

Minutes:	Board of Governors
Time and date:	Thursday 11 December 2025 at 10:00
Location:	Virtual meeting via Teams
Present:	Ian Squires (Chair), Tamera Campbell, Alison Court, Stuart Dawkins, Justin Dobson, Phil Grierson, Vivek Ganotra, Dilpreet Kaur, Jonathan Kerry, Jonathan Mills, Catherine Njoroge, Katie Normington, Sardip Sandhu, Beverley Shears, Shikha Singh, Twig Smalley, Peter Tansley, and Paul Woodgates
In attendance:	Alison Benson, Deputy Secretary and Head of Compliance, Debbie Muddimer, Executive Director of Finance and Procurement, Nikki Pierce, Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board
Secretary:	Nick Jeffs; nick.jeffs@dmu.ac.uk

CONFIRMED

55 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Shreena Dasani, Patrick Moody, and Abdul Mullick.

56 Declarations of any pecuniary, family or other personal interests

No declarations of pecuniary, family or other personal interests were made in respect of any items on the agenda.

The university maintains a Register of Interests, which records standing declarations of pecuniary, family or other personal interests from all members of the Board of Governors and the University Leadership Board.

57 Annual Financial Return 2025

The Executive Director of Finance and Procurement introduced a report [57] concerning the university's Annual Financial Return (AFR) for 2025. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from governors, the following points were highlighted:

- i. It was noted that there had been delays in the finalisation of BDO's External Audit Management Letter and elements of the version that had been appended to the report were still in draft. It was agreed that, in the interests of time, the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee would take a view on the final version of the management letter, on behalf of both the committee and the full board, ahead of 15 December, which was the date on which the accounts were to be formally signed. It was also agreed that the final version of the management letter would then be shared with the board for its awareness, once available.
- ii. It was agreed that the delays on the part of BDO were not satisfactory and it was noted that there had been more work than usual left until late in the audit process. The university would be holding a debrief with BDO where the reasons for the delays would be explored in greater detail; the outcome of the debrief would be shared with the Audit and Risk Committee in due course.

- iii. It was noted that the university's audit process was more complex than many other higher education institutions as a result of its status as a Public Interest Entity. It was also noted that the university was working with a new audit partner for the 2024/25 audit.
- iv. **[Redacted]**
- v. Overall, the board commended the university on receiving an unqualified audit opinion for the 2024/25 academic year. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee noted that the process did appear to have improved for 2024/25, despite the aforementioned delays, and that BDO retained the committee's confidence in its ability to carry out the external audit role effectively.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the audited financial statements for 2024/25 be approved.
- b. That the assessment that DMU continued to remain a going concern, thereby meeting the external auditors' requirement in that respect, be approved.
- c. That the Letter of Representation, which would be provided to the external auditors, be approved.
- d. That the External Audit Management Letter (i.e. Audit Completion Report) from the external auditors be noted.
- e. That the delegation of authority to the Vice-Chancellor for the submission of the AFR workbook by the deadline of 31 December 2025 be approved.

58 2024/25 financial outturn

The Executive Director of Finance and Procurement introduced a report [58] concerning the final financial outturn position for the year ended 31 July 2025, a draft of which had been presented in detail to the board at its meeting on 25 September 2025.

The board commended the outturn position, which had been achieved despite the various financial challenges faced by the university during 2024/25.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the financial outturn position for the year ended 31 July 2024, as outlined in the report, be noted.
- b. That the final position for the five-year forecast, as outlined in the report, would be submitted to the Office for Students as part of the AFR.

59 Internal audit annual report

The Executive Director of Finance and Procurement introduced the annual report of the university's internal auditors (KPMG) for the 2024/25 academic year [59].

In discussing this item, it was noted that the report had been considered by the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 17 November 2025, and that the committee would continue to have oversight of the progress of actions arising from internal audit work.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

60 Modern Slavery statement

The Executive Director of Finance and Procurement introduced a report [60] concerning the university's Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking statement for the 2024/25 academic year.

In discussing this item, it was noted that the university would be working to formalise the monitoring of its high-risk suppliers, and that the outcome of this monitoring would be reported to the Audit and Risk Committee in due course.

RESOLVED:

That the statement be approved for publication on the university's external website. It was noted that the statement would be signed by the Chair of the Board of Governors following the meeting and before publication.

61 Degree Outcomes Statement 2025

The Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board introduced a report [61] concerning the university's Degree Outcomes Statement for 2025. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from governors, the following points were highlighted:

- i. In discussing the decrease in the percentage of good honours since 2020/21, it was noted that this had been expected due to the university moving away from the 'no detriment' policies that had been introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was also noted that the university expected to see an increase in good honours from 2024/25 due to the positive impact of block teaching.
- ii. It was recognised that the outcomes statement was one of many measures of academic assurance that were shared with the board and that it would be presented alongside some of those other measures in future as a means of providing some useful context. It was agreed that a report concerning sector benchmarking for good honours would be shared with the Finance and Performance Committee in due course.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the 2025 Degree Outcomes Statement, as appended to the report, be approved for publication on the university's external website.
- b. That a report concerning sector benchmarking for good honours would be shared with the Finance and Performance Committee in due course.

62 Annual report of the Audit and Risk Committee

The Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board, and the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, introduced the Annual report of the Audit and Risk Committee for 2024/25 [62].

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

63 [Redacted]

Phil Grierson left the meeting for the following item

64 **Appointment of the Professional Services Staff Governor**

The Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board introduced a report [64] concerning the proposed appointment of re-appointment of Phil Grierson as the Board of Governors' Professional Services Staff Governor.

In discussing this item, it was noted that Phil had nominated himself for the role and had subsequently been elected by the professional services staff constituency. The re-appointment of Phil had been recommended by the Nominations Committee following consideration of the proposal earlier in December.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed re-appointment of Phil Grierson as the university's Professional Services Staff Governor be approved. Phil's second term of office would commence on 1 January 2026 and end on 31 July 2028.

Phil Grierson re-joined the meeting at this point

65 **Review of the board's performance**

Members were content that the board had been effective in discharging its responsibilities, and that all present had been enabled to be effective in their contribution.

66 **Date of the next meeting**

The Board of Governors' strategic away day would take place at 10:00 on Thursday 5 March 2026 in The Yard, rooms 3.02 and 3.05.

It was noted that a dinner for governors and the executive would take place on the evening of Wednesday 4 March 2026 and that further details would be announced in due course.

67 **Any other business**

The Vice-Chancellor provided updates on a number of matters as follows:

- i. The university had meet with the Office for Students to discuss its B3 metrics (regarding student outcomes). It was noted that the OfS had not expressed any significant concerns with the university's current position in this regard.
- ii. [Redacted]
- iii. UKVI had asked to meet with the university to discuss the number of its students who claimed asylum in the UK. It was noted that the number of students claiming asylum continued to decrease and it was felt that UKVI were likely to be meeting with a number of universities, not just DMU.
- iv. [Redacted]

RESOLVED:

That the updates from the Vice-Chancellor be noted.

Meeting duration: 10:00-11:02