**Quality and Standards Committee**

**Minutes**

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| Date | 26 November 2019 | Time | 14.30 |
| Venue | Eastbourne, Corporation Room | | |
| Chair | Tony Campbell | | |
| **Membership:** Tony Campbell (Chair), Ian Jungius (Vice-Chair), Henry Ball, Clive Cooke, Gill Short, Steve Hedge, student governor (Vacant), David Smith  **In attendance:** Dan Shelley (Executive Director – Strategic Partnerships and Engagement), East Sussex Group Principals [Rebecca Conroy (Eastbourne), Fred Carter (Lewes), Jim Sharpe (Hastings)]; | | | |
| **Apologies:** Henry Ball | | | |

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|  | Item | Action |
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|  | **Apologies**  Apologies were noted from Henry Ball. | Noted |
|  | **Declarations of Interest**  David Smith made a declaration of interest. |  |
|  | **Minutes of the meeting held on 22.5.19**  **and matters arising**  **THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 MAY 2019 WERE AGREED AS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD.**  Matters arising were noted as completed or covered by today’s agenda. |  |
|  | **HE update and HE Quality Report and signed statement to HEFCE (OFS)**  David Fowler, Head of Higher Education, was welcomed to the Committee to provide a HE update and the HE Quality Report.  It was noted that the Monitoring and Intervention Team from the Office for Students have confirmed that Further Education colleges are no longer required to submit accountability returns to the OfS, as this has now been superseded by the B Conditions of Registration.  David Fowler provided an overview of the Higher Education performance in 2018/19, the first full year of ESCG performance, and a summary of the Quality Improvement Plan for 2019/20.  Overall quality was noted to have been maintained on HE programmes in 2018/19, including increases in achievement rates on legacy SDC HE provision.  29 course, mixtures of degrees and other approaches with Pearson and Brighton Uni.  Writing 3x top ups for September 2020 delivery to help develop recruitment from HND to level 6, to make the offer more attractive.  Combined retention is about 94% and achievement combined at 95%. Retention and achievement is up from last year for both Eastbourne and Lewes.  Bronze TEF – better than last year.  OFS registration took place in June 2019.  The combined NSS survey results are however lower than last year and David Fowler described some fluctuation. 87% Teaching, 76% academic support. NSS overall satisfaction 70%, down from last year.  The Committee was advised that actions have been added to the HE QIP and ESCG will participate in an NSS Pilot scheme for this academic year, that will include all HE students, to help to develop a more detailed process of analysis for HE in FE nationally. This will include every HE Student, not just final year.  2019/20 enrolment was said to have been strong, with a 14% increase, bucking trends at HEIs which indicate a national drop in enrolments.  ESCG has received a full compliance letter from Office for the Student (OfS), notifying that the college are one of the 101 providers out of 300+ who complied with all HE submission deadlines and therefore will not incur financial penalties  Gill Short question whether the College is proactively looking for other universities to work with. Partnership work was described as a real strength, but Dan Shelley advised of an agreement with University of Brighton that they are provided first refusal on any validation. E.g. Performing Arts Lewes. Cost was noted as a barrier as furthering aims in this area.  Dan Shelley advised that Sussex University are becoming more partnership orientated but less validation orientated.  David Smith said the registration with OFS and really well done and a fantastic achievement.  David Smith advised that OFS are talking to ESFA more than they did about the health of Colleges with offers, and we need to be mindful of this in relation to the Colleges financial health.  Dan Shelley advised he attended an OFS meeting recently and that regulatory requirements are strict. David Fowler and Dan Shelley are writing a reportable event to go to OFS.  Tony Campbell asked what role HE is playing in recruitment, and asked if the College is doing enough to obtain Maths and English teachers. Dan Shelley talked positively about the PGCE graduates and advised that this is a marketing area that has been and will continue to be explored. Plans to ‘grow our own’ were discussed. A Teaching assistant course is being run.  There was a discussion around adoption of T- Levels and that Ruth Whittaker, Vice Chancellor at University of Brighton is keen to endorse T-Levels as a progression pathway .  Rebeca Conroy advised that she had spent with the FEC during their visit and they were very interested in development work and concerns about the college under / overstretching itself in ensuring destinations for learners.  It was noted that there has been a lot of work with recruitment, curriculum development and school liaison.  **Action: An update on this work to be provided at the next meeting by Dan Shelley and the Principals** | DS & Principals |
|  | **Policies:**   * **Student Union Constitution (due 2020 or as required)**   Rebecca Conroy presented the Student Union Constitution. She advised this was the first merged SU constitution and the Learner Journey Manager (Placements) has worked closely with NUS who recommended the template that has been adopted.  Rebecca Conroy said there is one overarching Student Union, with 3 campus-based subsidiaries, each headed up by a Student President.  The SU Constitution emphasises the importance of not affiliating with political parties or religious organisations.  The SU has a Trustee Board which ensures financial oversight, and Biram Desai has signed off on these arrangements. Clive Cooke noted that in the Finance Committee the SU budget was underspent and asked Rebecca Conroy to ensure the Learner Journey Manager (Placements) meets with finance so funding flows to the Presidents.  It was confirmed that an identified member of the Finance Committee, either Biarm Desai or one of his managers, will be on the Trustee Board.  Gill Sharpe asked for confirmation that the Student Presidents are employed members. Rebecca Conroy confirmed and advised an identified College manager, the Learner Journey Manager (Placements), supports them.  Mia Brown noted that the Quality and Standards Committee does not have a student rep and enquired if one the SU Presidents or there team could join the Committee.  David Smith said he would support student representation on this group. He said the Student Union feels very separate from the Board at the moment and would welcome opportunities to bring them closely together. (mia check where this is at)  Ian Jugius said there is now good student voice initiatives in the local College boards, but that is missing from the main Board.  Jim Sharpe said the course representatives are integral to ‘you said, we did’ work and that this will feed into the local board, but also needs to come up to the main Board.  Tony Campbell advocated student governor panels which operated in the past.  Gill Short said that the student representatives on the Lewes board were very powerful and they contributed in a very meaningful way.  **THE STUDENT UNION CONSTITUTION WAS APPROVED**. |  |
|  | **College Self-Assessment Report 2018-19**  Jim Shape presented the College Self-Assessment Report 2018-19.  He advised this is on the agenda for discussion, feedback and input, and for the Committee to validate the grades ahead of final sign off by main board in December. It was agreed to share this with the FEC team for their feedback. Jim Sharpe advised the SAR will be uploaded to the Ofsted portal in January.  Jim Sharpe said that any revisions to the SAR will be sent to the Committee.  **Overview of proposed grades:**     |  |  | | --- | --- | | Leadership & Management | RI |   Fred Carter talked through the identified strengths and weaknesses and judgements for: intent, implementation (including sequencing) and impact.  Ian Jungius said that outcomes generally show small movement in the right direction and noted that the quality of provision has improved, he asked how far away from the College is from a Good judgement.  Fred Carter reminded the Committee that the SAR is for the previous year and since this time large strides have been made, including new management and staffing arrangements. He advised that whilst A-levels have dropped in Eastbourne the College is not far off a Good judgment.  Jim Sharpe said it would be difficult to declare a Good judgement given that 16-18 headline is below national rate. He said that even through A level is 8% of total provision, it is still a vital part of provision and is not yet Good across the College. He advised the College was not fully EIF compliant in terms of sequencing and on aspects of intent and implementation, but reminded the Committee that the SAR self-assessed against a framework that was not operating last year.  Ian Juguis asked if there had been sufficient movement and monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Specifically if the College is being rigorous enough moving on teaching staff and improving sequencing issues. He asked for assurance that the College has the right people to drive quality forwards.  Jim Sharpe said progress can absolutely be demonstrated in retention. He said the picture is markedly different to this time last year. He talked about improvements in vocational, and said that if there is demonstrable progress in A-Levels and consistency in GCSE outcomes, then there would be a strong Good judgement. He advised of a large number of curriculum area reviews across the campuses and concluded quality is much improved.  Rebecca Conroy agreed. She said teaching staff are not complacent and that they have welcomed the new EIF and the emphasis it puts on learners experiences and progress. She said teams are more confident and aware of the areas that need improving. She said that the mentality of not wanting to replace staff has become less of an issue and that performance management is an ongoing process. She advised of peer support and peer review process in place. There is a keenness to look at cross group initiatives, e.g Eastbourne A-level teaching going into Lewes for peer review and drawing knowledge from other Good Colleges.  Gill Short said there is a history of Lewes and Eastbourne working in competition and hoped peer processes would eradicate this.  Tony Campbell asked if progress will be evidenced in PPRs. Jim Sharpe and Rebecca Conroy advised it will be.  David Smith said it is important to ensure consistent messaging across the range of audiences who are interested in the College. He advised the purpose of the merger was to drive quality consistency across College, ensure financial health and to deliver a comprehensive estates strategy, making better use of College estate. He said these priorities remain the main focus with green shoots in areas, but that progress is a year delayed due to a number of reasons. He said the RI grade feels right for this time last year.  Jim Sharpe said it will be a matter of how well the students are able to articulate their experiences and progress made during the inspection.  Ian Jungius urged the importance of instigating the actions contained within the SAR narrative, he would not want the College to be saying the same things this time next year.  Clive Cooke agreed with Ian Junguis’s point. He said in the same way Finance want assurance that the budget is moving in the right direction, the local College Boards and Quality and Standards will need to be provided with the same assurances. A quality dashboard with exception reporting could support monitoring and scrutiny. It could look a number of key areas including;   * Attendance * Retention and withdrawal rates * Examination results * Achievements * Value-added * Sector averages and performance indicator data * Progression and destinations of students   Clive Cooke advised it will be for the local College boards to assure itself and agree the mechanics. The next local College boards in March were noted as the perfect time to assure progress has been made.  **Action: Mia Brown to forward plan on College board agendas.**  Jim Sharpe advised that Heads of Curriculum are receiving training in the EIF and they will lead training for their teams. This will be focus on tracking and evidencing student progress and explaining sequencing. Each Principal is leading the planning for their own College, supported by Dan Shelley.  Dan Shelley talked about apprenticeships being hard to benchmark due to a shift in the framework. Overall achievement has dropped, but if this excludes ‘standards’ then the results are the same as the previous year. It was noted that standards are taking longer to complete which is affecting timeliness.  David Smith said the timeliness of completion of apprenticeships will have cost implications on the College and noted that timeliness of internal activity is better than sub-contacted delivery.  Rebecca Conroy said it would be prudent to preface the SAR with a caveat that grading is against the EIF, rather than CIF.  **THE GRADE OF RI WAS AGREED.**  Rebecca Conroy talked the Committee through identified strengths and weaknesses across and judgements for personal development and behaviours and attitudes  Behaviours and attitudes  Rebecca Conroy described a range of activity that has taken place to create a more positive learning environment. She described initiatives to  develop student maturity and ownership of learning. She said there has been a significant uptake in participation activity across the College which has really supported student development. She talked about the strengths around safeguarding structure and systems.  Gill Short said the narrative statements were very reassuring but asked if there is data available to back these up. Rebecca Conroy advised that this data can be made available as it is captured via corridor walks, safety records of the incidences related to bullying etc and emergent themes. She confirmed the narrative statements can be supported by quantitative data.  **Action: Jim Sharpe agreed to add evidence as an Appendix.**  Rebecca Conroy said that an area for improvement was some in depth safeguarding around all forms of exploitation.  Ian Jungius asked if students would support the self-assessed Good grade. Rebecca Conroy was assured they would based on corridor walks and survey feedback.  **THE GRADE OF GOOD WAS AGREED**  Personal Development  Attendance was noted to be an area for improvement, but the Committee heard about attempts to engage better with students to improve attendance.  Jim Sharpe said he would bring more data on attendance and authorised absence and retention for Committee scrutiny.  **Action: Jim Sharpe**  With regards to destinations and progression Rebecca Conroy advised of evidence to support the judgement and this would be entered under the impact (outcome) section in the SAR.  David Smith said it might be useful to add some context and remember the audience of this SAR is external and needs to be read as such.  David Smith asked if the good sporting offer could be added re enrichment. Rebecca Conroy agreed and said this could be linked to wellbeing.  **Action: Rebecca Conroy/ Jim Sharpe**  Rebecca Conroy advised that it was a lack of consistency that prevents a Good judgment, but that the in year position is better than last year.  **THE GRADE OF RI WAS AGREED**  Jim Sharpe presented on the identified strengths and weaknesses across and judgements for leadership and management, governance and safeguarding.  Leadership and Management  Jim Sharpe proposed a grade of RI.  He said that some aspects of leadership and management have been moved into personal development and staff workload and wellbeing has been added, in reference to the EIF.  There has been improvement in retention on A levels, evident for the 18-20 cohort. There is evidence via external validation and outcomes for learners. He advised that curriculum directors are clear on their responsibilities and how this is measured.    The senior leadership team has maintained a standing agenda item of “no regrets”, where the current level of performance of all aspects of the College provision is rigorously interrogated and clear interventions identified and delivered.  All curriculum managers hold monthly monitoring meetings concentrating on tracking and improving students’ progress. Lesson observations and student forums are focused on students’ learning and the progress that students are making. Curriculum managers effectively use the outcomes from these observations to identify interventions that will improve teachers’ practice. Governors continue to attend “Principal’s Performance Reviews” to closely monitor learner progress and curriculum staff performance and challenge senior managers on performance.  David Smith said evidence of improvement is demonstrable. He advised that the FEC said that progress in quality admirable despite the turbulence the College has been through.  Partnership work was noted as strength.  It was acknowledged that improvement is still required at level 3 to enable students to achieve their full potential  There was a discussion about improved parental and young people co-production on curriculum design.  The Committee noted that the group has not increased attendance sufficiently and attendance is not consistently good across A levels and some subjects. A small minority of teachers still require improvement in their professional practice.  Staff morale in some teams is low, with restructuring and cost saving activity has impacted on staff sense of security, as evidenced in the staff survey results.    Jim Sharpe will add information in about the working groups established to review and responded to staff feedback in the survey and appraisals.  Ian Junguis challenged the self-assessed grade. He said that leadership and management is not just the senior leadership team and governors, but the teaching leaders across the College group. He suggested there is a strong case to argue on almost all aspects there has been significant movement in a short period of time. He said it might be RI, but that it is “full of Good”.  Tony Campbell agreed.  David Smith suggested this is a conversation that could be held in conjunction with the FEC.  Gill Short advocated keeping the judgement as RI. She said it was important that people trust the College and its self-assessment.  Clive Cooke said a lot systemic problems have been tackled, but that the grade should be left open to discussion for the time being.  **THE GRADE OF RI HAS BEEN LEFT OPEN FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION.**  Governance  David Smith this section needs reviewing and there is a need to be reflective.  Ian Junguis agreed.  Gill Short said there is a still a long way to go before diversity and gender balance is rectified and that there remain improvements to be made.  Jim Sharpe reminded the Committee that the self-assessment is based on last year.  David Smith said that he recognised this but that there does need to be mention of all the plans being implemented now around succession planning  Clive Cooke agreed.  **Action: David Smith to send Jim Sharpe some suggested narrative and Jim will circulate to check everyone is happy with the addition.**  Safeguarding  Rebecca Conroy acknowledged a need to improve the breadth of safeguarding training to reflect regional and local issues.  She said there is a need to support students with their resilience and supporting young people to remain in College, this means looking at whether or not the courses they are enrolling on are the right fit for them and supporting them to change courses.  It was noted that arrangements to safeguard students are rigorous and effective.  Gill Short spoke favourable about the improved processes in year and welcomed the action plan that has been devised. The internal audit on safeguarding and the LA safeguarding review will be incorporated into the action plan.  It was confirmed that the Designated Safeguarding Lead is a member of the Exec team which reflects the strategic significance of Safeguarding within the College.  David Smith reminded that Mia Brown can provide some expertise in this area, if required.  Clive Cooke noted that some of the paragraphs in the SAR use EIF terminology and suggestion the document be reviewed to include consistent EIF related statements.  **Action: Jim Sharpe**  **THE OVERALL GRADING OF RI WAS AGREED.** | MB  JS  JS  RC/JS  DS & JS  JS |
|  | **Quality Improvement Plan**  Jim Sharpe advised that each local board has a QIP in place, which have been approved by local board with progress forward planned on agendas.  He presented the College wide QIP and advised that contained on the QIP are agreed issues that require focus across the whole College group, and where consistency of practice needs improving.  He described the QIP as an iterative document that will be reviewed at every monthly meeting.  The following issues were noted as priority areas of focus:   * Leadership management * Attendance * CPD * English and maths * A level provision   *Leadership and Management*   * Preparing Heads of Curriculum for inspection * Focusing energies on key areas for improvement * PMO and workload being tackled * Attendance crucial strategy for all Colleges * Key actions around being more nuanced about reporting of attendance, focus of all Heads of Curriculum every week and using additional resources to drive up attendance   *CPD*   * Quality improvement and preparation for EIF   *English and Maths*   * Agree consistency across the College’s – between English and Maths team’s and clarifying who holds provision   Jim Sharpe asked if the Committee thought there were any additional actions.  Gill Short noticed that a lot of the actions were already marked as completed and asked for assurance that they will be revisited as some of the actions have longer term implication.    Jim Sharpe assured actions will be re-visited and that the completed actions will be adjusted to reflect the next action required.  Clive Cooke said that teaching and learning strategies needs to be a priority.  Jim Sharpe advised this would be added under CPD which can address actions concerning sequencing, stretch and challenge.  **Action: Jim Sharpe**  Clive Cooke said we would like to see narrowing achievement gaps, particularly for SEND, as a priority.  Jim Sharpe agreed, and identified the narrowing of the gender attainment gap also needs including.  **Action: Jim Sharpe**  Gill Short said she would like to see more about the student voice and students taking responsibility for their own learning included in the QIP, which seems predominantly focused on staff.    Jim Sharpe concurred and suggested adding in strategies for developing independent learning.  **Action: Jim Sharpe**  Clive Cook requested changing ‘Head of Quality’ to Principal and to add in initiatives around sharing good practice.  **Action: Jim Sharpe**  Ian Jungius said it is important to add in what is expected to happen and by when, he said if challenged the Principals may not be able to sufficiently evidence the specifics.  Rebecca Conroy suggested adding ‘success measures’.  Jim Sharpe said he would not want to duplicate the detailed QIPs for each campus, but agreed success measures could be added.  **Action: Jim Sharpe**  **THE QIP WAS AGREED, WITH THE CHANGES SUGGESTED.**  Targets  A list of KPIs where presented which can go to the Board for discussion.  National benchmarks could be included.  Ian Jungius asked how the KPI’s were arrived at and if there were realistic.  Jim Sharpe advised the KPIs tend to be similar across all Colleges. Fred Carter said they were realistic.  Gill Short asked if ALPS will be included as she felt they are a real mark of where we are.  Clive Cooke advised they can be. Jim Sharpe and Fred Carter said not all L3 vocational; courses are measured for progress by ALPS.  Clive Cooke suggested value added for A- Level English, and Maths GSCE progress as a sub-target.  Fred Carter talked about the importance of measuring progress as well as attainment. Clive Cooke agreed and said that it would be vital to capture anything that would risk a Grade 2 (positive or negative impact).  Gill Short said she wanted to ensure she was giving suitable challenge, and remarked that all the KPIs looked positive but would want to see distance travelled and the inclusion of some of the more challenging areas including in the suggested KPI’s.  **Action: Jim Sharpe**  David Smith agreed this would be important and would also welcome seeing some of the more challenging areas included.  Dan Shelley asked what else could be added and retention was suggestion.  Fred Carter advised of an achievement tracker which provides a snapshot.  David Smith said that given the funding audit the College would do well to track campus by campus guided learning hours and urged the Principals to think on this.  Clive Cooke advised that whilst this is an MIS job the Principals could undertake their own checks and balances.  Dan Shelley emphasised this would suggest learner personal development outcomes. Rebeca Conroy agreed saying that is it about ensuring learners have the most positive experience they can.  Clive Cook suggested some sampling through the year and reporting back to this Committee.  **Action: Principals.**  **IT WAS AGREED TO RECOMMED APPROVAL TO THE BOARD.** | JS  JS  JS  JS  JS  JS  Principals |
|  | **Safeguarding and Prevent update**  Rebecca Conroy advised that the Local boards have a local responsibility to have safeguarding as standing item on their agendas.  Gill Short advised of some internal audit results regarding training, single central record and DBS that Mia Brown had bought to her attention as link governor and advised that these are being worked into the afore mentioned action plan.  Rebecca Conroy advised of staff training. She also spoke about student training and that they are currently receiving online training and feedback on the programme is being sought. This is to ensure that students as well as staff have basic safeguarding awareness.  She advised that reporting by category of abuse had improved.  Rebecca Conroy and Gill Short are meeting monthly to draw together the action plan.  **Action: Mia Brown to forward plan**  Rebecca Conroy advised that there is a safeguarding session pre-December Board’s to update all governors on where the college is with regards to safeguarding and to highlight the priority areas of focus on the action plan.  Rebecca Conroy advised the LA review will provide some useful feedback on currently safeguarding processes and arrangements.  Gill Short said she was satisfied with progress being made in this area.  Clive Cooke said that safeguarding is good example of how the structure flexes to a campus by campus approach whilst keeping a one college mentality to such a vital area of business.  Steve Hedges asked if there was any scope for staff to undertake a qualification on safeguarding. Rebecca Conroy advised there is and this is likely to be identified as an area to promoted in the LA review.  David Smith said he was impressed by the safeguarding support and expertise at East Sussex County Council. | MB |
| 9) | **Any other business notified to the Director of Governance in advance of the meeting**   * Rebecca Conroy advised that Diana Garnham has been working with the Learner Journey Manager (Placements) about the careers strategy and in particular how the college can increase experience of work etc, which is a key part of the strategy. Rebecca said that in Eastbourne they are moving ahead with some great ideas and pilot initiatives. She advised that Diana Garnham has made an approach to work with the other local boards on this. Rebecca suggested the Careers Hub at ESCC, Diana Garham and the Learner Journey Manager (Placements) were keen to present to the Committee about where the the careers strategy could go.  This was considered a good idea.   **Action: Mia Brown to forward plan.**   * The Chair thanked Ian Junguis for his support and challenge on this Committee over the time he was served. * Mia Brown was asked to confirm a meeting date in March 2019. * The items that were due to be discussed from the cycle of business which could not be accommodated on the agenda today were noted. | MB |

**Items carried over:**

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| **Emergent Curriculum Plan for 2020-21** |
| **International update** |
| **College Board reporting** |
| **Summary reports of Principal’s Performance Reviews (PPRs)** |
| **Work Experience and Employability and oversight of the Employability, Work Experience and Social Action Strategy** |
| **Summary reports on the student experience from student representatives** |
| **Update on cross curriculum areas – International, Sussex Skills Solutions and apprenticeships, HE** |