

THE TRAFFORD COLLEGE GROUP

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Higher Education Curriculum & Quality Committee
held on Wednesday 14 June 2023, at 5.30pm via Microsoft Teams**

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| Present: | Graham Luccock | (Chairperson) |
| | James Scott | (Principal and Chief Executive Officer) |
| | Sarah Drake | |
| | Fatema Desai | |
| | Emily McIntosh | |
| | Marie Temperton | (HE Student Representative) |
| | Claire Stocks | (Co-opted Member) |
| In Attendance | Barry Watson | (Corporation Secretary) |
| | Carmen Gonzalez-Eslava | (Deputy Principal) |
| | Tracey Wood | (Assistant Principal Adult Skills Employer Engagement) |
| | Jane Nickisson | (Assistant Principal Higher Education & Skills) |
| | Danielle Judge | (Assistant Principal Apprenticeships) |
| | John Simpson | (Head of Higher Education & Higher Skills) |
| | Paul Butler | (ETF/ IoD – External Governance Reviewer) |

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Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Corporation Secretary welcomed Paul Butler (External Governance Reviewer) to the meeting and members introduced themselves to him.

The Corporation Secretary also asked members if they could provide some feedback on the new templates that had been introduced for all the reports that had been presented to the Committee.

Action: Committee Members

HEC&Q/16/23 Election of Chairperson of the Higher Education Curriculum & Quality Committee for the Academic Years 2023-2025

The Corporation Secretary (CS) sought nominations for the position of Chairperson of the Higher Education Curriculum & Quality Committee for the Academic Years 2023-2025.

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

Action: Corporation Secretary

HEC&Q/17/23 Apologies for Absence

The (CS) reported that apologies for absence had been received from Kurt Allman.

It was noted that the Deputy Corporation Secretary was unable to attend the meeting.

Minute No.**HEC&Q/18/23 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/19/23 Election of Vice Chairperson of the Higher Education Curriculum & Quality Committee for the Academic Years 2023-2025

The Chairperson sought nominations for the position of Vice Chairperson of the Higher Education Curriculum & Quality Committee for the Academic Years 2023-2025.

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

Action: Corporation Secretary

HEC&Q/20/23 Minutes of the Higher Education Curriculum & Quality Committee Meeting held on 01 March 2023

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

HEC&Q/21/23 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- i) HEC&Q/13/23 – Student Engagement Update 2022/2023

A member asked about the progress of the proposed monthly student Bulletin.

The Assistant Principal Higher Education & Skills (APHES) advised that it was the intention to commence the Student Bulletin from the beginning of the next Academic Year.

Action: Assistant Principal Higher Education & Skills

- ii) HEC&Q/06/23 – Outcomes from Higher Education CDAR Report 2023 (Draft)

The Higher Education Link Governor (EM) advised that, with regard to the action relating to sharing Teaching Observation (TO) models, she had undertaken 3 Governor Link visits this Academic Year and would share the relevant information relating to various models of TO with APHES online.

Action: HE Link Governor (EM)

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

HEC&Q/22/23 Higher Skills Strategy Action Plan Update

The Deputy Principal (DP) presented a report which provided members with a copy of the Higher Skills Strategy Action Plan (HSSAP) which set out how the objectives of the

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Higher Skills Strategy (HSS) were being addressed and the progress that had been made up to June 2023.

The DP went through the progress that had been made for each of the 5 Strategic Objectives as follows:

- **Strategic Aim 1** – Adapt and grow the Higher Skills offer in line with National/Regional policy developments.

The DP advised that since the last report the Curriculum Planning process had been completed and a clear plan established for the roll out of wave 2 and 3 HTQ in line with GMCA skills priorities for 2023/24 and 2024/2025 (Digital, Construction, Health, and Applied Science).

It was further advised that a strategic decision had been made to base all new provision at Stockport University Centre and funding from the Office for Students (OfS) Capital Bid and HE Injection fund had been allocated to support the need for specialist equipment in these areas.

- **Strategic Aim 2** – Maximize recruitment opportunities through improved penetration into key market areas.

The DP advised that progress continued to be impacted upon by lower than planned September recruitment numbers.

The DP commented that as part of the Curriculum Planning process for 2023/2024, the Adult Level 3 offer has been reviewed and further developed to provide progression opportunities for adults into Level 4+ courses.

It was further advised that the Curriculum Planning process had been completed which focused on aligning Young People and Adults to the Higher Skills Offer.

It was also advised that progress has been made on activities to increase internal progression of young people and improve the recruitment from employers into higher level study to reverse the decline in HE numbers.

It was noted that the objective around HE Alumni was still RAG Rated as Red as work had yet to commence around this due to limited marketing capacity. The DP commented that at this stage progression was unclear with this objective due to other priorities.

- **Strategic Aim 3** – Provide a curriculum that is employment-focused through effective partnership working.

It was advised that reasonable progress continued to be made against the objectives and that EAB (Employer Advisory Boards) had been established in all the key subject areas as part of the Group's Employer Responsive Strategy and the embedding of the new Business Development Team.

The DP commented that the focus for the Group in 2023/2024 would be to continue to work collaboratively and provide opportunities for students and staff to

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enhance their industry and employment focused skills as well as broaden their transferrable skills (digital, problem solving, creativity).

- **Strategic Aim 4** – Develop innovative and flexible models of delivery to better meet the needs of students and employers.

- The DP advised that good progress had been made on aligning the quality assurance/quality improvement processes with Further Education, without compromising the distinctiveness of Higher Education.

It was noted that the Group had developed a partnership with a Health Sector organisation to introduce flexible learning modules for underrepresented groups in Higher Education and that a January 2024 start has been introduced as part of the main offer that would better meet the needs of students and employers.

- **Strategic Aim 5** – Support the development of regional and local collaborative arrangements to enable increased recruitment and progression.

The DP advised that the partnership for flexible delivery of Level 4/5 in Health through OLC Europe has produced enrolments in the summer term and that the plans for further provision and validation with Sheffield Hallam University were progressing for the Academic Year 2024/2025.

It was noted that the opportunity around capital and revenue support through the Local Growth Fund via GMCA was still under discussion with Greater Manchester Colleges Group and that discussions continued to take place between GMCA and the GM Vice Chancellors' Group with options for meaningful collaboration being explored.

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

- A member asked what the plans were for addressing the approach to Teaching Learning and Assessment in the context of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Chat GPT.

The DP advised that the Group had reviewed its Assessment Policy and the TCQ guidelines, but that further work was required to be undertaken with students at Induction.

The APHES advised concerning the Group wide four-pronged approach which involved looking at CPD for staff, looking at relevant regulations and the Misconduct Policy, the student voice relating to enrichment and the consequences of using the tool and systems and process to support detection.

A member commented that it might be helpful to talk to employers about the use of AI including wider stakeholders and professional bodies in order to secure an external context.

A member commented around Internal detection school that could help support the Group's approach to ensure that people are supported and on the right track with regard to the matter. The APHES commented that she was confident that the

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Group would be ready for the commencement of the next Academic Year.

A member commented that this matter should be an item on the agenda for the Committee's next meeting and the Committee agreed that the suggestion should be actioned.

Action: Corporation Secretary

- A member asked for an update concerning the position for recruitment of students and how it compared to last year. The member also asked for clarification concerning the curricular areas that were involved with the sector skills council in respect of objective 3.

The DP advised that it was expected that student numbers would increase for the next Academic Year but that it would not be significant and referred members to the partnerships in Health and Social Care and Sport (not materialised).

The DP also commented around the work that was being undertaken with GM Colleges and its impact on recruitment. It was further advised that the curricular areas that were involved with the Sector Skills Council were Construction and Computing.

The APHES advised the Committee of the benefits that been achieved through sharing with other Colleges in terms of the distribution of students and the proactive approach that was being taken to ensure that applications turn into enrolments.

The Chairperson referred members to the work that was being undertaken by Chairpersons and Principal in Greater Manchester at a strategic level and the accessing of monies to the benefit of HE providers and learners across the region.

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/23/23**Quality Improvement Plan 2022/2023 – Progress Report**

The Head of Higher Education & Higher Skills (HHEHS) presented a report which provided members with the progress that had been made against the key actions within the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) as of June 2023.

The APHES advised that attached to the report was a copy of the updated HE QIP which consisted of eight key objectives which were addressed through a series of actions during the academic year 2022/23 and beyond.

It was advised that effective progress had been made with regard to all of the objectives as detailed in the report and that the key areas for Governors to note were as follows:

- Good progress was being made in all identified areas of the HE Quality Improvement Plan.

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- The Task and Finish Group for developing and delivering Level 4 and 5 qualifications was now established and was progressing well. It was further advised that plans had been approved to start course development 2024/2025 in Counselling, Healthcare and Media Make-up.
- The National student Survey had closed, with the Group not achieving its response rate target of 82%. It was advised that the outcome rate was 67.20% with the National outcomes being published in July 2023.
- A full review of UCAS and application journey had taken place and further enhancements had been made including all HE courses information; central admissions offer and a singular point of contact for updating and maintaining public information.
- Standard handbooks were currently being distributed to ensure a consist approach for all HE students from September 2023.

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

- A member asked about the arrangements that were in place for bespoke staff development for HE staff particularly in the context the CDAR report. It was further asked how staff development needs were identified and how the impact was measured and whether staff could access Advanced HE Follow Up.

The HHEHS provided the Committee with a detailed overview of the arrangements that were in place for HE staff in terms of CPD. He specifically referred to the Annual Progress Reviews and the staff implications arising from it, the Access to Advanced HE and the available platforms to CPD.

He also outlined the approach to Fellowships which large cohorts of staff had undertaken and the development of scholarly activity. He further commented around the nature of the staffing cohort in that 80% of staff are technical based and the emphasis being on Professional updating.

He further commented that the staff development numbers were small and that it was anticipated that more opportunities for development would take place during the next Academic Year.

- A member commented around the take up for the NSS which had not reached target and the actions that were being taken to improve the position.

The HHEHS commented that members need to be aware that the sample size was very small so a small number of non-completers would have a big impact on the response rate percentage figure.

The APHES advised that it was anticipated that the response rate would improve next year due to the fact that 90% of students would be located at the Stockport College Campus and the stronger emphasis on the student representation model.

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.

Minute No.**HEC&Q/24/23 Higher Education CDAR Report 2023**

The HHEHS presented a report which provided members with the final Higher Education Curriculum Development Area Review (CDAR) report and reminded members that full details of the draft report had been considered by the Committee at its last meeting.

The HHEHS went through outcomes from the report in detail and advised that the 14 recommendations arising from the final report were being actioned.

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

- A member commented that the issue concerning module handbook had been cited in the report and welcomed the student participation in meetings that had been evidenced in the report.
- A member asked why the issue identified in the report relating to advice to students to achieve higher marks was not contained in the Executive Summary as a key action.

The HHEHS commented that it was a good point and outlined the actions that were being taken to address the issue.

- A member commented about the low response rate in respect of the Learner voice.

The HHESH referred to his earlier comment around the low student cohort numbers have a disproportionate impact on the percentage figure and advised around the actions that would be taken to seek to improve the uptake in the next Academic Year.

Action: Head of Higher Education & Higher Skills

- A member commented concerning the need to improve facilities and resources as evidenced in the report and asked for further explanation of how the identified issues would be addressed especially with regard to Digital Media.

The HHEHS provided a detailed explanation of the activities that were being funded through to two successful capital bids that would address the identified issues.

The APHES also provided specific information relating to resource support in Creative Arts and the range of actions that were being undertaken to create a University Ethos and to embed values across the vision through sharing of good practice and CPD.

The Student Representative (SR) commented on the positive experience she had had with regard to the matters being discussed including the positive feedback

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arrangements that were in place for learners.

- A member sought clarification around the issue of Licences for Construction students.

The HHEHS advised that this was a funding constraint issue due to the expensive nature of the Licences.

He further advised of the work of the Digital Strategy Group and the resources that would be made available for Library students from a digital perspective. He further commented that this was a big agenda item and future proofing was required.

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/25/23**Student Success and Outcomes**

The Assistant Principal Higher Education & Skills (APHES) provided the Committee with a report which requested a discussion regarding the format for monitoring student outcomes by the Committee for the Academic Year 2022/2023 and beyond in the context of the key performance indicators relating to continuation, completion, and progression.

The APHES further advised concerning the requirements in relation to the Office for Students (OfS) in respect of the student outcomes data dashboards which provided a sector and provider-level picture of continuation, completion, and progression and that these indicators would inform the Group's regulation of student outcomes in the 2023 assessment cycle.

It was also advised that the OfS publish the size and shape of provision data dashboards which gave a sector and provider-level picture of the size and shape of higher education at OfS registered providers and supported the monitoring of APP outcomes.

Members commented on the report as follows:

- A member suggested that the Quality Improvement Plan could be supported through relevant KPI reporting similar to the process undertaken within the Group's FE KPI reporting but adapted for HE provision.
- A member commented on models that are used in universities which identified what success looked like including static and dynamic indicators which could be looked at.
- A member commented about the importance of reporting on the key KPI's of attainment and attendance and identifying the relationship between the two.
- A member commented concerning reporting on reporting on the outcomes of targets that had been set for students.

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- The PCEO commented that it was important that regulatory requirements were reported together with an alignment of the model that is used in FE reporting through the QIP and the Group's Strategic Priorities.

There were no further issues raised by members and the APHES undertook to take the members' comments into account in the reporting of Student Success and outcomes in the next Academic Year.

Action: Assistant Principal Higher Education & Skills

HEC&Q/26/23**Access and Participation Plan Update**

The APHES provided a report which provided members with details of the Group's revised requirements for the Access and Participation Plan (APP).

The APHES provided the Committee with an overview of the key issues arising from the revisions which were as follows:

- The current APP had been extended for a further year to cover the academic year 2023-24 and a new APP would need to be submitted in the summer of 2024 to take effect for the Academic Year 2025-2026.

The APHES commented that this was really good news and that it gave the Group plenty of time for extensive consultation concerning the APP going forward.

The APHES also outlined some of the actions there were being taken in respect of the links with local schools and other providers together work around Maths and English.

- There was an enhanced focus on evaluation and raising attainment for the current and future APP and that the guidance set out a new approach and expectation for increased evaluation and sector-wide activity to support raising attainment for those not yet 16.

It was also advised that there would be a new annual publication of APP dashboard data.

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/27/23**Higher Education National Policy Update**

The APHES presented a report which provided members with an update concerning the current HE external landscape and any impact on HE provisions at the Group.

The report also included a Higher Education Regulatory Landscape Update presentation

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and a copy of the B3 EM Case closing letter (April 2023).

The report covered the following key Policy areas:

- The OfS publication of updated student success outcomes dashboard and B3 conditions.
- The updated regulations around APP and Equality of Risk Register.
- An update on Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE) which was seen as a very positive opportunity for the Group.
- An update on Higher Technical Qualifications and an additional funding bid which was being made by the Group which needed to be completed within 4 weeks within the areas of Creative Arts and Health Care.

The APHES provided members with a brief overview of all the areas detailed in the report and members made the following comments arising from the report and overview.

- A member commented around any approach for the ring fencing of course that were at risk.

The APHES advised that it was only modules that were ring fenced and that it mainly related to adult part time provision.

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/28/23 Office for Students Risk Register

The APHES presented a report which provided the Committee with a copy of the updated Higher Education Risk Register (HERR).

The APHES advised the Committee that the purpose of the report was to highlight the key risks for Higher Education and the mapping of the risks to the Office for Students Conditions of Registration.

The APHES further advised that the HERR should not be seen in isolation and that it sat alongside the HE Quality Improvement Plan and Access and Participation Plan as part of the Group's approach to ensuring the delivery of high-quality provision at Level 4, and above across the Group.

A brief overview of the key issues arising from the update which were as follows:

- Financial Risk
- Delivery of successful student outcomes in line with B3 conditions
- The awarding of good TEF rating by OfS

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

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- A member asked when the announcement concerning the TEF would be made and what was the anticipated outcome.

The APHES advised that it was due to be announced in September 2023 and that there was no way of anticipating what the outcome would be.

- A member commented about the risk relating to students moving to high paid jobs and the APHES advised concerning the challenges that this presented in the context of good performance outcomes and the difficulty in getting a handle on potential outcomes.
- A member asked about the data being of a historical nature particularly relating to merger. The APHES advised that there was a mixed picture relating to this and commented around the data relating to a given point of time and assessment of performance.
- A member asked what the current position was with regard to applications for the forthcoming academic Year. The APHES advised that applications were up between 30-40 compared to last year and the actions that were being taken to seek to ensure that the applications became enrolments. The member asked were the staff still adopting the “keeping Students warm” over the summer approach and the APHES confirmed that they were and provided details of the actions being taken particularly in respect of a broader offer which would support the maximisation of funding.

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/29/23**Office for Students and Department for Education Capital Bids Progress Report**

The HHEHS presented a report which provided members with a progress update concerning the OFS and DfE Capital Bids.

The content of each of the bids were also provided to members.

The report covered the following key issues:

- The Group was successful in two HE funds bids; OFS Capital (1.7m) and DfE Higher Technical Injection Fund (390k).
- £491,161 expenditure and £299,202 had been committed by March 2023 with a further £336,075 of expenditure being expected to be incurred by 31st July 2023. The HHEHS advised that the funding had been used to support the refurbishment of Vernon tower entrance, the supporting of the Group’s Digital Strategy and the purchase of specialist equipment.
- The Higher Technical Education (HTE) Injection fund would focus on Digital, Construction, Early Years and Engineering to support the development of new programmes and growth in numbers.
- The project remained on track but that there was a risk of clawback if student numbers were not achieved (HTE bid only).
- The Capital Bids were from, a financial perspective, monitored on a regular basis by

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the Resources Committee.

A member welcomed the report and the progress that was being made and it was commented that it would be helpful if members could visit the Stockport College to view the progress.

It was suggested that the next meeting of the Committee be held at the Stockport College and the CS agreed to look into the suggestion at some stage during the next Academic Year.

Action: Corporation Secretary

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/30/23**Student Engagement Update 2022/2023**

The HHEHS presented a report which provided the Committee with an update on student engagement activities.

The HHEHS commented that the report would help Governors ensure that students engage in a meaningful way and provide opportunities for students to be involved in the enhancement of their learning.

The report covered the following key issues:

- Following recent student surveys, student satisfaction from semester 1 to semester 2 had increased in all areas of provision and that the overall satisfaction had increased by 10 percentage points.
- Sports, Construction and Arts students were very satisfied with their courses and had responded positively to teaching and learning opportunities.
- In respect of Early Years, Engineering and Computing, improvements were to be implemented in areas of organisation and management, learning resources and learning community.
- The very successful outcomes from the Sheffield Hallam UK Partner Awards 2023 with the Group's students winning 7 Awards in the Student Voice and Student.

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

- Members offered their congratulations to the HE Student Representative (MT) in being an award winner in both categories that she had been entered for.
- A member commented around the response rates for the Student Survey.

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/31/23**Resignation of Co-opted Member of the Higher Education Curriculum and Quality**

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The CS advised the Committee that CF, due to personal reasons, had resigned from her position as a Co-opted Member of the Committee.

The CS further advised of the arrangements that would be put in place following the outcomes from the External Governance Review process to fill the vacancy.

Members agreed to contact any potentially interested persons in the vacancy and refer them to the Corporation Secretary.

Action: Committee Members**HEC&Q/32/23****Any Other Business**

A member advised that this would be last meeting for the CS before his retirement in September 2023 and members expressed their thanks and appreciation to the CS for his outstanding work and contribution to the effective functioning of the Committee.

HEC&Q/33/23**Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be held at 5.30pm on Wednesday 22 November 2023 via Microsoft Teams.

Action: Corporation Secretary

The meeting closed at 7.20pm

The Principal and Chief Executive Officer joined the meeting at 5.50pm during the consideration of Agenda item 7 (Higher Skills Strategy).

The Assistant Principal Adult and Employer Engagement left the meeting at 6.31 pm after the consideration of Agenda item 9.