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## EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

### QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2016 in the Board Room, Hele Road, Exeter College

#### Present

Dave Underwood	Chair - <i>Bar item 9 (part)</i>
Bindu Arjoon	Vice Chair - <i>Chair for item 9 (part)</i>
John Laramy	
John Bunting	
Chris Hoar	
Elaine Hobson	
Craig Marshall	
Martin Owen	
Emma Webber	
Silas Welsh	

#### Apologies

#### 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 8 only</i> Jennie Hamilton	Head of Student Experience
<i>Item 7 only</i> Alison Heard	Acting 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 Chris Hoar and Silas Welsh who were new to the Committee.

There were no apologies.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016, as circulated, were

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agreed and signed by the Chair.

### 3. **Matters arising**

#### 3.1 Ofsted Social Action report

The report was received and the Chair reminded the Committee that at its last meeting it had received a report on the student involvement in community activities. This had been recognised by Ofsted, which cited the College in its report.

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

### 4 **Quality**

#### 4.1 Exeter College results 2016

- A Level and IB

The presentation was received and Emma illustrated the essence of results day using photographs of students receiving their results. She confirmed the headlines. There was an increase in the pass rate for A2 to 99.8% against a national average of 98.1%. 54% achieved high grades (A\*- B) compared to 48% last year. This figure might rise further with remarks awaited. 83% achieved A\*-C compared with the national average of 77.3%. Thus the College had achieved an increase in high grades and retained high success rates. Turning to AS results, the pass rate had increased to 91% against a national average of 90%. High grades had increased to 38% against a national average of 41%, with 46% achieving grades A\*- C. Success rates had decreased slightly to 83%. Using tables, Emma illustrated the upward three year trend.

Value added scores also gave a positive message. Using A Level Performance System (ALPS) there had been an improvement over the last three years from a score of 7 in 2014, 6 in 2015, to 3 in 2016, which put the College in the top 25% of providers. This had been achieved by concerted effort, and within the College there was now a culture of progression and value added.

Emma highlighted outstanding performance. Several subjects had achieved 100% pass rate with high ALPS. The impact of subjects with high learner numbers, such as history, had contributed significantly to the overall improved outcome. Of the 16 new linear AS Levels, 10 subjects had increased their pass rate, one had remained the same and five had declined. Thirteen of the 16 subjects had increased their high grade scores on 2015 results.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) results were also strong, with a pass rate of 97% (against a world average for 2015 of 78%). Four students had scored over 40 points, putting them in the top 1% in the world. Nine had achieved over 36 points, which equated to four A Levels at grade A. IB numbers were growing.

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Progression to Oxbridge was up on 2015, with 14 students receiving offers and ten places secured against nine places in 2015 from 11 offers.

- GCSE English and Maths

Emma confirmed that this was challenging for the whole sector, and quoted from a BBC news item blaming the decline in results on more pupils in England being required to re-sit English and maths. As per the sector, the College's results had declined. National benchmarks had fallen significantly and both the College's English and maths GCSEs were 12% above national benchmarks. She also confirmed the significant increase in student numbers, with a 109% increase in learner numbers between 2014 and 2016. The College would no longer offer Level 2 Functional skills in the subjects as the exams were more difficult and less well recognised than GCSEs.

Following pilots, the College had introduced two pathways: the Delta group for those with grade D on entry and who were working towards a C in one year, and an Echo group for those with grade E at entry, and who would aim for progression to a D in the first year and a C in the following year. Benefits included more bespoke teaching and achievable targets to inspire those with the lower entry grade. This model would have a negative impact on A-C results, but the E to D grade targets would have a positive effect on progression data.

Emma confirmed the changes for this academic year. GCSEs would be graded by numbers rather than letters. Grade 4 equated to a low C, grade 5 to a high C and grade 6 to a B. Therefore the Delta and Echo groups would need to change to reflect the number system.

Although the results were disappointing, the Principal confirmed that they were strong within the sector.

The Committee considered the update and asked about the proportion of GCSE learners who had come through internal progression. Emma confirmed that there was a significant number, but also an increase in external students, with a decline in GCSE English language results in local schools.

The Committee commended the report and the results. The focus on Value Added had achieved the outcome sought by the Board, and it was commendable that success rates had also remained strong. It also commended the focus on Delta and Echo groups to improve outcomes and requested an update when next year's results were known.

**The Committee noted the report.**

4.2 Curriculum reform - A Level Structure

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The presentation was received and Rob Bosworth, Vice Principal Schools, Partnerships and Curriculum confirmed that each of the different offers in academic, vocational and workbased learning provision were currently subject to significant curriculum reform. For each there was College lead driving the College response and there would be an opportunity for Governor engagement during the forthcoming Autumn Twilight Seminar. A Level reform comprised the changes to linear A Levels in 2017; vocational provision (BTec) would see the introduction of new Technical and Professional Pathways from 2019, and the Employer Levy would impact on Workbased Learning from April 2017. Future meetings would include updates on the latter two.

Emma updated the Committee on the A Level reforms. Significant changes were proposed with a decoupling of AS and A2 over a three year phased programme. Previously each had contributed 50% to the overall A Level mark. This was to be replaced with a single exam at the end of the second year carrying 100% of the marks. The merit of an exam at the end of the first year was discussed; whether to test at the end of year one to provide practice and a sense of progress or to continue to a single exam at the end of year two with the benefit of additional teaching time, freed up by removing exams.

There were three key questions: how many A Levels should the student take; three or four? Breadth was important but four A Levels was onerous. Secondly, should students still take AS exams? There was a cost implication to entering students for both AS and linear A Levels. Finally what should an aspirational linear A Level programme look like? Enrichment as part of the programme would have the added benefits of giving learners additional skills to help them mature and support their learning and, most importantly, to differentiate them when applying for HE or employment.

The 3+1 model in year one proposal was to offer three A Levels plus an enrichment programme, with a working title of the Exe Bac. With the bulkier linear A Levels, it was more sustainable to do three, and breadth of learning was provided for by the enrichment programme. Universities asked for three A Levels and the points basis which favoured four subjects, was less popular. Nevertheless Emma confirmed that some subjects contained within the enrichment programme would be certificated and carry points. Currently 80 of students studied three subjects and 20% four.

Turning to the benefits of exams at the end of year one, Emma confirmed that in some subjects this might still be preferable. An alternative was to have a formalised assessment at the end of the year. However time gained by not having exams could be used for additional teaching.

Under the new proposal, the second year would continue the model of

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three A Levels with the additional programme focussing on employment and employability talks, inspirational talks and provide space for preparation for HE applications, such as personal statements.

The rationale for the proposed model was more teaching time, greater flexibility, teaching to the A Level exam from the outset, plus the benefit of the additional programme to add breadth and enrichment. Emma updated the Committee on the planned communication with staff.

Responding to questions, Emma confirmed that there was unlikely to be an impact on teaching space. Indeed teaching some of the enrichment in the new lecture theatre would free up classroom space. Furthermore being taught in the lecture theatre would give students experience which would benefit them when they progressed to HE. The Student Governor commended the concept of working towards a single exam from the outset. The perception that an offer of three A Levels was dumbing down compared to four was debated. Others in the sector were offering three and universities did not seek a fourth A Level, but the skills and experience that the enrichment programme would offer. Marketing would be key and very able students could still have the option of a fourth A Level. Other benefits were discussed and the impact on teaching hours.

The Principal confirmed that most sixth form colleges had gone all linear. Tertiary Colleges had opted for a combination of linear and models with assessment at the end of year one. This College had agility and would sustain the right student right course philosophy.

The Committee commended the proposal and agreed to

**Note the report.**

*The agenda was reordered to take item 7 next.*

*Alison Heard, acting Head of People, joined the meeting for item 7 only.*

**7. HR**

**7.1 HR Annual Report**

The report was received and taken as read. Alison highlighted the key statistics and rationale for changes from the previous report. Reorganisation had resulted in changes in the workforce profile, due to the realignment of responsibilities and changes in senior leadership team line management. For example the nursery had moved out of the Department for Student Experience and into the Faculty of Health Care and Public Services.

The introduction of the new living wage would impact and in preparation for this lower spine points had been removed. Gender distribution was

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unchanged from last year, and was consistent across full and part time staff. There was an increase in those staff declaring a disability. Turnover had remained the same and was lower than the national average for the sector. Exit questionnaires were now asking about destinations and would change to a multiple choice format to avoid a nil response.

Although there was an increase in absence, it was still under the national average. Reasons for short term sickness were unchanged. Wellbeing initiatives had been introduced into the College and were new to the report. With the increase in awareness of mental health issues, wellbeing was key, and mindfulness and resilience courses were available.

Alison confirmed that statistics for completed PPR and training were as at the end of August and so would have increased since the report. Similarly, the data on qualified staff was dynamic and new staff enrolled on training courses throughout the year, particularly evident at the start of a new academic year. Equality and Diversity training would be mandatory and would include an element on British Values. The Committee agreed that this on-line training should also be completed by the Governing Body.

Whilst the report provided data on length of service for leavers, the data was based on a low number of returns and needed greater analysis. This metric could be triangulated with turnover. The Committee requested that future reports also include average tenure, or length of service of staff in post.

AH/GN

The Committee agreed to

a) **Note the report**

BHS

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

5. **Responsiveness**

5.1 College Feedback and Survey Processes

The report was received and taken as read. Martina used a YouTube clip to illustrate complimentary feedback from an international student extolling the qualities of the College. Boast files were collated by faculties and received most feedback at the end of the academic year. External exam reports also commended processes and efficient administration.

Turning to on-line surveys, there were proposals to make them more inclusive so that there was a single survey for a number of areas of provision with only Adult Education having its own.

The Committee commended the comprehensive report and aged to

**Note the Report.**

Approved

6. **Teaching and Learning**

6.1 External and Internal Verification Update for 2015-2016

The report was received and Martina confirmed that a block was 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 five in 2014-15 to three in 2015-16. In two of the cases there was an administrative error causing the block and which was removed immediately. The third was in a new programme and once modified the block was released. Martina confirmed that the incidence of blocks was low for the sector.

It was proposed that the name for the meetings forum for internal verifiers should change to Vocational Meetings, which better reflected the work of the group.

The Committee commended the report and agreed to

**Note the report.**

*Jennie Hamilton, Head of Student Experience, joined the meeting for item 8*

8. **Safeguarding (including Prevent) Annual Update**

8.1 Safeguarding

- Year Review

The report was received and Jennie highlighted the key issues. The College continued to have an excellent relationship with its partners and played a leading role in the sector.

The report included collation of data and the College had circa 2000 learners on its log across all Faculties. The report showed breakdown by Faculty and gender and there had been a year on year increase in the number of men referred or self-referring. Whilst Foundation Studies saw the largest number, there had also been a spike in English, Languages and IB (ELB). Retention was high, commendable for these learners. Care leavers were a significant cohort and the high retention demonstrated strong support and effective systems.

Mental health was a big issue nationally and the main reason for referrals. With less and less support externally, the case load for the College was increasing. This was a strain on capacity as well as staff having to deal with more complex issues. In 2016-17 there would be a review of systems.

The Student Governor asked how well used was the on-line reporting facility. Further promotion was planned, but on-line reporting offered an

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addition route.

Was increased incidence of mental health issues due to greater awareness or a real increase? It was likely to be both. The effectiveness of social action in tackling poor mental health was acknowledged and there were plans to promote a campaign of mental wealth.

Governors asked the reach of the service. Did those in workbased learning have equal access? The Committee was assured that they did. The impact of Safeguarding was cross college, with all Faculties having safeguarding leads, and access to information via the student bulletin and induction processes.

Colleges had a statutory duty to audit and the College had met its targets for last year. New targets would be agreed.

The Committee agreed to

**Recommend the Safeguarding Annual Report to the Board.**

BHS

- Child Protection Policy

The Policy, which required annual review, was received and taken as read. The revised Policy complied with new changes.

The Committee noted that reference to "Domestic Violence" should read "Domestic Violence and Abuse"

The Committee agreed, subject to the requested amendment, to

BHS

**Recommend the Child Protection Policy to the Board**

8.2 Prevent

- Strategy and Year Review

The report was received and taken as read. Jennie confirmed that the College was ahead of the curve, and that it had worked hard to achieve compliance. This work was ongoing as the area was dynamic and duty of care ever changing. There was strong partnership working at many levels and responses were proportionate.

Staff training included contractors and host families and parents. Refresher training was planned.

The circulated risk assessment was a live document and Jennie updated Governors on progress towards chaplaincy support, working with the University and Hospital and their interfaith links.

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Governors noted that lanyards, introduced to promote safeguarding and Prevent, were now no longer mandatory. Realistically this was unenforceable, and replaced by requiring students to always carry forms of identification and subject to spot checks.

Finally Jennie highlighted the letter from the Prevent Regional Co-ordinator commending the College for engaging well with the Prevent Agenda.

The Committee agreed to

BHS

**Recommend the Prevent Strategy and Year Review to the Board.**

- Visiting Speaker Policy

The Policy was received and considered. There was no intention to suppress freedom of speech but rather to keep people safe. Challenge was to be welcomed and was a part of an enquiring mind, but the Policy and procedures were designed to safeguard students. The new lecture theatre offered opportunity for speakers to visit, and the procedure was simple for organising staff to comply with the Policy and carry out the necessary checks.

The Committee agreed to

**Recommend the Visiting Speaker Policy to the Board**

BHS

9. **Equality and Diversity and British Values Annual Update (EDBV)**

The report was received and Julie reminded the Committee that Equality and Diversity had been under Safeguarding, Tutorials, Equality and Wellbeing (STEW). Following reorganisation it was now under her remit as Vice Principal Standards and Student Experience. In addition to Ofsted's focus on Equality and Diversity, there was now the added remit of British Values. An operational steering group for Equality and Diversity and British Values (EDBV) had been formed and had already achieved a lot. More was planned for 2016-17. Whilst the make up of the group was effective, there was no student representation. It was also noted that the Equality and Diversity Governor did not sit on the steering group, given it was operational rather than strategic.

There was an action plan and it was key to embed EDBV in the culture of teaching and learning. Training of British Values would be included in the refresher mandatory training.

The Student Governor noted that student response to EDBV was not wholehearted and the term "British Values" too narrow. Despite attractive posters and inclusion in the tutorial programme, the concept was not yet embedded in students' culture. The Committee debated the merit of

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including the term "British". Values were fundamental and wider than a national focus. Whilst agreeing, the term BV was an Ofsted requirement and non negotiable. Tolerance was also a term with which the Committee took issue and which it proposed should be replaced by "acceptance". Again the Ofsted terminology was non negotiable.

The Committee agreed to

**a) Recommend the Equality and Diversity and British Values Annual Update (EDBV) to the Board** BHS

**b) Recommend that all Governors complete the EDBV on line training.** BHS

10. **Quality Assurance**

10.1 Intensive Care Update

The report was received and Julie updated the Committee on each of the subjects in the intensive care process for 2015-16 and their progress. She proposed the 2016-17 intensive care and outpatient subjects and provided justification for each.

Governors noted the value of AS Level assessments in assessing success or otherwise of subjects. Even with the introduction of linear A Levels it was still important to have interim monitoring to provide assurance that teaching and learning was on track.

**The Committee noted the report**

10.2 Student Recruitment Update

The update was received and the Principal highlighted four key issues. Despite a fall in demographics and significant decline in numbers in some feeder schools, recruitment was up on this point last year. Growth in international student had increased significantly and Higher Education numbers were up 13% for year one. The second year cohort was smaller. Finally, the Q1 starts for apprenticeships was up by 10-25%.

The Committee commended the position and agree to

**Note the update**

10.3 Apprenticeship and Subcontractor Update

The report was received and taken as read. The number of subcontractor provision had continued to decline.

**The Committee noted the report.**

Approved

11. **Balanced Score Card**

The report was tabled 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 Distance Travelled. At this point in the year the Balanced Score Card was 60% populated.

Julie talked to each line and confirmed that the fully populated card would not be available until November. The Committee requested that the completed version be uploaded. It also requested that a narrative section be included to note exceptions and their justification and that where there were anomalies due to significant change, numbers were included in addition to percentages.

BHS/JS

**The Committee noted the report**

12. **Committee Self- Assessment**

The report, including a draft self-assessment report (SAR) for the Committee was received. The narrative was drafted using responses to questionnaires sent to individual members of the 2015-16 Committee. The Clerk confirmed that the questionnaire would be distilled into a SAR of agreed strengths and areas for improvement.

The Search and Governance Committee had considered the process and agreed that it was excessively onerous. The narrative, with strengths and areas for improvement was drafted by the Clerk. However annual questionnaires were not considered to add value. The Committee had agreed that the evaluation of Board and Committee meetings should be included in the biennial Governor appraisal questionnaire, and that the last meeting in the academic year of the Board and each Committee should include an item of self-reflection.

The Committee agreed to

**Recommend that the SAR be incorporated into the Board's SAR and presented to the Quality and Standards Committee for subsequent recommendation to the Board.**

*Vote: Unanimous*

13. **Minutes/ reports for information**

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

- 13.1 QIP Update
- 13.2 Safeguarding meeting - Minutes
- 13.3 EDBV minutes
- 13.4 Committee Risk Register

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13.5 Items to take to Board

The Committee agreed that the following items should be included in the Executive Summary to be received by the Board:

Item 4.1 Exeter College results

Item 4.2 Curriculum reform – A Level Structure

Item 8.1 Safeguarding

Item 8.2 Prevent

Item 9 Equality Diversity and British Values

Item 10.2 Student Recruitment

13.6 Items for next meeting

The Committee was content that no other items beside those on the annual cycle of business should be included on the next agenda.

14. **Dates of Next meetings**

Monday 5 December 2016

Monday 6 February 2017

Monday 27 April 2017

Monday 5 June 2017