

MINUTES of the MEETING of the LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE held in the Boardroom, Main Campus on Friday 18 September 2015

PRESENT: Robbie Bain, Hector Douglas, Louise James, Jenny Loeffler, Helen Miller, Lizzie Munro, Diane Rawlinson
CHAIR: Hector Douglas
APOLOGIES: Dominic Thierry
ATTENDING: Depute Principal
Head of Curriculum
College Secretary

The Chair welcomed the new staff and student members to their first meeting and everyone to the first Learning and Teaching Committee in the new Campus.

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE HELD ON 2 JUNE 2015

The Minutes were **AGREED** as a correct record, were **APPROVED** and signed.

2. 2014-15 REPORT ON PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

A report by the Depute Principal provided a summary of the key performance indicators (PI) relating to student outcomes for 2014-15 activity. Only the outcomes for full-time FE programmes were available at the time of writing the report. Outcomes for part-time FE and for HE programmes were still being collated and finalised.

The PI calculations were those used by the Scottish Funding Council and by Education Scotland, enabling national benchmarking and the tracking of trends over time.

Full-time FE student outcomes for 2014-15:

Provisional completed successful outcome rates for full-time FE students had increased by 2 percentage points from 2013-14 with an 8 percentage point increase overall since 2012-13. The increase was down to partial success rates having fallen for the second successive year – from 19% in 2012-13 to 6 % in 2014-15. Success rates were likely to be below (better than) sector levels even when the remaining student outcomes had been processed. However, provisional success rates still remained below the latest published sector level, by 4 percentage points.

Retention rates had fallen slightly, with both early and further withdrawal rates up on last year. Both categories were 3 percentage points higher (worse) than sector levels. Therefore, improving retention rates, while maintaining low rates of partial success, was the overall priority for 2015-16 in terms of improving student outcomes.

Full-time FE student outcomes by curriculum area:

Provisional success rates had fallen from last year in only two areas: Care Practice and Construction Craft. However, the decline was significant in both

areas. The success rates in Engineering Craft had remained steady and were still above sector levels for the subject area. Rates in the other areas had all increased, with the most significant improvements being in Business and Computing and in Hairdressing, Beauty and Sport. The Culture and Creative Industries and the Forestry, Science, Maths and Aquaculture areas included within them the outcomes for the full-time Highers clusters, which generally had lower success rates overall.

The Committee were encouraged to **NOTE** the overall continue upward trend towards the sector average.

3. STUDENT EXPERIENCE 2014/15

A report by the Depute Principal provided an update on the student experience at Inverness College UHI during 2014-15. An overview of student feedback had been gathered across the College during the academic year 2014-15 from cross-college student surveys and over 20 student focus groups.

Overall, there was a very positive picture with high satisfaction rates in most areas. Furthermore, during 2014-15, overall student satisfaction had increased compared with the previous year.

The Committee **NOTED** the quality improvement activity that was already being undertaken in order to improve student satisfaction in a number of areas. The findings of this report would also be used to inform action plans for specific curriculum areas going forward.

The Chair thanked the Quality Manager for an excellent report.

4. PROGRAMME EVALUATION 2014/15

A report by the Depute Principal provided an overview of the process of course team self-evaluation for programmes completed in 2014-15, and in particular the improvements made to the FE reporting template for the 2014-15 reports.

The Committee **NOTED** the report and also that a report on the key themes from the programme areas would be submitted to the next meeting in December.

5. RESEARCH STRATEGY ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

A report by the Head of Research & Post Graduate Development provided a summary of the College research strategy and development activity for 2014/15. The College research strategy had been approved in 2014 and it built upon previous strategies which provided the focus and structure for significant development and growth in research across the College. The report also summarised progress against each of the research priorities in the strategy.

The Head of Post Graduate Development confirmed that in looking forward to 2015/16, the move to the new campus had finally provided the basis of the Research and Enterprise Hub to fully develop the next phase of the research strategy. Maintaining momentum and particularly maximising successful grant / income capture would be key targets for the coming year. The investment in research by the College (particularly in staff) had been considerable and it was important that a return on this investment continued to build as in 2014/15.

The Committee **NOTED** the very encouraging report and that it was rewarding to see results in this area after many years of developmental work.

6. STUDENT RECRUITMENT 2015-16

A report by the Depute Principal provided an update of student recruitment for 2015-16, in particular a breakdown of FE and HE enrolments for 2015-16 by curriculum area and by full-time and part-time provision, as at 14 September 2015. The enrolments at 14 September 2015 were compared to those at 13 October 2014 as a benchmark (the most comparable date where a breakdown by curriculum area was available). However, significant part-time recruitment would occur over the next few months.

The Committee **NOTED** that the picture was extremely positive at this stage with the total FE enrolments standing at 1,927 and the total HE enrolments at 1,323.

7. IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON LEARNING AND TEACHING

A report by the Depute Principal referred to the proposed Academic Partnership Agreement which had a number of implications for learning and teaching.

The proposed agreement would be discussed further in October and a summary of the implications for Learning and Teaching would be provided to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Chair expressed concern that there did not seem to be any spirit of partnership within the document.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

8. KEY OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR 2015/16

A report by the Depute Principal provided a review of the key objectives for 2014-15 and also set out the proposed key objectives relating to learning and teaching for academic year 2015-16. The objectives ensured that the issues, commensurate with the Committee's remit, which would drive the enhancement of learning and teaching, were progressed and monitored throughout the year.

The Committee **APPROVED** the following key objectives for 2015-16:-

1. Achieve FE and HE student activity targets for 2015-16:

Level	Student activity target
FE	28,569 credits
HE	1,450.56 FTE

2. Improve student retention and attainment rates for all full-time and part-time FE and HE programmes.
3. Improve student satisfaction rates at FE and HE levels (overall and in specific categories), as measured by the pre-exit student survey, and improve the NSS satisfaction rate overall:

Survey/level	Overall student satisfaction rate	
	2014-15 actual	2015-16 target

Pre-exit: FE	95%	98%
Pre-exit HE	89%	95%
NSS	74%	85%

4. Ensure the focus on learning and teaching had a tangible impact on professional practice and the student experience, including:
 - improved sharing of practice to support professional learning;
 - enhanced feedback and assessment practices;
 - increased student involvement in enhancing their own learning;
 - improved support for learning (including additional support) and academic guidance.
5. Receive a judgement of '*effectiveness*' from Education Scotland following the external review in March 2016.

9. **STUDENT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (SPA)**

A report by the Student President provided an update on the progress on the SPA which had been introduced in 2014/15 and which had enabled a greater sense of partnership between the College, the staff, ICSA and students.

Over the past year ICSA had worked on the four main work themes within the SPA and most of the actions had been completed or were progressing well.

Seven new actions to those in place last year had been added which would further enhance the student experience. These included, for example, working on increasing the number of Ambassadors and utilising them more to help other students within the college and working closer with Additional Support Needs staff when providing staff training on being able to recognise the signs of additional support needs in students who are undeclared or who have not been diagnosed.

This year's Freshers Fayre, held on 9th September was the biggest and most successful which Inverness College UHI had seen in recent years. Nearly 70 stalls with a mix of college departments, as well as national and international companies were in attendance. Excellent feedback had been received from all stall holders in attendance. The event had encouraged students and staff to interact with each other and make connections with people outside the college.

The Committee **NOTED** the very positive report.

10. **FRAMEWORK – STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS**

A report by the Student President provided information of the new 'Framework for the development of strong and effective college student associations in Scotland' which had been launched in June by Angela Constance, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning.

The Framework was supported by NUS Scotland, College Scotland, the Scottish Funding Council and the Scottish Government.

The Framework had a set of five Principles and five Themes. The Principles set the tone for how the Students Association should be run and what the Students Association should stand for. The five themes related to the work the Students Association did, how the students were represented and how the Students Association was governed.

ICSA and the College had been able to identify the areas that were already well developed and also the areas to be worked on. For ICSA the main area of development needed was sustainability and sustainable resources and already some positive steps had been made to achieve this development need.

A meeting with the Inverness College and ICSA's NUS staff Member had also confirmed that there was a high level of openness and trust between the College and ICSA and that ICSA was heading in the right direction in terms of its further development.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

11. ANNUAL REPORT ON INSTITUTION LED REVIEW OF QUALITY

The Depute Principal advised that the annual report on institution led review of quality required to be submitted to the SCF by the end of October. The report was being finalised and would be submitted to the Board of Management at its meeting on 7th October.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

12. PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL ENGAGEMENT VISIT REPORT

Andrew Brawley of Education Scotland gave a presentation on the annual engagement visit which had taken place in May. He drew out some of the key points from his report.

There had been a significant improvement in completed successful outcome rates for FT FE learners (54%-60%) but the College was still behind the sector norm (66%). A very significant improvement in completed successful outcome rates for PT FE learners (66%-79%) had now been achieved and the College was now above the sector norm (78%). Inverness was the fastest improving college in Scotland.

High quality learning had been evidenced across the Art and Design, BMA and Forestry and Highers programmes. In addition, progress had been made on a number of areas within learning and teaching.

In the area of learner engagement, the Inverness College Student Association (ICSA) was working to raise role awareness and a range of approaches, including the use of the student intranet, information events and staff/student sporting activities had helped to achieve this. Students at Balloch had reported a lack of presence of ICSA and guidance staff and it was acknowledged that these issues had to be addressed.

In relation to employer and school engagement, Mr Brawley referred to the extensive school links which were in place, commercial programme development had been evidenced and the Buttle UK quality mark had been achieved.

The introduction of programme coordinators, a refreshed learning and teaching strategy and self evaluation approaches and arrangements were some of the improvement initiatives which had been progressed under the quality culture.

In summary, Mr Brawley confirmed that significant continued improvements had been made but some areas, particularly within learning and teaching required

further improvements. Overall, the report outlined a very promising and positive picture and he confirmed that the college was certainly moving in the right direction.

13. QUALITY REVIEWS - EDUCATION SCOTLAND AND UHI SUBJECT REVIEWS

A report by the Quality Manager provided a summary of external quality reviews carried out on Inverness College during 2014-15; the Education Scotland Annual Engagement Visit (AEV) and the UHI subject review, namely Library Service.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

14. COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

A report by the Quality Officer provided a summary of recorded complaints during the academic year 2014-15.

A total of 51 complaints had been recorded by the Quality Unit during academic year 2014-15, 9 complaints were withdrawn leaving a total of 42. This was a 32% decrease compared with 2013/14 when there were 77 complaints for the academic year. This decrease was largely in part to the embedding of departmental processes and established academic and support team structures.

Overall FE complaints accounted for 57% of complaints during 2014/15. Comparatively, the total number of complaints had decreased by 44% from 2013/14 to 2014/15.

The top four complaint categories during 2014/15 were as follows:

- Course Administration
- Staff Performance
- Learning and Teaching
- Estates

The Committee **NOTED** the complaints data and also that further development was required to ensure that a larger number of complaints were resolved at stage 1.

15. MINUTES

The Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of the Meetings of the following Management Committees

- a. Academic Standards and Quality Committee held on 18 May 2015
- b. Equality and Diversity Committee held on 16 June 2015
- c. Student Support Committee held on 23 June 2015
- d. Research Committee held on 22 June 2015
- e. Academic Management Group held on 21 May 2015
- f. Academic Management Group held on 25 June 2015
- g. Academic Management Group – 27 August 2015

16. AOCB

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 2nd December at 12 noon

Signed by the Chair: _____

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Date: _____

2/12/2015.