

**MINUTES OF THE LEARNING AND QUALITY COMMITTEE HELD ON
THURSDAY 2 DECEMBER 2021**

PRESENT:

Mark Allanson	Chair
Lillian Croston	Member
Dr Fazal Dad	Principal and Chief Executive
Ram Gupta	Member
Catherine Hill OBE	Member
Mark Moren	Academic Staff Governor

IN ATTENDANCE:

Caroline Bracewell	Head of School: Higher Education
Nicola Clayton	Director: Business Development and External Engagement
Andrew Gadsdon	Head of Quality of Education
Chris Hepworth	Head of Quality and Standards (HE)
Damian Stewart	Assistant Principal: Teaching and Learning (Technical Centre)
Jean Tracy	Clerk to the Corporation

It was noted that the meeting commenced at 17.00pm and was quorate.

Members of the College joined the meeting as necessary to present their papers.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Glenys Pashley-Crawford, Jade Wellings and Rachel Tarplee.

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair advised those in attendance that should members of the Learning and Quality Committee become aware of any potential conflicts of interest, they should be disclosed at the earliest opportunity during the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE LEARNING AND QUALITY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 21 OCTOBER 2021

The minutes of the Learning and Quality Committee meeting held on Thursday 21 October 2021 were accepted as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Committee noted the updates against previous actions points. There were no other matters arising.

5. LEARNING AND QUALITY COMMITTEE CALENDAR OF BUSINESS 2021/22

The Committee considered and **APPROVED** the Calendar of Business for 2021/22 and **APPROVED** that for 2022/23 the Self-Assessment Report would be the main agenda item for

the November 2022 meeting, noting that the meeting dates for 2022/23 would remain unchanged.

6. PERFORMANCE AGAINST COLLEGE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

(i) 2020/21 FINAL

The Report provided information on the College's final position against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2020/21. The Committee noted the impact on retention and NSS Satisfaction Rates of Covid and was reminded that Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) had been used in 2020/21.

The Principal and Chief Executive informed the Committee that overall, the College had consolidated its overarching quality. Though HE had improved, this was from a low starting point and thus the College would continue to monitor.

A member of the Committee commented on the need to improve attendance. Information on the role of the Access and Participation Officer (APO) was provided and the College confirmed that the APOs were having a positive impact, though further improvement in attendance was still needed. The Chair of the Corporation Board had attended a number of Quality Summit meetings and was mindful that attendance needed to be a whole College expectation. The Chair of the Committee stated that the relentless focus on attendance from the Committee would continue.

In answer to a question from the Chair, the Principal and Chief Executive explained how the Committee would be assured that in-year progress was satisfactory. Using attendance and retention, the Committee would be informed, by exception, of intervention.

(ii) 2021/22 PROGRESS UPDATE

The Report provided information on the College's current position against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2021/22. It was confirmed that at this stage, none were behind target and that a number were not yet reportable.

7. A/AS/GCSE/VOCATIONAL/APPRENTICESHIPS AND HE RESULTS 2020/21 UPDATE

The Report provided the Committee with information on the final results of the 2020/21 academic year for FE, HE and Apprenticeships.

The Committee reviewed the Report and a detailed discussion took place on Value Added, its use, benefits and limitations. It was agreed that all available metrics should be used to identify areas for improvement and where these were still to be made. The Chair also asked if there was a need for a KPI covering high grade achievements which would be used alongside Value Added data to enable a greater focus on high grade performance.

The importance of adding value in its widest sense was discussed, including links with employers, both in the provision of work placements and in direct contact in College with student groups.

The format of the Report was agreed to be helpful to the Committee – the information was succinct and clearly presented.

The Assistant Principals: Higher Education and Teaching and Learning (Technical) joined the meeting.

8. KEY CHANGES TO THE CURRICULUM – ANNUAL REPORT

The Report provided the Committee with an annual overview of the curriculum changes for the academic year 2021/22 and the plans for 2022/23.

The Committee agreed that the report provided a clear overview of the changes and the reasons for these. It requested that a brief commentary on the impact per course be provided and that the information provided on impact was consistent across the report. It was also agreed that the format of future reports would cover the 3 Is – intent, implementation and impact.

Action: Director: Business Development and External Engagement and the Assistant Principals: Academic, Technical and HE

The Head of Quality and Standards: Higher Education joined the meeting.

9. HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) STUDENT PERFORMANCE INCLUDING REFERENCE TO OFS INITIAL AND ONGOING CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION UPDATE, RETENTION AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE, AND ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN

The Committee considered the Report which provided an update on progress against the key performance indicators, including the Office for Students' (OfS) B3 metrics and completion of the improvement plan, and progress against the Access and Participation Plan.

The Chair of the Committee noted that performance was exceeding benchmark and should thus remove the College from OfS review, but that the Committee's view was that improvement must continue. A discussion took place and it was agreed that the College should write to OfS – cc Nicola Dandridge (OfS Chief Executive) – to inform them of the College's current performance and thus removal from the list of concerns.

Action: Principal and Chief Executive

The Head of Quality of Education joined the meeting.

10. HIGHER EDUCATION SELF-EVALUATION DOCUMENT 2020/21

The Committee reviewed the Self-Evaluation Document (SED) in detail. Whilst it was noted that mapping against the HE Quality Standards would continue to provide assurance that the College was meeting all the relevant standards, etc., the College was asked to review the format of the SED going forward. The Committee requested that the critical areas of focus be extracted, that the report should be more evaluative and digestible as was the case with the College Self-Assessment Report, and that consideration be given to the inclusion of both benchmark and year-comparison data. The Head of Quality and Standards: Higher Education proposed that the intended future format be brought to the Committee early in the new year in order to ensure that it met the Committee's needs.

Action: Head of Quality and Standards: Higher Education

11. HE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2021/22

The Head of Quality of Education confirmed that previous comments from the Committee had been taken on board in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) being presented. The Report now included actions linked to previous performance, etc. and was similar to the FE QIP in scope and focus.

It was agreed that the HE QIP was a much stronger document, was now far more detailed, with a clear indication of targets but it was requested that more information on impact be included. It was **AGREED** that the heading title should be amended to "Impact" from "Progress Update".

Action: Head of Quality of Education

The Chair stressed the importance of students continuing and completing their studies, and also of being aware of the purpose in terms of their outcome – into graduate-level employment or study at a higher level.

A member of the Committee questioned whether the number of student withdrawals indicated a problem with the entry criteria. The Assistant Principal: Higher Education confirmed that the College was taking the correct approach regarding admissions. It was also confirmed that Summer schools were offered, though the take up was lower than the College would like and thus changes were being planned for the future.

The Committee requested that clarification on the frequency the various reviews, the Performance Quality Reviews for example, be included in the HE QIP. The College would also review the wording in 6.1.1.

Action: Head of Quality of Education/Assistant Principal: HE

12. HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGY

The Assistant Principal: Higher Education presented the Report which set out the intention for Higher Education at Blackburn College. The Strategy would be published externally and was supported by an internal-facing marketing document, the latter being included in the Appendix.

A discussion took place on the content, the Committee commenting that it was unable to identify the vision for the University Centre, its positioning and distinctiveness before determining how this would be achieved. There was also an expectation that the Strategy would have more focus on curriculum – what programmes of study would be most helpful to our cohort of students, how the links with employers could be further strengthened. Data, including that on demographics, was requested to enable the Committee to make a considered response to the Strategy being put forward. The Assistant Principal: Higher Education informed the Committee that this information was available in the internal-facing document and not published so as not to be used by the College's competitors.

The Committee was appreciative of the work being undertaken within the University Centre to bring about the improvements which the Committee was demanding and thus it was suggested that an independent facilitator might be required to help shape the strategy.

Action: Principal and Chief Executive

The Assistant Principal: Higher Education and the Head of Quality and Standards: Higher Education left the meeting.

13. FURTHER EDUCATION (FE) STUDENT IN-YEAR PERFORMANCE 2021/22 – RETENTION, ATTENDANCE AND STUDENT PROGRESS

(i) ACADEMIC

The Principal and Chief Executive presented the Report which provided Governors with an update on the in-year performance against set metrics, including retention, value added, attendance and engagement and quality assurance.

The Committee also noted the information regarding student numbers, attendance and High Needs. The Principal and Chief Executive confirmed that there were no areas of concern at this stage.

The Committee agreed that the Report had been well written but requested that it would be helpful to have had the actual numbers of student who had withdrawn in addition to the number of withdrawals at subject level.

Action: Assistant Principal: Teaching and Learning (Academic)

(ii) **TECHNICAL**

The Assistant Principal: Teaching and Learning (Technical Centre) presented the Report which provided an update on the in-year performance against set metrics, including retention, value added, maths and English outcomes and quality assurance for the Technical Centre. Information on the key reasons for low attendance had been included, the increase in mental health issues was noted and information on the support offered by the College was provided.

The Chair asked that the graphics relating to Point 5 – In-year Progress be amended to reflect the good progress being made.

Action: Assistant Principal: Teaching and Learning (Technical)

The high retention in the Centre was noted, and that this was a good indicator of achievement, the latter being 1-2% lower than the final retention figure.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal: Teaching and Learning (Academic) for his Report and on his awareness of the Centre's performance.

(iii) **WORK BASED LEARNING**

The Report provided the Committee with an update on Apprenticeship performance for 2020/21 and in year for 2021/22, it being noted that information on the final outcomes for 2020/21 had already been covered in an earlier paper. Achievement for 2020/21 continued to improve and remained significantly above national rates for both overall and timely achievement.

The Committee noted the Apprenticeship Performance to date and the significant curriculum changes reflecting the continued move from frameworks to standards. Information on the Lancashire Enrichment of Apprenticeship Programme (LEAP) was also included in the Report.

14. COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT 2020/21

The College Further Education Self-Assessment Report (SAR) had been revised to take account of feedback from the validation event and from the previous Learning and Quality Committee.

The Committee agreed that the SAR was much improved since the previous draft. A member of the Committee requested sight of the blueprint mentioned in the SAR¹. The College would also review the content of the Tier 2 SSA Self-Assessment Grades for Behaviour and Attitudes.

Action: Head of Quality of Education

The Chair thanked all those staff who had contributed to the SAR.

15. FE COLLEGE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2021/22

The Head of Quality of Education presented the paper which provided the Committee with an update on the actions included within the FE Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2021/22. As noted earlier in the meeting, the heading would be amended to "Impact" from "Progress Update".

The Head of Quality of Education confirmed that the QIP would be updated to reflect the action which had taken place and the expected timeframe dates.

Action: Head of Quality of Education

¹ Information sent 6 Dec 2021

16. URGENT CARE/PROGRAMME IMPROVEMENT PLAN

(i) FE

The Report provided the Committee with an overview of the courses that were currently being scrutinised as part of the Urgent Care process for 2021/22 and included detail on their progress in improving key metrics.

The Committee noted that the first Quality improvement Reviews (PQRs) had taken place and that where needed, further intervention action plans were reviewed to compliment/strengthen local QIPs. The actions identified in the School QIPs and specific improvement plans would be confirmed in the upcoming meetings with subject tutors. Appropriate training and one to one support would be put in place as necessary and would be monitored by the Heads of School and the Head of Quality (FE).

(ii) HE

The Report provided an overview of the HE programmes that were currently being scrutinised as part of the College Programme Improvement Plan (PIP) for 2021/22. PIP Action Plans were in being put place for each course. The detail on the HE programmes identified for inclusion in the PIP was contained in the Report.

The Head of Quality of Education informed the Committee that in the previous year there had been difficulties with the process rather than the QIP itself. For the current year, the process had been personalised, working with the teams in order that they were aware from the start as to the actions needed to be made to bring about the necessary improvements. The Head of Quality of Education was working with the Assistant Principal: Higher Education, the Head of Quality and Standards: Higher Education and the relevant teams to complete all the required plans.

17. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC BOARD 2020/21

The Committee considered the Annual Report which provided information on the Board's activities for the academic year 2020/21.

In answer to a question from a member of the Committee, the Principal and Chief Executive confirmed that Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) was not included and that a separate report would be brought to the Committee at a future meeting.

Action: Principal and Chief Executive

18. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2021/22 – AUGUST-OCTOBER AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021/22

The Report provided information on the core Organisational Development data sets for the period August to October 2021 and the Organisational Development Plan for 2021/22.

The poor staff satisfaction rate had been raised at an earlier meeting when the Committee had been informed of the issues in relation to external customer service training. This had been followed up by the College and changes to the timing of the CPD activities had been made in order to improve satisfaction rates. The Report included the progress made in relation to the KPIs covering staff satisfaction, completion of mandatory training and staff appraisal completion. The Head of Quality of Education explained the technical issues which had resulted in and incorrect appraisal figure and confirmed that the target would be met by 31 December 2021.

19. SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

The Principal and Chief Executive presented the Report which provided a summary assurance in relation to safeguarding arrangements. The Committee was reminded that Catherine Hill OBE attended the Safeguarding Committee meetings in her role as Safeguarding/SEND Governor Champion. Mrs Hill gave assurance to the Committee and Board that safeguarding within the College was operating well and was well managed.

The College continued to prioritise safeguarding arrangements for students across all aspects of provision and effective internal structures and processes supported statutory expectations and positive external agency interventions. The Committee noted the key messages and the Committee Assurance document as provided in the Appendix and was informed that the provision of additional student support was being looked into.

The Committee was informed that Emma Goodlet, Assistant Principal: Student Support and Experience, had started that week and would take over the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) role. The College now had 3 three staff who were fully qualified at DSL level. The College was asked to thank Francesca Keogh, Safeguarding Practitioner, for her work in the interim period.

20. FE AND HE COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS 2020/21

The Report summarised the compliments and complaints received during the academic year 2020/21 and, as requested by the Committee, included comparative data.

The Committee commented that it was good to also receive information on the compliments received. In answer to a question from a member of the Committee, the Head of Quality of Education also confirmed that the College was CMA compliant and none of the complaints were concerned with misinformation.

21. STUDENT VOICE COMMITTEE

(i) NOVEMBER 2021 – FEEDBACK

The Principal and Chief Executive provided feedback on the discussions which had taken place at the Student Voice Committee meeting held on 10 November 2021, it being noted that the Chair and another member of the Board had attended the meeting. The Principal and Chief Executive confirmed that feedback from the students had generally been very good and that any issues raised were small, noted and were dealt with quickly. The minutes of the meeting would be included, as usual, in the Board papers for 15 December 2021.

(ii) REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR 2021/22

Having considered the proposed changes to the Student Voice Committee Terms of Reference for 2021, it was **AGREED** that these would be recommended to the Board for approval at its meeting on 15 December 2021.

22. CHAIR APPROVED MINUTES OF ACADEMIC BOARD – 2 NOVEMBER 2021

The Committee noted the Chair Approved minutes of the Academic Board meeting held on 2 November 2021, these being presented for information.

23. HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM REVIEW PROPOSALS

The Report provided information on the proposed schedule of validations and revalidations for 2021/22 and the proposed plan for revalidations and validations from 2021 to 2026 and was noted by the Committee.

24. HIGHER EDUCATION ACADMEIC STAFF APPROVALS REPORT FOR LANCASTER UNIVERSITY PROGRAMMES

The Report on the process and outcomes of Lancaster University's approval of staff was provided for information.

25. STUDENTS' UNION ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21 INLCUDING DRAFT ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The Report provided and overview and information on the Students' Union (SU) activities which included the details, challenges and ambitions and priorities going forward. The draft SU annual accounts were also included in the Report.

The Chair wished to record the Committee's thanks to the Personal Development, Employability and Welfare Manager for her Report.

26. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of Any Other Business.

27. REVIEW OF MEETING

The Chair thanked all members for their contribution to the meeting and the details discussions which had taken place.

28. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Learning and Quality Committee would take place on Thursday 10 February 2022 at 5.00pm via Microsoft Teams/Harrison Centre Board room.

19:27pm: The meeting ended.

Signed:

Date: