

MINUTES

Minutes of the Academic Quality Committee meeting held on Wednesday 17 February 2021 at 3.30pm via Microsoft Teams.

Present: Shona Cochrane (Chair), Sarah Ferguson, Joseph Harney, Hugh Hall

Apologies: Jen Anderson, Zoe Thomson

In Attendance: David C Watt, Dorothée Leslie, Iain Hawker, Kay Fraser, Marianne Philp

1 Briefing Session

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

A briefing session on New Learning Campus: Academic Progress was held at the start of the meeting. The slides used are available on Microsoft Teams. The briefing covered:

- Ambitions
- A progress update
- Integrated learning pathways – key aims and principles
- Schedule of accommodation
- Digital learning collaboration

It was noted that key to the project was keeping the needs and desires of learners at the forefront of minds, and building a relationship with Fife Council based on respect and trust.

Members commented that the project was exciting and that it was good to hear such good progress being made, with learners and technology being at the forefront of all considerations. Some concerns were expressed about the practicalities of outdoor teaching. It was confirmed that this was a Scottish Government priority, and would be used to replicate working environments, eg for Construction students, and was also seen as important for health and wellbeing. It was confirmed that views of all stakeholder groups were being gathered.

Decision: To arrange a separate session for Academic Quality Committee members to provide more information on what outdoor learning spaces might be used for.

Responsibility: D Leslie/H Hall

Deadline: June 2021

2 Welcome

The Chair advised that in order to ensure the Academic Quality Committee was not operating in a silo, she had asked members of other Committees to give an update on any actions raised during the last meetings that may have crossover with the Academic Quality Committee. The following updates were given:

- Audit and Risk: the annual credits and student support funds audits had concluded with no issues being identified.



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- Health and Safety and HR: risk register which links to student issues; briefing on transformational ways of working which would mean all staff would have access to relevant information and also had more ownerships of their CLPL and potential career pathways
- Finance, Commercial and Estates: academic fees for 2021-22 had been approved and were unchanged; the Estates Strategy had been approved and a suggestion had been made that changes to library be brought to a future Academic Quality meeting for discussion.

The Chair also advised that a small group of Board members had discussed research within the College sector and an internal dialogue had started about this. The Principal confirmed that our relationship with universities would put the College in a strong position for this and that relevant staff were involved in progressing with this idea.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting: 28 October 2020

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

4 Matters Arising / Actions Outstanding

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was agreed that the deadline for Action 3 would be extended to the date of the next meeting.

5 Curriculum Update Report

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were outlined and noted. The following highlights were noted:

- The credits target was on track to achieve with 92% of the projected credits having been realized to date
- Retention figures were being affected by the pandemic and extensive support was being provided to students and this was having a positive impact.
- Recruitment for 2021-22 was progressing well and was approximately 4% ahead of where it was at this time last year.
- Contact was being made with all recent students and applicants to let them know about new courses becoming available.
- Recruitment was being pushed in priority areas where it was known that there would be progression opportunities and jobs post pandemic.
- It was important to ensure that our degrees offered skills to help students stand out at job interviews and compete against other candidates with the same qualifications.

Committee members thanked all staff involved for all the work that was being undertaken to ensure business continued as normal, and that students were given the support that they need during challenging times.

6 Fife College Students' Association (FCSA) Update

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

- The FCSA President for Education and Representation had stepped down from position following on from securing employment within the Student Funding Team. She would continue to represent students for the remainder of the academic year.
- Class reps training and meetings were continuing



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- Thank you forms had been introduced for students to pass on their thanks to college staff for things they were doing to make a difference to them
- An online President Oversight Group had been introduced
- The FCSA election process was now underway. "Suggest a Student" had been introduced to try to encourage more people to be identified as candidates.
- The FCSA and Fife College were awarded the bronze award in the Health Body, Healthy Minds Awards Scheme and were helping other organisations work towards receiving this award. Work was continuing which would lead to a silver award being achieved, hopefully by August 2021.

Committee members thanked the FCSA for continued good work and for the valuable support being provided to learners.

7 Learner Survey 1

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. A 73.3% response rate had been achieved, which was a 4.1% increase on last year. Comments made by students who were most satisfied and less satisfied as outlined on page 23 of the Boardpack were highlighted.

It was confirmed that the updated Student Funding process was being tested by learners prior to roll out in May 2021. Terminology and processes were being simplified wherever possible. Staff were also being briefed on the changes so that information given was consistent.

Course team meetings would continue to be used to evaluate learning. Teams were expected to reflect on who was being taught, how best this can be done, and is it working. This applied equally to online learning and classroom based learning.

It was noted that a report had been drafted on lessons learned from lockdown and issues that could be taken forward as restrictions are lifted, and that a recent staff pulse survey had also been undertaken. It was noted that these would be presented at future meetings of this Committee and the Board of Governors once available.

8 Performance Indicators: Fife v Sector

It was noted that Performance indicators would be presented at a future meeting.

9 Digital Learning Update

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. Most issues had been discussed at the earlier briefing session.

10 Key National Reports / Changes to National Policy

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

11 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 9 June 2021 at 3.30pm