

UNIVERSITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CONFIRMED

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2022, in room SB212, Sentamu building, Lancaster and via MS Teams

- Present:** Mr M Williams (Chair), Miss F Aiken, Mrs E Bales, Mr J Batty, Revd Canon C, Butland, Mrs J Johnston, Professor J Lee, Mr I Looker, Ms M McConnell, Professor J Mennell, Mr C Nall, Mr I Purdham, Ms S Swindley, Ms P Tatlow, Mr P Yates
- In attendance:** Dr J Brown, University Secretary
Dr R Harrison, Academic Registrar (item 21:74)
Mr A Heron, Deputy Director of Finance & Planning
Mrs K McLaughlin-Flynn, Deputy Chief Operating Officer (from item 21:82)
Professor Rob Trimble, DVC (Academic)
Professor B Webster-Henderson, DVC (HE&I)
- 21:66 Apologies for absence** Verbal
There were no apologies for absence.
- 21:67 Declaration of Interests** Verbal
Mrs E Bales in relation to her role as Director of Student Services; Mr I Looker in his role on the Audit Committee of Ofsted.
- 21:68 Minutes of the previous meeting**
The following were confirmed as an accurate record:
- minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting of University Board held 25 November 2021 UB21/40a &b
 - notes of the Strategy Day and University Board meeting minutes from 27 January 2022 UB21/42a &b
 - minutes of the University Board meeting held on 23 February 2022 UB21/45
 - notes of the Webinar held on 23 February 2022 BW220223
- 21:69 Matters Arising** UB21/43
The action log was noted
- 21:70 Chair's Business** Verbal
The Chair detailed the activities he had been engaged with in his role as Chair of the Board since the last meeting:
- He had signed the Grant Funding Agreement for the Citadels campus on 22 February 2022 alongside the Vice Chancellor;
 - The new campuses in Carlisle and Barrow had been reported to the OfS in early January through the reinstated requirements for reportable events;
 - Meetings had been held with the contractors for the Citadels at which the Chair of FRC and an FRC Director had attended;
 - The Chair of FRC had approved agreements relating to the Citadels development with the City Council.
- 21:71 Vice Chancellor's Report** UB21/46
- Received:** Vice Chancellor's Report and summary of the Vice Chancellor's activities & engagements a) & b)

The Vice Chancellor started by highlighting that graduation ceremonies were taking place in April, along with the inauguration of the new Chancellor. A stakeholder dinner was being planned for the evening of the inauguration.

Staff and students with links with Ukraine and Russia had been identified and supply chains were being reviewed. Alongside the general call for UK citizens to support individuals from the affected area there was a sector scheme to support displaced Ukrainians that the University had registered its interest in.

The Vice Chancellor detailed the various government papers and consultations that had recently been published. The University was actively engaged with the Cumbria LEP with respect to elements of the Levelling up White paper. The confirmed aspects of the Augar review outcomes were detailed along with the elements being consulted on.

The key aspects of the planning process about to be launched were detailed, including ensuring consistent and improved student outcomes, delivering on strategic projects, ensuring continued focus on efficiency and effectiveness in the University's operations, risks, resources and workforce planning. The need to reflect on capacity to deliver across the range of activities was noted.

The Vice Chancellor went on to comment on the constructive meeting of ARC that had been held the previous week. She detailed how the Committee had had a useful discussion on the University's approach to risk, including the risk register and risk appetite.

A section of this minute has been recorded in a separate confidential set of minutes.

The Vice Chancellor was thanked for her report.

AGREED: To receive the report.

21:72 Student's Union Matters

UB21/47

Received: A report from the Students' Union.

The Student Director introduced her report by noting that the new Sabbatical Officer team had now been elected. Some of the campus representative positions had not been filled, these would be open for elections again in September. Updates were provided on the workshops provided for representatives and the representative awards and well as the various campaigns that were underway.

What students were now thinking with respect to Covid19 was asked. The Student Director responded that that it was not discussed much unless there was an obvious increase in cases, as there were currently at one of the campuses.

AGREED: To receive the report.

21:73 Academic Matters

UB21/48

Received: Report from the DVC(Academic) and the DVC(Health Environment & Innovation)

a)
b)

DVC(Academic)

The DVC(A) spoke to his report starting by focusing on the work undertaken to complete the actions set out within the NSS Framework and the embedding of

these as normal practice. It was noted that the NSS 2022 had started, with response rates being monitored; the fact that two of the three years of the eligible students' time at the University having been impacted by the pandemic was a concern, however an un-interrupted timetable was running this academic year. The DVC(A) went on to provide an overview of the OfS consultation on student outcomes and the TEF, and the confirmation of changes to the other B Conditions of Registration. Work to confirm compliance with the changes to the Conditions of Registration was ongoing. The positive outcome of the UKVI Basic Compliance Assessment was noted.

A section of this minute has been recorded in a separate confidential set of minutes.

DVC(Health Environment & Innovation)

Noting that aspects of the report had been covered earlier in the meeting or within the pre-meeting briefing, the DVC(HE&I) introduced his report. He highlighted that the University would be receiving the results of the REF in May, with a plan for the communication of the results in place. On other matters he reported that there had been a slight increase in the number of cases of Covid19, with the University responding to the latest guidance and keeping a watching eye on the situation.

When the Board would see the results of the REF was asked. The Vice Chancellor responded that they would be shared with the Board within 24 hours of receipt. Why the additional research funding received in 2021/22 was used as it had been was asked. The DVC(HE&I) responded that there were conditions on how it was spent and, following expressions of interest, the distribution was felt to be the best use of the funding by the University.

The new Forestry degree apprenticeship was commented on, with it being a good example of partnership working.

AGREED: To receive the reports.

21:74 Apprentice Update

Presentation

Received: A presentation on Apprenticeships

The Chair introduced the item commenting that the University had ambitious plans to grow apprenticeships, which also underpinned the financial forecasts. The presentation was to enable to Board to understand more about what an apprenticeship was, the regulatory environment, and the risks with this form of delivery.

The DVC(A) introduced the Academic Registrar who had started work at the University in December 2021. The initial responsibilities of the role were set out.

The Academic Registrar (AcReg) introduced and spoke to the presentation, providing an overview of the context at the University, what makes up an apprenticeship and the regulatory context. How apprenticeships were delivered and the quality assured at the University was set out, followed by employer engagement and feedback and how they were administered and managed. He concluded by providing an overview of the Uniac internal audit undertaken in November 2019.

In the discussion that followed a comment was made that work to develop a consortium of employers and linking into the prosperity fund could be worthwhile.

It was noted that schools were conduits for activity to promote apprenticeships, with the appetite for them high. The AcReg responded that further work was needed by the sector to communicate that the choice did not have to be between an apprenticeship and higher education due to the ability to do degree level apprenticeships.

Questions were raised as follows:

- What was the typical amount of off-the job training included as part of the apprenticeship. The ACReg responded that it was 20%, with the University needing to ensure that this level of off the job training could be demonstrated.
- What safeguards were in place for students if an employer failed was asked. The AcReg responded that there were mechanisms to identify opportunities for students to continue and complete, with each case managed on a case by case basis.
- What the ESFA did with the 14 data returns they received each year and what came back to the University following the returns was asked. The ACReg set out how the ESFA looked to ensure that the various requirements were happening and at achievement rates. If a training provided was not meeting requirements then funding could be clawed back or withdrawn.
- Where the University self-assessed itself against the requirements was asked. The AcReg set out how a huge amount had been put in place, with the University in a relatively good position. It was, however, an opportune time to look at where there were areas to enhance as the numbers of apprentices increased.

The Chair suggested that with the significance of the University's apprentice provision the University could be one of the top universities in the country for apprenticeships. A drive to be excellent in all aspects of apprentice provision was encouraged.

The AcReg was thanked for the presentation.

AGREED: To receive the presentation.

21:75 AGC Annual Report to the Board 2020/21

UB21/49

Received: The annual report from AGC to the Board for 2020/21

AGREED: To receive the report.

21:76 Student Recruitment Update

UB21/50

Received: An update on 2021/22 in-year recruitment against targets and 2022/23 recruitment performance to date and forecast

The DDF&P commented that the majority of the recruitment for 2021/22 had occurred, with a small number of areas of variability highlighted for the Board. With respect to 2022/23 the picture was mixed, there were some subject areas that were performing well, however applications were down in healthcare and postgraduate teacher training, in line with trends being seen across the sector. Work was ongoing to address the gaps. With respect to the impact on forecast the DDF&P reported that it was a little early to predict; it was noted that although the majority of the applications had probably been received, applications received later in the cycle tended to be more likely to convert.

Whether there was any correlation between the areas doing well and NSS scores was asked. The Vice Chancellor responded that there was not a consistent trend.

It was noted that while pleasing to see that applications for programmes based at Ambleside had increased, the supply of accommodation at the campus could be an issue.

AGREED: To receive the report.

21:77 Financial Forecasts for 2021/22 and Management Accounts UB21/51

Received: The latest forecast for 2021/22, an update on financial performance to date

The DDF&P spoke to the paper which included the Period 5 Management Accounts. The Board was assured that there had not been any risks to the position through January and February. The forecast indicated a year end position better than budget by circa £400k. The DDF&P set out how, since the paper had been written the University had received £500k from the OfS reflecting the University's intake of students on high-cost subjects. It was confirmed that the income contingency had been retained; and noted that there were pressures on costs.

The Vice Chancellor commented that the extra OfS funding was welcomed. She emphasised that the Executive was well aware of the need to demonstrate that, whatever the outturn position it could not be at the expense of student outcomes.

AGREED: To receive the report.

21:78 OfS / DfE Update and communications UB21/52

Received: An update on communications from the OfS and DfE

AGREED: To receive the report.

21:79 Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy UB21/53

Received: The Equality Diversity and Inclusion policy, as recommended by PPCC

The DVC(HE&I) introduced the paper, starting by noting that the Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy had been discussed thoroughly by EDIW Committee and had recently been endorsed by PPCC. This was the first EDI Policy that the University had had and looked to provide an overarching framework. In addition to approval of the Policy, following previous discussions at University Board and elsewhere, the Board was asked to agree the approach being taken to the University's adoption of the IHRA working definition of antisemitism. In line with the Board's ask the last time the matter was discussed, the definition was included, alongside a range of other definitions, to assist in the implementation of the Policy.

The Chair of PPCC confirmed that the Committee had endorsed the approach taken, with the inclusive policy welcomed.

AGREED: To approve the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy and the approach taken to adopting the IHRA working definition of

antisemitism, alongside other definitions, to assist in the implementation of the Policy.

21:80 Honorary Awards

UB21/54

Received: Proposals from the Honorary Awards Committee

The Vice Chancellor reported that the nominations for an Honorary Fellowship and Alumni of the Year had been recommended by Honorary Awards Committee and endorsed by Academic Board. They were presented to University Board for approval.

AGREED: To approve the nominations as set out in the paper.

21:81 External Audit

UB21/55

Received: The external audit fee for 2021/22 and note the proposal for procurement of external audit provision for 2022/23 financial year onwards.

The Chair of ARC was asked for the Committee's view on the proposal. She reported that the Committee had agreed to retain KPMG for the 2021/22 audit, although there was discomfort over the size of the fee increase. The proposal to go out to tender for the 2022/23 financial year onwards had been endorsed.

It was commented that there may be benefit in speaking to other Chairs of Audit Committees, which was confirmed to be taking place.

AGREED: To approve the external audit fee for 2021/22 and note the decision to go out to tender for external audit provision for 2022/23 financial year onwards.

21:82 Barrow

UB21/56

Received: An update on the project

The DVC(A) spoke to the paper which had been discussed at FRC. It was noted that work continued on the key legal agreements with the aim that they were in place when the Grant Funding Agreement was ready for approval. The DVC(A) reported that the building design had been amended so that it was within the financial envelope for the build and that the application for planning permission was about to be submitted.

AGREED: To receive the report.

21:83 Citadels Project

UB21/57

Received: An update on Citadels Borderlands Project

The DCOO spoke to the paper highlighting the key elements of the project that had progressed since the last report to the Board. The next steps were noted to be to progress the land acquisition and finalise the application for planning permission.

A section of this minute has been recorded in a separate confidential set of minutes.

It was commented that at FRC there had been a push for the potential for the project to be completed by September 2025 rather than September 2026 be looked into due to the potential benefits. The DCOO confirmed that work to assess this as an option was ongoing as an earlier opening would be beneficial.

It was reported that FRC had discussed the potential for the build to be net zero carbon rather than low carbon, with the decisions in relation to this to be in line with the to-be-agreed institutional sustainability strategy. It was stated that cost increases were already coming though in the project. The need to manage the costs and watch out for scope creep was noted.

The team were thanked for their work on the project to date.

AGREED: To receive the report.

21:84 Estates Update UB21/58

Received: An update on current estates matters

Why the Percival lecture theatre in Ambleside was being refurbished was asked. The Vice Chancellor responded that it was due for a refurbishment and as such had been scheduled for the work to be undertaken this year.

AGREED: To receive the update.

21:85 IT Strategy Update UB21/59

Received: An update on delivery of the IT Strategy

AGREED: To receive the update.

21:86 Health and Safety UB21/60

Received: The Health and Safety Update report

The Chair of PPCC reported that the paper had been discussed at the last meeting of the Committee. He highlighted the update on the fire at the London campus, as detailed in the paper.

AGREED: To receive the report.

21:87 UoC2020 UB21/61

Received: An update on how the project strands are to be taken forward

The Vice Chancellor noted that the paper had been discussed at FRC. The project was being closed off, as set out in the paper, however the need to drive for efficiencies continued.

AGREED: To receive the report.

21:88 AOP 2021/22 UB21/62

Received: an update on delivery of the AOP

The Vice Chancellor spoke to the paper commenting that of the two areas that were not green, Barrow had been covered earlier in the meeting and the University was waiting for the Secretary of State to approve the collaboration with Imperial College on a Medical School in Carlisle.

AGREED: To receive the report.

21:89 Academic Board Reporting

AB21/31

Received: The minutes of the meeting of Academic Board held on 14 December 2021.

AGREED: To receive the minutes.

21:90 University Board Committees

Received:	• Finance and Resources Committee: Minutes and confidential minutes 9 November 2021; verbal update 1 March 2022	FRC21/22a &b
	• Audit & Risk Committee: Minutes and confidential minutes 11 November 2021; verbal update 8 March 2022	ARC21/22 a&b
	• People, Performance & Culture Committee: Minutes 8 November 2021; verbal update 22 February 2022	PPCC21/10
	• Academic Governance Committee: Minutes 2 November 2021 and 18 January 2022	AGC21/14
	• Nominations Committee – Minutes 23 February 2022	NC21/02

Finance and Resources Committee (FRC)

The Committee Chair reported that at its March meeting FRC had received a presentation on IT matters. Many of the other papers received had been covered within the Board agenda.

On the University's financial performance he commented that the current position continued a trend of meeting forecasts which was something the Committee was protective of as, for example, it put the University in a better position to receive funding from the bank.

Audit & Risk Committee (ARC)

The Chair of ARC reported that at its March meeting the Committee had undertaken a deep dive into risk management, both with respect to current risks and the University's risk appetite. It had been agreed that VCE would reflect and consider a revised risk appetite that reflected where people could take risks.

A section of this minute has been recorded in a separate confidential set of minutes.

People, Performance & Culture Committee (PPCC)

The Chair of PPCC reported that the main matters had been covered within the Board meeting.

Academic Governance Committee (AGC)

It was noted that the minutes from the 18 January 2022 meeting of the Committee had been omitted from the paper pack; they would be included in the pack for the next meeting. The Chair of AGC commented that although the Board were rightly concerned about the responses to the NSS, it should be remembered that only just over 1000 students were eligible for the survey this year.

Nominations Committee

The Chair highlighted that recruitment would take place over the coming months for a Director and Associate Directors. It was commented that the

minutes did not refer to diversity as an area to be focused on in the recruitment; the University Secretary confirmed that encouragement to people from diverse backgrounds would be included in the Applicant pack.

AGREED: To receive the minutes and verbal updates from committee chairs.

21:91 Future Meetings

- Thursday 19 May 2022
- Thursday 14 July 2022

Verbal