

Notes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (FE)
held on Tuesday 28 March 2023

Present: Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Jennette Arnold
Mervyn Jones (Chair for the meeting)
Tim Newsholme
Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)
Xaviere Hughes (Vice Principal Further Education)
Justin Gregory (Vice Principal Higher Education)

The meeting was inquorate as the Chair of the Committee had resigned unexpectedly very recently for personal reasons. The FE student governors had reconsidered the role and also chosen to resign. This meant that the meeting was inquorate. The minutes from the last meeting would also be taken as notes when no decisions were made.

1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Notes of the last meeting held on 1 December 2022 and matters arising

- I. Withdrawal data from other colleges had not been obtained. This year 6% of students had withdrawn before the census date with an additional 2% after the census date. Reasons for withdrawals post census were requested which were based on students' poor attendance and/or their failure to achieve. The College provides support for students with regular communication with parents. There are clear reasons and audit trails for students who withdraw.
- II. Progression data is tracked which was provided for students progressing to HE. Data is also being collated for students who progress into employment with a follow-up letter to be sent to last year's leavers imminently offering further advice and guidance. There was discussion about the alumni which is informal. An option to enrol students to the alumni programme when they commence their course who could choose to opt out was suggested. There was also discussion about employment areas and whether these related to their courses. The College ensures that students have a valued educational experience and outcome.
- III. Governors' participation in research days for PDC would be taken forward next year.

4. Performance Data

- I. Key data year to date showed a decrease in applications for 2023/24 compared to the same time last year with strategies outlined to address this. A Governor commented about fewer applications to Digital Futures. This had been affected by staffing issues limiting proactive marketing. Digital Futures information is being shared in schools and a careers event arranged for careers teachers. An update on Digital Futures was requested at the next Board meeting. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL.** A progression introduction evening will be arranged in tandem with degree shows to introduce students and parents to the UCAS process at the end of the first year.

Attendance has improved to 88%, an improvement by 1% despite being 5% lower than the year before; strategies to improve attendance were outlined in the report. There was discussion about the progress of students studying GCSE English and Maths noting that staffing has increased with an effective team delivering teaching in welcoming and suitable rooms with support from main qualification tutors. There are small groups and fun teaching and learning methods; assessments are completed to use assistive technology. Functional Skills Maths is offered as a stepping stone to GCSE. Course MOTs include English and Maths with attendance tracked. There are a range of students including some who are dyslexic, have ADHD or are fearful about exams. This year 130 students are enrolled who comprise of level 2 students predominantly.

Retention is above target at 97%. Students are supported to complete their courses, including some student with long-term health issues who may have individualised timetables. A Governor asked if there is a correlation between attendance and high grades which was confirmed. Students are encouraged to use tutors and facilities to maximise their success. Work ethics of students who have received unconditional offers from HEIs are sometimes impacted but encouraged to continue to work to high standards.

The College held a personal safety week with 200 students participating in a drugs awareness session, self-defence and workshops on staying safe on the streets and online. This was positively received by students.

- II. Destination data 2022 was summarised by course which included HE, FE and employment with 30 students progressing to HE at HCA. There are 49 applications for internal progression to date.
- III. There was one formal complaint regarding life drawing classes which the Curriculum Leader resolved by liaising with the parent and an alternative learning aim was provided for the student. Informal complaints which had been resolved were not captured.
- IV. A progress update to the Quality Development Plan was presented. There was discussion about how the Skills Agenda is being embedded.

Live briefs continue to be offered with some off-campus placements this year which will be increased next year. Professional development will include work placements from June after students have completed their course modules. An off-campus placement will be offered during courses with students encouraged to seek placements in addition to the College sourcing these. Placements do not necessarily have to be in the creative industries but could be to do a creative task within an organisation. Placements will develop students' soft skills and enable them to add value whilst potentially raising the profile of creative education and HCA in the community.

5. Professional Development Cycle (Teaching and Learning)

The PDC process has been modified with two windows in October when lessons are observed by a team of four. Reports are written with discussion about teaching to identify good practice and areas for development. 31 staff have completed two sessions this year. Staff development in September will focus on making further improvements to the cycle. Themes identified include different activities for student engagement, independent learning skills, questioning, planning, E&D, assessment. These were identified by several lessons. Students are also involved in the observation process.

There was discussion about how Governors know that teaching is good in the College. There are robust measures in place with observations, development, feedback from students and outcomes to evidence the effectiveness of teaching.

6. Curriculum Development and Employer Engagement

This item had already been addressed.

7. Identification of Key Risks

- I. Attendance
- II. Digital Futures recruitment, curriculum development and resources to develop digital curriculum
- III. Ofsted
- IV. Embedding the Skills Agenda
- V. Student applications
- VI. Risk on students' mental health, social issues and its financial impact

8. Any Other Business

No items.

9. Date and time of next meeting

Tuesday 20 June 2023 commencing at 2.00 pm