

Board of Governors

E-meeting

M1 2018/19 – 14 September 2018

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## E-meeting Minutes

12 governors responded to the e-meeting request, therefore the meeting is quorate and the below decisions are formalised.

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## Items for Approval

### 1. Minutes of the previous meeting (13 July 2018)

1.1 Comments were received regarding the minutes of the previous meeting as follows;

1.1.1 In 8.4 under the report of the Academic Standards and Student Experience Committee (ASSE) amend to include 'the Committee is keen to explore the possibility of carrying out one or two 'deep-dive mini-audits' per year into areas relevant to the student experience'.

1.1.2 9.13 should reflect the fact that Peter thanked Richard for all his work at Marjon and not just on the estates strategy.

1.2 **ACTION** it was suggested that the sequencing for consideration of the H&S report should be reviewed by F&R committee to ensure a brisker subsequent review by the Board.

1.3 The minutes were otherwise approved.

**ACTION** US to amend minutes for signing by the Chair.

### 2. Matters Arising

2.1 **ACTION** It was suggested that while action 2.1 regarding the incubation space was recorded as complete, further information regarding the offer and arrangements in place would be valuable.

2.2 **ACTION** It was also suggested that it is increasingly recognised as good practice to include mental health as an aspect within the Health & Safety Strategy and as such action

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6.1 might be reconsidered.

2.3 All other matters arising were considered complete.

### **3. The revised Governor's Handbook including:**

- a. Terms of Reference
- b. Meeting Dates for 2018-19 and 2019-20
- c. Templates and Protocols

3.1 The Handbook was received and approved. **ACTION** It was noted as a particularly helpful document however a number of suggested amendments were received and will be applied.

3.2 It was also agreed that in the following year, the Handbook will be supplied with tracked changes.

3.3 Some comments were also received regarding the role of Staff Governors as detailed within the Governors Handbook. **ACTION** The Chair will review this with Clerk and provide a response.

### **4. Recommendations for Board and Committee membership including Chairs and Deputy Chairs.**

4.1 Comments were received regarding the proposed membership for the 2018/19 Academic year. A number of governors indicated that Pamela Greener would make a good addition to the Board and this was therefore considered **APPROVED**.

4.2 Sue Brownlow and Michele Parkman requested that the membership be updated to indicate that Rhys Roberts had agreed to be Deputy Chair of AS&SE Committee rather than Sue. **ACTION** US to update this.

4.3 **ACTION** One governor requested that the Board receive a report on the current skills gaps, the process through which potential governors are identified and how this reflects E&D.

4.4 **ACTION** It was also noted that Patricia Hind is unable to take on the role of Deputy Chair of F&R and the membership should be updated to reflect this.

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## **5. Terms of Reference for role of Chancellor**

5.1 RW had confirmed that the paper submitted was intended to commence a conversation and would expect discussion at two Board meetings and at Nominations committee before agreeing on an approach. **ACTION** This was welcomed and agreed that this would be further discussed at the main meeting of the Board.

5.2 A number of comments relating to the paper were received. **ACTION** It was agreed that this would be carried forward for discussions at the main meeting of the Board as well as subsequent meetings before a formal decision would be made.

## **6. June Management Accounts from F&R for OfS**

6.1 A number of comments were received noting the high quality and positive content of the accounts provided, the improved financial performance and particularly the implications for the revised Barclays covenant.

6.2 **ACTION** It was suggested that F&R committee might further discuss the points regarding aged debtors and the points regarded as 'outside finance & facilities'.

6.3 **ACTION** It was also suggested that further information be received regarding the wider financial implications of the staff costs, the changes that have occurred in finance with two senior members of staff leaving and the implications and measures taken to provide a degree of reassurance.

6.4 Furthermore it was noted that the paper refers to a large number of staff changes at the end of July but at the time of writing the cost implications were unknown. **ACTION** an update at the Board meeting would be welcomed.

6.5 Richard Bayly confirmed that F&R will be meeting next month and will look at key aspects of the detail including the Barclay's Covenant and the continuing culture of over budgeting/ non delivery of expenditure/ costs coming through below budget. This will include talking with HR about developing plans for skills development in financial management in the line.

6.6 **ACTION** It was suggested that ahead of this, at the main Board meeting it might be

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helpful to have an oral update on the recruitment situation and its implication for the revenue line in the Budget.

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## Items for Information

### **7. Vice-Chancellor's Briefing for Directors of Academic Schools**

7.1 **ACTION** This report noted plans for improvements to the quad, a progress update on this was requested and it was suggested it would be good to press on with this.

7.2 **ACTION** The reference to 'post-Easter anxiety over cancelled lectures at the end of the academic year' on page 2 was noted and it was suggested that the cause of this should be established

7.3 Reference the idea of staff 'belongingness' mentioned in the report was highlighted and it was noted that the Marjon community spirit has staff morale at its heart.

7.4 **ACTION** The option to opt out of the REF was noted and while the reasoning behind this was apparent, it was suggested that such a mechanism should only be triggered after discussion with line managers.

### **8. Update on Doctoral Loans**

8.1 **ACTION** It was suggested that a written process surrounding this would be valuable including clarification that all present doctoral student awards have, and will continue to have, access to their loans.

8.2 It was further suggested if there are any future bureaucratic delays of this nature, we might consider asking for support from our MP to speed up a resolution.

### **9. Terms of Reference for Senate (formerly Academic Board)**

9.1 There were a number of comments from governors regarding the revised Terms of Reference and name change from 'Academic Board' to 'Senate'. It was also noted AS&SE Committee should have had sight of this in advance of Board approval.

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**ACTION** Clarification required.

## **10. Policy on unconditional and conditional offers and possible incentives for prospective students, including the potential and actual impact of these.**

10.1 Thanks were given to Katy Willis for a helpful analysis and a number of comments were received. Generally there was support for the proposals on bursaries and unconditional offers and the student message was welcomed as particularly valuable.

10.2 **ACTION** It was noted that it would be useful to see how Marjon ranks with other universities, particularly the competitor group.

10.3 **ACTION** It was agreed this would be useful to review again, particularly with an eye to retention figures.

10.4 A number of detailed queries were also received; these would be passed to Katy to respond to in advance of the next meeting and in time for the next Board.

## **11. Annual Chaplaincy Report**

11.1 The first report from the new Chaplain was received and welcomed.

11.2 There were a number of particularly positive points noted and some suggestions as follows:

11.2.1 Perhaps mental health first aid training for staff could be made mandatory (as with the annual online fire training)

11.2.2 The pastoral role of the chaplaincy is central to so much that goes on at Marjon and yet isn't always acknowledged as such by staff and students. How could it be?

**ACTION** A response surrounding these issues is required.

## **12. Report on Mental Health Support within the University**

12.1 This report was very much welcomed by the Board and governors indicated they felt

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reassured that so much work is being done in this area including evidence of a clear framework of care and support.

12.2 **ACTION** The paper recommended that a Mental Health Strategy should be put in place. A progress update on this including a timescale was requested.

12.3 **ACTION** A number of detailed queries received and it was agreed responses to these would be provided in time for the next meeting.

### **13. Update on the Office for Students and Data Futures**

13.1 The paper was received and noted. Thanks were offered to Stephen Plant for the helpful report.

13.2 Comments were received regarding the timetable for approval of data returns by the Board, overseen by F&R. **ACTION** It was suggested that Stephen brings an assessment of the issues to an F&R meeting in the next 6 months and we consider what the Board's role may be and how to cover it.

### **14. Research Briefing**

14.1 The briefing was noted as comprehensive and particularly welcome as research remains a fundamental component of a university, although there are often pressures to be teaching only.

14.2 **ACTION** It was suggested that some of the complexities of QR and its impact on Marjon may not necessarily be understood so it may be useful clarify this. Clarification was also sought surrounding Professorial, Associate Professorial and Reader appointments.

14.3 **ACTION** It was also queried whether there are any recommendations to be taken forward from the external PGR review. It was noted that 2020 isn't that far away now and it may take some considerable time to prepare bids and then undertake the research.

14.4 **ACTION** The Board also queried the likelihood of the government fee review work undermining the ability to cross subsidise research from undergraduate fees.

14.5 **ACTION** Some other queries were received and Rob Warner agreed to respond to

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these in advance of the next meeting including

14.5.1 Who is the decision maker in respect of the actions - Rob, senate or board?

14.5.2 It's good to see that staff development and support for enhancing their research output is specifically mentioned. This could also be extended to doctoral supervision. To track research output, as the paper mentions, all staff could be encouraged to have an orcid account.

14.5.3 For 'teaching academics' peer-led support to break the inertia would be really helpful.

## **15. Report on Fraudulent, Whistleblowing, Health and Safety Incidents and Legal Activities**

15.1 Received and noted.

## **16. Ethics Panel Annual Report & Policy on Research Integrity Annual Statements and report on any research misconduct**

16.1 Received and noted.

## **17. AOB:**

17.1 **ACTION** it was requested that an oral update on recruitment and its impact on the income budget for next year is made at the full Board.

17.2 **ACTION** The VC's briefing refers in part to completed summer campus works. It was requested that a short tour of this would be helpful on the day of the Board meeting.



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**Signed on behalf of the Board:**

..... Chair of the Governing Body

..... Date



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**Minute: 1.2**

**Action and response:** Sequencing of the H&S report should be reviewed by F&R committee to ensure a brisker subsequent review by the Board.

**Owner:** US

**Deadline:** F&R Oct

**Minute: 1.3**

**Action and response:** US to amend minutes for signing by the Chair.

- In 8.4 under the report of the Academic Standards and Student Experience Committee (ASSE) amend to include 'the Committee is keen to explore the possibility of carrying out one or two 'deep-dive mini-audits' per year into areas relevant to the student experience'.

- 9.13 should reflect the fact that Peter thanked Richard for all his work at Marjon and not just on the estates strategy.

**Owner:** US

**Deadline:** Main Board

**Minute: 2.1**

**Action and response:** Further information regarding the offer and arrangements in place for incubation space would be valuable.

**Owner:** EB

**Deadline:** Next Board

**Minute: 2.2**

**Action and response:** It is increasingly recognised as good practice to include mental health as an aspect within the Health & Safety Strategy and as such the H&S policy might be



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reconsidered.

**Owner:** RW/TS

**Deadline:** F&R Oct

**Minute:** 3.1

**Action and response:** Suggested amendments to the handbook were received and will be applied

**Owner:** US

**Deadline:** Next Board

**Minute:** 3.2

**Action and response:** It was also agreed that in the following year, the Handbook will be supplied with tracked changes.

**Owner:** US

**Deadline:** Sept 2019

**Minute:** 3.3

**Action and response:** Some comments were also received regarding the role of Staff Governors as detailed within the Governors Handbook. The Chair will review this with Clerk and provide a response.

**Owner:** US/PU

**Deadline:** Main Board

**Minute:** 4.3

**Action and response:** Request that the Board receive a report on the current skills gaps,



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the process through which potential governors are identified and how this reflects E&D.

**Owner:** US

**Deadline:** Governance & Nominations Committee

**Minute:** 4.4

**Action and response:** It was also noted that Patricia Hind is unable to take on the role of Deputy Chair of F&R and the membership should be updated to reflect this.

**Owner:** US

**Deadline:** Next meeting of Board

**Minute:** 5.2

**Action and response:** Role and proposals for Chancellor to be discussed fully at the main meeting of the Board. A number of queries received as well

**Owner:** US/RW

**Deadline:** Next meeting of Board

**Minute:** 6.2

**Action and response:** F&R committee to discuss the points regarding aged debtors and the points regarded as 'outside finance & facilities'.

**Owner:** US

**Deadline:** Next F&R

**Minute:** 6.3

**Action and response:** further information regarding the wider financial implications of the staff costs, the changes that have occurred in finance with two senior members of staff



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leaving and the implications and measures taken to provide a degree of reassurance.

**Owner:** US

**Deadline:** Next F&R

**Minute:** 6.4

**Action and response:** An update on the large number of staff changes and the cost implications at the Board meeting would be welcomed.

**Owner:** RW/PF

**Deadline:** Next Board

**Minute:** 6.6

**Action and response:** At the main Board meeting it might be helpful to have an oral update on the recruitment situation and its implication for the revenue line in the Budget.

**Owner:** KW/US

**Deadline:** Main Board

**Minute:** 7.1

**Action and response:** The VC's briefing to Directors of Academic Schools noted plans for improvements to the quad, a progress update on this was requested and it was suggested it would be good to press on with this.

**Owner:** RW

**Deadline:** Main Board

**Minute:** 7.2



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**Action and response:** The reference to 'post-Easter anxiety over cancelled lectures at the end of the academic year' on page 2 was noted and it was suggested that the cause of this should be established

**Owner:** RW

**Deadline:** Next Board

**Minute:** 7.4

**Action and response:** The option to opt out of the REF was noted and while the reasoning behind this was apparent, it was suggested that such a mechanism should only be triggered after discussion with line managers.

**Owner:** RW/IL

**Deadline:**

**Minute:** 8.1

**Action and response:** It was suggested that a written process surrounding doctoral loans would be valuable including clarification that all present doctoral student awards have, and will continue to have, access to their loans.

**Owner:** RW

**Deadline:** Next Board

**Minute:** 9.1

**Action and response:** There were a number of comments from governors regarding the revised Terms of Reference and name change from 'Academic Board' to 'Senate'. It was also noted AS&SE Committee should have had sight of this in advance of Board approval.



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Clarification required.

**Owner:** US/RW

**Deadline:** Next Board

**Minute:** 10.2

**Action and response:** It was noted that it would be useful to see how Marjon ranks with other universities on unconditional offers and bursaries, particularly the competitor group.

**Owner:** RW

**Deadline:** Next Board

**Minute:** 10.3

**Action and response:** It was agreed it would be useful to review again the policy on unconditional offers and bursaries, particularly with an eye to retention figures.

**Owner:** US/KW

**Deadline:** Next Board

**Minute:** 10.4

**Action and response:** A number of detailed queries were also received; these would be passed to Katy to respond to in advance of the next meeting and in time for the next Board.

**Owner:** US/KW

**Deadline:** Next Board

**Minute:** 11.2



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**Action and response:** Chaplaincy report queries - a response surrounding these issues is required.

**Owner:** US

**Deadline:** Next Board

**Minute:** 12.2

**Action and response:** The paper recommended that a Mental Health Strategy should be put in place. A progress update on this including a timescale was requested.

**Owner:** US/JB/KW

**Deadline:** Next Board

**Minute:** 12.3

**Action and response:** A number of detailed queries were received relating to Mental Health and it was agreed responses to these would be provided in time for the next meeting.

**Owner:** US/JB

**Deadline:** Next Board

**Minute:** 13.2

**Action and response:** Comments were received regarding the timetable for approval of data returns by the Board, overseen by F&R. It was suggested that Stephen brings an assessment of the issues to an F&R meeting in the next 6 months and we consider what the Board's role may be and how to cover it.

**Owner:** SP

**Deadline:** F&R Spring



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**Minute:** 14.2

**Action and response:** It was suggested that some of the complexities of QR and its impact on Marjon may not necessarily be understood so it may be useful clarify this. Clarification was also sought surrounding Professorial, Associate Professorial and Reader appointments.

**Owner:** RW

**Deadline:** Next Board

**Minute:** 14.3

**Action and response:** It was also queried whether there are any recommendations to be taken forward from the external PGR review. It was noted that 2020 isn't that far away now and it may take some considerable time to prepare bids and then undertake the research.

**Owner:** RW

**Deadline:** Next Board

**Minute:** 14.4

**Action and response:** The Board also queried the likelihood of the government fee review work undermining the ability to cross subsidise research from undergraduate fees.

**Owner:** RW

**Deadline:** Next Board

**Minute:** 14.5

**Action and response:** Some other queries relating to the research briefing were received and Rob Warner agreed to respond to these in advance of the next meeting

**Owner:** RW

**Deadline:** Next Board



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**Minute:** 17.1

**Action and response:** It was requested that an oral update on recruitment and its impact on the income budget for next year is made at the full Board.

**Owner:** KW/US

**Deadline:** Main Board

**Minute:** 17.2

**Action and response:** The VC's briefing refers in part to completed summer campus works. It was requested that a short tour of this would be helpful on the day of the Board meeting.

**Owner:** RW

**Deadline:** Main Board