

Minutes

CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE

Date:	17 th April 2023	Time:	4.00 PM
Chairperson:	Professor Gavin Brooks	Location:	UCN 284

Members	Name	Present	Role
	Prof Gavin Brooks (GB)	*	External Member
	Iain Wolloff (IW)	*	Principal & Chief Executive
	Lauryn Bailey (LB)	*	Student Representative
	Sally Osmond (SO)	*	External Member
	Shelly Van Meter (SVM)	*	Staff Representative
	Tim Major (TM)	*	External Member
Apologies:	Sam Dibas (SD)	*	External Member
	Cathy Wright (CW)	*	Director of HR and Support Services
In Attendance:	Dr Richard Lee (RL)	*	Clerk to Corporation - Minute taker
	Dr Jo Houghton (JH)	*	Director of Business & Partnerships
	Lee Hunt (LH)	*	Vice Principal
Quorum:	Three required	*	Five present at start - meeting quorate

AGENDA ITEMS

Item No.		Reports
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies were received from CW and SD.	Verbal
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS No declarations of interest were made.	Verbal
3.	ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR GB was nominated for the position of Chair of C&Q Committee. GB's nomination for the position of Chair of C&Q was unanimously approved by the Committee. TM was nominated to be appointed as the Vice Chair of the C&Q Committee. TM's nomination for the position of Vice Chair of C&Q was unanimously approved by the Committee.	Verbal
4.	TERMS OF REFERENCE To review and approve the Committee TOR's. GB noted that the role of the C&Q Committee is to approve its TOR and then ask the Board to note the approved version. GB noted C&Q's areas of responsibilities, included in the C&Q TORs, must include the skills agenda, curriculum mapping to regional skills needs, and the LSIP. Action: Add skills responsibility to the C&Q TORs [RL/GB]	Paper - p.3

	<p>SO noted that the Complaints Policy needs to be brought within the purview of the C&Q Committee and revised.</p> <p>Action: Amend the Complaints Policy to emphasise C&Q Committee oversight. [SO/GB]</p> <p>GB asked the Committee to approve the CQC TOR. The Committee unanimously approved the CQC TOR for note by the FGB.</p>	
5.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</p> <p>To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 21st of November 2022.</p> <p>GD asked the Committee to approve the Minutes for the meeting held on the 21st of November 2022. The Board unanimously approved the Minutes for the meeting held on the 21st of November 2022.</p> <p>Action: Send the Minutes to GB for signature [RL].</p>	Paper - p.7
6.	<p>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES</p> <p>GB noted the following actions from the meeting held on the 21st of November 2022 had been completed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CQC Minutes were signed. 2. TORs were reviewed and approved will be sent to the FGB for note. 3. Information on online safety was forwarded to LH. 4. The Skills Gap report was shared. <p>Action: Rephrase safeguarding (action 3) to online safety [RL]</p> <p>GB noted that CC has stepped down as a safeguarding governor; a new Safeguarding Governor will need to be appointed.</p>	Paper - p.16
7	QUALITY	
7.1	<p>OFSTED INSPECTIONS*</p> <p>Please refer to the confidential minutes.</p>	Paper - p.17
7.2	<p>IN YEAR QUALITY INDICATORS</p> <p>LH asked the Committee to receive an update on student attendance and retention. In line with the quality cycle attendance and retention of the key provision types is monitored and evaluated to understand how the design, development and delivery of curriculum is performing.</p> <p><u>Apprenticeships:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attendance is currently 91.9%, and retention is currently 77.8%. <p><u>UCN: overall attendance for the UCN is 91.3%, and</u> All courses not included have 100% retention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access Nursing & Midwifery (retention 90%): 2 WDs. • HNC Mechanical Engineering Y2 (retention 77.8%): 2 WDs. • FDCDL Y2 (retention 90%): 1 WD. <p><u>Potential improvements:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After week twenty-five of the academic year, cumulative FE attendance at college has now reached the college target of 85% (86%). This is an improvement on 2022 report of 0.3pp. 	Paper - p.20

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FE retention is looking positive and on target to meet the college QIP expectations. • Apprenticeship attendance 91.9%. • Overall attendance for the UCN is 91.3%. <p>LH noted that E&M attendance is a continuing issue.</p> <p><u>LH noted the following issues of concern:</u></p> <p>Further Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at E&M (English and Maths) requires improvement. 35% of the career academy students are underperforming with their E&M attendance. <p>Apprenticeships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship retention is an area of concern. This is being reviewed by the Apprenticeship Executive to identify themes and action plan issues raised. • An area of improvement is how withdrawals are tracked and how advice and guidance upon withdrawal is provided to the learner to ensure, where possible, learners are progressed onto another programme at the College. • The reporting of progress against targets is an area being improved. Work is being carried out by the Apprenticeship Team to ensure the e-portfolio reports correctly on annual progress when apprentices are on long programmes of over 3 years. <p>UCN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention on HNC Mechanical Engineering Y2 is low (77.7%). There were only nine direct entry starts and two of these learners were withdrawn due to personal circumstances. The programme is viable as it has five-degree apprentices infilling. <p>GB asked why apprenticeship retention numbers are an area of concern. JH responded it relates to the high level of apprentices being sacked or electing to leave their position without advance notification. GB asked if this related to the economy. JH responded it was not. TM asked if job competition was prompting apprentice turnover. JH responded rather than moving, many apprentices left the sector. GB asked if further research was being conducted to identify the reason. JH noted apprentice turnover is not sector specific and no trends are identifiable. TM asked there was high apprentice turnover at other Colleges. JH noted that apprenticeship completion is traditionally low across the FE sector. SO noted it is expensive for a company to lose people; GB affirmed it should be a secure employment route. LB asked if apprentices are leaving due to mental health challenges. JH noted a lot of mental health support is provided for students.</p>	
7.3	<p>REPORT ON STUDENT BEHAVIOURS AND ATTITUDES</p> <p>LH asked the Committee to discuss the work to address student behaviour and discipline. At the end of the 2021-22 academic year, the Vice Principal, Students and Curriculum (VPSC) was receiving intelligence from local schools that student behaviour and attitudes was a concern and the cohort of young people emerging from the Pandemic years was demonstrating significant levels of immaturity linked to social interaction, positive association and collaboration with peers or dealing with authority.</p> <p>In June 2022, a decision was made by SLT to re-deploy one Head of Department Learning, Steve Greenwood, to focus on Behaviours and Attitudes (BA) and to prepare the College, as best as possible, to deal with these emerging issues. Elements of the HoD workload were devolved to two programme leaders, who have been supported by the Head of Student Experience and the VPSC. It should be noted that the HoD remained the lead for the Business T level, T level industry placements, BEEP project delivery, Achieve and Engage design, development, and delivery (a total of eighty-nine students and twenty-two staff).</p> <p>The focus for the HoD was linked to the following Key Performance Indicators:</p>	Paper - p.25

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance levels (benchmarked against a satisfactory level of 85%, good level 90% and excellent level 95% to 100%) • Punctuality • Interventions • Student Council Actions • Typical Good Behaviours • Student Enterprise and Community • Behaviour Attitudes Theme (BAT) • Celebrating and positively motivating • Emerging Trends <p>From October 2022, a six weekly Position Statement (PS) was initiated, which has captured performance measured against the KPIs in a narrative form supported by data analysis. This PS is used to inform SLT of any emerging BA issues and subsequent actions.</p> <p>From January 2023, the trends identified several serious behaviours, and a small group of specific students were linked to the behavioural concerns. A behaviour log was created, and a higher-level overview initiated.</p> <p>The log has recorded many actions and has been used to inform key stakeholders. In summary, the College team, since November 2022, has had to deal with twenty-five significant behaviour and attitudes concerns. Two of these are related to adult students, one to a High Needs student and twenty-two are related to twelve students within the Education Provision for Young People (EPYP). Eight of the EPYP incidents involved the Police. Four students are categorised as a child in need or with a child protection plan.</p> <p><u>LH noted a number of issues of concern including:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Code of Conduct and Exclusions Policy needs to be reviewed – this is in line with the Ofsted feedback relating to speed of action. VPSC will lead on this, and it will be included in the Single Improvement Plan development. • The HoD for BA needs further support in dealing with the process for investigations – this is being reviewed and an alignment of staffing will take place. More staffing resource will be required. • Workload impact on current staff dealing with the emerging BA themes ensuring a speedier response. • Impact on Police involvement in the College investigation system. • Challenges faced by College staff in dealing with the expectations of external stakeholders such as children services and YOT, whilst trying to protect other students from the impact of negative BA. <p>GB asked if there was a timeline for addressing concerns. LH responded that one will be created but that team gets pressured by, for example, third parties and absences which poses challenges. SO responded that the College's interests should be protected over those of third parties. SO asked if students joining the College understand the consequences of bad behaviour. LH responded that many outside issues need to be considered, but that a more robust system for applying the disciplinary process to students quickly and fairly needs to be developed.</p>	
7.4	<p>COLLEGE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLANS</p> <p>LH asked the Committee to receive an update on progress against the actions identified in the College FE & HE QIPs. Updates on progress with both the College FE & Apprenticeship Quality Improvement Plan and the HE Self Evaluation Review Quality Improvement Plan is provided. There is positive progress in some key areas for both plans. The QIPs were reviewed as at 8 March 2023 in line with the College Quality Cycle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maths and English engagement by young people continue to be a concern. • Staffing in Foundation Learning continues to have significant issues 	Paper - p.29

	<p>LH noted as issues of concern that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ofsted inspection actions will need to be added to the FE QIP in line with the Single Implementation Plan. • Staff sickness in FL is impacting on learning. • E&M delivery continues to be a concern – the new Programme Leader commenced work on the 20 March and is currently undertaking a detailed deep dive of the whole area. <p>SO asked what the spend was versus profit in the high needs area and if the staffing model should be reorganised to better meet these needs. LH responded that the support worker rate was low; the overall contribution for high needs was c.52% - 8% below the recommendation. LH notes seventy-eight support workers are hired annually to support fifty students, but this model could be revised. SO noted ECHP funding does not cover the cost of students and other colleges have moved from '1-1' support to 'nurture groups' and asked if the College should also provide a better offer. IW responded the provision could be remodelled but noted the College is challenged by Local Authorities (LA) over the price point of the service provided. SO responded the College should define product and price. GB noted this should be a strategy day discussion. LH noted he has prepared a paper on the subject that can be disseminated.</p>	
7.5	<p>TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT (TL&A)</p> <p>LH asked the Committee to receive an update on the development and evaluation of the quality of TL&A. In line with the curriculum quality cycle, the College undertakes a review of Teaching, Learning and Assessment. This was completed in February 2023.</p> <p>LH suggested that potential improvements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the March Ofsted Inspection the areas identified within the overview link to the Inspector's feedback. In the main, the Quality of Education for the College is seen as good or outstanding with one significant area that is inadequate - English and Maths, which the College had graded as 'requires improvement' for 16-19 provision during the November self-assessment panel review process. <p>LH noted that matters remaining unchanged include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capability of students based on the centre assessed grading system employed during the Pandemic continues to be a concern and was outlined in March 2022 papers. <p>LH noted issues of concern included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of a minority of students on the learning environment of others. • The impact of a minority of students on the workload for some staff. • The quality of English & Maths (E&M) teaching. 	Paper - p.37
7.6	<p>COMPLAINTS REPORT</p> <p>The Committee received an update of complaints in 2022-23. There has been a total of thirty-two complaints received in 22-23. There were twenty-seven complaints received in the previous year. The breakdown of these complaints is outlined in the table provided. In summary the complaints for 22/23 link to nine categories, two additional categories have been added since 21/22, these are damage to personal property and contact with safeguarding staff.</p> <p>The analysis of the trend in complaints does not reveal any significant trends in comparison to the previous year. Staff conduct complaints have reduced, funding/finance dispute remains the same, but there has been a significant increase in curriculum delivery complaints. This was not unexpected as there had been issues outlined from the previous year linked to completion and certification and as the reporting period for complaints is March to April it was expected that from September to November the college would receive complaints regarding the lateness of certification.</p>	Paper - p.42

	<p>Overall, the trend of complaints for the past 3 years is 20/21 = 25, 21/22 = 27 and 22/23 = 31. Consideration should be given to the growth of student numbers during this period. For example, the college 16-19 community has grown from 374 in 18/19 to 760 in 22/23. The adult provision has grown by c.one thousand during the same period.</p> <p>SO noted that the complaints policy needs to be reviewed. SO noted that the Board should provide oversight for the complaints policy which should also be part of the Governance review process.</p>	
8	CURRICULUM	
8.1	<p>STUDENT ENROLMENTS</p> <p>IW asked the Committee to review the student enrolments for 2022-23. As at February 2023, the overall position for student enrolments is summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16-18 Full-Time – the growth of seventy-nine student enrolments this year is very positive and includes growth in the revised art provision (moving to Graphic Design), additional numbers for media courses, the first T Level and transition pathway students, and the new football academy provision in Reading. By the year end there are typically some further withdrawals. Therefore, the full-year forecast is lower than the current enrolments, but higher than the budgeted number. • 14-16 School links – the growth of school link students is positive, as the provision is re-established following the pandemic restrictions, and is forecast to be better than the budgeted number. • 19+ Full time & 19+ Part-Time – there is a significant increase in enrolments for full and part time students funded by the Adult Education Budget (AEB) and by loans, primarily due to the significant numbers of distance learning students. Recruitment for adults continues throughout the year, particularly for distance learning. The forecast is that we will meet our budget target for AEB and loans. • Community Learning – there is a small decrease of 11 students at this point, but we are forecasting that the budget target of 680 will be achieved. • Apprenticeships – there is a current growth of 22 apprentices compared to the same point last year, but the forecast is below the budget target of 255. The apprentice numbers include those undertaking higher and degree apprenticeships in the UCN. • UCN – the growth of 42 for the direct entry (non-apprenticeship) students in the UCN at this point is positive (enhanced by the short courses in robotics) and is forecast to be above the budget target. <p>IW noted potential improvements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall growth in student numbers compared to the previous year • Modest income growth above budget possible for 16-18s (resulting in additional in-year growth funding) and school links • Forecast achievement of budget targets for AEB, loans, community learning, and direct entry UCN students. <p>IW noted apprenticeship numbers being currently forecast below the budget target, was an area of concern. GB asked if apprenticeship numbers were an issue of concern. JH responded apprenticeship applications were not a concern, but that retention was a concern. IW noted the impact of the Ofsted report is a potential risk regarding student numbers.</p>	Paper - p.48
8.2	<p>CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENTS</p> <p>LH asked the Committee to receive a report on planned developments in the curriculum offer (FE, HE & Apprenticeships). From the curriculum planning work there are many key actions that need to be completed. This work is linked to the design, development and delivery of the curriculum offers. In summary, the curriculum has expanded rapidly, and this growth has been driven by:</p>	Paper - p.50

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in focus of some provision in the career academy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Sport o Art o Construction o T level offer o Foundation Learning o Achieve Pathway o Developing positive relationship with St Barts o Study Programme design and the wrap around support for career development and progression. • Implementation of the UCN offer, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Skills linked higher level qualifications in Engineering, Business and Digital. o Design and development of HNC/D in Engineering and Sport. o Design and development of access to HE. o Future programmes linked to green and grey courses, Bootcamps, and Robotics. • Development of a more robust and skills linked apprenticeship offer to include higher level engineering and a focus on motor vehicle, engineering level 3, and construction standards linked to electrical installation, plumbing and carpentry. • Remodelling of the Adult offer linked to the regional and national skills needs around life sciences and health. <p>The journey for curriculum development has been five years in the making but with the changing landscape and economic focus it is constantly evolving. More work is being completed linked to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Marking Apprenticeship • Development of new T Levels ready for 2025 • Key stage four extra (KS4X)/ESport offer with St Barts • Berkshire School of Business • Berkshire Leadership and Management School • Carbon Literacy programme of study • BEMS Apprenticeship • Civil Engineering Apprenticeship • Facilities and Estates development to support the expanding offer and close the PFI • AEB devolution <p>GB asked if proposed projects could be time lined. JH responded they are all imminent. GB noted this is a risk. SO noted not all the programs listed can [potentially] be supported and funded because of the demands of the SIP, and proposed projects should be re-evaluated on Strategy Day.</p>	
8.3	<p>ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT</p> <p>JH asked the Committee to consider the draft Accountability Statement and recommend approval to the Board. The Committee was asked to raise any questions and advise on amendments the College's Accountability Statement 2023-24, so that a final draft can be issued for approval by Corporation on 24th April 2023.</p> <p>As of 28th June 2022, governing bodies of institutions within the further education sector have a duty under the Skills and Post 16 Education Act 2022, to review provision in relation to local needs. The Act introduced the development of Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs). The Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce is the employer representative body summarising employer skills needs in the local area based on labour market information and feedback from local businesses. A separate, non-statutory duty is for providers to produce Accountability Agreements which need to be signed off by governing bodies, submitted to the Department for Education, and will apply from the academic year 2023-24. Governing bodies are required to review of the College provision at least</p>	Paper - p.57

	<p>every 3 years, or when a new Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP) is published. The outcome of the reviews will be published on the College website. The LSIP for Berkshire will not be published until 23rd June 2023, however the College Accountability Statement must be agreed and submitted to the DfE by 31st May 2023.</p> <p>A Skills Accountability Statement action plan is also submitted to action the elements of Skills provision that prevented the College being graded as 'strongly meeting skills needs' in the latest Ofsted inspection and to enhance the robustness of future Accountability Statements.</p> <p>GB asked when the next AS review date will be. JH responded the next year's curriculum plan will be reviewed in autumn term. SO asked when the AS is sent to the ESFA. JH responded it is sent to the ESFA in May. SO asked if the quality of the LSIP is reviewed. IW responded the LSIP is not substantively reviewed. IW noted that the College does a range of skills, not just 'high end' skills and the LSIPs should recognise this. GB notes that the AS needs to be signed by IW and SO.</p> <p>SO noted that the AS should be reviewed more frequently than every 3 years and that some generic pieces should be removed over time. SO asked if the football academy can be aligned to the skills agenda. IW noted that the football academy reflects student choice but that football feeds into multiple industries not just football. LH noted that destination data needs to be consulted moving forward.</p> <p>GB asked the Committee to vote to recommend the Accountability Statement to the FGB. The Committee unanimously voted to recommend the Accountability Statement to the FGB.</p>	
8.4	<p>SUBCONTRACTING</p> <p>JH asked the Committee to receive a report on Subcontracted provision for Term 2 2023. The progress of Subcontracted provision is set out in the attached report. The HoD UCN and Apprenticeships collates course information at the end of each term for all Subcontracted programmes. The outcomes of the report are shared with subcontractors and SLT. Action plans are set for Term 3 and QIP actions updated to ensure that areas for improvement are completed by the close of the academic year 2022-23.</p> <p>JH noted TSN and Adviza are on track to meet contracted values and quality is good. JH cautioned WBTC have advised that recruitment may not meet contracted values and an action plan is in place to work on ensuring contract value is met.</p> <p>SO asked if the WBTC relationship should be reappraised. JH responded that WBTC require their own AEB funding to have more financial security moving forward rather than sub-contracting.</p> <p>The Committee noted the subcontracting report.</p>	Paper - p.78
9	SAFEGUARDING	
9.1	<p>SAFEGUARDING GOVERNOR</p> <p>SO asked the Committee to agree the arrangements for nominating a new lead governor for safeguarding. SO noted no clear and obvious candidate had been identified as a potential safeguarding governor from within the current cohort of external governors and that the Governing Board has skill gaps that need to be filled. SO noted that a Quality Governor should also be appointed. SO noted funding should be made available to use professional search bodies to find governors; Peridot and Nurole were presented as possible recruitment agencies.</p>	Verbal

	<p>GB asked what should happen in the interim. SO responded an interim safeguarding officer is needed; IW has identified a potential candidate who might function as an interim Governor.</p> <p>Action: To follow up with Peridot and Nurole about identifying new governors [RL].</p>	
9.2	<p>SAFEGUARDING REPORT</p> <p>Please refer to the confidential minutes.</p>	Paper - p.85
10	<p>AOB</p> <p>None</p>	Verbal