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SOAS

ACADEMIC BOARD MINUTES

15 June 2017 at 2.00pm, Conference Suite, Paul Webley Wing

Dr R Alexander*	Professor Nadjie Al-Ali*
Baroness Valerie Amos	Professor R Bachmann
Dr B Bhandar	Professor R Black
Professor C Bramall	Dr J Caron
Professor M W Charney*	Professor A Contadini
Professor C Cramer	Ms R Everitt
Ms N Farzad*	Mr M Gaskin*
Mr A Habib*	Dr S Hawthorne
Dr G Heathcote	Professor M Hutt*
Dr E Hunter	Dr M Jennings
Dr D Johnston	Dr T Kaiser*
Dr G Kirsch	Dr M Laffey*
Dr K Latham*	Dr Angus Lockyer
Dr Lutz Marten	Dr B Murtagh
Dr M Nelson	Dr A Newsham*
Professor I Nikolaeva*	Dr S Pett*
Ms N Phillips*	Dr B Pizziconi
Professor R Reid*	Professor A Saad Filho
Dr M Sabaratnum*	Dr Mandy Sadan
Ms P Sanderson	Professor G Singh
Dr S Sperl	Mr M Taha
Professor C Tan	Dr U Volz*

*denotes apologies

In attendance:

Mr P Baran	Mr J Campbell
Mr G Davies	Ms S Harris
Mr R Ivermee	Ms AM O'Mullane (minutes)

[In order to be recorded on the minutes as in attendance members must sign the attendance sheet]

Directors Update - Occupation

AB 2016/17 7 A0

The Chair updated Academic Board (hereafter AB) on the occupation of the Directorate by Justice4workers which was related to a communication from Elixir that SOAS intended to close the refectory. This was untrue.

Following feedback from students and staff in relation to the School's catering provision the intention was to diversify the offer in order to deliver culturally diverse, affordable and more ethically sourced food. No decision had been taken to close the Refectory. The intention

was to engage in a consultation across the School. Elinor had not informed the School that they would be issuing letters to staff. These letters had been rescinded.

The occupiers had made a series of demands and were refusing to leave until these demands were met. The Chair thanked academic staff who had acted as intermediaries. The Chair reminded AB that the School negotiated with recognised trades unions and not with campaigning groups. It was not appropriate to engage in negotiations on terms and conditions of workers with student campaigns.

The Chair also report the concerns from staff intimidated as a result of the occupation. Some felt vulnerable after around thirty students tried to enter the occupation following a demonstration. Aggressive behaviour had been displayed at this point. The School respected the right to peaceful protest. It did not tolerate violent and threatening behaviour.

Minutes

AB 2016/17 7 A

The minutes of the meeting were **approved** subject to the following changes:

'It was noted that there would be some disruption to the library' should be changed to "significant disruption to the library"

Support for Multimedia was listed as in the IT Department. It should state LLR.

Action Points

AB 2016/17 7 B

The Committee Secretary would follow up on the matter of ensuring that the Head of IFCELS was updated on work in relation to the Resource Allocation Model. AB noted all other actions had been taken.

Matters Arising/Matters for Report

AB 2016/17 7 C

The Committee gave a vote of thanks to the following members of Academic Board who would not be members next year:

Professor Gurharpal Singh
Dr Griseldis Kirsch
Dr Barbara Pizziconi
Dr Mandy Sadan
Dr Erica Hunter

Director's Report

AB 2016/17 7 D

AB noted the Director's Reports from January, February, April and May 2018.

Outcome of the Teaching Excellence Framework

AB 2016/17 7 E

AB noted that the outcome of the teaching excellence framework had been delayed and no indication of a new date for publication. AB noted that Jo Johnson would continue as Minister of State for Universities and Science.

AB **received** three tabled papers on the location of Media & Film Studies, Islamic Studies and a diagram of the new academic structure in addition to the papers circulated in advance of the meeting. It was noted that the current student information systems would be maintained for the time being due to system limitations. Following discussion on each Item, AB made the following decisions:

Media and Film Studies

AB agreed that:

The MA Critical Media and Cultural Studies would stay in the School of Arts with the programme convenor. All other Media programmes and staff would move to Interdisciplinary Studies in a new Centre for the Study of Media and Digital Technologies (the name would be confirmed at a later date). The two Film Studies programmes would move to the School of Arts with one member of staff.

Islamic Studies

Two options were presented to AB: to move the School's two Islamic Studies programmes to the School of History, Religions and Philosophies (HRP); or to keep the programmes in the School of Languages, Cultures & Linguistics (LCL). Following discussion, a third option was identified to move the MA Islamic Societies and Cultures to HRP with two academic staff and two research-only colleagues; and to keep the other Islamic Studies programme and staff members in LCL. There was a discussion on the future direction of Islamic Studies at the School. Following this discussion, AB voted on the three options:

Option A – to move the School's two Islamic Studies programmes to the School of History, Religions and Philosophies: 5 votes

Option B - to keep the programmes in the School of Languages, Cultures & Linguistics: 0 votes

Option C - to move the MA Islamic Societies and Cultures to HRP with two academic staff and two research-only colleagues; and to keep the other Islamic Studies programme and staff members in LCL: 15 votes

Option C was carried.

It was noted that ongoing scrutiny would be required in order to prevent competition between the two programmes.

Governance

AB **approved** the recommendations contained in Appendices 1 – 5 covering governance arrangements. The Committee noted that the language around the standing orders covering changes to standing orders and annexes would be updated to reflect feedback provided by the Chair of the Academic Restructuring Governance Working Group. Academic Board agreed to a change to the appointment of Heads of Department Standing Order, to remove the clause relating to hearing and reading applications.

In relation to Appendix 2, Terms of Reference of Academic Board sub-committees, AB agreed that the Director of Research and Enterprise would be included in the composition of Academic Development Committee. The Head of the School of Arts should be included in the Brunei Gallery Advisory Panel instead of the Head of the Department of Art and Archaeology. It was confirmed that Faculty Research Committee had been removed.

Departmental and School Level Roles

AB **approved** Appendix 5 covering Departmental and School level roles.

Policy and Processes

AB **approved** the recommendations contained in Appendices 6 – 12 covering policy and processes. It was noted that the reference to a Departmental Management Group in section 14 of the Research Leave Policy was an oversight and did not refer to a formal group in the structure. AB agreed that more appropriate wording would be to state, “Head of Department for decision, in consultation with senior colleagues”.

Research and Interdisciplinary centres

AB **approved** Appendix 13 covering research and interdisciplinary centres. A new School Research Centre is created – the Centre for Media and Film Studies. It sits administratively in the School of Arts but like other School Research Centres would accept members from across SOAS. It is the basis for the next Media and Film REF submission. The London Confucius Institute would report to Executive Board.

Resources Allocation Model Working Group

AB **noted** Appendix 14 resources allocation model working group. There was discussion around incentivisation for performance against target, resource allocation for dissertation and the capacity to change the RAM as needed. It was suggested that the cost of Multimedia Services should be included in the RAM which was supported by LLR.

Attainment Gap

AB 2016/17 7 G

AB approved the three recommendations contained in the executive summary of the Attainment Gap paper and noted the other draft recommendations. Concerns were raised about the administrative burden involved in moving to blind marking of assignment. Feedback would be welcomed from administrative areas on this matter. It should be provided to the Dean of Law & Social Sciences who was chairing the working group.

There was lengthy discussion of whether data should be provided to students on module marks or staff. It was noted the students union and the working group was not supportive of providing data to students as it might discourage students from taking perceived “difficult modules” and result in decisions being taken on likely marks rather than on intellectual grounds. While it was agreed that data should be shared with staff and would be beneficial for staff when advising about modules outside their department, there were risks that unconscious bias would play a role in the advice being provided to pursue particular modules. It was noted that a robust advising system was crucial for students.

AB agreed that Attainment Gap would be a regular item on the AB agenda.

School's Online Future

AB 2016/17 7 H

AB noted the paper received on the School's online future. The aim of the paper was to provide a starting point for consideration of SOAS's Distance Learning, Online and Digital Future. AB welcome the Academic Head of Online Learning to the meeting. It was noted that the paper covered not only support for distance learners but also had objectives for on-campus learning and teaching. The Director of Library and Learning Resources asked that Library and Learning Resources be involved in future discussions as staff members had been undertaking work around digital literacy.

Decolonising SOAS Vision: Update on received feedback

AB 2016/17 7 I

AB **requested** the Decolonising SOAS Working Group re-examine the use of the word "reparation" as it was a contested word. The Working Group was asked to report back to the first meeting of AB in the next Academic Year.

Changes to General & Admissions Regulations for 2017/18 and Changes to Taught Degree Regulations for 2017/18

AB 2016/17 7 J

AB approved the changes to General & Admissions Regulations for 2017/18 and Changes to Taught Degree Regulations for 2017/18 subject to the date changing for the dissertation deadline to a week earlier as the current date coincided with the move-out date from accommodation.

Review of Two-Subject Degree Programmes

AB 2016/17 7 K

AB **approve** the recommendations contained in the report except around the home-location of two subject-degrees. Academic Development Committee was asked to do further work on the home location of two-subject degrees and to produce financial models of impact including in relation to registration fees. It was noted that

SOAS Languages Strategy

AB 2016/17 7 L

AB **noted** the SOAS Languages Strategy and agreed that it would be brought back to AB for further consideration.

Fundraising for Strategic and Vulnerable Languages

AB 2016/17 7 M

AB **noted** the paper on Fundraising for Strategic and Vulnerable Languages and agreed that it would be brought back to AB for further consideration together with the SOAS Languages Strategy.

**New Student Code of Conduct and updated Student Disciplinary Procedure for
2017/18**

AB 2016/17 7 N

AB noted the comments tabled at the meeting from Nadjie A-Ali in relation to the student disciplinary procedure. It was raised that section 4.3 of the procedure was problematic as it involved the complainant becoming a witness. It was noted that the forms were also missing from the documentation.

AB had two options to approve the Student Disciplinary Procedure in principle and gather feedback from board members and rework relevant sections or to delay approving the procedure until the changes were made. It was noted that the latter route would prevent the revised procedure from being used in 2017/18.

AB agreed in principle to approve the Student Disciplinary Procedure. It was agreed that the procedure would be circulated to AB members with the track changes. AB members would be given a week to provide further feedback on the procedure. Based on the feedback, the procedure would be reworked in time for its submission to the Board of Trustees for approval. The procedure was considered to be a substantial improvement on the previous procedure. It was recognised that changes could be made to the procedure this time next year should further changes need to be made.

AB members agreed to the following change to section 1.17 of the procedure:

- Change wording from "is as fair as possible" to "is fair"
- Removal of the wording "to the student"

School Risk Register

AB 2016/17 7 O

AB **noted** the School Risk Register. This was the first time that AB had received the Risk Register.

Regional/Centre' Annual Reports

AB 2016/17 7 P

Academic Board **noted** the Regional/Centre's Annual Reports. The Committee also noted the tabled report of the Centre of Contemporary Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Faculty Board Annual Reports

AB 2016/17 7 Q

AB **noted** the Report from the Faculty Board for the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences. The two other faculty board reports would come to the first meeting of AB next academic year.

Minutes/Reports from Academic Board Sub-Committee

AB 2016/17 7 R

AB noted the minutes from Academic Development Committee, 23 May 2017 and the report from Research and Enterprise Committee, 17 May 2017.

Appointment of Senior Fellow – Michael Masseh QC*

AB 2016/17 7 S

AB noted the appointment of Senior Fellow Michel Masseh QC.

Associate Deans – 2017/18

AB 2016/17 7 T

AB noted the appointment of the following Associate Deans:

Arts & Humanities

ADLT – Dr Angus Lockyer from 2017 onwards

ADR – Dr Erica Hunter (for 2017-18 only)

ADR – Dr Marloes Janson (2018 onwards)

Languages & Cultures

ADR – Professor Tian Yuan Tan (2017/18)

ADLT (UG) - Dr Mustafa Shah (up to 2018/19)

ADLT (MA) – Dr Julia Sallabank (from 2017/18)

Law & Social Sciences

The ADR and ADLT are continuing for 2017/18

ADLT – Dr Hong Bo

ADR – Dr Paul O’Connell

Emeritus Status: Dr Isolde Standish, Emerita Reader

AB 2016/17 7 U

Academic Board is asked to note the award of Emerita Reader to Dr Isolde Standish.

Action Points

Item	Action Detail	When?	By?
AB 2016/17 7 B Action Points	Committee Secretary to follow up on the matter of ensuring that the Head of IFCELS was updated on work in relation to the Resource Allocation Model.	Oct 2017	AOM
AB 2016/17 7 F Academic Restructuring	Changes to be made to Standing Orders and Annexes reflecting decisions of AB Change to be made to Research Leave Policy as per decision of AB	July 2017 July 2017	AOM RI
AB 2016/17 7 G Attainment Gap	AB agreed that Attainment Gap would be a regular item on the AB agenda.	Oct 2017	AOM
AB 2016/17 7 I Decolonising SOAS Vision	Decolonising SOAS Working Group to re-examine the use of the word "reparation" as it was a contested word.	Oct 2017	DJ
AB 2016/17 7 J Changes to Regulations: Dissertation Deadline	AB approved the changes to General & Admissions Regulations for 2017/18 and Changes to Taught Degree Regulations for 2017/18 subject to the date changing for the dissertation deadline to a week earlier as the current date coincided with move-out date from accommodation.	July 2017	DJ/EP
AB 2016/17 7 K Review of Two-Subject Degree Programmes	Academic Development Committee was asked to do further work on the home location of the two-subject degrees and to produce financial models of impact including in relation to registration fees.	Dec 2017	DJ
AB 2016/17 7 L SOAS Languages Strategy	The SOAS Languages Strategy is to be brought back to AB for further consideration.	Oct 2017	LM
AB 2016/17 7 M Fundraising for Strategic and Vulnerable Languages	The paper on Fundraising for Strategic and Vulnerable Languages is to be brought back to AB for further consideration together with the SOAS Languages Strategy.	Oct 2017	LM
AB 2016/17 7 N Student Disciplinary Procedure	Student Disciplinary Procedure to be updated with language agreed at AB for section 1.17 The procedure is to be circulated to AB members with the track changes. AB members would be given a week to provide further feedback on the procedure. The procedure would be reworked in time for its submission to Board of Trustees for approval.	July 2017 July 2017	AC/CI AOM/AC/CI