



HARTPURY

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE HARTPURY UNIVERSITY

Minutes of a Meeting
1.10pm Tuesday 12th November 2024
Gordon Canning & Teams

Present: Andy Collop (Professor) – Vice-Chancellor and Principal
Ian Robinson (Professor) (Chair) - University Governor
Chris Moody – University Governor
Rose Stephenson - University Governor
Lamees Nazir - University Student Governor
Thomas Legge - University Staff Governor
Jon Renyard – Co-opted Member HE QuEST

In Attendance Rosie Scott-Ward – Deputy-Vice-Chancellor
David James – Academic Dean (Teaching, Learning & Student Experience)
Lucy Dumbell (Dr)– Academic Registrar
Steve Draper (Professor) – Academic Dean RKE
Barbara Buck – College Governor (Chair FE Quest)
Gillian Steels – Clerk to the Governors

Apologies: Alison Blackburn - University Governor

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
HEQuEST 01/11/24	Welcome and Apologies New attendees were welcomed to the meeting and introductions provided. Apologies noted as above.	
HEQuEST 02/11/24	Quoracy It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate.	
HEQuEST 03/11/24	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 Chris Moody and the Vice-Chancellor and Principal were members of both Boards. There were no declarations of members' interests for agenda items	
HEQuEST 04/11/24	Minutes of the Last Meeting The University QuEST Committee agreed the minutes of the meetings of 27 th June 2024 as a true and accurate record.	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
HEQuEST 05/11/24	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>The Action Update log which updated members on progress of actions was NOTED.</p> <p>It was confirmed the Access and Participation Plan had been circulated to the Committee and that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor would cover it in her report.</p>	
HEQuEST 07/11/24	<p>Key Performance Indicators Review 2023/24 and setting for 2024/25</p> <p>The report confirmed the KPIs for 2024-25, including the wording of the postgraduate research (PGR) student KPI, reflecting the progress made towards the RDAP requirement of 30 PGR completions, of which staff cannot exceed 50%.</p> <p>The committee noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The wording of the postgraduate research (PGR) student KPI, reflecting the progress made towards the RDAP requirement of 30 PGR completions, of which staff cannot exceed 50%. <p>It was confirmed that retaining a target of 11% for the awarding gap, in line with the previous year was considered realistic.</p> <p>The Committee considered performance for 2023/24. It was noted that the in-year retention figures were on track to meet the KPIs. These were close to being finalised. It was also noted that the reduction in the upper awards for honours degree students and the awarding gap had returned to figures similar to previous years after last year's welcome reduction. It was noted that there was a separate achievement report, which considered the awarding gap, to be discussed later in the meeting.</p>	
	The HE QuEST Committee NOTED the KPI outturn for 2023/24 and APPROVED the KPIs for 2024/25.	
HEQuEST 06/11/24	<p>HE Update – Internal & External Environment</p> <p>The Deputy-Vice-Chancellor provided a presentation covering latest sector and Hartpury HE news.</p> <p>Recent announcements included:</p> <p>Fees – SFR had considered and given approval for SMT to revise in line with government guidance. Other institutions had confirmed they also planned to progress this.</p> <p>Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE)- this had been delayed. There had been limited demand indicated for this type of learning, but it was noted that the Student Loan Company would be aligning to this style of delivery and that Hartpury would need to ensure its processes could meet any changes to requirements.</p> <p>Foundation year fees – reduction of fee for business courses</p> <p>Future HE policy</p> <p>1. Play a stronger role in expanding access and improving outcomes for disadvantaged students – an area of strength for Hartpury</p>	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	<p>2. Make a stronger contribution to economic growth – an area of strength for Hartpury – need to ensure build in further to curriculum development</p> <p>3. Play a greater civic role in their communities – an area of strength for Hartpury.</p> <p>4. Raise the bar further on teaching standards, to maintain and improve our world-leading reputation and drive out poor practice – an area of ongoing focus for Hartpury. It was possible the Teaching Excellence Framework would evolve to incorporate this. If this change happened it was expected to be enacted rapidly and Hartpury would need to be ready to respond. It was recognised this could be a challenge for capacity.</p> <p>5. Underpinning all of this needs to sit a sustained efficiency and reform programme - an area of ongoing focus for Hartpury. Course costing had been completed as part of this work. The need to ensure changes were balanced by maintenance of the student experience was recognised.</p>	
	Graduation – this had been a good celebration of the work of students and staff.	
	Access and Participation Plan	
	<p>This had been approved by OfS.</p> <p>The following key points had been highlighted in the OfS feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where you have included commitments to delivering financial support for students in your plan, I expect you to take all reasonable steps to ensure students have clear information about the support they are entitled to, and to deliver this support to them. You should not make any changes to the financial support arrangements set out in your plan without first seeking a variation to the plan and approval from the OfS. • Where you have students registered with you who are studying under sub-contractual arrangements, you are reminded that that these students are covered by your access and participation plan. As such, you are expected to take all reasonable steps to deliver the provisions of your plan to them. • I would like to remind you of your requirements to undertake evaluation of your plan to consider whether activities are achieving the intended outcomes and to publish the results, both of what works and what does not work, to build the scale and quality of the evidence base for access and participation activity across the sector. 	
	Enrolment	
	Highlights were	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive – 1% growth on last year • Groups had behaved differently • Budget positive • At a departmental level, student enrolment behaviour largely aligned to predictions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued growth in VN (8% growth on last year and 37% in the last 3 years) 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four percent growth in Sport compared to last year (which does include the addition of Business) • Declining numbers in Animal and Agriculture (6% decline compared to previous years) • A 2.5% decline in equine compared to the previous year. <p>Work was ongoing to raise the profile of Animal.</p>	
	New Curriculum was outlined for this year and the next two years.	
	<p>2030 HE Strategy</p> <p>Work to develop the Strategy was outlined. It was confirmed a draft would come to the February QuEST. It was confirmed the strategy was subject to ongoing consultation with a wide number of parties. The challenge of Research Degree Awarding Powers was reflected on in terms of capacity. The need to be clear on the Research Excellence Framework (REF) was also recognised. It was confirmed this was incorporated in the REF Plan.</p> <p>The Deputy Vice-Chancellor advised a review had been done of a qualification against the LLE profile to help assess future options. This would be considered further. It was noted the pilot had not been very successful nationally.</p> <p>It was recognised that Hartpury was having to balance its ambitions against capacity. It was confirmed awards at graduation included exit awards.</p>	
	The HE QuEST Committee NOTED the HE Update.	
HEQuEST 08/11/24	<p>Student Survey report reflecting on previous year (National Student Survey - NSS, Postgraduate Taught Experience- PTES, Hartpury University Student Survey - HUgSS)</p> <p>The Academic Dean (Teaching, Learning & Student Experience) took the Committee through the report. It was highlighted that the University has a clear commitment to enhancing the student experience for all students. To support this, all students have an opportunity to reflect on and evaluate their experiences via participation in an end-of-year survey. The report provided 'University-level' analysis of the findings from each of the end-of-year surveys, identified areas of commonality across each survey, and proposed a series of key actions to improve our outcomes where applicable. Response rates across the surveys being considered had been positive.</p> <p>The key findings were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academic Support and Teaching & Learning were recognised as key strengths for Hartpury, whilst Learning Resources was the area of most concern. • Action: Improve students' awareness of existing study spaces and provide greater access to subject-specialist facilities whilst the completion of the University Learning Hub was ongoing. 2. Our postgraduate taught experience was very strong, ranking Hartpury as #1 in the UK for Assessment and Feedback, and Top 5 for Teaching & Learning, Organisation & Management, and Overall Experience. 	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	<p>3. Whilst Hartpury remains above the Sector average in all areas apart from Learning Resources, our NSS performance decreased against that of 2023.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adherence to our core principles and policies to address areas of inconsistency within the teaching, learning, and support experience. 2. Implementation of New Timetabling Principles for 2024-25 (allowing students to organise their time more effectively) and earlier release of timetabling information for returning students. 3. Implementation of new Student Voice Policy to improve the recognition and perceived value of the student voice. 4. Formation of a new 'HE Student Experience Working Group' to improve the wider non-academic student experience (Community, Student Life, Students' Union etc.,). <p>Governors were supportive of the planned actions and stressed the importance of maintaining and improving the Student Experience. It was noted that communication was a common issue and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor confirmed that this was recognised as an area for development. Governors commented that transport and residential accommodation were common issues and would need to be part of wider strategic considerations relating to resource planning.</p>	
	The Student Survey report reflecting on previous year (NSS, PTES, Huggs) was NOTED and Actions planned ENDORSED.	
HEQuEST 09/11/24	Annual Quality Report	
	<p>The Annual Quality Report had been produced, following the format agreed upon and requested by last year's Academic Board and governor led Quality Enhancement and Standards (QuEST) Committee. It was designed to provide assurance to Academic Board and the Corporation of Hartpury University's performance against the OfS Conditions of Registration B and C1.</p> <p>The RAG ratings were proposed to be the same as last year. Two were specifically highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RAG rating for section B3i 'positive continuation and completion outcomes for all students' had remained Amber as whilst the data added in 2023-24 to the OfS 4 year aggregated had improved these figures the metrics were not yet established as above both threshold with statistical certainty – and ideally above benchmark with statistical certainty. <p>Governors were supportive of this prudent approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RAG rating for section B3ii 'positive progression outcomes for all students' had remained Amber as whilst the 2023-24 data contain a concerning decrease the study types were above threshold, except for Other Postgraduate which was a very small proportion of the University's students such that would not trigger OfS concern, and therefore does not warrant a Red flag at this time. <p>Governors were updated on the ongoing monitoring.</p>	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	<p>It was highlighted that during 2023-24 challenges for students in navigating a difficult social and economic environment were identified, which was reflected in considerations of support. The University's key focus was on improving student retention and successful completion of their modules of study, so that they could progress to their next year of study or achieve their award. In 2024 the Hartpury University Student Engagement Policy had been launched emphasising better attendance, engagement with the Academic Personal Tutor and submission of work by students would increase the likelihood of academic success. Early indications (the retention cycle does not finish until December) were that we had successfully retained more students during 2023-24 than in previous years.</p> <p>Governors welcomed the positive position at this date, noting it would be finally confirmed in February.</p> <p>It was noted that alongside student engagement the refreshed curriculum was in its second year of implementation. This focussed on ensuring activities were adding real value for students' learning and streamlining the students' experiences of their curriculum to ensure curriculum and the University's education provision is sustainable. It was recognised this had involved some difficult choices.</p> <p>It was outlined that the unprecedented rate of consultation on, and short notice change of, required and expected by external regulation and reporting experienced in the previous two years had steadied during 2023-24, in part due to the general election. Hartpury had used its sector membership of representative bodies to inform its planning as much as possible to provide clear message and reassurance to our staff. Throughout the year Hartpury had continued to prioritise its commitment to offering students an outstanding teaching and learning experience to support them complete their programmes and achieve awards while maintaining academic integrity. Governors were supportive of this key focus.</p>	
	<p>The report confirmed that Hartpury University offered quality, reliable 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. The one area that was identified as having areas of concern identified for internal reasons forms part of the OfS' Condition of Registration B2. Each cohort receives sufficient resources and support for a high-quality academic experience and success in and beyond HE is an area that is divided between extremely high performance for support and low student satisfaction with resources. Actions had been suggested to understand this, and it was noted they formed part of an action plan to continue to enhance the University's offer.</p> <p>It was noted that for the second year all students were invited to participate in student experience surveys. Pleasingly student participation rates in the student experience surveys had increased including an increase in participation rate in our internal undergraduate student survey open for students not eligible for the National Student Survey increased by over</p>	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	20%. The final year undergraduate students participating in the National Student Surveys were less positive than those in 2023, with the most concerning score in learning resources. Feedback from other student groups has been more positive, so the particularly low score might be connected to the longer duration of the typical undergraduate student's studies, with a larger impact felt from the delays to the University Learning Hub. Inconsistent experiences with poorer quality aspects, which are more likely to be found during longer periods of study were particularly noted as reasons for negative comments. Actions had been suggested to understand this, and they formed part of an action plan to continue to enhance the University's offer.	
	Governors recognised the significant work in producing the report and the breadth and self-critical approach. It was noted that it mirrored OfS requirements and a member queried if that limited Hartpury setting its quality vision. It was confirmed the current format had evolved as a way to provide governors with assurance for the OfS Conditions in quality but was considered sufficiently flexible when taken alongside other indicators (for example the annual Student Achievement Report) to reflect Hartpury key concerns. The Committee was pleased at the amount of Student Voice incorporated in the Report.	
	Governors again noticed the emphasis on capacity as a factor to be considered.	
	The HE QuEST Committee APPROVED the Annual Report.	
HEQuEST 10/11/24	Student Achievement Report	
	<p>The Committee considered the report noting that the achievement of Hartpury students remained a key focus for the University. Achievement measures showed that more students passed their modules in a timely way in 2023/24 than in the previous year, and a higher proportion of final-year students at all levels of studies achieved their target award. Governors agreed this was pleasing.</p> <p>It was confirmed that Hartpury University does not demonstrate a profile suggestive of 'grade inflation'. The percentage of achieving students who gain upper awards decreased this year, largely as a decrease in the proportion of students gaining first class degrees. Although the wider sector is also reporting decreases Hartpury's profile is being closely monitored. Student Outcomes Intervention meetings will be held with programmes with outcomes of concern to support understanding and actions.</p> <p>It was highlighted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement of target awards had improved for all levels of studies (Level 5 up 3 percentage points, First degree up 6pp, PGT up 8pp) • Students passing all modules at first attempt had increased by 2pp for the second year running to 87% • Despite target award achievement increasing, the proportion of students achieving an upper award had fallen. • Achievement of upper awards for honours degree students was below KPI by 7.2pp 	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The differential Degree Outcomes across upper awards was of concern in 2023/24, with a large gap between the lowest and highest achieving demographic splits The gap between female and male students had widened after two years of narrowing, and the gap was much larger than the sector gap had been in recent years In the sixth year of intervention for students demonstrating low engagement, the proportion of students required to withdraw decreased in 2023/24, with a smaller proportion of these than previous years due to non-engagement <p>It was recognised that the outcomes would impact on league table performance. It was noted that value added was not an area used within the HE league tables, but that it had been built into Hartpury's TEF submission.</p>	
	<p>It was confirmed that further work was being completed to investigate repercussions of regulatory changes aimed to increase retention and achievement of modules and awards, and this would be brought to the next Academic Standards and Enhancement Committee. The Committee requested that it be updated once this report was available, recognising the importance of these issues. It was confirmed that targets were considered realistic. It was recognised that Hartpury's subject mix accentuated the areas of difference.</p> <p>Governors were pleased that the report demonstrated grade inflation was not an issue, but were supportive of ongoing work to ensure student outcomes were fair. It was confirmed that external examiners had not raised any issues.</p>	Academic Sec. Feb 2025
	The HE QuEST noted the Student Achievement Report.	
HEQuEST 11/11/24	Concordat to Support Research Integrity	
	<p>The Academic Dean RKE took the Committee through the report, highlighting that that the revised Concordat to Support Research Integrity made clear that issues of research integrity must be continually revisited, to guarantee principles were understood and accepted and that newly introduced ethical, legal and professional obligations were met.</p> <p>The Statement provided was required to meet Hartpury University's annual obligations. There were three key obligations for universities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify a named point of contact who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity. 2. Provided a named point of contact or recognised an appropriate third party to act as confidential liaison for whistle-blowers or any other person wishing to raise concerns about the integrity of research. 	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	And to publish an annual statement on how they are meeting the requirements of the revised concordat.	
	<p>It was confirmed that The Annual Statement (once approved by Corporation) will be publicly available on the website. This link will then be sent to the Secretariat of the Concordat (Universities UK [UUK]).</p> <p>The Committee reviewed the Statement and confirmed support for it. It was agreed that it was good to see that the policy had worked effectively, as demonstrated in the cases outlined.</p>	
	The HE QuEST Committee APPROVED the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and AGREED to RECOMMEND it to the University Board for Final Approval.	
HEQuEST 12/11/24	SU Report	
	The Committee was pleased with the range and breadth of activities reported. It noted the introduction of a SU Monthly newsletter as a positive development. The increased strength of the SU through an additional activities co-ordinator role was welcomed.	
	<p>Governors were pleased to see the improved feedback on transport.</p> <p>It was agreed that the SU continued to have a positive impact on the institution.</p> <p>SU Team members who had spoken at graduation were commended.</p>	
	The HE QuEST Committee NOTED the SU Report.	
HEQuEST 13/11/24	Academic Board Update - Minutes June & July	
	It was agreed the minutes provided a helpful summary of the work of the Academic Board. Governors were pleased at the level of engagement shown through strong attendance.	
	The HE QuEST Committee NOTED the Academic Board Update.	
HEQuEST 14/11/24	Complaints Termly Complaints Report	
	<p>It was noted that in the period from May to 31st August 2024 1 formal complaint relating to university students had been received. This complaint had not been upheld.</p> <p>There had been one appeal to the Vice-Chancellor during this period, it had not been upheld.</p> <p><u>Appeals to OIA</u></p> <p>There had been 1 complaint appeal to the OIA during the prior period which was found to be 'not justified'. However, the complainant had requested a review of the OIA's decision. This related to a formal complaint made in December 2022 and appeal to the Vice Chancellor in January 2023.</p>	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	<p>Following the review the OIA proposed a minimal payment which had been made.</p> <p>It was noted that a further OIA complaint was currently ongoing.</p> <p>The Termly Complaints Report was NOTED.</p>	
HEQuEST 15/11/24	Any Other Business	
	None	
HEQuEST 16/11/24	Any Points Identified to Highlight at Board	
	<p>KPIs</p> <p>Annual Quality Report – particularly conditions highlighted</p> <p>Student Surveys</p> <p>Student Achievement Report – especially areas of concern</p> <p>Research integrity Statement</p>	
	Dates of future meetings-Noted:	
	The meeting closed at 2.35pm	