



University Executive Board

Minutes of the meeting of 6 July 2021

Attending

Professor Shearer West (Vice-Chancellor), 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 Sam Kingman (FPVC Engineering), Professor Todd Landman (FPVC Social Sciences), Professor Andrew Long (DVC), Professor Nick Miles (Provost UNNC), Professor Robert Mokaya (PVC GE), Professor Zoe Wilson (FPVC Science)

Attending

Rowena Hall (Secretary), Professor Sarah Metcalfe (Incoming Interim Provost UNM), Professor Simon Langley-Evans (Head of the School of Biosciences), Professor Jonathan Tallant (Head of the School of Humanities, Professor Richard Emes (APVC RKE MHS) for minute 21.91, Pip Peakman (Director of Research and Innovation) for minute 21.91, Nalayini Thambar (Programme Director: Getting in Shape and Director of Careers and Employability) for minute 21.93

Apologies

Margaret Monckton (CFO), Professor Sarah Sharples (PVC EDI and People), Professor Sarah Speight (PVC ESE)

21.88 Welcome, Apologies, Quoracy and Declarations of Interest

- .1 The Chair welcomed Professor Simon Langley-Evans, Head of the School of Biosciences and Professor Jonathan Tallant, Head of the School of Humanities to the meeting as observers.
- .2 The Secretary confirmed that the meeting was quorate.
- .3 There were no declarations of interest.

21.89 Minutes of the 20 May and 7 June 2021 Meetings and Action Log

- .1 The minutes of the meetings held on 20 May and 7 June 2021 were confirmed as a true record.
- .2 It was NOTED that an update on the HR Review was pending.

21.90 Chair's Business

- 1. A report from the Vice-Chancellor was provided to UEB prior to the meeting.
- .2 UEB considered the government's lifting of restrictions on teaching and learning at universities and the impact on the teaching timetable. The timetable could not be adjusted quickly or easily to meet with changes in social distancing requirements. If there remained no social distancing requirements in the autumn, more flexibility could be introduced to the capacity of spaces. The Pro-Vice Chancellor Education and Student Experience would be able to provide further details of ongoing work in relation to the use of teaching spaces.
- .3 The promotion of the vaccination programme to students continued. The testing service would continue its operation into the autumn term. Students would be encouraged to use the asymptomatic testing service before they collected keys to their accommodation.



21.91 Research SDP 2022-27 Development Update

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/21/90) from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Knowledge Exchange.
- .2 Following discussion at the UEB Away Day in June, work continued to develop the research strategic delivery plan 2022-27 with the formulation of draft content to be included in a White Paper. A draft White Paper would be presented to UEB in August with a final version submitted for approval in September prior to publication across the University.
- .3 An overview of four key objectives designed to improve performance was provided alongside proposed interventions grouped into three categories: targeted, focussed and University-level. The approach set out was underpinned by principles of quality research time and clear expectations aligned to KPIs which had both been referenced in feedback from the Green Paper.
- .4 Based on the Green Paper consultation, four strategic themes had been identified for inclusion in the White Paper alongside two drivers: 1) Research culture, inclusion, ambition and environment and 2) Influence, impact and societal change. It was proposed that it be suggested as part of the White paper, that where an initiative did not affect either driver, it should not be progressed.
- .5 UEB considered the information presented and made the following observations and suggestions in connection with the further development of the White Paper:
 - .1 The specific challenges and tensions faced by research should be referenced in the White Paper.
 - .2 Consideration should be given to being explicit about activities that should cease.
 - .3 Overlap or alignment with the other SDPs could be identified in the White Paper.
 - .4 Consider whether references should be to 'supporting ambition' rather than 'improving performance'. However, it was acknowledged that it was important to be clear in the White Paper that research performance needed to be addressed.
 - .5 The fourth of the improving performance objectives which focussed on financial performance was not referenced sufficiently in the later stages of the paper. The White Paper should be clear that more would need to be delivered with less.
 - .6 There should be a sharper focus on a smaller number of initiatives.
- .6 The issue of time featured regularly in the feedback received on the Green Paper. It was acknowledged that having sufficient time to conduct research was likely to mean different things to different people. However, it was clear that when time was made free to support the delivery of research, the University had to be confident that it would lead to high quality research outputs.
- .7 It was NOTED that work was ongoing to understand which of the proposed interventions would have the highest impact and which required the most effort to deliver. It would be important to ensure that mid-level career researchers were supported to secure external funding.
- .8 Subject to changes arising from the feedback provided, UEB was supportive of the direction of the development of the White Paper.
- .9 It was acknowledged that the research strategic delivery plan would need to meet the needs of staff in ensuring that they were supported to deliver quality research, and those of Council, which were ensuring that research performance was improved. The Vice-Chancellor



confirmed that she would work with the Chair of Council to ensure that Council had appropriate opportunity to engage with the development of the research strategic delivery plan before it was submitted to Council for approval in the autumn.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.10	To submit the first draft of the White Paper to UEB for consideration in August.	PVC RKE	31 July 2021

21.92 University of Nottingham Online Business Case

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/21/86) from the CEO University of Nottingham Online and presented by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
- .2 UEB NOTED that the business case for the establishment of the University of Nottingham Online (UoNO) had been approved by the Education and Student Experience Committee and Commercial Governance Board. A number of UEB members had considered the business case when it was approved at the last meeting of Planning and Resources Committee, and it had been discussed at a number of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor’s meetings with Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellors.
- .3 If approved by UEB, a detailed communications plan would begin across all campuses, initiated with a presentation at the next Senior Leaders’ Forum.
- .4 Whilst there were still elements to finalise in connection with UoNO’s governance structure, due to the size of the University’s investment in the project, its direct reporting line would be to Commercial Governance Board and Planning and Resources Committee. A reporting line to Quality and Standards Committee and Education and Student Experience Committee was necessary in connection with the regulatory requirements of the QAA and OfS.
- .5 UEB considered the business case and made suggestions for further development which included:
 - .1 Continued close working with staff at UNM to ensure that the ambitions of UoNO and UNM’s plans to progress its digital provision and remote learning plans were aligned
 - .2 Ensuring there was clarity that UoNO’s monopoly on new online award-bearing programmes did not apply to the provision of CPD programmes where online delivery was only a small portion of the overall programme.
 - .3 How best to incentivise staff across the University to engage with the project and devote resource to it.
- .6 UEB APPROVED the ‘Hybrid: In-house with external support’ approach to the establishment of UoNO as set out and recommended as Option 4 in the business case. UEB further APPROVED the initial funding request of £4m over the course of the 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.7	To continue to receive regular reports on the progress of the establishment of UoNO.	CEO, UoNO	Quarterly.

21.93 The Steps Towards Agile Working at the University of Nottingham



- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/21/59) from the Registrar which outlined a plan to establish an agile working project team with dedicated resource to help the University realise the benefits of new ways of working in a structured and coordinated manner.
- .2 The Agile project was the next stage in development following the introduction of hybrid working as more staff returned to the workplace. The project would last for two years and be led through the Getting in Shape programme.
- .3 The proposed governance of the project was outlined and would be led by the Registrar.
- .4 References to the significant benefits of agile working having a positive impact on education and student experience were not considered compelling. It was NOTED that there was no representation from education, student experience or technical services in the proposed membership of Agile Working Executive Group.
- .5 There was some concern that the proposed timeframe for project was too long at two years and that as staff transitioned back to work over the summer, some of benefits achieved through remote working might be lost. It was acknowledged that foundational work was already underway as part of the hybrid working project.
- .6 The delivery of the project would raise a complicated range of issues and not taking the time to recognise those issues when working through them would result in the project not delivering its objectives. It was reiterated that the project was not about personal employee choice but rather about having flexibility to achieve better ways of working.
- .7 The Registrar confirmed that the project would consider organisational, physical, digital and HR changes.
- .8 UEB ENDORSED the draft vision for Agile working and NOTED that it remained subject to refinement. UEB also ENDORSED the proposed principles of Agile working and the proposed core and additional outcomes for the Agile project. The proposed project team structure and costings were NOTED.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.9	To continue to receive regular reports on the progress of agile working project.	Registrar	Quarterly

21.94 Roundtable Discussion

- .1 Professor Metcalfe thanked Professor Kingman for his support as she transitioned into the role of Provost, UNM. The Vice-Chancellor led a vote of thanks on behalf of UEB to Professor Kingman for his interim leadership of UNM.
- .2 The campus at UNM had closed as a result of the national lockdown which had begun on 3 July. 170 students remained on campus alongside a small number of staff to support them.
- .3 The School of Medicine restructure had completed its consultation phase and was entering the implementation phase.
- .4 Recruitment was underway for a new Head of the School of Economics.
- .5 Feedback showed that University’s wellbeing app had been used heavily by staff since its release in November 2020. Work would continue to promote it as a support mechanism.
- .6 The handover between the outgoing and incoming Students’ Union Officers was underway. The Registrar was meeting weekly with the new officers.



- .7 A briefing would be delivered to Senior Leaders in the next week on the new level 7 staff banding, subject to Remuneration Committee approval of its introduction. Following the briefing, all level 7 staff would be provided with information on the banding followed by a personal email by the end of the month confirming how the banding would affect them. A meeting for Heads of School and Heads of Department had been scheduled in August to answer any questions they had.