

137th Meeting of the Board of Governors
The Wash Houses, London Metropolitan University, 25 Old Castle Street, London, E1 7NT
Thursday 20 March 2025, 10:00 AM — 12:30 PM GMT

Present:	Tijs Broeke	Independent Governor and Chair of the Board of Governors
	Baron Anyangwe	Independent Governor
	Urmi Dutta- Roy	Independent Governor
	Julie Hall	Vice Chancellor
	Linda Patterson	Independent Governor
	Usman Khan	Independent Governor
	Munesh Mahtani	Independent Governor
	Isaac Sorinola	Academic Governor
	Claire Locke	Staff Governor
	Awesome Olasope	Student Governor
	Andrea Stark	Independent Governor
	Petra Wend	Independent Governor
	Fahmida Yesmin	Student Governor
Also present:	Eugene McCrossan	Chief Operating Officer
	Alexandra Banks	APVC
	Gary Davies	DVC (Student Recruitment and Business Development)
	Nikki Le Faou	University Secretary
	Billy Ahmed	Governance Officer
	Priscila Da Cruz Silva	Chief of Staff and Head of the Vice Chancellor's Office
Apologies:	Muniya Barua	Independent Governor
	Valerie Leipheimer	Independent Governor
	David Morrall	Independent Governor
	Nona McDuff	Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost

1. Welcome, Apologies, Announcements and Declarations of Interest

Apologies: Apologies had been received from Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost, Nona McDuff and Independent Governors David Morrall, Valerie Leipheimer, Munesh Mahtani and Muniya Barua.

1.1. Minutes of the January 2025 meeting of the Board of Governors

For Approval - Presented by Tijs Broeke

The minutes of the January 2025 Board of Governors meeting were approved as a correct record.

1.2. Minutes of the January 2025 Strategy Day

For Approval - Presented by Tijs Broeke

The minutes of the January 2025 Board of Governors Strategy day were approved as a correct

record.

1.3. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

For Noting - Presented by Tijs Broeke

There were no matters arising.

2. Strategic discussions - confidential

2.1. Takeaways from the January 2025 Strategy day

For Consideration - Presented by Julie Hall

The detailed minutes of this item are available to the Board of Governors only in the confidential section.

2.2. Sustainability project update - managing financial challenge

For Consideration - Presented by Julie Hall

The detailed minutes of this item are available to the Board of Governors only in the confidential section.

2.3. Recruitment update

For Noting - Presented by Gary Davies

The Board of Governors considered the March 2025 recruitment and enrolment update.

The detailed minutes of this item are available to the Board of Governors only in the confidential section.

3. Vice Chancellor's report

For Noting - Presented by Julie Hall

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

The key points were noted in discussion:

i) The Office for Students had requested an interim financial return, updated for 2024/25 from all Universities.

ii) The Education Secretary had confirmed that the key provisions of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 would be brought into force.

iii) Outgoing Nottingham Trent Vice Chancellor, Edward Peck, had been appointed as Office for

Student Chair.

iv) The Board noted the work of the University's reputation group, changes that had been made to Senior Leadership Team meetings to boost communications and the work of the Vice Chancellor in relation to engagement activity.

Conclusions

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

4. Academic matters, Student Experience (and apprenticeships and CEI)

For Noting - Presented by Alexandra Banks

The Board of Governors considered the Academic Matters and student experience report.

The Board was advised that the University was seeing good progress at pace against the student success strategy, and was seeing some early shoots of success for continuation rates.

The Board considered whether it should return to a conversation on lobbying in relation to graduate level employment, it was agreed that this would be timely in the context of the new Office for Students' Chair.

Conclusions

The Board of Governors noted the academic matters report.

5. Finances

5.1. FMR

For Noting - Presented by Eugene McCrossan

The Board of Governors considered the financial management report to 28 February 2025. At this point in the year, the University's performance remained below its budget expectations and generally aligned to the latest quarter 2 forecast.

Income was £11.4m lower than budget. This was mostly due to tuition fees being less than expected because of lower international student recruitment from semester one and franchise and partnership fees are also reporting slightly behind target.

Pay costs were £0.1m less than budget. This included phased estimates for the National Insurance increase from April 2025, the final element of the latest pay award due at the end of March 2025 and estimates of future costs of associate lecturer costs to the end of the year.

Non-pay costs were £1.8m less than budget. The key lines to note were rent and utilities - £0.3m less mainly due to transaction limiting, franchise cost £1.0m less due to lower continuing student numbers than planned at this stage offsetting lower income plus depreciation cost - £0.9m higher due to assets becoming active sooner than anticipated, and other expenditure - £0.5m lower due to timing differences and phasing of budgets.

Net assets showed a healthy position of £65.4m.

It was noted that spend on the estates strategy had been reprioritised and significantly slowed.

Conclusions

The Board of Governors noted the Financial Management Report, the January FMR had been the subject of a very detailed discussion at the People, Finance and Resources Committee.

6. Student Governors' report

For Noting - Presented by Awesome Olasope

The Board of Governors considered the Student Governors' quarterly report.

The Board of Governors noted:

- i) The Annual report of the Returning Officer
- ii) The Annual Members meeting minutes
- iii) Audited Annual Accounts
- iv) That the SU Articles of Association would be due for renewal in line with the requirements of the 1994 Education Act.
- v) The extensive work undertaken by the SU in relation to Student Voice and Community activities.
- vi) Organisational change as a new Board Chair was due to join, and the CEO would shortly start maternity leave - interim recruitment for the CEO role was underway.

Conclusions

The Board of Governors noted the Student Governors report.

6.1. Reports of sub-committees

6.2. *Audit and Risk Committee - 26th February (subject to Chair's approval)

For Noting - Presented by Usman Khan

The Board of Governors received the report of the February 2025 Audit and Risk Committee meeting.

6.2.1. *Risk Management

The Board of Governors noted the Risk Management update report and Corporate Risk Register.

6.2.2. *Health and Safety report

The Board of Governors noted the quarterly Health and Safety report.

6.2.3. *Cyber Security

The Board of Governors noted the Cyber Security update report.

6.3. *Academic Board- 15th January and 5th March

For Noting - Presented by Julie Hall and Petra Wend

The Board of Governors received the meeting report of the January and March 2025 Academic Board meetings. The Independent Governor for Academic Quality spoke positively of the efficacy of the meetings, noting that an enormous amount had been covered.

At the March meeting the Academic Board had been provided with a presentation on portfolio changes, which had been positively received.

6.3.1. *Safeguarding report

The Board of Governors noted the annual Safeguarding report.

6.3.2. *Annual report on Academic misconduct, appeals, student discipline and complaints

The Board of Governors noted the Annual report on Academic misconduct, appeals, student discipline and complaints.

6.4. *People, Finance and Resources Committee - 6th March

The Board of Governors noted the report of the March 2025 People, Finance and Resources Committee.

6.4.1. *5 Year financial forecast (as submitted)

The Board of Governors received the 5- year financial forecast as submitted to the Office for Students ahead of the January 2025 deadline.

6.5. Governance Committee - 17th March

For Noting - Presented by Munesh Mahtani

The Board of Governors received a report of the March 2025 Governance Committee meeting and:

- i) reapproved the process for Academic Board elections
- ii) Reapproved the Governor Code of Conduct
- iii) Reapproved the Governor Conflict of Interest Policy
- iv) Reapproved the Governor appointment Policy and Procedure
- v) Approved the appointment of Tracey Rob Perera as a coopted member of the Audit and Risk Committee for a further 3-year term, subject to her being willing to serve.

The Board of Governors noted the responses to the effectiveness questionnaires which had been circulated in January. In terms of next steps it was noted that the following themes would be followed up:

- i) Enhanced Strategic focus: Dedicate consistent and ample time within Board agendas for strategic planning and forward-looking discussions, with consideration to comparator analysis where relevant.
- ii) Board and Committee agenda document packs: Remind report authors of the importance of producing concise and impactful reports for Board and Committee meetings. This will optimise Governor time while ensuring they receive the necessary information for informed decision-making.
- iii) Staff and student representation: Further enhance staff and student representation by building upon the successful expansion of student representation to two student governors and their inclusion on all Board committees. Consideration should be given to how to further enhance staff and student representation in consultation with the Chair of the Board of Governors. This might include improved reporting from sub-committees or guest speakers.
- iv) Requests for in-person meetings: Requests for more in person meetings at committee level were made. Audit and Risk Committee recently agreed that one meeting would be held in person per year. Consultations with all other Committee Chairs to be held regarding the right in-person meeting frequency.
- v) Addressing skills gaps: Governance Committee to consider returning to the previously identified HR/ People skill gap as part of the next recruitment round following Governor feedback.
- vi) Governor role descriptions: While the majority of responses indicated that the time commitment was largely as expected, as some advised it was more than expected, the Governor search brief has been reviewed to ensure that the time commitment is appropriately reflected.

7. For information

7.1. *CUC, OfS Roundtable Discussion on Governance and Regulation Notes

The Board of Governors received a note of key points from the CUC, OfS round table discussion on Governance and Regulation.

7.2. *Letters from the OfS - F3 notice

For Reference

The Board of Governors received the F3 notice received from the Office for Students which requested an interim financial return for the University for the financial year ending in 2025.

7.3. *Aldgate Campus and Benwell Road expenditure (approved by circulation)

For Reference

The Board received the Aldgate Campus and Benwell road expenditure report which had been approved by circulation.

8. AOB, effectiveness and close

The Board of Governors welcomed the revised approach of having strategic conversations at the start of the meeting.

The Board of Governors requested that future meetings take place at the Holloway Campus owing to issues with the venue's acoustics.

It was noted that Academic Governor, Isaac Sorinola was attending his last meeting of the Board of Governors as he would be leaving the University for a new role at the end of April. The Board requested that their formal thanks for his contributions be put on record.

The Board of Governors meeting was followed by a joint session with the Students' Union.

