

**Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (FE)**  
**held on Tuesday 29 March 2022**

**Present:** Kate Murrie (Chair)  
Jennette Arnold OBE  
Abigail Appleton (Principal)  
Victor Barratt (Student Governor)  
John Nicol

**In attendance:** Xaviere Hughes (Head of Further Education)  
Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)  
Hannah Jones (HE Student Governor)

The meeting was quorate as five Members were present.

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Katie Seekings, Justin Gregory (Head of Higher Education). Andrew Jones did not attend.

**2. Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

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

The following matters arising were discussed.

- I. The Student Governor had suggestions to support students missing learning which he would feedback to the Head of FE.
- II. It was not possible to report anonymous cases studies for Study Skills students.

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

**4. Performance Data**

Key data 2021/22 year to date and 2022 applications were reported. Attendance was marginally lower at 93% against a target of 95%. This is being monitored closely with staff aware of individual students who have attendance issues who are being given support. The decline was not specific to any courses. A Governor asked about reasons students have not attended and for confirmation that lessons are attractive and exciting. Attendance is affected by some students who experience profound personal challenges or health issues. During the Ofsted pilot deep dives identified reasons individual students were missing which also evidenced the immense levels of support staff provide. Attendance in Performing Arts is very good where students understand the importance to attend as

they rely on each other on the course. There was a question about the impact of attendance and retention on achievement noting retention is good at 95%. Students' work, grades and progression are very good. A question followed how retention compared nationally. This was difficult to compare with like to for colleges as GFE colleges do not provide a similar comparison. There was a suggestion to make comparisons to the objectives agreed by the Board. A retention target of 96% has been agreed with a contextual statement requested showing progress against the target. **ACTION: HEAD OF FE**

Applications had increased to some courses, such as Performing Arts. Overall applications are marginally lower compared to the same time last year. Actions were outlined in the report to address this. Discussion progressed to open days with a suggestion to focus on transferable skills achieved from courses. The Head of FE confirmed that transferable skills for employability are highlighted.

GCSE English, Maths and Functional Skills results are good. It was noted that access arrangements no longer travel with students from schools. Study Skills staff process assessments for support and Functional Skills during the first term. To improve the process there was a suggestion to ascertain if student's access arrangements could be obtained from schools. Schools provide safeguarding information but it has proved challenging to obtain access arrangements and learning support information from schools.

A student was entered for GCSE maths in December at the request of their parents who had achieved grade 3 but was very near to achieving grade 4. It was acknowledged that schools work extremely hard to support students to achieve GCSEs which makes it more challenging to support students to achieve higher grades in post-16 education.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report and key data

## 5. Student Experience

- I. The Professional Development Cycle (Teaching and Learning) which is in its second cycle, has had positive impact. This empowers staff in a progressive and holistic process with a summary of activities outlined. Implementation of a quality measure was raised with confirmation that the Head of FE is working with a small group of colleges to introduce third party challenge. There was a question how this will be reported to the Committee concluding that the group of colleges will identify the feedback method. There was a suggestion to improve attendance and punctuality as additional focuses. A reporting system was being developed; there was a request to report staff actions and activities. **ACTION: HEAD OF FE.** A question followed how observation peers from other colleges would differ; this would introduce an external dimension ensuring objectivity and further rigour reporting findings to SLT. FE and HE are developing a more robust matrix of processes to

evaluate the quality of service including teaching and learning. The aim is for greater consistency across HE and FE. Collaboration between FE, HE and other providers was commended.

- II. Student survey feedback regarding teaching and learning was a follow up survey to the settling in survey with summary feedback presented. 320 students participated in the survey. Follow up surveys will be launched after Easter and at the end of the course using the same questions with some additional questions about students' expectations. The survey results reconciled with other data presented.
- III. A summary of strategies embedded to support students to achieve high grades in English and maths was provided.
- IV. RSM quality assurance systems further education report was positive evidencing robust practices.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the reports presented

## 6. Quality Improvement

- I. The Development Plan 2021/22 reported progress against the Self Assessment Report. Internal verification will be an additional measure to ensure students have completed all parts of their qualifications. Staff development is being provided about standardised assessment frameworks. The Chair enquired if actions for employability are incorporated in the Development Plan. There is information about employability, careers and creatives speaking about their experiences on the website. Each curriculum area has its own Development Plan. A Governor asked about the student voice with confirmation that feedback is provided to the Student Council and disseminated to students. A Governor suggested an option for some student representatives to participate in the work with the group of colleges regarding the professional development cycle which was supported. **ACTION: HEAD OF FE**
- II. The Ofsted Pilot was positive which has provided a platform to build on the journey towards becoming an outstanding provider.
- III. Level 1 and Level 4 programmes are no longer being offered with alternatives available for students. FE and HE course collaboration will continue to be pursued next year.

## 7. Identification of Key Risks

- I. Challenge of transition for students to make up for missed learning skills resulting from covid-19
- II. Student wellbeing, mental health and resilience following lockdown (recruiting for an additional wellbeing support mentor)
- III. Attendance, progress and outcomes
- IV. Consolidating the digital curriculum
- V. Art and Design Level 1 and 2 (deep dive with group of colleges suggested)
- VI. GCSE English and maths (English is less of a concern)
- VII. Professional Development Cycle (teaching and learning)

VIII. Ofsted EIF

8. **Any other business**  
There were 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 remotely on Tuesday 29 March 2022**

**Present:** Abigail Appleton (Principal)  
Jennette Arnold  
Victor Barratt (Student Governor FE)  
Dr Joanne Horton (Co-opted Member)  
Hannah Jones (Student Governor HE)  
Mervyn Jones  
Kate Murrie (Chair of the meeting)  
Tim Newsholme  
John Nicol

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

The meeting was quorate as nine Members were present. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting particularly Dr Joanne Horton, introductions followed.

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Katie Seekings and Justin Gregory (Head of HE). Andrew Jones (Student Governor FE) did not attend.

**2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 23 November 2021 and matters arising**

It was agreed that Kate Murrie, as chair of the meeting, should sign the minutes of the meeting as a true record.

- I. Policies should report Governors' responsibilities separately to SLT's responsibilities; this would be amended in the policy guidelines. **ACTION: CLERK**
- II. The Schools White Paper was published in March which will have implications on English, Maths and SEND. The impact will be summarised to the AQ&S FE Committee. Jennette Arnold is a SEND champion who would meet the Head of FE. **ACTION: HEAD OF FE**

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

**3. Draft Minutes of the Academic Board – 10 November 2021**

The Principal drew Governors' attention to discussion about the OfS consultation. A pre-enrolment survey was under development regarding

transition from FE to HE following the pandemic. The FE Student Governor offered input into its development. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

Colleges have been advised by the Home Office to be more vigilant of student views particularly in view of the war in Ukraine.

Some HE assessment deadlines had been extended with reasons considered; in future consistency of deadlines would be introduced. There had been low responses to module surveys from students which partly reflected on student engagement.

The Board agreed: -

- To note the Academic Board minutes

#### **4. RSM Safeguarding Framework: harassment and sexual misconduct**

This was a positive report which was also supported by the Local Authority's safeguarding audit completed by the Principal, Head of FE and Designated Safeguarding Governor.

There was a low-level recommendation to undertake a self assessment against Ofsted's guidelines 'review of sexual harassment in schools and colleges' which would be completed. Governors were fully supportive of this, particularly in light of the national child Q case which reinforced the necessity to embed robust systems and a culture whereby issues are identified, recorded and addressed. It is important to record incidents and conversations which provide useful reference in the event that an issue should become formal. Staff use MyConcern to track conversations and concerns; this will be developed further to draw information together in a central place.

Ofsted feedback on safeguarding was positive which had acknowledged strong links to external agencies, support to students and for staff. Safer recruitment practices are in place with a suggestion to review dates for DBS renewals. Students had confirmed to Ofsted that they feel safe in College and that there is an atmosphere of respect for others.

It was recognised that feedback from students, including HE and mature students, is extremely important. HE staff need to consistently use MyConcern which is a change in culture. There was a proposal to introduce MyConcern as mandatory training for HE staff. SLT are reviewing staff CPD to ensure that it covers mandatory, teaching and learning development training for relevant staff.

The Committee agreed: -

- RSM's report of safeguarding practices was reassuring which covered a fundamental area

#### **5. Policies and Strategies**

- I. The Professional Development and Employer Engagement Strategy encapsulated engagement with employers to support delivery of student learning and their professional development skills whilst supporting employer needs in curriculum development.

Additional elements of the strategy would be developed in future. There was a suggestion to expand the definitions of the main areas of professional development to include opportunities for placements overseas. In addition, artistic development and employment differ for LDD who need placements which suit their individual needs. A number of graduates will progress into self-employment or portfolio careers with recognition it is important to develop students' entrepreneurial skills to enable them to run their own business or provide incubator units. The professional development modules would encompass this with a suggestion to ensure students are equipped to know their rights, including those with protected characteristics. There was a question who is responsible to oversee employer engagement. The Principal has a wide range of contacts which are disseminated to staff. A Governor referred to research graduate champion opportunities linked with employers which provide positive progress for students. This will be discussed outside of the meeting. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL.**

- II. The Head of HE is working with the Head of FE to prepare a Quality Assurance Strategy which will be influenced by internal monitoring and the recent Ofsted pilot feedback. This will bring consistency with a single strategy whilst highlighting some differences in FE and HE. The College has an aspiration to become outstanding. The Chair offered assistance and input into the Quality Assurance Strategy.
- III. The Student Behaviour and Discipline Policy was progressing with a suggestion to issue drafts to Committee for comments at the end of April for email consultation or, if necessary, to arrange a separate meeting before issuing to the Board for approval in May. SLT had begun to develop a single policy but identified significant differences in FE and HE based on legislation. A working group was established to comment on the policy its members were the Chairs of AQ&S FE and HE Committees, John Nicol and the Heads of FE and HE. **ACTION: HEADS OF FE/HE**

The Committee agreed: -

- The Professional Development and Employer Engagement Strategy was a positive strategy which would be presented to the Board; this covered part of several elements which are being developed
- The Quality Strategy is being developed which will be presented to the Board for approval once available
- A working group was established to progress the Student Behaviour and Discipline Policy

## 6. **Any other business**

There were no items

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

The next meeting was arranged for Tuesday 28 June 2022 with the FE: 2.00 pm, combined meeting: 3.45 pm and HE meeting to follow the combined meeting.

**Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (HE)**  
**held remotely on Tuesday 29 March 2022**

**Present:** Tim Newsholme (Chair)  
Abigail Appleton (Principal)  
Dr Joanne Horton (Co-opted Member)  
Hannah Jones (Student Governor HE)  
Mervyn Jones

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

The meeting was quorate as five Members were present. In the absence of the Head of HE, the Principal presented reports.

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Katie Seeking and Justin Gregory (Head of Higher Education)

**2. Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

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. Key Data for 2021/22**

The Principal explained that attendance is being tracked which showed a decline. This had triggered concern around student engagement and retention. A course MOT process has been introduced ensuring that absence is followed up formally with individual students. This provides the College with useful and timely information about student engagement despite OfS not measuring attendance. A Governor asked if there is a minimum attendance percentage noting that registers have been introduced as mandatory for all formal teaching and learning. The College outlines expectations and requirements to prospective students at open days.

There was a marginal decrease in retention which had been masked during the pandemic when students received covid credits towards their programmes.



Applications have increased significantly year on year and exceeded 2020 applications. There are good levels of internal progression which was encouraging. The overall profile to courses is inconsistent to date with cautious optimism until applications convert to firm acceptances and enrolments.

There was specific discussion about some programmes including photography and Masters programmes agreeing to provide an update to the Board on the College's offer of Masters programmes, enrolments and applications. **ACTION: HEAD OF HE**

UWTSD had a QAA visit which involved HCA as a partner. UWTSD had confirmed that it had received positive feedback regarding its relationship with partners. The process included a review of HCA's application process for students who had not met the entry criteria which had been confirmed as robust.

The College uses its website and social media to publish some digital galleries of exhibitions which are widely accessible. A film maker has recently joined the marketing team who will further facilitate its content.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report and statistics

## **5. Student Experience Survey**

A 'settling in' survey was introduced for first year students this year which largely mirrored the existing FE survey. There was a lower completion rate compared to the FE survey agreeing higher participation would be useful. The survey was not anonymous which enabled follow up to responses with participants. The survey would be repeated annually with feedback provided to the Student Council. It was reiterated that prompt feedback to students is crucial.

Level 4 and 5 complete surveys at the end of semester one; this provides 3-year comparison data. There was a general consensus that it is important to measure students' starting point and distance travelled.

The structure of surveys would be reviewed for next year with input from students and systematic feedback. Survey results should be used to provide trend information so that policy becomes stronger as opposed to being reactive to issues identified each year.

There was a question if notice boards at Station Approach are used to promote information and guidance for students; this would be checked.

**ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

Discussion progressed to ensuring that the questionnaire was relevant with a suggestion to incorporate the impact of global events such as student finance, debt and securing employment after graduation.

**ACTION: HEAD OF HE**

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the survey results concluding that this was an excellent process

**6. Quality Improvement**

- I. The College is progressing revalidation of degrees working with an HE consultant. UWTSD have proposed validating key Foundation Degrees for September 2022. In future there will be formal reporting of curriculum development and revalidation of degrees.
- II. The Teaching and Learning Professional Development Cycle embedded in FE is being rolled out in HE.
- III. OfS have changed the College's lead contact for the Access and Participation Plan (APP). OfS has a new strategy to change the APP from a 5-year plan which will be required for submission in 2023. This will focus on graduate recruitment, teaching and learning, employability and careers. The APP and TEF will be 4-year cycles with input from the student voice. The College will develop its recruitment activity and a partnership framework with local schools which could be extended to schools in the region including urban areas; this will be facilitated through the Creative Arts initiative.

**7. Identification of Key Risks**

- I. Curriculum development and resources to develop digital curriculum
- II. Student applications
- III. Covid-19 risk on students' mental health, social issues and its financial impact
- IV. Covid-19 impact on missed learning for students
- V. NSS score following the impact of covid-19
- VI. Quality regulation and changes to APP, TEF and B3
- VII. Graduates outcomes

**8. Any Other Business**

There were no items.

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

Tuesday 28 June 2022 commencing at 3.45 pm

**Signed as a true record of proceedings**

**Chair:** ..... **Date:**.....