

Minutes:	Board of Governors
Time and date:	10:00, Thursday 28 November 2024
Location:	The Yard, rooms 3.05 and 306
Present:	Ian Squires (Chair), Peter Collyer, Stuart Dawkins, Phil Grierson, Vivek Ganotra, Priya Karasala, Jonathan Kerry, Katie Normington, Buddy Penfold, Sardip Sandhu (from item 33), Komal Shahzadi, Beverley Shears (from item 37), Shikha Singh, Peter Tansley (from item 33), and Paul Woodgates
In attendance:	Alison Benson, Deputy Secretary and Head of Compliance, Lis Clarke, Deputy Director of Marketing and Communications (item 36), Bridget Donoghue, Executive Director of People Services (items 43 and 46), Annette Hay, Head of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (item 45), John Hurst, Director of Strategic Planning and Insight (items 41 and 42), Tracey Jessup, Chief Transformation and Resources Officer (items 38, 43, and 44), Chloe Keenan, Governance Officer, Debbie Muddimer, Executive Director of Finance and Procurement, Simon Oldroyd, Pro Vice-Chancellor Sustainability (item 38), Susan Orr, Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Equalities (items 39, 43, and 45), Osaro Otobo, Halpin, David Parkes, Director of Library and Student Services (item 39), Nikki Pierce, Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board of Governors
Secretary:	Nick Jeffs; nick.jeffs@dmu.ac.uk

CONFIRMED

28 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Alison Court, Jonathan Mills, Patrick Moody, and Abdul Mullick. Apologies for a late arrival had been received from Sardip Sandhu, Beverley Shears, and Peter Tansley.

29 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.

30 Minutes of previous meetings

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the 26 September 2024 meeting of the Board of Governors [30a] and the minutes of the 17 October 2024 strategic away day [30b] be approved.

31 Matters arising

All of the matters arising [31] had either been completed or were scheduled for consideration at a future meeting of the board.

32 Report of Chair's Action

The Chair of the Board introduced a report [32] concerning Chair's actions that had been taken since the previous meeting in relation to the following:

- i. the university's contract in respect of its partnership in the Pharmaceutical Technical University, Uzbekistan; and
- ii. the submission to the Office for Students of a reportable event relating to the closure of the mathematics subject area at DMU.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

Sardip Sandhu and Peter Tansley joined the meeting at this point

33 Report from the Chair

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

- i. Following a competitive procurement exercise, Halpin has been appointed to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the board and the university's governance more widely. The Chair introduced to the board Osaro Otobo from Halpin; Osaro would be observing the meeting as part of the review.
- ii. The ongoing governor recruitment exercise, supported by Odgers Berndtson, would soon be drawing to a close, with the shortlisted candidates scheduled to be interviewed across the 9th and 18th December.
- iii. Following an interview on 12 November, a panel of governors had recommended that Shreena Dasani be appointed as a governor apprentice under the university's Governor Apprenticeship Programme. The approval of Shreena's appointment would be considered at the 10 December meeting of the Nominations Committee and the 12 December meeting of the board.
- iv. The students' union would be adjusting its governance processes to allow for the earlier nomination of new student governors.
- v. Staff and student governors were invited to indicate if they would like to attend as observers any of the forthcoming committee meetings.
- vi. Governors were reminded of the importance of responding to Outlook invites so as to ensure the Governance Office had the most accurate possible picture of expected attendance ahead of board and committee meetings.
- vii. Governors were reminded of the board's annual discussion session with the Academic Board, which would take place immediately following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

34 Report from the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor introduced a report [34] 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. Regarding the OfS' plans to enhance and formalise university-school partnerships by establishing a regional approach to Access and Participation Plans, it was noted that DMU already had strong relationships with a number of local schools and further education providers, and that some thought would be given as to how to make these relationships more strategic.
- ii. **[Redacted]**
- iii. The board commended DMU on the successful renewal of its institutional Athena SWAN 'Bronze' award, and welcomed the university's aspirations to seek a 'Silver' award at the next opportunity. It was agreed that the criteria for the Silver award, and an outline of the approach that the university would be taking to achieve that award, would be shared with the board.
- iv. The board commended the work that the university had done to successfully move its Dubai operations to a new campus, noting that the continued renovation of that campus remained on track.
- v. It was noted that there had been limited coverage in the local press of the university's voluntary severance scheme. It was felt that the reporting of the scheme would not have a negative impact on student recruitment, and it was noted that no questions about the scheme had been asked at a recent open day.
- vi. The board offered its congratulations to Professor Muyiwa Oyinlola, who had won UK Research and Innovation funding of £3m for a collaborative project on renewable energy in Africa, and to the university's Chief Transformation and Resources Officer, Tracey Jessup, who had received a special award from CIO UK 100 for outstanding contributions to the public sector.
- vii. The board offered its thanks to Professor Heather McLaughlin, who would be retiring in January 2025, for her work for the university since joining in January 2020, most recently as Pro Vice-Chancellor Lifelong Learning and Dean of the Faculty of Business and Law.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the updates be noted.
- b. That a report concerning the university's UKVI compliance, which had been scheduled to go to the Audit and Risk Committee on 18 November, be considered by the board at its next meeting.
- c. That the criteria for a 'Silver' Athena SWAN award, and an outline of the approach that the university would be taking to achieve that award, would be shared with the board.

35 Report from the Student Governors

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

- i. Both Black History Month and Disability History Month had seen the students' union arrange a number of celebratory events, which had been well-attended.
- ii. The Welcome Festival, held in the first few weeks of the first term, had been successful, with positive engagement from the student body. Preparations were underway for the union's Welcome Refresh events, which would take place in the

first weeks of the second term, and were aimed at returning students as well as those starting as part of a January intake.

- iii. The Student Council had considered a number of motions, including changes to the remits of the union's Executive Officers.
- iv. In early December, the union would be holding its 'Winter Wonderland' festival, which would offer small businesses owned by current student and graduates the opportunity to sell some of their products.
- v. The union continued to support students with welfare-related issues.
- vi. The results of a survey of new students suggested that the majority had had a positive experience of their induction to the university.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

36 [Redacted]

Beverley Shears joined the meeting at this point

37 [Redacted]

38 [Redacted]

39 DMU library redevelopment options

The Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Equalities, and the Director of Library and Student Services, introduced a report [39] concerning the library redevelopment project. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from members of the committee, the following points were highlighted:

- i. It was suggested that it would be useful for the final business case for the project to outline how long the university might expect the proposed developments to last before further investment would be required to bring the library up to date again. It was noted that the 'gold' option was intended to bring about meaningful improvements in its own right, and would not be a halfway measure towards further development.
- ii. It was noted that the proposed developments would not be sensitive to year-to-year fluctuations in student numbers, and that one of the key aims of the project was to make better use of the existing space, with a particular focus on accessibility and student facilities.

RESOLVED:

That the development of a full business case for the 'gold' option for the redevelopment of the Kimberlin Library, as outlined in the report, be endorsed.

40 [Redacted]

41 League tables update: domestic and international

The Director of Strategic Planning and Insight introduced a report [41] concerning the university's performance in the most recent domestic and international league tables. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from governors, the following points were highlighted:

- i. It was noted that the university tended to perform better in league tables that were informed more directly or solely by student opinion, and that the larger, more well-known league tables were often weighted against institutions such as DMU.
- ii. It was noted that the university would continue to explore ways in which it might make sustainable improvements to its league table positions, and it was hoped that the now campus-wide positive messaging around the university's performance in a range of alternative leagues tables and awards would have a subsequent positive impact in this area.

RESOLVED:

That the university's performance, as outlined in the report, be noted.

42 Empowering University Strategy update

The Director of Strategic Planning and Insight introduced a report [42] concerning the university's performance to date against the targets set within the Empowering University strategy. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from governors, the following points were highlighted:

- i. It was noted that any target end dates that exceeded the lifetime of the current strategy would be carried forward into its next iteration.
- ii. It was noted that the executive would revisit the metric 'Percentage of Graduates Employed in the East Midlands', recognising that there may be more useful indicators of the impact that DMU graduates were having in the local region. However, it was suggested that it would still be useful to track this metric, even if it were to no longer inform one of the strategic KPTs.
- iii. It was agreed that it would be important for the university to consider carefully the way in which it communicated to staff and students any changes to its strategic KPTs.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the university's performance, as outlined in the report, be noted.
- b. That the changes to the KPTs used to measure the Empowering University strategy, as outlined in the report, be approved.

43a Strategy implementation plan update: Digital Transformation

The Chief Transformation and Resource Officer introduced a report [43a] concerning an overview of the progress made against the Empowering University's cross-cutting digital theme since October 2023.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the off-track success indicators, objectives and activities, as set out in the implementation plan, and the planned future actions, be noted.
- b. That the key achievements since the last update be noted.
- c. That the proposed amendment to the Digital Transformation Strategy Principles, demonstrating a commitment to digital inclusion at DMU, be endorsed.

43b Strategy implementation plan update: Empowering People

The Executive Director of People Services introduced a report [43b] concerning the progress made in relation to the Empowering People pillar of the Empowering University strategy.

RESOLVED:

That the progress made to date, as outlined in the report, be noted.

43c Strategy implementation plan update: Learning for Life

The Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Equalities introduced a report [43c] 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.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the implementation update, including the actions that being undertaken to address areas that were off-track against KPTs, as well as the university's achievements in this area of the past year, be noted.
- b. That the Teaching Excellence Framework update, as appended to the report, be noted.

44 Digital update

The Chief Transformation and Resources Officer delivered a presentation concerning an update on the university's Digital Transformation Strategy.

RESOLVED:

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

45 Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report

The PVC (Education and Equalities) and the Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, introduced the university's Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) report, which covered the period October 2023 to October 2024. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from governors, the following points were highlighted:

- i. The board commended the work that the EDI-work that DMU had undertaken during the previous year, and reiterated its encouragement that the university consider working towards an Athena SWAN Silver Award.
- ii. It was suggested that the university should consider how the promotion of some of its EDI-related work and achievements might feature in its student recruitment activities.
- iii. It was recognised that social and economic inclusion in relation to staff recruitment was an emerging issue, and something that the university would be focussing on in future.

RESOLVED:

That the annual EDI report be endorsed. It was noted that the report would be on the university's website following the meeting.

46 [Redacted]

47 Conclusion of DMU Dubai action plan

The Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board introduced a report [47] concerning the development of an action plan in respect of a 'lessons learned' review relating to DMU Dubai and the challenges associated with the project.

RESOLVED:

That the signing-off of the action plan be approved.

48 London School of Science and Technology

The Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board introduced a report [48] concerning the university's partnership with London School of Science and Technology.

In discussing this item, it was noted that the university would be developing a new strategy in respect of UK-based educational partnerships and, as part of that work, would be considering the strategic fit of all of its partners.

RESOLVED:

That the findings set out in the report be endorsed.

49 Prevent Duty Accountability and Data Return

The Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board introduced the annual Prevent report [49], 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 2023/24, be noted.
- b. That the ADR, which would be submitted to the OfS by the deadline of 2 December 2024, be approved.
- c. That a briefing for board members on their responsibilities in respect of the Prevent Duty would be arranged during 2024/25 be noted.

50 Academic Board annual report for 2023/24 and annual plan for 2024/25

The Vice-Chancellor introduced a report [50] concerning the Academic Board's annual report for the 2023/24 academic year, and its annual plan for 2024/25.

RESOLVED:

That the annual report and annual plan be noted.

i. Audit and Risk Committee

The minutes of the 30 September 2024, meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee were included at item 53. In addition, the Chair of the committee noted that the progress of the external audit to date appeared to be positive, and it was hoped that the approval of the annual accounts could take place, as scheduled, at the board's meeting on 12 December. The Chair also noted that historical issues around data quality in relation to apprenticeships had been resolved to the internal auditors' satisfaction. Finally, noting that the committee's 18 November meeting had been cut short, and as noted above at item 34, the Chair recommended that the report concerning UKVI compliance, which had been scheduled to be discussed on that date, instead be shared with the full board on at its meeting on 12 December.

ii. Finance and Performance Committee

The Chair noted that the majority of the items that had been considered by the Finance and Performance Committee at its meeting on 13 November had already been considered by the board earlier in the agenda. However, it was noted that the committee had also considered the results of the 2021/22 Graduate Outcomes survey and the 2023/24 Applicant Tracker survey.

iii. People and Culture Committee

The unconfirmed minutes of the 23 October 2024, meeting of the People and Culture Committee were included at item 56. In addition, the Chair of the committee noted that the university's Annual Health and Safety and Annual Health and Wellbeing reports had been endorsed, and that both documents had been included for noting at items 57 and 58.

iv. Lead governors for Ofsted and skills

The lead governors for Ofsted and skills noted that they had met with the Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board twice since the previous update to the board, and that the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Skills and Training would be joining those meetings in the new year. It was also noted that Ofsted had introduced an online portal for comparing a provider's data against benchmarks; it was agreed that further information on the portal would be provided to the board in due course.

v. Academic Board

The unconfirmed minutes of the 9 October 2024 meeting of the Academic Board were included at item 60. In addition, the governors attending Academic Board highlighted some of the more significant items that had been discussed at that meeting, including amendments to the undergraduate progression regulations, and a new standard operating process for the university's response to the Higher Education Business and Community Interaction survey.

RESOLVED:

That further information concerning the Ofsted portal for apprenticeships would be provided to the board in due course.

52 Secretary's Report

The Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board introduced a report [52] concerning a number of governance-related items that had been considered and approved by the board's committees and the Academic Board. These included:

- i. the constitutions of the Academic Board, the Remuneration Committee and the People and Culture Committee;
- ii. the annual reports of the Finance and Performance Committee, the People and Culture Committee, and the Remuneration Committee;
- iii. the results of the effectiveness self-assessment surveys of the Finance and Performance Committee and the People and Culture Committee; and
- iv. an effectiveness action plan, which had been developed on the basis of the outcomes of the governor appraisal process, and the results of the board and committee effectiveness self-assessment surveys.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the constitutions of the Academic Board, the Remuneration Committee, and the People and Culture Committee, for the 2023/24 academic year, be endorsed.
- b. That the annual reports of the Finance and Performance Committee, the People and Culture Committee, and the Remuneration Committee, for the 2023/24 academic year, be noted.
- c. That results of the effectiveness self-assessment surveys of the Finance and Performance Committee and the People and Culture Committee be noted.
- d. That the effectiveness action plan be noted.

53 Minutes of the 30 September 2024 meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes [53] be noted.

54 Appointment of the university's external auditors

RESOLVED:

That the report [54] be noted.

55 Information Governance annual report

RESOLVED:

That the report [55] be noted.

56 Unconfirmed minutes of the 23 October 2024 meeting of the People and Culture Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes [56] be noted.

57 Annual Health and Safety report 2023/24

RESOLVED:

That the report [57] be noted.

58 Annual Health and Wellbeing report 2023/24

RESOLVED:

That the report [58] be noted.

59 Access and Participation Plan

RESOLVED:

That the report [59] be noted.

60 Unconfirmed minutes of the 9 October 2024 meeting of the Academic Board

RESOLVED:

That the minutes [60] be noted.

61 Items placed under the university seal

RESOLVED:

That the report [61] be noted.

62 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.

In considering the various difficulties facing the higher education sector more broadly, it was suggested that it would be useful for DMU to reflect upon whether key teams across the institution comprised the appropriate skills and competencies to help the university overcome those challenges. It was agreed that the executive would reflect on this suggestion and provide the board with assurance in this regard at a future meeting.

63 Date of the next meeting

An extraordinary meeting of the Board of Governors would take place at 10:00 on Thursday 12 December 2024 via MS Teams.

The next ordinary meeting of the Board of Governors would take place at 10:00 on Thursday 27 February 2025 at a location to be confirmed on DMU's campus.

64 Any other business

a. Peter Collyer

The Chair thanked on behalf of the board Peter Collyer for his service as an independent governor since January 2022. Peter was also thanked for his roles as Chair of the Remuneration Committee, and as a member of the Nominations and People and Culture Committees. Peter would be stepping down from the board at the end of December 2024. It was noted that Shikha Singh had agreed to take on the role of Chair of the Remuneration Committee from 1 January 2025, and that the successors to Peter's remaining roles would be identified from the ongoing governor recruitment exercise.

b. Komal Shahzadi

The Chair thanked on behalf of the board Komal Shahzadi for their service as a student governor and member of the Nominations Committee since September 2024. Komal would be stepping down from the board at the end of January 2025, and it was hoped that a new student governor would be appointed to the board in due course.

Meeting duration: 10:00-14:34