



**The
University
Of
Sheffield.**

Office UEB/2019/1903/02
Of
The President &
Vice-Chancellor.

CONFIRMED

Minutes University Executive Board

Date: 5 March 2019

Present: Professor G Valentine (GV) (in the Chair),
Mrs H J Dingle (HJD), Professor S Fitzmaurice (SF), Professor M J Hounslow (MJH), Professor W Morgan (WM), Professor D Petley (DP), Mr R Sykes (RS), Professor Craig Watkins (CW)

In attendance: Dr T Strike (TS); Dr S Want (SW) (item 1); Mr C Baker (CB) (item 1); Mrs V Jackson (VJ) (item 2); Dr R Birch (RB) (item 4); Mr A Carlile (AC) (item 4); Mrs D McClean (DC) (item 5); Mr R Gower (RG) (item 6)

Apologies: Professor J Derrick (JD), Mr A Dodman (AD), Professor K Lamberts (KL), Professor Dame Pamela Shaw (PS)

Minute Secretary: Mr N Button (NB)

1. Closed Minute and Paper

2. Closed Minute and Paper

3. Closed Minute and Paper

4. Student Lifecycle Project: Academic Model Coding Structure

(Dr R Birch & Mr A Carlile in attendance for this item)

4.1 UEB considered and noted the contents of a paper on the new Academic Model Coding Structure. Attention was drawn to the more flexible and future-proof nature of the new system, the need for awareness raising and answering any concerns which may arise as a result of changes to the coding structure, and the next steps in the communication of the new coding structure, including roadshow events.

4.2 During discussion, UEB noted the following:

- While unique codes for modules and programmes were hard coded into the academic model and attached to departments in the organisational structure, these were accompanied by labels which allowed for the creation of flexible, more meaningful and user friendly information to be presented with the code.
- There would be greater restrictions to access of data than under the old coding system.
- The communications strategy also provided an opportunity to reiterate the aims of the Programme Level Approach.

5. Expectations for Postgraduate Research Students

(Mrs D McClean in attendance for this item)

5.1 UEB considered a paper on expectations for postgraduate research students. Attention was drawn to the low submission rates of PhD students within a three-year funded period, the potential interest of the Office for Students in the issue of low completion rates, and the need for a fundamental re-evaluation of the goals and expectations of a PhD programme.

5.2 During discussion, UEB noted the following:

- Any change to the standard length of a PhD programme would have implications for student recruitment and funding.
- Other universities were having similar discussions about the practicality of continuing with three-year PhDs.
- It was challenging to identify additional responsibilities and training as the specific cause of the decrease in submission rates.
- The competencies as described in the paper were too prescriptive to allow flexibility in PhD provision.

5.3 **Actions:**

- (a) Further consideration would be given to the impact of changing the standard PhD length on student recruitment and numbers.
- (b) Further consideration would be given to the underlying causes for the decrease in submission rates.

6. Closed Minute and Paper

7. Round Table

- (a) Council dinner: GV noted an issue around invitations to the most recent Council dinner.
- (b) NSS: WM updated UEB on the latest response rates for the National Student Survey.