

CQE44 19/20  
 Meeting 27 April 2020  
 Minutes **FINAL approved**  
**22 June 2020**



Governing Body  
 Human Resources  
 Committee

**Belfast Metropolitan College Human Resources Committee 4.30pm Monday 27 April 2020 via Microsoft Teams**  
**Minutes FINAL approved 22 June 2020**

**Committee Members:** Jim McCall (Chair); Catherine Burns; Sam Snodden; Maureen Walkingshaw; Brian Wilson; Louise Warde Hunter (Principal & Chief Executive)

**Management:** Gillian Magee, Director of People, Policy and Planning; Rebecca Roberts, Centre for Excellence (CfE); Stephanie McCormack, Head of Human Resources (HHR).

**Clerk to the Governing Body:** Gerry Crossan

<p><b>HR29</b> <b>19/20</b></p> <p><b>Chair</b></p>	<p><b>Apologies, Quorum, Conflicts of Interest, Advance Clarifications and Notice of AOB</b></p> <p><b>Apologies:</b> No apologies received as at date of issue of final agenda (27 April 2020).</p> <p><b>Welcome:</b> The Chair welcomed Louise Warde Hunter to the meeting and all Governing Body members introduced themselves.</p> <p><b>Quorum:</b> The meeting was quorate under the terms of Paragraph 3B of the Terms of Reference for the Human Resources Committee dated February 2018 (2 Governors).</p> <p><b>Conflicts of Interest:</b> No <b>perceived, potential or actual</b> conflicts of interest under the terms of Paragraph 15.1 of the Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body Standing Orders dated August 2015 were advised.</p> <p><b>Advance clarifications:</b> No advance clarifications requested on HR Committee papers issued on Tuesday 21 April 2020 4.17pm</p> <p><b>AOB:</b> No Items of AOB received at date of issue of final agenda (27 April 2020)</p>
<p><b>HR30</b> <b>19/20</b></p> <p><b>Chair</b></p>	<p><b>Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2020 - Draft (Proposed Final)</b></p> <p>The Committee approve the Draft (Proposed Final) minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2020 without amendment.</p>

Agenda Item	
<b>HR31</b> <b>19/20</b> <b>Chair</b>	<b>Matters Arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2020</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catherine Burns advised that members had advised on the emerging drafts of the minutes, including a record note of a closed session. The Clerk will provide record note to Management. DPPP advised that any action arising will roll forward into 2020/21.</li> <li>• Review of Terms of Reference: Catherine Burns advised on the development of the work plan. Clerk will bring this to next meeting.</li> <li>• Employee Engagement: DPPP advised that further work had been carried out on engagement including sickness absence.</li> <li>• Equality Report is in progress and will come to the June 2020 meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>HR32</b> <b>19/20</b> <b>Chair</b>	<b>Governance Guidance and Information</b>  No governance guidance and information relating to the work of the HR Committee has been notified since the date of the last Committee meeting.
<b>HR33</b> <b>19/20</b> <b>Chair</b>	<b>Chair's business</b>  The Chair thanked Catherine Burns for the work as Chair of the Committee in setting the direction of travel for the Committee and building an effective support, scrutiny and challenge function through the Committee since its inception.
<b>HR34</b> <b>19/20</b> <b>DPPP</b>	<b>HR Metrics (TOR 1.3)</b>  (a) Quarter 2 2019/20 Key staff-related performance metrics: Key issues included  <u><b>Absence rates:</b></u> reduction in both short and long term absence, support staff absence still higher than teaching staff. Continuing efforts by line management and engagement with OHS.  <u><b>Reasons for absence:</b></u> Profile remains the same with highest reason being musculo-skeletal disorders. Across the economy, stress comes second to this but it is in the College;  <u><b>Establishment:</b></u> Increase in staff of circa 59 WTE.  <u><b>Staff Turnover and attrition:</b></u> Decrease year-on-year but an increase between Q1 and Q2. Attrition rate is low, demonstrating that we are not committing resources to recruitment unnecessarily.  <u><b>Staff Utilisation:</b></u> Slightly below target at 92.1% but in line with in-year trends. Each HoD is responsible for monitoring and managing this.  <u><b>Employee relations:</b></u> Case work has significantly reduced in Q2 and this reflects a downward trend.

Agenda Item	
	<p>The Committee asked if staff grievances are being addressed using mediation. Management advised that the number of complaints is down in general but HR are using facilitated conversations to support managers in addressing issues before they engage a more formal procedure. Management clarified that sickness absence is likely to reduce in Q3 but the reason for the variance between year-on-year and in-year trends is not easy to identify. Management advised on the potential pathways that could apply to complaints of work-related stress, including case by case management and the use of external support services.</p> <p>The Committee asked for future reports to include specific reference to the impact of COVID-19. Management advised that the move to remote working has led to changes to reporting processes, for example, online reporting of sickness absence. A review of COVID-19 related absences shows around 13 cases arising from this including self-isolation, shielding and bereavement. FE Sector has agreed that COVID-19 absences will not be included in contractual or performance management processes around sickness absence.</p> <p>The Committee noted the increase in staff numbers in the support side. Management advised that major factors were increased project funding and increased support staff. The Committee asked that some further brief high-level information could be provided where there are significant changes in these numbers reflecting Management action.</p> <p>P&amp;CE sought clarification of utilisation targets. Management advised that this target is in the Corporate Plan set by the Governing Body, there is no industry benchmark because of the various methods of student contact – 95% of teaching and tutorials.</p> <p>The Committee <b>noted</b> the information provided by and the action taken by Management.</p>
<p><b>HR35</b> <b>19/20</b> <b>HHR</b></p>	<p><b>HR Department Priorities (TOR 1.3)</b></p> <p>(a) Quarter 2 2019/20 HR Department Priorities: Key issues included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HHR advised on priorities framework for 2019/20, including proposals for a changed HR structure;</li> <li>• 11 are on track or not yet commenced and 1 has slipped; and,</li> <li>• FE sector HR self-service package is being procured and Belfast Met Management are heavily engaged in the procurement.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee asked management to consider the wording on the action point relating to revised management structure. The Committee noted that the issue of a proposed structure was considered by the Committee throughout the past 2 years. Management advised that the recent digitisation of advice and guidance and the delivery of self-service delivery has meant that the structural proposals have to be reconsidered in the light of these improvements in transaction-based services.</p> <p>The Committee <b>noted</b> the report and the action taken by Management.</p>
<p><b>HR36</b> <b>19/20</b> <b>DPPP</b></p>	<p><b>Equality Information (TOR 1.10)</b></p> <p>(a) Quarter 2 2019/20 Key Equality related information: Key issues included</p>

Agenda Item	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality Commission have put a hold on Article 55; and,</li> <li>• DRAFT Annual Return and Article 55 reports will come to June 202</li> </ul> <p>The Committee <b>noted</b> the report and the action taken by Management.</p>
<p><b>HR037 19/20</b></p> <p><b>DPPP</b></p>	<p><b>Resourcing (TOR 1.8)</b></p> <p>(a) Quarter 2 2019/20 Resourcing information: Key issues included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 recruitment processes in Q2</li> <li>• healthy applicant numbers across all recruitments;</li> <li>• cybersecurity, IT and engineering and STEM remain challenging areas around attractiveness of salaries and attracting people with the right qualifications; and,</li> <li>• DfE have agreed that qualifications levels can be amended where these challenges prevent recruitment – each approval on a case -by -case level by DfE.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee asked about staff on projects and if any offers had been made in the Q2 and whether the COVID-19 impact on funding. Management advised that, at this point, there is no evidence that this funding risk is impacting negatively on project funding. Management are making offers to staff starting in August 2020. Management advised that the College does not access the Government furlough scheme because Government funding is continuing – this is the position across the sector with redeployment being the preferred option where self-isolation, shielding or online access is an issue. Management advised that the part-time lecturer register is moving forward including online interviewing, online micro-teaching and engagement on other online platforms. Management advised that recruitment has not stopped and workforce management is continuing.</p> <p>The Committee <b>noted</b> the report and the action taken by Management.</p>
<p><b>HR38 19/20</b></p> <p><b>CfE</b></p>	<p><b>Observation and Appraisal (TOR 1.6)</b></p> <p>(a) Quarter 2 2019/20 Key information in relation to completion of appraisals within the College. Key issues included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 113 observations filed successfully and no unsatisfactory observations, some are still outstanding – COVID-19 has impacted negatively on target of 100%;</li> <li>• CfE working with curriculum management on remote sign off of observations and movement of reporting into 2020/21;</li> <li>• Management advised that a contingency is being built into 2020/21 budget to buy in addition support if required which will pick up observations from 2019/20 that are not completed;</li> <li>• Support Team appraisal programme opens on 1 June and Management are working on the assumption that programme will continue remotely, supported by webinars; and,</li> <li>• Consultation on academic staff underway (sector wide biennial process) on use of online/remote processing;</li> </ul> <p>The Committee <b>noted</b> the report and the action taken by Management.</p>

Agenda Item	
<p><b>HR39</b> <b>19/20</b></p> <p><b>CfE</b></p>	<p><b>Centre for Excellence</b></p> <p>(a) COVID-19 Response: Staff Training and Support Key Statistics:</p> <p>Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• referred throughout the meeting to the actions being taken as part of the response to COVID-19;</li> <li>• are now scenario planning for potential pathways to limited or full access to campuses to support learners to close off qualifications in 2019/20; and,</li> <li>• using this analysis to support the planning for the beginning of the 2020/21 year.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee <b>noted</b> the report, the action taken by Management and that the response to COVID-19 will be considered by the Governing Body (<b>GB64 19/20 29 April 2020</b>).</p>
<p><b>HR40</b> <b>19/20</b></p> <p><b>CfE</b></p>	<p><b>Centre for Excellence</b></p> <p>(a) Quarter 2 2019/20 Centre for Excellence Overview by Workstream. Key issues included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• significant action on “digital-by-default” space arising from response to COVID-19;</li> <li>• 8 webinars a day from 23 March 20, including using CANVAS, alternative assessment, engagement with learners across discussion boards, etc; and,</li> <li>• 589 attendances at webinars, 218 staff who had not engaged before; 792 1-1 sessions building academic skills in engaging with learners.</li> </ul> <p>(b) Quarter 2 2019/20 Centre for Excellence Overview by Team. Key issues included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality Team working steadily on management of relationships with examinations providers and on supporting the continuing communications through teaching staff to students and parents;</li> <li>• Extensive support for online appraisal, leadership and health and well being – online support on health and wellbeing launched today on College intranet;</li> <li>• Staff Learning Portal on CANVAS supports health and wellbeing support and training for all staff;</li> <li>• Business as usual planning for WCQIP and inspections in 2020/21;</li> <li>• Business Continuity has up to this point focussed on home-working kit – Management Guidance for Remote Working is a separate FE sector policy to support staff and clarify health and safety obligations;</li> <li>• User engagement in online processes is high, staff are engaging and recognise supports being provided;</li> <li>• Frequently Asked Questions for both staff and students is updated frequently and is available on the Staff Portal to provide clarity and assurance in these challenging times; and,</li> <li>• Online Coaching Opportunity issued today to all managers with high level of uptake already.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee asked for nature of feedback from TEL teams. Management advised that feedback from both long-time users and new users of CANVAS has been positive and that the experience is supporting empowerment and enablement across the curriculum teams.</p>

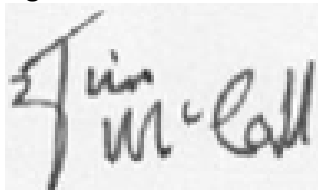
## Belfast Metropolitan Human Resources Committee

Agenda Item	
	<p>Management advised that responses from staff indicate that staff are feeling supported – once the College processed pay it provided fundamental assurance to all workers.</p> <p>The Committee asked for clarification on rollout of teaching qualification (Level 4 Teaching Programme). Management advised that this in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year and 5<sup>th</sup> cohort of part-time lecturers. New Start Support and Development Programme for full-time staff – based on Microsoft Teams and online - has started support and communications networks across teaching staff.</p> <p>The Committee asked if further information was available in relation to NIPS and Apprenticeships teaching. Management advised that there is 100% retention across all staff and that a comprehensive report on the support being provided will come to the next meeting</p> <p>The Committee <b>noted</b> the report and the action taken by Management.</p>
<b>HR41</b> <b>19/20</b>  <b>Chair</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>  The Committee asked for a short seminar on the use of Microsoft Teams. Management will arrange this through the current CfE provision. Clerk will confirm availability of both Committee members and CfE colleagues.  Meeting ended at 5.55pm
<b>HR42</b> <b>19/20</b>  <b>Chair</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b>  The next meeting of the Human Resources Committee will be held at 4.30pm on Monday 22 June 2020 in the Titanic Quarter Boardroom or using Microsoft Teams.

Chair of Belfast Metropolitan College Human Resources Committee

Jim McCall

Signature



Date

