

**STANDARDS AND EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held at 5.00pm on 14 February 2019**

**Present:** Sue Daley (Chair) Karen Points Alan Maltpress  
Nikos Savvas, CEO/Principal

**In Attendance:** Colin Shaw, VP Q&LE Rachel Kirk, AP HE Gary Jefferson, ED  
Penny Fawcus, ED Jenny Dines, HR Director Phil Stittle, ED  
Rachel Boast, M+E Director Cathy Durrant, Head of PS Jules Bridges, Clerk

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

**Action**

**1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Rudy Berongoy and Jim Gazzard. Non-attendance will be recorded for E Foster. In addition apologies for absence were received from the Vice Principal Employer Engagement, Laraine Moody, Executive Director Debbie Coomes, Executive Director Debbie Tappin and Executive Director Andrew Adamson.

**2 Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2018**

The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a correct record subject to inserting the number '90' between the words 'two' and 'minute' in the fourth paragraph of item 4 to read 'two 90 minute sessions'.

JBridges

**3 Matters Arising**

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

**4 Key Performance Indicators**

Overall attendance ended the term 1% higher than the end of last academic year for both 16-18 (89%) and 19+ (89%), but is 1% lower than for the same period last year. Analysis of attendance by level identifies that there is clearly an issue for 16-18 students at Level 1, as attendance is only 82%. Attendance is being closely monitored by course teams and support put in place for students where required.

An attendance gap continues to exist between Maths and English sessions and vocational sessions; however, students are fully engaging in these sessions with results from the recent GCSE exams showing some promising improvements. It was noted that plans are already in place to proactively manage functional skills tests to ensure there are improvements in the results for these subjects.

The Committee noted the poor and declining performance in most metrics for Animal Care students. This is a small cohort of students however attendance, assessment progress and the number of students at risk (2) are disappointing. There are a number of improvement areas and initiatives in place so progress will continue to be monitored and reported to the Committee as requested.

CShaw

Assessment progress picked up at the end of term as anticipated, with more progress being achieved than at the same time last year. In the large majority of areas, progress is either on or ahead of target. It is pleasing to

note the great improvement made with Access to HE, which was consistently behind target last year.

As expected for this time of the year, student retention is strong for both 16–18 (98%), which is 1% higher than this time last year and 2% higher for 19+ (98%). PSTs have ensured that all students who have not returned from the Christmas break have been contacted and either supported to return to the College or withdrawn from their course as appropriate.

Apprenticeship recruitment in the first term was strong with 583 Apprentices enrolled onto programme and this is a slight increase on 2017/18 of 3%. For 2018/19 further vocational areas have been introduced to meet Employer demand, and we now have Learners undertaking Apprenticeships in the new areas of HR, Project Management & Procurement. Achievement to date for 2018/19 also remains strong with 296 Apprentices having achieved YTD (Year To Date). Good performances on recruitment and achievement have all contributed positively to the Apprenticeship income and at the end of R05, Income was up by £1.1m against the same point in 2017/18.

## 5 **Early Leavers and Withdrawals**

The number of withdrawals for 16-18s is 62 to date. For the 19+ students it is 6 and for Apprentices it is 26. This time last year we had seen 81 withdrawals for the 16-18s and 19 19+ students withdrew. There were 17 Apprentices withdrawn, so overall our Early Leavers are slightly less (by 23) than last year.

Main reasons for withdrawal in the 16-18s age group have been due to gaining an apprenticeship (27% = 17 students) or gaining employment (24% = 15 students). 18 of the 27 withdrawals were because the student had either gained employment or an apprenticeship (9 each respectively). Three students were also withdrawn due to ill health (mental health).

For 19+ students the main reasons for withdrawal have been due to gaining employment (50% = 3 students), financial reasons (17% = 1 student), altered family commitments (17% = 1 student) and the course no longer relating to their plans (17% = 1 student).

PSTs are working hard to monitor attendance, work with parents and student welfare where appropriate. PIP (Positive Intervention Plans) has also started now and we are promoting College apprenticeships for those looking to move onto an apprenticeship. For the apprentices the reasons for withdrawal are noted as Other (88% - 23 students) and these have been due to the employer ending their employment or there have been behavioural reasons (drugs) where they have lost their apprenticeship. The Committee asked to see the level of detail of the 'Other' reasons in the next report.

The Executive Director for Quality Improvement and PD, Penny Fawcus, reported that she holds an individual Quality Improvement Plan for the Apprenticeship team and meets with them fortnightly to track progress and set new initiatives to improve performance; innovation coaches, recruitment and earlier screening improvements, restructuring OneFile, training, target setting, embedding equality and diversity, character strengths and how to involve employers in all of our processes and practice.

DTappin

The Committee was interested to learn more about the underpinning reasons why students fail to attend or lost contact with their learning. We engage where we can with parents and PSTs are absolutely instrumental to positively encourage students to re-engage.

## **6 Courses at Risk**

There are currently 17/140 courses rated as 'At Risk' across the College compared with 37/138 courses at the same point last year. The Committee was pleased to note that there are no Access to HE courses included in this report, and recognised that the impact of the changes to the recruitment process and assessment practice on both retention and assessment progress has been so positive.

It is anticipated that the majority of courses identified as 'At Risk' (11) will improve and move out of this risk category once assessment progress reaches the required threshold, as retention rates for these courses are all 90% or above.

Courses with retention rates below 90% will remain 'At Risk'. They include Children's Play Learning and Development National Diploma Level 3 Year 2 (75%), Children's Play Learning and Development Technical Diploma Level 2 (76%), Progression to Beauty (88%), Make-Up Certificate Level 1 (87%), Applied Science Extended Diploma Level 3 Year 1 (89%) and Electrical Installation Diploma Level 1 (80%).

There are currently 8 Apprenticeship courses identified as 'At Risk', with some of the issues relating to inherited retention issues. The Committee was pleased to note however that overall Apprentice Best Case Success Rates looks strong at 81% compared with 70% last year.

## **7 Maths and English Update**

The Director of Maths and English, Rachel Boast, reported a pleasing 2.9% shortfall of meeting 100% condition of funding at this time.

The results from the November sitting of the Maths and English GCSEs are pleasing. This is the first time this has been offered to 16-19 provision and 35% achieved an English grade 4 and 43% achieved in Maths.

200 students had the opportunity to sit the exam. Sixty-eight students have now been transferred out of their GCSE classes and impact has been twofold. For the student, they have an additional 3 hours per week of study time to devote to their vocational qualification. Furthermore, staff within the GCSE sessions have found that those students remaining in class, have been invigorated by the results; staff to student ratio is reduced, allowing more time to focus on those who are still studying the subjects.

Crucially, it was noted that only 1 student achieved a grade 2 at resit and many students were within 4 marks of the pass mark; evidence of significant distance travelled for these students and they will be well placed to achieve in June.

Adult results for the resits are outstanding. Sixteen students were entered for the exams; 78% achieved English (7 out of 9 students), 86% achieved maths (6 out of 7 students).

The overall attendance (16-19 provision) continues to be robust with a whole college summary of 78% attendance for English, 77% for Maths and 85% overall. The best performing department is Healthcare and Early Years (118 students) with 84% attendance at both subjects. Other areas of note are Conservatoire East (27 students), Engineering (36 students) and Electrical installation (20 students) where English attendance is 86-89%. It was noted that some improvement on Animal Care students attending Maths and English has been seen since December 2018 when students were moved to study their Maths and English here at main campus. It is felt that this will further improve once Animal Care is relocated from Newmarket to here on main campus.

Rachel Boast left the meeting at 5.45pm

## **8 Apprenticeship Update**

Apprenticeship Achievement has remained steady with 51 more Learners achieving their Apprenticeship in December 2018.

Activity and focus remains at a critical level in order to ensure we achieve the best outcome possible for 2018/19. Those identified as being at risk are being supported, and Programme Managers are visiting Employers to ensure that support for the Learner is being triangulated.

It was noted that in 2017/18 not all of our Partners performed to the standard required and through issues of late notified leavers and timely completion, this did have a big impact on our final results. In order to mitigate the same potential risks this year, increased monitoring and support is taking place and particularly poor performers have had a ban on recruiting any further learners onto programme.

The Committee was pleased to note that recruitment targets continue to be met despite the national down trend of a 30% average decline. Update reports are to continue to be provided to the Committee as a standard agenda item.

## **9 2018/19 Quality Improvement Plan Update**

The 2018/19 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) has been produced as an outcome of ongoing targets from the 2017/18 QIP and the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2017/18. It incorporates action plans for areas of underperformance as well as targets for improvement in order to be recognised as outstanding.

In addition to improvement work needed it also captures developments that are in focus for 2018/19 in order to prepare for sector changes to be introduced in 2019/20.

The Committee noted the good progress made against the 2018/19 QIP already including changes to the start of the year to inform attendance monitoring and English and Maths progress, staff PD and introduction of Innovation Coaches and enhanced exams procedures.

## **10 Lesson Observations. Learning Walks and IQRs**

Since the 2018/19 start of term there have been two internal quality reviews carried out by the Observation Teaching Learning and Assessment (OTLA) team. Learning walks during the first 6 weeks of term have been carried out to review the student experience of induction into the College. In October there was an Internal Quality Review of apprenticeship delivery.

The students who were asked about their induction into the College said that they enjoyed the induction day and had no issues to share. They spoke positively about their tutors and were enjoying the vocational sessions. There was some negativity from students about English and maths. However this related more to their lack of commitment to continuing with the subject rather than the classroom experience. Some lessons learned from the feedback included better planning of room capacity, the tone of the induction sessions (more balanced approach with the more negative topics that need to be covered such as disciplinary proceedings and non-attendance – finding better ways to deliver a difficult but necessary message); managing disruptive behaviour; and improving technology connectivity and speed of logging into systems.

The focus of the apprenticeship IQR (Internal Quality Review) in October 2018 was to look at the workplace review meetings, teaching and learning sessions in College and in the workplace, apprenticeship sign up, a review of OneFile, and discussions with apprentices, employers and staff.

As a consequence of the IQR a review of enrolment and induction of the day release apprentices in College is to take place in order to facilitate better and quicker access to College systems, registers and ID badges. OneFile is to be developed to support good practice and assessors and College tutors are to be one team and use the same student tracking systems.

The report also detailed the number of learning walks documented which currently stands at 57% (52 staff) as a green indicator, 39% (41 staff) with an amber indicator and 2% (2 staff) with a red indicator (underperforming). Support for the two underperforming staff is in place as detailed in the report.

## **11 HE Withdrawals and Retention**

The withdrawal report for January 2019 shows a total of 8 withdrawals across all HE courses which equates to 1.3% of students. This is 0.7% (6 students) improvement on the same point last year.

The team has continued with the practice of early chasing of non-attendance and the triangulated support offered through the use of ProMonitor and the new HE learning support tutor. It was reported that there is no picture emerging of any specific subject area that is at a greater level of risk than another. Based on this data, the current retention rate is 98.7% against the target for the year of 96%.

The highest number of withdrawals continues to be due to personal/financial health reasons or a wrong institution/choice/career. There are six courses that have had students withdraw but none of these courses lost students last year so there is no emerging trend. Conversely the seven courses that lost students last year have not lost students this year so this suggests that IAG, monitoring and support for students has been more effective this year in these areas.

## **12 NSS/ISS Update Report**

The outcome of the NSS results for 2017/18 was very positive with overall satisfaction of 83% (an increase of 11% on 2017 and was equal to the national benchmark).



The key outcome for actions across the provision are around IT Resource; course organisation and management; and the student voice. In addition there are four curriculum areas which have been put onto risk alerts either because of their NSS or ISS outcome, or they are on risk alerts carried over from 2017/18. Each has its own action plan and meets with the Head of HE on a regular basis to monitor and review good progress.

In response to the emerging actions from the survey we have ensured the server for printers and library facilities has been updated; changed the student WiFi to Eduroam which is a much more robust connection; developed an HE CPD programme; promoted the student voice forums and shown the responses to student feedback through a series of You Said, We Did posters.

The Committee noted the concern with Construction areas that are under risk alert. There are frequent meetings with students and course teams to work through the areas for improvement. The course team are working through the targets to complete and are making good progress. The Committee will be updated with the progress of all four risk alert areas; Counselling, Engineering, Construction and Business at each meeting as requested.

### **13 Workforce Update**

The College is currently preparing data for its second gender pay gap report. The deadline for reporting is 30 March 2019 for the snapshot date of 31 March 2018. Currently our overall median hourly rate gap sits at 17.03% as reported in March 2018. This was for the first gender pay gap reporting period with a snapshot date of 31 March 2017. This compares with the national average of 18.4% (source: ONS). It was noted that this is for both the public and private sectors and across all industries.

The report detailed a number of health and well being initiatives and activities offered to staff this academic year to date including; Dance-a-thons, mindfulness sessions, competitions, pension talks, jumper days, heart beat checks and NHS Health Checks.

Monitoring of Spotlights completion continues to take place and is also reported and kept in focus in the monthly HR KPI report to the Senior Management Team and continues to be followed up. Enhancements to the Folio SpotLights system to improved data input and recording has also taken place and a full review of SpotLights effectiveness is scheduled for May 2019. Some dip testing of SpotLights reviews has been undertaken by the Director of HR, Jenny Dines, and the Executive Director for Quality Improvement and PD, Penny Fawcus, and this has shown mixed capabilities for conducting these.

Development of the succession planning process to support workforce planning and ensure robust plans are in place for critical roles. From a wider workforce planning process, work is underway with Professional Development and Higher Education to support improved access to suitably qualified Lecturing staff through development of a specific strategy to combine targeted recruitment with being competitive in the market and 'growing our own' to ensure we have the right employees in place both now and in the future.

The Committee looks forward to seeing the newly developed HR KPIs detailed in the report. It was noted that some KPIs do lend themselves to

be cut against the nine protected characteristics and this will be factored into future reports.

Jenny Dines

**14 Committee Meeting Times**

The Committee confirmed that they wish to continue to schedule the Standards and Excellence Committee meetings on a Monday at 4.00pm for the 2019/20 academic year.

**15 Any other business**

None.

**Date of next meeting**

Thursday 14 March 2019 at 4.30pm. Room TG1.16

The meeting closed at 6.20pm