



## Board of Governors

### Minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020

#### 20/36 Attendance

##### 36.1 Present

Mr J Bateman OBE	Independent Governor, Chair
Mr C Arntzen	Independent Governor
Dr D Beech	Independent Governor
Mr J Bothamley CBE	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
Mr N Khan	Independent Governor
Dr D McDougall	Staff Governor
Rev'd Dr A Pettersen	Independent Governor
Miss M Price	Student Governor
Mr M Scriven	Staff Governor
Mr I Smith	Independent Governor
Mr H South	Student Governor
Mrs S Speck	Independent Governor

##### 36.2 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	Head of Governance and Regulatory Affairs (Clerk to the Board)
Ms T Manning	Vice President, Students' Union
Mrs J Newland	Assistant Clerk to the Board
Mr R Renton	Senior Pro Vice Chancellor (Students)

##### 36.3 Apologies

Mr S Devlin	Co-opted Governor
Dr C Jones	Independent Governor
Dr S Pittaway	Staff Governor

#### 20/37 Declarations of Interests

37.1 There were no declarations of interest.

**20/38 Review of the Risk Register, Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite [BG20/29]**

- 38.1 The Board received for consideration amendments to the Strategic Risk Register, Covid-19 Risk Register and Risk Management Policy, as recommended for approval by the Audit Committee.
- 38.2 The Board noted the proposed amendments to the Risk Management Policy included new risk appetite thresholds and key risk areas proposed following a review by UEB. The introduction of departmental risk registers and responsibility for identifying risks, internal audit recommendations, are also reflected in the policy. A risk assurance map is to be developed. A query was raised on why the key risk area 'Student Experience' covered 3 risk appetite thresholds and it was noted that 'Student Experience' was a wide ranging area of work so a wider range of risk thresholds was needed.
- 38.3 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*
- 38.4 The Board considered a proposed update to the Covid-19 risk register with the addition of three new risk events, including the impact of Covid 19 on staff and student mental wellbeing.
- 38.5 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*
- 38.6 The Board approved the proposed amendments to the Risk Management Policy, update to the University's risk appetite, University Strategic Risk Register and the Covid-19 risk register.

**20/39 Reports from Committees**

**39.1 Finance and Development Committee [BG20/30]**

**39.1.1 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]***

39.1.2 The Board received the report.

**39.2 Audit Committee [BG20/31]**

39.2.1 The Committee Chair presented the report. In addition to items covered at the previous day's meeting, the Committee considered the internal audit reports on Key Financial Controls: Payroll, and Follow-up and the Annual Internal Audit Report. The Chair thanked the Committee members including the co-opted members, for their scrupulous work in providing assurance. He added the relationship with the internal auditors had developed swiftly and was working well.

39.2.2 The Board received the report.

**39.3 HR Committee [BG20/32]**

39.3.1 The Committee Chair presented the report on the work of the Committee and noted how much work the HR team is still doing related to Covid 19. *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

39.3.2 A query was raised on whether there were sufficient opportunities for staff to share concerns as a result of the pandemic's impact. The Director of HR confirmed there is a wide range of support available to staff, such as support for home working and the employee assistance program. The Christmas holiday has also been extended for staff. The Board noted the Vice Chancellor had been approached to make a video on the mental health challenges of the pandemic, evidence of the widespread interest in its impact. The Chair of Governors is to thank staff on behalf of the Board for their huge effort.

39.3.3 The Board received the report.

**39.4 Nominations & Governance Committee [BG20/33]**

39.4.1 The Committee Chair presented the report on the Committee's work and noted there are a number of upcoming governor vacancies. As a result, the Committee is considering the approach to the recruitment of

new members. The Chair asked the Board to let the Committee know of any suggestions for new members. The Committee is to consider the feedback from the first workshop held as part of the follow-up to the Board Effectiveness Review.

39.4.2 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

39.4.3 The Board received the report.

20/40 Academic Governance

40.1 Provost's report [BG20/34]

40.1.1 The Provost noted the University has continued to deliver a blend of in person and online teaching with around 58% of teaching in person. It is planned to increase to 65% teaching in person next semester, if possible. In accordance with government guidance, all teaching is being moved online by 9<sup>th</sup> December and this is being staggered by course.

40.1.2 The Board noted the update on the outcome of the exam boards. Despite the very challenging circumstances, the proportion of students unable to progress to the next academic level was exactly the same as last year. The increase in students progressing with conditions was largely due to the impact of the pandemic and deferred practical assessments. The total number of completions has fallen slightly, however this is largely due to the impact on a number of schools, with placements withdrawn. All of those students are expected to be able to complete this academic year. There was a very small increase in the proportion of first class degrees that the Provost noted demonstrates academic standards have been maintained.

40.1.3 The Board received the report.

40.2 Report from Academic Board [BG20/35]

40.2.1 The Governor observer on Academic Board presented the report of the Academic Board meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and noted the report reflects how robust the Academic Board structure was in the face of all the new and unexpected work and she congratulated them on their work. Board members have received the Learning & Teaching and Research & Knowledge Exchange strategies and it was noted it is useful to read these in conjunction with the Provost's report. A final (draft) version of the Research Excellence Framework will be presented at the next Academic Board in January. Academic Board discussed in detail a report on the 2020 National Student Survey.

40.2.2 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

40.2.3 The Board received the report.

40.3 Annual Report on Academic Quality and Standards [BG20/36]

40.3.1 The Board received the Academic Quality and Standards Report 2019/20. The Provost noted this was an executive summary of the full annual report that is available to members on the Governors' portal together with the Progress Report on the 2019/20 Quality Enhancement Action Plan and the Quality Enhancement Action Plan for 2020/21 that is mapped against the Learning & Teaching Strategy.

40.3.2 – 40.3.7 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

40.3.8 In conclusion, the Provost noted the report reflected the enormous work by many people and gave the Board assurance the University's arrangements for managing academic quality and standards remain robust and secure. A query was raised on how the University ensures gains are shared across the University. Wherever possible, best practice is shared and implemented.

40.3.9 Members commended the strong report and thanked the Provost and Dr Marie Stowell, Director of Quality and Educational Development.

## 20/41 Students' Union business

### 41.1 Students' Union report

41.1.1 The Students' Union officers presented their update on the Students' Union activities, highlighting how they have responded to the pandemic and ways in which they provide support and advice to students. It was noted the number of course reps has now increased to 320, as against 259 at the time of writing the report. The new Student Networks are now moving forward and engagement has really increased. The initiative and willingness many clubs have demonstrated in this difficult period to keep their members active and healthy was noted. Members also noted the University students' good reputation for volunteering. November saw the launch of the first TeamWorc Action Day in association with Worcester Against Single Use Plastic where students collected litter from the Worcester to Birmingham canal towpath. Raise and Give (RAG) has raised £7.5k so far, a fantastic achievement. The Vice Chancellor added the High Sheriff of Worcester wants to put the Students' Union in touch with the local search and rescue team.

41.1.2 The Chair thanked the officers for their report, noting he was struck by the enthusiasm and amount of activity. The Board received the report.

### 41.2 Students' Union Annual Accounts 2019/20

41.2.1 The Board received for information the Students' Union Annual Accounts 2019/20.

## 20/42 Any Other Business

42.1 Meetings are to continue virtually until Easter 2021 at the earliest, therefore the next Board meeting will again be split into two sessions over 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

## 20/43 Date of Next Meeting

23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021.