

Minutes of the Meetings of

Hartpury University and Hartpury College Boards 10 am Wednesday 20th November 2024 Enterprise Park, University of West of England & via Teams

Members University Board College Board Edward Keene Present (Chair) Present (Chair) Present (Co-opted Governor) Alison Blackburn Patrick Brooke Present Robert Brooks Present Present (HE Student Governor) Lamees Nazir Present (Vice-Chair) Barbara Buck -Andy Collop (Professor) Present (Vice-Chancellor) Present (Principal) Alastair Grizzell Present Ella Smith Apologies (FE Student Governor) Mary Heslop Present Henry Hodgkins Present Thomas Legge Apologies (HE Staff Governor) Melissa Orritt Present (FE Staff Governor) William Marshall Present Present (from 10.20am) Chris Moody Present (from 10.20am) Lucie Hammond Present Ian Robinson (Professor) Present Sue Blake Present Rose Stephenson **Apologies** Helen Wilkinson **Apologies** In Attendance Mick Axtell Present (Chief Operating Officer) Present (Chief Operating Officer) Present (Deputy-Vice-Chancellor) Rosie Scott-Ward Present (Clerk to the Board) Present (Clerk to the Board) Gillian Steels Present (Deputy-Principal Further Claire Whitworth Education) Leslev Worsfold Present (Deputy-Principal Resources) Present (Deputy-Principal Resources) Hannah Lennon Deputy FE Student Governor (Present) Jon Marchant - Forvis-Present from 01-05 inclusive Present from 01-05 inclusive

	ACTION & ACTION DATE
Welcome	
The Chair welcomed the new student governor to the meeting. Introductions were provided.	
Apologies and Confirmation of Quoracy	
Apologies as detailed above.	
It was confirmed the meetings of the University Board and the College Board were quorate.	
	The Chair welcomed the new student governor to the meeting. Introductions were provided. Apologies and Confirmation of Quoracy Apologies as detailed above.

Mazars External Audit

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
02/11/24	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 Edward Keene, Andy Collop and Henry Hodgkins as Directors of Hartpury Rugby Limited would not vote or be signatories on the proposed letter in item A5. Also noted that Barbara Buck as President of the Rugby would not comment on this item.	
	Standing Interests – Chair, Vice-Chancellor/Principal and Chris Moody members of both University and College Boards	
03/11/24	Minutes of the meetings The Minutes of the University Board and the College Board meetings held on the 18 th September 2024 were agreed by the respective Boards to be true and accurate records. The Minutes of the College Board meeting held on the 5th November 2024 was agreed by the College Board to be true and accurate record.	
04/11/24	Matters Arising An action log had been provided updating on issues raised at previous meetings. Safeguarding Concerns – the Deputy Principal Resources confirmed that processes to collect the required data separately for College and University was in place from September 2024, in response to the new OFS requirements.	
	The update was NOTED.	
	Part 1 Priority Agenda Items Jon Marchant – External Audit – Mazars -Forvis was welcomed to the meeting	
05/11/24	Audit and Risk Management Committee Minutes of the meetings 12th November 2024 The Minutes of the meeting had been provided. The Committee Chairs highlighted key discussions from the meetings It was noted that the Going Concern Statements had been formatted in line with the previous years. The plans and assumptions used were outlined. It was confirmed they had been reviewed and confirmed by the External Auditors. It was confirmed the External Auditors had anticipated providing an unqualified opinion. It was confirmed that this had now been formally provided. Changes due to accounting changes which would take place from 2027 had been outlined. The External Audit work had been outlined and the efforts of the internal finance team recognised.	
	The Committees' Annual Committee Reports had been reviewed, updated and approved to progress to the Boards. The Risk Register, and current High Risks had been discussed. Planned changes to the register format and process, and review of the Risk Appetite Statement had been discussed and supported in principle by the Committees.	
	The new Procurement Manager had attended the meetings and provided a helpful update on the planned changes of the Procurement Act as well as the routine procurement	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	compliance report. There had been an update on the ongoing Internal Audit Plan and the Internal Audit Annual Report, which had provided an unqualified opinion, had been considered.	
	The Health & Safety had been endorsed for final approval by the Boards.	
	Year End Accounts Jon Marchant, Mazars-Forvis, highlighted that the process had been thorough, with the Hartpury finance team supporting the process, which had been challenging with the change of personnel. It was confirmed that the External Auditors were providing an unqualified opinion for the university, the college and the other subsidiaries.	
	He advised that at the Audit & Risk Management Committee there had been three outstanding matters: Final work by management on the Financial Statements – completed satisfactorily, Auditor review of going concern assessment – completed satisfactorily Confirmation of bank balances from Lloyds Bank – the bank balances had now been seen – therefore no issues to prevent the signing of the Financial Statements.	
	He confirmed that the Audit was therefore satisfactorily complete and thanked the management team for their time.	
	Governors had the opportunity to ask questions. It was confirmed that the information provided with the feedback from the Chairs and Auditors covered off all issues.	
A.1	Audit Committee Annual Report – University and College	
A.2	External Audit Report Governors' attention was drawn to Appendix E in relation to responsibilities The University and College Boards NOTED the External Audit Report, and that the External Auditors had provided an Unqualified Opinion. Direct Loan Audit – The University Board NOTED the Report.	
A.3	Internal Audit Annual Report - The University and College Boards NOTED the Internal Audit Report, and that the Internal Auditors had provided an Unqualified Opinion.	
A.4	Letter of Management Representation - The respective Letters of Representation were APPROVED for signing by the Hartpury University and College Boards.	
A.5	Letter of Support Hartpury Rugby Ltd The Chair, Vice Chancellor and Principal, Henry Hodgkins and Barbara Buck abstained from discussion of this item and did not vote on this item. The University Board APPROVED the Letter of Support for Hartpury Rugby Ltd and for it to be signed by two independent governors.	
A.6	Annual Accounts – Hartpury Rugby Limited It was NOTED these had been approved by the Hartpury Rugby Ltd. Board and were included within the University Group Accounts.	

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A.7	Annual Accounts Rudgeley Services Limited It was NOTED these had been approved by the Rudgeley Services Limited Board and were included within the University Group Accounts.	
A.8	Annual Accounts Limbury Ltd It was NOTED these had been approved by the Limbury Ltd Board and were included within the University Group Accounts.	
A.9	Confirmation College as a going concern Hartpury College was confirmed as a Going Concern by the Hartpury College Board.	
A.10	Financial Accounts and Annual Report – Hartpury College of Further Education Company The Hartpury College Board APPROVED the Financial Accounts and Annual Report for Hartpury College of Further Education College Limited.	
A.11	Confirmation University as a going concern Hartpury University was confirmed as a Going Concern by the Hartpury University Board.	
A.12	Financial Accounts and Annual Report – Hartpury University The Hartpury University Board APPROVED the Financial Accounts and Annual Report for Hartpury University.	
A.13	Top Risks – these were NOTED.	
A14	H&S Policy – This was APPROVED by the College & University Boards.	
A15	Risk Management Policy It was noted that changes were planned in the future. The Risk Management Policy was APPROVED by the College & University Boards.	
	10.20am Jon Marchant left the meeting	
06/11/24	Vice-Chancellor and Principal's Update The Vice-Chancellor and Principal provided a presentation which covered:	
1.	External environment The following key facts, and their implications for Hartpury were highlighted by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, and their impact reflected on by the Boards, it was recognised this remained a challenging financial period. Budget Overall • Minimum wage & national living wage increases – noted this was a c. £25k cost to Hartpury & compressed pay scales • Increase in employers NI rates & lowering of threshold - c. £800k cost to Hartpury • Some specific measures for Colleges • Post-budget announcement for universities	
	Colleges Better than expected, with explicit mention of FE and its role in skills development £300m extra in revenue (Apr 25 – Mar 26)	

ACTION & ACTION DATE DfE have said colleges have "freedom to use the funding in the way that best suits their needs" ➤ Distribution mechanisms (e.g. 16-19 formula) – process currently unknown. £950m extra in capital (Apr 25 – Mar 26) £40m for shorter & foundation apprenticeships in "key sectors" Government likely to cover additional NI employer contributions (~£50m) > Allocation mechanisms – not straightforward Detail in Spring 25 Universities Limited mentions in budget Lifelong Learning Entitlement delayed further – courses starting Jan 27 Inflationary increases (3.1%) in tuition fees and maintenance allowances announced after budget c. £550k positive impact if applied to all years Classroom-based Foundation Year fees cut to FE levels Expectations for Universities: Play a stronger role in expanding access and improving outcomes for disadvantaged students. Make a stronger contribution to economic growth. Play a greater civic role in their communities. Raise the bar further on teaching standards, to maintain and improve our world leading reputation and drive out poor practice. Underpinning all of this needs to sit a sustained efficiency and reform programme It was considered that these reflected many of Hartpury's current strengths. More information on these were expected from the government. A governor questioned whether there was a reduced government focus on research, knowledge and exchange, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal confirmed this was still important to the government, but also teaching & learning. He advised that Hartpury was developing its research capacity to create more impact. At this time this would be niche work in sport and equine. It was highlighted that the OfS was currently focusing on the sustainability of the university sector, with approximately 40% of universities expected to be returning deficit budgets for 2024/25 and a larger percentage for 2025/26. The OfS was issuing more financial updates and requesting more information. It was recognised that additional returns disproportionately impacted small specialist institutions and risked specialisms being lost. It was considered that the new OfS 6 monthly update would put more pressure on the government to look at the funding model (available on the Governance Site). It was noted that the banking sector was now more risk averse to education. Governors reflected on the health of the university sector and questioned whether Hartpury could learn from recent issues in the sector, such as the merging of Writtle with Anglia University. The Vice-Chancellor and Principal confirmed that learning from the sector was an ongoing focus. He advised that particular issues at Writtle had related to long term recruitment and cash generation issues, a campus needing investment and a lack of diversification. Hartpury had been more flexible and innovative during this time, but the need for focus on cash generation was, as governors had been advised, a key area of focus.

SoGlos Business Awards – thesehad been held in Hartpury's Equine Centre and had

2.

Hartpury Highlights

been a great showcase for Hartpury and the Awards. Horse Research Project – research on horse welfare, relating to the tightness of nosebands had recently been published. It had been a positive area of research for Hartpury to be involved in, although there had been some negative social media feedback. It was recognised that this was an aspect Hartpury needed to be more prepared for in the future. Hartpury Stadium – This had been renamed the For Ed Vodaphone Stadium which had been welcomed by students and staff. Graduation - these had as always been a very memorable and special events. Martin Clunes had been formally installed as the University Chancellor and had been very well received by students, parents and staff. Charlie Whitehead, former governor, had received an Honorary Degree and his speech had highlighted Hartpury's impact. China Visit – the Vice-Chancellor & Principal and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor had undertaken a 5-day visit to develop relationships, build opportunities with Chinese institutions and increase international students in the longer term. It had included events with the British Council and the Department of the Board of Trade. There had been a particular focus on equine, but also sport, and potentially progression to Alevels. These opportunities would continue to be explored. Governors agreed these were interesting developments, but cautioned that some options, such as franchising, were resource intensive and stressed the need to ensure that any partners in countries we worked with were aligned to our values. 07/11/24 Conflidential Item - Commercial Sensitivity 3 years 08/11/24 Research, Knowledge and Exchange Update Statement and Report on Research Integrity must be continually revisited, to guarantee principles are understood and accepted and that newly introduced ethical, legal and professional obligations were met. The Statement met the required annual obligations: 1. Identified a named point of contact to act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information			ACTION & ACTION DATE
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		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	Student recruitment overall student recruitment had been positive, with financial performance (student fee income) very positive. (confirmed that dates should be read as 24/25). Anecdotally Hartpury's recruitment was above the sector, but was not as high as 3 years ago. Work was ongoing to understand recruitment in different programmes and to be prepared for the next recruitment cycle. At this point the in-year indicators were up against the previous year with higher attendance at open days. It was flagged that applicant/application data needed to be carefully monitored as some students might apply for several Hartpury courses.	
	Student retention for last academic year retention had improved significantly on previous years. Work continued to maintain this.	
	Curriculum developments this continued to make progress with most new programmes having recruited successfully.	
	Research and knowledge exchange - progressing in line with expectations.	
	Access and Participation Plan had been agreed by the OfS with some feedback. The team were now progressing with implementation.	
	The HE staff were thanked for their work in achieving the current position.	
	The HE Report was NOTED.	
10/11/24	FE Report	
	The report provided a high-level overview of progress made with key areas of development for Hartpury College, the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 recruitment and an overview of recent updates to policy and the external environment.	
	Policy / External Environment: the external environment continues to evolve. Key areas of focus for included: 1. Budget update 2. Qualification 'Pause and Review' update which had been discussed earlier in the meeting.	
	Recruitment: overall, recruitment was much higher than last year. There had been an	
	unprecedented enrolment with regard to conversion from offer to enrolment post GCSE results day, with many factors potentially contributing which would be considered for the next recruitment cycle. Feedback from DfE in relation to in year funding for the over recruitment was awaited. It was confirmed that recruitment had been strong across B'tecs, T'Levels and A'levels. Where students had declined places they were surveyed to identify any issues. The main reasons were accepted other courses, accommodation, transport. At this stage 25/26 applicants were on an upward trend. Continuous Improvement: this remained a constant focus and further development of practices and expectations in support of the skills agenda had been a priority as well as continuous development of teaching, learning and assessment for all of our qualifications. To date, good progress was being made against the Quality Improvement Plan targets. The 2023-2024 Self-Assessment Report (SAR) had been considered and challenged robustly by FE QuESt. Grades proposed were Overall Outstanding and Strong Contribution for Skills. This reflected the Ofsted inspection, but also self-assessment and the Landex	

ACTION & ACTION DATE peer review. The 2024-2025 Quality Improvement Plan (QuIP)had also been assessed critically by FE QuEST. (see proposal later). It was noted there had also been a recent LA Authority SEND inspection which had not raised any concerns. Governors queried any implications of the move of the ESFA functions into the DfE. They were advised that this would be discussed at the next Strategic Conversation in Jan 25. The FE staff were thanked for their work in achieving this strong position. The FE Report was NOTED. 11/11/24 Student & Staff Voice Student Governor *University Student* – no issues of concern to highlight College Student Deputy Governor- catering - more opportunities now to feedback. Recognised that work ongoing to resolve concerns re catering. **Staff Governors** University Staff Governor – (update provided to Chair) – Work ongoing to maintain high teaching and learning standards with increasing numbers in some departments, and ensuring recruitment and continuation being a key focus in areas. Graduation very positive experience. It felt very special having our new Chancellor, Martin Clunes in attendance and highlighted our evolution as a university. Some catering issues. College Staff Governor - work ongoing to retain and support students. Students now having mock exams and preparation for UCAS submissions- demanding time for staff and students. The Landex Peer Review had been welcomed. Staff were pleased to have been engaged with the 2030 Strategy development meetings. **Governor Link Activity Safeguarding** – Barbara Buck – monthly attendance at meetings continues Sustainability - Robert Brooks - ongoing conversations with Head of Sustainability and all day development session on Carbon Literate in October A levels and Access to HE - Mary Heslop 12/11/24 Health & Safety - Lucie Hammond -FE and HE Animal – Alison Blackburn – initial contact in place FE and HE Sport, Outdoor Adventure and Uniformed Public Services - Fiona Reece first meeting held with staff Estates - Henry Hodgkins - helpful initial meeting **Overall Department Visit Feedback** Staff Morale -.generally good - although concerns on some aspects. Positive feedback on mental health support from HR. **Industry Links** – strong – breadth demonstrated **Students Feel Safe** – Yes – although limited meetings with students The Updates were NOTED. The Chair thanked governors for their involvement in the link governor scheme which helped to triangulate the information provided at the meetings. Comments on graduation

were endorsed.

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
12/11/24	QuEST Committees	
12/11/24	Minutes of the Meetings 12th November 2024	
	HE	
	Key Topics discussed:	
	KPIs – noted these now included a metric for research (30 PhDs achieved) Student Surveys Undergraduates - emerging themas - U. H. timetables - come	
	 Student Surveys Undergraduates – emerging themes ULH, timetables – some clumping. Generally positive. 	
	Student Surveys Postgraduate Taught – very strong results – 4 th in UK.	
	Annual Quality Report – critical self-assessment – through Academic Board pre-HE	
	QuESt. Three areas rated as amber: continuation, progression & learning	
	resources. Work ongoing on these. • Student Achievement – very positive. No issues of grade inflation. Review ongoing	
	to benchmark to ensure parity with other institutions.	
	,	
	FE	
	KEY Topics discussed: KPIs – minimum and stretch targets put in place.	
	SAR & QuIP – discussed as detailed above. Agreed LANDEX Report provided helpful	
	triangulation and added external vigour.	
	At Risk areas – deep dive into U grades and related action plan challenged and endorsed.	
	Btec positive trajectory noted. T'level monitoring had also been reviewed and challenged	
	recognising this was a new area of delivery.	
	Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan were APPROVED by the	
	College Board. Annual Quality Report was ENDORSED by the University Board.	
	Allitual Quality Report was ENDORGED by the Oniversity Board.	
13/11/24	Strategy Finance and Resources Committee	
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		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	It was noted that the following had been approved under delegated authority: • People, Performance and Development Annual Report • Prevent Return	
14/11/24 14.1	Search and Governance Committee Minutes of Meetings 31 st October 2024	
	Key Points Discussed: External Governance Effectiveness Review ongoing Skills Audit – alternative format to be developed Diversity of Board – ongoing focus. Board and Committee membership. Board reporting format updated.	
	The College Board APPROVED the appointment of Mary Heslop as Vice-Chair of FE Quest 2024-25.	
	The University Board APPROVED the appointment of Robert Brooks as Vice-Chair of the University Audit & Risk Management Committee.	
	Governance KPIs – these were NOTED.	
15/11/24	Application of Hartpury Seal* None	
16/11/24	Any Other Business TRAC Return noted delegated to be Agreed by SFR.	
	The meeting closed at 12.05pm	