

**SOAS
ACADEMIC BOARD**

**Wednesday 11 June 2014
2pm in Room 116
AGENDA**

* Items are formal business; if members wish to discuss any issues arising from these reports they must inform the Secretary by noon on Tuesday 10 June 2014.

- I Minutes**
To approve: minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2014 [previously circulated, and attached]
- II Action Taken**
To receive: updates on action taken
- III Matters Arising**
- IV Director's Report**
(i) To receive: a report from the Director [Appendix A]
(ii) To receive: an oral report from the Director on the RPC meeting of 10 June 2014
- V Centenary Research Themes**
To consider: a paper from the Pro-Director (Research & Enterprise) [Appendix B]
- VI Students' Union Educational Priorities (Minute 10)**
To receive: an update on the educational priorities of the Students' Union [Appendix C]
- VII Committee Effectiveness**
To consider: a paper from Governing Body [Appendix D]
- VIII Existing Faculty & Departmental Centres (Minute 33 2012/13)**
To approve: recommendations from [Appendix E]
(i) Arts & Humanities Faculty Board [Appendix E, Annex 1]
(ii) Languages & Cultures Faculty Board [Appendix E, Annex 2]
(iii) Law & Social Sciences Faculty Board [Appendix E, Annex 3]
- IX Centre for Comparative Political Thought**
To approve: the creation of a Centre for Comparative Political Thought [Appendix F]
- X Centre for Film & Screen Studies/Centre for Media & Film Studies (Minute 22 2011/12)**
To consider: a report on the relationship between the Centres [Appendix G]
- XI London Asia-Pacific Centre for Social Science**
To approve: a constitution for the Centre [Appendix H]
- XII Regulations**
To approve: the following on the recommendation of ADC
(i) PGT dissertation deadlines [Appendix I]
(ii) Word limits and penalties for over-length coursework [Appendix J]
(iii) Transfer of full-time UG students to part-time study [Appendix K]

- XIII Grievance & Disciplinary Panel 2014/15**
To approve: new members of the panel [Appendix L]
- XIV Sub-Committees**
- (i) To receive: termly reports from
 - (a) Academic Development Committee [Appendix M]
 - (b) Research & Enterprise Committee [Appendix N]
 - (c) Equality & Diversity Committee [Appendix O]
 - (ii) To approve: for recommendation to Governing Body changes to the membership of ADC [Appendix P]
 - (iii) Faculty Boards
 - a) To approve: for recommendation to Governing Body a reduction in the frequency of Faculty Board meetings [Appendix Q]
 - b) To receive: annual reports from Faculty Boards [Appendix R]
 - (d) Arts & Humanities Faculty [Appendix R, Annex 1]
 - (e) Languages & Cultures Faculty [Appendix R, Annex 2]
 - (f) Law & Social Sciences Faculty [Appendix R, Annex 3]
- XV Term Dates 2017/18**
To note: term dates approved by LTQC [Appendix S]
- XVI *Regional Centres**
To note: annual reports from
- (i) Centres & Programmes Office [Appendix T]
 - (ii) Centre of African Studies [Appendix U]
 - (iii) Centre of Contemporary Central Asia & the Caucasus [Appendix V]
 - (iv) Japan Research Centre [Appendix W]
 - (v) Centre of Korean Studies [Appendix X]
 - (vi) Centre of South East Asian Studies [Appendix Y]
 - (vii) London Middle East Institute at SOAS [Appendix Z]
- XVII *London International Development Centre**
To note: an annual report from the LIDC [Appendix A1]
- XVIII *Emeritus Status**
To note: the award of emeritus status to:
Professor Tim Barrett
Professor Doris Behrens-Abouseif
Professor Anne Booth
Professor Ian Brown
Professor Graham Furniss
Professor Werner Menski
Professor Itesh Sachdev

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

Wednesday 11 June 2014

Mr D Beaton*	Professor D Mosse
Professor R Black	Professor I Nikolaeva*
Professor M Craven	Dr E Onyema
Mr D East	Professor C Oughton
Professor R Fardon	Professor A Pauwels
Professor A George	Professor N Rao
Professor A Gerstle	Mr J Robinson
Dr L Hammond	Professor T Screech*
Dr R Harris	Professor G Singh
Dr D Healy	Professor L Smith
Dr K Hirschler	Professor P Webley (Chair)
Dr A Janku	Mr M Zafar*
Mr P Kohler*	

Dr C Ince attended at Acting Secretary

In attendance:
Mrs J Airey
Mr P Baran
Dr M Bentham
Ms S Blohm
Mr D Christmas

*Those whose names are marked with an asterisk were unable to be present.

27. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 12 March 2014 were **approved** as a true record.

28. Action Taken

Academic Board **noted** that all action points from the last meeting which were due for completion had been completed.

29. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising which did not appear elsewhere on the agenda.

30. Director's Report

Academic Board received the report from the Director at Appendix A. The Director elaborated on several items within the report.

(i) Student Recruitment

Updated figures for student recruitment had become available and showed that an overall shortfall in undergraduate enrolment of approximately 200 was now predicted. Approximately 130 students had failed to respond to offers from the School, and efforts were being made to contact them. This meant that recruitment during the clearing process would be extremely important.

Recruitment to Masters programmes was currently approximately 100 below target and figures for postgraduate research students showed a shortfall of approximately 26.

(ii) The North Block

The draft Section 106 agreement had now been finalised and it was hoped that contractors would start work on the site within the next two weeks.

(iii) Funding Success

In addition to the successful outcome of the School's application for £332,000 from the Garfield Western Foundation, the School had just been informed that it would receive £500,000 towards the cost of the North Block from the Wolfson Foundation. This was the largest single grant that the organisation had ever given for arts and humanities.

The Wolfson Foundation was also renewing its PhD scholarship programme, and the School would continue to be one of the small number of institutions that it funded. The School would receive 3 full PhD scholarships a year for the next three years.

(iv) League Tables

In the Guardian league tables, SOAS had slipped two places in the rankings from 22nd to 24th. The Director drew the attention of Academic Board to the performance of the School of Law which had improved its ranking by 10 places, and it was now ranked in the top 10 Law Schools. Several other departments including Politics & International Studies and Anthropology had also improved rankings.

(v) Distance Learning

The University of London International Academy (UL IA) had identified four tracks (A, B C and D) which Lead Colleges could use. The Track A draft contract and price list had been considered by ULIA's Finance Committee and the ULIA Board, and the School expected to receive information about this by the end of the week.

It was anticipated that the School would not implement any changes to its programme set-up until the summer of 2015. It was likely that the current interim arrangements with the University of London would continue until that time.

It was important for the School to look more widely, and strategically, at the area of distance learning, and the Director would be asking the Pro-Director (Learning & Teaching) and appropriate colleagues to be taking this forward over the summer and early autumn of 2014.

(vi) Shadow Minister for Higher Education and Universities

The Director reported on a private event for Universities at which the Shadow Minister for Universities, Science and Skills had spoken.

31. Resources & Planning Committee

The Director reported on the major items from the meeting of Resources & Planning Committee which had taken place on the previous day.

Next year the School would be budgeting for a small deficit of approximately £500,000. This was partly as a result of agreed expenditure which had been delayed. In the current year the School was likely to break even, or have a small deficit.

Academic Board acknowledged that a breakeven position was not sustainable over the longer term. It was necessary to make surpluses of at least 5% in order to remain sustainable as an organisation.

For 2015/16 and 2016/17 the forecast was a recovery to surplus, but on current figures the surplus was likely to be small. Resources & Planning Committee expressed deep concern about this. The Committee was extremely worried that after the boost the School had received as a result of the introduction of £9,000 fees, income from fees would reduce in real terms. In addition, there were several cost increases on the horizon (such as increases in National Insurance, and employer pension contributions) and RPC had therefore asked the School to look at where it could operate more efficiently, and so reduce its cost-base.

32. Centennial Research Themes

Academic Board considered the paper from the Pro-Director (Research & Enterprise) at Appendix B, which had already been discussed by Research and Enterprise Committee, and by the Centenary Planning Group. The Group agreed that as well as organising a fundraising campaign and a series of events to mark the Centenary, it was very important to include some intellectual academic content related to the School's research. The document set out a series of five proposed 'Centenary research themes' that could be used to structure events and activities, to raise the profile of SOAS research.

Academic Board was open to the idea of reducing the number of themes, and it was suggested that perhaps the third theme was less focused than the others. It might also be helpful to identify and prioritise those areas for which student demand was strongest.

The Pro-Director (Research & Enterprise) would bring a paper to the autumn meeting of Academic Board for approval.

33. Students' Union Educational Priorities

Academic Board received the paper from the Students' Union at Appendix C, which provided an update on the educational priorities paper which had been presented to Academic Board in November 2013.

Academic Board heard that positive progress had been made during the session. Academic Development Committee had recognised the need for individual examination feedback on request, and a policy would be drafted during the next session. In relation to the request for more frequent and transparent student evaluation of courses, a new questionnaire had been developed which it was hoped would address the issues raised.

The Students' Union would provide a paper on its priorities for 2014/15 to the next meeting of Academic Board.

34. Academic Board Effectiveness

Academic Board considered the paper at Appendix D. This had been written as a result of issues raised at the last meeting of Governing Body during discussion of the recent Governing Body Effectiveness Review. Governing Body believed that a significant number of the issues raised related to matters of academic governance, and the best route for these to be considered was for it to ask Academic Board to take another look at its own effectiveness and membership.

After consideration of the paper, Academic Board **approved** the recommendation that a small working group be established, chaired by member of Academic Board, to consider the issues over the summer and autumn. The group would report back in the next academic session to Academic Board and/or the proposed joint informal meeting with Governing Body.

It was further **agreed** that:

- Specific terms of reference and membership of the Working Group would be agreed by the Chair of Academic Board.
- The Group would be made up of five members of Academic Board (one member of EB, one head of department, one student member, two other members)
- The Group would be supported by the Deputy Secretary's Directorate
- The Group's Terms of Reference would focus on issues of academic governance within the framework of Academic Board's own Terms of Reference and membership.

35. Existing Faculty & Departmental Centres (Minute 33, 2012/13)

At its meeting in June 2012, Academic Board agreed criteria for School Institutes, Centres and Groups. Faculties were asked to review their existing Centres and to make recommendations to Academic Board in June 2013. Faculties had not completed their reviews by that date, and had been asked to make a final report and recommendations to Academic Board in June 2014.

Academic Board considered Appendix E and its Annexes, which set out the recommendations from the Faculties. Academic Board **approved** the recommendations as follows:

i) Arts & Humanities Faculty

The creation of a Centre for World Christianities. This Centre had previously been known as the Centre for Eastern and Orthodox Christianity.

ii) Languages & Cultures Faculty

- a) Confirmation of the status of the Centre for Translation Studies (a Faculty Centre) and the Centre for Jewish Studies (a Departmental Centre).
- b) The closure of the Centre for Language Pedagogy (a Faculty Centre).

iii) Law & Social Sciences Faculty

- a) Confirmation of the Centre for Ottoman Studies, the Centre of Taiwan Studies and the Centre of Water and Development as Faculty Centres.
- b) Confirmation of the following as Centres attached to the School of Law:
 - Centre for the Study of Colonialism, Empire and International Law
 - Centre of East Asian Law
 - Centre of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law
 - Centre of Law, Environment and Development
- c) Confirmation of the Centre for Development Policy and Research as a Departmental Centre attached to the Department of Development Studies.

- d) Confirmation of the Centre for International Politics of Conflict, Rights and Justice as a Departmental Centre attached to the Department of Politics & International Studies.
- e) Probationary status be given to the Centre for Ethnic Minority Studies (attached to the School of Law), and the Centre on the Politics of Energy Security (attached to the Department of Politics & International Studies) for one year. Academic Board would expect a report from the Faculty on these Centres at the June 2015 meeting of Academic Board.
- f) Confirmation that the current Centre for Law and Conflict would, with immediate effect, become a Group.

iv) Centres Focused on Religions

Academic Board **noted** that there were a number of Centres which dealt with various religions spread across the Faculties, and was concerned to ensure that there was some coordination between these Centres. The Pro-Director (Research & Enterprise) was asked to take up this issue with the Chairs of the relevant Centres.

36. Centre for Comparative Political Thought

After consideration of the paper at Appendix F, Academic Board **approved** the creation of a Centre for Comparative Political Thought as a departmental centre of the Department of Politics & International Studies.

37. Centre for Film & Screens Studies/Centre for Media & Film Studies (Minute 22 2011/12)

At its meeting in March 2012, Academic Board was asked to agree to the creation of a Centre for Film & Screen Studies, a Faculty Centre of the Faculty of Languages & Cultures.

Academic Board discussed the relationship between this Centre and the Centre for Media & Film Studies, which was attached to the Faculty of Arts & Humanities. Concern was expressed about having two Centres dealing with similar subject matter, and the potential confusion that this might create.

It was agreed that the relationship between the two Centres would be reviewed in two years, and a report (Appendix G) provided to this meeting of Academic Board.

Academic Board considered the report, and **agreed** the recommendations of the report that the two Centres should continue to exist, each with a clearly distinctive main focus, and that the Centres should be renamed to reflect this. Academic Board therefore **agreed** that there should be a Centre of Media Studies (located within the Faculty of Arts & Humanities) and a Centre for Film Studies (located within the Faculty of Languages & Cultures).

The Deans would ensure that both Centres prepared a plan of their activities for the next three years, to be submitted to the next meeting of Academic Board for information.

38. London Asia-Pacific Centre for Social Science

Academic Board considered the paper at Appendix H, which set out a constitution for the London Asia-Pacific Centre for Social Science.

This Centre, which would replace the current Faculty Centre attached to the Faculty of Law & Social Sciences, would be an officially constituted Centre of both King's College London and the School. As a joint collaboration between the two institutions, the Centre would need a constitution which was slightly different from the standard SOAS format.

Academic Board **approved** the revised constitution for the Centre.

39. Regulations

On the recommendation of Academic Development Committee, Academic Board **approved** regulatory changes relating to:

- i) Postgraduate Taught dissertation deadlines (Appendix I). Academic Board **agreed** that the effect of this change on the late submission rate should be monitored.
- ii) Word limits on penalties for over-length coursework (Appendix J)
- iii) Transfer of full-time undergraduate students to part-time study (Appendix K). Academic Board recognised the importance of making the process of transferring as simple as possible and **agreed** that these changes should be monitored to ensure that they were working well.

40. Grievance & Disciplinary Panel 2014/15

Academic Board **approved** new members of the panel for the 2014/15 session, as set out in Appendix L, and thanked Dr Gray and Dr Kong for their willingness to serve on this panel.

41. Sub-Committee Reports

(i) Termly Reports

Academic Board **received** the termly reports from Academic Development Committee (Appendix M), Research & Enterprise Committee (Appendix N) and Equality & Diversity Committee (Appendix O).

The Pro-Director (Research & Enterprise) highlighted items within the report at Appendix N.

- a) In relation to REF debriefs and forward plans, all Departments had been asked to provide five-year plans. It would be helpful if these could be submitted as soon as possible.
- b) The policy on External Professional Activity would be implemented in a staged away. Any consultancy which had been approved under the previous rules would continue as at present, as the new policy would only apply to newly approved consultancy.
- c) A process for internal peer review of research grant applications had been agreed, and this would be introduced in Departments where a process was not already in place.

(ii) Membership of Academic Development Committee

As a result of the Governing Body Effectiveness Review, Academic Development Committee had undertaken a review of its membership. It wished to ensure that it had the correct balance between academic and professional services staff, and the most appropriate staff within these categories.

Academic Board **approved for recommendation to Governing Body** the proposal (Appendix P) that the membership should be amended to include three further members of academic staff, nominated by the Chair. It was confirmed that the Chair would nominate one individual from each Faculty.

(iii) Frequency of Faculty Board meetings

Academic Board considered the proposal as set out in Appendix Q for a reduction in the frequency of Faculty Board meetings to one per term.

The proposal was **approved for recommendation to Governing Body**.

(iv) Faculty Board Reports

As the result of changes made to Faculty Board terms of reference at the end of the 2010/11 session, Faculty Boards were asked to make annual reports to Academic Board regarding the overall delivery of the Performance Indicators and targets in the Faculty Strategic Plan.

Academic Board **received** the reports from Faculty Boards as set out in Appendix R, Annex 1, 2 and 3.

42. Term Dates 2017/18

Academic Board **noted** term dates for 2017/18 (Appendix S) which had been approved by the Learning & Teaching Quality Committee.

43. Regional Centre Reports 2013/14

Academic Board **noted** the annual reports from

- i) Centres & Programmes Office (Appendix T)
- ii) Centre of African Studies (Appendix U)
- iii) Centre of Contemporary Central Asia & the Caucuses (Appendix V)
- iv) Japan Research Centre (Appendix W)
- v) Centre of Korean Studies (Appendix X)
- vi) Centre of South East Asian Studies (Appendix Y)
- vii) London Middle Is Institute at Soas (Appendix Z)

The Chair drew Academic Board's attention to the report from the Centres & Programmes Office at Appendix T. The report gave Academic Board a very clear picture of the invaluable work carried out by the staff in the CPO.

44. London International Development Centre

Academic Board **noted** the annual report from the London International Development Centre at Appendix A1.

45. Emeritus Status

Academic Board **noted** the award of emeritus status to the following individuals, and thanked them for their valuable service to the School:

Professor Tim Barrett
Professor Doris Behrens-Abouseif
Professor Anne Booth
Professor Ian Brown
Professor Graham Furniss
Professor Werner Menski
Professor Itesh Sachdev

46. Committee Members

The Chair, on behalf of Academic Board, thanked all of those members who would be stepping down from membership of Academic Board at the end of the session.

47. Acting Registrar

On behalf of Academic Board, the Chair expressed his thanks to Graeme Appleby who had carried out his duties as Acting Registrar in an exemplary manner, having taken over these duties under difficult circumstances.

Thanks were also expressed to Chris Ince and Barry Douglas, who had also taken on additional duties, and carried them out extremely well.

There were no reserved items of business.