

Edinburgh Napier University
University Court

Academic Board

Minutes of the meeting held Friday 13 October 2023 at 9.00 am at the Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus and by Teams Video Conference

PRESENT:

Professor N Antonopoulos (Vice Principal Research & Innovation and Deputy Vice Chancellor) (Convenor); O Akindehin (ENSA Sabbatical) (from item 6); Professor A Al-Dubai; Professor P Andras (Dean, School of Computing, Engineering & the Built Environment); Dr S Campbell Casey (School of Applied Sciences); Professor C Cross (Dean, Business School); Dr C Garden (School Head of Learning & Teaching); Dr R Haddrill (School of Health & Social Care); Professor G Hutchison (Dean, School of Applied Sciences); Professor N Karodia (Vice Principal Learning & Teaching and Deputy Vice Chancellor) (online); M Leavitt (School of Health & Social Care); Dr M Leggate (School Officer responsible for Quality Enhancement); Dr K Leitch (School of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment); Dr S Logie (Director, Student Services & Academic Registrar) (from item 7); Dr D Maclean (Dean, Schools of Arts and Creative Industries); Dr K Macleod (School of Arts and Creative Industries) (online); Professor P Robertson; B Stillie (School of Arts and Creative Industries); Dr G Wright (School Head of Research).

IN ATTENDANCE:

D Cloy (Head of Governance and Risk; M Greenhalgh (Director of Strategy & Planning and Secretary to Court); A McGoff (Director of Finance & Operations (for item 5); A Quickfall (Head of Planning); C Taylor (Director of Information Services).

APOLOGIES:

Professor A Nolan (Principal & Vice Chancellor); S Crozier (School Officer responsible for Quality Enhancement); N Graham (Vice-Principal, International); J Irving (Student Representative); Dr F McQueen (School of Applied Sciences); A Machay (Student Representative); M Noetzel (Student Representative); Dr S Wells (School of Computing); Professor A Machin (Dean, School of Health & Social Care); Dr X Pierron (Business School); Dr N Pitropakis (School of Computing); Professor K Stutterheim (School Head of Research).

OBSERVER:

L Duncan (Court Member).

1. WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

- 1.1 The Convenor welcomed members to the meeting.
- 1.2 The apologies were **noted**.

PART A: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION & DECISION

2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 2 JUNE 2023

AB(22/23)061

- 2.1 The minutes were **approved**.

3. MATTERS ARISING

3.1 3.1 Pathway College

The Board noted an update on progress with the establishment of the University's international pathway college, the Edinburgh Napier University International College (ENUIC), which had been launched in July and would welcome its first students in January 2024. It was noted that further work would be progressed with the Schools not included in the initial launch to establish further pathways. Members recognised the importance of the pathway college for securing future growth.

4. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

AB(23/24)002

- 4.1 The Convenor introduced the Principal's written report and highlighted the reviews published by the Scottish Government over the summer which were expected to heavily influence the future direction of tertiary education policy and funding. Members were encouraged to review the detailed analysis of these documents and the potential impacts on the University which had been prepared and was appended to the report. It was noted that Academic Board would be kept apprised of policy developments in the University's external environment as they arose.
- 4.2 The deal agreed between the UK Government and the European Union on the UK's association to the Horizon Europe programme was highlighted as was the success of the Urban Research and Education Knowledge Alliance (UIREKA), a consortium of universities from across Europe established in 2016 of which Edinburgh Napier University was a founding member, in securing funding to become an official Erasmus+ co-funded European University alliance. This would provide a range of engagement opportunities for the University in its capacity as an associate member.
- 4.3 In discussion it was noted that the HE Sector in Scotland were actively lobbying against any moves to de-prioritise the funding of arts and humanities subjects and that the University was committed to continuing to be a comprehensive university. It was also noted that there was currently no detail on how the new Innovation Investment Programme would be implemented but the sector were actively engaged in seeking clarity.
- 4.4 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the report.

5. UPDATE ON FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2022/23 AND BUDGET 2023/24*

AB(23/24)003

- 5.1 Academic Board received a paper which presented the provisional financial outturn for the year ended July 2023 and budget for 2023/24. The Board noted the key highlights and the overall positive outturn for the year.
- 5.2 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the financial outturn 2022/23 and Budget for 2023/24.

6. UPDATE ON ANNUAL PLAN

AB(23/24)004

- 6.1 Academic Board received the end of year annual plan priorities update for 2022/23 and noted the significant achievements and progress across a number of areas as detailed in the report.
- 6.2 In discussion it was confirmed that the University's accommodation strategy applied to all students including international postgraduate. It was noted that challenges with accommodation availability in the private rental sector impacted that student group in particular, and that the issue was recognised and was being reviewed by the Scottish Government and local authorities with a view to improving availability. The University was also exploring options to make affordable accommodation available to its students. It was also highlighted that a strategic review with the aim of ensuring greater allocation of academic staff time on research would be undertaken over the coming year.
- 6.3 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the report.

7. DRAFT SFC OUTCOME AGREEMENT

- 7.1 Academic Board received an update on the development of the University's Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council for 2023/24. It was noted that the final document would be approved by Court later in October and would be presented at the Board's next meeting.
- 7.2 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the update.

8. SIZE AND SHAPE DISCUSSION

AB(23/24)005

- 8.1 Academic Board received an update on the discussions and evidence which had been considered regarding the future size and shape of the University as it related to Project Vision, informed by engagement with Schools, which had been discussed with Court in June.
- 8.2 In discussion it was agreed that it would be helpful to have a more detailed picture of demographic movements over the longer term. It was noted that growth opportunities and demographic issues were being aligned to the Estates Strategy within Project Vision. Regarding diversification in the international recruitment market it was noted that work was ongoing to engage with agents in a wider range of countries in order to reduce reliance on current key international markets.
- 8.3 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the update.

9. EARLY STUDENT ADMISSIONS DATA

AB(23/24)006

- 9.1 Academic Board received the paper which provided an overview of the 2023 admissions cycle and current student population estimates. The range of activity underway to address the recruitment challenges and shortfall was highlighted.
- 9.2 Academic Board **noted** the report.

10. STUDENT RETENTION PLAN

AB(23/24)007

- 10.1 Academic Board received the paper which outlined the University's approach to enhancing student retention and progression. Thanks were extended to all involved in delivery of the plan and to ENSA for their support.
- 10.2 Academic Board **noted** the report.

11. STUDENT SURVEYS: OUTCOMES AND ACTIONS*

AB(23/24)008

- 11.1 Academic Board received the paper which summarised the latest (2023) results of the sector-wide student experience surveys: the National Student Survey (NSS), the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES). In addition, the paper provided a summary of the results from Module Evaluation surveys undertaken internally at Edinburgh Napier during the academic year 2022/23. The role of the Student Success Group in agreeing and monitoring the actions to address the outcomes of the student experience surveys to enhance the student experience was also highlighted.
- 11.2 Academic Board **noted** the report.

12 STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING UPDATE

AB(23/24)009

- 12.1 Academic Board received the paper which provided an update on the work undertaken to support student mental health and wellbeing in 2022/23 and which commented on current issues.
- 12.2 Discussion followed during which members expressed their appreciation for the work of the Wellbeing and Inclusion team in supporting student mental health and wellbeing and their approach to partnership working. It was suggested that consideration could be given to pro-active measures that could be taken to address causes of non-academic misconduct. It was also recognised that growth in international student numbers would result in greater support demands which needed to be planned for.
- 12.3 Thereafter Academic Board **noted** the report.

13. SABBATICAL POLICY

AB(23/24)010

- 13.1 Academic Board received the paper which presented the draft Academic Sabbatical Leave Policy which had been developed in consultation and discussion with Deans of School, EIS, Research & Innovation Committee and ULT.
- 13.2 Discussion followed during which the policy was welcomed. It was clarified that there was flexibility within the policy to allow consideration of full sabbaticals for Grade 6 academics on a case by case basis and to allow sabbaticals for periods of less than 6 months (with a minimum of three months). The need to ensure consistency in the application of criteria was recognised as was the need to manage expectations given the likely high level of interest initially. The need to manage resource implications through planning processes and to have appropriate implementation and transition plans in place was also recognised.
- 13.3 Thereafter Academic Board **approved** the Sabbatical Leave Policy.

14. RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE PATHWAYS UPDATE

- 14.1 Academic Board were advised that the initial review which had explored merging the Research and Enterprise pathways within the academic promotions framework had led to the commencement of a full review of the academic promotions framework which included representation from across the Schools. Academic Board would be updated as the review progressed.
- 14.2 Academic Board **noted** the update.

15. UPDATE ON WELCOME WEEK

- 15.1 Academic Board received and **noted** an update on Welcome Week.

PART B RECEIPT OF MINUTES

Academic Board received the minutes of the following meetings if its sub-committees.

16. Minute from the meeting of Education and Student Experience Committee held on 27 September 2023. AB(23/24)011

- 16.1 Academic Board **noted** the minutes. It was highlighted that the University's Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (replacing ELIR) would take place on 7 December.

PART C ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

17. EDUCATION & STUDENT EXPERIENCE, COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23 AB(23/24)12

- 17.1 Academic Board **noted** the report.

18. QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23 AB(23/24)13

18.1 Academic Board **noted** the report.

19. TERMS OF REFERENCE, CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP OF ACADEMIC BOARD 2023/24

AB(23/24)14

19.1 Academic Board **noted** its Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership for 2023/24

20. FORWARD SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS 2023/24

AB(23/24)15

20.1 Academic Board **noted** its forward schedule of business for 2022/23.

21. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2023/24

Noted as:

24 November 2023

08 March 2024

07 June 2024

All Fridays at 9.00am, Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus

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