

128th Meeting of the Board of Governors
MS Teams - virtual
Thursday 5 October 2023, 10:00 AM — 12:00 PM BST

Present:	Lynn Dobbs Baron Anyangwe Rosemary Benson Urmi Dutta- Roy Tijs Broeke Muniya Barua Linda Patterson Usman Khan Valerie Leipheimer Tammika Chambers Petra Wend Munesh Mahtani Isaac Sorinola Awesome Olasope	Vice Chancellor Independent Governor Staff Governor Independent Governor Independent Governor and Chair of the Board of Governors Independent Governor Independent Governor Independent Governor Independent Governor Student Governor Independent Governor Independent Governor Independent Governor Student Governor
Also present:	Eugene McCrossan Gary Davies Nikki Le Faou Julie Hall Billy Ahmed Will Hopson-Hill	Chief Operating Officer DVC for Student Recruitment and Bu University Secretary DVC (Academic) Governance Officer Director of Digital Transformation (item 5.3 only)
Apologies:	Andrea Stark	Independent Governor

1 Welcome, Apologies, Announcements and Declarations of Interest

Apologies: Apologies had been received from Independent Governor Andrea Stark.

Welcome: The Chair welcomed Independent Governor, Munesh Mahtani and incoming Academic Governor Isaac Sorinola.

The Chair apologised for changing the meeting mode to virtual, this had been unavoidable owing to rail strikes.

1.1 Minutes of 29th June 2023 Board of Governors meeting

For Approval - Presented by Tijs Broeke

The Board of Governors approved the minutes of the 29th June 2023 meeting as a correct record.

1.2 Matters arising not covered elsewhere

For Noting - Presented by Tijs Broeke

There were no matter arising.

2 Governance Matters

For Noting

2.1 Committee Terms of Reference - annual review (ARC, PFRC & Remuneration Committee)

For Approval - Presented by Tijs Broeke

The Board of Governors considered the annual review of the People, Finance and Resources Committee, Audit and Risk Committee and Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference. The Terms of Reference were presented on the recommendation of each of the associated sub-committees.

Conclusions:

The Board of Governors approved the annual review of the People, Finance and Resources Committee, Audit and Risk Committee and Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference.

2.2 Academic Governor appointment and committee membership

For Approval - Presented by Nikki Le Faou

Isaac Sorinola remained in the meeting but did not participate in the discussion.

The Board of Governors considered a report that presented the outcome of the recent Academic Board nominations period, and presented proposed committee nominations for approval.

Conclusions:

The Board of Governors confirmed the appointment of Isaac Sorinola as the Academic Governor for an initial term of three years, ending 31 July 2026.

The Board of Governors also approved the appointment of Isaac Sorinola to the People, Finance and Resources Committee and the appointment of Rosemary Benson to the Governance Committee.

2.3 Board of Governors forward look

For Approval - Presented by Nikki Le Faou

The Board of Governors noted its forward look for the coming academic year. The forward look had been prepared to indicate where items were for approval, regulatory returns, updates or were routine items. The document had also been prepared to provide a clearer overview of the work being undertaken at committee level.

Conclusions

The Board of Governors noted the forward look.

3 Vice Chancellor's quarterly report

For Noting - Presented by Lynn Dobbs

The Board considered the Vice Chancellor's quarterly report to the Board. The key points were noted as follows:

TEF outcome and National Student Survey results: Over the summer the University had received its Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) outcome and National Student Survey (NSS) results. Both were excellent. The TEF submission was assessed as Silver.

League Table Results: The University had improved its position in the league tables this year. The University had moved up four places to 124th (out of 131) in The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide which had been published in September.

The Guardian published their 2024 league table results and the University had jumped nineteen places to 85th out of 122.

Financial services company Novuna had analyzed 121 University's in terms of business cash flow, and 9.7 million alumni profiles on LinkedIn to find out which universities produce the most CEOs. Their listing placed London Met at number 12 in the rankings.

Student Fraud Cases: The University was close to closing the concerns around student fraud raised by the Office for Students and Student Loans Company in December 2022. It appeared that the problem in the sector was very widespread, with the University being at the very edge of it. It was anticipated that the issue would be closed with the submission of the University's internal audit report after the Audit and Risk Committee's September meeting to the Office for Students.

Strike Action: The UCU had had a mandate for a week of strike action commencing Monday 25th September. Industrial action in the form of strike action took place at London Met on 25th and 26th September, UCU did not call on employees who were members to participate in strike action on 25th, 27th and 29th September. UCU were balloting their members again for both strike action and further marking and assessment boycotts, results of which were due in early November.

The UK government had proposed to introduce minimum service levels (MSLs) in universities in England in the event of strike action by their staff. This means that employers would be able to issue notices to unions to ensure that a minimum service operates during periods of strike action.

The Board noted that progress against most of the University's KPIs was currently rated as "green." KPIs would be reviewed as part of the upcoming strategic plan update.

Conclusions:

The Board of Governors noted the Vice Chancellor's quarterly report.

3.1 Strategic Plan update

For Noting - Presented by Lynn Dobbs

The Board of Governors noted the proposed timeline for the development of the Strategy Plan 2030.

3.2 Government policy

For Noting - Presented by Lynn Dobbs

The Board of Governors considered an update from the Vice Chancellor regarding Government/ opposition policy announcements and plans that may affect the University's Business model. This included:

- i) a new fee model
- ii) no home fee increase from £9250 impacts the home market
- iii) Increased pension costs
- iv) limits on international student numbers

Conclusions:

The Board of Governors noted the update and asked the Vice Chancellor to consider the one issue that every Governor should raise when meeting with Labour MPs or Shadow ministers.

4 Academic and Student Matters (including apprenticeships update)

For Noting - Presented by Julie Hall

The Board of Governors considered a report that presented an update on Academic Matters and Student Experience.

The Board of Governors was provided with an update on Start of the Year activities. Changes included an increase in events for students, dressing on the campus, better sign posting and branded welcome packs.

It was noted that Professor Marcia Wilson had joined the University on 1st September. Professor Wilson would take responsibility for the Centre for Equity and Inclusion, including the Education for Social Justice Framework, Student Services and Student administration. The Board noted that all 3 Pro Vice Chancellor posts were now filled.

The Board was advised that in support of the work to be undertaken in respect of graduate outcomes, the University had appointed a new Dean of Graduate Outcomes. The postholder would work with the Schools to focus on graduate outcomes, the careers service and other related areas. It was noted that the new Dean of Graduate Outcomes would come to the Board with updated plans in due course.

The Graduate Outcomes Survey is a national survey of recent graduates that captures their perspectives and current status. The Board anticipated that the new Dean of Graduate Outcomes would support the University to achieve the best possible results in this survey. The University's results are affected by a number of factors, including how students report and the number of students entering the public sector, which typically has lower salaries. The Board advised that the University should continue to lobby on this issue and requested details of the baseline salary used to define a graduate-level salary in the survey.

The Board requested that future iterations of the report be prepared to include information on targets for each quarter, and how each intervention would support the University to achieve them.

There were no updates to note in relation to the University's apprenticeship provision.

Conclusions:

The Board of Governors noted the update.

5 Strategic Discussions

5.1 Teaching Excellence Framework

Presentation - Presented by Julie Hall

The Board received an update from the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) regarding the University's results from the recently announced Teaching Excellence Framework. It was noted that the TEF was undertaken every four years and would result in outcomes of 'requires improvement', bronze, silver, or gold. The submission comprises the Office for Students TEF data dashboard, a university narrative account to explain the strategic approach taken to teaching excellence and a Student Union submission.

The assessment was undertaken on two broad indicators: Student Experience (National Student Survey) and Student Outcomes (Continuation, Completion and Graduate Outcomes).

The Board noted that the University's provision in relation to Student Experience was consistently outstanding and of the highest quality found in the UK Higher Education sector, consequently the University was awarded Gold for Student Experience.

In relation to Student outcomes the University was awarded a Bronze award, improvements over the four year period since the last assessment were noted. It was noted by the Board that there was a lot of work underway across the University to bring about improvements in student outcomes. A full update on the University's Student Success Strategy would be provided to the Board as part of its January away day.

The Board was delighted to note that two of the University's staff members had been awarded Teaching Fellowships as part of the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme. The Board offered its congratulations to Dr Danielle D'Hayer, Course leader for Interpreting MA and Conference Interpreting MA and Neelam Thapar, Head of Careers and Employability.

The Board requested that Alumni and Employer Engagement be added to its work plan in due course.

Conclusions:

The Board of Governors noted the Teaching Excellence Framework presentation.

5.2 NSS

Presentation - Presented by Julie Hall

The Board of Governors considered a presentation from the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) on the results of the annual National Student Survey which had been published on the 10th August 2023.

It was noted that the results of the NSS had been really positive for the University. The Board noted that:

- i) London Met ranked 15th in the country for overall positivity by Times Higher;
- ii) The University achieved an 86% response rate, compared to a sector average of 71%;
- iii) The University was ahead of the sector in every area except for Learning Resources and Mental

Wellbeing;

iv) The University outperformed the peer group average score in every area except for mental wellbeing;

v) The University outperformed the Russell group average in every area except for Learning Resources, and;

vi) The University was one of 3 London Post-92s to be in the top 15 for student satisfaction;

In terms of next steps the University would be:

i) Promoting our Mental Health Services;

ii) Improving learning resources;

iii) Developing School action plans;

iv) Working with QAHE to reflect on its performance, and;

v) Preparing for the 23/24 NSS.

Conclusions:

The Board of Governors noted the update and requested an update on the progress of implementing action plans later in the academic year.

5.3 Digital strategy update

For Noting - Presented by Eugene McCrossan and Will Hopson-Hill

The Board of Governors considered the annual report on the implementation of the University's Digital First Strategy.

The delivery of the Digital Strategy was on target to deliver the significant organisational gains as had been expected, it was noted that the strategy was progressing well and the majority of the KPIs were on track. Large and small projects were underway, and some had been completed. The projects covered a spectrum of activity right across the University's digital landscape and new projects were surfacing on a regular basis. It was confirmed that the Digital Steering Group, chaired by the Vice Chancellor, and involving all senior stakeholders was managing workflows effectively to ensure focus is on delivering the University's Strategic objectives.

In relation to the People & Finance Transformation Programme it was noted that following its official launch in May, analysis and design work had progressed well, with HR and Payroll elements being prioritised as they go live first in April 2024. The design phase completed at the end of October, following which training and testing phases will begin.

102 of the 144 teaching spaces in scope for the Classroom capture had been upgraded, with the remainder due for December/January of this academic year.

The Board noted that all students and staff had been migrated to the new Microsoft 365 platform, completing the University's shift from Google and Box to a single, integrated solution for end-user productivity and collaboration.

The Board requested that updates be provided to the People, Finance and Resources Committee in due course to enable them to monitor progress of the strategy.

Conclusions:

The Board noted the annual update report.

6 Student Governors' Report

For Noting - Presented by Awesome Olasope and Tammika Chambers

The Board noted the Student Governors' report which is a standing item. In particular the Board noted that:

i) during the summer, the new and returning sabbatical officers completed comprehensive training, equipping themselves with the tools and knowledge necessary to make a positive impact on students' experiences in the coming academic year.

ii) The SU President had played an active role in the Start of The Year activity and had been working on a Home Away from Home campaign.

iii) The SU was launching the 365 Black History events, a year-long celebration of Black culture, heritage and achievements.

Conclusions:

The Board of Governors noted the Student Governors' report.

7 Reports from sub-committees

8 Remuneration Committee (minutes)

For Noting

The Board of Governors noted the minutes of the September 2023 Remuneration Committee meeting.

8.1 Annual Remuneration Committee Report to the Board of Governors

For Noting

The Board of Governors noted the Remuneration Committee's annual report.

9 People, Finance and Resources Committee

For Reference - Presented by Urmi Dutta- Roy

The Board of Governors considered a report of the September 2023 People, Finance and Resources Committee meeting. All items for approval were presented separately.

9.1 Financial Management report

For Noting - Presented by Eugene McCrossan

The Board of Governors noted the Financial Management Report. The report contained the draft unaudited year-end financial position for the twelve months to 31 July 2023, including the actual performance compared to original phased budget and this time last year.

The University's operating performance finished strongly as costs were well managed and income generation was ahead of expectations. Cash balances at the end of July 2023 showed the University with £32m more than the original phased budget.

Conclusions:

The Board of Governors noted the Financial Management Report.

9.2 Financial Regulations

For Approval - Presented by Eugene McCrossan

The Board of Governors considered a report that presented proposed amendments to the University's Financial Regulations on the recommendation of the People, Finance and Resources Committee.

The key changes to note were:

i) Financial Regulations page 19 - this addresses the approval and authorisation process for students and staff fee wavers, and:

ii) amendments to reflect the Board's current committee structure.

Conclusions:

The Board approved the amendments to the Financial Regulations.

9.3 Modern Slavery Act: annual review of Anti-slavery policy and anti slavery and Human trafficking statement

For Approval - Presented by Eugene McCrossan

The Board of Governors approved the University's Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for 2021/22 on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee.

10 Audit and Risk Committee

For Noting - Presented by Usman Khan

The Board of Governors noted the report of the September 2023 Audit and Risk Committee meeting.

10.1 Health and Safety annual report

For Noting - Presented by Eugene McCrossan

The Board of Governors noted the Health and Safety Report as considered by the Audit and Risk

Committee at their meeting on 21st September 2023.

10.2 Risk Management

For Noting - Presented by Eugene McCrossan

The Board of Governor noted the Risk Management update report, which included an updated version of the University's Corporate Risk Register.

10.3 Cyber Security

For Noting - Presented by Eugene McCrossan

The Board noted the quarterly Cyber Security update as considered by the Audit and Risk Committee at their meeting on 21st September 2023.

11 AOB, effectiveness reflections and close

The Board requested that consideration be given to extending each meeting by 30 minutes to ensure sufficient time for discussion.

The Board noted the excellent quality of the presentations and reports. Members stressed the importance of having a balanced agenda that not only highlights the work being done but also provides room for discussions on areas where improvements can be made.

Actions from October 2023 Board of Governors meeting

Item	Action	For action by who	By when	Update
Vice Chancellor's report	The Board of Governors noted the update and asked the Vice Chancellor to consider the one issue that every Governor should raise when meeting with Labour MPs or Shadow ministers.	VC	ASAP after meeting	VC to cover as part of Board report
Academic and Student matters	The Board...requested details of the baseline salary used to define a graduate-level salary in the survey.	DVC (Academic)	ASAP after meeting	Details to be provided under matters arising
Academic and Student matters	The Board requested that future iterations of the report be prepared to include information on targets for each quarter, and how each intervention would support the University to achieve them.	DVC (Academic)	ASAP after meeting	A new version of Academic Matters reporting is being prepared for the first meeting in 2024 to include information on targets for each quarter, and how each intervention would support the University to achieve them.
Teaching Excellence Framework	The Board requested that Alumni and Employer Engagement be added to its work plan in due course.	DVC (Academic)	ASAP after meeting	TBC – Spring 2023 (presentation from Alexandra Banks, Dean of Graduate Success)
AOB	The Board requested that consideration be given to extending each meeting by 30 minutes to ensure sufficient time for discussion.	US/ Chair of the Board of Governors	ASAP after meeting	TBC