



Minutes of a meeting of the UCP Council held at 1630hrs on 8 June 2023.

Present	Prof Sir Les Ebdon (Chair)	Peter Walker	Dr Alison Davies	David Dixon
	Mark Woods	Tony Keeling	Sameena Aziz	Maddi Hobman (Student Officer)
	Rachel Nicholls (CEO IEG)	Louise Perry (IEG CFO)		
In Attendance	Joanne Ulyatt (CoSec/IEG GD)	Liz Knight (AD)	Dan Lee (HE Manager)(SC)	
Apologies	Mathew Bradbury			

35/22 ELIGIBILITY, QUORUM, DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- a. Apologies were as noted. Claire Bowes (staff member) had unfortunately resigned.
- b. No notice had been received of any Member becoming ineligible to hold office, the meeting was quorate and there were no unregistered interests declared; the register was available for scrutiny.
- c. There were no requests for urgent business.

The information was received and noted.

36/22 STANDING ITEMS

- a. The Minutes of the last meeting held on 9 March 2023 were confirmed for electronic signature. **(ACTION 12)**
- b. Matters arising. There were no matters arising.
- c. Outstanding Actions. Actions from the last meeting were considered; all had been completed.

See referenced minute for full detail.		Resp
Action 9	24/22a Minutes of last meeting (1 December 22) approved for signature	Completed
Action 10	25/22g Half day induction visit to UCP to be arranged for TK for 30 March 2023	
Action 11	28/22a Review of UCP Financial Regulations deferred until June agenda	

- d. Draft UCP Audit Committee minutes were noted.

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified. (See Register at end of document)

37/22 ACADEMIC DIRECTOR'S (AD) REPORT

The AD Report and annexes considered areas of interest which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda. The detail was discussed, specific points included;

- a. It had been announced that Professor Arif Ahmed has been appointed as the first Director for Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom by the OfS. A code of practice to adhere to is expected to follow; UCP will respond accordingly, considering best practice across the sector.
- b. The 18% expected increase in OfS fees was discussed, noting that the OfS are absorbing the quality assurance function that was previously paid for through subscriptions to QAA.

- c. A memorandum of agreement is to be signed with The Coding Institute which it is hoped will provide UCP with some exclusivity. These courses can be recruited to nationally due to the online delivery.
- d. Further opportunities to align with the Centre for Green Technology are to be explored through a curriculum working party that will be in place from September. There is funding available to bid for to be used in the development of Higher Technical Qualifications so LK is working with IEG colleagues to meet deadlines.
- e. This is the last meeting of the current Student Officer; the Deputy Student Officer has been elected by the Student Council to step up into the role, and students have now been invited to submit nominations ahead of an election for a new Deputy Student Officer.
- f. Overview of applications provided.
- g. The Academic Committee Structure has been reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with OfS conditions and the changing status of QAA. The UCP Council were asked to consider a recommendation from the Academic Board to reduce the number of student representatives on the Academic Board from 6 with a quorum of 3 to 4 with a quorum of 2 in order to aid continuity of attendance. It is hoped that this action, as well as ensuring no meetings are held outside of teaching weeks, will result in the same students attending each meeting.

*The UCP Council **approved** the recommendation to reduce the number of student representatives on the Academic Board to 4 students with a quorum of 2.*

- h. Quality update provided, noting good outcomes with the Pearson Reviewer, and exceptional collaborative agreements. Only one External Examiner visit is outstanding which relates to Computing.
- i. The use of AI in HE was discussed in light of workshops on the agenda for the HE Conference.
- j. A collaborative event between Islah and UCP, the Community and Social Research Conference, in Peterborough on 15 June 2023 was highlighted and the registration link shared; <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/community-and-social-research-in-peterborough-conference-tickets-594826150027>. There will be circa 20 organisations presenting as well as independent researchers, and LE is one of the guest speakers.

The information was received and noted.

38/22 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs) DASHBOARD

- a. Growth – there has been an increase in FTEs compared to last year and PT applications are starting to pull through. Continuation figures were discussed. The next Open Evening is to be held on 4 July which links with clearing opening on 5 July.
- b. Internal progression figures are included but many are just starting to apply now. Peterborough College applications are down overall but conversions are a little better, partly because of the change in offer strategy in response to competitor behaviour so there is some comfort from figures. It is a difficult time for HE in FE with continued decline in other locales whilst UCP has held reasonably steady.
- c. Quality/Achieving Excellence; strong in year retention. Module evaluation score mirrors NSS which is around 75% nationally. Semester 2 sits around 80% but there are differences across the provision; the OU module is bedding in at about 74%; ARU about 84%; and, Pearson at about 82%. There was a lower than usual response rate from students this year which has impacted outcomes. The team are now identifying priority areas and any modules that have not performed well will be reviewed and changes put in place for next year to enhance and improve. Given the staffing challenges these are remarkably good figures.
- d. Valuing Our People; H&S and HR narrative provided. All accidents recorded appropriately and working hard to ensure offices and work spaces kept tidy. Staff challenges in

- Computing are reflected in the Risk Register and MRA introduced. LK met with the new IEG COO to discuss ideas to address some of the challenges faced around staffing.
- e. Governors noted a 20% drop in staff retention but a third in costs and asked if this relates to high value roles; this is partly due to turnover but also fewer students were recruited resulting in some savings made where courses were not run because the staff costs were avoided from day one. The planned for staff were able to be redeployed elsewhere within IEG so the cost savings were more linked to this than staff turnover.

39/22 ANNUAL COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS REPORT

- a. Overview of total number of complaints to date for academic year. 11 complaints, broken down by category; 4 formal and 7 early resolution.
- b. 9 compliments had been received which is always pleasing to see. Positive feedback has also been received informally by student representatives.

The information was received and noted.

40/22 OfS/UCP PUBLISHED OUTCOMES

- a. Slides presented. Baseline thresholds were shared along with definitions of terms. In terms of continuation, UCP is showing far above threshold for FT other UG and a little ahead on FT first degree. PT numbers are too low for an indicator. For progression UCP does not have enough numbers for other UG because it is classed as a new provider, but is ahead of threshold for first degree.
- b. UCP looks comfortable on most of the B3 outcomes which is good news but they have a limited number because classed as a new provider and performance of previous students is not included.
- c. Handy tool visually for snapshots as to what is working well or not.
- d. Once a year the UCP Council would like to see an exceptions report to highlight any relevant data indicating where UCP is likely to fall foul of condition B3 and the other conditions when they are statistically viable, so that it can be used as an early warning of moving into an amber zone.

The information was received and noted.

41/22 FINANCE REPORT

- a. This is a fairly static time of year when the income and expenditure is largely known. There is no difference in forecast and nothing unexpected or risky so UCP expect to make the predicted surplus. It was advised that these are management accounts now because funding through Advanced Learner Loans rather than Student Loans Company means that technically they have to be IEG students, so when the financial accounts are prepared some has to be stripped out to IEG accounts. The pessimistic budgeting around energy costs was sufficient and so costs are coming in on budget across the Group. It was noted that the variance columns on the report are not working.
- b. Governors noted a successful first year of managing the budgets in light of the new direct competitor and are reassured that it has not significantly affected the bottom line. UCP benefits greatly from being able to vary the staffing budget with IEG which is a significant advantage in not carrying staff.
- c. The 'Other income' field was discussed. With the exception of £40k which relates to a grant which is the only element shown in the YTD and will be retained in UCP, the remainder is the Advanced Learner Loan income that will be shown as IEG in the financial statements, with the associated registration and staff costs removed too. This includes both the Coding and a large counselling cohort that is all funded. Consideration will be given as to how to report this next year to ensure it is clearly identifiable in both income and expenditure throughout the year.

The information was received and noted.

42/22 ANNUAL REVIEW OF UCP FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- a. The document provided is a subset of the main IEG regulations and has already been reviewed by the UCP Audit Committee. Updates include additional regulations or amendments put in as a result of ONS reclassification which took the Group into the public sector from private sector and ramped up DfE oversight of financial areas. The financial guarantee that sits between IEG

and UCP is no longer technically allowed, but this is a guarantee that the OfS required; permission was therefore requested some months ago but a response is yet to be received. The majority of the changes reflect changes in IEGs external governance.

*The UCP Council **approved** the updated UCP Financial regulations.*

The information was received and noted.

43/22 RISK REGISTER AND BOARD ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

- a. None of the residual risks have been changed, though improvement in applications and offers for next year was noted, but it is prudent to wait until the autumn to ensure intentions translate to reality before moving the risk.
- b. Staffing concerns are ongoing and likely to continue due to competitor activity.
- c. Work around marketing and recruitment continues, and some of the systems work is being implemented.
- d. No new concerns raised.

The information was received and noted.

44/22 URGENT BUSINESS

There had been no requests for urgent business.

45/22 NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is TBC.

ACTION TABLE

	Resp	Date
See referenced minute for full detail.		
Action 12	GD	wie

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 18:06.