

Minutes of the Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee Meeting

held at 6.00pm on Wednesday 22 February 2023
at the Skills and Logistics Centre.

Present:	Mr B Armstrong (BA) Ms T Aust (TA) Mr A Smith (AS) Mr J Bolt (JB) Ms A Cornish (AC) Ms T Kaur (TK) Ms B Sandhu (BS)	Chair Principal
Apologies:	Mr L McBirney (LM)	
In Attendance:	Ms K Frost (KF) Ms M Gajewska-Kopczyk (MGK) Ms K Lehmann (KL)	Head of Governance Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality Director, Higher Education

1/23 **Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from LM. TK was attending the meeting virtually.

2/23 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest relating to the items on the agenda.

3/23 **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The minutes from the meetings of the committee held on 5 October 2022 and 23 November 2022 had been received in advance. (Papers 1 and 2).

IT WAS DECIDED the minutes were a true record of the meeting and they were approved.

4/23 **Matters Arising**

a) **Summary Action Point List**

The 'Summary Action Point List' (Paper 3) was received in advance of the meeting. Committee members noted the following updates of previously agreed action points:

Min Ref	Details of Action Point	Lead	Status Update
8 (13/10/22)	Framework for FE/HE development and collaboration – to make the framework available to the committee when published.	TA	Completed. Circulated as part of the papers for the meeting.
36 (23/2/22)	In future curriculum SARs, the SAR to include an analysis of the impact of employers on provision.	MGK	The SAR process is currently under review. Following the meeting with Bruce, and the discussion with the Principal, the draft process is currently being updated. It also includes an updated curriculum SAR template which will more explicitly focus on the contribution curriculum areas make to meeting skills needs and the impact of employers and partners. A proposal will be ready for the next meeting of the committee. The impact of employers is also included as part of deep dives.
36/22	Add an annual agenda item about the number of student disciplinarys by curriculum area to the CQS committee schedule of business.	KF	This has been added as an agenda item to the Autumn Term meeting of the Committee.

5/23 Risk Register

A 'Cover Sheet – CQS Risk Register' (Paper 4a) and the 'CQS Risk Register' (Paper 4b) were received in advance of the meeting.

Following feedback from the last Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee, the following changes had been made:

- Risks 1 and 2: There had been a review of the controls and mitigation for curriculum design and development.
- Risk 6: There had been a review of the controls and mitigation for attendance and the net score had reduced to 16.
- Risk 11: There had been a review to reflect the risk of a pandemic but without a specific focus on COVID-19. The gross and net scores for likelihood had been reduced.

Governors asked what the score for Risk 6 had been before it was reduced. The Principal said the score had been 20 but it had been reduced to 16 as it was felt the level of risk had reduced as a result of the controls and mitigation in place.

Governors discussed the governance oversight of 'Risk 1 – Curriculum' and how this would be reported to the committee. It was agreed that the Executive Team would report any curriculum changes that took place as part of the curriculum planning cycle to the committee. Changes would also be discussed at strategy days. Curriculum design was referenced in the Development Plan which was reviewed at each committee meeting.

Governors asked whether it would be worth adding a risk about the transition to T Levels and the defunding of Level 3 courses. This could be as part of another risk rather than a stand-alone risk. It was agreed to add this to the risk register.

Action: MGK

6/23 **T Level Update**

MGK gave an update about T Levels. The College was working towards starting two T Levels from September in Health and Digital (Production, Design and Development route). The implementation was on track. All managers and staff had received training.

A T Level section of the website had been launched and the College had already started to receive applications from students.

Governors asked what age the T Levels were suitable for. MGK explained T Levels were only available for 16-18 students. The College was developing two transition programmes for students who were not eligible for T Levels.

Governors asked whether T Levels were being promoted actively in schools. MGK said they would need to be advertised and promoted more in schools. Parents and students were hesitant about enrolling on new courses as there were a number of risks with the unknown.

Governors asked whether there would be any funding allowance for low recruitment in the first couple of years. The Principal said she wasn't aware of any adjustments being made. The level of funding was better for T levels but there was a need to deliver more hours.

Governors asked what the target numbers were for the courses. MGK said there would be one group for each T Level and 10-12 students in each group.

The committee discussed potential risks with competition, particularly around the amount of work experience that was needed as part of the courses.

Governors asked whether there would be further expansion of T Level provision and noted the College planned to expand the number of T Levels on offer in future years.

Governors asked whether students would need work experience in a relevant field or whether transferable skills were valid. MGK said a proportion of work experience could be in a different setting if it could be shown there were transferable skills but a proportion needed to be in a work related setting.

Governors said GSK were relocating to another area and asked whether this would impact on the College. The Principal said there would be an impact on Project Search. New alternatives were being explored.

7/23 **Higher Education Provision**

A 'Higher Education Update' (Paper 5) was received in advance of the meeting.

When the committee last met in October, it had been agreed that it was time to carry out a review of the Higher Education offer including a clear analysis of numbers and trends over the last 3 years.

The results from the analysis had been received as part of Paper 5 and indicated that it was time for the College to consider making changes to the Higher Education provision.

The following recommendations were made:

1. Retaining the franchised Higher Education provision but increasing the marketing and communications to maximise enrolment.
2. Reviewing the Higher Education offer in creative industries and switching over to the suit of UAL Level 4 Professional Diplomas. There were funded for 16-19s and were more focused on practical work.

Governors asked what the entry level would be for the courses. KL said it would be Level 3. Governors asked who would choose the qualifications over a traditional degree. KL said the qualifications would be suitable for students who weren't yet confident to go to University or who didn't want to get a loan. The courses would suit the College's market.

Governors asked whether students would be able to progress to a Level 5 course once they had completed the Level 4 course. MGK said it would depend on the content of the course they progressed onto. Some students might start again at Level 4. It would be important to get progression agreements in place.

Governors asked whether the College had considered international students. MGK said international students weren't the College's target market and the College couldn't compete with traditional universities in this area. However, there were a growing number of refugees attending the College.

Governors said they thought it was a good offer, particularly for people who were worried about funding and the issue of cost had come up in the student feedback. It was a positive move, responding to demand and being flexible which would fit with the College mission.

3. Discontinue the ICT and Business Higher Education offer for 2023-24 and continue to explore other potential Level 4 non traditional courses.
4. Continue with the HNC and HND provision in Applied Biology.
5. Increase marketing and communications to maximise enrolment.
6. Monitor, review and adjust the Higher Education offering annually, during curriculum planning, to ensure it continues to meet the needs of our students.

Referring to the Action Plan, governors asked for the leads for action and monitoring to be different people. It wasn't possible for someone to monitor an action they were responsible for.

Action: KL

Governors said it would be interesting to hear how it went. Marketing of the courses would be key.

8/23 **Data Dashboard**

The committee reviewed the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that fell under the committee's remit including: attendance, learning walks, achievement and deep dives.

a) **Attendance**

Attendance was at 85% overall for learners compared to a target of 88%. It was in line with the attendance for last year. MGK explained what the College was doing tackle attendance and punctuality.

Governors said the reasons for less than good attendance appeared to be due to the cost of living and strikes. If that was the case they would have expected the issues to be the same throughout the College but there were differences in the levels of attendance in different curriculum areas. MGK said the issues were the same throughout the College. There were a large number of reasons contributing to low attendance including the impact of COVID and a huge increase in mental health issues. The College increasingly needed to make sure there was good wrap around support for students so they were supported to achieve.

Governors asked whether students were having to pick up more responsibilities at home as a result of the cost of living crisis and the increase in mental health issues. MGK said there were examples of families needing to work longer hours so students were taking on more responsibilities at home. There were also a number of young carers. The College was inclusive, recognised diversity and focused on meeting need where it could.

Governors asked whether other colleges had also seen an increase in the number of mental health issues. The Principal said they had, this was discussed at networking meetings.

The committee acknowledged there was an issue with attendance but it would appear that the College was doing everything it could to address some of the issues.

b) **Achievement**

The final achievement rates for 2021/22 were in and were very good, showing a positive 4 year trend:

Overall: 90.3%. This was a 0.3% increase on last year and the continuation of a three year increasing trend.
16-18: 88%. This was 5% above national and in line with target.
14-16 ESOL: 94%.
High Needs: 90%.
Adults: 92%.
Apprenticeships: 64%.

The English and Maths GCSE results had been very positive.

The first round of predicted achievement for 2022-23 had been completed and was:

EPYP: 89.4%, with further improvement at Level 3.
Adult: 92.8%.
High Needs: 93%.

Governors asked why the achievement figure for 21/22 was so small for apprenticeships. MGK said that it was the year that had been impacted by COVID.

As part of curriculum self-assessment process, 29 courses with a decrease in achievement, achievement below national rates, or a decline in the proportion of students achieving their target high grades have been identified and given a Notice to Improve. The courses were closely monitored through Deep Dives, the Principal

Performance Reviews, CQEG meetings and 1-1 with Directors. 21 courses were predicting an improvement in achievement. Action plans were in place for 8 courses.

Five courses at the Skills and Logistics Centre had been issued a Notice to Improve, including three courses in Motor Vehicles and two courses in Construction. The courses in Construction were on track to improve. Two of the Motor Vehicles courses remained a concern. Individual student plans were in place.

c) **Deep Dives**

The calendar of Deep Dives had begun. So far, Deep Dives had been carried out in Motor Vehicles and Engineering, English and Health and Care.

Governors asked whether there was an issue with staff morale due to everything that was happening both internally and externally. The Principal said it varied. In areas where there were changes in management, morale was often affected. The Staff Governor said he thought morale was good in Creative Industries with dialogue, collaboration and reflection evident and people enjoyed working with each other.

d) **Learning Walks**

80 learning walks had been completed. 75% were green, 23% amber and 2% were red.

9/23 **Development Plan**

The 'Development Plan 2022-2023 – Feb 23 Update' (Paper 6) was received in advance of the meeting.

The Principal drew attention to some key areas in the report:

- A lot of work was underway around partnerships, tying into priority sectors. The College was making a large contribution to the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan and was involved with Employer Advisory Boards.
- Work continued around staff CPD with a particular focus on industry updating.
- There was a continued focus on health and wellbeing which was being positively received. Positive feedback had been received about the ongoing Leadership and Management programme. There was continued investment in staff across all areas of the organisation including curriculum and business support staff.

Governors noted that the predicted achievement for English High Grades was off target and asked whether this was a concern. MGK said she was confident the target would be achieved. Additional tuition fund sessions had been put in place.

Governors asked about the alternative approaches to recruitment mentioned in Goal 3.3. The Principal said this would involve a range of different methods with the aim of achieving greater diversity in the College's staffing. The College would be looking at non-traditional ways of recruiting staff, including the possibility of sharing roles across a number of colleges.

The committee reviewed the data for apprenticeships which appeared to be below target. It was agreed to receive a further report on this at the next meeting of the committee.

The 'Progression Pathway Agreement Comms Statement' (Paper 3a) and the 'Progression Pathway Agreement' (Paper 3b) were received in advance of the meeting.

Governors said they thought the agreement was a good step forward for students, the region and the College. They asked whether students would be guaranteed a place in

University. The Principal said they would have a definite place if they met the entry requirements for the course.

The Principal said there was a large amount of shared work taking place in the local area. A Shared Governance Event had been arranged to be held on 15 March 2023.

Governors congratulated the Principal.

10/23 **Safeguarding Report**

A 'Safeguarding Update – Feb 2023' (Paper 7) was received in advance of the meeting.

JB reported that there had been a sudden increase in the number of safeguarding incidents post COVID when the College fully re-opened. The numbers had now reduced back down. Mental health issues were having a significant impact.

JB said he was impressed by the level of commitment that the College showed in putting resource into dealing with any safeguarding issues. There had been an increase in the number of Designated Safeguarding Leads.

11/23 **Student Voice**

a) **Report from Student and Community Link Governor**

A report from the 'Holocaust Memorial Event' (Paper 8) was received in advance of the meeting. BS reported that the event had been very successful.

The College would be hosting an Iftar event on 31 March 2023. This was very positive for the local community.

b) **Report from Student Governors**

A student governor report was received at the meeting. TK summarised the report:

- Overall, feedback from students was largely positive.
- Enrichments events were taking place which were fun and beneficial for students.
- Students felt well supported, both financially and with their learning.
- Many students had been given the opportunity of work experience which was very useful.

One area that could be improved was the cleanliness of the toilets.

Governors thanked TK for the comprehensive report.

12/23 **Committee Terms of Reference**

The draft 'CQS Committee Terms of Reference 2022-23' (Paper 9) was received in advance of the meeting.

A number of amendments were suggested by governors. It was agreed the Head of Governance would make the changes and re-circulate the terms of reference to committee members.

Governors asked for a report to be provided showing how the committee was fulfilling the terms of reference.

Action: KF

13/23 **AOB**

The Principal reported that there had been a data error in the QAR data return where some qualifications that should have been down as fails were down as continuing. This made the data look more favourable than it should be. The College had taken steps to understand why it had happened and to ensure it wasn't repeated. The error had been reported to the ESFA.

14/23 **Items for the Next Agenda**

- Proposal about updated SAR process.
- Report about apprenticeship achievement.

15/23 **Date of the Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting of the committee was Wednesday 14 June 2023.

Summary of Actions

No.	Action	Lead	Target Date
5/23	Add a risk to the risk register relating to the transition to T Levels and the defunding of Level 3 courses. This could be as part of another risk rather than a stand-alone risk.	MGK	June 23
7/23	Separate the leads for action and monitoring in the Higher Education action plan so that there is a different person named for both.	KL	June 23
12/23	Carry out an analysis of the committee terms of reference and evidence how the committee is fulfilling its responsibilities.	KF	June 23