



CURRICULUM AND QUALITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2022

Report: Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 12 May 2022
Author: Clerk
Action: Approve
Status: Open

Present: Sarah Stewart (SS – Interim Chair)
David Alexander (DA – Principal and CEO)
Aneela Ali (AA)
Carol Davenport (CD)
Michael Wood-Williams (MWW)

In attendance: Deni Chambers (DC – Assistant Principal)
Darren Heathcote (DH – Head of Student Services and Customer Experience)
Helen Hepple (HH – Assistant Principal)
Kevin Marston (KM – Assistant Principal)
Andrew Robson (AR – Assistant Principal)
Chris Toon (CT – Deputy Principal: Curriculum & Quality)
Ivan Jepson (IJ – Director of Business Development & Planning)
Jeremy Cook (JC – Deputy Principal: Finance & Resources)
Nadine Hudspeth (NH – Director of Marketing, Communications, Health and Safety, Student Services and Corporate Admin)
Richard Ward (RW – Head of Quality Improvement)
Sally Cooper (SC – Clerk)

CQ/97 Chair's Welcome / Apologies / Conflicts of Interest

SS welcomed everyone to the meeting. No apologies were received.

There were no conflicts of interest declared. Members were reminded to declare any conflicts that arose during the meeting.

CQ/98 Minutes of the last meeting dated 17 February 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 17 February 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

CQ/99 Matters Arising / Action Log

In relation to the new Chair of the Committee, SS updated the Committee on governor recruitment in this regard, noting that a new Governor with experience in the education sector had been successfully recruited to the role of Committee Chair, and was due to be appointed on 1 June 2022. It was agreed that CT would make contact with the new Chair prior to the next meeting.

The action log was noted.

CQ/100 Safeguarding Update

The report was presented by DH.

DH noted that the number of cases being managed was now 115, a slight increase from 114 since the report had been produced.

NH advised there had been an opportunity at the safeguarding steering group to discuss recent activities in relation to the College's PREVENT and safeguarding work with Learning Facilitators, and how they had managed conversations with students.

DH noted the ongoing work the College was doing to engage with learners in a variety of ways.

In response to a question from SS, DH confirmed that there had been occasions where some students had been referred more than once, with multiple referrals for a small pocket of young people, who were being closely managed in the community and by the College, and are well known by safeguarding team. CT noted that there would be a small number of students with the majority of referrals. This data could be represented by the College in some way in the next report.

DH noted the range of measures in place to enable learners to provide feedback on whether or not they feel safe, and if any areas of concern emerged they were followed up by the College promptly.

MWW commented in relation to governor assurance, noting that at the safeguarding steering group, an excellent balance was being struck by the College in supporting an increasing safeguarding practice and support, in order to meeting growing need. This was supported by an effective cultural approach to safeguarding at the College. Although it is a resource-intense approach, the College is investing that resource in order to deliver effectively and in an innovative way.

JC noted that internal auditors reviewed safeguarding with their thorough report providing a strong level of assurance (the report outcome was highest level of assurance provided by the auditors on their scale). This report would be presented to the next College Audit Committee meeting in June, and was consistent with the strong level of assurance provided at the meeting today.

SS noted her thanks to DH and his team for the work undertaken.

The report was noted.

DH left the meeting at 10:25.

CQ/101 2021/22 Year to Date Performance – Apprenticeships

The report was presented by AR.

SS noted the importance of apprenticeships to the College, in supporting the College's vision of developing students with employment edge. Historically, apprenticeships had been a challenging area, and extensive work had been undertaken over the past 18 months, which is why the Committee wished to focus so extensively on apprenticeships at this meeting.

In response to a question from SS in relation to table 3, it was confirmed that the equivalent figure for the previous year was 59.3%, with national rate for 2021 being 57.7%. This placed the College above the national average for 2021

CT commented in relation to the reliability of the forecasts, noting the historic challenges in calculating predicted achievement levels. Whilst in some areas within the College there is now a rich history of previous pass rates, there is not the same history of pass rate data for apprenticeships and the same knowledge of the approach to assessments, so the predicted pass rates should be viewed with caution. In addition, DC noted the long lead-in time for securing end point assessments for learners, with an average lead-in time of 100 days, which was also likely to impact achievement within this year.

In response to a question from SS in relation to the implications of being above or below national average, CT noted that the College should work towards higher performance, with colleges in the same peer group achieving at around 70%.

DA noted that the rate was currently above the national average and the College is committed to making this better and continuing to improve, although a system within which the national average is below 60% may raise more systemic questions about the current system itself. DC noted that there was a view across the sector that the system should be reformed in some way, but it was unclear whether this would lead to any meaningful reforms. KM noted that in some sectors there were very limited EPA centres, which would impact the volume of learners that could be assessed. In some instances, the College was able to set up its own EPA centre to avoid the risk of having to go out of region and be subject to the same level of delays.

IJ noted that, given the various factors, it was likely that employers, rather than the sector, would have to drive the change in order for government to reform the system.

DA noted that the College was trying to improve all areas within its control where it was able to do so, whilst continuing to look at avenues for challenging the external systems where felt required more strategically.

The report was noted.

CQ/102 Quality Improvement Update – Apprenticeship Focus

The report was presented by DC.

DC noted that there had been a shift in focus this year, with a College-wide approach to improvement, and central services playing a key role alongside curriculum provision, ensuring a joined-up approach, which enables progress to be made more quickly. This also reflects a shift in apprenticeships forming a more core focus of the College, reflecting the significant proportion of the College's teaching that apprenticeships represent.

HH noted the rigour of the approach, on a learner by learner basis, with the same approach previously undertaken in other areas of Education and Training now being adopted and embedded in the delivery of apprenticeships. This ensures the College knows where each learner is on their journey and can identify any risks or issues, which can be addressed on a proactive basis.

DC also noted the particular progress that had been made across all areas of the College, including courses based in Team Valley, with staff engaged in the improvement journey. CT also noted the work of IJ's team in developing and implementing the systems required to have learner data available to support this work.

CD noted the value of survey results in highlighting any particular areas that need to be developed.

SS noted the importance from employers' perspectives of ensuring they are engaged and responsive, including with employer surveys. DC noted that the next employer survey was due to be issued, with a tailored approach to follow up with phone calls as another technique of engaging with employers. RW noted that any negative survey responses are now dealt with and responded to in a much more timely and proactive way, so that survey respondents can see the outcome of the feedback they provide.

SS noted the possibility of taking a paper to a future Board meeting in relation to this topic, with assurance to the Board and the value of the work undertaken. It was agreed to take a paper on overall learning and teaching performance to the Board meeting on 6 July.

The report was noted.

CQ/103 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

This item of business was moved from agenda item 10.

The report was presented by RW.

SS noted the importance of the one to one apprentice reviews, as this appeared to be a key area in which apprentices receive feedback and improve. Therefore, improving this review process is a key part of driving improvement in apprentice outcomes more generally.

SS thanked the team for the ongoing work in this area.

The report was noted.

CQ/104 Business Planning

CT shared a presentation providing details of the College's 2022-23 business planning process.

JC noted that the way the College approaches business planning and budgeting involves a high level of integration between all aspects of the College; rather than this being led by the finance team, it is an exercise that has grown over months and the budget is curriculum led.

Colleagues agreed from a quality assurance perspective, they had assurance in relation to the 2022-23 process and how the figures had been challenged and developed in order to arrive at a robust budget.

SS noted it was a journey the Committee had been on to understand this process and see how budgets were developed from a curriculum perspective.

DA noted that this was a whole-College approach, with the budget being led by how best to support outcomes, rather than simply maximising financial return.

In response to a question from AA, CT confirmed that contributions were based on realistic assumptions, and there were curriculum areas that the College would not provide because other Colleges in the region were doing them well, and if there were some areas where it appeared the College was not delivering demand in certain areas, the College would look at others in the region as well as local and regional priorities and needs. DC confirmed that developments in curriculum areas were always focussed on employment edge and the needs of employers.

The presentation was noted.

CQ/105 Subcontracting

The report was presented by IJ.

SS noted that this subject was due to be considered by the Finance & General Purposes Committee, and by the Board given the College was delivering above the ESFA 25% subcontracting level (notwithstanding that there is no penalty associated with that), and to provide assurance in relation to the College's plans to reach the 25% level.

The report was noted.

CQ/106 Bootcamp Update

The report was presented by DC.

In response to a question from SS, CT noted that the College did not have the expertise or capacity to develop the volume or returns required on a standalone basis, but the College was working with a number of partners and some partners were able to work particularly responsively and effectively. The process has also shown that the College is able to mobilise effectively, and also support other colleges in the region to mobilise and undertake the proportion of the work assigned to them. DA also noted the quality of what was being delivered, not just the volume of delivery.

SS noted the opportunities for wider learning from this work.

The report was noted.

CQ/107 Higher Education

The report was presented by AR.

SS noted that, due to the relatively small number of learners in HE, the approach of not submitting TEF, if this is an option available to the College, is unlikely to impact recruitment. It was therefore agreed this would not be submitted.

CD noted the challenges with TEF in the sector generally and its limitations and noted it may be more beneficial to the College not to engage with TEF if possible.

The report was noted.

CD and MWW left the meeting at 12:00.

CQ/108 2021/22 Year to Date Performance – Education and Training

The report was presented by AR.

In response to a question from SS, AR confirmed the expectation that individual College QAR data would be published in this coming year, as was the case prior to Covid. It was noted that data would take a number of years to even out following the use of teacher-assessed grades (which are not included in the published data).

The report was noted.

AA left the meeting at 12:08

CQ/109 Risk Register

The report was presented by CT.

CT noted the range of reports that could be brought to the Committee, in order to give assurance to the risk register, for items that fell within the Committee's remit.

The report was noted.

CQ/110 Draft Board Calendar 2022/23

The draft Board calendar for 2022/23 was shared by SC.

Committee members noted that the Committee previously had 5 meetings in each year, rather than 4 (one of which was the SAR meeting). It was agreed that it would be appropriate to have a discussion with the new Committee Chair once in post, to agree the frequency of meetings in the next calendar.

The calendar was noted.

CQ/111 Any other business

There was no other business.

CQ/112 Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed on the 2022/23 meeting schedule and is scheduled for 29 September 2022 at 10am.