

CORPORATION BOARD

CURRICULUM, QUALITY AND STUDENTS COMMITTEE



Minutes of a meeting held on Monday 8th November 2021 at 6pm. Meeting held virtually on Teams.

Present

Jacqui Canton, Principal
Vicky Field, Chair
Fay Croft
Sam Wolfe
Kathryn Schutterlin, Staff Governor
Rober Weavers, Student Governor

In attendance

Jenny Craig, Deputy Principal
Jo Milsom, Vice Principal for Student Engagement
Victoria Hazel, Assistant to the Board

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

1. Opening Comments

No apologies, declarations of interest or other matters were raised. The Chair introduced Robert Weavers who has been appointed as the new Student Governor.

2. Minutes of previous meetings

2.1 The Public Minutes from the previous CQS Committee meeting held on 16th June 2021 were approved.

3. Matters arising, written resolutions & action points

All action points from the previous meeting have been completed, with the exception of the invitation for a faculty area to attend the March 2022 CQS meeting. It was decided that the Head of Faculty for Service Industries would be invited to the March meeting, as this faculty has implemented two of the new T Level qualifications this year.

Action	By Whom	Deadline
Invite Head of Faculty for Service Industries to attend March 2022 meeting of the CQS Committee	Clerk	To be actioned for March 2022

The report was noted.

4. Committee Cycle of Business

The Assistant to the Board highlighted that there were discrepancies between the 2021/22 Cycle of Business approved by the committee and the Cycle approved by the Board. The committee agreed that the version approved by the committee (Appendix 1) was the correct version.

5. Annual Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan

5.1 FE Self-Assessment Report

The Chair thanked the Deputy Principal and team for the detail and quality of the report. The Deputy Principal summarised the key points of the report and highlighted to the committee that the judgement for the quality of education carries the most weight.

- What scale do the numbers represent? *1-4, with 1 representing 'outstanding' and 4 representing 'inadequate'.*
- Could you tell us more about the key strengths in the report? *Student outcomes is hard to benchmark as there is no current national data but we are confident that overall, our student outcomes are good. The Quality of Teaching and Learning is consistently good in almost all areas and outstanding in some. The 'value added' to student outcomes compared with their starting point is exceptionally strong and significantly above expectations.*
- Please tell us more about the areas for improvement. *Functional Skills for 16-18 year olds did not perform well last year; this is anecdotally the national picture with no firm data available yet. The main reasons were the new specification was much more challenging, sessions were delivered online due to the pandemic making it harder for some to engage, and the tests could not be taken until the spring meaning little time to prepare and practice sitting the papers. There are a small number of curriculum areas where achievement needs to improve. This is mainly in practical subjects where learning could not take place in the workshops for much of last year. There is further work to be done on supporting Looked After Children, who felt the impact of the pandemic even*

more than most. Enrichment programmes were affected by the pandemic and a stronger programme will be developed going forwards.

- What proportion of learners take Functional Skills? *Around half of all 16-18 year-old learners take English or maths, and around half of these do this through Functional Skills with the other half taking GCSEs. There was a big increase last year, with 140 instead of the usual c.12 students taking level 2 Functional Skills in both maths and English.*
- Is the wider authority providing support for Looked After Children or is the college looking at inputting more support? *We've acknowledged there are gaps in support which have been highlighted by the pandemic. The local authority are engaged with also providing support.*
- Is the goal for this report about being consistently good in all areas or aiming to move all areas up a level from their previous? *Our overall aim is for all areas to be outstanding, but as a first step the aim is to move those areas that are not yet consistently good to being so. All curriculum areas have specific targets to help them move up a level from where they are now.*
- Has the college defined a date where the aim is to be at grade 1 by this time? *Not a date specifically; as our current grade is 'good' we are expecting a short Ofsted inspection for their next visit, which makes it difficult to be regraded as outstanding. We aim to self-assess as outstanding as soon as we can, but maintaining a grading of 'good' with the pandemic impact has been an achievement.*
- Is there a longer-term comparison for college grading as this data is only to 2018? *Historically the college was a grade 3 'satisfactory' for a long time until 2014 when it was graded 'good overall and outstanding for leadership and management'. In 2017 the college was graded 'good' for all areas.*
- The college has consistently been grade 2 'good' for some years now, what is preventing this progressing to outstanding? *Changes to the Ofsted inspection framework over recent years mean that the same performance may now be graded lower, so organisations have had to improve to be able to maintain the same Ofsted grade. A grade 2 'good' is also an extremely wide band and so performance can be improved but still fall within the same grading band, even without taking into account inspection criteria changes. It is extremely difficult to achieve an Ofsted outstanding grade overall, shown by the tiny proportion of colleges that have achieved this under the new framework.*

The Chair recognised the achievement of the college in delivering all that it has to the standard it has during the challenges of the pandemic.

The report was recommended to the Board.

5.2 FE Quality Improvement Plan

The Deputy Principal presented the FE Quality Improvement Plan. The Plan provides a focus for addressing the most significant issues to address affecting quality of provision, but there will always be additional areas to address that arise throughout the year and so this will be reviewed in-year.

The report was recommended to the Board.

5.3 HE Self-Assessment Report

The Deputy Principal presented the HE Self-Assessment Report.

- Why have some of the grades moved from 1 to 2? *Several factors have led us to reflect that in those areas we are now performing as good rather than outstanding. The outstanding criteria have been affected by the student experience being less positive, due to online learning in the pandemic as one of the features of our HE provision that attracts students is the small, in-person tutoring and learning sessions. Achievement in-year was affected by the job roles that some of our HE students do such as front line care work, meaning they had less available time for study and took breaks in learning to focus on work during the pandemic.*
- The gender profile for HE is 66% female, is there any reason for the gender imbalance? *A large element of our HE provision is Early Years which as an industry has a far larger proportion of females, and the same is true for Animal Care. The HE courses we offer that have traditionally enrolled a higher proportion of male students (engineering and IT) have seen overall enrolment numbers drop.*
- Why has there been such drop in achievement rates for BME students? *This is because of the very small number of HE BME students and 2 students withdrew during the year, affecting the achievement rates.*
- How many HE students does the college have overall? *Approximately 175 on prescribed HE degree programmes.*
- Please explain more about the key areas for development. *There is different relationship between students and teaching staff in HE compared with FE; in FE the teacher is more directive in their role and in HE the teacher is*

facilitating learning through discussion, evaluating and encouraging further independent study. Being clearer with students on the expected differences here at an earlier stage will help them move to independent learning sooner.

The HE Self-Assessment Report was recommended to the Board.

5.4 HE Quality Improvement Plan

The Deputy Principal presented the HE Quality Improvement Report. The committee considered the report in relation to the HE Self-Assessment report.

The Quality Improvement Report was recommended to the Board.

6. Curriculum and Quality Report

The Deputy Principal presented the Curriculum and Quality Report to the committee.

The key item being addressed initially is the attendance rate, especially at GCSE English and Maths sessions for 16-18 year-olds. This has been affected by some having to isolate due to covid cases. Overall student feedback has been very positive. We are able to use data from Power BI to inform this report.

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategy is moving away from graded and developmental observations of teachers and piloting a new form of peer development. This has so far been received positively by staff but is in the early stages of implementation.

- Why is Service Industries showing such a high proportion of students at high risk of failing? *The department is particularly focused on identifying any students early on who may have additional needs such as relating to anxiety, so that they can access interventions for them to achieve well.*
- How will staff be prepared for Ofsted graded judgements when we have an inspection? *Ofsted are no longer grading individual lessons but forming judgements on the quality of education overall from a broad range of evidence including learning walks. The college is carrying out learning walks to ensure staff and students are used to people coming into lessons.*

The level 3 qualification review could have a big potential impact for the college, depending on the decisions taken around funding for some level 3 qualifications that we currently deliver such as in sport and creative arts. Any developments or announcements will be closely monitored.

Action	By Whom	Deadline
Teaching Learning and Assessment Strategy update to be presented to the Board.	Clerk	December Board meeting
Make the Board aware of the potential significance of the Level 3 qualification review as part of the CQS committee report.	Vicky Field (Chair)	December Board meeting

The report was noted by the committee.

7. Annual Report on Student and Employer Complaints

The Vice Principal for Student Engagement presented the Annual Report on Student and Employer Complaints.

Although there has been an increase in the number of student complaints it has been recognised that historically there have been a very low number of complaints. This has been due in part to the College Leadership Team successfully dealing with lower level complaints before they are recorded. Whilst this is good that complaints are dealt with, SMT do need to have a clear picture of where the issues are. Compliments are recorded as well as complaints.

Informal complaints relating to enrolment processes have significantly reduced compared to the previous year, showing that action has been taken and successfully addressed the cause of previous complaints.

- Do you feed back to the complainant once improvements have been made? *Yes where appropriate to do so. We are planning to do more through Student Voice to have visual displays showing action taken to address complaints.*

Project Why has helped encourage a culture of welcoming complaints as a way to improvements.

- The Complaints Policy on the portal references an Appendix D which does not seem to be available.

Action	By Whom	Deadline
Check Complaints Policy and appendices on Governor Portal and add any missing information	Clerk	As soon as possible

The report was noted by the committee.

8. Committee Self-Assessment

The Chair recognised that the committee Terms of Reference would benefit from being reviewed against the committee Cycle of Business, and also the new college strategy currently being developed.

Action	By Whom	Deadline
Committee Terms of Reference to be reviewed and updated.	Clerk	Once new Clerk appointed

Whilst there are some benefits to meeting virtually such as travel time, the committee reflected that at least every alternate meeting should be in person. Any proposed online meetings should be reviewed against the cycle of business as there are some discussions and reviews which are more beneficial to have in-person.

The committee would like to invite one more governor to join this committee, initially from the current governing body and potentially from new governors hoping to be recruited. A background in education may be useful but not essential, as long as the governor is willing to be able to examine and question.

Action	By Whom	Deadline
Committee Chair to discuss with Chair of Governors the appointment of another governor to this committee.	Vicky Field, Chair	Before December Board meeting

The committee considered whether it would be useful to reinstate a workshop session specifically to examine the Self-Assessment Reports, rather than within this meeting.

Action	By Whom	Deadline
Consideration of a SAR workshop to be included in committee report for discussion at next Board meeting.	Vicky Field, Chair	Before December Board meeting
Any further comments on the self-assessment of the committee to be sent to the committee Chair for inclusion in the committee report to the Board.	All committee members	Before Monday 22 nd November.

9. Any Other Business

No matters were raised.

10. Future Business and Reflection

The next meeting will be held on 3rd March 2022 and will be held face-to-face. The Head of Faculty for Service Industries will be invited to attend.

The meeting ended at 7.30pm.

Approved for signature.....

Signature.....

Date.....