

The University of Manchester

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Wednesday 25 May, 2022

Present: Mr Edward Astle (in the Chair), President and Vice-Chancellor, Mrs Ann Barnes (Deputy Chair), Prof Claire Alexander, Mr Gary Buxton, Prof Danielle George, Mr Miguel Gonzalez-Valdes Tejero, Dr Reinmar Hager, Mr Nick Hillman, Ms Philippa Hird, Ms Caroline Johnstone, Dr Eric Lybeck, Prof Paul Mativenga, Dr Neil McArthur, Mr Jatin Patel, Mr Robin Phillips (by video conference), Mr Raoul Shah, Mr Richard Solomons (by video conference), Ms Melody Stephen, Ms Natasha Traynor (Associate Member), Dr Jim Warwicker, Mrs Alice Webb and Ms Roz Webster (22 members).

Apologies: Ms Deirdre Evans

In attendance: The Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer (RSCOO), the Deputy President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the Interim Chief Financial Officer, the Chief Financial Officer Designate, the Director of Communications, the Vice-President for Research (item 6), and the Deputy Secretary.

1. Declarations of Interest

Reported: there were no new declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

Agreed: the minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2022.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

Received: an updated report on ongoing issues that had been raised at previous meetings.

Reported: The documents outlining actions arising from the recent meetings between Board members and both current students and staff in Schools would be amended slightly so that the actions were more Board specific (these would be circulated to the Board). **Action: Deputy Secretary**

Noted:

(1) Staff from the Compliance and Risk Directorate were meeting that day (23 May) with representatives of the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) following the recent issue of a Prohibition Notice relating to transport of materials.

(2) An action plan was in place, including amending procedures and process controls (where appropriate): there had been no harm to students, staff, the public or the environment as a result of the matters identified.

(3) An audit of practice relating to carriage of dangerous goods was planned as part of the next internal audit programme.

(4) In the context of the ONR notice and the recent UKRI Funding Assurance Programme audit findings, the importance of ensuring a rigorous approach to compliance more generally.

Agreed: that the Board receive an update at its next meeting on measures taken to ensure compliance with the ONR notice. This would be via Audit and Risk Committee which would also continue to provide assurance on compliance more generally.

Action: Director of Compliance and Risk/RSCOO

4. President and Vice-Chancellor's report

Received: a brief, verbal report from the President and Vice-Chancellor.

Reported:

(1) The successful REF outcome (see item 6 below).

(2) There was excessive demand on support required from IT Services, exacerbated by staff shortage resulting from the current labour market conditions (approximately 70 vacancies in IT Services not filled).

(3) As a result of the above, it had been agreed that stabilisation of the IT environment and the Finance Transformation Programme be prioritised. This would mean a delay in elements of the Student Experience Programme requiring IT support: this would not impact on planned, structural change which would continue as planned (ensuring that there was not a period of prolonged uncertainty for relevant colleagues). Developments which were not dependent on technical change would also be progressed.

(4) On the staff survey, a technical set-up error by the service provider had resulted in some members of staff not receiving all relevant questions. After careful consideration of available options, the decision had been made to suspend the survey and re-run it in September 2022.

Noted:

(1) Demand for specialist IT staff was now acute and in an effort to maintain a competitive position in the market, consideration was being given to allowing fully remote working when recruiting to vacant positions (current plans were for this to apply anywhere in the UK, but members noted that in other sectors, international remote working was being considered).

(2) Whilst noting the external factors outlined above, some concern that the need for IT reprioritisation had become apparent at a relatively late stage of development.

Agreed: that the Board receive a further update on the background to the reprioritisation at the July meeting.

Action: RSCOO

5. Performance Report

Received: the latest institutional performance report, based on scorecard metrics in the Board dashboard (covering social responsibility, decarbonisation and financial sustainability)

Noted: the scorecard metrics as outlined in the report, noting that there would be further consideration of related matters at the Board Strategy Day which would immediately follow the meeting.

6. Research Excellence Framework 2021

Received: a report summarising the results of the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF).

Reported:

(1) The University retained fifth place for Research Power (a measure of scale and quality).

(2) Over 93% of the University's research activity was assessed as 'world-leading' (4*) or 'internationally excellent' (3*): this included a 99% world leading average for research environment.

(3) The University ranked in 8th place in terms of grade point average (a measure of overall or average quality), an improvement from 17th in the previous exercise, REF 2014.

(4) The University was in the top three nationally for nine subjects (unit of assessment - by grade point average or research power).

(5) Research Strategy Group will use the results to inform strategy to further improve the quality of research across outputs, impact and environment, including the internal peer review of outputs (Research Review Exercise).

(6) Manchester made one of the largest and broadest REF submissions in the UK, entering 2,249 eligible researchers, 5,200 outputs and 160 Impact Case Studies across 31 subject areas.

Noted:

(1) Financial implications were still to be confirmed, although it appeared that, in relation to its peers, Manchester would perform well (with the expectation of maintaining current levels of funding in the context of overall reduction in income for Russell Group institutions).

(2) When making comparisons between institutions, the need to factor in and understand institutional size and shape.

(3) There had been extensive media coverage of the outcome, including internationally. Further work was planned on impact case studies, building on materials already available. A summary of key headlines would be made available to Board members.

Action: Director of Communications and Deputy Secretary

(4) Whilst overall there was great satisfaction with outcomes, there were some disciplines where there was further room for improvement, and others where performance had been better than anticipated.

(5) From Senate Board members, comments about the exemplary, supportive contribution to the REF submission from Professional Services colleagues.

Agreed: that the Board's thanks to the many staff who had contributed to the successful REF outcome be publicised through the President and Vice-Chancellor's weekly message.

Action: Deputy Secretary

7. External Stakeholders Survey: Action Plan

Received: the action plan arising from the External Stakeholders Survey considered by the Board at its meeting in February 2022.

Noted:

(1) The action plan noted comments about the lack of distinctiveness of the University's teaching and learning offer, and in this context there was acknowledgement of the need to ensure better promotion and awareness of [Stellify](#), the [University College for Interdisciplinary Learning](#). Highlighting positive activities and developments in the teaching and learning space would help to promote a stronger teaching, learning and student experience environment at the University.

(2) The action plan did not feature readily accessible measures of success: whilst some of the related activities would feature in future performance reports to the Board, the addition of details of success measures to the plan would be helpful (and should be appended the Matters Arising report to the July Board).
Action: Head of Marketing

(3) The need for IT reprioritisation as outlined above had the potential to impact on delivery of elements of the action plan.

8. Call for Expressions of Interest in the role of Chair of the Board

Received: a report outlining the process for expressions of interest in the role of the Chair of the Board, which was vacant from September 2022. The deadline for expressions of interest was 10 June at 5pm.

Agreed: that the role and person specification be amended to include explicit reference to the role of the Chair in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in accordance with the University's strategy and values.

Action: Deputy Secretary

9. Secretary's report

i) Office for Students: Variations to Access and Participation Plans 2023-24

Received: a summary of recent Office for Students communications about Access and Participation Plans.

ii) Exercise of Delegations

Reported: the award of Emeritus Professorships, recent use of the Seal and appointment of a Head of School.

10. Senate (27 April 2022)

Received: the report from the most recent Senate meeting held on 27 April 2022.

11. Board Committee reports

(i) Audit and Risk Committee (31 March 2022)

Received: the report from the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 31 March 2022.

Reported:

(1) The Uniac report included an overview of the institutional change programme and progress in relation to assurance mapping.

(2) The review of the Risk Register, included further consideration of measures to mitigate cyber risk.

(ii) Finance Committee (6 April 2022)

Received: the report from the Finance Committee meeting held on 6 April 2022.

Reported:

(1) Finance Committee had approved the initial request in relation to the Humanities Size and Shape Business Case: growth assumptions informing the business case were set out in the business case.

(2) Other matters considered by the Committee included an update on the Student Experience Programme (SEP) which had been updated by information provided verbally earlier on the agenda.

(3) There were financial and non-financial benefits from SEP: some members had already engaged with colleagues in the Strategic Change Office to better understand progress on strategic change programmes, and other members were welcome to follow this example. One member commented on the potential for more effective prioritisation of the Strategic Change Programme

and, in the course of 2022-23, it would be helpful for the Board to receive an overview of the Strategic Change Programme and progress.

Action: Director of Planning, Director, Transformation Programme and Deputy Secretary

(iii) Nominations Committee (31 March 2022)

Received: the report from the meeting of the Nominations Committee held on 31 March 2022.

Reported: the Committee had confirmed, via correspondence, the appointment of Nazir Afzal as Chancellor, with effect from 1 August 2022, on the recommendation of the Committee.

(iv) Staffing Committee (6 April 2022)

Received: the minutes of the meeting of Staffing Committee held on 6 April 2022.

Agreed:

(1) That the University proceed with the process outlined in the Contracts Procedure to deal with those staff considered to be at risk on open ended contracts linked to finite funding for the period from 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2023 and that, in relation to these staff, the University continue to take all steps possible to avoid the need for redundancy.

(2) That the University should enter into consultation with the campus trade unions about the proposals relating to the Technical and Experimental Services outlined in the report to reduce posts by six from an "at risk" pool of 24 posts, create 221 new posts resulting in a net increase of 29 posts (12 of which were fixed term due to the investment needed for the over recruitment of students in 2020 and 2021) and, subject to consultation, should progress with its proposals for voluntary severance.

(3) That the University continues to take all steps outlined in the report to avoid the need for redundancy wherever possible and, in particular, to support the use of the University's Voluntary Severance Scheme in the affected areas

(4) To note the Staffing Committee will continue to oversee proposals in accordance with Part II of Ordinance XXIII.

(5) To approve the terms of reference for the People Committee (which would subsume Staffing Committee, subject to some minor rewording to ensure clarity between the respective remits of Remuneration Committee and People Committee).

v) Remuneration Committee (6 April 2022)

(All senior officers of the University, with the exception of the Deputy Secretary left for the consideration of the report).

Received: the report of the meeting of Remuneration Committee held on 6 April 2022.

Reported:

(1) The report was in two parts, the first part covering the salary review for the President and Vice-Chancellor and the second part covering other matters including the Gender Pay Gap report, pay market data, salary review for the direct reports to the President and Vice-Chancellor and succession planning in relation to the Senior Leadership Team.

(2) As had been the case previously in recent years, the President and Vice-Chancellor had confirmed that she would not accept a salary increase.

Noted:

(1) The Committee was now able to rely on more extensive benchmarking information (noting that the scale and complexity of Manchester needed to be taken into account) and this had been factored into determination of pay awards for direct reports to the President and Vice-Chancellor as outlined in the report.

(2) With the exception of the President and Vice-Chancellor, and noting the caveats about benchmarking above and in broad terms, salaries were comparable to the sector, whilst noting potential for further uplift in some areas.

(3) The ratio of the President and Vice-Chancellor's salary to median pay of staff was reported to the Office for Students in the Financial Statements.

(4) A voluntary 20% reduction in senior staff salaries had been agreed at the beginning of the pandemic and this reduction had not been reinstated (six months later) when staff returned to full salary.

(5) In relation to succession planning for the President and Vice-Chancellor, there was recognition that to ensure competitiveness, salary would need to reflect current market conditions and expectations.

12. Planning and Resources Committee (5 April and 10 May 2022)

Received: a report from the meeting of Planning and Resources Committee held on 5 April and 10 May 2022.

18. Forward agenda for 2021-22

Noted: the latest Board forward agenda for the remainder 2021-22.