

HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 28 November 2019

Membership: *L Laycock (Chair)
*S Adamopoulos
*J Bouffler
*R Bristow (by phone)
*L Sherry
*denotes present *K Spencer

In attendance B Jones, Vice-Principal
P Whitehead, Vice-Principal
A King, Assistant Principal
K Edwards, Director of Quality
G Peachey, Director of T-Levels and Implementation
T Andrews, Head of Quality Assurance for Higher Education
K Craig, Head of Academy
R Lucas, Head of Governance

657 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee welcomed L Sherry, Student Governor, to her first Committee meeting.

658 Declarations of Interest

S Adamopoulos declared that his is a College manager responsible for A-Levels.

659 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Standards and Curriculum Committee meeting held on 18 June 2019 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

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

There were no matters arising.

661 Harlow College Self-Assessment 2018/2019

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the Harlow College Self-Assessment 2018/2019, presented by B Jones, Vice-Principal.

The Committee was informed that the format of the self-assessment had changed this year, following feedback from Ofsted during its inspection of the College in January 2019.

A self-assessment table for 2018/2019 has been produced which is line with the new Ofsted framework and the new Ofsted key judgments.

The table is broken down into the following sections:

- Key Strengths – what the College is doing well.
- Areas to Improve – what the College needs to work on but not critical.
- Key Actions Required – what the College must do and linked to the College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

The Standards and Curriculum Committee discussed in detail the areas to improve and key actions required, as follows:

AREAS TO IMPROVE:

Quality of Education – Intent:

Further scoping work for extended work placements needs to be undertaken in preparation for delivery of T-Levels. Capacity delivery funding commenced last year to assist with this.

L Laycock asked if the extended work placements would be a challenge to achieve. It is envisaged all pathways except early years will be a challenge initially.

Quality of Education – Implementation:

There has been good progress made with the use of One-File for apprenticeships and the systems provides the College with a better overview of the IQA and 20% off-the-job requirements.

There are examples of excellent stretch and challenge, however this needs to be consistent across the College and is a key focus for staff development. It was noted that this an emerging theme from the morning's self-assessment event, along with target setting being key.

Quality of Education – Impact:

English and maths needs to be fully embedded in core delivery. Improvements have been made and the College's English and maths GCSE results are in line with national averages. Staff CPD for English and maths will continue to be a key focus for the College. There has been a decline with functional skills qualifications, both as a College and nationally, as it is a straight pass or fail qualification.

Students with an EHCP are achieving well however there has been a dip in retention.

R Bristow declared an interest as Pearsons are a provider of functional skills. He offered to follow up on the national decline in functional skills pass rates.

The College's academic ALPs value added has fallen from "very good" to "good" however this is not a universal picture across the College and the reasons for the College having an overall three-year decline are being looked into. There was discussion about the cohort and "teaching to the middle", however some subjects for

example Sociology had very good results. Sotiri to review as the AAM for the area and identify key actions in terms of stretch and challenge.

R Bristow asked what the reasons were for the decline in value added. K Spencer reported that not all providers nationally opt into the ALPS data set and that the average equates to 70% - 75%. A large proportion of schools chose a linear model and not the AS model and therefore filtered a number of students out. S Adamopoulos highlighted that the College's approach is to be non-selective and that the College is at the lower end of required qualifications on entry. The College's base level being lower therefore has an impact on the College's data. The College's A-Level cohort is the same as it was three years ago whereas other schools are being more selective. This results in a very different student profile amongst institutions. Value added was intended to eradicate this, however the issue with ALPS is the average being 70% - 75%.

R Bristow asked whether it is the value added or standards that has decreased. K Spencer reported that it is more challenging for the College's cohorts of students to get high grades and more of a challenge with regards to stretch and challenge. The College's cohorts consist of more students with grades 5s and 6s at GCSEs rather than students with high grades and there is always the danger of teaching to the middle.

L Laycock asked if the profile of students has changed. K Spencer confirmed that the College's profile has not changed whereas the profiles of other institutions have. The College has high aspirations for all its students to get high grades and students are able to be "pulled up" by more able students in the cohort.

K Spencer reported that there is no value added model that can be adjusted for cohort specific variances.

R Bristow highlighted the need to look at how this information can be used to have a positive impact on teaching and learning. K Spencer reported that this will be a key focus as there is a danger that staff "teach to the middle" and do not stretch and challenge the students.

Behaviours and Attitudes:

The framework for British Values is to be looked at to ensure it can be accessed by all.

Personal Development:

The College needs to ensure that there is better access for adult learners and apprentices to the tutorials and there is a need to ensure tutorials are consistently delivered.

Leadership and Management:

The College needs to focus on closing the attainment gap for particular groups of students.

There is a need to focus on the quality of provision and the craft of teaching.

Teaching and learning needs to be visible throughout all levels and feed into the College's strategic planning processes.

KEY ACTIONS REQUIRED:

Quality of Education – Intent:

Retention, achievement and pass rates have been declining. The College will look at the programmes being offered and destinations for learners to ensure that the College is providing the right courses.

Quality of Education – Implementation:

Stretch and challenge, particularly for adult learners, needs to be addressed.

SMART and ambitious targets are being set and CPD around this has been planned.

The difference in performance of different groups needs to be reduced.

Quality of Education – Impact:

Whilst functional skills is improving slowly, there is still work to be done, particularly with Level 1.

The College has a number of projects focusing on improving English and maths teaching, learning and assessment with extra resources being put in.

Work also needs to be done on GCSE English and maths performance.

The College is implementing new strategies and delivery models for English and maths. The core team will deliver all English and maths with everything being prepared and planned centrally.

The College is looking at its strategy for GCSE resits, with only those who had previously achieved a Grade 3 taking the November resits and those with a Grade 2 resitting in June. The College's student profile is getting lower with more students having previously achieved a Grade 2 rather than a Grade 3.

Governors acknowledged that English and maths is a hard task for colleges to deal with.

K Spencer provided an update on the College's Maths Centre for Excellence project and reported that all maths centres nationally are overwhelmed with the amount of work they need to do nationally, taking teachers out of the classroom for long periods of time. R Bristow asked for some further information on this to be sent to him.

L Laycock highlighted that not all of the key actions required were listed as areas to improve. B Jones clarified that areas to improve are areas the College wants to work on and key actions required are what the College needs to do.

L Laycock and K Spencer asked for tutorials to be added into the key actions required and this was agreed by the Standards and Curriculum Committee.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee approved the self-assessment for 2018/19 subject to the addition outlined in the paragraph above and agreed to recommend it to the Corporation at its meeting on 19 December 2019.

662 Quality Improvement Plan for 2019/2020

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2019/2020, presented by B Jones, Vice-Principal.

B Jones informed the Committee that areas to improve and key actions required from the self-assessment have formed the basis of the QIP. The QIP has been aligned to the new Ofsted framework and the College's strategic objectives, with termly reviews scheduled to take place. The QIP will be updated in line with areas and issues discussed and highlighted at the self-assessment event that took place earlier in the day.

B Jones asked the Standards and Curriculum Committee if the QIP was clear and accessible and the Committee confirmed that it was and agreed the format of the document.

L Laycock asked about the retention rate for learners with an EHCP. It was reported that there has been a decline and that this has been included in the self-assessment.

B Jones informed Governors that the second cycle of the Power of 3 is now taking place and the initiative has become "business as usual" across the College. All teams are now engaged, with 70% having been completed and central support for the Power of 3 continues to be provided.

Governors asked what the College has learnt from the Power of 3 process. It was reported that it is an encouraging process however some staff are focused on just completing the process rather than determining what the impact of the process is.

The impact and lessons learnt are measured through the College walk-throughs. K Edwards reported that is good to hear staff talking about teaching and learning. Walk-throughs are taking place three times a year and every member of staff is seen at least once a year. 208 out of 225 teaching staff have been seen to date. 26 staff have been trained as observes with a further 14 being trained. Judgements are being refined on the walk-throughs and walk-throughs are looking at clear embedding on English and maths in lessons.

Following on from the College's Ofsted inspection in January 2019, the College is working on pace, challenge and differentiation via a cross-College approach centred on the staff development days. Teams have enjoyed working across different teams in the College and data now shows what staff need to do in order to improve their practice. Pro-Metrix allows AAMs to see exactly where their teams are at. Resources are being developed and best practice is being shared.

A discussion was held around the Safeguard system being used to record student disciplinary and the Committee agreed that this would not be beneficial.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee approved the Quality Improvement Plan for 2019/2020 subject to the changes highlighted above and agreed to recommend it to the Corporation at its meeting on the 19 December 2019.

663 Maths and English Improvement Plans

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted that Maths and English Improvement Plans is a standing agenda item for the Committee.

Governors noted that agenda items 661 – Self-Assessment 2018/19 and 662 – Quality Improvement Plan 2019/20 had covered this agenda item.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee requested that Maths and English Improvement Plans remain a standing agenda item for the Committee.

664 Higher Education

664.1 To receive and consider the report on higher education quality assurance

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received an update on higher education, presented by T Andrews, Head of Quality Assurance for Higher Education.

T Andrews reported that the key message is to grow the College's higher education provision. ARU delivery has now ceased and the College is now delivering HNCs and HNDs at Levels 4 and 5 and UAL at Level 4. Governors were informed that the main data contained within the report focused on ARU and Higher National delivery.

T Andrews informed Governors that the College's provision has been rationalised and curriculum areas redeveloped. Internal and external targeted marketing is now taking place.

Governors noted that the survey response rate needs to be improved, particularly as there are such low student numbers. It was reported that student satisfaction is generally good however work is being undertaken with the teams to highlight the importance of students completing the surveys. Governors noted that no issues have been raised at student panel meetings and that there is good feedback on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

Governors' attention was brought to the breakdown of awards and Governors noted that there has been a decline in the failure rate, an increase in the pass rate, the percentage of high awards achieved has increased and there is a differential between the awards for apprentices and full-time learners on HNDs.

T Andrews informed Governors that work is being undertaken for the Pearsons Annual Monitoring Report which is due in February 2020.

The College has adapted its approach to higher education recruitment and recruitment events have now been aligned to the College's open evenings. The College also now has a dedicated Information, Advice and Guidance team member focusing on the College's own higher education offer and the UCAS application process. This is allowing the College to promote its own offer along with the UCAS offer. More social media marketing is taking place and recruitment activities and strategies have commenced earlier this year. Interest has already been expressed for 2020/21.

Governors were informed that there is a mixed economy of students who choose to stay on at College to study higher education. This includes those looking to broaden their portfolio of experience, those fitting in studying around family commitments and those who are studying access courses as a route into industry.

J Bouffler asked if there was support from ARU on campus and B Jones confirmed that there was.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee was informed that there is no longer an Office for Students requirement for Governing Bodies to submit an annual higher education quality assurance monitoring return.

Governors were informed however that a mapping exercise against on-going conditions for Office for Students registration had been undertaken and this was presented to the Committee.

The Committee reviewed the mapping exercise and noted that participation in the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework is voluntary up until 2021, however the College has plans in place to address this.

The Committee agreed that the mapping exercise is a useful document and the information presented is clear.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the update on higher education quality assurance.

664.2 To receive and consider correspondence from the Office for Students

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the following correspondence from the Office for Students:

- Requirement to report reportable events to the OfS, dated 15 October 2019;
- Compliance with regulatory deadlines, dated 21 October 2019.

The Committee was reminded that the Governing Body is responsible for reporting reportable events to the Office for Students and it was agreed that reportable events should be a standing agenda item on the Standards and Curriculum Committee agenda.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the correspondence from the Office for Students.

665 T-Levels

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on T-Levels, presented by B Jones, Vice-Principal.

Governors were informed that the T-Level Action Plan circulated in advance of the meeting sets out the number for delivery from 2020/21 onwards and that the numbers have been adjusted slightly based on information the College has since gathered. Action plans have been developed however this has been challenging due to full details of the specification not yet being published. Governors were also informed that an additional document had been submitted and the College will provide Governors with further information on T-Levels when it is received.

J Bouffler asked if there was quite a high level of risk involved. P Whitehead confirmed that there is due to T-Levels being complex, particularly the extended work placement element. It is necessary for the College to start laying the foundations now ready for delivery in 2020/21. Governors were informed that the College has been successful in securing Teacher Regional Improvement Project (TRIP) funding to assist with this.

Governors were informed that some applied general courses will run alongside the T-Levels and discrete cohorts for T-Levels will be identified from within the curriculum teams. It is envisaged that the success of T-Levels will be dependent on the work placements which should provide a clear route into industry.

J Bouffler asked if the College has a risk register associated with T-Levels. P Whitehead confirmed that T-Levels are already on the College's risk register however changes to the wider curriculum is a bigger issue.

J Bouffler asked if the College's revenue funding would be affected if recruitment does not take place as planned. K Spencer reported that this is a national problem and that the College cannot afford to fund an increase to the number of hours and remove applied general pathways, therefore the College will deliver T-Levels, A-Levels and apprenticeships.

P Whitehead informed the Committee that an internal audit on the College's preparatory work for T-Levels is scheduled for the Summer Term 2020.

G Peachey highlighted that the industry placements for the digital pathway is a challenge nationally.

J Bouffler asked if the cost to implement T-Levels would be high. P Whitehead confirmed that it would be and that is partly why the College has rationalised the numbers for early delivery.

P Whitehead informed the Committee that a T-Level is equivalent to A-Levels however there are no exit points. No credits or UCAS points will be given for partial completion.

The Standards and Curriculum noted the report on T-Levels.

666 Apprenticeships

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on apprenticeships, presented by A King, Assistant Principal.

Governors were informed that the College is now delivering more Standards than Frameworks, with Frameworks only being delivered where Standards are not yet available. From July 2020, no new starts on Frameworks will be permitted, therefore Plumbing and Childcare must transition to Standards before this date.

An End Point Assessment (EPA) Hub has been established in partnership with the Federation of Essex Colleges. The College has trained staff to become Independent End Point Assessors and to undertake EPA at the Hub. This has had a positive impact on the College staff as they have a greater understanding of what is required for an apprentice to be successful in their EPA.

The College re-applied to be on the ESFA Register of Training Providers (RoATP) in October 2019 and is awaiting the outcome. The College needs to be on RoATP in order to deliver apprenticeships.

It is planned that all employers will access the Digital Service for apprenticeships from April 2020. This means that procurement will be on an open market basis and providers will no longer have allocated contracts, therefore the College needs to adapt the way in which it works to ensure it is competitive in an open market. A pilot with SMEs has been undertaken and highlighted that SMEs need support in using the Digital Service therefore staff time and resources need to be built in. J Bouffler highlighted that this would see a rise in competition and K Spencer reported that the main challenge is in sectors where it is easier to deliver and not so specialist.

Apprenticeship success rates were discussed and the Committee noted that the College has withdrawn its hairdressing apprenticeship. Governors noted that there has been a slight increase in apprenticeship timely success rates, which is classed as an apprentice achieving their qualification within 90 days of their expected end date. Governors were informed that the EPA for Standards is led by the employer therefore providers cannot be held responsible for when the apprentice completes. It is therefore envisaged that the method for calculating timely success will change. Standards are currently not included in timely success rates.

Overall achievement rates have declined, particularly in 19+ apprenticeships. An analysis of this has been undertaken and the majority of learners started their apprenticeship with a failing training provider and the College was requested by the ESFA to take on the learners. This proved to be a challenge as the private training provider operated differently to the College and mainly learners were not aware they were on an apprenticeship programme. The College has since been approached by the ESFA to take on other learners however the ESFA refused to allow the College to re-start the learners on an apprenticeship therefore the College declined the ESFA's offer.

Construction has seen a significant decline in achievement mainly due to staffing issues. Apprentices from previous cohorts are working with the College to complete their apprenticeship, whereas other learners are on target. The team is addressing the issues and they have articulated what needs to be done. L Laycock asked if this was contained within their QIP and it was confirmed that it is. Governors noted that new construction apprentices are logged on One-File.

Engineering has also seen a decline in overall and timely success rates however it is clear in their QIP what actions need to be taken.

Building Services has also seen a decline in success rates, however it was noted that these apprenticeships are long in duration. It can be difficult to keep the apprentices on programme and that there is a need to engage with employers to ensure they fully understand the timescales involved.

J Bouffler asked about the audit actions. P Whitehead confirmed that in a recent ESFA audit, the College could demonstrate the 20% off-the-job requirement however management oversight of this needs to be clearer. The majority of students have day release however the College needs to ensure that the evidence is being captured. The College is replicating good practice from full-time learner data for apprenticeships. P Whitehead confirmed that all processes are being reviewed to ensure they are all fully aligned.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on apprenticeships.

667 Ofsted Education Inspection Framework

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the letter from Paul Joyce, HMI, on the new Ofsted- Education Inspection Framework.

Governors were reminded that the new Education Inspection Framework was launched in September 2019 and early feedback from colleges having been inspected under the new Framework has been positive. Governors noted that inspectors will stop lessons to speak to students and staff.

K Spencer provided the Committee with further information on the format of the reports under the new Framework.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the letter from Paul Joyce, HMI, on the new Ofsted- Education Inspection Framework.

668 Complaints and Compliments 2018/19

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on complaints and compliments 2018/19, presented by P Whitehead, Vice-Principal.

Governors noted that the number of complaints had risen from 12 during 2017/18 to 20 during 2018/19. It was however noted that the number of complaints upheld or partially upheld in 2018/19 had reduced compared to 2017/18.

P Whitehead informed Governors that highest number of complaints received during 2018/19 was in relation to exams and that exams processes have been refined and improved for the current academic year.

Governors asked why the breakdown of complaints by team was not included in the report. P Whitehead confirmed that there number of complaints is so small that it could be easy to identify individuals. It was suggested that the category for upheld complaints could be added into future reports however it was noted that only 5 out of the 20

complaints were upheld. The Committee recognised that dealing with complaints requires a high level of staff resource.

Governors noted that the number of compliments received during 2018/19 had decreased slightly compared to 2017/18. This decrease is mainly due to the reduction in NCS delivery undertaken by the College. Governors noted that there had been an increase in the number of compliments received for the Principalship which is largely due to the number of visits and visitors the College hosts.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on complaints and compliments 2018/19.

669 Any Other Business

There were no items of any other business.

670 Dates of Future Meetings

Spring Term	Wednesday 18 March 2020	08.30am
Summer Term	Tuesday 25 June 2020	08.30am