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| Cardiff Metropolitan University |
| Strategic Planning and Performance Committee Annual Report |
| Academic Year 2022/2023 |

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| Approved by: Taylor, JohnDecember 2023 |





Strategic Planning and
Performance Committee
Annual Report

# About the Committee

The Strategic Planning and Performance Committee (the **Committee**) is a delegated body of the Board of Governors (the **Board**) at Cardiff Metropolitan University (the **University**).

The Committee advises the Board on strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation of strategic priorities, progress towards growth, diversification and improvement, and horizon scanning.

In 2022/2023, the Committee was supported Greg Lane (Head of Governance and Deputy Clerk to the Board of Governors) and Emily Samphier (Governance Officer).

Remit

The Committee is responsible for advising the University on matters regarding strategic planning and academic performance. It’s Terms of Reference can be found at [Appendix 1](#_Appendix_1). In summary, its work included:

* Advising the Executive on matters of strategy, including planning, and evaluating performance against the strategic priorities through measures of success and key performance indicators.
* Development of, and assessment of progress against, the Fee and Access Plan.
* Reviewing the University’s performance in: the Research Excellence Framework, Academic Quality Assurance, and key league tables and surveys.
* Assessment of the impact of external changes through horizon scanning.

Membership

Membership of the Committee for the Academic Year 2022/23 was as follows:

* John Taylor (Chair and Independent Governor)
* Professor Cara Aitchison (President and Vice Chancellor)
* Nick Capaldi (Independent Governor)
* Roísín Connolly (Independent Governor)
* Venky Gonavaram (Student Governor)
* Paul Matthews (Independent Governor)
* Professor Myra Nimmo (Independent Governor) (til June 2023)
* Dr Christopher Turner (Independent Governor)

Meetings

Five meetings were held during the 2022/2023 Academic Year:

* 30 November 2022
* 19 January 2023
* 09 March 2023
* 20 April 2023
* 15 June 2023

The Committee provided a summary report to the Board of Governors following each meeting.

# The Committee’s Work During 2022/23

Due to the sustained effectiveness of online meetings, it was decided that the work of the Board’s Committees would continue to be carried out virtually, whilst meetings of the full Board took place in-person.

# Strategy

Thematic & Enabling Strategies

Following final approval of Strategy 2030 in July 2022 by the Board of Governors, the University began development on the Thematic and Enabling Strategies –

* Thematic Strategies: Learning, Teaching, & Student Engagement; Research & Innovation; Global Engagement; and Civic Mission.
* Enabling Strategies: Finance; Estate; People; & Digital.

Working Groups were convened to develop the sub-strategies in detail.

The University’s sub-strategies will involve significant investment and resources, and therefore the Committee had an integral role in ensuring the sub-strategies aligned with the University’s overall strategic direction, as well as reviewing how they would be presented to the University’s stakeholders.

The Thematic and Enabling Strategies were subsequently approved by the Board of Governors at its meeting on 06 July 2023.

Measures of Success

In support of the University’s strategic mission, the Committee played a significant role in the development and approval of the proposed Measures of Success (Key Performance Indicators). These Measures are vital in tracking progress towards the goals of Strategy 2030, providing valuable insight into areas that could be improved, and leading to data-driven decision-making. The agreed Measures fell into the following categories:

* Reputation – of which one target was to improve Cardiff Met’s League Table ranking to become a ‘top 50’ University by 2030.
* Learning, Teaching and Student Engagement – of which targets include improving retention as well as the National Student Survey Results.
* Research and Innovation – of which the target in R&I income was to achieve a better balance between the income of the two areas.
* Global Engagement – of which a target was to increase the number of international undergraduate students.
* Civic Mission – of which targets include increasing the number of Welsh speaking students studying at least 40 credits in Welsh per year, and to stay ahead of the Welsh sector for attracting widening access students.

Strategic Comparators

To ensure the Committee can benchmark the University’s performance and identify opportunities for improvement, the development of a list of strategic comparators is essential. Annually, the Committee discusses and reviews the list of institutions to consider if they are still aspirational or comparable when looking at the journey the University is on. This year, the Committee agreed to revise the list to reflect the University’s ambitions. The remaining institutions represented universities that Cardiff Met had ambitions to be like, with reference to the goals of Strategy 2030.

# Environment Scanning

As part of the Committee’s role in the University’s strategy, environment scanning is an essential tool to enable it to develop informed decisions about strategic priorities. Environment scanning updates were presented through a PESTLE analysis, which identifies key political, economic, social, technological, legal, & environmental factors that could impact the University’s future. The Committee considered this information and advised the University on how to approach these developments. Key areas considered in the 2022/2023 academic year included:

International Recruitment

There were two key changes during the academic year which had a potentially negative impact on the University’s international recruitment. Firstly, the UK Government made the decision to abolish visas for dependants of international postgraduate students. The changes were planned to take place in January 2024, meaning the impact was still unknown. Additionally, there was likely to be increased competition with Australia, which had recently changed its student visa, adding two-years post-study.

Inflation and Cost-of-Living

Throughout the academic year, the Committee kept a close eye on the cost-of-living crisis, assessing the impact it was having on both students and staff.

Commission for Tertiary Education and Research Wales

Whilst there were no immediate changes for the University to act on during 2022/23, the Committee regularly reviewed the developments relating to the new Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (the **Commission**), which would be replacing HEFCW in 2024. The Commission’s regulatory remit would encompass both Higher Education and Further Education, unlike HEFCW which had oversight of HE only. The Committee regularly discussed the Commission’s priorities around Learner Voice and Civic Mission, and intended to discuss ways of developing these areas further once CTER’s priorities became more evident.

# Performance

As part of the Committee’s commitment to oversee the development of the University’s strategic goal to be a Top 50 UK University, it received regular relevant reports throughout the academic year.

League Tables

As a widely used and influential measure of university performance, league tables can have a significant impact on attracting students. Therefore, consideration of the UK league tables is vital for developing strategies to improve the University’s overall image.

In 2022, the University’s general league table performance was as follows:

* 72nd out of 130 UK providers in the Complete University Guide (down 9 places);
* 73rd out of 121 UK providers in the Guardian University Guide (down 11 places);
* 93rd out of 132 UK providers in Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide (down 14 places).

A Working Group had been established to look at the University’s ambition to be a Top 50 University by 2030. The University would need to explore the staff/student ratio, student retention & completion, as well as the NSS among other areas.

Student Recruitment

As the University’s main source of income is tuition fees, tracking the University’s progress towards its enrolment targets is important to identify areas for improvement. At each meeting, the Committee was briefed on the recruitment statistics and activities at the University.

During 2022/23, a key issue for the HE sector, including the University, was the decrease in PGCE applications. This reduction was being seen across the sector due to the career no longer seeming attractive to potential students (caused by deterioration in pay and conditions). The Committee worked with the Executive on ways to improve the University’s offering, and discussed proposals that could be taken forward to help the challenge of recruiting teachers across Wales.

Additionally, student retention had been causing concern across the sector, due to the challenges associated with the cost-of-living.

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey Results 2022

The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (**PRES**)indicates how well the University supported Doctoral Research candidates. In 2022, the University ranked 2nd of 54 HE institutions, with a 90% general satisfaction rate – this was 10% above the sector average, and the University’s joint best performance. The Committee discussed with the Executive how to make any further improvements to the scores. A key area the University was developing was community and culture among postgraduates, this included social meetups such as brunch clubs.

Graduate Outcomes 2019/20

To assess if the University is effectively providing its students with the skills and knowledge to progress further in education or the workforce, the Committee annually reviews graduate outcomes. Strategically, this is also vital, as failure to deliver strong graduate outcomes could impact the University’s position in league tables and its ability to recruit students.

The 2019/20 graduate outcomes had improved on the previous year, indicated in metrics such as:

* 95.8% in any kind of work or further study, up from 93.1%
* 71.4% graduate level outcomes, up from 68.4

# Fee & Access Plan Evaluation

## All Welsh Universities must annually submit a fee & access plan to HEFCW. Fee & Access Plans are about making “a significant and lasting contribution to widening access to higher education in Wales”[[1]](#footnote-2), showing how the institution is providing support for disadvantaged groups.

## The Committee annually evaluates the Fee & Access Plan, also a HEFCW requirement. This year, it was highlighted that Cardiff Met remained strong at attracting widening access students, and in areas where it been behind target, action plans were in place.

# Academic Assurance

HEFCW Quality Assurance Statements 2021-2022

A key element of the Committee’s delegated responsibility is Governor-level consideration of academic assurance. Like with other years, the Annual Assurance Report was framed around ten internal assurances, mapped to the six Governors’ Assurance Statements and to the expectations of the revised UK Quality Code.

The Annual Assurance Statement was reflective of a successful visit to the University by HEFCW in Spring 2022, the Triennial Assurance Review. It was confirmed by HEFCW that it was assured regarding all six of the quality statements:

1. The Governing Body has received a report taking account of the external quality assurance review, and an action plan had been put in place and implemented as appropriate, in partnership with the student body.
2. The methodologies used as a basis to improve the student academic experience and student outcomes, to the best of our knowledge, robust and appropriate.
3. The standards of awards for which we are responsible have been appropriately set and maintained.
4. The governing body has considered a report on the annual dialogue between the institution and the student union or equivalent, scrutinised student survey outcomes and confirmed that action plans have been put in place and implemented, in partnership with the student body.
5. The governing body has received a copy of the relationship agreement between the institution and the student union or equivalent, and a copy of the student charter, both of which have been reviewed within the past year.
6. The governing body has effective oversight of degree outcomes and academic integrity.

Spring & Summer Quality Assurance

The Committee also received spring & summer QA updates, which summarised the progress of activities relating to external review and sector QA developments.

Degree Outcome Statement 2020/2021

The Degree Outcome Statement evaluates the University’s degree classification distribution, ensuring that it aligns with national degree standards. The Committee receives this report each year before submitting it to HEFCW, and also assesses the University’s efforts to enhance best practices. In 2020/21 key metrics included:

* 84.5% of students achieved Good Honours, this pattern was in line with the sector with an average in 2020/21 of 82% Good Honours.
* The University had seen an increase in First-Class degrees due to the No-Detriment Policies put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic, and this was now above the sector average.

# Complaints and Conduct

The Committee reviews complaints and conduct through an annual complaints and conduct report, and the OIA Annual Statement. Through this, the Committee can ensure that the University is meetings obligation to provide a positive learning environment for all students.

Complaints & Conduct 2021-22

The Annual Complaints & Conduct Report highlights trends or significant areas of concern that need to be addressed. This aids in ensuring the University can continually improve its programmes, support services and administration. In the academic year 2021-22, it was found that for the size of the University, and the complexity of the student experience, the level of complaints received were in-line or below sector average.

**John Taylor**
Chair of Strategic Planning & Performance Committee

December 2023

# Appendix 1

Strategic Planning & Performance Committee Terms of Reference 2022-2023

**Committee Terms of Reference:**

**STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE**

Reports to: the Board of Governors

Occurrence: up to 5 meetings a year, with additional meetings scheduled as required

*Terms of reference last revised: November 2021; and next due for review: September 2023*

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| Members: John Taylor (Chair) Nick Capaldi Roisin ConnollyPaul Matthews Professor Myra NimmoChris TurnerProfessor Cara Aitchison (President and Vice-Chancellor) SU President (Community & Affairs)Quorum: 4 members, at least 3 of which must be Independent or Co-opted Governors  | In attendance: University Secretary and Clerk to the Board of Governors Head of Governance Deputy Vice-Chancellor Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Engagement Chief Officer (Resources) Head of Strategy, Planning and Performance At the discretion of the Chair other University officers, as may be appropriate, shall be invited to attend meetings.  |

Remit:

The Strategic Planning and Performance Committee advises the Board on matters relating to strategic planning; the monitoring and evaluation of strategic priorities and performance against the strategic plan; the evaluation of progress relating to the overarching agenda of growth, diversification and improvement; and horizon scanning. The Committee also has a role in giving initial recommendations and advice to Board on Masterplanning[[2]](#footnote-3).

Terms of reference:

1. To consider and have authority to approve on behalf of Board:
	1. The development of and progress against the Fee and Access Plan, including reviewing the revisions to annual plans and updated guidance from HEFCW.
	2. External academic scrutiny relating to performance, especially the Research Excellence Framework and Academic Quality Assurance (in line with the Quality Assessment Framework for Wales), as well as the National Student Survey, Postgraduate Research Experience Survey, league tables, and other requirements from HEFCW and the Welsh Government.
	3. The approach for the annual Board awayday on strategy.
	4. The development and implementation of major projects, new enterprises and strategic investments.
	5. Anything other item or issue delegated to it from the Board
2. To provide initial recommendations and advice for Board approval:
	1. The overall strategic direction of the University in relation to the formal responsibilities of the Board and its members, including the Strategic Plan, Purpose, Values, and high-level measures of success. Identifying key issues for Board consideration, bringing ideas and working papers to Board for fuller discussion.
	2. Proposals for the general or long-term direction of the University through horizon scanning and review of big pictures issues in the sector and wider economy and society, both nationally and globally. Recommendations to inform annual Board horizon scanning session at awayday on strategy.
	3. The impact of major external changes and possible impact on the students and strategy of the University, including post-pandemic planning.
3. To receive reports for information and consider and advise Board and/or the Vice-Chancellor as appropriate on:
	1. The performance of the University relating to the priorities of the strategic plan against high level measures and key performance indicators.
	2. The performance of the University in league tables
	3. The development and implementation of major projects, new enterprises and strategic investments.
	4. Emerging strategic issues arising out of the work of the Board’s committees.

The Committee may establish time-limited Task & Finish Groups to undertake any of the above responsibilities on its behalf. The membership and reporting arrangements of such Task & Finish Groups shall be agreed by the Chair of Board, the Committee Chair, or the Vice-Chancellor, according to business demands.

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Operation

The Committee shall agree and present to the Board an annual report outlining the key business undertaken by the Committee during the previous academic year, with a particular focus on the decisions taken by the Committee on behalf of the governing body in accordance with the delegated authorities provided in these terms of reference.

The Committee shall provide a summary report to Board following each meeting, setting out what decisions have been taken via delegated authority. The Chair will provide an oral update to Board as necessary highlighting any issues that they need to bring to the attention of the Board.

The Committee may consider matters referred to it by Board, the Management Board or Academic Board (via the Vice-Chancellor), or the University Vice-Chancellor’s Executive Group.

# Appendix 2

Attendance at Meetings

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| **Name | Date** | 30-Nov-22 | 19-Jan-23 | 09-Mar-23 | 20-Apr-23 | 15-Jun-23 |  |
| Professor Aitchison, Cara (Vice-Chancellor) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Apologies |  |
| Capaldi, Nick (Independent Governor) | Yes | Apologies | Yes | Yes | Yes |  |
| Connolly, Roisin Lara (Independent Governor) | Apologies | Yes | Yes | Apologies | Yes |  |
| Gonavaram, Venky (Student Governor) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Apologies |  |
| Matthews, Paul (Independent Governor) | Yes | Apologies | Apologies | Apologies | Yes |  |
| Nimmo, Myra (Independent Governor) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | n/a |  |
| Taylor, John (Chair & Chair of the Board) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |  |
| Dr Turner, Christopher | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Apologies |  |

1. [W22-19HE-Fee-and-access-plan-application-guidance-English.pdf (hefcw.ac.uk)](https://www.hefcw.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/W22-19HE-Fee-and-access-plan-application-guidance-English.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The SPPC will consider Estates Masterplanning from a strategic perspective and make recommendations to the Board of Governors on the overall plan; the Resources Committee will consider the establishment, development and monitoring of the Estates Strategy including the acquisition and disposal of land and buildings and the effective and efficient use of resources related to this as well as the purchase of capital goods and services in accordance with the provisions of the financial regulations. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)