

Minutes of the Standards Committee held on Wednesday 16th November 2022 at 5pm in Conference Room 2, Broadway

Members Present: Julius Adams
Paul Hartridge
Mollie-Amelia Hehir
Sukhninder Panesar (Chair)
Neil Thomas (Chief Executive and Principal) (CEP)
David Whatton (Vice Chair)

In attendance: Georgina Barnard (Managing Director of Institute of Technology)
Gill Darwood (Director of Corporate Governance) (DCG)
Diana Martin (Vice Principal) (VP)
Dean Price (Standards & Performance Manager)

Committee administrative matters

1 **Confirmation of quorum**

1.1 The Director of Corporate Governance confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

2 **Apologies for absence and welcome to new members**

2.1 There were no apologies for absence.

2.2 J Adams and P Hartridge were welcomed as new members of the committee.

3 **Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair 2022/23**

3.1 S Panesar was appointed as Chair and D Whatton as Vice Chair for 2022/23.

4 **Declarations of interest**

4.1 There were no declarations of interest.

5 **Approve minutes of previous meeting held on 5th May 2022**

5.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 5th May 2022 were confirmed as a true record for signature by the Chair.

6 **Matters arising**

6.1 The DCG confirmed that actions arising from the previous meeting had been completed.

7 **Terms of reference 2022/23**

7.1 The DCG advised that it was considered good practice for Corporation committees to undertake a periodic review of their terms of reference. The terms of reference for the Standards Committee had been reviewed with the proposed amendments highlighted through tracked changes. The main changes to the document were noted as:

- Reference to the committee's responsibility for monitoring the Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Strategy.
- Reference to the committee's responsibility for monitoring compliance with OFS requirements and delivery of Higher Education programmes.

7.2 **It was resolved** To recommend the terms of reference to the Corporation for approval.

8 **Standards Committee's Annual Report for 2021/22**

8.1 The DCG presented the report which summarised the work undertaken by the Standards Committee in 2021/22. Once approved by members the report would be placed in the document library of Convene for access by all Corporation members.

8.2 [The CEP suggested that it would be helpful to share papers of previous meetings with new members via Convene.](#)

8.3 **It was resolved** To approve the committee's annual report for 2021/22.

Standards and Performance Matters

9 **Data dashboard review**

9.1 The CEP presented an overview of the College dashboard, noting that the dashboard would next be updated in January 2023 alongside publication of the Annual Strategic Impact Assessment.

9.2 The CEP provided an overview for each key client group looking in particular at enrolments and attendance data which had been updated in-year. He noted that attendance was in line with the previous year for all key client groups.

9.3 In respect of enrolments:

- 16-18 numbers were comparable to the previous year.
- A level numbers were increased by 10%.
- Adult numbers were similar to the previous year but slightly behind on long courses and increased on short courses.
- Apprentices were in line with forecast.
- Higher skills enrolments were slightly ahead of forecast.
- Subcontracted enrolments were decreased as part of the planned withdrawal from sub-contracted provision.

9.4 For the benefit of new members, the CEP provided an update on the College's approach to reducing sub-contracting, focusing on high quality strategic partnerships in areas of provision where the College did not have a technical specialism.

9.5 The CEP noted that student satisfaction surveys were updated on the dashboard twice per year and other areas such as achievements were updated annually.

9.6 **It was resolved** To note the data dashboard review.

10 **Operational Development Plan progress update**

- 10.1 The CEP presented the College Operational Development Plan (CODP) progress update. Many actions were now completed and some were still 'on track' with due dates leading up to Christmas and beyond. There were a few actions which were 'overdue' as either the scope of the action had changed or the work was now planned to continue into the new calendar year.
- 10.2 The current plan would continue until December 2022. As part of the standard quality cycle, a new plan would be developed in January which would take on board actions from the Strategic Plan related to 2023 as well as areas for development identified through the Annual Strategic Impact Assessment (ASIA) process. This new plan would come to Standards Committee for discussion before being taken to Corporation for final approval.
- 10.3 The VP provided further clarification in relation to some of the areas flagged as red, in particular around delivery of T Levels due to lower recruitment numbers in some areas.
- 10.4 In response to a question from the Chair the CEP explained that the new plan would be developed based on items from the Strategic Plan, actions rolled forward and any items identified during the self assessment process.
- 10.5 **It was resolved** To note progress on the operational development plan.

11 **Annual Strategic Impact Assessment 2021/22**

- 11.1 The CEP provided an introduction outlining the College's approach to assessing performance through the Annual Strategic Impact Assessment for 2021/22, which graded each area on a balanced scorecard against specific criteria, arriving at an overall judgement for each key client group of either 'below expectations', 'meeting expectations' or 'exceeding expectations'.
- 11.2 The VP provided an update on the College's initial assessment for each key client group:
- 11.3 *Full time 16-18 learners*
- Enrolments were consistent with previous years.
 - Diversity remained higher than the local population.
 - Travel to learn patterns remained consistent.
 - Achievements – level 1, 2 and 3 slightly below previous year and last published national rates, however it was noted that published national rates were expected to fall but were not yet available.
 - GCSE resits – at 80% for English and 57% for mathematics were strong. The narrative would provide clarification on the college's targeted approach to the delivery of mathematics and English.
 - Overall satisfaction - slightly above benchmarks overall. It was noted that benchmarks were against other grade 1 and 2 colleges only.
 - Destinations - strong at 95% going into positive destinations.
 - STEM subjects increased to 56%.

- Forward progression from level 2 to level 3 showing strong proportion progressing from level 2 to level 3.
- 11.4 Members agreed with the overall assessment of ‘meeting expectations’ in relation to the 16-18 key client group.
- 11.5 *A Level learners*
- Enrolments increased on previous year.
 - Travel to learn remained broadly local but with some learners travelling from further afield than previously.
 - Diversity – strong in relation to ethnicity and disability.
 - Achievement rates - slightly above last published and in line with previous year.
 - High grades - profile A-B at 58% and A-C grades at 80% and above national rates was strong.
 - Destinations - progression into university and growing numbers progressing into employment or apprenticeships.
 - STEM participation increased by 1% at 62%.
- 11.6 D Whatton suggested that it would be helpful to include within the narrative a breakdown in relation to progression into employment.
- 11.7 Members agreed with the overall assessment of ‘exceeding expectations’ in relation to the A level key client group.
- 11.8 *Adult learners*
- Enrolments were increased on the previous year. Members noted that whilst learner numbers were increased, income had underperformed due to the trend towards shorter programmes which did not generate as much income for the College.
 - Diversity was strong.
 - Achievements were slightly below last published rates at all levels but national rates were likely to drop when published. The impact of reduced retention partly due to fully funded programmes, such as Access, had impacted achievement rates.
 - Functional skills achievements were increased on the previous year.
 - GCSE achievements remained strong for adults.
 - Student satisfaction was high.
 - Destinations were more challenging to measure for this cohort as it covered a large proportion of basic skills provision at level 1 and below. Higher levels showed increased levels of positive destinations. The destinations of unemployed adults into employment had increased.
 - Mix of provision was moving towards more technical pathways.
 - STEM participation stood at 36%.
- 11.9 Members agreed with the overall assessment of ‘meeting expectations’ in relation to the Adult key client group, noting the challenges around achievements for this cohort.

11.10 *Apprentices*

- Enrolments had fallen during pandemic years.
- Travel to learn pattern was much wider across England.
- Diversity – this cohort was traditionally less diverse but showing increasing numbers of females compared to previous years.
- Overall achievement rates were down compared to previous years with a large impact from Covid. This was impacted by delays in timely achievements. The national rate was expected to be around 55%.
- Retention was impacted by the higher number of withdrawals during the pandemic. These withdrawals would have an ongoing impact on performance until their planned end date.
- Satisfaction of this cohort was lower and reasons for this were being further investigated.
- Employer reviews rated provision as good overall.
- STEM participation remained consistent at 58%.

11.11 P Hartridge noted the impact of a historic shortage of assessors which had now been addressed, and the difficulty of accessing employer premises during the pandemic. The CEP also explained that any change of employment for an apprentice on programme would normally lead to a withdrawal due to the time constraints for achieving a transfer. D Whatton noted that it would be important in the narrative to demonstrate an understanding of the causes of retention and achievement issues, and whether these issues were within or beyond the College's control.

11.12 Members agreed with the assessment of 'below expectations' for the apprenticeship key client group, based on the decline in numbers of starts, lower achievements, and satisfaction of apprentices, whilst acknowledging the hard work and commitment of staff in this area.

11.13 *Higher Skills*

- Provision was broken down by Apprenticeships, HNC/D and level 4+.
- Enrolments were slightly down on the previous year.
- Travel to learn was wider for HE learners.
- Diversity was strong.
- Achievement rates were slightly below previous year (which had been based on centre assessed grades) but comparable to 18/19 achievement levels.
- Satisfaction rates were high.
- STEM data was to be confirmed.

11.14 Members agreed with the overall assessment of 'meeting expectations' in relation to the Higher Skills key client group.

11.15 *Sub-contracted provision*

Achievement rates had increased due to withdrawal from underperforming sub-contracted provision. It was noted that this was a sub-category of apprenticeships and would be assessed as 'below expectations'.

11.16 The draft version of the Annual Strategic Assessment Report would be brought to the December Corporation meeting with the narrative included which would address the points raised.

11.17 **It was resolved** To endorse the judgements in relation to the Annual Strategic Impact Assessment 2021/22.

12 **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan – progress update**

12.1 The CEP presented the report which provided members with an update on the actions being taken in support of the College's EDI Commitment Statement. An updated EDI Action Plan for 2021/22 was also included which provided the latest position on all actions. Key points in this report were noted as:

- 8 staff were recruited into dedicated project roles to support the delivery of the EDI Action Plan.
- The College has created a new post of EDI Officer with effect from 1st September 2022.
- Standard protected characteristics were agreed and had been implemented.
- New reporting tools developed and implemented.
- Work has started on a review of policies and procedures.
- Dedicated EDI College conference held in October 2022.

12.2 This action plan would continue to be monitored through future Standards Committee meetings.

12.3 **It was resolved** To note the update on the EDI action plan.

13 **Risk register monitoring**

13.1 The CEP presented the report which provided committee members with an update on risks relating to curriculum and standards. There were five risks relevant to this committee. Two risks had a higher net score at 9, and these were:

- The quality of apprenticeship provision.
- The delivery of the work placement strategy.

13.2 There were three actions subject to delay in respect of:

- Issuing new job descriptions to all assessors – recognising the changing role of assessors.
- Explore the opportunity to share a 'mock Ofsted' with another college.
- Realign the priority of placements and apprenticeships so that they were cross-sold to employers.

13.3 The CEP noted that there was a commitment from government to discontinue BTECs in two years' time. P Hartridge expressed concern in relation to all students' ability to cope with the revised qualifications and examination requirements, which was shared by staff and members.

13.4 **It was resolved** To note the risk register monitoring report.

Teaching and Learning Matters

14 **Teaching and learning update**

- 14.1 D Price presented the report which provided a summary of the progress and development of teaching and learning across the current academic year. Key points from this paper were highlighted:
- Key focus for this academic year was teaching triangles, learner visits and Ofsted readiness.
 - Teaching triangles established and had started in most curriculum areas with all staff being seen this year.
 - Learner visits would be conducted with all curriculum areas in November and would support Ofsted readiness.
 - Learner visits include a pre-meeting with curriculum teams, lesson visits to talk to learners, feedback to curriculum (individually and collective) and a report to SLG.
 - Processes for monitoring curriculum and individual underperformance were underway.
 - Focussed action plans were in place for identified areas of performance based on 2021/22 outcomes.
 - Student induction survey results were highly positive with 96.3% stating that the induction process was a good experience. Further surveys would be carried out on a monthly basis to provide information on key themes.
 - College conference (21 October) had a single theme (EDI - equality, diversity and inclusion) and received excellent staff feedback.
 - Focus on examination attendance and behaviour in exams, supporting staff to prepare students, sessions to support parents and carers, upgrade week in January to look at revision.
 - Introduction of PowerBi reporting to track student submission of assignments and when they were returned.
 - Introduction of an attendance league table to tackle attendance and retention issues.
 - Appointment of a new curriculum performance manager.
 - Training for staff on assessment plans and timely completion of apprenticeships.
- 14.2 In response to a question from D Whatton, D Price confirmed that lessons learned from recent complaints in relation to exams would be incorporated into exam preparation training.
- 14.3 D Price provided further information in relation to the conduct of data integrity meetings with Curriculum Managers, which highlighted any data anomalies as well as looking at any learners at risk of not achieving and noted that the meetings were positively received by managers.
- 14.4 **It was resolved** To note the teaching and learning update.
- 15 **Confidential - Compliments and complaints analysis**
This matter is the subject of a separate and confidential minute.

Safeguarding and Student Conduct Matters

- 16 **Confidential - Safeguarding and learner conduct report**
This matter is the subject of a separate and confidential minute.

Higher Education Matters

- 17 **Higher Education update**
- 17.1 G Barnard presented the paper which provided members of the committee with an update on matters relating to Higher Education. Key points were noted as:
- As a condition of registration with the Office for Students (OfS), providers came into scope for mandatory involvement in the Teaching Excellence Framework when their HE full time equivalent numbers exceeded 500. It was anticipated that the College would come into scope for the academic year 2026-27 and would therefore start aligning to the TEF standards.
 - An update on the review of data and new PowerBi dashboard for HE currently in development.
 - An update on all reporting actions for OfS compliance was included, which confirmed that all actions had been completed by the deadline dates.
 - An update on the review of policies and procedures relating specifically to HE.
 - An update on the HE section of the new College website with amendments made in line with Consumer Law and OfS registration requirements.
 - An update on the Board of Studies which was a vehicle to update HE curriculum staff.
- 17.2 The Chair noted that the future assessment of higher education within the Annual Strategic Impact Assessment would require a focus on TEF metrics and G Barnard agreed that this would be introduced as part of the alignment to TEF standards.
- 17.3 **It was resolved** To note the Higher Education update.

Policies for recommendation

- 18 **Policy updates**
- 18.1 The CEP presented a number of policies which were due to have their regular review and update and were being presented to committee for approval and recommendation to Corporation. They had been reviewed by senior colleagues.
- 18.2 - *HE Admissions Policy* - This has been substantially rewritten as part of the review of all higher education processes in preparation for recent internal audit.
- 18.3 - *Safeguarding Policy (and associated procedure)* - The Policy included minor changes to reflect latest national guidance and changes in job roles internally. The Safeguarding Procedure was also included as this provided further detail on meeting statutory requirements in relation to safeguarding and had been substantially updated to reflect the current guidance.

- 18.4 D Whatton proposed the procedure should make reference to allegations against governors as well as staff, and the VP agreed to include this within the scope of the document.
- 18.5 In relation to children missing from education, D Whatton drew attention to helpful guidance on Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) which he agreed to share with the VP. The VP noted that the College had appointed a mental health lead who was currently undertaking an audit and producing a three year action plan and therefore this guidance would be welcome.
- 18.6 - *Standards & Performance Policy* - This policy had been updated to reflect some minor organisation changes.
- 18.7 **It was resolved** To recommend the policies to the Corporation for approval.
- 19 **Any Other Business**
- 19.1 No further business was raised.
- 20 **Date of next meeting**
- 20.1 The next meeting was noted as 8th February 2023.

The meeting closed at 19.00

Approved by committee members at the meeting held on 8th February 2023.