REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD
HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2020 at 2.00pm
Via Microsoft Teams

Present: Marcus Clinton (principal) MC
             Gary Crowe (independent) GC
             Francesca Francis (independent) (Chair) FF
             Prof Chris Gaskell (independent) CG
             Dr Chris Haslam (co-opted) CH
             Anne McKay (staff) AM

Attending: Yvette Foulds-Davis (HE academic registrar) YFD
             Sarah Hopkinson (assistant dean) SH
             Matt Gower (vice principal curriculum and quality) MG
             Peter Greenall (assistant principal and dean) PG
             Chelsey Rountree (student association) CR
             Liz Watts (head of marketing) LW *(item 6.3 onwards)*
             Jackie Schillinger (company secretary) JS

Part A unless stated

Item	Content
1.	**WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
1.1	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. There were no apologies for absence.
1.2	The meeting was declared quorate.
2.	**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
2.1	There were no interests declared as giving rise to a conflict of interest in relation to the agenda items for the meeting.
3.	**TERMS OF REFERENCE AND FORWARD PLAN OF BUSINESS**
3.1	**RESOLVED: The Committee Terms of Reference (TOR) were received and recommended for approval to the Board.**
3.2	**RESOLVED: The Forward Plan of Committee Business was received and approved.**
4.	**MINUTES**
4.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and the action log reviewed for assurance.

5.	**COVID-19 UPDATE**
5.1	Curriculum Delivery and Assessment Update: YFD provided a summary of her report setting out how the faculty had adapted to the challenges of Covid-19 and moved to remote delivery with some additional sessions where needed, rapid responses to regulatory changes and assessments. Members received good assurance from the report that the faculty had adapted very well and ensured continuation of study and progression for the students. CH passed on his thanks to YFD and colleagues at the college for all the work carried out together with the University to meet the challenges and confirmed that the response from the college had been exemplary.
5.2	Student Experience Feedback: SH presented a summary of the feedback on remote delivery from a recent student course representatives meeting. She shared some best practice that has worked very well in terms of staff support and guest lectures and the adaptability of the college. She noted that there has been some inconsistency and not all students have had the same quality of delivery. She noted the picture on engagement is mixed with the college seeing increased engagement in some areas but not in others and the technology has taken some time to embed. She confirmed that the review now underway will look to build on the good practice and identify and address areas that need improvement. Questions and discussion followed: -GC asked SH if there was an idea of the number of students that are disengaged and so an idea of the level of risk of students not returning in the autumn. SH said that they had not yet any definite numbers and set out the actions being taken to combat any disengagement including additional sessions and she agreed that it was important to keep looking at this closely to ensure there are no gaps that could expose the college to additional risk. GC emphasised the importance of trying to put some numbers on this to help to quantify the risk here. He recognised the tremendous amount of work that has gone on. CG noted the importance of ensuring that no students are disadvantaged by being less able to access the technology. PG added that there is work currently going on to identify and support those students more at risk. -CR provided some feedback from students that she asked across eight different areas. She noted that the communication between staff and students was good and the adaptability of staff was very good, and the recording of online sessions has been very useful. She noted that some of the negatives are the lack of access to practical lessons and feedback on assessments. She said that she had picked up that some students were considering deferring and that a number had experienced difficulties with the online learning, especially those with additional learning needs. She gave some further detail on feedback on different courses and some areas that students felt could be improved. FF thanked CR for doing this work and providing this important feedback. PG offered assurance that this feedback matches the student forum feedback that the faculty has received and form actions in the action plan. FF noted the importance of communicating back to the students to reassure them that they are being listened to. PG acknowledged the need to communicate this to the wider student body. MC added that he is alert to the sense of urgency on communicating clear plans for the autumn term and this is coming out to students imminently.
5.3	Review of QAA Guidance: YFD summarised the actions taken to ensure quality within the HE provision in the current situation and is guided by the University regulations. She pulled out some of the key guiding principles including decision making, adapting processes to maintain academic standards, ensuring missing skills are developed going forwards, reviewing modules for next year in line with the University and the no detriment assessment policy. Members received the report and welcomed the good assurance provided.
5.4	2020-21 Academic Year Planning: SH provided an overview of the planning for next year, in the current uncertain situation. She explained that the delivery will be a combination of remote and face to face with

	practical sessions and lab work prioritised as face to face, with measures also planned to ensure the benefit of the social side of HE as well as the academic side. Key parts of the plan are clear communication to students, monitoring quality and consistency as well as training and development of staff. She also outlined the health and safety measures planned to ensure risks are minimised and the way in which the college will react to any changes in the situation as per the government's five levels so that everyone knows what to expect should there be further outbreaks and disruption into next year. FF suggested some further work on what students are worried about might be useful to inform this planning as well and provide the opportunity for further communication and reassurance for students. CH confirmed that the University is working on the basis that the coming year will be a disrupted year and so flexibility is important to be able to move between modes of delivery, as is the effectiveness of induction processes and welcome back sessions for existing students as well. CG noted that contingency planning is vital and that maintaining the university experience is going to be a challenge to bear in mind when planning for next year.
6.	**STRATEGIC UPDATE**
6.1	Dean's Report (including OFS new condition consultation): PG presented a summary of his report for information and assurance, including the following key points: -A reconfigured HE Leadership Team is now in place and academic vacancies have been largely addressed following a particularly turbulent year. -OfS have consulted on changes to their regulatory framework to incorporate a new condition of registration to deter inappropriate admissions practices. UCR is broadly in support of the proposed measures. -The HE Senior Leadership Team have continued to monitor guidance from the OfS and other sources to inform our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. -A temporary student number control for UCR has been set at 347 by the Minister of State for Universities. Our predictions for September 2020 are expected to be well within the figure set. -Marketing activities for prospective HE students have been delivered through online and virtual methods. The events and information have been well received and plans for online enrolment and IT account activation prior to the start of term are nearing completion.
6.2	Curriculum Development Update: PG presented an overview of curriculum development and he reported positive progress on offer development but with still some work to go on progressing some of the new programmes via the University. He noted that support of CH at the University has been very helpful in bringing some clarity to these processes. Looking ahead, he explained the full review planned of the curriculum offer for the longer term, working with the University. Questions and discussions followed: -CH confirmed that he had some discussions with MC and PG and is fully supportive of developing the offer and working together more closely together. Members considered this very encouraging and welcomed the intention to work more closely together. -GC commented that he was not yet clear on where UCR sees its key position versus peers in the marketplace and, recognising that these things take time, it will be important to identify the core proposition. GC also requested that the reporting on progress be presented in a way that enables the committee to take assurance from it, such as a plan that shows actions, reasons, key milestones and actions yet to be completed. PG confirmed that there are project plans underpinning the report and so the reporting can be adapted to provide more assurance. FF agreed that it is crucial to set out clearly what the UCR proposition is. PG confirmed that this is a key focus for the newly formed leadership team, and they are formulating these plans currently as a high priority. MC provided assurance on this work underway as part of the business planning process and noted that the curriculum development over five years is articulated as part of the overall strategic plan. He accepted that this has perhaps not been articulated clearly enough and agreed to provide further information on this outside of the meeting. -AM asked how the curriculum development involves employers in terms of market demands and PG

	explained this engagement is channelled through the projects research and innovation team. FF thanked PG and the team for the report and welcomed the positive progress on further joint working with the University.
6.3	Business Planning Update: PG presented a summary of the business planning update report, highlighting the following key points: -Forecast income for 2019-20 notably varies from budget and he reminded members of the reasons why. -The predictive model used for our student number predictions has been refined to take account of factors which were not previously accounted for, which provides stronger assurance for the budget for 2020-21. -Student number predictions for 2020-21 are comparatively lower than the previous year, however the financial impact is somewhat mitigated by the increase in foundation degree fees. -The proposed budget for 2020-21 has been set at around £5.7m which is broadly comparable to the forecast outturn for 2019-20 (£5.8m). -The impact of the global pandemic on HE recruitment for September remains somewhat unknown, and actions are being taken to mitigate this risk to the greatest possible extent.
6.4	FF thanked PG for this report and questions and discussion followed: -FF asked for and received clarification on a table in the HE student data report and PG explained that this shows the proportion of level 3 students who applied to HE at UCR compared to competitors. FF noted that this raises some serious concerns on progression. PG agreed that this needs to be linked not only to the offer development but to the change in communication culture to FE students at an early stage. -FF asked about the current predictions data and whether some of the small number courses would still run. PG explained that there is overlap with some of these courses and so there are infill opportunities, but he also covered a couple of courses that are a concern at the moment and he explained the work going on to generate further interest in these courses. -FF queried how much work has been done on aligning the courses to the subject areas for UCAS entries and advised that the coding of courses is looked at. PG noted that a review had been undertaken recently. -FF Access to Higher Education diploma tuition fees suggested this be looked at to improve clarity. -CR observed that it might help to consider titles as her course on rural events managements could be re-titled events management as the principles are core. -FF queried how the marketing plan is linked in with the access and participation plan. PG provided assurance that the access and participation steering group is overseeing this and links in closely with the head of marketing and her team. LW provided further information on the HE marketing group and how it is aligned with the access and participation planning. LW also provided information on how the marketing activities have moved to remote events supported by digital campaigns and she gave examples of the activities that have taken place. -FF asked LW if the college is using current students to contact prospective students. LW explained the current students as part of offer holder days and there are plans to have students available to be contacted to answer queries. FF noted that these students will need to be well briefed. -LW noted that the fresher crew can post in the applicants' page and this can be very helpful.
7.	**PERFORMANCE MONITORING**
7.1	Student data report: The student data report was received for information and members noted that it had been considered as part of the business planning update discussion at item 6.
7.2	UCR Quality Improvement Plan monitoring: PG presented a summary of progress against the plan and he explained the context of Covid-19 and the impacts on some of the amber and the two red RAG rated

	items on the plan. Members thanked PG for the update and noted the overall level of assurance as good considering the unprecedented situation this year. FF questioned whether the faculty knows why the module evaluation surveys have a poor response rate this year. CR gave her view that it could be survey fatigue and it is better in her view to try and do as much face to face engagement as possible and also to do these surveys in class time to achieve a better response. CG acknowledged the challenges but noted that survey data collected is important data. YFD noted that the increasing use of rapid technology can allow for these more dynamic in class survey sessions. FF thanked everyone for their input and the report was received for information and assurance.
8.	**COLLEGE STRATEGIC RISK REVIEW**
8.1	Review HE related risks: The Principal, MC introduced the risk review report and updated members on the HE related risks. Members thanked MC for the comprehensive report that picked up Covid-19 impacts clearly and provided assurance that key HE related risks are identified and monitored.
9.	**WRITTEN RESOLUTIONS**
9.1	The committee noted that the items for approval by written resolution would be provided by email and recorded in the minutes at the next meeting.
10.	**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/ASSURANCE**
10.1	The following items were received by the meeting for information and assurance: • HE Academic Board meeting minutes • HE Student Complaints Monitoring Report • HE Quality and Curriculum Development Committee minutes • HE Learning, Teaching and Scholarship Committee minutes
11.	**MATTERS TO ESCALATE TO RISK REGISTER/ REPORT TO THE BOARD**
11.1	It was agreed to highlight the following in the Chair's report: -The Committee Terms of Reference is recommended for approval to the Board. -The Forward Plan of Committee Business was approved. -The good levels of assurance received on how UCR has adapted to the impact of Covid-19 and ensured continuation of study, quality, assessment and academic standards, including feedback on the student experience, acknowledging that there is work to do to ensure consistency of the student experience and address some areas. -The planning for delivery in the 2020-21 academic year and communication of this to students as soon as possible. -The good progress on the curriculum development with the support of the University and the welcome news of the joint working group to progress collaboration UCR and the University. The need to clearly articulate the UCR core proposition. -The challenge on recruitment for 2020-21 and the work on the business planning and offer to be further reviewed by the committee before its next usual meeting in the autumn term.

12.	**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
12.1	There was no other business reported to the meeting.
13.	**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
13.1	The date of the next planned meeting was confirmed as 26 November 2020 at 2pm and it was suggested that an additional meeting be held on 16 July to review HE marketing and business plan.

The meeting closed at 4.30pm.
Approved as a correct record 26.11.20