



REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD
HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2025 at 2.00pm
Committee Room, Reaseheath College

- Present: Jane Artess (independent, co-opted, chair)
 Claire Blanchard (independent)
 Prof Gary Crowe (independent)
 Prof Paul Johnson (external, co-opted)
 Marcus Clinton (principal)
- Attending: Summer Lakin (SU president) for student committee member
 Niamh Macloughlin (student) (*item 2.1*)
 Jane Nickisson (dean)
 Sarah Hopkinson (assistant dean)
 Neil Moran (head of academic standards and admissions)
 Jackie Schillinger (head of governance)

PART A unless stated

item	Content
2pm – 2.30pm	
Higher Education Marketing Focus - led by Liz Watts, Head of Marketing	
Short presentation and discussion key points:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing the brands together – one Reaseheath brand • Different channels need different approaches. Use of influencers. Not in a structured way, but it does happen organically. • Recommend more focus on use of influencers/high profile people, as well as students/alumni in sectors we serve, and monitoring/responding to online forum opportunities. • Risk appetite – need to be bold and brave and do things differently • Recommend track what impact these activities are having/what people are seeing from the outside • Longer lead timing into clearing this year. • New website is being user tested, for example with school work experience students. 	
1.	Opening items
1.1	Apologies and Declarations: Apologies were received and accepted from Francesca Cooper. SU president and student governor Summer Lakin attended the meeting. Student Niamh MacLoughlin also attended to share her experience of her course with the committee. There were no declarations made to the meeting. The meeting was quorate and remained quorate throughout.
1.2	RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.
1.3	Matters arising: The committee confirmed that any matters arising were covered by the agenda items.
1.4	RESOLVED: The minutes of the deep dive SEND meeting held on 8 May 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

1.5	<p>Matters arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported understanding of the amount and type of support, especially in FE that is supporting that progression and transition into HE. Guidance from Chester on late disclosure is helpful. As a small team in UCR, able to provide a high level of support that goes beyond the DSA support. Useful joint themed deep dive meetings with the Quality and Standards Committee. Next year consider another joint session.
Corporation Core Function Accountabilities	
2.	Holding executive leaders to account for educational performance and quality and the performance of staff
2.1	<p>Student Experience: Student Niamh MacLoughlin shared her experience of her Canine degree programme with the committee to bring to life the student experience. She shared that she is progressing into work with Reaseheath as a kennel assistant, once she graduates. The committee thanked Niamh for sharing her experience. Discussion followed and committee members asked several questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was your support like before you came here? Spectacular, before was very personal right from the earliest time I got in touch and came to visit and continued from there. What was your experience like of settling into life at Reaseheath? Reaseheath chaplain runs a weekly club called Rooted, he and his wife cook for students and a homely meal. I joined a church in the local area and have made a lot of friends in the Nantwich community. I did student ambassador work, learned about the farm and other life experiences, lots of little things. Also, others who do go out, go to all the evening events etc, the opposite to me, they also had a fantastic time. And on your course? The Canine course offers very practical and real work experiences as well as lots of trips and visits, including to Crufts. I presented at the Newcastle undergraduate research conference and the Canine conference. I never thought I would achieve this. I could not even talk to anyone when I arrived, now I am in a governor meeting! What could make the experience even better? I had the opportunity to speak to someone before I came here, lots of questions, as I knew her, but this would be good to put in place for everyone as peer mentoring perhaps. The college is keen to put this into place. SU president Summer Lakin confirmed that she thought that the student life offer is very good, with buses from campus to town and back on student night, making sure students are safe. She considered the student support quite unique, including with early access to move into residence being important to help those students who need it.
2.2	<p>Student Experience: The committee also received a variety of programme area updates from managers, which provided insight into the student experience in those areas, including performance, successes and challenges and areas for further support and development.</p>
2.3	<p>Student Engagement Plan: The committee reviewed the draft plan in line with its responsibility in its terms of reference to: “Ensure that appropriate systems are in place to listen to the views of students, respond effectively and ensure outcomes are effectively communicated back to the student body”. In summary the plan’s main objectives were set out as delivering a purposeful student experience and journey throughout their time at University Centre Reaseheath, as well as aligning the approach with regulatory bodies, awarding bodies and Reaseheath’s strategic initiatives with the plan’s priorities being:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic Student Support • Student Centred Communication • Student Participation & Partnership • Data Driven Student Engagement.
2.4	<p>Questions and key points raised by the committee in discussion about the Student Engagement Plan were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you measure success? By adopting a data-driven approach and linking all recommended actions from the engagement plan to measurable success indicators. These include key metrics, such as event participation, student feedback, continuation rates, and engagement with support services, with proposed measurable success indicators year-on-year. • How will you adapt and tailor your approach to reach different students so that you promote an inclusive approach? In line with our Access and Participation Plan, we can use these data sources to ensure equality of opportunity for students with specific characteristics, for example by tracking the progression outcomes of our disabled students using internal data, the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard and the Student Outcomes (B3) dashboard. • Have you considered the importance of ‘you said we did’ in your approach so that students see the value in engaging with your initiatives? Students are more likely to engage in feedback if they can see they’re having a tangible impact. This will be achieved by sharing the following with our students. Summarising trends, feedback themes and actions taken; feedback and survey participation rates; an annual Student Engagement Report. This information should be presented in a way that’s clear, engaging, and accessible to all students. This includes offering it in both printable and downloadable formats, using infographics and videos on campus screens, and providing an executive summary for those who prefer a quick overview of the key insights. • How does this sit with what you already have in place? It builds on what we already have and it will be linked with the existing documents and links to the college overall strategic 4Es (Excite; Engage; Enrich; Enable) and the OfS condition. • What is the next stage? To share this with students for further consultation and then come back with a final version. Working with the SU – what things would you do – we will look at this in student consultation, we want the SU’s ideas. • Is there a resource implication? We have a realignment of staff focus to student engagement and experience and this new team structure will provide more focused resource. This will be their remit, with clear milestones. • Suggestion to add more in about what happens after graduation, and this is what previous students did and how we provide this information on graduate outcomes. Use a career readiness survey, such as that used in the University of Leeds’ Careers Registration Project. The team would take this suggestion away and thanked the committee for its valuable input.
2.5	RESOLVED: The committee supported the student engagement approach outlined in the Student Engagement Plan and looked forward to receiving the final version following student consultation.
2.6	Quality Improvement Plan 2024-25 progress monitoring, including quality dashboard data: The key points highlighted were:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student recruitment improvement: Currently up 22 on first year firm acceptances. Top Ups are also up, which is a key part of the strategy. There has been lots of engagement and recruitment activity via links with other colleges. For example, a visit next week with 44 college students. 48-hour turnaround offer response with a personal approach. Extensive internal progression activity. Earlier intervention to guide the marketing team to much more HE specific activity this year, and earlier clearing strategy. • Student outcomes improvement: Intervention strategies have taken place, but the data system needed to interrogate this still needs more work. However, module assessment boards have collated this to feed into end of year programme committee meetings and so we will get a sense of student and programme performance is at this point – we are on target to meet the targets we set. 85% continuation and improvement on last year. Completion rates 86% and over target set. Retention 94% and over target. Student outcomes improving in all areas. Mark book module is RAG rated red, but this will be in place for next academic year. • Do you allow retrieval? Yes, it was introduced this academic year. We found students have not made as much use of it than they might have done. It is optional now, so might consider it being mandatory, as others have done in the sector. There are a range of views on this, but in summary we are looking at how we can make more use if it. • Quality of teaching, learning and assessment: Teaching and learning, external feedback re assessment and feedback, use of generative AI. These priority areas are feeding into the staff development workshops on use of generative AI and using assessment as engagement to motivate students to continue to attend, submit and achieve. Inclusive practice is currently RAG rated amber, which is about being able to evidence impact and using data. Visibility of SU in engagement is addressed in the student engagement plan. • Curriculum development: Good progress on development priorities, with lots of support from Chester on the RCVS reaccreditation, with thanks to Chester colleagues. The outcome should be known in the next 2 weeks. Numbers are looking very strong for vet nursing this year. Course numbers good for the sector, some lower, but have some shared modules so this helps. • Do you have a January start option? It is always something to consider going forwards, but it is not planned for 2025-26. • Data dashboard snapshot covered applications, offers and acceptances. Retention 92%. No further withdrawals since March. 1 case of academic misconduct. No complaints needing escalation. Attendance overall 81%, dropped off now towards the end of the year. Vet nursing attendance over 90%.
2.7	RESOLVED: Overall, good progress made on the quality improvement targets set, substantial assurance on a continuing strong student experience and outcomes with student complaints reporting providing substantial assurance on resolution of concerns at an early informal stage
3.	Strategy
3.1	<p>Dean's Report: The dean provided a strategic overview of the external environment, regulatory update, curriculum planning update as well as update on UCR strategy including the strategic alliance with the University of Chester Partnership. Key points raised included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key areas to watch are the capital bidding opportunities which will be coming out shortly, new guidance on the quality code and consultation response. Members of the committee offered support in critical friend input into these responses, which was welcomed by the Dean, with thanks.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The OfS have introduced Condition E, which comes into force in August 2025, to regulate how higher education institutions (HEIs) in England prevent and address harassment and sexual misconduct. This regulation aims to create safer environments for students by establishing clear requirements for handling these issues. UCR have created a policy which meets the requirements of the legislation and the condition of registration and will be implemented from August following approval. Currently this will apply to Higher Education students, however, there will be further discussions with OfS to clarify the position in relation to a complaints scheme that will be shared by FE students in colleges delivering HE. Moving to a non-exclusive associate college arrangement with the University of Chester, with a fee structure to be phased in over time, with the proposal coming forward to the Board meeting in July for in principle approval.
3.2	RESOLVED: The committee reported substantial assurance on the management of strategic risk to quality and student outcomes from the reporting in the meeting, noting good engagement and response to the emerging regulatory environment and welcome progress on agreeing the strategic way forward moving to an associate college relationship with the University of Chester.
4.	Items for approval/assurance
4.1	UCR Policies Review: RESOLVED: The following policies are approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UCR Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Expression UCR Admissions Policy UCR Contextual Admissions Policy UCR Complaints Policy
4.2	RESOLVED: UCR Academic Board Minutes, with accompanying Access and Participation Plan summary was received for information (Action: APP progress to be reviewed as agenda item at next meeting).
4.3	RESOLVED: UCR Faculty Education and Student Experience Committee Minutes were received for information.
4.4	RESOLVED: The Reaseheath College HESES data return was received for assurance of compliance with Office for Students' requirements.
5.	Governance
5.1	RESOLVED: The committee was satisfied that it had met its terms of reference and planned cycle of business for the year, with the recommendation that the committee focus its remit on the student experience, quality of teaching learning and assessment, student outcomes and regulatory compliance and student recruitment monitoring against the quality improvement plan. It recommended its reviewed terms of reference aligned against the strategic 4Es for approval by the Board. (attached below)
6	Closing items
6.1	RESOLVED: The committee approved the reporting of the HSE prosecution outcome to the Office for Students as a reportable event.
6.2	RESOLVED: The date of next meeting was provisionally set as Thursday 6 November 2025 [<i>post meeting note: date changed to 3 November 2025</i>]

The meeting closed at 4.15pm

Approved as a correct record 3 November 2025

Jane Artess, Chair