

THE COUNCIL

Minutes

This paper presents the confirmed Minutes of the meeting of the Council held by correspondence between 18 – 25 February 2019 at The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes.

The Council **approved** the Minutes as a correct record at its meeting on 5 March 2019.

Dr Jonathan Nicholls
University Secretary

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Attachments:

C-2019-01-M Minutes of the meeting of the Council held by correspondence between 18 – 25 February 2019

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Minutes of the meeting of the Council held by correspondence between 18-25 February 2019

- Present: Mr M Sweeting (Chair), Professor M Kellett (Vice-Chancellor), Mr S Begbie (Treasurer), Ms C Brown (President, OU Students Association), Professor J Brooks (Vice-Chair), Dr J Byford, Mrs M Curnock Cook, Mr J D'Arcy, Ms Maggie Galliers, Ms R Girardet, Mr P Greenwood, Dr R Heffernan, Ms A Henderson, Mrs R Lock, Mr D T Parry, Mr R Spedding, Dr B Tarling, Dr G Walker, Professor J Wolffe
- In Attendance: University Secretary, Head of Governance, Senior Manager, Governance (Working Secretary)
- Apologies: None

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- 1 APPOINTMENT TO THE COUNCIL AND A COUNCIL COMMITTEE C-2019-01-01**
- The Council **approved** the appointment of Robert McCracken:
- a) as an external co-opted member of the Council; and
 - b) as a Council member on Finance Committee
- with immediate effect until 31 July 2019.
- 2 JOINT COMMITTEE TO APPOINT THE VICE-CHANCELLOR C-2019-01-2**
- This paper was withdrawn as the decision to appoint Malcolm Sweeting as chair of the Joint committee of the Council and the Senate to appoint the Vice-Chancellor had already been approved by the Council at its meeting held by correspondence between 11-18 December 2018.
- 3 INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE TEACHING EXCELLENCE AND STUDENT OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK C-2019-01-03**
- 3.1 Maggie Galliers declared an interest as a member of Advisory Group established by Dame Shirley Pearce to support her in conducting the Independent Review of the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF).
 - 3.2 The Council welcomed the proposed response from the OU to the call for evidence from the Independent Review of the TEF, which articulated the OU's position in a realistic and measured way.
 - 3.3 Members made the following comments for consideration by the TEF management group and the Government and External Affairs team:
 - a) given the OU's unique experience of such provision, the University's response should emphasise its willingness to support the positive development of the TEF;

- b) although the response identified ways in which the current use of metrics disadvantaged some providers and groups of students, it should elaborate earlier and further on the reasons why measuring teaching excellence is so different for part-time distance learning. It should also clarify whether the OU wanted the metrics to be amended for all providers or for differentiated measures to be used for those institutions offering flexible, distance learning and/or part-time study. The statement that quantitative measures must continue to develop did not fully convey the value placed on the narrative aspects;
- c) it was not necessarily realistic to assert that social mobility should be an overarching objective of the TEF, as it was just one component of the higher education environment. A student member of the Council, who was also a TEF panel member, observed that panellists and assessors were scrupulous in using the contextual data that accompanied the metrics, together with any evidence in the submission, to give appropriate credit to providers with a focus on widening participation;
- d) rather than suggesting that 'distance travelled' should be measured instead of 'student satisfaction', it would be more appropriate to propose that both metrics were considered. The potential increase in the number of OU students with previous HE qualifications, due to a greater focus on continuous professional development and the relaxation of the equivalent and lower qualification rule for science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects, meant that 'distance travelled' would not be appropriate as a single metric;
- f) if the University supported the concept of TEF, it should acknowledge that it would consume a significant amount of academic, professional and management time; and
- g) the response should reference the OU's four nations presence and consider whether there were any specific issues that disadvantaged Irish, Scottish and Welsh students.

3.4 The Council **agreed** that the response should be submitted to the Independent Review by 1 March 2019.

4 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next ordinary business meeting of the Council will be held on Tuesday 5 March 2019 at The Open University offices in Nottingham. There will be a Council Dinner on Monday 4 March 2019.

5 DECLASSIFICATION OF COUNCIL PAPERS

The following paper can now be classified as 'internal use only':

C-2019-01-01 Appointment to the Council and a Council Committee

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