
**Minutes of the inaugural joint meeting of the
Board of Governors and Academic Board
held on Tuesday 26 January 2016 (3.30pm – 5.25pm)**

Governors and Academic Board

Mr Clive Jones (Chair, Board of Governors)	Prof. Peter McCaffery (Deputy Vice Chancellor) (Academic Board)
Prof. John Raftery (Vice Chancellor and Chair of Academic Board)	Ms Ann Minogue (Governor)
Ms Rolande Anderson (Governor)	Ms Nicole Mitchell (Academic Board)
Ms Suzanne Burley (Academic Board)	Dr. Jane Neal-Smith (Academic Board)
Dr Kathy Castle (Governor)	Mr Obie Opara (Governor)
Mr Pete Chalk (Academic Board)	Prof. Dominic Palmer-Brown (Academic Board)
Mr Karl Chambers (Academic Board)	Prof. Stephen Perkins (Academic Board)
Dr. Elizabeth Charman (Academic Board)	Mr Andy Stone (Academic Board)
Ms Pauline Curtis (Governor)	Ms Cathy Sullivan (Governor)
Mr Rob Hull (Governor)	Dr. Graham Taylor-Russell (Academic Board)
Mr Lewis Jones (Academic Board)	Mr Tunde Toki (Academic Board)
Mr Adrian Kamellard (Governor)	Ms Cecile Tschirhart (Academic Board)
Mr Tony Millns (Governor)	Associate Prof. Digby Warren (Academic Board)
	Prof. Dianne Willcocks (Governor)

In attendance

Mr Paul Bowler (Deputy Chief Executive)
Ms Lynn Burke (Director, Office of Institutional Effectiveness)
Mr Robert Fisher (Director of HR)
Mr Iain Franklin (OC | OC Programme Manager)
Mr Peter Garrod (University Secretary)
[REDACTED]
Ms Pam Nelson (Director of Finance)
Ms Siobhan O'Donoghue (Assistant University Secretary) (minutes)
Dr. Christopher Sarchet (Director, Strategic Programme Office)

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Welcome, Apologies and Announcements**Oral**

1. The Chair welcomed members of the Board of Governors, Academic Board and attending staff to the inaugural joint meeting.
2. Apologies had been received from Independent Governors Emir Feisal and Michael Murphy; Academic Board members Marco Brunone, Mark Campbell and Kane Millward; and co-opted Audit Committee members Jane Broadbent, Richard Indge and Avnish Savjani.

Declarations of Interest

Oral

3. **There were no declarations of interest.**

BIS Green Paper: Implications for London Metropolitan University and University Response to the BIS Green Paper

BG-AB 01/1.2 and
BG-AB 01/1.2

4. The Deputy Vice Chancellor introduced two reports on the Higher Education Green Paper, *Fulfilling Our Potential: teaching excellence, social mobility and student choice*. The first was a report that broke down the Green Paper into its constituent key proposals and mapped the implications of these for London Metropolitan University and the higher education sector. The second paper was London Met's formal response to the consultation, which had been submitted by the 15 January 2016 deadline, and reflected comments received on earlier drafts from the Senior Management Team and the Academic Board.
5. The Board of Governors and Academic Board noted in particular the analysis around the proposed Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) assessment approach and its link to fees; quality assurance arrangements; the role of a proposed new 'super-regulator' and its funding arrangements; the proposed relaxation of criteria to open the sector and create a 'level playing field' for new providers with degree-awarding powers; and the proposals to set targets for institutions that were not making sufficient progress in achieving widening participation goals. The Board and Academic Board also considered what the Green Paper had omitted – including reference to metrics; and specific acknowledgement of part-time students and older learners, for example.
6. In commenting on the University's formal response, members of the Board of Governors and Academic Board agreed that it was right that the University had sought to strike a balance in challenging some of the assertions made in the Green Paper with reasoned and evidence-based comments, and engaging constructively and positively to try and achieve proposals that were more workable and in the best interests of students. The University's response had acknowledged the complexity of higher education and that a 'one size fits all' approach was inappropriate, for example, around calculating 'learning gain' and 'earning gain'. There was much that London Met could usefully contribute to the debate, based on its experiences.
7. Members thanked the Deputy Vice Chancellor and those staff responsible for contributing to, coordinating and drafting the University's response. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to have a further joint meeting between the Board of Governors and Academic Board when the Higher Education White Paper was issued.

8. **The Board of Governors and Academic Board:**
 - a. **noted the Higher Education Green Paper, *Fulfilling Our Potential: teaching excellence, social mobility and student choice*; and**
 - b. **noted the University's consultation response to the Higher Education Green Paper.**

Student Charter

BG-AB 01/2.1

9. The Dean of Students and Academic Registrar presented a number of proposed changes to the University's Student Charter, following consultation with the Academic Board, staff, current students and the Students' Union. The purpose of the Student Charter was, in essence, to set out what students could expect and what was expected of them in return. The current Charter had been prepared in September 2012 and, in light of the Board's approval of the Strategic Plan 2015-2020, it was considered timely to re-visit it to ensure it articulated sufficiently the institution's promise to students set out in the Strategic Plan. In future, the Charter would be reviewed on an annual basis, as was good practice. It was noted that, although the response rate from students to the consultation had been disappointing, it had been useful in highlighting issues around the visibility of the current Charter, and the student responses received were broadly positive of the recommended changes.
 10. Currently, the Charter was circulated to students at the beginning of the academic year, at the same time as a number of other documents. It was suggested, however, that by having a focused annual event to highlight the Charter, involving the student representatives in promoting it, and displaying it in areas frequented by students (such as Hubs and social spaces); the Charter's visibility could be improved and there would be increased engagement with it.
 11. It was explained that, the Charter was one of a number of framework documents for students and staff, with others including the Staff Charter, Academic Regulations and Student Regulations, for example. The concise nature of the Charter meant that there were some limitations, including the need for fairly generic language, and that other supporting information – such as the University's Student Regulations – would need to be accessible via weblinks in the document. Suggestions were also made for greater consistency in the language used in the Charter.
 12. The updated Charter set out explicitly that students could expect 'real work experience and employment opportunities while studying' and the Board of Governors and Academic Board considered the practicality and feasibility of delivering this. This was a major commitment and it was vital not to 'over-promise'; but it was explained that the expectation was that it would not only involve work placements, but could also include work-based learning, engagement with employers, live projects, and written coursework based on voluntary placements. These activities happened across Faculties already, but the intention was to bring these together and replicate successful models. It was noted that two of the six underpinning Programme for Improved Student Outcomes (PISO) programme strands – Student Achievement and Research and Enterprise – included projects that were addressing this area directly.
13. **The Board of Governors and Academic Board approved the Student Charter, subject to the incorporation of suggestions relating to language.**

Annual Report on Academic Misconduct, Appeals and Complaints

BG-AB 01/3.1

14. The Board of Governors and Academic Board received an annual report, summarising formal cases of academic misconduct (including plagiarism and cheating in examinations), appeals against Assessment Board decisions, and student complaints considered during 2014/15. The report also included 2014 statistics from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) – the independent ombudsman that reviewed individual complaints by students against universities – which presented its statistics by calendar year. The OIA used the term ‘complaint’ generically to refer to any appeal it received where the student had completed the University’s procedures. As with other universities, the majority of London Met’s OIA ‘complaints’ originated in appeals against Assessment Board decisions.
15. Headlines included the following:
 - a. The total number of academic misconduct cases had increased 30 per cent compared to 2013/14, which was linked primarily to the increased use of the plagiarism detection software, ‘Turnitin’, following its widespread introduction for coursework submission in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (FSSH). The rate of misconduct cases equated to around one in every two-hundred assignments submitted, which was in line with the sector average.
 - b. The total number of academic appeals had decreased from 698 to 612, which was broadly in line with the reduction of the student population size.
 - c. The number of complaints reported to the University Secretary’s Office and the number of cases referred to the OIA had reduced slightly in 2014/15 compared to 2013/14. In both cases, the numbers were too small to be able to identify any particular pattern.
 - d. An analysis of misconduct and appeals by fee status (Home/EU and International) showed the proportions of cases to be in line with the wider student population.
 - e. An analysis of misconduct and appeals by ethnicity (compared to the student population), however, suggested an under-representation of white students and an over-representation of female black students in particular. Initial analysis suggested that this was linked directly to a concentration of cases in a relatively narrow range of subjects within FSSH. In response, the Faculty had identified a number of measures and had developed codes of behaviour to support students.
 - f. In response to the analysis of the statistics around misconduct, proposals were being developed to review student induction, pedagogic practice and assessment design in those areas where the number of academic misconduct cases appeared disproportionate, with the aim of raising awareness, supporting students and ‘designing out’ opportunities for plagiarism.

16. The Board of Governors and Academic Board discussed the detail of the annual report and its implications:
- a. The practical steps being taken, such as assignment design, were welcomed, as was the increased use of Turnitin; not only as a device to detect misconduct, but also as a study aid to help students improve their own written coursework submissions.
 - b. However, it was noted that something as straightforward as including a well-prepared bibliography could affect the Turnitin score significantly, and that there still needed to be an element of academic judgement to assess the relevance of the Turnitin score. 'Contract cheating', whereby students commissioned other individuals to write assignments on their behalf, would also be difficult to detect using software alone.
 - c. The Students' Union had received queries and complaints relating to the use of Turnitin, including that score thresholds were not being applied consistently, even within disciplines. Whilst there needed to be an element of discretion, this was a matter that needed to be discussed further within Faculties.
 - d. The misconduct rate (1/200) suggested that the majority of students were aware of plagiarism and how to use Turnitin, but there remained a question as to the extent of students' understanding of the software and its implications – particularly amongst first year students, who would be new to the process. It was essential that plagiarism and Turnitin (including its use for checking and improving drafts) were explained adequately to students as part of inductions and course introductions.
 - e. It was noted that the Programme for Improved Student Outcomes (PISO) BME attainment group would undertake a further analysis of disproportionate misconduct levels; and it was suggested that an independent external perspective might provide useful additional insight to the review.

17. The Board of Governors and Academic Board:

- a. **noted the number of cases of academic misconduct, appeals and complaints;**
- b. **endorsed further analysis of academic misconduct by the PISO BME attainment group; and**
- c. **endorsed the review of student induction, pedagogic practice and assessment design in areas identified as having a disproportionate number of academic misconduct cases.**

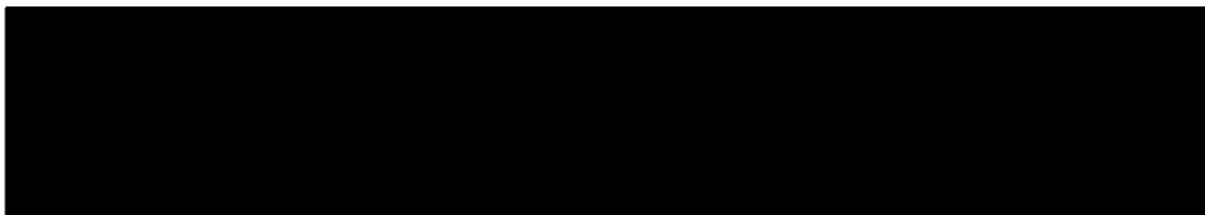
Student Numbers Update

BG-AB 01/4.1

18. The Board of Governors and Academic Board received a report providing the latest update on student numbers compared to budget; projections for future years; and data for comparator institutions.

19. Spring 2016 enrolment forecasts were down on 2015, but indicators were showing a slight improvement in overall planned student numbers against the prudent 2015/16 budget assumptions, with an increased number of home new students and returner students. Overseas student numbers remained low, however.

20.



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21. 2015/16 student retention had improved across all Faculties overall by 2 per cent for Year 0 and 3 per cent for Year 1. Despite the improvement, retention remained an issue for the University to address: it provided an opportunity to improve the financial position and also had a positive reputational impact. For budgeting and planning purposes, an ongoing improvement to retention rates was assumed as a direct result of the Programme for Improved Student Outcomes (PISO) and extant Met2020 projects. The aim was to reduce the number of students who did not return by one in four, and this had been factored into financial forecasts up to 2018/19.

22. The Board of Governors and Academic Board noted the Student Numbers update.

Programme for Improved Student Outcomes

BG-AB 01/5.1

23. The Deputy Vice Chancellor presented an update report on progress with the Programme for Improved Student Outcomes (PISO), which had been launched officially across the University community at an event on 17 December 2015. The programme aimed to secure academic sustainability and financial stability and was a complementary programme to One Campus | One Community. The six projects that comprised the programme – which was overseen and coordinated by the PISO Programme Board – were all on schedule or ahead of schedule, with project leads, engagement champions, and specified targets and outcome success criteria.
24. The Board of Governors and Academic Board noted the headlines for each project that were set out in the report, in particular, the progress that had been made recently as part of the Marketing, Recruitment and Induction strand. This included a recent science and technology event at Holloway for over 4,000 Year 8 pupils; and forging strong relationships with over 50 key feeder institutions in the Greater London area, including some which had previously been unfavourable to the University but were now actively promoting London Met courses.
25. A short video of the official PISO launch was played, which the Board of Governors and Academic Board encouraged to be used as part of the University's marketing campaigns.

26. The Board of Governors and Academic Board noted the update on the Programme for Improved Student Outcomes.

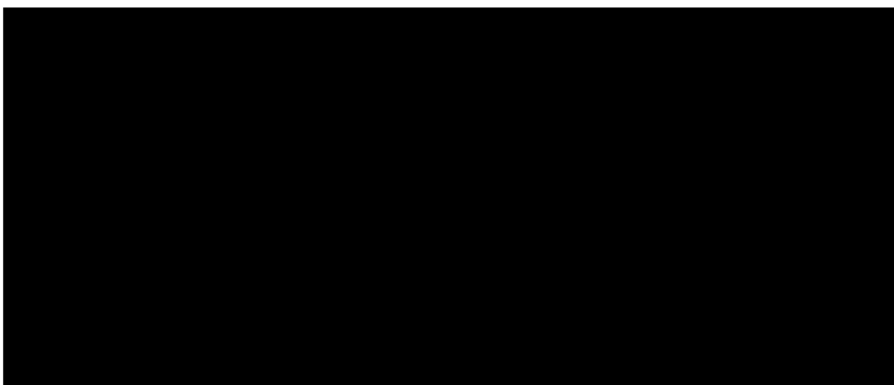
Any Other Business

Oral

27. The Chair of the Board of Governors closed the meeting by remarking on the positive nature of the discussions; and that further joint meetings between the Board of Governors and the Academic Board should be scheduled to coincide with the Higher Education White Paper, and also in twelve months' time.
28. There were no further items of business.

Siobhan O'Donoghue
February 2016

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