

Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (FE)
held on Tuesday 23 November 2021

Present: Kate Murrie (Chair)
Jennette Arnold OBE
Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Victor Barratt (Student Governor)
John Nicol

In attendance: Xaviere Hughes (Head of Further Education)
Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)
Hannah Jones (HE Student Governor)

The meeting was quorate as five Members were present.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Katie Seekings, Justin Gregory (Head of Higher Education). Andrew Jones did not attend.

2. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 29 June 2021 and matters arising

It was agreed that the Chair should sign the minutes as a true record.

Matters arising were discussed.

- I. Governors had a tour of CRC in October. The Clerk summarised discussion by the Search and Governance Committee to develop a mechanism to invite Governors into College to see teaching, learning and students' progress.
- II. Support for students to achieve high grades would be carried forward to the next meeting. **ACTION: HEAD OF FE**

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

4. Performance Data

- I. Key data 2021/22 covering enrolments, attendance and retention was reported showing 88% attendance to date, a 3% decline compared to the same period last year. A Governor asked if students' wellbeing impacted on attendance and if students with EHCPs had lower attendance. There was discussion about wellbeing noting that the pandemic has had a significant impact on students, particularly those with challenges before the pandemic. MyConcern is used effectively with concerns triaged to provide relevant support. High levels of support are provided for students with EHCPs by

Learning Support Assistants which is reflected by their good attendance. The Student Governor commented that some students struggle with their wellbeing suggesting a quiet space could be beneficial. The Head of FE responded that a bookable quiet space has just been made available for students.

Attendance had decreased generically across programmes and levels. There was a question if lower attendance was impacting students' learning with was confirmed. Strategies were outlined in the report including individual action plans. The Committee would look at an anonymised action plans for an EHCP student within their study skills programme. The Student Governor explained that tutorials are used to set smart targets, Individual Learner Plans (ILPs) and career aspirations with support from tutors to prepare students for their next assignment and future. Tutors have group profiles and disclosures recorded in students' application forms. A Governor asked if there is evidence that teachers take account of individual student needs in teaching delivery; this was evidenced in action plans.

Student progress correlates with good attendance; with evidence of lower attendance affecting progress during the first term. Student recruitment following the census was 558 with 35 early withdrawals. Assessments were brought forward to identify the quality of students' work at an early stage to ensure students are on appropriate courses.

- II. The Self Assessment Report (SAR) timetable was noted which had included external moderation and would be discussed by the Committee next week. Emerging themes and areas for improvement were noted. Teachers' enthusiasm was peppered throughout the SAR. There was a suggestion to ensure that the SAR incorporated what is good about the practice of teaching and changes implemented to improve teaching. Student destinations would be reported in the SAR. **ACTION: HEAD OF FE.**

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the exemplary and clear report, key issues and supporting statistics
- The action plan process would be discussed with anonymous case studies provided showing how additional support is agreed and embedded. **ACTION: HEAD OF FE**
- The Committee would discuss the SAR at a meeting dedicated to the SAR on 3 December 2021

5. Professional Development Cycle (Teaching and Learning)

The Head of FE gave a presentation about the professional development cycle which was introduced last year. Studio walks have been held in the first term. Staff were paired up with peers in the spring term to evaluate and critique teaching practice. In the summer term the majority of staff

completed the full cycle.

The effectiveness of teaching is evaluated throughout the year using several mechanisms including in-year surveys, learner voice, student assessments, staff feedback, course MOTs, team meetings, FEMT/HEMT meetings moderator visits and reports. High grades, attendance and internal/external progress provide critical indicators of the standard of teaching and learning. Ad hoc deep dives test the accuracy whilst providing another level of assurance.

The professional development cycle is a motivational tool with full engagement from teachers, technical demonstrators and digital demonstrators. This will be introduced for HE staff providing opportunities to work together and share practice. The College is working with Northern Art School and Morley College London to provide external input and triangulation.

A Governor asked how staff are paired with peers; the Teaching and Learning Quality Improvement Lead selects pairs taking account of strengths, areas for improvement, length of professional career, organisation and practices to complement each other.

Questions used for the staff self assessment showed improvements in all areas year on year.

In summary, the professional development cycle is an innovative tool to engage staff in their professional development. Governors noted that the developmental cycle did not preclude observation by managers or other measure should there be any concerns. Risks are also mitigated with external moderation. It will identify strengths and weaknesses of teaching.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the informative presentation

6. Curriculum Development

The Head of FE explained that Level 1 programmes were offered previously to ensure inclusivity and a natural progression to Level 2. Level 1 programmes attracted extremely small numbers which were not viable to offer. Course retention and the interview process have been reviewed concluding that students without standard minimum entry qualifications could be considered for Level 2 programmes following individual interviews and consideration of individual applicants. The College is inclusive and would not disadvantage applicants.

Level 4 music and performing arts programmes were introduced this year working closely with HE students. It had been agreed to remove Level 4 programmes following the introduction of 2-year Foundation Degrees. Governors agreed that the option of the Foundation Degree mitigated removing Level 4 programmes.

7. Identification of Key Risks

- I. Challenge of transition for students to make up for missed learning skills resulting from COVID-19
- II. Student wellbeing, mental health and resilience following lockdown
- III. Attendance, progress and outcomes
- IV. Consolidating the digital curriculum
- V. Art and Design Level 1 and 2
- VI. GCSE English and maths
- VII. Professional development for teaching
- VIII. Ofsted EIF

8. Any other business

There were no items.

Signed as a true record of proceedings

Chair: **Date:**

Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee
(HE and FE Combined Meeting)
held on Tuesday 23 November 2021

Present: Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Jennette Arnold
Victor Barratt (Student Governor FE)
Hannah Jones (Student Governor HE and President of SU)
Mervyn Jones
Kate Murrie (Chair of the meeting)
Tim Newsholme
John Nicol

In attendance: Justin Gregory (Head of Higher Education)
Xaviere Hughes (Head of Further Education)
Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)
Kath Ayres (Student Engagement Officer) Item 2

The meeting was quorate as eight Members were present. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting particularly new members.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Katie Seekings and Dr Joanne Horton (Co-opted Member). Andrew Jones (Student Governor FE) did not attend.

2. Student Union update on activities

The President of the Student Union and Student Engagement Officer gave a presentation outlining the Student Union's key challenges and achievements in 2021. The team has expanded to include some 1st year students to broaden and enhance communication, and to facilitate succession planning as so many officer are in their final year. The SU was rebranded following consultation with students and the constitution is being adapted to include co-officer roles, a mature student post and sustainability officer. Societies have grown which are facilitated by students and open to HE and FE students. Events for the term were outlined including a student safety campaign being launched with support from the Police.

The Principal commended the President of the SU and Student Engagement Officer for their tenacity to drive the SU, especially during the lockdown and pandemic.

The Committee agreed: -

- To thank the President of the SU and Student Engagement Officer for their hard work and presentation
- The SU should provide an update to the Board in February

3. **Minutes of the last meeting held on 29 June 2021 and matters arising**

It was agreed that Kate Murrie, as chair of the meeting, should sign the minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2021 as a true record.

The Designated Safeguarding Governor had completed Level 5 safeguarding training previously. This was not a requirement but agreed as useful.

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

4. **Draft Minutes of the Academic Board – 10 November 2021**

The Principal drew Governors' attention to discussion about the Admissions Policy specifically changes proposed to unconditional offers for HE and college level admissions.

The Head of HE explained the College had a history of making admissions judgements on interview. Each summer the small number of students who have not achieved 80 UCAS points are admitted based on their interview records. The college is now going to increase the use of unconditional offers following interview. This is subject to applicants demonstrating that they have the necessary skills and abilities at interview and or audition to succeed on the course. There was a question why unconditional offers were not introduced previously noting that it had been considered with concern that it could be demotivating for FE students on programmes once an unconditional offer was made. College data showed students remain motivated. It is common practice in other creative arts HE providers to offer unconditional places on the bases of interview/audition.

A further amendment was proposed that HCA retains the discretion to reject an applicant where, in the judgement of the College, it is not in their best interest to join the course. This could relate to applications received to FE programmes living out of the area; good attendance is required on programmes which could mean that proposed travel to College would be unrealistic. A Governor asked if a student could complete a course remotely; this would not be practical; however, some elements could be completed as distance learning.

The Board agreed: -

- To approve amendments to the Admissions Policy which would be reported to the Board **ACTION: CHAIR OF COMMITTEE**

5. **Policies and Strategies**

The Safeguarding Policy and Student Behaviour and Discipline Policy are being reviewed which will require separate policies for FE and HE based

on legislation including KCSIE. These will be presented to the Board for approval. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

The policies presented follow national guidelines. A visual campaign will be launched to students so that students can recognise issues and reporting. There was a request to ensure Governors were included in policies where relevant in addition to staff. A point of redress was required for any vexatious comments. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

The Quality Assurance Strategy was outlined and there were no changes to the Teaching and Learning Strategy.

The Committee agreed: -

- The Safeguarding Policy and Student Behaviour and Discipline Policy would be presented directly to the Board for approval
- To recommend the Board approve the Peer on Peer Abuse Policy, Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy and the Quality Assurance Strategy
- To approve the Teaching and Learning Strategy which was renamed Teaching and Learning Policy **ACTION: HEAD OF HE**
- To commend officers on the quality of the policies presented which were clear and purpose driven

[Jennette Arnold left meeting]

6. Student Experience

- I. The Principal presented the Complaints Data 2020/21 informing Governors that an ongoing complaint had been investigated, including appeal, and OIA investigation who had not upheld the complaint.
- II. The Safeguarding, Prevent and Wellbeing Annual Report 2020/21 was deferred to the Board due to staff absence. **ACTION: HEAD OF FE**
- III. The Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2020/21 was previously reported within the Access and Participation Plan. The internal auditors had recommended a high-level annual report is provided. There was discussion about the unconscious bias behaviour training for staff and students which had good feedback; however, there had not been any reference to the trans-community. Gender identity training had been held for staff last year which would also be made available for students.
- IV. The Principal gave a presentation confirming that freedom of speech and Prevent policies are embedded throughout the College. There is a Freedom of Speech Code of Practice for External Speakers. The Freedom of Speech Bill will promote free speech and academic freedom with new duties placed on the OfS. Staff development and student engagement will be arranged to ensure that these are understood and embedded. Freedom of speech is incorporated in the Student Charter and SU terms of reference. The registration process for events and speaker's

registration, including external organisations hiring space, will be reviewed to ensure that this is robust and follows freedom of speech requirements.

A Governor suggested considering freedom of speech within the context of freedom of expression as an arts school, particularly as the College and SU invite speakers for their arts bias. It was agreed that it is important to phrase policies appropriately.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the Complaints Data 2020/21
- The Safeguarding, Prevent and Wellbeing Annual Report 2020/21 would be presented to the Board
- To receive the Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2020/21 and Freedom of Speech update which would be issued to the Board

7. Any other business

There were no items

8. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting was arranged for Tuesday 29 March 2022 with the FE: 2.00 pm, combined meeting: 3.45 pm and HE meeting to follow the combined meeting.

Signed as a true record of proceedings

Chair: **Date:**

Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (HE)
held on Tuesday 23 November 2021

Present: Tim Newsholme (Chair of the meeting)
Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Hannah Jones
Mervyn Jones
Kate Murrie (Chair AQ&S Committee FE)

In attendance: Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)
Justin Gregory (Head of Higher Education)

The meeting was quorate as five Members were present

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Katie Seekings, Dr Joanne Horton and Xaviere Hughes (Head of FE).

2. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 29 June 2021 and matters arising

It was agreed that the Chair of the meeting should sign the minutes as a true record. There were no matters arising

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

4. Key Data for 2021/22

The Head of HE outlined changes which will be introduced in response to the shortfall in enrolments. Retention was high on Level 5 programmes which evidenced the effectiveness of measures introduced to support students following lockdown. This included additional use of workshops and delivery of catch up sessions by tutors. Cross-college support is effective. OfS are introducing retention as a measure.

High grades are consistent with a higher number of students achieving first class degrees due to changes in UWTSD's metrics for students who had graduated during the pandemic.

Attendance monitoring is increasing in the sector. This year the College is piloting changes to timetabling with staff utilisation and teaching elements reported. Attendance is lower than the same period last year with some shortfalls in attendance by BAME, Polar Quintile 1 (based on

postcodes) and Polar Quintile 2 students. This represents a potential impact on retention with strategies implemented to address. There was discussion about numbers of Eastern European students; however, these are not recognised as a category by OfS. Tutors are being given support to provide tutorials, 1:1 meetings with students and course MOTs have been introduced for all HE programmes which is anticipated to improve attendance.

Collaborative delivery was trialled in Professional Practice which will be extended as part of validation. A collaborative and course-based module will be introduced next year.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report and statistics

5. Graduate Outcomes Report

The Head of HE presented the report providing a summary of graduate outcomes and benefits. Some graduates take a second job in tandem with their practice to supplement income. There are some careers in the arts which do not attract high salaries initially. Mature students frequently have a different ambition to become makers and value their educational experience at HCA. Students need to be reminded that when they graduate they are practitioners even if they have a second job.

A Governor commented on national comparisons of Herefordshire salaries which is low in addition to salaries in the creative industries. UKADIA has a role to counter argue on graduate outcomes in the creative industries.

The College needed to publicise its student successes more prominently. Collating more granular data on graduate outcomes, tracking graduate stories and the collateral benefit case. The College has an alumni programme including 'launchgrad' which showcases graduates to employers. A College-level alumni could be used to develop case studies including value added from a student's starting point at College to graduation. Creative degrees provide permutations, transferrable skills and a solid grounding for the future. HCA+ is going to be developed further to deliver some topics that complement core creative programmes such as teaching and marketing.

The Professional Practice Level 5 module prepares graduates for employment and careers. The Student Governor commented that this module would be more relevant in Level 6; it was confirmed that this will be offered to both levels.

HEIs have access to software to bring together data sets by course, access and participation, and NSS results providing comparisons. The College currently analyses students' raw personal data which is complex.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the Graduate Outcomes Report

6. Quality Improvement

- I. NSS results showed 84% overall satisfaction which was one of the highest scoring institutions compared with other art schools and competitors. Student satisfaction reflected additional support provided by the College for students during the pandemic and lockdown. The report will be standardised to provide year on year comparisons. There was discussion about specific areas with lower levels of satisfaction agreeing to discuss these with current students to explore mechanisms to make improvements. The SU had an important role in student experience.

A summary of the 2nd semester Level 4 and 5 students' experience would be provided half way through the year along with student focus groups.

- II. The Consumer Marketing Authority (CMA) Report was presented. The College is reviewing its approach, which is very thorough, with some revisions introduced to ensure that live information is published. It is crucial to ensure that information is accurate to prevent any reputational risk. Information is accurate, open and honest. There was discussion about the College's offer of regular use of workshops, studios and tutorials which would be incorporated into the CMA subject to robust evidence to quantify statements. The admissions process and timescale to offer interviews could be added along with the staff:student ratio and access to additional staff contact time with Technical Demonstrators and Digital Demonstrators.
- III. The Teaching Excellence Framework has been delayed. The primary purpose of TEF was to promote improvement and the pursuit of excellence. Quality measures will follow a similar approach to Ofsted. The College will mitigate risk by contextualising data.

Results of the previous TEF were summarised with actions for 2021/22 including developing T&L development programme, institutional support to gain HEA fellowship, sharing good practice, T&L knowledge exchange, and inclusive teaching following recommendations from the 'Gravity Assist' report to support students with digital skills. Tutors complete impact forms on Google Forms which quantify good teaching and encourage reviews.

- IV. The revalidation process seeks to facilitate curriculum development around several key themes: promoting the development of a creative community, careers and enterprise, wellbeing, distinctiveness, environmental sustainability, financially sustainable, teaching and learning, and equality and diversity.

Structural work with courses will consider curriculum development in 5-10 years.

Validation of new courses is challenging due to staff capacity and time which had been discussed with UWTSD. Processes and improvements have been identified to make processes slicker to increase staff capacity.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the HCA's NSS results which were extremely encouraging
- To note the CMA report evidencing compliance to requirements
- To note the presentation on curriculum development
- To record appreciation to Head of HE for preparing the comprehensive reports

7. Identification of Key Risks

- I. Student applications
- II. Covid-19 creates uncertainty to recruitment and working methods causing unpredictable changes which absorb staff time
- III. Covid impact on missed learning for students
- IV. CMA requirement to communicate offer to students to meet OfS obligation
- V. TEF and revised action plan
- VI. Graduates outcomes
- VII. Revalidation and staff capacity
- VIII. UWTSD partnership review

8. Any Other Business

There were no items.

9. Date and time of next meeting

An additional meeting was arranged for 6 December 2021 at 2.00pm to discuss the UWTSD's College report.

Signed as a true record of proceedings

Chair: **Date:**.....