

## QUALITY OVERSIGHT GROUP: 8<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2020

### MINUTES

<b>PRESENT</b>	Shane Chowen (Chair), Amelia Sussman, Mel Brookstone, Mark Isherwood, Anthony Impey, Gemma Simmons-Blench
<b>IN ATTENDANCE</b>	Roy O'Shaughnessy (CEO), Kurt Hintz (Executive Principal), Gary Hunter (Deputy Executive Principal), David Dangana (Director of Quality and Compliance), Jackie Chapman (CCCT Managing Director), Graham Drummond (Director of Governance), Graham Cooper (Deputy Clerk)
<b>APOLOGIES</b>	Sanna Jordansson, Sarah Ebanja
<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	None

The Chair welcomed Gemma Simmons-Blench, Deputy CEO of Luminate Education Group, as a new member of the group, noting Gemma's background and that she was expected to bring valuable experience of quality oversight. Everyone present introduced themselves.

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| <b>1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2<sup>ND</sup> JULY</b> | The minutes were agreed and signed as an accurate record, subject to the addition of reference to the request made for a comparison of mock grades v target grades for A Levels. | <b>Action</b><br>GD |
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**2. MATTERS ARISING**

The group noted that:

With respect to item 1, relating to attendance and engagement, the Executive Principal advised that following a period of adapting to the new blended approach to learning, all learning, in person and online, was now delivered in line with each course timetable. With enhancements being made to the technology used (e.g. Microsoft Teams) and new protocols being introduced, the ability to assess the extent to which students are engaged, not just 'present' in online lessons, was improving. There had also been further guidance provided to tutors on which elements of courses are deemed able to be taught online and those that require face to face tuition. For some students, including those on Access to HE courses, the need for substantial in-person tuition during the first term is important in building engagement.

The Committee asked about steps being taken to tackle the difficulties that some students were experiencing as a result of not having access to PCs or laptops. A proportion of students, estimated at c. 25-30% were using mobile phones to access online lessons. The Executive Principal explained that this issue was being addressed as a priority, particularly in light of the additional difficulties that these students would once again face in the event of another local or national lockdown. He advised that the Group had c. 4,000 laptops for this purpose, around half of which were available to students through the bursary scheme. There had, however, been difficulties in getting students to complete the steps necessary to access the bursary scheme. A further c. 2,000 laptops were available to students on a loan basis. The Committee noted that a number of private sector companies, education trusts, and livery companies were working with colleges to assist students in accessing IT. Whilst many of the Group's students did not meet the criteria for support from the DfE's recent much publicised initiative, the Group had been able to access support from various organisations and was continuing to explore other opportunities. Members of the Group advised that they would provide the Executive Principal with details of any schemes that they are aware of or become aware of.

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The Committee also noted the logistical difficulties that had been experienced as a result of larger classrooms being needed to accommodate students whilst meeting social distancing guidelines. This had been particularly difficult during the early part of term as class sizes had changed as a consequence of additional enrolments. The Executive Principal explained some of the measures that had been used to overcome day to day issues, such as the use of the library at the Finsbury Park centre to accommodate overspill and avoid lessons being disrupted, and ensuring that capacity details of classrooms can be accessed by teachers easily so that face to face teaching can be carried out safely. As class sizes have settled, more permanent arrangements are being made as a matter of priority and the Executive Principal advised that, if needed, this would include opening up rooms at the Marlborough building.

The CEO also highlighted that, with Covid-19 infection rates continuing to rise, teachers would inevitably become more concerned about their own safety. It was also becoming increasingly clear that the current situation was one that would need to be lived with for the foreseeable future. With this in mind, the approach needed was not how to squeeze students into existing spaces, but to find innovative solutions that could provide additional space where distancing is more comfortable and achievable. The CEO reported on discussions that he was having with Westminster Council and Paul Scully MP regarding the potential use of local theatres, cinemas and restaurants that are currently closed due to the pandemic. A further meeting was due the day after this meeting and it was hoped that a way forward could be agreed by half-term.

With respect to item 1, and the group's request for staff and employer feedback to be included in the list of quality indicators reported, the Executive Principal brought members' attention to the inclusion of employer feedback in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) to be discussed later in meeting, although the absence of staff feedback was further noted.

With respect to item 1.2 regarding apprenticeship provision, Jackie Chapman advised that she has been in discussion with Anthony Impey's contact at Investors in People about issues surrounding End Point Assessments.

With respect to the additional point raised relating to the minutes in terms of mock grades v targets for A levels, the Executive Principal stressed the importance of taking into consideration that the 2020 grades were based on Centre Assessment Grades (CAGs), which had implications for the comparative analysis. He noted the importance of any analysis distinguishing between the period prior to the lockdown in March and the period from March onwards.

### **3. GROUP QUALITY UPDATE**

A Group Quality Update report was received and considered. It was noted that:

- The General Qualification results were released based on CAGs. The College had a robust system of calculating the CAGs in line with the guidance provided. Based upon these, A level results showed an 11% improvement in achievement rates, a 5% improvement in retention rates and a 6.5% improvement in pass rates. The Value Added score improved from a 7 in 2018/19 to a 5 in 2019/20 at CIC and from 8 to 6 at WKC. Given the degree of difficulty in achieving a 2% increase in Value Added in a single year, the challenge for the current year would be maintaining this level of Value Added. An analysis of actual grades relative to teacher grades showed that there was no difference between these in 93% of cases. The Government's policy of allowing students to choose the higher of mock grades or teacher grades had led to some students receiving higher grades than was likely to have been the case in normal circumstances
- GCSE high grades, which had improved steadily over the last 3 years, had further improved by 7% compared to the 2018/19 rates. An analysis of results by grade was further noted.
- Some vocational and technical qualifications (mainly Construction, Hair and Beauty Therapy and Accounting) had been delayed until colleges reopened, due to assessment requirements. Those qualifications were being completed and all were scheduled for completion by the October half term.
- Over 1,423 learners had appealed the outcome of their results. The results were reviewed based on all the grounds of appeal regardless of the grounds of appeal presented by the individual candidate. An analysis of the grounds of appeal was provided and reviewed. 19 of these appeals were upheld. Appeals had then been submitted on behalf of students to the awarding bodies and some of which were still being considered.
- All A level and GCSE students whose grades were determined using the CAGs process were entitled to sit the autumn examinations as part of the appeals process. The A level examinations were scheduled for the 5th October to the 12th November 2020 and 129 students had registered, although the numbers kept changing as learners elected not to re-sit the exams, and the eventual actual number would be much less.

- Preliminary progression data showed the number of students progressing to university, although this was also changing as some students had places held for them and were progressing through the appeals process. A full report on progression to universities, colleges and employment would be provided to the November meeting.
- The Teaching Learning and Assessment policy is being revised - in response to the last Ofsted inspection and the last self-assessment report having identified concerns with the consistency of teaching, learning and assessment. There is to be a move from the current graded observations to a developmental approach that focuses on coaching and which is not linked to the capability policy.
- The annual Self-Assessment Report process was progressing and members of this group had been invited to attend the Group SAR validation meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> November. The Corporate Service SAR validation had taken place on 28<sup>th</sup> August and a summary of the validations was provided and noted.
- An Ofsted interim visit is expected to take place in the near future and a summary of the areas that were likely to be the focus of attention was noted.

The group asked about A level grades and the number of changes to teacher assessed grades, particularly in Biology, and expressed concern that the high volume of appeals suggested that students were unclear regarding the appeals process. It was also noted that around 10% of students had received a U grade, and the group considered that there was a need to establish the extent to which the issues leading to this related to Information Advice and Guidance or Teaching Learning and Assessment.

With regard to student groups not making expected progress, the group considered that a more detailed 'deep dive' examination and reporting was needed in order to facilitate appropriate scrutiny. The Executive Principal confirmed that such deep dive reviews are being undertaken

The group also discussed the possibility of next year's exams being postponed as a result of Covid, or if a decision is made to use CAGs again. The Executive Principal advised that it was the intention to be better prepared for such an eventuality, with work being undertaken to ensure that the Group is more able to rely upon Mock results and associated course work, where relevant, and to help manage student expectations so as to avoid the situation giving rise to as many appeals.

The group noted concerns regarding retention, which the Executive Principal acknowledged was an issue – particularly at WKC's Kings Cross Centre and CIC's centre at the Angel. He advised that there had been a significant improvement in the current year to date, but that it was still too early to evidence the improvement and that there were concerns that the gains made would be lost as a result of the impact of further Covid-19 related restrictions.

Noting the need for governors to be assured regarding the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, the group discussed the challenges associated with its responsibility for oversight and the nature of targets and data reporting. The need for a matched data set by subject, with appropriate benchmarking was emphasised, to include a particular focus on value added as a measure of student progress. The group also advised that further consideration should be given on how to bring student feedback more directly to this group, so that members are able to obtain a deeper understanding of the students' perspective and importantly the extent to which students understand their target grades, how close they are to achieving these and what they need to do to improve. Additionally, the group was keen to hear from students regarding how well they feel they are being supported during this particularly difficult time.

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#### 4. **APPRENTICESHIPS**

An update on Apprenticeships was received and members noted the following:

- In response to issues during 2018-19, there had been a significant focus in 2019-20 on improving engagement with employers. Good progress had been achieved, and this had been noted during the Ofsted visit, but it had also been highlighted that there was more still to be done to bring about further improvement.
- The pandemic had had significant implications for apprenticeship attendance. Attendance had varied greatly during the first two months following the transition to online learning and support sessions, as apprentices had to adapt to changed circumstances, with some apprentices who were continuing to work having been unable to attend sessions, and others having been furloughed.
- Retention for 2019/20 was 67.5% (compared to 57% in 2018/19).
- Timely achievement had been impacted by several factors. Some apprentices who had been furloughed were unable to generate the correct evidence needed to complete. Also, with the transition from Frameworks to Standards, one of the key measures was now the grade

achieved at the End Point Assessment. The CAG process on functional skills had meant that results were not available until July, which had resulted in a delay in the End Point Assessment process, which meant that final results were still being generated. Nevertheless, within CCCT to date, 105 apprentices had completed the full EPA process across 9 different standards at the time of writing the report and a further 82 had completed during the last week.

- Resources had been impacted by 3 out of 4 Apprenticeship Managers having left the Group.
- For the current year, much of the content would be delivered online and in order to manage the challenges, the number of frameworks and standards was to be reduced from 92 to 35 across the Group for 2021.
- The Apprenticeship Rapid Improvement Action Plan (RIAP) would continue for the current year. A significant focus had been placed on improving employer engagement, with progress having been achieved but which continued to present challenges. Regularly monthly meetings were now taking place with all employers.
- A major consideration at the present time was that many apprentices were concerned about the risk of losing their employment as the pandemic continued to affect jobs, and the team was spending a lot of time on supporting the mental health and wellbeing of students.
- There were also issues relating to the quality of new apprentices being recruited. Members noted particularly that the Group's current Grade 3 Ofsted grade precluded it from recruiting apprentices from certain employers, including significantly NHS trusts and Local Authorities. In view of this, new starts this year were anticipated to be around 500 rather than at the previous level of c.1,000.

Members provided advice in relation to enhancements to reporting that they would wish to see in order to enable them to raise their level of oversight, including:

- Improved mechanisms for direct feedback from apprentices, and also improvements in the process for obtaining feedback from employers
- Data on progress, specifically the proportion of students who are at, above and below expected progress
- Enhanced reporting of progression data – to include apprentices who gain promotion in their current workplace

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Members also asked about plans for assessors to become assessors for other organisations, to broaden their experience, and noted that this stage had not yet been reached.

## 5. IMPROVEMENT PLANS

The group received and noted the 2019/20 QIP and the draft QIP for 2020/21. The Executive Principal advised that the QIP presented was a summary Group level QIP and that each of the colleges had its own more detailed QIP.

With regard to an end of year review of the 2019/20 QIP, the SAR validation meeting, to be attended by some members of this group, would provide an opportunity for further discussion.

Members stressed the importance of the QIP for 2020/21 including the priorities for monitoring as advised during this meeting. Specifically, that reporting should include a scorecard that is standardised across the Group and covers the breadth of the EIF, with a greater focus on learner, parent and employer feedback and a regular set of data collection points against which to measure progress and to provide the group with the ability to focus its questioning and to determine progress. The group also noted the additional challenges that the ongoing pandemic and the likelihood of repeated lockdowns would create. The Executive Principal advised that it would be appropriate for individual leaders to attend the group to provide detailed answers in relation to their areas of the college QIPs.

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Members asked about steps and methodology being adopted to assess the quality of online teaching. The Executive Principal advised that guidance in relation to good and outstanding online lessons was being developed, noting that this differed in certain aspects from face to face teaching, and highlighting also the importance of lesson preparation. Some tutors had adapted better than others to online teaching. Sharing of best practice would be important and Heads of Teaching and Learning were attending online lessons in order to observe and to develop best practice guidelines. A self-assessment of all tutors was to take place, scheduled for 23<sup>rd</sup> October, which would then feed in to training plans. The Executive Principal advised that a Blended Learning Team was looking also at broader aspects, including the provision of detailed guidance on safeguarding. The group noted that digital learning also opened up opportunities to do new things and the Executive Principal advised that at CONEL a masterclass programme had been delivered during the first

week of term, leveraging the benefit of being able to reach a wider audience. Notwithstanding this, it was clear that students generally had a preference for face to face lessons.

Members of the group advised that the AoC and London ACL were also potential sources of guidance on best practice relating to online teaching.

The suggestion was made that there may be an opportunity to undertake an early induction survey on experience and engagement relating to blended learning

**6. MEMBERSHIP TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Director of Governance advised that it was hoped to have a student member appointed to the group for the next meeting. Members also noted the Terms of Reference, which had been circulated.

**7. QUALITY CALENDAR 2020/21**

The importance of the alignment of opportunities for scrutiny by this group with the quality cycle was noted. A full day SAR validation, which some members would attend was planned for 27<sup>th</sup> November and the next meeting of this group was currently scheduled for 18<sup>th</sup> January, although the likely need for a further meeting before then was noted. It was also noted that an interim visit by Ofsted was highly likely to take place prior to Christmas.

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**8 MEETING SCHEDULE 2020/21**

*The following meeting dates for the remainder of 2020/21 had already been agreed:*

*Friday 27th November 2020 9am – 4pm – SAR Validation*

*Monday 18th January 2021 5pm*

*Thursday 25th February 2021 4:30pm*

*Tuesday 23rd March 2021 5pm*

*Thursday 13th May 2021 5:30pm*

*Monday 28th June 2021 5:30pm*

Signed as a correct record: \_\_\_\_\_

Shane Chowen