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Edinburgh Napier
UNIVERSITY

AB(24/25)029

Edinburgh Napier University
University Court

Academic Board

Minutes of the meeting held Friday 22 November 2024 at 9.00 am at the Horizon Suite, Sighthill Campus

PRESENT:
Professor A Nolan (Principal & Vice Chancellor); Professor N Antonopoulos (Vice Principal Research & Innovation and Deputy Vice Chancellor); Professor P Andras (Dean, School of Computing, Engineering & the Built Environment); Professor P Barron (Dean, Business School); Dr M Bonnett (School Officer responsible for Quality Enhancement); Dr S Campbell Casey (School of Applied Sciences); Dr H Earnshaw (School Officer responsible for Quality Enhancement); Dr C Garden (Associate Dean of Learning & Teaching); N Graham (Vice-Principal, International); Professor G Hutchison (Dean, School of Applied Sciences); M Leavitt (School of Health & Social Care); Dr S Logie (Director, Student Services & Academic Registrar); Dr D Maclean (Dean, Schools of Arts and Creative Industries); Dr F McQueen (School of Applied Sciences); C Marvis (ENSA Sabbatical); Dr R Osowska (Business School); Professor P Robertson; B Stillie (Associate Dean of Learning & Teaching).

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

APOLOGIES:
Francesco Accolla (Student Rep); Fatouma Ali (Student Rep); Professor A Al-Dubai; Professor S Dawkes (Dean, School of Health & Social Care); S Gerrard (SACI); Dr R Haddrill (School of Health & Social Care); Professor G Jayalakshmi (School of Arts and Creative Industries); Professor N Karodia (Vice Principal Learning & Teaching and Deputy Vice Chancellor); Dr K Leitch (School of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment); Dr N Pitropakis (School of Computing); Professor K Stutterheim (Associate Dean, Research & Innovation); C Taylor (Director of Information Services); Dr E Urquhart (Business School); Ruaridh Wallace (Student Rep); Dr G Wright (Associate Dean, Research & Innovation).

OBSERVER:
S Kumar (Court Member).

1. **WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS**

1.1 The Convenor welcomed members to the meeting.

1.2 The apologies were **noted.**

PART A: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION & DECISION

2. **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 18 OCTOBER 2024   AB(23/24)016**

2.1 The minutes were **approved**.

3.   MATTERS ARISING

   i)   <u>Academic Calendar for Taught Postgraduates (minute 3.2)</u>

3.2   Academic Board received an update on the ongoing consideration around the academic calendar for taught postgraduates. It was noted that modelling undertaken suggested that a later start would likely result in the recruitment of additional international students. It was noted that consideration of the matter would continue and that the overall academic calendar would also require review. A further update would be brought to Academic Board at the appropriate point.

4.   PRINCIPAL'S REPORT   AB(24/25)018

4.1   The Principal introduced her written report and highlighted the extremely challenging funding, political and economic landscape impacting on Higher Education.

4.2   An overview of the benefits and opportunities from the University's membership of the U!REKA European University Alliance was provided and it was noted that a full update would be brought to a future meeting.

4.3.   The new partnership between Bright Red Triangle (BRT), the University's enterprise hub, and Queen Margaret University and Edinburgh College through which BRT would offer entrepreneurial support to their students, graduates and staff was highlighted.

4.4.   It was noted that five high quality honorary graduates had been awarded at the recent graduation ceremonies. Schools and colleagues were thanked for their efforts in putting forward names.

4.5.   It was noted that the University's five-year Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund (KEIF) Strategy was being developed and would be taken to Court in December and to Academic Board at its next meeting.

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

5.   STUDENT ENROLMENTS AND FORECASTS 2024/25*   AB(24/25)019

5.1   Academic Board received a paper which summarised student enrolments against student targets for the academic year 2024/25. Performance on delivery against Scottish Funding Council (SFC) funded activity was provided alongside overseas on-campus student recruitment, compared with internal targets. Data on Research Postgraduate students was also provided.

5.2   In discussion feedback was noted on ways to enhance future Postgraduate Open Evening events.

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

6.   STUDENT RETENTION

6.1   Academic Board received a presentation which provided an update on the work which had been undertaken and was continuing to improve student retention and progression. The positive progress was welcomed, and thanks were extended to all concerned.

6.2 In discussion Academic Board recognised that points of entry and transition were a vulnerable time for students and this was noted as an area of particular focus. The need to consider the future use of data to support retention and to enhance the data literacy of colleagues was recognised. It was noted that the Director of Strategy & Planning and the Director of Student Services and Academic Registrar would review the presentation of data to Schools. **ACTION MG/SL.** An overview of the work being taken forward by the Compassionate Communications Working Group, which included ENSA, was also provided. It was noted that the Director of Student Services and Academic Registrar would attend a future Student Council meeting to discuss this work.

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

7. PLANNING & BUDGETING PROCESS

7.1 Academic Board received an update on the planning and budgeting process including ongoing monitoring and review activity.

7.2 In relation to the extent of the planning period covered, it was noted that School plans included longer term elements and that long term projects such as VISION and TNE projects were also reflected in plans.

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

8. STRATEGY DELIVERY UPDATE: LEARNING & TEACHING

8.1 Academic Board received a presentation which provided an update on progress on the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

8.2 In discussion it was noted that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) development work would feed into the Learning & Teaching Strategy. In relation to Artificial Intelligence (AI), the activity underway supported by the Department of Learning & Teaching Enhancement (DLTE) to consider the University's position on AI in Learning & Teaching and provide support and guidance was noted. These resources would be promoted further to academic staff. It was noted that it would be beneficial to include insights from the perspective of international partners when developing guidance. It was also noted that a proposal would be considered by SLT to form a strategic advisory board to consider the implications of AI across all areas of University activity.

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

9. TERTIARY QUALITY ENHANCEMENT FRAMEWORK   AB(24/25)020 SELF EVALUATION ACTION PLAN (SEAP)

9.1 Academic Board received the paper which presented the draft Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework Self Evaluation Action Plan (SEAP), which required

to be finalised for submission to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) by 2nd December 2024.

9.2 Academic Board **approved** the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework Self Evaluation Action Plan (SEAP).

10. LEAGUE TABLE PERFORMANCE AB(24/25)021

10.1 Academic Board received the paper which summarised Edinburgh Napier's current rankings in the four main UK league tables, as well as the Times World University rankings, the Times Young University World rankings and the Times Impact rankings. The paper also highlighted the changes in our position this year, the reasons behind those changes and considered the likely future position.

10.2 In discussion members reflected on the variances between different league tables and noted that the QS rankings had the greatest influence in the international recruitment market currently.

10.3 Academic Board **noted** the report.

11. TRUSTED RESEARCH & INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AB(24/25)022

11.1 Academic Board received the paper which outlined the issues surrounding Trusted Research and international security which had been presented to Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) at its meeting on 20 September 2024 and to University Court on 28 October 2024. It was noted that work was underway to evaluate the University's position against the UUK self-evaluation framework and that any necessary actions would be put in place to ensure alignment. The importance of awareness amongst academic staff was emphasised.

11.2 Academic Board **noted** the update.

12. PATHWAY COLLEGE UPDATE AB(24/25)023

12.1 Academic Board received the paper which provided an update on progress of the Edinburgh Napier University International College (ENUIC) since its launch in January 2024.

12.2 In discussion, it was noted that there would be ongoing monitoring of the progress of ENUIC students who joined the University.

12.3 Academic Board **noted** the update.

13. PROJECT VISION AB(24/25)024

13.1 Academic Board received the paper which provided an update on progress of Project VISION. It was noted that further time would be spent to ensure that School requirements were fully understood and captured.

13.2 Academic Board **noted** the update.

14. EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT: HEALTH & WELLBEING PILOT

14.1 Academic Board received an update on the establishment of the Strategic External Engagement Group for Health & Wellbeing which sought to identify opportunities to develop strategic partnerships and commercial collaborations with private sector, third sector, government bodies and other universities.

14.2 Academic Board **noted** the update.

15 HONORARY AWARDS* AB(24/25)025

15.1 Academic Board **approved** the Honorary Award nominations recommended by the Honorary Awards and Visiting Tiles Committee for onward transmission to Court for approval.

15.2 It was noted that a good diversity of backgrounds was to be encouraged in future nominations and that it would be helpful to include detail of which School had put forward a nomination in future papers.

PART B   RECEIPT OF MINUTES

16. Minute from the meeting of Education and Student Experience Committee held on 13 November 2024. AB(24/25)026

16.1 The minutes were not available at the time of the meeting and would be carried forward to the next meeting.

PART C   ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

17. UNIVERSITY TOP RISKS MONITORING REPORT (1 OF 3)* AB(24/25)27 2024/25

17.1 Academic Board **noted** the report.

18. RESEARCH & INNOVATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT AB(24/25)28

18.1 Academic Board **noted** the report.

19. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2024/25

Noted as:
07 March 2025
06 June 2025
All Fridays at 9.00am, Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus

VALEDICTION

It was the last meeting of the Principal & Vice-Chancellor Professor Nolan as Chair ahead of her retirement on 31st December 2024. Warm thanks were extended for her significant contribution in leading and developing the University throughout her 11 years in office.

The Principal also thanked Academic Board members for their support and contributions throughout her time as Chair.

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