

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
19 SEPTEMBER 2024**

REDACTED MINUTES FOR PUBLICATION

A meeting of the Board of Trustees was held at Taylor Wessing, Hill House, 1 Little New Street, London EC4A 3TR from 11.30am-16.00pm on Thursday 19 September 2024.

Present:	Prof N Braisby (NB)	(Vice Chair Designate)
	A Clack (AC)	(Chair)
	C Costigan (CC)	From 1pm
	A Denton (AD)	(Student Trustee)
	J Gill (JG)	
	J Hubert (JH)	(Staff Trustee)
	N Hughes (NH)	
	Dr S Jackson (SJ)	(Vice Chair)
	Prof M Jones (MJ)	
	R Kerslake CBE (RK)	
	P McCrea OBE (PM)	
	B McManus (BM)	(Student Trustee)
	J Quinn (JQ)	
	G Ralphs (GR)	
	D O'Rourke (DOR)	
	G Scott (GS)	(Honorary Treasurer) – to end item 3.3
	C Thackeray (CT)	Staff Trustee
	C Turley (CT)	To end item 4
	A Wheaton (AW)	(Vice Chancellor)
In attendance:	H Al-Katib (HAK)	(Director of Strategy & Planning) for item 3.3 and 3.4 only
	J E Fawkes (JEF)	(Deputy Vice Chancellor & University Secretary)
	L Gaitskell (LG)	Board Apprentice
	L Hughes (LH)	(Clerk to the Board) – minute taker
	R Stephenson (RS)	Guest speaker from HEPI – for item 1 only
Apologies:	C Augustine (CA)	Board Apprentice

13102 1.1) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND WELCOMES

13103 There were apologies for absence from Chrystal Augustine.

13104 The Chair welcomed Jyotveer Gill and Jules Quinn, new Independent Trustees, to their first official meetings in their new roles.

1) EXTERNAL SPEAKER

13105 1.2) THE POLICY CONTEXT IN HIGHER EDUCATION UNDER THE NEW LABOUR GOVERNMENT

13106 The Chair welcomed Rose Stephenson to the meeting, Director of Policy and Advocacy at HEPI, the Higher Education Policy Institute. Rose has worked in several aspects of education: online learning, outdoor education and as a teacher and Head of Science in secondary education before moving to the higher education sector. Rose held multiple roles at the University of Bath, overseeing policies and projects relating to the student experience. Rose's role at HEPI focusses on policy; research; analysis; and creating policy recommendations.

13107 RS presented slides to the Board outlining the policy context for higher education, opportunities and challenges, under the new Labour Government. The slides were made available to Trustees following the meeting on the Trustee Portal.

13108 The presentation introduced the work of HEPI and then some of the key policy issues within higher education today, including the shift towards part time study and associated financial reasons driving this. The focus then moved toward what might be coming for higher education as a result of the new Labour government's policies. For improvements to be seen in the sector, HEPI believes stability, support and sustainable funding will be the key requirements. **Stability** in leadership (average tenure for a UK government minister between 1974-2023 was 2.1 years but between 2019-2023 it was just 8 months) is essential and is anticipated through the appointments of Bridget Phillipson MP (Secretary of State for Education), Baroness Jackie Smith (Minister for Skills, Further and Higher Education) and Sir Patrick Vallance (Minister for Science, Research and Innovation) who have offered **support**, stating they seek to work in partnership with the sector and develop policies and rhetoric that empowers it. There is some caution, however, that the primary focus of the Department for Education is schools and early years. It is also encouraging that the issue of **sustainable university finances** is recognised by these ministers though little is as yet known about what this may mean. RS commented that the fee loan system has protected universities from the worst of austerity measures but with tuition fee loans fixed since 2017 (equating to a 30% real terms reduction since then), the impact on quality of student experience is now being felt. Whilst Scotland covers the tuition fees of all its students, in England the public purse puts in only 16% of the funding required and this is unlikely to increase given public funding priorities. The UUK is calling for a rise in the tuition fee cap and then indexing this to inflation in the future. For this to be successful the maintenance support package for students would have to be improved at the same time. There is also the option of employers investing in upskilling their employees through a graduate employer levy, but this too may prove challenging to introduce. There are no easy answers but allowing a university to go bust is not politically or economically wise for the government either.

13109 The Labour government has suggested they will evolve the current apprenticeship levy into a growth and skills levy though there is not much detail on the policy as yet. The Lifelong Learning Entitlement has also been proposed but the scope is unclear and there are major questions around how the student finance system would align, what the mechanism for credit transfer would be, agreement on what constitutes a

degree and who would award it, the need for a new regulatory framework and how the offer would be effectively communicated to the public. The ways in which these two policies would interact also requires substantial consideration and, whilst challenging, this could lead to a more cohesive approach to tertiary education and partnering between colleges and universities, if issues of regulation, funding structures, demarcation and incentive alignment can be resolved. It is also clear that education underpins many of the five missions of the new Government as well as their clearly articulated agenda of increasing house building. Skills shortages in building and related trades are well known and UCEM's flexible provision in built environment skills could provide a key solution to this.

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Following the presentation there was substantive discussion time. This focussed on:

- The likely timescales for implementing policies in tertiary education – this most likely requiring a 2-term approach and funding that has not currently been identified.
- The message to other sectors has been 'no funding without reform' and this is likely to be the case for higher education. Reform is most likely to be driven through the OfS though their remit may be streamlined and greater autonomy given to universities.
- The Growth and Skills Levy where current thinking implies 50% of the existing apprenticeship levy would be ringfenced for apprenticeships and 50% for upskilling workforces more generally. Apprenticeships are generally considered to work well and reducing the funding would not be popular yet increasing taxes on businesses to pay for upskilling would be equally unpopular.
- The vulnerabilities of institutions financially. Institutions used to be protected from failing by HEFCE, but this is no longer the case. Despite saying they will not bail out any institution, it seems unlikely the Government would allow a big university to fail given its widespread impacts. The OfS is currently tendering for an audit company to conduct ten audits of institutions with financial challenges in the next four years and to determine where solutions towards an orderly exit may be possible, but it is clear OfS does not hold the same powers that HEFCE did in this regard.
- The expectations of universities outside of just teaching alone and the impossibility of existing funding stretching to cover this needs to be better understood by policy makers.
- The costs of delivering apprenticeships are far higher than those for delivering just a degree, and this needs to be better understood by policy makers, as does the fact that the funding for apprenticeships is **not** public funding, it belongs to employers.
- The challenges for universities to make money (80% of teaching universities do not) and the change in rhetoric required – it should not be about auditing institutions who are struggling but about recognising and valuing their role regardless of this. It would be helpful for the regulator to focus on success within the sector and change the perception of value of the sector itself and of degrees to those who study, as there is genuine concern about this within the public currently. RS encouraged UCEM to promote its offer and get its voice heard with policy makers as evolution will be coming.
- The challenges associated with the international student market relative to fees and sustainability.
- The threat of the potential competitor market for modular tertiary education.

- The need to find ways to deliver higher education more effectively, with greater flexibility but retain and even increase the value of it.
- The need to grow financial literacy of younger people to help them make informed decisions about higher education options and their likely associated outcomes.
- The protection the professional bodies provide to institutions like UCEM where the degrees lead directly to specific jobs in industry and the potential impact on such institutions were their requirements might change or lessen. This also linked to discussion of whether the Government really understands its not just education that would change but professional regulation.
- The conflict between OfS expectations on widening access and participation and outcomes for all and the reality of cost of living and studying for those people.

13111 At the close of the discussion, the Chair thanked RS for joining the meeting and providing such useful context for ongoing Board deliberations. The Chair invited RS to join the Board for their lunch break and then invited her to leave the meeting.

2) GENERAL BOARD GOVERNANCE

13112 2.1) DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

13113 There were no conflicts of interest reported.

13114 2.2) APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 11 JULY 2024

13115 The minutes and the proposed redactions of the Board of Trustees meeting held on 11 July 2024 (as provided at paper 2.2) were **APPROVED** as a true record and signed by the Chair. They will be published on the UCEM Governance webpage.

13116 2.3) MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS SUMMARY

13117 The summary showing the outcomes of actions from the meeting held 11 July 2024 (paper 2.3) was taken as read with updates on listed actions duly **NOTED**. Those actions still ongoing are: scheduling of a full Board discussion on Artificial Intelligence (though it was noted that the Academic Review Committee had discussed this subject in June 2024); and scheduling of a full Board discussion on UCEM Asia Ltd – it is intended these will both be planned for the next two meetings.

13118 It was also noted that whilst paper 3.3 provides an update on the actions associated with the Strategic Plan, not everything listed was concluded and therefore some elements will need to be carried forward. These would be listed as new actions where/if necessary in that section.

13119 2.4) CHAIR UPDATE

13120 The Chair made a verbal update to the wider Board on her decision to stand down as Chair and leave the Board within a year maximum, but following discussions with the Vice Chancellor, this was thought could be more likely by mid-winter. The increasing responsibilities involving more travel given her job role for HKA could mean AC may have clashes and she did not want to let UCEM down on commitments

the role of Chair of Trustees at UCEM deserves.. The Board expressed their regret that AC would be leaving UCEM but thanked her for all her time and commitment to date.

13121 JEF advised the Board that a recruitment process has been planned out with the support of NuRole and a Chair Search Panel. The role description for the Chair will be shared with and approved by the Nominations & Governance Committee on 3 October 2024. Any contacts within the networks of Trustees should be encouraged to apply through NuRole, as should any existing Trustees who wish to apply, and LH will share the social media links and recruitment information with the Board when the advert goes live. It is anticipated there will be a period handover between AC and the new Chair through early 2025.

ACTION: Share Chair recruitment process information and links with Trustees one approved by Nominations & Governance Committee and when they go live. [LH]

3) STRATEGIC DISCUSSIONS

13122 3.1) UPDATE ON COLLABORATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

13123 The Vice Chancellor provided a verbal update on some of the current collaborative opportunities open to UCEM and these were discussed by the Board.

13124 The Vice Chancellor also reported that UCEM had been successful in securing a further £100K grant from the Office for Student for Wave 3 Degree Apprenticeship Development for a collaborative bid with the London School of Architecture for Level 6 Design and Construction Management.

13125 3.2) UNIVERSITY NAME CHANGE AND TITLE APPLICATION

13126 The University Secretary presented paper 3.2 to the Board which provided an update on the practical activities undertaken to date since the decision of the Board in July to proceed with applying for a change in name/title of UCEM to University of the Built Environment (see paper 3.2).

13127 The application was submitted back in July and JEF has replied to some initial queries. UCEM is pushing for the OfS to commence the public consultation as soon as possible. Communications are ready to be issued when it does go live and legal support for the process is all in place. The Board should note that although it has been two months since the application to OfS the timescale for UCEM to date has been swifter than some other institutions have experienced. .

13128 JEF also advised that the Honorary Community had been informed of UCEM's intentions and whilst there was some nostalgia for UCEM's history the replies received were predominantly positive and supportive of the Board's decision.

13129 The Vice Chancellor then provided an update on the key stakeholder consultation meetings he has held to date. The key stakeholders consulted at this stage are University of Reading, University of Westminster, RICS, RTPI, CABE, CIOB, Activate Learning and GuildHE and meetings have now been held with the majority of these

(notable exceptions of University of Reading and RTPI). The feedback from the PSRBs has been unanimously positive to date and they support the principle of there being a university that serves the wider built environment sector. They see this as necessary for sector-wide collaboration. All those consulted have committed to writing letters of support to the OfS as soon as the consultation goes live. At this stage, it is believed the only potential objections could arise from those institutions that have their own Schools of the Built Environment.

13130 The Board **NOTED** and welcomed the progress update on managing the UCEM name change and title application process and thanked JEF for her continued work to progress the process with the OfS.

13131 **3.3) STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030**

13132 The Board welcomed Hannah Al-Katib, Director of Strategy and Planning, to join the meeting for items 3.3 and 3.4.

13133 HAK presented the proposed final version of the Strategic Plan 2025-2030 for Board approval following incorporation of the amendments requested at the last meeting in July (paper 3.3 and 3.3b). HAK also presented a PESTLE and SWOT analysis (paper 3.3a). HAK reminded the Board that 2024-25 was a transitional year between the existing strategic plan and the next for the 2025-2030 period and the version to be signed off would come into operation on 1 August 2025, thereby giving 10 months to plan implementation.

13134 Overall, the Board concurred that the feedback provided at the last meeting had been taken on board for this final version and that the plans balance aspiration with pragmatism.

13135 In terms of feedback on the PESTLE and SWOT analysis, the following points were made:

- There is the potential for structural reform and mergers within the tertiary education sector and this is missing from the analysis and should be added.
- Do the documents feature enough on the potential risks in operating in Hong Kong under the Chinese government?
- Is the potential loss of 50% of the apprenticeship levy fully assessed for potential impact? UCEM must be ready to adapt and change its model if it becomes necessary to do so.

13136 In terms of feedback on the Strategic Plan itself, the following points were made:

- The target in point 3.6 on reach and performance should refer to ‘taught and registered’ students (to differentiate from any franchised students) in order to meet OfS expectations.
- The financial framework/cost/benefit analysis associated the various proposed initiatives through this plan period is being prepared by the Executive and will be essential to prioritisation within the planning period. The priority at this time is to get agreement on the overall ambition and strategic intention within the plan. UCEM is also aware it needs to develop stronger processes around business cases, planning and project management function and has started work on this to support implementation of the Strategic Plan.

- ESFA will be disbanded so the referencing to this entity will need to be removed when the plan is finalised/published.
- Most measures have a baseline, a target and a stretch target but it would be useful for new Trustees to see the trajectory prior to the baseline being set to gain some context and institutional history. HAK/JEF will consider how this can be provided but recommended new Trustees review papers for the Board meeting in September 2023 on the Trustee Portal which provide some context to the development of the plan.
- As a next step in the planning and implementation phase UCEM should consider how it will keep alert to competitors, and adapt the strategy as needed based on what is best for the sector UCEM serves. . This should also feature on the institutional risk register.
- There needs to be clarity in the section on 15% surplus on financial performance as a stretch target to clarify that this is surplus to reinvest back into the business and the student experience, not a surplus for the sake of it (which would put UCEM contrary to Charity Commission rules). It was clarified that the purpose of this target is about driving UCEM's ability to deliver such surpluses and operate from a healthy financial position, not about what may or may not be done with the surpluses once generated. Part of the implementation plan will be to agree the right models of and processes for reinvestment back into the business by agreeing the appropriate levels of reserves vs investments in enablement and the ambition of the institution. The wording in the plan could be resolved by the addition of 'before investment' on the target.
- Much depends for UCEM on the EPA for the Chartered Surveyor apprenticeship becoming integrated – has UCEM considered what it would mean for UCEM if that never happened? It was confirmed the target should be understood as maximising yield from the funding available or from employers. It will also be delivered by further improvements to the Qualification Achievement Rate.
- A separate discussion on the plans for UCEM Asia Ltd in Hong Kong will come forward for the Board but the UCEM Asia Ltd Board regularly discusses the political risks of operating in the region. The key factor to consider will be whether to become Hong Kong specific with the local offer or not.
- Point 3.9 requires the removal of the word 'the' from the proposed new university title.
- Is there a discrepancy in the strategy between the Scope 3 emissions target and the UCEM Sustainability Strategy? HAK confirmed that a lot of work has been done on UCEM's Net Zero aspirations since the Sustainability Strategy was first published, including the agreement to follow the STBI methodology on how UCEM calculates its performance in this area. This has led to changes since the Sustainability Strategy was first published and this will be updated after the first annual report against that strategy is approved by the Executive and the Board. The target at face-value for Scope 3 appears unachievable but to align to the adopted methodology it needs to be included however challenging it is. UCEM is preparing a roadmap of changes and policy decisions it will need to make in order to work towards the targets but if it can commit to this and prioritise sustainability within its decision making then the target is achievable. Some members of the Board were uncomfortable in having moved from a position of 'as far as practicable' on scope 3 emission in the Sustainability Strategy to a hard target on scope 3 in the strategic plan without reviewing the Net Zero Transition Plan that would

enable the ambition to be achieved – it would look bad for UCEM were it to fail to reach such a target. It was agreed it could be approved within the Strategic Plan though, on the basis that the plan is a document setting a strategic intent, and it would be ok to adapt this, if necessary, during the life of the plan. The Board would like to see more of UCEM’s specific sustainability goals, roadmap towards them and their achievability at a forthcoming meeting.

- The Board also queried if the Scope 1 and 2 targets are strong enough to resonate with becoming the world’s most sustainable university. HAK confirmed she is confident that despite the actual target written down in the plan, which again is to align with the SBTi methodology, UCEM will have eliminated Scope 1 and 2 emissions by the end of the plan.
- The Board queried how UCEM can aim to be reducing staff costs per student yet looking to recruit more talent and whether these were contrary. Again, this is all to be defined through a HR and productivity strategy that combines HR, Finance/profitability and Technology maturity that would be delivered through the life of the plan but sets the strategic intent at this time. UCEM is not currently equipped to deliver the full ambition of the plan, and this should be recognised.
- The plan features an aim to review the profitability of international students to UCEM and ways to maximise this.
- Professional training is a new area of ambition for UCEM and the investment plan for this is likely to be significant when presented for specific consideration by the Board in the fullness of time.

13137 HAK confirmed some of the planned next steps following approval of the plan. This includes determining when and how progress will be reported, including at various milestones within the plan period and between the various annual plans that will operationalise the 5-year strategy as well as development of a prioritisation matrix. HAK also confirmed that the plan will remain agile to the changing external context in which UCEM operates and opportunities which present themselves during the life of the plan. At this point in time, the primary aim is to provide strategic intent for the university. Finance Committee will be engaged in discussions on surpluses and how these are reinvested into the business vs the right level of reserves for the size of business UCEM now is.

13138 The Board **APPROVED** the Strategic Plan 2025-2030 in order to enable UCEM to move forward with associated business planning, subject to one final review by the Board of the Strategy that takes into account the comments made in discussion during the meeting.

ACTION: Present the final Strategy document to the Board in December 2024. [JEF]

13139 3.4) STRATEGIC REVIEW OF RISK

13140 HAK presented the UCEM Risk Register and the Risk Appetite Statement and Process Guide to the Board for their consideration, noting that the Audit Committee reviews risk in detail on behalf of the Board at every meeting under delegated authority (see papers 3.4, 3.4a and 3.4b) but that the Board would review risk in detail at least annually.

- 13141 The Board noted that the version of the Risk Register shared did not yet reflect the new PESTLE analysis and this will be addressed ahead of its next presentation to Audit Committee. HAK commented that work is also ongoing around the technology risks and how these may need to be represented in future iterations of the Register. Trustees suggested being very specific in the Register about which Cyber Essentials criteria UCEM is working towards.
- 13142 The Board also raised a query on the ongoing fire security risk identified in 2018 that has still yet to be addressed concerning the decking area at Horizons in an emergency situation and whether this should feature on the Risk Register.
- ACTION: Investigate the ongoing risk identified in the H&S report on fire safety in the decking area of Horizons that has yet to be addressed and does not feature on the UCEM risk register and report back to JG. [JEF]**
- 13143 HAK reminded Trustees that the institutional risk register they see focuses on risks that meet a threshold for institutional impact – there are many other risks considered more minor which are managed through departmental approaches. HAK agreed to provide an overview of the architecture of risk management and approaches at local vs institutional level to help the Board better understand how risk is managed in its entirety across UCEM.
- ACTION: Provide a UCEM risk management architecture of approach to the Board to help illustrate the various ways and levels at which risk is managed across UCEM. [HKA]**
- 13144 The Board **NOTED** the institutional risk register and Risk Appetite Statement & Process and thanked HAK for her management and oversight of risk at UCEM in such a comprehensive way.
- 13145 The Chair thanked HAK for her contribution and invited her to leave the meeting.

4) PROPERTY UPDATE

- 13146** **4.1) REDACTED**
- 13147 REDACTED
- 13148 REDACTED
- 13149 REDACTED.
- 13150 REDACTED
- 13151 REDACTED.
- ACTION: REDACTED**
- 13152 REDACTED
- 13153 REDACTED

13154 REDACTED

13155 REDACTED

ACTION: REDACTED

5) STUDENT TRUSTEE UPDATE

13156 5.1) STUDENT TRUSTEE UPDATE

13157 Adam Denton and Ben McManus, the Student Trustees, provided the Student Trustee report (see paper 5.1) focussed on the results of the NSS and SES surveys and the student experience at UCEM. The feedback focussed on key themes of academic, community or culture with relevance to the student experience and how current students feel about UCEM's survey results.

13158 The Student Trustees reported many of the positive aspects to academic study with UCEM such as access to resources, the e-library, the VLE, forums and communications. They suggested sustainability could be further embedded across all course content and that some academic support provided by tutors is inconsistent. The value of one-to-one support from Lecturers and Apprenticeship Outcomes Officers cannot be underestimated to how positive students feel and perform. The Student Trustees reported that whilst broadly positive on the community theme, particularly around the organisation and management of courses, there are sometimes issues with accessing resources via multiple devices and there are concerns that feedback may not always be acted upon. In terms of culture, workload is also often cited as an issue, but students recognise UCEM's work to change this over recent years and that this is filtering through further each year.

13159 The Board restated how much it values hearing the student voice from the Student Trustees with this type of feedback. The Board also welcomed UCEM's approach to analysing the results and feeding this back into the action plan for the year ahead and into revalidation events.

13160 It was also noted that VLE challenges are not unique to UCEM and are felt in many institutions and often derive from standardisation across modules and structures.

13161 The Board **NOTED** the Student Trustee update report and feedback, and the Chair thanked AD / BM for their contribution to the meeting.

13162 The Board **NOTED** that the Staff Trustees update report would return for the next meeting and had been deferred on this occasion due to an already full agenda.

6) INSTITUTIONAL UPDATE

13163 6.1) VICE CHANCELLOR'S OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS 2024-25

13164 A UCEM progress update was provided by the Vice Chancellor. This was predominantly verbal and paper 6.1 provided just a reminder of the agreed metrics

and targets for the year as it is too early in the year to provide a meaningful written update to the Board.

- 13165 The Vice Chancellor referred to papers 6.1a and 6.1b which provided further detailed results of the NSS and SES surveys 2024, which had yet to be reported to Board as NSS results were only released the day before the last Board meeting. The Board recognised that the results were exceptional given that the questions are designed for full time, campus-based, undergraduate students and UCEM competes positively (top third) with the wider sector of institutions with its vastly different operating models. Work continues on improvements for the year ahead and UCEM aims to retain the stability and consistency in its overall scores next year.
- 13166 The Vice Chancellor reported that UCEM's financial health is looking extremely positive, both in terms of the outturn for 2023-24 (income close to £22M, a statutory surplus of £1.6M, £3M added to the Balance Sheet - largely due to a reduction in USS debt-, positive cash at bank and healthy investments performance). New student recruitment for the 2024-25 year is also progressing well and UCEM currently forecasts enrolling 1,040 students vs a target of 920 for the autumn semester, the bulk of which are on undergraduate programmes and apprenticeships (which is positive for longer term impact on income).
- 13167 The Vice Chancellor provided an update on the recruitment progress and process for a new Chief Operating Officer. David Balme has been appointed and commenced at UCEM on Wednesday 18 September 2024. He is based in the Northeast but will be in Reading two nights per week. He has been recruited on a temporary basis and will be part of the competitive permanent COO recruitment process that remains underway currently.
- 13168 The Vice Chancellor provided an update on the Staff Roundtable meetings he has been holding since April 2024. To date he has held 25 meetings where staff have discussed the good and the bad of UCEM and asked open and honest questions of the Vice Chancellor. The Vice Chancellor commented that the meetings have been a positive experience in terms of staff engagement and trust in leadership and have identified themes for improvement centred around systems, automation, single sources of data and communications.
- 13169 The Vice Chancellor also updated the Board that since 1 August 2024, UCEM has operated its Horizons building on a new model. The office is now open just Monday-Thursday and core office days, for office-based staff to be present, are Tuesday-Thursday inclusive. UCEM is now making operational savings through the Friday closure. Numbers of staff in Horizons on the core days since the new model came into operation is averaging at 79 in September month to date, and the highest attendance so far has been 89. Attendance on Mondays has lowered as a result of the new operating model.
- 13170 **REDACTED**
- 13171 Overall, the Vice Chancellor commented that it has been a positive if extremely busy start to the new academic year. The Board **NOTED** the initial commentary on performance against the CX9 goals for the 2024-25 year, the student experience results 2024, the recruitment update for a new COO, the feedback from the staff

roundtable meetings and the update on implementation of the core working days model at Horizons.

- 13172 The Deputy Vice Chancellor then provided a brief update on Freedom of Speech, following the briefing provided to the Board at the last meeting and its approval of an updated Code of Practice to meet new regulatory requirements. JEF reported that the new Government had paused implementation of the Act and so the new regulations the Board were briefed on at the last meeting will not be implemented.
- 13173 The Board **NOTED** that the new Labour Government had paused enacting the Freedom of Speech regulations and therefore this new Condition of Registration has not yet commenced.
- 13174 Finally, the Board queried whether the planned new programmes for Autumn 2024 were proceeding and were viable. The Vice Chancellor replied that the picture was mixed. Recruitment to the MSc Urban Planning had been suspended but UCEM does now have a meeting in place with the RTPI and through the support of the Chair of the Board they have verbally agreed to establish a pre-accreditation approach for UCEM students on this programme which will significantly aid recruitment efforts for Autumn 2025 and will mean that for those early students on the programme, by the time they finish their studies they would be eligible for full RTPI accreditation. On other new Level 4 programmes the numbers are reasonable to date and the numbers on the MSc Innovation in Sustainable Built Environment remain small but growing and the cohort looks to be viable for Autumn 2024.

13175 **6.2/ ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN EVALUATION AND REPORTING**

- 13176 Charlotte Thackeray, in her professional capacity of Outreach and Inclusion Lead, presented the Evaluation Report for the 2020/21 to 2023/24 Access and Participation Plan (APP) to the Board (paper 6.2 and 6.2a) for approval. CTh reported that of the ten targets set within the plan seven had been met based on data from 2022/23 (which is the latest data set available).
- 13177 The Board **APPROVED** the Access and Participation Plan 2020/21 to 2023/24 Evaluation Report.
- 13178 CTh then presented a structural overview of Widening Participation (WP) work at UCEM, including reporting routes for the WP Strategy and the new Access and Participation Plan (paper 6.2b). This document is intended to demonstrate UCEM's governance structures associated with this workstream and provide full Board assurance on how the work is managed and reported. It includes 2 targets that are not included in the OfS data dashboard but are important to still report to the Board. The document covers process escalation, including where any reportable event might be required to be considered or submitted.
- 13179 The Board commended UCEM's work on widening participation in a sector that is, in itself, not diverse. The Board welcomed this excellent piece of work and all that UCEM is doing in this field.
- 13180 The Board **APPROVED** the Widening Participation at UCEM overview 2024/25 to 2027/28 with associated reporting structures.

7) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13181 7.1) THANKS TO DEPARTING BOARD MEMBER

13182 The Chair formally thanked Chris Turley for his six years as an Independent Trustee at UCEM and for willingly hosting many of UCEM's London meetings of the Board. A gift was presented at the lunch reception during the meeting at which CT expressed his pleasure at having served on the Board and his pride in all that UCEM had achieved during this period and the exciting future ahead, which he will remain a strong support of and advocate for.

13183 7.2) MATTERS FOR NOTING, APPROVAL AND REPORT

13184 The Board was invited to make comments on the additional Board paper of matters for noting and approval (items 8, 9 and 10).

13185 No substantive comments were made so all matters were deemed approved and noted (as below).

13186 7.3) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13187 PM commented that the Quarterly Business Review was a really fantastic induction opportunity for new trustees and recommended others also attend.

13188 There being no other items of business raised, the Chair thanked all Trustees for their participation in the meeting and Taylor Wessing for having hosted UCEM.

13189 7.4) MEETING CLOSE

13190 The Chair closed the meeting at 16.00pm.

The following matters were circulated in a separate pack for approval / noting or comment via email in advance of the meeting.

8) EXTERNAL AND REGULATORY UPDATE

13191 8.1) OFFICE FOR STUDENTS CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION COMPLIANCE REGISTER

13192 An update on the UCEM compliance register with OfS Conditions of Registration was provided at paper 8.1 and 8.1a.

13193 The Board **NOTED** the updated position regarding UCEM compliance with OFS conditions of registration, that UCEM remains compliant with all conditions and the specific update relative to student outcomes metrics, freedom of speech and harassment & sexual misconduct.

13194 8.2) REPORTABLE EVENTS PROCEDURE

13195 The Board **APPROVED** the updated Reportable Events Procedure following minor updates to reflect change in personnel at UCEM for republication as the new V4.0.

ACTION: Finalise and republish the updated Reportable Events Procedure V4.0.

9) MATTERS FOR APPROVAL OR REPORT

13196 9.1) GLOBE PROGRAMME UPDATE

13197 The Board **NOTED** the Globe programme progress update (paper 9.1) as of August 2024.

13198 9.2) ACADEMIC REPORTS

13199 The Board **NOTED** that there was no Executive Summary of Academic Board as the meeting had only been held on 16 September 2024. An update will be provided at the next Board of Trustees meeting.

13200 The Board **APPROVED** the Apprenticeship Position Statement 3 2023/24.

13201 9.3) BOARD CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY

13202 The Board **APPROVED** the Board Conflicts of Interest policy for republication as the new V7 following amendments to reflect feedback received at the last meeting of the Board.

ACTION: Finalise and republish the updated Board Conflicts of Interest policy V7.0.

13203 9.4) BOARD OF TRUSTEES TERMS OF REFERENCE

13204 The Board **APPROVED** the updated Board of Trustees Terms of Reference for republication as the new V22.0.

ACTION: Finalise and republish the updated Board of Trustees Terms of Reference V22.0.

13205 9.5) CONCORDAT TO SUPPORT RESEARCH INTEGRITY STATEMENT

13206 The Board **APPROVED** the Concordat to Support Research Integrity statement as circulated at paper 9.5.

13207 9.6) GRANT TO UCEM ASIA LTD FOR 2023-24

13208 As is normal procedure, Nova commenced their audit work of UCEM Asia Ltd in July 2024 based on a provisional sum of grant for the year approved by the Finance Committee of £545,000. Following completion of audit work, this number is always finalised based on actual figures for the year. The total sum now required for grant

from UCEM to UCEM Asia Ltd for the 2023-24 year is £514,000 (a reduction from the sum approved provisionally). As a result, the Chair of the Board **APPROVED** the final letter of grant for this sum to be issued to the auditors for UCEM Asia Ltd for 2023-24.

10) OTHER MATTERS FOR NOTING ONLY

13209 10.1) TRUSTEE CALENDAR

13210 The Board **NOTED** the Board's calendars of dates for 2025, noting the minor updates recently made.

13211 10.2) REPORT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

13212 The Board **NOTED** the quarterly report on Health and Safety.

13213 10.3) UCEM COMPLAINTS, APPEALS AND WHISTLEBLOWING REPORT

13214 The Board **NOTED** the data on complaints made to UCEM in Quarter 4 2023-24 as detailed in paper 10.3.

13215 The Board **NOTED** the data on appeals cases in Quarter 4 2023-24 as detailed in paper 10.3.

13216 The Board **NOTED** that there had been no whistleblowing cases.

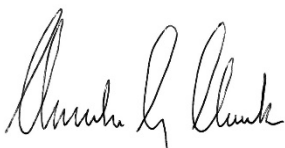
13217 10.4) DATA PROTECTION REPORT

13218 The Board **NOTED** the five minor data protection breaches in the July to September (month to date) 2024 period, and that there was one Data Subject Access Request and three third-party disclosures (paper 10.4). The Board **NOTED** that the overall rate of breaches remains relatively low. The Board also **NOTED** that the data protection function at UCEM is now being managed on an outsourced basis via Evalian.

13219 10.5) UPDATED STAFF ORGANISATION CHART

13220 An updated Senior Level UCEM staff organisational chart by department / SLT level was provided at paper 10.5 and **NOTED** by the Board.

Signed



Name

Amanda Clack

Position

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Date

4 December 2024