

Students, Curriculum & Quality Committee

Wednesday 11 June 2025, 6:00-7:55pm
Block 1 Boardroom (1.204)



Meeting papers link: [11 June 2025 \(GovernorHub\)](#)

Committee members:

Sarah Dawson
Gail Rothnie (Committee Chair)
Anna Sutton – via Teams

Officers in attendance:

Sarah Bullus, Assistant Principal
Steph Morley, Director of Governance
Jon Priest, Chief Information Officer
Craig Tucker, Assistant Principal
Jo Williams, Deputy Principal/CEO

APPROVED MINUTES

Item	Discussion	Action
1	<p>Welcome and introductions</p> <p>The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance.</p> <p>It was confirmed the meeting was quorate and that the virtual attendee was able to hear and participate in the meeting.</p>	
2	<p>Procedural matters</p>	
2.1	<p><u>Apologies</u></p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted from O. Preece, T. Powers and J. Carman.</p>	
2.2	<p><u>Declarations of interest</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest for this meeting.</p>	
2.3	<p><u>Minutes of last meeting and actions/matters arising</u></p> <p>The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2025.</p> <p>All actions from the previous meeting were confirmed as complete.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to postpone the student engagement session with governors to the Autumn term and schedule a further session towards the end of the Spring term.</p>	
3	<p>Current year performance, progress and risk</p>	
3.1	<p><u>Performance against KPIs/targets and predicted outcomes</u></p> <p>J. Priest presented the report and the following was highlighted/discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Attendance was marginally down from the same point last year- Retention was 92.26%, broadly in-line with last year- Value Added (VA) from AP4 was currently a grade 5 for both A1 and A2 - most subjects were on a positive trajectory	

- Vocational VA showed students were not achieving grades above target in Level 3 qualifications across a range of areas

The Committee asked about confidence in A Level predictions. J. Williams advised this was a mixed picture - practice across subjects was not consistent and more emphasis would be placed on expectations going forward to ensure consistency. J. Priest informed governors about the challenges of predicting grades, due to vast differences across the datasets, and also about the upcoming inclusion of BTECs into ALPS.

The Committee noted the achievement of higher grades at Level 3 as an area for improvement and asked what would be done to achieve a positive VA measure. C. Tucker reported the work done to date had mainly been with A Level staff due to data availability and learning from this would be used to work with vocational staff. J. Williams explained how the VESPA model (Vision, Effort, Systems, Practice and Attitude) would be introduced, first with A Level (its intended focus), followed by vocational if successful. She also spoke about the different methods used by the college to scrutinise the difference between expected and achieved grades, and the planned work to ensure all staff were putting their training into practice.

The Committee **noted** the report.

3.2 QIP progress

C. Tucker presented the report and the following was highlighted/discussed:

Apprenticeships

- Retention was below target but above national average
- Achievement was on track to meet target, with high grades in particular providing a positive picture
- Student and employer satisfaction was strong

Attendance

- (Resit) Maths & English continued to pose the biggest challenge for attendance
- Sports, Humanities and Catering had improved attendance at all provision levels

The Committee noted the good work undertaken by Sports, Humanities and Catering regarding attendance and asked what action had been taken to make this improvement. C. Tucker advised the reasons were subject-specific - a new Head of Division, fewer students resitting Maths & English, and resolved staffing issues respectively.

The Committee referred to areas for development within the QIP and KPI report, and asked if concerns were fairly spread. J. Williams explained Level 3 accounting (AAT) was a common factor and that the introduction of Level 2 in September would help to address this, as it would provide a more appropriate entry level for some students.

The Committee asked if any departments/subjects had excelled at promoting and achieving good attendance. C. Tucker advised Sport had achieved this through an increased emphasis on knowing each and every student, which had been driven by the Head of Division. J. Williams confirmed the lessons learned from this achievement would be replicated where possible across the new staffing structure.

The Committee **noted** the report.

3.3 Risks aligned to SCQC

J. Priest presented the risk dashboard and the risks assigned to the SCQC, following the following was highlighted/discussed:

The Committee spoke about the risk (and opportunities) related to students' use of AI, the pace of change/development and the implications for assessment. The Committee asked how prepared students were for its use and it was confirmed students were ready, particularly as AI was now incorporated into everyday life.

C. Tucker referred to the risk regarding the new Ofsted framework and advised its publication was expected next term, with inspections commencing in November 2025.

In line with earlier discussions, the Committee acknowledged the risk level for student attendance had been increased during the risk register's review in May 2025.

S. Bullus referred the Committee to the increased risk level around youth gang violence due to the local picture, rather than incidents at college. She spoke about the continued work with partner agencies and the importance of intelligence sharing within the local area (and beyond). The Committee asked about the use of security arches – S. Bullus explained they were used approx. twice per year – students were not informed in advance; however, the situation was managed differently for students with EHCPs. The Committee asked if there had been any instances of knives being found on students – J. Williams confirmed there had been none this year to date; however, staff were not complacent and worked to the assumption that 'it does happen here'.

The Committee thanked J. Priest for presenting the risk dashboard and **noted** the risks aligned to the SCQC.

4 **In year updates (Students)**

4.1 Safeguarding and wellbeing

S. Bullus presented the report, highlighting the continued increasing complexity and workload of the safeguarding issues and incidents addressed by the college's safeguarding team. The following was highlighted/discussed:

- Mental health remained high priority, with increased use of wellbeing services/drop-ins and referrals to outside agencies
- Youth violence was seeing greater prominence than in previous years, which was being responded to via working with external partners for collaboration, guidance and intelligence, building effective networks, and keeping knowledge relevant and up-to-date
- Policies/procedures were being reviewed to prepare for the Martyn's Law requirements for colleges, including staff and student lockdown drills

The Committee **noted** the report and acknowledged the work of the Safeguarding team, particularly the continued increasing workload and complexity of issues.

4.2 Learner Voice

J. Williams presented the report, covering feedback from apprentices, adult students, HE students and the college-wide Summer 2025 survey. She advised the responses from all four surveys were positive and that where areas for improvement had been identified, follow-up actions were being implemented (as appropriate). She noted there

had been no unexpected issues or concerns raised and that the key messages from students were the importance of teachers, friendships and practical sessions.

The Committee **noted** the results from the surveys, acknowledging the triangulation with what was reported during SCQC meetings.

4.3 Supreme Court ruling re gender

The Committee **noted** the attached briefings (AoC and EHRC) and acknowledged the need to wait for further guidance for colleges before fully responding to the ruling.

5 **In-year updates (Curriculum & Quality)**

5.1 Teaching, learning & assessment and staff development

C. Tucker presented the report, which provided an update on quality assurance and staff development activity. The following was highlighted/discussed:

- 249 lesson observations had been undertaken in total, with staff commenting on the process having a supportive and developmental approach
- Data-driven and staff development actions arising from divisional reviews informed the divisional QIPs
- The recent staff development day had been successful, with more feedback received than ever before
- Processes have been put in place to triangulate the impact of training with student outcomes
- The college was co-hosting the Black Country Colleges Learning & Skills Research Network conference on 18/06/25 (agenda included in report)

The Committee welcomed the college co-hosting the LSRN conference and asked if the agenda included academic content as well as practical sessions. C. Tucker confirmed this, adding that some college staff members were contributing to the agenda and linking this to their CPD/qualifications.

C. Tucker referred governors to the previously requested information – numbers of recently qualified teaching staff throughout the college, which was acknowledged by the Committee. The Committee thanked C. Tucker for this information and requested this be added into the regular report presented to SCQC.

CT

The Committee **noted** the report.

5.2 Apprenticeships and employer engagement

(i) **Apprenticeships:** J. Priest presented the report and referred governors to the previously requested information about reasons for withdrawal. The following was highlighted/ discussed:

- The main reason for withdrawal was performance issues in employment and/or at college (38%), followed by mental health (19%) and job offer (14%)
- In some instances, employers had refused time off for EPA once the apprentice had achieved their professional qualification
- Apprenticeships would be aligned with the existing divisions, rather than be separate from the rest of college provision

Where employers had refused time off for EPA, the Committee asked what was being done to reduce this risk. J. Williams advised the college would not continue to work with these employers and that apprenticeship contracts were being reviewed to prevent this occurring again.

The Committee acknowledged the positive picture presented in the report, noting how performance was favourable to the national position, and asked whether the college had ambition for growth. J. Williams advised there would be growth following the introduction of Level 2 AAT and return of business administration apprenticeships and reported the aspiration was to reach approx. 500 apprentices.

(ii) **Employer engagement:** J. Williams presented the report and the following was highlighted/discussed:

- The recent employer survey, based on the questionnaire used by Ofsted, provided a positive picture and follow-up actions to any areas for improvement were being implemented (as appropriate)
- An employment engagement update had been incorporated into the report for the first time, which outlined the activity underway across each of the divisions
- Significant progress had been made over the last year, with all employment boards now established and meeting

The Committee welcomed the inclusion of this update and noted the report's value in providing assurance of effective engagement with employers. The Committee requested this be a standing item on future SCQC agendas.

SM

The Committee enquired about the supply of work placements for students – J. Williams advised this had been steady; however, there was a need to be more proactive with employers who had the capacity to support placements.

The Committee discussed the benefits of an annual event/employer forum bringing together each of the employment boards to celebrate the good work, share best practice and build relationships.

The Committee **noted** the report.

5.3 Careers and destinations

S. Bullus presented the report, which provided an update on careers and student destinations. The following was highlighted/discussed:

- A new Head of Careers (E. Walkington) was in place and a new careers strategy was in development (to be presented to SCQC late Autumn)
- New DfE careers guidance and revised Gatsby Benchmarks, with greater emphasis on inclusion, had been published
- The Careers Impact Internal Leadership Review started in November 2024 used the Compass+ Maturity Model and confirmed strong performance across six key areas of careers provision. The college would be involved in a peer-to-peer day, bringing careers professional together from across the region
- Data had identified the need for more tailored sessions for vulnerable students and offering both individual and group sessions
- Positive destinations were being secured for the vast majority of students. The college would continue to capture this information, despite no longer being a DfE requirement, and would utilise the dataset being collated by the WMCA

SM

The Committee thanked S. Bullus for the update and discussed the development of the new careers strategy. Governors requested a section in the strategy that captured how the delivery of the strategy would be monitored and evaluated, as well as an explanation of how identified gaps in provision informed action.

SB

The Committee noted the positive destination data and asked if this could be broken down for specific student groups, such as those from low-income families or high deprivation localities. J. Priest confirmed this was available at postcode level and could be provided at future meetings.

JP

In reference to the updated Gatsby Benchmarks and the emphasis on meaningful work experience, the Committee asked how this would be achieved. J. Williams advised updates from all work experience placements were received and quality measured as well as numbers. S. Bullus informed there were additional considerations for specific sectors, such as the safeguarding implications of placements within micro businesses and exploring the possibility of a virtual/hybrid approach.

The Committee **noted** the report.

5.4 Subcontracting

There was no further update to provide at this time.

6 Planning for 2025/26

6.1 Curriculum planning

J. Williams advised the publication of the DfE's review of curriculum and assessment was still awaited; however, expected outcomes of the review included more flexibilities and a greater commitment to T Levels. She advised, for 2025/26, the main new development for the college curriculum was the introduction of Dental Nursing (Level 3, at Shenstone House) and reflected the regular discussions held with R. Joshi (in his NHS role) regarding local skills need.

6.2 Student recruitment

J. Priest presented the report and the following was highlighted/discussed:

- A-Level recruitment was down from last year, which was not unexpected due to being at the end of the CAG/TAG cycle
- Digital and media recruitment was also below expectation
- Growth had been seen in Business, Early Years, Hair and Science

The Committee asked if the decrease in A Level recruitment was linked to local competition. J. Williams and J. Priest both confirmed this was a contributory factor, as there was increased competition from King Edwards College and the UCB Sixth Form, and advised a new/different approach to marketing would be explored.

The Committee discussed T Level recruitment being below expectation across the board, and the possible link between the continued uncertainty and lack of understanding about the qualification.

The Committee asked how applicants were 'kept warm' in the run-up to enrolment. J. Williams informed the Committee about the activity that took place from the point of offer,

including regular digital communications, a good luck card for GCSE results day and automated message from the system.

The Committee **noted** the report and looked forward to receiving the enrolment numbers in the Autumn term.

7 Strategy/policy reviews

7.1 Curriculum Strategy

J. Williams presented the final draft of the Curriculum Strategy, which had not changed significantly since being shared with the Committee in March 2025. She explained there would be a need to review the strategy following the publication of the national review of curriculum and assessment, hence the document being a short-term strategy.

The Committee **recommended** approval of the Curriculum Strategy by the Corporation at its meeting on 03 July 2025, subject to a final proof-read and date-check.

JW

7.2 Excellence in Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy

C. Tucker presented the draft of the Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy, which had been updated to reflect the themes within the recent Ofsted consultation document. He explained there would be a need to review the strategy if there were substantial changes within the published version of the new inspection framework in Autumn 2025.

The Committee asked who the intended audience of the document was – C. Tucker advised this was a combination of leadership, stakeholders and teaching staff; therefore, the strategy had needed to reflect this mix.

The Committee acknowledged the emphasis on student aspirations and asked how this would be measured. J. Williams advised impact would be evaluated using observations, divisional reviews and KPIs. The Committee noted the importance of this activity and requested an impact statement be added into the strategy prior to presentation to the Corporation.

JW

The Committee **recommended** approval of the Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy by the Corporation at its meeting on 03 July 2025, subject to the addition of an impact statement.

7.3 Terms of reference review

The Committee was asked to send feedback on the Committee's terms of reference to S. Morley for consideration during their annual review later this term.

SCQC

8 Any other business

8.1 Ofsted onsite visit

C. Tucker informed the Committee of Ofsted being onsite that week for a thematic monitoring visit in relation to the University of Worcester's initial teacher training course.

8.2 Division Performance Review meeting

It was confirmed the annual meeting involving the Chair of the Corporation and Chair of SCQC would be combined with the annual achievement discussion.

There was no further business for discussion and the Chair closed the meeting at 7:55pm.

2025/26 proposed meeting dates:

- Autumn 1 TBC (Actual outcomes 24/25)
- Autumn 2 TBC (SAR 24/25 & QIP 25/26)
- Spring TBC (Mid-year updates)
- Summer TBC (Predicted outcomes 25/26)

Actions from previous meeting(s)

Student, Curriculum & Quality Committee – 20 November 2024			
Ref	Action	Owner	Status
5.10a	Explore potential termly meetings for governors with students (& staff)	DofG	Dates being set for 2025/26
Student, Curriculum & Quality Committee – 19 March 2025			
Ref	Action	Owner	Date
5.1	Include numbers of newly qualified teaching staff in TLA report going forward	CT	01/09/25
5.2	Add employer engagement as a standing agenda item	SM	01/09/25
5.3	Add the careers strategy to the forward plan of business for the Autumn 2025 term	SM	31/07/25
5.3	Incorporate a statement/section on gap identification and evaluation of progress	SB	Autumn 2025
5.3	Include students identified as being from deprived/ financially challenged backgrounds in destination data	JP	Autumn 2025
7.1	Undertake final proofread and present to Corporation for approval	JW	25/06/25
7.2	Incorporate a statement on evaluation of progress and present to Corporation for approval	CT	25/06/25
7.3	Send any feedback regarding the terms of reference to SM	SCQC	30/06/25