



Board of Governors

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 9th July 2024, 3.30 pm

EE1012, Edward Elgar, St John's Campus

23/58 Attendance

58.1 Present

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|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Mrs S Speck | Independent Governor, Chair |
| Mr E Atkinson | Student Governor |
| Mrs L Barber | Staff Governor |
| Dr D Beech | Independent Governor |
| Mr S Devlin | Independent Governor |
| Professor D Green CBE | Vice Chancellor & Chief Executive |
| Mr M Hardy | Independent Governor |
| Dr C Jones (v) | Independent Governor |
| Mr N Khan | Independent Governor |
| Mr J Lambert | Student Governor |
| Ms R Mane | Student Governor |
| Ms C Moir | Staff Governor |
| Mrs S Morgan | Independent Governor |
| Mr A Noorani (v) | Independent Governor |
| Mr D Pocha (v) | Independent Governor |
| Mr R Richards | Independent Governor |
| Mr M Scriven | Staff Governor |
| Mr K Sorrell MBE | Independent Governor |

58.2 In Attendance

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|----------------------|---|
| Mrs J Britton | Pro Vice Chancellor Communications & External Affairs |
| Mrs A Cope | Director of Human Resources |
| Mr M Donovan | Pro Vice Chancellor Partnerships (agenda items 1-6) |
| Ms H Johnstone | University Secretary and Clerk to the Board |
| Ms A Jordan | Provost |
| Professor S Moyle | Pro Vice Chancellor Health & Science |
| Mrs J Newland | Assistant Clerk to the Board |
| Professor L Stansbie | Pro Vice Chancellor Education, Culture & Society |

58.3 Apologies

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|--------------------|---|
| Mr R Bonham | Pro Vice Chancellor Finance & Resources |
| Mr L Coiffait-Gunn | Independent Governor |
| Mr T Heywood | Independent Governor |

Mr I Smith
Ms L Taylor

Independent Governor
Independent Governor

V – attended virtually

The Chair welcomed Rob Richards, recently appointed Independent governor, and Ruttuja Mane, Elliot Atkinson and Jack Lambert, new student governors, to the Board.

23/59 Declarations of Interests

59.1 There were no declarations of interest.

23/60 Minutes

60.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 7th May 2024 [BG23/54] were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.

60.2 Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

60.2.1 Ethical Investment Policy [minute 50.4] At its last meeting, the Board agreed to revisit areas excluded from investment in the Ethical Investment Policy. No feedback had been received from Board members and it was proposed and agreed that this be a matter for the Investment Committee to revisit in the future.

23/61 Chair's Business

61.1 The Chair thanked Board members for their hard work and ongoing support in challenging times.

23/62 Vice Chancellor's Report [BG23/55]

62.1 The Board noted the Vice Chancellor's report had been written before the outcome of the general election was known and that his presentation and paper under the following agenda item focussed more on the new political landscape and the University's finances.

62.2 The Vice Chancellor presented his report to the Board and highlighted the following points:

- the University was assessed as No. 1 in the UK for Quality Education in the Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings for 2024 and first for sustained employment over 5 years in this year's Longitudinal Educational Outcome statistics.

- there has been significant progress in improving student retention and continuation.

- this year's Course Experience Survey showed a further significant improvement in students' perception of their educational experience at Worcester.

- the Rivers Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) are to move into office accommodation at the University's Jenny Lind building from late this summer. The Board noted the University was increasingly working with MATs on a variety of continuing professional development matters and that co-location would assist this development.

- the University has been named the UK's most electric vehicle friendly institution by Auto Trader.

- a new partnership with Worcester-based company The Development Manager (TDM) will progress the University's apprenticeship work.

- success in obtaining a Turing grant for 2024/25 that funds outward mobility by British students.

- the appointment to a new post of Director of Commercial Operations at the University.

- the proposal to run a Development Campaign to mark the 20th anniversary in September 2025 of the award of full University title to Worcester.

62.3 The Board received an update on home and international student numbers for 2024/25 and the Vice Chancellor was pleased to report the University recently received its full allocation of Confirmation of Acceptance to Study Numbers (CAS). *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]* The Board reflected on the 'Brand refresh' work that has gathered pace and the new approach to the University Prospectus.

62.4 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

62.5 The Board noted England Netball did not award a franchise to the University to play in next year's Netball Super League. The University is in discussion with the Birmingham Panthers, the new club who were awarded a franchise, about how to best carry forward the work of the Severn Stars' Netball Academy.

62.6 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

62.7 The University has a responsibility to promote democratic participation in elections and public life and encouraged eligible students to register to vote and to vote in the general election. It was not possible to organise hustings as usual due to too few students being on campus at this time of year, however the University made itself available for visits and the Labour Party requested a visit. The event was well attended by students.

62.8 The Board received the Vice Chancellor's report.

23/63 The University's Finances

63.1 Presentation on the University's Finances including the new political landscape

63.1.1 The Board received a presentation from the Vice Chancellor on the new political landscape post the General Election and what contribution the University can make to the Government's five missions for change: Breaking Down Barriers to Opportunity; Build an NHS fit for the future; Economic Growth; Take Back our Streets; Green Energy Superpower. The Vice Chancellor highlighted areas of opportunity for the University such as in teacher training, growth of the Medical School, apprenticeships and partnerships.

63.1.2 The Board reflected on initiatives in developing the University's offer such as in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and the Institute of Education's work on its offer to answer the call for improved Early Years provision.

63.1.3 In conclusion, the Vice Chancellor suggested the University's mission for 2024 be 'National renewal through education'.

63.1.4 The Pro Vice Chancellor Partnerships updated the Board on partnerships with Dudley and BMET Colleges, the creation of University of Worcester Centres at other colleges, and the Black Country Health Hub. *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

63.1.5 The Board discussed the potential impact of AI on jobs in the future and on future training needs and what the University teaches. The Board agreed the importance of a deeper understanding of this area and suggested this be the focus of a future Board Development Session. Members noted new course development in areas including Computing in AI and Cyber Security and the potential for cross-disciplinary work.

63.2 Report of Finance & Development Committee [BG23/56]

- 63.2.1 The Board received the report of the Finance & Development Committee meeting of 17th June 2024 together with the Vice Chancellor's report to the Committee meeting and the Period 10 Financial Update.
- 63.2.2 The Board approved the updates to the Finance & Development Committee's terms of reference and noted the report.

63.3 Scenarios for the 2024/25 Budget [BG23/57]

- 63.3.1 The Board received and considered scenarios for the 2024/25 Budget, in particular the 'central' scenario which will inform the final Budget to be approved by the Board at its meeting on 1st October 2024. This budget paper was considered by the Finance & Development Committee at its meeting on 17th June 2024.

63.3.2 – 63.3.5 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

- 63.3.6 The Chair and members of the Finance & Development Committee reported that at their meeting on 17th June the Committee had a detailed discussion on the financial situation and raised many questions and the Board could be reassured by the Committee's considerations.

63.4 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

23/64 Reports from Committees

64.1 People & Culture Committee [BG23/59]

- 64.1.1 The Chair of the People & Culture Committee presented the report of the Committee meeting held on 16th May 2024 and drew attention to the outcomes of the staff survey conducted in February by People Insight on behalf of the University, highlighting the positives as well as areas for improvement and areas to explore further. It was noted many of the themes seen in the results are common to the HE sector.
- 64.1.2 Heads of Schools and Services are to discuss the results with their teams to develop a greater understanding of areas to work on and areas to celebrate. A UEB working group has been created to consider staff feedback and develop an action plan and the People & Culture Committee is to receive an update at its next meeting. Members discussed timing of follow-up with staff and of future surveys.
- 64.1.3 The Board approved the updates to the People & Culture Committee's terms of reference and noted the report.

64.2 Audit Committee [BG23/60]

- 64.2.1 The Chair of Audit Committee presented the report of the Audit Committee meeting held on 11th June 2024 and highlighted that the Committee:
- received internal audit reports on Environmental Sustainability and Student Retention, both with good outcomes, and agreed the internal audit plan for 2024/25.
 - received a report on the Critical Incident Exercise held at the University on May 21st together with the Local Resilience Forum, and on learnings from the exercise.
 - considered the external audit plan and external audit fee estimate for the year ending 31.7.2024. Following further discussions subsequent to the Committee meeting, the Committee agreed a

revised external audit fee estimate. The Chair thanked the finance team for their work on the matter.

64.2.2 The Committee also considered the six monthly update to the University Strategic Risk Register and a proposal to refresh the approach to and format of the Strategic Risk Register and to focus the Register on high net rating risks.

64.2.3 The Board approved the updates to the University Strategic Risk Register and the proposal to refresh the format of the Register.

62.2.4 The Board approved the updates to the Audit Committee's terms of reference and noted the report.

64.3 Nominations & Governance Committee [BG23/61]

64.3.1 The Board received the report of the Nominations & Governance Committee meeting held on 25th June 2024. The meeting reviewed Board and Committee membership and upcoming vacancies. The Committee also considered the proposed amendments to the University's Instrument and Articles of Government and recommended them to the Board for approval.

64.3.2 The Board noted the report.

23/65 Students' Union Business

65.1 Students' Union Report [BG23/62]

65.1.1 The Board received the Students' Union report noting the new officers had undertaken their inductions and will be setting their objectives for the coming year in August. The report covered updates on the Help and Advice Service, Societies and Sport, the Cost of Living Campaign and Academic Representation. Points noted included implementation of a new loyalty scheme for the SU bar and events and The Hangar recently achieving second place in the national Best Bar None awards. The Students' Union was pleased overall with scores in the Course Experience Survey 2024, highlighting 87% satisfaction overall with the Students' Union.

65.1.2 The Students' Union recently surveyed members on how they felt the SU was performing against its new strategic framework. Members noted the headline results and some very pleasing free text comments. The report concluded with the officers' manifesto aims.

65.1.3 The Board thanked the officers for their report.

23/66 Academic Governance

66.1 Report from Academic Board [BG23/63]

66.1.1 The Provost presented the report of the Academic Board meeting of 26th June 2024, with an update on the Board's work. These included a report on the University Access and Participation Plan that was approved by the Office for Students in September 2023 for implementation during academic year 2024. A steering group has been established to oversee the implementation of the plan.

66.1.2 The Board noted the report.

23/67 Instrument & Articles of Government [BG22/64]

67.1 As part of the work to establish a wholly owned subsidiary company through which to employ staff, as previously approved in principle by the Board, the University's lawyers recommended that some minor amendments be made to the University's Instrument and Articles of Government. These related to providing for employees of the subsidiary to be staff members of the Board, changes to

incorporate subsidiaries into the Articles and an amendment to the definition of academic freedom at Article 6.4 to reflect the wording of the Higher Education (Free Speech) Act 2023.

67.2 The Board considered and approved the proposed amendments.

23/68 University Schedule of Delegation [BG22/65]

68.1 The Board received amendments made during 2023/24 to the University Schedule of Delegation. The Schedule sets out the delegated responsibilities for a range of decisions, statutory roles and other responsibilities. The Board receives the Schedule annually to provide it with assurance the University has appropriate internal controls in place.

68.2 The Board noted the updated Schedule.

23/69 OfS Matters [BG23/66]

69.1 The Board received for information an update on matters in relation to the OfS, noting that as a non-departmental public body the OfS was subject to Cabinet Office guidelines during the pre-election period and therefore had published less content than usual. The OfS had published its annual review of the financial sustainability of Higher Education providers.

69.2 Members noted there had been no reportable events to the OfS since the last report on 7th May 2024.

69.3 The Board noted the report.

23/70 Report Items

70.1 Annual Report on Subsidiary Companies [BG23/67]

70.1.1 The Board received the annual report on the University's subsidiary companies. Members noted the new subsidiary company, Uniworc Ltd, was incorporated on 18th June 2024 and that UW Worcester Wolves Ltd was expecting to return a surplus this year.

70.2 Annual Sustainability Report [BG23/68]

70.2.1 The Board received for information the Annual Sustainability Report that reports on the University's sustainability achievements and initiatives and progress against its targets and strategic objectives. The University met in part or in full over 84% of its over 100 targets. Members noted the University's Sustainability Strategy is to be updated concurrently with the development of the new University Strategic Plan.

23/71 Any Other Business

71.1 The Chair commented on the success of hybrid Board meetings in allowing all members to participate in meetings.

23/72 Date of Next Meeting

Board Meeting

1st October 2024