

THE UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE

Minutes: 11 April 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 Gill Hogg, Deputy Principal (External Relations)
Professor John Sawkins, Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching)
Mr Alick Kitchin, Acting Head (Edinburgh Business School)
Dr Peter Morris, Interim Head (Life Sciences)
Professor Beatrice Pelloni, Head (Mathematics and Computer 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
Professor Mairead Nic Craith, Assistant Deputy Principal (Research)
Mr Paul Travill, Academic Registrar
Mr Steven Watson, Scholarship and Global Student Programme Manager
Mr Brett Dodgson, Clerk
- Apologies: Professor Ammar Kaka, Vice-Principal (Dubai)
Professor Robert MacIntosh, Head (Management and Languages)
Professor Stephen McLaughlin, Head (Engineering and Physical Sciences)

* Indicates member participating remotely

MINUTE REF

M16/131

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

[Clerk's Note: The business recorded under minutes 16/135 to 16/140 inclusive was taken first at the meeting.]

M16/132

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING [Papers: UE/16/086A and UE/16/086B]

The UE considered the minutes of the meetings held 21 March 2016 and 4 April 2016 and approved them as a correct record.

Arising from minute 16/104, the UE noted that, as part of the current review of the University's taught postgraduate programme portfolio, a "sandpit" event was to be hosted in May 2016 at which opportunities for new collaborative programmes would be considered. It was noted that further advice regarding this event would be circulated separately.

Arising from minute 16/119, the UE noted that the Universities and Colleges Union had notified the University of its intention to ballot its members for industrial action. **[Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.30 and s.33]**

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Arising from minute 16/120, the UE noted that details would shortly be circulated to all staff regarding the open meetings to be held as part of the Thinking About Our Futures initiative. It was noted that the first open meeting would be held 20 May 2016 at the Malaysia campus and that the Principal would, in advance of this, circulate to the UE the content of his presentation for the meeting.

Arising from minute 16/122, the UE agreed that there should be a clear commitment to ensuring that applications to taught degree programmes at the Scottish campuses should be processed within the agreed maximum turnaround time. **[Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.30 and s.33]**

Arising from minute 16/127, the UE noted progress in refining the capital investment programme and that recommendations would be presented to the UE in due course. The Vice-Principal emphasised the need to ensure that final budget plans were robust and were submitted on time.

M16/133 ACTIONS LOG AND FORWARD AGENDA [Paper: UE/16/087]

The UE received the actions log as at 4 April 2016 and the forward agenda to 13 June 2016.

It was noted that, owing to the volume of business, written reports for presentation to the UE must be submitted to the Clerk by the agreed deadlines. To aid the flow of business, it was anticipated that some written reports would be considered by correspondence. The Clerk would continue to liaise with members of the UE regarding reports which did not yet have an agreed landing date.

M16/134 REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

In a verbal report the Principal and Chair noted that, in the first of a series of planned commentaries, he had published an article sharing his perspective on contemporary issues relevant to the University. In that article the Principal had drawn attention to the clear view within the higher education sector that there would be severe financial consequences for universities should the UK withdraw from membership of the EU.

The Principal drew attention to an announcement by the City of Edinburgh Council that a number of schools within the city would be closed until further notice owing to structural concerns with the school buildings. It was noted that advice for staff effected by the school closures would be circulated shortly by the Director of Human Resources Development.

Finally, it was noted that work was continuing on proposals to re-focus the University's research activity and arrange this around a number of cross-cutting themes. Partners from outside the University were contributing to this work.

M16/135 HUMANITIES, ARTS, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES TASK FORCE: REPORT [Paper: UE/16/088]

The UE considered the final report of the Humanities, Arts, and Social Science Task Force.

It was noted that the Task Force had been convened to review humanities, arts, and social science scholarship across the University and to consider ways in which the University might build on this as part of its overall strategy of research intensification. The findings and the recommendations of the Task Force were noted, including those areas which had been identified being priorities for action.

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

It was noted that many UK universities now encouraged researchers to create an individual ORCID identifier. ORCID was a registry of such identifiers allowing research activities and outputs to be linked to that individual regardless of disciplinary, institutional, or national boundaries. It was noted that the University did not currently encourage the use of ORCID identifiers but that there could be good reasons for doing so. The UE agreed that the Deputy Principal (Research and Knowledge Exchange) should develop for the consideration of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Board proposals on the use of ORCID identifiers.

M16/136 RESEARCH COUNCILS UK STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND SPENDING PLAN 2016-20

The UE received a verbal report on the UK Research Councils' Strategic Priorities and Spending Plan for 2016-20.

It was noted that significant tranches of funding had already been committed and that this illustrated the need for both effective intelligence-sharing mechanisms and proactive and early engagement with research funders. The continuing importance of consortium-led bids was also noted as evidence of the value of engagement in networks with other universities and industrial partners.

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

M16/137 SCHOLARSHIPS, BURSARIES, AND FEE ABATEMENTS REVIEW [Paper: UE/16/090]

The UE considered the findings of a review of the University's portfolio of scholarships, bursaries, and fee abatements.

It was noted that the review had sought to establish a complete picture of the funding opportunities available to applicants and current students in respect of taught degree programmes at the Scottish campuses. The review had found that, where management of funding opportunities had been devolved to the Schools, variations in practice had developed with respect to eligibility for funding, award value, and award nomenclature.

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

The UE agreed that a complementary review of funding opportunities for research degree programmes should also be completed.

The UE agreed that there should be an integrated approach to decision making on fees and scholarships and noted that the terms of reference for the Fees Working Group described its responsibilities in relation to scholarships [minute 16/112]. It was noted that the findings of the review would be presented to both the Fees Working Group and the Finance Committee for endorsement.

The UE agreed that, within the overall scholarships framework, each School should have a clear strategy as to how scholarships and funding opportunities would be used to leverage external funding, grow quality, and support the achieving of student recruitment targets. It was agreed that the Scholarships Manager should liaise with relevant colleagues from each School to map local strategies for the award of scholarships and funding opportunities and should present a composite report to the UE.

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M16/138 SCHOLARSHIPS FOR REFUGEE STUDENTS [Paper: UE/16/091]

The UE considered a proposal to provide scholarships for students who had been granted refugee status by the UK government.

It was noted that the proposals related to students at the Scottish campuses only. It was noted that there had been no demand for similar support at the Malaysia campus and that the Deputy Principal (External Relations) would consult with the Vice-Principal (Dubai) as to where there had been any such demand at the Dubai campus.

The UE agreed that each School should commit one full fee waiver scholarship for a suitably qualified taught postgraduate student who had been granted refugee status by the UK government. It was further agreed that £20,000 from the income generated from the 2016 telethon campaign should be made available to provide cost of living bursaries worth up to £1,000 each for undergraduate and postgraduate students who had been granted refugee status by the UK government. The UE agreed that it would not be possible to offer scholarships to students who were in the process of seeking asylum in the UK.

The UE agreed that the paper should be revised and made available as the University's Policy on Scholarships for Refugee Students. It was agreed that the Policy should be kept under review.

M16/139 ADMISSION OF STUDENTS TO FOUNDATION PROGRAMME (MALAYSIA) ON PROVISIONAL GRADES [Paper: UE/16/092]

The UE considered a proposal to continue in 2016 an arrangement to permit admission to the Foundation Programme (Malaysia) on the basis of provisional International General Certificate of Education (IGCSE) grades.

It was noted that in March 2015 the UE had agreed that admission to the July 2015 presentation of the Foundation Programme (Malaysia) on the basis of provisional grades should be permitted. Twelve students had subsequently been admitted to the programme under this arrangement.

The UE agreed that this arrangement should continue for the July 2016 presentation of the Foundation Programme (Malaysia) and that the number of students admitted under this arrangement should not exceed 10% of the total student intake. It was agreed that the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) should recommend to the Senate that a Senate committee should be invited to monitor the number and performance of students admitted under this arrangement.

M16/140 FACE-TO-FACE: CORE BRIEF APRIL 2016

The UE received a verbal report on the Face-to-Face initiative.

It was noted that the first core brief had been circulated in March 2016 and had been used by line managers and other leaders as the basis for briefings to staff across the University. It was intended that such briefings would be through existing channels such as team meetings and that separate "Face-to-Face" briefing events were therefore not needed nor did existing channels need to be renamed as "Face-to-Face" briefings. Some feedback on the initiative had been received from professional services staff and it was agreed that Heads of School should encourage feedback from academic staff. It was noted that the initiative would continue to evolve and would be kept under review.

The UE endorsed the proposed topics for the next core brief and noted that this was due to be circulated in mid-April 2016.

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M16/141 COMMISSION ON WIDENING ACCESS: BRIEFING ON FINAL REPORT [Paper: UE/16/093]

The UE received a briefing paper on the final report of the Scottish Government’s Commission on Widening Access.

The UE noted the report and agreed that it should be prepared, following elections in May 2016, to engage with the Scottish Government and with the Scottish Funding Council on the recommendations of the Commission.

M16/142 INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY BOARD [Paper: UE/16/094]

The UE received the minutes of the meeting held 11 February 2016.

The UE noted the report of the business conducted by the Board.

M16/143 CAMPUS SERVICES MANAGEMENT BOARD [Paper: UE/16/095]

The UE received the minutes of the meeting held 8 March 2016.

The UE noted the report of the business conducted by the Board.

M16/144 SECRETARY’S BOARD [Paper: UE/16/096]

The UE received the minutes of the meeting held 1 March 2016.

The UE noted the report of the business conducted by the Board.

M16/145 LEARNING AND TEACHING BOARD [Paper: UE/16/097]

The UE received the report of the away day held 8 March 2016.

The UE noted the report of the business conducted by the Board.

M16/146 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The UE noted that its next meeting would be held 18 April 2016.

Signed by Chair

Date