

## UCEN Manchester Board

Minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 10am via Microsoft Teams.

Present: Kimoni Bell, Modupe Dosumu, 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), 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).

*No declarations of interest were received.*

*The Board welcomed Mark Harris and Modupe Dosumu to their first UCEN Manchester Board meeting.*

### Part A

14/20	<p><b>Part A minutes of the meeting of the UCEN Manchester Board held on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020</b></p> <p>The Part A minutes of the meeting of the UCEN Manchester Board held on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were received, approved as an accurate record to be signed by the Chair in electronic form.</p>
15/20	<p><b>Letter from Secretary of State for Education to Vice Chancellors</b></p> <p>The Board was presented with a letter from the Secretary of State for Education requesting the organisation adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of antisemitism.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that LTE Group Board be recommended to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of antisemitism.</p>

16/20

## Learner Outcome Reports

The Board received an overview of the Learner Outcome Reports for 2019/20. Key areas to note were:

- Improved attendance rate
- Improved and positive in-year retention and in-year pass rates
- High levels of high attainment across the provision as a whole; with strong increases in first class and 2:1 degree classifications on both the BA and BSc programmes
- Small declines in course duration retention, pass rate and therefore achievement
- Continuation rate declined to 2017/18 level; but stronger on FT first degrees and in teacher education
- Improved performance across level 5 and level 7 programmes
- Improved achievement across foundation degrees due to stronger retention; small declines in achievement on other types of qualification, largely due to falls in retention
- increased achievement rates in six departments and decreases in overall achievement in seven departments
- Strongly improved and high performance in teacher education compared to the previous year.

The Board was pleased to see attendance rate had increased by 4%, retention (one-year measure) increased by 2.4%, and retention (duration of course), 5.2%. The continuation rate (HESA measure) improved by 0.3%. Attendance rates, retention rate (duration of course) and the continuation rate (HESA measure) also showed three-year trends of improvement. Pass and achievement rates showed declines of 9.3% and 3.2% respectively. The significant decline in pass rates was mostly caused by similarly significant declines in departments with high numbers of students, including Arden, business, hair and beauty therapy, health and social care, media and sport and public services. The high attainment rate was highlighted as being very strong.

Teacher education was highlighted as a key area with rate of 84.4%, which was higher than the national benchmark of 79.8%.

In response to a query on how UCEN Manchester was connecting with students during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Board was assured that the organisation had adopted a blended learning approach. Tests had been conducted to assess student mental well-being. These also gave insight into module evaluations, retention and attendance.

The Board was satisfied to see UCEN Manchester had provided a wraparound support package for students.

It was highlighted that students who lived away would be able to travel back home on the 8<sup>th</sup> December when teaching ceased. Commuting students would have their courses looked at individually to assess a safe end of term point. It was confirmed UCEN Manchester was gaining understanding on how students could be referred into the local Covid-19 testing system before returning home. This remained a challenge, but a priority for the team.

	<p>In response to a query on the absence of detail on student destinations, it was explained that this data was not yet available but that it would be reported to the next meeting.</p>
17/20	<p><b>Self-Evaluation Document (SED)</b></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 when presented to future meetings of the Board.</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.</p> <p>Key strengths were presented to the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High in-year retention and pass rates across the majority of programmes, particularly high in Performing and Creative Arts;</li> <li>• Success in narrowing of participation and achievement gaps - increased participation of majority of priority of groups and widening participation and disability groups achieve as well as their peers;</li> <li>• Consistently high standard of TLA practices within the Arden and Teacher Education mean students frequently had an outstanding learning experience;</li> <li>• Very strong models of assessment practice, including enhanced assessment design and feedback to support learning and progression;</li> <li>• Vibrant, stimulating and engaging curriculum delivery in practical areas leading to improving student experience and outcomes in most of those programmes;</li> <li>• Assessment briefs, moderation and internal verification practices were robust and of a high standard;</li> <li>• NSS student participation and satisfaction rates have significantly increased and are above benchmark across the majority of categories;</li> <li>• Strong and purposeful leadership and management resulted in an extremely positive Quality &amp; Standards Review from the QAA; and</li> <li>• Development of 'Future U' concept provides highly effective 'one-stop shop' for student support services.</li> </ul> <p>The Board noted key areas for improvement were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuation rates were too low in Other UG (Undergraduate) programmes, specifically on Foundation Degrees in Special Effects, Sports Coaching and Sport Science; HNC in Health and Construction and HND in Computing (Outcomes)</li> <li>• BAME and mature students' achievement and attainment rates were too low, and they did not perform as well as their peers;</li> <li>• 'Student outcomes' judgements in a minority of Departmental SEDs 'did not meet requirements';</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student academic skills were insufficiently evidenced in certain modules across a minority of programmes;</li> <li>• Library resources supporting student learning and their consistency across UCEN Manchester campuses;</li> <li>• The impact of leadership and management in securing and embedding the improvements needed to achieve TEF Gold metrics across all departments; and</li> <li>• Inadequacy of IT facilities, which, along with several of our learning environments, attract very low levels of student satisfaction.as</li> </ul> <p>The Board considered that the reliability and rigour of the SED process had been sufficient to give the necessary assurance on the quality of HE provision.</p>
<b>18/20</b>	<p><b>National Student Survey (NSS) Report</b></p> <p>The meeting received the NSS outcomes report for 2019/20. Participation stood at 85% for 2019/20 compared to 75% prior year. The overall satisfaction rate for UCEN Manchester was 82.7% (an increase of 2% on prior year). The three main contributory factors to the success were also outlined. These were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment and Feedback had increased by 6.8% and was now classed as “significantly above benchmark”,</li> <li>• Learning Opportunities has increased by 3.1% and</li> <li>• Learning Community had increased by 2.7%.</li> </ul> <p>The Board noted Learning Resources had now been classed as “significantly below benchmark”. The Board expressed its concern at this and sought assurance that remedial action was in place. It was confirmed that a five year investment plan for the refresh and investment in IT resources had been developed with approval for implementation anticipated shortly.</p> <p>In respect of individual question, whilst improvements were noted across most areas “assessment and feedback” had seen significant improvement. The Board noted positively that this had been identified as a specific target for 2019/20.</p> <p>Programmes in the Arden and Manchester Film School continued to perform extremely well in the survey.</p> <p>The Board welcomed the performance in the survey for 2019/20 as a reflection of a strong performance with improvements clear in most areas and specifically in those areas which were the focus of quality improvement actions during the year.</p>
<b>19/20</b>	<p><b>Reporting on the access and participation plan 2019/20</b></p> <p>The Board was informed that the Office for Students (OfS) hds introduced a new reporting requirement in the annual financial statements relating to access and</p>

	<p>participation, effective for the first time in the year ending July 2020. The requirement was to report expenditure on activities related to access and participation and a requirement for the external auditors to include their opinion on the use of funds in their audit report. Information proposed to be included in the Financial Statements in order to fulfil this obligation was provided for information.</p>
20/20	<p><b>Update from Academic Board minutes</b></p> <p>The minutes from the Academic Board were received for consideration.</p>
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The meeting closed at 12:06pm