

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 12 June 2025 at 4.00pm

Present physically: C Chua, Governor - **Chair** N Savvas, CEO and Governor

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

In attendance: A Hurrell, Group Head of Quality Assurance
J Ling, Head of Teacher Education and Innovation
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
T Lloyd, Executive Director – Skills, Innovation and Strategic Development

Apologies: H Arnold, Committee member
J Gazzard, Governor
K Brown, Group Assistant Principal – Teacher Education
M Searcey, Governor
S Minns, Group Head of Admissions and Enrolment

Absent:

Action

1. Declaration of Interests and Apologies for absence

C Chua declared his role as an employee of University of Cambridge's Judge Business School. No other conflicts of interest in relation to the items of the agenda were declared.

Apologies for absence were received from H Arnold, J Gazzard and M Searcey.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2025

The minutes of the meeting on 6 March 2025 were **agreed** as an accurate record.

The Governance Professional **noted** that in March 2025 the Committee approved the HE Admissions policy and HE Admission Appeals and Complaints procedure.

3. Matters Arising from the meeting on 21 November 2024

Four of the eight matters arising from the previous meeting were complete, one was complete and closed, two were for the Audit and Risk Management Committee and one was a verbal update.

4. First Hand Feedback

No feedback from visits to UPD were received.

5. HE Strategy

Members received and considered the draft strategy provided.

The Chair noted that feedback from C Higgins and R Hetherington have been incorporated and M Searcey has provided further feedback which the team are working to incorporate.

The Chair summarised the main areas of feedback:

- Further developing our unique selling points
- Giving examples of growth areas

Members commended the team on the clear and concise strategy.

Members **approved** the HE Strategy and **agreed to recommend to the Corporation**, and **delegated authority** to L Moody to make minor changes as needed to incorporate M Searcey's comments.

L Moody

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 reflected that the Prime Minister has visited a local FE College in relation to the development of skills to support Sizewell C and queried if we are well placed to support the new nuclear plant. L Parish confirmed that we have been working very closely to prepare for Sizewell C for years. The CEO informed that when Hinckley Point C was being created it became clear that the scope of demand to support new nuclear plants is such that it requires a region-wide approach from FE Colleges.

Members queried the anticipated timescale for apprenticeships linked to Sizewell C. The CEO advised that we have been preparing for Sizewell C for over a decade and during that time have visited Hinckley Point C and Bridgwater and Taunton College to learn from their experiences. From this, we know that many of the roles associated with Sizewell C will be from within its immense tier 1, 2 and 3 supply chain rather than roles directly commissioned by EDF energy, and we know the types of roles/quantities of roles that the site will require over time. L Moody explained that following the announcement there is concern about demand for civil, construction and project management staff from local industry and informed that we are working with the civils work alliance to build capacity to deliver larger scale training cohorts in construction and project management to support Sizewell C's supply chain. L Moody informed that we are delivering another cohort of HNC apprenticeships in September 2025 for EDF energy's Sizewell B. The CEO advised that EDF energy apprenticeships for Sizewell C will follow the pattern of Sizewell B, and informed that the majority of roles will be adult roles or apprenticeships via their tier 1, 2 and 3 supply chain.

Members queried what is included in 'skills for success' and whether all apprentices undertake this element. L Parish explained that we developed this element to build students character strengths and the key skills which employers tell us are needed, and informed that we may students at the start of their journey and work with them to self-assess throughout their programme to monitor impact. L Parish informed that we have seen 'skills for success' having a positive impact on the confidence and skills and R Bamford fed back that 'skills for success' is our unique personal development approach for apprenticeships and was commended by inspectors during the recent Ofsted inspection.

Members queried whether apprentices value the 'skills for success' offer. L Parish fed back that we seek student feedback throughout their studies and have received positive feedback from apprentices in reference for 'skills for success' and the support they receive from the college.

Members queried whether we should look to share this best practice approach with other FE Colleges. L Parish reflected that it is part of our unique selling point but agreed to consider.

Members discussed the withdrawal data and the actions taken to work with students and their employers to support retention.

Members discussed the areas requiring focused intervention and queried whether these were the result of isolated actions/incidents or systemic concerns. L Parish explained what issues had been identified and the proposed actions being taken.

Members discussed the challenges of working in Health and Social Care due to the financial pressures on the sector and resulting redundancies.

Members discussed the apprenticeship student feedback and reflected that 66% understand end point assessments, means a third of students do not understand, and queried what action is being taken to remedy this. L Parish explained how staff engage with students to explain what happens at the end of their apprenticeship with the end point assessment. Members reflected that students first time pass rates are very high which indicates that the students are effectively supported by staff and are well prepared for the final assessment.

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, enrichment opportunities, careers guidance and curriculum development. S Appleby summarised the key points.

Members queried what the 'dungeons and dragons community' was. S Appleby explained that this a role play game and this is a student led club.

Members reflected that the counselling course has been an area of concern in the past and asked for an update on progress. S Appleby explained that the new course leader has been instrumental in driving improvements in both the course content and student engagement/experience and summarised how the course content has been adapted to create a coherent program with clear assessments. S Appleby informed that student feedback shows the positive impact of these changes.

Members discussed the courses for next academic year and commended the strength of internal applications from our sixth forms.

Members discussed the proposed new logistics and supply chain management degree and queried when we would look to offer the course and the target market. L Moody explained that it is very early days but that we hope to offer it from 2026 and will develop the course with our new employer advisory group. L Parish informed that many of the proposed modules are already written, and that this degree is just more targeted for the local need. L Moody explained that we have been working closely with Century Logistics and other companies to understand how new technologies, automation and AI are impacting their sector; to inform the skills we hope to develop within the degree.

8. Teacher and staff development

Members received and considered the paper provided which informed on plans to recruit to our teacher education programmes, update on teacher training including QTLS, Teaching apprenticeship and to introduce new Level 4 and 5 CertEd/PGCE and Access to HE diploma courses. J Ling summarised the key points.

Members queried the timeframe for introducing the access to HE diploma. J Ling confirmed that we haven't received applications yet so we will likely aim for a January cohort.

Members discussed how the Level 3 teaching qualifications are being offered to our SEND school staff and the timeline for teachers to complete each Level.

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 and L Hunt summarised the key points.

Members discussed plans for the upcoming PD days and the proposed topics.

Members discussed how colleges with HE's NSS survey results are used.

Members discussed the number of external examiner posts needing to be filled and queried what action is being taken. L Hunt explained that the examiners are reappointed each year so this is not a concern.

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. A Hurrell summarised the key points.

Members commended the thorough approach being taken.

11. **Risk Register Extract**

Members received and considered the Risk Register extract which showed 0 red, 1 amber and 0 yellow risks.

Members discussed WSC001 (relating to student numbers) and commended the impact of the new approach to recruit from our sixth form provisions and queried how we are working to promote to former students including adults. L Moody explained how we are working to promote to alumni and our wider local community.

Members reviewed the risks and **felt assured** that the mitigations were appropriate.

12. **Policies**

- **Academic Appeals and Complaints Regulations**
- **Assessment Regulations policy**
- **Attendance and Course Engagement policy**
- **Extenuating Circumstances policy**
- **HE General Terms and Conditions inc. Tuition Fee policy**
- **Reasonable Adjustments policy**
- **Submission of work for assessment policy**

Members received and considered the above policies and L Hunt summarised the key changes proposed.

Members discussed the recent OfS intervention at University of Sussex arising from non-compliance with internal policies and queried whether these are external HE policies. L Hunt confirmed that these are external HE policies aligned to the OfS requirements.

Members discussed the Attendance and Course Engagement Policy and queried what actions are taken if student attendance falls below the expectation. L Hunt summarised how staff provide support and intervention if attendance drops and how staff review the students wider engagement to consider the best intervention strategy.

Members **approved** the policies and **agreed to recommend them to the Corporation**.

13. **Any Other Business**

- **Incident at University and Professional Development Campus**

The CEO informed of an assault of a member of staff by an apprenticeship student at UPD yesterday which is being investigated by the police. The CEO summarised the support we are providing to the member of staff and the additional security we have arranged at UPD for the coming weeks to safeguard students and staff. L Parish summarised how we have communicated with students, staff and employers.

- **Plans to expand remit of Committee in 2025/26**

The CEO informed of plans to expand the remit of this Committee for 2025/26 to include adult, apprenticeship and HE, to cover all of the UPD provision and support the joined up working of these areas. The CEO advised that we will train existing Committee

members and also recruit additional members with Apprenticeship and Adult expertise. The Governance Professional informed that M Searcey has agreed to become the WSC Governor Lead for Safeguarding (UPD) and advised that the formal proposal will come to the Corporation in July 2025 for approval. Members supported the proposal.

The meeting closed at 5.55pm