USP College Corporation
Quality Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 15 October 2024
Meeting held via Microsoft Teams
Meeting commenced: 16.00hrs
Meeting ended: 17.45hrs

Present
Paul Nutter	Independent Member	Chair
Rachel May	Independent Member	
Nick Patterson	Staff Member	
Shaunak Gupta	Student Member	
Phoenix Halsey	Student Member	

Apologies for absence
Vikki Liogier	Independent Member
Dan Pearson	Chief Executive
Perry Sansom	Staff Member

In attendance
Clare White	Principal
James Parker	Vice Principal Quality & Innovation
Cherie Brightwell	Vice Principal Technical & Professional
Chris Murgatroyd	Vice Principal Academic
Andy Shepherd	Head of Student Services (item 11 only)

Clerk
Sue Glover	Clerk to the Corporation

QC.30.24 **Declaration of Interest**
Members and officers were reminded of the need to declare any personal or financial interest in any item to be considered during the meeting.

There were no declarations of interest.

QC.31.24 **Apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were received from

- Vikki Liogier
- Dan Pearson
- Perry Sansom

The Quality Committee agreed to accept the apologies for absence.

QC.32.24   **Appointment of Committee Chair**

The Clerk reminded members that the previous Chair of the Committee, Ian Hockey, resigned from the Board in November 2023 and that, since this date, Vikki Liogier has acted as interim Chair, but does not wish to continue on a permanent basis. Therefore, it is necessary to appoint a new Chair of the Committee at this meeting.

Members were advised that, in accordance with the Terms of Reference for the Committee, the Chair of the Committee is appointed by the Corporation from among the independent members of the Committee. Paul Nutter had been nominated and it was unanimously agreed by the Committee that he should be appointed Chair of the Quality Committee.

Agreed

The Quality Committee recommends to the Corporation Board that Paul Nutter is appointed Chair of the Committee

QC.33.24   **Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2024**

The minutes of the meeting were approved and signed as a correct record.

QC.34.23   **Matters arising and action points from the minutes of the previous meeting**

Members reviewed the action points arising from the meeting. It was agreed that the action to review processes in place in relation to the Digital and Monitoring Standards is removed as this was an action for the previous Chair.

It was agreed there were no other matters arising from the previous meeting.

QC.35.24   **Careers and Skills Education**

The Vice Principal Technical & Professional presented a report, detailing the proposed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2024/25 to help monitor employer engagement, student career progression and overall student experience.

Members were advised that
- the KPIs are strategically designed to enhance student outcomes, foster industry partnerships and promote institutional development with strong emphasis on diversity, inclusion and professional development
- the strategy aligns with the priorities of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) to ensure the College is meeting the local and national skills needs of employers
- a key focus will be on enhancing the effectiveness and reach of physical work experience and placement opportunities to ensure sustained improvements by forging stronger industry partnerships, increasing placement options and embedding experiences within the curriculum

The summary of KPIs for 2023/24 was reviewed, noting that the Staff CPD target of 90% had not been achieved. In response to questions, members were advised that this was for industry specific CPD and not for all staff CPD. It was agreed that the wording for this KPI should be adjusted to reflect this.

The Committee considered each of the ten KPIs proposed for 2024/25 and agreed these were appropriate and that the targets suggested were realistic to ensure they were achievable.

The Committee thanked the Vice Principal for the update, which has helped to demonstrate that the College has strong partnerships and collaborations across schools, community and employers. There is strong alignment to priority skills needs supported by a strong pipeline of employer partnerships.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed
- to receive and note the report
- the ten KPIs and targets for 2024/25, which will be monitored by the Committee at each termly meeting

QC.36.24   **Year-end Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

The Vice Principal Quality & Innovation presented a report detailing the KPIs for achievement, retention and pass rates in 2023/24.

Members were advised that
- overall achievement rate (82.7%) and retention rate (89.4%) are slightly below national FE averages, pass rate (92.5%) exceeds national benchmark
- there are no identified widening downward trends within the various ethnic groups students identify with
- overall, there were no significant differences between male and female achievement
- there were no significant differences between students identified as High Needs funded and those without
- Free School Meals students and Looked After Children show positive trends in achievement

The Committee considered the detail of the report, noting that
- performance varies significantly across levels with Level 1/Entry, Level 2 and Level 3 vocational programmes outperforming national averages
- A level performance has declined sharply, impacting overall metrics
- Notable improvements seen in Level 2 achievement and pass rate; Level 3 vocational maintains strong performance
- Retention challenges persist, particularly in A levels and Level 3 year 1 vocational courses
- Value added measures show room for improvement, with A levels in the bottom quarter nationally

Members discussed the issues raised and, in response to questions, were advised that
- The key focus areas include addressing A level performance declines, improving retention rates, sustaining level 2 improvements, maintaining strengths in level 1/entry and level 3 vocational programmes
- Continued monitoring of at-risk cohorts will ensure progress and help close any emerging gaps
- A factor in the decline in A level achievement is the move away from AS levels in the first year

Members agreed that the report had given a clear summary of the achievement, retention and pass rates of students. It was pleasing to note the improvements in Level 2 achievement and pass rate and that Level 3 vocational maintains strong performance. However, A level achievement is disappointing, but it was acknowledged this was not the only factor and that challenges within the A level programme are being addressed.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC.37.24   **Teaching and Learning 2023/24 and focus for 2024/25**

The Vice Principal Quality & Innovation presented a report detailing Teaching and Learning in 2023/24 and the focus for the 2024/25 academic year.

Members were advised that
- all teaching staff are assigned a RAG rating based on learning walks, student feedback and quality reviews, which gives guidance for the allocation of Teaching Improvement Practitioners (TIPs)
- 773 learning walks were conducted in 2023/24 across all curriculum areas, demonstrating commitment to ongoing quality assurance and improvement
- TIPs played a crucial role in supporting staff development and while the number have been reduced, their remission time has increased to allow for more focused and impactful interventions
- A key strength this year has been the reduction in the percentage of teachers rated as Amber and Red, decreasing from 28% in 2022/23 to 23% in 2023/24

The Committee reviewed the detail of the report, noting the key areas for development
- Implementing a new 'Think Further' initiative for stretch and challenge
- Refining the 'One Thing' programme to foster greater peer collaboration and reflection
- Expand the reach of TIP support to impact larger number of staff with a need for more structured follow-up after the 6-week cycles to ensure sustained improvement

The Committee agreed that there was a very robust process in place for supporting teachers, which enables the College's quality team to quickly identify where additional support for teachers is required. It was pleasing to note the reduction in the number of teachers rated as Amber and Red, acknowledging this improvement is a reflection of the effectiveness of targeted support strategies and professional development initiatives, but that with continual improvements being made this will contribute to further reducing this percentage in 2024/25.

Members were informed that staff are encouraged to embrace 'taking a risk' when considering new initiatives for teaching.

The Committee agreed that the college continues to be very proactive in addressing issues with teaching staff. The focus for 2024/25 will be the continuing professional development of teaching staff leading to better outcomes for both staff and students so that college continues to deliver a high-quality provision for its students.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC.38.24 **Complaints Summary for 2023/24**
The Vice Principal Quality & Innovation presented a report detailing the College's complaints received during 2023/24.

Members reviewed the detail of the report, noting that
- Overall, the level of complaints are similar to previous year,
- Curriculum remains the primary source of complaints, slight increase from 71% to 72%
- New complaint categories emerged as ALS (2%) and Student Services (6%)
- Student behaviour complaints increased from 3% to 8%, largely due to a single incident
- Admissions complaints decreased from 10% to 4%, partly due to reclassification
- Within curriculum complaints, communication issues most prevalent (44.4% of curriculum complaints)

In discussion, members were advised that the action plan in place to addresses issues includes
- Communication strategy to be reviewed, particularly the impact of MyUSP
- Continue support for teaching and learning improvements, particularly for new and unqualified teachers
- Address staff interaction issues through coaching and reinforced professional expectations
- Enhanced student voice activities to identify issues early
- Implement ongoing tracking and intervention for staff receiving multiple complaints

The Committee agreed that there is a robust process in place to deal with complaints with an action plan in place to address issues.

Agreed
The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report.

Cherie Brightwell left the meeting

QC.39.24 **Quality Strategy**
The Vice Principal Quality & Innovation presented, for approval, the College's Quality Framework and Strategy, which sets out the
- Top Line Outcome KPIs for 2024/25
- Key Quality Processes
  - Intent
  - Implementation
  - Key Features
  - Timeline

Members were advised that the College's quality framework aims to support delivery of the college's career focused learning strategy through robust quality assurance and improvement aligned to the student journey.

The Committee reviewed the detail of the document, in particular the top line outcome KPIs for 2024/25. It was agreed it was a very comprehensive document that clearly sets out the College's strategy for improvement.

Agreed
The Quality Committee approves and recommends to the Corporation Board for approval the College's Quality Framework and Strategy for 2024/25

QC.40.24   **College Improvement Priorities**
The Vice Principal Quality & Innovation presented a report to consider, for approval, the priorities for quality improvement.

Members were advised that the College's self-assessment report (SAR) for 2023/24 is currently in progress and the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2024/25 is under development. The following key priorities have been identified through a comprehensive review of the previous year's performance indicators.

- A level achievement
- Level 3 Year 1 vocational achievement
- Academic stretch and challenge
- GCSE English & Maths (grade 4+)
- GCSE English & Maths attendance
- Overall attendance

Members reviewed the detail of the report, noting the approach being taken to develop priorities and that these areas require focused attention to enhance the college's overall educational outcomes and student experience.

In discussion, members agreed that the areas for improvement were appropriate, clear and concise and are clearly linked to priorities.

Agreed
The Quality Committee approves and recommends to the Corporation Board for approval the College Improvement Priorities as presented

QC.41.24   **Association of College's (AoC) EDI Charter**
The Vice Principal Quality & Innovation presented the AoC's the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) charter, which the college has the opportunity to sign.

Members were advised that the Charter
- represents a public commitment to fostering an inclusive culture where all staff, learners and communities can thrive
- recognises the UK's diverse society and the unique position of further education in driving societal transformation

The Committee reviewed the detail of the document, noting the key points in signing up to the Charter. It was agreed that by adopting the Charter and developing the College's pledge to EDI, there is the opportunity to strengthen the commitment to EDI, potentially improving student outcomes and enhancing the College's role in the community. The student member agreed to join the College's EDI committee and help to develop the Charter.

Agreed
The Quality Committee agreed to the
- College adopting the AoC's EDI charter
- Charter being signed by Chair & CEO
- Draft pledge to be prepared and presented for review at next meeting

Andy Shepherd joined the meeting

QC.42.24 **Annual Safeguarding Report for 2023/24**
The Head of Student Services presented, for consideration and acceptance, the Annual Safeguarding Report for 2023/24.

Members were advised that
- the annual safeguarding report reviews the work undertaken in relation to Safeguarding including Prevent throughout the year
- the report provides assurance to the Board that the College is compliant with its responsibilities in relation to Safeguarding including Prevent and that appropriate actions are being taken in relation to safeguarding students, staff and visitors to the College

Members reviewed the detail of the report, noting
- the number of interventions has remained similar to previous year
- cases are divided between 'Safeguarding', a student who requires intervention which if not provided could escalate and result in the impairment of their safety, health and development, and 'Wellbeing' intervention to promote a more positive and happy life, these would normally be shorter and deal with issues such as relationship difficulties, stress, low self-esteem
- half the number of students at Palmers required support during the year with the same level at Seevic
- the main area for support has been mental health issues with a slight decline in the level of support for anxiety
- the level of Safeguarding and Prevent awareness training undertaken by all staff and the additional training undertaken by the Designated Safeguarding and Deputy Safeguarding Leads
- the measures in place for the Corporation Board in relation to its responsibilities for Safeguarding including Prevent

Members discussed the issues raised and, in response to questions were advised that
- the main reasons for intervention are around wellbeing issues in general, such as problems at home, relationships, financial issues
- the stable level of safeguarding support has been due to having a constant safeguarding team in place
- the senior management team recognises the support required for the wellbeing team and makes it a priority that they all have supervision
- an emerging area is around toxic masculinity – the student governor asked how the College plans to educate students on this type of behaviour and was advised that it is proposed expert externals should be brought in as student would be more inclined to listen and thus have more impact

Members commended the report, particularly the level of support that is given to students by the Wellbeing Team. The Committee recognised the high level of training undertaken by the safeguarding team against a whole range of activities and considered that the report gives a level of confident to the Board that statutory duties relating to safeguarding are being met. The Chair of the Committee advised that, in his capacity of Link Governor for Safeguarding, he had recently visited the College to review the central records and to meet with the Safeguarding Team and will report on the outcome to the December Board.

The Committee asked that thanks are passed to the Safeguarding team on behalf of the Board for the tireless work they do to ensure the safeguarding of all students.

Agreed
The Quality Committee agreed to accept and recommend to the Corporation Board for acceptance the Annual Safeguarding Report for 2023/24

QC.43.24 **Any Other Business**
There were no items of any other business.

QC.44.24 **Schedule of Quality Committee meetings 2023/24**
Wednesday 4 December 2024
Tuesday 4 March 2025
Tuesday 17 June 2025

As there was no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed.

SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD:

DATE: 4 December 2024