

University of Suffolk

## SENATE

**Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 11 October 2023 at 14.00 hours in room A206, Atrium Building**

**Chair:** Professor Mohammad Dastbaz (Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

**Present:** Dr Marco Beato (University wide representative, School of Allied Health Sciences), Professor Emma Bond (Pro Vice-Chancellor Research), Dr Ellen Buck (Director of Learning and Teaching), Jo Campbell (Head of People, People and Organisational Development, Vice-Chancellor's nominee), Dr Sam Chenery-Morris (Dean, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Public Health), Sam Clarke (Students' Union Officer, School of Social Sciences and Humanities), Dr Adam Clayden (School of Technology, Business and Arts representative), Jo Divers (School of Nursing, Midwifery and Public Health representative), Fiona Fisk (Academic Registrar and Director of Student Life and Registry Services), Professor Stuart Harmer (Dean, School of Technology, Business and Arts), Deana Hazeldene (School of Allied Health Sciences representative), Professor Gurpreet Jagpal (Pro-Vice-Chancellor Business and Entrepreneurship), Dr Ross Kemble (Leadership and Management Academy representative), Dr Rachael Martin (University wide representative, School of Social Sciences and Humanities), Professor Alistair Mathie (Dean, School of Allied Health Sciences), Professor Brian McCook (Dean, School of Social Sciences and Humanities), Abigail Morgan (OSACC Manager, Professional Services representative), Felix Ngobigha (Lecturer, School of Technology, Business and Arts, Vice-Chancellor's nominee), Sean Preston (University wide representative, School of Technology, Business and Arts), Dr Pallawi Sinha (School of Social Sciences and Humanities representative), Reilly Willis (University wide representative, School of Social Sciences and Humanities), Lewis Woolsten (Students' Union President of Education)

**Apologies:** Professor Helen Langton (Vice-Chancellor), Tim Greenacre (Chief Operating Officer), Shannon Pilsworth (Students' Union Officer, School of Technology, Business and Arts)

**Secretary:** Alison McQuin (Head of Quality)

**In attendance:** Associate Professor Stuart Agnew (Director, Centre for Academic and International Partnerships), John Cavani (Director of Marketing, Communications and International), Stuart Lipscombe (Representative, University and College Union), James Nial (Head of Planning and Management Information), Laura Pennie (Deputy Academic Registrar)

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

### **Minutes of previous meeting**

23/001 The minutes of the meetings held on 15 March and 13 July 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

### **Matters arising**

Academic Integrity/ChatGPT (from minute 22/085)

23/002 The Associate Dean, Learning, Teaching and Student Experience, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, had facilitated a webinar for staff on assessment and artificial intelligence (AI).

23/003 A Centre for Excellence for Learning and Teaching (CELT) task and finish group was exploring the institutional assessment strategy and would be reported to the summer 2024 Senate meeting.

Policies and procedures – Disability Statement (from minute 22/092)

23/004 It was confirmed that a staff disability statement was being explored and would be developed alongside the review of the Disability Confident Employer Accreditation.

OSACC report (from minute 22/117)

23/005 The OSACC report had been shared widely with academic colleagues within Schools.

23/006 All other actions had been completed or were due for completion at a future date.

### **Students' Union report**

23/007 An update was provided on Students' Union activity since the last meeting, including recruitment and training, an update on progress with the Presidents' manifesto, activities and commercial operations.

23/008 Members queried engagement with international students and it was confirmed that the 'home away from home' campaign would help support international students.

### **Chair's report**

23/009 An update on University and sector activity was received. The recent University success in the Teaching Excellence Framework and the league tables was celebrated by members, noting that these have taken place in an increasingly challenging external landscape for higher education providers.

### **Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)**

23/010 A presentation was provided to members covering the University's silver TEF outcome. This highlighted where the panel had identified aspects considered high quality, outstanding and where there was insufficient evidence.

23/011 It was noted that the University needed to better demonstrate impact of initiatives and use evidence better to improve future TEF ratings. This work was being supported by quality assurance and enhancement processes, including the development of course action plans to identify and act on issues more quickly.

23/012 Members thanked all those who were involved in the TEF submission.

## Terms of reference

23/013 Members reviewed the terms of reference as part of the annual review and were supportive of the proposed changes to reflect the new School structure. It was recommended the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Health and Wellbeing, was removed from membership, as this role was currently vacant, and noted the job title for the Director of Marketing, Communications and International should be corrected.

**Agreed action:** The Secretary to update the membership in response to member recommendations prior to publication.

## Policies and procedures

### Apprenticeship End Point Assessment Procedure

23/014 The Apprenticeship End Point Assessment Procedure was reviewed as part of the normal cycle of policy reviews.

23/015 The apprentices' roles and responsibilities were discussed, noting that these would not be included within this Procedure and discussions were taking place with the Apprenticeships Hub to produce student facing guidance.

23/016 Members queried whether international external assessors could be recruited, it was confirmed that this would only happen in exceptional circumstances and it would align with the external examiners policy. It was agreed that further discussion between the Deputy Academic Registrar and Head of People would take place to explore potential external assessor numbers prior to approval.

**Agreed action:** The Deputy Academic Registrar to update the procedure with the international recruitment statement from the External Examiner policy by December 2023 and prior to publication.

**Agreed action:** The Deputy Academic Registrar to discuss potential assessor numbers with the Head of People by December 2023.

23/017 The course team would be responsible for finding the external assessor as they would have the necessary links to those with the required industry skills and knowledge, noting there was a Conflict of Interest Policy in place regarding the recruitment of assessors.

23/018 Dissemination of the procedure would take place with course teams as well as signposting from the Hub.

23/019 It was agreed that an annual summary evaluating the impact of the procedure should be produced by the Apprenticeships Hub.

### Conflict of Interest Policy for Apprenticeship End Point Assessment

23/020 The Conflict of Interest Policy for Apprenticeship End Point Assessment was reviewed as part of the normal cycle of reviews. While members noted that both paragraphs 8 and 10 outlined the outcome of no disclosure, members were supportive in approving the policy, noting that it was based on the University Vocational Awards Council (UVAC) conflicts of interest template.

**Outcome:** Approved.

Framework and Regulations for Undergraduate Awards delivered in partnership with Unicaf  
23/021 The Framework and Regulations for Undergraduate Awards delivered in partnership with Unicaf had been updated to reflect the development of their course portfolio. It was confirmed that the language used reflected the other assessment regulations and that students could re-apply to a course if they had been withdrawn for non-engagement reasons.

**Outcome:** Approved.

#### Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework

23/022 The revised Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework was presented. Members queried how liberating the curriculum, paragraph 11, would be monitored. It was confirmed that this would take place through quality assurance processes, through the Liberating the Curriculum task and finish group and through reporting to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee.

23/023 Members discussed the use of the 'work-ready' phrase within the Framework, but it was agreed that it should be retained as it was a sector measure and expectation that graduates go on to employment. It was agreed that external parties should not be stipulated within the Framework to ensure flexibility.

23/024 Further minor amendments were suggested by members including updating wording in paragraph 38 to reflect the expectations for academic staff to hold a teaching qualification and include cross references to academic pathways in paragraph 39.

**Agreed action:** The Deputy Academic Registrar to update paragraphs 38 and 39, by December 2023 and prior to publication, to ensure expectations for academic staff holding a teaching qualification were made clear and cross references to academic pathways were included.

#### Management of Academic Provision Framework

23/025 The revised Management of Academic Provision Framework was presented to members. Members were supportive of the proposals, subject to adding reference to the Pro-Vice Chancellor and the Research Strategy in paragraph 11. Members discussed the Heads of Subject line management responsibilities and agreed that these were sufficiently covered within the document.

**Agreed action:** The Deputy Academic Registrar to update paragraph 11 by December 2023 and prior to publication.

23/026 It was confirmed that the dissemination of the Framework was covered within the CELT CPD provision and at the annual Course Leader briefing.

#### Student Protection Plan

23/027 The Student Protection Plan had been updated to better reflect risk elements and changes within the University. Members were supportive of the changes but noted the finance date within section three should be updated and that reference to the ESFA mock audits should replace Ofsted within section one.

**Agreed action:** The Deputy Academic Registrar to update the Student Protection Plan in line with member comments by December 2023 and prior to submission to the OfS.

### Honorary Award Nomination Form

23/028 The revised Honorary Award Nomination Form was considered. Members were supportive of the proposed changes but noted the need to amend the declaration of interests, so that it was broader than the local level, and to update the footnote and references to 2023.

**Agreed action:** The Chair to update the Honorary Award Nomination Form in line with member comments prior to publication.

### Student surveys

23/029 The results of the National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) were shared with members, noting that the full reports and comments have been shared with Schools for course action plans to be produced.

### Block and blend learning

23/030 The evaluation of block and blend learning was provided, noting that there had been some improvements within the University's Access and Participation Plan (APP) target groups.

23/031 While the high continuation rates for block courses compared to conventional courses was highlighted, it was queried whether this was due to the subject rather than delivery method. It was noted that a small data set had been evaluated this year and further analysis would be undertaken.

### Graduate outcomes

23/032 The results of the graduate outcomes survey was shared, noting the data related to the 2020/21 graduates.

23/033 Members noted that there was a lag in the data and the impact of recent initiatives, including the investment in the Careers team and the Careers Zone, should be reflected within future graduate outcome surveys. It was also highlighted that as the large partner cohorts came through the system, they would have a greater impact on the overall University data.

### CELT annual report

23/034 Members welcomed the high-quality CELT report, providing details and impact of CELT activities.

23/035 Members discussed the engagement, application and acceptance data provided on Suffolk sixth forms and colleges, querying how the conversion of applications could be improved. It was explained that this would be supported by activities by the APP team and the student recruitment team, as well as links with academic staff.

23/036 It was confirmed that further evaluation was planned around the impact of block learning for students with a disability, the University was working with DeMontfort University and the wider block community on this.

23/037 The task and finish groups identified in the report were welcomed and the Associate Deans would be establishing the membership.

**Access and Participation Plan update**

23/038 The APP update highlighted to members that the draft plan would need to be submitted in spring 2024. The targets and the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR) had been drafted and shared with partners.

**Senate elections**

23/039 The outcome of the Senate elections for a new School of Nursing, Midwifery and Public Health representative and University wide academic representative was reported, welcoming Jo Divers and Dr Marco Beato into membership.

**Office for Students (OfS)**

[REDACTED]

23/041 The level of detail required for Data Futures was highlighted to members, which would have a significant impact on the University and its partners. A collaborative long-term project to re-build and re-shape the student record system was being undertaken.

**B3 student outcomes**

23/042 This item was postponed from the scheduled June Senate meeting. While there had been some areas of improvement there were still areas of concern, in particular continuation data, and these were being discussed in Schools.

**OfS assessment**

23/043 Members were provided with a summary of the OfS assessments undertaken at the University of Bolton and London South Bank University, noting the duration of the investigations and the volume and breadth of evidence submitted.

**OSACC key learning points**

23/044 A summary of the key learning points from the 2020/21 OSACC annual report was provided for information.

**Partnerships register**

23/045 The University's register of partnership arrangements was received.

**Course suspension and discontinuation forms**

23/046 The list of approved course suspension and discontinuation forms was provided to members.

**Course (re)approvals 2022/23**

23/047 The annual course (re)approval report for 2022/23 was provided to members for information.

**Senate activity**

23/048 The items approved since the last full Senate meeting were provided for information.

**Sub-committees**

Quality Committee

23/049 The minutes from the Quality Committee held on 13 September 2023 were provided.

Research and Enterprise Committee

23/050 The minutes from the Research and Enterprise Committee held on 6 June 2023 were provided.

School Academic Committee (EAST)

23/051 The School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology Academic Committee held on 8 February 2023 were provided.

**Any other business**

23/052 There was no further business.

**Date of next meeting**

23/053 The next meeting will be the joint Senate and Board workshop on Tuesday 28 November 2023.

**Alison McQuin**  
**Head of Quality**