

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting held on
Wednesday 8 March 2023

Present:

Gary Dixon (Chair)

Huw Barton	Liz Blyth
Craig Brown	Nishan Canagarajah
Martin Cullen	Sophie Dale-Black
Cathy Ellis	Rhiannon Jenkins
Ian Johnson	Kerry Law
Rishi Madlani	Azam Mamujee
Catherine Morley	Kevin Nagle
Mark Purnell	Jacqui Shaw
Richard Tapp	

In attendance: Alison Benson (Assistant Secretary); Alex Erdlenbruch (Chief of Staff, President and Vice-Chancellor's Office); Paul Gowdrige (Chief Financial Officer); Geoff Green (Registrar and Secretary); Liz Jones (PVC Education); Kevin Joyce (Secretariat).

Apologies: George Acquah; Vijay Sharma.

The formal meeting was preceded by a development session focused on Cyber Risk, led by Chris Tilbury, Deputy Director of Digital Services. Alison Phillips, Director of Digital Services was also present.

23/M01 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of personal interest pertaining to any of the items dealt with in this meeting.

23/M02 **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2022 as a correct record and **noted** the responses to the matters arising from that meeting.

23/M03 **CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

The Chair welcomed new Council member Liz Blyth to her first meeting.

The Chair recorded his thanks to Michael Flanagan, Director of Estates and Digital Services who was leaving the University on 15 March 2023.

The Chair recorded his thanks to Azam Mamujee who was stepping down as a member of Council after many years of service, including as Chair of Audit Committee.

The Chair updated Council on a confidential matter concerning an ongoing legal case.

23/M04 **PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS**

The President and Vice-Chancellor introduced his written report for Council which provided a comprehensive update on recent developments in the HE sector generally, and at Leicester specifically.

Attention was drawn to the positive media coverage that the University had received relating to the following:

- the appointment of the new University of Leicester Chancellor, Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock MBE;
- Archaeological Services finding what appears to be the cellar of a Roman building and a fragment of an 1,800-year-old altar stone during excavations in the grounds of Leicester Cathedral; and
- a BBC feature on Ukrainian students at the University.

It was reported that, following the East Midlands Freeport initiative, a meeting had taken place with Leicestershire County Council who had asked if Space Park could be a customer-designated site and this had been granted, subject to HMRC approval.

It was highlighted that the industrial dispute between the University and the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) with regard to pay and working conditions was ongoing, however industrial action had been paused for two weeks, allowing the University to communicate a pay award of between 5-8% to staff. Further strike days were now planned. The impact on scheduled activities remained very low. It was highlighted that the USS pension valuation expected at the end of March could have an impact on the current dispute.

Three matters of Reserved Business were reported.

It was reported that many University-wide events had taken place throughout February in relation to LGBT+ History Month which had highlighted the importance of awareness and supporting the LGBT+ community.

Council noted the report.

23/M05 **STRATEGIC THEME UPDATE: OUR CITIZENS**

Council considered the annual update of progress made against the Our Citizens strategic theme delivery for the period 2021-2022 and the key priorities for 2022-23.

During 2021-22 a governance structure had been put in place to monitor and provide assurance on the progress of the delivery plans associated with each of the four aims. This included designation of Our Citizens leads across the Colleges and Professional Services areas.

It was reported that the KPI target for both Student and Staff Engagement had been reduced from 90% to 80%; this reflected feedback which had been given by Council in September 2022. It was highlighted that milestone KPIs were still to be developed and would be reported on in the future.

It was reported that a project officer dedicated to Our Citizens would begin in post in April 2023 and would focus on mapping activities to aims. It was therefore anticipated that KPI reporting would improve going forward.

Council noted that a number of initiatives were being considered in relation to the social impact strategic aim, including the link to Universities Partnership, sustainability targets for the University's energy providers and the new International Travel Policy.

It was confirmed that the Sustainability Plan would come to Council for its consideration in due course.

Council noted that staff engagement was being measured using the three most relevant questions from the staff survey. Student engagement was being measured using data on internships, placements, volunteering and similar types of activities.

Council noted the report.

23/M06 **TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK SUBMISSION**

Council considered an update on the 2023 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission which had been made in January 2023.

Council noted that the submission consisted of three parts:

- Institutional data
- Provider submission
- Independent student submission

All submissions were currently being reviewed and a provisional rating would be received in July/August 2023.

Council noted that the independent student submission had been produced by the Students' Union, drawing on the 882 responses they had received from surveying students and evidence from student representative forums relating to the reference period. The student submission had outlined a number of strengths, such as a positive partnership with the University, its student-centred approach and its focus on employability. Areas of weakness covered had included attendance and timetabling; hybrid teaching; learning resources; some issues in relation to estates and facilities; accessibility and the ongoing impact of industrial action. The Students' Union were satisfied that these areas were being tackled by strategies already developed by the University.

Council noted that two Schools used a year tutor system which was a different model of personal tutoring. In these Schools, academic leads were supported by a team of professional services staff trained to provide pastoral support. Executive Board would be evaluating the performance of this model imminently.

Council noted that, whilst assessment and feedback was still listed as a weakness in the student submission, steps had been taken to improve this.

Council noted that the peer review programme in place for teaching also applied to assessment feedback. The programme alternated each year between peer observation of teaching and marking.

Council noted the report.

Two matters of Reserved Business were discussed.

23/M07 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

Council considered the latest Strategic University Risk Register (SURR), updated for the spring term 2023. **Council noted** that the SURR had received prior scrutiny from the Audit and Assurance Committee.

Council noted that the officers responsible for the risk report had recently changed and that the new officers had been invited to attend the next termly risk update at the Audit and Assurance Committee.

Several matters of Reserved Business were **noted**.

Council noted the report.

23/M08 **HONORARY DEGREES**

Several matters of Reserved Business were noted.

Council approved the nominations for Honorary Degrees.

23/M09 Reserved Business was considered.

23/M10 **ACADEMIC ASSURANCE AND COMPLIANCE ITEMS**

Annual Academic Assurance Statement 2022

Council received the annual report confirming the processes that were in place to ensure quality and standards of provision mapped against the OfS 'B' Conditions of Registration. These included analysis of the University's assessment and marking processes, an outline of the academic governance structure, a summary of quality assurance practices, and an outline of awarding regulations and the institutional degree outcomes.

Council approved the Annual Academic Assurance Statement 2022.

Degree Outcomes Statement 2022

Council noted that some of the measures included in the statement had been implemented to mitigate the impact of the ongoing pandemic. These had now changed and evidence requirements were back in place.

Council noted that in 2021/22, 87.6% of students were awarded 1st or 2:1 honours.

Council approved the Degree Outcomes Statement 2022.

Student Protection Plan 2022/23

Council received the student protection plan which set out the manner in which the University protects students' interests in a number of circumstances relating to the ability of the University to deliver its programmes. The plan was a requirement for ongoing registration with the OfS and was subject to an annual review and approval by Council.

Council approved the Student Protection Plan 2022/23.

Annual Research Integrity Report 2021/22

Council received the annual research integrity report which required employers of researchers to provide a short statement that must include a number of key elements in relation to research integrity.

Two matters of Reserved Business were noted.

Council noted the report.

23/M11 **SENATE**

Council noted a report of the Senate meeting held on 15 February 2023.

23/M12 **AUDIT AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE**

Council noted a report of the Audit and Assurance Committee meeting held on 14 February 2023.

23/M13 **NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

Council approved the updated Corporate Governance Code of Practice (including the Code of Conduct for Council Members).

Council noted a report of the Nominations Committee meeting held on 2 February 2023.

23/M14 **FINANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

Council noted a report of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 16 February 2023.

A matter of Reserved Business was reported.

23/M15 **PEOPLE, EDI AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE**

Council noted a report of the People, EDI and Wellbeing Committee meeting held on 12 January 2023.

23/M16 **ALUMNI ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE**

Council noted a report of two meetings of the Alumni Association Committee on 1 December 2022 and 9 February 2023.

23/M17 **UNIVERSITY SEAL**

Council noted the report of sealed documents.

23/M18 **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Council noted the dates of meetings scheduled for 2022-2023:

- Wednesday 10 May 2023 - Ordinary meeting 4pm
- Wednesday 5 July 2023 - Ordinary meeting 4pm

CHAIR

Duration of meeting: 1 hour 55 minutes