

the Academic Council

Minutes of the third meeting of the Academic Council in the 2022-2023 academic session, held on 26 April 2023 at 2 pm in Room 123, Jellicoe Building, Medway campus and via Microsoft Teams.

Present:

Jane Harrington, Vice-Chancellor (Chair)

Peter Garrod, University Secretary
(Executive Secretary)

- Rachel Ashton, Interim Executive Director, Student and Academic Services
- Leigh Doster, PVC Business
- Peter Griffiths, PVC Engineering & Science
- Krishmi Karki, elected student member
- Jennifer Marie, PVC Education
- Derek Moore, PVC FEHHS
- Zoe Pettit, Deputy Dean, FLAS
- Peter Taylor, Chief Operating Officer
- Anuj Baral, elected student member
- Paul Butler, Executive Director and Chief Information Officer, ILS
- Andy Frost, Interim Director, GRE
- Petros Ieromonachou, Associate Dean (R&KE), GBS
- Heidi King, Executive Director, Marketing & External Relations
- Louise Owusu-Kwarteng, Associate Dean (Student Success), FLAS
- Andrew Westby, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Knowledge Exchange)

In attendance:

Trudy Brighton, SEO: Governing Body (minutes)

Karen Brough, Assistant Director (Registry), Student & Academic Services

Anna McMenamin, Interim Associate Director, Employability & Apprenticeships (item 22/49)

Apologies:

Abdul Ahad, Elected Student Member

Yasinur Rashid Jabed, Elected Student Member

Jane Roscoe, Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost

Sofia Stathi, Chair, UREB

AC 22/39 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Mohammed Sakikhales and Mary Clare Martin, faculty academic staff members for FES and FEHHS respectively, to their first meeting and reported that interviews for faculty members from FLAS and GBS were scheduled for 1 June 2023.

She extended a further welcome to Sheryl Hendricks, Director of NRI, and Vanessa Lemm, PVC of FLAS, to their first meeting.

The Chair reported that Yasinur Javed was attending his last meeting as he was stepping down as President of the GSU on 12 May 2023 in order to take up a role within the University as a Global Mobility Officer. She thanked him for everything he had accomplished during the year. Krishmi Karki would succeed him as GSU President until 30 June 2023.

AC 22/40 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were made.

AC 22/41 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND ACTIONS LIST (AC 22/P35)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 January 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

The actions list was received. It was noted that all actions were ongoing or completed or addressed on the meeting agenda.

AC 22/42 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE

42.1 Responding to the Greenwich Student Survey (GSS) (AC 22/P36)

The PVC Education presented proposals on how the University should respond to the Greenwich Student Survey (GSS). The survey provided insight into the experiences of students prior to their final year of study in order to enhance their student experience for the remainder of their time at Greenwich. Hitherto there had been no structured way in which the results were examined and the proposals outlined different governance structures and timescales for responding to the GSS results.

The Council noted that the Continuous Improvement Tool currently in development to streamline the review of on-campus programmes was due to be launched in June 2023. However, the Tool did not currently have the functionality to include GSS results or cover programmes run by UK or TNE partners. As a result, the proposals recommended that the GSS results were embedded into the Tool as soon as possible.

The proposals, which had been approved by the Learning, Quality and Regulations Committee, envisaged the following timeline:

April	GSS programme results available
April to Nov	Programme Management Committees to discuss GSS results for their programmes at earliest opportunity
May - following April	Programme Management Committees to track actions arising from GSS results.
May	Summary GSS results available at School/Faculty/University level.
May to July	Summary GSS results at School / Faculty level discussed initially at first Faculty Student Success Committee.

June	Summary GSS results at University level discussed at Learning Quality and Regulations Committee.
November to December	Confirmation to FSSCs that all GSS programme results discussed at a Programme Management Committee.
January	Confirmation to LQRC that all GSS programmes discussed at PMC and summaries at FSSC.

The Council considered the above proposals and also those for partner programmes where it was being suggested that the GSS results were first discussed by the Greenwich link tutors with the programme team at the partner institutions. These which would then report into Faculty level and University level programmes and partnerships management committees. After some discussion on the specific proposal for partner programmes, it was decided that the formal route for all results should be through the Faculty Student Success Committees and the University level Student Success Board. After which detailed consideration of emerging issues should be discussed at the relevant committee, for example regulatory issues would be considered by the Learning, Quality & Regulations Committee.

Subject to the changes to the reporting process, the Council **approved** the proposals for responding to the Greenwich Student Survey.

AC 22/43 REPORT FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR (AC 22/P37)

The Vice-Chancellor presented her report on recent developments and highlighted the following:

- **Access and Participation Plan Data Update:** the OfS had released data on the Awarding Gap and Continuation. Greenwich's BAME Awarding Gap had widened slightly by 0.8 percentage points to 13.1 in 2021-22. This was less than the sector increase of 1.7 percentage points. The PVC Business was undertaking work to identify how to bring about improvements.

The Continuation rate had dropped from 90.6% in 2019-20 to 87.9% in 2020-21 (a 2.7 percentage point decrease). This compared to a sector worsening of 2.2 percentage points. This was a disappointing result for Greenwich although it was recognised that its high proportion of students from deprived areas was a contributing factor. The interventions to support continuation such as the cost of living measures and the retention calling project would continue. The launch of the Student Lifecycle Management tool in July would help track students who needed support. PAS was undertaking a more comprehensive data analysis for review at a future meeting in order to understand the implications of the data and help identify the next steps to be taken.

- **University Achievements:** The University had been awarded funding from the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and Office for Artificial Intelligence enabling it to offer 30 £10,000 awards to study MSc Data Science and its Applications.
- **Strategy Programme Update:** Following the budget round, consideration was being given to determining strategic priorities and projects for 2023/24. The finalised list would be shared with the Council when available.
- **Office for Students:** Several consultations and publications had been

issued including a consultation on the publication of the National Student Survey and how to present the data received from students' responses. Greenwich would be submitting a response ahead of the 2 May 2023 deadline.

AC 22/44 STUDENTS' UNION REPORT (AC 22/P38)

The President of Greenwich Students' Union presented an update on strategic activities. The annual Student-Led Teaching Awards which celebrated excellence across all aspects of learning would be held on 11 May 2023. 421 nominations had been received across 11 award categories.

Following a full year's operation, the student voice and representation provision had been reviewed to take account of feedback from staff and students. The current model allowed for two student representatives per level per programme and 38% of potential roles had been filled this year. Mark Heffernan, GSU Head of Campus Engagement & Opportunities, reported that areas of focus for 2023/24 included:

- Increasing representative coverage across the Faculties
- Providing feedback on students' educational experience
- Improving communications between representative and Faculty staff

and outlined the actions that were being taken.

It was noted that student representative engagement with FES was particularly low, with only 19% of student representative roles filled. Mark Heffernan reported that the GSU planned to meet with the Faculty to examine what could be done to improve the quality and number of student representatives in that area.

The Chair welcomed the GSU's intention to produce Faculty level summary reports on feedback from the representatives in the coming year. She emphasised the advantage of the opportunity for student representatives to forge a direct relationship with the School and programme teams and feed themes up the chain to Faculty level. It was important for the feedback to be reactive and for issues to be addressed quickly and by the right people.

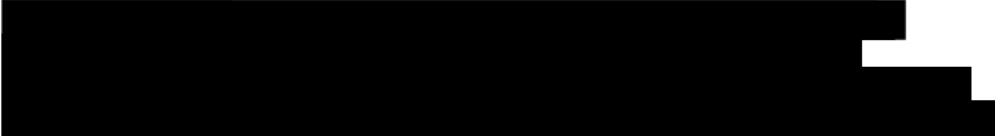
The Chair thanked the President for his report and wished him well in his new role.

AC 22/45 FACULTY REPORTS (AC 22/P39)

The Executive Dean & PVCs presented highlights from their Faculty reports:

45.1 Faculty of Engineering & Science

Professor Peter Griffiths drew the Council's attention to the following:

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- **Staff and Culture:** Recruitment to a number of vacant posts was in progress. All of the academic portfolio leads within the Schools had been appointed although a number of teaching positions remained unfilled.
- **Student Success:** The suite of forensic science programme had achieved accreditation the day before. Interventions to strengthen the employability aspect of the provision were under consideration.
- **Research & Knowledge Exchange:** The Medway Food Innovation Laboratories had now officially opened. Recent knowledge exchange work on the origins of covid and the use of small fish in tackling malnutrition and the food crisis had been published in the Daily Mail and the Nature Food journal respectively.
- **International:** Successful visits had taken place in the Netherlands. A research conference was being held tomorrow at MSA.
- **Partnerships:** The Faculty was working through the conditions attached to the new Plumpton College partnership including the successful accreditation of its Veterinary Nursing degree programme.
- **Accreditations:** Accreditation for the BEng Chemical Engineering and construction programmes was in progress.

45.2 Greenwich Business School

Professor Leigh Doster drew the Council's attention to the following:

- [Redacted]
- **Staff and Culture:** Staff recruitment continued to be challenging. A Faculty leadership development programme had been launched. A pilot scheme to maximise office space had been implemented with the creation of school neighbour areas and collaboration spaces.
- **Student Success:** The Faculty was working with HR to pilot apprenticeship schemes for staff. Skills injection funding had been won to develop level 4 and 5 qualifications. Assessment writing retreats, part of the ongoing series of student success activities, were proving popular with students.
- [Redacted]
- **Events:** A recent Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport London Region Student Conference had been attended by the Princess Royal who had met with selected students and staff members.

45.3 Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Professor Vanessa Lemm drew the Council's attention to the following:

- [Redacted]

- **Staff and Culture:** Proactive recruitment to fill current vacancies across the four Schools was under way. Meetings were planned to enable Schools to showcase their strengths and ensure alignment with strategic ambitions. A Faculty Forum was planned for June.
- **Student Success:** Improving employability opportunities for students was a current area of focus and successful events across all four Schools had been held. Film and TV graduates had recently received a number of top student awards and nominations.
- **Research & Knowledge Exchange:** The new Centre for Sound and Image had received formal approval at the recent RKE Board. The remaining five Centres would be considered at the Board's May meeting.
- **International:** A Faculty delegation visit to existing and new partners in Chicago and California earlier in the year would lead to new opportunities in North America.
- **Partnerships:** A new collaboration with the Ghana School of Law was in progress. A new partnership with Edinburgh Greenside Venues would enable two student shows to be performed at the Edinburgh Arts Festival this year.
- **Accreditations:** Continued accreditation of the three architecture programmes until 2027 was confirmed by RIBA in March.
- **Event:** The School of Design End of Year Show was scheduled for 15 June 2023.

45.4 Faculty of Education, Health and Human Sciences

Professor Derek Moore drew the Council's attention to the following:

- [REDACTED]
- **Staff and Culture:** All School Deputies and Associate Heads of Student Success and R&KE had been appointed. A celebration of Faculty success would be held in the summer. There had been two nominations at the Royal College of Midwives in May 2023.
- **Student Success:** The first cohort of Midwifery apprentices in the world had graduated in March. New programmes for Physiotherapy and Physician associates and Speech and Language were being prepared for launch for 2023 entry. Improvements to the PABS and registration processes were being put in place.
- **Research & Knowledge Exchange:** The showcase event for the work of the Institute for Lifecourse Development held on 20 April 2023 had been well attended and well received. A contract with Heath Education England to deliver Critical Care Nursing post-registration training had been extended until 2025.
- **International:** A new international plan was being developed. Visits to Nepal and Hong Kong to develop relationships and explore relationships were planned.
- **Accreditations:** Preparations for a possible Ofsted ITE inspection and for apprenticeships were continuing. The School of Human Sciences had had successful accreditation reviews by Social Work England, British Association of Counselling Psychology and British Psychological Society for its

- programmes.
- **Events:** A further mass casualty/simulation event was being planned for the summer.

AC 22/45 REVIEW OF THE DEGREE ALGORITHM FOR HONOURS DEGREE CLASSIFICATIONS (AC 22/P40)

The PVC, Education presented a proposal for a change to the degree algorithm for honours degrees following review. The purpose of the review had been to ensure that the algorithm best reflected the achievements of students at the point they left the University and was as inclusive as possible.

It was being recommended that the current honours degree algorithm of

20% (all credits at level 5) plus 80% (best 90 credits at level 6)

should change wef the 2022/23 academic year to:

10% (all credits at level 5) plus 90% (best 90 credits at level 6).

Detailed modelling, appended to the report, of the effect of increasing the weighting to level 6 on degree classifications and on the classifications of different student ethnicities, suggested that there would be some effect on 'good' awards, with a greater impact on first class honours. However, this was not likely to exceed pre-pandemic awarding rates, which was a requirement of the OfS and would still compare favourably with other institutions.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that it had been realised that the University's BAME Awarding Gap had been affected by the degree algorithm. This tied in to the late academic development of some students in this group. The PVC Education confirmed that modelling of the BAME Awarding Gap for the past four years indicated that the change in algorithm would have a positive impact on reducing the awarding gap.

In discussion it was noted that:

- Greenwich's most recent (2021/22) rates of good award were 72% with first class honours of 29%. Monitoring of these rates would be necessary to ensure that they remained below pre-pandemic levels.
- Whilst the change in the degree algorithm should have no bearing on the criteria of the various professional, statutory and regulatory bodies which accredited programmes, the Vice-Chancellor requested that a check be made to ascertain that this was the case;
- In order not to disadvantage current students, both degree algorithms would be used to assess the grade and the best outcome of the two would be used.
- The point was made that the new degree algorithm might be detrimental to students who were experiencing a bad third year and were feeling under stress. The Vice-Chancellor reported that this scenario had been considered and accounted for the fact that the weighting for year six was 90%. There would be the opportunity to compare outcomes in the future and identify whether many students were in this position.

The Council **approved** the change to the degree algorithm with effect from the 2022/23 academic year. The outcomes would subsequently be reviewed to assess whether the algorithm should be adopted permanently.

AC 22/46 HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT (AC 22/P41)

The Council received an update on actions in response to the OfS Statement of Expectations on Harassment and Sexual Misconduct.

The University Secretary reported that, since the last meeting, the OfS had launched a consultation on a proposed new condition of registration around student harassment and sexual misconduct. Amongst other things, HE providers would be required to maintain and publish a single document setting out policies and procedures relating to student harassment and sexual misconduct whilst meeting minimum content requirements imposed by the OfS. Mandatory training for students and staff on student harassment and sexual misconduct would also be a requirement. UUK and other sector groups were developing responses to the consultation; the University would submit its own response as well.

Take-up of the Healthy Sex and Relationships online training course for students launched in January 2023 and surveys linked to a parallel academic research project survey had been lower than anticipated. Further publicising of the training was planned. Students were to be offered a £20 Love-to-Shop voucher as an incentive to improve take-up and feedback.

Since the recent introduction of the new Report + Support platform for reporting concerns about harassment and bullying, hate crime, sexual misconduct and discrimination, [REDACTED] Data from the system would be reported periodically to relevant committees to help identify trends and themes and would also be included in future annual student casework reports to the Council and Governing Body.

It was noted that the Student Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy needed to be updated to refer to Report + Support and the University Secretary agreed to do so. The Vice-Chancellor thanked all concerned for the important work being undertaken in this area.

AC 22/47 TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK REVIEW (AC 22/P42)

The Council considered a review of the University's TEF 2023 submission and areas identified for future development. The PVC Education reported that the TEF process had been reviewed from three perspectives:

- (i) the creation of the institution narrative
- (ii) working with the GSU on the student narrative
- (iii) the educational provision at the University.

An overview of the detailed findings of the review were set out in the report's appendices. Overall, the narratives were regarded as high quality but improvements to the way the University and GSU worked together could be made and it would be beneficial to have a dedicated resource to work on the TEF submission. There were many strengths to education at the University but specific areas needed attention, some of which would be picked up through the

strategies on Student Success, Estates and Digital. Good practice needed to be embedded across the University and better evaluation of what worked was necessary.

The Council noted that communications about TEF, the lessons learnt and areas to be addressed would be communicated back to staff and students.

AC 22/48 ANNUAL REPORT ON STUDENT CASEWORK (AC 22/P43)

The Council considered the annual report on student casework covering the 2021/22 academic year.

The Assistant Director, SAS (Registry) presented the summary details and proposed responses following analysis of the casework statistics. She highlighted that casework in most areas had risen year on year:

• [REDACTED]

It was reported that the increase in the number of extenuating circumstances claims and the percentage rejected on insufficient grounds was likely to have led to the increase in academic appeals. In response to a question from the Vice-Chancellor about whether the Extenuating Circumstances Policy was being reviewed, the AD, SAS (Registry) confirmed that a review was underway and that consideration was being given to centralising this area of casework in order to reduce the administrative burden on Faculties and standardise decisions. The Vice-Chancellor **asked** for this work to be accelerated.

[REDACTED] In cases necessitating police intervention, clarification was provided that the disciplinary processes were not invoked until the police processes had concluded although students involved were likely to be suspended throughout this time. The Report + Support Tool provided a new pathway for students and staff to make disclosures about sexual violence and harassment and a breakdown of cases had been provided for information.

The Council noted the proposed next steps for these areas of work in the coming year together with the proposed amendments to the annual report. The Vice-Chancellor asked the AD, SAS (Registry) to collaborate with the PVC Education and the University Secretary on refining the report to make it suitable for submission to the Governing Body in June.

The Council noted that the OIA Annual Statement for the University had not yet been received but would be circulated to the Council for information in due course and would be incorporated into the report for Governors.

AC 22/49 DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS (AC 22/P44)

The Council received an update on degree apprenticeships presented by the Associate Director, Employability & Apprenticeships.

[REDACTED]

In preparation for the planned growth, the Employability & Apprenticeships team had been restructured, systems were being streamlined and automated and upskilling of staff by raising awareness of apprenticeships was in progress. The governance around apprenticeships was being reviewed to ensure it was fit for purpose.

The AD, Employability & Apprenticeships reported that the team was working with Faculties ahead of the 2023/24 academic year to ensure that the apprenticeship programmes were viable in terms of numbers and fitted with employers' expectations around content.

[REDACTED]

The Council was pleased to note the success of Greenwich's Midwifery Degree Apprenticeship which was the first in the world. It was recognised that the design of apprenticeship degrees was key to attracting large employers and growing apprentice numbers. The Vice-Chancellor acknowledged the work of the AD, Employability & Apprenticeships in preparing for the ESFA and Ofsted accreditation.

AC 22/50 UPDATE ON RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE SUB-STRATEGY: FORMATION OF CENTRES AND INSTITUTES (AC 22/P45)

The Council received an update on the approval of the new Research Centres and Institutes which were being established as part of the work to improve the research and knowledge exchange culture and environment.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (R&KE) recalled that approval of the new Institutes rested with the Vice-Chancellor's Executive and the new Centres with the Research & Knowledge Exchange Board. He summarised progress to date with their establishment (as set out in the appendix to the minutes).

The Council was informed that the first round of Centre Leadership workshops had been held to introduce the theory of change and ensure Leaders were working on a single page. A parallel piece of work on how to communicate the work and manage the web presence was being carried out

The Vice-Chancellor noted the progress to date and emphasised the need for proper consideration to be given to the names of the Centres so that they represented more than just a list of disciplines.

AC 22/51 POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE SURVEY (PRES) ACTION PLAN AND UPDATE (AC 22/P46)

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (R&KE) presented an update on the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) implementation and action plan and preparation for the next PRES. The action plan covered the period to the next PRES survey (3 April – 5 May 2023) and included activities to improve the response rate, to encourage the sharing of good practice, to improve library resources and improve PGR wellbeing.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (R&KE) reported that he remained concerned about the disjointedness of the postgraduate research experience across the University. A Doctoral College to address these concerns was being scoped and the outcome would be submitted to a future meeting of the Council for consideration. A query was raised about the role of the Doctoral College in providing support to PGR students and supervisory staff. The Council agreed to revisit this issue when the scoping outcome was submitted.

AC 22/52 PREPARATIONS FOR REF2028 – ANNUAL GREAT CYCLES (AC 22/P47)

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (R&KE) provided an update on the annual GREAT cycle. He reminded the Council that the GREAT exercises had served the University well in the past and played a crucial part in the development of the research culture, environment and aspirations of the University. As the GREAT2022 process had not been completed due to a lack of engagement and concerns about the quality of the outputs submitted, the REF Strategy Working Group had been re-convened to re-launch GREAT2023. A series of GREAT 2023 roadshows had been held in March with 250 attendees across three events, following which GREAT2023 had been formally launched.

As detailed in the timetable for the REF2023 process appended to the report, staff had been invited to submit nominations for up to three outputs for internal assessment by 1 May 2023, and potential Impact Case Studies by 31 July 2023. Assessment of outputs and Impact Case Studies would follow with feedback provided to staff on the decisions taken.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked the DVC (R&KE) for the report and highlighted the value of the GREAT exercise to the REF preparation.

AC 22/53 SUMMARY REPORTS FROM ACADEMIC COUNCIL COMMITTEES (AC 22/P48)

The Council received summary reports from the following Academic Council's committees:

- Research and Knowledge Exchange Board, 6 December 2022
- Research and Knowledge Exchange Board, 8 February 2023
- Student Success Board, 23 February 2023
- Student Success Board, 23 March 2023
- Strategic Business Board, 17 March 2023
- University Research Ethics Board, 21 February 2023

AC 22/54 MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL COMMITTEES (AC 22/P49)

The Council **received** minutes from the following Academic Council's committee meetings:

- Research and Knowledge Exchange Board, 7 December 2022
- Research and Knowledge Exchange Board, 8 February 2023
- Student Success Board, 23 February 2023
- Student Success Board, 23 March 2023
- Strategic Business Board, 17 March 2023
- University Research Ethics Board, 21 February 2023

AC 22/55 ACADEMIC COUNCIL CYCLE OF BUSINESS 2022/23 (AC 22/P50)

The Council **received** the updated cycle of business for 2022/23.

Meeting closed at 16:45.

T.A.Brighton
23 May 2023

Appendix to Academic Council minutes of meeting held on 26 April 2023

RESEARCH INSTITUTES AND CENTRES

Institute for Lifecourse Development (ILD)(FEHHS) comprising seven Centres (approved in January 2023):

- Chronic Illness and Aging
- Inequalities
- Thinking and Learning
- Workforce Development
- Vulnerable Children and Families
- Mental Health
- Exercise Activity and Rehabilitation

Natural Resources Institute (NRI) (FES) comprising three Centres (pre-existing):

- Food Systems
- Sustainable Agriculture for One Health
- Society, Environment and Development
- Society, Environment and Development

Greenwich Business School – four Centres:

- Employment and Work (pre-existing)
- Networks and Urban Systems (pre-existing)
- Political Economy, Governance, Finance and Accountability (pre-existing)
- Tourism and Marketing (new)

Faculty of Engineering & Science – five proposed Centres:

- Sustainable Cybersecurity (new)
- Mathematical Modelling and Simulation (new)
- Advanced Manufacturing and Materials (in preparation)
- Functional Molecules and Materials (in preparation)
- Safety, Disaster Resilience and Physical Security (in preparation)

Faculty of Engineering & Science – formation of Institute based on non-NRI work under consideration.

Institute of Inclusive Communities (ICE)(FLAS) comprising six Centres:

- Sound and Image (new)
- Communities and Social Justice (in preparation)
- Creative Futures (in preparation)
- Human Rights, Governance, Environment and Criminal Justice (in preparation)
- Language Culture and History (in preparation)
- Sustainable and Inclusive Design (in preparation)