

TRAFFORD & STOCKPORT COLLEGE GROUP

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Higher Education Curriculum & Quality Committee
held on Thursday 28 November 2024, at 1.30pm via Microsoft Teams**

Present:	Emily McIntosh	(Chair)
	Olivia Bussey	
	Sarah Drake	
	Graham Luccock	(Vice Chair)
	Nurun Nahar	(Co-opted Member)
	James Scott	(Principal and Chief Executive Officer)
In Attendance:	Rebecca Clare	(Corporation Secretary)
	Carmen Gonzalez-Eslava	(Deputy Principal)
	Danielle Judge	(Assistant Principal Apprenticeships, HE and Skills)
	Andrea Ormisher	(Head of Higher Education, Quality and Standards)
	Henry Taylor-Toone	(Chief Finance Officer)
	Yvonne Riley	(Assistant Corporation Secretary)

Minute No.**HEC&Q/28/24 Election of Chair and Vice Chair of the HE Curriculum & Quality Committee 2024/2026****Chair of the HE Curriculum & Quality Committee for the Academic Years 2024/2026**

The Corporation Secretary (CS) sought nominations for the position of Chair of the HE Curriculum & Quality Committee for the Academic Years 2024/2026.

Emily McIntosh was the sole nomination, and it was unanimously resolved that she be re-elected to the position of the Chair of the HE Curriculum & Quality Committee for the Academic Years 2024/2026.

Vice Chair of the HE Curriculum & Quality Committee for the Academic Years 2024/2026

The Chair sought nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the HE Curriculum & Quality Committee for the Academic Years 2024/2026.

Graham Luccock was the sole nomination, and it was unanimously resolved that he be re-elected to the position of the Vice Chair of the HE Curriculum & Quality Committee for the Academic Years 2024/2026.

HEC&Q/29/24 Apologies for Absence and Welcome

The Corporation Secretary (CS) reported that apologies for absence had been received from co-opted members Fatema Desai and Claire Stocks.

A welcome was extended to the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) who was attending the early part of the meeting in relation to the Internal Audit Report HE Student Data to be considered at agenda item 6.

The CS further reported that Cameron Sewell (CSE) had been elected as the new HE student representative on the Committee, replacing Marie Temperton. It was noted that CSE had been unable to attend the meeting and that the Assistant Principal,

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Apprenticeships, HE and Skills (APAHES) and the CS would follow up to ensure participation at future meetings.

HEC&Q/30/24 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of either direct or indirect interest in any of the meeting's business items

HEC&Q/31/24 Minutes of the Higher Education Curriculum & Quality Committee Meeting held on 5 June 2024

The minutes of the meeting were approved and accepted as a correct account of the meeting's proceedings.

HEC&Q/32/24 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Members were referred to the previously circulated Action Proforma and information on progress against actions from previous meetings of the Committee.

It was noted that the majority of the actions had been closed.

The following additional updates were provided:

17/24 Internal Audit Report – HE Student Data

It was noted that the CFO was continuing to provide interim updates and that the matter would be considered as part of the meeting's agenda.

21/24 Student Engagement Update

In relation to future reports and the request to include the size of focus groups and engagement with hard-to-reach groups, the HHEQS confirmed that the matter would be considered at item 12 of the meeting's agenda and the action was now closed.

07/24 Higher Education and Standards Report – including the Quality Improvement Plan – Progress Update 2023-2024

In relation to the announcement that apprenticeships would count as UCAS points in the future, the Assistant Principal Apprenticeships, HE and Skills (APAHES) reported on a recent AoC Apprenticeship meeting and notification of ongoing consultation regarding the allocation of UCAS tariff points for apprenticeships. It was reported that the initial proposal had been to cap the points at a pass level, regardless of whether a student had achieved a merit or distinction, and that this had led to some concerns being raised. The APAHES confirmed that an update would be provided to the Committee once there was confirmation around standards and allocation of points.

In relation to any further matters arising from the minutes, a member enquired about the status of the HE Mitigating Circumstances Policy which, it had been reported, would be presented for consideration at a future meeting of the Committee. The HHEQS clarified that the policy was actually a procedure and therefore would normally be presented to Leadership for approval once completed. The HHEQS provided an update in relation to the procedure and ongoing work, detailing the complexities. The Chair emphasised the importance of getting the procedure right, especially given the NSS scores for the provision and the increasing number of students with declared disabilities.

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Action: Head of Higher Education/ Chair of the HE Curriculum & Quality Committee
Following due discussion, it was confirmed that a decision would be made as to whether the HE Mitigating Circumstances Procedure would need to be presented to the Committee once finalised.

There were no further matters arising from the minutes.

HEC&Q/33/24 Data Management Action Plan and Internal Audit Report – Higher Education Student Data

The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) referred members to the previously circulated report and update on the ongoing actions relating to HE data compliance.

The report contained the following supplementary documentation:

- ILR Higher Education Student Data Report
- OfS Data Management Action Plan 2023/2024
- E-mail from OfS dated 10 October 2024

The CFO provided details in relation to the background of the audit and the subsequent outcome. It was noted that a further internal audit had been commissioned to take place in August 2024 and that the scope had been to review student data for 2023/2024 and report on the level of compliance, following up on the recommendations raised in the OfS 2019/2020 report and the subsequent ILR HE data audit 2022/2023.

The CFO advised that the scope covered a review of a sample of 60 targeted learners to ensure reasonable coverage of issues identified during the previous reviews; and a review of governance arrangements for the oversight of action taken to improve the OfS student data. Members were reminded that a specialist MIS consultant had also been working with the Group with a remit of reviewing processes to prevent any future recurrence of the issues.

The CFO reported that the internal audit had been conducted as planned and that the error rate had decreased. It was confirmed any errors had been corrected and that clean data had been provided to the OfS for 2023/2024. The CFO confirmed that an email had been received from OfS on 10 October confirming that they were satisfied that the audit recommendations had been addressed and advising that they do not require any further information at this time.

In relation to the action plan, members noted that the majority of actions put in place to address key in-year areas of deficiency 2023/2024 had been closed. It was confirmed that the Group were still in the process of recruiting a full-time Head of MIS to replace the contractor currently covering the role.

Next steps/ ongoing actions were reported as follows:

- Action plan set up based on the consultant's recommendations for 2024/2025 data.
- Apprenticeship team to take on HE data compliance and checking roles to ensure ongoing accuracy.
- Further internal audit commissioned to take place prior to the end of the academic year.
- Updates to continue to be provided to the Audit Committee and the HE Curriculum & Quality Committee.

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Questions and comments were invited from members.

Action: Corporation Secretary

The CS reported that the newly elected Chair of the Audit Committee (HL) had been invited to attend the meeting during consideration of this item but had been unable to attend due to a new job role and work commitments. It was confirmed that the Audit Chair would be invited to attend future meetings for consideration of this item until the end of the academic year.

A member sought clarification as to whether the enclosed internal audit report was the most recent. The CFO confirmed that the internal audit was an extension of the previous year's audit and that recommendations would remain as detailed in the first report to allow for a further year of data to demonstrate that issues have been fully resolved.

A member enquired about the status of the high-risk areas RAG rated RED in the executive summary of the report. The CFO advised that several issues had been raised based on live data which have since been addressed, but that the auditors will need to return to verify that these issues have been resolved before recommendations can be removed.

A member enquired of the latest position in relation to the recruitment of the Head of MIS and the CFO advised that interviews were scheduled to take place on 3 December 2024.

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Internal Audit Report in respect of HE Student Data and accompanying documentation be received and noted.

HEC&Q/34/24 Draft Higher Skills Strategy 2024/2030

The Assistant Principal Apprenticeships, HE and Skills (APAHES) referred members to the previously circulated report and initial draft of the Higher Skills Strategy (HSS) 2024/2030.

It was noted that the HE Management Committee had reviewed the draft HSS.

The APAHES advised that the new HSS had provided the opportunity to re-evaluate the Group's HE provision and to consider new ways to engage the Group's market through differentiated delivery models and diversification of the product portfolio. It was noted that the HSS had been aligned with the Group's Strategic Plan.

The objectives were as follows:

- Shaping our local community, through an employer aligned and inclusive curriculum (SP1)
- Positioning UCSC as the employer of choice for the Higher Education workforce (SP2)
- Transformative student experience and outcomes (SP3)
- Maximise recruitment opportunities (SP4)
- Innovative curriculum delivery models, supported by outstanding digital and physical learning environments (SP5)
- Support Collaborative arrangements (SP6)

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The APAHES provided members with a summary of the strategic objectives, which included:

- A curriculum tailored to meet the needs of local employers and provide progression pathways to ensure that students are gaining the skills that will help them thrive in both regional and national job markets.
- Position UCSC as the top choice for HE professionals by fostering growth, collaboration, and inclusivity, recognising staff achievements, and implementing strategic workforce planning to attract and retain talent aligned with UCSC's 2030 vision.
- Transformation of the student experience at Level 4+ to emphasise the blend of vocational workplace ready skills with higher level academic outcomes. Students should be prepared for both employment and potential further study.
- Recruitment efforts highlight the value of FE-based Level 4+ qualifications as employer-driven, accessible, and cost-effective, with clear routes to higher education and career advancement.
- Innovative delivery models (blended learning, use of technology, work-based learning) to ensure flexibility for part-time students, adult learners, and those balancing work and study.
- Collaborative arrangements with employers, universities, and community organisations to ensure the relevance of the curriculum and provide students with meaningful opportunities for both study and employment.

The APAHES reported that a consultant had been brought in to assist with the Access and participation Plan (APP) and had reviewed the HSS as part of process. The APAHES advised that the consultant had recommended making the education gain more explicit in the HSS to ensure that the strategy aligns with future TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework) submissions. It was noted that the APAHES and the HHEQS would incorporate the consultants feedback into the final version of the strategy.

The APAHES expanded on measures to improve internal progression from Level 3 to HE courses, which included the establishment of a Progression Working Group with the aim to increase the number of students progressing internally by making the pathways clearer and more accessible, and by addressing the needs of students who may have barriers to attending traditional universities.

Confirmation of next steps included:

- APAHES and HHEQS to make any necessary amendments to the draft HSS following feedback and present final version to governors at the Strategic Development Day on 5 March 2025.
- Action plan to be produced to monitor the strategy, with termly reports presented to the HE Curriculum & Quality Committee.
- KPIs against each objective to be produced or aligned to the overall TSCG HE KPIs, where applicable and incorporated into the action plan reporting.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

A member raised the issue of the low internal progression from Level 3 to HE and whether it was a marketing issue or if students prefer more traditional universities. The APAHES advised that it is likely to be a combination of factors but that the Progression Working Group is aiming to improve communication and marketing efforts to highlight

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and make opportunities more visible. The APAHES stressed that the work that is being undertaken in relation to course offer and delivery models would also be crucial.

Further discussion centred on the shortfall in HE recruitment, course offer and adult opportunities. The Deputy Principal (DP) emphasised that, whilst internal progression is important, the key to maintaining and overturning the decline in numbers lies in targeting the adult market. The DP highlighted provision strengths, which included support to students with barriers to learning, such as those with learning difficulties. Small class sizes and personalised support were also highlighted as major strengths. The DP suggested that more work is needed to understand and tap into the adult market, leveraging the Group's strengths in providing a supportive learning environment.

Action: Assistant Principal Apprenticeships, HE and Skills

The Principal and Chief Executive Officer (PCEO) drew attention to SP3 (Transformative student experience and outcomes) and highlighted that the Group's overall Strategic Plan encompasses the entire student experience, including the quality of teaching, learning, assessment, and feedback, whereas the HSS focuses more on aspects outside the classroom and recommended making the educational gains as highlighted by the consultant more explicit.

A recent member to the Committee sought clarification in relation to the acronym UCSC and it was advised that it stood for, University Centre Stockport College.

A member highlighted the importance of consistency and clarity in the use of acronyms in documentation and branding. The HHEQS highlighted the complexities and noted that some colleagues, particularly in the engineering department at Stretford, find the UCSC branding unhelpful.

Action: Head of Marketing/ HE Curriculum & Quality Committee

The Principal highlighted the efforts to create greater visibility for the HE brand and suggested that the Head of Marketing, following approval of the HSS, would review the brand and present a proposal to the Committee to ensure that there is a clear identity.

Action: Assistant Principal Apprenticeships, HE and Skills

A member asked a question in relation to the establishment of a Strategic Oversight Committee (p6) and whether this would include governors. The APAHES, clarified that strategic oversight would not be a standalone committee and that the HE Management Committee would manage the strategic oversight of the HSS. It was confirmed that the action plan would be reviewed termly by HE Curriculum & Quality Committee. The APAHES undertook to update the reference in the HSS accordingly.

Action: Head of Higher Education

A member highlighted some minor typographical amendments which the HHEQS noted and undertook to amend.

The Chair emphasised the importance of tertiary education, noting that colleges are well-positioned to own this space due to their comprehensive pipeline from lower levels to HE. The Chair noted the AoC report "100% Opportunity: The Case for Tertiary" as a valuable resource and suggested that the Group could take insights from it to strengthen their position in tertiary education. The Chair expressed the belief that tertiary education would become more prominent by the time of the TEF submission in 2027 and

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highlighted the need for clear connections and regional understanding of skills-based support. The potential for collaboration with other universities to enhance the pipeline and delivery expertise was also noted.

The Chair praised the strategy's emphasis on macro, miso, and micro levels, noting that it effectively addresses what the HSS means for the institution, the national context, and the Greater Manchester (GM) context.

The Chair suggested that the strategy needs a formal launch event to raise awareness and publicity and proposed organising an event to engage the wider community and college contacts, emphasising the importance of promoting the university centre.

Action: Principal and Chief Executive Officer

The PCEO commented on the Group's plans in relation to the formal launch of the new Strategic Plan in January and proposed having focused launches for underpinning strategies, including the Higher Skills Strategy, to engage key stakeholders.

The PCEO confirmed that the Board would be considering the Institute of Technology (IoT) development under confidential items in December and explained that the Group had received a formal invitation to apply for the IoT, which would cost around £25,000 annually for membership. It was noted that membership would enhance the Group's presence with employers across Greater Manchester under the IoT brand. The Principal welcomed any comments from the Committee and it was confirmed that this would be discussed further at the Confidential Board meeting in December.

Action: Assistant Principal Apprenticeships, HE and Skills/ Chair of the Committee

It was confirmed that the APAHES and the Chair would meet prior to the Governors' Strategic Development Day to consider HSS and the suggested feedback.

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Draft Higher Skills Strategy 2024/2030 be presented at the Governors' Strategic Development Day for final consideration and approval.

HEC&Q/35/24 HE Self-Assessment Document and Quality Improvement Plan

The APAHES referred members to the previously circulated report and information in relation to the Annual Self-Evaluation Document (SED), outcomes of the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2023-2024 and the QIP 2024/2025.

Key issues highlighted included:

- The QIP 2023/2024 had 8 areas for improvement (Afl) with 44 actions, of which 73% were completed, 25% partially completed and 2% not completed (RAG rated Red).
- Enrolments in 2023/2024 fell by 5.6% compared to the previous year.
- Retention as of 1 November fell by 4.9 percentage points to 87.6%.
- In-year retention and achievement were stronger than the previous year at 97% and 96.3% respectively.
- The level of attainment was higher than in 2022/2023, with almost one-third of students securing first-class honours or distinction.

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- The profile of the student population remains broadly in line with that in 2022/2023. Notably, of those that enrolled, almost 69% were mature students, 81% white, 43% in IMD quintiles 1 and 2 and 25% declared a learning difficulty or disability.

Quality Improvement Plan 2024/2025

The APAHES advised that analysis of the strengths and areas for improvement, supported by evidence as presented in the Self Evaluation Document (SED), had informed the Quality Improvement Plan 2024/2025.

It was confirmed that there are 7 areas for improvement, broader in scope than those in 2023/2024 and with 44 actions.

The APAHES outlined the 7 areas for improvement, which included:

1. Curriculum offer, course design, and delivery
2. Outcomes for students
3. Student engagement and representation
4. Evidence of widening access and participation
5. Engaging and meeting the needs of every learner
6. Assurance of quality standards and processes
7. Human resourcing of HE provision

There was confirmation that progress reports and updates would be presented to each meeting of the Committee with the aspiration of delivering sustained quality performance and growth.

The HHEQS confirmed that the areas for improvement had been aligned to the Higher Skills Strategy.

Questions and comments were invited from members

A member commented on the hard work that had been undertaken in the production of the SED and the usefulness of the inclusion of the curriculum portfolio. A member raised concerns, given the shortfall in recruitment, about the number of targets listed as pending or not achieved despite significant effort and raised a question in relation to how much consideration had been given as to why certain actions had not worked. The HHEQS commented that some targets may have been too ambitious. The DP added that some actions may take longer to show results and that the Group needs to be more realistic about the timeframe. The DP also emphasised the importance of understanding the market and using evidence to plan and set realistic targets.

A member enquired about the extent to which the QIP for 2024/2025 had been informed by student engagement analysis. The HHEQS commented that student engagement analysis had been a high priority, especially with the appointment of HE Engagement and Enhancement Officer and acknowledged the need to ensure that any analysis and feedback is clearly reflected.

A member highlighted that it was impressive that a third of the students had achieved first-class Honours and the Committee emphasised the importance of promoting student success in marketing campaigns and strategies.

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A member enquired about the status of the action, 'to improve pedagogic practice and evaluate the learning experience for both traditional and non-traditional learners', which was RAG rated Amber and whether it should be Green. The APAHES highlighted that there were inconsistencies in pedagogic practice across different areas and that whilst some areas showed outstanding practice, others needed improvement, which contributed to the Amber rating.

Further consideration was given to the process of self-evaluation with the following comments made:

- The PCEO commented that self-evaluation should start with an assessment of where the previous year ended, evaluating what worked and what didn't. It was noted that that this approach would help to understand why certain actions did not achieve their intended outcomes and what changes were needed for the upcoming year. The PCEO emphasised that self-evaluation should not start with a blank slate but should build on the previous year's experiences and outcomes.
- The Chair noted statements on the importance of self-evaluation in Scotland and highlighted annual reflection for quality assurance purposes in order 'to identify and plan for key strategic enhancements which would be articulated through the action plan'.

A member asked for clarification on retention rates, noting that the retention as of the 1 November fell by 4.9 percentage points to 87.6% and sought to understand the apparent contradiction, as it was also mentioned that in-year retention and achievement were stronger than the previous year. The APAHES clarified that the 87.6% figure refers to all learners, including those that withdrew in year one, whilst the in-year retention figure reflects only those that were retained throughout the 2023-2024 academic year.

The Committee thanked the APAHES for the clarification and noted that the improved in-year retention and achievement rates indicate that the assessment process is working effectively.

There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration and deliberation it was resolved that the HE Self Evaluation Document 2023-2024, Quality Improvement Plan Outcomes 2023-2024 and the Quality Improvement Plan 2024/2025 be recommended for approval to the Board of the Corporation.

HEC&Q/36/24 HE Performance Update 2024/2025

The APAHES) referred members to the previously circulated report and information on the current financial performance in relation to student recruitment and possible income implications. It was noted that the report also provided an update on in-year retention.

An overview of the recruitment position by college department was presented as follows:

- Four courses closed due to low enrollment, saving 2 FTE teaching posts to offset some lost income.
- An issue with forecasting Teacher Education inflated figures, corrected in June 2024 after target numbers were set; the budget now reflects reduced numbers.
- Work to do with January 2025 enrolments. 20 starts targeted in 4cast against Construction, Engineering and Computing.

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- Organisational Learning Centre (OLC) above target however, the Group only receives 20% of funding.
- Income (minus OLC fees and any staffing savings accounted for) currently £369,000 adrift from target. Risk contingency built into budget of £350,000.

In relation to the current retention position, the APAHES advised that the retention metric of those retained as of 1 November 2024 (including continuers) is 94.8%, compared to 87.3% last year. It was confirmed that retention post 1 November was currently 100%, compared to 96% at year-end last year.

In terms of next steps and timeline the following was highlighted:

- Address Recruitment Shortfalls
 - Review marketing and recruitment strategies for impacted courses to improve future enrolment. The APAHES advised that only 23 attended the Open Day on 29 October 2024, but that the aim is to combine HE Open Days with FE moving forward.
 - Proposals to be set out in the HSS on how to improve recruitment in subsequent years with different delivery methods.
 - Internal level 3 Progression Working Group established to look at ways to maximise progression to level 4.
- Strengthen Retention Efforts
 - Analysis of current retention data and develop targeted initiatives to support student retention. The APAHES advised that the APP Working Group and priorities will help to address any retention gaps moving forward.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

Action: Assistant Principal Apprenticeships, HE and Skills

A member asked if there was any follow-up with attendees of the June Open Day who did not enrol in order to understand why they chose other providers. The APAHES responded that whilst follow-up calls were made to those that applied and booked there hasn't been any detailed analysis of why attendees chose other providers. The APAHES undertook to look into the matter and provide an update at the next meeting.

A member commented on the reference to strategic thinking around HE in the Management Accounts and asked whether this topic would be discussed at the Governor Strategic Development Day in March.

The PCEO advised that a focus of the Strategic Development Day would be to consider the underpinning strategies to the Group's Strategic Plan but confirmed that there was no current proposal to change the direction of travel for higher skills, which remains an important part of the curriculum portfolio. The PCEO emphasised that it would be premature to suggest that Level 4/5 provision would not part of the portfolio, given its good financial contribution and relevance to the Group's strategic goals.

A member raised a question in relation to the retention policy, whether it was evaluated, and if there have been any interventions for courses with low satisfaction scores. The APAHES provided an update on policy, procedures, strategic suspensions and measures in place to improve retention including, at risk meetings, financial support and fitness to

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study action plans. The HHEQS added that small numbers of students also allow for more personalised support. Planned reviews of attendance procedures and delivery models were also highlighted.

A member enquired about the strategies to address recruitment shortfalls asking if there were plans to create clear progression pathways from Level 3 to Level 4 and Level 5, and if these could be used as a marketing strategy. The APAHES confirmed that the Progression Working Group was in the early stages of mapping out all Level 3 courses and identifying potential Level 4 pathways, and the goal is to include these pathways in the prospectus and course information sheets to make it clear to students that they can progress from Level 1 to Level 6 within the college.

A member expressed that it is heartwarming to hear about the extensive efforts made to support students and the Committee noted their appreciation of staff dedication and hard work.

There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the HE Performance Update 2024/2025 be received and noted.

HEC&Q/37/24 HE Regulatory Update

The APAHES referred members to the previously circulated report and information in relation to key areas impacting upon the HE provision at the Trafford & Stockport College Group.

A short presentation was made by the APAHES within which the following was highlighted:

- Access and Participation Plan (APP) Update
 - consultant engaged to lead on the APP for 2027, with the submission due in the summer of 2025
 - there was confirmation that working groups have been established with responsibilities outlined
 - confirmation that, to date, two working group meetings have taken place
 - it was intended that a draft of the APP would be presented to the HE Curriculum & Quality Committee in March 2025
- OFS Capital Bid and Funding Allocation for 2024/2025
 - confirmation that all 2023/2024 OfS capital bid monies had been accounted for and spent with £220,000 remaining to be spent by March 2025
- OFS Annual Fee Return for 2025/2026
 - First degrees £8200
 - Foundation degrees and HNC/HND £8,000
 - HE CERT/DIP £7500
 - Part time fees charged at 50%

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- Student Loan Company (SLC) Update
 - performance metrics for attendance confirmations with the goal of meeting standards of 85% confirmations by due dates, aiming for 95% within 30 days, and 98% within 60 days
 - it was confirmed that TSCG has vastly improved on 2023/2024 position ahead of regional and national figures

In terms of next steps and timeline the following was highlighted:

- complete Capital Projects by March 2025
- monitor SLC Attendance Confirmation Standards
- ensure timely completion of the APP project plan
- draft plan to be presented to the HE Curriculum & Quality Committee 6 March 2025

Action: Assistant Principal Apprenticeships, HE and Skills

In relation to the annual fees for 2026/2027, it was confirmed, that considering recent announcements of university fees increasing to £9535, TSCG would be conducting a full review of local provider fees to produce an equality impact assessment that would be presented to the HE Curriculum and Quality Committee 6 March 2025.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

The Chair referred to a recent Link meeting and noted the seamless transfer of leadership from the previous Assistant Principal highlighting that focus areas have continued to be addressed effectively. The Chair also highlighted the solid consultancy support to ensure the APP is executed successfully.

Action: Corporation Secretary

In relation to the presentation of the APP, it was confirmed that the consultant (DH) would be invited to the next HE Curriculum & Quality Committee.

The PCEO commented that the consultant would also be supporting with FE data analysis in relation to students and EDI.

A recent member to the Committee sought clarity in relation to the risk analysis, specifically how risks are scored and what benchmarks or criteria are used to increase or decrease risk levels. The PCEO advised that the HE Risk Register follows the Group's overall risk management approach as set out by the Audit Committee.

Action: Corporation Secretary/ Chief Finance Officer

The Corporation Secretary noted that member (OB) had been unable to attend the recent risk appetite training for Governors, and it was proposed that a meeting would be scheduled with the Corporation Secretary and the CFO to clarify the risk framework.

A member expressed gratitude for the overall clarity of the documentation and presentation. It was noted that the information that had been provided was clear, helpful, and transparent.

There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Higher Regulatory Update be received and noted.

Minute No.**HEC&Q/38/24 HE Quality Calendar 2024/2025**

The Head of Higher Education, quality and Standards (HHEQS) referred members to the previously circulated Higher Education Academic Quality Calendar for 2024/2025.

There was confirmation that the calendar was a live document and had been provided for information.

Action: Head of HE, Quality and Standards/ Corporation Secretary

It was confirmed that HE Link Governor visits would be included in the calendar.

It was further confirmed that a link visit would be organised in conjunction with the next HE Curriculum & Quality Committee in March 2025 to allow other members of the Committee to attend. It was proposed that the visit would include a tour of the facilities at Stockport campus and a catch up with student representatives. The CS advised that a risk assessment was in place for co-opted member (CS) and asked that the Governance team be notified in advance of any face-to-face meetings or site visits.

A member enquired about the possibility of a student conference and was advised of challenges in respect of low student turnout at previous events due to work and family commitments. It was confirmed that feedback was being sought from student representatives to plan future events.

There were no further comments or questions from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Quality Calendar be received and noted.

HEC&Q/39/24 Student Engagement Update

The HHEQS referred members to the previously circulated report and information in relation to the impact of student engagement activity in 2023/2024 and the first 3 months of 2024/2025.

It was confirmed that the report also provided analysis of the 2024 NSS results and the 2024/2025 Start of Course Survey results.

The report contained the following supplementary documentation:

- Student Engagement Impact Statement 2023-2024 Q4
- NSS 2024 Analysis Report
- Student Engagement Impact Statement 2024-2025 Q1
- Analysis of HE Start of Course Survey 2024-2025 Q1

The report highlighted the following:

- 2023-24 Q4 concluded the academic year with a focus on closing out student finance and administrative issues, as well as supporting final assessments and preparing for the next intake of HE students. The NSS results highlighted both strengths and areas for improvement, particularly in supporting students with disabilities and improving course organisation. Engagement efforts have 3 contributed positively to retention and achievement, setting the stage for continued progress in 2024/2025.
- Key insights from the 2024 NSS survey reveal that UCSC's results fall below institutional benchmarks and sector-wide averages across most themes, marking a significant decline from the 2023 results. It was noted that this drop likely reflects

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shifts in student demographics and unique experiences in the 2024 academic year, as outlined in the NSS Analysis Report.

- 2024-25 Q1 has seen 70 early interventions by the Disability Support Officer to support students with learning difficulties and disabilities; exceeding Student Loan Company registrations - 95% within 5 days of term start date (85% 2023-24) and 99.4% within 30 days (KPI 95%); indication of more positive Start of Course survey student participation - 58% response rate.
- The 2024 HE Start of Course Survey has been designed to align with the National Student Survey (NSS) themes. To better gauge institutional performance based on OfS expectations, several questions in the survey were modified to reflect NSS standards, allowing for more accurate benchmarking of the institution's progress and effectiveness.
- The highest levels of satisfaction were observed among Education and Early Years students. Induction experience positivity ranged from 51% to 100%, reflecting disparities between departments. Positivity regarding 'Teaching on my course' was reported at 89%-100% for three departments, while one department showed concern with less than 40% positivity. Organisation and Management positivity ranged from 39% to 98%, and Student Voice positivity ranged from 39% to 100%.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

The Chair commended the introduction of the start of course survey, highlighting its importance in understanding students' perceptions and expectations upon arrival. It was noted that this approach helps in measuring learning gain and value added throughout the academic year. The Chair commented that this approach aligns with efforts to work with UCAS for a pre-arrival questionnaire to standardise data collection across the sector.

A member emphasised the importance of following up on specific issues identified in the survey and the HHEQS confirmed that focus groups had been planned as part of the work for the APP. It was noted that this would assist in understanding and addressing the needs of different student groups. The HHEQS highlighted that qualitative feedback is being gathered from student representatives to understand the reasons behind the survey responses.

Action: Head of HE, Quality and Standards

In relation to action arising from the previous meeting (21/24 Student Engagement Update) and the request to include the size of focus groups and engagement with hard-to-reach groups, it was agreed that the action would remain open and that an update would be provided once focus group activity had taken place.

A member asked if there have been any interventions for courses with low satisfaction scores in terms of course quality and organisation and enquired as to whether the same evaluation form was used across all programs to assess student engagement and satisfaction with teaching quality. The HHEQS confirmed that the same evaluation form was used across all disciplines and that this allows for consistent comparison and analysis. It was reported that conversations had been held with Program Leaders to address issues in courses with low satisfaction scores, such as in construction. The APAHES highlighted that the HE Management Committee reviews feedback and ensures accountability among Heads and Program Leaders to address satisfaction issues.

Minute No.

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Student Engagement update be received and noted.

HEC&Q/40/24 Office for Students Risk Register Update

The APAHES referred members to the previously circulated reports and an Office for Students (OfS) risk register update.

The key operational risks were confirmed to be:

- Financial Risk against 2024/2025 income position
- Delivery of successful student outcomes in line with B3 conditions
- Compliance with CMA guidance around public information for HE

The following changes to risk scores since March 2024 were reported:

- D - Risk has increased from 8 to 12 due to currently being below income targets and limited opportunities for in er recruitment. Further work in process to identify cost savings. It was noted that a small contingency was built into the budget for under performance, but this is outweighed by under recruitment.
- Further E3 risk added to capture OFS audit outcomes.

There were no questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the position in respect of Office for Students (OfS) Risk Register Update be received and noted

HEC&Q/41/24 Link Governor Update

The Chair provided an update in respect of the recent link governor visit.

It was reported that during the visit three separate meetings had been held with HE Link managers, the Corporation Secretary and the Deputy Principal. The Chair reported that the meetings focused upon several aspects of HE operational delivery, including the Access and Participation Plan, modality and portfolio health, sector activity and context, student surveys and the HE Curriculum & Quality Committee agenda.

The Chair also reported that she had attended the HE Graduation Ceremony at Stockport Town Hall and thanked all those involved for their hard work in the planning of and attendance at the ceremony.

There were no questions or issues raised by members and it was resolved that the update in respect of Link Governor visits be received and noted.

HEC&Q/42/24 Any Other Business

In relation to a query on the suitability of the timings of meetings, the CS advised that meetings had been moved to daytime to enhance governor engagement, particularly for student-related meetings. It was noted that this change was based on recommendations from the governance external review. The CS advised of plans to evaluate the current schedule at the end of the academic year to determine its effectiveness.

Action: Corporation Secretary

Minute No.

In relation to difficulties with attendance at meeting due to current timings, the CS advised that contact would be made with a member that had recently raised concerns in order to look at the issue.

There were no further matters raised under any other business.

HEC&Q/43/24 Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be held at 10.30 on 6 March 2025 in the Boardroom at Stockport Campus.

The meeting closed at 3.30pm

The Chief Finance Officer left the meeting following consideration of agenda item 6.

NH joined the meeting during consideration of item 8.