

EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 30 November 2020 via Zoom

Present	Bindu Arjoon	Chair
	Jo Matthews	Vice Chair
	John Laramy	
	Sue Clarke	
	Tim Quine	
	Tim Rutherford	
	Susie Hills	
	Sonja Longmore	
	Vicki Roberts	
	Will Valastro	
Oliva Dupont		

Apologies None

In Attendance	Jade Otty	Vice Principal Performance
	<i>Item 4 only</i> Kristyn Woodward	Director of Student Experience
	<i>Item 5.3 only</i> Lucinda Sanders	Director of Adult and HE
	<i>Item 6 only</i> Gemma Noble	Director of People and Organisational Development
	Alison Layton-Hill	Clerk to the Corporation

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

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting and extended a particular welcome to new governors Olivia Dupont and Susie Hills.

The Chair acknowledged that this would be Jo Matthews' final meeting and thanked Jo for her valuable contribution to the Committee, particularly in her role as Vice Chair. The Committee noted that the Search and Governance Committee will make a recommendation for a replacement Vice Chair for the Committee at the Board meeting on 11 December 2020.

There were no apologies or declarations of interest received.

2. **Minutes**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2020, as circulated, were agreed.

3. **Matters arising**

3.1 QRR Review Update

The Principal/CEO updated governors following the recent quality and resources review (QRR) meetings. He commended the work of the leadership team and all faculties on an impressive and consistent performance.

The Chair reminded the Committee that governors would, in normal times, be invited to attend the QRR reviews and encouraged governors to take part when possible as it offered an opportunity to understand how quality assurance is carried out in the College.

The Committee noted the update

Kristyn Woodward, Director of Student Experience joined the meeting for item 4 only

4. **Safeguarding**

4.1 Safeguarding Annual Report

The Chair informed the Committee that Sue Clarke as the safeguarding lead governor and herself as the deputy safeguarding lead governor had attended helpful refresher training which covered the responsibilities of the safeguarding lead.

Kristyn Woodward introduced himself to the Committee and presented the safeguarding annual report. He highlighted that the team had been restructured and the College had invested in wellbeing advisers to strengthen the frontline referral service. New trainee counsellors had completed their training and were gaining experience in the work place. There had been a drive to improve staff safeguarding awareness and training from the point of induction and at regular intervals thereafter.

There had been a marked rise in mental health referrals, young people experiencing homelessness, online exploitation and young people affected by County Lines. The team was working with the police and charities locally and regionally and there is a greater emphasis on the role of the tutor and personal development plans to support online safety.

The Principal stated that mental health and other student challenges appeared to be less prevalent in colleges that were open the most which reinforced the decision the College had made.

The safeguarding lead governor had received a thorough briefing from the Director of Student Experience and was pleased to note that the breadth of safeguarding knowledge and skills enabled an effective response from the College. She noted that Covid-19 had provided positive opportunities for the College such as building the skillset and capacity to support at a time when charities were unable to, using bursary funding to provide

access to essential IT equipment for vulnerable learners, investing in the role of the tutor, improving the structure of the team and investing in wellbeing staff.

The Committee challenged how staff engagement in safeguarding training had been measured. Staff are provided with regular updates and bulletins and each staff development day has a safeguarding aspect. Tutors have welcomed the training and professionalisation of their role.

The Committee raised that the student survey feedback indicated that students may be feeling less safe. It was noted that the response to the survey had been low at 57% and therefore difficult to ascertain a meaningful measure. The Student Experience Department is exploring different measures to gauge feelings of safety and establishing methods to measure the actual impact of training sessions and resource.

The Committee thanked the Director of Student Experience for the work of his team and for the informative and reassuring presentation.

The Committee agreed to recommend the Safeguarding Annual Report to the Board for approval on 11 December 2020.

Clerk

4.2 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

The Committee received and considered the updated Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which is reviewed annually.

The Committee agreed to recommend the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy to the Board for approval on 11 December 2020

Clerk

5. **Quality Assurance**

5.1 Covid-19 Teaching and Learning update

The Chair led a Q&A session to enable governors the opportunity to ask questions related to Covid-19 and its impact on teaching and learning.

The Committee questioned whether the need for students to self-isolate, and be away from college, had caused any issues. The Vice Principal Performance explained that the number of students needing to self-isolate had remained low and the vast majority had only required a short absence. Where students are self-isolating, the College provides a set of guarantees to them as to how often they would be set work and catch up funding is used to support them. The College had also introduced FLIP weeks to extend holidays and ensure learners receive as many uninterrupted weeks in College as possible.

Governors asked how the recent exam resits had helped the College to prepare logistically for the summer exams if social distancing is still needed. It was thought that the summer exams would not be as challenging as the recent GCSE resits which demanded a strict set of

social distancing requirements. For exams due to take place in January 2021, the College had hired accommodation away from College to negate any impact on the learning of other students.

The Committee noted the discussion

- 5.2 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2019/2020 Outcome
The Committee received the Quality Improvement Plan for the 2019/2020 academic year and the Vice Principal Performance advised governors that all actions had been completed or carried over to the 2020/2021 QIP.

The Vice Principal Performance outlined some of the positive headlines including how safeguarding had supported the College, the acquisition of specialist teaching space, improved social mobility and launching a new curriculum strategy. The main challenge that will be carried forward is adult achievement rates, where improvement is still required.

The Committee noted the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2019/2020

College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2019/2020 and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2020/2021.

The report was received and the Committee noted the overall assessment grade as 'Outstanding'.

The SAR reflected the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) and the Vice Principal Performance gave a summary of the key achievements and areas for improvement for each of the four areas: Quality of Education, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development and Leadership and Management. All study programmes were judged as Outstanding except for Adult Learning Programmes which were considered Good.

The Committee noted the positive report and questioned areas of the curriculum that had not been so positive. It was noted that the recruitment and retention of specialist teachers for some of the more practical subjects had been challenging. 2019/2020 had also been particularly challenging for these learners as they were required to attend College for adaptive assessments. It was agreed that improvements could be made to the consistency of the experience of some of these students.

Governors recalled expressing concern for students not in employment or training (NEETs) and were pleased to note that the completion and progression data for NEETs had much improved over the last year. The destinations for students in receipt of bursaries was questioned as there appeared to be no destination data for 30% of these learners. It was

accepted that the systematic collection of destination data needed to be improved.

Referring to the section related to governance, the Vice Principal Performance stated that the strength and depth of understanding and challenge of this committee and the Board is outstanding. Governors questions whether a reference to the governors' self-assessment would be useful which was confirmed.

After significant consideration of the evidence, followed by review and challenge, governors agreed to endorse the assessments across all four EIF criteria.

The Committee agreed to recommend the College SAR 2019/2020 to the Board for approval Clerk

The Quality Improvement Plan for 2020/21, in its new format, was received and considered. The Vice Principal Performance highlighted the key areas for consideration under the headlines of; safeguarding and wellbeing of learners, wellbeing of staff, equality and diversity, keep the risk low, maintain outstanding and grow and thrive.

The Committee sought assurance that all elements of the SAR had been captured within the QIP and questioned how the metrics of success are measured. It was advised that the senior leadership team will regularly assess progress and RAG rate where the College is in meeting the objectives. It was confirmed that the Committee will receive a review at the next meeting.

The Committee agreed to recommend the College QIP 2020/2021 to the Board for approval Clerk

Lucinda Sanders, Director of Adult and HE joined the meeting for item 5.3 only

5.3 HE SAR 2019/2020 and QIP 2020/2021

The Committee received the report and noted the achievements during 2019/2020 and the key priorities for 2020/2021. Key priorities include: curriculum development and awareness, a focus on higher technical qualifications in digital, construction, healthcare and engineering with the objective of supporting more students to progress to level 4 and 5 qualifications, improve specialist staff development, acknowledging the difference between teaching FE and HE, improve learning resources and the accuracy of recording destination data.

The Committee referred to objectives that had been carried forward from 2020 and questioned what the College would be doing differently to achieve them. A key aspect was identified as improving the learner

experience by supporting learners outside of the classroom and providing additional support for progression. The Committee noted that a Student Experience Lead is joining the College in January 2021 to promote a stronger student voice. It was also felt that the Future Skills Centre and Institute of technology will be key to provide adult and HE space as well as an adult and HE hub for advice and guidance.

The Committee questioned whether the College had considered the practice at comparative institutions which was confirmed. There did not appear to be any merit in comparing the College with universities as HE learners at the College are mainly those who are returning to education and require study skills support.

It was acknowledged that some faculties had not engaged with the on-course survey, which was hoped to be resolved through strengthening the student voice.

The Committee agreed to recommend the HE SAR 2019/2020 and QIP 2020/2021 to the Board on 11 December 2020 for approval

Gemma Noble, Director of People and Organisational Development joined the meeting

6. HR Policies

6.1 The Committee received and reviewed the amendments to the following policies:

- Probation Procedure
- Suspension and Dismissal Policy
- Capability Policy
- Special Leave Procedure

Referring to the capability policy, it was clarified that a grade 3 lesson observation is classified as 'requires improvement' and a grade 4 lesson observation as 'inadequate'. Governors suggested that professional bodies and trade unions are added to the section outlining where support for staff can be obtained from.

GN

The Committee approved the HR policies

7. Risk Management

7.1 Risk Register

The Principal gave an overview of the process for formulating the risk register. Following inputs from faculties and department, the senior leadership team review the risk register which is scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee owns the risk register as a whole and each risk is dispersed to the relevant committees.

Referring to R58 failure to recruit 16-18 learners, the Committee questioned what the response had been to the online open events. The Committee noted that the virtual events are being well received and current data shows that recruitment could increase by 200 learners. Therefore, the risk may be downgraded at the next review.

Governors noted that risk R56, failure to deliver appropriate teaching and learning had increased. It was acknowledged that students feel differently about on-line learning and the uncertainty about assessment methods at the end of the year was a concern.

The Committee noted the risk register

7.2 Emerging Risks

The Committee considered any additional risks that had emerged from the discussion.

The Committee did not propose any additional risks

8. **Future Meetings**

8.1 Items to take to Board were agreed as:

- Safeguarding Annual Report and Policy
- QIP and SAR
- HE SAR
- HR Policies

8.2 Items for the next meeting

The Committee reviewed the cycle of business for the meeting on 22 February 2021.

8.3 Date of future meetings:

- Monday 22 February 2021
- Monday 14 June 2021

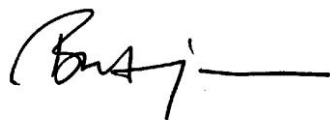
9. **Minutes/reports for information**

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

9.1 EDBV meeting minutes

9.2 HR Annual Report

Signed by the Chair



Date: 22 February 2021