

The London Interdisciplinary SchoolAcademic CouncilMinutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 14.00 via Teams

START: 1403

**Attendees**

Dr James Carney (Faculty)	Hayley Dawson (Faculty Manager)
Dr Michael Englard (Registrar)	Ed Fidoe (Chief Executive Officer)
Dr Mattia Gallotti (Faculty)	Prof Carl Gombrich (DoTL and Chair)
Jet Hayden (Student Representative)	Jaspar Joyce, Director of New Products
Dr Priya Lall (Faculty)	Dr Tom Mcleish (external member)
María Angélica Madero (Faculty)	Dr Ebrahim Patel (Faculty)
Imogen Pemberton (Head of Admissions and Widening Participation)	
Dr Andrew Redford (Head of Quality)	Christopher Sarjantson (Student Representative)
Professor Diana Spencer (external member)	Isaiah Wellington-Smith (Faculty)
Marielle van der Meer (Director of Student Experience, Careers and Partnerships)	

**Papers submitted in advance.**

001	Minutes Academic Council meeting held on 16/12/2021	to approve
002a	DAPS Update to Academic Council and Quarterly Report	to receive
002b.	NDAP Quarterly Report Year 1, Quarter 1	to receive
003a	MEQ Results winter term 2021/2022 Coversheet	to receive
003b	MEQ Summary Data	to receive
004a	Review of Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policies Coversheet	to note
004b	Review & Effectiveness Form for Academic Freedom & Freedom of Speech Policies	to note
004c	Code of Academic Freedom	to approve
004d	Code of Freedom of Speech	to approve
005a	MASc Validation & Approval coversheet	to note
005b	MASc Programme Specification	to approve
005c	MASc Module Forms	to approve
005d	MASC PMRAP Report with PDT Response	to receive
006	Smart Targets	to approve
007	Rolling Internal Audit: admissions review - coversheet and report	to receive
008	Regulatory Working Group minutes 02/02/2022	to note
009	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee minutes 19/01/2022	to note
010	Learning Resources and Property Working Group minutes 02/03/2022	to note
011a	Student Voice Committee minutes 19/01/2022	to note
011b	Student Voice Committee minutes 23/02/2022	to note

**1. Welcome and Apologies.**

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Dr Ash Brockwell, Dr Amelia Peterson, Dr Bronwyn Tarr and Isaiah Wellington-Smith.

**2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

2.1 The Council received and **approved** the minutes (paper 001) from the previous meeting held on 16/12/2021.

**3. Matters Arising and Updates**

3.1 **Matters Arising, actions from previous meeting.** There were no outstanding actions from the previous minutes.

3.2 **DAPs update and Quarterly Report.** The Council received the update (paper 002a) noting that the report would be submitted to the QAA as the Quarterly Report. It was stated that progress against milestones and the criteria is as expected and on track. The Council received the NDAP report from the QAA on year 1, quarter 1 (paper 002b).

**3.3 Research Strategy update**

3.3.1 The Council received a verbal update and presentation on the development of the School's research strategy. It was stated that whilst LIS is foremost a place for teaching and learning the School does wish to enable research within the organisation although does not aim to participate in the REF. To facilitate this, a consultation has been on-going with the view to develop a strategy to be in place for the next academic year. It was stated that the strategy will enable a framework that can account for the 20% of staff contract time that is allocated to research and scholarship but allow it to be adjusted to the relevant research activity, noting that some projects may need more extended periods of time.

3.3.2 It was stated that the School is looking at how the strategy can enable and support research projects and in particular how to identify, evaluate and support research development proposals. It was reported that the strategy utilised four macro strategic priority areas that will assist in identifying and filtering proposals. These areas are interdisciplinary fundamentals, interdisciplinary phenomena, interdisciplinary problems and interdisciplinary leaders. It was noted that the aim is for the proposals to be able to be scaled operationally.

3.3.3 It was stated that over the last 18 months the School has delivered a number of unaccredited professional development programmes, some of which are custom designed for specific organisations which have utilised staff research in their content. This includes one multi month programme for a NHS leadership academy which stimulated others to ask for equivalent or similar sessions.

3.3.4 It was queried as to how the strategy would be funded. The Chair noted that the School's own funds will be utilised and that the School is cautious of the external research grant culture and the resources that can be expended on it for little return.

3.3.5 It was stated that the School will be convening a half day workshop on the research strategy and will invite both external members of the Council.

3.4 **Faculty Structure.** It was reported that there had recently been a competitive round of interviews for new Faculty roles and in addition a revised structure facilitates more delegation and ownership. The roles in the revised structure include research and development (Mattia Gallotti), learning and teaching

(Amelia Peterson), problems Lead (Ash Jay Brockwell), prep culture and content (Maria Madero), coaching and integration (Isaiah Wellington-Lynn) and qualitative methods (James Everest).

#### MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR APPROVAL

#### 4. Module Feedback Report of preceding (winter) term

- 4.1 The Council received the report on recent MEQ results, noting that it had been discussed at Student Voice Committee and that the actions that had been agreed were in the process of being implemented. It was noted that the School is conscious of the response rate and wishes to increase it and is increasing communications on the survey in this regard as well as introducing a prize draw.
- 4.2 It was queried whether any theme was considered to be emerging from individual comments thus far such as whether students feel sufficiently stretched. The Council noted the individual comments and the Chair stated that their greatest challenge and concern was on achieving both breadth and depth in the curriculum. As a result, the School had extended the amount of time on each discipline, increasing the time to 3 weeks on each before moving on to the next topic. It was noted that increasing the amount of time on each topic limits the overall number of topics that can be covered and there would be great concern if the cohort didn't feel stretched. One member stated that from experience at other institutions in interdisciplinary studies, first year students report similar issues such as rushing too fast to the next topic. However, it was highlighted that those students when they progress to the second year and then reflect back agree that the first year was helpful as the pace brought them out of their comfort zone. They stated that there is always a balance to be struck between a certain level of discomfort in student feedback versus adherence to a programme philosophy.
- 4.3 The Student Representatives stated that they echoed the points and applauded the School's quick responses to feedback. It was stated that it does feel that as one issue is solved then another emerges but that the School will need to see how the situation evolves over time.
- 4.4 It was suggested that paper copies rather than electronic forms could be utilised in class to boost response rates. It was also noted that surveys can often reflect those students who are anxious as opposed to the ones who are positive about their experience and consequently less inclined to complete a survey when they have little to feedback on.

#### 5. Academic Freedom Policy and Freedom of Speech Policy annual review

- 5.1 The Council received the policies (papers 004c/d) and review form (paper 004b) noting that as part of their review they had been discussed at EDIC. It was queried as to what the complaint process would be in relation to them. It was stated that this would depend on who was making the complaint and against whom, as different processes would relate to a complaint made about a student, staff member or a visitor.
- 5.2 It was queried as to what is meant by the LIS context in the policies. It was confirmed that this is any formal teaching context. It was suggested and **agreed** that the policies would benefit from this being articulated more clearly. *[Action: ME to amend policies, to be approved via Chair's action].*
- 5.3 The Council **approved** the Code of Freedom of Speech (paper 004c) and Academic Freedom Policy (paper 004d) for a further year, subject to amendment as above (minute 5.2) which may be confirmed via Chair's action.

#### 6. MASC Programme Specification, Module Forms & PMRAP recommendations

- 6.1 The Council received the PMRAP Report and the accompanying response (paper 005d). The Chair of the Panel noted that the Panel had been delighted with the standard of documentation provided and had made some advisory recommendations which had been fully addressed in a robust and positive way by the Programme Development Team. The PMRAP Chair reported that the Panel commended the Team for the interesting and challenging proposition of the new programme.
- 6.2 The Council, following the recommendation of the Panel, **approved** the programme specification (paper 005b) and Module Forms (paper 005c) for delivery from 2022/2023 (subject to approval by the OfS). The Council received paper 005a noting that the sourcing of External Examiners was underway and that the programme will enter the School's monitoring and review mechanisms in due course in accordance with policy.
- 7. Class Observation oral update**
- 7.1 The Chair confirmed that all scheduled class observations had now been completed. It was reported that the class observation forms are completed electronically. It was noted that themes arising from class observation will be reported as part of the annual quality reporting cycles later in the academic session. It was noted that the School wishes to be open about teaching in order to provide feedback to each other.
- 8. Academic Council Smart Targets**
- 8.1 The Council received and **approved** the proposed smart targets (paper 006), noting that they had been discussed by RWG previously. It was stated that the targets will now be routinely monitored via RWG with periodic reporting to the Council.
- 9. Rolling Internal Audit: admissions review**
- 9.1 The Council received and **approved** the Panel report (paper 007) from the Admissions Review. It was reported that the Panel had been very impressed by the documentation provided, the discussions with the Team and the personalised approach of admissions at the School. It was stated that the RWG would scrutinise the recommendations and determine actions as necessary moving forward.
- 9.2 A student representative queried how the recommendations would be taken forward. It was stated that there will be a follow up report in due course to confirm the actions taken as a result.
- 9.3 One student representative queried how students were selected to attend the meeting with the Panel. It was confirmed that there is a rolling pool of students who are known to be well-engaged and interested in these types of processes. It was stated that at this stage a cohort-wide request for participants had not been used or deemed necessary due to the significant engagement of the cohort generally. The Student Representatives confirmed that they were happy with the approach to engaging students in the process and stated that in their experience the student participants used in these processes varies sufficiently.

**MATTERS TO RECEIVE OR TO NOTE ONLY**

**Minutes of Academic Council sub-committees and working groups**

- 10. Regulatory Working Group minutes of the meeting held on 02/02/2022**
- 10.1 The Council received the RWG minutes (paper 008) from the meeting held on 02/02/2022.
- 11. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee minutes of the meeting held on 19/01/2022**
- 11.1 The Council received the EDIC minutes from the meeting held on 19/01/2022 (paper 009)

**12. Learning Resources and Property Working Group minutes of the meeting held on 02/03/2022**

12.1 The Council received the LR&PWG minutes of the meeting held on 02/03/2022 (paper 010)

**13. Student Voice Committee minutes of the meeting held on 19/01/2022 and 23/02/2022**

13.1 The Council received the SVC minutes of the meeting held on 19/01/2022 and 23/02/2022 (paper 011a/b)

**14. Any Other Business**

14.1 Class observation. It was queried whether staff had found the class observation process helpful and rigorous. Staff stated that they had found the observation process useful, creating good dialogue and a positive experience. It was stated that the form can be amended further with staff feedback. It was noted that in addition there is also the Reflective Practice Group which regularly meets enabling the sharing of practice. The link between class observation and promotion was queried. It was **agreed** that that whether class observation should be linked or remain separate from staff promotion and performance management should be included in the annual review of the class observation policy.  
*[Action: CG and ME to discuss].*

**15. Next Meeting:**

15.1 The Council noted that the next meeting will be held on:

- Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022; 14.00-16.00

**RESERVED BUSINESS**

There was no reserved business

END: 1540

**ACTIONS 2021/2022**

**COMPLETED ACTIONS**

Meeting/minute	Action	By Whom	Deadline	Outcome
17/09/2021; minute 9.1	External Learning: to draft process document for quality assuring externally provided delivery	Head of Quality	Next meeting	On-going as part of wider framework for project and initiative development.
17/09/2021; minute 12.1	Student Support Policy: to include gender diversity training (including sourcing and tendering discussion with AB)	MVDM	Next meeting	Changes to be sent to Regulatory Working Group
17/09/2021; minute 13.1	Governance chart: to provide additional documentation /slide on management lines in relation to governance	Registrar	Next meeting	Pending revisions from restructuring.
17/09/2021; minute 14.1	Reserved items: to draft memorandum on student representation and reserved items for next Academic Council	Registrar		Complete
16/12/2021; minute 3.5.3	MASc: to circulate Learning Resource Plan	ME	Next meeting	Completed
16/12/2021; minute 6.2	Space: to circulate Estates Plan	ME	Next meeting	Completed

**CONFIRMED**

16/12/2021; minute 15.2	MASC: to liaise with TM and DS on PMRAP	ME	Next meeting	Completed
24/03/2022; minute 5.2	Code of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Policy. To revise wording on LIS context.	ME		Completed
24/03/2022; minute 13.1	Class observation policy. To discuss whether class observation should be linked or remain separate from staff promotion and performance management as part of the annual review of policy.	CG & ME		Completed. It was agreed that they should remain separate.