



HARTPURY

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE HARTPURY UNIVERSITY

Minutes of a Meeting
1pm Thursday 9th November 2023
Gordon Canning & Teams

Present: Andy Collop (Professor) – Vice-Chancellor and Principal
Alison Blackburn - University Governor
Ian Robinson (Professor) (Chair) - University Governor
Chris Moody – University Governor
Mr Jon Renyard – Co-opted Member HE QuEST
Ms Sascha Bruce - University Student Governor
Thomas Legge - University Staff Governor

In Attendance Rosie Scott-Ward – Deputy-Vice-Chancellor
Lucy Dumbell (Dr)– Academic Registrar
Steve Butts (Dr) – Academic Dean (Teaching, Learning & Student Experience)
Barbara Buck – College Governor (Chair FE Quest)
Mary Heslop – College Governor
Helen Wilkinson – College Governor (from 2.10pm)
Gillian Steels– Clerk to the Governors
Sophie Savage – SU Manager

Apologies: none

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
HEQuEST 01/11/23	Welcome and Apologies Attendees were welcomed. Apologies noted as above.	
HEQuEST 02/11/23	Quoracy It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate.	
HEQuEST 03/11/23	Declaration of Interest The Clerk advised that members' interests would be taken as those disclosed in the Register of Members Interests. It was noted that Chris Moody and the Vice-Chancellor and Principal were members of both Boards. There were no declarations of members' interests for agenda items	
HEQuEST 04/11/23	Minutes of the Last Meeting The University QuEST Committee agreed the minutes of the meetings of 29 th June 2023 as a true and accurate record.	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
HEQuEST 05/11/23	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>The Action Update log which updated members on progress of actions was NOTED.</p> <p>It was confirmed the Achievement update re sport would be covered as AOB.</p> <p>Access and Participation – guidance on this was awaited from OfS – an update would be provided once available.</p>	
HEQuEST 06/11/23	<p>HE Update and Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Review 2022-23 and Agree to 2023/24</p> <p>The Deputy-Vice-Chancellor provided a presentation covering latest sector and Hartpury HE news and more detail on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) outcomes.</p> <p>Sector Update:</p> <p>1. Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE)</p> <p>This was progressing but would be administered by the Student Loan Company, which might lead to limitations due to the need to align to the funding model. It would be targeted mainly at undergraduates which was a disappointment. Hartpury would be keeping the developments under review to identify challenges and opportunities.</p> <p>2. Data Futures</p> <p>This development was proving challenging for the sector and HESA. The Vice-Chancellor and Principal advised that this was working better at Hartpury than at a number of HEIs which was pleasing. Hartpury continued to monitor this closely. Governors queried if there were any specific issues regarding Hartpury. The Deputy-Vice-Chancellor advised that Hartpury had concentrated its data capacity in this area, as it was a small team. Therefore, she had no issues in relation to Data Futures, however the size of the team limited in year work which could be done on retention from a data monitoring perspective. It was planned to go forward with Power BI to support data review. Governors queried the position with UnitE and were advised that the position had improved.</p> <p>3. New UCAS interface</p> <p>This was proving challenging at Hartpury, with ongoing work continuing. SMT was monitoring the position closely.</p> <p>4. Higher Technical Qualifications</p> <p>These were a potential opportunity for Hartpury, but there had been limited interest from the sectors Hartpury operates in to date.</p> <p>Hartpury Student Recruitment</p> <p>The Deputy-Vice-Chancellor updated that it had been a very challenging year which had resulted in under recruitment which would impact the budget. She advised that student behaviour had changed significantly against that of previous years. Applicants had been 1% up against a sector reduction, however conversion from accepted to enrolled had seen a significant reduction – changes at this stage in the applicant journey were very unusual. This had impacted on home undergraduates and Foundation Degree Top Up years. Investigation was ongoing to identify if this was a Hartpury or sector issue. Anecdotally it was believed to be an issue at mid-tariff HEIs. UCAS data on this would not be available until Dec/Jan. Positives had been increased numbers</p>	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	<p>through clearing (100 against previous best level of 80) and International which was 19 above target.</p> <p>A survey had been undertaken on students who had declined to come, so far only a limited response had been received but this suggested some issues around accommodation and attractiveness of campus. The analysis was continuing.</p> <p>In terms of subject areas agriculture and sport had performed well, equine and animal were in decline, Veterinary Nursing had also been challenging. The pattern in postgraduate was similar. The Deputy-Vice-Chancellor advised that at this stage she had concerns about the sustainability of the Postgraduate Taught provision. A review was ongoing in this area and would be updated to QuEst.</p>	Dep-VC June 24
	Returning Student Numbers	
	<p>Of 2492 undergraduate enrolled students 300 were classified as not active (withdrawn or studies suspended)</p> <p>Of 267 postgraduate taught students 32 were classified as not active (withdrawn or studies suspended)</p> <p>To try to reduce the number of non-active students going forward a flag system had been put in place aligned to risk factors and tutors would be using it from this week to monitor and support students.</p> <p>The reasons for students becoming not active had been reviewed. Staff were being encouraged to ensure there was clarity on why a student was withdrawing to provide feedback on any actions which could be put in place to improve support.</p> <p>It was confirmed that monitoring of students withdrawing and suspending had been in place all year, but the expectation had been the rate of occurrence would reduce later in the academic year, however this had not proved to be the case.</p> <p>Governors reflected on the information. It was recognised there were implications from a financial and regulatory perspective as the non-retention of students would impact the B3 conditions. The Deputy-Vice-Chancellor confirmed this was a concern, particularly as it was now a 2-year trend. It was noted that TEF data for the 2027 submission would also be impacted. Once data from the sector was available it would be very helpful to understand Hartpury's comparative position.</p> <p>The Deputy-Vice-Chancellor highlighted the challenges around managing a falling student number cohort for resource planning etc, particularly following the increased size during the Covid period.</p> <p>It was confirmed that a plan had been developed to respond to the financial challenges from the reduced cohort size which had been discussed in detail at the SFR Committee. Reductions had been made to the HE budget, and posts frozen. Additionally, as previously discussed the number of weekly taught hours for first years, had generally reduced from 15 to 12, optionality had been reduced, fees had been increased where possible. The</p>	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	<p>development of new curriculum, as previously highlighted, was ongoing. It was noted that the Veterinary Nursing (VN) provision was currently going through revalidation, review and reaccreditation. This was a robust process, and some institutions currently providing VN had particularly found the current national reaccreditation process challenging. Hartpury had thus chosen to seek reaccreditation one year early, in order to permit continuing on the current accreditation if major changes were required in the updated programmes.</p> <p>It was recognised that improving retention was a key action, and it was confirmed that a number of initiatives were in place to support this, including ensuring students were encouraged and supported to finish their year.</p> <p>The new curriculum offer being explored for 2025 was outlined. The Deputy-Vice-Chancellor commented that Hartpury recognised that it would be important to ensure that new courses were bedded in and that students felt part of the Hartpury family and that the size of other areas of provision didn't act as a barrier to inclusion.</p> <p>The Deputy-Vice-Chancellor confirmed that she was confident that new curriculum was being designed effectively with less optionality and sharing, fewer small credit modules, shorter & fatter delivery and offering a January enrolment option.</p> <p>Governors queried if the categorisation of Veterinary Nursing as a non-graduate profession would be a challenge in relation to progression data if this cohort was targeted for expansion. The Deputy-Vice-Chancellor advised the qualification had been reclassified so this should not be an issue.</p>	
	<p>KPIs</p> <p>The Governors considered the HE KPI's, both performance 2022/23 and proposed targets for 2023/24. A governor, while welcoming the ambition, queried whether retention targets were realistic given the current position. The Deputy-Vice-Chancellor advised that the aim was to get back to the level of past years, and highlighted that a number of steps were ongoing to support this. She recognised however that changes in student behaviour meant it was difficult to know if this target would prove realistic in the longer term.</p> <p>Governors asked for clarification on the employment and progression KPIs, and were advised that progression was based on the OfS definition (and was what would be used for B3 and TEF monitoring) and employment was the total minus the number who were unemployed.</p>	
	The HE QuEST Committee NOTED the HE Update and the KPI position for 2022/23 and APPROVED the HE QuEST KPIs for 2023/24	
HEQuEST 07/11/23	TEF Outcome	
	The Deputy-Vice-Chancellor provided a presentation covering more detail on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) outcomes. 228 providers had undertaken TEF submissions (over 180 mandatory as part of the regulatory conditions.). A number of submission outcomes were	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	<p>pending. To date 20% of outcomes were gold, 44% silver, 13% bronze and the remainder pending. (those pending were expected to be announced imminently). As had previously been advised Hartpury had achieved Triple Gold and was very proud of its achievement. OfS would publish a TEF Report which was considered user friendly, which highlighted excellence and areas which could be made stronger.</p> <p>Planning was now underway for 2027. A new student voice project was ongoing to improve impact. In relation to student outcomes retention would be a challenge. The historic data which had been recognised as incomplete would be phased out with the date line for the new TEF. Educational Gain – and the best mechanisms for evidencing this, and Progression would be areas of focus. It was recognised that the 2023 cohort would be part of the TEF 2027 evidence base.</p> <p>It was confirmed that OfS recognised the disproportionate burden and cost of the TEF exercise on small institutions and smaller Student Unions.</p> <p>It was confirmed that once the 2023 Strategy was developed the related HE Strategy would be finalised, and this would build in our TEF ambitions.</p> <p>Within the 2027 TEF submission Hartpury would again need to be clear on what made it distinct, and it would be important to ensure this was supported through the new curriculum. Hartpury would be focusing on the aspects which linked student engagement, educational gain, data and learning digital to ensure it focused its resources most effectively.</p>	
	<p>The Hartpury Team was again congratulated for the outstanding TEF result.</p> <p>Governors confirmed they would take forward the need to monitor the focus on retention and educational gain.</p>	HE QuEST ongoing
	The HE QuEST Committee NOTED the TEF Outcomes and the Ongoing Preparation for the 2027 TEF.	
HEQuEST 08/11/23	Achievement Report - including Outliers	
	<p>The report provided data and information about our HE students' achievement, and allowed insight into the performance of our students and how they achieve. It was highlighted that these themes contribute to how HE aims for the best possible student experience (Being the best we can be), working in partnership with our students to support them to achieve their full potential (building strength through partnerships) and supporting students from under-represented groups to succeed at Hartpury (inclusive in all we do).</p>	
	<p>It was confirmed that Hartpury University does not demonstrate a profile suggestive of 'grade inflation'. Achievement measures show that more students passed their modules in a timely way in 2022/23 than did so in the previous year and awarding gaps decreased.</p>	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement of target awards has improved overall in 2022/23 to 81%, mostly due to a large increase in the proportion of postgraduate students achieving and despite both honours degree and level 5 students both seeing a small decrease. Passing all modules at first attempt had seen an increase from 83% in 2021/22 to 85% in 2022/23, allowing more students to progress to the next stage. Upper award achievement of honours degrees fell by over 2 percentage points, to return to pre-pandemic levels in 2019/20. After two years of above KPI performance, 2022/23 falls below KPI. It was highlighted that Academic Board had requested a review of upper award achievement by students with similar profiles at similar institutions. Governors were supportive of this approach and it was confirmed the outcome would be brought to the Committee. It was agreed it was important to ensure fairness to students, and looking at performance against profile compared with other institutions would help with this. The interrelationship with the Degree Outcomes Statement and Board and OfS interest in this area was recognised. The differential Degree Outcomes across upper awards is not of concern in 2022/23, with the gap narrowing significantly in full-time students from the previous year. The gap between female and male students in the achievement of upper awards has reduced, however the lower achievement of male students remains a concern. It was confirmed this was an area departments were looking at – particularly in relation to curriculum design. It was recognised that in sport the national picture showed a lower honours level which Hartpury was mirroring. It was agreed it was important to understand the picture. In the fifth year of intervention for students demonstrating low engagement, the number of students required to withdraw for non-engagement stabilised and was less than those required to withdraw for academic failure. <p>Students on course routes with integrated foundation years had seen an improvement at all stages for achievement, apart from upper award achievement. Of the 78 students who enrolled on the foundation stage in 2019/20, 49% achieved their target award in 2022/23 (compared to 40% of 2017/18 entrants) and 53% of those achieved upper awards. These figures will be monitored carefully, especially with the number of students on integrated foundation year course routes increasing. Governors agreed this was another area for focus.</p>	Academic Registrar Feb/June 24
	The HE QuEST Committee NOTED the Achievement Report and ENDORSED Actions re Outliers.	
HEQuEST 09/11/23	Student Satisfaction Survey Outcomes and Planed Actions - NSS PTES	
	The Academic Dean (Teaching and Learning and Student Experience) took the Committee through the key elements of the report. It was noted that the most recent National Student Survey (NSS) and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) supported Hartpury's strategic intent and positioning as a high-quality education provider. This was	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	<p>underpinned by a commitment to driving the highest possible response rate, and achieving above sector average for these and our internal Hartpury Undergraduate Student Survey (HUGSS).</p> <p>Survey data and enhancement action plans were undertaken at Department and Programme level. Common cross-institution areas for consideration from NSS open comments were: Covid impact; library and learning resources; and study spaces. For PTES, open comments to be addressed were access to library and journal resources; and access to physical resources. Apart from Covid impact, these were areas where deeper understanding and action is required in addition to the new University Learning Hub coming online.</p> <p>The Committee was pleased to notes the PTES completion rate of 73% against a sector average of 22%. The strong scores were noted.</p> <p>The strong performance in NSS was noted. It was confirmed that departments with lower scores were undertaking actions with students to understand the relatively lower scores.</p> <p>The strength of many of the NSS outcomes were welcomed. Governors reflected on the overall negative score relating to learning resources. It was confirmed that work was ongoing to ensure students understood the learning resources available to them. It was hoped that the introduction of the University Learning Hub would improve the feedback, but noted that focus groups on the issue with students suggested a wider issue on interpretation, access and knowledge of what was available. The Academic Registrar flagged it would also be important to identify what learning resources the students considered they needed.</p> <p>It was noted that a Student Voice Project and forthcoming Policy was underway to support a deeper real time understanding of student views, enable timely action if required, and pick up cross-institutional issues in year so students can see the feedback loop being closed. Governors were supportive of these developments. It was noted that clarity on defining and understanding 'academic community' would be key to meet our RDAP ambitions.</p> <p>The HE Student Governor advised that the feedback from the SU led FE and HE Forums would be incorporated in the Student Voice work.</p>	
	The HE QuEST Committee NOTED the Student Survey Report and ENDORSED planned Actions.	
HEQuEST 10/11/23	SU Report	
	<p>The report updated on; The SU team Ellie Martin, previous President: Representation, had now joined as SU Representation and Opportunities Coordinator. President Representation: Sascha Bruce (re-elected from last year) President Guidance: Morgan Hanif President Opportunities: Lara Jones</p>	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	<p>Morgan and Lara were new to the SU team.</p> <p>The Committee was updated that additionally a 'Liberation Officer' which combined the four previous roles (Black students', Women students', LGBT students' and Disabled students' officers), to ensure that HSU can continue to amplify the voices of minority groups had been elected.</p> <p>Representation</p> <p>A total of 169 students had registered on the rep database, comprising of 136 from university and 33 from college, and the majority of these have been trained via Teams. FE rep forums took place w/c 23rd October and HE forums w/c 6th November.</p> <p>Sascha had accompanied Andy Collop, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, in attending the GUILD HE AGM in September and the whole SU team had attended the Small and Specialist SUs Lead and Change event hosted by NUS, GUILD HE and the Association of Colleges on 25th October.</p> <p>The SU had submitted its section for inclusion in the Hartpury Annual Quality Report.</p> <p>Guidance</p> <p>Pop-ups had continued.</p> <p>The officers had created resources and events to raise awareness and support students, for example, our annual 'Have a Brew on HSU' on World Mental Health Day, campaigns to support marginalised groups including International Pronouns Day, Coming Out Day, Black History Month and Hate Crime Awareness Week. Short term plans include International Men's Day, Movember, White Ribbon Campaign and Trans Day of Remembrance.</p> <p>Opportunities</p> <p>A mixture of clubs and societies, including sports groups were very active and new ones were being established. Events for quieter students were also in place.</p> <p>Governors were pleased to note the Liberation Officer was an FE student.</p>	
	The Committee welcomed the vibrancy, breadth and range of the SU activities.	
	Governors queried whether the SU was involved in student complaints, academic appeals and similar processes. They were advised that the SU had a formal role in academic misconduct procedures, for other aspects it was a matter for the student to decide.	
	The HE QuEST Committee NOTED the SU Report.	
HEQuEST 11/11/23	Academic Board Update - Minutes	
	It was agreed the minutes provided a helpful summary of the work of the Academic Board.	
	The HE QuEST Committee NOTED the Academic Board Update.	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
HEQuEST 12/11/23	Annual Quality Report	
	<p>The Academic Registrar highlighted key points of the Annual Quality Report. She advised that the plan had been reviewed to ensure it covered the key regulatory conditions, without overlapping with other work. It was noted that the Annual Quality Report was designed to assure QuEST (Quality, Enhancement and Standards Committee) that Academic Board and the underpinning academic governance structures were discharging their responsibilities regarding Quality Assurance effectively. In particular it considers the OfS Conditions of Registration C1 and B. This formal annual report together with the routine reports received at each meeting, sight of Academic Board activity and Key performance Indicators (KPIs) should provide assurance to the governing body that Hartpury had met the challenges faced, continued to enhance activity and were aware of, and responding to areas of greater risk.</p> <p>During 2022-23 Hartpury experienced student number growth as our large first year cohorts in the last few years transitioned to returner cohorts. While challenges in supporting those students through navigating a difficult social and economic environment were identified, we were cognisant of supporting a growing student body, including a large number of Foundation Year students. Student feedback had been positive and we gained more representative participation for formal surveys. It was planned to continue to invest in our staff base and our data and digital capabilities.</p> <p>The Committee was reminded of the unprecedented rate of consultation on, and short notice change of, required and expected regulation and reporting experienced in 2021-22 continued through 2022-23. We used our sector membership of representative bodies to inform our planning as much as we could to provide clear message and reassurance to our staff. We responded to government guidance in a measured way as an institution when it added value to do so. Throughout the year Hartpury continued to prioritise its commitment to offering our students an outstanding teaching and learning experience to support them complete their programmes and achieve awards while maintaining academic integrity.</p> <p>The achievement of the TEF triple gold was a highlight of this year, reflecting hard and focussed efforts to improve student outcomes and experience and support our students in achieving a learning gain by studying at Hartpury University.</p> <p>It was confirmed that Hartpury University offers quality, reliable and appropriate standards and positive outcomes for all students, as defined through the OfS B conditions. When developing and implementing policies, procedures and terms and conditions, the University had given due regard to relevant guidance about how to comply with consumer protection law as defined by OfS condition C1.</p> <p>It was noted that the one area that was identified as having areas of concern identified for internal reasons forms part of the OfS' Condition of Registration B2. This requirement that each cohort receives sufficient resources and support for a high quality academic experience and success in and beyond HE is an area that, for Hartpury, is divided between extremely high performance for support and low student satisfaction with resources. It was</p>	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	<p>confirmed that actions have been suggested to understand this, and they form part of an action plan to continue to enhance the University's offer.</p> <p>The Committee explored the areas that were amber:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B2i: each cohort receives sufficient resources and support for a high quality academic experience and success in and beyond HE - B3i: positive continuation and completion outcomes for all students - B3ii: positive progression outcomes for all students <p>It was noted these were already areas which had been explored within the meeting and the actions planned in response were noted. It was agreed the actions focused on retention were of key importance. Governors queried whether completing module choice before the summer would improve retention. The Deputy-Vice-Chancellor advised that this had been tried previously and had not seemed to have a significant impact. It was agreed it was important for students to have their exam outcomes and to discuss the option choice face to face, when making their choices.</p> <p>A governor questioned whether Hartpury could be confident that it was uncovering all academic misconduct. The Academic Registrar advised that all reasonable precautions were taken with all assessed work, including presentations submitted to Turnitin to review. Governors queried the comment relating to one external examiner concerning thresholds. They were advised that this was a new external examiner and the query had now been resolved.</p>	
	The HE QuEST Committee NOTED and ENDORSED the Annual Quality Report.	
HEQuEST 13/11/23	Complaints Termly Complaints Report	
	Three formal complaints were received from University students between May and August 2023. One had been upheld. There had been no appeals to the Vice-Chancellor or the OIA	
HEQuEST 14/11/23	Any Other Business	
	The Academic Registrar took the Committee through the Sport achievement data, recognising this had partly been covered within the achievements paper, but enabling more of a focus on sport. It was noted the position would be reviewed within the curriculum refresh. Governors agreed it was helpful to follow up this additional detail.	
HEQuEST 15/11/23	Any Points Identified to Highlight at Board	
	<p>HE Update & KPIs</p> <p>Student Achievement – Upper Awards Review Academic Board</p> <p>Student Satisfaction – Good NSS and PTS</p> <p>Academic Quality Report</p> <p>SU Report – vibrancy, breadth and impact of activities</p>	
	Dates of future meetings-Noted:	
	The meeting closed at 2.40pm	