Minutes of: Academic Quality and Standards (FE) Committee

Date: 19th March 2024 3pm   **Location:** College Road Campus, A10

Present	In attendance
Mervyn Jones (Committee Chair) Abigail Appleton (Principal/CE) Myfanwy Page Ian Axtell Jennette Arnold (online via Teams)	Stephanie Garland (Teaching, Learning & Quality Improvement Lead) Justin Gregory (Vice Principal HE) David Hawkins (Vice Principal BDSE) Judy Balderson (Board Member, observing) Rebecca Semple (Clerk to Governors)
Quoracy: Meeting was quorate	

1. **Apologies for Absence**
   a. **Apologies** – Xaviere Hughes, Joe Hedges
   b. **Declarations of interest** – none

2. **Minutes of last meeting**
   a. **Approval of minutes of meeting held 21st November 2023** - minutes approved as a true and accurate record
   b. **Matters arising** - none

3. **Performance Data**
   a. **Key data year to date.** The Principal and the Teaching, Learning & Quality Improvement Lead (TLQI Lead) presented this report in absence of the Vice Principal (FE), and highlighted key areas:
      - **Attendance and Retention**: Numbers slightly down on last year. Main reason last year was mental health, but this year it is finance issues drawing students into full-time employment (noted by Principal as similar across sector). HCA hardship grants cover some categories of financial struggle, but not at level of replacing an income stream.
      - **Applications:** numbers overall are level with last year. Work is ongoing in refreshing relationships with schools. Art and Design course changes (in curriculum and Course Leader) over last two years appear to be bringing increased applications.
      - **English & Maths:** Staff Governor reported that English and Maths resits (November 2023) results indicated that better attendance led to higher results, and updated the Committee on Maths and English results overall. Regional Maths Challenge hosted by HCA last week and HCA students achieved some high level awards. Recent controversial DfE change to funding requiring delivery of more hours for English and Maths. Expectation from Sept 2024, mandatory from Sept 2025.

A Committee Member commented on how positive it is to note the focus on maths at HCA and to see the energy and commitment of staff and students having an impact on curriculum and results.

b. **Applicant and destination data 2024 including internal progression** – the Principal presented the report and highlighted key issues:
   - Applicant behaviour around UCAS deadline has changed both locally and countrywide (thousands of applications received in final 24 hours)
   - HE progression information is being gathered from this year on. Progression activity remains a parallel focus for curriculum and outreach teams.

c. **Quality Improvement (Update on SAR priorities)** – the TLQI Lead and the Principal presented revised QI targets (distilled from the more detailed FE Quality Development Plan) and invited questions or comments.

   Following comments from the Committee, a discussion was held around whether any of the targets are more measurable and trackable, and whether a 'dashboard' approach was possible in order to give a better understanding of how processes are developing. The Principal noted that a possible move towards aligning the FE and HE data presented could be considered, with some smarter and more aligned targets. Clerk and Principal to work on revising timetabling reporting against targets over the year.

   Action: Clerk/Principal

4. **Teaching and Learning Professional Development Cycle** – the TLQI Lead presented this report, provided a verbal overview of the Cycle process for newer Committee Members, and invited questions and comments from the Committee
   - A Committee Member commented on the peer–observation process as being a clear strength of the revised process. The TLQI Lead confirmed that the peer observation - undertaken in groups, without direct 'feedback' on teaching, but instead inviting comments on impact on learning - was being received well by staff and resulting in useful prompts for development. A Staff Governor reported on her experience of leading a group as part of this process.
   - The TLQI Lead confirmed that Governors will soon be invited to come and observe the process in action
   - A Committee Member reflected on the contrast between the initial concerns raised when this process was introduced a few years ago, and the current rich and positive experience now being gained
   - Committee Members and the TLQI Lead discussed various models that the process was based on/related to, and asked about a timeframe for independent evaluation. The TLQI Lead confirmed that the process is under constant internal review informally, links with another UK College group using a similar system were useful as part of this, and suggested some options for who could perform an external review.

   5. **Student Voice** – The TLQI Lead updated the Committee on the survey currently used to gain student feedback on teaching and learning, and explained how live results reporting is used to both monitor quality and act immediately on anything of concern, linking with Pro-monitor system where any student concerns are raised. Challenges with obtaining responses from students were noted. Course Leaders also have access to live results, allowing them to feed back to teams. The Committee Members then

raised queries around survey anonymity, links with student council and other possible incentives to encourage participation. The TLQI Lead explained that students are informed that responses are not anonymous when starting the survey, with the reason being that the College can then provide the necessary support to specific students in the case that they raise something that needs acting on.

6. **Curriculum Development: Professional Practice** – The Principal updated the Committee that FE teams are working on off-campus work experience, although no data to present around this at this point. A review is currently underway about which activities are most impactful in order to focus staff efforts more efficiently.

A Committee Member asked how much credit/recognition is gained by students taking part in external professional practice projects such as the Ferrous Festival. The TLQI Lead confirmed that Gatsby benchmarks are used at FE level, but that this doesn't always fairly represent activity due to the very distinct nature of the Gatsby categories. The Principal commented that as the wider skills gained as part of professional development in creative education are recognised, this will naturally lead to linking with wider range of apprenticeships and similar/wider professional pathways.

7. **Regulatory**
   a. **Post-16 Qualifications Reform update** – the Principal presented this report and highlighted key areas.
      * UAL will re-pitch their Level 3 qualifications this summer as part of their revalidation, and revisions are likely to include an external assessment.
      * Different style qualification likely by 2026, which could present new opportunities but may undermine the current non-exam-based attraction of UAL level 3 (in comparison with A levels).
      * Advanced British Standard consultation is underway nationally. HCA have fed back via AoC but other priorities are preventing an individual response to this round.
   b. **Progress on 2023/24 Accountability Statement and update on guidance for 24/25** – the Vice Principal (BDSE) presented an update on progress against national, regional and local priorities identified in the current Accountability Statement. The Committee heard a verbal update on recent guidance from DfE, including the closer link of the Accountability Statement with LSIPs. The Principal confirmed that the 2024/25 Accountability statement is due for submission by end of June, and will be brought to main Board for approval before this date.

8. **Identification of key risks** – the Principal gave a verbal update. Post-16 qualification reforms and Recruitment remain key risks.
9. **Any other business** - none
10. **Date of next meeting**: 18th June 2024

Minutes approved: …………………………………………………………. Date: …………………………………………

Minutes of: Academic Quality and Standards FE&HE combined Committees

Date: 19ᵗʰ March 2024   **Location:** College Road Campus, A10

Present	In attendance
Mervyn Jones (Committee Chair)	Justin Gregory (Vice Principal HE)
Abigail Appleton (Principal/CE)	David Hawkins (Vice Principal BDSE)
Myfanwy Page	Judy Balderson (Board Member, observing)
Ian Axtell (left meeting 6.15pm)	Rebecca Semple (Clerk to Governors)
Tim Newsholme	
Quoracy: Meeting was quorate	

1. **Apologies**
   a. **Apologies for absence –** Russell Roberts, Jennette Arnold, Kate Mori, Charlotte Semus, Jo Horton, Xaviere Hughes
   b. **Declarations of interest** - none
2. **Minutes of last meeting**
   a. **Approval of minutes of last meeting held on 21ˢᵗ November 2023** – minutes approved as a true and accurate record
   b. **Matters arising** – none

3. **Freedom of Speech Act 2023** – the Vice Principal (BDSE) gave a verbal update to the Committee. Following guidance already received from Director of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom, we are currently awaiting the publishing of a Code of Practice, against which College policies can then be reviewed and aligned. The operation of a Complaints system is a key factor that will be affected by Code of Conduct when it arrives. A discussion around the link between Freedom of Speech and the Prevent duty was then held. The Committee agreed on a general approach that Safeguarding overrides Freedom of Speech if ever these may appear to be in conflict.

4. **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - EDI report on 23/24 targets / Access and Participation report on 23/24 targets / Access and Participation report on 23/24 targets**

The Vice Principal (HE) presented these reports to the Committee, highlighting key areas:

- Results are low in Polar Quintile 1&2 for first time, but VPHE feels work is in place to improve this.
- DSA student success is currently a risk – further work is needed to drill down and investigate each case to identify any patterns. Format of current data doesn't allow detailed intersection for analysis, but a planned move to using a more sophisticated IT software package will improve this.

- Sector view is that current APP targets are ambitious. New APP plan will focus on a few self-identified targets.
- APP has challenged us to focus on student needs, and the VPHE anticipates that the new APP will do this further.

5. **Academic Portfolio Development (FE and HE)** – The Vice Principal (BDSE) presented this report, noting that all suggestions will be subject to business case development, but that commencing early work around this area would be beneficial. Opportunities around making more of lifelong learning funding and providing accredited short courses available were discussed, as well potential collaboration opportunities with other institutions. Following comments from Committee Members on the range and type of ideas presented, the Principal confirmed that the list presented today aimed to raise areas being considered for awareness at this stage, and that a prioritisation exercise based on some clear categories would be undertaken as a next step before bringing back more firm development proposals to Committee.

6. **Proposal to revise HCA UCAS tariff (for approval)** – The Vice Principal (HE) presented this report, demonstrating the range of UCAS tariff points across the sector, and reminding the Committee that UCAS tariff is an indication of 'quality' for prospective applicants. The VPHE proposes better-aligning the College's aspiration with its UCAS tariff, balancing this with cotextural assessment as the primary means of selection. The current HCA UCAS tariff is 80. Proposal is for a band (96-112 points).

> **Decision:** Committee agreed to present this proposal to Board for approval.

> **Action:** VPHE to provide paper for Board

7. **Policies and Strategies**
   a. **Student Health and Wellbeing Strategy** – The Vice Principal (BDSE) presented this new strategy for approval. Following comments from Committee Members, it was confirmed that the appendix will be updated to reflect the correct names of all current policies that it refers to.
   b. **Support for Study Policy** – The Vice Principal (HE) presented this new policy, which has been created following Committee Member input into reviewing a previous 'Fitness to Study' policy. A Committee Member asked about possibility of including expected timescales for assessing a 'successful' outcome of process undertaken.
   > **Action**: VPHE to add a point about agreeing a timescale appropriate to the individual situation, and discuss with a Committee Member (JA).
   c. **AI Policy** - The Vice Principal (HE) presented this new policy, and summarised its development process as reminder to the Committee. It was noted that an AI briefing has been made to Board already. The Vice Principal (HE) reported that the risk of AI to internal academic processes in reality has been less than originally anticipated.

   > **Decision**: The Committee agreed to recommend all policies above to Board for approval, following today's discussion and approval by AQ&S.

A more general discussion around how policies fit with each other/overlap and how this could be portrayed in a map/hierarchy was also held, prompted by Committee Member comments about the range of policies and links between them. The Principal reported that she and the Clerk are in

early stages of a related piece of work around policies that should provide a more clear categorising/linking of policies in place.

8. **Any other business** - none
9. **Date of next meeting**: 18th June 2024

Minutes approved: ………………………………………………………. Date: ……………………………………………

Minutes of: Academic Quality and Standards (HE) Committee

Date: 19th March 2024 5pm   **Location:** College Road Campus, A10

Present	In attendance
Mervyn Jones (Committee Chair) Abigail Appleton (Principal/CE) Myfanwy Page Ian Axtell (left meeting 6.15pm) Tim Newsholme	Justin Gregory (Vice Principal HE) David Hawkins (Vice Principal BDSE) Judy Balderson (Board Member, observing) Rebecca Semple (Clerk to Governors)
Quoracy: Meeting was quorate	

1. **Apologies**
    a. **Apologies for absence** – Russell Roberts, Kate Mori, Charlotte Semus, Jo Horton, Xaviere Hughes
    b. **Declarations of interest** - none
2. **Minutes of the last meeting**
    a. **Approval of minutes of meeting held 21st November 2023** – approved as true record
    b. **Matters arising** - none
    c. **Minutes of Academic Board held on 8th March 2024** – noted by Committee
3. **Performance Data**
    a. **Key Data to date** – this report was presented by Vice Principal (HE), who highlighted some key areas:
        - Level 5 and 6 retention remains a risk. VPHE will investigate any patterns in reasons for next meeting

            Action: VPHE
        - Examboard summaries presented (as an action from last meeting). Slightly reduced number of students claiming 'extenuating circumstances' this year , but an increased number where evidence provided to UWTSD EC panel has been insufficient, extending the timescale of the process. Vice Principal (HE) and Registry Manager are liaising with UWTSD regarding the impact of this.
        - A reduction noted in module resits this year to date

4. **Quality Improvement**
    a. **Curriculum development and professional practice report** – this report was presented by the Vice Principal (HE) and noted by Committee. The Vice Principal (HE) highlighted three days of successful 2024 Professional Practice conferences, with a high level of support from curriculum staff.
    b. **Teaching and Learning** – this report was presented by the Vice Principal (HE) and noted by Committee
5. **OfS requirements regarding Retention of Assessed Work** - the Vice Principal (HE) presented an update on this Office for Students (OfS) regulation and the College's current approach to

adhering to this, for the Committee's awareness. Key issues were highlighted as below and discussed by the Committee:

- OfS condition of registration B4 indicates that an 'appropriate' amount of student work needs retaining for 5 years. Long-awaited further guidance was published last week, giving a more clear idea of what needs to be kept and in what format, and this will be used to revise HCA work recording/retention plans
- For HCA, all recorded and digital submissions are easy to retain. Physical art and sketchbook records are less easy to record and retain, and this is not currently a formal part of student's process (although arguably a potentially valuable one).
- Committee Members commented on whether knowing the whole project would need to be photographed could change a student's approach to their work/process/journey. The advantages of this approach of recording creative journeys were also discussed.
- The Vice Principal (HE) noted some changes underway that could result in keeping a larger sample, led by the new guidance, and will give an update on this to Board when plan is formulated. The Committee felt that the college should only ensure appropriate levels of archiving/recording, sufficient to capture the student artistic journey, be actioned.
- The Principal noted a plan to work with Clerk on reviewing how the OfS conditions of registration are monitored internally.

Action: Clerk and Principal

6. **AQ&S Interface committee with Board** - Committee agreed that this would be discussed outside of meeting between Committee Members, due to time pressures
7. **Identification of Key Risks** - Recruitment remains a risk
8. **Any other business** - none
9. **Date of next meeting**: 18th June 2024

Minutes approved: …………………………………….…………………. Date: …………………………………………