

University Board Meeting

Minutes of a meeting held on 7 February 2025

Members Present

David Furniss (Chair)	Chair of the University Board
Karima Fahmy (Deputy Chair)	Independent Board Member
Dr David Crosby	Independent Board Member
Esther Chinenye Isaiah	President, Students' Union Bournemouth University
Prof Lois Farquharson	Academic Staff Board Member
Nick Frost	Independent Board Member
Nick Golding	Independent Board Member
Prof Alison Honour	Vice-Chancellor (VC)
Karl Hoods	Independent Board Member
Stuart Jones	Independent Board Member
Sara Luder	Independent Board Member
Joyce Napa	Professional Services Staff Board Member
Susie Reynell	Finance Director (FD)
Dr Carly Stewart	Senate Board Member
David Smith	Independent Board Member
Deborah Warman	Independent Board Member
Robert Williams	Independent Board Member

In attendance

Karen Parker (Director of HR), Deborah Wakely (Clerk to the Board); Kimberly Downton (Senior Regulatory Lawyer and Deputy Clerk to the Board); Jane Meredith (Senior Governance Manager); Kerry-Ann Randle (Interim Head of Student Services) - CPD presentation.

Meeting minutes

Opening CPD session – Annual Safeguarding Training.

24/081 The meeting opened with a CPD presentation from Kerry-Ann Randle (Interim Head of Student Services and Designated Safeguarding Lead). This annual training for Board members covered safeguarding and their responsibilities as governors and was a mandatory requirement. Members discussed the University Retreat and the support available for students not on Talbot Campus, the risk, if entry tariffs were reduced, of increasing the number of students who struggled academically and the planned implementation of a case management system in June. The Board expressed its thanks to the Team for the work in this area, recognising its importance to students.

1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interests

24/082 The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Jo Pretty, Simon Jackson and Maggie Frost. The Chair confirmed that the meeting was quorate. The Chair invited any new

or relevant declarations of interests from Members. No new declarations were made.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

2.1. Minutes of the University Board Meeting, 29 November 2024

24/083 The Board **approved** the minutes of the previous meeting as an accurate record.

2.2. Matters Arising and Actions Register

24/084 The Actions Register was **noted**, with all actions being completed, not yet due or picked-up under other substantive agenda items.

3. Context Setting and Update Reports

3.1. VC's Update Report

24/085 The VC introduced key points from her update report noting that the recent period had been busy with significant internal and external engagements including:

- BU hosted a Business Breakfast engagement event with over 80 external stakeholders;
- The VC gave a keynote speech for the Dorset Chamber Business Partners Dinner;
- East Cliff Meyrick Estate had plans to develop a creative digital film site and was interested in developing affordable housing options to encourage graduates to remain in the area;
- A DVC Provost appointment had been made and an announcement would be made shortly;
- A campaign had been launched to increase staff and student engagement with the national student surveys to improve the dialogue on student voice which would be important for closing the gap in student satisfaction and improving TEF results. Partnership with SUBU would be key in this. Targets had been set for participation and would be reported on regularly to UET;
- In addition to the Portfolio Review to identify proposed course suspensions, work had been underway on getting new courses to market at pace for 2025 and 2026 (including accelerated degree pilots and apprenticeships).

24/086 Some reportable events communications were noted in the paper. The VC confirmed that there was no ongoing dialogue with the OfS on any of these.

24/087 Members welcomed the increased business engagement and were interested in the proposals around affordable housing and the University's potential role in this. [Redacted]

24/088 The recent press coverage of course closures and redundancies at other universities was noted. It was recognised that a difficult period was ahead and the University was taking cognisance of the negative press coverage elsewhere and carefully preparing key messages for staff and to reassure students that their studies would be protected.

24/089 A Member noted the opportunity to share positive news stories and student voices more boldly in recruitment materials. The developing partnership with SUBU, in bringing out the student voice, was noted.

24/090 Following BU's submission of its APP Fees inflation Statement, OfS had asked BU, along with many other Universities, to select which index fees inflation would be linked to. After some research of practice across the sector, BU had selected RPI as the most appropriate choice along with the majority of universities. As this was a change to the previously submitted APP approved by the Board, the Board's approval regarding this change was requested.

24/091 Members raised some concern regarding the choice of RPI, given its volatility, but ultimately noted that it was the Government's preferred measure and that choosing CPI would have made BU an outlier. The Chair reminded Members that the decision was for 2025/26 only, at present.

24/092 The Board **noted** the report and **approved** the amendment to the fees inflation statement noting that this would be reconsidered if circumstances changed.

3.2. SUBU Update Report

24/093 The SUBU President introduced key points from her report. She highlighted the successful 'Speak Week' which had focused on themes of part time working, cost of living and student mental health support. The election process for full-time officers was due to take place in March.

24/094 Footfall on campus had dropped significantly in the two final weeks before the winter break and this pattern had continued in early January. Although seasonal, this was also believed to be linked to lectures in that students were less likely to come on campus when they did not have lectures. The engagement framework was aimed at improving this. Interventions had increased and continuation had also improved. This would be reviewed at the end of the academic year.

24/095 The report was **noted**.

3.3. Chair's Report

3.3.1. Board and Committee Memberships and Appointments

24/096 On the recommendation of Nominations Committee, the Board **approved**:

- Chris Haslam to be co-opted to the Student Experience, Quality and Standards Committee (SQS) as an independent member for an initial term of 3 years from February 2025.
- Joe Jones for appointment to the Board and Finance & Resources Committee (FRC) for an initial term of three years from March 2025.
- Paul Shearer for appointment to the Board and Finance and Resources Committee for an initial term of 3 years from February 2025.
- Toby Wright for appointment to the Board and Audit, Risk and Governance Committee (ARG) for an initial term of 3 years from March 2025.
- Abimbola (Bims) Johnson for appointment as a co-opted independent member of FRC for an initial term of three years from February 2025.

Deborah Warman withdrew from the meeting.

24/097 On the recommendation of Nominations Committee, the Board **approved** the reappointment of independent member Deborah Warman for a second term of three years from the end of her 1st term and continuing her respective Committee roles (subject to the usual refreshed due diligence checks). Her appointment to SQS Committee, commencing on 8th February 2025, was also **approved**.

Deborah Warman re-joined the meeting.

24/098 On the recommendation of Nominations Committee, the Board **approved** the reappointment of independent member *Simon Jackson* for a second term of three years from the end of his 1st term and continuing his respective Committee roles (subject to the usual refreshed due diligence checks).

Nick Frost withdrew from the meeting.

24/099 On the recommendation of Nominations Committee, the Board **approved** the appointment of

independent member Nick Frost to the role of Deputy Chair of ARG for a term concurrent with his Board and Committee membership and commencing in March 2025.

Nick Frost re-joined the meeting and Karl Hoods withdrew

24/100 On the recommendation of Nominations Committee, the Board **approved** the appointment of independent member Karl Hoods to the role of Deputy Chair of Remuneration Committee to run concurrently with his Board and Committee Membership and commencing on 8th February 2025.

Karl Hoods re-joined the meeting.

24/101 On the recommendation of Nominations Committee, the Board **approved** the re-appointment of Prof Christos Gatzidis as a Senate member of the Honorary Awards Committee for a second term of 3 years commencing from the end of his first term.

24/102 On the recommendation of Nominations Committee, the Board also **approved**:

- changes to the University Board, Senate and Committees Policy and Procedures regarding the terms of office of Independent Board Members.
- the revised role descriptions for the Chancellor and Pro Chancellors.

3.3.2. Chair's Action, Written Resolutions and Use of the University Seal

24/103 The report was **noted**. The Board **approved** the continuation of the delegation, to the Chairs of the Board and FRC along with the VC, to approve the catering contract extension. Members also **noted** the progress of the Care Quality Commission application.

4. Strategic and Financial Matters

RESERVED BUSINESS – CONFIDENTIAL

Prof Farquharson, Dr Stewart, Mrs Napa and Mrs Downton withdrew from the meeting for the next 2 items.

4.1. Reserved - Financial Recovery Plan Update

[Redacted]

4.2. Reserved Item

[Redacted]

24/124 The Board **delegated** the final sign-off of the Consultation Documents to UET.

Action: Meet with the Chair of ARG to clarify the detail of the restructure of Professional Services.

Action by: ICOO

Action: Consider the appropriate segregation of duties in the new Professional Services Structure.

Action by: ARG

Action: Provide regular progress updates to the Board on milestones, 2-3 pages every 2-3 weeks.

Action by: VC

Action: Notify the Board of anything critical such as anything expected to generate adverse press coverage.

Action by: VC

Prof Farquharson, Dr Stewart, Mrs Napa and Mrs Downton re-joined the meeting.

24/125 In order to ensure that staff Board Members had the relevant information to enable them to fulfil their duties as trustees, the Chair noted that a briefing session would be arranged to bring them up to speed on the key relevant points of the previous, reserved items.

Action: Arrange a briefing session for staff Board Members with the Chair.

Action by: Clerk

4.3. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

24/126 The KPI report was **noted**.

4.4. Proposals for Fee Delegations

24/127 The FD introduced this paper reminding Members of the previous approval of an uplift to home fees, following the Government's decision to raise the fee cap to £9,535 (for full-time students) for 2025/26 and noting that this was not guaranteed to continue beyond 2025/26. A fee of £9250 had been used for budgeting. If permitted under any fee cap/regulations, BU would raise fees by RPI-X.

24/128 The Board **approved** the home fees for all applicable students being set at the maximum level allowed by the UK Government for 2026/27 entry, up to a maximum of RPI-X. The only exception to this would be home UG students who began their programmes in or before the 2024/25 cohort, whose fees would remain fixed throughout the duration of their programme. The Board also **approved** the delegations in the table of delegations of authority.

4.5. Student Recruitment and 2025/26 Forecast Update

CONFIDENTIAL

24/129 The FD presented key points of this report, which had been presented to FRC on 24th January, and provided an update. [Redacted]

24/130 Members recognised the challenging position across the sector. The issue of a bottle neck delaying visas for international students was raised. Work was ongoing to accommodate late arrivals where possible noting the potential impact on cohort identity and that there was a cut off where a student had missed a significant period. Additional enrolment dates were being considered to reduce the waiting time for those who had missed a course start date.

24/131 The paper was **noted**.

4.6. BU2035 Update

24/132 The VC updated the Board on the activity that had been taking place, the next steps and the timetable. Staff engagement events had been held in December. Following this there had been an open call for staff to sign up to Task and Finish Groups for each BU2035 strategic pillar. There had been a good response with numbers exceeding the 30 places for all pillars.

24/133 Seven workshops were running throughout February and March. UET members would lead each Group which would discuss and agree SMART Objectives. The Groups would then discuss how these objectives would lead to KPIs, which would inform Faculty and Professional Service departments' business

plans, and cascade to inform team and personal objectives as part of the Appraisal process for the 2025/26 academic year. Emerging priorities would be shared with key stakeholders.

24/134 Once the Groups had completed their work, feedback would be collected through ULT and then through staff engagement events. After this, the new Strategy would be pulled together and presented to the May meeting of the Board for approval. A detailed campaign would be developed during June/July with the new Strategy due to be launched in September and a call opened for BU2035 transformation projects.

24/135 Members emphasised the importance of simplicity in the new Strategy. Noting that the intention was to launch BU2035 at the beginning of 2025/26 to move the focus to the future, a Member raised the necessity of starting to build in interim milestones in the 10 year Strategy. The intention was to break it into three year cycles with KPIs set accordingly. Members were keen to contribute prior to considering the final draft at the next meeting. An opportunity, such as an away day, would be considered.

24/136 The Chair noted that Board involvement was key and that the Strategy should be clearly owned by UET and the Board and right for BU. He encouraged the Executive to seize any opportunities to look to growth and improved quality.

Action: Circulate the slides following the meeting.

Action by: Clerk

Action: Provide an opportunity, such as an away day, for Board Members to contribute to the development of BU2035.

Action by: VC/Chair

5. Business Cases For Approval

5.1. SITS Business Case

24/137 The Chair noted this Business Case had been considered by FRC.

24/138 [Redacted]

24/139 The challenges in finalising costings were noted along with the opportunity to reconsider the approach in three years' time.

24/140 The Board **approved** a three year contract through to 2028 up to a maximum total value of £[Redacted]. The Board **delegated** authority for the execution of the contract and any other related documentation that may be required by:

- the VC or other member of UET nominated by the VC; and,
- where such documentation is to be executed as a deed the VC (or alternate appointed by the VC) and any one of the Director of IT and any other member of UET to execute the documentation and to witness the application of the seal on behalf of the University pursuant to paragraph 10.1 of the Instrument of Government.

Action: Invite Karl Hoods to advise on future direction of investment in the student records system.

Action by: ICOO

6. Committee Reports

6.1. Finance & Resources Committee (11 November, 15 November and 12 December 2024) (FRC

Chair)

24/141 The minutes were **noted**.

6.1.1. Management Accounts and Cashflow

24/142 The management accounts were **noted**.

6.2. Audit, Risk & Governance Committee (15 November 2024)

24/143 The minutes were **noted**.

6.3. Honorary Awards Committee (20 November 2024)

24/144 The minutes were **noted**.

6.3.1. Honorary Awards Committee Terms of Reference

24/145 The Honorary Awards Committee (HAC) Terms of Reference were **approved**.

6.3.2. Honorary Award Nominations Process and Documentation for 2026 Call for Nominations

24/146 The Board **approved** the process for the 2026 call for Honorary Awards nominations.

6.4. Student Experience, Quality & Standards Committee (14 November 2024)

24/147 The minutes were **noted**.

6.5. Senate (23 October 2024)

24/148 The minutes were **noted**.

7. Any Other Business

7.1. Turing bid 2025/26

24/149 The Chair reported that the DfE had released guidance around the Turing Scheme 2025/26 and an indicative timeline for the bid, in late January. The submission date was believed to be 14 March 2025. UET would consider the business case which was expected to be circa £[redacted] so would require Board level approval.

24/150 To meet the timelines the Board **delegated** approval of the Bid to the Chairs of the Board and FRC along with the VC.

7.2. Student Occupational Health Business Case

24/151 The Board **delegated** authority to approve the student occupational health contract - once the tender was complete - to the Chairs of the Board and FRC along with the VC. It was noted that the proposal was for a five year contract with a potential value of circa £[redacted] including VAT.

7.3. IT Security Training

24/152 The Chair thanked members for completing the ongoing cyber security training. He noted that new training modules were due to be rolled out the following week and requested that Members keep this training up to date as completion rates for all areas, including Board Members, were circulated. The

Governance team could advise if anyone was not sure what they needed to do or how to access the training materials. Although many Members would already need to do this kind of training in their other roles, he noted that BU had to be able to prove that appropriate systems and controls were in place.

7.4. Student Voice

24/153 The SUBU President asked whether Board Members would be interested in meeting students and hearing their stories. This idea was well received by Members and the Chair agreed to consider an appropriate opportunity to facilitate this.

Action: Provide an opportunity for Board Members to meet students and hear some of their stories.

Action by: Chair/VC/SUBU President/Clerk

7.5. Thank You

24/154 The Chair thanked outgoing members Stuart Jones and Nick Golding, who were both stepping down from the Board and wished them well in the future. Both would be invited to the Board Dinner in July.

24/155 There was no further business.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Friday 23rd May 2025, 9.30am, Boardroom