

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
HELD ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2024

Present

C Wayman, Pro-Chancellor (Chair)	M Marsden
R Bennett	J Nelson
S Denton	Professor E W Peck
N Ebbs	G Walker
L Holder	J Walker
P Kenyon	D Williams
G Love	Dr D Wilson
E Karch	

In Attendance

Professor S Speight, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost
R Jenkyn, Clerk to the Board of Governors
J Clews, Governance Services Manager (Minute Secretary)
J Lacey, Director of Finance for minute references 24.31 to 24.35

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Dr A Emuwa, S Gregory and C Leviton.

24.31 Welcomes

The Pro-Chancellor welcomed Professor Sarah Speight, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost, to her first meeting of the Board of Governors.

The Pro-Chancellor noted that Duke Dayal had stepped down as a member of the Board of Governors on 19 August 2024 due to work and travel commitments. She thanked him for his contribution on behalf of the staff and students of NTU.

24.32 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 interest were declared.

24.33 Minutes

(a) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on 2 July 2024 (Document A) were approved as a true record.

(b) Matters Arising

The Board received and noted the report (Document B) in relation to matters arising from the previous meeting. All action points had been progressed.

Minute Reference 24.17(b): Matters Arising - Vice-Chancellor's Update - Mental Health Charter: The Vice-Chancellor reported that an announcement in relation to the University's Mental Health Charter submission to Student Minds was expected in early October.

Minute Reference 24.21: Vice-Chancellor's Update – Pay Bargaining: Noting the positive outcome to the University's local collective pay bargaining process, the Vice-Chancellor updated the Board on the position in the sector regarding national collective pay bargaining.

Minute Reference 24.21: Vice-Chancellor's Update – Nottingham City Council: The Vice-Chancellor advised the Board that positive discussions had been held with the new Leader and Deputy Leader of Nottingham City Council. A meeting had also been scheduled with the incoming Chief Executive.

24.34 Report from the Pro-Chancellor

The Pro-Chancellor presented a report (Document C) updating the Board on matters not included elsewhere on the agenda.

The Pro-Chancellor provided a summary of the overarching themes arising at her one-to-one meetings with Governors held over the summer period. It was noted that the discussions had been very positive and some common themes had emerged, including:

- Exploring the challenges and opportunities arising from Artificial Intelligence;
- Whilst recognising the financial challenges in the sector and the need to manage these, it was important to ensure also that a balanced approach to discussions at Board meetings was taken and appropriate focus was given to other key factors, e.g. the REF and the TEF;
- It was important for the Board to give sufficient focus to University employees, including their wellbeing and conditions of service;
- It would be useful to review the Mansfield and Ashfield project now that this was embedded within the University's offer and to consider how lessons learnt from this may shape future projects;
- Sustainability matters should continue to be a key factor within decision-making processes; and
- It would be useful to reflect on the preferred balance of Home and International students.

Any further information would be included within the Pro-Chancellor's report to the Board in November.

The Pro-Chancellor also updated the Board on progress with the recruitment exercise for new Governors.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

24.35 Vice-Chancellor's Update

The Vice-Chancellor provided a report (Document D) updating the Board on matters of importance not covered elsewhere on the agenda. The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

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

- The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost advised the Board that a range of initiatives and activities were underway to ensure that new students were supported to settle well into the University, both academically and socially, through a personalised approach;
- Support and guidance documents were being recirculated to colleagues to ensure that they were using all the interventions available to enable their students to have a positive initial experience of NTU;
- The University was refreshing mechanisms to welcome students considering joining NTU after the traditional September enrolment period. Further details regarding this approach, particularly regarding personalised arrangements for January starters, would be shared with the Board in November;
- NTU had risen to 42nd out of 131 UK institutions in The Times and Sunday Times 2025 Good University Guide, an improvement of one place on the previous year's ranking. The University had also been named Runner-Up Modern University of the Year 2025; and
- Discussions continued in relation to the governance arrangements for the new East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA). It had been agreed that the University representative on the EMCCA Main Board would rotate on a two-yearly basis, commencing with the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Derby; NTU's Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost would also attend these meetings. The three universities (the University of Derby, the University of Nottingham and NTU) were also represented on the various sub-committees. The University was reviewing existing partnership arrangements to ensure that these remained relevant following the establishment of the EMCCA. A further update would be presented at the November meeting of the Board.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the update be received and endorsed.

24.36 Nottingham Trent Students' Union President's Update

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

- The extended Welcome Week had now concluded. 280 Freshers team volunteers had been recruited to support new students. A review of the Freshers Team programme would be undertaken to ensure that this remained fit for purpose;
- NTSU continued to work with the University to ensure that a tolerant and diverse community was maintained. The NTSU Executive had agreed actions in response to the outcome of the referendum on a motion calling for it to take a humanitarian stance in relation to the Israel-Gaza conflict;

- Positive feedback had been received from students in relation to the graduation ceremonies held in July, particularly in relation to the new gowns which had provided an enhanced sense of identity;
- Cost of living pressures continued to be a significant factor for students and the NTSU welcomed the initiatives provided by the University to support students in this regard. It was noted that the increased availability of student residential accommodation in the City had improved affordability, offering a range of price points to suit differing student needs;
- A full review of democracy processes within NTSU was underway to ensure engagement and feedback from across the student body; and
- The NTSU had achieved a strong financial outturn for the 2023/24 academic year, with strong revenues achieving a 31% increase in EBITDA.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

24.37 Student Recruitment Update

The Board received a report (Document F) from the Chief Operating Officer and Registrar in relation to the latest student numbers position for 2024/25.

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

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

24.38 Future Development of the Academic Portfolio

The Board received a report (Document G) from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost providing an update on proposals for the sustainability of arts and humanities subject provision at NTU.

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

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

24.39 Business from Standing Committees

(a) Audit and Risk Management Committee

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee provided an oral report in relation to the meeting of the Committee held on 17 September 2024. The main focus of this meeting had been to consider the reports from recently completed internal audits. A positive annual report had also been presented by the Internal Auditors.

The Board also received and noted the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Management Committee held on 1 July 2024 (Document H), on which a verbal report had been given at the previous meeting of the Board.

24.40 Application of the Corporation Seal

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

24.41 Any Other Business

Governor Recruitment Exercise: The Board reflected on the discussions held during the meeting and suggested that it might be helpful to appoint new governors with expertise in the areas of Further Education and AI. It was agreed to consider this as part of the governor recruitment process.

24.42 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Board of Governors had been set for Tuesday 26 November 2024.