

**Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 21 November 2024 at 4.00pm**

**Present physically:** C Chua, Governor - **Chair** M Searcey, Governor  
H Arnold, Committee member N Savvas, CEO and Governor

**Present virtually:** C Higgins, Governor - **Vice Chair** (part) R Hetherington, Governor

**In attendance:** A Hurrell, Group Head of Quality Assurance  
A Corston, Group Head of Data and Analytics Practice  
C Shaw, Group Sixth Form Principal  
K Brown, Group Assistant Principal – Teacher Education  
L Hunt, Head of Student Experience  
L Moody, Group Principal University and Professional Development  
L Parish, Group Assistant Principal – Apprenticeships  
R Bamford, Group Assistant Principal – Quality  
S Appleby, Head of Higher Education Curriculum Delivery  
S Gales, Governance Professional  
T Lloyd, Executive Director Skills, Innovation and Strategic Development

**Apologies:** J Gazzard, Governor  
S Minns, Group Head of Admissions and Enrolment

**Absent:**

**Action**

**1. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair**

The Governance Professional informed that the Corporation appointed C Chua as Chair and C Higgins as Vice Chair for 2024/25, at its meeting in July 2024.

**2. Declaration of Interests and Apologies for absence**

C Chua declared his role as an employee of University of Cambridge's Judge Business School and, H Arnold and M Searcey declared their roles as employees of University of East Anglia. No other conflicts of interest in relation to the items of the agenda were declared.

Apologies for absence were received from J Gazzard.

Members introduced themselves and welcomed H Arnold.

The Chair explained the rationale for the wider remit of the Committee to include oversight of Apprenticeships, and confirmed that specialist training was delivered on 5 November 2024 and is available on GovernorHub for reference.

The Chair congratulated staff for their successful Ofsted inspection and explained that several of the agenda items are a verbal update rather than a paper, in recognition of the significant work involved with an inspection. The Executive confirmed that papers would be provided in the future.

**3. Terms of Reference, Committee Skillset and Agenda Planner**

Members received, considered and **approved** the Terms of Reference, Committee Skillset and Agenda Planner provided, and **agreed to recommend** to the Corporation.

**4. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2024 were **agreed** as an accurate record.

The Governance Professional noted that in June 2024, the Committee electronically reviewed and **approved** three policies (Student Charter, Student Disciplinary and Non-Academic Complaints) and recommended them to the Corporation for approval.

5. **Matters Arising from the meeting on 15 June 2024**

Two of the five matters arising from the previous meeting were complete, two were closed and one is ongoing.

6. **First Hand Feedback**

M Searcey feedback on his visit to Abbeygate Sixth Form College and R Hetherington fed back on his visit to Exning Primary School.

The Chair encouraged members to visit UPD for a first-hand visit to see the Apprenticeship and HE provision.

C Higgins joined the meeting at 4.10pm

7. **2023/24 US Self-Evaluation Document (inc. NSS results and complaints and compliments)**

Members received and considered the paper provided which included the key achievements of 2023/24 and ongoing challenges identified as part of the MRE Action Plan for 2024/25; detailed analysis of 2023/24 student data by course type, EDIM, applications/enrolments, progression/completion, attainment; concerns/complaints and appeals; student voice both by course and NSS; range of provision; quality and standards, and governance. S Appleby summarised the key points.

The HE team thanked the Data and Analytics team for their help collating the report and for improving the accuracy of the databases.

S Appleby informed the committee of the current enrolment, continuation between levels of study, and progression from WSC sixth form and adult courses, into our HE offer.

Members commended the clarity of our HE strategy and queried the potential number of students who could progress into our HE courses from the EEG. L Moody explained that we are currently collating this information from intended destination information of our Group sixth form students. L Moody confirmed that we continue to market to prospective adults locally and explained how we have changed our approach and the language we use to break down preconceptions and to promote the benefits of HE study.

Members also commended the team on a good start in properly integrating the HE provision with the activities of the apprenticeship team and the rest of the College, the final step in transferring the provision overseen by the UoS with provision overseen by WSC.

The CEO informed the committee of plans to review our sixth form and HE curriculum to ensure there are appropriate and accessible progression pathways from our sixth form provision into our HE courses. The CEO explained that we are also working to create curriculum links between sixth form teachers and HE lecturers, so there is a deep understanding of our HE offer and the benefits for students. Moreover, we continue to ensure each HE course has strong links to businesses. The CEO advised this will take time to fully embed and to see the impact on enrolments.

Members queried how and when it would be appropriate to monitor progress on the new strategy and approach. S Appleby and L Moody summarised the significant progress to date.

The CEO suggested that for Curriculum Development we bring a paper outlining, for each HE course, the progression routes from our sixth form courses, the links to business and career outcomes for our students, the links between sixth form teachers and HE lecturers, as well the training and personal development of our HE teaching staff. The Committee agreed that this approach would help to address ongoing concerns about student enrolments and financial outcomes of HE. The driving ethos for

T Lloyd  
S Appleby

HE is consistent with the rest of the group --- putting students first and giving students the right course at the right time. For many of our sixth form students they would benefit from HE opportunities elsewhere, which we would encourage, but for others we would expect WSC to provide them with the best opportunity to study at this level.

L Hunt summarised the NSS results and noted the Table 1 results significantly improved compared with last year. Members discussed the Table 2 results and queried the reasons for the variance of the results between the courses. S Appleby explained the results for Counselling were expected given the timing of the NSS and the ongoing issues with the course management. S Appleby explained the significant work done to improve the course content and leadership, which should improve the 2025 NSS result.

Members commended the Early Childhood Studies NSS results.

Members discussed the factors which impact the organisation and management NSS section results. S Appleby explained how we are working with staff, to strengthen course leadership, and with students to improve communication and establish realistic expectations. The CEO explained that by creating stronger links to industry, staff can showcase how the curriculum links to employability and progression. L Moody added that we are also empowering staff to tailor the courses as trusted professional leaders, which is helping to improve morale and the culture of leadership.

Members **approved** the Self Evaluation Document and **agreed to recommend it to the Corporation**, subject to the amendment of a typo of the title on page 7.

S Appleby

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

### 8. KPI Report inc. student progress and retention/attrition

Members received and considered the paper provided which included analysis of the qualification achievement rates compared to the national rate, over time and by course, geographical spread of apprentices, high grades over time, performance against the accountability framework KPIs, programmes at risk and actions taken, proposed new apprenticeship delivery, student and employer voice.

L Parish summarised the performance of our apprenticeship provision in 2023/24 and informed WSC apprentices had a 69% achievement rate (compared to the national rate of 54%) making WSC the highest performing GFE College for apprenticeships.

L Parish explained the actions taken in relation to programmes at risk, and impact of the actions taken.

Members commended the high standards and focus on continuous improvement.

Members discussed the apprenticeship student and employer voice and queried the reasons for the student communication results. L Parish explained that while the apprentice review survey is relatively new (compared to the employer review) student responses were not always focussed on their experience in 2023/24, so the results were adversely impacted by historic and now resolved issues. L Parish noted that student voice was also collated as part of the recent Ofsted inspection which resulted in strong and positive feedback.

S Appleby outlined the improvements in HE student and employer voice, and gave an example of a local engineering firm which had concerns, and is now a strong partner.

### 9. Access and Participation Plan inc. Investment Monitoring

Members received and considered the paper provided which detailed the objectives of the new 2025-29 Access and Participation Plan (APP), and of the associated Bursary and Hardship Funds for 2025-26. The paper also detailed the planned vs. actual Investment Spend in 2023/24.

L Hunt informed the committee that analysis of the actual spend in 2023/24 is still being finalised. Members queried why this is ongoing. L Hunt explained that the data is being checked and verified.

Members queried the significance of a query from the OfS in relation to the new APP. L Hunt explained the nature of the query, the response given, and the likely next steps.

**10. Curriculum Development (inc. progression pathways and HE course viability)**

Members received and considered the paper provided which detailed the HTQ, HNC, HND, and Degree offer; curriculum progression routes from our sixth form provision; external promotional activities; commercial opportunities and developments; CMA compliance; OfS B1 compliance and Tuition Fee information.

Members noted this item was discussed as part of agenda item 7 above.

Members queried if our psychology course is accredited by BPS. S Appleby explained it is not; however we are exploring this and plan to develop a proposal for consideration by the Senior Executive Team relating to the professional accreditation.

Members commended the diverse range of courses in development, however queried whether these courses can be delivered by our current staff or whether new staff will need to be sourced and appointed. S Appleby confirmed our current staff are suitably trained and experienced, and there is sufficient capacity to deliver the new courses to small cohorts, although if cohorts are larger we might need to recruit additional staff.

Members queried how we are upskilling sixth form teaching staff to deliver HE, which requires different approaches and skills. S Appleby and L Hunt explained that we plan to replicate the best practice at UEA and operate peer-review observations to inform the training and upskilling offer. L Hunt explained that these will be supported by the Group's quality teams. L Moody added that we are working with UEA to offer staff university-specific training linked to new regulation requirements – e.g. sexual harassment and free speech.

**11. OfS Compliance Report**

A Corston provided a verbal update on OfS Compliance and informed we will submit the Graduate Outcomes Survey data return in December.

**SKILLS NEED**

**12. Skills need update (Apprenticeship Programmes)**

T Lloyd noted that skills was considered and commended as part of WSC's Ofsted inspection. T Lloyd informed the committee of plans to further develop and enhance our links to employers and their influence on the curriculum design and delivery, and to share this best practice across the Group.

C Chua, as Governor Lead for Skills, commended the strength of the provision, though queried how we can use these links to enhance our HE provision and opportunities for students. T Lloyd explained that we have a diverse range of established forums and feedback routes to engage with employers, which often varies by sector to best meet their needs. As such, if we utilise these rather than try to re-invent the wheel for HE, we can enrich links between our HE courses to local and national employers in their sector to enhance the curriculum design and delivery with current industry practice, language, skills and behaviours so students graduate work ready and with connections to businesses.

**BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES  
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**13. Student Experience inc:**

- Voice and student surveys
- Attendance

- Involvement with the community and competitions
- Enrichment Opportunities and Character Strengths
- Careers IAG (inc. provisional destinations)
- The personal development curriculum (*Apprenticeship only*)

Members received and considered the paper provided for our US provision, and L Hunt summarised the key points.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

### 14. Teacher and staff development (inc. EDI)

K Brown introduced herself and outlined plans to work with the Apprenticeship and HE teams to create a tailored approach to CPD to meet their distinct needs, and to use the learnings from our quality assurance work to inform our teacher and staff development offer.

### 15. Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement

R Bamford outlined work to collaboratively create a robust quality assurance framework with the Apprenticeship and HE teams and noted the strong emphasis on conducting quality assurance work which improves and enhances quality.

### 16. Recruitment (forecast and planned enrolments)

Members received and **noted** the paper provided.

### 17. Risk Register Extract

Members received an extract of the updated Risk Register, with the risks relating to financial matters highlighted. Of these risks, post-mitigation, there were **1 red** and **2 amber** risks.

Members reviewed the risks and **felt assured** by the mitigations proposed.

### 18. Any Other Business

- **Review of the meeting**

Members fed back that the meeting was effective and positive, with active discussion and engagement.

The meeting closed at 5.55pm