

**ARTS UNIVERSITY PLYMOUTH
MEETING OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Date: Tuesday 28 November 2023
Time: 10.00 am in the Barns-Graham Room, AUP, Tavistock Place

Present:	Dr Sue Brownlow	Chair
	Anna Corbett	Deputy Chair
	Prof Paul Fieldsend-Danks	Vice-Chancellor
	Margaret Campbell	Staff Member
	Ciara Eastell	Independent Member
	Beth Evans	Student Member
	Nigel Godefroy	Co-opted Member
	Tim Gundry	Staff Member
	Andrew Honey	Independent Member
	Ian Parry	Independent Member
	Dame Janet Ritterman	Independent Member

In attendance:	Nadyne Ebbens	Deputy Clerk
	Tasha Deacon	Head of Finance
	Prof Stephen Felmingham	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
	Jacqui Moore	Director of External Relations
	Dr Robin Kirby	Registrar & Deputy Vice-Chancellor
	Liz Wiltshire-Meads	Clerk to the Corporation*

*virtually via Google Meet

CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

BG/23/45 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & QUORACY

Apologies were received from Mark Greaves and Rachel Soundy, Independent Members and Rich Watson, Chief Operating Officer. There were no un-registered declarations of interest. The meeting was quorate.

BG/23/46 MINUTES

BG/23/46/1 ACTION TRACKER

It was noted that items were either on the agenda, or would form part of the next Board Planning Meeting in order to schedule a strategic discussion within a Board meeting or a Development Session.

BG/23/46/2 Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes and confidential Minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 17 October 2023 were considered to be a true and accurate record of proceedings.

RESOLVED: that the minutes be approved for signature by the Chair.

The Head of Finance joined the meeting.

BG/23/47 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

This item was deemed to be confidential and was subject to a separate confidential minute.

BG/23/48 **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM**
This item was deemed to be confidential and was subject to a separate confidential minute.

BG/23/49 **AUDIT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**
BG/23/49/1 **Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2022/23**
The Chair of the Audit Committee introduced the report, which demonstrated that the Audit Committee had completed everything delegated to it from the Board.
Received.

BG/23/49/2 **Internal Audit Annual Report 2022/23**
The Board received the Internal Audit Report for 2022/23.
Received.

BG/23/49/3 **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM**
This item was deemed to be confidential and was subject to a separate confidential minute.

The Head of Finance left the meeting.

BG/23/49 **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM**
This item was deemed to be confidential and was subject to a separate confidential minute.

BG/23/50 **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM**
This item was deemed to be confidential and was subject to a separate confidential minute.

BG/23/51 **ACADEMIC BOARD SUMMARY AND MINUTES**
The Vice-Chancellor presented the Minutes of the Academic Board meeting held on 8 November 2023 and noted the useful comments back from governors who had observed that and past meetings. Academic Board was high functioning, substantive, developmental and accountable.

The Vice-Chancellor gave a summary of points covered by the Academic Board which included: a discussion around the Middle East; risk and target setting against the strategic plan; academic standards and quality; complexity and increase in complaints; academic assurance including SEND issues within the city; the University's own neurodiversity guide which was progressive and forward thinking pedagogy; postgraduate entry requirements; a visit from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator which resulted in confirmation of the robust processes in place.

Following questions and comments from Board members and further discussion it was noted that:

- a) most complaints were dealt with and resolved quickly;
- b) the appointment of external examiners was limited due to the high number of programmes for which external examiners could only be appointed to a single programme.

Noted.

BG/23/52 **PRE-DEGREE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT (SAR) 2022/23 & QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (QIP) 2023/24**

The Registrar & Deputy Vice-Chancellor introduced the reports and noted that the SAR was voluntary but was used to form the framework for pre degree quality. The SAR was submitted in January 2024 to Ofsted. Ofsted inspectors then come ready to inspect on the basis of the information provided.

Having taken part in an Ofsted inspection the review for 2022/23 was an external assessment and the findings of the report were the basis of the SAR. There were nine inspectors over four days which provided 300 hours of external inspection which provided intensive scrutiny of the University's relatively small pre degree provision.

Following questions from Board members and further discussion it was noted that:

- a) attendance percentages should have context and aim going forward including national benchmarks if possible;
- b) assurance was provided that the QIP would deliver the outcomes in terms of Maths;
- c) This comment was deemed to be confidential and was subject to a separate confidential minute.

RESOLVED: To approve, prior to submission to Ofsted:

- 1. the closed-out Pre-Degree Self Assessment Report (SAR) 2022/23 - for approval prior to submission to Ofsted;**
- 2. the closed-out Quality Improvement Plan (QUIP) for 2022/23; and**
- 3. the proposed Quality Improvement Plan (QUIP) for 2023/24.**

BG/23/53

HE ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2022/23

The Registrar & Deputy Vice-Chancellor introduced the report and highlighted that the report had been authored by Associate Professor Stephanie Owens, Dean of Arts, Design and Media. The report demonstrated the data driven processes throughout the year and what it was like to teach or learn at the University. The National Student Survey (NSS) had 80% engagement and the report reflected on those results. The report also included the following components: the institutional learning and teaching context for Higher Education at the start of the year; student recruitment, retention, enrolment and degree completion data; assessment and feedback overview; student achievement and graduate outcomes overviews; analysis of factors which affected the student experience over the year; changes in staffing, curriculum, resources and delivery where applicable; and student feedback from internal and national surveys.

The AMR summary document was approved by the Academic Board prior to submission to the Board.

Following comments and questions from Board members it was noted that:

- a) the report had been reduced to 12 pages with headlines that included assessment and feedback and was exemplary in terms of assurance to the Board;
- b) there had been a real gain and achievement in terms of employability and outcomes;
- c) the report was outstanding and answered many questions asked by the Board in other forums;
- d) it was essential that all Board members read the detail of the report thoroughly.

Noted.

BG/23/54 SUMMARY REPORT FROM VALIDATION CYCLE

A summary report from the validation cycle was received. Following a comment from the Board it was highlighted that the degree of externality, with only one external member of the panel, was of particular note given the small size of the institution and that the internal panel members would know each other, in comparison with larger multi faculty institutions. The process should have scrutiny by expertise rather than numbers.

ACTION: Academic Board/R&DV-C to consider the comment and provide feedback.

Received.

BG/23/55 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

This item was deemed to be confidential and was subject to a separate confidential minute.

BG/23/56 ANNUAL EDI MONITORING REPORT

The Registrar & Deputy Vice-Chancellor noted that the report covered a wide range of areas including the gender pay gap and how the University performed against that. Of note was the Access and Participation Plan (APP) which was in the process of review after being in place since 2020. The APP requirement had been in place for approximately 17 years in order to widen participation to new students. The new Fair Access required a more rigorous approach to ensure those students stayed and succeeded within higher education and left with good marks and a good job i.e. real access was success, which was an important shift ethically and was already within the culture of the University.

There was a need to be well networked locally and nationally with actions already in place such as "coffee with cops", in order to avoid tokenism, with the strategic context of embedded values already in place.

Following questions from Board members and further discussion it was noted that:

- a) the "ED&I implications" box of Board reports was rarely completed;
- b) the use of the box would help the Board by ensuring EDI was more transparent;
- c) EDI was a standing item on the Nominations & Governance Committee's agenda with a number of actions already in place to improve diversity and new developments in train such as an associate governor role.

ACTION: Include Board section within the report next year for transparency.

Noted.

BG/23/57 ED&I POLICY REVIEW

The Registrar & Deputy Vice-Chancellor set out the proposed amendments to the live and active policy: amendment to introduction in light of Strategic Plan 2023-30; additional text to encourage participation (para 2); inclusion of Academic Freedom (para 8 and in other areas); additions to terminology (e.g. Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boater communities - GTRSB - under Race); and update to antisemitism definition.

Following questions from Board members and further discussion it was noted that the amendment to the antisemitism definition was inline with sector guidance and would be accepted by OfS. There had not been any live issues in terms of the Israel/Hamas conflicts but the right channels were in place if any issues arose.

RESOLVED: To approve the amendments to the ED&I Policy.

BG/23/58

F&E COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS: ANNUAL FINANCIAL RETURN COMMENTARY

The AFR Commentary had been considered by the F&E Committee on 7 November 2023 and recommended to the Board for approval.

RESOLVED: To approve the commentary to accompany the Annual Finance Return (AFR).

BG/23/59

BG/23/59/1

REMUNERATION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Annual Report to the Board of Governors 2022/23

It was noted that the Report would be published on the University website in line with the HE Senior Staff Remuneration Code.

Received.

BG/23/59/2

Terms of Reference Update

The Chair of the Remuneration Committee presented the amendments to the Terms of Reference as recommended by the Committee.

RESOLVED: to approve the amendments to the Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference.

BG/23/60

COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Committee minutes for the: Remuneration Committee held on 30 October 2023; Finance & Estates Committee held on 7 November 2023; and Audit Committee held on 14 November 2023, were received.

Received.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Director of External Relations, staff and student members left the meeting.

BG/23/61

BG/23/61/1

CONFIDENTIALLY RESTRICTED

This item was deemed to be confidentially restricted and is subject to a separate confidential minute.

BG/23/61/2

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

This item was deemed to be confidentially restricted and is subject to a separate confidential minute.

BG/23/61/3

Restricted Confidential Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The restricted confidential Minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 17 October 2023 were considered to be a true and accurate record of proceedings.

RESOLVED: that the minutes be approved for signature by the Chair.

BG/23/62/4

RESTRICTED CONFIDENTIAL COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Board received the Restricted Confidential Minutes of the Remuneration Committee held on 30 October 2023 and Finance & Estates Committee held on 7 November 2023.

Received.

The Clerk and Deputy Clerk left the meeting. The Registrar & Deputy Vice-Chancellor from that point clerked the meeting.

BG/23/63 RESTRICTED CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

This item was deemed to be confidential and was subject to a separate confidential minute.

BG/23/64 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A virtual Special Board of Governors meeting was scheduled to take place at 9.00am on Monday 18 December 2023 if required by the Bank.

A Board Development Session was scheduled to take place at 10.00am on Tuesday 30 January 2024.

The next Board of Governors’ meeting within the cycle of business was scheduled to take place at 10.00 am on Tuesday 26 March 2024.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1.15 pm

Approved Date
Chair

Distribution: Board of Governors, Registrar & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, COO, Clerk,
Deputy Clerk.