

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
HELD ON 6 JULY 2021**

Present

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

* *from minute reference 21.33 onwards*

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 reference 21.32

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr D Dayal and Mr J Maier.

21.24 Welcomes and Farewells

The Pro-Chancellor welcomed members to this meeting of the Board of Governors, convened virtually.

The Pro-Chancellor welcomed Sara Murcott to her first meeting of the Board since her appointment as the Professional Services Member on the Board of Governors. Sara had been appointed for an initial term of three years with effect from 1 July 2021 and would also join the Employment Policy Committee and the Remuneration Committee.

The Board noted that Professor Nigel Wright, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) would be leaving the University on 31 July 2021. The Board recorded its thanks to Nigel for his work, particularly on the development of the University's submission to the Research Excellence Framework, and wished him well for the future.

The Pro-Chancellor noted that Sir David White, a former Chair of the Board of Governors at NTU, had died in April aged 91. Sir David was Chair from 1988 to 1999 and in post during NTU's transition from a Polytechnic to a University. He worked with the then Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ray Cowell, to create the University's first mission statement and business plan. Sir David was made an Honorary Graduate in 1999 in recognition of his contributions to the University.

The Board was also advised that Sean O'Shea, formerly Chief Executive Officer for UPP Group Limited, had died suddenly aged 57. Mr O'Shea had been a valued supporter of the University and had also been a co-opted member of the NTU Development Board from March 2013 to November 2018, and Chair of that Board from 4 October 2016 until his retirement.

21.25 Declarations of Conflicts of Interest 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. No conflicts of interests were declared.

21.26 Minutes

(a) Minutes of the Previous Meetings

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on 23 March 2021 (Document A) were approved as a true record.

(b) Matters Arising

Members received a report (Document B) in relation to matters arising from the previous meetings. All action points had been progressed and updates were provided as appropriate under the relevant agenda item.

21.27 Report from the Pro-Chancellor

The Pro-Chancellor presented a report (Document C) updating the Board on a number of matters relating to memberships and governor engagement. The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

- The Pro-Chancellor noted the informative presentation delivered to the Board the preceding evening by Alistair Jarvis, Chief Executive Officer of Universities UK in relation to the opportunities and challenges within the HE sector. A presentation had also been received from the Executive Dean of the School of Social Sciences. The Board welcomed the revised format of the presentation which provided a greater focus on strengths, weaknesses, risks and challenges and what success would look like for the School in five years' time;
- Following approval of the creation of the role of Senior Independent Governor at the previous meeting of the Board, one application and two nominations had been received for the role. The Pro-Chancellor had progressed discussions with relevant parties and, with the endorsement of the Membership and Nominations Committee, it was recommended that Ian Ellis be appointed as Senior Independent Governor. It was proposed that the appointment commence on 1 August 2021 and expire in October 2023 when Ian was scheduled to step down as a Governor having served a full term (nine years) on the Board. The appointment was approved unanimously by the Board of Governors;
- The Pro-Chancellor provided an update in relation to the search for potential candidates for appointment to the Board. The Pro-Chancellor, the Deputy Pro-Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor would be meeting with two potential candidates on 9 July 2021, both of whom had strong backgrounds in environmental sectors;

- The Chair of the Academic Assurance and Regulation Committee, the Clerk to the Board, and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development and Performance) had met with Professor Jon Scott, a prospective candidate for co-opted membership of the Academic Assurance and Regulation Committee. A recommendation for his appointment had been made subsequently to the Membership and Nominations Committee and, in accordance with its delegated authority, the Membership and Nominations Committee had approved the appointment of Professor Scott for an initial term of three years with effect from 1 August 2021; and
- The Pro-Chancellor reported that Juergen Maier would be standing down from membership of the Board of Governors after the September meeting due to other commitments. Noting that Juergen was keen to retain his association with NTU, opportunities were being explored in this regard, particularly relating to the University's engineering provision.

IT WAS RESOLVED

- (i) that the report be received and endorsed; and
- (ii) that the appointment of Ian Ellis as the Senior Independent Governor be approved for the period 1 August 2021 to October 2023.

21.28 Standing Orders and Committee Terms of Reference

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

The Pro-Chancellor noted that the Standing Orders and the Committee Terms of Reference were reviewed routinely each year and presented for approval normally at the first meeting cycle of the academic year. However, a number of changes were required at this meeting to ensure these aligned with the revised committee membership structure approved by the Board at its meeting on 23 March 2021 for implementation on 1 August 2021.

IT WAS RESOLVED

- (i) that the report be received and endorsed; and
- (ii) that the revised Standing Orders and Committee Terms of Reference (as set out in Composite Document D) be approved and endorsed.

21.29 Board of Governors Away Day: 27 September 2021

The Board of Governors received a report (Document E) from the Vice-Chancellor in relation to the proposed design for the Board of Governors' away day scheduled for 27 September 2021. The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

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

- The away day would focus on implementation of University, reimagined and aimed to draw on the experience of Governors to help shape the University's approach to addressing its strategic challenges over the next five years; and

- The Vice-Chancellor would consider the feedback received from the Board to develop a revised design for the away day. It was noted that the agenda and the associated papers would be shared with Governors in advance of the event.

IT WAS RESOLVED

- (i) that the report be received and endorsed;
- (ii) that the Vice-Chancellor consider the feedback received from Governors to develop a revised design for the Board of Governors' away day; and
- (iii) that a programme of golden thread presentations be developed and presented to the Board of Governors at its September meeting.

21.30 Vice-Chancellor's Update

The Vice-Chancellor presented a report (Document F) 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.]

Covid-19 Update

- The University had communicated to students, applicants, colleagues and stakeholders the approach being taken for the new academic year, namely that teaching would be delivered in person where this was the most appropriate method, and within the constraints of any Government guidance. This approach had been welcomed by students. Governors were assured that alternative scenarios had been developed should circumstances change and a revised approach be required;
- The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the University would adopt the Government's guidance on issues such as social distancing requirements and the wearing of face masks. It was recognised that some colleagues and students may have concerns regarding the relaxation of restrictions, however the University would ensure that campuses remained safe and secure. Further guidance was expected to be released by the Department for Education shortly, and the University would review its current approach to risk assessments for vulnerable individuals in order to ensure that it remained fully compliant with the latest Government guidance;
- A high take-up of students participating in the Covid-19 vaccination programme was anticipated;
- The Board noted the importance of capturing new approaches adopted during the pandemic and ensuring that good practice was retained in the future. A report would be prepared for presentation to the Board in September which outlined the changes adopted by the University, both in terms of the academy and the support provided to students, compared to the pre-Covid position in 2019;

Ministerial Visit and Round Table Meeting

- The University had hosted a successful virtual visit from the Minister of State for Universities on 15 June 2021;

- A round table event had been held on 16 June 2021, chaired by the MP for Mansfield and newly appointed leader of Nottinghamshire County Council. This had been attended by local business and education leaders, including the Principal of Vision West Nottinghamshire College (VWNC);

Academic Matters

- The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development and Performance) advised the Board that the University had received accreditation from the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education to offer a Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) in software development at Level 4. Achieving accreditation to offer this first HTQ was noted to be an important milestone for the diversification of the University's portfolio and particularly the developments in Mansfield and Ashfield;
- The results of the 2021 National Student Survey were scheduled to be published on 15 July. It was noted that the University did not receive these in advance;

Reward and Recognition

- The University Executive Team had been keen to acknowledge the collective effort of colleagues that had enabled the University to emerge from the pandemic having implemented academically innovative practice, been professionally responsive, and secured financial sustainability. It was noted that provision for a national wage rise had been included within the budget for 2020/21 but this had not been utilised due to the outturn of the national pay bargaining exercise (zero increase). The award of a discretionary payment to all employees who met the eligibility criteria had been discussed at the recent meeting of the Employment Policy Committee, and this had been supported by the Committee;

Student Recruitment

- The University continued to focus its efforts on achieving the recruitment targets. A range of conversion activities had taken place and communications with applicants and their advisers focused on progressing conversion from offer to acceptance. Events scheduled included virtual offer-holder days and campus tours, and an NTU Open House event was scheduled for the end of July; and

Women's Safety on Campus

- The University's responsiveness to the issues relating to women's safety on campus and in the City had been welcomed.

IT WAS RESOLVED

- (i) that the report be received and endorsed; and
- (ii) that a report outlining the changes adopted by the University in response to the pandemic, both in terms of the academy and the support provided to students, be targeted for presentation to the Board at its September meeting.

21.31 Nottingham Trent Students' Union

(a) President's Update

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

- NTSU had demonstrated its key role in achieving a positive student experience at NTU, providing responsive and broad support to students;
- The NTSU was seeking to re-engage and progress the key objectives in its strategy which included supporting educational transitions, enhancing the quality of teaching, encouraging healthy communities, and leading conversations on equality diversity and inclusion. The NTSU would also continue to work with the University to ensure that students were not disadvantaged due to any changes arising as a result of the pandemic, particularly around student performance;
- Training for student leaders and colleagues within NTSU aimed to ensure that they were well-equipped to support students. The induction programme for new and returning officers had provided an opportunity to focus on manifesto implementation, strategic goals, and driving engagement with students;
- NTSU would work closely with the University to ensure that sector best practice was adopted should quarantine arrangements be required for international students during 2021/22; and
- Three new student trustees and an external trustee had been appointed to serve on the NTSU Board of Trustees.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

(b) NTSU Budget 2021/22

The Board received a report (Document H) in relation to the 2021/22 budget for Nottingham Trent Students' Union, together with the 2021 block grant application (Document H1). The budget had been approved by the NTSU Board of Trustees at its meeting held on 23 June 2021.

The Board noted that the NTSU was exploring opportunities to generate additional commercial revenue through the activation of the NTSU's trading company. This change would ensure that the NTSU remained compliant with charity regulation.

The NTSU President highlighted that the Block Grant Application demonstrated the achievements of the NTSU during the 2020/21 academic year and the support it provided to students.

IT WAS RESOLVED

- (i) that the report in relation to the budget for Nottingham Trent Students' Union for 2021/22 be received and noted; and

- (ii) that the block grant for Nottingham Trent Students' Union for 2021/22 be endorsed.

21.32 Budget 2021/22

The Board received a report (Document I) from the Director of Finance which presented the budget for the University for the 2021/22 academic year and forward projections to 2025/26. Governors were advised that the Strategy, Policy, Finance and Resources Committee had reviewed the budget and forward projections in detail and recommended these to the Board for approval. The Audit and Risk Management Committee had also reviewed the financial and risk assumptions included in the budget and had considered these to be robust.

[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 Budget for 2021/22 and the financial projections to 2025/26 be approved for submission to the Office for Students.

(Baroness Warwick joined the meeting)

21.33 NTU in London

The Board received a report (Document J) from the Vice-Chancellor in relation to the potential expansion of the NTU offer to London. The proposal had been discussed in detail with the Strategy, Policy, Finance and Resources Committee and was presented to the Board with its endorsement. The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

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

- The Board supported unanimously the further development of the business case; and
- The establishment of a sub-group of the Board of Governors to progress matters in the event that decisions are required ahead of scheduled meetings of the Board was approved.

IT WAS AGREED

- (i) that the report be received and endorsed;
- (ii) that progressing further exploration and development of the proposed expansion of NTU in London be approved by the Board of Governors, with the assumption that this would lead to the development of Heads of Terms and legal documentation on terms acceptable to the University; and
- (iii) that a sub-group be established to progress matters in the event that decisions are required ahead of scheduled meetings of the Board of Governors.

(Mr D Williams left the meeting.)

21.34 University, reimagined

(a) Strategy Implementation Plan

The Board received a report (Document K) from the Vice-Chancellor in relation to the implementation plan for *University, reimagined*. The report outlined phase one of the implementation plan for *University, reimagined*, covering the period June 2021 to August 2022.

The Board was advised that the strategic initiatives would require input from colleagues across different schools and professional services. Local action plans had also been developed.

The University Leadership Team, which comprised the senior leaders from across the schools and professional services, would become the key forum internally for monitoring delivery of the strategy. This would enable high-level communication, active engagement, and mutual accountability. The Deep Dives prepared for the Board of Governors would be considered by ULT in advance to gain its input.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed

(b) Key Performance Indicators

The Board received a report (Document L) from the Vice-Chancellor in relation to the KPI balanced scorecard for *University, reimagined*. This highlighted movements in the measures since last reported to the Board in March 2021.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

21.35 Office for Students – Statement of Expectations

The Board received a report (Document M) from the Chief Operating Officer and Registrar in relation to the University's compliance with the Office for Students' Statement of Expectations for preventing and addressing harassment and sexual misconduct affecting students in higher education. The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

- The report provided assurance that the University's policies and processes in respect of sexual misconduct or harassment were robust. Students who experienced sexual misconduct or harassment were well supported. An action plan had been developed to further enhance the current approach and this had been received positively by the University Executive Team and Academic Board;
- The collection of quantitative and qualitative data to assess the effectiveness of the University's complaints processes and policies was noted to be an area of ongoing development by the University;
- The Board commended the partnership approach adopted by the University and the NTSU. It was highlighted that mandatory consent training for all first-year undergraduate students was being introduced for 2021/22 and completion rates for the training would be monitored; and

- The University's Staff Student Relationship Policy included robust sanctions to address issues where inappropriate relationships were formed between colleagues and students.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

21.36 Supportive Complaints Process

The Board received a report (Document N) from the Vice-Chancellor which outlined the 2021/22 phase of work to deliver a supportive staff and student complaints process. It was noted that this scheme formed a significant element of the University's Race Equality Action Plan.

The University would be exploring the development of a 'report and support' platform. This would afford benefits to those reporting complaints and enable also the University to monitor complaints to ensure that matters were dealt with effectively and that data were collected for reporting purposes.

The Board was advised that the structural approach to managing and monitoring equality, diversity and inclusion matters within the University was being reviewed in order to ensure that a consistent approach was applied for both students and colleagues.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

21.37 Academic Governance

(a) Academic Board

The Academic Board Member presented the unconfirmed minutes from the meeting of the Academic Board held on 16 June 2021 (Document O). The following matters were highlighted:

- Academic Board had received a number of reports relating to complaints matters, including the supportive complaints process, a revised student complaints process and a report assessing compliance with the OfS Statement of Expectations. Academic Board had also approved revisions to the Student Code of Behaviour and had welcomed the fair and balanced process which would enable to the University to respond to incidents appropriately;
- There had been an engaging discussion at the meeting in relation to academic freedom and freedom of speech. Academic Board had recognised that some international students may find difficulty in engaging with or critiquing particular subjects due to cultural sensitivities; and
- Improving graduate outcomes was a key area of focus for the schools. Academic Board members had shared approaches adopted in their schools to ensure that students had the skills, resilience and confidence to apply for graduate level jobs.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

(b) Academic Assurance: Standards and Employment Outcomes

The Board received a report (Document P) from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development and Performance) providing summary information relating to the standards, quality and enhancement of the University's provision based on evidence relating to Standards and Employment Outcomes.

The report had been reviewed and endorsed by Academic Board at its meeting held on 16 June 2021. It was noted that such reports would be presented to the Academic Assurance and Regulation Committee in future years.

The Board was advised that a further release of sector data for the Graduate Outcomes Survey was awaited which would enable the University to assess its performance against the sector. It was also noted that the Office for Students was expected to launch consultations in autumn 2021 in relation to the quality of courses and future development of the Teaching Excellence Framework.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

21.38 Research Excellence Framework

The Board received a report (Document Q) from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) in relation to the University's submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 and reflections on the process for future cycles.

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

The following matters were highlighted:

- NTU's Code of Practice, which had been approved by Research England in 2019, had specified the process for determining which colleagues were in scope for the REF and also the process for colleagues to declare circumstances that might justify a reduction in the number of outputs required. Application of the Code had worked well;
- An EDI analysis of the REF submission had been compiled; and
- Preparations for the next REF exercise would commence shortly to enable focus to be given to those Units of Assessment selected by the University for submission.

The Board recorded its thanks to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and all colleagues involved in compiling the REF submission, together with those colleagues with significant responsibility for research whose work had formed the basis for the submission.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

21.39 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 22 June 2021 (Document R). The Chair of the Committee noted that there had been a positive discussion regarding the risk analysis for the budget. It was also highlighted that there had been no overdue audit recommendations to report at the meeting with this position being commended by the Committee.

(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 22 June 2021 (Document S).

(c) Employment Policy Committee

The Chair of the Committee updated the Board on discussions at the meeting of the Employment Policy Committee held on 28 June 2021.

21.40 Application of the Corporation Seal

Members received and noted a report (Document T) summarising the documentation to which the University's Corporation Seal had been applied since the previous meeting of the Board.

21.41 Any Other Business

[This minute note has been withdrawn due to its confidential nature.]

21.42 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Governors was scheduled for Tuesday 28 September 2021 at 9.30 am. This would be preceded by the Away Day, presentations and dinner on Monday 27 September 2021.

It was noted that the meetings of the Board will be held on the following dates for the remainder of the 2021/22 academic year:

- Tuesday 23 November 2021;
- Tuesday 22 March 2022; and
- Tuesday 5 July 2022.