

**APPROVED
CIRCULATED**

AB(13/14)21

**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY COURT
ACADEMIC BOARD**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 4 October 2013 at 9.00 am in
The Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus**

PRESENT:

Professor A Nolan (Principal & Vice Chancellor) (Convenor); N Ashton (School of Arts & Creative Industries); Dr S Cairncross (Dean, Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); M Chapman (School of Life, Sport & Social Sciences); J Derham (Student Representative from the Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); Dr J Donaldson (Head of School from the Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences); Professor J Duffield (Vice-Principal, Strategy, Resources & External Relations); Professor E Hart (Professoriate); R Holmes (School of Accounting, Financial Services and Law); Dr P Jaworski (School of Management); C Lambert (Director, Student and Academic Services); Dr S Marr (School of Marketing, Tourism & Languages); I McIntosh (Dean, Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences); Professor B Paechter (Assistant Dean from the Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); R Pelik (Leader of Academic Strategy & Practice); C Pinder (Director, Information Services); Professor A Sambell (Vice-Principal, Academic); D Smith (NSA President); S Smith (Head of School from the Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); Dr K Stewart (School of Engineering & the Built Environment); Professor G Stonehouse (Dean, the Business School); 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); G Bisset (Student Representative from the Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences); K Cairney (Director of International, Development & External Affairs); S Falconer (Head of School from the Business School); R Kemmer (School of Computing); Professor A McCleery (Leader of Research Strategy & Practice); A Morrison (Assistant Dean from the Business School); Professor S Smith (Director from the Research Institutes); Dr K Smyth (Teaching Fellows/Senior Teaching Fellows).

1. WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

- 1.1 Professor Nolan introduced herself to her first meeting of the Academic Board and welcomed members, making particular mention of Dan Smith (NSA President) who was attending his first meeting.
- 1.2 The apologies were **noted**

PART A: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE, CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP AB(13/14)01

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

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 31 MAY 2013 AB(12/13)81

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

4. MATTERS ARISING

(i) Academic Year Review: Academic Calendar (Minute 6.4)

- 4.1 It was **noted** that, in line with authority delegated at the last meeting of Academic Board, the VP (Academic) had approved the academic calendars for 2014/15 through to 2017/18, subject to any negotiations which may be necessary with the relevant unions concerning the move of the Easter vacation in 2016/17.

(ii) Academic Regulations 2013/14 (minute 8)

- 4.2 It was reported that, following the approval of the Academic Regulations 2013/14 at the last meeting of the Academic Board, Regulations Committee undertook a further review of the regulations in light of the programme design guidelines which were also approved at the same meeting. A number of small consequential amendments were proposed and these were approved by the Vice Principal (Academic) by Convenor's action on behalf of ASEC, and by the Principal through Convenor's action on behalf of the Academic Board. This action was necessary between meetings to allow the Regulations to be effective ahead of the next meeting of Academic Board. Academic Board **homologated** this decision.
- 4.3 It was noted that the amendments would be circulated for members' information following the meeting.

5. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT AB(13/14)02

- 5.1 The Principal introduced her written report and highlighted the current position regarding student recruitment. It was noted that the University expected to fulfil its SFC funded numbers and was close to its consolidation limit. It was noted that the University was unlikely to make its target for rest-of-uk admissions, however, and that its international undergraduate admissions may be below target. Work currently underway to improve conversion rates was highlighted as a priority and briefly discussed, and work in progress to review the University's approach to international recruitment was outlined. It was noted that a full report on recruitment would come to the next meeting of the Board.
- 5.2 With regard to the potential opportunity to establish a campus in Hong Kong, which Academic Board had discussed at previous meetings, it was noted that there was no indication that the position had changed from that reported to the last meeting of the Board and there was no expectation that a Request for Proposals would appear in the near future. A group led by the Vice-Principal

(Strategy, Resources & External Relations) would be reviewing the University's strategy for Hong Kong over the next couple of months.

- 5.3 With reference to improvement in the University's performance in the National Student Survey, the Principal thanked all those involved for their good work and ongoing commitment towards improving the student experience.
- 5.4 The University's reduced performance in recent league tables was outlined, and it was recognised that the University was taking appropriate actions which would impact on improving performance over time but that continued patience, resilience and commitment would be needed to achieve this.
- 5.5 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the report.

6. REF UPDATE

AB(13/14)03

- 6.1 The Board received the report which provided an update on the process for assessing and shaping the University's submission to the REF2014, which was well underway ahead of the final date for submission of 29 November 2013. It was anticipated that just under 100 research active staff would be submitted across 9 Units of Assessment. Given the tactical approach to REF submission necessitated by the SFC's intention to fund only 3* and 4* outputs, it was recognised that many of those involved in producing excellent research would not be selected for inclusion and it was therefore important to continue to motivate, engage and develop these colleagues in preparation for REF2020.
- 6.2 Discussion followed during which the difficulty of predicting funding outcomes arising from the University's REF profile and the media interpretation/presentation of such profiles was noted.
- 6.3 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the report.

7. RESEARCH STRATEGY AND FUTURE ROLE OF RESEARCH INSTITUTES*

AB(13/14)04

- 7.1 The Vice Principal (Academic) introduced the paper which was presented to help shape thinking on the future direction of research within the University, and which addressed the areas of research strategy, research performance and research structures. It was noted that the University's imminent submission to REF 2014 had necessitated a critical self-evaluation of the University's research activity since RAE 2008. As a key element of the research strategy to date had been the focussing of research activity into nine institutes established in 2009, it was considered timely to now review this structure and related research support arrangements.
- 7.2 With regard to future research strategy, it was asserted that high quality research was critical to the future success of Edinburgh Napier University and proposed that it should be fully integrated with other academic activity, in particular the taught portfolio, to ensure its relevance to students and academic staff. It was suggested that research engagement for academic staff should be the norm and that research should underpin the entire academic portfolio. A

number of research aims and key indicators of success in achieving these aims were highlighted.

- 7.3 Academic Board welcomed the vision for research at Edinburgh Napier presented in the paper and broadly supported the development of a research strategy encapsulating the ambitions contained. Discussion followed, during which the importance of adequately supporting, incentivising and resourcing academic staff at different points of their careers, and in areas which were not currently research active, in order to achieve these aims was noted.
- 7.4 It was noted that current indicators of research performance showed that the University was not currently moving forward in the way it would need to if it was to realise its commitment to research. Against this background, the planned review of the Research Institutes and research support was outlined. It was recognised that each Institute had done excellent work, but it was considered timely to consider whether these, and associated research related support structures, provided the best context for the future development of research. It was recognised that the current Institute structure created a perception of a dislocation between research and teaching, and in discussion there was broad support for research activity to be moved back into the School structure to align it with teaching, and enable a holistic approach which would foster inclusiveness and avoid pigeonholing staff as researchers or teachers. Whilst such alignment was welcomed, it was recognised that some important research may not link to teaching and that there may need to be some exceptions.
- 7.5 The Vice Principal (Academic) thanked members for their helpful discussion and comments. It was noted that the Board would consider the matter further as the research strategy developed.

8. STUDENT SURVEYS

a) Student Survey Outcomes

AB(13/14)05

- 8.1 The Board received the report which identified key themes which had emerged from the various student satisfaction surveys undertaken by the University. This revealed both strengths and areas of lower satisfaction with the student experience where further improvements were required. Key strengths were noted in learning resources, staff/teaching and development of research skills. Key areas for improvement were noted as feedback, organisation and management and student union. An outline was given of the range of initiatives and activities underway under the auspices of the Student Survey Steering Group, which were intended to address some of the areas for improvement identified by the 2013 surveys. Work taking place in partnership with the Napier Students' Association (NSA) to improve student engagement and increase National Student Survey (NSS) participation was emphasised. The NSA President also outlined activities underway within the Association to improve the satisfaction of its members and increase their engagement.
- 8.2 Discussion followed during which it was noted that, even in areas where surveys suggest the University is doing well, it was important to guard against

complacency. In relation to organisation and management issues, a number of systems issues which created difficulties in module administration were noted and it was recognised that such matters needed to be addressed and resolved. It was also agreed that the VP (Academic) would circulate his "road map" for student experience document to members.

8.3 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the report.

b) Internal Student Satisfaction Survey

AB(13/14)06

8.4 The Board received the paper which provided an update on plans to deliver a University wide internal student satisfaction survey and included details of process and the draft questionnaire for the Board's consideration.

8.5 Discussion followed during which members emphasised the importance of effectively communicating the survey, its purpose and its benefits to academic staff to raise their awareness and alleviate any perception of threat. It was also agreed that all those involved in a programme should be able to see the data for that programme. It was noted that the question of future online delivery of the survey would be kept under review.

8.6 Thereafter, Academic Board **endorsed** the roll out of a University wide internal student satisfaction survey.

9. NOMINATION FOR AN HONORARY ACADEMIC TITLE* AB(13/14)07

9.1 The Board **approved** the nomination for the award of the Honorary Academic title of Visiting Teaching Fellow to the individual named in the paper.

10. HONORARY AWARDS* AB(13/14)08

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

10.1 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 28 October 2013 to seek endorsement.

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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| 11. Minutes of the Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee meeting held on 02 May 2013 | AB(12/13)75
(Professor Sambell) |
| 12. Minutes of the University Research Integrity Committee meeting held on 07 May 2013 | AB(12/13)76
(Professor McCleery) |
| 13. Minutes of the Collaborative Provision Committee meeting held on 27 May 2013 | AB(13/14)09
(Ms Pelik) |
| 14. Minutes of the Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences | AB(13/14)10 |

- Academic Board 12 June 2013 (Mr McIntosh)
15. Minutes of the Business School Academic Board meeting held on 13 June 2013 AB(13/14)11
(Professor Stonehouse)
16. Minutes of the Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries Academic Board meeting held on 18 June 2013 AB(13/14)12
(Dr Cairncross)
17. Minutes of the Collaborative Provision Committee meeting held on 24 June 2013 AB(13/14)13
(Ms Pelik)
18. Minutes of the Academic Strategy & Enhancement Committee meeting held on 18 September 2013
These were not available. To be carried to next meeting.
19. Minutes of the Collaborative Provision Committee meeting held on 20 September 2013
These were not available. To be carried to next meeting.

PART C ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

20. UNIVERSITY BUDGET 2013/14* AB(13/14)16

20.1 The Board **noted** the summary of the University's approved budget for 2013/14.

21. STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS FOR 2013/14* AB(13/14)17

21.1 The Board **noted** the decisions made by PEG concerning the allocation of strategic investment funds for Financial Year 2013/14.

22. SFC OUTCOME AGREEMENT UPDATE AB(13/14)18

22.1 The Board **noted** the update on the continuing development of outcome agreements in the sector and on the related processes.

23. ELIR PREPARATIONS AB(13/14)19

23.1 The Board **noted** the update on developments regarding Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR) and preparations for the next review visit.

24. FORWARD SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS OF ACADEMIC BOARD 2013/14 AB(13/14)20

24.1 The Board **noted** its forward schedule of business for the 2013/14 session.

25. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2012/13:

22 November 2013
07 March 2014
30 May 2014

All on Fridays at 9.00am in the Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus.

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