

**Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (FE)**  
**held remotely on Tuesday 29 June 2021**

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

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

The meeting was quorate as five Members were present.

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Katie Seekings.

**2. Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 23 March 2021 and matters arising**

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

- I. A timetable had not been prepared to invite Governors to see lessons this term. It was noted that this had been a busy and intense term for SLT and staff. Governors would be invited to visit the College next term. **ACTION PRINCIPAL/CLERK**
- II. Retention data would be reported in item 4.

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

**4. Performance Data 2020/21**

The Head of FE presented the report.

Attendance is tracked using the live dashboard from daily registers which indicates good attendance across the majority of areas at 92%, an improvement by 3% compared to last year. English and maths attendance is lower at 81% and 77% respectively. This has been an ongoing issue throughout the academic year impacted by the lockdown. English and maths grades were inflated last year; however, students have made progress.

Retention is very good at 95% overall. Governors agreed that this was excellent in view of challenges during the year. Level 2 Art & Design retention had decreased to 83% following five students leaving the course despite support provided by tutors and the Wellbeing Development Lead during lockdown with one student finding full time employment.

Individual Teacher Assessed Grades (ITAGs) have been submitted this year which have been prepared using substantial evidence with a flavour outlined. The College will be required to respond to UAL requests as an evidence sample of ITAGs.

The Foundation Diploma grade profile showed a decrease in distinctions from 30% to 19% and an increase in pass grades from 28% to 62%. There was discussion about the impact of the pandemic on assessments, some of which took place when students had no access to specialist workshops. Governors agreed to review how the College prepares students to achieve high grades at the next meeting. **ACTION: HEAD OF FE**

A Governor commented that this had been an extraordinary year with good attendance despite students been unable to engage in teaching and learning through usual mechanisms. There was a question if it was possible to differentiate between attendance and the impact of the pandemic. Attendance was recorded to online sessions during the pandemic. It was agreed that a narrative should be added to the SAR about the impact of the pandemic. Some students had felt unable to attend College and there were challenges delivering a combination of face to face and blended online learning, particularly if students had poor internet connectivity or limited access to devices. The College provided support for students who were unable to attend College evidencing continual engagement. In addition wellbeing support was provided. It was agreed that there are wider measures than attendance which are crucial to evidence in the SAR. **ACTION: HEAD OF FE**

Applications 2021/22 are buoyant and substantially better than last year with increased applications to the Foundation Diploma and Art and Design.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report, key issues and supporting statistics
- To commend staff for their hard work in the thorough moderation process recognising their increased workload

## **5. Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

This would be discussed at the combined meeting.

## **6. Leadership and Management**

The Head of FE drew Governors' attention to the key points identified in the Development Plan. Questions were invited.

A Governor enquired if mature students enrolled on the Foundation Diploma found lockdown more challenging than their peers. Students generally had their own equipment to enable them to continue to work from home. Mature students have frequently enrolled on the course following successful careers and enjoy integration and use of workshops in College. Some mature students have other pressures such as family commitments which made teaching and learning more challenging during lockdown.

The Teaching, Learning and Quality Improvement Lead was working closely with the Hereford and Marches Careers Hub and the Head of FE to

develop an HCA careers strategy to deliver advice and guidance following the Gatsby Benchmarks. Mechanisms include the tutorial programme, recording 'employer encounters' (live briefs, lectures, work experience) and preparing students for work both in and outside of the creative industries. The Student Governor confirmed that teaching and guidance was provided to prepare students for the work place.

There was discussion about the learner voice noting that a student survey had been issued which included progression and was linked to Gatsby benchmarks, wellbeing and safety on campus, sustainability and support offered to students by the College.

Due to the pandemic and Government guidelines the College had cancelled the 'Bridging the Gap' event which would have supported 2021 transition. This is being addressed in alternative ways.

Online course interviews have worked effectively and will continue to be offered. Visiting lecturers have been delivered on Teams means these have increased participation with outstanding lecturers. Students are extremely supportive of each other and work collaboratively.

Accommodation changes were outlined to accommodate the increased number of students in September. Additional space has been secured at CRC, including the chapel wing, which will provide music and performing arts facilities. The Foundation Diploma will be relocated to CRC which will provide opportunities for collaboration with HE. This will create additional space at Folly Lane for Digital Futures. 2<sup>nd</sup> year Art and Design will relocate to the current Foundation studio. The Stronger Towns investment plan will provide longer term development for digital futures. Tours of campuses would be arranged for Governors next term. **ACTION: CLERK**

The Head of FE reported that Ofsted are requesting providers to volunteer for inspection in the autumn term which will not be graded. Staff have had briefings about the EIF. To prepare for Ofsted, the SAR will be put in place next term with moderation to include assessment against the Ofsted EIF.

## **7. Identification of Key Risks**

- I. Challenge of transition for students to make up for lost learning skills resulting from COVID-19 and discrepancy of high grades for Foundation students
- II. Consolidating the digital curriculum
- III. Art and Design Level 1 and 2
- IV. GCSE English and maths
- V. Ofsted EIF
- VI. Student wellbeing and mental health following lockdown remained challenging
- VII. Professional development for teaching

## **8. Any other business**

There were no items.

**Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee**  
**(HE and FE Combined Meeting)**  
**held remotely on Tuesday 29 June 2021**

**Present:** Abigail Appleton (Principal)  
Jennette Arnold  
Kate Murrie  
Tim Newsholme  
John Nicol (Chair of the meeting)  
Mike Rookes  
Ellie Arbuthnott (Student Governor FE)  
Hannah Jones (Student Governor HE)

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

The meeting was quorate as eight Members were present.

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Katie Seekings. Jordan Knight did not attend and was preparing his final show.

**2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 23 March and Matters Arising**

It was agreed that John Nicol, as chair of the meeting, should sign the minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2021 as a true record.

Matters arising had been actioned. The status of policies needed to be confirmed. [Post meeting the Clerk had checked that all policies approved at the meeting were available to access on the website]

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

**3. Draft Minutes of the Academic Board – 14 May 2021**

These were noted.

**4. Teaching Professional Development Plan Pilot**

The Head of FE gave a presentation outlining mechanisms previously used to grade teaching and learning and the rationale to revise processes to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. Lesson observations would become focused on professional development. There will be a transitional approach (encouraging teachers to take responsibility for their professional development with critical reflection) and transformative approach (sharing experience, problem solving, critiques).

Digital Skills Demonstrators and Technical Demonstrators have been included in the observation process this year which had been extremely positive.

This year 95% of staff have completed the observation cycle which had included learning walks by the Head of FE, Teaching and Learning Lead and Course Leaders. Staff have been paired to share practice with two peer observations conducted by staff with reflections. A summary of responses to questions was provided from the recent self assessment evidencing staff feel more confident in the process.

2021/22 process will encompass FE and HE involving students in the observation process. There was a question about students' involvement particularly how this would work and the time commitment required. All students will be eligible to participate with training, coaching and suggested questions provided. Examples were outlined covering teaching and learning and safeguarding. A Governor asked if students could visit and comment on other courses. This would be implemented. Collaboration between courses has increased this year with opportunities for staff and students to share good practice and work with peers to extend the student experience and learning. Students' feedback will be included as part of the formal observation.

The Governors stressed that the SAR must articulate positive points about teaching, areas to improve identified from the scheme and the impact on students. They also made it clear it was crucial to encapsulate actions to address under-performance in teaching. Examples of rigour and challenge would be incorporated. The AQ&S (FE) committee are to discuss the new arrangements further at the next meeting to ensure that standards remain high.

There was a question if teaching standards would be externally validated concluding that external validation will be arranged by several colleges including an Ofsted trained moderator. **ACTION: HEAD OF FE**

A Governor asked if there was a link between professional standards, appraisal and pay awards with confirmation that these are separate processes.

There was a suggestion to consider the process to pair staff to ensure there is an appropriate level of challenge.

The Committee agreed: -

- The teaching and learning observation scheme was progressive and interesting agreeing a summary presentation should be provided for the Board in future **ACTION PRINCIPAL/CLERK**
- AQ&S Committee (FE) would have further discussion about teaching and learning at the next meeting

**5. Regulatory requirements following recent reports from OfS and Ofsted regarding harassment and College's plan to ensure**

### **appropriate policies are in place**

The Principal explained that OfS and Ofsted have revised their policy on harassment in schools and colleges. The College is in the final stages of revising its harassment policy which was previously incorporated in the Safeguarding Policy.

#### The Committee agreed: -

- Several policies which are being revised will be emailed to Governors for comments **SLT/CLERK**

### **6. Student Experience - Matrix Standard Confirmation**

The Principal reported that the College had successfully achieved the Matrix Standard for provision of advice and guidance to students following a 3-day digital assessment. The formal report had not been received to date. SLT are addressing recommendations from the assessment.

#### The Committee agreed: -

- To congratulate the College on achieving the Matrix Standard

### **7. Annual Item for Committee**

#### The Committee agreed: -

- To appoint Katie Seekings and Kate Murrie as Chair of AQ&S HE and FE Committee respectively
- The Committee effectively met its terms of reference
- No changes were proposed to the terms of reference
- To consider succession planning to ensure that the Safeguarding Designated Governor is trained to Level 5 safeguarding **ACTION: CLERK**

### **8. Any other business**

The Committee recorded appreciation to John Nicol for effectively chairing the AQ&S Committee (FE) and many of the combined meetings. A Governor specifically thanked him for being inclusive and involving everyone in meetings.

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

The next meeting was arranged for Tuesday 23 November 2021 with the FE: 2.00 pm, combined meeting: 3.30 pm and HE: 4.30 pm.

**Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (HE)**  
**held remotely on Tuesday 29 June 2021**

**Present:** Tim Newsholme (Chair of the meeting)  
Abigail Appleton (Principal)  
Hannah Jones  
Mike Rookes

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

The meeting was quorate as four Members were present

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Katie Seekings. Jordan Knight did not attend the meeting who was putting his final show together.

**2. Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 23 March 2021 and matters arising**

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

The brainstorming session with F&GP Committee and AQ&S Committee had been very useful.

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

**4. Key Data for 2020/21**

Attendance was good which reflected the combination of campus and online engagement. Delivery on campus and collaboration will be used as much as possible next year. There will be less focus on blended learning to create a strong College community. The attendance policy is being revised to connect with students on campus and support individuals recognising the correlation between attendance and results. This attendance policy will introduce an institutional approach to review course attendance with conversations with Course Leaders and students to discuss reasons for non-attendance and subsequent actions. The College is equipping students for professional practice in their future which requires students to commit. The Student Governor commented that students are paying for their courses and suggested

reinforcing this message. The impact of non-attendance affects the whole course and interaction with their peers.

Retention remains good and better than last year; however, this was masked by last year's Examination Board when 40 no detriment Covid credits were awarded to all students without submission. This was positive for students but created a void this year. This was challenging in varying levels and across courses for students. This year a number of students have applied for extenuating circumstances which have been granted by UWTSD. Students with extenuating circumstances have been encouraged to submit early. There was a question about the number of students with extenuating circumstances which was around 100 students and had increased substantially this year. There was a follow up question of strategies embedded to reduce these. The College has provided additional workshop time, including over Easter, and extended terms for making courses to allow students the opportunity to catch up. The pandemic has impacted on some students with shielding for themselves or family members, or isolating. Students' work in final shows has shown that standards and quality of work remains high. This will be confirmed by the External Examiners.

A Governor asked if an analysis of online and blended learning will be undertaken to identify any advantages. There are positive elements of blended learning which provide flexibility to students who commute. Flipped learning has been piloted with some visiting lecturers and makers with edited recorded resources provided for students.

There are fewer applications compared to last year which is of concern. This is comparable with some competitors in a volatile year. Actions are being taken to increase applications.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report and statistics

## **5. Teaching and Learning**

The Head of HE reported that small cohorts will be recruited to some courses this year. Collaborative delivery is being timetabled next year to enhance the quality of the student experience and provide more energy and opportunities to share ideas. The induction model will be expanded, some critical studies and professional practice skills will be shared; this will build community and collaboration.

A Governor commented that this would enable students to opt to transfer to different courses once enrolled. Collaboration across programmes during the first year would enable students to transfer to alternative courses which could improve overall retention. The Student Governor commented that opportunities to collaborate between courses improves the student experience, both between similar courses and very different courses.

The Head of HE gave a presentation about OfS 'Gravity Assist' which is based on the review commissioned by the Secretary of State and



conducted by Sir Michael Barber to move towards digital teaching and learning. OfS have taken a positive approach to the effects of the pandemic. There are two approaches to deliver blended and flipped learning, (the latter access to pre-recorded learning).

The College had prepared an action plan to implement blended teaching and learning. This ranged from assessing each student's digital access to equipment, to provision of resources and skills for staff delivering combined face to face and online learning, and plans for use in longer term.

During lockdown online learning fragmented the student experience. The College is tailoring delivery and use of blended learning to maximise the student experience.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the informative report and presentation

## **6. Quality Improvement**

- I. Curriculum development was outlined in the report. This included progress of MA course validation which will include some common modules, backed up by course specific Indicative Content. Course capacity would also be addressed with delivery of common modules. Validation of Popular Music had been deferred to 2022 due to a change of course leadership. A Governor asked about the PGCE programme and its delivery noting that a specialist will be appointed as this is a new curriculum area.

Significant changes have been introduced to course delivery from 2021. This will focus on enhancing the College's strong community and removing barriers between courses. Optional elements of modules are being piloted with HCA+ for extra curricula which includes an education element. The Student Governor commented that this provided an excellent opportunity for students. These are changes to professional practice and students' employability whilst positioning the College in a competitive environment. Students sign up to courses to equip them for their careers and employability progression. Some mature students sign up for the experience following successful careers in different sectors. There is collaboration with FE, an example was an event in the Wye Valley involving all students in activities. Wellbeing is supported and embraced in an inclusive environment.

- II. UWTSD Final Examination Board will be held in July with a pre-board with the intention to address complicated issues. A retrieval board will be arranged early in September so that level 6 students can graduate at the ceremony on 16 September.
- III. The OIA Annual Statement showed that two complaints had been made to the OIA this year; one of these was outside of the OIA's

remit.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the quality reports
- To note the OIA Annual Statement

**7. Identification of Key Risks**

- I. Student applications
- II. Number of students with extenuating circumstances
- III. COVID-19 creates uncertainty to recruitment and working methods causing unpredictable changes which absorb staff time
- IV. CMA requirement to communicate offer to students to meet OfS obligation
- V. TEF and revised action plan
- VI. Graduates outcomes and NSS
- VII. Revalidation and staff capacity

**8. Any Other Business**

There were no items.