

Minutes of: Curriculum and Quality (HE) Committee

Date: 3pm on 11th November 2025 **Location:** A5, College Road Campus

Present	In attendance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ian Axtell (<i>Chair</i>) ▪ Abigail Appleton (<i>Principal & CE</i>) ▪ Russell Roberts (<i>Online</i>) ▪ Kate Seekings (<i>Online</i>) <p>Collectively referred to as the “<i>Committee</i>” and individually as a “<i>Committee Member</i>”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Justin Gregory (<i>Vice Principal of Higher Education, “Vice Principal (HE)”</i>) ▪ Xaviere Hughes (<i>Vice Principal of Further Education, “Vice Principal (FE)”</i>) ▪ Abigail Boyce (<i>Clerk to the Corporation, “Clerk”</i>) ▪ Christy Bolderson (<i>Audit Committee Member</i>)
<p>Quoracy: Meeting was quorate in accordance with paragraph 1 below.</p>	<p>Absent: Helen Hurford</p>

Note: *In these minutes, Board Members’ contributions that have a substantive impact on College decisions, actions, or policy, such as influencing a decision, prompting a significant change, or raising a valid challenge, are italicised and/or underlined. Routine questions, minor procedural amendments, or suggestions that do not materially affect decisions are recorded in the discussion but are not highlighted.*

1. Quorum

The meeting was duly convened as a quorum of three members was present, satisfying the quorum requirement set out in Section 5, Clause 2.2 of the Standing Orders (*Academic Quality and Standards Terms of Reference*).

2. Apologies and Declarations

- a. **Apologies for absence:** Apologies for absence were received from Helen Hurford.
- b. **Attendance Note:** Christy Bolderson, newly appointed to the Board and serving on the Audit Committee, was in attendance to observe the meeting and develop her understanding of how other committees operate. She did not participate in the discussions.
- c. **Declarations of interest:** there were no new declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of last meeting

- a. **Approval of minutes of meeting held on 22nd September 2025:** The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record, subject to an amendment to the wording of Kate Seekings’ apologies. It was noted that Kate had requested that the minutes be revised so they do not record her as absent, as she had made an attempt to join the meeting. The Clerk will amend the minutes accordingly.
- b. **Matters Arising:** all actions were noted as complete or as in progress.

4. HE Key Data Report

a. Key data

The Vice Principal of Higher Education presented the key data report, highlighting course performance, student progress, and retention trends. The discussion explored challenges and opportunities across different courses, noting how various factors such as cohort

dynamics and prior experience can influence student achievement and retention. Members considered the support available to students, including approaches to teaching, learning development, and staff development initiatives, and how these contribute to overall course quality. Particular attention was given to retention at Level 6, which currently stands at 77%, the lowest in five years, noting these figures are close to the Office for Students threshold of 75%. The Committee reflected on monitoring at-risk students and strategies to improve consistency, recognising the importance of balancing operational oversight with strategic planning and data-informed decision-making.

b. Graduate Outcomes Report

The Vice Principal of Higher Education introduced the report, noting it was a comprehensive “warts and all” review prepared by the Scholarship and ED&I Lead. It was highlighted that HCA would not be classified as ‘at risk’ by the Office for Students and discussed the potential impact on TEF Gold, observing that other institutions, had achieved Gold despite lower graduate outcomes by providing context and narrative behind their results. The discussion considered graduate outcomes, employability, and the context behind the data, noting that while some students pursue roles unrelated to their degree, the advantage of the college’s small size allows detailed understanding of individual pathways. The Board discussed embedding employability within courses, including practical experiences, and the importance of enabling students to recognise and demonstrate the skills they gained during their studies in their employment. The Principal noted that, while data presentation had improved, the report highlighted areas requiring further work.

5. HE Quality Reports

a. Minutes of Academic Board

The minutes of the Academic Board were noted. The Vice Principal of Higher Education highlighted key challenges at the Academic Board, including an update to the attendance policy, which now requires 80% attendance over four weeks, with letters issued for legitimate absences and course leaders responsible for recording attendance.

b. Progress on Quality Improvement Plan

The Committee reviewed progress on the Quality Improvement Plan. Members discussed the TEF-related aim of ensuring consistency of education across all programmes, including the development of a base standard that all courses adhere to. It was acknowledged that while consistency is important, students’ individuality must also be recognised. The Vice Principal of Higher Education emphasised the importance of working collaboratively with course leaders to support the implementation of the plan and to break down actions into manageable steps. Inclusive learning projects and the allocation of responsibilities were also discussed, ensuring that tasks are appropriately shared and supported across the team. The Vice Principal confirmed that course leaders are aware of the QIP content, with further ownership and implementation remaining priorities.

c. NSS Report

The Committee noted the NSS report, which is being presented again since September due to changes in reporting methodology. Members welcomed the overall improvement in scores. Differences between male and female responses were discussed, noting that

these are influenced by course cohorts, for example, Blacksmithing having more male students and Illustration more female students.

6. Curriculum and Portfolio Development

The Vice Principal of Higher Education presented the curriculum and portfolio development report, produced in response to the committee’s request for a more detailed view of course health. Specific points were noted such as a dip in recruitment for Blacksmithing and the need to improve the visibility of CDC on UCAS, as it currently does not appear when searching “craft.” The discussion also noted the importance of highlighting employability for both CDC and Photography. The committee queried how decisions would be made if a course were to be discontinued. The Vice Principal explained that this would depend on the course and likely involve reviewing figures over the following year. In such cases, key skills from the course could be integrated into other programmes to ensure they continue to benefit students. The committee also considered the balance between student-focused learning and commercially driven course objectives, and the value of highlighting key risks through a traffic-light system. Members welcomed the format, finding it informative, and agreed it should form part of an annual overview with updates on key risks and actions throughout the year.

7. Key Risks

No new key risks were identified during the discussion at this time. The Committee will continue to assess and address any potential risks as they arise.

8. Close of Business and Date of Next Meeting

With no further business to discuss, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 17:35. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 02nd December at 3:00 PM to consider the Further Education Self-Assessment Review and University of Wales Trinity Saint David Annual Programme Review.

Minutes approved: Date: