

# EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

## QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015 in the Board Room,  
Hele Road, Exeter College

<b>Present</b>	Emma Webber Dave Underwood John Bunting James Jefferson Craig Marshall Mark Overton Martin Owen Tim Tamblyn	Chair
<b>Observers</b>	Philip Bostock	
<b>Apologies</b>	Richard Atkins Elaine Hobson Cameron Seymour	
<b>In Attendance</b>	Barbara Sweeney John Laramy <i>Item 4.1 only</i> Emma Fielding <i>Item 5 only</i> Lisa Souch <i>Item 5 only</i> Julie Skinner	Clerk to the Corporation Vice Principal Assistant Principal Head of Performance and HE Assistant Principal

1. **Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest.** Action

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting

Apologies were received.

Philip Bostock attended as an observer.

There were no declarations of interest

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2014, as circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

### 3. **Matters arising**

There were no matters which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda

*Emma Fielding, Assistant Principal joined the meeting for item 4.1 only*

### 4. **Teaching and Learning**

#### 4.1 A level reforms

The update was received and Emma tabled hand-outs to accompany her circulated PowerPoint presentation. She confirmed that there was still uncertainty around the proposed A level reforms, dependent upon the General Election in May. However the College was well prepared for a range of outcomes.

Emma presented the timeline for the next three years and confirmed that in September 2015, 12 subjects would move to linear A levels, with students' results based on a single exam at the end of the second year without the contribution of coursework (with the exception of art and design). The results from the AS exams, taken at the end of the first year, would not count towards the final result. It was proposed that a further 12 subjects would move to the linear model in September 2016, and all remaining subjects in September 2017. The phasing of their introduction was confusing for learners and parents, and the College had taken the decision to offer four A levels, even if some were in subjects which had moved to linear, and the first year's results would not contribute to the overall grade. Subjects needed to be co-teachable, so that if a student was studying a subject which was linear, the syllabus ran through to A2.

Emma assured the Committee that standards would remain broadly in line with the current AS/A2 qualifications. Most linear syllabuses were similar to that of AS/A2, although in some subjects there was greater challenge, such as in history and economics. She was meeting with subject leads and some had opted to change examination boards, with the associated change in syllabus. Staff development days were scheduled to support staff with the transition. There needed to be flexibility as in some subjects an examination at the end of the first year might be detrimental and the linear model offering a better option. Other subjects might require a different teaching model, with implications on continuity of staffing.

The College's focus on high grades and value added meant that it was vital to monitor a student's progress and the impact on progression. Some universities made offers based on the three best A levels, whilst others worked on a points system (which benefitted from the addition of an AS score). The Committee discussed the benefits of offering three subjects; it allowed longer to deliver the subject, but with implications for timetabling.

The College had adopted ALPs to monitor value added scores. As used by

73% of the sector, ALPs provided a good basis for benchmarking. Value added was a valuable tool to monitor progress and set aspirational targets and an on-line tracker had been developed to enable tutors to monitor and stretch students. However there was a tension between value added and high grades and, as an inclusive college, it was important to motivate the less, as well as the more able students.

The Student Governor asked about information advice and guidance to potential students and their parents; were they fully aware of the reforms? Emma assured the Committee that students were encouraged to pursue the subjects they loved irrespective of whether they were linear or not, and in some subjects the offer of the linear A level was a better option. However, there remained the opportunity to change subjects early in the year. If elected, a Labour Government would not enact the reforms and therefore it was important not to create unnecessary anxiety. At open events reforms were explained but with the rider that they were dependant on the outcome of the General Election.

Progression remained a key metric, and because Higher Education entry criteria was disparate within the HE sector, it was difficult to predict the impact of reforms. However it was predicted that success rates would fall nationally. Effective tracking was vital to maintain current success rates and the quality of teaching and learning should position the College well.

The College was monitoring preparation within the sector and networking events provided an opportunity to see how other colleges were approaching the reforms and providing opportunities for benchmarking. With a mixed economy of linear and AS/A2 subjects, it was a period of change and retention of staff was important to provide continuity. It was also important to retain a culture of flexibility.

The Committee asked if there were cost implications: there were potential savings in examination costs with linear A levels, although some subjects would require intensive resourcing, particularly in staff time.

The Committee commended the College for its positive attitude to change and the work done to date, and agreed to

### **Note the update.**

#### 4.2 Qualification Success Rates

The report was received and John confirmed that the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) had introduced timely success for classroom based learning. As Qualification Success Rates (QSR), reporting was now by qualification type, not by level or duration, and the former analysis of data by learner age, qualification level and duration of course was no longer used. The Education Funding Agency (EFA) had a different approach. This meant there were 51 different lines of data, which was confusing and poorly

defined.

John confirmed that the Senior Curriculum Group had developed a best practice approach to monitoring student success and proposed that it should report to the Committee any emerging trends outside of the core data lines by exception, in order to provide the committee with assurance but still a high level analysis of success. An annual summary would be brought to the Committee for scrutiny. The Committee sought assurance that when benchmarking against national averages, comparisons were valid. John confirmed that data was within tolerances for the SFA data.

The Committee noted the outcomes for specific faculties and for apprenticeships, and requested a more detailed update at the next meeting. Members of the Business Services Committee confirmed that it had received a valuable update on apprenticeships at its last meeting, which, whilst predominantly financial, also covered quality. The Committee requested a report at its next meeting summarising the paper received by Business Services, with additional detail on quality outcomes and agreed to

**a) Note the report**

**b) Request an update on apprenticeship success rates**

BHS

**c) Request an update on progress in the Aplus Faculty**

BHS

**d) Request an annual update on College success rates**

BHS

**e) Receive exception reports, where results were outside core tolerances**

*Julie Skinner, Assistant Principal, and Lisa Souch, Head of Performance and HE, joined the meeting for item 5 only*

**5. Higher Education Update**

The report was received and taken as read and Lisa confirmed that there was to be an inspection this year under the new QAA framework, the Higher Education Review (HER). Subject to ratification, a member of the Quality and Standards Committee would be appointed HE Governor at the Board meeting on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

The Committee considered retention. The majority of students who dropped out did so because of financial, mental health or personal reasons. Included with the cohort were those who interrupted their studies. Lisa confirmed that the College supported learners and there was a small financial hardship fund, the opportunity to defer payment and to agree bank loans. STEW worked closely with learners who had personal or

mental health issues, and the “fit to study” scheme also helped students to consider interruption as an option to dropping out.

Lisa confirmed that success rates were strong, and that a significant number went on to achieve a first class degree in their third year at the partner institution having completed two years HE in the College. National comparisons for success were difficult for HE in FE as there were no national success rates. Furthermore, retention was by year rather than over the two year course, unlike HE in universities, where completion from entry to graduation was recorded. HE in FE provided for a different population, with some students joining in a second year, and learners including mature students and learners returning to education. Whilst there was annual retention data for individual colleges this data was not in the public domain, and there was no national data to track from the start to the end of year two.

Following significant debate it was agreed that data for universities was different from HE in FE, and comparisons on retention were not possible. The Committee would not request data for the sake of it, but if helpful to monitor success and retention and provide information for marketing, then agreeing relevant metrics would be useful. Setting targets and scrutinising dropout rates would also enable the Board to monitor loss of income, even if not benchmarked against other institutions.

Lisa confirmed that the focus of the QAA assessment was the Quality and Academic Standards of Higher Education provision offered by the College. The Committee agreed that the student experience was very different in a college from a university and that student views were important to improve the environment.

The Committee

**a) noted the report**

**b) agreed to receive proposals for HE metrics at the next meeting under matters arising**

LS/JS/JL  
/MO

**6. Quality Assurance**

**6.1 Subcontractor Quality Update**

The report, providing an update on each of the College’s subcontractors was received and John confirmed that the number delivering learning had significantly reduced. Quality was monitored and there was no complacency, with a new Head of Department in post six months. The Business Solutions Department had been graded as good. The Committee considered individual subcontractors and recommended that unless the College was 100% confident with delivery, it should not outsource to a

subcontractor.

### **The Committee noted the Report**

#### 6.2 Intensive Care Progress

The report was received and John confirmed that the results from the recent mock examinations were still awaited. However there was good progress with those subjects in intensive care.

The Committee ask about the impact of accommodation. There were occasions when small classrooms affected the range of learning activity. However there were also examples of state of the art facilities for subject areas in intensive care.

The Committee discussed the risk of not being able to recruit high calibre staff because of competition from other providers and industry. In vocational subjects a market forces payment might be considered. Timing of recruitment was important, as high calibre teachers were snapped up. However it was a real challenge, and the impact of funding cuts affected recruitment.

Turning to specific subject areas in intensive care, the Committee noted that it was important to drill down within faculties as some outcomes may mask poorer results. Since success was a key marketing message, it was important for the purposes of recruitment in challenging times.

John confirmed the outcome of a recent internal inspection of a faculty with one programme in intensive care. The quality of teaching and learning was high, with 90% achieving good or outstanding.

### **The Committee noted the report.**

#### 6.3 Retention Attendance and Punctuality Update

The report was received and was considered. John confirmed that whilst the overall data was strong with attendance of 92%, there was an impact of maths and English and the sector was seeing the effect of providing these courses to learners who were not motivated to study the subjects.

The Committee agreed to

### **Note the report.**

## **7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

The following reports were received and noted:

### 7.1 Safeguarding meeting

- 10 October 2014 *Approved*

- 12 December 2014 *Draft*
- 7.2 Equality Objectives Scheme meeting
- 1 October 2014 *Approved*
  - 3 December 2014 *Draft*
- 7.3 HR Update on Teaching Staff Qualifications  
Overall the picture was stable. The timing of intakes and scheduling of training affected the data
- 7.4 Internal Inspection Reports – Construction  
The inspection had taken place from 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> January 2015, and that the final report was still in draft but would be received by the Committee at its next meeting on 27 April 2015.
- 7.5 E4L minutes  
The minutes were received and the Chair of E4L Partnership Governor Committee confirmed that the Committee had received an update on the Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust from the College’s Assistant Principal.
- 7.6 Risk register  
In the light of a recent Ofsted inspection, the College Nursery risk would be reviewed when the Senior Leadership team next considered the register. Risk 15 had been considered under the item on A level reforms. However the wording of the risk needed reshaping. The Committee asked how the College was dealing with the PREVENT agenda. An item would come to the next meeting of this Committee.

BHS

8. **Dates of Next meetings**  
Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2015  
Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015