

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
27th SEPTEMBER 2019**

REDACTED MINUTES FOR PUBLICATION

A meeting of the Board was held at Taylor Wessing, 5 New Street Square, London, EC4A 3TW from 10am – 13pm on Friday 27th September 2019.

Present:	Mrs B Bartlett (BB)	
	Ms J Brainch (JB)	
	Ms A Clack (AC)	
	Mr C Costigan (CC)	
	Mrs H Edwards (HE)	(Staff Trustee)
	Ms P Farrell (PF)	(Student Trustee)
	Mr J Gellatly (JG)	(Chairman)
	Dr S Jackson (SJ)	
	Mr A Martin (AM)	
	Professor K Miller (KM)	(via videoconference)
	Mr C Turley (CT)	
	Mr A Wheaton (AW)	(Principal)
In attendance:	Mrs J E Fawkes (JEF)	(UCEM Secretary)
	Mrs L Hughes (LH)	(Note taker)
Apologies for absence:	Mr A Hynard (AH)	
	Ms M von Tunzelman (MvT)	

1) GENERAL BOARD GOVERNANCE

10133 **1.1) DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

10134 There were no conflicts of interest reported.

10135 **1.2) TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

10136 There were apologies for absence from Andrew Hynard and Misa Von Tunzelman.

10137 **1.3) TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27TH JUNE 2019**

10138 The minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting held on 27th June 2019 (as included at paper 1.3) were **APPROVED** as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

10139 1.4) To APPROVE THE REDACTED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27TH JUNE 2019

10140 The proposed minutes for redaction from the meeting of 27th June 2019 (for the purposes of meeting Office for Student conditions of registration compliance from September 2019) were reviewed by the Board and **APPROVED**. Trustees were reminded that UCEM is now required to publish all Board and Committee minutes and that approval for redacted sections must now be agreed at the start of each meeting.

10141 1.5) To CONSIDER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT INCLUDED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA AND REVIEW THE ACTIONS SUMMARY

10142 The summary showing the outcome of actions from the meeting held 27th June 2019 (paper 1.5) was taken as read with updates on listed actions duly **NOTED** (all actions were either closed, in progress or were scheduled on this or forthcoming agendas).

10143 The Chairman gave a verbal update on the only outstanding action (minute 10000) regarding conclusion of the 2018 Trustee Appraisals process. The only appraisal that remained outstanding as of August 2019 was the Chairman's. Chris Turley advised that the discussion had now taken place and that he just needed to forward the paperwork through to JEF.

10144 10077 – The Board was advised that the Windsor Group had been supportive of the arguments. At the current time only the Postgraduate Surveying apprenticeship standard remains outstanding for approval as two constructions standards were recently approved.

10145 1.6) TO NOTE DATES FOR TRUSTEE DIARIES

10146 Trustees **NOTED** papers 1.6a and 1.6b, which summarise the Board and Committee dates for 2019 and 2020, alongside the list of additional discretionary events that require support from across the Trustee body.

10147 JEF updated Trustees that it has now been confirmed there will be just two Graduation Ceremonies in December 2019 on a single day of proceedings (and not three ceremonies over two days as previously advised was a possibility).

2) STUDENT AND STAFF FEEDBACK

10148 2.1) UCEM STUDENT EXPERIENCE

10149 Phoebe Farrell, Student Trustee, with Mark Thomson, Director of Student Services Operations, provided the Student Experience update, focusing on the Student Representatives Framework (see paper 2.1). The paper outlined the Student Representation model and the plans to make further enhancements to this in the coming year. Actions are categorised into short, medium and long term.

10150 The Board queried the resourcing implications of establishing a Student Association and remuneration for representation roles. PF responded that all options are being considered, including fee discounts rather than direct remuneration. One element

of a normal Student's Union is an independent advisory function linked to resolution of student complaints. If UCEM were to establish this function it would require additional resource, other planned enhancements are budgeted in-year.

10151 The aims of the enhancements are all relative to driving student engagement, communication and sense of community outside of programme learning and are directly relevant to improving National Student Survey results. The new post of Director of Student Community is responsible for delivering these enhancements.

10152 The Board **NOTED** the report and the enhancement plans and thanked PF/Mark Thomson for having provided this and their work to improve NSS scores in this area.

10153 2.1) UCEM STAFF EXPERIENCE

10154 Helen Edwards, Staff Trustee, provided the Staff Experience update, focusing on the opportunities that UCEM staff have available for staff engagement, rewards and benefits (see paper 2.2).

10155 Opportunities include the staff *Bulletin* weekly newsletter, *Offline* magazine, values awards, £500 for 500 employee development programme, Feed Me Fridays, Wellness Wednesdays, social clubs and events and the Cycle to Work Scheme.

10156 HE summarised that staff are appreciative of the opportunities they have, and that they motivate and engage them.

10157 The Board **NOTED** the update provided and the Chairman thanked HE for her contribution.

3) MONITORING AND OVERSIGHT OF M7 TARGETS FOR 2019-20

10158 3.1) PRINCIPAL'S OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS AGAINST TARGETS

10159 The UCEM progress update was provided by Ashley Wheaton (see paper 3.1). The coloured RAG ratings in the report reflect the status of the objective at this first meeting of the 2019/20 financial year, providing the latest perspective on performance against the top level M7 goals for the year.

10160 **AW highlighted some key points in his update:**
The report provided in paper 3.1 provides an overview, as requested by the Board. A detailed financial update will go forward to Finance Committee when new student recruitment and re-registration is nearer completion.

10161 Delivering the Transform project, securing an Ofsted good outcome and the Student Experience, focussed on the NSS, are the top priorities for 2019-20.

10162 Progress on module success rate improvement continues and is significant at undergraduate level 4 but still requires further improvement at postgraduate level and in consistency across all modules. Equally, there continues to be good progress against the 60% full award target, which is achieved on postgraduate but not yet on undergraduate.

- 10163 Significant progress has also been made on the ESFA (apprenticeships) student satisfaction survey which increased from 61.8% to 81.6% due to the hard work and effort of the team. The results of the employer survey are not yet known.
- 10164 The new widening participation targets are challenging to meet, with the Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) sub-target the most difficult to achieve. If achieved throughout the life of the Access and Participation Plan UCEM would have a significant impact on the diversity of the sector as a whole. The targets relate to UK students on a small sub-set of undergraduate programmes only – those that the Office for Students are monitoring. The Board may wish to consider a strategic discussion in the future on whether UCEM develops a programme specifically targeted to attract the student profile that meets OFS requirements, as well as programmes that are targeted on meeting the needs of students worldwide.
- 10165 UCEM achieved 91% of plan on the new student recruitment targets at postgraduate level and is on target for re-registration. Undergraduate is not yet complete. A reforecast of income will take place as soon as the recruitment window closes. Competition for the new student market remains steep across the whole sector now numbers for institutions are uncapped. UCEM makes conditional offers only to its prospective students.
- 10166 Overall, income is likely to fall short of the £15.4M budget but costs are being managed appropriately to this likelihood. UCEM has heard from the Office for Students that the appeal submitted on the shortfall in the grant funding amount awarded earlier this year for the 2019-20 academic year has been upheld. The new sum awarded will be announced on 17th October 2019.
- 10167 The next employee engagement survey will open in November and whilst the last result from June was positive overall, there remain some pockets of dissatisfaction that the SLT will be addressing in the coming months.
- 10168 The Board **NOTED** the comprehensive update provided by the Principal and thanked AW for the new format of the report. The Board asked the Principal to add columns to the report on the targets and results from last year for comparison when next presented to the Board.

ACTION Add a column with targets and results from last year to the Principal's Update Report to allow comparison. [AW]

10169 3.2) THEMATIC UPDATE: EDUCATION – TRANSFORM PROJECT

- 10170 The Principal presented a Transform Project update (see papers 3.2 and 3.2a). In addition, Trustees were provided with printed copies of PowerPoint slides – now available on the Trustee Portal. Following identification of potential issues in the project (linear programme delivery structure which meant a lack of flexibility for those wishing to go fast or slow) and increasing external risk factors (political and economic uncertainty), a decision was made over the summer to scale back the extent of its ambition and de-risk the institution.
- 10171 As a result, the structure will not be moved to a 9-week delivery model and delivery will remain within the current CAO structure with further enhancements. Rescoping

the project in light of the decision is well underway with the key complication being the need to revalidate all programmes under the existing structure, which had been due to expire in summer 2020. This is planned to be completed by February 2020 but involves significant workload in the Academic Quality Unit.

- 10172 The revised project scope will continue with many of the benefits the full Transform project envisaged but will phase them over more years. Immediate benefits that remain in scope for September 2020 include removal of exams from all modules, re-sitting and re-submitting available on all modules (as opposed to re-takes only), opt-out re-registration, in-year processes and systems enhancements. The removal of exams will yield £250k savings a year in operations.
- 10173 The budget for the rescoped project was presented in paper 3.2a and showed that by the end of year 2 of the project, the spend will be over £1M less than originally planned. In October 2020, the remaining aims of the original project will be reconsidered.
- 10174 To date there have been less than ten student enquiries on the project changes that have been communicated to UCEM. Staff are also generally positive (except where they may be directly impacted by a new programme no longer being planned for launch).
- 10175 The revalidation programme is complicated and requires PSRB mapping and accreditations but much of the enhancements made through Transform project work to date can be utilised within this. RICS have been supportive to date but securing accreditation remains the core risk overall. Key academic staff are working on this exclusively.
- 10176 The Board noted that the primary change in the rescoped project is the removal of the Foundation Year. Most students affected by this have opted to study the BSc Access Module.
- 10177 The Board **COMMENDED** the bravery of the decision to re-evaluate the project and were content that none of the key principles of the project have been lost and that the decision reflects a pragmatic desire to be more realistic and effective with what can be delivered for September 2020

10178 **3.3) THEMATIC UPDATE: EDUCATION – OFSTED**

10179 The Board was provided with an update on the progress UCEM is making towards securing an Ofsted Good inspection outcome in an inspection anticipated this autumn (see paper 3.3).

10180 REDACTED

10181 REDACTED

10182 Trustees commented that they are pleased with the leadership and management of the institution from the perspective of Ofsted-ready preparations. UCEM can clearly demonstrate the journey it is taking, having had one monitoring visit and acted on those outcomes, followed by Mocksted which resulted in further improvements being made.

10183 The Board **NOTED** the progress update and the report provided at paper 3.3.

10184 3.4) THEMATIC UPDATE: STUDENT SATISFACTION – NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY (NSS)

10185 JEF provided an update on the plans UCEM is implementing to improve its NSS rankings following a disappointing result of 73% overall satisfaction in the 2019 survey, published in July, against a target of 82% (see papers 3.4 and 3.4a, and additional data on the Trustee portal).

10186 Despite the fact only a small proportion of UCEM students complete the NSS survey, the Executive was extremely disappointed in the drop in overall satisfaction in the last year. An Action Plan driven by SLT has since been created and implementation is being monitored monthly. It features actions aimed at impacting the next survey in January and actions that are longer term aims. The plan is driving institution-wide focus on the importance of the metric. As part of this, ensuring the positive changes are effectively communicated back to students is pivotal.

10187 The Board noted that the Executive had discussed whether to make targeted improvements for the NSS cohorts or whether to ensure improvements impact all students. It chose to positively impact the student experience for all students and focus on this from the very beginning of their journey with UCEM, thereby yielding ongoing positive results in the longer term.

10189 The Board noted the reputational risk to UCEM and welcomed the seriousness with which the Executive is responding to the required improvements, such that a positive annual survey result is reliable, repeatable and sustainable.

10190 REDACTED

10191 The Board **NOTED** the NSS update provided and commended the targeted approach being taken to address the disappointing survey results published in July 2019 and to deliver sustained enhancements in student satisfaction.

4) EXTERNAL AND REGULATORY UPDATE

10192 4.1) ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN

10193 JEF provided an update to the Board on the UCEM Access and Participation Plan, which was approved in draft by the Board on 27th June 2019 (see paper 4.1). JEF informed the Board that following submission of the Board-approved plan, the Office for Students requested further review and refinement of the targets as they were not considered sufficiently ambitious. UCEM Academic Trustees supported the Executive in refining the submission and on 21st August the OfS confirmed they had no further queries.

10194 On 20th September, the OfS confirmed to UCEM in writing that the plan had been accepted and approved to 2024 with no enhanced monitoring requirements. It will be subject to an annual monitoring process only. JEF reported that some 31 out of

41 submissions to date will have enhanced monitoring implemented so UCEM is in an enviable position.

- 10195 JEF reminded the Board that it is required to have knowledge of the plan and its associated targets, which is available in full on the Trustee Portal at paper 4.1a. It is also required to regularly monitor the deliverables within the plan, and this will take place through the relevant Board sub-committees as well as an annual Board update and review ahead of OfS monitoring submissions.
- 10196 The Board was also reminded that the targets are only associated with a minority of UCEM students that fall within the remit of OfS monitoring.
- 10197 The Board **NOTED** the increasing regulatory burden of the OfS on UCEM operations and was supportive of potential strategic investment in this area for additional resources to manage the workload.
- 10198 The Board thanked JEF for her work to ensure the plan was drafted, submitted and approved by the OfS.

10199 **4.2) USS PENSION LIABILITIES**

10200 REDACTED

10201 REDACTED

10202 REDACTED

10203 **4.3) NON-LEVY APPRENTICESHIP FUNDING**

- 10204 AW presented an update to the Board on an issue that has arisen relative to Apprenticeship Levy funding (see paper 4.3). AW explained that the amount of funding available to UCEM through non-levy payers is being restricted by the ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) and that this may significantly restrict UCEM growth in apprenticeship student numbers as the funding cap is reached. Without additional funding from the ESFA, UCEM will be unable to accept any further new starts from non-levy paying (generally small firms) employers for the rest of 2019/20.
- 10205 UCEM is exploring options to transfer Levy funds to non-levy paying employers with existing clients but it is not yet clear whether this is likely to be successful due to the commitments the Levy-payers need to make over a long period of time. UCEM is also pursuing other mitigating activities and will inevitably have to re-focus recruitment activities on levy-payers.
- 10206 The Board **NOTED** the update on this issue and expressed dismay at the continuing mismanagement of levy funding in central government. The Board concurred that the funding system for apprenticeships is broken for employers and providers but that the ability for anyone in the sector to effect any political change in the situation is minimal given government's other priorities.
- 10207 The Board also **NOTED** that UCEM had reapplied to remain on the Register of Approved Training Providers in late August.

5) PROPERTY MATTERS

10208 **5.1) SHINFIELD GRANGE UPDATE**

10209 AW provided an update on progress since the last meeting regarding the Shinfield Grange project (see paper 5.1 and paper 5.1a on the Trustee Portal). The Board noted that some Trustees had visited the site in August and had concluded that the site is perfect for realising the wider ambitions of UCEM.

10210 REDACTED

10211 REDACTED

10212 REDACTED

10213 REDACTED

10214 The Board also **NOTED** the members of the new Shinfield Grange Working Group (Andrew Hynard, Amanda Clack and Alastair Martin, with Michael Gibbens and Chris Carter Keall) and that regular telecons of this working group will be scheduled.

10215 **5.2) BIRMINGHAM / READING TEACHING FACILITY / OFFICE BUSINESS CASE**

10216 REDACTED

10217 REDACTED

10218 REDACTED

10219 REDACTED

10220 REDACTED

10221 REDACTED

6) CX STRATEGY AND FUTURE PLANNING

10222 **6.1) OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS FOR YEARS 1 AND 2**

10223 The Board approved the new CX Strategy in December 2018 and it was formally launched on 1st August 2019. Since then the political uncertainty in the UK has significantly increased, the OFS regulatory framework is increasingly burdensome and internal changes at UCEM have taken place, such as the re-focussing of the Transform project. In this context, the Board discussed the opportunities and risks for years 1 and 2 of the CX strategy. The short, medium and long-term goals of the original strategy were circulated in paper 6.1 and the Board was asked to consider whether the direction of travel needs to be altered or what activities UCEM should cease if it is genuinely being too ambitious.

- 10224 The Board agreed that UCEM resilience is important given the current external landscape and was pleased that the in-year cash requirement had been reduced by circa £1.5M through the decisions to scale back Transform and invest in the Reading site rather than Birmingham. The need to ensure costs do not continue to keep rising in line with income still needs to materialise to provide full Board comfort relative to the extent of ambition.
- 10225 Overall the Board **AGREED** that UCEM is focused on the right areas in its immediate plans – student success and student satisfaction, with overall quality and consistency at the heart of this. It was acknowledged an entirely revamped teaching model may be required to deliver this. The institution will require further investment in regulatory compliance and to ensure Executive time can be spent delivering the strategic ambitions. The Board should be open to meaningful and collaborative partnership opportunities to reduce risk and operational costs. Equally it should be open to considering new funding sources and partnerships. The Board also agreed that UCEM has saturated its current part-time demographic and therefore needs to grow in new markets with new programmes or a full time offer. Overall, some near-term prudence was recommended vs maintenance of ambition for excellence and increased scale.

7) MATTERS FOR REPORTING

10226 **7.1) KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR LEVEL 3 SURVEYING TECHNICIAN DIPLOMA PROGRAMME**

- 10227 The Board was presented with the updated KPIs for the L3 Surveying Technician Diploma programme (paper 7.1) for review to ensure Board confidence and oversight that UCEM is working to reduce risk and meet its compliance obligations in this area. Within this it was noted that UCEM is closing the gap on retention rate targets.
- 10228 The Board reviewed and **NOTED** the quarterly data report on Ofsted Key Performance Indicators.

10229 **7.1) LEVEL 3 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

- 10230 The Board was presented with the Level 3 Surveying technician Diploma programme Quality Improvement Plan overview (paper 7.2 – with the full plan available on the Trustee Portal at paper 7.2a) for review to ensure Board confidence and oversight that UCEM is working to reduce risk and meet its compliance obligations in this area. Within this it was noted that the plan now reflects the lessons learnt through Mocksted.
- 10231 The Board reviewed and **NOTED** the Level 3 Quality Improvement Plan.

10232 **7.3) REMUNERATION COMMITTEE UPDATE**

- 10233 The Board received the annual report of the Remuneration Committee (paper 7.3).
- 10234 The Board **NOTED** the Remuneration Committee Annual Report (paper 7.3) following its annual meeting held on 27th June 2019.

10235 **7.4) AUDIT COMMITTEE UPDATE**

10236 The Board **NOTED** the outcomes and decisions of the Audit Committee, held on 11th July 2019, as presented in the Executive Summary of the meeting at paper 7.4. The Board also **NOTED** that the full minutes of the meeting are available for reference on the Trustee Portal.

8) OTHER MATTERS FOR NOTING ONLY**10237** **8.1) REPORT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY**

10238 The Board **NOTED** the report on Health and Safety as presented at paper 8.1.

10239 **8.2) UCEM COMPLAINTS, APPEALS AND WHISTLEBLOWING REPORTS**

10240 The Board **NOTED** the data on complaints made to UCEM since the last meeting as detailed in paper 8.2 and that no issues had been raised to OIA level.

10241 The Board **NOTED** the data on appeals cases since the last meeting as detailed in paper 8.2. Some 15% of appeals are upheld and there is a lack of visibility on this to students. UCEM should promote that it is fair when assessing appeal hearings.

10242 The Board **NOTED** that there had been no whistleblowing cases.

10243 **8.3) DATA PROTECTION UPDATE REPORT**

10244 The Board **NOTED** the four information security breaches and three subject access requests across June, July and August 2019. The Board was reminded that Subject Access Requests and Freedom of Information requests are increasing and will need to be resourced appropriately.

10245 **8.4) UPDATES FROM ACADEMIC BOARD**

10246 An Executive Summary of the Academic Board meeting held on 12th September 2019 was presented at paper 8.4 and the Board noted that the full minutes of the meeting were included for reference at paper 8.4a on the Trustee Portal.

10247 **8.5) UPDATED STAFF ORGANISATIONAL CHART**

10248 An updated UCEM all staff organisational chart by department and team was provided at paper 8.5 and **NOTED** by the Board. It was noted that UCEM will be preparing staff diversity statistics for the Board in the future.

10249 **8.6) ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

10250 The advert for new independent Trustees went live on 26th September and is open until 14th October. The Board was asked to promote this through their networks and contacts. The Board noted that UCEM is looking to recruit a minimum of two trustees. JEF will circulate the link to the advert to all Trustees ASAP.

ACTION **Circulate the link to the Trustee recruitment advert to all Trustees.**
[JEF]

- 10251 LH reminded Trustees that returning the register of interests forms that were circulated in mid-September by the deadline of 7th October is essential ahead of the audit process commencing.

- 10252 The Board offered congratulations to Phoebe Farrell on her marriage earlier in September and presented her with champagne.

- 10253 The Board noted this was the final meeting Bridget Bartlett could attend in person ahead of her retirement from the Board in December 2019. The Board thanked her for her service and presented her with a gift.

- 10254 The Chairman presented all trustees with a copy of the recently published three-part History of UCEM book and a copy of the new UCEM Vision statement booklet.

- 10255 The Chairman thanked JEF and LH for their work to redesign the Board pack and reduce the volume of paperwork. LH was also thanked for the new Trustee Portal resource.

- 10256 No further items of business were reported, and the Chair duly closed the meeting at 13.05pm, thanking Taylor Wessing for hosting.

The next Board Meeting will be held on **Friday 22nd November 2019** from **10am-2pm** at **UCEM, Horizons, Reading.**

Meetings before 22nd November 2019:
10th October – Property Award Luncheon
11th October – Finance Committee & Nominations and Governance Committee
16th October – Audit Committee (Academic Review Committee has been postponed to early 2020)

Signed By:



Name:

STEPHEN JACKSON

Date:

22 November 2019