
MINUTES OF THE SIXTY SIXTH MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2023, COMMENCING 1600 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

PRESENT: Mrs J McKeever, Committee Chair
Ms M Breslin
Mr P Clancy
Mrs S Fisher
Mrs M Gormley
Mr B O’Neill
Mr F Smyth
Mr P Thompson (from 1702)
Ms V Toland (from 1622)

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

66.1 WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Committee Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone with a special mention to the new members who had recently joined the Committee and to Mr P Clancy newly appointed Board member. Apologies were received from Mr L Murphy, Principal & Chief Executive. Ms V Toland gave advance notice that she would be joining later. The Committee Chair provided members with an overview of the work of the Committee. A round of self-introductions followed.

66.2 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS/DECLARATIONS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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

The following item (66.3) was taken later in the meeting as there were insufficient members present who were at the 6 June 2023 Committee meeting. Ms V Toland and Mr P Thompson were expected to join the meeting shortly.

66.3 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 JUNE 2023**➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

Paper EC 66.3 Draft Education Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2023

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

PROPOSED, Ms V Toland

SECONDED, Mr P Thompson

6.3.1 MATTERS ARISING – 6 June 2023 Committee Meeting

65.5, Report 1 - An expression of interest invite was sent out on 13 June 2023 to eligible members of the Committee to consider taking on the role as Chair of the Committee. Following this process, Mrs J McKeever was duly appointed to this post.

65.5, Report 6 - The Draft Strabane Curriculum Plan was approved at the Governing Body meeting held on 27 June 2023.

The Committee Chair reported on the vacancy within the Committee for a Governor to take on the role as the Board HE representative. **It was agreed that an expression of interest be sent out to eligible members of the Committee together with a summary on the roles and responsibilities for this position.**

66.4 COMMITTEE CHAIR'S BUSINESS

The Committee Chair provided an overview of the strategic context of the sector and referred to a number of significant matters that will impact on the College over this academic year. The Committee Chair then introduced Dr O'Mullan, Director of Curriculum and Academic Standards to the new members and invited her to present the Education Committee Management Report.

Dr O'Mullan thanked the Chair and noted that she was delighted in the level of interest by Governors in the Education Committee. The curriculum portfolio and the learner experience were the core business of the College. Her role and that at CLT was a combination of strategic vision and operational good housekeeping to develop, deliver and ensure a high quality of education, training and skills. She welcomed the support and challenge of the new Committee and their comments and questions.

66.5 MANAGEMENT REPORT – Dr C O'Mullan, Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards.

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

EC 66.5	Management Report
Report 1	Full Time Enrolment Update
Report 2	Curriculum Policy – August 2023
Report 3	Academic Standards Committee Meeting Minutes – May 2023
Report 4	Business Support Centre Update

Dr C O'Mullan introduced her Management Report with reference to the Curriculum Policy (Report 2) which she considered provided information aligned to the key induction documents provided to members. She also emphasised the extensive integration between her team and other key support functions.

In relation to the update on the 2022/23 enrolment figures from the final CDP Progress Report several points were noted; full-time Maximum Student Numbers (MaSN) HE enrolments decreased by 18.4% from an actual of 424 in 2021/22 to an actual of 346 in 2022/23. Part-time HE enrolments achieved 98.3% of the target with 629 enrolments against a target of 678. HLA enrolments achieved the target of 72. FE full-time and part-time¹ achieved 8,547 enrolments against a target of 7,921. Full-time enrolments in APPSNI exceeded target of 500 achieving enrolments of 519.

The members considered that it would be useful to have an awareness of where the College sits in relation to the sector regarding enrolments and other factors.

Dr O'Mullan referred to the process of validated data and its annual publication in late November/early December in the FE statistical bulletin.

It was agreed that once validated benchmarking data will be provided to the Committee when available in the usual manner.

Report 1 Full Time Enrolment Update

The ongoing action short of a strike has had an impact on inputting enrolment data on the EBS system. Therefore several workarounds have been put in place to prioritise this. The full-time enrolment data presented in Report 1 showed a comparison of actual vs the November data lift of 2022. For full-time provision as at 15 September 2023 compared with November 2022 data reflects a positive picture in Level 1, 3 and levels 4 – 6 all with increased enrolments; this was caveated by the fact that some full time enrolments still need to be processed and that there was always a reduction in full time numbers from the 1 September to the 1 November as a result of student withdrawals. The details of this will be reported in usual manner to the Education Committee.

It was noted that a CDP commissioning letter had not yet been issued by the Department. The Chair indicated that the details of a new format of a CDP were still to be finalised. Dr C O'Mullan highlighted the importance of reviewing actual enrolments against target as apart from being an indication of effective planning in a number of types of provision the targets relate directly to the funding. The two examples cited were Level 2 Traineeships and HE full-time MaSN. Discussion took place on the likelihood of potential clawbacks in relation to actuals against target or performance by the Department (DfE). Members noted the decisions taken in relation to the full-time provision for 2023/24.

At this point there appeared to be a lower than expected enrolment in Apprenticeships vs target reflecting challenges for employers as well as an increase in learners requiring Level 1 provision reflecting the entry qualifications of some students. A full picture of enrolments for all types of provision will be presented at the next Education Committee as well as ongoing reports on attendance and retention of learners.

¹ Excl WBL/HE/ESK

Mr B O'Neill asked if data was gathered on other non-academic outcomes such as wellbeing and confidence. In response, the Head of Client Services stated that transversal skills are tracked. Student surveys take place throughout the year to continue to improve the student experience and these and other values are a key component of the quality improvement process.

Dr C O'Mullan noted the ongoing work at sector level regarding curriculum reform.

Dr C O'Mullan also referred to the work being undertaken in collating performance data for the year 2022/23 and gave an overview of the Self-Evaluation and Quality Improvement Planning process in the College. The details on the performance of College KPIs and the progress of work to collate the Whole College Self Evaluation/Quality Improvement Report will be provided at a later date in line with the College Quality Improvement Calendar. The forthcoming inspection at HMP Magilligan was noted.

The Director provided the Committee with details on the one week strike action that commenced on 18 September 2023. Individual strike days are also planned over the coming weeks. A decision was made to deliver classes by remote learning during week 18 to 22 September 2023 and the management and communication issues around that decision as outlined in the management report were noted. This approach will be reviewed for the individual planned strike action.

The Committee were apprised on the SOLAS Project, a state agency that oversees the building of a world class Further Education and Training (FET) sector in Ireland, developing skills to fuel Ireland's future. SOLAS funding has been confirmed for the College to deliver in Strabane Campus several intensive apprenticeship training programmes.

The College has appointed a dedicated Sustainability Champion and Skills Champion with a view to focusing on the ESG Agenda and uplift the opportunity for learners to participate in regional and national skills competitions.

Report 2 Curriculum Policy – August 2023

The Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards brought members through the Policy which is updated annually. Highlights were noted; the extensive range of type of provision and funding streams; the key documents underpinning the policy which included the 10X Economy NI Decade of Innovation Strategy. The College will continue to develop a curriculum portfolio aligned to the three pillars of the Strategy.

Dr C O'Mullan reported on the curriculum planning process and the importance to promote and communicate a culture of continuous improvement in the learner experience and success across the College.

Report 3 Academic Standards Committee Meeting Minutes – May 2023

For the benefit of new Committee members, the Director of Curriculum and Academic Standards provided detail on the work of this Committee and highlighted that this was one of several multidisciplinary cross College committees established to focus on particular aspects of provision and to ensure effective communication between academic and support colleagues. She referenced the various agenda items that are discussed at Academic Standards, which is dedicated to the higher education provision. She also noted that this and other committees include student representation to facilitate the student voice and feedback.

Dr C O’Mullan reminded members that the College had achieved validation for the Open University and that two out of the three planned full time programmes had successfully recruited learners.

Report 4 Business Support Centre Update

Members noted the report.

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

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

For the benefit of new members Ms Moss provided an overview of the work of the Client Services teams and the reports that will progress through the Committee.

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**Report 1 Equality Update**

The Head of Client Services highlighted the proposed Schedule of Awareness days for 2023/24 which included the World Suicide Prevention Day held on 10 September 2023. Having undertaken EFDNI’s Disability Positive Accreditation, which focuses on employment-related disability good practice, the College was successful in obtaining their AAA accreditation. The College initiated links with the Strabane Ethnic Community Association who is the College’s charity for the Strabane area. SECA agreed to support the College’s Fresher week in September. Work has commenced on extending further awareness throughout the College.

On going projects includes work to support the North West Migrants’ Forum racism and training project, staff development opportunities, RNIB Visibly Better Employer and work on becoming a College of Sanctuary.

Report 2 Internal Audit Review – Business Development & Employability Update on Recommendations

The Head of Client Services provided an update on the progress of agreed actions on the internal audit review.

66.7 CORRESPONDENCE


There was no correspondence.

66.8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Ms V Toland, Staff Governor reported that she attended the J P McManus All Ireland Scholarships in Limerick with student Aileen Barber to collect her scholarship.
- **It was agreed it would be useful for a workshop to be arranged for Committee members to gain further understanding of the complexities of the curriculum and the learner journey which will underpin the details in the forthcoming committee papers.**

That being the end of business the Committee Chair thanked everyone. The meeting ended at 1759.

Date of Next Meeting – 27 November 2023

Signed: 
Mrs J McKeever, Governing Body Chair

Date: 27 November 2023