



HARTPURY

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE HARTPURY UNIVERSITY

Minutes of a Meeting
2:00pm Tuesday 5th November 2019
Gordon Canning Room

Present:	Prof. Ian Robinson (IR) - Chair
	Ms Jenny Arroud (JA) – HE Staff Governor
	Mr Russell Marchant (RM) – Vice-Chancellor/Principal
	Dr John Selby (JS)
	Mr Chris Moody (CM) – FE and HE Governor
	Ms Emily Hancock (EH) – HE Student Governor
In Attendance:	Ms Helen Wilkinson (HW) Chair – College QuEST
	Mrs Barbara Buck (BB) - FE Governor
	Ms Ehlana Drury (ED) – FE Student Governor
	Mr Kam Nandra (KN) – FE Governor
	Ms Rosie Scott-Ward – Pro-Vice-Chancellor
	Ms Lucy Dumbell (LD)- Academic Registrar
	Ms Claire Whitworth (CW1) – Vice Principal - FE
	Gillian Steels – Clerk to the Governors

Apologies:

Mr Sean Lynn (SL) – FE Staff Governor

		ACTION	ACTION DATE
1. Apologies	Apologies were received as detailed above.		
2. Declaration of Interest	The Clerk advised that members' interests would be taken as those disclosed in the Register of Members Interests. There were no declarations of members' interests for agenda items.		
3. Minutes of the Last Meeting	The Minutes of the meeting held on the 25th June 2019 were agreed to be a true and accurate record, subject to the days of future meetings being updated. With this clarification they were signed by		

	the Chair.		
4.	Matters Arising University – QuEST Minutes – Weston Partnership – the termination element within the agreement was confirmed.		
5.	-		
6.	HE Reports		
6.1	<p>Annual Quality Report</p> <p>The Committee was reminded that the Annual Quality Report was confirmed as part of the enhancement cycle in 2017-18. It was noted that it provides information for Academic Board and is critical, alongside regular reports from Academic Board, performance indicators and reports to the Quality Enhancement and Standards Committee, in providing information to Governors about how Hartpury University monitors and evaluates its provision to meet the expectations of a provider on the OfS' Register of Higher Education Providers in England.</p> <p>Governor assurances that Hartpury University has acted appropriately to maintain academic standards and improve student experience may have to be provided in December. It was noted that these do not explicitly focus on the previous year, but are a judgement around an ongoing cycle of communication, challenge and insight. It was recognised that this work was supported through a range of statutory returns, including: the HESA student return - due 31st October, HESA staff return due early November, and census data on enrolling and continuing students is not available until post the census date of 1st December which provide the University with institutional data, such as completion, continuation and other figures, and sector comparisons. This report enables timely insights into 2018-19 performance and ensures actions are put in place promptly where required.</p> <p>The Pro-Vice- Chancellor stressed that the area of serious concern to Academic Board, is student retention and continuation. It was confirmed the University's performance in this area was currently being scrutinised by a nominated sub-group of Academic Board, following intensive debate within that committee.</p> <p>The Committee considered the report in detail. The Committee was advised that the Academic Board had red rated Retention and Continuation during their scrutiny of the report. It was confirmed that the Student Experience, continuation and retention were being considered in detail by the subgroup which included the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, the Academic Registrar, Head of Inclusivity and the new Dean of Teaching and Learning. Governors asked for more detail on work to date. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor advised that two peaks when students left early had been identified: within the first three months – home sickness appeared to be a significant factor and</p>		

June/July – this generally followed a pattern of disengagement (non-submitting of work, non –attendance and lack of engagement with tutorials). Work was ongoing to identify more detailed patterns and identify solutions to improve the position. The Chair of the Committee questioned whether the underlying reason could be identified as academic matters or well-being issues. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor commented that disengagement was the key theme with the other aspects interrelated. Key appeared to be a lack of a clear sense of belonging. A governor queried the University's ability to influence this through induction and peer support measures. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor advised that a different approach had been incorporated within induction this year, building in a team building day. The impact of this would now be monitored. She advised that student led induction and peer mentoring had been relaunched. Further work was needed to support this.

The Governors asked if the students ceasing to continue had any common characteristics. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor advised that young white males were most likely to fall into this group. She confirmed that tutors had been given more information on the type of student at greater risk of not continuing so that they could apply targeted monitoring. A weekly register report to enable holistic monitoring of a student's engagement had also been put in place. It was highlighted that Foundation students, against national trends, were less likely to withdraw. The Pro-Vice –Chancellor stressed the ongoing improvements in data capacity and capability at the University which was enabling improved and more timely reporting to support students. She advised that the aim was to produce a dashboard for easier staff review. It was noted that the attendance monitoring process was supported by direct staff intervention rather than automated emails which were used in some universities. It was considered that this more personal response should be more effective, although it was recognised it was more labour intensive.

A governor reflected on the challenge of meaningfully monitoring inclusivity and diversity data on an annual basis given the small cohort size and suggested the use of three year rolling averages to provide more informative data. This approach was supported by the Committee as a mechanism to identify differential experience with more timeliness.

There was concern that the Student Survey results had plateaued and that this was now at amber. The processes in place to support students completing the surveys to provide meaningful information was outlined. It was noted that internal surveys, which contained Hartpury focused questions tended to have a higher number of completions, but lacked the benefit of benchmarking provided through UKES, which could have some institution specific questions added. Hartpury was therefore reviewing its approach to surveys. It was recognised that strong engagement by students in student feedback supported continuous improvement.

<p>The Chair of the Committee queried the sign off process for the Annual Quality Statement and Annual Governance Assurance Statement. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor advised that submission dates for these returns had not yet been advised. It was confirmed that Governor oversight would be in place to sign off returns as necessary, but confirmed this might be electronic.</p> <p>Governors requested an agenda item for a future meeting should be an Overview of the Academic Quality System, and this was agreed as a bi-annual agenda item.</p> <p>The Annual Quality Report was APPROVED and RECOMMENDED to the Board to ENDORSE.</p>	<p>Pro-Vice-Chancellor</p>	<p>Feb 2020</p>
<p>6.2 Student Achievement Report</p>		
<p>The Committee considered the Student Achievement Report which included data about achievement, academic failure and differential awards. It was highlighted that the improvement in data quality has allowed student characteristics to be considered in more detail than previously. It was noted that some of the concerns identified last year about student groups with certain characteristics would appear to be a cohort effect and were not repeated this year. It was recognised that as the number of years of these data held increases, identifying patterns will be easier and more reliable. It was agreed that the proposals to use rolling three year averages would also support this work.</p> <p>It was confirmed that action had already been started to positively impact on student achievement, and noted that the report forms the basis of this area of the Annual Quality Report.</p> <p>The Committee considered the proportion of firsts and the need to ensure maintenance of standards. The proportion of males and females in these classes was considered. It was recognised that small cohort sizes meant there could be a greater level of fluctuation. It was noted that the sector averages of first class degrees was 28% with Hartpurly at 24%, which supported the view that there was not a pattern of grade inflation. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor confirmed that work was ongoing to ensure tutors used the full range of marks, especially on Foundation Awards. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the variability in programme was monitored and reasons identified. She confirmed the internal verification systems had been reviewed to ensure they were operating correctly, and that this had been confirmed through the review.</p>		
<p>The Pro-Vice-Chancellor advised that improvement in Foundation Degree outcomes reflected that individuals undertaking these courses were now specifically choosing this option, which had</p>		

	<p>improved outcomes.</p> <p>It was confirmed that Hartpury was continuing to improve its data capability and would need to further develop the tracking of value added.</p> <p>The Chair requested that for the next year the Committee look at outliers to see if there were any systemic lessons to be learnt. The Academic Registrar confirmed this work was ongoing internally. It was confirmed that Hartpury's External Examiners came from a range of institutions to support scrutiny and challenge. It was noted that Hartpury would need to publish its approach to determining degree classifications by the end of the academic year. The Academic Registrar advised she had attended a QAA workshop on this. The aim was to produce by May. It was confirmed it would be brought to the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the report and approved the approach.</p>	<p>Academic Registrar</p>	<p>June 2020</p>
<p>6.3</p>	<p>Key Performance Indicators - Final Performance Outcomes and Agreement of New Targets</p>		
	<p>The Pro-Vice-Chancellor confirmed that as the end of the data cycle for the 2018-19 academic year approaches, a number of performance indicators have been updated. It was confirmed that most of these had been discussed in detail within the Quality Report (above). Highlighted changes within this report related to the employment focused performance indicators, this reflected the replacement of the DLHE (an employment focused survey taken 6 months post completion) by the Graduate Outcomes¹ Survey (taken 15 months post completion). It was noted that from initial reports of institutions already through the Graduate Outcomes Survey, that engagement with the survey is low². Despite this, the Office for Students (OfS) continues to refer to it as a lead indicator and its continual inclusion as a TEF metric is highly likely. It was highlighted that while Hartpury had put in place a number of steps to support a positive completion rate, concern remained that this is unlikely to be achieved especially as the Survey is administered by a central agency. Given that Hartpury considers employment is a key outcome to benchmark our provision and the experiences we provide our students; Hartpury has committed to undertake its own internal employability survey six months' post completion. It was confirmed this will be done in a similar style to the DLHE, and will provide valuable data on student employment status, as well as a value tool for benchmarking. It will also be a useful narrative for future TEF submissions. As a result, we have changed the wording to reflect this in the 'Employment or Further Study' performance indicator. This planned approach was supported by</p>		

¹ <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/outcomes/students>

² <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2019/04/15/a-positive-outcome/>

	<p>the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee considered the In-Year Retention figure which had dropped for the last three years. The importance of challenging but also realistic targets was stressed. It was agreed this should be 95% rather than 97%.</p>		
	<p>Subject to the amendment above the Committee approved the KPI Targets for 2019/20 and noted the outcomes for 2018/19.</p>		
<p>6.4</p>	<p>Access and Participation Plan Update</p>		
	<p>The Committee was updated that on the 20th September 2019, Hartpury had received notification that the Director for Fair Access and Participation had approved the Hartpury University Access and Participation Plan 2020-25, which had been through the Committee, with enhanced monitoring in place. The Committee considered the overview of the feedback received from the OfS prior to approval, a summary of targets, and an outline of the activity planned for the next five years to ensure Hartpury meets its targets and does not breach conditions of registration with the OfS.</p> <p>It was noted that the reiterations of the plan had put in place more ambitious targets, this was a sector wide position. It was highlighted that the conditions put in place reflected issues highlighted by Hartpury in its plan, providing assurance that it had been a self-critical process.</p> <p>It was noted that the conditions required Hartpury to provide the OfS with written commentary, which describes the progress made and outcomes to date with respect to implementing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased data analysis and evaluation capacity - The development of an evaluation framework - The OfS bursary evaluation tool <p>It was highlighted that within the written commentary, Hartpury must also confirm whether we will be applying for any variations to our approved access and participation plan. It was noted the commentary is in addition to the routine monitoring of the delivery of the 2019/20 APP, also due in January 2020.</p> <p>The Committee was updated on ongoing work to take forward the required actions and ensure the monitoring report was robust and clearly demonstrated process. It was confirmed the University was receiving external support in relation to the data collection and also being part of sector discussions through GuildHE.</p> <p>The APP Update was NOTED and the monitoring approach ENDORSED, noting this would include updates to the Board in November and May (as a minimum within the HE report).</p>		

	<p>It was confirmed that if guidance required returns to be reviewed by governors that a process for this would be put in place.</p>		
<p>6.5</p>	<p>NSS Survey Results</p>		
	<p>The Committee had been provided with a detailed report which recognised that the NSS will continue to be an indicator used by potential students and sector bodies to make judgements about the institution and the importance of Hartpury fully engaging with the survey and its outputs to look critically at our provision in light of the student perceptions the survey captures. It was confirmed that previous focus on accuracy of related student data and emphasis on the programme leader's responsibility for survey engagement, had supported a second year of an NSS completion rate over 80%.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the results had been considered by a number of groups, from programme management committees through to HE Executive and Academic Board, with a working group examining the data and considering possible implications and necessary actions. It was highlighted that in future the newly established TEF Gold Working Group, would have oversight of the NSS strategy going forward.</p> <p>It was recognised that the results had remained constant compared to last year, with comparison to the region, sector and benchmark, shows that we are higher in most areas, however not enough to meet our aspiration of being in the upper quartile in all areas.</p> <p>At the meeting a detailed presentation on whole institution but also subject by subject of the data, text comments, relationship to student characteristics and implications for TEF was considered.</p> <p>The importance of triangulating information and putting in place robust actions was stressed by the Committee. The Committee considered whether staff turnover was impacting on student satisfaction. It was agreed there was some work to do in reviewing staff salaries and any impact on staff retention. The importance of timely feedback and effective communication with students was highlighted, and it was confirmed these messages were being used to shape practice in 2019/20. It was highlighted that the new TEF Gold criteria included the student voice.</p> <p>The process to launch the survey to increase student participation in it was explained. Governors considered this a key process given the importance of the survey and the potential for survey overload for students. It was confirmed that where survey outcomes had fallen below expectations that focus groups had been put in place to get more detailed feedback from students.</p> <p>The Committee questioned whether student growth and access to facilities was an issue. The Academic Registrar advised that access to facilities had been highlighted by some students, and that the</p>		

	<p>improved library facilities had come on board too late to influence this. It was hoped that the results for 2019/20 would reflect the improvements.</p> <p>A governor queried the volumes of students in areas where the results had been below the average for Hartpury and was advised they reflected larger cohort sizes and the importance of improving them was recognised and being actively targeted. Course organisation improvements for 2019/20 were in place with timetables being issued five weeks ahead which had been well received by students.</p> <p>The demographics and disadvantaged groups, and feedback outside the averages, were considered. Improvements in male feedback was noted.</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the NSS Survey Outcomes and Actions Taken to Respond.</p>		
7.	HE Reports for Information		
7.1	Academic Board Minutes – September The Committee noted the minutes.		
8.	Complaints Analysis 2018/19		
	<p>Given the change to becoming a University with a wholly owned subsidiary which is a Further Education Institution, two complaints reports had been produced for 2018/19, one for the University which includes all complaints regarding our HE provision and students plus any complaints regarding wider Hartpury.</p> <p>The FE complaints report includes only complaints related to FE provision and students.</p> <p>It was noted that for this first year comparator data at this granular level was not available.</p> <p>It was highlighted that following a review of good practice across the HE sector, we have improved our processes with regard to complaints. Previously many complaints were submitted through the complaints process before adequate opportunity had been given at a local level to resolve issues and concerns. In 2019/20, departments are encouraged to deal locally with issues and to utilise the complaints procedure only where the issues cannot be resolved, or the complaint is dissatisfied with the outcome. This new approach ensures that matters are dealt with promptly at source and builds a better relationship at a local level.</p> <p>It was noted that for Higher Education Hartpury was now required to record complaints as directed by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) which had led to a revision of categories</p>		

	<p>previously used, this approach was also being used across FE. Governors queried the process and whether all complaints were being captured given the relatively low numbers. It was confirmed that if a matter was resolved locally it would not be included but that where there was any reference to “complaint” that it would be captured.</p>		
	<p>University</p> <p>Overall, across Hartpury complaints have fallen this year, 19 complaints were received for the University.</p> <p>Of the 19 complaints received 6 were upheld, 8 were not upheld, and 6 were partially upheld.</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the University Complaints Report 2018/19.</p>		
	<p>College</p> <p>Overall, across Hartpury complaints have fallen this year, 27 complaints being received in total.</p> <p>Of the 27 complaints received 12 were upheld, 12 were not upheld, and 3 were partially upheld.</p> <p>It was confirmed OFSTED had been comfortable with the College processes for dealing with complaints. It was noted that the commonest complaint was having to pay for accommodation following leaving a course early.</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the College Complaints Report 2018/19</p>		
7.	<p>Students’ Union Report</p> <p>The Committee considered the update on SU processes to improve student involvement and engagement activities. The Student Governor confirmed the feedback from a student perspective.</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the SU Report.</p>		
8.	<p>Terms of Reference Update</p> <p>The proposal to formally include the Academic Registrar in the “in attendance of the Committee was supported.</p> <p>The Terms of Reference, with the revision detailed above was APPROVED and RECOMMENDED to the Board for endorsement.</p>		
9.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>None.</p>		
10.	<p>Dates of future meetings-all commence at 2.00pm:</p> <p>Thursday 13th February 2020</p>		

Tuesday 30 th June 2020 Tuesday 3 rd November 2020		
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The meeting closed at 4.30pm

Professor Ian Robinson
Chair
University Quality Enhancement and Standards Committee

Date:

Approved February 2020