

## EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

### QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

#### Minutes of the meeting on Monday 3 March 2025 held remotely via Zoom

<b>Present</b>	Sue Clarke	Chair
	Jess Adams	
	Bindu Arjoon	
	Pamela DeGregorio	
	Ashish Ghadiali	Co-opted
	Wilf Hudson	
	John Laramy	
	Ayo Okesola	
	Tim Quine	
	Vicki Roberts	
	Lindsay Skinner	
<b>Apologies</b>	Antony Hart	
<b>Observers</b>	None	
<b>In Attendance</b>	Jade Otty	Deputy CEO
	Sam Hillman	Deputy Vice Principal
	<i>Item 5</i> Billie Stokes	Assistant Principal
	<i>Item 6</i> James Wilson	Head of Teacher Advancement
	<i>Item 5</i> Claire Lunn	Head of Student Experience, Careers and Tutoring
	Alison Layton-Hill	Head of Governance

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

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting and extended a particular welcome to Wilf Hudson to his first Quality and Standards Committee meeting. Apologies were received from Antony Hart and there were no declarations of interest received. The Chair reminded governors that Lucy Gregson had stepped down from the Board.
2. **Minutes**
  - 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2024 were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.
3. **Matters arising**
  - 3.1 Digital Safety

It was confirmed that the amendments to the digital safety policy approved at the previous meeting had been implemented and the policy had been published on the College's website.

4. Policies

4.1 Admissions policy

The Committee received the updated admissions policy. The Chair reiterated that although governors own the policy, they are not part of the admissions process. The circumstances in which the College may accept 15 year old learners was clarified. It was agreed that the Committee would be advised of enrolments for learners under 16 years **JO**

**The Committee approved the admissions policy**

4.2 Suspension and Dismissal policy

The Committee received the suspension and dismissal policy and noted the minor amendments.

**The Committee approved the suspension and dismissal policy**

*Billie Stokes and Claire Lunn joined the meeting*

5. **Wellbeing update**

The changes to the structure of teaching, learning and development were explained and Claire was introduced as the new Head of Student Experience, Careers and Tutoring. The Committee received the presentation covering the key themes of communication, training and the wellbeing offer.

The Committee requested that, as well as teaching staff, support staff should also be fully informed about the wellbeing offer.

Governors enquired as to the extent that student feedback informs the current offer. It was agreed that input from the Learner Leadership Team will be sought and appropriate questions added to the learner questionnaires.

Governors were assured that wellbeing staff are visiting all sites to facilitate access to the offer. Governors suggested that learners could help shape the language of certain aspects of the offer to make it more meaningful and engaging. It was also agreed that the use of data and its analysis would support the proactive engagement of those learners most at risk. It was acknowledged that promoting the full offer across all areas of the College (including parents/carers) is a priority as well as agreeing measurable success factors.

The Committee was pleased to note that at this early stage there was a positive interface between the Wellbeing and Safeguarding teams with each having a clear remit.

**The Committee noted the assurance provided and agreed to receive a progress update in the autumn term** **BS/CL**

*James Wilson joined the meeting*

## **6. Teaching and Learning**

### **6.1 SEND Staff Training**

James was introduced as the new Head of Teacher Advancement. The Committee recalled their previous challenge related to seeking assurance that the College is providing sufficient training to meet the scale of SEND learners.

The increase in learners with an EHCP, in line with regional and national trends, was acknowledged. There had been tangible benefits from the training provided earlier in the day which had been focused on creating an inclusive learning environment. The Committee viewed photographs taken during the training day.

The Committee questioned whether there were structures within the team to track the impact of the training and understand the challenges? It was advised that lesson observation data and feedback would support tracking the implementation of best practice outlined in the training.

Clarity was sought related to how certain aspects of assisted technology was used and shared. It was agreed to research further the availability and cost of examples of assisted technology.

The training had been focused on teaching staff, however the benefit for support staff would be considered.

### **The Committee noted the assurance provided**

## **7. High Needs update**

The Committee received the report. The number of high needs learners had increased significantly and it was anticipated that these numbers would continue to rise. The College's decision to increase capacity and restructure the provision had been well timed. The College continues to work positively with Devon County Council within this challenging landscape.

The new Connect provision was full and was having a positive impact on learners who may not have been in full time education for some time. The College's ambition is to enable young people to enter mainstream provision at the earliest stage and short courses will be offered over the summer to support learners to become college ready.

The Committee questioned the significant increase in those learners that have been electively home education. It was acknowledged that Devon has the second highest number of these learners and the risk factor for retention was recognised.

The Committee discussed the importance of ensuring that staff have the right skills to teach in the high needs arena and it was pleasing to note that teachers feel confident and supported by the College. Feedback from learners within the Connect provision is positive and the College hopes that many of these learners will be within the mainstream offer in the new academic year.

Governors discussed the budget related to the Connect provision and that, as the provision becomes more widely known the demand might increase. It was confirmed that a proportion of the cohort attract additional funding through their EHCP, however it was felt that learners could not be excluded on the basis of how they are funded. Although the budget deficit for the provision is currently not significant, governors were keen that the College remains vigilant and further work with DCC is required in terms of expectations and a wider Devon solution. The importance of understanding the thresholds where the College would not be the appropriate placement was highlighted.

### **The Committee noted the assurance provided by the report**

#### **8. Quality Assurance**

##### **8.1 Intensive Care Progress update**

The Committee received the report and noted the positive progress made in the three individual curriculum areas that were receiving additional support.

All heads of faculty had presented to SCG to monitor progress and provide additional support and the quality process during the following week will provide further opportunities for support.

### **The Committee was assured with the outcomes of the intensive care process**

##### **8.2 QIP update**

The Quality Improvement Plan was received and reviewed. The challenge related to offering a nursing degree pathway was noted, however the skills need in Exeter remains a key driver for including this offer. Apprenticeships was highlighted as a potential challenge due to the DfE announcing significant changes in adult apprenticeships and functional skills.

### **The Committee noted the progress**

#### **9. Responsiveness**

##### **9.1 Meeting the Skills Need**

Governors acknowledged the importance of understanding how the College's offer, today and into the future, meets the skills need of its community and region. Shared labour market intelligence showed that unemployment rates are low but there are significant skills gaps in key areas. The College is targeting the most vulnerable who wish to, and are able to, work to take positive steps into the workplace.

The Committee discussed the Skills England strategy and the need to understand how differing priorities and training elements join up. It was suggested that a more in-depth evaluation session at Board level would be a useful exercise.

### **The Committee agreed that the Board would receive an evaluation session as a strategic discussion item at a future Board meeting**

**HofG**

## 9.2 Draft Accountability Agreement

The Committee received the draft 2025/2026 Accountability Agreement, which is the College's statement to the DfE to justify receipt of DfE funding.

Governors were pleased to note the progress and successes on achievements of previous year. Governors suggested including information related to meeting the national need, providing more information about the Connect provision and emphasising the challenge of category C and D accommodation.

The challenge of the DfE timeline and the need for Board sign off was noted.

**The Committee agreed that the Head of Governance would ensure a process for Board approval of the Accountability Agreement** **HofG**

## 10. Risk Register and Emerging Risks

Governors considered the risk register and questioned the rationale for the increase in the risk rating related to residential accommodation. It was confirmed that a new Boarding Manager had been appointed and that the risk would be reduced. It was confirmed that the College expects a further inspection of its boarding accommodation during 2026.

**The Committee did not raise any additional risks to add to the register**

## 11. Future Meetings

### 11.1 Items to take to Board were agreed as:

- Policies
- Wellbeing update
- Send staff training
- High Needs update

### 11.2 Items for the next meeting

The Committee reviewed the cycle of business for the meeting on 23 June 2025.

### 11.3 Dates of future meetings

- Monday 23 June 2025

## 12. Minutes/reports for information

### 12.1 Retention and Attendance

## 13. Any other business

The Chair gave apologies for the following meeting. The Head of Governance would seek the availability of the Vice Chair.

**HofG**