

HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 22 November 2016

Membership:

- * Sotirios Adamopoulos
- * Jon Bouffler
- * Chris Christofides (Chair)
- * Luke Jones
- * Liz Laycock
- * Myrtle Prodger
- * Karen Spencer

**denotes present*

In attendance

- L Turner, Deputy Principal
- B Jones, Assistant Principal
- T Greenall, Head of Academy (item 563 only)
- V Kimeng, Asst Academy Manager (item 563 only)
- D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation
- R Lucas, Deputy Clerk to the Corporation

556 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

557 Declarations of Interest

S Adamopoulos declared an interest in agenda item 563 – English and Maths Improvement Plans.

J Bouffler declared an interest in agenda item 560 – Higher Education Quality Assurance and any other matters relating to Anglia Ruskin University.

558 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The meeting received and approved the minutes of the Standards and Curriculum Committee meeting held on 24 June 2016.

559 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising.

560 Higher Education Quality Assurance

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on Higher Education quality assurance, presented by L Turner, Deputy Principal and B Jones, Assistant Principal.

Governors received the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), the schedule of reporting and the annual quality assessment return. The information and schedule are designed to ensure that Governors have enough opportunity to question the College on its higher

education provision and that they have a detailed understanding of the full quality cycle and how processes feed into the cycle. A detailed discussion was held around the information provided and Governors were given the opportunity to ask question.

M Prodger asked what higher education provision through Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) the College would continue to be offering. B Jones confirmed the following courses: Early Years – BA, Foundation Degree and Top-Up; Graphics – Foundation Degree; Bio-Science – BA, Foundation Degree and Top-Up, and Engineering – Foundation Degree with the Top-Up being explored.

Governors asked why Journalism is no longer being offered. The Principal explained that journalism is a subject best learned whilst employed as a trainee journalist rather than a degree subject and there is no longer a market for the degree. The College does still offer NCTJ qualifications, which are seen as the industry gold standard.

L Laycock asked how the College ensures the quality of the qualifications which are closing and being run out. Governors were informed that the courses were closing due to low student numbers rather than quality issues, however the College is working with the ARU faculties and action plans are in place. These same internal processes are in place for all courses delivered by the College. L Laycock suggested it would be useful to see the plans at the next Committee meeting. A discussion was held around how Governors could oversee the quality systems the College has in place. It was agreed that a summary report should be presented each time the Committee meets, which pulls together the key points and provides Governors with a clear understanding of the quality process cycle. Governors agreed a summary would be useful.

C Christofides highlighted the documentation listed on the schedule and it was agreed that if Governors wished to review any specific piece of information to contact the Clerk or Deputy Clerk.

The Principal informed Governors that the College is working with ARU to develop degree apprenticeships and a proposal will be presented to the Committee.

Governors noted that the action plan included in the AMR has been updated following the Institutional Review, it is a rolling action plan and will be considered at each time the Committee meets.

The Deputy Principal informed the Committee about the changes in ARU processes, particularly around admissions and marketing. The data is being considered in depth by the College, with weekly reports sent by ARU.

The Principal reported on issues that have arisen with the top-up of the engineering degree that led to lower levels of student satisfaction, and Governors noted these issues have now been resolved. Governors asked what assurances are in place regarding student satisfaction. B Jones highlighted the national student survey and that the College will address any issue raised in the survey.

B Jones reported that the AMR presented is for the College's ARU provision and that the College would need to complete an AMR for Pearson for its HNC and HND provision. She reported that the new set up and way of working is working well and the College is confident going forward. It was highlighted that the AMR narrative refers to provision being poor and it was agreed that not all areas are poor and that the report should be more explicit as to where the negatives are.

After careful consideration of all the information presented to Governors, the Standards and Curriculum Committee agreed that suitable processes are in place for the College's higher education provision and that full assurance can be given by the Governing Body. The Standards and Curriculum Committee approved the statement contained in the Annual Quality Assessment Return and agreed for K Spencer, as Accounting Officer, to sign the Return on behalf of the Governing Body.

561 Self-Assessment Report for Harlow College 2015/16

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for Harlow College 2015/16, presented by L Turner, Deputy Principal.

The Deputy Principal informed Governors that data in the SAR has been updated since it was presented to the Corporation in October 2016 and that the apprenticeship data might still change slightly. Governors were informed that there has been an improvement in the College's overall success rate, which has been calculated using the old methodology.

English and maths remain the College's greatest challenge. For 16-18 Maths is at benchmark for GCSE and requires improvement for functional skills. GCSE English is inadequate for 16-18s. These are covered in detail as a standing item of the agenda (see 563).

Apprenticeship provision has improved and is now self-assessed as good.

C Christofides asked if the apprenticeship self-assessment grade is secure and the Deputy Principal confirmed that is.

The Deputy Principal reported that the requirement to take English and maths has had an impact on the EDIMS data and a gap in performance exists due to this. The College is looking at ways to best support these learners.

A discussion was held around the new GCSE grades and it was agreed that a session should be organised for Governors on this, along with the Sainsbury Report. It is still not yet known whether a grade of 4 will be acceptable for the condition of funding, after the first year, or whether students will need to get a grade 5. It is envisaged that this will be dictated by what the universities and employers require.

It was highlighted that delivery of English and maths is a condition of funding. There is a 5% tolerance however the College normally enrolls 99% of the eligible students onto English and/or maths. The College recognises the benefit and importance of English and maths however the qualifications need to be fit for purpose.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee approved the Self-Assessment Report for 2015/16 and agreed that headline data from the SAR should be published on the College's website.

562 Quality Improvement Action Plan and Associated Targets for 2016/17

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on the Quality Improvement Action Plan and associated targets for 2016/17.

The Deputy Principal reported that Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) are in place for all curriculum teams and service areas. L Turner also reported that the key themes the College is focusing on in the College-wide QIP align with the College's KPIs.

Governors noted all sections and themes contained within the QIP, with a particular focus and discussion on:

- Apprenticeships:
 - This remains a strong focus for the College and high standards are now being seen across all areas.
 - Work is being done with employers around expectations on both sides.
- English and Maths:
 - Ofsted insisted on the College raising its targets to 50% however the College thought it was better to set realistic targets, which are both challenging and attainable. C Christofides asked what the benchmark is. In maths the benchmark is 23% (Mides data) and the College target is 40%. In English the target is 25%, 6% points above the benchmark which is 19%.
 - It was agreed that this would be considered again by the Committee in February 2017.
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment:
 - Improved processes are in place for staff, all staff have development plans and there are thorough team review processes.
 - C Christofides highlighted the need to promote aspirations to teach at any outstanding level.
 - It was agreed to add in details of the induction process in section 3.8.
- E-Learning:
 - L Jones asked about i-pads for apprentices. Ideas are currently being brainstormed and it was suggested approaching employers to ask them to contribute towards them. A purchase scheme is also being looked in to.
 - It was highlighted that the five most used app by the College are available on laptops, PCs and mobile phones.
- Employability and Progression:
 - The College is continuing to look at making the curriculum more relevant and looking at a seamless transition into apprenticeships.
 - Last year's data on impact, destination and targets is being collected and the College will ensure there are targets set.
 - It was asked if this section also relates to work-related learning and work-readiness. L Turner confirmed that this is covered in the curriculum development section.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on the Quality Improvement Action Plan and associated targets for 2016/17.

563 Maths and English Improvement Plans

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received an update on maths and English

improvement plans, presented by T Greenall – Head of Academy, V Kimeng – Assistant Academy Manager and S Adamopoulos – Assistant Academy Manager.

A detailed discussion was held around the improvement plans and Governors challenged the plans.

The Maths and English managers were asked by Governors to explain:

- The key rapid actions put in place to improve performance
- The differences in predicted grades and actual performance, particularly in English
- C Christofides asked - How teaching, learning and assessment profiles for staff could be 'good or better' when outcomes were poor
- L Laycock asked – What support is available outside the classroom for those students who are progressing less well?

Both areas explained the new model for centralising the teams. Staff are now part of the A-level team and are working closely to share good practice. They have daily meetings and share resources and expertise. Collaborative teaching and peer observation is in place to support development.

A clear scheme of teaching and assessments is in place in both disciplines. Student performance is tracked through pro-monitor. Standardisation takes place across the teams to ensure marking is to the correct standard.

Online learning activities are available for each topic and students get signposted to additional workshop sessions. It is the vocational teams' responsibility to ensure their students attend the workshops.

It was noted, that in English the new GCSE 9-1 specifications was being used. This removes the necessity to complete controlled assessments – the element that lowered student attainment most significantly and took most of the year to complete. However, this may not solve the gap in attainment for students completely as the level of grammar and reading required is significantly higher.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on the maths and English improvement plans and agreed that maths and English should be a standing item on the Committee's agenda.

564 Complaints and Compliments 2015/16

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on complaints and compliments 2015/16, presented by L Turner, Deputy Principal.

Governors noted that there has been a reduction in the number of complaints and the biggest drop in terms of categories of complaint is teaching. It is believed this is due to the quality processes and procedures the College now has in place. The breakdown of complaints by team was noted by Governors.

L Laycock asked if the ways of making a complaint is widely known. The Deputy Principal confirmed that this is and with the realignment of services in Building A, key information is now available to students at reception, which has contributed to the reduction in complaints.

Governors noted the compliments which the College had received throughout the year.

The Committee agreed that the format of the report needs to be reconsidered, however Governors requested that the level of detail for compliments remains.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on complaints and compliments 2015/16.

565 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

566 Dates of Future Meetings

Spring Term	7 February 2017	8.30 am
Summer Term	27 June 2017	8.30 am