

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF ACTIVATE LEARNING
HELD AT THE CITY OF OXFORD CAMPUS ON 16 APRIL 2018

PRESENT:	Tracey James	Acting Chair
	Sally Dicketts	Chief Executive Officer
	Maire Brankin	
	James Dipple	
	Evelyn James	
	Dermot Mathias	
	Pauline Odulinski	
	Malcolm Wicks	
	Nigel Rayner	(NRa)
	Nina Robinson	(NRo)
	Julia Von Klonowski	(as indicated in the minutes)
	Ben Sims	Staff Governor
	Anja Owona Okoa	Student Governor
IN ATTENDANCE:	Steve Ball	Chief Finance Officer
	Lee Nicholls	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
	Paul Newman	Group Executive Director
	Bill Hunt	Director of Higher Education (as indicated in the minutes)
CLERK:	Jamie Wade	

PART I

<u>MINUTE NO.</u>	<u>PART I</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	The meeting started at 16:00	
1.	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> The Board received apologies from Chris Jones, and noted that Julia Von Klonowski would join the meeting later.	
2.	<u>Declarations of Interest, Gifts and Hospitality</u> PO declared her interests, as recorded on the Register of Interests. NRo declared that negotiations were underway between Activate Learning (AL) and NRo's company for the provision of services, and the CEO declared that she had received a hamper. It was agreed that none of the interests, declarations or gifts declared were relevant to the agenda. No other members declared any conflict of interest, gift or hospitality.	
3.	<u>Minutes of the Meeting of 19 February 2018</u> The minutes of the meeting on 19 February 2018, having previously been circulated to the Board, were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. All members were agreed.	

MINUTE

ACTION

NO.

4.

Matters Arising from the Meeting of 19 February 2018

The Board noted the progress of matters arising from the minutes of the meeting of 19 February 2018. The Clerk informed the Board that, due to other priorities, two items intended for the May Away Day agenda were to be postponed to a later meeting. The CEO provided an overview of the proposed agenda and invited governors to communicate any comments to herself or the Chair of the Corporation.

5.

Deep Dive – Higher Education

The Director of Higher Education presented an update on Higher Education (HE) in AL, highlighting key achievements, the effects of changes in the sector (including the Post-18 Review), and progress towards the 2021 targets. The Director of HE informed the Board of the upcoming application process for registration with the Office for Students, and the restrictive impact of not registering, and received the Board's support.

The Board considered opportunities and challenges around delivery of Higher or Degree Apprenticeships, and noted the benefits of building upon strengths in vocational provision. The Director of HE advised the Board of the impact of nationally falling applicant numbers in HE, including an increase in unconditional offers which was impacting motivation in Access and A Level students as well as driving differentiation between providers. The Board discussed opportunities to increase student numbers through the development of AL career pathways into HE, building a strong brand through consistency and quality, partnering with key employers and developing flexible, modular options.

JVK joined the meeting at 16:30.

The Director of HE advised the Board of the potential impact of the potential mergers on HE provision in AL, including the opportunity to capitalise on greater volume to increase focus on and investment in HE.

The Board considered the risk to the 2021 target of 800 HE students, and whether the current strategy was sufficient to achieve the target without reliance on merger growth. The Board noted the challenges presented by late notification of policy changes and competition with established universities. The CEO added that HE provision was important for the delivery of full AL career pathways.

The Board noted that a 3-year HE plan was in development and would be present to the Board for review.

Action: Present the 3-year HE plan, showing minimum and stretch targets, and delineating the impact of mergers within the numbers.

PN/BH

The Board thanked the Director of HE for an informative presentation.

BH left the meeting at 16:55.

6.

Finance and Performance

a) *Management Accounts and Year End Forecast*

The CFO presented the Management Accounts, February 2018, which were taken as read. The CFO delivered a presentation of key issues arising from the Management Accounts and Year End forecast, noting in particular the timing issues affecting the mid-year position and the level of confidence in the achievement of the forecast surplus. The CFO presented a breakdown of opportunities and risks to the full year

**MINUTE
NO.**

ACTION

forecast, noting that in the present view, the opportunities outweighed the risks, primarily due to anticipated income from the Saudi Partnership. The Board considered data from the ESFA dashboard, which confirmed AL's 'good' financial rating and position ahead of the sector in cash profit and borrowing.

b) Strategic KPI Summary

The Board received the KPI Summary, which was taken as read.

c) Property and Facilities Update

The CFO provided a verbal update on property and facilities, noting the progress of an application for funding to the Oxford LEP.

d) Health and Safety Update

The Board received the Group Health and Safety Report, which was taken as read.

e) Group Risk Register

The Board received the Strategic Risk Register and noted that a full review of risk was scheduled for the May Away Day. The Board considered the mitigations against key risks to the 2021 targets, and were assured that GDPR was considered a strategic risk as a result of the action plan in place to ensure compliance.

7. CEO Report

The CEO presented the CEO Report, which was taken as read, and highlighted the key points. The CEO advised the Corporation of the upcoming opening of the Plough Restaurant, which would provide training opportunities for AL apprentices and students and the Board approved the application of the Corporation Seal to the Shareholders Agreement by which AL would invest in 5% shares of The Plough. All members were agreed.

The Board thanked the CEO for the helpful webinar update which had been circulated to governors prior to the meeting.

8. Improvement Plan Update

The Deputy CEO presented the Improvement Plan Update, which was taken as read, and highlighted that, whilst legacy issues prevented improved Timely Success rates in Apprenticeships for 2017/18, integration of Apprenticeship provision into the Quality Assurance process was expected to result in significant improvement in 2018/19. The Board considered the Quality Assurance work underway, including the implementation of a new tracking system. The Board noted that 'value added' ranking in vocational courses was a focus for improvement, especially in light of the impact of 'value added' on AL's ability to bid for certain T-Level provision.

The Board considered the dissemination of Attributes work and noted feedback from the Student Governor about the impact of a reliance on tutorials for embedding Attributes on consistency and the reach of end of year assessments, particularly for A Level students. The Board considered the measurement of Attributes 'value-added' and were assured that this would be reported at the end of the year.

Action: Circulate the Attributes YouTube video to the Board.

Clerk

Action: Report Attributes 'value added' 2017/18 to the Board at the end of the

DCEO

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year.

9. Minutes of Committees

a) *Search and Governance*

The Board noted that there were no recommendations from the meeting of the Search and Governance Committee on 16 April 2018.

b) *Ends and Means Working Group*

The Board received the minutes of the meeting of the Ends and Means Working Group on 15 February 2018.

10. Policies

The Board received the Assessment & Verification Policy, Financial Support Policy – 16-19, Financial Support Policy – 19+, Fees Policy and Professional Conduct Policy, which were taken as read and approved by the Board.

All members were agreed.

11. Use of Corporation Seal

The Clerk advised the Board of the application of the Corporation Seal to the Part II minutes of the meeting of the Corporation on 19 February 2018, which was approved by the Board. All members were agreed.

12. Evaluation

The Board completed an evaluation of the meeting and noted the quality of the papers and that it had been helpful to understand the context of discussions through the papers and presentations.

13. Any Other Business

No other business was raised.

14. Dates of Upcoming Meetings

Away Day 12:30pm Monday 14th May - 4pm Tuesday 15th May

Board Meeting 18th June 2018 4 - 6:30pm

Board Meeting 9th July 2018 4 - 6:30pm

The meeting closed at 17:30

Chair

Date

Summary of Actions

Action	Responsible
Present the 3-year HE plan, showing minimum and stretch targets, and delineating the impact of mergers within the numbers.	PN/BH
Circulate the Attributes YouTube video to the Board.	Clerk
Report Attributes 'value added' 2017/18 to the Board at the end of the year.	DCEO