

2011 Effectiveness Review: Recommendations

Overall Assessment:

By the best standards of UK higher education, governance at Edge Hill is fundamentally sound and its Governing Body is highly effective in many key respects. There are some areas where effectiveness can be significantly enhanced but the commitment of the Governing Body to continuing improvement and development augurs well for the future.

No	Recommendation	Report Ref	Comments
1	There should be a further informal discussion on the role of the Board, with a view to developing a final paper to which all members might subscribe	5.7	<p>The Board recognises this as a continuing debate which is encompassed in a number of completed or ongoing discussions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a new Strategic Plan; • Board re-structuring proposals; • Development of a Scheme of Delegation; • Presentation of documentation for the Board; • Members' annual conversations with the Chair of the Board. <p>In addition, the Board has sought to extend its understanding of the academic business of the University through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular reports from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic); • Presentations from areas of the University not generally represented at Board or committee meetings; • Regular reports from the President of the Students' Union; • Continuation of the academic committee link governor scheme.
2	Together with its (new) Chair, the Board should consider the structure of agendas, the frequency of meetings and general modus operandi as suggested in detail in the report.	5.9	This work is now complete with a number of proposals agreed in terms of the structure of Board committees, frequency of meetings and presentation of documentation.

3	There should be individual reviews of members' experience both towards the end of a period of membership and more frequently – perhaps annually – during the membership period; these arrangements should include reviews of the Chair.	5.10	Annual conversations with the Chair have been instituted.
4	All committees should follow the Audit Committee practice of an annual self-evaluation.	5.10	A new pro-forma has been devised for use by all Committees at the first meeting of the year. These will be implemented in September 2012.
5	A full evaluation of Board effectiveness should be undertaken every four years and should be supported by an external facilitator and should be accompanied by a review of academic governance.	5.10	This recommendation is accepted in principle. The next full evaluation will be in 2015/16.
6	The Board, through the Nominations Committee, should review the process for the appointment of new members as recommended in the July 2010 report.	5.11	Appointment procedures have been approved and are contained in the Board's Standing Orders.
7	With regard to internal and external communications, the Board and the Executive need to determine their respective roles; suggestions are made as to how the Board might raise its profile both within the institution and externally.	5.13	<p>The Vice-Chancellor and the Chair of Governors consult appropriately on matters of internal/external communication. The Chair of Governors undertakes a number of externally-facing duties and represents the University on some public occasions. Governors are represented on the West Lancs Borough Council/University Forum. All Governors are invited to attend public and social events many of which involve opportunities to meet with student representatives.</p> <p>The Board is not convinced that a public Annual General Meeting would serve a useful purpose at this stage but the matter will be kept under review.</p>

8	The Board should satisfy itself about the processes for achieving quality in both academic and service areas – even though the responsibility for achieving both rests with the Executive (section 7.3).	7.3	The Board receives Academic Board minutes, the student satisfaction survey and staff survey results. Scrutiny of quality in both academic and service areas is a priority of the Audit Committee and the focus of internal audit processes. This is enhanced through additional periodic presentations to the Board.
9	Informal briefings might be held on particular themes relating to the University's core academic business in order to keep governors well informed.	7.3	Facilities for this will be enhanced through the new Board structure.
10	Given the difficult circumstances facing higher education for the foreseeable future, the Board should devote a Strategy Day/Awayday to consideration of future issues, both those facing all institutions and those specific to Edge Hill.	8.0	This is addressed in the new Board structure which incorporates more frequent Board meetings.

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Clerk to Governors
June 2012