

**Minutes of the
Quality, Standards and Achievement Committee
Tuesday 13 October 3.30pm
Video conference - Microsoft Teams**

- Present:** Richard Dimbleby (Chair)
Sharon De Leonardis (SDL)
Melissa Peacock (MP)
Ian Pryce (IP)
Allan Schofield (Asch)
Sheila Selwood (SS)
Luisa Vecchio (LV)
- In attendance:** Georgina Ager (Vice Principal)
John Guiney (Head of Quality)
Em Lowe (Vice Principal)
Alex Mortby (Director of HE)
Rachel Nicol (Director of Governance & Clerk to the Corporation)
Petra Williams (Director of Quality, Learning, Teaching and Assessment)

QSA/21/20 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Sulaman Sunny

QSA/22/20 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations from those present relevant to the matters on the agenda.

QSA//20 Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

The potential for a Northamptonshire Sixth form. GA represents the Group on the Corby Town Board and negotiations are taking place with a prospective landlord. GA will keep the Committee updated

There were no other matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

QSA/24/20 Academic Risk

The Vice Principal responsible for Quality presented the report and highlighted progress made during Covid and the steps taken to ensure delivery of a high-quality education on site and remotely. The Risk Register has been updated and meetings have taken place with Public Health England and the Borough to discuss cases in Bedford with cases attributed to community rather than College transmission.

The College's approach to Centre Assessed grades had resulted in very few appeals and the processes in place were considered strong.

The Committee discussed the frequency of meetings with local authorities and the intelligence gathered. It was confirmed the Vice Principal based in Northamptonshire has weekly meetings in Northamptonshire but Bedfordshire meetings are less frequent. The Committee explored the position on future examination sittings and the resource required to accommodate the number of students involved. The numbers have increased but this concurs with the experience of other Colleges. There is no government contingency arrangements for students who cannot attend because they are isolating and they will then join the next sitting.

Student behavior is noted to be good and the Committee sought assurance on the measures in place to monitor and reach this judgement. Measures have included checks on the wearing of ID badges, students complying with the Covid distance measures and handing work in on time.

The Committee noted the positive progress in moving open events on line and some members had viewed the BSF event.

The report was noted.

QSA/25/20 Stakeholder feedback

Agenda item 6 on stakeholder feedback was taken next.

The Head of Quality introduced the Stakeholder feedback paper covering the plans for obtaining feedback in 2020-2021. The Committee was updated on additional dates agreed since the report; employer survey internal (January 2021) and external (March 2021)

Surveys will open and close at set times. Distance learning and parent surveys are currently open and will be closed in December for a snap shot review before they are run for a second period.

Despite the inability to receive face to face feedback all stakeholder groups will be surveyed in the current year.

A top five wish list is being worked on with student representatives and the Committee agreed to review when the induction survey results are reported.

The report was noted.

QSA/26/20 HE NSS scores

The Director of HE attended to present the report and explained the context. A short survey was carried out between January and April. The response rate for the Group remains static at 68% and work is being carried out to increase engagement. A number of responses were recognised to be on a negative trajectory after previously being on a positive trajectory and this was a cause for concern.

Positives were outlined including: learner voice, improved resources and strong academic support in a number of areas. Areas of concern were outlined and assurance given that a targeted intervention plan is in place and will be monitored by the HE Steering Group. Positive work has been done to simplify partnership arrangements, in particularly at Shuttleworth. It was however recognised that partnership arrangements need to be carefully monitored and simplified to ensure clarity of responsibility and improvement in performance.

The low score on course organisation was of particular concern given some areas had performed positively and intervention plans will be shared at a future meeting. A further concern was raised in that the bulk of the responses were understood to have been provided pre Covid.

Results were not as anticipated and a potential discourse between student feedback and internal reporting was already being reviewed by Executive. Systems for improved communication of problems through the management structure and independent focus groups are being established to ensure intervention is effective.

The Committee will see the HE review and QIP as a separate report at the next meeting and will ensure oversight.

The survey is recognised as an external survey and there is limited ability to explain the potential interpretation of questions.

In addition to the QIP the Committee requested a ***detailed report on the relationships with the partnerships and asked for further reasons for the NSS feedback.*** The Committee will then seek to monitor impact of actions being taken on student satisfaction.

The report was noted.

The Director of HE also confirmed the OfS – regulation framework has been paused and the Committee will be updated when it is restarted.

The Director of HE left the meeting.

QSA/27/20 Academic Progress

The Head of Quality provided an overview on the report. The data illustrates the robust nature of the process in place to establish centre assessed grades (“CAG”).

242 requests were received for details of the centre assessed grades, 106 of these were received following the issue of moderated grades and prior to the decision to accept CAG grades.

22 appeals were investigated, primarily by the Quality team with subject specialism involvement. 3 students were successful and errors were attributed to administration errors. Following each error identified, all potential students who could be impacted by the same error were checked. It was confirmed the awarding bodies have corrected the errors. An analysis was also carried out from an EDI perspective and no issues of concern were noted.

Further work is being carried out with awarding bodies to support students who have requested a review.

An overview of grades was provided showing an upward trend on GCSEs and A levels A* to C up with A* to A being slightly down.

The Committee appreciated the detailed level of the report but requested that tables on achievement include the targets for ease of reference and monitoring. It was confirmed that targets are always set for improvement year on year and also that no National Achievement Rates Table (“NART”) tables will be available for 2019-2020.

The report was noted.

QSA/28/20 Dashboard

The Director of Quality, Teaching, Learning and Assessment explained the dashboard and targets presented. Attendance was at 85.16% in the last academic year. English and Maths attendance was at 70% in the last academic year with the current target set at 80%. The retention target for the year end was noted at 95% but is on a sliding scale throughout the year to enable monitoring.

HE targets including access and participation targets (polar 1 noted to refer to disadvantaged areas) were confirmed as matching the targets in the Access and Participation plan. The number targets referenced were noted to relate to the gaps.

POLAR (Participation of Local Areas) classifies local areas into five groups - or quintiles - based on the proportion of young people who enter higher education aged 18 or 19 years old. Quintile one shows the lowest rate of participation. Quintile five shows the highest rate of participation.

It was confirmed that T levels are not planned to be delivered this year but commence in September 2021.

Targets have been set either against the NART tables or against the College’s own achievement in previous year to ensure continuous improvement.

It was agreed that an HE target will be included in the student satisfaction targets.

The dashboard was noted for future monitoring.

QSA/29/20 Learning, teaching and assessment in Covid and impact of Covid

Quality newsletters have continued throughout Covid to disseminate training, to promote ILT champions to assist in implementation of class teams and improvement of knowledge and establish expectations for delivery. Class teams is the platform being used by teachers.

Checks are in place for monitoring quality of provision including: drop in sessions, interventions, the 3i review (intent implementation and impact), learning walks, student focus groups and forums.

The Committee discussed student access to IT. The bursary is in place to ensure students are not disadvantaged and bookable spaces are also available within the campus buildings.

The governor who had attended the Estates SAR reiterated to the Committee the size of the Estate including 53 buildings across 22 sites and commended the successful delivery of projects and readiness of the buildings for learning. The achievement of the IT department in ensuring remote working for students and staff in a short time frame was also commended, together with the work of many other support departments.

The Committee sought assurance on the activities on the ground. The staff governor provided information on the challenges in delivering remote learning. Students and staff have had to adapt very quickly. Positives of blended learning were highlighted but the Committee also acknowledged the additional costs incurred as a result of Covid.

The College was noted to have strong financial management and to be in a more fortunate position than some other colleges. Accessibility to the catch-up fund and restrictions, and development of an action plan were outlined including: English and Maths hubs in different campuses and small groups with targeted learning. This funding is subject to restrictions.

The report was noted.

QSA/30/20 Professional development

The staff development conference in its normal format did not take place in the summer. An online suite of speakers was however arranged in August including an expert on the teenage brain and a speaker on vocational education policy across 4 European countries.

All videos are available for staff to access.

The "Risk It" initiative was outlined, the first phase being for staff to meet with a knowledgeable other, discuss what they will create, the second phase being to create and the third phase being to reflect on it providing peer support. Staff are being encouraged to research and share externally and the overall plan is to generate as much impact as possible.

Chair approved 21.10.20

Toolkits and training are provided and the Quality department are looking to get the toolkits certificated

The Committee asked whether engagement and participation have been as expected given the timing and online delivery. Numbers of areas participating and engagement are felt to be higher than in previous years. The online model has improved cross campus collaboration and accessibility of training to wider numbers. Training for course managers on timetabling and new enrolment applications have been considered to be a real success.

The Committee commended the commitment to CPD and sought assurance around the social and emotional difficulties for students and how the links between this and educational engagement are being explored. The Risk It initiative will promote exploration of these areas. Trauma training is also being provided and this is being delivered to Personal Achievement Tutors (“PATs”) as an addition to the mental health first aider training already provided. The challenges of delivering in a large college with multi campuses were acknowledged but being met.

The report was noted.

QSA/31/20 Work plan and action log

The need to review the Quality strategy, outstanding on the action log was highlighted.

It was confirmed that now targets are in place the Strategy can be updated and brought to the next meeting.

It was confirmed that the HE Self-Assessment Document (“HESED”) and QIP will be presented separately.

QSA/32/20 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 9 June 2020 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

The Committee members were thanked for their attendance.