



EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY COURT

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 22 June 2020
at 3.45 pm by WebEx Video Conference**

Present: Dr G Forbes (Chair); Professor A Nolan (Principal & Vice-Chancellor); Mr R Adams; Ms J Boyle; Mr S Brannan; Lord Brodie (Chancellor's Assessor); Mr J Chittleburgh; Mr G Cullen; Mr J Fraser; Mr C Guest; Mr A Houghton; Mr C Ibanez; Dr S Jiwa; Professor A McCleery; Dr S Moir; Ms G Moran (until item 10); Dr H Patrick; Ms E Partyka; Professor A Sambell; Professor A Scullion; Ms G Scholefield; Mr S Walls; Mr N Woodcock; Professor L Yellowlees.

Apologies: None.

In attendance: Mr D Cloy (Secretary to Court); Ms K Dewar (Director of People & Services); Mr M Greenhalgh (Interim Vice Principal (International)); Mr A McGoff (Director of Finance & Operations); Professor A Tobin (Vice Principal, Learning & Teaching); Professor N Antonopoulos (Vice Principal Research & Innovation).

Observing: Mr A Duggal (ENSA President Elect).

1. OPENING REMARKS, WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1. The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and welcomed Ankit Duggal (ENSA President Elect) who was observing the meeting in preparation for taking up his role.

1.2. There were no apologies.

Part A For discussion and decision

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

(i) Reserved Minutes of 16 December 2019*

2.1. The reserved minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2019 were deferred for approval until the next physical Court meeting.

(ii) Minutes of 23 March 2020

UC(19/20)47

2.2. The open minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2020 were **approved**.

(iii) Reserved Minutes of 23 March 2020*

- 2.3. The reserved minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2020 were deferred for approval until the next physical Court meeting.

3. MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1. There were no matters arising.

4. COVID-19: PLANNING FOR 2020/21 **UC(19/20)49**

- 4.1. Court received the paper, which provided information to members regarding the approach being adopted to plan for the successful and efficient return to campus for Academic Year 2020/21, in line with the easing of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. It was noted that planning to date had been based on the two meter social distancing rule, but that planning was now also taking place based on a potential reduction to one meter. The cautious approach being taken to resuming activity was highlighted, and it was noted that consultation on the return to campus risk assessment was taking place with the Trade Unions this week.
- 4.2. Discussion followed in which it was noted that communications to students so far had been broad, setting out the overall ambition to offer an on campus experience wherever possible, with more detail to follow as matters became clearer. Activity underway to ensure the necessary health and safety measures were in place in consultation with the Trade Unions was outlined, and it was noted that supplementary external consultancy support had been engaged from the Institute of Occupational Medicine (IOM) which would provide an additional layer of Health & Safety assurance. It was also noted that sectoral guidance from the Scottish Government, co-authored with the Trade Unions and the sector, would be available shortly and would be adhered to. Work being undertaken to provide additional equipment to support staff working at home, and to develop an enhanced working at home policy was also highlighted. The mechanisms through which the Principal remained connected to developments and issues within HE across the rest of the UK were noted.
- 4.3. Thereafter, Court **noted** the update.

5. COVID-19: LEARNING & TEACHING CONTINGENCIES **UC(19/20)50**

- 5.1. Court received and **noted** the paper which provided an update on actions taken in response to the Covid-19 pandemic in relation to students not being academically disadvantaged. Court were satisfied the paper provided assurance that decisions made were appropriate and that they were made in order to safeguard the academic integrity and standard of the University's degree awards. It was noted that the University was abiding by the UK Quality Code in being committed to the assurance that marks awarded to students must be "fair, valid and reliable". Court therefore endorsed the approach being taken to normalize module marks as well as granting extensions and adjustments to exam formats and duration as being well thought-through and proportionate.

6. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

UC(19/20)51

- 6.1. The Principal introduced her written report and highlighted the additional allocation of research funding by the Scottish Government and the current situation with regard to the possibilities for extra funding for the sector. The report of the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery, led by Benny Higgins, released that day and its content relating to universities and colleges was also highlighted. With regard to recruitment, it was noted that home recruitment was expected to be very competitive this year due to uncertainty as to whether EU students would come.
- 6.2. Court members extended their thanks and appreciation to the staff and students of the University for their wonderful response to the Covid-19 crisis. The improvement in Complete University Guide league table performance was also acknowledged and welcomed.
- 6.3. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

7. REVIEW OF CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION*

UC(19/20)52

- 7.1. Court received and **noted** the paper which provided the summary financial results for the year to date to April 2020.

8. PLANNING & BUDGETING 2020/21*

UC(19/20)53

- 8.1. Court received the paper which presented the University's budget for 2020/21, as recommended by the Finance & Property Committee, along with a summary of the planning priorities for the schools and services. The work that had been undertaken to control the cost base and the proposed measures which were being consulted and negotiated on with the Trade Unions with regard to staff cost savings were outlined.
- 8.2. Discussion followed during which the opportunities from the very likely increased availability of research funding across the UK were noted. The planning priority around enhancing inclusion activity and support for the University's BAME community was endorsed and welcomed. It was noted that the academic promotion process had taken place and concluded successfully, but that the approach to pay increases arising from promotions was yet to be determined.
- 8.3. Thereafter Court:
 - a) **approved** the Budget for 2020/21
 - b) **authorised** the Principal to sign and submit the three-year financial forecast to the SFC
 - c) **noted** the University's Annual Plan and School priorities for 2020/21.

9. REPORT FROM NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE ON COURT AND COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP*

UC(19/20)54

- 9.1. Court received the report of the proceedings of the Nominations Committee held on 11 May 2020.

- 9.2. Thereafter, Court:
- a) **Noted** the report of the meeting of Nominations Committee on 11 May 2020
 - b) **Approved** the recommendation to appoint Stephen Moir as Vice-Chair of Court for the duration of his Court appointment
 - c) **Approved** the proposed membership and convenorship of Court Committees for 2020/21.

10. RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK REVIEW UC(19/20)55

- 10.1. Court received the report which presented an indicative quality profile for the University's forthcoming REF2021 submission, based on current submission data, as at June 2020.
- 10.2. Court welcomed the position presented in the paper, and recognised the progress made. It was noted that the extended submission date would provide a welcome opportunity to further enhance impact case studies. The measures being put in place to support all academic staff involved in research over and above the REF submission were outlined.
- 10.3. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

11. RISK MANAGEMENT

a) University Top Risks for 2020/21* UC(19/20)56

- 11.1. Court **approved** the Top Risks Register for 2020/21 as recommended by the Audit & Risk Committee.

b) Top Risks 2019/20 Monitoring Report (3 of 3)* UC(19/20)57

- 11.2. Court received and **noted** the paper which provided the final assessment of confidence in the management of the University's top risks for academic year 2019/20.

12. SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL ANNUAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT REPORT UC(19/20)58

- 12.1. Court received the paper which presented a draft of the annual report to the Scottish Funding Council on Institution-Led Review.
- 12.2. Thereafter Court:
- a) **approved in principle** the format and outline content of the draft report
 - b) **authorised** the Vice-Principal (Learning & Teaching) to sign-off the final version of the SFC Annual Report prior to this being submitted to the Council by 30th September 2019

c) **authorised** the Chair of University Court to sign and date the statement of assurance .

13. HONORARY AWARDS REGULATIONS UC(19/20)59

13.1. Court **approved** the amendments to the Honorary Awards Regulations.

14. NOMINATIONS FOR HONORARY AWARDS* UC(19/20)60

14.1. Court **approved** the proposals for Honorary Awards, as recommended by the Honorary Awards Committee and approved by Academic Board.

Part B For information

15. ACADEMIC BOARD MEETING 5 JUNE 2020 UC(19/20)61

15.1. Court **noted** the minutes from the meeting of the Academic Board of 5 June 2020.

16. HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT UC(19/20)62

16.1. Court received and **noted** the Annual Report of activity in Health & Safety management, on the recommendation of the Health and Safety Committee, as assurance that there are effective arrangements in place to secure and promote Health and Safety across the University.

17. SFC OUTCOME AGREEMENT UC(19/20)63

17.1. Court **noted** the final version of the University's Outcome Agreement for 2020/21 as submitted to the Scottish Funding Council.

Part C Not intended for discussion

18. REPORTS FROM COURT COMMITTEES

18.a Audit & Risk Committee meeting on 3 June 2020* UC(19/20)64

18.1 The report was **noted**.

18.b Finance & Property Committee meeting on 4 May 2020* UC(19/20)65

18.2 The report was **noted**.

18.c Finance & Property Committee meeting on 11 June 2020* UC(19/20)66

18.3 The report was **noted**.

19. VALEDICTIONS

- 19.1. The Chair paid tribute to demitting members of Court; Elizabeth Partyka, Alison McCleery, Alistair Sambell, Jonathan Fraser, Georgia Moran and Stuart Walls (whose term was ending in July, subject to potential re-election). All were thanked for their significant contributions to the work of Court and the University.
- 19.2. The Vice-Chair paid tribute to the Chair of Court, Graham Forbes, who would demit office on 31st July after completing his 8 year term as Chair, recognising his significant commitment and contribution to Court and the University throughout his tenure.

20. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- 20.1. The dates of future Court meetings were **noted**.

Part D: Reserved Business

21. ENSA PARTNERSHIP UPDATE*

[Recorded on confidential Reserved Business minute]

[The ENSA Sabbatical Officers left the meeting during this item in recognition of their conflict of interest in the matter]

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