EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC BOARD

**Minutes of the meeting held Friday 8th March 2024 at 9.00am
Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus**

PRESENT:
Professor A Nolan (Principal & Vice Chancellor) (Convenor); Professor N Antonopoulos (Vice Principal Research & Innovation and Deputy Vice Chancellor); O Akindehin (ENSA Sabbatical); Professor A Al-Dubai (Professoriate); Professor P Andras (Dean, School of Computing, Engineering & the Built Environment); Professor C Cross (Dean, Business School); S Crozier (School Officer responsible for Quality Enhancement); Professor A Fonzone (School of Computing, Engineering & the Built Environment); S Gerrard (School of Arts and Creative Industries); N Graham (Vice-Principal, International); Dr R Haddrill (School of Health & Social Care); Professor G Hutchison (Dean, School of Applied Sciences); Professor G Jayalakshmi (School of Arts and Creative Industries); Dr N Pitropakis (School of Computing, Engineering & the Built Environment); Professor N Karodia (Vice Principal Learning & Teaching and Deputy Vice Chancellor); M Leavitt (School of Health & Social Care); Dr M Leggate (School Officer responsible for Quality Enhancement); Dr K Leitch (School of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment); Dr S Logie (Director, Student Services & Academic Registrar); Dr F McQueen (School of Applied Sciences); J Martin (Student Representative); Dr R Osowska (Business School); B Stillie (School Head of Learning & Teaching); Professor K Stutterheim (School Head of Research); Dr E Urquhart (Business School); Dr G Wright (School Head of Research).

IN ATTENDANCE:
M Greenhalgh (Director of Strategy & Planning and Secretary to Court); D Cloy (Head of Governance & Risk); C Taylor (Director of Information Services).

OBSERVING:
M Melville (Court member).

APOLOGIES:
Dr S Campbell Casey (School of Applied Sciences); Dr C Garden (School Head of Learning & Teaching); J Irving (Student Representative); A Machay (Student Representative); Dr D Maclean (Dean, Schools of Arts and Creative Industries); Dr R Patterson (Dean, School of Health & Social Care); Professor P Robertson (Professoriate).

1. WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

1.1 The Convenor welcomed attendees to the meeting.

1.2 The apologies were **noted.**

PART A: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION & DECISION

2.   MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 24 NOVEMBER 2023   AB(23/24)29

2.1   The minutes were **approved**.

3.   MATTERS ARISING

3.1   **Minute 8.2: Insight into experiences of students starting in September set against those with a January start date.**

Members noted that work had started on the development of a strategy to provide an equivalent experience for January intake students on TPG programmes with the recommendation to review the compulsory July reassessment requirement for students who start in January. Students would have the opportunity to undertake early reassessment if they felt able to but otherwise, they would have a compulsory reassessment opportunity during trimester 2 of the following academic year.

4.   PRINCIPAL'S REPORT   AB(23/24)31

4.1   The Principal introduced her written report and highlighted the current status of the various reviews underway concerning the sector and the extremely challenging Scottish Government funding settlement which represented a significant reduction in resource budget for Higher Education institutions.

4.2   The challenging international recruitment environment impacted particularly by UK Government immigration policy, delays in visa processing and the currency devaluation situation in Nigeria was highlighted as was the range of activity underway and plans to address the situation.

4.3   Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the report.

**5.   QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND STANDARDS REVIEW   AB(23/24)32
OUTCOME REPORT**

5.1   Academic Board received the report which presented the outcome of the University's recent Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR). The outcome report was published on the QAA website on 15th February 2024 and confirmed that the review team had confidence that Edinburgh Napier University was making effective progress in continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision to enable effective arrangements to be in place for managing academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience. This was the best possible outcome for this QAA review method. There were three areas of good practice identified, one improvement recommendation and a number of enhancement suggestions.   Thanks were extended to the Head of Quality & Enhancement and all involved in supporting the review. It was noted that an action plan was being developed to address the recommendation on postgraduate student experience which would be brought to Academic Board in June.

5.2   Discussion followed during which members reflected on the review process which was noted to be evolving.

5.3   Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the report.

6.   **ANNUAL REVIEW OF KPIS**   AB(23/24)33

6.1   Academic Board received the paper which provided an update against the agreed set of University Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which are used to monitor progress towards the University Strategy, 'Shaping our Future: Driving Distinctiveness'. Key points were highlighted from the report, which summarised achievements and performance against the 2022/23 Annual Plan and presented the latest figures for the KPIs.

6.2   In discussion the importance of focussing on research student retention in the context of growing research student numbers was recognised as was the impact of current immigration policy.

6.3   Academic Board **noted** the update.

7.   **PLANNING PROCESS UPDATE**

7.1   Academic Board received an update on the 2024/25 planning process and noted that the finalised University plan and priorities would be presented to the next meeting.

7.2   Regarding the impact of the current recruitment freeze on the ability to deliver planning priorities, the £10m increase in spending on staff put in place in the previous year was highlighted, and it was noted that in instances where particular growth opportunities were contingent on additional resource, such resource could be approved subject to the business case presented.

7.3   Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the update.

8.   **ADMISSIONS CYCLE UPDATE REPORT 2024***   AB(23/24)34

8.1   Academic Board considered the paper which presented an update on student applications and the recruitment and admissions process for the 2024 admissions cycle.

8.2   In discussion it was noted that a demographic analysis had been undertaken to gain insights into potential future student number growth. This analysis would be circulated to Academic Board for information. **Action VP (International and External Relations).** The positive impact of the work undertaken to improve student retention was also recognised.

8.3   Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the update.

9.   **STUDENT ENROLMENTS AND FORECAST FOR 2023/24***   AB(23/24)35

9.1   Academic Board received the paper which provided an update on the University's Scottish Funding Council (SFC) student population. A number of developments and plans intended to deliver future income growth were highlighted.

9.2   Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the update.

10. STRATEGY DELIVERY UPDATE: RESEARCH & INNOVATION

10.1 Academic Board received a presentation updating on progress with delivery of the Research & Innovation Strategy. Overall positive progress with implementation was noted and areas of future priority were highlighted. It was noted that a review of the Research & Innovation Strategy would commence in the coming months and would be brought back to Academic Board later in the year. In discussion it was noted that a strategic view would be taken on how the University's research activities were organised and focussed in the context of current resourcing.

10.2 Academic Board **noted** the update.

11. PATHWAY COLLEGE UPDATE

11.1 Academic Board received an update on progress with the establishment of the Edinburgh Napier University International College (ENUIC).

11.2 In discussion members reflected on the effectiveness of the implementation of the ENUIC and considered that positive lessons could be applied to future projects. The sources of financial and other support available to ENUIC students experiencing difficulties were highlighted.

11.3 Academic Board **noted** the update.

12. PROJECT VISION UPDATE   AB(23/24)36

12.1 Academic Board received the paper which provided an update on progress with Project VISION; Shaping our Future Infrastructure and Estates. Progress with the development of the underpinning Digital Strategy was also highlighted.

12.2 Discussion followed during which the potential impact of refurbishment activity on the student experience was highlighted and the importance of effective communication and securing high quality decant space to mitigate this was recognised. It was noted that space utilisation data had been shared with Schools to enable them to reflect on current practices and inform future approaches to timetabling. The issue of how to deal with specialist space during refurbishment was also considered.

12.3 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the update.

13. ACADEMIC APPEALS AND INTEGRITY ANNUAL REPORT*   AB(23/24)37

13.1 Academic Board received the paper which presented the annual report on matters relating to the areas of academic appeals and academic integrity. The impact of changes to the academic appeal regulations in reducing the number of appeals was noted. Regarding the increase in academic integrity cases it was noted that Schools had appointed Senior Academic Integrity Officers and that an Academic Integrity Committee had been established. The range of measures being taken to address academic integrity issues was highlighted.

13.2 Discussion followed in which members reflected on the issues arising from the use of Artificial Intelligence by students and recognised the need to consider how assessments are undertaken and what should be assessed. It was noted

that this would be considered by the Academic Integrity Committee and that a Scottish sectoral group was being established to ensure consistent guidance in this area.

13.3 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the report.

14   COMPLAINTS & STUDENT CONDUCT ANNUAL REPORT*   AB(23/24)38

14.1 Academic Board received the paper which provided the annual report on matters relating complaints and non-academic student conduct. A number of key points arising from the report were highlighted, and thanks were extended to the Complaints and Student Conduct Manager and other colleagues involved for their excellent work in supporting this area. It was noted that improvement opportunities from complaints were addressed and taken forward promptly within Schools and professional services and that further analysis of conduct complaint data would be undertaken to identify if any further work was required to address student conduct issues with particular groups. It was noted that an update on this would be provided at a future meeting.

14.2 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the report.

PART B   RECEIPT OF MINUTES

Academic Board received the minutes of the following meetings to confirm that its sub-committees were continuing to meet their remits and were undertaking business on its behalf to the standard it expects.

15. Minutes of Research & Innovation Committee meeting held on 22 November 2023.   **AB(23/24)39**

The minutes were **noted**.

16. Minutes of Research & Innovation Committee meeting held on 24 January 2024.   **AB(23/24)40**

The minutes were **noted**. The approval of three new Research Centres was highlighted.

17. Minutes of Education and Student Experience Committee meeting held on 21 February 2024.   **AB(23/24)41**

The minutes were **noted**. The work underway to develop a new Assessment Policy was highlighted.

PART C   ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

18. TOP RISKS MONITORING REPORT (2 of 3)*   AB(23/24)42

19.1 Academic Board **noted** the Top Risks monitoring report.

19. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2023/24

Noted as:
07 June 2024 at 09.00.

*denotes a paper to which an exemption under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 applies.