

Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (FE)
held remotely on Tuesday 24 November 2020

Present: John Nicol (Chair)
Jennette Arnold
Kate Murrie
Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Katie Seekings
Ellie Arbuthnott (Student Governor)

In attendance: Xaviere Hughes (Head of Further Education)
Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)

The meeting was quorate as six Members were present. The Chair welcomed everyone, particularly new Governors, to the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the last meeting: 29 June 2020

It was agreed that the Chair should sign the minutes as a true record. There were no matters arising.

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

4. Performance Data 2020/21

The Head of FE presented the report summarising that attendance is 91% to date and comparable with last year. Enrolments have increased by 17% with specific courses with increased enrolments highlighted in the report. The Portfolio course traditionally attracts mature students; this year there are fewer students which was due to the impact of COVID-19 causing some students to feel anxious who had family members shielding. There was a question if Portfolio students are able to work on the course remotely using online teaching and learning; this was an option and the Course Leader had spoken with students individually.

Retention remains high at 100%; however, there has been internal movement on courses with some starters and leavers within the first six weeks before the ESFA census date with no significant change to overall student numbers. It was uncertain if interviews by Teams could have affected this.

GCSE English and maths results were 100% and 93% respectively which were based on centre assessed grades. A Governor asked about the potential impact on student progress and retention if GCSE results were higher than grades achieved by exams. The College is providing additional support to students in English and maths using DfE funding to appoint a part time tutor who will be a champion for Centurytech. There was a follow up question if robust assessments were undertaken at the start of term to ascertain student levels and competences with confirmation that these were

completed and are ongoing using Centurytech to track progress. This has also been identified in the SAR and will be monitored.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report, key issues and supporting statistics and monitor the impact of centre assessed grades

5. **Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

The first window of teaching and learning observations evidenced positive practices to embrace all levels of teaching and learning. A Governor enquired about the extent that teaching and learning observations monitor progress. Observations are ungraded and conducted in pairs including conversations with students, following the students' journey through their work, Promonitor and MyConcern data and group profiles which are prepared at the start of the year and updated frequently. These processes are triangulated which provide an accurate assessment and teaching and learning.

There was a question about the impact of COVID-19 on learning assessments with an explanation that students are required to self assess work completed at home. Assessment covers progress and attainment, attitude and responsibility, attendance and being brave. A Governor asked if all teaching is delivered face to face. During the first half term all students attended College and completed their induction. The College adjusted timetables to provide some remote learning. All groups attend College at least once a week working in their bubbles. This ensures students have access to tutors and workshops. The College has provided a few students with iPads to enable them to have remote access to online learning. Students with poor or limited WIFI have access to space in College. Vulnerable students and those with EHCPs are timetabled to regularly attend College.

Examples of practice from recent learning walks was requested which were conducted as walk throughs and observing online teaching sessions. Music students were singing their response to the register in an online class. Plastic screens have been installed in studios. Online Christmas performances are being considered which follow social distancing. Best practice examples will be included in the SAR. **ACTION: HEAD OF FE**

Students from different courses will also be involved in learning walks to bring a different angle to assessments. Governors were invited to see lessons being delivered online or visit College to see teaching and learning. **ACTION: CLERK/HEAD OF FE**

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report on teaching and learning
- Governors would be invited to see teaching, both online and in College

6. **Leadership and Management**

The SAR provides a summary of the College's key strengths and areas for improvement based on progress and achievement information from 2019/20. All curriculum areas have submitted first drafts which have also been reviewed by an external moderator with feedback provided to Course Leaders. The SAR template has been revised for 2020/21 to reflect the new Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF). The Head of FE summarised that there were positive achievements on courses last year with additional work required on the approach to work experience, progression, advice and guidance, particularly how to support students when they complete their courses. Introduction of Level 1 and 2 programmes offer different entry points and progression embedding a holistic culture of learning. There was a question how tutors have adjusted to teach Level 1 and 2 programmes noting this has been positive with support from Teaching Assistants and Learning Support Assistants working with students.

FE programmes use similar assessment criteria enabling students to achieve UCAS points on vocational programmes. There is a focus on internal progression for FE students with pathways identified, particularly the Digital Futures programme.

The Committee agreed: -

- The draft SAR would be scrutinised by Governors on 3 December 2020
- A new external moderator for the SAR should be appointed next year

6. Identification of Key Risks

- I. Challenge of transition for students to make up for lost learning skills as a result of COVID-19.
- II. Digital curriculum embedding and progression
- III. Art and Design Level 1 and 2 which is a small team and new way of working
- IV. GCSE English and maths
- V. Ofsted EIF

7. Any other business

There were no items.

Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee
(HE and FE Combined Meeting)
held remotely on Tuesday 24 November 2020

- Present:** Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Jennette Arnold
Kate Murrie
Tim Newsholme
John Nicol (Chair of the meeting)
Mike Rookes
Katie Seekings
Ellie Arbuthnott (Student Governor FE)
Hannah Jones (Student Governor HE)
- In attendance:** Xaviere Hughes (Head of Further Education)
Justin Gregory (Head of Higher Education)
Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)
Kath Ayres (Graduate Ambassador & Student Union Officer) item 2

The meeting was quorate as nine Members were present.

1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence. Jordan Knight (Student Governor HE) did not attend the meeting.

2. Student Union update on activities

The Student Union President gave a presentation of Student Union activities, particularly during Freshers' Week which had been challenging to deliver due to COVID-19 guidelines. Social media has been relaunched and several new societies launched.

A Governor asked if students provide feedback with confirmation that students gave positive and constructive feedback. There was discussion if any of the Student Union committee live in halls of residence and importance to ensure events are arranged in halls. The Student Union is working on arranging activities open to HE and FE students.

The Committee agreed: -

- To commend and congratulate the President and Student Union and the team on their outstanding achievements in challenging circumstances
- Half termly meetings between the Student Union and SLT would be arranged

3. Minutes of the last meeting

It was agreed that John Nicol, as chair of the meeting, should sign the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2020 as a true record.

Matters arising

- I. The new Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy had not been finalised. This will be presented to the Committee in the future. There is a requirement for HE policies to align to UWTSD policies which creates differences

- between some HE and FE procedures.
- II. Equality and diversity training is being provided for staff using a consultant. There has been discussion with the Student Council about personal pronouns with briefings provided to staff.

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

4. Update on managing the impact of COVID-19 and supporting students remotely

The College has followed Government guidelines and embedded minimum standards of expectations. Several students are self isolating with ongoing support provided.

The Committee agreed: -

- SLT have kept Governors informed of the impact of COVID-19 from aspects of teaching and learning, health and safety, safeguarding and wellbeing.

5. Draft Minutes of the Academic Board – 11 November 2020

Colleges and Universities have received a request from Gavin Williamson MP for Boards to sign up to an antisemitism statement. This would be reported directed to the Board for consideration in December. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL/CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS**

The Admissions Policy for HE unconditional offers had been trialled for music and photography courses last year which was subject to students meeting the entry criteria. The pilot will continue and be extended to the textiles course.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the minutes of the Academic Board
- The Board would be requested to consider adoption of the antisemitism statement requested by Gavin Williamson MP

6. Policies and Strategies

The following policies and strategies were presented which had been discussed by the Academic Board.

- I. The Teaching and Learning Strategy is a high-level strategy that underpins the College's approach to both quality assurance and quality improvement. A draft implementation plan was provided. There was a question if SLT would be involved in peer observations noting that the Heads of HE and FE would receive invitations. It was noted that SLT and occasionally external moderators would be involved. Previously in HE there were only peer observations which have recently been aligned to FE and HE professional standards. This will make the system more robust and encourage lecturers to embrace experimental teaching methods. The student voice will be part of the observation process.
- I. The Quality Assurance Strategy had been prepared in consultation with the Teaching and Learning Working Group. This is a high-level document that also underpins the College's approach to quality assurance and quality improvement. A draft implementation action plan was also provided.
- II. The Equality and Diversity Inclusion Policy replaces the Single Equality Scheme and ensures that the College meet its obligation to the public sector Equality Duty. It outlines the College's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion for everyone including employees, students, contractors and visitors. There was discussion about the process to ensure contractors and visitors are notified of the policy. This is part of the process to visit the College and signing up to the PREVENT Duty for visiting speakers. It was confirmed that the College addresses discrimination even if this was outside of the College, such as via social media.

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the Teaching and Learning Strategy
- To recommend the Board approve the Quality Assurance Strategy and Equality and Diversity Inclusion Policy (the latter subject to amendments proposed) which would be sent to the Chairs to take Chairs' action. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL/CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS**

7. Student Experience

- I. The Head of HE explained that the Student Charter 2020/21 had been amended to incorporate British Values and the College's response to COVID-19.
- II. Complaints Data 2019/20 was presented showing that the majority of complaints were received from HE students. The Complaints Policy is being reviewed which will be presented at the next meeting. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**
- III. The Clerk explained that the Safeguarding and Wellbeing Annual Report will be presented directly to the Board as safeguarding is a statutory responsibility of Governors. The Head of FE gave a brief summary that more training and awareness is being provided for FE students. The staff handbook is being updated to ensure staff understand their role in keeping students safe. It is crucial that staff recognise the impact of COVID-19 on students and embed additional measures to provide support.
- IV. The Head of HE presented the report evidencing progress of the Access and Participation Plan action plan prepared by the Scholarship and Enterprise Development Manager. The action plan incorporated evidence and impact of strategies, such as 'impact statements' which will capture good practice and evidence mapped to access, success and progress, areas defined by the Office for Students. An example included a tracker to measure student wellbeing and academic capacity during the COVID-19 lockdown. Governors were encouraged by the Teaching and Learning Knowledge-Exchange Hub (KEH). This offers a space to share core external guidance and research to drive granular actions associated with the APP. It provides an agile framework for CPD mapped to key priorities identified by the teaching and learning working group.

The Committee agreed: -

- The Student Charter should be expressed artistically and a brief would be sent to all students **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

8. Any other business

There were no items.

9. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting was arranged for Tuesday 23 March 2021 with the FE: 2.00 pm, combined meeting: 3.15 pm and HE: 4.30 pm. (The HE meeting would commence slightly later to allow more time for the combined meeting, allow less time for the FE in future and keep FE first). **ACTION: CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS**

Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (HE)
held remotely on Tuesday 24 November 2020

Present: Katie Seekings (Chair)
Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Hannah Jones
Tim Newsholme
Mike Rookes

In attendance: Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)
Justin Gregory (Head of Higher Education)
Xaviere Hughes (Head of Further Education)

The meeting was quorate as five Members were present

1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence. Jordan Knight did not attend the meeting.

2. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the last meeting: 29 June 2020

It was agreed that the Chair should sign the minutes as a true record.

Matters arising would be covered on the agenda

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

4. Enrolment and retention

Enrolments had been re-forecasted during the year which showed an increase and were marginally below target during a volatile year due to COVID-19. The College had worked with integrity when making offers and approaches following protocol.

Some students on courses were awarded 40 COVID-19 credits by UWTSD in 2019/20 so that they were not be disadvantaged due to the lockdown. Retention is good with a potential risk based on the policy of UWTSD's awarding COVID-19 credits. At the start of term all lectures were held on campus which had subsequently moved to online delivery for some lectures, such as Practice in Context.

A Governor asked if reasons were collated for students who leave their course. The Head of HE has the data but this is not recorded centrally. Leavers will be tracked in future which could be measured numerically. Students identified as 'at risk' are tracked by the Course Leader with a suggestion to develop indicators to identify at risk students, interventions and monitor progress. Discussion progressed to equality and diversity tracking noting that UCAS forms provide some information on equality and diversity characteristics with data inputted manually by the registry team. It was anticipated that online applications will improve this process. There was a further suggestion to consider introducing group profiles for HE which is embedded at FE.

Attendance to lecturers, both online and to face to face lectures, is good with some concerns regarding care leavers, BAME and polar quintile 1 (economically deprived backgrounds); however, these relate to low numbers of students. There was a question of actions being taken to support the students. Teaching is delivered with appropriate support for individual students by the academic mentoring team. There was a suggestion to track under-represented groups by attendance with national comparisons.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report and statistics

5. Student achievement and graduate outcomes report

Students worked remotely and effectively during lockdown with 71% of Level 6 students achieving high grades.

A high number of students completed graduate outcome data at College. Student earnings are often suppressed in Herefordshire and the starting level of salaries in the creative industries. Some graduates hold two jobs who do not always include their creative role as their main role. 28% of graduates lived in Herefordshire before attending the College with 36% post-graduation. Salary outcomes are extremely low; although it was noted that some careers take time to develop and grow in the creative industries. Reasons students enrol at the College are not always for career progression but to enhance the quality of their life.

There was a question about actions being taken in response to the data. The College is reviewing professional practice modules as part of course revalidation. Art graduates gain core employability skills which benefit the business sector in addition to the creative sector. It is important to develop an awareness of transferable creative skills as some students progress in other professions. Visiting speakers from other sectors could be explored. There was discussion about the number of BA (Hons) graduates who progress to the MA programme noting that this was positive.

The Committee agreed:

- To note student achievement with 71% of Level 6 students achieving high grades

6. Quality Improvement

- I. The NSS results 2019/20 and action plan were presented showing 87% overall satisfaction. The majority of scores have increased although most courses received below 10 responses. Scores have been aggregated by Discover Uni. The timing of the dissertation had affected some scores and subsequently the date for dissertation submission has been changed. Students had raised the assessment and feedback as they want assessments returned promptly regardless that lecturers provide feedback within two weeks of submission. A Governor enquired about the potential impact of lockdown on Level 5 students last year when they complete the survey. Lockdown had a practical impact of access to studios and workshops although staff continued to work with students during the summer to support teaching and learning. The College has received constructive feedback on the survey and its perception from the Student Council.
- II. HE course reviews are in progress with a summary of each course provided including actions, key judgements, NSS results for overall satisfaction and observations. Digital Futures is a developing FE programme with numerous progression pathways and outcomes; internal progression options are being addressed. MA programmes in curating, photography landscape and the environment are being validated for offer in January. An

MA in hot forged metal is also being investigated. BA (Hons) Product Design is being postponed pending further investigation. There was a question if there was potential overlap with NMiTE noting that HCA will own this course. There is a significant amount of work to complete before courses can be validated with a question how will this be managed and if there is capacity. The Head of HE stated that an HE Administrator has been appointed to enable the Head of HE to work with Course Leaders and that the College has commissioned an HE consultant, Dr Halford. Back fill of teaching for two Course Leaders had also afforded some time for development. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic had delayed progress and fatigued staff. It was agreed that it is important to celebrate achievements with staff.

- III. A summary of curriculum development with validation of new courses and revalidation of existing courses was provided in the report.
- IV. The Teaching Excellence Framework action plan was predominantly covered in the Access and Participation Plan reported at the combined Committee meeting. The HE lesson observation process is being aligned to the FE model as both FE and HE work to the same professional standards. Staff are encouraged to take risks, experiment and celebrate outcomes. The Knowledge-Exchange Hub (KEH) and impact studies draw together different strands of existing practice, share good practice and celebrate achievement. A Governor asked if lecturers have embraced this; only a few staff need encouragement. KEH is a positive move forward to capture good practice and recognizes staffs' work and practices. This is a combined platform for HE and FE. Targets have been set for courses to submit work. The Student Governor asked if this could be shared with students and encourage them to share their experiences too; currently it is not visible to students. Staff are encouraged to publish papers externally. There was a suggestion to include accessibility and examples of KEH as 'a week in the life of the knowledge exchange' at the January Board meeting.
- V. The UWTSD partnership and APR review was postponed from March 2020 due to lockdown. Course Leaders have completed APRs which have been submitted to UWTSD which was a significant task. The APR overview will be reviewed by a small panel of the Committee before being presented to the Board in December which will apply rigour to the process.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the quality reports and progress

7. Identification of Key Risks

- I. COVID-19 creates wide uncertainty to recruitment and working methods causing unpredictable changes which absorb staff time
- II. Student recruitment
- III. CMA (due to COVID-19) and specifying offer to students
- IV. TEF
- V. Revalidation and staff capacity

8. Any Other Business

The Principal reported that completion of Station Approach has been delayed until the end of January 2021 with temporary student accommodation being extended. This date appeared optimistic for completion. City Heart have commissioned an independent assessment of the fire at the site. It was agreed that the social space is very impressive which will be able to accommodate exhibitions. Meadow Arts are working to secure grant funding for art work for the external building. A celebration event will be held when the building is opened.