

Colchester Institute Corporation

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee
held on 2 February 2022

Present

Terry Smyth, in the Chair	Aron Leader
Alison Andreas	Brenda Rich
Olive Campbell-Lilo	Kevin Prince
Peter Cook	Jenny Thorpe

In Attendance

Maeve Borges	Vice Principal: Student Services and Support
Caroline Fritz	Assistant Principal: Quality and Teaching and Learning Improvement
Hazel Paton	Clerk to the Governors
Jason Peters	Vice Principal: Curriculum Delivery and Performance
Jill Wognum	Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality

The Chair welcomed Olive Campbell-Lilo, Peter Cook and Aron Leader to their first meeting of the Committee.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

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

None

3. **Agreement to Starred Agenda Items**

Members were invited to indicate any items which they wished to star for discussion or question. No additional items were starred

4. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2021 (CIC/CQ/22/1/1) were received and approved as an accurate record.

5. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

6. **Curriculum and Quality Update Report**

CIC/CQ/22/1/2, Curriculum and Quality Update Report, was received. The Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality explained that this new report had been developed in response to the discussion and feedback at the last Board meeting and asked for feedback on the content, level of detail and usefulness as a regular report to this Committee and the Board.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the key points. It was reported that due to the disruption in learning over the last two years students had little or no experience of undertaking formal examinations. This was a particular concern because many of the programmes now have a large number of exams. There was also a concern that students were finding it more difficult this year to settle into their academic studies.

It was reported that predicted achievement for adult learners was slightly less than average. In previous years the College had large groups of adults on Access and ESOL (English for speakers of

other languages) courses. Numbers have reduced nationally over recent years and much of the adult provision was now delivered through the Learning Shops. Many of the learners in the Learning Shop were referred by Job Centre Plus and are hard to motivate to achieve particularly at this time of high employment, meaning that those we are working with now are furthest from the workplace.

Members challenged the Senior Leadership Team on the predicted grades and progress check scores, questioning:

- how predicted grades are determined.
- the level of improvement for each progress check score since the November predictions.
- whether students are set a target grade. Members noted that the Quality Framework Strategy references predicted grades but not targets.

In response it was reported that for Study Programmes, tutors predict the achievement rate for each student (Pass, Merit, Distinction where applicable) three times during the year. Students are also scored (four times during the year) against Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (progress check score) on a nine point scale. A score of 1-3 would be RAG rated red, 4-6 amber, 7-9 green, and a score of six indicated expected level of progress. Historical data is used to test the accuracy of the predictions. The expected levels of progress for Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour was established by the Course Leaders at the beginning of this process and updated annually. At the November Progress Check the score for skills was below the expected level and extra work was put in place to address this. By the January Progress Check most students were given an as expected grade. It was confirmed that all students are set a target grade at the beginning of the year. For most courses at Level 3 (which are graded) this will be Distinction, Merit, or Pass, and for the majority of courses at Levels 1 and 2 (which are pass/fail) it will be to pass. The Committee recommended expanding section 8 in the Quality Framework Strategy to reflect the target setting process. **Action: Assistant Principal: Quality and Teaching and Learning Improvement.**

It was reported that GCSEs would account for 30% of College entries this year compared to 27% in the previous year. As the overall number of students has declined, the number of GCSEs as a percentage had increased.

A Member noted that the headline responses received to the Teaching and Learning survey were very positive but commented that as presented it was difficult for the Board to identify if there were any particular areas or courses where responses were less positive. It was reported that the survey data was only intended to provide a snapshot of the headline responses. The survey did not close until the end of January and a separate, more detailed report would be received at the next meeting.

Members provided feedback on the Curriculum and Quality Update Report. Governors felt that some commentary to explain some large discrepancies between performance would be helpful and asked if the predicted achievement tables could include targets to give context to the current predicted achievement levels. Governors noted the references to 2021/22 being a challenging year because of the disrupted learning over the previous two years and would have liked to have seen some commentary on the actual support that had been put in place to address this. **Action: Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality**

The Committee Chair commented on how prominent the issue of diversifying/decolonising the curriculum had become in HE, schools and more widely in society, and suggested that this was something the College needs to consider. The Committee Chair had raised this with his link area (UCC) and this was something already under consideration. The Dean of Higher Education had included a session on this topic at a recent staff development day.

7. **Principal's Report**

CIC/CQ/22/1/3, Principal's Report – January 2022, was received and noted.

Governors noted that some universities might not accept T Levels as an entry route and asked if colleges embarking on T Levels had received assurances that students who want to progress to higher education would be able to do so. It was reported that the position was mixed, with some universities stating that they will not accept T Levels, others not accepting them yet, and the rest accepting them now. This was a significant issue and was being monitored. The other concern in respect of the development of T Levels is the challenge around sufficiency of work and industrial placements. Some sectors are more difficult than others. Established placements are in place for Child Care learners but digital media, for example, may be more challenging, given the number of learners.

Governors noted that Colchester Institute was not part of the successful Institute of Technology (IoT) bid, which will be led by South Essex College, and asked what impact this could have and whether this would result in competitive pressures or opportunities for collaboration. The Principal thought that there could be an opportunity for Colchester Institute to join the IoT once it is established should it wish to do so. This was not considered a barrier to collaborative work.

8. **Quality Framework Strategy**

CIC/CQ/22/1/7, Quality Framework Strategy 2021-22, was received and presented by the Assistant Principal: Quality and Teaching and Learning Improvement. The Committee:

- Challenged some of the detail around the section on planning learning, suggesting that teachers should use the group profile in every session. It was reported that the intent was that the group profile should inform the teaching and learning, but not necessarily for the teacher to have it to hand in all sessions.
- Questioned how much had changed compared to previous versions of the framework strategy. It was reported that the document had been updated to reflect changes to student engagement processes, college quality targets, and dates for observation sessions.

Brenda Rich left the meeting.

9. **Supporting Teaching and Learning Improvement**

CIC/CQ/22/1/4, Supporting Teaching and Learning Improvements, was received and presented by the Assistant Principal: Quality and Teaching and Learning Improvement. It was reported that after the first round of teaching and learning observations the College had some very rich data around aspects of what was seen in the classroom based round the CI7 framework (Colchester Institute's key priorities for teaching, learning and assessment).

The Committee:

- found the report useful and were interested in the headline strengths and weaknesses by area.
- questioned how things were improving overall compared to the previous year and asked the SLT to consider how they can demonstrate the impact of some of these initiatives, for example by looking at the correlation between predicted achievement and strengths and weaknesses in an area.
- commented that it was not clear from the report which were the weaker areas of the College.

In response it was reported that:

- going forward it should be possible to look at observation data in conjunction with data from sources such as the student survey feedback and progress checks. This was not something that the College had done in the past.
- Senior Leaders had created a RAG rated matrix by subject and types of provision showing where the College believes the strengths and areas for improvement are. It was agreed that something like this would be considered for the C and Q report in future.

In response to a question the Student Governors agreed that they were involved in the assessment of their progress.

10. **Update on Progress Against Quality Improvement Plan**

CIC/CQ/22/1/5, Update on Progress against Quality Improvement Plan, was received and presented by the Assistant Principal: Quality and Teaching and Learning Improvement. It was reported that three actions had yet to commence, and the reasons for this were noted.

To help their understanding, the Committee said it would be helpful if the report indicated whether a risk was getting less or greater. As an example, a risk currently amber could remain amber but still be better than it was previously, whereas another risk could move from green to amber. **ACTION:** The Assistant Principal to consider for future updates to this report.

The Committee noted that Area Heads had reported ongoing issues in respect of student behaviour and asked for further information. It was reported that this referred to classroom behaviour and indicated that students had not been in a disciplined learning environment for some time. The disciplinary policy was being used and the position was improving.

The Committee asked for an update on the November GCSE English and maths resits. It was reported that unlike other colleges who had been very selective, Colchester Institute had accepted every student who wanted to do a resit. The results for maths were disappointing, with only 4% of the 196 students put forward achieving a Grade 4. In English Language, 21% of the 129 students achieved a Grade 4. These were students who had not had the opportunity to sit an examination last year and at the time of the examinations the majority of them had only attended four or five lessons since last May/June. It was noted that for a large number of these students, the November resits were the first public examination that they had ever sat.

Feedback on the paper, which would apply to all papers, included a request for the summary sheet to include the three or four key points requiring the Committee's attention.

11. **Update on Strategic Plan One Year Action Plan**

CIC/CQ/22/1/6, Update on Strategic Plan Goals, was received and noted.

12. **Safeguarding**

The Committee received and considered:

- CIC/CQ/22/1/8, Safeguarding Policy
- CIC/CQ/22/1/9, Safeguarding Protocol for Staff

The Vice Principal: Student Services and Support reminded the Committee that the Safeguarding Policy was reviewed annually against the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education. It was reported that the Policy had grown in length year on year as additional information was added and it was recognised that it had become unwieldy. The Safeguarding Protocol for Staff had previously been a section of the Safeguarding Policy but had been separated into its own document to make it more accessible for staff. In a similar approach, it was proposed that at the next annual review the key information would be moved to the front of the document, with supporting information included as appendices.

The Committee Chair referred to research on safeguarding in schools, and in particular an analysis of the comments in Ofsted Reports where schools were shown to be unsafe. The issues identified in these reports were in respect of record keeping, Leadership and Governance, and follow up. The Vice Principal reassured the Committee on this point and reported that recently the Safeguarding Team had dedicated time to go through their cases to ensure their record keeping was clear and complete.

The Committee:

- **APPROVED for recommendation to the Board** the Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Protocol for Staff.
- **AGREED** to the publication of the Safeguarding Policy on the website, with the approval status: still to be approved by the Board.

Aron Leader and Jill Wognum left the meeting

13. **Link Governor scheme**

CIC/CQ/22/1/10, Link Governor Scheme, was received, considered and **APPROVED**.

14. **Annual Report to the Board**

CIC/CQ/22/1/11, Curriculum and Quality Committee Annual Report to the Board 2020-21, was received, considered and **APPROVED**.

15. **Review of Meeting**

The Committee considered:

- Items/papers to be reported to the Board: Curriculum and Quality Report; Update on Progress against Quality Improvement Plan, Link Governor Scheme; Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Protocol for Staff
- Items to be treated confidentially: - none
- Effectiveness of meeting and potential areas for improvement: SLT/Clerk to give more attention to the starrng of items before publication of the agenda.
- Feedback on papers: as discussed during the meeting

16. **Date of Next Meeting**

There will be a virtual meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee on Wednesday, 23 March 2022 at 4.30pm.

17. **Any Other Urgent Business**

There were no items

PART II – Confidential

These minutes are not confidential, but the supporting papers are confidential

18. **Part II Minutes**

The Part II minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2021 (CIC/CQ/22/1/12) were received and approved as an accurate record.