

THE MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 NOVEMBER 2023

Present: Simon Duffy (Chair)
Philippa Anderson
Carlo Frondaroli
Andrew Heyn
Professor Hannah Holmes
Professor Julie Scott Jones
Bridget Lea
Professor Malcolm Press
Sandesh Punhani
Nick Read
Ethan Romer
Simon Rutter
Karen Varty

In attendance: Andrew Hewett (Chief Financial Officer)
Professor Karen Moore (Chief Operating Officer and Clerk to the Board)
Martin Conway (Head of Governance and Secretariat)
Helen Barton (Director for Strategic Planning and Operations) for minute 2110
Ron Hamilton (Director of Education Services) for minute 2111
Mark Turner (Programme Director) and Chris Robinson (Chief Information Officer) for minute 2112

2107 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Sean Anstee, Dr David Birch, Professor Darren Dancey, Andy Forbes, Kate Green, Jill McCormack, Miles Rothbury and Professor Steve Rothberg.

2108 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

2109 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BRIEFING

The Vice-Chancellor presented a report on the latest University developments (BG/23/43). The key points of discussion included the following:

2109.1 Conflict in Gaza and Israel

The Vice-Chancellor provided an update on the ongoing conflict and management of its impact on the University community. Colleagues were meeting two or three times a week to monitor the situation and ensure that an inclusive community can be maintained, with only a small number of low-level instances recorded to date. The Vice-Chancellor had met with faith leaders and issued a joint statement about the situation and its impact on our students and staff. The Mayor of Greater Manchester, and Deputy Mayor was visiting the campus on 24 November to meet students, representatives, and colleagues.

2109.2 Teachers' Pension Scheme

In common with a number of modern universities, Manchester Met has a significant proportion of staff that hold membership of the Teachers' Pension Scheme. On 27 October the Department for Education (DfE) published the outcome of the 2020 valuation of the scheme. A five per cent increase in the employer contribution rate had been confirmed, to take effect from 1 April 2024 and the new employer contribution rate would therefore be 28.68 per cent. This would mean an additional cost to the University of around £6m a year.

2109.3 International Students and Immigration

The Vice-Chancellor updated the Board on political interventions around immigration and the potential impact on international student recruitment. The sector was actively lobbying for government to recognise that a significant proportion of international students return to their country of origin, with the remainder moving to other visas for work or further study, before return. Alongside this, the economic and social contributions made by international students were well demonstrated.

2109.4 Joint Education Institute Visit

The Vice-Chancellor referenced the recent successful visit to our Joint Education Institute (JEI) with Hubei University (HUBU) in China. The Institute offers undergraduate courses in Chemistry, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, and Software Engineering, alongside a postgraduate course in Advanced Materials. A delegation from the Institute would return to visit the University in June 2024, for the Chancellor's Dinner.

2109.5 Advanced British Standard

The Vice-Chancellor referenced the announcement of proposals to introduce the Advanced British Standard, a Baccalaureate-style qualification for 16 to 19 year-olds that will replace A-levels and T-levels and bring them together into a single qualification. Students would study a minimum of five subjects at different levels – either major or minor (so for instance, three majors and two minors). The proposals were likely to take a decade to implement in full and a

white paper will be published in 2024 setting out the plans for implementation.

2109.6 Professor Dame Sandra Burslem

The Vice-Chancellor paid tribute to our former Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dame Sandra Burslem, following the announcement of her death in November, at the age of 83. Sandra was an inspirational leader, who had achieved so much throughout her career, and was widely regarded as one of the leading vice-chancellors of her generation. The obituary published by the Telegraph is available at the following location: [Professor Dame Sandra Burslem](#).

2109.7 Other items

The Vice-Chancellor also updated the Board on the National Student Survey 2023 and TEF, Graduate Outcomes 2020/21, improvements in the University's League Table Performance, staff appointments, and the recognition payment to made to staff in November 2023.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

2110 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT: OVERVIEW OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2022/23

The Director of Strategic Planning and Operations presented a report (BG/23/44) on the University's Key Performance Targets, providing an overview of 2022/23 performance and performance against the sector. The following points were noted:

- The report presented a positive picture overall but highlighted underperformance in some KPIs (notably Net Zero, relating to the Birley Energy centre and supply fluctuations) and within some measures compared to our benchmark group.
- The Board considered the fall in the Entry Quality measure in further detail, acknowledging that it should be considered against our profile of programmes and that another year's data and a sectoral comparison was required to track movement and assess any implications.
- Clear strengths were noted in the metrics for student satisfaction, international students and financial sustainability. Graduate Outcomes had improved by over 10% in two years, although there was still more to be done.
- Level 5 returners, progression and overassessment were indicators of inefficiency in the system and placed a burden on academic and professional staff. The University's Education Annual Review process would continue to challenge this.

- Performance in the entry quality KPI will require continued monitoring against benchmark, given anticipated national changes in assessment policy.
- The challenges of the student profile KPI were noted, including the connections between this measure, L5 returners and entry tariff, as well links through to student number targets, good student outcomes, SSRs, and our ability to free up academic time to pursue research.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

2111 ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS ANNUAL REPORT

The Director of Education Services presented the Annual Report on Academic Quality and Standards (BG/23/45), 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 2022/23 academic year. The presentation also made reference to a recent internal audit review of Education Governance, and feedback from a recent visit from the Office for Students (OfS). The Board welcomed the report and the assurance provided.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

2112 ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2022/23 AND ANNUAL FINANCE RETURN TO THE OFFICE FOR STUDENTS

The Chief Financial Officer presented for approval the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2022/23 including the Representation Letter to the External Auditors (BG/23/46). It was noted that the People, 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 Chief Financial Officer provided an overview of the statements and external audit process including: two minor issues that did not require any formal adjustment, the letter of representation, and the forward look that would be provided as part of the OfS return.

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. A suggestion was made that within the "University at a glance" section of future reports

could include a reference to levels of investment in the estate over recent years.

RESOLVED

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

- Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2023.
- Management Representation Letter to the External Auditors.
- Annual Finance Return 2023 and commentary.

2113 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE

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

2114 REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION FROM THE PEOPLE, FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Chief Operating Officer and Clerk to the Board presented a report from the People, Finance and Resources Committee (BG/23/48).

CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE

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

2115 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PREVENT DUTY IN 2022/23

The Chief Operating Officer and Clerk to the Board presented the Annual Report on the implementation of the Prevent duty in 2022/23 (BG/23/49). The report confirmed the effectiveness of the University's Prevent-related policies and processes, including details of training delivered during the year, and presented 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 2022/23 be approved for submission to the Office for Students.

2116 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee presented for approval the Audit and Risk Committee 2022/23 Annual Report, including the Internal Auditors' annual report (BG/23/50).

RESOLVED

that the Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report be approved.

2117 APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

The Chief Financial Officer presented a paper (BG/23/51) and a recommendation from the Audit and Risk Committee on the appointment of the External Auditors. The key points included:

- In 2020 BDO were appointed as the University's External Auditors for a three-year term of appointment, with the option to extend by a further year. The University took up the one-year extension for the financial year 2022/23.
- In recognition of a limited market for external audit services, a further year of appointment was recommended.
- Although the contract with BDO which was set up in 2020 only allowed for a maximum of four years' audits, under the Public Contracting Regulations (PCR) it was acceptable to extend a contract for no more than 50% of the original contract value. It was therefore possible for the University to extend the existing contract for at least one more year.

RESOLVED

that BDO LLP be appointed as the University's external auditor for 2023/24.

2118 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/23/52). Attached to the report were the Vice-Chancellor's objectives for 2023/24 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 2023/24 objectives and the Remuneration Annual Report.

2119 MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING STATEMENT 2023

The Chief Financial Officer presented for approval the University's Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2023 (BG/23/53), which was a requirement of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

RESOLVED

that the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2023 be approved for publication on the University's website.

2120 ANNUAL STATEMENTS OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONCORDAT TO SUPPORT RESEARCH INTEGRITY 2022/23 AND THE CONCORDAT TO SUPPORT THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCHERS

The Vice-Chancellor presented for approval the Annual Statement of Compliance with the Concordat for Research Integrity (BG/23/54). 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 2022/23 be approved for publication on the University's Research Governance website.

2121 BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Chief Operating Officer and Clerk to the Board of Governors presented a report (BG/23/55) outlining recommendations from the Nominations and Governance Committee in relation to the membership of the Board and the composition of its committees.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the independent members of the Board approved the appointment of Ian Smyth as an Independent Governor from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2026.
- (ii) that the Board of Governors approved the appointment of Saeed Atcha, MBE, as a Co-opted Governor from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2026.

- (iii) that the independent members of the Board approved the reappointment of the following as Independent Governors for a further three-year term of office:

Name	Term of Office
Philippa Anderson	29 March 2024 – 28 March 2027
Dr David Birch	12 February 2024 – 11 February 2027
Andy Heyn	29 March 2024 – 28 March 2027

- (iv) that the Board of Governors approved the following changes to Committee membership and the appointment of the Board's Observer to Academic Board:

- Dr David Birch to move to the People, Finance and Resources Committee and take up the Chair, with effect from 1 March 2024.
- To place Sean Anstee on the Remuneration Committee and appoint him as Chair.
- To appoint Ian Smyth to the Audit and Risk Committee on joining the Board of Governors.
- To appoint Andy Forbes as the Board's Observer to Academic Board.

2122 MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 30 JUNE 2023

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the Board meeting held on 30 June 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2123 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

A report (BG/23/56) was submitted setting out actions to be taken following the meeting of the Board held on 30 June 2023 and progress made against those actions.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

2124 NOTES OF THE JOINT BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE GROUP STRATEGY MEETING HELD ON 5 AND 6 OCTOBER 2023

RESOLVED

that the notes of the of the meeting held on 5 and 6 October 2023 be approved as a correct record.

2125 BOARD EFFECTIVENESS SURVEY

A report (BG/23/57) was submitted providing the results of the survey on Board Effectiveness, that had been undertaken with Board members over summer 2023.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

2126 BOARD OF GOVERNORS' ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

A report (BG/23/58) was submitted providing a summary of the work of the Board and its Committees during 2022/23.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

2127 ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR

A report (BG/23/59) 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.

2128 ACADEMIC BOARD REPORT

A report (BG/23/60) was submitted providing an update on business conducted by the Academic Board at its meeting on 9 November 2023 and a summary of the work of the Board in 2022/23

RESOLVED

that the reports be received.

2129 COMMITTEE REPORTS

The following reports were submitted for information:

- Audit and Risk Committee – 22 September and 3 November 2023 (BG/23/61).
- Nominations and Governance Committee – 26 October 2023 (BG/23/62)
- Remuneration Committee – 22 September 2023 (BG/23/63).

RESOLVED

that the reports be received.

2130 SCHEDULE OF AGENDA ITEMS

The Schedule of Agenda Items for 2023/24 (BG/23/64) was submitted for information.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

2131 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2131.1 Appointment of CEO, Students' Union

The President of the Students' Union provided the Board with an update on the appointment of a new CEO, to replace Matt Robinson, who would be leaving the Union before the end of the year.

Signature of Chair _____

Date _____