

**FARNBOROUGH COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
CORPORATION BOARD**

CURRICULUM & STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**Minutes of meeting held on Monday 13 November 2023
held on the virtual platform Teams**

Present:

MS J Houzer (Chair)
Mr N Crippa (Vice Chair)
Prof O Khan
Mr J Sparkes
Ms V Barrett (Principal CEO)

In Attendance:

Ms K Morris (Director of Quality)
Mr I Graham (Vice Principal HE & Curriculum Development)
Mr C Hodge (Vice Principal Teaching, Learning & Completion)
Ms N Branson (Designated Safeguarding Lead and Learner Services Manager)
Mrs L Payne – Clerk to the Corporation

Quorate: Yes

The meeting opened at 5pm

1. Opening of Meeting and Apologies for Absence

The Chair thanked Members for attending the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Mr T Dunne, Ms K Yeomans and Dr F Oduneye.

2. Declarations of Interest

No Member declared any conflict of interest with the agenda.

3. Election of Chair & Vice Chair for 2023-24

The Clerk advised members of the guidance from the Chair of the Board for Chair and Vice Chair of this committee for the next academic year.

Mr N Crippa was proposed as Chair of the committee from December 2023 to July 2024, and Professor Khan as Vice Chair, in that period. Then in July 2024 Professor Khan would take on the office of Chair of the committee.

All Members were agreed.

Action: Refer to Corporation.

4. Minutes of the last Curriculum & Standards Committee meeting held 15 June 2023

Minutes of the previous Curriculum & Standards Committee meeting held on 15 June 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record and were approved for signing by the Chair.

5. Matters arising from the minutes of 15 June 2023

It was noted matters arising had been actioned or would be covered within the agenda.

6. Review of Committee Terms of Reference & Committee Effectiveness

Members considered the committee terms of committee and its effectiveness in the last year.

It was noted the committee had no vacancies, that all meetings in the last academic year had been quorate, and that attendance at meetings in the last academic year had been 72%. In considering the effectiveness points, it was agreed that the committee had an appropriate mix of knowledge and skills

amongst its membership and that papers and reports were comprehensive and concise and tailored to the needs of the committee. The Chair of the Board at the last Board meeting had referred to the new streamlined reports he was proposing and given the large number of papers for this meeting, members looked forward to that. The new proposed report style would provide a fuller summary for members but still be supported by appendices for more information.

Members were happy that the information the committee received was robust and objective, and also that the Chair provided sufficient time for each agenda item to be considered enabling an appropriate level of detail and rigour. Members agreed the Chair of the Committee had chaired business well in the last year, and as this would be her last Curriculum and Standards Committee meeting, thanked her and wished her well for the future. There were no other actions that it was felt could improve the committee's effectiveness.

Members agreed to recommend the terms of reference to the Board for approval.

All Members were agreed.

Action: Refer to Corporation.

Members agreed to refer the Committee effectiveness outcome to the Board for approval.

All Members were agreed.

Action: Refer to Corporation.

Professor Khan raised one issue relating to website links referring to QAA, a matter he had raised before and the Principal informed him that where this related a site with FCoT referred to, it could not be overridden by the College. The Principal said she would action removing reference to QAA as not having quality jurisprudence in England or Wales, where possible.

Action: Principal.

7. Annual Operating Statement 2022-23 July Monitoring Point

Members noted the colleges Annual Operating Statement 2022-2023, which captured key targets linked to the Sustainable Transformations Strategy 2022-32 and had a vision to create learners who would be a success for themselves, the economy and society. This was supported by four enabling goals and members were invited to review the progress of the last academic year strategic targets and agree the term three progress update for the Annual Operating Statement 2022-23.

The Principal informed members this was a whole college document.

The report was noted.

8. Annual Operating Statement 2023-24

Members noted the College's Annual Operating Statement 2023 - 2024, which also captured key targets linked to the Sustainable Transformations Strategy 2022-32. Members noted the four enabling goals listed within the strategy. The overall purpose of the strategy was to 'work in partnership to help people add value to society as net positive contributors.

Members discussed the report. Current retention was at 91%, whereas it had been higher before the pandemic at 96% and 97%. The Principal said there was a need to have improvement on satisfaction in all areas. The Chair referred to the total IT focus and asked 'what a modern learning experience was', saying that 100% digital was not good for everyone. The Principal agreed and would revisit that point.

Action: Principal.

Subject to the comments, Members agreed the Annual Operating Statement 2023-24 and agreed to recommend it to the Board for approval.

All Members were agreed.

Action: Refer to Corporation.

9. FE Self-Assessment Report 2022-23

This item was presented by the Director of Quality (DoQ). Members noted the annual Self-Assessment report summarising all the key indicators for FE performance and evaluative judgments about the quality of the College's provision. The key points on the approach for the 2022-23 SAR were:

1. The format of the report was based on the key criteria used by Ofsted inspectors when considering the quality of college provision.
2. The report focused on the strengths and areas for improvement/action in relation to each criterion and the amount of discursive text was minimised.
3. The report aimed to be evaluated and avoid focusing on describing aspects of the College.
4. Key areas of provision; 16 to 18, adult, apprenticeships and high needs learners were separately and subjectively evaluated.

Members were pleased to note the full draft Self-Assessment Report. The DoQ informed them that it had been subject to scrutiny by an external consultant and by an internal panel of Senior Managers. There were a small number of items of information still not available but that would be included in the Self-Assessment Report when presented to the Board in December for approval.

Members noted the recommendation was that the College should continue to be graded as Outstanding for overall effectiveness.

The Chair of the committee felt that this was a brilliant first draft of the Self-Assessment Report showing the best quality she had seen in 10 years. It was a really fair and excellent piece of work, and she congratulated the team on this.

She reminded members that in the past, she had felt the report had not been grounded, but that this draft was first class and would be very pleasing to Ofsted. Mr N Crippa agreed and praised the inclusivity, which he was delighted to read.

The Principal spoke about some students who were lost in the first six weeks of term and the discussions on-going on how to improve that for future students. Professor Khan felt this was an outstanding piece of work and praised the appendices with comparative numbers. He felt it may be useful for the committee to highlight the movements in the numbers and show those learners who were not achieving and what the College was doing about it. He felt a highlight box showing where the College could improve would be useful.

Action: Director of Quality.

Members discussed many aspects of the Self-Assessment Report. There was a discussion around focusing more on maths and English, which was currently under review. The DoQ advised members that the College was clear on its areas for improvement and in particular, learners who needed to increase exam outcomes. This applied to adult students as well. The Principal suggested the committee may want to look at the 'outcomes for learners', and that could be a focus going forward.

The Chair and members again praised the excellent Self-Assessment Report and agreed to recommend it to the Board for approval.

All Members were agreed.

Action: Refer to Corporation.

10. HE Annual Review Reports 2022-23

This item was presented by The Vice Principal HE & Curriculum Development (VPHECD). Members were reminded that in HE the majority of Higher Education provision at the college was validated by the University of Surrey. The Annual Review Report was part of the University of Surrey's Quality Assurance Process, but also served as an internal review of the College's Higher Education provision.

The report contained a progress review of the 2023 action plan and detailed the actions set out for the next academic year, citing progress made to date.

Members discussed the Annual Review Report and noted that there were 253 higher education new starts for 2022-23, being a marginal decrease of 11 students, when compared with the previous academic year.

Overall, student numbers across all levels had increased by 20 from the previous year, with a total of 439 students enrolled. In student outcomes, the overall 2022-23 continuation rate for undergraduate students at the College was 93%, being an increase of 6% when compared with the previous academic year. This was noted as above the OfS threshold of 80% and 6.8% over the national benchmark of 86.2%.

In relation to student awards, the percentage number of students achieving good degrees in 2022-23 had decreased by 5% to 67%., which was statistically closer to the College's five-year average. The comments made by external examiners were noted as they had considered the strength of feedback to students to be individualised and personal and the use of many types of feedback used helpful, including voice notes.

The high quality of dissertations was also praised by the external examiners, as was the quality of the teaching team. Specific points of commendation from the external examiner's reports included the continued decolonisation of the curriculum, the extra support provided to a new lecturer and the process in place for modernisation and the strength of primary source analysis. There were no areas of concern reported by the external examiners.

Members noted the evaluation of feedback from students and the National Student Survey (NSS) return completed by students to assess their experience whilst at the College. The Chair of the committee expressed some concern with some of the results where they were lower than the sector average, in particular in organisation and management and mental well-being services, together with learning resources. She was particularly concerned about the mental well-being services. Professor Khan agreed the information showed a trend of less satisfaction, for example, with mental well-being services, but that the college was working in a particular demographic.

The Chair thanked the Principal for her input. Members felt it would be useful to have half-termly communication to keep the university up to date.

Action: Principal.

In relation to the specific data referred to in the NSS, where the sector norm was higher than at Farnborough, it was agreed to bring this back to the next meeting of this Committee for further discussion.

Action: Agenda item.

Professor Khan spoke about a useful matrix he had that might help the College in recording these matters and would make it available to the Principal. The Chair of the committee spoke about HR recruitment and enquired whether there were any specific areas to consider as not continuing. She also felt that small college classes could be changing the percentage information on the NSS referred to earlier. The Principal thanked committee members for their useful comments and for the next meeting she would ask the Assistant Principal Education & Humanities to come to the meeting and present the HR review report.

Action: Principal/Vice Principal Education & Humanities.

Members noted the report.

11. Monitoring of Curriculum Risks

Members considered the risks attributed to this committee to further scrutinise. There were six risks and the top of those related to the impact of RAAC across all provision types. The risks and their scores were considered.

The report was noted.

The Chair of the Committee congratulated the Executive on dealing with the impact of RAAC to curriculum and quality and teaching, and how well they had preserved the ongoing the learner experience and that the quality of teaching would have benefited greatly.

The report was noted.

12. FE Student Performance Report

Members noted the report on the student attendance and retention position for the various funding categories set out in the report. The Chair felt this showed a very positive picture.

The report was noted.

13. HE Update on the TEF & APP

Members noted the report on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and Access and Participation Plan (APP). On the TEF, members noted the summary of the report findings and areas for development, with a working plan of action allowing the College to move forward beyond the status of bronze. In relation to the APP, members had received the five-year plan set by the Office for Students (OfS) to improve access and participation across higher education provision. The challenging targets included access to HE for those from low participation and deprived areas and the proportion of BAME students, the continuation of students from deprived areas and the success of LLDD students, and the relative success of mature students when compared to national averages. Members noted the report on the update of the College progress against the prescribed targets alongside the revised action plan to improve access and participation for 2023-24.

The report was noted.

14. Termly Safeguarding Report

Members noted the report providing information on the issues regarding safeguarding that had arisen in the first half term of the year. The Chair of the committee, considering the reports, wondered whether more was needed in connection with the male cohort on gender and Mr Crippa felt it would be helpful if there was more on 'Looked After Children'. It was agreed that these aspects would be considered in the next report.

Action: Principal

The report was noted.

15. Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Members noted the report on the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures. It was noted the Safeguarding Policy was amended annually and reflected the changes to staff within the safeguarding team and the new reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) from September 2023. Members had received the main updates to KCSIE for September 23 at the Board meeting on the 30th of October 2023. Members noted the updated policy and procedures. Mr Crippa felt there was change required on the report rephrasing to 'staff will get training', from 'staff should get training'.

Members wanted to be assured that all members of the Board would receive this updated policy, highlighting this section on the responsibilities of the Board of Governors. Subject to the small changes made, members agreed to recommend Policy to Board for approval.

All Members were agreed.

Action: Refer to Corporation.

16. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Minutes

Members noted the minutes of the EDIC on Thursday 2nd of November.

17. Complaints Analysis 2022-23

Report in the Part II Minutes.

18. Any Other Business

Members thanked Ms J Houzer for her, sterling work on this committee over a number of years and wished her well for the future as this would be her last Curriculum & Standards Committee meeting.

19. Evaluation of Meeting

Members were asked to complete the online evaluation via the hyperlink in the agenda.

17. Date & Time of Next Meeting

Thursday 7 March 2024 at 5pm

The meeting closed at 6.55pm.

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

Signed:.....

Dated:.....