

University of Suffolk

## SENATE

**Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 12 June 2024 at 14.00 hours in room A206, Atrium Building**

**Chair:** Professor Helen Langton (Vice-Chancellor)

**Present:** Dr Marco Beato (University wide representative, School of Allied Health Sciences), Professor Emma Bond (Pro Vice-Chancellor Research), Dr Ellen Buck (Director of Learning and Teaching), Dr Sam Chenery-Morris (Dean, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Public Health), Sam Clarke (Students' Union Officer, School of Social Sciences and Humanities), Dr Adam Clayden (School of Technology, Business and Arts representative), Professor Mohammad Dastbaz (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Jo Divers (School of Nursing, Midwifery and Public Health representative), Rob Ellis (Interim Dean, School of Allied Health Sciences), Fiona Fisk (Academic Registrar and Interim Director of London Centre), Professor Stuart Harmer (Dean, School of Technology, Business and Arts), Deana Hazeldene (School of Allied Health Sciences representative), Professor Gurpreet Jagpal (Pro-Vice-Chancellor Business and Entrepreneurship), Ella Macartney (Students' Union Officer, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Public Health), Dr Rachael Martin (University wide representative, School of Social Sciences and Humanities), Abigail Morgan (OSACC Manager, Professional Services representative), Dr Felix Ngobigha (Senior Lecturer, School of Technology, Business and Arts, Vice-Chancellor's nominee), Sean Preston (University wide representative, School of Technology, Business and Arts), Dr Pallawi Sinha (School of Social Sciences and Humanities representative), Reilly Willis (University wide representative, School of Social Sciences and Humanities)

**Apologies:** Jo Campbell (Deputy Director of People & OD, People and Organisational Development, Vice-Chancellor's nominee), John Cavani (Director of Marketing, Communications and International), Dr Ross Kemble (Leadership and Management Academy representative), Stuart Lipscombe (Representative, University and College Union), Professor Brian McCook (Dean, School of Social Sciences and Humanities), James Nial (Head of Planning and Management Information), Shannon Pilsworth (Students' Union Officer, School of Technology, Business and Arts), Lewis Woolsten (Students' Union President of Education)

**Secretary:** Alison McQuin (Head of Quality)

**In attendance:** Associate Professor Stuart Agnew (Director, Centre for Academic and International Partnerships), Tim Greenacre (Chief Operating Officer), Chantalle Hawley (Assistant Director, Student Life), Laura Pennie (Deputy Academic Registrar), Lindsay Westgarth

Minutes shown in bold italics should be treated as confidential and will be removed from the published set on the University website.

### Minutes of previous meeting

23/116 The minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2024 were approved as an accurate record, subject to correcting a typo within the list of attendees.

**Agreed action:** The Secretary to correct the typographical error within the list of attendees prior to publication.

### Matters arising

23/117 All actions had been completed, were due for completion at a future date or were included on the agenda. It was requested that the update on the Admissions Policy action be circulated to members with the minutes for completeness.

**Agreed action:** The Secretary to circulate the Admissions Policy action update to members with the minutes.

### Students' Union report

23/118 An update was provided by the Students' Union, noting that the opening of the Inspire Sports pitches were well received by students and that there was an increase in the number of course representatives elected.

23/119 By-elections for vacant SU Officer roles would be held in October. It was highlighted that the SU Shop would remain open over summer with a reduced food offering.

23/120 It was noted that in 2022/23 the Advice Centre had logged 302 recorded cases, compared with 133 cases in 2023/24, but the data in 2022/23 included one-off contacts so a direct comparison could not be made.

### Chair's report

23/121 The Chair's report was received, noting the University's excellent result in the recent Complete University Guide League Table and the launch of the Civic University was an important milestone in the University's journey.

23/122 It was requested that the link to the apprenticeship report, highlighting the University's positive ranking, was circulated to members.

**Agreed action:** The Secretary to circulate the link to the apprenticeship report with the minutes.

### Freedom of speech

23/123 A presentation was provided on the implementation of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023, noting that this applied to both the University and the Students' Union.

23/124 The speed at which this needed to be implemented was highlighted, with members asked to cascade the information from the presentation to colleagues.

23/125 An action plan had already been created with those responsible for actions identified, including an action to update relevant existing policies and procedures with a statement on the Free Speech Code of Practice. A separate Freedom of Speech

Policy would be developed for approval on Chairs' action prior to the start of the new academic year.

- 23/126 The Assistant Director, Student Life, was engaged with sector wide discussions so would ensure the University aligned with sector practice.

### **Access and Participation Plan**

- 23/127 The Access and Participation Plan (APP) 2025/26-2028/29 was provided to members, noting that some further amendments would be made following comments received from the Senior Leadership Team.

- 23/128 The final list of targets that the University was committing to was provided in the document, noting that work had already started to progress these. While the plan to be submitted to the Office for Students (OfS) was until 2028/29, the OfS reserved the right to request a new APP earlier if required. The APP would be submitted to the OfS by the end of July and it was hoped that a response from the OfS would be received in the autumn.

- 23/129 Members thanked the Director of Learning and Teaching and their team for their work on the APP and requested that a summary of the APP was provided on the Hub to encourage engagement across the institution.

**Agreed action:** The Director of Learning and Teaching to provide a summary of the APP on the Hub by the end of September 2024.

### **Policies and procedures**

#### Admissions Policy Appendix 2

- 23/130 A new appendix was proposed to be added to the Admissions Policy to outline the different processes for partners. It was confirmed that the Centre of Academic and International Partnerships (CAIP) completed observations of the admissions processes at partner institutions and that there were clear minimum expectations set to ensure students received a good experience.

- 23/131 It was agreed that clarity should be provided on page 9 to show that the University makes the final decision on offers and admittance of international students at East Coast College.

**Agreed action:** The Director of CAIP to update page 9 to clarify responsibilities for offers to international students at partner institution prior to publication in September 2024.

#### Applicant Appeals and Complaints Procedure

- 23/132 The Applicant Appeals and Complaints Procedure was amended to ensure it aligned with the UK Agent Quality Framework. Members were supportive of the changes but requested that a definition of an 'agent' be provided for clarity.

**Agreed action:** The Deputy Academic Registrar to include a definition of 'agent' within the Procedure prior to publication in August 2024.

#### EE Policy

- 23/133 A minor amendment to clarify external examiner responsibilities relating to recognition of prior learning was proposed. It was noted that paragraph 18 needed to be updated to reflect recent amendments made to the Assessment Moderation Procedure.

**Agreed action:** The Deputy Academic Registrar to update paragraph 18 to reflect changes made to the Assessment Moderation Policy prior to publication in August 2024.

Framework and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Awards

23/134 The revised assessment regulations for use with the new 30-credit framework was presented, noting that variations would be included where required by PSRBs.

23/135 It was confirmed that while there was the provision for 15-credit modules within the regulations, these should only be used in exceptional circumstances. The use of 10 credit modules would only be allowed in apprenticeship courses where the End Point Assessment (EPA) was stipulated within the Institute for Apprenticeship and Technical Education (IfATE) assessment plan as either 20 or 40 credits.

23/136 It was agreed that a minor amendment to paragraph 18 should be made to clarify the inclusion of research methods provision within the course.

**Agreed action:** The Academic Registrar to update paragraph 18 to clarify research methods provision prior to publication in August 2024.

23/137 It was confirmed that flexible assessment types did not have to be offered in all modules. Members discussed the proposal to allow students to take the alternative assessment as their resubmission attempt where assessment optionality was available. Members discussed the balance between allowing students who may not feel confident in retaking the same assessment type with potentially disadvantaging students who may not have received the same level of coaching for the alternative assessment method; the use of formative assessment to support students through either assessment method; and any additional staff workload to support students through resubmission. It was agreed that further discussion about this element of the proposal should be taken back to Quality Committee prior to Chair's action being taken.

**Agreed action:** The Academic Registrar to refer the ability to choose alternative assessment methods, where optionality was available, for resubmissions to the Quality Committee prior to Chair's action being taken.

23/138 It was noted that where optional assessment was available, it should be checked at validation that both assessment options should cover the same learning outcomes and that students were unable to choose the same assessment method throughout their course.

23/139 It was confirmed that course teams would support part-time students who may need to transfer to the 30-credit framework and there was the ability to extend registration periods for those that needed it. General communications about the move to the 30-credit module structure would be circulated to staff and students following approval of the regulations.

Framework and Regulations for Undergraduate Awards

23/140 The revised assessment regulations for use with the new 30-credit framework was presented, noting that similar comments for the Framework and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Awards applied to the undergraduate assessment regulations.

**Agreed action:** The Academic Registrar to refer the ability to choose alternative assessment methods, where optionality was available, for resubmissions to the Quality Committee prior to Chair's action being taken.

**Agreed action:** The Academic Registrar to update paragraph 36 to clarify research methods provision prior to publication.

23/141 It was queried whether condoning 25% of a level was too generous and it was agreed that paragraph 67 and 73 be amended so that condonement only happened after the module had been retaken.

**Agreed action:** The Academic Registrar to update paragraph 67 and 73 prior to publication so that condonement only happened after the module was retaken.

23/142 The removal of the provision to discount modules when calculating the degree classification was discussed, noting that this was not considered as good practice by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA). The change to the weighting from 60:40 to 70:30 for level 5 and 6 in the degree classification should reflect the exit velocity of students and lessen the impact of the removal of discounting.

#### Safeguarding Policy

23/143 The Safeguarding Policy was updated following discussion at the previous Senate meeting. It was confirmed that radicalisation was captured within the existing Safeguarding Policy, but there wasn't a separate policy for staff. It was confirmed that disabled children and young people up to the age of 25 years would be covered within the term 'vulnerable adult'.

**Outcome:** Approved.

#### Student Charter 24-25

23/144 The updating of the tone and language to the Student Charter was welcomed by members.

23/145 It was agreed that the use of 'reflective' should be replaced with 'reflexive' in the opening sentence. It was confirmed that the amendment to graduate access to the careers team reflected current practice, which acted as a differentiator to other institutions, but will be kept under review.

**Agreed action:** The Deputy Academic Registrar to update the introductory sentence from 'reflective' to 'reflexive' and update the typo on page 6 prior to publication in August 2024.

#### Student Protection Plan

23/146 The Student Protection Plan was reviewed on an annual basis, with limited changes proposed. It was noted that the highlighted sections may be updated if the outcome of the ESFA audit was received in time. Subject to correction of a minor typographical error, members approved the changes.

**Agreed action:** The Deputy Academic Registrar to correct the typographical error on page 2 prior to submission to the Office for Students.

Student Suspension Processes

23/147 Following a recommendation by the Office for the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), it was proposed to update the student suspension process within the Fitness to Practise Procedure; Student Discipline Procedure; and the Support to Study Procedure.

23/148 Members queried whether the wording relating to the ability to practise safely appeared exclusionary but it was confirmed that the wording was taken from the OIA Good Practice Framework.

23/149 Members were supportive of the changes but requested that the roles of those who were able to suspend students was reviewed to align with the sector and reflect upcoming changes in the University's senior management structure.

**Agreed action:** The Deputy Academic Registrar to review the roles of those who were able to suspend students and update prior to publication in August 2024.

Work-based and Placement Learning Framework

23/150 The Work-based and Placement Learning Framework was updated to reflect the investment and new structure within the Careers, Employability and Enterprise team.

23/151 It was confirmed that the use of non-disclosure agreements was included in paragraph 56 to respond directly to feedback from employers who may have commercially sensitive data. It was requested that the paragraph be updated to remove reference to students so that it could cover a broader range of people as necessary. It was also noted that reference to version control should be removed from page 20.

**Agreed action:** The Pro-Vice Chancellor to remove reference to students within paragraph 56 and reference to version control on page 20 prior to publication in August 2024.

23/152 It was noted that health related courses with a PSRB and substantial placement element would not follow this framework as other arrangements were in place. It was suggested that an appendix be created to list the courses that were excluded from following the framework.

**Agreed action:** The Pro-Vice Chancellor, Business and Entrepreneurship, to create an appendix listing courses that were excluded from following the Framework prior to publication in August 2024.

**Academic calendar**

23/153 The proposed academic calendar for 30-credits was received, which all Ipswich courses, except those health-related courses with significant placement elements, should follow once re-approved for 30-credits.

23/154 Schools were able to schedule assessment boards at a time that suited within the allocated weeks, which were positioned to meet international student and data return requirements.

23/155 It was requested that the enrichment/break weeks be re-titled as 'to be confirmed' while there were still discussions about what format these would take and to rename the Christmas and Easter break as winter and spring breaks.

**Agreed action:** The Director of Learning and Teaching and Deputy Academic Registrar to update the terminology used in 'enrichment/break', Christmas and Easter weeks prior to publication on the Hub.

- 23/156 In response to feedback from international students, an additional conferral point had been added to the year to allow certificates to be issued earlier for students who missed the annual graduation ceremonies.

### **Honorary Awards Committee**

- 23/157 The list of nominations for honorary awards was received for information. It was queried whether nominees who had previously received an award at the Suffolk College graduation ceremonies should receive a further award. However, it was noted that these would have been awarded by the University of East Anglia, as the awarding body at the time, and that this was fully considered by the Honorary Awards Committee who were nominating the person for a different honorary award.
- 23/158 All the nominees received in this round were male and members were encouraged to submit female nominations.

### **Block and Blend Evaluation**

- 23/159 An update on the evaluation of block and blend delivery compared to semesterised delivery was provided to members.
- 23/160 The attendance monitoring e-mails were discussed, which were created in collaboration with the SU, noting the need to balance the tone of the e-mails between the compliance aspect and compassionate communication. It was reported that work was being undertaken to ensure the register system was more effective and efficient for the new academic year.

### **Academic Framework**

- 23/161 The update on the move to the 30-credit academic framework was received for information.

### **Student recruitment**

- 23/162 An update on student recruitment for 2024/25 was received for information. It was confirmed that activities were planned to support conversion of applications to acceptances.
- 23/163 While there were some early teething issues with the customer relationship management (CRM) system, these should now have been resolved. Any further issues should be raised with the Marketing, Communications and International business partners.
- 23/164 Members were pleased to see an increase in applications for courses that required specific skills resources, but it was noted that recruitment figures were not stable enough to invest further in this area at this time.

### **Assessment Task and Finish Group**

- 23/165 An update from the Assessment Task and Finish Group was provided, noting that the Group had found there was a broad range of assessments used across the Schools, although these were heavily weighted towards written assessments.
- 23/166 The rubric from the University of Greenwich, to establish how AI hostile/vulnerable different assessment types were, were shared with members, with Schools encouraged to submit course modifications where assessments were particularly AI vulnerable.
- 23/167 Members noted there was a good turnout at the AI and assessment session at the Learning and Teaching Day and thanked the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching for arranging the event.

### **London Centre**

- 23/168 An update was provided on the new London Centre, with work underway to submit an application for a UKVI licence and the contract with the London School of Commerce almost complete.
- 23/169 The course approval of the MBA to be delivered at the London Centre was progressing.
- 23/170 A schedule for staff members to tour the Centre was in place.

### **Retention data**

- 23/171 An update on withdrawal rates was provided, noting these had reduced from the previous year, however they were subject to change following completion of the assessment boards.

### **Partnerships register**

- 23/172 The University's register of partnership arrangements was received.

### **Course proposal forms**

- 23/173 The list of approved course proposal forms was provided to members for information.

### **Course suspension and discontinuation forms**

- 23/174 The list of approved course suspension and discontinuation forms was provided to members.

### **Professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs)**

- 23/175 Activity involving PSRBs, since the last meeting, was provided to members for information.

### **Sub-committees**

#### **Academic Appointments and Promotions Committee**

- 23/176 The minutes from the Academic Appointments and Promotion Committee held on 16 November 2023 were provided.



**Research and Enterprise Committee**

23/177 The minutes from the Research and Enterprise Committee held on 29 November 2023 and 28 February 2024 were provided.

**School Academic Committee (AHS)**

23/178 The minutes from the Allied Health Sciences School Academic Committee held on 15 November 2023 and 22 February 2024 were provided.

**School Academic Committee (NMPH)**

23/179 The minutes from the Nursing, Midwifery and Public Health School Academic Committee held on 25 May 2023, 21 September 2023 and 22 February 2024 were provided.

**School Academic Committee (TBA)**

23/180 The minutes from the Technology, Business and Arts School Academic Committee held on 21 February 2024 were provided.

**Any other business**

23/181 This was the last meeting of Senate for the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice Chancellor Business and Entrepreneurship and the Chief Operating Officer. Members thanked them all for their significant contribution to the development of the University.

**Date of next meeting**

23/182 The meeting is to be held at 14:00 on Wednesday 9 October 2024.

**Alison McQuin**  
**Head of Quality**