

Academic Board

22 March 2023



Actions

Ref	Action	Lead	Due Date
23/011	Invite the Students' Union sabbatical officers elected for the 2023-24 academic year to observe the June Academic Board meeting	CM	June AB
23/018	Add a discussion item on artificial intelligence tools and academic integrity to the next agenda of Academic Board	CM	June AB
23/039	Elected member to send detailed queries on the proposed amendments to the College Statutes to Academicboard@rhul.ac.uk Principal to review comments	SM and JS	June AB
23/040	Update Academic Board on analysis of the responses to the Committee Effectiveness Review	CM	June AB
22/193	Add Foundation Year Degree to a future agenda of Academic Board	CM/JHE	End of 22-23 academic yr

Action from current meeting

Action completed since last meeting

Academic Board

22 March 2023

14.00-16.00

Moore Auditorium and MS Teams

Min. 23/001 – 23/050



Minutes

Present:	Prof J Sanders (Chair), Dr S Alty, , Prof K Badcock, Prof R Barn, Dr D Beer (on MS Teams), Dr M Berry, Dr T Berry, Prof T Bhamra, Dr P Bremner (on MS Teams), Prof V Boisvert, Dr E Cox (on MS Teams), Dr C Dendrinios, Prof K Dodds, Prof S Gibson, Professor R Hemus (on MS Teams), Prof S Hosany, Prof R Jago (on MS Teams), Ms M Jarvis, Prof J Knowles, Dr C Kremmydas, ,	Prof R Livesey (on MS Teams), Prof M Lycett, Prof C Matos (on MS Teams), Prof J McEvoy, Prof C Mitchell (on MS Teams), , Prof S Murphy, Prof R Mock, Dr J Nuri, Prof A Palombi, , Prof G Pieri, Prof JP Rud (rep Exec Dean of L &SS), Prof S Shah (on MS Teams, until item 12), Mr S Shrey, Prof L Sjoberg, , Prof C Tsinopoulos, Prof S Wagner (from item 11), Dr E Xhetani (on MS Teams)
Secretary:	Miss C Munton	
In attendance:	Prof M Humphreys, Mr S Kendrick, Prof G Knight (on MS Teams, from item 12), Mrs A Wallis	Mrs D Salsbury (Minutes)
Apologies:	Prof D Anderberg, Dr A Bown, Dr D Brown, Dr V Desai, Ms E Hall, Ms H Hockin, Prof R Fitzgerald, Mr L Kaounides,	Prof B Langford, Prof I Moffatt, Prof N Panteli Prof D Schreve, Prof G Shaddick, Prof G Symon, Prof H Zagefka
Observers:	Mr A Alway (on MS Teams)	

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. 23/001

Apologies were noted; these are recorded in the above list. 23/002

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2022 (M22/195 - M22/265) were APPROVED 23/003 as a correct record, subject to amendments to minute numbers 22/223, 22/224 and 22/246 in response to feedback from two Board members.

3. Matters arising

Min22/205 and 22/256 Circulate updated Academic Promotions paper

The Board NOTED that this action has been completed since the last meeting. The updated paper was circulated with the March meeting papers. There was one further 23/004

amendment to correct the name of the Politics, International Relations and Philosophy department title.

Min22/208 Update Academic Board on the implementation of the proposals in the UUK Suicide Safer Prevention report

The Board NOTED that this will be discussed under item 14 of today's meeting. 23/005

Min22/210 Update Academic Board on the KPIs underpinning the Environmental Sustainability Strategy

The Board NOTED that this will be discussed under item 12 of today's meeting. 23/006

Other:

The Board NOTED that the Teaching Excellence Framework submission was circulated to the Board on 20 January 2023. The Chair gave thanks to all involved. It was NOTED that the reflections on Royal Holloway's 2023 submission will be discussed under item 13 of today's meeting. 23/007

The Board NOTED that the College will be making an application for Turing Scheme funding for the 2023-24 academic year. Applications opened on 14 February and will close on 6 April 2023. 23/008

4. **Actions taken by the Chair**

The Board NOTED that no actions have been taken by the Chair since the last meeting. 23/009

5. **Unstarring of items**

The Board NOTED that there have been no requests for unstarring of items. 23/010

Formal Reports

6. **Principal's Report**

The Board RECEIVED a written report from the Principal (AB/23/01). The Principal noted congratulations to the Students' Union (SU) sabbatical officers elected for the 2023-24 academic year. They will be invited to observe the June Academic Board meeting. 23/011

The Principal reported that the Students' Union President will respond to the recent 'freedom of speech' case published in the national media under item 8 of today's meeting. 23/012

The Principal provided updates on the following:

(i) The changes to the university title and senior leadership titles will be effective from 1 April. 23/013

(ii) The Principal will continue to engage with UCEA and the Unions. 23/014

(iii) The College is recruiting several senior leadership posts. 23/015

(iv) There will be a new Executive Director Student Journey role which will be advertised through a full external process shortly. 23/016

(v) Dr Nigel Rata has been appointed as Interim IT Director following Mike Johnson's departure. 23/017

7. Reports from the Senior Management Team

Artificial intelligence tools and academic integrity

The Senior Vice-Principal (Education) and Vice-Principal (Quality and Standards) reported on the College's approach to the use of advanced technologies such as ChatGPT. The Regulations on Academic Misconduct are being updated to include the use of artificial intelligence to write work to gain an unfair advantage as an offence. The Quality Assurance and Standards Committee (QASC) has recently discussed ways of handling artificial intelligence tools and academic integrity and will produce guidance for students and staff. The next stage will be to consult the Students' Union and have a discussion at the June Academic Board meeting. However, there are also good opportunities around integrating this technology into curriculum development and training opportunities. 23/018

Ofsted visit for the MSc Clinical Associate Psychologist Integrated Degree Apprenticeship

The Principal reported that Ofsted were visiting the College this week for the MSc Clinical Associate Psychologist Integrated Degree Apprenticeship. As a new provider this will be a monitoring visit. This is an interim inspection that assesses progress and is designed to encourage improvement, assess risk, and measure progress. 23/019

After a monitoring visit, the provider will be offered one of three possible outcomes:

- (i) Insufficient progress: progress has been either slow or insubstantial or both, and the demonstrable impact on learners has been negligible.
- (ii) Reasonable progress: the provider's actions are already having a beneficial impact on learners, and improvements are sustainable and are based on the provider's thorough quality assurance procedures.
- (iii) Significant progress: progress has been rapid and is already having considerable beneficial impact on learners.

Professor Helen Pote is the nominee for the College. A full Ofsted inspection will follow the monitoring report. The likely date for the full inspection is February 2025.

8. Report from the Students' Union President

The Board RECEIVED a report from the Students' Union President (AB/23/02). The Students' Union President highlighted the following aspects of her report: 23/020

- (i) The Students' Union President's focus this term has been engaging stakeholders in her Invest for Change campaign. 23/021
- (ii) The voter turnout for spring term elections for Sabbatical Officers and School Representatives for 2023-24 was 20.7%, showing a good recovery on previous years and demonstrating students engaging with democracy. 23/022

The President provided an update on an alleged no platforming incident involving the Students' Union that is currently being reported in the press. She advised that following a guest speaker invitation from the Debating Society to Baroness Claire Fox, six student societies contacted her expressing concerns about the invitation due to views that Baroness Fox had expressed about the transgender community. The President confirmed that standard due diligence procedures on inviting external speakers had been followed prior to the invitation being issued. Confirmation had been received from the University's Legal Counsel that the views expressed by Baroness Fox did not within fit the legal definition of hate speech. The Debating Society were made aware of the concerns raised by the six societies and they initially opted to continue with the event. This approach was supported by the Students' Union in line with their mandate to represent all student communities. The Debating Society later decided to withdraw the invitation. The Board were advised that there are factual inaccuracies in the media reporting and it was confirmed that at no point did the Students' Union veto this event. The Board's attention was drawn to the timing of the reporting on this incident; the media reports were published 23/023

soon after Baroness Fox spoke about the proposed amendments to the Freedom of Speech Bill in the House of Lords.

The Board were advised that the Students' Union external speaker procedure was jointly reviewed in 2022 by representatives from the Students' Union and University staff, prior to Council approval in July 2022, and it is incorporated within the Memorandum of Co-operation between the SU and the University. The procedure is being followed and will be amended as appropriate once final consideration of the Freedom of Speech Bill has passed through Parliament.

The President noted her thanks to the University's PR team and Principal for their support in managing the situation, and confirmed the SU's commitment to the principles in the external speaker policy, notably around upholding academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law.

9. **Report from the Council**

The Board RECEIVED the minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 November 2022 (AB/23/03). 23/024

10. **Students, Education and Research Committee**

The Board RECEIVED a report from the School, Education and Research Committee meeting held on 22 February 2023 (AB/23/04). The Senior Vice-Principal (Education) reported that the paper summarises the core business: (i) development of the Transformative Digital Technologies, Security and Society catalyst; (ii) supporting student wellbeing; (iii) Pillar 1 strategic projects. The update on the Pillar 1 strategic projects noted that the College has met all but one key performance indicator (KPI) and there are discussions about how better to support students. 23/025

11. **Reports from Schools**

The Board RECEIVED a presentation from the Executive Dean of the School of Business and Management (SBM) (AB/23/05). The Executive Dean (SBM) reported that the School is trying to create critical thinkers and skilled individuals. One way to evaluate how good the School is, is by external accreditations. The School has several external accreditations, including AACSB accreditation. Only 6% of business schools are AACSB accredited. The School also has several course level accreditations and is looking to expand on these. The Year in Business is available to all undergraduate students and is supported by a small placement team who match students to placements. Many students each year take this option and are reported to be the happiest students. The Executive Dean (SBM)'s presentation highlighted some of the School's research and impact work. The presentation also commented on things for consideration, such as the name of the School – is there a difference between 'Business' and 'Management'? There is also a question around bringing back the MBA, perhaps as an online or executive MBA. The School currently only has one Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) and is looking at ways to expand this. The presentation concluded with a list of progress and priorities. 23/026

Members of the Board asked the following questions:

- (i) Are there any courses on business ethics?
- (ii) Is there engagement with alumni at the School of Business and Management?

The Executive Dean (SBM) confirmed that there are courses on business ethics and engagement with alumni at the School of Business and Management. 23/027

Strategy Discussion

12. Strategic Plan Update – Pillars 1-3

Pillar 1 - Serving the higher education needs of students in an expanding London population

The Board RECEIVED an update on Pillar 1 - Serving the higher education needs of students in an expanding London population (AB/23/06). The Senior Vice-Principal (Education) reported that this was discussed at the Student, Education and Research Committee. Key considerations include the question of diversification, closing awarding gaps between black and white students, and financial sustainability of the growth in student numbers to 15,000. There are various Pillar 1 projects listed in the paper including Assessment Futures, awarding gaps, undergraduate marketing, commuting students, developing relationships with London boroughs, curriculum management, personal tutoring, and employability (CVstac). The Senior Vice-Principal (Education) reported that progress has been made meeting many KPIs, but further headway is needed on closing awarding gaps between black and white students. 23/028

A member of the Board asked why the project to improve education and support for commuter students had been paused. The Senior Vice-Principal (Student and Staff Experience) responded that other projects will have an impact on commuting students so those will have to be completed first. 23/029

Pillar 3 - Addressing key issues of our modern time by developing our strengths in challenge-led research

The Board RECEIVED an update on Pillar 3 - Addressing key issues of our modern time by developing our strengths in challenge-led research (AB/23/07a & b). The Senior Vice-Principal (Academic Strategy and Research) reported that the first part of the paper provides an update on the Doctoral School's plans to establish skills training and employability experiences for doctoral students. Since producing this paper, the Economics and Social Research Council bid (ESRC) to establish a major new Doctoral Training Centre in Social Sciences has been submitted with Royal Holloway taking the leadership role; the Senior Vice-Principal (Academic Strategy and Research) thanked Professor Kathy Rastle and Professor Klaus Dodds for their work on this. 23/030

The Senior Vice-Principal (Academic Strategy and Research) reported that the second part of the paper focuses on maintaining and enhancing staff and provides an update on the development of the staff research environment. An important part of the work noted in the paper is to identify and provide support for Early Career Researchers (ECRs). The Executive Dean of the School of Life Sciences and Environment (LSE) thanked Ellie Rayner for her work on this. 23/031

Pillar 6 – Environmental Sustainability

The Board RECEIVED an update on Pillar 6 – Environmental Sustainability (AB/23/08). The Executive Dean (LSE) provided his thanks for the support and camaraderie offered by Professor Sigrun Wagner. He reported that the decision was made to establish the Environmental Sustainability Strategy as Pillar 6 of the College's Strategic Plan. Next week the Environmental Sustainability Working Group (ESWG) will meet with Strategic Planning to develop a Project Charter. An Interim Head of Sustainability will start at the College in April. The post will be for six months. 23/032

Major Items of Business

13. Education

13.1 Teaching Excellence Framework

The Board NOTED the reflections on the Royal Holloway Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission 2023 (AB/23/09). The Senior Vice-Principal (Education) reported that the TEF submission was sent to the Office for Students (OfS) in January. He noted that there was vast variety in the sector in the ways institutions approach TEF. He reported that Royal Holloway came across as an intellectual and engaging institution and considered that the College needs to think about how to articulate that. TEF metrics are slipping, and the College needs to consider how TEF drives the work the College does. Whilst the College is good at teaching innovation and research informed teaching it does less well at evaluating and measuring impact. There also needs to be clarity on the definition and measurement of educational gains. The Senior Vice-Principal (Education) reported that TEF2027 is already on the way and the College needs to ensure that projects such as curriculum development and Assessment Futures move forward. 23/033

13.2 Structure of Teaching

The Board RECEIVED an update on discussions on the structure of teaching (AB/23/10). The Senior Vice-Principal (Education) reported that the paper places the semesterisation of the year in context of the three major projects – Curriculum Management and Design, Assessment Futures, and the Shape of the Year. The growing numbers of students taking resits and applying for extenuating circumstances and extensions indicate that the current structure of the year is not working and needs to be rearranged to offer better support to students. The core model puts the central assessment period after Christmas which should enable early intervention for struggling students and improved marking distribution for staff. The model has fixed course lengths with standardised teaching weeks and study weeks. A steering group met to discuss how the structure of the year might change and the Senior Vice-Principal (Education) reported that he was grateful to the steering group who assessed a large number of different models and criteria. 23/034

A member of the Board asked the following questions: 23/035

- (i) What will be the decision-making process?
- (ii) Who will be making the final decision?
- (iii) Will feedback be responded to?
- (iv) How much have students been consulted, especially given that the length of teaching time for each module will be reduced by 10%?

The Principal responded that the next stage will be the disaggregation of the project. Decisions are still to be made. The Students' Union President confirmed that there has been consistent student consultation since the start of the project.

13.3 Access and Participation Plan

The Board RECEIVED an update on the new Access and Participation Plan (APP) requirements (AB/23/11). The Senior Vice-Principal (Education) reported that the OfS is proposing eight changes to the APP submissions and the paper summarises the proposals and the College's current plan. APP is one of the regulatory requirements the College must meet to be able to continue charging higher tuition fees. 23/036

14. **UUK Suicide Safer prevention** 23/037
- The Board NOTED the institutional action plan implementing Universities UK (UUK) guidance to develop our commitment to being a suicide safer university (AB/23/12). Thanks were noted for Helen Groenendaal for her work in this area. The Senior Vice-Principal (Student and Staff Experience) reported that in October 2022, UUK updated its Suicide Safer guidance, with particular reference to the of sharing information with trusted contacts. The College is addressing the UUK recommendations and will be working with an external consultant who will be acting as a critical friend to review all changes made. The College also aims to work with the NHS on this. The trusted contact will be kept confidential within the Wellbeing Team and not routinely shared with personal tutors.
15. **Consultation on Statute Changes** 23/038
- The Board RECEIVED the amended wording of the College Statutes, in principle and subject to Privy Council consent, for approval from Academic Board for minor changes to reflect the extended title of Vice Chancellor and Principal and minor amendments to role of Secretary to Council (AB/23/13).
- A member of the Board noted two typographical errors in Statute 1, considered the proposed changes created ambiguities about the appointment and accountability of the University Secretary between Statute 2.2 and 3.17, and that there was potential for conflation about the meaning of the word 'University' in the title University Secretary as the Statute 1 definition of 'University' refers to University of London. The Chair clarified that there would be amendments to the definitions in the University of London Statutes, which would subsequently resolve the concern raised about the definition of 'University'. The Board member also asked and sought clarification about the change in the appointment process in the proposed Statute revision where the Council's current right to appoint an individual to this position is to be replaced only by a right to approve an appointment. Due to the detail in the comments, the Chair asked the Board member to put the corrections and queries in writing to the Academic Board mailbox for forwarding to the paper author. The comments would then be reviewed. A second member asked for clarification on the appointment of the University Secretary. Clarification was provided by the Chair, who noted that Council have approved the role of University Secretary, the role would be line managed by Principal, and the appointment panel for the role would include Council and Senior Leadership members. The Chair added that University Secretary is a recognised role in the sector and this role was benchmarked before being advertised. No other concerns were raised by Board members on the proposed changes. 23/039
16. **Effectiveness review** 23/040
- The Board NOTED that a committee effectiveness review will be circulated during the week commencing 27 March 2023 and RECEIVED the questions that will be asked as part of the review (AB/23/14). Board member responses will be anonymous, and analysis of the responses will be brought to the next meeting. The Secretary urged all members of the Board to complete the review.

Items for formal approval

17. ***Proposed amendments to regulations for 2023-24**
- 17.1 The Board APPROVED the proposed amendments to the academic regulations for 2023-24 as recommended by the Executive Committee for Assessment (AB/23/15). 23/041
- 17.2 The Board APPROVED the proposed amendments to the postgraduate research degree regulations for 2023-24 as recommended by the Doctoral School Committee (AB/23/16). 23/042

Items for report

18. ***Annual Review**
- The Board RECEIVED the composite School reports from the review of postgraduate taught provision in 2021-22 (AB/23/17). 23/043
- The Board RECEIVED the composite School reports from the annual review of postgraduate research provision in 2021-22 (AB/23/18). 23/044
19. ***Academic Board Executive**
- The Board RECEIVED the minutes from the Academic Board Executive meeting held on 13 February 2023 (AB/23/19). 23/045
20. ***Executive Committee for Assessment**
- The Board RECEIVED the minutes from the Executive Committee for Assessment meeting held on 2 November 2022 (AB/23/20). 23/046
21. ***Curriculum Development Committee**
- The Board RECEIVED the minutes from the Curriculum Development Committee meetings held on 16 November 2023 and 1 February 2023 (AB/23/21a & b). 23/047
22. ***Quality Assurance and Standards Committee**
- The Board RECEIVED the minutes from the Quality Assurance and Standards Committee meetings held on 10 and 24 November 2022 (AB/23/22). 23/048

Other Matters

23. **Any other business**
- The Chair NOTED that this was the last meeting for the Senior Vice-Principal (Academic Strategy and Research) and the Senior Vice-Principal (Education). The Board thanked them for their excellent work. 23/049
24. **Date of next meeting**
- Wednesday 7 June 2023 (14:00 – 16:00); Moore Auditorium and MS Teams 23/050

