



## Academic Board

### Minutes of a meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019

**Present:** Stephen Hopgood (*Chair*), Andrea Cornwall, Deborah Johnston, Alfredo Saad-Filho, Paula Sanderson, Kevin Latham, Michael Charney, Narguess Farzad, Chege Githiora, Awino Okech, Shane McCausland, Tania Fraizer, Hugh Bendor-Samuel, Graham Davies, Ulrich Pagel, Dina Matar, Marloes Janson, Nana Sato-Rossberg, Felix Berenskoetter, Griseldis Kirsch, Zoë Marriage, Elisa Van Waeyenberge, Victor Murinde, Maxine Thomas-Asante, Carol Tan, Ciaran Driver, Vanja Hamzić, Justin Watkins, Julia Gallagher, Barbara Pizziconi, Ashley Thompson, Alessandra Mezzadri and Naresh Sharma.

**In Attendance:** Anna Dodridge, Simon Rofe, Oliver Urquhart Irvine, Jonathan Tanner and Monika Nangia (*item 10 only*), Zena Khan (*minutes*).

**Apologies:** Valerie Amos, Meera Sabaratnam and Hannah Bargawi

#### AB 19/20 1 1 Minutes of 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019

The minutes were **approved** as an accurate record **noting** corrections to the attendance.

#### AB 19/20 1 2 Actions

AB **noted** for the next AB meeting the actions will have clear accountability with names against each item.

#### AB 19/20 1 3 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

#### AB 19/20 1 4 Terms of reference and procedure for the conduct of meetings

AB **noted** Standing Order II, Terms of Reference for the Academic Board, and Standing Order XVIII, Procedures for the Conduct of Committees.

#### AB 19/20 1 5 Academic Board Members to be appointed to Board of Trustees

AB **approved** a nomination from the Director that Dr Awino Okech will represent Academic Board on the Board of Trustees.

AB **noted** that Professor Michael Charney will represent Academic Board for a further term on the Board of Trustees.



### **AB 19/20 1 6 Professional Services Staff Member to be appointed to Board of Trustees**

AB **approved** a nomination from the Director that Mr Oliver Urquhart Irvine represent Professional Services on the Board of Trustees, as stated in Article V of the Standing Orders.

### **AB 19/20 1 7 Vision for SOAS UG Curriculum Review**

AB had discussions on the following topics:

- Part-time students
- Fractional staff
- Languages modules
- Student credits
- Online departments
- Attainment gap
- Competitors
- Complexities of Departments
- Existing and future partners
- Global engagement
- Timetabling

AB **agreed** the establishment of the task and finish groups with the following amendments:

- that the task and finish groups would also consider issues to do with partnerships, languages, part-time & widening participation and local curriculum review processes

It was **noted** that the work of the task and finish groups would be integrated at the conclusion of the process.

### **AB 19/20 1 8 Changes to ToR for Academic Committees**

AB **noted** and **approved** the Changes to the Terms of Reference for onward approval through the academic committee structure.

### **AB 19/20 1 9 Revised Terms & Conditions**

AB **approved** the Revised Terms and Conditions as detailed in the report.

### **AB 19/20 1 10 Annual Complaints Report**

AB **noted** the Student Complaints Review Implementation paper presented by the Student Casework Manager.



AB **noted** that a Student Casework advisor had been appointed and will take up the post next Monday. This person comes with a good background in complaints resolution having worked at the OIA.

Further updates to be brought back to AB to provide assurance that the School is recognising disabilities.

**Action:** A further paper to be brought back to AB on the School's approach to recognising disabilities.

It was **noted** that concerns were raised in the Doctoral School that linked complaints from students to issues with supervision.

A piece of work had begun looking at the service level agreement and any changes to administration.

#### **AB 19/20 1 11 Quality Assurance Review**

AB **considered** and **approved** the overview report on quality assurance activity in 2018-19.

#### **AB 19/20 1 12 Academics Promotions Panel**

AB **noted** a slight delay with this paper coming to AB due to the revised processes.

AB **noted** that a full time Equalities trainer has been appointed.

AB discussed the level of seeking references to support academic promotions.

It was felt that a lot of pressure was put on Heads of Departments to chase for references in order to support the academic promotion. It was noted that referees often do not reply to reference requests sent by HR team. The HR Director will look at smoothing out the process to further support Heads.

A template for references will be sent to Heads to capture different levels of referencing, depending on the promotion applied for.

**Action:** HR to send reference templates to HoDs.

AB **noted** that some mandatory training for staff was at too basic a level for some staff. HR will consider further what training is being offered.

AB **noted** the revised parallel descriptions of criteria for promotion on the Teaching & Research and Education-focussed pathways.

AB **noted** an expansion of those eligible to apply for an AER contract to those working on sessional contracts at the time of their application.

AB **noted** completion of the online Research Ethics course as a requirement of promotion on the Teaching & Research pathway.



AB **noted** future developments for the annual promotions exercise including:

- new training requirements;
- additional promotions pathways and,
- improvements to HEA qualification requirements.

AB **agreed**:

- a revised framework for references for promotion and,
- new appointments to the Schools Promotion and Individual Circumstances Panels

### **AB 19/20 1 13 Foundation Year**

AB **noted** a verbal update from Pro Director International on the success of the Foundation Year in terms of recruitment. It was noted that the School has over 300 new students from a more diverse background than the rest of the student body.

AB **noted** that the School was well prepared for the intake as an experienced Senior Lecturer in Education had been appointed in CILT as Academic Lead & Programme Convenor for Foundation Year. Feedback from students was being actively collated and initial coursework return indicate high levels of engagement. Evidence from other institutions suggests that Foundation Year students outperform direct entry students on average in terms of their final degree classification.

AB **noted** that the Open Days should have more of a Foundation Year presence. The syllabus for the Foundation Year is online.

There will be more data at December's AB meeting.

### **AB 19/20 1 14 Professors of Practice**

AB **noted** a tabled item from Pro Director Research and Enterprise on a strategic approach to the integration of practical or professional expertise with the School's core activities; teaching, learning and research.

AB **noted** the School's new practise-based roles as:

- Professor of Practice
- Global Fellow
- Policy Fellow
- SOAS Community Fellow

and **noted** the new appointment procedures as detailed in the report.

### **AB 19/20 1 15 Revised SOAS Research Strategy**

AB **noted** that the new strategy will be presented to the new Director next year.



AB **approved** the revised Research Strategy.

#### **AB 19/20 1 16 SOAS signing up to the new Concordat**

AB **approved**:

- SOAS signing up to the new Concordat to support the Career Development of Researchers.
- SOAS will seek to renew the HR Excellence in Research Award in May 2020.
- A working group to engage with the Concordat and the HR Excellence in Research Award.

AB **noted** that if a member of AB wishes to be part of the working group they should contact the Associate Director of Research (Humanities and Languages).

#### **AB 19/20 1 17 SU Priorities**

AB **noted** the SU Educational and Non-Educational priorities to focus on over the coming year.

AB thanked the SU representatives and welcomed their approach and for providing detailed information.

AB **noted** that the SU agenda item should be further up the agenda as it comments on important work within the School.