

Approved

EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 27th March 2017 in the Board Room,
Hele Road, Exeter College**

Present

Chair from item 4 Dave Underwood
John Laramy
Chair to item 4 Bindu Arjoon
John Bunting
Dalya Erdogan
Chris Hoar
Craig Marshall
From item 4.2 Martin Owen
Silas Welsh

Apologies

Emma Webber
Elaine Hobson
Rob Bosworth

Observers

Philip Bostock

In Attendance

	Julie Skinner	Vice Principal, Standards and Student Experience
<i>Item 5.1 only</i>	Martina Esser	Quality Manager
<i>Item 4.1 only</i>	Alison Heard	Acting Head of People
<i>Item 5.2 only</i>	Jenny Leach	Assistant Principal
<i>Item 6.1 only</i>	Dee Rowett	Director of Teaching, Learning and Performance
<i>Item 7.1 only</i>	Steve Strang	Head of Estates
<i>Item 4.3 only</i>	Malcolm Walsh	Assistant Principal

Barbara Sweeney Clerk to the Corporation

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

Because of the delayed arrival of the Chair, the Vice Chair welcomed colleagues, including those observing, to the meeting.

Apologies were received.

Approved

There were no declarations of interest

2. **Minutes**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 6th February 2017, as circulated, were agreed as a true record. They were subsequently signed by the Chair.

3. **Matters arising**

3.1 Quality and Resource Review Days (QRR)

The update was received and the Principal confirmed that the Committee Chair had attended two sessions of the Quality and Resource Review Days, observing Art and Design, and English Languages and the IB. The format of the reviews had been refreshed and were more streamlined and several new Heads of Faculty had presented for the first time. The reviews were positive and it was evident that staff had a good understanding of data. There was progress in the grade 3 faculty, which was on track to improve to good.

The Committee Chair recommended that members from the Business Services Committee may wish to attend future QRR sessions.

The Principal confirmed that an appointment had been made for a new Head of Construction and thanked the Chair of the Board for his involvement in the interview process.

The Committee sought clarification as to whether the combined approach from the Devon Colleges Group had resulted in any additional funding from Devon County Council for High Needs Students. Whilst there was greater strength in campaigning with a single voice, it had yet to result in any uplift.

Alison Heard, Acting Head of People, joined the meeting for item 4.1 only.

4. **Policies**

4.1 HR Policies

- Pensions and Retirement Procedure
- Social Media Code of Practice

The draft Policies were received and Alison highlighted the key issues. Changes to the Pensions and Retirement Policy were minor and related mainly to the updated threshold to autoenrolment. The Policy had been reviewed after a year, rather than the usual two year review, because of the end of the autoenrolment transition period. There were no changes to the eligibility criteria for pension schemes.

The Social Media Code of Practice was aimed at staff and workers, including volunteers, and was a code rather than a policy or procedure to mirror the ICT Code of Practice. Although guidance, there was an expectation of adherence to the Code. With the growth in social media

Approved

came associated issues, including safeguarding. The Code brought together all recommended guidance into a single document. There had been consultation with Information and Learning Services, Marketing and the Student Experience Department. It drew a distinction between private and working life and protected the College from liability, including any employment claims against the College in the event of a related dismissal.

The Committee asked how the Code and its possible sanctions were communicated to volunteers and was assured that there were processes in place to ensure that all new workers were made aware of the Code, alongside other mandatory requirements. The provision was the Association of Colleges' guidelines. Governors questioned whether social media was investigated as part of due diligence during the recruitment process. With the high volume of new appointments this would be too resource intensive and an individual would only be investigated if an issue was raised during the appointment process.

Staff reaction to the draft had been positive, with no objections from the unions during consultation.

Finally the Committee recommended that, with the increasing use of social media by Governors, the Board should also be included in the scope of the Code.

The Committee agreed to approve

- a) Pension and Retirement Policy**
- b) Social Media Code of Practice (subject to the agreed amendment)**

Vote: unanimous

Malcolm Walsh, Assistant Principal, joined for item 4.2 only

4.2 Admissions Policy

The report and Policy were received and Malcolm confirmed that the scheduled review was timely, given the diversity of potential students, with increasing numbers requiring support needs and healthcare plans. The review had been rigorous, with legal advice taken.

Malcolm highlighted key changes, all based on integrity, which included greater clarity at the interview stage so that expectations were realistic. If the College was not the appropriate place for the learner there was signposting, and there was a clear reference to out of area learners who might be better served by more local provision.

The most significant changes were to the section on entry requirements,

Approved

due to the introduction of health care plans and high needs learners, where funding was capped, despite potential high support costs. There was a strict deadline for applications, to allow for any required adjustments to be made. This and other robust clauses mitigated the risk of learners enrolling when the College was not the most appropriate place, with lower exposure to the risk of late enrolment of learners with high needs.

In response to questions, Malcolm confirmed that medical checks were not routinely carried out in cases where the intensity or length of a specific course might be challenging. If there was lack of clarity in a health declaration, further check could be made. Furthermore, the Adult Transition Panel considered each on a case by case basis and where there was disclosure, liaised with the relevant agencies. As this was time consuming it was important that applications were timely, so that expectations could be managed.

The Committee commended the thoroughness of the Policy and, subject to clarification of a section in the Equality Analysis, agreed to

Recommend the Admissions Policy to the Board at its meeting on 5th May 2017.

Vote: unanimous

4.3 Equality and Diversity Policy

The Policy was received and Julie confirmed that during its routine review, it had been refreshed because there had been changes in the language used in many of the protected characteristics in Equality and Diversity. There had been consultation with the Equality Diversity and British Values steering group, unions and SLT, and the next stage was to develop action plans, which although not mandatory, were best practice.

Subject to clarification in the Equality Analysis Section, the Committee agreed to

Recommend the Equality and Diversity Policy to the Board at its meeting on 5th May 2017.

Vote: unanimous

5. **Quality Assurance**

Martina Esser, Quality Manager, joined for item 5.1 only

5.1 Quality Assurance Update

The report and power point presentation, using screen shots to illustrate

Approved

the documentation, were received. Martina highlighted the key issues.

An updated Learning Review Report used different terminology to reflect Equality and Diversity requirements, including removing reference to gender. New fields recorded attendance or lateness of the learner.

Learner feedback was also new to the form, with the opportunity to include direct quotes. Observations were no longer summative, but indicative, as part of an overall Teaching Learning and Assessment grade. The observation process was therefore renamed as a "Graded Learning Review."

Martina updated the Committee on the latest observation data. There had been 221 observations to date in the 2016-17 academic year, with 42% of full time staff observed and 17% of part time staff. Of those, 43% were outstanding and 51% graded as good. In response to questions, Martina confirmed that there was good evidence of EDBV being raised during lessons, citing language lessons, where students watched the news in German, and discussed issues such as tolerance.

Turning to the On Course survey, a new on line survey had been developed in conjunction with IT, which provided live information on response rate and tools to permit greater interrogation of answers by faculty, teacher and individual course. This provided useful feedback for teachers to use to improve practice.

Governors were concerned at the high percentage of unattributed complaints. Without detail it was difficult to monitor trends. There were some complaints about incidents or issues for which there was no solution and cases where complainants were pursuing issues beyond the final appeal stage. To provide better clarity the complaints procedure was under review, with a new title of Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure, written in more user friendly style. There would also be an opportunity to report issues to the police, because it could not always be established beyond doubt whether the perpetrators of bad or illegal behaviour were students belonging to the College.

Finally, Martina updated the Committee on the recent Quality Management Review on Pearson BTEC programmes. The review had gone well and the outcome was positive with one recommendation, to complete a Conflict of Interest Policy with associated safeguards, for example to avoid a teacher who is also a parent from marking their child's work.

The Committee agreed to commend and to note the report.

Jenny Leach, Assistant Principal joined for item 5.2 only

Approved

5.2 HE update

The report was received and Jenny reminded the Committee that the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) had changed its quality assurance process and now required, as part of the annual return, confirmation that the Board received regular assurance on HE provision. She updated the Committee on the current issues.

A recent Annual Provider Review had noted areas of concern relating to the growth of provision and assurance that steps had been taken or were planned to ensure that student outcomes and the quality of student academic experience was maintained. The circulated return, providing assurance, was received and noted.

The College had formally applied to be assessed through the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). However the initiative had been delayed by a Lords' ruling and it was unlikely that there would be the anticipated gold silver and bronze bandings.

Jenny confirmed that HE provision had been rebranded and she tabled the new prospectus. There had also be additional marketing material for staff to support the drive on internal progression. There was a 13% increase in applications, and whilst these were not necessarily converted into enrolments, the trend was positive. A new MIS tool helped to track conversions. Recruitment was a priority, and marketing had started half a term ahead of last year's campaign, with the focus on internal progression.

New and additional pathways had been added to HE provision, including generic "top up" routes. This would help to increase the university feel, and whilst there was still work to do on branding and developing the University Centre, work was underway. Whilst student satisfaction levels could be improved on, this did not relate to classroom teaching.

The Committee noted the update.

6. Teaching and Learning

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

The report was received and taken as read. Dee thanked those who had participated in the recent Board Residential break out group. Using a PowerPoint presentation she highlighted the key issues in the circulated report.

Approved

In the updated staffing structure James Tarling, shortlisted for the TES Teacher of the Year Awards, was working with the learning leads. The focus was on consistency across faculties, with a clear agenda, and using action learning sets to find solutions to problems. In response to questions Dee provided justification for the change in roles within the team. The current structure allowed for flexibility and review as the new roles bedded in.

There was a new approach to staff development day, with an external facilitator used for the rolling feedback sessions. There had been a high energy feel to the day, which had also included staff wellbeing sessions, organised by HR. Extra sessions for support staff helped this cohort to feel valued and to understand their role in delivering exceptional teaching learning and performance.

Greater engagement with external speakers and organisations had increased diversity, using the Education Training Foundation (ETF), Creative Education and promoting mental health issues in "how to" sessions. There were enhanced research and collaboration opportunities, and a first call for submissions for the Journal of Ideas in FE. Staff were encouraged to "walk in others' shoes" to improve understanding of colleagues' roles.

The digital agenda aimed to reduce the digital divide, where inconsistent use across faculties disadvantaged some learners. Digital champions, comprising staff and students, encouraged fertilisation of ideas. An on-line survey assessing digital involvement in the classroom would be included in the student survey, with digital use included in the quality assessment of teaching and learning.

Finally Dee updated the Committee on teacher education and confirmed that the PGCE centre had moved from Plymouth to Exeter.

The Committee commended the update and noted the report.

6.1 Curriculum Reform Update

The report was received and in the author's absence Julie updated the Committee on the key issues. She reminded Governors that they had received a number of recent updates on curriculum changes across the College including Apprenticeship Standards, Technical pathways or T levels, and A level reform.

At its last meeting the Committee had been updated on the plans to offer 80% subjects with an AS exam at the end of the first year and 20% as linear A levels, with a single exam at the end of the second year. The phased approach would minimise risk on the curriculum reform and the report provided detail of which subjects were to be offered as linear A levels.

The Committee considered the Extend programme, where learners could study from a bespoke selection of courses, designed to enhance learners' experience and set them apart from others. The offer was a real unique selling point (USP) for the College, and would add value to becoming an exceptional College. Due to start in September 2017, there had been considerable interest from other colleges. The Committee considered how this would be resourced and Julie confirmed that faculties had been invited to propose subjects where they already had teaching expertise, and the final list agreed. The interview process would provide an indication of demand, by subject. The Committee asked the significance of an asterisk by the subject title. There would be clarification at the next meeting.

BHS

The Committee noted the report.

7. Special Projects

Steve Strang to join for item 7.1 only

7.1 Student Food Survey

The report and executive summary were received. At the invitation of the Chair, the Student Governor 16-18 highlighted the key findings of the survey, which had been developed, distributed and analysed by the Student Representative Committee (SRC) in response to conflicting feedback on the quality of food available to students. Of the 332 student respondents and 32 staff, 30% had special dietary need and whilst the sample was small and potentially skewed, it demonstrated the passion of those who responded. Better quality food led to better health and better concentration which could lead to marginal gains in learner outcomes.

Communication was a key issue, and more needed to make students aware of the content of their food and what was available.

The project had been challenging, but had started a conversation. Commended by the Committee, it highlighted some key issues, but defining "healthy" food was not itself without challenge.

As the College link to the catering contractors, Steve confirmed that by coincidence, many of the issues raised in the survey had or were being addressed. The SRC might wish to consider involving the contractors in future surveys. The appointment of a Health and Wellbeing Officer would take forward the agenda, working alongside the Head of Estates. It was important to demonstrate responsiveness and that with the appointment of a new catering manager, the timing was helpful to action some of the survey's recommendations.

In conclusion the Chair summarised the key finding: that it was important

Approved

to have a consistent message regarding the promotion of healthy eating and that letting people know what was on offer was an easy win.

The Committee commended the two student Governors and the SRC and agreed to **note the results of the Student Food Survey**.

8. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

The following reports were received and noted:

8.1 Safeguarding meeting –Draft minutes from meeting on 10 February 2017

8.2 E & D and British Values Steering group (EDBV) minutes from 8 February 2017

8.3 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) update
The report showed progress towards actions from the 2015-16 Quality Improvement Plan

8.4 Retention Attendance and Punctuality
The report was received and the Chair highlighted the improved in year attendance, which was currently 0.6% up on the same time last year. The improvement was significant, based on a large population and came despite the drag effect of maths and English.

8.5 HR Update on Teaching Staff Qualifications

8.6 Risk register
The revised risk register was received, reformulated to reflect the new Strategic Plan. Governors scrutinised the risk and risk ratings for all those for which the Quality and Standards Committee was responsible. Taking each in turn Governors were updated on the rationale for the risk and the justification for the rating. The Chair reminded Governors of the reports received during the annual cycle of business to support the Committee in monitoring assurance for each risk.

8.7 Items to take to the Board
The Committee agreed to items for the executive summary to go to the Board on 5th May 2017. BHS

8.8 Items for next meeting
Items for the meeting on 5th June were as per the circulated cycles of business

7. **Date of next meetings**
Monday 5 June 2017

Approved