



## Academic Board

Wednesday 10 May 2023<sup>1</sup>

### MINUTES

**Present:** Dr Michael Spence, President and Provost (Chair).

Professor Bas Aarts; Dr Mojtaba Abdi-Jalebi; Professor Klaus Abels; Dr Ali Abolfathi; Professor Patti Adank; Dr Rik Adriaans; James Agar; Professor Jonathan Agar; Hamza Ahmed; Simona Aimar; Jennifer Akinola; Dr Bojan Aleksov; Adnan Ali; Professor Mark Altaweel; Dr Jake Anders; Professor Lynn Ang; Professor Haki Antonsson; Dr Seth Anziska; Professor Kathleen Armour; Professor Anasuya Aruliah; Professor Jonathan Ashmore; Professor Tomaso Aste; Dr Juliette Atkinson; Professor David Attwell; Professor Jan Axmacher; Dr Paul Ayris; Professor Jurg Bahler; Professor James Bainbridge; Professor Gianluca Baio; Professor Jamie Baker; Professor Kristin Bakke; Professor Christopher Barnes; Professor Yolande Barnes; Dr Cecile Bats; Professor Yasminah Beebeejaun; Professor Costante Bellettini; Emily Bellshaw; Professor Mette Berg; Professor Michael Berkowitz; Professor Andrew Bevan; Professor Jeff Bezemer; Professor Robert Biel; Anja Boeing; Dr Beate Bohnacker Hellawell; Professor Iain Borden; Dr Neus Bover Fonts; Dr Jeff Bowersox; Dr Raina Brands; Professor Patrick Bray; Dr Damian Bright; Professor Annie Britton; Professor Geraldine Brodie; Professor Frances Brodsky; Professor Clare Brooks; Professor Jamie Brown; Professor Dan Browne; Dr Suzy Buckley; Professor Helene Burningham; Professor Jonathan Butterworth; Dr Tim Button; Dr Boyana Buyuklieva; Professor Fabio Caccioli; Professor Joseph Cain; Dr Jelena Calic; Noël Caliste; Professor Claire Cameron; Dr Michelle Cannon; Professor Benjamin Caplin; Professor Licia Capra; Dr Velia Cardin; Professor Claire Carmalt; Dr Brent Carnell; Professor Vincent Carpentier; Professor Madeline Carr; Professor Philip Cavendish; Professor Paola Ceccarelli; Professor Richard Chandler; Dr Declan Chard; Professor Michael Cheetham; Professor James Cheshire; Sianne Chinwuba; Dr Evangelia Chrysiou; Andrew Churchill; Professor Elisabete CIDRE; Professor Chris Clack; Professor Lucie Clapp; Professor Beverley Clark; Dr Alun Coker; Professor Susan Collins; Kimberly Cornfield; Dr Ludovic Coupaye; Professor Ingemar Cox; Professor Sebastian Coxon; Dr Helene Crutzen; Dr Damian Cummings; Sonja Curtis; Dr Silvia dal Bianco; Professor Izzat Darwazeh; Professor Pamela Davidson; Professor Gareth Davies; Dr Jason Davies; Professor Paul Davis; Professor Sally Day; Professor Rohan de Silva; Professor Janice Derry; Professor Alison Diduck; Dr Duygu Dikicioglu; Professor Jason Dittmer; Professor Annette Dolphin; Dr Alex Donovan; Dr Johanna Donovan; Dominique Draï; Professor Paulo Drinot; Professor Karen Duff; Dr Oliver Duke-Williams; Dr Mark Dyble; Professor Ian Eames; Dr Karen Edge; Professor Frances Edwards; Dr Ian Edwards; Dr Alex

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<sup>1</sup> This meeting was held via videoconference.

Elwick; Dr Andrew Embleton-Thirsk; Dr Emily Emmott; Professor Susan Evans; Dr Russell Evans; Ava Fatah gen. Schieck; Professor Federico Federici; Dr Alexander Fedorec; Professor Delmiro Fernandez-Reyes; Dr Liory Fern-Pollak; Professor Patrizia Ferretti; Professor Margot Finn; Professor Maria Fitzgerald; Dr Richard Freeman; Professor Nicholas Freemantle; Dr Lisa Fridkin; Dr Bettina Friedrich; Dr Martin Fry; Professor Jonathan Gale; Professor Caroline Garaway; Professor Tamar Garb; Dr Anna Garnett; Dr Claire Garnett; Dr Malu Gatto; Professor Haidy Geismar; Professor Dame Hazel Genn; Professor Guido Germano; Professor Alasdair Gibb; Professor Adam Gibson; Professor Sam Gilbert; Professor Shirli Gilbert; Professor Faye Gishen; Polly Glegg; Dr Jennie Golding; Dr Hugh Goodacre; Professor Eric Gordy; Professor Lesley Gourlay; Professor John Gray; Professor Duncan Greig; Professor James Griffin; Professor Francois Guesnet; Professor David Guile; Dr Lucia Patrizio Gunning; Professor Leslie Gutman; Professor Helen Hackett; Dr Oliver Hadeler; Dr Hassan Haghparast Bidgoli; Professor Stephen Hailes; Martin Hall; Rachel Hall; Professor Susan Hamilton; Joy Han; Jesper Hansen; Professor Stephen Hart; Professor Sarah Hawkes; Dr James Haworth; Professor Michael Heinrich; Dr Katie Hemer; Elisabeth Herbert; Dr Ulrike Heuer; Professor Mark Hewitson; Professor Evangelos Himonides; Professor Arne Hofmann; Professor Martin Holbraad; Dr Joshua Hollands; Dr Amy Horton; Professor Jie Huang; Professor Jennifer Hudson; Professor Andrew Hudson-Smith; Dr Talia Isaacs; Professor Richard Jackman; Dr Joana Jacob Ramalho; Professor Shabbar Jaffar; Professor Dan Jagger; Professor Helene Joffe; Professor Philip Jones; George Joseph; Professor Jasmina Jovanovic; Dr Thomas Kador; Professor Lily Kahn; Professor Jian Kang; Professor Matilda Katan-Muller; Mrs Kate Keen; Professor Nicoletta Kessarlis; Dr John Leon Kiappes; Dr Maki Kimura; Professor John King; Professor James Kirkbride; Professor Josef Kittler; Professor Hannah Knox; Professor Nikolaos Konstantinidis; Dr Efrosyni Konstantinou; Professor Andreas Korn; Professor Alison Koslowski; Edyta Kostanek; Dr Fiona Kyle; Dr Kata Kyrölä; Dr Danielle Lamb; Professor Claudia Lapping; Professor Alan Latham; Professor Benjamin Lauderdale; Dr Sandra Leaton Gray; Professor Alena Ledeneva; Dr Fiona Leigh; Dr Natalie Leow; Professor Paola Lettieri; Professor Dewi Lewis; Dr Jonathan Lezmy; Mrs Amy Lightstone; Professor Christoph Lindner; Professor Chaozong Liu; Dr Kris Lockyear; Professor David Lomas; Dr Helga Lúthersdóttir; Professor Gary Lye; Dr Isobel Mackay; Professor Sandy MacRobert; Professor Mairead MacSweeney; Professor Eleanor Main; Dr Antony Makrinos; Dr Elvira Mambetisaeva; Dr Miriam Manchin; Professor Ioanna Manolopoulou; Dr Joanne Marks; Professor Deborah Martin; Professor John Martin; Professor Sarah Matthews; Dr Margaret Mayston; Dr Claire McAndrew; Dr Jenny McArthur; Professor Carolyn McGettigan; Dr Jennifer McGowan; Dr Saladin Meckled-Garcia; Professor Susan Michie; Professor Alex Mills; Professor Grant Mills; Professor Zoran Milutinovic; Professor Sara Mole; Professor Richard Mole; Dr Magdalena Morawska; Professor Ruth Morgan; Professor Rear Admiral Neil Morisetti; Dr Gareth Morris; Professor Gemma Moss; Dr Guy Moss; Dr Dale Moulding; Dr Vanessa Moulton; Professor Theano Moussouri; Professor Vivek Mudera; Professor Peter Mullany; Professor Veronique Munoz-Darde; Professor Steven Murdoch; Professor Mirco Musolesi; Professor Florian Mussgnug; Dr Yusra Naqvi; Dr Marga Navarrete; Professor Ad Neeleman; Dr Helene Neveu Kringelbach; Dr Mark Newman; Professor Thanh Nguyen; Dr Mengyan Nie; Professor Mignon Nixon; Professor Lorraine Noble; Dr Alex Norori-McCormac; Mx Johanna Novales; Professor Lucy O'Brien; Professor Moses Oketch; Professor Alexandra Olaya-Castro; Professor Martin Oliver;

Professor Rumana Omar; Professor Susan O'Neill; Professor John O'Regan; Rikke Osterlund; Professor Norbert Pachler; Dr Ioannis Papaioannou; Professor Ioannis Papakonstantinou; Professor Amos Paran; Professor Jayne Parker; Professor Jenny Parkes; Dr Aaron Parkhurst; Professor Ivan Parkin; Professor Nora Pashayan; Dr Vasos Pavlika; Dr Anne Peasey; Professor Paola Pedarzani; Professor Hiranya Peiris; Professor Jane Perryman; Professor Konstantinos Petrides; Professor James Phillips; Professor Franck Pichaud; Professor Hynek Pikhart; Dr Jeffrey Pittaway; Dr Anna Ponomareva; Professor Andrew Pontzen; Professor Mike Porter; Professor John Potter; Professor Henry Potts; Professor Ian Preston; Dr Ayanna Prevatt-Goldstein; Professor Stephen Price; Professor David Pym; Professor Stephen Quirke; Professor Slavo Radosevic; Professor Ahad Rahim; Professor Greta Rait; Dr Sangaralingam Ramesh; Professor Ahmed Rashid; Professor Geraint Rees; Professor Rebecca Rees; Jill Reese; Professor Anna Remington; Professor Ferruccio Renzoni; Professor Mary Richardson; Professor Carol Rivas; Dr Miguel Rivera; Professor Aeli Roberts; Professor Helen Roberts; Professor Claire Robins; Professor Jennifer Rodd; Dr Jennifer Rode; Professor Caine Rolleston; Dr Flaminia Ronca; Professor Karin Ruggaber; Professor John Sabapathy; Professor Kerstin Sailer; Professor Patricia Salinas; Dr John-Paul Salter; Dr Benet Salway; Professor Vieri Samek-Lodovici; Professor Alexander Samson; Dr Andrei Samsonov; Professor Richard Sandford; Professor Prince Saprai; Dr Tim Scanlon; Dr Rafael Schacter; Dr Natalie Schoeler; Professor Ralf Schoepfer; Professor Eloise Scotford; Professor Toby Seddon; Professor Alwyn Seeds; Professor Andrea Sella; Professor David Selviah; Professor Mala Shah; Professor Lion Shahab; Professor Sonu Shamdasani; Professor David Shanks; Dr Ala'a Shehabi; Dr Miranda Sheild Johansson; Professor Nicola Shelton; Professor Elizabeth Shepherd; Dr Ruth Siddall; Justin Siefker; Professor Talvinder Sihra; Professor Bill Sillar; Professor Ricardo Silva; Professor Angus Silver; Dr Samuel Sims; Dr Henrik Singmann; Professor Joy Sleeman; Professor Trevor Smart; Dr Holly Smith; Professor Anthony Smith; Professor Kenneth Smith; Professor Alan Sokal; Professor Christophe Soligo; Professor Samuel Solomon; Professor Eva Sorensen; Professor Catalina Spataru; Professor Aimee Spector; Professor Maarten Speekenbrink; Professor Sarah Spurgeon; Dr Uta Staiger; Professor Sacha Stern; Professor Fiona Stevenson; Professor Michael Stewart; Professor Jack Stilgoe; Professor Melvyn Stokes; Professor Sabine Storp; Professor Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen; Dr Sherrill Stroschein; Mrs Dorota Studniarczyk; Professor Judith Suissa; Dr Bugra Susler; Professor Peter Swaab; Professor Ilias Tachtsidis; Dr Becky Taylor; Bryan Taylor; Professor Geraint Thomas; Professor James Thomas; Professor Olga Thomas; Professor Alan Thompson; Professor Julian Thompson; Professor Jon Thomson; Dr Amy Thornton; Professor Ulrich Tiedau; Dr Matteo Tiratelli; Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker; Professor Helena Titheridge; Simon To; Professor Matthew Todd; Martyn Towner; Professor Kimberley Trapp; Dr Helen Tsui; Dr Richard Tunwell; Professor Catalina Turcu; Professor Elaine Unterhalter; Professor Gert Van Der Heijden; Professor Hans Van Wees; Dr Renée Vanraenenbroeck; Professor Liz Varga; Professor Laura Vaughan; Professor Steven Vaughan; Dr Michael Veale; Professor Carol Vincent; Dr Nalini Vittal; Dr Bella Vivat; Dr Julia Wagner; Dr Tone Walford; Dr Zachary Walker; Professor Michael Walls; Professor Nicola Walshe; Professor Johanna Waters; Professor Li Wei; Professor Finn Werner; Professor Ian White; Patrick White; Dr Iya Whiteley; Breege Whiten; Dr Martina Wicklein; Professor Joanna Williams; Professor Andrew Wills; Professor Duncan Wilson; Professor James Wilson; Professor Stephen Wilson; Professor Matthew Wing; Dr Nick Witham; Michael Wozniak;

Professor Dominic Wyse; Professor Jinghao Xue; Dr Punam Yadav; Dr Christine (Xine) Yao; Dr Victoria Yorke-Edwards; Professor Ian Zachary; Professor Paola Zaninotto; Dr Anselm Zdebik; Professor Stan Zochowski; Professor Martijn Zwijnenburg.

**In attendance:**

Dr Robert Bell; Aimie Chapple; Professor Parama Chaudhury; Paul Clark; Adam Cresswell; Donna Dalrymple; Dr Cathy Elliott; Tom Glynn; Charu Gorasia; Dr Clare Goudy; Dr Chak Hei Lo; Dr Christine Hoffmann; Ed Hossack; Liz Jones; Natasha Lewis; Dr Alison McAnena; Nick McGhee; Catherine Sharp; Andy Smith; Dr Fiona Strawbridge; Kirsty Walker; Olivia Whiteley; Dr Kathryn Woods.

**Part I: Preliminary Formal Business**

**30 ACADEMIC BOARD MINUTES**

30.1 The minutes of the AB meeting of 8 February 2023 [AB Minutes 19-29, 2022-23] were confirmed.

**Part II: Matters for Discussion**

**31 PROVOST'S BUSINESS** (Paper 4-01)

31.1 AB noted the report.

**32 AI IN EDUCATION EXPERT GROUP** (Paper 4-02)

32.1 Academic Board received a presentation on the work of the AI in Education Expert Group. The group had been established to explore the potential impact of this rapidly developing technology on the university.

32.2 During the course of the discussion the following points were raised:

- a. Staff reported the receipt of AI-generated written statements from applicants, in some cases including troubling content. It was thought likely that this would accelerate the move away from the use of personal statements in application processes across the sector.
- b. AI would affect different disciplines in different ways. Mathematics had perforce developed significant expertise in this area as a result of the software available to students. The Expert Group was advised to engage with the Department of Mathematics in order to draw on their experience.
- c. Although the impact of AI on assessment was a primary concern, its potential to contribute to the learning process should not be overlooked. Some colleagues were working on the use of AI in positive ways, such as in the marking process. The report gave no indication of whether this kind of work was acceptable or likely to breach any future ethics guidelines, but it was confirmed that a proscriptive approach was not being taken. Any

colleague working on these issues was encouraged to make contact with the group.

- d. It was important to consider the impact of AI on student wellbeing. The need for guidance to students on using the technology in a positive way was noted.
- e. Members raised the question of how AI systems obtained their data, for example in the context of open-access publishing.

32.3 Any members with expertise or a particular interest in this area were encouraged to make contact with the Expert Group<sup>2</sup>.

### 33 **ATHENA SWAN CHARTER CHANGES** (Paper 4-03)

33.1 It was proposed that UCL adopt the transformed Charter for Athena Swan, which had been re-launched in 2021. The new charter involved a lighter-touch process with a reduced data-gathering and administrative burden. The paper outlined the changes to the Charter, with an FAQ and an Academic Impact Assessment.

33.2 AB discussed the general principle of external organisations setting and measuring the performance of universities against those organisations' own standards. The efficacy of initiatives such as Athena Swan in bringing about change at a sector level was acknowledged, as was the significant workload that would be involved in developing internal processes to deliver such change. Nevertheless AB noted that there could come a point at which it would be reasonable to prioritise the point of principle over pragmatic considerations, and that further discussion would then be required.

33.3 Members highlighted the risk that the collection of data could substitute for real action to tackle inequalities. It was confirmed that data about sex continued to be collected alongside the additional categories of data now required in seeking to address wider equality issues. AB was advised that work was progressing on a Data Strategy.

33.4 Members of ExComAB commended the Academic Impact Statement accompanying the document.

### 34 **FUTURE REF ACTION PLAN** (Paper 4-04)

34.1 The last REF had been positive for UCL, placing second in the UK for research power. The nature of the next iteration of the exercise was still unknown, but the outcome of UKRI's Future Research Assessment Programme was expected shortly and would give some indication of how this was developing. It was thought likely that the staff circumstances element and the weighting of environment would be amended, and EDI considerations further embedded in the process.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/assessment-resources/ai-education-and-assessment-staff-briefing-1/ai-expert-group>

34.2 AB received a presentation on the Future REF Action Plan and the principles underpinning it. This had been informed by discussions with departments, including consideration of potential improvements at UoA level and the kind of central support that could be provided in respect of impact.

34.3 In the course of discussion the following points were made:

- a. Members welcomed receipt of the paper at this early stage in its development. It was confirmed that this was part of a developing picture that would involve ongoing dialogue.
- b. It was important that varying publication practices in different disciplines – in particular the use of long-form but less frequent publications in non-STEM areas – be appropriately considered. AB noted the need to consult staff working in areas where such outputs were common in the process. A Long-form Outputs Task and Finish Group had been established and was due to make recommendations later this year. Members spoke in favour of UCL putting the case for more than double-weighting on monographs against standard outputs.
- c. Members welcomed action to address questions of allocation of staff to UoAs in a timely fashion.
- d. AB discussed the developmental function of appraisal in supporting academic excellence, for example in considering what REF factors needed to be taken into account in developing an academic career, while avoiding a direct link between appraisal and REF outputs.
- e. REF performance was impacted by the research environment, which faced a number of challenges as discussed at recent meetings of the Board. This issue spoke to the strategic need to invest in people.
- f. Members flagged the importance of UCL's participating in the debate around how the REF exercise conceived of impact, and to engage with the Research Councils on this.

34.4 Members thanked the REF team for developing this work as well as for their support during the last REF process.

## 35 **STANDING ORDERS** (Paper 4-05)

35.1 Academic Board received a presentation on the proposed changes to the Standing Orders. These related to:

- a. Standing Orders 5 and 9: provisions in respect of the running of meetings, including the question of holding votes outside the published time slot for the meeting;
- b. Standing Order 13: amendments to the GCAB terms of reference;
- c. Standing Order 17: the terms of reference and membership of ExComAB. The proposed membership was designed to be integrative with other key bodies in keeping with the agreed purpose of the Committee, and included provision for AB to remove the chair of ExComAB;
- d. Standing Order 18: relating to the archiving of governance records.

35.2 Work was ongoing to review the proposals in light of UCL statutes, legal and regulatory requirements. GCAB and the General Counsel would work on the proposals.

36 **MARKING AND ASSESSMENT BOYCOTT (Paper 4-06)**

36.1 Academic Board discussed UCL's proposed approach to the UCU Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB), prior to voting on a Motion put forward by 74 members and circulated with the papers for the meeting.

36.2 The signatories to the Motion argued that UCL's intention to withhold 50% of pay from staff participating in the MAB for the duration of the central assessment period (24 April to 6 July) was punitive and disproportionate. The approach did not reflect the variation between individual members of staff in the proportion of workload related to marking and assessment activity. This lack of nuance would result in disproportionate salary deductions being made from individuals with relatively light responsibilities in this area, and it was suggested that relatively few staff spent 50% of their time on this activity.

36.3 It was further argued that:

- a. the salary deductions would have a disproportionate impact on staff from disadvantaged groups, as well as a negative impact on staff wellbeing, morale, trust in the institution, and effectiveness at work;
- b. the action was being taken to address issues of vital importance to the future of the sector, including casualisation and declining salaries, and was therefore in the interests of future generations of students as well as in the long-term interests of the sector;
- c. rather than taking a punitive approach, UMC should be using the evident strength of feeling to pressure UCEA;
- d. UCL's approach to declaration of participation belied a lack of respect for staff;
- e. students did not want to be taught by demoralised staff or to have their degrees devalued as a result of bypassing quality assurance mechanisms;
- f. although the boycott overall was continuous, the action of any one participating individual was not;
- g. in respect of UCL's position that the response reflected the impact of the MAB on students, only a sliding scale of deductions could avoid the charge of being arbitrary. The proposed action could only retributive or dissuasive in intent, either of which were problematic.

36.4 In setting out the reasons behind UCL's position, the Vice-Provost (Faculties) noted that participation in the boycott constituted partial performance. Employers were entitled to reject partial performance and to deduct up to 100% of salary. UCL had decided to accept partial performance and to make a 50% deduction during the central assessment period. This position had been reached in view of: a review of the position taken by other institutions; the range of marking and assessment activities that were subject to the boycott; the continuous nature of the boycott; and the magnitude of its impact

on students at this point in the year. UCL had had helpful discussions with JCNC, notably on the issues of mitigation of the impact on students and the question of the declaration of participation in advance of the marking deadline.

36.5 There was case law which supported the principle that applying a uniform approach to withholding pay was reasonable in complex situations of this kind given the collective nature of industrial action. There was no clear legal guidance stating the amount an employer may withhold in relation to partial performance in the context of Action Short of a Strike. It was clear however that the amount withheld should be appropriate and not punitive. It was confirmed that UCL would consider any representation that in a particular individual's circumstances the application of this standard approach was unjust.

36.6 Noting that the letter accompanying the Motion stated that UCL's approach was among the most extreme in the sector, the Chief People Officer stated that universities were taking a range of different approaches. Some had rejected partial performance and announced 100% salary deductions, with others making deductions for a period of unspecified duration. UCL was one of a number of institutions proposing to make a 50% deduction for the central assessment period. UCL's central assessment period was longer than at some other universities as it only had one assessment period a year. As UCL students would not have marks 'banked' from an earlier assessment period, the action was consequently more impactful on them.

36.7 AB voted on the motion:

that Academic Board advises Council to direct the UMC to withdraw the threat of 50% deduction for any participation in the UCU MAB; to adopt a nuanced and proportionate approach to deductions, whereby staff are deducted no more than the time allocated in each individual's workload model for marking and assessment activities; and to guarantee that, if and when the MAB is called off, and where marking and assessment is subsequently carried out, no deductions will be made

36.8 403 AB members voted as follows:

Yes	352	87.3%
No	34	8.4%
Abstain	17	4.2%

36.9 The chair noted this as a clear expression of the view of Academic Board and thanked members for their participation in the discussion.



**Part III: Other business for approval or information**

**37 AB ELECTIONS TO OTHER COMMITTEES (Paper 4-07)**

37.1 Noted.

**38 ACADEMIC BOARD TERM 3 MEMBERSHIP UPDATE (Paper 4-08)**

38.1 Noted.

38.2 The secretary notified AB of an error in the appointed membership of the Board. This related to a subgroup of the appointed members who did not meet the definition of academic staff set out in Statute 1, and in respect of whom there was no evidence of Council ever having exercised its discretion to extend the definition to include them. Those members had been contacted and would henceforth not be appointed members of the Board until the position had been regularised. This would involve discussions with GCAB over the membership of the Board and, in all likelihood, a request to Council to amend Statute 7.

**39 UCL CAREERS ANNUAL REPORT (Paper 4-09)**

39.1 Noted.

**40 ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR (Paper 4-10)**

40.1 Noted.

**41 GCAB NOMINATION TO TRIBUNALS (Paper 4-11)**

41.1 Noted.

**42 MINUTES OF OTHER COMMITTEES (Paper 4-12)**

42.1 Noted.

**43 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

43.1 The next termly meeting would be on 14 June 2023 at 2pm.

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