56 MINUTES
Approved
56.1 The Minutes of the meeting of 9 May 2012

57 ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING
Noted
57.1 A very helpful meeting had been held with Mary Curnock Cook, Chief Executive of UCAS, addressing some of the issues that were specific to Birkbeck. The option of extending the system for rejected students to be automatically referred to other UCAS programmes to non-UCAS programmes was discussed. The proposal to publish links to part time courses on the relevant full time subject pages would be taken to the UCAS Board.

57.2 The first meeting of the student recruitment fee income monitoring meetings with the PVM Strategy and the Deans had been scheduled.

57.3 Discussions on the 2012-13 narrative planning statements between the PVMs Strategy, Learning and Teaching and Research with the Deans and the College Secretary (for Professional Services) had taken place as agreed.

57.4 The case study to illustrate REF policy and procedures was under development.

57.5 Development of the employability/business relations agenda was ongoing.

57.6 The Master had asked the Vice-Master to lead the review of UCAS programmes agreed at the previous meeting.

58 MASTER’S REPORT
58.1 A recent meeting with HEFCE had been constructive and positive, although concerns were expressed over the decline in part time applications being experienced by the College and other institutions. HEFCE had also continued to pursue the agendas of controlling staff costs and increasing income from international students.

58.2 As the downturn in applications had been predicted and planned for, the College was able to assure HEFCE that it remained financially viable, but had stressed the risk of delays in student loan income having an impact on cashflow and had noted the planned expansion of three year accelerated part time programmes to offset the risk of decline in part time uptake.

59 BUDGET PROPOSALS 2012-13

59.1 The updated IDM budget proposals for 2012-13 (SP 2012 49)

59.2 A note on changes in the reported and projected income, spending and surplus/deficit positions of Schools between 2011-12 and 2012-13 (SP 2011 50)

59.3 The analysis of previous year’s trends did not include research grants in order to give a clearer picture. However, these were also an important factor to take into account in terms of overall College turnover and activity.

59.4 It was noted that at year-end the moderated surplus for 2011-12 was likely to be higher than the mid-year predictions, as it was unlikely that all of the contingency provisions would now be needed before the end of the year.

59.5 In the 2012-13 projections, although undergraduate four-year degree recruitment was predicted to fall, other recruitment streams were expected to do well and a there was a projected modest surplus of £770K, after contingency provision for 2012-13. The tuition fee contingency had been set School by School to reflect different risks and planning uncertainties being faced by each School.

59.6 The projected surplus for 2012-13 was a positive result of the considerable hard work that had been done by staff, enabling Birkbeck into a position to weather the coming storm. However, it was important at this point not to commit to large amounts of recurrent spending. The College would continue to closely control costs including staff costs while the future was uncertain.

59.7 The note on trends was accompanied by a note on departmental performance and anticipated recovery from the fall in undergraduate recruitment. This analysis was for the purpose of isolating microtrends rather than for wider circulation, as the Schools were the overall budget holders and financial units.

59.8 In 2009-10, 14 departments were operating at a deficit, and the number now was only 6. The majority of these were showing a clear trajectory towards a balanced financial position, primarily as a result of increased student related income due to improved recruitment and progression alongside higher fees. Departmental size had
proved to be a major factor in the scale and speed of financial recovery after the ELQ crisis.

59.9 There was a correlation at department level between deficit projections and large amounts of CertHE provision aimed at 'lifelong learners' studying for personal interest. These students were particularly fee-sensitive, and lower fees had damped post-ELQ recovery in these areas of provision. This was likely to have an even greater effect in the future. The loss of HEFCE T funding for new students on CertHE modules would not be offset by a corresponding increase in fee levels as in other types of provision. All of the CertHE modules in the lowest fee tier were in departments currently in deficit. These data indicated the importance of addressing Certificates, although it was noted that the academic, resource and strategic issues were complex, and Certificate programmes had played a key role in helping the College during previous funding upheavals.

Agreed

59.10 To forward the updated draft of the IDM budget forecasts for 2012-13 (SP 2011 49) to F&GPC.

60 SCHOOLS AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES PLANS 2012-13

Endorsed

60.1 The final versions of the narrative planning statements of the Schools and Professional Services (SP 2011 51).

61 FEES, BURSARIES AND SCHOLARSHIPS COMMITTEE

Received

61.1 A report from the Fees, Bursaries and Scholarships Committee (SP 2011 52)

61.2 A note from the PVM Strategy on pricing strategy for Certificates of HE for 2013-14 (SP 2011 53)

Noted

61.3 FBSC had agreed fees for decelerated (six year) undergraduate degrees, to be pro rata equivalent to the three and four year degrees.

61.4 FBSC had discussed fee tiers for CertHEs in 2013-14. It had taken the decision to move incrementally towards equivalence with undergraduate degree fees and, as a first step, to recommend raising the Tier 1 fee from £2,600 full time equivalent to £3,200 FTE.

61.5 There was a need to consider the future of those Certificates which were taken primarily by those studying on a modular basis for personal interest, rather than for a qualification or for progression purposes. Around 40% of the College's CertHE numbers were taking modular provision of this type in 2010-11, concentrated in the Schools of Arts and SSHP. Schools had put this provision in Tier 1, which had been held at £2,600 FTE for 2011-12 to maintain numbers and allow a transition period for the academic development of alternative models. This fee level did not cover the costs of the course. FBSC's recommendation had been made after consideration of the need both to offset the impact on student recruitment levels and to ensure the
fee income would cover the costs of the course after the removal of HEFCE T funding in 2012-13.

61.6 FBSC’s view was that CertHE fees should be considered alongside undergraduate degree fees to facilitate seamless progression and closer integration of all levels of academic provision. It would be desirable, ultimately, to advertise CertHE fees alongside degrees in equivalent subjects. However, it acknowledged that it would be premature to make the final allocation of CertHE provision to confirmed fee tiers for 2013-14 at the current stage of the planning cycle. It was proposed that the fee structure and strategy should be confirmed now, in the summer term, and allocation of modules and programmes to tiers should take place in the autumn term.

61.7 Old system modular fees were being held for old system students until the end of 2013-14 to allow them to complete CertHEs if desired, but after this these prices could not be subsidised. By 2014-15 there should have been a move to a new transparent fee structure, where fees reflected costs.

61.8 The continued negotiations with the Trade Unions on sessional pay were noted. If sessional costs increased then the cost of running modular CertHE courses would also increase.

61.9 SPC thanked the Fees committee for their work on this issue and for coming to a suitable compromise position for 2013-14.

Approved

61.10 FBSC’s recommendation that Tier 1 be increased to £800 for 2013-14, with minimal changes to other fees as shown in the table below, as a transitional step towards higher pricing to cover costs from 2014-15.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>2012-13 fee per 30 credit</th>
<th>2012-13 fee per FTE</th>
<th>2011-12 fee per 30 credit</th>
<th>2011-12 fee per FTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier 1</td>
<td>£800</td>
<td>£3,200</td>
<td>£650</td>
<td>£2,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 2</td>
<td>£1,000</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
<td>£950</td>
<td>£3,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 3</td>
<td>£1,200</td>
<td>£4,800</td>
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<td>Tier 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tier 5</td>
<td>£2,000</td>
<td>£8,000</td>
<td>£2,000</td>
<td>£8,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

61.11 The Research Councils had indicated that the fee portion of their research studentships would be £3,828 in 2012-13. The College had already set a full time postgraduate research fee of £3,840. The difference would be covered by a small central allocation in the IDM.

61.12 FBSC had commissioned a review of postgraduate research provision, studentship and fees.

61.13 FBSC had considered and recommended an international fee reduction scholarship targeted at specific countries and for students with good first degrees. Thailand, Vietnam and India had been identified as price-sensitive and the scheme would be trialled for these countries in its first year. An allocation of 150K had been made in
the 2012-13 IDM for this scheme, to cover a fee reduction of 10%. The scheme would be reviewed after one year and recommendations made for the future of the scheme, including possible extension to more countries.

62 ACCESS AGREEMENT 2013-14
Endorsed
62.1 The Access Agreement for undergraduate programmes, to be submitted to OFFA (SP 2011 54)

Noted
62.2 The average fee across all undergraduate provision, taking waivers into account, would be £6,500 FTE.

62.3 The College had decided to use its contribution to the National Scholarship Programme to provide all eligible part time students with a £3,000 fee waiver on their first 120 credits. The national regulations put part time students at a disadvantage by restricting fee waivers from the Government contribution to a maximum of 90 credits. The programme would be reviewed annually at Birkbeck and there was also a national level review, with signals that the guidelines would change to provide more equality for part time students.

62.4 To offset the current unfairness of the national guidelines, Birkbeck would make every effort it could to continue funding students through their second and subsequent years. The College would lobby on this issue and it would be a major focus of fundraising over the coming months.

Actions
62.5 (TK) Communicate the reasons for the current NSP allocations made and the lobbying work, so that colleagues working directly with students were aware.

62.6 Involve Development and Alumni colleagues in discussions on fundraising to augment the National Scholarship Programme allocation.

63 FEES AND LOANS POLICY
Approved
63.1 The proposed Fees and Loans policy to be applied to students (SP 2011 55)

64 NON CREDIT BEARING PROVISION
Noted
64.1 Proposed guidelines on the development and approval of courses not carrying academic credits would be circulated to members.

65 BIRKBECK ASSOCIATION
Received
65.1 An update on progress with the Birkbeck Associate Student Scheme (SP 2011 57)

Noted
65.2 It was likely that the scheme would have three levels of subscription: a basic fee, a fee with access to library resources online, and a fee with full library access (borrowing rights).
65.3 The scheme would involve a lecture series, a set of associated events, and the opportunity to “audit” individual undergraduate modules (if they were not at capacity) for approximately 80% of the fee, providing the members met the prerequisites for the course.

65.4 The “auditing” aspect of the course would be piloted and then reviewed to see if it was possible to offer a larger discount. It was confirmed that Schools would be able to set limits on the number of “auditing” students on each course. One option which might be attractive to potential members could be a certificate of attendance for Associate Students.

65.5 It was noted that the proposal to offer members online journal access might impact the cost of the College’s Library subscriptions; this would be clarified before the launch of the Scheme.

65.6 It was planned to launch the scheme early in 2013 to begin from April/May 2013. The first year would focus on a series of lectures featuring leading academics from each School, focusing on the theme of ‘Controversies’.

65.7 The working group was prepared for the first year of the scheme to be challenging as new issues arose throughout the year.

65.8 The Committee congratulated the group on their work and the promising way in which the Scheme was taking shape.

66 INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP

Endorsed

66.1 The report from the International Working Group (SP 2011 58) Noted

66.2 The report was very positive, confirming a 90% increase in recruitment over the last three years.

66.3 Members discussed the status of unconditional and conditional offers in the current year’s recruitment statistics. As well as academic conditions, international entrants had to take tests on English language competency for UKBA immigration requirements.

ACTION

66.4 (NH, DP) In future, make a distinction between language competency-related conditions and academic achievement conditions when reporting on applications, offers and enrolments.

66.5 The standard entrance requirement for overseas students throughout the College was an IELTS score of 5.5. Some members expressed the opinion that it was not appropriate to set an English language condition on postgraduate students who had already taken an undergraduate degree in English. It was agreed that the College should be conservative in interpreting and applying UKBA requirements, given their recent harder stance with HE institutions.
67 RISK MANAGEMENT
Considered
67.1 The Risk Register for 2012-13 (SP 2011 60)

Noted
67.2 The Olympics had not featured in the 2011-12 register and so were technically recorded as an unforeseen risk, although every possible action had been taken to control the risk once the implications of the Russell Square Media Hub were clear. The key risk, financial sustainability, was the same as last year due to the threats to student recruitment in the new fee and funding system.

67.3 The risk level for Birkbeck Stratford had risen compared with the previous year because the construction project was in train and there was a large amount of work to be achieved to deliver joint services and facilities with the University of East London.

67.4 The risk level for the REF had also risen, as preparations for it were growing more intensive and the criteria for submission were being narrowed.

67.5 The Risk Management Report (SP 2011 59) would be circulated to members by email.

Agreed
67.6 To forward the Risk Register to Audit Committee and Governors for formal approval, subject to any further comments from members following circulation of the Risk Management Report.