

The College of West Anglia
Minutes of Performance Review and Quality Committee
4 March 2009 – 10.00 am Board Room

Present	Kate Atherton	Chair
	Paul Cotton	
	Di Atkinson	
	Chris Barnes	
	Cheri Crosley	
	Roger Ward	
	David Pomfret	Principal
Attending	Andrew England	Head of Organisational Development and Quality
	Arlene Clark	Executive Director, Curriculum and Learning
	David Williams	Head of Foundation and Skills for Life (part)
	Hilary Reid	Clerk to the Corporation

1 Apologies

None – all members present.

2 Minutes of the previous Meeting – 17 December 2008

The Minutes of the meeting of 17 December 2008 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3 Matters Arising

(i) Page 5 – item 7 Student Induction Survey September 2008

The question raised by a governor at the previous meeting had been addressed and further discussions were to take place with the Executive Director, Customer Services and Cambridgeshire Liaison.

4 Curriculum Area Review

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality introduced David Williams, Head of Faculty, Foundation and Skills for Life, and provided a brief resume of grades awarded from the time of the Isle College inspection in 2004 to date. He noted that at the College inspection in 2007 the area had been graded 2 (Good); in 2007-08 performance had dipped and the SAR grade had been lowered to a 3 (Satisfactory) to reflect this.

The Head of Faculty, Foundation and Skills for Life presented data and commentary explaining the reasons for the grades awarded. The following points were highlighted:

(i) **Skills for life:** Key factors in the down-turn in performance during 2007/08 were -

- Mid way through the academic year the LSC removed the option for unitised provision. This had been re-introduced for 2008/09
- LSC had placed limitations on College certified Skills for Life provision
- There was poor retention on the Prince's Trust programme. The programme had since improved.
- Retention was poor on Routes to Learning
- There had been some poor delivery of ESOL. The tutor had since retired. University of Cambridge ESOL qualifications were currently being offered. There was now a good team and much improved delivery.

At inspection in 2007 performance across Isle and King's Lynn had been at the same level and the huge improvement at Isle had been validated. Both campuses during 2007/08 had been equally affected by the fall in performance.

(ii) **Foundation Studies:** Key factors in the down-turn in performance during 2007/08 were –

- Retention dropped in 2006/07 from 92% to 86%. Poor enrolment practice, particularly at Isle, was addressed and students were now enrolled on individual annual programmes.
- Achievement rates had been affected by Skills for Life qualifications.
- Starts had increased significantly in Edexcel qualifications in Life skills. Some poor enrolment practice at outcentres had been addressed and the Edexcel qualification was no longer offered at Easton. An alternative qualification had been identified.

(iii) **Moving Forward:** Key actions for improvement were noted as follows:

- Re-introduced enrolments on to unitised Skills for Life
- Optimised use of College Certificated Skills for Life to manage success rates
- Implemented closer on-going monitoring of performance

In conclusion, the Head of Faculty shared with governors a description of a typical group of students illustrating the special educational, social and emotional needs of the cohort.

The Chair noted from the extracted SAR that limited ILT equipment was a recurring theme. The Head of Faculty explained the steps taken to improve the quality of provision.

Di Atkinson raised the question of introducing "buddying" to support students and offered to discuss further with the Head of Faculty outside the meeting.

The report was noted.

David Williams left the meeting at 10.40 am.

5 Self Assessment Report (SAR) – Leadership and Management

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality presented an extract from the SAR – Key Question 5: “How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?” He noted that this element of the SAR had not previously been presented to governors and, as SMT had down-graded it from 1 to 2, felt it was important to report to the Committee.

He explained that the grade reflected Leadership and Management across the College starting at course director level through to Corporation level.

Leadership and management had been down-graded because the College had under-performed in three key areas -

- Improvements to the learning and working environment
- Overall and long qualification success rates, particularly at 16-18
- Meeting rigorous and challenging performance targets in some areas

Questions and comments were invited and noted as follows:

- The re-grading was not just about capturing MIS data accurately but about significant underperformance in some areas
- Much stronger monitoring of Course Directors and tracking of programmes was now taking place during the academic year
- It was important for management to recognise the relationship between the range of factors impacting on performance
- There was no specific reference to ILT and it would be appropriate to include this.
- Despite funding pressures, investment in IT and ILT was continuing
- The success rates at Isle were 11% below those at King’s Lynn. An equitable position was being worked towards
- The Fenland District Council strategic partnership had been omitted from section 6, page 3.

Action: DP/AE

The report was noted.

6 Key messages on College Performance in 2007-08

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality presented a summary of the SAR – Key Question 1 (KQ1): “How well do student learners achieve?” He reminded the Committee of the results from 2007/08 presented at a previous meeting and of the dip in performance.

He advised that the paper before governors – a summary of key messages from KQ1 – had been presented to all the management team. He highlighted that overall success rates spread across long 16-18 and long 19+ had fallen. There had been a 5% drop in retention and 2% drop in achievement in long 16-18 and a 2% drop in achievement on long 19+.

Long level 1 success rates across the College dropped by 6%. This included the Foundation and Skills for Life area where there was a significant drop and was the area in teaching and learning causing most concern. Consultants (BW) had been engaged from Easter 2009 to look at long level 1 across the College.

The Chair felt the summary encapsulated the reasons for the decisions management had taken in the self-assessment process and felt it would be useful to highlight the key messages to the Corporation.

Noted.

7 Quality Strategy

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality presented the Quality Strategy and invited comment and questions from the Committee. He explained that the document was an overview of the College's approach to raising standards and its commitment to continuous improvement. It reflected the importance of peer review, proposals for self-regulation and the evolving Framework for Excellence.

Governors made the following points:

- In an internal audit report considered by the Audit Committee, only one person in the sample said they were **responsible** for quality.
- **Page 4**, para 3(a) – Suggested that the word “assumed” be replaced with “expected”.
- Reference to a formal procedure for writing of the College procedures had been omitted.
- **Page 12** - Add a sentence which makes specific reference to how the quality of assessments is monitored as well as the outcome.
- **Page 13** - It would be helpful to link the rationale for the new programme with the potential market.

Action: AE

Paul Cotton proposed, seconded by Cheri Crosley that, subject to the amendments noted above, the Quality Strategy be approved and recommended for adoption to Corporation. Agreed.

8 Ofsted Desk-based Review

The Principal reported the outcome of the desk-based review undertaken by the Ofsted Inspector, Lindsay Hebditch, in January 2009.

The inspector's views of the College had been drawn from reports uploaded to the LSC portal and, in particular, the College SAR. The monitoring activity was a risk assessment undertaken by Ofsted to highlight whether there were any broad issues of concern. The HMI's judgement is reflected in the future scheduling and resourcing of inspections. In this case there were “no implications for re-scheduling” and the College will be monitored in the same way next year.

There was recognition of a fall in performance and, in particular, the College grade 2 in leadership and management. The inspector was very positive about the College's self-assessment process and its self-critical and constructive approach. He strongly endorsed the grade profile given to the SAR.

The Chair commented that there was now a more vigilant role for the Performance Review and Quality Committee.

The Ofsted correspondence and Risk Assessment report were noted.

9 Current Interventions

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality presented the annual report of current interventions. The report defined the current procedures for corrective action and the intervention process and described the categories and levels of intervention applied together with a summary of the areas currently undergoing Type 1 interventions.

The following areas were currently undergoing intervention:

- Agriculture and Countryside Programme
- Administration Apprenticeship/Work Based Learning
- Construction (Cambridgeshire) Apprenticeship/Work Based Learning
- Electro-technical Apprenticeship/Work Based Learning
- Care (Cambridgeshire) Apprenticeship/Work Based Learning

There had been significant improvements in some areas, some were improving at a slower rate but the majority had improved considerably.

For the future, management were considering how Type 1 interventions should be formally monitored and were proposing that each term a report be presented to SMT when decisions would be made as to further appropriate action.

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

- Results from the intervention process (success rates) were known at the end of the year.
- An update on an area which had consistently been under-performing would be brought to the next meeting.
- The impact of staff turnover could, in part, be mitigated by succession planning and internal career development.
- The Committee would be kept informed of progress in the recruitment of an MIS manager. An interim manager was to be brought in for 2/3 days per week for a minimum period of 2 months.
- Mentoring arrangements for new staff could be beneficial.
- A greater degree of control was being exercised with regard to assessors in Work Based Learning.

The Committee considered its role in the intervention process and -

agreed that the areas in Type 1 intervention should make presentations to the Committee but that very positive presentations recognising success should also continue.

It was suggested by the Head of Organisational Development and Quality that the Head of Faculty, Technology, should be invited to make a presentation to the next meeting.

Action: AE

The report was noted.

10 Complaints received from December 2008 to February 2009

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality presented details of the complaints received from December 2008 to February 2009.

In summary, 39 complaints had been received in the period and these were shared equitably across campuses. Of the 39 complaints, 20 related to on-course administration/management but covered a wide range of issues. Estates issues were the second largest category of complaints and IT had once again become prominent as a cluster.

Managers were aware of the complaints and were taking action. In the absence of a Head of Property Services, complaints about the estate were being forwarded to the Director of Capital/Educational Developments. Complaints about IT were being forwarded to the Assistant Principal, E-Learning.

Governors sought, and were given, further information on complaints numbered 438, 450, 458 and 460.

The report was noted.

11 IQER

On behalf of the University Centre Manager, The Head of Organisational Development and Quality presented a paper explaining the Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review (IQER) process and the outcomes of a Developmental Engagement on 3 and 4 December 2008.

He explained that the IQER was the measure of HE delivered in FE colleges and very different from the process operated by Ofsted. IQER was a two stage process – Developmental Engagement followed by the Summative Review (Summer term 2010). The outcomes of the Developmental Engagement would not be published outside the college, but the summative review would be placed in the public arena.

The Developmental Engagement process took place over two days and looked at three lines of enquiry – programme monitoring and evaluation, feedback to students, and information to students.

The results of the process were contained in recommendations given to the College in three categories:

- (i) “Essential”: The report did not include any essential recommendations requiring immediate action.
- (ii) “Advisable”: The report included one advisable recommendation relating to a review of the College’s committee structure.
- (iii) “Desirable”: The report included 7 desirable recommendations to enhance quality..
- (iv) “Good Practice”. Eight areas of good practice were identified which were suitable for dissemination within the College’s HE provision.

An action plan had been drafted which took account of the advisable and desirable recommendations. An executive summary and the action plan were to be presented at the next meeting on 20 May 2009 and a time frame for a further review agreed.

The report was noted and the proposed actions agreed.

Action: AE

12 Any Other Business

None.

13 Chair's items for briefing to Corporation

- Quality Strategy – recommend approval and adoption
- Key messages
- Ofsted desk-based review

14 Date and time of next Meeting

Wednesday, 20 May 2009, 10.00 am.

The meeting closed at 12.40 pm