

BoS 3 July 2024

Wednesday, 3rd July 2024 2:15pm

Teams | Faculty of Science Board of Studies

Attendees

Attended

Teresa Buckley

Zoe Burke (ZB)

Andrew Burrows (AB)

Duncan Craig (Chair)

Susan Crennell (SC)

Charlotte Dodson (CD)

Marguerite Hallett (Secretary)

Amanda Harper

Momna Hejmadi

Philip Ingham (PI)

Matthew Jones (MJ)

Eamonn O'Neill (E'ON)

Amanda Pedley

Charareh Pourzand (CP)

Fei Qin

Philip Rogers (PR)

Tony Shardlow (TS)

Gan Shermer (GS)

Gunnar Traustason (GT)

David Tsang (DT)

Ventsislav Valev (VV)

Michael Wilson

Rhod Woodhouse

Did Not Attend

Florin Bisset

Sarah Upendra Chandratreya

Ffion Gould

Tim Rogers

Jeyabal Sivaloganathan

Dmitry Skryabin

Michael Wright

Miranda Yafi

1.0 Welcome and Quorum (7612)

The Chair welcomed members, noted apologies and observed that the meeting was quorate. The Chair thanked academic staff for their hard work in completing marking on time and professional services staff for helping to process the results.

2.0 Declarations of Interest (7613)

There were no declarations of any potential conflicts of interest.

3.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (7614)

The Board approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 May 2024 (Paper 247).

4.0 Matters Arising (7615)

M7597 Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee

The Board noted that an exemption request from the Rule 2 requirement that Chief Invigilators will be members of academic staff was considered by EQSC on 2 July. The Committee decided that there were operational issues that were beyond its remit to discuss, so confined itself to a discussion on whether there was any standards-based reason that the Chief Invigilator had to be an academic. It unanimously agreed that there was not, and that Rule 2 was no longer fit for purpose given how exam invigilation has changed since Rule 2 was first drafted, e.g. invigilators are no longer allowed to advise on errors in examination papers. Registry now need to consider these operational matters (e.g. role specifications, training) and are aiming to do this quickly so that the Faculty will know before the supplementaries how it can proceed. They will also look at changing Rule 2 more broadly. There is unlikely to be any central funding for paying external Chief Invigilators, so the Faculty will need to consider this in due course.

The Chair added that this review should include a review of the practice of invigilation, e.g. avoiding holding examinations across multiple venues and mixing examination cohorts, and improving invigilator training, to reduce invigilation errors, e.g. examination scripts going missing. AB agreed to feed this back to the Examinations Office.

5.0 Chair's Business (7616)

The Chair thanked departments for engaging with the Faculty guidelines on scaling. In particular, the transparency of justifications for scaling decisions has improved considerably, providing a much stronger case. The Board noted that, in response to feedback from the Faculty, Registry had prioritised clarifying the guidance on scaling in QA35 for next year.

6.0 Report on Research Grants (7617)

The Board received details of awards accepted by Research and Innovation Services from 15 May until 25 June 2024 (Paper 248).

The Chair congratulated in particular:

- Dr Theresa Smith, Department of Mathematical Sciences, for her award of £800,444 from the EPSRC for research into AI for Collective Intelligence (AI4CI) - A UKRI AI Research Hub for Real Data.

7.0 Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (7618)

The Board noted the minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2024 (Paper 249).

8.0 Faculty Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (7619)

The Board noted the minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2024 (Paper 250).

9.0 Faculty Executive Committee (7620)

The Board noted the minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2024 (Paper 251). CD enquired as to whether a date had been set yet for the rescheduled EDI Away Day. The Chair explained that the original date of 12 June had been postponed because it clashed with Board of Examiners meetings and to provide more time for planning the event. CP reported that the Away Day will now take place in September. The Chair added that the Faculty is working on finalising plans for the event as a high priority.

10.0 Faculty Doctoral Studies Committee (7621)

The Board noted the minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2024 (Paper 252).

11.0 University Board of Studies (Doctoral) (7622)

The Board noted the minutes of the meetings held on 24 April (Paper 253A) and 22 May (Paper 253B) 2024.

12.0 Staff Student Liaison Committee meetings (7623)

The Board noted the minutes of the meetings held on:

Department of Life Sciences: Biology and Biochemistry 1 May 2024 (PGT) (Paper 254).

Department of Computer Science 14 May 2024 (PGT) (DA) (Paper 255).

Department of Physics 1 May 2024 (Paper 256).

The Chair enquired if there were any significant matters arising from these meetings. AB noted one incidence of a new unit being introduced that did not provide a mock examination, and commented that it is good practice to provide mock examinations for new units so that students have an idea of what to expect. AB stated that he would raise this matter with the relevant department and as a more general point at the next FLTQC meeting. The Chair added that such good practice could help to avoid future scaling of marks. E'ON reported that students had commented that Moodle was not particularly interactive as a learning platform, and was not compatible with screen-readers, which might be an EDI issue. DT reported that students had requested improved access to the notes, revision guides and problem sheets for new CT units, which were not always available immediately.

With regard to student rep attendance at meetings, AB reported good engagement at FLTQC earlier on in the year, which then petered off, probably as expected as exam season approaches. A similar pattern was seen at BoS, and the Nat Sci and Physics SSLCs. Approx. two-thirds of student reps attend Pharmacy SSLC, and 50% across the rest of Life Sciences. The Chair questioned whether the timings of meetings may need to be reviewed.

The Board agreed, particularly with the rolling out of CT, to review common themes arising from SSLC meetings as a matter of practice going forward.

13.0 Any Other Business (7624)

There was none.