



Minutes Meeting of the University Executive Board

Date: 19 November 2024

Present: Professor K Lamberts (KL) in the Chair

Professor R Blakeley (RB), Professor A Blom (AB), Professor J Derrick (JD), Professor S Fitzmaurice (SF), Professor G Jewell (GJ), J Jones (JJ), Professor R Mokaya (RM), Professor C O'Bradaigh (CO), R Sykes (RS), Professor M Vincent (MV), I Wright (IW)

In attendance: J Strachan (JS), T Wray (TW); B Petty (BP), K Noice (KN), D Smith (DXS) (item 4)

Apologies: Professor S Hartley (SH)

Secretary: D Swinn (DS)

1. Closed Minute and Paper

2. Undergraduate Home Tuition Fee

- 2.1 UEB returned to consider whether to apply an increase to the home UG tuition fee in line with the new UK government fee cap and to which students this should be applied. It was noted that an Equality Impact Assessment had now been undertaken, which demonstrated that any negative impacts could be mitigated. It was reported that recent discussions between the Russell Group and OfS had highlighted that decisions about whether or not to apply the increase to continuing students was a matter for individual institutions, although government figures included a built-in assumption that this would be the case. UEB also noted the University's student terms and conditions. It was also noted that the increased fees would likely mean more graduates did not repay the full amount of their student loans.
- 2.2 UEB agreed to approve an increase to the undergraduate home tuition fee from £9,250 to £9,535, in line with the new UK government tuition fee cap. UEB also agreed that this increase should apply to both new and continuing students.

3. Update on the Framework for Mitigating Actions

- 3.1 UEB received a presentation, during which attention was drawn to: the further adjustments to be made to the OfS forecasts; a more detailed breakdown of these adjustments and the risks of further declines in tuition fee income, which would be shared with Council on 28 November; the key features of the framework for monitoring mitigating actions and the associated ownership and accountability

from UEB collectively to Heads of School and PS Directors; the features of the self-assessment template; the robust review and intervention process to ensure the successful delivery of actions; and the range of complementary and supporting initiatives to help achieve the savings targets.

- 3.2 During discussion it was reported that the Council Finance Committee was considering holding monthly update briefings with JJ at times when no formal business meeting was scheduled, given the pace of developments at present and the importance of rapid and effective action.

4. International Working Policy

(BP, KN and DXS in attendance for this item)

- 4.1 Further to previous discussion, UEB considered a proposed new International Working Policy and an approach to implementation, as well as the next steps in associated process developments. During a related presentation, attention was drawn to the key provisions of the policy, authorisation levels from line manager up to and including UEB, the proposed levels of risk and relevant approvers for each, and a high level timeline for the policy's rollout and implementation.
- 4.2 During discussion, clarification was provided about provisions relating to the use of University devices on overseas visits, including personal holidays, and the relevant provisions in related IT policies. Members also welcomed the pragmatic approach that had been followed in setting the levels of risk and escalation in order to manage the impact on workloads whilst appropriately mitigating risk. It was noted that Health & Safety were undertaking work to ensure related policies, such as risk assessments, were aligned with this new Policy. Further clarification was provided over the evidence that would be required to demonstrate both approval and that had been an appropriate consideration of risks relating to overseas travel, pending further work to identify an automated, technological solution in due course.
- 4.3 Subject to additional points noted, UEB approved the International Working Policy, agreed to its implementation with effect from 1 January 2025 and endorsed the continuation of the project to develop a longer-term IT solution, subject to future budget approval.

5. Staff Survey Update

- 5.1 Ahead of receiving a detailed paper and recommendations in due course, UEB received a presentation by way of update on the headline results from the recent Staff Survey and comparisons with the previous iteration, during which attention was drawn to: the overall Employee Net promoter Score and a breakdown by staff type; average scores per question; a summary of key findings, with protecting wellbeing and a positive working culture being consistent with themes from the previous survey; and a series of emergent recommendations at organisational and Faculty/School level. Overall the scores had decreased slightly since the previous survey in 2022 but this was largely expected in the current operating context and given the extent of challenging actions that the University was having to take.

6. Report of the UEB Information Management & Security Sub-Group

- 6.1 UEB approved the Report, noting updates on recent activity and the implementation and application of recommendations from the UEB Sub-Group Review.

7. Round Table

- (a) Vice-President and Head of the Faculty of Health: KL reported that AB had accepted a role as Dean of the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health and would be leaving the University at the end of February 2025. UEB thanked AB for his efforts and significant contributions to the Faculty of Health and the wider University during his time at Sheffield. Consideration was being given to the leadership of the Faculty and an update would be provided in due course.
- (b) OFSTED visit: It was reported that the Ofsted visit had concluded and the University was confident that it would receive a positive outcome when the written report was received, having received positive feedback during the visit.
- (c) Academic Health Partnership: KL and AB reported on the latest discussions and planned next steps.