

THE UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE

Approved Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2015

Present:

Prof R Williams, Principal (Chair)
Prof J Jones, Vice-Principal
Prof R Craik, Vice-Principal (Malaysia)
Prof A Kaka, Vice-Principal (Dubai)
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 [by Skype]
Prof S McLaughlin, Head, Engineering & Physical Sciences
Dr P Morris, Acting Head, Life Sciences
Prof G Pender, Head, Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure, & Society
Prof F Waldron, Head, Textiles & Design
Ms A-M Dalton, Secretary of the University
Mr A Menzies, Director, Finance

In Attendance:

Mr L Allan, Head, Health & Safety Services [for M15/173]
Mr R McGookin, Director, Planning
Mr M Roch, Director, Information Services [for M15/174]
Mr M Spence, Director, Marketing & Communications [for M15/178]

Mr B Dodgson, Officer, The Secretariat (Clerk)
Ms L Kirkwood-Smith, Head, The Secretariat
Ms S Smillie, Principal's Office

Apologies:

Prof R MacIntosh, Head, Management & Languages

M15/169 WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

- Mr Les Allan, Head of Health and Safety Services
- Mr Mike Roch, Director of Information Services

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

M15/170 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The UE received and considered the minutes of the meeting held on 27 August 2015 and approved them as a correct record.

M15/171 ACTIONS LOG AND MATTERS ARISING

Actions Log

The UE received and noted the Actions Log which included actions agreed at the meeting held on 27 August 2015 and the progress that had been made in completing these.

Matters Arising

Arising from minute M15/147, the UE noted that there had been no further news from the UK Government on its plans to award a number of Regius Professorships to mark the 90th birthday of HM The Queen. The UE noted that a report on areas of research activity which could form the basis of an application in any forthcoming competition for Regius Professorships would be presented for consideration by the UE at its meeting in November 2015.

Arising from minute M15/149, the UE noted that a full description of the scope of the planned audit of research had been circulated to members of the UE and that the audit concerned processes relating to the financial management of Research Council awards.

Arising from minute M15/155, the UE noted that the complete Management Accounts and the Group Financial Summary Dashboard to 31 July 2015 (Full Year) had been circulated to members of the UE and approved for onward presentation to the Finance Committee.

Arising from minute M15/156, the UE noted that the revised Treasury Management Policy had been circulated to members of the UE and approved for onward presentation to the Finance Committee.

M15/172 BUSINESS REPORTED BY THE CHAIR

The Principal thanked the members of the UE for the welcome that had been extended to him since he had taken up office at the start of September 2015. The Principal noted that since taking up office he had been impressed with the positive approach that had been displayed by colleagues from across the University.

The Principal noted that the UE was due in October 2015 to have its next strategic discussion day. The Principal noted that this would now be a leadership forum attended by academic and professional services leaders from across the University and designed to facilitate discussions on strategic issues. The UE noted that the Principal would following the meeting circulate further advice on the leadership forum. The UE noted that consideration would be given to the best means of facilitating the participation of colleagues from the University's international campuses.

The Principal noted that the results of the UK Government's latest spending review were due to be announced in November 2015. The UE noted that it was likely that following the review there would be a further tightening of public expenditure and that this would have significant implications for universities. The UE noted that in response the University would need to review its financial performance and consider how it could continue to grow its income.

The UE noted that in September 2015 the Principal had attended the Universities UK annual members' conference. The UE noted that the conference had discussed:

- a. the implications of the UK Government's proposed Teaching Excellence Framework and the financial incentives that might be associated with this; it was noted that the Framework could have an effect on the recruitment by Scottish universities of students from the other UK nations;
- b. the possibility that there would be further tightening in the UK's immigration and visa rules, such as higher English language entry requirements for those seeking to study or work in the UK, and the effects that this could have on the ability of universities to recruit qualified students and staff; and
- c. the new rules on counter-terrorism and the prevention of extremism emerging from the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the range of views that those rules had elicited; it was noted that there was scope for universities to take a pragmatic approach in implementing the new rules and that a report on their implementation within the University would be presented to the UE at its meeting in November 2015.

M15/173 HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15 [Paper UE/15/134]

The UE received and considered the annual Health and Safety Report for the 2014-15 academic year which was presented by the Head of Health and Safety Services.

The UE noted the contents of the report and, in particular, the following items:

- a. enhanced oversight arrangements with respect to the University's international campuses;
- b. a new framework for legislative compliance with respect to operations at the Malaysia campus and the development of the first health and safety plan for the campus;
- c. the launch of a new incident response system which facilitated easier management information reporting; and
- d. enhanced oversight arrangements with respect to academic activities involving genetic manipulation and biological safety and which supported compliance with statutory obligations.

The UE noted that several of the groups responsible for aspects of health and safety oversight currently met only annually but that it was expected that they would begin to meet more regularly as they became more established.

The UE noted that there was currently no automated system for the handling of Control of Substances Hazardous to Health documentation. The UE noted that there would be costs in purchasing or developing a new system and that the existing system enabled the University to fulfil regulatory requirements. The UE agreed that the Head of Health and Safety Services should consider the need for an automated handling system and the options available in this respect.

The UE welcomed the report and noted that the figures for reported incidents involving staff or students were below the sector average. The UE noted the importance of a strong health and safety record as an indicator of an institution's broader culture and agreed that the current Head of Health and Safety Services had helped to deliver a number of important service enhancements, particularly with respect to the University's international campuses. The UE noted that it was intended that Health and Safety Services would expand their role in areas relating to disaster management and business continuity.

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

M15/174 INFORMATION SYSTEMS PROJECTS 2015-16 [Paper UE/15/135]

The UE received and considered a report presented by the Director of Information Services on a proposal to reallocate spending of the approved 2015-16 Information Services capital fund.

The UE noted that the first two phases of the new iHR system had been delivered on time and on budget and that it had been planned that a third phase of the system would be launched in the 2015-16 academic year. The UE noted that a review of student-related systems, led by the Academic Registrar, had identified a number of areas for enhancement and that the Strategic Information Systems Committee had agreed that phase three of the iHR system should be postponed and the planned expenditure within 2015-16 Information Services capital fund should be reallocated to enhancements of student-related systems.

The UE endorsed the proposal to reallocate funds to enhancements of student-related systems and approved the proposed investment plan described in the report.

The UE noted a question as to investment in systems that supported the University's compliance in relation to open access to research data. The UE agreed that the Director of Information Services and the Deputy Principal (Research and Knowledge Exchange) should consider current and future systems requirements with respect to open access to research data and circulate a briefing note on this to members of the UE.

M15/175 UPDATE REPORT ON STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE MALAYSIA CAMPUS [Paper UE/15/137]

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

The UE noted that the report provided an update on student recruitment in relation to the strategic development of the Malaysian campus following the report considered by the UE at its meeting in August 2015 [M15/144].

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

The UE agreed that it should consider a further update report at its meeting in November 2015 and that a report should be prepared for onward presentation to the Court on the University's response to current student recruitment levels at the Malaysia campus.

M15/177 WEST LONDON COLLEGE: UPDATE REPORT [Paper UE/15/138]

The UE received and considered a report presented by the Deputy Principal (External Relations) on the University's partnership with West London College.

The UE noted that the report provided an update on the nature of the University's future relationship with West London College following the report considered by the UE at its meeting in August 2015 [M15/145].

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

M15/178 REFINING THE UNIVERSITY BRAND

The UE received and considered a presentation from the Director of Marketing and Communications with colleagues from The Roundhouse on refining the University's brand.

The UE noted that The Roundhouse had been engaged to help the University refine its brand and that their initial work had involved interviews with senior managers, staff, students, and prospective applicants.

The UE noted that as a result of those interviews it had been possible to analyse perceptions of the University's current brand and to identify a number of strengths and weaknesses relating to this. The UE noted that on the basis of these findings a new brand "boilerplate" had been prepared for consultation. The UE noted that the purpose of the boilerplate was to succinctly describe what the University is, where it comes from, and where it is directing its attention. The UE noted that the boilerplate would serve to differentiate the University from other institutions and would in turn form the basis for the development of the University's brand guidelines and set the tone for its communications.

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

The UE noted that a summary version of the presentation would be made available following the meeting and that members of the UE and other colleagues as appropriate would be invited to share their views on the proposed boilerplate. The UE noted that in October 2015 the boilerplate would be presented for the consideration of the Court and that there would be time for further discussions at the October 2015 leadership forum before a final version was prepared and presented to the UE for approval at its meeting in November 2015. The UE noted that, subject to approval, the proposed boilerplate and developments in the University's brand and communications would be phased to better manage the costs associated with replacing print materials and other branded content.

M15/179 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORTS: DUBAI AND MALAYSIA CAMPUSES [Papers UE/15/140 and UE/15/141]

The UE received and considered draft annual reports from the Dubai and Malaysia Campuses presented by the Vice-Principal (Dubai) and the Vice-Principal (Malaysia).

The UE noted that the reports had been prepared at the request of the Court and that they were intended to provide a general review of achievements from the past academic year that would complement other more detailed performance analyses and reports.

The UE agreed that the drafts should be amended to better reflect their purpose and the level of detail needed by the intended readers of the reports. The UE agreed that each report should be prefaced by an executive summary which noted the most significant achievements and include a summary of current strategic risks and that the reports should be made more consistent in structure and appearance.

The UE endorsed the reports, subject to the agreed amendments, for onward presentation to the Court and, in the case of the report from the Malaysia campus, to its Board of Directors.

M15/180 SCHOOL OF ENERGY, GEOSCIENCE, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND SOCIETY CHANGE PROGRAMME: SUMMARY REPORT [Paper UE/15/142]

The UE received and considered a report presented by the Head of the School of Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure, and Society on the change programme that had been instituted to align working practices across the School following its creation from the merger of the School of the Built Environment with the Institute of Petroleum Engineering.

The UE noted the contents of the report and noted that the programme's objectives had been met in full and that the anticipated benefits had been achieved or would be achieved in the 2015-16 academic year. The UE noted that an overarching benefit of the programme had been the opportunity it had provided for staff to engage in the development of the School in its first year. The UE noted that the programme as a strategic project was now complete and that the report included a project closure statement and a description of the lessons that had been learned. The UE noted that as an exercise in change management, the creation of the School had highlighted the importance of removing staff uncertainty through strong communications, having clarity as to next steps, and getting back to regular operations as soon as possible. The UE noted that the approach taken through the change programme had been commended by the relevant trades unions.

The UE welcomed the report and noted the successful operation of the School in its first year. The UE agreed that all those involved in the creation of the School and the change programme should be thanked for their contributions.

M15/181 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).

M15/182 REPORT FROM THE LEARNING AND TEACHING BOARD [Paper UE/15/143]

The UE received and noted a report of a meeting of the Learning and Teaching Board held on 24 September 2015 which was presented on behalf of the Board by the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching).

Arising from item 8 of the report, the UE noted that discussions on an integrated approach to student learning skills and staff academic development had raised issues relating to the structure of the Academic Registry. The UE agreed that there should be an integrated framework for the development of student learning skills and staff academic practice skills, but that further discussions on the structure of the Academic Registry should take place outside of the Learning and Teaching Board.

The UE noted that the Secretary of the University and the Academic Registrar were already looking at the structure of the Academic Registry and that in the 2015-16 academic year the Deputy Principal (External Relations) was due to launch a review of the Centre for Academic Leadership and Development. The UE agreed that the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching), the Deputy Principal (External Relations), the Secretary of the University, and the Academic Registrar should consider how these various strands of work could be brought together and should present an update report at a future meeting of the UE.

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

M15/183 REPORT FROM THE RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE BOARD [Paper UE/15/144]

The UE received and noted a report of a meeting of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Board held on 24 September 2015 which was presented on behalf of the Board by the interim Deputy Principal (Research and Knowledge Exchange).

Arising from item 3 of the report, the UE noted that the School Directors of Research and Knowledge Exchange had been asked to identify areas of research activity which could form the basis of an application in any forthcoming competition for Regius Professorships.

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

Arising from item 7 of the report, the UE noted that the Research and Knowledge Exchange Board had agreed to establish a working group to support the University's preparations for the 2020 Research Excellence Framework. The UE noted that the Principal and the interim Deputy Principal (Research and Knowledge Exchange) would consider the outcomes of the 2014 Research Excellence Framework and the University's targets for the 2020 Research Excellence Framework and that a report would be presented for the consideration of the UE at a future meeting. The UE noted that Schools would need in the near future to appoint coordinators for each Unit of Assessment to ensure the coordination of preparatory activities at all levels.

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

School of Life Sciences Research Activities

The UE noted that a working group had been established to consider the relocation of research activities from the School of Life Sciences to other Schools. The UE noted that the group would meet for the first time in October 2015.

Analysis of Research Proposals and Awards

The UE noted analyses of research proposals and awards as of July 2015 and August 2015.

[Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.30 and s.33]**M15/184 REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL (EXTERNAL RELATIONS)**

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

Review of the School of Life Sciences

The UE noted that feedback on the announcement of the outcomes of the review of the School of Life Sciences had been constructive and that discussions with the Students' Union and the Universities and Colleges Union were continuing. The UE noted that staff from the School had requested additional information on the review's findings and that this would be made available.

[Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.30 and s.33]**M15/185 ATHENA SWAN UPDATE [Paper UE/15/145]**

The UE received and noted a report presented by the Deputy Principal (External Relations) on progress with respect to Athena SWAN accreditation since May 2015.

The UE noted the contents of the report and, in particular, the following items:

- a. the outcomes would be announced in October 2015 of the applications for Bronze Award status from the School of Engineering and Physical Sciences and the School of Mathematics and Computer Sciences;
- b. it was expected that the applications for Bronze Awards status from the School of Management and Languages and the School of Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure, and Society would be submitted in November 2015; and
- c. it was expected that the application for Bronze Awards status from the School of Textiles and Design would be submitted in April 2016.

M15/186 REPORT FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE UNIVERSITY AND REPORT FROM THE SECRETARY'S BOARD [Paper UE/15/146]

The UE received and noted the July 2015 Secretary's Board Bulletin which was presented on behalf of the Board by the Secretary of the University.

The UE received and noted a report of a meeting of the Secretary's Board held on 1 September 2015 and which was presented on behalf of the Board by the Secretary of the University.

Arising from item 3 of the report, the UE noted the development of the Supporting Family Life suite of policies. The UE noted the possible cost implications of the changes in policy on paid paternity leave and noted that the suite of policies would be presented for the approval of the UE at a future meeting.

Arising from item 6 of the report, the UE noted that the Secretary's Board had approved the terms of reference for a University Prevent Group. The UE noted that the Prevent Group would coordinate the University's response to the Prevent duty guidance which requires Scottish authorities to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The UE noted the importance of the University being able to meet its obligations under the Prevent guidance and being consistent in its response to an area of complex legislation. The UE noted that a report on the University's response would be presented for the consideration of the UE at its meeting in November 2015 and that the report would include proposals for an associated staff training programme.

Arising from item 12 of the report, the UE noted that the Secretary's Board had approved the rationalisation of the University's various internal student surveys into a single annual survey to be complemented by feedback from a student panel. The UE noted that a working group had been established to develop the annual survey and student panel and that it was expected that these would be launched in February 2016.

Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill

The UE noted that the Education and Culture Committee of the Scottish Parliament would in October 2015 hear evidence on the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill. The UE noted that the Secretary of the University had been invited to provide evidence to the Committee.

M15/187 STUDENT ENROLMENTS OVERVIEW AT SEPTEMBER 2015 [Paper UE/15/147]

The UE received and considered a report presented by the Director of Planning on student enrolments as of September 2015.

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

M15/188 SENIOR PROMOTIONS (ACADEMIC) APPEAL HEARING [Paper UE/15/148]

The UE received and noted a report on the outcomes of a senior promotions (academic) appeal that had been heard in September 2015.

The UE approved the recommendations contained in the report with respect to the promotions appeals process.

M15/189 HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT SIX-MONTHLY REPORT [Paper UE/15/149]

The UE received and noted a six-monthly report from Human Resources Development covering the period March to August 2015.

The UE noted the record of academic staff appointments, promotions, and leavers for onward presentation to the Senate and the Court.

M15/190 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: SOCIAL MEDIA AND REPUTATION [Paper UE/15/150]

The UE received and noted a report on an internal audit of the reputational risks arising from institutional uses of social media.

The UE noted that, as agreed by the UE in August 2015 [M15/148], the recommended management actions contained in the report had been amended to better reflect existing staff engagement with social media.

The UE noted that the report would be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting in October 2015.

M15/191 VACANCY MANAGEMENT GROUP: TERMS OF REFERENCE 2015-16 [Paper UE/15/151]

The UE received and noted the terms of reference for the Vacancy Management Group in the 2015-16 academic year.

The UE approved the terms of reference.

M15/192 CONSULTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS LOGS [Paper UE/15/152]

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

M15/193 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The UE noted that the leadership forum would be held on 22 October 2015 and that the next meeting of the UE would be held on 10 November 2015.

Signed

Date