



**GOVERNING BODY**

**QUALITY, TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting of the Quality, Teaching and Learning Committee held on Thursday 25 June 2020 at 1000hrs via Skype due to College closure (Covid-19).

**Present:**

Mr M Blanning	Chairman
Mr S Cook	Principal
Mr A Start	GB Chair
Prof E Sallis	
Mr J White	Student Governor
Mrs M Woolston	
Mrs J Watt	Exec Director of Curriculum & Quality

**In attendance:**

Ms J Burtenshaw	Dir of Employer Relations
Ms C Burkin	Clerk to the Governing Body
Mr J Egan	Dir of Quality
Mr C Lydon	Dir of Curriculum
Mr N Mugharbel	Dir of Curriculum
Mrs A Ritchie	Dir of Student Services

**1 Declarations of Interest**

*Mr S Cook* declared an interest as a Rivermead Trust, a Board member of the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership and Chair of Medway Place Board, Trustee of Royal Engineers Vocational Education and Training Trust (REVETT) and a member of MKCTS Board. *Prof E Sallis* declared an interest as Education and Training Foundation T level Professional Development External Assurance Group/Trustee of the Education Support Partnership/ The Association of Accounting Technicians Licensing and Monitoring Group/currently being consulted by the DfE as part of their review of Level 2 qualifications, particularly

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in relationship to qualifications in childcare. *Mrs M Woolston*, North West Kent Alternative Provision Service - Head Teacher.

## **2 Apologies for Absence**

No apologies were received.

The Chairman welcome Marie Woolston to her first official meeting.

## **3 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 March 2020 and the call notes 6 May 2020**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 March 2020 and the call notes 6 May 2020, papers GBQTL19/234 & 235 were agreed and accepted as a true record. These will be signed digitally.

## **4 Matters Arising**

All matters are actioned in the meeting papers.

Members noted that at the March meeting the main focus was attendance and HE Strategy. At the May call which all Governors joined, the focus was about maintaining provision during the Covid-19 pandemic and the new key risks this presents.

## **5 Student Engagement Update**

J White introduced paper GBQTL19/236, Student Engagement Update. Members had also been sent a video for pre-viewing highlighting extra curricula activities and the positive student experience.

Members felt the paper and video enhanced their knowledge of the student journey and experience. They were assured by the Student Governor that the experience of those on the video was consistent with Students across the College. They asked what other student feedback is available to give further assurance.

A Ritchie informed members that feedback was given directly to staff by students during the Student Voice process and actioned where possible. An example of this was the review of some timetables. Feedback is also gained through surveys with recommendations taken forward. Members noted that the usual T&L Survey and FE Choices survey had not taken place this year due to

the pandemic. Student surveys will continue to provide crucial feedback and one will be sent after induction 2020/21.

Members challenged the low attendance at the Student Conference and asked if plans would change going forward. They were assured that future events will be formed with a blended approach of virtual and physical activities. Social media is also being used with course Facebook groups.

Members were informed of several ways the College is supporting students' especially those who are vulnerable students. The NCS programme has been vital in helping ESOL students, many of which are unaccompanied asylum seekers, to clearly understand the culture, rules and norms of living in this society and this has led to a decrease in unacceptable behaviours and an increase in retention.

Members thanked the team for the update.

## **6 Executive Director of Quality and Curriculum Report**

Jackie Watt introduced Paper GBQTL19/237. The following points were discussed at length:

- Business planning has planned to exceed our allocation by 461 students for 16 – 18 year olds. A reduction in the planned 19+ delivery for funded provision was noted. The College is currently developing provision for the potential impact of COVID-19. Changes to student documents due to social distancing, continues to be in place in September to accommodate the changes that will be required.

Members asked for assurance regarding the plans for September, in particular for college-wide (“top-down”) strategies for blended learning. They had already gained some assurance through Governor online visits and calls to departments undertaken by QTL members (e.g. through the CPR process) and through selected departmental planning documents included in the papers, which all evidenced much departmental-level preparation and planning for delivery of the curriculum in September.

College staff have proved creative in this time and continue to provide a good consistent service to the students. Enrolment continues but staff are very mindful of the potential challenges ahead with a cohort of new students in September, some of which will not have been in a learning environment for many months. Lockdown has forced unnatural behaviours for teenagers and this has to be taking into account when planning. Furthermore, the usual

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information that accompanies a student may not be available and the mental health and welfare of the new student may have been negatively impacted by the pandemic.

CPD in place with Advanced Practitioner team to improve staff confidence in delivering on line learning and assessments.

The usual Welcome and Inductions will take place in adapted forums to ensure the expectations are still understood but the College will be very different to a normal September start. Induction has been extended in some areas to give extra support were required.

Members discussed fully the comprehensive plans for transition and the College's involvement with local schools and the authority to ensure the support required for year 11 students so they do not become NEET. Virtual tours of the campus are available to help reduce any anxieties about the environment and small groups are coming into College especially for the more vulnerable students but also for the post 16 mainstream students. Contact with new students in departments via Facebook groups is a further example of the adapted methods being prepared for September induction.

Students will form 'bubbles' for learning and support to help maintain their safety during Covid-19. Blended learning will provide a mix of virtual and physical learning, adapted to the abilities and requirements of the students: L1 students will be a priority for in-college contact, as will new learners on L2 and L3 courses, particularly those in the more vocational departments.

E&M GCSE and FS will be delivered remotely with 1:1 and onsite workshops available. Initial assessments will be completed at the beginning of term and lessons will be timetabled using the same streaming based on prior attainment as used in 2019-20

Members also discussed metrics for measuring in-year and year-end performance. It is proposed that the same MLPs will remain in place and will continue to be monitored in the usual way going forward. For example, Attendance or non-attendance in a Zoom lesson will be judged and reacted to as in a physical lesson. They also stressed to College leaders that all evidence of individual student learning through the year should be carefully recorded, given the distinct possibility of a second wave of Covid-19 leading to a repeat of assessment process being based on teacher predictions and/or adapted methods.

Members discussed some specific areas such as Adult learners and the opportunities that may become available due to the pandemic. They also noted the opportunities in FE as Apprenticeships will likely be limited. Members noted that Apprenticeships is not on the agenda for this meeting as a comprehensive call specifically regarding this area was held with R&A and QTL members on 11 June 2020 and is referenced in the R&A Committee minutes of 16 June 2020.

End of 2019-20:

- Retention was reported as currently 93.3% which is 0.3% above MLP and 0.9pp below final figure at end of last year. Members noted the areas of improved retention had also shown increased achievement.
- Proposed achievement claims for students are being submitted with professional integrity after moderation at departmental and senior management level. . Members asked for and received justifications for specific departmental results either being assessed to be above last year's results or, in one case, to be below last year's (due to poor retention early in the year).

Members also noted the useful written examples provided in the papers, with regard to teacher assessments of student grades at a departmental level, which gave assurance of robust processes. The College is working through the many differing guidance from awarding bodies to ensure all students are not disadvantaged by the current situation.

Where possible practical (sometimes adapted) assessments required on more vocational courses, notably for City & Guilds, have been/ are being completed in College. End dates have been extended, if this has not been possible, due to the industry not yet reopened such as Hair & Beauty but detailed guidance from awarding bodies are still unclear. Where industry placements are required, such as Childcare, these have been postponed. The Student Governor was assured that all possible is being done to support students in these industry effected areas and members recognised this as an area of concern for students.

GCSE and Functional Skills predicted grades have been submitted. The College has worked with the new Awarding Body to ensure the process is transparent and fair for all students. The predicted grades have to reflect the College trend and historical achievements. Members challenged the process to ensure lessons have been learnt with regard to evidencing grades to mitigate the risk if this occurs again next year. The College assured Governors that mock results will be used in the future. They were also informed that the majority of FS level 1 students who were assessed as not having passed the exam will

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be returning to College in September and continue their studies and therefore will have a chance to gain the qualification. It was noted that some student engagement has improved with the flexibility of remote learning.

- Observations will continue in an adapted way with support and challenge available to staff.

Members thanked the College for a detailed discussion regarding end of year outcomes and future planning which provided much assurance that the risks are being managed well in this unusual time.

*A Start left the meeting.*

## **7 HE & Adult Update**

Chris Lydon introduced paper GBQTL19/238, HE & Adult Update which asked members to support and sign off on revised Higher Skills Strategy 2020 and to note the OIA Annual Statement 2019.

Members noted that HE is in a period of flux that could impact the College positively or negatively. They noted the amended and comprehensive Higher Skills Strategy which is a requirement of the Office of Students (“OfS”) as part of the Conditions of Registration B, C & E.

They noted that Higher Skills Strategy identifies the key priorities at MidKent College regarding Higher Level programmes (Level 4+) and will be reviewed on a 24 month cycle.

The Higher Skills Strategy informs the following key priorities:

- to deliver high quality programmes that meet the needs of all students ensuring that teaching is of the highest standards;
- to measure and maintain quality through timely and effective quality assurance processes;
- to widen participation amongst ‘non-traditional’ HE students;
- to work with a range of employers to offer programmes that meet their specific needs;
- to continue to work in partnership with local universities as well as explore new partnerships;
- to increase the number of further education students that progress onto higher level courses and develop a wide offering of programmes that allow this progression thus increasing higher education students; and
- to recognise the reputational risk in not maintaining the Conditions of Registration as required by the Office for Students.

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The Higher Skills Strategy is supported by a strategic and operational action plan that will timeframe the priorities and must be scrutinised by College Senior Leaders as well as Governors as part of the OfS ongoing Condition of registration E3.

Members discussed the Higher Skills Strategy, priorities and its supporting action plan within the current challenges of COVID-19 regarding delivery models and adaptive assessment methods. They felt opportunities may be available in this area if University recruitment is impacted by the pandemic and are working with partners to explore these. The College is also exploring options with the Open University to give students as many opportunities as possible.

Members noted that HE provision had continued throughout the closure and blended learning has worked well. As the College offer is different to that of the traditional University experience, it may suit more students going forward. Members noted that the quality of the provision remains a focus.

Members thanks C Lydon for the update. They **supported** the Strategy and **noted** the OIA Annual Statement 2019.

## **8 Feedback from Governors Informal Visits**

Members noted the feedback from the following Governors Informal Visits

- Chris Reeves – Apprenticeships 12/3/20
- Ed Sallis – HE 14/2/20
- Michael Blanning – note of Departmental CPR 18/6/20
- Marie Woolston – Note 23/6/20 spoke to staff about remote teaching and learning

Members thanked colleagues for the feedback which added another layer or scrutiny and assurance for the Board.

## **9 Committee Self-Assessment for 2019/20 & Improvement Plan for 2020/21**

Michael Blanning reminded members of the importance of self-assessment to ensure improvement going forward. Members took time to reflect and assess the Committee during 2019/20. They discussed the strengths and areas for improvement and agreed the way forward for 2020/21 keeping in mind the strategic remit of the Committee.

The Improvement plan presented for discussion:

- Four strengths were included to highlight the scrutiny of the Committee to the TLA of the College.
- Four improvements were included to address the balance of the plan and continue to improve the Committee moving forward. Members noted that further focus is needed regarding Student Destinations, which in turn inform curriculum design (impact feeding back into implementation). J Watt informed members that progress has been made during College closure to contact students and an update can be brought forward.  
**Action: J Watt**
- One new area for improvement was proposed and agreed: Understand the quality of TLA in a Covid-19 – affected environment.

The Chairman asked members to feedback any further comments to him ASAP for inclusion in the **recommended** document to the Governing Body.

**Action: All Members**

## 10 Terms of Reference Annual Review

Members were reminded it is good practice to review the Terms of Reference annually to ensure they remain fit for purpose. They noted the document had been reviewed in line with changes to titles and acronyms and amendments for consideration, were presented as tracked changes.

The two suggested additions had been recommended by the S&G Committee as they felt the content of the Governance Self-assessment and improvement plan were best suited to the remit of the QTL Committee. These were:

- Reviewing and making recommendations to Governing Body on the GSAR of the Board with consideration of the Committee self-assessment. To be completed in June annually.
- Oversight of the effective completion of the resulting Board Improvement Plan. To be completed in June annually.

The framework for the meeting contents has been amended accordingly and will act as a reference point and reminder of the items of business for each meeting.

Members agreed the amendments for **recommendation** to the Governing Body for approval in July 2020.

## 11 Risk Register Review (T&L)

Members were reminded that there is an expectation that each Governing Body Committee will review and monitor the risks relevant to their remit, from the College Risk Register to support and challenge the Exec Lead. Any amendments will be recommended to the R&A Committee. This item acts as a cross check of information already discussed.

Members agreed that the risks below had been covered in the Committee papers. Members noted the key new risks/uncertainties of unknown student numbers in September due to the pandemic and the revised organisation of the provision that were highlighted in the May meeting. They felt these had been discussed fully during the meeting.

QTL key risks:

- 1) Failure to improve the quality of the HE provision
- 2) Failure to improve achievement rates for apprenticeship provision
- 3) Failure to comply to Office for Students or HESA regulations and returns
- 4) Failure to improve standards of Maths and English across the College
- 5) Failure to improve student attendance and punctuality
- 6) Failure to provide outstanding provision for 16-18 students (inc with SEN)
- 7) Equalise and have consistently good quality teaching, learning and assessment
- 8) Fraudulent claims for student achievements or falsification of records

Members **noted** the risks but no amendments were required.

## 12 Any Other Business

There was no any other business

## 13 Dates for meetings in 2020/21:

28 November 2020

11 March 2021

24 June 2021

It was agreed that these meeting will remain at 10am.

### **Call Dates 2020/21 at 5pm**

17 September 2020

22 October 2020

4 February 2021

6 May 2021

The meeting closed at 12:01

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