

Faculty of Engineering & Design Board of Studies

Unreserved Business

Wednesday, 17th January 2024 3:15 pm

via TEAMS | Faculty of Engineering & Design Board of Studies

Attended

John Chew

Charles Courtney

Jos Darling

Mirella Di Lorenzo

Sabina Gheduzzi

Jonathan Graham-Harper-Cater

Marion Harney

Andrew Heath

Carmelo Herdes Moreno

Tim Ibell

Tristan Kershaw

Sally Lewis

Davide Mattia

Benjamin Metcalfe

David Stacey

Jannis Wenk

Apologies

Florin Bisset

Chris Bowen

Ricardo Codinhoto

Jeffrey Gavin

Nathanail Georgiou

Vaggelis Giannikas

Caitlin Grainger-Spivey

Patrick Keogh

Despina Moschou

Emma Emanuelsson Patterson

Andrew Plummer

Partial Attendance

Nigel Johnston

2336 Welcome and Quorum

The Chair welcomed members, noted apologies and confirmed quorum.

2337 Declarations of Interest

The Chair asked for any declarations of interest which were not going to be declared during subsequent discussions. There were none.

2338 Minutes of the Previous meeting - ED2023-24/057

The unreserved minutes of the meeting of the Board of Studies held on 15 November 2023 (ED2023-24/057) were approved as a correct record of the proceedings.

2339 Actions and Matters Arising

The Board noted the following actions

Minute 2318 Consultation on University Rule 2 - Feedback to Head of Registry Services action completed.

2340 Chairs Business

The Chair reported that following informal discussions the Faculty had launched a review of its International Recruitment Strategy (for both undergraduate and postgraduate taught students), with the aim of completing the review by Easter.

2341 Research Activity Report ED2023-24/058

The Board received and noted the first quarter Grants & Contracts report for 2023-24. The Chair congratulated colleagues on their strong performance and noted that the Faculty had contributed >50% of the University's research grant income in the first quarter. Professor Mattia noted that changes to UKRI procedures (the retention of applications and funding provided in a staggered phased way) may have unforeseen impacts on the Faculty's research income.

2342 Annual Report: Monitoring of Standards (Scaling) 2022-23 ED2023-24/059

The Board received the annual monitoring report on units with mean marks in the atypical range during 2022-23, which were considered by Boards of Examiners for Units (BEUs) for scaling. The Board noted that there had been 33 units with mean marks in the atypical range in 22/23 compared to 22 units in 21/22, a 50% increase. However, the number of units then adjusted (scaled), 16 was comparable to the previous year. The Board noted that the majority of PGT MSc courses in Mechanical and Chemical Engineering had a 50% pass mark and that Academic Registry had provided guidance to the BEUs on the typical and atypical mark ranges relevant for these courses. Four ME5 units with means in the lower atypical range had been scaled upwards as the BEU considered marking to the 50% pass mark required calibration; two CE5 units had also been adjusted upwards based on concerns about the cohort's preparedness for in-person exams. In all instances the BEUs satisfied themselves that students moved to the passing standard following scaling had achieved the learning outcomes.

Members of the Board commented that the methods taken by Exam Boards in adjusting marks varied and that greater consistency of approach was desirable. The Chair requested that the Faculty Learning Teaching & Quality Committee consider and review Faculty advice to Exam Boards on approaches to scaling.

The Board noted that more detail was provided in the scaling report than is normally made available to students on SAMIS e.g. details of before and after unit marks, and that student reps on the Board of Studies therefore had greater access to detailed data than students on the units which had been adjusted. Members of the Board asked for clarification as to whether it was appropriate for the report to be considered under Unreserved business and confirmation of the level of detail recorded on SAMIS for atypical units. The Chair referred the matter to FLTQC.

The Board agreed the Report's recommendation for Departments to complete annual monitoring for the following units (which had produced unit means in the atypical range in 22/23 and also in the preceding 3 years).

AR50465 Building integrated environmental systems
 CE20238 Chemical Engineering skills, practice and design 2
 EE10213 Mathematics 1
 EE30121 Microelectronic systems
 EE50229 Electronic communication systems
 EE50238 Autonomous systems navigation, guidance
 ME10003 Thermodynamics
 ME30037 Internal combustion engine technology
 ME40061 Biomechanics

Action: Faculty Learning Teaching & Quality Committee to consider and review Faculty advice to Exam Boards on approaches to scaling.

Action: Departments to complete annual monitoring of units identified in the report (see above) to include a review of historic unit data and the format of assessment.

Secretary's note: QA35 specifies the data to be included in the annual monitoring report and requires that the report is made available to student academic representatives on the BoS. Secretary to consult with the Academic Standards team (Academic Registry) regarding the Board's concerns.

2343 Annual Report: Operation of Boards of Examiners 2022-23 ED2023-24/060

The Board received the annual report on the Operation of Boards of Examiners for 2022/23 and noted the summary of feedback from Independent Observers (IOs) and External Examiners. Six Exam Boards had been observed by members of administrative/professional services staff independent of the Faculty based on the criteria detailed in the paper. The Board noted the additional workload resulting from the impact of the marking and assessment boycott (i.e., the requirement for additional Boards of Examiners) and the complexity of SAMIS processing regarding interim progression and award decisions.

The report drew attention to feedback from external examiners regarding the presentation of student information to Boards of Examiners. As in previous year's the feedback did not point towards a consensus of views on the presentation of either anonymised marks or student names on the SAMIS reports. The Board agreed that as in previous years Chairs of BEPs could determine whether BEP reports should be anonymised, taking account of the feedback from their external examiners.

The Secretary advised that the same risk-based criteria would be applied for identifying Exam Boards to be observed in 23/24. The Board noted that the IO system had been in operation for 10 years and had been introduced at a time when there was a variety of exam Board practice across the Faculties & School. Over this period there has been extensive alignment of exam board processes, good practice has been embedded and common templates developed (for Board agenda, minutes etc.). The requirement for the continued role of IOs was queried.

2344 Exam Paper Errors 2022-23 ED2023-24/061

The Board received the annual monitoring report on exam paper errors covering semester two and supplementary assessments in 2022/23. Across the Faculty's four departments there are fewer exams in semester two compared to the first semester due to the focus on project activities for UG third and fourth year students. The Board noted that the majority of examinations in the Faculty were being held in-person (i.e., had move away from Inspira). Of the six exam errors reported, five had been for in-person examinations.

2345 Staff Student Liaison Committee ED2023-24/062

The Board of Studies approved the membership and Terms of References for the following Staff-Student Liaison Committees for 2023/24.

- a) Department of Electronic & Electrical Engineering
- b) Faculty PGT SSLC

Members of the Board commented that Department SSLCs still had a number of vacancies for student reps and that filling the positions to ensure representation across all years was an ongoing challenge for departments (notwithstanding the efforts of colleagues to promote student rep roles during induction events). The Board noted that an SU Officer had not been nominated to attend the Faculty Board and that therefore the concerns of the Board regarding the effective operation of SSLC and engagement of students were not being automatically picked up by the Students' Union.

The Secretary advised that the Faculty's Education Manager, Grace Cappy, was actively working with

departments and student representatives with the aim of establishing informal fora and mechanisms to improve opportunities for meaningful student engagement. The Chair proposed that Ms Cappy be invited to attend the next meeting of the Board of Studies to brief the Board.

Action: The Board's concerns regarding the election of student representatives to be passed to the Students' Union.

Action: The Faculty's Education Manager to be invited to the next meeting of the Board.

2346 Update from Student Representatives and/or Students' Union Officer

No update or report had been submitted.

2347 Reports from Ex Officio members ED2023-24/063

The Board received the update reports from ex officio and academic leadership members of the Board as detailed in paper ED2023-24/063.

Members of the Board commented on the serious issue of the number of technician staff vacancies across the Faculty. The Chair agreed that the situation was incredibly challenging, and the recruitment market was hugely competitive for technician roles. The Faculty must grow its technical base through maximising research income with technician support fully costed and specified as part of research grant submissions. Members of the Board commented that the critical role that technician support provides for teaching also was often not fully recognised.

2348 Library Matters

Mr Stacey reported on the following items;

1. The Library is providing the usual range of exam and assessment support activities e.g., the take a break campaign.
2. Library Sparks student competition will be launched in February with a £1k cash prize for the best student idea or suggestion for library improvements.
3. Thanks to the Science library team the University has a subscription to Nature Review Bioengineering.
4. The Library is trialing new modules (including data visualisation tools) on Sage Research Methods until the 26th February.

2349 Sub-Committee Minutes ED2023-24/064-066

The Board received the minutes of the following sub-committee meetings

1. Faculty Learning Teaching & Quality Committee (FLTQC) 22 November and 15 December 2023 ED2023-24/064
2. Faculty Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee (FRKEC) 27 September 2023 ED2023-24/065

3. Faculty Executive 30 October and 4 December 2023 ED2023-24/066

2350 Committee Minutes (SSLC, DBoS, FDSC) ED2023-24/067-069

The Board received the minutes of the following Committee meetings

1. Architecture and Civil Staff Student Liaison Committee Minutes 19 November 2023 ED2023-24/067
2. Faculty PGT Staff Student Liaison Committee minutes 23 November 2023 ED2023024/068
3. Faculty Doctoral Studies Committee minutes 8 November and 6 December 2023 ED2023-24/069

2351 Any Other Business

There were no other items of unreserved business.