



**Minutes of the meeting of the Quality and Curriculum Committee on
Wednesday 16 June 2010 at 5.00pm in Room 3F099, York College**

Present: Alison Birkinshaw
Kevin Deadman
Andrew Lindsay
Lynne Marston
Andy Mendus (Chair)

In Attendance: Richard Coultas, Quality Manager
Richard Hinde, Clerk to the Governing Body
Graeme Murdoch, Deputy Principal Quality Assurance & Support (DPQA&S)
Bob Saynor, Assistant Principal Lifelong Learning and HE

The meeting started at 5.05pm.

Action

10.28 Apologies for Absence / Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from David Maughan Brown, Glyn Jones, Louise Lawrence-Crockford and Clare Wareing. There were no declarations of interest.

10.29 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 28 April 2010

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2010 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

10.30 Matters Arising

a) Action Summary Sheet

The action summary sheet was considered and it was noted that all matters had been actioned or were in progress.

With regard to Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG), the Deputy Principal Quality Assurance & Support (QA&S) provided a verbal report on developments to date. It was noted that North Yorkshire was one year ahead of the City of York in seeking to implement the new common application process. The national target was that by 2013 every student would apply using this method. Discussion took place about whether this new application process was likely to benefit the College, and it was explained that the College was committed to the initiative and preparing accordingly. It was **agreed** that an update report would be provided at the next meeting.

DPQA&S

In relation to student surveys, it was reported that the Quality Manager had created a framework on the College's computer system for integrating the College's own student surveys and the Framework for Excellence surveys. It was anticipated that that this would lead to the production of certain benchmarking data next year.

b) Any Other Matters Arising
None.

10.31 Student Attendance and Retention 2009/10

The Deputy Principal QA&S presented the report providing an update on the College's student attendance and retention in 2009/10, which was considered by the Committee.

It was reported that attendance was currently 86% against a target of 88%. Year-end outturn was projected to be 86%, and improvement actions were now being targeted for 2010/11. The main thrust of which would be earlier interventions.

With retention, the rate for 16 –18 learners was strong in comparison to last year. For adults it was lower than last year. However, current predictions were that pass rates would be high, so overall success rates would be at least as strong as last year. This was based on nine Divisions which had participated in a Business Performance Management (BPM) meeting so far this term. Of these nine Divisions, five were predicting success rate outcomes higher than last year; three were predicting the same level as last year; and one was predicting a 2% drop. This meant that these Divisions were all predicting that the students who had been retained would achieve their qualification. With the Division that was currently predicting a drop in success rates, targeted support was being directed to individual students which, if successful, should mean that the same level of success rates as last year might actually be achieved.

With withdrawals, the pattern was similar to previous reports provided. However, the number of new withdrawals had reduced markedly for all lines except Adult part-time provision. Discussion took place about the level of Adult withdrawals for "health reasons" and it was queried whether the College had further details in this regard.

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.

10.32 Observing Teaching & Learning 2009/10

The Quality Manager presented the report and explained that 325 observations had been carried out to date, which equated to 76% of the teaching staff who were theoretically in scope for observation. Not all staff had been observed, whilst some staff had been observed twice (or more). The majority of good or outstanding sessions still tended to be seen at Level 3 or above, and especially in classroom-based sessions. This position had remained constant throughout the year. All inadequate sessions had been observed during Internal Reviews and were rooted in classroom sessions delivered to Level 1 and 2 students. The weakest sessions were said to be Part Time Variable Hours (PTVH) staff observed at the start of the year. When these members of staff had been re-observed, improvement had been seen. All those members of staff whose sessions had been deemed "inadequate" had now progressed to

“satisfactory”.

It was explained that the College’s approach to Observing Teaching and Learning (OTL) was under review, with a view to changing its approach for 2010/11. This would be with the aim of revising the rationale behind the OTL process and the conclusions that could be reliably drawn from the data gathered.

The Deputy Principal then circulated a further report outlining the proposed changes to the College’s OTL process for 2010/11, which had just been considered by the College’s Senior Management Team (SMT). Members considered the proposed changes with approval, and were encouraged that this process was still viewed by the College’s SMT as a priority. Discussion took place about how the proposed process would link with staff performance reviews. Clarification was also provided in relation to the training requirements for vocational tutors and how this tied in with the OTL process.

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to endorse the College’s revised approach to its Observation of Teaching and Learning process.

10.33 Quality Policy 2010/11

The Quality Manager presented the report with the proposed changes to the Quality Policy made for 2010/11 which were said to be minimal. These included incorporating “themed” Internal Reviews of short duration, such as for one or two days. Some additions had also been made to the “key quality processes” referred to in Appendix 4 of the Policy to include course file validations and extending the range of surveys carried out.

Discussion took place in relation to Appendix 2 of the Policy containing the “self assessment sequence” and it was **agreed** that a number of revisions should be made in this regard.

DPQA&S

It was confirmed that the development of a retention strategy referred to in the Policy was covered in the College’s Strategic Plan for the coming year.

(Kevin Deadman left the meeting at 6.05pm.)

Discussion also took place about the relationship between the quality of Teaching and Learning, student achievements and student satisfaction. The Quality Manager explained that with new part-time staff it was inevitable that there would be some poor teaching. However, what was not clear from the OTL report was whether it was the same staff members performing poorly each year or whether it was genuinely new entrants. It was **acknowledged** that this was an area that required further investigation.

QM

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to approve the College's Quality Policy 2010/11, subject to inclusion of the agreed amendments.

DPQA&S

10.34 Internal Reviews Update

a) Business and Professional – Progress Update

This item was treated as confidential and a separate confidential minute produced.

b) Construction

This item was treated as confidential and a separate confidential minute produced.

10.35 Employers' Survey (Summer 2010)

The Deputy Principal QA&S presented the report summarising the outcomes of the College's employers' surveys and its recent Employer Focus Group held on 20 May 2010. It was explained that this was the first time that the College had undertaken these tasks in this way. The information gained demonstrated how strong the College's approach to Employer Engagement was, whilst recognising that there was also room for improvement. To this end, a list of further actions had been produced which would address those areas of weakness identified. It was also noted that the employers attending the Focus Group had indicated that they would welcome additional opportunities to "get involved" with the College and further work in this regard was being carried out.

Discussion took place about the response rate to the employer survey and whether it was a truly representative sample. It was queried what proportion of employers in the area didn't use the College and why. It was **agreed** that in future it would be useful for the total number of employers in each sector to be stated so that Members could see what percentage of each sector the number of respondents represented. It was also **agreed** that a similar end of year summary should be presented each year for presentation to the Committee.

DPQA&S

DPQA&S

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.

10.36 Self Assessment Report – Quality Improvement Plan (2009/10) – Progress Report

The Deputy Principal QA&S presented the report identifying progress made against the actions identified for 2009/10. Generally, progress was good with improvements being realised in internal communications; Teaching and Learning outcomes; the capture of timely achievements; and the positive impact of Notices to Improve.

However, further actions were required (and had been identified for 2010/11) in relation to improving value added; improving student attendance; extending student involvement activities; and improving self-assessment outcomes of "satisfactory" Divisions.

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.

10.37 **Complaints/ Compliments Report 2009/10**

The Deputy Principal QA&S presented the report showing that for the year to date (31 May 2010) the College had received 101 complaints, which was 15 less than last year.

It was explained that the College saw complaints as opportunities for improvement and its responses to complainants were made on this basis. Whilst each complaint was resolved individually there had been some College wide improvements. These included in respect of “studio fees” paid by students; in the way the College administered EMAs for Xtra Curricular activities; and the way the College kept students and parents informed about operational changes (such as a change of tutor). All complaints were followed up, and ‘signed off’ by a member of the Senior Management Team. They were only ‘signed off’ when a satisfactory outcome for the complainant had been reached.

The compliments received by the College had been welcomed, and related to a range of activities, teams and individuals from across the College.

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.

10.38 **2009/12 Strategic Plan – End of Year Progress Reports**

The Deputy Principal QA&S presented the report on progress relating to the four sections of the current Strategic Plan, relevant to the Committee. Key areas of progress included: Four Internal Reviews had been held; The Observation of Teaching & Learning (OTL) Framework for 2010/11 had been reviewed; Employer survey outcomes were very positive; Much emphasis had been placed on improving students’ experiences “in the classroom”; Developments had been undertaken regarding Value Added/Minimum Target Grades, although the outcomes were not yet known; Retention rates for adults were not as strong as desired; Much work had been undertaken to implement the Qualifications Credit Framework (QCF); and there had been strong Support for Students, with a wide range of activities and 684 students being seen, which was a 14% increase on the previous year.

Detailed consideration was given to the individual sections and other key points highlighted. Discussion took place about the induction rates for Part Time Variable Hours (PTVH) staff and how they were managed. It was ***agreed*** that the College’s HR Manager should produce a summary report on the HR approach to recruitment of PTVH staff and their performance review processes. It was also ***agreed*** that the Quality Manager should provide a similar summary on how PTVH staff were dealt with in the College’s quality assurance processes.

HRM

QM

It was noted that next year the format for such Strategic Plan updates would be uniform throughout the College. A summary update of the whole Strategic Plan would be presented at the forthcoming Governing Body meeting.

DPQA&S

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.

10.39 2010/2013 Strategic Plan – Draft Sections

The Deputy Principal QA&S presented the report with the proposed draft sections of the College's 2010/2013 Strategic Plan, for which the Committee would have responsibility.

It was explained that the plans built on the actions implemented during 2009/10. Some actions remained (because they were medium/long term); some had been removed (because they were now complete); and some were new. However, it was stressed that they should be read as a "package" of related items. Some aspects would be updated when the 2009/10 outturn information was available.

(Andrew Lindsay left the meeting at 7.15pm.)

Members then went on to consider the following sections in detail: Portfolio Development (Section 4); Teaching and Learning (Section 5); Support for Students (Section 7); Quality Assurance (Section 8); Equality and Diversity (Section 10).

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to recommend the Governing Body to approve the proposed sections of the College's 2010/13 Strategic Plan relating to Portfolio Development; Teaching and Learning; Support for Students; Quality Assurance; and Equality and Diversity.

10.40 Student Union Executive/ SMT Meeting Notes

The Deputy Principal QA&S presented the report and explained that two meetings had been held since the last report to the Committee.

The main topics considered had included the SU Executive's aims/objectives for 2010/11; Keep College Clean Week; the SU Executive to act as sign-posters for students requiring support; and the SU Executive to inform the Xtra Curricular programme for 2010/11.

Discussion also took place about the College's no-smoking policy, and difficulties experienced in policing it..

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.

10.41 Committee Terms of Reference and Schedule of Business 2010/11

The Clerk to the Governing Body presented the report. Members considered the Committee's most current Terms of Reference which had been revised in accordance with recommendations made by the Committee during the course of the year, together with the Committee's proposed schedule of business for 2010/11. Members reviewed both documents to ensure that they reflected the functions of the Committee, regulatory requirements and best practice. It was ***agreed*** that a new responsibility relating to Information, Advice and Guidance should be

Clerk

added to the Terms of Reference, and a number of revisions to the schedule of business were also proposed. Members noted that the schedule of business was not fixed and other items could be presented to the Committee as necessary during the course of the year.

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to recommend the Governing Body to approve the Terms of Reference for the Quality & Curriculum Committee, subject to agreed amendment; and further resolved to approve the Committee's schedule of business for 2010/11, subject to agreed amendment.

10.42 Any Other Business

The Chair referred to the fact that Members had previously requested that the format of the Divisional SAR reports should be uniform across all Divisions.

DPQA&S

10.43 Date of Next Meeting

To be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 7.35pm.

Signed (Chair):

Date:

Name: