

THE MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 JULY 2022

Present: Ms Janet Dawson (Chair)
Mr Sean Anstee
Dr David Birch
Professor Tim Brennan
Ms Rowena Burns
Professor Darren Dancey
Ms Stella Ebalehita Ibifunmilola
Mr Andy Forbes
Mr Carlo Frondaroli
Ms Kate Green
Mr Mohammad Habeebullah
Mr Andrew Heyn
Ms Shrutisha Morris
Professor Malcolm Press
Mr Mark St John Qualter
Mr Miles Rothbury
Ms Karen Varty

In attendance: Ms Pam Aspden (Head of Governance and Secretariat)
Mr Martin Conway (Governance Senior Manager)
Professor Steve Decent (Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor)
Mr Andrew Hewett (Director of Finance)
Professor Karen Moore (Chief Operating Officer and Clerk to Board)
Professor Andy Dainty (Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education) for minute 2023
Mr Andrew Fallon (Director of Estates, Facilities and Capital Development) for minute 2027
Mr Matt Hill (Assistant Director Capital Development) for minute 2027
Mr Chris Robinson (Chief Information Officer) for minute 2028
Mr Alexander Thorley (Academic Registrar) for minute 2023
Mr Mark Turner (IT and Digital Programme Manager) for minute 2028
Professor Jenny Watling (Pro-Vice-Chancellor International) for minute 2025

2020 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Ms Stella Ebalehita Ibifunmilola, Mr Andy Forbes, and Ms Kate Green were welcomed to their first meeting of the Board.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Simon Duffy, Dr Hannah-Louise Holmes, Ms Letitia Nicole Jones, and Ms Evelyn Asante Mensah. In the

absence of the Chair, the meeting was chaired by Ms Janet Dawson, Deputy Chair of the Board of Governors.

2021 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Board members were invited to declare possible conflicts of interest on any matters being discussed at today's meeting. Declarations were received from Mr Sean Anstee, Ms Rowena Burns and Ms Stella Ebalehita Ibifunmilola in relation to minute 2029, Board Membership.

2022 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BRIEFING

The Vice-Chancellor presented an update on University and sector developments (BG/22/24). The key points of discussion included the following:

2022.1 Research Excellence Framework (REF) Results

The Vice-Chancellor provided an overview and summary of the results from the REF 2021. The results were pivotal for the University and with the anticipated impact of REF outcomes on global league table positions provided a significant opportunity to strengthen the University's international profile.

2022.2 Undergraduate and Postgraduate Applications

There had been a 17% increase in home UG applications to the University. Applications to postgraduate taught programmes were also increasing.

2022.3 Resources

The REF results, and the rising profile and popularity of the University were important in the context of external pressure on resources. The UG home fee level had been frozen at £9250 since 2012, and, over time, the University was having to work harder to deliver more with less, while maintaining a keen focus on student welfare.

2022.4 Other milestones

The Vice-Chancellor also highlighted a number of internal developments including:

- the Student Journey Transformation Programme which was now on a secure footing with go-live anticipated in Summer 2023;
- the introduction of semesterisation from September 2022; and
- the developing profile of the University's Degree Apprenticeships offer.

Although noting these were positive indicators, the external environment remained economically and politically challenging.

2022.5 Initial Teacher Training (ITT)

ITT was discussed in the context of the government market review, and a shift towards training delivered wholly in schools. All

ITT providers have had to apply for accreditation (or reaccreditation) based on new quality requirements. Manchester Met programmes had achieved its Stage 1 accreditation, but a number of established HE providers had been unsuccessful.

2022.6 Conclusion

The Board offered congratulations to the senior team, academic colleagues, and staff across the University in delivering the REF results and other recent achievements. The Board also noted the opportunity to leverage support from partners and stakeholders across the city region to further promote the University.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

2023 EDUCATION STRATEGY UPDATE

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education presented an update (BG/22/25) on progress made with the University's Education Strategy.

2023.1 Summary of Progress

Overall, the University had seen a steady improvement in its performance against the four key education metrics, both in absolute terms and relative to the sector. However, the disruption caused by the pandemic has impacted on some metrics (particularly NSS) over the past 18 months. The key headlines were:

- A steady increase in entry quality, with a substantial increase last year when 65.7% of students were at the KPI threshold of 112 tariff points, well above the target of 50%.
- A gradual increase in student satisfaction over the past 5 years peaking at 84.4% in 2019. The recent decrease (down to 69.9%) reflected sector trends and considerable work was being undertaken to improve student experience and NSS outcomes.
- 72.0% of 2019/20 graduates were in a positive destination 15 months after graduating, 3.4 pp up on the previous year.
- The University was in an exceptionally strong position for both undergraduate and postgraduate admissions for 2022/23.

2023.2 Planning for 2022/23

A more stretching set of Education KPIs within the Road to 2030, coupled to a more challenging regulatory landscape, demanded a refreshed Education Strategy and work was currently underway to develop this.

2022.3 Graduate Outcomes

The Board discussed the significance of the Graduate Outcomes KPI and challenges in respect of the University's demographic profile. It acknowledged that the metric was imperfect, and that

there were specific challenges in some disciplines, notably, the Arts. The University remained committed to delivering improvements via the Graduate Outcomes Strategy and an additional focus on providing work experience opportunities for all students. It was suggested that a future discussion on Graduate Outcomes would be beneficial.

2022.4 Entry Tariff

The challenge of balancing improvements in the entry tariff against the University's widening participation mission was considered and it was noted that the KPI related to the average entry tariff across a range of programmes, which was recognised in the Access and Participation Plan.

2022.5 Grade Inflation

The University remained below the sector in terms of degree outcomes but had seen an increase in the number of first class honours degrees awarded from 41.9 in 2019/20 to 45.3% in 2020/21, principally within a small number of larger programmes. Ongoing monitoring in liaison with external examiners would continue.

2023.6 Conclusion

The current Educational Strategy and the focus on: high quality teaching, the integration of student education, experience and support, the promotion of HE professional practice, and engagement with external partners, had served the University well. However, the HE sector faced unprecedented change in the form of rising costs, frozen fees, a greater regulatory burden, and higher student expectations. Recognising this, the new Education Strategy sought to put the student experience at the core and as part of a transformational learning community, that provided a sense of belonging where student-centred opportunities abound. This, coupled with a continued focus on positive Graduate Outcomes, would ensure improvements in the education metrics moving forward.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

2024 DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENT 2021/22

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education presented the University's draft Degree Outcomes Statement 2020/21 (BG/22/25) for approval prior to publication on the University website.

RESOLVED

that the Degree Outcomes Statement 2020/21 be approved.

2025 INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGY 2022-2026

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor International presented the Internationalisation Strategy for 2022 – 2026 (BG/22/26).

2025.1 Summary of main points

The Internationalisation Strategy 2022-2026 was a refresh of the 2017-2021 strategy, and focused on the following ambitions:

- Increasing the international student body, both on and off campus.
- Strong international partnerships to support education, research and recruitment ambitions.
- Providing international experiences for all students, supporting overseas students to succeed, and creating opportunities for staff to develop global competencies.
- Enhancing engagement with the University's global alumni network.

A key development of the new Strategy was the focus on the international student experience and providing access for home students to meaningful, high quality, international experiences within their study.

2025.2 Distinctiveness and Values

The Board discussed the extent to which the Strategy articulated a unique proposition. While the University's current position, and the opportunity for growth, was seen as distinctive, there was also the opportunity to demonstrate the distinctiveness of the University's academic offer in an accompanying action plan. It was suggested that the addition of information on the University's values, partnership governance processes and the mutual benefit provided by collaborative partnerships, would enhance the Strategy further.

RESOLVED

that the Internationalisation Strategy 2022-2026 be approved.

2026 UNIVERSITY DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2022/23 AND FINANCIAL FORECASTS

The Director of Finance presented for approval the proposed budget for 2022/23 and Financial Forecasts (BG/22/27) following consideration by the Finance and Resources Committee on 8 June 2022. Attention was drawn to the following points:

- The budget presented a cash surplus of £39.9m, which exceeded the financial sustainability metrics around operating cash flows and liquidity days. However, the income and expenditure statement showed an underlying accounting deficit of £9.6m, which was predominantly the result of two non-cash items – increased pension provision charges and depreciation.

- The budget included additional investments in IT, student support, academic staff, and equipment.
- The inclusion of contingencies together with prudent budgeting of income and costs ensured a good balance between risks and potential outperformance against the budget.
- Cash generation was expected to exceed the Financial Strategy targets ensuring funds would be available to finance the University's investment plans.
- Sustained high levels of inflation would pose a risk to the achievement of the forecasts. However, the inclusion of significant contingencies together with the ability to adjust ongoing expenditure mitigated this risk.

RESOLVED

that the proposed budget for 2022/23 be approved.

2027 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE

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

2028 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE

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

2029 BOARD MEMBERSHIP

The Chair of the Board presented a report (BG/22/30) outlining Board and Committee membership recommendations.

Mr Sean Anstee, Ms Rowena Burns, and Ms Stella Ebalehita Ibifunmilola withdrew from the meeting for the discussion on their respective appointments.

2029.1 Reappointment of an Independent Governor

Although recommended by the Nominations and Governance Committee for re-appointment as an Independent Governor for a further term, Ms Rowena Burns had subsequently notified the Clerk that she was not seeking reappointment. She would therefore stand down from the Board on 31 August 2022.

2029.2 Student Governors

Ms Letitia Nicole Jones had been re-elected as President of the Students' Union and Ms Stella Ebalehita Ibifunmilola had been elected as Education Officer.

RESOLVED

that the following be approved:

- (i) The appointment of Ms Bridget Lea as a new Independent Governor for a three-year term of office from 1 August 2022 until 31 July 2025.
- (ii) The reappointment of Mr Sean Anstee as a Co-opted Governor for a further three-year term of office from 1 December 2022 until 30 November 2025.
- (iii) The appointment of Ms Letitia Nicole Jones and Ms Stella Ebalehita Ibifunmilola as Student Governors from 1 July 2022 until 30 June 2023.

2030 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 APRIL 2022

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the Board meeting held on 1 April 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2031 ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR

A report (BG/22/31) 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.

2032 RISK MANAGEMENT

A report (BG/22/32) was submitted by the Chief Operating Officer providing an update on risk management.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

2033 ACADEMIC BOARD REPORT

A report (BG/22/33) was submitted providing an update on business conducted by the Academic Board at its meeting held on 9 June 2022.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

2034 COMMITTEE REPORTS

The following reports were submitted for information:

- Audit and Risk Committee – 20 May 2022 (BG/22/34).
- Finance and Resources Committee – 8 June 2022 (BG/22/35).
- Nominations and Governance Committee – 25 May 2022 (BG/22/36).

RESOLVED

that the reports be received.

2035 MEETING DATES AND SCHEDULE OF AGENDA ITEMS

A report (BG/22/37) was submitted setting out the proposed schedule of meetings for 2023 and a draft agenda schedule for 2022/23.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the 2023 meeting dates be approved;
- (ii) that the schedule of agenda items be received.

2036 FORTHCOMING BOARD MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Noting that Ms Rowena Burns would be standing down from the Board of Governors, the Chair thanked Rowena for her service over the last three years.

It was also noted this was the final Board meeting for Mr Mark St John Qualter, who had served on the Board of Governors for nine years, including seven as Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee. On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked Mark for his commitment and dedication to the University.

Signature of Chair _____ Date _____