

UCEN Manchester Board

Minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2021 at 10:04am via Microsoft Teams.

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

Apology: Lisa O'Loughlin (Principal).

In Attendance Amy Avery (Assistant Company Secretary & Solicitor), Rachel Curry (Deputy Principal), John Evans (Vice Principal), Jennifer Foote MBE (Company Secretary and General Counsel), Susan Holden (Director of Quality, Standards and Strategic Partnerships), Christine Kenyon (Deputy Principal), Wendy Pennington (Director of Student Experience and Engagement), Debbie Sanderson (Divisional Finance Director College and Income Team) and Michael Walsh (Vice Principal and HE Dean).

Apologies: Rebecca Bishop (Group HR Director), Mark Harris (Associate Dean) and Edward Lack (Group Director of Quality).

No declarations of interest were received.

At the start of the meeting, the Vice Principal and HE Dean was pleased to inform the Board that UCEN Manchester had recently received the gold badge at the Whatuni Student Choice Awards for its outstanding student support during the pandemic and the Return to Learning Award at the MCC Adult Education and Skills Partnership Awards.

Part A

13/21	<p>Part A minutes of the meeting of the UCEN Manchester Board held on 5th March 2021</p> <p>The Part A minutes of the meeting, of the UCEN Manchester Board, held on 5th March 2021, were received and approved as an accurate record, to be signed by the Chair in electronic form.</p> <p>In reference to Minute No. 05/21 '<i>Strategic Challenges – DAPs/TEF</i>' an update was provided to the Board. A workshop took place on 5th May 2021 which was useful for Governors to discuss wider issues. Also, some awarding bodies who had stopped accepting applications due to Covid had reopened and therefore UCEN Manchester would be able to submit applications. A further update would be provided to the Board at the next meeting on 19th November 2021.</p>
-------	--

14/21	<p>Nomination of Chair</p> <p>It was agreed to nominate Cllr John Hacking for the position of Chair for 2021/22.</p>
15/21	<p>Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2020-21 Progress Update</p> <p>The Board received an overview of the improvement priorities articulated in the UCEN Manchester QIP for 2020-21 (which derived from the SED). The annual review of the progress made was tracked to illustrate historic progress towards the objectives and targets.</p> <p>The position that attendance and retention had improved in most areas and achievement gaps had decreased for students with a BAME background was noted positively. Further, UCEN Manchester was on an upward trajectory to increase continuation rates.</p> <p>Members reflected upon the objectives that the QIP set out to achieve. Most objectives had been RAG rated amber. It was explained that this was because UCEN Manchester was part-way through the year and it was not possible to sign off objectives until the results were received. It was articulated that good progress had been made against the actions which provided the meeting with confidence that the objectives would be met.</p> <p>Areas that would take longer to advance were highlighted as the realignment of student support and the IT facilities. Despite investment in IT taking place in-year it was made clear that it would take several years for the full impact of improvements to be felt.</p> <p>The meeting also received the full QIP and SED for a further level of scrutiny and assurance.</p> <p>It was indicated that a very significant piece of work regarding objective 2 <i>'Improve BAME and mature students' achievements to be as good as their peers'</i> was being undertaken. Upon completion, members would be provided with a detailed analysis of the performance of different groups and an improvement plan for any identified gaps.</p> <p>In response to a query, it was explained that the FE and HE sectors had different requirements as to data sets and a different way of analysing their student data. The FE regulator required more granular detail whereas the HE sector adopted a more generalised approach. This was illustrated by the c. 20 different ethnicities in the FE sector data compared to the c. 5 ethnicity groups in the HE sector data. This meant that UCEN Manchester would need to go into the more granular detail to obtain internal improvements whilst ensuring compliance with the data requirements of the OfS.</p> <p>The Board was assured that the overall aim to close achievement gaps would continue and the progress would be monitored and reported to the Board.</p> <p>In response to a query regarding the participation percentage of students who had contributed to the destination outcome data, it was confirmed that the way the data was collected changed three years ago which had seemingly led to a lower response rate.</p>

	<p>It was confirmed that internally FE destinations had improved over the last couple of years and the procedures to improve the HE destinations would need to be considered. It was discussed that students whether from TMC or UCEN Manchester should be treated the same in terms of the utilisation of the same monitoring systems post-completion of the courses. The merging of all data would need to be actioned to obtain a more complete picture as currently intelligence from teachers was not included. It was flagged that it had taken some students longer than one year after their course had ended to achieve their destination of choice. In some instances, it might be necessary for a student to obtain a job in another sector to earn some money pending their career of choice being entered. It was suggested that a discussion could take place with the OfS regarding how UCEN Manchester should manage its destination data.</p> <p>In response to a further query, the methodology that UCEN Manchester used for destination data was clarified and discussed. It was acknowledged that the destination data was already a few years out of date as it concerned students who graduated in 2017-18. However, unfortunately that was the only data available to date.</p> <p>Debate then ensued surrounding how students could be encouraged to complete the surveys and it was understood that the response rate had been a challenge across the whole sector.</p> <p>The strategic and stakeholder implications and risks were articulated.</p> <p>Members were pleased with the progress being made against the objectives/targets in the QIP.</p>
16/21	<p>Predicted Achievement Report</p> <p>Members received the Predicted Achievement Report for scrutiny. The context of the report was explained as highlighted by the QIP.</p> <p>The predicted achievement rates were presented broken down into '<i>All Starts</i>' (all students on all years of a 3-year degree) and '<i>Final Year Starts</i>' (only the students on the final year of a 3-year degree).</p> <p>All 2020-21 predicted grades were shown by individual departments and had been rated as green for +5% compared to all departments or rated red (which indicated -5% compared to all departments). It was explained that in some areas no such rating could be allocated, e.g. where the result was 97% as it was not possible to improve upon that figure by 5%.</p> <p>It was stressed that with the predicted achievements, there was a degree of uncertainty around pass rates this year due to Covid, the resultant increase in requests for mitigating circumstances and disruption caused by lockdowns.</p> <p>Further, it was articulated that continuation rates (the percentage of students who successfully completed a 1-year course or who enrolled on a course of 2 or more years and successfully progressed to the second year) were another important indicator of HE performance.</p>

	<p>The predicted continuation rates were presented which were based on the predicted achievement rates. Members were pleased to note that except for a small number of students on a part-time construction course all continuation rates were predicted to improve by c. 3% above the OfS's HE in FE Continuation Rate Benchmark of 79.8%.</p> <p>The key issues for 2020-21 were summarised as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attendance and retention rates had improved; • pass rates were <i>predicted</i> to improve for final year students; • continuation and achievement rates were <i>predicted</i> to improve; • pass rates for Level 4 students were <i>predicted</i> to be slightly lower than in 2019-20; • Covid had clearly impacted Level 4 performance; • strong performance was seen across many departments/programmes; • attendance was below 85% in Sport & Public Service; • Engineering had a low attendance and retention rate; • Performing Arts had declining retention and attendance from 2019-20 (but both were still relatively high); and • achievements in some courses were a concern (Computing, Engineering, Health & Social Care and Sport & Public Services); <p>Members were assured that performance would be further reviewed through the self-evaluation process in 2020-21 and more direct line management of all UCEN Manchester areas by the Associate Dean would drive additional improvements.</p>
	<p>RESOLVED that as the items to be considered are deemed commercially sensitive, the Board moved into confidential session.</p>
	<p>-----</p> <p>Chair</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Date</p>

The meeting closed at 12:11pm.