

**Board of Studies
20th Meeting**

31 January 2007, MIC Hotel and Conference Centre, London

Minutes

Present

Mrs Amanda Ashley, Dr Nigel Beasley, Mrs Terry Bransbury, Ms Marion Cartwright, Mrs Catherine Lillie (Secretary), Mr Matthew McClelland, Mr Mike Miller, Dr Ann Morton (in the Chair), Mrs Alison Robinson, Ms Helen Thomas, Mr Bob Westaway

In Attendance

Mrs Liz Bromley

Apologies

Mrs Sue Beech, Mr Simon Eades, Ms Janet Flexney, Mr Hugh Jones, Mrs Joyce Tate

01.20 Minutes

Confirmed: minutes of the previous meeting.

Matters arising:

- (1) (01.19.i) A response had been received from Professor Sir David Watson, Director of the Institute of Education's MBA (HEM) regarding articulation arrangements. No credit transfer was permitted but graduates would be sent promotional materials.
- (2) (01.19.iv) A copy of the Programme Handbook had been sent to the Chair, Equality Advisory Group and a response was awaited.
- (3) (07.19) The admissions policy for non-standard entry was still under review by the Programme Management Team. A paper would be presented to the next Board of Studies meeting for approval.
- (4) (12.19) Work on incentives for mentors was still underway. Support in principle from mentors had been received. A paper would be brought to the next Board of Studies meeting for implementation in the 2007/08 academic year.

02.20 Terms of reference and membership

Received:

- the terms of reference of the Board
- the current membership of the Board

Noted:

- (1) Mrs Catherine Lillie, the new Programme Manager was welcomed to the meeting

- (2) There are a number of vacancies on the Board which would be advertised where appropriate.

Action: Secretary

03.20 Assessment

(1) Received:

- an oral report from the last meeting of the Assessment Board
- oral reports from the assessor representatives

Reported:

- (1) The following recommendations had been made to the Open University:

- (a) Submissions in the first instance (9):
- Awards: 3
 - Referrals (major assignment): 3
 - Referrals (portfolio- CoPS assignment only): 1
 - Referrals (both): 2
- (b) Resubmissions (8)
- Awards: 7
 - Fails: 1

- (2) The standard of work submitted had not changed significantly and the following general criticisms had been made:

- (a) narrow responses to questions and failure to answer the assignment question;
- (b) insufficient range and quantity of reading;
- (c) an increase in slight and fundamental errors showing a lack of engagement.

- (3) The following positive feedback had been given:

- (a) the External Examiner was confident that a good standard was being applied;
- (b) there was a higher proportion of participants passing at resubmission, showing that feedback was fulfilling its developmental role;
- (c) the regular submission deadlines on the new programme should help identify issues as they arise.

Noted:

- (1) The new programme structure should resolve the issues relating to standards but improving standards for existing cohorts remained important.
- (2) Further ways of supporting existing cohorts such as guidance, training, comprehensive feedback, additional mentoring, peer-support networks etc were being actively encouraged.

Resolved:

- (1) Mentors would be copied into the assignment acknowledgement email sent to participants so that they know the timescale for assessment. This would allow them to initiate contact with their participant when the feedback has been released, to discuss the assignment with them.
- (2) Graduate monitoring should include information on how the programme

benefits institutions, not just the participants themselves.

Action: Secretary

(2) **Reported:**

Alison Smith, Director of Professional Programmes and Deputy Director of the Management Development Centre, University of Loughborough had been appointed as External Examiner by Open University Validation Services. Her role is to provide additional support with the increase in participant output of the new programme, as well as providing continuity.

04.20 Graduate Survey

Received:

- the report of the graduate survey produced by Celia Whitchurch, King's College London

Reported:

Future graduate surveys would not be as detailed as this data which had formed part of Celia Whitchurch's own research project. However it was useful to help discern trends which can inform future marketing.

Noted:

- (1) Many participants join AUA to do the programme therefore marketing must be reaching them via means other than direct AUA member marketing.
- (2) Some respondents had noted they had changed job as a result of the programme.
- (3) Engagement with alumni from the programme should be investigated as a means of promoting the programme.
- (4) The suggestion of one of the respondents to have group projects may help participant interaction and enable them to work more comparatively. This could be achieved virtually.

Resolved:

Data from graduates would be sought at different stages e.g. 5 and 10 year intervals since graduation.

Action: Secretary

05.20 Statistical Summary

Received: a statistical summary of recruitment, progression, and retention for 2006-07.

Noted:

- (1) Withdrawal rates due to lapsed participants were still being monitored. Institutional support would help alleviate this problem when the institution has paid the programme fee;
- (2) The option for participants to contact the AUA office to arrange payment by instalment would be added to the application form.

Action: Secretary

06.20 QAA Mapping Exercise

Received: an updated QAA mapping action plan

Reported:

- (1) items 5 and 6- a response was awaited from Sara Hunter, Chair of the Equality Advisory group;
- (2) item 10- the Programme Management Team will report to the Board in May.

07.20 Annual Monitoring Action Plan

Received: the Annual Monitoring report

Reported:

- (1) The Annual Monitoring report had been submitted in December. No formal response had as yet been received.
- (2) Action point 1- the drafting of a policy for non-standard entry was ongoing by the Programme Management Team.
- (3) Action point 8- the Programme Management Team were looking into possibilities for e-learning including use of the AUA website, VLEs etc.
- (4) The targets for the 2006/07 session should be reached. The target of 80 for 2007/08 may be reduced to 60.
- (5) There are currently no mentor targets because there is a small turnover of mentors. Mentor marketing is carried out geographically to respond to the locations of participants.
- (6) Recruitment of assessors is ongoing.

Action: Programme Management Team

08.20 Reports from Representatives

Received: reports from –

(1) Branch / Regional Coordinator representative

Reported:

- (a) BC's did not always feel they have an important role in the programme;
- (b) the AUA office is currently looking at ways to involve BC's more in the programme such as BC's helping with promoting the programme to their members and in matters such as setting up study groups.

Noted:

- (a) further qualifications may be developed in the future but this will be considered by AUA's ongoing work on the LGM framework;

Agreed:

- (a) the possibility of bursaries and sponsorship opportunities would be looked into, possibly to involve alumni

Action: Liz Bromley

(2) Participant representatives

Reported:

- (a) Participants had raised the following issues:

- (i) workshops were not offered free to participants;
 - (ii) a Student Support Officer would help alleviate problems of participants and mentors feeling isolated;
 - (iii) more opportunities to meet other participants should be developed as well as a taught element to the programme;
 - (iv) inadequate feedback was unhelpful in terms of development;
 - (v) feedback after the formative assignment is only provided at the end of the programme. It was suggested that feedback be provided at intermediate point as well;
 - (vi) the role of the draft knowledge assignment was unclear;
 - (vii) the amount of academic reading required was unclear;
 - (viii) there are differing amounts of guidance and learning outcomes in each of the knowledge areas in the old Resource Pack;
 - (ix) documents on the web are not always up-to-date or clear in who they apply to;
 - (x) the assignments on the website need to be reviewed and updated;
 - (xi) there should be some sort of reward for completing the PDP;
 - (xii) the first two assignments should have more value.
- (b) Participants had commended:
- (i) the ability to learn about HE in the UK and develop their administrative skills;
 - (ii) the mentoring component, which was considered very positive;
 - (iii) the study days were considered excellent and well run;
 - (iv) the materials given to participants were clear and coherent.

Noted:

- (a) In response to the participants concerns:
- (i) workshops are optional and although they may be appropriate to the programme, they are not part of the programme;
 - (ii) a quarterly bulletin for participants and mentors had been introduced to keep people informed- the roles of the Programme Manager and Programme Leader would be clarified in the next quarterly bulletin, in terms of participant and mentor support;
 - (iii) future development days may be run on a cohort-specific basis to encourage participants to meet up. Past development days had not always been well-attended;
 - (iv) the quality of feedback has been addressed by the Assessment Board and improved for both the new programme and existing cohorts;
 - (v) the draft knowledge assignment will be discussed at Study Day 2;
 - (vi) the Study Skills guide is being used by participants. The example assignments on the website will be looked at;
 - (vii) the Academic Adviser, William Locke, is looking at the Programme Handbook, particularly the Knowledge chapter;

- (viii) the website hadn't been updated immediately after the last induction day but was now up-to-date and cohort-specific;
- (ix) it isn't possible to give a mark for the PDP. The value of the PDP is discussed at Study Day 1 and the formative assignment (and assessment more broadly) is discussed at Study Day 2;

Resolved:

The online materials will be reviewed and updated where necessary

Action: Programme Leader

(3) Mentor representatives**Reported:**

- (a) Mentors had raised the following issues:
 - (i) there was concern over the frequency of communication from the AUA office and that mentors are not being kept informed of their mentees progress
 - (ii) the increase in the programme fees had affected some participants. It may be useful to have fees paid in instalments
- (b) In response to the mentor concerns:
 - (i) All mentors were contacted on a regular basis in line with standard policy; in addition a quarterly bulletin for mentors was being introduced to include generic information on the programme;
 - (ii) the AUA Executive Committee was responsible for setting the fee levels for the programme; participants were able to pay by instalments and from 2007-08 this facility would be publicised to applicants.

09.20 Other Business**Reported:**

The Programme Management Team had met for the first time since the disbanding of the Review Group. It will have a creative role, responding to emerging trends and issues arising from the programme and would report to the Board. It would also act as an advice-source for the Programme Manager and Programme Leader.

Agreed:

There will be a standing item on the Board agenda to report Programme Management Team activity.

10.20 Dates of next meetings

21st meeting: noon, 31 May 2007, Manchester

22nd meeting: September 2007, London