

CORPORATION BOARD of UNITED COLLEGES GROUP
Minutes of Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee
Wednesday 09 November 2022, 6 pm by Zoom

Members Present: Colin Smith (Chair), Angela Drisdale Gordon, Stephen Davis (CEO), Tony Johnston, Max Maalimey (staff governor), Desmond Bishop (staff governor), Grethe Woodward.

In attendance: Zoë Lawrence, James Wilson, Angela Jackson, Claire Collins, Louise Reynolds.

A	Procedural
1	<p>Welcome and apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies has been received from Liz Jones, Kieran Joseph and Patricia Aquino.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Grethe Woodward to her first meeting of the Committee as a co-opted governor. GW was also taking the role of safeguarding governor during Natalie Dweh's absence.</p>
2	<p>Declarations of interests in agenda items</p> <p>No interests were declared.</p>
3	<p>i. Approve minutes of the Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee of 13 June 2022 <i>(The minutes were circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>The minutes were approved as an accurate record.</p> <p>ii. Matters Arising</p> <p>At the June meeting a request had been made for information on the 40 poorer performing teachers and whether they were permanent members of staff or HPLs. AJ confirmed that 60% of these were agency or HLPs with only 40 % permanent. ADG asked if there had been a correlation between poorer performing teachers and poorer student attendance. JW said that the lesson observation process was looking at this and there did seem to be a pattern. TJ asked if the College was continuing to employ the agency staff that did not perform well. AJ confirmed that their employment had ended.</p> <p>iii. Grey Box</p> <p>No items were raised for discussion.</p>

Strategic Matters	
4	<p>i. Enhanced Student Experience & Outcomes Balance Score Card <i>(Papers circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>SD explained the information provided and that more detailed papers were on the agenda which covered achievement, attendance, complaints, and exclusions. The value-added data was yet to be received and would be provided at the January meeting.</p> <p>ii. Risk Register <i>(Papers circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>JW reported that out of the 10 risks four were above the risk tolerance level. These were the BI/MIS infrastructure, which was impacting on performance reporting and definitions, achieving an Ofsted Good, E&M results and student outcomes at or above national rates. E&M outcomes overall had recovered and were at a similar level to 18/19 before the</p>

pandemic. Mitigating actions were in place for the other risks which were included in the other papers on the agenda.

CS asked what stage the BI system would reach by the beginning of the calendar year. JW said that the BI brought together the two systems but the benefits realisation had been delayed with difficulties recruiting skilled staff. Expertise was now in place, and work was progressing to create cleaner more reliable data based on consistent definitions. Plans were in place to bring together the two pro-monitor systems, but this was not expected until Easter and it was likely that they would run in parallel until Sept 2023.

TJ asked about the Ofsted risk and what evidence was available to demonstrate improvements this term, particularly for Business. JW said that a new management team had been put in place and the advanced practitioner group was providing intervention support. It was important to triangulate what was being reported with what was actually happening in the classrooms. The high recognised trade union presence in the area was noted. The intervention being taken forward was more complex than that used to address the weaknesses in E&M the previous year.

iii. Attendance

(Paper provided in advance)

AJ reported that attendance had been 73% the previous year. 80 % was the current BSC target. The paper set out attendance against this target broken down into curriculum areas. Attendance varied but was currently on track with significant improvement (6%) in some areas. The data did not include E&M at this stage as the classes and registers were yet to settle following the census point and this would be difficult to produce with any confidence in accuracy. The actions taken to improve attendance this year centred on ensuring the policies and protocols were embedded and understood by staff, students and parents/guardians. Attendance had also been a key feature of induction and welcome events with its importance stressed from the beginning.

GW asked if AJ thought there was a particular action or if it was a combination of things that was driving the improvements. AJ said that it was a combination, with attendance being the focus at every touch point, plus clarity for teachers. GW said it was good to see the improved attendance data at this point in the year.

ADG welcomed the substantive item on attendance and the detail in the paper. She asked for a wider explanation of the protocols being used. AJ said that these set out clearly when the teacher should contact the student for non-attendance, when parents should be contacted (as applicable) and the rigor that should be adopted in following these up.

TJ asked if the financial reward scheme for attendance used in the previous year had been continued. AJ said that a review of this had concluded that it had minimal impact for improving attendance and didn't appear to work. Making expectations explicit appeared to have better results. TJ said that in his role as link governor for English and maths there were comments last year about timetabling and group size, which was impacting attendance. Did AJ think that this was the same this year? AJ said that there may be some issues, but this was at a much smaller level than the previous year and the college has been much quicker in resolving problems. The number of E&M learners had increased and there were difficulties with the MIS coding structure. MM commented on the increasing number of 19+ learners who attend 16-18 age group courses and have difficulty attending due to work commitments which have increased with the cost of living crisis. He suggested that

	<p>there may be options for discrete 19+ courses or blended learning approaches to support these students. DB stressed that attendance needed to be owned by the curriculum.</p> <p>iv. Safeguarding Annual Report <i>(Paper provided in advance)</i></p> <p>AJ set out the main themes and messages from her annual report plus some of the welfare support being provided by the college including clothes and food banks, and links with welfare agencies in Brent. TJ thanked AJ for the detailed report and suggested that the ethnicity data be expressed as a percentage to provide context. GW commented on the robust approach being given to safeguarding and the broad range of issues the report covered. She noted the rise in non-safeguarding related issues such as mental health and anxiety. AGD commented how the report painted a sad picture of young people’s mental health following the pandemic. She asked if AJ thought there was under reporting of sexual abuse incidents by males due to the potential stigma attached. AJ said there were forums for males to come forward safely, but acknowledge that this may be an issue. ADG asked if there was any feedback from students on the range of safeguarding and welfare activities provided.</p> <p>v. Safeguarding Policy <i>(Papers circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>This policy had already been approved by the Corporation at the October meeting to ensure that the most up to date version was issued as soon as possible in the academic year. AJ highlighted where the main changes had been made in response to the updated version of KCSIE issued in September 2022.</p> <p>vi. Link Governor – relaunch for 2022/23</p> <p>ZL brought to the Committee’s attention the re-launch of the Link Governor Scheme for 2022/23 and that Link Governors and APs had been encouraged to make plans during this term and would be expected to report back at the December Corporation meeting. SD commented that he thought the Link Governor scheme was a powerful mechanism and sought where possible for this to be extended into other non-curriculum areas. Link Governors were already in place for IT and HR. Further areas would be considered.</p>
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Teaching, Learning and Skills	
5	<p>i. Student Achievement <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>Updated figures from those provided at the Corporation meeting in October were provided. These showed a very slight decline for 16-18-year-old learners, and an improvement for 19+ learners. It was thought that the exam-based component of courses had impacted on achievement following the pandemic when centre assessed grades replaced exams. Absence levels for staff and students from Covid had also affected achievement. JW showed that where students were retained the pass rate was generally good. JW set out the actions being taken as described in the paper which included tailored CPD, the reporting scaffold and quality compliance. He also highlighted the areas of improvement which included functional skills and BDEV.</p> <p>TJ asked how the SLT were creating confidence in the predictions going forward and GW asked what evidence of improvement could be provided at inspection. JW said that work scrutiny was taking place as part of the lesson observations. Students’ work was being sampled and in some areas this was 100% sampling. This direct evidence would inform the</p>

CAD position in the New Year which would be based on actual student work. It was expected that three substantial pieces of work would be completed this term.

TJ asked if it was possible for 19+ learners who were working to access a recording of the lesson and course materials. JW said that resources were available through teams, though a balance was struck to emphasise the expectation of attendance and that attending at college added value for the learner. It was reiterated that 16-18 year-old students were legally required to attend college and that any part-time work needed to fit around that. The bursary was available to students to provide some financial support.

ADG asked when there would be a breakdown of data for different learner groups. This was expected for the next meeting in the New Year.

ii. Enrolment and Retention

(Paper circulated in advance)

JW reported that 16-18 year-old enrolments were slightly below target but further starts were expected in the New Year. The position on 19+ enrolments was positive. For HE some newly planned courses had not run. Attrition was better across all age groups compared to the previous year. TJ congratulated the Executive on a successful enrolment and asked when the evaluation of the marketing campaign would be available. CC said that this would be for the next meeting in January. CC said that she thought this year had gone well and the learning from research had been helpful. The School Liaison Officer was now in post and had started visiting schools and was linking with Unloc.

iii. College Operational Plan

(Paper circulated in advance)

SD explained this planning process and the development of hard metrics to monitor performance. This was aligned to the BSC and SPH objectives. The plan shared at this meeting was in development and the final version was expected to be ready for the Corporation meeting in December. It had been brought together through two development days with staff and was based on the four themes in the strategy.

iv. T Levels

(Paper circulated in advance)

LR set out the position on T levels and that this would bring about a major change for the college. BTEC courses were being defunded and replaced with T levels. Delivery would start from September 2023 and would include 400 hours of industry placement over two years. There was significant input from employers with A level style exams. Efforts were currently being put into staff development and marketing of the courses. DfE were providing some brokerage for the industry placements. Teachers needed upskilling to be able to deliver the specific requirements.

TJ asked about the impact on L2 courses. LR thought that this would provide a strong recruitment base for T levels particularly as they were accustomed to college style learning and would be able to access higher level apprenticeships. TJ asked if work simulation was equal to work experience. This was not the case. MM asked about the entrance criteria. LR said that this was for UCG to set. The requirement for T level students to have GCSE maths and English had been relaxed.

SD commented that the delivery time for T levels had increased but the fee had not. It appeared that government were supporting more 2-year qualifications and withdrawing

	<p>applied and general ones. There would be significant organisational challenges in the transition to T levels depending on the rate of change.</p>
6	<p>Student Engagement</p> <p>I. Exclusions and Complaints <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>Complaints - AJ described the main points of her paper summarising the complaints received in 2021/22 compared to the prior year. She emphasised the focus on addressing issues before they became complaints, improvements to the complaints form, and training in customer service which had been provided. A request for the complaints data to be presented by learner group (16-18, 19+ and HE) was made.</p> <p>Exclusions - AJ described the data in the report and the trends compared to the previous year including the impact of students returning to campus post Covid when behaviour was more challenging. Some staff had received training on trauma to better understand some of the complex experiences of some of the students and what may be potential triggers. The ethnicity of excluded students was noted and an Equality Impact Assessment would be undertaken to look at this. The majority of exclusions were due to violent behaviour and one of racially abusive language. It was thought that the process was robust and that students were treated fairly. ADG asked for clarity of definitions of exclusion and suspension. Suspension was for a short period and exclusions prevented a return to the college for up to two years. ADG commented on the socio-ethnic issues of society and how there needed to be more understanding of this. MM said that it was important to be mindful of the home lives and backgrounds of students. He felt that the exclusion process was fair and allowed students the opportunity to make their case in a non-prejudicial environment. For context AJ said that the afro-Caribbean learners were the highest ethnic proportion in the college.</p>
7	<p>AOB</p> <p>There were no items of AoB.</p>
8	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>23 January 2023</p> <p>Meeting closed at 8.23 pm</p>

Minutes taken by Zoë Lawrence 10 November 2022

SIGNED: **Date:**
Colin Smith
TLS Chair

ACTIONS

Ref	Action	Owner	Status
5i	Student Achievement by EDI learner group to be provided for the next meeting in January 2023	JW	Complete
5ii	Evaluation of the August 2022 enrolment process and marketing to be on the January meeting agenda	CC	Complete
6i	Complaints to be broken down into learner group (16-18 / HE and 19+)	AJ	Complete