

**College of West Anglia**  
**Minutes of Performance, Review and Quality Committee**  
**Wednesday, 4 June 2025**  
**8:30am – 11.00am**  
**Remote Meeting, via TEAMS**

<b>Present</b>	Jan Feeney Fliss Miller Paul Gibson David Pomfret	Governor (Acting Chair) Governor (Vice Chair) Governor (Staff) Governor (Principal/CEO)
<b>Attending</b>	Kerry Heathcote Rob Petto Sarah Anstiss Sue Moore Clare Pelling Jules Bridges	Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality Assistant Principal Funding and Performance Head of Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning Head of Faculty - Technology Head of Learner Experience Head of Governance

No.		Action
1	<b>Apologies</b> There were no apologies for absence.	
2	<b>Declarations of Interests</b> There were no items of interest declared.	
3	<b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting on 5 March 2025</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2025 were reviewed and <b>agreed</b> as being an accurate record.	
4	<b>Matters Arising</b> The progress arising from the previous meeting were summarised in the progress report and all actions reported had either been resolved or, where appropriate, an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda.  It was agreed that more employer case studies are still required to evidence the impact of the employers' voice.  All other completed items are to be removed from the report.	App/WBL  HoG
C Frunza, M Parkes, and B Cunnell-Westthorpe joined the meeting at 8.40am		
5	<b>Learner Voice – students invited to attend the meeting</b> Students were invited to join the meeting, Cosmina Frunza, Maisie Parkes, and Benji Cunnell-Westthorpe attended.  Cosmina (Childcare and Health and Social Care Level 1) said that the course had been amazing, with great course work, and they have enjoyed being a student ambassador and getting involved in the multicultural day. Their time here at the college has been very exciting and they have had an amazing time at the college. Cosmina will progress onto level 2 childcare next year and has already met with their new course director. Next steps for this learner were made clear to them, made sense and they are really excited about the future.  Maisie (Bluebird course) commented that there is always lots to get involved in at college and that they feel safe. They have been made aware of what their next steps could be, and they felt prepared for their destination. The Bluebird course has provided this learner with lots of opportunities for taster sessions which has helped them to make up their mind about a level 2 health and social care programme next year and then onto level 3.	

Benji (Bluebird course) has been inspired by the public services taster sessions and has aspirations now to be a firefighter.

Students were asked to tell governors what the best things about the college are, and the opportunities that are on offer to them. Students said that they couldn't think of anything to change for the better other than maybe more spaces for people to join. Benji commented that one of the good things about the college is the support available for students.

C Frunza, M Parkes, and B Cunnell-Westthorpe left the meeting at 8.50am

Agenda item 12 superseded items 6 through to 11 inclusive

## **6 Operational Oversight Report**

In addition to the commentary in the report it was highlighted that that the medium action on the audit (point 1) is underway for reporting later this month (27 June 2025) and will be reported to the Corporation meeting to be held on 9 July 2025.

In terms of retention for 16-18s this is currently at 89.3% which is short of the college target of 92% but is a significant improvement on the end position last year and was a focus of Ofsted inspectors when they visited in March 2025. Everyone across the college is absolutely focused on retaining every student and there is confidence that 92% will be achieved next year.

The externally led deep dives are going well with positive side effects for team members being offered CPD and coaching along the way. Although Ofsted will no longer carry out deep dives as part of inspection (from 3 November 2025), CWA will continue with these but rebranded as 'Area Performance Review visits'. Rather than 9 four/five-day Area Performance Reviews next year there will be fourteen/fifteen shorter versions (2 days) with a proportion of this time doing desktop 'deep dives' focusing on gradebook to track and monitor marking, progress and outcomes over the year.

Governors noted that attendance on some of the courses showed some challenging statistics and attendance correlates with achievement, so it was questioned if there was concern about achievement, non-attendance and retention for those curriculum areas. It was confirmed that ESOL adults has improved in terms of quality, but attendance does remain low, so a conscious effort has been made not to grow this provision. There are over 340 ESOL learners currently. CWA will jointly plan the curriculum offer with Norfolk County Council and the New Library in King's Lynn. ESOL learners tend to be in temporary accommodation which affects their ability to attend on a regular basis and from a maths and English point of view the team are looking on a student-by-student basis. The volume of learners is entry level (up by 456%) over the past four years so more evaluation and analysis of reasons for absence will help understand the issues that learners face (on a course-by-course basis) and governors asked for a report on this for the next meeting.

DCEO/VPC&Q

Similarly, it was noted that Creative Arts apprenticeship attendance is also a problem area. Retention is at 40% and achievement to date is at 8.3% with best overall case at 26%. This is hairdressing and low numbers are skewing the data. Governors asked to see the number of enrolments for apprenticeship reporting (which are available in agenda item 8 below).

DCEO/VPC&Q

The staff governor mentioned the Equine Deep Dive and the English and maths attendance concern and asked if this was like other areas in terms of the differential or if this was because of other issues like staffing or timetabling at the Cambridge campus. It was confirmed that staffing is robust and not the issue here, but more analysis as mentioned above would help identify the root cause for learners.

## 7 Learning and Curriculum Report

The committee congratulated Paul Gibson, Staff governor, who has been appointed Head of Quality commencing in September 2025. He will stand down from this committee but join the membership of the Finance and General Purposes committee in the new academic year.

Complaints are now being supported and administered by the SMT PA, which will provide consistency in approach and future reporting. Currently the compliments email address is not being utilised, and it has been acknowledged that we need to use this intelligence to make change and learn from not just complaints but compliments also.

Sampling of PDPs and CPD logs under Area Performance Review Visits will commence in the new academic year. Lesson visits are working well with quality oversight of teaching, learning, and assessment and the outcomes of these will be used to bolster process and improve practice.

The staff governor highlighted the number of zeros in the report (item 7.1) regarding the unseen observations (drop-ins), and it was confirmed that these are not captured effectively and there are probably more being completed than reported so there is work to do to improve this area. Governors also asked if last year and previous years' comparable data could be reported, and it would be useful to have a benchmark or good practice target to show what we're aiming for.

The Chair noted the number of untimely complaints reported and asked what the reasons were as to why they had not been dealt with appropriately. This has also been identified by management and whilst not excusable the Interim Head of Quality has been tasked to oversee this and bring it all together.

The Principal/CEO commented that there was concern reported of inconsistency of application of the support model for new teaching staff but made a point of saying that HR processes have changed that have positively impacted on retention albeit there are still some pockets of inconsistency in approach that clearly need to be addressed.

S Anstiss and S Moore joined the meeting at 9.35am

## 8 Priority Item 1 – Apprenticeships/Technology

The Head of Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning reported that the R10 return has been submitted with achievement currently standing at 53.8%, Technology at 55.2% and Work Based Learning, 71.4%. The challenge remains with partnership achievement which is at 23.5%.

Governors expressed their delight and congratulated the team for the 'good' Ofsted judgement for apprenticeships. This absolutely shows the amount of progress made even though there are still some remaining stubborn metrics to overcome. As mentioned in item 6 above hairdressing is an area that is struggling and governors wanted to know why, what is being done about subcontractor partners where quality isn't perhaps where it should be and if there is a drop off in employer engagement. It was confirmed that there are three hairdressing learners due to complete shortly so this concern will disappear. CWA is working its way out of the relationship with S4PL. They have joined the APAR (Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register) to directly recruit learners, and it is expected that half of these learners (those who are not likely to achieve or complete before September 2025) will transfer to S4PL. In terms of the quality of partner provision the DCEO/VPC&Q has been conducting the quality assurance visits and these have all been positive with no issues raising red flags so from an employer and learner perspective there is confidence that the quality of teaching and learning is good.

In terms of the direct impact the main area of focus has been the off the job hours which has an impact on curriculum. Some adjustment and review of the hours delivered, and the hours required is taking place which is the key piece from an efficiency and quality point of view. Assessment and how CWA assesses against the standards and the pace of change is also challenging as Skills England review the standards and these start to

HoQ

come through so this is being managed carefully. There is some slow down with employers, certainly around construction so efforts are being made to encourage employers to take on apprentices. The increase of employer NI contributions seem to be impacting but not necessarily for Work Based Learning.

The Principal/CEO commented that the pace of change on apprenticeships and the policy front with so many apprentices over multiple years adds another layer of complexity for the college which presents the potential for things to go wrong. It is imperative that CWA keeps a close eye on rules and educating staff to be alert.

S Anstiss and S Moore left the meeting at 9.50am

## **9     **Headline Quality Improvement Plan 2024/25****

The QIP continues to be developed and evolve. The Interim Head of Quality has held progress checks and updates, and it was agreed that the BRAG ratings reported are appropriate. Governors asked for comparative sector data and some of this has been included in the papers. It was noted that the HE strategy date of 2035 reflects the end of the strategy with the target to enrol 1000 students. A shorter milestone target for HE will be developed over the summer and specific targets are to be added with headline actions outlined in the QIP without being too operational.

DCEO/VPC&Q

The Chair highlighted that retention is looking positive at entry level (above local and national) but not as good for level 1. There are several reasons why retention is not as high and due to new conditions of funding, and a huge number of level 1 learners on entry level maths and English provision, next year the college is introducing a 'step to' level 2, additional level 1 provision, and a 'step to' level 3 additional level 2 maths and English provision. The CWA large 16-18 student profile relative to the sector is disproportionate compared to other colleges which in terms of funding is playing to our advantage but in terms of retention suggests gross underperformance which is not relative to the sector.

## **10    **HE Performance Report****

The recent internal audit on HE recruitment and retention by Scrutton Bland was shared with the committee. The audit provided significant assurance (green) although governors questioned how such a level of assurance could be provided when HE recruitment numbers are so low. The report confirmed that the college is making appropriate and timely responses despite the external challenges that UcWA has faced and the negative impact that this could have on HE recruitment and retention so a significant assurance level could be justified.

F Miller left the meeting at 10.00am

It was noted that despite these external challenges the number of accepted offers for 2025/26 has increased (72 compared with 42 at the same point last year). There is a renewed focus and a review of the growth plan, looking at years 1, 3 and 5 will be shared with the committee once completed over the summer.

DCEO/VPC&Q

## **11    **HE Strategy and Growth Plan 2024-2035 Progress****

The essence of the growth plan and strategy remain and there is still an appetite, aspiration, and an energy for our HE offer.

Governors were informed about collaboration opportunities with other HEIs, FE Colleges, and Local Authorities that UcWA is building upon and planning. The OfS application continues to be pursued in preparation of submitting when the OfS reopens for applications in August 2025. The quality of UcWA provision is not a concern, but student numbers is in decline. Consequently, this committee asked for the Finance and General Purposes committee to consider the financial viability of this provision, and this instigated a review and a meeting of a small group of governors. Short term targets are to be set but the meeting concluded that the UcWA offer remains viable and is a strategy that should continue to be pursued.

12	<p><b>Single Equality Action Plan</b></p> <p>The report demonstrated that lots of activities have positively progressed the action plan and this was also evident from the students who joined the meeting today and spoke about some of the events and activities that they have been involved in.</p> <p>Committee members acknowledged the positive progress but mentioned the area of challenge around staff training and this will continue to be built upon to ensure that staff receive updates and refresh their knowledge so this will stay as an action on the plan although once embedded as standard practice this could fall off.</p> <p>Concern was raised where there are some areas of poor student behaviour and training for staff to learn how to approach problems and behaviours positively is to be rolled out.</p>	
	C Pelling left the meeting at 8.55am. The Chair resumed the order of the agenda at item 6	
13	<p><b>Strategic Targets 2024/25 – Progress Review</b></p> <p>There is one strategic objective area (2.7) behind target relating to the implementation of the HE strategy as discussed in agenda items 10 and 11 above, otherwise, the report overall shows reasonable and good progress of all other strategic targets.</p>	
14	<p><b>Review of Committee’s Performance, Terms of Reference &amp; Annual Business Cycle</b></p> <p>The committee considered the prepared review and concluded that it provides a fair and accurate summary of the committee’s performance during the year. It was agreed that more input from learners would be welcome, and they are to be invited to meetings and more detail on learner satisfaction is needed. The Principal/CEO commented that it would be good to invite bigger groups of students to meetings.</p> <p>The Terms of Reference were considered and the Head of Governance commented that an addition is proposed to the Powers of the committee, to uniform with other committees around employing the services of external advisers. The addition will be sent to the committee by email for agreement.</p> <p>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. As discussed above the learner voice item and student satisfaction will be added to the schedule but not for the September meetings.</p>	<p>HoG HoLE</p> <p>HoG</p> <p>HoG</p>
15	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>The staff governor was thanked for his contribution to the work of the committee.</p>	
16	<p><b>Chair’s Items for Briefing to Corporation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An overview of the learner voice, having invited students to attend the meeting</li> <li>• Learner Voice and student satisfaction will be regular items on agendas for the next academic year</li> <li>• An overview of attendance figures, positive and negative</li> <li>• Internal audit student retention and achievement, significant assurance (green)</li> <li>• Implementation and work of the student led Neurodiverse group</li> <li>• Apprenticeship achievement rate improvement</li> <li>• Change in deep dives approach to Area Performance Review Visits next year</li> <li>• HE recruitment positive and future plans</li> <li>• Membership of committee needs to be strengthened, currently two vacancies</li> </ul>	Chair
17	<p><b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>Wednesday 17 September 2025 at 8:30am, Meeting Room, Principals Suite, KL</p>	

Meeting ended at 10.25am