



**USP College Corporation
Quality Committee**

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 3 March 2026
Meeting held via Microsoft Teams
Meeting commenced: 16.00hrs
Meeting ended: 18.00hrs

Present

Paul Nutter	Independent Member	Chair
Ashley Garner	Independent Member	
Rachel May	Independent Member	
Nick Patterson	Staff Member	
Harvey Wayland	Staff Member	
Harrison Catchpole	Student Member	

Apologies for Absence

Dan Pearson	Chief Executive
James Meade	Student Member

In attendance

Clare White	Principal
Cherie Brightwell	Vice Principal Technical & Professional
Chris Murgatroyd	Vice Principal Academic
Hannah Johnson	Assistant Principal Student Experience
Clare Coleman	Director of Quality
Megan Brophy	Head of HE& Access
Andy Shepherd	Head of Student Services

Clerk

Sue Glover	Director of Governance
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QC.01.26 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.02.26 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from

- Dan Pearson
- James Meade

The Quality Committee agreed to accept the apologies for absence.

QC.03.26 Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2025

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

QC.04.26 Matters arising and action points from the minutes of the previous meeting

Members reviewed the action points arising from the meeting. The Committee was advised that data on home-schooled student retention is not yet available and will remain on the schedule until this information is presented to the Committee.

The College's pledge to EDI was presented. Members were reminded that this was to be developed following the adoption of the AoC's EDI Charter. Members reviewed the pledge presented and were pleased to note that this was now in place.

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

QC.05.26 Termly Higher Education update

The Head of HE & Access presented a report, which provided an update on the College's HE provision.

Members were advised that

- Enrolments have increased slightly due to an increase with the subcontracting partner
- The partnership with the Coventry University Group and North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College continues to strengthen with current work including development and delivery of HE programmes within Coventry's Business and Health Schools
- Validation for a BSc in Sport and Exercise Science with Coventry University is in its final stages
- Staff will be receiving training on the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) as the College has received approval from the DfE to offer LLE funded modular provision, which will be implemented initially within HTQ programmes
- The College is progressing work to ensure full compliance with the Office for Students' latest regulatory requirements, which includes information around harassment and sexual misconduct related policies and procedures

The Committee were informed on the approvals for HE courses for 2026/27, which included

- HTQ Early Years
- HTQ Engineering
- HTQ Digital Technologies
- Pearson Creative Suite (Motion and Interactive Design HE Pathway)
 - HND Visual Effects
 - HND Animation

In discussion regarding the proposal for the Motion and Interactive Design HE pathways, members were informed that this had consolidated several specialisms, such as visual effect and animation, which had seen declining numbers and this new pathway aims to better align with student career interests in programming and animation.

Clarification regarding student loans was sought, specifically whether students could access national student loans or if their access was through a different system and were informed that, while students do access the Student Loans Company, the process for Docklands students usually takes longer because the majority are not UK-born. These students must provide additional proof regarding their right to work and study in the UK, making the application process lengthier than it is for students under the Arts 1 subcontracting partner.

Members noted that student withdraws appear to be common among mature students and asked if there was a specific pattern or set of reasons for the current

withdrawals and were informed that these are mostly attributed to non-attendance and the inability to balance home life with course commitments, particularly for mature students on the Early Years course, which requires a full-time placement.

Members commented that the progress around the specialised pathways for gaming had been sound by aligning with student needs and industry standards. The Committee thanked the Head of HE & Access for a very comprehensive update on the College's HE provision.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the HE update

Megan Brophy left the meeting

QC.06.26

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment delivered in 2025/26

The Vice Principals presented a report, prepared by the Head of Teaching and Learning, which gave an update on the current position of teaching and learning delivered in 2025/26.

Members were advised that

- All teachers are rated red/amber/green/blue based on learning walks, reviews, student feedback and Internal Quality Reviews (IQRs) – with most rated Green (66%) or Blue (19.8%) and only a small proportion with Amber (11.2%) or Red (3%)
- Staff development is strengthened by the Teaching Improvement Practitioners (TIP) team, who, with targeted CPD and coaching, have moved 19 staff from Amber to Green since September 2025, with intensive interventions in place to address underperformance and secure learning progression, particularly at Level 2
- Strengths identified in learning walks include strong planning and student engagement, while areas for development include 'Think Further' (stretch and challenge)
- IQRs, particularly in tutorial and level 2 areas, show inconsistencies in curriculum planning, 1:1 reviews, attendance and delivery of tutorial content

Members discussed the issues raised and, in response to questions, were advised that

- The TIP team provide direct support in the classroom when any member of staff who has given notice and on a formal improvement plan to ensure learners are not disadvantaged
- Staff rated 'red' are full time members of staff and not agency staff
- Attendance data for tutorials can be separated from the main core of courses to allow for comparison, and it was agreed this would be included in future reporting
- Feedback for the IQRs is not gathered through digital questionnaires but through 'learner voice' discussions where groups of students meet directly with the review team

The Student Governor commented that delivery of tutorials had included structured interview role-play and topics such as voting and politics and felt that these had been beneficial to the students.

The Committee agreed that the college has effective systems in place for monitoring and supporting teaching staff, resulting in high levels of good and innovative practice with a collaborative approach to RAG rating and quality monitoring, which ensures underperformance is quickly identified and addressed.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC.07.26

Key Performance Indicators

The Vice Principals presented a report, which provided an update on current attendance, retention, predicted achievement and ongoing processes used to monitor these.

Members were advised that

- Overall attendance is stabilising at 80% and broadly matches last year across campuses with 'hybrid Fridays' showing the highest attendance rates
- Overall retention is at 94.7%%, which is slightly up on last year and well above 2023/24
- RAG prediction method for achievement is currently 90.5%, up from 87.1% this time last year and typically 3% above final outcomes. Attendance + RAG method offers a conservative 'worst case' projection based on engagement risk

Members reviewed the detail of the report, noting that

- Retention is stable across levels, with small level 3 reductions but increases at levels 1,2 and 4
- Most qualification types exceed 90% retention with T levels at 84.6% and Access remaining lower but with improvement on previous year

Members discussed the issues raised and, in response to questions, were advised that

- 'hybrid Fridays' are reserved for level 3 students and not used for level 1 or 2. While the total number of sessions is lower, the attendance rate for these online lessons is the highest in the college at 83.5%
- the new awards and rewards programme for attendance is progressing well
- the ratings for predicted achievement were consistently applied by all teaching, with teachers being able to update them throughout the year rather than waiting for a specific census point

The Committee commended the At Risk Student Dashboard being utilised to monitor and support high-risk students, which provides real-time data to identify students who require immediate intervention, and the additional support sessions and targeted interventions implemented for these students.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC.08.26

Careers and Skills Education

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

Members were reminded that the strategy was developed in response to the Skills for Jobs white paper and subsequent Local Skills Improvement Plans to ensure the College is meeting the local and national skills needs of employers. It also aligns with the launch of Skills England, which is tasked with closing the UK's skills gaps and grow the economy.

The Committee was advised that

- the college continues to adapt its career-focused approach to meet the demands of the changing employment landscape, and developing strong collaboration with employer sector boards, curriculum working groups and LSIP partnerships
- engagement with employers, local authorities and other education and training providers has ensured learners are well-prepared for further study and the workplace

Members considered each of the ten KPIs and the RAG rated progress, noting that

- the rise in employer participation to 80%
- improvement in the student completion of work experience to 98%
- maintaining 95% engagement in impactful live brief opportunities for students via college companies and/or project-based learning
- achieving a 92% satisfaction rate for careers support and embedding co-design and co-delivery within 20% of curriculum provision

In discussion, members were informed that while vocational students must complete a mandatory amount of work experience, it is not compulsory for academic students. However, these students still receive exposure to employers, universities and UCAS through student CPD days and the work experience team support any academic student who proactively chooses to seek a placement.

The aim for co-design this year is to develop a meaningful collaboration with industry partners and stakeholders to ensure the curriculum is responsive to the demands of the employment landscape, shaping course content that reflects industry needs. While the college received a 'strong' rating for skills in its last Ofsted inspection, a key takeaway had been the need to ensure employers understand their specific contribution to curriculum co-design as, although inspectors found instances where co-design was happening, some employers could not clearly articulate their role.

The Committee thanked the Vice Principal for the update and agreed that each of the KPIs demonstrates that good progress has been made. The report was very comprehensive and helps to demonstrate that the College continues to have strong partnerships and collaborations across schools, the 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.09.26 Curriculum Development

The Vice Principal Technical & Professional and Vice Principal Academic presented a report, which provided an update on curriculum development in 2026/27 for.

- T Levels
- 16-19 Study Programmes
- Adult and HE

Members were advised that

- T levels are being expanded to seven pathways, including a new Business & Administration (Team Leadership and Management) T level aligned to LSIP priorities
- Although there is significant national uncertainty following the Skills White Paper and Curriculum & Assessment review, approved new vocational,

academic and T levels programmes for 2026/27 and 207/28 ensure alignment with government direction and local skills needs

- Expansion of HTQs, new HE paths and modular delivery models align with the Lifelong Learning Entitlement with adult provision expanding through Access to HE, Skills Bootcamps, Functional Skills and sector-specific programmes, supporting workforce upskilling and local demand
- For 2027/28 the college plans to introduce its eleventh T level in Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction and a new BSc in Psychology with Criminology is also proposed to capture a large pool of current A level students

In discussion, members agreed that the plans for the development of the Curriculum had been very robust against the backdrop of the recent Skills White Paper. The plans were very exciting and innovative and had aligned to meeting skills gaps and employment opportunities.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and accept the report

QC.10.26 College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2025/26

The Vice Principals 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 2025. The top-level SAR set the key areas for improvement in the QIP as:

- Attendance
- Level 2 outcomes and progression
- Value added and high grades
- Strategic partnerships
- Digital innovation
- Use of Safeguarding data
- Tracking personal development

Members reviewed the QIP and agreed that good progress is being made against the key areas and that the QIP is an effective mechanism to monitor improvement. It was appreciated that this was a mid-year update, and final outcomes will become known for the next meeting.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and accept the report

QC.11.26 Safeguarding reporting

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

Members reviewed the detail of the report, noting the

- Summary of wellbeing activity and support
 - Number of learners supported by the wellbeing team during the autumn term compared to previous year
 - The three-year trend of overall interventions at each campus
 - The number of wellbeing interventions at each campus compared with previous three years and the type of intervention
- Children Looked After (CLA)
- Child Protection/Vulnerable Adult

- Support for Care Leavers and Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
- Priority Students
- Prevent update
- Student Engagement and Training

Members were advised that there had been a significant increase in the safeguarding folders received from schools and the safeguarding team are exploring an AI tool to help summarise this high volume of complex information. Members asked why there had been such an increase and were informed that there had been a range of reasons with no single point. AG advised that he had experience with the 'my concern' platform for safeguarding management and agreed to liaise with the Head of Student Services outside of the meeting to share his experiences.

There is a continuous timetable of safeguarding related training for staff which is spread across the year and the Committee noted the comprehensive range completed by staff.

The Quality Committee agreed that the report presented had been very comprehensive and clearly demonstrated that the college fulfils its statutory duties towards the safeguarding its students and asked that thanks are passed to all members of the safeguarding team for their continuing hard work and contribution to ensure the safeguarding of students.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC.12.26 Frequency of DBS checks on staff

The Principal presented a report on the DBS renewal cycle.

Members were informed that the Finance and Resources Committee at their November 2025 meeting had challenged why the College undertakes DBS re-checks for existing staff on a five-year rolling programme rather than every three years. The Committee had asked the Principal to undertake a review against statutory and regulatory requirements and sector benchmarking and asked that, as DBS rechecks relate to existing staff and would come under safeguarding matters, the outcome be reported to the Quality Committee.

The Committee was informed that

- Under Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE)
 - There is no statutory requirement to re-check DBS certificates at set intervals once a member of staff is in post
 - The college must ensure appropriate safeguarding checks at recruitment
 - Ongoing suitability should be monitored through safer recruitment practices and staff declarations
- There is no Ofsted requirement to re-run DBS checks every 3 years
- It is recognised sector wide that a DBS certificate is only accurate at the point of issue and can technically be out of date immediately after completion

Members were advised that currently the college re-checks DBS's on existing staff on a rolling five-year programme with a DBS redeclaration completed annually. All staff are encouraged to join the DBS update service, however this is voluntary.

Within the sector there does not appear to be any standard approach to the frequency of checks and Ofsted inspections have historically accepted the College's approach and have not raised any concern regarding the five-year cycle.

Members were informed on the cost for DBS re-checks, noting that

- Current five-year renewal model £30,500 over five years, not including new starters. Approx. 80 new starters - £4,800
- Forecast under three-year renewal model £55,000, representing an increase in cost of £24,500

Members reviewed of detail of the proposal and discussed the issues raised around whether to increase the frequency of DBS re-checks from five to three years. It was noted that while three years is considered good practice in some sectors, the college's current annual declaration process and the policies and procedures around safeguarding checks that are in place provide sufficient oversight, particularly the rigorous annual DBS declaration process where staff must formally state if their status has changed. There is also comprehensive safeguarding training for staff, which is face to face together with regular safeguarding newsletters and is deemed to be effective.

The Committee agreed that the current five-year cycle, combined with the robust annual declaration process, the checks and balances provided through this process and the policies in place together with the training given to staff effectively mitigate the risk without the need for additional cost or administrative burden.

The Principal would inform the Finance and Resources Committee of the outcome of the discussion at their next meeting.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed that the rolling cycle of DBS re-checks for existing staff should remain at five-years, coupled with the current robust annual declaration process, checks and balances together with the staff training in place

QC.13.26

Any Other Business

There were no items of any other business

QC.14.26

Schedule of Quality Committee meetings 2025/26

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: 16 June 2026