MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HE PERFORMANCE AND QUALITY COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 MARCH 2024

Present

Angela Briggs	Governor
Ruth Brook	Governor (Chair)
Dan Fell	Governor
Sam Hewson	Student Governor
Emma Kirk	Staff Governor
John Rees	Governor (CEO)

The quorum for the HEPQ Committee is 40% of membership to include at least 3 external members. The meeting was quorate.

In attendance

Dan Bown	Director - Institute of Technology & Higher Technical Education (via Teams)
Danny Fenwick	Deputy Principal (via Teams)
Sharon Harmon	Clerk to the Corporation
Rachel Maguire	Chief Operating Officer - People & Information
Karen Robson	Assistant Principal, HE (via Teams)
Barrie Shipley	Chief Operating Officer - Finance & Infrastructure
Karen Dainty	Associate Director APP - Wellbeing, Inclusion, Safeguarding & Prevent (for Item 4)
Sally Senior	Director of Wellbeing, Inclusion, Safeguarding and Prevent (for Item 4)

The meeting was held at North Lindsey College / via MS Teams and commenced at 5.30 pm.

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1   Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Andrea Ward, Governor and Tina Greaves, Governor.

2   Declarations of Interest

Members should declare any personal or financial obligation, allegiance or loyalty which would in any way affect decisions in relation to the subjects under discussion.

There were no declarations of interest.

3   Minutes of a meeting of the HE Performance & Quality Committee held on 22nd November 2023 and any matters arising

The minutes of the HE Performance & Quality Committee held on 22nd November 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.

Matters Arising

The Clerk confirmed training requests had been followed up.

The APHE confirmed a meeting with A Ward to discuss the requirements for TEF Gold had been arranged.

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4   Access and Participation Plan

The COOPI introduced the update report on the Access and Participation Plan (APP) and advised the committee on the recent restructuring and changes in portfolio and responsibilities.

The Associate Director APP (ADAPP) presented the APP update report providing an update on the current APP 2021-24, including the Bursary and Hardship payments paid out in the academic year September 2023 to February 24; the developments made on the resubmission exercise of the APP 2025-26 to 2028-29; the identified indicators from the OfS Equality of Risk Register, the proposed DNCG underrepresented groups, targets and objectives and draft proposed Intervention Strategy.

Members noted the APP is a requirement for all providers of Higher Education, who are registered with the Office for Students (OfS) and charge above the basic tuition fee cap, referred to as the Higher Fee Income. Members noted the APP sets out how DNCG will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in, and progress from higher education. Members noted that DNCG currently have in place a 2021-24 APP and an update for the APP 2025/26 – 2028/29 is being undertaken.

Members noted that the initial date for submitting the new plan was 31st July 2024. However, OfS informed DNCG on 25 January 2024 that a staggered approach was being adopted and that DNCG had been allocated Submission Window 3 and as such must submit the plan by 1 October 2024.

Members were advised that once the APP 2025-26-2028-29 has been submitted a Summary document, the full APP 2025-26 – 2028-29 and Financial Investment document will be published on the DNCG Website as well as on HE Essentials for current students to access.

Members were assured that a comprehensive action plan has been developed to meet the submission date of 1 October 2024 and reviewed and discussed the summary presented in the APP 2025/26 – 2028/29 Gantt Chart.

Members noted that Internal ILR data reports are being developed to enable in year analysis to begin and reporting of the 'At Risk' underrepresented student groups in terms of Continuation, Completion and Attainment. Members were advised that progress against the APP 2021-24 targets will be reported at the end of the academic year, once the internal datasets are available and complete for continuation, completion and attainment.

Members noted that an internal APP Dashboard is currently being developed which will allow data to be reported on a regular basis to support the development of 25/26 – 2028/29 APP. Members asked about the timeline for the completion of the dashboard. Members were advised that work was in progress to build the dashboard and were provided with the timeline for the development.

Members reviewed and discussed the overview of the current APP 2021-24 and overview of Bursary and Hardship Payments 2023-24. Members noted that the majority of Low-Income bursary applications were received from UCNL students compared to UCDon students. Members discussed equity of access to the bursary fund and agreed it is important to ensure this is available to students at both sites. Members were assured that further investigation is being undertaken and remedial action is being taken to raise UCDon student awareness of the bursary fund through the use of HE Essentials, Canvas Programme pages and Wellbeing Centre.

Members asked if DNCG were able to top up bursary funds from elsewhere, from local employer for example. Members were advised that opportunities could be explored via the employer facing team.

Members noted that whilst the 2023-24 figures are indicative and there are 4 months of the academic year remaining, initial data suggests that there is a decrease in the number of students who have applied for the DSA Equipment Allowance. Members were assured that further investigation and monitoring is being put in place to ensure students are being assessed and supported appropriately. Members were further assured that there is continued strengthening in the support for students with additional needs through the new structure.

Members considered the Overview of the OfS Equality of Risk Register and Indicators at DNCG. The ADAPP explained the identified Risks to Equality of Risk (OfS) and that an Assessment of Performance of the OfS Dashboard Gap data and Internal data sets was undertaken and the risks of equality of opportunity for students to access, succeed and progress from HE into highly skilled and/or further education were identified.

Members reviewed and discussed the draft intervention strategy and were assured that a detailed APP Action Plan in place to report on the developments and progress. Members suggested that were percentages are identified within targets it would be helpful to know the number of students included within the percentage.

Members asked if the Group's performance is benchmarked against other providers in the region. Members were advised that there is limited data to benchmark against as this is not published in public domain. However, once the plans are published on websites more benchmarking data will be available. Following further discussion members agreed the importance of the APP meeting the support needs of the individual institution.

Members discussed how the impact of targets is evaluated. Members were provided with an overview of the evaluation process and provided with examples of interventions and impact.

Members were advised that the final APP will be circulated to committee for information.

Note: The Director of WISP and the ADAPP left the meeting.

5   Risk Register Review

Members received the Group Risk Register. Members reviewed the strategic risk summary and discussed the strategic risk for which the HEPQ Committee has responsibility for oversight. Members noted mitigations, planned actions and assurances. Members considered the residual risk score and noted this is currently within the target risk score and were assured this remains appropriate.

5   HE Performance Monitoring and Quality Improvement Plan Report

The Assistant Principal, HE (APHE) presented the HE Performance Monitoring and Quality Improvement Plan Report. Members noted the contents of the report. Members noted and discussed the following key updates:

- Strong retention linked to reduction in withdrawals for UCNL and UCDon.
- Attendance mixed across schools and campuses.

- Continuation remains strong (same position as November 2023, next OfS data update is due April 2024).
- students identified as 'at-risk' of non-completion continue to be supported with targeted interventions.
- Mid-year Internal Assessment Panels have been introduced to give an early indication of success rates, student performance and course performance.
- Strong achievement rate based on mid-year assessment panels

Members congratulated the team on the improvement in retention and reduction in withdrawals at both UCNL and UCDon. Members asked for more detail on what supports had been put in place to reach this positive improvement. The APHE outlined the interventions and support provided to achieve this improved position.

Members asked about areas in which retention is lower. The APHE explained planned interventions in those areas.

Members asked what process was in place for gathering feedback on learner experience from withdrawing students. Members discussed capturing feedback from leavers and the APHE agreed to explore mirroring the current process used for capturing leaver feedback in FE provision.

Members discussed the attendance figures and asked about actions to improve in areas where attendance is lower. The APHE explained planned actions including improved attendance-early interventions and use of Promonitor and monitoring of all students.

Members were provided with an update on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023 outcome and noted that the current TEF status is Silver. Members further noted that the TEF data dashboards are expected to be updated annually, there is no further change to the TEF data since the TEF outcomes were published in September 2023 and that the next update is expected in Spring 2024.

Members reviewed the HE Quality Improvement Plan noting updates on actions taken and progress against targets. At the members request the APHE outlined actions and mitigations to support learners with continued improvement in performance.

Members asked for an update on developments in Academic Resources. The APHE outlined the enhancements that had been made to Academics Resources and the planned future developments following student feedback.

Members noted and congratulated the HE Team on the successful bid for wave 2 funding to develop degree apprenticeships pathways.

Members were assured by the continued improvement across HE provision and thanked the APHE and the HE team for the excellent work.

7 Institute of Technology Performance Report

The Director of Institute of Technology & Higher Technical Education (DIoT&HTE) presented Institute of Technology (IoT) performance update report covering recruitment, licensing, curriculum developments and funding. Members noted and discussed the following key updates:

- Recruitment targets set for the Lincolnshire IoT at UCNL have been met and there will be no clawback of funds.

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- Lincolnshire IoT is entering the relicensing period. The next licensing period is for a 10-year period. Recruitment targets have now been submitted from 2024-29.
- The South Yorkshire IoT has now commenced year one and the workspaces at UCDon are now functional and utilised by students in Engineering, Animal Welfare Science and Construction.
- The Digital Technologies recruitment target was not met at UCDon and now focusing on September 2024 intakes across the group.
- The SYIoT launch event is planned for 22nd March 2024.
- DNCG successfully added the entirety of SSA 9 to the IoT at UCDon which align with the needs of the local area.
- Funds awarded to DNCG for the promotion and development of HTQs across the group.
- A range of CPD activity is now being offered through the LIoT at UCNL. A CPD offer has been developed in response to local needs to support local businesses to upskill their staff.

Members asked about potential competition in the digital space and impact on recruitment. Members discussed potential competition and strategies to improve recruitment to digital. Members noted that there is an action plan in place to improve recruitment including supporting progression pathways through FE provision.

Members thanked the DIoT&THE for the update report.

8   Governance Development Plan

Members reviewed the spring term update to the Governance Development Plan noting progress against targets for which the committee has oversight. Members were satisfied progress against targets was on track.

9   Committee Chair's Report to Corporation Board

Members considered the business of the meeting and noted key items and any changes to strategic risks identified for feedback in the Committee Chair's Report to the Corporation Board. Members agreed to highlight:

- The DNCG Access and Participation Plan is under way. The Committee received a detailed update report and had a full discussion. A high level of assurance was provided on the work being undertaken.
- A positive improvement in retention in HE provision. The Committee received a high level of assurance around the work to improve retention and the holistic approach being taken to support students.
- Successful bid for wave 2 funding to develop degree apprenticeships pathways.
- IoT update. The committee noted the rich and flexible curriculum offer. The SYIoT launch event is planned for 22nd March 2024.

10   Any Other Business

The Student Governor asked a question about logins details for the University of Lincoln. The APHE agreed to follow up and resolve any issues.

11   Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the HE Performance & Quality Committee is scheduled for Monday 17th June 2024, 5.30 pm, Room 3.04 UCNL.

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The meeting closed at 7.32 pm

Sharon Harmon
Clerk to the Corporation

Signed: ………………………………… (Chair)   Date: …………………….

TABLE OF ACTIONS				
Date	**Minute**	**Action**	**Responsibility**	**Date Due**
13/03/24	3	Explore options for capturing learner experience feedback from withdrawing learners.	APHE, K Robson	June 2024
13/03/24	6	The final Access and Participation Plan to be circulated to the HEPQ committee for information.	APHE, K Robson	June 2024
13/03/24	10	Follow up on learner logins to the University of Lincoln.	APHE, K Robson	March 2024