

# Hereford College of Arts

## Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee held on Monday 19 June 2017

- Present:** Mr John Nicol (Chair)  
Ms Abigail Appleton (Principal)  
Mr Tim Newsholme  
Mr Oliver Tomlinson
- In attendance:** Mr Jim Walmsley (Vice Principal)  
Ms Xaviere Hughes (Course Leader)  
Mrs Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)  
Miss Rachel Alferoff (Student Governor)

The meeting was quorate as four Members were present.

- |  | <b>Action</b>   |
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| <p><b>1. Apologies for absence</b><br/>Dr Elizabeth Halford, Mrs Kate Murrie and Mr Mike Rookes.</p>   |   |
| <p><b>2. Declaration of Interests</b><br/>None declared</p>  |   |
| <p><b>3. I. Minutes of the last meetings</b><br/>The Chair signed the minutes of the last meeting held on 20 March 2017 as a true record.</p> <p><b>II. Matters Arising</b></p> <p>A. Course teams are discussing how to use project live briefs to increase contact with employers out of College. This will be taken forward with the new Head of FE.</p> <p>B. The Finance Director and Head of FE would discuss collection of FE data and tracking.</p> <p><u>The Committee agreed:</u> -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To approve the minutes of the last meeting</li> </ul>   |   |
| <p><b>4. Quality Assurance</b></p> <p><i>I. Retention</i></p> <p>A. <i>HE retention:</i> Full time courses was currently 96% overall from the start of the course with 81% in-year retention. The MA Contemporary Crafts is 92%.</p> <p>B. <i>FE retention:</i> Overall retention was 95% for main qualifications and 94% including all qualifications. A Governor asked reasons for 90% retention on the Extended Diploma in Music year 1. Three students had withdrawn; Governors had been notified of issues during the year. Management were tasked to ensure that this was incorporated into the QIP. Benchmarks were raised agreeing that the national benchmark in the sector should be incorporated in the retention statistics in an additional column.</p> | <p>A Appleton/<br/>B Gamble</p> <p>A Appleton/<br/>B Gamble</p> |

- II. *Attendance (FE)*: Overall attendance was 91.85% which was slightly below the aspirational target of 95%; this was comparable to last year. The Chair asked for an explanation about the Extended Diploma Music (year 2). There had been some safeguarding issues within the group. Tutors are supporting students and liaising with parents if appropriate. In addition, the Course Leader had identified attendance had decreased following a major gig in May which was part of assessment; its timing would be adjusted next year. The rhythm and course content would be delivered more evenly throughout the year. Governors asked about the process for students who are permitted to work from home; this was specifically for project work and only authorised subject to prior approval. University open days and UCAS had impacted on attendance. In summary, it was anticipated that better reporting, communication and timing of final major projects would address some attendance issues. Attendance on Foundation and Performing Arts is high. Reasons could be that some Foundation students are mature students or fee paying students; Performing Arts students rely on working together. Attendance to GCSE maths was higher than English; this would be investigated further to identify and share best practice from courses with higher attendance levels.
- III. *Applications*
- A. HE applications: 422 compared to 430 last year. Firm acceptances are currently 106 excluding 46 insurance and 8 deferred places. An MA Fine Art had been validated with 6 firm acceptances and interviews continuing. A Governor asked if this attracted current HCA students; there were some HCA students. The Principal was ensuring new courses are launched with appropriate marketing campaigns; there was an option to expand the Masters programme further. Governors pressed about application to conversion which required improvement and would be a major focus.
  - B. FE applications: The target for 2017/18 is 329; a recent open day had increased enrolments with applications at 355 compared to 381 last year. Additional work was required with secondary schools to tailor the course offer, publicise options and progression.
- IV. *GCSE English, Maths and Functional Skills*: Governors agreed that they had been briefed on issues covered in the report throughout the year. English and maths have been embedded in the main qualification aim with tutors working with the English and maths team who are aware of course projects. This ensures provision is motivating and responsive to students' needs. Timetables are set around English and maths. Staff development has been arranged to include input from an English and maths specialist. There was acknowledgement that 67.45% of students with access arrangements were high and extremely challenging to

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manage; comparisons with some other specialist colleges would be useful. A Governor asked if there was a link between attendance and access requirements based on English and maths attendance; this was uncertain.

J Walmsley

V. *FE Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)*: A Well-Being Officer was being recruited whose role would cover PWBD. Areas RAG rated red were brought to Governors' attention which would be addressed during the meeting. The Student Governor attends the Safeguarding and E&D Committee, but not as a student rep.

VI. *Enhancement to HE Quality Assurance & Monitoring Process (HE)*: The quality assurance and reporting cycle for HE was being scrutinised to ensure the College met the requirements of the HEFCE quality assurance process. The Vice Principal had discussed processes with Dr Halford and would ensure key processes linked together, such as student feedback, data, retention and grades. A similar process to the SAR moderation would be introduced for HE. This would be discussed at the exam board and Academic Board.

J Walmsley

VII. *UWTSD Report HCA Interim Partnership Review (HE)*: This was a pleasing report. A Governor referred to paragraph 16 and asked if recruitment and retention was of concern. The review team were not concerned about small numbers but its potential to affect quality of student experience; which was not currently an issue.

VIII. *UWTSD Revalidation Report (HE)*: This was an encouraging report.

IX. *Matrix Standard Report – Continuous Improvement Check (CIC) (FE & HE)*: This was an annual process. The Academic Board would discuss the value of the Matrix Kite Mark and ascertain if this brought benefits to the College. The Chair commented that the College independently encapsulated many of the issues covered in the matrix.

X. *Pearson External Quality Management Review Report (FE)*: This was extremely positive with no significant areas of concern.

XI. *Pearson Standards Verification Report – Functional Skills (FE)*: This was issued for information evidencing that the College met the standards.

XII. *Minutes from Academic Board*: Noted.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note MIS and other reports evidencing

## 5. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

I. *HCA TEF Result and Rating (HE)*: The Principal tabled TEF's statement confirming that HCA was assessed as silver which would be valid for three years. It would be important for

the College to maintain its good practices to retain or improve this standard.

- II. *Observation of Teaching & Learning 2017/18 planning (FE):* Lessons observed graded outstanding had improved to 26% and good lessons 71%. Mentoring for staff had been effective. Themes identified for next year's observation were outlined in the report.
- III. *AoC HE Scholarship Project:* A comprehensive report had been prepared by the Scholarship Development Manager detailing the project to date.

The Committee agreed: -

- To congratulate and thank managers and all staff who had been involved in preparing the TEF submission and achieving a positive result for the College
- To note the reports and high quality of provision, also confirmed by external reports

## 6. Leadership and Management (Quality)

- I. *Safeguarding and Prevent:* Support resources which had been disseminated to staff following the recent terrorist attacks and additional mental health support resources were available on the intranet for staff and students.
- II. *FE Work Experience:* A matrix had been provided to measure work experience by programme showing the number of students and hours of work experience to date. Some courses had not recorded all information. Evidence of work experience is being collated such as student and employer feedback and introductory emails. This year has been a learning curve to ensure robust systems are established to measure work experience. Planning has commenced for next year's work experience to ensure each student completes 37 hours of work-related experience, including a mix of external project briefs and some off site work. There was different feedback from recent inspections as to whether Ofsted accept live briefs and projects would be acceptable as part of work experience. Governors commented that guidance should also be provided to employers. Work experience is arranged by courses as the College does not employ a work experience coordinator. Discussion progressed to careers advice and guidance agreeing that this is another key area with impartial advice provided and delivery of transferable skills. The Head of FE would be tasked to identify how to take forward structured work experience.
- III. *Inspection Ready:* It was confirmed that the College is prepared for an Ofsted inspection and has a plan to respond to notice with 48 hours or less.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report

## 7. Identification of Key Risks

The Committee agreed risks which would continue to be closely

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monitored -

- I. GCSE English and Maths, Functional Skills
- II. HE and FE recruitment and retention
- III. Work experience
- IV. Ofsted

#### **8. Annual items for Committee**

The Clerk reminded Governors of the rationale to split the Committee with separate meetings for FE and HE. Each meeting would have different Chairs who would attend both meetings along with the Principal, Vice Principal and Head of FE. A combined meeting was proposed for business affecting both committees. This proposal was received favourably which the Board had already been briefed of at its last meeting.

- I. Election of Chair 2017/18: The Committee agreed Chairs for the FE and HE meetings, namely, John Nicol and Dr Halford respectively.
- II. Committee's self assessment: Members assessed the Committee's performance against its terms of reference. The Clerk had compiled evidence of effectiveness.
- III. Terms of reference: These would be revised to reflect the practice of separate meetings and duties for FE and HE.
- IV. The plan of business 2017/18 showing a division of duties.

The Committee agreed: -

- To appoint the following Chairs: John Nicol (FE) and Dr Halford (HE) for 2017/18
- To accept the proposed plan of business 2017/18 for separate HE, FE and a combined Committee meeting
- The Committee was effective and adequately met the requirements of its terms of reference
- The Clerk would review the terms of reference during the summer to divide duties between the HE, FE and combined Committee meeting

#### **9. Any Other Business**

A Governor alerted managers to a website 'what do they know' showing progress of Freedom of Information requests made to the College.

#### **10. Date and time of next meeting**

The next meetings were arranged for: -

Monday 2 October 2017 commencing at 3.30 pm: SAR meeting  
Tuesday 28 November 2017 HE: 2.00 pm, combined meeting 3.15 pm, FE: 3.45 pm