

HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Minutes of the virtual meeting held on Zoom on Tuesday 16 March 2021, 9.30am

Membership: *Liz Laycock
 *Sotirios Adamopoulos
 *Jon Bouffler
 *Rod Bristow
 Lily Lin (Chair)
 Eva Scott
*denotes present *Karen Spencer

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

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Lily Lin due to her attending Governor training and Eva Scott due to her attending her College lesson on site.

Liz Laycock chaired the meeting in Lily Lin's absence.

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 25 November 2020 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

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

4.1 Self-Assessment Team Reviews (minute 6.1 refers)

Liz Laycock asked about completion rate of staff appraisals and Karen Spencer reported that the College had suspended the process during lockdown.

4.2 Self-Assessment Report 2019/2020 (minute 6.2 refers)

Karen Spencer informed the Committee that the College submitted the Self-Assessment Report 2019/2020 to Ofsted and submission is voluntary.

Liz Laycock asked if a reference to the Corporation had been made in the section on safeguarding and Becky Jones confirmed that this had been done.

Liz Laycock asked about the data tables which had potentially indicated a significant drop in learner numbers and enrolments. Paul Whitehead reported that some learners' achievement data is included in the following year's data, partly due to anomalies in relation to COVID and due to late claims. Karen Spencer also reported that AS Levels have been removed as well as other shorter courses which historically provided additionality therefore a decrease in learner numbers and learner enrolments was expected.

4.3 T-Levels (agenda item 11 refers)

Liz Laycock asked if T-Levels were being covered in the main agenda items. Karen Spencer reported that the College's T-Level provision is small and reporting will be in line with the College's normal reporting processes through the Self-Assessment Report, Quality Improvement Plan and Key Performance Indicators.

5 Key Performance Indicators and Quality Improvement Plan

5.1 Key Performance Indicators

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2020/2021, presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal.

Becky Jones informed Governors that the KPIs have been updated and RAG-rated following a February 2021 review. Some are RAG rated amber due to the progress being in a transition phase or due to them being delayed because of the latest lockdown.

Apprenticeship remains an issue for the College. A new strategic group and sub-groups have been formed to address specific issues and undertake specific tasks, with a whole College approach being taken. Delivery teams are focusing more on assessment and delivery and resources have been added to the quality team to help address the identified issues.

Becky Jones reported that the Adult Education Budget was of concern due to the present climate. Rod Bristow asked if the concerns were around achievement or quality of provision. Becky Jones reported that the issue is the earning of the income and Karen Spencer confirmed that this has been discussed in detail by the Resources Committee.

Becky Jones informed the Committee that higher education recruitment is currently RAG rated red based on this year's recruitment however recruitment is good for next academic year.

Becky Jones reported that a new safeguarding software system is being trialled as the current system does not produce detailed enough reports for the College.

The College is increasing its work experience and work placements and this will be a key focus for after Easter.

Karen Spencer reported that the College faces a particular challenge of not knowing what the impact of COVID will be and the impact on assessment. Governors noted that the KPIs were set when the College was expecting circumstances to be more normal and this is an issue faced nationally by colleges.

A detailed discussion was held around the KPIs. Some of the KPIs have got outcome targets set and are indicated in column G of the spreadsheet however it was agreed that it is useful to document actions which need to be undertaken to achieve the outcomes. It was agreed that the KPIs should be target-led and inputs should be carried into the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The Committee acknowledged that the QIP is the operational plan which is not just quality-focused and that all the documents are interlinked. It was suggested that the KPIs for outcomes, teaching, learning and assessment could be pulled out separately to be used alongside the QIP so that they were in a simpler format, showing the measure not the detailed operational actions.

Rod Bristow highlighted the need to focus Governors' attention on what the Committee and the Corporation should be concentrating on. Paul Whitehead reported that the KPIs are cross-college and maybe they could be assigned to the relevant Committee for overview, scrutiny and focus.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the KPIs and agreed that Karen Spencer and Becky Jones should revisit the format of the relevant KPIs for the Committee (Outcomes, TLA and Curriculum) and share this with Liz Laycock and Rod Bristow prior to the next Standards and Curriculum Committee meeting to see if they meet needs effectively.

5.2 Quality Improvement Plan

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2020/2021, presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal.

Liz Laycock asked if the QIP, KPIs and SAR all triangulate and Becky Jones confirmed that they do.

Becky Jones reported that reasonably good progress has been made with QIP actions in some areas. Staff have been trained to move to online learning and delivery and this has been a key focus of the quality team. The key actions on differentiation, pace and challenge will be focused on again in September.

Liz Laycock raised the following questions on the QIP and received the following responses:

- why action 1.1 has not been marked as complete?

This is due to the website and prospectus having been completed however curriculum planning review meetings are commencing tomorrow therefore the action has been marked as amber.

- Have sufficient employers been recruited for T-Levels?

There is some concern around employer recruitment however the majority of placements are in year 2 of the T-Level programme so there is still time to recruit. Some hours can be work tasters or part-time work and some charitable hours can be included. The work experience can be route-level based rather than subject-sector based which offers greater flexibility.

- What impact will the actions on apprenticeships have on 2020/2021?

The changes will benefit apprentices who are starting their apprenticeship therefore the improvements will be lagged.

Rod Bristow asked if the apprenticeship issues are COVID related. Becky Jones reported that issues are partly due to COVID however there are also issues with retention.

Jon Bouffler asked if the Qualification Achievement Rate (QAR) target was threatened. Karen Spencer reported that the QAR target was a pre-pandemic target and that the Government are not producing any data this year. It is unlikely that the College will achieve the rate though due to the impact of COVID.

- What has the impact of recruiting a new member of staff for the quality team been?

The member of staff has been able to share best practice and resources however the Committee agreed that the rating should be amber until the impact has been seen.

- Is there a possibility to extend apprentices' end dates due to the lockdown?

An end date is set on the system for each apprentice as they start their apprenticeship and this is a realistic date based on information at the time. The College does however have a number of apprentices who have not completed by their original end date. Liz Laycock asked how the College is judged in relation to this and Paul Whitehead confirmed that at present the College is not judged against the original planned end date as no data is being published however the College continues to work with each apprentice on an individual basis to support them in achieving their qualification in a timely manner.

- Should tutorials on British Values, personal safety and Prevent awareness be moved to the 2021-2022 QIP?

These tutorials are planned for September and October 2021 and therefore this will be achieved when the 2020 – 2021 QIP is finalised in November 2021.

Sotirios Adamopoulos reported that there is a mental health first aid programme available for staff which is being promoted across the College.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the QIP.

5.3 English and Maths

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered English and maths report, presented by Kirstie Craig, Head of Academy.

A detailed discussion was held around attendance and the Committee asked when did the decline in attendance happen. Kirstie Craig reported that before Christmas attendance rates were between 70% and 75% which were in line with previous years, pre-COVID. English and maths is being delivered 100% online this year and initially there was no decline in attendance. There started to be a drop-off in attendance the week before Christmas, then the Government announced the third lockdown and that GCSE and A-Levels exams were cancelled for this year. Following this, there was a significant drop in attendance. There is always some decline in attendance after the November resits as students believe they will have achieved the required grade 4 in the resits. There appears to be a pattern with main programme and English and maths attendance, particularly in some areas such as hair and beauty, construction, automotive and building services. The English and maths teams are working closely with the Work Placement Officers who are chasing up attendance.

Liz Laycock asked if the cancellation of exams has caused more or less of a problem. Kirstie Craig reported that she is not overly concerned with GCSEs as the College has put robust plans in place for centre-assessed grades from the beginning of the year. Evidence has been and continues to be collated and there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate student progress. There is however a concern with Functional Skills as these exams are still taking place and the guidance is not very clear at present. In addition, many students have inflated grades due to the schools' centre-assessed grades from last academic year.

Karen Spencer reported that she had recently chaired the Association of Colleges' English and maths group and that attendance and functional skills are national issues which are being reported by all colleges.

Kirstie Craig reported that with the work being undertaken on the Centre for Excellence in Maths, partners are reporting on average pre-COVID attendance rates of 60%. The College rates were significantly higher than this and the decline this year now brings the College in line with the 60% attendance rate.

Rod Bristow asked if the decline in attendance was equal for GCSE and Functional Skills classes and Kirstie Craig confirmed that this was correct.

The Committee noted the excellent English and maths November resit results and noted that English results are now in line with maths, thanks to the hard work of the English team.

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

5.4 Apprenticeships

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on apprenticeships, presented by Ann King, Assistant Principal and Paul Whitehead, Vice-Principal.

Karen Spencer asked what the impact has been to date on the actions which have been taken. Ann King and Paul Whitehead reported that actions taken are those linked to the whole apprenticeship journey, from start to finish, therefore the impact is hard to measure at present.

The Committee agreed that the report provided good operational detail however Governors needed more of a strategic position paper with more tangible outcomes reported. It was suggested that the data should include number of apprentices this year and in subsequent years and how many of those are on track, broken down by area.

Jon Bouffler asked about the split between performance and compliance with targets. Karen Spencer reported that the QAR is a Government reporting measure and is separate from how well students are performing academically.

Liz Laycock highlighted the need for the Committee to know the impact that the measures being taken are having and where the College is in relation to achievement.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on apprenticeships and agreed that Karen Spencer, Becky Jones, Paul Whitehead and Ann King would meet to look at the format of the paper and agree metrics to be included in future reports to the Committee.

6 Return to Onsite Delivery and Assessment Arrangements 2020/2021

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the verbal update on the return to onsite delivery and assessment arrangements 2020/2021, presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal.

Governors were informed that the College is in discussion with staff and students about what has worked well with online learning and what could be looked at going forward and this will form part of the planning for next academic year.

Jon Bouffler asked if there was any benefit to the College with the COVID testing. Karen Spencer reported that the College had been informed that it would receive £30k for setting up and running a testing centre however this is now not guaranteed. Over 1,200 tests were undertaken on site last week and further students were tested in the

community. None of the tests were positive and whilst this does not provide full assurance, it provides the College with some additional reassurances.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee approved and endorsed the College's four-step roadmap and approach to return to onsite delivery and noted the approach to assessments for 2020/2021.

7 Higher Education

7.1 Annual Pearson Monitoring Report

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the Annual Pearson Monitoring Report (AMR), presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal.

Becky Jones introduced Maria Staines, Head of Higher Education, who will be involved in producing the higher education papers for the Committee and is attending today as an observer.

Liz Laycock asked the following questions and received the following responses:

- Does the AMR refer to all HN programmes or just sport?

It covers all programmes running last academic year however Section A does imply it is just sport as this was the only area which had an External Examiner Report and Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) visits. All RQF visits are currently suspended however sport had already had a visit.

- Why is Ofsted cited?

It is a standard section on the online form, all sections of which need to be completed in order for the report to be submitted.

- What is the situation for External Examiner Reports for this year?

The College is expecting this to be undertaken remotely this year with random sampling taking place. External Examiners have been assigned and higher education is not eligible for centre-assessed grades.

- Part of the HN Engineering information is marked as incomplete.

This is an anomaly with the system and is dependent on how the individual External Examiner reports the suspension in activity.

- Does the College not have an Attendance Policy?

There is no discrete Attendance Policy for higher education as it is incorporated within the College's Attendance Policy which covers further and higher education.

- Has the College addressed staff competency in using MS Teams and breakout rooms?

When MS Teams was first introduced, there was no facility for breakout rooms however these rooms have now been introduced. A key focus for the November staff development day was the use of breakout rooms. There was high demand for this training and there have been lots of opportunities for staff training. Staff are now using breakout rooms successfully.

- How does the action plan improve student satisfaction?

There was an issue with satisfaction on the HN Engineering courses for higher apprentices. This was due to the assessment plan and a number of assignments due at a similar time. These issues have been resolved and satisfaction has improved.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the Annual Pearson Monitoring Report.

7.2 Internal Student Satisfaction Survey Results Semester 1

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the internal student satisfaction survey results for semester 1, presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal.

The Committee noted that student satisfaction was 86% overall which meets the College's overall target of 86%. Governors noted the table which shows a three-year trend and shows an improving picture over the three years, including a significant increase in the engineering satisfaction which declined last year.

Liz Laycock reported that the satisfaction rates are particularly pleasing considering the challenges faced this year with COVID and that the figures still show an improving picture despite of COVID and online learning.

Karen Spencer informed the Committee that the College has seen an increase in its applications to higher nationals for next academic year set against a national picture of general dissatisfaction with higher education at present due to COVID and the associated restrictions in place.

Rod Bristow asked how do the internal satisfaction results compared to the National Student Survey (NSS) and does the College participate in the NSS? Becky Jones reported that the College does participate in the NSS where and when applicable as some numbers are so small that they are not eligible. The majority of the College's higher education students study for a HNC or HND and then undertake a top-up year and this makes them ineligible for completing the NSS.

Rod Bristow highlighted that if the College's student satisfaction survey results are higher than the national picture is showing, then this should be used in marketing the College's higher education offer.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the internal student satisfaction survey results for semester 1.

7.3 OfS Regulatory Requirements

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

The Committee noted the OfS correspondence received by Karen Spencer and the requirement of the Committee to ensure the College is compliant with regulatory requirements.

Becky Jones highlighted Condition C1 – Guidance on Consumer Protection Law, Condition C2 – Student Complaints Scheme and Condition C3 – Student Protection Plan and the Committee noted the action the College has taken.

Liz Laycock asked if the documents referred to are fully accessible and Becky Jones confirmed that all are available either on the College's website or on Qube, the College's intranet. The Committee agreed it would be useful to have all the documentation in the public domain and Becky Jones confirmed that she will look into this.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee confirmed the College's compliance with OfS regulatory requirements.

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 25 November 2020.

8 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 she is meeting with the ambassadors more frequently and is holding monthly surgeries. The March meeting was brought forward so that any issues or concerns regarding returning to onsite learning could be raised and addressed prior to students' return to campus.

Governors were informed that a chat room has been created on MS Teams which is moderated by Laura Wedgbury-Glew and is a very responsive way of communication. A "You Said, We Did" section has been added to Qube and is being pushed out on the i-pads. A new postcard campaign is being launched which is linked to moving on activities and getting students to think more about their next steps.

Rod Bristow asked about students reporting they work harder at work than on site and asked whether any lessons learnt from online learning would be taken forward and change the shape of delivery with more of a blended approach being adopted?

Kelly Edwards reported that part of the staff development day on 4 May will be used for teams to reflect on what was worked well with online learning, with a view to taking the best bits and putting them into practice moving forward. Staff have currently been focusing on providing a welcome return to site for students, ensuring face-to-face lessons are of real value, with a positive feel.

Karen Spencer reported that students who are reporting that they are working better and harder from home are often those who are on higher level or academic courses and this is not the same for those on lower level or more practical based courses.

Karen Spencer highlighted that curriculum planning taking place within individual teams will encompass digital learning and that there is good rationale for a more blended approach to be used for higher education.

Sotirios Adamopoulos reported that the College has developed very meaningful online provision which should not be lost and asked how representative the information is from the student ambassadors? Laura Wedgbury-Glew reported that the issue around working harder from home was raised by ambassadors on a higher-level qualification. The student ambassadors represent students across all levels however learning and preferred learning styles are very individual. Becky Jones reported that Laura Wedgbury-Glew is working hard to establish team and academy learner representative meetings, so that information can be triangulated with what teams and academies are reporting along with what the student ambassadors are reporting, Work is being undertaken to raise the profile of student voice and to increase the number of student voice representatives across the College. Karen Spencer reported that by nature, the student ambassadors would probably not be wholly representative however it facilitates a mechanism for the College to ask questions to students.

Karen Spencer highlighted that there is a need to harness stretch and challenge whilst helping those students who need support the most. Independent learning and use of technology, combined with digital learning, will help the College to better achieve this and avoid “teaching to the middle”.

Liz Laycock highlighted that it is positive to see the emphasis on communication and the acknowledgement of student mental health within the report.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on student voice.

9 Any Other Business

There were no items of any other business.

10 Dates of Future Meetings

Summer Term	Thursday 17 June 2021	08.30am / 09.30am
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Key Points From The Meeting For Corporation To Note:

1. Key Performance Indicators

To note the current position of the KPIs for 2020/2021

2. Return to Onsite Delivery and Assessment Arrangements 2020/2021

To note and endorse the College's four-stage roadmap and note the assessment arrangements for academic and vocational qualifications for 2020/2021.

3. Student Voice

To note the latest update from the Student Ambassadors meetings.