



**CENTRAL MANAGEMENT GROUP**

**30 August 2016**

**Minute**

- Present:** Senior Vice-Principal Professor Charlie Jeffery (Convener)  
Vice-Principal Professor Dorothy Miell  
Vice-Principal Professor Jane Norman  
Vice-Principal Professor James Smith  
Mr Hugh Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services  
Ms Tracey Slaven, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning  
Mr Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary, Student Experience  
Mr Phil McNaull, Director of Finance  
Ms Zoe Lewandowski, Director of Human Resources  
Ms Leigh Chalmers, Director of Legal Services  
Professor David Argyle, Head of School of Veterinary Medicine  
Professor Ewen Cameron, Head of School of History, Classics & Archaeology  
Professor David Gray, Head of School of Biological Sciences  
Professor Arthur Trew, on behalf of Vice-Principal Professor Yellowlees  
Dr Catherine Elliott, on behalf of Vice-Principal Professor Sir John Savill  
Mr Brian MacGregor, on behalf of Mr Gavin McLachlan, Chief Information Officer  
Mr Barry Neilson, Director of Student Systems (for item 3)  
Professor Allan Murray, Assistant Principal, Academic Support (for items 5 & 6)  
Mr Dave Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability (for items 11,12,13 & 14)  
Professor Lesley McAra, Assistant Principal, Community Relations (for items 11,12,13 & 14 )
- In attendance:** Ms Kirstie Graham, Deputy Head of Court Services
- Apologies:** The Principal  
Vice-Principal Professor Jonathan Seckl  
Vice-Principal Mr Chris Cox  
Ms Sarah Smith, University Secretary  
Mr Gavin McLachlan, Chief Information Officer  
Mr Gary Jebb, Director of Estates  
Professor Jeremy Robbins, Head of School of Literature, Languages & Culture  
Dr Ian Conn, Director of Communications and Marketing

**1 Minute**

**Paper A**

The Minute of the meeting held on 14 June 2016 was approved.

Senior Vice-Principal Professor Charlie Jeffery welcomed new members: Professor David Gray, Professor Ewan Cameron and Professor David Argyle to their first meeting.

## **2 Principal's Communications**

Senior Vice-Principal Professor Charlie Jeffery, on behalf of the Principal, reported on the following: this was the first meeting of CMG following the referendum vote for the UK to leave the EU and the University had undertaken a range of activities over the summer to reassure current and prospective staff and students, including Town Hall meetings across the campus and provision of specialist legal advice; a sub group of Court had been established and had met, the management team was holding weekly communication meetings to consider Brexit implications and the University was engaging through sector bodies and directly on the issues affecting the sector; the Principal was part of the Strategic Funding Group in the current Scottish Budget Negotiation round; Professor Sir Adrian Bird had been awarded a Shaw Prize in Life Science and Medicine and Professor Richard Morris had been awarded the Brain prize, these were both highly prestigious international awards and members noted their congratulations.

### **SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS**

#### **3 EvaSys Course Enhancement Roll-Out**

**Paper B**

CMG considered the final draft of the EvaSys Course Evaluation Policy, which would be re-named as the Course Enhancement Policy. The wide consultation on development of the policy was noted. Members discussed the issues of awareness of unconscious bias and of free text comments that breached the dignity and respect policy, which would be addressed through the existing Code of Conduct.

During discussion it was agreed that awareness of unconscious bias should not just be raised with staff using the data, but also flagged to students when completing the survey. In the longer term, the aggregate data could provide an opportunity for research in this area and CMG supported developing a research base to inform future actions in relation to unconscious bias.

CMG approved the Course Enhancement Policy as set out in the paper.

#### **4 Strategic Performance Measures**

**Paper C**

CMG considered a framework to assess the success of the University against the goals of the recently approved Strategic Plan, to be published in September 2016. The performance framework would operate at different levels for Court and CMG, with a small set of high level measures for Court annually and more comprehensive dashboard reporting for CMG, to be updated regularly.

Members provided a number of comments, including the need to ensure the unambiguous priority of teaching was reflected in the presentation of measures to Court; the importance of qualitative over quantitative measurements, particularly in relation to areas such as industry engagement; the challenge of ensuring indicators were 'leading'.

Members were encouraged to forward any further comments directly to the Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning to inform development of the framework, which would be presented to the next CMG with the inclusion of baselines and proposed targets.

## **5 NSS Results**

**Paper D**

CMG considered the results of the NSS student survey, which showed a decline in overall satisfaction and declines in all of the headline categories compared to last year. Initial benchmarking indicated the University's performance against the Russell Group and the Sector as a whole had also declined. This was of particular concern as NSS would drive part of the metrics used in the Teaching Excellence Framework and it was likely that league tables would be produced that included all UK Universities based on these indicators.

CMG discussed the reasons for the results, noting in many cases a disjuncture between the NSS results and the outcome of other forms of student feedback. CMG agreed on the importance of tackling academic underperformance and reinforcing a sense of priority and esteem for teaching activities; and continuing student engagement and communication to address student issues early in the first semester. Other planned activities were noted, including accelerating the timetable for implementing Lecture Capture and the Principal meeting with class representatives.

There was discussion of the role of support services and the estate on the student experience, with particular focus on the importance of student and social space. It was noted that the Space Strategy group had been reconfigured with a long term vision, including study space.

CMG agreed it was essential to send out a consistent message on the importance and value of teaching, while noting that each School is distinctive and central support and direction would require local adaptation and delivery.

## **6 Assessing Teaching Ability during Staff Recruitment**

**Paper E**

CMG considered a proposed new process to be used during recruitment to academic posts that include an element of student learning, to assess candidates' skills in, and commitment to, teaching. The recommendation was based on the results of a benchmarking exercise involving Schools within the University and others, nationally

and internationally. The requirement was that a practical teaching exercise be included in the recruitment processes. There was flexibility in what form this exercise could take but it was expected that students would be involved in some part of the process.

It was noted that many Schools are already compliant with the proposal, but a University wide policy would be sector leading. There was discussion of guaranteed hours staff and Chancellor's Fellows, which were not explicitly addressed in the paper and the view was that the Policy should aim to be comprehensive in its reach.

CMG endorsed the proposal as set out in the paper for immediate implementation and noted the issue of guaranteed hours staff should be considered as part of the roll out.

**7 Finance Directors Update** **Paper F**

The Finance Director spoke to his update, noting that the year-end management accounts indicated a higher operating surplus than forecast, partly as a result of one-off income such as RDEC and also accounting changes as a result of FRS17. There would need to be careful consideration given to communication of this message given the wider financial climate.

**8 Value for Money Report** **Paper G**

CMG considered and endorsed the Value for Money report for 2015-16, to be forwarded to Audit & Risk Committee for consideration as part of the mandatory requirements from SFC.

**9 Planning Timetable** **Paper H**

CMG noted and approved the annual planning guidance and timetable, noting the ongoing discussions with the Thematic Vice-Principals on inputting into the planning process.

**10 Tuition Fees Deposit Policy** **Paper I**

CMG considered and approved the Tuition Fees Deposit Policy, as set out in the paper, noting that the proposed policy was presented a 'target operating model', signalling the direction of travel that Colleges should migrate to over the course of the next two years.

**11 Draft Institutional Climate Strategy** **Paper J**

CMG considered the draft Climate Change Strategy 2016-2026 and there was discussion of the proposed targets, the interface with the University investment policy and with research areas of the university.

CMG agreed the proposed carbon target of “zero by 2040”, approved the Climate Change strategy and endorsed the renewables review group remit.

**12 Scottish Government Social Impact Pledge**

**Paper K**

CMG considered the proposal to respond to the invitation, extended by the Scottish Government to Universities, to participate in the Social Impact Pledge. Aligning the University response to evolving projects associated with the Community Engagement Strategy meant that the University was in a position to have a phased programme of pledges for the next three years and beyond. Three pledges had been identified for the first year: Edinburgh City schools engagement; student social enterprise; and student digital ambassadors.

CMG approved the proposal as set out in the paper and wished to ensure the University maximised the benefited from signing up through effective communication of the initiative, internally and externally. It also requested that there was evaluation of the outcome of the pledges.

**13 Proposed Prisoner Placement Scheme**

**Paper L**

CMG considered a proposal for a prisoner placement scheme at the University of Edinburgh, to enable prisoners to gain work experience.

Members discussed the importance of ensuring that the University was engaged in all aspects of community engagement, including with victims of crime and other socially disadvantaged groups. It was noted that the University did work with disadvantaged groups, but was not as active in this area as it could be and any proposed work with prisoners would need to be carefully balanced with these existing initiatives. Members were also concerned about the skills, expertise, training and time commitment of staff in SRS, where the support for this initiative would be based. It was agreed that it was essential to have the right skills and support in place and further work was also required on prioritisation with other community engagement activities and the University’s wider contribution to employment from within the community.

It was agreed that the Assistant Principal, Community Relations, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning and Director of Human Resources would discuss the proposal further in the light of the issues raised.

**14 Good Food Policy**

**Paper M**

CMG considered and endorsed the Good Food Policy.

**15 Health and Safety Quarter 3 Report**

**Paper N**

CMG noted a summary of health and safety related incidents that took place during the period 1 March 2016 to 31 May 2016, as well as relevant health and safety issues and developments.

**16 UCU concerns about introduction of requirement for staff to record where they are working**

**Verbal**

The Director of Human Resources reminded members of the decision by CMG in relation to the requirement for the University to be able to account for the whereabouts of all Tiers 2 and 5 staff. CMG had taken the view that there should not be a distinction made between the requirements for UK and international colleagues and there should be a proportionate response to recording this information for all staff using existing mechanisms such as the online diary system.

There had been a negative response from the UCU union to this, including a motion at an EGM and the Director of Human Resources had met with Union officials and agreed to share their concerns with CMG. UCU did not support the government decision in relation to Tiers 2 and 5 staff, but recognised the University had to comply with this legislation. However, the view was expressed that the University had used the legislation as an excuse to introduce attendance monitoring for academic staff and they wished the University to remove the requirement that academic staff record when they are working away from their normal place of work for blocks of half a day or more, provided that staff are contactable.

CMG discussed the issue in depth, noting that for many staff this was not a concern and was indeed existing diary practice. Staff required to be contactable for a number of reasons and this was best facilitated by the use of electronic diaries such as Office 365. CMG therefore agreed that it should continue to be a requirement for staff to record when they are working away from the University, but there would be a recognition of the need for the University diary system to be fully rolled out to support this and better communication of what was meant by the requirement and how to comply.

**ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL**

**17 NPRAS Estates Rates 2017-18**

**Paper O**

CMG approved the revised NPRAS rates for use in the 2017-18 planning round as set out in the paper.

**18 Proposals for Chair Establishment and Changes**

**Paper P**

CMG approved the establishment of a new Chair of Avian Biology in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine and a new Chair of

Power Electronics and new Chair of Integrated Sensor Technology in the College of Science and Engineering, as set out in the paper.

**19 Fees Strategy Group**

**Paper Q**

CMG approved the fee proposals from the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences as set out in the paper.

**20 Principal's Strategy Group**

**Paper R**

The report was noted.

**21 Date of next meetings**

Tuesday, 4 October 2016 at 10.00 am in Raeburn Room, Old College.