

Minutes of: Curriculum and Quality (HE) Committee

Date: 6pm on 17th June 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 ▪ Kate Seekings ▪ Charlotte Semus (<i>Student Governor</i>) ▪ Helen Hurford (<i>Student Governor</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>) ▪ David Hawkins (<i>Vice Principal of Business Development and Student Experience, “Vice Principal (BDSE)”</i>)
Quoracy: Meeting was quorate in accordance with paragraph 1 below.	Absent: Russell Roberts

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 Russell Roberts.
- b. **Declarations of interest:** there were no new declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of last meeting

- a. **Approval of minutes of meeting held on 25th March 2025:** the minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.
- b. **Matters Arising:** all actions were noted as complete or as in progress.

4. HE Performance data

a. Key data year to date (*attendance and retention*)

The Vice Principal (HE) presented the report, highlighting a downward trend in attendance among female students. He noted that efforts are underway to understand the reasons behind this development. Retention rates were reported to be broadly in line with the previous year.

The Committee discussed the ongoing impact of COVID-19 across different cohorts, acknowledging this may be reflected in current trends. The Vice Principal (HE) also reported a record response rate to the student survey this year.

In response to a governor's question regarding flexibility for students facing difficulties, the Vice Principal (HE) confirmed that part-time study is an option on some, though not all, courses. It was also noted that students may begin on a part-time basis and later transfer to full-time study if desired.

b. 2023/24 applications and acceptances

The Committee reviewed application figures, and a governor queried whether the recruitment pool might be smaller due to students choosing to remain closer to home in

light of the cost-of-living crisis. The Vice Principal (HE) suggested that this may work to HCA's advantage, as advertising locally is more cost-effective than national campaigns. The Chair requested that the Board receive a summary of courses where confidence remains high but application numbers are currently low. The Vice Principal (HE) confirmed that work is already underway on this and a report can be shared at the next Board meeting.

A governor also queried the low progression rate into postgraduate study. The Student Governor remarked that finances are a significant barrier for many students. It was suggested that contacting previous graduates, particularly those who have had a year to work, might help improve conversion, and this will be explored further.

5. HE Quality Reports

a. Minutes of Academic Board (*for noting*)

The Committee noted the minutes of the Academic Board. No discussion took place.

b. Progress on Quality Improvement Plan

The Vice Principal (HE) provided an overview of the plan, explaining that the process had been redesigned following a discussion with Mary Malcolm (DfE Consultant), particularly in relation to revising the approach to course review and the Self-Assessment Report (SAR). He noted that progress on improving graduate outcomes remained limited and discussed efforts to strengthen links with industry.

A Governor queried the distinction in pedagogical approaches. In response, the Vice Principal explained that part of the aim is to break down course silos and encourage greater collaboration. The Governor cautioned that an overemphasis on a uniform pedagogical model could risk making teaching less engaging and potentially divert focus from artistic objectives. The Vice Principal reassured the Committee that creative aims would continue to be prioritised. The Committee then discussed how pedagogical approaches were being applied in teaching, along with effective strategies for improving student retention.

6. Curriculum and Portfolio Development

The Vice Principal (HE) presented to the Committee focusing on two key areas: the development of new courses and the repositioning of existing programmes. He indicated that a more comprehensive report will be submitted to the Board in due course. The presentation outlined the principal challenges facing each course and the corresponding measures being undertaken to address them, providing a summary of key points rather than an exhaustive account.

A Governor enquired about the potential benefits of leveraging existing subjects to develop new MA courses. The Vice Principal (HE) advised that minimizing the number of course variants is preferable, as launching new programmes demands considerable time and resources.

The Committee proceeded to discuss the associated financial and resource implications. Consideration was also given to the prospect of introducing PhD programmes. While acknowledging the opportunities this could present, members recognised that implementation

would be complex and would require careful planning, particularly in relation to MA progression pathways.

7. Key Risks

No 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. Any other Business

The Chair emphasised the importance of achieving greater alignment between committee and Board objectives in the coming year, noting that committees have had limited opportunity to focus on these objectives and that Board meetings face time constraints. The Principal acknowledged that some objectives are multi-year and underscored the need to clearly define annual success. It was noted that objectives would be incorporated into the cycle of business, rather than being reviewed at every meeting.

9. Close of Business and Date of Next Meeting

With no further business to discuss, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 19:13. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday 22nd September 2025, at 3:00 PM.

Minutes approved: Date: