



University Executive Board

Minutes of the meeting of 5 May 2020

Attending Professor Shearer West (Vice-Chancellor and Chair), Professor John Atherton (FPVC Medicine and Health Sciences), Professor Dame Jessica Corner (PVC RKE), Dr Paul Greatrix (Registrar), Professor Jeremy Gregory (FPVC Arts), David Hill (CDO), Jaspal Kaur (Director of Human Resources), Professor Graham Kendall (Provost UNM), Professor Sam Kingman (FPVC Engineering), Professor Todd Landman (FVPC Social Sciences), Professor Andrew Long (DVC), Professor Nick Miles (Provost UNNC), Professor Robert Mokaya (PVC GE), Margaret Monckton (CFO), Professor Sarah O'Hara (PVC ESE), Professor Kevin Shakesheff (FPVC Science), Professor Sarah Sharples (PVC EDI)

Attending Rowena Hall (Secretary), Professor Sarah Speight, Professor Zoe Wilson, Anne Partington (Head of Strategy Support) for minute 20.54, Mike Early (Senior Risk Adviser) for minute 20.54, Alex Wright, (Culture and Change Facilitator) for minute 20.55, Anna Truscott-Smith (Gallup representative) for minute 20.55, Jason Carter (Director of Governance and Compliance) for minute 20.57, Neil Hawthorne (Director of Health and Safety) for minute 20.57, Helen Pennack (Chief Marketing and Communications Officer) for minute 20.59

20.50 Welcome, Declarations of Interest and Quoracy

- .1 The Chair welcomed Professor Sarah Speight and Professor Zoe Wilson to the meeting as observers.
- .2 The Secretary confirmed that the meeting was quorate.
- .3 There were no declarations of interest made by members.

20.51 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 10 March 2020 and 6 April 2020 and Action Tracker

- .1 The minutes of the meeting on 10 March February 2020 and 6 April were agreed as an accurate record.
- .2 It was NOTED that some reprioritisation of University activity would impact the relevance of items on the Action Tracker. The Action Tracker would be reviewed before the next meeting.

	ACTION	OWNER	Due
.3	To request updates on actions including priority and to amend the Action Tracker accordingly.	Secretary	June 2020

20.52 Chair's Business

- .1 The Vice-Chancellor had circulated an update to members before the meeting.

20.53 Recommendations for Academic Year 2020/21

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/20/55 from the PVC ESE which offered a series of recommendations for the structure of the academic year 2020/21 and the delivery of teaching. The draft paper had been shared with, and feedback had been received from, the ESE Senior Leadership team including the Students' Union Education Officer, all Faculties, Information Services, UNM, and from individual members of UEB.

Structure of the Year

.2 Recommendations 1, 2 and 3

- .1 The recommendations proposed to change the dates of the Academic Year 2020-21 in order to be able to spread teaching over 14 weeks per semester. It was not planned to deliver any additional teaching but to spread it over a longer period. The Christmas and Easter breaks would both be reduced by one week and an inter-semester break was proposed. The January exam period would be removed and replaced with continuous assessment during the autumn semester. For some disciplines, assessment of autumn semester modules would be delayed until the summer assessment period.
- .2 UEB were supportive of the recommendations and welcomed the option of coinciding an inter-semester break with the February half term for local schools. Further consideration should be given to how the recommendations aligned with Ramadan and Chinese New Year in 2021.

.3 Recommendation 4

- .1 UEB AGREED that Schools should review their module offering for the 2020-21 academic year, with a view to suspending/deleting low recruiting modules which would make staff time available to focus on the delivery of core modules. It would be possible to suspend the offering of modules at UNUK where appropriate, but continue to run them at UNM and UNNC.
- .2 It was recognised that the short deadline for the provision of required curriculum information presented Schools with a challenge, particularly given the ongoing work around budget reductions and the launch of a voluntary redundancy scheme, both of which would affect staff numbers and resource available. Therefore, the information required by Student Services would be broken down into phases.
- .3 Whilst it was in the best interests of students to remove lower recruiting modules in order to ensure high quality teaching and learning outcomes, UEB stressed the importance of ensuring that the process, managed by Teaching and Learning Committee, was followed to ensure that the University was in compliance with OfS and CMA requirements.
- .4 It was anticipated that some students would be disappointed with the decisions made to suspend or delete particular modules. Communications were in preparation to explain the challenges and manage feedback received.

Delivery of Teaching and Assessment for Returning Students

- .4 Recommendation 5
- .1 UEB AGREED that undergraduate students were advised that, subject to national restrictions, they would recommence their studies on campus at the start of session on 21 September, albeit with social distancing measures in place.
- .5 Recommendation 6
- .1 UEB NOTED that social distancing requirements would mean that large lectures would need to be delivered digitally, with tutorials and small group sessions delivered in larger rooms. The University would respond as appropriate to the Government's changing guidelines on social distancing.
- .2 UEB AGREED that social distancing measures were implemented for all campus delivery with strict criteria.
- .6 Recommendation 7
- .1 UEB NOTED that activity was underway to model the capacity increase of the timetable by extending the teaching day and week through evening Wednesday afternoons and Saturdays and by exploring the use of staggered starts to face-to-face teaching. Concerns were expressed by some UEB members about the implications of timetable extensions on the personal circumstances on staff.
- .2 UEB AGREED that options for extending the teaching day and week should be explored further with the appropriate consultation with staff and Trades Unions.
- .7 Recommendation 8
- .1 UEB AGREED that online access should be facilitated for all face-to-face teaching which would enable students who were not able to attend campus to engage with the learning.
- .2 It was NOTED that the work load model would look different for many academic staff and a co-ordinated approach to communicating work load planning approaches and concerns would be required.
- .8 Recommendation 9
- .1 UEB AGREED that University space should be prioritised for teaching and learning and this included exploring the feasibility of venues such as Lakeside, DRSV and Jubilee sports centres.
- .2 UEB AGREED that rooms managed locally should be brought into the central timetable to assist with timetable planning.
- .3 It was NOTED that some venues might have already been booked for conferencing activity. The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that steps would be taken to ensure that teaching would take priority where required.
- .9 Recommendations 10
- .1 UEB AGREED that semester one modules should predominantly be assessed by coursework with an option for essential exams as part of the summer assessment period.

.10 Recommendation 11

- .1 UEB AGREED that all Schools should be required to have approved teaching contingency and student communications plans to manage changes to delivery mode required by the pandemic.

Delivery of Teaching for New Undergraduates

- .11 UEB discussed the start of session for new undergraduate students and were presented with two options: an online start, and an in-person start with students divided into two cohorts with only one cohort attending campus at any one time. Research suggested that the appetite of students for an online start to term was limited and might have an impact on recruitment levels. The second option appeared to be very complex to manage and deliver.
- .12 A third option was suggested which would see all new undergraduates start as normal on campus with large teaching sessions delivered digitally. UEB AGREED that the third option was preferred, particularly as it aligned with the approach taken with returning students. Viability of the approach would depend in part on halls of residence being able to operate with the necessary social distancing measures in place.
- .13 The PVC ESE would develop proposals for the preferred approach including draft communications for prospective students advising of the University's plans.

2+2 Students

.14 Recommendation 12

- .1 UEB AGREED that where there was 4+0 programme, students could start their third year at UNM/UNNC, transferring to the UK at a later date if conditions allowed and they wished to.
- .2 UEB NOTED NOTED that UNNC might need to commission UNUK support to deliver teaching.

.15 Recommendation 13

- .1 UEB AGREED that where there was not a 4+0 alternative, students could remain on campus at UNM/UNNC and be taught from the UK via digital and interactive methods.

Programmes with Non-Campus Components

- .16 Recommendation 14 was AGREED.
- .1 UEB AGREED that Faculties should have a degree of local decision-making with regard to how programmes with non-campus components were delivered in 2020-21, which would be discussed and agreed as part of a detailed planning process.
- .2 UEB NOTED that subject to social distancing measures, some students on health care and medicine programmes would be returning to placements and study over the summer.

Postgraduate Taught Students

- .17 UEB considered a number of options for the approach to the start of session for PGT students. Options included programmes with cohorts of largely UK students starting on campus with social distancing measures in place, programmes with large numbers of international students beginning online in September and transitioning to face-to-face teaching on campus as conditions permitted, and programmes with large numbers of international students delaying start until January.
- .18 It was recommended that, within a clear framework, Faculties were enabled to make local decisions on the approach to the start of PGT programmes. UEB considered that a significant amount of planning would be required to make decisions in connection with individual programmes. UEB AGREED that it was vitally important that there was a clear plan for which programmes would be managed under which heading and that External Relations were able to provide advice for Faculties on their start date options. Information provided to applicants would need to be crystal clear and they should have no doubt about the plan for the start of their programme.
- .19 UEB AGREED recommendation 15 and confirmed that it was important that decisions were made as soon as possible to support applicants in their decision making.

Next Steps

- .20 UEB AGREED that:
 - .1 Detailed planning work should be carried out with FPVCs/APVCs to correlate the faculty savings plans and teaching delivery plans and to ensure adequate resourcing for improvement to online teaching delivery plans. Each Faculty must have an approved 2020-21 delivery plan.
 - .2 Detailed planning work should identify the business critical roles and projects required to move online delivery from 'emergency remote teaching' to a quality digital mode.
 - .3 On-campus accommodation options were reviewed to consider how social distancing/school based clusters could be organised. A working group should be established to provide further recommendations on how this would be achieved.
 - .4 New course developments would be managed separately as part of the Nottingham Global Online project.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.21	To update UEB on the progress of plans for the start of session	PVC ESE	Ongoing

20.54 University Level Risk Register Review

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/20/49 from the Registrar and presented by the Head of Strategy Support and the Senior Risk Adviser.
- .2 UEB NOTED that the risk register had been reviewed as part of the normal course of business, but updates included the anticipated impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic across the risks and a new standalone risk related to the University's ability to resume operations in a timely manner following the lockdown period. It was proposed to move three risks which were within risk appetite to a watch list.

- .3 UEB NOTED that the overall level of University risk had increased alongside as well as the risk levels of individual risks
- .4 UEB AGREED that the Risk Register required more holistic management and oversight. Rather than considering risks separately, their inter-dependencies and impacts on each other should be considered.
- .5 In order to support more holistic management, UEB AGREED that:
 - .1 The Senior Risk Advisor would work with each risk owner to review their risk and its dependencies and impacts on other risks.
 - 2. The Risk Register should be considered at each monthly meeting of UEB, in addition to being reviewed by Planning and Resources Committee quarterly.
- .6 UEB AGREED that risks should not be removed from the Risk Register at the current time or moved to a watch list.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.7	To understand from the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee whether there were any further suggestions for the management and oversight of the Risk Register.	CFO, Registrar	May 2020
.8	To add the Risk Register to the agenda for each UEB meeting.	Secretary	Ongoing
.9	To update the committee coversheet to support the identification of all relevant risks.	Secretary	June 2020

20.55 Gallup – Staff Engagement Results

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/20/52 from the Director of Human Resources which set out some key highlights and proposals in connection with the 2019 Engagement Survey Results. The paper was supported by a video summary of Gallup’s analysis of the University’s scores.
- .2 The Vice-Chancellor provided her reflections on the results of the survey, the context in which it was launched, and the positive steps and engagement in the period since the last survey which had been hoped would provide a more significant improvement in staff engagement. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed her commitment to staff engagement and to redoubling efforts focussed on the areas and initiatives that had benefited engagement in the last two years.
- .3 UEB NOTED that a clear gap still remained between the engagement of UEB and Senior Leaders and other members of staff. Initiatives introduced to support the engagement of Heads of School, which had included termly lunches with the Vice-Chancellor and an LMA programme of training, had proven that small changes could have a significant impact on engagement. It would be important to focus some engagement initiatives on other Level 7 staff; whose engagement was crucial due to their leadership and line management roles across the University. Gallup were able to provide more detailed information on the engagement levels of this particular category of staff member.
- .4 Significant staff engagement had been achieved during the course of the development of the University’s strategy, however, its launch coincided with industrial action. It was hoped that following the immediacy of the response to the pandemic, there would be opportunities to re-engage staff with it, although this and other engagement activities would be within the context of new challenges and difficult decisions.

- .5 UEB AGREED the proposed next steps for communication and responding to the 2019 Engagement Survey Results.
- .6 Due to the importance of keeping staff engagement at the forefront of its consideration, UEB AGREED that staff engagement should be included on the UEB meeting agenda quarterly.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.7	To request further analysis of the engagement of level 7 staff outside of the Senior Leaders Forum Group.	Director of Human Resources	June 2020
.8	To include staff engagement on the UEB engagement quarterly	Secretary	June 2020

20.56 COVID-19 PGR Extensions – Financial Implications

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/20/54 from the PVC RKE.
- .2 UEB NOTED the options available to respond to the announcement by UKRI and Wellcome that PGR students in their final year of study would be able to apply for funded extensions of up to six months where they had been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Financial exposure ranged from £1m to £3.1m.
- .4 The approaches adopted by Russell Group universities to date were mixed.
- .5 UEB were of the view that the University's approach to support for PGR students should be in line with its values and therefore, as equitable a response as possible should be applied to the different categories of final year PGR students. It was NOTED that this approach had the potential to result in the maximum financial exposure predicted. Therefore, it would be important to ensure that a consistent and rigorous case-by-case approach to extensions was adopted ensuring that the scope of the PhD was reviewed to identify the minimum extension required. Extensions would not be permissible to assist supervisors with workload. It was acknowledged that a case-by-case approach rather than a blanket one would require more administration.
- .6 UEB AGREED to recommend the financial commitments set out in Options A – F of the paper and the proposed mitigation approaches, to the Council Finance Governance Group for approval.

20.57 Health and Safety and Regulatory Compliance

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/20/50 from the Registrar and presented by the Director of Governance and Compliance supported by the Director of Health and Safety. The paper provided an update on Health and Safety at the University.
- .2 UEB NOTED the progress of the Health and Safety Remediation Plan and the activity undertaken by the Health and Safety department to support the University during the pandemic which included support for the University's civic response. Guidance had been provided to staff to support them during their initial period of homeworking. As staff transitioned from temporary to more permanent home working arrangements, further guidance would be provided and the network of DSE assessors would be trained to support the provision of required home workstation assessments.
- .3 The Director of Governance and Assurance reported that despite the Office for Students' relaxation of its regulatory requirements to ease the burden on universities during the pandemic, it had released a consultation on a proposed new and time limited regulatory condition designed to stabilise the sector and guard against unfair competition between

institutions. The consultation document had been circulated to key stakeholders for comment before submission. There was significant concern that the additional regulatory condition would not be relinquished after the impacts of the pandemic had ceased.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.4	To provide UEB with an update on Health and Safety following the next Health and Safety Committee.	Director of Governance and Compliance	June 2020

20.58 COVID-19 Support for Partners

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/20/48 from the PVC RKE. The paper summarised the approach taken in establishing the University's COVID-19 Support for Partners Programme and highlighted the most significant impacts to date.
- .2 The principles of the approach had been used to deliver four areas of support through a programme management and workstream model.
- .3 UEB APPROVED the principles used and thanked the team involved for delivering the activity for which the University had been recognised in its service by the Department for Education.
- .4 The PVC RKE confirmed that in due course an overview assessment of the value of the University's contribution would be prepared.

20.59 Framework for UEB Engagement

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/20/53 from the Director of Human Resources and the Chief Marketing and Communications Officer.
- .2 The paper proposed the principles, framework and infrastructure for a UEB approach to engagement with staff, which would be founded on the principles used to engage externally with the University's stakeholders and advocates. The focus would be on engagement being part of a two-way conversation.
- .3 UEB NOTED the proposal to establish an internal engagement and advocacy management group to identify and plan staff engagement activities on hot topic areas. The proposed membership mirrored that of an external engagement and advocacy group, but it was suggested that there would be benefit in widening its membership in response to particular hot topics, to include key leaders or influencers and to ensure their engagement in discussions at an early stage.
- .4 UEB considered that there should be a focus of engagement activity on Level 7 and 6 staff who were not members of the Senior Leaders' Forum.
- .5 UEB AGREED the creation of an internal engagement and advocacy management group to support engagement activity. The value of the group should be reviewed by UEB in six months and if appropriate the operation of the group would continue.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.6	Review the operation of the internal engagement and advocacy management group.	Registrar, Director of Human Resources, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer	November 2020

20.60 UEB Sub-Committee Update

UEB RECEIVED and NOTED paper UEB/20/51 from the Secretary.

20.61 Roundtable

- .1 Over 5,000 students had returned to UNNC. Whilst it was very early stages, both students and parents were pleased with the transition.
- .2 The Director of Human Resources confirmed the communication sequencing for the launch of a voluntary redundancy scheme the next day, which would start with the announcement of the scheme via the DVC and CFO's finance blog. Some UEB members were still unclear whether there would be any REF impact if the final date of employment under the scheme was 31 July. It was AGREED that Research England would be asked for confirmation of the position, the outcome of which would be circulated to UEB.
- .3 The Director of Human Resources confirmed the ongoing constructive engagement with trade unions on the proposals to pause certain activities including, promotions, Nottingham Recognition Scheme and incremental pay rises and the introduction of the voluntary redundancy scheme.
- .4 The Vice-Chancellor reiterated the importance staff taking their annual leave regularly and encouraged UEB members to book periods away from work over the next few weeks.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.5	To seek confirmation from Research England of the relevant REF impacts where a staff members final date of employment was 31 July.	PVC RKE, Director of HR, Director of Research and Innovation	7 May 2020
.6	UEB members would book annual leave and the Secretary would organise a central record to ensure adequate UEB cover.	UEB members, Secretary	June 2020