

**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY COURT**

ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on **8 March 2019** at **0900**
in the Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus

PRESENT: Professor A Nolan (Principal & Vice Chancellor) (Convenor); Professor A Sambell (Senior Vice Principal & Deputy Vice Chancellor); Professor A Tobin (Vice Principal of Learning & Teaching); Ms N Graham (Vice Principal for International); Professor N Antonopoulos (Vice Principal of Research and Innovation); Dr J Brodie (School Academic Lead, Learning & Teaching); Dr S Cairncross (Assistant Principal); Professor S Dawkes (School Academic Lead, Learning & Teaching); Dr J Hails (School of Arts & Creative Industries); Dr G Hutchison (Dean, School of Applied Sciences); Prof S Keates (Dean, School of Engineering & the Built Environment); Professor J Kennedy (Dean, Research & Innovation); Mr R Lannon (School Academic Lead, Quality Enhancement); Dr S Logie (Director, School Support Service & Academic Registrar); Dr C Mahoney (School of Health & Social Care); Professor Alison McCleery (Professoriate); Dr L Muir (School of Computing); Professor B Paechter (School Academic Lead, Research); Dr E Theodoraki (Business School); Dr N Urquhart (School of Computing).

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms K Swanton (Head of Quality & Enhancement) (*items 1 and 2 only*); Mr N Woodcock (Court) (*observer*); Mr S Brannan (Court) (*observer*); Ms A Mclean (ENSA VP Reps & Volunteers); Mr D Cloy (University Secretary); Dr C Steen (Clerk)

APOLOGIES: Mr W Baah (Student Campus Representative, Merchiston); Mrs G Boag (Dean, Business School); Dr N Brown (School Academic Lead, Quality Enhancement); Dr N Cimini (School of Applied Sciences); Professor L Dryden (School Academic Lead, Research); Ms S Ernst (Student Campus Representative, Craiglockhart); Dr A Fonzone (School of Engineering & the Built Environment); Mr J Fraser (ENSA President); Dr A Gavris (Business School); Professor E Hart (Professoriate); Professor T Humphrey (Dean, School of Health & Social Care); Mr M Innes (School of Arts & Creative Industries); Dr E Malone (School of Applied Sciences); Ms P

Miller-Judd (Dean, School of Arts & Creative Industries); Dr B Neades (School of Health & Social Care); Ms A Samra (Student Campus Representative, Sighthill); Professor S Smith (Dean, School of Computing); Dr M Thomson (School of Engineering & the Built Environment).

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

- 1.1 The Convenor welcomed everyone to the meeting and welcomed Professors Antonopoulos and Keates to their first Academic Board meeting. Messrs Woodcock and Brannan, lay members of University Court, were welcomed to the meeting as observers.

2. ENHANCEMENT-LED INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW (ELIR) Presentation

- 2.1 Members were reminded that the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) was conducted every five years and focused on the quality of taught provision. The current ELIR would additionally address the quality of the research student experience for the first time.
- 2.2 It was noted that preparations for the review were well underway, with a steering group having been constituted in 2018. Members were advised that the deadline for submission of the reflective analysis was 5 August 2019, with the review team scheduled to visit in early December 2019.
- 2.3 The contextualised themes guiding development of the reflective analysis were outlined. It was hoped to publish a draft of the document (via SharePoint) in April 2019 together with a short list of questions to encourage feedback from staff. Communications with staff would be piggy-backed on to scheduled discussions regarding the strategy beyond 2020 to minimise duplication.
- 2.4 Requests for feedback from students would be carefully designed to ensure they did not add to the feedback already ongoing, e.g. NSS. It was noted that students had been encouraged to submit photographs which typified what they thought being an Edinburgh Napier student was like: a selection of these photographs would be included in the reflective analysis. Members were advised that student communications had already taken place via the Student Council, information screens and printed leaflets.
- 2.5 Members discussed ways in which staff could become more engaged with the ELIR process to improve awareness amongst staff of ELIR and its significance and importance. It was agreed that the Head of Quality & Enhancement would attend relevant events (e.g. School meetings, programmes leaders fora) to highlight progress, explain the process and garner feedback. Members were reminded that, in addition to highlighting the good practice taking place within

the University, it was equally important to show that the University was addressing areas of poorer performance.

- 2.6 It was agreed that international partners would be included in the review cycle. The Head of Quality & Enhancement undertook to discuss the best way to approach this with the Vice Principal for International.
- 2.7 The update on progress with the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) was noted.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2018 AB(18/19)28

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2018 were approved.
- 3.2 It was noted that work relating to the development of a week numbering system relating to the academic calendar (para 10.2) was in progress. It was anticipated that a new week numbering system would be in place for the start of the 2019/20 academic year.
- 3.3 It was confirmed that no further feedback relating to the Research Promotion Framework (para 16.1) had been received. Members were advised that the framework had been launched and the first advice session for staff held.

4. MATTERS ARISING

- a) **Use of PRES survey results in student recruitment campaigns (item 3(a)):** It was noted that the Vice Principal of Learning and Teaching had met with the Director of Marketing and External Relations to discuss the use of PRES survey results and gender balance in marketing literature.

It was noted that the use of PRES results had not been a priority in the Marketing & Communications department when designing postgraduate marketing literature. It was suggested that the Dean of Research and Innovation meet with the Director of Marketing and External Relations to progress this further.

It was confirmed that the Marketing & Communications department would focus more on gender balance when designing future recruitment literature.

- b) **'Settled Status' costs for EU staff (item 4.1):** Members were advised that the need for the University to adopt a position with regard to covering the costs of attaining settled status for EU staff (which had been agreed) had been overtaken by the UK Government's undertaking to waive such costs for all EU citizens living in the UK.

- c) **Gender Action Plan review and development (item 7.1):**
Members were encouraged to visit the gender action dashboard which had been developed (a link would be sent to members). It was noted that the Gender Action Plan was being reviewed and would be submitted to the June 2019 meeting of Academic Board for consideration.
- d) **Gender balance in marketing literature(item 7.3):** See item 4(a) above.

5. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

AB(18/19)29

- 5.1 Members were advised that the University had received its Scottish Funding Council (SFC) funding allocation for 2019/20, which in real terms represented a cut. Coupled with increasing pay and pensions costs, this presented a challenging financial scenario for the University and for all other HEIs in Scotland. Members were encouraged to focus on increasing income while controlling costs.
- 5.2 Members were provided with a brief update on Brexit. Concerns were expressed regarding the possibility of EU citizens having to apply for visas if a 'no deal' scenario occurred: the UK government had indicated that under the Temporary Leave to Remain scheme, visas would be for a maximum of three years, which was directly at odds with the Scottish four-year degree cycle.
- 5.3 Members discussed changes to the Research Excellence Grant (REG) allocation rules. It was noted that the University had expressed its disagreement and concern to the SFC, primarily because of the lack of process and consultation around the change. It was noted that the new rules would financially disadvantage the University. Members were advised that proposed changes to the Research Excellence Framework (e.g. inclusion of all 'research active' staff in the submission) would likely further concentrate funding in a group of institutions that already received the majority of REG funding.
- 5.4 Members discussed the University's preparedness to address the 'fourth Industrial Revolution' and agreed that the institution should consider data innovation, data science and intelligent systems when developing its forthcoming strategy: all of these areas would influence employment in future. Activity in areas was noted.
- 5.5 The Principal's Report was noted.

6. 2019 ADMISSIONS CYCLE JANUARY BRIEFING

AB(18/19)30

- 6.1 Members considered the paper, and the reduction in applications in particular. Applications to SEBE, Computing and Biological Sciences

programmes continued to be of concern. It was noted these were areas where the University was likely to enter Clearing in summer 2019.

- 6.2 Schools were thanked for their support for Applicant Days and other conversion events.
- 6.3 It was noted that recruitment for postgraduate and international students was at an early stage. As noted above, the effect of Brexit on EU applications was a concern. Indications for international recruitment were generally positive.
- 6.4 Members welcomed the report and requested that, in future, the report included data on gender balance and Widening Participation.
- 6.5 It was suggested that the flow of applicant data to the School of Arts and Creative Industries had been slower than usual, resulting in a loss of applicants, who had been called for auditions, interviews, etc. at other institutions more quickly. The Vice Principal for International agreed to investigate this matter.
- 6.6 The 2019 Admissions Cycle January briefing was noted.

7. STUDENT ENROLMENTS AND FORECASTS FOR 2018/19 AB(18/19)31

- 7.1 Members were reminded that current information on enrolments and forecasts was available on the COGNOS site.
- 7.2 It was noted that the University had achieved its publicly-funded cohort within the parameters set by the SFC. The increase in Nursing & Midwifery programmes had been achieved. It was acknowledged that retention continued to be an issue, as was recruitment from the Rest of UK (rUK).
- 7.3 International recruitment was positive. The shift in the mix of students, with increasing postgraduate recruitment compensating for a drop in undergraduate enrolment, was noted.
- 7.4 Members noted the positive contribution of the January intake and queried whether multiple entry points could boost recruitment. It was noted that some institutions (e.g. Coventry University, Robert Gordon University) operated an additional intake in May. While it was suggested that an additional entry point might not be worthwhile (in terms of additional student numbers), it was agreed to review the pros and cons of doing so.
- 7.5 It was suggested that fully flexible entry was desirable but programme and module management would need to improve significantly to accommodate such a fundamental change.

7.6 The Student Enrolments and Forecasts Report 2018/19 was noted.

**8. STRATEGY 2020 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: AB(18/19)32
ANNUAL UPDATE OF 2017/18 PERFORMANCE**

8.1 The key headlines from the paper were noted, i.e. student numbers, employability and graduate level employability and research-active staff KPIs were on track to meet the 2020 targets. The National Student Survey (NSS) result was disappointing; within this context it was noted that, out of thirty subject areas, eight had scored in excess of 90% and five areas had improved their scores from the previous NSS.

8.2 It was noted that the data in Appendix B of the paper showed a strong correlation between Schools which performed well in the NSS and research activity, and had high numbers of staff with PhDs.

8.3 The Annual Update on Strategy 2020 Key Performance Indicators was noted.

9. UPDATE ON PLANNING AND BUDGETING PROCESS Verbal Report

9.1 Members were advised that the Director of Finance and Operations would be invited to the June 2019 meeting of Academic Board to provide members with an update on the University budget for 2019/20.

9.2 It was confirmed that initial meetings had been held with each School and plans were currently being redrafted in light of those discussions. Professional Services plans had been submitted and discussions with each service were in progress. An indicative budget was being compiled based on information received to date.

9.3 All Schools had been asked for their longer-term visions which would be fed into the new strategy. Schools had been asked to present their plans to the University Leadership Team (ULT) in the context of the University's key priorities. It was noted that progress with the planning and budgeting cycle would be reported at the June 2019 Academic Board.

9.4 Members discussed the University's success in attracting graduate apprenticeships. It was hoped that, given the ongoing uncertainty regarding allocation of places and the onerous reporting requirements, graduate apprenticeships would be absorbed into the mainstream (SFC-funded) cohort in future.

9.5 The update on the Planning and Budgeting Process was noted.

10. RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK CODE OF PRACTICE

AB(18/19)33

- 10.1 Members were reminded that all higher education institutions participating in the REF had to submit a Code of Practice (CoP). Finalised guidance on the CoP had been released in January 2019 and the document presented took cognisance of both the guidance and consultation with staff. It was noted that the CoP had to be submitted to SFC by 7 June 2019. Due to the timing, delegated authority was being sought from Academic Board to the Research & Innovation Committee to approve the draft CoP on its behalf.
- 10.2 Members were advised that discussions were ongoing regarding Equality Impact Assessments and the specific need to evidence that research workload allocation was not biased in any way: one possible solution would be to constitute an Inclusion Committee in each School to monitor such allocation. It was noted that a paper would shortly be considered by ULT on this subject.
- 10.3 Members were advised of open campus meetings later in March 2019 to consult with staff on the draft CoP. Meetings to consult with the Trades Unions had also been arranged.
- 10.4 The Dean of Research & Innovation was thanked for her work in compiling the draft CoP.
- 10.5 Delegated authority was granted to the Research & Innovation Committee to approve the CoP on behalf of Academic Board. The update on the Research Excellence Framework Code of Practice was noted.

11. BREXIT UPDATE

AB(18/19)34

- 11.1 Members were reminded that staff briefings on the possible implications of Brexit had been held in late February 2019, with the University's legal advisors, Anderson Strathern, in attendance to provide guidance. The focus now was on scenario planning around areas of exposure, particularly in the event of a 'no deal' outcome.
- 11.2 Brexit briefings for staff would continue to be held and members were advised that the University had communicated with its ERASMUS partners to request support for students currently on exchange visits in the EU, which had been received positively. It was noted that some of these partners had advised they would now not be sending exchange students to Edinburgh Napier in September 2019.
- 11.3 Communications with (c.130) exchange students currently in the EU had been instigated, with support from the Edinburgh Napier Students' Association. It was noted that, to date, there had been few

responses and those which had been received had been on specific individual concerns.

11.4 The Brexit Update was noted.

PART B RECEIPT OF MINUTES

12. MINUTE FROM THE JOINT MEETING OF LEARNING, TEACHING & ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE & STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 13 FEBRUARY 2019 **AB(18/19)35**

12.1 The minute from the joint meeting of the Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee and the Student Experience Committee, held on 13 February 2019, was noted.

13. MINUTE FROM THE RESEARCH & INNOVATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 FEBRUARY 2019 **AB(18/19)36**

13.1 The minute from the Research & Innovation Committee, held on 14 February 2019, was noted.

PART C ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

14. OUTCOME AGREEMENT WITH SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL 2019/20 TO 2021/22 **AB(18/19)37**

14.1 Members were advised that a good pattern of meetings had been established with SFC regarding monitoring and approving of Outcome Agreements.

14.2 It was noted that Edinburgh Napier had been awarded c£1.7m from the Widening Access/Retention Fund and discussions with the Schools were underway on the best way to use these funds.

14.3 The update on the Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council 2019/20 to 2021/22 was noted.

15. STUDENT APPEALS, COMPLAINTS AND CONDUCT: STATISTICS AND ANNUAL REPORT **AB(18/19)38**

15.1 Members' attention was drawn to the number of appeals within the University remaining static, compared with a growing level of appeals in the sector. It was noted that there had been growth in the number of appeals (submitted centrally) being referred back to Schools, as they were in effect late extenuating circumstances: this tended to ensure appeals were dealt with timeously and were not escalated.

- 15.2 'Essay mills' were discussed and the appetite (amongst academic staff) for making such submissions illegal was highlighted. It was acknowledged that a proportion of students only used these services when desperate and therefore circumstances surrounding the intent to cheat should be considered. Where the use of such services had been uncovered and there were no mitigating circumstances, students had been excluded from the University.
- 15.3 Members thanked Mr Bews for his work in compiling the report and in dealing with the cases which occurred over the period.
- 15.4 The Annual Report on Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct was noted.

16. UNIVERSITY TOP RISKS 2018/19: MONITORING REPORT 2 OF 3 AB(18/19)39

- 16.1 The Monitoring Report on the University Top Risks 2018/19 was noted.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

All at 0900 in the Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus:

07 June 2019