



Northern College

THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on **21 February 2022**.

Present: Prof Mike Bramhall (Chair), Colin Forrest, Tim Thornton, Sue Horner, Henry Otulakowski, Sarah Tyler (up to and including Q22/26) and Yultan Mellor (Principal).

In attendance: The Assistant Principal – Curriculum, Quality, Business Development (Emma Beal), the Assistant Principal – Student Experience (Diane Lawson) and the Clerk to the Governors (Sarah Johnson).

Apologies: None.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Q22/1 Each governor present declared any potential interests/conflicts of loyalty related to items to be considered at the meeting. With respect to his roles as Deputy Vice Chancellor at the University of Huddersfield and member of the Leeds City Region Employment and Skills Panel Prof Tim Thornton declared a potential conflict of loyalty in items relating to the College's higher education provision. It was agreed that no decisions to be taken at the meeting would be affected and it was not considered necessary for the member to withdraw.

MINUTES

Q22/2 The minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING

Q22/3 None.

SECTOR REPORT

Q22/4 The committee received a verbal update on sector developments and changes in the external environment that could have an impact on quality, curriculum and student experience, including:

- student recruitment, particularly application to enrolment conversion;
- outcome of the FEC stock take visit;
- partnerships and stakeholder engagement, particularly Doncaster Chamber of Commerce, Sheffield Hallam University, Nottingham Trent University, ETG Leadership Institute;
- the Levelling Up white paper;
- MPs, particularly Dan Jarvis' question in the Houses of Parliament regarding residential funding, Minister Burghart's visit to the College on 19 May 2022;
- Ofsted preparation.

Q22/5 The committee particularly considered student recruitment and strategies for maximisation of enrolments.

Resolved: i That the report be noted.

PERFORMANCE (Document 3i)

Q22/6 The committee considered the **KPI dashboard for 2021/22 to 14 February 2022**, noting that:

- this was a new format and feedback was welcome;
- that some fields were not yet populated and a full data set would be developed over the remainder of 2021/22.

Q22/7 The committee particularly explored:

- participation data, noting that positive support from partners was helping to drive up applications, and the work being done in partnership with DWP and jobcentres in South Yorkshire;
- conversion data, especially in February which was of concern, noting that the College was analysing the data in detail and developing strategies to improve conversion performance which would be critical if recruitment targets are to be met;
- student progress, noting that it was too soon in the academic year to draw any conclusions, but the College continued to track above national averages;
- student attendance and specifically the drop seen in January on level 3 programmes, noting that there were a range of factors and no clear single reason, but COVID definitely remained a factor, that action plans were in place where relevant, the College was confident if the students were retained they would achieve, but attendance would be key and robust plans were in place;
- teaching staff absence in January 2022 due to COVID, noting that this was impacting more than previously but was being effectively managed.

Q22/8 The committee explored opportunities to further expand work with partners and stakeholders in West Yorkshire.

Q22/9 The committee considered the performance monitoring and review report which set out details of the College's performance monitoring process for curriculum managers and heads of departments, along with the outcome of the latest round undertaken in January/February 2022. The committee noted that:

- the process was very purposeful and effective;
- engagement from staff was strong;
- data provided for scrutiny had developed significantly and was effective;
- key actions arising from the reviews related to College priorities including student recruitment, partner referral processes, marketing and events, maximising staff utilisation, cost efficiencies, risk management, attendance monitoring and mandatory training and CPD.

Q22/10 The committee considered a report on **student recruitment for 2021/22** to date, noting that:

- the figures had been reforecast in line with the plan for the remainder of 2021/22;
- cancellation and no-shows remained an issue;
- the position was however gradually improving;
- the focus for the College was recruitment and conversion for the remainder of 2021/22 and 2022/23 September starts;

- the bus was proving to be very positive and usage and feedback was good, and the College was setting up events to align to it with the event effectively starting in Barnsley town centre.

Q22/11 The committee agreed that the key performance issue remained student recruitment, which was critical, and sought and received assurance that the College was taking all the right action, with applications and the improvement of conversion rates being top priority.

Q22/12 The committee considered a report which set out the College's revised framework and calendar for seeking feedback from its students which included student governors, student council, College operational committees, the regular residential meeting, themed surveys, the College survey, curriculum survey, HE student representatives, learning walks, lesson observations, and Principal meet and greet. The committee:

- agreed that the College had created a stronger framework with increased clarity, which felt more joined up and embedded;
- welcomed the introduction of co-produced work, particularly in relation to Safeguarding;
- looked forward to considering the results in detail as appropriate.

Q22/13 The committee considered results arising from the College survey and additional access and pre-access curriculum surveys and:

- explored student engagement, welcoming feedback that events and activities were well attended;
- explored negative feedback raised and how this was addressed, noting that whilst feedback was overwhelmingly positive the College worked hard to draw out negatives and areas for improvement;
- welcomed individual examples of support including the development of nutrition and dietary plans.

Q22/14 The committee considered the **complaints report**, noting that numbers were very low. The committee:

- agreed that no significant issues had been raised and responses were appropriate;
- explored the issues regarding the cancellation of courses, noting that the College had minimised this as much as was feasible;
- explored how the College encouraged the raising of complaints where appropriate;
- agreed that HE student complaints should be identified separately.

Resolved: i That complaints from HE students be identified in future reports.

MARKETING AND PR UPDATE (Document 3ii)

Q22/15 The committee considered a report which presented an update on the College's marketing and PR activities including;

- brand modernisation;
- development of the website;
- profile raising;
- messaging;
- packaging up provision;
- partnership approach.

Q22/16 The committee explored:

- the use of real-life content on social media;

- the College's positioning messages and use of language;
- the development of local and strategic partnerships;
- the use of in person and online events;
- the use of varied backgrounds in photo content;
- the College's media schedule and timing of activities.

Q22/17 The committee

- welcomed the move to South Yorkshire terminology, but encouraged the College to consider how this could be broadened further;
- encouraged the College to think about messages for those potential students who were less clear about what their progression could be;
- requested analytics data to be presented for consideration at a future meeting;
- agreed that whilst further development was required the work done to date was positive and strong marketing and PR would be essential in recouping student recruitment;

Resolved: i That the marketing schedule for the remainder of 2021/22 be shared with committee members.

ii That marketing analytics data be presented at a future meeting.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND PROGRESS TO DATE (Document 3iii)

Q22/18 The committee considered the quality improvement plan and progress towards targets/actions to date, particularly exploring areas rated red including:

- achievement rates in Maths L1 and L2 functional skills, noting that whilst this was a national issue it remained a significant concern for the College, the committee sought and received assurance that it was not a teaching issue, and that robust assessment was in place;
- delivery of a consistent pre and post short course careers and progression offer for all students, noting that this was a staffing issue where the College had been unable to recruit to a post to date.

Q22/19 The committee:

- agreed that the actions identified were appropriate and whilst acknowledging that there were challenges, overall appropriate progress was being made;
- asked that future reports include post roles as well as names for those taking the lead on actions.

Resolved: i That future QIP reports include post roles as well as names for those taking the lead on actions.

DESTINATIONS AND OUTCOMES (Document 3iv)

Q22/20 The committee considered a report which set out a revised destinations and outcomes framework which aimed to significantly improve the data set collected and increase response rates. The committee welcomed the improved approach proposed, emphasised the significance of the data set, challenged the College to improve response rates significantly and explored the strategies planned for achieving this, including the use of automated follow-up.

Q22/21 The committee considered the destinations outcomes from the short course survey, noting that:

- 50.1% completed the survey, which was a 23.7% increase since the system was automated at the end of November 2021;
- the indication of work required with students to review and develop pathways for progression.

Resolved: i That the report be noted.

HIGHER EDUCATION REPORT (Document 3v)

Q22/22 The committee considered a higher education report which included;

- the quality reporting calendar;
- an update regarding university partners and awarding bodies;
- the University of Huddersfield and Northern College quality calendar;
- details and areas of planned growth;
- areas of development;
- HE quality reporting;
- 2020/2021 key strengths;
- 2020/2021 key areas for development;
- the HE quality improvement plan;
- application, conversion, retention and achievement data 2021/22;
- application data for 2022/23.

Q22/23 The committee welcomed the report which was comprehensive and easy to understand, and particularly:

- considered the proposed calendar of data to be reported to the committee, agreeing that this was appropriate and comprehensive;
- welcomed the further strengthening of teacher education which would bring benefits to the wider teaching and learning across College;
- requested greater emphasis on progression and destinations data in future reports;
- agreed the report appropriately covered all areas expected by the QAA.

Resolved: i That future reports include greater emphasis on progression and destinations data.

CURRICULUM PLANNING 2022/23 (Document 4i)

Q22/24 The committee considered a report which presented a summary of the College's work to date in relation to curriculum planning for 2022/23 which had included detailed consideration of:

- the strategic landscape;
- labour market information and competitor analysis;
- intent and design;
- planned growth;
- admissions;
- careers and progression;
- destinations;
- other areas for development.

Q22/25 The committee:

- welcomed the focus on building back after COVID and the decision to make limited changes to the curriculum which had been revised significantly in recent years;
- supported the focus on progression, skills and resilience, blended delivery, increased accredited provision, and increased HE provision;

- encouraged the development and improvement of admissions management and process timeframes;
- looked forward to considering the resulting curriculum plan.

Resolved: i That the report be noted.

QUALITY PROCEDURES AND FRAMEWORK (Document 4ii)

Q22/26 The committee considered and welcomed revised quality procedures and framework, and requested that in addition any external quality reports be included in each report as appropriate.

Resolved: i That any external quality reports be included in the quality procedures framework reports as appropriate.

PREPARATION FOR OFSTED

Q22/27 The committee considered a draft proposed position statement in readiness for Ofsted. The committee supported the statement and asked that in addition reference to strong and weaker courses be included.

Resolved: i That reference to strong and weaker courses be included in the Ofsted position statement.

RISKS OVERSEEN BY THE COMMITTEE (Document 4iv)

Q22/28 The committee considered the risk register noting that the areas allocated to the committee for oversight - recruitment and marketing, Ofsted and audit activity by West Yorkshire Combined Authority - had been explored during the meeting.

Q22/29 The committee agreed;

- that the risks were suitably reflected in the register and the controls and mitigation were appropriate;
- that additional risks relating to ensuring the College continued to recruit with integrity and retaining staff be added to the risk register.

Resolved: i That additional risks relating to ensuring the College continued to recruit with integrity and retaining staff be added to the risk register.

SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

Q22/30 The committee considered a detailed update regarding Safeguarding and Prevent matters, including an update from the Lead Governor – Safeguarding, particularly:

- due diligence work being undertaken;
- the positive impact of a new mental health worker role;
- proactive work being undertaken to reduce Safeguarding issues arising;
- the low level of referrals to date for 2021/22;
- changes to the KCSIE regarding bullying and harassment;
- the recent DfE/Ofsted workshop held at the College;
- co-production of work with the student safeguarding ambassador;
- the outcome of the recent student survey, with 99% stating they felt safe at College;
- a developing new relationship with the specialist members of the Barnsley crisis team;
- the development audit with Barnsley Safeguarding Adults Board;
- the role the College had developed for the bus in relation to safeguarding.

Q22/31 The committee agreed that the work being undertaken was above and beyond normal practice, that there was a clear lack of complacency, and the approach being taken was very strategic in nature.

Resolved: i That the report be noted.

DATES OF THE NEXT MEETINGS

Q22/32 16 June 2022 – 1.30pm
5 December 2022 – 1.30pm
20 February 2023 – 1.30pm
12 June 2023 – 1.30pm