

Minutes (unrestricted)

Meeting title: Senate (special meeting)

Date: Wednesday 15 October 2014

Time: 2.15 pm

Location: The Senate Room, George Thomas Building, Highfield campus

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (*in the Chair*), Pro Vice-Chancellor Neill, Pro Vice-Chancellor Petts, Pro Vice-Chancellor M Spearing, Dr J W Anderson, Dr L Armstrong, Professor Y Baatz, Professor A Barney, Dr H Bui, Dr M Carravetta, Professor P Charles, Dr T Chown, Dr S Colley, Dr S Curtis, Dr K Deinhardt, Dr A M Drummond, Professor J Falkingham, Professor K Fox, Dr A M Gravell, Dr H M Haitchi, Professor S Hawkins, Mr A L Hill, Dr J Holloway, Professor N Hounsell, Professor J Howells, Dr C W Jackson, Mr M Johnston, Dr B Lwaleed, Professor M Niranjani, Professor G Niblo, Dr D Nicole, Dr J Pybus, Ms J Savidge, Professor J A Vickers, Dr P Whittaker, and Dr K Zwolski

By invitation Dr V Korzeniowska, Professor P Smith, and Mr S White (Chief Operating Officer)

In attendance Ms C J Gamble

Welcome

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular Mr White, the interim Chief Operating Officer, Dr Korzeniowska and Professor Smith. Dr Korzeniowska and Professor Smith had been invited for the presentation and discussion of the draft Self-Evaluation Document, the sole item on the meeting's agenda.

5 Introduction by the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor introduced the draft Self-Evaluation Document (SED) for the University's Higher Education Review (HER) by outlining Senate's specific responsibilities for academic quality assurance and enhancement. He reminded members of Senate that the execution of this responsibility was significantly delegated to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee which reported to Senate on all relevant matters at every meeting

Turning to the draft SED, the Vice-Chancellor stated that the document represented the University's formal submission for the Review which would be conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in February 2015. The SED was due to be submitted to the QAA on 10 November 2014.

The Vice-Chancellor invited Senators to comment on matters of substance where they felt that the document could be improved and strengthened. Points of detail, such as typographical errors, should be forwarded to Dr Korzeniowska and Professor Smith as soon as possible after the meeting but by no later than 18 October 2014.

6 Quality Assurance Agency's Higher Education Review: draft Self-Evaluation Document

Received A copy of version 7.0 of the draft Self-Evaluation Document, marked 'Confidential' and dated 7 October 2014, together with a covering note from Dr Korzeniowska, Assistant Director, Student and Academic Administration, and Head of Quality, Standards and Accreditation and Professor Smith which outlined three specific areas on which views and comments were sought: accuracy and content; tone; and demonstrating how the University met the Expectations in the Quality Code.

Pro Vice-Chancellor Neill summarized the process that had been followed to prepare the document. It incorporated contributions from a wide range of academic staff from across the University, colleagues in Professional Services, and from a small group of external, critical friends. Representatives of the Students' Union had been involved in the drafting of the text from an early stage in the process which had been overseen by a steering group. Professor Smith was acting as the principal editor, bringing all the individual sections together in a consistent written style. An earlier version of the draft had been discussed at Senate in June 2014, and recommendations for change and improvement had been made on that occasion. Since that meeting the document had been revised and presented again to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee in September 2014. This meeting of Senate was the final opportunity for Senators to offer comments on the document which, it was felt, required some minor redrafting, rebalancing and refinement prior to submission in November 2014.

Professor Smith explained that the document was structured in a format required by the Quality Assurance Agency. There was some duplication of text in the document but this had been intentional and necessary to ensure that the document satisfied the QAA's requirements, and that each section could be read independently by a reviewer.

Dr Korzeniowska gave an overview of the evidence collection process and the plans regarding the referencing and ordering of the individual pieces of evidence.

Opening the discussion, the Vice-Chancellor invited questions, comments and views on the areas highlighted in the introductory paper.

Senators offered a number of points for consideration which Professor Smith noted, including the following:

- The University had a good track record in attracting students from lower participation groups in society. There appeared to be little information on the monitoring of that achievement and what steps were under consideration to improve further the University's current positive performance. (Paragraph 142.)

The Vice-Chancellor suggested that the evidence box should include the details of sources of information that described the details of the monitoring processes in place.

- In the light of the recent changes introduced in respect of a number of executive groups, what evidence would be best presented in the section entitled 'Governance, Roles and Responsibilities' (paragraph 8)?

The Vice-Chancellor stated that the changes did not affect the powers of Senate. An overview of the executive management arrangements would be provided as a part of the supporting evidence. He highlighted the ways in which the new arrangements were designed to improve the alignment of the executive function with the academic mission of the University and were intended to strengthen the executive support for the achievement of academic quality and enhancement determined by Senate. Pro Vice-Chancellor Neill commented that the remit of the Education and Student Experience Executive Group (ESEEG) would be developed to ensure alignment with the responsibilities of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

- Paragraph 178, under 'Support and Development of those involved in teaching', should be strengthened. Postgraduate research students were required to take Parts 1 and 2 of the programme 'Introduction to Teaching Skills for Postgraduates'. Professor Vickers would discuss how the text might be revised with Professor Smith after the meeting.
- In section 4.1.1, under the heading 'Responsibilities and entitlements of PGR students', the information about the entitlement and the support grant needed minor amendments; there were two separate sources of funding: one for the student and one for the Faculty (paragraph 445).
- In the section devoted to Internationalisation, there was no reference to Dalian Polytechnic University. Professor Smith stated that he would address this and include cross-references to section 4.10 where the detail of the arrangements with Dalian were described. He confirmed that the numbers of students studying at the Malaysia Campus would be corrected (paragraph 15).
- Progress in respect of Athena Swan should be included in the various sections on Equality and Diversity. Professor Howells commented that the Equality and Diversity Policy had been revised

and the link provided should take the reader to the up-to-date document (paragraph 160 under 'Equal and effective opportunities').

- The date of the opening of the City Gateway Halls of Residence needed to be amended on the University's web pages.
- The section on the re-framing of the University's organizational structures should include a reference to academic units. These were listed in subsequent sections in the document.
- Some of the links to web pages did not work. Dr Korzeniowska stated that they were all being tested and the necessary changes would be made to ensure that they functioned properly.
- The section on key challenges facing the institution (Section 1) would benefit from being written in a more confident and optimistic style. Professor Smith agreed that it was an issue of tone. The ordering of the paragraphs in that section, however, was stipulated by the QAA, and the sequence could not be changed.
- An executive summary of the document might help all staff understand the breadth of detail contained in the SED. Pro Vice-Chancellor Neill stated that drawing up such a summary could be undertaken after the document had been submitted. It was suggested that it might be helpful to produce a guide that took the reader through the sections which were most relevant to an individual's particular role.

The inclusion of a contents page in the full document would be a useful addition, if it was possible to include it under the prescribed format.

- In response to a query about the minutes of Senate, the Vice-Chancellor confirmed that sets of minutes would be made available as evidence, if requested by the QAA.

The Vice-Chancellor drew the discussion to a close. He proposed that there had been no issues raised that might have required a fundamental revision of the document, and clarified that most comments had been about the accuracy of facts, consistency, and fine-tuning of the text. He confirmed that all the changes agreed at the Senate meeting would be made to the final version of the SED.

The Vice-Chancellor commended those working on the preparation and drafting of the document, stating that it had been approached methodically and thoroughly. He reported that it was planned to make the document as accessible as possible to University staff and acknowledged that its content was confidential and could not be made publically available. The preparations for the Higher Education Review in February 2015 would continue, as agreed, over the following months, including targeted communications to the University community. He thanked Senators for their contributions to the discussion and all those who had been involved in the drafting of the document, in particular Professor Smith and Dr Korzeniowska.

- Resolved**
- (i) That the draft Self-Evaluation Document be approved for submission to the Quality Assurance Agency, subject to the final version having been revised to take account of the points discussed.
 - (ii) That Senators should forward any minor amendments they might wish to raise about the document to Dr Korzeniowska by 18 October 2014 at the latest.

7 **Date of next meeting**

The Vice-Chancellor confirmed the date of the first ordinary meeting of Senate of the 2014/15 academic year: 5 November 2014.

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The meeting finished at approximately 3.40 pm.

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