

Items 7 and an item of other business under Item 14 of these minutes are deemed to be CONFIDENTIAL by virtue of Instrument 16(2) as they contain business sensitive information. These minutes are not available for public circulation and are held separately by the Director of Governance / Clerk.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HE PERFORMANCE AND QUALITY COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22 JUNE 2022

Present

| | |
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| Angela Briggs | Governor |
| Ruth Brook (Chair) | Governor |
| Emma Kirk | Staff Governor |
| Mick Lochran | Chief Executive |
| Andrea Ward (via MS Teams) | Governor |

The quorum for the meeting was five Members (at least 3 external).

In attendance

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| Joanne Platt | Interim Director of Governance / Clerk to the Corporation (via MS Teams) |
| Karen Robson | Assistant Principal, HE |
| Alan Girvin | Director of HE |
| Adam Hewitt | Director of Business and Community Integration and Employability |
| Debbie Jensen | Director of Academic Administration and Quality Assurance |
| Sharon Smith | Principal / Deputy CEO |

The meeting was held at North Lindsey College, Doncaster College and via MS Teams and commenced at 5.30 pm. The Interim Director of Governance confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

| Item | Minute | Action | Date due |
|----------|--|--------|----------|
| 1 | Apologies | | |
| | Apologies for absence had been received from Tom Burton, Luke Cantrill and Scarlett Littlemore. | | |
| 2 | Declarations of Interest | | |
| | There were no declarations of interests. | | |
| 3 | Minutes of a meeting of the HE Performance & Quality Committee held on 9 March 2022 and any matters arising | | |
| | It was noted that there had been no declarations of interests at the previous meeting, but that this hadn't been recorded in the minutes. Subject to this being added to the minutes, the minutes were approved as a true and accurate record for signature by the Chair. | | |
| | In terms of matters arising, it was noted that the HE and Curriculum Strategies will be brought to a future meeting of the Committee. In the meantime, updates on both will be included in the Principal's report. The presentation for minute number 8 of the previous meeting was on the agenda for today's meeting. | | |
| 4 | Principal's Report | | |

| Item | Minute | Action | Date due |
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| | <p>The Committee considered a report providing an update on the evolving HE Strategy and curriculum developments in HE. It was noted that this is being developed through the new leadership structure, working with SLT colleagues from FE, and will align to the new Group Strategy under the new Chief Executive, to define the future vision of the DN Colleges Group to maintain its position as a large College-based Higher Education provider.</p> | | |
| | <p>The HE Strategy will have an implementation plan once approved and the progress of this plan will be monitored by this Committee.</p> | | |
| | <p>The HE Strategy will be informed by both external and internal factors, including changes to the OfS Quality Standards, the Institute of Technology, Higher Technical Education and Post-18 reform, and developments to the Teaching Excellence Framework and National Student Survey. It will include a full analysis of all these influencers to ensure its sustainability in longer term. The Strategy will also be flexible and reviewed annually as the national policy landscape evolves.</p> | | |
| | <p>The Committee noted that plans are in place to develop curriculum plans to meet changes in policy, including working with Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) on the development and delivery of Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) and reviewing the Group's student profile to consider the impact of the Government's response to the Augar Review.</p> | | |
| | <p>In response to a question from a Governor, it was confirmed that the timescale for development of the strategy will be aligned with the College's new strategic plan, work on which will start when the Group's new Chief Executive is in post.</p> | | |
| | <p>The Committee noted that the launch event at UCNL was excellent but that the UCD launch had been postponed.</p> | | |
| | <p>The Committee noted the report and that updates on development of the strategy will continue to be provided through the Principal's report.</p> | | |

5 Student Experience and Support Case Studies Presentation

The Committee considered a presentation on Student Support, following a review by the HE Student Governor Luke Cantrill. The review had looked at HE Student Support across the Group, two Student Case Studies (one each from UCNL and UCD), HE Survey Results, input from a HE Lecturer and Student Society Feedback.

It was noted that there is a dedicated support team to assist all students with many aspects of study, including academic writing, referencing, time management, researching, IT support and exam arrangements. There is also one-to-one support, tailored to individual needs, access to the Academic Enhancement Canvas page once enrolled, a free on-site counselling service for all students, confidential pastoral support, access to financial support from the HE Admin Team, a dedicated team for help with academic resources and the Student Society.

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The Committee looked at data which shows that there is significantly more support provide at UCNL than at UCD. Whilst this issue is now being looked at, it was noted that data was from a transitional year when new arrangements were being embedded at UCD. It was also noted that HE students are more visible at UCNL and therefore easier to target for support. There are also fewer HE students at UCD than at UCNL and it was agreed that showing the figures as a percentage rather than a number will provide a better comparison. It was also noted that the approach to student intake was different with UCD students entering programmes at Level 3 and therefore possibly needing less support.

Nevertheless, it was noted that the data is useful to identify pinch points for students to enable the Group to better target the support available.

The Committee reviewed the two case studies and asked if the delay in accessing support in the first had caused financial difficulty for the student. It was confirmed that this may have been the case. Delays arise due to a lack of the student's knowledge about availability of support and the Group's reliance on the DfE to process applications in a timely way. The Group is seeking to address the first issue by reviewing its student induction to make clear the types of support available on initial enrolment.

In relation to the second case study, it was noted that work is now ongoing to identify the types of remote online support that can be provided for students who only attend college on one day a week. This is particularly important for students with disabilities, to ensure that the College has done all it can to make reasonable adjustments to support them to study.

The Committee noted the things the College does well and those that need to improve, as identified in the HE survey, and considered the barriers to effective communication and access to resources and the actions to be taken to address these. It asked that progress be kept under review and in this regard noted that actions have already been included within the HE Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

It was noted that a new single support platform for staff and students is under development and will be available at the start of the 2022-23 academic year.

The Committee thanked Luke Cantrill for his excellent work in undertaking the review and in particular the inclusion of the learner voice in the review.

6 HE QIP Update Report

The Committee considered an update on the HE QIP, noting that student attendance at 82.6% is slightly below the 2021-22 target of 85%. This continues to be monitored by programme teams through Programme Operational Meetings with interventions for 'at-risk' students as required.

Student retention is 90.3% (92.2% at UCD and 89% at UCNL) which is lower than when reported at the previous meeting but is in line with expectations at this point in the year and is nevertheless on track to meet the target of 90%.

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| | <p>In terms of student achievement, the Committee noted that module and programme boards are scheduled to take place between 13 – 24 June and that an interim analysis of student outcomes will take place at the end of June with a full analysis to follow after the August exam boards. Data will therefore be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.</p> | | |
| | <p>The DNCG Higher Education Survey was extended to June to provide programme teams with opportunities to increase response rates and it was noted that quantitative data is currently being collated by the AAQA team to enable analysis at both programme level and institutional level. Preliminary analysis of qualitative data indicates continuing concerns across the portfolio about learning resources.</p> | | |
| | <p>It was noted that the National Student Survey 2022 closed on 30 April with results being released by Ipsos Mori in July.</p> | | |
| | <p>Focus groups to provide enhanced monitoring of programmes were completed by the end of March and overall, there was positive feedback about learning and teaching and student support, with no significant issues arising from any of the focus groups. Feedback for enhancing the learning experience is being incorporated into planning for 2022-23.</p> | | |
| | <p>Observations of practice and learning walks have been completed for all teaching staff and it was noted that there are no concerns, but there was significant evidence of innovation to support student learning post-Covid.</p> | | |
| | <p>Module evaluations for semester 1 is included in Programme Area Reviews completed on 4 March and analysis for semester 2 will be included in Programme Area Reviews to be completed by 9 July. Interim analysis at institutional level will take place in July leading to full programme-level analysis and action plans in university partners' Annual Monitoring Reviews in October 2022.</p> | | |
| | <p>The HE leadership team is redeveloping the process and tools for monitoring student retention and achievement to ensure effective institutional oversight of performance against OfS Condition B3 measures and TEF outcomes and monthly reviews will be re-introduced for HE for the 2022-23 academic year.</p> | | |
| | <p>In response to a question from a Governor, it was confirmed that there are no concerns, although the information from the review of student support considered under Item 5 above was very helpful in addressing support needs.</p> | | |
| | <p>Governors asked to see the headline outcomes data when available but noted that this is currently looking positive compared to available benchmark data.</p> | | |
| | <p>Governors asked for the QIP update report to be RAG rated in future to help them to identify any areas of concern with ease.</p> | A. Girvin | Next meeting |
| | <p>The Committee also asked for future reports to note numbers / issues for complaints and appeals and the stages of appeals between internal and those referred to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.</p> | A. Girvin | Next meeting |

| Item | Minute | Action | Date due |
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| 7 | South Yorkshire Institute of Technology | | |
| | This item is confidential and is subject to a separate minute held by the Director of Governance / Clerk. | | |
| 8 | Marketing and Recruitment Report | | |
| | The Committee considered an update on recruitment, noting that 2022 has been another unpredictable and challenging year for college-based higher education recruitment. Early indications nationally are that fewer mature students may be applying to HE this year than last. Within this context, the Group has set ambitious targets for HE recruitment this year, which reflects its learning from the previous cycle. | | |
| | Current recruitment performance presents a mixed picture, with several course areas performing well. Whilst overall applications at the time of writing the report were down by 10% on the same point in the cycle last year, it was noted that the latest data available shows that actions taken to address this have made an impact, with applications now comparable to the same time last year. | | |
| | The Committee reviewed a breakdown which showed data for a specific suite of courses, noting that extensive activity is taking place to address challenges in those areas, including an acceleration of the application process, so that the Group can convert promptly from enquiry to application and application to offer. In response to a question from a Governor, it was confirmed that the data provided shows offers made but not yet converted to enrolments. | | |
| | It was noted that wide-ranging recruitment activity continues, in line with the tactics and audiences identified in the Marketing and Recruitment Strategy presented to the last meeting of the Committee. Whilst some of this work is seeing positive immediate results, other areas, especially those involving the development of relationships with schools and partners, are likely to take longer to come to fruition. As the Group progresses through the recruitment cycle, it will increasingly focus on activities to make applicants feel engaged and supported in readiness for their start date. | | |
| | Whilst the immediate focus is on meeting the targets in the current cycle, work is also underway to enhance the data and insight the Group holds on current and future markets, to inform forward planning and prioritisation and it will seek to develop this market insight to shape the development of the Group's HE and Curriculum Strategies. | | |
| | In response to a question from a Governor, it was confirmed that the Group's growth ambition is realistic, despite financial pressures on people caused by significant cost of living rises. The market is there but the Group needs to focus on quality and getting its new programmes on board. However, further work is planned to review the HE senior leadership structure and staff utilisation to ensure the Group is best placed to meet its growth and quality targets. | | |

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| | <p>Governors asked if plans are in place to review the offer across the region with a view to focusing on what the Group is good at rather than spreading itself too thin and it was confirmed that this will be done when reviewing the curriculum strategy.</p> <p>In response to a question from a Governor, it was confirmed that programmes with low numbers of enrolments are more viable than in a university context, but that cost data is nevertheless reviewed on a weekly basis.</p> <p>The Committee noted the report.</p> | | |
| 9 | OfS Report | | |
| | <p>The Committee considered a report providing an update on the OfS Conditions of Registration and the OfS ILR Audit.</p> <p>It was noted that the OfS has published its strategy for 2022 to 2025. The objectives in this strategy focus on participation, experience, outcomes and value for money and are underpinned by eleven goals that will be the focus of the Group's internal quality assurance strategy and processes in the future. These relate to Quality and Standards, Equality of Opportunity and Enabling Regulation and the Committee considered the Group's position against these goals and sub-sections within them, noting the challenges and that work is underway to ensure compliance and how this can be evidenced.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the updated Access and Participation Plan (APP) will be written to strengthen students' opportunities to succeed and that the updated the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy has added more detail about harassment and sexual misconduct to support the OfS's equality of opportunity goal.</p> <p>It was noted that the OfS has recently given an insight on how they intend to test compliance with their goals, by announcing investigations into the quality and standards of business and management programmes at eight universities and colleges. The focus of these investigations will be on the use of online learning and whether this has replaced face to face teaching to the detriment of students' academic experience. They will also be reviewing the effectiveness of delivery and assessment, contact hours, learning resources and academic support to ensure these are sufficient.</p> <p>The Committee also noted that the OfS had audited the 2020-21 ILR in May 2022 and is currently working through the responses to queries posed. A report on the outcome of this audit is expected sometime over the summer.</p> <p>To ensure the Group remains compliant in all areas, it is continuing to audit HE practices against the 12 themes in the QAA Advice and Guidance, to ensure any required policies or changes to practice are in place for September entry.</p> <p>Governors asked if there is a definition of what the levelling up agenda means for the Group and what success will look like and it was suggested</p> | | |

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| | that it relates to graduate outcomes in terms of high paid jobs. One Governor provided a link to one definition and what sits behind this. | | |
| | The Committee noted the report. | | |
| 10 | Strategic Objectives and Balanced Scorecard | | |
| | The Committee considered revisions to the Strategic Objectives and Balanced Scorecard made following input from Governors, Local Stakeholder Boards and staff, and feedback from the recent Ofsted inspection. | | |
| | It was agreed to recommend the changes that fall within the remit of the Committee to the Corporation Board for approval at its meeting on 4 July. | | |
| | Resolved: The Committee agreed to recommend the changes to the strategic objectives and Balanced Scorecard that fall within the remit of the Committee, to the Corporation Board for approval at its meeting on 4 July. | | |
| 11 | Committee Cycle of Business | | |
| | The Committee considered its cycle of business for the forthcoming year, which was broadly based on the current year's cycle. | | |
| | Subject to some minor changes to the job titles of report authors, the Committee agreed to recommend the Cycle of Business for approval to the Corporation Board. | | |
| | Resolved: The Committee agreed to recommend the 2022-23 Cycle of Business for approval to the Corporation Board at its meeting on 4 July. | | |
| 12 | Link Governor Update | | |
| | The Link Governor for HE informed the Committee that she has had three meetings since her last report and has made new connections with relevant staff. | | |
| 13 | Incomplete QIP Actions / Areas | | |
| | The Committee noted the latest position in relation to the Governance QIP and actions assigned to the Committee. On-going actions are now embedded, and other actions have been completed. It was noted that a review of the QIP was to be undertaken over the summer and Governors asked that success criteria in the new QIP are defined to make it easier to measure when actions are completed. | | |
| 14 | Any Other Business | | |
| | Developing the Higher Education offer for Doncaster | | |
| | This item is confidential and is subject to a separate minute held by the Director of Governance / Clerk. | | |

