

THE UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE

Minutes: 6 December 2016

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- In the Chair: Professor Julian Jones, Vice-Principal
- Present Also: Professor Ammar Kaka, Vice-Principal (Dubai)*
Professor Robert Craik, Vice-Principal (Malaysia)*
Professor Gill Hogg, Deputy Principal (Engagement and Staff Development)
Dr Gillian Murray, Deputy Principal (Enterprise and Business)
Professor Gareth Pender, Deputy Principal (Research and Innovation)
Professor John Sawkins, Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching)
Professor Malcolm Chrisp, Head (Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure, and Society)
Professor Robert MacIntosh, Head (Management and Languages)
Professor Beatrice Pelloni, Head (Mathematics and Computer Science)
Professor Fiona Waldron, Head (Textiles and Design)
Professor Mushtak Al-Atabi, Senior Deputy Vice-Principal (Malaysia)*
Ms Ann Marie Dalton-Pillay, Secretary of the University
Mr Richard McGookin, Director of Planning
Mr Mark Adderley, Director of Human Resource Development
- In Attendance: Dr Gillian Thomson, Director of Learning and Teaching (Engineering and Physical Sciences)
Mr Michael Bates, Director of Student Recruitment
Mr Martyn Spence, Director of Marketing and Communication
Mr Brett Dodgson, Clerk
- Apologies: Professor Richard A Williams, Principal and Vice-Chancellor
Professor Stephen McLaughlin, Head (Engineering and Physical Sciences)
Professor Heather McGregor, Executive Dean (Edinburgh Business School)
Mr Andrew Menzies, Director of Finance

* Indicates member participating remotely

MINUTE REF
M16/319

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed to the meeting the members of the UE and those colleagues who were in attendance. The Chair thanked Dr Gillian Thomson for attending on behalf of the School of Engineering and Physical Sciences.

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MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The UE received the minutes of the meeting held 29 November 2016 and approved them as a correct record.

M16/321

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

In a verbal report the Chair thanked members who had provided comments on the draft of the Dubai campus annual report for the 2015-16 academic year [minute 16/311]. The Chair noted that the report would be presented to the Court at its meeting to be held 9 December 2016.

It was noted that it had been intended to present to the Court at the same meeting the financial reports and statements for the financial year to 31 July 2016 [minute 16/306]. The financial reports and statements would now be deferred to a later meeting owing to the need to complete

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additional work to ensure that they were prepared in accordance with UK Financial Reporting Standard 102 and the new Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting for Further and Higher Education 2015.

M16/322 STUDENT RECRUITMENT CONFERENCE

The UE received a verbal report on plans for a student recruitment conference to be held in January 2017.

The UE noted the proposed scope for the conference and noted that it would bring together colleagues from the Scottish, Dubai, and Malaysia campuses as well as recruitment partners from India and China. The Senior Deputy Vice-Principal (Malaysia) would consult with members of the UE as to the objectives for the conference.

M16/323 UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT RECRUITMENT

The UE considered a report on recent trends in the recruitment of undergraduate students at UK universities.

It was noted that:

1. early application rates as reported by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service indicated that across the sector there had been a significant fall in the number of applicants; the number of applicants for undergraduate programmes starting in 2017 was 9.8% lower than at the equivalent point last year;
2. it was thought that post-1992 institutions and pre-1992 institutions that performed less well in national league tables had seen the most significant falls in applicant numbers;
3. a number of factors were thought to be influencing student recruitment including reduced demand – arising from demographic changes, changes in visa requirements for international students, and new providers in the UK and key international markets; increased capacity in the UK and in key international markets; changes in competitor behaviour – such as investment in communication and conversion activities and the use of unconditional offer schemes; and changes in the behaviours and attitude of prospective applicants who were more willing to compare study options and providers; and
4. those pre-1992 institutions outside of the Russell Group who had maintained or grown their levels of student recruitment had done so through delivering an improved student experience, strengthening their programme portfolios, and investment in brand and prospect communications and conversion activities.

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

M16/324 MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE [Paper: UE/16/251]

The UE received and approved the terms of reference for a new Marketing and Recruitment Committee and subordinate working group. It was noted that the Committee would support the achievement of student recruitment targets and would report to the University Executive.

M16/325 UNCONDITIONAL OFFERS SCHEME [Paper: UE/16/251]

The UE considered proposals for a new unconditional offers scheme for admission to undergraduate programmes.

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It was noted that:

1. a number of other UK universities had introduced equivalent schemes whereby exceptional applicants were selected, on the basis of their predicted performance in their final secondary school examinations, to receive an unconditional offer of admission to an undergraduate degree programme;
2. such schemes gave those universities offering them a competitive advantage as it enabled them to recruit high quality applicants earlier in the recruitment cycle; applicants receiving an unconditional offer also benefitted through reduced uncertainty and anxiety;
3. the proposed scheme would see applicants apply in accordance with normal procedures and be considered against the approved admissions requirements for the programme applied for; where the application suggested that the applicant was particularly strong they would be considered for an unconditional offer on the basis of their predicted performance in their final secondary school examinations; applicants who were predicted to meet but not significantly exceed the approved admissions requirements would be given an offer of admission conditional on meeting the requirements;
4. the proposed scheme would be open to applicants for full-time undergraduate degree programmes at any campus whose performance in their final secondary school examinations was predicted to exceed the minimum admissions requirements by 16 tariff points or more;
5. the proposed scheme would be open to applicants presenting A-Level, International Baccalaureate, or equivalent Business and Technology Education Council qualifications but would not be open to (i) applicants subject to Scottish Government intake controls – that is, Scottish and EU domiciled students; and (ii) applicants who would need a visa to study in the UK; and
6. with the agreement of the Head of School programmes with specific admissions requirements could be excluded from the scheme.

The UE endorsed the proposed unconditional offers scheme and agreed that this should be implemented with immediate effect subject to the approval of such amendments to the Academic Regulations as might be needed. It was agreed that the Director of Student Recruitment should work with the Heads of Schools to ensure there was a mechanism by which Schools could ensure that capacity constraints and specific admissions requirements could be reflected in the making of offers through the proposed scheme.

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

M16/326 RECRUITMENT AGENTS: COMMISSION ARRANGEMENTS [Paper: UE/16/251]

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

M16/327 SCHOLARSHIPS POLICY (SCOTTISH CAMPUSES) [Paper: UE/16/251]

The UE considered a new Policy for University-Funded Scholarships at the Scottish Campuses.

It was noted that the Policy was intended to provide a coherent framework for the University's financial support offer. Within the framework each School would offer at least one scholarship of each type but there would be no limit as to the number of scholarships that each School could offer.

The UE approved the Policy and agreed that the Policy should be effective from 1 January 2017 to support applicants for entry in the 2017-18 academic year onward. It was agreed that, to aid the marketing of these scholarships, consideration should be given to the title for each award.

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It was noted that other institutions used titles such as Chancellor's Scholarship, Principal's Scholarship, School of XXX Scholarship, etc. to make such awards more attractive to applicants.

It was agreed that the Schools should agree what scholarships they would each offer within the framework. It was agreed that decisions on the scholarships to be offered should be made within the context of the current financial planning round and reflect a tactical approach to using scholarships so as to support the achieving of recruitment targets. It was agreed that the financial implications of the framework should be mapped to assess its impact on the course fee break even points.

M16/328 GO GLOBAL BURSARIES [Paper: UE/16/251]

The UE considered a proposal to continue funding for bursaries to support students undertaking inter-campus transfers.

The UE approved the release of £75,000 from the University endowments fund to support inter-campus transfers taking place in the 2017-18 academic year. It was agreed that students transferring to the Dubai campus should receive awards of £1,000 in recognition of the higher living costs in the United Arab Emirates; students transferring to the Scottish and Malaysia campuses should receive awards of £500. It was agreed that the term "awards" should be used in preference to "bursaries" in promoting the scheme.

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

M16/329 SENIOR ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS ROUND 2017 [Paper: UE/16/252]

The UE considered proposed changes to the process for promotions to senior academic positions.

It was agreed that:

1. the Planning Office should provide scorecards for all applicants for promotion to senior academic positions;
2. to support the fair treatment of academic staff holding part-time appointments, discipline-level statements of expectations should be agreed for full- and part-time staff and applicants for promotion should be invited to provide information on any relevant specific circumstances which may have affected their ability to meet those expectations – such as parenting or caring leave;
3. applicants for promotion should be required to identify six referees (rather than two as at present) and Schools should identify four assessors (rather than two as at present); all referees and assessors should be of international standing in their discipline and referees should normally be independent of the applicant; panels would recommend promotion only where reports had been obtained from at least three referees and two assessors; and
4. the pre-meeting of the Senior-Promotions Board [minute 16/009] should be replaced with a pre-meeting of the Deputy Principal (Engagement and Staff Development) and the Head of Employee Recognition and Reward.

It was agreed that the UE should be invited to approve a restructured format for the academic curriculum vitae and that this should indicate teaching and learning activity as well as research activity. It was agreed that the Vice-Principal (Dubai) and the Vice-Principal (Malaysia) should consider how the academic curriculum vitae would be used at the international campuses. It was agreed that the academic curriculum vitae should be used by line managers to inform Performance and Development Reviews for academic staff.

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M16/330 FACE-TO-FACE: CORE BRIEF DECEMBER 2016

The UE received the proposed topics for the December 2016 Face-to-Face core brief.

M16/331 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The UE noted that its next meeting would be a business meeting and would be held 13 December 2016.

Signed by Chair

Date