

**LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE AND TROPICAL MEDICINE
COUNCIL
MINUTES 27 JUNE 2024
APPROVED BY COUNCIL ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2024**

MEETING OF COUNCIL

Date of meeting: Thursday 27 June 2024, 14:00 to 16:30

Place of meeting: Hybrid via LSHTM Board Room (G05) and ZOOM Video Conference

Present: Don Robert (Chair), Mohamed Osman, Angela Darlington, Liam Smeeth, Clare Chandler, Matt Lee, Hitesh Patel (*virtual attendance*), Mike Turner, Nazira Amra, Naomi Stewart, Jocelyn Prudence, Hamza van der Ross, Nambusi Kyegombe, Lindsay Northover (*virtual attendance*) and Diana Layfield.

Partial Attendance: Moffat Nyirenda (*for item 1*), Alana Luckraft (*up to item 6.2*), Caroline Relton (*for item 6.2*), Hannah Whiteman (*for item 6.2*), Elsa Butrous (*for item 6.2*) and Paul Ensor (*for item 7.1*).

Apologies: Mark Poulton and James Hargreaves.

Minutes: Ayisha Govindasamy.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Welcome & Introduction

1.2. Declarations of Interests: None declared.

1.3. Minutes from the previous meeting

Resolved:

1.3.1. Council approved the minutes from the previous meeting held on 26 March 2024.

1.4. Actions taken by the Chair

Noted:

1.4.1. The Chair signed a letter of support for the Sustainable Climate Impact Fund (SCIF) on behalf of LSHTM Council.

2. SPOTLIGHT SESSION

Received: Council received a presentation from Moffat Nyirenda (Unit Director) on the work of the Medical Research Council/Uganda Virus Research Institute and London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine.

3. REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR

3.1. Director's Report

Noted:

3.1.1. The Director recently attended the London Higher Annual General Meeting where Lord Willetts, former Universities Minister, was in attendance.

3.1.2. Should the Labour Party be elected as the next UK Government, it is expected that their approach to immigration for both students and skilled workers will be more supportive to higher education.

3.1.3. Across the UK Higher Education sector, many universities were struggling financially, and some universities were undertaking voluntary redundancy programmes. It was understood that more established and world-renowned universities such as Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial and other specialist institutions such as LSHTM would not be as severely impacted.

3.1.4. The Director would be meeting with the current Shadow Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Wes Streeting, later in July 2024 to discuss the future of the NHS and public health in the UK.

3.1.5. LSHTM has appointed Professor Ahmed Rashid as its Pro-Director of Education who will take up post in September 2024. LSHTM's new Director of Development and Alumni Relations, Lee Rodwell, will take up post in August 2024.

3.1.6. LSHTM is currently advertising for the position of Dean of Faculty (Infectious and Tropical Diseases).

**LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE AND TROPICAL MEDICINE
COUNCIL**

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- 3.1.7. Given the high staff turnover in the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) team, the Executive Team would be reflecting on what the best structure for meeting LSHTM's EDI needs would be.
- 3.1.8. The Director had recently been involved in a review of the Pasteur Institute in Paris.
- 3.1.9. LSHTM is awaiting a response from the Royal Patron office on whether King Charles III or another member of the royal household, would be willing to take up the role of LSHTM's Patron. As LSHTM is still affiliated with University of London (UoL), it has close links to the Princess Royal who is the Chancellor for UoL.
- 3.1.10. The Wellcome Trust has recently become one of the Sustainable Climate Impact Fund's (SCIF) first clients for its carbon credits.
- 3.1.11. Cyber-attacks are increasing in the Higher Education sector, with research being specifically targeted. LSHTM will be receiving a briefing from the UK Government on the risks facing academia and ways institutions can protect leading research. LSHTM recently hosted a cyber security briefing for its Strategic Leadership Network and was about to launch mandatory cyber security training to all staff.

Resolved:

- 3.1.12. Council noted that LSHTM's cyber security plan was regularly scrutinised by the Audit & Risk Committee and requested that the latest cyber security plan be circulated to members for information.

4. REPORT FROM STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Noted:

- 4.1. The Students' Representative Council (SRC) President thanked Council for the opportunity to serve as a member over the past academic year.
- 4.2. The SRC President noted that the year had been quite peaceful considering the political unrest and protests at other neighbouring universities.
- 4.3. Concerns over student study and social space have been raised with management and it was re-emphasised that support for student social activities was important to student life.
- 4.4. The SRC have struggled to receive appropriate support and guidance from LSHTM on how best to arrange social and other student related activities and clearer guidance on how the budget for the SRC is allocated and managed would be beneficial.
- 4.5. The SRC's 'Map of the World' was displayed in the Council room to show where students have come from and the diversity of the student community.
- 4.6. Events such as pizza evenings, and the annual boat party have been well attended and well received by students.
- 4.7. Council noted that more support and funding should be provided to help create a vibrant student culture and sense of belonging.
- 4.8. The Executive Team advised that it was investing in support for the student experience and additional resource have and will be provided.

Resolved:

- 4.9. Council requested a progress report on how the recommendations within the SRC annual report would be addressed, and further details on how the student experience is resourced and supported by LSHTM.

**LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE AND TROPICAL MEDICINE
COUNCIL**

MINUTES 27 JUNE 2024

APPROVED BY COUNCIL ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2024

5. INSTRUMENTS OF GOVERNANCE

Noted:

- 5.1. Council noted the proposed changes to LSHTM's Charter, ahead of seeking formal approval to make these changes and revoke the Statute Concerning Academic Staff through special resolutions at an extraordinary meeting of Council on 08 August 2024.
- 5.2. It is also proposed that a petition be made to His Majesty for an Amendment Supplemental Charter to recognise LSHTM's change in status to a university.
- 5.3. Following the conclusion of successful negotiations with trade union colleagues, arrangements to replace the Statute Concerning Academic Staff with a new Employment Ordinance and harmonised HR policies have been formally agreed.
- 5.4. It was anticipated that following Privy Council approval, the new arrangements would come into effect in the early new year.

6. STRATEGY

6.1. Strategy Implementation

Noted:

- 6.1.1. The next stage of the Education Strategy was underway and has four workstreams.
- 6.1.2. The concept of a Strategic Research Office is being replicated for education to develop new education activities and to ensure LSHTM's education portfolio meets the needs of current and prospective students. LSHTM is also currently reviewing all professional services who support educational activities.
- 6.1.3. The Chief Operating Officer was currently supporting the EDI Team to ensure statutory responsibilities are met.
- 6.1.4. The Executive Team was now focusing on reviewing LSHTM's employment model to ensure there is appropriate use of without duration contracts and fixed term contracts. The high number of fixed-term contracts remains a big concern for staff and trade unions.
- 6.1.5. The refurbished social space will be opening in September 2024, ahead of the new academic year.
- 6.1.6. IT systems, such as Agresso and HR/Payroll, are migrating to cloud-based systems which are being managed carefully given how key these are to LSHTM's operations.

6.2. Research Strategy

Received: A presentation on the progress to implement the Research Strategy from Caroline Relton (Pro-Director of Research and Academic Development), Hannah Whiteman (Head of Strategic Research) and Elsa Butrous (Management Trainee).

Noted:

- 6.2.1. Council noted the eight workstreams within the Research Strategy.
- 6.2.2. LSHTM is known for doing lots of critical research but there needed to be more of a strategic approach, as opposed to only a bottom-up approach. The aim is for LSHTM to apply for larger research grants that provide more funding over a longer period of time. This would provide more employment stability for researchers, improve indirect cost recovery and reduce the administrative burden on those involved in research operations.
- 6.2.3. It was emphasised that small to medium research grants were necessary for early career researchers and that senior academics should be shifting their focus to larger research grants.
- 6.2.4. The data presented to Council was for research grants that were managed by LSHTM, and this excluded the Units. Ideally research data would be shared between the Units and LSHTM so that a fuller research grant picture could be identified.
- 6.2.5. There has been a thorough review of LSHTM's Research Excellence Framework (REF) performance in 2021. LSHTM submitted research under two categories (clinical medicine and

**LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE AND TROPICAL MEDICINE
COUNCIL
MINUTES 27 JUNE 2024
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public health) and was ranked first for research impact. The aim for REF 2029 is to ensure this ranking for impact is maintained and to consider whether LSHTM should submit some of its research under other REF categories. A lot of work went into identifying research that was rated 3* and 4* and there was a rigorous peer review process which could be streamlined for REF in 2029. Further work is also needed to ensure there is little to no 2* rated research, and there is a higher proportion of 4* rated research compared to 3* rated research.

6.2.6. Analysis has been undertaken to identify LSHTM's research strengths and there are plans to use this data to inform the annual senior staff review process.

6.2.7. LSHTM ran a pilot grant application programme to help early career researchers using workshops, mock grant review panels, peer to peer support, and mentorship by senior academics. The feedback from this scheme has been positive and will be run again in the future.

6.2.8. The vast majority of LSHTM's partnerships are motivated by research. This is unique compared to other Higher Education institutions whose partnerships are often developed around education activities.

6.2.9. It was identified that more could be done to utilise in-house expertise to consider the future health challenges and influence research funding calls.

7. ACADEMIC ASSURANCE

7.1. Academic Assurance Matrix

Received: An overview of the academic assurance matrix from Paul Ensor (Head of Education Policy, Quality and Student Experience).

Noted:

7.1.1. Council noted the academic assurance matrix which demonstrated LSHTM's compliance with the 'B' and 'C' Conditions of Registration from the Office for Students (OfS).

7.1.2. Where baseline thresholds have been defined by the Office for Students, these have been incorporated into the matrix to contextualise LSHTM's data.

7.1.3. Supplementary data and commentary detail the volume of academic quality activities that take place across LSHTM.

7.1.4. Council was complimentary of the matrix as it was simple to read and easy to interpret.

7.1.5. The academic assurance matrix was specifically designed around the Office for Students requirements but there were other measures of academic quality that could help provide assurance to Council e.g., student survey data, internal audits, research council thresholds etc.

7.2. Report from Senate

Noted:

7.2.1. Council noted the summary of Senate from 05 June 2024.

7.2.2. It was highlighted that Senate received the annual Research Governance Committee report which included assurances around how LSHTM's conducts its research ethics processes, along with human tissue and animal ethical considerations. It was suggested that this work be highlighted to Council in future reports.

8. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

8.1. Finance & Development Committee

Noted:

8.1.1. Council noted the summaries of Finance & Development Committee meetings held on 09 May 2024, and 06 June 2024, and the fundraising update.

8.1.2. The committee had reviewed the proposed The Gambia Unit Estates Masterplan, which was underfunded by £7 million, and requested it be reviewed to ensure it was fully funded.

**LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE AND TROPICAL MEDICINE
COUNCIL**

MINUTES 27 JUNE 2024

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- 8.1.3. Due to LSHTM's financial model, only focusing on research activities is not sustainable due to the financial losses in overheads therefore there is a need to ensure LSHTM's education activities are thriving for LSHTM to be financially sustainable.
- 8.1.4. LSHTM, and the broader Higher Education sector, is facing a number of financial pressures, which has been recognised by the Office for Students. Whilst LSHTM is less affected because it does not provide undergraduate education, there is likely to be a financial impact that LSHTM will need to mitigate.
- 8.1.5. The current year has been better than expected due to additional funding from Research England, reduction of employer contributions to the USS Pension fund and being able to sell some assets.
- 8.1.6. Should student recruitment targets continue to not be met, there will be significant pressure on LSHTM's liquidity levels in the future.
- 8.1.7. The committee requested that the Executive Team consider what mitigating actions need to be considered should student recruitment targets not be met.
- 8.1.8. A new Pro-Director of Education would be joining LSHTM in September 2024 to deliver the Education Strategy 2.0. LSHTM is considering how to make its education offering more flexible to suit the demand from students e.g., more hybrid modes of delivery, differential pricing, etc. It was also agreed that short courses and other programmes could be marketed towards corporates/public health organisations.
- 8.1.9. Further discussions on LSHTM's future financial sustainability would take place at Council's Away Day on 26 September 2024.

Resolved:

- 8.1.10. Council approved the operating and capital budgets for 2024/25 proposed budget for 2024/25.

8.2. Audit & Risk Committee

Noted:

- 8.2.1. Council noted the summary of Audit & Risk Committee's Away Day and meeting held on 13 June 2024.
- 8.2.2. The committee benchmarks LSHTM's strategic risks against those commonly found across the Higher Education sector; LSHTM is broadly aligned and there were no major risks not already being considered.
- 8.2.3. The Gambia Unit reported that, due to inflation, there has been an overspend in their budget which will need to be carefully mitigated.
- 8.2.4. The committee requested the Units carry out a cyber security assessment which the IT Director would support.
- 8.2.5. Good progress has been made to help mitigate cyber security risks across LSHTM, and further work is needed to ensure LSHTM monitors its supply chains.
- 8.2.6. The committee noted the work being undertaken to assess the opportunities and threats artificial intelligence poses to LSHTM.
- 8.2.7. The committee received an update on LSHTM's newly developed Business Continuity Policy and procedures.
- 8.2.8. LSHTM's Internal Auditors issued three reports at the meeting, with an amber-red rating for student experience.
- 8.2.9. An outstanding internal audit recommendation to develop a *Working Overseas for Personal Reasons Policy* should be completed by no later than July 2024.

**LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE AND TROPICAL MEDICINE
COUNCIL**

MINUTES 27 JUNE 2024

APPROVED BY COUNCIL ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2024

- 8.2.10. BDO had been re-appointed as LSHTM's external auditors. Although the committee were unhappy with the fee increase, they have been working to ensure LSHTM's relationship with BDO is strong and effective.
- 8.2.11. The committee reviewed the updated Whistleblowing Policy and noted that this would be brought to Council at its next meeting for approval.
- 8.2.12. The committee noted the compliance matrix which demonstrated LSHTM's compliance with the Office for Students Conditions of Registration.

8.3. People, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee

Noted:

- 8.3.1. Council noted the summary of the People, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee meeting held on 14 June 2024, and the Annual EDI Report which will be published on the LSHTM website in line with LSHTM's statutory duty.

8.4. Nominations & Governance Committee

Noted:

- 8.4.1. Council noted the summary of the Nominations & Governance Committee meeting held on 06 June 2024.
- 8.4.2. The committee reviewed proposed changes to the Charter and discussed the potential roles of Patrons and Chancellors.
- 8.4.3. Recruitment would soon be underway for the vacant Independent Member of Council position.
- 8.4.4. Council received an update on work to enhance Unit governance and noted that proposals to establish two Unit specific committees would be brought forward to the next meeting.

9. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION/RATIFICATION WITHOUT DISCUSSION

Noted:

- 9.1. Council noted the use of the LSHTM Seal for the exclusivity agreement between the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and Simon Franks relating to 8 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3RA, the Annual Schedules of Business for Council and Committees of Council, the meeting schedule for Council and Committees of Council for Academic Year 2024/25, and the LSHTM Festival schedule.

Resolved:

- 9.2. Council ratified the appointment of Professor Koya Ariyoshi, Professor of Clinical Tropical Medicine at the Institute of Tropical Medicine at Nagasaki University, for the 2024 Heath Clark lectureship.

- 10. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** Special meeting of Council on 08 August 2024, and Council Away Day on 26 September 2024.