

UCEN Manchester Board

Minutes of the meeting held on 24th June 2022 at 10:00am via Microsoft Teams.

Present: Justice Ellis, Cllr John Hacking (Chair), Philip Johnson, Lisa O'Loughlin (Principal).

In Attendance: Linda Barlow (Assistant Company Secretary & Legal Officer), Rachel Curry (Deputy Principal), Susan Diamond (Group Quality Team Director-FE), Mark Harris (Associate Dean), Kate MacKenzie (Deputy Company Secretary & Solicitor), 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 acknowledged the positive contribution of Kimoni Bell who had resigned.

Part A

10/22	<p>Part A minutes of the meeting of the UCEN Manchester Board held on 4th March 2022</p> <p>The Part A minutes of the meeting, of the UCEN Manchester Board, held on 4th March 2022, were received and approved as an accurate record, to be signed by the Chair in electronic form.</p>
11/22	<p>Nomination of Chair</p> <p>It was agreed to nominate Cllr John Hacking for the position of Chair for 2022/23.</p>
12/22	<p>Student Enrolment Pipeline 2022-23</p> <p>The Board received an update on applications and acceptances to UCEN Manchester, both external and internal, from The Manchester College (TMC).</p> <p>It was articulated to the Board that applications showed a 19% increase due to several in-year activities put in place to address the shortfall in enrolments in 2021-22.</p> <p><i>Philip Johnson left the meeting.</i></p> <p>Overall applications were above previous years in all areas/ schools and particularly positive due to targeted growth in Creative & Media Arts, Manchester Film School, Management and Digital and Counselling and Teacher Education. However, applications in Health and Social Care and Childhood and Youth Studies courses had</p>

	<p>decreased owing to the challenging legacy left by COVID and poor employment terms and conditions offered in the sector. The Board understood that significant work to recover the level of applications in these areas would need to be undertaken.</p> <p>In response to a query as to whether there was granularity of data available to determine if UCEN Manchester's competitors were also reporting the same downward trend in applications in Health and Social Care and Childhood and Youth Studies, it was reported that this data would be available in March/April 2023, but it was anticipated that this would be mirrored nationally. The position would be monitored and report on applications in this area would be brought to the Board next year.</p> <p>A graph on internal applications was presented and articulated to the Board which showed that total internal applications had improved (22% increase) since the same point last year and internal applications for Level 4 courses had improved (14.2% increase) since the same point prior year. Internal applications had been seen particularly in 3D Game Art & VFX, Counselling, Business Management, Computer Network Security, Software Development and Acting which demonstrated that work in stimulating interest internally in Level 4 courses was starting to yield results.</p> <p>Part time applications had increased (19.5%) demonstrating a growing demand for part time learning. However, applications for Teacher Education were significantly reduced, a trend reported in the Education and Training Consortium Steering Group.</p> <p>Acceptances had improved (15% increase) since the same point last year, and 13% more than the 3-year average. Arden was the exception due to lower figures on Dance and Performance.</p> <p>The Board was presented with a slide showing an extract from a modelling dashboard currently in development for 2023 enabling targets to be quantified and efforts steered to achievement of such targets. It was reported that 150 non-Arden applications were needed to achieve the 1408 predicted September enrolments.</p> <p>In a response to a query as to whether the 1408 figure included January starts, it was confirmed that those figures would be a positive addition to that figure but were not being relied on for budget modelling.</p> <p>The Board noted the positive internal progression on applications and acceptances.</p> <p>The Board was informed that a full dashboard of data including, targets, applications, offers, acceptances and forecast enrolments with the functionality to model different scenarios was currently being developed for September 2022.</p> <p>The Board was presented with an update on marketing and recruitment for the 2022 entry confirming the September new target enrolment figure of 1405 which was in line with the 1538 target for September 2023 attached to the Estates Strategy. It was reported that this new target equated to a 26% increase on in year enrolments which was challenging but achievable.</p> <p>The Board was reminded of the four routes and associated actions to increase overall enrolments and achieve the new target enrolment figure which were : increase</p>
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	<p>applications, increase offers, increase applications to offer conversion rate and increase offers to enrolment conversion rate.</p> <p>An update on the additional investment of £58K applied to increase 2022 entry targets was provided to the Board, highlighting the Unibuddy chat platform which had encouraged more acceptances towards enrolment and the Accelerator Award, launched in January which provided students progressing directly from TMC to specific UCEN Manchester programmes with £1K cashback.</p> <p>The Board was presented with an overview of the activity planned to increase conversions, including a plan to hold enrolments at the new City Centre campus to build on students' HE experience and ethos.</p> <p>In response to a query about how the reduction in marketing spend (80K-53K) had still led to an increased enrolment target, it was confirmed that spend on increasing conversions was additional spend and that overall it would be greater than last year as the approach was aligned with the UCAS cycle and the team was able to respond to what the market requires.</p> <p>The Board welcomed the innovative marketing approach and commendation was provided to the team on the activities planned.</p>
13/22	<p>Self-Evaluation Document 2020/21 and Quality Enhancement Plan 2021/22 Progress Report</p> <p>The Board received a summary of the UCEN Manchester Self-Evaluation Document for 2020/21 (the "SED") which was built around the departments as they were in 2020/21.</p> <p>The Quality Enhancement Plan for 2021-22 ("QEP") was received by the meeting in the interests of scrutiny. It was noted that the aim of the QEP was to drive continuous improvement across UCEN Manchester.</p> <p>The progress of the QEP in addressing the Areas for Enhancement ("AfEs"), identified by the SED, had been tracked to May 2022. Of the eight, six of the action points in the QEP were RAG rated amber and likely to be achieved, two were rated red and unlikely to be achieved but remedial actions were planned.</p> <p>The following AfEs rag rated red were highlighted to the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>AfE 5: The Programme Leader role is neither adequately defined nor consistently implemented, leading to a lack of accountability rigour and impact within the performance of a number of programmes.</i> <p>The timeline for work in progress aligned to this was shared and the UCENTRIC strategy had been positive to bring this area back on track.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>AfE 8: The Future U Student Support Service lacks a single coherent QEP and therefore actions are not always suitably focused on bringing about improvements in UCEN Manchester.</i>

	<p>It was articulated that self-evaluation in UCEN Manchester was under review and that a separate Future U QUEP for HE student support services would be implemented next year.</p> <p>The Board noted the improvement priorities articulated in the QEP.</p> <p>In response to a request at the previous meeting, (<i>Minute No. 02/22 refers</i>) the Board received an update on the AfEs that were likely to roll into subsequent years. It was confirmed that five of the eight would likely roll into the QEP for 2022/23.</p> <p>Two AfEs were identified from the 2020/21 QEP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Improve library resources to support better students' academic skills.</i> • <i>Improve student satisfaction with IT facilities and resources and reduce concerns raised in this area.</i> <p>It was reported that these two AfEs undoubtedly influenced the current QEP Afl 4: <i>National Student Survey Results are below the benchmark: Overall satisfaction, Organisation and management, Learning Resources</i>. The Board was assured that these points were being addressed where it was in the gift of UCEN Manchester to do so.</p> <p>The Board endorsed the improvement priorities articulated in the QEP, the progress made against those objectives and targets and noted the SED as context for the QEP.</p>
14/22	<p>Update from Academic Board – minutes</p> <p>An update from the last Academic Board meeting, held on 27th May 2022, was provided to the meeting for information along with the draft minutes. The main points discussed at the Academic Board meeting included: the confirmed appointment of a successor to the role of Director of Quality, Standards and Strategic Partnerships, review of the Academic Governance Committee structure, approval of a range of policies including UCEN Manchester Admissions Policy and Procedure, Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure, Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Assessment Policy, the Pearson Academic Regulations and Pearson Mitigating Circumstances Policy, Student Engagement Strategy and Student Support Policy and the Student Protection Plan. A UCEN Manchester QUEP update was provided, the Academic Calendar 2022-23 approved, the Student Performance Update received. Minutes of Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee from 6th May 2022 and the OIA Statement for 2021 were provided.</p>
15/22	<p>Access and Participation Plan Update</p> <p>For information, the Board received an update on the Access and Participation Plan (APP). It was articulated that new guidance and expectations around APPs had been issued by the DofE to the OfS in November 2021, followed in February 2022 by the</p>

	<p>new Director for Fair Access and Participation setting out his priorities for AP over the next four years.</p> <p>It was explained that a three phased approach over the next four years was planned, with institutions currently completing phase one: monitoring of access and participation plans for the academic year 2020-21 and phase two: variations and sector engagement.</p> <p>It was articulated that the reform of the APP was to refocus APPs so that they clearly set out how providers would address the four new national priorities, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Make access and participation plans more accessible, by providing a plan summary that was and easy for students, their parents, and other key stakeholders to understand.</i> • <i>Develop partnerships with schools and other local and national organisations, to help raise the pre-16 attainment of young people from underrepresented groups.</i> • <i>Set out how students from underrepresented groups would successfully participate in higher education and achieve good graduate outcomes, from high quality courses.</i> • <i>Seek to develop more diverse pathways into higher education, through expansion of flexible Level 4 and 5 courses and degree apprenticeships.</i> <p>UCEN Manchester was required to submit a variation of its existing APP for the 2023-24 academic year by the end of July. A new plan would be required to be submitted next year.</p> <p>The documents outlining the variations requested setting out how UCEN Manchester would address the four national priorities were provided to the Board for information.</p>
	<p>RESOLVED that as the items to be considered were deemed commercially sensitive, the Board moved into confidential session.</p>
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