



# University Executive Board

## Minutes

3 June 2025

**Present:** Professor Jane Norman (Vice-Chancellor, Chair), Professor Sam Kingman (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Professor Sube Banerjee (FPVC MHS), Jason Carter (Chief Governance and Risk Officer), Kylie Colvin (Chief Strategy Officer), Richard Evemy (Interim Chief Operating Officer), Professor Jeremy Gregory (FPVC Arts and Interim FPVC Social Sciences), Professor Katherine Linehan (PVC ESE), Helen McNamara (Chief People Officer), Professor Tom Rodden (PVC RKE, from minute 25.77), Professor Chris Tuck (Interim FPVC Engineering), Professor Zoe Wilson (FPVC Science)

**Apologies:** Matt Atkinson (Interim Chief Financial Officer)

**In Attendance:** Sarah Troy-Brown (Secretary), Louella Houldcroft (Director of Communications and Advocacy), Professor Jon Garibaldi (Provost UNNC, for minute 25.77), Patrick Joseph (Registrar UNM, for minute 25.77), Kev Thompson (Interim Director of Governance and Assurance, for minute 25.78 and 25.82), Caitlin Milazzo (Head of School of Politics, University Lead for Academic Performance, for minute 25.79), Ben Ollivere (APVC RKE, University Lead for Academic Performance, for minute 25.79), Duncan Young (Interim Chief Digital Officer, for minutes 25.84), Sally Blackamore (Director of Finance, for minute 25.81), Angela McDonald (Associate Director for Risk and Assurance, for minute 25.82), Rachel Brereton (Director of Research and Innovation Operations, for minute 25.85), Jason Feehily (Head of Trusted Research, for minute 25.85), Jenny Vempati (Director of Internal Audit, for minute 25.83)

### 25.74 Welcome, Quoracy and Declarations of Interest

The Secretary confirmed that the meeting was quorate. There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

### 25.75 Minutes and Action Log

- .1 The minutes of the meetings held on 30 April and 19 May 2025 as set out in paper UEB/25/63 were CONFIRMED as a true and accurate record.
- .2 The Action Log was NOTED. Members were reminded of the action to ensure all priority one and two internal audit actions were completed by 31 July 2025 (action 25.67.5).

### 25.76 Chair's Business

- .1 The financial landscape within higher education was DISCUSSED and the challenges being experienced in the sector were NOTED.
- .2 The increased focus of the UK government on compliance and efficiency matters within higher education was DISCUSSED. It was NOTED that the Universities UK Transformation and Efficiency Taskforce report: "*Towards a new era of collaboration*" had been published the previous day. This report set out the potential for opportunities to support transformation and efficiency which included the pursuit of innovative collaborative structures, and sharing more services and infrastructure.
- .3 Revised guidance from the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) on collaborations between universities had recently been released. This guidance would be shared with members.
- .4 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor REPORTED that the University had been contacted by the Office for Students to seek an update on the University's current financial position and financial plans as part of work on the broader sector. It was understood that all universities were being contacted for this information.



**ACTION**

- .5 Recently revised CMA guidance on collaborations between universities would be shared with members

**OWNER**

Chief Governance and Risk Officer

**DUE**

June 2025

**Post meeting note:** This action has been completed.

**25.77 International Governance Reports from UNNC and UNM**

1. UEB RECEIVED and NOTED papers UEB/25/52 and UEB/2/53 which set out the quarterly governance reports from University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC) and University of Nottingham Malaysia (UNM) respectively.
2. It was NOTED that UNNC students who had been offered places in the USA would be offered guaranteed places at UNM. It would be explored whether places at UNUK could also be offered to these students.
3. UEB requested updates on mitigations of the student recruitment risks identified in the papers.

**ACTION**

- .4 It would be explored whether places at UNUK could also be offered to UNM students who had been previously offered places at USA institutions.
- .5 Updates on progress of mitigations of the student recruitment risks would be included in future reports.

**OWNER**

Provost UNNC,  
Registrar UNM,  
Chief Strategy Officer

**DUE**

July 2025

September 2025

**25.78 University of Nottingham North Star**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED and CONSIDERED paper UEB/25/73 which set out guiding principles to help the University focus on the highest priorities over the following 12 to 18 months. It reflected a shift toward a more streamlined set of priorities, bringing sharper focus, more coordinated effort, and greater impact. By concentrating on the things that were expected to make the biggest difference, the University would give itself the best chance of delivering meaningful progress. In doing this, it provided necessary success criteria and alignment for all strategic programmes and initiatives that included Future Nottingham.
- .2 UEB provided the following comments:
  - .1 The metrics in the paper should be aligned with those in the 'measuring expectations' work discussed under minute 25.80 below to ensure a single source of metrics;
  - .2 There was insufficient emphasis on research in the paper, and it was requested that the first sentence of the proposed vision be amended to include reference to development and extension of knowledge through research, and that this reference be included before the reference to education;
  - .3 Reference to the 'current climate' in the first principle be revised to remove the word 'current' in order to ensure the principles remained relevant over time;
  - .4 The first principle be amended to include emphasis on a positive culture under 'a place of belonging' so the principle was broader than the physical environment;
  - .5 It was considered that tariff would be a better key performance target than 'enrolment growth'.
- .3 The audience for the paper was DISCUSSED and whether it be disseminated beyond the original planned audience of Council. It was proposed that once Council had endorsed the paper, it would be circulated more widely. UEB noted the original purpose of the paper was to provide context for Council when they consider business cases in the future.
- .4 UEB APPROVED the North Star vision statement and AGREED the following, subject to the amendments above:



- .1 The principles and owners to ensure aligned decision-making remained;
- .2 The need for performance metrics and accountable UEB leads.

ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.5 The North star paper would be amended to take in account the comments from members.	Chief Strategy Officer, Interim Director of Governance and Assurance	July 2025

## **25.79 Measuring Academic Expectations**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED and CONSIDERED paper UEB/25/67 which set out the staged approach to the implementation of the ESE and RKE performance dashboard which would underpin Future Nottingham Phase 2. This dashboard would capture academic activity at an individual level. The dashboard was considered essential to the establishment of a culture of sustainable academic excellence at the University, and alignment of academic activity to the University's strategic goals.
- .2 It was NOTED that a code of practice would be developed and submitted to a future meeting for approval.
- .3 UEB provided the following comments:
  - .1 It was important that performance arrangements for both professional services and academic areas be aligned to ensure a common message on performance culture;
  - .2 Further investment may be required to collect data that was outside SciVal and Scopus and it was NOTED that spend should be within existing budget envelopes.
- .4 UEB NOTED the following:
  - .1 The staged approach to performance dashboard implementation;
  - .2 The need for a code of practice to be developed and agreed prior to September 2025;
  - .3 The importance of either an aggregated or integrated performance informatics and insight team within the future structure.
- .5 UEB APPROVED the following:
  - .1 The dashboard design principles;
  - .2 The metrics included in the stage one dashboard implementation
  - .3 Engagement with and the alignment of these separate pieces of work to create a single, aligned proposal for an academic expectations framework to be presented to UEB after the summer.

ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.6 The University Leads for academic performance would consult with the Director of Libraries on data that was outside SciVal and Scopus.	University Leads for academic performance	July 2025

## **25.80 Executive Structure and Accountability Framework**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED and CONSIDERED paper UEB/25/77 which set out the proposed executive structure for the University. The structure illustrated the leadership positions that would immediately report into the 'c' suite that have been ratified in the final team structures as part of Future Nottingham Phase 1 in professional services.
- .2 It was NOTED that in line with sector developments, the following job titles had changed:
  - .1 Chief Commercial Officer would now be Chief Revenue Officer;



.2 Director of Estates and Facilities would now be Chief Property Officer.

.2 UEB provided the following comments:

- .1 Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellors for RKE and ESE would need to be included in the organisation chart;
  - .2 The Heads of Trusted Research and Research Governance reported into the Director of Research and Innovation Operations rather than the PVC RKE;
  - .3 The Director of the Biosciences Unit was listed in the structure; however, this was inconsistent with directors of other research facilities that were also heavily regulated such as human tissue, the University farm, and the Zero Carbon Cluster. The chart would need to be revised to ensure consistency;
  - .4 Other areas such as the Researcher Academy should also be included on the chart;
  - .5 Executive Assistants to UEB would be removed from the chart as similar level roles sitting below other areas were not shown;
  - .6 The role Chief Property Officer would be revised to Chief Property and Facilities Officer.
- .3 Clarification of the responsibilities of the new Executive Director of Academic Services (EDAS) role were requested. The draft role profile for the EDAS role would be circulated to members.
- .4 The structure chart would be amended in line with the comments received and submitted to UEB for approval via circulation.

#### ACTION

#### OWNER

#### DUE

- |    |  |                                    |           |
|----|--|------------------------------------|-----------|
| .5 | The draft role profile for the EDAS role would be circulated to members for information.                                   | Interim Chief<br>Operating Officer | July 2025 |
| .6 | The structure chart would be amended in line with the comments received and submitted to UEB for approval via circulation. | Interim Chief<br>Operating Officer | July 2025 |

### 25.81 Financial Performance to April 2025

- .1 UEB RECEIVED and NOTED paper UEB/25/78 which set out financial performance to the end of April 2025. It was REPORTED that there continued to be significant positive variance to the budget year to date position that was expected to continue for the remainder of the financial year.
- .2 The following key points were NOTED:
  - .1 The year to the end of April 2025 was £27.3m better than budget, of which £22m was expected to be permanent;
  - .2 The budgeted contingency of £20m remained unused;
  - .3 Work was due to commence on writing-off old debt which would offset some of the upside. It was NOTED that payment of bad debt would continue to be pursued even though it was written off on the accounts;
  - .4 The cash position was positive, and it was unlikely that the revolving credit facility would be used during the remainder of the year;
  - .5 There were no expected breaches of lenders covenants, and the University remained compliant with the Office for Students requirement to hold a minimum 30 days cash.
- .3 It was CONFIRMED that the Financial Approvals Board review limits would change from reviewing requests over £20k to over £10k from 1 August.



## **25.82 Strategic Risk Management Update**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED and CONSIDERED paper UEB/25/79 which set out changes to risk ownership, risk scores, new risks, de-escalated risks and an analysis of risk performance following a review of the Strategic Risk Register by Planning and Resources Committee.
- .2 Risk 17 Health and safety compliance and assurance was DISCUSSED, and it was NOTED that this risk would remain on the register for at least a further six to 12 months to ensure Council had received sufficient assurance this risk was under control.
- .3 It was NOTED that having too few risks would not provide the appropriate level of detail required by both UEB and Council. It was further NOTED that risk definitions would need to be more tightly defined to avoid them becoming generic.
- .4 UEB NOTED the changes in risk ownership and APPROVED the full Strategic Risk Register and the high-level version of the Strategic Risk Register for presentation to Council in June.

## **25.83 Audit Recommendations Tracking**

1. UEB RECEIVED and NOTED paper UEB/25/71 which provided an update on audit recommendations tracking.
2. It was REPORTED that as of 3 June 2025, the number of overdue actions remained at 30.
3. The Chair reiterated the need for members to ensure the completion of all priority one and priority two audit actions by the end of July.

## **25.84 UniCore Product Team Update**

1. UEB RECEIVED and NOTED paper UEB/25/75 which set out an update UniCore and included challenges and highlights since the go-live in November 2024.
2. Issues with UniCore were broadly in three themes: embedding new processes, genuine system defects, and opportunities to improve.
- .3 The PVC RKE NOTED concern with regard the lack of integration of UniCore with the RIS system and how this issue was impacting the University's ability to manage REF related data. It was NOTED that integration with RIS was planned.
- .4 Concern was NOTED that the paper did not set out the big issues with UniCore and how these issues were being addressed. The Chief Governance and Risk Officer advised the Interim Chief Digital Officer that a list of significant consequential risks be identified, and these risks would inform the UniCore Product Team's priorities over the following six months.
- .5 UEB NOTED the following:
  - .1 The formal closure of the Digital Core Project and transition to a product team model;
  - .2 The structure of the product team and immediate priorities, which would include reducing the backlog of incidents and service requests, and ensuring operational stability through forthcoming upgrades;
  - .3 The feedback received through engagement exercises with Faculties, Schools and Professional Services on the wider University's experience during the go live, emergent themes and action plans;
  - .4 The recent Oracle contract renewal for 4 years at additional cost and the removal of Oracle Guided Learning (OGL) as a cost saving.

## **25.85 Foreign Influence Registration Scheme**



1. UEB RECEIVED and NOTED paper UEB/25/66 which set out the details and implications for the University of the Foreign Influence Registration Scheme (FIRS) which had been introduced by the UK government as part four of the National Security Act 2023.
2. FIRS was a two-tier scheme consisting of a political influence tier and an enhanced tier. Russell Group institutions were working together to develop and better understand different scenarios.
- .3 UEB ENDORSED the proposed actions as set out in the paper.

#### 25.86 Any Other Business

- .1 The following items would be circulated for approval due to time: Future Nottingham Financial Delegation Revision (UEB/25/74), Staff Personal Relationships Policy (UEB/25/69), and Dignity at Nottingham Policy (UEB/25/70).
- .2 The UNM 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary was DISCUSSED, and it was AGREED to limit the number of UEB members attending. It was CONFIRMED that the PVC Science who was already planning a visit to UNM and the Chief Strategy Officer would join the Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor as UEB representatives at the event.

#### ACTION

	OWNER	DUE
.3 The following items would be circulated for approval:	Secretary	June 2025
a) Future Nottingham Financial Delegation Revision (UEB/25/74)		
b) Staff Personal Relationships Policy (UEB/25/69);		
c) Dignity at Nottingham Policy (UEB/25/70).		

**Post meeting note:** This action has been completed.

#### 25.87 Dates of next meetings: 2 July 2025.