

UCEN Manchester Board

Minutes of the meeting held on 5th March 2021 at 10am via Microsoft Teams.

Present: Kimoni Bell, Modupe Dosumu, Justice Ellis, Cllr John Hacking (Chair), Philip Johnson, Lisa O'Loughlin (Principal) and Peter Winter.

In Attendance Rachel Curry (Deputy Principal), Katy Elliott (Assistant Company Secretary and Legal Officer), Jennifer Foote MBE (Company Secretary and General Counsel), Mark Harris (Associate Dean), Susan Holden (Director of Quality, Standards and Strategic Partnerships), Christine Kenyon (Deputy Principal), Edward Lack (Group Director of Quality), Debbie Sanderson (Divisional Finance Director College and Income Team) and Michael Walsh (Vice Principal and HE Dean).

Apology: Wendy Pennington (Director of Student Experience and Engagement)

No declarations of interest were received.

The Board welcomed Justice Ellis to his first UCEN Manchester Board meeting.

Part A

01/21	<p>Part A minutes of the meeting of the UCEN Manchester Board held on 20th November 2020</p> <p>The Part A minutes of the meeting of the UCEN Manchester Board held on 20th November 2020 were received and approved as an accurate record to be signed by the Chair in electronic form.</p> <p>With reference to Minute No 16/20 the Board was informed that the data expected on destinations was not yet available in its entirety therefore a report would be submitted to the next meeting.</p>
02/21	<p>Covid-19 update</p> <p>The Board received an update on measures to the health and safety of the learners, staff and friends and families during the Covid-19 pandemic. The College continued to provide meaningful education online for students, whilst preparing for some return to face to face teaching. Key priorities included continuing to provide on-site education for the most vulnerable, and ensuring successful recruitment and progression of all students. This was detailed as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New students recruited in January 2021. • Virtual support and guidance for prospective students for 2021/22.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progression support for existing students to external organisations at the end of 2020/21. • Internally progressing students from 2020/21 to 2021/22. <p>The Board received an update of the current position with regard to the communication, engagement and wellbeing strategy under way with a combination of detailed guidance comms, weekly webinars, leadership visibility and support in addition to wellbeing sessions. The College was working towards being able to offer a weekly COVID-19 test to colleagues attending site during the period of national lockdown. The distribution of IT equipment for HE students (73 laptops delivered so far) was confirmed. Government guidance had identified some HE provision could return to face-to-face teaching from 8 March and the team was currently working through the implications of this for UCEN Manchester courses.</p> <p>The Principal was pleased to inform the Board from September 2020 to December 2020 the transmission rate was almost nil and it was important to retain the same practices going forward when restrictions lift to keep learners and staff safe.</p> <p>A Covid-19 test centre had been established at the Shena Simon campus. Regular weekly tests would be offered to staff and was run in partnership with an occupational health provider.</p> <p>In response to a query regarding issues of non-compliance from staff and learners, it was confirmed there had been challenges but government guidelines were being followed. Management had been deployed to sites to ensure compliance. Communications had been extremely extensive and reinforced mask wearing and keeping a 2m distance. The Board reviewed the DfE guidance regarding students returning to HR and testing plans.</p> <p>The Board thanked the team for their extensive efforts during this difficult time.</p>
03/21	<p>Review of compliance with consumer law and ongoing condition C1</p> <p>A letter received from the OfS in respect of a review during the first half of the spring term of the compliance with consumer law was submitted. The letter required assurance to be provided to the governing body that compliance with ongoing condition C1 (guidance on consumer protection law) was in place. This condition required a provider to demonstrate that, in developing and implementing its policies, procedures and terms and conditions, it had given due regard to relevant guidance about how to comply with consumer protection law. The Board confirmed that assurance in this respect had been received.</p> <p>The Board was also informed that a letter received from the Secretary of State regarding a revised code for the freedom of speech would be considered with any additional requirements as a result brought to the Committee for approval.</p>

04/21	<p>HE Fees Policy and HE Fees</p> <p>The tuition fee rates and tuition fee policy for 2022/23 was received by the Board for its review and approval in order to meet the on-going OfS registration requirements. It was confirmed any altered requirements for EU students would be reflected in the revised policy.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the tuitions fees and the tuition fee policy, as set out in the report, be approved for 2022/23, subject to any amendment following validation outcomes.</p>
05/21	<p>Strategic challenges – DAPs/TEF</p> <p>A briefing paper was supplied to the Board which identified the strength and risks of the current TEF and set out criteria for applying for DAP's. The detailed paper was welcomed as an informative insight into the strategic considerations to be undertaken by the Board, prior to any decision being made on the most appropriate way forward for UCEN Manchester. It was agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting to consider an appraisal of options for future TEF/DAP status.</p>
06/21	<p>Validation Cycle</p> <p>The Strategic Curriculum Review and Validation Cycle Update was presented for consideration. Due to adopting the groups 'resilience model' at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, further work on developing the curriculum strategy and exploring different validation options had been put on hold. A refreshed Curriculum Strategy would be presented to a future Board meeting but in the interim, a number of developments that had taken place regarding validation arrangements were presented to the Board for information.</p>
07/21	<p>SED / QIP progress report 1</p> <p>The Group Director of Quality provided the Board with an overview of the UCEN Manchester SED (2019-20) and introduced UCEN Manchester's annual Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2020-21. The QIP had been drafted by focusing on the areas for development identified in the UCEN Manchester SED. The "bottom-up" approach taken in UCEN Manchester whereby curriculum programmes and departments self-evaluated first in order to provide the basis for the process was noted. The QIP was subject to future monitoring points from the UCEN Manchester management team. The first monitoring point for departmental QIPs was in December, so the report included a summary from that review point.</p> <p>QIP</p> <p>The standard of UCEN Manchester departmental QIPs was higher this year than in previous years. In all cases the AFIs from the SED were addressed in the QIPs. The documents themselves were well-written and, in most cases, had been evaluated thoroughly ahead of the monitoring point. As most of the targets focused on measurable</p>

	<p>outcomes, the great majority of action points were rated as ‘amber’ on the grounds that action had been taken to address the AFI, but that quantitative data did not currently exist to suggest that the target had been fulfilled. It was anticipated that many of the ‘amber’ ratings would change when the QIPs were monitored for the final time in September 2021. Several departments reported good progress against actions. It was evident that most departments had adapted their practice (and QIPs) to account of the ongoing pandemic. The Board was impressed at how much progress had been evidenced despite the day-to-day concerns around teaching during the COVID-19 crisis. Some actions were reliant on the restoration of the ETLA (Evaluation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment) system, but given the pandemic, this system was not operational and had been replaced by the RoL (Review of Learning) procedure. Head of Departments were encouraged to adapt their QIPs to account for the RoLs as opposed to the ETLAs. It was encouraging that so many departmental leads were keen to gather information on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, so that they could make improvements to their provision. The Board, however, noted with concern, references to the poor state of IT equipment in some curriculum areas – and that this was also evident last year. In some cases, the team were compelled to apply a ‘red’ rating to the action point around IT equipment as challenges were being faced.</p> <p>SED</p> <p>The Board received an overview of UCEN Manchester’s SED (2019-20) along with the full SED to provide an understanding of context for the QIP.</p> <p>The conclusions of the SED were mainly positive in that UCEN Manchester “<i>meets requirements</i>” in the curriculum areas, with The Arden being rated as “<i>exceeds requirements</i>”. Members noted that improvements needed to be made regarding Computing and Business which was in receipt of a “<i>does not meet requirements</i>” conclusion. The Board received assurance that, although the challenge of managing the capital demands of the IT estate should not be underestimated, the need to ensure student access to appropriate levels of equipment had been recognised and remedial action was in place.</p> <p>In response to a query concerning Afl 2, it was confirmed that further investigation, including a root cause analysis would need to be conducted to ascertain the issues behind the action requiring improvement.</p> <p>The Board reflected that it was inappropriate to group achievement rates and attainment rates from various diverse ethnic cohorts under the BAME generic heading and that efforts should be made to reflect this data by distinct ethnic group. An independent consultant had been appointed to review terms such as ‘BAME’ and provide guidance on how this practice could be ameliorated in future.</p>
08/21	<p>Access and Participation Plan Update</p> <p>The Board recapped on the 2019-20 Access and Participation plan and noted the reformed 2020-21 Access and Participation plan. The Access and Participation plan 2020-21 set out how UCEN Manchester would improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups in access to, succeed in and progress from higher education.</p>

	<p>This included UCEN's ambition for change, and the measures put in place to achieve that change (including the investment it would make to deliver the plan). The measures for success from OfS were articulated through the adoption of key performance measures and national targets focused on eradicating the gaps in access, success, and progression for underrepresented groups. They were underpinned by reforms to individual provider regulation through access and participation plans, sector regulation through activities to support and promote effective practice; and financial investment through dedicated OfS access and participation funding.</p> <p>In response to a query it was confirmed that the analysis was based on historical pattern analysis based on the residential addresses of former students.</p>
09/21	<p>Update from Academic Board</p> <p>The minutes from the Academic Board were received for consideration.</p>
10/21	<p>Complaints 2019/20</p> <p>The Director of Quality Standards and Strategic Partnerships provided to the Board an overview of the complaints procedure and complaints made in 2019/20.</p>
	<p>-----</p> <p>Chair</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Date</p>

The meeting closed at 12:05pm