

CURRICULUM, QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING

Date	Wednesday 18 th May 2016	Time 5.30pm	FINAL
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Venue	The Executive Boardroom, New College Stamford
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Chair	Alison Grant
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Membership: Alison Grant, Allison Sunley and Paul Wingfield.
In attendance: Paula David (Director of Learning – Development & Welfare) (for items 3 & 4 only), Carol Hargreaves (Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development) (for item 3 only), Janet Meenaghan (Principal), Rachel Nicholls (Vice-Principal, Curriculum & Quality (“VPCQ”)) and Sally Brook Shanahan (Clerk to the Corporation).

Apologies: Zoe Nash, Luke Rurans and Andrew Tofts

Disclosure of Members Interests: There were no disclosures of interests beyond those already declared in the Register of Interests.

Item	Actions
1. Minutes of the Meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee held on 9th March 2016 The minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee held on 9 th March 2016 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.	
2. Actions Table and Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th January 2016 The Actions Table was received and the following additional point was made: From the Meeting held on 9th March 2016 <u>Action No. 4 – Minute 5 – Page 4 – Quality Improvement Plan – Progress Update</u> – The Committee Chair confirmed he had sent his marked up version of the QIP to the Vice Principal, Curriculum and so the Action was closed. As the dates for completion of the remaining Actions are in the future it was confirmed they will be reported on at subsequent meetings.	
3. Report on Staff Probation Carol Hargreaves was welcomed to the meeting and it was noted that her attendance was in response to a discussion at the Corporation meeting on 27 th April 2016 in which questions had been raised about Probation and the operation of the Teachers’ Toolkit. Carol Hargreaves introduced the Report and said that it outlined the current policies and procedures relating to induction for new staff and the procedures in place to support and monitor performance through the probationary process. She explained that this involved an allocated area Mentor, the use of the Teaching and Learning Coaches	



(TLCs) and Probationary Reviews being undertaken by the line manager and monitored by the HR Department. Carol Hargreaves acknowledged there are improvements to be made to the tracking and monitoring of teaching performance during the probation period and said that these are being addressed by a review of the paperwork relating to induction and probation and development of the Teachers' Toolkit, delivered by the TLCs.

Members were referred to the summary attached to the paper that presented a breakdown of the processes in a visual format to show how they operate against the policies with a particular emphasis on teaching mindful of the Committee's focus. Members asked about the role of departmental mentors in response to which it was noted that changes have been made via the Organisational Development Group so that reliance is no longer placed on a single individual but that others in the team are able to fulfil this important role.

Attention focussed on the table that showed the probation completion rates of the 42 contracted staff currently on probation and in particular on the action that had been taken in respect of the eight members of staff identified as potentially failing their probation. With one of these being a manager, Members asked if this made any difference to the way in which the individual is managed through the process and what the impact was on their team. It was explained that the procedure remained the same and that the impact in an area is considered on a case by case basis noting that line managers are now more able and supported to do what is required. On occasions external assistance has also been engaged. The manager in question has improved as a consequence of the support received but in some other cases staff have not had their appointment confirmed prompting a question about closure. In reply it was stated that occasionally the probation period had been extended but in view of the resource intensive nature of the probation process staff who are identified as failing are not always retained until the end of the period where there is no positive change in their performance.

In response to a question about confidence that the probation process is being applied consistently across the College it was confirmed that whilst all managers take it seriously some have to be pushed in order to return the review paperwork on a timely basis. Carol Hargreaves confirmed that she personally reviews every one.

Members thanked the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development for her report.

4. English & Maths

Paula David was welcomed to the meeting and began by outlining the key features that have influenced the English and maths curriculum in 2015-16:

- 1,345 students studying were currently GCSE/Functional Skills/Themed Awards/Pre Entry qualifications in English and maths.
- Functional Skills at Level 1 and 2 were revised in August 2015 to sit closer to the changes to GCSE in relation to terminology used, question style and a move away from functionality for employment. It was reported that this has had a negative impact on achievement when comparing current performance to the same point in the previous academic year with concern and disappointment

expressed at this consequence. Consequently it was confirmed the team are focused on additional revision and resits for current students to maximise achievement. In addition, portfolio based Entry Level Theme Awards will be further embedded into Skills for Work and Living. Members expressed their strong concern about the need for students to gain English and maths qualifications without which they will be unable to achieve and maintain sustainable employment. Paula David referred to communications with the awarding body about arrangements for taking these exams and offered to provide these to the Clerk for uploading to the meeting pack.

Clerk

- Embedding English and maths continued to be a priority across the College. It was reported that Teaching and Learning Coaches (TLCs) and English and maths staff are working with vocational staff on embedding strategies. The forthcoming staff development week in June 2016 will focus on supporting curriculum staff to develop their knowledge and skills in this area.
- The English and maths team had a dedicated TLC, and training and development sessions had been held each week, focused on key areas of development identified through LATO observations and walk through sessions.
- New staff that joined the English and maths team in September 2015 had been monitored through their probationary period and responded in a very positive manner to the team ethos in this area.
- Planning for 2016-17 had moving forward with even more emphasis on English and maths being at the centre of students' study programmes. One key consideration was the changes happening to GCSE qualifications and the decision by the Government to allow legacy exam resits in the existing/old GCSEs

Members discussed the key issues that affected the planning for 2016-17. These included the impact of the fact that GCSE English and maths qualifications moved to new specifications for those students at school who will start Year 10 in September 2016. The Government had also decided that the old GCSE English and maths qualifications would not be available after June 2016 that meant students coming from school to college in September 2016 would have studied the old style GCSE English and maths qualification at school but would have to re-sit the new style GCSE English and Maths qualification in June 2017.

In January 2016 the Government launched a consultation with schools and colleges and asked for their views about allowing a legacy resit exam opportunity for those students who sat their GCSE English and maths exam in June 2016. The outcome of the consultation was the decision by the Government to offer a legacy resit exam opportunity for those students who sat their GCSE English and Maths exam in June 2016. This will be funded by the Government but the results will not sit in the League Tables. Members were referred to the letter from Ofqual to the Chief Executive of the Association of Colleges dates 23rd March 2016 included in the meeting pack which

	<p>communicated the decision.</p> <p>The final topic for discussion was the impact of English and maths in relation to Apprenticeships during which it was confirmed that the greatest impact is at Level 3 Childcare.</p> <p>Members thanked the Director of Learning – Development & Welfare for her report.</p>	
5.	<p>Key Performance Indicators 2015-16</p> <p>The Vice-Principal, Curriculum & Quality introduced the paper which sits below the overarching dashboard. The quality related KPIs state the previous year's performance and include the national average, where relevant. Progress against the target set has been recorded and RAG rated. Members noted that the 16-18 overall success slightly below target being currently 80.9% against the target of >82%.</p> <p>A discussion followed about "A" Levels in relation to which there are two measures: Achievement rates and Value added consequently where there is no hope of a student achieving a pass grade steps have been taken to prevent 76 "A" Levels being graded as "U" in order to assist this measure.</p> <p>Overall 16-18 Retention was reported to stand at 92%. Last year's Achievement rate of 88.1% had been poor but should be better in the current year. Consequently overall Success was predicated as Green as even though Retention was Amber as at 92% it was an improvement from the previous year.</p> <p>Some concern was expressed that the current performance indicated is on best predictions with questions asked about whether the departmental figures are accurate and what lies beneath them. The Vice-Principal, Curriculum & Quality described the exercise that has been undertaken to ensure the exercise is robust and to reassure Members that appropriate action is being taken. In response to a particular concern expressed about "A" Levels the Vice-Principal, Curriculum & Quality told Members about the panels she run with "A" Level tutors in which they examine individual students to look at their attendance, commitment and performance and that as a result of this in-depth scrutiny non-performers have not been allowed to remain on programme. Previous concerns expressed about Markbook and tracking were also allayed.</p> <p>The Vice-Principal, Curriculum & Quality reported that she was working on KPIs for 2016/17 on Progress that will ensure everyone is using Markbook. MAG grades will be put on Markbook straightaway that means effective monitoring of who is working on, at, above and below target can take place. Some teams have been using other fit for purpose systems up to now as it was not productive to mandate change mid-year, however, assurance was provided that by September 2016 all staff will be on Markbook with the acid test being as results start to come out this summer. An exercise to look at predicted grades versus actual will be undertaken and reported to the Committee noting that the judgment made is linked to the competence and assessment of the teacher.</p> <p>In a discussion that followed it was confirmed that the College has largely stopped recruiting students who will not achieve.</p>	VPC
6.	<p>Ofsted 16-19 Study Programmes Inspection Dashboard</p>	

	<p>The Committee had considered a detailed report on Value Added performance measures at its meeting on 9th March 2016 but in view of the importance of Value Added, the Vice-Principal, Curriculum & Quality recapped on the main points. It was emphasised that Value Added will soon be the key measure but that it was one that is built on Level 3 Value Added data that is loaded with AS data from students who failed at school and have come to College. Consequently the view was expressed that the measure is flawed.</p> <p>Members concluded that if just the Value Added measure is used it will not be good news for the College and emphasised the importance of the College being well prepared for it.</p> <p>With the knowledge that the Value Added measure is not the College's strongest suit, the Principal was asked to check the new Level 3 Value Added Report for 2015/16 to ensure that there is no rogue student data embedded in the College's figures. ALIS data will also be brought to the next meeting so that the Committee can focus on Value Added in summary form to give an end of year prediction.</p> <p>In the course of a discussion that followed members were reassured that the management of withdrawals has been put right and that good recruitment practice is in place.</p>	Principal
7.	<p>Student Survey</p> <p>Members received the report which focussed on the mid-year surveys and noted the sources which are being utilised to seek and clarify the views of students at the College. The survey had been conducted using software, questions and analysis provided by QDP, a third party organisation and took place between February and March 2016.</p> <p>Student views continue to be collected throughout the year via the Induction, QDP Mid-year and FE Choices Surveys and often complain about survey overload.</p> <p>Students also participate in focus groups as part of the Curriculum Area Review process; they participate in student representative meetings, the Student Council and various committees in particular for Higher Education level courses.</p> <p>It was noted that QDP survey results are often received several weeks after the survey has taken place. Upon receipt the data had been analysed by department and course and showed there were key issues around teaching and learning with satisfaction and positivity about studying at the College low when benchmarked with other providers. There were also a number of areas which have particularly poor levels of positivity that have impacted negatively on the overall results including issues around matters as key as the organisation of lessons leading to the conclusion that the student experience, which is inextricably linked to teaching, learning and assessment, requires improvement as some provision is not good enough.</p> <p>Members discussed the impact of the scoring system and questioned whether the College is smart enough in the way it administers the surveys. They also observed the length of surveys and the repetition could be off-putting to some students. The consensus was that a few significant matters should be extracted from the results with attention then focussed on them in order to sort the issues that had been identified, one</p>	



	<p>of which was agreed is punctuality. Overall the need for a debate about the value of the surveys was identified and if its conclusion is that the survey results are not informing anything then the College should not incur the cost. A suggestion was made that the results could be reality checked by groups of students and that it may be preferable for the College to run shorter surveys itself as part of the Curriculum Area Reviews process without the need for benchmarking. Overall there was enthusiasm expressed for work to be undertaken in focus groups in order to reach an informed position. The Principal suggested one way to do this would be to have students selected at random being asked to talk through issues with the Principal as part of a revised Learner Voice Strategy. With the benefit of this discussion it was agreed that a paper about the way forward with the Learner Voice will be presented to the Committee's next meeting.</p>	<p>Principal/ VPC</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Quality Achievement Report (formerly Success Rates) 2014-15 The Qualifications Achievement Rates report (QAR) replaced the Qualification Success Rates Report (QSR). The QAR contained the first release of national averages and provider group averages for 2014-2015 provision thereby enabling the College to compare last year's performance. The new QAR report has received heavy criticism in terms of accessibility and layout and it was reported that extracting the data from it has been time consuming and laborious.</p> <p>The report contained a comparison of key data sets with the recently released national averages. based on last year's performance aspects of the curriculum that remain a significant concern are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Level provision, in particular AS • 16-18 year olds on diploma qualifications • Animal Care • Sport • Travel and Tourism, and • Apprenticeship provision <p>Members scrutinised the detail in the report and noted In terms of overall Success by qualification type the College is below national average. Overall Success by Subject Sector Area ("SSA"), was noted as being a measure that providers were told would be removed and not available within the QAR. The need for caution was, therefore, urged as some SSAs contain courses that are not always obvious. For example, Level 2 Certificate in Cabin Crew sits in SSA 4 Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, AS General Studies sits in SSA 14 Preparation for Life and Work as well as all functional skills and lower level English and maths qualifications.</p> <p>Overall, and notwithstanding the issues identified with the Report, it was concluded that it contained no significant problems about which the College was not already aware. These were legacy issues where in the past there had been insufficient focus and work is already in hand to make improvements.</p> <p>It was noted that the National Achievement Rate Table had been published and withdrawn form publication on the day of the meeting. The only disappointment was that the College was not yet at national average.</p>	



<p>9.</p>	<p>Curriculum Area Review (“CAR”) Report Members received the paper which provided an update on the process which the Heads of Department have bought into, is working well and providing the information that is needed. Key areas identified were “Motivation/expectations” and “Digital Learning” where there is more work to do.</p> <p>Sport has still to have its CAR and others will be updated over the summer so that every area will have had a CAR before the start of the new academic year.</p> <p>Members emphasised the need for the impact of the CARs to be seen and queried what would be the best time for them to be reviewed in response to which it was suggested that a time in September/October would be appropriate. A number of ideas were discussed about the operation of the review process including that curriculum areas could be asked to prepare a one page summary for the Committee. It was noted that it is a rolling process and so to that extent will never be “final”, however, it was concluded that reflection on the results of the CARs should happen at a fixed point. It was suggested the seven areas reviewed already should be asked to update their feedback in December 2016 and the remaining areas who will have completed their reviews by September should update six months later.</p> <p>Members commended the CAR process and asked that the format of reports should be changed to highlight strengths first. Where lists of apprenticeship provision are made these should be anonymised using letters in place of names.</p>	<p>VPC</p> <p>VPC</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Any other urgent business None.</p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p>Date of next Meeting The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday 2nd November 2016 at 5.30pm in the Executive Boardroom.</p>	

The meeting ended at 7.40 pm

Signed  Chair

Date 06/07/16

