

Minutes Quality, Learning and Standards Committee

(All resolutions passed were the unanimous decision of the Quality, Learning and Standards Committee members present unless otherwise stated)

Meeting Title	Quality. Learning and Standards Committee by skype
Date	12 May 2020
Members	Mr G. Willett Chair Mr D. Cheema Cllr B. Fraser Mr. P. Mayhew-Smith Group Principal / CEO Prof P. Reid Mr M. J. Stone
In Attendance	Mr A. Slade Principal, South Thames College Ms J. Morrison Assistant Principal - Quality and Innovation Mr J. Pemberton-Billing Principal, Carshalton College and Merton College Mr M. Tweedale Principal, Kingston College Ms H. Meredith Head of Governance
Key Meeting Outcomes	
	The meeting took place remotely during the college closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
1	WELCOME, APOLOGIES
1.1	Apologies were received from Mr Foulston, who although not a member of the Committee had intended to join the meeting. Mr J. Azah was absent from the meeting.
1.2	DECLARATION OF INTEREST Members confirmed that they did not have any pecuniary or other interest in any agenda item.
2	MINUTES OF MEETING OF 19 MARCH 2020 AND MATTERS ARISING
2.1	<u>Accuracy.</u> The minutes were accepted as an accurate record and were signed by the Chair. <u>Matters arising</u> The Chair and Head of Governance were still to review the log of outstanding actions and agree a new timetable for these – bearing in mind that various items from this will now need to be re-scheduled to a future date due to the ongoing college closure.
3.	REVIEW OF BOARD ASSURANCE RISK AREAS (PART 1)
3.1	The Chair reminded the Committee that the two risks allocated to it for review are the risk of a poor Ofsted inspection or OFS result and the risk of declining student numbers, for review in detail under Agenda Item 9.
4.	UPDATE ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING DURING COLLEGE CLOSURE
4.1	The Committee reviewed a report noting key points highlighted below- with Assessment taken under Item 5:
4.2	Teaching, Learning & Assessment Since closure, Teachers and learners have enthusiastically developed innovative and active distance learning technologies and opportunities. This has included the use of Microsoft Teams, Zoom and Discord. The LRCs have developed a Distance Learning Moodle Course/Site to support learners to improve and develop their distance learning skills. The Group Principal reported that the transition to remote working has been very successful and that in some areas the level of student engagement is higher than 90%.

<p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p> <p>4.5</p> <p>4.6</p> <p>4.7</p> <p>4.8</p> <p>4.9</p>	<p>Key support to staff and managers across the Group has been provided by one of the LRC ILT managers. Teaching & Learning Coaches have created an Instagram site to support teachers with using and developing content.</p> <p>A minority of learners are not able to engage for a variety of reasons, including some not having access to technology. For these learners, teachers are continuing to find ways to maintain engagement in learning (including sending work/work books home, phoning etc.).</p> <p>High Needs Support during lockdown Supported Learning: Each student has been given work on Moodle and a hard copy pack and been set a project and are sent a weekly timetable including online activities. Their tutor contacts them weekly and parents are encouraged to be present. Most students are adapting well and continuing to make progress.</p> <p>Mainstream: All students, with additional support needs, are being remotely taught by their teachers. Every student with High Needs has been allocated at least one Specialist Learning Assistant (SLA), to support them remotely with their studies. Where a student has not been responsive/not seen emails sent, parents are contacted to see what support may be needed.</p> <p>Specialist teachers are contacting the students they regularly see one-to-one and they are continuing to support progress. Speech and language therapy is being delivered remotely through Skype. Lead Professionals are also in contact with students and/or parents for wellbeing reviews, initially prioritising students with particular vulnerabilities. Annual reviews by phone or by video conferencing are proceeding with a strong focus on progression & transition.</p> <p>Currently 80% of students are engaging and receiving support to meet their individual needs.</p> <p>On-site Supported Study: A very small number of students with High Needs and/or their parent/carer took up the offer of one to one SLA support by attending Merton College site. There has only been one student who has regularly attended in this way.</p> <p>Safeguarding The Group Principal reported that the Student Services team have been continuing their work remotely to support students and are continuing to make referrals to the appropriate authorities in cases where there are significant concerns for a student.</p> <p>It was resolved to note the report.</p>
<p>5.</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p>	<p>IMPLICATIONS OF CANCELLATION OF SUMMER EXAMS AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR EXAM GRADING AND ASSESSMENT FOR SUMMER 2020 QUALIFICATIONS</p> <p>The Committee reviewed a paper setting out the approach to Centre Assessment Grades for GCSE and A Level qualifications, vocational and technical qualifications in Summer 2020. The qualifications fall into three categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualifications used for progression to further of higher education • Qualifications serving a mixed purpose • Qualifications signalling occupational competence <p>Ofqual and the awarding bodies will agree one of the following options for awarding results this summer for each qualification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculating results • Adapting assessments • Delaying assessments <p>The Group's Quality Team have produced a Guide for staff to the Exceptional Arrangements for Assessment and Grading in 2020 which was shared with the Committee. The four stage process of calculating grades for GCSE E&M, GCSE Curriculum and A Level provision had begun and this involves:</p> <p>Stage 1 – Individual learner grade and class rankings Stage 2 – College Grade/Ranking Review Stage 3 – College Data Review Stage 4 – Final Adjustment Period before Grade are entered/registered.</p>

5.4	Calculations for other in-scope qualifications will follow and deadlines are being finalised as Ofqual release more information. The Assistant Principal reported that some of the deadlines (particularly Pearsons, which had been brought forward) seem unreasonably short.
5.5	The Principal, Kingston College also reported on the planning work involved in working out what part of the process might be open to Appeal by dissatisfied students. The Appeals Policy is being developed and will be notified to students very soon so that they understand the position.
5.6	In response to a question about the Ranking Review proposed by the awarding bodies the Principal, Kingston College explained that there has been some push back on that by large Colleges with the hope that they will accept group rankings for such a large cohort of students as at STCG.
5.7	Governors asked whether the Group anticipate any difficulties in meeting the deadlines of the awarding bodies. The Assistant Principal explained that some teachers are still teaching for other awarding bodies when they also need to carry out the assessment of Pearson qualifications. This is challenging but staff are working hard and the Group has developed a good approach to this and currently the teams are on track to meet all the deadlines. The Committee congratulated the team for this work which will enable this year's students in achieving their qualifications.
5.8	It was resolved to note these updates.
6.	IMPACT OF COLLEGE CLOSURE ON DATA
6.1	The Assistant Principal presented a summary report on the impact of the closure reporting: Retention 16-19: Group 95.9% 19+: Group 96.9% Apprenticeships: Group 82.8%. <i>Note: MIS are still working through the reported planned breaks and recently received apprenticeship leavers, so retention is likely to drop by circa 5% over the coming month.</i>
6.2	Progression and Enrolment Marketing and Student Services are working to plan Virtual Open Day Events. The Website will be used as the platform for Open Event Registrations. The Group is also developing online registration/enrolment resources. Governors asked about planning for a possible increase in student numbers in September and the Group Principal reported that the Group is planning for a number of scenarios. The AoC are lobbying the DfE to fund 100,000 additional college places nationally from September 2020.
6.3	Work Experience Due to the lockdown very little Work Experience is being undertaken. However, around 15 students are either working on Industrial Placements/Work Experience virtually and some students are working / volunteering to support the NHS.
6.4	It was resolved to note this report.
7.	PLANNING FOR COLLEGE RE-OPENING
7.1	The Committee noted that the AoC has established working groups to consider the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical re-opening of the estate 2. Ensuring the safe return of staff to work (including advice on shielding, PPE) 3. Additional costs (including smaller teaching groups. Transport, IT) 4. Online start to next year (enrolment, data sharing with schools etc) 5. Curriculum issues
7.2	The Committee noted the AoC's Early Summer Survey: Covid-19 and Colleges had been circulated to the Committee and reported on findings from a survey completed by 130 colleges on the impact of Covid-19 and colleges' plans for reopening.

7.3	The Group Principal reported that DfE Guidance on re-opening of Education Settings had been published the day before and that he had been consulted by ESFA on how the Group plans to respond prior to publication of DfE Guidance for Colleges later in the week.																					
7.4	The Group Principal outlined that the Group is following a very cautious approach to re-opening the College to allow very small groups of students back for very limited purposes. Following the DfE advice to allow back Year 12 students would mean the College re-opening 4 or 5 buildings for 2000-3000 students who would all need to use public transport to travel to college. The College response initially is to target vulnerable students and those needing to return to college to complete assessments needed for professional qualifications. As well as the health and safety risks it is not clear how many teaching staff could return to work before other schools and childcare settings re-open. The initial opening is looking at only about 20-30% occupancy of college buildings so as to allow safe social distancing to take place. The Group is putting its proposals to the Trade Unions in the next week and will put its proposals to the Corporation on 21 May. The Committee agreed that utmost importance of achieving a safe working environment for staff and students taking into account the London context which involves travel to college by public transport and a significant number of BAME students living in multi-generational families.																					
7.5	Governors asked how the Group plans to help get students back on track where they have lost part of their education this year. The Principal, Kingston College reported that the College is currently developing plans to help students who have missed some content mid-course which might include giving them pre-reading lists.																					
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8.	CURRICULUM PLANNING UPDATE																					
8.1	The Group Principal reported to the meeting on curriculum planning activity for 2020-21 being undertaken by the Curriculum teams. A huge amount of work has been undertaken in preparing the budget including stakeholder engagement with Local Authorities and local employers.																					
8.2	Governors asked about lessons learnt from the lockdown and whether the Group can develop opportunities for offering more on-line or blended learning going forwards? The Principal, South Thames College confirmed that the Group is working closely with Local Authorities and local employers to develop an online learning offer for people changing jobs, such as offering online course on Safeguarding and Prevent for people moving into the care industry. The market for this is increasing and the Group is enrolling a number of students for short courses starting immediately. Governors noted that proper distance learning (such as through the Open University) requires very well motivated students and that the best approach for the Group might be for blended learning rather than fully on-line.																					
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9.	REVIEW OF BOARD ASSURANCE RISK AREAS																					
9.1	The paper was presented by the Group Principal Members reviewed the two risk areas allocated to the committee and the assessment of the level of risk for each as below:																					
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9.2	<p>After discussion, particularly about the risks relating to student numbers it was resolved:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">That the Committee was satisfied that the risk level for each of the risks is correct at the moment and that sufficient controls and/or actions are being taken to manage these risks.</p>
	<p>OFS CONSULTATION ON THE INTEGRITY AND STABILITY OF THE ENGLISH HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR</p> <p>The Committee received and noted the consultation on a new regulatory condition which would allow the OFS to intervene where universities and colleges act in ways that undermine students' interests or threaten the stability of England's HE sector during the COVID -19 crisis. The consultation could result in a retrospective change to regulatory requirements to ensure good governance practices around admission of HE students for this year's admissions cycle.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Chair, Principal, South Thames College and Head of Governance would discuss reporting and governance scrutiny of HE and bring proposals to the next meeting including whether there should be a separate Quality Sub-Committee for HE.</p>
	<p>It was agreed to move the next meeting to the earlier start time of 5.30pm by Skype on Tuesday 16 June 2020.</p>
	<p>The meeting closed at 6.45pm.</p> <p>Signed: Date:.....</p>

Action points		Responsible	Deadline	Signed off
1	Chair and Head of Governance to review the log of outstanding actions and agree a new timetable for these	GW / HoG	June 2020	
2	The Chair, Principal, South Thames College and Head of Governance would discuss reporting and governance scrutiny of HE and bring proposals to the next meeting.	GW/ AS / HoG	June 2020	