

Colchester Institute Corporation

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee  
held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020

**Present**

Keith Moule, in the Chair  
Lizzy Ellam

Kevin Prince  
Terry Smyth

**In Attendance**

Maeve Borges  
Caroline Fritz  
Hazel Paton  
Jason Peters  
Jill Wognum

Vice Principal: Student Services and Support  
Assistant Principal: Quality, Teaching and Learning  
Clerk to the Governors  
Vice Principal: Curriculum Delivery and Performance  
Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Alison Andrea and Pam Donnelly.

2. **Declaration of any conflicts of interest**

None

3. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020 (CIC/CQ/20/3/1) were received and confirmed.

4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

5. **Higher Education Complaints Procedure**

During the QAA review of the College's Higher Education provision the review team had found that the complaints section on the website of the University of East Anglia did not match the College's paperwork. Governors' asked if this had been addressed and were advised that it was rectified on the day it was brought to the College's attention.

6. **Re-opening of College Campuses to Students**

Governors asked if the delivery of gas and electrical safety classes had started in mid-June as planned. It had not been possible to start these courses because of Government guidance in respect of Covid-19 and adults.

7. **Progress against Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)/Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP)**

CIC/CQ/20/3/2, Update on Progress against Post Inspection Action Plan 19/20, was received and presented by the Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality. It was noted that some of the actions had been put on hold or deferred because of the campus closures. The action plan will be evaluated as part of the self-assessment process (starting this week with areas) and revised for the autumn. Account will also be taken of the feedback from the Ofsted monitoring visit and other quality audits that have taken place.

Governors noted that the action to develop 'feed forward' mechanisms to ensure students are aware of how to build on existing skills' had not yet been delivered, although one Excellent Teacher has taken it forward, and asked how this would be taken forward. Work had started as part of the CI7 in Action programme, but the current context is making different demands of people. With different modes of delivery planned for the autumn, the focus is now going to be on the quality of online

learning and the importance of ensuring that what students do online links back to what they do in practical sessions.

Governors' asked if students were able to articulate to Ofsted Inspectors how their learning links to next learning and longer term goals and were advised that the College is in a relatively strong position in this regard. During Learning Walks carried out last year and the Ofsted Monitoring Visit many students were able to talk positively about this. The Staff Governor reported that making these links is most successful, and is better received, during one-to-one sessions with the student.

## 8. Current Performance 2019-20

### 8.1. Education Programmes for Young People

The Vice Principal: Curriculum Delivery and Performance updated the Committee on the process for calculating student grades. Before the grades are submitted, they are subject to a quality review.

The outcomes look similar to last year, but there is an element of uncertainty. The examination board checks include internal verification (the Early Years Leadership will be going into College to scan evidence across to the BTEC Internal Verifier) and comparing the results that are submitted against historical profiles. This could lead to adjustments and requests for ranking (ranking is a requirement for some examination boards, but for others is only required if the examination board has an issue with the grades submitted).

A number of students have had to be brought back into College to finish their qualifications, including:

- Level 2 and Level 3 Sport – particularly those on coaching qualifications
- Hospitality – one student does not have the minimum level of evidence
- Hairdressing – 20 students who do not have the minimum evidence. This is dependent on every student being able to find someone from within their household or social bubble to work with them. Risk assessments are in place.
- Motor vehicle – about 20 students without the minimum evidence are expected to complete by 10<sup>th</sup> July. A small number of students on the painting course are expected to complete by mid-July. This group is taking longer to complete because of the need not to share specialist industrial masks and the need for a break after using masks.
- AAT accounting courses – public examinations started this week and attendance (about 50%) is disappointing. If AAT students miss the first examination, they do not have to pay for the first re-sit. Although the students are not penalised financially they are lengthening the time between when the material was taught and when they are examined. There are about 150 adults on the accountancy programme, but just two have formally requested a break in learning.

The College has about 30 beauty therapy students who are currently unable to complete their qualifications because the relaxation of the lockdown rules does not extend to beauty salons. Plans are in hand to bring these students in when the guidance changes. If this is during July or August staff will give up their annual leave and come in.

Governors asked about the level of confidence in the internal verification process. Area Heads are undertaking all normal processes, which are approved by the awarding bodies' year on year. In addition they are meeting with the Assistant Principal: Quality, Teaching and Learning to explain what they have done, and checking their grades against the historical profile. These quality review meetings are tailored to the requirements of the award body (each awarding body is operating differently) and are recorded should the awarding body need to see them. These meetings look at the underlying efficacy of the process, whether it was fair and equitable, and how borderline cases were dealt with. There were three occasions on which the submission of the grades was not

authorised because more work was required, for example the final standardisation or check against historical data had still to be done.

## 8.2. **Apprenticeships**

The Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality reported that there are about 200 learners with a completion date in this year that still needed to complete their programme. The barriers to completion vary. Some learners need to complete on site work, which they may not be able to do if their employer is not working. Some learners need to complete their qualifications or functional skills at College. Some learners are waiting for their End Point Assessment, most of which are delayed. A number of apprentices have been furloughed (but beginning to return) and some have been made redundant during the last few months. Recent changes to rules around redundancies now allow a break in learning for a period of time while the apprentice looks for another job so they can continue. It is likely that more apprentices will lose their jobs before the autumn.

Of the 200 learners with a completion date in this year, around 100 may need to be rolled into next year. The majority of these are adult learners in the electrical and plumbing areas. There was some confusion over the Government guidance, which initially said that adults could return when the campuses re-opened, but was subsequently changed. These learners are now being brought on site in small numbers to enable as many to complete as possible. For apprentices doing qualifications which awarding bodies have deemed as able to be calculated, the process for calculating those grades is the same as for FE full time learners. Few End Point Assessments are currently taking place, with many pushed back to the autumn.

Based on current available information the overall achievement rate is about 72%, which would be a significant improvement on last year, and similar to 2017-18 outcomes. However it is a dynamic situation and could change for the reasons given. The final position will not be known until the ILR is run in September.

Governors noted the problems associated with Covid-19 and asked if data was available to show what proportion of the College's apprentices had been adversely affected, and whether it is in line with the rest of the country. The National Achievement Rate Tables will not be published in the spring because it is recognised that the data will be unreliable, but it is expected that national averages will be published.

## 8.3. **Adult Learning Programmes**

The Assistant Principal: Quality, Teaching and Learning reported that the process for submitting calculated grades for adults on Study Programmes, ESOL and in the Learning Shops is the same as for education programmes for young people. The data is broadly in line with the previous year, but for a smaller number of entrants. The Learning Shop offers roll on/roll off programmes and would have been expecting more learners to enrol during the period March to August.

## 8.4. **Vulnerable Learners**

The Vice Principal: Student Services and Support reported that these learners are spread across the FE curriculum. Prior to the lockdown all the categories were expected to achieve in line with or slightly above their peers.

The Vice Principal: Student Services and Support updated the Committee on other requirements for vulnerable learners during the lockdown. Whilst schools have remained open for the children of key workers and vulnerable students, no students from vulnerable categories have been attending College. Members of Additional Learning Support and the Safeguarding and Welfare teams have been in weekly contact with these learners to check on their welfare, engagement with their programme, and general wellbeing. This continued until the end of term. There was an additional requirement to seek feedback from learners with an EHCP (Education and Health Care Plan) on the

support that was put in place for them over the lockdown, how it met their requirements, and how satisfied they were with it. These learners were largely positive about the support they received from the College.

The College has continued to support vulnerable learners with free school meals and with transport costs if required to come into College to achieve their qualification.

## 9. **2020/21 Applications and Curriculum Plan**

### 9.1. **Further Education**

CIC/CQ/20/3/3, 20-21 Applications and Curriculum Plan, Further Education, was received and presented by the Vice Principal: Curriculum Delivery and Performance.

It was reported that at 19 June 2020 the overall number of applications (6392) was almost identical to the same time last year. Because the College was unable to interview in the normal way due to the pandemic, the decision was taken to offer places to everyone who applied who on paper met the entry requirements. As a result offers at 19 June 2020 were much higher (700) than at the same time in the previous year. Governors asked how many of these applicants, based on historical data, would have been rejected. It was reported that only a very small number would have been rejected. These are students that have applied late. The lateness of the application can be an indication of their lower level of commitment and these learners are more likely to drop out.

Governors understood the reasons for making offers to all applicants, but were concerned at the potential impact on the cohort, and asked about plans for checks in September prior to enrolment to ensure students are on the right course and that quality standards are maintained. This will be a challenge in the early part of September and there might be more movement than normal. Subject Areas are considering assessments to get students on to the right course and are going to be running events across July and August.

It is uncertain whether the College will achieve its apprenticeship starts next year due to the impact of the pandemic. It is speculated that some learners whose preference would have been an apprenticeship will enrol on a full time programme, resulting in some growth in the number of students on Study Programmes.

The approach to the curriculum plan to account for the Covid emergency was noted. The priority will be for every learner to come on to campus at least one day a week. Area Heads are currently producing their normal College timetable and have been asked to identify which day of the week they want to bring in a particular group. These will be reviewed to ensure that there is an even spread of learners across the week.

The College is working with other regional colleges to purchase an online package for the delivery of GCSEs next year. Identified groups (Level 1 and some Level 2) will be supported by direct, in-class teaching. Governors asked for more information on the online package, and were advised that it is widely used in secondary schools and colleges. Colchester Institute has signed up to the package for one year. It is expected that students will work on the package for one hour each week for each subject. Students will undertake a range of assessments, and the system will monitor what exercises they have undertaken and how they performed. In addition online sessions will be provided through Google Classroom and if a tutor identifies someone is not progressing a one-to-one session with a specialist teacher can be requested. To be successful main qualification teachers will need to ensure on a weekly basis that the students are engaging with the learning.

Governors asked how the College planning fits with Government guidance for educational institutions, particularly in respect of face to face teaching. It was reported that guidance for FE colleges, published that morning, states that from September students should undertake their full

programme. It is clear from the detail that this does not mean that students are on-site for all of their learning and colleges should be continuing with online delivery.

#### 9.2. **Adults**

CIC/CQ/20/3/4, Adult Learners (19+) – Applications and curriculum plan June 2020, was received and presented by the Assistant Principal: Quality, Teaching and Learning. The curriculum plan anticipates a potential increase in unemployment as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the need for upskilling adults. The College will be offering Essential Digital Skills, a free programme for adults who don't have the basic digital skills they need for life and work. It is also looking at a more comprehensive offer of fully online courses, such as introduction to the Health and Care sector. Enrolments and assessments will still be administered through the Learning Shops.

#### 9.3. **University Centre Colchester**

CIC/CQ/20/3/5, 2020/21 UCC – Applications and Curriculum Plan, was received and presented by the Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality. The current pandemic is having a significant impact on HE nationally, with many factors potentially impacting on numbers in September. It is not known how many new students, or students currently on programme, may choose to defer for a year because of the change of delivery mode. It might also be the case that more people will not want to incur accommodation costs if they are going to be taught mainly on online.

Although full time applications have been slow this year and spiky in profile, the overall numbers are encouraging. Based on current acceptances it is anticipated the College will achieve the revised target. An early decision was taken not to run two programmes because of insufficient applications, and applications in some other course areas are not as high as the College would like and are being carefully monitored. A final decision on whether to run these courses will be taken in July. This will give affected students time to look at alternative courses during clearing.

Students have been taught through a virtual environment since March and the intention for 2020-21 is for a blended model. Students will be on campus for between 45% and 65% of their programmes, with the remaining modules delivered online. If the requirements around social distancing change, the College has the flexibility to move to an entirely online delivery mode, or bring students back on campus for a higher proportion of face to face delivery. The online delivery of supervision and tutorials has been very effective and there is no reason to return to using College space for these elements of the programme in the future.

It is too early to know if the part time learner numbers target will be achieved as these programmes tend to recruit very late in the year. Virtual open events have been held over the last few weeks which appear to have been successful in terms of student engagement. It is hoped that they will have a positive impact on recruitment numbers in September.

#### 9.4. **Apprenticeships**

CIC/CQ/20/3/6, 2020/21 Apprenticeships – applications and curriculum plan, was received and presented by the Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality. Apprenticeships are the biggest risk to the recruitment plan and income for September. Nationally some providers believe up to half the apprenticeship market may disappear over the next year. The Government is putting in place financial incentives to encourage employers to take on apprentices, but it is too early to tell what impact this will have. The College is targeting as many employers as possible, with discussions taking place on how the College can support them to take on, or continue with, an apprentice. The College is able to offer bespoke programmes, and programmes for upskilling staff has been a growth area over the last year.

Governors noted with concern the impact on applications of the withdrawal of the Level 2 framework in Plumbing. Despite lobbying by employer groups, the Government is going ahead with

its decision to remove all frameworks in July. There are not many Level 2 apprenticeship Standards available and the Level 3 Standards are large, complex four year programmes.

10. **Academic Targets 2020/21**

CIC/CQ/20/3/7, College Targets 2020/2021 – Academic – FE, Apprenticeships and HE, was received and considered.

Governors questioned Management on two aspects where the proposed targets were below what had previously been achieved or below national benchmarks. It was reported that the target for Joint Achievements (all qualifications, adult learners only) reflected the mix of adult programmes, in particular the decision to have a very large number of entrants in accounting. The proposed target for Joint Achievement (all qualifications, all learners, all ages), whilst at the national average, suggests regression compared to previous achievement rates. This target recognises the decision, taken for financial reasons, to cancel exam entries in British Values. Achievements in British Values tended to be around 99%. Given the high number of entrants (c.3500) British Values accounted for 3% achievement rates. The proposed target, although slightly lower than previous years, is actually a more challenging target because it does not include British Values. The Committee was reassured by the explanations provided.

Governors questioned Management on the new target for higher education students progressing to further study or paid employment, which would not capture for example progression into the voluntary sector relevant to the degree. It was reported that the higher education targets relate to the new Office for Students (OfS) metrics that the College will be measured against. National benchmark data is not available for widening participation providers such as Colchester Institute, which is why some targets are below national benchmarks for all providers. The College's Access and Participation Plan, which has to be signed off by the OfS and has been subject to ongoing amendment up until this week, showed the most recently available destination data for the College was 55%. The College has agreed with the OfS an increase of 10%.

It was AGREED to recommend the Academic Targets 2020/21 to the Board for approval.

11. **Students' Union**

11.1. **Annual Report 2019/20**

CIC/CQ/20/3/8, Colchester Institute FE Students' Union Annual Report 2019-20, was received and noted.

11.2. **FE Students Union 2020/21**

CIC/CQ/20/3/9, Proposals for FE Students' Union 2020/21, was received and considered. The Vice Principal: Student Services and Support reported that interest in the Students' Union has declined in recent years. The FE Students' Union Annual Report 2019-20 does not reflect the very low number of students engaging in the events and activities (around 30 students across the College). There is a significant amount of bureaucracy and costs associated with running the FE Students' Union which, with only a very small number students engaging with the Union, outweigh the benefits. The Committee approved the proposal that the FE Students' Union ceases to operate at the end of this year. In taking this decision it was noted that no students would be disadvantaged. The College will continue to run all the activities and the HE Students' Union would still be affiliated to the National Union of Students, allowing all students to obtain an NUS card. The decision will be kept under review and reconsidered if there is evidence of student demand for an FE Students' Union.

12. **Update on Self-Assessment 2019/20**

CIC/CQ/20/3/10, Self-Assessment 2019/20 process update, was received and the proposed timeline of activity, including Governor involvement at an earlier stage, was noted.

13. **Date of Next Meeting**  
Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 4.30pm.

14. **Any Other Urgent Business**  
There were no items.

## **PART II**

**These minutes are not confidential but the supporting paper is confidential**

15. **Part II Minutes**  
The Part II minutes of the meeting held on 27th May 2020 (CIC/CQ/20/3/11) were received and confirmed.