YORK COLLEGE

Minutes of the Quality and Curriculum Committee
held on 24 February 2021 at 5.30 pm via video conference

Present:	Libby Bush John Ennis Ian Looker Grace Morrison Lee Probert (Chief Executive and Principal) Mark Rushworth Fiona Thompson (Chair) Cathy Waters John Robinson Owen Trotter
In Attendance:	Glyn Jones – Vice Principal for Academic and Applied Education (VPAAE) Graeme Murdoch – Deputy Chief Executive and Principal Quality and Student Experience (DCE) Mike Saunders – Head of Quality Improvement Sharon Smith – Vice Principal for Higher, Vocational and Professional Education (DPHVP) Elizabeth McClure - Director of Governance (DG)

	Item 1: Apologies for Absence / Declarations of Interest	**Action**
	There were no apologies for absence. There were no declarations of interest.	
	Item 2: Minutes and Matters Arising	
	2.1 Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 14 October 202 The Committee reviewed the minutes of the meeting of 14th October 2020 and noted some minor amendments. The Committee also reviewed the confidential minutes which had been circulated outside of the meeting; there were no comments. ***The Committee resolved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting subject to the changes requested.***	
	2.2 Actions Summary The Committee noted the progress on actions presented on the Actions Summary Sheet. All actions were either completed, not due or addressed on the agenda. ***The Committee resolved to note progress on the Actions Summary***	
	2.3 Any Other Matters There were no other matters arising.	
	Item 4: Statutory and Regulatory Compliance	
	3.1 Office for Students Matters	

X:\Governance\Governance 21-22\Board and Committee Meetings\Q&C\Approved minutes\Quality and Curriculum Committee Minutes 24 February 2021.docx

1 of 5

The Vice Principal for Higher, Vocational and Professional Education presented an update on OfS matters and noted the following:

- The HE Team were currently working through OfS recommendations regarding return to on site teaching for HE students; the guidance did not dictate a full return to in person learning but confirmed that it was a possibility for Colleges to consider. The remote provision was currently working well but a return to more in person provision, particularly for Teacher Training and Health & Social Care courses was being considered.

- A Freedom of Speech Policy was now a condition of registration with OfS, having previously been an optional recommendation. This was being developed and would be referred to the Governing Body for approval when ready.

- The College's Access and Participation Plan had been approved for rollover to next year. The OfS had imposed a requirement to publish all fees on the website alongside this plan.

- The change of validation partner was a reportable event; this had been noted by OfS

The Committee noted that OfS guidance relating to the return to onsite provision for HE appeared to be targeted at Universities with Halls of Residence. It was agreed that this was the case but the College was looking closely at the best options for students in different circumstances.

The Committee resolved to note the report on the Office for Students Matters

	Item 4: Strategic Plan Implementation	
	4.1 Implementation Plan – Pillar 1 and 2 The Deputy Chief Executive and Principal Quality and Student Experience provided an overview of the implementation plan for Pillar 1. The key progress areas were noted which included the endeavours to ensure that the student experience of blended learning was positive; the collation of standardised evidence of student progress by curriculum teachers; the implementation of Progress Coaches from August 2021 and the appointment of a new Director of Student Experience. It was noted that there were also key areas for development which included the development of tutorials to provide more overt support to students and initial assessments to more accurately consider student 'starting points'. The Committee noted the positives from the reports and welcomed the method of presentation. It was agreed that it may be useful to develop a mechanism for monitoring the areas where most progress was required. The Committee further noted that it would be useful to hear the thoughts of the new Director of Student Experience after they had been in post for a while. The Committee noted that the report mentioned that some assessments had already been conducted. It was confirmed that some English and Maths assessments had been conducted and results were comparable to the usual pattern, though there was a small proportion of students who had not engaged. It was noted that in addition to the internal assessments, there had been a mock exam process and again some students had not engaged. All of those students who had not engaged would receive a letter	**GAM**

X:\Governance\Governance 21-22\Board and Committee Meetings\Q&C\Approved minutes\Quality and Curriculum Committee Minutes 24 February 2021.docx

2 of 5

	encouraging engagement. The Committee queried how the possibility of students 'falling through the gaps' was being addressed. It was noted that this was difficult during remote sessions, where students may join the session but not participate, however the College was attempting to put in place more accurate measures of engagement which considered factors beyond attendance. The Committee would be updated on engagement metrics at each meeting. ***The Committee resolved to note the Implementation Plan for Pillar 1 and 2***	
Item 5: Student Engagement and Success		
	5.1 Quality Report The Deputy Chief Executive and Principal Quality and Student Experience presented the Quality Report and provided an overview of each section. It was noted that overall college attendance was slightly higher than in the prior year but that there were 200 students who were currently rated 'red' or 'amber' for attendance and engagement. These students were being contacted and supported by staff where necessary. It was noted that the retention of Adult HE students was currently 1.5pp below that of last year. The Committee questioned how those students who had fallen behind were being assisted. It was confirmed that there were measures in place to assist those who had fallen behind. For those studying practical subjects, there was a management plan in place to ensure that students could catch up as soon as they were able to attend in person again. The Committee noted the attainment and continuation of HE students; attainment was below the internal target for some populations but above for others. It was noted that mature part-time students tended not to continue their studies; the cause of this was being looked into by the Head of HE but it was noted that the priority of some students was to obtain a degree and they were less concerned about the classification or progression opportunities. The Committee noted that it was positive that all students had agreed to transfer to the OU. The Committee further noted a staffing issue relating to HE com; it was confirmed that this was close to be being resolved and the staff member in question had agreed a phased return to work. The students affected by the absence had been supported and were being closely monitored. It was not considered to be a reportable event. The Committee noted the Quality Improvement Actions and agreed the importance of ensuring robust quality procedures to facilitate accurate grade reporting at the end of the year. Excellent feedback had been received. It was noted that there had been no significant change to the numbers of complaints and compliments compared to the prior year. The number of disciplinaries had reduced due to remote provision. There had been one student suicide (offsite); peers and staff were being supported and the Chair of Governors had been informed at the time. ***The Committee resolved to note the Quality Report.***	
Item 6: Teaching, Learning and Assessment		

X:\Governance\Governance 21-22\Board and Committee Meetings\Q&C\Approved minutes\Quality and Curriculum Committee Minutes 24 February 2021.docx

3 of 5

6.1 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The Head of Quality Improvement presented the Teaching, Learning and Assessment update. The Committee reviewed and noted the main areas of the report:

- Sections 1 and 2 of the digital Teaching and Learning Handbook had been approved. A bulletin on decolonization of the curriculum had been circulated that day and a further one on sustainability was expected later in the month
- A Training Day had taken place to discuss blended learning which had been useful to identify issues and share best practice.
- New starters or staff with a development plan would be subject to lesson observations; 20 had taken place to date.
- The team were working to ensure that the IQA process was effective and there had been good response rates so far.

The Committee resolved to note the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Report

6.2 Interested Party Feedback

It was noted that the response rate to the Student Survey was low compared to the prior year but the satisfaction rates were broadly in line with previous years. Satisfaction ratings among apprenticeship students had improved and exceeded the ratings in other areas. The qualitative data indicated that some students had trouble accessing college systems; this was being investigated and rectified.

It was noted that there had been an issue relating to parents and carers who felt that they did not know who the appropriate point of contact at the College was. This was being addressed and it was anticipated that Progress Coaches would resolve this issue in future as the first point of contact.

The Committee resolved to note the Interested Party Feedback Report.

Item 7: Supporting Students

7.1 Supporting Students Report

The Deputy Chief Executive and Principal Quality and Student Experience provided a summary of the report. The following was noted:
- The online access to mental health support had resulted in fewer missed appointments and a higher rate of referrals. The College was conscious that referrals may spike after the return to the site and were prepared for this.
- 816 applications to UCAS were made before the deadline; further late applications were anticipated
- 100% was attained across 7 of the 8 Gatsby benchmarks
- Additional laptops had been received for those students who required them; national funding was not yet applicable to FE Colleges.
- There had been contact with 100 students in relation to safeguarding issues and 30 Operation Encompass reports from the Police.
- Enrichment activities had proved difficult due to the impact of Covid but there were plans to establish an online choir.
- There had been two Equality and Diversity complaints, both of which had been investigated.
- In terms of destinations, more students were opting to continue in education (94%).

X:\Governance\Governance 21-22\Board and Committee Meetings\Q&C\Approved minutes\Quality and Curriculum Committee Minutes 24 February 2021.docx

4 of 5

	The Committee questioned whether the College was considering continuing the online provision of mental health services as this had been successful. It was confirmed that this was being considered and there were new counsellors volunteering or completing training. ***The Committee resolved to note the Supporting Students Report***	
	Item 8: Corporate Governance and Assurance	
	8.1 Strategic Risk Management The Committee reviewed and noted the Strategic Risk Management report.	
	8.2 Progress against the HE QIP The Vice Principal for Higher, Vocational and Professional Education provided an overview of progress against the HE QIP, noting that there had been positive engagement with blended learning. There was ongoing high quality support for high risk students. It was not yet clear which adaptations would be required for some courses; information was awaited from some validating partners. It was noted that a bespoke HE Teaching and Learning strategy was being developed; feedback from the OU was anticipated. ***After scrutiny, the Committee resolved to note the Progress against the HE QIP.***	
	8.3 Progress against the FE QIP The Committee reviewed the progress against the FE QIP. It was noted that there were positive steps towards improved student progress monitoring, as discussed above. The initiatives relating to staff mental health and well-being would be discussed in greater detail at the People & Governance Committee. It was further noted that whilst placements with employers were limited due to the current circumstances, there had been some virtual placements which had worked well. The College were working with employers to ascertain if there was more scope for virtual links/placements. It was noted that T-levels were a risk in this respect; placements were integral to the courses and it was necessary to work with employers to shape T-level content.	
	SUMMARY MATTERS	
	Item 9: Key Meeting Outcomes and/or Actions **9.1 Matters for report to the Governing Body (if any)** - An update on OfS matters	**DoG**
	9.2 Matters for report to Audit Committee (if any) -None	
	10.Summary Matters	
	10.1 Any Other Business - None.	
	10.2 Date of the Next Meeting – 26 May 2021	
	The meeting closed at 7.00pm	
Signed	Approved remotely as an accurate record – 26 May 2021	
Name:	Fiona Thompson	
Date:		

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5 of 5