



Minutes of an electronic meeting of the Council held at 1630hrs on 21 January 2021.

Present	Claire Bowes	Mathew Bradbury (29/20 on)	Dr Alison Davies	David Dixon
	Sir Les Ebdon	Dr Mary Kiernan	Peter Walker	Shakira Martin
	Richard Greensmith	Rachell Nicholls (Principal)(PC)	Mark Woods (until 31/20a)	
In Attendance	Ralph Devereux (Sec)	Charlotte Hobday (attendee)	Liz Knight (Academic Director(AD))	James Larnar (Deputy Director)
	Louise Perry (CFO)	Dan Lee (HE Head)(SC)		
Apologies	Sameena Aziz	Mathew Bradbury (Late Arrival)		

26/20 ELIGIBILITY, QUORUM, DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The apologies were accepted. 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.

The information was received and noted.

27/20 STANDING ITEMS

a. The Minutes of the last meeting held on 26 November 2020 were confirmed for electronic signature. **(Action 1)**

b. Outstanding Actions. Actions from the last meeting were considered.

See referenced minute for full detail.		Status
Action 1	14/20c. DD & SA appointed a Council Members.	Complete
Action 2	15/20a. Last minutes confirmed for signature.	
Action 3	16/20c. Strategic Planning day tbh after Easter 2021.	
Action 4	16/20c. Members' "Link" scheme to be initiated.	In progress
Action 5	16/20. Appreciation recorded for staff continued commitment.	Complete
Action 6	17/20. IHRA definition adopted.	
Action 7	18/20. Liaison between staff elements to be improved.	
Action 8	19/20. HE Strategy approved.	
Action 9	20/20b. AFS approved for signature.	
Action 10	21/20. Detail on validation confidential.	

c. Governance and Nominations (G&N) Committee. The last meeting held on 26.11.20 had partially completed the agenda, the recommendations had been approved and implemented at Action 1 of the last meeting. That meeting, reconvened on 06.01.21, had recommended Daljit Pye for appointment as an Independent Council member; that recommendation was unanimously approved. **(Action 2)**. The unconfirmed minutes were noted.

d. Audit Committee (AC) Minutes. The draft and unconfirmed minutes of the inaugural meeting of the AC held on 15.12.20 were noted, a later and amended draft would be circulated.**(Action 3)**

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified. (See Register at 37/20 below)

28/20 ACADEMIC DIRECTOR'S (AD) REPORT

The AD Report and Annexes considered areas of interest which were not covered elsewhere on the Agenda and the detail was discussed; the appendix (Letter from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator(OIA)) was noted. Reports were taken as read with items of note raised specifically:

- a. University Admissions. The University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) had modified the general admission processes in response to Covid UCAS and had extended the application deadline from 15 to 29 January. UCP applications were administered through UCAS, although the franchise partner "Addict" managed them locally. The revised and later publication of A Level and Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) results had delayed the clearing process and this had allowed time for alignment of Stamford College (SC) Higher Education (HE) term dates with UCP.
- b. Complaints overview by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The letter from the OIA detailing complaints and appeals for the previous year had been appended to the paper; Members noted and welcomed that there were no UCP referred complaints.
- c. Office for Students (OfS) Returns and Consultation:
 - (i) Access and Participation Plan (APP). A productive meeting with the OfS had been held on 12 January and submission dates for the APP had been agreed. The meeting had also considered data related challenges faced by UCP throughout the merger process, both as a new provider and the additional demands of the recent dissociation from Anglia Ruskin University (ARU). Members noted the information.
 - (ii) HE Students Early Statistics Return (HESES) The data in the return would inform funding rules and definitions for HESES20, which would provide an early indication of the number of students and teaching funds for 2021-22. The information, required by 2 February 2021, would confirm that lockdown had not adversely affected UCP recruitment.
 - (iii) Consultations. UCP had participated in 2 OfS administered consultations: "Regulating quality and standards in HE" with a submission date of 19 January 2021 and "A new approach to the Uni Connect programme" also required by the same date. The processes and themes were considered and discussed, some lack of clarity between "Quality" and "Standards" prompted comment; furthermore, not all HE led into higher rewards, for example theological provision. Funding for the "Uni Connect" initiative seeking to widen FE/adult participation in HE had not yet been confirmed.
- d. OfS Challenge Fund. The latest evaluation report had not yet prompted any OfS comment; the total grant of c£146k had been underspent by c£4k. It had been challenging to spend the funds during the "closed" environment, this experience had been mirrored across the sector. The focus had now been changed to present virtual recorded career talks and 25/44 planned sessions had been completed. Students' involvement was considered and an upturn in offers of help from employers and associated networking in parallel with development of personal skills was welcomed. Widening and development of the scheme continued and could supplement other considered initiatives such as final year students' National Career Service; 79 individuals had participated in 198 activities which were explained and welcomed.
- e. Academic Updates. The Annual Monitoring Report for ARU and Pearson would be considered at the Academic Board meeting (12.02.21) together with "Peer Assessment" as a valid basis for teaching reviews as part of campus strategy alignment. The next Council meeting would consider the "Academic Strategy and Curriculum Portfolio" informed by detail in Paper 7.3; **(Action 4)**
- f. Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) Peterborough Update. Media coverage of ARU Peterborough continued and the appointment of Professor Ross Renton as Principal had

recently been announced. UCP meetings with local schools and colleges continued as part of ARU consultation process and local information was informing the future UCP curriculum model all formed around student focus at the centre; marketing and good press coverage opportunities were taken and collaboration with ARU would be positively sought. It was also important that the term “Peterborough University” should be avoided and the correct title “ARU Peterborough” used in preference. **(Action 5)**

- g. Citizens UK. Citizens UK worked with a diverse group of leaders from schools, universities, hospitals, mosques, churches, synagogues, charities and other community groups. UCP is actively involved in establishing a steering group in Peterborough and was currently running a listening campaign to help with identification of necessary change which will inform the Citizen’s Assembly.

During general discussions, the Student Officer reported that he had recently attended an OfS seminar and had been surprised to find that he was the only student present. Members took comfort from his comments re executive communication with the student body which indicated that local communication at UCP was far superior to that extant at his present post-graduate institution. He also noted the focus on the mental wellbeing of students, which he personally had noted as increasingly challenging. Students missed the opportunities for socialising with contemporaries, for example spontaneous encounters between lectures, some short lived but valuable interpersonal exchanges.

**The information was received and noted.
Actions had been identified. (See Register at 37/20 below)**

Mathew Bradbury joined the meeting.

29/20 COVID

Both IEG and UCP responses to Covid had been robust and compliant with all protocols and requirements, support for stakeholders had been established; for example, distribution of laptops to digitally challenged students and close focus on wellbeing, particularly mental health had been established from an early stage. Additional OfS hardship grant had been made available for HE institutions (Appendix 1) and would be available this month. The detailed and comprehensive paper examined and explained the Covid arrangements for:

- a. wellbeing and safety for staff and students;
- b. additional financial support and hardship;
- c. academic experience;
- d. communications;
- e. support for UCP partners;
- f. testing; and
- g. development of governance and engagement opportunities.

The information had been available for some time but was again noted. During general considerations the influences were compared to a “Perfect Storm” with complex changes to OfS consultation processes, development of the UCP “niche” offer overlaid with changing and sometimes apparently contradictory Covid requirements. Additionally, digital poverty responses such as refocus of £1m+ to provide laptops for staff and students clearly influenced overall. The IEG was developing a working group dedicated to development of a mental health strategy. That was particularly welcomed and assurance was sought and provided that detailed records of all Covid associated activity were meticulously recorded and other supporting evidence of full compliance was available. Forward planning for students return to campus continued, although there was some indication that the new working patterns were being accepted by students. Personal care and attention was the norm in UCP; the relatively small environment in parallel with Open University (OU) partnership, looked to serve well in the future. The Council

recorded sincere thanks to all concerned with the performance throughout these difficult and challenging times and required the sentiment to be passed on. **(Action 6)**

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified. (See Register at 37/20 below)

30/20 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)

A comprehensive KPI report comprised a narrative supplemented by a data dashboard and graphical detail and was explained. The total student population, including those registered with sub-contractors stood at a healthy 826, both campuses were now reconciled on Pro-Solution. Other detail:

- a. applications for 2021.22 (target 750) were currently at 746 for direct entry and sub-contracted combined (RAG Rated);
- b. retention for 2020.21 (target 91%) stood at UCP Peterborough 96% and UCP Stamford 99%;
- c. progression (both red rated):
 - (i) between levels (Target 2%); and
 - (ii) from PC & SC (Target 40% of new applicants. Currently 9% at PC and) at SC, however the UCAS deadline extended to 29.01.21.

The information was noted. Discussions on the Performance Dashboard prompted the view that all was proceeding well despite the transient challenges and that was cautiously welcomed. The report and data tables were received and noted.

The information was received and noted.

31/20 FINANCE REPORT

Charlotte Hobday had now moved on from IEG however she had attended this meeting since she had been largely responsible for the detailing of the report during former role. Thanks were recorded to Charlotte for her past contribution and her cooperation at this meeting. **(Action 7)**

- a. Management Accounts. The IEG finance team's progressive assumption of financial administration from ARU had almost been completed but a small number of residual transactions (payments to) from the Student Loans Company (SLC) remained, provisions for the eventual settlement had artificially increased the number of cash days to 80 (target 35). The accurate year-to-date surplus stood at £148k ,slightly behind the budget projection and a reliable indicator that the end of year position would be met; the Income and Expenditure (I&E) report was at Appendix 1. Actual income at 37.81% of target was in line with the forecast and a detailed income table was at Appendix 2. The cash position briefly examined above would deteriorate in the short term, since no profit accrued however as that position was corrected the reserves would improve. There had been little financial effect from Covid and that was expected to continue.

Mark Woods left the meeting.

- b. 5-Year Financial Plan. Financial matters were reserved for IEG Corporation consideration and approval but it was necessary for this Council to satisfy themselves of the probity and practicality of the detail and to make recommendations accordingly. The recommendation from this meeting re the draft 5-Year Financial Plan would be considered by the IEG on 9 February 2021 which would satisfy the OfS submission deadline (end of that month). The Plan was then considered, informed by the 7 key assumptions, detail from prior years and present and future risks. The comprehensive paper was fully explained and discussed, supported and informed by specialised tabulated data worksheets. The document had been meticulously and prudently developed and included detail based on present and planned student numbers matched to planned provision, which had informed the income and expenditure forecasts. There was a surplus in each forecast year, with 2021.22 at the lowest (£47k) through "double" charges of validation and registration fees, a residual to ARU and future OU payments; subsequent years showed an increasing surplus. Cash

payments to the SLC had been considered in the previous item but the cash position for Year 4 (P53) would be reconsidered and some reprofiling may be necessary **(Action 8)** Capital expenditure had been considered in the detail however the offsetting OfS capital grant figure was not yet available. The Plan was welcomed and was unanimously recommended (including any changes to the CFF) IEG Corporation for approval and submission to the OfS. **(Action 9)**.

The information was received and noted.
Actions had been identified. (See Register at 37/20 below)

32/20 CONFIDENTIAL

33/20 RISK REGISTER (RR)

The RR had been considered by the Audit Committee (AC) at their meeting held on 15 December. Detail now been completely transferred to the “4Risk” template and system and the register items were clearly listed in the accompanying papers, each was individually considered. The register had been updated to include the latest Covid information and was discussed:

- a. Primary Risk. (number 26) “Failure to meet HE student numbers and income targets” The combination of Covid, unhelpful media and the impact of the proposed ARU Peterborough influenced this risk;
- b. Primary Risk (number 262) “Covid-19” Guidance was being scrupulously followed but, as this was frequently modified, a reactive response was often necessary. There was full working integration with IEG resources ; and
- c. Contingency Risks. Contingency Risks were monitored each term; the associated scoring and activity was fully explained in the RM Policy; the 2 highest risks related to sub-contract provision (number 261) mainly in Quality Advisory Agency (QAA) compliance and financial health (number 265). A new risk had been added (number 266) re UCP reliance on IEG systems.

During general discussions it was confirmed that training with RM issues continued and were these were full discussed at the regular meetings of the IEG RM Management Group.

The information was received and noted.

34/20 MEETING SCHEDULE

Some meeting dates had been changed to co-ordinate with higher level meetings and the revised schedule was noted and agreed. **(Action 11)**

The information was received and noted.
Actions had been identified. (See Register at 37/20 below)

35/20 URGENT BUSINESS

There had been no urgent business requested.

36/20 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held at 1630 on 25 March 2021.

37/20 ACTION TABLE

See referenced minute for full detail.		Resp	Date
Action 1	27/20a. Last minutes (26.11.20) confirmed for signature.	Sec	wie
Action 2	27/20c. DP unanimously appointed as an independent member.	Sec/AD	
Action 3	27/20d. Latest version draft AC minutes to be circulated.	Sec	
Action 4	28/20e. Academic Strategy&Curriculum Portfolio to next mtg.	AD	25.03.21
Action 5	28/20f. ARU Peterborough title to be used.		
Action 6	29/20. Appreciation of stakeholders’ performance to be notified.	Chair	wie
Action 7	31/20. Thanks recorded to CH.		
Action 8	31/20b. 5-Year Plan cash profile to be reconsidered	RN/LP	

Action 9	31/20b. UCP 5-Year Financial Plan recommended to IEG.	Chair	09.02.21
Action 10	32/20. Confidential	Sec	wie
Action 11	34/20. Revised meeting schedule approved.		

Rajesh Devarajan (Secretary) for Sir Les Ebdon (Chair)

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Final Audit Report

2021-05-11

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