

DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY

**MINUTES OF THE 113TH MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS
HELD ON THURSDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2014**

Present:

Mr Ian Blatchford (Chairman)	Professor Robert Harris
Professor Dominic Shellard (Vice-Chancellor)	Mr Mike Kapur
Mr Mark Anderson	Mr Oliver Mishcon
Mr Alan Charlton	Ms Suzanne Overton-Edwards
Mrs Doreen Crawford	Dr Vijay Patel
Ms Ann Ewing	Ms Marcia Saunders
Miss Christine Hancock	Mr Ian Warrington

In attendance:

Professor David Wilson, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Business and Law
Mr Ben Browne, Chief Operating Officer
Mr Simon Ambrose, Executive Officer to the Vice-Chancellor
Mrs Rebecca Jenkyn, Clerk to the Board of Governors
Ms Sue Francis, Assistant Clerk to the Board of Governors (Secretary)

Guest attendance

Mr Andrew Pemberton, Director of Communications
Professor Andy Collop, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation (*Item 2052 only*)

2042 Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Mr Tony Stockdale. Apologies for a late arrival had been received from Ms Saunders.

The Chairman welcomed Dr Vijay Patel and Mrs Doreen Crawford to their first Board of Governors' meeting.

2043 Declaration of any pecuniary, family or other personal interests

Mrs Crawford advised the Board of her joint membership of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and University and College Union (UCU).

2044 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Board of Governors' meeting held on the 21 November 2013 were approved as a correct record.

2045 Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the above minutes which were not covered on the agenda of this meeting.

2046 Chairman's update

The Chairman reported that certain governors had recently been approached to join the governing bodies of other universities. He asked that, if approached with such requests, governors should contact the Chairman to discuss any potential conflict of interest.

2047 Membership and tenure of governors

The Chairman proposed to the Board the appointment of Ms Hilary Carty, reminding governors that a need for expertise in the area of performing arts had previously been identified, given De Montfort University's academic expertise in this area. Ms Carty had visited DMU earlier in the week and had met with the Vice-Chancellor and key staff.

Governors considered that Ms Carty could add a different perspective to discussions and that she would be a valuable member of the Board.

The Board approved the appointment of Ms Carty as an independent member of the Board of Governors for an initial 3-year term.

2048 Report by the Vice-Chancellor

Governors noted a report from the Vice-Chancellor on recent developments.

It was reported that, following the conferment of his honorary degree on 24 January 2014, the Rt Hon John Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons, had been invited to preside over a passionate and spirited debate in DMU's Trinity Chapel. The debate followed the format of a House of Commons debate and was extremely well received. Consequently, Mr Speaker had indicated that he now wished to build the national celebrations of the 750th anniversary of the De Montfort parliament in 2015 around DMU.

2049 Items for receipt

No requests for clarification had been received on the items included in this section.

The Chairman enquired with Mr Kapur as to whether there was anything within the minutes of the Audit Committee which he wished to specifically bring to the attention of the Board.

Mr Kapur confirmed there were no particular matters to highlight within the minutes of 6 November 2013, but referred to a further report contained within the items for receipt, which explained DMU's rationale for selecting ISIS Education as its international pathway provider (BG/13-14/28).

2050 Autumn Statement and Student Number Control

The Vice-Chancellor introduced the item, advising governors that the Chancellor's 2013 Autumn Statement had contained significant implications for universities and the higher education sector:

- An additional 30,000 student places would be available for 2014/15 recruitment across the higher education (HE) sector. DMU would be advised on 14 February

2014 of its provisional Student Number Control (SNC) allocation, but was anticipating 200-250 additional places for 2014/15.

- The SNC would be abolished from 2015/16, effectively freeing-up universities to recruit as many students as they are able in open competition with each other.

The Government believed an additional 60,000 students per year were currently prevented from entering HE due to SNC restrictions. Whilst DMU was effective at converting student applications into acceptances, the overall number of applications needed expanding. Current application numbers were similar to 2013/14 levels (at -2%), though international student numbers were increasing (currently +12%).

2015/16 would therefore be a defining and critical year for the HE sector. As such, DMU must:

- a) Continue to differentiate itself, for example via the #DMUglobal initiative, the Confucius Institute, promoting DMU as a public good, and its leading partnerships;
- a) Increase quality in everything that it does; and
- b) Focus upon customer service and the student experience.

A strong brand, coupled with clear and consistent marketing was considered vital to increase student applications.

New marketing campaign

The Vice-Chancellor showed examples of DMU's new marketing campaign, due to launch in Spring/Summer 2014. Working with national advertising agency, Cubo Communications Group, the campaign would feature a series of 'This is not...' straplines and would be spearheaded by high profile advertising campaign. £1m had been set aside for the advertising and media campaigns.

A challenge had been set to all university function areas to develop ideas for the campaign, which had been very well received.

East Midlands Airport could be targeted in the campaign, as well as some overseas airports, such as Bangkok, Thailand. Overseas advertising would be tailored to the specific audience.

It was suggested that barcodes/QR Codes be placed on all advertisements to enable interested parties to immediately obtain further information.

Students with disabilities

DMU currently had one of the largest proportions of students seeking disability support in the country. It was proposed that one of the reasons for this could be due to there being a high proportion of students with dyslexia within creative industry programmes.

It was felt that DMU's existing excellent disability support team could offer an opportunity for DMU to be recognised as the university of choice for disabled students, and that it could be a particular focus of the new marketing strategy. To do so would require investment to establish a disability assessment centre. Currently, students considering DMU were assessed at Northampton University. Other institutions could be encouraged to use the new centre, which may lead to a growth in disabled student numbers at DMU.

It was proposed that DMU should consider whether it had sufficient capacity to increase the number of students with disabilities and ensure there was clarity on where efforts should be focussed.

It was agreed to provide governors with a breakdown of the data held on current DMU student disabilities.

University funding for 2014/15

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) published its annual funding letter to HEFCE on 10 February 2014. The letter confirmed that sector funding for 2014/15 would be reduced by £125m; the £37m Access to Learning ('hardship') Fund would be abolished and teaching funding reduced. The pinch point was likely to be felt mid-2014/15 and a full cost-base review was being undertaken.

There had also been an indication that the Government-funded Student Opportunities Fund would be abolished. Should this be confirmed, DMU would consider funding some or all of this provision from existing funds.

In light of the above, it was paramount that academic staff workloads were maximised, that university buildings were used efficiently and that DMU moved towards providing a 24/7 service.

Recruitment strategy

[whole section redacted on the grounds of strategic information likely to affect competition]

2051 Update on collective agreements

[redacted]

2052 Research and innovation update

The Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation presented a paper on research activity, including an update on DMU's Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014 submission and plans for REF 2020.

Governors were reminded that DMU's strategic vision was to be "a university that places research excellence and innovation at the heart of its mission" (Strategic Plan 2011-15). The Board had approved the Research and Innovation Strategy 2013-17 at its meeting in February 2013.

REF 2014 submission

Governors were advised that DMU had submitted its return to REF 2014 in November 2013. Approximately 31% of 'core' academic staff (i.e. excluding groups such as contract [non-independent] researchers and part-time hourly paid lecturers) had been returned to the exercise across twelve Units of Assessment (UoA), mirroring the national picture.

DMU predicted a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.74 (based on external reviews of publications), compared to 2.36 from the 2008 exercise.

It was likely that funding arising from REF 2014 would be concentrated on research graded as 3* (internationally excellent) and 4* (world leading).

DMU's submission was almost 800 pages in length and was divided into three main sections:

- Outputs, which constituted 65% of the final grading;
- Environment (15%); and
- Impact (20%).

The overarching strategy for the submission had been to achieve the highest possible quality (GPA) whilst maintaining sufficient critical mass in each UoA.

DMU's selection of outputs and staff had been informed by external review and academic staff were selected for inclusion in REF 2014 based on achieving a minimum individual GPA of greater than 2.0 and a minimum UoA GPA of greater than 2.5, with certain variations for high performing UoAs and Early Career Researchers (ECRs).

Outcomes from REF 2014 would be published in December 2014 with detailed panel overviews and sub-profiles to be made available in Spring 2015. These outcomes would drive annual quality-related (QR) funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) from academic year 2015/16, essentially until the next research assessment exercise.

DMU's position in relation to its competitors was uncertain for two main reasons:

1. Immediately following the 2008 exercise, there had been a lack of institutional focus on research, which was likely to have negatively affected DMU's REF 2014 submission compared to some other institutions; and
2. There was considerable scope in REF 2014 for universities to be highly selective and strive for the highest possible quality profile through returning low staff numbers.

Secretary's note: Mr Anderson left the meeting at this point.

Implementation of the Research and Innovation Strategy and preparations for REF 2020

Governors were advised that the next assessment of research would probably be undertaken in 2020, though no firm commitment had been given by the Government.

It was likely that the same funding criteria would apply as for REF 2014, in that funding would be concentrated on research graded as 3* (internationally excellent) and 4* (world leading), unless a new grading structure were created.

The requirement for HEFCE to demonstrate that it was business-led would, in turn, require universities to increase their focus on capturing and fully documenting the impact of research undertaken. It was anticipated that 'Impact' would account for 30% of the final grading for REF 2020.

For DMU to improve its performance in REF 2020, there would need to be a focus on: (i) improving research quality, and (ii) increasing research capacity. Robust targets would be developed once the outcomes from REF 2014 and the framework for REF 2020 were known.

Following approval of the Research and Innovation strategy, a number of new initiatives had been put in place to deliver each strategic objective:

- Following a successful pilot undertaken in Summer 2013, Individual Research Plans (IRPs) would be introduced across DMU for all staff requesting a research allowance as well as all professorial staff. The overall aim of IRPs was to increase the quality of research undertaken by existing academic staff and focus research allowances on those staff who were able to, or had the potential (in time) to, deliver research of international quality.
- An incentivisation policy would be implemented in 2014 to encourage academic staff to generate income from research and commercialisation activities.
- A number of staffing initiatives had been put in place to recruit high quality research-active academic staff for REF 2020 in areas (research groups) that were, or had the potential to be, internationally excellent or World leading, namely:
 - a) Three Early Career Research Fellowship appointments had recently been made and Executive Board had approved a further two appointments per year. The first two years of these appointments would be focussed on embedding research before progression was made into a “traditional” Lectureship.
 - b) A large recruitment campaign had recently been undertaken to appoint to the newly created Vice-Chancellor’s 2020 Lectureship Scheme, which was specifically designed to bring top quality research-active staff in the early stages of their career to DMU with REF 2020 in mind. Subsequently, eleven appointments had been made. It was anticipated that this scheme would continue, funded through the strategic re-investment of surpluses.
- The Vice-Chancellor’s Future Research Leaders’ Programme had been initiated in January 2013; a twelve-month, externally-facilitated programme to raise the strategic research competence of a cohort of twelve academic members of staff selected from across DMU to position them as genuine future research leaders, and to equip them with the skills and the sense of personal responsibility to act as champions of research in their own research groups, departments, schools and faculties. Feedback had been extremely positive and, as such, a second cohort of twelve staff had recently been selected for a January 2014 start.
- A competitive Research Capital Infrastructure Fund (RCIF) had been introduced to allow investment in research-related infrastructure and equipment in areas of excellence. The scheme particularly encouraged bids for research equipment that would underpin novel approaches to cross-disciplinary interaction and collaboration.
- In September 2013, twelve Doctoral Training Programmes (DTPs) had been launched to provide a clear focus for PhD student training and development and recruitment. The DTPs would provide subject-specific research training, placement and teaching opportunities, and a range of skills to enhance PhD student employability.
- To encourage the best alumni to continue their studies at DMU, five additional annual High Flyer PhD scholarships had been established with enhanced

stipends and other benefits. The Vice-Chancellor's 2020 Scheme had also been introduced and would entitle high performing alumni to a reduction in fees (up to 50%) for entry to taught postgraduate courses in 2014/15.

- The planning process had been revised for 2014/15 onwards to provide a more robust template for research and commercial targets to be agreed with faculties.

In addition to the above initiatives, a specific strategy (Appendix 1 to the paper) had been prepared for DMU's REF 2020 submission. The strategy had been approved by the University Research Committee and the Executive Board.

A question was raised as to whether the low number of nursing and midwifery staff returned to REF 2014 was typical across the sector. It was suggested that greater research opportunities were opening-up in these fields and that DMU should be mindful of this in its recruitment policies. It was considered that DMU ought first to continue to invest in its research strengths but that surpluses returned could be re-invested to develop research in other fields.

2053 Any other business

The President of De Montfort Students' Union reported that the elections for the union's new executive officer team had recently closed. 3143 votes had been cast, a turnout of approximately 20%, which had been the highest to date.

2054 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Governors would be held at 10am on Thursday 8 May 2014, at One Great George Street, Westminster, London.

Signed by the Chair of the Board of Governors

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Date: