

# **Heart of Yorkshire Education Group Corporation**

## **Curriculum and Quality Committee**

### **Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 11 June 2025 (Meeting)**

#### **Present:**

- David Powell (Chair)
- Dmitry Fedotov
- Vijay Teeluck
- Louise Elkington (until minute 7)

#### **In attendance:**

- Group Executive Director of External Relations and Development (GEDER)
- Group Executive Director of Curriculum and Quality Standards (GEDCQ)
- Group Executive Director of Student Experience and Support (GEDSE)
- Director of High Quality and Performance (DHQP)
- Head of Apprenticeships Quality and Curriculum (HAQC)
- Head of Governance and Legal Services (Clerk)

#### **Apologies:**

- Alex Miles
- Annabelle James

#### **1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and extended a particular welcome to the HAQC, attending her first meeting of the Committee. Apologies were noted from Alex Miles. It was also noted that Annabelle James had declined the invitation.

1.2. The Chair acknowledged the contribution of Ruth Baxter, who would soon leave the College. The Committee expressed thanks for her work, particularly during the merger period.

## **2. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

## **3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 February 2025**

3.1. The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed for accuracy. No amendments were proposed, and the minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record.

3.2. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2025 be approved.

## **4. Matters Arising**

4.1. The Clerk provided an update on matters arising:

4.1.1. MA1: Issues identified for discussion with students at the engagement session had been addressed.

4.1.2. MA2: The subject that 11 Selby College students were not passing was identified as psychology. This number had since reduced to one student, none of whom were in Year 2.

4.1.3. MA3: Engagement with employers regarding demand for foundation apprenticeships had taken place. The GEDER confirmed that the Head of Apprenticeships had been leading this work and the HAQC added that health and social care was a key area of interest.

4.1.4. MA4: Alex Miles had selected two items from the QIP for deep dives: the Teaching and Learning Framework and Apprenticeship Personal Development.

## 5. Executive Director Update

- 5.1. The GEDCQ provided a comprehensive update on national and local developments:
  - 5.1.1. The Government's immigration white paper had highlighted the need to grow domestic skills.
  - 5.1.2. Adult skills funding was being cut by 6% in non-devolved areas and 2.5% in combined authorities.
  - 5.1.3. The College had successfully delivered on the Free Courses for Jobs programme and had been awarded an additional £450,000 in growth funding.
  - 5.1.4. A National Audit Office report highlighted challenges in teacher recruitment and retention, with a £10,000 pay gap between school and college teachers.
  - 5.1.5. T-levels continued to face challenges, including low uptake and high dropout rates. A review was underway.
  - 5.1.6. The College had achieved Young Carers Accreditation and maintained Matrix Accreditation.
  - 5.1.7. The College had reviewed the Supreme Court's recent ruling on the Equality Act definition of sex.
  - 5.1.8. Retention and recruitment remained strong, particularly in 16-18 provision. Castleford was experiencing accommodation pressures due to oversubscription.
  - 5.1.9. Foundation apprenticeships had been introduced.
  - 5.1.10. AI Quality Assist software had been piloted to support the SAR process.
  - 5.1.11. Concerns were raised about proposed SEND reforms and the impact on EHCPs.
  - 5.1.12. The new post-16 building at Castleford would not be ready for the start of term but contingency plans were in place.

- 5.2. Questions and answers:

5.2.1. Q: What is the impact of the adult skills funding cut on the College?

A: The College has grown its adult skills funding. There is no immediate financial impact.

5.2.2. Q: How can we ensure AI tools are effective and accurate?

A: The AI tool uses College data and is effective for identifying trends. Staff are trained to interpret outputs critically and apply context. The HAQC confirmed the Apprenticeship Team had experience of using this piece of software and provided assurance of how helpful it had been for the work they were doing.

## **6. Chair's Update**

6.1. The Chair reported on three key items:

6.1.1. He had attended the AOC Curriculum and Quality Committee in March, where discussions focused on Ofsted's proposed inspection framework and apprenticeship reforms, including foundation and short duration apprenticeships.

6.1.2. He had been on a learning walk observing a GCSE English lesson. He described the process as very interesting and that he had been very encouraged by what he saw and learned. One of the things the walk highlighted was the inevitable challenges associated with the introduction of a new Teaching Excellence matrix for observations and observers having to learn how to interpret the new criteria within it.

6.1.3. He had requested a report in the autumn on the impact of the use of agency staff on teaching, learning, and assessment.

## **7. Apprenticeships Update**

7.1. The GEDER presented the Apprenticeships Update. Key points included:

- 7.1.1. Predicted achievement stood at 69.9% - an improvement on the previous year. There was confidence in the accuracy of projections based on historical performance and internal tracking.
- 7.1.2. Accountability Framework: The College was on track for 7 out of 9 matrix indicators. A recent drop in achievement and retention was attributed to historical Selby data being added to the group dataset, resulting in duplicate records. A query had been submitted to the DfE.
- 7.1.3. 96% of achievers and 88% of all apprentices had moved into positive destinations.

7.2. Concerns were raised about staff turnover in Construction and Engineering by members.

7.3. Questions and answers:

- 7.3.1. Q: What proportion of teachers from industry stay and do vacancies impact achievement and retention? A: There are few agency staff and recruitment efforts are ongoing in problem areas such as Construction and Engineering, with some success in stabilising staffing. The HAQC noted that certain apprenticeships benefit from long-standing staff, contributing to higher achievement and retention.
- 7.3.2. Q: How long do apprentices have to transfer to a new employer? A: 12 weeks.
- 7.3.3. Q: Do withdrawal reasons vary by subject? A: Reasons for withdrawal include employer redundancy, personal choice, and progression to other roles. The Committee requested a breakdown by curriculum area in the next report.
- 7.3.4. Q: What is the impact of endpoint assessments (EPA) being delayed? A: Delays are due to limited AM2 test centre availability. These delays are outside the College's control and are impacting the timing and completeness of achievement data.

7.3.5. Q: What is the College's strategy regarding English and Maths for 19+ apprentices, especially in the trades and crafts, where Maths is important, when they are no longer mandatory? A: 60% of employers still require these qualifications, and pre-apprenticeship routes are offered where needed.

7.3.6. Q: What can you tell us about the college's plans for short duration apprenticeships? A: The Group isn't looking at them yet, though only some specialised apprenticeships (e.g., health and social care) would be suitable.

## **8. Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)**

8.1. The QIP discussion was centered on the Apprenticeships Personal Development and Teaching and Learning Framework items.

8.2. Progress against the Apprenticeships Personal Development item was given.

8.3. It was noted that only 10% of apprentices responded to the recent apprenticeship questionnaire although satisfaction with personal development was 84%.

8.4. Questions and answers:

8.4.1. Q: Have you considered text messages to address the low response rates to questionnaires? Yes. There are also plans to refine the language of the questionnaires and review completion times.

8.4.2. Q: How useful are surveys for assessing employer opinions regarding fitness for purpose for personal development? A: Lots of other means of gathering the information are available including employer discussions at which personal development is discussed.

8.4.3. Q: How is the College benchmarked against other colleges with regards to personal development? A: External inspection reports and comparative survey data are used to benchmark performance,

particularly in areas like personal development. The Committee requested this data be included in future reports.

8.5. Governors requested that future QIPs include numerical data alongside percentages and that the impact of interventions, e.g. Personal Development Coaches, be clearly documented.

8.6. Progress against the teaching and learning framework item was given.

8.7. Questions and answers:

8.7.1. Q: How is progression between levels measured? A: This is based on reflective practice and evidence of implementation.

8.7.2. Q: Have you considered fostering staff development by a 'buddy' system? A: Several Teaching and Learning Champions have been appointed to support this.

8.7.3. Q: How did you come up with the seven themes in the Teaching Excellence Matrix? A: The themes were developed by mapping across the professional standards and a previously implemented professional standards framework familiar to staff. The aim is to reflect the core components of a lesson and provide aspirational guidance, not a tick-box exercise

8.7.4. What is the influence of classroom layout on pedagogy? A: Dynamic classroom design is being explored.

8.8. The Committee discussed the need for variety in teaching methods. The DHQP described how curriculum leaders are using themed practice events and evidence-informed strategies to support this.

## **9. Student Experience Update**

9.1. The GEDSE presented the Student Experience Update, highlighting:

9.1.1. Mental Health and Wellbeing Week: A wide range of activities were delivered.

9.1.2. Sustainability Week: All three colleges had ranked in the national top 10 for Planet Earth Games.

- 9.1.3. Accreditations: The College had achieved Young Carers Accreditation and maintained Matrix Accreditation for careers advice and guidance.
- 9.1.4. Safeguarding: Despite the absence of the Safeguarding Manager, robust systems had remained in place.
- 9.1.5. TalkCampus: Engagement was growing, particularly among adult learners. Plans were in place to expand access and integrate with the student app.
- 9.1.6. Behaviour Regulation: Fewer interventions had been recorded, but exclusions increased slightly. Each case had been reviewed individually with a focus on safety and inclusion.

## 9.2. Questions and answers:

- 9.2.1. Q: Could TalkCampus usage be integrated with the student app? A: There will be a phased rollout and ongoing development.
- 9.2.2. Q: Could action research be used to look at student well-being and mental health? A: The GEDSE welcomed the idea and noted that if she had the resources to do some action research then she would be interested in doing some.
- 9.2.3. Q: Why have behavior regulation meetings dropped but exclusions increased and how do you reconcile exclusions with the inclusive nature of the College? A: Minor issues are picked up in early meetings. Exclusion is a last resort and is often for the safety of other students.
- 9.2.4. Q: How many students are participating in enrichment activities? A: Approximately 75% of students engage in some form of activity, with plans to improve data capture.

## 9.3. Dmitry Fedotov presented a summary of the most recent student engagement sessions, noting the following:

- 9.3.1. Sessions had been refined to include a governor briefing, pre-agreed topics for discussion, and a debrief although Governors were encouraged to follow student led discussions.

- 9.3.2. Six recurring themes had emerged: safety, teaching and learning, sustainability, personal development, Maths and English, and mental wellbeing.
- 9.3.3. Students had praised teaching quality and induction but raised concerns about tutor turnover and inconsistent communication of enrichment opportunities.
- 9.3.4. Mostly positive feedback had been received regarding safety. While students felt safe, some cited a lack of visible security.
- 9.3.5. Student support had been consistently praised, particularly mental health and wellbeing services.

9.4. Dmitry Fedotov recommended the following for 2025–26: Focus should be placed on engagement sessions on Maths and English, enrichment, and pastoral support.

9.5. The Committee requested consideration be given to alternative methods (e.g. learning walks) to gather feedback from apprentices and high needs students.

## **10. Projected Achievement Forecasts**

- 10.1. The DHQP presented the projected achievement data noting:
  - 10.1.1. The College was on track to exceed 2024–25 targets and is ahead of the same point last year.
  - 10.1.2. Adult achievement was slightly lower due to data cleansing and updated withdrawal processes.
  - 10.1.3. Staff had been trained to align risk ratings with professional judgment grades. Final risk ratings were being reviewed to assess distance travelled.
- 10.2. The Committee emphasised the importance of accurate predictions and understanding the human factors behind student outcomes.

## **11. Higher Education Update**

11.1. The DHQP noted:

11.1.1. Retention had improved compared to the same point last year.

11.1.2. Predicted Achievement was up by nearly 3%.

11.1.3. There had been an increase in HE student behaviour concerns.

Plans were in place to reinforce expectations early in the next academic year.

11.2. The Committee noted the long-term decline in HE enrolments and asked about future viability. The GEDCQ confirmed the cohort remained healthy and competitive. The GEDCQ also said that the decline in enrolments is in line with the national trend for HE.

11.3. The Committee acknowledged the impact of mental health on HE outcomes and thanked Steve Mulligan for his work.

## **12. Committee Self-Assessment**

12.1. The Clerk introduced the annual self-assessment process, aligned with AOC guidance. The Committee reviewed its responsibilities and effectiveness. Key points included:

12.1.1. The Committee is broadly fulfilling its remit.

12.1.2. Two areas for consideration were the Safeguarding Annual Report, which was currently reviewed only at Board level, and student destinations. The Committee discussed whether to include the Safeguarding Annual Report in future agendas. It was agreed that Dmitry Fedotov, as Lead Governor for Safeguarding, would continue to review the report in detail and provide assurance to the Board. While data on student destinations was received in parts, a consolidated report would improve oversight. The GEDCQ confirmed that a full destinations report, including sustained destinations, would be presented at the scheduled meeting in March 2026.

### **13. Review of Terms of Reference**

- 13.1. The Committee reviewed its Terms of Reference. The Clerk proposed minor updates for clarity and alignment with current practice. These were accepted.
- 13.2. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the amended Terms of Reference be recommended to the Board for approval.

### **14. Evaluation of Committee Effectiveness**

- 14.1. The Chair invited feedback on the Committee's operation over the past year. A summary of the feedback was given as follows:
- 14.2. Strengths:
  - 14.2.1. Rigorous scrutiny and challenge.
  - 14.2.2. Strong integration with student engagement.
  - 14.2.3. High-quality reports and presentations from staff.
- 14.3. Areas for Improvement:
  - 14.3.1. Three hour meetings were too long.
  - 14.3.2. Agendas should be streamlined and focus on strategic priorities.
- 14.4. The Chair and The GEDCQ agreed to review the meeting schedule and structure for 2025–26.

### **15. Date of Next Meeting**

- 15.1. The next meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee would be confirmed in due course.
- 15.2. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed .....  Date 11.11.2025

## Action

Number	Minute	Action	Deadline	Owner
1	6.1.3	A report was requested in the autumn on the impact of agency staff on teaching, learning, and assessment.	Autumn 2025	GEDCQ
2	7.3.3	A breakdown of withdrawal reasons by curriculum area was requested.	The next report	GEDER
3	8.4.3	Benchmarking data on personal development should be included in future reports.	The updated QIP	GEDER
4	8.5	Future QIPs should include numerical data alongside percentages.	The updated QIP	GEDCQ
5	8.5	The impact of interventions (e.g. Personal Development Coaches) should be clearly documented in QIPs.	The updated QIP	GEDCQ
6	9.4	Focus of 2025–26 student engagement sessions should include maths and	The next student engagement meeting	Governors

		English, enrichment, and pastoral support.		
7	9.5	Consider alternative methods (e.g. learning walks) to gather feedback from apprentices and high needs students.	The next meeting	Clerk
8	12.1.2	A full destinations report, including sustained destinations, will be presented in March 2026.	The spring meeting	GEDCQ