

Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (HE)
held on Tuesday 19 March 2019

Present: Mr Mike Rookes (Chair of the meeting)
Ms Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Mrs Alison McLean
Mr John Nicol

In attendance: Mrs Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)
Mr Justin Gregory (Head of Higher Education)

The meeting was quorate as four Members were present

1. Appoint Chair of Committee

The Committee appointed Mike Rookes as Chair.

2. Apologies for absence

No apologies

3. Declaration of Interests

Alison McLean declared an interest as her son in law teaches on the FE Music course.

4. Minutes of the last meeting: 27 November 2018

Approval of the minutes

Alison McLean, who had attended the last meeting, signed the minutes as a true record. There were no matters arising.

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

5. Quality Assurance

- I. Retention was marginally above national averages. Cohorts are small which increases percentages. The College is seeking to improve in-year retention with changes introduced across all courses. The profile of students is mixed with post-18 and mature students. Academic mentoring support is provided in study skills support; the model has been restructured for next year. A Governor asked if the College liaised with external agencies, this was confirmed. Training is provided to support staff. MyConcern was introduced to manage pastoral care in HE recently which is being embedded and proved to be an effective tool.
- II. Attendance to date was presented by course showing overall percentages and comparisons since December 2018. These are below the expected level. There was discussion about mature students noting that all students are expected to achieve the same level of attendance. The behaviour policy is being reviewed which will include expected levels of attendance.
- III. A review of Practice in Context (PIC) Critical Studies (level 5) would be undertaken based on reasons outlined in the report. Possible outcomes could be a fundamental change to the range of delivery approaches, an option to create subject specific theory or reduce

- dissertation credits which could be absorbed in other course units.
- IV. There has been low recruitment on Popular Music course since 2015 despite the subject fitting into the College's portfolio and offering progression from the FE music course. To address this and make improvements facilities and the course model are being reviewed to ensure that these are appropriate. A new Course Leader has been appointed on a fixed term contract to drive this forward.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the quality assurance reports presented by the Head of HE

6. Teaching and learning Report 2019

The Head of HE is completing lesson observations reporting that there was excellent teaching on some courses; however, this also identified curriculum design and accommodation issues in a few areas. There is a strong focus to ensure teaching and learning is appropriate throughout the curriculum.

7. Leadership and Management

- I. Applications are turbulent and unsettled in HE nationally. There had been a decline in applications and acceptances in 2019/20 compared to the previous year. Strategies have been implemented which include open days and arranging interviews promptly. The report outlined applications and acceptances to each course. Unconditional offers are only offered if students already meet the qualification tariff or in exceptional circumstances which ensures that the College maintains high standards. The strategy only anticipated small growth this year; however, the impact of student accommodation and work by the Head of HE and Head of Communications was likely to have an impact on recruitment in the longer term.
- II. Curriculum development was outlined in accordance with the strategy to launch a new BA (hons) and three MAs. Further research of new courses will be undertaken and presented to the Committee. **ACTION: HEAD OF HE**
- III. Office for Students (OfS) has confirmed that national guidance will be provided to prepare the Access and Participation Plan. The APP will focus on a step change in ambition and outcomes for disadvantaged students. The APP will have a whole provider approach to the student cycle which will be aligned to E&D and the inclusion strategy, student engagement, partnership, collaboration and strategic relationships with schools and employers. The College is required to submit a 5-year APP to OfS by 1 July which would be brought to the next Committee. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL.**

8. Identification of Key Risks

- I. Retention
- II. Critical Studies
- III. Curriculum development
- IV. Recruitment
- V. OfS: Prevent agenda (introduced to HE) and Access and Participation Plan

8. Any Other Business

No items

Signed as a true record of proceedings

Chair: Date:

Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee
(HE and FE Combined Meeting)
held on Tuesday 19 March 2019

- Present:** Mr Mike Rookes (Chair)
Ms Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Mrs Alison McLean
Mrs Kate Murrie
Mr Tim Newsholme
Mr John Nicol
- In attendance:** Mr Ben Gamble (Head of Further Education)
Mr Justin Gregory (Head of Higher Education)
Mrs Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)
Miss Hannah Jones (Student Governor FE)
Mrs Mel Williams (Wellbeing Development Lead) item 3

The meeting was quorate as six Members were present.

1. Apologies for absence

2. Minutes of the last meeting

John Nicol, as chair of the last meeting, signed the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2018 as a true record. There were no matters arising.

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

3. Safeguarding and Wellbeing

The Wellbeing Development Lead presented the report explaining that this was the first self assessment against the new Universities UK Stepchange framework for mental health wellbeing in HE. The College is using the framework across HE and FE. Management are supportive of strategies for safeguarding and wellbeing. Training had been provided for staff and students in response to common themes logged on MyConcern. These have recently included mental health first aid training, suicide prevention, child sexual exploitation (CSE) and healthy relationships. Baseline data will be collected by optional questionnaires to staff and students to assess wellbeing at the start, mid and end of year. Questionnaires would be anonymous and evaluate the impact of intervention. It was agreed that the College needs to develop resilience.

A summary of incidents by category recorded on MyConcern was provided divided into FE and HE students showing that there are some differences. HE students experience issues associated with living independently and family breakdown which have led to anxiety and emotional health problems. The profile of incidents recorded week-by-week showed key pinch points in the academic calendar. All concerns are monitored with appropriate intervention. MyConcern is used effectively by FE staff with training provided for HE staff who are beginning to use the system effectively. There was a question about the percentage of students which are logged on MyConcern which was approximately 15% of the student body. Another question followed about the impact of student issues on retention and achievement. The

Head of FE confirmed that the attendance dashboard can be checked against MyConcern.

The Wellbeing Development Lead acts as a triage to signpost students and staff to relevant services. There was discussion about the benefit of sport which could be offered. The Student Experience Coordinator had introduced some societies; a student bar is also available.

The Committee agreed: -

- To thank the Wellbeing Development Lead for preparing and presenting the report

4. Minutes of the Academic Board (Draft)

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the minutes of the Academic Board

5. Policies (draft) for recommendation to the Board

- I. Freedom of Speech Code of Practice
- II. External Speaker Procedure (minor amendments from AB)
- III. Guidelines for External Speaker
- IV. External Speaker Approval and External Speaker Referral

The Committee agreed: -

- To recommend the Board adopt the policies

6. Any other business

No items.

7. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting was arranged for Tuesday 17 June 2019 with the HE: 2.00 pm, combined meeting: 3.30 pm and FE: 4.00 pm.

Signed as a true record of proceedings

Chair: Date:

Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (FE)
held on Tuesday 19 March 2019

- Present:** Mr John Nicol (Chair)
Ms Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Ms Kate Murrie
Mr Tim Newsholme
- In attendance:** Mr Ben Gamble (Head of Further Education)
Mrs Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)
Miss Hannah Jones (Student Governor FE)

The meeting was quorate as four Members were present.

1. Apologies for absence

2. Declarations of Interests
No declarations

3. Minutes of the last meeting: 26 November 2018

The minutes of the meeting were agreed and signed by the Chair as a true record.
There were no matters arising which were not included on the agenda.

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

4. Quality Assurance

- I. Retention is good overall at 98%; however, combined level 2 yields 86.3% retention which is a key risk and being monitored closely.
- II. Achievement. Overall 93% achievement is predicted. Staff regularly discuss the 'at risk' student list and provide support to students. Functional Skills achievement is good.
- III. Attendance is 91.56% with a marginal decrease of absences to date. There are meetings with Curriculum Leaders and Course Leaders to discuss attendance. The process for attendance will be reviewed for September. A Governor asked about recurring themes and if the Head of FE was concerned. Level 3 Diploma in Art and Design is at 92.48% with reasons explained noting that FEMT have discussed issues and strategies to improve these, ranging from robust interviews and the option for mature students to progress to Foundation instead of year 2. There was challenge about the potential impact on numbers and likelihood of students to succeed with assurance that progression would be based on quality of work which would be tested. There was a question about the ability of students who are absent to catch up on the programmes which was being investigated.
- IV. English and Maths results were noted showing 100% achievement of grade 4 from three students who took re-sits. Functional Skills achievement is good at 88% overall which was better than last year and national data. There was correlation with good attendance and Functional Skills passes.

Online tests and on demand papers have been introduced. Reformed Functional Skills qualifications will be introduced in September 2019. These will have an increase in the subject content with headline changes outlined. There is an option to phase out level 1 and 2 Functional Skills and replace with GCSE. MIDAS showed the College in the top 10% for English progress.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report and supporting statistics

5. Teaching and Learning Report 2019

Teaching and learning continues to be assessed using the nine BRAG teaching standards which can be observed in lessons and used within a new pilot observation framework. Areas identified for development are assessment for learning, equality and diversity and planning and behaviour. The planning was about members of staff using the course profiles which needed to be linked to teaching. A Governor asked if staff are given notice of observations. They are notified of the two week span in which an observation would take place but not specific lessons.

A Governor asked if staff have received the new system positively which was confirmed. The Head of FE is considering using an external moderator to verify the grades as observers have been in post for two years. It was noted that Ofsted's framework changes in September 2019. A suggestion was made to use case studies to measure progress which could change the focus of observations or run alongside these which would evidence value added. The Student Governor confirmed that she had made progress since starting her course. The creative thinking matrix (Professor Brian Claxton) was suggested to measure individual student's progress.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the teaching and learning report evidencing good standards of teaching and learning

6. Leadership and Management

- I. Deep dives of the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) into English and Level 2 Art and Design were provided explaining that these are completed by Course Leaders with input from their teams to self-assess and measure progress against the PIP. Guidance was issued to Course Leaders to complete the form with feedback provided to Course Leaders. PIP reports are collated centrally to the overarching self assessment report. Data for 16-18 and 19+ learners has been completed separately for the Diploma in Art and Design to identify any specific areas to address.
- II. 2019/20 applications are stable and slightly better than predicted with a breakdown of applications by course. Ten applications have been received from students with EHCPs compared to five last year who will need additional support.
- III. Curriculum development was outlined covering the Digital Futures milestones, risk register and progress. This showed that the majority of RAG areas were positive and had been achieved or were on track. Applications have been received for the programme. UAL external examiner will approve the qualification. In addition, Music BTEC will be moderated by UAL which will allow the option for a combined arts course in the future. Investment and marketing is in place for Digital Futures and a visit by ESFA arranged. T Levels will be launched in September 2020 which require 315 work placement hours for each student. The College is currently providing T Levels as a pilot for two students who have work placements in the county. The Foundation Course has a new learning aim with training on its delivery to be provided for staff. There will be no financial or quality impact. SLT are reviewing introducing a Foundation

Course in music and performance (level 4) which would be FE funded. It was recognised that the Foundation programme develops students in the creative arts as a scaffold to learning.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the informative reports evidence effective quality management systems and curriculum development

7. Identification of Key Risks

- I. Digital curriculum recruitment and delivery.
- II. GCSE English and Maths, changes to Function Skills curriculum
- III. Combined Level 2 retention

8. Any other business

No items.

Signed as a true record of proceedings

Chair: Date: