

THE TRAFFORD COLLEGE GROUP

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Higher Education Curriculum & Quality Committee  
held on Wednesday 9 June 2021 via Microsoft Teams**

<b>Present:</b>	Colette Fagan	(Chairperson)
	James Scott	(Principal & Chief Executive Officer)
	Kurt Allman	
	Sarah Drake	
	Neil Hanney	
	Leanne Arch	(HE Student Governor)
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Barry Watson	(Corporation Secretary)
	Carmen Gonzalez-Eslava	(Deputy Principal)
	Helen Wood	(Assistant Principal Cheadle & Marple)
	Gary Spicer	(Head of University Centre)
	John Simpson	(Head of Registry, Standards and Compliance)
	Andrew Mould	(Assistant Principal Stretford)
	Joan Scott	(Assistant Principal Adult Learning & Apprenticeships)

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**HEC&Q/15/21 Apologies for Absence**

The Corporation Secretary (CS) reported that apologies for absence had been received from Graham Luccock.

**HEC&Q/16/21 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/17/21 Minutes of the Higher Education Curriculum & Quality Committee Meeting held on 2 March 2020**

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

**HEC&Q/18/21 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

- i) HEC&Q/04/21 – Matters Arising from the Minutes – Draft Higher Skills Strategy

The Deputy Principal (DP) advised that the Draft Higher Skills Strategy would be presented to the Committee and the Board of the Corporation in the Autumn Term 2021.

It was explained that this was the most appropriate course of action given the intended and impending appointment of an Assistant Principal for Adult Education and Higher Skills, who could impact on the Strategy, and following the Board approval of the Group's three-year Strategic Plan in July 2021.

**Action: Deputy Principal**

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

- ii) HEC&Q/04/21 – Matters Arising from the Minutes – Renewal of Higher Education Policies- Student Protection Policy

The, Head of Registry, Standards and Compliance, in answer to a question from a member, advised that he had still not heard from the Office for Students (OFS) despite submitting further information relating to the matter.

- iii) HEC&Q/11/21 – Quality Calendar Update 2020/2021

A member asked if a copy of the updated Quality Calendar was available.

The HUC advised that further changes were required following the completion of the Student Survey 2 which would be implemented for the next Academic Year which was noted.

**Action: Head of University Centre**

- iv) HEC&Q/12/21 – Higher Education Update – Freedom of Speech

The Head of University Centre (HUC) advised that the Group's compliance with the Secretary of State for Education's communication regarding the requirements in respect of Freedom of Speech was fully covered in the Group's Freedom of Speech Policy and that there was no need for a change to the Policy which was duly noted.

- v) HEC&Q/14/21 – Any Other Business – Student and Co-opted

The HUC advised the Committee that the issues relating to the attendance of the HE Student Governor and the Co -opted member had both been resolved and that they were both in attendance at the meeting which was noted.

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

**HEC&Q/19/21 Higher Education Policy and Procedures Update**

The HRCS presented a series of Policies and Procedures for the Committee's consideration and review as follows:

- **Admissions Policy and Procedure**

The HRCS provided the Committee with an overview of the Policy and details of any changes to the previously approved Policy.

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The Committee had a discussion relating to ensuring consistency with the arrangements with the Group's HE Partner Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) and the HRCS explained the reasons for some of the differences detailed in the Policy and that he would be meeting with representatives of SHU to go through the document.

**Action: Head of Registry, Standards and Compliance**

The HRSC also explained the Group's approach to interviewing all students that apply to the Group.

There were no further issues raised by members and after due discussion it was resolved that the Admissions Policy and Procedure be recommended to the Board of the Corporation for approval.

**Action: Board of the Corporation**

- **Student Complaints Policy**

The HRCs advised the Committee concerning the minor amendments that had been made to the Students Complaints Policy.

Members made several suggestions for clarifications relating to the scope, reference to other university complaints procedures and the period of 10 working days in paragraph 20 of appeal which the HRCs undertook to action.

**Action: Head of Registry, Standards and Compliance**

There were no further issues raised by members and after due discussion it was resolved that the Students Complaints Policy, subject to minor adjustments, be recommended to the Board of the Corporation for approval.

**Action: Board of the Corporation**

- **Mitigating Circumstances Policy Procedure and Guidance**

The HRSC advised the Committee concerning the minor amendments that had been made to the Mitigating Circumstances Policy Procedure and Guidance.

Comment was made in relation to clarity around item 3 (grounds for mitigation) and an amendment to the wording which the HRC undertook to action.

**Action: Head of Registry, Standards and Compliance**

There were no further issues raised by members and after due discussion it was resolved that the Mitigating Circumstances Policy, Procedure and Guidance, subject to minor adjustments, be recommended to the Board of the Corporation for approval.

**Action: Board of the Corporation**

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- **Appeals Policy and Procedure**

The HRSC advised the Committee that there were no proposed changes to the Appeals Policy and procedure and the Chairperson commented that it was very good piece of work and Policy.

There were no further issues raised by members and after due discussion it was resolved that the Appeals Policy and Procedure be recommended to the Board of the Corporation for approval.

**Action: Board of the Corporation**

- **Fitness to Study Policy**

The HRSC advised the Committee concerning the minor amendments that had been made to the Fitness to Study Policy.

A member commented concerning paragraph 13 of the Policy and the inclusion of the paragraph relating to Equality Impact monitoring which was not in other policies.

The HRCS acknowledged that it was a good point that the member made and undertook to reflect the action in other Policies.

**Action: Head of Registry, Standards and Compliance**

A member commented about the requirement to undertake DBS checks for some courses which was not mentioned in the Policy which was noted.

There were no further issues raised by members and after due discussion it was resolved that the Fitness to Study Policy subject to minor adjustments, be recommended to the Board of the Corporation for approval.

**Action: Board of the Corporation**

- **Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy and Procedure**

The HRSC advised the Committee concerning the minor amendments that had been made to the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Policy and Procedure.

Clarity was provided by the HRCS regarding the period of time for the submission of APL claims and some minor wording changes were identified.

There were no further issues raised by members and after due discussion it was resolved that the Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy and Procedure, subject to minor adjustments, be recommended to the Board of the Corporation for approval.

**Action: Board of the Corporation**

- **Academic Misconduct Policy**

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The HRSC advised the Committee concerning the minor amendments that had been made to the Academic Misconduct Policy.

A member commented that further clarity could be provided regarding the cheating aspects of para1.4 and suggested the removal of para 5.1.1 as it did not follow through with the rest of the document.

**Action: Head of Registry, Standards and Compliance**

There were no further issues raised by members and after due discussion it was resolved that the Academic Misconduct Policy, subject to minor adjustments, be recommended to the Board of the Corporation for approval.

**Action: Board of the Corporation**

- **Higher National Qualification Assessment Regulations**

The HRSC advised the Committee concerning the amendments that had been made to the Higher National Qualification Assessment Regulations and that they only applied for HNC Awards issued by Pearson's Ltd.

It was also advised that the regulations related specifically to BTEC awards and this should be reflected in the title.

It was also agreed that a wording amendment be made to Para 1.4.

**Action: Head of Registry, Standards and Compliance**

Clarity was also provided to members in respect of RQF which was the new grading criteria.

There were no further issues raised by members and after due discussion it was resolved that the BTEC Higher National Qualification Assessment Regulations, subject to minor adjustments, be recommended to the Board of the Corporation for approval.

**Action: Board of the Corporation**

- **Student Terms and Conditions of Enrolment**

The HRSC advised the Committee concerning the minor amendments that had been made to the Student Terms and Conditions of Enrolment.

Clarity was provided concerning the status of European Union Students and that the link arrangements in para1.5 should be amended to the Trafford College Group link details.

Regarding Section 13 of the terms and conditions it was agreed that the statement should be checked with the Group's Data Protection Officer.

**Action: Head of Registry, Standards and Compliance**

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There were no further issues raised by members and after due discussion it was resolved that the Student Terms and Conditions of Enrolment, subject to minor adjustments and agreed actions, be recommended to the Board of the Corporation for approval.

**Action: Board of the Corporation**

- **Student Transfer Plan**

The HRSC advised the Committee concerning the minor amendments that had been made to the Student Transfer Plan and advised of the circumstances when the Plan would be used.

It was further confirmed that the new Plan was part of the requirements for OfS registration.

The Chairperson commented that it was an excellent document and after due discussion it was resolved that the Student Transfer Plan be recommended to the Board of the Corporation for approval.

**Action: Board of the Corporation**

The HRSC thanked members for their comments and input into the various Policies and procedures adding that they were really helpful.

The Chairperson commented that in general terms the Policies and Procedures exhibited good standards.

**HEC&Q/20/21 Higher Education Improvement Plan 2020/2021 - April 2021 Progress Update**

The HUC provided the Committee with a copy of the Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan (HEQIP) 2020/2021- April 2021- Progress Update.

The HUC reminded members of the RAG Rated definitions and advised that some areas of performance had exceeded target and that some areas required further development and would therefore roll over into the HEQIP for 2021/2022.

Members raised several issues arising from the update as follows:

- A member asked what had been done in respect of the results from Student Survey 2 which were due on 21 May 2021. The HUC advised that he would cover the matter in detail later in the meeting (agenda item 10) but that the Group had received good data and good feedback from students.
- A member commented that HEQIP was very detailed, comprehensive and clear and thanked the staff involved in producing such a pleasurable read.
- A member asked about the embedding of the work undertaken in respect of the new Partnership Strategy and asked if this would now be one document which would link the previous two documents. The HCU provided the Committee with the historical background to the Student Engagement Strategy and the Teaching and Learning Strategy which had been written in

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2017. He further advised that these had been reviewed in 2020 and would be completed in June 2021 as a Community Response Strategy.

- A member asked if it was possible to show within the HEQIP what the key measures are, from which Governors could evidence that progress had been made. The HUC commented that this could be evidenced from improvements in satisfaction rates and achievement outcomes. It was suggested that an impact column could be added to measure success. The Principal and Chief Executive Officer (PCEO) commented that this was something that the managers would reflect on with a view to updating for next year.

**Action: Deputy Principal**

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

**HEC&Q/21/21 Office for Students Risk Register and Reportable Events Update**

The HRSC presented a report which provided the Committee with a copy of the OfS Risk Register and Improvement Plan 2020/2021 and advised the Committee that the Risk Register provided an up-to-date information relating to the Group's current position.

The report also included a copy of the reportable events document which had been sent to OfS in respect of the merger with Cheadle and Marple Sixth Form College.

Members raised several issues arising from the report as follows:

- A member sought clarification around the Grey Rag Rating boxes and the HRCS advised that this meant that the activity had not as yet happened.
- A member commented that there was no evidence of responsibility in the document. The HRCS asked how useful members found the document whether the requirements could be embedded in the HEQIP. The PCEO commented that the document needed to be retained due to meeting the requirements for OfS registration. Members commented that it might be worth combining in to one document so long as the conditions of registration are not lost.
- A member commented that the wording on the website relating to the Student Protection Plan was out of date. The HRCS advised that the comments had been updated re the merger and sent to OfS and that he would change the wording on the website to say it had been submitted to OfS.

**Action: Head of Registry, Standards and Compliance**

- Regarding the reportable events report a member commented that he thought the submission read very well. The HRCS advised that the

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submission had been updated by the CS from a Governance perspective since its submission and that he had not had any response from the OfS.

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

**HEC&Q/22/21 Access and Participation Plan 2020-2025 Progress Update**

The HRSC provided the Committee with a copy of the RAG Rated updated Access and Participation Plan 2020-2025. It was advised that all the targets were either green or amber.

It was also advised that the Plan would be required to be submitted to the OfS for the period 2022-2027 and the HRCS provided members with the planned timeframe to meet this requirement.

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

**HEC&Q/23/21 Impact Report 2019/2020**

The DP presented a copy of the impact report for 2019/202 which had been submitted to the OfS.

The DP commented that of the 16 targets 14 had been achieved and that with regard to the targets that had not been achieved (Care Learners and Access part time) an action plan had been submitted to the OfS and that their response was awaited.

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

**HEC&Q/24/21 Data Dashboard for Higher Education Provision Update**

The HRSC provided members with a presentation which provided them with the following predicted key outcomes data for 2020/2021 from the HE Data Dashboard:

- Attendance 90.20 %- a significant improvement on 2019/2020.
- Retention 97.00 %- no change on 2019/2020.
- Completion 91.00 %- up 5% on 2019/2020 and a 3-year trend increase by 10%
- 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Outcomes 65% - up 5% on 2019/2020 and 20% since 2016/2017.
- Other UG 70% up 2% on 2019/202 and 20% over a 5-year period.
- Student Satisfaction (semester 2) 96.00%.

The PCEO advised that the figures provided were “hot off the press” and commented around how the Groups approach to flexible learning had helped in areas such as attendance.

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The HE Student Governor (HESG) commented that the approach had helped her significantly and outlined how due to her own personal circumstances the Group had been able to support her and that on line learning had enabled her to follow recorded learning activities which if held on site she would not have been able to attend.

The HESG also paid tribute to the fantastic work and dedication of the tutors in supporting her through her studies who she commented had been exceptional.

The HUC commented that the HESG experience was replicated in the survey and the Groups consistent approach had helped in delivering improved performance. He further added that the good practice evidenced would be implemented going forward.

The Assistant Principal Stretford (APS) commented that he had received feedback from students earlier in the week as follows:

- Effective use of online learning.
- The opportunity to pick up lessons and learning at a later date.
- The contact through Teams had been really effective.
- Students could go back to their workplace to carry on success to the following year.

A member commented that the staff and students should be congratulated on the results and the brilliant student feedback that had been achieved.

The Chairperson commented that the positives needed to be made habitual and a member commented that she was proud to be a Governor of the Group and that HE, rather than being an annexe of provision, was now definitely part of the Group.

The HRCS also provided the Committee with further data outlining that the Group was the 30th largest provider of HE of FE Colleges nationally, 5<sup>th</sup> in the North West and 2<sup>nd</sup> in Greater Manchester.

In discussion it was agreed that this data should be used as part of the Groups promotional materials. The Deputy Principal also outlined the branding and marketing approach that was being considered going forward.

### **Action Deputy Principal**

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

## **HEC&Q/25/21 Curriculum Developments and Partnership Update**

The DP advised that the Partnership with SHU was working very well and was very positive. It was further advised that the Group would review its partnerships as part of the Strategy review.

### **Action: Deputy Principal**

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In respect of curriculum developments, the APS provided the Committee with an overview of the agenda for Higher Apprenticeships and the significant opportunities that were available to the Group and how management intended to take advantage of the opportunities.

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

**HEC&Q/26/21 Higher Education Update**

The HRSC made a presentation which updated the Committee in respect of key developments that impact on the Group's Higher Education provision as follows:

- Recurrent Grant Consultation
- Capital Grant Consultation.
- Higher Technical Qualifications.
- University Connect Programme.
- Greater Manchester Universities and Colleges.

In discussing the overview of the key issues, the PCEO provided Committee members with information in terms of the context for the Higher Technical Qualifications together with the commitment statement of the GMCG to work collaboratively in a Higher Education context.

This included influencing HE provision in schools, developing partnerships from Level 1 -6 and student, joint development of new programmes and Student Mental Health.

The Chairperson commented concerning the involvement of post graduate research students with schools.

The Committee had broad discussion covering the issues raised including the impact on reduced funding in art provision. The HRSC advised that it would not be significant for the Group and would be in the region of 5k per annum. The Committee in general terms expressed their concern at the perceived down grading of Arts Higher education provision and funding.

There were no further issues raised by members arising from the presentation and it was resolved that it be noted and received with thanks.

**HEC&Q/27/21 Appointment of Assistant Principal Adult Education and Higher Skills**

The DP advised the Committee that the Group had recently reviewed the organisational management structure due to staffing changes and that it had been decided to create a new role of Assistant Principal Adult Education and Higher Skills.

The DP further advised that the post had been advertised and that interviews were due to be held on 25 June 2021 with an anticipated starting date for the appointed candidate in October 2021.

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The DP expressed her thanks to GS, JS and HW for their contribution to the Group's Higher Education provision.

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

**HEC&Q/28/21 Any Other Business**

There were no matters raised under any other business and the Chairperson thanked the HESG for her participation and wished her well for the future.

**HEC&Q/29/21 Date of Next Meeting**

In discussion it was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee should be held at 5.30pm on Wednesday 6 October 2021 when the Committee would consider a stand-alone item of the Access and Participation Plan 2023- 2027.

It was further agreed that the normal business meeting for the Autumn Term should be held at 5.00pm on Tuesday 9 November 2021.

**Action: Corporation Secretary**

Agenda item 9 Impact report 2019/2020 was considered as agenda item 8

Kurt Allman left the meeting at 7.11pm during the consideration of agenda item 11.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm