



University Executive Board

Minutes of the meeting of 7 July 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 Duncan Angwin (Dean of Nottingham University Business School), Pip Peakman (Director of Research and Innovation) for minutes 20.77 and 20.84, Edith Prak (Director of Advancement) for minute 20.79, Mike Early (Senior Risk Advisor) for minute 20.80, Sally Blackamore (Financial Controller) for minute 20.81, Helen Lawrenson (Deputy Director of Finance) for minute 20.81, Alex Favier (Director of Global Political Affairs) for minute 83, Ben Sumner (Director of Business Engagement) for minute 84.

20.75 Welcome, Declarations of Interest and Quoracy

- .1 The Chair welcomed Professor Duncan Angwin to the meeting as an observer.
- .2 The Secretary confirmed that the meeting was quorate.
- .3 There were no declarations of interest made by members.

20.76 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 1 June 2020 and Action Tracker

- .1 The minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.
- .2 The following updates on actions were provided:
 - .1 Action 19.117.4: The priority level of the activity had reduced as a result of focus on COVID-19 related activities. Responsibility for the activity had not been reallocated following the staffing changes. It was AGREED that the action should be removed from the action tracker.
 - .2 Action 19.128.13: It was AGREED that the activity would be delivered at the Council meeting to be held in November 2020.
 - .3 Action 19.135.5: The internal audit plan had been overhauled in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, therefore it was AGREED that the action should be removed from the action tracker.
 - .4 Action 20.21.6: Work continued on the business case approval framework which would be presented to UEB for consideration and approval in August.



- .5 Action 20.32.5: The PVC RKE had implemented the changes in connection with respect to research integrity. Work on the revised structure for an Ethics Committee had been paused. It was AGREED that a revised proposal would be submitted to UEB for consideration in November 2020.
- .6 Action 20.54.7: The review of the risk register had been a focus for a number of weeks, therefore it was AGREED that the action should be removed from the action tracker.

20.77 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Research Strategy Status Report

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/20/88 as requested which was presented by the PVC RKE and Director of Research and Innovation.
- .2 UEB NOTED the progress of the Research Strategy against KPIs and the impact of COVID-19. The pausing of much on-site research and the changing nature of the research funding landscape had resulted in a recasting of the budget for 20/21. Forecasting was challenging and complex mapping was required which resulted in a projected reduction in research income with a corresponding reduction in research margin.
- .3 Savings had been applied across the Research Beacon programme achieving an overall saving of 15%. Recruitment to the Fellowship programme had been paused.
- .4 The planned mid-term review of the Research Strategy by an external panel had been postponed. The review would have reported on the current standing and performance of the University's research activity and advised of strategic priorities for the next five years. It would have also contributed to the new Research Strategy Strategic Delivery Plan. The mid-term review would be replaced by a rapid light touch review conducted in the context of the wider environment. The details of the review were to be decided but it would inform the development of the Strategic Delivery Plan which would be presented to the Research Advisory Group for review in the autumn.
- .5 In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the University's response for research matters aligned with that of other Russell Group universities. A further round of intelligence would be carried out.
- .6 Whilst it was accepted that the next set of Research Strategy KPIs would not include a single QS ranking metric, it would still be important to understand the reasons for the downward trajectory of performance, and some of the metrics behind the QS ranking would likely be in the mix.

Extensions to Periods of PGR Study

- .7 The PVC RKE reported that a communication would be sent to PGR students later in the day confirming that all students with an end date up to October 2021 would be provided with an automatic six month extension to their period of registration with no additional fees. Students funded by University stipends, with an end date up to 31 March 2021, would be able to apply for up to a six month funding extension based on the personal and research impacts of COVID -19 on their research progress. The requirement to show impact on progress should result in the majority of extensions being for a period of less than six months.
- .8 It was RECOMMENDED that the communication of the arrangements to staff stressed the importance of supporting students to deliver their research according to their original



timescale where possible. This would ensure that funding had the greatest impact for those who required it. FPVCs were requested to reinforce the message with Heads of School.

- .9 UEB further RECOMMENDED that the communication was cascaded to senior leaders and supervisors before it was received by PGR students. The draft communication would be circulated to UEB for review before it was shared further.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.10	To conduct a further round of intelligence to understand how Russell Group universities were managing research matters in response to COVID-19 impacts.	PVC RKE	August 2020
.11	To emphasise the importance to Head of Schools of students being supported by supervisors to deliver their research on time where possible.	FPVCs	20 July 2020

20.78 Chair’s Business

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

20.79 CASE-Ross Survey

- .1 The Vice-Chancellor introduced a paper (UEB/20/85) received from the Director of Advancement which provided an overview of the University’s fundraising performance in 2018/19 compared with other Russell Group Universities. It was acknowledged that fundraising had not been a focus of University activity during 2018/19 following the end of the Impact campaign and prior to the Director of Advancement commencing her role.
- .2 The Director of Advancement identified the likely factors leading to lower levels of pledged and cash income, which included an unusually fallow year for legacy gifts and highlighted a lower return on investment than other Russell Group universities. The importance of a future focus on major gifts was stressed.
- .3 UEB NOTED CARO’s developing approach to locating fundraisers in Faculties which allowed close alignment with the needs of the Faculty and to fundraise accordingly. The close positioning to senior leaders within the Faculty also supported better management of unexpected gifts.
- .4 The Director of Advancement would attend UEB in the autumn to discuss further the direction of travel of philanthropic activity at the University and the support required from UEB.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.5	To schedule a UEB discussion on philanthropic activity for the autumn term.	Secretary	20 July

20.80 University Level Risk Register Review

- .1 UEB RECEIVED and NOTED paper UEB/20/86 from the Registrar and presented by the Senior Risk Advisor.
- .2 UEB NOTED that the risk profile of the University had deteriorated as a result of the impact of COVID-19 and as anticipated, the number of red residual risks had risen from three to eight,



with all being significantly outside the agreed risk appetite. The changes were considered to be in line and reflective of the impacts across the higher education sector.

- .3 UEB were advised that it was imperative that risk and action owners robustly managed their risks through strong oversight of controls and monitoring of progress against mitigating actions whilst maintaining a holistic view of the Risk Register to ensure awareness of the impact of action on other risks. Risk should be kept up to date with detailed commentary. This would allow the regular reassessment of timelines to enable the earlier reduction of risk scores where possible.
- .4 UEB APPROVED the refreshed University Risk Register and AGREED that a UEB discussion on risk appetite should be scheduled for the autumn.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.5	To consider the form of the UEB risk appetite discussion.	Vice-Chancellor, Registrar	September 2020

20.81 Medium Term Financial Plan

- .1 UEB RECEIVED and NOTED paper UEB/20/95 from the Chief Financial Officer and presented by the Deputy Director of Finance and the Financial Controller
- .2 The Financial Planning Group jointly chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Chief Financial Officer was established to develop the revised Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). Three key dependencies underpinned the plan: recruitment size and shape, the delivery of 15% budget plans and improvement in research margin.
- .3 The draft MTFP had been endorsed by Finance Committee. The MTFP would be reviewed during the course of its life at the request of UEB. It was already planned to reconvene the Financial Planning Group in January when there would be clarity on the recruitment size and shape and any government support package to consider any necessary changes to the numbers contained in the Plan.
- .4 UEB NOTED that the 15% budget plans provided the University with scope to make choices about activity and investment, but it was vital that the plans were delivered on a permanent basis otherwise investment in the strategy would not be possible. UEB further NOTED that the resource allocation model would be used to address budgets where recruitment or activity grew.
- .5 The PVC EDI and People highlighted a concern about how the MTFP would be received by the University community given its aspirations for driving an improvement in research margin and generating research income during a year when a focus on the delivery of teaching was required.
- .6 UEB AGREED the MTFP and recommended it for submission to Finance Committee for approval. It was further AGREED that following approval by Finance Committee, the detail of the MTFP would be distilled into a formal document for the record.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.7	To distil the MTFP following approval by Finance committee into document form for the record.	Chief Financial Officer	31 July 2020



20.82 Response to Trade Unions Financial Concerns

- .1 UEB RECEIVED and NOTED paper UEB/20/94 from the Chief Financial Officer. Members of the Emergency Finance Group had met with Trade Unions to respond in detail to their financial concerns. The paper set out both the detail of the concerns raised and the University's response.
- .2 In order to disseminate the University's position further on the questions raised, an abridged version of the paper would be shared at the Senior Leaders' Forum later in the week in order to support Senior Leaders in managing any concerns raised directly with them. A video presentation of the paper had been recorded and could be shared.

20.83 Universities for Nottingham Civic Agreement

- .1 UEB RECEIVED and NOTED paper UEB/20/93 from the Vice-Chancellor, FPVC Science and presented by the Director of Global Political Affairs.
- .2 UEB NOTED that the draft Universities for Nottingham Civic Agreement would be considered at a joint UEB and Nottingham Trent University executive board meeting later in the day.
- .3 The Director of Global and Political Affairs provided background to the development of the draft agreement with which a number of UEB members had been closely involved. UEB NOTED that the project team had accelerated and repositioned the initiative. This had taken place following consultation to understand the new challenges that had emerged from COVID-19, its impact on communities and the economy and where priorities and capacity had changed.
- .4 UEB remained very supportive of the project but was keen that at the meeting to be held later in the day a determination was made about the priority areas for focus.

20.84 The Role of Continued Professional Development and Degree Apprenticeships in COVID-19 Recovery

- .1 UEB RECEIVED and NOTED paper UEB/20/87 from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and presented by the Director of Research and Innovation and Director of Business Engagement.
- .2 UEB NOTED the intention to incorporate degree apprenticeship into the University's size and shape planning.
- .2 UEB reconfirmed institutional commitment to the development and delivery of professional skills provision and were keen that it should form part of plans for all Schools and Faculties.
- .3 UEB AGREED in principle that HEIF funding could be used to support the activity to develop enhanced employer engagement and of support infrastructure, subject to the preparation of a business case and approval through the requisite governance processes.

20.85 UEB Circulation Results

UEB RECEIVED and NOTED paper UEB/20/89 from the Secretary.

20.86 UEB Sub-Committee Update

UEB RECEIVED and NOTED paper UEB/20/90 from the Secretary.



20.87 Roundtable

The Provost, UNNC reported that four ceremonies celebrating graduation had been held the previous week in Ningbo. There had been a significant increase in PGT applications to UNNC from Chinese students at Chinese universities and Chinese students currently overseas but planning to return to China. There had been a drop in international applications for both PGT and PGR courses.

20.88 Any Other Business

- .1 An update would be given at the next Senior Leaders' Forum on the progress of the marks processing and progression processes and the context and scale of the achievement. It was NOTED that there had been significant challenges in delivering the processes and time would need to be devoted at UEB to considering how to manage future challenges.