

MINUTES

Minutes of the Academic Quality Committee meeting held on Wednesday 10 June 2020 at 3.30pm via Microsoft Teams.

Present: Shona Cochrane (Chair), Jen Anderson, Joseph Harney, Hugh Hall, Carol Hunter, Amanda Kindness, Zoe Thomson

In Attendance: David C Watt, Dorothée Leslie, Iain Hawker, Wendy Brymer, Marianne Philp

1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting. In particular Amanda Kindness was welcomed to her first meeting. Thanks were expressed to Tony Martin who had now stepped down from this Committee.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting: 19 February 2020

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

3 Matters Arising / Actions Outstanding

There were no matters arising / actions outstanding.

4 Innovative Learning and Teaching Practice

Kay Fraser joined the meeting for this item. A video was played showing work students had been undertaken whilst on lockdown.

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were outlined and noted. This included preparation for lockdown, successes and challenges since lockdown and next steps. It was noted that communication with staff had improved and there had been a big step forward in using technology for learning. It was confirmed that other Faculties had adopted a similar approach and were in a similar position.

Members of the Committee commended staff for the way they had come together to ensure learner needs were met during lockdown, and were pleased to see evidence of good levels of engagement and improving KPIs.

It was confirmed that investment in digital learning would continue to be prioritised for the College and the Principal advised of the Digital Ambition 2030 which set out what the sector as a whole needed to take forward. Flexibility was key for learners and would be embedded in the future strategy. The importance of empowering lecturers to take on new practices and learner responsibility was also noted.

The Chair thanked Kay Fraser for joining the meeting and for her interesting and insightful update.

Decision: To update the Committee on how digital learning is progressing at a future meeting.
Responsibility: Dorothee Leslie **Deadline:** February 2021

5 Curriculum Update Report

The contents of the report that had been circulated were outlined and noted. Committee members noted that the credit target for 2019-20 would be met. Early and further withdrawal rates had improved when compared with last year. Recruitment for 2020-21 was progressing well with FE at a similar level to last year and HE showing an improvement.

A question had been raised by a member prior to the meeting about contingency planning and strategies for social distancing and the impact of COVID-19 on learning and teaching when College buildings return. It was confirmed that College plans were well underway and that communications to stakeholders were due to be issued. The College term would start at the normal time. The first few weeks would prioritise assessments to allow 2019-20 to complete their courses and any commercial activity that was required. Induction would be undertaken online. The start of term for 2020-21 would commence remotely with online learning frontloaded and practical elements initially delayed. Learners would return on a phased basis, with attendance spread across different days to reduce numbers in the building at any one time and allow for social distancing. Estates had started working on changes required to the buildings and layout of rooms, and were making arrangements for PPE. It was noted that the plans were subject to agreement with the Trade Unions and would be adjusted to fit with any Government guidance and good practice issued. Health and safety was the paramount consideration throughout.

It was noted that the Scottish Funding Council had confirmed the credit target for 2020-21 which was very close to this year's. Some ringfenced activity had been reduced which meant more flexibility about those courses which would be helpful.

The Business Development Team continued to prioritise MA recruitment and it was likely that there would be a move to MA starting in January 2021 rather than the start of the academic year.

It was confirmed that work was ongoing to recruit to areas such as computing and digital where job opportunities were most likely. There were encouraging signs of increased interest in this area in light of the current situation.

It was noted that Colleges required to ensure they were agile enough to respond to changes to the market required by employers.

6 Fife College Students' Association (FCSA) Update

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. Updates were given on:

- a range of activity that had been organised to engage learners and continue FCSA remotely using digital solutions.
- issues raised by students and representatives logged on the student engagement tracker
- the recent FCSA elections and open badges
- progress made with embedding mental health into the curriculum
- recent awards and conferences



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Members of the Committee commended everyone involved in the work of the FCSA for all that had been achieved. It was noted that this was Carol Hunter's last Committee meeting. Members thanked her for her valuable contribution and wished her well for the future in her role within the Guidance Team.

7 Learner Survey 2

7.1 Learning and Teaching 2019-20

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. Members were delighted to note a 68.9% response rate, which was a significant increase on previous years and above the target response rate set by the Scottish Funding Council. Members commented that this made the results statistically valid as there was coverage across all areas of the College.

It was highlighted that 95.7% of students would recommend the College to others. Positive and negative comments had been made and these would be evaluated and taken forward as appropriate.

7.2 SFC Student Engagement and Satisfaction Survey

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. The response rate had improved across all categories of responses. SFC had indicated that responses would not be published as not all colleges had asked learners to complete anticipating low return rates due to lockdown. In particular it was pleasing to note an improvement in responses relating to the FCSA, showing that students were more aware of the work being undertaken.

It was noted that student suggestions being taken seriously appeared to be one of the weaker responses. It was confirmed that this was related to closing the loop and that there a "Your Voice" campaign in place to push out messages more and address this.

8 Inclusion Report

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was highlighted that Fife College's performance data had improved across all areas with the exception of deprived postcode areas. The sector position had shown a decline across all areas. Members agreed that it was encouraging to note improvements, and that further work would be undertaken forward to continue to improve the position.

9 EREP Report: Update on Progress

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. The paper showed that all actions were on target, with the exception of one which had not yet started. This related to the development of an online School College Partnership portal. It was confirmed that the schools currently get all information they need, and the portal was a way to share this more easily and efficiency, but it was not a priority and caused no risk. The intention was to take this forward at an appropriate time in the future.



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It was confirmed that the Education Scotland planned visit had been cancelled due to COVID-19. However self-evaluation would be undertaken as normal.

10 Draft Digital Learning Strategy 2020-24

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was highlighted that staff had been involved in the Strategy by a range of focus groups – face-to-face prior to lockdown and online thereafter, and that the draft Strategy had been approved by the Executive Team. It was confirmed that a detailed digital plan was also in place which covered the physical and HR elements of delivering the strategy.

A query was raised about the various platforms currently being used and where the College would be on this in 3-5 years time. It was confirmed that a recommended platform with a range of toolkits and guidance would be made available to support staff. The transition would take place over a period of time so that learning would not be disrupted.

Once the Strategy had been approved, an action plan would be developed to ensure its delivery. This would be closely monitored by the Executive Team.

Decision: To approve the Digital Learning Strategy 2020-24.

Responsibility: Iain Hawker

Deadline: 31 July 2020

11 Key National Reports / Changes to National Policy

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted.

12 Review of Remit and Self-Evaluation

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. Members confirmed that they had no changes to propose to the current remit, and that timing of meetings and format of papers remained suitable.

13 AOCB

Updates were given as follows:

- A new Queen Margaret University (QMU) validated BA (Hons) Creative Enterprise degree for 15 HNDs to progress onto would start from September 2020. More information is available at <https://www.fife.ac.uk/news/innovative-creative-enterprise-degree-launched/>
- Talks were progressing with QMU to consider a second validated degree in the area of BA (Hons) Childhood Practice
- £70k funding had been given for a 2 year project with Children's University Scotland to increase after schools learning opportunities. More information is available at <https://www.fife.ac.uk/news/funding-boost-for-partnership-project-to-improve-learning-opportunities-for-young-people-in-fife/>
- Open University discussions were progressing with regard to an option for a validated degree in Computing to replace an expiring Abertay University Networking Technologies degree



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- Fife College was taking part in College Expo 2020 with partners Edinburg Napier, Queen Margaret University and Edinburgh College, to showcase a new website www.pathways.ac.uk which will promote articulation routes from HN to degree courses, initially in the east of Scotland. More information is available at: <https://www.fife.ac.uk/news/student-designs-website-logo-for-tertiary-education-sector-to-support-prospective-degree-students/>

Decision: To prepare a report detailing the College's articulation routes and partnerships for circulation to the Board of Governors.

Responsibility: I Hawker

Deadline: 30 September 2020

14 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 28 October 2020 at 3.30pm, Boardroom, Dunfermline Campus or via Microsoft Teams