



## CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum & Quality Committee held on 18 November 2020 at 1030 hours through the use of Microsoft Teams.

Agenda Item	
	<p><b>Present:</b>            David Anderson            Sasha Brydon            Neil Cowie            Martin Dear            Abha Maheshwari            Julie McGinley            Neil McLennan            Andrew Russell – Vice Chair            Anne Simpson - Chair            Gwen Watt            Graham Mutch – Co-opted Member</p> <p><b>In attendance:</b>            Ken Milroy, Regional Chair            Robin McGregor, Vice Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality            Susan Betty, Director of Learning            Alesia Du Plessis, Director of Learning            Susan Grant, Director of Learning            Gill Griffin, Director of Quality            Duncan Abernethy, Director of Business Development            Shona Anderson, Quality Enhancement Manager (for Agenda Item 31-20 only)            Pauline May, Secretary to the Board            Susan Lawrance, Minute Secretary</p>
	<i>Prior to the commencement of business the Chair welcomed S Brydon and J McGinley and D Anderson to their first meeting of the Committee.</i>
25-20	<p><b>Apologies:</b>            There were no apologies.</p>
26-20	<p><b>Declaration of any Potential Conflicts of Interest in relation to any Agenda Items</b>            N McLennan declared a potential conflict of interest by virtue of his role at the University of Aberdeen.</p>
27-20	<p><b>Minutes of Previous Meeting – Wednesday 03 June 2020</b>            The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.</p>
28-20	<p><b>Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting</b>            Members noted the Matters Arising Report. No further matters were raised.</p>
	<i>A Maheshwari joined the meeting at this time.</i>

	<b>Matters for Decision</b>
29-20	<p><b>Committee Terms of Reference</b> Members reviewed the Committee's Terms of Reference and confirmed the specific duties continued to accurately reflect the main areas of the Committee's focus.</p> <p>The Committee readopted the Terms as presented.</p>
30-20	<p><b>Programme of Business AY2020-21</b> Members considered the proposed Programme of Business for AY2020-21. The Committee approved the Programme of Business as presented, noting that additional items would be added as required.</p> <p>It was highlighted that key themes from the recent Strategy Event would be included in future agendas, with economic recovery and the College's strengthened partnership with RGU specifically noted.</p> <p>R McGregor advised Members that additional items relating to ongoing work on Curriculum Business Priorities would also be shared with the Committee.</p>
31-20	<p><b>Presentation – Quality Enhancement Team Update</b> The Committee received a presentation from S Anderson providing an update on the work of the College's Quality Enhancement Team.</p> <p>The presentation provided information on how the College is "Adopting new ways of working to secure solutions that are fit for purpose and meet the changing needs of our learners and our curriculum teams". Specifically, information was provided on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handbook for Curriculum Planning &amp; Delivery</li> <li>• Immersive Senior Lecturer Enhancement Role</li> <li>• Supporting the digital revolution for learners</li> <li>• Raising NESCol's profile as an employer of choice</li> <li>• Restoring the social aspect to teaching.</li> </ul> <p>Additional information was also provided on further planned developments that will be launched shortly, and ambitions regarding the strengthening of quality enhancement activities.</p> <p>A further update on Quality Enhancement Activities was requested for a future meeting of the Committee in AY2020-21.</p> <p>S Anderson was thanked for the very informative presentation by the Committee Chair.</p>
	<i>S Anderson left the meeting at this time.</i>
	<b>Performance Reporting</b>
32-20	<p><b>Internal Key Performance Indicator Report 2017-19</b> Members considered a paper providing the Committee with an opportunity to discuss the College's Key Performance Indicators for AY2019-20.</p> <p>G Griffin highlighted key figures and trends, noting that there may still be changes to some figures due to ongoing processing of deferrals. The Directors</p>

	<p>of Learning provided an update on deferred activity in their respective curriculum areas.</p> <p>A discussion followed with the Committee noting the remaining challenges for some curriculum areas in students being able to complete practical aspects of their course, including issues with some students re-engaging with the College and ongoing social distancing guidance.</p> <p>G Griffin agreed to confirm that the College's approach to KPIs and the treatment of deferrals is in line with other colleges to ensure that sector benchmarking for AY2019-20 will be accurate and fair.</p> <p>D Anderson noted a number of observations from the data provided in relation to declining enrolment numbers, high withdrawal rates in certain curriculum areas, and an increase in partial success rates. D Anderson commended the provision of detailed information, adding effective interrogation to inform improvement actions was critical.</p> <p>G Griffin confirmed that detailed data analysis would be undertaken to identify themes and patterns and to enable any related potential issues to be addressed.</p> <p>R McGregor highlighted that AY2019-20 was a truly exceptional year with changes to processes and assessments required in response to the COVID-19 pandemic which are thought to have impacted on KPIs. R McGregor added that the KPI data was a key consideration for the ongoing Business Priority Planning and course viability work currently being undertaken.</p> <p>N Cowie commented that the College's performance in comparison to the sector tended to position NESCol as average, and restated that the collective ambition of the Leadership Team was to significantly improve to become Scotland's best performing college by 2025.</p> <p>For future data reports to the Committee, it was requested that a one-page summary be included to high-level messages and any areas of concern.</p>
33-20	<p><b>Early Withdrawal Key Performance Indicator Report AY2020-21</b></p> <p>The Committee considered a paper providing information on the College's Early Withdrawal Key Performance Indicators AY2020-21.</p> <p>Members were advised of caveats in relation to Early Withdrawal figures yet to be finalised, with R McGregor advising of ongoing work to confirm the final figure. The Committee was advised of current predications from the Directors of Learning which equate to a final Early Withdrawal rate between 4.6% and 7%.</p> <p>A discussion was held in relation to engaging with 'At Risk' students. S Brydon noted dis-engagement with some students who were finding online learning challenging.</p> <p>It was confirmed that a further update on Early Withdrawal figures would be provided to the Committee in due course, with the final figure confirmed as soon as possible.</p>
	<p><i>J McGinley left the meeting at this time.</i></p>

34-20	<p><b>Credits Outturn AY2019-20 &amp; Credits Forecast AY2020-21</b>  P May provided Members with a presentation confirming the credits outturn for AY2019-20 and providing a credits forecast for AY2020-21.</p> <p>Confirmation was provided that the College had achieved and slightly exceeded its Total Credits Target for AY2019-20. It was noted that the Board had previously been advised that the College had achieved its AY2019-20 credits target but this has now been confirmed by the internal auditors.</p> <p>It was highlighted to Members that in-year changes (removal of the one plus limit and the opportunity to claim for additional academic guidance) to credits guidance made a positive impact on the College's credits outturn as in March 2020 the College was forecasting that the Total Credits Target would not be fully achieved. Members were also advised that due to the positive credits position at the end of AY2019-20, it was possible for the College to span a significant amount of BCD activity into the current academic year.</p> <p>Challenges with preparing credits forecasts with a high level of uncertainty and changing circumstances were noted, with reassurance however provided to the Committee that achievement and close monitoring of the College's Total Credits Target remained a priority for the Leadership Team.</p> <p>The current forecast end of year credits position was presented to the Committee, noting that the information was as at mid-October – the forecast has been calculated using actual credits to date (128K – deferred, spanned and current year activity), known still to come activity and estimated end of year cleansing. The impact on final Early Withdrawal figures on the College's credits position was also presented as a sliding scale.</p> <p>The Committee was reminded that the SFC has confirmed that no clawback would occur for credits shortfalls in AY2020-21 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>A number of caveats that could potentially impact on the College's end of year credits position were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmation of Early Withdrawals</li> <li>• Risk related to delivery of any 'still to come' activity</li> <li>• SFC Approval of Justification Statement for exceeding new 16 credit tariff for FT FE courses</li> <li>• Current exclusion of school links and primary school activity that is usually delivered in May/June due to uncertainty</li> <li>• Potential risk attached to challenges with ESF documentation.</li> </ul> <p>The current position in relation to Early Withdrawal was presented, noting that its calculation was more challenging this year given the blended learning model and the need to adopt a different approach to the use of registers.</p> <p>Members were advised that confirmed Early Withdrawal was currently 134 students, equating to 2% of full-time enrolments, but that a further 330 'At Risk' students had been identified at this time. It was highlighted that the impact of all 'At Risk' students being withdrawn the rate would increase to 7% and a loss of 5,670 credits.</p> <p>Ongoing actions in support of the forecasting process were noted in relation to identification of potential new provision, further engagement (College and SDS) with 'At Risk' students, and further data cleansing to enable Early Withdrawal figures and related impacts on credits to be confirmed.</p>
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	It was confirmed that an updated credits forecast would be presented at the Board Meeting scheduled for December 2020.
35-20	<p><b>Presentation - Student Support, Health &amp; Wellbeing Update</b></p> <p>The Committee received a presentation from A Du Plessis on the College's approach to Student Support, Health &amp; Wellbeing. Information was provided on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing for AY2020-21</li> <li>• Approach to Academic Tutoring</li> <li>• Remote Service Delivery</li> <li>• Student Support Deferrals</li> <li>• Safeguarding and PREVNT</li> <li>• Counselling Service</li> <li>• Library Usage</li> <li>• Student Feedback on Support Services.</li> </ul> <p>In response to a query regarding onward referral of students to health services, A Du Plessis confirmed that effective arrangements were in place to support this with a number of external regional providers.</p> <p>It was agreed that available additional resources from Aberdeenshire Council LLA would be highlighted to NESCol students, with A Simpson offering to share relevant Council contacts with the College's Student Advice &amp; Support Team.</p>
	<b>Matters for Discussion</b>
36-20	<p><b>Early Student Satisfaction &amp; Engagement Feedback</b></p> <p>R McGregor provided Members with an update on student satisfaction and engagement.</p> <p>It was noted that the First Impressions Survey would close at the end of the week and that detailing information from this would be shared with the Committee at its next Meeting.</p> <p>Members were advised that various engagement mechanisms (Course Committee Meetings, Peer-led Reviews; Quality Team facilitated Focus Groups) as utilised in previous years, were continuing in support of the current academic year's blended learning model.</p> <p>The undertaking of an additional student flash poll and its feedback was highlighted. It was noted that ongoing student feedback regarding delivery of courses and the provision of student support was critical in identifying any required improvements.</p>
	<i>M Dear left the meeting at this time.</i>
37-20	<p><b>Students' Association – Activity Report</b></p> <p>Members considered the Report providing information on the work of the Students' Association (SA) for the period 01 July to October 2020.</p> <p>S Brydon summarised key information from the Report, with the Committee Chair thanking the Association for the provision of such a comprehensive overview of its activities.</p>

	<b>Matters for Information</b>
38-20	<p><b>College Enhancement Plan AY2019-20 – Final Update</b> Members noted a paper providing the AY2019-20 final review of the College's Enhancement Plan for AY2019-22.</p> <p>G Griffin advised that the Leadership Team planned to review the document to identify next steps for key future quality enhancement activities.</p> <p>In noting the use of Power Bi in proving key evaluation and enhancement data sets, the Committee requested that the Board receive a demonstration of the College's Power Bi Dashboard.</p>
39-20	<p><b>Recruitment Activity – Virtual Open Day</b> Members noted a paper providing information on plans for the upcoming Virtual Open Day scheduled for 18 November 2020.</p> <p>R McGregor provided further information on the format of the Day, its promotion, and the initial response in terms of pre-registrations and bookings for schools.</p>
	<i>A Maheshwari left the meeting at this time.</i>
40-20	<p><b>Strategy Event – Follow Up</b> It was noted that the recent Strategy Event would influence the future work of the Committee.</p> <p>N Cowie advised Members of a joint presentation provided by him and the Principal of RGU to the SFC regarding the strengthening of the partnership between the two institutions.</p> <p>K Milroy noted the Stakeholder Soundbites made available to Members at the Strategy Event and commented that issues raised in theses would be reflected on for future Board and Committee discussions.</p>
41-20	<p><b>Any Other Business</b> No other business was noted.</p>
42-20	<p><b>Summation of Business and Date of Next Meeting</b> The Secretary gave a summation of the business conducted. The next meeting of the Curriculum &amp; Quality Committee is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 24 February 2021 at 1000 hours.</p>
	Meeting ended 1205 hours

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Actions from Curriculum &amp; Quality Committee 18/11/20</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
31-20	Provide a further update on quality enhancement activities to be provided	G Griffin	09 June 2021
32-20	Confirm with SFC treatment of deferrals to ensure sector benchmarking will be fair and accurate	G Griffin	17 February 2021
32-20	Undertake data analysis of AY2019-20 KPIs to identify themes and patterns and any related potential issues	G Griffin with DoLs and D Abernethy	17 February 2021
32-20	Ensure future data reports include one page summary to highlight high-level messages and any areas of concern	Report Authors	Ongoing
34-20	Confirm AY2020-21 early withdrawal rate	P May	17 February 2021
35-20	Publicise available LLA support information to students	Student Support & Advice Team	As soon as possible
38-20	Provide demonstration of Power Bi Dashboard to all Board Members	P May	In due course

**Signed:**.....

**Date:** .....