

## MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES 9<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2021

### REDACTED MINUTES FOR PUBLICATION

A meeting of the Board of Trustees was held remotely via Zoom Videoconference from 09.00am-13.00pm on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

Present:	Ms W Appleby (WA)	
	Ms J Brainch (JB)	(Honorary Treasurer)
	Miss E Campbell (EC)	(Student Trustee)
	Ms A Clack (AC)	(Chairman)
	Mr C Costigan (CC)	
	Mrs H Edwards (HE)	(Staff Trustee)
	Dr S Jackson	(Vice Chair)
	Mr A Martin (AM)	
	Ms A Milambo (AMi)	(Staff Trustee)
	Prof K Miller (KM)	
	Mr C Turley (CT)	
	Ms M von Tunzelman (MvT)	
	Mr A Wheaton (AW)	(Principal)
In attendance:	Mrs J E Fawkes (JEF)	(University College Secretary)
	Mr M Ahmed (MA)	(Student Trustee Designate)
	Mr G Alexander (GA)	(Student Trustee Designate)
	Mr S Bartle (SB)	(Commercial and Business Development Executive) – for items 3 & 4 only
	Mrs L Downey (LD)	(VP Digital Education & Professional Services) – for items 3 & 4 only
	Mr G Edwards (GE)	(Director of Regulatory Compliance) – for items 5.1 only
	Ms P Farrell (PF)	(Lead Student Representative)
	Mrs W Finlay (WF)	(VP Learning, Teaching & Apprenticeships) – for items 3 & 4 only
	Mrs L Hughes (LH)	(Clerk to the Board)
	Mr T Mills (TM)	(Finance Director) – for items 3 & 4 only
	Mr M Speight (MS)	(Director of Apprenticeships Compliance) – for items 8.1 & 8.2 only
	Mr A Williams (AWi)	(Director Research, Innovation & Partnerships) – for items 3 & 4 only
Apologies:	Prof N Braisby (NB)	
	Mr A Hynard (AH)	

## 1) GENERAL BOARD GOVERNANCE

### **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 Andrew Hynard and Nick Braisby.

11240      The Chair welcomed Muhammad Ahmed and Grant Alexander to the meeting as Student Trustee Designates.

### **11241**      **1.3) APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 25<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2021**

11242      The minutes and the proposed redactions of the Board of Trustees meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021 (as included at paper 1.3) were **APPROVED** as a true record and signed by the Chair. They will be published on the UCEM Governance webpage.

### **11243**      **1.4) APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE UPDATE MEETING HELD 14<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2021**

11244      The minutes and the proposed redactions of the Board of Trustees update meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (as included at paper 1.4) were **APPROVED** as a true record and signed by the Chair. They will be published on the UCEM Governance webpage.

### **11245**      **1.5) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT INCLUDED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA AND REVIEW THE ACTIONS SUMMARY**

11246      The summary showing the outcomes of actions from the meeting held 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021 (paper 1.5) was taken as read with updates on listed actions duly **NOTED** (all actions were closed or in progress).

### **11247**      **1.7) RE-APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEE CHRIS TURLEY**

11248      Chris Turley left the meeting for this item.

11249      The Board of Trustees **APPROVED** the re-appointment of Chris Turley for a second three-year term of office effective from September 2021 through to September 2024.

11250      Chris Turley re-joined the meeting and was congratulated on his re-appointment as Independent Trustee.

### **11251**      **1.7) APPOINTMENT OF STUDENT TRUSTEES**

11252      Muhammad Ahmed and Grant Alexander left the meeting for this item.

11253      The Board of Trustees **APPROVED** the appointment of Muhammed Ahmed as Student Trustee for an initial one-year term of office effective from July 2021 to July

2022. The Board **NOTED** that Muhammed is also the Lead Student Representative, taking over from Phoebe Farrell.

- 11254 The Board **APPROVED** the appointment of Grant Alexander as Student Trustee for an initial one-year term of office effective from September 2021 to September 2022.
- 11255 Muhammed Ahmed and Grant Alexander re-joined the meeting and were congratulated on their appointments as Student Trustees.

## 2) STUDENT AND STAFF FEEDBACK

### **11256**      **2.1) UCEM STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

- 11257 The Lead Student Representative and the Student Trustee, provided the Student Experience update (see paper 2.1) focussed reasons for suspend, defer and withdrawal from UCEM programmes.
- 11258 PF/EC reported that the primary reasons reported for students taking suspend, defer or withdraw action are linked to obvious major life events, such as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, financial challenges and time management issues where students are seeking to balance full time work with study. However, some students also reported their reasoning as being unaware of or unappreciative of how difficult the programme would be, how challenging it is to feel isolated from meaningful peer and tutor contact due to the online delivery mode, and perceived unfairness in marking and feedback processes. The LSR has been organising a series of Round Table session between students and tutors to explore these issues and work on issue-resolution initiatives for the benefit of all students, such as an explanation video to students of the quality assurance processes across assessments.
- 11259 It was commented that those students actively participating in their cohort WhatsApp groups found these useful for gauging their own performance and wellbeing in comparison to their peers. It was clear though that many students are unaware of the wider support UCEM does offer its students to avoid suspension, deferral or withdrawal. Where these services are known, there is sometimes a stigma associated with accessing them.
- 11260 The Student Trustees commented that UCEM is good at provision of clear and transparent protocols but could provide more upfront guidance on this and the challenges of studying full time whilst working to students at the point of registration.
- 11261 The Principal commented that UCEM is not complacent and will continue to address this student feedback by further communications to help students understand how to learn with UCEM. UCEM will also continue to work to address perceived inequalities in quality, consistency and quantity of feedback and marking. This will, however, always be challenging where there are large modules which involve significant numbers of students, tutors and markers.
- 11262 The Board **NOTED** the Student Trustees update report and feedback and thanked PF and EC for their contributions.

**11263      2.2) UCEM STAFF EXPERIENCE**

- 11264      Helen Edwards and Amanda Milambo, Staff Trustees, provided the Staff Experience update, focusing on staff ideas for increasing student retention and the return to Horizons in autumn 2021 (paper 2.2).
- 11265      HE/AM reported that staff were supportive of the renewed focus on student retention and student outcomes. Staff suggested several initiatives which could help retention, such as improvements to the registration process, access and availability of data to help target individual student support, enhancements to assessments to avoid peaks in student workload, confidence building initiatives for first year students, improvements to systems to free up staff time from manual processes, and greater individualisation of student support. It was also suggested students could be encouraged to seek employer mentors to support them through their studies. The Board was encouraged by staff enthusiasm for addressing issues and making further enhancements to the UCEM provision.
- 11266      Feedback on staff returning to Horizons in the autumn was also overwhelmingly positive. Staff were particularly pleased with the flexibilities UCEM is offering, the engagement of staff in consultation about future working patterns and the plans for collaborative workspaces within Horizons. The only real concern for staff is how UCEM will ensure it continues to communicate effectively in a fully hybrid working model. JEF reported that the UCEM leadership team is now actively encouraging staff to return to the office and feel the benefits of working there through team days as part of the transition. JEF also cautioned that UCEM is facing some challenges about balancing individual preferences for working models with what is actually optimal for UCEM.
- 11267      The Board **NOTED** the Staff Trustee update report and thanked HE/AM for their contributions.

### **3) MONITORING AND OVERSIGHT OF M7 TARGETS FOR 2019-20 AND 2020-21**

- 11268      The Board was joined by Lynne Downey, Wendy Finlay, Stephen Bartle, Aled Williams and Tim Mills for items 3 and 4.

**11269      3.1) PRINCIPAL'S OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS 2020-21**

- 11270      The UCEM progress update was provided by Ashley Wheaton (paper 3.1). The coloured RAG ratings in the report reflect the status of the objective at this final meeting of the 2020-21 financial year, providing the latest perspective on performance against the top level M7 goals for the year. AW reported that the update on the year so far continues to show predominantly green in the RAG ratings.
- 11271      The Principal reminded Trustees of the institutional context as UCEM set out on the 2020-21 year. The pandemic had commenced in March, UCEM was in the final negotiations for taking on the lease at 56 Queen's Road, UCEM was planning for the Full Time Offer, and UCEM was in the final stages of preparing to launch Transform. UCEM was also in a period of growth. In 2014 UCEM's income was £6.25M and it is

now nearly three times this. Set in context, UCEM has been in a substantial period of growth, alongside maturing as an Independent Institution, and adapting to the increased burden of regulation in Higher Education, all of which has increased the demands and expectations on staff. The Principal highlighted that as a result staff are tired yet have continued to deliver an exceptional result in an unprecedented year. The outcomes for 2020-21 are the result of agile thinking and clear decisions about what activities UCEM would and would not deliver through the pandemic. In this context there are increasing signs of staff fatigue and mental health challenges from continued working from home, and overall Trustees should be aware that the results presented have not come easily.

- 11272 AW reported that the results of the Student Satisfaction Survey were up 10 points on last year. The National Student Survey results are expected on 15<sup>th</sup> July and UCEM hopes to achieve a similar or higher level of overall student satisfaction. The anticipated statutory surplus from operations will be the strongest financial result for UCEM in around 15 years. UCEM continues to make progress on student success and retention, with the introduction of resubmissions yielding an uplift in the number of students who can progress, though more work and focus will continue on this next year. UCEM secured 4.1 overall satisfaction in the latest Employee Engagement Survey which meets the M7 target, but in percentage terms represents a small drop in overall satisfaction, but an across the board drop in the numbers of people actively dissatisfied. Wellbeing of staff continues to be a concern.
- 11273 The Principal provided data in the report on student outcomes and success rates in recent semesters which continue to show a significant number of students who leave UCEM with no award and illustrates why the focus in 2021-22 will be on further improving student outcomes.
- 11274 The Board **NOTED** the overview of performance against the M7 goals for the 2020-21 year and in particular the extremely positive outturn against the backdrop of a very challenging year in general. The Executive will ensure these results are celebrated across the staff body.

### **11275** **3.2) BUDGET FOR 2021-22**

- 11276 Ashley Wheaton presented a brief overview of the proposed budget for 2021-22, which was fully scrutinised by Finance Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and is recommended by the Committee for full Board approval (see paper 3.2). The Board **NOTED** that the deliberations of the Finance Committee, in the form of the draft meeting minutes, were available on the Trustee Portal for any Trustees to review.
- 11277 The Principal acknowledged and shared the Finance Committee's overriding concern that following a year of delivering a surplus UCEM is returning to a breakeven budgetary position with the proposals put forward for 2021-22. This is largely as a result of significant financial pressures on the cost base as listed in paper 3.2 and many of which are outside of UCEM control. In addition, UCEM has not budgeted for any Covid-related savings, which made a substantial contribution to the surplus generated in 2020-21. The totality of the increased costs on the P&L is in excess of £1M and therefore the budget presented forecasts breakeven operationally and requests £400K of continued investment in the business to cover the realisation of the Shinfield Grange capital asset, a new and senior role in Regulation, Data and

Compliance, and for new programme development feasibility studies (any decision to proceed with these programmes would require further Board investment).

- 11278 The budget does not forecast any upside in income from student recruitment or as a result of the focus on student success and is a fully loaded cost base and therefore is a realistic budget rather than an optimistic one. The Executive team hopes to beat the budget by July 2022. Trustees noted that the income forecast is conservative given the unpredictable market. Early indicators show some volatility but there are segments of UCEM's market already proving better than this time last year so the team is confident the income targets are achievable.
- 11279 Trustees noted that UCEM has limited ability to change its structural costs and its strategy must be to grow the top line to create a bigger gap between cost and income. Trustees also noted that student fees do not increase during their period of study, whereas UCEM is subject to inflationary cost increases in this same period.
- 11280 Further comments from Trustees included that the capital budget was light and that UCEM should not hold back on IT investments. Trustees also commented that whilst investment into the business to meet ambitions is necessary there is discomfort with the ongoing deficit budgetary position at UCEM and the institution should consider its risk appetite in order to reach financial sustainability and challenge itself on whether the investments proposed this year are the right ones. The Principal responded that the primary lever remains students progressing at pace and at first attempt as all other student profiles become a drag on profitability and this is why the focus will return to successful student outcomes.
- 11281 The Board **APPROVED** the proposed budget for 2021-22, noting that any discretionary spend will be deferred until after the autumn student recruitment and re-registration window.

### **11282 3.3) M7 AND INSTITUTIONAL KPIs FOR 2021-22**

- 11283 Jane Fawkes provided a brief overview of the proposed institutional themes, metrics and KPIs for the year ahead (paper 3.3). The M7 slide and Student Outcomes sub-slide at paper 3.3a illustrate the high-level overview for the year ahead.
- 11284 The theme in 2021-22 remains organisational health with a focus on financial sustainability and the transition of staff back into Horizons. The top three metrics on the slide relate to student outcomes, education and employee engagement with detailed and increased KPIs for student outcomes on the second slide. These targets are linked to all staff objectives through the PDR process.
- 11285 The Board proposed that UCEM considers a metric around speed of student study through programmes as an element of financial sustainability for the future. The Student Success plan does include the need to review student metrics and financial analysis of student profiles/programmes such as rates of payment and progression to illustrate module feasibility.
- 11286 The Board **APPROVED** the KPIs and M7 metrics proposed for the 2021-22 financial and academic year.

**11287            3.4) TRANSFER OF UCEM RESERVES TO A NEW INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT FIRM**

11288            REDACTED

11289            The Board **NOTED** the principles that guided the Finance Committee in making its recommendations, which are part of the draft UCEM Investments and UCEM Reserves policies. These policies will be finalised at the next Finance Committee meeting in autumn 2021.

11290            The Board **APPROVED** the transfer of UCEM's full investments portfolio to Sarasin & Partners Climate Active Fund before 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021.

**ACTION:            Enact the transfer of UCEM funds from Barings to Sarasin and Partners ASAP. [AW/TM]**

## **4) STRATEGIC DISCUSSION**

**11291            4.1) STRATEGY DISCUSSION**

11292            The Chair opened a discussion on the UCEM Strategy and its further evolution two years into delivery. Paper 4.1 provided the background to the discussions, which was introduced by Jane Fawkes, and proposed a realignment of targeted headline student numbers as part of *Project 1000*, a review of UCEM's market share and UCEM's current influencing activities.

11293            UCEM's current headline target within the CX Strategy is to recruit 6,000 students by 2025 but this is now considered unachievable due to the closure of the Level 3 provision at Further Education level and the lack of a Full Time Offer. UCEM's student numbers have been static for three years indicating that growth will only come from doing different activities. The Executive is seeking to engage staff in a meaningful target and has developed the concept of *Project 1000* which will see UCEM increase student numbers to 4,700 through new programme development and through focus on student outcomes.

11294            The Board queried how the reduced target would impact the financial ambitions of the institution. This will depend on the student mix, but 4,700 students should still take UCEM to in excess of £20M income annually.

11295            The Board also suggested that there are other strategies to achieve institutional growth which might include mergers or acquisitions. UCEM also needs to ensure the latent demand for its courses is realistic. The Principal responded that there are opportunities for the construction sector in the post-pandemic world and that UCEM needs to ensure it matches this demand with the right products. For example the Government is focussed on adult learning and discreet qualifications at levels 4 and 5.

11296            The Board **APPROVED** the re-alignment of the headline student number objective within the CX Strategy to 4,700 students by 2025.

- 11297 The Board **NOTED** there is ongoing work on influence, and that it will have a more detailed discussion on this activity in September 2021 which will include looking at the opportunity to apply for full university title (following securing permanent Degree Awarding Powers) and the branding for the university.
- 11298 Trustees discussed the merits of having university status which were summarised as making UCEM more attractive to students, international and domestic, the ability to attract grant funding and to diversify incomes streams thereby making UCEM less reliant on student income alone, and prestige, reputation that full University title would bring.
- 11299 Lynne Downey and Wendy Finlay presented paper 4.1a on UCEM's plans to renew institutional focus on student outcomes in a three-year plan from 2021-22 onwards. The programme commits UCEM to targets of 70% of all students achieving a full award and 15% of all students achieving an intermediate award by 2024/25 through six pillars of improvement work. The plan is currently being translated into meaningful and clearly defined actions for staff, some of which are immediate but some of which are by nature longer-term, such as systems enhancements.
- 11300 The Board queried what student feedback has informed the plan, noting that those already engaged tend to be the students that provide feedback rather than those already struggling with their studies. Trying to catch up once they have fallen behind is often cited as this curtails aspirations and UCEM is seeking to provide enhanced support to students through these circumstances. It was noted that this kind of support is more readily available to apprentices and UCEM will seek to adopt some of the pastoral support it provides to apprentices into its non-apprentice provision through the activities of the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Team.
- 11301 The Board **APPROVED** the plan to increase Student Outcomes by 2025 through the three-year focused plan in six pillars of work as presented in paper 4.1a.
- 11302 Stephen Bartle presented paper 4.1b on UCEM's plans to undertake feasibility studies on new programmes for potential development in 2021-22 as a means to financial growth and long-term sustainability.
- 11303 **REDACTED** Feasibility studies in these areas would also be welcomed. New subject areas like these would help diversify UCEM's product portfolio for the future and offer a USP as UCEM's traditional market and demand for the offer are now subject to increased competition from other HE Providers.
- 11304 The Board recognised that some of the subject areas proposed will not fit with UCEM, but that engineering and technology were certainly worth consideration with larger numbers of students in these subject areas to attract. UCEM should undertake research with employers to assess demand and seek to offer what they genuinely need for their employees for the future. Whether UCEM offers any of these new programmes in a full-time context should also still be open to consideration, despite the delay to the offer agreed last year.
- 11305 The Board **NOTED** the proposed approach to commence feasibility studies to support the development of breadth of programmes as presented in paper 4.1b and that the outcomes of these studies will be discussed by the Board in the autumn.



- 11306 The Chair thanked LD, WF, SB AWi and TM for contributing to the discussion and invited them to leave the meeting.

## 5) WIDENING PARTICIPATION

### **11307 5.1) DELIVERING THE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN TARGETS**

- 11308 Gethin Edwards joined the meeting for this item. Gethin presented a comprehensive view to the Board of UCEM's current progress against some of the targets in the APP, the targets for future years of the plan presented as student headcounts, the assumptions and calculations informing these headcounts, and the main activities proposed to achieve the targets (see paper 5.1).
- 11309 The Board welcomed the presentation of the targets in headcount form despite the associated caveats. The Board also welcomed the activities on marketing and conversion to enrolment as a key element of achieving the access targets. The Board noted that bursaries and scholarships are a key tool in meeting the targets, helping with conversion and retention on programmes. Also essential to meeting the targets is enhanced use of data on the APP student groups in order to target and guide academic and non-academic support and interventions. The Board noted that the OfS focus to date is on meeting the numerical targets set and not on how the targets are achieved.
- 11310 The newly formed Access and Participation Plan Working Group will commence meetings later in July and will seek to add detail and specific activities to each of the action plan's high-level aims.
- 11311 The Board discussed the challenge for UCEM in students needing to self-identify disabilities in order for them to count in the APP data. GE commented that UCEM will focus on helping students to self-identify in their first year of studies before the UCEM data on APP is initially declared and highlighting the benefits and support they will receive if they declared their disability. PF commented that for disabilities like dyslexia there are up front costs to the student to prove the disability before it can be declared to UCEM, and that the institution might be able to support such costs in an effort to encourage self-identification to the institution.
- 11312 MvT commented that in her capacity as Lead Trustee for EDI she has attended meetings of the Widening Participation Working Group which has also considered the activities UCEM can undertake to meet the APP targets. This group has provided insight and challenge into the plans made to date. The internal groups will track activities and impact in real time in order to adjust focus and modify interventions if they are having insufficient results.
- 11313 The Board also noted that the Bursaries Working Group is in the process of being reconfigured to more explicitly support those students in the APP categories. Overall, the Board was encouraged by the strategies proposed to realise the challenging targets. The Board also advised UCEM continues its dialogue with the OfS about whether the plan is realistic and achievable, such that it can demonstrate clear intention, commitment and effort to realise the targets even if ultimately it fails to meet them.

11314 The Board **NOTED** UCEM's performance to date in meeting the Access targets and **APPROVED** UCEM's proposed activities as the means to achieving the targets set for subsequent years of the plan.

11315 The Chair thanked GE for his contributions and invited him to leave the meeting.

**11316** **5.2) EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

11317 Jane Fawkes and Misa von Tunzelman presented paper 5.2 which provided the Board with a comprehensive overview of all EDI-related activity at UCEM and updated on the work of the Nominations and Governance Committee, and internally across UCEM, following the Advance HE workshop held for the Board in April. The Board were also provided with the trustee EDI survey data from March 2021, pre the Advance HE Workshop, for information.

11318 The Board noted the appointments of Misa von Tunzelman and Lisa Wilks as Lead Trustee for EDI and Lead Staff member for EDI respectively and are in the process of establishing an EDI Working Group. The Board also noted that the revised Board Commitment Statement is now live on the UCEM website. The proposed next steps will be to put some formal structures in place, review further data and to align all strategic documentation on EDI, including defining KPIS to monitor EDI, which will be reported to the Board.

**ACTION: Define the institutional KPIs on EDI which will be reported to each Board meeting. [JEF]**

11319 The Board welcomed the EDI Trustee Survey outcomes and confirmed its intention to repeat the survey annually as a means to tracking progress. It was also suggested that a reserve mentoring scheme might be useful to Trustees in understanding barriers for staff and students as a result of inequalities. The Board is keen to show leadership and help the built environment sector to become truly diverse and inclusive. The Board would be keen to tell their own stories to demonstrate who and what UCEM is in order to help promote the power of diversity.

11320 It was noted that widening participation features clearly in the CX Strategy but EDI does not explicitly and this should be rectified to ensure its inclusion is implicit. This should be part of the rationalisation and refinement of all the different EDI documentation over the coming months to give clarity of focus.

**ACTION: Ensure EDI is incorporated fully into the CX Strategy refresh in a holistic way. [JEF]**

11321 The Board considered how it can embed EDI into its Board meetings further, whilst recognising that Nominations & Governance Committee should retain oversight for driving forward UCEM's work on EDI. The Board agreed that it can monitor EDI performance as a regular agenda item once the KPI's are agreed. Communicating to both staff, students and externally both the high level aims and the work of the various internal groups to achieve them will be essential. The Board agreed UCEM is ahead of the curve on its approach to EDI but the built environment sector has significant challenges in diversity and inclusion, and UCEM will aspire to work with and lead the industry in this area. UCEM should also consider the language it uses

when it defines its objectives, for example BAME is now being discouraged due to negative implications.

- 11322 The Board **NOTED** the activity that has occurred on EDI over the last year and welcomed the institutional focus on this important topic.
- 11323 The Board **APPROVED** the proposed next steps for the EDI workstream for autumn 2021 and beyond, principally to review and align all documentation, to undertake further data analysis and to set KPIs in this area for the Board to monitor at future meetings.
- 11324 The Board **APPROVED** the ongoing delegation of authority to the Nominations & Governance Committee to retain institutional oversight of the workstream and to report to the Board as necessary.

## 6) PROPERTY UPDATE

### **11325 6.1) SHINFIELD GRANGE UPDATE**

- 11326 Ashley Wheaton provided a brief update on the latest developments with regards to Shinfield Grange (paper 6.1).
- 11327 **REDACTED**
- 11328 **REDACTED**
- 11329 The Board continued to agree the timing of the work being undertaken was optimal and that an injection of capital funding through the realisation of the site would give the institution significant opportunities for the future.
- 11330 The Board **NOTED** the latest developments in the Shinfield Grange project and thanked the Property Working Group for all their time and effort on the project in recent months.

## 7) EXTERNAL AND REGULATORY MATTERS

### **11331 7.1) NEW CONDITION OF REGISTRATION C4 – STUDENT PROTECTION DIRECTIONS**

- 11332 Gethin Edwards joined the meeting for this item and presented paper 7.1 to the Board outlining the new Condition of Registration from the OfS with which UCEM must comply relating to Student Protection Directions.
- 11333 GE reported that the Board need not be concerned about the imposition of this condition. If market exit were to become a significant concern for UCEM its Student Protection Plan would come into force. The Condition has been introduced in the context of the huge expansion of provision in the sector where the risk of market exit is very real in some cases.

11334 The Board **NOTED** the introduction of ongoing condition of registration C4: student protection direction and that the risk for UCEM associated with not meeting this condition is considered low.

### **11335 7.2) OFS EXPECTATION ON HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

11336 Gethin Edwards advised the Board that on 19 April 2021 the Office for Students (OfS) published a statement of expectations for preventing and addressing harassment and sexual misconduct affecting students in higher education. OfS invited providers to review and update their systems, policies and procedures in line with the statement of expectations ahead of the 2021-22 academic year (paper 7.2).

11337 GE reported that UCEM has established an internal working group that is making good progress in assessing UCEM in line with the expectations. This group will present its outcomes and its action plan to the Board in September 2021. There have been no issues of concern in the recent past, but UCEM is ensuring through this work that it is prepared to follow procedures in the future should any concerning event arise. GE was advised that the group should think specifically about the nuances of the online delivery model in the context of sexual misconduct and harassment.

11338 The Board **NOTED** the OfS' invitation for universities to review their harassment and sexual misconduct policies ahead of the 2021-22 academic year drawing on the regulator's statement of expectations. The Board also **NOTED** the work being undertaken at UCEM to adhere to this and that the Board will be informed of the outcome of this review when it next meets in September 2021. An update will also be provided to the Nominations and Governance Committee when it next meets.

11339 The Chair thanked GE for his contributions and invited him to leave the meeting.

### **11340 7.3) DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENT**

11341 Helen Edwards presented UCEM's updated Degree Outcomes Statement for the 2019-20 academic year to the Board (paper 7.3). This statement was produced for the first time in 2020 and is now reviewed annually.

11342 HE reported that the key points to note include the increasing number of students receiving a good honours degree outcome, which is now up to 71%. HE reported that this is not the result of grade inflation but a genuine improvement in student outcomes as a general sector trend and as a direct result of the Covid pandemic where regulatory changes were brought in and where students had increased time to spend on their studies. The data now also includes increasing numbers of apprentices who generally perform better than non-apprentice students. Mature students have increased in terms of performance, but this still lags behind that of younger students. Finally, it was also noted that there remains a performance gap between white and BAME students.

11343 Institutional internal focus will now shift to demonstrating progress in the numbers of UCEM students being awarded degrees even if not in the upper classifications given UCEM's drive to supporting students to succeed.

11344 The Board **APPROVED** the UCEM Degree Outcomes Statement 2019-20 as presented in paper 7.3.

## 8) MATTERS FOR REPORTING

### **11345**      **8.1) OFSTED READINESS**

- 11346      Mike Speight (MS), Director of Apprenticeships Compliance, joined the meeting for items 8.1 and 8.2.
- 11347      MS provided an update on UCEM's preparations and readiness for a full Ofsted inspection at any time of its entire apprenticeship provision (paper 8.1). MS predicted an inspection is likely in mid-September (and must be before April at the latest) and confirmed UCEM is ready. The focus is currently on ensuring staff confidence at inspection.
- 11348      MS reminded Trustees that the focus of the inspection will be on apprentice progression and the work of the Apprenticeship Outcomes Officers, the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Team and Student Guidance Team.
- 11349      MS confirmed that the UCEM draft position statement to end April 2021 has been prepared, the first to cover UCEM's entire provision and not just Level 3. The statement self-assesses UCEM as good and MS confirmed that the 'quality of education', which UCEM previously assessed as 'requires improvement' has been improved through the new ways of working and performance management metrics implemented in the Apprenticeship Outcomes Officers team regarding apprentice progress monitoring.
- 11350      The Board queried whether Trustees would be required at inspection. MS responded that UCEM will seek to actively promote Board involvement as their strong role in governance and oversight of UCEM is a strength to be highlighted.
- 11351      The Board **NOTED** that UCEM is ready for an inspection at any point but that more time will allow the changes within the delivery team (implemented since MS joined UCEM) to further embed fully and provide increased evidence ahead of inspection. The Board took great comfort in this improving position and expressed its thanks to MS and the wider UCEM team.
- 11352      The Board **NOTED** that the updated Position Statement for Q3 will be presented to the Board at its next meeting following internal approval processes commencing in July 2021.

### **11353**      **8.2) CLOSURE OF LEVEL 3 PROVISION**

- 11354      MS presented a progress update on the closing out of UCEM's Level 3 provision following the Board's decision to cease this programme in summer 2020 (paper 8.2).
- 11355      MS reported that academic delivery on the programme ceases on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021, though ongoing support sessions will remain as diplomas will not be awarded until October. There are 30 apprentices to complete at this time and MS expects all will do so, leaving no teaching issues for the future. In the previous cohort all apprentices passed with 60% of them at merit or better and a similar result is anticipated for this final cohort. The students will enter the End Point Assessment phase after they

receive their results and the team will continue to support them up to sitting the AssocRICS in Spring 2022.

11356 The Board **NOTED** the progress update on the Level 3 provision close-out plan.

11357 The Chair thanked MS for his contributions and invited him to leave the meeting.

**11358 8.3) CEASING DBS CHECKS ON UCEM STAFF**

11359 Jane Fawkes updated the Board that UCEM is planning to cease undertaking DBS checks on all its staff in line with the Level 3 provision closure and the lack of students who are under-18 in age.

11360 **REDACTED**

## **9) ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**11361 9.1) THANK YOU AND GOODBYE TO PHOEBE FARRELL AND ELLA CAMPBELL**

11362 The Chair reminded the Board that PF and EC complete their terms of office as Student Trustees at this meeting and then led expressions of thanks for their service to the institution, praising their insight and understanding of the institution.

11363 PF/EC provided some reflections on their time of office at Student Trustees, which they stated had provided a fantastic professional development experience. They also praised the Board's sensible and compassionate approach to receiving student feedback.

11364 Due to ongoing Covid-19 restrictions and the meeting being held remotely, gifts and expressions of thanks and goodbye were posted to PF/EC ahead of the meeting from the entire Board of Trustees.

**11365 9.2) ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

11366 The Board was advised that the UCEM Self-Assessment Document for the application for Permanent DAPS will be placed on the Trustee portal by the 16 July for Trustee's information and review.

**ACTION: Place Self-Assessment Document for permanent Degree Awarding Powers on the Trustee Portal for information. [LH]**

11367 There being no other items of business raised, the Chairman thanked all Trustees for their participation in the meeting.

11368 The Chair closed the meeting at 12.36pm.

---

The following matters were circulated in a separate pack for approval / noting or comment via email in advance of the meeting.

## 10) EXTERNAL AND REGULATORY UPDATE

### **11369 10.1) OFFICE FOR STUDENTS CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION COMPLIANCE REGISTER**

11370 An update on the UCEM compliance register with OfS Conditions of Registration was provided at paper 10.1 and 10.1a.

11371 The Board **NOTED** the updated position regarding UCEM compliance with OFS conditions of registration (paper 10.1a) and that all conditions are being satisfactorily monitored or appropriately mitigated through all the relevant governance structures.

### **11372 10.2) CONDITION OF REGISTRATION A1 – ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION**

11373 An update on UCEM's 2019-20 access and participation monitoring return and an update on the outcome of UCEM's application for a variation to its 2020-21 to 2024-25 access and participation plan (approved for submission to OfS by the Board through meetings and Chair's action in February/March 2021) were presented in paper 10.2.

11374 The Board **NOTED** the submission of UCEM's 2019-20 Access and Participation monitoring return in April 2021.

11375 The Board **NOTED** the OfS approval of UCEM's application for a variation to its 2020/21 to 2024/25 Access and Participation Plan.

### **11376 10.3) OFFICE FOR STUDENTS REPORTABLE EVENTS UPDATE**

11377 As per the UCEM Reportable Event Policy, the Board is required to approve the submission of any reportable events. The Board **NOTED** that in the last quarter there had been no reportable events submitted to the Office for Students.

11378 The Board **NOTED** that UCEM submitted an Error Summary Report for the HESA Staff Return 2020 submission to the OfS Data Amendments Panel but that this amendment was formally signed-off by the regulator and UCEM Accountable Officer on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and is now closed.

## 11) MATTERS FOR APPROVAL

### **11379 11.1) ANTI-BRIBERY POLICY**

11380 The Board was requested to review the Anti-Bribery Policy in advance of the meeting (papers 11.1 and 11.1a). No comments on the minor proposed changes (relative to nomenclature) were received and as a result the Board **APPROVED** the UCEM Anti-Bribery Policy V2.01 as the new V3.0 for finalisation and publication.

### **11381 11.2) BOARD CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY**

- 11382 The Board was requested to review the Board Conflicts of Interest Policy in advance of the meeting (paper 11.2 and 11.2a). No changes were proposed to the document and as a result the Board **RE-APPROVED** the UCEM Board Conflicts of Interest Policy V3.01 as the new V4 for finalisation and publication.

### **11383** **11.3) BOARD OF TRUSTEES TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 11384 The Board was requested to review the Board Terms of Reference in advance of the meeting (paper 11.3 and 1.3a). Only minor amendments to Board membership listed in the Terms of Reference were proposed and as a result the Board **RE-APPROVED** the Board Terms of Reference V11.01 as the new V12 for finalisation and publication.

## **12) OTHER MATTERS FOR NOTING ONLY**

### **11385** **12.1) UPDATES FROM SUB-COMMITTEES**

- 11386 The Board **NOTED** the outcomes and decisions of the Academic Review Committee, held on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021, as presented in the Executive Summary of the meeting at paper 12.1a. The Board **NOTED** that the key items discussed were: oversight of UCEM's Access and Participation Plan 2019-20 monitoring Report submission; review of UCEM's completion and success rate data; oversight of Ofsted readiness and Level 3 close-out; NSS 2021 activities; Enhancement Plan achievements; oversight of academic institutional risks; oversight of UCEM's accreditations with professional bodies; and, External Examiners feedback 2019-20. The Board also **NOTED** that the full minutes of the meeting are available for reference on the Trustee Portal.
- 11387 The Board **NOTED** the outcomes and decisions of the Nominations & Governance Committee, held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021, as presented in the Executive Summary of the meeting at paper 12.1b. The Board **NOTED** that the key items discussed were: approval of the Trustee appraisal process 2021; approval of Property Award Panel Terms of Reference; approval of the Board Apprentice Scheme terms; approval to commence Independent Trustee recruitment; and, substantive EDI discussions. The Board also **NOTED** that the full minutes of the meeting are available for reference on the Trustee Portal.
- 11388 The Board **NOTED** the outcomes and decisions of the Audit Committee, held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021, as presented in the Executive Summary of the meeting at paper 12.1c. The Board **NOTED** that the key items discussed were: approval of the Value for Money Statement 2019-20; agreement to evaluate the profitability and costs of individual programmes, modules and modes of study; agreement to run an audit on data protection compliance; monitoring of institutional risk; oversight of compliance with specific OfS Conditions of Registration and other compliance activities; the outcomes of the Value for Money audit; and, approval of the auditors Audit Strategy Memorandum for 2020-21. The Board also **NOTED** that the full minutes of the meeting are available for reference on the Trustee Portal.
- 11389 The Board **NOTED** the outcomes and decisions of the Finance Committee, held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021, as presented in the Executive Summary of the meeting at paper 12.1d. The Board **NOTED** that the key items discussed were: oversight of performance year to date; pre-approval of a proposed budget for 2021-22;



discussion on fees and opportunities to increase income; approval of increase in module fees from £1,175 to £1,200 for 2022-23; agreement to scope out annual registration as a driver towards financial sustainability; and, the principles of the draft Investments and Reserves policies. The Board also **NOTED** that the full minutes of the meeting are available for reference on the Trustee Portal.

11390 The Board **NOTED** the outcomes and decisions of the Finance Committee, held on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021 dedicated to the tender process for a new investment management firm and as presented/discussed in item/paper 3.4 of this meeting. The Board also **NOTED** that the full minutes of the meeting are available for reference on the Trustee Portal.

#### **11391** **12.2) CHAIRS ACTIONS SINCE THE LAST MEETING**

11392 The Board **NOTED** that the only Chair's Action since the last meeting was the submission of UCEM's revisions to the Access and Participation Plan which were shared with Trustees for approval ahead of submission in March 2021.

#### **11393** **12.3) PERMANENT DEGREE AWARDING POWERS APPLICATION UPDATE**

11394 The Board **NOTED** that UCEM's application for permanent Degree Awarding Powers is now progressing with the Office for Students and that UCEM is awaiting being advised of further details.

#### **11395** **12.4) BUILDING PEOPLE UPDATE**

11396 REDACTED

11397 REDACTED

11398 The Board **NOTED** the resolutions taken by the Building People Board and the independent status of Building People from 1<sup>st</sup> August.

#### **11399** **12.5) TO NOTE DATES FOR TRUSTEE DIARIES**

11400 The Board **NOTED** paper 12.5 which summarised the Board and Committee dates for 2021 and 2022. The calendars presented reflect all Outlook appointments issued to date. The Board **NOTED** that since the last time the calendar was presented changes to the autumn Remuneration Committee dates in both years are the only changes to have been made.

#### **11401** **12.6) REPORT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY**

11402 The Board **NOTED** the report on Health and Safety as presented at paper 12.6.

#### **11403** **12.7) UCEM COMPLAINTS, APPEALS AND WHISTLEBLOWING REPORTS**

11404 The Board **NOTED** the data on complaints made to UCEM in Quarter 3 2020-21 as detailed in paper 12.7 and that none had been raised to OIA level.

11405 The Board **NOTED** the data on appeals cases in Quarter 3 2020-21 as detailed in paper 12.7.

11406 The Board **NOTED** that there had been no whistleblowing cases.

**11407 12.8) DATA PROTECTION REPORT**

11408 The Board **NOTED** the four minor information security breaches in the February-April 2020-21 period and that there were no third-party disclosures or subject access requests in that period (paper 12.8). The Board **NOTED** that 97% of full time, permanent UCEM staff had completed the refreshed GDPR training since it was launched in May 2021.

**11409 12.9) UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC BOARD**

11410 An Executive Summary of the February and March meetings of the Academic Board was presented in paper 12.9 and **NOTED** by the Board. The most recent meeting of the Academic Board was end June 2021, the outcomes of which will be presented to the next Board of Trustees meeting in September.

**11411 12.10) UPDATED STAFF ORGANISATION CHART**

11412 An updated Senior Level UCEM staff organisational chart by department / SLT level was provided at paper 12.10 and **NOTED** by the Board.

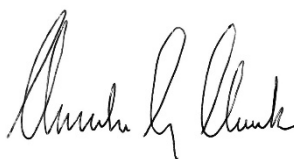
The next full Board Meeting will be held on **Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021** from **13.00-16.00pm** in person at Horizons

**Meetings before 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021:**

Graduation – 4<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Nominations & Governance Committee – 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Signed



Name

Amanda Clack

Position

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Date

9<sup>th</sup> July 2021