

Strategy Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 31st March 2021



Attendees: Jane Hillston (Chair), Joy Candlish, Chris Williams, Frank Keller, Björn Franke, Julian Bradfield, Matthias Hennig, Ram Ramamoorthy, Jacques Fleuriot, Jim Ashe, Bob Fisher, Ohad Kammar, Lindsey Fox, Kasia Kokowska, Mahesh Marina, Lorna Adams (secretary)

Apologies: Vijay Nagarajan

	Summary	ACTION
<p>1. 1.1</p>	<p>IN ATTENDANCE – Alex Li MSc in Advanced Robotics</p> <p>RR briefly introduced the item and highlighted key points from the circulated paper. RR stated that he wanted to bring it to this Committee for further discussion on how we want to progress. There was some discussion with the following comments noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RBF felt that it's quite a big ask for students to pay for two years. RR thinks that students would want to do this, but agreed that market research needs to be done. - FK noted that the two year programme in Design Informatics, which although had small student numbers, was generally successful had fees lower than the two years for this proposed new MSc. FK added that the Design Informatics programme aims to roll internships into their programme, which usually happens in first year. FK thought that these still exist, but acknowledged that there are some issues. <p>JH added that with regards to internships, there would also need to be dedicated funds to cover the cost of a BDE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CW felt that under Option 1 of the proposal, gaining 120 credits in first year is not actually a Masters. We need to also think about exit routes, as well as appropriate branding. - AL was concerned that visas and internships would be restricted and could see that this could potentially be an issue. AL also felt that the proposal does not allow for breaks for the types of internships. - MM stated that there is good value in exploring specialised Masters. Perhaps there are similar programmes at other institutions that we can learn from? Alex Li advised that most of the two year programmes in Europe allow for these types of placements and in the US companies can offer similar placements. - BF queried what the potential impact on workload would be. RR agreed that this element still needs some more thought and Alex Li noted that they need to have an understanding of those academics able to supervise. <p>Alex Li and RR will review the proposal and finalise further consultation with IPAB and then external market research.</p>	

<p>2.</p> <p>2.1</p> <p>2.2</p>	<p>PREVIOUS MEETING</p> <p>Approval of previous meeting minutes Minutes from the previous meeting were approved with no changes.</p> <p>Matters arising from previous meeting IPAB – Chair in Industrial Robotics – the updated business case, reflecting student intake numbers associated with the new programme, is still to be done. Not sure if will be proceeding with a two year MSc, which makes it hard to estimate student numbers against this. Action: RR will follow up with JC. Discussions are ongoing in IPAB. <i>Update: RR and JC will be developing the business case for new post when there is more likelihood of strategic posts being favourably received by the Exceptions Panel.</i> Data management plans – CW will find out if Ajitha Rajan and Peggy Series have met to discuss. Ethics approval for student projects – BF is in discussion with PS to draft a template for UG projects. Dedicated ethics training resource for current staff – JH and JC are to discuss and investigate further possibilities with College. <i>Update: JC has raised with College but no resource available; also raised as part of Growing Research Together.</i> Online Strategy – MSc in AI – BF hopes to bring the revised proposal back to this Committee meeting in May. EU students will have to pay for a visa from September 2021 – RBF understands that Edinburgh Global will be contacting students. Will follow up to see if this has been done.</p>	<p>RR/JC</p> <p>CW</p> <p>BF</p> <p>BF</p> <p>RBF</p>
<p>3.</p> <p>3.1</p>	<p>HEAD OF SCHOOL BUSINESS</p> <p>Report from Head of School JH provided a brief update to the Committee as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There has been some messaging indicating that UoE will reinstate promotions for the next academic year. We anticipate formal announcement in the coming weeks. <i>[Post meeting note: An update on national pay and reward processes from James Saville was circulated to all staff on 17th May. Details as follows:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All eligible staff will received the standard pay progression increment in August 2021. - UoE will resume consideration of professional services job regrading cases from August 2021. - Academic promotions will resume, with titles and awards effective from August 2022. - UoE will run the contribution reward process in 2022 for the award of lump sums in July 2022 and increment awards in August 2022.] - The University’s Recruitment Exceptions Panel will no longer consider recruitment requests, with decisions being devolved to Heads of College. However, decisions made will be monitored closely by the Exceptions Panel. - Academic Recruitment – Interviews for the Chair in NLP are planned for 13th April 2021. Interviews have taken place for the Data Visualisation post, as well as the Machine Learning position. Currently in negotiation discussions with the successful candidates. <i>[Post meeting note: Antonio Vergari will be joining us as Lecturer in Machine Learning, with Uta Hinrichs joining the school as Reader in Data Visualisation (EFI). The starting date for both will be 1st September 2021.]</i> 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From 26th April 2021, Scotland is expected to move into Tier 3 and a return to the way of working last autumn. From 17th May 2021, there is expected to be a wider opening to deliver blended learning to PGR students, at which point we would encourage face-to-face meetings with students. 	
<p>4.</p> <p>4.1</p>	<p>STRATEGY AND PLANNING</p> <p>Duty Allocation Policy – Papers 4.1a & b</p> <p>The circulated papers were taken as read. This revised approach attempts to envisage the teaching load that a new academic (UE08 & UE09) staff member would undertake depending on their offer and start dates. In principle new staff will normally have a reduced teaching allocation in their first year, with a full load in their second year.</p> <p>FK noted that in the old policy, a new member of staff's first year, is taken as being the year that they start, which is often part of a calendar year. This policy takes it as the academic year. Need to find a compromise.</p> <p>As UE10 academic staff do not generally get teaching relief, the allocation of specific duties will be considered on a case by case basis.</p> <p>The updated policy also includes the teaching loads for new University Teachers and for Chancellor's Fellows, which had not previously been documented.</p> <p>The Strategy Committee approved the proposed changes.</p>	
<p>5</p> <p>5.1</p>	<p>RESEARCH BUSINESS</p> <p>Report from Director of Research</p> <p>CW provided a brief update as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At the last Research Committee Meeting there was a discussion on the UoE AI strategy, led by Michael Rovatsos. - At the next School Research Committee Meeting, the main item on the agenda will be Export Control. Keith Edwards will be in attendance for this discussion. - At College Research Committee there was some discussion around the shrinkage of ODA funding. <p>JH took the opportunity to advise the Committee that the School's REF submission was now complete, and thanked everyone for all their efforts with this. It's anticipated that next REF could be 2027. It is anticipated that, once results come out next year, there will be a review and a decision on the date of next submission.</p>	
<p>6.</p> <p>6.1</p>	<p>TEACHING BUSINESS</p> <p>Report from Director of Teaching</p> <p>BF gave the following short update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning update imminent from UoE for next year. - Revised teaching support policy modelling also imminent. - Online exams may be likely to stay with us longer and we will need to look at best practice for this; we need to concentrate effort into how we examine students in future. - Heads up that the Board of Exams will be challenging for us this year. 	

6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning to offer some lightweight courses – a ‘pre-start’ before the beginning of next semester. If anyone is interested, please let BF know. <p>Exam Feedback – Potential School Policy</p> <p>BF introduced this item which has been discussed at Teaching Committee. There was some discussion by this Committee, who thought it was quite reasonable to provide students with exam feedback. The following additional comments were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RBF questioned when students would be able to access the feedback. BF advised that once marking was completed, a list of typical issues would be compiled in a timely manner and then uploaded to a dedicated website. This feedback may also be useful for students taking exams in the following year. - MH asked how this would differ from providing exam solutions. Currently it is standard practice for marks to be written down without any comments as to why marks have been deducted. - MM was concerned that there may not be context for this feedback and we would also need to publish exam scripts. MM was also not sure how relevant this feedback would be for future year students. BF feels that it would be very useful for new students and would help them to get feel for exams and expectations. - FK added that we would also need to provide solutions in the feedback too. JH advised that it is UoE policy that we cannot publish solutions to exams. - This Committee felt it would be helpful to see an example of proposed feedback. As JH noted, even feedback to students saying ‘everyone found this part difficult’ is still useful and not very difficult for us to do. Think we need to find a compromise. <p>Action: BF to prepare an example of some feedback and will circulate to this Committee.</p>	BF
7.1	<p>7. GRADUATE SCHOOL BUSINESS</p> <p>Report from Director of Graduate School</p> <p>RBF provided a brief update as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IGS team are currently making offers and processing applications. - Deep Mind Scholarships – Still one to fill, unfortunately we have not enough suitable applicants for these. JH asked if these were explicitly advertised. KK advised that these were highlighted at our recent open days and are also highlighted on our websites. JH suggested that these are pushed out to Hoppers. Action: KK to investigate if we could advertise these on FindAPhD.com. - PhD students who have been offered places, are being put off by the additional £1,750 hotel quarantine. JH pointed out that it is the Scottish Government that is imposing this and not UoE. Scottish Universities did lobby Scottish Government about this. 	KK
8.1	<p>8. COMMERCIALISATION BUSINESS</p> <p>Report from Director of Commercialisation and Industry Engagement</p> <p>JA shared some slides by way of an update of activity in the Commercialisation Team. He also noted Huawei are planning on expanding their foot print in Edinburgh, which could be a good opportunity for us to grow that relationship.</p>	

	<p>JF asked JA what the plan will be for providing support AIAI with Ahmed's departure. JA and JC are submitting a case for a replacement post to the Exceptions Panel. <i>[Post meeting note: Case approved and post advertised].</i></p>	
<p>9.</p> <p>9.1</p>	<p>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</p> <p>Report from Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion VN had sent his apologies for today's meeting. In his absence, JH advised that we are preparing for our Athena SWAN resubmission and need to convene a new self-assessment team. The resubmission deadline is April 2022. Jane and Bonnie Webber will be leading on this, but need some volunteers, particularly men and some Dols to join this group.</p>	
<p>10.</p> <p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p> <p>10.3</p>	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>Verbal Updates from Directors of Institutes No updates.</p> <p>Verbal update from Research Staff representative No updates.</p> <p>Verbal Updates from Professional Services Representatives LF raised concern that there is a growing tendency to refer to IGS rather than reference individuals by name which is impersonal and leaves people feeling that they are not recognised as individuals. It was recognised that this is potentially a wider problem in the school with our increased electronic communication and not seeing people in person; and the increased use of ticketing systems where the sender does not know who will deal with the query. A suggestion was to refer to (for example) "the IGS team" rather than "IGS".</p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p>Date of next meetings:</p> <p>Semester 2 Wednesday 26th May 2021, 11am-1pm Wednesday 28th July 2021, 11am-1pm</p>	