

University of Manchester: Governance Effectiveness Review 2021-22

In accordance with the commitment to regular external review, in 2020-21, the Board of Governors commissioned an extensive, independent review of the University's governance arrangements from the Halpin Partnership (the previous review took place in 2017).

In the report's executive summary, Dame Angela Pedder OBE, the Chair of the Halpin Review Team stated: "Overall, when measured against Halpin's Governance Maturity Framework, we concluded that The University of Manchester's governance arrangements are **good and effective** with some areas of leading-edge practice."

The review focused on:

- The University's culture of governance;
- How culture and processes of governance enable effective academic governance;
- Decision making and delegated authority;
- Stakeholder views of governance; and
- Further governance development to support strategic delivery, agility and resilience.

The report made 34 recommendations and 26 suggestions for improvement and an implementation plan is currently in development.

Highlights from the report include:

- The Governance Office and Secretariat Support Team are strong.
- The Annual Accountability Review process is sector-leading best practice.
- The lay Board member skillset is strong, and the Chair is viewed to be excellent.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion governance practice is on an improvement trajectory with some examples of good practice emerging.
- Concern about the culture and processes of governance of the Senate, with two areas assessed to be inadequate.
- The culture of governance at Board level is strong, but the staff perception of the wider University governance culture is less positive. There is a need for the Board to address its wider profile and engagement with stakeholders.
- Suggestion of a new constitutional settlement for the University whereby respective roles and responsibilities are clearly understood and accepted. This includes Senate accepting the authority of the Board to fulfil its regulatory responsibility to the Office for Students (OfS) for assuring academic quality and standards. The Executive and ultimately the Board should, subject to due process tested by audit, have confidence in the role of Senate as its key source of assurance on these matters.
- Some concerns about behaviour, courtesy, and respect: this featured in the review of Senate, but the report notes that the institution must guard against this behaviour translating into meetings and interactions in other parts of the University, to ensure acceptable standards of behaviour across the entire organisation.

Deputy Secretary

August 2021