

CURRICULUM & STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING

CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 15 MARCH 2022 AT 4:30PM VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Present:

Jill Lanning (Chair), Corrienne Peasgood, Andrea Blanchflower, Annie Cook

Attendees:

Jerry White (Deputy Principal), Ed Rose (Assistant Principal HE and Adult), Julia Bates (Vice Principal, FE, Curriculum and Quality), Jodie Mitchell (Director of Governance and Legal) Andrew Barnes (Corporation Chair) – as an observer, Evie Berg – as an observer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Helen Richardson-Hulme (Assistant Principal, Student Services) and Nikki Gray.

2. Declarations of Interests

Governors and Committee members are requested to make known any relevant pecuniary interests relating to any items on the agenda and it was noted that all declarations will be recorded.

There were no new declarations of interest given at the meeting.

3. Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2022

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2022 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

4. Unconfirmed confidential minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2022

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5. Matters Arising

C&S 1 Action 3: NTTC to be included on the agenda for the next Strategy Day taking place in January 2022. *Discussions are on-going and an update will be provided to C&S Committee.* ACTION COMPLETE

C&S 1 Action 5: Level 3 Qualification reform to be discussed as part of the next Strategy Day. *To be include in the Intend Strategic update.* ACTION COMPLETE

C&S 2 Action 3: CP to produce set of improvement actions and targets back upon Ofsted report and SAR. *Following discussions at the Strategy Day, an updated set will be provided to the Board. CP will discuss all actions with the Committee Chairs prior to presenting them to the Board.* ACTION COMPLETE

C&S 3 Action 1: JW to present analysis of the EDI data of those withdrawals that have taken place in the first 6 weeks to the Board. *Was included in Agenda item 7.1.1 for Board on 08 Feb 2022.* ACTION COMPLETE

C&S 3 Action 2: JB's to present further details relating the Healthcare Science T-Levels as part of the Strategic Priorities at the next C&S meeting on 15 March 2022. ACTION COMPLETE

C&S 3 Action 3: ER to provide feedback on the OfS consultations to Governors at the next C&S meeting on 15 March 2022. ACTION COMPLETE

C&S 3 Action 4: CP to send the dates of the TLA grid meetings to Governors. *Andrea Blanchflower and Annie Cook attended Grid meetings in addition to Jill Lanning to provide additional scrutiny.* ACTION COMPLETE

6. SECTION A

6.1. Easton English and Maths

Please see confidential minutes.

6.2. Quality Report

JW highlighted points for discussion from the Quality Report with Governors:

- Overall attendance rate is at 87.5%, which is below last year levels (89.5%), although comparisons due to the pandemic are inappropriate.
 - FE, attendance is 88.3% compared to 90.1%
 - HE attendance is 85.0% compared to 89.5%
 - Apprenticeship attendance is 88.5% compared to 89.9%; and
 - English and Maths (both GCSE and Functional Skills) attendance on the Norwich campus is 75.8%, at Easton 79.2% and Paston 73.9%.
- Retention rates for 16-18 students are broadly in line with national comparators.
- Retention rates for 19+ students are currently above national comparators in the latest data, although some recent withdrawals may reduce our position.
- RCU MiDES reports for the R06 period (data from August 21 to the end of January 22) were shared with the Committee. These reports provide an analysis of the College's retention position compared to sector averages.
- JW confirmed the demographic data is also available in the annex documents of the Quality Report for Governors if required. To note, that when the retention is split between demography or course type no issues are highlighted at this stage

ABI thanked JW for the annex documents and wanted to commend the College on several points. Retention in young males is good as nationally this has been highlighted as a concern. There is strong retention across ethnic minorities and for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

ABI noted that the retention for the 19+ Basic Skills English and Maths and GCSE English and Maths is a little low but GCSE other (biology and psychology) is good. ER noted students within biology and psychology specifically need these qualifications to progress onto HE. However English and Maths, are seen as good progression for a wide range of courses. Students do appear to withdraw quicker from these if they have not achieved the required progress and therefore in the curriculum planning the

College has implemented a L2 Functional skills in E&M as it is felt that these would be better suited to some students than the GCSE.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeship achievements are being carefully monitored due to the delays in progress caused by the pandemic and some significant staffing pressures.

JW noted that there are business and finance implications to the apprenticeship retention and achievement rates, and this has been monitored through the Business Committee and through the Emerging Picture at Board.

Currently 418 apprentices are 'beyond expected end date' (BEED) due to the pandemic and significant work is being undertaken to support these apprentices to achieve. A further 118 have expected end dates that fall between March 2022 and July 2022.

In addition to the 536 above, the College has seen 41 apprentices withdraw from their studies this year, with the largest numbers in Business and Professional Services (16) and Health and Early Years (15).

Particular attention is being paid to the BEED apprentices, given that the delays in their progress can have impacts for their personal career progression, their employers and the College's performance data and funding levels.

Of the 418 BEED apprentices, 138 (33%) are in the Technical Construction area (Plumbing, Electrical and Civil Engineering) and a further 40 (10%) in the Construction Trades (Brick, Wood).

Currently recruitment to assessor posts is proving very challenging which is adding to an already challenging situation. There are also additional pressures relating to physical space, such as workshops.

JL queried if there were pressures around end point assessment (EPA) bookings across the sector? JW confirmed he was not aware of issues with booking the assessments. However, the working relationship between the apprenticeship team and the registry team has enabled good transparency and planning for when an apprentice may require an EPA and therefore it has been arranged ahead of time.

JBs noted that the EPA bookings have improved recently, particularly around construction.

6.3. TLA Report

JW and JB highlighted points for discussion from the TLA Report with Governors:

- Covid 19 cases continue to provide challenges for staffing and student attendance. Curriculum areas which have been particularly affected are Inclusive learning, Engineering and Apprenticeships.

ABI noted that the cancellation of sessions is quite significant. JB agreed with ABI and noted that this has been a 'last resort' when all avenues to keep the session running has have been exhausted. ABI felt that this point should be specifically highlighted to the Board.

JW specified that particularly within Inclusive Learning the level of staffing required for a small cohort can be high and very specialist and unfortunately the experience required to support some of these students is not available, even more so through agency staff. There is an added pressure of knowing the students personally to understand their support and behavioural needs. Last week there was approximately 70 staff/students absent due to Covid. This week it has increased to 150+. The number of staff who are too unwell to work is also increasing therefore the ability to teach online has reduced.

Cancellation has been avoided as much as possible and the College has tried to manage cancellations so not any one subject or cohort has significantly impacted.

There has been focused work since the last TLA GRID on 'catch-up learning'. A session with all curriculum managers was undertaken during the College, Teaching and Learning session 'CMT TLA'. Over 17 potential initiatives for catch-up activities were identified.

Four students have become College Ambassadors for racial justice as part of the Student Commission for Racial Justice programme. Students were also involved in attending 'Step In, Speak Up' performances across all three sites which focus on the Bystander Programme (Sexual Harassment against Girls and Women).

New staff induction, mentoring and support continued to be a theme in the TLA GRID meetings and CMT are also reviewing new staff induction programme. The quality of planning also continued to be a theme, particularly as planning facilitates students adopting better behaviours for learning. An emerging theme has been that students are not using feedback well or engaging with feedback to develop their learning and progress. Reviewers will keep a watching brief on this topic.

ABI queried if issues were arising when students were not recognising they were receiving feedback? JB confirmed this has been the case previously and it is currently being monitored and actions will be taken to support students to understand when feedback is received and how to productively react to that for improvement. EB echoed that initially at the beginning of her course, herself and peers would not notice the significance of informal verbal feedback so this, therefore, does need highlighting.

It has been identified that post pandemic times have brought us back to a much more regular level of teaching and learning quality review opportunities (QROs). Levels of QRO activity are on a par with the last normal period, pre pandemic and in some cases i.e., Direct Sessions Reviews ("DSRs"), have seen significantly higher activity, including DSRs for staff new to the College

Staff CPD is focusing on several different themes including those identified as cross College needs from the recent GRID meeting. Innovative ideas and links to resources and packages have been shared with managers to help them plan CPD for their own teams.

JBs highlighted the resources available to new and existing staff is increasing all of time and we are seeing the benefits in support for students and flexibility for staff.

T-Levels

JBs confirmed that Education and Childcare early year T-Level was launched in 2020 and replaced the NCFE Childcare course. It had work placement requirements already factored into the course and to date the course has run well.

In 2021 the Lab Science T-level was launched and will replace the Foundation Diploma in Applied Sciences BTEC. Unfortunately, the application levels were low for the T-Level, but this was slightly expected and is being monitored.

AC highlighted that due to the absence of a Course Leader at the time of initial discussions, expectations of what is required from an employer were not clear and therefore uncertainty made potential employers less willing to offer placements, particularly at an exceptionally busy time for the science labs.

JBs acknowledged AC's feedback and will carry this forward. JB's also noted as discussed, that course leaders for T-Levels may not be subject specialists but instead experienced teachers and we need to ensure support for those course leaders.

In 2022 the Education and Childcare T-Level will have additional pathways - Assisting Teaching, Health – Supporting Healthcare Adult Nursing Team, Health – Supporting Healthcare Mental Health and Health – Supporting Healthcare Care of Children and Young People will all launch. The Health – Pharmacy Services start has been delayed slightly.

The College has been an early adopter of the Level 2 transition courses 'Pre-T's' to enable students' progression onto the T Levels. These need to be seen in the context of the DfE Post-16 Review of Qualifications at Level 2

Post-16 Review of Qualifications at level 2 and below - Consultation

CP tabled the Post-16 Review of Qualifications presentation from the DfE and highlighted:

- The presentation relates to Entry, Level 1 and Level 2 courses and did not raise the same concerns expressed for the Level 3 consultation
- The proposal is for L2 qualifications to be split into 8 groups, potentially over 2 years. CP noted that if the proposal was to be implemented there are not too many concerns relating to provision for our students
- The proposal is for L1 qualifications to be split into 5 groups and recognises that some pre-technical qualifications may be needed, especially for vocational skills
- The proposal is for Entry Level qualifications be split into 4 groups
- There has been a clear focus on Personal, Social and Employability Skills (PSE) and ensuring these courses provide a clear purpose for students
- The proposed timetable was discussed, starting in September 2024

AC queried how this would impact the apprenticeship programmes and the employers? CP confirmed that the proposal should align the full-time courses and apprentices a lot more and be a benefit to students, but this will be monitored to ensure that we are not losing any aspects of the apprenticeships that are required by employers.

JL queried if there were potential funding implications for moving a L2 qualification to a 2-year course? CP felt that currently most students would undertake a L1 and then L2

qualification so would be in education for the same time so it should not impact funding significantly.

6.4. HE Report

ER highlighted points for discussion from the HE Report with Governors:

- End of Semester Survey Data

The survey format has been changed to an end of semester questionnaire which include module evaluations to decrease the number of questionnaires that students receive.

Unfortunately, the response rate was low at 13% but this is not unusual.

Additional work is required to ensure responses and a target has been set for a 40% response rate for the end of the summer semester.

Results across the four main questions are:

How satisfied are you with your overall experience on your programme?

- 71% either Agree or Mostly Agree
- 21% either Disagree or Mostly Disagree
- 8% are neutral.

Analysing data by year instead of course shows that there is a trend for students' perspectives to potentially harden as time progresses as all of the Disagrees and Mostly Disagrees are from 2nd and 3rd year students.

My Course is well Managed and Organised

- 56.5% who either Agree or Mostly Agree
- 25% Disagree or Mostly Disagree
- 18.5% are neutral

The majority of the disagrees come from programmes where staffing issues have been significant in the first semester – FdSc Health Studies, FdSc Mental Health Practice, BA Psychology with Sociology. Maintaining consistent staffing on programmes remains the most critical predictor of performance in this measure.

The Teaching on my Course has been Good

- 74% either Agree or Mostly Agree
- 17% Disagree to some degree.
- 9% are neutral

Again, students on programme longer are more likely to be negative in this measure.

Marking and assessment has been clear and fair?

- 72% either Agree or Mostly Agree
- 8% Disagree to some degree.
- 20% are neutral

From a programme perspective there are several areas which are a cause for concern. These will be picked up with individual Managers by the Head of HE.

JL reminded the Committee that in the past governors had asked for data to show the number of respondents alongside the number of potential respondents. Also, it had been agreed that where the rating for 'disagree or mostly disagree' amounts to more than 10% of the response rate then further analysis needs to be provided so that governors can be reassured that issues are being identified and resolved.

ER confirmed that further analysis for this semester can be provided to Governors.

ACTION 1: ER to provide further analysis on the End of Semester survey results for the next Board meeting as part of the C&S Committee summary report.

ABI noted that it had been previously discussed about online Teams meetings with cohorts of students being held for feedback with positive results. ABI queried whether they are still happening?

ER noted the course committee meetings are still taking place and are being held this week. At present, the College is not seeing the same 'negative' feedback from class reps that are seen in the survey results.

The only course that the College is aware of in terms of poor student satisfaction is the BSc Professional Aviation Engineering Practice (1st year only), who unfortunately are not settling as well as had been expected.

ABI echoed JL comments that Governors require reassurance that the student feedback is being heard, even if the response is from a small proportion.

- OfS Consultation

ER noted that OfS are undertaking 2 consultations with both closing on 17 March 2022.

Data provided by OfS allows each registered institution to analyse its own performance against the Threshold (for student outcomes) and Benchmarks (for TEF). The data will be refreshed for implementation in Autumn 2022.

Student Outcomes will measure

- the proportion of students **continuing** on a higher education course
- the proportion of students **completing** a higher education qualification
- the proportion of students **progressing** to managerial or professional employment, or further study

Once the data is analysed and split between indicator categories each institution will be expected to meet certain thresholds within this data.

ABI noted that the number of data returns has been increased greatly and suggestions have been made that the response back from the OfS should be done annually otherwise managing the data is going to be a big administrative task. JW agreed but confirmed that we make monthly ILR returns currently and this will probably remain.

ABI also noted that the OfS are committed to making the degree awarding institution responsible for the quality of the provision of all students taking their degrees. This would mean that UEA will carry a degree of accountability for CCN and other college students in the future.

TEF Benchmarking data (contained in Appendices 4 and 5) combines the measures outlined above with Student Experience measures drawn from the 8 themes of the NSS. This data is benchmarked so that metrics compare similar students on similar courses i.e., our Mature, Female students, studying English at CCN, compared to all Mature, Female Students, studying English throughout the sector.

Again, for measures contained in Student Outcomes (Completion, Continuation, Progression) performance is reasonably positive, noting the work to be done on Progression, and none of these raise a significant cause for immediate concern.

Student Experience data raises more issues however as it combines NSS scores from the last 3 cycles. Although NSS last year moved significantly towards benchmark performance over that period was poor and impacts this data. Although data is broadly within benchmark some measures (Organisation and Management, Academic Support) are concerning.

- Applications update and comparative analysis
Applications currently remain below those of the same time last year, although the gap is closing. Course teams are working with applicants to ensure that there is a range of keep-warm and engagement activity to encourage conversion.

Work is also continuing internally with each course team to develop additional marketing materials and ensure that appropriate messages about courses are being promoted. This will be used by the Business Development Officers in their newly expanded role to promote programmes targeted at particular employers (Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship, FdSc Mental Health Practice, BA (Hons) Additional Needs & Disabilities and FdA Early Years.

Analysis data has been provided in the report for Governors to review.

Higher Education Funding Changes

CP tabled the Higher Education Funding Changes presentation and highlighted:

- Fee Cap Freezing at £9,250 for students starting in 2024/25 (for all years of Degree)
- Repayment terms –
 - Student loans from 2023/24 will have the interest rate reduce to RPI+0%
 - Repayment threshold for earnings reduce to £25,000
 - An increase in the repayment terms to 40-years not 30-years
- Controls on student numbers by tilting growth towards the provision of post-18 education and training with the best outcomes for students, society and the economy
- Minimum eligibility requirements – limiting access to student finance by excluding applicants without grade 4s in GCSE English and Maths or two Grade E A-Levels

- Foundation year courses at university should not cost more than an equivalent course in an FE College (Access to HE)
- Level 4 and 5 courses – removing barriers from the funding systems to boost more employer-responsive learning in higher education.
- Lifetime Loan Entitlement – A loan entitlement will be available for the equivalent of 4 years post-18 education to use over their lifetime. This will support increased access to high-quality technical qualifications.

6.5. Easton FE Improvement Board Report

Please see confidential minutes.

6.6. Information, Advice and Guidance Update

JW presented the update on HRH's behalf and noted the following:

- Verbal feedback received is that the College continues to meet the Matrix Standard and has received very positive feedback.
- Face to face careers fairs are now taking place again over the next few weeks.
- Recruitment for the IAG team has improved, although there has been a lot of movement around staffing within various teams. Temporary staff are being appointed where needed to ensure support.

ACTION 2: HRH to provide the Matrix Standard report to the next C&S Committee meeting on 10 May 2022.

6.7. Residential Report

JW presented the update on HRH's behalf and noted the following:

- Improvements have been seen in students reporting faults or in meeting other requirements e.g., PAT testing etc. which is positive.
- Painting and Decorating students have begun the refurbishment of 4 student bedrooms in Alston.
- A variety of extra-curricular activities talks and events have taken place.

6.8. Strategic Priorities

CP presented the update and noted that the targets for FE, HE and Ofsted all need reviewing by the Committee before presenting to the Board in March 2022.

ACTION 3: All Committee members to reflect on the targets and provide feedback to the Principal by 21 March 2022 in readiness for the Board meeting.

6.9. Governor Curriculum Scrutiny

JL requested that the Adult Curriculum Scrutiny be moved to the next meeting for discussion.

ACTION 4: JM to add the Adult Curriculum Scrutiny be moved to the next meeting on 10 May 2022 for discussion.

6.10. Curriculum Planning for 22/23

JW presented the papers to Governors and noted the following:

- The curriculum strategy is broken down into three principles – intention, implementation and the impact of curriculum.
- JW and colleagues have identified some key responses for each of the 3 principles and are detailed within the paper and were discussed with Governors.
- JW noted we are approximately halfway through the curriculum planning for September and there may be more considerations to add to the key responses over the coming weeks.

ABI noted that it would be beneficial to provide some detail if there is any provision that we may stop doing going forward, along with some further detail on progression for all courses.

AC queried if the strategy covered all aspects of the curriculum? JW confirmed it covered FE, HE, Adult and Apprenticeships. AC felt that the adult provision was not easily identifiable within the report or within marketing.

ACTION 5: JW to review the Curriculum Planning for 22/23 and add additional information around provisions that may be stopped, progression data for all courses and expand details about the adult provision.

7. SECTION B

7.1 Student Union Update

JL noted the Student Union update is included for information. JL also thanked the SU for the excellent work being undertaken in the absence of a SU President at present.

8. SECTION C

No items were discussed under this section.

9. Other Urgent Business

No items were discussed under this section.

10. Confidentiality

Please see confidential minutes for items for items 6.1 and 6.5.

11. Date of next meeting

The next Curriculum and Standards Committee meeting will take place on Tuesday 10 May 2022.

The meeting was closed at 7:10pm.

Signed
(Chair of Meeting)

Date