

THE TRAFFORD COLLEGE GROUP

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Higher Education Curriculum & Quality Committee
held Tuesday 9 November 2021 at 4.00pm
via Microsoft Teams**

Present	Graham Luccock James Scott Sarah Drake	(Chairperson for the Meeting) (Principal and CEO)
In Attendance	Barry Watson John Simpson Carmen Gonzalez- Eslava Andrew Mould Tracey Wood Kendra Kirby	(Corporation Secretary) (Head of HE and Higher Skills) (Deputy Principal) (Assistant Principal, Apprenticeships – Stretford) (Assistant Principal, Adult Skills and Employer Engagement) (Assistant Principal, SP Vocational – Altrincham)

Minute No

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chairperson welcomed the recently appointed Assistant Principals (TW and KK) to their first Committee meeting.

HEC&Q/30/21 Apologies for Absence

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

It was advised that Graham Luccock would take the Chair for the meeting in the absence of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.

HEC&Q/31/21 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/32/21 Minutes of the Higher Education Curriculum & Quality Committee Meeting held on 09 June 2021

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

HEC&Q/33/21 Matters Arising from the Minutes

i) HEC&Q/18/21- Matters Arising from the Minutes- Student Protection Policy

The Head of Higher Education and Higher Skills (HHEHS) advised that he had not heard from Office for Students (OFS) regarding the matter and that the matter had now been updated at merger and submitted under reportable items.

Minute No**ii) HEC&Q/20/21- Higher Education Improvement Plan 2020/2021 – Progress Update**

The Deputy Principal (DP) advised that an impact column had now been added to the Plan and a member asked if the actions taken to encourage internal progression from Level 3 provision to Higher Education had been effective.

The DP advised that it had been most effective, particularly regarding Creative Arts provision and outlined in detail the actions that had been taken to encourage progression.

A member asked if this was the case regarding High Level Apprenticeships.

The Assistant Principal Stretford (APS) confirmed that it was and outlined the growth in provision together with the wider agenda that was being addressed particularly in the areas of Engineering and Construction.

A member asked about the Community Response Strategy and if there was a copy that could be made available to Governors.

The DP advised that this was a work in progress but that activities were being undertaken to deliver on responses to the Community.

It was agreed that as soon as it was available it would be shared with Governors.

Action: Deputy Principal

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

HEC&Q/34/21 Access and Participation Plan Monitoring 2019/2020 – Provider Impact Report

The HHEHS provided the Committee with a copy of the letter that had been received from the OFS regarding the monitoring of the Group's Access and Participation Plan (APP) for the period 2019/2020.

The report also included a copy of the provider Impact Report (IR) for the same period which summarised the Group's progress against the targets, objectives and written commitments as set out in the APP.

The IR covered progress against the following key areas:

- Ambition and Strategy
- Self-Assessment of Targets
- Investment Commitments

Minute No

The HHEHS reminded members of the processes relating to the APP and that it will be published on the website.

Members raised several issues arising from the report as follows:

- A member sought clarification regarding Annexe A of the document and asked why no additional steps had been taken to reach the additional milestones.

The HHEHS advised that this was an access target for 2019/2020 which had been missed.

The member asked if there were any consequences arising from this and the HHEHS advised that there would be no consequences but there were wider discussions needed in respect of how the Group deals with access within its Early Years provision.

Action: Head of Higher Education and Higher Skills

The DP commented that it was intended to align the work around inclusion with the Group's Further Education provision and that the recent structural changes would improve performance relating to inclusion.

It was also advised that further thought was being given to wider strategies in this respect for the future.

Action: Deputy Principal

A member asked about paragraph 6 in the OFS letter in respect of milestones relating to closure of gaps and advised that this would be under review going forward based on potential national structural changes.

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

HEC&Q/35/21 Access and Participation Plan 2022-2026

The HHEHS provided the Committee with a copy of the Access and Participation Plan (APP) 2020-2026 and commented that there were no significant gaps in the Group's performance and that the identified gaps would be closed during the 5 years of the APP.

The HHEHS made a presentation to the Committee detailing the following key issues.

- The requirements, and focus APP which related to improving the equality of opportunities for unrepresented Groups to access, succeed and progress from Higher Education.
- Assessment of Performance and the factors to be considered.

Minute No

- Performance of the Group in terms of Access, Attainment and Progression
- Steps to be taken going forward and matters that may need further consideration.

Members raised several issues arising from the report and presentation as follows:

- A member asked why the data provided went back as far as 2016/2017 and 2017/2018.

The HHEHS advised that there was a requirement for the APP to be over a five-year period and that the required data for 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 was not available.

- A member asked about the outcome data relating to Asian students and advised that it was low because a substantial number of students in this category leave the Group for employment reasons which was a good outcome.
- A member commented that the APP seemed rather process driven rather than outcomes orientated and suggested that the APP be sent for scrutiny by absent members of the Committee before it was finally sent to Board. It was agreed that this suggestion be supported.

Action: Head of Higher Education and Higher Skills

The DP commented that some of the targets were ambitious and that she was confident that the identified gaps, which were very small in some instances, could be closed.

The DP thanked and acknowledged the high volume of work that the HHEHS had undertaken in producing the APP.

There were no further issues raised by members and after due discussion and consideration it was resolved that, subject to the further scrutiny by absent Committee members, it be recommended to the Board of the Corporation for approval.

Action: Board of the Corporation

HEC&Q/36/21 Self-Evaluation Document 2020/2021 and Quality Improvement Plan 2021/2022

The HHEHS presented the Committee with a copy of the Self Evaluation Document (SED) for 2020/2021 and a copy of the updated Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2021/2022.

The Committee was advised that the documents met the framework requirements of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and were now in a similar format to other Group Self-Assessment Reports.

Minute No

The Committee were further advised that the key issues arising from the reports were as follows:

- The Quality of Teaching and Learning remained good and of a high standard. It was advised that the external examiner confirmed the good grading in what had been a difficult year due to the pandemic and that there were no concerns relating to the quality of teaching and learning.
- The Higher Education Review process had now been embedded and that excellent work had been undertaken in supporting students.
- Student Feedback would be reported on later in the meeting.
- Scholarship review was good and three educational talks had been undertaken covering slavery, the holocaust and Gypsy and travellers Roma history.
- Recruitment by provision and over a five year trend. It was advised that recruitment remained a key focus and on-going initiatives were outlined in detail. It was also advised that Construction and Engineering continued to be a challenge whilst reduction in numbers had been evidenced in Early Years, Computing and Sports provision.
- Access and participation with student intake being balanced.
- Retention, Achievement, Success and Completion rates which were outlined in detail.
- Partnership arrangements.

Members raised several issues arising from the report as follows:

- A member offered her congratulations to the staff for a good performance in the Academic Year 2020/2021 and welcomed the inclusion of impact measures in the QIP.
- A member commented concerning the continuing problems and issues relating to Learning Resources as this had been challenged by Governors last year.

The DP advised concerning some of the issues and areas of concern that were due to disruption arising from the redevelopment at Stockport College and issues in Creative Arts and Computing.

It was further advised that the students were now very pleased with the new facilities that were now being utilised and that improvements would continue to be made.

Minute No

The PCEO advised that there were now many real positives regarding this and that the Greater Manchester Colleges Group (GMCG) had been successful in a funding bid which would ensure that there was a pot of money available for improvements.

- A member raised the issue of low student engagement and the lack of take up in the appointment as a Student Governor from Higher Education Students. The question was asked how much this was being promoted by staff.

The DP commented that management were aware of the issues and were taking action to address them and full details would be covered later in the meeting under the Student Feedback agenda item.

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

HEC&Q/37/21 Draft Higher Education Skills Strategy 2021-2024

The PCEO presented a copy of the Draft Higher Education Skills Strategy (DHSS) 2021-2024 and drew members attention to the objectives of the Strategy which covered five key areas as follows:

- Adapt and grow the Higher Skills offer in line with national/regional policy developments.
- Maximise recruitment opportunities through improved penetration into key markets.
- Provide a curriculum that is employer focused through effective partnership working.
- Develop innovative and flexible models of delivery to better meet the needs of students and employers
- Support the development of regional and collaborative arrangements to enable increased recruitment and progression.

The PCEO explained to the Committee how each of the objectives would be delivered in detail and explained the Group's approach in delivering through Collaboration and Partnership arrangements.

The PCEO also explained the work of the GMCG in this context and the opportunity that was available to bid to GMCA to develop a coherent offer around Level 4 and 5 across Greater Manchester.

It was advised that the Group's PCEO and the Principal at Wigan and Leigh College would be leading on the bid which was welcomed by Committee members.

A member advised the Committee of the work undertaken by the Chairpersons of the GMCG and expressed that he was very pleased that the Group's PCEO was

Minute No

involved with the bid. He added that the proposed Strategy fits in very well with the Group's Employer Engagement Strategy.

He further commented around some of the challenges that would be faced in respect of the local Universities and that it would be interesting to see how those relationships developed going forward.

A member commented that the proposed DHESS evidenced that the Group was moving forward with Higher Education provision which was to be welcomed and the right way to proceed.

There were no further issues raised by members arising from the report and after due discussion and consideration it was resolved that it be recommended to the Board of the Corporation for approval.

HEC&Q/38/21 Higher Education Student Feedback 2020/2021

The HHEHS presented a report which provided members with details of the outcomes from internal and external sources regarding student satisfaction at the Group.

The HHEHS advised that the outcomes from the surveys were as follows:

- **Internal – Post Induction Survey**

It was advised that overall satisfaction rates remained high at 94% with an overall response rate of 45%. Outcomes for individual curriculum areas were also provided and the HHEHS commented that further work needed to be undertaken in respect of Computing whose satisfaction rates were 10 % lower than the overall rate.

Action: Head of Higher Education and Higher Skills

- **Internal- Semester Evaluation Questionnaires (SEQ)**

It was advised that the overall satisfaction rate continued to improve with satisfaction rates increasing from 94% and 96% between Semesters 1 and 2. The HHEHS referenced the response rates and commented that they were low, particularly in Semester 2, due to difficulties using devices during remote learning.

The report also provided data outcomes for each of the Group's curriculum areas and the HHEHS provided an overview of the outcomes and issues to be addressed for each of the curricular areas.

He further advised that students seemed less satisfied with Learning Resources as a whole, but particularly in practically based areas such as Arts and Computing.

- **External – National Students Survey (NSS)**

Minute No

The report provided members with the outcomes from the NSS by category of question together with comparators for the Academic Year 2019/2021.

The HHEHS advised that the outcomes clearly indicated that the Group was above average in England in all categories other than Learning Resources, Organisation and Management and Overall Satisfaction.

The HHEHS went through the outcomes in detail and commented that the overall satisfaction rates across the sector had declined due to the impact of the pandemic.

- **Action Plan 2021-2022**

Taking into account the issues arising from the various sources the HHEHS provided members with a copy of an action plan to address the issues.

The HHEHS advised that the key actions for improvement were as follows:

- Improve Student Satisfaction in SEQ's by at least 3%
- Improve Student Satisfaction with Learning Resources.
- Increase participation in SEQ's by 10%
- Achieve top quartile in all NSS categories and increase participation by 10%

The DP commented that overall the Group outperformed other providers nationally and that there had been a reduction in satisfaction rates across the sector.

Members commented on the report as follows:

- A member commented that the low response rate was very disappointing and response rates of 45 % was not a satisfactory outcome.

The DP advised that it was intended that the approach going forward would be aligned with the Further Education provision practices which secures average response rates of 70%.

The DP further outlined the detailed actions that would be taken to address the matter.

Action: Deputy Principal

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

Minute No**HEC&Q/39/21 Office for Students Risk Register and Reportable Events**

The HHEHS advised the Committee that there were no reportable events, since the last Committee meeting, which were required to be reported to the OFS.

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

HEC&Q/40/21 Curriculum Developments and Partnership Update

The DP advised the Committee regarding the following curriculum developments and partnership update:

- The development with John Moore's University for Criminology which would be offered from September 2022.

In answer to a question from a member the DP confirmed that there was not a lot of local competition for the provision, it was very popular and an attractive pathway for young people.

- Areas of prioritisation for curriculum provision following the exercise that had been undertaken in relation to curriculum planning.

The DP advised that some gaps in provision had been identified particularly in the areas of Sustainability/Green issues and explained how the actions would impact on the Group's Higher Education offer and add value to the current programmes.

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

HEC&Q/41/21 Quality Calendar 2021/2022

The HHEHS presented a copy of the Quality Calendar for 2021/2022 and advised that it was currently a "live document" which may change going forward.

There were no issues raised by members regarding the Quality Calendar and after due consideration it was resolved that it be noted.

HEC&Q/42/21 Higher Education Update

The HHEHS provided the Committee with his termly Higher Education update which covered the following issues:

- **Higher Technical Qualifications**

THE HHEHS advised concerning the nature and background to the new qualifications and that the first teaching of the qualifications would be available from September 2022 commencing with Digital followed by Construction and Health Science in 2023 with full roll -out over a four -year period.

Minute No

- **Lifelong Learning Loan**

The HHEHS advised concerning the background design and purpose of the new Lifelong Learning Loans which were due to be launched in 2025. It was noted that trials would begin in England in September 2022 and that for the Group it could mean offering specific modular delivery that would count towards qualifications over time or modular delivery to support workforce development.

It was further advised that the areas of interest for the Group included education, digital innovation, health care and achieving net zero emissions.

The PCEO commented regarding the logo design for the loans and advised of the link to T Levels particularly in the areas of Hairdressing/Beauty and Catering.

- **Other**

It was advised that the CEO of OFS would be leaving her post along with several Directors and that a new Chairperson had been appointed.

It was also advised that the Government's Budget had offered nothing in terms of Higher Education, and it was understood that there were still several issues to be decided.

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

HEC&Q/43/21 Any Other Business

A member commented concerning the lack of student representation on the Committee as, following the outcomes of the recent Student Governor elections, there had been no nominee from Higher Education provision.

The CS advised that he was in discussion with the HHEHS concerning the matter and it was hoped that a representative could be secured as a co-opted member of the Committee in the very near future.

Action: Corporation Secretary

HEC&Q/44/21 Date of Next Meeting

In discussion it was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee should be held at 5.30pm on Wednesday 02 March 2022.

Action: Corporation Secretary

The meeting closed at 5.34.pm