



Minutes

Meeting of the University Executive Board

Date: 06 February 2024

Present: Professor K Lamberts (KL), in the Chair

Professor A Blom (AB), Professor J Derrick (JD), Professor S Fitzmaurice (SF), Professor S Hartley (SH), Professor G Jewell, J Jones (JJ), Professor C O'Bradaigh (CO), R Sykes (RS), Professor M Vincent (MV)

Secretary: D Swinn (DS)

In attendance: J Strachan (JS), T Wray (TW); A Carlile (items 4-4.1 and 5(a); R Gower (items 4-4.1); M Nuttall (item 4.1)

Apologies: I Wright (IW)

1. **RCUK capital equipment funding**

1.1 UEB considered and approved a proposal to end the current policy of providing matched capital funds for RCUK awards now that RCUK had reinstated the 80% funding rate for capital equipment. In particular, it was agreed that: there would be new additions to the reserves for equipment covered by the new UKRI policy of funding 80% of the equipment costs; additions due to be made in respect of the unfunded depreciation on equipment previously purchase would continue until 2025/26; and the remaining reserve balances would remain available for capital equipment purchases.

1.2 During discussion, UEB noted the need for wider work to develop clear guidance and provide the appropriate support for colleagues seeking external awards, given the increasing demands from funders for an element of institutional match. This would also need to reflect on what support was required for colleagues to understand changes to Horizon Europe during the three years in which the UK had not been associated with the programme and UEB noted that comparative data and evidence on the use of match funding may be helpful in informing the policies and principles, as well as potential future national policy discussions. . The outcome of this work would need to be communicated clearly to ensure that staff understood the relevant requirements.

2. **Closed Minute and Paper**

3. **13 February Strategic UEB agenda discussion**

3.1 UEB discussed initial suggestions from Members for items for UEB's new strategic discussion meetings and agreed items to be taken at the first of these, to be held on 13 February, and additional amendments to the provisional list.

4. **New Schools Update**

(AC and RG in attendance for this item)

- 4.a UEB received and noted a general update paper, including the intended publication of new webpages related to implementation. UEB discussed a suggestion that some new Schools would benefit from a longer period of time to propose their new names, for consideration at Senate and Council in June and July, rather than in March and April. UEB agreed that all Schools that were ready to bring forward their proposed new names could do so at Senate in March, with any outstanding being presented to Senate in June, prior to Council approval, subject to clarification that this delay would not pose any difficulties to the related IT work on coding.
- 4.b UEB also discussed initial feedback and points raised at the 5 February UEB-HoDs meeting and reflected on the importance of offering clarity to colleagues about the overall implementation plans and various workstreams underpinning the changes. It was reported that the draft report from the Halpin review of governance was due in early March and would inform a framework to support the establishment of structures in new Schools.

4.1 **Head of School Job Description**

(AC and RG in attendance for this item)

- 4.1.1 UEB considered a draft job description for Heads of Schools, following initial discussion and feedback from UEB and further comments from participants of the leadership workstream of the new schools project. Subject to UEB approval, emails advertising the new roles would be sent to colleagues. It was noted that those Heads of Departments or Schools that would not be changing in the new structure would become the Head of School but under the new job description, for consistency.
- 4.1.2 Clarification was provided about the responsibilities listed in the draft job description, as well as other senior leadership posts in Schools. It was recognised that HoSs would need support and guidance to enable them to understand what was expected of them in discharging the responsibilities of the role.
- 4.1.3 Further clarification was provided about the extent to which HoSs might seek to establish additional leadership roles at School-level, given UEB's earlier agreement that there would be three core School executive posts in addition to the HoS, with variation by exceptional agreement on the basis of discipline-specific need. UEB recognised the importance of ensuring that the leadership arrangements, and the attendant allowances, in new Schools were broadly consistent but with sufficient flexibility to maximise the effectiveness with which individual units could operate.
- 4.1.4 Following discussion, UEB approved the draft job description, subject to one amendment. UEB also agreed to use the findings of the Halpin governance review to inform principles by which HoSs could establish their overall leadership structure, supported and guided by

their respective Faculties and UEB. However, UEB agreed that HoSs would not have discretion to establish additional school leadership or executive posts that attracted an additional allowance to ensure the equitable treatment of leaders across all Schools.

4.2 **Closed Minute and paper**

5. **Round Table**

- (a) Data Futures (AC in attendance for this item): UEB discussed delays in other providers completing statutory returns to HESA and consequent delays in relevant data being published, and the impact on league tables.
- (b) 7 February Public Teach Out: UEB noted local group's plans to hold protest activity aligned with the Stop the War Coalition's Stand with Gaza, Workplace Day of Action, which called for all those in work, college or university to organise a 30-minute walkout at lunchtime or an early morning protest, or other collective action. An update and a reminder about the relevant University guidance would be shared with senior leaders in the weekly update.
- (c) Free Speech and Academic Freedom: UEB noted the outcome of a recent Employment Tribunal case involving another university and recent discussions between sector groups and the OfS, which had asked for examples of the kinds of situation upon which guidance and information about the OfS' likely approach would be helpful.
- (d) AMRC media coverage: It was reported that the BBC was filming at AMRC for a Newsnight feature on levelling up.
- (e) Sunday Times article: UEB received a further update on efforts across the sector and at institutional level to respond to the recent Sunday Times article on international student recruitment.