

APPROVED  
CIRCULATED

AB(10/11)62

**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY  
UNIVERSITY COURT  
ACADEMIC BOARD**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on Friday 27 May 2011 at  
9.00 am in the Castle Room, New Craig, Craighouse**

**PRESENT:**

Professor Dame J K Stringer (Principal & Vice-Chancellor)(Convenor); K Bylinska (President, Napier Students' Association); Dr S Cairncross (Dean of Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); Professor J Duffield (Vice-Principal, Academic); S Falconer (Head of School from the Business School); Professor C Fairfield (School of Engineering & the Built Environment); Professor E Hart (Professoriate); R Holmes (School of Accounting, Financial Services and Law); Dr P Jaworski (School of Management); R Kemmer (School of Computing); C Lambert (Director of Student Affairs); Professor A McCleery (Director of Research); Dr S Marr (School of Marketing, Tourism & Languages); Professor B Paechter (Associate Dean from Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); R Pelik (Director of Academic Development); C Pinder (Director, IS); Professor M Prowse (Dean of Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences); Dr J Rees (Vice-Principal, Academic Quality & Customer Service); Dr J Sharp (Senior Lecturer from Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); S Smith (Head of School from Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); Professor G Stonehouse (Dean of the Business School); L Veitch (School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Care); Dr G C Webber (University Secretary); J Worden (Dean of International Strategy & Operations).

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

D Cloy (Assistant Secretary) (Clerk)

**APOLOGIES:**

N Ashton (School of Arts & Creative Industries); M Chapman (School of Life, Sport & Social Sciences); Dr J Donaldson (Head of School from Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences); R Goodwin (Student Representative from the Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); H Harvey (Student Representative from the Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences); L Juleff (Teaching Fellows/Senior Teaching Fellows); Professor R Mackenzie (Vice-Principal, Commercialisation); A Millar (Student Representative from the Business School); Dr R Wilkinson (Associate Dean from the Business School).

**1. WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS**

- 1.1 The Convenor welcomed Rachel Holmes attending her first meeting as the newly elected member from the School of Accounting, Financial Services & Law. It was also noted that Linda Juleff had been elected as the member drawn from the Teaching Fellow community, and had stood down from her position as Senior Lecturer member from the Business School, recognising that this category of membership was likely to disappear under the new Board Constitution.
- 1.2 It was noted that Rob Kemmer had been elected as the Academic Board member on Court, replacing Professor Brian Sloan.

- 1.3 The apologies were **noted**

**PART A: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 4 MARCH 2011 AB(10/11)46**

- 2.1 The minutes were **approved** as an accurate record of the previous meeting.

**3. MATTERS ARISING**

- 3.1 No matters arising were identified.

**4. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT AB(10/11)47**

- 4.1 The Principal introduced her written report, highlighting the outcome of the Scottish election and the returning government's continued commitment to free higher education for Scottish students. It was noted that a significant funding gap was likely to remain that would require to be filled and that the position on funding Scottish Universities remained unclear.
- 4.2 An update on the University's latest recruitment figures was also provided. It was noted that UCAS applications were up by 21%, well above the national increase, and that an estimated 173 students were required to meet Home EU non priority targets, with 32 required to meet Home EU priority targets. It was noted that overseas full time undergraduate applications were up by 16%, however overseas full time postgraduate applications were down by 19%. Full and part time postgraduate home/EU applications were also down by 7 and 24% respectively. It was noted that further efforts were required to deliver the non-UCAS recruitment figures.
- 4.3 It was reported that a very successful meeting had been held with the Nursing and Midwifery Council concerning the BSc in Nursing, where a number of commendations were made and only once condition given. Areas for commendation included the quality of documentation, the involvement of stakeholders in planning and the quality of the team. Congratulations were extended to the nursing team.
- 4.4 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the written report.

**5. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AB(10/11)48**

- 5.1 The Vice Principal (Academic) introduced the paper which presented the digest of management information based on a range of detailed indicators related to student academic performance, at University, Faculty and School level, which were closely aligned with the University's Key Performance Indicators. It was noted that the indicators were considered to be broad enough to cover all major dimensions of student academic performance and the student journey and that future developments would include benchmarking at subject area level.

5.2 The Board welcomed the information presented, which would enable it to better monitor the Academic health of Faculties and Schools. Discussion followed during which the increase in entry qualifications which had followed the increase in applications was noted, along with the need to reflect on how this may impact on widening access considerations. It was also noted that student satisfaction was broadly improving (as it was for other institutions) but that this required more detailed analysis at programme level to establish where improvements were needed. The importance of engagement with this data by Schools and Faculties was also noted.

5.3 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the indicators presented.

## 6. **ACADEMIC BOARD REVIEW: FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

AB(10/11)49

6.1 The Vice Principal (Academic) presented the final report of the 2010/11 effectiveness review of the Academic Board, and presented a number of detailed proposals concerning the Board's constitution and sub-committee structure, which were in line with the initial proposals which had been endorsed by the Board at its meeting on 4 March 2011. It was noted that the proposal resulted in a reduction in the number of formal committees and consequent servicing requirements.

6.2 It was reported that, during consultation, there had been concern expressed over the loss of School level committees in the new structure, and it was emphasised that the important contribution of such committees was to be subsumed into the Faculty level committees, and not disbanded. It was noted that Schools would, however, need to create discussion fora as appropriate to ensure information was effectively taken both upwards and back down. It was also noted that there had been concern expressed about the potential for some of the new combined committees to become overloaded, but that this was considered manageable through effective agenda management by Convenors and Clerks.

6.3 Discussion followed during which the need to maintain the level of engagement that School committees had allowed was emphasised. A number of detailed points regarding the remits and constitutions of sub-committees were also made. It was agreed that the VP (Academic) and members of the Working Group would reflect further on these points and any additional feedback received following the meeting and consider any amendments required. These would be approved by the Principal as Convenor on delegated authority and disseminated subsequently. It was further noted that a report on the operation of the new structure would be brought to the final meeting of the Board the following year.

6.4 Thereafter, Academic Board:  
**(i) approved** its proposed new constitution, for submission to Court for its final approval  
**(ii) approved** the proposed new committee structure  
**(iii) delegated authority** to the Principal as Convenor to **approve** the detailed remits and constitutions of the sub-committees, incorporating any additional changes which may be required in view of comments received at and following the meeting.

**7. OUTCOME OF ELIR**

**AB(10/11)50**

- 7.1 The Director of Academic Development introduced the paper which reported on the outcome of the Enhancement Led Institutional Review visit and outlined the main topics raised in the 'key themes' letter received from the Quality Assurance Agency. It was noted that the key themes letter confirmed that the University had been given a judgement of confidence in the current, and likely future, management of the academic standards of the awards it offers and the quality of the student learning experience it provides. This represented the best possible judgement from the process. It was further noted that the letter identified a number of areas of strength, and also a number of areas where the University was encouraged to reflect.
- 7.2 It was further reported that, following publication of the final report by the QAA in August, an action plan would be developed to follow through on actions designed to embed and share areas of strength and good practice as well as to follow through on areas for reflection. It was noted that the Board would receive a monitoring report one year on from publication to monitor progress, and this would form the basis of the follow up year-on response for QAA.
- 7.3 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the report, the content of the key themes letter and the follow on actions outlined.

**8. REVISED STUDENT APPEALS AND EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES REGULATIONS**

**AB(10/11)51**

- 8.1 The Director of Student and Academic Services introduced the update paper on the work undertaken to consider university regulations covering extenuating circumstances, appeals, student discipline, fitness to practice and complaints. The Board was presented with fully revised and updated Extenuating Circumstances and Academic Appeals regulations, as considered and endorsed by Regulations Committee and Quality Committee.
- 8.2 The Board was also invited to note that a series of minor changes, reflecting changes in role title as a result of University re-structuring, had been made to the regulations covering student discipline, fitness to practice and student complaints, approved at Quality Committee. It was noted that these regulations would be fully reviewed in the next session and would come to the Board for final approval in due course.
- 8.3 Discussion followed during which it was agreed that a statement making clear that these regulations did not apply to research students should be incorporated. There was further discussion on the provision of section A2.1(xiii) of the Extenuating Circumstances Regulations concerning evidence from counsellor's letters of support. It was agreed that this provision should stay where it was, given that convenors would be able to exercise judgement as to the weight that should be given to such evidence, but that the wording should be amended to read "*a counsellor's letter, or University Counsellor's letter or Independent Student Advisory Services Advisor's letter detailing any relevant non-health and non-medical issues*".

- 8.4 Thereafter, the Board:  
**Approved** the revised Extenuating Circumstances and Academic Appeals regulations.

**Noted** that minor changes to the regulations covering student discipline, fitness to practice and student complaints, had been approved at Quality Committee, pending a full review next session.

**9. ANNUAL REPORT TO THE SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL AB(10/11)52**

- 9.1 The Vice Principal (Academic Quality & Customer Service) presented the annual report on institution led review for submission to the Scottish Funding Council, which must be endorsed by Court. It was considered and approved by Quality Committee at its meeting on 6 May and was presented to Academic Board for endorsement and onward submission to Court for endorsement at its meeting on 27 June.

- 9.2 During discussion it was agreed that in the table presenting the annual report on professional and statutory body activities, for consistency, if there was no outcome, then the table should simply record “outcome awaited”.

- 9.3 Thereafter, the Board **endorsed** the report for onwards submission to Court.

**10. STUDENT EXPERIENCE STATEMENT AB(10/11)53**

- 10.1 The Vice Principal (Academic Quality & Customer Service) presented the Student Experience Statement that had been discussed at the Student Experience Committee, Learning Teaching & Assessment Committee and the Principal’s Executive Group. It was noted that this provided a single statement highlighting the full range of aspects of the overall student experience and was intended to subsume the Student Charter.

- 10.2 Discussion followed during which a number of points were noted including; the need to ensure the wording is inclusive to all types of student and to consider its applicability to those overseas; the need to include a mechanism to gather feedback; the need to reflect on whether the University is able to meet all expectations raised by the commitments contained. It was also agreed that it would be desirable to receive the document in its fully completed form including all linked and underlying documentation.

- 10.3 The Board **endorsed** the overall approach to the Student Experience Statement and **resolved** that a revised statement incorporating the points outlined above should be brought back to the first Academic Board of the next session to enable approval in time for a second trimester launch.

**11. ACADEMIC CALENDAR 2015/16 AB(10/11)54**

- 11.1 The Board **approved** the Academic Calendar for 2015/16.

## **PART B RECEIPT OF MINUTES**

The minutes of Academic Board's sub-committees are received to confirm to the Board that its sub-committees are continuing to meet their remits and are undertaking business on its behalf to the standard it expects.

12. **Minutes of Co-Curricular Modules Committee meeting held on 21 April 2011** **AB(10/11)55**
13. **Open Minutes of Research Degrees Committee meeting held on 22 March 2011** **AB(10/11)57**
14. **Open Minutes of Research Degrees Committee meeting held on 24 May 2011**  
To be received at the next meeting of Academic Board.
15. **Minutes of Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee meeting held on 17 February 2011** **AB(10/11)41**
16. **Minutes of Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee meeting held on 12 May 2011**  
To be received at the next meeting of Academic Board.
17. **Minutes of Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee held on 9 February 2011** **AB(10/11)42**
18. **Minutes of Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee held on 11 May 2011**  
To be received at the next meeting of Academic Board.
19. **Minutes of Quality Committee held on 11 February 2011** **AB(10/11)43**
20. **Minutes of Quality Committee held on 6 May 2011** **AB(10/11)60**

## **PART C ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

21. **REPORT ON UNIVERSITY KEY RISKS APPROPRIATE TO ACADEMIC BOARD** **AB(10/11)61\***

21.1 The Board **noted** the report on the University's key risks appropriate to its remit.

## **VALEDICTIONS**

The Convenor reported that this was the final meeting of Kasia Bylinska, who would shortly conclude her two year term as NSA President and thanked her for her contribution to the work of the Board over the past two years.

It was also reported to be the final meeting of Ryan Goodwin, the Student Faculty Rep from FECCI and Dr John Sharp as his category of membership would cease

with the proposed constitution change. It was also noted to be the last meeting of Professor B Paechter & Dr R Wilkinson under their current “associate dean” category of membership, and that Anne Sibbald had left the University since the Board last met.

The Convenor extended thanks to all concerned for their contribution to the work of the Board.

**\*denotes a paper to which an exemption under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 applies.**