

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE BOARD HELD ON TUESDAY 7  
NOVEMBER 2023 IN ROOM 109, REGENT STREET AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

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PRESENT:	Professor P Bonfield (Chair) Dr S Jarvis Professor C Kalantaridis	Professor A Linn Professor J Jones
IN ATTENDANCE:	O Adetona (Minute 23.51) Professor D Anand I Griffiths (Minute 23.48) J Lamarque (Secretary) N Nelson (Minute 23.50)	A Norris (Minute 23.54) E Standen (Minute 23.46) Professor G Wielander (Minute 23.49) I Wilmot (Interim USCOO <sup>1</sup> )
APOLOGIES:	Professor A Hughes	

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**23.45 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- 23.45.1 **Welcome:** The Chair welcomed all members and attendees to the meeting, in particular Professor Christos Kalantaridis, the newly appointed Head of College, Westminster Business School. Professor Kalantaridis outlined his priorities for the coming year.
- 23.45.2 **Apologies:** Apologies were received as noted above.
- 23.45.3 **Requests to discuss starred items and business not on the agenda:** The Chair confirmed there were no requests to discuss starred items and agreed to discuss three items of business not on the agenda (see Minute 23.57).
- 23.45.4 **Chair's business:** The Chair updated members on recent events around industrial action and lessons learnt on the special regulations adopted. The Chair also reported on items for his upcoming blog.

**23.46 OFFICE FOR STUDENTS PREVENT DUTY MONITORING RETURN**

- 23.46.1 Emma Standen, Deputy Registrar (Quality and Standards) presented the Office for Students (OfS) Prevent Duty monitoring return (Document UEB 231107A).
- 23.46.2 The Deputy Register reported that there were fewer Students' Union (UWSU) events than last year and the Prevent risk assessment has been updated to cover all requirements.
- 23.46.3 In response to a member's query, the Deputy Registrar confirmed that all refresher training had been completed for the key individuals. The Deputy Registrar thanked members who had taken part in the refresher training.
- 23.46.4 A member commented that they had not received any updates for their College, and the Deputy Registrar confirmed that historically updates are only sent to Colleges if there was something to report.
- 23.46.5 **AGREED** The Deputy Registrar will send updates to all Colleges for information.
- 23.46.6 In response to a member's query on UWSU being disinclined to invite external speakers, the Deputy Registrar commented that those societies that have predominantly invited external speakers in the past continue to do so. The Deputy Registrar agreed to explore with UWSU any

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<sup>1</sup> University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer

barriers to societies engaging external speakers. Members noted that colleagues are currently exempt from the External Speakers approval process; however, that is under review.

23.46.7 Members discussed changes in freedom of speech legislation, and the Deputy Registrar confirmed that the OfS is yet to release their consultation on how they will enact the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023.

23.46.8 Members noted that the Deputy Registrar will provide an update for UEB members on implications of the Freedom of Speech Act when the OfS requirements are published and update the College Executive Groups on the Prevent Duty.

23.46.9 **AGREED** OfS Prevent Duty Monitoring Return to be submitted to the Court of Governors.

## 23.47 EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

23.47.1 The Chair withdrew this item from the agenda<sup>2</sup>.

## 23.48 UNIVERSITY RISK REGISTER AND MITIGATIONS SCHEDULE – PERIODIC REVIEW 1 (INCLUDING OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTERS REVIEW OUTCOMES)

23.48.1 Ian Griffiths, Risk and Resilience (R&R) Manager presented the first periodic review of the strategic and operational risk registers (Document UEB 231107C).

23.48.2 The R&R Manager reported there was no significant increase or decrease in the risk position although there were some changes in residual risk scores.

23.48.3 Members will continue to review strategic risks in parallel with work to review risk appetite framework alongside the Court. Members confirmed the R&R Manager will meet with each strategic risk owner to review the existing strategic risks and identify any new risks.

23.48.3.1 **ACTION R&R Manager** to deliver a session at a future UEB meeting where risk owners will brief other members on their strategic areas and UEB will review the strategic risk register collectively to identify any gaps, duplication, or alternative suggestions.

23.48.3.2 **ACTION UEB Secretary** to schedule the strategic risk register review session.

23.48.3.3 **ACTION Interim USCOO** to discuss the two new escalated operational risks with the Director of Information Systems and Support and update members on the outcome of those discussions, including intended timescales for completion of the work in these areas.

23.48.4 **AGREED** University risk register and mitigations schedule to be submitted to the Audit and Risk Committee with a summary of the UEB discussion.

## 23.49 SUPPORTING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

23.49.1 Professor Gerda Wielander, Associate Head of College (AHoC), Liberal Arts and Sciences, presented an update from the international student support work implementation group (Document UEB 231107C).

23.49.2 In response to member's queries, the AHoC confirmed:

- there was input from all Colleges in the working group;
- the group are looking at ways to make sure all students – including those who join late - have the necessary the information and whether the welcome period can be extended if necessary.
- mitigations for a reduction in conversion from acceptances to enrolments include faster response to CAS () queries, and “credibility” interviews and document verification

<sup>2</sup> Therefore, there is no Document UEB 231107B for this meeting.

checks by the Admissions Team (to address the high degree of fraudulent applications across the sector).

- 23.49.3 Members discussed the importance of pre-arrival and induction activities, including those for international students, and suggested that this should be the focus for bids for Quintin Hogg Trust funds.
- 23.49.4 A member suggested that the use of commercial materials could support different pedagogical environments and that all colleagues should have an opportunity to learn how to support international students and their sense of belonging.
- 23.49.5 Members commended the progress made by the group on the recommendations in the report.

### **23.50 ASBESTOS POLICY**

- 23.50.1 Niamh Nelson, Head of Safety, Health and Wellbeing (SHW) presented the updated Asbestos Policy (Document UEB 231107E).
- 23.50.2 The Head of SHW confirmed that updates to the policy are minimal and the review was conducted in response to a recommendation from an internal audit review of asbestos management.
- 23.50.3 Members noted that the Asbestos Management Plan will be submitted to UEB when the Director of Estates, Planning and Services has arranged site surveys to inform the asbestos management plan. Members heard that there are no specific areas of concern and the internal audit identified good practice. The Head of SHW informed members that surveys are conducted proactively before embarking on any work; however, the University did not routinely undertake asbestos management surveys.
- 23.50.4 In response to a comment that there was no reference to students in the policy, the Head of SHW explained that that students would not be expected to be aware of or take responsibility for asbestos.
- 23.50.5 **APPROVED** Updated Asbestos Policy to be implemented with immediate effect.

### **23.51 OfS FINANCIAL COMMENTARY AND FINANCIAL RETURN**

- 23.51.1 Oyin Adetona, Deputy Director of Finance presented the OfS five-year forecast return and commentary (Document UEB 231107F), which are based on the five-year financial forecast agreed at UEB in September 2023 and two years of financial accounts.
- 23.51.2 Members heard that the balance sheet is strong with assets of **[REDACTED]** and that there is also a strong cashflow position that reflects ambitious capital plans.
- 23.51.3 Members discussed the impact of higher inflation and pension contributions on the balance sheet and the Interim USCOO confirmed that inflationary increases are built-in to the forecast to a certain extent, and the Finance team has modelled scenarios such as reduced fees.
- 23.51.4 **AGREED** Members recommend the OfS five-year forecast and commentary to the Resources Committee.

### **23.52 STRATEGIC KPIs – PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

- 23.52.1 The Interim USCOO informed members that the proposed key performance indicators (KPIs) would be circulated to members for comment and agreement by email prior to submission to the Resources Committee on 14 November 2023<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Therefore, there is no Document UEB 231107G for this meeting.

**23.53 STAYING SAFE: BUSINESS CONTINUITY GROUP UPDATE**

23.53.1 Sal Jarvis, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) for Education and Co-Chair, Staying Safe: Business Continuity Group reported on progress in development of the new Business Continuity Policy, membership of the Group and discussions around Martyn's Law (Protect Duty).

**23.54 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ACCREDITATIONS UPDATE**

23.54.1 Andy Norris, Head of Culture and Inclusion presented an update on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) accreditations (Document UEB 231107H).

23.54.2 Dibyesh Anand, Co-Chair, EDI Committee informed members that the Committee proposes that the University applies for the Athena SWAN then the Race Equality Charter accreditation.

23.54.3 The Head of Culture and Inclusion reported that the current proposal clearly states the benefits of the accreditations, providing scope for distinctiveness.

23.54.4 Members acknowledged the importance of such accreditations and the Co-Chair, EDI Committee confirmed the Senior Lead for the Self-Assessment Team should be a senior academic already very active in EDI matters.

23.54.5 A member suggested that a decision on the level of Athena SWAN award should be taken once the self-assessment is underway to ensure it is realistic and achievable and that external benefits should align with internal priorities.

23.54.6 **AGREED** Members supported the EDI Committee's proposal to apply for Athena SWAN and Race Equality Charter Mark accreditations.

23.54.7 **APPROVED [REDACTED]** to be allocated for the Race Equality Charter application fee<sup>4</sup>.

23.54.8 **APPROVED [REDACTED]** plus on costs to be allocated over three-years for a fixed-term EDI Accreditations Project Manager role.

23.54.9 Members noted the annual colleague hours allocation required to support the applications.

**23.55 STUDENT CONTINUATION UPDATE**

23.55.1 The DVC (Education) informed members that continuation and attrition had improved from the year before, and that benchmark data is not yet available.

23.55.2 The DVC (Education) reported that there is more work to do as gaps remain for some groups; however, 98% of students have now been allocated a Personal Tutor (PT) and most PTs have engaged with their students. Members noted that student success meetings take place in each College following the Student Success Board.

23.55.3 The DVC (Education) informed members that around 40% of PTs are accessing learner analytics and an AHoC (Education and Students) is working on an alternative to the learner analytics dashboards, which some colleagues find difficult to navigate.

23.55.4 A member stated the expectation that every PT must connect with their students, particularly those that are not attending.

**23.56 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING, ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING**

23.56.1 **AGREED** Members confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2023 (Document UEB 231107I) as an accurate record of the meeting.

23.56.2 Members reviewed a summary of the actions from previous meetings (Document UEB 231107J) and noted those that were now complete.

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<sup>4</sup> The annual Advance HE annual membership fee includes application for an Athena SWAN award.

**23.57 ANY OTHER BUSINESS****Community Music**

- 23.57.1 The DVC (Education) reported that Community Music - a partner of the College of Design, Creative and Digital Industries - has informed the University it is no longer able to deliver a Foundation Degree validated by the University.
- 23.57.2 The DVC (Education) confirmed that the University has notified the OfS and the University will take action to enable students to continue and complete their studies. Members noted that communications to students, including those who have suspended their studies, have been agreed, and there will be a financial impact on the University.
- 23.57.3 Members noted that the Court of Governors will receive notification of the withdrawal of Community Music and the report to the OfS.

**EDI Committee membership**

- 23.57.4 The Co-Chair, EDI Committee proposed an amendment to the membership of the Committee.
- 23.57.5 Members noted that there is an open call for three Professional Services EDI Leads, one of whom it is proposed will be their representative as a member of the EDI Committee.
- 23.57.6 **AGREED** EDI Committee membership to include a nominated Professional Services EDI Lead with immediate effect.

**Social Media Policy**

- 23.57.7 A member asked whether the updated Social Media Policy, recently approved by UEB subject to minor amendments, could be circulated to colleagues.
- 23.57.7.1 **ACTION UEB Secretary** to contact the Director of Global Recruitment, Admissions, Marketing and Communications to confirm the publication date for the policy.

**23.58 HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT TO 31 JULY 2023**

- 23.58.1 **APPROVED** Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery Statement to 31 July 2023 (Document UEB 231107L) to be submitted to the Court and published on the University website.

**23.59 LETTER OF REPRESENTATION TO EXTERNAL AUDITORS AND MANAGEMENT STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE AND MATRIX**

- 23.59.1 **AGREED** Letter of representation and management matrix (Document UEB 231107K) to be submitted to the Audit and Risk Committee.

**23.60 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Regular meetings are 10.30am to 12.30pm in RS109, Regent Street or via Microsoft Teams.

**2023/24**

27 November 2023	30 April 2024
12 December 2023	14 May 2024
9 January 2024	28 May 2024
23 January 2024	11 June 2024
13 February 2024	25 June 2024
28 February 2024	9 July 2024 (UEB dinner)
11 March 2024 (UEB dinner)	10 July 2024 (UEB away day)
12 March 2024 (UEB away day)	23 July 2024
28 March 2024	7 August 2024
16 April 2024	