

**HERTFORD REGIONAL COLLEGE CORPORATION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
QUALITY, STANDARDS & CURRICULUM PLANNING COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 6 DECEMBER 2017**



687 PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS

687.1 Attendance, Apologies for Absence & Membership

Membership: Ricky Irons
Tony Medhurst
Charlotte Simonds (From Item 2.1)
Jan Wing

In Attendance: Mike Carver
Jayne Chaplin (Clerk)
Wayne Wright

687.2 Declarations of Interest

None reported.

687.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 October 2017 were confirmed as a correct record, and were signed by the Chair.

687.4 Matters Arising:

Learning Walks (Minute 679)

Following discussion at the previous meeting, it was confirmed that plans were being updated and would be republished shortly.

Ofsted support and challenge visit (Minute 682.1c)

See Minute 688.2a

688 ITEMS OF FORMAL REPORT OR FOR REVIEW OR APPROVAL

688.1 SELF-ASSESSMENT & PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Charlotte Simmonds joined the meeting and was welcomed.

Reports were presented confirming performance and quality improvement for 2016/17 comprising:

688.1a College Self-Assessment Report

The College Self-Assessment Report for 2016/17 was received.

Identifying the key strengths and those areas that required development to ensure improved quality and success outcomes in 2017-18, noted to be broadly concerning improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and in student outcomes and feeding directly into the College's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), the grades were summarised.

In the context of the Ofsted findings following its Inspection, triangulation of subsequent progress and the year-end results, detailed consideration was given to the proposed:

- Grade 3, Requires Improvement, for Outcomes for learners discussing the improvements in apprenticeships, including timeliness, the importance of which had been emphasised by Ofsted and the continued improvement in achievement rates. The impact was acknowledged on the proposed grade from those areas that had performed less well noting however, the changes made in those areas, the action already taken and planned to address the issues identified.
- Grade 3, Requires Improvement, for 16 to 19 study programmes acknowledged to represent an accurate reflection with progress not as positive as anticipated but noting the changes made in those areas, the action already taken and planned to address the issues identified.
- The proposed Grade 2, Good, for overall effectiveness discussing with management the overall trajectory of positive improvement but questioning the likelihood of any potential impact on the Grade of those aspects graded 3 noting neither to be limiting factors and expressing confidence in the evidence to support such a Grade.

Following discussion of the grades, the various aspects and concluding that it represented a prudent approach, it was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND**:

- For the Corporation to **APPROVE** the College Self-Assessment report for 2016/17

688.1b Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE): Assurance Statement

Reporting that with three cohorts classified as Higher Education (HE) learners, the College was required to adopt the HEFCE quality assurance processes, those for 2017-18 set out in its circular letter 37/2017 were presented. Members were advised of the requirement to collect assurances from the Corporation about the quality of its higher education provision, reporting on the action required in preparing the statements that should reflect the Corporation's oversight of academic governance arrangements during the 2016-17 academic year.

In that context, members were advised of the HEFCE Annual Provider Review (APR) quality visit in November 2017 welcoming report that it had been very positive with no concerns identified, reporting that it was anticipated for the second stage of the process in January to be 'light touch'.

Reviewing with management performance and the Teaching Excellence Framework statement of findings with management, it was confirmed that:

- The 2016 APR statement of outcomes for 2015/16 met requirements and raised no concerns.
- The 2016/17 metrics reviewed similarly show no cause for concern. Noting however that there had been a negative flag for overall student satisfaction in the National Student Survey, confirmation was welcomed that that the issue had been rectified during 2016/17 with overall student satisfaction improving from 77% to 83% -1% against benchmark.

Following review and discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** for the Corporation to:

- **APPROVE** the assurance statement about the quality of its Higher Education provision.

688.2 Academic Year 2017/18: Year to date Activity

Reports were presented on year to date activity and quality improvement objectives for 2017/18 comprising:

688.2a Enrolment: Update

A report was received providing an overview of the position to date for 16-18 and Higher Education (HE) enrolments for 2017/18 along with an oral update on subsequent developments.

The report was summarised with members noting that:

- In-line with indications reported at the October meeting, the 16-18 learner numbers had dropped with the current enrolment and funding totals below both target. Acknowledged to be regrettable there was note of the significant improvement with numbers observed to be very similar to those recorded at the same time last year. Reviewing the figures in more detail it was noted that the data was reflective of learners recruited by the College, although members were advised that additional numbers envisaged from both sub-contractors and in year provision delivered by the College.
- With 202 learners, HE enrolment had improved both from previous years and from the number reported in September 2017 with the majority now on HNC and HND courses.
- The total number of adult full-time learners was 206 and that whilst the majority was co-taught with 16-18 learners on study programmes, there was also discrete provision for those learners on Access courses. Members were advised that in addition, there would be adult learners on part-time courses funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) with the majority with the College's sub-contractors. It was reported however that slightly less learners from the College as some adults on electrical and art and design programmes would pay their fees directly (full cost recovery) and not draw down ESFA funding.
- Withdrawals since the beginning of term showed an improvement compared with 2016/17 but it was acknowledged that the rate remained too high.

Reviewing the report, discussion included

- Those areas where numbers were slightly down on last year and those areas of growth noting this to be in most cases with good or outstanding provision in contrast with those area where performance had been disappointing, but also acknowledging the potential impact of increased competition in those areas.
- The reasons for learner withdrawals also exploring with management the impact of behavioural issues noting both the positive response to the immediate addressing of such matters and the strategies for reducing this further for next year.

Following consideration, the report was noted.

688.2b Performance Targets (Strategic Objectives)

A report was received presenting updating members on progress in the implementation of the curriculum and quality performance objectives proposed for 2017/18.

Progress was summarised noting whilst too early to predict an overall achievement rate for the year, performance against predictive indicators:

- Highlighted the current Retention Rate to be positive at 99.56% compared with the 94% retention rate target for the year.
- Showed Attendance to date to be 86% across all curriculum areas compared with the College target of 90% attendance and the aspiration target of 100%.

An overview was noted of most recent activity and developments to progress the objective to continue to revitalise the curriculum offer for 2018/19 to ensure it responded to local, LEP and national priorities,

There was particular discussion of the student attendance data:

- Noted to be higher in the Service Industries and Creative and Enterprise Directorates and highest in health and social care and childcare, MAPA and LLDD, questioning management about the likely factors underlying the contrast in the STEM Directorate with the lowest attendance recorded in construction, engineering and workwise.
- Reviewing the main vocational, programmes where attendance was higher at 88% and the fall observed when attendance at English and maths lessons was included. Reflecting on the critical nature and challenges of the subject matter to learner programmes and the need for constant reinforcement of message, members explored with management how this was to be addressed, noting that strategies were place with further activities planned.

After discussion, the update was noted.

688.2c Interim Teaching, Learning & Assessment (TLA) Report

The Interim Teaching, Learning & Assessment Report was received.

After providing an overview of the feedback from the last Ofsted support and challenge visit progress in the completion of the lesson observations and learning walks was reviewed:

- Expressing concern and discussing with Management the 44% completion rate based on forms received to date. Confirmation was welcomed that the figure reflected observations completed up until 17 November 2017 with the figure now increased to 73% and with completion of all first observations anticipated by the 15 December 2017 deadline.
- Considering the overall effectiveness of teaching observations noting 66% to be overall effective across the college across the directorates and in the individual curriculum areas with 83% of observations in Creative & Enterprise, 63% in Service Industries and 50% in Science. Technology, English & Maths were judged to be overall effective.
- Noting that a total of 142 learning walks had been carried out since the beginning of term reporting that this had allowed for swift and timely intervention to address areas of under-performance and to drive forward improvements in teaching, learning and assessment.

The report was considered further with questioning of management including:

- The 66% observations rate of overall effective across the college noting this to have been expected with priority on early observation of in-experienced members of staff with stronger and more consistent tutors to be observed towards the end of the cycle confirming that it was expected for the percentage to increase by the end of term.
- College Performance in the context of Ofsted expectations of Good or better TLA and the year to date profile. Members were advised that the profile for 2016/17 had been 84% with the current observation profile showing 81% effective or highly effective across the individual TLA standards.

After discussion, the update was noted.

688.2d Safeguarding Update

An oral report was received from the Committee Chair updating members on the recently received safeguarding update for the autumn term.

Members were provided with an overview of:

- The number and breakdown of referrals noting that compared with the same period in the previous year, the 29% increase recorded, of the 89 referrals the actual learner number had been 77 and of those referred more than once, the majority had been in the category of emotional and psychological issues. It was further reported that there had been a 46% increase in sexual abuse referrals and that of two Prevent cases recorded, one had been referred to Prevent and was ongoing with the other dealt with internally.
- The breadth and variety of strategies to address safeguarding issues and promote Prevent and British values

The update was noted.

689 ANY OTHER BUSINESS & NEXT MEETING

689.1 Any other business

No other business was raised.

689.2 Date of Next Meeting

5.30pm, Wednesday 28 February 2018

Signed:



Date: 28 February 2018

ACTIONS FROM THE CONFIDENTIAL MEETING OF THE QUALITY, STANDARDS & CURRICULUM PLANNING WEDNESDAY 6 DECEMBER 2017/ MATTERS ARISING

Minute Ref	Action	By who	Update
687.4	Matters Arising: Learning Walks	Clerk	Details published
688.2b	Student attendance: Update	VP	On agenda
688.2c	Interim Teaching, Learning & Assessment (TLA) Report: confirmation of 100% completion of lesson observations	VP	Confirmation provided at 14.12.17 Corporation meeting