

# THE MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

## BOARD OF GOVERNORS

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 MARCH 2021 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Present: Mr Simon Duffy (Chair)  
Ms Evelyn Asante-Mensah  
Mr Sean Anstee  
Dr David Birch  
Professor Tim Brennan  
Ms Rowena Burns  
Mx Bran Catron  
Dr Darren Dancey  
Mrs Janet Dawson  
Mr Carlo Frondaroli  
Mr Mohammad Habeebullah  
Professor Donna Lee  
Mr Mike Perls  
Professor Malcolm Press  
Mr Miles Rothbury  
Mr Mark St John Qualter  
Ms Evelyn Sweeney  
Ms Karen Varty

In attendance: Professor Steve Decent (Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor)  
Mr Andrew Hewett (Director of Finance)  
Professor Karen Moore (Chief Operating Officer and Clerk to Board of Governors)  
Mrs Marie Morrissey (Head of Governance and Secretariat)  
Mr Mike Sheppard (Director of Estates, Facilities and Capital Development) for minute 1936  
Dr Justine Daniels (Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange) for minute 1939  
Professor Richard Greene (Pro-Vice-Chancellor RKE) for minute 1939  
Professor Jenny Watling (Pro-Vice-Chancellor International) for minute 1940  
Ms Helen Barton (Director of Strategic Planning) for minute 1943  
Mr Aaron Porter (Associate Director of Governance, Advance HE) for minute 1951

#### 1936 RETIREMENT

It was noted that Mr Mike Sheppard, Director of Estates, Facilities and Capital Development, would be retiring from the University in April 2021. The Chief Operating Officer and the Board thanked Mr Sheppard for his outstanding contribution to the University and wished him a happy retirement.

## **1937 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Board members were invited to declare possible conflicts of interest on any matters being discussed at today's meeting. No declarations were received.

## **1938 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BRIEFING**

The Vice-Chancellor presented an update on University and sector developments (BG/21/13). Key points included:

- A number of students had already returned to campus and planning was taking place for the possible return of more students pending further government guidance.
- Student recruitment for 2021 entry was performing well.
- There continued to be financial pressures on the HE sector and a continued focus on efficiency would be essential.
- In light of continued uncertainty around COVID-19 restrictions, it had been decided to retain the block teaching model for the 2021/22 academic year and to review the impact of block teaching delivery during 2021 to inform planning for 2022/23 and beyond.
- Following the successful use of pulse surveys in 2020 to understand and respond to colleagues' workplace experience, it was planned to do three pulse surveys each year in 2021 and 2022.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

## **1939 RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Knowledge Exchange (RKE) and the Director of RKE presented an update (BG/21/14) on progress made with the University's RKE Strategy.

### **1939.1 Summary of Progress**

Although the University's research and knowledge exchange activities had been affected by the pandemic during the last year, good progress had been made against the RKE KPIs in the areas of:

- External awards
- Research capacity
- Research quality

The Board welcomed the progress that had been made and the University's commitment to focusing on impactful areas of quality and strength.

**1939.2 Research Excellence Framework**

A major focus of activity this year had been preparations for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 submission. The return would include significantly more colleagues, research income and PhD conferments than the previous return

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

**1940 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE**

*Not for publication in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.*

**1941 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION UPDATE**

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor International presented a report (BG/21/16) on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). The report included key developments over the past year and key priorities for the future. The key points included:

- The University valued diversity and was committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all.
- Key developments over the last year included:
  - A greater focus on race equality.
  - Strengthening leadership, engagement and infrastructure.
  - A continued focus on widening participation and improving student outcomes.
- The University had applied for the Race Equality Charter Mark, a framework for strategic approach to race equality that aimed to improve representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students in HE.
- A new set of Equality Objectives (2021-2025) had recently been approved by the Finance and Resources Committee focusing on:
  - Leadership, culture and governance
  - An inclusive student experience
  - An inclusive employee lifecycle
  - Celebrating diversity.

The Board confirmed its support for the work that was taking place in this area.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

**1942 REVIEW OF COMPLIANCE WITH CONSUMER PROTECTION LAW**

The Chief Operating Officer and Academic Registrar presented a report (BG/21/17) outlining the findings from a recent review of compliance with consumer protection law.

### **1942.1 Background to the Review**

The review had been undertaken in response to a request made by the Office for Students (OfS) in 14 January 2021 for HE providers to review their compliance with one of the registration conditions relating to consumer protection law.

### **1942.2 Key Findings of Review**

The review had been thorough and had highlighted a high degree of compliance across the University. The key findings included:

- Clear and timely communications had been provided to new and continuing students about the delivery of teaching and assessment in 2020/21 setting out the changes that could be expected to teaching and assessments as a result of the pandemic. Updates had also been issued centrally during the year.
- The vast majority of students had received the teaching and assessment that they were advised to expect to receive during the Autumn Term 2020. The University had records which could be made available of those instances where there was a necessary deviation from the arrangements set out in central communications and a local solution was applied.
- The University's plans for the Spring and Summer Terms had ensured that students would receive the teaching and assessment that they were promised and might reasonably have expected to receive based on the information provided. These plans included specific solutions for certain groups of students, e.g., students on practically-based courses that would revert to blended delivery from 8 March but who continued to study online-only after that date for reasons of personal circumstance or preference.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

### **1943 RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Director of Strategic Planning presented a report (BG/21/18) on risk management. It was noted that the University's Risk Register was reviewed regularly by the Audit Committee. Key risks continued to be covid-related including staff health and wellbeing. The Board was assured that the University was identifying and managing risks effectively.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

#### **1944 ACADEMIC BOARD REPORT**

A report (BG/21/19) was submitted providing an update on business conducted by the Academic Board at its meetings on 28 January 2021 and 10 March 2021.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

#### **1945 BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

The Chief Operating Officer presented an update on the recent Governor recruitment exercise and recommendations from the Nominations and Governance Committee on new appointments (BG/21/20). It was noted that, in making its recommendations, the Nominations and Governance Committee had considered the skillset that would most benefit the Board in the future and the need to improve the Board's diversity.

RESOLVED

that the following proposed new appointments be approved for a three-year term of office from 29 March 2021 to 28 March 2024:

- Philippa Anderson
- Andrew Heyn OBE
- Shrutisha Morris.

#### **1946 MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2021**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the Board meeting held on 22 January 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **1947 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

A report (BG/21/21) was submitted setting out actions to be taken following the meeting of the Board held on 22 January 2021 and progress made with regard to those actions.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

#### **1948 ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR**

A report (BG/21/22) was submitted outlining actions that the Chair had taken on behalf of the Board in accordance with Article 6.2 of the Articles of Government.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

#### **1949 COMMITTEE REPORTS**

The following reports were submitted for information:

- Audit Committee – 29 January 2021 (BG/21/23).
- Finance and Resources Committee – 24 February 2021 (BG/21/24).
- Nominations and Governance Committee – 25 February 2021 (BG/21/25).

RESOLVED

that the reports be received.

#### **1950 SCHEDULE OF AGENDA ITEMS**

The Schedule of Agenda Items for 2020/21 (BG/21/26) was submitted for information.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

#### **1951 BOARD EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW**

Mr Aaron Porter, Associate Director Governance, Advance HE, presented an overview of initial findings from the current Board Effectiveness Review. It was noted that the initial findings suggested that the University's approach to governance was sound and well run. Areas for development included diversity of Board membership and greater involvement of students.

The draft report was expected to be finalised during April and May 2021 prior to being considered by the Board in June 2021. It was suggested that it would be useful if the final report could include:

- Comparative information relating to the diversity of Board membership.
- Recommendations that could make a difference to the University's performance particularly in terms of enhancing outputs.
- An assessment of whether progress had been made since the last external review in 2017.

Signature of Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_