

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HE PERFORMANCE AND QUALITY COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2025

Present

Angela Briggs	Governor (Acting Chair)
Lizzie Brown	Student Governor
Dan Fell	Governor
Sam Hewson	Student Governor
Helen Kirby-Hawkins	Governor
Emma Kirk	Staff Governor
John Rees	Governor

The quorum for the meeting was 3 External Governors. The meeting was quorate throughout.

In attendance

Dan Bown	Vice Principal HE
Phil Briscoe	Vice Principal Quality (Further & Higher Education)
Danny Fenwick	Deputy Principal
Sharon Harmon	Clerk to the Corporation
Rachel Maguire	Chief Operating Officer, People & Information
James Wadsworth	Director HE Academic Registry

The meeting was held on MS Teams and started at 5.30 pm.

Item	Minute	Action
1	Apologies	
	No apologies for absence were received.	
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	Election of Chair and Vice Chair	
	Members agreed, in order to maintain quoracy for the vote, to elect the Chair and Vice Chair of the committee via written resolution following the meeting. Members agreed A Briggs would continue as acting Chair for the purposes of the meeting.	
4	Minutes of the meeting of the HE Performance & Quality Committee held on 2nd July 2025 and any matters arising	
	The minutes of the HE Performance & Quality Committee held on 2 nd July 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	

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	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>The Clerk advised the committee that the HE Profession Conversation has been deferred to the Spring Term 2026.</p>	
5	<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>	
6	<p>HE Performance Report</p> <p>The Vice Principal, Higher Education (VPHE) presented a Higher Education performance update report covering student outcomes for 2024/25, recruitment, retention, attendance and Office for Students (OfS) compliance.</p> <p>Members noted and discussed student retention and achievement for 2024-25. Members noted that overall retention increased to 88% and were assured that student retention is good, improving and above comparable OfS thresholds. Members were assured that actions have been implemented to support enhanced performance in curriculum areas where retention is lower. Members noted that achievement rates increased to 86%. Degree outcomes were strong, with 65% of first degree students attaining high grades (First or Upper Second), and Level 4–5 awards showing a marked improvement in higher grades. Members were assured that student achievement was excellent, improving and 11% above (comparable) OfS thresholds. Members congratulated the team on an particularly exceptional performance in Engineering, Life Science, Teacher Training, and Creative Arts. Members noted and discussed plans to review and support curriculum areas with lower achievement. Members congratulated the team on an excellent set of results.</p> <p>Members discussed in-year recruitment and attendance figures for 2025-26. Members noted that HE enrolment is currently below target in some areas. Members discussed key influences effecting enrolment and were assured by mitigations against the shortfall in enrolments. Members were further assured that January intakes are expected. Members noted that within the sector recruitment remains a challenge. Members reviewed attendance figures and were assured that overall attendance was good. Members noted and discussed plans to support curriculum areas with lower attendance levels.</p> <p>Members discussed the mechanisms for identifying and supporting students at risk of withdrawal, or non-achievement. Members were assured by the supports and the action plans in place to support students identify at risk.</p> <p>Members noted that the Curriculum Accountability Framework (CAF) has been implemented across DN Colleges Group. Members were advised that the first CAF panels are planned to take place at the end of November 2025.</p> <p>Members noted and discussed the update on OfS conditions of registration. Member were assured that the HE Governance Structure has been evaluated over the summer period to ensure full mapping to Office for Students ongoing conditions of registration, alongside the Quality Assurance Agency UK Quality Code 2024 to</p>	

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	<p>ensure the HE provision across DNCG is secure. Members were assured that the OfS conditions tracker has also been updated which clearly demonstrates compliance.</p> <p>Members thanked the VPHE for the comprehensive report.</p>	
7	HE Self-Evaluation Document	
	<p>The Committee received and reviewed the Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document. Members noted and discussed the contents of the report covering HE portfolio, enrolments and performance 2024/2025, Academic Standards, Student Experience, Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), Graduate Outcomes, Access and Participation Plan, and Regulatory Compliance. Members were assured the HE Self-Evaluation process was moderated.</p> <p>Members noted and discussed the strengths and areas for strategic improvement highlighted in the document. Members agreed the Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document provides assurance of a strong academic performance, a positive student experience, and continued regulatory compliance across HE provision. Members were assured that areas identified for strategic improvement would be addressed through the Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan. Members had a full discussion about the Access and Participation Plan. Members had a full discussion about the future strategic focus for HE provision.</p>	
8	HE QiP	
	<p>The Director HE Academic Registry (DHEAR) presented a report providing an update on the Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan (HEQiP) for the 2024-25 academic year and the progress made towards achieving the actions detailed.</p> <p>Members considered the update and noted that the HE QiP 2024-2025 contained 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 noted and discussed the actions set which addressed 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 were assured by the successful completion of actions, which ensured notable enhancements in student voice, continuation/retention rates, completion/achievement rates, educational gains, apprenticeship completion rates and compliance with new OfS conditions.</p> <p>Members reviewed the Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan 2025/26. Members noted and discussed targets including a focus on the Teaching, Learning and Assessment policy, progression rates, student perceptions of learning resources and IT, and the application of the Access and Participation Plan (APP). Members had a full discussion about Lifelong Learning Entitlement.</p> <p>Members thanked the Director HE Academic Registry for the update report.</p>	
9	OfS Oversight Tracker	
	<p>The Director HE Academic Registry presented a report providing an update on DNCG's monitoring of compliance with the Office for Students' (OfS) ongoing conditions of registrations. Members noted and discussed updates on compliance with OfS conditions of registrations. Members considered the OfS conditions tracker and were assured the tracker clearly demonstrates compliance alongside mechanisms of reporting.</p>	

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	<p>Members discussed compliance with condition C1 relating to consumer protection law. Members asked about student guidance on the use of personal data and their rights in relation to their personal data. The COOPI assured members that students are made aware of their rights in relation to personal data and how data is used. The COOPI agreed to provide more detail on this at the next meeting.</p>	
	<p>Action: The Director HE Academic Registry and the COOPI to provide more detail on the guidance provided to students in relation to OfS condition of registration C1 and personal data at the next meeting of the committee.</p>	<p>DHEAR / COOPI</p>
	<p>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>	
10	IoT Performance Report	
	<p>The Vice Principal Higher Education (VPHE) presented the IoT performance monitoring update report, covering recruitment, curriculum and activity highlights within both the Lincolnshire and the South Yorkshire Institutes of Technology (LIoT and SYIoT).</p>	
	<p>Members noted that overall recruitment remains strong and above target for both the LIoT and the SYIoT. Members noted some curriculum areas were slightly below target and were assured by planned activity to increase recruitment in those areas.</p>	
	<p>Members noted and discussed curriculum developments. Members noted good progress with the Engineering CPD offer and employer engagement. Members noted that DNCG hosted the WorldSkills UK Renewable Energy national qualifier at UCDon, Members noted the SYIoT curriculum roadshow on 16 Oct 2025 focused on micro credentials, employer co design, digital enrolment and immersive technology. Members were assured that partnership activities are building and strengthening employer partnerships.</p>	
	<p>Members noted and discussed student experience and academic enrichment activity across disciplines. Members were assured by the breadth and quality of enrichment activity including Digital, Games and Business delivery of the Digital Fusion showcase with an IoT partner, CADI students presented at Game Republic and hosted a Game Careers Day, UCNL's Health and Social Care team enhanced practical delivery by opening the ward and flat spaces, Animal and Medical Bioscience reported positive outcomes and benefited from external input, including access to Professor Gordon Dougan's labs and wider scholarly activity.</p>	
	<p>Members noted and discussed the update on infrastructure and facilities development. Members were assured that enhancements to learning environments continue to support progression and employability.</p>	
	<p>Members had a full discussion about the future development of both the LIoT and the SYIoT. Members discussed challenges to delivery and were assured that risk is well managed and appropriate mitigations and action plans are in place to ensure continued quality of provision.</p>	
	<p>Members thanked the VPHE for the update report.</p>	

Note: The Deputy Principal left the meeting.

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11	<p>HE Student Experience Report</p> <p>The VPHE presented a HE Student Experience report. Members noted and discussed the contents of the report including student feedback and educational gains.</p> <p>Members considered feedback from the National Student Survey (NSS). Members noted that the National Student Survey (NSS) 2025 achieved a 76% response rate, exceeding national averages, and DNCG scored above sector benchmarks in six of seven themes. Members discussed areas highlighted as requiring enhancement and were assured insights gather through student feedback will inform ongoing quality enhancement strategies across the curriculum.</p> <p>Members discussed educational gains and noted that the Scholarly Internship Programme (SchIP) had another successful year with a range of meaningful outputs for students including publications in books, journals and presentations at conferences.</p> <p>Members noted that a full evaluation and audit of the HE Governance Structure was undertaken over the summer period to ensure compliance with the OfS conditions of registration and to further enhance the student experience. Members were assured that the HE Governance Structure centres the student experience, integrating feedback into reporting mechanisms, strategic planning and quality assessment.</p> <p>Members were assured that outputs from formal student feedback mechanisms are reviewed within the HE Quality, Standards, and Enhancement Committee, and educational outcomes are assessed by the HE Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship Committee. Members noted that HE students will have expanded access to a range of central college student experience initiatives, further supporting their academic and personal development. Members were assured by the continued focus on the student experience and the positive student feedback.</p> <p>Members were impressed by the range of student achievements and enrichment activities across the Group. Members agreed that the student experience within HE is a key strength, as evidenced by the breadth of educational achievements and the consistently positive feedback provided by students through both formal and informal channels.</p> <p>Members thanked the VPHE for the comprehensive report.</p>	
12	<p>EDI Annual Report 2024/25</p> <p>Members agreed to defer the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Report 2024/25 to the next meeting of the HEPQ Committee.</p>	
	<p>Action: The Clerk to include the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Report on the agenda of the March 2026 meeting of the HEPQ Committee.</p>	Clerk
13	<p>Student Services Report 2024-25</p> <p>The Chief Operating Officer, People & Information (COOPI) presented the Student Service report. The COOPI explained that the Student Service report would be presented to the HEPQ committee for oversight going forward. The COOPI advised the committee that the further widening of Student Services from September saw Digital & Academic Services and SEND/ALS areas joining the</p>	

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	<p>portfolio. Members noted that this expansion in portfolio brings almost all student facing functions together to support the cohesive end to end support for students.</p> <p>The COOPI reported that measures within the Student Services area and teams help to ensure that students are supported sufficiently to carry out their planned learning, in addition to delivering statutory obligations. Members were assured that this helps students to embark and stay on programme, achieve, keep safe and progress onto a positive destination.</p> <p>Members noted the contents of the Student Services report covering activities in the Safeguarding, Wellbeing & Counselling, SEND, ALS & Inclusion, Student Experience, Student Services - Personal Development (PD), Digital & Academic Services and Customer Services & Student Finance teams.</p> <p>Members noted the contents of the Safeguarding Annual Report 2024/25 and noted that reporting for 2025/26 will be periodic throughout the year, providing updates in year on Safeguarding (filtering and monitoring). Member discussed support measures and reporting specific to HE.</p>	
14	Freedom of Speech Policy	
	<p>Members received and considered the updated Freedom of Speech Policy. The COOPI explained that the revised Freedom of Speech policy has been developed in line with new requirements which came into force in August 2025.</p> <p>Members were assured that the revised policy has been considered by legal experts, and any suggestions made have been addressed. The Director HE Academic Registry advised that the policy was compliant with current OfS guidance.</p> <p>Members considered the revisions to the policy and the context in which the updates were made in line with the new requirements. Members were assured that the updated document promotes safe and lawful freedom of speech for all students which will facilitate greater understanding of these contemporary issues and develop the skills in students to be able to articulate themselves in a respectable and lawful manner.</p> <p>Resolution: The HEPQ Committee endorsed the Freedom of Speech Policy for recommendation to the Corporation Board for approval.</p>	
15	Review of Committee Performance 2024-25 and Terms of Reference	
	<p>Members considered the performance of the HEPQ Committee in 2024/25 measured against the Committee's Terms of Reference (ToRs). Members agreed that the Committee had met its responsibilities as set out in the Terms of Reference for the Committee and that it had been effective in carrying out its remit. Members agreed that reporting to the committee had continued to be robust throughout the year, and that high-quality reports are received by the committee.</p> <p>Members considered any further development which could enhance the HEPQ Committee for 2025/26. Members considered training and development that would enhance the committee's effectiveness. Members agreed the priorities for the coming year, to include strengthening the committee membership and a focus on future strategic direction for HE provision.</p> <p>Members reviewed the Committee's Terms of Reference (ToRs) and noted updates to the ToRs with regard to the committee's additional responsibilities for</p>	

