

Minutes:	Board of Governors
Time and date:	10:00, Thursday 27 November 2025
Location:	The Yard, rooms 3.05 and 3.06
Present:	Ian Squires (Chair), Tamera Campbell (from item 30), Stuart Dawkins, Justin Dobson, Phil Grierson, Dilpreet Kaur, Jonathan Kerry, Patrick Moody, Katie Normington, Sardip Sandhu, Beverley Shears, Twig Smalley and Paul Woodgates
In attendance:	Tash Bell, Head of Marketing (item 32), Alison Benson, Deputy Secretary and Head of Compliance, Vicky Chadderton, Deputy Director, International (item 31), Lis Clarke, Deputy Director of Marketing and Communications (items 31 and 32), David Corden, Head of Space and Planning (item 40), Bridget Donoghue, Executive Director of People Services (item 35), Annette Hay, Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (item 36), John Hurst, Director of Strategic Insight and Planning (items 35, 37-38), Tracey Jessup, Chief Transformation and Resources Officer (items 35 and 43), Mike Kagioglou, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Planning, Research and Innovation (item 40), Sophia Imegi, Governance Officer, Debbie Muddimer, Executive Director of Finance and Procurement, Akin Oluwatudiumu, Director of Estates (item 40), Nikki Pierce, Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board, Lisa Stansbie, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education, Equalities and the Student Experience (items 35-37)
Secretary:	Nick Jeffs; nick.jeffs@dmu.ac.uk

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23 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Alison Court, Shreena Dasani, Vivek Ganotra, Jonathan Mills, Abdul Mullick, Catherine Njoroge, Shikha Singh and Peter Tansley.

It was noted that, whilst the meeting was still quorate, there had been a large number of apologies, some of which had been given with short notice. It was recognised that there would always be reasons why an individual might need to give their apologies but it was agreed that governors would be reminded of the importance of attending board (and committee) meetings and of giving reasonable notice of apologies where possible.

Justin Dobson, the newly elected Academic Staff Governor, was welcomed to his first meeting of the board.

24 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.

25 Decision taken between meetings

RESOLVED:

That the decision to appoint Justin Dobson as the board's Academic Staff Governor, which was taken between meetings, be noted.

26 Minutes of previous meetings

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the 25 September 2025 meeting of the board [26a], and the board's 16 October 2025 Strategic Away Day [26b], be approved.

27 Matters arising

The listed matters arising [27] had either been completed prior to the meeting or were scheduled for consideration at a future meeting of the board.

28 Report from the Chair

The Chair of the Board delivered an update concerning a range of issues:

The board was reminded of its annual meeting with the university's Academic Board, which would be taking place immediately following the conclusion of the board meeting.

- i. **[Redacted]**
- ii. It was noted that, as part of the search for DMU's new Chancellor, the consultation with the university's communities was now underway. A steering group would meet in January 2026 to consider the outcome of the consultation as well as candidates suggested by executive search firm, Odgers, with whom the university had partnered for this process.
- iii. On the subject of the Chancellor, it was agreed that that the term of the incumbent, Akram Khan MBE, would be extended to until the end of July 2026 in order to ensure that that the role was covered up to the point that the university was in a position to confirm the appointment of his successor.
- iv. It was noted that Professor Rama Thirunamachandran OBE DL had been identified as a potential independent governor candidate. Rama was currently serving as Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Canterbury Christ Church University but was due to retire in April 2026. Rama had been approached by the university with a view to him joining the board, following his retirement, as an independent governor with experience of being a senior academic in the UK higher education sector. It was anticipated that an interview for the role would be held with Rama early in the new year.
- v. The board was reminded that a dinner for governors and members of the executive would be held in Leicester on the evening of 4 March 2026 ahead of the board's meeting on 5 March.
- vi. It was hoped that the board's 14 May 2026 meeting would be held on DMU's campus in London and that it might coincide with the date of the formal launch of DMU London.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

29 Report from the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor introduced a report [29] concerning a range of recent developments in relation to the university and the higher education sector as a whole. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from governors, the following points were highlighted:

- i. The Deputy Chair of the Board provided an update on his recent visit to the university's Dubai campus to attend, on behalf of the board, the opening ceremony. It was felt that DMU Dubai had the potential for future growth given the country's aspirations around becoming a market leader for international higher education.
- ii. **[Redacted]**
- iii. The university would conduct a risk analysis around its overseas partnerships in light of policy changes in Denmark and Kazakhstan that had had an impact on its operations in both countries. The university was confident that there were other partnership opportunities available in other markets should it prove necessary to replace any existing provision that was no longer viable. It was recognised that the university's efforts to develop its transnational education provision would remain a key way in which it could diversify its income streams in light of declining numbers of UK students.
- iv. It was noted that the university was drafting an international strategy that would help to drive the development of its TNE provision. It was agreed that the latest version of the strategy would be shared with the board at its meeting on 5 March 2026.
- v. In terms of the key risks facing the university, it was felt that the volume of initiatives taking place simultaneously – and the related impact on colleagues' workloads – as well as the restructuring of the Digital and Technology directorate, and the uncertainty around changes in government policy, were the most significant at present.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the report be noted.
- b. That the latest version of the university's refreshed international strategy would be shared with the board at its meeting on 5 March 2026.

Tamera Campbell joined the meeting from this point

30 Report from the Student Governors

The student governors delivered an update concerning a range of issues, including:

- i. The union had started work on the refresh of its strategy, and had begun to consider strategic themes and how to encourage effective input from students.
- ii. The union had been gathering 'you said, we did' examples in response to the feedback received in the latest National Student Survey.
- iii. The union would launch its 'Welcome Refresh' week for students who were beginning or returning to their studies in January 2026.

- iv. The Welcome Week held at the start of the autumn term had been well attended and received much in the way of positive feedback from students.
- v. The union's Annual Impact Report had been published and would be shared with the board at its meeting on 5 March 2026.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

31 Recruitment and admissions update

The Deputy Director of Marketing and Communications and the Deputy Director, International introduced a report [31] concerning the university's current position in terms of student recruitment and admissions. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from members of the committee, the following points were highlighted:

- i. It was suggested that the university's strong performance in terms of international recruitment had come as a result of a strong sense of the quality of DMU's offer, and the benefits of Leicester as a destination, amongst certain markets, particularly India and Pakistan. It was noted that the university was supported in its international recruitment efforts by a strong network of international agents.
- ii. It was noted that the university had taken action to mitigate the risks around international students claiming asylum in the UK once they had started their studies. These actions included the introduction of credibility interviews for all markets and challenging agents who provided students that later went on to claim asylum. However, it was recognised that there was still work to do in this area and that the university would continue to review the relevant processes to ensure that they were appropriate and effective.
- iii. It was noted that the university had established a working group to consider how it might move forward with DMU International College given the issues that were being experienced in terms of progression and recruitment targets.
- iv. The university remained optimistic that it would meet its targets for recruitment to DMU London and that it would pick up more applications as the year progressed.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

32 Brand update

The Deputy Director of Marketing and Communications and the Head of Marketing delivered a presentation concerning recent work on the development of the university's brand proposition. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from members of the committee, the following points were highlighted:

- i. It was noted that the university was developing a framework that enabled it to give consistent brand messaging to multiple audiences across multiple DMU campuses.
- ii. The university was confident in its ability to evidence the promises that it was making as part of its marketing through a number of 'stories'. These stories would be further developed and expanded over time, and would be linked to DMU's distinctive offer and the refreshed university strategy.
- iii. It was suggested that it would be useful for the university to establish a sense of how its marketing was received by employers as well as potential students. The

university felt that the work it had done to date was foundational and that its messaging could be tailored to suit different audiences, including employers and industry partners.

- iv. It was recognised that it would be important to ensure that people across all of DMU's campuses – both staff and students – talked about the university and its offer in a consistent way, and that the risks posed by individuals being 'off message' were significant in terms of the potential impact on the university's reputation.
- v. In terms of feedback on the presentation of the brand wheel, it was suggested that it be distilled into a 'one page' format if possible, and that the colour red be replaced with a colour more inclusive and accessible.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the presentation be noted.
- b. That the presentation slides be shared with the board following the meeting.

33 [Redacted]

34 Strategy refresh update

The Vice-Chancellor introduced a report [34] concerning that progress that had been made to date on the Empowering University strategy refresh, including Phase 1 consultation activity, draft Mission, Vision and Values options, and the outcome of the university-wide strategic theme poll ahead of establishing co-creation (thematic working) groups.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the progress on the refresh of the Empowering University strategy at the conclusion of Phase 1 and the commencement of Phase 2 be noted.
- b. That the proposal to test two Mission options, two Vision options and two Values sets (including the existing and proposed "Four Cs") with staff, student and stakeholder working groups be noted.
- c. That the proposed Phase 2 structure of strategic theme working groups and enabling strands that would take the testing forward, with further reporting to the board in due course, be noted.

35 Strategic performance update

The Director of Strategic Planning and Insight, the Chief Transformation and Resources Officer, the Executive Director of People Services, and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education, Equalities and the Student Experience introduced the following (respectively):

- i. a report concerning the university's performance to date against the KPTs set within the Empowering University strategy [35a];
- ii. a report concerning an overview of the progress made against the Digital Transformation cross-cutting theme since October 2024 [35b];
- iii. a report concerning the progress made in relation to the Empowering People pillar of the Empowering University strategy [35c]; and
- iv. a report concerning the progress that had been made towards the success indicators identified within the Learning for Life cross-cutting theme of the Empowering University strategy [35d].

RESOLVED:

- a. That the current status of the KPTs against target and the actions in place to achieve those targets be noted.
- b. That the progress, achievements, off-track activities, and future actions outlined in the Digital Transformation, Empowering People and Learning for Life implementation plans be noted.

36 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education, Equalities and the Student Experience and the Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, introduced the university's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Annual Report for 2025 [36]. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from governors, the following points were highlighted:

- i. The board commended the report and the work that the university's EDI team had carried out during 2025.
- ii. It was noted that the number of mature students was in decline across the sector and that mature students at DMU tended to be younger than average.
- iii. It was noted that the key objective for the EDI team across the next 12 months was to continue to encourage active engagement with EDI across the institution – amongst both staff and students – and to capitalise on the momentum of the university's recent successes in terms of its charter work.

RESOLVED:

That the EDI Annual Report for 2025/25 be approved.

37 Student outcomes (Office for Students B3 metrics)

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education, Equalities and the Student Experience and the Director of Strategic Planning and Insight introduced a report [37] concerning the university's compliance with conditions of registration as set by the Office for Students under 'B3', which related to continuation, completion and progression. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from governors, the following points were highlighted:

- i. The university had developed a model to test continuation data on the basis of the previous year's outcomes and it had estimated a continuation rate of 85%, which would represent a significant increase on the forecast position and be above the Office for Students' threshold when taken over a four-year period. It was noted that the model had a margin of error of 2%.
- ii. It was recognised that the B3 metrics were critical given the role they played in the outcome of the Teaching Excellence Framework.
- iii. It was agreed that it would be important to continue to ensure that students completed – and succeeded in – their studies where possible, and that the completion rate continued to increase over time.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the latest results of Office for Students B3 student outcomes data be noted.
- b. That the additional actions taken in terms of faculty action-planning, aimed at mitigating the impact of likely below-threshold continuation measurements in the 2026 data release, be noted.

- c. That the suggested two-tier approach to programme monitoring and support, as outlined in the report, be noted.

38 League tables update

The Director of Strategic Planning and Insight introduced a report [38] concerning the university's performance in the most recent domestic and international league tables.

The board commended the ongoing work, outlined in the report, to improve the university's performance in league tables.

RESOLVED:

That the latest league table performance and the ongoing improvement plans in the areas of: the National Student Survey and Graduate Outcomes performance; entry tariff and data capture; academic and employer reputation survey coordination; student continuation and engagement improvement initiatives; and sustainability ranking submissions, be noted.

Shikha Singh left the meeting at this point

39 Library of the Future business case

The Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board of Governors introduced a report [39] concerning a business case for the refurbishment of the Kimberlin Library. In addition, the Chair of the Finance and Performance Committee provided an update on the committee's consideration of this item at its meeting on 18 November. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from members of the committee, the following points were highlighted:

- i. The extent to which the existing functions of the library would need to be decanted during the refurbishment would be identified in time and through the development of a more detailed business case relating to that phase of the work.
- ii. It was agreed that it would be important to for the external landscaping and refurbishment works to be of high quality as a means of demonstrating to users that improvements were taking place. The university was encouraged to make the refurbished library as much of a 'statement piece' as possible within the limits of the business case.
- iii. It was recognised that the accessibility elements of the refurbishment would be critical.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the preferred option for the library refurbishment project (with an outlined budget figure of £17.742m) be approved.
- b. That the capital expenditure of £5.984m (from the overall budget of £17.742m), comprising £4.221m to undertake the replacement of the library roof (and associated works) during summer 2026, and £1.673m to take forward the design stage, be approved.

40 Campus Masterplan enabling works business case

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Planning, Research and Innovation, the Director of Estates, and the Head of Space Planning introduced a report [40] concerning a business case for a series of enabling works that would support the first phase of the Campus Masterplan.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the divestment of Edith Murphy House and Heritage House, in line with the Scheme of Delegation, be approved.
- b. That an investment request of £1,932,523 (inclusive) to deliver the Campus Masterplan phase 1 enabling works had been approved by the Finance and Performance Committee at its meeting on 18 November 2025 be noted.
- c. That a further Campus Masterplan phase 1 'refurbishment' business case would follow in due course be noted.

41 Prevent Duty Accountability and Data Return

The Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board introduced the annual Prevent report [41], which included the annual Prevent Accountability and Data Return (ADR).

RESOLVED:

- a. That the requirements of the OfS in respect of the monitoring of the Prevent Duty, and the Prevent Duty-related activity undertaken by the university during 2024/25, be noted.
- b. That the ADR, which would be submitted to the OfS by the deadline of 1 December 2025, be approved.

42 Academic Board annual report and annual plan

The Vice-Chancellor introduced the Academic Board's annual report for 2024/25 and the annual plan for 2025/26.

The board welcomed, and commended the efficiency of, the report.

RESOLVED:

That the Academic Board annual report for 2024/25 and annual plan for 2025/26 be noted.

43 Demonstration of DMU student app

The Chief Transformation and Resources Office delivered a presentation concerning the key features of the DMU student app. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from governors, the following points were highlighted:

- i. The board welcomed the app and it was felt that it would put the university in a strong position relative to other such offerings across the sector.
- ii. It was noted that the app would be regularly updated over time, with communications being sent to users to make them aware of the more significant updates.
- iii. It was noted that the developers of the app, Agile Professionals, owned the IP and so it would not be straightforward for the university to commercialise its wider use.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

44 Member's updates

i. Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee had last met on 17 November 2025. Key items of business that had been considered by the committee included the university's audited financial statements for 2024/25 – which would be considered by the board at its meeting on 11 December 2025 – and an internal audit report relating to fraud risk and the university's compliance with the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act.

ii. Finance and Performance Committee

The Chair of the Finance and Performance Committee noted that a number of items from its most recent meeting, which had taken place on 18 November 2025, had already been considered by the board earlier in the agenda. In addition, it was noted that the committee had considered a business case for a refresh of the university's data centre infrastructure and an update on the university's procurement function.

iii. People and Culture Committee

The People and Culture Committee had last met on 23 October 2025. Key items of business that had been considered by the committee included an update on the university's change programme, an update on the Student Experience Programme – which would be closing early in the new year – and annual reports concerning Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and Health and Wellbeing.

iv. Remuneration Committee

The Remuneration Committee had last met on 6 November 2025; this meeting had focussed primarily on a review of salaries of members of the University Leadership Board.

v. Academic Board

The Academic Board had last met on 8 October 2025. Key items of business that had been considered by the committee included Research and Innovation Institutes, the ongoing establishment of the Faculty of Technology, Arts, and Culture, and the results of both the National Student Survey and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey.

vi. Lead governors for Ofsted and skills

The lead governors for Ofsted and Skills continued to meet with the Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board and the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Extended Education. Topics considered at recent meetings included the launch of the university's new teaching apprenticeship, the new Ofsted framework, and a forthcoming audit, by Ofsted, of the end point assessments of the university's digital technology and skills apprenticeship.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

45 Secretary's Report

The Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board introduced a report [45] concerning a number of governance related items.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the constitutions of the Academic Board and the Remuneration Committee be endorsed.
- b. That the annual reports of the Finance and Performance Committee, the People and Culture Committee, and the Remuneration Committee be noted.
- c. That the results of the effectiveness self-assessment surveys of the Board of Governors, the Audit and Risk Committee, the Finance and Performance Committee and the People and Culture Committee be noted.
- d. That an effectiveness action plan would be developed on the basis of the outcomes of the governor appraisal process, and the results of the board and committee effectiveness self-assessment surveys, be noted.
- e. That the proposed process for the recruitment and appointment of a Senior Independent Governor, as outlined in the report, be noted.
- f. That the proposed approach to the publication of the university's most recent Governance Effectiveness Review, as outlined in the report, be noted.

Ian Squires left the meeting, and Shikha Singh returned to the meeting, at this point

46 Reappointment of the Chair of the Board

The Deputy Chair of the Board introduced a report [46] concerning the proposed reappointment of Ian Squires as an independent governor and the Chair of the Board of Governors.

[Redacted]

RESOLVED:

That the proposed reappointment of Ian Squires to the roles of independent governor and Chair of the Board of Governors be approved. It was noted that Ian's third term would run or a period of three years from 6 January 2026 to 5 January 2029.

Ian Squires re-joined the meeting at this point

47 Information Governance annual report

RESOLVED:

That the report [47] be noted.

48 Academic quality assurance summary report

RESOLVED:

That the report [48] be noted.

49 Minutes of the 18 September 2025 meeting of the Finance and Performance Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes [49] be noted.

50 Annual Health and Wellbeing report

RESOLVED:

That the report [50] be noted.

51 Unconfirmed minutes of the 8 October 2025 meeting of the Academic Board

RESOLVED:

That the minutes [51] be noted.

52 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.

53 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Governors would take place at 10:00 on Thursday 11 December 2025 via Teams.

54 Any other business

No items were raised.

Meeting duration: 10:00-14:29