

Minutes

Curriculum Strategy and Quality Enhancement (CSQE) Committee

Governance 2024-2025

Date	13/03/2025	
Time	17:30 - 19:15	
Location	MS Teams	
Present	Mike Sutcliffe (MS)	Chair
	Mario Michaelides (MM)	Vice-Chair
	Vincent Neate (VN)	Governor
	Jenny McLaughlin (JM)	Governor
	Joe Swindells (JS)	Governor
	Keith Smith (KS)	Ex-Officio, CEO
	Dylan McTaggart (DM)	Group Principal
	Shane Woodhatch (SW)	Chief Financial Officer
	Jo Withers (JW)	Chief of Business Strategy
	Julie Amory (JA)	Chief People Officer
	Alex Denley (AD)	Chief Technology Officer
	Tim Hulme (TH)	Interim Chief Operating Officer
	Louise Southam (LS)	Deputy Principal Uxbridge & HRUC Student Ambition
	Clive Hodge (CH)	Harrow College Principal
	Gavin Hughes (GH)	Richmond upon Thames College Principal
Absent	Sofia Barbosa-Boucas (SB-B)	Governor
Clerk	Perry Perrott (PP)	
Note Taker	Natalia Tymkiv (NT)	

Summary of Actions

No.	Description	Responsible Person	Deadline
1.	Set deliverable dates and milestones for the completion of various actions from the 03/12/24 Action Log.	AD	30/04/25
2.	Align statutory review responsibilities within the ToR and ensure collaboration with West London colleges.	KS	30/04/25
3.	Provide a mapping document on IAB engagement levels, using a RAG rating system, and highlight areas needing improvement.	JW	30/04/25
4.	Propose strategies for increasing employer participation in underrepresented sectors and provide an update to the Committee.	JW	30/04/25
5.	A review of how employer feedback influences curriculum planning to be conducted, with recommendations presented at the next meeting.	JW	30/04/25
6.	Check and rectify the percentage in the Retention by National Averages data Richmond columns.	CH, LS	30/04/25
7.	Check the latest data on business growth and provide an update to the Committee.	DM	30/04/25
8.	Provide a comparative benchmarking report at the next meeting to assess curriculum performance against other institutions.	DM	30/04/25
9.	Provide an updated Curriculum Growth Strategy that integrates with the evolving Estates Strategy.	TH, DM	30/04/25

Agenda

1 - General disclaimer statement at start of meeting:

The meeting was recorded for the purpose of minuting.

2 - Apologies for absence

All expected attendees were present, except for SB-B. The meeting was quorate.

3 - Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest had been received in advance. MS reiterated the importance of checking for any conflicts of interest regarding the items on the agenda, but none were declared.

4 - Minutes of the last meeting dated: 5 December 2024

Minutes were reviewed and approved as factually accurate.

5 - Actions from last meeting

The committee reviewed the action items from the previous meeting. Perry Perrott highlighted that there were over 20 actions to be addressed. Several updates were provided by various members:

- **Item 6 (Quality Assurance):** DM clarified that the update should be under Item 7 regarding SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and confirmed that Item 6 was completed. The SEND review is ongoing, with structural conversations at a senior level.
- **Item 8 (Ofsted Review Document):** JW explained the adjustments made to the progress review document to set more challenging targets for apprentices, which had been signed off internally by Managing Director of Apprenticeships. This did not require EMT approval.
- **Item 13 (Adult Learner Achievement Data):** Louise Southam confirmed that the review was completed, addressing discrepancies related to functional skills qualifications at Richmond.

The committee discussed the terminology change from "deep dives" to "enhanced reviews" in the context of Ofsted inspections. It was agreed to continue using "deep dives" until the new terminology is officially adopted.

5.1 - Update from CTO

AD summarised the strategic update on action items 14-22. He emphasised the need for clear deliverable dates and milestones for the completion of these actions. He also highlighted the importance of closer collaboration with the curriculum team to improve the utilisation of immersive rooms.

A Governor raised a concern about the curriculum team's engagement with the immersive rooms, which DM addressed by confirming that the curriculum team is committed to using these rooms and is working closely with the digital team.

ACTION 1: Set deliverable dates and milestones for the completion of actions from 03/12/25 Action Log. – AD by 30/04/2025

5.2 - Updated CSQE ToR - Review

The Committee reviewed the updated Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Curriculum Strategy and Quality Enhancement (CSQE) Committee. The committee confirmed the name change and the revised ToR had been approved generally by the Board. It was suggested to include the statutory duty to review the curriculum and its alignment with local labour market needs in the ToR. This was agreed upon, and KS will work offline with the team to ensure appropriate triangulation with the EMT.

ACTION 2: Align statutory review responsibilities within the ToR and ensure collaboration with West London colleges. – KS by 30/04/2025

6 - Industry Advisory Boards

The Committee noted the papers which were circulated in the meeting pack as 'Read'.

JW provided an overview of the Industry Advisory Boards (IABs) and their value to HRUC, highlighting the importance of these boards in feeding into market intelligence and evaluating new opportunities. The discussion focused on the examples provided in the extended paper, addressing matters arising from Ofsted and other strategic considerations. The Committee acknowledged the significance of the IABs in enhancing the curriculum and aligning it with industry needs.

A Governor emphasised the growing number of IABs and their integration within the governance structure, highlighting the importance of understanding how these boards fit within the governance structure and how the

governing body can derive benefits from them. JW responded by explaining the internal governance structure, mentioning the new Skills Intent Committee chaired by CH and herself, which feeds into the curriculum and quality strand board and subsequently into the larger governance framework.

JW elaborated on the formation of Advisory Boards, noting that for larger sectors like construction and engineering, formal Industry Advisory Board meetings are held, while smaller sectors engage advisors on an individual basis. JW provided examples such as health and social care, where they work collaboratively with other colleges and NHS providers to avoid duplication and harmonise efforts. These advisory board meetings often take the form of active workshops and are crucial in informing the curriculum.

JW also mentioned a pilot engagement initiative involving a skills week at Uxbridge through the Business School, where employers interact directly with students and staff, providing valuable feedback to inform the curriculum. Additionally, JW discussed a thank-you breakfast for stakeholders who supported them during inspection week, using the opportunity to gather further insights on how to support industries better.

A Governor acknowledged the need to revisit the strategy holistically, while JW emphasised the importance of advisory boards in feeding market intelligence, using development planning meetings as an example. These meetings utilise regional and local data, along with industry advisor feedback, to inform future demand and evaluate new opportunities, such as in the food and drink sector.

A Governor raised questions about engaging industry advisors in larger sectors like Health and Social Care and the challenges of obtaining employer engagement. JW responded by highlighting focused activities in sectors like hospitality, where they work with well-known organisations to deliver structured master classes and support learner assessments. JW emphasised the importance of work experience and industry placements in leveraging advisor engagement and making learning relevant for students.

A Governor suggested mapping interactions with industry to identify strengths and gaps, using a RAG rating system. DM added that the strategy should include signposting and signing off curriculum content, integrating industry engagement into the strategy's next phase.

- ACTION 3: Provide a mapping document on IAB engagement levels, using a RAG rating system, and highlight areas needing improvement. – JW by 30/04/25**
- ACTION 4: Propose strategies for increasing employer participation in underrepresented sectors and provide an update to the Committee. – JW by 30/04/2025**
- ACTION 5: A review of how employer feedback influences curriculum planning to be conducted, with recommendations presented at the next meeting. - JW by 30/04/2025.**

7 - Curriculum KPIs report

The Committee noted the KPIs Report as 'Read'.

CH presented the Curriculum KPIs report, providing a brief overview of the KPI headlines, noting positive retention rates for 16 to 18-year-olds at 96% and 98%, respectively, and high achievement rates at 86% to 89%, which are about 5% above the national average. CH also highlighted high levels of student satisfaction at around 90%.

Areas for improvement were identified, such as current attendance at 82%, which is 4% below the target but in line with previous years. CH assured that work is being done at pace to improve this figure. Challenges with apprenticeships were also addressed, noting that while performance is above national averages, there are some issues at Harrow and Richmond, which are being worked through.

A Governor asked about confidence levels around predicted achievement rates, to which CH responded that confidence is high based on current attendance, retention, and ongoing close monitoring through various meetings.

A Governor raised concerns about data presentation, particularly issues with Richmond data and national averages, suggesting a need to check the integrity of the data. There was an issue with the RC percentage in the Retention by National Averages data due to a cell error. It was agreed that all columns for Richmond would be checked to ensure accuracy.

A Governor flagged attendance as a persistent issue that needs addressing, which CH noted.

ACTION 6: Check and rectify the percentage in the Retention by National Averages data Richmond columns. – CH, LS by 30/04/2025.

8 - Curriculum & Skills Ambition Strategy Document - 2 years on

DM led the discussion on the Curriculum & Skills Ambition Strategy Document, two years on, providing a brief overview of the strategy's backstory, noting its inception during a time of flux in further education and the need to revisit it now, two years later.

DM provided context on the evolving landscape of further education, noting both the demographic growth in the 16 to 18-year-old population and the corresponding funding increases, alongside ongoing challenges in accommodation and staffing vacancies.

DM outlined the six objectives of the strategy and suggested it was time to reassess their relevance.

The importance of aligning curriculum growth with economic demands and ensuring resources were allocated accordingly was highlighted. Additionally, the need to accelerate the development of a consistent teaching and learning culture across the institution and to enhance students' emotional intelligence was stressed.

Concern was raised regarding business course enrolments showing a decline, requiring further analysis.

DM then discussed the importance of preparing for "tomorrow's classroom" and the necessity of a long-term investment plan for both 16 to 18 and 19 plus education. DM identified three priority areas: apprenticeships, the West London Institute of Technology (WLioT), and reframing the WLioT to focus more explicitly on student and employer experiences. DM suggested evaluating capacity, viability, and delivery approaches by determining where to grow, where to stop, where to start, and where to improve.

A Governor steered the conversation towards the future direction of the strategy, suggesting that more emphasis should be placed on co-developing and co-delivering the curriculum in partnership with industry. The Governor also stressed the importance of incorporating the institution's collaboration with MIT and identifying unique selling points to differentiate the organisation from competitors.

Another Governor raised the need to strengthen the construction curriculum, highlighting the increasing demand for skilled workers in the sector. The Governor also pointed out accommodation challenges and the reliance on agency staff, questioning whether higher education, apprenticeships, and 19 plus education were being positioned correctly within the broader strategy.

KS supported the need to align priorities with key employment sectors in West London, targeting existing skills gaps while optimising funding efficiency. KS also emphasised the importance of optimising funding efficiency and the need to maintain current strengths while expanding the commercial curriculum offer.

JW responded to questions about apprenticeships, noting that while growth had been modest, a new business plan had been developed to support expansion in priority sectors. JW provided an example from the food and drink industry, where employer engagement had shaped curriculum design and led to apprenticeship opportunities.

A Governor questioned how the College measured its performance against similar institutions and whether sufficient comparative data was available to inform decision-making. DM acknowledged the importance of benchmarking in refining the curriculum strategy and stated that while internal data was available, external comparisons with other institutions would provide further insight into strengths and areas for improvement. KS agreed, suggesting that benchmarking against both local and national competitors would help the College understand where it excelled and where additional support was needed.

The strategy for AI and digital learning was discussed, with the need for clear implementation timelines.

A Governor asked whether the curriculum strategy was aligned with the Estates Strategy, specifically regarding physical space requirements for practical and technical courses. The Governor questioned whether the current facilities were fit for purpose and whether further investment was needed. DM acknowledged that estate developments were under consideration, but further discussions were required to ensure that the institution's physical infrastructure supported its curriculum ambitions.

The discussion concluded with a focus on ensuring the curriculum strategy remained relevant and aligned with employer needs. The importance of industry collaboration, digital inclusion, and curriculum sustainability was reiterated.

ACTION 7: Check the latest data on business growth and provide an update to the Committee. - DM by 30/04/2025.

ACTION 8: Provide a comparative benchmarking report at the next meeting to assess curriculum performance against other institutions. - DM by 30/04/2025.

ACTION 9: Provide an updated Curriculum Growth Strategy that integrates with the evolving Estates Strategy. – DM, TH by 30/04/2025

9 - Any Other Urgent Business (AoB)

The discussion included various urgent business items, with members expressing their appreciation for recent events and contributions. A Governor thanked Keith Smith for his representation of the college on national radio, highlighting the positive impact of his accessible and heartfelt communication. Another Governor added her thanks to GH and the STEM team for the successful launch of the Richmond STEM building, noting the thoughtful delivery and the excellent performance of students and staff.

The conversation concluded with acknowledgements of the hard work and dedication of the college's staff and the importance of continuing to deliver high-quality education and support to students.

10 - Dates of the next meetings

- 7th of May 2025 via MS Teams

The meeting concluded at 7:13p.m.