

Minutes of: Curriculum and Quality (FE) Committee

Date: 5pm on 22nd September 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>) ▪ Myfanwy Page (<i>Staff Governor</i>) ▪ Ellie Bunston (<i>joined at item 5</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>)
<p>Quoracy: Meeting was quorate in accordance with paragraph 1 below.</p>	<p>Absent: Jennette Arnold</p>

Note: *In these minutes, Committee Members’ contributions that have a tangible impact, such as influencing a decision, prompting a change, or raising a valid challenge, are italicised and/or underlined. Routine questions and comments are recorded in the discussion but are not highlighted, to focus attention on contributions that directly affect College decisions or actions.*

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 Jennette Arnold, who attempted to join the meeting via Microsoft Teams but was unable to connect due to technical difficulties.
- b. **Declarations of interest:** there were no new declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of last meeting

- a. **Approval of minutes of meeting held on 17th June 2025:** Subject to the amendment under item 4(b), changing the reference from “enrolments” to “applications”, the minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.
- b. **Minutes:** The Chair raised, outside of a formal committee meeting, a query with the Clerk regarding the approach to recording Governor contributions in the minutes, seeking clarification on the use of italics and underlining to highlight impact. The Clerk advised that such emphasis should only be applied where contributions have a direct influence on outcomes or decisions. The Chair also emphasised the importance of capturing Governor challenge, and the Clerk confirmed that, going forward, both impact and challenge will be highlighted, while routine comments and questions will not.
- c. **Matters Arising:** all actions were noted as complete or as in progress.

4. FE Key Data Report

- a. **2024/25 High Level Outcomes**
The Vice Principal (FE) presented an overview of 2024/25 outcomes. The Committee noted that retention remains strong at 94% for main programmes and 93% overall, including

English and Maths, slightly below the target of 96%, but still considered positive. High-grade outcomes were highlighted as strong.

The Committee requested that future results be presented alongside national benchmarks and internal targets to provide clearer context and support performance assessment. The Committee agreed that future reports should include year-on-year comparisons, targets, and additional measures such as value-added and distance travelled, supported by three-year trend data.

b. 2025/26 Enrolment Update

The Vice Principal (FE) provided an update on current enrolments, noting that while the report reflects the present figures, work is ongoing to capture conversion rates more accurately. The Committee noted that overall enrolment is improving, although the report indicates a shortfall from target, and that interviews are continuing with movement within the student cohort. The Vice Principal (FE) highlighted concerns regarding engagement for some students and emphasised the need for early intervention where performance is not meeting expectations.

c. English and Maths report

The Committee noted that English and Maths remain a key focus area. The Vice Principal (FE) highlighted the introduction of a new AI-based programme to enhance student feedback and support attendance. The discussion focused on strategies to ensure students attend examinations, including reminders to students' phones, early registration, breakfast sessions, and direct follow-up with schools and parents. A Committee member asked whether financial penalties could be applied for non-attendance, similar to practices in schools, and it was noted that multiple reminders would be issued beforehand. It was further noted that enrolments for English and Maths continue to increase year-on-year, exceeding the figures reported.

5. Draft High Level Quality Improvement Plan 25/26

The Committee received an update on course SARs. The Principal noted that staff will be presenting their SARs alongside high-level data and that they are supported by an external consultant. It was highlighted that the SAR outputs feed directly into the Quality Improvement Plan and that student understanding, particularly regarding work experience, remains a key priority.

The Committee discussed improvements in tracking student destinations, noting that surveys will be sent earlier to allow sufficient opportunity for responses and to strengthen links with HE providers. Developments in existing courses were highlighted, alongside strategies to enhance employability and entrepreneurship. The possible rebranding/positing of the mature student Portfolio course was also raised. The Committee also considered ways to strengthen links between FE and HE, with internal progression strategies aimed at familiarising students with the college's HE buildings and pathways and fostering a sense of community. The Principal noted the value of a staff subject group to encourage cross-college collaboration and reduce hierarchical barriers, while the accessibility of tutors through HCA Direct was acknowledged as a key strength in supporting students to continue at HCA.

Staff development was identified as a central theme, with the Committee noting ongoing work to promote inclusive teaching and support for students with SEND and those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Attention was also given to maintaining professional standards, enhancing classroom management, and embedding peer observation processes to ensure consistency and foster a cohesive academic community.

6. Curriculum and Portfolio Development

The Committee received an update on the new Fashion Business & Retail course. It was noted that a holding page has been established and the new prospectus is in development. The Committee was informed that a consultant is supporting the team to ensure the course is launched effectively and is expected to have a positive impact on enrolment numbers.

7. Key Risks

The Committee recognised the changes to the Ofsted framework as a potential risk. A Committee member queried whether an individual training as an inspector could be approached to provide insight into potential outcomes. It was noted that additional support was in place with an Ofsted inspector contracted to work with the college to offer guidance and feedback on the SAR.

8. Close of Business and Date of Next Meeting

With no further business to discuss, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 17:50. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 11th November at 5:00 PM.

Minutes approved: Date: