

Approved

EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 21st September 2015 in the Board Room, Hele Road, Exeter College

Present	Dave Underwood Bindu Arjoon Richard Atkins John Bunting Elaine Hobson Abbie Lawless Craig Marshall Martin Owen Emma Webber	Chair Vice Chair
Observing	Philip Bostock	
Apologies	Rachel Hutchinson	
In Attendance	Barbara Sweeney John Laramy <i>Items 5.1 & 6.1 only</i> Martina Esser <i>Item 7 only</i> Gemma Noble <i>Items 6 & 7 only</i> Julie Skinner	Clerk to the Corporation Vice Principal Quality Manager Head of HR Assistant Principal

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

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the first meeting of the academic year. He particularly welcomed Bindu Arjoon and Abbie Lawless, 16-18 Student Governor, to their first meeting, and Philip Bostock who was attending as an observer.

Apologies were received.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 8th June 2015, as circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

Approved

3. **Matters arising**

3.1 Higher Education Review action plans

John Laramy, Vice Principal, confirmed that at the HER Review during the 2014/15 academic year the College had met the highest standard possible, that of "meeting the national standard". The required action plan included two key issues: to produce full minutes of strategic meetings and to improve consistency across HND and HNC provision.

The Committee requested regular updates on progress

BHS

3.2 Update on impact of teaching staff contract hours on learner outcomes.

John confirmed that whilst the College results were strong overall, the outcomes for achieving high grades and positive value added scores were more mixed. The Assistant Principal has visited colleges with a record of strong value added and was undertaking analysis of the relationship with fractional teaching contracts and drilling down by faculty and subject. The Committee considered the tension between quality outcomes and cost and flexibility afforded by fractional contracts. An SLT away day was scheduled on 12 October 2015 for further analysis. The Principal confirmed that fractional contracts were distributed across faculties and that the challenge was to maintain this in the face of funding cuts.

The Committee requested a further update at the December meeting of the Committee following the SLT away day.

BHS

3.3 Update to risk register (R8)

John confirmed that the requested amendment had been made to Risk 8 to demonstrate that the risk was to sustain the accuracy of the SAR, rather than to achieve it.

4. **Quality Assurance**

4.1 Exeter College results 2015

- A level and IB
- Success Rates
- GCSE English and Maths

The report was tabled and John confirmed that whilst student outcomes remained on track to be outstanding, the academic year 2014/15 year had been challenging for compulsory Maths and English, achievement of high grades and value added scores. Retention and attendance were strong, which resulted in challenging value added metrics, as those less minded to drop out tended to have higher entry qualifications, and therefore lower added value scores. Results for functional skills showed a decline in line with the national average.

Approved

John updated the Committee on other key issues. Final student outcomes were not reported until mid-October, but 16-18 success rates were outstanding on every data line, at every level and on apprenticeships. John confirmed amendments to the AS level results.

The Committee noted the report.

4.2 Update on Ofsted changes

John reminded the Committee that the Common Inspection Framework for Ofsted had changed and that the two key revisions were the introduction of short inspections for good or outstanding providers every three years and that, for the first time, the same Common Inspection Framework applied across each phase of education. All inspectors were employed by Ofsted. Inspections did not review curriculum areas but types of provision. Since provision was consistent across the College this would not impact. However the opportunity to identify and share best practice, in relation to particular areas of best practice in individual subject areas across the sector, would be lost.

Other changes included the requirement to publish specific data on college websites. Consequently colleges must be aware of, and working towards improving areas of concern.

The Committee considered value added outcomes further. As a college with predominantly level 3 provision, there was less opportunity to achieve significant value added scores than in colleges where there was more level 1 and 2 provision. There was an inverse correlation between high retention and strong value added scores. The College culture was to promote good attendance and retention and therefore achieving high value added scores would be a challenge, as bright students, usually with good entry requirements, stayed on and achieved.

The Committee discussed the culture of challenge, which was a regional issue. The College's culture of inclusivity and support did not readily promote the concept of challenge. However, the College was aware of, and working towards improving value added scores and functional skills outcomes. The new linear A levels would impact and there was a tension in taking large numbers on a 2 year course, knowing that a proportion would not be on the ideal progression for the full length of the course. In the former regime, such learners would have benefitted from the study as an additional one year qualification. Furthermore achieving high grades might be compromised in more mixed ability groups. The wider impact of 3 rather than 4 A level courses was under scrutiny by the Senior Leadership Team.

Approved

The Committee recommended using all tools available to analyse appropriate metrics to support strategic decisions. It was also acknowledged that there were curriculum changes to apprenticeship provision.

The Committee noted that the new Common Inspection Framework introduced a new aspect of grade related to personal development. Were new tools needed to ensure compliance with required standards? John confirmed that the appropriate infrastructure was in place through student services, including tutorials and enrichment.

The Committee agreed to

- a) Note the report**
- b) Resolve that the terminology in the College SAR should fall in line with the new CIF**
- c) Resolve that the College SAR should include a new page which makes a judgement about the six types of provision**
- d) Resolve that College lesson observations should evolve over the next two years to reflect the holistic approach of the new Ofsted standards.**

Martina Esser, Head of Quality, joined the meeting for items 5.1 and 6 only.

5. **Responsiveness**

5.1 College Feedback and Survey Processes

The report was received and Martina confirmed that the increase in complaints was due, in part, to better recording, and whilst the majority were dealt with at a grass roots level, faculties were encouraged to be more active in logging complaints. She confirmed that the complaints procedure encouraged early discussion to achieve a resolution before the complaint was formalised. Immediate feedback was also sought through a system of allocating tokens.

Martina updated the Committee on the type of complaints received and provided assurance on how these had been addressed. She also confirmed that the process had been tightened, with prompts to ensure staff were responding within the agreed timescale. Working closely with Marketing, the College website now provided clearer instructions on how to direct feedback to the appropriate place.

Although compliments were not logged, unlike complaints, the themes were similar year on year. The Committee agreed that compliments were also valuable to improve quality, through sharing best practice across

Approved

the College, and recommended that future reports include analysis of compliments and detail of where feedback had changed practice. Furthermore, it would be helpful for the Committee to see where upheld complaints had resulted in a change of practice.

The Committee agreed to

- a) Note the report, subject to a change relating to reference to an Ofsted inspection rather than an internal inspection**
- b) Recommend further analysis of compliments in future reports** ME
- c) Recommend that future reports include details of changes in practice as a result of complaints or compliments** ME

Julie Skinner, Assistant Principal joined the meeting for items 6 and 7.

6. Teaching and Learning

6.1 External and Internal Verification Update for 2014-2015

The report was received and Martina confirmed that the College had been judged as low risk following several positive Quality Review and Development visits. There had been more external verification in 2014-15 because of the changes to the BTec processes, with all programmes undergoing external moderation and verification. Where there were a number of distinctions in one area, confirmation sampling had taken place.

The Committee was concerned by the number of blocked subjects, which were where the Standards Verifier disputed the grades allocated by assessors to a student's work. This resulted in the entire cohort's work not being certificated. All were released after a second sample of work had been provided. New processes were in place to reduce the number of blocks, including lead Internal Verifiers (IVs) meeting with team leaders to undertake standardisation exercises. These meetings were critical and the Quality Office was implementing several ways to ensure attendance. The Committee was keen to monitor the number of blocks and staff attendance at lead IV's meetings and requested an update to the February 2016 meeting

The Committee agreed to

- a) Note the report.**
- b) Request an update on reducing the number of blocked subjects at its Committee meeting in February 2016.** BHS

Approved

6.2 Teaching and Learning Observation Strategy

This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.

Gemma Noble, head of HR joined the meeting for Item 7

7. **Human Resources (HR)**

7.1 HR Update

The report was received and taken as read and Gemma confirmed that it was a summary of HR activity for the 2014/15 academic year, including demographic data and workforce profile. She highlighted the key issues relating to staff turnover, absence and sickness relative to the sector, and summarised the HR department's role in the PPR process and staff development, particularly on line training for Equality and Diversity. The Committee considered that it merited compulsory rather than voluntary training.

Graphs and charts illustrated workforce data, including a breakdown of qualifications by contract type. The Committee considered the balance between staff contracts and funding cuts and agreed that there was a challenge in balancing staff contracts across the curriculum in a time of funding cuts and budget controls. The relationship was complex. Gemma confirmed that the table showing the number of staff in post by pay band did not include invigilators and models who were classified as workers.

The Committee considered the high level of respondents not wishing to declare ethnic origin. All new starter forms captured the data, but responses from long serving staff were collected through periodic data collections. Responding was not mandatory. However, the response rate would increase with staff turnover. The percentage of new staff without teaching qualifications was also considered. This was due to the lag between starting dates and enrolment on courses.

Finally Gemma confirmed that exit interviews were offered but had a poor take-up. A new electronic process would improve the response rate. However where there were issues Heads of Faculty and SLT actively sought feedback.

The Committee recognised the improvement in HR, thanked the Head of Department, and agreed to

Note the report.

7.2 HR Policies

The report was received and Gemma updated the Committee on the changes to the received HR Policies.

Approved

The Committee agreed to Approve the following:

- a) Grievance**
- b) Whistleblowing**
- c) Attendance Management**
- d) Redundancy**

Vote: Unanimous

BHS

8. Quality Assurance

8.1 Intensive Care Update

The report was received and John confirmed that it had been a positive year for those subjects which had been subject to the intensive care process in 2014/15. Once all the results were known, the Committee would receive a full list of proposed subjects for the intensive care process for the 2015/16 year at its December meeting. One subject had been withdrawn already due to inconsistent results. As a one year AS level course this did not impact on a second year cohort.

BHS

The Committee noted the report

8.2 Student Recruitment Update

The tabled confidential report was received and John confirmed that despite a demographic downturn numbers had grown in 16-18 and apprenticeship learner numbers. Growth was spread across the College. HE was also above target, reduced in anticipation of the lifting of the cap in HE institutions.

The Committee noted the strong performance in recruitment.

8.3 Apprenticeship and Subcontractor 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. An additional subcontractor was anticipated.

The Committee discussed the importance of due diligence when taking on new providers and agreed on the strategic foresight in reducing the number of subcontractors.

The Committee noted the report.

9. Committee Self-Assessment

The report, including a draft self-assessment report (SAR) for the Committee was received. The document was aggregated from responses to questionnaires sent to individual members of the 2014-15 Committee. The Clerk confirmed that the questionnaire would be distilled into a SAR

Approved

of agreed strengths and areas for improvement.

BHS

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.

10. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The following reports were received and noted:

10.1 TOR

10.2 QIP Update

The report was received and reflected the focus of the previous year and showed the emerging challenges which would be included in the 2015/16 version, which the Committee would receive with the Self-Assessment Report at its December meeting.

BHS

10.3 Safeguarding meeting - Minutes

10.4 Key Performance Indicators

10.5 Committee Risk Register

11. Dates of next meetings

Monday	7	December	2015
Monday	8	February	2016
Monday	25	April	2016
Tuesday	6	June	2016