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## EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

### QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2018 in the Board Room, Hele Road, Exeter College**

**Present** Dave Underwood Chair  
Bindu Arjoon  
John Laramy  
Kira Lewis  
| Craig Marshall  
Jo Matthews  
Martin Owen  
Emma Webber

**Apologies** Rob Bosworth  
Caleb Stevens  
Aimee Mitchell

**In Attendance** Julie Skinner Vice Principal, Standards and Student Experience  
*Item 5.1 only* Tim Burnham Learning Support Manager  
*Item 6.2 only* Martina Esser Quality Manager  
*Item 4 only* Gemma Noble Head of People  
*Item 6.1 only* Dee Rowett Director Teaching Learning and Performance  
*Item 5.1 only* Malcolm Walsh Assistant Principal  
Barbara Sweeney Clerk to the Corporation

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

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting.

Apologies were received.

There were no declaration of interest.

2. **Minutes**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2017, as circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. **Matters arising**

The Chair updated the Committee on the proposal at the last Search and Governance Committee relating to the schedule of meetings for 2018-19. Governors considered the proposal to reduce the number of Quality and Standards Committee meetings from five to four. After discussion and

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reflection Governors agreed to retain the status quo of five meetings to maintain current levels of assurance and to cover Committee business.

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There were no other Matters Arising which were not elsewhere on the agenda.

*Gemma Noble, Head of People, joined for item 4 only.*

#### 4. **HR Policies**

- i. Redundancy Policy
- ii. Whistleblowing Policy
- iii. Attendance Management Policy
- iv. DBS Checks procedure
- v. Grievance Policy

The draft Policies were received and Gemma highlighted the key changes from previous versions. In the main they were all procedural.

The only change to the Redundancy Policy related to Senior Post Holder titles. In the Whistleblowing Policy there was clarification on who could undertake investigations. The Attendance Management Policy included a number of changes relating to the use of the Occupational Health service, phased return to work and triggers for the attendance review process. The DBS Checks Policy included updates to reflect the use of electronic checks and on line status checks, plus changes relating to agency workers, secondees and, where relevant, checks for students.

The Committee was assured that there was capacity within the Occupational Health team for the changes to the Attendance Management Policy and that it was prudent to invest resources early in the process. Governors were also assured that there had been consultation with the unions on all Policies.

The Committee agreed to approve

- i. Redundancy Policy**
- ii. Whistleblowing Policy**
- iii. Attendance Management Policy**
- iv. DBS Checks procedure**
- v. Grievance Policy**

*Vote: unanimous*

*Malcolm Walsh, Assistant Principal and Tim Burnham, Learning Support Manager, joined for item 5.1 only.*

## 5. **Holistic**

### 5.1 Learning Support Update

The report was received and taken as read. Formerly comprising two Faculties, it was now under the remit of one: Foundation and Learning Support, which now provided the cross college function. 400 students were being supported over the year by 120 staff. The challenge remained the delivery of increased support with reduced funding, and the report included current and proposed changes.

The report was taken as read and Tim highlighted the key issues. There had been pre-entry interviews with 565 learners, an increase of 40%. Governors asked whether all those interviewed joined courses. There was an increased demand because more were declaring mental health issues, albeit not reaching the threshold for high needs learners.

To accommodate the increased demand there were a number of initiatives, including a Graduated Response, effectively an on-line triage system to allocate targeted limited resources to issues including literacy, numeracy, time management and exam technique. Support would be increased if required.

Exam access arrangements remained a challenge, with the system not fit for FE, where exams were early in the academic year, increasing the pressure on assessment.

Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) were the current name for statements. With increasing pressure from local authorities for colleges to take high needs learners, numbers were likely to grow. Cross college link workers focussed on in-class support for high needs.

The Committee considered outcome data for EHCP learners. Success was in line with whole College averages. There was a dip in level 2 due to a small number of maths failures. However numbers were low and whilst this would be monitored, there was not undue concern.

Funding for High Needs Students (HNS) was in line with the past two years. ESFA Funding was lagged and based on the previous year's number of HNSs, where learning support costs exceeded £6000 in a given academic year (Element 2). Additional top-up funding (Element 3) was provided by the LEAs for students whose costs exceeded £6000. The LEA was proposing to move towards a Banding system of funding from January 2018, with three funding levels of Element 3 all high needs learners with EHCPs.

Tim updated the Committee on plans for the future. Support was needed for HE learners with additional needs. A small income stream might be available. Assisted technology would empower students to work

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independently. Apps were available with the benefit of enabling coping strategies to continue after the student had left the College.

The Committee challenged capacity, if need continued to rise. There was a change in the nature of special needs and, with a finite resource to go further, shorter, more intensive sessions were planned to free up time. Different strategies, such as the highlighted graduated, tiered approach, would help. However, there was an expectation that colleges would be required to take in increasing numbers with high needs.

The Committee recalled that, following the update in 2017, the Board had written to DCC expressing its concern over funding. Whilst this had not changed there was now a more proactive approach. However, since 2009 there had been no dedicated pot, and resources were now coming from the core teaching budget.

The Committee

### **Noted the report**

#### 5.2 Equality, Diversity and British Values Annual Update

The report, comprising a summary and action plan, was received and considered. Providing an overview of the Steering Group, Julie confirmed that it was in its second year and that membership had increased to include the LGBT and Equality and Diversity officers from the Student Representative Committee, plus members from Employer Engagement and Apprenticeships and a nominated Governor representative.

Action Plans comprised four key objectives, each with an "owner", and under which there were key actions. Objective 1 was to continue to monitor achievement gaps between those with protected characteristics and those with none and disadvantaged learners and learners who are not. The Committee considered at length the value of drilling down responses from the on course survey to pick up trends and key issues specific to those with protected characteristics and disadvantaged learners. Whilst this was possible it was resource intensive and given funding constraints there had to be a decision where resource was concentrated. In addition to the on course survey, other feedback mechanisms and triangulation highlighted issues.

Objective 2 was to embed EDBV in all teaching and learning and training. The review column illustrated progress toward the initiatives. Objective 3 related to mental health and the Mental Health Strategy would be launched at the Board Residential in March 2018. Finally, Objective 4 pertained to staff and was under the ownership of the Head of People.

The Committee agreed to

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**a) Commend the Action Plan as a good innovation**

**b) Recommend the Equality Diversity and British Values to the Board at its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

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**c) Review the Action Plan at the September 2018 meeting at which student surveys are agreed, and consider resource implications relating to Objective 1.**

Clerk

*Dee Rowett, Director Teaching Learning and Performance, joined for item 6.1 only.*

## 6. **Teaching and Learning**

### 6.1 Teaching Learning and Assessment Update

The report was received and taken as read. Dee highlighted the key issues. There was plenty of positive news and the profile of the Department of Teaching Learning and Performance had risen significantly.

Staff development was popular and over 100 staff undertook a range of activities in an innovative example of CPD. A half day “kick start” session in August had been added to the schedule for the first time to focus staff after the summer holidays.

The Department had been responsive to need, with the roll out of Office 365, and support for requests for training. Embedding EDBV in teaching and Learning had been a key focus.

The Student Teaching Ambassadors programme (STAs) was a new initiative with learners at its heart. The main focus was short projects, for example, students producing a scheme of work to include in tutorials. The STAs programme was a route for progression and could be marketed as such at recruitment.

Paperless observations had been rolled out in January 2018, informed by the teacher workload review and the Ofsted focus on observation rather than paperwork. This also fitted with the culture of sustainability and data protection.

The on course survey had increased in significance with the learner voice as part of triangulation in the new pie observation process. A task and finish group, with representatives from thirteen faculties, was working to agree the survey questions relating to teaching and learning. Questions could be included to test soft skills such as rapport and pastoral qualities. A digital Teaching and Learning newsletter was being created to stand apart and engage staff to consider scholarly activity.

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The Committee sought clarity on the impact of GDPR in relation to Teaching and Learning. Dee confirmed that she was on the Strategic Group, and that whilst some aspects were daunting, others were more of a step change. Ofsted myth busting sessions were commended and working collaboratively should impact positively on individual time pressures.

Finally the Committee asked about the new careers support requirements under the Gatsby benchmarks. Because of current practice the College compliant with the new criteria, in place since January 2018. Notwithstanding, the involvement of students in the task and finish groups would add value.

### **The Committee**

**a) Commended the impact of the role since its inception**

**b) Noted the report.**

*Martina Esser, Quality Manager, joined for item 6.2 only.*

- 6.2 Student Induction Survey (deferred from 4<sup>th</sup> December 2017 meeting)  
The comprehensive report was received and Martina confirmed that the response rate was its best ever at 91%. No questions had been changed, but there had been a major update of the on course survey.

In three areas included in areas for improvement (because they fell below the 80% mark) there was still positive distance travelled. The Committee considered these themes and there were anomalies in that progression was not a priority during induction and so responses were of limited value. The Committee debated removing the questions but agreed to reword rather than remove it as it was helpful to have some indication of how this was handled in the early part of the course.

Responses formed part of the feedback mechanism, alongside the learner voice, and where possible, changes were made.

Governors considered the outstanding response rate and were reminded that in previous years, faculties where there was a low response rate were often those with new leadership, where there were other key priorities.

The Committee agreed to

**Note the report.**

### 6.3 Intensive Care Progress

[http://portal.exe-coll.ac.uk/sites/leadership/gov/staff/A Meetings 1718/4. Quality and Standards/3. 5th February/QS 050218 approved open mins for web.doc](http://portal.exe-coll.ac.uk/sites/leadership/gov/staff/A%20Meetings%201718/4.%20Quality%20and%20Standards/3.%205th%20February/QS%20050218%20approved%20open%20mins%20for%20web.doc)

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The report was received and taken as read. Julie confirmed that faculty leaders in subjects in intensive care were invited to present to the Senior Curriculum Group (SRC) twice a year for constructive and innovative support and for those in outpatients, once in the year. To date the SRC had received an update on every subject.

The rationale for inclusion was progression as well as success, and Julie updated the Committee on the reason for each being in intensive care or outpatients, and provided a progress update.

The Chair commended the process, which had been a key driver in quality improvements and the Committee agreed to

### **Note the report.**

#### 6.4 Retention, Attendance and Punctuality Update

The report, showing retention and attendance by faculty and level was received and considered. This was the first real indicator of the position in this academic year.

Attendance was strong at 90%, supported by a carrot and stick approach. Retention was scrutinised by faculty, with some improvements, some the same and some with declining retention numbers. It was noted where numbers were marginal. The Committee noted that where A levels had moved to linear, there had been an impact. It was also challenging in GCSE maths and English, where motivation was low.

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

#### 7. **Minutes/ reports for information**

The following reports were received and noted:

7.1 Safeguarding meeting. Minutes *Draft 8<sup>th</sup> December 2017*

7.2 E & D and British Values Steering group (EDBV) minutes *Draft 24.01.18*

7.3 Risk register

The Risk Register was received and noted. The circulated register had been reviewed in November 2017 and the termly review of risks would be completed on 19 February 2018, ahead of the next cycle of meetings. There had been no review ahead of this meeting because the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee met only once in the spring term, after the current round of meetings for other functional committees.

The Committee considered the risks for which it was responsible in detail, scrutinising each in turn, with judgements on whether the risk narrative, mitigations, rating calculations and overall RAG rating was appropriate. In some cases the risk title was, in reality, a mitigation and needed clarity. There was also debate on the value of including risks where mitigations

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were so effective as to result in a low RAG rating. However there was concern that if removed from the register Governors might not receive assurance on some key areas of Ofsted's focus.

There was also ambiguity when an issue was identified as the responsibility of both functional committees, since the risks might be different from a quality or resource perspective.

The Committee's recommendations would be considered when the register was next reviewed by SLT. It was confirmed that, having undergone the same exercise, the Business Services Committee had also made recommendations including the addition of GDPR preparedness.

The Committee agreed to

**a) Note the report**

**b) Recommend that the revised register incorporate the Committee's recommendations**

SLT

7.4 Items to take to Board

The Committee agreed on items to take to the Board on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

7.5 Items for next meeting

The Committee agreed the items to be included on the agenda for the next meeting on 26 March 2018. In addition to those on the cycle of business, the Committee requested an update on A level reform

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8. **Dates of next meetings**

Monday	26	March	2018
Monday	18	June	2018