

ASTON UNIVERSITY

THE SENATE

Minutes of the 338th meeting of the Senate, held on Wednesday, 8th March 2017

PRESENT:

Professor Alec Cameron (Chair)	
Dr Shakil Ahmad	Professor Sahar Al-Malaika
Professor Asif Ahmed	Professor Frank Austermühl
Dr Michael Butler	Karen Caine
Dr Leon Davies	Dr Philip Davies
Dr Frank Eperjesi	Professor George Feiger
Professor Christos Ioannidis	Dr Doina Gherghel
Ahmed Hassan	Professor Helen Higson
Roger Howell	Mohamed Ibrahim
Dr Anne Jenichen	Dr Sarah Junaid
Professor Julia Kotlarsky	Dr Fiona Lacey
Alison Levey	Professor Paul Maropoulos
Professor Ian Nabney	Safaa Nait-Charif
Professor Helen Pattison	Professor Gertrud Reershemius
Professor Ute Stephan	Viktoriya Stoykova
Professor Edward Sweeney	Dr Eirini Theodosiou
Jenny Thompson	Dr Paul Topham
Professor Jonathan Tritter	Dr Keqing Wang
Professor James Wolffsohn	Dr Sylvia Wong
Dr Uwe Wunderlich	

APOLOGIES:

Dr Jane Andrews	Alan Charters
Professor Robin Clark	Professor Simon Green
Professor Chris Hewitt	Professor Chris Langley
Dr Carol Marley	Dr Ryan Murphy
Neil Scott	Professor Corinne Spickett

IN ATTENDANCE:

Larry Atwood (for M16/205)	Sarah Davies (for M16/204)
David Farrow	Sarah Hayes (for M16/204)
Sally Puzey (for M16/205)	John Walter

FOR REPORT AND APPROVAL

Welcome

16/172 RESOLVED:

To welcome the following new members to the Senate: Viktoriya Stoykova, BSc Psychology and Business, final year, as the representative of undergraduate students and Jenny Thompson, Group Administrator for Work and Organisational Psychology as the representative of the professional support staff.

16/173 NOTED:

That nine candidates had stood for the election for the professional staff representative which demonstrated the high level of interest from Aston's support staff.

Constitutional Matters

Review of the Composition, Size and Powers of Council

16/174 RECEIVED:

Paper SEN-16-0031-A comprising the following:

- i) Rationale and proposals to change the Statutes relating to the composition, size and powers of the University Council which had been revised in the light of the useful feedback received from the Academic Assembly, the campus Trade Unions, and the Students' Union.
- ii) Tracked changes version of Statutes Sections 4 and 5.
- iii) Paper showing the feedback received from the Academic Assembly, the campus Trade Unions, and the Students' Union and the Vice-Chancellor's detailed response to each point raised.

16/175 NOTED:

- That the proposed changes would result in a reduction of the size of Council from 27 to 15, comprising nine external and six internal members. This would be achieved by reducing the internal *ex officio* positions on Council from eight to three (ie the Vice-Chancellor, the Provost, and the Chief Financial Officer), with the Chief of Operations and Estates and the Executive Deans of the Schools ceasing to be members but being invited to be in attendance as required. The number of student representatives would be reduced from two to one (ie the President or in the case of the President's unavoidable absence the Vice-President Education may attend a meeting of the Council as an alternate with full voting rights). The two current representative staff positions (drawn from Senate and Academic Assembly respectively) would be retained. The nine external members would include the Pro Chancellor (as Chair) but not the Chancellor, who would cease to be a member of Council.
- Some minor changes were proposed to Statutes Section 5: Powers of the Council to ensure that they reflected the model statement of primary responsibilities recommended for HE governing bodies within the CUC's Higher Education Code of Governance.

16/176 RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL (*NEM COM*):

That the proposed changes to the Statutes relating to the composition, size and powers of the Council be approved.

Review of Academic Governance

16/177 RECEIVED:

Paper SEN-16-0032-A comprising an executive summary of the report of a review of the University's systems and processes for academic governance undertaken by the Director of Quality and Enhancement, the Director of Governance and the Provost using the CUC's Illustrative Practice Note 3 on Academic Governance as a benchmark. The review concluded that Aston was compliant with the CUC's recommended good practice in relation to academic governance and that there were no major concerns with regard to the effectiveness of its systems of governance. Senate provided appropriate information and assurance to Council on the effectiveness of the academic governance systems, including external evidence and benchmarking that academic standards were being met. Council approved University academic strategy, and monitored the effectiveness of its implementation through regular reports from members of the

Executive and the Senate, and twice-yearly progress reports on the University's KPIs and the institutional strategic risk register. The report included six recommendations to enhance academic governance and Council's awareness and understanding of its effectiveness.

16/178 RESOLVED

To approve the recommendations contained in Paper SEN-16-0032-A to enhance academic governance and Council's awareness and understanding of its effectiveness.

ACTION: Director of Quality and Enhancement, the Director of Governance and the Provost to implement the academic governance recommendations

Minutes

16/179 RESOLVED:

To approve the minutes of the 337th meeting of the Senate, held on Wednesday, 9th November 2016

Matters Arising

16/180 RECEIVED:

SEN-16-0033-A, a summary of actions taken in response to matters arising from the previous meeting and oral reports on the following items:

Examination Timetabling (M16/134)

16/181 RECEIVED:

A report from the Director of Student and Academic Services that:

- a working group had been established to review the issues impacting on the timetabling of examinations.
- CLIPP was leading work to ensure that the level and methods of assessment were appropriate for all modules and programmes which could help to reduce the overall level of formal examinations.
- Consideration was also being given to the feasibility of introducing a third examination slot of one hour's duration starting no later than 17:30 to accommodate more examinations; it was emphasised that no individual students would be expected to sit three examinations in one day. If this proposal was logistically feasible a full consultation process with students would be undertaken.

ACTION: Director of Student and Academic Services to provide a further report on examination timetabling to the next Senate meeting

Sharing of Good Practice Identified in Annual Monitoring and Review (M16/161)

16/182 RECEIVED:

A report that two meetings of the Associate Deans Learning and Teaching had been held and a third would take place shortly to finalise the processes for identifying and sharing good practice identified in the annual review of taught programmes

ACTION: Professor Robin Clark to provide a progress report to the next Senate meeting on the development of a strategy for the sharing and dissemination of the outcomes of, and good practice identified in, Annual Monitoring and Review.

Council

16/183 RECEIVED:

The minutes of the Council meetings of 28th November 2016 and 23rd January 2017.

International Strategy Committee

16/184 RECEIVED:

The minutes of the International Strategy Committee meeting of 9th February 2017.

Learning and Teaching Committee

16/185 RECEIVED:

The minutes of the Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) meeting of 14th February 2017, together with a report from LTC and its sub-committees to the Senate in paper SEN-16-0034-A.

New University Award

16/186 RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

That University Ordinance 5.3: Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates of the University be amended to include the additional undergraduate award of Graduate Certificate (GradCert).

Disability Code of Practice 2016/17

16/187 RESOLVED:

To approve the updated Disability Code of Practice 2016/17, set out in paper REG/17/123.

Guidance on Audio Recording for Students with Disabilities

16/188 RESOLVED:

To approve minor changes to the Guidance on Audio Recording for Students with Disabilities, as specified in Paper REG/15/568(1).

Report on Disciplinary Offences 2013/14 to 2015/16

16/189 RESOLVED:

To approve a report on disciplinary offences 2013/14 to 2015/16 in Paper REG/17/120.

16/190 NOTED:

The following points raised my members arising from the report on disciplinary offences:

- That University colleagues worked closely with representatives of the Students' Union and its Advice and Representation Centre, in attempting to prevent academic disciplinary cases through the provision of information, guidance and training.

- That the Learning Development Centre (LDC) offered advice and support to students experiencing difficulties with assessments, including the use of software to identify plagiarism issues in assignments. Writing Mentors in the LDC worked with students to develop their academic writing skills and could provide guidance on the avoidance of plagiarism. Students should be encouraged to use peer review and feedback rather than always relying on staff.
- That there was concern across the HE sector at the growth in advertisements for “essay mills” offering to prepare tailor-made assignments and projects to help students to succeed. It was a serious disciplinary offence at Aston University to offer such services or to make use of them. The detection of such offences was often difficult and proving that an offence had occurred was also problematic; the use of vivas and the services of the University’s forensic linguistics team could help to resolve such cases. Software could be used to detect students who were posting requests for assessment solutions. The University proactively removed any notices or spam emails posted on campus that advertised such services.

Research Committee

16/191 RECEIVED:

The minutes of the Research Committee (RC) meetings of 18th October 2016 and 24th January 2017, together with a report from RC and its sub-committees to the Senate in paper SEN-16-0035-A.

Delegation of Authority to the Research Committee

16/192 RESOLVED:

To approve a proposal that, in future, the Research Committee (RC) should have delegated authority to approve on behalf of Senate:

- the introduction of new research degree programmes and programme modification and withdrawal;
- the University admissions policy for research degree programmes;
- the policies for Monitoring and Review of research degree programmes;
- the policies for Periodic Review of research degree programmes;
- the academic regulatory framework for research students;
- the policy for collaborative activity in relation to research degree programmes.

RC would make an annual report to Senate on these approvals and Senate would periodically review the effectiveness of the processes involved.

Three Paper Format for PhD Theses

16/194 NOTED:

The following points raised by members on the proposed three paper format for PhD theses:

- That the three paper format was intended primarily for ABS students, but it could be extended to other students where appropriate.
- That the three paper format was used extensively in Scandinavia and Central Europe.
- That the doctoral student would be expected to undertake all the research that formed the papers during their registration period at Aston.
- That the doctoral student was required to be first author on all three papers. If the work were to be the result of collaborative research, a statement must be provided

by the collaborating researcher(s), confirming the contribution made to the research by the candidate.

- That it was important to retain a high quality threshold (ie normally 3* or 4*) for the requirements for papers to be included in a PhD thesis. In view of these high thresholds, the Supervisor(s) would be able to recommend a switch to the standard thesis format at any point during the student's period of registration on the grounds that the conditions of the three paper route could not be met within the registration period.
- That it was not certain at this stage that doctorates in this format would be REF submissible and clarification was being sought.

16/194 RESOLVED:

To approve:

- i) the introduction of a three paper submission as an additional format to the traditional PhD thesis submission for ABS students, as specified in Paper REG/16/08(1), subject to consideration being given to the inclusion of "normally" at appropriate points within the requirements for papers to be included in a PhD thesis to provide some flexibility whilst maintaining the quality threshold.
- ii) Guidance for Students in ABS on a Three Paper Thesis Submission in Paper AU-GSMC-16-0016-A.

Graduate School Strategy

16/195 RESOLVED

To approve the strategy for the Graduate School developed by the Dean of the Graduate School in consultation with Graduate School Management Committee and Research Committee, as set out in Paper REG/16/756-1.

ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership

16/196 RESOLVED:

To approve the collaboration to form the ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership 'Midlands Graduate School', subject to approval of the Masters in Social Science Research by the Programme Approval Sub-Committee and of the collaboration by the Collaborative Provision Strategy Group.

Revisions to the Doctor of Business Administration programme

16/197 RESOLVED:

To approve revisions to the Doctor of Business Administration programme, including a new exit award of a Postgraduate Certificate in Business Research with Impact, subject to approval by the Programme Approval Sub-Committee.

Collaboration with Kaplan for the Doctor of Business Administration Programme

16/198 RESOLVED:

To approve the collaboration with Kaplan in respect of recruitment to the DBA programme in Hong Kong, subject to the Chair of GSMC being satisfied with the formal agreement and to approval by the ABS Learning and Teaching and Research Committees and by the Collaborative Provision Strategy Group.

Periodic Review and Revalidation Procedures 2016/17

16/199 RESOLVED:

To approve the Procedures for the Periodic Review and Revalidation of Research Degree Programmes as set out in Paper REG/16/775 and associated documentation.

Collaboration with BMW Plant Hams Hall

16/200 RESOLVED:

To approve the collaboration with BMW Hams Hall for PhD studentships, subject to the approval of the Collaborative Provision Strategy Group.

Monitoring and Review Procedures for Research Degree Programmes

16/201 RESOLVED:

To approve the Monitoring and Review Procedures for Research Degree Programmes in Paper REG/16/808 and associated documentation.

Schedule of Research Grants and Contracts

16/202 RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

That paper SEN/16/0036A, being the Schedule of Research Grants and Contracts, be approved and that the following members of staff be congratulated on attracting substantial awards:

Applicant(s)	Sponsor(s)	Amount
Prof A Ahmed	Novolife Biomedical Research Institute (Beijing) Co. Limited	4,000,000
Prof M Sumetsky	EPSRC	916,352
Prof P Dey, P. Albores-Barajas, P. Budhwar	ESIF / ERDF	605,783
Dr S Bellary	European Commission	550,231
Prof S Turitsyn	ERDF	297,722
Prof M Griffin, A. Pitt, V. Wang	UCB Bio Pharma SPRL	254,623
Prof S Turitsyn	European Commission	195,454
Prof W Cao	European Commission	195,454
Dr I Maidment	National Institute of Health Research	173,483
Prof M Sumetsky	US Army Research Lab	151,734
Prof T Bridgwater	European Commission	109,821
Prof P Maropoulos	ERDF	100,000

Schedule of Appointment of Academic and Academic-Related Staff

16/203 RECEIVED

The Schedule of Appointment of Academic and Academic-Related Staff in Paper SEN/16/0037-A.

Report from Report of the Director of Library and IT Services

16/204 The Senate received a report from the Director of Library and IT Services in Paper SEN/16/0038-A.

Report on Action taken on behalf of Senate by the Chair and Vice-Chair

16/205 RESOLVED:

To ratify the action taken on behalf of Senate by the Provost as set out in Paper SEN/16/0039-A.

Report on Student Disciplinary and Fitness to Practise Matters

16/206 RESOLVED:

To approve a Report on Student Disciplinary and Fitness to Practise Matters in Paper SEN/16/0039-A.

UNIVERSITY STRATEGY

Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive's Report

16/207 RECEIVED:

Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive's Report in Paper SEN-16-0041-A, which summarised progress being made with high-level institutional strategic objectives, as well as current University news for the information of members of Senate and Council.

16/208 NOTED:

- That a general advertisement was shortly to be placed in the national press for a range of academic posts in order to fill current vacancies. This would help to address the relatively high student/staff ratios which had arisen as a consequence of the success in student recruitment and the lag in recruiting commensurate numbers of academic staff.
- That a continuous improvement project had been launched for Aston's internal services and support functions, which would review and re-engineer business processes systematically across all operations, resulting in the definition of new processes which were both more efficient and more responsive for users. This project would be led by the CFO and COE.
- That the University would be considering the feasibility of offering accelerated degrees over a two-year period in view of the Government's announcement that it would be pursuing funding reforms to enable the development of such fast track degrees.

Keypath Education Collaboration

16/209 RECEIVED:

Paper REG/16/0042-A and an oral report from the Provost on progress with the Aston Online Project in Collaboration with Keypath Education. It was the intention for improvements made to MAP and Blackboard to meet the needs of online applicants and students would be rolled out to staff and students generally in due course.

Aston Medical School (AMS)

16/210 RECEIVED:

Paper REG/16/0043-A and an oral report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean for AMS on progress with the implementation of AMS. The School had passed Stage 4 of the GMC accreditation process and was currently awaiting a date for Stage 5, the inspection visit, which would take place before the final approval would be considered by the GMC's Council in July 2017.

Issues raised by Student Representatives and the Students' Union Senate

16/211 RECEIVED:

A report from the Students' Union in paper SEN-16-0044-A, together with an oral report from the Vice-President Education, highlighting progress in improving the systems, processes and training for course representation and student engagement, and the increased level of student interest in the Students' Union elections for 2017/18, with a record number of candidates standing. The Union's business strategy review, including plans for the new SU building, was nearing completion and it was intended to bring proposals to the next round of meetings of the Executive, Finance and Major Projects Committee and Council. The Loft, a social study space in the Union, was to be refurbished to accommodate 100 final year students in time for this summer's examinations.

Finance and Planning Issues

16/212 RECEIVED:

An oral reports from the Provost on finance and planning issues, noting:

- That the HE and Research Bill had reached the Report Stage in the House of Lords, and a number of significant policy concessions had been made by the government which had addressed some of the UUK's concerns. The government had agreed to some amendments which would provide greater protection to academic freedom and institutional autonomy. The government suffered a defeat by the Peers over its plans to link English universities' performance in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) to the tuition fees that they would be allowed to charge and the number of students (domestic or international) that they could recruit. The government was also defeated in votes on amendments to the Bill, which significantly altered the nature of TEF, provisions for new entrants to the HE market and the powers of the Office for Students (OfS).
- That the government had published a white paper on Brexit, and a Bill was making its way through the House of Lords. The white paper stated that one of the government's guiding principles was that the UK remained the best place for science and innovation. The Peers had voted to amend the Bill to require the Government to guarantee the rights of EU citizens living in the UK.
- That a total of 299 TEF submissions had been received by HEFCE of which 50 were from alternative providers and 15 from FE colleges. Institutional TEF narratives were currently being assessed by TEF assessors and panellists (comprising academics, students, widening participation experts and employers). The outcomes and accompanying information would be published at the end of May 2017.
- That Aston's undergraduate applications for 2017 entry were broadly similar to last year compared to a national decrease of 5% for UK students and 7% for EU students. Current PGT applications for 2017 entry were 4% higher than for last year, and acceptances were 44% higher.

UNIVERSITY STRATEGY THEMES

16/213 RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Vice-Chancellor that in line with the new operating methodology agreed by the Senate, the membership would next split into three breakout groups to discuss the following strategic themes:

- i) 'Turning the Two Page Challenge into Aston's "living" Learning & Teaching Strategy' as set out in SEN-16-0045-A and led by Dr Sarah Hayes, Senior Lecturer in Technology Enhanced and Flexible Learning and Sarah Davies, Director of Quality Assurance And Enhancement.
- ii) Aston REF Review as set out in SEN-16-0046-A and led by Sally Puzey, Director of Research Strategy and Impact, and Larry Atwood, REF Impact Manager.
- iii) Development of Academic/Senate KPIs as set out in SEN/16/0047-A and led by David Farrow, Executive Director of Marketing Strategy and Communication.

At the end of the breakout discussions the three groups made the following reports to the reconvened Senate:

'Turning the Two Page Challenge into Aston's "living" Learning & Teaching Strategy'

16/214 NOTED:

That the Group was asked to address two questions:

- i) "Where are we going now with the Strategy?" The two-page Strategy (paper REG/17/124) was drawn up through University-wide consultation to represent Aston's key principles and purposes. The Group was asked to agree the format.
- ii) "How will we get there?" Paper REG/17/125 was the same University Strategy in table format to facilitate the cascading of actions to appropriate colleagues across the University. Senate colleagues were asked about alignment with School learning and teaching strategies and for ideas on appropriate KPIs that might be assigned to the Strategy.

The following actions and general feedback were noted:

Actions

- The strategy in table format should be circulated to Associate Deans Learning and Teaching (ADLTs) so that the guiding principles could be linked to the School strategies in a consistent way.
- ADLTs should return revised School strategies for discussion and cross-fertilisation at the June LTC meeting.
- A slot on the Strategy should be included in the Learning and Teaching Strategy Day in June.
- A brief executive summary paragraph should be included to explain the context and University-wide consultation that had taken place and the diversity of contribution from across Aston.
- The Students Union to be invited to run one or two focus groups to elicit student feedback on how well they believed the new guiding principles had already been enacted.

General Feedback

- The Strategy was felt to be well-written and no major changes to the format of either of the documents were necessary.

- Colleagues queried which KPIs were appropriate and which KPIs were used by competitors. As a Senate KPI group had been established it was decided to defer further consideration of KPIs for the Strategy at this stage.
- When KPIs were developed for the Strategy, it was important that they should reflect the new modes of learning eg work-based, apprenticeships, and distance learning.
- To encourage the engagement of staff the Strategy could be linked into the PDR and promotion processes.
- Members queried whether the Strategy was financial or educational? This question was addressed directly at the end by the Vice-Chancellor, who emphasised the strong educational focus of Aston's Learning and Teaching Strategy albeit within the context of the need to operate a financially sustainable institution.

ACTION: Dr Sarah Hayes to take forward the above-actions to implement the new Learning and Teaching Strategy

Aston REF Review

16/215 NOTED:

That one Group considered the topic: *“Optimising research outputs for the REF exercise: how can researchers be supported to prepare their research papers, books, monographs and other forms of output to be optimised for REF?”*

- The group was unanimous in concluding that a “one size fits all” approach would not work, but rather it was important that strategies were tailored to the Schools and disciplines which all had different needs.
- It was noted that high teaching loads could have an impact on time available to write papers.
- Discussion focussed on how Aston could increase the achievement of 4* papers, as these were most highly weighted and thereby attracted most funding. The following suggestions were made:
 - In some areas of social sciences and humanities research assistants were utilised to help optimise manuscripts. This could take the form of contributing elements of writing and reviewing drafts for example.
 - EAS had piloted a “buddy system” so that Early Career Researchers (ECRs) could learn what 4* publications looked like in their subject area from more experienced colleagues.
 - Cross-checking or reading of manuscripts by peers was undertaken in some areas and was considered to be beneficial in driving up the quality of a paper before it was submitted (as after publication was too late to change the quality rating). In some instances there were group discussions about a publication prior to submitting the publication.
 - Scientific writers were used by some areas, although there was a cost associated with this.
 - Understanding how to write in an accessible way was an important skill. REF reviewers were not always exact experts in the field and it was therefore important to write in a style which was understandable, particularly in relation to the abstract and conclusions.

That another Group considered the topic: *Supporting the generation, evidence capture and reporting of impact: REF has provided an important focus for impact, establishing the case study as a unit of measure for it; what support is needed to ensure researchers are better able to generate, evidence and report the impact of their research?*

- Discussion focused on the need to communicate to staff what impact actually is as this was not always understood by all. There was a need to build awareness of this early on so that impact evidence could be captured.
- Gathering evidence would require REO involvement (ie via the REF Impact manager)
- There was a general acknowledgement that not many REF impact case studies were needed and, accordingly, there was a need for focus/co-ordination at institutional/School level as to what these should be
- In some areas culture still seemed about individual rather than about groups; but it was important to note that impact was not about individuals
- Proposals discussed by this group included:
 - more top level leadership (and perhaps mentoring) to steer staff towards impactful areas of research,
 - increased efforts to get more impact out of existing research. For example, to push research towards impact in the policy domain by bringing disciplines together (eg hard science and business/policy).
 - opportunities for collaboration should be explored between the Schools to add policy and business aspects to existing developing impact cases.
 - as with research papers, it was important to assess the potential impact case studies that were already available and how efforts should be focused on optimising them within the REF assessment period.

ACTION: Sally Puzey to build these suggestions into a REF strategy for Aston

Development of Academic/Senate KPIs

16/216 NOTED:

- That the Group endorsed the following Senate narrative to articulate its purpose and main functions which had been developed by the Vice-Chancellor, Provost and Executive Director of Marketing Strategy and Communications following the last meeting:

“Senate is the principal academic body of the University. It is responsible for overseeing the quality and standards of all teaching and learning carried out at Aston, as well as for all research activities. Senate meetings concentrate on significant areas of academic strategy, policy and delivery. Academic ordinances and academic awards can only be made with the agreement of Senate. With over 50 members including Deans, other academic and professional staff, and student representatives, Senate is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and meets four times a year. Senate has several committees including Learning and Teaching, Research, and International Strategy and delegates powers to these bodies when required.”

- That David Farrow had provided the Group with a progress report on the review of the University’s KPIs noting that it was proposed to reduce the number of KPIs from 43 to 30 and to create a set of eleven Mission Critical KPIs to be used for reporting to Council. The Group provided feedback on the proposed Mission Critical KPIs, noting the following discussion points:
 - The Group felt that the number of Mission Critical KPI’s should be kept to a minimum recognising that the University’s broad mission necessitated a range of KPIs.
 - Senate KPIs should relate to staff, to students and to research excellence.
 - The use of dynamic indicators (eg citations, number of publications, or research income) was preferable to using static indicators (REF rating), as they could be more readily used to monitor and drive impactful changes to improve performance.

- University KPI targets should be capable of disaggregation at School/discipline/departmental level.
- Consideration should be given to the fact that some KPIs (eg citations and research income) varied considerably between Schools and disciplines, and that benchmarking against other universities was, in such cases, particularly helpful at School/discipline level. In this context it would be useful to identify a key competitor group against which to benchmark Aston's performance.
- KPIs should be communicated widely so that staff in Schools and departments felt ownership of them and were aware of their personal contribution towards the achievement of institutional objectives.
- KPIs should be used to assess the University's performance rather than that of individual members of academic staff.
- A narrative and logical rationale for the KPIs should be developed, which could be supported by the clustering of cognate KPIs.
- That consideration be given to including KPIs for International Collaboration (eg collaboration on research and/or taught programmes), and Peer Esteem (eg membership of editorial boards, professional committees, etc).
- That the proposed aggregate measure of Staff Satisfaction could be problematic as it would be likely to show little variance and to be asymptotic.

ACTION: David Farrow to prepare a KPI narrative and to review the proposed KPIs in the light of the above comments

DATES OF SENATE MEETINGS IN 2016/17

16/217 NOTED:

That Senate would meet next year at 2:00 pm on Wednesday, 31st May 2017. The Joint Council-Senate Strategy Away-Day would be held on Wednesday, 3rd May 2017 (from 12:30 to 6:00 pm, followed by dinner) and the Senate Strategy Away Half-Day on Wednesday, 10th May 2017 (from 12:30 to 5:00 pm).

JGW/14.03.17