

THE MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2022

Present: Simon Duffy (Chair)
Sean Anstee
Dr David Birch
Professor Darren Dancey
Andy Forbes
Carlo Frondaroli
Kate Green
Mohammad Habeebullah
Andrew Heyn
Professor Hannah Holmes
Stella Ebalehita Ibifunmilola
Bridget Lea
Professor Malcolm Press
Miles Rothbury
Simon Rutter
Karen Varty

In attendance: Martin Conway (Head of Governance and Secretariat)
Professor Steve Decent (Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor)
Andrew Hewett (Director of Finance)
Professor Karen Moore (Chief Operating Officer and Clerk to the Board)
Chris Robinson (Chief Information Officer), for minute 2040
Helen Barton (Director of Strategic Planning and Operations, for minute 2041)
Julie Watson (Director of Curriculum Management) for minute 2042

2037 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Bridget Lea and Simon Rutter were welcomed to their first formal meeting of the Board.

Apologies for absence were received from Philippa Anderson, Evelyn Asante-Mensah, Professor Tim Brennan, Janet Dawson, and Letitia Jones.

2038 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Board members were invited to declare possible conflicts of interest on any matters being discussed at today's meeting. None were declared.

2039 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BRIEFING

The Vice-Chancellor presented an update on University developments. The key points of discussion included the following:

2039.1 **Student Fatality**

Very sadly, Luke O' Connor, a second-year student studying Business and Management, had been fatally stabbed on Wednesday 26 October 2023. A man had been charged with Luke's murder and was due to be tried at Manchester Crown Court in April 2023.

Luke's death had deeply affected the whole student community. The University had been providing support to those impacted, and particularly to his family and friends. The University was also working closely with the Students' Union to offer reassurance, support, and guidance to the wider student community.

2039.2 **Industrial Action by UCU and UNISON**

The University had been notified of strike action by UCU and UNISON on 24 and 25 November 2022. UCU would also be taking action on 30 November 2022 and had notified the University that members would take action short of a strike, which could possibly include not undertaking voluntary activities or providing cover for absent colleagues.

The Vice-Chancellor provided details of the context of the action, the national bargaining process, and the measures in place to minimise the impact on learning and teaching. The staff members on the Board of Governors also provided information on how the impact was being managed at faculty level.

2039.3 **Degree Apprenticeships rated "Outstanding" by Ofsted**

Following a short-notice Ofsted inspection in early October 2022, the University had been recognised as "Outstanding" for its degree apprenticeships provision and UAL Foundation Diploma in Art and Design.

The inspection team praised the quality of teaching and academic support, the inclusive and respectful environment in which apprentices and students learn, and careers advice and guidance. The Board welcomed the inspection outcome and expressed its thanks to the Apprenticeships Team.

2039.4 **Cost of Living Challenges for Students**

The Vice-Chancellor invited the Chief Operating Officer to deliver a presentation on recent research on the cost of living challenges facing students, and on the targeted response that was being provided by the University. The main points included:

- A task group, with student representation, had been set up, chaired by the Director of Strategic Planning and Operations,

which would keep under review the University's response and support for students.

- A set of guiding principles had been adopted to help shape a targeted and holistic approach.
- A Cost of Living Hub had been developed which brought together all the relevant information for students in one place.
- The measures to support students included:
 - Bursaries: £7.4m for household incomes under £25k. A cash alternative to the Met Card for these funds was being considered.
 - Hardship Fund: Increased from £0.85m to £2m and the average award so far this year was £1,200.
 - Expansion of Jobs4Students: this would provide increased part-time work opportunities for students on campus.
 - Increase in food offers and warm spaces.

The Students' Union (SU) had welcomed the range of measures as they were tailored, targeted and treated students as individuals rather than as a homogenous group. The SU would assist the University in communicating these measures to students and members of the academic community would also amplify. The Board noted that the University would carefully evaluate the potential impact of cost of living challenges on progression and the success of its interventions.

RESOLVED

- i. that the Board's sincere sympathies and condolences were extended to Luke O'Connor's family and friends.
- ii. that the Vice-Chancellor's briefing report be received.

2040 IT AND DIGITAL STRATEGY

The Chief Information Officer presented the IT and Digital Strategy (BG/22/39). The Strategy would be used to develop a costed and prioritised roadmap, which would support the University's core strategies and would enhance digital capabilities. The context was outlined, including the management of legacy systems, supply chain issues and staffing challenges.

The Board discussed security, staff skill levels and training, and opportunities to align the Strategy locally with other public and private organisations in the region, in order to develop innovation and use critical mass. A suggestion was also made that the roadmap should include a clear timeline, and that the plans supporting the Strategy should be guided by a principle of digital equity and include specific measures to challenge pockets of digital poverty.

RESOLVED

that the IT and Digital Strategy be approved.

2041 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT: OVERVIEW OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2021/22

The Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Director of Strategic Planning and Operations presented a report (BG/22/40) on the University's Key Performance Targets, providing an overview of 2021/22 performance and performance against the sector. The following points were noted:

- The report highlighted that the University's performance against its KPIs has been mixed, with strong year on year improvements and in-year targets being met in some areas but not across all 12 KPIs. As in previous years, the University remained in a strong position financially and continued to track above the KPI target. There had been other areas of strong performance such as student satisfaction and entry quality and positive performance against many of the enabling strategies, with strong international recruitment, business engagement income, staff advocacy, and environmental performance.
- However, the University was significantly behind the in-year target for two KPIs: student progression and external research income. A detailed programme of action was being implemented to improve them.
- The report also underlined the stretching nature of many of the targets and it was noted that there would need to be a focussed and sustained programme of actions across a number of areas to make progress against these ambitious KPIs and targets.

In considering those areas where performance was below target, the Board explored some of the early warning factors in relation to student progression that are closely monitored by the University. For external research income, the Board noted the "lumpy" nature of awards, and that the University was measuring itself against a new peer group. In reporting that the student entry target had been reached, it was acknowledged that this would evolve over time and could become more stretching. The Vice-Chancellor also highlighted that groups of KPIs would be examined at future meetings, and that faculty performance reviews would also provide an opportunity to reflect on progress at a more granular level.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

2042 ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS ANNUAL REPORT

The Director of Curriculum Management presented the Annual Report on Academic Quality and Standards (BG/22/41), 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 2021/22 academic year. The Board welcomed the report and the assurance provided.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

2043 ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021/22 AND ANNUAL FINANCE RETURN TO THE OFFICE FOR STUDENTS

The Director of Finance presented for approval the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2021/22 and the Representation Letter to the External Auditors (BG/22/42). It was noted that the Finance and Resources Committee had reviewed the accounts and that the Audit and Risk 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.

The Board of Governors considered the accounting treatment applied in respect of the Greater Manchester Pension Fund. In 2021/22 the financial assumptions around yields on corporate bonds had increased from 1.6% in 2020/21 to 3.5% in 2021/22, which had contributed towards a sizeable actuarial gain of £272.4m in 2021/22. This potentially presented a more accurate view of the University's overall position.

In addition to highlighting the strong financial performance, a number of members of the Board commented positively on the statements and noted how well they communicated the University's achievements.

RESOLVED

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

- Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2022.
- Management Representation Letter to the External Auditors.
- Annual Finance Return 2022 and commentary.

2044 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee presented for approval the Audit and Risk Committee 2021/22 Annual Report, including the Internal Auditors' annual report (BG/22/43).

RESOLVED

that the Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report be approved.

2045 APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

The Director of Finance presented a paper (BG/22/47) and a recommendation from the Audit and Risk Committee on the appointment of the External Auditors. The key points included:

- BDO had been appointed as the University's External Auditors in 2020 for a three-year term of appointment, with the option to extend by a further year.
- The 2021/22 audit was the third year of their appointment, and therefore the University proposed taking up the one-year extension for the financial year 2022/23.
- The University would begin, during the current financial year, a procurement process to appoint external auditors for 2023/24 and beyond.

RESOLVED

that BDO LLP be appointed as the University's external auditor for 2022/23, utilising the one-year extension in the existing contract.

2046 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE

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

2047 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/22/46). Attached to the report were the Vice-Chancellor's objectives for 2022/23 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 2022/23 objectives and the Remuneration Annual Report.

2048 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PREVENT DUTY IN 2021/22

The Academic Registrar presented the Annual Report on the implementation of the Prevent duty in 2021/22 (BG/22/47). The report confirmed the effectiveness of the University's Prevent-related policies and processes, including the provision of training, during 2021/22 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.

2049 MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING STATEMENT 2022

The Director of Finance presented for approval the University's Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2022 (BG/22/48), which was a requirement of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

RESOLVED

that the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2022 be approved for publication on the University's website.

2050 ANNUAL STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONCORDAT TO SUPPORT RESEARCH INTEGRITY 2021/22

The Vice-Chancellor presented for approval the Annual Statement of Compliance with the Concordat for Research Integrity (BG/22/49). 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 2021/22 be approved for publication on the University's Research Governance website.

2051 BOARD MEMBERSHIP

The Chief Operating Officer presented a report (BG/22/50) outlining a recommendation from the Nominations and Governance Committee in relation to the timeline and procedure to be adopted to appoint the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board of Governors.

RESOLVED

that the timeline and procedure to appoint the Chair and Deputy Chair be approved, to commence in April 2023.

2052 MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 1 JULY 2022

RESOLVED

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

2053 NOTES OF THE JOINT BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE GROUP STRATEGY MEETING HELD ON 6 AND 7 OCTOBER 2022

RESOLVED

that the notes of the of the meeting held on 6 and 7 October 2022 be approved as a correct record.

2054 BOARD OF GOVERNORS' ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

A report (BG/22/51) 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 2021/22.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

2055 ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR

A report (BG/22/52) 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.

2056 RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

A report (BG/22/53) was submitted by the Chief Operating Officer providing an update on risk management.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

2057 ACADEMIC BOARD REPORT

A report (BG/22/54) was submitted providing an update on business conducted by the Academic Board at its meeting on 2 November 2022 and a summary of the work of the Board in 2021/22

RESOLVED

that the reports be received.

2058 COMMITTEE REPORTS

The following reports were submitted for information:

- Audit and Risk Committee – 23 September and 4 November 2022 (BG/22/55).
- Finance and Resources Committee – 24 October 2022 (BG/22/56).
- Nominations and Governance Committee – 26 October 2022 (BG/22/57)
- Remuneration Committee – 23 September 2022 (BG/22/58).

RESOLVED

that the reports be received.

2059 SCHEDULE OF AGENDA ITEMS

The Schedule of Agenda Items for 2022/23 (BG/22/59) was submitted for information.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

Signature of Chair _____ Date _____