



## University Executive Board

### Minutes of the meeting of 11 July 2023

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**Present:** Professor Shearer West (Vice-Chancellor), Professor Jeremy Gregory (FPVC Arts and interim FPVC Social Sciences), David Hill (CDO), Jaspal Kaur (Director of Human Resources) via Teams, Professor Sam Kingman (FPVC Engineering and interim PVC RKE), Professor Katherine Linehan (PVC EDI and People), Professor Sarah Metcalfe (Provost UNM) via Teams, Professor Nick Miles (Provost UNNC) via Teams, Professor Jane Norman (DVC) via Teams, Professor Robert Mokaya (PVC GE), Professor Clive Robert (FPVC MHS), Professor Sarah Speight (PVC ESE) for minutes, Professor Zoe Wilson (FPVC Science)

**Apologies:** Dr Paul Greatrix (Registrar), Margaret Monckton (CFO),

**Attending:** Rowena Hall (Secretary), Dr Emma Weston (Associate Professor Biosciences), Dr Stephen Bull (Associate Professor, Head of Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering), Helen Pennack (Chief Marketing and Communications Officer) for minutes 23.72, Jason Carter (Director of Governance and Assurance) for minutes 23.73 and 23.74, Kev Thompson (Associate Director for Risk Management) for minutes 23.73 and 23.74, Rachel Newnham (Senior Assurance Manager) for minutes 23.73 and 23.74, Tamsin Majerous, Associate Professor Life Sciences for minute 23.75, Mark Bradley (APVC Teaching and Curriculum Leadership) for minute 23.76, Tracey George (Associate Director Curriculum, Timetabling & Postgraduate Research) for minute 23.76.

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#### 23.69 Welcome, Apologies, Quoracy and Declarations of Interest

- .1 The Chair welcomed Dr Emma Weston, Associate Professor, Biosciences and Dr Stephen Bull, Associate Professor, Head of Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, to the meeting as observers.
- .2 The Secretary confirmed that the meeting was quorate and there were no declarations of interest.

#### 23.70 Minutes of 6 June 2023 and Action Log

- .1 The minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2023 were confirmed as a true record.
- .2 The Action Log was NOTED.

#### 23.71 Chair's business

- .1 The Vice-Chancellor had circulated an update to UEB members prior to the meeting which reflected on the successes and the challenges of the academic year.
- .2 There was some discussion about activity that had become embedded into colleagues' workloads, but where there had been no recent assessment of the value or current need for it.
- .3 It was suggested that it would empower some staff to conduct a review of their current activity, if senior leaders were able to model a review of their own workloads identifying activities to cease or to be deprioritised. It was clarified that the activities referred to were business as usual activities and not strategic project activity.



	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>DUE</b>
.4	To review their workload to identify activities to cease or to be deprioritised.	UEB members	30 September
.5	To require their direct reports to complete a review their workload to identify activities to cease or to be deprioritised.	UEB members	31 October

**23.72 Developing a Brand and Reputation Strategy**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/23/86) from the Chief Marketing and Communications Officer which provided an outline of recent developments which indicated that it was the appropriate time to consider and develop a more comprehensive and far-reaching approach to brand and reputation.
- .2 An overview was provided of the visit by the Chief Marketing and Communications Officer and others to a number of US universities where the focus on brand was more explicit.
- .3 UEB was asked to consider the potential focus of a brand and reputation strategy and the following points were made:
  - .1 There was a distinctiveness about the Nottingham community.
  - .2 The University was sector leading in its approach to equality, diversity and inclusion, and to Curriculum Nottingham.
  - .3 Exceptional discoveries and research strength could be more integral to the University’s story, particularly Sir Peter Mansfield’s MRI work, a number of the REF impact case studies and the current campaign ‘the 100 ways we have changed the world’.
  - .4 Different narratives would likely resonate more effectively for internal and external audiences.
  - .5 The University’s unique position with campuses in three countries was recognised within the sector.
  - .6 There were upcoming and significant anniversaries for the University in 2028 and 2031.
  - .7 There was scope to leverage the handle ‘We are UoN’ in a more effective way.
  - .8 A resource pack containing the Nottingham story designed to meet the brand and reputation strategy would be welcomed by some staff and Council members.
- .4 UEB was thanked for the contributions to the discussion. A draft brand and reputation strategy would be presented for approval in the autumn.

**23.73 Assurance Framework (Statutory Obligations) First Annual Report**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/23/87 from the Director of Governance and Assurance which provided an overview of the process leading to, and a detailed view of the findings from, the first period of self-attestation as part of the University Assurance Framework.
- .2 The Director of Governance and Assurance reminded UEB of the work undertaken to design the Assurance Framework in collaboration with KPMG; its risk based approach leading to focus in its first iteration on themes of finance, procurement, UKVI, information security, safeguarding, people, consumer protection, and health and safety; and the identification of priority controls to support compliance.



- .3 An overview of the pilot projects was provided and a high level presentation of the results of the first period of self-attestation. The following themes were NOTED:
  - .1 The individual returns, in general, presented a consistent picture of the status of controls within faculties and professional services departments.
  - .2 A disconnect between some centrally published policies and their implementation locally had been identified with a lack of accountable and responsible people identified to deliver the required compliance. This included gaps in the training/guidance provision as well as a lack of consistent governance within areas to ensure the stated controls are adhered to.
- .4 Following completion of the self-attestation process, improvement plans had been developed by each Faculty and Professional Service Department (PSD) and action plans had been developed by subject matter experts for their areas of obligation. Faculty and PSD improvement plans were owned by the relevant FPVC or Director. Progress against the plans would be assessed by further review by the Assurance Team and future self-attestation cycles.
- .5 As part of the next steps to support the delivery of the improvement plans, subject matter experts would be asked, amongst other actions, to review their policies in line with the new University Policy Management Framework, to ensure that there was a published standard operating procedure or guidance to support each priority control and to review existing training provision and training requirements.
- .6 UEB members who had been involved in the self-attestation process provided positive feedback in connection with the deployment of the Assurance Framework
- .7 UEB AGREED that:
  - .1 The improvement and actions plans would be published.
  - .2 An update on progress of the improvement plans and action plans would be submitted to UEB in six months.
- .8 UEB RECOMMENDED that FPVCs and PS Directors should review and monitor the improvement plans for which they were accountable and the CFO, Registrar and Director of HR should review and monitor the action plans owned by the subject matter experts.

	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>DUE</b>
.9	To review and monitor the improvement plan and action plans for which they are accountable.	FPVCs, CFO, Registrar and Director of HR	11 January 2024

**23.74 University Policy Management Framework – Tier 1 Policies**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/23/90) from the Director of Governance and Assurance which provided an overview of the University’s Policy Management Framework agreed by UEB in February 2023 and which established a tiered approach to the management of policies.
- .2 UEB was reminded that Tier 1 policies applied to all staff and/or students and required UEB approval. It was confirmed that future Tier 1 policy approvals would be sought via circulation from UEB.



- .3 UEB APPROVED the revised Safeguarding and Fraud policies.
- .4 It was suggested that the Director of Governance would seek advice on the best way to provide easy internal online access to published policies.

	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>DUE</b>
.5	To seek advice on how to provide easy internal online access to published policies.	Director of Governance and Assurance	31 August 2023

**23.75 Institutional Athena Swan Gold Award Application 2023**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/23/92) from the PVC EDI and People which included the draft Institutional Athena Swan Gold Application 2023 and the associated Action Plan 2023-2028.
- .2 UEB NOTED that the second circulation of the paper included revisions in response to the Advance HE development review of the draft application. The PVC EDI provided a brief overview of an area identified for further development by the Advance HE reviewer.
- .3 Feedback from UEB on the draft application included ensuring there was appropriate reference to:
  - .1 The Midlands Innovation TALENT project.
  - .2 The commitments made to gender equality by the University's partners and suppliers.
  - .3 The University's own research into gender equality matters.
- .4 UEB NOTED that the substantive content of the document would be finalised by 14 August following which it would be reviewed and undergo final refinement by the External Relations team before submission to Advance HE on or before 29 September.
- .5 UEB APPROVED the draft application for submission subject to the feedback provided during the meeting.

**23.76 Auto closure of Low Enrolment Programmes and Modules**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/23/89) from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor which set out a proposal for an auto-closure process for low recruiting programmes and modules from 2023-24 onwards.
- .2 UEB was reminded that principles for streamlining curricula had been agreed previously, but the implementation of Campus Solutions and organisational redesign had resulted in the requirements falling from curriculum activity. This had been followed by the pandemic.
- .3 The proposed approach set out in the paper was required for the financial sustainability of the organisation's curriculum provision, and as an enabler for the University's commitment to curriculum design and enhancement.
- .4 The Vice-Chancellor emphasised that the success of the auto-closure process would be dependent on engagement with staff and communication prior to its introduction. It was NOTED that some staff might be reluctant to support the approach, particularly if they were involved in the delivery of a low-recruiting module or programme. As well as the benefits of the rationalisation to student experience, the benefits to staff should be clearly articulated. There were likely workload benefits for some staff which would create more space for research activity.



- .5 UEB determined that further work should be carried out to understand the impact on staff before the process was implemented. UEB was advised that there was sufficient work for any staff affected, but it might not continue to be in their particular area of specialism.
- .6 UEB AGREED proposals set out in the paper, subject to detailed communications and engagement activity and additional work to understand any impact on staff and workloads.
- .7 Any further detailed comments were requested to be sent directly to the APVC Teaching and Curriculum Leadership.

	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>DUE</b>
.8	To review the impacts of the auto-closure process on staff.	Director of HR and PVC ESE	31 August 2023

**23.77 Roundtable**

- .1 The interim PVC RKE outlined some of the changes to REF which would provide different opportunities to the University. It was AGREED that the UEB would need regular oversight of REF preparations, and clear recommendations on the approach to REF 2028 should be presented to UEB in the early autumn for consideration.
- .2 The publication of the QS World Ranking was NOTED. The ranking news had been well received across the University.
- .3 The results of University's Turing application were provided by the PVC GE.
- .4 There was a brief discussion on current developments in connection with Horizon Europe.
- .5 The interim FPVC Social Sciences advised of progress of the Nottingham University Business School quality and enhancement strategy and confirmed that the Deans of the tri-campus Business Schools were working well together.
- .6 An update was provided on the award of a contract to refurbish Building A at the Castle Meadow Campus.
- .7 A press release would be issued later in the week to announce the launch of University of Nottingham Maths School, a specialist maths school in the East Midlands for 16-19 year olds.
- .8 UEB was reminded that new paperwork had been introduced for academic promotions. Criteria remained the same.

	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>DUE</b>
.9	A paper proposing the approach to REF 2028 should be submitted to UEB	PVC RKE	November 2023