

Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (HE)
held remotely on Friday 3 December 2021

Present: Tim Newsholme (Chair)
Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Mervyn Jones

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

The meeting was quorate as three Members were present. This was a single item agenda to scrutinize the College's Annual Report before making a recommendation to the Board for approval and submission to UWTSD.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Dr Joanne Horton, Hannah Jones (Student Governor) and Katie Seekings.

2. College Report

The Head of HE explained that the document followed UWTSD's template to complete the annual review and overview report. Staff, student and senior leadership panel partnership reviews have taken place this week. UWTSDs had commended the College on the following: -

- Student engagement and support with a number of students commenting that the course exceeded their expectations
- HCA's relationship with UWTSD which is being developed in terms of clarity and support

Recommendations

- I. ETL role with link with UWTSD had become erratic during lockdown which UWTSD would clarify. UWTSD is a competitor and process needed to be less fraught from a business perspective.
- II. Form relationships between the support services provided for students in each institution.

In summary UWTSD wanted the relationship with HCA to continue.

The report outlined the following key aspects: -

- Delivery of provision through lockdown including continued provision flipped learning (online and face to face) evidenced HCA's flexibility and high retention during the pandemic. The pandemic spanned 15 months effecting two different year groups with a higher level of retrievals.
- Maintaining academic standards ensuring that assessment remains rigorous in line with sector standards which was evidenced by External Examiners. (Suggestion from Governor to include two quotes to create more substance)

- Summary of how UWTSD's regulations and procedures were disseminated to staff and students. Best 80 of 100 credits taken into account which resulted in an increase in Firsts awarded. Communication methods used with students were incorporated.
- Student engagement included at least two meetings with students/Student Council. A summary of student feedback was provided from the NSS survey.
- The semester two survey and complaints were summarised. There had been one historical complaint that went to UWTSD and from there to the Office for Independent Adjudicator who decided that the complaint was not justified on the basis that the College made a reasonable offer to resolve the complaint. There were very small numbers of student complaints, e.g. 4 complaints out of 300 students about critical studies with further work on content this year to mirror courses. The College is striving towards positive good experiences for all students. **ACTION:** A judgement would be added to this section.
- Completion of the APR process – UWTSD's had issued the template late with a request to issue the APR earlier in the academic year. MA contemporary craft and fine art will be submitted by 15 January 2021.
- APR includes appropriate response to issues raised by External Examiners. Response was noted regarding dissertations which was referenced by two EE reports. There was a discrepancy in grades between practice and theory modules.
- Reoccurring themes – meetings arranged with Level 6 students, a standardisation process has been introduced for Course Leaders with ongoing constructive dialogue between the two institutions.
- Feedback on the APR process – the revised more sophisticated approach is beneficial to both partners, increase use of standardised data across all courses. A Governor suggested making course meetings more standardised whilst still allowing for flexibility. Teams meetings should discuss progress of all students. Course MOTs are wider covering different staff and all aspect of students, not just academic progress.
- Curriculum developments e.g. launch of MA curating, developed teaching and learning strategy and quality progress were outlined.
- Risks were outlined.
- Financial sustainability 2nd bullet point regarding Level 4 targets for next year– remove 'modest'
- Amend title to 'Climate Commission FE roadmap' in environmental sustainability
- Opportunities for interaction between staff and students at both institutions
- Head of Collaborative Partnerships (Operations) was supportive of HCA creating its own FDA Games Design course for validation. Competitor/regulator relationship needed to be managed appropriately. The Head of HE meets with Course Leaders when UWTSDs issues ETL information. UWTSD work in partnership with HCA
- Potential to build relationships with other institutions as an opportunity for students in future.

General comments

- I. Check typos and use of wording

- II. Active statement of intention as opposed to bullet points – e.g. cross college enterprise strategy and curriculum
- III. Standardise use of paragraphs and bullets
- IV. Remove FE complaints section
- V. APR needs to substantiate any statements made with narrative and evidence. Fundamental knowledge of what we are doing and ensure UWTSD buys into this.
- VI. APR submitted to validating partner. Identifies some development areas. Next year quality process should achieve rigorous self assessment identifying strengths and areas for development whilst adaptable to meet validating partner's requirements whilst avoiding duplications
- VII. Fundamentally honest document presented to UWTSD - ensure this provides a holistic overview and clear sense of curriculum development, strengths and improvements.
- VIII. Structure and student experience need to include reference to schools
- IX. Satisfy validating partner and be useful and informative to the Board
- X. Section 5 is in a different font
- XI. To be submitted to Board for approval and will further brief Governors on HE.

The Committee agreed: -

- To recommend the Board approve the College report subject to amendments and final copy being prepared
- The Chair recognised the immense level of hard work from the Head of HE to prepare the report