

Minutes of: Curriculum and Quality (FE) Committee

Date: 4pm on 25th March 2025 **Location:** A5, College Road Campus

Present	In attendance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mervyn Jones (<i>Chair</i>) ▪ Abigail Appleton (<i>Principal & CE</i>) ▪ Ian Axtell ▪ Myfanwy Page (<i>Staff Governor</i>) ▪ Rosy Miller (<i>Student Governor</i>) ▪ Jennette Arnold (<i>Online</i>) ▪ Ellie Bunston (<i>joined at item 5(c)</i>) <p>Collectively referred to as the “Committee” and individually as a “Committee Member”</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>)
Quoracy: Meeting was quorate in accordance with paragraph 1 below.	Absent: None – all Committee Members were present.

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

- Apologies for absence:** There were no apologies; all Committee Members were in attendance.
- Declarations of interest:** there were no new declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of last meeting

- Approval of minutes of meeting held on 12th November 2024:** the minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.
- Matters Arising:** all actions were noted as complete or as in progress.

4. FE Performance data – The Vice Principal (FE) presented this report highlighting key areas.

a. Key data year to date

The Vice Principal (FE) presented an overview of attendance and retention data, noting strong performance in English, with both attendance and retention rates reported as fair. Retention in Maths was lower, reflecting a broader sector-wide trend and identified as an area for continued focus. The Vice Principal also outlined the “immediate offer” online application process and acknowledged the ongoing impact of student mental health on attendance.

A Committee Member congratulated the Vice Principal (FE) on the positive progress. Another Committee Member queried the apparent discrepancy between strong student survey results and ongoing wellbeing concerns. The Vice Principal (FE) clarified that the survey primarily measures teaching and learning, rather than student wellbeing, which accounts for the difference in feedback.

b. Expected progression 2025

The Vice Principal (FE) provided an update on student progression, noting that internal Level 3 applications are now being submitted earlier to support planning and improve student guidance. A decline in UCAS applications was observed, attributed in part to students taking creative gap years and the smaller size of the art and design cohort. However, a number of students have applied directly to HCA. The College is increasing efforts to support internal progression to higher education at HCA through initiatives such as talks and visits by the Vice Principal (HE). The Vice Principal also highlighted a wider trend of students opting to study closer to home due to financial pressures. It was noted that this trend presents a marketing opportunity, and the Marketing Team is currently collating relevant data.

c. English and Maths report

The Committee reviewed the performance in English and Maths, expressing concerns regarding low attendance at mock exams and the scheduling of the English GCSE immediately before the half-term break. Recent changes to funding conditions were discussed, primarily focusing on audit and attendance requirements. In response to a query, it was clarified that GCSE results may not always be an accurate reflection of students' abilities. It was noted that these discrepancies are often addressed after enrolment.

The Principal highlighted the flexibility in the delivery of English and Maths to better support student needs. The Chair underscored the importance of strategic oversight and recommended further discussion at the Board level. It was acknowledged that while adjusting teaching hours could help meet funding requirements, any changes must be carefully considered to ensure they align with educational outcomes and student benefit.

ACTION: To present a paper on Maths at the next Board meeting.

5. FE Quality Reports – The Vice Principal (FE) presented this report, highlighting key areas.

a. Progress to date on SAR Priorities –

The Vice Principal (FE) presented an overview of progress and survey findings, discussing key developments and improvements. It was highlighted that due to previous GDPR restrictions, tracking student outcomes was limited, but the focus has shifted to tracking transitions into employment and higher education. The Registry's tracking of internal data and benchmarking against competitors was discussed, with the quality of progression information significantly improving. *The Committee agreed that the Registry's efforts should be formally acknowledged.*

b. Teaching and Learning Professional Development cycle update

Professional development was discussed, and it was noted that it is progressing well. It was further noted that in future evaluations, it would be beneficial to assess the specific learning areas for staff development. The Vice Principal (FE) confirmed that data collection on this is currently being undertaken.

c. Student voice: Teaching and learning survey

The Vice Principal (FE) provided an overview of the survey results. A Committee Member sought clarification on how the institution interprets student feedback regarding ill health. In response, the Vice Principal (FE) assured that students feel well supported, with interventions in place that contribute positively to their progress.

Additionally, a Committee Member queried about the high number of students indicating they could push themselves further. The Committee discussed how the institution is addressing this by encouraging greater self-motivation and ambition among students.

6. Curriculum and Portfolio Development

The Vice Principal (FE) presented an overview of the four key sectors, focusing on formal collaborations with schools, employers, the community, and quality development meetings. The Committee emphasised the importance of defining clear next steps and ensuring effective learning outcomes.

A Committee Member suggested creating a summary sheet for each development plan to facilitate accountability for team leaders. Additionally, it was noted that the strategy should be aligned with and support other overarching strategies.

7. Key Risks

The funding for English and Maths delivery was identified as a key risk, with discussions around meeting the requirements. A paper on Maths will be presented at the next Board meeting. No other key risks were identified.

8. Close of Business and Date of Next Meeting

With no further business to discuss, the Chair adjourned the meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 17th June 2025, at 4:00 PM.

Minutes approved: Date: