

THE TRAFFORD COLLEGE GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting of the Higher Education Curriculum & Quality Committee held on Tuesday 2 March 2021 Via Microsoft Teams

Present:	Colette Fagan James Scott Kurt Allman Sarah Drake Graham Luccock	(Chairperson) (Principal & Chief Executive Officer)
In Attendance:	Barry Watson Carmen Gonzalez-Eslava Helen Wood Gary Spicer John Simpson Andrew Mould Joan Scott	(Corporation Secretary) (Deputy Principal) (Assistant Principal Altrincham) (Head of University Centre) (Head of Registry, Standards and Compliance) (Assistant Principal Stretford) (Assistant Principal Adult Learning & Apprenticeships)

Minute No

HEC&Q/01/21 **Apologies for Absence**

The Corporation Secretary (CS) reported that no apologies for absence had been received but that Neil Hanney (Co-opted Member) and Leanne Arch (HE Student Governor) were not in attendance.

HEC&Q/02/21 **Declarations of Direct or Indirect Interest in any of the meetings business items**

There were no declarations of either direct or indirect interest in any of the meetings business items

HEC&Q/03/21 **Minutes of the Higher Education Curriculum & Quality Committee Meeting held on 12 November 2020**

The minutes of the meeting were approved and accepted as a correct account of the meeting's proceedings.

HEC&Q/04/21 **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

- i) HEC&Q/35/20 – Matters Arising from the Minutes – Draft Higher Level Skills Strategy

The Principal & Chief Executive Officer (PCEO) advised that the Higher Level Skills Strategy (HLSS) needed further work and review particularly regarding the impact of the Higher Skills element of the recently published White Paper.

He further advised that the HLSS would also need to be reviewed in the light of the Group's, shortly to be considered, 3 Year Corporate Plan 2021/2024 and consequently the updated HLSS would be brought back for the Committee's further consideration at the summer term Committee meeting with a view to Board approval in July 2021.

Action: Deputy Principal

Minute No

- ii) HEC&Q/35/20 – Matters Arising from the Minutes – Higher Education Improvement Plan 2019/2020 Update Report (Scholarly and Pedagogic Activity – Stretford Campus)

The Assistant Principal Stretford (APS) provided members with an update and progress report in respect of the employer led nature of the curriculum provision at the Stretford Campus in respect of improving scholarly activity at the Campus.

He advised that the issues had been identified in order that expectations could be met in terms of the distinct approach that was needed for the provision at the University Centre and the provision at Stretford.

The Head of the University Centre (HUC) also provided an overview of the progress that had been made with pedagogic development both pre and post Covid19 particularly within the curriculum areas of Construction and Engineering.

The PCEO commented that it was important that teaching staff in FE were given the opportunity to develop and engage in scholarly and pedagogic activity. The Deputy Principal commented that it was important that there was a collective approach to the activity and that by working with other non-competitor colleges priorities could be enhanced and ideas explored.

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

- iii) HEC&Q/35/20 – Matters Arising from the Minutes – Student Partnership including Teaching and Learning

The HUC advised that the Student Conference held at the end of November 2020 had been recorded and he would send the recording to the CS for forwarding to Committee members.

Action: Head of University Centre

- iv) HEC&Q/35/20 – Matters Arising from the Minutes – Renewal of Higher Education Policies

The Head of Registry, Standards & Compliance (HRSC) advised that in terms of the Student Protection Policy he was still waiting for guidance from the Office for Students (OfS) in terms of producing the Policy.

Action: Head of Registry, Standards Compliance &

- v) HECC&Q/35/20 – Matters Arising from the Minutes – Any Other Business – Appointment of Higher Education Student Governor

The Chairperson was pleased to note that the Higher Education management organisational structures had been included in the papers and that it would be made available to all Governors through the Board Effects portal.

Action: Corporation Secretary

Minute No

vi) HEC&Q/36/20 – Student Engagement

The Assistant Principal Altrincham (APA) provided the Committee with an overview of the progress that was being made in terms of Student Engagement within the HE provision including details of recent and forthcoming events. The Committee also received details from the Assistant Principal Adult Learning & Apprenticeships (APALA) of the progress and developments in respect of Employer Engagement. The HUC also advised of the planned Education Mornings events between Further and Higher Education Students.

The Committee welcomed and supported the progress and developments and look forward to continued progression going forward.

vii) HEC&C/37/20 -Self Evaluation Document 2019/20 - Learning Resources

The APA and HUC advised the Committee of the outcomes of the investigation, work that had been undertaken and that was on going with regards to the underperformance in respect of Learning Resources against national benchmarks.

It was advised that key areas to be addressed included:

- Access to Digital and Specialist Equipment and a failing infrastructure particularly for Art and Design Students at Stockport. The HUC advised of the actions that were being undertaken to address this issue and that they would be totally resolved through the refurbishment of the Tower Block and the completion of the new build.
- Early years provision at the University Centre particularly regarding the library, stock and Wi-Fi. The HUC advised that good progress was being made in addressing the issues and that a good plan was in place to resolve the issues.

The APA advised that students were being asked to complete a second survey which would identify the progress that had been made together with any ongoing issues to be addressed.

Action: Assistant Principal Altrincham

viii) HEC&Q/41/20 – Curriculum Developments and Partnership Report

A member commented about the increasing numbers of Higher Education students at the Altrincham Campus particularly in the curriculum areas of Child Care and Arts and asked for an update on the current position.

The APA advised concerning the current position and the intended recruitment and progression plans for the September 2021 intake within the areas of Arts, FE/ HE Hub, Level 4 Travel and Tourism and Level 4 Hospitality (Management).

The APA also provided the Committee with an update in respect of the curriculum planning process that was being undertaken in preparation for the next Academic year.

The PCEO also provided the Committee with a verbal update in respect of the proposal for the delivery of Foundation Degree Apprenticeships with Greater Manchester Police.

Minute No

It was advised that discussions were still on going and that the subcontracting arrangements were currently with the Group's lawyers as the current proposed contract provided a level of risk to the Group that was not acceptable.

The PCEO advised that the Committee would be updated as developments occurred.

Action: Deputy Principal

There no matters raised by members arising from the minutes and it was resolved that they be noted.

HEC&Q/05/21 Self-Evaluation Document 2019/2020 and Higher Education Improvement Plan 2020/2021

The HRSC provided the Committee with a copy of the completed Self-Evaluation Document (SED) 2019/2020. The Committee were also provided with a copy of the updated Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2020/2021.

The HRSC advised that the format of the SED had been substantially altered and that it now followed the student journey and was designed to be more user friendly. He further advised that the information contained in the SED was substantially the same as that presented at the last meeting and provided the Committee with a brief overview of both the SED and QIP.

Members welcomed the revised format and the Chairperson commented that it was a real step change and that the key information was now more accessible and of help to members of the Committee and other Governors.

Members raised several issues relating to the impact of small numbers on trends and measuring of impact and progress in relation to the QIP which the HRSC noted and undertook to consider in future reports.

Action: Head of Registry, Standards & Compliance

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

HEC&Q/06/21 Office for Students Risk Register and Improvement Plan 2020/2021

The HRSC presented a report which provided the Committee with a copy of the OfS Risk Register and advised the Committee that the Risk Register provided an up to date information relating to the Group's current position.

A member sought clarification around the Amber Rag Rating as there was a predominance of such Rag Rated Risks. The HRSC advised that the amber ratings related to the current moment in time and that the Group were not specifically behind in terms of timings for any of the Risks.

A member asked about the Good Governance condition and the HRSC advised that the Group had met all the conditions to the satisfaction of the OfS and that the requirement was no longer applicable.

He further advised that there were certain actions that would be required to be undertaken on an ongoing basis to ensure the continuance of Good Governance and assured the Committee that processes were in place to achieve appropriate standards.

Minute No

A member sought clarification around the accountability for fees and funding condition in respect of management responsibility for the termly allocation of funding report to the HE Committee. The HRSC confirmed that this was the responsibility for the Associate Director of Finance (KMcb) who was a member of the management Finance Team and reported directly to the Director of Finance & Strategy.

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

HEC&Q/07/21 Review of Compliance with Office for Students Consumer Law and Ongoing Condition C

THE HRSC provided members with a copy of a letter that had been received from the Director of Regulation of the OfS which asked the Group to undertake a review of the Group's compliance with consumer law. It was noted that the Governing Body was also required to be provided with assurance concerning compliance with the ongoing condition.

The HRSC provide the Committee with a detailed report of the requirements which related to the Group implementing its offer to students and student's awareness of the offer and the actions taken by management to ensure compliance.

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

HEC&Q/08/21 Access and Participation Plan 2020/2025 Progress Update

The HRSC provided the Committee with a copy of the letter that had been received from the Director of Fair Access and Participation of the OfS confirming that the approval of the 2020/2021 Access and Participation Plan would roll over for the 2021/2022 Academic Year.

It was noted that it was advised that the approval would be on the same basis as the previous year and that the Group would now be required to submit a new Plan to cover approval for the period 2022/2023 - 2026/2027.

The HRCS outlined to the Committee the process that would be undertaken to submit a new Plan within the required timeframes.

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

HEC&Q/09/21 Data Dashboard for Higher Education Provision – March 2021

The HRSC referred members to the Governor Training Event held on 10 February 2021 when the Data Dashboard (DDB) had been presented and explained to all members of the Board of the Corporation.

The HRSC advised that there were no further updates relating to the DDB since the last presentation.

A member asked how often the DDB was updated and the HRSC advised that it was updated on a regular basis and would in future include achievement data. He further advised that a report would be presented to the Committee on a regular basis which identified the key issues arising from any updates.

Action: Head of Registry, Standards & Compliance

Minute No

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/10/21 Curriculum Developments and Partnership Update

The HUC advised that there were no currently no significant developments to report and provided the Committee with an overview of intended new programmes provision together with the intended timeframes to secure approvals and presentation to the Committee.

It was further confirmed that the Partnership with Bolton University had been concluded.

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

HEC&Q/11/21 Quality Calendar Update 2020/2021

The HUC presented the Committee with a copy of the HE Quality Audit Cycle which he advised had been produced to reflect the Further Education Cycle. He added that there were several items that were required to be added to the Cycle and that an updated copy would be presented at the next Committee meeting.

A member commented that August, if possible, should be kept free in order to free up staff which was noted.

Action: Head of University Centre.

There were no further issues raised by members and it was resolved that the Quality Calendar 2020/2021 be noted.

HEC&Q/12/21 Higher Education Update

The HRSC presented a copy of a letter which had been received from the Secretary of State for Education concerning strengthening academic freedom and free speech in Higher Education in England.

The Committee had a broad discussion regarding freedom of speech at the Group and how it is applied in the context of academic freedom and external and public events held at the Group.

After discussion it was agreed that the CS and HRSC would review the current Group Policy and Procedure for Freedom of Speech in the light of the Minister's letter and proposals and report back to the Committee in due course.

Action: Corporation Secretary/ Head of Registry, Standards and Compliance

HEC&Q/13/21 Higher Education – Management Organisational Structures

It was agreed that this agenda item had been considered, discussed and concluded under agenda item 4 – Matters Arising from the Minutes (Minute Ref HEC&Q/04/21 refers).

HEC&Q/14/21 Any Other Business

A member asked what the current position was in respect of the HE Student Governor and the co-opted member from Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) as they had not attended the Committee for a considerable period.

Minute No

The CS advised why the HE Student Governor had not been able to attend recently but was unsure why there was no attendance at the meeting as she had indicated that she would be able to attend.

The HUC undertook to investigate the matter further with the Student Governor.

Action: Head of University Centre

Regarding the co-opted member from SHU the HUC advised that the University had undertaken some restructuring and that current member (NH) may no longer be the most appropriate officer from SHU to be co-opted onto the Committee.

In discussion HUC agreed to discuss the issue with relevant persons at SHU.

Action: Head of University Centre

A member commented that she thought that Higher Education Provision at the Group was now progressing well, after a difficult journey and commended the staff involved for the progress that had been made.

HEC&Q/14/21**Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be changed from 9 June to 16 June 2021 to allow reporting on the outcomes from the Assessment Boards.

Action: Corporation Secretary

The meeting closed at 6.49.pm