

ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE



WEDNESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2012

GATESHEAD COLLEGE

Report: Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 20 June 2012

Author: Clerk of the Corporation

Action: Approve

Status: Open

Present: David Mitchell (Chair)
Keith Cann Evans
Gail Etherington
Darren Heathcote
Allan Steele

In attendance: Jackie Doxford
Judith Doyle
John Gray
Gwyneth Jones
Tim Poolan
Andrew Robson

1. Welcome/Apologies

David Mitchell welcomed everyone to the meeting in particular John Gray, Tim Poolan and Andrew Robson who he explained would be attending future meetings on a regular basis. Apologies for absence were received from Tom Cantwell, Brian Rapkin, Alan Reynolds, Mark Taylor and Richard Thorold.

The Chair invited members to declare any interests on any item on the agenda. No interests were declared at this stage in the meeting; however, members noted that should the direction of debate on any item result in a potential conflict of interest, this should be indicated during the meeting. Members were also reminded to advise the Clerk of any changes to be made to declaration of interests.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2012 were accepted as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising which were not substantive items on the agenda.

4. Post Inspection Action Plan

The report and the record of discussion on it are 'closed to public access' until such time as they are considered to be no longer commercially sensitive

5. Retention/Achievement Monitoring

The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality introduced a report which updated the Committee on current levels of retention and predictions for Success Rates. The report provided details of the retention levels taken from Pro-Achieve on 1 June 2012. A prediction model (newly established for 2011/12) generates anticipated success rates from Course Leaders' learner-by-learner analysis of expected successful completers. The predictions were shown as 'Min Predicted Success Rates' in tables included in the report.

The report included current retention levels and predicted success for 16-18 and 19+ for the whole College which were broken down by level and type (long/short) of course. The figures for 16-18 show a minimum predicted success rate of 85.4%, for 19+ the success rate is 90.8% and the overall predicted success rate is 88.8%. Tables providing a similar breakdown detailing current retention and predictions for each Subject Sector Area were also included in the report.

A summary of the outcomes show that overall retention levels are significantly up on rates for 2010/11 and 2009/10; overall predicted success rates show a level of performance above the National Rate for 10/11 which was the most recent external benchmark and an analysis of the SSAs indicates improved performance in almost all areas. The key areas of underperformance are long level 3 programmes in Area 1 and GCSE Maths and English (long level 2 in Area 2 and Area 12).

A member commented that 'Retention and Success Rate Predictions' should be included as a standard report for all future Academic Standard Committee meetings and suggested looking at three or four years' worth of data and not just the previous year.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report

6. Curriculum Review Update

The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality introduced a report updating the Committee on the outcome of the Curriculum Reviews which had taken place during the academic year 2011/2012 and included the teaching and learning observation data which had resulted from the reviews. She explained that following a request from the Board, a strong focus had been placed on Observation of Teaching and Learning, and there had been more than a 40% increase in observations compared to academic year 2010/2011.

A review of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) took place during the first weeks of the academic year. Individual reviews and the resulting ILPs are important during the induction period to ensure that individual targets are set and individual needs considered. The review involved examining ILPs for a sample of courses/students and identifying areas of good practice and areas for development. Findings were shared with tutors and Heads of Department. The key findings were: whilst there some was some good practice, there were also inconsistencies in the quality of ILPs; use of SMART targets is critical, and staff/student skills need to be developed in this area; and use of initial assessments and diagnostics are critical in forming a good ILP particularly at this stage of the year. In summary, reviews had been undertaken in Leadership & Management (October 2011), Health, Care & Early Years (October and November 2011), Teaching & Learning provision (November 2011), Business provision (December 2011), Creative Industries (January 2012), Engineering/Manufacturing (February 2012), Service Industries (February/early March 2012) and Sport (March 2012).

During March and April 2012 external moderation activity took place, with two separate visits from experienced Ofsted inspectors. During these external moderations, paired

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observations took place in order to compare the College's judgements with the expectations of external parties. The external judgements were largely in line with internal judgements. There was some slight over-grading of satisfactory teaching as good which has been addressed through additional training for the observation team. The paired observations during the May 2012 Ofsted inspection resulted in 100% agreement between Ofsted inspectors' judgements and the Gateshead College observation team.

The Committee noted that the overall summary of Teaching and Learning Observation Grades showed that 160 observations were completed in 2011/12 in comparison with 113 observations completed in 2010/11. The overall teaching and learning observation grade profile is fairly similar to that for 2010/11. There has been a rise in outstanding teaching and learning sessions, although the rate of good or better observations has remained more or less static (80% compared to 80.5%).

A member commented that it was more important to complete more observations than to increase the rate of good or better observations.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report

7. Any Other Business

A member enquired whether there was any mileage in scheduling more Academic Standards Committee meetings during the year and suggested having two meetings per term. The Chair supported the proposal and suggested bringing forward the first meeting in 2012/2013 to September 2012.

8. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 19 September 2012.