

Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (FE)
held on Tuesday 28 June 2022

Present: Kate Murrie (Chair)
Jennette Arnold OBE (by Teams)
Abigail Appleton (Principal)
John Nicol

In attendance: Xaviere Hughes (Head of Further Education)
Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)

The meeting was quorate as four Members were present.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Katie Seekings, Victor Barratt and 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 March 2022 and matters arising

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

The matters arising would be discussed during the meeting.

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

4. Performance Data

Key data 2021/22 year to date and 2022 applications were provided in the written report including GCSE performance. Questions were invited.

There was a question about reasons a couple of courses had attendance below 95%. This related to small cohorts which had a proportionate impact on data. There was a comment that underperformance in smaller cohorts should not be overlooked; the Head of FE responded that reasons for attendance were addressed.

The reason for fewer applications to Foundation Art and Design was requested. Last year the course recruited a large cohort due to covid-19 when a number of students enrolled on the course for their gap year before progressing to HE who were prevented from travelling due to the pandemic. A leavers' survey is being undertaken which will identify

progression plans; this will also ascertain information about unconditional offers.

Digital Futures attendance was low at 85% with reasons requested. Assurance was provided that students will complete the course successfully. Ofsted had identified staff specialisms, the impact if staff are absent and use of the space. Staffing is being addressed to ensure that this does not impact on teaching and learning in future.

There was discussion about English achievement which was low noting that students were enrolled based on teacher assessed grades (TAGs) which had proved to be above their level. This had created a challenge for the English and Maths Team. A Governor asked a follow up question about withdrawal of the offer of Level 1 programmes and of this created a potential risk to retention and performance. All applications are considered individually and only accepted if they have the ability to succeed. The College supports students to improve their grades in GCSE English and Maths who have not attained previously with c60% Level 2 students taking GCSEs in tandem with their vocational qualification this year. The College has invested in 'Exact' software which provides accessibility for students with EHCPs. It was concluded that this was not a risk as robust practices had been developed to support students. A Governor commended the hard work from staff to support students' progress in English and Maths based on high levels of support embedded in secondary schools.

A Governor asked if additional actions are required to enable students to be successful on their courses; particularly following the challenges of the pandemic and if any additional funding is available to support students. Initial assessments are conducted with all students. Functional Skills teaching hours are being increased next year. There are additional challenges to predict grades for students currently as GCSE grades from exams are not available. Next year students will be streamed on courses so that appropriate support can be provided within vocational courses using 16-18 funding. Some students are anxious who are taking exams for the first time as a result of the pandemic. The College has embedded additional support including revision sessions during holidays and offer breakfast before exams. The exam timetable was extended over several weeks this year to prevent the impact of potential students if they tested positive with covid. Some students were unable to attend exams due to sickness or anxiety. Strategies are in place, including contacting students by text or phone, before and on the day of their exams.

There was discussion about in-house assessments noting that these could be less quantifiable than external data. Online tests are another mechanism which will provide accurate data. Students with EHCPs and access arrangements will use the Exact software to identify individual support needs. It was agreed to investigate more quantifiable and objective software for students. **ACTION: HEAD OF FE**

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report and key data

5. Student Experience

Student progress and destinations were presented acknowledging excellent progress of this year's leavers to some reputable institutions. Internal progression will be reported at the next meeting as part of the SAR. **ACTION: HEAD OF FE**

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the reports presented

6. Quality Improvement

- I. The Development Plan 2021/22 reported progress against the Self Assessment Report. There was a comment that the employability offer and progress did not appear to dovetail to the strategy for employability. Governors agreed that there were strong processes to move the College forward in this area. Course teams have their own development plans; a Governor asked if these identified with the overarching plan which was confirmed.
- II. Level 1 and Level 4 programmes have been removed from the curriculum offer. HE are developing progression routes for Digital Futures with input from students to ascertain HE course progression this year. The Head of FE attended a UAL conference with discussion about the validation of Level 3 courses in view of T Levels. Assurance had been provided that Level 3 is on par with T Levels and confidence expressed that Level 3 would be offered until 2025. It is anticipated that UAL will also develop further courses. T Levels will continue to be monitored and the College will mitigate against risks where possible.

The Committee agreed: -

- To thank the Head of FE and team for their hard work to prepare the Development Plan

7. Identification of Key Risks

- I. Challenge of transition for students to make up for missed learning skills resulting from covid-19. Enrolment process has been changed for September to support students. There was discussion about access arrangements and if this information was obtained from schools. Study skills require this information as soon as possible to implement individual support for students. It was agreed that if schools gave the College evidence of each student's normal way of working this would be useful. In addition, the College could share progression data with secondary schools.
ACTION: HEAD OF FE
- II. Student wellbeing, mental health and resilience following lockdown. Wellbeing Support Mentor employed.
- III. Attendance.
- IV. Consolidating the digital curriculum.
- V. Art and Design Level 2.
- VI. GCSE English and maths.

- VII. Professional Development Cycle (teaching and learning).
- VIII. Ofsted EIF.
- IX. Employer engagement and meeting local skills needs.

8. Any other business

The Chair thanked John Nicol for his commitment and immense input to the Committee, which had included chairing the Committee for several years. Everyone reiterated their appreciation.

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 28 June 2022

Present: Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Jennette Arnold (Teams)
Dr Joanne Horton (Co-opted Member) (Teams)
Hannah Jones (Student Governor HE)
Mervyn Jones
Kate Murrie (Chair of the meeting)
Tim Newsholme
John Nicol

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

The meeting was quorate as eight Members were present.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Katie Seekings and Victor Barratt. Andrew Jones (Student Governor FE) did not attend.

2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 29 March 2022 and matters arising

It was agreed that Kate Murrie, as chair of the meeting, should sign the minutes of the meeting as a true record.

- I. A summary of the Schools White Paper would be circulated to Governors. **ACTION: HEAD OF FE**
- II. The pre-enrolment survey has not yet been finalised but would be shared with the Student Governor. **ACTION: HEAD OF FE**
- III. An employer relations lead needed to be identified in the College to progress employer engagement. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

3. Draft Minutes of the Academic Board – 11 May 2022

The Academic Board had discussed the admissions process for individual applicants who declare additional or complex needs or issues. The balance between the support needs of students and the ability of the College to provide the support would be reviewed over the summer with a further report to Governors. **ACTION: HEAD OF FE**

The Freedom of Speech Bill is progressing; an annual report will be prepared for the Board next year. As part of continuous improvement reasonable adjustments will be embedded to make teaching and learning inclusive; this is being reinforced to staff with clear guidelines provided.

There had been discussion about support provided for students who are in retrieval; it was anticipated that high numbers of students will be successful. Progress to address reasonable adjustments in equality and diversity had not been addressed as quickly as required which was being addressed by the Academic Board.

A recommendation regarding unconditional offers will be presented to Governors in the autumn.

The Board agreed: -

- To note the Academic Board minutes

4. Student Union Presentation

The President gave a presentation reflecting on the previous year, challenges and key achievements. The President and Head of HE are revising the SU Constitution which will be presented to the committee for approval. **ACTION: HEAD OF HE**

A fixed event calendar is being agreed with SLT which will be more efficient for future planning and events. An FE students' group with some representatives on the SU is being considered. Next year a new SU body will need to be appointed. This will be publicised to students as part of induction. It was agreed that succession planning needs to be addressed by the SU earlier in the year in future.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the presentation and thank the Student Union President for her commitment to the SU during the year

5. Teaching and Learning Professional Development Cycle (PDC)

A comprehensive report had been prepared by the Head of FE with questions and comments invited.

A Governor referred to a comment that Inspectors were uncertain if staff would feel confident to challenge other staff on poor performance asking the purpose of the PDC and if this had a performance element or if performance is addressed separately. It was clarified that the PDC is a peer assist process and that poor performance is addressed separately. There is interplay between professional development, peer on peer support and performance management. There are differences between quality assurance and quality enhancement which are identified in the HE quality procedure.

There was discussion if it was appropriate for PDC peer reviews to be mandatory as part of staff development. To date there has been 80% engagement with confirmation from participants that this had grown their teaching practice with new teaching methods embedded. Governors

agreed that the PDC should be mandatory and that full engagement from staff is essential. Teaching and learning assessments are already mandatory and embedded in FE. There was a comment if this could be mandatory cross-College noting that this is acceptable. Participation in training and development is included in employment contracts.

The Committee agreed: -

- The PDC should be mandatory which will evidence effectiveness of teaching and learning and performance management.
- Clarity was required regarding the professional development, peer on peer reviews and its relationship with performance management. The Quality Procedure will identify how these dovetail and measure effectiveness of processes and procedures and enhancement; this is an additional piece of work.
- A performance monitoring process will be separate which would also summarise any issues identified. The Chair of AQ&S (FE) Committee offered assistance to develop the Quality Procedure.

ACTION: HEAD OF FE

6. Policies, Procedures and Strategies

- I. The Student Charter is cross-College highlighting the College's ethos and values as opposed to offers specifically for FE or HE which is reviewed annually. There was a question if this could include more information about the student offer and access to facilities. The charter must not contradict the CMA rules; the student experience on programmes will be publicised in different mechanisms such as the core information documents which provide descriptions of courses. There was a suggestion to review the impact of the charter in the future.
- II. An additional paragraph was proposed to the Safeguarding Policy which would ensure compliance to KCSIE until a full review and approval in October.

The Committee agreed: -

- To recommend the Board approve the Student Charter, including an additional statement regarding its context **ACTION: HEAD OF HE**
- To recommend the Board approve the additional paragraph to the Safeguarding Policy

7. Annual item for Committee

The Committee agreed: -

- To appoint Tim Newsholme and Kate Murrie as Chair of AQ&S HE and FE Committee respectively
- The Committee effectively met its terms of reference with some areas for development identified in the self assessment
- No changes were proposed to the terms of reference
- Succession planning was being addressed by the Search and Governance Committee to ensure that the Safeguarding Designated Governor is trained to Level 5 safeguarding

6. Any other business

There were no items

7. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting was arranged for Tuesday 22 November 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 28 June 2022

Present: Tim Newsholme (Chair)
Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Dr Joanne Horton (Co-opted Member) (Teams)
Hannah Jones (Student Governor HE)
Mervyn Jones

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

The meeting was quorate as five Members were present.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Katie Seekings.

2. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 29 March 2022 and matters arising

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

- I. An update on the Masters programmes will be presented to the Board in October **ACTION: HEAD OF HE**
- II. The action regarding use of noticeboards at Station Approach to promote information and guidance for students was carried forward. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**
- III. It was challenging to build too much content into the student questionnaires concluding that the impact of global events should be addressed via different mechanisms such as student focus groups.

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

4. Key Data for 2021/22

The Head of HE referred to firm acceptances which are higher than previous years. Conversion is being analysed course by course including the pattern of applications and reasons for lower applications to some programmes.

Overall attendance showed declining rates year on year indicating a potential academic and retention risk; however, this year it had subsequently improved towards the end of the year. Some students have chosen to continue to work remotely joining lecturers by Teams. This has subsequently been addressed with the majority of students returning to campus. The HE Attendance Policy is being revised and will be publicised to students. There is synergy between attendance, withdrawals and achievement. There was a question about support for students to enable them to have successful outcomes on their programmes; interventions are varied and based on individual student's situations. There were more withdrawals from Level 6 which is when pressure increases on programmes; the majority of withdrawals were not based on the course but for other reasons. Governors discussed student support with input from the Student Governor. Level 6 induction will be provided for returning students in September. Wellbeing is incorporated in course revalidation. UKADIA institutions have identified attendance as an issue. There was an option to brainstorm ideas to support wellbeing and mental health. Students are invited to meet staff informally which provides effective interaction. The option to trial Level 6 access to workshops, studios or the library during key points of the year and offer exam preparation were suggested which would build the community and sense of ambition to prepare for employment. Ideas to deliver work experience components at the end of the first year and have a symposium covering graduates' outcomes at the end of the 2nd year could also build resilience. Pressure points on courses could be matched against resources and social activities. **ACTION: HEAD OF HE**

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report and statistics
- An action plan will be developed including communication and support for Level 5 students during the summer break **ACTION: HEAD OF HE**

5. Student Experience

- I. Data is being collected about student progress and destination of leavers which will be presented to the next meeting. The graduate outcomes survey completed 15 months after graduating will be used by Government. Systematic exit interviews will identify progression and destination, including those in art and design specialisms and with portfolio careers.
- II. The OIA annual statement was noted for 2021 which was a clean report. Students who exhaust the institution's complaints policy progress to the OIA who review the process followed before awarding any compensation. The College addresses all complaints received following the complaints policy.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the OIA statement

6. Quality Improvement

- I. The College is progressing revalidation of degrees. UWTSD have had revalidation documentation for several months originally anticipating receipt of paperwork for delivery by 1 July permitting sufficient time to write to students and incoming students to ensure that the College meets the CMA requirements. The process was delayed by UWTSD who have subsequently confirmed relevant information will be issued to the College on 16 July allowing time to meet CMA requirements.
- II. The HE Quality Procedure has been developed following approval of the Quality Policy in December. Quality processes remain unchanged with revisions to quality enhancement processes. Academic health of programmes can be identified by the number of retrievals on individual programmes. There are varying levels of support from different programmes for less resilient students to enable them to achieve. A Governor asked how successful retrievals are noting that these are generally very successful which are capped at 40%. The HE Quality Procedure will be reviewed annually. QAA baselines will also be identified in the document. There was a suggestion to consider including horizon scanning, advisory board or Fellows in reflection and evaluation. Long term plans could be course specific or generic with examples such as net zero or creative industries in the centre of Hereford. The Quality Procedure will be shared with the Chair of AQ&S (FE) Committee before being presented to the Board in October in tandem with the FE Quality Procedure which is under development. **ACTION: HEAD OF HE/FE/CLERK**
- III. OfS have recognised that the Access and Participation Plan (APP) needed to be simplified and be more proactive. The College is tracking the APP against its original aims and added Polar Quintile 2 and 3 to the main targets which relate to deprivation, rurality and transport issues. This has some synergy with the Stronger Towns bid. There are some enhancements based on the new OfS APP template. The College is working with some secondary schools in the county. This includes provision of CPD for art teachers, support for HE students to progress to teaching and delivery of workshops in schools. Saturday clubs are being relaunched. Student feedback will be including in the monitoring process.
- IV. The Head of HE gave a presentation on the Teaching and Excellence Framework (TEF) explaining that the consultation has closed. HCA's performance against the metrics was provided which was anticipated to categorise the College as a bronze; however, there is strong mitigation evidence including NSS metrics, continuation metrics and completion rates that the College could remain a silver. The College provides outstanding teaching and learning, completion and continuation, progression and educational gain. Colleges with less than 500 students are not obliged to enter TEF. If the College chooses not to pursue, there is a risk that the College would be outside of the quality measures or could be categorised below the bronze level. The TEF process will open in the autumn which may require an additional Board meeting to make a decision.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note progress of the HE Quality Procedure which will be presented to the Board for approval in October in tandem with the FE Quality Procedure
- To recommend the Board approve the Access and Participation Plan
- To record appreciation to the Scholarship and Enterprise Development Manager for her work to prepare the APP
- To note the update TEF update which would be discussed by the Board once TEF open the process in the autumn

7. Identification of Key Risks

- I. Curriculum development and resources to develop digital curriculum
- II. Student applications
- III. Covid-19 risk on students' mental health, social issues and its financial impact
- IV. Covid-19 impact on missed learning for students
- V. NSS score following the impact of covid-19
- VI. Quality regulation and changes to APP, TEF and B3
- VII. Graduates outcomes

8. Any Other Business

Dr Horton recorded appreciation to the College and students for their participation in her research Fellowship supported by Royal Museum Greenwich.

Governors commended the external artwork which had been installed on the exterior of Station Approach.

9. Date and time of next meeting

Tuesday 22 November 2022 commencing at 3.45 pm

Signed as a true record of proceedings

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