



**The
University
Of
Sheffield.**

Office UEB/2019/2506/02
Of
**The President &
Vice-Chancellor.**

Minutes University Executive Board

Date: 4 June 2019

Present: Professor K Lamberts (KL) (in the Chair),
Professor J Derrick (JD), Mrs H J Dingle (HJD), Professor S Fitzmaurice (SF), Professor M J Hounslow (MJH), Professor J Marsh (JM), Professor Dame Pamela Shaw (PS), Mr R Sykes (RS), Professor G Valentine (GV), Professor C Watkins (CW)

In attendance: Dr T Strike (TS); Miss E Packham (EP) (item 1); Mrs V Jackson (VJ) (items 2 & 3); Mrs L Carlile (LC) (items 4-6); Mrs L McCarthy (LM) (item 4); Dr R Birch (RB) (items 6 & 7); Ms T Wray (TW) (item 8); Mrs D McClean (DM) (item 9); Mrs K Ball (KB) (item 10); Mr I Wright (IW) (item 10)

Apologies: Professor D Petley (DP), Professor W Morgan (WM),

Minute Secretary: Mr N Button (NB)

1. Programme Level Approach

(Miss E Packham in attendance for this item)

- 1.1 UEB received an update on implementation of the Programme Level Approach (PLA). Attention was drawn to the self-reflection Departments were asked to engage with and subsequent work in identifying those Departments that should be considered higher priority for ensuring PLA was progressing. UEB were also briefed on the proposal for a formalised project to embed PLA and ensuring that the Programme was delivered on schedule.
- 1.2 During discussion, UEB noted the following:
 - A combination of the Pulse Survey and subsequent meetings with FDLTs had provided a comprehensive overview of how all Departments were progressing with PLA.
 - There were some additional complications in determining the ownership of PLA in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health.
 - Existing staff resource would be used for the proposed Project.
 - PLA represented a significant curriculum development and additional support for Departments would help reduce the burden, as well as having wider implications for the University's strategic priorities.
 - Further clarity on exactly what was expected from Departments and when would help generate buy-in.
 - The Annual Reflection process was an important tool by which the ongoing implementation of PLA could be monitored.

- 1.3 UEB noted the overview of progress and approved the recommended actions, including the proposed meetings with high priority departments. UEB also approved the proposal for a Project to formalise the governance and operational support to deliver PLA and the 2019-20 PLA priorities.

1.4 **Actions:**

- (a) Meetings with high priority Departments should begin as soon as possible.
- (b) UEB-HoDs should hold a discussion about PLA, including sharing best practice.

2. **Closed Paper and Minute**

3. **Closed Paper and Minute**

4. **Closed Paper and Minute**

5. **Review of Post-16 Qualifications – overview of consultation for UEB**

(Mrs L Carlile in attendance for this item)

- 5.1 UEB considered the University's response to the DfE consultation on the Review of Post-16 qualifications at Level 3 and below in England. Attention was drawn to the focus on the future of the BTEC qualification, the importance of A level & BTEC students to the widening participation agenda, and that the removal of applied general qualifications would not facilitate entry into HE.

- 5.2 During discussion, UEB noted the following:

- Recent reforms to BTECs had made the qualification more rigorous and more focused on academic learning.
- Funding for foundation years may be phased out under the Augar recommendations.
- The University was being advised that students with T levels alone would not reach the academic standards sufficient to enter a higher tariff University like Sheffield.

- 5.3 UEB agreed the recommended response, amended to temper the support for BTEC qualifications and to include reference to the development of T levels as a rigorous and realistic alternative to A levels.

6. **Closed Paper and Minute**

7. **Closed Paper and Minute**

8. **Staff Survey**

(Ms T Wray in attendance for this item)

- 8.1 UEB received an update on work following the publication of the 2018 Staff Survey results. Attention was drawn to the three strategic priority areas agreed by UEB in January 2019: leadership and strategic direction; communications; and addressing the difference in responses from academic and professional colleagues. Planned activities included detailed Q&A events, regular communications from UEB members, two-way information streams, Departmental visits, and the development of an Engagement Indicator.

- 8.2 UEB agreed the recommendations contained in the paper.

9. REF Code of Practice

(Mrs D McClean in attendance for this item)

9.1 UEB considered an update on the REF 2021 Code of Practice. Attention was drawn to the substantive changes on no detriment clauses, independent researchers, and output selection. The former was in response to concern from Trades Unions about the potential use of the REF Stocktake as the sole measure for determining performance evaluation.

9.2 During discussion, UEB noted the following:

- The assessment of research output remained a legitimate measure of performance, though these should not be used in isolation and there should be clear guidance on their use in those processes.
- Awareness of bias in the process of peer review against academics with protected characteristics was important.

9.3 UEB agreed the recommended changes to the REF 2021 Code of Practice.

10. Closed Paper and Minute

11. Closed Paper and Minute

12. Round Table

- (a) A Part of Sheffield: GV reminded UEB that the “A Part of Sheffield” exhibition would be held in The Octagon on Monday 10 and Tuesday 11 June.
- (b) Access and Participation Plan: RS informed UEB that the Access and Participation Plan had been submitted to the OfS, who had responded with some queries and requests for further information, which were being dealt with.
- (c) Interviews: RS updated UEB on the progress of phasing out inessential undergraduate recruitment interviews.