

**Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 6 March 2025 at 4.00pm**

**Present physically:** C Chua, Governor - **Chair**

**Present virtually:** C Higgins, Governor - **Vice Chair** M Searcey, Governor  
H Arnold, Committee member R Hetherington, Governor

**In attendance:** A Hurrell, Group Head of Quality Assurance  
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 Vice Principal – Quality  
S Appleby, Head of Higher Education Curriculum Delivery  
S Gales, Governance Professional  
S Minns, Group Head of Admissions and Enrolment  
T Lloyd, Executive Director – Skills, Innovation and Strategic Development

**Apologies:** J Gazzard, Governor  
N Savvas, CEO and Governor

**Absent:**

**1. 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 and N Savvas.

**2. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2024**

The minutes of the meeting on 21 November 2024 were **agreed** as an accurate record, subject to an amendment to reflect that H Arnold attended in person.

The Governance Professional **noted** that in November 2024 the Committee approved the Internal Progression to Higher Education policy.

**3. Matters Arising from the meeting on 21 November 2024**

Two of the three matters arising from the previous meeting were complete and one will be presented in the summer term.

**4. First Hand Feedback**

Members received and considered the feedback form from visits to UPD.

C Chua and H Arnold fed back on their visits in January 2025.

Members commended the continuous improvement of the appearance and facilities of the campus.

**5. Committee membership, skillset and training needs**

Members received and considered the report provided which summarised the membership, experience and skillset of the Committee, and the training undertaken.

**Action**

Gov. Prof.

Members discussed whether the Committee would benefit from a member with skills and/or apprenticeship expertise. Members asked the Nominations and Governance Committee to consider appointing additional members to this Committee.

Nom. & Gov.  
Committee

L Hunt informed that the OfS has specific HE governance training. Members asked L Hunt to share information with the Governance Professional, for this Committee to complete.

L Hunt  
App & HE  
EEC

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

### 6. Apprenticeship termly report

Members received and considered the paper provided which included information on qualification achievement rates, learners beyond planned end date, retention and withdrawals, breaks in learning, quality and programme performance, personal development and employer engagement, recruitment and financial position. L Parish summarised the key points.

Members queried the difference between learners beyond planned end date and actual end date. L Parish explained the two terms.

Members commended the strength of the apprenticeship provision and the clarity of the report.

Members queried if/how new government policy may impact the apprenticeship sector. L Parish noted that the reduction in minimum length of stay from 12 months to 8 months is slightly contentious and could result in unintended consequences, however equally they could create new opportunities – e.g. students which opted to take a gap year, could in 8 months complete an apprenticeship and gain real work experience to support them onto their next steps. L Parish noted that the introduction of foundation apprenticeships could help increase skills in critical sectors such as construction. Members queried if the changes to employer national insurance contributions will impact employers' willingness to have apprentices. L Parish noted that if the apprentice is under 25 years old the employers do not pay national insurance contributions, so this has not impacted in this way. L Moody noted we are also working closely with employers to develop more high apprenticeships to better support the needs of local businesses.

Members commended the high retention rate.

Members queried what are the concerns relating to Apprenticeships. L Parish explained that the planned changes to the apprenticeship levy could reduce employers demand for apprenticeships and move towards full cost courses. L Parish noted if this did occur, we feel WSC is well placed given our interconnected University and Professional Development courses. L Moody noted that the change to the rules around functional skills could result in students not enrolling for and achieving critical core skills which would help them to progress.

Members queried what is meant by the 'combined QAR'. L Parish informed that this includes the subcontracted NHS trust provision. L Parish explained that is normal for the NHS provision's QAR to be phased slightly later than our non-subcontracted provision and L Moody confirmed the QAR is not a concern at this stage.

### 7. Higher Education termly report

Members received and considered the paper provided which included information on on-course progress and retention, student voice, student support activities, student conduct, attendance, access and participation plan, and curriculum development. L Hunt and S Appleby summarised the key points.

S Appleby informed that there are early signs that the internal progression to higher education policy is having the intended effect of increasing applications and enrolments.

Members commended the clarity of the report.

Members discussed the low response rate to NSS and queried what actions are being taken to increase responses. L Hunt summarised the strategies used to promote the NSS to students.

Members reflected on the student course achievement data, and queried what support is being put in place to drive quality improvements in HE teaching to support student achievement. L Hunt noted the approach taken is explained in agenda item 9 and is linked to our course validation cycle, to ensure we continuously review and reflect of the quality of our provision. S Appleby explained that staff recognise the link between prior attainment, the effectiveness of student's study skills and their personal circumstances/commitments, and student achievement. Which is why in addition to improving teaching quality, we also work to improve analysis of student's starting points and their in-year progress, so we can develop and put in place effective support and interventions which help students to achieve.

Members commended the success of the Edmund's Open Lecture Series, though queried the purpose of them – e.g. are they enrichment for our HE students or for our broader community. L Moody explained the dual purpose of them, noting they are both for our students and community.

Members queried what other enrichment activities are available for our HE students. L Hunt and S Appleby gave examples of the enrichment activities – e.g. charity events, clubs, optional modules, etc. Members asked to receive a report on these enrichment activities in the future.

L Hunt

Members queried whether the Edmund's Open Lecturer Series is delivered by guest lecturers or if students and staff deliver lectures. L Moody explained that previous sessions were delivered by guest lecturers and staff, and confirmed the team are looking to expand it further to interested speakers which could include students.

Members queried whether leaders RAG rate courses by concern and analyse progression data to identify emerging trends/concerns. L Hunt confirmed that this is currently a manual process however informed that the data team are working to create a data report for this purpose.

Members queried whether leaders track internal progression/continuation between Level 4, Level 5, Level 6, etc. to identify emerging trends/concerns. L Hunt confirmed that this is currently a manual process however informed that the data team are working to create a data report for this purpose.

Members queried what the Children's university is. L Hunt explained that the Children's university provide additional activities for children in deprived areas, to experience of university to nurture high aspirations.

Members queried what triggers the need for a re-assessment. L Hunt explained that students who do not achieve the pass mark first time, they are eligible to retry the assessment for a second time however their achievement is capped at the pass level. L Hunt explained the internal and external verification processes.

Members queried why there are higher re-assessments in Psychology / Criminology / Sociology, and what support is put in place for students. L Hunt discussed the ongoing developments in these courses and explained how personal academic tutors discuss with students one-to-one how they did on their assessment, areas for improvement, and direct to any required additional support (e.g. academic skills or pastoral support). Members discussed the transition to higher level study can be quite an unanticipatedly big change for some students and discussed the need for robust baselining and study skills support.

Members discussed the practice used in school provision for governance members to observe leaders quality assurance mechanism via 'deep dives', and queried if this would be a useful extension of the Governance First Hand visits, to help strengthen awareness of the quality framework. The Chair reflected that we could also have deeper discussions at future committee meetings on particular subjects /industries (e.g. sciences, humanities, construction industry etc.) to understand the progression pathways to and from HE. The Executive to consider.

Members queried how the 2023/24 Year-End and Destinations Surveys were incorrectly assigned, and what action has been taken. L Hunt explained that this was the first year of trialling an in-house survey, which didn't work but was hoped to give us earlier access to the data from the OfS destination survey. L Hunt confirmed that we still have the OfS destination survey data and will use this until we are confident in the reliability of any in-house survey. Members queried why the EEG data dashboard does not yet work for the HE data, and when it would work for HE data. L Hunt explained that the EEG data dashboard is still being developed and confirmed that the data team are working to fix the issues. L Hunt confirmed that we can access our HE data, however it is not yet fully integrated within the wider college data dashboard.

Members commended the development of the progression pathway maps and queried how these are being used. S Appleby explained how these have been used to help plan future HTQ courses.

#### 8. **Teacher and staff development**

Members received and considered the paper provided which informed on plans to align the professional development dates for 2025/26, to recruit to our teacher education programmes, update on teacher training and the development of an Access to HE Diploma for Education and Training, the implementation of a quality framework for development and improvement, to use IRIS Connect for lesson observations, an update on teaching and learning support, and an update on collaboration with external education partners. K Brown summarised the key points.

Members queried what the Bury Education Partnership is. K Brown explained what the group is and its purpose.

Members queried whether there are requests from further education staff to upskill to teach higher education. K Brown informed that this is not common.

#### 9. **Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement**

Members received and considered the paper provided which informed on monitoring review and enhancement, internal quality review, peer review, HE professional development and assessment rubrics.

Members queried the rationale for the peer reviews. S Appleby informed that these align to the HE professional standards to identify areas for improvement and best practice sharing.

Members queried the purpose of the UEA Academic Link. L Hunt explained how we work with the UEA Academic Link.

Members queried when Counselling will be peer reviewed. S Appleby informed it will take place over by easter. Members discussed the history of the Counselling course and asked for an update on the peer review at the next meeting.

S Appleby

#### 10. **Complaints and compliments**

Members received and considered the paper provided which included WSC complaints and compliments, excluding HE specific complaints which are recorded/reported separately linked to the requirements of OfS.

L Hunt informed that there has been one HE student complaint which was partially upheld and has now been resolved.

## 11. **Risk Register Extract**

Members received and considered the Risk Register extract which showed 0 red, 3 amber and 0 yellow risks, and the internal audit report for HE quality management which had a significant assurance grade, with 5 low risk recommendations.

Members discussed WSC001 (relating to HE student numbers) and queried whether the mitigations are sufficient to reduce the risk from red to amber. S Minns noted that students wishing to apply via the internal progression to higher education policy, are more likely to convert as they are not applying to other providers. Members commended the progress, and the mitigations however did not feel sufficiently assured that the risk rating should be lowered. Members were confident that the mitigations are in place, but noted it was still early to see if the outcomes from the mitigations would have an impact on the risk rating. Members **recommend** that the Audit and Risk Management Committee reconsider increasing the risk rating to red.

Audit & Risk  
Management  
Committee

## 12. **Any Other Business**

- **Policies**

The Chair asked that members review the Higher Education Admissions Appeals and Complaints policy and Higher Education Admissions policy circulated by the Governance Professional and confirm if they are happy to recommend to the Corporation.

App. and HE  
EEC

- **Annual 1:1 with the Committee Chair**

The Chair confirmed that he is meeting with members to seek their feedback and to discuss future plans.

- **Review of the meeting**

The Chair welcomed feedback from members on the meeting. Members fed back that the meeting was well chaired and engaging.

The meeting closed at 5.46pm