

COLCHESTER INSTITUTE CORPORATION

CURRICULUM AND QUALITY COMMITTEE
held on Thursday 30 January 2025, 4.30pm
at the Colchester campus

Present:

Caroline Williams, Chair
Lisa Blake, Corporation Chair
Alison Andreas - Principal & CE
Marco Iciek - Governor (Safeguarding link)
Sally Messenger - Governor (Skills & Careers Link)
Angela O'Donoghue - Co-opted Member
Sanjeev Arya – Governor
Adam Fair – Staff Governor
Nicola Jay – Staf Governor

In attendance:

Ali Davies – Deputy Principal
Suzanne Kinsey – Assistant Principal
Alison Bennett – Head of Governance

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.
Tim Triffitt was not present.

2. Declaration of any conflicts of interest

None.

3. Minutes of meeting held on 26 November 2024

The Committee **APPROVED** the minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2024 (CIC/CQC/25/1/1), as a true and accurate record.

4. Action Sheet and Matters Arising from the Minutes

CIC/CQC/25/1/2, Curriculum and Quality Committee action sheet, was received.

5. Curriculum and Quality Update Report

CIC/CQC/25/1/3, Curriculum and Quality Update Report (QIP) was received and discussed in detail. The Deputy Principal reported:

Current performance Indicators:

- Overall retention and attendance figures are broadly in line with last year. Notable differences are in attendance to GCSE English +2.2 percentage points and attendance for adult programmes +2.8 percentage points.

- There has been a slight dip in Adult Programmes 19+ retention from the previous year.

Governors **ASKED** why there has been a reduction in apprenticeship numbers overall. The Deputy Principal explained that this is due to the apprenticeship profile. The DP assured the committee that the number of starts will meet the agreed target. The target is in line with last year's target.

Governors **QUESTIONED** the decrease in the number of HE students compared to the previous year, asking whether it was due to fewer apprenticeships or a reduction in the number of HE courses available. The Principal responded by explaining that it was mainly due to the courses that had been withdrawn from the offer and were on teach out.

Vulnerable Learners:

Governors raised concerns about the predicted achievement figure of 37.5% for Care Leavers, compared to 82% for all FE learners. The Deputy Principal explained that at the time the report was written, not all progress checks had been completed for those learners, and the current figure stands at 50%. However, it was acknowledged that this is still not acceptable, albeit for a very small number of learners.

Governors noted it was positive to see the predicted achievement comparison with all FE learners and highlighted that the top three categories—High Needs Students, EHCPs, and Students in Care—are outperforming the overall FE learners' figure.

A discussion took place regarding learners with declared learning difficulties. The Deputy Principal explained that the process by which learners declare their learning difficulty is being reviewed, given the significant increase in declared numbers this year. Governors **ASKED** whether there should be a distinction between those with a diagnosed difficulty and those who consider themselves having one. It was confirmed that the declaration follows a standard format. The Deputy principal replied that this was being reviewed with the aim of having a more robust system around both the enrolment form and how the data is integrated. These changes will be in place for September.

Targets:

The Committee were asked to approve some additional FE Academic targets for 2024/25;

- GCSE English to be within 5 percentage points of main aim attendance by curriculum area and overall.
- GCSE Maths to be within 5 percentage points of main aim attendance by curriculum area and overall.
- Adult Learning – main aim target 87%
- Adult Learning – attendance target 84%
- EDI Targets +/- 1pt with the exception of apprentices +/- 3pt

Governors **COMMENTED** that the QIP does not state what the college is doing to address EDI targets. The Deputy Principal stated that EDI data has been shared with all Area Heads, who are meeting with the Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal to assess EDI within their respective areas' QIPs. Regarding Vulnerable Learners, a shortfall in resource was identified, and a new full-time position is being advertised to take responsibility for

that area. The DP stated that the QIP is a live document; if an action isn't effective, it will be closed, and a review will be conducted to identify alternative solutions. Governors emphasised the need to start planning for next year's action plan.

Governors **COMMENTED** that they were pleased to see targets now in place for Young Adult Carers (YACs), which had not been in place previously.

GCSE Maths and English re-sits.

Although the percentage is lower than last year, it remains above the national rate as published by FE Week. The college does not actively encourage students who achieved below a grade 3 to re-sit; however, there are times they are allowed to do so. An audit of English and Maths will take place in March.

DECISION: The Committee **APPROVED** the FE additional academic targets for 2024/25

Spring Term Priorities:

The focus for the spring term includes a review of effectiveness and efficiencies within two departments. The review will be carried out by the Deputy Principal and relevant CLMG Manager and will be followed up by an action plan.

Governors were assured that Curriculum development is a key priority for the spring and summer terms. A curriculum development day has been scheduled for 5 February where all current provision will be reviewed and will explore how the College can meet national and local needs and provide every learner with the most appropriate programme linked to progression and ensuring high aspirations along with outstanding delivery and development of core and wider skills and resulting in a well-considered curriculum plan for 2025/26 and 2026/27. Governors **ASKED** how many T Levels learners have been retained.

24 – professional construction

29 – Early years (first years)

Health, Computing & Engineering T levels will be introduced in September 2025.

It was asked whether the Careers team will be involved in the curriculum planning day. While they won't be initially, they will be included moving forward. At the recent Ofsted Inspection, Inspectors reported on a lack of ambition at Level 1, which will be a focus during the curriculum planning day.

Teaching and learning:

Round 1 of the Teaching and Learning Observation Process runs until February half term, with 113 observations having been undertaken by members of the cross-college observation team to date. Round 2 will be carried out between the end of February and June 2025. It is too early to draw firm conclusions from the data available at this stage, but early indications are good and reflect that, in most areas, most staff are graded as either secure or mastery against a college target of 90%. Initial data suggests that the 'effectiveness of adaptive inclusive teaching' could be an area that requires support and development but, as more results are processed, this could change. Staff Governor commented that the cross-college observations were beneficial as it was being looked at from a fresh perspective. Governors **ASKED** how many observations there are to be completed in total and were told this was 174. Governors **ASKED** how confident the College Executive are that the full data will continue the current trajectory. The Deputy

Principal said that it will take a year to get a full set of outcomes. It was **ASKED** if staff are given action points following the observations and it was confirmed that they are.

Teaching and Learning survey:

The annual teaching and learning survey launched on 20 January and the information gathered will be used alongside observation feedback and learner outcomes to form a picture of the provision in different subjects and areas. For 2024/25 there is a paper/widget version of the survey for learners within Foundation and Supported Learning curriculum and ESOL areas to allow them more appropriate access.

Safeguarding:

The Link Governor asked why the target for mandatory training is not set at 100%. The Deputy Principal responded that this target has been requested. It was noted that there is a high level of compliance, but the target should either remain as is with explanations for why 100% cannot be achieved, or the individuals who cannot complete it (e.g., due to long-term sickness) should be removed from the count. It was also mentioned that HR system reporting for staff mandatory training is four weeks behind, with a question raised, by Governors, about why a system is being used that does not deliver the required data in a timely manner. It was explained that the Deputy Chief Executive is looking into this with the service provider. Governors requested that the DBS and KCSIE figures also include a percentage.

Area Monitoring Meetings (AMMs):

Round two of the AMMs will be held in late January/early February. The agenda for this round of meetings includes progress against area QIPs, learner retention and attendance, including for GCSE mathematics and English, learner progress and engagement with work related experience activities, induction survey results and current teaching and learning observation outcomes.

Apprenticeship Performance Monitoring Meetings (APMMs)

The end of quarter 2 saw the target of 452 new enrolments exceeded by 11. In addition, there are two more cohorts of Essex Firefighter apprentices planned, the first to start in late February, early March. Currently timely achievement is 60% in comparison to 47% at the same point last year.

The Learner Experience:

The post of Head of Learner Engagement and Progression came into effect from 2 January. The new post has overarching responsibility for all aspects of the learner experience including the Personal Development Programme (PDP), learner voice, enrichment, work related experience, CEIAG and EDI. An internal audit of the Personal Development Programme was undertaken by TIAA in December 2024 and provided strong assurance. However, the Deputy Principal stated that there were still actions required to reach the standard the College aspires to in Personal Development.

Professional Development

The first professional development day of 2025 took place on Friday 3 January 2025. The day was planned around three main blocks, mandatory training, supported experiment development and open development sessions. Governors commented on how positive

this event was but noted the attendance figures were not as high as could be expected. The Deputy Principal replied that the academic calendar has been updated to ensure that in future these events are mandatory. Governors requested to hear more about the supported experiments at another time.

ACTION: Supported experiments to be reported back to the committee at a subsequent meeting.

Back to the floor day took place on 29 January for all staff and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

6. Quality Improvement Plan 2024/25 - Update on Progress

CIC/CQC/25/1/4 Quality Improvement Plan 2024-25 was received and discussed. Governors were given the opportunity for questions.

Governors noted that the speed of some progress in some areas needs to be increased as the failure to achieve actions by the deadline was highlighted during the Ofsted inspection. Governors **QUESTIONED** whether the deadline column refers to the start or finish date. The Deputy Principal clarified that it should indicate the completion date and said that some delay had occurred due to the Ofsted inspection, but much of the information in the document was informed by the inspection. Governors commented that many actions seemed overdue and questioned whether the RAG rating should be reviewed. The Deputy Principal explained that while some actions have been completed, their impact is not yet visible, so they cannot be marked as green. A suggestion was made to include the learner voice element, particularly for those studying English and Maths. Although this is not currently reflected in the QIP, it will be addressed. Governors also commented on the document's usefulness.

7. Learner Induction Surveys

7.1 CIC/CQ/25/1/5, FE Student Induction Survey, was received by the Committee. The Deputy Principal said that Area Heads have been asked to carry out focus groups with learners. It was noted that there has been an increase in the response rates to questions around British Values and Prevent.

7.2 CIC/CQ/25/1/6, Apprenticeship Induction Survey was received by the committee. It was explained that information from the survey will be used in Apprenticeship Performance Monitoring Meetings and the Committee were assured that drilling down will take place to look at each red area.

8. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Data Analysis

CIC/CQ/25/1/7, EDI Data Analysis, was received.

Governors noted the disparity in ethnicity data. The Principal stated that further analysis is needed regarding the impact of ESOL figures on this measure. Governors **COMMENTED** on the data's potential to drive change. Governors also highlighted that there is no differentiation between ethnic groups to identify if certain groups are underperforming. Such differences could be significant, but this is not reflected in the way the data is currently presented. Governors asked whether breaking the data down would make it self-explanatory or if further investigation would be necessary. The Principal responded that

while they would look for underlying reasons, it would also be important to consider the very small number of individuals in some groups. Governors requested that, where possible, more detailed information be included in the report to provide additional context.

ACTION: Where possible, more detailed information to be included in the equality, diversity and Inclusion (EDI) report to provide additional context.

It was confirmed that the College has signed up to Association of Colleges (AoC) EDI charter.

9. Review of Meeting

Governors reviewed the effectiveness of the meeting. It was agreed that the following items would be shared with the Board:

- Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) – For the Board to note.
- Safeguarding update – For the Board to note.
- Executive summary for the Curriculum and Quality report

10. Any Other Urgent Business

None.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 3 April 2025

Tuesday 24 June 2025

All meetings to take place at the Colchester Campus at 4:30pm