

The College of West Anglia
Minutes of Performance Review and Quality Committee
21 May 2008 – 10.00 am Board Room

Present	Kate Atherton	Chair
	Di Atkinson	
	Jack Bantoft	
	Paul Cotton	
	Cheri Crosley	
	Roger Ward	
	David Pomfret	Principal
Attending	Andrew England	Head of Organisational Development and Quality
	Glen Singleton	Assistant Principal, e-Learning
	Susie Massen	Head of Work Based Learning (part)
	Hilary Reid	Clerk to the Corporation

1 Apologies

Arlene Clark.

2 Minutes of the previous Meeting – 12 March 2008

The Minutes of the meeting of 12 March 2008 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

The Chair agreed to bring forward item 8 on the agenda, revising the order for the ILT Report.

4 Minimum Levels of Performance in Work Based Learning

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality and the Head of Work Based Learning presented a report setting out the Minimum Levels of Performance (MLP) determined by the LSC, for 2008/09. It was explained that Colleges performing below the MLP would be sent notice to improve, and would be unable to recruit to the course, thereafter becoming subject to a competitive tendering process.

Some confusion remained within the LSC about MLPs for 2008-09 – published LSC minimum levels for WBL had been advised at 45%. In conversations with the LSC the level had been quoted as 50% for 2007-08 and 55% for 2008-09. Regional LSC had also set its own levels of performance and these could be higher than the national level.

Three areas of WBL within the College had been served with notice to improve or warnings about performance:

- Health and Social Care, all programmes, Cambridgeshire contract - success rate of 9% 2006/07 against MLP of 45%. (National rate 51%)
Recruitment had been halted for programmes at Isle and during the next 12 months good practice from Norfolk was to be adopted. The College will bid for the contract again in 2009. Success rate for 2008/09 was projected to be 60-70%.
- Hospitality apprenticeship, Norfolk contract – success rate of 44.4% against MLP of 45%. (National rate 45%)
Outturn for 2007/08 was projected at 80% but LSC had not taken this into consideration. Performance within the cohort was affected by high turnover in the industry.
- Engineering apprenticeship, Cambridgeshire contract – success rate of 36.4% 2006/07 against MLP of 45%. (National rate 62%)
The programme had experienced a high number of students wishing to leave and poor gate-keeping at the former Isle College had been identified. Success rate for 2007/08 was projected to be 45-63%. The area was in intervention and a rigorous action plan was in place. An Employers' Forum had been successfully established, chaired by a local engineering employer.

The report was noted.

Susie Massen left the meeting at 10.25 am.

5 Annual Review of the ISO 9001(2000) Quality Management System

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality referred members to the Annual Review of the ISO 9001(2000) Quality Management System.

The following areas of work were considered and key points noted as follows:

- **Quality Management System**

The quality system was monitored at regular (usually fortnightly) review meetings with the Principal. Specific issues were identified, corrective action planned and implementation plans agreed.

- **Quality Policy**

The Quality Policy was presented without amendment.

Roger Ward proposed, seconded by Cheri Crosley, that the Quality Policy be adopted. Agreed unanimously.

- **Quality Handbook/Manual**

The quality Handbook/Manual was acknowledged as a key document by governors.

- **Quality Audits**

The programme of Quality Audits had not identified any serious non-compliances and continued to work well. Actions identified had been addressed by the relevant managers.

- **BSI Monitoring Visits**

One BSI monitoring visit had been undertaken during 2007-08 (4 and 5 December 2007). Continued certification had been confirmed. Four minor non-compliances were being addressed via an Action Plan. A further visit was planned for 25 and 26 June 2008.

- **Effectiveness and Continuous Improvement**

All procedures had been reviewed and over 90% of the procedures in the Management System were amended in line with changing circumstances, good practice and new legislation. The number of forms had been reduced from 150 to fewer than 50 and action was being taken to reduce the number of “rogue” forms.

- **Connecting with the Customer**

Reference was made to the table illustrating trends in the total number of logged complaints from September 1998 to May 2008 and a small upturn was noted.

- **Review of Quality Objectives and Key Quality Themes within the Strategic Plan**

The detail contained in the report was acknowledged.

The detailed report was noted.

6 Teaching and Learning Observations in 2007-2008

In introducing his report, the Head of Organisational Development and Quality reminded governors that within a 3 year period observations were undertaken, as a minimum, once by the College team, once by Faculty Managers and once by consultants.

The SAR for 2006-2007 noted that observation grades in the College largely mirrored the national average. The College had already recognised there was a need for a clear commitment to improving the situation. Further, the Ofsted inspection indicated the College should address the further improvement in “satisfactory” teaching.

Data for the current year, illustrated graphically in the report, showed, broadly, a distribution similar to the national profile. For the last three years, the College profile had remained stubbornly close to the national average. BW consultants undertake approximately one third of the observations and place the College in a national context. A 5% shift from grade 2 to 1 and from grade 3 to 2 was a College goal.

Governors commented on the links with staff development and the actions being taken to move forward to meet the grade profile. It was felt that immediate or early feedback to staff was important.

The report was noted.

7 Self Assessment Framework

The importance of the Self Assessment process was underlined by the Head of Organisational Development and Quality and he drew on the comments from the Ofsted inspection report.

He proposed, for governors' agreement, that the template used last year remain largely unchanged for the coming year noting that the post inspection action plan would be reviewed in the 2007-08 SAR and again in the following year.

The framework for the Self Assessment Report (SAR) was agreed.

8 ILT Performance Report

The Assistant Principal, e-Learning, presented a report summarising activities undertaken during the academic year 2007-2008 that had an ILT/ICT focus.

He highlighted the following key points:

Ofsted inspection – comments made in the 2002 report were compared with the 2007 report and reflected good provision of computers for students that were generally of good quality and sufficient for their use. Ofsted also identified clear evidence of considerable improvement in the use of computers to add value to both teaching and learning and recognised the impact of investment, well focused training sessions and individual support for teachers.

Ofsted highlighted insufficient access to and use of ICT in "Preparation for Life and Work" subject sector – resources, training and observation requirements had been agreed with the Head of Faculty as part of the Post Inspection Action Plan..

LLDD Project Bid – The College had successfully bid to LSC for circa £100k. This would be used to support the Post Inspection Action Plan, in the main for Foundation Studies resources. It would also support the use of laptops within the Learning Resource Centres.

Technology Exemplar Network Application – The British Educational Communications Technology Association (Becta) had identified ten exemplar user organisations of ILCT across the LSC funded sector and invited applications to participate in its Technology Exemplar Programme. The College had been successful in its application to join the programme and would receive £50k of capital and £7.5k of revenue funding to support participation.

An action plan was to be produced to illustrate how the College would work with Grimsby College of Further Education – an exemplar College. The programme was due to start in the new academic year, probably in the arts division of the College.

ILT Training – Uptake for centrally provided training provision had reduced compared to previous years (471 seats to end April 2008 compared with 909 for the full year 2006-2007). The focus had been on more faculty-based training lead by ILT Champions.

The ILT training survey had demonstrated that 97.2% felt ILT was beneficial to their role. 63.6% of staff felt there was insufficient access to ILT facilities.

IT Services – Recruitment continued to be difficult. Currently there were 3 vacancies which were impacting on the College's ICT delivery. Financial incentives were being considered to encourage applications.

IT Infrastructure – There had been some significant failures of the network infrastructure and resolution had been time-consuming for both management and technical support staff. The difficulties had arisen around back-up and storage systems and failures of the College's core switches. Replacement equipment had been ordered and was due shortly.

IT Strategy proposal – SMT had considered, and governors had received a presentation of, the IT Strategy. The Strategy was to be considered more fully by Corporation at its meeting on 9 July 2008. **Action: GS**

Classroom technologies - New equipment purchased following agreement with Faculty Managers would be installed over the summer for the start of the new academic year.

ICT Collaboration with Schools – The College was working with West Norfolk Schools' Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) developments to allow students to have access to the College's VLE and to aid the development and delivery of the 14-19 curriculum. Similar work with Cambridgeshire was due to start soon which would bring Norfolk and Cambridgeshire together to attempt to provide a single solution.

e-NVQ Portfolio System – This system was being piloted to track work-based learners' progress. The Assistant Principal, Employer Engagement, was leading the trialling of the web-based e-portfolio system.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, acknowledged the massive cultural leap and progress in terms of ILT in College. She commended the vision, commitment and support of the Assistant Principal in achieving this.

Governors commented that it might be an appropriate time for Corporation to re-introduce the ILT Strategy Group, particularly in view of the new build project.

The ILT Performance Report for 2007/2008 was noted.

Glen Singleton left the meeting at 11.30 am.

9 The College Post Inspection Action Plan

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality presented the Post Inspection Action Plan noting that this was a first draft which would be reviewed and amended as actions were concluded and progress and new actions were required. The Plan had been uploaded to the LSC's website.

He highlighted in particular how the College proposed to move forward to improve teaching and learning and advised that the Executive Director, Curriculum and Learning, would be leading this.

Noted.

10 Complaints received from March 2008 to May 2008

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality presented a report and table detailing the complaints received since the last meeting. He noted a slight concern in that the table was showing, for the first time since immediately after merger, there were more complaints from the Isle campus than from the King's Lynn campus. Isle managers had been made aware of that issue.

Clusters of complaints received were around on-course administration (most complaints); estates (with the second most significant number). IT issues had started to appear again. Complaints about student transport were passed to the operators – the College did not manage or control this service.

It was noted that the College was to participate in a multi-college benchmarking exercise led by Bedford College. A report of the outcomes would be made to a future meeting.

Action: AE

Comments and questions were invited from members and noted as follows:

No. 317: Students received a certificate which did not match the programme they believed they were on. Appropriate certificates had since been issued. Action to ensure inputs into the system matched what the students actually did was requested.

No. 334: No action was shown. AE explained that staff were not aware that the exam situation required special consideration and were not able to respond. Action had been taken to ensure this did not happen again.

Staff: It was noted that complaints about staff issues had reduced significantly.

Response time: AE advised that around 95% of complaints were dealt with within 15 days.

The report was noted.

11 The Whistle-blowing Policy

The Principal presented the Whistle-blowing Policy for review. No changes were proposed.

It was agreed to recommend to Corporation adoption of the Whistle-blowing Policy without amendment.

12 Any Other Business

- (i) The Principal reported that the College had been invited to apply for Beacon Status.
- (ii) The Principal reported College successes in the East of England apprenticeship awards.
- (iii) The Chair acknowledged that this would be Jack Bantoft's last meeting with the Committee. She thanked him for his contribution, which had been greatly appreciated. The Chair's views were reiterated by the members.

13 Chair's items for briefing to Corporation

- Improvement in ILT; problems of recruitment
- Beacon status
- Post inspection reports
- Whistle-blowing policy approved.

14 Date and time of next Meeting

Wednesday, 8 October 2008, 10.00 am.

The meeting closed at 11.55 am