

**College of West Anglia
Minutes of the
Performance Review and Quality Committee
12 June 2024
8.30am
Meeting Room, Principal's Suite**

Present	Chris Ashman Jan Feeney Sam Fletcher Paul Gibson David Pomfret	Governor (Chair) Governor Governor Governor (Staff) Governor (Principal/CEO)
Attending	Kerry Heathcote Rob Petto Sarah Anstiss Ria Vinten Ann Compton Jules Bridges	Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality Assistant Principal Funding and Performance Head of Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning Head of Learning Improvement Careers and Destinations Manager Head of Governance

No.	Action
<p>1 Apologies Apologies for absence were received from Fliss Miller, Vice Chair. Sue Moore, Head of Faculty for Technology and Clare Pelling, Head of Learner Experience also passed on their apologies.</p>	
<p>2 Declarations of Interests There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
<p>3 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 March 2024 The minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2024 were reviewed and agreed as being an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
<p>4 Matters Arising The progress against the outstanding matters from previous meetings was summarised in the report. The completed items are to be removed from the table.</p> <p>Governors had asked at the last meeting to know what the college is doing to reduce the number of complaints that are unreasonable and/or those that are resolved at stage 1 or are not recognised as a complaint. This is scheduled to be reported back to the committee at the meeting to be held in November 2024.</p> <p>Governors also asked at the last meeting for more narrative to be provided in future observation reports to explain the data presented. The committee would like to know how many observations would be expected to have been completed in the term for each area as in the last report 2 were completed in Teacher Training, and 40 for Land Based Studies for example. This is scheduled to be reported back to the committee at the meeting to be held in November 2024.</p> <p>It was agreed that the analysis of AEB provision will be provided at the next meeting of the committee. Members were informed that the £200k AEB funding growth budgeted has been achieved.</p>	<p>HoLI</p> <p>HoLI</p> <p>DECO/VPC&Q</p>
<p>S Fletcher joined the meeting at 8.35am</p>	
<p>5 SAR/QIP/Single Equality Scheme/Risk Mindmap The mindmap provided governors with a visual overview of the links between the college SAR, QIP, Single Equality Scheme and Risk.</p>	

The consolidation of some of the links are still work in progress particularly between the headline QIP and the SEAP (Single Equality Action Plan). Governors commented that the map demonstrates the enormity and complexity of the college with the map starting with the student voice and how everything emanates from this. It was noted that discussion through external influences is also to be represented in the visual. This will be used as an Ofsted visual to demonstrate how the college links its curriculum and quality processes.

6 Operational Oversight Report

1. Operational Oversight Report

The report confirmed the continued focus on attendance, retention, achievement and pastoral support. Retention however has dipped 4.9% below target at 87.1%. Deeper analysis of why retention has dipped is being undertaken at microscopic level. There are more exclusions this year and an increase in behavioural issues. English and maths entry requirements may also be impacting as learners struggle with this element of learning on top of their programme of study.

The BRAGP risk-rating system is working well which supports the focus on retention. Learner withdrawal is the current project focus.

GCSE maths attendance in May 2024, the first exam paper, was good at 93% overall although this is not reflected in attendance at classes across some faculty areas. A working group has been established to explore potential alternative plans for Level 3 learners who need to achieve Grade 4 or above, to avoid having to progress to the second year without having achieved this in Year 1.

S Anstiss joined the meeting at 8.50am

Governors queried how the imposed maths and English conditions of funding proposed for 2025/26 to deliver more hours of learning may further impact learner engagement and confidence to achieve. A collaborative group has been working on a delivery model that doesn't identify the learning as maths and English but brands it as 'applied skills', and these sessions are proposed to be timetabled to all learners so they will serve a dual purpose and not just satisfy those learners who are yet to achieve a grade 4 in maths and English.

A governor questioned if there were any patterns in retention and attendance from learners transitioning from school into college and if there is opportunity to learn from the subject areas where retention is high. It is recognised that there is a need to improve the transition for learners from one institution to another and the detail/documentation that follows an individual.

In summary the Chair commented that attendance is comparable with the rate last year and the gap between English and maths and vocational is relatively the same albeit overall attendance is below the target. More interrogation of the data will be undertaken as it is understood that as a minimum Ofsted would expect an attendance rate to be at least 86%.

It was noted that an Ofsted inspection is unlikely to take place now in this academic year. Inspections would start in the third week of September, so the team have been briefed ahead of time.

Governors noted the range of Adult and HE provision listed in the report which was positive and the college is seeing an increased appetite for shorter, 'try before you buy' courses. The Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality will be delivering 3 psychology summer day schools to test the appetite for more a modular and flexible learning approach.

2. Level 2 Provision – Collaborative Deep Dive Report

The Level 2 Deep Dive outcomes were positive supporting the self-assessment judgement of 'Good' quality of education and a 'Strong' contribution to meeting skills needs. Although progression to level 3 was below sector average, positive destinations have been recorded e.g., employment with training.

3. LANDEX Peer Review Report

In summary, the LANDEX Peer Review, revealed that this provision would benefit from additional employer engagement evidence to support the 'Strong' judgement across all levels of the provision visited.

The review had a focus on stakeholder engagement and the ability of students demonstrating a real understanding of Prevent and British Values. The Chair also noted the positive commentary in the report around observations of TLA. The Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality added that the recent University of Huddersfield Initial Teacher Education Ofsted inspection report confirmed 'good' across all phases.

4. ARU Annual Monitoring Report 2022/23

The report was received as read and noted by the committee.

7 Priority Item 1 – Apprenticeships/Technology

The report provided an overview of apprenticeship provision at the R9 return. The R10 figures now show that the achievement rate has increased slightly to 47% and the best possible at 70.2%. Some learners have since gone through gateway so the legacy figures past planned end dates are coming down and the emphasis now is moving as many learners as possible through to gateway and onto their EPA (End Point Assessment). So far with the number that have gone through within year is 74%, timely, but the Assistant Principal Funding and Performance will be able to calculate a forecast achievement rate as more learners go through EPA before 31 July 2024.

APF&P

The Principal/CEO mentioned that this year the college has hosted three national WorldSkills qualifier events, one in electrical, one in welding, and one in hairdressing, evidencing the high standards expected of technology apprentices and other subject areas and students at the college.

Regarding the Apprenticeship Accountability framework, a governor asked if a learner withdrew during the qualifying period would there be a financial loss to the college. Governors wanted to know the financial impact of withdrawal and this data would be calculated and provided to the committee by email. It was confirmed that the first milestone would be 5 weeks without impact other than the cost of administration and induction, the second stage is whilst they are on programme and those that are past the end planned date is a huge cost and some of these after two or three years are falling off programme so there are multiple stages that impact. An analysis of withdrawal reasons is underway and calculation of financial impact which will be shared with governors, more appropriately with the Finance and General Purposes committee or the Corporation but quality impact and outcomes with this committee.

HoApp&WBL

The Chair asked about the progress made with implementing policies and procedures, embedding systems that are understood, are known, and work and don't hinder the learners or staff. Significant progress has been made with development of a dashboard to track additional learning needs for example. There are some challenges with some vocational teams, but continual audit, training and support is moving progress positively. New templates are ready for the new contract year and are live in the CRM system. The move across to Smart Assessor will enhance the recording required around off the job and other funding condition compliance. The college has contracted Sigma Consultants to achieve efficiencies and lessen reliance on more paper-based processes. At the request of the Chair, it was agreed that the process flow map that articulates the apprenticeship journey will be shared with the committee.

HoAPP&WBL

R Vinten left the meeting at 9.30am

It was confirmed that the training plan template has been rewritten and this has been agreed in consultation with employers. An external training session has provided support and clarity to the team, and this is being followed through with a pilot practice of the new template to consolidate understanding to manage training plans and reviews with the apprentice at the 10 to 12 weekly interval which is checked monthly by the IQA team to ensure that these are being completed.

Items 9, 10 and 11 preceded item 8 as R Vinten experienced intermittent connectivity throughout

8 Headline Quality Improvement Plan 2023/24

The Headline QIP is aligned to the Corporate Risk Register with seven focus areas identified as apprenticeships, study programmes, adult education, HE programmes, college-wide, leadership and management, and leadership and management – recruitment and retention.

Progress since the last report to the committee has been updated with redundant targets struck through and completed targets signed off in blue. Targets for review post reporting period are highlighted grey.

The Head of Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning confirmed that good progress is being made regarding apprenticeship improvements. The Chair asked if the actions in the QIP mean that the improvement identified will be addressed. It was confirmed that it means that the improvement and progress that is being made should start to result in a positive impact in achievement, timeliness of achievement and driving a) the right people on programme and b) effective progress monitoring of the learner journey to be able to react and provide the support and intervention needed to keep the learner on their apprenticeship programme.

S Anstiss left the meeting at 9.40am

The Head of Learning Improvement commented that the Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality has asked that the headline QIP is shared online with the curriculum and quality group and with CLT so that leads are able to update their own headline QIP activity and integration of risk will be supported with the inclusion of the Head of Governance.

Governors observed that the red areas of the headline QIP have been covered in discussions at the meeting which demonstrates triangulation of the areas for concern, notably apprenticeships and the disappointing retention rate. Governors asked if there were amber rated (satisfactory progress) areas for improvement that were of concern that could easily tip into red (unsatisfactory/no progress). Systems and IT in Apprenticeships has featured in the QIP for a while, but continuous monitoring of progress is captured on the apprenticeship risk register so this is an improvement outcome that is subject to regular, close scrutiny, and progress tracking.

It was noted that the outcome/measure of a 'new induction process for all new starters including increased support from the Learning Practice for teaching staff and reductions from teaching' has been downgraded from good (green) to satisfactory (amber) progress. The Head of Learning Improvement confirmed that the new induction process has been received wholly positively but there are pockets where the two-week process has become three days due to staffing challenges. The reason for the regression on progress is because the induction checklist doesn't always evidence the completion of the induction period, so the Head of Learning Improvement is working with HR to track that processes are embedded and consistently applied, then the status can be positively moved on.

Finally, the Principal/CEO confirmed that he would pick up progress of the 'use of apprenticeship levy to offer funded development opportunities' with the Head of HR as governors queried if the September update was realistic, or too optimistic.

Principal/CEO

9 HE Performance Report

Data was shared with the committee online showing the student planned numbers against enrolled figures for the last three years by programme. The data set will be shared with committee members post meeting.

HoG

Governors noted the disappointing full-time in year retention figure of 85.9% (as at May 2024). This is the number of learners that started the degree programme and remain in year on that degree. This figure is lower than anticipated and there are several factors impacting this reduction in retention and these continue to be supported and addressed in live ARU actions plans.

It was noted that the shape of this offer will change over the progress of the 10 year HE strategy (item 10 below refers) as some programmes will no longer form part of the offer and new Open University Higher Technical Qualifications in Computing and IT with Cyber Security, and Health Science, along with several higher-level micro-credentials and higher-level apprenticeships are introduced.

Confidential item under Article 17(2) of the Instrument and Articles of Government
This item was deemed to be confidential.

10 HE Strategy 2025-2035

The draft HE Strategy was presented to SMT colleagues in March 2024 and further work (appendix F) is now fully developed and included. The Deputy CEO and Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality completed an analysis of the student headcount over a 5-year period which concluded that there has been a 42% decrease in student numbers with new starts falling by 61% over this time. This evidenced the need to invigorate an ambitious HE strategy that introduces an application with the Office for Students (OfS) and an acceptance that UcWA needs to do things differently, such as encouraging aspiration to learn and achieve by including recognition of prior learning at application (subject to eligibility). The target figures proposed are notably ambitious however with a range of commercial and full cost micro-credentials there is confidence that the targets are achievable, meaningful, and in line with the CWA strategic ambitions.

Governors asked how market intelligence has been enhanced to ensure that where UcWA is looking at pitching the strategy it is felt to be the best approach for the college in line with an assessment of the level of risk. The HE team were invited to provide an elevator pitch including pathways, specific employer information, who, why and what needs this provision and if there is a gap in the market.

This item is deemed to be confidential.

The strategy does represent risk, a financial risk but without the change of relationships and wider engagement with the team UcWA would continue to decline and potentially cease. This strategy will drive UcWA forward, it is ambitious, yet challenging but it is right for the college and every energy will be put into realising HE growth and achieving the ambitious numbers.

The Chair asked for assurance that there is a clear leadership and management team who are and will be accountable for the success of the HE strategy. The bespoke HE and Higher Apprenticeship quality improvement framework will respond. The Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality will head the HE offer with the support of the 0.5 HE Programme Manager who will take up capacity and additional responsibilities will be assigned to others as the provision grows.

Finally, it was noted that the Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality is in the early stages of looking at the potential to provide term time student accommodation (27room block). Any proposal will come back to committee and the Corporation. The committee agreed the HE Strategy and will share the document with the Corporation for approval at the meeting to be held on 3 July 2024.

Chair

11 Single Equality Scheme/Action Plan Update

It was noted that the BEING and employee wellbeing groups are to merge to avoid duplication and promote a more joined up approach to encouraging both students and staff to feel a sense of belonging during their time at college. This new group is called well-BEING.

R Vinten rejoined the meeting at 10.25am

Through the work of the BEING group a number of staff led groups have been created including, Parents and Carers of Neurodiverse People and an Armed Forces Network group. Governors noted that once actions have made good progress the status is changed to green but when an action is achieved/completed, and the status becomes blue it was questioned how and if the impact of the action is then tested. It was confirmed that tests are carried out for example through the learner voice, tutorials and surveys etc to establish if the training, workshops, tutorial programmes, promotional materials etc have impacted positively to satisfactorily close the action. The staff governor commented that he had visited tutorial sessions and found that there was engagement with LEaP, and work experience integration for example which were actions to progress in the plan.

The committee received and considered the updated and amended EDI policy, accepting the changes proposed, and resolved to **approve** as presented.

A Compton joined the meeting at 10.45am

12 Careers, Information, Education, Advice and Guidance (CIEAG) Policy

The policy was shared with governors as it is good practice and recommended that governors are fully aware of the policy provided for the college, how it is delivered, and how it is evaluated.

It was noted that the review date on the front of the policy should read May 2024 as this was the date of the review by the Senior Management Team. Under the heading of 6, Partnership Working, it was noted that reference to the LEP should be replaced with the Norfolk County Council Careers Hub. The committee was keen to know how success of the policy would be measured. This will be established through learner feedback, destination data gathering, employer and other stakeholder consultation and engagement. Examples of good feedback would be for example, 'I hadn't considered that as a career before but now I'm really excited about it and I'm going to look into it further' or 'I hadn't considered Higher Education as an option for me but now I realise that this is something that I can do'. The Principal/CEO confirmed that the college achieved the Quality and Careers Standard last year.

C&DM

A Compton left the meeting at 10.55am

13 Strategic Targets 2023/24 – Progress Review

Reasonable and good progress has been made since the last report to the committee.

Regarding strategic target 1.3 it was noted that reasonable progress had been made but governors were interested to know if there was confidence at the year-end that pass rates would improve, be in line with, or would better national averages in 16-18, adult and apprenticeships. There was optimism but not confidence.

Similarly strategic target 1.5, there was confidence that the apprenticeship accountability measures would be achieved but the college is not hitting its own ambitions hence the reasonable progress assigned at this reporting time.

14 Review of Committee's Performance, Terms of Reference and Annual Business Cycle

The committee considered the prepared review and concluded that it provides a fair and accurate summary of the committee's performance during the year. The Chair encouraged committee members to attend APR meetings where possible. It was agreed that the committee will continue its focus on apprenticeships/technology in the 2024/25 academic year and agreed to invite other managers to meetings for professional development opportunities.

S Fletcher and R Petto left the meeting at 11.00am

There were no amendments proposed to the Terms of Reference since the last review/approved copy. The committee remained content with the document and will recommend the approval to the Corporation at the meeting to be held on 3 July 2024. The Chair suggested inviting students to attend the meeting, perhaps the student governors or student representatives, WorldSkills students for example to showcase their experience of college life. It was agreed that this would be added (learner voice item) to at least one meeting in the year and this will be added to the annual business cycle.

Chair

HoG

Similarly, the annual business cycle was considered, and it was agreed that the business items covered in the year would enable the committee to fulfil its responsibilities. It was agreed to add that the committee will receive an HE performance report at the beginning of the year and an update on student numbers for its meeting in November 2024.

HoG

R Vinten left the meeting at 11.05am

15 Any other business

There were no other items of business.

16 Chair's items for briefing to Corporation

- Retention has dipped below target (92%) to 87.1%. Deeper analysis of why retention has dipped is being undertaken at microscopic level.
- The college has not been inspected by Ofsted and inspections will not commence now until the third week of September. The teams have been briefed ahead of time.
- Level 2 Deep Dive outcomes were positive supporting the self-assessment judgement of 'Good' quality of education and a 'Strong' contribution to meeting skills needs.

Chair

- Apprenticeship achievement is predicted at better rates than last year. The forecast achievement rate will be calculated as more learners go through End Point Assessment (EPA) before 31 July 2024.
- The committee will recommend the HE Strategy 2024-2035 for approval by the Corporation at the meeting to be held on 3 July 2024.
- The committee received and considered the Careers, Information, Education and Advice and Guidance (CIEAG) Policy. It is good practice and recommended that governors are fully aware of the policy provided for the college, how it is delivered and how it is evaluated.
- The committee's terms of reference and annual business cycle will be recommended to be approved by the Corporation at the meeting to be held on 3 July 2024

17 Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday, 18 September 2024 at 8.30am

Meeting ended at 11.10am