



AGM 2021 Minutes
Wednesday 13th January 2021

1. Welcome and Introduction - Jonathan Atkinson (JA), UK Chair

The UK Chair, Jonny Atkinson opened the meeting at 12:15 welcoming everyone and explaining the process. Each item would be introduced, followed by an opportunity for comments and questions, then a proposer and seconder would be sought before a vote would be taken. Everyone is welcome to comment, but only primary contacts and appointed proxies can vote. There are 146 institutional members and to be quorate one-third of those or their appointed proxies must be present (49). 86 primary contact or proxies registered their attendance via the Mi-Voice voting platform (with a further 21 joining after the initial registration period), so the meeting is quorate and can conduct formal business. All motions will be by a simple majority vote. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chair shall either: call for another vote; or exercise his casting vote.

2. Apologies for Absence - Steven Walsh (SW), UK VC (Membership & Administration)

The Vice-Chair (Membership and Administration) Steven Walsh, Liverpool Hope University, received 19 formal apologies from members.

3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 15th January 2020, Crowne Plaza, Stratford-Upon-Avon
- Jonathan Atkinson (JA), UK Chair

The Chair asked for any comments, questions or amendments to the 2020 AGM Minutes. A minor error was noted on page 9, the spelling of Helena Ziegler's name will be corrected. The minutes will be updated and circulated.

Proposer	Fiona Curry, University of Gloucestershire
Seconder	Ben Copsey, City, University of London

The Chair invited the meeting to adopt the 2020 minutes as a true and accurate record. The minutes of the 2020 AGM were approved - For: 92, Against: 0, Abstain: 4

4. Reports
4.1 UK Committee Report - Jonathan Atkinson (JA), UK Chair
<p>It has been a challenging year and each member of the UK executive, UK committee and group committees have displayed an increase in resilience, ability and insight. Not only did they have their own institutional challenges in adapting to changes due to COVID, but they also ensured that HELOA continued to be a stable and successful organisation.</p> <p>The organisational development plan and the risk register have provided focus on what we need to do. With so many changes last year, communications were a key development ensuring that members were well informed. This was through the usual channels but also included ad-hoc information sharing and two-way communications with members and committees.</p> <p>The partnerships teams were pivotal in ensuring HELOA's voice was shared and that information was gained from external partners. The national training team and group VCs for training went above and beyond to ensure that the information they shared was adapted to support members in the constantly changing climate.</p> <p>Our volunteers have done such an amazing job, but the core idea that runs through the entire organisation is the fact that each member has given professional and personal support to each other. We've created a network of people who are focused on doing the best they can possibly do to make sure that the higher education sector, our professions, and personally are in a good position and I'm hugely proud of the organisation.</p> <p>No comments or questions were received.</p>
4.2 Report of the Partnerships Team - Rebecca Hollington (RH), UK VC (Partnerships)
<p>The partnerships framework highlights how HELOA works with different external organisations as partners, collaborators or sponsors.</p> <p>Partners: The UCAS working group had an extremely busy year and met on a regular basis to continue to provide ongoing feedback and support for members and from the membership. They also had regular meetings with UCAS regarding the ongoing relationship and establishing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). By the end of January, HELOA will have a formalised MoU with all three partners: Student Loans Company, UCAS and The Student Room.</p>

Sponsors: In terms of commercial sponsors HELOA provides several paid opportunities including conferences, national conference awards, Facebook, social mentions and the Digest. Jack Clare the partnerships manager, worked closely with Andy Cotterill and the communications team on HELOA's digital offer. This year has been challenging with moving all events online however, the partnerships team managed to secure a number of sponsors.

Collaborators: Members of the partnerships team met and engaged with several of HELOA's organisational stakeholders to make sure that HELOA had a continued voice in addition to sharing insights back to the membership.

Mark George-Briant, University of St. Andrews - Does the MoU and partnership with UCAS also include the UCAS media which deals with the events?

RH - Yes, the MoU covers UCAS's entire entity.

Andy Roper, Goldsmiths University of London - These comments are also on behalf of a colleague at our institution who has attended the HELOA UCAS working group meetings. We are slightly concerned about HELOA signing the MoU with UCAS given the lopsided nature of the relationship with UCAS. For example, UCAS promised that they would allow discussion around UCAS event dates, but they were published without any consultation. In addition to this, UCAS is just one of the partners we work with and it seems we are prioritising UCAS over other partners. Whilst it has been a difficult year for universities and events, it has been a catastrophic year for freight companies. Gary Hayes has had to wind up his business and while we appreciate HELOA arranged a card for Gary, maybe we could look at working more closely with freight companies to avoid the situation of ending up with few companies and the impact of that.

RH Response provided in the meeting chat - HELOA engages with a variety of organisations throughout the sector, UK University search are key sponsors for HELOA and engage with members directly for feedback. The MoU with UCAS formalises and enhances the existing work that HELOA does with UCAS as a key organisation within the HE sector, the events working group is an element of this however the role of UCAS and their impact on students is broader. It's an acknowledgement of our shared mission to support students making informed decisions on HE.

4.3 Report on Group Development - Amanda Kenningley (AK), UK VC (Group Development)

Last year was a year like no other and the groups have risen to the challenge of taking training events and meetings online. HELOA has been able to support and help members throughout a difficult year, and the groups have been a massive part of that, so I just wanted to say thank you.

It was decided that a temporary budget freeze was necessary, which was relaxed later in the year. Despite this, groups still managed to provide a good range of activities and made use of expertise across the membership and wider sector. Since the introduction of online meetings, most group meetings saw an increase in attendance; this was more evident in groups with larger geographical areas therefore, it may be worth considering a blended approach moving forward.

All group VC Training and VC Partnership roles were updated to VC (Training & Partnerships) for consistency. The mentoring scheme proved extremely beneficial for members with aim to roll it out to all groups during 2021. The first buddy pairing between a new group chair and an existing group chair worked well so this will be continued for all incoming chairs.

No comments or questions were received.

4.4 Report of the Communications Team - Rebecca Montgomery (RM), UK VC (Communications)

The communications team focussed on developing and sharing interesting and useful content, in response to a difficult year with changes to members' roles. The Digest provided an opportunity to hear from a range of voices and the newly established HELOA blog provided a platform for members to share thoughts, ideas and best practice. The communications team developed new video content: 'A conversation with' and training events which are all available on the new HELOA YouTube channel.

Continued to develop the HELOA website to provide information for members, partners and officers. Provided a continued presence on social media, Facebook both public and private, Twitter, Linked In, YouTube and Slack. The communications team always welcome ideas for new content and people that members would like to hear from.

No comments or questions were received.

4.5 Report on Membership and Administration - Steven Walsh (SW), UK VC (Membership & Administration)

There has been a slight overall increase in members this year which is a credit to the Exec and committees. It shows that we are an association that is useful to our members in their roles.

Conducted a membership survey in mid-2020. Analysing the results was useful in supporting the association in its direction and to ensure that HELOA is listening to, and actioning members' ideas. Plan to provide further opportunities for members to express their views in 2021.

Other priorities of 2020 were to update the primary contact role descriptor to include details of nominating a proxy in the absence of the primary contact and compiling the Associate Membership proposal.

No comments or questions were received.

4.6 Report on Governance & Policy - Joanna Marchant (JM), UK VC (Governance & Policy)

Continued to expand our status as a charity with now being recognised as a charity in Scotland. Currently, HELOA is still waiting to be invited by the Northern Ireland Charity Commission.

Compiled a risk register with actions in place to mitigate risks. This had been planned to be implemented however, COVID increased the necessity of putting it in place quickly.

In 2020, there were three national elections for the UKC executive. For the final election, name blind applications were introduced. This will be monitored to determine the impact on the number of members voting.

The current HELOA strategy was due for completion in December 2020 but, due to the extraordinary circumstances that COVID created and that a lot of last year was dedicated to delivering events and priorities that hadn't been anticipated, the strategy deadline was extended by six months, until June 2021. This additional time will also be used to develop a new strategy.

No comments or questions were received.

4.7 Report of the Conference and Training Team - Andrew Cooper (AC), Conference Manager

Priorities for 2021 include: purchasing CPD accreditation for attendance at national training events, investing in external speakers to provide more expertise, finalising details with Carden Park for National 2022 and exploring national conference venues for 2023.

Online content has received good engagement so the training team plan to continue to offer webinars and virtual events in 2021. Engagement has increased across all events in 2020 except for the New Practitioners' Conference which may have been due to fewer numbers of new roles in the sector. The increase in engagement has been seen across all groups. The training team have worked very closely with the partnerships team throughout 2020 to ensure continued involvement from external partners and sponsors supporting virtual events.

<p>Andrew Cheung, Queen Mary University of London - Are there plans for more digital training to be available on demand, rather than at a fixed time? As it's still a turbulent year, having flexibility for when we access the training content would be useful.</p> <p>AC - The training team can explore this as an option.</p> <p>JA - Members are encouraged to utilise group meetings, committees and the Exec throughout the year to feedback ideas to help support and direct the work that HELOA does.</p>	
Proposer	Rebecca Oliver, University of Bournemouth
Seconder	Christine Todd, University of Liverpool
<p>The meeting was invited to adopt the reports of the UKC committee and groups as one. The reports were approved - For: 103, Against: 1, Abstain: 1</p>	

<p>5. Report on the Election and Appointment of Officer Posts - Joanna Marchant (JM), UK VC (Governance & Policy)</p>	
<p>5.1 Elected Officers and 5.2 Appointed Officers</p>	
<p>Please see the list of elected and appointed officers in paper 5 of the AGM reports. Jack Clare UK Vice-Chair (Partnerships) and Andy Cotterill UK Vice-Chair (Communications) were elected since the report was circulated.</p> <p>No comments or questions were received.</p>	
Proposer	Chris Mullen, Edge Hill University
Seconder	Rebecca Bowen, University of South Wales
<p>The meeting was invited to adopt the elected and appointed officers of the association. The officers report was approved - For: 105, Against: 0, Abstain: 0</p>	

<p>6. HELOA Office Update - Jonathan Atkinson (JA), UK Chair</p>	
<p>The HELOA office has been based at Edge Hill University for several years. The systems and procedures have been well organised and developed. In recent years there has been increased demand on the office due to a growth in membership, achieving charity status and ensuring that the association is GDPR compliant. To deal with the additional volume of work, Louise Povey was appointed as the HELOA office assistant and started in post in January 2020.</p>	

Typically, the office does a lot of the logistics for the various committee meetings and conferences which changed substantially last year however, the office adapted to organising online meetings and facilitating online events. In addition to this, the office used the opportunity to conduct a GDPR review with accuracy and great attention to detail.

The office developed the UKC Welcome Pack and UKC & Group Structure Charts to help support HELOA volunteers and members in understanding what HELOA is, HELOA's aims, the structure of the organisation and who to contact at both group and national levels.

The AGM process and communication feedback from members helped the office to shape the AGM process and structure for 2021 whilst, ensuring the necessary items were included.

The organisation is vast and varied and is not always apparent what is going on behind the scenes. The office is there to facilitate information sharing, support everyone across all areas and support in coordinating what we do.

No comments or questions were received.

Proposer	Jennifer Barton, University of Durham
Seconded	Jamie Graney, University of Liverpool

The meeting was invited to approve the report of the HELOA office. The report was approved - For: 95, Against: 0, Abstain: 1

7. HELOA Associate Membership for Non-Publicly Funded Institutions (NPFIs) and Further Review

- Steven Walsh (SW), UK VC (Membership & Administration)

The Associate Membership proposal has been a collaborative piece from myself, the Exec, UKC, the office, Louis Ormston and Nick Chambers both VC (Membership & Communications) from the South West and London groups respectively.

The proposal was formulated by conducting research into our own organisation, our aims, members' benefits and what it means to be a member. The second piece of research involved looking at other organisations that have similar categories of membership. The findings from both pieces of research was compiled to determine what associate membership would look like while ensuring HELOA's aims as a charity organisation remained at the forefront of the proposal.

Associate members will have an elected representative who will report to the UK VC (Membership & Administration) however, they will not have an input or influence over the decision and direction of the association.

Ben Copsey, City University of London - The research is insufficient to gauge the impact private providers and for-profit providers will have on HELOA. It doesn't explore the impact properly as it doesn't provide detail on best practice sharing, networking, charitable status, group meeting attendance or on the nature and aims of HELOA. The impact given in this document is largely restricted to administrative issues. It's conceivable that access to best practice training and networks will enable these for-profit institutions to fundamentally outcompete member institutions, as they are under no obligation to play fair in the marketplace or no obligation to talk to students objectively. We will see our best practice and good ideas stolen and we will see ourselves out competed by institutions beholden to profit margin, in many cases by immense private funds. If we are aiming to support students we should be supporting students not investors, shareholders and owners.

Peter Milne, Coventry University - I am not against it fundamentally but, if we are looking at for-profit organisations they are about making money first, which is not what an education provider should be about. Whereas charity or publicly funded are about delivering the service first with no expectation of turning a profit. An example is in the USA, where private education leads to inequality and not widening participation. Money does not get reinvested into the correct facilities for students or research. As an organisation, we do not want to be seen endorsing or enhancing this aspect. We would need to look at this very carefully if for-profit organisations are able to become members.

Robbie Pickles, Keele University - I think the proposal that's been brought forward here, clearly marks the combination of hard work by HELOA officers which is to be commended. You had a difficult task, where people understandably have strong views so, thank you to everybody for your work on the proposal. Reflecting on my time as HELOA chair, our external partners were very keen on the idea that HELOA was a sector organisation that represented universities in higher education institutes from across the sector. It was quite common in discussion with some external partners, that they felt that HELOA was not a sector organisation because it had a slightly long-standing view on what was and what wasn't a university. HELOA had been diminished in the eyes of some of our partners in its ability to represent the sector and recruitment, outreach and widening participation colleagues on a sector wide basis. The definition of what a university is, has changed and people will have a view on that. I think where we are now is that it's agreed that HELOA is an organisation

which represent universities and we need to take a very clear view on that. I think this proposal is a good solution to address the clear change in the sector.

The sector and universities have moved on. There have been many discussions over many years about the idea that new organisations or new private providers would seek to come to take our ideas and use them competitively, but I think it's reasonable to say that all universities, whether they're private providers or the longest standing universities are all working in a way where we're keen to attract students to our university that's become more acute over time. One of the key things is that all universities are currently in a phase where we're trying to in many cases, grow more students, and that has had an impact on the way that HELOA works and operates and HELOA has done a very good job of evolving. This proposal represents a further evolution in line with the changes which have been taking place for a number of years. Thanks again for bringing forward a proposal which is thoughtful and addresses what's happened. Whether it passes or doesn't pass today, I don't think that should be seen as a comment on that on work.

SW - Thanks for those comments. Everyone has had an opportunity to ask questions and express personal and or institutional opinions.

JA - I appreciate the balanced views that were presented and I think it really indicates the fact that this is a member led organisation and we will move forward based on the vote. My view comes from looking at the sector, who we support and what kind of organisation we want to be in terms of sharing information and best practice. I completely understand people's concerns about profitability but, just because a university may be called a charity that doesn't always dictate every one of their marketing or recruitment actions, whether they are a non-publicly funded institution or otherwise. I'm always encouraging collaboration which is why the wording of the proposal is as such and remains in line with our ethos. Regardless of the outcome, we'll be working on good practice guidelines to make sure that we are all accountable to each other in making sure that we're an ethical and strong organisation who put students first.

Question provided in the Q&A (identity unknown) - what happens if we don't agree on associate membership today?

SW - If this is voted against today we will be looking to bench the conversation for a number of years.

JA - We will know that outcome shortly and will look at that if it's needed.

Proposer	Dylan Cozens, Coventry University
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Seconded	Andrew Cooper, Liverpool John Moores University
<p>The membership was asked to vote on the creation of an associate membership, including non-publicly funded institutions, to join the organisation in line with the ethos and good practice of the HELOA community, and who will benefit from inclusion as outlined in the documents circulated prior to the meeting. The motion was passed - For: 55, Against: 27, Abstain: 19</p> <p>JA - The executive and the UK committee will now look at developing the associate membership in line with the proposal and our ethos. Some of this will be administrative and some will be focussed on how we work with associate members and make sure that that good practice is reinforced, and that best practice collaboration is at the heart of what we do as an organisation.</p>	

8. Officer Report and Financial Reports - Michelle Terrell UK VC (Finance)
<p>This year has been a challenging year for all of us and in the face of the pandemic the finance team constantly reviewed HELOA's financial position. With the support of the UK committee, we took steps, at the beginning of the pandemic to ensure the continued financial viability of the association. There was an inevitable reduction in income due to not being able to hold face to face conferences and the consequently reduced opportunities to secure sponsorship. However, this was mitigated by restrictions on in-person UK committee meetings and related expenses, and a freeze on all but business critical spending was put into place from April to September. Since then, the UK committee endeavoured to continue making cost savings wherever possible.</p>
8.1 Completed Accounts for the 2019/2020-2021 financial year
<p>A full audit was undertaken in compliance with the Charity Commission regulations. The completed accounts were approved by the auditor.</p>
8.2 Provisional Accounts for the 2021/22 financial year
<p>As a result of COVID-19 restrictions, there was a reduction in income of approximately 62%. It should however be noted that 52% of the projected expenditure was in relation to the delivery of such activities so it's not as alarming as it first looks. As a result of the mitigations which were put into place, it's predicted that the financial year will end in March, with the reduced income having covered all of our expenses for the year and generated a surplus of approximately £10,000, and with our operating surplus which rolls over year upon year around £81,000 also remaining intact.</p>
8.3 Proposed Membership Costs

<p>Despite the rising operating costs of the association in recent years, there has been no increase to the membership subscription fees since 2016. To ensure that our income continues to match our projected expenditure going forward and that we have additional funds to invest in a number of projects, it is proposed that we increase the subscription fees by 15% for next year. This will enable us to continue investing in and developing the training provision and further projects going forward. Furthermore, this would also ensure that we secure a stable financial situation for the coming years, whilst maintaining the current operating surplus. It's proposed that there will be no increase in fees for attending training events including national conference.</p>
<p>8.4 Proposed Budget 2021/22</p>
<p>The proposed budget for 2021-22 was written in the hope that face to face activities would be resuming in 2021 however, this was written before the latest developments and renewed lockdown restrictions. It's based around our projected income and expenditure returning to pre-pandemic levels. However, there is also a contingency budget to ensure continued financial viability. This contingency budget would only be implemented if restrictions remain in place in the UK and prevent a return to face to face training events for 2021.</p>
<p>8.5 Proposed Auditor</p>
<p>It is proposed that Bick accountants will continue as the HELOA auditors going forward.</p>
<p>Questions & Comments</p> <p>Kevin Betts, University of Sussex - Like many colleagues this year, I'm having to make savings and justify all our spending, so do we have an indication of what the investments will take the form of? If we're to spend 15% more on membership subscriptions, I'll need to justify that by putting forward what, exactly will be delivered for that 15%, given that HELOA appears not to be in debt at its current levels.</p> <p>JA - There is an absolute need to have an increase in membership in the coming years to cover operating and training costs. The majority of any surplus would be reinvested into physical training events, accreditation costs and additional projects such as, student ambassador working group and digital and physical events working groups.</p> <p>Andy Roper, Goldsmiths, University of London (question presented in the Q&A) - We'd like to suggest delaying the rise in membership fees for at least one year based on a number of factors: universities are currently suffering financially; surplus of £10,000 can be used for next year where costs are likely to remain low for at least half of the year; and we need additional information on the proposed increase in office and miscellaneous costs and reduction in group budgets.</p>

JA - I would like to highlight that we haven't increased membership costs for several years but that our costs have increased therefore, there will need to be an increase to cover these outgoings whether that is this year or, in the next year or two.

Mark George-Briant, University of St. Andrew's (question presented in the Q&A) - £80k surplus seems quite significant. Have there been discussions on how this could be invested in order to gain financial interest?

JA - An £80,000 surplus seems quite significant however, this is a regular surplus that is required to secure national conference venues which costs in excess of £100,000 as the payments from delegates are received after the event.

Kevin Betts, University of Sussex - Would any of the money be recouped by private providers?

JA - The number of private providers who have requested to join HELOA over the past few years is around four or five. This additional income will be offset by the administrative costs for separate systems that may be required. The number of associate members attending national conference will also be capped for parity and balance and to ensure they do not have an influence. Therefore, I don't anticipate a huge influx in income but if that was the case, our VC (Finance) would highlight this and we would ensure that this was being used to benefit members.

Proposer	Dave Handy, Newman University Birmingham
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Seconded	Steph Coogans, University of Chichester
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The meeting was invited to adopt the financial reports of the association excluding the proposed increase in membership fees. The reports were approved - For: 93, Against: 0, Abstain: 7

8.3 Proposed Membership Costs Vote

It was decided to hold a separate vote on the proposed membership costs (Poll resolution 1 on the Mi-Voice voting platform).

Proposer	Lydia Dams, University of Wolverhampton
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Seconded	Jonathan Atkinson, University of Liverpool
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The membership was invited to accept the proposed 15% increase in membership fees. The proposal was rejected - For: 31, Against: 39, Abstain: 16.

JA - We will look at membership fees again next year. If people have comments, questions or ideas for projects please do bring them forward for consideration.

9. Honorary Membership and Commendations - Steven Walsh (SW), UK VC (Membership & Administration)	
9.1 Nomination for Honorary membership	
None received.	
9.2 Nominations for Commendation of Contribution	
Rebecca Montgomery nominated by Andy Cotterill Rebecca Hollington nominated by Jack Clare Elliot Newstead nominated by Eleanor Wharfe Rebecca Bowen nominated by Andrew Jackson HELOA UKC, Group committees and the national office nominated by Robbie Pickles	
Proposer	Ben Copsey - City, University of London
Seconder	Jonas Rae, University of Swansea
The meeting was invited to approve the honorary membership and commendations of contribution. This was approved - For: 97, Against: 0, Abstain: 2	

10 AOB - Jonathan Atkinson (JA), UK Chair
<p>Mark George-Briant, University of St. Andrews - Will there be a new HELOA strategic plan in the offing?</p> <p>JA - We plan to hold a UKC meeting in March to review the strategic points that have been achieved, decide which will be ongoing and look at the creation of new strategic points. There will be an opportunity for group level discussions, comments and questions on what the strategic goals should be. The new strategy will be for two years, 2021 - 2023.</p> <p>Andy Roper, Goldsmiths, University of London (Comment provided in the Q&A) - Thanks for managing such a successful AGM in such trying circumstances.</p> <p>JA - The reason that we get involved with HELOA is because we care about supporting students and supporting each other. We are in a great position to make sure that people's lives are going forward in the right way, they're making informed decisions, good choices, and they are supported at every stage of their journey. It gives me absolute pride and pleasure every time I interact with our members because it is a sector, and an organisation, like no other that has been a true source of positivity and support.</p>

11. Date and Venue of 2022 AGM - Jonathan Atkinson (JA), UK Chair
The next HELOA AGM will be held on Wednesday 12 th January 2022, at Carden Park Hotel, Chester.
The AGM was called to a close at 14:26.

Dawn McClintock
HELOA Office Manager