

**EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION**

**QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 3 December 2018 in the Board Room,  
Hele Road, Exeter College**

|                           |                    |  |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--|
| <b>Present</b>            | Bindu Arjoon       | Chair  |
| <i>To Item 4.1</i>        | Mark Goodwin       |  |
| <i>To item 4.2 (part)</i> | John Laramy        |  |
|                           | Sue Clarke         |  |
|                           | Ben Gardner        |  |
| <i>To item 7.4 (part)</i> | Jo Matthews        |  |
|                           | Dave Underwood     |  |
|                           | Cassandra Wood     |  |
| <b>Apologies</b>          | Jacob Harris       |  |
|                           | Aimee Mitchell     |  |
| <b>Observing</b>          | Alison Layton-Hill | Clerk elect.   |
|                           | Sonja Longmore     |  |
| <b>In Attendance</b>      | Rob Bosworth       | Vice Principal Schools, Partnerships and Curriculum      |
|                           | Malcolm Walsh      | Deputy Vice Principal, Engagement People and Performance |
| <i>Item 4.1 only</i>      | Martina Esser      | Head of Teaching Learning and Performance                |
| <i>Item 5 only</i>        | Jennie Hamilton    | Head of Student Experience                               |
| <i>Item 4.2 only</i>      | Jade Otty          | Assistant Principal                                      |
| <i>Item 7.3 only</i>      | Mike Blakeley      | Director Apprenticeships & Employer Engagement           |
| <i>Item 7.5 only</i>      | Catherine Taylor   | Head of Higher Education                                 |
|                           | Barbara Sweeney    | Clerk to the Corporation                                 |

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

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting. She particularly welcomed Sonja Longmore, the newly elected teaching Staff Governor and Alison Layton- Hill, Clerk elect.

Apologies were received.

Ben Gardner, HE Student Governor, declared an interest in item 7.2, Intensive Care update.

Mark Goodwin, Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Exeter, declared an interest in matters relating to the University.

Dave Underwood, Co-opted Non-Executive Director, RD&E, declared an interest in any matters relating to the RD&E NHS Foundation Trust.

2. **Minutes**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018, as circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. **Matters arising**

Ahead of the SAR item for which he would not be in attendance, the Principal highlighted the successful outcome of the previous academic year, including the best ever outturn for success and value added. He acknowledged the areas for improvement, identified in the Quality Improvement Plan.

3.1 Quality and Resource Review Days (QRR)

At the invitation of the Chair, Sue Clarke updated the Committee on her session observing the QRR process. She commended the process, which was highly reflective, robust and authentic. The process was owned by the Faculty and Department Heads and the mature dialogue demonstrated good preparation, with different interpretations of the template, demonstrating that it was not a 'cut and paste' process. There were layers of challenge, with good understanding of data and the key issues, and there was triangulation with student feedback. Areas covered also included deployment of staff, resources and capacity. The Senior Leadership Team showed empathy and understanding and a good knowledge of the complexity and diversity of the organisation. Staff were at the heart of the improvement process. Sue endorsed the process and encouraged colleagues to attend future QRR sessions.

3.2 AS level curriculum update

Rob Bosworth reminded the Committee of the strategy to increase linear A level subjects. The College had agreed to a 80:20 split of AS to linear. Results had never been better and so the decision not to move fully to linear had been vindicated. Indeed, colleges where there had been a move fully to linear had seen a decline in quality. It was agreed to maintain the status quo but to review periodically. If a particular subject provided a compelling case, then this would be shared with the Committee with SLT's recommendation.

- 3.3 Committee Self-Assessment. The Clerk reminded the Committee that it had agreed to a self-assessment rating of outstanding and had agreed strengths and 'even better ifs' at the last meeting. The narrative emanating from that discussion and resulting Quality Improvement Plan was received and agreed as an accurate reflection of the discussion for

inclusion in the Governance SAR.

*Martina Esser, Head of Teaching Learning and Performance, joined for item 4.1*

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

##### 4.1 Student Induction Survey Outcomes

The report was received and taken as read. The Committee reflected on the response rate of 84%, noting that despite a slight fall, this represented only 9 respondents. There remained a focus on encouraging participation. The Committee considered strengths where the score was over 80% or a positive distance travelled. Areas for improvement included knowledge of evacuation and safety matters. Further analysis was required. However a change of personnel in Health and Safety and a delay in the fire evacuation drills might have impacted.

The Health and Safety Governor confirmed that the commitment to the Health and Safety meetings had declined and attendance was poor. The Committee agreed that this needed to be addressed.

The Committee considered induction and integration into the College. There was no consistency in the responses as to whether the length of induction was sufficient. Those joining late could not be given a full induction and the impact on retention was considered. This was compounded, as often those joining courses late were amongst the most vulnerable.

The Committee agreed to

##### **a) Note the report**

##### **b) Express its concern that there was not greater commitment to Health and Safety Meetings**

*Jade Otty, Assistant Principal, joined for item 4.2*

##### 4.2 How does the College continue to grow its reputation for Academic Excellence? (deferred from Board on 5 Oct 2018)

The presentation received by the Board at its meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2018 was circulated and Chair reminded Governors that they had been invited to feedback to the Board on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2018 the outcome from the Committee's discussion on how the College should continue to grow its reputation for Academic Excellence. Jade reminded Governors of the key successes, including outcomes, high grades, progress/Value Added. She updated on what is currently undertaken and what the College was working on.

Progress monitoring was undertaken via the A level tracker. However

more work was needed on communications with parents – potentially via a parent portal. The breadth of offer was great, with 46 different subjects and the extend programme. Together they provided a strong commitment to curriculum. However in some areas the breadth was too great, with examples of specialist or IB subjects having small class sizes impacting on viability and on the learners' experience. There was discussion on whether outcomes depended on quality of teaching and learning rather than class sizes.

Extend provided aspiration and choice, educating learners about the national context, and giving an added dimension. This would play in to the new Ofsted framework - Education Inspection Framework - which would focus on the whole education offer when introduced in September 2019.

It was important to monitor quality and seek learner feedback. Stakeholders' perceived that the College needed to better promote its high academic achievements. The College was not just about breadth of curriculum and vocational choices. Unlike schools, its size and flexibility supported optimal timetabling, expert subject specific teachers and the richness of the extend programme, which would be better recognised under the new Ofsted framework. The College was also tackling inconsistencies via the intensive care process.

Parents were recognised as key stakeholders. The Committee considered at length the potential for, and benefit of, marketing via radio, at open events and through College Advisory Teams (CATs).

The Committee agreed to feedback to the Board the recommendation to increase communication with parents through a Parent Portal, that the mix as well as the depth of curriculum was important and that marketing was a key tool for growing the reputation for academic excellence. It was also agreed that the Board Residential would provide an opportunity for further discussion

Clerk

**The update was noted.**

*Jennie Hamilton, Head of Student Experience, joined the meeting for item 5.*

5. Safeguarding Annual Report  
The Annual Safeguarding Report and summary presentation were received. The report was a retrospective on the year 2017-18, and also indicated priorities for the future.

Jennie summarised the key areas of strength: the Child Protection On-Line Management System (CPOMS) was effective, well embedded and timely. Staff commitment was strong, with clear understanding of responsibilities to promote welfare and act on information. There was

effective partnership work across agencies, with a layered approach. Students consistently reported that they felt safe. Ofsted had commended the College during the recent residential accommodation inspection, and safeguarding had been highly commended in the People Award. The College had a strong reputation for leading on mental health.

However, there were significant challenges for the service. The complexity, range and demand had increased significantly over the past five years and site security was always a challenge, with changing behaviours and the increase in gang culture. Wellbeing staff themselves needed support. There was a need to review the model of delivery, with the service stretched and teachers acting as safeguarding experts. External support was needed.

A new initiative had been Wellbeing Health Activity and Motivation (WHAM). Part of the College's Wellbeing service, it offered face to face support and special talks and events, and the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Advisor had reached out to over 6000 learners. Supported by an innovative digital platform, it offered a triage and signposting service. Podcasts and vlogs were available with staff, students and experts providing examples of strategies to deal with anxiety and depression. As such, the service offered an on-line alternative to face to face contact.

Responding to the Governors' questions, Jennie confirmed that the Mental Health and Wellbeing strategy addressed the vision that all staff across the College needed support – not just those on the front line. The report showed significant demand from learners who had come from two schools in particular. This was because of challenging environments but also due to excellent transition arrangements with the schools. Proactive intervention was important in areas with known poor outcomes, and Jennie reiterated that the relationships with other agencies, such as the Police, was strong.

The Committee thanked Jennie and her team for their comprehensive work and commitment to keeping students at the College safe and supported.

The Committee noted the report and agreed

**To recommend the Safeguarding Annual Report to the Board on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2018.**

*Vote: unanimous*

*The agenda was re-ordered, taking items 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5 ahead of items 6, 7.1 and 7.2.*

*Mike Blakely, Director Apprenticeships & Employer Engagement joined for*

*item 7.3*

7.3 Subcontractor Update

The report and update were received and the Committee was reminded that to date the Business Services Committee only had monitored subcontractor provision. However there was now a case for increasing volume, and quality assurance was key.

The Government had intervened in cases where there had been poor practice and the College had consciously reduced its subcontractor provision to a minimum. However, with flat line funding and the lagged funding model, there were limited options to address in-year challenges. The College was seeking to work with a limited number of high quality employers.

Quality was key and three audits had confirmed well managed subcontractor processes. Quality controls included the Apprenticeship Strategy Group, which met monthly to assess viability. The AoC had developed a framework- a model for contractual relationships - to monitor quality assurance and with which the College was compliant. The College had engaged PwC as an independent reviewer to provide independent assurance. In addition, apprenticeship provision was now included in the Quality and Resource Review Days and were now part of the Self-Assessment and Quality Improvement Plan process. Subcontractors went through three times the quality assurance as Faculties, with three assessments per year, two from Business Solutions and one from the closest aligned Faculty. The Learner Existence Survey mitigated against phantom learners. Staff were included in College's development days.

The Committee asked whether learning from past experience had influenced the current controls. The shrinking provision had bottomed out. Cross fertilisation from observations meant that best practice was shared. Initial due diligence was robust and guiding principles were used to ensure quality.

The Committee commended the recent Apprenticeship Conference and agreed to

**Note the report and update.**

*Catherine Taylor, Head of HE joined for item 7.4 only*

7.4 Higher Education Self-Assessment Report (HE SAR)

The report was received and Catherine confirmed that the circulated Higher Education Self-Assessment and Compliance Report was different from other Faculty SARs in that submission of a prescribed resolution was required by the Office for Students as an indicator that the Board received

assurance on the quality of HE provision. This was known as the Annual Accountability Return (AAR).

The circulated SAR showed an overall grading of outstanding. With grade 1 for both Quality of Teaching Learning and Assessment, and Effectiveness of Leadership and Management. Outcomes for Learners was self-assessed as Good.

Included in the SAR was the Quality Improvement Plan. The College was focussing on improving academic standards and student experience. Two areas for development to fully comply with the Code of HE Governance related to Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech. Whilst there was partial compliance through the College's Instruments and Articles and Code of Conduct respectively, there needed to be greater transparency and public awareness of what these meant in practice. The Committee was invited to endorse the action plans to promote Academic Freedom in Teaching and Learning Strategies and in guidance for staff. In promoting Freedom of Speech, there would also be reference in the HE Handbook.

The Committee agreed to recommend to the Board the following resolution, for submission to the Office for Students.

- a) The governing body has received and discussed a report and accompanying action plan relating to the continuous improvement of the student academic experience and student outcomes. This included evidence from the provider's own periodic review processes, which fully involve students and include embedded external peer or professional review.**
- b) The methodologies used as a basis to improve the student academic experience and student outcomes are, to the best of our knowledge, robust and appropriate.**
- c) The standards of awards for which we are responsible have been appropriately maintained.**

**In addition, the Committee**

**d) Noted the update**

**e) Endorsed the action plans in the Self-Assessment Report to progress:**

- i. Commitment to Freedom of Speech for HE Staff and Students**
- ii. Commitment to Academic Freedom for HE Academic Staff**

*Vote: Unanimous*

- 7.5 Quality Improvement Plan(QIP) 2017/2018 Outcome  
The report was received. Malcolm confirmed that all actions were complete or had been carried over to the 2018-19 QIP.

He highlighted some positives including momentum for improvement in English and maths and value added in BTEC, progress with T levels, internal progression and initial steps toward digitalisation of the curriculum. Despite best efforts, there remained challenges in outcomes in GCSE English and maths, value added for BTEC, commercial income against budget, and staff recruitment to some specialist areas.

**The Committee agreed to**

**Recommend the QIP outturn for 2017/18 to the Board at its meeting on 7th December 2018**

- 7.6 College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2017/2018 and Quality Improvement Plan(QIP) 2018/2019

The report was received and Malcolm highlighted some key achievements in the year, including the best ever A level results, the national STEM Award, the AA rosette for @34, 24 Oxbridge entrants and the under 18s Rugby world tour in Japan.

The overall Self-Assessment Grade was Outstanding with all Faculties rated Good or Outstanding bar Foundation maths which was assessed as grade 3.

The SAR reflected the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework (CIF) and the executive summary summarised the grades for each of the four areas: Outcomes for students, Quality of Teaching Learning and Assessment, Personal Development, Behaviours and Welfare and Effectiveness of Leadership and Management. All were judged as Outstanding and the Committee was invited to validate the grading based on scrutiny of strengths and areas for improvement.

Governors identified additional strengths, some of which were already included in the detail of the SAR, but recommended higher prominence. For example, under Effectiveness of Leadership and Management, the Committee proposed additional evidence to strengthen the outstanding rating. Greater emphasis should be given to the culture of continuous improvement, the culture of reflective practice to achieve improvement and the agility of staff given the complexity of the environment. An area for improvement included building awareness of the College's reputation for excellence through marketing. It was also recommended that the action to find new ways to recognise staff, and development of cross college strategies to improve retention and recruitment be merged into a

single action.

After significant discussion the Governors agreed to endorse the assessments across all four CIF criteria and, subject to the recommended minor amendments the Committee agreed to

**Recommend the College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2017/18 to the Board for approval at its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2018**

*Vote: unanimous*

- **Quality Improvement Plan**

The Quality Improvement Plan for 2018/19 was received and considered. Malcom highlighted the key areas including Foundation maths, value added scores in AS level and vocational subjects, attendance across the board with specific actions identified, and improved consistency on level 2 vocational programmes. Governors recommended also including the identified improvement under Effectiveness of Leadership and Management relating to marketing to increase the College's reputation for excellence.

As from September 2019 the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework (CIF) would be replaced by the Education Inspection Framework (EIF). Outcomes for learners would replace teaching learning and assessment. The College's strength in enrichment would play to this more holistic approach, but would need to be embedded in future SARs and in the College's current processes.

The Committee agreed to

**Recommend the Quality Improvement Plan 2018/19 to the Board for approval at its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2018**

*Vote: unanimous*

7.7 **Balanced Scorecard including Targets for the College**

The Balanced Scorecard was received and considered. Malcolm reminded the Committee that the format included top line data on four metrics: Progression, English and maths, Success Rates and Distance Travelled/Value Added. Data included the actual outturn for 2016-17 and the national average, target and actual outturn for 2017-18 plus the recommended target for 2018-19, which also formed the Faculty targets and were the collective judgement of the College Leadership Team.

Malcolm provided the rationale for each. Rob recommended that the circulated target for apprenticeships be revised and provided the context for this.

Governors asked whether there was an opportunity to monitor progress in-year. The QRR process, and attendance and retention reviewed as a standing agenda item, provided a sense of progress to the agreed targets. However much of the data was based on the final outcome, which was not known until results were published.

Subject to the amendment to the Apprenticeship target, the Committee agreed to

### **Approve the proposed targets**

*Vote: unanimous*

6. Risk Register  
The revised Risk Register, update by the Senior Leadership Team on 19th November 2018, was received and considered. The Vice Chair Audit and Risk Assurance confirmed that that Committee had reviewed at length the risks where there had been changes in risk ratings or mitigations. The key risk under the responsibility of Quality and Standards Committee which had been amended was the impact on curriculum and subsequent success rates with the recent announcement that Flybe was for sale. The Committee would consider this further at its next meeting.

Clerk

The Committee noted the report

### **7. Quality Assurance**

#### **7.1 Accommodation Ofsted outcome**

The report on the Ofsted inspection into the College's residential accommodation was received and Malcolm confirmed that it was highly unusual for a first inspection to achieve outstanding or good but that the inspection had gone well and the strong good was a testament to the work of staff. The two areas for development had already been addressed.

The Nursery Inspection outcome was received and noted. The quality and standard of the early years provision was assessed as Good.

The Committee thanked all those involved with both inspections.

### **The reports was noted**

#### **7.2 Intensive Care update**

The report was received and taken as read and Malcolm reminded the Committee of the rationale; to support areas because of a decline in outcomes or progress or both. The impact of poor performance of staff had potential to ultimately impact on learner outcomes. The Senior Curriculum Group assessed the areas in need of additional help and

whether that should be light touch or more intense.

Malcolm confirmed the courses under Intensive Care and Outpatients and provided the rationale for inclusion. The supportive process was already underway with action plans agreed. Intensive care had a strong record of success, and with a limited number of programmes, there could be focus where needed.

The Committee questioned how long programmes were allowed to continue despite poor performance. This depended on the length of the programme as well as how long performance had been lower than expected. The College did its best to protect the range of subjects offered but there was no legal requirement.

**The Committee noted the report.**

**8. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

The following reports were **received and noted:**

8.1 Safeguarding meeting. Draft mins 05.10.18

8.2 EDBV meeting Minutes

8.3 Internal Inspection Reports: English Languages & IB

8.4 Risk Register Review

The Committee reviewed the meeting in the light of the risk register and agreed that no changes were required. There was clarification on the process to bring forward risks for inclusion on the register.

8.5 Items to take to Board

The Committee reviewed the agenda and agreed on the items to be reported to the Board at its next meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2018

8.6 Items for next meeting

The Committee reviewed the cycle of business for the February 2019 meeting and agreed items to be included on the agenda.

**9. Dates of Next meetings**

Monday 4 February 2019

Monday 25 March 2019

Monday 17 June 2019