



**USP College Corporation
Quality Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 1 December 2021
Meeting held via Microsoft Teams
Meeting commenced: 16.00hrs
Meeting ended: 18.00hrs**

Present

Ian Hockey	Independent Member	Chair
Vikki Liogier	Independent Member	
Nicola Curtis	Independent Member	
Trevor Hutchinson	Co-opted Member	
Julie Snelling	Staff Member	
David O'Donovan	Staff Member	
Nicole Dragos	Student Member	
Mils Balcombe	Student Member	

Apologies for absence

Dan Pearson	Principal and Chief Executive
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In attendance

Gordon Haines	Chair of the Corporation
John Revill	Vice Principal Partnerships, Funding & Business Planning
Mark Silverman	Interim Quality Consultant
Stuart Coussins	Head of Higher Education
James Parker	Director of Education Improvement
Michelle Lagden	Safeguarding, Wellbeing and Mental Health Coordinator (item 7 only)

Clerk

Sue Glover	Clerk to the Corporation
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The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and took the opportunity to formally note the resignation of Ralph Henderson who left the Board on 31 October 2021 and to record thanks for all his hard work and contribution during his time on the Committee.

Members were advised of a change in the running order of the agenda so that the items relating to inspection feedback, College self-assessment and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are taken after the standing items.

QC.51.21 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.52.21 Apologies for absence
Apologies for absence were received from

- Dan Pearson

The Quality Committee agreed to accept the apologies for absence.

QC.53.21 Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2021
The minutes of the meeting were approved and signed as a correct record.

QC.54.21 Matters arising and action points from the minutes of the previous meeting
Members reviewed the action points arising from the meeting, noting the items that would be picked up under this agenda.

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

QC.55.21 Ofsted inspection 9-12 November 2021
The Interim Quality Consultant gave a presentation on the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection.

Members were advised that each area of the inspection had secured a 'Good' Grade 2, with the exception of High Needs provision, which had secured an 'Outstanding' Grade 1. The overall grade is 'Good' Grade 2.

Members were advised that the report has not yet been received from Ofsted, but this would be shared with the Board when available. An indication of the few recommendations made for improvement by Ofsted were around Apprenticeships advice and guidance and English and Maths.

The positive outcome relating to governance was noted as:

- Very good understanding of the College
- Involved in all college activities
- Broad skills
- Meet statutory responsibilities
- Hold leaders to account leading to improvement

The Student Member commented that during the recent inspection, Ofsted had been specific in their request when meeting with groups of students to discuss sexual harassment issues that they meet with male and females groups separately. The students were advised that this had been a request from Ofsted directly and had not been in the College's control.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed this was a very pleasing outcome for the College and took the opportunity to congratulate the Principal and his team for all their hard work in achieving such an excellent outcome for the College.

QC.56.21 Equality & Diversity
The Interim Quality Consultant presented, for consideration and approval the:

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Annual Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Report 2020/21
- Equality Objectives 2021-2025

Members were advised that the

- updated Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy sets out the College's duties and commitments to promote equality, diversity and inclusion through all its activities, including
 - Public Sector Equality Duty and key aims
 - Protected characteristics and Equality Objectives
 - Implementation of the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Annual Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Report for 2020/21 provides an annual, evaluative summary of the College's approach, progress and performance with regard to its Equality, Diversity & Inclusion duties
- Equality Action Plan and Objectives 2021-2025 details the 6 key Equality, Diversity & Inclusion objectives that College will commit to over the next 5 years, actions on how these will be achieved and targets against which these will be measured

Members reviewed each of the documents and commented that the wording in the annual report relating to college results should be amended to read more clearly. It was pleasing to see that that action plan and objectives covered the new Accessibility Regulations which came into force last year.

Members were advised that each of the documents are displayed in the appropriate section of the College website.

Resolved

The Quality Committee approves and recommends to the Corporation Board for approval the

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Annual Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Report 2020/21
- Equality Objectives 2021-2025

QC.57.21 College Self-assessment report (SAR) for 2020/21

The Director of Education Improvement and the Interim Quality Consultant presented, for consideration and approval, the College SAR for 2020/21.

Members were advised that

- the SAR sets out a review of College performance in 2020/21, based on the Education Inspection Framework
- the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) which sets out the key improvement priorities, planned actions and targets for the year will be produced once the report from Ofsted is received following the recent inspection and a post-inspection action plan developed

Members reviewed the detail of the document, noting

- performance against previous year's targets
- proposed targets for 2021/22
- overall effectiveness, key strengths and improvement priorities for the following areas:
 - Quality of Education
 - Behaviour and Attitudes
 - Personal Development
 - Leadership and Management
 - Provision for learners with high needs
 - Impact of Covid-19 – Distance Learning and Digital Innovation

Members were advised that at this time, provisional grading is 'Good' for all areas with the exception for the Provision for learners with high needs which is judged to be 'Outstanding'.

In discussion, it was agreed that the provisional grading for each of the areas was appropriate. The focus would be on the areas of improvement following the recent Ofsted inspection, which will be set out in the post-inspection action plan. Once this has been approved by the Board, this will be monitored by the Committee at each meeting during the year.

Resolved

The Quality Committee approves and recommends to the Corporation Board for approval the College self-assessment report for 2020/21

QC.58.21 Learner Satisfaction Induction Survey 2021

The Director of Education Improvement presented for consideration the outcome of the Learner Satisfaction Induction Survey 2021.

Members were advised that

- feedback was reviewed by following areas
 - Overall
 - Head of Learning area
 - Course type
 - Ethnicity
 - Gender
- overall responses were very positive with the majority being over 90%
- where differences have been identified an action plan has been devised and implemented to further investigate reasons why

In discussion, members commented on gender reviews being more inclusive in future and were advised that outcomes from this element has been followed through to the Equality & Diversity Action Plan. It was suggested that perhaps e-safety could also be covered within the student induction in addition to the internet safety sessions.

The Committee agreed that the survey presented a good review and it was pleasing to note such positive responses from learners.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC.59.21 Attrition Report 2020/21 – 2002/22

The Vice Principal Partnerships, Funding & Business Planning presented a report detailing the number of learners who had enrolled at the College, but left within the first 42 days (attrition rate).

Members were reminded that this information had been requested at a previous meeting to understand

- the number of students who have left
- where they went

Members were advised that

- to date 341 enrolled learners have left the College before the 42 day census point, which is a very similar level to previous years
- this equates to approximately 10% of enrolments, proportionally split between the main sites and in financial terms this is in the region of £1.4m
- the level of attrition across the curriculum areas is roughly proportional to the size of the areas
- there are no obvious direct correlations between attrition rate and curriculum areas, courses or campuses

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

- the bulk of learners transfer back to their sixth form or alternative FE College
- as a follow up, all learners that leave the College prior to the 42 days will be surveyed to look for external influences such as distance to travel, transport links

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

Higher Education

QC.60.21 Partnership arrangements with Oxford Business College (OBC)

The Head of HE presented a report to update on the current performance of OBC with regard to their Higher National Provision.

Members were advised that

- the organisational risk rating of working with OBC has moved from 'green' to 'amber' using a cautious approach to risk management, based on early indications of potential declines in performance by OBC
- the Partnership Manager continues to work closely with the OBC leadership team to implement early interventions and provide on the ground intelligence and early flagging of concerns, giving USP the best insight and ability to react
- there has been a significant reduction in the planned student volume for the academic year 2021/22 due to market forces and decisions by the SMT at OBC
- Student satisfaction remains high, based on feedback from End of Module Feedback and Quality Visit focus groups
- projected achievement of the February 2021 cohort is good at 85%

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

- potential declines relate to a decline in attendance and submission rates seen within the Summer term and timeliness of responses on service standards
- the Oxford and West London campuses have been red RAG rated in the progress reporting for the May 2021 cohorts as submission data is below the expected standard. OBC have action plans in place to follow up with at risk learners to ensure they meet the resubmissions conditions
- OBS reporting suggests these students have not transitioned as well as the earlier cohorts back to face to face delivery

Members suggested that perhaps different ways in which students can submit their work are explored to help ensure this is submitted in a timely manner.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC.61.21

Higher Education self-evaluation document and action plan

The Head of HE presented a self-evaluation document (SED) and accompanying action plan relating to the continuous improvement of the HE student academic experience, HE student outcomes and the standards of the HE awards for which the College is responsible.

Members were reminded that there is no requirement by the Office for Students (OfS) for providers to submit an Annual Quality Assessment Assurance Statement as had been required in previous years. However, the Corporation Board should continue to receive appropriate assurance and the self-evaluation document and action plan are presented to provide a clear statement on the quality of the College's higher education provision and to set appropriate actions at a provider and where appropriate, programme level.

Members reviewed the detail of the SED on the Higher Education provision at USP College in 2020/21, noting in the key areas that:

- student experience has improved from 2019/20, with achievement predicted to be 82% and continuation moving to 82%, which is currently above the Further Education sector average of 78.9%, but below the University sector of 84%
- there has been significant improvement in the implementation of improved quality monitoring and oversight processes with Higher Education Partners
- the review and implementation of a new organisational structure in the College's Higher Education has enabled the employment of key roles to design and implement a student success framework that aims to reduce non-continuation and improve student experience and satisfaction on all HE programmes
- improvement in National Student Survey (NSS) results place USP College with the highest overall satisfaction rating in East Anglia.
- an improved marketing and recruitment strategy is required to ensure the viability on newly validated provision to the USP portfolio.

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

- the work led by the HE partnership manager has demonstrated a considerable improvement in achievement and continuation rates so that they now align to internal provision
- NSS satisfaction rating is 80% and the work of last year's quality improvement plan has seen scores rise above sector averages in six out of the nine survey themes
- the college needs to establish clarity in promotion of newly validated courses not only to its level three students but to the wider south Essex sixth form market and the development of an outreach strategy will aid this aim

The Committee reviewed the action plan, noting the action taken against each of the areas identified for improvement and agreed that good progress is being made.

Resolved

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the SED and action plan and to recommend to the Corporation Board for acceptance as assurance on the quality of the College's HE provision

QC.62.21 Safeguarding

Annual Safeguarding Report for 2020/21

The Safeguarding and Wellbeing coordinator presented, for consideration and approval, the Annual Safeguarding Report for 2020/21.

Members were advised that

- the annual safeguarding report reviews the work undertaken in relation to Safeguarding including Prevent throughout the year
- the report provides assurance to the Board that the College is compliant with its responsibilities in relation to Safeguarding including Prevent and that appropriate actions are being taken in relation to safeguarding students, staff and visitors to the College

Members reviewed the detail of the report, noting

- there is a continuing trend in high levels of various mental health referrals, which is in line with the national trend
- that cases are divided between 'Safeguarding', a student who requires intervention which if not provided could escalate and result in the impairment of their safety, health and development, and 'Wellbeing' intervention to promote a more positive and happy life, these would normally be shorter and deal with issues such as relationship difficulties, stress, low self-esteem
- there has been one referral to Prevent, which related to a student viewing inappropriate content online. The Prevent Team advised a discussion was had with the student and no further action was required
- the retention rate of the students receiving wellbeing support is only 1% lower than the whole student population, a pleasing outcome as it has been a difficult year with those students who have significant barriers to learning, and achievement for students is just over 2% less than the overall college figure, approximately 1% lower than the previous year
- the safeguarding team continue to work extremely well with external agencies, a very positive comment by Ofsted during the recent inspection
- the College's response to the 'Everyone's Invited' campaign relating to Sexual Harassment and the measures taken was commented positively by Ofsted during inspection
- the measures in place for the Corporation Board in relation to its responsibilities for Safeguarding including Prevent

Members commended the report, particularly the positive comments made by Ofsted. It was suggested that perhaps future reports could contain some further analysis regarding harassment and abuse and victims support. The Committee asked that thanks are passed to the Safeguarding team on behalf of the Board for the tireless work they do to ensure the safeguarding of all students.

College Policies

The Safeguarding and Wellbeing Coordinator presented for consideration and approval the following policies

- Safeguarding and Prevent policy
- Peer on Peer Abuse Policy

Members were advised that

- the Safeguarding and Prevent Policy has been further updated following the previous meeting to include latest changes in the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' document and further suggested amendments made at the previous meeting
- the Peer on Peer Abuse policy has been introduced to highlight the College's responsibility in line with KCSIE September 2021 and is an addition to the set of safeguarding policies in place which ensure guidance and good practice is followed to keep staff and students safe from harm

Members reviewed the detail of each of the policies and agreed there were no further changes required.

Resolved

The Quality Committee agreed to approve and recommend to the Corporation Board

- the Annual Safeguarding Report for 2020/21
- the Safeguarding and Prevent Policy
- the Peer on Peer Abuse Policy

QC.63.21

Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy 2021-2024

The Vice Principal Partnerships, Funding & Business planning presented for consideration the USP Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2024.

Members were advised that

- the strategy has been developed to promote and support staff and student wellbeing
- underpinning the strategy is an implementation plan which supports the College alignment to the AoC Mental Health Charter

The Committee considered the detail of the strategy, noting

- Background and context
- Strategy objectives
- Awareness raising and promotion
- Building capacity
- Partnership working
- Review and monitoring

In discussion, members commended the principles of the strategy to support all aspects of wellbeing and the promotion of positive mental health activities supporting student and staff needs. It was suggested that progress against the implementation plan is reviewed by the Committee annually.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the USP Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which will be reviewed annually by the Committee

QC.64.21 Any Other Business

There were no items of any other business

QC.65.21 Schedule of Quality Committee meetings 2021/22

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. H. S.', written in a cursive style.

DATE: 1 March 2022