

**BLACKPOOL AND THE FYLDE COLLEGE**  
**QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE (“the Committee”)**  
**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 2 APRIL 2020, 5.00PM**  
**VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

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**Present:** K Gilmour (in the Chair) Independent Member  
A Parmley Independent Member

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

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**1. Chair and quorum**

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

**2. Apologies for absence**

The apologies received from H Knight and L Wareing were noted.

**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 26 November 2019 were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record.

**5. Quality and standards scorecard**

The regular dashboard showing progress against a number of quality metrics was provided to the meeting

The Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum provided context for the slight drop in retention and the slightly less favourable FE attendance rate but noted that overall performance was neither unusual nor controversial.

The Committee noted that the dashboard presented a snapshot of performance as at 17 March 2020, the previously scheduled Committee meeting, and therefore the impact of the Government's social distancing measures and cancellation of external assessments in response to the coronavirus pandemic had not been captured.

To that end, the Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum advised the Committee of the measures B&FC had introduced to facilitate the delivery of remote learning, to enable the continued assessment of learning outcomes and to ensure the overarching imperative of student progress. He also gave an overview of the interventions, support and care B&FC was providing to its students.

Given the unprecedented circumstances, the Chair asked whether the Committee, on behalf of the Board, could be assured as to the quality and standards of B&FC's teaching, learning and assessment. In response, the Director of Quality and Standards emphasised that the substance of learning had not been compromised nor undermined by being configured remotely and virtually; that established robust processes and procedures were continuing to be adhered to; and that although the method of grading students in the absence of examinations was yet to be announced, it was expected that a consistent, evidenced based approach comprising progress, performance and prior attainment would be adopted.

In response to a question from A Parmley on the delivery of practical assessments given the coronavirus pandemic, the Director of Quality and Standards confirmed that due consideration would be given to whether students had already met the practical requirement for their assessment outcomes earlier on in their course. She also highlighted the importance of B&FC ensuring its allocated standards verifier was consistent with the official assessment approach.

A Parmley asked about the level of student uptake of online learning. In response, the Director of Quality and Standards reported that student attendance records across all curriculum areas evidenced that some students who were disengaged previously had re-engaged with the introduction of online learning and that work was underway to triangulate the relevant key data.

In response to A Parmley asking whether students had the necessary technology at their homes to participate in this new style of learning, the Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum and the Director of Quality and Standards informed the Committee of the various channels that were being used to ensure the continuation of effective communication and engagement with B&FC's students. They also provided an overview of the support and initiatives that were available to those students who required them and how B&FC resources and kit were being allocated fairly to those students who were most in need.

The Committee noted the content of the dashboard.

## **6. Impact of Education - Value added (L3) and distance travelled (L2) mid-year report**

The Director of Quality and Standards summarised the value added and distanced travelled mid-year board and the Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum reported on the changes that had been made to RQF given the significant reliance on external examinations and the implications thereof.

In response to a question from A Parmley regarding inspections during the pandemic, the Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum confirmed that Ofsted had suspended all routine inspections.

## **7 Impact of Education - English and Mathematics curriculum 2019/20 update**

The Vice-Principal of Quality and Curriculum summarised the key points from the report, noting that with the exception of low student attendance in English and Mathematics classes, progress was on track.

The Vice-Principal of Quality and Curriculum also updated the Committee on the impact of the recent cancellation of GCSEs and the expectation that mock exam results would be taken into consideration to determine the grades to be awarded. The Committee noted that had the assessment model not changed in response to the coronavirus pandemic, the Vice-Principal of Quality and Curriculum would have been confident that B&FC's performance in Maths and English would have been consistent with the positive results in previous years.

The Vice-Principal of Quality and Curriculum reported on the recently published National Achievement Rate Tables for the 2018-19 outturn, highlighting that B&FC had remained at second place for Maths and had moved up to fifth place for English and that B&FC's work and progress resonated very strongly with the previous year (for Colleges in England). He confirmed that B&FC was making interventions in year to bring about changes to enhance the performance of GCSE English.

The Committee noted the report and update.

## **8 Impact of Education - Ofsted inspection data summary report (IDSR)**

The Director of Quality and Standards summarised the IDSR report which informed the Committee of both the changes to the format of the IDSR to reflect the Education Inspection Framework and also the content of B&FC's IDSR for 2018/19.

The Director of Quality and Standards highlighted that the IDSR data set out in the report represented that used by Ofsted inspectors when they prepared for their inspections.

Following a request from A Parmley for a hard copy of the IDSR, the Chair requested that it be saved to the useful documents section of the B&FC's governance online portal.

**ACTION: Company Secretary**

The Committee noted the report.

## **9 Quality of Education – student attendance mid-year report**

The Director of Quality and Standards presented the student attendance mid-year report to the Committee for consideration, highlighting that it was written prior to the Government's lockdown restrictions.

The Director of Quality and Standards highlighted the hard work B&FC was undertaking to enhance attendance with FE to bring this to the desired level. She and the Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum provided examples of B&FC's students' firm engagement with remote and online learning platforms including the notable results with a particular course which had seen a dramatic upturn in student engagement. It was acknowledged that the Government's advice prior to lockdown, for the public to stay at home if experiencing certain symptoms, would have likely contributed to the steady decline in attendance during that period.

The Chair asked what conclusions were being drawn from the positive student engagement with remote working and what could be learnt from this going forward. In response, the Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum highlighted the benefits of the recently imposed adoption and use of technology from an education perspective. He also summarised B&FC's areas of focus to inform its future investment decisions in this regard.

The Chair congratulated the team on this work and the Committee noted the report.

## **10. Quality of Education – Student retention - mid-year report**

The Director of Quality and Standards summarised the student retention mid-year report which provided a snapshot as at 17 March 2020, noting that retention had continued to remain positive overall. She also updated the Committee on recent activity.

In response to A Parmley asking about the impact of the cancellation of examinations on students, the Director of Quality and Standards acknowledged the value of examinations in terms of the certainty and focus they can provide for students but highlighted that, where applicable, the requirements for students to undertake coursework assessments remained.

The Committee noted the report.

**11. Quality of Education – Learning, teaching and assessment observations - mid-year report**

The Committee considered the learning, teaching and assessment observations mid-year report.

The Director of Quality and Standards highlighted that the observations were now being considered through the prism of the new ways of working and that there were some excellent examples of learning, teaching, assessment and engagement. B&FC was highly impressed with the way in which students and staff had adapted to this new model, which would inform B&FC's future strategy.

The Chair expressed the Committee's appreciation of B&FC's efforts and new ways of working and acknowledged the positive outcomes and results.

**12. Quality of Education – Student feedback and satisfaction – mid-year report**

The Director of Quality and Standards introduced the student feedback and satisfaction mid-year report, which the Committee considered.

The Director of Quality and Standards highlighted the value of the student surveys in gauging student satisfaction and B&FC's intention to further enhance this aspect of the student voice to enable it to become even more integrated with the overall student experience and learning environment.

The Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum and the Vice-Principal for HE and Student Enhancement elaborated on the results and summarised the work B&FC was undertaking in response to address this and the tangible improvements to date.

In response to a question from the Chair about student response rates to the survey, the Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum summarised the introduction of a phased survey to enhance survey participation.

In response to a question from A Parmley about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on students' locations and working arrangements, the Vice-Principal of Quality and Curriculum reported on the exercise that B&FC had undertaken to facilitate the transfer of residential students home where they were now working remotely. He also informed the Committee of the arrangements in place for those students who worked from B&FC or local accommodation and for overseas students.

The Committee noted the content of the report.

### **13. Curriculum implementation: apprenticeship performance mid-year report**

The Director of Quality and Standards presented the apprenticeship performance mid-year report for the Committee's information.

The Director of Quality and Standards provided an update on the decrease in apprenticeship performance across the sector and its impact on B&FC's achievement forecast. She also highlighted the recently published National Achievement Rate Tables for 2018-19, noting that B&FC wished to improve its final position of 65.2% in the period notwithstanding this had been above the national average.

The Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum informed the Committee of the challenges faced by apprenticeship employers resulting from the coronavirus pandemic; the ways in which employers were navigating social distancing and furloughing; and the inevitable consequential challenges and difficulties for B&FC's delivery of apprenticeships.

The Committee noted the report and the update.

### **14. Office for Students' access and participation plan (APP) 2020/21-2024/25 update**

On behalf of and with input from the Director of Higher Education, the Vice-Principal for HE and Student Enhancement summarised the key points from the report, including the work undertaken since B&FC's APP 2020-25 had been approved by the Committee.

The Committee was provided with an overview of the monthly monitoring of APP as set out in Appendix A of the report and was advised of how this informed and enabled B&FC to report to the OfS.

In response to A Parmley's question about implementation timescales of the APP, the Director of Quality and Standards clarified the position.

The Committee noted the report.

### **15. Revised terms of reference**

P Howard reported that the terms of reference had been revised since the last meeting to reflect the Committee's comments, highlighting that the amendments were self-explanatory and non-contentious.

Subject to a slight amendment agreed at the meeting, the Committee approved the changes and agreed to recommend the revised terms of reference to the Board for approval.

**16. Any other business**

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair acknowledged that the Committee had received assurance of the help and support B&FC was providing to students and locally.

**17. Date, time and venue of next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 12 May 2020 at 5.00pm, via teleconference should it not be possible to convene the meeting in person at University Centre.