

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
27 SEPTEMBER 2023
REDACTED MINUTES FOR PUBLICATION**

A meeting of the Board of Trustees was held at HKA offices, 100 Victoria Embankment, London from 11.00am-17.00pm on Wednesday 27 September 2023.

Present:	Prof N Braisby (NB)	
	A Clack (AC)	(Chair)
	C Costigan (CC)	
	A Denton (AD)	(Student Trustee)
	J Hubert (JH)	(Staff Trustee)
	H Kaur (HK)	(Staff Trustee)
	Dr S Jackson (SJ)	(Vice Chair)
	Prof M Jones	
	A Martin (AM)	
	Prof K Miller (KM)	
	D O'Rourke (DOR)	
	G Ralphs (GR)	
	G Scott (GS)	(Honorary Treasurer)
	C Turley (CT)	
	M von Tunzelman (MvT)	
In attendance:	A Wheaton (AW)	(Principal)
	H Al-Katib (HAK)	(Director of Strategy and Planning) for
	item 7 only	
	S Bartle (SB)	(Executive Director Business Development & Apprenticeships)
	L Downey (LD)	(VP Student and Registry Services)
	J E Fawkes (JEF)	(Deputy Principal & University College Secretary)
	Dr W Finlay (WF)	(VP Education)
	L Hughes (LH)	(Clerk to the Board)
	LB McMillan (LBM)	Board Apprentice
	T Mills (TM)	(Executive Director Finance)
	R Powley (RP)	Board Apprentice
	A Williams (AWi)	(Executive Director Innovation & Partnerships)
	A Youell (AY)	(Executive Director Digital and Regulation)

Apologies:

1) GENERAL BOARD GOVERNANCE

12533 **1.1) DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

12534 There were no conflicts of interest reported.

12535 **1.2) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

12536 There were no apologies for absence, however it was noted Gareth Ralphs, Chris Turley and Hannah Al-Katib would not be in attendance until item 7 of the meeting agenda.

12537 **1.3) APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 6 JULY 2023**

12538 The minutes and the proposed redactions of the Board of Trustees meeting held on 6 July 2023 (as provided at paper 1.3) were **APPROVED** as a true record and signed by the Chair. They will be published on the UCEM Governance webpage.

12539 **1.4) MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS SUMMARY**

12540 The summary showing the outcomes of actions from the meeting held 6 July 2023 (paper 1.4) was taken as read with updates on listed actions duly **NOTED**. All actions were closed, noting that one EDI action, number 12312, still requires further work but will be presented to the next Nominations & Governance Committee meeting). In addition, it was noted that the Shinfield Grange action, number 12485, had been closed as matters had moved on significantly since the last meeting. Finally, the GLOBE budget, number 12447, was noted as due to be presented to the Board in November 2023.

12541 **1.5) TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT UPDATE**

12542 The Board was provided with an update on Independent Trustee recruitment by Jane Fawkes (paper 1.5). Trustees were reminded that the advertising window remains open until 2 October 2023 and that further promotion through existing networks was still possible. Several recommended candidates had been personally contacted to invite them to apply, though the success rate of this had, unfortunately, been limited to date. NuRole, who also supported UCEM in the appointment of Graeme Scott earlier this year, have now been contacted to provide potential search support through October in order to keep the recruitment schedule on track ahead of the first retirement from the Board in December.

12543 The Board **NOTED** the progress with Trustee recruitment activities and that the current advertising window would close on 2 October 2023. The Board further **NOTED** that Amanda Clack and Alastair Martin would form the Trustee Panel for stage 2 in the selection process, should appropriate candidates have applied, and that the aim remains to have a new appointee in place for the next meeting of the Board in November 2023.

2) INSTITUTIONAL UPDATE

12544 **2.1) PRINCIPAL'S OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS 2023-24**

- 12545 A UCEM progress update was provided by the Principal (paper 2.1). The coloured RAG ratings in the report reflect the status of the objective at this first meeting of the 2023-24 financial year, providing the latest perspective on performance against the top level CX9 goals for the year. It was noted that it was too early in the year to provide meaningful updates on several of the targets.
- 12546 The Principal reported that UCEM has recruited 997 new students vs a target of 910 for the autumn semester, which is an excellent result given the current market conditions. The cohort includes the highest number of apprentices UCEM has ever recruited (558 or 56%). Whilst this is a strength, this does need to be recognised as a potential risk too as the size of the self-funded and sponsored student market is decreasing, meaning UCEM is increasingly becoming an Apprenticeships business.
- 12547 Student outcomes are seeing sustained improvements with an overall 8% uplift vs the previous Spring semester and a further uplift against the autumn semester performance, by both apprentice and non-apprentice students.
- 12548 August 2023 financial results (month 1) show UCEM is slightly ahead of budget – the strong new student recruitment will bolster this further.
- 12549 The Principal reported that the key area of risk and challenge in the CX9 is End Point Assessment completion rates. UCEM is doing all it can to encourage and support employers to ensure they put their students forward for the RICS APC in a timely manner, however, the decision is largely outside of UCEM control and rates are lower than desirable once again. It is also impacted by RICS capacity to undertake the assessments. This has a significant deferred income impact on UCEM. The Principal will be meeting the CEO of RICS in October and will raise this issue with him. It was recognised that the most desirable solution would, however, be an integrated EPA to the degree apprenticeship.
- 12550 Updates on other metrics were provided in the report at paper 2.1. The significant work required by the Executive to deliver on the metrics was noted, particularly new programme development and revalidation.
- 12551 The Board was provided with a full analysis report of the National Student Survey (NSS) and Student Experience Survey (SES) results for 2023 at paper 2.1a. The Board was reminded that the NSS survey had been substantially changed for 2023 meaning comparison of results is not possible. UCEM retains the overall satisfaction question as an optional extra in the survey. Results were positive and engagement with both surveys increased this year, particularly against the OfS generated benchmark. The team will be looking to set new targets using this baseline result data. A number of actions have been adopted for the enhancement plan and the team is planning for the launch of the 2024 survey in January. Alongside this, student communications in a 'you said, we did' style are being issued.
- 12552 The Board thanked the UCEM team involved in the phenomenal and well-deserved results.
- 12553 The Board **NOTED** the overview of performance against the CX9 goals for the 2023-24 year to date which showed UCEM to be on track at this early stage in the year.

12554 **2.2) UNIVERSITY TITLE**

12555 Jane Fawkes updated the Board on UCEM's ongoing discussions and plans for University Title (paper 2.2), and proposed a revised strategy as next steps for the institution.

12556 JEF outlined the proposed new approach following the Board's lack of consensus to the suggested name change at the last meeting. Several subsequent discussions were held, including individually with a number of Trustees, and at the Nominations and Governance Committee in early September. REDACTED

12557 As an integral part of the rebranding project, UCEM is fully entitled within its Charter, to make use of Vice Chancellor and Professor titles and it would look to adopt these in the very near future to begin the brand transformation process. Very clear criteria for professorships and wider academic team titling will be developed. The Board would wish to be consulted on this in the fullness of time and it was stressed that the criteria need to be clear and consistent with the mission of the institution and reflect UCEM's strong links with industry.

12558 The Chair asked Trustees for their views on the proposals. Trustees were largely supportive, though there was some disappointment that UCEM will be unable to formally progress the application for title change in the very near future. The proposals were considered sensible, pragmatic and a positive compromise. Communications and a sense of celebration with all staff should form part of the brand transition plan.

12559 REDACTED

12560 The Board **APPROVED** the recommendation that the narrative around University title within UCEM be changed, and as part of this UCEM adopts the standard nomenclature used by Universities, which would include Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor and Pro Vice Chancellor, as well as the opportunity for 'Professorships', all of which are already permitted within the Charter.

12561 **2.3) STUDENT TRUSTEE REPORT**

12562 Adam Denton, the Student Trustee, provided the Student Trustee update (see paper 2.3) focussed on student expectations of UCEM as the centre of excellence for built environment education over the next ten years, as a contribution to the strategy discussions planned for the remainder of the meeting.

12563 AD reported that the feedback shows UCEM students consider their journey with UCEM as far more than just learning and that throughout their time with the institution they develop professional, personal and technical skills. Students were positive about the curriculum and its links to workplace activities, and this should continue to adjust alongside innovations and requirements of professionals within the sector. Students felt UCEM can still work to improve communication channels between students that allow for greater collaboration and integration, such as group assignments and more in-person opportunities. The student experience could also be enhanced through development of increased professional representation within module content and through recording of live webinars to support those unable to

attend live sessions. It will be important to maintain the student experience for those not working in relevant roles whilst they study so they are not disadvantaged in gaining appropriate experience to succeed in their studies.

- 12564 The Board **NOTED** the Student Trustee update report and feedback and thanked AD for his contribution to the meeting on behalf of the UCEM student body.

12565 2.4) STAFF TRUSTEE REPORT

- 12566 Jon Hubert, one of the Staff Trustees, provided the Staff Trustee update (see paper 2.4) focussed on staff expectations of UCEM as the centre of excellence for built environment education over the next ten years, as a contribution to the strategy discussions planned for the remainder of the meeting.

- 12567 JH reported that the report was based on an approximate 10% response rate to requests for staff feedback. Overall, there is some frustration within the academic community that some staff feel unable to fulfil their potential currently due to competing priorities. They are passionate and committed to UCEM but feel constrained by current working practices... This impacts on having sufficient time to reflect and develop courses appropriately to ensure UCEM will be a centre of excellence.

- 12568 Following some discussion, the Principal commented that the feedback is a result of a growing and happy tension and evolution of the institution from an exclusively vocational training college to a fully-fledged university that will continue to take time to emerge. Academic workload management will continue to evolve as the institution does. MJ commented that the feedback was not atypical of academic staff.

- 12569 The Board **NOTED** the Staff Trustee update report and feedback and thanked JH for their contributions to the meeting on behalf of the UCEM staff body.

3) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12570 3.1) MATTERS FOR NOTING, APPROVAL AND REPORT

- 12571 The Board was invited to make comments on the additional Board paper of matters for noting and approval (items 4, 5 and 6). No substantive comments were made so all matters were deemed approved and noted (as below).

- 12572 **REDACTED**

- 12573 The Board noted that much of the regular Board business had been curtailed for this meeting to allow dedicated time to discuss UCEM strategy and that regular Board business will return for the November meeting.

12574 3.2) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 12575 The Chair reminded Trustees one final time to support the Independent Trustee recruitment process underway by sharing the links through their channels and networks.

- 12576 The Chair congratulated and thanked Jane Fawkes on her 25 years of service to UCEM in 2023.
- 12577 The Chair noted that Alastair Martin was unable to attend the next Board meeting in November in person and that this was therefore his last in-person meeting with UCEM. He was sincerely thanked for his service to UCEM over the last 6 years.
- 12578 There being no other items of business raised, AC thanked all Trustees for their participation, closed this section of the meeting and invited all Trustees to take lunch ahead of the strategy discussions taking place during the afternoon.

4) EXTERNAL AND REGULATORY UPDATE

12579 4.1) OFFICE FOR STUDENTS CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION COMPLIANCE REGISTER

- 12580 An update on the UCEM compliance register with OfS Conditions of Registration was provided at paper 4.1 and 4.1a.
- 12581 The Board **NOTED** the updated position regarding UCEM compliance with OFS conditions of registration (paper 4.1a) and the summary of specific matters of note regarding ongoing compliance in paper 4.1.

5) MATTERS FOR APPROVAL OR REPORT

12582 5.1) SHINFIELD GRANGE UPDATE

12583 REDACTED

12584 REDACTED

12585 5.2) GLOBE UPDATE

- 12586 The Board **NOTED** the planned activities for GLOBE in FY23/24 and the key priorities in each dimension of the programme.

12587 5.3) HONORARY AND ASSOCIATE FELLOWSHIP NOMINATIONS

- 12588 The Board **APPROVED** the nominations of Clare Johnson MBE, John Gellatly and Dennis Wong for Honorary Fellowships of UCEM.
- 12589 The Board **APPROVED** the nominations of Rebecca Humphrey, Andreea Plant, James Doyle, Lo Kwok Kei, Perry Ng, William Chan and Christopher Tang for Associate Fellowships of UCEM.

ACTION: Write to all approved candidates regarding their nominations and induct them into the UCEM Honorary community. [LH]

12590 **5.4) ACADEMIC REPORTS**

12591 The Board **APPROVED** the Ofsted Self-Assessment Position Statement 3 Report 2022-23 (paper 5.4a) following Academic Board scrutiny on 11 September 2023.

12592 The Board **NOTED** the Executive Summary of the Academic Board meeting held 11 September 2023 (paper 5.4b).

6) OTHER MATTERS FOR NOTING ONLY**12593** **6.1) TRUSTEE CALENDAR**

12594 The Board **NOTED** paper 6.1 which summarised the Board and Committee dates for 2024 and the potential date changes to be made to this during October.

12596 **6.2) REPORT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY**

12597 The Board **NOTED** the quarterly report on Health and Safety.

12598 **6.3) UCEM COMPLAINTS, APPEALS AND WHISTLEBLOWING REPORT**

12599 The Board **NOTED** the data on complaints made to UCEM in Quarter 4 2022-23 as detailed in paper 6.3 and that none had been raised to OIA level.

12600 The Board **NOTED** the data on appeals cases in Quarter 4 2022-23 as detailed in paper 6.3. The Board **NOTED** that there had previously been two cases referred to the Office of Independent Adjudicator, and that both had now been found to be not justified. All policies and procedures were followed by UCEM correctly and no recommendations were made – as a result both cases are now closed.

12601 The Board **NOTED** that there had been no whistleblowing cases.

12602 **6.4) DATA PROTECTION REPORT**

12603 The Board **NOTED** the four minor data protection breaches in the June – August 2023 period, and that there were no Data Subject Access Requests or third-party disclosures (paper 6.4). The Board **NOTED** that the overall rate of breaches remains low, that there is a high level of awareness around the need for containment and reporting and that GDPR compliance had been subject to an audit in the last quarter, the results of which will be presented to the Audit Committee in November 2023.

12604 **6.5) UPDATED STAFF ORGANISATION CHART**

12605 An updated Senior Level UCEM staff organisational chart by department / SLT level was provided at paper 6.5 and **NOTED** by the Board.

7) CX STRATEGY DISCUSSIONS**12606** **7.1) CONTEXT FOR NEW STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030**

- 12607 The Principal presented to the Board the context for the strategic discussions to be held for the remainder of the meeting. Paper 7.1 and 7.1a supported this presentation and the slides were shared on the Trustee Portal following the meeting.
- 12608 The Principal confirmed that UCEM continues its evolution into a mature, independent university. The first five years of the strategic plan delivery were about consolidating the rapid growth and position of UCEM accordingly. UCEM's long-term vision to become the Centre of Excellence for Built Environment Education will remain unchanged. When this vision is realised UCEM will be offering programmes that cover all built environment professions at all levels, alongside research. The purpose of the discussions today is to determine the work to take place on this journey over the coming five years (which will still not see UCEM reach its desired end state). UCEM's core purpose will also not change and will remain focussed on accessibility, relevancy, cost effectiveness, student outcomes, professionalism and sustainability.
- 12609 The presentation then covered the external landscape (political, economic, social technological, legal and environmental), UCEM's current market share and the potential market opportunities if UCEM can build its reputation in new areas. It also covered the increasing dominance of apprenticeships income to UCEM's portfolio and that income from existing sources is likely to plateau in the coming years so consideration of new growth opportunities and operational optimisation will be essential. The presentation considered the demographics of UCEM's students and the shifting balance in customer relationships between students and employers. Investment in the business development team will be essential to secure new growth revenue. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for UCEM were also considered, with significant comments focussed on the requirement for greater depth in programme offering, the need for process improvements and the need for dedicated resource and investment to deliver the ambition. UCEM should consider opportunities like becoming an End Point Assessor Organisation as a new income source. It will also need to review organisational design, talent management and the physical estate.
- 12610 The Principal reminded the Board that the Board decided not to focus on training and international in the first phase of strategic delivery, but that these decisions warrant reconsideration now. He also reminded the Board of some core principles which will remain – that UCEM **will** only deliver programmes in English, that UCEM does **not** need to be limited to online delivery only but will be primarily online, that UCEM programmes **will** remain flexible and that UCEM will **not** validate other institution's bespoke programmes but **will** consider other collaborative models.
- 12611 Finally, the presentation covered the achievements of the last five years at headline level (noting that the Pandemic had taken place through this period) and the core decisions the Board had made during the first five years of delivery, such as the removal of Level 3 provision and further education from the strategic plan, not to proceed with a full time offer/ blended degree programmes and the introduction of the Globe programme.
- 12612 The Board discussed the presentation and agreed that agility to adapt to changing circumstances must remain fundamental to UCEM's evolution in the coming years. The Board also commented that UCEM consolidating its finances into operating surpluses in recent years is impressive in a context of declining resource within

higher education more generally. At some point, UCEM will be impacted by this too though and must be prepared to generate income/growth from other sources. It was acknowledged that the opportunities available to UCEM are bigger and better than ever; selecting the right initiatives for the institution when it is challenged by resource, ability and scale is the real issue.

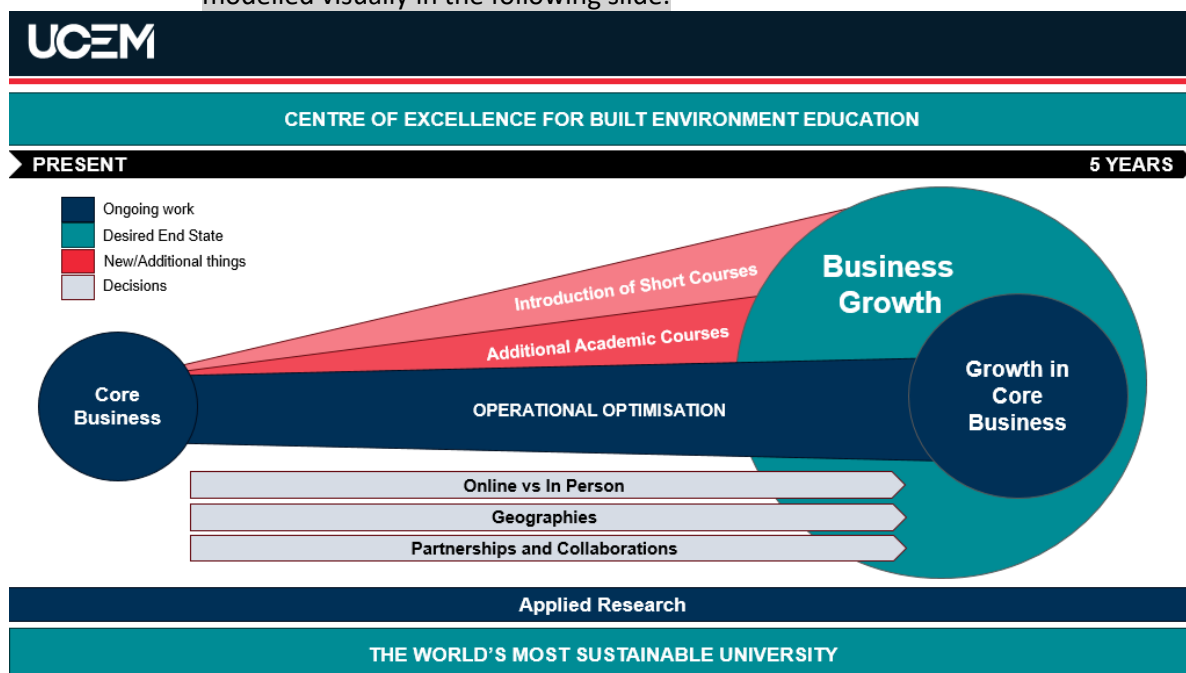
12613 The Board commented that they would like to see UCEM make more of its position as the number one provider in many of its programme offerings and build UCEM's profile in sustainability further. The Board agreed the focus needs to be on determining the best ways to move forward in the context of the identified constraints and the investment required for new growth areas. One way to grow more rapidly that may merit further consideration is opportunistic mergers and acquisitions (where UCEM is the dominant partner in any deal). UCEM will also need to focus on operational optimisation and the operating model itself to ensure its long-term viability. It would also be useful to understand how Artificial Intelligence and digital are likely to impact within the sector to know the extent to which this will need to feature in UCEM's strategic plans.

12614 The Chair thanked the Principal, and the wider team involved, for the presentation and the important context setting for the remainder of the discussions today.

12615 7.2) UCEM PERCEPTION – THE NEXT 10 YEARS: WHAT DOES UCEM WANT TO BE?

12616 Jane Fawkes presented to the Board the feedback received prior to the meeting from stakeholders on what UCEM should look like as the centre of excellence for built environment education in 10 years' time. Paper 7.2, which included all the feedback submissions to the padlet from the Executive, the Senior Leadership Team, the Board and Employers, was considered.

12617 The Principal presented the proposed strategy overview for the next five years, modelled visually in the following slide:



12618 REDACTED

12619 REDACTED

12620 REDACTED

12621 REDACTED

12622 7.3) STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030 UPDATE: HIGHER EDUCATION, INTERNATIONAL AND CPD/TRAINING

12623 The Principal introduced the three areas of proposed focus to form the core elements of the next phase of the CX Strategy delivery plan for discussion and agreement (paper 7.3 summarised these areas). The Board discussed each in turn following a short presentation by Stephen Bartle and Wendy Finlay, considering the guiding principles and objectives for each area.

12624 REDACTED

12625 REDACTED

12626 REDACTED

12627 REDACTED

12628 REDACTED

12629 REDACTED

12630 REDACTED

12631 REDACTED

12621 REDACTED

12622 REDACTED

12623 REDACTED

12624 REDACTED

12625 REDACTED

12626 7.4) WRAP-UP AND SUMMARY OF DECISIONS MADE

12627 REDACTED

ACTION: Prepare the draft strategic plan for 2025-2030 for Board approval.
[AW]

8) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12628 **8.1) ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

12629 The Chair thanked all attendees for their participation in the meeting.

12630 There were no other items of business raised.

12631 **8.2) MEETING CLOSE**

12632 The Chair closed the meeting at 16.35pm and reminded all Trustees, where possible, to join the Alumni Networking Event at Cavendish Square from 6.30-9pm.

Date of next meeting:

Thursday 30 November 2023, Horizons, Reading

Meetings before 30 November 2023:

12 October 2023 – Property Award Luncheon

18 October 2023 – Remuneration Committee

9 November – Audit Committee

9 November – Joint Audit and Finance Committee

9 November – Finance Committee

Signed:



Name: Amanda Clack

Position: Chair of the Board of Trustees

Date: 30 November 2023