

1 CORPORATION BOARD CURRICULUM, QUALITY & STUDENTS COMMITTEE



Minutes of a virtual meeting held on Tuesday 16 June at 2pm.

Present

Jacqui Canton
Vicky Field, Chair
Fay Croft
Kathryn Schutterlin (except item 4)

In attendance

Jenny Craig, Deputy Principal
Jo Milsom, Vice Principal
Jenny Lowe, Clerk & Governance Advisor

Governor questions are represented with bullet points, and management responses are italicized.

1. Opening comments, apologies for absence and new declarations of interest

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. There were apologies from Jessica Birkhead. Kathryn Schutterlin declared an interest in Item 4. Governors agreed to deal with this item at the end of the meeting, so that Kathryn could withdraw for the item.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 4 March, 2021

The minutes were approved for signature.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda, and Action tracker

The report was noted.

4. Student of the Year Awards

See confidential minutes.

5. Curriculum Headline Report

The Deputy Principal introduced her report and noted that Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) for GCSE and relevant vocational and technical course were being submitted ahead with a deadline of 18 June 2021.

- How is recruitment for T-levels? *Looking at 3 t-levels. Health t-level – applications exceptionally strong. Also education and childcare – strong. Computing – slower but picking up after increased marketing.*
- How is College dealing with the impact of Covid on opportunities for work experience – how do we handle this? *Where courses require industry placements, we need to prove that we have done work readiness type work with the students instead. Where work experience was mandatory, requirements are being relaxed.*
- Employer led master classes – what are they? *This is where an employer gives an hour of time to give a virtual presentation to students. It has been much easier for employer experts to find an hour to do a virtual session. We have had sessions with award winning actors on stage, music professionals, business experts and infection control experts.*
- With T-levels, we were concerned about the work element – is this going to be an issue going forward? Do we think alternatives will be available for T-levels? *We have 2 years within the t-levels to secure the hours/days of work experience required so*

we can push this element into the second year if necessary. We are confident that the DfE will provide flexibility if the restrictions continue. Our only concern is with digital. The sector, particularly SMEs, are working remotely and not choosing to go back into office space. We have lobbied the minister to allow some of the placements to be online but the Minister is adamant that they need to be in person.

- Are the AoC taking this up? *Yes, the AOC are lobbying.*
- How many can students can we take? *In digital we are not up to capacity, in education and childcare we are on track, and in Health & Social Care we are exceeding our target. In terms of capacity, if this causes any issues it will be in terms of staffing rather than space – we may need to recruit additional staff.*
- Do students and parents know about T-levels? *There is limited awareness, but we are marketing them with schools and parents/students to raise awareness.*
- In HE, where the blended approach seems popular, is there any reason why applications are down? *In some areas applications are stronger, for example animal rehab and welfare. Applications generally have been impacted by Covid. In engineering the numbers are disappointing. SMT have identified that there needs to be a STEM review to fully understand why there isn't stronger demand in this area.*
- What are the practical implications of Covid delays for the apprentices? *The apprentices can stay on programme until finished.*
- At Bicester 12 apprentices were recruited - what was the target? *The target was 30. However, apprentices were moved from Witney to Bicester. This means Bicester is full, but they are not all new apprentices.*
- How are we supporting school leavers joining us? *We usually rely on their GCSE performance to get the right level and course so we will need to put more effort into induction and initial diagnostic work. We have also recognised that many will have been out of structured learning for a long time now due to Covid. We have seen a difference in behaviour and ability to access formal structured lessons. Some have needed extra time in Access to Learning to develop study skills and independent learning skills. Schools have finished teaching by May half term. They have asked us to provide workbooks and taster sessions and school visits are taking place.*
- Can you give an update on OAL? *We initially thought it would be difficult for them to offer lots of their courses during Covid but they have exceeded expectations. Languages worked really well online and with other courses, they worked hard to continue engaging with students, even when the practical aspects of various courses couldn't go ahead.*

6. Quality Headline Report

The Deputy Principal noted the enormous effort which had been required in order to collate the evidence to support the TAG process. There is a lot of internal quality assurance. TAGs are not individual teacher opinions, they are subject to moderation and each grade is signed off by the Deputy Principal. In the vast majority of cases results have been good.

TAGs all need to be submitted by Friday 18 June to allow for results by 10 August for L3 and 12 August for GCSE. This is earlier than usual, so teachers have been working to

contracted timescales. The Deputy Principal wished to pay tribute to teachers for their efforts in completing this work.

Functional skills students are being expected to make progress in a shorter time period and are behind where we would expect them to be. They will have to take exams unless extenuating circumstances. We believe these results are likely to be lower than in a normal year.

- We should formally record our appreciation of the extra volume of work and effort by the teaching staff. *We should also note the huge amount of work by the Deputy Principal and all of the exams team.*
- What information do students have about TAGs? *We have been transparent with students about how it works and made clear that it is not simply the opinion of their teacher. Work will be sampled, they need evidence and there will be quality assurance.*
- In light of the increased workload for everyone – have we needed additional staff or have staff worked extra hours? *We have freed up teachers wherever we can to concentrate on this work. For example by making the week after half term an independent learning week for students to give teachers time to work on the TAG process. We have also delayed timetabling for next year and are adapting the SAR process to make sure teachers are not overloaded. We have looked as an SMT at how we can take some of their other work away, and also tried not to implement new things.*
- Is the Principal overseeing apprenticeships at the moment? *Yes but at the end of next year we will be looking to recruit a new member of SMT to oversee apprenticeships.*
- How many young carers do we have? *We have between 15-20 that we are aware of. We believe we have more but either they don't recognise it themselves or don't want to come forward.*
- Is engineering a problematic area? *We have started a brand new L1 course this year. It is a practical course so they have really struggled. We got them back in as soon as we could but some disengaged during lockdown completely. Engineering is a focus from now on.*
- E&M attendance is down - do we expect this to impact on results? *Majority of 16-18 students engaged with the mock assessments. Grades are very good this year, although obviously are still subject to review and moderation by AQA. Lots of students are anxious about exams so perform much better under test conditions but in normal classrooms. We are confident we have the evidence to show that the TAG process has been rigorous and fair.*
- In the notes on the QIP – vulnerable students are of particular concern and always seem to suffer most. *The QIP is talking about qualification achievement rates. With some of the most vulnerable students our focus is on safety and welfare. We have highlighted them as a group for focus this year.*
- What is the '5 why' approach for SAR? *This is a technique where you keep asking why multiple times in order to get to the real root cause of an issue.*

The Deputy Principal noted that Angela Hayles and Pam Willsher are retiring after many years at the College and that recruitment was underway for their replacements.

The Committee asked that formal thanks be recorded and passed on to them for their service.

Action	By whom	deadline
Thanks to be passed to Angela Hayles and Pam Wilsher on behalf of the Committee.	Principal	As soon as possible

7. Students Headline Report

The Vice Principal Student Engagement introduced the report.

Peer on peer report has now been published by Ofsted – readable report sensible recommendations, but need to see what the guidance says. Will take on the recommendations in terms of training of staff and sexual and relationships education. Add compulsory SRE to FE (like schools) we cover a lot of the content already so no major concerns. SRE – want to talk to single sex groups to ask about their views. Need to look at the gap between our expectations and what happens in school locally. Need to know what is happening in schools – impact is limited at the age we get them. Need to support staff to have those conversations.

- Where are we with safeguarding themes such as county lines, domestic violence and sexual harassment? *Our main safeguarding themes are around mental health. There has been some ‘unlocking anxiety’ particularly related to not being vaccinated yet. Domestic violence has become less of a concern now society is unlocking. In relation to ‘Me too’, we have been talking to students and will be revamping student voice and getting more input from students on our policies and curriculum.*
- Interesting comments re the partnership with Bournemouth & Poole college – how do we teach students to be resilient? *This is about developing practical skills similar to mental health first aid. If we are awarded the grant, it will be a chance to develop sector appropriate materials.*

7.1i Safeguarding Policy

The committee recommended the amended Safeguarding Policy to the Board.

7.1ii Equality Objectives

Long process to look at what we thought they should be – did some retrospective data collection and set some more reasonable targets.

Some areas not covered but we have tried to focus them. And make the process more meaningful. We want to do something meaningful.

- Can you explain the objective of reducing number of disciplinary cases and how this relates to the dignity at work policy? *This is looking at how respectful staff are of each other and each other’s differences and trying to intervene in staff conversations*

before they escalate. It has been identified as a theme in HR casework so they wanted to address it - there appear to be pockets of it to address.

7.2 Student Voice & Student Survey

The summary of the student survey was noted.

- 879 students completed survey – what proportion is this? *It is out of a total of approximately 1800 students.*

One improvement to note is in the percentage of students who feel they were being treated fairly. It is also interesting to note that the percentage of students who define as 'other' has increased. This indicates a positive inclusive trend.

Action	By whom	deadline
Add Equality Objectives and Safeguarding Policy to the Board agenda	Clerk	For July Board meeting

9. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

10. Future Business and Reflection

It was agreed that the November meeting would be focused on the SAR, so the next curriculum presentation should be in March 2022. Health & Social Care would be invited to present.

Action	By whom	Deadline
Invite faculty area to the March 2022 QS Committee meeting	Clerk	March 2022 meeting

The Committee agreed that the meeting had gone well remotely and that all members had accessed the meeting and papers successfully. They looked forward to resuming meetings in person when this was possible.

The next CQS meeting date will be confirmed, a draft meeting calendar for 2021/22 will be circulated with the agenda at the next board meeting.

The meeting closed at 15.45 pm

Approved for signature:

Signature

Date

Action points arising from the CQS Committee, 16 June 2021

Item & Title	Action	By whom	deadline
6 Quality Headline report	Thanks to be passed to Angela Hayles and Pam Wilsher on behalf of the Committee.	Principal	As soon as possible
7.2 Student Voice and Student Survey	Add Equality Objectives and Safeguarding Policy to the Board agenda	Clerk	For July Board meeting

10. Future Business and Reflection	Invite faculty area to the March CQS Committee meeting	Clerk	March 2022 meeting
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