

**UNIVERSITY OF HULL
UNIVERSITY OF YORK**

HULL YORK MEDICAL SCHOOL

JOINT SENATE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 29th January 2015

PART A: UNRESERVED BUSINESS

14-15/23 APOLOGIES AND ATTENDANCE

For a list attendees and apologies, please see Annex A

The Chair welcomed members to the Committee and received apologies for absence.

14-15/24 MINUTES 30th OCTOBER 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th October 2014 (enclosure 1) were reviewed and **approved** as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

14-15/25 MATTERS ARISING

The Committee **received** a summary of actions arising from the previous meeting (enclosure 2). Items listed as separate agenda items and other completed actions were noted.

- a) 14-15/03(a) – The Chair explained that the Universities' Registrars have agreed in principle to permanently locate appeals administration in one of the institutions. Hull is currently responsible for appeals administration, but the location of the permanent secretariat is to be confirmed. Action closed.
- b) 14-15/04(b) – The Chair explained that the Committee has a duty under the Memorandum of Agreement to oversee research in HYMS. This has proved difficult to fulfil due to the organisation of research in the School, which has led to long-standing confusion as to how best to review such activity. The Dean noted that research activity by staff based at York was embedded in, and reported through, various academic departments. At Hull HYMS is a faculty and so research of staff based there is reported via Faculty reports. It was his view that this made any additional reporting via HJSC complex and less necessary. After discussion with the York Registrar, the Chair confirmed that the Committee would continue to receive only an annual report at its autumn meeting. The action was closed.
- c) 14-15/06 – Mr Brooks reported that due to the nature of records held by the Hull University Union it had not yet been possible to distinguish cases of HYMS students in financial hardship from other students. Mr Brooks committed to completing this task at the earliest opportunity and share the information with the Dean for any appropriate follow-up.

Action: Mr Brooks

- d) 14-15/09 – The Head of Quality and Standards informed the Committee that following its direction all suggested amendments had been made to the Code of Practice on Academic and Fitness to Practise Appeals and this had been implemented 8th December 2014, accompanied with a revised appeal form. The application process guidance the Committee had suggested be introduced has been published as interim copy, pending finalised versions ahead of the next assessment cycle in February 2015. Usability of the guidance will be closely monitored.

The Committee was also informed that the Office of the Independent Adjudicator had published its anticipated guidance on appeals shortly after the new Code of Practice was published. The Head of Quality and Standards has undertaken a mapping exercise to determine where the OIA guidance suggests the Code of Practice could be revised further. A draft of a revised Code incorporating additional OIA guidance will be presented to the Board of Studies in March 2015 before submission to the April HJSC, with the aim of introducing the approved version for the 2015/16 academic year.

Action: Chair BoS

- e) 13-14/58 – The Chair BoS informed members that a revised Code of Practice on Assessment and Examination for MBBS would be submitted to the March BoS and the April HJSC.

Action: Chair BoS

14-15/26 TO CONSIDER MATTERS RAISED BY STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

The student representatives did not bring any matters to the Committee's attention.

14-15/27 TO RECEIVE A WRITTEN REPORT FROM THE DEAN

The Dean introduced his report (enclosure 3), highlighting particularly:

- The difficult financial situation in which HYMS is operating currently;
- The near completion of the organisational review and restructuring and that a review of academic and clinical leadership will commence shortly;
- The work underway to submit an application in November 2015 for an Athena SWAN Silver Award;
- The generally positive final GMC review report, which will be submitted to HJSC in April;
- The recent completion of MBBS applicant interviews for 2015 entry;
- The ongoing challenges of implementing the new MBBS curriculum;
- The pleasing REF results for HYMS for staff submitted under seven assessment units across the two Universities.

Members of the Committee noted that a higher REF return rate for HYMS staff based in University departments would be desirable and that it had been particularly satisfying to see high impact scores. The Dean explained that HYMS' position in league tables varied according to table compilers' methodologies. Additionally, it was noted that the Medical Schools Research Council had taken a HYMS study to use as an example of best practice.

The Dean explained that there would be some financial impact on teaching and learning, for example PBL group sizes had been increased from 8-10 students, but would not be raised further in order to safeguard the learning experience. The impact of financial constraints was reported as constraining development more than current teaching as there are insufficient funds to expand the academic staff. Discussions are progressing with the Universities to secure funds for additional posts and resources.

The Dean explained the initial priorities for new programme development that would allow for expansion of student numbers and attract MBBS students and others wishing to develop in particular specialisms. However, these would also be contingent on increased staff numbers, additional physical resources and the refurbishment of the Loxley Building at Hull.

The Chair congratulated HYMS on the staff awards achieved, as well as praising the School for introducing its own prizes to recognise women's scientific achievements.

14-15/28 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE A PROPOSAL TO RENAME INTERCALATING AWARD TITLES

The Committee considered a proposal (enclosure 4) to replace the single generic *BSc (Hons) Medical Science* award in order to better reflect what subjects students had studied and to potentially attract additional external applicants to the intercalation awards. The proposed titles to replace the current *BSc (Hons) Medical Sciences* were:

1. *BSc (Hons) Medical Science (Sport, Health and Exercise Science)*
2. *BSc (Hons) Medical Science (Biomedical Sciences)* – applicable to students who complete the intercalated degree at Biology, York
3. *BSc (Hons) Medical Science (Biological, Biomedical & Environmental Sciences)* – applicable to students who complete the intercalated degree at Biology, Hull
4. *BSc (Hons) Medical Science (Applied Ethics)*
5. *BSc (Hons) Medical Science (Philosophy of Mind & Body)*

It was noted that the proposed award *BSc (Hons) Medical Science (Biomedical Sciences)* is entirely separate to, and does not affect, the recently introduced York *BSc Biomedical Sciences* programme.

The Committee noted the School's desire to develop further intercalation opportunities for its own students and to attract external applicants, investment permitting. Neuroscience and Anatomy were offered as potentially attractive avenues for innovation. It was also noted that a review of the intercalated award portfolio might be required following the QAA's recent confirmation that MBBS awards are typically at Level 7(M) of the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications*. This has implications for Level 6(H) intercalation awards if the HYMS MBBS is recalibrated to Level 7(M).

The Committee **approved** the proposed titles which will be implemented in the academic year 2015-16 at which point the generic title would cease to exist. Students who started their intercalated degree in 2014-15 will be awarded the generic: *BSc (Hons) Medical Sciences*.

14-15/29 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE A HYMS POLICY ON LEAVE OF ABSENCE

(Secretary's note: Members questioned the degree to which the Board of Studies is empowered to approve regulatory documents and changes to governance structures within the School without requiring HJSC's approval. The Chair stated his support for a measured approach providing HYMS autonomy to approve operational and policy documents of lesser significance, or that lack wider implications for the Universities. However, the Chair also notes the terms of reference (a) and (m) for HJSC detailed in the Memorandum of Agreement which direct that it is HJSC's role to approve Regulations and Codes of Practice (a) and to approve the academic management structures for progression and for awards (m). This note is of particular relevance to the items discussed and minuted as: 14-15/29 – 14-15/32 and 14-15/35).

The Committee considered a proposal (enclosure 5) to introduce a new Policy on Leave of Absence to cover all HYMS programmes and that would fill a current policy void. The proposal had been adapted from the University of Hull policy after review of both Universities' documentation.

Members supported the proposal which was **approved** subject to the following amendments:

- Section 5.4 and the flowchart (p.11) be reviewed to ensure consistency and the intended provision that the Chair BoS approves requests by Chair's Action rather than approval being required by the full committee;
- That the flowchart (p.11) be reviewed to consider ways to simplify the process for considering, reviewing and approving a request for Leave of Absence;
- Section 6.3.1 be amended to replace 'councillor' with 'counsellor';
- Section 8.1.1 be amended to include 'and clinical placements' at the end of the sentence (in recognition that HYMS students will study in clinical settings as well as on campus);
- Section 9.2 be amended to read '...before HYMS will permit you to register...'

The Chair was content for the Policy to be implemented following the suggested amendments without requiring any final review by him.

Action: Chair BoS

14-15/30 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE HYMS POLICY ON MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

The Committee considered a proposal (enclosure 6) to introduce a new Policy on Mitigating Circumstances to cover all HYMS programmes and that would fill a current policy deficiency. The proposal had been adapted from the York policy after review of both Universities' documentation.

It was noted that consideration and approval of this policy would also require the approval to constitute a new Mitigating Circumstances Committee which was part of the Academic Governance Review (see M14-15/35). The new structure of an MCC under the Boards of Examiners was thought to offer a more effective and logical organisation than the current position.

The Committee stressed the need to ensure that at all stages of the process of applying for mitigating circumstances students were made aware of the support available to them internally and at the Universities. It was suggested that the form on which students apply for mitigating circumstances be amended to include signposts to the appropriate Hull and York services.

The Committee was concerned that information and procedures relating to students with disabilities and who needed to apply for mitigating circumstances were clear throughout the policy. It was agreed that section 3.4 be removed and that the full policy be reviewed to ensure it balances both the onus on students with disabilities to know what their responsibilities are in cases of mitigating circumstances, with the School's obligation to be mindful of due process in case handling and in providing information to all students enabling them to fulfil their responsibilities.

The student representatives were concerned to ensure that the reasons for which mitigating circumstances were unlikely to be approved (section 7.1, pp.12-13) did not disbar the approval of some legitimate cases. The Committee agreed that the direction provided by section 7.1 allowed for some discretion and the recognition that severe instances of some stated circumstances could lead to the approval of mitigation where their effect was sufficiently severe.

The policy was **approved** subject to the suggested review and amendments. The Chair was content for the Policy to be implemented following the amendments without requiring final review by him.

Action: Chair BoS

14-15/31 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE HYMS POLICY ON DISABILITY AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS IN ASSESSMENTS

The Committee considered a proposal (enclosure 7) to introduce a new Policy on Disability and Reasonable Adjustments in Assessments to cover all HYMS programmes and that would fill a current policy deficiency. The proposal had been developed in consultation with the Director of Student Services (York) and following unsuccessful attempts to gain advice from Hull colleagues (see also M14-15/32).

With regard to section 3.3, the Committee considered whether there was a risk of assessments of need carried out by York or Hull leading to different thresholds and decisions of appropriate adjustments. It was felt that each case would be considered on its individual circumstances regardless of which university conducted the assessment, thus making it difficult to ascertain such differences. The Dean stated that any suggested trends of students being routinely assessed differently leading to inequitable outcomes would be raised with the appropriate services. The policy was **approved**.

14-15/32 TO CONSIDER THE YORK POLICY ON FITNESS TO STUDY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR HYMS

The Chair introduced the York Policy on Fitness to Study (enclosure 8) which was to be implemented across the University pending direction as to whether or not it would apply to HYMS students, in what circumstances and whether or not it required amendment to be inclusive of practices in the School. The Committee was informed that the policy had been brought to HJSC after the Secretary of BoS had discussed the draft with the Director of Student Services (York), to gain some comment from HYMS staff and those from Hull that could consider the implication for Hull-registered students.

The Chair suggested that HYMS could consider: adopting the proposed York policy with adaptations to fit School practice; adopt an equivalent policy of the University of Hull, or; use the Universities' policies as a template for drafting its own if the need was felt.

The Committee was informed that the Director of Student Services (York) had attempted to gain the opinion of colleagues at Hull without success and that it was recognised such a view was important to obtain. The Deputy Chair offered to assist in establishing communications with the appropriate people and informed the Committee that Hull's policy on Leave of Absence covers the same circumstances as those addressed by the proposed York Fitness to Study document.

Action: Deputy Chair

It was **agreed** that the Committee was insufficiently informed of the policy context and that further discussion of the issues raised were needed within the School. It was suggested the Board of Studies considers the issue at its next meeting. In addition, the Chair BoS offered to conduct a review of the relationship of inter-relating policies to ensure comprehensive cover of procedures and effective delineation between policies.

Action: Chair BoS

14-15/33 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW, EXTERNAL EXAMINERS' REPORTS AND COMBINED ACTION PLAN

The Head of Quality and Standards introduced the annual programme review for 2013-14, accompanying external examiners' reports and action plan combining actions resulting from the period review and NSS (enclosure 9). It was noted that the action plan has continued to be implemented since its submission to the Committee and that it will remain a live document overseen by the Board of Studies.

The Chair thanked members of staff that had compiled the reports. Members praised its quality and were pleased that the agreed process for completing the documentation had been a successful exercise (see M14-15/14).

Members observed a missing examiner's report and were informed that this examiner has now finished their term and so there was little leverage in order to obtain the report. However, it was reported that the MBBS Programme Board was satisfied that other externals had provided sufficient feedback. Furthermore, the Committee was reassured that the School, Academic Support Office (York) and Exams Office (York) are monitoring the return of reports more closely and pursuing late submissions. This activity has seen a better return than for 2012-13.

Mr Brooks informed the meeting that Hull University Union are working with Hull to review the extent to which students are asked to complete surveys and to assess the degree of survey fatigue. Mr Brooks invited HYMS to take part in these discussions in relation to concerns in the APR to reduce survey fatigue. The Chair BoS to liaise with Mr Brooks.

Action: Chair BoS

A question was raised regarding the timing of some student feedback activities, as a concern that they did not affect the NSS response rate or influence the actual NSS responses. The Head of

Quality and Standards explained that the School was constrained by GMC requirements to seek feedback on aspects of the final year assistantship, but reassured the Committee that care was taken to encourage completion of the NSS without influencing how students responded.

Unresolved issues with the quality of some accommodation for students on placements were noted. Mr Brooks informed the Committee of the Hull Union's star rating initiative for assessing the quality of accommodation and offered to discuss with the School how that used by HYMS students might be included as a catalyst for quality improvement. The Dean reassured the Committee that such issues had been resolved at other sites and that the School firmly encourages NHS partners to enhance the standards of student accommodation. The Dean added that the NHS' responsibility for residences limited HYMS' ability to improve it, but that complaints would be followed up with Trusts.

HYMS' commitment to student representation, as reflected in the APR process and report was noted. The Committee was informed that a working party was examining the role, effectiveness, training and support for student representation with an aim to enhance the student voice further.

The Committee **approved** the APR, accompanying examiners' reports and action plans.

14-15/34 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE ANNUAL REPORT OF ADMISSIONS TO THE MBBS COURSE

The Chief Operating Officer introduced a report on the admissions cycle leading to the 2014 entry to the MBBS programme, which included data on five-year trends in applications and admissions (enclosure 10). It was noted that the cycle had been challenging due to HYMS' decision to guarantee interviews to applicants of a certain standard. This had led to increased numbers of applicants but low conversion due to many people selecting HYMS as an insurance option. The interview guarantee policy had not been repeated for the 2015 entry cycle, which was underway and on track. It was suggested that comparison of the 2015 entrants with the admissions in 2013 would be preferable next year due to the idiosyncrasies of 2014.

It was reported that the School met its Home student target in 2014, but again missed its Overseas one. The Dean informed the meeting that effort was being put into international marketing and relationship building with Overseas applicants to encourage offer acceptance. The Committee was pleased to note the increased proportions of entrants in 2014 from socio-economic groups 4-7, BME groups and graduates. The Committee **approved** the report.

14-15/35 TO RECEIVE A PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Chair BoS introduced a progress report on the Academic Governance Review (enclosure 11) and sought the Committee's approval for the revised Code of Practice on Academic Committees.

It was noted that the creation of, membership and terms of reference of the Mitigating Circumstances Committee required approval in order to implement the Mitigating Circumstances Policy (M14-15/30). The Committee **approved** this and acknowledged the interim impacts on the Academic Progress Committee.

The Committee noted that the proposal as a whole included some appendices to the Code of Practice still awaiting a number of outstanding decisions, particularly regarding the BoS' own membership and terms of reference and those of the Staff Student Committee.

The Committee offered a number of comments for BoS to consider when proposing a final constitution for the Board and its sub-committees:

- There was a difference of opinion as to whether the Board should have a narrower, more executive membership or a wider one inclusive of a greater number of academic colleagues. It was appreciated that a larger BoS could be difficult to physically accommodate with the need for simultaneous video-linked gatherings at Hull and York for the meetings, but it was felt these could be overcome.
- A more inclusive Board of Examiners was suggested as an alternative to a more inclusive BoS. It was proffered that increasing the Boards of Examiners' memberships to include academic colleagues that taught on and set assessments on the programmes could enhance their sense of contribution to the processes and provide a valuable opportunity to discuss assessment issues that might currently be lacking.
- It was observed that there is still a risk that the same people will be members of too many of the proposed committees which could create conflicts of interest or a narrowness of perspective. It was suggested that a more inclusive approach could facilitate greater sharing of committee responsibilities amongst a wider pool of people and enhance governance.
- The relationship between the Mitigating Circumstances Committee and Boards of Examiners should be unambiguous in the terms of reference to ensure that the Board of Examiners focuses on assessment of results and is not reviewing decisions made by the MCC, which should be subject to review only by the Chair BoS.
- The terms of reference for Staff Student Committee should demonstrate the genuine incorporation of student representation and opportunities for student contribution, not merely that students will be listened to. For example, term of reference two on page 14 could refer to "active engagement and participation" of the student body.

The Committee was supportive of the results of the Academic Governance Review, and requested that the Chair of BoS takes note of the above comments when finalising the Code of Practice and its appendices. The Chair advised that a final revision, in line with the progress report and engaging with the Committee's recommendations could be submitted for HJSC approval under Chair's Action.

Action: Chair BoS

I4-5/36 TO RECEIVE THE ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE HYMS ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Committee noted for information the annual report of the HYMS Ethics Committee (enclosure 12) which had been submitted to the ethics committees of the two universities.

14-15/37 DATES OF MEETINGS 2014-15

The Committee **noted** the date of the next meeting:

- Thursday 30th April 2015, 10.00-12.00 (rooms available from 9.30)

York: HYMS Building 1st floor meeting room; Hull: Loxley Building 1st floor meeting room

ANNEX A: Attendance**Members**

Professor John Robinson (Chair, PVC York)

Professor Glenn Burgess (Deputy Chair, DVC Hull) – Arrived during item 3 and left during item 13

Mr Richard Brooks, (Hull Students' Union)* – Arrived during item 7 and left during item 13

Dr Richard Waites (York University Teaching Committee representative)

Dr Jan Hardman (York University Teaching Committee representative)

Professor Gillian Greenway (Hull Senate representative) – Left during item 7

Professor Trevor Sheldon (Dean of HYMS)

Dr Mark Williamson (Chair Board of Studies, HYMS)

Professor Jonathan Bennett (Chair of Postgraduate Research Board, HYMS)

Ms Amal Fadi (VP Graduate Students' Association, York)*

In attendance:

Dr Adrian Lee (Secretary, York)

Mr John Busby (Chief Operating Officer, HYMS)

Mrs Alison Pettigrew (Head of Quality and Standards, HYMS)

Professor Brian Fulton (Dean of Faculty – Sciences, York) – Arrived during item 9

Apologies

Mr George Offer (York University Students' Union)*

Ms Jelena Horvatic (Graduate Students' Association, York)*

Professor Tony Morland (York Senate representative)

Dr Elizabeth Cleaver (Hull Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee representative)

Professor John Greenman (Hull Senate representative)

Dr Graham Scott (Hull Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee representative)

Mr Nigel Dandy (Head of Academic Support Office, York)

Members marked with a * do not attend for reserved business.