

Colchester Institute Corporation

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee
held on 29 June 2022**Present**

Kevin Prince, in the Chair
 Alison Andreas
 Olive Campbell-Lilo
 Angela O'Donoghue

Brenda Rich
 Terry Smyth
 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

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Peter Cook and Aron Leader.

2. Declaration of any conflicts of interest

None

3. Agreement to Starred Agenda Items

Members when invited to indicate any items which they wished to star for discussion or question. Items that were not starred were noted and/or approved by the Committee without discussion.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2022 (CIC/CQ/22/3/1) were received and confirmed as an accurate record.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes

CIC/CQ/22/3/2, Curriculum and Quality Committee Action Sheet, was received and noted.

It had been agreed at the last meeting to review the ranking of the Progress Check scores, and Governors asked when this would be considered by College management. The Principal confirmed that it had been discussed internally but the Executive were reluctant to make any changes. The progress score system was introduced during 2018/19 and is now well established and understood by staff. The RAG rating is not used with the students, so moving the numbers will not have any major benefits and could potentially lead to confusion and inconsistencies. The report that the students receive is a commentary against the number. This was accepted by the Committee.

6. Curriculum and Quality Update Report

CIC/CQ/22/3/3, Curriculum and Quality Update Report, was received and presented by the Executive Vice Principle: Curriculum, Planning and Quality. As reported previously it had been a challenging year. The biggest barrier had been getting learners to the point where they were able to engage fully and cope with the increasing demands of external assessments. It was reported that there would be a slightly lower achievement rate than the previous year, when many programmes had received TAGs (Teacher Assessed Grades). Retention and attendance remained relatively high although there was still a gap between attendance for English and maths resits and the rest of the programme. The predicted achievement for apprenticeships was dependent on the learner passing the End Point Assessment by the 31 July deadline, which was proving difficult in some areas.

It was reported that the biggest risk going forward was staffing, and that the situation in some areas was critical. The College was expecting to recruit significantly more students in September than in the previous year, and recruiting staff was a significant challenge.

The Committee questioned the Executive on the predicted achievement rates in Early Years, which were lower than other areas. It was reported that there were a number of causal factors, including major behavioural problems, low retention rate, an inexperienced area leadership team and the absence due to maternity leave of three of the most experienced teachers. The College had not done as well it would have liked in Level 3 areas undertaking public examinations and had struggled with Early Years students. This cohort of students, who had had their education disrupted by the pandemic, had refused to do resits, choosing instead to walk away from the programme. This was not something that the College had experienced previously. The College became aware of behavioural problems and retention issues in Early Years and Salon Studies in October and had struggled to control it. Early Years now has a settled leadership team, the experienced teachers will return by September, and provision will move into a new area. The College had invested heavily in the quality of the resources to increase group identity.

The Committee commented that the inclusion of data for the previous year in the predicted achievement table would have been helpful. It was reported that the decision had been taken not to include this because last year's results were largely TAGs (Teacher Assessed Grades) and not directly measurable.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the attendance rate was for all ages; 16-19 attendance was marginally better than adults.

In response to a question, the process for calculating progress check scores was summarised. It was reported that four to five times a year teachers rate every student against where they are expected to be at that point in the year for knowledge, skills and behaviour.

Governors noted the problems with GCSE attendance and asked if anything would be done differently next year to try and increase attendance. It was reported that the College would continue to work with students on examinations skills, but a bigger concern was the lack of teachers for next year. Teachers trained by Colchester Institute were taking positions in schools at higher salaries (up to £9k). The College currently had vacancies for three English and 2.6 maths teachers.

Referring to the End Point Assessment results, the Committee noted that Professional Apprenticeships had far more Distinction grades than other areas and asked if there was a reason why this area was so successful. It was reported that this was the largest area after Health and Social Care. These learners are in employment, doing an apprenticeship for their jobs, and those which are retained do well at the End Point Assessment. There are some areas where the Distinction category is not applicable. These will be highlighted in future reports.

The Committee noted approximately 100 apprentices would be rolling over into the next year and asked if these learners were in particular areas. It was reported that this was across all areas. The number of students rolling over was increasing, mainly because they were at the gateway but could not fit in the End Point Assessment before 31 July.

The Committee noted that currently no apprentices had failed the End Point Assessment and were advised that some of the learners had done resits. It was reported that three learners will fail because, with the agreement of their employer, they will not do the resit. The Executive Vice Principal agreed to include data on first attempts in future reports.

The Committee asked if there were opportunities to expand Early Years apprenticeship provision, which had a predicted achievement rate of 94%. It was confirmed that Early Years provision was being expanded. There had been a problem with disruption to placements during the pandemic.

Governors questioned the Executive on the lower retention rate for older apprentices, which was largely linked to gaining professional qualifications before taking the End Point Assessment. It was reported that this was a national problem, which it was hoped would be addressed by the Awarding Bodies.

7. **Update on Progress against Quality Improvement Plan**

The Assistant Principal: Quality, and Teaching and Learning Improvement gave an oral update on progress against the Quality Improvement Plan. It was reported that the effectiveness of the Quality Improvement Plan would be summarised in the Self-Assessment Report. The actions that had been achieved appeared to have had the outcome the College wanted. Three actions remained red due to limited progress.

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

CIC/CQ/22/3/4, Update on Strategic Plan One Year Action Plan, was received and presented by the Principal. It was noted that actions which had been completed had now been removed, and that some new actions had been added based on feedback from the Ofsted inspectors and the new priority of meeting the skills agenda.

The Principal summarised the new actions:

- Plan and development students' and apprentices understanding of literacy – there is a still a concern about how well every student's literacy is developed through the main qualification.
- Enrichment activities around careers at Level 1 – enrichment activities are provided at Level 1, but not as well as Levels 2 and 3. Opportunities will be explored at Level 1.
- Stickability - use of CI 7 in action had been endorsed strongly by Ofsted, who could see the results of the work that had been done around questioning. To continue that good work, there will be a focus next year on stickability and on helping students in assessments and examinations.
- Supporting teachers to support students with SEND – sessions to strengthen what the College already does had been included in the staff development programme for the following week.
- Establishment of 'Sector Skills Boards' – these will be new from the autumn
- Stronger programme of enrichment for apprentices - this issue was flagged during the Inspection

The Committee asked if the next report could include an indication of outcomes against one year success indicators. The Principal agreed to look at what could be reported, bearing in mind that the action plan runs thought to December 2022. Alternatively, it was suggested that the report on overall success rates for students could be linked back to the Strategic Plan. **ACTION:** Principal

9. **Safeguarding Report**

CIC/CQC/22/3/5, Safeguarding Report June 2022, was received and presented by the Vice Principal: Student Services and Support. It was reported that:

- the Vice Principal and Head of Student Services and ALS had recently met with local MP Will Quince and the Chief Executive of the Clinical Commissioning Group to discuss external mental health services which the College could work more closely with.
- The decision had been taken to make the temporary increase in staff in the Safeguarding and Welfare Team permanent.

Governors asked if the "De-Stressstival" project which had focussed on supporting students with preparing for their exams and final assessments would be an annual event, and whether there had

been an evaluation of the project. It was reported that anecdotally the project had had an impact. A wide range of activities had been carried out over a number of weeks. Recognising that many students had never been in an examination room before, a video had been created with student volunteers sitting a dummy exam, which had been discussed in group tutorials. On each of the exam days, there had been a number of students who were unwilling to go into the exam rooms, feeling that they could not cope, which members of the Welfare Team had been able to support. This had resulted in fewer students refusing to go into the exam than in previous years. This project is something that the College would like to refine and continue.

The Committee noted the summary of safeguarding cases reported and dealt with since April, and asked if future reports could:

- Include a commentary covering emerging themes, trends over time and the interaction between categories.
- Provide a sense of how some of the categories are clustered around individual students, whilst preserving the anonymity of individuals.
- Include percentages as well as actual number of students to help identify changes over time.

ACTION: The Vice Principal: Student Services and Support agreed to consider the above

In response to a question, it was reported that the College does not provide an online mental health service, but does recommend websites, including Kooth, an online counselling and mental wellbeing platform for children and young adult. Angela O'Donoghue agreed to provide information on the online support tool introduced at South Essex College, which was liked by students.

Governors asked what type of cases would be recorded under the category risk behaviours. It was reported that this was a wide category but could include somebody engaging in inappropriate sexual relationships or anti-social behaviour.

In response to a question, it was report that online abuse would be recorded based on the nature of the concern (bully, abuse, racism, homophobia etc) rather than that the fact that it is online. It was reported that the vast majority of cases have an online element.

The Designed Governor for Safeguarding reported that the guidance for Safeguarding Governor and the emphasis given to the role varies. He advised the Committee that he would initiate a review of the role with the Safeguarding Lead and Corporation Chair and report back to the next meeting for discussion.

10. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Annual Report 2020/21

CIC/CQ/22/3/6, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Report 2020/21, was received and considered. The Committee welcomed the inclusion of data on student achievement but suggested future reports includes an analysis of the data to pick out issues and what was being done to address them. An example was given of the difference in achievement rates for 19+ classroom learners with a disability and those without.

The Committee commented on the high number of learners (549) on study programmes that had not provided information on learning difficulty/disability and asked how this information is collected. It was reported that the data is taken from the application form. Governors suggested adding a third option 'not declared'. **ACTION:** Vice Principal: Student Services and Support to consider.

11. FE, HE and Apprenticeships Academic Targets 2022-23

CIC/CQ/22/3/7, Quality Targets 2022/23, was received and presented by the Principal. It was reported that the biggest change compared to previous years was in respect of the aspects. It was proposed that a number of FE targets linked to performance tables (value added and distance

travelled) are removed, on the basis that performance tables have not been published for a number of years and there was uncertainty over when they would return or in what format. The progress target had also been removed because of the difficulty in obtaining national data. The apprenticeships and HE targets had been updated in line with national measures.

Governors questioned how the targets had been set before the outcomes for this year were known. It was reported that the College has a reasonable idea of achievement rates. Predicted achievement based on progress scores have improved over the years to within one to two percentage points, giving a good level of confidence. The Executive like to recommend the targets in July so they can inform appraisal discussions at which targets are set over the summer. The targets are re-presented in October with performance against the previous year and in one or two cases may lead to a discussion on whether a target should be changed. Governors commented on the difficulty of predicting the impact of Covid on students doing exams for the first time and on achievement rates.

Governors questioned why there was a target for overall achievement at GCSE but not one for pass rate. It was reported that because of the intake in terms of GSCE grades on entry a progress measure rather than absolute figure is preferred. About 90% of the intake will not achieve a 4 – and very many do not come in with a 3; it is how many students the teachers can motivate to raise a grade.

Governors questioned the significant drop in the HE target for Student Satisfaction. It was reported that the College had not met previous aspirational targets and that this was felt to be a more realistic target against the sector benchmark.

Governors commented that the apprenticeship achievement target appeared low given the predicted achievement rate. It was reported that these were benchmark measures and were a minimum expectation. Governor suggested setting targets above the benchmark threshold and adding a footnote to the paper explaining the rationale for using the benchmark.

Given the challenges Governors suggested setting a targets for English and math attendance. It was reported that attendance this year had been between 73-75%. The Executive were cautious about setting a target given the current uncertainty over delivery due to the staff shortages.

The Committee APPROVED the Quality Targets 2022/23 for recommendation to the Board.

12. Students' Union Annual Report to the Board

CIC/CQ/22/3/8, Students' Union Annual Report to the Board 2021-2022, was received and noted. Governors recognised the work that had gone into producing the report, which was appreciated, and asked for their congratulations to be passed on to the President of the Students' Union.

13. Update on Self-Assessment 21/22

CIC/CQ/22/3/9, Update on Self-Assessment 21/22, was received and the proposed timeline noted. As in previous years there will be an opportunity for Governors to talk to Area Leads about their self-assessed grades at meetings to be in September.

14. Policy Review

14.1. CIC/CQ/22/3/10, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy, was received, considered and APPROVED for recommendation to the Board.

14.2. The Assistant Principal: Quality, and Teaching and Learning Improvement reported that Disciplinary Policy for Students on Further Education, Adult Learning or Apprenticeship programmes needed to be reviewed prior to its publication in September for the new student intake.

15. **Review of Meeting**

It was agreed that the Chair's report to the Board would include aspects of the Curriculum and Quality Update report and Safeguarding report.

16. **Date of Next Meeting**

To be confirmed.

17. **Any Other Urgent Business**

There were no items