



TRURO AND PENWITH COLLEGE CORPORATION



Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee

Minutes of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee on Wednesday 27 September 2023 at Truro College.

Members: Mrs L Batchelor, Mr D Collins, Mrs S Sanderson (Chair) and Mr M Tucker (Principal)

Also Present: Ms L Briscoe (Director of Student Experience), Ms A Bull (Director of Curriculum Development), Ms J Cashmore (Director of Operations), Ms L Maggs (Director of Operations, Penwith College), Mrs H McKinstry (Director of Partnerships & Apprenticeships), Mrs V Pearson (Director of Teaching and Learning), Mr R Townsend (Chair of Corporation) and Mrs A Winter (Clerk to the Corporation)

Apologies: Mr R Bray, Mrs L Gooding and Professor F Wall

Item	Discussion/Decision	Action
23/30	<p>Minutes</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2023 were APPROVED as a correct record.</p>	
23/31	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>31.01 Lesson Observations (Minute 23/20)</p> <p>The Principal confirmed that observations of Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) were being introduced this year in line with a new observations policy encompassing both lecturing staff and LSAs. Training was being rolled out to the quality team to adapt their practices. Staff unions had been consulted on the changes.</p> <p>31.02 Governor Learning Walk Feedback (Minute 23/21)</p> <p>The Senior Quality Team confirmed that Governor feedback forms had been revised to improve the way comments were captured.</p> <p>31.03 Quality Improvement Plan (Minute 23/22)</p> <p>The QIP was being updated and the latest version would be published on Convene.</p> <p>31.04 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) (Minute 23/28.03)</p> <p>Governors noted that the final TEF outcomes were due to be published on 28 September and a positive outcome was expected. Details of the judgement would be shared with Governors as soon as it was available.</p>	
23/32	<p>Student Achievements – Summer 2023</p> <p>The Principal presented a report on the outcomes and assessments completed in 2022/23 and highlighted key achievements.</p>	

	<p>A more detailed breakdown with benchmarking, value-added information and action plans would be provided in the College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) later this term. Programme Area Reviews (PARs) were already underway to review performance and identify areas for improvement.</p> <p>The Committee reviewed the outcomes, noting the return to formal examination conditions which most students had not previously experienced. Governors were also aware of the national strategy to re-calibrate grading this year.</p> <p>During discussion Governors noted that the DfE had highlighted the problems with ALPS measures of value added due to inflated CAGs/TAGs on entry. Governors asked whether staff were aware of the unreliability of the ALPS data and were advised that course leaders understood the issues which would not be rectified until 2025/26.</p> <p>Governors asked about GCSE Maths and English resit results and staff explained that although the College's pass rates (Grade 4 and above) were above national averages, the proportion succeeding nationally remained very low. Also, GCSE Maths and English performance across Cornwall was particularly poor this year. This would mean an even larger number of Level 3 learners taking Maths and/or English re-sits at the College in 2023/24 which presented significant challenges. Maths and English performance was a national concern and the AoC was pushing Government to increase funding for colleges to staff and deliver Maths and English.</p> <p>The Committee asked about any surprises in the data or areas requiring attention and noted that although the College's high grade profile remained above national averages, this would be a key focus for 2023/24. The PAR meetings would help to identify any common themes and develop strategies to support the achievement of high grades.</p> <p>Governors sought clarification on the changes to the PAR process and the revised self-assessment processes for programme areas was explained. The PAR meetings would focus more explicitly on weaknesses and areas for improvement. Also, programme areas would not be individually graded this year.</p> <p>Governors commended staff and students on the excellent outcomes and exceptional individual achievements summarised in the report.</p>	
23/33	<p>Student Enrolments – Autumn 2023</p> <p>The Principal explained that numbers were still settling with some late enrolments and withdrawals continuing. Overall enrolments were good with some growth in overall 16-19 this year, however the Year 1 profile had shifted as many applicants had not met course entry requirements and needed to re-take Maths/English.</p> <p>Governors asked about the implications of the disappointing GCSE results and the Principal outlined the logistical difficulties and adjustments needed to timetabling, staffing and course provision. This had resulted in a drop in A Level numbers and an increase in enrolments for Level 3 and Level 2 Vocational courses as well as large numbers re-taking Maths/English alongside their Level 3 programme.</p>	

	<p>The Committee asked about the typical number of students who withdrew before the 42 day funding census and noted that generally around 100 left before the census date. This had been taken into account in budget projections. Retention from Year 1 to Year 2 was encouraging with only a small drop out.</p> <p>Governors noted that HE enrolments had been maintained at around 520, in contrast to a national decline. The development of Higher Technical Qualifications, Nursing courses and internal progression was helping to sustain recruitment.</p> <p>The Committee welcomed the growth in apprenticeship recruitment and asked whether there were sufficient high quality employers to provide any further expansion. The Principal explained the College's priority had been on high quality provision rather than rapid growth. Staff worked closely with employers to ensure standards were upheld, with a RAG rating system to monitor employer quality. Whilst opportunities for further growth generally were limited, expansion in particular specialisms (eg. solicitor apprentice) and with businesses in North and East Cornwall, (delivered from the new STEM and Health Skills Centre at Bodmin), were being developed.</p> <p>The Committee noted the overall position at this early stage and the ongoing activities to support and retain students.</p>	
23/34	<p>Safeguarding Update</p> <p>The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) briefed Governors on the changes to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) which were summarised in the presentation accompanying the agenda papers. Governor noted the key changes.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the processes for filtering and monitoring digital systems to maintain IT security and block inappropriate content. A range of software was in place and additional monitoring systems were being trialled. Staff training had also been enhanced to meet the latest digital standards and ensure robust filtering and monitoring systems were in place.</p> <p>In response to questions, Governors noted that online safety training was compulsory for all staff and students and regularly refreshed to take account of advances in technology. Also, a new compliance officer was responsible for ensuring policies and procedures were regularly updated and complied with latest guidance.</p> <p>Governors noted the Section 175/157 self-assessment return had been submitted as required and feedback on the College's arrangements was awaited.</p> <p>The safeguarding team was continuing to be very busy, particularly with casework related to high numbers of students with mental health difficulties and acute mental health issues.</p> <p>The Committee considered and APPROVED the following policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Children and Adults with Care/Support Needs • Visitors on Site – Security and Safeguarding Procedure • Child on Child Abuse Policy 	ALL governors to view safeguarding update

23/35	<p>Review of Curriculum Development Plan</p> <p>The Director of Curriculum Development explained that the curriculum plan had been revamped to provide a clearer explanation of the context and rationale for the curriculum and the ambitions underlying the offer to ‘Look Further, Reach Further and Go Further’.</p> <p>The Committee considered the overview provided and discussed the achievement of the aims set out in the 2021-2024 plan. Many of the intended actions had been completed and some were ongoing.</p> <p>Governors asked why the T Level roll out had not been completed and noted that the lack of flexibility from the DfE to allow work placements to be undertaken remotely (a common mode of working for digital sectors) meant that course requirements could not be fulfilled and some pathways could not go ahead. The Committee noted they had been offered a BTEC or alternative qualification where appropriate.</p> <p>The Committee also discussed the overhaul of the high needs curriculum and introduction of the new Progression Pathways which were being phased in this year. The new curriculum would help learners prepare for their next steps and ensure EHCP outcomes were met.</p> <p>Governors were assured that curriculum plans could be adapted if there were policy changes such as the reform of applied general/BTEC qualifications and other national initiatives. A change of government in 2025 could result in a shift in education policy.</p>	
23/36	<p>Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) Update</p> <p>The Committee reviewed progress against the actions and targets identified in the QIP. The extensive changes and improvements implemented were noted and the reasons why some actions had not yet been fully achieved were discussed.</p> <p>In particular, Governors asked about the rapid improvement plans in specific curriculum areas and was pleased to hear that significant progress had been made in all areas although it would take time to see the results of the actions and changes. Also, Governors raised student attendance and punctuality and was advised that positive improvements had been made with continuing efforts to address the underlying problems and maintain improvements this term.</p> <p>The Committee asked about the effectiveness of the new Progression Pathways and how the changes were being received. Despite some initial issues, the introduction of the new curriculum was generally going well and meetings with parents/carers had helped to clarify arrangements and gain useful feedback. The Council was supportive of the new approach which had been a big adjustment for all. More time was needed for the changes to fully bed in.</p>	All to view QIP update on Convene
23/37	<p>Higher Education Update</p> <p>37.01 OfS Update – Conditions of Registration Risk Register</p> <p>The Committee noted that the OfS Risk Register was continuing to be regularly monitored by the College Board of Studies for HE (CBSHE) and no changes had been made to the risk ratings.</p>	

	<p>37.02 Access and Participation Plan (APP)</p> <p>The Committee noted that the APP was in the process of being reviewed to ensure actions remained appropriate to deliver the aims and targets.</p> <p>37.03 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)</p> <p>The outcome of the TEF process was imminent and results would include a grading with feedback on the panel's judgement. The report would identify aspects of excellence as well as weaknesses to support future developments.</p> <p>37.04 College Board of Studies for HE (CBSHE)</p> <p>The Committee reviewed and noted the minutes of the CBSHE meeting held on 26 May 2023.</p>	
23/38	<p>Student Association Constitution</p> <p>The Director of Student Experience reported that the Student Association was considering changes to the constitution and amendments would be proposed once the Association's internal processes had been completed.</p>	
23/39	<p>Draft Cycle of Annual Business for 2024</p> <p>The Committee considered and APPROVED the cycle of business for 2024.</p>	
23/40	<p>Dates of Future Meetings</p> <p>Members NOTED the dates of forthcoming meetings as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HE QA Group – Thurs 16 Nov 2023 at 4.00pm (Truro) • SAR Working Party - Weds 17 Jan 2024 at 4.00pm (Penwith) • TLA Committee - Weds 28 Feb 2023 at 5.00pm (Penwith) 	ALL to note
23/41	<p>Confidential Report on Complaints and Compliments for 2022/23</p> <p>The Committee reviewed the confidential report and discussed specific cases in further detail. Governors were reminded of the process and noted the various mechanisms to enable learners to raise concerns and highlight issues.</p> <p>Overall, the data indicated that most issues were specific to individual situations although three key themes had emerged from complaints last year - staff industrial action/disruption, exam concessions and transport.</p> <p>SMT explained that in many instances a face-to-face discussion was helpful and provided an opportunity to clarify the facts and to explain the background. Most complaints were successfully resolved in this way.</p> <p>Governors asked about any learning points arising from the matters raised. The Principal explained that staff were undertaking further training on the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations governing eligibility for exam concessions to ensure clarity about the external requirements. Also, the tutorial programme had been adapted to incorporate information for students.</p> <p>The Committee NOTED the issues raised as well as the many compliments received.</p>	

23/42	<p>Confidential Report on Disciplinary Actions/Exclusions 2022/23</p> <p>The Committee received a confidential report on the formal disciplinary cases and noted there had been 15 exclusions this year, an increase from 5 in 2021/22.</p> <p>The Director of Operations explained that suspensions were used as a neutral holding phase whilst matters were investigated. The key emphasis throughout the process was to encourage students to modify behaviour and take personal responsibility. Exclusions were a last resort.</p> <p>Governors asked about any additional measures to address behaviour and noted that Youth Intervention Officers working at the Truro and Penwith campuses were helping to deal with low level disorder. Also, improved car parking security had helped to prevent unauthorised access. The College was continuing to engage with local police and the community to maintain good relations.</p>	
23/43	<p>Confidential Report on HE Academic Appeals for 2022/23</p> <p>The Committee noted there had been no appeals this year (compared to 2 in 2021/22).</p>	