



Board of Governors

Minutes of the virtual meeting held on 6th July 2021

20/84 Attendance

84.1 Present

Mr J Bateman OBE	Independent Governor, Chair
Dr D Beech	Independent Governor
Mr J Bothamley CBE	Independent Governor
Mr S Devlin	Independent Governor
Mr R Dudley	Staff Governor
Mrs D Gant	Independent Governor
Professor D Green CBE	Vice Chancellor & Chief Executive
Mrs A Hooper	Independent Governor
Mr D Iddon	Independent Governor
Dr C Jones	Independent Governor
Mr N Khan	Independent Governor
Mr L Lees	Student Governor
Dr D McDougall	Staff Governor
Mr R Mularczyk	Student Governor
Rev'd Dr A Pettersen	Independent Governor
Dr S Pittaway	Staff Governor
Miss N Ricketts	Student Governor
Mr I Smith	Independent Governor
Mrs S Speck	Independent Governor

84.2 In Attendance

Mr R Bonham	Director of Finance & Resources
Mrs J Britton	Director of Communications & Participation
Mrs A Cope	Director of Human Resources
Professor S Greer	Deputy Vice Chancellor & Provost
Ms H Johnstone	University Secretary and Clerk to the Board
Dr T Jones	Interim Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor Students
Ms A Jordan	Deputy Provost
Mrs J Newland	Assistant Clerk to the Board

84.3 Apologies

Mr C Arntzen	Independent Governor
Mr M Donovan	Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor (Inclusive Sport & Educational Development)
Mr M Scriven	Staff Governor

The Chair welcomed the new Student Governors, Liam Lees, Students' Union President, Ragnar Mularczyk, Vice President Education and Neve Ricketts, Vice President Student Activities.

20/85 Annual Reports of the Remunerations Committees

[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]

The Vice Chancellor joined the meeting after agenda item 85.1.

Apart from the Director of HR who was already present, those listed as in attendance in item 84.2 joined the meeting after item 85.

20/86 Declarations of Interests

86 .1 There were no declarations of interest.

20/87 Minutes

87.1 The minutes of the meetings held on 27th and 28th April 2021 [BG20/70] were confirmed as an accurate record of the meetings with the following change: in items 63.1 and 77.1 Sean Devlin should appear as an Independent Governor, not Co-opted Governor.

87.2 There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

20/88 Chair's Business

88.1 Chair's Actions

88.1.1 The Chair reported he had approved and signed minor amendments to the Health & Safety policy and statement under Chair's Actions.

88.2 Chair's Report

88.2.1 The Chair had recently visited campus several times and was happy to see more life returning to campus. He congratulated everyone involved in the graduation ceremonies, noting participants greatly appreciated the events.

88.2.2 The CUC held a seminar on Lobbying and the Media with a focus on social media and the Chair asked the CUC if they could do more to lobby on this issue. The CUC is now setting up a group to look into this further. The CUC is also setting up a special group for Chairs of Audit Committees. The UUK has put together a proposition on the pensions issue to put to the unions.

20/89 Vice Chancellor's Report [BG20/71]

[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]

20/90 Financial Matters

90.1 Finance and Development Committee [BG20/72]

90.1.1 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

90.1.2 The Committee considered the draft budget for 2021/22 and noted the impact on the forecast of the low point of the number of 18 year olds and that income and expenditure are forecast to start to return to pre-pandemic levels. The Committee recommended the draft budget to the Board for approval.

90.1.3 The Board received the report.

90.2 2021/22 Budget [BG20/73]

90.2.1 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

90.2.2 The Board approved the 2021/22 budget and passed their thanks to the Finance team.

90.3 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

20/91 Sexual Harassment and Abuse

91.1 Update on allegations about sexual exploitation at the University [BG20/75a]

91.1.1 The Board received a confidential update from the Vice Chancellor on allegations of sexual exploitation at the University further to the article published by The Daily Telegraph on 27th April which the Board was advised of at its last meeting, and the statement from the UCU representative of a member of staff whose grievance was heard by a panel of governors. The UCU statement contained a number of accusations that were unsubstantiated and the UCU have distanced themselves from it. The University dealt with the allegations as transparently as possible and found there was no evidence of a culture of sexual exploitation. The Board noted the University's policy on sexual misconduct was under review and a revised policy was to be presented to this meeting of the Board.

91.1.2 The Universities Minister wrote to Vice Chancellors on July 2nd on sexual harassment and misconduct and the Vice Chancellor noted 119 universities were currently listed on the Everyone's Invited Website and that the University of Worcester was not currently mentioned.

91.2 Review of the University's arrangements for preventing and addressing harassment and sexual misconduct [BG20/75]

91.2.1 The Board received a report on the University's review of its arrangements for preventing and addressing harassment and sexual misconduct. In response to the allegations of sexual exploitation at the University and the OfS statement of expectations for preventing and addressing harassment and sexual misconduct affecting students in Higher Education, a working group was set up to review the University's arrangements. It concluded a specific 'Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment Policy' was required which would bring together and signpost how reports of this nature should be managed.

91.2.2 The Board considered the new policy. It was noted it applied to all staff, students and visitors and clearly set out the University's expectation that staff/student relationships are prohibited unless pre-existing. Dr Jones, joint Chair of the Working Group, noted the policy was the start of the work on this issue and the next stage would include looking at education on healthy relationships, and promoting the policy to the University community. Members noted the Students' Union had had input into the policy and had worked to ensure it was as easy to understand as possible.

91.2.3 A query was raised around zero tolerance of relationships and a preference for regulation through culture. It was noted the University's position on the prohibition of relationships had been reached after detailed discussion in a range of forums.

91.2.4 It was suggested the definition of staff that the policy applies to (item 5.3), and the definition of pre-existing relationships could be made clearer and that mention of governors should be included.

91.2.5 It was noted the Board was being asked to endorse the policy and that the policy had been approved by UEB. The Board endorsed by a majority the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment Policy with the understanding wording of item 5.3 and the definition of pre-existing relationships would be reviewed. The policy title page is to be amended to state 'endorsed' by the Board of Governors.

91.2.6 The Board received and noted a review setting out each of the expectations in the OfS Statement and how the University is either already addressing them or what action has been identified to address these going forward.

20/92 Instrument and Articles of Government and Bye-laws

92.1 Instrument and Articles of Government [BG20/76]

- 92.1.1 The Board considered the revised University's Instrument and Articles of Government and noted that the amendments were initially presented to the Board for consideration in April 2021. Members were invited to submit comments by email and as a result, minor amendments were made.
- 92.1.2 In accordance with its powers set out in sections 124ZA and 124E of the Education Reform Act 1988, the Board resolved to approve the revised Instrument and Articles of Government as considered at this meeting, paper BG20/76, labelled version 8.3.21. The revised Instrument and Articles of Government are to be lodged with the OfS.
- 92.2 Bye-laws [BG20/77]
- 92.2.1 The Board considered proposed amendments to the Bye-laws, made further to the amendments to the Instrument and Articles of Government. The proposed amendments were circulated to the Board in advance of the Board meeting for comment. It was noted that Bye-law 9, Dismissal of Board member, was not for approval and was still under review with further work to be undertaken on an appeals process.
- 92.2.2 In accordance with its powers set out in Article 9, the Board resolved to approve the amendments to the Bye-laws as considered at this meeting, paper BG20/77, with the exception of Bye-law 9.

20/93 University Schedule of Delegation [BG20/78]

- 93.1 The Board noted proposed amendments to the Schedule of Delegation that included a new entry to make clearer the Board's responsibility for academic quality and standards; changing the approving body for tuition fees and bursaries and residential fees from the Board to UEB to reflect the changes in the Articles; and clarification of responsibility under Estates and Capital Developments.
- 93.2 The Board approved the amendments to the Schedule of Delegation.

20/94 Any Other Business

- 94.1 The Chair reminded members of the annual Governor review process currently under way.

20/95 Date of Next Meeting

7th July 2021