

THE UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE

Minutes: 29 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 Duncan Hand, Interim Deputy Principal (Research and Knowledge Exchange)
Professor Ammar Kaka, Vice-Principal (Dubai)*
Mr Alick Kitchin, Acting Head (Edinburgh Business School)*
Professor John Sawkins, Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching)
Professor Gavin Gibson, Interim Head (Mathematics and Computer Sciences)
Professor Robert MacIntosh, Head (Management and Languages)
Professor Stephen McLaughlin, Head (Engineering and Physical Sciences)
Mr Andrew Menzies, Director of Finance
- In Attendance: Ms Lisa Herlihy, Clerk for the meeting
Mr Richard McGookin, Director of Planning
- Apologies: Ms Ann Marie Dalton, Secretary of the University
Mr Brett Dodgson, Clerk
Professor Gill Hogg, Deputy Principal (External Relations)
Dr Peter Morris, Interim Head (Life Sciences)
Professor Gareth Pender, Head (Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure, and Society)
Professor Fiona Waldron, Head (Textiles and Design)

* Indicates member participating remotely

MINUTE REF
M16/068

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

M16/069

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The UE considered the minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2016 and approved them as an accurate record.

M16/070

MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS LOG

The Principal and Chair highlighted that a number of actions on the log were currently without a deadline. The Principal, in conjunction with the Clerk, would liaise with action owners to set deadlines. The UE noted that a four-week forward agenda plan for the UE had been developed by the Clerk and that this would be circulated electronically to members.

Arising from minute 16/061, the UE noted that minor modifications had been made to the report on Research Culture and the Research Excellence Framework [UEP/16/041], based on comments from Heads of School. The revised report would now be presented to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Board. The Principal and Chair confirmed that the report would be presented to the Court at its meeting in June 2016 for their information. The UE received and noted the actions log.

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M16/071 REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

In a verbal report the Principal and Chair highlighted that the University had recently received the Queen's Anniversary Prize. A number of Heriot-Watt students had attended the ceremony at Buckingham Palace as part of the celebrations. The Principal and Chair noted that the medal received would be displayed at the Court meeting in March 2016.

The UE noted that the Court would meet on 4 March 2016, and that this meeting would be preceded by a dinner on 3 March 2016. The topic of the dinner discussion would be 'Bricks or Clicks?' and presenters would explore, via case studies, the right balance between investment in physical learning spaces and in online teaching methods and resources. The UE agreed that the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) would circulate the presentations to the UE for information.

M16/072 SENIOR OFFICER DEPUTISING AND ABSENCES: POLICY AND PROCEDURES [Paper: UEP/16/049]

The UE considered the draft Policy and Procedures on Senior Officer deputising and absences. The Principal and Chair noted that currently the arrangements for deputising in the absence of senior colleagues was not entirely clear and that the Policy aimed to clarify these arrangements.

During the course of discussion, members of the UE fed back the following comments:

- that some Schools had in place Deputy Heads of School who would deputise in case of absence. This was not currently reflected in Appendix 1 of the Policy 'Deputising Arrangements';
- uncertainty regarding whether the Deans should be covered by this Policy;
- that the deputising arrangements for the Secretary could include an academic lead in order to ensure completeness;
- that it would be helpful to have a single Director of Professional Services who would cover general queries in the absence of the Secretary, alongside the current arrangement where each Director deputised in their own specialist area;
- that the Policy required deputising arrangements when Senior Officers were unable to undertake their duties. This currently included situations where Senior Officers were absent from their "home" campus for a full working day or more. It was suggested that this would be better phrased as 'out of contact for a full working day or more', as this was more likely to be problematic; and
- that a deputising procedure had previously been in place at the University and that a comparison between the new Policy and this procedure would be helpful.

The Principal and Chair confirmed that the Heads of School could assign deputies according to the most sensible arrangement in their School, and that records would be maintained by the administrative team in the Office of the Principal. It was agreed that all those named would affirm to the Secretary their deputising officers by the end of this week. The UE also agreed that the Policy would be reviewed in light of the above comments and would then be presented for approval.

M16/073 ACADEMIC STAFF RECRUITMENT: UPDATE [Paper: UEP/16/50]

The UE considered an update on academic staff recruitment, which summarised all academic appointments, whether under the Global Platform strategic project or otherwise, over the period July 2015 to December 2015.

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

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The UE endorsed the proposal that academic recruitment would be a substantive agenda item at the Planning Round meetings, commencing 21 March 2016. Through this process Schools would:

- identify specific candidate areas for recruitment;
- set targets for numbers of appointments and their phasing; and
- indicate support that they would need to achieve the targets.

The Vice-Principal identified that the process would be complete by early April 2016. At this point the UE would receive a report outlining the requirements and approach identified by Schools and next steps for implementing this approach. The UE agreed that the Principal, the Vice-Principal and the Director of HRD would meet to discuss effective management of the academic recruitment process.

The UE agreed that the Vice-Principal, in conjunction with the Principal and the Interim Deputy Principal (Research and Knowledge Exchange), would review the new Postgraduate Taught (PGT) programmes being developed, the recruitment of Chairs for REF2020 and the University's research vision, and would consider how to bring all of these threads together. The conclusions reached would be reported to the UE at a future meeting.

M16/074 FOUNDATION PROGRAMMES [Paper: UEP/16/051]

The UE considered a paper on Foundation Programmes and endorsed the principle that these programmes might, in future, be used by Schools in making admissions decisions for students wishing to study degree programmes at any of the University's campuses. There would no longer be any requirement or presumption that students completing a Foundation Programme at a particular location would only be offered admission to a degree programme at that location.

M16/075 TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK

The UE considered an oral update on UK Government plans for the introduction of a Teaching Excellence Framework, including discussions over the future of quality arrangements. The UE noted the publication on 29 February 2016 of the Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) Select Committee Report into the TEF and HE quality arrangements.

The UE noted that Scottish HEIs, through Universities Scotland, were working to feed into current Teaching Excellence Framework discussions.

M16/076 DRAFT OUTCOME AGREEMENT 2016-17 [Paper: UEP/16/052]

The UE considered a paper on the draft Outcome Agreement 2016-17, noting that this had been agreed by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) subject to approval by the University Executive and the Court.

The Director of Planning highlighted that a 3-5 year programme of activities had been set out in Heriot-Watt's Outcome Agreement 2013-14 to 2016-17 document. Much of this material had been maintained in the Outcome agreement for 2016-17, with two key changes:

1. that the SFC had cancelled the fourth and final tranche of funding for additional funded undergraduate places for widening access and college articulation schemes. However the University was expected to continue to set aspirational targets with respect to such schemes via their core resource; and
2. that a Carbon Management Plan had been developed and a commitment had been made to an absolute emission reduction target of 12% by 2019-20.

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The UE further discussed the widening access targets and agreed that the cost of maintaining these targets through core resource would be identified. It was noted that the Introduction for the Outcome Agreement was still in draft and would be completed by the Principal and Chair, including mention of the appointment of a Deputy Principal (Enterprise and Business).

The UE discussed the topic of progression rates, highlighting that these were not currently considered by the SFC and had no penalty attached to poor performance. The UE confirmed that the University wished to improve progression rates and that the Director of Planning would further investigate the current situation and would make recommendations for how the factors effecting progression could be mitigated in future.

M16/077 2016 FIVE YEAR PLAN: UPDATE

The UE received a presentation on the 2016 Five Year Plan, including prospects, envelopes and capital plans.

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

M16/078 RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE BOARD: MINUTES OF MEETING 15 FEBRUARY 2016 [Paper: UEP/16/055]

The UE received a report from the Research and Knowledge Exchange Board (RKEB) meeting held on 15 February 2016. The UE noted a recent review of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASS) research activity and highlighted that a number of useful recommendations had been produced by the review and had been endorsed by RKEB. A key issue arising from the report was the perception that HASS research was undervalued at Heriot-Watt.

The UE agreed that a revised report, incorporating the amendments suggested by RKEB, would be circulated to the UE and would form the basis for a future discussion. The UE also agreed that Professor Mairead Nic Craith would be invited to UE to discuss the main recommendations from the report.

M16/079 SECRETARY’S BOARD: MINUTES OF MEETING 2 FEBRUARY 2016 [Paper: UEP/16/054]

The UE received a report from the Secretary’s Board meeting held on 2 February 2016.

M16/080 APPLICANT CONVERSION UPDATE – 26 FEBRUARY 2016

The UE received an update on applicant conversion, as at 26 February 2016.

M16/081 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The UE noted that its next meeting would be held 7 March 2016.

Signed by Chair

Date