

These minutes are for information only. Any corrections to the minutes will be recorded in the minutes of the subsequent meeting of the committee.

SOAS

**ACADEMIC BOARD
MINUTES**

1 November 2017 at 2.00pm, Conference Suite, Paul Webley Wing

Baroness Valerie Amos (Chair)	Professor N Al-Ali
Dr R Alexander	Professor R Bachmann
Dr B Bhandar	Professor R Black
Professor C Bramall	Dr J Caron
Professor M W Charney	Professor A Contadini
Professor S Hopgood	Ms R Everitt
Ms N Farzad	Dr S Hawthorne*
Dr N Hill	Ms H-Y Tam
Dr H Bo*	Dr U Volz
Professor C Tan	Dr M Jennings
Professor D Johnston	Dr T Kaiser
Ms Waite	Dr M Laffey
Professor K Latham	Dr A Lockyer
Professor L Marten	Dr B Murtagh
Dr M Nelson	Dr A Newsham
Professor A Saad Filho	Dr S Pett*
Ms N Phillips	Ms P Sanderson
Professor R Reid	Mr H Anderson
Dr M Sabaratnum	

*denotes apologies

In attendance:

Mr P Baran	Dr I Pickup
Mr G Davies	Professor S Chan (For Item F)
Mr R Ivermee	Dr C Ince (minutes)
Dr S Rofe*	

Minutes

AB 2017/18 1 A

The minutes of the meeting on 15 June 2017 were **approved**.

Action Points

AB 2017/18 1 B

The Committee Secretary updated the Board on progress against the actions. Other than those not yet due, completed or covered on the agenda there were the following updates:

2016/17 7 F – The changes to the Standing Orders had been approved by the Board of Trustees. There would be further amendments during the coming year and feedback would be provided from the working group that had looked at them during the last revisions

2016/17 7 L & M – The Languages Strategy and paper on fundraising in this area would come to the next meeting.

Matters Arising/Matters for Report

AB 2017/18 1 C

The Interim Director of Library & Learning Resources reported that she would be contacting members to schedule brief meetings to discuss what they needed from library services and to share information about areas of success

Terms of Reference & Conduct of Committees

AB 2017/18 1 D

Academic Board **noted** its Terms of Reference along with the Code of Conduct for all committees at SOAS.

Director's Report

AB 2017/18 1 E

The Director **presented** her report to the last Board of Trustees meeting. This highlighted the School's challenging financial position and the developing plans to address this. The decision to maintain the tariffs set by departments for recruitment in 17/18 had worsened this position from the previous forecast. This had been a decision taken by Executive Board with the support of the Board of Trustees. There would be a short-term financial plan to address this deficit as well as a medium-term plan around future investment and areas of growth. AB **noted** that the informal meeting with the Board of Trustees the following day would look at a review of the SOAS marketing strategy and potential areas for growth.

Academic Restructuring

AB 2017/18 1 F

(i) Area Studies Review

Professor Chan **reported** on the outcome of the Review of Area Studies at SOAS. The Report addressed the poor performance in the last REF exercise and made several recommendations to improve this as well as maintain the School's commitment to Area Studies in the future. These included a smaller more focused REF submission, locating MA degrees currently in Institutes in academic departments and revised entry requirements for students wishing to undertake a PhD in Area Studies.

EB **discussed** the School's Area Studies REF submission and if this should be a small focused submission or a larger submission from across the School. The REF criteria were still to be finalised, but a decision needed to balance the interests across the School and many staff had a discipline and area expertise. EB **agreed** that the School needed a strong focused submission to the REF in Area Studies but did not support the creation of an "Area Studies Academy" to facilitate this. Other options discussed included managing this through the Institutes or the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies.

Academic Board **approved** the recommendations in the Report. However, there would not be a creation of an Area Studies Academy. The Pro-Director, International would lead on considering how the School could develop a PhD pathway for Area Studies and what the entry requirements would be.

(ii) Promotions Panel Composition

Academic Board **approved** the panel composition and associated guidance.

Student Safeguarding Policy

AB 2017/18 1 G

The Deputy COO (SAE) **reported** on the work to develop a Student Safeguarding Policy that covered a range of areas. This was an expectation of HEFCE and likely to be a requirement for the Office for Students.

Academic Board **approved** the Policy and agreed that this would be reviewed early in 2018 so that it could receive an update on its implementation at its March meeting.

Academic Performance Framework

AB 2017/18 1 H

Academic Board **discussed** changes to the Academic Performance Framework that addressed issues raised last year and the academic restructure. The revisions had been shared with UCU and several concerns had been raised around alignment to the REF, teaching qualifications, the guidance being illustrative for all components and the shift away from research in the criteria for promotion.

The Pro-Director, Research & Enterprise explained that the inclusion of impact did not explicitly refer to REF and was a good step as it allowed the School to promote on this criterion; consideration would be given to the recognition of overseas teaching qualifications but a qualification was a requirement to complete probation; the guidance could be clarified to state it covered all components of the framework as illustrative examples; the greater emphasis on teaching was in line with that at other institutions and provided guidance on a decision already taken by Academic Board.

EB **approved** the revisions to the Academic Performance Framework. It **noted** it would receive a paper to a future meeting on if the same criteria and teaching qualification requirements should be extended to senior/teaching fellows and lecturers.

Decolonisation

AB 2017/18 1 I

The Chair of Senate **reported** on the ongoing work around decolonisation at SOAS. The paper included an update action plan as well as feedback from the Working Group on the inclusion of the word “reparations” in the document. Academic Board had asked the Group to consider removing the word “reparations” and replace with “redress” but the Group recommended retaining it.

Academic Board discussed in detail the use of the word “reparations” and what should be included in the approved version. It voted on this and agreed by a vote of 20 to 5, with 2 abstentions, to use the word “redress”.

HEFCE Annual Provider Review

AB 2017/18 1 J

Academic Board **approved** the Annual Provider Review for recommendation to the Board of Trustees. This would also be discussed with the Board of Trustees at the informal meeting the following day.

AB nominations to committees

AB 2017/18 1 K

Academic Board **noted** the various committee vacancies for its members on other committees. Any members interested in serving on one of the committees should contact the Secretary in the next two weeks. The Director would make any final decisions on appointments, if required.

Student evaluation of modules

AB 2017/18 1 L

The Pro-Director, Learning & Teaching **reported** on student evaluation of modules and that Academic Development Committee was reviewing the thresholds at which it could be used in the Academic Performance Framework. The current threshold meant that only 3 of the School’s 1600 modules met the criteria.

The data were used for a wider range of issues and were reviewed by LTQC every year. The School needed to ensure it engaged with course reps so that the response rates improved, and students were able to see the data and how they were being used.

Academic expertise and public debate

AB 2017/18 1 M

EB **approved** the Policy on Academic Expertise and Public Debate, which had been developed in response to a discussion at Senate the previous academic year.

Senate Papers

AB 2017/18 1 N

The Chair of Senate **reported** on the recent Senate meeting. This had debated three motions as well as discussing the School’s Online Learning Strategy.

The first motion, about co-location of administrative support with academic departments, had 130 votes for, 6 against and 7 abstentions. The issue was part of the consultation on student and academic services that would commence the following week in line with the Schools change management policy. A small working group was being set up to look at this specific issue and would involve staff and students. Academic Board noted the advisory vote, which would be fed in to the consultation by the Senate Chair. The final decision on any structure was not within the remit of Academic Board.

The motion relating to events on campus had received 85 votes in favour, 18 against and 27 abstentions. The Senate Chair would write to the Director, Registrar and Chair of the Board of Trustees about the motion and ask for a formal response.

The third motion related to SOAS journals and had 133 votes for, 2 against and 6 abstentions. The Pro-Director, Research & Enterprise offered to meet with the motion creators to discuss the steps the School was already taking around existing contracts and open access and see if any further action was required.

Constitution of Centre for Yoga Studies

AB 2017/18 1 O

Academic Board **approved** the creation of a Centre for Yoga Studies, subject to the constitution being written in the correct template.

Reports from AB sub-committees

AB 2017/18 1 P

Academic Board **noted** the minutes of Resources & Enterprise Committee, which had been circulated via e-mail. These would be included on the agenda for the next meeting, along with those from Academic Development Committee.

Appointment of Senior Fellow

AB 2017/18 1 Q

Academic Board **noted** the appointment of Simeon Obidairo as a Senior Fellow.

Action Points

Item	Action Detail	When?	By?
AB 2016/17 7 G Attainment Gap	AB agreed that Attainment Gap would be a regular item on the AB agenda.	5/12/17	CI
AB 2016/17 7 L SOAS Languages Strategy	The SOAS Languages Strategy is to be brought back to AB for further consideration.	5/12/17	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.	5/12/17	LM
AB 17/18 1 F – Area Studies Review	Proposals for Area Studies PhD and any specific entry requirements	31/1/18	SH
AB 17/18 1 G - Student Safeguarding Policy	Report on implementation of Policy	14/3/18	IP
AB 17/18 1 H Academic Performance Framework	Paper on use of criteria and teaching qualifications for TF/STF/Lectors	31/1/18	DJ
AB 17/18 1 K – Committee vacancies	Members interested in serving on another committee to contact Secretary	15/11/17	All