

Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (FE)
held on Tuesday 26 November 2019

Present: Mr John Nicol (Chair)
Ms Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Ms Katie Seekings
Miss Hannah Jones (Student Governor)

In attendance: Mr Ben Gamble (Head of Further Education)
Mr Justin Gregory (Head of Higher Education)
Mrs Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)

The meeting was quorate as four Members were present.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Kate Murrie.

2. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the last meeting: 27 June 2019

The minutes of the meeting were agreed and signed by the Chair as a true record. Matters arising had been addressed with the exception of careers guidance/next steps information for students. Creative careers information is being sent to all applicants which addresses this action.

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

4. Quality Assurance

- I. Retention is very good and only one student has left their course after the six-week retention date. Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) students have increased from 5 to 21 this year who are high needs students. This would be another area which Ofsted would inspect alongside 16-18 and 19+ students. Funding for EHCP students is being pursued as this has not been received from all Local Authorities. Payments are made throughout the year which increases workload for some staff. A Governor asked if progress of vulnerable students is monitored separately which was confirmed including other protected groups, such as FSM and LAC. Attendance is measured and linked to student progress.

Interviews for 2020/21 commence in December. A Governor asked reasons for commencing interview before mock exam results are available. The Head of FE responded that if students fail to achieve their required entry grade then a course at a suitable level will be offered. The Comms team would be asked to link to students who accept places. Attendance averages were raised which are expected to be at least 90%, this includes all timetabled learning of 540 hours during the vocational programme and 75 hours for English and maths. C50% of absences are due to sickness.

- II. Maths continuous improvement plan had been developed to improve

progress. GCSE grade 4 and above was 18% (7% below baseline target). To address this the lead for maths has commenced CPD with Warwickshire University. Century learning software is being used by students which targets areas of individual learning needs. There was discussion about student confidence to work through questions during the exam which is one of the focuses. All staff are being supported to incorporate maths delivery into lessons during the year.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report and supporting statistics

5. **Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

The Head of FE informed Governors that observations commenced in October. Results are being collated and dovetailed to staff development. In February teaching and learning will be re-observed to develop the teaching and learning model which builds on nine standards. FE and HE teaching and observation processes are being aligned.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the teaching and learning cycle 2019/20

6. **Leadership and Management**

- I. The Self Assessment Report (SAR) and supporting data had been issued. Equality and diversity and inclusion had been identified as an area for improvement from teaching and learning observation data. This was a crucial area to embed across HE as well as FE. Progression data of Level 3 Extended Diploma students had been presented in a clearer format with 69% progression to higher education. The SAR template will be presented in March in a format akin to the new Ofsted EIF. There was discussion if external moderator reports should be brought to the Committee concluding that SAR moderation and the SAR incorporated these.
- II. The Head of FE explained curriculum development is focused on maximizing the educational offer to students and their progression. The OfS required colleges to prepare 5-year targets to improve access and participation. A strand of this is connected to FE with the provision of Level 1 programmes offered to some students who could potentially progress to Level 4 programmes. Additional curriculum developments were outlined in the paper. The Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) will become the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) to align with the strategic plan and underpin the new elements of the EIF.

The Committee agreed: -

- To recommend the Board approve the SAR
- To note curriculum development

7. **Identification of Key Risks**

- I. Digital curriculum recruitment and delivery
- II. Art and Design Level 1 and 2 which is a small team and new way of working
- III. GCSE maths
- IV. Ofsted EIF

8. **Any other business**

No items.

Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee
(HE and FE Combined Meeting)
held on Tuesday 26 November 2019

- Present:**
- Ms Abigail Appleton (Principal)
 - Mr Tim Newsholme
 - Mr John Nicol (Chair of the meeting)
 - Mr Mike Rookes (by phone)
 - Ms Katie Seekings
 - Mrs Jenny Hodgeman (Student Governor HE)
 - Miss Hannah Jones (Student Governor FE)
- In attendance:**
- Mr Ben Gamble (Head of Further Education)
 - Mr Justin Gregory (Head of Higher Education)
 - Mrs Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)

The meeting was quorate as seven Members were present.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Mrs Kate Murrie.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

John Nicol, as chair of the meeting, signed the minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2019 as a true record. There were no matters arising.

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

3. Safeguarding

- I. The Head of FE gave a presentation of the Safeguarding Annual Report 2018/19 including data comparisons of all concerns recorded in the previous year. These were very similar despite 2018/19 including HE in addition to FE. Wellbeing concerns had increased which was likely to be due to the reporting method as only acute issues are recorded in other specific categories. Breakdowns by FE and HE were provided showing anxiety peaks at Christmas and during the time when HE students complete their dissertations. Suicide thoughts are highest during the first term. MyConcern data had enabled the College to deliver workshops for students at the start of term to support their wellbeing help to defuse anxiety. The Head of FE and Head of HE analyse the data to ensure appropriate support is provided. FE data showed more flags as the system had been operational for two years. Gender breakdown showed anxiety, emotional health and wellbeing as key areas for both genders and males' suicidal thoughts are similar to the national picture. Data is more accurately logged with a catalogue of incidents recorded by staff for individual students. Governors agreed identification of the number of students flagged with issues would be useful. **ACTION: HEAD OF FE**

It was noted that there are approximately 300 incidents each year.
Retention data evidenced that wellbeing practices have improved retention.

- II. The Safeguarding Policy incorporated changes to meeting the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), peer on peer abuse and up skirting. Staff would be updated on the new procedure at staff development training. A Governor asked about staff adhering to the code of conduct and behaviour policy of the institution which they understood were linked to safeguarding. If proven to be correct, this would be added to the personal code of conduct for staff and would be added to the safeguarding policy before being taken to the Board for approval. **ACTION: HEAD OF FE**
- III. The Prevent update evidenced the College's compliance to the Prevent agenda. A Governor asked if this was embedded with staff and students with confirmation that it had been widely accepted. The College has a Freedom of Speech Policy and Visitor Speaking procedure which support the Prevent agenda and behaviour expectations.

The Committee agreed: -

- To formally recommend the safeguarding policy to the Board for approval subject to minor changes
- To note the Prevent update

4. Draft minutes of the Academic Board

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the minutes

5. Sustainability Statement (draft)

The Principal was seeking feedback from Governors and the Student Council before requesting the Board to endorse the Sustainability Statement. It was agreed that it is important that the statement captures the student voice. The F&GP Committee had proposed linking the statement into the UN statement. There was consensus that student choice is recognised. Student Governors felt that there are additional practices which could be adopted in College which would improve sustainability. Course leaders would be asked to notify SLT when sustainability is discussed with students.

The Committee agreed: -

- To support the Sustainability Statement which would capture the student voice for approval by the Board

6. Supporting Student Registration to Vote

The Principal had prepared the paper outlining actions taken by the College ahead of the general election. It is important to encourage a culture of political debate outside of the election period which could be provided by a range of political leaders which also linked to British Values. The annual enrolment cycle will include encouraging students to register to vote. **ACTION: HEAD OF HE**

7. Annual Complaints Report 2018/19

There had been three formal complaints and three informal complaints which have been addressed. There had been an appeal against a complex complaint which had identified some shortcomings in the process. Actions have subsequently been implemented including training for staff and student reps, improved tracking and appointing an assessor outside of the course team to mitigate concerns about the impact of raising complaints on student marks. There was discussion about the nature of policies and how these linked to the safeguarding policy and behaviour policy.

The Principal will review the complaints policy and nature of informal complaints to ensure that there is flexibility to time scales and proactive management.

The Committee agreed: -

- The revised complaints policy would be issued to the Committee for approval. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

8. Any other business

No items.

9. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting was arranged for Monday 23 March 2020 with the FE: 2.00 pm, combined meeting: 3.30 pm and HE: 4.00 pm.

Minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (HE)
held on Tuesday 26 November 2019

Present:

Ms Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Mr Tim Newsholme (Chair of the meeting)
Mr Mike Rookes
Ms Katie Seekings
Miss Hannah Jones
Mrs Jenny Hodgeman

In attendance:

Mrs Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)
Mr Justin Gregory (Head of Higher Education)

The meeting was quorate as six Members were present

1. **Apologies for absence**
There were no apologies.
2. **Declaration of Interests**
There were no declarations of interest.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting: 19 March 2019 and notes of meeting 27 June 2019**
The minutes of the meeting were agreed and signed by the Chair as a true record.
There were no matters arising which would not be reported during the meeting.

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

4. **Recruitment and Enrolment**
101 first year students had enrolled with retention on target. Overall retention from last year is higher than the previous year with actions taken to further improve this. A Governor questioned reasons students had left in their third year which were mainly due to illness and mental health issues.

Enrolment to specific courses was discussed which reflected the national picture. There are some small cohorts which increases volatility. Some courses had good levels of applications which did not convert to enrolments.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report and statistics

5. **Office for Students (OfS) and regulatory matters**
 - I. The graduate Launchpad and outcomes report outlined the initiative and Graduate Outcomes Survey. Student engagement activities were noted with actions shown to increase engagement and outcomes. There had been a positive response to date to the graduate outcomes survey. OfS measure graduate outcomes which also contributes to the College's TEF score. A summary of feedback from the survey and a 5-year strategy for the Graduate Launchpad will be presented at the next meeting. **ACTION: HEAD OF HE.**
 - II. Compliance to Consumer Markets Authority (CMA) is an OfS requirement

covering provision of information to prospective students, fair and accessible terms and conditions between the provider and students, and accessible, clear and fair complaints procedure to manage complaints. Comments were sought on the draft Student Charter 2019/20 which the Student Council would also discuss. The Charter would be reviewed annually in July. It set out the College's mission, expectations and information for the College to adhere to and expectations for students including engagement and attendance to sessions.

- III. The summary action plan for the Access and Participation Plan (APP) 2020/25 showed targets and aims. A Governor asked how the College would address increasing the ethnic diversity of the student population. The College has targeted over 100 sixth forms including some in areas with higher ethnicity. The College has a dedicated area on its website for mature students. The APP 2019/20 action plan and progress to date will be presented at the next meeting. **ACTION: HEAD OF HE**
- IV. The College changed its HE offer process last year to become more competitive. The Head of HE had researched unconditional offers in the sector evidencing that this had reduced A Level grades. There had been discussion with staff regarding a proposal to offer unconditional offers to under 21 year old applicants who have obtained 80 UCAS points (with the exception of Artist Blacksmithing, Popular Music and Performing Arts). Students over 21 years will continue to be interviewed. This will be piloted for the Photography course. Student Governors felt that the interview was an important part of their application and decision-making process. It was reiterated that students with unconditional offers will still be invited to visit the College to have one to one sessions with course leaders. Unconditional offers will be made with personalised letters. A Governor asked about the timescale for applicants to accept offers which is June; however, statistically applicants are more likely to accept the first offer they receive. The profile of Hereford is also being marketed and the comms team is working closely with course leaders to market programmes accurately and effectively. Student Governors suggested students applying to become ambassadors undergo an interview and training. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

The Committee agreed: -

- To note actions to ensure the College meets OfS regulatory requirements

6. Quality Improvement

- I. The NSS survey results are crucial for the College with the 2018/19 summary results and action plan presented. There was some strong performance but an overall marginal decrease. This provides a clear indicator of the student experience and quality of courses which are benchmarked nationally. It was encouraging that academic support, student voice and learning resources had improved following a focus on these last year. Results by individual courses and key themes were analysed with key actions identified. There was discussion about collaboration noting that synergy between FE and HE would be introduced aided by a cross-college timetable. A benefit would allow all students to attend visiting lectures. Some core modules and collaborative projects are taking place. The College community had begun to be addressed with some activities implemented. The building does not aid community cohesion with its small rooms and corridors, and needed a facility for students to have coffee. Cross-community work with collaborative events and projects will be developed further. It was agreed that it is important to feedback to students with an institutional voice. **ACTION: HEAD OF HE**
- II. HE Course Reviews have been undertaken by the Principal, Head of HE and

an external consultant. Staff have been given feedback and an action plan will be developed. This is an evolutionary process for course leaders affording opportunities to introduce change in response to discussion. In parallel UWTSD partner reports will be undertaken at course level. A meeting was arranged with some Governors on 9 December at 2 pm to interrogate the course review before its submission to UWTSD.

- III. The timeline for validation of new courses and revalidation of some existing courses was presented. This will be a tight timescale but was achievable as research had already been completed.
- IV. A Teaching Excellence Framework action plan had been prepared to work towards maintaining at least a silver award at resubmission in 2021. The TEF is based on the NSS score and a contextual statement. In the event that resubmission is brought forward to 2020, which is a possibility, it would be reliant on the current NSS data which places the silver award at risk.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the reports agreeing to meet on 9 December to interrogate the course reviews for submission to UWTSD

7. Identification of Key Risks

- I. Retention
- II. Critical Studies
- III. Curriculum development
- IV. Recruitment
- V. OfS compliance
- VI. TEF
- VII. Catering

8. Any Other Business

No items