

Minutes of the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee Meeting

Held Tuesday 16 March 2021

Present	Lance Hanson (<i>Chair</i>), David Allen, Andy Dobson (<i>Principal</i>), Jake Hiatt, Zubeda Limbada, Joanne Rouse
In attendance	Joanne Williams (<i>Director of Learning and Teaching</i>) Mandy Davis (<i>Director of Learner Services</i>) Jennifer Sunter (<i>Clerk to the Corporation</i>)
Observer	Dan Grant

It was agreed that agenda item 9, Report on Apprenticeships be taken before item 7, Consideration of the Quality Improvement Plan and the minutes reflect this.

1	Apologies
	There were none.
2	Declarations of Interest
	There were none.
3	Minutes of the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee Meeting held 17 November 2020 and Matters Arising
	<p>The minutes of the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee Meeting, held 17 November 2020 were approved as a correct record, subject to a minor correction.</p> <p>The Clerk reported that under the minutes of the meeting held 17 November 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item 4a, Appointment of Committee Vice-Chair, Jo Rouse had been appointed as vice chair. Item 14a, Any other Business, Apprenticeship and Adult provision reports were scheduled for March and June respective committee meetings. <p>There were no further matters arising.</p>
Action 3a	The Clerk noted that with regard to reporting on Current Year targets under item 9, that this item be included in the June Committee agenda.

4	Student Performance and Progress Report
	<p>Joanne Williams reported on student retention and attendance, emphasising the challenges and risks during national lockdowns and in students' concerns regarding returning to College. The potential impact of mental health issues on longer term achievements was also highlighted. However, attendance for the first week of returning to College and performance gauged from recent Curriculum Area Review meetings were both positive.</p> <p>Areas of most concern regarding retention were noted, including for the current A2 cohort.</p> <p>Members asked if there were any trends regarding students leaving. Joanne Williams responded that exit information was gathered and that while mental health and domestic concerns were notable, no trends were discernible.</p>

Action 4a	Members asked questions about data provision. It was recognised that data across cohorts impacted by the pandemic could not be viewed as normal, and therefore it was hard to extract patterns or trends, however, reports could be adapted to include numbers in addition to percentages across three years.
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5	Teacher Assessments
	<p>Joanne Williams explained the complexity of addressing the range of qualifications for courses across the College provision. While there were no A Level and GCSE exams in 2021, there were exams for some areas such as AAT Accounting and potentially for Functional Skills.</p> <p>Confidence in teacher assessed grades was based on standardising the approach and fairness in assessing what had been addressed under a syllabus. This was being reviewed with each curriculum area.</p> <p>The College awaited further detail on individual vocational qualifications, which would predominantly focus on coursework. Qualifications where there was a licence to practise, were of some concern, but focus was upon reassuring students that there was a fair process.</p> <p>The student governor asked about the status of work experience. Joanne Williams detailed the College support to address work experience opportunities for students where it was a required component of their course, and for all students. Alongside the virtual work experiences being provided, the reopening of schools, and other areas where work experience could be conducted appropriately, could increase opportunities going forward.</p> <p>The Chair asked about communication to stakeholders and appeals. Joanne Williams reported that this was being addressed with focus on assessments being firmly based on evidence from students' work. Students were aware of their assessments, therefore should not be surprised by their grades. However, the College was sensitive to external assessment requirements and would support students, both through additional sessions and the offer in supporting mental health and resilience.</p> <p>The Chair commended the curriculum staff for their professionalism.</p> <p>The update on the approach to teacher assessments was received.</p>

6	Pastoral Report
	<p>Mandy Davis provided a detailed summary of the pastoral activity to support students. Previous restructuring had been timely in enabling new teams to work together very responsively to support students through the pandemic.</p> <p>Members received updates in relation to safeguarding, wellbeing, equality and diversity and work experience, in addition to use of platforms for delivery, tracking and monitoring.</p> <p>With regards to student support needs Mandy Davis reported on success in working with partners which reduced assessments and provided early student support, and the use of a programme to support core competencies of mental fitness.</p> <p>The student governor confirmed that the mental health support offer remained important.</p>

	Members discussed reporting on equality and diversity. This included understanding how reporting related to the organisation, to staff and to students in addition to how governors are leaders.
Action 6a	It was agreed that consideration would be given to reporting on equality and diversity.

9	Report on Apprenticeships
	<p>Joanne Williams reported on the key findings from the report undertaken by external consultant Dan Grant.</p> <p>While the report highlighted the positives in provision and Joanne Williams outlined the significant changes in both leadership and monitoring arrangements, members understood that there were many actions for improvement.</p> <p>Members noted that a discreet Quality Improvement Plan and targets had been put in place, and that actions were being addressed.</p> <p>Both Joanne Williams and Andy Dobson reported that the College was reviewing the approach to apprenticeship offer, to align more clearly with strategic aims. This was with clear intent to focus on specialist areas of strength, in addition to the continuing offer on meeting community need. This would initially mean lower apprenticeship numbers, then with growth focused of quality provision in a narrower set of areas.</p>
Action 9a	Members noted the large number of actions and how this related positively to close support, management and oversight of the area. It was agreed that the report would be returned to the Committee for monitoring.

7	Consideration of QIP 2020/2021
	<p>Joanne Williams reported on the College Quality Improvement Plan and the key areas that remained, despite being overshadowed by the pandemic.</p> <p>These included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students achieving at or above their target grades when operations were more normal • improvement of Functional Skills outcomes • more engaging Level 1 course offer, • increased enrichment • employer engagement and work placement including with regard to T Levels • A Level retention • student attendance • ensuring systems deployed reduced workload. <p>In response to questions on monitoring of the QIP, Andy Dobson noted that the current two-year timescale was challenging and could not be solely data-measures driven. However, it remained important to remain clear on key challenges, and when these were reviewed in the cycle. Andy Dobson further stressed the basic approach in properly diagnosing problems and encouraging ownership of solutions.</p>
	The Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee agreed to recommend the Quality Improvement Plan to the Corporation.

8	<p>Learning, Teaching and Assessment Report - in year 2020/2021</p>
	<p>Members noted that assessment was of online lessons and from student survey responses and that there had been an overarching culture of being “in it together”, with teachers doing all that they could to ensure learning.</p> <p>Development in online practice had grown from experience and opportunity to innovate. The Chair noted the excellent opportunity for sharing good practice and Joanne Williams reported on positive examples while overall this had been variable. Some staff had recorded lessons and this was a resource that students liked. Staff confidence had also grown in checking student engagement and using breakout rooms.</p> <p>While students mostly preferred face to face lessons, or if on line, to type rather than to talk, there were exceptions to this based predominantly on curriculum areas and that some students felt better able to contribute in lessons held online.</p> <p>The student governor confirmed that students who were personally more outgoing were more likely to use their webcam, but would feel discouraged if the majority of their class were off camera. It was felt, that in hindsight, greater encouragement of participation on camera could have been given.</p> <p>Joanne Williams reported on excellent work in catering, through bringing the kitchen to screen. While there was always scope for improvement, some of the excellent practice should be retained moving forward.</p> <p>Members asked what devices students were using for online learning. Joanne Williams reported that lap tops were predominant, with some use of desk top computers, tablets and play stations, however, some students were still using mobile telephones, despite the College offer of lap tops where this was the case.</p> <p>The Chair noted that there was no precedence for what teachers were having to address and commended their work, their research and their commitment, which made them a credit to the College.</p> <p>The report was received.</p>
10	<p>Courses Under Notice - in year 2020/2021</p>
	<p>Members noted that courses under notice were listed, based on retention or achievement falling below the national rate.</p> <p>Joanne Williams reported that focus remained on retention of students and that retention together with pass rates formed course achievement rates. Vocational retention rates were good and while pass rates were not yet known, the direction of travel was leading to an increase in achievement rates. A Level achievement would be impacted by the lower retention rate.</p> <p>The report was received.</p>
11	<p>Any Other Business</p>
	<p>College Covid Testing Centre</p> <p>The staff governor provided feedback on the success of the College testing centre, with approximately six hundred tests undertaken each day. Andy Dobson confirmed how effective the centre was operating, with thanks to staff and community volunteers, who supported community pharmacists in impressive delivery.</p>

	Having attended the Equality and Diversity Consultative Forum a governor highlighted how responsive the College was, particularly noting the timeliness of a Staying Safe presentation provided for tutorials.
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12	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting of the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee is scheduled for Tuesday 15 June 2021.</p>
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The meeting closed at 7.45pm

ACTIONS ARISING FROM MEETINGS		
<i>Actions from the meeting held 17 November 2020</i>		
Action 14a	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Joanne Williams proposed that apprenticeships and adult provision be addressed specifically in March and June meetings of the Committee, respectively.</p> <p><i>Achieved.</i></p>	<p>JWi</p> <p>March 21</p> <p>June 21</p>
<i>Actions from the meeting held 16 March 2021</i>		
Action 3a	<p>The minutes of the meeting held 17 November 2020</p> <p>The Clerk also noted that with regard to reporting on Current Year targets under item 9, that this item be included in the June Committee agenda.</p> <p><i>Update: These will now be provided to Corporation as part of all College targets.</i></p>	<p>June 21</p>
Action 4a	<p>Student Performance and Progress Report</p> <p>Members asked questions about data provision. It was recognised that data across cohorts impacted by the pandemic could not be viewed as normal, and therefore it was hard to extract patterns or trends, however, reports could be adapted to include numbers in addition to percentages across three years.</p>	<p>June 21</p> <p>September 21</p>
Action 6a	<p>Pastoral Report</p> <p>It was agreed that consideration would be given to reporting on equality and diversity.</p>	<p>21/22 Cycle</p>
Action 9a	<p>Report on Apprenticeships</p> <p>Members noted the large number of actions and how this related positively to close support, management and oversight of the area. It was agreed that the report would be returned to the Committee for monitoring.</p>	<p>June 21</p> <p>September 21</p>