

Higher Education Action and Enhancement Plan

Last updated 14 December 2016

	Area of activity	Source(s)	Action(s)	Who	Reason(s) for action(s)	Complete by	Progress and date
1.	University Centre Somerset strategic plan	Operating Plan (2.4.6, 5.3.1)	a) College to scope the potential and strategic benefits for pursuing degree awarding powers. b) Continue to model systems and maintain records that could be relevant as evidence in the future. c) Develop a strategic plan for the University Centre Somerset.	Principalship SMT Director of SCQS Head of HE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HE Bill is opening the market for HE and the College needs to understand fully how to position itself for the future to give students in the area the best possible access to the best possible HE provision locally. 	April 2017	
2.	The provision of information to prospective students about the University Centre Somerset	Department Self Evaluations Oct 2016 EE Reports Student feedback Operating Plan 16-17 (1.2.5, 5.3.2)	a) Review marketing strategy for HE with priority given to 'at risk' courses b) Marketing and HE Quality Team to work closely on meeting Consumer Protection Law and UK Quality Code expectations. c) Liaise with HEI partners to ensure any changes meet their needs. d) Review Ts&Cs to ensure compliance with CMA e) Review information publicly available in relation to	Head of Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that all information is fit for purpose and trustworthy, and is accessible to those who need it in a timely way. (UK Quality Code: <i>Expectations: B2, B9,C</i>) Ensure courses are promoted effectively to boost recruitment in identified areas. Student satisfaction against expectations set from the outset Promote the new University Centre Somerset brand to 	July 2017	

			<p>policies, procedures etc to ensure CMA compliance</p> <p>f) Alignment of admissions systems across the merged college</p>	<p>Admissions & Guidance Manager</p>	<p>raise the profile of the HE offer at the College</p>		
3.	Student satisfaction	NSS results 2016	<p>a) Heads of Department to work closely with HE teams to support students in completing the NSS and other related surveys.</p> <p>b) Courses with known less than benchmark results to review results in detail and ensure a plan is produced that addresses performance issues.</p> <p>c) College to consider courses for QIPs where needed on this basis.</p> <p>d) Ensure teams are prepared for new 2017 question set</p>	<p>Heads of Department</p> <p>Head of HE</p> <p>Director of Student Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSS overall satisfaction score in 2016 was 77%, significantly below the sector average of 86% Improve the student experience To ensure future TEF ratings are positive. Promote shared understanding with staff and students of the importance of the NSS and impact of the student voice in HE. 	Jan 2017	
4.	Student engagement	<p>Student survey results 2016</p> <p>EE reports</p> <p>HEI reports</p> <p>Operating Plan (1.6.4)</p>	<p>a) Review arrangements for HE student feedback within the context of a merged college.</p> <p>b) Ensure student engagement is encouraged strongly at course level through the representation system</p>	<p>Director of Student Services</p> <p>Heads of Department</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to build on the good practice from Somerset College for student voice activities to improve the student experience and improve survey results in 2016/17 	March 2017	
5.	Assessment practices	<p>EE Reports 15/16</p> <p>Operating Plan 16/17 (1.1.2, 2.4.5)</p> <p>Student feedback</p> <p>HN Engineering Board reports</p>	<p>a) Put in measures to promote the consistency of the marking of assessed work</p> <p>b) Improve and keep under constant review marking/feedback turnaround times</p> <p>c) Review the College's Expectations and Good Practice Guide to align with the Assessment Framework</p> <p>d) CPD opportunities for staff via EPs</p> <p>e) Review assessment loadings to reduce over-assessment where possible</p>	<p>Head of HE</p> <p>Head of Quality & Teaching Development</p> <p>Heads of Department</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the student experience and see that demonstrated through NSS scores in 2017 and beyond. Address recommendations made by EEs relating to these activities in some EE reports. 	July 2017	

			f) Reduce numbers of referrals among HN Engineering students				
6.	Level and spread of staff teaching responsibilities	EE Reports 15/16 Department Self Evaluations Oct 2016 Student feedback HEI meetings	a) Keep teaching arrangements for HE staff under review b) Consider the need of exploring options for addressing this within the context of the University Centre Somerset and future strategic direction.	Head of HE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some feedback from students indicates an awareness of how busy staff can be Marking of work and provision of feedback can take longer than expected, this was shown as a less than benchmark statistic in the NSS results for 2016 University partners/externalss often express concern regarding the teaching workloads at the College at validation events and partnership meetings 	July 2017	
7.	Scholarly Activity and research	College Self Evaluations of 2014-15 Department Self Evaluations Oct 2016	a) Continue to engage staff and maintain focus on meeting this aspect of the Terms of Reference of the Research Scholarship and Ethics Committee b) Promote HEA Fellowships and subscription support to all HE teams with view to increasing the number of recognised Fellows	Head of HE Head of Quality and Teaching Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This activity is critical in building a HE culture and enhancing the quality of the College's HE provision and reputation. It is also a key component of FDAP and TDAP if the College decides to pursue a strategy to achieve this. 	July 2017	
8.	Peer observation and review for HE programmes	Operating Plan 16/17 (1.1.1, 1.1.3)	a) Pilot new Peer Review and Observation policy and then review. b) Launch new Peer Review/Observation approach for HE at HE Conference in February 2017 c) Embed process for HE TLA activities for 2017/18 d) Analyse outcomes and review impact	Head of HE with Head of Quality & Teaching Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability by College to understand better the quality of teaching in HE Scholarly activity opportunity for staff Preparation for participation in the TEF Support the development of a HE culture 	a) Dec 2016 b) Feb 2017 c) July 2018 d) Oct 2018	
9.	Attendance levels of students at taught sessions	EE Reports Student feedback	a) Ensure expectations on attendance are clear to students and staff b) Extend the Taunton Centre attendance agreement to all	Head of HE Heads of Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve student experience and outcomes Increase survey satisfaction levels 	a) Dec 2016 b) Nov 2016 c) Ongoing	

		Operating Plan 16/17	HE students through the terms and conditions c) Continue to monitor and address attendance issues at course level				
10.	Resourcing of high cost HE provision	Department Self Evaluations Oct 2016 Operating Plan (4.2.2, 4.4.3) EE reports	a) Keep HE tuition fees under review as a merged college b) Explore the potential for using Turnitin across the whole organisation for HE c) Course costs to be kept under review through college processes	Head of HE Head of Quality and Teaching Development Heads of Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlighted as an area of risk to the success of HE programmes through the Departmental HE Self Evaluations in Oct 2016. 	July 2017	
11.	Evaluation of widening participation activities and targets	OFFA Access Agreements Operating Plan (1.6.1, 2.4.1)	a) Establish a working group to monitor and report on key WP activities b) Effectively evaluate and report on the impact of WP activities c) Ensure college systems are set up to capture and report on quantitative information appropriately in the longer term	Head of HE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OFFA expectations about quality of evaluation of impact of WP activities against Access Agreements APR metrics that will look at students by categories including WP factors TEF metrics that will take into account WP students and their outcomes. NCOP activities and relation to other WP activities 	April 2017	
12.	Non-prescribed HE	Department Self Evaluations Oct 2016 Student feedback Operating Plan (1.6.2, 2.4.4) Complaints log	a) Develop effective quality systems that meet the expectations of the awarding bodies and UK Quality Code for HE as far as possible. b) Develop student voice activities that reduce reliance on complaints as a means of communication for raising issues.	Head of HE with Head of Quality and Teaching Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve student satisfaction on non-prescribed HE as these programmes have disproportionate number of complaints compared to prescribed HE in 15/16. 	July 2017	
13.	Academic study skills of students	EE reports Student feedback	a) Continue to develop the HEADstart programme, taking attributes of the existing offer at the Taunton	Director of Student Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognised as an area of strength by EEs and staff and is an enhancement activity The support does not always continue at the same 	March 2017	

		Department Self Evaluations Oct 2016	Centre to further strengthen it. b) Develop teaching staff skills in supporting academic skill development in students		standard at course level once the HEADstart aspect has concluded.		
14.	Higher/Degree Apprenticeships	HEI partner reports Operating Plan (2.2.1, 2.2.5, 2.4.2)	a) Grow profile of HAs/DAs b) Ensure internal college approval processes for HAs/DAs are fit for purpose. c) Develop quality systems that effectively monitor the unique requirements of HAs/DAs d) Work with university partners on developing cross-institutional relationships that support the growth of DAs.	Director of Business Development Assistant Principals Head of HE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential area for significant growth in HE provision and employer needs/university relationships. 	July 2017	
15.	Skills of HE teaching teams	EE reports Department Self Evaluations Oct 2016 Operating Plan (3.1.4, 3.2.3, 3.3.2)	a) Review HE specific induction arrangements for teaching staff b) Share skills of staff and good practice through peer review approaches c) Promote recognition of teaching and learning in HE through supporting staff to complete fellowship applications to the HEA d) Explore the possibility to provide HE teaching staff with the opportunity to gain HE relevant teaching qualifications through the College	Head of HE Head of Teaching & Quality Development Heads of Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EEs report positively on staff skills and support provided, this is a positive picture that needs to be maintained Expectations of new staff to teaching HE are not codified 	July 2017	
16.	Curriculum plan for HE	Operating Plan (5.1.1, 5.3.3) HEI partnership boards	a) Review the curriculum offer in the context of a merged college with priority given to similar course offers at different centres being rationalised. b) Ensure portfolio changes are agreed with HEI partners. c) The University Centre Somerset, Taunton Centre,	Assistant Principals Heads of Department Head of HE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure provision meets known market needs and expectations Meet standards and quality expectations of HEI partners and UK Quality Code College to ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of HE provision as a merged college 	March 2017	

			<p>to be the location of HE courses where possible.</p> <p>d) Keep level 3 and Access to HE provision under constant review to ensure appropriate progression routes are available at the College wherever possible.</p> <p>e) Review tuition fees for 18/19 as a merged college</p>				
17.	Institutional Approval with the OU	OU Partnership Agreement	<p>a) Complete and achieve approval as Bridgwater and Taunton College to continue to offer OU provision.</p>	Head of HE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical to ensure re-approval to maintain and grow HE provision in the future. 	March 2017	
18.	HE Quality Systems and policies	Operating Plan (5.6.2)	<p>a) Review HE quality systems as a merged college</p> <p>b) Devise a realistic plan to align HE policies on a priority basis</p> <p>c) Consider establishing a working group to channel consultation of changes/introduction of new policy</p> <p>d) Commence policy reviews and re-writes against the plan</p>	Head of HE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure positive attributes from both colleges are considered and captured as part of this process. Opportunity to undertake a detailed review of policies and systems to ensure they are fit for purpose. Help enhance the HE culture through meaningful contribution to key policy developments 	July 2017	
19.	Support systems for HE	<p>Restructure proposal</p> <p>NSS scores</p> <p>Department Self Evaluations Oct 2016</p>	<p>a) Ensure that all aspects of HE specific activities that are conducted by central support teams are catered for within the restructure post-merger.</p> <p>b) Review support mechanisms for additional learning and DSA in light of merger</p>	<p>Director of SCQS</p> <p>Assistant Principal of APFS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for significant loss of skills within wider HE support teams. Reduce over reliance on key staff that has been seen in the Bridgwater approach within the merged college structures 	January 2017	
20.	Erasmus+	Operating Plan	<p>a) Launch and facilitate implementation of new KA1 HE Mobility project for staff and students across Europe</p> <p>b) Explore further international exchange opportunities</p>	Head of Quality & Teaching Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing meaningful opportunities for staff and students to engage in scholarship and personal development in a European HE context Raising aspirations for students and increase employability 	March 2017	

21.	Employability	<p>HEI partnership priorities</p> <p>DLHE results</p> <p>TEF scores</p> <p>Foundation Degree Qualification Statement</p>	<p>a) Conduct a gap analysis of courses to ensure they meet the revised Foundation Degree Qualification requirements. Support and monitor that curriculum teams are making any necessary changes following the gap analysis.</p> <p>b) Develop a deeper understanding of the College's DLHE data and overall destinations profile and data.</p> <p>c) Consolidate employability resources across the merged college.</p>	Head of Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure the College can uphold and maintain Academic Standards • To ensure the employability of graduates is understood and able to be articulated well. • Ensure that work undertaken by the two colleges prior to merger on employability is built on and shared to benefit all HE. 	March 2017	Gap analysis of Taunton Centre courses complete (August 2016).
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