

STANDARDS AND EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.00pm on 2 February 2016

Present:	S Daley (Chair) K Heathcote	A Maltpress (Vice Chair) J Gazzard	A Head N Savvas
In Attendance:	R Carter, Chair L Johnson, VP C&Q S Steeds, HE Director	M Wagner, DP R Kirk, AP QI J Bridges, Clerk	L Moody, VP EE T O'Sullivan, HR Director

Members confirmed that they had no conflicts of interest to declare in relation to the items of this agenda.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from J Bloomfield. Other apologies from attendees were received from B Unwin, Quality Manager.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2015

The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a correct record.

3 Matters Arising

The matters arising from the meeting were summarised in the report and all actions reported had either been completed or, where appropriate an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda.

Overall Effectiveness

4 Quality Improvement Plan 2015/16

The College Self Assessment Report was signed off by the Committee and the Corporation at the respective meetings held in December 2015. The Quality Improvement Plan for 2015/16 was presented to the Committee for information to provide assurance to members that all areas for improvement that had been identified in the SAR now featured in the Quality Improvement Plan and that for each action point, a clear KPI has been set which is measurable.

The priority for the College is Maths and English so in order to elicit focussed improvement a more detailed action plan supplementary to the QIP has been produced to have direct impact on Maths and English delivery across the entire organisation.

Members noted that an additional line has been added to each action which details what the milestone is and the progress that has been made. The Committee was pleased to see that at the end of January 2016 only 5% of the actions were behind target (38% on target and 57% ahead of target). Priorities such as Maths and English, Apprenticeships and improving success rates were making good progress.

Little progress has been made on the introduction of Service Level Standards for the Business Support Areas. Members asked if the College has received any complaints that would suggest that this action needs to be escalated to a higher priority. The Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality confirmed that this was not the driver but some improvement areas had been identified which had instigated change in current practice with internal delivery teams. This was more about documenting the customer service processes our business support teams have in place and setting the expectations of what good customer service looks like at the College. Members also queried if there was a suggestion that service standards are in decline as a higher proportion of business support staff appear

Action

to be taking sick leave. The Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality confirmed that this was not the case but that the action taken was purely instigated as a quality control measure.

Outcomes for Learners

5 Key Performance Indicators

The Committee received a tabled paper detailing Classroom Based Learning Attendance. Overall attendance has increased by 1% for 16-18 students to 90%, but decreased by 1% for 19+ students whose overall attendance is now 87%. The data included vocational classes, directed study and tutorials but excluded attendance at Maths and English as this is reported and monitored separately. The Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality focuses on the courses with low attendance and the Assistant Principal, Student and Learning Support, provides the support for the individuals whose attendance is of significant concern, marking them "at risk".

The report shows six areas where attendance is flagged as high risk. These are: Maths and English Adult, Healthcare and Early Years, Automotive, Applied and Social Science, Proactive Education and Construction Crafts.

The significant majority of adults have attendance that exceeds 80% for the year. However, GCSE Maths and English courses at RAF Honington have attendance below that mark due to the work priorities of the students and an additional lesson is to be scheduled to enable students to cover missed classes.

Healthcare and Early Years has a couple of courses that are causing concern Childcare Level 1 and Health and Social Care Level 2. These courses were being managed by the same course director who is currently absent and also subject to a disciplinary hearing. The Curriculum Director of this area has now assumed responsibility for these courses.

All Automotive courses have low attendance. Lots of intervention is in place and the team is using the disciplinary policy well. A high percentage of students are at risk and in receipt of support but it is anticipated that attendance will now improve.

Applied and Social Science has some courses which cause concern: Sport Level 2 and Sport and Public Services Level 1. The Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality has intervened with Sport Level 2 to support the Course Director and agree focussed actions. The Course Director for Sport and Public Services Level 1 is strong and has implemented a number of interventions to improve attendance. More of a concern is declining attendance on Level 3 year 2 Public Services and it was noted that the Curriculum Director is to oversee the Course Directorship of this cohort as the current Course Director is due to leave the College.

By their nature, Proactive Education (Prince's Trust and Access to Education courses) students have a history of poor attendance, lacking confidence, and with social interaction and behavioural issues. Every student in this department has a personalised programme of study but generally all are making good progress.

Construction Crafts has 5 courses with attendance below 80% overall; Bricklaying Levels 1 and 2, Painting and Decorating Levels 1 and 3 and Construction Skills Entry 3. There is concern that Course Directors are not progressing students through the disciplinary process where there are

behavioural issues, as there are numerous causes for concern and oral warnings, but no evidence to suggest that individuals have been progressed further. The Committee asked to receive a progress report at the next meeting to be held in April 2016.

LJohnson

The Committee asked the Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality to produce future KPI reports showing just the columns for attendance, retention and markbook completion against each other. This will help to identify the high risk areas and for the Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality to provide just a line for each to describe the action/intervention in place. These KPIs are then to be cross referenced with lesson observations to put the whole picture into context and for the Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality to then provide the underlying action plan and demonstrate how this is linked to the QIP.

LJohnson

6 **Maths and English Update**

The report provided the Committee with an update concerning the Maths and English curriculum plan, staffing and accommodation, growth in student numbers, condition of funding and monitoring of attendance, retention, progress and assessment tracking.

Attendance can now be looked at by qualification and student attendance at Maths and English classes is being checked at every timetabling point throughout the day to ensure that students are attending. The next step is to ensure that all student progress in the in-year assessment is recorded in MarkBook and the priority to input this progress has been with the GCSEs. On the basis of assessment progress and attendance, all students are now being RAG rated and an “at risk” report produced that correlates with the history of that student’s disciplinary records. The aim of this is to ensure that all progress by the students is on their ILP, ensuring that the wrap around support can be deployed where it is required for the student.

Several revision days in the holidays have been scheduled for those on GCSE Maths and English and students are being directed to sign up for these, especially where their predicted grade is a D. Currently the report shows that 16% of students on English GCSE are predicted to achieve a grade D and 35% on GCSE Maths. Those that have not yet been determined (others) means that something other than a grade has been entered into the cell so these and expected grade D’s are all being investigated. Some investigation has already taken place and the grade profile has improved since the time of writing the report. Overall, grades are predicted to be better than those achieved last year.

Members commented that attendance for both Maths and English in Foundation Studies were both high at 95% and questioned if there was best practice that could be shared across the College to improve student attendance in other areas. The Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality confirmed that delivery of Maths and English in Foundation Studies is much different to mainstream delivery. Maths and English is delivered as unit qualifications that are taught in “bite size” elements by their main qualification teacher which then leads to an award. This is a much different mode of delivery than mainstream GCSE Maths and English.

The Committee asked that Maths and English remains as a priority agenda item for each meeting.

JBridges

7 HE Attrition Rate Update

The overall FTE attrition rate stands at 4.04FTE to date. The rate should be below 10.00% and overall was 14.00% last year. At course level the report shows three courses with significant numbers (over 10) and an attrition rate of over 10% that are subject to investigation, these being Applied Interior Design, Building Services Engineering and Sports Coaching and Development. The reasons why students have withdrawn was linked to the report and shows that 25 people have withdrawn from their course to date. At the same point in 2014/15 28 students had withdrawn.

The Committee asked the HE Director to explain what is happening with the courses where the attrition rate is gradually creeping up to the 10.00% marker. He confirmed that this report is analysed monthly and programme leaders are giving every opportunity to each student to stay on target. Certainly in the first semester it is usual that some students will need more support than others to get them into the routine of staying on target, keeping up with assignments and studying at this level and pace. The attrition rate therefore is likely to be higher in the first semester than later on in the course. The Committee asked if students were being appropriately advised about this level of learning and what to expect or if they had been pushed into progression too soon. It is believed that this is not the case and that students receive the appropriate advice and guidance from the outset of initial enquiry about degree level learning. It is very much the students' choice as to whether or not they progress onto Higher Education as they choose to apply to UCAS for their place. UCS BSE then offers them the support to prepare them for their learning journey. A member suggested introducing taster assignments right at the beginning of the course to assess competency from the outset with frank and quick feedback. This can then be used to position students in that year group so that they have some sense of where they sit with others on the course with the same learning issues.

Members asked if students who progress through West Suffolk College onto UCS BSE perform better than those who have not come through College learning. The HE Director confirmed that those who progress from Access to HE courses tend to perform better on programme and it is thought that this is because they are better prepared and know what to expect having completed the Access to HE route.

The Committee questioned if students are contacted six months post decision to withdraw to ascertain if withdrawal was right for them. The HE Director confirmed that this wasn't currently undertaken.

L Moody left the meeting at 5.25pm

8 NSS Survey Response Timed Action Plan

The report had been presented to the Committee at the last meeting in December. However the links to the summary sheet and action plans did not work. The report was therefore re-presented to the Committee for discussion.

The Committee reiterated their concern from the December meeting that the promptness of feedback was one of lowest scoring aspects of the survey and asked how this had improved. The HE Director confirmed that UCS BSE staff work within the 20 working day policy to provide feedback. The issue is not the quantity, quality or type of feedback but the timeliness of it. Where there are bank holidays, half term, Christmas, Easter breaks for example this can lengthen the duration between submission and feedback but in most cases the feedback is given within the 20 working days. It appears that the action is to manage student

expectations rather than encourage staff to provide the feedback quicker so there is a need to improve communication from the outset about the assessment and feedback process.

9 Early Leavers Report

The report was received for information. Members questioned why for some lines (e.g. studying at another College, entered sixth form etc) no data was available for 2013 or 2014 but a trend arrow against 2015 showed movement up or down. The Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality confirmed that some lines do not have figures against them in 2013 and 2014 because this level of detail was not captured in those years on the ILR. However the trend arrow provides the overall indication that students are getting onto the right course much earlier and therefore the number of students that leave early has reduced so this is a good news report.

10 Lesson Observations

Confidential item under paragraph 18(2) of the Instrument and Articles of Government

Leadership and Management

11 Workforce Key Performance Indicators

Confidential item under paragraph 18(2) of the Instrument and Articles of Government

12 Workforce Update

Confidential item under paragraph 18(2) of the Instrument and Articles of Government

13 Committee Meeting Times

The Clerk will arrange for meetings to continue to be scheduled for a Tuesday at 4.00pm.

14 Any other business

Nothing further to report.

Date of next meeting

Tuesday 26 April 2016 at 4.00pm. Room TG1.16

The meeting closed at 6.05pm

JBridges