

THE TRAFFORD COLLEGE GROUP

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Higher Education Curriculum & Quality Committee
held on Tuesday 19 May 2020
at 1.00 pm Via Microsoft Teams**

Present:	Graham Luccock	(Chairperson)
	Sarah Drake	
	Emily Johnstone	(Higher Education Student Governor)
In Attendance:	Barry Watson	(Corporation Secretary)
	James Scott	(Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality/ Campus Principal)
	Mark Harris	(Dean of Higher Education)
	John Simpson	(HE Registrar and Academic Services)

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HEC&Q/01/20 Election of Chairperson for the Period 2019/2021

The Corporation Secretary (CS) sought nominations for the position of Chairperson for the Academic Years 2019/ 2020 and 2020/2021.

Colette Fagan was the sole nomination and it was unanimously resolved that she be elected as Chairperson of the Committee for the period outlined.

It was also agreed that Graham Luccock should Chair the meeting in her absence.

HEC&Q/02/20 Apologies for Absence

The (CS) reported that apologies for absence had been received from the Principal, Colette Fagan, Kurt Allman and Neil Hanney.

HEC&Q/03/20 Election of Vice Chairperson for the Period 2019-2021

The Interim Chairperson sought nominations for the position of Vice Chairperson of the Committee for the Academic Years 2019/2020 and 2020/2021.

Kurt Allman was the sole nomination and it was unanimously resolved that he be elected as Vice Chairperson of the Committee for the period outlined.

HEC&Q/04/20 Declaration of Direct or Indirect Interest in any of the following Items

There were no declarations of either direct or indirect interest in any of the meeting's business items.

HEC&Q/05/20 Governor Link Visit

The Committee received a Governor Link and Learning Walk report as follows:

- **Higher Education – Student Engagement**

The Link Governor (SDR) advised that the purpose of the meeting was to promote Governor's understanding of the Group's actions to engage Higher Education students in College life.

SDR also reported on the detail of the main issues arising from the visit, which were included in her written report.

SDR also commented that it was her first meeting which had been very interesting and positive, and it was commented that a lot of work had been put in by the staff

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at a very early stage.

SDR advised that the issues for Governors to focus on were as follows:

- Progress in embedding a shared culture into the fabric of what all departments do/the psyche of all staff/to develop shared knowledge and aspirations.
- Progress in finding ways to measure impact of the visual arts/creative writing project through students' satisfaction and successes.
- Progress in developing the wider social engagement of students across all curriculum areas.

A member asked about the Alumni event and asked whether this was being rolled out across other programmes and courses. The DHE advised that it was and provided the Committee with other examples and event details.

In discussion it was agreed that this issue should be considered for the Group's Further Education provision and the Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality/ Campus Principal agreed to liaise with the Director of Marketing over the matter.

Action: Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality/ Campus Principal

There were no further issues raised by members arising from the report and it was resolved that it be noted.

HEC&Q/06/20**Governance Higher Education Self-Assessment Report – Office for Students Regulatory Framework**

The Dean of Higher Education (DHE) presented a report which included a copy of the Governance Higher Education Self-Assessment Report (GHESAR) for the Office for Students (OfS) Regulatory Framework.

The report advised members of the robust review and process that had already been undertaken in terms of presenting the final GHESAR and the context within which the GHESAR had been produced.

The DHE provided the Committee with a brief overview of the GHESAR together with the main outcomes and judgments.

The DHE also advised members of the details relating to the Action Plan arising from the GHESAR and the monitoring arrangements that would be put in place to review progress against the plan.

Members commented that the GHESAR had been analysed and reviewed in great detail and that there were no further comments to be made concerning the matter.

After due discussion and consideration, it was unanimously resolved that the Governance Higher Education Self-Assessment Report be approved and submitted to the OfS no later than 20 May 2020.

Action: Corporation Secretary

HEC&Q/07/20**Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 2018/2019**

The DHE presented a report which provided the Committee with the final copy of the annual Higher Education Self Evaluation Document (SED) for 2018/2019.

The DHE advised of the considerations that had been undertaken to the SED by the HE Working Group and the management HE Committee and that following the

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resubmission of the OfS action plan there had been a number of small amendments made to the evaluation and targets in the document. He further advised that all the targets had been aligned to the Access and Participation Plan (APP).

The report also provided members with a series of judgments which summarised the overall performance for the year.

The DHE advised that this was an internal document and sought member's views on the completed SED.

The HE Student Governor (HESG) raised the issue of low staffing levels and provided an example of how physical resources were not being used due to staff shortages, she added that staff appear to have to juggle both Foundation and Higher Education delivery. The DHE advised that the position described came down to financial viability and that the particular provision sited had reduced from 300 learners to 50 over a three-year period. He further advised that the Group had undertaken a College wide review of technician support in order to ensure that the support was there deliver on the offer. He agreed to discuss the specific issue raised with the HESG outside the meeting.

Action: Dean of Higher Education

A member asked about how much had changed in respect of HE Data Dashboard which was referred to on a number of occasions in the SED.

The DHE advised that the Dashboard had been completed in February 2020 half term and that all staff now had access to it and it was his intention to roll it out to staff and Governors in the Summer Term 2020. He advised that it was currently being used from a management perspective and that it was intended to run a training event for Governors going forward. The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality/ Campus Principal undertook to pick the issue up with the MIS team.

Action: Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality/ Campus Principal

There were no further issues raised by members arising from the report and after due discussion and consideration it was resolved that the Higher Education Self Evaluation document be approved.

HEC&Q/08/20**Higher Education Improvement Plan 2019/2020**

The DHE presented a report which provided the Committee with an update concerning the progress that had been made in respect of the Higher Education Improvement Plan 2019/2020 (HEIP).

The report included a copy of the HEIP which had been RAG Rated against the relevant areas for improvement.

The DHE advised that progress continued to be positive in most areas with examples of strong impact on student outcomes, very good levels of student satisfaction, good observation with peer activity and well considered stakeholder engagement to inform curriculum.

The DHE also provided details of the actions that had been taken in respect of the following areas for Improvement:

- Employability.

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- Scholarly Activity.
- Attainment.

The DHE also advised that the key issue of the audit and review of HE policies, which would be picked up in Summer 2020. With regard to the other key issue of engagement of employers it was advised that a survey was being undertaken with employers and learners to seek to match the skills that employers need.

Members raised a number of issues arising from the report as follows:

- What were the issues around provision at the STEM Campus? The DHE advised that the problems were not a resistance from staff rather it was about finding different ways of operating to meet needs. He further advised around the different nature of the provision (largely part time and trade training). It was further advised that the Group was securing feedback from learners through Teams in order to find a solution to some of the identified problems.
- A member commented that the termly registry standards briefings were behind schedule and were due to be completed by March 2020 and asked what was the intended action for this. The DHE advised that this action, due to Covid19, would now be completed in the Summer Term 2020.

Action: Dean of Higher Education

There were no further issues raised by members arising from the report and after due discussion and consideration it was resolved that it be noted.

HEC&Q/09/20**Office for Students Risk Register**

The DHE presented the Committee with a copy of the updated OfS Risk Register as at March 2020.

- The DHE advised the Committee concerning the following issues:
- That the Risk Register should be reviewed in relation to the OfS regulatory framework for Higher Education in England.
- The specific conditions of registration received from the OfS in June 2019.
- The progress of actions and the Board of the Corporation and HE Committees monitoring arrangements.
- The actions currently RAG Rated as red. The DHE advised that all of these actions would be completed in the Summer Term 2020.

Action: Dean of Higher Education

There were no issues raised by members arising from the update and after due consideration it was resolved that it be noted.

HEC&Q/10/20**Action and Participation Plan 2020/2025 – Progress Report**

The DHE presented a report which provided the Committee with a copy of the updated Action and Participation Plan (APP) 2020/2025 which had been submitted to the OfS on 9 April 2020 and that receipt of the APP had been acknowledged by OfS.

The DHE advised that the APP provided details of the performance of all student groups in relation to access, success and participation and that 11 target areas had been identified where there were performance gaps related to OfS target groups.

The DHE further advised that this was a five-year plan to reduce the identified

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gaps particularly in the area of the numbers of students in lower social groups. The DHE explained in detail the actions that would be undertaken to address the identified gaps as follows:

- Widening in participation for a wider number of groups of students.
- Increasing access for students.
- Improvement in progression rates which were already high at 97%.

A member asked about improvement measures and the outcome measure of getting students into higher paid employment. The DHE advised of the actions that would be and are being actioned in this respect particularly with regard to increase in outcomes which were up significantly. The DHE also advised of some of the challenges that were around this performance measure particularly with regard to the target at Stockport which would find it particularly challenging to achieve the Higher Level targets.

In answer to a question the DHE confirmed that the QAA Quality Code requirements would be included from September 2020 in preparation for the next OfS review over the next 18 months.

There were no further issues raised by members arising from the report and after due discussion and consideration it was unanimously resolved that the report be noted.

HEC&Q/11/20 Students Experience and Outcomes Report

The DHE provided members with a report which updated them concerning student performance including progress activities regarding Covid19. The report provided an update in performance in relation to student retention, attendance and satisfaction rates.

The report provided members with the following detailed information:

- A summary of the outcomes for 2018/2019.
- An update on outcomes for 2019/2020.
- Intervention activity to support student achievement and progression remotely (Covid19).
- An update on targets specific to APP targets.
- Teaching and Learning update.
- Complaints received by category.

The DHE provided the Committee with an overview of the key issues arising from the report and advised that continuation rates were expected to continue to improve and that performance against the APP target groups (retention) were very positive. He was pleased to advise that retention rates were up at 95% compared to last year and that a weekly risk register had been developed for students. He further reported that the High Grades position may go down from 65% last year but that an update will be provided at the next meeting with the final position being confirmed in September 2020.

The DHE also provided full details of the intervention activities that had taken place in response to the challenges of Covid 19 together with the outcomes within APP groups.

The DHE added that he had no concerns at this stage and that there were no evidential risks to targets.

With regard to student complaints it was advised that they had all been resolved apart from one which was pending from March 2020.

Members raised a number of issues arising from the report as follows:

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- Why were the Asian attainment outcomes so low and disappointing at 26%? The DHE commented that this related to the programme rather than the ethnicity and that the particular programme had a low level of attainment. He advised of the actions that were being considered and had been taken already to address the issue.
- A member congratulated the staff involved in securing the improved levels of continuation compared to last year and asked for the reasons for the improvement. The DHE advised of the factors relating to this and in particular the improved continuation of students at the Stretford campus particularly in the area of Health Care.

There were no further issues raised by members arising from the report and after due discussion and consideration it was resolved that it be noted.

HEC&Q/12/20 Curriculum and Growth Update

The DHE presented a report which updated members concerning the development of the curriculum and the curricular offer for 2020/2021.

The report provided the Committee with information concerning the following issues:

- Trends in student numbers over the last 3 years.
- The nature of the curricular provision with trends.
- Recent initiatives to improve recruitment.
- Challenges, changes and requirements going forward.
- Changes to the curricular offer for the next Academic Year.
- The need for a Higher Education Strategy.

The DHE provided a brief overview relating to the report identifying in his view what were the key issues for the Group.

Members raised a number of issues arising from the report as follows:

- What were next year's recruitment intake expected to be? The DHE advised that 130 learners had accepted an offer which was broadly the same as the position last year. He further advised that the Level 3 progression rate to Higher Education was not yet known and that the Group had a particular risk around sponsorship by employers which might not be there for the next Academic Year. He advised that the full time and prescribed numbers looked to be on target and he would provide a further update at the next meeting.

Action: Dean of Higher Education

- A member asked if interest in the Multi-Disciplinary Curriculum had evidenced interest and the DHE advised that this was not an offer it was rather how delivery is planned.
- The HESG asked about the provision of joint workshops for example between Painting and Decorating and Art and the DHE outlined a wide range of examples of skills are shared across the curriculum provision.

There were no further issues raised by members arising from the report and after due consideration and discussion it was resolved that the report be noted.

HEC&Q/13/20 Student Protection

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The DHE provided an oral report with regard to the Student Protection processes during the Group lockdown period. He outlined the processes that had been put in place as the Group moved to online learning and how the student protection plans had been updated.

He further advised that the processes need to be tested to ensure that they are meeting learner needs and that the Policy and appropriate procedures would be updated for the Committees consideration at its next meeting.

Action: Dean of Higher Education

A member asked the HESG of her views on actions during the lockdown period and she advised that tutors had kept students up to date but was not aware of any specific as she had not visited the website. The HESG advise that she would be more informed in this regard at the next meeting.

There were no further issues raised by members arising from the report and after due consideration and discussion it was resolved that the report be noted.

HEC&Q/14/20**Impact of Covid19 on Higher Education Update**

The DHE presented a report which provided members with an update regarding the impact of Covid19.

The report outlined the outcomes of the National Education Committee which had been held earlier in the day and the DHE suggested that the following summary reports be presented to the Committee and Board of the Corporation at the next meetings:

- A report on the quality of online blending learning to be informed by student survey and forum, remote per observations and an update on student outcomes.
- To consider the student experience post Covid19 the role of blended learning and how it will be quality assured within the quality cycle.
- To consider the potential changes to the curriculum design and offer to ensure it remains fit for purpose post Covid19.
- To report on the remote support systems that have been put in place, and impact on student outcomes with a focus on the most disadvantaged groups.

Action: Dean of Higher Education

The Committee thanked the DHE for the update and supported the suggested approach as outlined in his report.

There were no further issues raised by members arising from the report and after due consideration and discussion it was resolved that the report be noted.

HEC&Q/15/20**Any Other Business**

There were no matters raised under any other business other than a member commented that it had been a really useful and interesting first Committee meeting.

The HESG also confirmed that it had been a very interesting meeting.

HEC&Q/16/20**Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be held at 1.00pm on

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Tuesday 7 July 2020.

Action: Corporation Secretary

The meeting closed at 2.20.pm