



**USP College Corporation
Quality Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 15 June 2021
Meeting held via Microsoft Teams
Meeting commenced: 16.00hrs
Meeting ended: 18.00hrs**

Present

Gordon Haines	Independent Member	Chair
Vikki Liogier	Independent Member	
Nicola Curtis	Independent Member	
Dan Pearson	Principal and Chief Executive	
Julie Snelling	Staff Member	
David O'Donovan	Staff Member	
Cameron Root	Student Member	
Success Popoola	Student Member	

Apologies for Absence

Ian Hockey	Independent Member
Ralph Henderson	Independent Member
Trevor Hutchinson	Co-opted Member

In attendance

John Revill	Vice Principal Partnerships, Funding & Business Planning
Clare White	Deputy Principal Corporate & Student Services
Mark Silverman	Interim Quality Consultant
Stuart Coussins	Head of Higher Education
James Parker	Director of Education Improvement
Andy Shepherd	Head of Student Services
Jacob Smith	Independent Governor (item 5.1)

Clerk

Sue Glover	Clerk to the Corporation
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The Clerk to the Corporation advised that the Chair of the Corporation, Gordon Haines, would be taking the role of Chair of the Committee for this meeting. In accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference where it is known in advance of a meeting that a member with specific expertise will not be in attendance, the Chair of the Committee, through the Clerk, may seek to identify one or more appropriate members of the Board to attend. In this case, the Chair of the Committee made the appropriate arrangements through the Clerk who notified members in advance of the meeting and who had indicated their agreement.

QC.15.21 Declaration of Interest

Members and officers were reminded of the need to declare any personal or financial interest in any item to be considered during the meeting.

There were no declarations of interest.

QC.16.21 Apologies for absence
Apologies for absence were received from

- Ralph Henderson
- Ian Hockey
- Trevor Hutchinson

The Quality Committee agreed to accept the apologies for absence.

QC.17.21 Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2021
The minutes of the meeting were approved and signed as a correct record.

QC.18.21 Matters arising and action points from the minutes of the previous meeting
Members reviewed the action points arising from the meeting, noting that the action relating to Learner Satisfaction remains on the schedule as ongoing.

Members agreed there were no other matters arising from the previous meeting.

Higher Education

QC.19.21 USP Partnership Quality Overview
The Vice Principal Partnerships, Funding & Business Planning (VP P,F&BP) gave a presentation to give an overview of the College's quality framework and the Collaborative Partnership Quality Handbook that has been developed to support the higher education provision.

Members were advised of the stages of the operational delivery plan for ongoing quality assurance, noting that a risk based approach has been taken to monitor partners.

The VP P,F&B advised that the Link Governor for HE has been involved in the development of the HE quality framework and the draft of the handbook for which the College is very grateful.

The Link Governor for HE advised that the

- quality framework serves as a foundation for maintaining and developing relationships with the College's HE partnerships
- the presentation demonstrates how the oversight and engagement with partnership institutions will operate and show cases how auditing and oversight and visits will occur through weekly, monthly and termly progress reports to allow for a strong monitoring of performance and quality assurance
- risk rates will be monitored and engaged with, alongside the delivery of modules and teaching
- feedback and student questionnaires are to be harnessed, alongside interviews in order to assess student experience and reception of their learning experience
- the operational handbook developed is a very lengthy operational document and will be made available outside the meeting to those as required
- the proposed focus would serve to support student success rates and personal development, as well as building on an already high level of student satisfaction
- the benefits of the module and the forms used are the opportunities provided for not only the auditing of the HE provision, but for college staff with HE responsibility to intervene and advise early and continually throughout the academic year where necessary

Members discussed the issues raised and agreed that the framework presented an excellent mechanism for the monitoring of the College's HE provision, which allows for its application across all of the partnership and for future expansion of the college's HE provision.

In addition, the Link Governor for HE advised that at the recent meeting of the Risk and Audit Committee, it had been agreed to include an internal audit on HE which would give additional oversight and provide the Board with further reassurance of the processes in place.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to approve the HE quality framework

QC.20.21 HE Partnership Provision update 2020/21

The VP P, F&BP presented a report providing an update on the latest developments with the College's HE subcontracted provision with Docklands Academy London (DAL) and Oxford Business College (OBC).

Members were advised that

- organisation stability risk for OBC is a low risk and for DAL has moved from high to medium risk with both organisations showing excellent attendance and retention
- recent Pearson's Annual Monitoring review, which focused predominately on DAL, was very positive on the distance travelled
- both the termly quality monitoring visits and the monthly data dashboard are positive for OBC, whilst DAL are making good progress against their quality improvement plan
- despite challenging recruitment times, OBC will recruit to their stretch, aspirational target of 300 learners and have agreed to install immersive learning rooms in all campuses, which will significantly enhance communications to students

It was agreed that there has been a significant improvement on the performance of the College's subcontracted provision particularly with DAL, noting that the quality assurance process has been strengthened for all subcontracting partners through the HE quality framework, discussed under the previous item, and is also documented in the Higher Education Quality Operational Handbook.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report.

QC.21.21 Office for Students Consumer Protection Review

The Head of HE presented a report, detailing the College's approach to Consumer Protection during the first term of 2020/21.

Members were advised that

- the Office for Students (OfS) have asked all FE Colleges who provide Higher Education to undertake a review of their approach to Consumer Protection
- the College has self-assessed its processes concerning the Research, Application and Enrolment phases of the student life cycle, ensuring compliance to the guidance provided by the Consumer Market Authority (CMA)
- the college has also reviewed and updated its complaints processes since OfS registration

Members reviewed the detail of the report, noting that all processes comply with the appropriate guidance.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report.

Jacob Smith left the meeting

QC.22.21

Remote Learning and the quality of teaching and learning and assessment

The Director of Education Improvement presented a report, which provided additional detail on the College's internal quality reviews of teaching and learning and actions taken as a result.

Members were reminded that at the last meeting, a summary of the deep dives being conducted would be presented to the next meeting.

Members were advised that

- a robust review was undertaken, which reviewed KPIs, Progress Reviews, Markbook and additional Promonitor records to provide an overview of the area
- the review identified good practice and areas for improvement at course level
- all students sent a questionnaire to provide learner voice feedback on the impact of online learning
- a leadership and management review conducted with the HoL and Programme Coordinators by the Deputy Principal, Curriculum and Quality

Members discussed the issues raised and, in response to questions, were advised that

- each teacher was given a support needs rating as part of the class room visits
- there was a small percentage of teachers who require further support with the basics of online learning
- those teachers were prioritised for external Learning Walks, once face to face teaching resumed, which resulted in identifying good practice and areas for development and actions as part of the feedback with a second learning walk conducted a few weeks later to review progress

Members endorsed overall the rigour of the quality assurance process in place and the subsequent support for those staff who require it.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC.23.21

Key Performance Indicators

The Director of Education Improvement presented a report, which provided an update on current attendance, retention, achievement and value added and the ongoing processes to monitor them.

Members were reminded that at the last meeting, it was asked if a further update is given at the next meeting with indicators from the previous year to give a top level comparison and to identify any anomalies.

Members were advised that

- when compared to the same time last year, the overall college attendance has seen an increase of around 2%. However, since returning to 'in college teaching' there has been a small drop in attendance across both campuses

- Level 1 and 2 students have struggled more with engagement with online learning and have been less engaged on return to college
- Level 2 includes all GCSE English and Maths classes, which have had a lower attendance than student's main courses, but have shown an improvement from the previous year
- there has not been any significant change in retention since the last report
- A level year 2 retention is well above figures from last year, with an increase of around 10%
- Achievement is based on Teacher Assessment Grades (TAGs) and is currently around 91%
- the quality review of TAGs is still underway, but indications are that value added and high grades will be above the previous year

Members discussed the issues raised, particularly with regard to the engagement by Level 1 and 2 students who appear to have struggled with online learning and that they have also been less engaged on return to college. The student governors commented that some students prefer the flexibility of online learning and others are comfortable with face to face, but there appears to be no consistency.

Members were advised that this is an issue that has already been identified by the College and there are a number of strategies in place to support those students. There has been no real research to date among colleges as to the reasons why there is a lack of engagement, but further work will be undertaken to establish whether a blended learning approach may be adopted for some students, particularly level 3.

The Committee agreed it was pleasing to note that the A level year 2 retention has increased by 10% from last year.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC.24.21

Predicted Outcomes and Quality Assurance

The Director of Education Improvement presented a report, which provided an overview of the Teacher Assessed Grade internal quality process and summary of achievement.

Members were advised

- how vocational and technical qualifications will be awarded in 2021
- how GCSEs, AS and A levels will be awarded in the Summer 2021
- the internal quality assurance involves a three stage process
 - course
 - HoL
 - Quality team checks
- that quality checks are still ongoing, but overall college achievement is 91%, an increase from the previous year

The Committee reviewed the detail of the report, noting the dates for release of results to students and that there is no specific window for teacher assessment to take place, but results must be with the Awarding Organisations by 18 June.

In discussion, members were advised that the deadline of 18 June would be achieved. The Committee asked whether there has been any external pressure on staff reported in an attempt to influence judgements and were advised that there have been no incidents reported, but staff are fully trained so that they are aware of any external pressure that could potentially occur.

It was agreed that the processes in place to consider teacher assessed grades and the internal quality process are extremely robust.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report.

QC.25.21 Destinations and Progression

The Director of Education Improvement presented a report, which provided an update on progression and destination.

Members were reminded that at the last meeting it was agreed that the outcome was very positive and that final destination information is presented when complete.

Members reviewed the detail of the report, noting that

- Positive destinations are up from 89% in 2018/19 to 92.8% in 2019/20
- Overall positive destinations for all level 3 leavers is 92.5%, DFE destination data in 2017/18 for comparison is 88%
- UCAS acceptance rates at 88% are above the UCAS national acceptance rate of 78.3%

The Committee agreed that this continues to indicate a positive outcome, particularly that UCAS acceptance rates are above the national rate.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC.26.21 College Quality Improvement Plan 2020/21

The Director of Education Improvement presented the College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), detailing the progress made in the key areas for improvement.

Members were reminded that the top level SAR approved by the Board in December 2020 set the key areas for improvement in the QIP as

- Quality of Education
- Behaviour & Attitudes
- Personal Development
- Leadership & Management

Members were advised that the lockdown restrictions have had an impact on quality improvement actions, but they are on track for completion. A key focus is on digital and online learning quality improvement. It was noted that the QIP has been further summarised to include main key actions only, and members asked that the document is referred to the Chair of the Committee, who is absent from this meeting, for his comment on the format.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC.27.21 College self-assessment for 2020/21

The Director of Education Improvement presented, for consideration and approval, a report giving an overview of the initial outline and timeline for the College self-assessment report 2020/21 and governor involvement.

Members were advised that the process in place for 2020/21 is designed to

- ensure ownership of standards and improvement requirements by all staff at all levels
- ensure department and whole College priorities are aligned
- allow governors to be complicit in the process and be able to monitor and challenge progress
- ensure the final SAR report is focused on improvement needs without too much distracting detail

Members reviewed the projected timeline, noting governor involvement to ensure sign off by the Board in December.

Resolved

The Quality Committee

- agreed to receive and note the report
- approve and recommends to the Corporation Board the process and initial timeline for the College SAR

QC.28.21 Equality & Diversity Action Plan

The Interim Quality Consultant presented a report, to provide a progress update on the Equality & Diversity Action Plan.

Members were advised that

- the Equality & Diversity action plan identifies key imperatives and sets out actions and responsibilities to achieve these
- it is a statutory duty of the Corporation Board to approve and to termly review the action plan
- the action plan and the Single Equality Scheme is published on the college website

The Committee reviewed the detail of the report, noting that there has been good progress made against each of the actions within the E&D action plan, having been rated green or amber. However, it was noted that the action to establish staff forums to allow those from protected characteristics groups to represent the diverse College workforce has not been achieved and is rated red. Members were advised that due to the pandemic and other competing priorities this has not been explored, but will be a focus for the next academic year.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and not the report.

QC.29.21 Termly Safeguarding report

The Head of Student Services presented a report detailing Safeguarding and Prevent related activities during the spring term 2021.

Members reviewed the detail of the report, noting the

- summary of wellbeing activity and support
 - the number of monthly wellbeing interventions compared to previous year
 - interventions by mental health category and campus
 - most common reasons for wellbeing intervention compared to previous year
- Child Protection
- Children Looked After
- Training status update

Members discussed the issues raised and, in response to questions, were advised that

- that at the Palmer's campus 28% of the overall cohort have received support, a 2% increase from last year, and at the Seevic Campus 14% of the overall cohort have received support, which remains the same as the previous year
- there has been no significant rise in the number of child protection cases
- the college has not been named in the recent publicity surrounding the issue of 'rape culture' in schools.
- work has already commenced with contacting feeder schools to establish whether their students require support when they start college
- with regard to data on incidents and harmful sexual behaviour, there is a good audit trail with information held confidentially in Promonitor, however there is no significant number of cases
- the outstanding training is due to long term sick leave/maternity, which are rigorously chased to ensure they are completed

The Committee asked if the Sexual Harassment & Abuse action plan could be shared with members.

Members asked that thanks are passed to all members of the safeguarding teams for their continuing hard work and contribution to the safeguarding of students.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report.

QC.30.21 Terms of Reference and Annual Schedule of Business for the Quality Committee 2021/22

The Clerk presented a report, which outlined the need to review on an annual basis, the Committee's Terms of Reference and Annual Schedule of Business.

Members reviewed the highlighted changes to both documents, which reflected the business conducted during the year and agreed to the proposed amendments.

It was noted that the effectiveness of the committee for the year would be considered as part of the Governors self-assessment process in the summer.

Resolved

The Quality Committee approves and recommends to the Corporation Board for approval the Terms of Reference and Annual Schedule of Business for the Quality Committee for 2021/22

QC.31.21 Any Other Business
There were no other items of any other business

QC.32.21 Schedule of Quality Committee meetings 2021/22
Tuesday 5 October 2021
Tuesday 16 November 2021
Tuesday 1 March 2022
Tuesday 21 June 2022

All meetings commence at 4pm

As there was no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed.

SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. G. S.', written in a cursive style.

DATE: 5 October 2021