



UPDATE MEETING TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES 14TH MAY 2021

REDACTED MINUTES FOR PUBLICATION

An update meeting to the Board was held remotely via Zoom videoconference from 09.00-09.45am on Friday 14th May 2021. It took the form of an informal briefing by the Principal and Deputy Principal / University College Secretary. No papers were presented for the meeting.

Present:	Ms J Brainch (JB)	(Honorary Treasurer)
	Ms A Clack (AC)	(Chairman)
	Mr C Costigan (CC)	
	Mrs H Edwards (HE)	(Staff Trustee)
	Dr S Jackson	(Vice Chair)
	Mr Alastair Martin (AM)	
	Prof K Miller (KM)	
	Mr C Turley (CT)	
	Mr A Wheaton (AW)	(Principal)
In attendance:	Mrs J E Fawkes (JEF)	(UCEM Secretary)
	Mrs L Hughes (LH)	(Note taker)
	Ms P Farrell (PF)	(Lead Student Representative)
Apologies for absence:	Ms W Appleby (WF)	
	Prof N Braisby (NB)	
	Miss E Campbell (EC)	(Student Trustee)
	Mr A Hynard (AH)	
	Ms A Milambo (AMi)	(Staff Trustee)
	Ms M Von Tunzelman (MvT)	

1) UPDATE BRIEFING

11236 **1.1) DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

11237 There were no conflicts of interest reported.

11238 **1.2) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

11239 There were apologies for absence from Wendy Appleby, Nick Braisby, Ella Campbell, Andrew Hynard, Amanda Milambo and Misa von Tunzelman.

2) OPERATIONAL UPDATE

11240 2.1) FINANCES – CURRENT YEAR AND BUDGETING FOR 2021-22

11241 Ashley Wheaton provided an operational financial overview. Firstly, he reported that Barings is preparing to close its Targeted Return Fund in August 2021 and that consequently UCEM will need to move its reserves before then. The Finance Team is researching options and preparing a draft reserves strategy. It is hoped a swift process of review and selection can run in June for final approval by the Board on 9th July 2021. UCEM has between £8-9M in the fund currently.

11242 The current financial year position continues to look positive with UCEM forecasting a year end income of £15.68M (revised budget was for £14.8M, original budget for £13.8M). The uplift is driven by over achievement in new student recruitment predominantly. UCEM has also made significant cost savings due to Covid-19 (facilities, furlough scheme, expenses). Overall, UCEM projects a £1M statutory surplus for the year (subject to final movements).

11243 The Board noted that income continues to shift towards apprenticeships vs non-apprenticeships. UCEM has 142 students on the PG Surveying Apprenticeship which brings in double the income compared to the non-apprenticeship route.

11244 UCEM is in the process of planning and budgeting for 2021-22 and details will be brought to Finance Committee in June 2021. Income continues to look healthy and will grow to £16.2M however there are challenges to overcome. UCEM anticipates a lower level of OfS grant funding and no capital grant funding next year. Savings as a result of Covid-19 can no longer be anticipated, alongside new/increasing costs outside of UCEM control (e.g. USS increases and new entrants to the scheme). As a result, balancing the budget is not proving easy.

11245 AW believes the profitability / surplus generating challenge for UCEM relates to student success rates. Whilst the full impact of Transform has still yet to be seen, UCEM remains unable to increase success rates on non-apprenticeship programmes, nor to get students to proceed at the ideal pace due to the pay-as-you-go model of study it operates. Ultimately, UCEM may need to consider a different commercial model.

11246 AW also advised the Board that UCEM is undertaking further analysis on the emerging problem that employers are not pursuing the End Point Assessment for their apprentices, which means UCEM is unable to claim the final apprenticeship payment. UCEM is considering how it might incentivise employers.

11247 2.2) REDACTED

11248 **REDACTED**

11249 2.3) STAFF UPDATE, RE-OPENING OF HORIZONS AND FUTURE WORKING CONSULTATION

11250 UCEM is running a staff consultation currently about future ways of working and use of Horizons. Staff have four choices: remote, hybrid light, hybrid heavy or office based. Staff have been asked for an early indication on their choices, but contractual changes will not be implemented until mid-summer. There is a strong preference for remote or hybrid light currently, meaning the office will be sparsely used and UCEM will need to consider the future of Horizons in the context of lower staff use. Line managers are considering what is operationally effective for UCEM despite individual choices. UCEM will monitor how this evolves as lockdown is eased then look at options for repurposing of the space if the office becomes under-utilised.

3) PROPERTY

11251 3.1) PROPERTY WORKING GROUP (PWG) UPDATE

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4) REGULATORY MATTERS

11257 4.1) UCEM'S APPLICATION FOR PERMANENT DEGREE AWARDING POWERS (DAPS)

11258 JEF updated the Board that the OfS had written to UCEM via email on 4th May 2021 informing the institution that OfS had nearly completed its working on the more urgent DAPS cases and will shortly be able to resume work on UCEM's DAPS variation (time-limited to indefinite DAPS) application. It was estimated that work would resume on assessment of UCEM's variation request in early June 2021, with a view to making a referral to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) by end July 2021. It is unlikely UCEM will hear anything further from OfS until they make their referral to confirm the type of assessment of UCEM that they wish the QAA to undertake.

11259 If OfS formally passes assessment to the QAA in mid-end July, the Self-Assessment Document would need to be completed by end August/early September. Work to refine and complete this is therefore underway. QAA will decide if they need to visit UCEM or will undertake a desk-based assessment in the autumn and a final decision on the application outcome is likely towards the end of the year/early 2022. Given these timeframes, UCEM is planning how it might cope with both DAPS and Ofsted inspection taking place concurrently in the autumn. UCEM hopes only a desk-based assessment will be put in place. Once permanent DAPS are secured, UCEM will be able to proceed to University Title application.

11260 The role of Trustees in the assessment process remains unknown and is only likely to be required if the QAA undertakes a formal visit to UCEM.

11261 4.2) OTHER REGULATORY MATTERS – ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN AND OFSTED

11262 There have been no queries or issues raised to date on UCEM’s revised Access & Participation Plan submission. UCEM will seek feedback in approximately two weeks if it has still not heard. Work is underway internally on how UCEM will achieve the stretching targets included within the plan, which will be brought to the Board for review in July 2021.

11263 An Ofsted inspection remains likely to be in autumn of 2021 and work continues to ensure UCEM is ready for inspection.

5) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11264 5.1) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11265 The Chair thanked Trustees for their attendance at the meeting and there being no further business, the meeting was closed at 09.44am.

Date of next meeting:

Friday 9th July 2021 from 10am-2pm

Meetings before 9th July 2021:

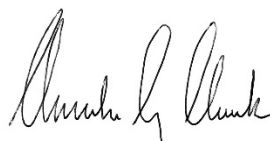
20th May – Nominations and Governance Committee

25th May – UCEM Quarterly Business Review (discretionary attendance)

17th June – Audit Committee

17th June – Finance Committee

Signed



Name

Amanda Clack

Position

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Date

9th July 2021