

## Board of Directors Minutes

Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at 3pm  
Teams online

### Attended:

- Rob Cowan – Director, CEO
- Jules Brookes – Director, Head of Provider, Chair
- Anwar Hamad – Director, General Manager, Clerk
- Mulika Sannie – Non-Executive Director
- Peter Black – Non-Executive Finance Director
- Andrew Gower – Non-Executive Director

### Apologies:

- Keith Harris – Non-Executive Director

## MINUTES

### Item

#### Section 1: Welcome

##### 1.1. Welcome and apologies

- 1.1.1. The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

##### 1.2. Confirmation of minutes from the previous meeting

- 1.2.1. The board **confirmed** the minutes from the previous meeting.

##### 1.3. Actions update

- 1.3.1. The General Manager provided an update on actions from the previous meeting, noting that the information on first-time pass rates was included in the report presented to the Audit and Value for Money Committee.
- 1.3.2. Regarding the action on the graduate scheme, it was agreed that the School would more proactively advertise new positions to graduates until a formal graduate scheme is established.
- 1.3.3. The Academic Board confirmed that Middlesex University regulations are always reviewed before decisions are made. For this particular instance, the change to requirements was covered under the existing validation agreement, so no additional consultation with Middlesex University was needed.
- 1.3.4. Further discussions regarding the Knowledge Transfer Partnership were postponed due to the recent building opening. This action will be revisited in the new term. **ACTION.**

## **Section 2: Standing Items (to note unless starred)**

### **2.1. Head of Provider's report**

- 2.1.1. The accounts were reviewed in detail at the Audit and Value for Money Committee meeting, showing results that outperformed the forecast—a positive outcome for the School.
- 2.1.2. The recent launch of the new website and branding marks the culmination of a year-long development process. This rebranding aims to make a bold statement that distinguishes pointblank from its competitors, positioning the School as a key player in the industry and an attractive stepping stone for prospective students. We anticipate that the refreshed branding, alongside the new building, will enhance our appeal and lead to increased student enrolment.
- 2.1.3. Current projections indicate that we will welcome more new students in September 2024 compared to the previous year. A primary recruitment focus will now shift to the January 2025 intake.
- 2.1.4. With the completion of the expanded premises, there will be greater opportunity to prioritise and advance other strategic initiatives.

### **2.2. Premises expansion update**

- 2.2.1. The CEO provided an update on the Penn Street expansion, reporting that the project is nearing completion. An unforeseen issue with the air handling units has now been resolved and Practical Completion is anticipated by the end of this week, allowing the new facility to open in time for the start of term. In the event of any additional unexpected delays, a contingency plan is in place to continue delivering from the current facility, with a phased opening of the new space during the term. Due to the project delays, there is potential for litigation with the contractors. A Non-Executive Director advised that while pursuing full compensation may be legally justified, the cost of litigation can be high, and reaching a settlement may be a more cost-effective approach to dispute resolution.
- 2.2.2. The CEO also noted that the Creative Director has taken on the role of project manager, overseeing daily operations related to the expansion.

### **2.3. Adopt the management accounts for the quarter ended 30/06/2024**

- 2.3.1. The management accounts were presented with no comments from the Board, and they were formally adopted.

#### **2.4. Degree Award Powers (DAPs) update**

- 2.4.1. The Head of Provider reported that the Degree Awarding Powers (DAP) application was submitted in April. Since submission, the team has been preparing the necessary evidence to support the application. The School is well-prepared, though the evidence itself has not yet been submitted; it will be provided later in the year, in line with the required deadline.
- 2.4.2. The Office for Students (OfS) reached out in August, and a briefing with them is scheduled for October. Assuming the initial evidence assessment is successful, a formal scrutiny period will begin in early 2025. This scrutiny phase will likely involve two meetings and may require additional evidence submissions. If the process proceeds smoothly, a decision could be expected within a year.
- 2.4.3. A Non-Executive Director congratulated the Head of Provider on reaching this significant milestone, expressing encouragement with the progress and the outlined process.

#### **2.5. Review report from Academic Board**

- 2.5.1. The Board reviewed the report, with a Non-Executive Director enquiring whether the current number of 225 “at-risk” students is typical for the institution. The Head of Provider noted that these students are actively supported by the Retention Working Group, which is focused on reducing this figure. The General Manager will consult with the Head of Education and Curriculum and the Registrar to determine if comparable figures are available from other institutions within the sector. **Action.**
- 2.5.2. It was noted that a recommendation from the Academic Board suggests a 5% reduction in the intake of mature students. The rationale for this recommendation was unclear, and the General Manager will seek further clarification. **Action.**
- 2.5.3. The Board requested that the Academic Board include references to the validating partner when proposing policy or process changes to ensure these align with the policy position or requirements of the validating partner. **Action.**
- 2.5.4. The Board welcomed the proposal for the Student Success award and recommended that the Academic Board confirm the resources required to implement it. The Head of Education and Curriculum is currently assessing these needs.
- 2.5.5. The Head of Provider updated the Board on the deferral of two newly validated degree programs, noting that recruitment numbers did not meet expectations. After evaluating marketing, entry criteria, and program

content, adjustments have been made to enhance the appeal of these courses for the upcoming academic year.

2.5.6. No further comments were raised.

## **2.6. Review report from Executive Committee**

2.6.1. The Board recommended that EXCO review the terms of reference and assess whether the Creative Director's involvement remains necessary, given that he has been unable to participate this year due to commitments related to the building project. **Action.**

2.6.2. The CEO provided an update on the decision regarding the four-hour delivery project. The review of this delivery method highlighted additional areas for improvement in student engagement, such as potential upgrades to the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). These improvements are currently under consideration.

2.6.3. No further comments were raised.

## **Section 3: Items to Decide**

N/A

## **Section 4: Items to Discuss**

### **4.1. Discuss any recommendations from Audit and Value for Money Committee**

4.1.1. The following items were recommendations from the Audit and Value for Money Committee:

- Any amendments to the Risk Register be highlighted for future reference.
- Provide a summary of the student numbers and capacity projections.
- Risk 2.1 should be revised to focus more on the risks surrounding quality.
- Share the latest draft of the APP to highlight the analysis conducted and the actions being taken.
- Provide more details about the actions relating to the APP in the summary document provided to the Committee at each meeting.

## **Section 5: Items to Note**

### **5.1. Students numbers report**

5.1.1. The Board reviewed the student numbers report, with a particular focus on new Higher Education (HE) starters for the upcoming October term. It was noted that figures may fluctuate before the start of term, but an intake of approximately 270–275 new HE students is anticipated for the London

campus which would be the biggest cohort to date. A slight decrease in new starters for the Online School is expected compared to the previous October. The CEO enquired about the reason for potential fluctuations in the numbers, to which the General Manager explained that some students who have accepted offers may change their plans prior to commencing the course.

- 5.1.2. The Board noted that the Senior Team is exploring ways to enhance the online student experience. Proposed improvements may include redesigns of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and the Student Dashboard.

## Section 6: Close

### **6.1. Vote on Shareholders' dividends**

- 6.1.1. The Board approved the issue of Shareholders' dividends.

### **6.2. Confirmation of next meeting date**

- 6.2.1. The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled to take place in person on 11th December at the Penn Street office, pending confirmation from those directors who were unable to attend the current meeting.

### **6.3. AOB**

- 6.3.1. There was no other business.

## Key Contacts

Chair: Jules Brookes  
 Jules@pointblankmusiccschool.com  
 Clerk: Anwar Hamad  
 Anwar@pointblankmusiccschool.com

## Actions Table

Action No.	Minute Ref.	Action	Deadline	Responsible Parties
1	3.1.1 from previous minutes	CEO should meet with the Head of Quality to discuss how KTPs.	Next meeting	CEO

2	2.5.1	Determine if there are comparable figures available from other institutions within the sector regarding 'students at risk'.	Next meeting	General Manager
3	2.5.2	Seek further clarification regarding the Academic Board's reference to a 5% reduction in intake of mature students.	Next meeting	General Manager
4	2.5.3	Inform the Academic Board to include references to the validating partner when making any policy or process changes to ensure these align with the partner's requirements.	Next meeting	General Manager
5	2.6.1	EXCO to review the terms of reference and assess whether the Creative Director's involvement remains necessary.	Next meeting	General Manager