

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Curriculum & Quality Assurance Committee**
held on Wednesday 17 May 2023 at 5.00 pm
via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT:	Ms Siobhan Breen Mrs Deborah Brown Mrs Maureen Brunt Dr Frances Campbell Ms Celine McCartan, Chief Executive Ms Anne McCleary (<i>from item 5.0</i>) Mr Michael McGuckin Dr Lynsey Quinn, Committee Chair
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body Mr Pdraig McNamee, Assistant Chief Executive, Learner Experience
APOLOGIES:	Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive Mrs Sandra Isherwood

1.0 **PRELIMINARIES**

Dr Quinn, Committee Chair, welcomed all present to the meeting. She acknowledged the forthcoming departure of Mr Daly and Mr McGuckin as committee members due to the end of their terms of office as well as the departure of Dr Cush from the College to take up another post and went on to express her appreciation to them for their contribution to the Committee.

2.0 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were tendered on behalf of Dr Cush and Mrs Isherwood.

3.0 **CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS**

Dr Quinn noted her employment with the Open University.

4.0 **MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Assurance Committee meeting held on Wednesday 22 March 2023.

There were no matters arising.

Ms McCleary joined the meeting at this juncture.

5.0 KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 04.01 List of Key Strategic Issues
- Paper 04.02 Key Strategic Issues Management Update
- Paper 05.12 Planned Curriculum Adjustments.

5.1 Reduction in Full Time Further Education Student Numbers and Retention

Mr McNamee reported an increase in applications to Further Education (FE), Higher Education (HE) and Work Based Learning (WBL) programmes for September 2023 entry and advised that the 2023/24 budget will determine the College's curriculum offer.

5.2 Student Retention

Mr McNamee reported on the additional student support put in place and on the integration of these activities. He also advised of the positive feedback received following a recent review of the student experience achieved through the Advanced Technical delivery model.

5.3 Essential Skills

Mr McNamee confirmed the transition to an alternative awarding organisation for Essential Skills to facilitate greater flexibility regarding examination arrangements thereby providing students with additional options in terms of the timing of assessment.

In response to a question on the progress of this transition, Mr McNamee noted lecturers' enthusiasm for the change, detailed the difficulties encountered with the previous Essential Skills assessment arrangements and commented on the anticipation of a better outcome for students through the enhanced flexibility offered by the new provider.

5.4 Curriculum Delivery Model

Mr McNamee explained that an analytical review of curriculum delivery had been undertaken as well as planning for the 2023/24 curriculum provision to align with various budget scenarios.

Referring to paper 05.12, he then provided an overview of the curriculum planning undertaken highlighting the assumptions made, the maximization of income generation opportunities, the identification of efficiency measures and the consideration of the success and viability of programmes. He went on to detail the proposed curriculum adjustments for each of the nine schools and concluded by quantifying the net teaching hours reduction of 4.8%.

In acknowledging colleges' dual role in supporting the economy and promoting social inclusion, Mr McNamee drew attention to the move from free delivery of community provision to delivery on a cost recovery basis and noted the research underway to identify sources of financial support to enable groups to fund this provision. A discussion then ensued during which members were advised that free community provision is not currently offered elsewhere in the sector, were informed of the growing demand for Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision, were made aware of the pressures created by the increasing requirement for special examination arrangements, were apprised of the need for

information sharing from schools in relation to the support requirements of individual students transitioning to the College, made suggestions in terms of potential funding sources for community groups to access college services and suggested that the Department of Health is approached to ascertain its scope for contributing to SEN provision in light of its reduction in services to this community.

Ms McCartan raised the potential for redundancies arising from the reduction in curriculum delivery and reminded the meeting of the £1 million savings committed in overheads in addition to the planned curriculum adjustments. She also commented on the ability to scale the curriculum plan depending on the budget allocation.

On conclusion of the discussion Mr McNamee paid tribute to Heads of School and Deputy Heads of School for their contribution to the development of the curriculum plan and acknowledged the challenging task ahead in implementing the curriculum adjustments.

5.5 Quality of Teaching and Learning

Mr McNamee commented on the continuous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and on the collation of student feedback into a single report for management consideration.

5.6 Access to Higher Education

The update provided on Access to Higher Education was noted by the Committee.

6.0 MANAGEMENT REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 05 Management Report
- Paper 05.01 Further Education Update
- Paper 05.02 Higher Education Update
- Paper 05.03 Work Based Learning Update
- Paper 05.04 Digital Learning Update
- Paper 05.05 Social Inclusion Update
- Paper 05.06 Quality Assurance Report
- Paper 05.07 EU Funding Projects Report
- Paper 05.08 Erasmus Report
- Paper 05.09 Safeguarding Report
- Paper 05.10 Annual Student Services Report 2023
- Paper 05.11 Sectoral Advisory Review – Lost Learning
- Paper 05.12 Planned Curriculum Adjustments
- Paper 05.13 Post 16 PTE Quality Assurance Handbook 2023-25
- Paper 05.14 Curriculum and Business Development Unit Collaboration
- Paper 05.15 Full Time Higher Education Bid 2023-24.

6.1 Further Education

Ref: Management Report Section 1.0 and Paper 05.01

Mr McNamee drew attention to the target and actual 2022/23 FE enrolments detailed in the Management Report as well as to the 2023/24 applications received and reiterated the need for more effective information sharing from schools on the support needs of students transitioning to the College.

He advised on the commencement of courses under SWC Online and of the planning underway for additional online programmes; commented on the positive feedback received on the Advanced Technical Award model and noted that funding for this programme has not yet been confirmed for 2023/24; and explained that enrolments to the College under the Entitlement Framework is likely to reduce in 2023/24 in light of the reduced budget for this programme and noted the further development of relationships with schools.

6.2 Higher Education

Ref: Management Report Section 2.0 and Papers 05.02 & 05.15

Mr McNamee reported on the target and actual 2022/23 HE and HLA enrolments as well as on the 2023/24 applications received to date.

He went on to confirm the Department for the Economy's (DfE) acceptance of the College's HE Maximum Student Number (MaSN) bid and the clawback clause should enrolments fall below target.

6.3 Work Based Learning

Ref: Management Report Section 3.0 and Paper 05.03

Mr McNamee referenced the target and actual 2022/23 WBL enrolments and 2023/24 applications received listed in the Management Report and noted the progression of a number of traineeship students to apprenticeships.

He informed the meeting of the development of new apprenticeships; advised of the unlikelihood of the introduction of All Age Apprenticeships in 2023/24 in light of the current financial environment; and reported on improvements to the functionality of the Trainee & Apprentice Management System (TAMS).

Mr McNamee also commented on the opportunity afforded by the new college structure to enhance employer engagement through greater collaboration between curriculum and business support teams.

6.4 Essential Skills

Ref: Management Report Section 4.0

The update provided on Essential Skills in the Management Report was noted by the Committee.

6.5 Digital Learning

Ref: Management Report Section 5.0 and Paper 05.04

Mr McNamee commented on the collaborations between Digital Learning and curriculum teams; highlighted the need for expertise in data capture and reporting; and advised on the establishment of a project to promote college job vacancies.

6.6 Social Inclusion

Ref: Management Report Section 6.0 and Paper 05.05

Mr McNamee drew attention to the successful bid for funding under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to deliver the Rural Economic Accelerator Programme (REAP).

6.7 Quality Assurance

Ref: Management Report Section 7.0 and Paper 05.06

Mr McNamee noted the collation of student feedback into a single report for management consideration as well as the sharing of good practice in the Quality Improvement Planning process within the proposed Strategic Alliance with Northern Regional College (NRC) and North West Regional College (NWRC).

6.8 Economic Engagement

Ref: Management Report Section 8.0 and Papers 05.07, 05.08 & 05.14

Mr McNamee drew attention to paper 05.08, providing an overview of student mobility activity within the College, as well as to paper 05.14, documenting current and proposed collaborations between the Business & Industry Support Unit and curriculum departments to streamline employer engagement. It was suggested that it may be useful to explore the reasons for differences in project value and drawdown.

6.9 Safeguarding

Ref: Management Report Section 9.0 and Paper 05.09 & 05.10

Mr McNamee reported a high volume of students accessing the College's counselling service and explained that a review of this service will be undertaken to assess its sufficiency and effectiveness.

Ms McCartan referenced a number of complex safeguarding issues that had arisen in year and explained that a review of the application of procedures will be undertaken to assess compliance and effectiveness. She also commented on the high level of care provided to students by college staff and noted the importance of a clear understanding of support pathways and the scope of lecturer responsibilities.

6.10 Update on Implementation of 2022/23 Annual Development Plan / Report Cards

Ref: Management Report Section 10.0 and Paper 05.12

It was noted that paper 05.12 had been considered earlier in the meeting.

6.11 Additional Items

Ref: Management Report Section 11.0 and Paper 05.11

The Report on the Internal Audit Sectoral Advisory Review of Lost Learning was noted by the Committee.

6.12 Policy Reviews

Ref: Management Report Section 12.0 and Paper 05.13

AGREED: that the Post 16 PTE Quality Assurance Handbook 2023-25 be recommended to the Governing Body for approval.

7.0 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE'S PERFORMANCE 2022/23

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06 Partially Completed Review of Committee's Performance in 2022/23.

With reference to paper 06, it was noted that the review had been partially completed by the Secretary to the Governing Body where a factual response was available. The Committee Chair then sought members' views on the self-assessment with the resulting review attached as Appendix A.

8.0 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2023/24

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07 Proposed Schedule of Meetings 2023/24.

The Committee agreed to convene 2023/24 committee meetings as per the proposed schedule, with the exception of the March 2024 meeting which is to be held on Tuesday 12 March 2024, and to hold meetings via Microsoft Teams, with the exception of the October 2023 meeting, which is to be held in the Dungannon campus.

AGREED: acceptance of the proposed schedule of Curriculum & Quality Assurance Committee meetings for 2023/24 with the amendment noted above.

9.0 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 08 Outstanding Actions.

It was noted that a presentation on the priorities of the Skills for a 10X Economy Strategy had not yet been received by the Governing Body and it was suggested that the Director of FE, DfE, along with a colleague, is invited to attend the September 2023 Governing Body meeting to inform members on this matter. It was also suggested that a DfE representative is invited to attend the Curriculum & Quality Assurance Committee's October 2023 meeting.

A revised list of outstanding actions is included in Appendix C.

10.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

Ms McCartan apprised the Committee of DfE's approval of the College's 2023/24 Widening Access and Participation Plan (WAPP) and Mr McNamee advised that the Fitness to Practice Policy is under review to cover traineeships as well as HE.


11.0 REFLECTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETING

Members commented favourably on the proceedings of the meeting throughout the year.

The meeting concluded at 6:55 pm.

CONFIRMED AND ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21 JUNE 2023

CHAIRMAN



DATE 21/06/2023

**REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE OF THE CURRICULUM & QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE
2022/23**

		Yes	No	Comments
Terms of Reference				
1	Does the Curriculum & Quality Assurance Committee have written terms of reference?	✓		
2	Were the terms of reference reviewed by the Committee and approved by the Governing Body?	✓		Reviewed by the Committee in October 2022 and January 2023 and approved by the GB in November 2022 and March 2023.
3	Has the Committee complied with the provisions of its terms of reference in its proceedings throughout the year?	✓		
Programme of Business				
4	Did the Committee agree a programme of business for the academic year?	✓		Agreed by the Committee at its October 2022 meeting.
5	Did the Committee cover all business listed in the programme of business?		✓	Annual Report on Safeguarding and Reviews of Submission of Coursework Policy, Fitness to Practice Policy, FE Personal Tutoring & Academic Support Policy deferred until Autumn 2023 meeting.
6	Have all actions identified by the committee been satisfactorily delivered?		✓	Presentation on the priorities of the Skills for a 10X Economy Strategy outstanding.
7	Is there any business that members feel do not need to be covered next year?	✓		No departmental presentations required in 2023/24 in light of implementation of management realignment.
8	Is there any additional business that members feel should be included next year?		✓	
Skills, Knowledge and Competences of Members				
9	Does the appropriate mix of skills, knowledge and competences exist within the Committee to perform most effectively?	✓		
Governing Body Key Performance Indicators				
10	Did attendance levels at Committee meetings average at least 65%?	✓		Average 90% year to date.
11	Did Committee meetings generally last no more than two hours?	✓		

POLICIES RECOMMENDED TO THE GOVERNING BODY FOR APPROVAL

#	Policy
1	Post 16 PTE Quality Assurance Handbook 2023-25

SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

#	Meeting Date	Minute Ref	Action
1	19/10/2022	4.0	Presentation on the priorities of the Skills for a 10X Economy Strategy to be provided to the Governing Body.
	17/05/2023	9.0	The Director of FE, DfE, along with a colleague, to be invited to attend the September 2023 Governing Body meeting to inform members on the priorities of the Skills for a 10X Economy Strategy.
2	17/05/2023	9.0	DfE representative to be invited to attend the Curriculum & Quality Assurance Committee's October 2023 meeting.