

THE MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 NOVEMBER 2021

Present: Mr Simon Duffy (Chair)
Mrs Philippa Anderson
Mr Sean Anstee
Professor Tim Brennan
Ms Rowena Burns
Professor Darren Dancey
Mrs Janet Dawson
Mr Carlo Frondaroli (for minutes 1970-1982 & 1984-1992)
Mr Mohammad Habeebullah
Mr Andrew Heyn
Ms Letitia Nicole Jones
Professor Donna Lee
Ms Hanifa Maryam
Ms Shrutisha Morris
Mr Mike Perls
Professor Malcolm Press (for minutes 1970-1976 & 1978-1992)
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 and Clerk to Board)
Ms Helen Barton (Director of Strategic Planning and Operations) (for minutes 1973 and 1974)
Mr Alexander Thorley (Academic Registrar) (for minutes 1978 and 1979)

1970 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Ms Evelyn Asante Mensah and Dr David Birch.

1971 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 1977) and indicated that he would be leaving the meeting for that item. Mr Carlo Frondaroli declared a conflict of interest in relation to the item on Board membership (minute 1983) and indicated that he would be leaving the meeting for that item.

1972 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BRIEFING

The Vice-Chancellor presented an update (BG/21/45) on University and sector developments. It was noted that the University was continuing to progress strategic priorities whilst also focusing on issues arising from Covid. The key points of discussion included the following:

1972.1 Access and Participation

John Blake had been appointed as the new Office for Students (OfS) Director for Fair Access and Participation. The University was already focused on the OfS main priorities in this area, including raising standards and attainment and widening access to higher education.

1972.2 Post 18 Reforms

The Government response to the Augar Review was expected imminently and was likely to feature:

- a lifelong learning entitlement to student loans, with bite-sized micro-credentials developed in collaboration with employers as a solution to the Equivalent or Lower Qualification (ELQ) rule for students who had already completed higher education qualifications.
- Continued focus on provision which it perceived to be of low quality.
- Changes to the terms and conditions for the repayment of student loans.

1972.3 Industrial Action

Industrial action by University and College Union (UCU) members had been announced from 1-3 December 2021. Planning was underway to minimise disruption and maintain normal operations where possible and students were being kept informed about plans, any cancellations or changes and the application of 'no detriment' policies where needed. The Students' Union was working with the University to minimise disruption while maintaining a neutral stance on the dispute itself.

1972.4 Awards and Successes

In addition to the awards and successes outlined in the Vice-Chancellor's report, it was announced that the University had won the Widening Participation and Outreach Initiative of the Year award at the Times Higher Education Awards for its First Generation initiative. Governors congratulated the University on this prestigious award.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

1973 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT: OVERVIEW OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2020/21

The Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Director of Strategic Planning and Operations presented a report (BG/21/46) on the University's Key Performance Targets, providing an overview of 2020/21 performance and performance against the sector, which had, in some areas, been impacted by the pandemic. The main points included:

1973.1 Education

Whilst entry tariffs had seen a significant increase, there had been a drop in progression rates back to pre-pandemic levels. However, the underlying trend remained strong, with performance above the benchmark group. The National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes were disappointing but strategies were in place for improvement, led by the new Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education.

1973.2 Research

Research had seen some short term impacts on data due to the pandemic, including a slight drop in research income, although there had been improvement overall during the last five years. The results of the Research Excellence Framework were awaited in May 2022.

1973.3 Internationalisation

Enrolment figures were holding steady and, following January 2022 enrolments, were likely to reach similar levels to 2020/21. The University was continuing to improve its position relative to other institutions.

1973.4 Institutional Sustainability

The University continued to perform strongly in environmental sustainability and growth in income diversity remained stable.

It was suggested that a more granular analysis of data on the performance of disabled students could support further improvement in addressing attainment gaps. There was also a suggestion that a more nuanced high-level metric on environmental sustainability might be helpful following the move to more off-campus/hybrid working practices.

It was concluded that, whilst the results were mixed, it was important to contextualise the University's outcomes against the impact of the pandemic on the sector, the full extent of which was yet not known. The University had performed well in exceptional circumstances and had remained focused on its priorities of providing an outstanding student educational experience and outcomes and delivering internationally renowned, impactful research. The Board welcomed the clarity of the report, the progress that had been made and the work taking place to develop new, future targets as part of the Road to 2030 Strategy development.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

1974 ROAD TO 2030 UPDATE

The Vice-Chancellor, Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Director of Strategic Planning and Operations presented an update (BG/21/47) on the development of the Road to 2030 new Strategy and vision. The key priorities were the delivery of:

- A high quality educational experience for students to ensure excellent outcomes for all graduates.
- Impactful, internationally renowned research, to drive the economy and society.

The new Strategy and vision would be supported by refreshed thematic Strategies for Education and Research, underpinned by enabling strategies centred on: diversity; people; business; campus and digital; reputation; international; sustainability; and resources.

The importance of achieving balance of focus between current priorities and strategies to meet developing and future challenges over the next ten years was discussed, and it was noted that, following approval of the Road to 2030 in February 2022, a new five-year Strategy would be developed with flexibility to accommodate change should circumstances require it. It was suggested that strong focus needed to be maintained on internationalisation of the curriculum, data and digital development within a volatile environment and that the next ten years presented excellent opportunities for the University to build upon its strong performance and respond to government imperatives. The Board welcomed the clarity and focus of the report.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

1975 ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2020/21 AND ANNUAL FINANCE RETURN TO THE OFFICE FOR STUDENTS

The Director of Finance presented for approval the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2020/21 and the Representation Letter to the External Auditors (BG/21/48). It was noted that the Finance and Resources Committee had reviewed the accounts and that the Audit Committee had considered any audit and control issues arising from the audit and had specifically reviewed the ongoing relevance of the going concern concept in preparing the accounts.

RESOLVED

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

- Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2021.
- Management Representation Letter to the External Auditors.
- Annual Finance Return 2021 and commentary.

1976 AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The Chair of the Audit Committee presented for approval the Audit Committee 2020/21 Annual Report, including the Internal Auditors' annual report (BG/21/49).

RESOLVED

that the Audit Committee Annual Return be approved.

1977 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//21/50). Attached to the report were the Vice-Chancellor's objectives for 2021/22 and the Remuneration Annual Report, which had also been approved by the Committee.

RESOLVED

to endorse the decisions of the Remuneration Committee in relation to the Vice-Chancellor's remuneration, the Vice-Chancellor's 2021/22 objectives and the Remuneration Annual Report.

1978 ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS ANNUAL REPORT

The Academic Registrar presented the Annual Report on Academic Quality and Standards (BG/21/51), which provided an overview of the University's policies, regulations and procedures to support the management of academic quality and standards, and their operation throughout the 2020/21 academic year. The Board welcomed the report and the assurance provided.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

1979 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PREVENT DUTY IN 2020/21

The Academic Registrar presented the Annual Report on the implementation of the Prevent duty (BG/21/52). The report confirmed the effectiveness of the University's Prevent-related policies and processes, including the provision of training, during 2020/21 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 2020/21 be approved for submission to the Office for Students.

1980 MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING STATEMENT 2021

The Director of Finance presented for approval the University's Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2021 (BG/21/53), which was a requirement of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

RESOLVED

that the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2021 be approved for publication on the University's website.

1981 ANNUAL STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONCORDAT TO SUPPORT RESEARCH INTEGRITY 2020/21

The Vice-Chancellor presented for approval the Annual Statement of Compliance with the Concordat for Research Integrity (BG/21/54). The Statement formed part of the University's evidence of compliance with the UK Universities Concordat to support Research Integrity.

RESOLVED

that the Annual Statement on Compliance with the Concordat for Research Integrity 2020/21 be approved for publication on the University's Research Governance website.

1982 GOVERNANCE EFFECTIVENESS ACTION PLAN

The Chief Operating Officer presented a draft Governance Effectiveness Action Plan and a proposal to change the name of the Audit Committee to Audit and Risk Committee (BG/21/55). The Nominations and Governance Committee had considered and supported these proposals on 15 November 2021.

RESOLVED

that the following be approved:

- (i) Governance Effectiveness Action Plan.
- (ii) The proposal to change the name of the Audit Committee to Audit and Risk Committee.

1983 BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Mr Carlo Frondaroli withdrew from the meeting for this item.

The Chief Operating Officer presented a report (BG/21/56) outlining a recommendation from the Nominations and Governance Committee in relation to Board membership to reappoint Mr Carlo Frondaroli to the Board for a further term of office.

RESOLVED

that Mr Carlo Frondaroli be reappointed to the Board for a further term of office from 11 February 2022 to 10 February 2025.

1984 MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 18 JUNE 2021

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the Board meeting held on 18 June 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

1985 ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

A report (BG/21/57) was submitted setting out actions to be taken following the meeting of the Board held on 18 June 2021 and progress made with regard to those actions.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

1986 NOTES OF THE JOINT BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE GROUP STRATEGY MEETING HELD ON 7 AND 8 OCTOBER 2021

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 7 and 8 October 2021.

RESOLVED

that the notes of the of the meeting held on 7 and October 2021 be approved as a correct record.

1987 BOARD OF GOVERNORS' ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

A report (BG/21/58) 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 2020/21.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

1988 ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR

A report (BG/21/59) 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.

1989 RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

A report (BG/21/60) was submitted by the Chief Operating Officer providing an update on risk management.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

1990 ACADEMIC BOARD REPORT

A report (BG/21/61) was submitted providing an update on business conducted by the Academic Board at its meeting on 4 November 2021.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

1991 COMMITTEE REPORTS

The following reports were submitted for information:

- Audit Committee – 24 September and 5 November 2021 (BG/21/62).
- Finance and Resources Committee – 27 October 2021 (BG/21/63).

- Nominations and Governance Committee – 15 November 2021 (BG/21/64)
- Remuneration Committee – 17 June and 24 September 2021 (BG/21/65).

RESOLVED

that the reports be received.

1992 SCHEDULE OF AGENDA ITEMS

The Schedule of Agenda Items for 2021/22 (BG/21/66) was submitted for information.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

Signature of Chair _____

Date _____