

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2020**

Present

Mr N Goulden, Pro-Chancellor (Chair)	Mr C Naughton
Ms A Brown	Miss J Nelson
Ms C Brown	Sir D Nicholson
Mr S Denton	Professor E W Peck
Mr N Ebbs	Mrs S Walker-Smith
Mr I Ellis	Baroness D Warwick
Mrs S Fish	Ms C Wayman
Mrs L Holder	Mr D Williams
Mr G Love	Mr O Woodley
Mr J Maier	

In Attendance

Professor S Huttly, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development and Performance)
Professor N Wright, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise)
Mrs R C Jenkyn, Clerk to the Board of Governors
Miss J A Clews, Governance Services Manager (Minute Secretary)
Mr J A Lacey, Director of Finance, for minute references 20.70 to 20.72

20.59 Welcomes

The Pro-Chancellor welcomed members to this meeting of the Board of Governors, convened virtually. He thanked Governors for their contributions at the previous evening session of the Board.

The Pro-Chancellor welcomed Caroline Wayman to her first meeting of the Board. Caroline's appointment to the Board of Governors had been progressed by the Pro-Chancellor over the summer period. The Membership and Nominations Committee and the Board of Governors had been contacted via email and had endorsed Caroline's appointment, effective from 1 September 2020.

20.60 Declarations of Interests Relating to Items on the Agenda

Members present were asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest they held in the agenda items to be considered.

Mr Maier reported that he had been appointed to the Board of the Halle Orchestra. It was not anticipated that this appointment would result in a conflict of interest. It would be recorded on the University's Register of Interests.

Ms Brown, in her role as Executive Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities, had prepared the report and proposals in relation to Reimagining Modern Languages Provision at NTU. The report would be presented to the Board by the Vice-Chancellor (Minute Reference 20.73).

20.61 Minutes

(a) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Board of Governors held on 7 July 2020 (Document A) were approved and accepted as a true record.

(b) Matters Arising

Members received a report (Document B) in relation to matters arising from the previous meeting. All action points had been progressed as outlined in the report. Updates would be given as appropriate under the relevant agenda item.

20.62 Pro-Chancellor's Update

The Pro-Chancellor updated the Board on discussions at the private session held with Independent Members earlier in the day. The following topics had been covered:

- The Pro-Chancellor had updated colleagues on progress in relation to the appointment of new members to the Board of Governors, with a particular focus on enhancing BAME representation amongst Independent Governors;
- Independent Members had discussed the governance arrangements in relation to Covid-19 and had considered these to be appropriate; and
- The annual governance effectiveness questionnaire seeking views on a range of governance related matters had been issued to all Governors over the summer. The feedback received had been discussed with Independent Members and the Pro-Chancellor had noted a number of potential areas for improvement. These matters would be discussed further with the Vice-Chancellor and the Clerk to the Board of Governors.

20.63 Standing Orders and Committee Terms of Reference

The Board received and considered a report (Composite Document C) in relation to proposed amendments to the University's Standing Orders and Committee Terms of Reference.

A number of revisions had been made to the Standing Orders in order to ensure that these remained accurate and up-to-date.

The Terms of Reference for the Audit and Risk Management Committee had been updated to reflect the provisions within the revised HE Audit Committee Code of Practice issued by the Committee of University Chairs in May 2020. The Terms of Reference had been approved by the Committee and were recommended for ratification by the Board.

The Strategy, Policy, Finance and Resources Committee had approved its Terms of Reference without amendment.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the revised Standing Orders and Committee Terms of Reference (as set out in Composite Document C) be approved and endorsed.

20.64 Vice-Chancellor's Update

The Vice-Chancellor presented a report (Document D) updating the Board on a number of matters. The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

[Some of the detail of this minute has been withdrawn due to its confidential nature.]

Confirmation and Clearing

- The Vice-Chancellor commended the professionalism of colleagues involved in the Confirmation and Clearing process. The University had been able to adapt swiftly and effectively to accommodate unplanned changes to the main UCAS recruitment process and Government policy changes relating to A-level and BTEC awards;

Policy Picture

- The Department for Education (DfE) was expected to issue an HE Vision/Strategy report during the autumn. The Vice-Chancellor was contributing to a report being prepared by Universities UK (UUK) which would seek to shape this;
- The Prime Minister had issued recently a statement setting out the Government's commitment to both free level three education and a lifelong loan entitlement at levels four and five for all adults;
- The Office for Students had been asked to undertake a review of the National Student Survey;

University Superannuation Scheme

- The affordability of the University Superannuation Scheme remained a challenge for the sector. Whilst the number of colleagues at NTU within the scheme was low, the potential strengthening of the covenant (the way that the assets of HEIs are used to underpin the deficit) was being monitored closely;

Bluecoat Trent Academy

- The University was supporting the proposed creation of a new Free School in Nottingham by the Archway Learning Trust (ALT), having been approached initially in 2018. This would be a strong indication to the City of the strength of the University's commitment to educational improvement;

The Nottingham Project

- A number of propositions were being developed by The Nottingham Project, an initiative which aimed to develop the cultural and creative offer in Nottingham;

Potential Opportunities to Support Economic Recovery

- A range of activities were being undertaken by the University to support economic recovery;

Director of Human Resources

- Noting that Jayne Billam would be leaving the University at the end of the calendar year, the Deputy Pro-Chancellor recorded her thanks and appreciation

to Jayne for her contributions to the University. This was endorsed by the Board;

Internal Communications

- The Board considered that it would be timely to issue a communication to all employees to convey the Board's appreciation for their hard work and efforts over recent months; and
- The Vice-Chancellor noted that discussions had been held in relation to how best to acknowledge colleagues' contributions over the preceding period.

IT WAS RESOLVED

- (i) that the report be received and endorsed.

20.65 Nottingham Trent Students' Union President's Update

The Board received a report (Document E) from the President of Nottingham Trent Students' Union (NTSU). The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

- An update was provided on Welcome Week, including the arrangements and the measures in place to welcome students to the University whilst also ensuring a Covid-Secure environment. The Board was advised that positive feedback had been received from new and returning students;
- The President was asked to confirm the general mood of students returning to campus. The Board was advised that whilst there had been, understandably, a level of anxiety, this had been eased by the practical measures implemented on the campus to ensure the safety of colleagues and students. Positive feedback had been received from returning students in relation to the academic provision, particularly the levels of face-to-face contact time provided. The Welcome Week events on campus had also provided opportunities for new students to feel part of the NTU community; and
- The financial impact of the restrictions was noted to be challenging for the NTSU and opportunities to increase revenue were being explored.

The Board congratulated the NTSU on its work to date. The Pro-Chancellor encouraged the President to contact him or other Governors for help or support as required during what was likely to be a challenging year.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

20.66 Race Equality at NTU

The Board received a report (Document F) from the Vice-Chancellor which presented NTU's Race Equality Action Plan (REAP) and the specific actions identified for 2020/21.

[Some of the detail of this minute has been withdrawn due to its confidential nature.]

The Action Plan had been discussed in detail at the evening session of the Board on 28 September.

The Board was advised that specialist training was being sourced for Governors. This would be based on the training recently undertaken by the University Executive Team in relation to White Privilege and Anti-Racism.

Noting that driving race equality was a key priority for the University, updates on progress against the Action Plan would be reported within the Vice-Chancellor's Update at future meetings.

The Vice-Chancellor noted that the Action Plan would be shared with all colleagues during this term to demonstrate the work in progress.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

20.67 University, reimagined - Key Performance Indicators

The Board received a report (Document G) in relation to the proposed key performance indicators for University, reimagined.

[The detail of this minute has been withdrawn due to its confidential nature.]

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

20.68 Student Recruitment 2020/21

The Board received a report (Document H) from the Chief Operating Officer and Registrar in relation to student recruitment for the 2020/21 academic year. The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

[Some of the detail of this minute has been withdrawn due to its confidential nature.]

- The Board acknowledged the work and commitment of professional services and academic colleagues in delivering a successful recruitment process this year. The University had adopted a two-phased approach to Clearing due to the Government's announcement on the change of methodology for A-level results and the removal of the Student Number Control late in the process. Whilst many universities had experienced a decline in recruitment, NTU had performed strongly with increased recruitment in line with Russell Group institutions;
- Whilst the volume of offers and acceptances for international students was strong, the full enrolment position remained uncertain in part due to factors beyond the control of both the students and the University;
- The Board commended the University's continued support for social mobility; and
- Development of the University's future portfolio had been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the recruitment figures for both 2019 and 2020 entry demonstrated that there remained capacity to increase student numbers at volume. A strategic view regarding future growth would be developed for consideration by the Board following internal portfolio review discussions.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

20.69 Preparations for the Start of the 2020/21 Academic Year

The Board received a report (Document I) from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development and Performance) and the Chief Operating Officer and Registrar in relation to the University's preparations for the start of the 2020/21 academic year. An update on the University's Covid-19 measures had also been provided to the Board at the session held the previous evening.

[Some of the detail of this minute has been withdrawn due to its confidential nature.]

The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

- It was proposed that a Pandemic Advisory Group be established to provide advice to the Vice-Chancellor and the University Executive Team. The Group would comprise the Pro-Chancellor, the Deputy Pro-Chancellor, the Chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee, and the Board's Representative on the NTSU Board of Trustees. The Pro-Chancellor advised that he would also arrange to visit the University to meet with students and colleagues on campus;
- Consideration would be given to any specific support that Board members could provide to the University Executive Team. The University was also encouraged by the Board to review opportunities to streamline activities for colleagues in order to ensure that a focus could be given to key priorities;
- The University was utilising a range of communication channels for both colleagues and students. The importance of ensuring that all communications were high quality and co-ordinated to ensure consistent messaging was noted;
- Advice, guidance and support were available to both new and returning students regarding life at University and the measures in place on campus. All students had been reminded of their responsibilities to act as good citizens and should behavioural issues arise the University was able to respond quickly. The University was also working closely with the NTSU, UPP and residential accommodation providers; and
- In response to a question regarding whether it might be possible to offer temporary residential accommodation to any students concerned about returning to family homes due to the risk of Covid-19 transmission, the Chief Operating Officer and Registrar advised that this matter would be raised with colleagues in Student Accommodation Services. No such requests had been received to date.

IT WAS RESOLVED

- (i) that the report be received and endorsed; and
- (ii) that the establishment of a Pandemic Advisory Group be approved.

20.70 Estates and Facilities Update

The Board received an updating report (Document J) from the Chief Operating Officer and Registrar on campus developments for the City, Clifton, Brackenhurst and Confetti campuses. The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

[Some of the detail of this minute has been withdrawn due to its confidential nature.]

- As previously agreed by the Board, those capital projects at an advanced stage continued to be progressed;
- The development of a revised campus master plan was being progressed;
- A significant number of estates developments had been undertaken over the summer period, in readiness for the start of the academic year, in order to create additional teaching capacity and also ensure that buildings and facilities were Covid-Secure. The high quality of the facilities was noted and thanks were recorded to colleagues in Estates for their efforts in this regard; and

IT WAS RESOLVED

- (i) that the report be received and endorsed.

(Mrs L Holder left the meeting.)

20.71 Budget 2020/21

The Board received a report (Document K) from the Director of Finance in relation to the forecast outturn for the 2019/20 academic year and the revised revenue and capital budget for 2020/21. Members were advised that budget and the financial assumptions had been reviewed by both the Strategy, Policy, Finance and Resources Committee and the Audit and Risk Management Committee.

[Some of the detail of this minute has been withdrawn due to its confidential nature.]

The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

- The University had mitigated fully the income losses in 2019/20 associated with the lockdown measures implemented in the light of the Coronavirus pandemic;
- The forecast position for 2020/21 had improved significantly, largely due to the University's strong Home/EU undergraduate recruitment; and
- The Board was advised that in order to support short-term liquidity in the sector, the Government had changed the profile of payments to institutions from the Student Loans Company during 2020/21.

IT WAS RESOLVED

- (i) that the report be received and endorsed.

20.72 Nottingham Trent Students' Union: Budget for 2020/21

The Board received a report (Document L) in relation to the budget for Nottingham Trent Students' Union for 2020/21, together with the block grant application

(Document L1). These had been reviewed and supported by the Strategy, Policy, Finance and Resources Committee.

The NTSU President noted that the block grant had been maintained at the same level as the previous year and confirmed that this would not impact negatively on services to students. The Board questioned whether a process was in place for the NTSU to seek additional financial support if it experienced difficulties due to the restrictions associated with the pandemic. The Board was advised that, should this occur, the University would discuss opportunities to provide short-term financial assistance to ensure that the NTSU could continue to support students.

IT WAS RESOLVED

- (i) that the report in relation to the budget for Nottingham Trent Students' Union for 2020/21 be received and endorsed; and
- (ii) that the block grant for Nottingham Trent Students' Union for 2020/21 be endorsed.

20.73 Reimagining Modern Languages Provision at NTU

The Board received the consultation report (Document M) from the Vice-Chancellor in relation to proposals for the development of the University's modern languages provision. This set out the external context, the current position at NTU, and the detailed rationale for the proposals.

[The detail of this minute has been withdrawn due to its confidential nature.]

IT WAS RESOLVED

- (i) that the report be received and endorsed; and
- (ii) that the Board of Governors supported the proposals contained in the consultation document for the development of the University's modern languages provision.

20.74 Academic Governance and Assurance

[Some of the detail of this minute has been withdrawn due to its confidential nature.]

(a) Academic Governance

The Board received a report (Document N) from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development and Performance) in relation to academic matters, including sustaining the quality of the student experience. The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

- A report had been presented to the Strategy, Policy, Finance and Resources Committee at its September meeting in relation to progress made towards achieving the targets set out in the University's Access and Participation Plan (APP) 2020-2025. This had also been presented to the Academic Board. The analysis demonstrated that the University's interventions were not as yet having the anticipated impact and that a deeper cultural change may be required;

- The University was developing its approach to using results from the National Student Survey (NSS) to ensure that continuous improvement of the student experience was achieved. It was noted that a review of the NSS was being undertaken by the Office for Students. Confirmation had been received that the NSS would run in 2021, although information regarding the data that would be captured was awaited;
- The Board was advised that the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) now required all future subcontracting arrangements to be approved by the Board of Governors, and for details of subcontracting partners to be published on the University's website;
- A new requirement had been placed on all HE providers to publish a Degree Outcomes Statement which analysed their degree classification profile and articulated the results of an internal institutional review. The Academic Board had reviewed the draft Statement at its September meeting and, subject to a number of minor amendments, this would be presented to the Board of Governors at its November meeting for approval; and
- Recruitment to the University's new HE provision at Mansfield was reported to be positive.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

(b) No Detriment Policy and Undergraduate Assessment Outcomes

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development and Performance) presented a report in relation to undergraduate student outcomes for the 2019/20 academic year and the implementation of the University's No Detriment Policy.

The Board was advised that the No Detriment Policy had worked well, ensuring that the standard of NTU degrees had been maintained. The efforts of colleagues, particularly the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Academic Registrar, for developing and implementing the Policy were recognised.

Data presented related to the period July 2019 to July 2020, and these data would be updated to incorporate the outcomes from September examination boards and presented to the Board of Governors at its next meeting.

IT WAS RESOLVED

- (i) that the report be received and endorsed; and
- (ii) that an updated report in relation to Undergraduate Outcomes 2019/20 be presented at the next meeting.

(c) Academic Board

The Academic Board Member provided a verbal update on matters discussed at the meeting of the Academic Board held on 23 September 2020. The following matters were highlighted:

- The Academic Board had been advised of the scope and timings of an external review which was to be undertaken as part of the governance processes looking at the effectiveness of the Academic Board. Members had requested that this review include consideration of matters related to equality, diversity and inclusion both in its membership and also in the manner in which meetings were convened and scheduled. It would consider the ways in which sub-committees report to Academic Board and the relationship between the Academic Board and the Board of Governors;
- The Race Equality Action Plan had been discussed and the proposals and objectives were supported unanimously by the Academic Board;
- A report had been received on progress made towards achieving the targets set out in the University's Access and Participation Plan and a number of suggestions were made in order to drive improvements;
- Discussion had taken place in relation to the preparations for the start of the academic year, the Graduate Outcomes Survey, and the NSS 2020 results and proposals for 2021. The Academic Board had considered the report in relation to the No Detriment Policy and Undergraduate Student Outcomes and noted this to have been an excellent result; and
- The Academic Board had endorsed the proposals relating to the development of the University's modern languages provision.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

(d) Academic Board Annual Report 2019/20

The Board received and considered the Academic Board Annual Report 2019/20 (Document Q) which provided an overview of the work of the Academic Board during the academic year.

Members were advised that the report formed part of the assurance provided to the Board of Governors in relation to its responsibilities in respect of oversight of academic governance.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

(e) External Effectiveness Review of Academic Board

The Board received a report (Document R) from the Clerk to the Board of Governors in relation to the external governance effectiveness review of Academic Board.

The report outlined the scope, process, and timeline for the review, incorporating feedback received from the Academic Board. An external consultant, AUA Consulting, had been commissioned by the Clerk to undertake the review.

(Baroness D Warwick left the meeting.)

The Board was advised that the review would consider the arrangements and processes currently in place regarding sub-committees of the Academic Board. This would enable consideration of how to support greater engagement and debate at meetings of the Academic Board, and the reporting arrangements through the sub-committees to the University Executive Team, the Academic Board and the Board of Governors.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

20.75 Research Governance

The Board received a report (Document S) from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) in relation to Research and Knowledge Exchange matters, including the University's continuing preparations for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021. The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

- The forecast position for Postgraduate Research (PGR) student recruitment was noted to be stable against previous years, despite the challenging market;
- Preparations for the Research Excellence Framework 2021 continued to progress in line with the revised submission timetable confirmed by Research England as 31 March 2021. A request submitted by the University to reduce the number of outputs required for specific Units of Assessment where there were high numbers of early career academics had been approved by Research England;
- Construction of the Medical Technologies and Innovation Facilities (MTIF) at the Clifton campus and on the Boots Enterprise Zone was now complete and fit-out of the facilities was proceeding. The first clients had been confirmed for the Clifton facility; and
- Work was progressing on the Dryden Enterprise Centre which was scheduled to open in April 2021; and
- The University had secured funding from the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership for a Smart Wireless Innovation Facility on the Clifton campus. This would support local companies to develop technologies that would exploit 5G technology.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

20.76 Scheme of Delegation

The Board received a report (Document T) from the Clerk to the Board of Governors in relation to the establishment of a University Scheme of Delegation. The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

- The Scheme of Delegation would replace the existing Authorities Manual. It addressed changes in practice and provided clarity on levels of responsibility for particular types of contracts and set out the approvals required for the different aspects of the University's operations;

- The Pro-Chancellor advised the Board that he had reviewed the Scheme and had also considered a proposal to increase the levels of delegated authority for capital projects. In conjunction with the Chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee, it had been agreed that the financial thresholds above which Board approval was required should remain the same given the current financial climate;
- The Chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee noted that, as this was a key control document for the University, the Scheme would be shared with the Committee; and
- In response to a query from the Board in relation to approvals for franchised arrangements, it was confirmed that high risk partnerships were reported to the Audit and Risk Management Committee. The wording within the Scheme would be reviewed by the Clerk to ensure clarity in this regard.

IT WAS RESOLVED

- (i) that the report be received and endorsed; and
- (ii) that the Scheme of Delegation be approved.

20.77 Policy Updates

The Board received a report (Document U) from the Clerk to the Board of Governors setting out proposed revisions to the University's Freedom of Speech Policy.

The Board was advised that the Policy had been amended to reflect the introduction of more online/virtual events being held. It was noted that a further review would be undertaken when guidance anticipated from the Government was released.

The Policy had been reviewed and endorsed by the University's Prevent Steering Group.

IT WAS RESOLVED

- (i) that the report be received and endorsed; and
- (ii) that the revised Freedom of Speech Policy be approved.

20.78 Business from Standing Committees

(a) Audit and Risk Management Committee

The Board noted the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Management Committee held on 7 September 2020 (Document V).

(b) Strategy, Policy, Finance and Resources Committee

The Board noted the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Strategy, Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 7 September 2020 (Document W).

(c) Employment Policy Committee

The Board noted the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Employment Policy Committee held on 6 July 2020 (Document X), a verbal report having been given by the Chair of the Committee at the previous meeting of the Board.

20.79 Application of the Corporation Seal

Members received and noted a report (Document Y) summarising the documentation to which the University's Corporation Seal had been applied since the previous meeting of the Board.

20.80 Any Other Business

Higher Education Code of Governance: The Clerk to the Board of Governors noted that a revised HE Code of Governance had been published recently by the Committee of University Chairs (CUC). An analysis would be undertaken to review the University's compliance with the revised Code and a report was targeted for presentation at the next meeting of the Board.

20.81 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Governors was scheduled for Tuesday 24 November 2020 at 9.30 am. This would be preceded by presentations on Monday 23 November 2020. These would all be held virtually.

Rebecca Jenkyn, Clerk to the Board
October 2020