

THE UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE

Minutes: 1 February 2016

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- In the Chair: Professor Richard A Williams, Principal and Vice-Chancellor
- Present Also: Professor Julian Jones, Vice-Principal
Professor Robert Craik, Vice-Principal (Malaysia)
Professor Ammar Kaka, Vice-Principal (Dubai)*
Professor Gill Hogg, Deputy Principal (External Relations)
Professor John Sawkins, Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching)
Professor Gavin Gibson, Interim Head (Mathematics and Computer Sciences)
Mr Alick Kitchin, Acting Head, (Edinburgh Business School)*
Professor Robert MacIntosh, Head (Management and Languages)
Professor Stephen McLaughlin, Head (Engineering and Physical Sciences)
Dr Peter Morris, Interim Head (Life Sciences)
Professor Gareth Pender, Head (Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure, and Society)
Professor Fiona Waldron, Head (Textiles and Design)
Ms Ann Marie Dalton, Secretary of the University
Mr Andrew Menzies, Director of Finance
- In Attendance: Mr Richard McGookin, Director of Planning
Mr Mark Adderley, Director of Human Resources Development
Mr Brett Dodgson, Clerk
- Apologies: Professor Duncan Hand, Interim Deputy Principal (Research and Knowledge Exchange)
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* Indicates member participating remotely

MINUTE REF

M16/024 WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed to the meeting the members of the UE and those colleagues who were in attendance.

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

M16/025 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The UE considered the minutes of the meetings held 11 January 2016 and 18 January 2016.

The UE agreed that any suggested amendments to the minutes should be submitted to the Clerk by the end of the day and that, should no amendments be suggested, the minutes would be approved as a correct record.

M16/026 MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS LOG

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

The UE noted that the actions log would be circulated following the approval of the minutes of the last two meetings as a correct record.

M16/027 REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

The UE considered a verbal report from the Principal and Chair.

The Principal and the Vice-Principal had met with representatives of the Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council to discuss possible reductions in the university sector's funding from the Scottish Funding Council. The UE noted that it was expected that some universities would face smaller reductions than others and that some could see reductions significantly greater than the expected average of 3.3%. It was expected that the indicative settlement would be released later in the week and that, although core funding for teaching and research were likely to be protected, funding for strategic projects could be vulnerable.

The Principal drew attention to an article which had recently been published in the THE ("Several London Post-92s See Falls in Battle for Students") which reported on how the UK Government's removal of student number controls had led some English universities to increase their student intake by more than 20% while others have recorded falls of up to 10%. The Principal noted that Scottish universities would inevitably be affected by ever-greater competition for students from the rest of the UK and that, potentially, issues relating to recruitment could present a more significant risk than a reduction in funding from the Scottish Funding Council. In that context, conversion of applicants would continue to be of critical importance and the Secretary of the University had convened a group which would consider ways to further improve conversion rates; Heads of Schools were invited to nominate academic members of staff who would be willing to join this group.

The Principal noted that Personal Development Reviews with members of the UE would start later in the week. Following the discussion on shared team objectives [minute 16/023], a common template had been prepared and circulated to UE members comprising the UE team objectives and members' School/service role objectives.

The Principal circulated a summary of the outputs from the University Leadership Forum held 28 January 2016 and invited members to submit any suggested amendments to the Clerk by the end of the day. It was noted that the Forum had had a positive atmosphere and had created space for valuable discussions.

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

The Principal noted that the position of Deputy Principal (Research and Knowledge Exchange) would soon be re-advertised and that adverts would be published for the positions of deputies for the Dubai and Malaysia campuses. A new position of Deputy Principal (Business and Enterprise) was also planned and it was intended that the post-holder would lead improvements in the University's relations with businesses and enliven the research park at the Edinburgh campus. It was noted that some realignment in the roles of the Deputy Principals might be needed following the creation of this post and that members of the UE were invited to share their views on this privately with the Principal.

M16/028 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT [Paper UEP/16/019]

The UE considered the scope of the audit, its findings, and the management actions arising from these. The UE approved the recommended management actions. It was noted that some of the issues raised by the report would be addressed by the new Research Management Administration System and that the report should be shared with the Director of Research and Enterprise Services to take forward actions in other areas.

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M16/029 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: IT GENERAL CONTROLS [Paper UEP/16/020]

The UE considered the scope of the audit, its findings, and the management actions arising from these. The UE approved the recommended management actions and agreed that the Secretary of the University and the Director of Information Services should develop a policy on network access including network access by former staff. The UE noted that in response to an earlier audit report on IT attack and penetration testing the Director of Information Services was preparing an action plan which would address some of the issues identified by this audit.

M16/030 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN, AND MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS [Paper UEP/16/021]

The UE considered the scope of the audit, its findings, and the management actions arising from these. The UE approved the recommended management actions and agreed that the report should be shared with the Director of Estates and Campus Services to take forward these actions.

M16/031 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY UPDATE [Paper UEP/16/022]

The UE considered the actions which had been undertaken or were planned in response to the 2015 employee engagement survey [minute 15/118] and agreed that, in advance of the report being presented to the Staff Committee, the Director of Human Resources should ensure that the report reflected progress to date in full – for example, by including outputs from the University Leadership Forum in relation to Personal and Development Reviews. The UE noted that questions remained as to the use in Personal and Development Reviews of performance data and, in particular, data relating to teaching activities. It was agreed that at a future meeting the UE should consider issues relating to such use of performance data.

The UE agreed that it should continue to receive reports each quarter on progress against University and local action plans and that future reports should use red/amber/green coding to indicate progress. Heads of Schools were encouraged to advise Human Resources Development of ongoing progress to help ensure that these reports were complete.

M16/032 UNIVERSITIES SUPERANNUATION SCHEME AND NATIONAL INSURANCE CHANGES [Paper UEP/16/023]

The UE noted that the final salary section of the Universities Superannuation Scheme would end on 31 March 2016 and that, from 1 April 2016, member contributions would increase to 8% of salary resulting in a reduction in take home pay. Additionally, from 6 April 2016 Basic and Additional State Pensions would be replaced by a flat-rate State Pension; from that date all employees would pay a standard rate of National Insurance and this would lead to a further reduction in take home pay.

The UE noted that efforts to communicate these changes were already underway by means of notices in staff payslips and seminars which all staff were encouraged to attend. Targeted emails would also be used to notify effected staff.

The UE approved the plan for communicating these changes to staff and agreed that the Director of Human Resources Development should prepare a version of the paper which could be circulated to Heads of Schools and department heads and used by them to respond to enquiries from academic staff.

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M16/033 EDUCATION ALLOWANCE FOR STAFF AT DUBAI CAMPUS [Paper UEP/16/024]

The UE noted that it had considered in December 2015 initial proposals to introduce an education allowance for staff employed at the Dubai campus [minute 15/258].

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

M16/034 SCOTTISH BUSINESS PLEDGE [Paper UEP/16/025]

The UE considered a report on the Scottish Business Pledge, a voluntary code for companies which had been launched by the Scottish Government in May 2015. Signatories to date included the University of Edinburgh, Glasgow Caledonian University, and Forth Valley College.

The UE noted that the Pledge comprised nine components and that for several of these components the University was already compliant with the requirements of the Pledge. **[Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.30 and s.33]**

M16/035 RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE BOARD [Papers UEP/16/026 and UEP/16/027]

The UE received the minutes of the meetings held 11 December 2015 and 13 January 2016.

The UE considered the Board's terms of reference as amended for the 2015-16 academic year. The UE agreed that the Secretary of the University should discuss the terms of reference with the Deputy Principal (Research and Knowledge Exchange) and that these should be re-presented for approval at a future business meeting.

M16/036 LEARNING AND TEACHING BOARD [Paper UEP/16/028]

The UE received the minutes of the meeting held 20 January 2016.

Arising from minute 16/006, the UE noted that the Board had considered the effectiveness of the operation of the Boards of Studies and the role of Senior Director of Studies and had made recommendations for briefings and improving communications relating to academic management structures.

M16/037 RISK AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY BOARD [Paper UEP/16/029]

The UE received the minutes of the meeting held 14 January 2016.

The UE noted the strategic risk register, UK and international campuses risk register, and the strategic projects register.

M16/038 SECRETARY'S BOARD [Paper UEP/16/030]

The UE received the minutes of the meeting held 12 January 2016.

M16/039 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The UE noted that its next meeting would be held 8 February 2016.

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Signed by Chair

Date