

# THE MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

## BOARD OF GOVERNORS

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 NOVEMBER 2020 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Present: Mr Simon Duffy (Chair)  
Mr Sean Anstee  
Professor Tim Brennan  
Dr David Birch  
Ms Rowena Burns  
Mx Bran Catron  
Mr Darren Dancey  
Mrs Janet Dawson  
Mr Carlo Frondaroli  
Mr Mohammad Habeebullah  
Professor Donna Lee  
Mr Mike Perls  
Professor Malcolm Press (for minutes 1899-1906 & 1908-1920)  
Mr Miles Rothbury  
Mr Mark St John Qualter  
Ms Karen Varty

In attendance: Ms Pam Aspden (Head of Governance and Secretariat)  
Professor Steve Decent (Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor)  
Mr Andrew Hewett (Director of Finance)  
Professor Karen Moore (Chief Operating Officer)  
Ms Helen Barton (Director of Strategic Planning) for minute 1902  
Professor Andy Gibson (Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Science and Engineering) for minute 1905  
Professor Sharon Handley (Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Arts and Humanities) for minute 1906  
Mr Mike Sheppard (Director of Estates, Facilities and Capital Development) for minutes 1905 and 1906

#### 1899 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Ms Evelyn Asante-Mensah and Ms Evelyn Sweeney.

#### 1900 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Board members were invited to declare any possible conflicts of interest on any matters being discussed at today's meeting. Professor Malcolm Press declared a conflict of interest in relation to the item on the Vice-Chancellor's remuneration (minute 1907) and indicated that he would be leaving the meeting for that item.

## 1901 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BRIEFING

The Vice-Chancellor presented an update (BG/20/41) on University and sector developments. The main points of discussion included:

### 1901.1 Key Issues Affecting the Sector

The key issues currently affecting the sector included:

- The Covid-19 pandemic, including:
  - Student asymptomatic testing and the Christmas 'travel window' from 2-9 December 2021.
  - Teaching arrangements for December 2020.
  - Hall fees and the University's plan to refund nine days' hall fees (from 10-18 December) and ask private providers to consider similar action.
  - Arrangements for students' return to University in January 2021.
  - Future arrangements for a Covid-19 testing and vaccination site on campus, to be located on the Birchall Way site.
- Brexit, which the University was as well prepared as possible for, despite current uncertainty. Developments were being monitored.
- The government spending review, which had not referred to universities apart from reductions in inbound ERASMUS funding and the linkage of the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) with the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).
- Recent insight from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), which indicated that Covid-19 related complaints were only being upheld in cases of academic disadvantage, which was reassuring in light of the University's robust Covid-19 mitigations.

Against this background, the following successes were noted:

- RISE (formerly the third term programme), had won the 'Course Design, Retention and Student Outcomes' category in the delayed Guardian University Awards.
- Preparations for the forthcoming Research Excellence Framework were at an advanced stage and there had been significant growth in the research awards portfolio, including two prestigious, high value awards.
- **CONFIDENTIAL SECTION - *Not for publication in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.***
- Professor Tim Cable, from the University of Birmingham, had been appointed as Director of the Institute of Sport, from April 2021.

It was noted that:

- Daily updates showed that staff and student Covid-19 infection numbers were now in single figures, and health and safety measures on campus were working effectively.
- Positive student feedback had been received about the opportunities provided for face to face teaching, in support of their education, general wellbeing and mental health.

The Board was assured that the University was continuing to focus on its strategic priorities whilst responding to the challenging external environment, including the impact of Covid-19. The Board thanked the University Executive for continuing to deliver high quality education and for its proactive approach to supporting students' attainment and wellbeing in difficult circumstances.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

## **1902 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT: OVERVIEW OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2019/20**

The Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Director of Strategic Planning presented a report (BG/20/42) on the University's Key Performance Targets, providing an overview of 2019/20 performance, progress towards 2021/22 targets and performance against the sector. The main points included:

### **1902.1 Overview of Performance**

The report confirmed that:

- The last year had presented unprecedented challenges due to the impact of Covid-19. Whilst some performance metrics had been affected, the University had, overall, continued to make progress, and had developed significantly over the four-year period.
- Areas of strength included:
  - Continuing improvements in education metrics against sector, including: student progression and attainment; and the removal of differential progression rates for BAME students.
  - Improved research capacity, awards and progress towards the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2021), the results of which would give a real indication of the University's success following investments in this area.
  - Financial sustainability remained robust and the University continued to attract good quality students and staff in a competitive market place.

- The University's regional reputation had been enhanced and student and staff engagement had been considerably strengthened.
- Areas of challenge included:
  - The impact of Covid-19 and associated sector benchmarking.
  - Graduate entry metrics, which were not yet available for 2020 and which had been affected by the volatility in the awarding of A level and Vocational grades during the pandemic.
  - Graduate Outcomes, which needed more time to demonstrate the impact of the new initiatives in the Graduate Outcomes Strategy.
  - Some short term impact of Covid-19 on international student recruitment.

There was discussion about:

- Entry tariffs and the strategy for maintaining quality; Board members would receive the final 2020 entry tariff data when available.
- The possible addition of an appropriate high-level staff engagement metric in the 2030 Strategy Key Performance Targets.
- The possible benefits of using Objectives and Key Results (OKR) methodology, underpinned by KPIs, in future Strategy development.
- The benefits of ongoing engagement with Manchester-based international forums, particularly to support developments in China.

The Board welcomed the clarity of the report, the progress that had been made and the work taking place to achieve the 2021/22 targets.

#### **1902.2 Future Strategy Development**

Planning for the 'Road to 2030' new Strategy was underway and would be discussed at the next Board meeting on 22 January 2021.

#### **1902.3 Annual Report on Academic Quality and Standards**

The Board received the University's Annual Quality and Standards Report for 2019/20, which provided an overview of the University's systems and processes for securing the academic standards of its awards and for enhancing the quality of the student learning experience.

RESOLVED

- (i) that 2020 entry tariff data be provided to Board members, following publication.

- (ii) that Objectives and Key Results (OKR) methodology be researched as a possible future progress measurement approach.

### **1903 ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2019/20**

The Director of Finance presented for approval the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2019/20 and the Representation Letter to the External Auditors (BG/20/43). It was noted that it was the University's first year of working with BDO as External Auditors and that both the Audit Committee and the Finance and Resources Committee had reviewed and endorsed the Financial Statements.

#### **RESOLVED**

that the following be approved for submission to the Office for Students:

- Draft audited Financial Statements for 2019/20.
- Representation Letter to the External Auditors.

### **1904 AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT AND PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE AUDIT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Chair of the Audit Committee presented for approval the Audit Committee 2019/20 Annual Report, including the Internal Auditors' annual report and proposed revisions to the Audit Committee terms of reference (BG/20/44).

Supported by the External Auditors, particular areas of focus for the Committee had been:

- Assurance of 'Going Concern' in light of the impact of Covid-19.
- Pension provision, on which members of the Audit and Finance and Resources Committees had attended a development session led by the British Universities Finance Directors' Group (BUFDG).

#### **RESOLVED**

that the following be approved:

- (i) the Audit Committee Annual Return.
- (ii) the revised terms of reference for the Audit Committee and corresponding changes to the Scheme of Delegation.

### **1905 SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING FULL BUSINESS CASE**

The Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Science and Engineering and the Director of Estates, Facilities and Capital Development presented for approval the Science

and Engineering Full Business Case (BG/20/45). The Full Business Case had been discussed in depth and endorsed by the Finance and Resources Committee on 3 November 2020.

It was noted that these developments would enable the Faculty of Science and Engineering to take its considerable recent achievements to the next level, substantially enhancing its profile and reputation regionally, nationally and internationally and providing a strong platform for the University to fulfil its academic vision and agenda for the 'Road to 2030':

**RESOLVED**

that the Science and Engineering Full Business Case be approved.

**1906 GROSVENOR BUILDING REFURBISHMENT OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE**

The Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Arts and Humanities and the Director of Estates, Facilities and Capital Development presented for approval the Grosvenor Building Outline Business Case (BG/20/46) which had been endorsed by the Finance and Resources Committee on 3 November 2020.

There was discussion on the benefits that an improvement plan for this historic building would bring to Arts and Humanities including:

- Further strengthening student recruitment to this area of high quality provision.
- Providing a stronger platform for contributing to national and regional priorities for the creative industries.
- Enhanced facilities would reflect the strength and quality of the Faculty's work in the arts and creative industries.

It was noted that next Masterplan update to the Board would include this project.

**RESOLVED**

that the Grosvenor Building Outline Business Case be approved.

**1907 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REMUNERATION AND REMUNERATION ANNUAL REPORT**

*The Vice-Chancellor withdrew from the meeting for this item.*

The Chief Operating Officer presented a report on the Remuneration Committee's decisions relating to the Vice-Chancellor's remuneration (BG//20/47). Also attached to the report were the Vice-Chancellor's objectives for 2020/21 and the Remuneration Annual Report, which had also been approved by the Committee.

The further work planned by the Remuneration Committee on objective setting for the Vice-Chancellor and Executive staff was noted.

RESOLVED

to endorse the decisions of the Remuneration Committee in relation to the Vice-Chancellor's remuneration, the Vice-Chancellor's 2020/21 objectives and the Remuneration Annual Report.

#### **1908 STAFF PERFORMANCE, OBJECTIVES AND REMUNERATION**

There was a discussion on sector benchmarking on overall staff performance, remuneration and objective setting. It was noted that the University's framework for the pay, conditions and pension arrangements of all staff took into account any schemes of pay and conditions drawn up by relevant national bodies, regulatory requirements; and best practice.

#### **1909 ANNUAL STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONCORDAT FOR RESEARCH INTEGRITY 2019/20**

The Vice-Chancellor presented for approval the Annual Statement of Compliance with the Concordat for Research Integrity (BG/20/48). The Statement formed part of the University's evidence for compliance with the UK Universities Concordat to support Research Integrity.

RESOLVED

that the Annual Statement on Compliance with the Concordat for Research Integrity 2019/20 be approved.

#### **1910 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PREVENT DUTY**

The Chief Operating Officer presented the Annual Report on the implementation of the Prevent Duty (BG/20/49). The report confirmed the effectiveness of the University's Prevent-related policies and processes during 2019/20 and also included the annual return required by the Office for Students.

RESOLVED

that the Annual Report on the Implementation of the Prevent Duty and the Prevent Duty Accountability and Data Return be approved for submission to the Office for Students.

## **1911 MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING STATEMENT**

The Director of Finance presented for approval the University's Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2020 (BG/20/50), which was a requirement of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

RESOLVED

that the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2020 be approved.

## **1912 ACADEMIC BOARD REPORT**

A report (BG/20/51) was submitted providing an update on business conducted by the Academic Board at its meetings on 28 July and 4 November 2020.

The Academic Board Observer and Academic Board nominee also provided an overview of the work of the Board in 2019/20, highlighting the way in which it had fulfilled its statutory responsibilities whilst engaging with the academic community on: policy development; progress with Key Performance Targets; approaches to learning and teaching; upholding and enhancing quality; and ensuring support for students.

The Board welcomed the report and the breadth of the information provided. It was noted that more granular insight into the performance of Faculties and Departments would be beneficial.

RESOLVED

that an overview of Faculty and Department performance would be provided to enhance the Board's insight into areas of challenge and strength.

## **1913 MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 26 JUNE 2020**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the Board meeting held on 26 June 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **1914 NOTES OF THE INFORMAL BOARD OF GOVERNORS' MEETING HELD ON 31 JULY 2020**

A report was submitted providing the notes of the Informal Board of Governors meeting held on 31 July 2020.

RESOLVED

that the notes of the of the meeting held on 31 July 2020 be received.



**1915 NOTES OF THE JOINT BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE GROUP STRATEGY MEETING HELD ON 8 AND 9 OCTOBER 2020**

A report was submitted providing an update on business conducted by the Board of Governors and the University Executive Group at the Strategy Meeting held on 8 and 9 October 2019.

RESOLVED

that the notes of the of the meeting held on 8 and 9 October 2020 be approved as a correct record.

**1916 BOARD OF GOVERNORS' ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**

A report (BG/20/52) was submitted providing an update on the current membership of the Board and a summary of the work of the Board and its Committees during 2019/20.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

**1917 ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR**

A report (BG/20/53) 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.

**1918 RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

A report (BG/20/54) was submitted by the Chief Operating Officer providing an update on risk management.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

**1919 COMMITTEE REPORTS**

The following reports were submitted for information:

- Audit Committee – 18 September and 6 November 2020 (BG/20/55).
- Finance and Resources Committee – 3 November 2020 (BG/20/56).
- Remuneration Committee – 18 September 2020 (BG/20/57).

RESOLVED

that the reports be received.

**1920 SCHEDULE OF AGENDA ITEMS**

The Schedule of Agenda Items for 2020/21 (BG/20/58) was submitted for information.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.