



**REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD**  
**HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2023 at 2.00pm**  
**Committee Room, Reaseheath Hall**

Present: Prof Chris Gaskell (independent, Chair) CG  
 Kalliopi Angelakopoulos (student) KA  
 Marcus Clinton (principal) MC  
 Prof Gary Crowe (independent) GC  
 Prof Paul Johnson (external, co-opted) PJ  
 Liz Watts (staff) LW

Attending: Peter Greenall (assistant principal and dean) PG  
 Sarah Hopkinson (assistant dean) SH  
 Debra Swift (academic development manager) DS  
 Thomas Furness (academic registrar) TF *via Teams*  
 Jackie Schillinger (company secretary) JS

Part A unless stated

Item	Content
<b>1.</b>	<b>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>
1.1	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. There were no apologies for absence.
1.2	The meeting was quorate and remained quorate throughout.
<b>2.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>
2.1	There were no declarations made in relation to the agenda items in the meeting.
<b>3.</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE/FORWARD PLAN OF BUSINESS 2023-24</b>
3.1	The committee considered its Terms of Reference (TOR), which had been endorsed via the document review in the recent external review of governance. The committee considered its plan of business against its TOR and considered it had met its responsibilities as set out in its TOR. It did not consider any changes necessary to its TOR at the current time.
<b>3.2</b>	<b>RESOLVED: To recommend the committee TOR for approval.</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2023 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.</b>
4.2	The rolling action log was reviewed for assurance that actions were completed or on track. On matters arising, it was noted that the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) panel were reportedly behind the schedule and so outcomes may be delayed. This could mean a short turnaround from receiving the provisional outcome to the TEF going public and so it might be harder to appeal and feedback in a short time frame and so the team would need to be ready for a quick turnaround if necessary.
<b>5.</b>	<b>STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING</b>
5.1	Quality Improvement Monitoring Report. SH presented the progress monitoring report, explaining the RAG ratings applied. She then took the meeting through the RED rated actions. Key points of discussion in the meeting were: -Awaiting NSS results to make a full evaluation and if they have had the intended impact.

5.2	<p>-Recruitment support actions have not had desired impact and so targets have been adjusted in the budget and business planning for next year.</p> <p>-IT infrastructure issue is still not resolved and is JISC dependent, now expected for the autumn term. Discussion focused on interim communications to student and the student governor noted that she had not picked up much dissatisfaction from students and noted that the previous blackspots for Wi-Fi had been resolved and so the covering was generally much better than last year.</p> <p>-National Student Survey (NSS) results are expected around early to mid-July but there is no confirmed date. In the interim, relying on the module evaluation survey which was adapted to NSS alignment and there are some assurances in that on improved student satisfaction.</p> <p>-Student engagement in learning resources, the library and learning spaces in the business hub is working well and the student governor gave her view that students are generally well engaged with the learning resources. She suggested it would be useful to look at a focus on resources for other courses not just land-based this may help with marketing. DS noted the importance of creating that collective practice and communal activity and feeling part of community, which impacts positively on all other survey responses.</p> <p>-SH updated the committee on the initial survey findings from semester 2 update. She reported that completion rate had dipped form semester 1. However, overall satisfaction is good – 80% or above, with results generally showing a significant improvement from last year’s NSS.</p> <p>- Staff student partnership forums are being taken forwards with a slightly less formal approach, which worked well early on but has seen a reduction later in the year, with an action for next year to keep this going. Overall, more consistency is needed across the faculty on student engagement, with the relaunch of the Student Association as the Student Union intended to support this. It was noted that participation is around 50% and PJ commented that tin his experience it is very hard to achieve higher than 50% and this is a good result. LW suggested SU links with the Chester SU and PG confirmed this already happens and that it will be valuable to engage with Chester as they refresh their student voice structure within their SU and ensure we are working on collaboration.</p> <p>- The complaints monitoring report provided positive assurance, with no OIA referrals.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: The committee takes assurance on the good level of student voice engagement and that the improvement actions carried out over the year show encouraging signs of positive impact on student satisfaction, pending NSS survey results, but there remain two important areas yet to be resolved, which are increasing student recruitment and completing the upgrade to the IT infrastructure.</b></p> <p><i>GC left the meeting</i></p>
6. 6.1	<p><b>6. STRATEGIC UPDATE</b></p> <p>Dean’s Update: PG provided an update on UCR performance with recruitment data. He noted there was some potential for some late applications this year, but the data is showing applications remain behind target. He explained that UCAS applications are down overall this year 1-2% and competitors down about 5-6%. However, UCR remains behind, and actions have been taken in year to mitigate impact of reduced numbers, including not replacing roles where these are not required and tight control of staff costs and non-pay costs. He emphasised that a good conversion rate would make a big difference and there has been a lot of work to maximise conversion. He summarised that overall, there will be a reduction in income into next year, but this has been factored into the budget setting for September the executive team consider the target is achievable. In discussion the key points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- disappointment that the internal progression data remains stubbornly low. PG and MC acknowledged that there is a significant piece of work to do going into September.</li> <li>- a review of competitor base and what the external view of UCR is would be useful</li> </ul>

<p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p>	<p>- discussion on USP, in relation to curriculum areas such as canine and vet nursing, overall culture and feel of UCR, and the ability to gain employment with a UCR degree.</p> <p>- the data indicated a drop in attendance, but retention has remained strong.</p> <p>- 44% declared learning need, with only half of those DSS funded so this poses a challenge to resources.</p> <p>- much more manageable staff turnover this year which has been a real positive.</p> <p>- Lots of work on learning walks this year, with the team very confident on the quality of teaching of a good solid standard with pockets of outstanding practice, with more work to achieve more consistency of outstanding practice.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: The committee takes assurance from the Dean’s Report that student retention, quality of provision and experience is good, but with a challenging picture remaining on internal progression and recruitment generally.</b></p> <p><i>GC rejoined the meeting.</i></p> <p>Curriculum Development Update Report: DS presented the continuing good progress in line with the curriculum strategy. She highlighted a few areas of challenge. This included an example of difficulties in recruiting specialist staff to the construction department in college to assist the UCR team to run a HNC in construction. Discussion followed on the need to look at the model and work with a large industry partner. MC confirmed this is the direction of travel and the college is making progress with some of the large industry partners in other areas. He noted the LSIP reflects this challenge, which is helpful and there is significant lobbying going in with government policy makers.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: The committee takes assurance on the continued good progress with UCR curriculum development in line with its strategy. However, there remains a key challenge in staff recruitment to specialist areas that will need to be carefully considered in formatting the next iteration of the college and UCR strategy and curriculum model.</b></p>
<p>7.</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p>	<p><b>ITEMS FOR APPROVAL</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED: The UCR Complaints Policy is recommended for approval, with no substantive changes.</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED: the UCR Admissions Policy is recommended for approval, with no substantive changes.</b></p>
<p>8</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p> <p>8.3</p> <p>8.4</p> <p>8.5</p>	<p><b>ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/ASSURANCE</b></p> <p>The Prevent Assurance Report was received for assurance on continued management of risk and compliance with regulatory requirements.</p> <p>The Access and Participation Report was received for assurance on condition of registration covered and awareness, but with a significant piece of work to do next year due to the regulatory requirements which present a particular burden on small providers.</p> <p>The Scholarly Activity/CPD report was received for assurance on the continued positive direction of travel.</p> <p>The Academic Board meeting minutes were received for information.</p> <p>The Board of Studies meeting minutes were received for assurance, and it was noted that the Board was operating effectively with more work to do to refine how it links into the university structure and process as smoothly as possible.</p>
<p>9.</p> <p>9.1</p>	<p><b>MATTERS TO ESCALATE TO RISK REGISTER/REPORT</b></p> <p>The committee agreed to report the following key points to the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The risk on student recruitment remains and the continues to support holding steady as the offer is there and curriculum developments are very strong.</li> <li>• The next stage of strategy development needs to ensure HE recruitment is on the front foot as part of the overall college strategic plan and the committee offers its support to the executive team, for example in an informal extra session on recruitment strategy if this would be helpful in the new academic year.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In terms of management of risk re mitigations and actions the committee takes assurance from the reporting in the meeting, with student satisfaction expected to be improved on last year, but with the amber risk rating remaining appropriate due to awaiting NSS results and to the need to increase student recruitment.</li> </ul>
<b>10.</b>	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>
10.1	The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 23 November 2023 at 2pm.
<b>11.</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>
11.1	KA thanked members for the opportunity to be involved in the committee and members thanked KA for her very valuable contribution to the committee and the student voice and wished her all the best for the future.

The meeting closed at 4.30pm

Confirmed as a correct record: 23 November 2023

Chair: Chris Gaskell