

BLACKPOOL AND THE FYLDE COLLEGE
QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE (“the Committee”)
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2019, 5.00PM
IN ROOM 204 ON THE UNIVERSITY CENTRE CAMPUS

Present: K Gilmour (in the Chair) Independent Member
H Knight Independent Member
A Parmley Independent Member
L Wareing Co-opted Subject Specialist

In attendance: P Howard, PDH Advisory Limited (Clerk to the Corporation)
C Dunn, Vice-Principal for HE and Student Enhancement
K Coughlan, Director of Quality and Standards
H Fogg, Director of Higher Education
S Hughes, Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum

1. Chair and quorum

K Gilmour took the chair and noted that due notice had been given to all committee members and that a quorum was present. Accordingly, he declared the meeting duly convened and constituted.

2. Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no opening declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 October 2019 were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record.

5. Dashboard

The regular dashboard showing progress against a number of quality metrics was provided to the meeting and particular note was made of the changes in retention figures, although the Committee noted that it is common across the sector for this figure to drop slightly towards the end of the year.

The Committee noted the focused work ongoing to further improve FE attendance and a summary of the activities undertaken by both curriculum and support staff in encouraging attendance was provided. In response to a question from H Knight, the Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum confirmed that the current year's figures were similar to the previous year's and reminded the Committee that significant improvements at individual student level do not always have an obvious impact on the overall figures. In response to a question from A Parmley, the Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum summarised the targeted work at enrolment and on an ongoing basis to support students to attend college, such as the provision of discounted bus passes. L Wareing noted the correlation between good attendance and good attainment and good retention and the Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum noted that some curriculum areas offered mirrored class arrangements during the week and that, whilst this does not impact on a student's attendance figure, it does nonetheless positively impact on the quality of the education provided.

The Committee noted the content of the dashboard.

6. Further Education Self-Assessment Report 2018/19

The Director of Quality and Standards presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to allow the Committee to scrutinise and challenge the college's Further Education Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and to recommend the final version to the Corporation Board. She confirmed that the SAR reflected the new Ofsted Education Inspection Framework and the Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum confirmed that, whilst no longer a regulatory requirement to complete a SAR and submit it to the Education and Skills Funding Agency, it remains recommended best practice and that a copy of the final document is provided to Ofsted for information.

In response to a question from H Knight about what the term "high needs student" refers to, the Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum explained the difference between "supported students" and "high needs students" in relation to the cost of their additional support requirements.

In response to a question from H Knight, the Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum noted that traineeships require 20% off-the-job training and explained the relationship between traineeships and apprenticeships. He confirmed that the size of the traineeship cohort within the college is very small, with c.100 students per year.

L Wareing commented on the scale of the data and analysis within the SAR and thanked those responsible for its collation. She noted the importance of student attendance which cut across several areas of the report and progress in relation to GCSE maths and English resit students was discussed in detail.

H Knight noted that, in some sections of the SAR, comments had been made around the level of student work being excellent and sought clarity on the validation for those comments. In response, the Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum advised that work is reviewed by external verifiers from the various awarding bodies but that employers are regularly invited to attend the college to see at first hand the work that students are completing. The Director of Quality and Standards also reminded the Committee of the importance that is placed on industry placements for students.

The Committee considered that the SAR illustrated progress well and had been the subject of robust scrutiny, both prior to completion and by the Committee. It therefore RECOMMENDED that the document be approved.

7. HE Self-Evaluation Document 2018/19

The Vice-Principal for HE and Student Enhancement presented the Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 2018/19 (SED) for the Committee's consideration, following approval of the document by the HE Academic Board. She reminded the Committee that there is external membership of all SED panels and student representatives are also invited to participate. Particular note was made of the recruitment figures within the report as well as the inclusion of higher and degree apprenticeships.

In response to a question from A Parmley, the Vice-Principal for HE and Student Enhancement summarised the work that had been undertaken within the Maritime and Offshore curriculum area to better inform student perception, as this area was necessarily more structured as part of the "on board" student experience.

H Knight highlighted the content on page 20 of the report which confirmed that learning resources at B&FC are excellent and queried where any areas of challenge might be. In response, the Vice-Principal for HE and Student Enhancement advised that this question is asked of the students at each SED panel to allow them the opportunity to identify any other necessary areas of support.

H Knight commended the section around research and the Committee noted the Director of HE's lead responsibility in this area. The Director of HE noted that B&FC seeks to collaborate with other organisations when appropriate and cited by way of an example a recent conference undertaken in conjunction with Blackburn.

The Chair acknowledged that the number of degree apprenticeships was growing, to which the Vice-Principal for HE and Student Enhancement noted that there are different start dates throughout the year to ensure flexibility and responsiveness.

L Wareing referred the Committee to the quality improvement plan commencing on page 51 of the report and noted that some of the planned improvements in the 2018/19 quality improvement plan had been partially achieved or not achieved. In

response, the Director of HE confirmed that those not yet achieved had been rolled forward into the 2019/20 plan.

The committee received the report and endorsed the content.

8. Office for Students' Access and Participation Plan

The Clerk took the opportunity to inform the Committee that correspondence had recently been received from Office for Students that the Access and Participation Plan had been approved and would be subject to enhanced monitoring. It was agreed that the final version of the document would be shared with the Committee.

ACTION: Clerk (to circulate)

The committee received the report and noted the content.

9. Committee self-assessment

The Clerk facilitated a self-assessment exercise based on the Committee's terms of reference, the results of which are appended to these minutes. As a result of the exercise, the Committee noted the need to slightly amend the terms of reference for the Committee at the next meeting.

The committee received the report and noted the content.

10. Date, time and venue of next meeting

The next meeting of the Quality and Standards Committee will be held on 17 March 2020, 5.00pm on the University Centre Campus.