



**USP College Corporation
Quality Committee**

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 25 June 2025
Meeting held via Microsoft Teams
Meeting commenced: 16.00hrs
Meeting ended: 17.40hrs

Present

Paul Nutter	Independent Member	Chair
Rachel May	Independent Member	
Nick Patterson	Staff Member	
Harvey Wayland	Staff Member	
Phoenix Halsey	Student Member	

Apologies for absence

Dan Pearson	Chief Executive
Shaunak Gupta	Student Member

In attendance

Ashley Garner	Governor Designate
Megan Brophy	Head of HE & Access
James Parker	Vice Principal Quality & Innovation
Cherie Brightwell	Vice Principal Technical & Professional
Chris Murgatroyd	Vice Principal Academic
Hannah Johnson	Assistant Principal Student Experience
Andy Shepherd	Head of Student Services

Clerk

Sue Glover	Director of Governance
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The Chair welcomed the Ashley Garner, governor designate, who will be serving on this Committee once his appointment has been formally approved by the Board.

QC.14.25 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.15.25 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Dan Pearson
- Shaunak Gupta

The Quality Committee agreed to accept the apologies for absence.

QC.16.25 Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2025

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

QC.17.25 Matters arising and action points from the minutes of the previous meeting

Members reviewed the action points arising from the meeting, noting that the pledge for the AoC Charter continues to remain on the schedule until presented to the Committee. Members asked if the Learning Framework requested at the previous meeting could be recirculated as some had not received this.

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

QC.18.25 Termly Higher Education update

Members received a report, presented by the Vice Principal Academic and Head of HE & Access, which provided an update on the College's HE provision.

Members reviewed the current HE enrolments and applications, noting

- there has been a slight drop in enrolment numbers from 152 to 151, primarily due to two withdrawals from the Arts programme balanced by one increase at Docklands
- expected applications for next year is 195 students, aiming for a target of 200
- new courses and partnerships
 - validation with Coventry University for the BA (Hons) Sports and Exercise top-up is nearing completion with a proposed launch in September
 - the Public Services course is in final stages of approval and expected to launch in September
 - Docklands Academy successfully completed an external moderation by Pearsons and the most recent collaboration with Arts1 remains strong
 - the HND in International Travel and Tourism Management at Docklands Academy is in 'teach out' phase with all students expected to complete by 2026

In discussion, members were advised that

- there have been a number of HE and Access taster events targeting prospective applicants for Games, Sport, Public Services, Early Years and Access programmes, as well as engaging external stakeholders
- new individual strategies for higher education, access to HE and adult learning are currently being developed, which are aimed to review and enhance the existing provision with a focus on curriculum relevance, learner progression and improved alignment across different stages of learning
- courses with single-figure enrolments, particularly those at the end of a three-year programme such as Games Development, would still run and new courses such as Public Services would likely run at lower numbers in order to become established, with recent events indicating promising numbers

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The Committee agreed that the report presented indicated a strong position for the college's HE provision and were supportive of the strategies being developed.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC.19.25

Cross-college student survey feedback

The Assistant Principal Student Experience presented the outcomes of the student voice survey 2024/25.

Members were advised that

- the survey focussed on three key areas
 - safeguarding and safety
 - careers and feedback channels
 - course satisfaction and skills development
- a participation rate of 67% was achieved over a three-week period, which has sustained from the previous year (66%)

The Committee reviewed the detail of the outcomes, noting that

- 88% of students felt safe on campus, 98% know how to keep themselves safe online and 83% know who to speak to about wellbeing or mental health
- 81% of students know who to talk to about careers and 78% feel they can share feedback
- 80% would recommend their course and the same percentage feel their course is helping them develop future skills
- the lowest rated statement was 53% of students feel the college listens and acts on student views

In discussion, members were informed that the lowest-rated statement highlighted a potential breakdown between feedback collection and visible action or communication. Other concerns raised included price/quality of catering, Wi-Fi issues, staff cover for teaching and long timetabling gaps. The survey outcomes will inform quality improvement planning and shared with student representatives, curriculum leads and support services to shape meaningful and visible action in response to learner voice.

The student governor commented that students experience 'survey overload' due to multiple long surveys from various sources and suggested shorter, more frequent surveys, or less frequent larger ones.

It was acknowledged that there is work to be done to increase the response rate and suggested when this survey is next launched it should not coincide with any others to reduce the 'survey overload' experienced by students. Members asked if there could be some comparison year on year feedback when this is next presented.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report.

QC.20.25

Key Performance Indicators

The Vice Principal Quality & Innovation presented a report, which provided an update on current attendance and retention and predicted outcomes for 2024/25.

Members were advised that

- overall attendance is 1% increase from last year with some months above last year's attendance. September typically sees a decline plateauing in December with another decline in March/April due to disengagement post-exams
- overall retention increased to 91.6% from 89.4% in previous year
- GCSEs and level 1 courses have attendance challenges, while HE level 5 and T levels achieved the highest attendance
- GCE A level retention improved markedly from 86% to 89.3%
- projected achievement for the current academic year is 85.7%, up from 82.8% last year

In discussion, members were informed that attendance for English and Maths remains challenging, but a new English and Maths matrix will be implemented next year to offer more flexibility and allow subject areas to own their groups. It was pleasing to note the significant improvement in GCE A level retention, which had been a concern last year.

There are significant improvements in predicted achievement for students on Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP) and High Needs students. The gap for Free School Meals students has closed and Looked After students show a three-year increase in predicted achievement.

Members raised the issue of EDI data and were informed that available data allows for drilling down by gender, ethnicity and sector areas. The ability to drill down allows the college to understand the performance of various groups, such as EHCPs and high needs students, to identify trends and areas for improvement or success within these cohorts.

The Committee thanked the Vice Principal for the very clear and concise KPI update on attendance, retention and predicted achievement

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC.21.25

Destinations and Intended Progression

The Vice Principal Quality & Innovation presented a report, which provided an update on progression and destinations for the 2024/25 academic year.

Members reviewed the detail of the report, noting that

- the college has successfully partnered with a new data capture provider, which has achieved 70% response rate from 1,699 learners
- Key findings include
 - 85% of departing students have positive outcomes, with Education and Training (50%), in employment (35%) and apprenticeships (10%)
 - 62% of students are in destinations directly related to their course of study, this alignment is exceptionally high for those who continued to further education with 82% pursuing a related programme
 - Financial & Professional services had the highest proportion of students progressing to positive destinations, 89% and Humanities & Social Science and Health & Social care also showing strong positive outcomes at 88%

- Benchmarking – the 85% positive destination rate was above the national average among colleges using the same partner to capture data

The Committee agreed that, overall, the level of intended destinations is a positive picture. The report highlights the College's strengths in student progression and identifies opportunities to enhance satisfaction and support, particularly for at-risk students.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

Megan Brophy left the meeting

QC.22.25

Careers and Skills Education update

The Vice Principal Technical and Professional presented a report, which provided an update on the progress made by the College against the agreed KPIs.

Members were advised on the progress against each of the KPIs, that

- 41 distinct employer engagement events have been successfully delivered, exposing 2,232 learners employers
- significant progress has been made in placing vocational learners and T level students into industry placements, achieving 80% placement rate for our learners to date
- 96% of learners are projected to complete their work experience this year, up from 89% at the time of writing the report
- term 3 sector board events have been positive, bringing new employers in areas such as games development, media, different theatres for creative industries
- there has been an improvement in student CPD day survey rating of 3.26% against a target of 3.5% and learners have indicated they would still like more careers advice and guidance
- 81% of EHCP learners and 91% of SEND community learners have successfully secured placements
- a small number of EHCPs completed and passed a scheme with Amazon, which has resulted in the majority of them likely to be offered employment with them

The Committee thanked the Vice Principal for the update and agreed that each of the KPIs demonstrates good progress being made. It was particularly pleasing to note the outcome of the EHCPs learners on the Amazon scheme and asked that thanks are passed to those who have supported those learners in their achievements.

Members were reminded that the last Ofsted inspection had rated the College's contribution to meeting skills needs as Strong and each area of the college has worked hard to maintain this level. It was agreed that the report presented helps 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

QC.23.25 USP College Quality Improvement Plan

The Vice Principal Quality & Innovation presented the College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), detailing the progress made on the key areas for improvement.

Members were reminded that the Corporation approved the College self-assessment report (SAR) and the QIP at the meeting held in December 2024. The top-level SAR set the key areas for improvement in the QIP as:

- Strengthening strategic partnerships
- A level achievement
- Level 3 Year 1 Vocational Achievement
- Teaching & Learning Stretch and Challenge
- Teaching & Learning Active Learning (in class/Hybrid)
- GCSE English & Maths (grade 4+)
- Work experience and industry links
- Establish apprenticeship provision
- Digital Literacy and use of EdTech
- Streamlining administrative workloads across roles
- Expand flexible learning offer for adults
- Attendance in GCSE English & Maths
- Overall attendance

It was agreed that good progress continues to be made against the key areas and the QIP is an effective mechanism to monitor improvements. Members were informed that stretching talents around teaching and learning has seen improvement, but there has not been any change in value added. Attendance remains RAG rated red as is currently 4% below the 85% target.

As discussed previously, there have been improvements in A levels, including better retention with changes to assessment targeted interventions and anticipated improvements in value added based on DfE measures and year 1 mocks.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report.

QC.24.25 College self-assessment report for 2024/25

The Vice Principal Quality & Innovation presented, for consideration and approval, a report giving an overview of the initial outline and timeline for the College self-assessment report 2024/25 and governor involvement.

Members were advised that the process in place for 2024/25 is designed to

- ensure ownership of standards and improvement requirements by all staff at all levels
- ensure department and whole College priorities are aligned
- allow governors to be complicit in the process and be able to monitor and challenge progress
- ensure the final SAR report is focused on improvement needs without too much distracting detail

Members reviewed the projected timeline, noting governor involvement to ensure sign off by the Board in December. Members advised they would be happy to be involved with the moderation panel in November. The Director of Governance would ascertain dates and circulate to the Committee.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report and support the process and initial timeline for the College SAR

QC.25.25 Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy

The Assistant Principal Student Experience presented a report and presentation on the development and implementation of the college's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2028 and the associated action plan.

Members were advised that

- the strategy is designed to embed a whole-college approach that promotes mental health and wellbeing at a strategic level for both staff and students
- the refreshed strategy reflects the college's recognition that mental health is fundamental to educational success and staff wellbeing

Members were informed on the key actions taken to

- Promoting Resilience and Early Help (Students)
- Supporting Inclusive and Equitable Access (Students)
- Embedding a Whole-Community Approach (Students and Staff)
- Staff Capacity and Development (Staff)
- Work with the EDI committee to ensure neurodiverse learners have easier communication channels
- Researching online/A1 mental health support platforms though this is considered a big project due to risks
- Providing short CPD sessions to curriculum staff to improve mental literacy, particularly for topics such as sexualised harmful behaviour

Agreed

The Quality Committee is supportive of the refreshed Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the key actions being taken and agreed that it will be reviewed again by the committee in a year's time

Andy Shepherd joined the meeting

QC.26.25 Termly Safeguarding Report

The Head of Student Services presented a report detailing Safeguarding and Prevent related activities from January to April 2025.

Members reviewed the detail of the report, noting the

- Summary of wellbeing activity and support
 - the number of individual learners supported by the Wellbeing Team compared to previous year
 - the number of monthly wellbeing interventions compared to previous year
 - total interventions by type during the autumn term compared to previous year
 - common mental health reasons for interventions during autumn term and the highest priority reasons why support required
 - common reasons for wellbeing intervention during autumn term compared to previous year
- Child Protection/Vulnerable Adult cases
- Children Looked After
- Counselling update
- Internet monitoring and filtering
- Prevent update
- Training status update

The Committee was informed that

- there has continued to be a drop in lower-level mental health concerns and anxieties, aligning with national trends
- there has been a slight rise in domestic violence cases, with a small number of individuals requiring significant intervention
- Smoothwall reporting – first full academic year with the system showing immediate identification of issues, primarily bad language/immaturity but also flags potential concerns
- the college has been piloting a Young Carers Award with Essex Safeguarding, and it is anticipated that this will be received, reflecting the hard work by the wellbeing teams

On behalf of the Board, the Quality Committee asked that thanks are passed to all members of the safeguarding team for their continuing hard work and contribution to the safeguarding of students.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report.

QC.27.25 Terms of Reference and Annual Schedule of Business for the Quality Committee 2025/26

The Director of Governance presented a report, which outlined the need to review on an annual basis, the Committee's Terms of Reference and Annual Schedule of Business.

Members reviewed both documents, noting minor date changes proposed, and agreed these were appropriate and there was nothing further to add.

Agreed

The Quality Committee approves and recommends to the Corporation Board for approval the Terms of Reference and Annual Schedule of Business for the Quality Committee for 2025/26

QC.28.25 Any Other Business

As this was their last meeting of the Committee before the end of their term of office, the Chair of the Committee took the opportunity to thank the two student governors for all their hard work and contribution to the work of the committee.

There were no other items of any other business.

QC.29.25 Schedule of Quality Committee meetings 2025/26

Tuesday 14 October 2025
Wednesday 3 December 2025
Tuesday 3 March 2026
Tuesday 16 June 2026

All meetings commence at 4pm

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

SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD:

DATE: 14 October 2025

