



**Minutes of the Quality and Curriculum Committee  
held on 26 May 2021 at 5.30 pm via video conference**

<b>Present:</b>	John Ennis Ian Looker Grace Morrison Lee Probert (Chief Executive and Principal) Mark Rushworth Fiona Thompson (Chair) Janet Dean (observing) John Robinson Naomi Watson	
<b>In Attendance:</b>	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 Elizabeth McClure - Director of Governance (DG)	
	<b>Item 1: Apologies for Absence / Declarations of Interest</b>	<b>Action</b>
	Apologies for absence received from Libby Bush and Cathy Waters.  There were no declarations of interest.	
	<b>Item 2: Minutes and Matters Arising</b>	
	<b>2.1 Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 24 February 2021</b>  The Committee reviewed the minutes of the meeting of 24 <sup>th</sup> February 2021.  <i><b>The Committee resolved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting.</b></i>	
	<b>2.2 Actions Summary</b>  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.  It was noted that the Freedom of Speech policy would be approved via the Audit Committee and the Board.  <i><b>The Committee resolved to note progress on the Actions Summary</b></i>	
	<b>2.3 Any Other Matters</b>  There were no other matters arising.	
	<b>Item 3: Statutory and Regulatory Compliance</b>	
	<b>3.1 Office for Students Matters</b>  The Vice Principal for Higher, Vocational and Professional Education noted that the OfS update was also included in the Quality Report.	

	<p>There were two matters of note. The College had recently received a detailed document, outlining how the OfS sought to reduce the regulatory burden on Colleges. Once fully reviewed, the details would be reported to the Board, if significant. A further communication regarding the Freedom of Speech policy had also been received; this was already drafted and would be presented to the Audit Committee and Board.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Deputy Chief Executive and Principal - Quality and Student Experience should consider whether OfS matters should remain a separate agenda item or be included in the Quality Report.</p> <p><b><i>The Committee resolved to note the report on the Office for Students Matters</i></b></p>	GAM
	<b>Item 4: Strategic Plan Implementation</b>	
	<p><b>4.1 Implementation Plan – Pillars 1 and 2</b></p> <p>The Deputy Chief Executive and Principal- Quality and Student Experience presented an update on the implementation of the strategic plan. The following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student groups had been stood down for the year, following a successful year of meetings and input. Those groups relating to amended assessment continued.</li> <li>- All Progress Coach roles had been filled; training and induction was being arranged.</li> <li>- The areas requiring work, following Ofsted feedback were noted; these included over-emphasis on qualification outcomes over skills and behaviours and the development of activities for students to assess their own progress. These themes were reflected across the agenda of the meeting.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee noted that there were four progress coaches and queried how the College sought to ensure consistency of approach. It was confirmed that all were undergoing training and there was a clear process in place with a focus on consistency. It was anticipated that the coaches would work together as team; there was a diverse range of skills and experience and it was hoped that this would facilitate peer development.</p> <p>The Committee noted reference to a comprehensive overhaul of the adult offering and queried what this would entail. It was confirmed that some new developments would be in place for September, others would continue to be developed as part of the post-Covid strategy and the three-to-five-year plan would evolve over the next 12 months. The Head of Curriculum would not commence teaching in September to ensure additional capacity to implement the changes.</p> <p><b><i>The Committee resolved to note the Implementation Plan for Pillar 1 and 2</i></b></p>	
	<b>Item 5: Student Engagement and Success</b>	
	<p><b>5.1 Quality Report</b></p> <p>The Deputy Chief Executive and Principal- Quality and Student Experience presented the Quality Report, noting that this was reviewed at each SLT meeting. The paper was taken as read and the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attendance was impossible to compare against the prior year's data due to the impact of Covid and therefore the pattern over a four-</li> </ul>	

	<p>week period was demonstrated in the paper. Individual students were monitored where there were concerns and rated on a RAG scale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Similarly, retention statistics had not been reviewed in the same way during the pandemic. Current figures suggested lower retention than anticipated and this was reported to the local authority. For HE students, retention was good but there was risk as safety nets had been removed and assessments had to be completed as normal. There would be additional work over half term, and extensions where possible, to assist students as far as possible.</li> <li>- The proportion of EQA reports without actions or sanctions was now 95% (target 85%).</li> <li>- The JISC Digital Experience survey was now complete. The national data for comparison would be available in June.</li> <li>- There had been 18 cases of academic misconduct; none had resulted in sanctions for the College.</li> <li>- There had been fewer complaints than usual during the year, though some had taken longer than the target period to resolve</li> <li>- Student disciplinaries could not be compared to last year due to the pandemic; the majority related to lack of engagement.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee queried whether the continuing lack of attendance tended to be the same students or to fluctuate across the student body. It was noted that there was variation across areas and some individuals with repeatedly low attendance. Attendance was generally improved when teaching was offered online but areas of typically low attendance were closely monitored and targeted.</p> <p>The Committee noted the retention figures and underlined the importance of supporting new students at the beginning of the next academic year in light of the disruption they had experienced. It was noted that before the first lockdown, relationships had been developed on site and could more easily continue online. The second lockdown had a more severe impact on retention. It was anticipated that a more 'normal' year, without lockdowns, would improve retention.</p> <p>The introduction of 'Turn It In' software was noted.</p> <p><b><i>The Committee resolved to note the Quality Report.</i></b></p>	
	<p><b>Item 6: Teaching, Learning and Assessment</b></p>	
	<p><b>6.1 Teaching, Learning and Assessment</b></p> <p>The Head of Quality Improvement presented an update on Teaching, Learning and Assessment. The report was taken as read and the following noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Progress was being made on the T&amp;L Handbook, which would align with the new structure of progress coaches</li> <li>- The Research College Group was up and running. There was a College research network group considering collaborative research</li> <li>- 54 lesson observations had been completed and a formal peer consultation process was being considered for all staff</li> <li>- The IQA Update Training was underway with good progress made.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee questioned how much more progress was anticipated on lesson observations as only 54 of 139 were complete. It was confirmed that there had been some incorrect allocation but the observations which could be conducted would be completed. It was noted that similar</p>	

	<p>numbers would be expected next year; observations were only conducted for new staff or where there were concerns.</p> <p>The Committee reviewed and noted the OIA Report. It was noted that the version circulated was a draft, but the OIA had confirmed today that it was final.</p> <p><b><i>The Committee resolved to note the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Report and the OIA Report.</i></b></p>	
	<p><b>6.2 Interested Party Feedback</b></p> <p>The Committee reviewed the results of the JISC Digital Survey, noting that national comparative data was not yet available. The results largely aligned with the College's internal surveys. There were variations in the student experience across curriculum areas, though there were no obvious reasons for this. Overall, HE students were marginally less satisfied than FE students. There had been very positive feedback on the College's development of the online learning experience. It was noted that apprenticeship feedback was included, and it was hoped that employer feedback could also be collated in future.</p> <p>The Committee noted reference to a question around 'feeling safe'; the student governors confirmed that this question appeared to have been misinterpreted.</p> <p>The Committee noted that there was only a 23% return rate of the survey and underlined the need to improve this. The survey could not be relied upon if it was not representative. It was noted that progress coaches should assist with this, and it may be worth reducing the length of the survey. The Committee noted that shorter, focused surveys could be considered. The student governors provided some feedback on the 'pop-up' alert to complete the survey and it was agreed that this would be revised.</p> <p><b><i>The Committee resolved to note the Interested Party Feedback Report.</i></b></p>	<b>GAM</b>
	<p><b>6.3 TAG Approach</b></p> <p>The Vice Principal for Academic and Applied Education confirmed that the College had submitted a policy for TAG to JCQ which had been accepted. The policy had been drafted in the context of recent data produced on the number of appeals against TAG. The intention was to be as transparent with students as possible.</p> <p>The Committee queried if grades awarded in previous years were used as a basis for TAGs. It was confirmed that this was considered but there were also other criteria, and grades did not have to align with those awarded previously.</p> <p><b><i>The Committee resolved to note the TAG Approach.</i></b></p>	
	<p><b>6.4 Ofsted Update</b></p> <p>The Deputy Chief Executive and Principal- Quality and Student Experience provided an update on the recent Ofsted inspection and the paper was taken as read. It was noted that the purpose of the inspection was to test if the EIF would work in a Covid environment and was not an assessment of quality. The inspection coincided with the discovery of the flood and was therefore reduced to 3 days, with fewer inspectors.</p>	

	<p>The inspection covered a range of activities and concluded that it was possible to conduct inspections in the Covid environment, though some factors such as removing students from classrooms to discuss quality would change.</p> <p>The College was pleased with the positive comments about intent and implementation; there was clear alignment across staff and students in answers to questions.</p> <p>The inspection had noted an emphasis on qualification outcomes and suggested more consideration of softer skills and wider progress.</p> <p>It was noted that the feedback needed to be incorporated into the next SAR process.</p> <p>It was noted that the vast majority of the recommendations were already in the QIP, which facilitated Board oversight. The specific improvement actions had already been picked up and were being developed.</p> <p>It was noted that the views expressed by the inspectors would be taken on board and actioned accordingly, but the opinion of inspectors could always vary and therefore should not be deemed indicative of the outcome of a full inspection.</p> <p><b><i>The Committee resolved to note the update.</i></b></p>	<b>GAM</b>
	<b>Item 7: Supporting Students</b>	
	<p><b>7.1 Supporting Students Report</b></p> <p>The Committee reviewed the Supporting Students Report. It was noted that a spike in mental health related referrals had been anticipated upon return to the building; additional volunteers and an improved triage process had been put in place to handle this. There were currently 11 students on the waiting list, which was the lowest to date.</p> <p>It was noted that the Matrix Award had been re-credited and feedback from the inspector had been excellent. Student funding applications were up to date and 150 laptops had been issued during the pandemic period. In terms of safeguarding, domestic abuse had increased during the lockdown period. The statistics for enrichment activities remained positive and broadening the College's links with the community was a focus. It was noted that students had engaged with a national project – the Student Commission on Racial Justice. The two Equality &amp; Diversity complaints were the same complaints reported at the previous meeting.</p> <p>The Committee questioned the increase in notifications of domestic violence. It was noted that the College was not permitted to approach students direct following notifications; notifications did not specify the nature of the incident, or the people involved. If students approached the College directly, they would be given support.</p> <p><b><i>The Committee resolved to note the Supporting Students Report</i></b></p>	
	<b>Item 8: Corporate Governance and Assurance</b>	
	<p><b>8.1 Strategic Risk Monitoring.</b></p> <p><b><i>The Committee resolved to note the Strategic Risk Monitoring.</i></b></p>	
	<b>Item 9: Policies and Other Matters</b>	

	<p><b>9.1 Assessment Policy and Malpractice Policy</b></p> <p>The Head of Quality presented the Assessment Policy and Malpractice Policy for approval. It was noted that the majority of the changes had been requested by the OU or were in place but had not been documented.</p> <p>The Committee provided comments, noting that there were two elements to assessment – evaluative and as part of the student learning process. Section three of the policy appeared to blur these elements; the new addition related to fairness of assessment but the surrounding bullet points related to the learning process. It was confirmed that the T&amp;L Handbook was more focused on formative, classroom-based assessment. The Policy focused on meeting external requirements. It was agreed, however, that the policy blurred the boundaries and these should be delineated. It was agreed that the Policy would be approved but this should be considered more generally.</p> <p><b><i>The Committee resolved to approve the Assessment Policy and the Malpractice Policy.</i></b></p>	<b>GAM</b>
	<p><b>Item 10: Other Matters</b></p>	
	<p><b>10.1 Terms of Reference</b></p> <p>The Chair outlined the changes made to the Terms of Reference as part of the OU process.</p> <p><b><i>The Committee resolved to approve the Terms of Reference.</i></b></p>	
	<p><b>10.2 OU Update</b></p> <p><b>CONFIDENTIAL</b></p> <p><i>The student governors left the meeting.</i></p> <p>It was noted that a report had been circulated confidentiality. It was noted that all information and updated policies had been sent to the OU before the deadline, though there may be additional work to do on some conditions imposed. The programme validations had been completed and two programmes would not be validated: BA Business and BA Creative Practice. The College had agreed not to seek future validation for the former; there was a small number of applications from new student and there was an alternative HN business course. The validation fort Creative Practice would be sought again in September; work was underway and would be submitted by 4<sup>th</sup> June. The panel would take place on 7<sup>th</sup> July and would comprise of members from more specific creative arts backgrounds; a positive outcome was therefore anticipated. The OU had praised the College for its support for student, openness, comittement and the HE Essentials programme.</p> <p>The main recommendations from the OU were the embedding of work related learning, employability strategy and CPD support.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the recommendations could assist positive change where necessary. The Committee commended the team for their hard work during the validation process.</p>	
	<p><b>SUMMARY MATTERS</b></p>	

	<b>Item 11: Key Meeting Outcomes and/or Actions</b>  <b>11.1 Matters for report to the Governing Body (if any)</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ofsted update report</li> </ul>	
	<b>11.2 Matters for report to Audit Committee (if any)</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To advise on freedom of speech policy – should go forward to the Board.</li> </ul>	
	<b>12.Summary Matters</b>	
	<b>12.1 Any Other Business</b>  <p>It was noted that it was the last meeting for the Chair who would be stepping down as Governor over the summer. It was further noted that both student governors would also step down at the end of summer.</p> <p>The Committee thanked the Chair and the student governors for their work for the Committee.</p>	
	<b>10.2 Date of the Next Meeting – tbc</b>	
	The meeting closed at 7.12pm	
<b>Signed</b>		
<b>Name:</b>	Ann Lees	
<b>Date:</b>		