

CURRICULUM & STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING

CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 21 JUNE 2022 AT 4:30PM VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Present:

Jill Lanning (Chair), Corrienne Peasgood, Andrea Blanchflower, Nikki Gray, Evie Berg

Attendees:

Jerry White (Deputy Principal), Ed Rose (Assistant Principal HE and Adult), Jodie Mitchell (Director of Governance and Legal), Andrew Barnes *until 5.51pm* (Corporation Chair) – as an observer, Helen Richardson-Hulme (Assistant Principal, Student Services)

JL acknowledged that this would be the final Committee meeting CP would be attending prior to her retirement and thanked her for her dedication over the years. JL further acknowledged how the Committee's has been developed and enabled robust governor scrutiny during this time. CP thanked the Chair and rest of Governors for their support during her time on the Committee.

1. Apologies for Absence

Received apologies from Annie Cook.

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. Draft minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2022

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 10 May, after minor amendments, were agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

4. Draft confidential minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2022

The unconfirmed confidential minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2022 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

5. Matters Arising

C&S 4 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. *JW to provide an update within the Quality Paper.*
Action Complete

C&S 5 Action 1: CJ to add T-Levels for Curriculum Scrutiny for June meeting agenda.
Action Complete

C&S 5 Action 2: CP to provide NG with an update on the results of the T-Level Implementation internal audit as part of NG's curriculum scrutiny, scheduled for discussion in June. *CP and NG had good discussion out of the meeting regarding the T-Levels. A further*

face to face with NG and FJ has been arranged for late June at Ipswich Road. Action complete.

C&S 5 Action 3: CP to arrange for Dean Crosbie to contact ABI regarding A-Level Curriculum Scrutiny. CP and NG had good discussion out of the meeting regarding Curriculum Scrutiny. A further face to face meeting with ABI and Dean has been arranged for early July in at Ipswich Road. Action Complete

C&S 5 Action 4: CP to provide an update at the June C&S meeting about whether other organisations have noted an increase in ALS numbers. Action Complete

C&S 5 Action 5: CP to provide the ALS internal audit to the C&S Committee in June for discussion. Action Complete

C&S 5 Action 6: JW to provide an updated report on Apprenticeship retention and BEED figures for June C&S meeting. Action Complete

C&S 5 Action 7: ER to provide an update of course intake figures for C&S June meeting. Action Completed

C&S 5 Action 8: HRH to provide and update from the Residential Panel Meeting concerning residential plan sign off to the June C&S meeting. Action Complete.

6. SECTION A

6.1 Easton English and Maths

Please see confidential minutes

ABn joined meeting at 4.37pm

6.2 Quality Report

JW presented his report and noted the following:

- Attendance is at 86.3% which demonstrates a fairly consistent pattern for the year.
- Easton site has better attendance for E&M than Paston and Norwich.
- With a new term in September improvements in attendance rates will be addressed as things get back to a normal routine post Covid.

CP noted that attendance is to be reviewed as part of this year's internal audit plan.

FE Retention Rates

- 16-18 year olds - figures were lower than the same period in 2018/19 due in part to the increase in courses with a two-year duration, but this did not provide the full picture for these lower figures.
Factors such as the cost-of-living crisis and ongoing mental health have impacted rates, as students are having to decide between being able to afford to study or seeking employment to help boost their families income.
- 19+ - figures are currently better and comparable with previous years but there is still room for improvement going forward.
- A Levels - the figures presented do not reflect the actual number of qualifications being completed against the number of students studying them.
1 in 5 students starting A Levels withdraw from the College.

JW acknowledged this is an area of concern with improvement needed going forward.

JL commented that Covid may have impacted these low retention rates to some extent but queried the extent to which the reduction in retention may also be due to students transferring from A Levels to a vocational course after year 1, as they decide they are not for them. It is a matter that needs referring back to the Heads of Area to reflect this concern in the SAR at both CCN and Paston.

Apprenticeships -

JW referred to Table 4 of the report and discussed the in-year achievement rates as follows:

- Figures are lower than in previous years but urged caution in comparing them with a mid and end year position for 17-18 and 18-19 year groups.
- The current performance in this year and end of year position 2 years ago is showing a significant gap of 15%-20%. This gap reflects the situation with a number of BEED Apprenticeships not able to complete their apprenticeship by the target date. In part this can be moved on via catch up delivery.
- Some progress is being made on addressing the BEED numbers, despite the challenges faced by the exams team at a busy time of year for exam entries and processing.
- There are concerns regarding the level of resources required to manage the volume and complexity of Apprenticeship work. It is becoming increasingly specialised in terms of the methods for claiming apprenticeship completion and the EPA processes.

CP asked if JW or ER could provide an explanation on Gateway and JW provided the following summary:

Gateway is the term used for the point when it is decided with the employer that each apprentice is ready to take the end point of assessment of the Apprenticeship Standard. At this point CCN can book an end point assessment with the appropriate assessment organisation and this can take some time. This is a new process brought in as part of the apprenticeship standards.

JL commented on the complex nature in achieving completions with Apprenticeships during the busy Summer Term when other examinations are taking place, adding to the administrative pressures.

EB joined meeting at 4:59pm.

College Collective Initiative (CCI)

JW discussed the College Collective Initiative and noted the following:

- The CCI is a successful 'pilot' initiative that the college took part in to create new peer networks under the guidance of 'Associate Experts'.
- CCN provided 3 'experts' and received peer support in 4 areas; Marketing a multi-site campus, Best Practice in bid writing, ESOL delivery and Maths delivery.
- The peer support was well received, broadening professional networks and providing staff with insight into other college cultures and organisational priorities.
- There is support from staff for the project to continue but the cost implication will be the deciding factor as no funding is available post pilot. However, there

is the potential to consider creating a similar opportunity through existing networks on an informal basis.

Curriculum Planning update

This has been completed and the following matters were noted:

- The additional 40 hours of tuition is an opportunity for students to enhance their skills and knowledge and is a delivery requirement for receiving the increase in Government funding.
 - The tuition must be delivered in class and not online because, under the regulations, blended learning is not permitted. It has therefore, created a challenge to organise sessions in relation to individual curriculum areas and effected students' transport arrangements, especially for inclusive learners and those at the Paston site.
 - 16-19 Tuition Fund – this is a separate fund financed by the Government for catch up sessions post pandemic. Delivery needs to be in a prescriptive way, with sessions being arranged according to students' timetables. This has created a challenge for staff to minimise disruption as much as possible to students' normal study routines.
 - T Levels - These will be available from September 2022 across 6 of the planned 11 routes. Work placements will need to be sourced for students as a requirement of the course. Industries have been approached to assist with this requirement and some positive responses have been received but it will be a challenge to meet the numbers needed. This is a process that will take some time to evolve into a working model.
- 16-18 Progression – This year has seen a particular challenge to encourage 17 year olds to stay in education instead of moving into employment. Even with bursary support on offer, it is difficult for students to continue attending college rather than working with the current financial pressures their families are facing. Technically young people in employment are required to receive formal training under the participation legislation but this is not enforced

JL asked whether there was any appetite for those going into work at age 17 to consider online learning instead? JW responded stating that we are restricted by the legislation. The CCN Adult offer would be the next option, if they returned to learning later but would need to be explored further to provide the most appropriate offer.

FE – New Courses in 2022/23

- Changes have been made in relation to the rationalisation and standardisation of the inclusive learning between Easton and Norwich sites.
- A decision has been made to end the licence agreement with Project Search and CCN will manage the supported internship provision, operating at NNUH and Norse.
- A new Level 4 qualification in Performance has been created to support progression for young local professionals to upskill and support self-employment.
- Reinstating of a Level 1 qualification for Childcare provision.

Withdrawn courses

- HE courses with low applications numbers are being withdrawn. e.g. the Equine Degree programme.
- FE – several of the Level 3 courses are being replaced with the new T-Level and will be withdrawn e.g. Engineering, Health and Social Care and Business

6.3 TLA Report

CP presented this report and noted the following:

- Grid meetings – CP stated that for future meetings these documents will be placed on Share Point for easier viewing.
- 6 areas are rated as Requiring Improvement and it was noted that this included Landbased which is a key improvement, although Agriculture remains a concern.
- Only 1 area (Construction) dropped a point but remained in the Good range. Concerns were raised about the student experience outside of the main qualification that are to be investigated.
- 17 areas were judged to be within the Good range.
- 6 areas remained in in the Outstanding category.
- Health, Social Care and Childcare moved back to Outstanding which is a positive outcome. This was not originally proposed by the Head of Area but it had been agreed by the Grid meeting that this was appropriate.

Cross College matters of note -

- There is a broad range of QROs and Matt Scott will be carrying out a QRO system review so all themes are being captured in time for the new term.
- The need to develop a framework for Early Career Teachers and the use of evidence in relation to the framework to be captured as a QRO.
- CCN will reinstate the use of external examiner and verifier reports for review by CLT and Governors.
- Activities from Creative Excellence at staff development day were considered in relation to how they could be used for co-creation work.
- Cross site collaboration is working well in several areas but other areas needing further development
- A review of our course process is being undertaken by Ruth Harrison (Interim VP)
- Planning will be the focal point going forward into next year, impacting on assessment methodologies and programmes of study. This includes the need to review the teaching weeks in order to regain teaching time lost to increased external assessment. This might include moves such as removing the May half-term break.
- the TLA grid process was discussed, a different procedure was used compared to previous years.
- Although the process has worked well improvements can be made such as with small pre meetings, reinstating a buddy system and having additional reviewers.

SAR

In previous years the Self-Assessment process has not started until September after exam results have been received but managers are working on draft reports now to facilitate the scrutiny process to take place early next term.

Development Day – All planned activities are on track with c60 sessions and c800 staff attending.

Leadership Support - CP informed Governors that Ruth Harrison (Interim VP) will continue to provide support to CCN until October half term for at least two days a week or more as needed.

A wide range of applications have been received for the two Vice Principal vacancies and CP asked JW to provide an overview of the focus on each position.

- Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality will concentrate on curriculum and quality incorporating the funding, planning and resourcing functions, including Head of Projects
- Vice Principal Student and College Services:
This brings together student services, nursery, marketing, registry service and other services linked with the student's journey and impact on the student experience.

Leadership and Management Team

Two of the college's Directors have been promoted to the following positions at East Coast College,

- Paula Ottaway – Assistant Principal of Student Services and Student Support
- Tom Roberts – Assistant Principal Curriculum and Quality for Construction Engineering, Public Services and Sport.

6.4 HE Report

ER provided an update in 3 specific areas and the following was noted:

Access and Participation Plan

- CCN were requested to submit variations to the Access and Participation Plans before the end of this academic year under the 4 priorities in the report,
 - A. Accessibility of the plan
 - B. Enhancing partnerships with schools and raising attainment for pre-16 age groups
 - C. Access of HE to underrepresented groups
 - D. Diverse pathways into HE
- No major review has been carried out against the APP this year because a more in-depth revision will be carried out using a new data set. This is expected at the start of the next academic year.
- In the interim, a light touch approach has been taken OfS with minor amendments made in line with the new template and some minor changes to the spreadsheet that underpins the APP.

ABI asked whether the targets are realistic for current times? ER responded that the targets were set 2 years ago and were based upon data for 2017/18. Going forward these targets are likely to be changed.

JL asked whether the Plan should also include supporting CCN FE students to move onto HE? ER responded stating that the Plan requirements are aimed at the pre-16 group in respect of attainment and progression rather than other groups.

TASO Project Funding

- A tender was submitted for funding for this research project which the College have been successful in securing £21k.
- The project aligns with the APP.
- Lisa Collyer is the Project lead, supported by 3 HE colleagues.
- The evaluation is taking place over the next 6 months with the results being published by TASO in 2023.

Applications Update

- These numbers are 25% below last year but are not linked to any specific courses.
- There is the potential that late applications will be received that could increase this figure but competition between institutions is creating uncertainty.
- This is impacting on our final figures as students choose alternative providers; these which are currently higher than in previous years.
- It was suggested that CCN needs to review what the HE offer should look like going forward thus providing clarity for prospective students of what the CCN offer entails.

JL and the governors agreed that it is a good time to review our HE course provision now we are post covid and suggested all Level 4 and above provision is also included.

CP stated that the local skills improvement plan should feed into the College offer.

ABI asked whether courses would be delivered with low numbers and if this is economically viable, in relation to the Colleges obligation to the student? ER responded stating that some courses, in particular the land-based ones at Easton, can still run regardless of the numbers because of the course structure. Others such as Agri business and Business Management will need a decision whether they go ahead and mean speaking with the students to determine their expectations from the course and offering alternative options given the CMA expectations.

ABn left meeting at 5.51pm

6.5 Easton FE Improvement Board Report

CP provided a verbal update as follows:

- A meeting was held on 14 June 2022 and was the last one for the year. The meeting arranged for the 12 July 2022 has been cancelled as it clashes with the Strategy meeting being held the same day.
- E&M was discussed at length with Sports and Public Services also being examined.
- Matt Scott gave a presentation to the Improvement Board in relation to the area, providing a good overview for Zoe Gusterson, who recently returned from maternity leave .
- There were no major issues to raise in terms of session delivery although there was a lack of planning and this will be a matter to address for future provision.
- Across site working is not to the level it needs to be currently so an area for improvement going forward.

JL noted that the College is improving practice at Easton instead of rescuing bad practice in most areas now, and those areas requiring improvement have planned actions in place. This is a positive outcome and JL acknowledged the concerted efforts made by several staff members at Easton to achieve this result.

6.6 Information, Advice and Guidance Update

HRH provided an update and noted the following:

- The IAG team are working with current students looking to return next year on a 1:1 appointment basis.
- There has been an increase in the number of enquiries received regarding T-Levels including from concerned parents. The team are working closely with Fern and course leaders so these queries can be answered. More in-depth advice in relation to these qualifications will be provided at the July open day.
- Local schools – working with year 10s who will be considering post 16 options.
- Neaco - HRH is still waiting to hear from the Home Office if the 2 international student visa applications have been approved.
- Bursaries have just opened now for next year so new applications can be received.
- Provision of free school and college meals is currently being considered so vouchers can be requested from Norfolk County Council.

NG asked whether parents understand how the new T Level qualifications fit in with the learners' pathway and if they are asking for clarification about this?

CP responded stating that as these are new qualifications and the prospectus aimed at the new term did not contain full information about the T levels, so is some confusion as to what course of study the student will be taking.

JL asked for clarity regarding changes to the AEB funding.

HRH responded stating the process is as follows:

- Changes relate to the residency rules.
- Previously a student resident for less than 3 years in the country were exempt from paying international fees.
- New rules give less categories for exemption, making for a time-consuming process in order to submit a correct application.

6.7 Residential Update

HRH provided an overview of the report noting the following;

- The environmental group running since Easter carried out a beach clean-up.
- A board was created to display stars for achievements the students have made throughout the year.
- Year-end celebrations have taken place with many now starting to vacate rooms.
- Students have rated their experience at the residences as positive in the end of year survey.

JL asked if there will be a higher number of residential students next year? HRH stated that currently numbers are lower than expected but there are interviews still taking place with potential new students at Easton. Jo Riseborough is working in conjunction with Liz the administrator at Easton, to check if any applications have requested a residency. Where they have, an interview is scheduled after the course one, to avoid delay in processing the application, but is dependent on a place being offered first.

HRH stated that Jo Riseborough is confident the numbers will increase as we have the structure in place to deliver a positive service.

JW added that the refurbishment work will be significant to increasing this capacity going forward in the hope of meeting potential new students' aspirations.

Post inspection Action Plan 2021

- HRH agreed that the estate needs updating otherwise everything else is in progress and being monitored.
- CP suggested carrying out an audit mock inspection at the end of September against the action plan with a view to closing the Action Plan.

6.8 ALS and EAA

CP gave an update and noted the following:

Exam Access Arrangements (EAA)

- CP stated that there had been a significant increase in numbers which was shown by type of EAA for E&M in the papers. It is now evident that these figures have impacted on the Norwich site in particular, in relation to student exam experience.
- CP had noted that the requirements of support such as a reader, prompter and rest breaks determines the room size, and invigilator numbers in relation to the number of rooms needed.
- In relation to arrangements for students with mental health issues needing a smaller room, this has not had the impact originally thought.
- No decision has been made regarding the 2023 examinations and planning requirements that CCN will need to consider for EAA.

NG queried if those eligible for an EAA were known about ahead of time and how many EEAs were reviewed and from the number reviewed how many were rejected?

CP responded stating that EAAs are in place for 3 years and students coming from school will already have an arrangement which will be rolled forward onto their College study if the school passes on this information otherwise a new application has to be made for these. However, due to Covid and no exams being held for the last 2 years more applications have been needed. Where EAAs were in place, these were often no longer relevant for the current needs of the student.

CP stated EA's can also change over time due to whether the current one is reflecting the student's needs in both the classroom and exam. If additional help is not required in the classroom but is requested for the exam, this would be challenged.

JW stated that in some cases CCN are aware of the EAA need well before exams but not for this cohort, due to Covid causing school shut down last year. Consequently, any difficulties would not have been noted and thus CCN have been picking up these needs instead. In addition, there are also Adults, approximately 10% of this cohort, that are also being dealt with by CCN.

JW commented that the College needs to be mindful of the process used to determine these EEA requirements going forward. However, this situation is not unique to CCN as other colleges are reporting the same issues, which have been raised with JCQ and Ofqual.

JL asked if the EAA would be in place for other exams students were taking such as BTECs?. JW confirmed that the appropriate arrangements would be applied to the level of any assessment a student is taking e.g. a GCSE English and Level 3 BTEC in Engineering. Generally, the standard amount of extra time allowed is 25%, equating to

an additional 30 minutes for a 2 hour exam. However, in terms of a 50 hour assessment as is needed for one T Level, this would mean an additional three days assessment. This situation has created a large-scale challenge for CCN to deliver and one that is unsustainable going forward.

ABI asked whether Governors can intervene in addition to the matters already having been raised with JCQ and Ofqual, as it is an ongoing matter of concern.

JL responded stating that the matter could be taken to Board so that it is reported as being unsustainable.

CP asked JL if this was a matter that could be taken to the Vice Chairs and Chairs Network?

JL said this is possible and although no meeting is arranged yet, a request could be submitted for this to be an agenda item for discussion. JL stated that there is an AoC Group for Chairs of Curriculum and Quality committees as well as Chairs and Vice Chairs Group and suggested the matter could be sent to both these groups for discussion, to raise further awareness.

JW queried that this assessment approach is being driven by schools because the GCSE is mainly a school-based qualification rather than a post 16 qualification despite the number of students taking them in college.

ACTION 2: JL to raise with AoC meetings the unsustainable impact of Exam Access Arrangements.

ALS – Internal Audit report

CP reported the following:

The main outcome of the Audit was a rating of Significant Assurance in relation to funding and two low risk recommendations, noted below:

1. Annual review to be undertaken and no errors found – this is in place.
2. Benchmarking – this is an exploratory exercise needing to be investigated with what other colleges are doing.

CP confirmed that there were no major concerns to raise, only for Governors to be informed of the outcome, as the report had already been considered at both Board and Business Committees. No comments were raised in relation to the report.

6.9 Strategic priorities

CP informed Governors that the Strategic Priorities for the next academic year will be considered in more detail at the Strategy Day meeting on 12 July 2022.

6.10 Governor Curriculum Scrutiny

6.10.1 T-levels

NG informed the Committee that a meeting had been planned for 20 May 2022 with Fern and CP but, due to illness, could not go ahead. The meeting has been rescheduled for next week. CP stated that a report prepared by NG has been fed through to Internal Audit as it demonstrates the link between C&S scrutiny and Internal Audit, in relation to the T Level qualification.

JL asked whether there has been any development on the issues of T-Level delivery sustainability discussed at the last meeting? CP responded stating that a meeting is

taking place with Internal Audit this week and an external meeting next week. The outcome of these meetings will determine which Committee to feed the findings into. CP had a meeting with the new Vice President of the Pearson FE Reference Group and this will provide a good link with the AO. CP confirmed that all normal routes will be followed but JL encouraged CCN to communicate with the CEOs of each T Level AO as another option, to raise awareness about the challenges being created with these qualifications.

6.11 Governance Matters

JM provided an update concerning Terms of Reference as follows:

6.11.1 Annual Review of Terms of Reference

These were last reviewed in 2019 and it has been proposed that they will be worked on over the Summer after Strategy Day. These will be brought back to this Committee in the new academic year for comment and approval.

ABI stated she has been involved in a review of Governing Bodies effectiveness at the University (UEA) which has suggested recommendations of embedding assurances needed for OFS in terms of reference. ABI asked if this would be useful information to feed into the annual review.

JL stated that there was much to be considered in respect of the amendments needed to the terms of reference, in relation to the changing environment and agreed any additional information like this is helpful.

ACTION 3: ABI to provide details of University of East Anglia's Governing Body Effectiveness Review to support the review of the C&S Terms of Reference.

ACTION 4: JM, JW and JL to review the C&S Terms of Reference over the summer break and present an update on 4 October 2022.

7. SECTION B

7.1 Student Union

JL congratulated EB on her appointment as FE Officer at Easton site.

- CP confirmed that the first round of elections has been concluded and added that there will be other Officer positions available in September.
- The newly appointed President, Lewis Pepperell will be working on promoting the SU through Freshers events and getting course reps elected.

JL asked when Staff Governors elections will be held? JM confirmed these will be at the start of term in September.

8. SECTION C

No items were discussed under this section

9. Other Urgent Business

HRH made apologies for 2 student names being quoted in the residential report and asked for anyone who has printed a copy to disregard this information. HRH confirmed a redacted version had been sent through with the minutes to JM.

CP shared information from the Internal Audit Plan and stated this is for comments only at this stage, to allow for Audit Committee to respond to any made, so it can go to Board for approval on 5 July 2022.

JL added that this matter had been discussed at Audit but if any observations or recommendations were noted regarding the Audit plan, they would go to Board to be included for sign off.

CP stated the key risks in relation to this committee for consideration in the Audit Plan are as follows:

- The focus group for this year will be for 16-18 years and Adults
- The curriculum planning process
- Student attendance and retention
- Compliance in relation to Office for Students requirements including CMA
- Safeguarding and Prevent

JL asked the Committee if these are appropriate matters to be investigated for next year? CP suggested that the Plan be circulated to members so they can look at Appendix A, the Four-Year Audit Plan for comments.

ABI asked whether this was looking at numbers or will it include looking at whether the right courses are being offered? CP responded stating that the Audit Committee will be looking at these risks in relation to the College Budget confirming it is number related and to see how we as a College respond to oversubscription or undersubscription.

ACTION 5: JM to send out Audit Plan report to Governors for comments prior to being brought to Board for approval and sign off on 5 July 2022.

10. Confidentiality

Please see confidential minutes for items 6.1

11. Confidential Items

No items were discussed under this section.

12. Date of next meeting

The next Curriculum and Standards Committee meeting will take place on Tuesday 4 October 2022

All formal business having been concluded, the meeting closed at 6.43pm

Signed Date

(Chair of Meeting)