

Summary Report of Council 2

The University Council held a meeting on 30 November 2022. The meeting was preceded by a presentation from the Associate Director, Engagement, Alumni and Development and the Development Manager on philanthropy activity within the University.

This paper provides a high-level summary of the business considered by Council, which will be published on the University website. This is not a formal record of the Council meeting but presents an update on matters discussed by the University's governing body.

Eileen Milner
Chair of Council

1 Report from the Chair of Council

The Chair welcomed and introduced Matt Atkinson, new lay member of Council to the meeting. The Chair also drew attention to the complex and challenging environment in which the University, and the HE sector, continued to operate, including the uncertainty in relation to international student recruitment.

2 Vice-Chancellor's Report

The Vice-Chancellor provided an update on key matters affecting the University since the last meeting of Council. Among topics highlighted were:

- the new University Chancellor, noting that the announcement had been very positively received both locally and nationally.
- that for the first time the University had been placed among the top 501-600 universities in the world according to The Times Higher World Rankings 2023 which demonstrated the University was a leading global institution
- the recent University delegation to Dubai and Thailand.

Council also noted that the Director of People and Organisational Development would leave the University on 30 November.

3 Report from the Students' Union

Council received a report on current issues and recent activities which included an update on fresher's week; student engagement and volunteering opportunities; UBU council members; UBU campaigns and events; and Sabbatical Officer objectives for the academic year 2022/23.

Council thanked the Sabbatical Officers for their uplifting report and commended the excellent work that was being undertaken by the UBU.

4 Student Recruitment Update

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor presented the key headlines from the report, noting that this was the final update on enrolment, and position against target for the September 2022 intake. The significant growth in international postgraduate taught students was discussed, with Council noting that work was being undertaken on the University's emerging size and shape / growth plan. An update on student retention and progression was also provided.

5 KPI Report

Council received an update on the University's KPI dashboard and noted that a review of the KPIs was being undertaken with a view to identifying more frequent 'in-year' measures to assess progress against strategic objectives and enable appropriate intervention where required. Council welcomed the intended approach noting that a revised dashboard would be presented to the next meeting of Council.

6 Annual Report and Financial Statements 2021/22

Council considered and **approved** the consolidated Annual Financial Statements for the University for the year ended 31 July 2022 noting these were compliant with the Office for Students Accounts Direction. Council noted that the Financial Statements had been through an iterative process and had been subject to considerable scrutiny by the Executive Board and a Joint Meeting of the Finance and Audit Committees (which included representatives from the University's external and internal auditors, BDO and RSM) who had endorsed the approach to the Financial Statements.

Council acknowledged the significant amount of work that had been undertaken by the Chief Finance Officer and his team and the Associate Director, PR and Communications in the preparation of the Financial Statements. These would be published on the University's website in due course.

Thanks, were also expressed to the Chairs of Finance and Audit Committees for providing scrutiny and challenge on the Financial Statements during its development.

Council also **approved** the Letter of Representation the University's external auditor, BDO, and delegated signature to the Chair of Council.

7 Risk Management Annual Report 2021/22

Council noted that risk management continued to be an integral part of the University management and business activity and as such **approved** the Annual Report 2021/22 as assurance that risk management at the University remained effective. The University's risk management had also been confirmed as effective through independent audit review.

8 Modern Slavery Statement 2022/23

Council considered and **approved** the University's Modern Slavery Statement for the 2022/23 academic year which set out the steps the University had taken and would take to mitigate any risk of modern slavery and human trafficking. Council noted that the statement would be signed by the Chair of Council and would be published on the University website.

9 Prevent Update

Council considered and **approved** the University's Prevent Accountability and Data Return for submission to the Office for Students and authorised the Chair of Council to sign the statement of declaration on its behalf.



10 Academic Quality and Standards: Institutional Overview

Council considered in detail a report on the key changes to B Conditions of the Office for Students 'Regulatory Framework for Higher Education' that came into effect from 3 October 2022 and the University's framework for managing the academic quality and standards as it related to these conditions of ongoing registration.

Council noted that the University was performing well and was able to demonstrate broad compliance with the B Conditions, both against OfS numerical thresholds and 'softer' measures such as regulation, policy, and practice and **approved**:

- the strength of institutional-level performance against the measures of continuation, completion and progression outcomes used to inform OfS's regulation of condition B3.
- the robustness of the University's current approach to the management of quality and standards.
- that the risks associated with the University's regulatory obligations, as they pertained to the B Conditions of ongoing registration, were understood and appropriate action was either in progress or planned to sufficiently mitigate such risks.

11 Teaching Excellence Framework 2023

Council considered a report on the Teaching Excellence Framework 2023 noting the measures the University was taking to prepare its submission, and that participation in the TEF was now a mandatory requirement of ongoing registration with the Office for Students. Council was pleased to note Executive Board's collective commitment to being recognised for the excellence of its teaching under the TEF.

12 Report from University Secretary

Council received a report from the University Secretary on the ongoing work related to areas of governance pertinent to Council and the University. Following consideration of the report, Council **approved**:

- delegation of authority to the Chair of Council and the Treasurer and Chair of Finance Committee to approve the Office for Students Annual Financial Return, incorporating the feedback from and on the recommendation of Finance Committee, in advance of the submission deadline in December 2022. It was noted that the annual financial return which covered audited data (2020/21 and 2021/22), the current year (2022/23) and four future years (2023–2027) had been subject to detailed, constructive challenge from Finance Committee.
- the recommendations for Honorary Awards (six Honorary Doctorates and three Outstanding Contribution Awards).

Council also noted:

- the changes to Council membership and thanked Shahnaz Ali, Carl Chambers, and Karen McMahon for their commitment to and work with the University as lay Council members and members of University Committees and their wider commitment to University activity.
- that an externally facilitated Council Effectiveness Review would commence in the new year.
- that a new Chair of Audit Committee would be appointed, using an executive search consultant.

13 Report from Senate

Council received and noted the summary report and the annual report of the business of Senate which provided assurance of the robustness of the University's academic governance arrangements.

14 Report from Joint Audit and Finance Committees

Council received the summary report and noted that the Joint Meeting of the Audit and Finance Committees removed the need for duplication of discussion and further enhanced the assurance of the approval of the annual Financial Statements.

15 Report from Audit Committee including Audit Committee Annual Report 2021/22

Council received the summary report and noted the Audit Committee Annual Report which covered the work undertaken by the Committee in its fulfilment of its terms of reference and compliance with Office for Students requirements for the year to 31 July 2022.

16 Report from Remuneration Committee

Council received the summary report noting that the Annual Remuneration Report had been considered and approved by the Remuneration Committee and would be published on the University's website. Council also noted the recent package of pay and benefits had been well received by staff including the one-off bonus payment and Executive Board was commended for implementing the payment as a thank you to staff for their hard work and commitment to the University.

17 Business from Committees of Council

Council noted summary reports from Finance Committee, Governance and Nominations Committee, Honorary Awards Committee, People Committee, and University Ethics Committee a on issues discussed since the last meeting of the Council.

18 Council received the following reports, for information:

- Minutes from the Council meeting held on 21 September 2021 and action tracker.
- Register of interests.
- Report on Chair's Action.
- UBIC Steering Board Annual Report 2021/22.
- Access and Participation update.
- Draft Council 4 agenda and Council schedule of business for 2022/23.
- Council terms of reference and membership 2022/23.

19 Date of Next Meeting:

Council 3: 1 March 2023

Jacqui Holgate, Assistant Head (Governance), November 2022