

## Approved Minutes

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023 at 6.00pm in Skills Park and via MS Teams

Present: Angela Cross-Durrant (Chair), Julie Kapsalis (Acting CEO / Principal), Felicity Fletcher, Nadine Guy, Charley Johnson, James Knowles, Nick Vaughan-Barratt.

In Attendance: Andy Cowan (Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality), Dario Stevens (Deputy Principal Planning & Information), Nicki Adams (Director of HE), Rob Greening (Director of Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare), Susanne Wicks (Head of Governance).

<b>16.22</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
	Apologies for absence were received from Lynn Reddick.	
<b>17.22</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	The following declarations were made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Julie Kapsalis declared that she is an unremunerated Director of NESCOL Enterprises Ltd. (NEL).</li> <li>James Knowles declared he is a Trustee for AQA.</li> </ul>	
<b>18.22</b>	<b>Minutes of the previous meeting and Matters Arising</b>	
	i	The Deputy Principal Planning & Information pointed out that the comments attributed to him in minute 11.22 (Annual Complaints and Compliments Report) were made by the Interim Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality.  Subject to the amendment shown above, the minutes of the meeting held on 2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.
	ii	The Chair gave a brief summary of the meeting of the SAR Working Group that met on 24 <sup>th</sup> November 2022.  The minutes of the SAR Working Group meeting that took place on 24 <sup>th</sup> November 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.
	iii	<u>Matters Arising</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Director of Professional &amp; Service Industries delivered a briefing session on T Levels for Governors on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023.</li> <li>NV-B and FF advised that there were no useful resources emerging from the T Level training session they attended on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022, led by the AoC.</li> <li>NA confirmed that the QIP is a standing item on future HE Sub-Committee meetings.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The clerk confirmed that the critical friend report was shared with the Committee.</li> <li>• Deputy Principal Planning &amp; Information confirmed that he shared proposed targets for the 2022-23 KPI by email for review, comment and approval.</li> <li>• The Committee received the information about complaints trends requested at the previous meeting. NVB noted that the numbers of complaints are so low that it is challenging to identify any complaints and the Committee agreed that it is encouraging to see how few complaints are received.</li> <li>• The Chair reported that she has not been able to discuss timings of future committee meetings. The clerk confirmed that in the first draft of the calendar for 2023-24 she has scheduled the HE Sub-Committee meetings later in the term. The Acting CEO/Principal advised that work is already underway on a revised Strategic Plan, which will include the development of KPI and clear reporting lines for progress against them, including reporting to Governors. This will enable much more efficient timetabling of meetings, decision making and cycles of business. <b>Action:</b> Acting CEO/Principal to report on progress on the revised Strategic Plan as and when appropriate.</li> </ul>
17.22	<b>Safeguarding and Learner Voice Update</b>
i	<p><u>Safeguarding</u></p> <p>The Director of Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare presented his report and welcomed comments and questions.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality pointed out that the increase in numbers of referrals to the team is partly a reflection of a greater number of staff making referrals, and reminded Governors that referrals may not all relate to safeguarding issues, and may be low-level matters that can be resolved with support from the team.</p> <p>The Director of Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare advised that the student questionnaire about Andrew Tate showed that students have mixed opinions about him, but there is a proportion of young men who admire him, and work continues to address that.</p> <p>NVB asked about checks on guest speakers and the Director of Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare explained that, in accordance with the Guest Speaker Policy, they must be accompanied at all times by a staff member. When speaking, they</p>

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		are expected to present a balanced view, and staff members will intervene if required.
	ii	<p><u>Learner Voice</u></p> <p>The Director of Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare presented his report and welcomed comments and questions.</p> <p>With regard to comments made by learners about the use of ID lanyards, the Deputy Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality advised that many colleges face similar challenges around ensuring that learners wear a lanyard. Although it can appear trivial, it's a matter of safeguarding and behaviour expectations. He reassured Governors that staff are reasonable in their approach and understand that sometimes lanyards cannot be worn for safety reasons in the classroom but should be worn in communal areas and shown to staff upon request.</p> <p>At the suggestion of the Committee the Director of Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare undertook to ensure graphs included in reports are more clearly labelled in future. The Deputy Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality also suggested that, where levels of satisfaction have increased from previous surveys it would be useful for Governors to be able to see that.</p> <p>The Director of HE advised that the LGBT Focus Group is open to all students across FE and HE. She advised that in a recent HE student survey, there was a lower than sector average response on students knowing who to report sexual harassment to and as a result, she and the Director of Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare have already discussed reviewing safeguarding literature.</p> <p>The Chair noted the students' interest in joining working groups for Estates, Catering and Student Experience and asked how those areas were identified. The Director of Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare advised that any involvement is entirely voluntary and the three themes emerged from the learner voice cycle.</p> <p>Report received.</p> <p>The Director of Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare left the meeting.</p>
<b>18.22</b>	<b>QIP</b>	
		<p>The Deputy Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality presented the QIP and welcomed comments and questions.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality explained how the QIP links with the SAR and advised that the revised version should be complete by</p>

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	<p>the end of term, although noted the challenge in ensuring the revised version is usable and includes a reasonable number of themes rather than an exhaustive list of items. He advised that the 2023-24 QIP would be aligned to recommendations that emerge from the Ofsted report and confirmed that the current version was discussed during the recent inspection and areas identified for improvement were already in the QIP.</p> <p>Noting the recruitment challenge for electrical assessors which is affecting the sector generally, the Chair asked if any current staff could be trained. The Deputy Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality confirmed that he has discussed this with the Head of Apprenticeships, but all lecturers are at capacity as this is one of the highest growth areas in the 16-19 sector. He also advised that practitioners would be unlikely to be take on an assessment role as they can earn far more as a practitioner. Whilst all options are considered, there must be consistency of practice.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality acknowledged that attendance for English and Maths continues to be challenging but confirmed that he has discussed this with the Head of English &amp; Maths with a view to drafting a more focussed strategy next year.</p> <p>JK suggested that it may be useful to add a line into the QIP about the TEF outcome which will shortly be available, and any actions to be taken with regard to the TEF indicators. The Director of HE reminded Governors that the B3 conditions and TEF indicators are also captured in the risk register, and although she was not of the view that the TEF is totally representative of everything that HE provision is measured against, there could be some value in cross-referencing the TEF in the QIP, particularly in terms of adding value.</p>
<b>19.22</b>	<b>Term 2 Key Performance Indicators</b>
	<p>The Deputy Principal Planning &amp; Information Services presented his report and welcomed comments and questions.</p> <p>NVB asked about the impact on students of the need to use the South Maidstone electrical test centre. The Deputy Principal Planning &amp; Information Services advised that the College booked the slots well in advance but Electrical is one of the biggest cohorts and there may be some delay in the end-point assessment. The Deputy Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality suggested that there may be a commercial opportunity in opening a test centre, but he was not aware of all of the logistics and there may be a cost involved. However, there could be some funding available or a partnership opportunity.</p>
<b>20.22</b>	<b>Student Attendance and Withdrawals</b>
	<p>The Deputy Principal Planning &amp; Information Services introduced his report and welcomed comments and questions.</p>

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	<p>Highlighting the drop in FE attendance this year, the Deputy Principal Planning &amp; Information Services, advised that there was no obvious reason for it although the rail strikes may have had an impact. NVB asked if any comparable colleges have significantly higher attendance and the Deputy Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality advised that, at the time of the Ofsted inspection, the rate of attendance (86.6%) was very good and compared well with others in his network. He advised that the cost-of-living crisis will have an impact, as some learners have to manage work as well as College, and Maths &amp; English attendance is a challenge across the sector.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality also pointed out that a student's attendance at lessons is not necessarily a measure of their participation in learning. While the College needs to track and monitor learner attendance, there is also a need to shift the focus from comparing attendance only against outcomes and towards considering attendance and progress in the context of individual students' circumstances.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality noted that attendance of vulnerable learners is good but attendance among Looked After Children is often lower, and they receive high levels of support from the Welfare Team. He indicated that context is key; for example, in the 14-16 cohort, attendance is low, but most of the learners have disengaged completely in education. One student's attendance is 39% but is the highest it has ever been in her learning career, so her mother is very pleased.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal Planning &amp; Information Services reported that retention is still quite high at 96% but warned that March is the halfway point and the peak time for withdrawals. There will also be some impact on those full-time students who have not attended English and Maths classes.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal Planning &amp; Information Services highlighted the slight increase in pre-census withdrawal rates and suggested that some may have struggled with larger class sizes. The Chair asked if that has been explored further and FF confirmed that there is evidence of this in English and Maths, particularly post-pandemic. Efforts are made to mitigate this through streaming, but support is given on an individual basis as well.</p>
<p><b>21.22</b></p>	<p><b>Student Destinations</b></p>
	<p>The Deputy Principal Planning &amp; Information Services introduced his report and welcomed comments and questions.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal Planning &amp; Information Services highlighted that, of the 227 students who entered into sustainable employment, 54% of them were employed in a role which was vocationally related to their course of study, which means 46% of them were employed in a totally different field. The Chair reported that when she attended an Art and Design open</p>

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	<p>evening she heard feedback from staff, students and families that, even if they did not secure a job in the field, they were developing a range of skills that would be valuable to employers.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed the graphs included in the report which presented the information very clearly.</p>
<b>22.22</b>	<b>Careers Strategy Update</b>
	<p>The Deputy Principal Planning &amp; Information Services delivered a short presentation setting out progress against the Careers Strategy, the slides of which are available <a href="#">here</a>. He welcomed comments and questions.</p> <p>Governors commended the videos created by Media and Performing Arts students and suggested that closed captions be added and that a more diverse range of students be involved. The Deputy Principal Planning &amp; Information Services confirmed that some involvement from Foundation learners was planned for future videos.</p> <p>With regard to the Transferable Skills Framework, NVB asked if students will be able to recognise the skills and apply them in an interview and work environment. The Deputy Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality reassured Governors that teachers would support students in this regard.</p> <p>CJ asked when Grofar would be launched across the College and noted that she was not aware of it, but it would be of benefit to some students. The Director of HE confirmed this has been discussed but Counselling students have a designated agency and placement manager, so does not lend itself as well to the use of Grofar as other courses do.</p> <p>Governors noted the next steps as set out in the presentation and looked forward to further updates in the future.</p>
<b>23.22</b>	<b>Equality &amp; Diversity Update</b>
	<p>The Deputy Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality presented the interim Equality Objectives which have been agreed for use until the end of this academic year. He advised that a refreshed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Group will convene to agree a revised strategy which aligns with the new strategic plan currently in development.</p> <p>The Chair pointed to the following measure for Objective 1: “<i>success rate gaps do not exceed 5% for protected characteristics</i>” and sought clarity on how that would be measured, i.e., against internal historic data or against a national benchmark. The Deputy Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality advised that this would be discussed further by the EDI Group which will meet before the end of term.</p> <p>The Chair asked how the 5% target compares with current performance and the Deputy Principal Planning &amp; Information Services advised that the headline gaps are small but can vary according to different groups and this is covered in the SAR. He confirmed that there is national data</p>

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	<p>available but it's not particularly helpful in the context of Nescot where the focus is on narrowing the gap year-on-year rather than achieving a set figure.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality outlined his intention to review EDI strategies in other Colleges to identify best practice, and the Chair suggested that he look at what colleges with a diverse cohort or those with students from deprived areas are doing to narrow the gap.</p> <p>NVB asked how well Nescot is performing in terms of diversity among its senior staff and the Deputy Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality confirmed that there is work to do, although it is not always evident if an individual has a protected characteristic. He noted that the Assistant Principal HR &amp; OD would be better able to respond to this issue and confirmed that he is working with her to ensure the membership of the EDI Group is more diverse. Governors agreed that this is a complex issue. The Acting CEO/Principal acknowledged that there is always more that can be achieved in this area but highlighted some positive feedback from Ofsted about women in construction and some best practice inspectors had observed. She also reported that she and the Deputy Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality have established a staff group which will look at areas for improvement across the College.</p> <p>The Chair asked to what extent staff need to build confidence in dealing with this as an issue and the Deputy Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality advised that staff have suggested that training would be helpful for them to challenge racist behaviour in a non-aggressive way.</p>
<b>24.22</b>	<b>CPD Update</b>
	<p>The Deputy Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality delivered a verbal update on the approach to CPD in the future. He advised that in the last few years there has been a CPD week in the autumn and summer terms and it has proved challenging to track and monitor the impact of any CPD that staff have undertaken during those weeks. He outlined the plan to move from 34 to 36 academic weeks, adding seven CPD days across the course of the year. This will enable LSA, teaching teams and support staff to come together to undertake CPD.</p> <p>The Chair asked to what extent staff will give input into their training needs and the Deputy Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality expressed the hope that they will be fully engaged in their own development. He confirmed that the Assistant Head of Quality is carrying out a learning walk cycle and compiling information on themes emerging from his visits, alongside recommendations from the Ofsted inspection. He outlined the intention to conduct a survey of staff to seek their views on how useful CPD has been, and to ensure that future learning walk cycles include an assessment of the impact of CPD on practice in the classroom.</p>

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	The Chair welcomed the change from CPD weeks to days throughout the year, and FF suggested that it would be useful for the Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality to explain the change in the calendar to staff, as some are of the view that they are losing holiday. The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality advised that Nescot offers the lowest contractual obligation of contact time in the South-East and efforts are being made to make that more efficient and to include more admin time to support wellbeing and workload management. FF encouraged the Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality to ensure staff are aware of the benefits of the change, in particular the added flexibility to delivery, contact time, financial health and, potentially upon staff recruitment. The Chair thanked FF for the feedback.
<b>25.22</b>	<b>Higher Education Matters</b>
	The Committee confirmed that they had received the minutes of the HE Sub-Committee meeting that took place on 8 <sup>th</sup> February 2023 and had no further comments or questions.
<b>26.22</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>
	There were no matters arising.
<b>27.22</b>	<b>Date and Time of the Next Meeting</b>
	Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2023 at 6.00pm

The meeting closed at 7.55 pm.

#### Actions:

1. Acting CEO/Principal to report on progress on the revised Strategic Plan as and when appropriate.
2. Director of Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare to ensure that graphs included in his reports are more clearly labelled in future.
3. The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality and Director of HE to agree how best to reference the TEF in the QIP.