

MINUTES

Meeting:	QUALITY, STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE	Date:	28/01/2019
Location:	ROOM B.17, LONDON ROAD CAMPUS	Time:	5.30 p.m.
Membership:	Andy Allen, Christine Davies, Gordon Channon (ex-officio, Chair of the Board), Christina Gore, Josh Harry, Nigel Merchant, Kari Quant and Mike Willmot (HE Lead Governor). Student Governors by invitation – Meg Chandler and Mitch Neale.		
IN ATTENDANCE:	Members of the Senior Leadership Team: Catherine Armstrong, Group Vice Principal - Curriculum Support and Business Development (GVP – CS&BD) Paul Morgan, Director of A Level Studies (DoALS); Chris Pemberton, Group Vice-Principal, Quality and Curriculum Management (GVP – Q&CM); and Clerk to the Board - Tracy Cottee		
APOLOGIES:	Kari Quant and Mike Willmot.		

01/09. **Declarations of Interest**

A. Allen declared an interest as an employee of Harper Adams University.

02/19. **Minutes – 12 November 2018**

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2018, were approved and signed as a true record.

03/19. **Matters Arising**

None.

The Student Governors were not present during the discussion at Minute Nos 04 & 05/19.

04/19. **Progress Grades – Period 2 (Appendix No. 4)**

The SLT officers present updated the Committee on Progress Grade Period 2 for A levels and vocational provision (previously circulated), being the second set of progress grades for the academic year. The College was now able to track changes between collection points as well as equivalent points in different years.

Regarding Year 2 A level provision, the professional judgements for high grades were currently 46.2% against 51.6% for the actual figure for 2018. However, staff had increased their predictions due to their increased experience with linear courses and receiving more feedback from exam boards on marking criteria and grade boundaries.

Looking at meeting targets, the Committee noted that the current cohort had a lower GCSE average attainment so actual outcomes might be lower; however, current value added analysis through ALPS Connect suggested a quality indicator of between 2 and 5; 2018 actual score was 3.

The high grades percentage was improving and areas for further work had been identified using the ALPS value added assessment. Interventions would be planned in meetings with Programme Leaders to assess students at risk and those underachieving to put together an action plan for change. In addition, the Director of A levels met with students underachieving in more than one subject area, reviewing actions with those who had not made improvement since the first meeting, the impact being that the number of students requiring this attention had reduced. Staff were currently marking mock exams and would meet with students to discuss progress including with coursework as appropriate. Curriculum Leaders would work with Programme Leaders/Course leaders to identify specific actions to gain improves in outcomes on underperforming courses. In addition, the Academic Leadership Team (ALT) would review the impact of the ALPS analysis which showed underperformance of students in the GCSE range 6.1 to 6.7 and showing target grades B-C. The Committee supported this approach, as it was of the view that this was a timely intervention to support the high grade strategy of the College and to offer support to students to effectively manage their stress and workload.

Regarding BTEC Subsidiary Diploma, the Committee reviewed High Grades assessments and the Committee directed that actions for Programme Leaders were to set targets for the remaining work to produce the outcomes to, at least, maintain the ALPS award of 3 from 2018.

Regarding BTEC Certificate, the Committee acknowledged that, while Year 2 were the priority, the majority of certificate students would continue to year 2 on the subsidiary diploma; therefore, their performance was critical to ensure the quality of outcomes for next year.

Regarding vocational provision, the GVP – Q&CM reported that -

- All course review meetings were continuing and interventions in place, with new, realistic targets in place for 2018 – 2019;
- Interventions started with the most significantly at risk or lower-performing areas identified in the first progress check, had yielded improvements.

After hearing details of the College's processes in place to encourage students to achieve and progress, the Committee expressed support for the approaches taken.

The Committee debated the recent Office for Student (OFS) research report on the impact of unconditional grades offered by some universities on outcomes for A levels. The Academic Staff Governor (EB & WB) described how he addressed the risk to outcomes in his subject area, by acknowledging the achievement in gaining a university place but highlighting the risks of complacency to students. He considered that an unconditional offer could reduce stress on the student, notwithstanding the risk to motivation and outcomes.

Regarding the HNC Fashion and Textiles provision, the Committee pressed the DoALS on students' access to specialised facilities. The Programme Leader was looking at options with the DoALS and Finance Director; the Board Chair indicated he would take this issue up with the Director of Finance.

The Committee noted that the DfE Performance Tables Summary 2017/2018, had been published and that the College had performed exceptionally well both nationally and locally. The Committee wished to record its congratulations to the College and staff.

05/19. **Apprenticeships** (Appendix No. 5)

The Committee considered a summary (previously circulated) of the College's and sub-contracted apprenticeship provision with respect to enrolment and achievement.

- The 2018 – 2019 Target was 75%, unchanged from 2016 – 2017;
- Enrolment Summary to date - 727 enrolled and active College based apprentices;
- 140 currently past planned end date = 19.5%;
- Attendance - Currently at 90.5% - an increase of 8.8%;
- An appointment had been made to the vacant post of Manager in September 2018;
- Employer Reviews were undertaken by a dedicated team to enable more open and honest feedback – employers had welcomed this new approach;

- Milestones for progress checks for each apprentice using Smart assessor had been implemented, to risk rate those falling behind expected progress and create targeted actions plans. Extra resources had been committed to help with the volume of employer reviews needed;
- Side by side training accessed through Smart Assessor by apprentices and certificates was being uploaded;
- The first employer newsletter had been sent in December 2018;

The Apprenticeship Lead Governor reported that he had met with the GVP CS & BD during the Autumn Term 2018, and was assured that the actions being taken would improve both the rate of timely completions and improve outcomes. He would meet with the GVP CS & BD again this Term. The Committee again challenged the rate of timely completions and the GVP CS & BD explained the challenges in securing assessors that could deliver student support to the College's high and expected standards.

The Committee also discussed the Strategic Planning Event held on 25 January 2019 and governors' preparation for OFSTED. It was AGREED that the GVP CS & BD deliver a presentation on apprenticeship provision, specifically, the impact of recent development both national and local on the College's provision and quality systems at the next Committee meeting.

06/19. **Higher Education Update** (Appendices Nos. 6a & 6b)

Summary of all Higher Education External Examiners (HE EE) Reports for 2017 – 2018

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated), providing a general overview, highlighting good practice, common themes and key areas of concern in the external examiner reports received for 2017 - 2018.

All HE EE reports had been shared with students through Moodle and discussion during Tutorials. Course representatives had been specifically asked for comment on the reports at their student consultatives.

HE Quality Improvement Plan

The Committee reviewed the latest update of the HE Quality Improvement Plan (QulP) (previously circulated). The HE Lead Governor had sent in comments prior to the meeting, confirming satisfaction with the College's progress made against improvements identified. The HE Student Governor commented on the effectiveness of the College's plagiarism protocols and the impact on protecting students' original work. The Committee sought assurance that vulnerable students were protected from exploitation for plagiarism. The Committee suggested that the College investigate safeguards to prevent saving documents on computers to general desktops.

07/19. **Student Induction Survey Autumn 2018** (Appendix 7)

The Committee reviewed a report (previously circulated) setting out an overview of results of the Induction Satisfaction Survey of academic and vocational learners conducted in November 2018. The survey presented a summary of information relating to students' views which would contribute to the self-assessment cycle. The report was a significant contribution to the learner voice feedback and represented an opportunity for students to reflect on all aspects of their College experiences. The Curriculum Leaders would be expected to produce action plans based on the outcomes which would be used to improve learner experience.

The Committee acknowledged that, whilst overall, the results were positive and that it was now easier to identify trends and target specific issues, it challenged the Academic Leadership Team (ALT) to investigate the results with respect to student awareness in specific subject areas of safeguarding, health & safety and anti-bullying as a result. The Committee wished to avoid a situation where the College was not in a position to effectively identify areas where students were not satisfied with the quality of their experience and not be in a position to put in place effective improvements as a result. The Committee requested an update on actions identified at the next Committee meeting.

The HE Student Governor pointed out that there might be a correlation between the lack of knowledge of the work and function of The Agency amongst some students, as indicated in the Survey, due to its location. The GVP Q&CM pointed out that the Agency had a presence across all three sites. However, the GVP O & BD explained that she was investigating how students prefer to communicate and how they wished to receive information about the College.

The Board Chair requested that all members be circulated both with the report and the update on the actions.

The Committee agreed that

1. There were a number of areas that required further investigation and clarification with the students and these should be followed up as per the full findings data by the Curriculum Leaders (CLs) and reported back to the next Committee meeting;
2. The full range of comments be reviewed by each CL and discussed during student forums planned for the Spring Term; and
3. Going forward, the College ensure there is full coverage including late starts for the 2019/20 Induction.

08/19. **Student Voice 2018/19 – January Update** (Appendix No. 8)

The Committee reviewed an update report on the College's Student Voice activities (previously circulated), including verbal reports from the student governors.

The Committee was advised that, following the recent NUS Student Voice project for newly-merged colleges, which the College had participated in, good progress had been made in developing a multi-campus Student Voice. Key developments included:

- Elections for the new Student Union Executive (S.U.E.) were taking place as planned so that officers would be in place at the start of the academic year.
 - 10 students had been elected into the new roles which included 2 representatives from HE, 1 apprentice and 7 from WB, EB and LR. The S.U.E had met regularly since September 2018. The Principal/CEO would attend the meetings in February 2019, as would the Committee Chair and the student governors;
 - The visibility of the S.U.E has been improved across all three campuses with S.U.E. members wearing a branded hoodie which includes their roles printed on

the back and the S.U.E. posters were on display at all campuses including contact details

- Managers had been invited to talk with students and students had regularly attended meetings with the GVP O&BD and had been updated in College Operational Team meetings;
- Students had decided on a charity for the year - Shropshire Mind;
- The College would enter a float in the Shrewsbury Carnival; and
- The nomination process for the new student union 2019/20 had started.

The Committee noted that S.U.E. members had made a good start to the academic year and there was a clear framework for student voice activities in place.

09/19. **Equality and Diversity Committee – Lead Governor Report** (Appendix No. 9)

The E&D Link Governor presented a report (previously circulated).

The following key issues were brought to the Committee's attention.–

- The Equality & Diversity Committee had met once since the last Committee meeting – 13 December 2018.
- Equality Essentials Module - staff completion and training was ongoing. HR had undertaken a targeted campaign as part of the PD day in January 2019, to ensure staff caught up on modules, resulting in a high percentage of staff now having completed the module;
- The Committee had reviewed the College's Achievement data relative to the profile of students and demographics;
- Regarding Higher Education, the Committee had considered feedback from the Learning Walk undertaken by a student to 'road-test' facilities in the Centre. Areas of concern had been addressed. Governors had also visited the Centre;
- In December, the Committee had been asked to think of ways to share and feedback on how the College could share practice to instigate more activity on the theme of E&D, British Values, Embedding across curriculum areas/campuses and was also now working on preparing for OFSTED.

The E&D Lead Governor would also meet with the Chair of the E&D Committee this Term.

The Committee acknowledged the impact of the Lead Governor in leading on Board challenge to secure a high percentage of staff completions on the mandatory staff module. It also discussed the challenges around embedding British Values in the College, particularly for teaching staff.

10/19. **Safeguarding Committee - Lead Governor Report** (Appendix 10)

The Safeguarding Lead Governor presented a report (previously circulated).

The Safeguarding Committee had met once since the last Committee meeting – 28 November 2018. The following key issues were brought to the Committee's attention.–

- The Committee continued to maintain a strong focus on core safeguarding issues such as staff training and the wearing of badges whilst on sites, with updates at every meeting on how many staff were left to undertake the mandatory development. Following targeted efforts on the College PD Event on 7 January 2019, a high percentage of staff had now completed the mandatory modules. The Lead Governor was maintaining a strong focus on this;
- Regarding Looked After Young People, the Committee was advised that positive feedback from LAYP had been received following participation in a recent multiple agent Audit;
- The Committee continued to review Safeguarding Caseloads at each site, analysing for trends. Mental health and related issues continued to generate the majority of cases and were on the increase;

- The Committee had received the Safeguarding Annual Report 2017 – 2018, prior to its submission to the Board meeting in December 2018. The Committee had noted performance and the actions required, particularly with respect to the reporting of emotional wellbeing concerns; and
- The 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance had been revised and the Committee reviewed its implementation in the College.

The Safeguarding Lead Governor had met with the Director, Curriculum Support, the Safeguarding Manager and the Additional Learning Support Manager, to receive assurance and updates on the College's Safeguarding framework. The Lead Governor explained that the College was dealing with an increasing number of Safeguarding issues, many of which were complex and required a variety of support strategies. The College was also attracting an increasing number of Looked After students from out of County. The Lead Governor had been impressed with the attitude and professionalism of the College's Safeguarding Team and reported that the Team was also working to support students in transition to post 18 support arrangements, which was challenging.

11/19. **Risk**

The Committee concluded that the risks identified were adequate and that there had been sufficient discussion of the issues at the meeting; particularly with respect to students not achieving predicted grades.

12/19. **Committee Self-Assessment** (Appendix 13)

The Chair invited Committee members, including officers, to submit by email their completed committee assessments before the end of the week.

13/19. **Date of Next Meeting** – 08 April 2019. Venue – Classroom B.17, London Road Campus.

The meeting concluded at 7.11 p.m.