REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD
HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING
Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2023 at 2pm
Via Teams

Present: Prof Chris Gaskell (independent, Chair) CG
                  Casey Crispin (student) CC
                  Marcus Clinton (principal) MC
                  Prof Gary Crowe (independent) GC *(items 1 – 2.4 inclusive)*
                  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
                  Jackie Schillinger (company secretary) JS

PART A unless stated

item	Content
1.	**Opening items**
1.1	There were no apologies for absence. The meeting was quorate and remined quorate throughout.
1.2	**RESOLVED: Appointment of Casey Crispin to the committee and the appointment of Prof Chris Gaskell as Chair and Prof Gary Crowe as Vice Chair of the committee for the 2023-24 academic year.**
1.3	**RESOLVED: Approval of the minutes of meeting held on 22 June 2023 as a correct record.**
2.	**Holding executive leaders to account for educational performance and quality and the performance of staff**
2.1	Student governor report: CC provided a report on the student perspective in the first term so far, as well as the Student Union (SU) activities and approach to gathering the student voice this year. She provided an overview of some of the non-academic feedback that the SU have gathered, and this included disappointment in the availability of the UCR café due to staffing shortages in catering. The committee acknowledged that these important aspects of the student experience influence overall perceptions. Management accepted that the UCR students have been impacted by the HE Café not being available as often as it should because of college wide catering staffing shortages. Assurance was taken that management are listening and seeking to improve the situation. The committee supported a strategy to resolve this in working with the UCR student body to secure more student workers to support the café opening times and urged management to do all it could to keep this resource for UCR students open as much as possible.
2.2	Evaluation of National Student Survey Results: Academic Register TF presented a summary of the faculty's evaluation of the results for the 2022-23 year. Overall, these represented a significant improvement on previous years, exceeding the benchmark for UCR in almost every question and the results were higher than the national average. The results were welcomed as a very positive indicator by the committee, with thanks to the UCR team for all their work in achieving this. Of note was the success in improving student satisfaction with the library service which was a key area of focus for the committee the previous year and is now strong. However, further focus is needed in several areas, reflected in the quality improvement plan provided to the meeting to enable UCR to build on this success and improve further. The team are conducting focus group work on areas of the survey to fully understand some weaker areas. The committee requested further information on one of these areas,

	which was the variance between the BSc and Foundation degree programmes and this analysis and resulting actions were agreed as an action to bring back to the next committee meeting. *ACTION: NSS feedback variations between BSc and Foundation investigated and reported at next meeting.*
2.3	Interim Results First Impressions Survey: TF then gave an initial update on the feedback from the first impression survey. This showed a good response rate and good engagement. Overall, the survey results showed positive feedback in many areas with a strong emphasis on community, and with the lower scores related to the café and HE social spaces. The committee welcomed the student survey feedback overall and noted those areas of catering and student social space as ones that management is sighted on. One aspect the committee considered very important was the quality of communication back to students from the outcome of student voice surveys, ensuing that a strong message on 'you said, we did' is received by students.
2.4	Draft Self-Evaluation Document (SED) Report 2022-23 and QIP 2023-24: Dean of HE, PG presented a headline summary of the SED and QIP, both comprehensive documents having been provided to the committee in advance. Following review of these reports, the committee thanked PG and his team for all their good work, evidenced in the SED. They supported the QIP priorities and considered the process effective to support continuous improvement and approved the reporting to be made to the full board for approval. On next steps, PG explained the key areas of focus are the significant piece of work needed on the Access and Participation Plan, the graduate employability and career progression strategy as set out in the presentation to the meeting, and the work on student recruitment as well as development of the offer into higher and degree level apprenticeships.
2.5	**RESOLVED: The UCR Self-Evaluation Document 2022-23 provides a comprehensive overview of UCR educational performance and quality of provision and is recommended for approval alongside the quality improvement targets and KPI for academic quality for 2023-24.**
2.6	UCR Compliments and Complaints Monitoring: Assurance provided in the reporting on a low number of complaints and effective handling and resolution with no completion of procedures letters issued in 2022-23. So far this year, the TellUCR form for student feedback has been used well with prompt responses to all student feedback submitted. The UCR café was noted as a recurring theme as discussed earlier in the meeting and an important issue to resolve.
2.7	Learning Gain and Employability Strategy: Assistant Dean SH provided an overview of the new learning gain and employability strategy which set out the UCR approach to enhancing graduate employability/further study. Members received the presentation for information and looked forward to seeing how this will develop.
2.8	Strategic Risk Monitoring: In the committee review of higher education provision, the level of risk exposure on a decline in quality and student outcomes for UCR was considered low, with the recent TEF outcome of Bronze with elements of Silver. Whilst this moves UCR from Silver overall to Bronze until the next review, it remains solid assurance on a good level of quality, especially as the latest much improved national student survey results had not been released at the time of the review and this would have strengthened the submission further. The committee also reviewed the student recruitment picture which remains challenging. One recurring area of scrutiny for the committee was internal progression, and the committee took assurance that this is a priority action in the UCR quality improvement plan for 2023-24. One aspect of the plan that was welcomed was the rolling out a successful trial in one area of provision using UCR lecturers to teach at level 3 to seek to raise aspirations and build engagement to support progression from FE to HE. It was also noted that the increase in T level students at FE should also support progression. Whilst curriculum development continues to be strong, the committee emphasised that the future offer is a key strategic decision within the context of the development of higher and degree apprenticeships. The committee recommended that the new college and UCR strategy being developed this year needs a clear pathway to develop the higher education offer in a way that can deliver growth.
2.9	**RESOLVED: To report the committee's review of strategic risk within its remit to the Audit Committee and in doing so to emphasise the need for the new overall college and UCR strategy to set out a clear pathway to develop the higher education offer in a way that can deliver growth.**

3.	Governance
3.1	Impact Evaluation against Core Functions/ TOR • Recommended approval of the UCR Self-Evaluation Document • Recommended approval of the quality improvement targets and KPI for academic quality. • Assurance that the outcome of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) review resulted in a Bronze award overall with elements of Silver. • Significant improvement in NSS results for 2022-23 and particular success in improving student satisfaction with the library service which was a key area of focus for the committee last year and is now strong. Further focus to build on this success and improve further. • Student satisfaction this year could be impacted negatively by factors to do with the overall environment including the catering services. Assurance was taken that management are listening and seeking to improve the situation, with a strategy to resolve this in working with the UCR student body to secure more student workers to support the café • Management to focus on the quality of its communication to students in terms of enhancing how it feeds back to them from the outcome of student voice surveys, ensuing that a stronger message on 'you said, we did' is received by students. • Review of the student recruitment picture which remains challenging. One recurring area of scrutiny was internal progression, and this is a priority action in the UCR quality improvement plan for 2023-24.
4.	**Consent Agenda**
4.1	**RESOLVED: The following items were received for assurance:** • **TEF outcome** • **Final QIP 2022-23** • **Access and Participation Plan Progress Report** • **Curriculum Development Report** • **UCR Academic Board minutes** • **UCR Student Experience Committee (formerly Board of Studies) minutes**
5.	**Closing items**
5.1	Any other business: There was no further business reported to the meeting.
5.2	**RESOLVED: The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 7 March 2024 at 2pm.**

The meeting closed at 4.10pm
Confirmed as a correct record: 7 March 2024   Chair: Chris Gaskell