

# Hereford College of Arts

## Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee held on Monday 20 March 2017

**Present:** Mr John Nicol (Chair)  
Ms Abigail Appleton (Principal)  
Dr Elizabeth Halford  
Mrs Kate Murrie  
Mr Tim Newsholme  
Mr Mike Rookes

**In attendance:** Mr Jim Walmsley (Vice Principal)  
Mr Nick Day (Head of Teaching and Learning Enhancement)  
Mrs Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)  
Ms Mairead McVeigh (Student Governor)

The meeting was quorate as six Members were present.

	Action
<p>1. <b>Apologies for absence</b> Miss Rachel Alferoff (Student Governor), Mr Oliver Tomlinson and Ms Xaviere Hughes (Course Leader).</p>	
<p>2. <b>Declaration of Interests</b> None declared</p>	
<p>3. <b>I. Minutes of the last meetings</b> The Chair signed the minutes of the last meeting held on 28 November 2016 as a true record.</p> <p><b>II. Matters Arising</b> The Vice Principal had contacted HESA to request the total UK continuation (retention) rates for FT undergraduate students in 2014/15 after one year and two years. Full time was 14.2% and part time 36%. A breakdown specifically for Creative Arts would follow by email.</p>	J Walmsley
<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>4. <b>Quality Assurance</b> The Chair invited questions asking for verbal reports by exception.</p> <p><b>I. Retention</b></p> <p>A. <i>HE retention:</i> Full time courses was currently 82% overall from the start of the course with 92% in-year retention. Following the Mid-session Examination Board. In February 2017, 44 (12%) (12% in 2016) who had not successfully completed assignments/modules were given the opportunity to retrieve. An analysis of student progression including comparison against HESA data and Awarding Body data (if available) would be provided</p>	J Walmsley

for the committee following end of year Retrieval Exam Boards in September 2017. Courses would continue to provide retrieval feedback tutorials and support for all students after February and June Exam Boards.

- B. *FE retention*: Overall retention had decreased from 99% to 96% since the last report asking if there was any cause for concern; this still remained above national level. The Chair asked if there were any national comparisons. 74% of courses have achieved or exceeded targets to date. The size of cohorts was raised asking if some courses remained viable. SLT are reviewing the viability of A Level provision. The UAL Exam Board required high levels of workload from entrants. Photography A Level would not be offered only English which might have impacted on application stats but had not affected enrolments. A suggestion was made to publicise UCAS points achieved on FE courses to parents and prospective students; SMT had discussed this.

J Walmsley

- II. *Attendance (FE)*: Overall attendance was 90.9% which was below the aspirational target of 95%. SMT were asked how confident they were that this would not decline further and if it was likely to impact on retention. Reasons for low attendance on some courses included staffing and behaviour issues which SMT had addressed. Attendance on the 2<sup>nd</sup> year Art and Design Diploma had decreased and was being closely monitored with actions implemented to address. These included students on behaviour reports and liaison with parents. English and maths staff rigorously monitor attendance. Some of the strategies embedded to improve attendance and reasons for high attendance on other courses were requested.

N Day

The accuracy of teaching staff recording attendance was challenged noting FE use electronic registers. FEMT discuss attendance by groups and individual 'at risk' students with absence followed up by Course Leaders. If registers are not completed, a note is automatically generated to tutors.

Attendance by gender was questioned which were comparable. There was a request to report on the protected characteristic and gaps in achievement.

N Day

A Governor asked about processes for HE which was clarified. If a student misses three days a letter is sent from their Course Tutor with a process followed to address student absence. The Student Governor confirmed tutors also send texts or an email as a follow up to check students are alright and offer support.

- III. *Applications*
- A. *HE applications*: Details of firm, deferred and insurance places were outlined acknowledging that 159 applicants had attended interview but not accepted places to date, with acceptance required by the UCAS deadline in May 2017. 93 applicants are

awaiting interview. In response to a question, several applicants accept offers after May when they have had more time to work on portfolios. The Principal was concerned by applications and firm acceptances at this stage of the year and did not know reasons. Further research and marketing strategies are in place to address this including reasons for insurance choice as opposed to first choice investigated. Trends show that first choice HEIs are lowering entry grades.

- B. FE applications: The target for 2017/18 is 329. It was anticipated that there will be approximately 50 fewer students compared to 2015/16 and an overall shortfall of c25 students. The Chair commented that Progress 8 in schools could have an impact on applications this year. SMT are investigating embedding a sophisticated recruitment strategy to FE offers for schools whose students do not take GCSE art. Strategies for FE are similar to HE to keep students warm.

- IV. *GCSE English, Maths and Functional Skills*: The quality of English and maths teaching was requested based on observations; this was good. In addition, students complete surveys with positive feedback and good attendance, results are above sector results nationally. English and maths walk-throughs are conducted. The mock exam in Review Week 3 was commended. A Governor asked if the independent external assessment conducted by Ofsted trained inspectors last year would be repeated. This was an option however; significant coaching and mentoring had been embedded in the department showing improved teaching. Predicted achievement rates were requested which predict a slight decrease in A\*-C compared to last year. Functional Skills exam results were encouraging. Positive strategies to improve attendance were noted agreeing that impact should be monitored as a link was expected between attendance and student results. The RAG rating would be reduced to amber.

N Day

- V. *FE Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)*: This had been discussed at the previous meeting. Governors agreed that this should be RAG rated as amber and similar to the safeguarding level of risk. Evidence to demonstrate the impact of the QIP was requested which would be shown in a separate column with quantifiable data where possible.

N Day

- VI. *Minutes of the Academic Board*: To follow

The Committee agreed: -

- To note MIS reports
- To note the report on GCSE English and maths, and Functional Skills
- To note the QIP

## 5. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

*FE Observation of Teaching and Learning:* Observations are unannounced to check that tutors' default position is not delivered for observations. Staff well-being was raised as the process is intrusive and could become a negative experience. The approach aims to be robust but mindful of well-being. There was a further question if walk-throughs are graded; only constructive feedback is provided. If poor teaching is identified the tutor is revisited at a later date. A Governor pressed further to find out if there were clear criteria for walk-throughs noting that these are themed. Further challenge about consistency of findings with the grade profile followed responding that to date, these have been consistent. Integration of Prevent and British Values was raised which are incorporated and identified from lessons. Curriculum Leaders have also been asked to ensure these are embedded in tutorials.

A Governor asked if HE was observed noting that a different criterion was used which would be reported at the next meeting. Student feedback on teaching quality evidenced during formal observations would be considered as part of OTL reporting at both FE and HE levels.

N Day

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the positive teaching, learning and assessment report

## 6. Leadership and Management (Quality)

I. Safeguarding and Prevent: A progress report was provided in the dashboard with a commendation from Governors on a recent safeguarding incident which had been investigated using the procedure with no wrong doing found by the College. This highlighted the importance of safeguarding and evidenced that the College had established robust and effective systems. The RAG rating would be reduced. Support for the member of staff concerned was questioned noting that this was in place including additional training and staffing.

N Day

II. Professional Conduct Policy (FE and HE): Governors commended the policy. There was detailed discussion covering physical restraint and de-escalation training concluding that that this should be explored. The Head of Teaching and Learning Enhancement was tasked to check the process for disclosing information to parents and correlation with the Safeguarding Policy and Data Protection. Students could be requested to sign a disclosure on the enrolment form to enable the College to contact parents or next of kin in an emergency. Staff development could be provided. The policy would include contacting the safeguarding lead if in doubt. Staff cannot give students a lift in their own car unless they have business insurance; this also protects staff against malicious claims. The legal position regarding detaining students after hours would be checked as stated in the Education Act. Discussion progressed to social contact agreeing that this is a potential risk if staff provide their personal details and the use of Moodle and official email should be encouraged. SMT would discuss changes and approve the Professional Conduct

N Day

SMT

Policy.

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| III. | FE Work Experience: An audit of work experience had been commissioned. Projects and completion of work experience paperwork was being tested. All courses maintain documentation evidencing students' work, work in progress and hours and students who have completed work experience. A member of staff has recently been allocated to work experience. A Governor asked how relevant placements are based on progression of students noting that projects are relevant to courses and progression. There was challenge as to whether students complete work experience or gain experience of work. The College is a specialist college but ensures that direct engagement between employers and students is evident. Kate Murrie would make further enquiries in the sector. The Principal outlined projects in conjunction with the National Trust and Hereford Cultural Partnership to provide work experience of large creative projects next year. Other suggestions included The Courtyard, Herefordshire Live and Border Lines Film Festival. If work experience was negotiated at different times to schools placements available could be more successful. A Governor asked if students who complete work experience do a reflection; this is included in the student reflection document. | K Murrie           |
| IV.  | FE Student Destinations 2016: Governors agreed that this was 'high importance' but not a high scoring risk. This showed a breakdown of leavers by each course. There was a positive improvement in student progression to HE, employment and voluntary work over last three years which was extremely encouraging. The effectiveness of using an external company to collate destination data was discussed noting that this would be costly. Events and lectures are held for alumni when progression data is also collected. Dr Halford would discuss the methodology to collect data with the Head of Teaching and Learning Enhancement.   | N Day<br><br>N Day |
| V.   | Inspection Ready: An Ofsted action plan was in place which anticipated less than 48 hours' notice. The AQ&S report and QIP evidenced practices in numerous areas which were likely to be tested by Ofsted. Staff work extremely hard and were encouraged to celebrate successes and good teaching practices. Data and evidence of case studies such as students who had completed work experience, gender differences, predicted rates for English and maths and how many students are on track to achieve these would be collated.   | N Day              |

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report

## 7. **HE Curriculum Development and Revalidation**

This paper was a late submission which had been prepared for UWTSD; feedback was awaited. The process of revalidation enables Course Leaders to rearticulate the curriculum and aspects of courses which could be delivered strategically across the College.

This would be a culture change to embed collaborate working. It would enhance the curriculum offer to include delivery of work skills to prepare students for employment, external placements and opportunities. Student access to alumni could increase which could potentially increase interest in the MA programme.

The Board agreed:-

- HE curriculum development and revalidation would be discussed further at the Board meeting
- The context for HE development was extremely encouraging

A Appleton

**8. Identification of Key Risks**

The Committee agreed risks which would continue to be closely monitored -

- I. GCSE English and Maths, Functional Skills
- II. HE and FE recruitment and retention
- III. Work skills and outcomes at HE based on DELI and TEF
- IV. Work experience
- V. Ofsted

**9. Any Other Business**

Thanked Nick for preparing report.

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

The next meeting was arranged for Monday 19 June 2017 commencing at 3.30 pm.