

HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Minutes of the virtual meeting held on Zoom on Thursday 25 June 2020, 8.45am

Membership: *L Laycock (Chair)
*S Adamopoulos
J Bouffler
R Bristow
*L Sherry (until 9.15am)
*denotes present *K Spencer

In attendance B Jones, Vice-Principal
P Whitehead, Vice-Principal (agenda item 688 only)
K Edwards, Director of Quality
T Andrews, Head of Quality Assurance for Higher Education
R Lucas, Head of Governance

680 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from J Bouffler and R Bristow due to personal reasons.

681 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

682 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Standards and Curriculum Committee meeting held on 28 November 2019 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

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

683.1 Quality Improvement Plan for 2019 – 2020 (minute 662 refers)

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received a verbal update on the Quality Improvement Plan for 2019 – 2020, presented by B Jones, Vice-Principal.

B Jones reported that the QIP had been updated however some information around results were under embargo. B Jones reported that actions are being continued for those areas marked as green.

The full adoption of OneFile across all teams is being implemented and a Head of Academy is supporting the Assistant Principal with responsibility for apprenticeships in implementing this.

Under behaviour and attitudes, English and maths attendance and achievement is still coded red however information is under embargo.

All actions have been met under personal development. Tutorials will be moved to online in September and ILP processes are being looked at. An induction checklist is being developed and the first teaching week in the new academic year will commence on 14 September

All actions have been met under leadership and management. Progress has been made on narrowing the achievement gap and whilst timelines have slipped during lockdown, the SAR, QIP and health-check processes have continued. B Jones reported that these processes are working well for delivery teams but not so well for service areas and that the College is reflecting at what can be changed for next year. The staged review process is being amended and the Head of Academy level of the process being reviewed. The Executive Team Member will present an update from one of their areas at the weekly Executive Team meetings on a rolling basis. B Jones confirmed that staff development day in August will be dedicated to teams completing their QIPs.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the update on the Quality Improvement Plan 2019 – 2020.

684 Grading and Assessment Update

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received a verbal update on grading and assessment, presented by B Jones, Vice-Principal.

B Jones reported that all centre-assessed grades have been submitted and that the College had met all the deadlines set.

B Jones reported that it had been a challenging process for ESOL, functional skills, A-Levels and GCSEs. Provisionally grades were produced which staff had to agree or disagree. If they disagreed, evidence had to be produced and this went to a panel for consideration. All of the processes have been fully documented.

Grading for vocational qualifications has been undertaken by the Quality Team, as many elements of the qualifications had already been completed and graded before lockdown. The same process as detailed above enabled staff to challenge the grades.

Technical and vocational qualifications falling into the adapt or delay category have been challenging and it has been hard to keep students and staff informed due to the constant changing of qualification categorisation and different awarding organisations treating the same equalization differently.

L Laycock commended the College on having dealt with all grading in a timely manner and K Spencer reported that the College has been in a good position compared to other colleges nationally.

L Laycock asked if the College was expecting a high number of appeals. B Jones reported that if it did get more appeals, it would likely be from A-Level students. S Adamopoulos reported that most should be on grounds of administration not the actual

submission process. R Lucas reported that the sector is anticipating an increase in subject access requests linked to grading.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the update on grading and assessment.

685 Ofsted Research Visit Feedback

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered Ofsted Research Visit feedback, presented by K Spencer, Principal, and K Edwards, Director of Quality.

K Spencer thanked K Edwards for doing a fantastic job in putting the programme together and praised all the staff and students involved.

K Edwards reported that the inspector had asked to meet with a variety of students across Levels 1 – 3. He met with teachers in advance of the session, talked to students after each online session and then the relevant manager after the session. He had full access to Padlet and Showbie. He commented on assessment, verbal feedback and written feedback and asked about progress. Students reported they liked using MS Teams and they demonstrated a positive, can-do attitude. He reported that students were engaged in learning and that staff had confidence in the change to the delivery model.

L Laycock asked if this would be seen as a way forward for future Ofsted inspections. K Spencer reported that it would be as onsite inspections will not be able to start until January 2021 at the earliest and that Ofsted needs to conduct monitoring visits as a minimum before then.

L Laycock highlighted the amazing working being done by the College and the positive feedback that had been received which is outstanding given such unusual circumstances that the College is working in.

K Spencer reported that 20 colleges took part in the programme of visits and an overall anonymised report will be produced and published by Ofsted.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the Ofsted Research Visit Feedback.

686 Student Ambassador Report

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the Student Ambassador Report, presented by L Sherry, Student Governor and B Jones, Vice-Principal.

B Jones informed the Committee that a meeting had been held with the Student Governors, Student Ambassadors and herself to discuss how students have been finding online learning during lockdown. The following issues were reported:

- Wifi issues at home and students were unaware that the College could offer them a mifi device.

A discussion was held around whether this issue was lack of wifi or quality of wifi at home.

Ambassadors were unaware of the mifi devices and it was agreed that different communication channels will be used to promote tis moving forwards and will be included in the enrolment plan for students.

K Spencer reported that all key information is communicated to students via text messages and asked if students were not reading the texts and if there was something else the College could do to communicate this? L Sherry reported she did not recall getting such a text however the Committee noted that communications with higher education students had been different to those for further education students. B Jones reported that there are information links on Qube.

L Laycock reported that some students could be using this as a barrier to learning as they are in a situation they do not want to be in and that the College should keep doing what it is currently doing and the more it becomes familiar for students, they more accepting they will become. She further highlighted the need to ensure that students know what help is available to them. B Jones reported that a clearer message will be sent out to students through the roll-out of i-Pads.

K Spencer reported that all teams are making contact with students who are not engaging and K Edwards highlighted that the College is further ahead than many others in the sector with its use of technology and provision of i-Pads for students.

The Committee acknowledged that access to technology at home could be an issue for students if they have to share laptops, PCs etc. with other family members who are working from home or studying.

The Committee agreed that the College should continue addressing these problems where possible, ensure the students know where to go for help and ensure staff know what can be done for their students.

- Communicating with staff over MS Teams is harder for students and some are less willing to talk using MS Teams.

K Spencer reported that the more reticent students have been found to prefer using MS Teams and students fed back to the Ofsted inspector that they liked using MS Teams and that they found the chat function a helpful, responsive way to communicate.

K Edwards reported that the use of MS Teams for staff is a key are of focus for the staff development day taking place today and B Jones reported that students will be shown how to send messages publicly and privately on MS Teams. Students using MS Teams have reported back that they are happier having the interaction with staff and the College's use of MS Teams is an evolving picture.

L Laycock acknowledged that the College is doing everything it can and K Spencer reported that students want to get back to normality. There are however a group of students who prefer online learning, particularly the Supported Studies students however it is part of the College's duty to these students to prepare them to live and work independently and home learning is not achieving this goal.

- Access to specific software was not available from home.

K Spencer reported that licences for some software are available to students however a high spec machine is required at home in order for them to run properly. Some software used in Engineering though cannot be accessed offsite. Moving forward, access to specific software will be a key consideration for planning and timetabling students being onsite. K Spencer confirmed that none of the students have had access to specific software during lockdown therefore none have been disadvantaged and K Edwards reported that students have been finding alternative ways of working.

Governors agreed that the key was to ensure that no students are disadvantaged, particularly in respect to achievement and results and to challenge any awarding organisation who insist on students using a specific software during this time.

- Students in the adapt and delay categories felt less motivated.

B Jones reported that much has changed since the meeting was held with the Student Ambassadors and issues have been resolved around practical elements of qualifications. There are constant changes to classifications of qualifications and that different awarding organisations have different approaches for the same qualification.

- Students are worried about returning to campus and using public transport.

B Jones reported that the majority of issues have been addressed and plans put in place since the meeting was held with the Student Ambassadors. B Jones confirmed that a full communications plan for students and parents is in place and L Laycock highlighted the need to make all students feel comfortable and confident in returning to the campus.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the Student Ambassador Report.

687 Higher Education Update

687.1 Higher Education and Quality Assurance Update

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received the Higher Education and Quality Assurance Update, presented by B Jones, Vice-Principal, and T Andrews, Head of Quality Assurance for Higher Education.

B Jones reported that the Annual Monitoring Report had been provided to the Committee for information and T Andrews provided the Committee with a summary of the report.

Key strengths were identified, quality processes are robust and quality of provision is assured, with upskilling of staff being on-going.

Areas for development included growing the numbers and student survey response rates.

T Andrews informed the Committee that the College is maximising the use of its moving on process to highlight higher education pathways and College open events have been aligned, with taster activities being provided to potential students.

The survey response rate from Semester 1 has increased from 45% last year to 95% this year and there has been a key drive to increase response rates within the curriculum teams.

The Committee noted that overall satisfaction rates had increased and are on target with the exception of Engineering. L Laycock asked if the College was doing something to address this. K Spencer reported that there had been a particular issue with Engineering that is being addressed however not all issues all resolvable. L Laycock asked if this had an impact on student achievement and K Spencer confirmed that it had not.

T Andrews reported that feedback from the surveys is given to teams which is filtered into the health-check and QIP processes, with targets for improvement being set.

L Laycock asked what numbers were like for next academic year. B Jones reported that the numbers are not high and gave a breakdown of predicted numbers per subject area. All early years HNC students are progressing onto the HND and 12 new students have applied for the early years HNC. Business is moving to a Pearson online platform and it is hoped there will be additional interest in this. No Level 3 engineering students are looking to progress onto the HNs. There have been four external applicants, however one is an assurance offer and one is an overseas student therefore it is not viable to run it with only two students. For higher apprenticeships wanting to study the HND, the employers have to pay the cost. There are four students wanting to undertake this qualification and the College is waiting to hear whether or not the employer will pay. This will be the next HN to online in September therefore the College is considering a January offer.

K Spencer reported that the College's HE student numbers are capped at 38 however the College can apply to increase this cap. Organisations with an increased student number will not be penalised if these numbers are not reached. The Committee agreed that the College should apply for an increase to its student numbers.

B Jones reported that new qualifications are being offered, such as International Travel and Tourism and K Spencer reported that the College is expecting to see growth in professional courses such as NCTJ and AAT.

L Laycock highlighted that despite the numbers being small, robust quality assurance processes are in place. T Andrews reported that the small provision offered by the College is a unique selling point.

B Jones reported that changes had been made to grading processes however this was not needed by the College. B Jones confirmed that all learners had completed in the usual way.

The Committee noted that a blended 50:50 model for next term was being planned.

Governors' attention was brought to the OfS correspondence. B Jones reported that regulations and reporting had been relaxed by the OfS however the College still intends to update its plans, policies and access statement B Jones confirmed that no transparency return was required by the OfS and also confirmed that all QAA requirements had been met and fees paid.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the Higher Education and Quality Assurance Update.

687.2 OfS Reportable Events

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted that there had been no OfS reportable events since the Committee last met on 28 November 2019.

688 Curriculum Planning 2020 – 2021

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on curriculum planning 2020 - 2021, presented by B Jones, Vice-Principal.

B Jones gave an overview of the College's revised curriculum planning process.

A new process focusing on careers driving the curriculum has been implemented. All teams identified six career areas for their area and worked to identify what courses and qualifications were needed for these careers. This is referred to as the Super 6 and is being used for marketing. This process has been well received by the teams and following meetings with the Vice-Principals, a Year in Action document was developed. Plans had been produced and discussed with AAMs and Heads of Academies and then lockdown commenced. The process has therefore been temporarily paused and will be implemented fully in the 2021 – 2022 academic year.

B Jones reported that teams had been much more ambitious in their planning and that this process will form part of the annual health-check and QIP processes and will be tracked.

L Laycock asked if this had been completed by every area and if there was a big difference in the curriculum going forward. B Jones reported that all teams had

completed the process and that there were no big changes in the curriculum for next academic year although there will be some. K Edwards reported that managers had been reinvigorated with the process and it has been seen as a positive step by staff.

L Laycock commented how this approach links well with the College's strapline – not just courses, careers. S Adamopoulos reported that the approach has been adopted through the interview and IAG processes.

L Laycock reported that this system was coherent and T Andrews reported that it provides more clarity for current students and future students. L Laycock highlighted that this approach will give future students and parents the comfort that life and delivery is continuing at the College.

B Jones provided the Committee with an update on timetabling and enrolment for next academic year.

B Jones reported that the College is proceeding with caution with a partial reopening of the campus in consultation with the unions. The cautious approach taken by the College puts it in a stronger position if lockdown returns and will enable the College to respond to any change in circumstances based on the underlying principles of reopening.

From September, the campus will be split into three zones, each with its own entrance and students will be required to stay within these zones. L Laycock asked how the College would stop students moving between zones. B Jones reported that signage will be in place, students will have colour-coded lanyards and staff will challenge students who appear not to be in the correct zone. Those with mobility issues or requiring access to specialist services on site will be given an additional card to indicate this. Student Services will be available in each zone, as will an isolation area.

A quarter of the cohort of each team will be onsite at any one time and this will be split into morning and afternoon sessions. Different rooms will be used in the mornings and afternoons and a robust cleaning schedule is in place. Teams will have staggered start times. These arrangements will form part of the communications plan which will be sent out to students and parents over the summer. L Laycock asked if there was an impact on guided learning hours and B Jones confirmed that there would be not. Qualifications with practical elements are having the theory elements front-loaded and work placements are being paused at present. Three half day sessions a week for each cohort of students will take place with the rest being online, however teams are able to work out their own schedules based on the requirements of the qualifications.

L Laycock acknowledged that the model is complex but provides flexibility. B Jones reported that additional half days could be added to or taken off the model based on what happens with lockdown and social distancing in the future.

L Laycock asked about library resources and B Jones confirmed that the College is looking to strengthen its online resources.

Enrolment will take place as normal, with groups of 20 students being invited in at a time. Enrolment will include induction, covering health and safety, code of conduct and the issuing of i-Pads, including an introduction to the key apps used by the College.

There will be a one hour gap between enrolment slots to allow the area to be thoroughly cleaned.

S Adamopoulos asked if the code of conduct covered expectations for online learning as well as face-to-face and B Jones confirmed that it does.

S Adamopoulos asked if students' consent for recording lessons was being sought and L Laycock highlighted the need to ensure compliance with GDPR. P Whitehead confirmed that consent forms for recording will be issued to students and parents upfront and the teacher will seek further confirmation of consent at the start of the lesson if it is being recorded. L Laycock asked if they did not give consent, would they still be able to participate in the lesson. P Whitehead confirmed that they would participate with the camera and microphone off and if they wanted to ask a question they would use the chat function. K Edwards reported that online safeguarding processes are being updated and that 1-2-1 sessions which are recorded are uploaded directly to the student's Pro-Monitor profile and not saved anywhere else. Online sessions are only 20 minutes in duration and are often an introduction and warm-up to the activities that the students will then self-study.

L Laycock highlighted the need to communicate the information with students and parents and highlight how safe it is to come to College.

L Laycock asked if PPE would be worn by staff and students. B Jones confirms that the guidance says for PPE not be worn however this could change and the situation is being monitored.

T Andrews reported that the support given to staff throughout the period of lockdown has been incredible.

S Adamopoulos asked what the plan was for issuing results over the summer. B Jones confirmed that GCSE results will be sent electronically due to the high numbers however A-Level students can choose to come to College to collect their results if they wish. If not, they will be sent electronically.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee commended the College on producing a robust plan for September 2020 onwards.

The Standards and Curriculum discussed and noted the report on curriculum planning 2020 – 2021 and endorsed the College's plan for reopening in September 2020.

689 Any Other Business

689.1 Admissions Policy

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the Admissions Policy and unanimously agreed to the proposed changes.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee approved the Admissions Policy.

689.2 EdTech Demonstrator

K Edwards informed the Standards and Curriculum Committee that the College had been successful in becoming an EdTech Demonstrator College.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee thanked K Edwards and the digital team for all their hard work supporting staff and students during lockdown.

690 Dates of Future Meetings, Committee Business Plan and Terms of Reference

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received, considered and approved the dates of future meetings, the Committee's business plan and the Committee's terms of reference without amendment and requested a paper on achievement be presented to the Corporation at its meeting on 22 October 2020.