Edinburgh Napier
UNIVERSITY

AB (19/20) 060

EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY COURT

ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on **5 June 2020**
at **0900** by videoconference

PRESENT:	Professor A Nolan (Principal & Vice Chancellor) (Convenor); Professor A Sambell (Senior Vice Principal & Deputy Vice Chancellor); Professor A Tobin (Vice Principal of Learning & Teaching); Professor N Antonopoulos (Vice Principal of Research and Innovation); Professor P Barlow (School Head of Research); Mrs G Boag (Dean, Business School); Dr J Brodie (School Head of Learning & Teaching); Dr P Chapman (School Officer responsible for Quality Enhancement); Professor S Dawkes (School Head of Learning & Teaching); Dr A Fonzone (School of Engineering & the Built Environment); Dr J Hails (School of Arts & Creative Industries); Dr G Hutchison (Dean, School of Applied Sciences); Dr S Logie (Director, School Support Service & Academic Registrar); Dr D Maclean (Dean, School of Arts & Creative Industries); Dr K Macleod (School of Arts and Creative Industries); Professor Alison McCleery (Professoriate); Dr L Mora (Business School); Dr Xavier Pierron (Business School); Professor S Smith (Dean, School of Computing); Professor A Snowden (Professoriate); Mr M Thomson (School of Engineering & the Built Environment); Dr N Urquhart (School of Computing); Dr S Wells (School of Computing); Dr H Willis (Interim Dean, School of Health & Social Care); Dr G Wright (School of Applied Sciences).
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mr A McGoff (Director of Finance and Operations); Mr M Greenhalgh (Interim Vice Principal, International); Mr A McLachlan (Head of International Operations and Admissions); Ms C Taylor (Director, Information Services); Mr D Cloy (University Secretary); Dr C Steen (Clerk)
APOLOGIES:	Ms N Graham (Vice Principal for International); Professor S Keates (Dean, School of Engineering & the Built Environment); Dr M Leggate (School Officer responsible for Quality Enhancement); Dr E Malone (School of Applied Sciences.

1.   **WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

1.1.   The Convenor welcomed everyone to the meeting and the apologies were noted.

2.   **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 6 MARCH 2020**   **AB(19/20)042**

2.1.   The minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2020 were approved as an accurate record.

3.   **MATTERS ARISING**

a)   There were no matters arising.

4.   **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**   **AB(19/20)043**

4.1.   Members were advised that the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) had released c£75m of research funding in response to the challenges faced by the sector due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Edinburgh Napier's allocation had yet to be advised but if allocated on the basis of the current formulae, was estimated to be in the region of £0.5-£1m.

4.2.   It was hoped that further funding would be made available to the sector from the UK Government (via Barnett consequentials). The sector was lobbying for access to funding currently under consideration to support UK Research and Innovation and also funds that would be set aside for assisting organisations in restructuring post-COVID. It was anticipated that neither of these sources would provide significant financial support to Edinburgh Napier.

4.3.   Members were advised that Professor Alison Machin had been appointed as Dean of the School of Health and Social Care and would join the University in early September 2020.

4.4.   It was noted that the UK Visas and Immigration department was re-opening visa centres in China and it was anticipated that other centres would open as the pandemic allowed. It was unclear how international recruitment would be affected by the pandemic: it was likely that the ability to travel might be restricted. Recruitment to Global Online was continuing, but at a level c.12% below the same period in 2019/20.

4.5.   The Principal's Report was noted.

5.   **COVID-19 IMPACT AND RESPONSE UPDATES**

(i) **Learning, Teaching & Assessment**   **AB(19/20)044**

5.1. The significant level of work undertaken by staff in a short period of time was noted. It was confirmed that the guidance to programme assessment boards had been finalised.

5.2. A paper titled 'Response to Covid-19 – Module Marks Normalisation' was circulated to members and the marks confirmation process detailed in the paper was noted.

5.3. The update on the Learning, Teaching & Assessment response to COVID-19 was noted.

(ii) Research & Innovation   **AB(19/20)045**

5.4. Members were advised that a number of staff in Research, Innovation and Enterprise (RIE) had been furloughed.

5.5. The revised submission date for REF2021 was not yet available: however it was anticipated that the date would be communicated in the next four weeks. Members were reminded of the eight month notice period, indicating a deadline sometime in March 2021.

5.6. It was noted that research income generation was accelerating and it was hoped to increase research income by 20-22% in year. Three COVID-19 research projects had been secured with an income of c£200k.

5.7. Communications with research students was continuing, with regular virtual meetings being held. Further hardship funding had been secured for this cohort.

5.8. Business engagement activity was continuing, with regular virtual meetings being held with external customers and potential customers.

5.9. The update on the Research & Innovation response to COVID-19 was noted.

(iii) Updates from Professional Services   **Verbal Report**

5.10. **Finance:** Members were advised that Finance & Operations was working to support staff and students working remotely. c.150 laptops had been issued since lockdown began. A university-wide communication focussing on short- and longer-term working from home support was imminent. Additional cyber security resilience was being added to combat the surge in attacks since lockdown started.

5.11. Work was underway to prepare for a limited return to campus for some activities in September 2020, including travel to work arrangements, car parking, etc.

5.12. It was noted that 269 members of staff had been given access to campuses to collect furniture and equipment to support working from home. All staff would shortly receive a communication detailing the formal process for requesting support. The University's Home Working policy was being revised in consultation with the Trades Unions and would be reissued. Members were urged to continue to make support requests to Information Services in the normal manner.

5.13. **Human Resources:** It was noted that 97 staff across the University were on furlough. Discussions with the Trades Unions on the current situation were continuing with a particular focus on return to work as the campuses were opened gradually in line with Scottish Government and Health and Safety advice.

5.14. **Student Support:** Members were advised that an update on the remote provision of student wellbeing services had been presented to the Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Student Experience Committee in May 2020. A separate paper on the provision of Information Services had been provided to the Committee. It was suggested these papers be shared with members. This was agreed.

5.15. It was noted that there had been no increased demand from students for mental health support to date.

5.16. **Recruitment/Admissions:** Academic colleagues were thanked for their support of transnational education, initially during the demonstrations in Hong Kong in late 2019/early 2020, and in the current circumstances.

5.17. Members were advised that applications from international students continued to be healthy. A recent (virtual) postgraduate open evening had been well attended.

5.18. Undergraduate recruitment was continuing: the UCAS deadline for acceptance of offers had been moved from early May to mid-June 2020.

5.19. Deferral requests from students were being closely monitored and would be capped to minimise disruptive effects on student numbers for 2020/21 and 2021/22.

5.20. It was noted that some college students would not receive an HN award as they had been unable to complete practical elements of their course. It was noted that Admissions was working closely

with college partners to ensure these students were not disadvantaged.

5.21. Exchange arrangements with other institutions were being reviewed. It was noted that some partners had suspended exchange activity for Trimester 1. Discussions with programme leaders with compulsory exchange elements were ongoing.

5.22. The update on the Professional Services response to COVID-19 was noted.

6. UPDATE ON PLANNING PROCESS

(i) Financial Context   **Verbal Report**

6.1. It was anticipated that financial losses in the Scottish university sector would be c£72m in 2019/20 and c£400-650m in 2020/21. The sector had received little financial support from the Scottish and UK governments thus far.

6.2. Edinburgh Napier's anticipated losses were estimated at £3.5m (2019/20) and c£14.8m (2020/21). Actions to reduce costs and increase income were underway.

6.3. The University remained in a strong position with regards to cash: however, this would worsen in 2020/21. It was noted that a low student intake in 2020/21 would affect the University's finances for 3-4 years.

6.4. Meetings had been held with Schools and Professional Services to examine and re-cast budgets. It was hoped these would be finalised in the next fortnight at the latest. The budget would be submitted to Court for approval on 22 June 2020.

6.5. The update on the financial context was noted.

(ii) Approach to Planning   **Verbal Report**

6.6. Members were advised that plans were being revisited, particularly the arrangements for delivery in the coming academic year. A Steering Group had been convened, with responsibility for overseeing a range of work streams focussed on the phased re-opening of campuses in a safe manner.

6.7. The University's commitment to its strategy, student experience, research activity, etc. was restated. Delivery against strategic objectives would continue to drive activity.

6.8. The planning update was noted.

7. APPROVED UNIVERSITY STRATEGY: SHAPING OUR FUTURE   AB(19/20)046

     7.1.   Members were reminded that the new strategy had been presented at the March Academic Board meeting and had subsequently been approved by Court at its meeting on 23 March 2020.

     7.2.   The strategy had been reviewed since lockdown, and it was agreed that, while the strategic objectives remained relevant, the transformational actions would be reviewed in terms of the approach to delivery.

     7.3.   It was noted that the development of the Learning & Teaching and Research & Innovation strategies had been slowed while the University addressed the challenges presented by COVID-19.

     7.4.   The update on the University Strategy was noted.

8. LEARNING, TEACHING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY   **Verbal Report**

     8.1.   Members were advised that plans to hold workshops over the Summer to develop the 'gold standard curriculum' had been placed on hold.

     8.2.   Discussions on integrating skills training into the curriculum were continuing.

     8.3.   The update on the Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy was noted.

9. RESEARCH & INNOVATION STRATEGY   **Verbal Report**

     9.1.   Discussions on the academic themes outlined in the strategy were continuing. Investment decisions in areas of research/ innovation critical mass would be made once budgets were finalised.

     9.2.   The update on the Research & Innovation Strategy was noted.

10. ACADEMIC REGULATIONS FOR SESSION 2020/21   AB(19/20)047

     10.1.   Members were advised that the stated intention to remove the cusp regulations was being reconsidered as the regulations had proven invaluable during the lockdown.

     10.2.   The amendments to the Academic Regulations detailed in the paper were approved.

10.3. The in-session amendments to Emergency Regulations and Graduate Academic Misconduct regulations were approved.

10.4. The Principal's decision, via Convenor's Action, to approve changes to the programme assessment boards was homologated.

11. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE QUALITY FRAMEWORK AND PROPOSED CHANGES FOR 2020/21   AB(19/20)048

11.1. Members were advised that the institution-led review (ILR) methodology had been changed to move activity towards subject review. It was noted that the ILR scheduled for the School of Computing had been postponed due to COVID-19.

11.2. It was stressed that the SFC were aware of the pressures being experienced by the sector in running 'normal' quality approval processes. Guidance from SFC was awaited and would be circulated when received.

11.3. It was confirmed that the curriculum management project was continuing: three potential providers of the system were currently being assessed.

11.4. The report on the effectiveness of the Quality Framework, and proposed changes to the framework, was noted.

11.5. The proposal to permit the Convenor of the Quality & Standards Committee to sign off the final version of the quality framework prior to publication was approved.

12. ACADEMIC CALENDAR TO 2025/26   AB(19/20)049

12.1. Members were advised that it was proposed to start the 2024/25 academic year on 9 September 2024, as 2 September 2024 was considered too early. This proposal would provide an additional marking/preparation week in that year. This was agreed.

12.2. It was also proposed that the first week of Trimesters 1 and 2 be termed 'Welcome Week'. This was approved.

13. THE MUSCATELLI REPORT: DRIVING INNOVATION IN SCOTLAND   Verbal Report

13.1. Members were reminded that the Muscatelli Report had been published in 2019 and would feed into SFC's review of tertiary education.

13.2. It was noted that, broadly, the recommendations contained in the Muscatelli Report sought to concentrate research activity in a small number of universities in Scotland, proposing a 'hub and spoke' delivery model, with (potentially) Russell Group institutions as hubs and other universities as spokes.

13.3. It was noted that Edinburgh Napier would continue to focus on recruiting and retaining its key research staff, continue to develop high quality research partnerships (at home and abroad), and continue with development of the University's innovation hub.

13.4. Members were encouraged to read the Cumberford-Little Report: 'One Tertiary System: Agile, Collaborative, Inclusive', authored by two college principals.

13.5. The update on the impact of the Muscatelli Report was noted.

14. ELIR UPDATE INCLUDING DRAFT ACTION PLAN   AB(19/20)050

14.1. Members were reminded that the final report from the ELIR visit was now available on the DLTE and QAA websites. It was noted that the draft action plan presented in the paper had been drawn up with less consultation than usual, due to the disruptive effects of the COVID-19 lockdown.

14.2. The ELIR Draft action plan was welcomed and noted.

15. REF PREPARATIONS – READINESS REPORTING   AB(19/20)051

15.1. Members were advised that the current focus was on developing research environment statements and impact case studies. Professors Sean Smith and Emma Hart were commended for their efforts in co-ordinating the development of these documents.

15.2. A full assessment of all Units of Assessment (UoAs) would be completed by the end of the Summer. It was estimated that Edinburgh Napier was currently scoring around 2.7-2.9* overall: the mock submission would assist in highlighting how this could be improved.

15.3. The update on REF preparations was noted.

16. ANNUAL REPORT ON QUALITY ENHANCEMENT   AB(19/20)052
ACTIVITY TO SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL

16.1. Members were advised that there were more gaps in the draft report than normal due to disruption caused by the lockdown. These gaps would be closed before the report was considered by Court at its meeting on 22 June 2020, prior to submission to SFC.

16.2. The draft Annual Report on Quality Enhancement was noted.

17.   HONORARY DEGREE REGULATIONS   **AB(19/20)053**

17.1. The proposed changes to the Honorary Awards guidelines were agreed and the revised regulations recommended to Court for approval.

18.   HONORARY AWARDS   **AB(19/20)054**

18.1. The three nominations presented in the paper were agreed and recommended to Court for approval.

PART B RECEIPT OF MINUTES

19.   MINUTE FROM THE RESEARCH & INNOVATION   **AB(19/20)055**
COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 MAY 2020

19.1. The minute from the Research & Innovation Committee held on 8 May 2020 was noted.

20.   MINUTE FROM THE LEARNING, TEACHING,   **AB(19/20)056**
ASSESSMENT & STUDENT EXPERIENCE
COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 MAY 2020

20.1. The minute From the Learning, Teaching, Assessment & Student Experience Committee held on 20 May 2020 was noted.

PART C ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

21.   COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY REPORT TO ACADEMIC   **AB(19/20)057**
BOARD 2019/20

21.1. The Collaborative Activity Report to Academic Board 2019/20 was noted.

22.   UNIVERSITY TOP RISKS MONITORING REPORT   **AB(19/20)058**
(3 OF 3)

22.1. The University Top Risks Monitoring Report was noted.

23.   OUTCOME AGREEMENT WITH THE SCOTTISH   **AB(19/20)059**
FUNDING COUNCIL 2020/21 TO 2022/23

23.1. The Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council 2020/21 To 2022/23 was noted.

24. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

All at 0900 in the Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus

16 October 2020
27 November 2020
05 March 2021
04 June 2021