

THE MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 JANUARY 2023

Present: Simon Duffy (Chair)
Philippa Anderson
Sean Anstee
Evelyn Asante Mensah
Professor Tim Brennan
Professor Darren Dancey
Janet Dawson
Carlo Frondaroli
Mohammad Habeebullah
Andrew Heyn
Stella Ibifunmilola
Letitia Nicole Jones
Bridget Lea
Professor Malcolm Press
Miles Rothbury
Simon Rutter

In attendance: Professor Steve Rothberg (Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor)
Andrew Hewett (Director of Finance)
Professor Karen Moore (Chief Operating Officer and Clerk to the Board)
Martin Conway (Head of Governance and Secretariat)
Professor Andy Dainty (Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education) for minute 2064
Professor Jenny Watling (Pro-Vice-Chancellor International) for minute 2065

2061 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Dr David Birch and Kate Green.

2062 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

2063 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BRIEFING

The Vice-Chancellor presented a report on the latest University developments (BG/23/01).

2063.1 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

The University had completed its TEF submission. Key points included:

- The submission comprised two components: The first focused on performance against key metrics, and an accompanying narrative provided context. A further optional section, completed independently by the Students' Union, had also been submitted.
- Between February and June 2023, the TEF panel will carry out the assessments and reach provisional decisions about the ratings. From July to August, providers will receive provisional ratings and reasoning and may make representations before the final ratings are decided and published in September. There were three ratings categories signifying increasing degrees of excellence above OfS minimum quality requirements – Bronze, Silver and Gold. Where the panel judged there was an absence of excellence, no TEF rating would be given and the outcome would state that the provider 'Requires improvement'.
- In the last exercise, outcomes had been heavily influenced by the narrative submission and the University had been graded Silver. Based on performance against the metrics a similar result was anticipated in 2023, as while significant improvements had been achieved the metrics did not indicate Gold-level performance.
- Thanks were expressed to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education and all those in the University that had contributed to the submission.

2063.2 Industrial Relations

The Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) had announced that they will strike on Wednesday 1 February. This was the first of 18 days of planned strike action taking place in February and March, across the entire university sector. In addition, strike action by UNISON members was scheduled for 6, 7 and 8 February. The University had established a contingency planning group to discuss mitigations, and there was confidence that for the majority of students any negative impacts would be managed effectively.

The Board discussed the nature of industrial relations, particularly in relation to annual pay awards, and differences between national and local positions.

2063.3 Future Me Week

Future Me Week, held between 23 January and 27 January, was an enrichment activity offering opportunities to help students develop their skills and prepare for their future career. For most students, the week included a challenge related to their programme of study, which they tackle in teams developing skills in collaboration and design thinking. The events within the week sought to tackle the main elements of Graduate Outcomes, across career readiness, access to graduate level roles, and also prompting students to consider and explore postgraduate opportunities. Although Future Me Week was a new initiative, the events built upon and amplified the University's established programmes and activity, including Rise.

2063.4 Other matters

The Board also received information on recent senior appointments, improvements in study spaces, the retention of the British Universities and

Colleges Sport (BUCS) Physical Activity Excellence award, and on the University's community engagement over December 2022.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

2064 EDUCATION STRATEGY

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor presented for approval the Education Strategy 2022-2026 (BG/23/02), one of the two core strategies underpinning the Road to 2030 Strategy. Key points included:

- The Education Strategy had been developed and co-created following consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including significant input from the Education Committee, the Academic Board and in particular, the Students' Union. It would also inform the new Research Strategy, and cross referenced a number of the enabling strategies throughout, demonstrating its foundation in the Road to 2030 Strategy.
- The Strategy had been guided by the University's values and included a basket of leading indicators to monitor and track implementation. It had also been revised following earlier engagement with governors, to ensure the University's values were enshrined in it and resonated throughout.
- The Strategy prioritised five areas: a future focused high-quality curriculum, digitally enhanced teaching and learning, a great student experience, excellent student outcomes – whether in graduate level employment or further study, and support and development for staff to deliver transformational outcomes for students.

In discussing the Strategy, the Board noted the following:

- The focus on Graduate Outcomes, and the nature of some lagging indicators and the metrics developed by the University to track student development in terms of placement opportunities, work experience and internships, and broader career readiness.
- The objective to reprofile the University's student population over time, with greater proportions of international students, degree apprenticeships, and an increased postgraduate population. This sought to de-risk a dependency on the home, full time, student population, while enhancing the academic experience for all.
- The threats to academic quality and integrity arising from essay mills and AI (e.g. ChatGPT), and the University's responses including working with the student population to develop authentic assessment strategies that provided confidence to employers and other stakeholders.
- The clear links between the University's current educational projects, initiatives and activities and the aims and objectives within the Strategy, and the role that Personal Tutors would take in supporting its implementation.
- That the Education Strategy would complement a growing research drive and ambition, and the importance of delivering and implementing both strategies concurrently.
- As reports on progress against the Strategy come forward, the Board would welcome opportunities to explore elements and specific initiatives

in further detail and would be kept informed of progress by periodic reviews of performance by faculty or department as appropriate.

RESOLVED

that the Education Strategy be approved.

2065 INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGY UPDATE 2017-2022

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor International presented the final update on progress against the Internationalisation Strategy 2017-2022 (BG/23/03).

Attention was drawn to the following key achievements:

- 1,336 new students were enrolled onto on-campus programmes in 2021/22
- 2,011 new international students enrolled onto on-campus programmes for 2022/23
- The University had exceeded off-campus enrolment targets and expanded its overseas presence.
- The University received £35.6m (gross) from all international tuition fees in 2021/22.
- In terms of engagement, the University achieved a 19% increase in the number of registered international alumni in 2020/21.

In discussing the Update, the Board noted the following:

- International student recruitment remained a key priority within the new Internationalisation Strategy, and the University had a target of 2,500 new, full time, on-campus students by 2026. In autumn 2022, 2,011 new international students were enrolled, and a further uplift was anticipated with January enrolments meaning that it was likely to significantly exceed the target of 2,042 for 2022/23.
- Recent reports and government statements regarding international recruitment, and academic engagement with specific countries, including China. The University monitored the geopolitical environment closely, and where required, would strengthen due diligence activity to ensure this remained robust. At the same time, the University would seek to diversify international recruitment to ensure that it did not become overly dependent on any single market and it remained alert to potential changes to the Graduate Visa Route.
- The University worked alongside academic partners and local agencies in the Greater Manchester region to promote Manchester as a student destination. However, for certain markets the key consideration was the University's portfolio offer. In addition, the research profile of the University had a significant impact on the University's performance in international league tables, and therefore recruitment potential.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

2066 STUDENT VOICE REPORT

The Students' Union (SU) Officers presented a report (BG/23/04) providing the Student Voice Report from Term 3, 2021/22, and an Update from the SU Officers. This new reporting was a response to the additional information the Board had requested on student-related matters in feedback meetings held with the Chair of the Board of Governors in Summer 2022. From this point on, it was proposed that the regular Student Voice Report, as approved by Academic Board, would be forwarded to the Board of Governors at each iteration.

In discussing the Student Voice Report, the Board noted the following:

- The Student Voice Report had highlighted accommodation pressures for students prior to the start of the 2022/23 academic year. These had arisen from issues in terms of the supply of accommodation within the Manchester City region. All incoming students had been allocated accommodation by the beginning of the year, with a small number of students placed in Huddersfield and Liverpool initially and recompensed for any additional travel costs. The students affected were also offered the option to take up places in Manchester as they became available.
- The Officers' Update highlighted pressures on the student misconduct and appeals system, which involved SU officer representation on appeal panels. Most appeal cases were fast tracked through established processes, but highly complex cases would take longer to resolve. This system had worked very well for many years, but the volume of complex appeals had increased this year and the workload was now too great for the officers, with some of the burden falling disproportionately across the team. The University was therefore working with the SU on a proposal to create a pool of trained students to join those panels to ensure that appeals could be resolved without undue delay.
- The Student Voice Report and Officers' Update were welcomed by members, who expressed appreciation for the additional information on student matters.

RESOLVED

that the Student Voice Report be received.

2067 BOARD EFFECTIVENESS SURVEY

The Chief Operating Officer and Clerk to the Board of Governors presented a report (BG/23/05) providing the results of the Board Effectiveness Survey undertaken in the summer 2022.

In discussing the Board Effectiveness Survey, the Board noted the following:

- The results were generally very positive with excellent feedback in many areas. All of the questions had scored 80% or above (i.e. 80-100% of Governors agreed with the statement).
- The Board noted that the free text comments had been reviewed against comments in 2020 (when the survey was last undertaken) and demonstrated a stable position in terms of their positive, neutral or

negative status. The Board also noted points concerning the granularity of data regarding faculty performance, a consistent oversight of academic matters across the governing body, use of SharePoint, the acoustics and limitations of some rooms used for meetings, and references to diversity and ensuring the Board's composition was appropriately balanced, which were all being taken forward by the University. During discussion, the Board suggested that opportunities to take meetings or events off site, might also be explored.

- The Survey was only one element in the broader Board Effectiveness Framework. This comprised feedback gathered following each Board meeting and event, one-to-one meetings held between the Chair and Governors each summer, an annual survey, and a four yearly external review. Future reporting of the Survey would be widened to incorporate actions arising from these components.

RESOLVED

that the Board Effectiveness Survey report be received.

2068 MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2022

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the Board meeting held on 25 November 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2069 ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

A report (BG/23/06) was submitted setting out actions to be taken following the meeting of the Board held on 25 November 2022 and progress made against those actions.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

2070 ACADEMIC BOARD REPORT

The Vice-Chancellor presented a report (BG/23/07) arising from the meeting of the Academic Board held on 15 December 2022.

The Academic Board recommended the Education Strategy for approval by the Board of Governors and had also approved:

- The commencement of a series of enabling activities to implement anonymous marking from the start of 2023/24.
- The Academic Calendar 2023/24 – 2026/27.
- Revised terms of reference for the Research Ethics and Governance Committee.
- Revised terms of reference for the Research Degrees Committee.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

2071 BOARD MEMBERSHIP

The Chief Operating Officer and Clerk to the Board of Governors presented a report (BG/23/08) outlining reappointment recommendations from the Nominations and Governance Committee.

The Board noted that there were no changes in Board membership to report since the last Board meeting held on 25 November 2022. Within the Board's committees, the Board noted that Simon Rutter had joined the Audit and Risk Committee, with effect from 6 December 2022

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

2072 ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR

A report (BG/23/09) 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.

2073 SCHEDULE OF AGENDA ITEMS

The Schedule of Agenda Items for 2022/23 (BG/23/10) was submitted for information.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

Signature of Chair _____

Date _____