

**The College of West Anglia
Minutes of
The Performance Review and Quality Committee
10 June 2020
8.30 am
Remote Meeting – Microsoft Teams**

Present	Samantha Penn	Governor (Chair)
	Chris Ashman	Governor
	Scott Leadley	Governor (Vice Chair)
	David Pomfret	Governor (Principal)
	Lee Smith	Governor
	Roderick Watkins	Governor
Attending	Andrew Gedge	Assistant Principal Quality & Students
	Ruth Harrison	Vice Principal Curriculum & Learning
	Laura Holland	Head of English & Maths (part)
	Vicky Mann	Head of Apprenticeships & Work Based Learning (part)
	Steve Lowery	Head of Faculty – Technology (part)
	Stephen Halls	Clerk to the Corporation

1 Apologies

There were no apologies for absence received.

2 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting – 29 April 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2020 were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record.

4 Matters Arising

The progress against the outstanding matters from previous meetings was summarised in the report for item 4.

12/2/20 Item 6 – Recruitment of Technology Staffing – The Clerk reported that this matter had been referred to both the Chairs' meeting group and the Employment Policy Committee. The Employment Policy Committee received a report from the Head of HR at its meeting on 3 June 2020 outlining the many activities and methods that had been engaged in the recruitment of

suitable teachers to the faculty. The issue was sector wide. The Vice Principal Curriculum & Learning added that since the commencement of the coronavirus pandemic the College had been successful in recruiting a bricklayer, a plumber and an electrician. The Chair noted that those leaving the faculty during the year had commented on management issues within the faculty.

Governors commented on the two most outstanding matters from the listing (14/11/18- Apprenticeship Reporting and 13/3/19 Maths & English reporting dashboard) and asked if these items should be deleted. The Principal said that both outstanding tasks were important in the need to report and present information and although both had been delayed these were still needing to be actioned. The Principal would consult with SMT colleagues to progress these items. **ACTION-PRINCIPAL**

29/4/20 Item 11 – Suspension of Selected KPIs – the Principal said that this could be discussed further if necessary during item 12 on the agenda – Strategic Targets, particularly with a view to preparing targets for 2020/21.

5 Update on the Coronavirus Pandemic

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Learning reported that work on the A level grading process had been completed the previous day. There was still some confusion in the sector regarding the grading of those on vocational courses where guidance was still being issued. Teaching staff were concerned that particular learners were not getting the practical skills they required to complete their courses. On-line teaching had been going well, with a brief pause during the half-term holiday period and the subsequent week, giving teachers time to focus on the grading process. The Assistant Principal Quality & Students confirmed that it had been a challenging time for teachers to assess the performance of the large numbers of learners in a short period.

Lee Smith joined the meeting at 8.41 am

Governors asked for an update on apprenticeships and those affected. The Vice Principal advised that a detailed report would be presented at Item 7, but for now, the guidance available to colleges and employers was still unclear. The College had taken the initiative to support all apprentices and offer teaching and learning where possible to keep them engaged. Plans were now being considered for the autumn term with consideration given on how best to manage workspaces across the campuses to give learners the opportunity to develop their practical skills.

The Vice Principal was pleased with how individuals had made the fast transition to on-line learning. Various training sessions had taken place to support this.

Governors asked which committee had oversight of the delivery of the curriculum over the coming months. The Vice Principal considered that the PR&Q committee was best placed to review the college's delivery plans rather than the full Board.

Governors asked about how the Learning Practice was supporting teachers with on-line teaching and what was being considered for the autumn term. The Vice Principal advised that training for on-line teaching was still being provided where needed. For September, staff were considering how best to deliver their courses, which classes needed to be held on campus and how safety would be maintained. In some areas there were still "unknowns", but this was common with other colleges. On-line materials were being developed, especially the welcome packages to students joining the college for the first time.

Governors asked if there would be an opportunity to respond to the teaching strategy for the coming year. The Principal advised that a paper would be issued imminently outlining the College's plans for teaching for the remainder of the academic year, including proposals to recommence some teaching on campuses from next week. The curriculum planning paper for 2020/21 would be presented at the next Board meeting (1 July 2020) and would provide the latest proposals for continued on-line delivery and face-to-face delivery across the campuses for 2020/21.

The Chair noted that the committee would be reliant on senior managers to provide a varied set of reports at future meetings to inform on the latest teaching methods, staff training and learner performance. The Principal considered that detailed information on a course-by-course basis would not be appropriate for the committee to consider, although oversight of what would be offered with assurance that health & safety requirements would be met would be provided to all Board members. The Chair agreed to this approach.

The Assistant Principal advised that the Learning Practice had continued to support staff with their accelerated development plans and together with support from the Technology Enhanced Learning Department there had been a noticeable surge in the confidence of staff using digital technologies. Most staff were engaging although there had been a few instances of staff suffering due to the lack of technology in their own home environment, and for some members, from September, it would be necessary for them to be on campus to present their lessons to learners working at home. The systems such as BUZZ and Learn were effective and good for keeping students in contact with each other. The expectation for September was that the quality of on-line teaching, although good, would need to be higher than at the present time.

The Staff Governor reported that during recent appraisal interviews colleagues had commented on the impact of having to introduce new delivery methods at pace and the skills that had been acquired in a short period of time. Teaching, staff meetings and training sessions were being held remotely which was something that had not been previously considered.

The Assistant Principal introduced "Asynchronous delivery" where students have the opportunity to receive their teaching at various times, locations and methods, noting for example, that teachers may consider pre-recording their lectures for students to watch in their own time. The Principal added that the College was mindful of the challenges faced by students learning in a home environment and the need for flexible timetables to fit in with responsibilities, such as childcare. The Assistant Principal commented that the College recognised the digital poverty situation for some students both with infrastructure and the demand in those homes with few devices. Live teaching sessions could place demands and create anxiety in students' homes.

The Principal noted his concern that although the ESFA had relaxed its funding rules at the present time regarding how it would measure delivery, there had been no agreement as yet if the relaxation would continue into 2020/21 which could result in a reduction in funding being claimed. Teaching methods would need to change, and the focus should be on meaningful engagement and how best to monitor progress being made by an individual.

The Vice Principal would discuss with the Chair outside of the meeting the best way for providing the correct information for the committee to review and monitor performance in the coming months.

ACTION-VPCL/CHAIR

Governors considered that the committee should take time to consider the overall view of education provision within the community, looking at vulnerable students, the socio/economic priorities etc within a workshop setting rather than through detailed paper reports.

The report was noted.

Laura Holland joined the meeting at 9.14 am

6 Mathematics & English

The Head of Department reported that engagement with students continued to increase, noting that for other colleges this was decreasing. However, it was anticipated that some students may now disengage as in a “normal” year, GCSE teaching would have now ceased following the exam period. Thank you cards had been given to the team in recognition of the work done this term. The department had been involved in the centre assessed gradings for GCSE and Functional Skills (FS) students; this had been challenging. Headline figures were known, although not yet confirmed: overall, the GCSE results were slightly higher than the previous year, as had been expected. FS Maths was in line with national results, but significantly down on last year’s performance.

Planning was underway for the first half of the autumn term where delivery would be on-line using a mix of live Zoom sessions, PowerPoint with voice-over sessions and various learning materials. A summer package of teaching was being planned for those who were wanting additional studies.

Adult provision was proving popular with approximately 100 learners waiting to commence studies in September 2020. Personal telephone calls were being made to new and existing students to keep them interested and engaged.

Governors asked for clarification on the numbers of those engaged in their studies. The Head of Department said that the latest statistics (23% for English and 46% for Maths) represented those students who had completed and returned work for marking, noting that for other colleges the return rate was around 10%. Governors asked why other students were not engaging in their work. The Head of Department said that the approach being taken was to support students and not to pressure them into completing work. It was considered that Maths and English tended to be supplementary subjects for most learners who prioritised their main subject of study. Maths engagement was higher as the completion of a short quiz was more likely than an in-depth piece of written work. Governors asked if teachers were in touch with all of their students. The Head of Department said that communications were being made with students, and followed-up when not received, ensuring also that this was the case in vocational areas. Out of 2,000 plus students only 3 had been unsuccessful in maintaining a communication link.

The Assistant Principal reported that the department had worked hard to gather the evidence-based information for the grading process. For those who physically sat the test, the reformed pass rate for functional skills was 27%; this could be revised once all providers had submitted their calculated grades.

Governors asked about plans to improve engagement moving forward. The Head of Department advised that new e-learning packages and new exercise modules would be utilised, along with a mix of on-line teaching sessions. The Vice Principal added that the College’s expectations for engagement would be clearly specified at the time of enrolment so that learners were clear that they will be required to participate and return work.

Governors enquired if there were plans in place to manage examination resits. The Head of Department explained the difficulties associated with entering students in the November exams and then keeping them engaged for the two months following until the results were known. Further, it had just been announced that for a student challenging their assessed mark and

requiring an actual resit they would need to take that exam in their original secondary school (i.e. where they would have originally sat their exam in the summer term). For functional skills, resits could take place earlier, although this would need to be managed to allow for social distancing measures. The Assistant Principal noted that the College was anticipating huge numbers of appeals/complaints once the results were received in a very small window at the end of August and into September.

The report was noted.

*Laura Holland left the meeting at 9.33 am
Vicky Mann joined the meeting at 9.33 am*

7 Apprenticeships

The Head of Department provided the latest figures to those showing in the report: The number of apprentices who had returned to work had increased from 80 (as noted in the report) to 160; also, the number of apprentices who had been furloughed had reduced from 337 (as noted in the report) to 280 currently.

Governors asked regarding apprentices who had been furloughed, made redundant or laid off, what the anticipated trajectory was and if this was showing signs of improving. The Head of Department advised that the figures were changing on a daily basis, sometimes improving, and then surprisingly worsening with new instances of apprentices being let go, even though the lockdown issues were reducing. Some apprentices were still making progress with 48 achievements since lockdown being noted.

The Principal reported that this area remained a financial concern for the College. Income would be lost in the current year (circa £200-£300k) although the final out-turn would be on target, indicating how well this activity had performed against budget prior to lockdown. Income for 2020/21 would be difficult to predict but a target of £3m had been set. The Principal noted that it was important to recognise that the underlying apprenticeship performance was becoming a concern before the coronavirus situation. The financial effect was being monitored by the Finance & General Purposes Committee. Senior managers were meeting with the Head of Department and her team on a regular basis to check progress and review the actions being taken. The Head of Department would be meeting with the Head of the Technology Faculty the following day (11 June 2020) to discuss the possible postponement of new starters in September 2020 to January 2021.

The report was noted.

*Vicky Mann left the meeting at 9.41 am
Steve Lowery joined the meeting at 9.41 am*

8 Technology Faculty Update

The Head of Faculty reported that following recent interviews 3 new members of staff had been successfully recruited to the faculty. Teaching staff were currently working to help those students who needed to complete their current apprenticeship courses. The Vice Principal advised that staff were making plans for bringing in those students who needed practical sessions with technical support officers now engaged in preparing workspaces; this was anticipated to commence from 22 June onwards, on a rota basis. The Head of Faculty and Head of Work Based Learning were reviewing the possible delay of starters from September 2020 to January 2021 (as noted also in the previous report) and the Head of Faculty confirmed

the planned meeting for the following day. A pre-apprenticeship programme was being considered for the autumn term to develop hands-on skills, prior to the commencement of the technology-based apprenticeships in January 2020.

Governors asked about the staff induction process and how this was being managed on-line. The Head of Faculty reported that the 3 new starters had completed their first day induction programme with the HR department; this took place on Monday 8 June 2020. The faculty induction would commence the following week with each new member being paired up with an existing member of staff to provide support and help. Governors asked if support was being made available from the Learning Practice. The Head of Faculty advised that Joyce Chen would be supporting the 3 new members.

The report was noted.

Steve Lowery left the meeting at 9.45 am

9 Learning & Curriculum Report

The Vice Principal referred to the conference for Heads of Faculty and Programme Managers which took place on 19 May 2020. Three questions were posed to the working groups and the report detailed the responses received all of which would help in the planning of future teaching. The Technology Enhanced Learning Department and the Learning Practice had been supporting staff where required. Teachers were considering various aspects of future teaching, including the best use of remote teaching platforms, such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

The Vice Principal reported that Childcare students would be returning to on-campus teaching in the following week. The College's Health & Safety Officer was currently reviewing the Wisbech campus to plan for the safe teaching of practical sessions for technology students.

Governors asked if colleges were directed by authorities and how flexible this was as to what should be delivered and to whom over the coming weeks, and how this was prioritised by the College. The Vice Principal explained that the College had considered its own situation and the needs of its students. Priority was being given to those students who needed more support and to new students. Those requiring practical skills were an urgent need and this was being addressed in the partial re-opening proposals of the campuses. The re-opening proposals had been set by the management team with a view to noting any adverse effects this could cause to the funding received, as there were constraints due to payments being based on the actual delivery provided.

The Principal assured Governors that the re-opening proposals were in line with legal requirements. For the College, the priority was to ensure current students completed their respective courses. The original guidance which stipulated a re-opening date of 1 June 2020 had since been changed to 15 June 2020, with much of its original content being relaxed leaving colleges able to assess their own individual situations and plan accordingly.

The report was noted.

10 Applewood Nursery Update

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Learning reported that the Nursery was open for 3 days per week at the present time with on average 3-4 children attending. Those parents using the facility were being asked to confirm that they were key workers. An additional day was planned. Staff were working on a rota basis. Additional cleaning was being undertaken using new methods

(with additional expenditure) and even the toys were being cleaned on a regular basis using new safety guidelines. Parents were grateful for the service being offered. The Vice Principal was pleased to note that the OfSTED inspection was still on hold, relieving the pressure for staff at this time.

Governors asked about those using the nursery facilities. The Vice Principal explained that the service was being offered to key workers in the community who could not work from home and therefore this excluded college staff who were currently working at home. At present, the service was being used by employees of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the police force. As the need to provide more places to more key workers increased, then staffing and opening hours would be reviewed.

The report was noted.

11 Quality Improvement Plan 2019/20

There were no questions or concerns raised on this report.

The Chair commented that moving forward this plan would need to be updated to reflect any new areas that required monitoring following the recent changes in the delivery of teaching.

The report was noted.

12 Strategic Targets 2019/20 Progress Review

There were no comments or questions raised regarding the current targets under review by this committee.

The Principal explained that future targets would need to be considered in more detail and be appropriate for the changes in the teaching and learning that would evolve. There would be a need to monitor the quality aspects of the College's provision, for example, attendance may be considered to be less important than previously, whereas being able to monitor overall student experience would become very significant.

The Principal was currently preparing the draft strategic plan for 2020/21 which he would issue to all Board members in due course for comment. The final plan would then be considered by the Board at its meeting on 1 July 2020. The Principal asked committee members to submit their suggestions on possible KPIs to monitor and track performance in the coming year.

ACTION-COMMITTEE

The Chair commented that the targets would need to reflect the variety of learners at the College and the differing delivery methods of teaching, as well as the priorities for the College in the coming year. Governors warned of the need to avoid creating burdensome targets which would be difficult to track. Targets which could demonstrate student success would be welcomed, such as those moving to further study and those moving into employment.

The Vice Principal said that targets should reflect the themes of OfSTED's Education Inspection Framework to reflect curriculum intent, implementation and impact. Feedback from the Student Voice was key to understanding how the College was performing and that by ensuring the overall student experience was excellent would allow students to achieve and move on.

The report was noted.

13 Equality & Diversity Objectives 2019/20 – 6 Monthly Review

There were no questions raised on this report.

Governors asked for Equality Objective Number 2 to be amended to read: “To eliminate inequality, harassment and victimisation by removing or reducing disadvantages **experienced** by people of different groups.”

ACTION-APQS

The report was noted.

14 Complaints (Current)

Governors asked if the College anticipated receiving many complaints in the coming weeks. The Principal considered that students would complain about their assessed grading once the results were released. The Assistant Principal added that the influx of complaints was expected to be within a two-week period from 20 August 2020 (results released) until the start of the September term.

The Principal reported that complaints had been made asking for the partial return of fees, particularly for access courses. These complaints had not been upheld as teaching had continued, albeit remotely, during the lockdown period. Governors asked about the financial exposure to the College. The Principal considered that in the HE sector new students for the autumn term may consider deferring their place for a year as they felt they would not enjoy their first term, possibly in lockdown and studying remotely and would miss the initial social experiences (e.g. freshers’ week etc). This concern could be experienced by UcWA students and so there was the risk that HE income may be reduced in 2020/21.

The Chair noted that there could be complaints from students regarding the order in which particular course groups were invited back to on-campus teaching.

The report was noted.

15 Any Other Business

The Assistant Principal highlighted the risk that a small number of students would not be able to complete their respective courses in the current year, mainly those requiring practical assessments where it would be physically impossible to accommodate all students in the workshops/teaching areas in the time remaining before the deadline of 31 July 2020. These students would roll-over into 2020/21.

16 Chair’s items for briefing to the Corporation

The Chair noted that, due to the changes facing the College with the delivery of its teaching, the committee would need to change its approach for the coming year as to how it monitored performance and reviewed targets without causing additional work for managers or the need for complex reporting systems to be introduced.

17 Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday, 23 September 2020 at 8.30 am.

The meeting closed at 10.20 am