



Minutes of an electronic meeting of the Council held at 1630hrs on 29 September 2021.

Present	Claire Bowes	Mathew Bradbury	Dr Alison Davies (Acting Chair till 04/21)	David Dixon
	Sir Les Ebdon (Chair)(04/21 on)	Dr Mary Kiernan	Monica Kinancaite	Shakira Martin (05/21 on)
	Rachell Nicholls (Principal)(PC)	Peter Walker	Mark Woods	
In Attendance	Ralph Devereux (Sec)	Liz Knight (AD)	Louise Perry (CFO)	James Larnar (Deputy Director)
	Dan Lee (HE Head)(SC)			
Apologies	Sameena Aziz	Shakira Martin (Late Arrival)		

01/21 ELIGIBILITY, QUORUM, DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- a. 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.
- b. The Chair had been unavoidably delayed and it was agreed that Dr Alison would act as interim. **(Action 1)**

The information was received and noted.

02/21 STANDING ITEMS

- a. The Chair thanked and welcomed all to the meeting.
- b. The Minutes of the last meeting held on 10 June 2021 were confirmed for electronic signature. **(Action 2)**
- c. Matters arising. There were no matters arising.
- d. Outstanding Actions. Actions from the last meeting were considered.

See referenced minute for full detail.		Status
Action 1	53/20b. Last Minutes (25.03.21) confirmed for signature.	Complete
Action 2	53/20c. Minutes circulation asap after meetings.	
Action 3	54/20a(i). Progress with OfS recommendations to Members.	
Action 4	58/20b. Budget 2121.11 recommended to IEG Corporation.	
Action 5	59/20b. Link preferences to Secretary.	
Action 6	59/20. RG thanked and commended for service to the Council.	

- e. Training Day. The notes of the Training Day held on 6 September 2021, would inform Item 5.

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified. (See Register at 13/21 below)

03/21 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;

- a. Policies and Training. As explained at the last Council Meeting it was necessary to publish an Office for Students (OfS) approved sexual harassment and misconduct policy; that had now been completed and the Policy “UCP-DIS002 HE Coping with Unacceptable Behaviour”, which met all OFS requirements had been published on the website. Also “Prevent” arrangements, had been virtually and comprehensively scrutinised by the OfS the previous day with confirmation that the required standard had been met; training for staff and students was being arranged to be delivered by the DfE Prevent Lead and additionally the updated “Advance HEA” on-line training would soon be available on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) CANVAS and the senior team, including the Student Officer (SO) received “Incel” (involuntary celibate) prevention training. The 19/20 Access and Participation Plan Annual Monitoring had also been approved by the OfS and published on the website.
- b. Returns. The Higher Education Early Statistics Survey (HESES-21) and the OfS confirmation of tuition fees were about to be submitted; explanations in the accompanying paper were noted. The future student fee profile was also considered in the paper and comments were noted.
- c. Sector Update. Michelle Donelan had now taken Governmental and national responsibility for the post 18, Further Education (FE) and skills portfolio.
- d. Covid. Current arrangements for Covid related issues, fully detailed in the accompanying paper were explained, discussed, and noted; full information was available at the Website “Inspire Education Group (IEG) – Covid updates.”
- e. Academic & Students. The HE Charter 21/22 had now been reviewed by the SO and student body and changes were informed in the accompanying paper. Timelines for the Open University (OU) Programme Validations had been tabulated and were noted. The Academic Board was on the 24 September, membership had been widened to include Matt Green (Vice-Principal (VP) Addict). UCP had been given a provisional award for the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF). Marketing and promotional restrictions are in place while the new TEF is launched and evaluated. Negotiations with Bishop Grossteste University (BGU) regarding provision of the future offer had been successfully completed, the new revalidated arrangements were welcomed. The graduation held on 23 September, which combined 4 ceremonies and both Peterborough College (PC) and Stamford College (SC) students had been very successful.

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified. (See Register at 13/21 below)

Sir Les Ebdon joined the meeting and assumed the Chair.

04/21 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)

The continuing repercussion from the last term’s cyber-attack had precluded necessary data collection for determination of KPI; consideration was postponed until the next meeting. An informative and interactive electronic presentation “Hello Future - Student Data and KPIs” (attached to the filed copy of these minutes) was delivered and well received.

The information was received and noted.

Shakira Martin joined the meeting.

05/21 HE STRATEGY

The first face-to-face gathering of Council Members had been on 8 September when all had met at the College for a “Training and Discussion Forum”. Notes from the event had been circulated with the papers for this meeting and informed a discussion and update on the way forward. The notes considered events involving the establishment of the Inspire Education Group (IEG) and the subsequent involved deregistration from the Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) and the partnership with the OU. The AD and her team were currently working on the

strategy, which would be brought to Council for consideration when the draft was complete. It was agreed that the awayday had been successful and provided a useful and informal environment with productive discussions and outcomes.

The information was received and noted.

06/21 FINANCE REPORT

- a. Management Accounts. The updated management accounts representing the draft year end position were explained. The year had in many ways been challenging however recruitment had been strong and that had led to a solid base. Variances to both income and expenditure had been higher than in a “normal” year; the turbulence caused by a combination of Covid and the new status as a wholly owned subsidiary. Overall income had been c£6.172m - £907k above expectations due to growth at both PC and the sub-contact partner “Addict Dance” and additional OfS grants and an unexpected refund from ARU. Expenditure had been c£5.904m – c£735 also above expectations, and related to the additional income. The consequently strong surplus of c£267K was welcomed. Recharging rates for services provided from PC would be adjusted as experience since merger had clearly facilitated a more equitable arrangement.
- b. Capital. The budget recommended last June and subsequently incorporated into the Group three-year plan did not include any capital allocation. However, The UCP approved 5-year financial plan had assumed a capital investment of £154k in 2021/22 being a combination of cash and grant. The expectation had been, based on previous experience, that £50-70k would be received; however, the OfS had, at a late stage, provided all universities with a maximum of £30k subject to a successful bid, Accordingly, 2 bids had been submitted:
 - (i) an IT Suite (bid £54,942 total cost £62.3k, and;
 - (ii) a heating/cooling system for the building. (£80.0k) Full detail of both projects were in the accompanying paper. The final costings were;
 - (iii) total capital required - £148.893;
 - (iv) capital grant 30k; and investment from reserves of £118,893.

Members were asked to consider and overall capital plan of £160k with a specific capital investment of £148k, the “spare” would represent a contingency for smaller items; should the bid for OfS grant be unsuccessful then the entire capital plan over and above the capital grant would be met from UCP resources. That was unanimously approved and recommended to the IEG Corporation. **(Action 3)**

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified. (See Register at 13/21 below)

07/21 STAFFING REPORT

The Group Human Resources (HR) Department had, as requested, produced a limited report on staff turnover; for PC, including UCP, the number for 2020/21 was 15.5%; all UCP staff were Group employees. The annual combined target was 18.2% and, before the cyber-attack, the rolling annual PC number had been 12.9%, the specific detail for UCP was 9.5% (4/120). The information was complex since some UCP staff were also employed at PC. This stable situation had become unusually fluid with 5 leaving since September this year, the reasons for departure were explained in the accompanying paper with the caveat that the HR database remained out of use (through the cyber-attack) and consequently the information could be biased towards PC and not UCP; the only common comment related to salary expectations. Live departure interviews by HR staff in preference to line managers, although desirable, was not a practical proposition. HR was currently temporarily quite understaffed and was under pressure introducing a new Group iTrent system and future plans, detailed in the accompanying paper, were closely discussed. There was nothing to indicate a higher than normal departure rate or of a common driving force, however a close focus would be maintained, and this area and Members would be regularly updated.

The information was received and noted.
Actions had been identified. (See Register at 13/21 below)

08/21 ANNUAL BUSINESS

The annual schedule of business for UCP Governance had been tabulated by meetings for the academic year 2021/22. The business programme was indicative and additional items would be added and it was suggested and agreed, in the light of discussions in the previous item, to add "Staffing" to the January Council meeting agenda. **(Action 4)** With that addition the Schedule was approved. **(Action 5)**

The information was received and noted.
Actions had been identified. (See Register at 13/21 below)

9/21 SCHEME OF DELEGATION

The robust Scheme of Delegation, which identified responsibility and authorities across 7 levels of the organisation was noted and approved. **(Action 6)**

The information was received and noted.
Actions had been identified. (See Register at 13/21 below)

10/21 RISK REGISTER (RR)

Although the Group Risk Analysis process had been reviewed (as considered in the awayday minutes) and would be adopted, this report remained in the current format. RR had been considered by the Audit Committee (AC) at their meeting held on 18 May; the full Register was attached to the Report. 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 growing impact of the proposed Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) Peterborough influenced this risk; the PC Principal and the UCP Chair were both liaising with that organisation. As had been discussed at earlier Council meetings, the need for the current UCP media "low profile" would shortly be diluted and some parity of exposure should be achieved;
- b. Primary Risk (number 262) "Covid-19" Guidance was being scrupulously followed but, as this was frequently modified, a reactive response was often necessary. Weekly meetings of the Covid Response Group continued;
- c. Primary Risk (number 214) "Student Accommodation/Halls of Residence" Risk had been increased since the fees issue remained unresolved. In June 2021 UCP had made an offer of "£20k prompted by the poor performance of the former agent; on 14 April, an invoice for c£113k had been received. A firm reply had indicated that the offer of £20k remained appropriate and if not accepted, the issue would be referred to UCP lawyers. Necessary and prudent financial measures had been taken. It had been previously confirmed that there was no mounting liability.
- d. 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 (261) which was included in the IAS Annual Plan and financial health (265). The IAS had recently and successfully scrutinised the sub-contracting provision.

During general discussions it was confirmed that training with RM issues continued and were full discussed at the regular meetings of the IEG RM Management Group. Although some feeling persisted; that post mitigation outcomes remained worryingly high in some area, assurances were received that the revised policy would impact the situation.

The information was received and noted.

11/21 URGENT BUSINESS

There had been no urgent business requested.

12/21 NEXT MEETING

Details of the next meeting would be at 1630 on 10 November 2021.

13/21 ACTION TABLE

See referenced minute for full detail.		Resp	Date
Action 1	01/21b. AD to act as Chair pro-tem.	Sec	wie
Action 2	02/21b. Last minutes confirmed for signature.		
Action 3	06/21. Capital programme recommended to IEG Corporation.	Chair	19.10.21
Action 4	08/21. "Staffing" to be added to January Council Agenda.	AD	20.01.22
Action 5	08/21 Governance Business Schedule approved.	Chair	wie
Action 6	09/21. Scheme od Delegation approved.		