
MINUTES OF THE SIXTY NINTH MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 MAY 2024, COMMENCING 16:00 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

PRESENT: Mrs J McKeever, Committee Chair
Mr P Clancy, Incoming Committee Chair
Dr S Fisher
Mrs M Gormley
Mr L Murphy, Principal & Chief Executive (from 16:08 -16:28)
Mr B O’Neill
Mr P Thompson
Ms V Toland

IN ATTENDANCE: Dr C O’Mullan, Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards
Ms G Moss, Head of Client Services
Mrs É Doherty, Secretary to the Governing Body

69.1 WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Committee Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Mrs McKeever apprised members that this was her last Committee meeting to attend and thanked everyone. She added she was privileged to Chair the Committee and was delighted to hand over the position to Mr P Clancy.

Mr Clancy took over the role as Chair for the remainder of the meeting. He thanked Mrs Mc Keever for her time as a valued member of the Committee. Dr C O’Mullan echoed these sentiments.

Apologies were received from Ms M Breslin. The Incoming Chair noted that Ms Breslin was coming to the end of her term of office and thanked Ms Breslin for her commitment and time serving on the Committee. In her absence the Governing Body Secretary read out a note received from Ms M Breslin.

Mr L Murphy joined the meeting during this item.

69.2 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS/DECLARATIONS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no conflicts of interest declarations. There were no declarations of any other business.

69.3 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 26 MARCH 2024**➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

Paper EC 69.3 Draft Education Committee Minutes of the meeting held on
26 March 2024

The Draft Minutes were taken as read and agreed were a true and accurate record of the meeting.

PROPOSED, Mr B O’Neill

SECONDED, Mrs J McKeever

68.3.1 MATTERS ARISING – 26 March 2024 Committee Meeting

68.4, Report 1, 1.1 The Governing Body approved the amendments to the Education Committee’s Terms of Reference at the meeting held on 9 April 2024.

69.4 COMMITTEE CHAIR’S BUSINESS

The Incoming Committee Chair had no further business to discuss under this heading.

69.5 MANAGEMENT REPORT – Dr C O’Mullan, Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards.➤ **PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

EC 69.5	Management Report
Report 1	College Development Plan Progress Report Commissioning Memo, March 2024
Report 2	College Development Plan Progress Report, March 2024
Report 3	CDP Targets v Actuals and Proposed Targets for 2024/25
Report 4	HE in FE 2024/25 MaSN Commissioning Memo
Report 5	MaSN Bid 2024/25
Report 6	14-19 Agenda – Collective Response by FE Colleges through the SPWG
Report 7	NWTEC Update
Report 8	DfE Response to NWRC 2023/24 QIP Submission
Report 9	QIP 2023/24
Report 10	Draft Academic Standards Committee Minutes, 20 March 2024

EC 69.5 Management Report

The Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards reported on several of the strategic meetings and events she attended. The delivery of the deep reform of all qualifications at Level 2 have been slower than planned due to difficulties around OCNi resourcing issues and with the quality assurance process by CCEA as the regulator. In the interim the Curriculum Directors Working Group have taken the decision that five out of the six FE Colleges will proceed to offer all full-time, Level 2 provision as Traineeships, as was the intention for 2024/25.

There has been no further discussion around Level 3, Advanced Vocational Technical Awards.

Report 1 College Development Plan Progress Report Commissioning Memo, March 2024**Report 2 College Development Plan Progress Report, March 2024**

Dr C O’Mullan reported on the key component parts from her Management Report, commencing with the CDP Progress Report (Report 2). The actuals against initial targets at 29 March 2024 for 2023/24 were shared with the Committee.

Overall retention rates to 16 May 2024 were 92%. Attendance rates for full-time was 83% and part-time 87%. This was a similar pattern on 2023 rates.

The levels of unmarked registers have reduced considerably following the cessation of action short of strike.

Report 3 CDP Targets v Actuals and Proposed Targets for 2024/25

The Head of Curriculum & Academic Standards reported that the proposed targets for 2024/25 is still a work in progress. The formal commissioning CDP letter for 2024/25 has not been received from the Department (DfE).

Report 4 HE in FE 2024/25 MaSN Commissioning Memo

Report 5 MaSN Bid 2024/25

The Department (DfE) commissioned the MaSN bid and this was submitted by the College on 21 May 2024. The College is projecting 416 full-time MaSN enrolments for 2024/25. The new courses planned for delivery in 2024/25 were noted. An Open University course information event is scheduled for 5 June 2024.

Report 6 14-19 Agenda – Collective Response by FE Colleges through the SPWG (Schools Partnership Working Group)

The Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards referred to the response by FE Colleges through the SPWG. The response sets out the key challenges and opportunities identified by the Working Group and the need for FEC's to strengthen and consolidate links and partnerships with their Area Learning Communities. There is limited progress being made with the 14-19 Action Plan.

Report 7 NWTEC Update

The extensive work taken place with the NWTEC was noted.

Report 8 DfE Response to NWRC 2023/24 QIP Submission

Report 8 is the response to the submission of the QIP Mid Cycle update 2023/24 confirming there is sufficient evidence that the College is planning effectively for learning and quality improvement.

As part of the wider strategic quality improvement agenda, the Head of Quality Enhancement has, along with sector colleagues contributed to a recent QAA consultation on the proposed 2024 edition of the UK Quality Code.

Initial discussions have taken place with the ETI District Inspector/as part of the Quality Managers Forum as to the shape of the new ETI Inspection framework.

NWRC is revisiting its employer feedback mechanism to ensure comprehensive engagement with an expanding range of employers participating as work placement providers; AppsNI; HLA; and partnerships through Business Support Activity.

As part of the year end learner feedback, the College has submitted a student response rate of 76% to the NSS (National Student Survey) 2023. The outcomes will be available July/August.

Meetings with staff from the Quality Department were held with Dr L Warren (DfE, Quality Improvement Advisor) to further discuss the timing points of commonality and convergence of the sector College Development Plans and WCSER/QIP. It was also noted that it may be useful to take examples of best practice from colleges' QIPs going forward.

Following cessation of action short of strike there is progress of activity in the College quality cycle relating to completion of courses and collation of all learner outcomes.

The Strategic Investment Board (SIB) have been tasked to undertake an interim evaluation of the Traineeship programme. The review will incorporate direct engagement and consultation with all stakeholders.

Report 9 Quality Improvement Plan 2023/24

The Head of Curriculum & Academic Standards drew attention to additional areas of improvement been included in the Quality Improvement Plan 2023/24. These relate to the development of an electronic Project Based Learning Pebble platform and following the Voluntary Severance Scheme, work relating to the restructuring ensuring sound governance whilst achieving the quality standards expected from the College.

Members noted the many and varied curriculum events/competitions and recent awards. Mr P Clancy and Mr B O'Neill had attended the Project Based Learning Awards on 16 May 2024.

Report 10 Academic Standards Committee Minutes – March 2024

The Head of Curriculum & Academic Standard highlighted some of the key items from the Report.

The Incoming Committee Chair thanked Dr C O' Mullan and invited Ms G Moss to report to the Committee.

69.6 CLIENT SERVICES – Ms G Moss, Head of Client Services

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report 1 Equality Update
Report 2 Safeguarding Report

Report 1 Equality Update

The Head of Client Services reported on the awareness days across College Campuses which included some new awareness days. From 12 May 2024 the College has a statutory duty to provide period products free of charge on its premises in line with the Period Poverty (Free Products) Act (NI) 2022.

Staff attended the Strabane Ethnic Community Association's 20th anniversary celebrations in April 2024. Work continues in becoming a College of Sanctuary. A training session will be delivered by the Rainbow Project on 6 June 2024 for Governing Body members. Discussions at the Sector Equality Co-ordinator's' Forum was to introduce support for staff who are neurodivergent.

£2025 has been raised to date and will be divided between the three designated College charities for 2023/24. Electronic donations are now available.

Report 3 Safeguarding Report

The Head of Client Services reported that the Safeguarding Team have received a significant increase in 70 referrals compared to September to May 2022/23. Anxiety continues to be the most common reason for referral.

457 Access NI checks have been updated and approved on EBS to allow students to attend work placement. 97% of College staff have completed the mandatory Safeguarding staff training. The remaining 3% are off on long term leave.

The campaigns from February to May 2024 on sexual health were highlighted. The extensive work across campuses by the Safeguarding Team to raise the profile of mental health during Mental Health Week from 13 – 19 May was shared with the Committee.

The Incoming Committee Chair thanked Ms Moss for her report and the highly valued work in the College.

69.7 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

69.8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no any other business to discuss.

69.9 RESERVED BUSINESS – Taken separately

That being the end of business the Incoming Committee Chair thanked everyone. The meeting ended at 17:23.

Date of Next Meeting – 17 September 2024

Signed: 
Mr P Clancy, Committee Chair

Date: 17 September 2024