

**ACADEMIC REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**18 JULY 2023**

**REDACTED MINUTES FOR PUBLICATION**

A meeting of the Academic Review Committee was held via Zoom video conference from 10.00am-12.00pm on Tuesday 18 July 2023.

Present:	Prof. Nick Braisby (NB)	
	Susan Dawson (SD)	
	Helen Edwards [HE]	
	Dr. Wendy Finlay [WF]	
	Jon Hubert [JH]	
	Dr. Stephen Jackson [SJ]	
	Hazel Lobo [HL]	
	Prof. Kenneth Miller [KM]	(Chair)
	Prof. Nick Morton [NM]	
	Paula Shaw [PS]	
	Ashley Wheaton [AW]	
In attendance:	Stephen Bartle [SB]	(for item 3.2 only)
	Kate Deakin [KD]	(for item 4.2 only)
	Jane Fawkes [JEF]	(University College Secretary)
	Alan Hill [AH]	(for item 3.1 only)
	Lyndsay Hughes [LH]	(Clerk to the Board of Trustees)
	Prof. Ange Lee [AL]	(for item 3.3 only)
	Charlotte Thackeray [CT]	(for item 2.1 only)

Apologies for absence:

**1) GENERAL MEETING GOVERNANCE**

<b><u>2036</u></b>	<b><u>1.1/ DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST</u></b>
2307	There were no conflicts of interest declared.
<b><u>2038</u></b>	<b><u>1.2/ APOLOGIES FOR ABCENCE</u></b>
2039	There were no apologies for absence.
<b><u>2040</u></b>	<b><u>1.3/ MINUTES AND REDACTIONS OF THE MEETING HELD 19 JANUARY 2023</u></b>
2041	The minutes and proposed redactions (highlighted grey) of the Academic Review Committee held 19 January 2023 were <b>APPROVED</b> as a true record. The redacted minutes will be published on the UCEM website in order to maintain compliance with Office for Students Conditions of Registration.

**2042            1.4/ MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS SUMMARY**

2043            An actions summary from the previous meeting was circulated as Paper 1.4 and the Committee noted that the only action recorded at the last meeting had been promptly closed.

**2044            1.5/ RE-APPOINTMENT OF HAZEL LOBO AS ACADEMIC BOARD REPRESENTATIVE ON THE ACADEMIC REVIEW COMMITTEE**

2045            Hazel Lobo stepped out of the meeting for item 1.5.

2046            The Committee noted that Hazel Lobo had served as the Academic Board representative on the Academic Review Committee since Spring 2020. Hazel is a committed attendee and contributes positively to the Committee. Her re-approval for a further 3-year term is recommended by the Nominations and Governance Committee.

2047            The Committee **APPROVED** the re-appointment of Hazel Lobo as Academic Board Representative on the Academic Review Committee for a second three-year term of office to March 2026.

2048            The Chair welcomed Hazel Lobo back to the meeting and congratulated her on her re-appointment.

**2) COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION OF THE OFFICE FOR STUDENTS****2049            2.1/ ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN**

2050            Charlotte Thackeray joined the meeting to update the committee on the development of UCEM's Access and Participation Plan, which through a series of internal reviews and approval by the Executive and the Board of Trustees, has now been submitted to the Office for Students as outlined in paper 2.1. The Plan also went through the scrutiny of the Widening Participation Working Group and the UCEM academic deliberative committees.

2051            CT introduced the plan to the Committee, focusing on why UCEM chose to be in Wave 1 of new Access and Participation Plans being developed by the sector, the intervention strategies UCEM has chosen and how UCEM went about preparation of the plan. UCEM chose to be part of Wave 1 because it had created good momentum on its existing APP, gaining widespread institutional engagement and support. UCEM was also promised elevated levels of support from the OfS through being part of Wave 1 and that the group of institutions would be high-profile trailblazers for what APP can and should be about, particularly helpful for an institution of UCEM's size and type. Whilst the support from the OfS was not as significant as promised, and there were delays in releasing documentation which curtailed and pressurised timescales, UCEM has prepared the plan in collegiate support with the other participating institutions, which has been invaluable.

2052            UCEM had ten targets in its previous APP and used the opportunity to create a new plan to rationalise this number. Many targets were more relevant to place-based universities, and these were removed. Overall, UCEM has created four intervention

strategies in the new Plan. UCEM is focussed on EDI and on raising attainment pre-16 in schools. UCEM is also focussing on mature and female students as underrepresented groups in the built environment sector. The OfS asked institutions to consider raising attainment, mental health and flexible provision.

- 2053 The Committee discussed the plan and were content that UCEM had chosen the right targets for the institution. A process of querying and then sign-off is now anticipated ahead of an overall deadline of 18 September for the Plan to be accepted by OfS. UCEM has created a 'decisions log' throughout the development of the plan to support any OfS queries through this summer period.
- 2054 NM confirmed his institution was also in Wave 1 and that the peer support had been helpful through the development of the plans. The approach taken has been similar to UCEM and common themes have emerged. NM encouraged CT to ensure the Committee sees annual evaluation of the implementation and impact of the plan on an annual basis.
- 2055 The Committee queried the targets and the degree to which they will stretch UCEM to achieve them. CT confirmed there is a lot of new activity to undertake but she does believe they are achievable and will enhance what UCEM is already doing. The Committee was also pleased to see that the APP clearly links to UCEM's Widening Participation Strategy. PS was pleased to learn that this strategy commits to Peer Assisted Learning, even if this is not explicit in the APP, and recommended role modelling for female students.
- 2056 AW concluded the discussion by both thanking CT and by stressing to the Committee that the APP is one element of three layers to UCEM's work. The APP represents the regulatory compliance element. Siting above this is UCEM's Widening Participation Strategy which is much broader and impacts all UCEM students (not just the groups the OfS defines). Finally, there is the broader issue of diversifying the sector/industry as a whole, where UCEM can only be part of the solution, but must use its influence.
- 2057 The Committee **WELCOMED** the comprehensive APP and supported its adoption and delivery by UCEM.
- 2058 The Chair thanked CT for her contribution and invited her to leave the meeting.

### **3) STRATEGIC ACADEMIC PROJECTS**

#### **2059            3.1/ STUDENT OUTCOMES**

- 2060 Alan Hill joined the meeting to present the latest module success rates from Autumn 2022 as outlined in paper 3.1.
- 2061 AH was delighted to inform the Committee that UCEM has met the overall 87% module success rate KPI for the first time with the autumn 2022 semester results, with significant improvements over the previous semester and at all levels. Individually, Levels 4 and 7 also met the KPIs and results were improved though did not reach the KPI in Levels 5 and 6. REDACTED. AH also reported that there is 100% success for those students coming through the BSc Access route, but that work can be done to improve the Level 7 access route to support success. Finally, within programme cohorts there are some that did not reach the KPI, such a Building

Surveying, and this will be interrogated to seek improvements in the next phase of work and through revalidation.

- 2062 UCEM also has work to undertake regarding resubmissions. Data demonstrates that some students are using this process as a first attempt submission which can be disadvantageous for them as you can only pass the module and no more. Many students submit work far superior to this minimum but do not secure the marks they would derive without using this process. UCEM will be working to address this student behaviour. NM commented that his institution had looked at this issue recently and he would be willing to share their learning with UCEM outside of the meeting.
- 2063 AH confirmed that the strong performance is the result of improvements made in the Higher Engagement Lower Pressure project (HELP), by a refocussing of academic support, and by changes to resubmission and re-registration processes to ensure students are on the right module diets at the right times.
- 2064 The Committee welcomed the results and expressed hope that, given the particularly strong performance at Level 4 and that UCEM has such a large number of apprentice students, they would be sustainable in the future. The Committee also welcomed the further work on data interrogation into the different types of students and their performance levels as the next steps in the evolution of this work.
- 2065 AH confirmed that UCEM is looking at accessibility at revalidation in order to build in features of support from the outset, on the basis they can benefit all students, not just those with disabilities. Where appropriate, marking is also being adapted towards accessibility standards, and adjustments are being allowed within the processes.
- 2066 The Committee **NOTED** the work to date to improve student success rates and looks forward to UCEM sustaining these results in the future. The Committee supported the next steps outlined as:
- Continuing to roll out the initiatives for the Spring 2023 module to see whether the same impact can be achieved.
  - Developing the next phase of development and enhancements to support still better engagement and outcomes.
  - Enhancing and refining data production to identify and support enhancements which support student cohorts.
  - Factoring all of these improvements into the revalidation of current programmes during 2024 so that they are truly embedded.
- 2067 The Chair thanked AH for his contribution to the Committee and invited him to leave the meeting.

### **2068** **3.2/ REVALIDATION PLANNING AND NEW PROGRAMME ROADMAP**

- 2069 Stephen Bartle joined the meeting to jointly present with Wendy Finlay the plans for UCEM's revalidation of programmes in 2024 and the new programmes planned for development to support a greater breadth of offer at UCEM as outlined in paper 3.2.
- 2070 WF reported that UCEM's entire undergraduate provision will be revalidated in 2024, with postgraduate thereafter. To support this significant piece of work, revalidation processes have been streamlined and simplified. In addition, the

Academic Team has already commenced work planning to manage the project and has agreed the core principles that will apply to all programmes. The team is now working on programme first learning outcomes, with a focus on providing a good grounding at level 4 for all students. The focus will be to produce career-ready graduates and embed core principles of EDI and sustainability across all programmes. Attention will also be paid to those students who perform less well currently and how programmes can be structured to enhance success for these groups too.

- 2071 SB reported that the range of subjects UCEM covers remains too narrow and the institution will address this in the coming years with development of a wider range of academic programmes and apprenticeships. UCEM anticipates another 500 apprentices joining the institution in autumn 2024 across just four apprenticeship standards. REDACTED. In addition, based on market research, there are six more apprenticeship standards UCEM would like to offer programmes against, across levels 4-7, to meet employer demand. Simplification of internal approval processes will help UCEM to deliver this significant ambition.
- 2072 PS queried the support in place for staff to manage the workload and preparations for validation events themselves. To date, UCEM has been focussed on curriculum development days and setting the direction for the project as a whole. This support will evolve throughout the project to ensure consistency and common approaches. Thematic areas like APP and accessibility will come forward as the foundations of the curriculum are developed. The team is also being well briefed in the validation process and events to help prepare them. Learning and evaluation from prior validations is also featuring in what is taken forward this time.
- 2073 Employers are being involved in validations and in development of new programmes. They are consulted at the outset on the business cases for new programmes, content requirements and financial viability scrutiny. They also contribute to panels at validation events. There is ongoing dialogue with employers through UCEM's professional engagement advisory forums and as Employer Representatives on UCEM's academic deliberative committees.
- 2074 The Committee **NOTED** the proposals for revalidation and development of new programmes at UCEM to support greater breadth of offer.
- 2075 The Chair thanked SB for his contribution to the Committee and invited him to leave the meeting.

**2076 3.3/ RESEARCH UPDATE INCLUDING JOURNEY TOWARDS RESEARCH DEGREE AWARDING POWERS**

- 2077 Ange Lee joined the meeting to present to the Committee a research update and UCEM's journey towards Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAPs) as outlined in paper 3.3.
- 2078 Ange provided a brief overview of activity to build up UCEM's research profile and presence since the Committee last met. This includes the appointment of a Research Coordinator who has been establishing UCEM's research policies and procedures to ensure UCEM is fit for purpose for developing research and offering research degrees. There has been a series of free webinars developed called Building Perspectives. Four have been delivered so far with 70-140 attendees to each.

Research time has been factored properly into academic workload for the first time for the autumn 2023 semester and an institutional repository for research outputs has been created which has had 60 items uploaded to it since January and 175 downloads. UCEM's research web pages have also been developed.

- 2079 AL also reported that Batangas University in the Philippines has invited UCEM to jointly host their sixth Engineering Conference in November 2023 and to develop an MoU to collaborate together in the future. In addition, UCEM was approved to become a knowledge-based partner for InnovateUK and is eligible to bid for Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) grants. UCEM's first KTP application for a project with the Prince's Foundation, was successfully awarded £176K. UCEM is also in discussions to host the 2024 Practitioners Conference. UCEM remains unable to bid for UKRI funding still at the current time and will need to demonstrate research income to the next Research Excellence Framework to become eligible.
- 2080 **REDACTED.** There are discussions ongoing about the potential to transfer the Harold Samuel Research Prize into a scholarship to support students completing PhDs with UCEM.
- 2081 The Committee was impressed with the wealth of activity undertaken to build UCEM's research capabilities from a standing start. It is a long-term element of UCEM's strategy and will take many years to achieve but through that period will support development of the institution's profile and standing. The Committee was also pleased to hear that staff time, for those who desire it during 2023-24, has been carved out specifically for research activities, albeit on a small scale initially. It was acknowledged that student outcomes will, however, remain the number one priority for the academic team for the foreseeable future. There are a growing number of UCEM staff interested in completing PhDs once UCEM is able to offer them.
- 2082 The Committee **NOTED** the progress update on UCEM's research activities as it evolves into a research-led institution and the update on UCEM's RDAP ambitions.
- 2083 The Chair thanked AL for her contribution to the Committee and invited her to leave the meeting.

#### **4) ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND MONITORING**

##### **2084      4.1/ ACADEMIC DELIBERATIVE COMMITTEE FOCUS**

- 2085 The Committee was advised that each academic deliberative committee would rotate presenting to the Committee its work over the last year and plans for the year ahead. At this meeting, the Chairs of the Apprenticeship Quality Monitoring Committee (Helen Edwards) and Learning Teaching and Enhancement Committee (Wendy Finlay) presented summaries for review and discussion as outlined in papers 4.1a and 4.1b.
- 2086 Helen Edwards (Chair of AQMC) reported that the growth in UCEM apprenticeship numbers led to the formation of this Committee, which reports into the Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee. It meets four times a year and has a fairly rigid flow of business covering the Self-Assessment Position Statement Quarterly report, review of apprenticeships actions on the Quality Enhancement Plan and review of the Apprenticeship KPI performance. The Committee benefits from a Higher Education Apprenticeship External Advisor, who is an active Ofsted inspector.

The Committee also monitors progress in planning for new apprenticeship standards in UCEM's portfolio and the work on road to Ofsted Outstanding.

2087 Wendy Finlay (Chair of LTEC) reported that the LTEC is a subcommittee of the Academic Board that is focussed on monitoring and assurance of UCEM's Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy. This strategy has six strategic priority areas – student centred, industry excellence, widening access and participation, student outcomes, student satisfaction and strategic use of technology – and the Committee actively monitors progress against the action plan to deliver the strategy. An employer representative contributes to the committee.

2088 The Committee was content that the academic management of UCEM was being well managed. It **NOTED** the work of the Apprenticeship Quality monitoring Committee for the year concluding and the year ahead. It also **NOTED** the work of the Learning Teaching and Enhancement Committee for the year concluding and the year ahead.

#### **2089** **4.2/ APPRENTICESHIP KPIS AND SCORECARD**

2090 Kate Deakin joined the meeting for item 4.2.

2091 KD provided a brief overview of the revised KPI scorecard which now better aligns with the ESFA Accountability Framework and UCEM's current performance against it, as outlined in paper 4.2 and 4.2a. The updated scorecard was approved by the AQMC two weeks ago.

2092 **REDACTED** KD also reported that employer satisfaction is green, but UCEM will improve further the reporting of progression with the introduction of the new Employer Portal which is almost ready to go live. Functional Skills is also an area for improvement and is now being managed much more closely by the UCEM Funding and Compliance Manager with improvements already being seen in the data. Finally, KD reported that some old metrics have been removed from the scorecard in order to simplify it – they continue to be measured in other ways.

2093 The Committee welcomed the update to the scorecard and tracking of metrics. The Committee commented on the challenges across the sector with RICS and End Point Assessment being completion of the APC and advised the sector and education providers to continue to lobby for improvements in this collectively. The Committee also noted that UCEM intended to offer an extension to apprenticeship duration in cases where students and UCEM would benefit from this – it will not be a blanket extension for all though.

2094 The Committee **APPROVED** the new scorecard measures that now align with the ESFA Accountability Framework and **NOTED** the current performance against the KPIs.

2095 The Chair thanked KD for her contribution to the Committee and invited her to leave the meeting.

#### **2096** **4.3/ UCEM ENHANCEMENT PLAN**

2097 Helen Edwards presented to the Committee an overview of UCEM's enhancement Plan and work through 2022-23 to deliver it as outlined in paper 4.3 and 4.3a.

- 2098 HE reported that this was the Q3 update and Q4 will be completed at end July. There is still time to turn some metrics green and overall good progress has been made in 2022-23. Any non-complete items at year end will be scrutinised and impact assessments where actions have been completed will be undertaken. Planning is now underway for next years' Enhancement Plan actions.
- 2099 The Committee **NOTED** the current status of UCEM's planned enhancements (11 completed enhancement actions, 14 enhancement actions still in progress but on track and 8 enhancement actions behind target) and the steps that UCEM is taking to plan enhancement initiatives for the next business year.

## 5) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### 2100 5/ ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 2101 The Chair asked if there were any comments on the papers for noting and report at item 7 and none were raised.
- 2102 The Chair thanked all the external representatives for their continued commitment to the Committee and the valuable perspectives they bring to the academic matters it reviews.
- 2103 The Chair informed the Committee that Joe Orrell's term of office as Student Trustee is concluding and that consequently he will no longer be a member of the Committee. On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked JO for his contributions over the last year.
- 2104 There were no additional items of business reported.

## 6) CLOSE

### 2105 6/ MEETING CLOSE

- 2106 KM thanked the Committee for their contributions and called the meeting to a close at 11.40am.
- 2107 The date of the next meeting is Thursday 18 January 2024.

## 7) MATTERS FOR NOTING AND REPORTING ONLY

- 2108 The following matters were circulated as a separate pack for noting or comment via email in advance of the meeting. They were not discussed in the meeting.

### 2109 7.1/ ACADEMIC RISK REGISTER

- 2110 The Committee was provided with the latest details of the primary academic risks in paper 7.1 and 7.1a. The Committee **NOTED** the primary aspect of strategic risk continue to relate to the market and UCEM's position within it, but that work is underway to address lack of breadth in UCEM's provision. The Committee also **NOTED** the risks around political instability in Hong Kong and the minor



improvement to risk scores through mitigations in relation to safeguarding and demand for student welfare services.

**2111**                    **7.2/ EXTERNAL EXAMINERS REPORT 2021-22**

2112                    The Committee **NOTED** the feedback contained within the External Examiners Report 2021-22 and that overall EEs continue to have confidence that UCEM's academic standards are being maintained. The Committee also **NOTED** the areas for enhancement identified by the EEs that have been taken on board and incorporated into UCEM's enhancement agenda.

**2113**                    **7.3/ ACADEMIC DELIBERATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATES**


2114                    The Committee **NOTED** the deliberations of the Academic Boards held on 5 March and 5 June 2023.

2115                    The Committee **NOTED** the deliberations of the Quality Standards and Enhancement Committees held on 9 February and 9 May 2023.

2116                    The Committee **NOTED** the deliberations of the Research Committee held on 27 April 2023.

**Date of next meeting:**

**Thursday 18 January 2024 from 14.00-16.00pm, via Zoom videoconference**

**Signed**                      
**Name**                    Stephen Jackson  
**Position**                Chair of Audit Committee  
**Date**                    20 June 2024