

Academic Board

9 December 2020



Actions

Ref	Action	Lead	Due Date
20/166	Add agenda item for the March 2021 Academic Board meeting for an update on Personal Tutor system and Wellbeing	JHE	March 2021
20/187	Submit Paper 20/86, adoption of the IHRA anti-semitism definition with the additional select committee caveats to Council for final approval	JHE/JK	February 2021
20/188	Ensure the Intellectual Property Policy is updated with clarification that discretion can be used in applying the thresholds for IP revenue share and amend any incorrect references the upper threshold, which should be set at £75,000.	KN	January 2021
20/190	Sign up to the QAA Academic Integrity Charter	DG	January 2021
20/193	Submit any comments on the AB Annual Report 2019-20 to the Secretary by the end of the first week in January 2021.	All	January 2021
	Ask the Chair to confirm the Annual Report and submit to Council	JHE	January 2021
20/73	Update Membership List to reflect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the change in the Head of Department of Human Resource Management and Organisational Studies. (ii) the academic member of staff elected to Council, who will also sit on the Academic Board 	JHE	Complete
19/143 19/183 and 20/76	To add update on the College's Access and Participation Plan as an agenda item for the December AB meeting	JHE	Complete
20/78	Set up a Call for election in January to fill the remaining two vacancies for elected members	JHE	Complete
20/117	Review Intellectual Property Policy and bring back to December meeting for discussion	KN	Complete
20/10	Deputy Principal (Academic) to respond to queries raised in email requesting to unstar paper AB/20/51	KN	Complete
	Secretary to add the following to the agenda for the October meeting—	JHE	Complete
20/14	SU Digital Survey Outcomes		
20/41	Update on delivery of College's Enhancement Plan		
20/16	Circulate summer term Council Minutes to Academic Board	JHE	Complete
19/167	Correct the minutes of the meeting of the Board on 23 October 2019 as noted.	RH	Complete

19/170	Refer this matter [the length of papers for Academic Board and the timing of the circulation of these] to the Academic Board Executive meeting in February for further discussion.	RH	Complete (paper presented to ABE, needs to be actioned)
19/175	The Secretary and VP Education to review the election of academic representatives and present a report to Academic Board in March 2020.	RH/KR	Complete
19/179	Circulate the PowerPoint presentation on KEF to Schools.	RH/KN	Complete
19/182	Reword Section 2 (a) (iii) on page 7 of the Access and Participation Plan to clarify what is being measured: <i>Brilliant Club: support 590 pupils to improve their written communication, subject knowledge and critical thinking skills by 5% or more.</i>	DA	Complete
19/183	Academic Board to receive a regular update on progress in meeting the Access and Participation Plan targets. Update: will be included as a standing item under starred items	PJL/RH	Ongoing. Last update received Dec 2020
19/185	Present a draft Degree Outcomes statement to the March meeting of Academic Board.	DG	Complete (Considered in June)
19/195	DDS to review the guidance and report to the Executive Committee for Assessment in the Spring term.	RH	Complete
19/196	Review the wording of Proposal 3 on regulatory changes with colleagues.	RH/MB	Complete
19/119	Put a note on the Academic Board website about the decision made to amend the terms of office of elected members to one year.	RH	ASAP
19/121	Correct the minutes of the meeting of Academic Board on 5 June.	RH	Completed
19/129	Take forward the provision of support for students studying in London in the Academic Development and Resources Committee.	KB	ASAP
19/131	Check with the interim Director of Human Resources whether recommendations from UCU were considered as part of the review of the Gender Pay Gap.	RH	ASAP
19/137	Present a 'lessons learned' paper on lecture recording to Academic Board in December.	KB	Complete (moved to March meeting)
19/143	Provide an update to Academic Board later in the year on work undertaken to close the attainment gap.	JK	March/ June 2020
19/147	Link the Committees Handbook page to the Terms of Reference for new School and College committees, currently published on the academic restructuring pages.	RH	ASAP
19/148	Add the casualization of staff to topics to be considered as part of the redevelopment of the College strategy given the number of staff in the College on causal contracts.	KB	ASAP

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Min. 20/142 – 20/206



Minutes

Present:	Prof P Layzell (Chair); Prof K Normington, Prof J Knowles, Prof M Humphreys, Prof G Agyemang, Prof J Parker-Starbuck, Prof G Pieri, Prof S Boogert, Prof T Pincus, Prof R Alston, Prof S Wright, Prof R Livesey, Dr A Whitelock, Dr M Berry, Prof B Langford, Dr M Naef, Mr R Jago, Prof O Heath, Prof A Jashapara, Dr S Wagner, Prof V Jansen, Prof J Adam, Prof P Dalton,	Prof D Howard, Prof R Schack, Dr S West, Dr C Matos, Prof S Ansari, Dr T Berry, Prof V Boisvert, Dr S Kuenzel, Prof S Murphy, Dr E Xhetani, Prof H Zagefka, Prof D Gilbert, Prof H Nicholson, Miss K Roberts, Ms A Chohan, Ms H Warwick.
Secretary:	Dr J Howden-Evans	
In attendance:	Ms M Ennis and Mrs A Wallis	Miss C Munton (Assistant Secretary)
Observers:	Mr A Alway	

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Principal opened the meeting by recording his thanks to staff for their considerable hard work from lockdown 1.0, throughout the summer and the autumn term to repurpose and deliver teaching and research. He also thanked the Students' Union for their letter of support, noting it was testament to the hard work that colleagues have put in over recent months. 20/142

Apologies were received from Dr D Ashton, Prof K Badcock, Prof R Fitzgerald and Prof P Komisarczuk. 20/143

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2020 (*Min. 20/70-141*) were APPROVED. 20/144

3. Matters arising

The Chair REPORTED that the actions in *min. 20/73, 20/76 and 20/117* had been completed. A call for nominations to fill the remaining two vacancies for elected members, *min. 20/78*, would be actioned in January 2021. 20/145

4. Unstarring of items

No items were unstarred for discussion during the meeting. 20/146

Formal Reports

5. Principal's Report

Paper AB/20/79, Principal's Report to Academic Board was RECEIVED. 20/147

- The Chair REPORTED that arrangements for the start of term 2 had been finalised in accordance with latest government guidelines, which requested that universities ensure a staggered return of students to campus. All teaching would start on 11 January 2021 as planned, with some students participating in blended learning from the beginning of term whilst others studying online only, in accordance with the principles for teaching and learning face to face set out by the Universities Minister. Confirmation had been received from government that universities would be permitted to offer asymptomatic Covid-19 testing on campus until at least the middle of February, by when all students were expected to have resumed face to face teaching. It was unclear whether there would be a government extension to asymptomatic testing beyond that date. 20/148
6. **Reports from the Senior Management Team**
- The Deputy Principal (Academic) REPORTED that UKRI has released a block grant to Higher Education institutions which will enable the College, from January 2021, to offer 3 month extensions to students who have not yet received an extension to their funding and whose funding ends between March and September 2021. Students with extenuating circumstances would be also be eligible to apply for a funding extension. Executive Board agreed to match the UKRI offer for College funded students. 20/149
7. **Report from the Students' Union President**
- Paper AB/20/80, update from the Students' Union President was RECEIVED. 20/150
- In addition to her written report, the President thanked academic and professional services staff for their work in the autumn term during the difficult circumstances created by the pandemic, noting that students appreciate the dedication that goes into supporting them. On behalf of the Board, the Chair affirmed this view, advising that colleagues have appreciated working as a team with the Students' Union in resolving the challenges presented by Covid-19. 20/151
8. **Report from the Council**
- Papers AB/20/81 minutes of the Council meeting held on 22 October 2020 were RECEIVED. 20/152
- The Chair REPORTED that the annual financial accounts had been signed off at the November Council meeting. Royal Holloway was one of the few universities to have their annual accounts signed off both by the governing body and the auditors, providing confirmation that the College is a going concern for the next 12 months. He thanked the Finance and Strategic Planning teams for their work in preparing the accounts and acknowledged that there has been an impact on all colleagues, for example through the freezing of vacant posts and suspension of new capital projects, in ensuring that the College remains a viable business. The formal minutes from the November Council meeting would be circulated with the March Academic Board papers. 20/153
9. **Reports from Schools**
- The presentation from the Head of the School of Humanities was deferred to the Academic Board meeting on 17 March 2021 due to technical difficulties. 20/154

Strategy Discussion

10. College Strategy

The Board were PROVIDED with an update on the College Strategy under item 25, paper AB/20/95, 3 year strategic plan statement approved by Council. 20/155

The Chair REPORTED that Council approved the 3 year strategic plan at their November meeting and that the Senior Vice Principal (Academic Strategy, Partnerships and Resources) is working with the Heads of School on drafting an implementation plan. 20/156

11. Student Wellbeing and Personal Tutoring support

The interim Director of Student and Academic Services and the Head of Student Advisory and Wellbeing PROVIDED a presentation on Student Wellbeing and Personal Tutoring; the Covid-19 effect and beyond. 20/157

The following points were noted:

- Student Advisory and Wellbeing services adapted their operational model rapidly in response to lockdown 1.0 in March and services were moved online. Students continued to engage well with this support during term time and there had been higher than normal engagement with support services over the summer vacation. 20/158
- In term 1, there was a proactive and holistic approach to supporting students self-isolating on and off campus. Wellbeing staff maintained contact with students via video calling to preserve an element of human contact and support was co-ordinated across wellbeing, the academic departments, accommodation, the Students' Union and the Hall Life team. The Library supported students by delivering books and learning material to those well enough to study during their period of isolation. Students were supported with their return to study at the end of their self-isolation. 20/159
- There was also a focus in term 1 on understanding from students their feelings about their wellbeing and the support the College has provided to them, and whether there were areas for improvement. Feedback from the pulse survey and meetings with students leaving self-isolation highlighted that whilst the vast majority of students had been able to access the right support when they requested it, there needs to be a greater focus on raising awareness of student facing services during induction week. Going forwards, personal tutors will be key to ensuring students are aware of the services available to them. 20/160
- There are two recommendations from the Digital Education Survey results specifically relating to personal tutoring to be considered next term. The first recommendation is to create minimum standards approach including a requirement for personal tutors to invite all students that have been assigned to them to an introductory meeting at the start of term 1 and the second is a review of current staff resources and the number of students assigned to each personal tutor to facilitate this engagement. 20/161
- More broadly, student surveys conducted by HEPI and the Office for National Statistics in autumn 2020 showed that nationally more than half of the students surveyed considered their mental health to be in a worse state than at the start of lockdown 1.0. College staff were asked to remain mindful that student wellbeing in 2020-21 has been impacted by various factors including being out of standard education for over 6 months whilst schools were closed, periods of self-isolation and social distancing requirements preventing them from socialising and finding groups of friends outside of their household bubble. Students have reported poorer 20/162

motivation, increased levels of procrastination and a general sense of feeling overwhelmed.

- Looking ahead to the 2021-22 academic year, HEPI research conducted at the end of November 2020 shows a high level of engagement in the Higher Education application process, facilitated by a physical return to school. UCAS has reported that student mental health and wellbeing continues to increase as a challenge for students applying to university. Universities, including Royal Holloway, will need to continue to adapt to the changing impact of COVID and be expect that next year it will be the cohort in general that needs wider support rather than specific student groups. 20/163
- A summary of the audit recommendations from the last 3 years, viz reassessing what is needed by the way of data and monitoring to better support student engagement and attendance in response to the blended landscape created by COVID, updating the complaints guidance to include the importance of early resolution at a local level and clarification of the governance mechanisms to support the Student Wellbeing Team, in particular case management. The Head of Student Advisory and Wellbeing noted that a case management system will be a key area moving forwards so that relevant staff have access to all of the necessary information and concerns can be flagged up at an early point to support a proactive response to issues. Personal Tutors will be a pivotal part of this to enable central Wellbeing services to have a cross sectional understanding of a student. 20/164

The presentation concluded with a summary of next steps for Student Advisory and Wellbeing Services and Personal Tutoring. With respect to advisory and wellbeing services, it was noted that a positive impact of COVID-19 has been earlier referrals from Schools, reducing the number of crisis situations. The Wellbeing team aim to keep up this momentum to maintain proactive responses, which needs to involve a greater focus on attendance and engagement awareness across the College to facilitate the faster response to concerns. Work will continue on developing internal services to offer more clinically based interventions for students at an earlier stage. With the support of the School of Life Sciences and the Environment, Student Advisory Services and Wellbeing have submitted a bid to the Office for Students and a Students' Mind project for funding to explore peer to peer support. 20/165

The Director of Student and Academic Services summarised the common themes arising out of discussions on personal tutoring and advised that after the Christmas break he would start working with colleagues on a set of recommendations for consideration at the next Academic Board meeting. The recommendations would be formed around issues such as what do staff require to deliver effective personal tutoring, reviewing students' understanding of personal tutoring, what a blended support service should look like in 2021-22 and how wellbeing concerns are recorded and escalated. RH100 student panel members would be asked to contribute to ensure student input. The Students' Union Vice President Education reported that she would also like to be included in the discussions. 20/166

The Director of Student and Academic Services thanked all staff at the College for their support in ensuring Royal Holloway did not experience the mental health crisis feared at the start of term. 20/167

12. Undergraduate Degree Outcomes		
	Paper AB/20/82 Analysis of Undergraduate Degree Awards 2020 was RECEIVED.	20/168
	The Vice Principal (Quality and Standards) REPORTED on four aspects from the paper:	20/169
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There had been some significant award inflation, however, it was important to put this into context. Although full sector data was as yet unavailable for comparison, bilateral information confirmed the College was not an outlier and that degree awards across the sector would be anomalous in 2019-20. Royal Holloway outcomes must also be considered within the effects of the no detriment policies such as the change to online assessment, Best go Credits and the Safety Net. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The analysis of award patterns in 2018-19 and 2019-20 by discipline attempts to draw attention to some of the challenges faced in assessing students in quantitative disciplines through the alternative assessment methods instead of the traditional end of year timed written exam. Discussions with the relevant departments on these assessment types formed a key part of the development of Flexible Education in 2020-21. 	20/170
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Examiners and the College's Principal External Examiner confirmed in their written reports that the no detriment actions were reasonable given of the scale of the disruption facing the College at the time and were consistent with approaches taken in other HEIs. 	20/171
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Royal Holloway sits in the mid-table of the OfS analysis of degree inflation relating to awards made in 2018-19. The Board were asked to note that the OfS analysis uses entry tariffs to model expected outcomes and should be used cautiously as it does not take into account other important factors such as value added, teaching quality and improvements in awarding gaps. Royal Holloway experienced a substantial jump in the number of unexplained firsts in 2019 compared to the previous year which may be attributed to changes in award patterns and declines in entry tariff. It was therefore important for the College to recognise the impact of the entry tariff degree inflation even if there are not marked changes in the degree award pattern. 	20/172
13. Developing Education in Terms 2 and 3		
13.1	Paper AB/20/83 was WITHDRAWN and the Senior Vice Principal (Education) PROVIDED a presentation on Flexible Education: Continuity and Development, Terms 2 and 3. He opened the presentation by thanking staff, the Students' Union sabbatical officers and students for their support with developing and implementing the Flexible Education offer in the autumn term.	20/173
	Consistent themes of positive feedback from the mid-term student survey included the quality of the teaching material and enthusiasm of teaching staff, the face to face engagement, the lecture recordings which had supported their studies and the praise for the interactive elements of modules, for example quizzes and videos. Areas for review and enhancement arising out of the survey included ensuring that lecture recordings and material is uploaded in advance of the lecture and that all reading lists are up to date, developing a better understanding of how to organise group and practical based work online, reviewing the teaching and learning methods underpinning the hybrid model i.e teaching students online and face to face in the classroom simultaneously, and a review of student workload to ensure that what is being asked of them is realistic in the context of the blended offer.	20/174
	He summarised the forthcoming decisions that still needed to be made with regards to terms 2 and 3. Plans for testing and travelling at the end of term 1 were now complete and had gone smoothly. Minor adjustments had been made to the extensions policy and some aspects of the	20/175

emergency academic regulations had been carried over from the previous year to protect students given the difficulty of the circumstances. Discussions at the start of term 2 would focus on the importance of the face to face part of the education focussing on what and how students are learning and their wellbeing. Some urgent improvements to physical teaching spaces and equipment would be made over the Christmas break to help with the quality of double teaching and recording. A decision would be taken in January on the possibility of scheduling in person invigilated exams or whether all end of year assessments would move online. The Department of Economics were participating in a proctoring pilot to establish if this would support exams if they needed to move online. The School of Humanities and the Library would test Ally, a new Moodle plug in to enhance the accessibility of teaching material, with the intention of implementing it across College before the start of the autumn term 2021. There would be a review of the College's definition of engagement and the benefits that can be derived from the additional data available from the reporting dashboard and more sophisticated technology. A decision would also be made on arrangements for term 3, including setting a realistic timeline for marking and exam boards in light of catch up activities such as postponed field trips.

The College's timetable for a staggered start to term 2 aimed to keep together Schools and joint honours subjects where possible. All students were expected to resume face to face teaching by 1 February 2021. Departments would also be asked to move any scheduled study weeks from the middle to the end of term to facilitate mid-term assessments, encourage consistent engagement with the blended study model and to provide a natural stagger to the end of term in the event of government announcing a travel window at the end of term 2. 20/176

The Senior Vice Principal (Education) also REPORTED on the next steps with implementing the education aspect of the College's 3 year plan, noting that key decisions include reviewing the portfolio of courses, determining what to keep and what to adapt from the flexible education model to improve student learning, support the new demographic of students and meet the anticipated scale of further and higher education policy changes. He hoped to start a consultation with key stakeholders in the spring term. The Chair noted that lessons learned from new styles of working for staff will be considered by the staff environment strand of the strategy. 20/177

13.2 The Students' Union Vice President (Education) PROVIDED a presentation on the recommendations arising out of the Digital Education Survey 2.0 conducted in November 2020. The survey covered the delivery and quality of online teaching, student engagement and satisfaction with online learning, accessibility of the online learning, student satisfaction with digitised professional services and student views on extra-curricular activities and the campus community. 20/178

The key recommendations included ensuring that recorded content is published within 48 hours of the lecture/seminar, the timing of classes and ensuring that regular breaks are factored into the teaching day, ensuring that microphones and cameras are located in the correct points in the room, increasing student engagement especially through using microphones and cameras, consistency in personal tutoring and ensuring students know how to access digital financial aid. 20/179

The Senior Vice Principal (Education) summarised the College's response to each of these recommendations, noting in particular that CeDAS and the Educational Development Unit have been asked to develop more consolidated training materials on MS Teams for students in advance of the spring term and that the reason for the connectivity issues on campus has been identified and is being addressed. The Head of the Department of Strategy, International Business and Entrepreneurship welcomed the review of student use of cameras noting that teaching and engagement has been made more challenging by not being able to see students on screen. 20/180

14. Access and Participation Plan

Paper AB/20/84 was WITHDRAWN and the Senior Vice Principal (Education) PROVIDED a presentation summarising progress in meeting the targets set out in the Access and Participation Plan covering 2020-21 to 2024-25. There remains considerable access and awarding gaps, however, positive progress has been made against all targets except in closing the awarding gap between black and white students. A key focus of next term in organising the Education Strategy and Student Success Project will be to determine how the College uses a more inclusive form of education to consistently narrow the awarding gaps. The Board noted that latest data available is from 2018-19 and it will be interesting to reflect on how the adjustments to teaching and assessment made in response to Covid-19 have impacted on student attainment in the next data set. 20/181

15. Student Recruitment

Paper AB/20/85, report on the November Student Number Count was RECEIVED. The Director of Strategic Planning REPORTED on the following – 20/182

- that the targets were set in January 2020, therefore prior to the pandemic, and that over recruitment of Home/EU undergraduate and postgraduate taught students has mitigated against some of the considerable fee loss caused by a shortfall in overseas recruitment. It was hoped that the January start offering on some degree courses would further mitigate this loss in fee income. 20/183
- the December Count shows little change to the student numbers published in the November Count. There would be another census in February to include the January starts. 20/184
- that the College Strategy sets out how the College intends to improve international recruitment over the next three years. 20/185

16. Anti-Semitism

Paper AB/20/86, the College's position on the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism was RECEIVED. 20/185

The Deputy Principal (Academic) REPORTED that the matter had been discussed at the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee and it had been agreed to recommend to Academic Board and Council that the IHRA's definition of anti-semitism is adopted, but with some caveats to uphold the principles of academic freedom. She noted that the College would extend the statement to clarify that no hate crimes are tolerated on its campus. 20/186

The Board AGREED to recommend to Council the adoption of the IHRA anti-semitism definition with the additional select committee caveats as outlined in paper AB/20/86. 20/187

17. Intellectual Property Policy

Paper AB/20/87, Intellectual Property Policy was RECEIVED AND APPROVED, subject to clarification that discretion can be used in applying the thresholds for IP revenue share. The Deputy Principal (Academic) confirmed that the upper threshold is £75,000 above and that any incorrect references to this being set at £50,000 would be corrected. 20/188

18. **PDR proposal for University of London Worldwide**
 Paper AB/20/88, Periodic Departmental Review proposal for programmes offered with the University of London World Wide distance learning provision, was APPROVED. The Vice Principal (Quality and Standards) advised the Board that although the paper indicates a review will be scheduled for term 3 of the 2020-21 academic year, this is yet to be discussed and confirmed with the relevant departments. 20/189
19. **QAA Charter on Academic Integrity**
 Paper AB/20/89, QAA Charter on Academic Integrity was RECEIVED and the Board AGREED to Royal Holloway signing the charter. 20/190
20. **Research Degree Regulations**
 Paper AB/20/90, amendment to the Research Degree Regulations WAS RECEIVED and APPROVED. 20/191
 The Deputy Principal (Academic) acknowledged that requiring an independent chair at PGR viva examinations was a change in practice for some departments but considered it was especially important during the pandemic that the College adopted best practice within the sector. In response to a query from the Head of the Department of Earth Sciences, she confirmed that the independent chair could be appointed from within the School. 20/192
21. **Annual Report of Academic Board**
 Paper AB/20/91 Annual Report of Academic Board was RECEIVED. The Principal noted that it had been a late circulation and that he would take Chair's action in January 2021 to approve the report. Members of the Board were asked to send any comments to the Secretary. 20/193
 The Board recorded their warm thanks to Professor Normington for her considerable contributions in various roles while at the College, and wished her the very best for her new role as Vice Chancellor of Leicester De Montfort University. 20/194

Items for formal approval

22. *** Proposed amendments to regulations for 2021-22**
 Paper AB/20/92, minor amendments to the academic regulations for 2021-22 was RECEIVED and APPROVED. 20/195
23. ***Proposed changes to terms of reference**
 Paper AB/20/93, amended terms of reference of the Executive Committee for Assessment were RECEIVED and APPROVED. 20/196
24. ***Nominations for committees**
 Paper AB/20/94, updated list of nominations for the Statute 9 and Student Discipline Committees was RECEIVED and APPROVED. 20/197

Items for Report

25. ***College Strategy**
Paper AB/20/95, update on the College Strategy was RECEIVED. 20/198
26. ***Annual Review**
Paper AB/20/96, composite School reports from the review of undergraduate provision in 2019-20 were RECEIVED. 20/199
27. ***Suspensions of regulations**
- 27.1 Paper AB/20/97, report on the suspension of undergraduate and postgraduate taught regulations in 2019-20 was RECEIVED. 20/200
- 27.2 Paper AB/20/98, report on the suspension of postgraduate research regulations in 2019-20 was RECEIVED. 20/201
28. ***Annual Report on the Executive Committee for Assessment**
Paper AB/20/99, Annual Report on the Executive Committee for Assessment was RECEIVED. 20/202
29. ***Academic Board Executive**
Paper AB/20/100, Minutes of the meeting of Academic Board Executive held on 2 November 2020 was RECEIVED. 20/203
30. **Quality Assurance and Standards Committee**
Paper AB/20/101, Minutes of the meeting of the Quality Assurance and Standards Committee was RECEIVED. 20/204
31. **Institutional Recovery Project**
Paper AB/20/102, the consolidated decision log across the clusters, was RECEIVED. 20/205
- Other matters**
32. ***Date of next meeting**
Wednesday 17 March 2021 at 2pm on MS Teams. 20/206