

Minutes of the Curriculum and Quality committee held on Tuesday 4th May 2021

Present: Emma Jarman (Chair)
Pradeep Bhardwaj, Simon Cove, Carole Kitching, Monica Lawson,
David Panes

With: Adam Fahey, Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality
Lynne Plested, Vice Principal Higher Education and Curriculum
Thom Young, Director of Student Services (minutes 43 - 45 only)
Tracy Scaife, Head of Governance

43. Apologies for absence – received from Charlotte Mannion.

44. Disclosures of Interest – none received.

45. Presentation by Thom Young, Director of Student Services – the Chair welcomed Thom Young, Director of Student Services to the meeting and invited him to make his presentation on the Student Services Team.

The meeting noted the structure of the Student Services Team and the work being undertaken to balance areas across the two campuses. Governors asked if the range of skills of the Student Services team were also taught by them to others. The Director of Student Services explained that they were fully deployed in their support roles although one of the Counsellors did do some teaching on the Counselling Course. Together all is being rolled out to all staff and students and will be a great 24/7 resource. A donation of £20k has been received from Nationwide to the Institute of Technology (IoT) for mental health services. An Equality and Diversity Project is planned and it is hoped that this will be rolled out across the college. Nurse availability will continue with provision for three days a week at the Queens Drive campus and five days a week at North Star.

The Chair, on behalf of the committee, thanked the Director of Student Services for his presentation.

ACTION: TS to circulate copy of presentation to committee.

46. Minutes of the last meeting held on 22nd February 2021 and matters arising – minutes agreed as a correct record.

Matters arising raised as follows:

(a) Minute 34(iii) - Minute 28 – Curriculum Reporting Framework – an update on the Curriculum and Quality committee reporting framework was requested. The Principal advised that a draft proposal would be available by 11th June 2021. Progress has been made with some areas of the Framework but further suggestions need to be integrated to make this the most useful document. It would also be good to have the Framework linked back to a costed budget. The Chair advised that at the end of the current academic year meeting cycle she would like to review the Terms of Reference for the committee and suggested that catch-up meeting with the Vice-Chair, Principal and Head of Governance be held between 11th June and 6th July 2021.

ACTION: CK to forward C&Q reporting framework to C&Q committee by 11th June 2021.

(b) Minute 38 – Curriculum Strategy – noted that at the previous meeting the Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality agreed to report back to the committee on the five main curriculum focuses.

The committee received a verbal report by the Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality, noting that the five main curriculum focuses were –

- Curriculum development including T Levels; study programmes; Institute of Technology (IoT); roll out of the RCU/Vector tool for Curriculum Managers (CMs) to start to model their curriculum over the long term
- English and Maths performance – in the short term ensuring that timetabling is in place so that all learners receive their entitlement;
- Tutorial programme – moving to a Progress Coach model with a focus on barriers to achievement and progression;
- Retention and internal progression and destination tracking;
- Equality and diversity – using the data the college has to narrow the long-standing gaps in achievement and to make equality and diversity a core element of the college.

The meeting further noted that Wave 2 T Levels were health, laboratory science, education and childcare and digital production, design and development and Wave 3 were business and administration, and legal finance and accounting. Curriculum developments are Level 3 Btec in Esports – a significant growth area, Level 3 courses in Animal Management, Construction, Plumbing Advanced Technical Diploma, Hair, Digital Music Production and Graphic Design, Level 1 Multi-trades Diploma and Level 4 Beauty.

With regard to assessment for 2021 it was noted that the college policy for this was submitted to the JCQ CAP portal the previous week, the college is waiting for approval confirmation. The deadline for submission of data, including grades for the endorsements is 18th June 2021. The internal deadline to provide for IV, moderation, Review Boards, CM sign off and Head of Centre sign off is 14th May. All areas have discretion to take teaching and assessment as deep as they need to. Grades can be submitted from 26th May. Every centre will be asked to provide the evidence used to determine the grades for at least 5 students for each subject. Exam Boards will advise centres which subjects and students have been selected in the week beginning 21st June 2021 and evidence will need to be returned to them within 48 hours. The consultation on appeals is due on May 5th.

The meeting noted the hope for a partnership with Digitas who are opening a site in Swindon. It was further noted that the recent White Paper has implications for curriculum and quality including possibly directing colleges to offer courses that employers want. LP shared the IoT course development that is in progress for 21/22 the main areas of development are digital higher apprenticeships and technician science higher apprenticeship. Recruiting staff for digital and engineering courses is challenging, the main issue being competing with industry. The college does have some staff that could be upskilled but recent industry experience is also needed. The success of the IoT depends on the employment of the correct staff. The Team are looking to build environmental sustainability into the study programme via the Scheme of Work, and have contacted IMEA with a view to becoming a training provider for them. The curriculum strategy will be built into the cycle of business for the committee.

47. Risk management update – verbal report by Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality received and noted.

The main risks relating to the committee areas of responsibility are recruitment and end of year achievement.

The Chair advised that she would like a more structured approach to the report of risk to future meetings of the committee.

48. Predicted Achievement Rates (PAR) – reports by Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality and Vice Principal HE and curriculum were noted.

The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality advised the meeting that the PAR cycle was extremely accurate in predicting final grades. This year Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) are based entirely on work completed by students and with this in mind teams were not asked to submit predicted grades in the March PAR but a snapshot of current attainment. If students were to be graded based on their March attainment, college achievement would be 83.6%, 3.4% below target. Teacher and Curriculum Managers have been working to ensure that students produce work to a high standard to raise final outcomes for 20/21. It was noted that there are some quite large drops away from national average figures, some of these are due to legacy problems, particularly retention at North Star.

The PAR for HE is a new requirement this year, HE has not previously been part of the PAR exercise. Unfortunately this means that there is no back data to compare against.

49. Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) – reports by Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality and Vice Principal HE and Curriculum received and noted.

It was noted that there are still a number of uncertainties due to the Covid-19 pandemic and it is expected that the grade profile will look similar to last year. Higher Education is showing an increase of 4%

Concerns were raised that the wording within the document regarding the wearing of lanyards gave an incorrect picture of the situation and should be reviewed.

ACTION: AF to review wording in QIP re. wearing of lanyards.

50. Updates to note:

(a) Recruitment – noted that there appears to be a three year downward trend with regard to recruitment and the Chair asked the Team if they had any insights in to this. The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality advised that A Levels have been particularly affected by school sixth forms. During the past year it has been very difficult to get in to schools due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdowns. The college needs to identify what its niche areas are and what it can offer students that schools can't.

(b) Lesson Observations – noted.

(c) Professional development – noted.

51. Any other business – raised as follows:

(a) Terms of Reference of Curriculum and Quality Committee – the Chair advised the meeting that these will be discussed towards the end of the current academic year and reviewed by the Nominations, Remuneration and Governance committee.

ACTION: EJ, SC, TS to review ToRs for C&Q committee



(b) Committee cycle of business – the Chair asked for an item to be placed on the agenda for the first meeting of the next academic year on the committee cycle of business and plan for the year.

ACTION: *TS to add item to agenda for first meeting of next academic year re. cycle of business for committee*

(c) Fully-costed budgets – noted that the college is now using 4cast for this purpose.