

EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 14 June 2021 via Zoom

Present	Bindu Arjoon Sue Clarke John Laramy Tim Quine Tim Rutherford Sonja Longmore Vicki Roberts	Chair Vice Chair
Apologies	Olivia Dupont Will Valastro	
In Attendance	Rob Bosworth Jade Otty <i>Item 5.1 only</i> Kristyn Woodward <i>Item 6.1 only</i> Lucinda Sanders <i>Item 4.2, 5.1, 5.2 and 8.3 only</i> Lisa Smith <i>Item 7 only</i> Gemma Noble <i>Item 6.2 only</i> Mike Blakeley Alison Layton-Hill	Deputy Principal/CEO Vice Principal Performance Director of Student Experience Director of Adult and HE Assistant Principal Director of People and Organisational Development Director of Apprenticeships Clerk to the Corporation

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

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting. The Committee acknowledged that Susie Hills had stepped down from the Board and thanked her for her contribution to the work of the Committee. It was noted that this would be the last committee meeting for the student governors and the Chair thanked them both, in their absence, for their support and wished them well for the future.

Apologies were received from Olivia Dupont and Will Valastro was not in attendance. There were no declarations of interest received.

2. **Minutes**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2021, as circulated, were agreed.

3. **Matters arising**

3.1 Staff Recruitment

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

4. **Teaching, Learning & Curriculum**

4.1 2021 grading/qualification update

The Committee received the Vice Principal Performance's report and also noted the Centre Policy for determining teacher assessed grades. Centre Evidenced Grades (CEGs) will be submitted for A levels, AS levels and GCSEs. The Committee acknowledged the significant amount of additional workload for staff in providing robust evidence in support of every grade, to allow for quality checking by the awarding bodies and to consider any student appeals.

The Committee was advised that there are many learners studying for qualifications where there is no CEG process. Awarding bodies for vocational and technical qualifications are all taking a different approach and the College is taking a bespoke approach to each type of provision.

The Committee expressed some concern about ensuring fairness to students in relation to previous cohorts and the sector nationally. The College is confident in its integrity and was hopeful that the methodology had been designed to ensure greater confidence in the grading system in the absence of nationally-set exams.

The Committee questioned whether the past year had been more difficult for vocational learners, referring to their lower attendance and feedback and was keen to be sighted on their experience. It was confirmed that online learning had been more difficult for vocational learners as their choice of learning style is more practical. However, the College had made every effort to keep the learners engaged and to complete assignments.

The Committee sought assurance that the College ensures that vulnerable learners are not disadvantaged through the appeals process.

The Committee noted the report

Lisa Smith, Assistant Principal joined the meeting for item 4.2, 5.1, 5.2 and 8.3

4.2 EIF Ofsted Readiness

The Committee received the presentation and noted that Ofsted will prioritise those colleges that have not had an inspection since September 2015. Exeter College was last inspected in January 2014.

In readiness, the College is launching a programme to reintroduce the key language of the inspection framework and to focus on the deep dive methodology.

The Committee thanked the Assistant Principal for her presentation and commended the sensible approach the College is taking. It was suggested that it would be useful to explore and understand the requirements of Ofsted further, particularly in terms of how governors will be involved.

LSm

The Committee questioned whether the College's own translation of Intent, Implementation and Impact might cause confusion to staff during an inspection. Governors were reassured that all staff are very familiar with how the language correlates.

Governors asked that their role was considered during the Ofsted readiness work.

The Committee noted the report

Kristyn Woodward, Director of Student Experience joined the meeting for item 5.1

5. Responsiveness

5.1 Department for Student Experience Annual Report

The Committee received the Department for Student Experience Annual Report and presentation. The Director of Student Experience highlighted the key themes of wellbeing, safeguarding, transition and bursary as well as the future plans for the department.

The Committee referred to staff reporting increased anxiety as they were recognising diminished mental health among students and reinforced the importance of supporting positive staff mental health.

The Committee questioned how the Department for Student Experience quality assures its provision and whether it engages in peer reviews. It was confirmed that the department had been the subject of an external review recently.

Governors sought assurance that the department had an escalation policy to enable robust and appropriate challenge to Early Help and the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

The Committee was pleased to note that the wellbeing team is working within faculties, which is an important presence, to raise the profile of the wellbeing support message and to shift culture.

The Committee received assurance that the College was fully considering the Ofsted review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges and putting additional measures in place as recommended.

The Committee noted the report

- 5.2 Student On Course Teaching and Learning Survey Outcomes
The Committee received the report and the Assistant Principal outlined both the positive elements and those areas identified for improvement from learner feedback.

The Committee challenged the absence of questions in the survey referring to wellbeing support. It was confirmed that wellbeing had been included but the data was not in the report as there had been no significant variation. Governors were also reassured that questions related to wellbeing were sent out through the learners' personal development plans in February.

The Committee questioned the demographic of those students who indicated that they were not making good progress (25% of responses). It was confirmed that this response was prevalent in vocational students who felt disadvantaged because they had not had the opportunity to practice their skill during lockdown.

The Committee noted the report

Lucinda Sanders, Director of Adult and HE joined the meeting for item 6.1

6. **Quality Assurance**

6.1 HE Student Voice

The Committee received the report and presentation from the Director of Adult and HE. It was acknowledged that the response rate to the survey had been disappointing and it was planned to send the survey directly to learners the following year, as opposed to via the faculties.

It was confirmed that practical, hands-on courses had been difficult to deliver, however governors were pleased to note that the opening of the Institute of Technology was already having a positive impact on adult learners.

The Committee encouraged the College to focus on assessment and feedback and it was confirmed that additional support is given to staff new to HE, to support them in this area.

The Committee noted the report

6.2 Sub-Contractor QA Annual Review

The Committee received the report and noted that the provision is decreasing with the aim that there will be no sub-contractor provision the following year. The ESFA's view is that sub-contracting is high risk, however the College's two sub-contractors are well managed by experience members of staff to make sure the College meets its obligations.

The challenges of lockdown were explained including that learners were passing planned end dates as a result of redeployment and suspensions during the pandemic. It was noted that the ESFA had removed the timely measure.

The Committee noted the report

6.3 Retention and Attendance

The Committee received the report and noted that attendance and retention are largely stable, although in some areas it has significantly improved on the previous year. The Committee cautioned that the total loss over a year tends to take place from February onwards which may impact the data.

The Committee noted the report

Gemma Noble, Director of People and Organisational Development joined the meeting for item 7

7. **Gender Pay Gap**

The Committee received the report and the Director of People and Organisational Development outlined the content.

The deadline for submission had been extended to early October resulting in much reduced data for comparison. However, nationally the College is benchmarked well with regard to overall gender pay gap and specifically for public sector and the education sector.

The Committee felt the report was positive and demonstrated the action the College is taking, which is significant in terms of progressing women into leadership. Governors did suggest that the two middle quartiles should be analysed more deeply.

GN

The Committee agreed to recommend the Gender Pay Gap report to the Board on 2 July 2021

Clerk

8. **Policies**

8.1 HR Policies

The Committee received and reviewed the draft updated HR policies which included:

- Recruitment and Selection policy
- Leave for Parents policy
- Flexible Working procedure

The Committee approved the policies

8.2 Admissions Policy

The Committee received and reviewed the Admissions policy which had been amended to provide clarity as to which learners the College sixth form provision is for.

The Committee noted that the policy referred to "Sixth Form for the city" and suggested "and region" is added. Governors also sought assurance that in the context of the government's focus on lifetime learning, that the College as being sufficiently inclusive.

The Committee noted that governors were not part of the appeals and complaints process and to avoid any confusion, it was suggested that relevant policies specifically stated that this is the case.

The Committee agreed to adopt the Admissions policy

8.3 SEN & D Policy

The Committee received and reviewed the SEND policy which had been written by the Foundation Learning Support team, in conjunction with Devon County Council, and records the College's offer for students with EHCP and SEND needs.

The Committee challenged whether the policy included those learners that had joined the College from an alternative provision (AP) as, although they may not have EHCPs they are potentially vulnerable and have specific needs. It was confirmed that these learners are included and that they would be referenced within the policy.

The Committee agreed to adopt the SEN& D policy subject to the addition of a reference to learners from APs.

LSm

9. Risk Management

9.1 Risk Register

The Committee noted the risk register which had been formally approved by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 7 June 2021.

The Committee questioned why the risk related to Ofsted and TEF Gold rating had increased. It was advised that this was simply due to the fact that the College is now within scope to receive an Ofsted inspection. It was also noted that TEF Gold had now been extended to mid-2022.

The Committee raised the importance of preparing for an Ofsted inspection in terms of the expectation on staff, students and governors.

9.2 Emerging Risks

The Committee considered any additional risks that had emerged from the meeting and referred to the risk related to the impact of Covid-19, furlough and Brexit on recruitment that had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

10. **Committee Self-Evaluation**
The Chair led a discussion on the Committee’s effectiveness over the past year.

The Committee agreed to receive an updated self-evaluation to consider at the first meeting of the next academic year

Clerk

11. **Future Meetings**

11.1 Items to take to Board were agreed as:

Clerk

- 2021 grading/qualifications update
- EIF Ofsted readiness
- Department for Student Experience annual report
- Gender Pay Gap report
- Student feedback (on course teaching and learning and HE)
- Policies

11.2 Items for the next meeting

The Committee agreed the cycle of business for the meeting on 27 September 2021.

Clerk

11.3 Date of future meetings:

- Monday 27 September 2021
- Monday 29 November 2021
- Monday 7 February 2022

12. **Minutes/reports for information**

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

12.1 CEG Centre Policy