

**THE SENATE**

**Minutes**

This paper presents the unconfirmed Minutes of the last meeting of the Senate held on Wednesday 15 October 2014 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

Julie Tayler  
Working Secretary to the Committee  
Email: [julie.tayler@open.ac.uk](mailto:julie.tayler@open.ac.uk)  
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Attachments:

S-2014-04-M Appendix 1: Curriculum Partnerships Committee (CuPC)  
S-2014-04-M Appendix 2: Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)  
S-2014-04-M Appendix 3: Research Degrees Committee (RDC)

## THE SENATE

Minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on Wednesday 15 October 2014 at 2.00pm  
in the Hub Theatre, The Open University, Walton Hall.

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### PRESENT:

#### 1) Ex officio

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

### Appointed

#### 2) Central Academic Units

##### Faculty of Arts

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

##### Faculty of Business & Law

Dr Kristen Reid	Mr Mike Phillips
Miss Carol Howells	Dr Sharon Slade

##### Faculty of Education and Language Studies

Dr Uwe Baumann	Professor Regine Hampel
Mr Pete Smith	Dr Tim Lewis
Dr Jane Cullen	

##### Faculty of Health and Social Care

Miss Christine Taylor	Mr Mick McCormick
Mrs Sue Cole	

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

Dr David Bowers	Dr Toby O'Neil
Dr Rachel Hilliam	Mr Brendan Quinn
Professor Andy Lane	Dr Magnus Ramage
Ms Maggie Holland	Dr Leonor Barroca

**Faculty of Science**

Dr John Baxter  
 Professor Monica Grady  
 Professor Hilary MacQueen

Professor David Rothery  
 Dr Janet Haresnape  
 Dr Claire Turner

**Faculty of Social Sciences**

Dr Troy Cooper  
 Dr Helen Kaye  
 Dr Jacqueline Baxter

Mr Matt Staples  
 Dr Anastasia Economou  
 Dr Sharon Pinkney

**Institute of Educational Technology**

Dr Anne Adams

Mr Chris Edwards

**Other Central Units**

Dr Liz Marr

**3) Associate Lecturers**

Ms Janet Dyke  
 Mrs Frances Chetwynd  
 Dr Walter Pisarski

Dr Tricia French (alternate)  
 Mr Stephen Pattinson  
 Dr Nicola Foster (alternate)

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

Mr Josh Brumpton  
 Miss Ruth Tudor  
 Mr David Humble

Ms Alison Kingan  
 Mr Jeferson de Oliveira  
 Mr John Murphy

**5) Academic-related Staff**

Ms Pat Atkins  
 Dr Donna Smith  
 Mr Phil Berry  
 Mrs Joanne Smythe  
 Mr Simon Horrocks  
 Mr Billy Khokhar

Dr Christina Lloyd  
 Miss Barbara Poniatowska  
 Ms Clare Riding  
 Mr Michael Street  
 Mr Jake Yeo  
 Mr Mike Innes

**6) Co-opted members**

Professor Peter Scott  
 Mr Christopher Goscomb  
 Dr James Miller

Mr John D'Arcy  
 Dr David Knight  
 Mr Rob Humphreys

**In attendance**

Mr Fraser Woodburn, University Secretary  
 Mr Andrew Law, Director of Open Media Unit  
 Mrs Dawn Turpin, Head of Governance  
 Mrs Julie Tayler, Senior Manager, Governance (outgoing Working Secretary)  
 Ms Sue Thomas, Senior Manager, Governance (incoming Working Secretary)  
 Miss Teresa Coyle, Manager, Governance  
 Dr Sharon Ding, Academic Director, Business Development Unit (Minute 13)  
 Mr Guy Mallison, Director of Strategy (Minute 13)  
 Professor David Rowland, Director of Taught Post Graduate, (Minute 13)  
 Professor Sally Dibb, Professor in Marketing, (Minute 15)  
 Mr Ben Palmer, Director of Assessment, Credit and Qualifications (Minutes 19 and 20)  
 Mr Kevin Mayles, Head of Analytics, LT Centre (Minute 21)  
 Mrs Alison Ashby, Head of Student Statistics and Survey Team, IET (Minute 21)  
 Dr Sam Smidt, Senior Lecturer, Science Faculty (Minute 11)  
 Mrs Joanna Farmer, Senior Manager, LT Centre (Minute 11)

**Observing**

Mrs Caroline Abbot, University Secretary's Office  
 Dr Claire Mitchell, Strategy Office

**APOLOGIES:**

**1) Ex officio**

Mr Jeremy Roche, Dean, Faculty of Health and Social Care

**Appointed**

**2) Central Academic Units**

**Faculty of Business and Law**

Ms Carmel McMahon

**Faculty of Education and Language Studies**

Dr Indra Sinka

Mrs Annie Eardley

**Faculty of Health and Social Care**

Dr Mary Twomey

Professor Jan Draper

**Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology**

Dr Peter Robbins

Dr Tony Nixon

Professor Joyce Fortune

**Faculty of Science**

Dr Arlene Hunter

**Institute of Educational Technology**

Professor Eileen Scanlon

**3) Associate Lecturers**

Dr Clare Spencer

Mr Bruce Heil

**5) Academic-related Staff**

Dr Victoria Crowe

Dr Linda Ward

**1 WELCOME**

The Vice-Chancellor, Martin Bean, welcomed all newly elected and re-elected members to the Senate, as well as those continuing with their term of office. Dr Richard Brown, Dean and Director of Studies, Faculty of Arts and Ruth Tudor, President of the OU Students Association (OUSA) were both attending their first meeting of the Senate in their ex officio roles.

**2 MINUTES**

S-2014-03-M

The Senate **approved** the minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on Wednesday 11 June 2014.

**3 MATTERS ARISING**

S-2014-04-01

**Locations Analysis Project**

- 3.1 A member asked why, in view of the Senate's wish to take part in a full discussion on the matter, the locations review had not been a substantive item on the meeting agenda, but was an appendix to the Matters Arising paper. Several other members also expressed their surprise that the item had been presented in this way.
- 3.2 The University Secretary, Fraser Woodburn, responded that it was possible for the Matters Arising paper to include important items, and that such items were open for discussion. Appendix 1 of the paper provided an update on the locations analysis project, and did not raise matters for discussion. Consequently, if it had been presented as a separate paper, it would have been placed in Section D: Items for Formal Approval or Report and would have needed to be starred for discussion. Given the length of the agenda, the item was better placed in Matters Arising at the beginning of the meeting.
- 3.3 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) [PVC(A)], Professor Musa Mihsein, said that it was unlikely that a discussion paper would be ready for the January 2015 meeting of the Senate, but assured members that no decision would be taken until the Senate had had an opportunity to discuss the proposals.
- 3.4 With reference to paragraph 8 of Appendix 1, which stated that the main communication channels for associate lecturers (ALs) would be through individual faculties, an associate lecturer (AL) member observed that this means of engagement had so far been irregular and to tight deadlines. The Director, Students, Keith Zimmerman, said that feedback had been difficult in the first round, but it would improve.
- 3.5 A member commented that this was a matter of change management, in which the University was both active and experienced. Some of the discussion papers being presented to the Senate had a specific section that referred to implementation and the management of change, and this was something to be encouraged in all papers. The Chair said that the University Secretary and Head of Governance should review the paper templates with this proposal in mind.

**Action: Governance Team**

**Student Support Teams**

- 3.6 Referring to the table in paragraph 5 of Appendix 2, a member observed that the number of proactive interventions being made by Student Support Teams (SSTs) appeared to be huge, but that anecdotal evidence suggested that few of the messages were being read by the students. It would be useful to track how many messages were being opened.

3.7 With reference to paragraph 12, which outlined the intention to work closely with central academic unit (CAU) SST colleagues to engage more substantively with module and qualification teams, the member commented that one of the key interventions was around students not submitting their first assignment on time, but this was being done through Student Services not the CAUs. The Director, Students responded that this was part of the process to ensure that students were engaged in their study before they incurred any financial liability. The Director, Student Support, Dr Christina Lloyd, said that this would be monitored; there was work taking place in the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) [PVC (LT)] Office and the SSTs to ensure that information would be made available on the website.

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

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

4.1 The Vice-Chancellor reported on the live virtual freshers' event, held for the first time in October 2014, which had produced some excellent feedback from students.

4.2 Reporting on student numbers, the University Secretary, Fraser Woodburn, said that the University's planning assumptions and targets were based on numbers as of the final enrolment date (FED). Students had the right to withdraw without financial penalty up to 14 days from module start, so the situation might change; however, the planning assumptions had taken into account that some students would drop out.

4.3 In England, the OU was now entering its third year under the new fees and funding regime. The University had adjusted its targets for the first two years, but as it had continued to perform strongly throughout this period, more ambitious targets had been set for the number of full time equivalent students (FTE) in 2014/15. In terms of new student FTEs, the University had achieved 99% of target in England, and 115% of target in both Scotland and Wales. In Northern Ireland, the OU had reached just 81% of its new student FTE target, but had met its target for funded student.

4.4 Student numbers for Access to Success had not reached target, achieving 50% of the target in the UK as a whole and 60% in England. The University would have to review how the scheme was packaged, particularly with regard to promotion and registration.

4.5 Postgraduate student recruitment had also failed to meet target again, reaching 84% in the UK and globally. The University had recently undertaken a study to understand the postgraduate opportunity, which was not as great as had originally been envisaged, and presentation of this work would be given later in the meeting (S-2014-04-10).

4.6 A member asked how many students had taken advantage of the extended FED. Mr Woodburn replied that a substantial number of registrations had been received between the original and the final enrolment date; the University would have been at least 10% short of its target if the deadline had not been extended. The member observed that students who registered late tended not to complete; it was difficult to ensure that they were fully prepared for the course and engaged with the student induction process. Mr Woodburn said that the University had considered this issue and had discovered that the completion rate for such students was worse, but not significantly. It was difficult to reach out to students if they registered late, but it was important to review how the University handled these students, rather than bring forward the enrolment date.

4.7 The Dean and Director of Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Professor Kevin Hetherington, said that whilst he understood why the FED had been extended, it had had a significant impact on Tutor-Student Allocation (TSA), which would affect the work being done on retention. Another member commented on the difficulties created by the delay in TSA. The Director, Students said that the decision had not been taken lightly, but the University had anticipated that extending the enrolment date would increase student

numbers. The problems created for TSA were acknowledged, but student behaviour was changing and it was necessary for the University to adapt accordingly. The University would be reviewing what had happened, with a view to taking earlier action in future.

- 4.8 In response to a query about Global Direct student numbers, the University Secretary said that the postgraduate numbers were about the same as last year; the undergraduate numbers had not reached what had been an overambitious target, but there had nevertheless been a 21% increase year on year.
- 4.9 The Vice-Chancellor observed that, as a sector, universities continued to operate in a challenging environment, and thanked everyone for their continued work in overseeing the development and delivery of an excellent student experience.
- 4.10 The Vice-Chancellor also reported on:
- a) The recognition that the OU had the top European University website in terms of Google search, and the third most popular worldwide.
  - b) The bronze award made to the OU Library's Communications team in the CILIP Marketing Excellence Awards for their submission, 'Conversations with students: raising awareness through social media.'
  - c) The development of the Open PAD scheme as a supported route for staff to achieve Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA). Over 80 members of central and regional staff and associate lecturers of our colleagues had been conferred over the last year, 15 of whom had been made Senior Fellows. Dr Mary Lea, Institute of Educational Technology (IET) was congratulated on achieving Principal Fellowship.
  - d) The award of the Royal Society Pfizer Prize to Dr Faith Osier, a Kenyan scientist and OU PhD graduate for her research into the mechanisms of immunity to malaria infection in humans.
  - e) A new initiative led by the Faculty of Business and Law's Centre for the Public Understanding of Finance (PUFIN) to improve public financial literacy, which included the launch of the Managing My Money course on OpenLearn, which had previously been a huge success on FutureLearn.
  - f) The anniversary of the launch of FutureLearn, which had received two "Lovie" awards from the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences (IADAS).
- 4.11 The Vice-Chancellor said that it had been an honour to report to Senate on the progress that the OU had made towards its mission over the past 5 years. The continual advancement was testament to the hard work, dedication and passion of the people that made up the organisation, and he thanked everyone.
- 4.12 The Vice-Chancellor also thanked Julie Tayler for her support as Working Secretary to the Senate since 2009, noting that this would be her last meeting in that capacity. The role would be taken over by Sue Thomas from January 2015.

## **5 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

S-2014-04-02

- 5.1 A student member fully supported the point made in minute 2.6 that regular communications should be in place with regard to the locations review, and observed that this should be the case for any changes in the University.
- 5.2 Referring to minute 2.11, which reported the Vice-Chancellor's comment that the review should be conducted in the right way even if the January 2015 deadline had to be

extended, a member said that the information to date suggested that the timescale was too tight for meaningful consultation.

- 5.3 The Director, the OU in Scotland, Dr James Miller, who was leading the project, acknowledged that the deadline was challenging. At present, the project was in an engagement phase, rather than full consultation. Information on requirements was being gathered and a report would be presented to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive (VCE) at the end of January. Any proposals that VCE wanted to take forward would be subject to further discussion.
- 5.4 A member commented that some papers had come to the Senate for consideration during the course of their development, and that this was a good mode of operation.
- 5.5 With reference to minute 2.14 concerning "B" degrees, a member observed that whilst as many as 117,000 students might be affected by the changes being introduced in 2017, many would have graduated before then. The Director, Students said that the number would be further refined as the University became aware of student choices. It was difficult to predict student behaviour, but it was tracked at every presentation.
- 5.6 With reference to minute 7.6 regarding the international market, a member asked if the strategy for international students could be included as a future item of business. The Vice-Chancellor said that an update would be provided at a future meeting.

**Action: Governance Team**

- 5.7 The Senate is asked to **note** the unconfirmed minutes from the meeting of the Strategic Planning and Resources Committee (SPRC) held on 25 June 2014 (SPRC-2014-03-M).

**6 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE S-2014-04-03**

- 6.1 With reference to paragraphs 4 and 5, and 26 of the report, which commented on the Periodic Programme Review (PPR) for Mathematics and Statistics, the Dean and Director of Studies, Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology (MCT), Professor Anne de Roeck, expressed some confusion at the report, particularly on the scope and direction of the urgent recommendation, and in relation to the governance of the PPR process behind the report.
- 6.2 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research, Scholarship and Quality) [PVC (RSQ)], Professor Tim Blackman, replied that the approval of PPR reports had been delegated to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC). Whilst the wording of the report might be improved, he was satisfied with the Committee's recommendations. He would be happy to discuss the matter further with the Dean outside of the meeting.
- 6.3 The Senate **noted** the report of the meeting of QAEC held on 23 June 2014.

**7 RESEARCH COMMITTEE S-2014-04-04**

The Senate **noted** the report of the meeting of the Research Committee (RC) held on 2 July 2014.

**8 CURRICULUM AND VALIDATION COMMITTEE S-2014-04-05**

The Senate **noted**:

- a) the report of the meeting of the Curriculum and Validation Committee held on 9 July 2014

- b) that the following items appear separately on the Senate agenda for consideration:
- i) Implementation of Revised Validation Model (S-2014-04-13)
  - ii) The New Structures and Processes for the Award of Credit and Qualifications and the Approval of the Terms of Reference and Membership of the Proposed New Module Result Panel, The Cluster Examination and Assessment Board, and the Progression and Completion Board (S-2014-04-17)
  - iii) The Revised Terms of Reference for External Examiners (S-2014-04-16).

**9 LEARNING, TEACHING AND STUDENT SUPPORT COMMITTEE S-2014-04-06**

- 9.1 Referring to paragraph 2, a (student) member suggested that ‘the possible refresh of financial support’ might imply an increase, which was unlikely. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) [PVC (LT)], Professor Belinda Tynan, agreed that the idea was poorly worded and should be rephrased; but she and the Director, Students would be discussing what might be done in this area.
- 9.2 The Senate **noted** the report meeting of the Learning, Teaching and Student Support Committee (LTSSC) that took place on 16 July 2014.

**10 SENATE MEMBERSHIP PANEL S-2014-04-07**

The Senate **noted** the report. of the Senate Membership Panel (SMP) held on 24 June 2014.

**11 LEARNING AND TEACHING VISION AND PLAN 2025 S-2014-04-08**

- 11.1 The PVC (LT) introduced the Vision and Plan, which served to establish the University’s leadership position and reputation in an increasingly competitive open distance education environment. The document articulated the rationale, the guiding principles, and the priorities for developing Learning and Teaching at the OU over the coming 10 years.
- 11.2 An earlier draft had been presented at a pre-Senate briefing on 11 June 2014. The Vision and Plan had been subject to wide consultation across the University, and the feedback had been absorbed where appropriate. The PVC (LT) thanked everyone that had played a part in the development of the paper.
- 11.3 The Vision and Plan was a lengthy document, so the principles, priorities and indicators of success had been summarised on one page (Appendix 1). Creative scenarios (Appendix 2) had been written following workshop sessions with students and staff, to encourage conversations about imagined futures. These were deliberately provocative so as to encourage debate and response.
- 11.4 Once the paper had been approved, the delivery of the Vision and Plan would be managed as a programme, which would take account of current and planned projects and programmes, as well as specifying new projects to deliver the Vision and to align it with the OU’s priorities.
- 11.5 Members welcomed the paper, commenting that its breadth and scope were exciting, creative and visionary. The exhaustive consultation on the document was particularly appreciated.
- 11.6 The Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, said that the document fulfilled the remit of a Vision and Plan. It would afford the opportunity to better engage with a diverse student community, and its reference to the global community was in line with the OU mission and in the spirit of the Student Charter.

- 11.7 The Dean and Director of Studies, Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology (MCT), Professor Anne de Roeck, said the paper was open-minded and encouraged the OU community to think about a number of important topics. Faculties would have a huge role to play in delivering the Vision and in ensuring that students were kept at the heart of everything the University did. However, some current policies, such as the IT security policy, might be barriers to delivery and workable solutions would have to be found. The PVC (LT) said that the Chief Information Officer (CIO) was aware of what the University wanted to achieve and would try to find ways to support the delivery of the Vision and Plan.
- 11.8 A member expressed concern that the Vision and Plan was not realistic with respect to the nature of OU students. Most Level 1 and Level 2 students were not as confident and competent as those who had taken part in the workshops. The PVC (LT) assured the Senate that this was a 10 year journey that the University and its students would travel together. No assumptions had been made about learners and the University had the best interests of the student at its heart.
- 11.9 Referring to paragraph 3.3, which noted that the current structures did not support interdisciplinary working, a member said that the emphasis should be on encouraging creativity, rather than persuading through incentives. Faculties and module teams should be allowed the space to develop bottom-up initiatives to promote cross-disciplinary and collaborative working. Another member commented that paragraph 3.3 understated the scale of the barriers to interdisciplinary working.
- 11.10 A student member commented that most students were interested in getting a qualification, and did not consider their place in the global community as a priority (para 4 d). The OU's primary concern should be with learning and teaching. It was important to retain flexibility, but the paper had only one reference to blended learning as an approach (para 6.5). The PVC (LT) responded that global citizenship was an attribute that the OU would expect its graduates to hold. Learners were already participating on the world stage in a digital environment, and the University needed to help them to do so well and fully. It would be necessary to work with the *Curriculum Fit for the Future* project to consider how the broad attributes of global citizenship played out in the curriculum and how they would be assessed.
- 11.11 Referring to Principles 3 and 4 (paras 6.4 and 6.5) about technology, a member commented that it was good to see this captured in the document. However, there was caution about the suitability of some technologies, and the possible barriers to progress that inadequate technology might present.
- 11.12 A member observed that there were tensions between Principles 3, 4 and 6 (paras 6.4, 6.5 and 6.7). Barriers to study existed for certain groups of students who found it difficult to access materials, for example offender learners, disabled students and those in remote locations without reliable internet. This linked to the challenge regarding internal barriers (para 3.3). Issues were currently being resolved locally, with module teams creating bespoke versions of materials for certain student groups. The strategy needed to build in flexibility of delivery in order to meet the diverse needs of diverse students.
- 11.13 With reference to Priority 3 (para 7.3) bullet points 4 and 5, a member welcomed the commitment to meet accessibility standards and to the evaluation of new technologies. In the past, the introduction of new technologies had not always been accompanied by a commitment to making them work. The PVC (LT) responded that the paper had deliberately not been explicit with regard to technologies. The introduction of new technology would be evidence based and decisions would be taken with care.
- 11.14 Another member observed that the use of pen and paper was once innovative, and was a proven methodology from a pedagogical perspective. It was important to use all means available, as so much was at stake in a 3-hour written exam. The comparative merits of

reading and writing on screen and on paper were still to be clarified. The PVC (LT) welcomed such debate, and said that there was nothing in the paper to suggest that the University was moving solely to on-screen space.

- 11.15 With reference to the scenarios (Appendix 2, appendix B), a member welcomed the idea of students creating their own curriculum. It was unlikely that students at L1 and L2 would be sufficiently skilled to do so, but they could be trained in readiness for L3. However, the barriers were huge; in order to generate such a scheme, the University would need to be clear on what was expected of its staff, its ALs and its systems. The PVC (LT) responded that there was already a considerable amount of work going on that was innovative. KMi and IET could help to work through systems and processes to get such innovations into practice, and set the OU apart from its competition.
- 11.16 With reference to Scenario 3 (page 19), a member was pleased to observe that the regional centre was part of the future vision as a hub of local intellectual life. Scenario 4 highlighted the need for e-portfolios. The tools in the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) were currently not good enough, particularly with regard to planning resources and recording employability skills, and there was an urgent need to address the issue. The PVC (LT) said that she and the Director, Students were looking closely at this problem.
- 11.17 A member suggested that the scenarios represented a day in the life of the future. The Senate should consider the processes and IT systems that would be required to support each scenario, so that the barriers or issues could be identified.
- 11.18 A student member said that OUSA had concerns about some elements of the potential direction and implementation of the strategy. However, there appeared to be no student representation in the governance of the project. The PVC (LT) said that she would be talking to the OUSA President, and the academic lead on the programme, Sam Smidt, would be investigating the possibility of student engagement in the delivery phase of the programme.

**Action: PVC (LT)**

- 11.19 The Senate **approved** the Learning and Teaching Vision and Plan to proceed to implementation stage by an overwhelming majority.

## **12 GROUP TUITION POLICY**

**S-2014-04-09**

- 12.1 The PVC (LT) introduced the paper, reminding the Senate that the Principles had been considered by the Senate in February 2014; and the draft Policy in June 2014. Further to the comments made by the Senate and other stakeholders during the extensive consultation that had taken place, the Policy had been redrafted and some specific issues had been addressed:
- a) Pedagogic benefit was the driver for the method of delivering group tuition. It was not an argument between face-to-face and online delivery, and this was now stated explicitly. Principle 1 regarding 'Purpose' was crucial.
  - b) Consideration of the need to develop relationships and team working was included in the Implementation Plan and was visible in the summary in the Appendix.
  - c) It was now clear that the Policy aimed to extend easy access to group tuition, not to reduce it.
- 12.2 The implementation plan was under development, along with a Business Case to ensure that implementation was properly resourced and managed, and would be available at the end of November 2014. Four substantive work streams or areas of activity, beyond project governance, had been proposed and were outlined in the paper. Significant

changes would be required to IT systems; the requirements were being specified in current systems redevelopments, overseen by a coordination group. AL staff development resources to strengthen the delivery of quality group tuition, both online (through OU Live and the VLE) and face to face, were already being worked on together with wider plans for changes in regions, nations and CAUs.

- 12.3 With reference to Principle 5, a member said that the provision of online learning events for some areas might be problematic in practice, for example when practicing mathematics problems in real time. In such cases, the need for face-to-face delivery should be highlighted. In response, the PVC (LT) referred to Principle 1, which underpinned the design of all group tuition.
- 12.4 Referring to Principle 9 and paragraph 42, which referred to core learning events being planned and communicated well ahead of schedule, some members commented that the implementation of this policy would be extremely difficult in practice. The delivery of learning events depended on the number of AL contact hours available, which in turn depended on the number of students enrolled. However, this would be unknown if the FED continued to be extended and TSA only took place just before module start. Consequently, it would not be possible to arrange such events with confidence three months before the module start. The review of the locations should also be taken into consideration, since some learning events could not be delivered over a large area. The PVC (LT) said that she was working closely with the Director, Students to find a solution to this issue.
- 12.5 A member asked whether, if it was necessary to publish a programme of learning events in advance of the module start date, it would be possible to appoint ALs in advance. The Director, Students responded that there were a long term set of activities in the implementation plan to facilitate TSA and the appointment of ALs was within the scope of the TSA process. There were strong pedagogical and administrative reasons for the early appointment of ALs, which would result in benefit for students. More feedback would be provided over the next few meetings of the Senate.

**Action: Director, Students**

- 12.6 A member suggested that some of the issues could be dealt with if they were approached differently. It should be possible to create a system that allowed flexibility, rather than creating a cottage industry within each faculty in order to cope with the problem.
- 12.7 A student member requested clarification around the issue of some aspects of group tuition, such as residential schools being made compulsory (para 28), as this would affect some students such as offender learners, disabled students, etc. The PVC (LT) said that details of what was required of students had been set out, and the University would not divert from that.
- 12.8 Another student member was concerned at the implication that students might be turned away if they had not signed up for an event in a timely manner (paras 42 and 43). There should be more flexibility with such events. The PVC (LT) referred to Principle 1 and the implementation plan, which reinforced the purpose and design of the learning experience.
- 12.9 Members also made the following comments:
- a) The repository of good practice relating to group tuition (para 30) was welcomed, but the issue that 50% of students did not attend group tuition events (para 7) had to be addressed.
  - b) The provision of clusters for students in the Republic of Ireland should be clarified (para 40).

- c) Saturday was not the only day on which some students might not be able to attend face to face tutorials (para 47); some students might have difficulties with study on Friday or Sunday.
- d) The mobile technology should be available before the University concerned itself with the pedagogy (para 50).
- e) There should be more consistency with regard to the provision of hand-outs (para 53), which could be vital for students who could not attend a learning event.
- f) Staff development was essential, particularly training on new systems.

12.10 The Senate **approved** the Group Tuition Policy by an overwhelming majority.

### 13 TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE STRATEGY

S-2014-04-10

- 13.1 The Director of Strategy, Guy Mallison, introduced the strategy, which was the result of a holistic study of the postgraduate (PG) market and presented a realistic ambition for the OU based on evidence of the PG opportunity. The University was committed offering postgraduate study, and this was at the heart of the strategy.
- 13.2 Members welcomed the strong evidence base, sharp analysis and good sense evidenced in the paper, as well as the focus on the product and the postgraduate student experience, but commented that the strategy might be developed further. A bolder vision was needed, as for the Learning and Teaching Vision and Plan, so that the strategy was a hotbed for innovation.
- 13.3 A member said that, whilst the taught postgraduate market might be more competitive, the failure to put the University's offering in the context of the OU mission was a major omission. The international postgraduate market accessible to the OU might be limited, but the OU was third in the Google worldwide rankings, which gave it international presence and reach. Nevertheless, the University's competitors managed to achieve better postgraduate student numbers. There was scope for the University to experiment with price reductions; for example, much more could be done regarding scholarships, the purpose and nature of which could dovetail with the OU's mission.
- 13.4 The Dean and Director of Studies, Faculty of Business and Law (FBL), Professor Rebecca Taylor, expressed concerns at the conclusion outlined in slide 21 that taught postgraduate might not be essential for research success. Whilst such provision might not be necessary in order to undertake quality research, it was important for other reasons such as the University's reputation, some areas of accreditation and the OU's status alongside its competitors.
- 13.5 The Dean, FBL, also commented that broad statements about some sub-markets not showing a decline were not particularly helpful, and should be broken down for the strategy going forward. There was healthy potential in some areas; targeted marketing would be welcome and was essential for success. Programmes in the executive education space, such as the Mary Seacole programme, delivered a good level of income; but processes and procedures needed to change in order to generate business.
- 13.6 Several members said that the University should not lose the cumulative effect of drawing from fragmented niche markets. In the spirit of the Learning and Teaching Vision and Plan, the University should review its structures and business models to enable flexibility.
- 13.7 A member observed that Level 3 undergraduate students were a captive audience with regard to the opportunities for postgraduate study, but the University did not treat them as a potential market. The Director, Strategy agreed that the University could do better, and might consider the use of scholarships to encourage further study.

- 13.8 Noting that the paper was the second postgraduate strategy in recent years, a member asked what had happened to the previous review. The Director of Strategy said that the previous paper had not addressed the scale of the OU's ambition or set targets; its focus had been on the student experience. The time had therefore come to take a step back and review the market.
- 13.9 With reference to paragraph 6 d) regarding innovations and cost savings on presentation rather than production (page 5), a member commented that the 2011/12 strategy had encouraged the use of found online content, but that postgraduate students did not like web links. It would be necessary to revisit this misguided policy.
- 13.10 A member said that the University should look at whether there was evidence to demonstrate that if the quality of the student experience was improved then recruitment would increase. The Director of Strategy responded that such specific analysis was beyond the evidence available.
- 13.11 Referring to slide 27, about the review of the internal pass mark, a member suggested that the University consider marks for Merit and Distinction, which would be particularly useful if students wanted to go on to study for a doctorate. There were also variations between faculties, and more consistency would help to improve recruitment.
- 13.12 Members also made the following comments:
- a) that there had been no contribution to the review from the Institute of Educational Technology (IET) (slide 29). Such input might not change the strategy, but IET would welcome the opportunity to contribute;
  - b) that the Postgraduate Student Support Team (SST) and elements of postgraduate work going on elsewhere were important as an evidence base and a vehicle for the postgraduate student experience moving forward;
  - c) that it was important to ensure that the Director, Taught Postgraduate worked with the proposed Director of the Graduate School (S-2014-04-04 Research Committee, para 17).

## 14 ANNUAL QUALITY REPORT

S-2014-04-11

- 14.1 The PVC (RSQ) introduced the paper, which aimed to assure the Senate that the management of quality and standards was effective, and summarised the main themes emerging from the cycle of business.
- 14.2 Referring to paragraph 5, the Dean, MCT, raised an issue about the wording and implications of the Periodic Programme Review (PPR) recommendations regarding the Mathematics and Statistics programme. The PVC (RSQ) said that the report reflected the views of the PPR panel. The review process was working well; but he would be happy to discuss any concerns outside of the meeting.
- 14.2 The Senate
- a) **noted** that the report will also be used as the annual report on institution-led review submitted to the Scottish Funding Council;
  - b) **endorse** the report and the statement of assurance required by the Scottish Funding Council and contained in paragraph 32.

- 15 PROMOTION SCHEME FOR ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH STAFF S-2014-04-12**
- 15.1 The PVC (RSQ) said that the University's promotions scheme was fundamental to the support and reward of academic and research staff. He thanked Professor Sally Dibb for leading the complex task to develop a new scheme, and Professor Mary Kellett and Dr Hugh MacKay for their valuable input. The new promotion scheme had been commended by the Academic Staff Promotions Committee (ASPC) and the paper included a commitment to run the current and new schemes in parallel and subject to an annual review. Professor Dibb presented the key aspects of the paper.
- 15.2 Members welcomed the ethos of the paper, and the clarity and transparency of the new promotion criteria. The Knowledge Exchange route and the sophisticated understanding of academic leadership were also appreciated.
- 15.3 A member observed that the grade of 'Reader' had previously been accepted as the pinnacle of some academic careers or as a stepping stone to 'Chair', but it had now been removed from the scheme. Professor Dibb replied that the matter had been raised during the first consultation, and there had not been a strong feeling that the grade should be retained. 'Reader' had been associated with people on a research career track, and there was not a comparative grade for those taking other paths. The change also reflected what was happening in the sector. The PVC (RSQ) added that the scheme aimed to modernise the system; it was no longer appropriate to promote staff for research and not for teaching. In future, the status, grade and salary scale for Senior Lecturer and Reader would be the same, with the key criteria being in the 'Senior Lecturer – Research' profile.
- 15.4 A member asked if any cases had been created as exemplars. It would be helpful to see how the criteria might be applied to regional staff. Professor Dibb replied that some cases had been reviewed against both the old and the new criteria, and road tested for implementation. The two year overlap between the two schemes would provide an opportunity to compare cases in real time, and ASPC would be flexible. Some staff tutors could see the profile of Knowledge Exchange as a potential route to promotion. Deans would be empowered to have a greater say on what was reasonable for a particular group.
- 15.5 The Dean, Social Sciences, asked for clarification on some of the issues regarding running the old and new schemes in parallel; in particular whether faculties could decide which scheme to use, whether individuals could submit to both schemes, and whether there would be consistency in comparing the success rates of those applying through the old and the new schemes. The PVC (RSQ) responded that there would be further consultation on implementation.
- 15.6 A member said that there was an inconsistency in the Research and Teaching profiles. From Senior Lecturer to Professor Band 2, external income was linked to 'teaching or research'. However, for Professor Band 3, the Research and Teaching profile only mentioned 'external research income', with teaching income playing no role. Criteria d also seemed to point to research rather than teaching grants. The PVC (RSQ) responded that the profiles had been carefully crafted and he was nervous about changing them on the floor of the Senate. He would look at the issue and request Chair's action should anything require amendment.
- Action: PVC (RSQ)**
- 15.7 A member suggested that the scheme provided scope for a buddy system. The PVC (RSQ) agreed in principle, and said he would consider the idea. The scheme allowed academic professional development for those with promotion aspirations.

15.8 Members also made the following comments:

- a) that there would be a knock on effect on Career Development and Staff Appraisal (CDSA), Valued Ways of Working (VWW) and Leadership Competencies, which should be reviewed by HR.
- b) that IET were looking at OpenPad and routes to the HE Academy, and this scheme would fit in with the Fellowship routes.
- c) that the criteria would make it much easier to give unsuccessful candidates useful feedback, which had not always been the case in the past.
- d) that it would be important to compare the criteria with the person specification for external recruitment.
- e) that the guidance on the new promotion scheme would be crucial, and the collaboration with Deans was welcomed.

15.9 The Senate **approved** the new scheme for the promotion of academic and research staff at the University by an overwhelming majority.

## 16 IMPLEMENTATION OF REVISED VALIDATION MODEL

S-2014-04-13

16.1 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) introduced the paper and thanked Dr Liz Marr, Director, Centre for Inclusion and Collaborative Partnerships (CICP) and her team for their patience and perseverance during the challenging task of ensuring that all stakeholders were in favour of the revised regulations.

16.2 The Senate **approved** the regulations for validated awards of The Open University (see Appendix 1) for implementation from 1 September 2015.

## 17 COMMITTEE MATTERS

S-2014-04-14

The Senate:

- a) **approved** the recommendations for the constitutional changes to the following committees arising from the annual effectiveness review (AER):
  - i) Curriculum Partnerships Committee (CuPC) (Appendix 1);
  - ii) Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) (Appendix 2);
  - iii) Research Degrees Committee (RDC) (Appendix 3);
- b) **noted** the matters for report set out in paragraph 8.

## 18 EMERITUS PROFESSORS

S-2014-04-15

The Senate:

- a) **approved** the recommendations from the Chair and Readership Subcommittee that the title Emeritus Professor is awarded to:
  - i) Professor Allan Cochrane;
  - ii) Professor Jeremy Gray;
  - iii) Professor Martyn Hammersley.

- b) **noted** that the Chair of the Senate took Chair's Action to approve on behalf of the Senate that the title of Emeritus Professor be awarded to Professor David Vincent.

**19 EXTERNAL EXAMINERS – REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE S-2014-04-16**

- 19.1 A student member expressed concern that External Examiners on cluster Examination and Assessment Boards (EABs) would be considering several modules, as this might affect their ability to maintain a detailed knowledge of specific modules. The PVC (LT) said that External Examiners would be given additional time and would take their new role seriously. The proposed modernisation was in order to better assure the quality of the OU's qualifications.
- 19.2 Another member welcomed the revised terms of reference, but cautioned against underestimating the huge change it would entail. It would be difficult for external examiners to consider vast numbers of papers across many modules during a single morning.
- 19.3 The Senate **approved** the revised Terms of Reference for the role of the External Examiner for the proposed new structures for the award of credit and qualifications.

**20 NEW STRUCTURES AND PROCESS FOR THE AWARD OF CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS S-2014-04-17**

- 20.1 In response to a query from a student member, the PVC (LT) assured the Senate that the extra scrutiny proposed in the new structures would not cause any delay to the process.
- 20.2 The Senate **approved**:
- a) the new structures and processes for the award of credit and qualifications
  - b) the terms of reference and membership of the proposed new:
    - i) Module Result Panel
    - ii) Cluster Examination and Assessment Board
    - iii) Progression and Completion Board

**21 STUDENT RETENTION AND PROGRESSION - ANALYTICS S-2014-04-18**

- 21.1 The Dean, MCT welcomed the development of the analysis about retention and progression, and the provision of information to the new annual quality review process. It would be helpful to have a better flow of such information through the management structures, and the work with IET was to be encouraged.
- 21.2 An AL member commented that the figures provided in paragraph 16 did not reflect the true picture. Many of the 41% of students who did not inform the University that they had stopped would have had numerous contacts with their tutor and SST, but may not have replied to the last email from the University.
- 21.2 In response to a query about how emotional real-time feedback would provide evidence, the PVC (LT) said that the University hoped to introduce a mechanism, such as that trailed during the virtual freshers' event, which would allow students to express their feelings and concerns. If issues, such as time management, could be surfaced, then the University would be able to make useful interventions.
- 21.3 The Senate **noted** the summary of work undertaken to investigate retention and progression of the 2012/13 intake and insight from the research on non-completers and non-returners.

- 22 SENATE ANNUAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW S-2014-04-19**
- The Senate **noted** the report on its effectiveness.
- 23 SENATE SUBSTRUCTURE ANNUAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW S-2014-04-20**
- The Senate **noted** the report on the annual effectiveness reviews of the Senate substructure committees.
- 24 THE COUNCIL S-2014-04-21**
- 24.1 With reference to paragraph 12 of the paper, a (student) member expressed concern at the potential for analytical data to be made available to third parties to generate income for the University. Whilst students might have the opportunity to 'opt out' of sharing their data, it would be better not to use the analytics in this way at all.
- 24.2 The Senate **noted** the report on matters discussed at the meeting of the Council held on 15 July 2014.
- 24 FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE STUDIES – DEPARTMENTAL NAME CHANGE S-2014-04-22**
- The Senate **noted** a departmental name change in the Faculty of Education and Language Studies from the Centre for Language and Communication to the Department of Applied Linguistics and English Language, with effect from 1 August 2014.
- 25 ACTION BY THE CHAIR S-2014-04-23**
- The Senate **noted** the report on action taken by the Chair since the last meeting of the Senate, which included approval of memberships for Chair and Readership Promotions Appeals Committee and Special Appeals Committee, and revisions to qualification and module regulations to include integrated masters degrees.
- 26 FUTURE ITEMS OF BUSINESS S-2014-04-24**
- The Senate **noted** the potential items for the agenda for the Senate meeting on January 2015.
- 27 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**
- Meetings of the Senate will be held on the following dates:
- Wednesday 28 January 2015  
 Wednesday 22 April 2015 (tbc)  
 Wednesday 10 June 2015
- 28 DECLASSIFICATION OF PAPERS**
- The following papers should remain confidential after the meeting:
- S-2014-04-10 Taught Postgraduate Strategy  
 S-2014-04-18 Student Retention and Progression - Analytics
- The following paper may be declassified after the meeting:
- S-2014-04-18 Emeritus Professors

**29 GOODBYE AND THANKYOU**

A member thanked the Vice-Chancellor for the efficient and inclusive way in which he had chaired the Senate during his term, and for his effective management of the University during a period of immense change. The Senate indicated their support of this sentiment.

Fraser Woodburn  
Secretary to the Committee

Julie Tayler  
Working Secretary to the Committee  
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Attachments:

- S-2014-04-M Appendix 1: Curriculum Partnerships Committee (CuPC)
- S-2014-04-M Appendix 2: Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)
- S-2014-04-M Appendix 3: Research Degrees Committee (RDC)

## CURRICULUM PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTION – UPDATED 05.0215.10.2014

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### **Purpose**

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

### **Terms of Reference**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Membership**

1. A Chair appointed by the Curriculum and Validation Committee.
2. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) or nominee.
3. One associate dean or equivalent with a relevant portfolio from each central academic unit (or the dean/director's nominee if no suitable portfolio exists).
4. The Director, Global Partnerships, Business Development Unit or nominee.
5. The Director of Academic Planning and Resources or nominee.
6. The Head of Quality.
7. The Director of Assessment, Credit and Qualifications, or nominee.
8. The Director of the Centre for Inclusion and Collaborative Partnerships or nominee.
9. One member of the Office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic).
9. One registered student appointed by the Open University Students' Association.
10. One associate lecturer appointed by the Associate Lecturers Executive.
11. One member of the Validation Committee, nominated by that Committee.
12. One member of the Research Degrees Committee who is a members of the Affiliated Research Centre Management Group, nominated by the Research Degrees Committee.

13. Up to two other members co-opted by the Committee, with expertise as necessary in either or both Scotland, Ireland and Wales and collaborative provision, if not otherwise elected or nominated.

Secretary

**Mode of Operation**

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

CONSTITUTION – UPDATED ~~1615.10.2013~~2014

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### Purpose

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee assures the Senate that quality assurance and enhancement arrangements are appropriately established and implemented, and oversees the University's engagement with external quality assurance processes.

### Terms of Reference

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

1. To ~~maintain the University's quality assurance and quality enhancement strategy for approval by the Senate, to~~ ensure that a strategic approach to quality assurance and quality enhancement is maintained and cross-University quality-related issues are properly addressed and satisfactorily resolved; and to assure the Senate accordingly.

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

2. To approve and review the University's arrangements for the management of quality assurance and enhancement, including use of student monitoring and feedback, in accordance with University policy and in the context of external requirements and guidelines.
3. To contribute to the quality assurance frameworks for Higher Education.
4. To oversee the preparation for, and the institutional organisation of, external quality assurance processes, including reviews by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), and other ~~Public and Professional~~ Statutory and Regulatory Bodies.
5. To approve plans for follow-up action to external quality assurance and enhancement processes and internal periodic review, and reports on the implementation and effectiveness of measures to address recommendations.

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

Terms of reference 2 to 5 above are relevant to this core function.

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

6. To advise appropriate University committees on matters relating to academic quality.
7. To oversee arrangements for the exchange of best practice on quality assurance and enhancement matters between units of the University and between the University and ~~its accredited and associated~~ institutions offering validated provision, and affiliated research centres.

## Membership

1. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research, Scholarship and Quality), Chair, *ex officio*.
2. The Head of Quality, *ex officio*.
3. Six members appointed by the Senate on the recommendation of the Senate Membership Panel, of whom at least four shall be members of academic units (to include at least two centrally-based academics) and one external to the University. At least one of the internal members should be regionally/nationally-based. These members shall normally serve for a period of four years.
4. One registered student, appointed by the Open University Students' Association.

## Mode of Operation

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

CONSTITUTION – UPDATED ~~1715.10.2012~~2014

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### **Purpose**

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

### **Terms of Reference**

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

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

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

4. To monitor the implementation of agreed policy on research degrees and higher doctorates.

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

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

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

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

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

10. To appoint the Chair of the Research Degrees Examination Result Approval Committee.

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

11. To appoint research degree supervisors and examiners.

**Judicial: deciding individual cases**

None

**Membership**

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

**In Attendance**

17. The Director of Library Services or nominee
18. The Head of Research Degrees office

Secretary

**Mode of Operation**

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