



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Office
Of
The President &
Vice-Chancellor.

UEB/2020/1304/01

Minutes University Executive Board

Date: 19 May 2020

Present: Professor K Lamberts (KL) (in the Chair)

Professor J Derrick (JD), Professor S Fitzmaurice (SF), Professor S Hartley (SH), Professor M J Hounslow (MJH), Ms J Jones (JJ), Professor W Morgan (WM), Professor C Newman (CN), Professor D Petley (DNP), Mr R Sykes (RS), Professor G Valentine (GV), Professor C Watkins (CW)

In attendance: Dr T Strike (TS), Mr I Wright (IW), Mr A Carlile (AC) (item 3)

Apologies: None Received

Secretary: Ms K Sullivan (KS) / Mr D Swinn (DS)

1. Closed Minute and Paper

2. Closed Minute and Paper

3. Closed Minute and Paper

4. Phased Return to Campus (RTC) in respect of Research and Innovation

4.1 UEB considered a proposal for a collaborative approach to a gradual safe return to on-campus lab-based activity, following previous discussions on 12 May. The proposed process sought to recognise the need for appropriate accountability and responsibility for decision making in order to manage RTC safely. Recognising the safety of staff and students was paramount, the University would implement all reasonable measures and comply with government requirements, whilst actively seeking to overcome any barriers to particular facilities reopening. The importance of compliance at local level was noted.

4.2 UEB noted that a two phase approach would ensure consistency in the prioritisation of activities, which should align with the key institutional research and innovation objectives but with appropriate Faculty, departmental and individual responsibilities and accountabilities, in particular around the development and use of risk assessments (RA).

4.3 During discussion the following was highlighted:

- Guidance and criteria for prioritising activity and facilities would be overseen by SH, advised by relevant colleagues as appropriate.
- UEB would be regularly updated on progress.

- UEB recognised that there were local and national demands from staff to maintain access to research facilities but also pressure from other groups of staff to not reopen at the present time.
 - University representatives remained in close and regular dialogue with the Trade Unions.
- 4.4 UEB agreed the proposals for a collaborative approach to a gradual safe return to on-campus lab-based activity and approved to begin to move through the proposed RTC phases on a limited basis as detailed in the paper.
- 4.5 **Actions:**
- (a) The AMRC and NAMRC had developed an on-line module for staff to complete about safely returning to work; relevant learning from this would be shared
 - (b) The paper would be updated to include considerations regarding support services.
 - (c) Communications would emphasise that the University continued to be guided by the current Government guidelines to 'work from home if you can' and that, at this stage, the RTC plans focused on research activities (not teaching).
 - (d) UEB would receive regular progress updates.
 - (e) Faculties would report to UEB regularly as facilities were reopened to ensure the early identification of any problems, including ED&I issues and specific challenges facing particular groups of staff.

5. **Coronavirus Update**

5.1 Research

Research leads from across the Russell Group had conveyed to senior UKRI representatives a strong message about the need for urgent work to prevent irreversible damage from the impact of Covid-19, including the cost to universities of covering extensions for UKRI-funded PGR students. The Russell Group had invited Universities to share any examples of impact to support further discussion with the Government.

5.2 Prospective Students

The Covid-19 Management Group was developing communications for prospective students about the Autumn term, based on current assumptions. The University was planning for students to be on campus but with a socially distanced experience, using a blended approach of face to face and digital teaching. The University would also be communicating with overseas students about potential quarantine requirements.

5.3 Continuing Students - Engagement

The University was engaging with continuing students about their experience of Covid-19 lockdown to inform future thinking and plans.

5.4 Furlough Scheme

Communications had been sent to relevant staff regarding furlough arrangements. Work was underway to look at broadening access to the scheme and to enable access for longer than originally expected.

Actions:

- (a) The Russell Group had invited Universities to share any examples of impact to support further discussion with the Government.
- (b) Further updates on the furlough scheme would be provided in due course.

6. Round Table

- (a) Degrees requiring a year abroad - SF reported concerns raised by students taking degrees that required a year abroad about the impact of Covid-19. More broadly, UEB also noted that the Government had not yet clarified whether or not it would continue to take part in Erasmus+ after the end of the Brexit transition period.