



MINUTES
of the meeting of the Quality and Standards Committee
held remotely on Wednesday 24 March 2021

Present: - Laura Johnston (Chair)
Igor Andronov
Sally Cassels
Debbie Lambert
Jeremy Nicholls
David Williams (Principal)

In attendance: - Debra Baldwin (Director of Personnel)
Jo Ricketts (Deputy Principal)
Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Corporation)

The meeting was quorate as six Members were present.

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

2. Declaration of Interests

None declared.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the last Meeting

The Committee agreed that the Chair should sign the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2020 as a true record.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes

4. Student Outcomes and Student Experience: 2020/21 Performance Data/KPIs

The Deputy Principal presented the following reports.

- I. Attendance rates are good at 91.2%. A small proportion of students did not fully engage in remote learning during lockdown. English and maths attendance was low at the start of the academic year which had since increased to 71.6% in February following a sustained drive from tutors. Students have adjusted better to online learning in English compared to maths.
- II. Retention 2020/21 is better compared to May 2020; however, this may not be a true reflection due to lockdown. Some students have recently withdrawn who have secured jobs and decided not to return to College. There is a risk that retention will be higher this year

Action

although achievement may be slightly lower; however, it is anticipated that achievement will be marginally better than last year.

- III. Student progress 2020/21: There are more students below target compared to last year based on a snapshot in January. Quality summit meetings are being held with Team Leaders to track student progress and identify additional strategies to support students to make progress. Practical delivery and assessment has been delayed due to lockdown. A Governor asked if programmes are ahead of delivering theory so that time could be dedicated to practical assessments when students return to College. Progress depended on the subject and delivery of programmes as some students require access to practical and specialist equipment. Practical teaching, learning and assessment catch up will be required in some areas.

GCSE English and maths progress is based on assessments completed before Christmas which showed more students are below target. To address this, letters have been sent to parents and students (over 18 years) with explanations about centre assessed grades, assessment to date and actions required. Achievement of grade 9-4 is currently anticipated to be c15% and 20% respectively in maths and English; this reflected slightly inflated grades awarded last year. There appeared to be discrepancies in data for Oswestry and Walford which would be checked and rectified in the next report. Governors recognised the immense challenge for English and maths teams who have only worked with students online since September compared to vocational teams who have had face to face teaching with students since March.

J Ricketts

Functional Skills English and maths is delivered to students who achieved a GCSE grade 1. Foundation students are being taught lessons in classrooms as part of their bubble. Significant catch up is required by foundation students who are being offered recovery work. This year Functional Skills will be assessed by exam as opposed to centre assessed grades. This is a more rigorous method and the team are having individual discussions with students.

- IV. Apprenticeships 2020/21: The majority of apprentices are on target for overall achievement with the end point assessment deferred; this will affect timely achievement. Some apprentices were furloughed with fewer furloughed during the second lockdown. Data was provided for frameworks and standards showing a best-case overall achievement of 74.8% against the target of 76% and 54.7% timely achievement. It is difficult to put data into perspective as there are no comparisons for the previous year with inconsistencies during an exceptional year due to the pandemic. The Awarding Bodies are publishing information on assessments.
- V. November 2020 GCSE results: English and maths grade 9-4 achieved 35% and 30% respectively with 30 students failing to taking exams. There is no like for like comparison this year due to the pandemic.
- VI. Learner voice survey results 2020/21: This was completed from October 2020 to January 2021 with positive overall feedback. It was encouraging that the score for students feeling safe in College remained unchanged despite the impact of COVID-19. The number

of students who would recommend the College to a friend had increased. Consistency of the student experience across all campuses had improved. IT had scored lower in HE which had been investigated with students who did not identify any issues.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the comprehensive reports and data, particularly the good attendance and progress during an exceptional and challenging year, and to recognise staffs' hard work to support students

5. Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

- I. The Deputy Principal presented the report and recommendations for 2021/22 covering planning, teaching delivery, the learning environment and assessment and tracking student progress. Individual and team assessments showed that staff assess themselves more severely. Advanced practitioner training and alternative methods of assessment are being reviewed including peer and unseen observations. In response to a question the Deputy Principal explained that an unseen observation is whereby a group work together to instil a practice, such as embedding English in teaching. Ideas are shared and embedded with feedback to the group. This had been piloted for English and maths at Oswestry and Walford campuses resulting in increased ownership by tutors.
- II. Teaching and learning delivery and the impact of COVID-19 meant that teaching is continuing to be delivered online. It is anticipated that practical lessons will be delivered after Easter enabling students to be able to achieve their qualifications by July/August.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the observation of teaching, learning and assessment report

6. Quality

The Deputy Principal presented the reports.

- I. The Quality Improvement Plan showed progress of actions to address findings in the Self Assessment Report to date.
- II. The 2020/21 Enhancement Action Plan (SED) related to HE programmes and the University of Worcester Foundation Degrees.
- III. Strategic Higher Education Committee minutes dated 8 December 2021 were noted.
- IV. OfS has written to institutions requesting evidence of ongoing compliance with condition C1 (consumer protection law). This asked the College to re-test how clear it had been with new and continuing students about how teaching and assessment would be delivered in 2020-21 taking account of COVID-19 restrictions. The paper evidenced how these have been achieved. Copies of letters sent to students on individual HE programmes were provided. It was agreed that the College had been sufficiently clear with new and continuing students about how teaching and assessment would be delivered in 2020-21 taking account of COVID-19 restrictions.
- V. Sub-Contracting: Total contract totalled £825K. There are termly monitoring meetings with the latest return showed 693 students totalling £384K AEB income. There have been 544 achievements to date meaning the best-case achievement would be 97.2%. The Skills Network have provided a Quality Improvement Plan and the Deputy Principal confirmed that she is satisfied with actions. There

are new subcontracting rules coming into force for 2021/22. There is a submission in May 2021 which will require providers to request exemption granted or reduce sub-contracting provision has been delivered. The College will need to demonstrate how sub-contracting provision will be reduced with a report presented to the Board.

J Ricketts

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the Quality Improvement Plan
- To note the 2020/21 Enhancement Action Plan (SED) for HE
- To note evidence confirming the College's ongoing compliance to OfS condition C1 (consumer protection law) during the pandemic
- To note the verbal report on sub-contracting provision with a report to be presented to the Board for approval

7. Equality and Diversity

The Director of Personnel presented the report.

- I. The Equality and Diversity Report included learner performance. It was encouraging that retention had increased to 97.7% compared to last year. Overall, performance comparisons by protected characteristics was good with no significant differences.
- II. Minutes of the Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity Committee held on 10 March 2021 were noted.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the reports particularly the excellent performance of students with protected characteristics which evidenced effective support and teaching from staff

8. Safeguarding and Child Protection

The Director of Personnel presented the report.

- I. The Child Protection and Safeguarding Report was noted. MyConcern evidenced wellbeing, mental health and anxiety issues have increased with confirmation that the College is providing support for students. Staff will undertake further mandatory safeguarding and safer recruiting training which will be held face to face on 1st April 2021. RSM auditors have undertaken audits of mental health practices and the Prevent agenda with some actions identified which would be addressed.
- II. Minutes of Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead meeting held on 10 March 2021 were noted.
- III. The Leaders in Safeguarding action plan had been updated following an independent review to ascertain if the College achieved the standard.
- IV. The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy had been updated to include amendments proposed by the Chair. Governors were invited to submit any changes or comments before the policy was recommended to the Board for approval.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report
- To recommend that the Board approve the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

9. Any other business and comments

- I. Jeremy Nicholls reported on his role as Careers Link Governor. He had discussed the Gatsby Standards with the Careers Advisor. There were some inconsistencies in 2020 student destinations showing at the following campuses: Holme Lacy Campus (46%), Ludlow College (44%) and Hereford campus (13%) with reasons requested. This was partly due to lockdown meaning students were not in classes so that data could be verified. Additionally, UCAS information does not always align to destinations. It was anticipated that the destination data for the 2020/21 cohort would have less 'unknowns'.
- II. Some Governors had participated in the AoC Governance conference which had included briefings on Ofsted, particularly the curriculum intent. The Search and Governance Committee had agreed that the next Governors' workshop would be dedicated to the Ofsted EIF.
- III. The LEP encourage Colleges to have enterprise advisors, which is a voluntary position. The job description would be circulated to Governors for interest and to publicise.
- IV. The Chair thanked the Deputy Principal and Director of Personnel for their comprehensive and informative reports.

J Ricketts/
L Watkins

10. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting was arranged for Wednesday 23 June 2021 commencing at 3.15 pm.