



**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY COURT**

ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on **27 November 2020**
at **0900** by Webex videoconference

PRESENT: Professor A Nolan (Principal & Vice Chancellor) (Convenor); 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 C Backhaus (School Head of Research); Professor P Barlow (School Head of Research); Mrs G Boag (Dean, Business School); Dr J Brodie (School Head of Learning & Teaching); Dr S Campbell Casey (School of Applied Sciences); Dr P Chapman (School Officer responsible for Quality Enhancement); Mr A Duggal (ENSA President); Dr A Fonzone (School of Engineering & the Built Environment); Mr M Greenhalgh (Interim Dean, School of Engineering & the Built Environment & School of Computing); Professor G Hutchison (Dean, School of Applied Sciences); Dr S Logie (Director, Student Services & Academic Registrar); Professor A Machin (Dean, School of Health & Social Care); Dr D Maclean (Dean, School of Arts & Creative Industries); Dr K Macleod (School of Arts and Creative Industries); Dr C Mahoney (School of Health & Social Care); Professor A McCleery (Professoriate); Dr L Mora (Business School); Dr X Pierron (Business School); Professor A Snowden (Professoriate); Dr N Urquhart (School of Computing); Dr S Wells (School of Computing); Dr G Wright (School of Applied Sciences)

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms C Taylor (Director, Information Services); Mr D Cloy (University Secretary); Mr I McGuire (EY) [Observing]

APOLOGIES: Mr P Goyal (Student Campus Representative, Sighthill); Dr J Hails (School of Arts & Creative Industries); Dr K James (School of Health & Social Care); Dr M Leggate (School Officer responsible for Quality Enhancement); Mr M Fahad Siddiqui (Student Campus Representative, Craiglockhart); Mr M Thomson (School of Engineering & the Built Environment); Mr S Kowshik Uppalapati (Student Campus Representative, Merchiston)

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

- 1.1. Ian McGuire from the University's Internal Auditors EY, who was observing the meeting as part of the Academic Governance Review, was welcomed to the meeting. The apologies were **noted**.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 16 OCTOBER 2020 AB(20/21)22

- 2.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2020 were **approved**.

3. MATTERS ARISING

- a) There were no Matters Arising.

4. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

- 4.1. The Principal provided an oral update on matters affecting the University not otherwise on the agenda.
- 4.2. The submission by Universities Scotland for the Scottish Budget 2020/21 was highlighted, and would be circulated for members' information.
- 4.3. Current activity to support the safe return of students at the Christmas break was highlighted, including participation in the Asymptomatic Testing programme for students moving households which involved nursing students and staff from the University filling key roles in the test centres being operated in partnership with the University of Edinburgh. It was noted that guidance was awaited from the Scottish Government on arrangements for resuming activities after Christmas, and that the Principals of the Edinburgh Universities were in regular contact to discuss ongoing Covid issues and developments.
- 4.4. It was also noted that the Principal and Vice Principal (Learning & Teaching) had met with student representatives who had expressed appreciation for the efforts of staff to support their continued learning during the pandemic, and provided a range of welcome feedback.
- 4.5. The Principal's Report was **noted**.

5. COVID-19: PLANNING AND RESPONSE UPDATE AB(20/21)24

- 5.1. Academic Board received the paper which reported on key developments in the University's response to the ongoing Covid-19 situation since last meeting. It was noted that plans were in

place to provide support to students' remaining in Student Accommodation over the Christmas period.

5.2. Academic Board **noted** the update.

**6. RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK (REF) AB(20/21)25
UPDATE**

6.1. Academic Board received the paper which presented a predicted quality profile for the University's forthcoming REF2021 submission, based on a near-final version of the submission, as at October 2020. It was noted that the current mock submission model indicated that the University was preparing to submit 68% of the overall REF submission at 3 or 4 star quality (internationally excellent or world-leading) as compared with 54% in REF2014.

6.2. In discussion it was noted that competitor Universities would also be likely to have improved their performance, however it was considered that achievement of the forecast outcome would place the University in a very competitive position relative to other modern Universities. It was also noted that the forecast outcome would result in a significant increase in the University's Research Excellence Grant funding from the SFC and would put the University in a stronger position with regard to the ongoing SFC review of teaching and research activity across the sector. The inclusion of new disciplines within the submission was also welcomed. It was noted that the final REF submission deadline was 31 March 2021, with outcomes expected in April 2022.

6.3. Academic Board **noted** the update.

**7. SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND THE BUILT AB(20/21)26
ENVIRONMENT AND SCHOOL OF COMPUTING:
RECONFIGURATION PROPOSAL**

7.1. Academic Board received the paper which outlined the rationale and external drivers to meaningfully integrate the School of Computing (SoC) and the School of Engineering and Built Environment (SEBE), considering the academic benefits for doing so and the potential options for the way forward. The consultation undertaken to date was highlighted and the further review work to be progressed through short-life working groups was noted.

7.2. Discussion followed during which members welcomed the full and open consultation which had taken place to date and noted a number of feedback points including the benefit of learning from

the previous experience of merging disciplines within the School of Applied Sciences, and the need to ensure support for subject areas on the fringe.

- 7.3. Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the contents of the paper, and the case for bringing together both SoC and SEBE in order to realise the benefits outlined. It was noted that the proposal would be explored further whilst considering alternative viable options as part of the additional review process being undertaken, before being brought back to Academic Board for decision as appropriate in March.

8. STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

(i) Research & Innovation Strategy	AB(20/21)27
(ii) Learning & Teaching Strategy	AB(20/21)28
(iii) Internationalisation Strategy	

- 8.1. Academic Board considered the proposed new Research & Innovation Strategy that had emerged from the “Shaping Our Future” strategy development process.
- 8.2. Academic Board **approved** the Research & Innovation Strategy.
- 8.3. Academic Board considered the proposed new Learning & Teaching Strategy that had emerged from the “Shaping Our Future” strategy development process.
- 8.4. In discussion it was noted that further consideration would be given to the ambition to submit to REF under pedagogy, and that further detail on the parameters of the “Gold Curriculum” would be welcomed as early as possible. It was noted that the Learning & Teaching Strategy would be a key consideration in the development of the underpinning Digital Strategy. It was also noted that use of technology was a factor being considered in the development of TNE partnerships.
- 8.5. Subject to consideration and incorporation of any minor amendments based on comments and feedback, Academic Board **approved** the Learning & Teaching Strategy.
- 8.6. Academic Board received an update on the development of the new Internationalisation Strategy. It was noted that consultation would be undertaken in the new year across the dimensions of student body, global opportunities, TNE/Global Online and the link between international and research. A well-developed draft of the Internationalisation Strategy would be brought to Academic Board at its next meeting in March 2021.

9. BREXIT UPDATE

9.1. The Board received an update on developments and preparations ahead of Brexit, following the detailed paper which had been submitted at the last Academic Board meeting. The current position regarding negotiations was noted, and it was noted that staff and student communications had been updated with the most recent developments and that specific communications had been issued regarding the pre-settled status scheme. It was further noted that plans were in place, and had been refreshed, for key risk areas.

9.2. Academic Board **noted** the update.

10. LEAGUE TABLE PERFORMANCE

AB(20/21)34

10.1. Academic Board noted the paper which summarised Edinburgh Napier University's current rankings in the three main UK league tables, as well as the Times World University rankings. The improved position in the league tables, largely due to the University's improved NSS performance, was welcomed.

11. UPDATE ON PLANNING AND BUDGETING PROCESS

AB(20/21)29

11.1. Academic Board **noted** the paper which outlined the process for the preparation of the operational plans for the Schools and Professional Services for the period 2021/22 to 2022/23.

PART B RECEIPT OF MINUTES

12. MINUTE FROM THE RESEARCH & INNOVATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 25 SEPTEMBER 2020

AB(20/21)30

The minute from the Research & Innovation Committee meeting held on 25 September 2020 was noted.

13. MINUTE FROM THE RESEARCH & INNOVATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 13 NOVEMBER 2020

AB(20/21)31

The minute from the Research & Innovation Committee meeting held on 13 November 2020 was noted.

14. MINUTE FROM THE MEETING OF LEARNING, TEACHING, ASSESSMENT AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2020

AB(20/21)32

The minute from the meeting of the Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Student Experience Committee meeting, held on 30 September 2020, was noted.

PART C ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

15. UNIVERSITY TOP RISKS MONITORING REPORT (1 OF 3)* AB(20/21)35

15.1. Academic Board **noted** the first top risks monitoring report for 2020/21.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

All at 0900 in the Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus

05 March 2021

04 June 2021