

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HE PERFORMANCE AND QUALITY COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 2ND JULY 2025

Present

Chris Bovis	Governor
Angela Briggs	Governor
Ruth Brook	Governor (Chair)
Lizzie Brown	Student Governor
Dan Fell	Governor
Sam Hewson	Student Governor
Emma Kirk	Staff Governor
John Rees	Governor (CEO)

The quorum for the meeting was 40% of Members, at least 3 external governors. The meeting was quorate.

In attendance

Dan Bown	Assistant Principal HE
Danny Fenwick	Deputy Principal
Sharon Harmon	Clerk to the Corporation
Hamid Jafarnejad	Curriculum Lead Engineering & Institute of Technology
James Wadsworth	Director HE Academic Registry

The meeting was held in the Boardroom at Doncaster College and started at 5.30 pm.

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1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Helen Kirby-Hawkins, Governor.

2 Declarations of Interest

Members should declare any personal or financial obligation, allegiance or loyalty which would in any way affect decisions in relation to the subjects under discussion.

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Student Presentation

The HEPQ Committee received presentations from two HE students, Amanda Panton and Olivia North, on their research projects which had been presented at Westminster as part of Posters in Parliament. Members were advised that Posters in Parliament takes place annually and brings together a collection of the best undergraduate research from across the country in an academic posters' exhibition. Members were delighted to hear that both Amanda Panton and Olivia North had received special commendations on the day.

Olivia North's presentation provided an overview of her dissertation on Autism diagnosis disparities for females. Members asked more about the research project and Olivia explained the objectives and impact of the research. Olivia praised the supportive environment of the College which enabled the achievement.

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	<p>Amanda Panton's presentation provided an overview of her dissertation on Mental Health in the Military. Members discussed the impact of the dissertation. Amanda noted the flexibility, support and understanding of the programme which enable her to complete her studies.</p> <p>Members congratulated Olivia and Amanda on their excellent achievements.</p> <p>Members acknowledged these were significant achievements for both students, and for DNCG as a college-based higher education provider and agreed these achievements should be celebrated</p>	
4	<p>Minutes of a meeting of the HE Performance & Quality Committee held on 17th March 2025 and any matters arising</p> <p>The minutes of the HE Performance & Quality Committee held on 17th March 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
5	<p>IoT Performance Report</p> <p>The Curriculum Lead Engineering & Institute of Technology (CLE&IOT) presented an IoT report providing an update on the performance, infrastructure developments, and strategic initiatives within both the Lincolnshire and the South Yorkshire Institutes of Technology (LIoT and SYIoT).</p> <p>Members noted that recruitment remains strong and above target for both the LIoT and the SYIoT. Members discussed curriculum development and were advised that the College continues to align its strategic direction with the Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQ) agenda and is actively involved in immersive technologies, micro-credential development, and employer-engaged CPDs.</p> <p>Members were advised that DNCG had submitted a collaborative bid with IoT partners to expand WorldSkills UK competitions through a shared infrastructure model. Members noted that the bid includes provision for staffing, training, and outreach support across the national IoT network. Members noted that the outcome of the bid will be announced in July 2025.</p> <p>Members were pleased to note that DNCG continues to play a leading role in WorldSkills and international collaborations, with DNCG and the SYIoT leading a national event, showcasing the importance of renewable energy skills and technical education. Members noted that the competition featured modules on wind turbine assembly, solar systems, knowledge checks, and PV design.</p> <p>Members were pleased to note that the new IoT-dedicated HE space at University Campus Doncaster has been completed, comprising four specialist classrooms, a collaborative workspace, and a student social area. Members were advised that the new facilities are timetabled specifically for HE and IoT learners, contributing to a significantly improved student experience.</p> <p>Members were pleased to note that in June, Doncaster College hosted the Manufacturing and Engineering Forum in partnership with Business Doncaster, Made Smarter, and SHU. The CLE&IOT explained that the event focused on</p>	

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digital adoption and productivity, providing a platform for employer engagement and showcasing UC Doncaster's IoT facilities.

Members were pleased to note that DNCG had received a high impact visit from the Gatsby Foundation, resulting in a nationally circulated report highlighting the college's best practices in technical education. Members were also pleased to note that a grant was secured to develop a new Food Science Laboratory and enhance automation facilities at UCNL. Members were assured that this will support the launch of a BSc in Food Science in September 2026 and a CPD offer for agri-food employers, with procurement, curriculum design, and recruitment of a food science specialist already underway.

Members discussed ongoing challenges with staff shortages in some specialist technical disciplines. Members asked how the Group manage the recruitment of staff to meet the increase in students. Members were assured that staff planning was addressed through the business planning cycle. Members were advised that new hires, CPD-driven training pathways, and micro-credential expansion aim to mitigate these risks and strengthen student progression. Members had a full discussion of strategies and approach to programmes. Members were assured that strategies were working, and the position was improving.

Members thanked the Curriculum Lead Engineering & Institute of Technology for the comprehensive update report and congratulated the IoTs teams on their many achievements.

6 HE Performance Report

The Assistant Principal HE (APHE) presented a Higher Education (HE) performance update report, outlining performance across HE provision covering recruitment, retention, attendance, students at academic risk, and Office for Students (OfS) compliance.

Members were assured that overall retention and engagement across HE provisions remains strong. Members sought more detail about the lower retention rate in some areas. Members were assured that the reasons for lower retention have been examined and planned strategies are in place to improve retention in areas where it is lower. Members asked for an update in relation to the previously discussed challenge with employers withdrawing apprentices before their full qualification is achieved. The APHE explained that this challenge is being addressed with a change in the way the qualification is delivered alongside the apprenticeship.

Member were further assured that a broader initiative is currently underway to enhance pre-entry and transition programmes across HE. Members sought further detail on the strengthening of pre-entry support and transition strategies. The APHE explained the initiative aims to improve student preparedness for HE studies and strengthen relationships between students and programme teams prior to commencement. Members agreed that this focused approach to pre-entry preparation, alongside robust recruitment and transition strategies, will be instrumental in sustaining and further improving retention.

Members noted and discussed attendance figures across curriculum areas and across both across campuses. Members noted that attendance remains consistent with previous reports. Members were assured by the measures in place to support curriculum areas with strengthening attendance. Members were assured by the tailored interventions and strategic measures focused on

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mitigating attendance barriers, particularly within low-performing areas, to foster sustained improvements in student engagement and retention.

Members considered the update on students at academic risk metrics. Members noted that the overall proportion of students at academic risk remains relatively low. Members were assured that each School is actively engaging in targeted support strategies to address high-risk students' needs.

Members were assured that the Student Experience and Curriculum Impact (SECI) mechanism continues to drive quality assurance improvements. Members were further assured that to ensure the HE provision across DNCG is secure, the HE Governance Structure has been implemented and mapped to Office for Students ongoing conditions of registration, alongside the Quality Assurance Agency UK Quality Code 2024. A robust OfS conditions tracker has also been implemented which clearly demonstrates compliance alongside mechanisms of reporting.

Members thanked the APHE for the clarity and quality of reporting to the committee and were assured by the improving metrics across HE.

7 HE Quality Improvement Plan

The Director HE Academic Registry presented a report providing an overview of the Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan (HEQIP) for the current academic year 2024-2025. Members noted the contents of the report, and the progress made towards achieving the actions set out within the HEQIP.

Members noted the HE QiP 2024-2025 contains 10 rolling actions which, either, emerged from the 2023/2024 Self-Evaluation Document (SED) or from issues identified in-year by the HE leadership teams. Members discussed the current actions set which address a range of themes, including student achievement and outcomes; student voice activity; teaching, learning and assessment (TLA), student access and participation, and satisfaction with learning resources and IT equipment.

Members reviewed and considered progress against the HEQIP targets. Members noted the good progress made and were assured that the majority of actions are on track for completion by the end of the academic. Members were assured by plans in place to address any actions currently behind schedule.

Members noted and discussed the improvement in completion rate for the HE student induction survey and were assured by planned actions targeted at further improving student engagement with surveys and providing feedback.

Members were assured that the HEQIP does not currently identify any significant risks to DNCG's ability to deliver high quality HE provision or the capability of DNCG to meet the OfS ongoing conditions of registration.

Members thanked the Director HE Academic Registry for the comprehensive update report.

8 OfS Oversight Tracker

The Director HE Academic Registry presented an update report providing an overview of DNCG's monitoring of compliance with the Office for Students' (OfS)

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	<p>ongoing conditions of registrations. Members noted and discussed updates on compliance with OfS conditions of registrations. Members were assured that DNCG remains compliant with the OfS ongoing conditions of registration and is proactively monitoring all conditions on a regular basis and actioning activity to address any potential risk to registration.</p> <p>Members were further advised that the OfS are currently consulting on the introduction of new conditions (C5 and E7), however, these only apply to institutions without current registration and would therefore not apply to DN Colleges Group.</p> <p>Members thanked the Director HE Academic Registry for the update report.</p>	
9	<p>HE Student Experience Report</p> <p>The Assistant Principal HE presented the HE students experience report. Members noted and discussed the contents of the report.</p> <p>Members considered how student feedback is collected through a range of formal and informal mechanisms, at different levels across HE. Members discussed the response rate and feedback received through student surveys. Members noted the earlier discussion on student response to surveys and the strategies in place to continue to improve student engagement in feedback. Members noted at the close of the National Student Survey 2025 (30 April 2025), Programme Teams achieved an impressive 76.2% response rate which was a highly positive result, and 5.4% higher than the final rate in 2024.</p> <p>Members asked about the mechanism for responding to student feedback and comments. The Director HE Academic Registry explained that the newly established HE Governance Structure which centres the student experience, integrating feedback into reporting mechanisms, strategic planning and quality assessment.</p> <p>Members discussed educational gains noting these are a key element of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and embedded across all schools within HE. Members noted that across HE at DNCG, a range of educational gains were deployed during the 2023-24 academic year to promote the overall student experience and offer opportunities for students to engage with activity outside of the formal curriculum. Members noted that committees for Quality, Standards, and Enhancement and Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship review outcomes to continuously enhance academic and personal development opportunities. Members noted the Scholarly Internship Programme for 2024-25.</p> <p>Members agreed the student experience within HE is a key strength of the institution, as evidenced by the breadth of educational achievements and the consistently positive feedback provided by students through both formal and informal channels. Members were assured that for the 2024-25 academic year the enhancement of the student experience remains a top priority.</p>	
10	<p>Governor Development Plan</p> <p>Members reviewed the Governance Development Plan and considered the updates on progress against targets for which the committee has oversight relating to curriculum and growth. Members agreed all targets remain appropriate and were assured that progress against targets was on track.</p>	

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11	<p>HE Professional Conversation – Autumn Term 2025</p> <p>Members were advised that a Professional Conversation was planned for the autumn term 2025/26 covering HE provision. Members discussed the scope of the review and agreed they would welcome suggestions from the HE Team. The APHE and the DP agreed to put together a programme and liaise with the Clerk to the Corporation to schedule a date.</p> <p>Action: The APHE and the DP to draft a programme for a Professional Conversation covering HE provision. The APHE and the DP to liaise with the Clerk to the Corporation to schedule a date for the Professional Conversation in the autumn term 2026/26.</p>	
12	<p>Risk Register Review</p> <p>Members received and reviewed the Group Risk Register. Members reviewed and discussed the strategic risk for which the HEPQ Committee has responsibility for oversight in relation to Higher Education provision. Members noted updates to mitigations, planned actions and assurances. Members considered the residual risk score and noted this has not changed since the last meeting of the committee and that it remains within the target risk score. Members were satisfied the current risk rating was appropriate.</p>	
13	<p>HEPQ Committee Cycle of Business 2025/26</p> <p>Members considered the committee’s proposed cycle of business for 2025/26. The Committee considered the business of the committee and agreed the proposed cycle of business was appropriate.</p> <p>Resolution: The HEPQ Committee approved the proposed HEPQ Committee’s Cycle of Business for 2025/26 for recommendation to the Corporation Board for approval.</p>	
14	<p>Committee Chair’s Report to Corporation Board</p> <p>Members considered the business of the meeting and noted key items and any changes to strategic risks identified for feedback in the Committee Chair’s Report to the Corporation Board. Members agreed to highlight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student presentations on dissertations and Posters in Parliament visit to Westminster. • Strong retention rates across HE Provision • Strong recruitment in both LloT and SYloT • Assurance received on compliance with OfS conditions of registration. • Assurance received that a fully integrated quality system is in place. • Assured by the robustness of the reports received by the committee. 	
15	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Members noted that this would be last committee meeting that R Brook would attend before leaving the Board on 31 July 2025. On the behalf of the HEPQ committee, the Chair of the Corporation thanked R Brook for her time and commitment in Charing the committee.</p>	

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16 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the HEPQ Committee will be held in November 2025 with the date to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm

Sharon Harmon
Clerk to the Corporation

Signed: **(Chair)** **Date:**

TABLE OF ACTIONS				
Date	Minute	Action	Responsibility	Date Due
02/07/25	11	The APHE and the DP to draft a programme for a Profession Conversation covering HE provision. The APHE and the DP to liaise with the Clerk to the Corporation to schedule a date for the Professional Conversation in the autumn term 2026/26.	APHE, DP, Clerk	September 2025