

CURRICULUM & STANDARDS COMMITTEE



AGENDA NOTICE

Curriculum & Standards Committee Meeting

Date: Thursday 11th June 2020

Time: 4.00pm

Venue: Online

Please note this meeting precedes Search Committee (6.30pm start)

- 3.1 Opening of Meeting and Apologies for Absence**
- 3.2 Declarations of Interest**
- 3.3 Minutes of the last Curriculum & Standards Committee held 12th March 2020**
Chair of Curriculum & Standards Committee Appendix 3.3
- 3.4 Matters arising from the minutes**
Chair of Curriculum & Standards Committee Appendix 3.4
- 3.5 Annual Operating Statement 2019/20 April Monitoring Point**
Report by the Principal Appendix 3.5
- 3.6 Monitoring of Curriculum Risks**
Report by the Principal Appendix 3.6
- 3.7 Centre Assessment Grading Report (New resulting from Covid-19)**
(For all Programmes including GCSE English and Maths)
Quality Improvement Consultant Appendix 3.7
- 3.8 Total Quality Assurance Framework**
Quality Improvement Consultant Appendix 3.8
- 3.9 Progress with Quality Improvement Plans**
Report by the Director of Quality Appendix 3.9
- 3.10 UCF (FCOT) Access and Participation Plan 2020-2025**
Vice Principal Higher Education & Safeguarding Appendix 3.10
- 3.11 2020-21 Emerging Delivery Approaches in light of Covid-19**
Verbal update by the Principal
- 3.12 FE and HE Destinations / Progression Report**
Head of MIS Appendix 3.12
- 3.13 Student Surveys**
Report by the Quality and Safeguarding Manager Appendix 3.13
- 3.14 Update on the Implementation of T Levels**
Report by the Vice Principal Technical & Vocational Education Appendix 3.14
- 3.15 Termly Safeguarding Report**
Report by the Vice Principal Higher Education & Safeguarding Appendix 3.15
- 3.16 Employer Satisfaction Interim Report**
Report by the Head of Industry-Led Development and Apprenticeships Appendix 3.16
- 3.17 Minutes of the Equality & Diversity Committee**
Report by the Principal Appendix 3.17
- 3.18 Any Other Business**
- 3.19 Date and time of the next Curriculum & Standards Committee meeting**
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DISTRIBUTION LIST:

Committee

Ms Jane Houzer – Chair
Mr N Crippa
Ms K Vargas
Professor O Khan
Mr R Rendel
Mr A Smith
Ms V Barrett – Principal

In attendance

Mrs H Drewery – Vice Principal Technical & Vocational Education
Mr L Magee - Vice Principal Higher Education & Safeguarding
Mr R Walker – Director of Quality
Professor M Earwicker – Ex-officio member
Ms C Gillam – Clerk to Corporation
Mr G Gomes – Head of MIS
Ms K Morris – Quality Improvement Consultant
Mrs R Jenkins – Quality and Safeguarding Manager
Ms K Morris - Head of Industry-Led Development and Apprenticeships

Farnborough College of Technology

Curriculum & Standards Committee

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 11th June 2020

Present:

Ms J Houzer – Chair (via video conference)
Mr N Crippa (via video conference)
Ms K Vargas (via video conference)
Professor O Khan (via video conference)
Mr R Rendel (via speakerphone) *left after item 3.6*
Mr A Smith (via video conference)
Ms V Barrett – Principal (via video conference)

In Attendance:

Mrs H Drewery – Vice Principal Technical & Vocational Education (via video conference)
Mr G Gomes – Head of MIS (via video conference)
Mrs R Jenkins – Quality and Safeguarding Manager (via video conference)
Mr L Magee - Vice Principal Learner Services & General Education (via video conference)
Ms Kat Morris – Quality Improvement Consultant (via video conference)
Ms Karen Morris – Head of Industry Led Development and Apprenticeships (via video conference)
Ms C Gillam – Clerk to the Corporation (via video conference)

Quorate: Yes

The meeting opened at 4.10pm

3.1/19.20 Opening of Meeting and Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from the Director of Quality. The Principal introduced the members of SMT joining the meeting to speak to various agenda items: the Head of MIS, the Quality and Safeguarding Manager, the Quality Improvement Consultant and the Head of Industry-Led Development and Apprenticeships. The Chair commended the Principal and her team for the high quality of the Committee papers.

3.2/19.20 Declarations of Interest

Mr Rendel declared an interest in the awarding organisation The London Institute of Banking & Finance. The Committee thanked him for his declaration but agreed that it was not a material interest.

3.3/19.20 Minutes of the meeting held 12th March 2020

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record and would be signed by the Chair.

3.4/19.20 Matters arising from the minutes

The Committee received the progress report on matters arising. It was noted and accepted that the risk score for GCSE English had not been reduced.

3.5/19.20 Annual Operating Statement 2019/20 April Monitoring Point

The Committee accepted the Annual Operating Statement 2019/20 April monitoring point.

3.6/19.20 Monitoring of Curriculum Risks

The Principal drew attention to two new curriculum focused risks addressing T Level implementation and the quality of the Centre Assessed Grading Process.

Mr Rendel left the meeting.

3.7/19.20 Centre Assessment Grading Interim Report

The Committee congratulated the staff members involved for the quality of this report which would form the substantive item of the meeting. The FCoT Quality team had led a rigorous process to ensure the College would be compliant with the new Centre Assessment Grade (CAG) process replacing external examinations this summer. The College's curriculum offer was accredited by 23 different Awarding Organisations and each provided different guidance for submitting CAGs. The CAG quality assurance cycle required Programme Managers to submit a variety of evidence to the Quality team to support the forecasted grade for each learner for each qualification. Forecast grades were checked against the College's 5 year achievement data trends and detailed explanation sought if there was a variance. Once the Quality team was satisfied with the evidence to support the forecast grades then the Centre Declaration Form could be completed, sent to the Principal for final approval and then on to the Awarding Body. Some examples of these forms were included with the paper. So far 12 out of 15 course areas had been signed off and submitted. The Committee praised the thoroughness of the process and asked if there were any areas where the Quality team had expressed concern. The Quality Improvement Consultant replied that a few areas had revealed some initial results which the Quality team had not accepted but these were very much in the minority. Sometimes difficult discussions had to be held before the final grades were put forward. It was a lengthy, but credible, process and the Principal noted it was vital for the College's reputation that the process had integrity. For example the Quality and Safeguarding Manager reported that the initial grading for Health & Social Care (HSC) was presented against a background of historically poor data but the curriculum had changed and a new programme Manager had been appointed 3 years ago. It was therefore necessary to check and question the forecast results. The HSC team reviewed all portfolios on site against the Internal Verifier matrix, Internal Verifier comments and assessor marking. A second check was conducted by the Programme Manager. Tutors cross checked each other's work. Overall 4 meetings were held with additional information provided, work physically checked and re-checked and data reviewed. It was a very detailed scrutiny. Mr Smith the Staff Governor explained how the process had worked in his curriculum area of Catering and that staff were content with the rigour of what was a challenging process even though difficult judgements were required. Governors enquired whether students would be able to appeal against their results. The Quality and Safeguarding Manager explained that it would depend upon the qualification and the Awarding Body. There would be no appeals in GCSE maths or English but some vocational subject areas would allow appeals. Governors also enquired what consideration had been given to identifying any bias in the grade distribution. The Quality and Safeguarding Manager explained that she and the Quality Improvement Consultant had been careful to ensure no student was disadvantaged. Attendance data pre-lockdown was reviewed and reasons sought for poor attendance or difficulty engaging. The Quality Improvement Consultant noted that it was necessary to look at individual students and understand where for example there may have been genuine reasons for poor attendance pre-Covid 19, but that since then the student had been producing high quality work and caught up. Staff applied their professional judgement but through an objective lens. Governors acknowledged the rigour of the process and how hard it must have been not only to assign grades but to place students in a centre rank order. The Principal agreed that it had been a huge task for the teaching staff with the Quality Improvement Consultant and the Quality and Safeguarding Manager leading the quality assurance process. She noted that she had not yet paid the Awarding Bodies their fees as she felt the College should receive some compensation for the huge amount of staff time it had taken to implement a process which would stand up to scrutiny. The Quality and Safeguarding Manager explained that regarding rank order every curriculum area produced its own rank

order. In some programme areas this was relatively straightforward and if candidates were judged about equal then a points scoring system was used to assign the order using factors such as attendance data and professional judgement. Where rank order proved more difficult were the subjects such as English and maths which were taught across College and across two campuses. Here team meetings were held to agree the rank order. Governors noted the rise in achievement data for 16-18 year olds in GCSE maths. The Principal explained that this was judged to be due to the increased learners achieving high grades in November 2019 compared to November 2018. The forecast achievement of high grades was 25% in summer 2020. The Quality Improvement Consultant reassured the Committee that the Quality team had held a number of discussions with the maths team about their profile of results and their use of historic grade boundaries. There was sufficient evidence to allow the Centre Declaration Form to be signed. Next year the College would expect a similarly high trend in GCSE maths results.

The discussion concluded with the Committee restating their admiration for the rigour and integrity of the process undertaken by College staff to award grades in these exceptional circumstances, and thanking all the staff involved.

3.8/19.20 Total Quality Assurance Framework

The Principal presented the College's Total Quality Assurance Framework noting that one of the recommendations of the 2018 Curriculum Review was to have one framework for the whole College. The Quality Improvement Consultant had led that process and produced this document. Ms Morris explained it had been a long process and required a cultural shift. The graphic on page 1 communicated the Framework through a visual medium which Governors praised for its clarity. It was suggested however that the pie chart should be revised to make all three sections of equal size as it might infer that 'stakeholder satisfaction and empowerment' was the lesser of the three as it was a smaller section than the other two. Governors enquired whether the College had an Academic Registrar as they are referred to in the document. The Principal noted that this post has been changed to a Quality Officer and thus the Framework should be revised to reflect this.

3.9/19.20 Progress with Quality Improvement Plans

The Committee noted that GCSE maths and English attendance was highlighted in red as both were low. However, the Principal reported that some colleges were reporting better attendance once the subjects moved online. Governors praised under item 1.3 in the report the significant improvements made in Engineering and congratulated the staff involved, particularly Mr Hutton.

3.10/19.20 HE Access and Participation Plan

The Committee noted the changes to the Plan from the version presented at the last meeting included guaranteeing a bursary for students given particular circumstances. The Vice Principal HE & S was congratulated for his work on the document. Governors observed that the document required as much work in its production as for a large University. The document had been submitted and approved by the internal assessors at the OfS and was now awaiting final approval by the Director of Access and Participation.

3.11/19.20 2020/21 Emerging Delivery Approaches in light of Covid 19

The Principal announced that she had sent to the Board that day detailed plans for the wider re-opening of the College from Monday 15th June. She thanked the Vice Principal HE & S who had been on site with her almost every day during lockdown for his support. Much work had been undertaken to revise timetabling protocols, purchase FCoT branded masks, install protective screens where required and install more sanitiser stations. A one way system had been introduced through the Farnborough campus with arrows signposting one direction down the mall and back up through the side malls. Students would be kept in consistent groups and

classrooms had been set up to enable 2 metre social distancing. Every process required rethinking such as giving guidance on how to use vending machines safely. June would be used as a trial which would help inform safe opening to larger numbers in September. Government guidance was that from 15 June no more than one quarter of learners should be on site at any one time. The College would have far less than this, the most being 128 learners due on site at the Aldershot campus on the 29th June for practical assessments.

Governors asked if the pedagogy of teaching had changed since lockdown. The Principal replied that staff had responded to the changes required to move teaching online, overnight, magnificently. The Director of Quality and the Quality and Safeguarding Manager had conducted a best practice review to see how the new teaching approaches worked and the best examples would be shared at the next staff development day. Some teachers had become online champions. The Vice Principal HE & S informed the Committee that Mr Crippa and Ms Vargas had attended the online Student Conference the previous day and invited them to share the feedback they had heard from students' experience of online teaching. Mr Crippa said that students were very positive and felt that communication from the College had been very good. Ms Vargas praised the organisation of the first online Student Conference which featured breakout rooms to allow students to share feedback with staff members representing different areas of the College which was very well received by the large number of students who attended the Conference.

Governors enquired what the approach to delivery would be from September 2020. The Principal said that the College's starting point would be to put everything that was possible online. This would protect the curriculum provision if a second wave of Covid 19 emerged and allow the College to maintain its online momentum. The College would seek to blend online and onsite delivery being mindful of the guidance to not allow more than 25% of students back on site at any one time and prioritising attendance for vulnerable learners and new students. Some areas, such as the adult learning provision, lent themselves better to more online learning. The Vice Principal T & VE added that for some subjects theory could be taught online but practical work would require onsite attendance. For such subjects it was planned to front load practical work where possible in the first term observing social distancing, in case a second wave brought about a return to more severe lockdown restrictions. One possibility was to use webcams so that half a group could attend College for practical work with the other half watching from home, and then swop round. This could also work for T Level delivery. She said that it was not possible to have a one size fits all model of delivery as different solutions would be required for different curriculum areas. The Head of MIS advised Governors that most of the Library's provision was available electronically and there were self-serving cubicles for those who came in to College to take a book out. However, this should be largely unnecessary as there was sufficient resource to enable students to access materials online. The Principal added that investment in the online College would continue to be a key priority into 2020/21. Governors asked what provision would be made for laptops for new students and the Principal explained that initially bringing your own devices would be encouraged. However, if students were still enrolled after December then it seemed fair for the College to assign a laptop to each student. The Principal announced that the College would be seeking to procure a contract with a company to translate resources from classroom to online and one Governor thought that they may be able to suggest some companies for consideration in the procurement process. Governors asked whether work placement would still be an expectation in 2020/21. The Quality Improvement Consultant replied that Awarding Body clarification was still awaited in some cases and some Awarding Bodies had given adaptations such as breaks in learning. Apprentices would be allowed back to work if their industry had returned to work but some sectors such as hospitality and hairdressing were particularly affected. The Vice Principal T & VE noted that all 16-19 students have a 1 or 2 week work placement for their course and this would be placed on hold for the time being awaiting Government guidance. Different sectors may prove easier than others so if schools fully re-opened in September it

might be possible for work placements in schools to go ahead. The hospitality sector was a significant unknown with pubs and restaurants currently not able to reopen. Employers were also being asked if there were any tasks students could do online as work experience projects.

3.12/19.20 FE Destinations 2018/19

The Head of MIS explained that only FE destinations were included as the HE data would not be available until later in the month. He would send the HE destinations once received to the Clerk to circulate to the Committee. The FE survey focused on completers aged 16-19 and showed an increase in students moving on to employment or apprenticeships and a drop in students staying in education. The survey had had a high response rate with 88% of students participating. There were likely to be a number of reasons to explain the shift in destinations such as the College actively promoting apprenticeships. The Committee was pleased to note that the vast majority of students had positive destinations and speculated that in 2020/21 the trend might be reversed with more students opting to remain in education rather than enter employment.

3.13/19.20 Student Surveys

The Vice Principal HE & S and the Quality and Safeguarding Manager presented the results of various surveys. The ESFA Learner Satisfaction Survey had been cancelled due to Covid 19 but a new Remote Learning Survey was included as an additional survey. The Vice Principal HE & S noted that in responding to previous feedback the College had held a very structured induction week in 2019 with lots of presentations but having reviewed the feedback from the Induction and Safeguarding Survey there would be a more nuanced approach to student induction in September 2020. The findings of the Remote Learning Survey were positive although Governors noted that adults were much more satisfied than 16-18 students perhaps reflecting generational expectations of production quality. When looking at the responses broken down by programme area 50% of Engineering students judged remote learning to be below average. The Quality and Safeguarding Manager said that many of these students reported frustration at not being able to use their specialist CAD software as easily at home as in College. Some student responses across all curriculum areas reported frustrations with lockdown in general rather than College specific issues such as difficulties working from home with siblings in the house or having too much work set compared to other colleges. Ironically the fact that FCoT maintained its teaching online was a source of frustration for some students who had friends at other establishments reporting that very little work was set. Each faculty had been sent copies of responses from their students in case there were specific curriculum issues which required addressing. The Staff Governor reported that some younger students lacked basic skills using word and excel and attaching documents to emails and this had caused some frustrations with online working. Governors discussed the requirement for students to check their emails regularly and the Quality and Safeguarding Manager noted that from September students would be encouraged to use their student email account as the primary method of communication.

3.14/19.20 Update on the implementation of T levels

The Vice Principal T & VE updated the Committee on readiness for T Levels noting that the College was on track to start delivery in September 2020. Prior to lockdown teaching teams had agreed upon the content of teaching to be delivered so the interactive schemes of work were being worked on now. Application numbers were healthy with 90 applications for Childcare and Education and 21 for Digital. Governors noted that the scheduled building works to refurbish areas of the College had been postponed due to the lockdown but it had been agreed with the DfE that the works could be completed by March 2021 and the commencement of T delivery in September 2020 would not be affected. The Committee congratulated the Vice Principal T & VE for her work.

3.15/19.20 Termly Safeguarding Report

Governors praised the work of the Safeguarding team whilst noting that the impacts of Covid 19 would be seen in September and beyond. It was observed that there had been an increase in the number of concerns raised about students in January and February but a decrease in March and April. Governors asked if it was possible to check in with those students for whom a concern had been raised earlier in the year without being too intrusive. The Vice Principal HE & S agreed that the College could do so. Governors enquired whether there had been an increase in suicidal ideation since lockdown and the Vice Principal replied that there had not been an increase but there were a number of mental health and anxiety issues being reported. Staff were encouraged to use the MyConcern system or raise informal concerns. The counselling team had continued to support students remotely and the College had moved swiftly when a domestic violence issue arose and all the external agencies communicated well to resolve the situation.

3.16/19.20 Interim Employer Satisfaction Survey Report

The Head of Industry-Led Development and Apprenticeships introduced the report which had been commissioned following two years of below average feedback from the ESFA Employers Satisfaction Survey. The College's Interim Employer Survey was conducted in January 2020 with 40 respondents and gave a result of 80% satisfaction which was in line with the ESFA survey rating. A number of employers gave excellent feedback but 8 employers (20%) were dissatisfied. Those employers were contacted to discuss their concerns and 7 were resolved satisfactorily. The 1 issue which could not be resolved concerned the time taken for an apprentice to complete but the apprentice was not always forthcoming with timely information. Governors noted that resolving the majority of issues appeared to be straightforward and suggested that the College be more proactive going forward in interacting with employers. The Head of Industry-Led Development and Apprenticeships agreed and said that processes had already been changed to include this feedback. Aptem, an online apprenticeship platform, would be used which would enable employers to access information regarding an apprentice's progress. Robust program reviews would be held and employers would be contacted in a termly survey to identify issues. The Committee congratulated the Head of Industry-Led Development and Apprenticeships for this work.

3.17/19.20 Equality and Diversity Committee

The Committee received the minutes of the May meeting of the Committee. Governors asked if the College had published a response to the Black Lives Matter movement. The Principal said that she had allowed staff to attend demonstrations in their working time if they wished. Her preference was that rather than the College making its own response that the FE sector made a uniform response. On a personal level she had been asked to sit on a race equality group looking at profiling black professionals but as Principal of the College she had to be seen publicly as taking a non-political stance. It was noted that the University of Surrey had released a statement on Twitter supporting the movement followed up with a blog post and a statement from the Vice-Chancellor. It was agreed that if the College were to release a statement it should come from the Board of Governors rather than the Principal. The Principal said that her preference was to address issues of equality through raising awareness and education via induction and tutorials from September.

3.18/19.20 Any Other Business

The Principal noted that Mr Rendel had had to leave the meeting early due to technical difficulties but he had asked via email if under item 3.7 any of the Centre Declaration Forms submitted to the Principal had not been approved for signature. The Principal replied that all of the forms had been signed as any issues had been resolved during the quality assurance process.

The Committee thanked the Principal and her team for exceptional reporting on the agenda items.

3.19/19.20 Date and Time of the next meeting

To be agreed at the July Corporation Board meeting

The meeting closed at 6.01pm.

Minutes agreed as being a true and accurate record by the Chair.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....