate **noted** the findings of the report of the Special Appeals Committee of the Senate (SAC) for the period June 2011 to May 2012.

## 12     HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE                      S-2012-03-09

The Senate **noted** the arrangements made for the conferment of honorary degrees at degree ceremonies held in 2012.

## 13     POSTGRADUATE STRATEGY                                  S-2012-03-10

**Introduction**

13.1     The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum and Qualifications), Professor Alan Tait, introduced the final report from the Postgraduate Review.  The Senate had considered a paper in April 2011 (S/2011/2/08) that had confirmed that taught postgraduate (PG) programmes were important to the OU, but that there was a need to review their identity in terms of both curriculum and pedagogy.  The Postgraduate Advisory Group (PAG), led by Dr Sharon Ding, Dean of the Faculty of Education and Language Studies, had been established in order to propose ways to deliver on the principles that had been agreed in April 2011.

13.2     Dr Ding thanked the considerable number of people who had contributed to the paper. The project had started from the understanding that the University could do better with regard to its postgraduate teaching (PGT) offer.  The market intelligence had shown that students and enquirers valued tutor support, student interaction, qualifications that were recognised and valued by employers, a university with a strong academic reputation and high quality teaching materials.  It had also indicated that there were some negative perceptions about the OU with regard to how it taught, who its students were and its academic reputation.  The Group had aimed to design a new PGT offer that played to the OU's core strength of high quality provision at scale and that was pedagogically strong, responded to student needs and expectations, provided value for money and delivered a clear, simple and coherent framework that would enable a targeted and effective promotion and marketing campaign.  It was important to understand that one-size would not fit all:  different academic disciplines and different market sectors had different requirements.  Consequently, a University level framework would have to have an appropriate level of granularity.  The recommendation proposed a framework that would deliver a high-quality, cutting edge and clear PGT offer that would also require a level of decision-making from Central Academic Units (CAUs) in the best interests of students and of the University.

**Online, externally sourced ('found') content**

13.3     Members welcomed the review and broadly supported the recommendations.  However, several members raised concerns about the use of online, externally sourced or 'found' content. One member said that the extensive use of 'found' resources would potentially restrict module and qualification teams and put the University in the position of a follower rather than a leader in terms of content.  This element might be too prescriptive and it would be preferable not to include it as a recommendation for the core student experience, but rather as something that should be investigated.  The cost implications for the maintenance of 'found' content was also of concern.  Dr Ding replied that it was the

view of the PAG, and others who had been consulted, that postgraduate students should be equipped with the ability to research and use existing content through an OU supported open learning programme or study guide. These students were not undergraduates with no experience of higher education (HE) study; at this level, the University should be moving away from crafting individual material. It was unlikely that the University would be seen to be offering lower quality provision by using more 'found' content, as other institutions in this sector also used it in their teaching. It was important to ensure that students and enquirers understood what they would get from the University.

13.4    Another member said that there was still more to consider with regard to the use of 'found' resources, as it was a different model of teaching. The University had experience of courses or modules built around 'found' content, but they had not always been as well received as those presented in a more traditional style. The University had to be careful to achieve a balance between following what was already available in the literature externally and making use of opportunities to create the curriculum. There had been occasions where the University had established new curriculum areas and had had to write a lot of new content to support it. Dr Ding suggested that it might be possible to forge a new curriculum area with contributions from academic thought in other disciplines. Module or academic teams in the OU that perceived a new way of addressing problems or looking at issues could pull in journal articles and other types of 'found' content from already existing discipline areas, and knit them together through the appropriate OU content to begin to develop a new discipline area.

13.5    A member said that modules had previously been developed, at both undergraduate (UG) and PG level, that encouraged students to do their own investigation. Students often found external journal articles, books and other relevant materials, but if the University wished to showcase OU research then it should be aware that such work often took a long time to be published and to become 'found' content. This element of the recommendation implicitly precluded research material generated within the OU that might be at an appropriate level but had not yet been published. Dr Ding said that there had been no percentages or proportions specified with regard to the amount of 'found' resources, but the recommendation stated that qualification content should be built extensively around it. It was important that the OU published its own research in good time, but where there was a piece of compelling research that the University wanted to include in a module, then it should be possible to do so, even if it had not yet been published.

13.6    The member commented that the elements of the core student experience appeared to be very prescriptive, rather than being a set of recommended practices that might typically be found in Masters level teaching. The status of the core experience was unclear and clarification was requested as to whether the various elements formed a blueprint or whether they were guidelines within which appropriate and market attractive offers could be developed. Another member requested that the prescriptive nature of the recommendation with regard to 'found' content be removed. Dr Ding confirmed that the recommendation was "all postgraduate teaching and learning and student support will be developed to a core student learning experience", so all of the postgraduate provision developed by the University would have to satisfy the various elements of this core student experience. The PAG would be reluctant to remove the recommendation around 'found' content, primarily because it was necessary to equip postgraduate students with the ability to select, analyse and synthesise such material if they were to compete on a level playing field with students from other institutions. Students would not be left on their own, but would be pointed to appropriate existing academic content. Moreover, if the recommendations were weakened by making exceptions, the University would not be able to promote and market a clear, coherent postgraduate offer. The work done by Monitor and Simon-Kucher & Partners (SKP) had indicated that students and enquirers had a lack of knowledge of and held misconceptions about the OU's postgraduate offer. If

postgraduate student numbers were to be increase, a simple, consistent offer had to be presented to the market.

13.7    A student observed that the OU was taking out the in-house developed curriculum and face-to-face tuition, and it would not be dropping its fees, even though a problem with pricing had been identified.  Dr Ding responded that the University would not be taking out all OU developed curriculum.  What had traditionally been called a study guide, but which was now being called an OU guided learning experience, would be an important part of the student offer.  This would not simply be a collection of journal articles or book chapters or items found through an internet search:  such content would be integrated and wrapped together for students, who would be enabled and supported in understanding how to engage with, articulate and analyse the issues arising from this 'found' content.  The issue of postgraduate fees would be dealt with separately by the University at a meeting later in June 2012.

13.8    The Dean of Mathematics, Computing and Technology, Professor Anne de Roeck, said that the paper made an important contribution regarding the pedagogical merit of including externally sourced content.  The use of such content was a cost effective way of putting agility into the curriculum, which was particularly important at postgraduate level.

**'Bolt-on' support**

13.9    Another member commented on the dangers of a model based entirely on online, externally sourced resources.  Investigation had revealed that other universities providing postgraduate programmes highlighted day schools as part of their offer.  All had reported high student attendance at and enthusiasm for such day schools, which were important for both the retention and the recruitment of students.  Previous experience within the OU had also indicated significant enthusiasm for day school provision, which the University was well placed to deliver.  The model being proposed did not play entirely to the OU's strengths and the University's competitive advantage over other institutions might be lost if more priority was not given to such face-to-face provision.  The paper itself provided some evidence to support this: for example, paragraph 21 stated that SKP had discovered that students wanted additional value features such as study days and printed materials; paragraph 25 c) suggested a criticism of excessive online reliance, with some students saying that they would welcome face-to-face contact; and paragraph 26 a) said there was no clear preference for a face-to-face or online method of delivery, but that a large proportion of students had indicated that they would be willing to pay more for face-to-face interaction in the form of study days.   The facility for day schools should not be written out, as appeared to be suggested by the description of the core student experience.  Dr Ding replied that the University would be able to provide 'bolt-ons' (paragraph 35).  There would always be a tension between those students who never took advantage of face-to-face provision and those who did and who valued it highly.  This model offered the best of both worlds, and played to the need to equip postgraduate students with the online skills needed to operate effectively in the 21$^{st}$ century.  However, the University recognised that some students were prepared to pay extra for face-to-face support, so the provision of 'bolt-ons' had been proposed.  SKD had investigated how far students would be prepared to travel and how much they would be prepared to pay, and this information would be passed on to Central Academic Units (CAUs) in order to support them in making decisions about whether and how to offer additional services such as day schools.

13.10   An associate lecturer member commented that the concepts of students paying more for face-to-face tuition or 'bolt-on' support might be understood to mean that if a student could pay more they would get more support.  There was some concern that the OU might be embedding this principle within the curriculum and delivery, and that it could lead to associate lecturers having to sell these extra support services to their students.  However, the idea of 'bolt-on' services was missing from what the Senate was being asked to

approve. If the recommendations of the Postgraduate Review were approved, would the Senate also be agreeing to embedding the principle of 'bolt-on' support being paid for in the future? Dr Ding said that there had been a lot of discussion around the principle of asking students to pay extra for something that had previously been provided. It was important to understand that the online tuition on offer would be appropriate, of high quality and would enable students to succeed. It was not intended that 'bolt-ons' should provide students with additional support in terms of material that would not otherwise be available online, but rather with a different mode of interaction which allowed face-to-face contact with tutors and fellow students. Students that did not pay extra would not have an inferior experience with respect to the quality of tuition, simply a different tuition mode. ALs would not be required to sell the additional 'bolt-ons' to students, as this would not be appropriate. The Senate would be approving the recommendation and it would be for faculties to decide, based on the needs of the discipline and the needs and requirements of the market sector, whether it was appropriate for them to offer 'bolt-on' face-to-face support, which would probably be in the form of day schools. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the Senate would be approving the recommendation. It did not have purview over pricing, which would be considered by the Strategic Planning and Resources Committee (SPRC) and the Council.

**Assessment**

13.11    With reference to the significant independent study project or dissertation being the only examinable component of all Masters qualifications, several members expressed their concerns about the implications of qualification-based assessment. A member observed that whilst cost reduction was necessary, this element would mean that a student failing the dissertation would have to sit the Diploma exam component on subjects that had been taught some time before in order to exit with a Diploma. If they failed that exam, a similar thing would happen in order for them to exit with a Certificate. This failed to recognise that progression was an incentive for students, or that many students had an interrupted study pattern and/or did not always take the modules in sequence. Dr Ding said that the University should not design a PG offer based on concerns for what might happen if students were to fail. The point of educating students was to enable them to succeed. Students would be able to retake their end of qualification assessment, so students who did fail will not necessarily have to go back to a Diploma or a Certificate.

13.12    Another member sought clarification regarding the level of assessment and the requirement that the only examinable component was the end of qualification dissertation. In Science, there were modules containing content that should also be assessed, so this particular condition would be difficult. Dr Ding said that the recommendation did not suggest that there should be no assessment in the contributing modules, but that there should be just one end of course assessment (ECA). It was anticipated that there would still be continuous assessment or tutor marked assessments (TMAs) throughout the qualification, the form and nature of which would be decided by the qualification or module team.

13.13    An associate lecturer member commented that as students progressed, they sometimes decided that what the OU offered was not suitable, as their interests had developed beyond what the OU model could provide. What would happen, both in terms of finance and the end of module assessment, if having undertaken the taught element of a Masters such students wanted to change institution to allow them to do something different in their dissertation? Dr Ding replied that the student should have the opportunity to undertake a separate piece of assessment, that they would not take if they were going for the Masters, but which would be the same as that undertaken by students who had registered for a Certificate or a Diploma from the outset. The costs involved in a student changing their programme might be built into the initial fee. Alternatively, a student might be asked to pay an additional fee if they decided to opt for a Certificate or a Diploma rather than the

Masters for which they had registered.  However, the implications of these options had not yet been discussed.

13.14   A member asked whether, in a series of nested qualifications such as the Certificate, Diploma and Masters, there would be an examinable component at the end of each part. A recent report in the Times Higher Education Supplement had said that there had been an increase in the number of students achieving a postgraduate Certificate.  It was a growing market, so the issue of qualification design and structure required detailed consideration.  Dr Ding said that students should take the ECA that was appropriate to the qualification that they had registered for.  If a student had registered for a Masters, they should not have to take all three ECAs.  However, if the student changed their mind, then they would have the opportunity to move across to a different level assessment.

13.15   A student member requested clarification as to whether it would be possible to register for a subsidiary qualification, such as a Certificate or a Diploma, rather than just have them available as step off points.  Dr Ding confirmed that this would be the case.

13.16   A member broadly agreed with the recommendations, and understood that the project or dissertation element would distinguish a Masters from a nested postgraduate Certificate or Diploma.  However, there was concern that the final module should be the only examinable component.  This had already been raised at Curriculum and Validation Committee (CVC) (Appendix 2 paragraphs 4  and 5 b).  Based on experience in the wider sector, it was recommended that faculties were given more leeway in how to approach nested qualifications within a Masters, and that there was an exit strategy at each 60 points.  Whilst the dissertation would distinguish the Masters, the option of an examinable component for a Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma should not be excluded.  Dr Ding said that the recommendation was not intended to be interpreted in this way, so if the wording was misleading then it would be changed.

13.17   A student member observed that the quote in Appendix 2 paragraph 6 had not been made by the Vice-President, Education of OUSA, but by himself.  It would be impossible to have an overarching institutional guide that suited all, so the elements of the core student experience should only be guidelines.  It would be better to let each faculty plan its own series of intermediate exams.  The Vice-Chancellor said that the paper would stand, but that there would be some latitude within the document for individual qualification teams to be able to make pragmatic decisions.

13.18   Professor de Roeck commented that the model was not unique.  Whilst the scope of this paper was the UK, the combination of the University of Liverpool and the Laureate offered postgraduate provision in business, computing and IT, and education where the only piece of examinable content was dissertation.

13.19   A member commented that this approach might lead to repercussions where the University engaged with professional bodies that required the examination of some learning outcomes, and would make inter-faculty and cross-disciplinary and partnership engagement more challenging.

13.20   A member commented that the University had previously enabled the counting up or down of credit from UG and PG qualifications.  However, this had not been mentioned in the paper.  Dr Ding said that there had been some conversations within the PAG on this matter.  More work was necessary, but the recommendation should not pose many problems in this area.

**Undergraduate vs Postgraduate**

13.21   A member said that there were some strategic concerns relating to the apparent focus of the review.  The paper did not go far enough in distinguishing between undergraduate

(UG) and PG provision. Dr Ding emphasised that the paper was about the OU's postgraduate offer, and the PAG had attempted to highlight the distinction between the OU's UG and PG provision. However, suggestions or recommendations as to how this distinctiveness might be strengthened would be welcomed.

13.22 Professor de Roeck said that the Senate should be mindful of the importance of offering postgraduate provision in a different way to undergraduate provision. Continuing to use processes that were designed for the UG level would not be satisfactory. If the PG provision was not sustainable in its own right, then the University would be asking undergraduate students to pay to support the postgraduate budget, which would be unacceptable. The UK Market Strategy had indicated that there was an opportunity for the University in postgraduate provision, but unless the University moved away from the undergraduate way of doing things there would be no point in trying to take this forward as the cost base would be unsustainable.

**Scale**

13.23 A member commented that the paper did not articulate what was meant by scale in the PG sector. Whilst the sector included a small number of large-scale disciplines such as Masters in Business Administration (MBA) and Postgraduate Certificates in Education (PGCE), there was also a wide spectrum of niche markets that the OU might provide for in the UK and globally. Dr Ding said that it was difficult to legislate on what was meant by scale in the PG sector at an institutional level, as this would vary according to the academic area. There were some large PG areas in the market, and some small ones. Consequently, the decisions about the curriculum offered by the University at PG level were being left to academic areas, supported by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum and Qualifications). It was only at this level that the University had the appropriate knowledge as to what the sector was and how the individual faculty or programme could engage with that sector in order to deliver an appropriate teaching programme at PG level.

13.24 Professor de Roeck agreed that some measures were required to indicate how big a particular postgraduate programme should be in terms of the number of participating students. This would be a more complicated measure than the number of students registered on a particular qualification, because the cost would not necessarily sit with the qualification.

**Individualisation**

13.25 An associate lecturer member said that there was an assumption running through the postgraduate strategy that the University could simultaneously offer high quality provision at scale and the individualisation that the market intelligence had suggested that students at this level wanted. However, ultimately, these two aims might be incompatible. It was often necessary to mediate between a very able student who was developing independence and individual interests and the bulk model, which did not permit such individualisation. If the University was to overcome this issue, it would be necessary to ensure at the module design and approval stage, that such individuality could be accommodated. Dr Ding agreed that there was a tension. The University did offer high quality provision at scale, but it was essential to ensure that personal support was included in some way. This would be primarily through the use of associate lecturers. For some sectors of the PG market, it might be necessary to decide that this was not possible, either because the specific discipline required too much personalised support or because the market sector was so small that the University could not attract enough students to deliver the degree of personalised support possible in a bigger market. Such decisions would have to be made at faculty rather than at institutional level, because they had to be driven by the needs of the academic discipline and the expectations and size of the

particular market sector.  It would be necessary to be careful at the design stage to ensure that the University would be able to meet the needs of the market.

**Postgraduate research**

13.26    A member commented that as this was the final report from the Postgraduate Review Group more might have been expected on postgraduate research (PGR) and postgraduate research studies and the programmes offered around them.  A number of students moved from Masters to postgraduate research, whether at the OU or elsewhere, and PGR students were usually expected to have a Masters in their background, which should prepare them for their research at postgraduate level.  Dr Ding said that this paper was concerned with PGT:  PGR had been out of scope.  Some PGT students did go on to be PGR students, but not that many.  This had been discussed briefly by the PAG and the conclusion had been reached that the University had to design the framework at the level for the majority of its students, which were PGT.  However, the Group believed that there was nothing in the paper that would adversely impact on the experiences of those PGT students who had aspirations to become PGR students.  This decision was with the CAUs at the level of the individual qualifications and curriculum content.  So when CAUs were redesigning their postgraduate curriculum they should engage with the appropriate people in their own faculties with respect to PGR provision.

**Market Analysis**

13.27    Referring to the Market Analysis (pp 3-4) and the consideration of those areas of the curriculum that might be developed, a member asked how the OU would keep this analysis reliable and current in terms of the external environment in order that the University did not miss out on opportunities.  For example, a professional capabilities framework was being proposed in Social Work which would encourage someone newly qualified in Social Work to progress through stages to principle social worker.  This opened up a number of opportunities for postgraduate offers that the OU might be able to provide.  The University Secretary, Fraser Woodburn, said that this had been a special, intensive piece of postgraduate market research to support this study.  In the future, it would be the responsibility of the Marketing Unit to conduct market research to support curriculum development in faculties.  Some of this would be generic, but much of it would be in collaboration with faculties.  There should be an opportunity for HSC to work with Marketing to identify opportunities going forward.

13.28    A member said that, if one searched for UK and distance learning in any subject on the website FindAMasters.com, it produced 1274 possible courses.  The market was very crowded and it would be difficult for the OU to have a distinctive offer in this sector.  Dr Ding said that the Group believed that the framework in the paper would deliver a distinctive offer.  The line that the University had to tread was between giving the appropriate levels of autonomy to faculties and qualification teams to make decisions versus having a institutional level framework, which was consistent across the university, and could therefore be promoted and marketed as a distinctive offer.

13.29    Professor de Roeck thanked Dr Ding and the PAG for taking forward the issues around the University's postgraduate provision.  The paper made some important progress in terms of making the University's postgraduate provision more sustainable.  The tone of the paper put the responsibility and accountability for postgraduate provision firmly back into the academic communities to ensure that the content, quality and professional relationships within the curriculum were endorsed.  There were aspects of the recommendation that needed further consideration, such as examination, counting down modules and professional accreditations, but it was now important to move on to the Next Steps (Appendix 1).

13.30    The Senate:

a) noted that the report had been considered by Curriculum and Validation Committee (CVC) by email in May 2012.

b) **approved** the following recommendation:

All postgraduate teaching and learning and student support will be developed to a core student learning experience.

The elements which together comprise the core student experience are:

i)      Core teaching support will be provided through a combination of online synchronous group events and continuously available forums, and specialist one-to-one contact for both generic and academic matters.

ii)      Qualification content will consist of an OU guided learning experience built extensively around online, externally sourced ('found') resources. This will enable study at the forefront of the discipline and/or practice.

iii)      All qualifications will be designed with appropriate external advice and engagement from employers, the professions and other stakeholders, and we will ensure that the development of employability and professional skills is central

iv)      Students will be supported in building skills of digital scholarship relevant to 21st century continuing professional development and scholarship beyond OU study. Online study tools and OU Library services will be embedded across all qualifications.

v)      The introductory module within all qualifications will include a significant amount of embedded postgraduate level study skills, developed progressively through the qualification.

vi)      The final module within all Masters qualifications will include a significant independent study project or dissertation. This will comprise the only examinable component for that qualification.

vii)      Students will be part of an online learning community. This will be facilitated through existing provision such as the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and qualification websites, but will be enhanced by contact (through podcasts, forums etc.) with leading academic experts from both inside and outside the OU, and by explicitly encouraging students to communicate regularly with each other.

In addition and where appropriate, qualifications will be designed so that we are able to seek any relevant professional and external quality accreditation.

## 14      REVIEW OF THE VALIDATION MODEL: FINAL REPORT      S-2012-03-11

CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE - recorded separately as S-2012-03-CM.

## 15      RESEARCH CODE OF PRACTICE      S-2012-03-12

15.1    Referring to paragraph 3.6 , an associate lecturer member observed that the location of information on copyright in relation to research and scholarship activity had only been identified for Academic and Research staff, and asked where such information could be found for other members of the University, such as students and academic-related staff. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship), Professor Tim Blackman, said that

such information did exist and the paragraph would be amended to give comprehensive coverage across all staff groups.  The Vice-Chancellor said that the amendment would be reported at the next meeting of the Senate.

**Action:  TB**

15.2    With reference to the second bullet point of paragraph 5.3, which stated that all researchers in the OU were required to deposit the bibliographic details of their research outputs on Open Research Online (ORO), the Dean of the Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology, Professor Anne de Roeck, said that the difficulties of making this mandatory had been discussed by the Research Committee some two years ago.  The boundary between a research output and another type of output that was published was hard to establish in some cases.  If this were mandatory then there would presumably be consequences for not doing so, which could be hard to implement.  Would it be possible to replace "required" with "expected"?  Professor Blackman said that the paper had been through extensive consultation already and it would be unfortunate to dilute the meaning by changing the word.  Researchers should be required to deposit their work on Open Research Online (ORO).  However, the University could be practical in how this was interpreted and it was not envisaged that it would become a disciplinary matter.  Professor de Roeck observed that this was a Code of Conduct, so disciplinary connotations were to be expected.  If "required" were to remain, it would be important to define a research output as compared to an output from another form of scholarship.  Professor Blackman replied that the criteria for deposit in ORO defined the output.  Professor de Roeck said that there would be issues around the implementation of this requirement.  The Vice-Chancellor suggested that the Senate noted these comments as it considered its decision.

15.3    Professor de Roeck said that there were several other kinds of project undertaken in the University that were subject to the same methodological rigour as research projects, but which were not research projects, and asked whether the paper included such projects in its scope.  Professor Blackman replied that the paper was a research code of practice, and it related to the definition of research given in paragraph 1.2.  Professor de Roeck said that this did not necessarily map onto the scholarship strategy of the University.  There were several strands of scholarship that would qualify for this definition and the Code of Conduct could be beneficial to several other kinds of project.  Professor Blackman said that there were difficulties in mapping the OU's use of terminology with that used in the external environment.  The University would soon be expected to sign a national concordat on research integrity and this paper would provide the University's response to that.  It was important to keep the language aligned in order to avoid complicating matters in terms of external accountability.  Professor de Roeck observed that the Code of Conduct touched on disciplinary procedures:  the way in which terms were defined was important, because it might lead people with similar conducts in different contexts to be treated differently in terms of disciplinary procedures.  If the University were not to be a hostage to fortune, it might be helpful to contextualise the paper for the OU.

15.4    Professor de Roeck observed that there was a typographical error in the third bullet point of paragraph 9.1, which should read "without acknowledgement *or* permission", rather than "*of* permission".

**Action:  TB**

15.5    Referring to the second paragraph of page 15 (Appendix 2) , Professor de Roeck asked whether it was appropriate that the Panel "*may* also make recommendations regarding any further action" or whether it was a reasonable expectation that the Panel "*will* also make recommendations", including that that no further action would be taken if that was the panel's finding.  Professor Blackman said that the Panel was empowered to make

such recommendations. Professor de Roeck observed that as worded it would be possible for an allegation of misconduct to be upheld, but for the panel to make no recommendation regarding further action. In this case, what was the point of the panel? Professor Blackman said that although it was difficult to envisage, it was possible that such a situation might arise. Professor de Roeck said that if this was the case then it should be noted that the panel had upheld the decision but had not recommended any further action. Professor Blackman said that this would be taken on board.

**Action: TB**

15.6      With reference to section 7 of Appendix 2 (page 12-13), a member welcomed the clarification of what would take place at the three stages of the procedure for dealing with allegations of academic malpractice or misconduct. However, did the greater explicitness regarding the Head of Unit's role at Stage 1 mean that the Head of Unit could no longer delegate the investigation to a member of their staff, as this would be a change to current practice. Professor Blackman said it was as it was written, which the Vice-Chancellor clarified meant there would be no delegation. The Director, Institute of Educational Technology, Professor Josie Taylor, asked what would happen in the case of appeal. A Head of Unit would normally delegate the preliminary investigation, in order that they might pick up any appeal. Professor Blackman said that he would take this matter back for further consideration and the outcome would be reported to the next meeting of the Senate. Professor de Roeck said that there were already certain procedures in place around whistle-blowing, investigations and disciplinary processes, and it would be good to know that those detailed in the Code of Conduct were consistent with current procedures. The Vice-Chancellor said that, although this work had already been done, he, Professor Blackman and the University Secretary, Fraser Woodburn, would ensure that these procedures were aligned with existing processes within the University, so that no unintentional conflicts were created between them.

**Action: MB/TB/FW**

15.7      The Senate:

     a)     **noted** that a key change to the Procedure is that the Investigation Panel and Appeal Panel should consist of 3 members, rather than 2, in order to avoid a situation where the Panel might be deadlocked.

     b)     **approved** The Code of Practice for Research at The Open University and The Procedure for handling allegations of academic misconduct or malpractice.

15.8      The Senate also **noted** that Equality Analyses had been carried out for the documents, and that these had been noted by Research Committee.

**16      GENERAL QUALIFICATION REGULATIONS**
**       (DECLARED QUALIFICATIONS)**            **S-2012-03-13**

The Senate **approved** the revised General Qualification Regulations (Declared Qualifications).

**17      120 CREDIT LIMIT STUDY AND THE MODULE REGULATIONS AND GENERAL**
**       QUALIFICATION REGULATIONS**            **S-2012-03-14**

The Senate **approved**:

a)    an amendment to the Module Regulations 2012 to give full effect to that policy (Appendix 1);

b)    an amendment to the General Qualification Regulations (Registered Undergraduate Qualifications) to remove a duplicate clause, with a minor consequential amendment to Student Regulations (Appendix 2);

to take effect for all student registrations and enrolments for modules which start on or after 1 August 2012.


**18    MASTER OF RESEARCH REGULATIONS**                          **S-2012-03-15**

The Senate **approved** the changes to the regulations for the MRes as follows:

To reduce the time allowed for major revisions to the MRes dissertation from 12 months to 6 months.


**19    RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK CODE OF PRACTICE**          **S-2012-03-16**

The Senate **noted** the Code of Practice for the OU REF 2014.


**20    STUDY EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME UPDATE**                       **S-2012-03-17**

20.1    Referring to paragraph 7, an associate lecturer member said that there was significant variance between faculties regarding the implementation of Curriculum Support Teams (CSTs).  Some were still awaiting the appearance of blueprints, so it would be helpful to make these available as soon as possible in order to ensure a level of consistency and continuity.  The Director, Students, Mr Will Swann, said that two critical blueprints would be published by the end of June 2012, the first covering the structure and roles of CSTs and the second providing the model of integrated learning and learner support.  The latter would replace the current learner support framework, integrating the learner support activities currently carried out in Student Services with those activities currently discharged by Qualification and Module Teams in the faculties.  Together with the draft implementation plan, these two blueprints would be provided to the deans at the beginning of July 2012 and would be more widely available at the same time.  Faculties would have the opportunity to discuss these at programme level over the summer period.  The faculties would be brought together at the beginning of September 2012 to enable the University to take a decision on the implementation schedule in October 2012.

20.2    A member commented that, whilst it was good to see the two overlapping projects working together, this appeared to formalise a weakness in the Student Support Review.  By focussing on student issues, very little attention had been given to how ALs, staff tutors, central academics and other members of faculty staff were likely to be involved.  Mr Swann said that it was unfortunate that the blueprints had taken longer to produce than had been hoped.  Some intensive workshops would be taking place over the next few weeks to ensure that the end of June deadline would be met.  Although the faculties were keen to implement now, there were still a number of other matters to be specified, developed and agreed by all the faculties. In September, agreement should be reached on the universal aspects of CSTs in order to guarantee an effective interaction between CSTs and the central resources that they would draw on, and to ensure continuity for students as and when they moved between CSTs.

20.3    The Senate **noted** the update on the Study Experience Programme.


21    **THE COUNCIL**                                                  S-2012-03-18

The Senate **noted** the report on matters discussed at the meeting of the Council held on 8 May 2012.


22    **FUTURE ITEMS OF BUSINESS**                                     S-2012-03-19

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


23    **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

Meetings would be held on the following dates:

Wednesday 17 October 2012
Wednesday 6 February 2013


24    **GOODBYES AND THANK YOUS**

24.1    A list of members retiring from the Senate on 31 August 2012 was shown.  The Vice-Chancellor thanked everyone for their service and input.

24.2    The Vice-Chancellor also thanked the Senior Assistant Secretary, Jane Duffield, who would be leaving the University at the end of September 2012.



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Attachments:


Key:
AB    Professor Alan Bassindale
MB    Martin Bean
TB    Professor Tim Blackman
SH    Steve Hill
WS    Will Swann
AT    Professor Alan Tait
FW    Fraser Woodburn