

**APPROVED
CIRCULATED**

AB(12/13)13

**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY COURT
ACADEMIC BOARD**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 5 October 2012 at 9.00 am in
The Castle Room, Craighouse Campus**

PRESENT:

Professor Dame J K Stringer DBE (Principal & Vice-Chancellor)(Convenor); Dr K Aitchison (Acting Leader of Academic Strategy & Practice); Dr S Cairncross (Dean, Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); M Chapman (School of Life, Sport & Social Sciences); Dr J Donaldson (Head of School from the Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences); Professor J Duffield (Vice-Principal, Strategy, Resources & External Affairs); Professor C Fairfield (School of Engineering & the Built Environment); S Falconer (Head of School from the Business School); Professor E Hart (Professoriate); Dr P Jaworski (School of Management); R Kemmer (School of Computing); C Lambert (Director, Student and Academic Services); G Leydon (Student Representative for the Business School); Professor A McCleery (Leader of Research Strategy & Practice); I McIntosh (Dean, Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences); A Morrison (Assistant Dean from the Business School); Professor B Paechter (Assistant Dean from the Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); C Pinder (Director, Information Services); Professor A Sambell (Vice-Principal, Academic); Professor S Smith (Director from the Research Institutes); Dr K Smyth (Teaching Fellows/Senior Teaching Fellows); L Veitch (School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Care); Dr G Webber (University Secretary).

IN ATTENDANCE:

D Cloy (Assistant Secretary) (Clerk)

APOLOGIES:

F Alston (Assistant Dean from the Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences); N Ashton (School of Arts & Creative Industries); K Cairney (Director of International, Development & External Affairs); R Holmes (School of Accounting, Financial Services and Law); Dr S Marr (School of Marketing, Tourism & Languages); R Pelik (Leader of Academic Strategy & Practice); S Smith (Head of School from the Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); Professor G Stonehouse (Dean, the Business School); T Zanelli (President, Napier Students' Association).

1. WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

- 1.1 The Convenor welcomed members to the meeting, making particular mention of Graham Leydon (Student Representative for the Business School) and Dr Karen Aitchison (acting Leader of Academic Strategy & Practice) who were attending their first Board meeting.
- 1.2 The apologies were **noted**

PART A: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE, CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP AB(12/13)01

2.1 The Board **noted** its terms of reference, constitution and membership for the 2012/13 session.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 1 JUNE 2012 AB(11/12)66

3.1 The minutes were **approved** as an accurate record of the previous meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING

a) Student Charter (Minute 11)

4.1 It was **noted** that the Student Charter was now available online on the Student and Academic Services Intranet pages and the Student Portal.

5. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT AB(12/13)02

5.1 The Principal highlighted key elements of her written report, noting in particular that the University had concluded its first Outcome Agreement negotiations with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) at the end of July which had resulted in a satisfactory outcome for the University. Whilst concerns remained around the potential impact of these agreements on institutional autonomy, there were indications that the SFC and the Scottish Government were taking on board these concerns. It was further noted that negotiations would shortly begin regarding the 2013/14 Agreement, which would include a statement around research activity, and that the Board would have the opportunity to consider this matter further at a future meeting.

5.2 With regard to the preparation for the potential opportunity to establish a campus in Hong Kong, which Academic Board had discussed at previous meetings, it was noted that the continued delay in the release of the tender by the Hong Kong Government meant that there was currently no detailed academic proposition to bring to the Board for fuller discussion and agreement. It was reported that work was continuing on the development and evaluation of the business case and to determine the wider benefits for the University, its students and staff in areas such as employability and the broader student experience, including international opportunities for Edinburgh based students. It was noted that the University had developed a good profile and reputation in the region, understood the requirements for a successful institution in that part of the world, and had made good progress in securing the financial backing, much of which was philanthropic, to fund any development.

5.3 An outline of the likely shape of the academic proposition being considered for the campus opportunity was given. This envisaged a semi-autonomous institution with a broad base of subject areas employing high quality, full time staff recruited from around the world who would undertake teaching, research and business engagement activity. It was also envisaged that the new institution would use a similar academic infrastructure to the University for efficiency and interoperability, allowing strong interactions between them.

Depending on developments regarding the tender issue, it was hoped that there would be a detailed academic proposition to consider at the Board's next meeting.

- 5.4 With regard to the recent publicity regarding the UK Border Agency's (UKBA) withdrawal of London Metropolitan University's licence to recruit overseas students, it was noted that the University had undertaken a great deal of work to audit its own compliance internally and had addressed a number of issues identified in its systems and processes. It was noted that the University was likely to be audited by UKBA shortly. The Board was also provided with detail on the measures in place around attendance monitoring. In discussion it was noted that resourcing implications of these monitoring requirements would be picked up as the measures were implemented. It was also noted that sectoral lobbying of the Home Office/UKBA over the past several years had failed to influence the matter significantly.
- 5.5 The University's performance in recent league tables was outlined. It was noted that the University had successfully increased its ranking overall in graduate employment, but that further work was needed to increase the percentage of its graduates in "graduate level" employment. It was also reported that the University had successfully bid for £900k of SFC funding which would support the further development of graduate employability activities.
- 5.6 It was noted that the University's position had dropped in the recently published Sunday Times university league table, and that the 2012 National Student Survey (NSS) results, publicly available through the recently published Key Information Sets, showed that the University had made no overall progress in improving its NSS outcomes, including in areas where particular effort had been focused. It was noted that the Vice-Principals would lead further work to focus efforts on improving performance in identified key areas with the aim of improving the University's position and reversing the recent downward trend. In discussion, it was noted that there was a need to achieve the right balance between research and teaching, and that it was important to emphasise positive areas of the University which were not measured and ranked in league tables. It was also noted that the close bunching of numbers in survey results meant that very small differences could disproportionately affect placing, giving the impression that changes were more significant than they actually were. In consideration of the potential affect on student perceptions of the short term disruption caused by the current building work at the Merchiston campus, the importance of communicating the positive message that this was an important and necessary investment to improve the future staff and student experience was emphasised.
- 5.7 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the report.

6. REPORT ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE REF

AB(12/13)03

- 6.1 The Board received the report which outlined progress with the Research Excellence Framework 2014 (REF2014) process. Progress with the Quality Audit and the input of Critical Friends was outlined and it was noted that by November the approximate size and shape of the University's submission would be known. It was noted that consideration was being given to the new element

of research impact beyond the academy, and that funding had been released against internal Strategic Research Investment bids to fund a number of external Professor/Reader appointments and to support internal staff in their REF preparation in cases where such funding was likely to make a difference within the timescale available.

- 6.2 Discussion followed during which it was noted that the University's submission would be much smaller than in previous such exercises, which was an inevitable consequence of the SFC's decision to fund only 3* and 4* quality outputs.
- 6.3 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the update and looked forward to receiving further updates as the process continued.

7. CHANGES TO POSTGRADUATE ACADEMIC YEAR PROJECT AB(12/13)04

- 7.1 The Board received the report which gave an update on the progress made to successfully implement the Board's decision to change the shape and structure of the Postgraduate Academic Year from 2012 against the project deliverables. A number of members reported that their experience of the change so far had been positive.
- 7.2 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the update.

8. UPDATE ON KEY INFORMATION SETS AB(12/13)05

- 8.1 The Board received the report which provided an update on the status of the Key Information Sets (KIS) project. It was noted that the University's KIS was published on 27 September 2012 and that the KIS Steering Group would continue to oversee the delivery of the project whilst the KIS Implementation Group would deliver the work packages.
- 8.2 Discussion followed during which the importance of colleagues who were involved in open days, recruitment and overseas activity being aware of the University's KIS was emphasised, and the importance of including appropriate contextual statements around small programmes was noted.
- 8.3 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the update.

9. HONORARY AWARDS* AB(12/13)06

[Clerk's note: This paper was tabled and collected from members following the meeting]

- 9.1 Academic Board **approved** the names put forward by the Honorary Awards Committee for Honorary Degrees. The names would be submitted to Court at its meeting on 22 October 2012 to seek endorsement.

10. NOMINATION FOR AN HONORARY ACADEMIC TITLE* AB(12/13)07

10.1 The Board **approved** the nomination for the award of the Honorary Academic title of Honorary Research Fellow to the individual named in the paper.

11. ACADEMIC YEAR CALENDAR 2016/17 AB(12/13)08

11.1 The Board **approved** the Academic Year Calendar for 2016/17.

12. ACADEMIC BOARD 'MINI REVIEW': FOLLOW UP TO ANNUAL SELF-EVALUATION OF COMMITTEE EFFECTIVENESS AB(12/13)09

12.1 The Board received the report which outlined the work being undertaken to follow up on the annual 'mini review' of the Board's sub-committees to ensure that committees operate effectively in the coming session and beyond. It was noted that open agendas, convenor approved draft minutes and papers were now being held electronically in a central location where they were published to all staff to improve communication and transparency. The recent successful Academic Board sub-committee briefing event was also highlighted.

12.2 Thereafter, the Board **noted** the report.

PART B RECEIPT OF MINUTES

Academic Board received the minutes of the following meetings to confirm that its sub-committees were continuing to meet their remits and were undertaking business on its behalf to the standard it expects.

No comments were raised on any of the minutes on this occasion.

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| 13. Minutes of Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee meeting held on 23 February 2012 | AB(11/12)45
(Professor McCleery) |
| 14. Minutes of Collaborative Provision Committee meeting held on 1 May 2012 | AB(11/12)67
(R Pelik) |
| 15. Minutes of Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee meeting held on 3 May 2012 | AB(11/12)68
(Professor Sambell) |
| 16. Minutes of Academic Ethics and Research Governance Committee held on 8 May 2012 | AB(11/12)69
(Professor McCleery) |
| 17. Minutes of Academic Strategy & Enhancement Committee meeting held on 16 May 2012 | AB(11/12)70
(Professor Sambell) |
| 18. Minutes of Collaborative Provision Committee meeting held on 29 June 2012 | AB(11/12)71
(R Pelik) |
| 19. Minutes of FECCI Faculty Academic Board held on 12 June 2012 | AB(11/12)72
(Dr Cairncross) |
| 20. Minutes of FHLSS Faculty Academic Board meeting held on 13 June 2012 | AB(11/12)73
(Mr McIntosh) |
| 21. Minutes of the Business School Faculty Academic Board meeting held on 14 June 2012 | AB(11/12)74
(Professor Stonehouse)
<i>to be submitted to next meeting</i> |

PART C ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

22. ANNUAL REPORT TO THE SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL: AB(12/13)10 FINAL VERSION

22.1 The Board **noted** the final version of the annual report to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) on Institution Led Review. This had been considered by the Board on 1 June 2012, approved by Court on 25 June and signed off by the VP(Academic) and sent to the SFC on 28 September 2012.

23. ELIR ONE-YEAR ON REPORT TO THE QAA: AB(12/13)11 FINAL VERSION

23.1 The Board **noted** the final version of the University's one-year on response to the Enhancement-led Institutional Review of Spring 2011. It was noted that this would be presented to Court for endorsement at its 22 October meeting.

24. FORWARD SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS OF ACADEMIC BOARD 2012/13 AB(12/13)12

24.1 The Board **noted** its forward schedule of business for the 2012/13 session.

25. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2012/13:

Friday **23 November 2012**, 9.00am, Castle Room, Craighouse Campus;

Friday **01 March 2013**, 9.00am, Room 1/37, Craiglockhart Campus;

Friday **31 May 2013**, 9.00am, Room 1/37, Craiglockhart Campus.

*denotes a paper to which an exemption under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 applies.