



University Executive Board

Minutes of the meeting of 11 October 2021

Attending

Professor Shearer West (Vice-Chancellor and Chair) until minute 21.131, Professor John Atherton (FPVC Medicine and Health Sciences), Professor Dame Jessica Corner (PVC RKE), Dr Paul Greatrix (Registrar), Professor Jeremy Gregory (FPVC Arts) until minute 21.133.4, David Hill (CDO), Jaspal Kaur (Director of Human Resources), Professor Sam Kingman (FPVC Engineering), Professor Todd Landman (FPVC Social Sciences), Professor Andrew Long (DVC) (and Chair from minute 21.131), Professor Sarah Metcalfe (Interim Provost UNM) until 21.127.4, Professor Nick Miles (Provost UNNC) until minute 21.125, Professor Robert Mokaya (PVC GE), Margaret Monckton (CFO), Sarah Speight (PVC ESE), Professor Zoe Wilson (FPVC Science)

Attending

Rowena Hall (Secretary), Professor Brigitte Scammell (Dean of the School of Medicine), Tony Ludlow (Associate Director, Operational Resilience), Professor Richard Emes (FAPVC Medicine and Health Sciences, and Co-Chair of Research Strategy Action Group) from minute 21.124 until minute 21.127, Pip Peakman (Director of Research and Innovation, and Co-Chair of Research Strategy Action Group) from minute 21.124 until minute 21.127, Professor Neil Crout (APVC RKE) from minute 21.124 until minute 21.127, Carol Steed (Leadership and Management Director) for minute 21.127, Dr Joanna McIntyre (School of Education) for minute 21.128, Emma Szembek (Deputy Director Student Recruitment) for minute 21.128, Stephen McAuliffe (Deputy Registrar) for minutes 21.129 and 130, Sarah Hyde (Associate Director - Customer Service) for minute 21.130, Professor Pip Logan (Professor of Rehabilitation Research) for minute 21.131, Katherine Tallant (Faculty Operations Director) for minute 21.131

21.121 Welcome, Apologies, Quoracy and Declarations of Interest

- .1 The Chair welcomed Professor Brigitte Scammell, Dean of the School of Medicine, and Tony Ludlow, Associate Director, Operational Resilience, to the meeting as observers.
- .2 The Secretary confirmed that the meeting was quorate.
- .3 There were no declarations of interest.

21.122 Minutes of Meetings and Action Log

- .1 The minutes of the meetings held on 2 August, 2 September and 7 September 2021 were confirmed as a true record.
- .2 The Action Tracker was NOTED.
- .3 It was CONFIRMED that actions 21.113.8 and 21.113.9 were complete and should be closed.



21.123 Chair’s Business

- .1 The Vice-Chancellor had circulated a report to UEB prior to the meeting.
- .2 The Vice-Chancellor announced that the FPVC Medicine and Health Sciences, Professor John Atherton, would be retiring in the spring.
- .3 Members were reminded about the importance of concise and well written papers to support the quality of decision-making at UEB. Members were asked to ensure that papers complied with the guidance provided.
- .4 UEB considered the challenges faced by the higher education sector in general and more specifically the internal cultural challenges faced by the University. There was a consensus that UEB needed focused time to consider how best to approach those challenges. It was NOTED that a session on the University’s values had been scheduled for an Away Day later in the month.
- .5 It was NOTED that a forward plan for UEB engagement was being developed with the support of the Director of Communications and Advocacy. The plan would include specific engagement activities with senior professors who did not hold defined leadership roles such as Head of School or APVC. A single point of co-ordination would be required to deliver the plan.
- .6 It was AGREED that as the University transitioned from crisis management, members should consider their committee/meeting commitments and whether any could be stood down or combined.
- .7 UEB was supportive of events including celebratory events returning to in person delivery where appropriate.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.8	To review committee/meeting commitments with a view to standing down or combining activities	UEB members	15 December

21.124 Research SDP 2022-27 Development Update

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/21/110) from the PVC RKE and NOTED that it would be presented at the meeting of Council the next day.
- .2 The PVC RKE reported that the White Paper Consultation on the Research Strategy had closed with 846 responses. Input from UNNC and UNM was awaited. The feedback received would be considered as the Research Strategy was developed and refined.
- .3 Whilst the Research Strategy would not solely be developed and designed to improve research performance, it would be a significant focus.
- .4 A likely target of the Research Strategy would be to achieve a top 10 Russell Group position for research income in the next five years. The Medium Term Financial Plan indicated that to achieve that ambition a step-change in income would be required in the outer years 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26. To achieve a step-change, research awards would need to increase in 2021/22 and 2022/23. It was NOTED that the outputs of the Spending Review would impact the University’s ability to achieve the required increase.
- .5 Immediate interventions were required to achieve the proposed trajectory of improved performance. UEB was reminded of those already underway and advised of the development a further programme which would take account of responses to the consultation, analysis of root causes of any areas of underperformance, and would endeavour to take advantage of regional opportunities.



- .6 The programme would be designed to achieve incremental improvement. To achieve a step change in research performance, targeted interventions would be required. A slide was presented which set out research income for University HESA cost centres. A number of units of assessment were already performing very well, but there were a number of potential high priority growth opportunities.
- .7 Targeted Faculty or School interventions might focus on strategic review of opportunities, how to address performance, recruitment of key staff, the balance between teaching and research resource and staff student ratios.
- .8 UEB were supportive of the content of the paper and provided some guidance on its presentation at the Council meeting the next day

21.125 Outcomes from Research Planning Working Group: Operational Delivery Plan for Research

- .1 UEB RECEIVED and NOTED the paper (UEB/21/112) from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Director of Research and Innovation which set out recommended actions to improve cost recovery for research.
- .2 UEB APPROVED the recommended actions.

21.126 Post REF 2021 Results

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/21/118) from the PVC RKE which set out a proposal for a University framework for post-REF 2021 analysis and review. UEB NOTED that the same paper had been considered by Research Committee which had suggested that the framework needed more clarity on how the activity would relate between Schools and Faculties.
- .2 REF results would be provided to institutions on 9 May 2022.
- .3 UEB made a number of suggestions for development of the framework:
 - .1 The purpose of the framework which was to support preparations for the next REF should be made clearer. Activity would inevitably provide learnings on research performance and culture.
 - .2 There should be clarity on the level of challenge required as part of the School-led process. Whilst external communications would need to focus on the positive outputs of the REF, School and Faculty assessments needed to more honest and reflective. As part of the process, Heads of School should consider on how accurate their predictions had been.
 - .3 The activity undertaken as part of the framework should align with Research Strategy activity.
- .4 UEB AGREED the proposed framework for the post-REF review subject to the comments made in discussion.

21.127 Staff Engagement Survey Leadership Groups Analysis

- .1 UEB RECEIVED a paper (UEB/21/113) from the Director of Human Resources, presented by the Leadership and Management Director.



- .2 It was NOTED that as part of the management of the wider leadership and management risk of the University (ULRR12), a mitigating action had been identified to ensure that the outcomes of the 2019/2020 staff engagement survey were considered across specific leadership groups, as well as by individual Faculties, Schools, Departments and Professional Services areas. The paper contained a large number of recommendations for further action resulting from that activity.
- .3 A number of the themes arising from the report were discussed including the juxtaposition between the calls in the report by some leadership groups for greater degrees of trust, authority and empowerment, and recent experience connected to returning to campus activity.
- .4 UEB also considered the ongoing challenges of internal communication and continued requests for greater transparency. It was NOTED that a number of engagement mechanisms already in place were not being utilised by leadership staff and significant steps had been taken to increase openness and transparency around decision-making.
- .5 There was consensus that the report contained too many recommendations and instead priority actions should be identified. UEB suggested that priorities might include:
 - .1 Ensuring a level standardisation across the role profiles for leadership groups to include responsibilities and accountabilities.
 - .2 Ensuring continued development around clarity on decision-making routes.
 - .3 The creation of network or communities of practice for leadership groups which should be led by the members of those groups. Opportunities for further engagement and better paths to communication should be identified by those groups.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.6	To engage with relevant Faculty and Professional Service groupings to identify a small number of priorities and circulate to UEB for information.	Director of Human Resources, Leadership and Management Director	January 2022

21.128 University of Nottingham/Nottingham Trent University Joint Bid for Universities of Sanctuary Designation

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/21/114) from the Registrar, presented by Dr Joanna McIntyre, which set out a proposal to make a joint submission with Nottingham Trent University for designation of Universities of Sanctuary.
- .2 UEB NOTED that if successful, Nottingham would be the first city to have both universities receive the award. The designation would support the City of Nottingham’s bid to become recognised as a City of Sanctuary. UEB further NOTED that as part of the submission a three-year plan of activity was required.
- .3 The PVC ESE reported that there were both internal and external communication plans associated with successful designation.
- .4 UEB APPROVED the joint submission with Nottingham Trent University and ENDORSED the three-year activity plan.



21.129 Graduation Celebration Options

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/21/115) from the Registrar which sought UEB's thoughts and views on principles associated with the delivery of graduation ceremonies for the Classes of 2020 and 2021.
- .2 UEB indicated the following:
 - .1 The ceremonies should maintain a close connection to the style of previous ceremonies and not lose their formal and traditional elements.
 - .2 The delivery of large-scale convocation style events should not be considered further.
 - .3 Ceremonies should be held on campus.
 - .4 The duration of each ceremony should not exceed that of ceremonies in recent years.
 - .5 Free gifts and mementos were not appropriate from an environmental sustainability perspective.
- .3 The Registrar drew attention to the significant commitment from staff that would be required to deliver such a large programme of ceremonies, both from staff involved in the organisation of the event and from academic colleagues through their attendance at ceremonies themselves, the post-ceremony celebration event and events held in Schools.
- .4 The extent of the graduation offerings that could be provided free of charge would need to be considered further with final agreement on the funding available to come from Planning and Resources Committee.
- .5 UEB AGREED that reciprocal arrangements should be in place with UNNC and UNM for the graduation ceremonies for the Classes of 2020 and 2021.
- .6 Further planning on the design of the graduation event would be undertaken and circulated to UEB for information and feedback.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.7	To undertake further design and development work on the graduation event and circulate outputs to UEB for feedback.	Deputy Registrar	December 2021

21.130 Timetabling for 2024

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/21/121) from the PVC ESE and the Registrar, presented by the Deputy Registrar.
- .2 The paper set out a proposal for a three-year project to improve student and staff satisfaction with the University timetable and to ensure efficient of space utilisation through the adoption of auto-scheduled timetables. Much of the programme would focus on changing the culture and practice associated with timetabling to prioritise efficiencies. The project would include a



review of timetabling software, the upgrade and standardisation of teaching facilities and AV including in locally managed teaching rooms that would transfer to the central timetable.

- .3 There was strong support for the project given the significant potential benefits. However, it was acknowledged that in order to achieve the considerable cultural change required across the University, the project would need to be championed by Heads of School and of Departments.
- .4 UEB NOTED that a number of actions included as part of the project had already received UEB approval, but there had been limited progress in delivery.
- .5 UEB ENDORSED the project.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.6	To deliver six-monthly updates on progress to UEB and quarterly updates to Senior Leaders	Deputy Registrar, Secretary	Ongoing

21.131 National Rehabilitation Centre

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/21/116) from the FPVC Medicine and Health Sciences which contained a full business case for the University’s involvement with the National Rehabilitation Centre.
- .2 An outline business case had been approved by PRC, UEB and Finance Committee in December 2020. It was NOTED that the paper addressed the comments made as part of that approval process.
- .3 UEB confirmed its continued support for the project and RECOMMENDED the business case to Finance Committee for approval including the requests that the University underwrite a commitment to a maximum rental of £600k per annum for a 20-year lease, with a 10-year break clause and pump priming costs of £1.16m for the first three years of the project.

21.132 Castle Meadow Governance

- .1 UEB RECEIVED and NOTED paper UEB/21/119 from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, which set out the proposed Terms of Reference for the Castle Meadow Strategy and Delivery Group pending consideration of the acquisition of the Castle Meadow site by Council the next day.
- .2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor would chair the Strategy and Delivery Group under which a number of workstreams would sit.
- .3 UEB discussed the workstreams, their membership and how they would incorporate the multiple priorities for the project. It was likely that the workstreams would evolve and possibly merge as their work progressed.
- .3 A group had also been established to oversee the Digital Nottingham project as whilst there was an overlap between the two projects, they were separate. The leads for the Digital Nottingham project would be co-opted onto the Castle Meadow Strategy and Delivery Group.
- .4 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor would consider the suggestion that an FPVC should be included in the membership of the Group, although it was his view that the Group should not become a sub-set of UEB.



21.133 Roundtable Discussion

- .1 The Director of Human Resources confirmed that notification of a ballot for industrial action had been received. The ballot would be open from 18 October until 4 November.
- .2 A programme manager had been appointed to lead the Tomorrow's NUH engagement activity with the Nottingham University Hospital's NHS Trust and discussions continued. It was NOTED that there had been a change in senior leadership at the Trust.
- .3 The FPVC reported that Professor Glenn McDowell's tenure as Head of the Department of Civil Engineering had been extended for a further two years and the Head of the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Professor Jon Clare, would stand down at the end of the academic year. It was further reported that the APVC for Education and Student Experience in the Faculty of Engineering would be standing down and the APVC for Research had agreed an extension of four years to their tenure.
- .4 Some concerns about the provision of catering services at the Sutton Bonington Campus were raised and would be taken forward outside the meeting.
- .5 A letter had been received addressed to the Chair of Council from a number of professorial staff which set out their concerns in connection with the new professorial banding project. The letter would be provided to the Chair of Council. An update provided to staff clarifying aspects of the new process would address the concerns raised.