# THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

**ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**ACADEMIC YEAR RESTRUCTURE PROJECT BOARD**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2014**

Present: Mark Thomson (Chair), Hannah Bannister, Simon Beattie, Keith Clarkson, Rachael Elliott, Mark Jackson, Mark Hoffman, Tom Maksymiw, Ginney Pavey, Martin Reid, Wayne Tatlow, Linda Taylor, Andrew Webb, Joy Whyte, Chris Wood.

In attendance: Ann-Marie Foxcroft (Secretary)

Apologies: Elizabeth Aitken, Sarah Ashwin, Cath Baldwin, Chris Fryer, Dr Neil Mclean, Osmana Raie, Rachel Ward,

1. Welcome
   1. The Chair welcomed Mark Hoffman (International Development) to the meeting and reported that Mark, along with Prof. Sarah Ashwin (Management), would be joining the Project Board to represent academic staff.
2. Minutes of the last meeting
   1. It was noted that Andrew Webb had been missed off the list of attendees at the previous meeting.
3. Matters arising/developments on actions identified at our first meeting
   1. The project board looked at the actions arising from the first meeting which had been listed in order of priority. It was noted that point 2 was a duplication of point 1.
   2. The Chair reported that over the summer he would be looking at whether any of these actions were dependent on other actions being completed before they could start/be completed.
4. Action Point 1 and 3: ‘Assessment’
   1. The Chair and Hannah Bannister had met with Simeon Underwood, Director of Academic Services, to discuss the remit of a working group to review ‘assessment’. This review, which had been planned prior to the decision to reform the academic year, will look at the pedagogy of assessment; propose a set of assessment principles; and might include proposals to widen summative assessment modes.
   2. It was agreed that the working group would also include some detailed work relevant to the work of the AYR project board; namely, reviewing whether there is any scope to introduce flexibility into the exam-setting/scrutiny and results processing arrangements; and reviewing the degree regulations around issues of progression, condonation and re-sits.
   3. An ‘assessment working group matrix’ would be presented to Academic Board for approval in early Michaelmas Term 2014/15 with the group’s recommendations presented to the first Academic Board of Lent Term.
   4. Hannah will be preparing the schedule for the 2015/16 exam period (including Lent Term ‘Week 0’ and Summer Term) by the start of Michaelmas Term 2014/15 for early discussion with departments. It is anticipated that policy positions will be drawn up by end of Michaelmas Term for consultation in Lent Term (i.e. on whether any flexibility can be built into the process).
5. Action Point 4: Sub-Boards
   1. The need to clarify whether sub-boards will be held within the shortened Summer Term or outside of term time is still to be determined as it is unclear to what extent departments will make use of the new exam period.
   2. Currently, half-units make up 54% of our taught courses. If half of these were moved to the new Lent Term ‘Week 0’ exam period, this would take some of the pressure off the Summer Term exam period and perhaps make it possible for sub-board meetings to take place in Summer Term Week 7. However, if the Lent Term exam period isn’t used in sufficient volume, it probably won’t be possible to hold sub-board meetings within the Summer Term and they will have to take place in Summer Term ‘Week 8’
   3. Alternative methods of assessment, as mentioned in 3.3 above, might alleviate some of the pressure on space for examinations.
   4. Involve Jethrow Perkins, Information Security Manager. I didn’t note why?!
6. Action Point 5: Timetables and Conferences & Events
   1. The Chair met with Rachel Ward and Linda Taylor to discuss room booking responsibilities. It was agreed that, at this stage, it was not possible to confirm what the term-time impact of the new academic year structure would be; further information was required.
   2. Departments would be contacted shortly to remind them that they needed to start thinking about how they plan to organise the extra term time weeks. They will be advised that they should consult with Staff-Student Liaison Committees and departmental Teaching Committees; proposals to be submitted by the end of Michaelmas Term.
   3. Departments will be asked whether they intend to take a standard ‘department wide’ approach or leave it to individual course conveners to determine. In either case, they will be asked whether they intend to run any ‘learning support activities’ and, if so, what kind of space would they require. From a Timetabling perspective it would be simpler if any planned activities were held in the class/seminar room normally booked for the course, but departments might want to run additional learning activities collectively across several courses.
   4. TLC would need to be involved in discussions with departments both to ensure that there is no overlap between School-level and departmental provision and that they were able to meet what is likely to be a significant draw on their time over the extra term-time weeks.
   5. Another issue raise at the last meeting was regarding Peacock Theatre, who need dates two years in advance, but Rachel is confident we’ll be able to make some adjustments to our 2015/16 bookings.
   6. Rachel will be contacting executive programmes, Summer Schools, known conference hosts and other parties who are currently scheduled to use School facilities outside of term time to determine whether their dates will be amended or remain as they currently are. Once she has this information she will be able to offer a view on any potential clashes.
   7. The Chair had also raised the need to refresh and clarify the School’s space allocation policy with Simeon Underwood.
7. Action Point 6: Review of school regulations and codes
   1. It was noted that GLPD would coordinate the non-degree regulations for the School, e.g. whether there would be any effect on complaints regulations, policy on free speech, terms of use of IT facilities, etc.
8. Action Point 7: Lent Term ‘Week 0’ exam capacity
   1. Following discussion at the last meeting, it had been confirmed that exam set-up/clearing takes three days. The next step is to work out the number of rooms involved in the Lent Term ‘Week 0’ exam period; the time we have available to set them up and then reset them to teaching style; and whether additional portering staff are needed to assist with this.
9. Action Point 8: Students
   1. The need to develop clear communication strategy for students will be discussed under agenda item 5.
   2. Concerns regarding student access to academic staff during reading weeks had been raised with Prof Paul Kelly, Pro-Director, Teaching and Learning. He noted that individual departments would be responsible for coordinating the availability of academic staff during reading weeks; however, the aim was that office hours would continue to be offered during reading week. Heads of Department would be responsible for sign-off of staff absences for conference attendance, etc.
10. Action Point 9: Committees
    1. The timing and cycle of committee business would be reviewed by GLPD and reported back to a future project board meeting.
11. Action 10: Accommodation
    1. Finance modelling for different contracts would be conducted and reported back to the project board meeting.
12. Action 11: Financial Support Office
    1. FSO would liaise with academic staff to ensure that they would be available for decision-making during the summer period; revised arrangements would be in place for the lead up to the 2015/16 academic session.
13. **Action 12: Ceremonies**
    1. If the July ceremonies remain in their current dates this would mean that they were even more remote from the exam board meetings; in turn, this would make it even more difficult to get faculty to attend. A decision to move the ceremonies would need to be made relatively urgently given the need to determine the availability of the Peacock Theatre.
    2. It was also queried whether changing the dates for the ceremonies would affect the Summer School.

ACTION: Mark Jackson to confirm.

* 1. It was noted that if the timing of the executive summer schools were changed it could cause problems if the new dates happened to coincide with the annual conferences that academic staff attend.

1. **Action 13: Honorary Fellows**
   1. The timings for the nomination and appointment of honorary fellows would be reviewed by GLPD and reported back to a future project board meeting.
2. Action 14: HR issues
   1. The Chair reported that he had contacted HR and invited them to send a nominee to attend the project board. It was hoped that there would be a representative at the next project board.
3. Action 15: TLC
   1. The Chair would meet with Neil Mclean next week to discuss how TLC would co-ordinate with departments to ensure that ‘additional learning support’ (either during reading weeks or otherwise) was joined up and that there was not duplication of effort at School and departmental levels.
4. Action 16: LSE Careers
   1. The Chair reported that Jenny Blakesley, Director of LSE Careers, had confirmed that there would be no issue with LSE Careers making themselves available to support earlier pre-sessional dates.
5. Action 17: Medical Centre and Chaplaincy
   1. The Chair reported that he had notified Revd James Walters of the changes to the academic year, but did not have contact details for Dr Naidoo.

ACTION: Andrew Webb to forward Mark contact details for Dr Naidoo.

1. Action 18: Academic Induction Programme
   1. The Chair reported that he would be meeting with Neil Mclean next week to discuss the effect that an earlier start date to academic year would have on the Academic Induction Programme.
2. Resources
   1. Time prohibited this item being discussed at the previous meeting and the Chair circulated an email to the project board following the meeting. Members were reminded that the project board was responsible for identifying resource requirements; not making resource allocation decisions.
   2. The Chair had sought guidance from the Finance Division following representations from departments and ARD that the support arrangements for an additional exam-setting/scrutiny/ processing period would require additional resources and that there would be some time-specific workload increases for Registry and departments around exam periods.
   3. The Finance Division advised that an increase in workflow density would not necessarily equate to a need for additional resources. They advised that those areas that felt that they needed additional resources should itemise the cost of each stage of the specific processes for which they felt they needed additional time-specific resources.
3. Communications
   1. The Chair noted that project board members had not had time to fully read the draft communications plan, as it had only just been circulated, and requested that members email any comments to him.
   2. It was requested that email communications were sent to the ‘Unit Managers’ email group which includes managers/heads of institutes/centres; whereas the ‘Academic Managers’ is just for managers of academic departments.
   3. Departments requested that a list of options/activities for reading week activities be circulated to departments. It was also noted that the use of Sharepoint could be a useful method for departments to share activities.
4. Date of next meeting
   1. The date for the next meeting is to be confirmed, but will be in mid/late September.

ACTION: Ann-Marie Foxcroft to arrange.

AMF  
15 July 2014