

SPARSHOLT COLLEGE HAMPSHIRE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE
held on 24 June 2021 at 9.30 am
Via videoconference

¹PRESENT J Milburn (P); A Owen (E); R Palmer (E) (Chair); J Plenderleith (St); C Wilson (E).

In attendance: J Baker, Vice Principal Curriculum (Sparsholt)
C James, Dean of Higher Education (minutes 81 to 108)
H Mitchell, Apprenticeship Manager (to minute 68)
R Price, Head of Learning & Quality
B Stokes, Vice Principal Curriculum (Andover)
S Willson, Clerk to the Corporation

APOLOGIES

51. Apologies were received from S Orme and H Perry.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

52. There were no interests to declare.

MINUTES

53. **Resolved** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2021 be confirmed as a correct record, with a minor clarification, and signed by the Committee Chair.

SEND (minute 22)

54. The Principal confirmed that it had been agreed with Hampshire County Council to establish a SEND Employability Hub on the Andover College campus and that preparations were underway.

55. There were no other matters arising not covered by items on the agenda.

FURTHER EDUCATION QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE

Performance

56. The committee had received from the Vice Principals Curriculum, Head of Learning & Quality and Apprenticeships Manager the progress report on FE and Apprenticeships in-year performance indicators, including a summary of awarding body quality reviews of study programmes, learner satisfaction survey data, the Landex quality review report of apprenticeship provision and progress with the English and maths operational plan.

57. College officers highlighted key developments in relation to Sparsholt College, Andover College, teaching quality across all FE provision, and apprenticeships.

58. The committee discussed a range of matters arising from the report, seeking further information from management on the factors behind improved overall retention at

¹ (C) = Co-opted; (E) = External; (P) = Principal; (S) = Staff; (St) = Student

- Sparsholt, the approach to support students who are re-sitting functional skills exams, and the expected overall improvement in achievement.
59. In terms of achievement, members were assured by management of the robustness and accuracy of the teacher assessed grades processes, noting that the majority of assessment had been undertaken in as normal a way as possible and that there were processes in place with the awarding bodies to scrutinise the assessments and grading. Members also noted the improvements which had been achieved through the actions previously identified and implemented regarding quality of teaching and learning.
 60. Members discussed whether there was a Brexit factor in the decline of 19+ learners at Andover College but management confirmed this was related to the pandemic and learners returning to their home countries. In terms of local skills needs, Andover College had seen a growth in interest in Construction and would be working to support employers fill any skills gaps.
 61. The committee also discussed with management what lessons had been learnt from delivery of learning online and where there might be benefits from delivering an online or blended offer in the future. The Vice Principal Curriculum (Andover) gave the example of Access to HE where an online offer could support certain students who had conflicting home/work responsibilities to access higher education. Other Access students would benefit more from being on campus.
 62. Reviewing the progress with teaching quality during the year and the impact of moving to online teaching during lockdowns, the committee noted the positive progress made implementing the TALO (Teaching and Learning Observations) system at the start of the year and adopting the OLRs (Online Learning Reviews) for online learning. Although the percentage of teaching staff assessed as ‘highly confident’ was slightly down from last year, this was mainly due to Covid-safe restrictions which had constrained to some degree creative and collaborative activities in the classroom. Delivery of new online CPD activities had been positively received and would continue.
 63. The committee noted that apprenticeships retention was reasonably stable, and achievement expected to improve year on year. This included expected higher achievement for Game and Wildlife apprentices which continued to be monitored and supported.
 64. Members discussed the challenges reported about End Point Assessment (EPA) materials not being available from EPA organisations and the actions taken by the College to support learners.
 65. Members also noted the Landex quality review of apprenticeships and the Apprenticeship Manager confirmed that the teams had found the process useful.
 66. The committee noted the continuing positive progress towards fulfilling the targets identified in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and the sustained improvements delivered in areas of the curriculum which had been identified for close monitoring and support.
 67. The committee agreed that there was evidence of sufficient progress being made in relation to the College’s strategic plan objective 1 (noting the challenges in English and maths) and of a continuing focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to make progress towards being an outstanding provider. Members were

also satisfied that the strategies implemented by the Apprenticeships team were having a positive impact against the context of the instability created by the pandemic.

68. The committee was content to report to the Board of Governors that the report demonstrated a standard equating to Ofsted 'Good' and that management had a clear and effective plan of continuing improvement based on detailed evidence and analysis, including from external reviews.

Quality Improvement Plan

69. The committee had received the progress report on the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) from the Head of Learning & Quality and commended the good progress which had been made overall in a challenging year.
70. The Head of Learning & Quality highlighted a number of new key areas, including the remodelling of the tutorial programme following feedback from Landex, the impact of the Teaching Project scheme evidenced by learner feedback, setting targets for learners and deep dive internal quality reviews.
71. It was noted that the External Quality Reviews which were cancelled due to Covid would be rescheduled in 2021/22.

Curriculum Delivery & Quality Improvement Strategy

72. The committee had received from the Vice Principals and Head of Learning & Quality the FE Curriculum Delivery and Quality Improvement Strategy for 2021/22 which set out the annual strategic priorities proposed to ensure that management continued to implement FE Curriculum Delivery and Quality Improvement Policy and secure further improvements to teaching, learning and assessment practices.
73. Responding to feedback from the Committee Chair offered prior to the meeting, the Vice Principal Curriculum (Andover) and the Head of Learning & Quality gave a presentation to set out the strategic priorities for curriculum delivery and quality improvement, linked to the review of the College's Strategic Plan.
74. A member welcomed the focus on wellbeing, particularly for students given the upward trend of safeguarding and mental health concerns.
75. Responding to a member's question about the course level curriculum SAR process, the Head of Learning & Quality summarised the plans and confirmed that the methodology was being enhanced and that a governor would be invited to take part in a SAR review panel.
76. Members supported the revised plans for TALOs in 2021/22 and noted that these enabled time for teachers to take on board the feedback and make progress before being reassessed.
77. **Resolved** – that the FE Curriculum Delivery and Quality Improvement Strategy be further developed to encompass the strategic priorities summarised in the presentation and submitted to the Board of Governors for approval.

T LEVELS

78. The committee had received the monitoring report of the Vice Principal Curriculum (Andover) on necessary actions to support the College in delivering T-level routes from September 2022 at the Andover College campus. This followed a session on T Levels at the Governors' Seminar in January.
79. The Vice Principal Curriculum explained that the monitoring report had also been presented at the Curriculum, Employers and Marketing Requirements Committee meeting but that management had also wanted to assure the Quality & Standards Committee that preparations for T Levels were intended to support an effective transition and minimise the risks to student achievement associated with the implementation of a new programme with a different teaching pedagogy and assessments. A CPD package for staff was being put in place from July and an experience external co-ordinator had been assigned to work with the five curriculum areas which would be delivering T Levels, in addition to collaborative activities with other providers with experience of T Levels.
80. The committee noted that the actions being taken by the College in relation to T-levels and that the considerations were understood by management and continued to be addressed as a priority.

HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE

81. The committee had received the report of the Dean of Higher Education (HE) on current HE academic and quality performance indicators.
82. The Dean of HE highlighted key points, noting that attendance had improved overall compared to the same point in the previous year and retention had been maintained.
83. A member sought more information about the cohort sizes of the groups where attendance was slightly lower than the previous year and it was confirmed that cohorts were relatively small. Nonetheless, University Centre Sparsholt (UCS) was seeking to recruit a progress coach type post to work with these group to encourage attendance.
84. The committee asked that future reports include student/cohort numbers alongside other data, where possible.
85. The Dean of HE reported that the quality of provision had not been negatively affected by the impact of the pandemic, highlighting the ways in which teaching was delivered first remotely and then returning to face-to-face practicals, communication with students to keep them informed of changes, and examples of the actions taken to replace trips with other additional practical activities and experience.
86. In addition to noting the student feedback summarised in the report, the Committee Chair sought the feedback of the Student Governor on how students had found the experience during the pandemic and the Student Governor reported her impression that UCS had made every effort to deliver a good experience when teaching had been online, although some students had expressed frustration about some technical hitches early on, screen fatigue and HE fees. Students had appreciated that UCS had been able to provide practical experience as well this year.

87. Looking ahead to 2021/22, the Dean of HE explained that UCS had been considering whether to provide a blend of online and in-person teaching but that the academic staff were keen to deliver in-person teaching, any Covid-19 restrictions allowing.
88. It was noted that end of year exams had been adjusted to time constrained assessments, other than for the FdSc Veterinary Nursing where completion of an unseen examination was a requirement of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS). Exam boards had not yet taken place and therefore attainment results would be reported at the next meeting.
89. The Dean of HE was pleased to report that the RCVS accreditation event had been positive and written confirmation of accreditation was anticipated shortly. The RCVS had agreed a list of further actions which would be implemented.

[Addendum: the College was notified by the RCVS on 1 July that accreditation had been granted for 5 years.]
90. The committee welcomed the information and evidence provided by the report of continuing focus on academic standards and the quality of the student experience.

COLLEGE REPORTS

91. The committee had received the report of the Vice Principals and Dean of HE on updates to the SEND Policy and FE and HE Student Charters.

Healthcheck

92. The committee had received and noted the latest College Healthcheck report (2021-05). There were no matters to discuss not covered by other agenda items.
93. The Principal explained that consideration was being given to how best to report English and maths attendance data to give more clarity in future reports.

Complaints Monitoring

94. The committee had received the annual report of the Vice Principal Curriculum (Sparsholt) on Complaints, Comments and Compliments covering the whole College Group.
95. The committee noted that there had been a similar number of complaints recorded as at the same point in the previous year: 89 in total with 12 founded, 40 partially founded 30 unfounded and 7 where the outcome was awaited. The primary areas of complaints related to Covid-safe protocols, teaching and learning and residential.
96. The committee noted that the assessment of the complaints and the range of subject matters and that there had been no systemic issues identified, although individual actions were implemented in response where appropriate.
97. Asked about the breakdown between complaints from students and complaints from parents, the Vice Principal Curriculum reported that most complaints were directly from students and it was agreed to provide a breakdown of this data in future reports.
98. The committee also noted the summary of student exclusions and serious conduct reviews. Overall, the College's zero tolerance approach to drug use and under-age drinking in accommodation, together with the setting of high behavioural expectations in

the Autumn term induction had seen far few exclusions that in 2020/21 and the committee welcomed this.

99. The committee was content to confirm to the Board that College management continued to effectively monitor, investigate and address complaints.

STUDENT POLICIES

Harassment and sexual misconduct

100. The committee had received the report of the Vice Principal Curriculum (Andover) (and Designated Safeguarding Lead) covering Ofsted’s review of sexual misconduct within schools and colleges and the statement of expectations from the OfS on preventing and addressing harassment and sexual misconduct.
101. The Vice Principal explained that, in light of the recent exposure of cases of harassment and sexual misconduct in FE and HE institutions and the recommendations produced by Ofsted and the OfS statement, the College had reviewed its Bullying & Harassment policy and procedures. It has been decided to decouple and update the bullying and harassment policy for staff and learners and to introduce a new sexual misconduct policy to provide additional focus and clarity around preventing and addressing this issue.
102. The committee noted that, as well as the updated/new policies, the College had identified actions including training for staff on understanding the policy and how to deal effectively with incidents of sexual misconduct, develop an online platform to enable learners to report concerns (in addition to existing ‘in person’ routes), develop a tutorial programme to address unacceptable behaviours, and implement a new safeguarding system (CPOMS) to allow further refinement of incident reporting and evaluation.
103. The committee sought optional feedback from the Student Governor as to anything she was aware of from the student community about whether students felt able to raise concerns and report any incidences. The Student Governor supported the actions being taken by the College, particularly the online platform, and discussed with other members how students in general might not have been comfortable reporting any ‘low level’ incidences in terms of how their peers would perceive this or been confident in identifying such incidences as harassment.
104. The Dean of HE agreed that introducing an online platform to support immediate reporting of any incidences, noting that this was one of the OfS’s expectations. If any online platform encouraged reporting of ‘lesser’ incidences, this would also support management in identifying any themes and inform the tutorial programme.
105. The committee commended the response of management to concerns highlighted in the FE and HE sectors, recognising that the policies and actions were building on existing good safeguarding practices in the College and the continued importance of keeping learners safe, including in relation to sexual misconduct and harassment.
106. **Resolved** – that the following updated policies and charters be recommended to the Board of Governors for approval:
- a) updated Bullying & Harassment Policy for Learners
 - b) new Sexual Misconduct Policy

HE Student Policies

107. The committee had received the report of the Dean of HE reviewing a number HE policies following a recent accreditation event with the RCVS which had identified some minor updates required.
108. **Resolved** – that the following updated policies and charters be recommended to the Board of Governors for approval:
- a) Ethical Review Policy
 - b) HE Fitness to Practice Policy (Veterinary Nurses)
 - c) HE Admissions Policy
 - d) HE Withdrawal and Suspension of Studies Policy

Other Student Policies

109. The committee had received the report of the Vice Principal Curriculum (Andover) summarising the review of other student related policies as part of the normal cycle of policy reviews.
110. The review had identified minor updates required to reflect updated roles within the College Group and changes to terminology/nomenclature. There were no changes to related statutory guidance.
111. **Resolved** – that the following updated policies and charters be recommended to the Board of Governors for approval:
- a) Student Code of Conduct
 - b) Missing in Education Policy
 - c) Accreditation and Recognition of Prior Learning/Prior Experience Policy
 - d) Complaints (and Other Feedback) Management Policies (FE & HE)
 - e) FE Learner Performance Policy
 - f) Learner Conduct Policy

COMMITTEE PERFORMANCE REVIEW

112. The committee had received the report of the Clerk to the Corporation which provided information to inform the committee's annual review of its performance and terms of reference.
113. There were no concerns identified by the committee and it was noted that improvements had been made since the previous meeting to the format of the agenda and reports.
114. The Clerk had reviewed the terms of reference in light of the draft revised AOC Colleges Code of Good Governance and proposed a number of updates, noting that these would be finalised once the final version of the revised code was published. The revisions were minor clarifications and reflected practices which were already in place. There was also an update in relation to the HE regulatory framework.
115. **Resolved** – that the Board of Governors be recommended to approve the revised terms of reference of the committee, subject to final review by the Clerk to the Corporation when the revised Code of Good Governance was published.

116. The Committee Chair noted that it would be Adrian Owen's last meeting as a governor before he completed his term of office and thanked him for his excellent service to the College and his impact on the work of the committee.
117. The Principal thanked Adrian Owen on behalf of the SLT, highlighting the duties he had undertaken and the support he had shown for the College.
118. Adrian Owen thanked his colleagues, the SLT and the Clerk and wished the College well.
119. The meeting concluded at 12.10 pm.