

# MINUTES

**Directorate:** Governance

**Minutes of:** Quality Curriculum and Student Committee

**Date:** 25 November 2021      **Time:** 4.00

**Venue:** Online via MS Teams

**Present:**

Mariann Rand-Weaver (MRW)	Governor (Committee Chair)
Melissa Bridge (MB)	Staff Governor
Darrell De Souza (DDS)	CEO/ Group Principal and Governor
Johanna Morgan (JM)	Governor
Amanda Priem (AP)	Governor

**In attendance:**

Neil Brayshaw (NB)	Interim Director Employment & Skills
Gavin Hughes (GH)	AP Learning Support & Safeguarding ( <i>items 13 &amp; 14</i> )
Dylan McTaggart (DMcT)	Deputy CEO and Principal Uxbridge College
Tracy Reeve (TR)	Clerk to the Corporation
Judith O'Neill (JO'N)	AP – HE, IOT & Tech Vocational ( <i>item 6.2 &amp; 7 only</i> )
Jo Withers (JW)	Principal Harrow College

## 1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence. The Chair (MRW) welcomed all to the first QCS Committee meeting of the 2021/22 year.

## 2. Notification of any urgent items members may wish to raise under Any Other Business

### • Death of HCUC student

The Principal Uxbridge (DMcT) informed the meeting that he was very sorry to inform the meeting that management had been notified earlier in the day that there had been a fatal stabbing of an HCUC learner. The incident had taken place on the evening of 24 November 2021 in the Southall area and the victim had been confirmed as an HCUC Public Services (Uxbridge College) Level 1 student. Governors were informed that the student was from the Sikh community and HCUC management had been in dialogue with the Police to assist wherever possible. Staff were also working to support learners within the Public Services group and elsewhere in the college from the Sikh community, who had heard the news today. DDS confirmed that he had spoken to the Chair of Governors (ND), the Vice-Chair (SC) and the Corporation safeguarding lead (NK) when the news of the stabbing had broken on the morning of Thursday 25 November. A cross-College action plan had been put into place with close intervention of HCUC security staff to monitor any ongoing tensions which might arise after the tragic incident. Marketing staff had also been involved in the college response. The Group Principal/ CEO (DDS) informed QCS Committee members that a Governors' Safeguarding meeting had been scheduled for 08.45 on Friday 26 November which would be attended by the Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors as well as the Governor Safeguarding Lead and key members of SLT as well as the Head of Security at the College and the Clerk to the Corporation. As well as assisting police the aim moving forward was to ensure the safeguarding of all other HCUC learners and to give staff and students any necessary additional support in dealing with this tragic incident. Governors lamented this sad news which came so soon after a similar incident at Richmond Upon Thames College.

***The report on the fatal stabbing was NOTED.***

There were no other items notified.

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3. **Notification of Interests Members may wish to declare relating to any item**

There were no interests declared.

4. **Minutes of the QCS Committee meeting held on 24 June 2021 at Uxbridge College**

The minutes were approved and would be taken as 'signed by the Chair'.

4a) **Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting, 24 June 2021, not on the agenda**

There were no matters arising that were not already included on the agenda. DMcT confirmed that Ofsted training sessions for Governors and NEA members of the SSCs had been actioned in September 2021. The Chair sought any additional information on when an inspection was likely. DMcT confirmed that an inspection could take place at any time in advance of the Christmas break and also potentially during the first week back in January 2022. The meeting was assured that staff and management were ready for the impending call.

There were no other matters arising that were not already on the agenda.

## FOR APPROVAL

### 5.1 HCUC Self-Assessment Reports (SAR) 2020/21

The meeting was reminded that the finalised Qualification Achievement Rates (QAR) reports that summarised the confirmed College performance during 2020/21 had been discussed in detail at the Governors Training Day in October 2021.

The meeting considered a draft of the HCUC Self-Assessment Report 2020/21; this had been drawn from the individual Harrow College (HC) and Uxbridge College (UC) SARs and performance data. The SAR overview report for HCUC had been drafted to mirror the format of the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) and reported on the following: Quality of Education (curriculum intent, implementation, and impact); Education programmes for young people (57% of HCUC provision); Adult learning programmes (43% of provision); Apprenticeships (1.8% provision); provision for High Needs learners; Behaviour and Attitudes; Personal Development; and Leadership and Management. The meeting also considered the SAR appendices, which provided more detail on the characteristics of each of the two constituent colleges in terms of learners, curriculum offer, outcomes, progression, and destination data.

The meeting noted the proposed SAR grades for overall effectiveness 2020/21 across HCUC compared with the comparable judgements for 2019/20 and 2018/19.

Proposed SAR Grades - HCUC	2019/20 Judgment	2020/21 Judgement
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding <i>with noted AFIs</i>	TBC Outstanding
Quality of Education	Outstanding <i>with noted AFIs</i>	Outstanding <i>with noted AFIs &amp; CV19</i>
• <i>Curriculum intent</i>	Outstanding	Outstanding <i>with noted AFIs</i>
• <i>Curriculum implementation</i>	Good <i>with outstanding features</i>	Good <i>with outstanding features</i>
• <i>Curriculum impact</i>	Outstanding	Outstanding <i>with noted AFIs</i>



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Education Programmes for young people	Outstanding <i>with noted AFIs</i>	Outstanding <i>with noted AFIs</i>
Adult Learning Programmes	Outstanding <i>with noted AFIs</i>	Outstanding <i>with noted AFIs</i>
Apprenticeships	Requires improvement <i>with good features</i>	Requires improvement <i>significant improvement but not yet Good</i>
Provision for High Needs	Good <i>with outstanding features</i>	Good
Behaviour and Attitudes	Good <i>with Outstanding features</i>	Good <i>with Outstanding features</i>
Personal Development	Outstanding	Outstanding
Leadership & Management	Outstanding	Outstanding

The meeting was reminded that the SAR judgements had been built up through the College; each curriculum area self-assessed then validation panels were held to validate the judgement. The meeting discussed the management decision on whether to assess as outstanding or Good+ for Overall Effectiveness; management were asking for the QCS view on this before taking a final recommendation to the Corporation in December 2021. The question on this had been raised in the final draft (October 2021) when the possible impact of new curriculum intent guidelines raised by the DfE white paper Skills for Jobs had been considered. The January 2021 white paper had put a strong emphasis on the need for colleges to actively drive curriculum development with employers. However, the expectation raised by the white paper did need to be tempered by the reality of the post-Covid world. DDS also highlighted that the nuance and impact of the lower ESOL and Functional Skills results – which had remained as examined courses even after lost learning during lockdown rather than moving to the ‘easier’ TAGs – needed to be borne in mind. There was also the impact of some staffing challenges post-covid and persistent gaps in learning for some students. The SLT would continue to review this overall SAR grading throughout December as some of the staffing gaps in engineering might be solved. DDS asserted the anecdotal view that if the College self-assessed as Good then Ofsted would stick with this grade. In order to try and fight for an Outstanding rating it would be necessary to self-assess as Outstanding with a clear acceptance and action plan of HCUC’s current challenges. DMcT agreed that if the SAR accurately reflected HCUC’s strengths and areas for improvement (AFIs) and in-year progress could be demonstrated then there was a chance of achieving an Outstanding grade at any imminent Ofsted Inspection.

The Chair sought clarity on whether the sub-grades would be revisited during any ongoing review and DMcT confirmed that this would be the case. The overall effectiveness judgements and grades were built up as a sum of the parts. The meeting asked whether it would be detrimental to have a Requires Improvement (RI) grade on the SAR for Apprenticeships; DMcT highlighted that this could improve before the SAR was finalised but SLT were remaining cautious until they saw the evidence of any improvement. DDS confirmed that the SAR needed to reflect sensible judgement for the sub-categories. He agreed that the judgement around Apprenticeships would be key and hoped that it might move to ‘Good with known inconsistencies and AFIs’. However, in order to justify this the College would have to demonstrate sound Leadership and Management judgements around this area of provision, as well as impact and progress in-year. Governors also noted that within the sub-categories Work Experience had now settled at 61% for the prior year so was no longer an AFI.

The Chair (MRW) sought clarity on the narrative judgements on page 8 of the SAR in terms of whether the college was being too hard on itself for a destination to only be classified as ‘gold- standard’ where it was in a field related to the area of study. DMcT confirmed that progression into



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any Higher Education was now considered a 'gold standard' destination and the narrative would be amended in the final SAR. MRW agreed with this as learners were moving onto a course or into employment that they could not have done without their HCUC qualification.

**The Chair suggested that the final version of the SAR should be loaded onto the Governors e-governance system as background reading.** The meeting commended the detail but highlighted the importance of having clear Governors' briefing which highlighted the key strengths and AFIs. This allowed the SMT to signpost the key facts to Governors.

After discussion the meeting agreed that SLT seemed to be erring on the side of caution and that the college should go into any Ofsted inspection with the aiming of fighting to achieve an Outstanding rating. The narrative of the report as well as the data supported that HCUC was better than Good. Governors sought clarification on what external verification would be undertaken on this SAR and DM agreed that he would get an external validation - from peer review (colleagues from another college) or from an ex-HMI - before it was uploaded to the Ofsted portal early in 2022. Governors commended the very strong results and agreed that the detailed data gave ongoing assurance on HCUC's strong performance compared with other local and London providers. The Chair also commended the narrative of the SAR which gave a very clear picture of the College in the absence of data.

## Emerging Strengths & Areas for Improvement (Afls) 2021/22

The headline **strengths** for HCUC to maintain were noted as:

- HCUC curriculum is designed to meet London's economic needs effectively. Employer involvement enhances and delivers ambitious career goals.
- The large numbers of highly effective lessons were characterised by expert teachers effectively using their subject knowledge and pedagogical skill to support students to achieve very high levels of knowledge & skills.
- Well-planned lessons that skilfully use a variety of student-led learning tasks which are appropriately sequenced to build students' knowledge, skills, and understanding to reach the highest levels of performance.
- Students achieve their full potential with very high & improving 16-18 & 19+ QAR Achievement, well above NA and improved over five years. This is reflected in exceptionally high destinations, positive valued-added & high-grades.
- Student Achievement is high and consistent in the majority of subjects. It is above NA for all subjects. HCUC has successfully invested in improving Construction & WBL which are now also above NA.
- Student behaviour is highly respectful, they are courteous to staff and one-another.
- Student well-being, mental health and monitoring and supporting 'at-risk' student is highly effective, including throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Support for students and staff throughout Covid-19 maintained student progress and staff and student wellbeing effectively.

The common areas identified across HCUC **for improvement** in 2021/22 were highlighted as:

- To continue improvement in Work Based Learning (WBL) outcomes, now well above national average (NA). Covid-19 had meant that a minority of WBL Teaching Learning & Assessment (TLA) provision had not improved quickly enough.
- Further developing the craft of less effective teachers in order that they can better deploy an appropriate range of learning tasks and/or assessment methods that ensure that all students make at least the progress expected of them.
- English & Maths attendance is inconsistent.



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- To further increase the volume of work experience to above 80%.

The meeting commended the detailed information provided in the SAR 2020/21, which enabled them to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the two colleges and provided a clear picture across HCUC. Governors agreed that they would concur with this anecdotal evidence and positive judgements. The meeting agreed with the narrative and the judgements and would recommend the SAR to the Governing Body on 7 December 2021. The meeting agreed that HCUC was able to justify an Outstanding self-assessment grading with noted AFIs (some due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic) and the meeting agreed that HCUC should go into any inspection aiming for this top grade.

***The HCUC Self-Assessment Report 2020/21 was NOTED and APPROVED; it would be RECOMMENDED to the Corporation on 7 December 2021 before being uploaded to the ESFA Gateway and to the Ofsted online portal after Corporation approval.***

## 5.2 Partnerships & Project Report including Work Based Learning (WBL) & Apprenticeships Update

The meeting took the Partnership element of this report as read which gave the meeting an update on employer engagement and partnership activities for HCUC for the autumn term 2021. Governors commended the wide range of activities and partnership development work across HCUC. Interim Director (NB) led on this report and highlighted that although there was a continuing impact from Covid opportunities were now starting to come through as employers were keen to benefit from the incentives around Apprenticeships. The detailed report was taken as read but Governors noted the key points as follow:

***Apprenticeships:*** The meeting noted that recruitment remained challenging, but HCUC had recruited 95% of the profile for the first quarter 2021/22 but 'quarter 2' was proving more of a challenge despite extended employer incentives. Kickstart was proving an alternative option for some candidates and employers and there was generally a lack of suitable candidates for any vacancies that occurred. The final QAR outcome data for 2020/21 was noted at 70.4% overall (58.1% HC and 72% UC). The QAR predictions in year 2021/22 for the 266 planned leavers (226 at UC and 40 at HC) were within the minimum of 66.2% and the maximum of 77.4%. NB confirmed that staff were chasing the monitoring detail much earlier in the year and were putting any necessary interventions in place to support apprentices to get them over the 'achievement line' on a timely basis. Staff were really focussing on the WBL provision and giving it the additional support necessary to implement the action plan and drive up quality. The interim results of the apprentice exit survey – with a current 54% response rate – were noted and Governors were pleased to note that 83% were still employed with the employer that they completed their apprenticeship with. The recent Employer Exit Survey had also shown strong satisfaction with 84% being very satisfied with the quality of training and stating that they would recommend HCUC. The meeting commended this result considering the challenging time over the last two years during the pandemic; NB confirmed that HCUC engagement with employers had remained strong during Covid.

The meeting discussed the new **Technical Apprenticeship School (TAS)** which was put in place at HCUC at the start of the academic year to raise quality in the building services, engineering, motor vehicle and IT curriculum areas. QCS Committee members were reminded that this proposal had been discussed in detail with Governors at the April 2021 Training and Planning Day. The new Assistant Director for 2021/22 was now driving this work forward even though the challenges and complexities had been greater than expected. Governors were given assurance that a clear action plan for this provision was now in place and would be delivered through the TAS framework. The action plan had been created by senior TAS staff working with external consultants who had conducted a thorough review of this area. This review had identified a general culture of historical under-performance with significant management underperformance. In the past there had been some instances of poor communications with staff, employers and apprentices. The review had also identified a lack of training for staff about the importance of the whole apprenticeship journey which

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had led to insufficient monitoring and target setting. The issues around funding and timely achievements had been exacerbated by an under use of college systems e.g., DocuSign and OneFile. NB confirmed that new assessment and verification procedures had now been put into place to remedy these weaknesses. The meeting commended Principal HC for her work to forensically interrogate the issues in WBL and for the creation of the TAS; it had been the correct course of action to allow HCUC management to identify the issues needing remedial action.

The meeting noted that a staff restructure was now in process which had raised expected standards of the new roles. Adverts were out for high quality staff to join the TAS team and enhance the provision led by the new Head of the TAS (Assistant Director, Neil Benjamin Miller) and his team. There was also a programme of ongoing staff development for the existing staff who had remained in role. JW confirmed that better links with employers had now been re-established and there were clearer lines of communication to respond to employer needs. The staff were working to ensure that they knew each work based learning (WBL) learner in more detail so that they could tailor an individual programme to each apprentices need; JW reminded the meeting that apprenticeship standards were designed for this flexible approach rather than the more rigid frameworks. The Chair commended the work done to unearth the issues within this provision; there had been challenging times but she hoped the apprenticeship provision had now turned a corner. Governors commended the clear action plan and the support that had been put in place to improve the WBL provision.

Employer Partnerships and Employability Programmes: The meeting was reminded of the focus for 2021/22 for HCUC to increase employer partnerships to inform the curriculum plan and support the co-design and co-delivery of study programmes. A successful Job Fair hosted in partnership with local Jobcentres had boosted Kickstart placements, apprenticeships, recruitment for SWAPs (sector-based work academy programmes), and relationships had been forged with new employers for the benefit of HCUC curriculum areas. There would be an increase in SWAPs in 2021/22 to support employers' recruitment with repeat business from Menzies, World Duty Free and British Airways. The meeting also noted the London Borough of Hillingdon Section 106-funded Security Industry Authority (SIA) 'Security for the Hospitality Industry' programme. Referrals to date had been strong in this area of provision and online courses were on track to meet target

Stakeholder partnerships: The West London Authority HE/FE steering groups representing the four priority sector in West London (digital, green, creative & culture, and health & care) were continuing to build traction with employer engagement, establishment of progression pathways and influence on policy drivers. The aim was to address employment, skills and progression within these priority areas. These were working well with the College Collaboration Fund CCF project and the Good Work for All initiative which was linked to the highest priority sector in West London health and care.

Subcontracting: HCUC was now working with seven subcontractors (AEB £100k and Good Work for All £175k) including one sub-contractor for apprenticeship delivery. Monthly partnership meetings were being conducted with more formal termly performance reviews which would monitor and drive high performance.

West London Institute of Technology (WLIoT): The meeting was reminded that key risks remained in relation to learner numbers at levels 4, 5 and 6 against original DfE targets and employer engagement; this had been heightened by the pandemic, College lockdown and a lack of any national advertising for the IoTs. Current recruitment data was noted as follows:

- 2019/20: Levels 4 & 5 139 v 149 Target
- 2020/21: Actual 378 v 513 (DfE target), 448 (WLIoT target)
- 2021/22: Actual 327 vs 781 (DfE target) 503 (WLIoT target)

JW confirmed that DfE would review learner number targets for all twelve IoTs in January 2022 when the first return was completed against targets; a discussion around the option of re-profiling would then take place in February. The meeting was reminded of the ongoing challenges around specialist staff recruitment in hard to fill STEM roles which the College was seeking to resolve by using s n



innovative new recruitment methods. NB confirmed that the SLT and Heads of Department with hard to fill vacancies were having daily conversations with the College HR team about how to drive this recruitment forward; although still an issue in some areas the College was now in a better place than six months ago. The fact that HCUC had an IoT was a big draw for applicants as was the high quality reputation and previous Ofsted Outstanding status. Governors (JM) suggested that recruitment challenges were currently presenting issues in many sectors and industries; recruiters were 'fishing in a limited pool'. She asserted the need to incentivise applicants to come to HCUC which might include the offer of a good CPD package. The meeting discussed the need for the College to think outside the box to attract good applicants. NB confirmed that SLT were looking at all options including variations to contracts and Terms and Conditions. The advertising for these new enhanced roles referred to the need for a different skills set which would allow HCUC to break the mould of the traditional delivery model. JW confirmed that although contract variations would look at options, as technical education moved forward HCUC also needed to think about how it worked differently to collaborate with employers (this would be discussed in more detail at agenda item 5.4 in the meeting). HCUC should collaborate with employers in the role as educationalists while employers filled the remit of industry specialists. There was a need to take the 'Intent' conversation further and draw in specialists to the delivery of technical areas. The CEO (DDS) confirmed that a lot of new thinking on technical recruitment was now taking place with some good ideas. DDS informed the meeting that the Secretary of State for Education had visited Brunel earlier in the day where he had met three ex-HCUC students who had progressed to HE; one of these students was keen on teaching as a career. DDS asserted the need for the college to focus on 'both ends' of the labour, younger people/ graduates as well as people at retirement age through the 'Teach Last' scheme. The meeting agreed that there needed to be wider recognition and support for these new initiatives.

***The Partnerships and Project / WBL Report was NOTED and RECEIVED.***

### 5.3 In-year KPI Dashboard for in-year monitoring 2021/22 YTD

The meeting considered the data dashboard for Governors which showed in year performance against the Key Performance Indicators for 2021/22 split by Student Progress, TL&A, and Student Experience. The meeting noted the year-to-date (YTD) performance for HCUC, HC and UC for the following metrics: Retention, Work Based Learning (WBL) updates, FT Attendance, Employability, Lesson Observations, Complaints and Disciplinarys. DMcT highlighted the following aspects of performance:

This report was largely taken as read after the time spent considering the SAR at item 9 of the agenda but the following data was noted.

Retention/ Attendance and Punctuality Rates 2021/22: Current full-time attendance for 16-18 learners was at the year-end target of 88% (92% with authorised absences). English and maths attendance for 16-18 learners was RAG rated red with figures of 82% and 83% respectively. Punctuality was holding on target at 4%. Retention for 16-18 (99.3%) and 19+ (99.7%) was above NA (91.0% and 93.5%) and above the prior year figures. HE retention was also improved on the prior year at 100%. DMcT informed the meeting that SLT was looking at new ways of incentivising students around good attendance e.g. the start of the '100 Club' which required 100% attendance. Management were looking at ways to make a quick impact.

#### Complaints Report 2021/22:

Uxbridge College: Year-to-date in 2021/22 there had been 11 complaints compared with 5 at the equivalent time last year, of which 4 were upheld.

Harrow College: To date in 2021/22, there had been 6 complaints compared to 5 at the equivalent time last year, of which 3 were upheld.

Lesson Observations (LOs): DMcT highlighted that although the Dashboard was showing 'amber' as the LO profile was currently at 63% 'meets or exceeds good'. However, this was due to the ve

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early lesson observations which had focused on any teaching staff identified as being weaker. Improvement had been secured already in 70% of these cases when 31 of these 'at risk' teachers had been reobserved already.

Safeguarding: DMcT focussed attention on the Safeguarding update. The meeting noted that currently there were 36 students on the serious safeguarding register, these were mostly for domestic violence and mental health issues. This was slightly higher than this time last year; the meeting was reminded that the prior year figure was the highest year ever recorded for serious cases. There were four cases ongoing on the Prevent register, one of whom was attending Channel Panel meetings. There were 392 looked after children in the college, and 266 currently on the mental health register for 2021/22; these figures were broadly in line with last year. DMcT highlighted the 19 cases reported on the new Sexual Harassment Register, which enabled recording of incidents and actions. Governors were reminded that a whole college approach to sexual harassment had begun with a number of planned events already. All HCUC staff were trained in safeguarding, Prevent and sexual harassment on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021 and governors were trained on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021. The number of Looked After Children was also slightly higher this year; the high numbers of LAC learners was due to the College proximity to Heathrow and unaccompanied minor asylum seekers being placed at HCUC. Governors sought additional clarity on whether there was an even split in mental health issues between colleges and this was confirmed as broadly in similar in both.

First Impressions Learner Survey 2021/22: This college-generated survey had been issued to all students on programmes at HCUC. The survey close data had not yet passed so the data reported to the meeting was noted as interim. To date there had been 2011 responses and 96% were satisfied with the TL&A on their courses. The figure for learners who would recommend HCUC to a 'friend' was 92% and the overall satisfaction rate for HCUC was also at 92%.

***The KPI Dashboard was NOTED and RECEIVED***

## 6. Curriculum & Partnerships (*DISCUSSION PAPER*)

### 6.1 Curriculum Intent

The meeting noted a paper presented by Principal Harrow (JW) which gave QCS Committee an overview of current practice and future plans for employers to be involved in the design, delivery and validation of the curriculum at HCUC. QCS Committee were reminded of the expectation within the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) that the intent and implementation of the curriculum at FE colleges met the local and regional skills needs. It was also key that all courses adequately prepared students for progression, either into HE or into work. JW reminded the meeting that this had been further reinforced by the DfE white paper Skills for Jobs published in January 2021. The meeting was pleased to note that in 202/21 87% of all HCUC courses had clear co design

/ delivery strategies with employers. The meeting noted the detail of co design and delivery strategies already in place as well as the impact of these across HCUC.

JW informed QCS Members that the recent Harrow College Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committee (SSC) had discussed the collaborative work undertaken with the NHS to develop specialist skills. The paper gave Governors a general awareness and outlined the future strategies for curriculum planning over a three to five year period which would be building on employers' skills needs. JW highlighted that at course level the unit selection needed to reflect this. The meeting was informed that during an IoT meeting in the previous week, HCUC staff and employers had looked at course units and whether they were currently meeting employer needs. Governor (AP) confirmed that she had supported that work as an 'interested employer' for the construction courses. In this way the college could take a regional/ local skills view and then then move to a granular course level. There would also be an ongoing focus to get employers into the classroom as guest speakers, delivering masterclasses, setting and validating assessments as well as being providers of Work Experience and Significant Industry Placements for the IoT. The aim was to make industry appreciate that H U

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and its learners were credible for the future. The next step would be for SLT to think about co-delivery for the higher level courses within the IoT. JW asked QCS Committee for some feedback on how well governors thought the College was approaching this employer focussed work. The meeting discussed possible other methods to make the employer focus more consistent across HCUC through engagement, planning and delivery.

AP talked about a recent challenge within the aviation environment where key players were aiming to develop programmes where employees had a module to develop teaching skills so they could impart their knowledge. She suggested that HCUC needed to tap into this as a development opportunity; it would be a mutually beneficial arrangement for both sides. Governors also talked about the need for a resilient workforce with digital capability and skills for future; thought needed to be given how to draw industry experts into this co-design and delivery. The meeting agreed that many larger employers had objectives to plan their talent pipeline for future projects; HCUC needed to tap into that and to encourage employers to develop enlightened workplaces. However, there was an acceptance that not all employers could dedicate time and energy to drive towards a dynamic workplace. The meeting talked about the untapped potential of how to develop people through all stages of their career and the benefits of employers asking their staff to develop others for the future. Governors suggested the College should approach employers and see whether there was any capacity for HCUC to get involved in their management development programmes.

JW confirmed that she believed that HCUC now had a strong basic model of employer engagement there was now a need to push it out across all curriculum areas with the same consistency. The meeting discussed what capacity 'small and medium sized employers' (SMEs) would have to engage with the current model of employer engagement at HCUC. Whilst it was easy to see where it would fit into large employers who had management development programmes, getting SMEs to engage would be more challenging.

The meeting went on to talk about the role in this work to drive up aspirations of learners and the role that mentoring could have, especially for level 4 or 5 learners. The Chair suggested that this could be done via E-mentoring as well as face-to-face and it had worked well in the university environment. Mentors did not necessarily saying anything different but the fact that it was a 'new' voice often made learners listen and if mentors could be employers as well that gave them added validity. It was agreed that the College would need to ensure that the mentor role was not onerous and should be based around a limited number of sessions to get most value from contributing employers.

JW thanked Governors for their input and assured them that SLT would continue to develop this key plank of the curriculum moving forward.

## **NOTED**

### **6.2 T Levels: today and looking to the future**

JO'N presented a paper which outlined developments in T level provision at HCUC. JO'N highlighted the new Curriculum Intent and Employability Group (CIEG) which had been established at HCUC in order to drive forward curriculum intent – especially vocational intent - and employability. The purpose of the group was to ensure that HCUC:

- was meeting regional and local skills needs and developing a pipeline of talent to meet those needs through the development of Employer Advisory Groups.
- was developing deeper relationships with employers to co-design and deliver elements of the curriculum alongside them acting as guest speakers, and providers of work experience.
- was closely monitoring progress against all work placement targets.
- was supporting students to develop appropriate behaviours, whilst having access to high level and current industry knowledge and skills through the regular employer activity in the classroom.

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- was ensuring that all students had a clear line of sight to work/ employment and a real sense of purpose in their studies.

The CIEG would also be the main forum for all matters related to the development and delivery of T Levels at the College.

The meeting noted that all T Levels planned for 2021/22 had recruited: Uxbridge College (UC) Digital Year 2 10/11 returned, Year 1 10; UC Early Years Year 2 12/13 returned, Year 1 15; Harrow College (HC) Digital Year 1 9; HC Science Year 1 12. The requisite Significant Industry Placements (SIPs) had been secured for all Year 2 T Levels and were well underway for Year 1. JO'N confirmed that development was underway for the Sept 2022 T Levels starts: UC Engineering and HC Management and Administration. Capacity Development Fund (CDF) resources had been targeted to support securing placements, particularly for Engineering. The meeting noted that in recent weeks two significant changes in the Government approach to achieving the T Level qualifications had been announced. The first was in relation to an acceptance that some of the SIPs could now be delivered remotely (the proportion allowed varied by T Level which would require very close and careful tracking to maintain compliance and validate the final qualification). The second was in removing the requirement for English and maths to be achieved at Level 2 in order to achieve the T Level. The meeting noted the disparity with Apprentices who were still required to achieve English and maths in order to secure the qualification. The meeting agreed that there was a danger that this change would dilute the message around T levels being prestigious as it could impact T Level learners progression to Higher Education or a higher level apprenticeship. The meeting agreed that HCUC might think about holding the existing entry requirements in order to preserve the quality of the T Level offer at the College. Governors also highlighted the possible reputational damage to HCUC if lower level learners were undertaking T Levels and being sent out on SIPs with employers.

Curriculum reform: The College was keeping abreast of all developments relating to the Level 3 reforms: the proposal for there to be three distinct routes: A Levels, T Levels and Apprenticeships. DSS confirmed that there appeared to have been some pull back on the intention to withdraw funding from qualifications duplicating any of the above preferred routes e.g. the applied nationals (BTECs). The timeframe had now been delayed from September 2023 to September 2024 at the earliest for wave one T Level subjects. The delay has been explained as giving time to support the growth of T Levels and give stakeholders more time to adjust to changes. Indications were that the value of other qualifications in enabling students to achieve successful outcomes was recognised but the expressed intention was for A Levels and T Levels to remain at the forefront of the Level 3 offer. DDS confirmed that a lot of lobbying was currently taken place as much of the FE sector would be unhappy for BTEC funding to be 'switched off'. Governors were assured that the College would continue to address the challenge of providing appropriate progression routes for all students and securing enrolment numbers in light of the rapidly changing qualification landscape. This would include modelling the impact of any funding changes on existing qualifications, ensuring Transition Programmes best prepare students for T Levels and developing understanding of the pedagogy related to T Level delivery to ensure successful outcomes.

T Level Development: The meeting noted that the College had been required to submit a Statistical Annex to the DfE in October 2021 which outlined the College's intentions for T Level delivery until 2025/26. A balanced approach had been taken by college management which demonstrated HCUC's ambition in relation to T Level delivery and the need to secure enrolments, but also reflected the challenges related to recruiting with integrity particularly regarding placements and external assessment. Within the Statistical Annex an expression of interest was made to run the following T Levels from September 2023: Legal, Accountancy, Health (Supporting Mental Health) and Healthcare Science (Assisting Healthcare.) JO'N highlighted that this would show the College's ambition and commitment to T levels while remaining mindful of the associated challenges and enrolment numbers.

Data tables: The update on Work Experience, SIPs and T Level enrolments was taken as read



***The update report on T Levels and Vocational Intent was NOTED***

## **7. Higher Education**

### **7.1 HE Access and Participation (A&P) Statement and Action Plan (FOR APPROVAL)**

The meeting noted the HE Access and Participation Statement and Action Plan which was a requirement of Condition A of the Office for Student registration. Governors were reminded that HCUC was required to have an A&P Statement but not a full A&P Plan. JO'N confirmed that the format of this Statement and Action Plan had been slimmed down and given a presentational refresh. A number of HCUC senior managers had worked together to produce this slimmer, more focused document which was now data driven and mirrored what the Office for Students would expect to see. JO'N also thanked MRW for her help in refining the new format. The meeting noted the identified priorities within Widening Access and Participation for 2022/23 which would require a focused approach:

#### **A) Access Priorities**

- Mature Learners – ensure that percentage of learners is on par with HE in FE Colleges
- Disabled learners – increase the proportion of learners with a disability
- Ethnicity – increase Black and White ethnicity learners from low participating areas
- Increase the proportion of female learners studying STEM related HE subjects.

#### **B) Participation and Success priorities**

- Maintain the improved retention of Black learners on HE programmes

#### **C) Reviewing and Monitoring impact**

- The College will review the impact of its access and participation plan on a termly basis at the Higher Education Academic Standards Committee and at QCS Governor Body and make adjustments as necessary.

JO'N highlighted that the objective of getting more female STEM learners in the IoT was not specific to OfS objectives but was a key priority for HCUC. The meeting was assured that the Action Plan would be followed through and closely monitored at various HE Committees across the College. Once approved by QCS Committee it would also be published on the College website. The meeting gave the new format A&P Statement unanimous approval; it was very clear on what HCUC was trying to address and how the College was going to go about this. ***MRW highlighted the typo which had allowed a student name to be included; JO'N confirmed that this would be removed before publication.***

***The HCUC A&P Statement and Action Plan was APPROVED.***

### **7.2 HCUC Higher Education Self-Assessment Report (SAR)**

The meeting considered the draft SAR covering HE provision at HCUC, this met Condition B of the OfS registration. QCS Committee members were reminded that this report had also been discussed in detail at the two HCUC Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committees. The detailed review against the conditions of registration B1 – B6 and C1 – C3 with the Office for Students was considered by the meeting. JO'N highlighted the new format of the HE SAR which was now a slimmer document as it had been split into two separate sections. The SAR focussed on the Condition B outcomes and quality for all students. The overview document for Condition E focussed on leadership and management and governance in relation to HE. The meeting noted the flow chart which detailed how HCUC reported on the academic side of HE. The meeting noted the excellent outcomes last year - 97% overall with retention improved in subject areas, these were noted by course. Governors were assured that the SLT were keeping close watch and there were no significant achievement gaps. JO'N highlighted the risk around a potential new condition in relation to HE staffing; HCUC would have to flag this risk as 'amber' on the Risk Register if the condition was introduced. MRW highlighted that other 'B Conditions' might also be subject to change which would require further review.

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MRW suggested that management should look at the narrative around 'HCUC continuation/modelling'; this appeared to be the wrong use of phraseology as there was no way of confirming that learners had ended up elsewhere. She asserted that the OfS continuation figures would be better than retention. The direct comparison on page 17 was discussed and MRW asked the SLT to think about the word 'continuation' when the data showed rolling average retention over 3 years. Governors noted that retention had improved from 2017/18 and 2018/19. The Chair sought confirmation that HCUC did not have to undertake the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF); this was confirmed as the case because the college had less than 500 HE learners. However, the TEF and a full Access and Participation Plan would be required if HCUC ever wanted to increase its HE fees above the £6,000 cap. The meeting agreed that this decision would not be taken lightly as this would involve a lot more work. The meeting took the detailed underlying data as read and was assured that the SLT and the HE Team were closely monitoring all aspects of provision. JO'N asked the meeting to note the specific input of the Interim Academic Standards Manager (Stuart Barlow) and the Academic Students Officer (Brian Hill); they had made a considerable contribution to the HE SAR and Governors' Monitoring Report.

MRW highlighted the importance of the Corporation understanding its role and responsibilities with respect to HE. JO'N confirmed that a paper making this explicit would be taken to the Corporation in December 2021. It was agreed that the current governance structure and operational control of HE provision was fully fit for purpose. The HE SAR (in relation to Condition B of the College's registration with the OfS) had been completed with robust actions identified to address areas for improvement. The very detailed HE SAR was taken as read along with the numerous appendices giving data by course level and protected characteristics as well as continuation rates and destinations. The meeting noted the following summary:

- HCUC HNC/ HND outcomes 2020/21 overall retention was 89%, and 98% achievement. Within this Harrow College was 100% for retention and achievement (22 starts) and UC 88% retention and 98% achievement (185 starts).
- Uxbridge College Teacher Training retention was at 98% and achievement was 100%.

The summary strengths and AFIs for 2021/22 were noted as follows:

#### HE Strengths

- High quality learning experience and reliable assessment leading to very high levels of achievement.
- Robust quality assurances processes and effective management of academic standards by curriculum teams.
- Strong partnerships with HEIs to support Teacher Training and Pearson to support Higher National provision.
- Well qualified staff many of whom have industry experience to enhance teaching and learning which leads to very good outcomes including for students with disabilities.
- Rigorous assessment feedback enabling students to improve the standard of their work.
- Excellent progression to university and employment for those completing their programmes.

#### HE Areas for Improvement

- Consolidate improvement in some resources to support teaching and learning.
- Maintain improvement in retention to secure improved continuation rates.
- Improve advice and support related to student finance at application, enrolment and on-programme.

DMcT formally thanked governor MRW for her ongoing input to the monitoring of HE at HCUC; her knowledge of the university sector and OfS requirements was proving extremely useful for the College.

***The HE Update Report and self-assessment 2020/21 was NOTED and RECEIVED.***



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## 7.3 HE Overview

The HE Overview Report was taken as read; the meeting agreed this provided useful background reading.

***The HE Update was NOTED***

## 7.4 Governors' HE Reporting Spreadsheet (conditions A & C)

The meeting took the detailed reporting spreadsheet as read. JO'N highlighted that continuation rates were still showing as amber on this document as the College needed to keep a close watch on this element of HE provision. It was agreed that this spreadsheet would be used for the following year to ensure HE compliance and governor scrutiny.

- Governance Leadership Self-assessment against the OfS Public Interest Principles

The paper drew Governors attention to Condition E – Good Governance and, within this, the entries relating to the OfS' Public Interest Principles. In order to provide assurance on this matter the Clerk presented a RAG rated summary document which provided detailed assurance for Governors that HCUC had complied with the 10 OfS Public Interest Governance Principles for 2020/21.

***The meeting AGREED that there was sufficient assurance for Governors that the College continued to comply with its ongoing requirements as set out under conditions of registration. A paper would be taken to the Governing Body in December 2021 which highlighted the close scrutiny and key elements.***

## 8. Employer, Partnerships & Project Report

This item had already been discussed at agenda item 5.

***The report was NOTED and RECEIVED.***

## 9. CEO's Update including Merger with Richmond Upon Thames College (RuTC)

The meeting noted a verbal update on progress with the merger discussions with Richmond Upon Thames College (RuTC) provided by the CEO. Governors were reminded that the RuTC Phase 2 Capital build had presented challenges in relation to planning conditions, following ongoing review by the local authority planning committee. This in turn was impacting the ability and timeliness for RuTC to access funds for the Phase 2 build from the developer (Clarion). As a result, the HCUC members of the Joint Steering Group had considered that there were financial assurances that would be prudent for HCUC to receive prior to agreeing a revised merger date. These assurances had been framed as 'gateways to merger' which had all been shared with RuTC and progress against these was being monitored by the Joint Steering Group (JSG). More detail on these would be provided at the Corporation meeting on 7 December 2021.

The meeting was informed that RuTC and their project managers continued to meet regularly with the Housing development company and Richmond Council to progress matters. DDS was also having weekly 'one-to-one' update meetings with the RuTC Interim Principal. The pre-merger work was continuing with the JSG meeting monthly and the Workstream activity had was still ongoing with a focus on Finance, Systems, Quality, HR & Marketing/communications. DDS confirmed that activity between the two colleges continued to be really positive with a lot of very effective collaboration already taking place. The meeting commended this ongoing collaboration so that when the planning issues were resolved and HCUC could gain assurance around the financial risks a revised merger date could be agreed.

***The verbal update was RECEIVED***

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## ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The meeting received the following detailed documents that were provided to give Governors full assurance around all aspects of underlying quality across HCUC. The meeting took the reports as read, unless there were specific questions.

### 10. Corporate Goals

The CEO (DDS) provided an update on the Uxbridge College's and Harrow College's Corporate Goals YTD achievement. The meeting was reminded that this was the first update since the approval of the Corporate Goals at the September 2021 Corporation meeting. DDS reminded the meeting of the impact on the 2020/21 achievement against Corporate Goals of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. DDS asserted that the effect of the pandemic would also be seen during 2021/22 and could affect finance and funding, learner outcomes, quality of the educational experience and in partnership and project work.

The report was largely taken as read but DDS highlighted the following:

- It was understood that current Ofsted Inspections would be particularly focused on safeguarding aspects and mental well-being, including the support provided to learners. In addition, following the impact of the pandemic and its disruption to learning, the College's approach to addressing lost learning was again expected to be a key focus of Inspection. Students' readiness for learning and readiness for employment and further study would also be key themes.
- Quality of Education (previously TL&A) retained refinements to incorporate the rise in importance of remote learning delivery. The importance of Curriculum intent and real employer/industry impact was also emphasised. Any formal Lesson Observations would continue to use external validation, but with an increasing focus on the developmental aspects and continuous professional development for teaching staff. 'Drop-in observations' would be an additional means of gauging and improving quality of teaching and learning. 'Deep Dive' activity during the first half of the autumn term had confirmed a 'Good+' overall profile with identified Areas for Improvement (Afls). This 'deep dive' work in preparation for any Ofsted Inspection had enabled the College to front-load the assessment of any 'weaker' teachers to ensure that they had no adverse impact on TL&A. As previously mentioned, DDS confirmed that of those weaker teachers identified during this exercise 70% had already improved.
- The Finance & Funding section had been amended to reflect the reduced CV19 funding elements. Project funding was more varied – and would become confirmed throughout the year - to reflect the promotion of collaborative initiatives focused on economic recovery.
- Responsiveness and compliance would again focus on main Government backed projects. Key within these were the Institute of Technology (IoT), T-level pilots and associated substantial Industry Placements, Mayor's Skills Academy (MSA) and activity linked to collaborative economic recovery projects within London and specifically West London.
- The Learner Outcomes section - a focus for QCS Committee - remained largely unchanged.

DDS reminded the meeting that the RAG rating system flagged up those items on the front page where progress in relation to a particular KPI or performance area had either faltered, prompting mitigating actions (amber rating), or stalled such that full achievement was now not possible (red rating). It was too early in the academic year for any target to be identified as not achievable so there were no 'red' ratings. Governors were reminded that considerable further detail was provided within the body of the Corporate Goals reports about the amber and red rated items flagged on the cover pages. DDS reminded the meeting that the Corporate Goals report was using the last available NAs as comparators (these were pre-pandemic).

***The Corporate Goals Update was NOTED***

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## 11. Enrolment Update

The meeting noted an update report on performance against the ESFA contract for 2021/22 at 18 November 2021. The meeting noted that the actual learner numbers enrolled and retained were 45 below target at 5,663 vs 5,708; the final R04 funding claim for 2021/22 would be submitted on 6 December 2021. Uxbridge College was at circa 92.1% of its 16- target and Harrow was at circa 87.4%. Adult 19+ enrolment was at 835 against the target of 977. The financial impact of this shortfall would be a loss of circa £300,000. Governors were reminded that due to the lagged funding methodology, the decrease in funding would take effect in 2021/22 when ESFA funding would drop from £31.9m to £31.6m excluding any other funding changes.

The detailed report was taken as read which highlighted areas of learner number shortfall by curriculum area at each college. The areas below 80% of target at Harrow were noted as Health and Social Care, ICT, Art and Hair and Beauty. There were no areas below 80% at Uxbridge and there were two area above 100%: ELTFS and Computing.

***The Enrolment Update report was NOTED and RECEIVED.***

## 12. HCUC English and maths update

The English and maths Report was taken as read, Governors had no specific questions.

***NOTED***

## 13. HCUC Student feedback

The meeting noted the Student Voice presentations one from each College; the Student Governors would present these to the Corporation meeting on 7 December 2021.

***The report was NOTED.***

### 13.2 Autumn 'First Impressions' Learner Survey

This report provided a summary of the First Impressions Survey strengths and areas for improvement across HC and UC. This survey had been issued in October 2021 to all learners across HCUC to capture students' initial thoughts and reflections on their experience to date since September 2021 enrolment. The survey close data had not yet passed so the data reported to the meeting was noted as interim. There had been 2011 responses and 96% were satisfied with the TL&A on their courses. The figure for learners who would recommend HCUC to a 'friend' was 92%. The overall satisfaction rate for HCUC was 93%.

***The interim report was NOTED; a final result would be reported to QCS Committee in March 2022***

## 14. SEND Update

The QCS Committee took this detailed report largely as read; it provided the year-to-date information for 2021/22 for this growing area of provision. The CEO reminded the meeting of the importance and scale of this area of work at the College; HCUC now had 516 High Needs learners compared with 503 in the prior year). Specialist Element 1, 2 and 3 High Needs funding for learners would be at circa £6.5m for 2021/22, the same as in the prior year.

Partnership work in this area continued to be strong, with HCUC attending both Harrow and Hillingdon Local Authority's SEN strategy groups. The biggest priority for each of these groups was noted as the funding for High Needs as there was currently a national crisis in EHCP funding in schools and Colleges. Hillingdon Local Authority (LA) had commissioned consultants to look at a banding structure for element 3 and was including other LA's in its findings which could be adopted more widely. The meeting received the detailed quality data 2020/21 for High Needs students' success rates and noted that the gap in success rates had widened from 3.2% in 2019/20 to 4.5%

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in 2020/21. The ongoing issue of securing good achievement for High Needs Learners on English and maths was also noted as an area for improvement during 2021/22.

***The report was NOTED***

#### 15. Summary of Staff Focus Group Feedback

The meeting received the report which provided detailed feedback from the recent staff focus group which had been held on 3 November via MS Teams; 10 lecturing staff from across both colleges had attended. The range of topics covered, were as follows: Time management and barriers to fulfilling the job role; Communications; Lesson observations; Teaching & learning hour; Maths and English; Ofsted Inspection; Student attendance & punctuality; People management; Career development; Staff training; E-learning; IT resources; and Quality/Improving the quality of TL&A. The meeting took the detailed report outlining staff feedback as read. Areas where lecturers had provided positive feedback at each of the Colleges were noted as well as the areas that had been flagged as needing action or consideration. Governors were assured that an action plan was in place to address the areas for improvement and that this was being closely monitored by the SLT. This would ensure that management was taking appropriate action in response to staff feedback. The meeting noted that this report had been discussed in detail at the Resources Committee (24/11/21) with the HR Director present.

***The report was NOTED***

#### 16. Ofsted preparations & updated Governors' briefing

The Deputy CEO/ Principal Uxbridge (DMcT) presented an update briefing for Governors on 'Strengths and Weaknesses' and on 'Leadership and Management Highlights'. ***The Clerk to the Corporation (TR) confirmed that she would upload the current version to the governance Board Intelligence portal.***

***NOTED.***

#### 17. Minutes of Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committees (SSCs), Harrow & Uxbridge Colleges

The minutes of the SSC meetings held on 9 November 2021 at Uxbridge College and 10 November at Harrow College were RECEIVED. SSC Members had found the October 2021 Strategy Day very useful and informative.

***The minutes were RECEIVED.***

#### 18. To confirm and agree the dates and times of QCS Committee meetings for 2021/22

The dates and times of the meetings were agreed as follows:

- Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 4.00pm
- Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at 4.00pm

The venue for these meetings would be considered and if access to campuses could be safely restored QCS would revert to meet at the Uxbridge Campus at Park Road.

***NOTED***

#### 19. Feedback to Governing Body meeting

The following items were agreed as highlights of the meeting:

- i) Governors commended the focus on linking the curriculum development and delivery to employers. HCUC was ensuring that it did the best it could to prepare students for the workplace with a focus on employability within study programmes. The ongoing focus on Work Experience for the maximum number of learners was commended.



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- ii) Apprenticeship provision at HCUC: there had been a clear and thorough review of the Leadership & Management of this area and an action plan was now in place to continue to drive up quality of WBL at HCUC.
- iii) Governors had approved a review and revision of the HE Access and Participation statement.
- iv) The QCS Committee were recommending the College SAR 2020/21 for approval with an overall grade of Outstanding.

## 20. Any other business

Governors (JM) raised the issue that the volume of papers provided for the meeting was too great; the pack on Board Intelligence had run to 174 pages. The meeting agreed that there was inevitably an ongoing tension between making sure Governors were fully briefed and overloading them with data. DMcT asserted that executive summary sheets were always provided to highlight strengths and weaknesses and any areas of ongoing concern for the meeting. Governors agreed that the briefing papers for QCS were always well written but asked SLT to be mindful of the amount of papers circulated for reading.

***It was AGREED that SLT should be mindful of the scale of paperwork that Governors were expected to read in advance of QCS Committee.***

There was no other business. The meeting closed at 5.55pm.

Signed.....

Date.....