

**College of West Anglia**  
**Minutes of Performance, Review and Quality Committee**  
**Wednesday, 6 November 2024**  
**8:30am – 11.00am**  
**Remote Meeting via TEAMS**

<b>Present</b>	Chris Ashman Fliss Miller Samantha Fletcher Paul Gibson David Pomfret	Governor (Chair) Governor (Vice Chair) Governor Governor (Staff) Governor (Principal/CEO)
<b>Attending</b>	Kery Heathcote Rob Petto Sarah Anstiss Ria Vinten Clare Pelling Jules Bridges	Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality Assistant Principal Funding and Performance Head of Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning Head of Learning Improvement Head of Learner Experience Head of Governance

No.	Action
<p><b>1 Apologies</b> Apologies for absence were received from Jan Feeney. Apologies were also received from Sue Moore, Head of Faculty, Technology.</p>	
<p><b>2 Declarations of Interests</b> There were no items of interest declared.</p>	
<p><b>3 Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2024</b> The draft minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2024 were reviewed and <b>agreed</b> as being an accurate record.</p>	
<p><b>4 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.</p> <p>S Fletcher and R Vinten joined the meeting at 8.35am</p> <p>It was confirmed that an overall format for data reporting has been developed and the apprenticeship dataset was contained in the report (agenda item 11 refers).</p> <p>The Chair asked for employer case studies to be shared.</p>	HoApp/WBL
<p><b>5 CWA Headline Self-Assessment Report 2023/24</b> The DCEO/VPC&amp;Q explained that a Leadership and Management self-evaluation questionnaire had been used to inform the SAR judgement as a robust grade 2. The raw data is available to evidence the grade.</p> <p>Governors asked what measures are in place to improve the regression on the areas (apprenticeships for example) that have moved to red. Apprenticeships is the key piece of work for improvement and operational meetings with all stakeholders involved are to be held and notes/records will be kept as an audit trail to evidence the action points and progress to be achieved. Data reporting has been improved so governors will be better informed on current and actual performance so a live position will be reportable. These operational meetings will be in addition to the fortnightly risk register meetings held.</p>	

The Chair highlighted that the apprenticeship achievement data shows that every other learner that starts, who was due to finish, didn't, and one out of four on a study programme didn't achieve. Achievement for adults is slightly better so how can a 'Good' judgement be justified. The DCEO/VPC&Q confirmed that the quality of education and wrap-around support is robust. CWA can demonstrate an inclusive curriculum, and the data demonstrates large cohorts of level 1 and level 2 learners, but heat maps show how CWA can improve and shows the measures in place to show where to focus attention and what needs to be implemented. Destination and level progression data also supports the 'good' grade.

The committee were content to recommend the Self-Assessment Report to the Corporation for approval at the meeting to be held on 18 December 2024, ratifying the 'Good' overall judgement.

Chair

## 6 **Headline QIP 2024/25**

The Head of Learning Improvement confirmed that as requested the college strategic targets are now included in the format of the headline QIP.

It was reported that the monthly QIP update meetings are positively impacting. The monthly status column showing the progress will move in line with reporting so the headings will change to September and October updates, and then October and November updates and so on as the year moves on.

The Chair commented that there appeared to be less red rated (unsatisfactory/no progress made) targets now compared to the July 2023/24 year end, so did this therefore indicate that sufficient progress and improvement has been made. This is the intent of the document and the monthly progress updates are demonstrating more movement but there are some conflicting targets to resolve, and these are being worked through in the monthly meetings. The data is more fluid, but the early indication is that improvement is being recognised. Governors said that they didn't necessarily see the change in RAG status or sufficient improvement coming through, but the process does align better so there is more confidence that a live and actual position is transparent, and the process is more tangible. It was noted that a refresh of the QIP targets now need to be aligned with the improvement areas identified from the college self-assessment report.

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Governors commented that there are some areas of the QIP where dates have slipped however overall, the process and continual review and update of the QIP is greatly improved. It was questioned however, using apprenticeships as an example, that so much time and energy has been invested in improvement but is CWA doing the right things, as positive impact is not yet evident. The Principal/CEO commented that in hindsight in trying to meet skills needs the college has been responsive but probably too responsive, keen to say yes, rather than say that we're not best placed to deliver which is why CWA has now rationalised the number of standards delivered to bring the focus back on quality rather than deliver on quantity.

## 7 **Operational Oversight Report**

The DCEO/VPC&Q provided an update on the data presented in the top table on page 22 of the pack which gave an overview of the number of apprentices past their end date. In September 2023 there were 139 learners past their end date compared to 98 in September 2024, demonstrating good and positive movement. Governors acknowledged the three-year trend of reducing numbers, notably 325 (September 2022), down to 139 (September 2023), and then down to 98 (September 2024).

Key points highlighted to the committee included the internal audit schedule planned for March 2025 that will include an investigation of retention and attendance. The student voice deep dive took place in May 2024 and all APR 3's had a student voice agenda item and a thematic review of this was undertaken. CWA has lots of evidence because of 'you said, we did' and the deep dive output provided rich data that enabled curriculum teams to develop innovative ways of implementing ideas from the student voice. The data on retention has exposed that there were 945 different reasons why students

withdrew last year and an analysis of this is to be undertaken to see if there are themes and commonality as to why students leave.

The work of careers and destinations, highlighted in the college self-assessment report is significant. Notably in the 2019 Ofsted inspection report Level 2 progression was an area for improvement and, whilst this still falls short of national average, CWA Level 2 learners leave to go to positive destinations. In 2023/24 there were 245 career events and NEACO targets were overachieved with 7,118 formal data points with interactions with students, the previous year (2022/23) there were 5,301, which is a 34% increase in contact.

Governors noted that on the whole achievement rates (table 1.3) show improvement, but Business, Humanities, Science and Computing is the standout area with much lower achievement rates. Interestingly, this year it is also the area that has under recruited albeit partly deliberately as this area has A Levels in it and the entire curriculum is under review. Qualifications are to be remodelled with adult delivery to be overhauled with a more commercial focus with recruitment targets.

Looking at the output from the learner voice deep dive, governors asked if there was anything in the report that didn't back up the overall analysis of the position of the college that could pose challenge from Ofsted inspectors, inclusivity, voice of the SEN learner for example. There is confidence and evidence of the learner voice in every area of the college and where there is inconsistency in approach, learning is being shared and triangulated between teams. The recent learner induction survey evidenced that many learners don't understand PREVENT despite working hard to embed this cross college. Slides and tutorial material has been purchased to push out to teams to use to react positively to this improvement area. It is fair to say that many learners who are happy at the college do not participate in surveys, so this does need to be considered when acting upon feedback and setting improvement targets and finding different ways to engage more learners to participate.

Noting that most learners are past the census point, governors wondered what the retention rate was currently. Every withdrawal is considered by the DCEO/VPC&Q and the APSS. The drop off point last year was May half term and the BRAGP, purple perilous rate is clearly identifying where the learners are at risk of withdrawal. Governors acknowledged that for every learner who withdraws early this impacts CWA retention and achievement but if learners could be moved onto a smaller qualification to accredit the learning that they had completed this would benefit the learner and CWA data would be more positive. It was agreed that the DCEO/VPC&Q will investigate this.

DCEO/VPC&Q

Regarding retention and withdrawal, governors wondered if there was a link between these learners and the output/feedback from the learner voice deep dive. The Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality commented that there is no pattern emerging although the analysis does still need to be completed. Governors asked that the analysis of the reasons why learners withdrew also provides clarity on what they went on to do. It is already known that many Level 2 learners in Hairdressing and Hospitality for example leave to go into work.

The Chair commented that at a corporation meeting the student voice report highlighted that learners had commented on the usefulness of study hours and it was confirmed that CWA is still working through this. This is a condition of funding for Level 1 learners in most study areas and where possible some study hours have been removed from Level 1 and Level 2 timetables. The number of Duke of Edinburgh learners have trebled in this academic year so that these learners can do this instead of study hours, whereas Level 3 learners tend to rely on their study hours to give them the space and time to get their work finished. Work continues to find alternatives for learners where possible.

The DCEO/VPC&Q will report on vulnerable learner achievement at the next meeting of the committee.

DCEO/VPC&Q

Finally, the Chair asked if there is enough capacity within maths and English given the increase in student numbers this academic year. Governors were told that some group sizes are large, but every learner is being given the opportunity to access quality teaching and learning and the college is being responsive to learner needs, adjusting group numbers, moving rooms etc.

## 8 **New Version – Meeting Skills Needs Curriculum Planning Strategy**

It was reported that the Programme Manager Reference Group was established to comment on and overhaul the strategy which has informed the changes highlighted to the committee.

On page 3 under the 'Intent' heading, it was noted that the reference to the geographical area served is primarily within Norwich and East Cambridgeshire. This should be changed to read Norfolk and Cambridgeshire.

DCEO/VPC&Q

A governor commented about the changing national landscape i.e., national industrial strategy, local growth plans, health and social care skills plan, LSIPs and asked how and if this strategy is responding and if there is confidence about our curriculum design. This will be a live strategy so as new policy comes into effect the strategy will be updated. The government post-16 skills plan is coming too, and CWA will have to be prepared to change, reshape, review and update monthly. Governors asked that the strategy also references government policy and not just FE weekly publications.

Subject to the amendments referenced above the committee was content to recommend the strategy to the corporation for **approval** at the meeting to be held on 18 December 2024.

DCEO/VPC&Q

L Jay joined the meeting at 9.50am

## 9 **Value Added Report**

It was noted that the college approach to value added is different to what is nationally published. CWA doesn't only use this as a retrospective measure, but it is used as a driver in creating stretching targets rather than an increase in performance. It was further confirmed that the progress scores are not published nationally due to the pandemic but will return soon. Noting that the national data hasn't been published since 2019 this means that as targets are based upon this data the college could be setting particularly stretching targets for its learners so when the data for 2023/24 is published the value-added report could read more favourably for the college than the current report based on 2019 data. When the 2023/24 national data is published it is intended that the report will be run again to see this year's scores compared to more recent data to see if the targets grades would have been lower than what was set and therefore if the value-added score would have been higher.

With A Levels the overall pass rate has improved, and the top end grade profile has improved compared to the previous year, but the grade C/D border saw far too many learners achieving D grades, and not C grades. Governors asked what this tells us about entry criteria coming into A Levels because the report is showing an improving value-added score despite a disappointing A\*-C performance. There are robust processes in place to gain prior attainment and the national data is 5 years old which is affecting target grades. An assumption would be that learners come in with lower starting grades and achieve a D rather than higher grades, but an analysis will be undertaken to establish the underlying effect on the value-added score.

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The Chair commented that value added is used for Level 3, but it was questioned if distance travelled was measured for other levels and if OneGrade was a sufficient tool to use. It was confirmed that OneGrade does do this, and it is used to calculate value-added for Level 3 and completion attainment measures as well as looking at pass/fail courses as satisfactory/good/excellent drilling into how far along the pass/fail measure the learner is and import assessment points throughout the year which would give an earlier indication of learner progress in the year and an earlier measure of value added

rather than waiting for the year end grade. OneGrade data is systematically integrated into APR meetings.

L Jay left the meeting at 10.00am

## 10 HE Student Numbers

The Government has announced the pause of the lifelong learning entitlement for 12 months which has partially scuppered the modular UcWA plans for January starts. Student numbers therefore are lower than planned but this is not a surprise. The target compared to the previous year will be included in the report in future.

DCEO/VPC&Q

F Miller left the meeting at 10.05am

UcWA is working collaboratively with National Heritage to introduce a Level 3 pathway course into a Heritage Construction degree programme. The OU validation process is going well. The OU validated Apprenticeship provision will enable UcWA to offer computing and cyber security at Level 4 and health science associate. Validation has also been achieved for the Level 6 top up in Education.

Governors asked about the long-term viability and where the challenges are commercially, both financially and in terms of quality. Low student numbers is a USP for UcWA as support for learners to get them through their degree is exemplary. The Psychology and Sociology degrees will be relaunched, and these will be more employer focussed so the challenge will be more about financial viability rather than the quality of the provision.

S Anstiss joined the meeting at 10.15am

## 11 Priority Item 1 – Apprenticeships/Technology

The Chair highlighted that the report mentions the need to 'move towards enabling the team to focus on delivering timely achievements now the past planned end date' and asked if there was an action plan in place to achieve this. The Head of Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning confirmed that there were so many learners past their actual end date rather than the learning date and this has been driven down with a continual drive to get 6 months in advance rather than being behind the curve.

The committee asked the Head of Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning if improvement was moving at the speed required and if there were any barriers preventing this from happening. They said that things weren't moving at pace but there were some unfortunate circumstances at the end of the year that impacted the achievement rate. There are still some negative attitudes to change in some areas. Regular quality assurance meetings are in place with a general focus to look ahead of the end date to ensure that learners are on track and don't slip past their end date. System challenges continue and assessor availability particularly in plumbing remains problematic. Things are being tackled from every angle and the new operational meetings will impact and provide the focus to drive forward and remove any barriers to change.

Governors noted that the report shows as of September 2024 (R13) apprenticeships was still RAG rated green on all apprenticeship accountability framework measures except retention and achievement. There is confidence that these indicators are unlikely to change for the year end R14 data.

F Miller rejoined the meeting at 10.30am

Noting that apprenticeships has been self-assessed as 'requires improvement' in the college self-assessment report, there is a statement that the teaching, learning and assessment across the provision is generally good but in terms of observations (reported under item 12 below) none appear to have been done so is there confidence that TLA is good. Observations have been completed but these are recorded in the report under study programmes so it was agreed that these would be split out in future reports to provide governors with an overview of the apprenticeship observations undertaken and oversight of the quality of TLA as Governors need to triangulate data

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and have the reassurance that what is being reported can be evidenced back to other data sets.

S Anstiss left the meeting at 10.40am

## 12 Learning and Curriculum Report

Governors noted that the report mentioned that further work was required to ensure that personal development plans are used effectively to demonstrate the improvements in practice, so they were interested to know what further work was needed. There is a Learning and Development Deep Dive with HR planned next week around personal development plans, linked with appraisals and induction, and this hopefully will expose how and why these are not consistently completed. There are also still challenges with induction where some pockets of new starters are not receiving the full 2-week induction programme. Governors asked for a focussed report for the next meeting to cover PDPs, appraisals and induction improved practice.

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The staff governor commented that as a Programme Manager they don't always have oversight of the quality of teaching and learning holistically in a faculty. SharePoint holds the data but only for each individual tutor so without opening each individual record and collating the data together this is the only way to gain oversight. It was agreed that governors do need to be better informed and provided with more narrative in the reports to support the statistical data reported.

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## 13 Complaints 2023/24

This statistical report showed the number of complaints received in the 2023/24 academic year and how/if these had been resolved. Governors noted that there were 16 complaints under the heading of 'other' and asked for a breakdown of these in future reports.

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R Vinten, F Miller and S Fletcher left the meeting and C Pelling joined the meeting at 11.00am. The meeting remained quorate.

## 14 Single Equality Action Plan 2024/25

The Chair asked if the new actions would remain new as the academic year progresses. Are these new for 2024/25 or are there actions from 2023/24 that have been brought forward. The action plan is a rolling programme so the new actions will become current and any emerging actions in the year will become new. In summary good progress has been made so far against the plan but there are some actions still to gain pace. Notably governors asked if the tutorial materials are now being used and it was reported that there has been some activity around this particularly around PREVENT and Safeguarding, but it is quite early in the academic year to have assurance that this is embedded.

C Pelling left the meeting at 11.05am

## 15 Strategic Targets 2024/25 Progress Review

It was reported that one target is behind, and one target is yet to be progressed, but it is still early in the academic year and better progress is anticipated to be reported at the next meeting of the committee to be held in March 2025.

## 16 Any Other Business

There were no other items of business.

## 17 Chair's items for briefing to Corporation

- The committee recommends the approval of the college Self-Assessment Report ratifying the 'Good' judgement to the Corporation.
- The committee recommends the approval of the Meeting Skills Needs Curriculum Planning Strategy to the Corporation.
- A value-added report was considered by the committee (based on 2019 pre-pandemic comparators). When the 2023/24 national data is published it is intended that the report will be run again to see this year's scores compared to more recent data to see if the targets grades would have been lower than what was set and therefore if the value-added score would have been higher.

Chair

- The committee continues to scrutinise and monitor apprenticeship provision.
- HE student numbers are lower than planned but there are lots of pathways into HE under development that should positively impact recruitment.

**18 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 5 March at 8:30am, Meeting Room, Principals Suite, KL

Meeting ended at 11.05am