

**MINUTES OF THE LEARNING AND QUALITY COMMITTEE HELD ON
THURSDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2023**

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	Assistant Principal: Higher Education
Nicola Clayton	Director: Business Development and Employer Engagement
Andrew Gadsdon	Head of Quality of Education
Emma Goodlet	Assistant Principal: Student Support and Experience
Damian Stewart	Assistant Principal: Further Education
Rachel Tarplee	Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality
Sarah Horeesorun	Director of Governance

* denotes attended via Microsoft Teams

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

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Cath Hill arrived at 17.05pm.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Imaan Ijaz and Andrea Machell, who had submitted her comments in advance and the Chair agreed to share these with the Committee at the relevant points throughout the meeting.

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 1 DECEMBER 2022

The minutes of the Learning and Quality Committee meeting held on Thursday 1 December 2022 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.

5. PROGRESS ON KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs) FOR 2022/23

The Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality presented the Report.

Members noted that five of the KPIs were on target, nil achieved in part, two under target, and twelve were not yet reportable.

The Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality explained that one of the KPIs that was under target was around pass rates and though the results were disappointing, this was not a local issue but indicative of the national picture.

The second KPI under target was related to attendance. To increase the focus on results and attendance, the frequency of the strategic meetings had changed to every two weeks with targeted actions and approaches agreed to encourage improvement.

A member commented that KPIs 17 and 18 had low targets and requested rolling information, best case, to help contextualise the position.

Action: Vice-Principal: Curriculum and Quality

Another member suggested that it would be helpful to have in year completion information for the Apprenticeships rather than wait until the end of the year.

Action: Director of Business and Employer Engagement.

6. FURTHER EDUCATION (FE) STUDENT: IN-YEAR PERFORMANCE 2022/23 INC. RETENTION, STUDENT PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT:

(i) FE Academic and Vocational

This Report was presented by the Assistant Principal: Further Education and provided the members with a top-level account of FE student performance compared to like-for-like data from the previous year.

Members noted an improved picture in overall Retention compared to this time last year. However, sought more information surrounding the concern with the A level provision and impact of historic withdrawals on current retention compared to 2022.

The Assistant Principal: Further Education explained that without the A level figures, and across the rest of the FE provision, Retention was at 99.9%. Progress was above where it was this time last year and those unlikely to achieve had been identified and were being closely monitored between interventions (snapshots) by multi-faceted Curriculum Area Teams who offered support and guidance.

A member enquired if there was a pattern to those learners that had left after year one? The Assistant Principal: Further Education said that work had been done to establish if there was a trend, and identified that the timing of leavers tended to be after their mock exams or slightly before their actual exam. To address this, wrap-around support has been introduced to provide revision guidance, exam preparation and exam taking strategies.

At a previous Committee meeting, a member had raised a point about the low-grade profile and the Assistant Principal: Further Education had responded to this completing some work in this area, confirming that it was 60% in line with what was suggested.

There was some concern around Value Added and a request for some more detail around Curriculum areas in Value Added.

Action: Assistant Principal: Further Education

In addition, there was a request for accumulation and forward analysis of leavers data to be included in the next Report.

Action: Assistant Principal: Further Education

The Committee thanked the Assistant Principal: Further Education for his forensic report, commending the level of detail and analysis in particular.

(ii) Foundation/Maths and English/High Needs

This Report was presented by the Assistant Principal: Student Support and Experience who highlighted the following:

- Attendance was better than last year
- Retention was looking really good
- Those students not making progress in Foundation Learning have action plans.
- Interventions were in place and communications had improved for courses in Urgent Care

The Committee acknowledged that the main indicator of progress and predicated grades at GCSE would be the mock exam series in March. This data would be presented to the next Committee meeting.

Action: Assistant Principal: Student Support and Experience

The Assistant Principal: Student Support and Experience shared with the Committee the range of on-going activities to drive improvement including:

- A regular Report on those students with 70% attendance or less shared with the Heads of school
- Letters to parents
- Stage 1 disciplinary implications if no improvement
- Action plans in place for those students whose learning and been impacted by the strike action

The Committee were pleased to hear of the improvement in teaching and staffroom culture in response to the sharing of best practice and knowledge from colleagues who had recently completed the 'Good to Outstanding' training courses. The Assistant Principal: Student Support and Experience described a positive team narrative.

The Principal and Chief Executive informed the Committee that the College would be undertaking an exercise to identify a students' starting grade, mock exam prediction and actual grade achieved to demonstrate progress. This activity was endorsed by the Committee.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal: Student Support and Experience for a good paper.

(iii) Apprenticeships

The Director of Business and Employer Engagement presented the Report and provided an update on the Apprenticeship Accountability Framework. In the summary, the Committee learned that:

- Overall Apprentice achievement for leavers in 2022/23 was 78% which is an increase on last year and 28.2% above the national rate.
- There were 189 continuing learners planned to complete in this academic year.

- 65 Apprentices have taken End Point Assessment in 2022/23, providing 100% achievement and an increase in higher level grades.
- 90% of Apprentices were on or above target
- 9 Apprentices had withdrawn in-year
- Curriculum development plans to grow provision in new areas to meet local skills needs.

The Committee acknowledged the success in Functional Skills for those students who remained on the programme and the other developments listed on the final page of the Report.

The Director of Business and Employer Engagement informed the Committee that the guidance for the new dashboard had arrived two days prior and that she would Report on this to the Committee at the next meeting.

Action: Director of Business and Employer Engagement.

The Chair thanked the Director of Business and Employer Engagement.

7. HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) STUDENT: IN-YEAR PERFORMANCE 2022/23 INC. RETENTION, ACHIEVMENT AND STUDENT PROGRESS:

The Assistant Principal: Higher Education presented the Report and explained that the performance was broken down by school. Overall, HE was performing well against OfS benchmarks as indicated by green on the tables within the Report.

Talking the Committee through the key issues, the Assistant Principal: Higher Education highlighted:

- Wraparound support and academic coaches in place to support HE students
- Teaching and Learning issues in Criminology being addressed
- Adequacy of AAG for students prior to signing onto HE courses

The issues around HE student attendance was discussed and obstacles that impact on attendance including students repeating years, working, financial issues/cost of living, mental health and family priorities.

Concern remained, amongst the Committee, regarding HNC/Ds due to poor end of year performance 2021/22 at 53%. The Assistant Principal: Higher Education explained that all programmes were in Urgent Care, the key interventions have been to move to a trimester approach, meaning the students focus on less modules at any one time, and the year had been extended to 33 weeks allowing an assessment week to be bolted onto the end of each module. For the first trimester submissions had greatly improved (Engineering 100% submission and Business 80% submission) and any reassessment requirements were being delivered in dedicated workshops held immediately after the Boards, thus capturing the resubmission earlier.

Committee members were keen to know what activities really made a difference when courses were placed in Urgent Care and why this worked for FE? The Head of Quality explained that diagnosis of the issues within courses was assessed on a course by course basis and there were many variables. Diagnostic work to get to the root of the problems and working with the Heads of School takes time, before moving onto remedial actions and planning. This was the Urgent Care model used for FE and may not be appropriate for HE, but would need exploring and more than one HE Quality Lead needed. The Vice-Principal: Curriculum and Quality confirmed that the Quality Structure was being reviewed as the Head of Quality was leaving.

The Principal and Chief Executive added that he had received a letter from the OfS informing him that Blackburn College was one of 20/100 providers to be selected for a review of B3 metrics. More would be shared once implications of the review established.

The Chair acknowledged the improvement in the content of this Report and thanked the Assistant Principal: Higher Education.

8. FURTHER EDUCATION (FE) QUALITY IMPROVMENT PLAN 2022/23 - PROGRESS REPORT:

The Head of Quality introduced this Report and talked through the attachment. The activities within the plan were RAG rated and the first activity was coloured green as this had been completed. All of the other actions were amber as they were in progress.

A member queried the number of staff who had completed the Prevent training as this seemed too low. It was explained that new Invigilating staff had started at the College in January and had only just commenced their mandatory Prevent training. This had impacted on the overall total.

This query was followed by a question on how does the College check students' understanding of Prevent? The Head of Quality said that this had come up in a recent Deep Dive exercise whereby it was identified that students understood the concept of Prevent, but not necessarily how it applied to them. To address this, targeted focus groups would take place in the Library and a Tutorial Take-over would discuss Prevent, Misogyny and other topical issues. A member added that Prevent had been talked about in the recent Student Voice Committee meeting.

The Committee noted the content of the report.

9. HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2022/23 - PROGRESS REPORT

As above, the Head of Quality introduced this Report and talked through the attachment. The activities within the plan were RAG rated and the all of the activities coloured amber as they were in progress.

There followed discussion of HE at the College and in particular the HE Strategy and how there were real opportunities with, for example, apprenticeship type degrees. Building on the College's well-established good work managing apprenticeships, knowing regulatory frameworks and the local skills market. Skills areas that the College was already exploring and expanding upon include Health-care, Nursing, Digital and Cyber. It was highlighted again; the benefits of tracking alumni and the Committee were informed that the Marketing Team are carrying out tracking of alumni to improve graduate outcomes.

The Committee noted the content of the Report.

10. URGENT CARE COURSES

(i) Further Education (FE) & Work-based Learning (WBL)

The Report and attachment provided the Committee with the status of the 25 courses and 3 Apprenticeships being monitored and supported through the Urgent Care process. Progress Quality Reviews were taking place with Curriculum Teams throughout February and action plans would be reviewed.

(ii) Higher Education (HE)

This report provided an update on courses in the Urgent Care process for 2022/23 academic year.

Retention and attendance were re-occurring themes and the College was focusing on the quality of delivery in these areas; the attendance, and; the in-year retention as predictors of the eventual completion (in final year courses) and continuation.

The Committee supported the intention for the FE Urgent Care process to be replicated in HE and the need for a Quality Lead to put some test and challenge in place once issues identified by the Heads of School.

The Principal and Chief Executive added that now that the first semester was complete, colleagues were waiting for data to be confirmed by MIS. This would be factored into the Urgent Care approach and process.

The Committee noted the content of the Reports and Appendices.

11. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – MID-YEAR REPORT

The Head of Quality of Education presented the Report and informed the Committee that the Appraisal completion rates were 95% overall and had met target. The Appraisals would need to be Quality Assured.

The Staff satisfaction with Staff Development was 100% and mandatory training at 94% completed. This is monitored by CLT to ensure compliance.

Looking ahead there was a need to improve CPD for Business Support Colleagues.

The Chair thanked the Head of Quality Education and the Committee took this opportunity to thank the Head of Quality, Andrew Gadson, as this was his last Committee meeting at the College. The Chair mentioned improvements in T&L and Quality at the College whilst Andrew had headed up the Quality Team. The Committee thanked Andrew for his hard work and wished him every success in his new job.

12. SINGLE EQUALITY PLAN 2021/22 - FINAL UPDATE INC. SINGLE EQUALITY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

The Action Plan Report provided a final update on the action plan for 2021/22. There were 4 learner objectives and 4 workforce objectives.

2 of the learner objectives remained amber whilst all others had been completed. All of the data provided included Apprenticeships.

The Committee noted the content of the action plan.

The Single Equality Committee Annual Report 2021/22 was presented in draft and a member noted a typo whereby the ethnic breakdown of the College Community should read 69% is white rather than 6%.

ACTION: Assistant Principal Student Support and Experience.

The Committee were keen to hear of some of the plans for raising EDI awareness and educational events for staff and students on topical issues such as the menopause and extreme racism.

13. STUDENT VOICE COMMITTEE FEEDBACK FROM MEETING 1 FEBRUARY 2023

The Assistant Principal: Student Support and Experience provide verbal feedback of the recent Student Voice Committee meeting. Two Committee members had also attended the Student Voice meeting where discussions covered such things as timetabling, careers advice, canteen issues and out of date books in the Library.

All of the points raised would be actioned and feedback provided at the next Student Voice Committee meeting.

14. LANCASTER UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP REVIEW – PERIODIC UPDATE

The Committee reviewed the Report noting the overall progress that the College is making on courses within the Lancaster portfolio.

15. CHAIR APPROVED MINUTES OF ACADEMIC BOARD – 24 JANUARY 2023

The minutes of the Academic Board meetings held on 24 January 2023 were noted by the Committee.

16. SAFEGUARDING ASSURANCE REPORT

This Report was shared for information and provided the Committee with an assurance summary of all activity reported to date this academic year.

17. UCBC ACADEMIC STAFF APPROVALS REPORT FOR LANCASTER UNIVERSITY 2022/23

This Report was supplied to Committee members to summarise the process and outcomes of Lancaster University’s staffing approval process. It was for information only.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ram Gupta had undertaken a Learning Walk ahead of this Committee meeting and took the opportunity to recommend that others do the same. It was an enjoyable learning experience and he had spoken with students and staff, and observed lessons on various I.T., Digital and Creative subjects.

19. REVIEW OF MEETING

The Chair thanked all members for their contribution to the meeting, the questions and detailed discussions that had taken place.

20. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Learning and Quality Committee would take place on Thursday 15 June 2023 at 5.00pm in the Exchange Boardroom / via Microsoft Teams.

19:30pm: The meeting ended.

Signed:

Date: