

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
HELD ON 27 SEPTEMBER 2022

Present

N Goulden, Pro-Chancellor (Chair)
A Brown
S Denton
N Ebbs
I Ellis
Dr A Emuwa
S Gregory
G Love
J Nelson

S V Murcott
Professor E W Peck
Baroness D Warwick
S Walker-Smith
C Wayman
D Williams
B Wills
Dr D Wilson

In Attendance

Professor S Huttly, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development and Performance)
R C Jenkyn, Clerk to the Board of Governors
J A Clews, Governance Services Manager (Minute Secretary)
J A Lacey, Director of Finance, for minute references 22.47 to 22.52

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from D Dayal, L Holder and O Woodley.

22.42 Welcomes

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

The Board also welcomed Aaron Porter from Advance HE who was observing the meeting as part of the Governance Effectiveness Review.

The Board congratulated Caroline Wayman on her appointment as Pro-Chancellor and Chair of the Board Designate. Caroline noted that she was delighted with the appointment and was looking forward to working with governors and the executive team to support the University.

22.43 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. All staff members on the Board of Governors declared an interest in relation to the Board's consideration of the Total Reward report (minute reference 22.53).

22.44 Minutes

(a) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on 5 July 2022 (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.

[Some of the detail of this minute has been withdrawn due to its confidential nature.]

Minute Reference 22.23: At its meeting held on 5 July 2022, the Board had requested that the University review its approach to monitoring compliance of essential/mandatory training. A report in this regard was considered by the Audit and Risk Management Committee at its meeting held on 13 September 2022.

22.45 Report from the Pro-Chancellor

The Pro-Chancellor updated the Board on matters not covered elsewhere on the agenda, together with the discussions at the private session held with Independent Members earlier in the day. The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

[Some of the detail of this minute has been withdrawn due to its confidential nature.]

Membership Matters

- In accordance with its delegated authority, the Membership and Nominations Committee had approved the appointment of Cathy O'Reilly as a Co-opted Member of the Investment Committee for an initial term of three years effective from 1 October 2022;

Independent Members' Meeting

- Independent Members had received a presentation from the Director of Finance and the Head of Philanthropy in relation to the Opportunity Fund. This would be launched formally by the University before the end of the calendar year and brochures would be circulated to Governors to share with their networks; and
- Discussions had been held in relation to the student recruitment position for 2022/23.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the appointment of Cathy O'Reilly as a Co-opted Member of the Investment Committee be endorsed.

22.46 Committee Terms of Reference

The Board received a report (Composite Document C) in relation to the proposed revisions to the Terms of Reference for the Audit and Risk Management Committee (Document C1) and the Strategy, Policy, Finance and Resources Committee (Document C2). The Clerk to the Board of Governors advised that minor amendments were proposed and that these had been reviewed by the respective committee.

IT WAS RESOLVED

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

22.47 Financial Regulations

The Board of Governors received a report (Document D) from the Director of Finance in relation to proposed revisions to the University's Financial Regulations. The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

- The Financial Regulations underpin and are subordinate to the University's Instrument and Articles of Government. As such, approval of the Financial Regulations by the Board of Governors is required. It was noted that these were supported also by the detailed provisions within the Scheme of Delegation;
- Minor amendments had been made to the Financial Regulations to reflect changes in organisational structures and job titles. There had been no substantive changes; and
- The Senior Independent Governor queried whether information should be included in the Financial Regulations in relation to the Going Concern assessment required in the financial statements. The Director of Finance would raise the matter with the University's External Auditors and update the Board accordingly in due course.

IT WAS RESOLVED

- (i) that the report be received and noted;
- (ii) that the Financial Regulations be approved and endorsed; and
- (iii) that the Director of Finance explore with the External Auditors whether there was any requirement to include information regarding the Going Concern assessment within the Financial Regulations.

22.48 Vice-Chancellor's Update

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

Senior Leadership

- Discussions were progressing with the preferred candidate for the role of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) and an update would be provided to the Board at the earliest opportunity;
- The recruitment process for the role of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Enterprise and Knowledge Exchange) was underway;

League Tables

- NTU had been named Modern University of the Year in The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2023. It was anticipated that this accolade would have a positive reputational impact and support future student recruitment;

Government Changes

- The impact of recent ministerial changes for Education and HE on the proposals for HE reform was unclear. Further details on HE reform, including the Lifelong Learning Entitlement, were not expected to be released imminently.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

22.49 Nottingham Trent Students' Union President's Update

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

- Welcome Week events had been well attended and the Freshers' Team had provided support to students throughout the period, including on the additional bank holiday for the funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II;
- Positive feedback had been received in relation to the graduation ceremonies held in July. The quality of support and the services provided by colleagues had been welcomed, together with the provision of free gowns;
- NTSU was taking actions wherever possible to mitigate the impact of the cost-of-living pressures on students, and had welcomed the approach adopted by the University to freeze prices for services and materials. The University recognised the pressures placed on the NTSU's budget given the limited reserves held and few levers available to manage financial challenges, and would work closely with colleagues in this regard. In response to a question from Governors relating to the wellbeing of students, the NTSU President confirmed that financial support and mental health services were available to students facing personal challenges;
- NTSU was working closely with partner organisations in relation to student safety. There had been ten reported incidents of alleged spiking during the Welcome Week period, but all had been confirmed as negative; and
- The outcome of the independent investigation into allegations of antisemitism at NUS UK would inform the NTSU's approach to its membership of the national body. NTSU remained politically neutral.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

22.50 Student Numbers Update

The Board received a report (Document G) from the Chief Operating Officer and Registrar in relation to the latest forecast on student recruitment for the 2022/23 academic year.

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

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and noted.

22.51 Admissions Strategy 2023/24

The Board received a report (Document I) from the Chief Operating Officer and Registrar in relation to the University's undergraduate admissions strategy for the 2023/24 recruitment cycle. This had been reviewed and approved by the University Executive Team and the Academic Board.

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

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

22.52 Finance Update

The Board received a report (Document H) from the Director of Finance in relation to the provisional results for 2021/22 and initial forecasts for 2022/23 based on latest student recruitment data.

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

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

22.53 Total Reward – Reimagining Reward and Recognition

The Board received a report (Document J) from the Vice-Chancellor in relation to the initial proposals for reimagining reward at NTU. This had been discussed in detail by the Board at its away day held on 26 September 2022. The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

- The University Executive Team had welcomed the discussion with the Board and the opportunity to set out the aims in relation to total reward in a broader context. It was important to outline clearly the principles for the change in approach to reward in order to convey these to colleagues. The Board's support for local pay bargaining had also been encouraging;
- Consideration was required in relation to appraisal ratings and performance management, particularly for those colleagues on pay scales above the National Framework Agreement. Governors noted that there could be a risk of spending significant effort for limited return or improved organisational performance;

- The Board's endorsement of the proposed approach to reviewing its pensions offer to colleagues was helpful. This matter would be explored further with the Employment Policy Committee in due course;
- It was suggested that publishing total reward statements for colleagues was good practice and could have a positive impact on staff recruitment. The Board was advised that this matter was being considered by the University; and
- The Board queried the University's approach to its suppliers and the extent to which they paid the living wage. It was noted that the University had two key areas of focus for suppliers, namely sustainability and modern slavery. No assumption was made in relation to suppliers paying the national living wage but this matter could be raised with procurement colleagues.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

22.54 University, reimagined

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

(a) Key Performance Indicators

The Board received a report (Document K) from the Vice-Chancellor in relation to the KPI balanced scorecard for *University, reimagined*.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

(b) National Student Surveys

The Board received a report (Document L) from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development and Performance) in relation to the University's performance in the 2022 national student surveys: the National Student Survey (NSS); and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES). The following matters were noted during discussion:

- The University had performed strongly in the NSS 2022, with overall satisfaction increasing to 81% (74% in 2021). It was noted that the NSS formed part of the core data set used for the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). The outcome of the Office for Students' consultation on proposed changes to the NSS for 2023 was awaited;
- Performance in the PTES 2022 was in line with 2021 outcomes and ahead of the sector at 84% of PGT students satisfied with the quality of their course;
- The Board noted that whilst the report identified high performing courses, it would be helpful to include more information regarding poor performance. The Academic Board Member confirmed that school data were reviewed robustly by School Executive Teams and that action plans were in place to implement enhancement activity where required. Course performance was also reviewed as part of the Size and Shape exercise each year; and

- It was recognised that feedback collected through the NSS and PTES surveys reflected how students felt at the time of the survey and may not correlate closely with the performance of a course across all metrics. Qualitative research was undertaken during the year to assess student feedback.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

22.55 Academic Governance

(a) NTU Degree Outcomes Statement

The Board received a report (Document M) from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development and Performance) in relation to the NTU Degree Outcomes Statement. The University was required to publish annually a Degree Outcomes Statement which analysed the University's degree classification profile and the results of an internal institutional review.

The Statement had been reviewed and endorsed by Academic Board and the Academic Assurance and Regulations Committee and was recommended for approval by the Board of Governors.

IT WAS RESOLVED

- (i) that the report be received and endorsed; and
- (ii) that the NTU Degree Outcomes Statement be approved for publication on the University's website.

(b) Academic Board

The Board received the unconfirmed minutes from the meeting of the Academic Board held on 14 September 2022 (Document N).

Academic Board had welcomed newly-elected representatives to their first meeting and a number of new colleagues joining its membership. It was noted that the approach adopted previously to engage widely with members through increased debate and break-out groups continued to work well.

The Board was advised that Academic Board had reviewed and endorsed the outcomes of the Professorial and Associate Professor promotions process for 2021/22, together with the planned enhancements for 2022/23.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

(c) Academic Board Annual Report 2021/22

The Board received the Academic Board Annual Report 2021/22 (Document O) 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. The report had also been presented to the Academic Assurance and Regulation Committee.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

22.56 Business from Standing Committees

(a) Audit and Risk Management Committee

The Board noted the draft minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Management Committee held on 13 September 2022 (Document O).

(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 13 September 2022 (Document Q).

(c) Academic Assurance and Regulation Committee

The Chair of the Committee updated the Board on discussions at the meeting of the Academic Assurance and Regulation Committee held on 22 September 2022.

The Committee had received a report in relation to the University's framework for quality management and had endorsed the approach adopted to academic quality management and assurance.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development and Performance) advised the Board that the Office for Students had published the outcome of its consultation on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). Technical guidance and data was expected to be available shortly. The deadline for submission had been delayed to January 2023, and the University had an action plan in place to develop its TEF submission.

The Board also received and noted the minutes of the meeting of the Academic Assurance and Regulation Committee held on 24 June 2022 (Document R), a verbal report having been given at the previous meeting of the Board.

(d) Employment Policy Committee

The Board noted the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Employment Policy Committee held on 4 July 2022 (Document S), a verbal report having been given at the previous meeting of the Board.

22.57 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.

22.58 Any Other Business

(a) Board Strategy Day – 26 September 2022

The Board reflected on its away day held on 26 September 2022.

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

22.59 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Governors was scheduled for Tuesday 22 November 2022 at 9.30 am. This would be preceded by evening presentations and dinner on Monday 21 November 2022.