

**Minutes of the
Academic Standards and Quality Development Committee
held on Tuesday 8 December 2015 at 8.00am
in Room 814 at the Matthew Boulton Campus**

Present:	Apologies:
	Jenni Ord (JO)
Veronica Docherty (VD) (Chair)	
Andrew Cleaves (Principal and Chief Executive)	
Philip Cornish (PC)	
In Attendance:	
Adrian Morris (AM)	
Julie Nugent (JN)	
Liam Nevin (Company Secretary) LN	

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Jenni Ord.

Declarations of Interest

There were none save for those already recorded in the Register of Interests.

Item 1 - Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 2 June 2015

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting

Matters Arising and Action Log

The Action Log was noted.

Item 2 (i) – Draft SAR and QIP

Item 2(ii) – College Performance

AM introduced both reports and invited the Committee to read across the content given the integral relationship between them. He advised that the Performance Report was measuring outcomes that were consistent with the new Common Inspection Framework performance requirements. It was noted that the 2014/15 performance outturn had been discussed by the Corporation in some detail prior to this meeting and the issues and required actions identified had informed both the Recovery Plan and the Self – Assessment Report (SAR).

In relation to the SAR, the summary position was that the position was unchanged from the previous year. This was consistent with the Ofsted inspection findings and was generally in line with expectations.

The draft SAR, set out at page 3 the grading categorisations, which were now more focussed on themes of learning rather than subject specific emphasis. The table on page 4 identified the

proposed self-assessed grades for 2014-15. In addition, and by way of further analysis, the table on page 25 of the draft SAR set out the overall qualification success rate by subject area and also provided three year trend data.

VD queried the significance of "Leavers Below MS Threshold" and AM advised that this related to an assessment of the group outturn performance.

Thereafter, AM advised that part 4 of the report detailed subcontractor performance in 2014-15. The overall success rate of 96% was good and marked a significant improvement in performance on the previous year.

VD questioned the teaching and learning targets in the Recovery Plan. She noted that these were currently "red" RAG rated and it was necessary to ensure that there were interim measures of performance so that in-year interventions could be undertaken if necessary. AM advised that this was acknowledged and that such measures would be informed by induction assessment, mock exams, and a more reliable forecasting process aligned with student reviews and parental feedback.

AM noted that the Committee had, at its previous meeting, requested information on the measurement of value added and he drew its attention to the section in the SAR "Outcome for Learners" (page 13) which contained this information.

PC asked what scoring system had been used for A and As levels, and AM advised that this involved an assessment of qualifications on entry with performance then measured against the distance travelled. This demonstrated that the College was performing at the lower end of the measures.

AM concluded by advising that there was more work to do to format and align the QIP with the Recovery Plan and the PIAP. In addition, following advice from Lynne Craig the document needed to more clearly identify strengths and areas for improvement. He therefore requested, and it was agreed, that these changes be developed over the next couple of weeks in consultation with the Chair.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

- **That the Committee recommend to the Corporation that the College's Self-Assessment Report be approved subject to amendments as identified in the preamble to this minute.**

Item 3 – Annual Summary of Complaints

AM introduced this report and advised that the College had recorded more complaints in 2014-15 than the preceding year (207 as opposed to 199) and this may in part reflect the improvements introduced into the process and the desire to encourage complaints as a means of improvement.

It was noted that the areas with the highest complaints were business, medical and construction services and the report further analysed complaints by type with trend data against the previous year. AM advised that the Action Plan on page 2 of the report included actions already implemented where the target date had passed.

VD asked whether and how complaints would be used to provide intelligence on under-performing areas and AM advised that the information from complaints was used to inform the departmental QIPs.

The Principal noted that whilst the data being presented to the Executive and the Committee had improved markedly there was scope for further improvement. This included presenting data on the rate of student complaints, so that the data was moderated to reflect the population size.

VD questioned whether the College could do more to gather data on compliments and AC advised that this was one of the objectives behind the recently introduced Reward and Recognition Scheme.

VD noted that whilst the Horticulture provision was relatively small there appeared to be a high level of complaints. AM advised that the course was delivered at a satellite site and there had been issues around data connectivity and PC access.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

- **That the Committee note the report**

Item 4 (i) – Capturing the Learner Voice

AM introduced this paper and advised that it captured feedback in respect of 2014-15, whilst item 4(ii) addressed the 2015-16 induction.

Satisfaction overall was 79% and this figure was consistent with the previous year. The satisfaction rate for FE survey participants had reduced on the previous year, but there was an improved satisfaction rate in respect of induction. It was noted that the participation rate had improved considerably on the previous year.

AM advised that whilst the key actions arising from the data had been captured on page 3 of the report, there was also a need to improve participation of apprentices and HE students in these surveys.

VD noted the significant differences in participation rates between the BIG Survey and the FE Choices Survey and asked whether the reasons for this were clear.

PC stated that there had been considerable publicity around the BIG survey which had encouraged student participation. JN advised that the two surveys were carried out simultaneously but it would be worth the College revisiting the questions asked to avoid students feeling there was duplication.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

- **That the Committee note the report**

Item 4 (ii) – Induction Survey 2015-16

AM introduced the report and advised that good student participation had been secured, with approximately 6, 200 responses. The overall satisfaction rate was 80%. However, the responses to key questions when compared with 2014/15 demonstrated a negative variance.

VD noted that some inductions had not been carried out and that a number of staff were new to tutoring, and AM advised that a wider group of staff was now involved in induction and there had been some inconsistent delivery. In addition, there had been increased student recruitment to accommodate and groups were still being added during enrolment and induction.

VD noted the importance of improvement in this area because of the impact on attrition rates and commented that the clear identification of the issues and the remedial plan in section 3 of the report were helpful.

VD sought assurance that students enrolling in-year were receiving a sound induction and AM advised that there were daily induction programmes during September with personal tutors tasked with delivering the same consistent level of induction experience.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

- **That the Committee note the findings of the report and the actions**

Item 5 - Employer Survey Results

JN introduced this item and advised that the satisfaction rate had improved following a period of successive deterioration since 2010/11. However, the College was still not securing the satisfaction rates of some local competitors.

A particular issue that had been identified through analysis of the responses was an unacceptably high rate of employers who said that they would not recommend the College. It was apparent from commentary that this reflected inconsistent communication rather than quality of training and as a consequence a common set of standards had already been introduced to ensure that there was a consistent, timely and well informed response from staff who fully understood the apprenticeship journey and employer expectations. This would be fully rolled out by January 2016.

Contact was also being made with survey respondents to address the concerns raised.

VD questioned the College's intentions in respect of the introduction of the e-portfolio system and AM advised that it was not intended to introduce the system for existing apprentices but that this would not adversely affect success rates.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

- **That the Committee note the report and the implementation of the new processes and systems implemented by the Executive.**

Item 6 – Annual Report on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

AM introduced this report, prepared by Kim Vaughan, the College lead for this purpose. He explained the arrangements for safeguarding within the College, the relationship with the City Council and the breakdown of cases addressed during 2014/15 compared to previous years. It was noted that the number of cases dealt with in the last year was consistent with the number in 2013/14 but that the student population was now smaller.

VD stated that as the governor lead for safeguarding she had discussed the report with Kim Vaughan and was satisfied that the College had robust processes in place. In relation to radicalisation she sought assurance that all students had received appropriate guidance, in light of the previous discussion in the committee concerning induction. AM advised that induction had now been completed for all students and additional information was being provided to students in line with Ofsted recommendations.

The Principal requested that, as induction as a theme had arisen throughout the meeting, AM provide VD with some further data around induction quality and performance including in relation to radicalisation.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

- **That the Committee note the report and refer it to the Corporation for approval.**

Item 7 – Higher Education Quality Review 2014/15

AM introduced the report and advised that the self-evaluation document had now been submitted. The review focussed on the outturn for the last academic year and also entailed a review of the policies and procedures that supported HE provision.

Overall, the success rate had increased from 55% to 58% but the College was applying the more rigorous FE success rate measures, rather than simply assessing final year performance. This highlighted a continuing high attrition rate and over twenty programmes were in “special measures.”

The Principal summarised that overall academic standards and final year measures were good, but attrition rates and overall success rate measures were poor. A detailed action plan was set out on pages two and three of the report which would address these weaknesses.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

- **That the Committee recommend to the Corporation approval of the AMR and associated action plan.**

Item 8 – Strategic Review of HE

It was agreed that JN would update VD on progress outside of the meeting.

Any Other Business

There was no other business

Date of the next meeting – 8 March 2016

Signed:..........(Chair)

Dated:.....29-4-16.....