

Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee
(HE and FE Combined Meeting)
held on Tuesday 28 March 2023

- Present:** Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Jennette Arnold
Dr Joanne Horton (Co-opted Member) (Teams)
Mervyn Jones (Chair)
Tim Newsholme
Charlotte Semus (Teams)
- In attendance:** Justin Gregory (Vice Principal Higher Education)
Xaviere Hughes (Vice Principal Further Education)
Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)

The meeting was quorate as six Members were present.

1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies.

2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 22 November 2022 and matters arising

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

- I. A briefing on safeguarding was provided to the Board in March along with the annual report.
- II. Approval of policies was carried forward due to an inquorate meeting.
- III. FE data had been presented at the previous AQ&S (FE) Committee.

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

3. Draft Minutes of the Academic Board – 8 March 2023

There had been discussion about the Access and Participation Plan (APP) with centralization of data. There was a suggestion to report retrievals data to the AQ&S (HE) Committee in the future. **ACTION: VICE PRINCIPAL HE**

The Board agreed: -

- To note the Academic Board minutes agreeing to report these to the AQ&S (HE) Committee in future unless there are specific issues relevant to FE. **ACTION: CLERK**

4. Policies, Procedures and Strategies

- I. The External Speakers Policy has been amended to ensure compliance and consistency with practices for speakers including the requirement for staff to complete risk assessments and meet the Prevent agenda; it is less burdensome for staff. The electronic system will ensure compliance which must be followed to enable an external speaker to be paid; there is guidance on the budget for speakers. A Governor asked how staff view the policy; there was staff consultation. There was a question if information on health and safety is provided to visitors; it is to be issued on arrival by reception in a new guide. There was discussion about risk assessments for off-site trips which predominantly cover health and safety, and safeguarding; prevent would be added. **ACTION: VICE PRINCIPAL FE.** A question followed as to whether mental health issues are assessed relating to some students. The Vice Principal FE would add this to the policy to consider at the stage when a member of staff is planning speakers. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL.**
- II. The Quality Strategy and been developed based on the policy prepared for HE in December 2021. This is a unified document covering HE and FE. QAA key values were included with discussion about a commitment to excellence and how excellence is defined. Excellence could be defined by validating bodies and grades, such as Ofsted outstanding judgement and a TEF gold. Students' journeys can be transformative but at different levels.
- III. The Drugs Policy had been developed which was previously incorporated within the Safeguarding Policy. Students are informed about the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse. There was a question about prescription medication and use of workshops. This is mentioned in the policy noting that some staff and students take these regularly for health and wellbeing; however; supplying these to other people would be misuse. Amendments were proposed in 1.2 and 6.3 to include prescription only medication, non-prescription or use of another person's medication. **ACTION: VICE PRINCIPAL FE.** It was defined that HCA premises includes campuses and education visits. Student residences are covered by the student professional behaviour and disciplinary policy.
- IV. The UWTD's Fitness to Study Policy had been adopted previously. The College has developed a policy for both HE and FE. There are some students who are committed to study but external factors impact on their studies. The policy will ascertain if a student's situation is impacting on their own learning or other students' wellbeing. A Governor asked how this could affect a student with an EHCP or DSA. It was noted that some students do not disclose disabilities and medical issues at enrolment. The College would discuss issues with the student and their parents for FE students. Reasonable adjustments are made for students. If something happens whilst a student is already enrolled and it is not possible to made reasonable adjustments then the policy will be followed. A Governor asked if an incident could trigger the policy; incidents would not be taken in isolation. Students are supported by the additional learning support and wellbeing teams

in addition to their course leaders. Only Vice Principals would be able to make a final decision regarding fitness to study which would be added. Section 1.4 and reference to DSA and EHCP students would be added. The Vice Principal HE could discuss proposed wording with Jennette Arnold before circulating to the Committee. The Committee requested the number of applicants and students who use policy should be reported to the Committee. **ACTION: VICE PRINCIPAL HE.**

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the External Speakers Policy subject to minor amendments
- To recommend the Board approve the Quality Strategy
- To approve the Drugs Policy subject to minor amendments
- To approve the Fitness to Study Policy subject to amendments which will be circulated **ACTION: VICE PRINCIPAL HE**
- To approve the Freedom of Speech Code which was deferred from the AQ&S (FE) Committee in December
- To approve the revision to the Admissions Policy which was also deferred from the AQ&S (FE) Committee in December

5. Any other business

There were no items.

6. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting was arranged for Tuesday 20 June 2023 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 on Tuesday 28 March 2023

Present: Tim Newsholme (Chair)
Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Dr Joanne Horton (Co-opted Member) (Teams)
Mervyn Jones
Charlotte Semus (Teams)

In attendance: Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)
Justin Gregory (Vice Principal Higher Education)
Xaviere Hughes (Vice Principal Further Education)
Jennette Arnold (Governor)

The meeting was quorate as five Members were present. The Chair welcomed Jennette Arnold to the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies.

2. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 22 November 2022 and notes 20 January 2023, and matters arising

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

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

4. Key Data year to date

The Vice Principal HE reported that attendance is 87% to date, an improvement compared to last year. Attendance by gender, BAME and polar quintile showed minor differences which was encouraging. A Governor asked about tracking attendance with confirmation that lateness and absence are followed up with reasons drawn down internally. Level 5 retention is 82% from the start of the course which predominantly related to students who have left their courses due to mental health issues. The College provides wellbeing support for students is key and constantly reviewed to ensure it is beneficial for students.

Students at risk are identified with measures of support offered. The end of course retention is estimated based on the B3 threshold target of a minimum

of 75%. Level 5 best and worst case is anticipated to be 81% and 67% respectively. A Governor asked if these are specific to a particular area; these are generic. There are no comparisons for arts courses with other HE providers. There was a question if there are inherent risks with benchmarked data against other specialists and similar size colleges; however, HCA is a specialist arts college, (specialist colleges also included land-based colleges).

Applications for September 2023 are 5% better for Level 4 compared to applications at the same time in 2022. New courses could potentially increase applications. The new strategic plan will need to reflect projections and courses.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report and statistics

5. Quality Improvement

- I. The Board had agreed that the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) will not be submitted to OfS this year but used internally to identify key issues. The TEF has been prepared as an inhouse exercise focusing on quality of provision using the TEF metrics; this includes graduate outcomes and NSS data. A student submission was completed in parallel with the process which had not been moderated. An action plan had been drawn together from the contextual statement following discussion by the Academic Board.

There was discussion with the following comments: -

- The submission could be reduced to be more succinct and dynamic.
- The College makes moral decisions when it offers places to students.
- Tangible case studies could be included as examples.
- The College is an independent FE Art College delivering HE with a 550/350 split of FE/HE. This provides advantages to FE students, internal progression opportunities and influences pedagogy. The Foundation Course benefits HE. This also supports the inclusion agenda but is holistic for HCA.
- Statistics on mental health, disability and demographics within the community could be included.

- II. The curriculum development report evidenced progress of new courses. These include MA Fine Art and MA Photography Landscape in 2023/24 and additional courses for 2024/25.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the reports

6. Identification of Key Risks

- I. Curriculum development and resources to develop digital curriculum
- II. Student applications
- III. Level 5 course retention
- IV. Risk on students' mental health, social issues and its financial impact
- V. NSS completion to date is 5% below responses compared to last year.
There was a suggestion to include the HE community and not just course leaders in NSS feedback and relevant actions
- VI. Quality regulation and changes to APP, TEF and B3
- VII. Graduates outcomes

7. Any Other Business

There were no items.

8. Date and time of next meeting

Tuesday 20 June 2023 commencing at 3.45 pm