

THE UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2014

Present:

Prof S Chapman, Principal (Chair)
Prof R J M Craik, Vice-Principal (Malaysia) (by Skype)
Ms A-M Dalton, Secretary of the University
Prof G Gibson, Act. Head, Mathematical & Comp Sci (MACS)
Prof G Hogg, Deputy Principal (External Relations)
Prof J Jones, Vice-Principal
Mr A Kitchin, Joint Head, Edinburgh Business School (EBS)
Prof R MacIntosh, Head, Management & Languages (SML)

Prof S McLaughlin, Head, Eng. & Physical Sciences (EPS)
Mr A Menzies, Director of Finance
Prof A Miller, Deputy Principal (Research & KT)
Prof P Morris, Act. Head, Life Sciences (SLS)
Prof G Pender, Head, The Built Environment (SBE)
Prof J W Sawkins, Deputy Principal (Learning & Teaching)
Prof F Waldron, Head, Textiles and Design (TEX)

Present also:

Mr M Adderley, Director of HRD (for minute items 125 and 144)
Ms S Collier, Director of Governance & Legal Services (for minute items 117.2 and 142)
Mr M Deans, Director of Campus Services (for minute items 121 and 122)
Mr Neil Gibson, Senior Sports Scientist (for minute item 123)
Mr R McGookin, Director of Planning
Ms L Kirkwood-Smith, (Clerk to the UE)

Apologies:

Prof A Kaka, Vice-Principal (Dubai)

M14/115 WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

115.1 The Chair welcomed the following individuals to the meeting:

- Mr Mark Adderley, Director of HRD (attending for paper items UE/14/164 and UE/14/180);
- Ms Sue Collier, Director of Governance & Legal Services (attending for paper item UE/14/178 and to brief the UE on EU sanctions on Russia);
- Mr Malcolm Deans, Director of Campus Services (attending for paper items UE/14/182 and UE/14/160); and
- Mr Neil Gibson, Senior Sports Scientist (attending for paper item UE/14/161).

115.2 The Principal expressed thanks and appreciation to Professor Alan Miller Deputy Principal (Research & KT), attending his last meeting of the University Executive before he retires, for the excellent contribution he had made to the University over the period of his appointment.

M14/116 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The UE approved the minutes of its meeting held on 11 November 2014.

M14/117 ACTION LOG AND MATTERS ARISING

117.1 Action Log:

The UE received and noted the Action Log report relating to the meeting held on 11 November 2014.

117.2 Matters arising:

Russian Federation economic sanctions

The Director of Governance & Legal Services (G&LS) updated the UE on current EU economic sanctions against Russia. Heads of Schools were requested to advise the Director of G&LS about any new programmes (degree programmes and especially CPD programmes - which may not be picked up in the normal course approval processes), or research collaborations in order that appropriate due diligence checks can be undertaken to ensure compliance with sanction rules.

M14/118 BUSINESS REPORTED BY THE CHAIR (ORAL)

118.1 USS pensions dispute

The Principal updated the UE on recent discussions relating to the USS pensions dispute, advising that there remained a chance of resumption of the assessment boycott when the current suspension ends on 15 January 2015.

The UE noted that a very small number of Heriot-Watt staff had actively participated in the assessment boycott before its suspension.

M14/119 CONSULTATION AND PUBLICATIONS LOG (Paper UE/14/158)

The UE received and noted a Consultations and Publications Log which reported on current consultations with a deadline date for responses up until January 2015 and recently released external publications.

M14/120 CONSULTATION ON THE HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNANCE BILL (Paper UE/14/159)

The UE received and noted a copy of the Higher Education Governance Bill consultation paper which had been released by the Scottish Government in early November 2014 with a deadline date for responses of 30 January 2015. It was noted that it was intended that the response from Scottish HEIs will be at sector level and therefore the opinions of Heriot-Watt to the matters under consultation will contribute, via Universities Scotland, to the formulation of a sector response. UE members were encouraged to provide their opinions on any part of the consultation paper they so wished and were asked to note a report of the opinions on the consultation paper expressed by the University Senate, which considered the paper at its meeting held on 3 December 2014.

The Secretary of the University provided a supporting presentation which summarised the current and future (post approval of the revised Charter and Statutes) impact on the University of the proposals under consultation.

Reserved section. The section sets out 'opinion' rather than 'information' which would be captured by FOI(S)A legislation.

It was noted that the combined opinion of the Senate and the University Executive would be reported on to the Court, which would consider its views of the proposals in the consultation document at its meeting to be held on 15 December 2014.

M14/121 NATIONAL PERFORMANCE CENTRE FOR SPORT: STAGE E COST REVIEW (Paper UE/14/182)

The UE received and approved a recommendation, presented by the Director of Campus Services in relation to the National Performance Centre for Sport (NPCS) project.

Reserved section: (Ref Section 30, FOI(S)A).

M14/122 NATIONAL PERFORMANCE CENTRE FOR SPORT: CONDITIONS PRECEDENTS (Paper UE/14/160)

The UE received and noted a paper, presented by the Director of Campus Services, which included a summary of conditions precedents relating to the National Performance Centre for Sport.

The summary, which had been prepared by solicitors CMS Cameron McKenna LLP, confirmed the following proposed transactions:

- a Guarantee by the University in favour of Sportscotland;
- a Guarantee by the University in favour of the City of Edinburgh Council;
- a disposition for the transfer of land by the University in favour of Heriot-Watt Services Ltd (the Court received and noted a campus plan with the designated land area highlighted);
- granting of a 'floating charge' by Heriot-Watt Services Ltd in favour of the University, securing HWSL's obligations to the University over all the assets of the company; and
- granting by Heriot-Watt Services Ltd certain security over its assets in favour of Sportscotland

The UE approved the proposals for onward presentation to the Court for consideration and approval at its meeting to be held on 15 December 2014.

M14/123 NATIONAL PERFORMANCE CENTRE FOR SPORT: ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT (Paper UE/14/161)

The UE received and discussed proposals, presented by the Head of Sports Science and the Head of the Centre for Sport and Exercise, for the development of a centre for Sport, Performance and Academic Research (SPARC) at Heriot-Watt University, as a collaborative project between the NPCCS and academic Schools within the University.

Reserved section: (Ref Section 33, FOI(S)A).

The UE noted an opportunity, in due course, to provide the Court with a full update on the academic opportunities associated with the NPCCS development.

M14/124 REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL (RESEARCH & KT) (Paper UE/14/162)

The UE received and noted a report presented by the Deputy Principal (Research & KT).

The report provided an update on research grants and contracts: proposals and awards for the period to the end of November 2014 (period 4). The Deputy Principal highlighted that the overall spend value was close to the same period last year; meanwhile, the value of awards had begun to pick up following a slow start in the first quarter. Both the number and the value of proposals were higher than in the same period last year.

M14/125 REPORT FROM THE RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE BOARD (Paper UE/14/163)

The UE received and approved, for onward presentation to the Senate, a report from the Research & Knowledge Exchange Board which related to the meeting of the Board held on 7 November 2014. All items in the report were presented for information.

The Deputy Principal drew attention in particular to a training programme for doctorate supervisors which was under development. The Board will consider programme proposals which will be tailored to meet both external and internal requirements, in due course. The Deputy Principal also advised the UE that a call out will be made soon in relation to new Scottish Crucible programme events to be run in April/May 2015.

M14/125 HWU REF 2014 – HRD LESSONS LEARNED (Paper UE/14/164)

The UE received and discussed a report, presented by the Director of HRD, which provided an assessment of the Heriot-Watt Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014 exercises highlighting the

human resource related lessons learned which can be carried forward to improve preparations for the REF in the future.

In relation to the earlier UE discussion which focused on the importance of consistency and care in terms of staff contract wording and REF eligibility criteria, the Director of HR confirmed that additional attention will be given to this through additional information gathering and iHR data entry at the staff recruitment stage. The Director confirmed also that the number of received declarations of special circumstances had been very large; lessons learned in the area will be carried forward.

M14/126 REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL (EXTERNAL RELATIONS) (ORAL UPDATE)

126.1 Staff development sessions

The Deputy Principal (External Relations) updated the UE on a continuing series of open sessions on promotion for academic staff. The Deputy Principal also highlighted a recently introduced staff development training session on offer for those with new people management responsibilities. Schools in particular were encouraged to consider these sessions in the context of PDR personal development aims for their staff. Participation of staff from Schools was often proportionately low.

It was suggested that it would be helpful to review the wording used in communication and promotion of training opportunities to ensure that these are relevant and are attractive to academic staff.

Malaysia Campus transition to operational phase

126.2 The Deputy Principal confirmed plans to establish a management committee to oversee the first year of transition of the Malaysia Campus from project to fully operational status.

M14/127 REPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY BOARD (Paper UE/14/166)

The UE received and noted a report from the International Strategy Board which related to the meeting of the Board held on 30 October 2014. All items in the report were presented for information.

M14/128 ATHENA SWAN REPORT (ORAL UPDATE)

The UE received and noted an oral update on recent Athena SWAN developments which was provided by the Deputy Principal (External Relations). The report included an update on the 'Doing things differently' campaign.

The Secretary of the University highlighted plans in the near future to conduct a University-wide audit of flexible working time arrangements with a view to ensuring that local practices align to agreed policy and support delivery of business objectives. Consultation on this matter will involve the Combined Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee (CJNCC).

M14/129 REPORT FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE SECRETARY'S BOARD (Paper UE/14/167)

The UE received and noted reports, presented by the Secretary of the University, which included the Secretary's Board Bulletin, dated November 2014, and a report from the Secretary's Board which related to the meeting of the Board held on 4 November 2014.

The Secretary of the University highlighted, in relation to the Attack and Penetrate Test audit report that the Director of IS had given a presentation to the Audit and Risk Committee and that a further progress report would be provided to the Committee in the early part of 2015. Consultation will be undertaken with the UE before discussion with the Audit and Risk Committee with particular focus on the EPS, MACS and EGIS networks.

M14/130 REPORT FROM THE CAMPUS SERVICES MANAGEMENT BOARD (Paper UE/14/169)

The UE received and noted a report from the Campus Services Management Board which related to

the meeting of the Board held on 6 October 2014.

The Secretary of the University highlighted the intention to dedicate a March 2015 meeting of the Board solely to consideration of the Estate Master Plan currently under development.

M14/131 QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS REPORT (Paper UE/14/170)

The UE received and noted a report of University complaints received and logged for the 2014/15 first quarter: 1 September to 30 November 2014, which was presented by the Secretary of the University.

The UE endorsed the report for onward presentation to the Court as part of the agreed periodic reporting of complaints handling to the Court.

M14/132 MUSEUM & ARCHIVE COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY (Paper UE/14/171)

The UE received and approved a draft revised Museum and Archive Collections Development Policy which was presented by the Secretary of the University. The University Collections Development Policy regulates the acquisition and disposal of items which form part of the Museum and Archive collections of the University and is a necessary requirement for accreditation. The Policy was presented in the context of the agreed two year period of review and re-approval by the University Executive and the Finance Committee.

The UE agreed to recommend the Policy for onward presentation for approval by the Finance Committee at its next meeting to be held in February 2015.

M14/133 STRATEGIC PROJECTS REGISTER (Paper UE/14/181)

The UE received and noted a Strategic Project Register and Projects in the Pipeline report which was presented by the Secretary of the University).

The report detailed the status of the University's strategic projects as at 26 November 2014 including notification of projects which had recently been allocated 'closed' status. New additions to the Register included creation of the School of Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure and Society and development of a Robotics Laboratory and Workshop in the Earl Mountbatten Building.

M14/134 REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL (LEARNING & TEACHING) (Paper UE/14/172)

The UE received and noted a report, presented by the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching), which provided an update on ELIR preparations.

The attention of UE members was drawn to the timetable in particular the commitment of relevant staff member time required at the 28 and 29 January 2015 Part 1 visit date.

M14/135 REPORT FROM THE LEARNING AND TEACHING BOARD (Paper UE/14/173)

The UE received and approved, for onward presentation to the Senate, a report from the Learning & Teaching Board, which related to the meeting of the Board held on 12 November 2014. All items in the report were presented for information.

M14/136 ACADEMIC REVIEWS (Paper UE/14/174)

The UE received and noted a paper, presented by the Deputy Principal (Learning & Teaching), which provided a report on the outcomes of recent Academic Reviews undertaken.

The UE noted the outcomes of the following areas of Academic Review:

- School of the Built Environment (Dubai) (Reviewed in January 2014); and
- MSc in Construction Project Management programme (Malaysia Campus) (Reviewed in March 2014).

It was noted that no University-level actions had been recommended in the case of either review.

M14/137 JANUARY INTAKE FOR DEGREE PROGRAMMES (Paper UE/14/183)

The UE received and discussed a report, presented by the Deputy Principal (Learning & Teaching), which detailed current arrangements for January student intake points for degree programmes. The UE noted and approved two recommendations which were presented in the report, namely:

- the establishment (and resourcing) of a Project led by the Academic Registry, to undertake the work detailed in the report, for completion by December 2015 in time to deal with decisions relating to students admitted in January 2015; and
- subject to Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC) Chair's action by the relevant Dean, to approve the admission of students at the Dubai campus onto SML programmes detailed in USC/DEC14/SML3 in January 2015.

It was noted that the USC had recently raised concerns requiring University Executive level consideration. These emerged from the fact that in a January intake, students would be required to enrol for the next stage of study before progression boards had been convened to make academic decisions on the previous stage, with the risk that a non-continuation or resit decision may require their subsequent withdrawal in a third week of study within the next stage.

In order to mainstream a January entry point it would be necessary therefore to address a number of related matters simultaneously. These included: Academic Regulations, which are predicated on students not progressing from one year to the next until academic decisions have been taken by properly constituted examination boards - (Senate responsibility with the LTB to lead on work); Registry systems where, at present, the 'decision pending' outcome does not create an active student record for the next year, giving rise to various work-around arrangements - (Academic Registry to lead on work); and Visa issues, where if students on visas were to be withdrawn and required to leave before the next resit opportunity, several months hence, they would be counted as non-completing, which would in turn impact upon the HTS metrics. (Governance and Legal Services to lead on work.)

The UE recommended that the Malaysia Campus should be included in the project, noting that a significant non-standard entry point will arise in relation to the Malaysia Campus in April 2015. The Secretary of the University strongly recommended that a pilot exercise is undertaken initially to test revised arrangements / systems.

It was noted that any additional costs required to resource the project would need to form part of the business case for January intakes that would be approved by the Executive in due course.

The Secretary of the University advised that, in consultation with the relevant colleagues, a Risk Register would be developed for the project, and the UE advised subsequently should risks be assessed at 'red' level. The UE noted there will be a significant financial risk associated with any failure to accommodate January 2015 student entry.

M14/138 PROPOSAL FOR A NEW DISCIPLINE, DUBAI CAMPUS (Paper UE/14/184)

Reserved section: (Ref section 33, FOI(S)A).

M14/139 MALAYSIA CAMPUS (HWUM): 5 YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN (Paper UE/14/175)

The UE received and discussed a report, presented jointly by the Vice-Principal, Vice-Principal (Malaysia) and the Deputy Principal (External Relations), which provided a summary of the ongoing review of the HWU Malaysia Business Plan and planning assumptions incorporated in December 2014 updates made to the approved version of the Five-Year Plan. The University Executive was invited to note and comment on both parts of the report.

Reserved section (Ref: Section 30, FOI(S)A.)

It was agreed that further development of the baseline V5.1 of the HWUM Plan should continue over the early part of 2015.

M14/140 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS (FIRST QUARTER) (Paper UE/14/176)

The UE received and noted a Management Accounts report for the period to the end of October 2014 (First Quarter), which was presented by the Director of Finance.

It was noted that caution should be exercised in interpreting the current year end forecasts. In a number of cases, Schools' year-end forecasts extrapolated the adverse variance on tuition fees, even where Schools were developing credible mitigation plans. There was therefore an expectation that a better reflection will be provided by Schools in the next more accurate forecasting exercise following month four of the financial year.

M14/141 JAMES WATT STUDENTSHIPS (Paper UE/14/177)

The UE received and noted a report, presented by the Vice-Principal, which confirmed the current status of the James Watt PhD Studentship Scheme, requirements for reporting in the current year and proposed allocations for 2015/16.

The UE noted the expectation that Schools will report 2014 starts to the Vice-Principal before the end of November 2014.

The UE approved proposed allocations for 2015/16 studentships, noting that some studentships will remain available for this year and that some are likely to be available for redistribution in the coming year. Heads of Schools were invited to advise the Vice-Principal, should they wish their School to be allocated any additional studentships.

The Vice-Principal advised that he would present a proposal at the February 2015 meeting of the UE for two scholarships to be allocated to support the Quantum Technology Hubs programme.

M14/142 DRAFT RISK POLICY AND APPETITE STATEMENT (Paper UE/14/178)

The UE received and discussed a draft Risk Policy and Appetite Statement which was presented by the Director of Governance & Legal Services.

The following recommendations were made in relation to two areas where it would be helpful if the policy was clearer:

- in relation to Learning and Teaching, meeting Quality Assurance Agency requirements is essentially a matter of compliance, this aspect therefore carrying a zero risk tolerance. This should be made explicit; and
- risk tolerance should be measured not only in terms of scale of the risk, but also the scale of the potential consequences attached to that risk, e.g. risk appetite might well be higher in a case where the financial consequences of failure are valued at £1 million, than a case where the financial consequences of failure are valued at £10 million. It would be helpful if the policy expressed this concept more clearly.

The UE otherwise approved the draft Risk Policy and Appetite Statement for onward presentation to the Court for discussion and approval.

M14/143 INTERNAL AUDIT SCHEDULE FOR 2014/15 (Paper UE/14/179)

The UE received and noted a revised internal audit schedule report from the University's Internal Auditor which had been revised following earlier consultation with the UE. The report set out the proposed schedule of internal audit reviews in 2014/15 with a forward plan up until 2018/2019.

It was noted that the revised schedule included dates which clashed with the ELIR timetable. Therefore further revision of the audit schedule would be undertaken.

M14/144 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: iHR BUSINESS READINESS REVIEW (Paper UE/14/180)

The UE received and noted an Internal Audit 'iHR Business Readiness Review' report which was presented jointly by the Secretary of the University and the Director of HRD. The UE accepted the draft management responses in the report, noting that the report would be considered at the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee to be held in February 2014.

M14/145 UPDATES ON SIGNIFICANT SCHOOL/CAMPUS NEWS AND DEVELOPMENTS FROM THE RESPECTIVE HEADS AND THE VICE-PRINCIPALS (DUBAI) AND (MALAYSIA) (ORAL)

The UE received oral updates including items of news from Heads of Schools and the Vice-Principal (Malaysia) who were present at the meeting.

M14/146 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

146.1 Appointment of Principal

The Secretary of the University advised the UE of plans to continue the search in relation to the appointment of Principal & Vice-Chancellor.

M14/147 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The UE noted that the next meeting will take place on Friday 30 January 2015.

Signed

Date