



Minutes of the Curriculum, Quality and Student Experience Committee Meeting

held at 6.00pm on Tuesday 25 February 2025
at the College.

Present: Ms R Turner (RT) Chair
Ms T Aust (TA) CEO/Principal
Mr J Bolt (JB)
Ms H Abdul Hakkeem (HAH)
Ms A Gray (AG)
Ms C Zervoudakis (CZ)
Mr G Casley (GC)

Apologies: Ms B Bata (BB)

In Attendance: Ms K Frost (KF) Head of Governance
Ms M Gajewska-Kopczyk (MGK) Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality
Mr M Cooper (MC)
Ms N Gharu (NG)
Ms K Lehman (KL)

1/25 **Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from BB. CZ was attending the meeting virtually. It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

2/25 **Declarations of Interest**

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

3/25 **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

a) **Minutes of Last Meeting**

The minutes from the meeting of the Committee held on 2 October 2024 had been received in advance. (Paper 3). IT WAS DECIDED the minutes were a true record of the meeting and they were approved.

b) **Matters Arising**

An update on progress towards the actions agreed at the last meeting was received in advance. The following matters arising were discussed:

28/24: It was confirmed that there were no students who were CME as defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

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28/24d: Governors requested a follow up on the suggestions made at the last meeting regarding the promotion of careers provision. Their recommendations had been to explore alternative advertising methods that would better engage students, such as utilising the portal or the Instagram page.

Action: MGK

4/25 **Higher Education**

a) **Higher Education Annual Report**

A 'Higher Education Update: Feb 25' (Paper 4) was received in advance of the meeting. KL summarised key points from the report.

GC entered the meeting

Governors asked whether the College explored Team Teaching with their university partners. The CEO said this had been explored in the past, for example the College worked with St Mary's to co-produce and co-deliver a course.

Governors asked if there were any plans to expand the access programmes. The CEO said the College had found access programmes were more successful when they were directly linked to a vocational area.

Governors asked what evidence there was that employers were interested in Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs). KL said HTQs were quite new but had been mapped to standards agreed by employers. The CEO said it was a complex landscape, made worse by the volume of curriculum reforms.

Governors said Higher Education needed to be considered as part of the development of the new Strategic Plan. They noted that enrolment numbers were very low and emphasised the need to evaluate its contribution. There was a discussion about the purpose of offering Higher Education. Questions remained regarding the target audience and the selection of appropriate modules however the general view was to continue with Higher Education, with the expectation that some of those questions would be answered over time. The provision provided a progression route for students and met a social and community need.

Governors said there were significant risks involved in developing Higher Education and suggested that it might be worth focusing instead on areas the College did really well. They asked who the risk was for. KL explained the current provision served a need for students who weren't ready for University and it also met local employer needs. The Higher Education provision made a modest contribution to the College.

Governors asked whether any other providers were offering the same programs as the College. KL responded that no other institution was offering the same provision and believed it to be the College's niche. She emphasised the importance of maintaining the provision as it supported students who would otherwise have limited options. Governors also noted that there might be further opportunities for growth in the future.

JB reported on a recent visit to a Careers event, noting a decline in the number of students applying to university. It was suggested that the College should better understand the aspirations and needs of these students. Apprenticeships were becoming harder to secure, and there might be value in discussing alternative

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options that could better suit their needs. KL highlighted the introduction of more Level 4 diplomas, which were funded for this age group. She pointed out that many students were hesitant to take on debt but the Level 4 diplomas offered an alternative route.

The CEO said there might be an opportunity for growth in Higher Education provision at the Skills and Logistics Centre. The University of West London had conducted research working with Local Authorities which had identified an underrepresentation of Higher Education provision in Feltham.

b) Link Governor Higher Education Report

A report from the Link Governor for Higher Education visit held on 13 January 2025 was received in advance of the meeting. (Paper 4c). CZ gave a summary from her visit. She said she had been very impressed with the work the students were doing and could see the difference the provision made. It would be important to continue to focus on areas of strength, continue to build the reputation and ensure the right resources were in place.

Governors thanked KL for the report.

KL left the meeting.

MC and NG entered the meeting.

5/25 Apprenticeships

An 'Apprenticeships Paper' (Paper 5) was received in advance of the meeting which included a report from the Further Education Commissioner (FEC) Active Support visit.

Governors said that during a visit to Fresh Start that there was a perception the apprenticeship structure was more focused on recruiting from outside rather than prioritising internal students. NG acknowledged that this was a fair perception. In recent years, the focus had been on recruiting employers looking to upskill their existing staff, but vacancies have always been open to internal students as well. The current focus was now shifting back to supporting internal students. The team were identifying students who were interested in apprenticeships and would help them find opportunities. MC added that one of the recommendations in the report was to strengthen the focus on progression to apprenticeship programs. This would involve a broader role for the apprenticeships team, working more closely with students.

Governors congratulated NG for the College achieving 'Good' for apprenticeship provision in the recent Ofsted inspection. They noted the areas of recommendation in the report from the FEC and asked what the next steps were. NG explained the steps that were being taken. Governors asked if all of the suggested improvements were included in the Apprenticeships Development Plan. NG confirmed they were. Governors asked for the Apprenticeships Development plan to be a standing agenda item so that progress towards the actions could be monitored.

Action: KF

Governors said that a key issue appeared to be a lack of sufficient employer contacts, particularly with different industries and companies in the area. They noted that the relationships with employers were not where they should be and emphasised the importance of understanding the needs of various businesses to create more opportunities.

Governors asked what the optimal size would be for the apprenticeship provision in the College. NG said it would be 150-200 apprentices.

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Governors discussed the number of apprentices at the College compared to other institutions nationally. The CEO mentioned that the College was working closely with West London Principals. It was noted that a high proportion of SMEs faced their own challenges when it came to taking on apprentices. The region ranked third from the bottom for apprenticeship starts.

In conclusion, governors asked that consideration be given to the structure of the apprenticeships team and whether any improvements could be made. They emphasised that if the College wanted to grow the apprenticeship provision, it might be necessary to invest additional resources and increase marketing efforts. They challenged the team to come back to the committee with a plan for how the growth targets could be achieved. In the meantime, the Apprenticeships Development Plan would become a standing agenda item so that progress towards the actions could be closely monitored.

RT said during her visit to the Skills and Logistics Centre, she had discussed Employer Advisory Boards and been informed that the College had recently linked with Renault who had committed to 12 work experience places and 3 students going onto an apprenticeship scheme. It was a good example of how things needed to join up.

MC and NG left the meeting.

6/25 **Student Voice**

a) **Student Governor Report**

A 'Student Governor Report' (Paper 6a) was received in advance of the meeting. Governors thanked HAH saying it was one of the best reports from a Student Governor they had received. HAH summarised key points in the report:

- Mental health and well-being remained a priority. Many students had said how much the College counselling service had aided them.
- The recent fire in the media department had impacted on students however teachers had ensured students were safe and had facilitated remote learning for two weeks. The situation was now under control thanks to the support of teachers, management and students.

Governors noted the comments in the report that students were interested in more career focused workshops and networking events and had asked for more opportunities for students to provide feedback on their academic experience. They said there were already opportunities for students to provide feedback and asked what more could be done. HAH said the questions in the surveys could be made more readable and understandable for students.

Governors said the College had recently increased the number of counsellors. AG said that mental health and wellbeing support had been an area of growth and the College had responded.

It was agreed the Student Governor report would be shared with the Director of Student Experience who would take the actions forward.

Action: MGK

b) **Community and Student Link Governor Report**

A report from the Community and Student Link Governor was received in advance of the meeting (Paper 6b). RT reported that she had attended two student voice meetings and had been very impressed with the students and staff involved.

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It was noted that some students were unaware of how their industry sector related to their studies. It was suggested that lecturers could do more to connect the curriculum to real-world employers and industry practices, helping students better understand how their studies aligned with career opportunities. While students were ambitious, many struggled to identify businesses or career paths within their sector.

7/25 **Review of Performance**

a) **Data Dashboard KPIs**

The Committee reviewed performance against the relevant KPIs:

- Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Learning walks were underway with 61% secure and 36% consolidating. They were on track to meet the targets for each of the criteria. Further work was needed on skills and meeting needs. Governors asked what was concerning leaders the most. MGK said there were no concerns, they were where they needed to be at this point of the year. Governors asked if still the College was still using external people to validate judgements. MGK said they were not planning on using external validation this year due to the Ofsted inspection.
- Deep Dives were in progress. The College continued to use a risk approach, starting with the areas that needed most support.
- Attendance continued to be a focus. It was currently 87.3% compared to the target of 88%. There were now a higher number of curriculum areas above target and all areas had made improvements compared to the same point last year.
- Achievement: Predicted achievement was broadly in line with last year. There were no concerns at this stage.

b) **Progress towards the Development Plan**

A 'Development Plan 2024-25: Feb Update' (Paper 7b) was received in advance of the meeting and was noted.

MGK said the partnerships action was still on track to meet the targets set for gaining new providers for work placements.

Governors noted the vacancy at the Skills and Logistics Centre for an employability coach. MGK said if there was a vacancy in a particular area for an employability coach, the responsibilities were assigned to a member of staff.

8/25 **Curriculum**

a) **Strategic Direction of Curriculum**

MGK provided an update on the outcome of the Post-16 qualification reform. No qualifications were being withdrawn, but there was a pause in the defunding of some. The College was currently reviewing T Level delivery for the next academic year. For example, in Childcare, the only Level 3 qualification would be the T Level, with no other qualifications offered. A similar approach would be taken the following year for Healthcare and Science. The Construction T Level had been scrapped and

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replaced by Level 3 qualifications. There were still some curriculum areas where the future was uncertain, for example, for sport.

Over the next two years, the landscape for Level 3 qualifications would be complex. The Government were slowly introducing qualifications that would sit alongside T levels such as AAQs (Alternative Academic Qualifications), and TOEQs (Technical Occupational Entry Qualifications).

Governors said curriculum reform was the biggest risk on the risk register. It was complex for employers, parents and students. They asked if there was still a concern that there might be a cohort for whom T Levels doesn't cater for. MGK said it was difficult to assess the impact at this stage due to the gradual introduction.

Governors asked if there was an opportunity to engage with employers and use this as a discussion point to strengthen relationships with them. MGK confirmed that there was an opportunity, as T Levels required significant input from employers. This provided an opportunity to engage with employers about the curriculum. Governors asked when the optimum time to engage with employers would be. MGK responded that Employer Advisory Boards (EABs) were being held, where engagement took place at the curriculum level. The focus was not only on existing employers but also on attracting new employers.

Governors noted that the Skills and Logistics Centre had recently held an EAB meeting, but no one attended. It was suggested that hosting an event for HR managers from local companies could be a better approach. The CEO said there could be an opportunity through Aspire event.

Action: MGK

b) **Accountability Agreement**

It was noted that the College was in the process of curriculum planning. The draft Accountability Agreement would be sent to the CQSE Committee prior to approval by the full Board at the May Strategy day.

Action: MGK

9/25 **Safeguarding**

The following reports were received in advance of the meeting:

- Report from the Safeguarding Link Governors monitoring visit held on 3 February 2025. (Paper 9a)
- Report from the Safeguarding Link Governors monitoring visit of the SCR held on 8 November 2024. (Paper 9b)

It was noted that there had been no issues or concerns raised during either visit.

10/25 **Risk Register**

A 'Risk Register Jan 2025 CQSEC Extract' (Paper 10a/b) was received in advance of the meeting. Governors reviewed the status of the risks noting that the only amber risk was Curriculum Reform. The Committee had a new risk to oversee 'Competition for Students'.

IT WAS DECIDED to amend the commentary for Risk 3: Ofsted to reflect the recent Ofsted grade of Outstanding.

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11/25 **Strategy Development**

Slides from the recent Strategy Day were received in advance of the meeting (Paper 11).

The Committee considered the output from the Strategy Day, with a focus on themes relevant to the committee:

- **Curriculum:** It would be important to consider the external landscape and the ongoing curriculum reform. There would be a need to adapt the curriculum to meet the demands of both the current and future workforce.
- **Focus on Skills:** The skills young people needed to progress to the next step was crucial. These included transferable skills, communications skills and flexibility. Digital skills were increasingly important, as was the ability to reskill and upskill for adults in a constantly changing job market.
- **Staff Recruitment:** It would be important to upskill staff in the use of AI and how to use it in an ethical way. Green skills was another area of challenge that required ongoing upskilling of staff. *Governors said* many fields were rapidly evolving, not just AI. It reinforced the importance of strong relationships with employers. It was noted that some employers offer staff time off to provide lectures on emerging topics to students. The CEO confirmed that industry updates for staff were a key part of the ongoing strategy.
- **Effective Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance:** The importance of designing a curriculum that met the needs of students and prepared them for future careers was highlighted.
- **Identifying Further Specialisms:** It was noted that the College already had specialisms in Higher Needs, ESOL, Health, Creative and Logistics. The Committee discussed whether to pursue a specialism in English and Maths but there were mixed views about whether to proceed with this.

The Committee discussed the layout of the Strategic Plan, questioning whether to continue with the current model that had different pillars. They suggested the pillars were all interlinked and how different aspects fed into the overall student experience. Students should be at the centre.

It was agreed the next step would be to seek clarity on the timelines involved in the development of the Strategic Plan and to decide what the next actions would be.

Action: RT/TA/KF

12/25 **Key Points from the Meeting**

The Committee reviewed the impact of the meeting and agreed the following key points to bring to the attention of the Corporation:

- **Strategy Development:** The Committee reviewed key themes from the Strategy Day, including curriculum, skills development, staff upskilling, careers guidance, and specialisms. They also discussed the structure of the Strategic Plan and agreed to clarify timelines and next steps.
- **Apprenticeships:** The Committee challenged the apprenticeships team to develop a plan to break the cycle of missed targets, including potential investment in additional resources. They emphasised the importance of developing employer relationships and agreed to make the Apprenticeships Development Plan a standing agenda item to monitor progress.

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- Higher Education: The Committee reviewed the Higher Education update. They noted low enrolment numbers but also the opportunity for growth in the future. Despite the low enrolment numbers, there was overall support for continuing with Higher Education provision due to benefits it brought to students, local employers and the local community. The Link Governor's report highlighted the positive impact on students.

13/25 **Date of the Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting of the committee was Wednesday 11 June 2025 at 6.00 pm.

Summary of Actions

No.	Action	Lead	Target Date
3/25	Follow up on the suggestions made by governors in the October 2024 CQSE Committee meeting regarding the promotion of careers provision including exploring alternative advertising methods that would better engage students, such as utilising the portal or the Instagram page	MGK	June 2025
5/25	Add the Apprenticeships Development Plan as a standing item at every meeting of the Committee.	KF	June 2025
6/25	Share the Student Governor Report from the February Committee meeting with Sam Louisy so that actions can be taken forward.	MGK	June 2025
8/25	Consider opportunities available for engaging with HR managers from local companies to help support development of engagement with employers.	MGK	June 2025
8/25	Circulate the Accountability Agreement to the CQSE Committee prior to approval by the full Board at the May Strategy day.	MGK	April 2025
10/25	Amend the commentary for Risk 3: Ofsted to reflect the recent Ofsted grade of Outstanding.	MC	June 2025
11/25	Seek clarity on the timelines involved in the development of the Strategic Plan and decide what the next steps are.	KF/RT/TA	April 2025

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