

# HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

## STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the meeting held at Harlow College on Wednesday 29 June 2022, 9.30am

Membership:                    \*Lily Lin (Chair)  
                                      \*Sotirios Adamopoulos  
                                      \*Jon Bouffler  
                                      \*Rod Bristow  
                                      \*Liz Laycock  
                                      Maksymilian Peikert  
                                      \*Karen Spencer

\*denotes present

In attendance                 Becky Jones, Vice-Principal  
                                      Paul Whitehead, Vice-Principal  
                                      Kelly Edwards, Executive Director – Quality  
                                      Laura Wedgbury-Glew, Assistant Principal  
                                      Kirstie Craig, Assistant Principal  
                                      Ann King, Assistant Principal  
                                      Maria Staines, Head of Higher Education  
                                      Ruth Lucas, Head of Governance

#### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Maksymilian Peikert, due to work commitments, Will Allanson, Wendy Martin and Viv Kimeng.

#### **2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the Standards and Curriculum Committee meeting held on 16 March 2022 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

#### **4 Matters Arising from the Minutes (not mentioned elsewhere on the agenda)**

There were no matters arising.

#### **5 Quality of Education**

##### **5.1 Study Programmes**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on Study Programmes, presented by Laura Wedgbury-Glew, Assistant Principal.

Laura Wedgbury-Glew highlighted the main points in the report.

The College is gradually getting back to where it was pre-pandemic in terms of predicted achievement and retention and is on track at present to meet the KPIs. The Vice-Principals are meeting with teams to discuss every student to ensure that tracking is accurate.

There is work still to do on the data and further breakdowns on what the information means to staff are needed, such as what do improvements in pace actually look like. Walkthroughs are almost complete and the data from these will be analysed to identify the issues more specifically.

It is necessary to tell the story behind the data as 95% making progress does not mean anything in terms of the story. Examples of students actively partaking in learning and enrichment and enthusiasm for the studies helps to evidence good teaching, learning and assessment.

The positive destination data was highlighted and how the destinations links into the teams' "Super 6" careers.

Liz Laycock asked if the teams that are identified as needing to improve reflect the outcomes in the area. Laura Wedgbury-Glew confirmed this is the case and that the data matches what management believe the issues to be. Liz Laycock suggested that this should be added to the evidence.

Liz Laycock asked why enrichment was poorly attended in 2021-2022 and asked if something was missing. Paul Whitehead reported that there was not a huge provision and it was not publicised, which lead to a poor uptake. For next academic year, the College has allocated Wednesday afternoons as enrichment for all 16-18 learners and a full programme of enrichment activities will be offered. The key is to get a good offer. There is a lot of enrichment of the curriculum taking place however not College-wide and inter-team.

Liz Laycock asked if the percentage progressing into apprenticeships as set out in paragraph 17 is positive in terms of destinations. Karen Spencer reported that there are no national figures however the figures for the areas highlighted in the report are the higher figures within the College compared to the average for other courses. Paul Whitehead reported that the percentages were of the total students in that area however it was agreed that a percentage of those eligible to undertake an apprenticeship would be more meaningful.

Rod Bristow highlighted that the November English and maths pass rate is low compared to targets for the year end and asked if it should be RAG rated red and what are the consequences and impacts if the students do not pass. Karen Spencer highlighted that this would be covered in agenda item 5.3 – English and Maths and that this only includes November figures not June results also, so there would be a shift. Laura Wedgbury-Glew responded that students need to retake English and maths if they do not pass and if they do not attend English and maths lessons, students will be subject to the College's disciplinary process.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on Study Programmes.

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## 5.2 Adult Education Budget

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on the Adult Education Budget, presented by Paul Whitehead, Vice-Principal.

Paul Whitehead highlighted that predicted achievement and retention are ahead of the position this time last year and are on target.

The walkthrough data demonstrates where challenge and pace needs improving. It was reported that the data looks at people rather than themes and different types of provision therefore this will be looked at in more detail by management.

E-learning is on track for predicted achievement and new programmes are being introduced. Jon Bouffler asked what the scale of the College's e-learning provision is and Paul Whitehead confirmed it was approximately 10% of the College's adult provision with 350 – 400 learners undertaking e-learning, It was agreed that giving proportions with the data along with the actual number of learners would be beneficial.

The College contracts with an external organisation to collect destination data and provides the College with a good sample size for analysis. Karen Spencer asked if destination data could be collected in a similar way to 16-18 destination data, by recording their intended destination at the end of the programme then checks on their actual destination are undertaken. Paul Whitehead reported that this could work for some of the courses and highlighted that there is more work to be done on destination data to demonstrate the impact of courses however interim measures are in place.

The College is delivering 16 new adult evening courses, which have had a positive start, and is now preparing for its offer next academic year.

Direct claim status for awarding organisations is being applied for. This is for new courses and not because direct claim status had previously been withdrawn due to any quality issues.

Liz Laycock asked if anything is being done in-year to address the decline in evidence of learners being challenged and setting improve targets. Kelly Edwards reported that this is being worked through with the teams and that CPD is delivered throughout the year and improvement and challenge is a key theme of this. Karen Spencer reported it is difficult to see the impact yet and Paul Whitehead reported that there are only a few walkthroughs left to be completed therefore the data is only just coming through. Liz Laycock highlighted that how this is written in the report should be looked at to reflect this.

Liz Laycock asked if embedding bitesize English and maths qualifications into the majority of employability courses has had a positive impact on last year's students. Karen Spencer confirmed that this is the case and the impact can be seen in the predicted and final achievement rates. Liz Laycock highlighted that it would be useful to see the English and maths results at the end of the year.

Karen Spencer reported that breakdown by sectors and then by English and maths would be beneficial.  
Liz Laycock highlighted the positive destination data at STAC as an amazing achievement for the College.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the Adult Education Budget.

### **5.3 English and Maths**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on English and Maths, presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal.

Becky Jones reported that attendance continues to be a challenge however there has been a small improvement from 65% last year to 70% this year.

November resits had a pass rate of 23% for maths and 16% for English however not all students took the resits whereas the majority have sat the exams this summer. Maths is above the national average, published by Ofqual, however the English is lower. Liz Laycock asked why the College is delighted with the November resit results. Karen Spencer reported that the College's results are significantly above other colleges as confirmed by the MiDES report circulated with the paper.

A full mock process was undertaken in March to help alleviate any fears students have. 74% attended both maths papers and 66% attended both English papers. The data gathered from the mocks has evidenced student progress, with a good proportion of students making progress and with some students making significant progress. Paul Whitehead highlighted that when mock grades were compared to qualifications on entry, the proportions making progress are not as good as the College would like them to be however this is due to the qualifications on entry being teacher-assessed grades which are often over-inflated.

Rod Bristow reported that it is good that students are making progress however with less than half of the target passing, should the KPI be RAG rated red not amber. Rod Bristow also asked if the target is too high and if there were other solutions that could help.

Karen Spencer responded that the November resits are never reflective of the overall position or target. Pre-pandemic the College was achieving a 40% pass rate at the end of the year, with the November resits often only seeing a 9% pass rate. It was agreed that in KPI 2.6, a target for the November resit should be set along with the College's end of year target. The College set a 40% target and Ofsted said that the College was unambitious with the target however the College feels that the target is realistic based on all the information it has.

Becky Jones responded that revision sessions, booster sessions and targeted 1-2-1 sessions were offered to students. The College has changed its approach slightly for next academic year with English and maths staff delivering in the curriculum areas rather than the students having to move across campus to access English and maths.

Karen Spencer reported that, in her professional opinion as a Maths Educator, the only way anything could change significantly is if colleges could have control over the curriculum and could design more appropriate pathways. Rod Bristow highlighted that colleges are therefore stuck with a Government policy which is not working with too many students not passing.

Liz Laycock asked about apprenticeships having challenges with their functional skills achievement due to the fact that functional skills were being delivered by the host team and they did not have the skills teaching needed. Karen Spencer reported that this refers to the host teams not having the teaching skills to deliver the difficult functional skills qualification.

Liz Laycock highlighted that English and maths is an issue that applies to all colleges and that the College must not come across as being complacent with English and maths.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee meeting noted the report on English and maths.

#### **5.4 Apprenticeships**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on Apprenticeships, presented by Ann King, Assistant Principal and Kirstie Craig, Assistant Principal.

Ann King reported that there are some areas that require improvement, specifically linked to the new accountability framework for apprenticeships and around achievement, withdrawals, retention and English and maths.

Achievement rates are gradually improving. 135 are due to achieve this year and the College is anticipating that 78 will do so this year with 57 moving into next year. The reasons for this were highlighted along with the issues with booking end point assessments.

Withdrawals previously have been high and are having an impact on this year's pass rates.

There are areas for development within teams and resources have been put in place in these teams. The College is starting to see an improvement in retention rates and the College is on track to achieve an improved overall achievement rate. Apprenticeship end dates are constant moving however this does not have a negative impact on the achievement data.

Liz Laycock asked that if apprentices go beyond their end date, is there an impact on the College. Kirstie Craig reported that it has an impact on the College's percentage of learners who are beyond their planned end date however the College will still work with them to ensure they achieve and there is an impact on the College in the current year. Kirstie Craig reminded governors of a new accountability framework for apprenticeships. Paul Whitehead reported that predicted achievement dates are very challenging and the data is moving constantly. The figures presented in the report are the best representation of the

current position on when the College expects learners to achieve. Paul Whitehead confirmed that oversight of this is much better than in previous years.

Liz Laycock asked about the table in the report with a revised end date column. Ann King reported that this related to learners who were originally due to complete in 2022-2023 however some will complete early and in this academic year and some will complete late. It was agreed that the data should be broken down into those who are achieving early and those that are delayed.

Liz Laycock asked about the poor performance of end point assessments. Ann King confirmed that there has been a complete change with apprenticeship Standards having been introduced. In some areas, apprentices can gain the qualification they need to enter industry without going through the end point assessment and they are counted as failing their apprenticeship. Jon Bouffler reported it would be useful to see the figures of those who have gained the qualification but did not go through the end point assessment as this has an impact on funding for the College. Paul Whitehead confirmed that the failure data would be looked at and broken down further. The volume of work involved in getting an apprentice ready for their end point assessment is huge therefore the funding associated with successfully completing an apprenticeship is crucial to the College.

Karen Spencer reported that the discussions are taking place with the ESFA around the College's apprenticeships in light of the new Accountability framework. Whilst the College's data last year was poor, there was a data error that cannot be corrected therefore the data look worse than it actually is. Regular meetings will take place with the ESFA and they are happy with the interventions that have already been implemented by the College.

The College is focusing on ensuring an apprenticeship is the most appropriate course for each learner before sign-up, ensuring they have the right entry requirements and where they do not, providing them with information, advice and guidance on other options available. Becky Jones reported that this includes English and maths qualifications on entry and the ability for the apprentice to achieve the required level of English and maths for the apprenticeship. English and maths is being frontloaded and delivered by the core English and maths teams and it is believed that this will aid retention. Open conversations take place with the apprentice, the employer and the College and clear expectations are set out from the start.

Liz Laycock asked about inconsistencies with progress review completion across teams. Kirstie Craig reported that this is being focused on by the College and an area still needing developing however significant improvements have been made.

Rod Bristow summarised the current position as achievement rates being below target and national averages and that learners are not always seeing the need to undergo their end point assessment, along with other factors that the College needs to address to improve success rates. Karen Spencer reported that some larger apprenticeship areas have been poor at planning and monitoring apprentices' progress historically therefore the teams need re-educating and extra resources are being put in place to address this.

Jon Bouffler asked about the ESFA consultation which is proposing an increased number of observations which will increase costs and potentially exasperate the situation with progress monitoring, and asked if the College has an effective lobbying mechanism. Karen Spencer reported that the College has an aspiration to have more regular reviews however some of the teams with issues are those which have staffing and resourcing issues. There is a demand for provision however there are not enough suitable people to teach. Karen Spencer also reported that all lobbying is done through the Association of Colleges who employ experts in the field and feed into consultations.

Lily Lin highlighted that she had some concerns when reading the papers however feels more reassured as a result of the meeting.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on Apprenticeships.

## **5.5 Any Other Matters Arising from the KPIs and QIP Not Covered Above**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received the KPIs and QIP.

Becky Jones reported that all updates are in red font and highlighted that the full two-year A-Level is being moved back to AS and A2. All other matters have been covered in agenda items 5.1 – 5.4 above.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the KPIs and QIP.

## **6 Student Voice**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on Student Voice, presented by Laura Wedgbury-Glew, Assistant Principal.

Laura Wedgbury-Glew reported that the College was pleased with the 75% completion rate of the latest student survey and only two questions scored under 80% which were “ready for next step” and “acting on views”, both scoring 78%.

Karen Spencer suggested revisiting the “You Said, We Did” posters and make them visible across the College.

Laura Wedgbury-Glew reported on the work the College is doing with Cohesion and the positive impact it has had on the students.

Governors noted the progress made on the Student Voice Action Plan.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on Student Voice.

## **7 Higher Education**

### **7.1 Higher Education Development Plan**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the Higher Education Development Plan, presented by Maria Staines, Head of Higher Education.

Maria Staines reported that the Module Evaluation Score results are positive with 86% overall satisfaction and engineering increasing from 65% in the first term to 94% this term, with a 100% completion rate by engineering students.

Recruitment is low and Maria Staines highlighted the actions she has taken to promote the College's offer and the feedback given by students. Early Years and Engineering will be the only higher nationals being delivered next academic year.

Rod Bristow highlighted it is counter-intuitive to have difficulties to recruit to career focused higher national courses and asked if the choice of programme was correct and who the College is marketing its offer to and should this focus on those already in work.

Karen Spencer responded that young people's aspirations are to move out of Harlow and due to the proximity to London, Cambridge, Hertfordshire and Essex higher education institutions, there are a lot of options open to them. Only 15% of Harlow residents are qualified at Level 3 therefore there is only a small number of residents who would be looking to undertake a higher national course. Areas in which the College could grow its provision are in areas which the College struggles to recruit staff to. Positive discussions are being held with Anglia Ruskin University on access into policing.

Liz Laycock asked about the College's access to HE programmes and Sotirios Adamopoulos asked if the College had considered other access courses. Maria Staines confirmed that it has and would be offering access courses in nursing, midwifery, medicine and counselling and psychology.

Rod Bristow highlighted that universities recruit adults without Level 3 qualifications using different selection criteria and asked if this is something the College does. Karen Spencer reported that the College can accredit prior learning however this is a challenge. The Open University is looking to make an offer to all colleges to become a validating body for higher technical qualifications at Levels 4 and 5 however there will be a cost to this. Becky Jones reported that the College has aligned the qualifications linked to the Institute of Technology to the College's T-Level offer to provide internal progression pathways for students. Rod Bristow asked if the higher technical qualification framework was an issue and Karen Spencer reported that many have not yet been validated.

Rod Bristow asked if flexibility around access to provision has been considered. Becky Jones reported that the higher apprenticeship in engineering has been previously delivered as twilight sessions and the College is looking at offering a part time evening higher national at STAC.

Karen Spencer reported that non-prescribed higher education should be included in the report.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the Higher Education Development Plan.



## **7.2 OfS Regulatory Requirements**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received the report on OfS regulatory requirements, presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal.

Becky Jones highlighted the appendices which were included with the report and that updates and changes are in red font in the report.

The Student Protection Plan is updated annually and published on the College's website however it needs to be approved by the OfS prior to publication.

Governors were informed that the College does not currently hold a Teaching Excellence Framework award due to the low numbers of higher education students however this is something that can be revisited.

Becky Jones highlighted that the wording and language of the OfS regulatory conditions have been updated and conditions B7 and B8 are new. The report highlights how the College meets all the conditions.

The Committee was reminded that they have devolved responsibility from the Corporation to ensure that the College meets these standards and the Committee agreed that the report provides them with assurance that the College is meeting all OfS regulatory requirements.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on OfS regulatory requirements and confirmed the College is meeting all the OfS regulatory requirements.

## **7.3 OfS Statement of Expectation for Preventing and Addressing Harassment and Sexual Misconduct**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received the report on the OfS Statement of Expectation for Preventing and Addressing Harassment and Sexual Misconduct, presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal.

Becky Jones highlighted the seven expectations set by the OfS and how the College meets these expectations. Becky Jones asked the Committee if it had sufficient information to report that the expectations were met by the College and the Committee confirmed that it has.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on the OfS Statement of Expectation for Preventing and Addressing Harassment and Sexual Misconduct and confirmed the College is meeting the seven expectations.

## **7.4 OfS Reportable Events**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted that there has been no OfS reportable events since the Committee last met on 16 March 2022.

## **8 Curriculum Update**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the Curriculum Update, presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal.

A T-Level schedule was circulated to Governors and Becky Jones highlighted the plan for introducing for new T-Levels.

Becky Jones reported that the College has been involved in a trial of the Transition Year however this has not been overly successful therefore will not be delivering this next year. T-Levels are harder than vocational pathways therefore the College is looking at its Level 2 provision and tweaking it to better suit what will be needed for T-Levels.

Liz Laycock asked if there is a funding implication for not running T-Levels. Paul Whitehead reported that the College will continue to run a vocational programme if a T-Level is not running without a funding implication provided that the vocational programmes has not been defunded.

Jon Bouffler asked if the College has effective recruitment strategies for T-Levels. Paul Whitehead some T-Levels are very specific and group sizes are small however there has not been an overall impact on recruitment overall to the College. Rod Bristow asked why there has been no overall impact. Paul Whitehead confirmed that there will be an impact over the longer term when vocational qualifications are removed. Karen Spencer reported that awarding bodies can apply for their qualifications if they believe they should not be defunded or if there is a new qualification which is better suited therefore there could be three different pathways available to students.

For next academic year, the College has allocated Wednesday afternoons as enrichment for all 16-18 learners and a full programme of enrichment activities will be offered. There are some pressures with the campus and staffing however teams are responding well. The offer will be launched at induction. Jon Bouffler reported that increased enrichment had a positive impact at Anglia Ruskin University on student satisfaction.

Becky Jones reported that the induction process is changing next academic year with a week-long induction taking place at the start of the year. All mandatory tutorials will be delivered during this week and key expectations will be set out. Tutorial time for the rest of the year will focus on 1-2-1s with students, welfare meetings, target setting, discussing aspirations and next steps.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the Curriculum Update.

## **9 Policies for Approval**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the Academic and Assessment Regulations, Academic Appeals Policy, Access and Participation Statement, Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy and Health, Wellbeing and Fitness to Study Policy, presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal.

Becky Jones reported that the changes are highlighted in red font throughout the policies with the exception of the Access and Participation Statement which has been rewritten.

Governors noted that the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy has been updated to cover the requirements of the OfS Statement of Expectation for Preventing and Addressing Harassment and Sexual Misconduct.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee approved the Academic and Assessment Regulations, Academic Appeals Policy, Access and Participation Statement, Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy and Health, Wellbeing and Fitness to Study Policy.

## **10 Any Other Business**

Kelly Edwards reported that the College is submitting its Apple Distinguished Status application this week. If successful, this will be the College's third award.

## **11 Dates of Future Meetings, Terms of Reference, Calendar of Business**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received the dates of future meetings, the Committee's Terms of Reference and the Calendar of Business, presented by Ruth Lucas, Head of Governance.

It was agreed to amend point (b) of the delegated powers in the Terms of Reference from "to receive reports from members of the College Executive on College strategies and policies that will raise standards and performance including for Governance and reduce risk" to "to receive reports from members of the College Executive on College strategies and policies, approving them where appropriate, that will raise standards and performance including for Governance and reduce risk.

It was agreed that job roles would replace names in the Calendar of Business.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee approved the dates of future meetings, the Committee's Terms of Reference and the Calendar of Business, subject to the amendments above.

## **Key Points From The Meeting For Corporation:**

- 1. Key Performance Indicators**  
To receive and note the Key Performance Indicators.
- 2. Quality Improvement Plan**  
To receive and note the Quality Improvement Plan.
- 3. Student Voice**  
To receive the report on Student Voice.