

# Academic Board

16 March 2022



## Actions

Ref	Action	Lead	Due Date
22/54	Provide update on review of Schools restructuring to an autumn term AB meeting	TB and JHE	Autumn 2022
21/136	Clarify position re the consultation on the proposal to apply for use of University title	JHE/CM	January 2022
21/142	Provide an update at the March Academic Board meeting on changes to the Personal Tutor system	JHE	March 2022
21/162	Circulate summary of Academic Board views on the proposed merger with St Georges	JHE/CM	January 2022
21/166	Refer issue of completion of resources information on cover sheets for consideration at AB Exec	JHE	Feb 2022
21/168	Develop and present a timeline on the implementation of forthcoming College education initiatives	JK and TB	Spring 2022
21/200	Update Academic Board on the Enquiry Management System	JHE	Spring/ summer 2022
21/163	Amend Minute no. 21/43 in the minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 29 June to read "He noted that this was a consultation with the Board and they would <b>not</b> be asked to vote on the proposal."	CM	ASAP
21/103	Circulate information re consultation on changes to the RHBNC Act 1985.	JHE/CM	November 2021
21/218	Contact Development Manager to update nominee statement before nominations are circulated to Council.	PJL/CM	ASAP
21/221	Correct name of School in paper AB/21/48 to read "School of Engineering, Physical and Mathematical Sciences" before paper is circulated to Council.	CM	ASAP
21/226	Amend Minute no. 21/46 in Academic Board Executive Minutes of meeting held on 8 November to reflect that the paper number received was ABE/21/06 and not AB/21/06.	CM	ASAP
21/93 and 21/94	Circulate the reports from the Academic Societies Review and Joint Honours Insight with the October 2021 meeting papers	JHE/CM	October 2021

21/112	Ensure Extensions Policy is approved by Chair's action over the summer and circulate the agreed policy with the October 2021 meeting papers	JHE/CM	October 2021
21/121	Circulate meeting invitations for additional Academic Board meeting on 29 June	CM	June 2021
21/130	Add agenda item on progress with implementation plan from Process Fix review of non-academic misconduct and complaints	JHE/CM	October 2021

#### Action from current meeting

# Academic Board

16 March 2022

2pm on MS Teams



Min. 22/01-22/62

## Minutes

Present:	Prof K Badcock (Chair); Prof J Knowles, Prof T Bhamra, Prof G Agyemang, Prof J Parker-Starbuck, Prof R Mock, Dr C Matos, Dr D Whistler, Prof R Alston, Prof R Livesey, Dr D Beer, Dr R Hemus, Dr E Cox, Prof B Langford, Dr M Berry, Prof D Anderberg, Mr R Jago, Prof O Heath, Dr S Wagner, Prof G Symon, Dr J Nuri, Prof A Jashapara, Dr J McEvoy, D K Clemitshaw, Prof D Schreve, Prof A Palombi, Prof P Dalton,	Dr S Alty, Prof M Wahlstrom, Prof R Schack, Dr S West, Prof M Humphreys, Dr T Berry, Dr D Brown, Dr P Bremner, Dr S Collignon, Dr V Desai, Prof R Fitzgerald, Dr S Kuenzel, Prof S Murphy, Dr E Xhetani, Prof H Zagefka, Mr S Kendrick, Ms H Warwick, Mr A Parry.
Secretary:	Dr J Howden-Evans	
In attendance:	Dr D Ashton, Ms M Ennis, Mrs A Wallis	Miss C Munton (Assistant Secretary)
Apologies	Prof P Layzell, Prof V Boisvert, Miss A Goode, Ms M Jarvis, Prof P Layzell, Prof C Mitchell, Prof G Pieri and Prof T Pincus	
Not present	Mr L Kaounides	
Observers:	Mr A Alway	

### 1. Welcome and Apologies

The Deputy Principal (Academic) reported that the Principal was unwell and he would chair the meeting in Prof Layzell's absence. Prof Badcock welcomed members, noting this was the first meeting for Dr S Alty, Head of the Department of Electronic Engineering. Prof R Mock had been invited to observe the meeting as incoming Head of the School of Performing and Digital Arts. Apologies were received from Prof V Boisvert, Miss A Goode, Ms M Jarvis, Prof P Layzell, Prof C Mitchell, Prof G Pieri and Prof T Pincus. 22/01

### 2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8 December 2021 (M21/131-M21/206) were APPROVED. 22/02

3. **Matters arising**

The following actions had been completed since the last meeting:

22/03

Ref	Action	Lead	Due date
21/136	Clarify position re the consultation on the proposal to apply for use of university title	JHE/ CM	January 2022
21/142	Provide an update at the March Academic Board meeting on changes to the Personal Tutor system <i>This topic is covered in agenda item 14</i>	JHE	March 2022
21/162	Circulate summary of Academic Board views to Council on the proposed merger with St. George's <i>A decision was taken in mid-December not to proceed with the merger. A comprehensive record of the discussion is provided in the December meeting minutes. Also covered in agenda item 4.</i>	JHE/ CM	February 2022
21/66	Refer issue of completion of resources information on cover sheets for consideration at Academic Board Executive (ABE) <i>Agreed at ABE that the Assistant Secretary will monitor cover sheets to ensure the resources section is completed before papers are circulated</i>	JHE/ CM	February 2022
21/168	Develop and present a timeline on the implementation of forthcoming education initiatives <i>This topic is covered in paper AB/22/01.</i>	JK and TB	Spring 2022
21/200	Update Academic Board on the Enquiry Management System <i>This topic is covered in agenda item 15</i>	JHE	Spring 2022

22/04

The Senior Vice Principal (Education) summarised paper AB/22/01, a draft plan of education project, initiatives, and key outputs over the next three years. The Head of the Department of English commented it was helpful from a staff management perspective to see an integrated vision, and confirmation of the staff members involved in the activities. She suggested caution around launching too many initiatives at the same time because of the risks associated with ensuring staff availability to successfully complete them. She welcomed a rapid move to prioritise activities and confirm the ones that are operationally viable. An elected member affirmed this view, noting that staff survey results since 2014 indicate a national and local workload crisis, and Senior Management must be realistic about prioritising improvements to be made over the next three years. In response, the Senior Vice Principal (Education) advised that the College must respond to the rapidly changing national agenda in Higher Education, and this document provided a starting point to this response. The next steps were to undertake a prioritisation exercise. He assured members the comments raised at Academic Board would be taken into consideration.

22/05

4. **Merger with St. George's**

The Deputy Principal (Operations) reported that St George's ended the merger talks prior to the Christmas break, and before the Royal Holloway Council College had the opportunity to form an independent view on whether they considered proceeding would have been the right decision for RHUL. It was plausible that St George's withdrew because a merger with the College was one of a few strategic options they had been considering and they may have been

22/06

concerned, as the smaller institution, about losing their identity and purpose should the merger proceed. Dr Ashton emphasised that the two Colleges remain on good terms. The merger talks identified several potential routes for future collaborations and Dr Ashton encouraged colleagues to continue to explore these.

5. **Unstarring of items**

There was a request to unstar papers AB/22/15b Terms of Reference for the Education Strategy Committee, AB/22/16 Research Ethics Policy and AB/22/18 Review of Implementation of Schools. 22/07

**Formal Reports**

6. **Principal's Report**

Paper AB/22/02, Principal's Report, was RECEIVED. 22/08

The Chair drew the Board's attention to the Office for Students' consultations on quality and standards presented in the report, and to a possible significant implication for the College regarding its use of University of London degree awarding powers should these proposals be implemented. There will need to be further discussions on this matter at a future Academic Board meeting. 22/09

The Senior Vice Principal (Education) provided a verbal update on the Teaching Excellence Framework. The general view held in the sector was that the government would not shift from the timeline presented in the consultation document, that is that the submission window would open in early September and close in mid-November. Information on the data set and format of the submission had not yet been confirmed. Prof. Knowles reported that Strategic Planning hope to create a data set, based on their predictions of what is likely to be included, to enable colleagues to draft a mock TEF submission over the summer. This would help prepare the framework for the College's submission and address the resource challenges proposed by the government timeline, which compresses a large piece of work into a short timeframe. The submission would be at provider level; earlier proposals for subject level ratings had been rejected. 22/10

The Head of the Department of Biological Sciences asked how the earlier discussion on the use of degree awarding powers fits in with the TEF, to which the Senior Vice Principal responded that if Royal Holloway continues to use University of London degree awarding powers it then is in jeopardy of having to make two submissions to similar audits. He noted the timing of this discussion is fortuitous given the application for university title. There was a debate to be had strategically and with Marketing and Communications and about any possible implications of not having the University of London on the degree. 22/11

7. **Report from the Council**

Paper AB/22/03 Minutes of the Council meeting held on 18 November 2021 were RECEIVED. 22/12

8. **Report from the Students, Education and Research Committee**

Paper AB/22/04 Report from the Students, Education and Research Committee meeting held on 23 February 2022 was RECEIVED. 22/13

9. **Reports from the Senior Management Team**

Paper AB/22/05 update from the Senior Vice Principal (Academic Strategy and Research) was RECEIVED. 22/14

	The Board RECEIVED an update on the recruitment of a new Principal. Long listing started in early March and final interviews were expected to be held in May. In response to a query from the Head of the Department of English, the Deputy Principal (Operations) confirmed that consideration of a track record in supporting Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) had been a prominent part of briefings with prospective recruitment agencies and EDI was an important factor in the long listing process.	22/15
	The Senior Vice Principal (Education) reminded members that the deadline for College Teaching Prize applications is 1 April 2022. The Annual Teaching and Learning Symposium was scheduled for 14 June 2022. The College had been working with Santander on a programme called Union Black, which looks to challenge the racial biases through the lens of black culture in Britain and the issues raised in modern society, and work towards changing behaviours. The <a href="#">link to the programme</a> was shared during the meeting and Prof. Knowles encouraged members to review the programme.	22/16
10.	<b>Report from Students' Union President</b>	
	Paper AB/22/06 Report from the Students' Union President was RECEIVED.	22/17
	The President reported that the results from the Students' Union sabbatical officer elections 2022-23 would be announced on the evening of 16 March.	22/18
11.	<b>Reports from Schools</b>	
	The Head of the London Graduate School PROVIDED a presentation, circulated with the papers as AB/22/07.	22/19
	Highlights included:	22/20
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of the 3 phases since 2018, i.e consolidation of activity in London, positioning and a vision for the future;</li> <li>• The impact of COVID-19 on phase 1 and 2 was noted, but the positioning of the LGS continues to strengthen and impact is expected to grow over the next 3-6 months;</li> <li>• Additional courses will be delivered at the London Campus from 2022/23;</li> <li>• Development of the School structure with budget and administration and a focus on dealing with the local issues;</li> <li>• Good feedback has been received from staff and students about the new space created from the development of Stewart House;</li> <li>• Further articulation of how this hybrid structure fits within the College, including more work with the Academic Schools to develop the offering in Central London, growing the unique nature, compared to Egham, of the student experience in central London, developing the staff experience, and marketing it as the Royal Holloway Graduate School;</li> <li>• Outlining plans for growing high numbers of students within Stewart House, this should in future offer four times the capacity of Royal Holloway's current usage.</li> </ul>	
	The Senior Vice Principal (Student and Staff Experience) thanked Mr Kendrick for his presentation and his work so far in developing the London Graduate School. She noted a central London offering is an essential part of the three-year strategic plan and encouraged academic colleagues to visit the London space and to understand the opportunities available for offering courses in London.	22/21
	The Head of the Department of Biological Sciences asked about the impact of the development on Stewart House on the College's use of space in Bedford Square. Mr Kendrick confirmed that the College would continue to use Bedford Square for teaching in the immediate future but would need to consider its purpose in five to six years' time.	22/22

In response to queries from the Head of the Department of English and an elected member, Mr Kendrick confirmed that unlike Bedford Square, Stewart House has step free access and therefore caters for all students, there are break out rooms in Stewart House which responds to concerns raised by staff teaching on courses already based on London and that discussions about allowing students to access existing student welfare services offered at London universities would resume now that Covid restrictions have been lifted. With regards to student social experience, the University of London may bring back Student Central, which Royal Holloway students could be involved in, but it would also be important to find out from students what social activities they want the College to offer on the London campus. A space review would clarify usage requirements to inform how best to equip the teaching spaces in future. The Senior Vice Principal (Student and Staff Experience) emphasised that communication between Schools and the Head of the London Graduate School is critical to ensuring the correct equipment is provided in the teaching spaces.

**Strategy Discussion**  
**12. KPI and Milestone update**

Paper AB/22/08 Key Performance Indicators for the Strategic Plan was RECEIVED. 22/24

The Deputy Principal (Academic) drew attention to the slide on milestones, reporting that there had been a push to complete specific milestones to support recruitment from September 2022, including a refresh of the International Foundation Programme with Study Group and work experience opportunities for first year students. Results from the staff pulse survey were expected imminently. Some of the student number targets in 'Growth' and 'Attractiveness' had been revised because the College did not recruit as well in Clearing 2021-22. Prof. Badcock advised this emphasises the need for many of the actions in the strategy to address the risks associated with c. 25% of students joining the College either through Clearing or as an insurance choice. Recruitment on pathway programmes with Study Group is increasing following their revalidation and work is ongoing to expand recruitment through the distance learning programmes. These activities are reflected in the revised figures. The 'Employability' section on first years taking a work experience before their second year of study had been updated to reflect the actual data. 22/25

**Major Business**

**13. Creating a mid-year assessment point: 2023 and beyond**

Paper AB/22/08 Creating a mid-year assessment point was RECEIVED. 22/26

The Senior Vice Principal (Education) PROVIDED a presentation. He noted that the proposal has been renamed from 'structure of the year' to 'creating a mid-year assessment point' in recognition that these are different issues. He summarised previous discussions, viz the desire to address inconsistent practice in departments around mid-year assessment and the negative impact this has on students, particularly those studying joint and combined honours, and on staff marking workloads. He also outlined the rationale for offering a mid-year assessment point, noting assessing students closer to their learning experience can improve confidence and outcomes and that continuation and outcomes will be important metrics in the TEF. In addition, there was a need for better monitoring of success and continuation to better support student achievement and meet the flexibility needs of the College's widening 22/27

demographic and new course structures such as January starts. Government policy was learning towards leaning towards a preference for bite size and flexible learning, and a mid-year assessment point would help support to facilitate this.

Prof. Knowles considered that the proposal outlined in AB/22/08 offered a mid-year assessment point whilst meeting the baseline principles agreed in previous discussions, namely avoiding revalidating degree courses to accommodate the assessment point, not changing the total number of timetabled weeks of teaching and holiday weeks and a wish to comply with Surrey County Council school holiday dates. The proposal provided some space for marking to alleviate staff workload, should help avoid assessment bunching for students, is sustainable and works for all positions of the Easter Bank holiday. It should also prevent excessive disruption and enable development of provision of central support over the next two years. 22/28

A reference group had been created to consider the 'structure of the year', with the aim of producing a green paper about the broader possibilities. This would be presented for further discussion at the Board in the next six months. The aim was to introduce the 'mid-year assessment point' from 2022-23, carry into 2023-24 and have a clearer idea by 2024-25 of any bigger changes the Board may wish to make to the structure of teaching. 22/29

In response to a question from the Head of the Department of Accounting and Finance Management, Prof Knowles confirmed that if the proposal was approved, the Assessment Futures project would carefully manage the implementation of the mid-year assessment point so all types of assessment could be accommodated. 22/30

The Head of the Department of English asked for clarification the impact of the proposal on reading weeks. Prof Knowles confirmed that departments may continue to offer a reading week; the 12-week term could be used to suit departmental preferences with the caveat that the first week must be kept clear for assessment. It was likely that to be able to accommodate a reading week, a department would need to use the second assessment week for teaching instead of assessment or marking. 22/31

The Head of the Department of Geography asked for the Students' Union view on the proposal. The President advised that there are concerns about students expecting to be examined straight after the Christmas break and she was seeking clarification of which courses this would apply to and was particularly cognisant of any impact on international students returning from their home countries. A meeting had been arranged between key representatives from the Students' Union and Prof Knowles to further discuss the matter. Prof Knowles recognised that the proposal went a long way in addressing several concerns raised in previous meetings but was unfortunately unable to balance all the competing demands. 22/32

An elected member asked for clarification as to how the proposal assisted with managing the staff marking workload. Prof. Knowles advised it was for departments to determine how to use the flexibility in the model to assist with marking, for example the second week of term could be used for staff marking. 22/33

Prof Knowles confirmed, in response to a query from a member of the Board, that the proposal has no impact on the autumn term. 22/34

The Board APPROVED the model to create a mid-year assessment point. 22/35



14. **Changes to Personal Tutor System**

Paper AB/22/10 amendments to the Personal Tutor system with effect from 2022-23 was RECEIVED. 22/36

The Director of Student and Academic Services recorded his thanks to the Vice President (Education) for her support in capturing student views on their experiences and expectations of the Personal Tutoring system. Student feedback was sought via a panel discussion at the Student Voice Conference 2022 and the RH100 Panel. He reported that the Student Futures Commission published a report in February 2022 with a call to action for universities and students to co-create a Student Futures manifesto based around six themes for ensuring a successful future at university post pandemic. The timing of the Student Futures report has made it possible for the RH100 panel to consider it alongside their own experiences of university life. Once the RH100 panel have shared their views, there would be a further discussion at the Student Experience committee, before submitting final recommendations for approval at Executive Board and Academic Board. The consultations have shown that students have had mixed experiences across departments, and that there is some excellent best practice that could be more widely implemented. 22/37

The Head of the Department of English commented that the proposals were laudable, however, also raised some key risks around expectations on what is deliverable given current departmental staff: student ratios (SSRs). She asked if there was an ideal SSR that would need to be achieved to implement the proposals. This view was shared by an elected member, who noted that the cover sheet advised that these changes were possible to achieve within current resources. They considered this could be problematic in the context of staff survey results highlighting significant concerns about workload. The Senior Vice Principal (Staff and Student Experience) responded that whilst the concerns were valid, the hope was to put in place a framework that offers a focus to personal tutoring and support the curriculum and skills agenda rather than create additional work for academics. She was aware of the SSR issue and advised that she is looking into a solution to personal tutoring that doesn't involve needing to have the relevant subject experience. Prof Bhamra also hoped that eventually personal tutor meetings would be timetabled to integrate them into the student journey and emphasise their important to students. The Chair advised that these comments on staff workload would be taken into consideration in shaping the final iteration of the revisions to personal tutoring. 22/38

15. **Enquiry Management System**

The Director of Student and Academic Services provided an update on developing an Enquiry Management System, as summarised in paper AB/22/11. 22/39

An Enquiry Management System (EMS) has been identified as the gateway project under Pillar 4 of the 3-year College strategy and is aimed at simplifying processes to improve the student and staff experience. The Board was asked to note that the IT system referred to in the paper is not the solution; the project must first review and streamline processes before deciding on an IT system to supplement the simplified processes. The key challenges of the current situation and that need to be resolved through EMS were summarised in section 3 of the paper, viz poor student user experience as they find services hard to navigate, staff being overloaded with enquiries, often not relevant to their area of expertise and therefore unable to resolve them quickly, a reliance on manual processes, strategic impacts including complaints and poor NSS scores caused by delays in responding to queries. 22/40

The Board's attention was drawn to section five of AB/22/11 which set out the five stages of the student journey. Analysis has shown that queries usually peak from arrival in August until 22/41

the end of term one and getting this part of the EMS right would transform the entire student experience at the College.

The feedback on the proposals from RH100 panel along with the feedback from Academic Board would be used to inform the final procurement exercise for an IT system. Changes to the structure of communication channels and triage were expected to be in place from 2022/23 with the implementation of an IT system in 2023/34. 22/42

The Head of the Department of Biological Sciences asked what was different about this project compared to previous attempts at introducing an enquiry management system. Dr Howden-Evans advised that the main difference is that this time, he is working with staff to review the types of enquiries and processes to bring them into a single point, prior to seeking an IT system. Previous projects have focussed on seeking an IT solution without addressing the process issues. 22/43

16. **Merger of the Departments of Social Work and Law and Criminology**

Paper AB/22/12, Merger of the Departments of Social Work and Law and Criminology was RECEIVED. The Board APPROVED presenting the proposal to Council for confirmation of the organisational change. The name of the Department would remain as the Department of Law and Criminology, however Social Work would continue to be well presented to an external audience without a negative impact on existing partnerships and student experience. The Head of the School of Law and Social Science advised that both departments supported the proposed merger from 2022-23. 22/44

**Items for formal approval**

17. **\* Proposed amendments to regulations for 2022-23**

\*17.1 Paper AB/22/13 Changes to the Research Degree regulations for 2022-23 was RECEIVED and APPROVED. 22/45

\*17.2 Paper AB/22/14 changes to other academic regulations for 2022-23 was RECEIVED and APPROVED. 22/46

18. **\*Terms of Reference**

Papers AB/22/15a, b and c Terms of Reference for Partnerships Committee, Education Strategy Committee and the Executive Committee for Assessment were RECEIVED and APPROVED. 22/47

Paper AB/22/15b was unstarred at the request of an elected member with concerns about resources. The Senior Vice Principal (Education) reported that interim governance processes had been put in place in from March 2020 and during 2020-21. The number of committees had been reduced, following a review in summer 21 before returning to business as usual. He confirmed that part of the work of specific committees is to consider the resources needed to support various projects, although Education Strategy Committee itself focusses on policy rather than implementation. Prior to the meeting, the Secretary advised that resources are considered by those committees with an explicit remit to consider resourcing implications. In respect of Education Strategy Committee, the requirements for the new projects and policies proposed by the committee are detailed within the Student and Academic Services Directorate's Business Plan following discussion at Executive Board. 22/48

19.	<b>*Research Ethics Policy</b>	
	Paper AB/22/16 Research Ethics Policy was RECEIVED and APPROVED.	22/49
	The paper was unstarred at the request of an elected member.	22/50
	The Chair advised that work had been ongoing since last summer on a new Research Ethics Policy and implementation programme. He reported that if there is research that has not been previously considered, it would need to be looked at, but beyond this the new policy would be rolled out within existing resources. He acknowledged that this would mean some compromises in the first year to achieve this and the matter would be reviewed at the end of this period. He thanked members of the Research Ethics Committee for their work on updating the policy.	22/51
20.	<b>*Research Misconduct Policy</b>	
	Paper AB/22/17 Research Misconduct Policy was RECEIVED and APPROVED.	22/52
<b>Items for report</b>		
21.	<b>*Review of Implementation of Schools</b>	
	Paper AB/22/18 Proposal for the review of the implementation of Schools was RECEIVED.	22/53
	The paper was unstarred at the request of an elected member, who raised concerns about how long it has taken to review the restructure and therefore how it will be possible to ensure those affected by the change can be engaged in the review to identify the advantages and disadvantages. The Senior Vice Principal (Student and Staff Experience) advised that the primary challenge in conducting the review would be untangling what has arisen because of the restructure versus the COVID-19 pandemic. She would also seek student input into the review. The composition of the reviewing team will include Executive Deans and School Managers as well as other key professional service colleagues to ensure all views are surfaced and solutions identified as part of preparing for further discussions.	22/54
22.	<b>*Library Services Content Strategy and updated Information Resources Policy</b>	
	Paper AB/22/19 Content Strategy and Information Resources Policy (formerly the Collection Development and Management Policy) was RECEIVED and APPROVED.	22/55
23.	<b>* Annual Review</b>	
23.1*	Paper AB/22/20 Composite reports from the review of postgraduate taught provision in 2020-21 was RECEIVED.	22/56
23.2*	Paper AB/22/21 Composite reports from the review of postgraduate research provision in 2020-21 was RECEIVED.	22/57
24.	<b>*Academic Board Executive</b>	
	Paper AB/22/22 Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board Executive held on 14 February 2022 were RECEIVED.	22/58

25. **\*Education Strategy Committee**  
Paper AB/22/23 Minutes of the Education Strategy Committee meetings held on 15 November 2021 and 12 January 2022 were RECEIVED. 22/59
26. **\*Partnerships Committee**  
Paper AB/22/24 Minutes of the Partnerships Committee meeting held on 29 November were RECEIVED. 22/60
27. **\*Quality Assurance and Standards Committee**  
Paper AB/22/15 Minutes of the Quality Assurance and Standards Committee meeting held on 11 November 2021 were RECEIVED. 22/61
- Other Matters**
28. **Date of the next meeting**  
Wednesday 1 June 2022 at 2pm. The Chair highlighted that this meeting would take place face to face and confirmation of the venue would be circulated. 22/62