

THE UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE

Approved Minutes of the meeting held on 27 August 2015

Present:

Prof J Jones, Acting Principal (Chair)
Prof R Craik, Vice-Principal (Malaysia) [by Skype]
Prof A Kaka, Vice-Principal (Dubai) [by Skype]
Prof D Hand, Interim Deputy Principal (Research & Knowledge Exchange)
Prof G Hogg, Deputy Principal (External Relations)
Prof J Sawkins, Deputy Principal (Learning & Teaching)
Prof G Gibson, Acting Head, Mathematical & Computer Sciences

Mr A Kitchin, Joint Head, Edinburgh Business School
Prof R MacIntosh, Head, Management & Languages
Prof S McLaughlin, Head, Engineering & Physical Sciences
Prof P Morris, Acting Head, Life Sciences [by Skype]
Prof G Pender, Head, Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure, & Society
Prof F Waldron, Head, Textiles & Design
Mr A Menzies, Director, Finance

In Attendance:

Ms S Collier, Director, Governance and Legal Services [for M15/144 - M15/154]
Mr B Dodgson, Officer, The Secretariat (Clerk)
Ms L Kirkwood-Smith, Head, The Secretariat

Mr R McGookin, Director, Planning
Ms R Moir, Asst. Principal (International Development) [for M15/144 and M15/145]

Apologies:

Ms A-M Dalton, Secretary of the University

M15/138 WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed to the meeting the members of the UE and the following colleagues who were in attendance:

- Ms Sue Collier, Director of Governance and Legal Services
- Ms Ruth Moir, Assistant Principal (International Development)

The UE noted those members who had submitted to the Clerk their apologies for the meeting.

The UE noted that the Acting Principal was attending his last meeting of the UE as Chair and would in September return to the position of Vice-Principal. The UE acknowledged and thanked the Acting Principal for his stewardship since March 2015 of both the UE and the University.

M15/139 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The UE received and considered the minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2015 and, subject to an amendment to the record of members present at the meeting, approved them as a correct record.

M15/140 ACTIONS LOG AND MATTERS ARISING

140.1 Actions Log

The UE received and noted the Actions Log which included actions agreed at the meeting held on 3 July 2015 and the progress that had been made in completing these.

140.2 Matters Arising

The UE noted that there were no matters arising from the minutes that were not already on the agenda as circulated.

M15/141 BUSINESS REPORTED BY THE CHAIR

[Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.30]

M15/142 CONSULTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS LOGS [Paper UE/15/109]

The UE received and noted the Consultations and Publications Logs as of August 2015.

The UE noted the announcements of consultations on:

- a. a draft Concordat on Open Data; the consultation had been launched by the Research Councils and the closing date for receipt of responses was 28 September 2015; and
- b. proposals to change the Knowledge Transfer Grant; the consultation had been launched by the Scottish Funding Council and the closing date for receipt of responses was 16 November 2015.

The UE agreed that the Research and Knowledge Exchange Board should be invited to respond to both consultations on behalf of the UE.

M15/143 REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL (EXTERNAL RELATIONS)

143.1 The UE received and noted a verbal report from the Deputy Principal (External Relations).

143.2 Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal

The UE noted that the six local authorities that make up the Edinburgh and South East Scotland region were working collectively on a bid to the Scottish and UK Governments for a City Region Deal. The UE noted that one of the strands of this bid would be the development of the region's knowledge economy and that the University was engaging with the development of the bid as well as considering the potential for further involvement.

143.3 Oriam Sports Performance Centre

The UE noted that staff from the University would be meeting with representatives from Oriam in September 2015 to discuss the potential for future research collaborations.

M15/144 UPDATE REPORT ON STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE MALAYSIA CAMPUS [Paper UE/15/110]

The UE received and noted an update report on the strategic development of the Malaysia campus presented by the Assistant Principal (International Development) together with the Vice-Principal (Malaysia).

The UE noted that the report provided an update on student recruitment and the health of the Malaysian economy in relation to the strategic development of the Malaysian campus following the report considered by the UE at its meeting in July 2015 [M15/119].

[Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.30 and s.33]

The UE noted that in accordance with the recommendations it had approved at its meeting in July 2015, the Risk Register and Risk Mitigating Plan had been updated.

The UE agreed that it should consider a further update report at its meeting in September 2015 and that this should reflect current exchange rate assumptions.

M15/145 WEST LONDON COLLEGE UPDATE REPORT [Paper UE/15/111]**[Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.30 and s.33]****M15/146 REPORT ON A REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL OF LIFE SCIENCES [Paper UE/15/112]**

The UE received and considered a report presented by the Deputy Principal (External Relations) on a review of the School of Life Sciences.

The UE noted that the review had been commissioned in May 2015 by the Acting Principal and had involved discussions with the Head of School, School staff, and the Student Union.

[Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.30 and s.33]

The UE agreed that further consideration should be given to the ways in which other Schools could make more use of the opportunities presented through the University's base in Orkney. The UE agreed that the Deputy Principal (External Relations) should present for consideration at a future meeting of the UE an initial report on the opportunities arising from the Orkney site.

The UE noted the value of Professor Morris' contributions to the review process and thanked him for his work as interim Head of School.

M15/147 CREATION OF REGIUS PROFESSORSHIPS

The UE received and noted a verbal report from the Director of Planning on the announcement by the UK Government that a number of Regius Professorships would be awarded to mark the 90th birthday of HM The Queen in June 2016.

The UE noted that Regius Professorships were awarded to an institution rather than an individual and were awarded to honour excellence in a specific subject area. The UE noted that the announcement had contained no details as to how many Regius Professorships would be awarded or the process by which institutional applications would be made.

The UE agreed that the University should participate in any competition to award new Regius Professorships. The UE agreed that the Research and Knowledge Exchange Board should identify subject areas where the University could demonstrate the required level of excellence.

M15/148 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: SOCIAL MEDIA AND REPUTATIONAL RISK [Paper UE/15/113]

The UE received and considered a report presented by the Director of Governance and Legal Services on an internal audit of the reputational risks arising from institutional uses of social media.

The UE noted that the audit had been one of a number that had been commissioned by the Audit and Risk Committee to better understand the reputational risks that the University faced. The UE noted that the auditors had not identified any high-level risks but had identified a number of medium- and low-level risks, including the lack of a University policy on the use of social media and the lack of guidance for staff on how to use social media effectively and appropriately.

The UE noted that internal audits explicitly do not address academic matters and that it had not been intended that this audit would address the use of social media for academic purposes. The UE noted that the auditors had found it difficult to distinguish between academic and non-academic uses of social media and that this had been reflected in the management actions recommended in the report.

The UE agreed that the auditors' description of staff as displaying a lack of engagement with social media was misleading. The UE noted that numerous examples could be cited from across the University of staff using social media to raise the profile of their work or as a public engagement tool and that the University already had an agreed position on the use of web 2.0 technologies. The UE agreed that the auditors should be asked to amend the recommended management actions to better reflect existing staff engagement with social media and that the UE should consider the amended report before it is presented to the Audit and Risk Committee.

The UE agreed that social media could be a powerful tool for communicating messages relating to the University's academic activities and that its use in this respect should be seen as a positive thing. The UE agreed that further consideration should be given to the types of message that the University should seek to communicate and to the social media tools that would communicate those messages most effectively.

The UE agreed that there would be value in the University adopting a policy on the use of social media that included guidance on the effective and appropriate use of social media for academic

purposes. The UE agreed that such guidance should not seek to limit the use of social media as a form of expression but should instead establish the general principles that characterise the positive and engaging use of social media in academic contexts. The UE agreed that such guidance should help staff to understand the different expectations in relation to social media use for personal and professional purposes and be clear as to the University's expectations when staff used social media in contexts where they would be seen as a member of its community. The UE agreed that although there could be reputational risks associated with any mode of communication, the use of social media merited specific attention given the speed with which posted comments could be shared.

The UE agreed that the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching), the Interim Deputy Principal (Research and Knowledge Exchange), and the Director of Marketing and Communication should together agree the parameters of University policy on the use of social media for academic purposes and consider how that policy could be developed and implemented. The UE agreed that at an appropriate point the Assistant Principal (Development) should be invited to contribute to this work and advise on specific issues relating to the use of social media to engage the University's alumni and supporters.

The UE noted that the use of social media for marketing and recruitment purposes, including its use by overseas agents, could present a bigger reputational risk than the use of social media for academic purposes and that there was likely to be a need to develop separate guidance in these areas.

M15/149 INTERNAL AUDIT SCHEDULE FOR 2015-16 [Paper UE/15/114]

The UE received and noted the indicative internal audit schedule for 2015-16 which was presented by the Director of Governance and Legal Services.

[Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.33]

The UE agreed that it should be provided with the proposed scope of the audit relating to research.

M15/150 REPORT FROM THE RISK AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY GROUP [Paper UE/15/115]

150.1 The UE received and noted a report of a meeting of the Risk and Project Management Strategy Group held on 13 August 2015 which was presented on behalf of the Group by the Director of Governance and Legal Services.

The UE approved the report for onward presentation to the Audit and Risk Committee.

150.2 Strategic Risk Register

The UE received and noted the Strategic Risk Register as of August 2015.

The UE approved the Register for onward presentation to the Audit and Risk Committee.

M15/151 REPORTS FROM THE SECRETARY'S BOARD [Papers UE/15/116 and UE/15/117]

The UE received and noted reports of the meetings of the Secretary's Board held on 2 June 2015 and 7 July 2015 which were presented on behalf of the Board by the Director of Governance and Legal Services.

Arising from item 6 of the report of the meeting held on 7 July 2015, the UE agreed that the phrasing might erroneously suggest that the Board had discussed academic matters which fell outside of its terms of reference. The UE acknowledged that other groups had responsibility for academic matters and that care should be taken in the preparation of reports to avoid misperceptions of inconsistency with terms of reference.

[Clerk's Note: Following the meeting, this matter was discussed with the Clerk to the Secretary's Board and it was confirmed this item had related to professional services; future reports would be made clearer as to the nature of the business discussed to avoid any misunderstanding.]

M15/152 REPORT FROM THE CAMPUS SERVICES MANAGEMENT BOARD [Paper UE/15/118]

The UE received and noted a report of a meeting of the Campus Services Management Board held on 11 August 2015 which was presented on behalf of the Board by the Director of Governance and Legal Services.

The UE approved the report for onward presentation to the Campus Committee.

M15/153 STRATEGIC PROJECTS REGISTER AT AUGUST 2015 [Paper UE/15/119]

The UE received and noted the Strategic Projects Register as of August 2015 which was presented by the Director of Governance and Legal Services.

M15/154 COMPLAINTS QUARTERLY REPORT: MARCH - MAY 2015 [Paper UE/15/120]

The UE received and noted a report presented by the Director of Governance and Legal Services on complaints received in the third quarter of the 2014-15 academic year.

The UE approved the report for onward presentation to the Court.

M15/155 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS AND GROUP FINANCIAL SUMMARY DASHBOARD TO 31 JULY 2015 (FULL YEAR) [Paper UE/15/121]

The UE received and noted the unaudited interim Group Financial Summary Dashboard to 31 July 2015 which was presented by the Director of Finance. The UE noted that the full year Management Accounts were still in preparation.

[Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.30 and s.33]

The UE noted that the end of year turnout of some Schools had been worse than had been forecast and that the Schools would receive individual reports from the Finance Office describing these variances. The UE agreed that forecasts against performance needed to improve to provide greater confidence in the University's spending plans.

The UE agreed that the strong financial position should be welcomed but noted that the surplus had been achieved by not spending available investment resource and through careful cost controls by Schools and Professional Services and that it was important to balance this control against expenditure necessary to grow the University's academic activities. The UE agreed that careful monitoring of financial performance against forecasts would continue to be needed to support the delivery of the University's strategic aims.

The UE noted that the UK Government had announced in the 2015 Summer Budget that it would introduce legislative changes which would mean that universities and charities would no longer be eligible to claim Research and Development Expenditure Credit. The UE noted that it was not expected that the changes would affect any claims made to date and that universities would be able to claim for qualifying expenditure they had incurred prior to 1 August 2015. The UE noted that the University had submitted its first claim under the Research and Development Expenditure Credit scheme and that its claims in full could total £4.5 million. The UE noted that that these claims had not been included in the accounts as the funds had not yet been received and HM Revenue and Customs had indicated that it could challenge the eligibility of universities' claims.

The UE agreed that it should consider the full Management Accounts and the confirmed Group Financial Summary Dashboard when these were available and before they are presented to the Finance Committee.

M15/156 TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY

The UE noted that this item would not be considered. The UE noted that a revised draft of the Treasury Management Policy was in preparation and that this would incorporate the amendments agreed by the UE in July 2015 [M15/122].

The UE agreed that it should consider the revised Treasury Management Policy when this was available and before it is presented to the Finance Committee.

M15/157 CONTINGENCY RELEASE 2014-15 [Paper UE/15/123]

The UE received and noted a report presented by the Acting Principal on the release of contingency funds in 2014-15.

The UE noted the balance of unused contingency funds and noted that this would improve the University's year-end position.

M15/158 STAGE ONE CAPITAL PROGRAMME [Paper UE/15/124]

The UE received and considered a report presented by the Acting Principal on Stage One of the current capital investment programme.

The UE noted that at its meeting in July 2015 it had delegated authority to the Acting Principal to approve defined strategic projects where these were consistent with the Five Year Financial Plan and the infrastructure investment priorities that had been identified by the UE [M15/124].

The UE noted that the report was unclear as to the nature of the work involving teaching space in the James Nasymth Building. The UE agreed that the Head of the School of Engineering and Physical Sciences should confirm and report to other members as appropriate.

[Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.30 and s.33]

The UE noted that the report did not make reference to space optimisation works in the Earl Mountbatten Building for the School of Mathematical and Computer Sciences. The UE noted that the Acting Principal would liaise with the Head of School.

The UE noted that the capital programme did not include uncommitted funds or Scottish Funding Council capital funds for research expansion. The UE noted that these funds would be used towards the Global Platform Recruitment for Research Leaders scheme and, potentially, the conversion of space in the Earl Mountbatten Building.

The UE endorsed the projects described in the report which had been approved by the Acting Principal with the delegated authority of the UE. The UE noted that the capital programme would be reviewed in the 2015-16 academic year as part of the annual planning cycle and that it was intended that a report on Stage Two of the capital programme would be presented to the UE in 2016. The UE noted that the review would provide an opportunity to consider re-prioritisation of items within the programme and that Heads of Schools should monitor projects where re-prioritisation may be needed.

M15/159 STUDENT RECRUITMENT UPDATE AND FORECAST AT AUGUST 2015 [Paper UE/15/125]

The UE received and noted a report presented by the Director of Planning on student recruitment as of August 2015.

[Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.30 and s.33]

M15/160 REPORTS OF THE FEES WORKING GROUP [Papers UE/15/126 and UE/15/127]

The UE received and noted the reports of the meetings of the Fees Working Group held on 27 April 2015 and 22 June 2015 which were presented on behalf of the Group by the Acting Principal.

M15/161 TUITION FEES 2016-17 [Paper UE/15/128]

The UE received and considered the tuition fees proposed for the 2016-17 academic year as recommended by the Fees Working Group and presented on behalf of the Group by the Acting Principal.

The UE noted that in respect to the standard fees for undergraduate programmes:

- a. for students domiciled in Scotland or the European Union (excluding the other UK nations) fees were set by the Scottish Government and would be announced in March 2016; and
- b. for students domiciled in the UK (excluding Scotland) fees would remain at £9,000 which was the maximum permitted by the Scottish Government.

[Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.30 and s.33]

The UE endorsed the tuition fees proposed for the 2016-17 academic year as recommended by the Fees Working Group and agreed that these should be presented to the Finance Committee for approval.

The UE agreed that future decisions on fees should be in the context of a broader strategic approach to identifying and exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities associated with the University's academic activities. The UE agreed that the University's mechanisms for managing and developing its portfolio of academic activities on an entrepreneurial basis were not as coherent as they could be and that it was important that decisions on fees and other matters supported an entrepreneurial approach. The UE agreed that the locus for identifying and exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities associated with the University's academic activities would be within the Schools but that there would be a need to coordinate this work with enabling activities and that this could happen only at an institutional level. The UE agreed that the Heads of Schools should consider how the entrepreneurial aspect of the University's academic activities could be more effectively supported and develop initial ideas that could inform the development of the University's next strategic plan.

The UE noted that fees for most taught postgraduate programmes fell within the standard bands but that premium fees and bespoke fee rates could be set where market conditions would support this. The UE agreed that Heads of Schools should liaise with their School's representative on the Fees Working Group if they had evidence of specific taught postgraduate programmes where the market conditions would support a bespoke fee.

M15/162 REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL (LEARNING AND TEACHING)

162.1 The UE received and noted a verbal report from the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching).

162.2 Learning and Teaching Communications Strategy

The UE noted that a new communications strategy for the University's learning and teaching activities was in preparation and would be launched in the near future.

M15/163 RESULTS FROM THE NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY 2015 [Paper UE/15/129]

The UE received and considered a report presented by the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) on the University's performance in the 2015 National Student Survey.

The UE noted that the 2015 results had been good rather than outstanding and that the University had scored:

- a. 89% for overall satisfaction, putting it in 28th position in the UK and joint 3rd in Scotland; and
- b. an average of 81% across the other survey questions, putting it in 65th position in the UK and 5th in Scotland.

The UE noted that the University's performance since the 2014 survey had improved in several areas, notably experience of teaching, but that the 2015 results suggested two areas of concern: experience of assessment and feedback – with particular dissatisfaction relating to the promptness,

completeness, and helpfulness of feedback received; and experience of learning resources – with particular dissatisfaction relating to library services and resources, though these concerns could relate more to known issues with access to study spaces. The UE noted that enhancement activities in these areas were already being implemented or were now being planned.

The UE noted that School-level results were in preparation and would be made available to Schools in September 2015. The UE noted that in response to the results each School, as well as relevant areas of Professional Services, would develop an action plan and that these action plans would be considered by the Learning and Teaching Board in October 2015. The UE noted that the Learning and Teaching Board would subsequently prepare progress reports for both the Senate and the UE.

The UE agreed that Em Bailey in the Planning Office should be thanked for her work in analysing and reporting on the National Student Survey results and noted that the quality of these reports was better than that of similar reports at other universities.

M15/164 REPORT ON PERIODIC REVIEWS 2014-15 [Paper UE/15/130]

The UE received and noted a report presented by the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) on academic reviews, academic-related Professional Services reviews, and academic audits completed in 2014-15.

M15/165 REPORT ON ANNUAL MONITORING AND REVIEWS 2013-14 [Paper UE/15/131]

The UE received and noted a report presented by the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) on annual monitoring activities and reviews of performance completed in 2013-14.

M15/166 REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL (RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE) [Papers UE/15/132 and UE/15/133]

166.1 The UE received and noted a report from the Interim Deputy Principal (Research and Knowledge Exchange).

166.2 Research Awards and Proposals

The UE received and noted a report on research awards and proposals to July 2015.

The UE noted that awards for 2014-15 had exceeded £40 million, a record amount for the University. The UE agreed that this had been an excellent result and that it would be important to maintain this momentum in 2015-16.

The UE noted that awards income was heavily skewed towards certain Schools. The UE agreed that this was not a new issue but that it remained a concern. The UE agreed that Heads of Schools should together consider the imbalances in awards income and develop initial proposals on ways to address these imbalances that could inform the development of the University's next strategic plan.

166.3 Open Data

The UE noted that the Open Data Working Group had identified a number of priority areas for action, in particular the embedding of data management plans in pre-award processes.

166.4 Research Management Administration System

The UE noted that the Research Administration System was working well and that legacy data should be added to the system in September 2015.

166.5 Dubai and Malaysia Campuses Research Strategy

The UE noted that a revised draft of the Dubai and Malaysia Campuses Research Strategy would be presented for consideration at a future meeting of the UE and that this would incorporate the amendments agreed by the UE in July 2015 [M15/127].

166.6 Internal Peer-Review Policy

The UE noted that a revised draft of the Internal Peer-Review Policy would be presented for consideration at a future meeting of the UE and that this would incorporate the amendments agreed by the UE in July 2015 [M15/128].

M15/167 REPORTS FROM THE SCHOOLS AND INTERNATIONAL CAMPUSES

The UE received and noted verbal reports from the Heads of Schools, the Vice-Principal (Dubai), and the Vice-Principal (Malaysia).

M15/168 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The UE noted that its next meeting would be held on 24 September 2015.

Signed

Date