

Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (HE)
held on Tuesday 28 November 2017

- Present:** Dr Elizabeth Halford (Chair)
Ms Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Mrs Alison McLean
Mr John Nicol
Mr Mike Rookes
- In attendance:** Mr Jim Walmsley (Vice Principal)
Mrs Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)

The meeting was quorate as five Members were present. The Chair welcomed everyone to the Committee's inaugural meeting.

- 1. Apologies for absence**
No apologies
- 2. Declaration of Interests**
No declarations
- 3. Update on external context and the two current consultations: HEFCE and Office for Students (OfS)**
Governors were reminded that the regulatory changes proposed in HE will be fundamental.
 - I. Consultation of the OfS**
The Principal presented the paper on the OfS. This will change the regulator bringing HEFCE and OFFA together in the newly created Government regularity body OfS which will have an expanded remit. There will be significant risks for the College associated with OfS including increased costs, data reporting and more challenge around access and participation. OfS will monitor registration and data with intervention based on risk thresholds. OfS will also regulate for improvements in widening participation and access of under-represented students in HE; these will be key areas for the College. There was a question if areas of deprivation would include rural deprivation; this was not likely to be counted. Judgements will be made about process, retention and outcomes. To prepare for the introduction of OfS the College will need to track student progress by the socio-demographic postcodes and vulnerable groups compared against the whole student body. This will be a fundamental change to measure and monitor student progress.

As part of the consultation, students have been signposted to various sections of the main consultation document. The College will need to develop its own communication strategy for students. Contracts will be required with each student.

A Governor asked about potential consequences there could be for the College. There was some ambiguity about reporting requirements and data submission which would also be different for HE and FE, with added complications from different funding and awarding bodies. This is likely to increase demands and costs in registry and MIS. In addition to implementation costs and compliance, initial costs and registration to OfS was anticipated in the region of £24,000.

The College is also a specialist institution with links to creative industries. Value for money and employability will need to be measured with a changed in the collection of destination data moving to HMRC which will not give an accurate reflection of graduates as many progress to become self employed.

Responsibility for quality assurance of academic standards and the student experience would become the responsibility of governing bodies.

A draft response to the consultation would be sent to the Chair of Committee, Chair and Vice Chair for submission by 22 December 2017

ACTION: PRINCIPAL

II. UK Quality Code for Higher Education

A summary of proposed changes to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education had been issued. It was understood that the Code would improve accessibility, clarity, structure, scope to avoid duplication and enhancement. The Vice Principal would attend a workshop about the UK Quality Code which will be a mechanism for the College to give informal feedback.

The Committee agreed: -

- A response would be made to the OfS consultation by 22 December 2017

4. HE Enrolments: under-graduate and post-graduate 2017/18

Total enrolments to full time, part time and MA courses were 382 students. This was encouraging; it was largely driven by good recruitment to the MA programmes. Applications had remained consistent during the year with a range of retention levels across programmes. A Governor asked reasons for lower retention on the music course; some students were retaking units which also highlighted the importance of a robust recruitment process. To address this, the music course had been revalidated this year to make its content relevant and improve its delivery. The Committee requested a report at the next meeting to identify reasons for poor retention and lessons to be learnt from programmes with high retention.

Course viability was raised asking about the optimum number for course delivery. There were alternative delivery methods which could be explored. Some students had transferred internally to different course.

The Committee agreed: -

- To request a holistic report to provide a granular overview of retention, good practice and synergy with other reports, such as student feedback.

ACTION: VICE PRINCIPAL

5. Annual Programme Review (APR) 2016/17

The quality process had been revised to meet requirements of HEFCE new model of Quality Assessment for HE which was introduced last year. The AQSC panel had been involved in APR course reviews in October. Good practice and key areas for

improvement were outlined in the report.

Responsibility for quality assurance of programmes would move to governing bodies. The Chair confirmed that she had been part of the APR process as a member of the AQSC panel which was robust; however, she proposed that a robust and holistic summary of key issues and course specific action plans would be more appropriate for the AQSC panel in future.

ACTION: VICE PRINCIPAL

A Governor asked if students could feedback anonymously; this could be completed in several mechanisms all of which feed into the APR.

The Committee agreed: -

- To task the Principal to sign the APR Quality Assurance statement for submission to HEFCE by 1 December 2017
ACTION: PRINCIPAL
- A further update on implementation of the action plan would be provided at the next meeting
ACTION: VICE PRINCIPAL

6. UWTSD Partner Overview Report

A Governor asked if the relationship and support from UWTSD was two-way which was confirmed. Governors were invited to submit any additional comments to the Vice Principal.

ACTION: GOVERNORS

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the draft report for submission to UWTSD by 27 January 2018

7. External Examiner Reports and Feedback

An executive summary was provided which was extremely positive. A Governor asked if there were external examiners for all programmes; this was confirmed.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the summary from External Examiner Reports 2016/17

8. HEFCE Annual Provider Review (APR) Visit 20 November 2017

This was a follow up in response to the quality assurance statement signed off and submitted to HEFCE last year. Data had been provided to HEFCE in advance of the visit with constructive discussion. Positive written feedback had subsequently been provided evidencing the College's direction of travel.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the verbal report following the HEFCE APR visit

9. HE Curriculum Development

The major strategic planning process which was underway would influence curriculum development. The MA programme and its expansion are being researched with propositions to be presented at the next meeting.

ACTION: PRINCIPAL/VICE PRINCIPAL

The HE prospectus will be published in June.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note timescale to report on curriculum development

10. NSS results 2016/17

A summary of NSS results by HCA, region and sector along with an action plan was provided evidencing high levels of student satisfaction. The definition of sector is all HE providers. The College has established student focus groups to provide feedback and address actions promptly.

The score about access to workshops was raised; it was understood that this related to workshops being closed in the evenings and at weekends. To address this would bring cost and a culture change. The Vice Principal was requested to drill down to course level relating to the question about courses being well organised and running smoothly. This also needed to be correlated with course retention.

ACTION: VICE PRINCIPAL

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report with 90.28% overall student satisfaction
- A master action plan was requested for HE instead of individual plans for each area

ACTION: VICE PRINCIPAL

11. Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

The report and action plan had been prepared in response to TEF metrical data, feedback and analysis of TEF contextual statements from HEIs achieving gold awards. A comment was made that statements needed to be meaningful for Course Leaders.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report and action plan

12. HE Scholarship Project

A wealth of information about scholarship projects was available on the AoC website.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report and commend the Scholarship Development Manager for her hard work

13. Identification of Key Risks

- I. Introduction of OfS and removal of HEFCE and OFFA
- II. HE enrolments

A Governor asked about viability of courses; the F&GP Committee is discussing this.

14. Any Other Business

The Chair commented that this had been an extensive agenda with some substantial items. The timing of agendas and future business would be carefully planned.

ACTION: CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS



Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee
(HE and FE Combined Meeting)
held on Tuesday 28 November 2017

- Present:**
- Dr Elizabeth Halford (Chair)
 - Ms Abigail Appleton (Principal)
 - Mrs Alison McLean
 - Mrs Kate Murrie
 - Mr Tim Newsholme
 - Mr John Nicol
 - Mr Mike Rookes
- In attendance:**
- Mr Jim Walmsley (Vice Principal)
 - Mr Ben Gamble (Head of Further Education)
 - Mrs Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)

The meeting was quorate as seven Members were present.

- 15. I. Minutes of the last meeting**
The Chair of the Committee (FE) signed the minutes of the last meetings held on 19 June 2017 as a true record.
- II. Matters Arising**
These would be addressed in reports to the AQ&S Committee (FE).

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

- 16. Strategy Review 2017/18: Extending the Vision**
Comments were invited from Governors to articulate ideas. Each Committee had discussed the paper.

- I. Opportunities with OfS and how the College could excel
- II. Work experience for students
- III. Scope to deliver leisure learning activities, possibly for retired population
- IV. International development
- V. NMite relationship and potential for collaboration
- VI. Cross-course collaboration and how radical this should be (student voice favourable in NSS feedback)
- VII. Creative thinking, transferable skills and flexible minds
- VIII. Sustainability agenda could be a unique and enabling area for students
- IX. Make the curriculum distinctive and attractive to applicants
- X. Mental health support – distinctive feature for a small college

- 17. Student Union Annual Report 2016/17**
[The Student Experience Officer (SLO) joined the meeting for this item which was

taken first on the agenda]

The SLO introduced herself who had graduated from HCA in 2015. She proceeded to outline the report including several campaigns for LGBT, mental health and well-being. The sale of hoodies was successful with merchandise extended to re-useable water bottles. Approximately 80 students had attended the end of year party where graduates were encouraged to keep in contact with the College.

Objectives were outlined with plans for pop-up shops for students to sell their work, campaigns and events. The ambitious campaign schedule was challenged which could be reduced to run fewer larger campaigns.

An observation was made that all officers are female; there had not been any interest from males this year.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the Student Union Annual Report 2016/17 showing that it is active and visible in the College
- To thank the SLO for presenting the informative report

18. Minutes of the Academic Board (Draft)

The Committee agreed:

- To note the draft Academic Board minutes dated 15 November 2017

19. Any other business

No items

20. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting was arranged for Monday 19 March 2018 with the FE: 2.00 pm, combined meeting: 3.15 pm and HE: 3.45 pm.

Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (FE)
held on Tuesday 28 November 2017

Present: Mr John Nicol (Chair)
Ms Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Mrs Kate Murrie
Mr Tim Newsholme

In attendance: Mr Ben Gamble (Head of Further Education)
Mrs Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)

The meeting was quorate as four Members were present. The Chair commented that there were several common themes throughout the documents which would be discussed during the meeting.

21. Apologies for absence
Dr Elizabeth Halford

22. Declarations of Interests
No declarations

23. Minutes of the last meeting: 2 October 2017
The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting which had been dedicated to the Self Assessment Report

24. Quality Assurance

I. Enrolment and Retention

Overall retention remains outstanding at 100% for the majority of courses and at 95% or above on two courses. Retention on Music Level 3 had decreased in June with reasons unpicked. To address this students have been enrolled onto a 1-year course as is practice in Art and Design and Performing Arts. Learning agreements have been changed following consultation with affected students.

II. Attendance

Overall attendance was 94.7%, marginally below the aspirational target of 95%. A breakdown of courses by month was presented. Live data is collected for attendance with further developments to systems to prepare a live dashboard of data for AQ&S Committee in the future. Since preparing the report attendance to GCSE programmes had improved.

III. Pro-Monitor update

A brief presentation was provided showing collation of all aspects of student data and progress electronically. Overall progress could be quickly and clearly identified for individual students. This information would be available to all Tutors and Tech Dems to access as live data. This had been actioned in response to feedback by a working group to identify improvements required to ProMonitor. Options for student tracking are

being considered.

IV. FE internal student survey

The participation rate was low at 52% with a Governor asking if Course Leaders will be held to account to increase the participation rate; this was confirmed. Key issues included health and well-being and the café/food which are being addressed. There was discussion about student progress, including English and maths, with explanation how this is tracked holistically. Communication was being addressed acknowledging that different approaches are required for staff and parents. A uniformed approach is being embedded for parents' evenings.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note informative reports and actions being implemented to make improvements

25. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The Head of FE explained that following a Teaching and Learning Forum at the start of term it had been identified that staff would welcome re-engagement with the coaching scheme. This was being implemented using previously trained coaching staff. ETF Professional Standards provide mechanisms for coaching and ungraded standards for teaching and learning which with could be useful.

There was a question how the College would move the majority of teaching which was good to outstanding, and how teachers delivering lessons that require improvement are supported to improve lessons. Key areas for improvement are questioning techniques, student engagement as a minority of students are not fully engaged and addressing some pockets of low attendance. The option to replace grades with teaching standards as a baseline was being explored agreeing key descriptors would be essential. Three lesson observations each year could include some less formal observations conducted by a peer. In addition, all staff would have a coach. Some of the work conducted by the Scholarship Development Manager could be useful.

The College has bid for NCOP funding for widening participation via Worcester University to support FE students to progress to HE.

Staff development for vocational teams has been planned delivered by the English team to increase understanding of baseline skills in English language. A confidential support line for teachers who might need guidance and advice was mooted.

There was discussion about involving students in the observation scheme. If introduced training would need to be provided for students with dual observations conducted with teachers. This would be a risk-taking area but could be worthy of consideration. The National College of School Leadership have done significant work in this area.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report on teaching, learning and assessment and planned developments in this area

26. Leadership and Management

- I. Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2016/17 (final position). Self Assessment Report (SAR) 2016/17 and process to prepare QIP 2017/18
A proposal was made to replace the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) with a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). This will ensure all aspects of FE academic quality are maintained and consistently improved. Overarching themes and a performance improvement cycle were proposed. A Governor was surprised by the high percentage of students with exam concessions;

however, this was not a concern as a plan was in place to manage this. Attendance was a common theme identified in several reports and had been thoroughly discussed during the meeting.

- II. **Safeguarding and Prevent**
A presentation of My Concern, the package launched in College to manage FE safeguarding and prevent, was given. All staff could register concerns on the system. A Governor asked if this would be launched to HE noting that this was the intention in due course. Data protection issues would need to be investigated before launching.
- III. **Ofsted Inspection**
Governors agreed that this was a good outcome with the report mirroring issues which were being addressed by the Committee as evidenced in minutes. Work experience had been identified positively in the report. The Head of FE had listened to a DfE webinar about funding available to colleges who opt in to T-Levels which would attract £5,000 to find substantive work placements for students. This was being pursued.

The Committee agreed: -

- To recommend that the Board approve the Self Assessment Report and note implementation of a Performance Improvement Plan
- To note useful updates provided

27. Identification of Key Risks

- I. GCSE English and Maths, Functional Skills results
- II. Work experience

This Committee will remain vigilant about safeguarding and Ofsted.

28. Any other business

No items.