

CURRICULUM & STANDARDS COMMITTEE

AGENDA NOTICE

Curriculum & Standards Committee Meeting

Date: Thursday 9th March 2023

Time: 5.00 – 7.00pm

Venue: Online

- 2.1 Opening of Meeting and Apologies for Absence**
- 2.2 Declarations of Interest**
- 2.3 Minutes of the last Curriculum & Standards Committee held 17th November 2022**
Chair of Curriculum & Standards Committee Appendix 2.3
- 2.4 Matters arising from the minutes**
Chair of Curriculum & Standards Committee Appendix 2.4
- Targets**
- 2.5 Verbal progress update on the Accountability Agreement**
Report by the Principal
- 2.6 Annual Operating Statement 2022/23 March Monitoring Point**
Report by the Principal Appendix 2.6
- Quality**
- 2.7 Pearson's Annual Monitoring and Performance Report (AMPR)**
Report by the Director of Quality Appendix 2.7
- 2.8 2021/22 Awarding Bodies Moderation Report**
Verbal update by the Director of Quality
- 2.9 Quality Improvement Plan**
Report by the Director of Quality Appendix 2.9
- 2.10 Underperforming Courses Report**
Report by the Director of Quality Appendix 2.10
- Curriculum**
- 2.11 Monitoring of Curriculum Risks**
Report by the Vice Principal HE & Curriculum Development Appendix 2.11
- 2.12 English and Maths**
Report by the Vice Principal HE & Curriculum Development Appendix 2.12
- 2.13 Curriculum Development**
Report by the Vice Principal HE & Curriculum Development Appendix 2.13
- Monitoring**
- 2.14 Attendance and Retention (FE, Apprenticeships, HE)**
Report by the AD Planning, Funding, Information Systems & Exams Appendix 2.14
- HE**
- 2.15 HE Report – TEF submission & Access to Participation Plan**
Report by the Director of HE and Special Projects Appendix 2.15
- 2.16 HE Annual Review Reports – University of Surrey**
Report by the Director of HE and Special Projects Appendix 2.16

Safeguarding

2.17 Termly Safeguarding Report

Report by the Vice Principal Safeguarding, Pastoral & Performance Excellence Appendix 2.17

Corporate Reports

2.18 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee minutes

Report by the Principal Appendix 2.18

STAFF AND STUDENT GOVERNOR TO LEAVE

2.19 Curriculum Review of Apprenticeships

Report by the Director of Quality Appendix 2.19

2.20 Any Confidential Matters of Report

Verbal report by the Principal

2.21 Any Other Business

1. Any items for discussion under AOB must be sent through in advance to the Clerk.

2. To agree the 2/3 key items from the meeting for the Chair to report on at the March Board

2.22 Date and time of the next Curriculum & Standards Committee meeting

Thursday 15th June 2023 at 5pm

DISTRIBUTION LIST:

<u>Committee</u>	<u>In attendance</u>
Ms Jane Houzer – Chair	Mrs R Jenkins – Vice Principal Safeguarding, Pastoral & Performance Excellence
Mrs G Christie	Mr G Gomes – AD Planning, Funding, Information Systems & Exams
Mr N Crippa	Mr I Graham – Vice Principal HE & Curriculum Development
Professor O Khan	Mr L Magee- Director of HE & Special Projects
Student Governors	Ms K Morris – Director of Quality
Mr J Sparkes	Professor M Earwicker – Ex-officio member
Ms K Yeomans	Ms C Gillam – Clerk to Corporation
Ms V Barrett – Principal	

Farnborough College of Technology

Curriculum & Standards Committee

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 9th March 2023

Present:

Ms J Houzer – Chair (via video conference)
Mr N Crippa - (via video conference)
Professor O Khan - (via video conference) – *from late item 2.5*
Mr J Sparkes - *to end of item 2.18*
Ms C Morris (via video conference) - *to end of item 2.18*
Ms K Yeomans (via video conference)
Ms V Barrett – Principal

In Attendance:

Mrs S Chapman – Governor attending as observer (via video conference) – *to mid item 2.14*
Mr G Gomes – Associate Director of PFISE – *for item 2.14 only*
Mr I Graham – Vice Principal Curriculum Development & HE - *to end of item 2.18*
Mrs R Jenkins – Vice Principal Safeguarding, Pastoral & Performance Excellence - *to end of item 2.18*
Mr L Magee – Director of HE & Special Projects (via video conference) – *from mid item 2.14 to end of item 2.16*
Ms K Morris – Director of Quality
Ms C Gillam – Clerk to the Corporation

Quorate: Yes

The meeting opened at 5.07pm

2.1/22.23 Opening of Meeting and Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Mrs Christie. The Chair welcomed Ms Morris, Mr Sparkes and Ms Yeomans to their first Committee meeting.

2.2/22.23 Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

2.3/22.23 Minutes of the meeting held 17th November 2022

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

2.4/22.23 Matters arising from the minutes

The Committee received the progress report on matters arising and noted that all actions had either been completed or were addressed in the items on the agenda.

2.5/22.23 Verbal progress update on the Accountability Agreement

The Principal advised the Committee that the Accountability Agreement (AA) would replace the College's annual funding contract. Skills (Part 2) are a prime focus and this is also reflected in the new Ofsted sub-judgement requiring colleges to demonstrate how they are meeting economic skills needs. The Principal explained that together with the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, a company call Lightcast (previously EMSI) has been commissioned to prepare economically driven curriculum plans, to ensure a bottom-up approach informs the AA. She had recently seen a first draft covering computing, arts, and media subjects and what had been produced was very dynamic, very useful for the AA. The AA must be signed off by the Board in May 2023.

Professor Khan joined the meeting.

Governors' questions and comments

Governors enquired whether any assistance was required with the drafting of the document and the Principal replied that it was somewhat prescriptive in its format. She would however, send the Chair of Curriculum & Standards Committee a draft for comment prior to Easter.

Action: Principal to send draft Accountability Agreement to the Chair of C&S for comment.

2.6/22.23 Annual Operating Statement 2022/23 March Monitoring Point

The Principal reflected that the Annual Operating Statement was a document which predated her arrival at the College but which she found very useful to show termly progress against the targets aligned to the Sustainable Transformations Strategy. She noted that she had tweaked the format to provide at the start a one page summary giving evidence of success and key performance indicators for each of the enabling goals, and then reported in turn on Term 1 progress against each of the goals.

Governors' questions and comments

Governors praised the revised format of the report and noted that the one page summary gave a valuable snapshot as to how the College was fulfilling its mission. This acted as a very helpful executive summary.

2.7/22.23 Pearson's Annual Monitoring and Performance Report (AMPR)

The Director of Quality presented the annual report noting the areas it covered which included HNC/D in Policing which was no longer offered by the College. A key action was to improve retention.

Governors' questions and comments

Governors enquired as to the retention issues. The Director of Quality advised that numbers were quite small and there was a complex picture for this post-pandemic cohort. One aspect under consideration was the rigour applied to recruiting to these courses.

2.8/22.23 2021/22 Awarding Bodies Moderation Report

In a verbal report the Director of Quality briefly set out the internal quality assurance process involved in verifying standards for all Awarding Bodies. All actions and recommendations were collated and fed into quality improvement plans. There were no restrictive actions for any qualifications last year, but there were actions requiring monitoring in areas such as Electrical Installation, Level 2 Engineering and Access to HE. The expectation was that all these actions would be resolved and a written report will be provided to the June meeting of the Committee to confirm this.

2.9/22.23 Quality Improvement Plan

The Committee received the report.

Governors' questions and comments

Governors noted that progress with improvements was on track for FE but enquired as to the situation regarding apprenticeships. The Director of Quality explained that under section 3 of the Quality Improvement Plan – Personal Development, the College was adapting best practice from FE for apprentices such as the provision of careers advice. She added a caveat however, that there had to be a long term focus for careers advice for apprentices. Employers had given feedback previously including the specific soft skills they desired apprentices to have. The College would survey employers again this term and present what actions had resulted from the previous feedback to show progress made. Governors understood that apprenticeship employers would not want careers advice to support seeking work elsewhere such as for

example interview skills, but suggested that shifting careers focus to how to maximise performance in the workplace would be useful. This could include areas such as communicating with your team, working effectively in a team, and how to raise an issue with your line manager. The Director of Quality agreed noting that improved communication skills had been requested by employers. The Principal agreed that the College would maintain a watching brief on what personal skills employers wanted their apprentices to have.

2.10/22.23 Underperforming Courses List

The Director of Quality began with the list of underperforming FE courses noting that for A Level, Motor Vehicle and Public Services predicted achievement was between 70 and 79% so these were of greatest concern. For underperforming apprenticeships the Director of Quality had identified 24 apprenticeships with timely achievement either below the national average or below the College target of 70%. 5 apprenticeships had been identified with 5 or more enrolments. However, the 2022/23 forecast for timely achievement for apprenticeships overall was 70.4%.

Governors' questions and comments

Governors enquired whether there was any correlation between those FE courses with predicted lower achievement and the quality of lessons taught? Could the Board be assured that the lessons were good or outstanding and that lesson quality had not impacted retention? The Director of Quality noted that deep dives and lesson observations had taken place in all these areas but the Principal agreed that this would be revisited as it was an important point to verify. Governors also questioned whether the rigour of recruitment which was raised under item 2.7 might also apply here too, especially in the case of A Levels. The Director of Quality advised that there had been an increase in the number of learners with additional needs but this was true for many post pandemic learner cohorts. There was an attendance issue noted for second year A Level students but as the C&S Committee had previously been advised the College had changed the delivery of the A Level provision to streamline the curriculum so A Levels were a changing picture. The Vice Principal Safeguarding, Pastoral & Performance Excellence (SGPEP) spoke of her experience in speaking with parents of learners with attendance issues. She noted that in one case a learner had 60% attendance but the learner's parents were delighted with that level of attendance as the learner had refused to attend school during the pandemic. The parents saw it as a huge improvement in their child's attendance, even though it was below the College's norm. She also advised that the new A Level pathway for first year learners was working well. Achievement in Level 2 Motor Vehicle had suffered last year due to retention issues with learners moving to apprenticeships. Whilst this affected College figures it did represent a positive move for those learners. The College was working in all areas to support families with learners experiencing challenges with their mental health, especially anxiety issues. Governors queried how a transfer from a Level 2 programme to an apprenticeship was recorded – it was a positive outcome for the learner, but was it recorded as a 'failure' for FCoT?. The Principal advised that an internal transfer was fine, but a transfer to an external provider would be recorded as a 'failure' for FCoT. However, she reminded Governors that Ofsted's focus was upon outcomes rather than achievement, and would view such moves as positive.

Governors requested reassurance that there was no correlation between any particular ethnic or other groups and the underperforming courses listed in the report. The Principal suggested this was discussed under item 2.18 the EDI minutes.

2.11/22.23 Monitoring of Curriculum Risks

The Vice Principal Curriculum Development & HE presented the risks noting that there were 10 risks all graded amber. Two risks, C3 and C7, had reduced from red in Term 1 to amber in Term 2, and a new risk C10 had been included addressing inability to secure T Level placements.

Governors' questions and comments

Governors raised the issue of ethnicity data and wondered if aspects such as insufficient progress made with improving the performance of certain groups, or failure to attract and retain individuals from diverse backgrounds, should be captured in the risk register? After discussion it was agreed that these were more targets than new risks. But did the College truly understand the impact of the risks from the risk register upon different groupings of the student body? It was noted that EDI goals were difficult to solve as it was such a complex area and sample sizes could be small. But this was not a reason not to try and the Principal agreed that more data would need to be shared with the Committee at the next meeting regarding improvements year on year in the field of EDI. It was also suggested that the risk register be shared with the EDI Committee for their feedback.

Actions:

- Principal to ensure the College provides additional EDI data to the next C&S meeting to show areas of focus and improvements.
- Risk register to be shared with the EDI Committee for their feedback.

2.12/22.23 English and Maths

The Vice Principal Curriculum Development & HE informed Governors that attendance for English and Maths had improved from Term 1 and that results from the November 2022 GCSE re-sits were broadly in line with College predictions. Specific strategies were in place to improve progress and achievement for learners including intervention sessions, streaming and intensive study. The Principal added that Ofsted had attended College for 16-19 Tuition Fund research and looked at Maths and English and how the fund was used, as well as the use of Progress and Attendance tutors. The Ofsted team were complementary regarding the College's provision in English and Maths and praised the Head of English and Maths as an engaging teacher and lead.

Governors' questions and comments

Governors welcomed the slow but steady progress the College had made in English and Maths. Attendance was improving and whilst was below the College average it was at its highest level in this area for some years and lots of initiatives were being tried to improve achievement. There was no one magic solution and the College was to be congratulated on progress in this difficult area.

2.13/22.23 Curriculum Developments

The Vice Principal Curriculum Development & HE advised the Committee that the framework for curriculum development was centred around local market intelligence and the skills gap, which the College has a requirement to meet. Some Level 1 provision will become broader in scope to provide learners with increased transferable skills. There will be additional online provision of a stretch programme for FE learners with English and Maths at grade 4 or higher focusing on transferable essential skills. Data Science is included as a core optional module in degree programmes as the management and utilisation of data is critical to many professions. Extra-curricular activity has been further developed to address Government and Ofsted expectations regarding national and regional skills gaps and meeting skills needs. Picking up risks C3 and C7 and the current economic climate and its impact upon learners, the College has developed a new part-time modular programme for those learners unable to continue with full time education in part due to economic pressures. It includes Maths and English and broader skills building and will allow learners to work and attend College part-time. The College has also developed bespoke community programmes to help in the current economic crisis.

Governors' questions and comments

Governors welcomed the information regarding new curriculum developments but requested in future information regarding courses to be discontinued. As much rigour needed to be applied to closing down courses as to creating new courses. The Vice Principal Curriculum Development & HE agreed to add this to future reports.

The Associate Director PFISE joined the meeting.

2.14/22.23 Attendance and Retention

The Associate Director Planning, Funding, Information Systems & Exams (AD PFISE) presented the report summarising the learner attendance and retention position for the various funding categories. Overall College attendance for 16-19 EFA learners has improved since lockdown and the Progress and Attendance tutors are having an impact by engaging closely with learners. As already reported attendance has improved in English and Maths. Attendance was broken down in the paper by programme areas with last year's figures given to benchmark. Greater detail was provided for HE programme areas and here attendance was expected to improve compared to previous years.

The Director of HE & Special Projects joined the meeting. Mrs Chapman left the meeting.

Governors' questions and comments

Governors asked which areas were giving cause for concern. The Principal advised that the College was closely monitoring attendance in all areas with the Vice Principal Safeguarding, Pastoral & Performance Excellence taking a lead. This was reflected in the improved attendance compared to last year. Professor Khan reflected that the areas on pages 50/51 which were RAG rated amber would be green in his HE institution, and whilst he recognised the high standards the College was holding itself to, he viewed the attendance figures as very good. He enquired whether the College operated the same attendance criteria for adult learners as for FE. The Principal replied that both adults and 16-18 learners follow the same process although they have a different census date. For the first six weeks the College focuses on settling all students and removes non-starters before the FE census date in December and adult census date in February. Learners have to engage and the College is vociferous regarding attendance. The College provides wrap around care and focuses upon learners with low attendance. Adults can have mental health and work issues and this is recognised. The AD PFISE added that many sessions are now recorded and so learners unable to attend can easily access missed material. This can particularly impact accelerated degree learners. The Vice Principal Curriculum Development & HE added that with smaller class sizes in HE it was harder to hide non-attendance but the College was quick to respond with appropriate support.

The Associate Director PFISE left the meeting.

2.15/22.23 HE Report - TEF submission and Access to Participation Plan

TEF

The Director of HE & Special Projects advised the Committee that the College had made its Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission and had made a case for a gold rating. The submission was based on a huge amount of data from the Office for Students (OfS) and National Student Survey (NSS) from the last four years. The College's data was positive for part-time learners and higher apprentices, but there was below average completion and continuation for full time learners. The NSS data was mostly positive. The data presented a mixed picture and so a realistic outcome might be a bronze rating. However, the College had put its case that adult learners led more complex lives and were more likely to withdraw, and the College was an unusual case with its higher number of adult learners. The result would be announced in June.

Governors' questions and comments

Governors agreed that for a small institution like FCoT the TEF could be a frustrating process. Silver would seem like a fair reflection for the College. The Director of HE & Special Projects

noted that HE was adopting techniques from FE such as the 6 week probation period and trying to change the culture of not withdrawing learners who were not engaging. There was a feeling that with smaller groups it was easier to keep learners who were marginal but that approach needed to stop.

Professor Khan requested a paper showing how the OfS B3 condition of registration would be met and noted that the Director of HE & Special Projects had been invited to provide assurance to the University regarding this condition. A table showing FCoT's performance against the B3 benchmarks would be most helpful. The Director of HE & Special Projects explained that this would be included in the Principal's Report to the March Board.

Governors suggested that once the TEF result was published an action plan should be drawn up including, for example, withdrawals after the 6 week probation period if learners were not engaging. Governors added that the College would be able to improve its completion rate faster given that learners were studying two year accelerated degrees. The Principal proposed that it was possible to bring such an action plan to the next C&S Committee meeting and that the Director of HE & Special Projects could liaise with Ms Houzer and Professor Khan regarding suggestions for inclusion in the action plan.

The Director of HE & Special Projects advised that the TEF submission consisted of a College and Student submission. He noted that the student submission had been completed by a peer mentor who had unfortunately suffered disruption to her studies due to a lecturer being on sick leave. Governors noted that without a Student Union there was a risk of the student chosen to write the student submission including anecdotes and their own personal experience. Perhaps it would be better to have a formal student body? The Principal advised Governors that she had spoken to the Head of a local secondary school which operates a student leadership group and she was considering launching a similar group for FE and for HE students here.

APP

The Director of HE & Special Projects drew the Committee's attention to the update regarding the targets for the Access and Participation Plan (APP). Some targets were not being reached and the College had tried unsuccessfully to alter these difficult targets. However, on some targets the College was ahead. Professor Kahn advised the Committee that the OfS would not require an APP return this year but would review institutions' dashboards in March and make contact for an explanation regarding any issues.

Action: Director of HE & Special Projects to bring TEF action plan after the results are known.

2.16/22.23 HE Annual Review Reports – University of Surrey

The Director of HE & Special Projects presented the report noting that it included a lot of the information contained in the TEF submission. The progression/achievement rate had improved slightly. He announced that he had received feedback from the University of Surrey's Quality Committee regarding an increase in the number of first class degrees awarded by the College which was 34% in 2021/22. This was higher than the University of Surrey's rate. The Director of HE & Special Projects observed that mature learners were very focused and highly motivated, but the Higher Education Working Group will discuss the issue and monitor. Professor Khan advised that the College should scrutinise but not necessarily seek to reduce its first class degree awards. Governors also noted that with smaller numbers of learners an increase in the percentage might only be a small number of people.

The Director of HE & Special Projects left the meeting.

2.17/22.23 Termly Safeguarding Report

The Vice Principal Safeguarding, Pastoral & Performance Excellence introduced the report noting actions taken to improve student and staff awareness and the positive findings of a Safeguarding and Induction Survey. 96% of students report that the College is a safe place to study, 95% of learners are aware of the dangers of extremism and radicalisation, and 98% of learners know how to stay safe online. Safeguarding issues raised on the MyConcern platform had decreased by 20% compared to last year and whilst the number of initial contacts within counselling had decreased there had been a significant increase in drop-in sessions which tend to be crisis support. The College has a number of learners on a variety of plans and movement between these plans is quite fluid. The total number of learners on plans equates to approximately 1.3% of the total FE 16-18 learners. Learners' behaviour is positive although a small minority have jumped over the turnstiles but the College has a robust disciplinary process in place and this has now settled. Finally the College has 10 Looked After Children with the majority coming from Surrey.

Governors' questions and comments

Mr Crippa praised the positive report and noted that the increase in the number of learners subject to plans showed how inclusive the College is, although he also appreciated the extra work this entailed for staff. Mr Crippa also informed the Committee that he had had early sight of the new Safeguarding Policy and praised the Vice Principal Safeguarding, Pastoral & Performance Excellence's work here. The Vice Principal noted that the policy was going through SMT approval but she looked forward to bringing it to a future Committee as it is one clear procedural document.

2.18/22.23 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee minutes

The Committee received the report and commended it as helpful.

Governors' questions and comments

Governors praised the social media activity from the College regarding promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.

Staff and Student Governors, the Vice Principal Safeguarding, Pastoral & Performance Excellence and the Vice Principal Curriculum Development & HE left the meeting.

2.19/22.23 Apprenticeship Review & Ofsted Action Plan

This item was recorded as a confidential minute.

2.20/22.23 Any Confidential Matters of Report

There were no matters to report.

2.21/22.23 Any Other Business

The Committee agreed to report to the Board a short summary of all their items as many key points had been raised.

2.22/22.23 Date and Time of the next meeting

Thursday 15th June 2023 at 5pm.

The meeting closed at 7.05pm.

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

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

Summary of action points

Item	Action
2.5 Accountability Agreement	Principal to send draft Accountability Agreement to the Chair of C&S for comment.
2.11 Monitoring of Curriculum Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal to ensure the College provides additional EDI data to the next C&S meeting to show areas of focus and improvements. • Risk register to be shared with the EDI Committee for their feedback.
2.15 HE Report – TEF & APP	Director of HE & Special Projects to bring TEF action plan after the results are known.