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EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18th September 2017 in the Board Room, Hele Road, Exeter College

Present

Dave Underwood Chair
Bindu Arjoon
Kira Lewis
Craig Marshall
Jo Matthews
Aimee Mitchell
Martin Owen
To Item 8.1 Emma Webber

Apologies

John Laramy

In Attendance

	Barbara Sweeney	Clerk to the Corporation
	Rob Bosworth	Vice Principal, Schools, Partnerships and Curriculum
	Julie Skinner	Vice Principal, Standards and Student Experience
<i>Items 5 and 6 only</i>	Martina Esser	Quality Manager
<i>Item 4 only</i>	Emma Fielding	Assistant Principal
<i>Item 7 only</i>	Gemma Noble	Head of People

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

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the first meeting of the academic year. He particularly welcomed Aimee Mitchell, Kira Lewis and Jo Matthews who were new to the Committee.

Apologies were received.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5th June 2017, as circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

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3. **Matters arising**

3.1 Governance Self-Assessment

The update was received and the Chair reminded the Committee that it had approved the new format of the College SAR at its last meeting, with evidence provided against impact statements relating to criteria in the Common Inspection Framework. The Governance SAR would be the same format against standards of governance best practice from the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges (March 2015). The standards relating to governance would form the SAR, together with feedback from Governors, and areas where the College did not achieve outstanding would be included in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

The Search and Governance Committee was scrutinising the Governance SAR and QIP at its meeting on 2nd October 2017, and would be recommended to the Quality and Standards Committee at its December meeting for recommendation to the Board as part of the full College SAR.

The Committee noted that the Charity Commission Governance Code was a further source of best practice and recommended that cross referencing the Code would add value.

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The Committee noted the update.

3.2 **Quality and Standards Committee Terms of Reference**

The approved Terms of Reference for the Committee were received and noted.

3.3 **New Governors – Pen Portraits**

By way of an introduction, the Governors new to the Board provided a brief update to the Committee on their pen portraits.

Emma Fielding, Assistant Principal, joined the meeting for item 4 only.

4 **Quality**

4.1 Exeter College results 2017

- A Level and IB

The presentation was received and Emma reminded the Committee that it was important to consider the outcomes in the context of national changes. With 60% of courses linear, the impact of the curriculum changes could have been significant, together with the backdrop of growth in learner numbers. Notwithstanding, the results had been outstanding and results day had been a great celebration.

The Committee scrutinised the three year trend data. The pass rate for A2 was 99% against a national average of 97.3%. 57.2% achieved high grades (A*– B) compared to 53% in 2016 and 48% in 2015. Therefore the focus on improving high grades had been effective. For AS, the pass

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rate was 89%, down 2%, but the same as the national average. With 60 remarks, the position might change. The dip in success rate to 81% meant that the right learner right course was critical, particularly so with the focus on progression. Some learners moved in year and retention did not include those who changed courses within the first 6 weeks. High grades for AS had dipped to 34% against a national average of 43%. However, the move to linear A levels meant that the learner's journey over two years was arguably the more important, and the College demonstrated increased success at A2.

Emma highlighted Ofqual data illustrating national trends for reformed and unreformed subjects and provided examples of outstanding performance at the College including three subjects which had been in intensive care. Turning to value added, she celebrated the improvement in ALPs scores to a high 3, putting the College in the top 17% for distance travelled. Value added correlated well with high scores, and the College's initiatives to achieve this success had been effective, including use of the new lecture theatre.

There was a 100% pass rate for the IB, with an average score of 34 (up 2 on last year) and with 5 students achieving over 40 points (putting them in the top 5-10% in the world), with one student achieving the maximum of 45 points. There was growth in learner numbers but retention, at 77%, was an issue on which the College was focussing, albeit IB retention was measured over two years unlike other programmes where it was over one. Ten of the 13 students with offers from Oxbridge had been successful in securing their place. However, there was concern that some universities were requiring students to sit specific entrance exams, disadvantaging those outside the independent sector.

- GCSE English and Maths

The national policy for all learners who had not achieved level 2 in these subjects to retake them remained a significant challenge and the numbers of candidates sitting exams (1056 for English and 1074 for maths) put extensive pressure on the examinations systems. Next year's exam season would be even more challenging because of a number of simultaneous exams.

The introduction of the Delta and Echo streams meant that it was not possible to compare outcomes with historical data. This differentiated programmes, where Echo included learners who had achieved an E prior to coming to the College, and Delta included those who had achieved a D. Nevertheless, progression from Echo to Delta (grade D or 3) was positive. The new specification for English of grades 9-1 rather than A* to G was a national change, also making comparisons difficult.

English results demonstrated success in achieving 67% progression from

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Echo. For Delta, 46% of learners progressed by 1 level and 21% by 2 levels. One student achieved a 7 and one an 8. This demonstrated the effectiveness of the initiative.

Maths was a more mixed picture. However, 205 Echo learners were included in data who would not have been there in previous years, accounting for 33% of learners. Whilst outcomes were better than for functional skills, it had been a challenging year, including no shows at examinations, and there would be continued focus in supporting these students.

In response to Committee questions, Emma reinforced that whilst results were not outstanding for AS level, it was the two year programme which was important and triangulation with value added scores, achievement and retention showed a positive picture. Quality of outcomes was the key and where class sizes necessitated it, staff were given additional hours or classes were split. She explained the rationale for retaining some AS programmes for certain subjects; to assess achievement after year one, or where subjects were dropped after one year, so that the learner still achieved qualifications.

Had the uplift in maths GCSE grades under the new specifications resulted in a reduction in learners enrolling? Emma confirmed that the number of students studying the subject was still high, albeit it included current learners. The impact of grade boundaries on enrolment was uncertain, but there was an increase in the number of level 3 vocational learners and a fall in full time level 2 students. All subjects were now linear and no new students would study modular subjects.

The Chair commended the outcomes, considering the significant change in curriculum. The College was working towards achieving exceptional, but was mindful of challenges in maths GCSE.

The Committee noted the report.

4.2 Curriculum Update

The report was received and Rob Bosworth, Vice Principal Schools, Partnerships and Curriculum reminded the Committee that each of the different offers in academic, vocational and work based learning provision had been subject to significant curriculum reform.

All A levels subjects were linear from September 2017, with AS serving to assess progress rather than be a performance measure. The report included details of subjects for which there was no AS exam and where courses were no longer running for students. The current "mixed economy" was challenging as there was a mixture of delivery. However the Senior Curriculum Group (SCG), which met weekly, was monitoring

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the situation. The A level/BTEC programme of study included three A levels (or equivalent qualification) plus the extend programme. This allowed increased time for delivery of the linear programme, together with other innovative changes to the timetable and study hours. Some extend subjects had had to be capped because of high demand and others had reverted to an AS option. Rob circulated the Extend Programme directory and confirmed its popularity.

With the changing grades at GCSE, and following consultation with schools partners, entry requirements had changed from 5 A-C including C in English and maths to 8 GCSE –C including a 4 in English and maths.

Turning to Vocational/Technical curriculum changes, Rob reminded Governors that of the circa 5,500 16-18 learners at the College, 60% were studying technical and vocational programmes. The transition to technical pathways had been delayed because professional Expert Panels had not been established in the summer as expected and there was doubt about the approach for a single Award Body for each pathway. Delivery of the new programmes had been put back from 2019 to 2020.

From September 2018 all BTECs would move to external assessment. From this year colleges could choose a number of areas to deliver the new specifications with external assessment at level 3. Rob confirmed the College's chosen subjects. There would also be an impact on levels 1 and 2 BTEC. Changes were being monitored by the SCG. Given the uncertainty of timing and implementation, staff were encouraged to focus on delivering the curriculum rather than the transition, and lessons learned from academic curriculum changes would be used to support changes to BTEC teaching learning and assessment.

There were also delays to the planned changes to work based learning. Apprenticeships remained a key focus for Government, with a target of 3 million by 2020. The change from frameworks to standards, written and led by key employers, had been delayed and the original date for all conversions in 2017 had been put back to 2020. Whilst this gave more power to employers to drive the content, there was also a new way of assessment and delivery. An external body would need to assess and sign off the apprentice as meeting the required standard. This would be achieved by delivering at least 20% off the job training over the programme, and suited a college style of delivery better than smaller Training Providers. The College was already delivering some of the new standards, which were circulated.

The new grading for GCSE had started this year for maths and English, which would impact on progression and delivery. The Government had retained its approach to mandatory re-takes and selected grade 4 as the target for achievement.

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The Committee noted the report

Martina Esser, Quality Manager, joined the meeting for items 5 and 6

5. **Responsiveness**

- 5.1
- College Feedback
 - Survey Processes

The report was received and taken as read. Martina used a power point presentation to illustrate changes to the Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy and the on course survey.

There was clearer sign posting on the web to the completely revised Compliments, Comments and Complaints Comments Policy with links from the website and easier access to the PDF of the procedure. The number of complaints had fallen, with fewer about staff. Employer feedback was not included but would be in future surveys. A pie chart illustrated the distribution of complaints.

Martina reminded the Committee that a key feedback mechanism was the Student Voice.

The on course survey had also been updated to allow greater analysis by Heads of Faculty and individual teachers, supporting holistic improvement and self-assessment. Questions remained unchanged to facilitate analysis of distance travelled.

The Committee recommended that the survey should allow free text, which would add value. It was also noted that the website did not include the full title of the Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy and this would be addressed.

ME

The Committee noted the report

6. **Teaching and Learning**

- 6.1 External and Internal Verification Update for 2016-2017

The report was received and Martina defined a block as where an external verifier was not satisfied that the required standards had been met or procedures followed correctly to justify certification. The number of blocks had reduced from three in 2015-16 to two in 2016-17, both of which were due to the verifier not adhering to agreed procedures. It was therefore a very positive position. The Committee asked the impact of blocks and Martina confirmed that certificates could not be awarded until the block had been lifted. On receipt of a reasons report from the external verifiers, there was consultation and second samples were submitted and, if satisfied, the blocks lifted.

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The Committee noted the report

6.2 Internal Inspection strategy and year plan

The update was received and Martina confirmed that three internal inspections were completed each year. Therefore, each faculty was inspected every 4 to 5 years, or sooner if there was a particular risk within a faculty. During the years of Ofsted there were no internal inspections. The presentation included details of faculties inspected by date and listed those due for inspection in 2017 and 2018, working a year in advance to enable Martina to source external inspectors and to schedule development meetings.

The Committee noted the report

Gemma Noble, Head of People, joined the meeting for item 7.

7. **HR**

7.1 HR Annual Report

The report was received and taken as read. Gemma highlighted the key statistics and stressed that the data was a snapshot in time.

The headcount had increased but where there was maternity cover, this was also included in the data, in effect a double count. The College did not have a funded post profile as there was no funded post structure. Associate Lecturers were included in the headcount. Gemma confirmed the difference between workers and staff, with workers having no contract, such as invigilators, admin and those located at Haven Banks. Both were covered by the same standards and received the same level of support.

The Committee considered Associate Lecturers (ALs) and the risk of lack of continuity. However, Gemma confirmed that working patterns were usually consistent but flexible, and ALs were valuable in areas where it was hard to recruit.

In the spirit of the Living Wage Foundation's recommendations, the College had removed the bottom two pay spine points from the salary scale. With full employment in the area and higher wages paid by other employers, this impacted on recruitment and retention and, together with limited career progression, might explain the percentage of leavers within their first two years.

Responses to data collection on ethnicity age, gender and disability had increased, with fewer not wishing to respond.

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Turnover was lower than the AoC national average (although the AoC's methodology might lead to potential under reporting). Although the report quoted whole College data, Gemma confirmed that she was able to drill down and where there was concern reports were run and analysed. Leaver reports included a large cohort of "other" as the reason. Did this mask areas which should be explicit? Given the total, the percentage represented a small number and reasons were likely to be known. It was rare for a dissatisfied member of staff not to have been on the radar of their manager or HR, and there was triangulation with other factors. Nonetheless the staff survey and inclusion in the Times top 100 employers indicated a happy workforce.

The Committee asked whether there was analysis on investment in staff development, and leavers. Did staff achieve College funded qualifications and then move on for career progression? Whilst there was no quantitative data for this, starters and leavers were monitored weekly by the Senior Leadership Team. The Lead Programme supported talented staff to grow, and any investment in training came with an agreement to stay for an agreed period.

Sickness data was scrutinised, with sickness absence at 2.6%, and days lost lower than 2015-16. The key reasons were noted and mental health did not feature because of the proactive approach by Occupational Health to keep staff engaged and at work.

Given the size of the workforce, there was a small number of formal cases; a testament to the skills of the team of managers. Formal requests for flexible working were augmented by informal arrangements.

There had been two significant restructures and mid-year Professional Performance Reviews (PPRs) undertaken through the Pie process, triangulating performance with teaching observations and learner outcomes.

Data on mandatory training (EDBV, Child Protection and Prevent) was considered, recognised as a snapshot in time and never 100% because of turnover. Governor mandatory training for Child Protection would be delivered at the scheduled Autumn Twilight Session.

There had been an increase in the staff development budget, and development days were popular, well attended and offered a wide range of programmes. Wellbeing was a key focus. Training needs were identified and targets set during the PPR process.

The number of staff requiring teaching qualifications had increased as had the number of qualified staff. The number of unqualified staff had fallen.

Finally, the Committee recommended that HR should consider a report

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from Australia on organisational flexibility and outcome led contracts as an alternative to hour led contracts.

The Committee noted the report

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8. **Quality Assurance**

8.1 Apprenticeship and Subcontractor Update

The report was received and taken as read. Rob confirmed that in the case of subcontractors, funding was drawn down and top sliced, with delivery outsourced. The College was still responsible for the quality of delivery. Quality assurance was monitored and managed through the Senior Curriculum Group and audit and compliance procedures were in place so that there was effective due diligence. This had been reviewed during the audit by external reviewers, required by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Following the trend over the past few years, subcontractor provision had continued to decline, and the value had reduced from £550k in 2015-16 to £320k. The use of subcontractors was now more tactical, to support employer engagement as well as to provide delivery of teaching and learning. There were two key subcontractors, with significant numbers of learners and high achievement.

Rob confirmed that the increase in apprentice learners was through real growth, and that since the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy the number of subcontractors had reduced.

The Committee noted the report.

8.2 Intensive Care Update

The report was received and Julie updated the Committee on the progress of subjects included in the intensive care process for 2016-17. As noted in the item on Student Results, there had been some notable successes in areas which had been in Intensive Care, demonstrating the effectiveness of the process.

Julie also updated Governors on proposals for retaining or releasing subjects from outpatients and confirmed that subjects did not necessarily move from Intensive Care into outpatients, but often left the process completely. The Committee cautioned that positive as well as negative years might be blips and were assured that there was constant monitoring by the Senior Curriculum Group. It was important to keep a manageable number of subjects under review.

Subjects for inclusion in the 2017-18 process for Intensive Care and outpatients subjects would be brought to the next meeting of this Committee.

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The Committee noted the report

8.3 Student Recruitment Update

The report was received and considered. Despite the significant demographic decline in numbers of available learners, the College's recruitment showed a positive picture and 16-18 learner numbers were at or about the same as 2016-17. By the next meeting the number of withdrawals would be known. However, the College was working hard to ensure learners transferred onto different programs rather than leave.

Apprenticeship recruitment had also made a good start, but there remained vacancies to fill and a campaign would support recruitment for the first time.

Higher Education numbers (HE) also showed growth and the investment in the department was paying off. Adult learners were as per 2016-17, but there was significant growth, albeit from a low baseline, for International Students, and in this growth market it was evident that there was greater diversity in classrooms.

The Committee noted the report

9. **Balanced Score Card**

The report was received and Julie reminded the Committee that it had approved a Balanced Score Card to include top level data for the following four key metrics: Progression, English and maths outcomes, Success rates and Value Added. At this point in the year the Balanced Score Card was still incomplete, but she updated on the likely outcome for each metric. The picture would be clearer by the time of the next meeting in December 2017.

Top line measures indicated that the College would again grade itself as outstanding at Self-Assessment.

The Committee noted the report

10. **Minutes/ reports for information**

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

- 10.1 QIP Update
- 10.2 Safeguarding meeting - Minutes
- 10.3 EDBV minutes
- 10.4 Committee Risk Register
- 10.5 Items to take to Board

[http://portal.exe-coll.ac.uk/sites/leadership/gov/staff/A Meetings 1718/4. Quality and Standards/2. 4th December/Approved open QandS 180917 mins for web.doc](http://portal.exe-coll.ac.uk/sites/leadership/gov/staff/A%20Meetings%201718/4.%20Quality%20and%20Standards/2.%204th%20December/Approved%20open%20QandS%20180917%20mins%20for%20web.doc)

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The Committee agreed on the items to be included in the Executive Summary to be received by the Board.

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10.6 Items for next meeting

No additional items to those on the annual cycle of business were requested for inclusion on the next agenda.

14. **Dates of Next meetings**

Monday	4	December	2017
Monday	5	February	2018
Monday	26	April	2018
Monday	18	June	2018