

**HERTFORD REGIONAL COLLEGE CORPORATION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
QUALITY, STANDARDS & CURRICULUM PLANNING COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 5 DECEMBER 2018**



704 PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS

704.1 Attendance, Apologies for Absence & Membership

Membership: Nathan Daech Green
Ricky Irons
Sarah King
Tony Medhurst
Charlotte Simmonds
Luke Taylor
Jan Wing (Chair)

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

Apologies: Philomena Shaughnessy
Angela McLean

704.2 Declarations of Interest

None reported.

704.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 October 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

704.4 Matters Arising

Safeguarding Update: Training Opportunities for Governors (Minute 693.1a)

It was confirmed that a refresher session had been arranged for 13 December 2018.

Ofsted Findings Presentation: Work Experience (Minute 696.1b)

In the context of prior discussions and plans to provide an update report on Work Experience at a future meeting, members received an oral update on the outcome of the recent Ofsted Monitoring Visit.

Pending publication of the formal report, members were advised that during their visit the Inspectors observed significant progress in work experience and it was confirmed that a report would be presented to the March meeting of the Committee.

The update was noted.

705 ITEMS OF FORMAL REPORT OR FOR REVIEW OR APPROVAL

705.1 SELF-ASSESSMENT & PERFORMANCE

Reports reviewing 2017/18 quality and performance were provided comprising:

705.1.1 College Self-Assessment Report (SAR)

Reviewing the quality of provision and standard of teaching learning and assessment, the College SAR was presented following scrutiny via a validation panel meeting attended by Management and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporation.

After advising members of a Grade 2 for Overall effectiveness and all other aspects with the exception of Grade 1 for Adult Learning Programmes and Provision for Learners with High Needs, there was review of:

- Those areas identified for development, in particular the focus on improving Outcomes, assessed as grade 3 in 2016/17. In the context of College outcomes at year-end, including comparison with the national average benchmark data and trend analysis, members concurred with the conclusions reached, observing and welcoming the clear and demonstrable trend of improvement, including in Programmes of Study.
- The Grade profile with those members that had attended the validation meetings reflecting on their experience, confirming the witnessing of overall and consistent quality improvement supported by the year-end outcomes; and concurring with the conclusions reached based on their question and challenge of the evidence presented in support of the grades.

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

- **APPROVE** the College 2017/18 Self-Assessment Report.

705.1.2 Office for Students (OfS) Quality Arrangements

With the College having several cohorts of students classified as Higher Education Learners and subject to the Office for Students reporting framework, reports were received comprising:

(i) The Annual Assurance Statement

Required to collect reassurances from the Corporation regarding the quality of its Higher Education provision, the Committee reviewed statements regarding the Corporation's oversight of the academic governance arrangements during 2017/2018.

There was consideration of:

- The findings of the Office for Students Annual Provider Review (APR) in 2017, noted to have been positive with no actions required and with the College maintaining its Silver - Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), confirming the College's good practices in Higher Education
- The National Student Survey metrics, which whilst showing the College to be below the national average, did highlight a 2% increase on 2015/16 outcomes, demonstrating the quality of the College Higher Education Provision.

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

- **APPROVE** the OfS Annual Assurance Statement confirming its oversight of the academic governance arrangements during 2017/2018; and to **AUTHORISE** the Chair to sign the Statement on the Corporation's behalf.

(ii) Freedom of Speech and Expression Policy (The Policy)

Presented to ensure that the College met all legislative and OfS requirements, members were advised that the Policy described the philosophy, principles and compliance framework for the College to meet its responsibilities to foster freedom of expression, the circumstances in which freedom might be restricted in order to prevent violence, abuse or discrimination; and its responsibilities regarding visiting speakers, including external lettings.

Following review, it was **RESOLVED**:

- To **RECOMMEND** for the Corporation to **APPROVE** the Policy.

706 Academic Year 2018/19: Year to date Activity

Reports were presented providing an update on year-to-date activity and progress in the implementation of quality improvement objectives for 2018/19, comprising:

706.1 Enrolment: Update

Reporting developments since discussion at the previous meeting, members were advised:

- Of a reduction in 16-18 enrolment numbers and with a higher loss of learners between October and November than that recorded in 2017/18.
- That whilst the overall HE picture was positive, as mentioned previously, Foundation Degree learner numbers had declined. It was noted that was due, in part, to the demographic reduction in 18 year olds and the reduction in the UCAS points' tariff offered by the University of Hertfordshire, with a significant impact on HE recruitment for all four Hertfordshire colleges, although the College has been the least affected.
- That although the total number of full-time adult learners was lower than the figure recorded for the same period in the previous year, it was expected to increase in-year and likely to be similar to last year.

After noting that many curriculum areas were still recruiting learners with new provision in some areas from January 2019, discussion with Management focused on 16-18 learner recruitment and included:

- Noting in response to questioning that the overall decline in numbers had affected all curriculum areas but that the greatest drop had been in the Creative and Enterprise Directorate with Art and Design, Computing and Business all declining by at least 30 learners so that the Service Industries Directorate was now the largest.
- Reflecting further on withdrawals noting the absence of any emerging trends and reporting on the combination of reasons identified for departing.

The report was noted.

706.2 Strategic Objectives

A report was presented providing an update on the year to date position for the 2018/19 strategic objectives.

After providing an overview of curriculum developments, it was reported that:

- Retention was very high at 99.43%, attributed to the recent completion of the 42-day qualification period for learners in mid-October.
- Compared with the College target for the year of 90% overall attendance, at 88%, was below target across all curriculum areas. Members were advised however that whilst below target, it represented an improvement of 2% on the same time in the previous year.

After welcoming the overall improved performance, the data was reviewed in more detail. Following response to points of clarification, members considered in more detail the attendance data:

- Questioning Management about those areas where rates were highest and lowest, noting in respect of the later that whilst the STEM Directorate was lowest at 81.5%, it still represented positive progress with a 3.5% improvement compared to the same period in the previous year.
- Observing the positive impact of the improvement measures put in place, noting to include a more focussed approach to managing poor performance at the beginning of term and Student survey feedback highlighting students to be happier with their programmes, including the quality of teaching, which it was anticipated would translate into positive outcomes at year-end.

Following review, the report was noted.

706.3 College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

The College QIP was presented showing year to date progress.

After observing discussion elsewhere on the agenda (Minute 705.1.1), the year-to-date position was summarised, and points of detail were answered and clarified as necessary.

The update was noted.

706.4 Teaching, Learning & Assessment Report

An overview was provided of the year-to-date position following the post-induction learning walks, lesson observations, which included joint observations with Ofsted during its recent Monitoring Visit; and internal quality reviews (IQR).

After observing those items discussed elsewhere on the agenda (Minute 705.1.1 refers), there was particular note:

- Of the feedback from the induction learning walks highlighting that in the majority of curriculum areas and lessons, clear progress had been made compared to the start of the previous academic year.
- That 78% of the latest observations were judged to be effective overall, representing a 19% increase on the same period in the previous year
- Of the feedback from the first IQR of the academic year noting the emerging strengths and areas for development for each curriculum area and reporting on how particular emerging issues were going to be addressed.

Following response to points of clarification, the report was reviewed in more detail. Reflecting further on the assessment of the overall strengths and areas for development, question of Management included the percentage completion of lesson observations noting confirmation that since publication of the report, the figure had increased to 76% with 100% completion anticipated by the end of term. Questioning further those areas reported to be behind schedule, members were advised of arrangements in place in STEM to ensure timely completion of maths observations with those severely behind schedule; along with contingency arrangements in place for the completion of observations in ARDE, to address the impact of the absence of the curriculum manager.

Following review, the report was noted.

706.5 Safeguarding Update

An oral report was received from the Committee Chair summarising Safeguarding and Prevent activity for the first term of the new academic year.

Activity to date was summarised and there was particular focus on the position with referrals:

- Highlighting a 25% increase in referrals compared with the same point in the previous year with all prioritised and responded to within 24 hours.
- Reporting the largest area of referral related to welfare referrals with action taken as appropriate and the position confirmed to be reflective of the picture nationally.

After consideration, the update was noted.

707 ANY OTHER BUSINESS & NEXT MEETING

707.1 Any other business

No other business was raised.

707.2 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 6 March 2019

Signed:



Date: 6 March 2019

Chair