

EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY COURT

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 14 December 2020
at 3.45 pm by Webex Video Conference**

Present: J Boyle (Chair); Professor A Nolan (Principal & Vice-Chancellor); Professor N Antonopolous (Vice Principal, Research & Innovation); S Brannan; Lord Brodie (Chancellor's Assessor); J Chittleburgh; Professor S Cross; G Cullen; A Duggal; H Fyfe; C Guest; A Houghton; C Ibanez; Dr S Jiwa; Dr S Moir; J Morrison-Ross; S Nairn; Dr H Patrick; G Scholefield; Professor A Scullion; N Woodcock; Professor L Yellowlees.

Apologies: R Adams; D Mohan; M Thomson.

In attendance: D Cloy (Secretary to Court); K Dewar (Director of People & Services); N Graham (Vice Principal (International); A McGoff (Director of Finance & Operations); Professor A Tobin (Vice Principal, Learning & Teaching).

Observing: G Short; R Tomlinson.

1. OPENING REMARKS, WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1. The meeting was preceded by a Pre-Court Strategy Presentation on the Innovation Hub by Professor Antonopoulos, Ms Gail Boag (Dean of the Business School) and Ms Linda Wallace (Head of Knowledge Exchange), which members had welcomed.
- 1.2. The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and welcomed new Court members Jane Morrison-Ross and Stuart Cross along with Rex Tomlinson (new member joining Court in August 2021, observing Court as part of his induction). Graham Short (EA to the Principal) who was observing as part of the induction to his new role was also welcomed.
- 1.3. The apologies were **noted**.

Part A For discussion and decision

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 NOVEMBER 2020 UC(20/21)22

- 2.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2020 were **approved**.

3. MATTERS ARISING

3.1. There were no matters arising.

4. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

UC(20/21)23

4.1. Court received the Principal's written report and, in order to increase Court's understanding of the ongoing work within the University and the sector to address racism, noted that an update from the BAME Inclusion Short Life Working Group would be provided at the next Court meeting.

4.2. Thereafter, Court **noted** the Principal's report.

5. COVID-19: PLANNING AND RESPONSE UPDATE

UC(20/21)24

5.1. Court received the paper which provided an update on the University's ongoing planning and response activity in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic. Further updates were provided on the steps taken to align the University to the recently released Scottish Government guidance on the staggered approach to resuming activity in January and on the asymptomatic testing programme for students changing address over the Christmas holiday period. The testing programme had been run successfully in partnership with the University of Edinburgh, and would resume in January for students returning to term-time accommodation. Plans to increase security presence around student residences in the New Year, and reduced occupancy rates were highlighted as further measures to mitigate risks of any further Covid outbreaks in student accommodation. The welfare support for students staying in residences over the Christmas period was also highlighted. In discussion the frustration arising from the need to adapt activities at short notice to respond to late guidance was recognised.

5.2. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

6. UNIVERSITY STRATEGY

(i) KPI Report 2019/20

UC(20/21)25

6.1. Court received the report, which presented the agreed set of University Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which had been used to monitor progress towards the University Strategy 2020 – Building Success. The report summarised achievements and performance against the 2019/20 plan and presented the latest and final figures for the Key Performance Indicators. It was noted that a set of updated KPIs to measure performance against the new University Strategy would be presented to Court at the Strategy Day in February, recognising that many of the existing KPIs would carry over.

6.2. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

(ii) New University Strategy: Next Steps

UC(20/21)26

6.3. Court received and **noted** the report which provided an update on the next steps for communication and implementation of the new University Strategy, which would be reviewed further at the Strategy Day in February.

(iii) Learning & Teaching Strategy

UC(20/21)27

- 6.4. Court received the Learning & Teaching Strategy which had been approved by Academic Board. In discussion it was clarified that the 2025 timeline for programmes to achieve the Gold Standard was to allow new programmes sufficient time to meet the requirements, but that it was expected that current programmes would achieve the Standard much sooner.
- 6.5. Thereafter, Court **noted** the Learning & Teaching Strategy.

(iv) Research & Innovation Strategy

UC(20/21)28

- 6.6. Court received the Research & Innovation Strategy which had been approved by Academic Board.
- 6.7. Discussion followed during which it was noted that the approach to international research engagement would be initially through existing partner institutions and that existing frameworks would be used to safeguard the University's reputation and mitigate risks to its staff and students. With regard to Upskilling/CPD the synergies and linkages between the Research & Innovation Strategy and Learning & Teaching Strategy, and the need to treat these holistically, was recognised. The importance of support for early career researchers and the benefits of pursuing Research Fellowships was also emphasised. With regard to the re-distribution of REG funding it was confirmed that Schools would be fully engaged on the allocation of funds and would not experience any adverse impact.
- 6.8. Thereafter, Court **noted** the Research & Innovation Strategy.

(v) Internationalisation Strategy Update

- 6.9. Court received and **noted** an update on the development of the Internationalisation Strategy. It was noted that consultation would be undertaken in January across the dimensions of student body, global opportunities, TNE/Global Online and the link between international and research. A well-developed draft of the Internationalisation Strategy would be brought to Court thereafter in the New Year.

7. REVIEW OF THE CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION*

UC(20/21)29

- 7.1. Court received and **noted** the report which provided the financial position as at the end of October 2020.

8. AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

(i) Annual Report 2019/20*

UC(20/21)30

- 8.1. Court received and **noted** the Audit & Risk Committee's 2019/20 annual report to Court. It was noted that all actions with regard to the GDPR Internal Audit Report had been promptly and fully implemented and that work continued to embed Privacy Impact Assessments. The need to closely monitor and respond to any further data protection issues arising from Brexit was also recognised.

(ii) Risk Appetite Statement – Annual Review

UC(20/21)31

- 8.2. Court **approved** the recommendation to carry forward the Risk Appetite Statement for a further year without amendment.

9. APPROVAL OF ANNUAL REPORT AND AUDITED ACCOUNTS 2019/20*

UC(20/21)32

- 9.1. Court received the paper which was presented to enable Court to discharge its statutory responsibilities in respect of the Financial Statements for 2019/20. It was noted that the statements had previously been considered and recommended for submission to Court by the Finance & Property Committee and the Audit & Risk Committee. Court extended their thanks to the Finance team for the work involved in their preparation.
- 9.2. Thereafter Court **approved** the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2019/20, **authorised** the Chair of Court and the Principal to sign the Financial Statements on its behalf and **authorised** the Principal and the Finance Director to sign the Management Letter of Representation on its behalf.

10. RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2020 UPDATE

UC(20/21)33

- 10.1. Court received the paper which presented a predicted quality profile for the University's forthcoming REF2021 submission, based on a near-final version of the submission, as at October 2020. It was noted that the current mock submission model indicated that the University was preparing to submit 68% of the overall REF submission at 3 or 4 star quality (internationally excellent or world-leading) as compared with 54% in REF2014, with a corresponding increase in staff submission rates from 98 FTE to 251 FTE
- 10.2. Discussion followed during which Court welcomed the report and the significant progress in growing and developing the University's research profile and culture that it represented.
- 10.3. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

11. HR POLICIES: DISCIPLINARY & GRIEVANCE

UC(20/21)34

- 11.1. Court received the paper which presented proposed amendments to the University's Disciplinary and Grievance policies which had been developed in consultation with the Trade Unions.
- 11.2. In discussion it was noted that the matter of adding a summary statement into the Grievance procedure would be kept under review in light of operation.
- 11.3. Thereafter Court **approved** the updated Disciplinary and Grievance policies.

12. BREXIT UPDATE

UC(20/21)35

- 12.1. Court received and **noted** an update on current developments and the University's preparations ahead of Brexit. The current position regarding negotiations was noted, and it was noted that staff and student communications

had been updated with the most recent developments and that specific communications had been issued regarding the pre-settled status scheme. It was further noted that plans were in place, and had been refreshed, for key risk areas, and that ongoing monitoring would take place in the New Year through the Advisory Group and through the daily 08.30 meetings already scheduled as part of the Covid response framework.

13. DRAFT SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL OUTCOME AGREEMENT 2021/22

13.1. Court received an update on the development of the University's Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) for 2021/22. It was noted that an interim Outcome Agreement for 2020-21 was required to be submitted by the end of January 2021, with the full 2021-22 Outcome Agreement to be developed and submitted by June 2021, following receipt of full guidance and confirmation of the future approach. It was noted that the interim 2020-21 Outcome Agreement would be circulated to Court in January once finalised.

13.2. Thereafter Court **noted** the update.

Part B For information

14. ACADEMIC BOARD MEETING 27 NOVEMBER 2020 UC(20/21)36

14.1. Court **noted** the minutes from the meeting of the Academic Board of 27 November 2020.

15. REPORT FROM REMUNERATION COMMITTEE* UC(20/21)37

15.1. Court **noted** the 2019/20 report from the Convenor of the Remuneration Committee.

16. ENSA UPDATE

16.1. Court **noted** an update on current activities and initiatives of the Edinburgh Napier Students' Association (ENSA), including the referendum on the revised ENSA Constitution which had been launched the previous week, the planned campaign for February to promote student physical and mental health, and recent issues and feedback gathered from students through ENSA's student engagement forums. Court welcomed the update, noted the appointment of Dr Jenny Rees as the new ENSA Chair commencing in the New Year and welcomed the continued positive engagement between the University and ENSA.

17. TOP RISKS MONITORING SCHEDULE (1 of 3)* UC(20/21)38

17.1. Court **noted** the Top Risks monitoring schedule.

Part C Not intended for discussion

18. REPORTS FROM COURT COMMITTEES

18.a Finance & Property Committee meeting on 25 November 2020* **UC(20/21)39**

18.1. The report was **noted**. The co-option of former Court member Robert Hare to F&PC to benefit from his background and expertise was highlighted, as was the establishment of an advisory group to review and report to F&PC on pensions issues.

18.b Audit & Risk Committee meeting on 25 November 2020* **UC(20/21)40**

18.2 The report was **noted**.

19. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS / OTHER UPDATES

19.1. The dates of future Court meetings were **noted**.

19.2. Congratulations were extended to Professor Scullion on her appointment to the UKRI – AHRC Council.

19.3. With regard to the recruitment of the next University Chancellor, it was noted that Shainool Jiwa and Grant Cullen had joined the Chancellor Appointment panel and that the appointment process was now underway.

VALEDICTION

It was noted that Kerry Dewar, Director of People and Services, would be leaving the University in February 2021 after 5 years to undertake a new role. Court thanked her for her contribution to the University and wished her well for the future.

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