

Abbreviated minutes of the fifty-ninth meeting of the Board of Directors held on 26 September 2017

- Present:** Dame Suzi Leather (Chair)
William Callaway, Amatey Doku, Professor Geoffrey Elliott, Wendy Finlay, Professor Alistair Fitt, Gillian Fleming, Peter Forbes, Carey Haslam, Mark Humphriss, Dr Andrew Purkis, Dr Martyn Thomas, Dr Simon Walford, Sophie Williams
- Apologies:** Andy Mack
Judy Clements (Independent Adjudicator and Chief Executive)
- Secretary:** Ben Elger (Chief Operating Officer)
- In Attendance:** Felicity Mitchell (Deputy Adjudicator)
Sarah Liddell (Head of Leadership Office)
Anda Albu (Executive Assistant) (staff observer)

17/27 Chair's business

There was no Chair's business.

17/28 Membership

The Board welcomed Amatey Doku to his first meeting of the Board, noted the appointment of Victoria Lowry as NUS Alternate Director and welcomed Anda Albu, Executive Assistant as staff observer to the meeting.

17/29 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest that are not already recorded on the Register of Interests.

17/30 Minutes of recent meetings

The minutes of the fifty-eighth meeting of the Board held on 27 June 2017 were approved.

17/31 Matters arising from the Minutes

The Board received a record of the matters arising from the minutes.

It was requested that the date for the 2018 Board Away Day should be set as soon as possible.

17/32 Report from the Independent Adjudicator and Chief Executive

The Board received the quarterly report from the Independent Adjudicator & Chief Executive.

Recent meetings with the Welsh Government and with HEFCW ahead of the consultation on proposed reforms to the post-compulsory education sector in Wales were noted.

Earlier discussions on the role of the Good Practice Framework in the new regulatory framework had raised the possibility that adherence to the Framework could be overseen by OfS. This has now moved on and the Framework will continue to fulfil its existing role whilst being recognised as complementary to documents such as the Quality Code.

Changes under HERA 2017 will require changes to some definitions in the OIA's Rules, and the opportunity will be taken to revise them and simplify the language at the same time. A working group will be convened to take this forward and Board members were invited to contact the Company Secretary to express interest in joining the group.

Further information on the OIA's plans to collect additional data on the number of formal complaints and academic appeals that providers receive each year will be brought to the next Board meeting.

The Board noted the importance of sharing information with the OfS to protect the interests of students.

There was support for continuing the OIA's longstanding policy of promoting settlement of cases where appropriate. It enables the OIA to model early resolution and is in line with the policy of promoting this within providers. It is an important part of the OIA's role to help providers to learn from complaints and monitoring this can be more difficult where the complaint has been settled.

The Outreach and Insight Team is taking forward engagement work with student advisors and others and a Student Liaison Officer is now in post. There will be a presentation on the work of the team at the December 2017 meeting of the Board.

The proposed publication of a piece on effective induction for international students was welcomed.

17/33 KPIs

The Board received a report on KPIs from the Chief Operating Officer.

Current performance against KPIs remains strong.

The proposal to increase the KPI for responding to enquiries within two working days from 90 to 95 per cent and to keep all other KPIs at their existing level in 2018 was **approved**.

17/34 Financial Matters

Finance Report to August 2017

The Board received the Finance Report to August 2017 from the Chief Operating Officer.

The Board congratulated the Office on successfully collecting in subscription income. Almost all core subscriptions have been paid, and all providers have paid their case element.

Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting

The Board received the minutes of the twenty-sixth meeting of the Finance Committee held on 12 September 2017.

Budget and subscriptions

The Board received a paper on the 2018 budget and subscriptions and 2019 estimates from the Chief Operating Officer.

The budget and estimates have been prepared in accordance with the principles agreed at the June 2017 Board meeting.

Core subscription

An increase of 2.9 per cent was **agreed** for 2018.

Case element

The Board considered the recommendations for amendments to the case fee element (impacting the 2019 financial year onwards):

- to increase the points attached to a full review from 4 to 5
- to reduce the per point fee from £240 to £190
- to maintain the principle of one 'free' case per year for all providers, and therefore to increase the free points allocation for the smallest providers from 4 to 5.

The impact on individual providers is mitigated by a reduction in the per point fee, and it is not anticipated that the changes would result in disproportionate costs for any providers. The recommendations were **approved**.

It was **agreed** that the points attached to settled cases should remain at 2 to support the organisational policy of promoting settlement where appropriate and in recognition that settlements usually involve less work than full reviews.

17/35 Governance

The Board received a paper on governance arrangements from the Company Secretary.

The proposal to set up a working group including Nominated and Independent Directors as well as the SLT to make recommendations to the Board about future governance was **approved**. Directors were invited to contact the Company Secretary to express interest in joining the group. The group will aim to bring recommendations to the March 2018 meeting of the Board.

17/36 Report from the Company Secretary

The Board received a report of Company Secretarial activity since the last Board meeting.

17/37 Any other business

There was no other business.

17/38 Reflections on the meeting

17/39 Dates of future meetings

Monday 11 December 2017 at 10.30am
Wednesday 28 March 2018 at 10.30am
Tuesday 26 June 2018 at 10.30am
Monday 24 September at 10.30am
Wednesday 5 December 2018 at 10.30am

Ben Elger
Company Secretary
29 September 2017