

EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 22 February 2021 via Zoom

Present

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

Apologies

None

In Attendance

	Rob Bosworth	Deputy Principal/CEO
	Jade Otty	Vice Principal Performance
<i>Item 5.1 only</i>	Kristyn Woodward	Director of Student Experience
<i>Item 5.3 only</i>	Lucinda Sanders	Director of Adult and HE
<i>Item 5.1, 5.2 and 7.1 only</i>	Lisa Smith	Assistant Principal

Alison Layton-Hill Clerk to the Corporation

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

Action

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting. There were no apologies or declarations of interest received.

2. **Minutes**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2020, as circulated, were agreed.

3. **Matters arising**

3.1 White Paper

The Principal shared with the Committee his view that the White Paper, the only one currently in the education sphere, is positive and that the College is well positioned to benefit from its contents.

He also advised that the College provided an online training session to all DfE staff covering student voice, T levels, apprenticeships, employers, Adult and HE.

4. **Teaching, Learning & Curriculum**

4.1 2021 grading/qualification update

The Vice Principal Performance confirmed to governors that exams for BTEC, AS Level, A Level, GCSE and the IB have been cancelled.

Alternative assessment will be required and the College is waiting for guidance from Ofqual. It is anticipated that there will be nationally set modified assessments.

Apprentices are expected to attend College to undertake online exams, which commenced on 16 February 2021.

Vocational learners on practical courses will be required to undertake a modified assessment on the basis of the competency they are able to demonstrate. Ofqual have not yet released details, however it is important for those students to attend College at the earliest opportunity to gain the skills they need to prepare for the modified assessment.

Governors noted the challenges for the College and the uncertainty for learners. The College is communicating regularly with learners and their parents/carers and a dedicated web page provides the latest information.

Governors sought assurance as to how vocational learners are being supported and were advised that Teachers are teaching practical courses online as far as is possible and those learners will be prioritised when the College re-opens. In addition, a significant proportion of the College's catch up funding is allocated to practical areas giving those learners extra time.

The Committee questioned whether the curriculum coverage had been compromised and noted that the awarding bodies identified at an early stage some parts of the curriculum that the College would not need to include. However, there is uncertainty in terms of how the modifications will translate into the format of tests.

The Committee acknowledged that students may be experiencing a sense of disconnect, concern about the inability to measure their progress with the lack of informal peer to peer interactions and reduced confidence about the readiness for assessments. The College has been delivering the full amount of learner hours, providing live online lessons and is still undertaking assessments and marking to provide grades.

The Committee noted the report

4.2 TLA update on remote learning, quality assurance and staff support

The Committee received the report and noted that learners are following the usual timetable with their usual teachers. There has been a slight drop in attendance but learner engagement remains good.

Referring to quality assurance, the Vice Principal Performance will share a video clip of T Level teaching which evidences that teachers have found innovative ways of delivering the curriculum. Online teaching is not currently being graded, which was welcomed by governors, and the full time student survey has been postponed. Live online sessions with learners from different sectors indicate that learners are grateful for the support they are getting from staff, however most would prefer to be back in College. **JO**

The main concern in terms of staff welfare is the need to support them delivering the timetable online. It was noted that the level of screen time for staff is challenging and they are being encouraged to set interactive tasks for learners to promote active learning and self-checking, however this is dependent on full learner engagement. It was noted that student welfare has become an increasing part of the teacher's role and staff development days have focused on staff wellbeing.

The Committee noted that the College was preparing for the transition back to face to face teaching and learning. Learners have missed the informal catch ups with teachers and peers before and after lessons and there is an intention for staff to include icebreakers in lesson time to support with reintegration.

Governors were reassured that inexperienced staff and new starters were given appropriate support. They have been buddied up with experienced, longer serving members of staff and will be given additional support when they return to the classroom.

The Committee noted that learner attendance remains high but there had been some curriculum areas where attendance had fallen and faculty heads will be supported with reports of those that have engaged least well. Those students will be prioritised for extra sessions.

The Committee noted the report

Lisa Smith, Assistant Principal joined the meeting for items 5.1 and 5.2 and Kristyn Woodward, Director of Student Experience joined the meeting for item 5.1

5. Responsiveness

5.1 Learner support during lockdown

The Committee received a detailed presentation of assurance in terms of how learners are being supported during lockdown with highlights being:

- The expectations of learners have also been shared with parents/carers.
- Support email addresses have been provided to learners
- Learners who would benefit from coming into the College have been identified and supported.

- Those learners that struggle with IT have been supported with connectivity, software and hardware.
- The health and wellbeing of students is a major part of the personal development programme.
- The new wellbeing team is fully in place
- Staff have been trained sufficiently to give them confidence to have lower level mental health conversations
- The full counselling service will be available by 8 March

The Committee was reassured that further support will be provided to those students and staff that will find it most challenging to return to College.

The Committee noted the discussion

5.2 Learner Feedback

The Committee received the report and the Assistant Principal outlined both the positive elements and those areas identified for improvement. Governors requested an update at a future meeting to gain assurance that the areas for improvement have been addressed.

Clerk

The Committee expressed interest in the questions asked of students at the end of their courses. It was confirmed that the questions within the on course survey are being discussed imminently and will be potentially amended due to the unusual academic year.

The Committee noted the report

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

5.3 Office for Students (OfS) Letter – Commitment to Students under Consumer Law

The Committee was advised that the OfS is the national regulator for HE and the College is registered as a provider due to its fee charging provision. The Committee received the OfS letter and an oral update from the Director of Adult and HE providing assurance as to how the College is meeting its obligations to its HE students, including the quality of teaching and providing effective communication.

The Committee questioned how the College is collecting feedback from HE students about their wellbeing. It was noted that regular surveys have been issued and feedback is received at faculty level. There had been a positive HE student forum and additional online 1-1 support had been offered.

The Committee noted the report

6. **Quality Assurance**

6.1 Intensive care update

The Committee received an oral update and noted that there had been areas of success but also there remained some challenges for the subjects receiving additional support. It was noted that without exams, as traditional methods of assessment, it will be difficult to evidence improvement.

Governors discussed that there may need to be changes to how intensive care support is monitored in the coming year due to the lack of comparable data.

The Committee noted the report

6.2 QIP Progress update

The Committee received the report and noted that although the College is making every effort to support its learners, some of the targets set in the autumn term may not be achievable due to the continued impact of Covid-19.

The Committee questioned whether recruitment campaigns are receiving better response rates and was advised that although recruitment remains a challenge, there have been some areas of success in recent weeks.

The Committee noted the report

Lisa Smith, Assistant Principal joined the meeting for item 7

7. **Policies**

7.1 Equality and Diversity Policy

The Committee received the updated Equality and Diversity policy and considered it for approval. The process by which the policy is reviewed was clarified.

Governors requested that section 3.2 should be amended to state that *"the Board is responsible for reviewing and implementing the policy..."*

It was confirmed that governors should undertake equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) training. Staff EDI training is being reviewed and this will include governors.

The Committee questioned whether the policy needs to be reviewed to include consideration of emerging EDI issues. The importance of the policy meeting the needs of the legislation was also considered. It was agreed that the policy would be approved, however the College will ensure that emerging issues will remain at the forefront of how the policy is implemented.

The Committee

a) approved the policy subject to the amendment in paragraph 3.2

b) agreed that it would receive assurance at the next meeting as to how emerging issues will be addressed in the action plan and how these will be implemented.

Clerk

8. Risk Management

8.1 Risk Register

The Committee noted that the risk register was unchanged since the previous meeting and will next be formally approved by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 15 March 2021.

8.2 Emerging Risks

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

The Committee did not propose any additional risks

9 Future Meetings

9.1 Items to take to Board were agreed as:

Clerk

- 2021 grading update
- TLA update on remote learning, quality assurance and staff support
- Learner support and learner feedback
- OfS Letter requirements
- EDBV Policy

9.2 Items for the next meeting

The Committee agreed the cycle of business for the meeting on 14 June 2021. EDI emerging issues will also be considered and additional information from Ofqual will either be shared by email or at the next meeting.

Clerk

9.3 Date of future meetings:

- Monday 14 June 2021

9. Minutes/reports for information

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

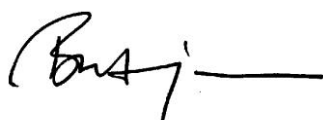
9.1 Catch up funding update

9.2 Remote learning statement

10. Any Other Business

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair expressed her thanks to all staff members that had taken part in the meeting for their ongoing dedication and support to learners and each other.

Signed by the Chair:



Date: 14 June 2021