

GLASGOW KELVIN COLLEGE

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTE

**Minute of the meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee held on
13 September 2023 at 5pm via MS Teams**

1. Sederunt

Dr Elaine Clafferty (Chair);
Dr Marion Allison (Vice Chair);
Derek Smeall (Principal);
Ian Patrick;
Marie Docherty;
Dermot Grenham;
Colm Breathnach;
John McBride;
Sonique Noreiga; and
Emma Leslie

In Attendance

Robin Ashton;
Monica McKerlie;
John Gallagher;
Peter Brown; and
Debbie Friel (Senior Committee Coordinator) (purpose of the minute)

2. Apologies

Emma Leslie;
Michael O'Donnell; and
Heather McNeil

The Chair welcomed members to the first meeting of the session. Additionally, she thanked M McKerlie, J Gallagher, D Higgins-Durnan and P Brown for their attendance as guest speakers.

3. Review of the Learning and Teaching Terms of Reference

It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate with 10 members in attendance.

4. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

5. Minute of the Previous Meeting held on 10 May 2023

The minute of the meeting held on 10 May 2023 was accepted as an accurate record of the business conducted.

C Breathnach, followed by Dr M Allison proposed the minute.

6. a) **Matters arising from Minute of Previous Meetings held on 10 May 2023**
Matters arising

Item 11 – College Counsellors & Funding

The Principal advised that the College had received notification that funding had been confirmed to allow the College to maintain its Counselling services.

Item 09 – Future Curriculum

R Ashton advised that this item would be brought back to the Learning and Teaching Committee at its meeting scheduled for November 2023.

Page 5 – Industrial Relations

R Ashton advised that the College continued to provide letters of comfort to the Universities/Employers to aid students' progression. He further advised that two days of strike action had been scheduled by EIS and Unison for 7th and 14th September. He highlighted that the College remained open with some classes continuing to run.

b) **Learning and Teaching Action Log**

The Chair noted that one live action remained on the log and that this item would be addressed in today's agenda.

The Chair advised members that the order of the agenda would be taken as follows: Item 08 through to Item 11, then followed by Item 07.

8. **Commendation and Complaints Annual Report 2022-23**

The Corporate Support and Administration Manager provided members with an update in relation to commendations and complaints received over the Academic Year 2022-23.

D Higgins-Durnan advised that the Commendations and Complaints Annual Report for 2022-23, referred to as Appendix 1, once approved, would be uploaded to the College website as per the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman (SPSO) guidance.

He informed members that a total of 9 commendations had been awarded in A/Y 2022-23, marking an increase from the 6 commendations received in the previous A/Y of 2021-22. Furthermore, he reported on the complaints received, and noted a slight decrease of 37 recorded in comparison to the previous session of 43 complaints received.

He continued to provide a comprehensive overview of the complaint categories as listed on page two, point 2iii. of the report.

The Chair thanked D Higgins-Durnan for the comprehensive report and invited comment or questions.

C Breathnach queried whether the College had access to comparative data from other colleges within the sector. D Higgins-Durnan explained that prior to the onset of COVID-19, there was a Complaints Handling Advisory Group responsible for collecting sector-wide statistics and producing reports. He highlighted that this group had since been discontinued.

Members of the Learning and Teaching are recommended to:

- i) approve the contents of this report and its appendix;
- ii) approve that the College complaints procedure in place is in line with the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman guidance as far as it possibly can be;
- iii) approve the publication of the report (Appendix 1) on the College website following approval at the Learning and Teaching Committee meeting of 13 September 2023; and request that the Corporate Support and Administration Manager bring forward an annual report for session 2023-24 to an appropriate future meeting of the Learning and Teaching.

D Higgins-Durnan – left the meeting at 5.20pm

9. Education Scotland Report

The Vice Principal of Curriculum informed members that the Progress Visit report was provided to the College on the 8th September 2023. The lead inspector, Barbara Nelson HMIe and the College Link Inspector Iain Beech HMIe have been invited to attend the October Board of Management meeting to present the findings of Education Scotland.

R Ashton explained that the report highlighted a large number of areas of positive practice across all College departments. Additionally, a small number of areas of development were identified, including the following two main points for action:

- college managers should improve rates of learner retention and attainment across all curriculum areas; and
- the college should raise learner awareness of the Students' Association and its role in improving the learning experience.

He went on to clarify that the College's quality enhancement and operational planning would tackle the areas requiring improvement. Additional details on the action plan will be discussed in the report in Item 07. Overall, he noted that the College management were pleased with the report and thought that it provided a good reflection of the College.

I Patrick acknowledged the report's positives and assumed that the College should anticipate a progress visit this session. He expressed disappointment about Education Scotland's omission of partial success in the report and enquired about the number of students consulted, suggesting that including figures within the report would have been beneficial. He continued and asked what the College intended to do to address the actions from the report.

R Ashton responded that the actions would be addressed within the Quality Enhancement Priorities paper, noted as item 07 on the agenda. He further advised that each of the actions would sit within the appropriate departments operational plan and that this information would be clarified further at the Board of Management meeting in October. 2023.

C Breathnach queried one issue of concern, he referred to page 3 of the report which stated *"The overall rate of success for learners from an ethnic minority background, learners with a disability, and care-experienced learners is lower than the national average performance level"*. He emphasised that this is an area of real concern and that this required further investigation.

The Chair requested the following actions to be logged.

R Ashton agreed to provide a report on progressing the actions from the Education Scotland Report. This would be brought back to this committee at a future date.

The Student Presidents to be tasked with addressing the issue of the Students' Association (SA) not being sufficiently visible to learners and not fully representing their views. The Student Association have been asked to report back to the committee with recommendations for improvement.

Members of the Learning and Teaching Committee agreed to consider and discuss the attached Education Scotland Progress Visit report.

10. Review of 2022-23 Student Activity and Outcomes

R Ashton informed members that the report sought to provide an overview and evaluation of learning and teaching related performance indicators for 2022-23.

He drew members attention to the table on page 1 of the report and highlighted that the College was close to achieving full delivery of its Core Target and at 98.4% this, he reported as being within the 2% leeway provided by SFC, within which SFC would not clawback funds. He further advised that the main reason why the Core Credit target was not achieved was due to high full-time withdrawal rates prior to the SFC funding date. He referred to the tabled graph in section 5 of the report.

He continued to report that there was a significant shortfall in FA Credits with only half of the Credit target achieved. The main reasons for this, he stated was due to the target set by the SFC was a stretch target and higher than achieved in previous years. Furthermore, there had been reduced levels of demand from school pupils and particularly FA courses since Covid restrictions during the preceding two years had a severe impact on enrolment levels. Whilst there were no restrictions in 2022-23, enrolment demand has not yet recovered to pre-Covid levels, despite increased resources invested by the College to stimulate FA demand.

R Ashton continued to provide an update on the Senior Phase Enrolment Levels and on the Evaluation of Widening Access Credit Levels. He reported that the College had made positive steps in increasing the volume of both students recruited from SIMD10 datazones and those with a care experienced backgrounds. He invited comment or questions.

I Patrick queried the future prospects for Foundation Apprenticeship.

The Principal provided an update on recent discussions with fellow Principals and the Head of Education. He noted that the general feedback from schools was that FAs had stagnated, in its present format. He went on to mention that the Scottish Government was well aware of the limitations of the FA model and, as a result, anticipated that this format will naturally undergo changes over time. He reminded members that they would also be aware of the transport issue and that this had also discontinued.

P Brown noted that the two-year FA program typically saw strong initial recruitment and high retention rates in the first year, but historically, retention significantly dropped in the second year. This year, he pointed out that the College had transitioned to a one-year program, anticipating improved retention.

C Breathnach raised a concern, reporting that this year, there were no students transitioning from Bannerman High, that he had observed in his Senior Phase N5 Psychology class. He expressed concern that the discontinuation of the transport service might have contributed to this situation. He further suggested that it would be valuable to determine which schools were affected by this and to assess the impact on enrolment levels. He also noticed that the partnership with Clyde College, which was aimed at establishing viable classes, appeared to have faded away. R Ashton expressed his intention to reestablish this connection.

The Chair requested that an analysis of the school enrolment levels is brought back to a future L & T Committee.

11. Summary of Learner Feedback

The Head of Quality informed members that the Stop and Check survey, which was circulated annually to learners during block one in each academic year, had been created using Microsoft Forms and promoted to learners via their course tutor.

J Gallagher reported that there had been a significant increase in responses with a total of 1,873. Furthermore, he highlighted that some of the questions remained unchanged from the previous year, however learners were given the opportunity of leave additional comments at the end of the survey. He further conveyed that the feedback on college services remained extremely positive, however, he highlighted that Student Support Services had experienced a slight decrease from 96% to 93%. He surmised that this change might be attributed to a shift in the question format and the exceptionally high demand for counselling services, resulting in occasional extended waiting times for access.

The Chair invited comment or questions.

J McBride observed a seeming contradiction on page 2, point 2.3.1. He noted that the SFC set of questions “*Any changes in my course or teaching has been communicated well*” had seen an improved increase of 90%. However, he then observed and referenced that this was then stated as an area of improvement as stated in 2.4, summary of student feedback. R Ashton responded that this feedback predominantly stemmed from class representatives and pertained to instances where there was insufficient communication to the class when a teaching staff member was absent due to illness.

D Grenham highlighted that the report provided a good set of results and moving in the right direction. One concern he observed was in the area of: *Class management and student behaviour*, as noted within the areas of improvement (point 2.4). He sought confirmation that this issue was being addressed in an appropriate manner. R Ashton elaborated that all comments are provided as feedback to the respective course tutor and manager for thorough review and potential investigation.

I Patrick expressed his preference for the Student Focus Groups and enquired about their extent and frequency. He mentioned his preference for this approach over the stop and check survey and deemed it highly valuable. R Ashton explained that eight focus groups were conducted during block one. However, due to staffing limitations this was only conducted in block one. He further explained they were actively working on devising an alternative approach for the current academic session to sustain these groups.

D Smeall agreed that the focus groups were invaluable and emphasised the importance of class representatives working more effectively in the upcoming year.

The Chair commented that she believed that the timing of the feedback was an important aspect to consider. She continued and thanked J Gallagher for his report and also to members for their contributions.

7. Draft 2023/24 Quality Enhancement Priorities

The Vice Principal of Curriculum and Quality noted that the following high-level College quality enhancement priorities for 2023-24 have been informed by an evaluation of College-level student performance data, a review of student feedback undertaken and the areas for action identified by Education Scotland. He drew member attention to the table on page one of the report which identified six College-level quality enhancement priorities for learning and teaching in 2023-24. He continued to summarise on how the College intended to strengthen quality systems and he noted that M McKerlie, Head of Student Services would elaborate on project 5/6 of the report.

The Chair thanked R Ashton for the comprehensive report and asked to take comment from members on Project three.

C Breathnach referenced Appendix 1, point 2 of the report which identifies a risk based approach in flagging of low, medium and high risk categories, pertaining to courses. He expressed his comment that this system can be very negative or work well. He also noted his awareness of the College system's intention to address the high-risk flagged courses and transform them into positive scenarios. C Breathnach commented on the report that it outlines the impact process and that this would be led by the Senior Curriculum Manager, supported by the Curriculum Manager. He queried if the course tutor and or lecture would be consulted on this. He noted that he felt that this was an important process to be considered further. R Ashton advised that this could be added to give further clarity and that he emphasised that he had advised Faculty Directors of the necessity to ensure that course teams are informed and involved in the process.

R Ashton agreed that an addition to the guidance was necessary, specifically to involve the course tutor team in the impact assessment process. This would ensure that they are notified and informed about any courses that have been flagged.

Dr M Allison and I Patrick commented that the process looked onerous and time could be a burdensome factor for staff. I Patrick asked if it would be possible to simplify in any way. R Ashton responded that the top priority for the College was to improve on its PI status and emphasised that it was important to make time to prioritise this objective. He added that he would work closely with the managers throughout the process, and that the data systems played a crucial role in streamlining the process and alleviating administrative burdens, enabling staff members to work more efficiently.

The Principal commented that the College needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the process and highlighted that not all courses would undergo this evaluation. Additionally, he stated that the College was required to generate evidence for HMIe, however acknowledged the importance of striking a fine balance.

D Grenham queried what the quality measure was and referred to the statement within the report which noted “We will categorise all College courses which are more than 5% - 15% below the full-time college average for that level as medium risk courses”. R Ashton explained that it measured successful student outcome.

Following a question on retention from D Grenham. R Ashton emphasised that while the process was geared towards improving overall success rates, retention remained a significant focus as it is one of the biggest elements in achieving success.

J McBride acknowledged the concerns raised about potential bureaucracy but emphasised that not all bureaucracy is inherently negative. He stated the importance of establishing a clear starting point in the process. He also emphasised on the importance of aligning the process with the objectives outlined on page 1 of the report, which would then facilitate the identification of problematic courses and enable a collaborative problem-solving approach. He noted that the report was positive and expressed his support on the process.

R Ashton reported that it would be the managers of the college that steered the process and not the teaching staff, however teaching staff would have an input.

The Director of Faculty, P Brown commented that the process was not as onerous as it might seem. He highlighted that he had met with a number of managers and the feedback was positive, they welcomed the opportunity to feed in and redirect on their resource in problematic areas.

The Chair thanked R Ashton for his report and welcomed M McKerlie to speak on project five of the report.

The Head of Student Services, M McKerlie noted that project five, “Strengthen Student Engagement and Representation” followed objectives from the Education Scotland report. She advised that the report found a weakness within the student association in that it was not sufficiently visible to learners and not able to fully represent their views. She reported that the College had outlined its objectives for the future and had already initiated collaboration with the Student Association. She mentioned that the College had developed an Engagement Representation Action Plan, designed for broader promotion throughout campuses. This plan was organised per block and offered clear objectives for the Student Representatives to focus on. She further elaborated on the overall success of the Fresher Week and outlined on the activities which had taken place. She further spoke on the recruitment of Class Representatives and SPARQS training which had been organised for the first week in October. She continued to report that the action plan would run for the full academic year and has given staff a focus on the targets to achieve.

M McKerlie continued to speak on project six of the report which looked to support strengthening the Student Health and Wellbeing. She advised members that the College welcomed notification that funding would continue for the counselling and wellbeing services. She advised that the College had widened its services to incorporate resilience workshop for students and Sports Scotland had funded an active campus coordinator role which would promote health and fitness. Furthermore, the Student Association and the Wellbeing Officer promoted health and wellbeing during Freshers Week. She further updated that the wider student services had been activity promoted throughout the induction period.

The Chair thanked M McKerlie for her input to the report and welcomed questions or comment.

C Breathnach commented that our success rates are dependent on the health and wellbeing of our students and welcomed the positive report, which showed the College was building on these resources. He thanked M McKerlie on behalf of the teaching staff for the efforts from her team in these areas.

R Ashton agreed with C Breathnach and advised members that the data from a student survey conducted in the last session reported that Health and Wellbeing was the most significant reasons for students leaving the College. He added that it was important to respond to that information and that the College reflected this within the report.

R Ashton commented that it was intended that the board would receive a slimmed down version of the background papers on why the College were making the quality improvement priorities.

The Chair thanked R Ashton for his report and members for their valued contributions.

Members of the Learning and Teaching agreed to endorse the proposed Quality Enhancement Priorities for 2023-24.

12. Recruitment and Enrolment Update

The Director of Faculty, P Brown informed members that the report sought to provide an update on recruitment for the 2023-24 academic year. He reported that the data indicated a slight fall in overall application levels from 2022-23 (reduced by 6.7%), with a more significant decrease from 2020-21 application levels (reduced by 17.5%). However, he noted that students applying to the College had increased slightly compared to last year (up by 5%). In addition, the conversation rate is higher with increased offers made to students (increased by 9.4% on the previous year).

P Brown continued to elaborate on the historical trend and that data suggested a more significant reduction in full-time applications (reduced by 20.8% compared to 2022-23) and headcount (reduced by 15.1%). However, offer levels were higher than the previous year (up by 8.1%) which was particularly positive in light of a reduced full-time recruitment target.

He further provided an update at Faculty level, reporting that Engineering, Construction and Science has seen a reduction in full-time engineering enrolments, failing to reach viable numbers for NQ Civil Engineering and full-time HND Mechanical Engineering. External factors such as low Engineering Academy intake from Strathclyde University and City of Glasgow College delivering an NC in Civil Engineering for the first this year have been large contributing factors. He continued to say that on a positive note, day-release provision in Civil Engineering and Building Services Engineering had significantly surpassed target enrolments with HNC Civil Engineering enrolling four full class groups against target.

He invited comment or questions.

I Patrick expressed his disappointment upon learning that there was a demand for Building Services Engineering but insufficient funding available. P Brown assured members that the College was actively lobbying SDS on this matter.

Members of the Learning and Teaching agreed to note the contents of the report.

13. 2023-24 SFC Credit Guidance for Colleges

The Vice Principal of Curriculum and Quality Enhancement informed members that on 12th June, 2023, the Scottish Funding Council published the Credit Guidance which was attached for information, as appendix one of the report.

He advised that the SFC had made two specific changes which would impact substantially on the College's Credits claim for 2023-24.

- Firstly, the SFC have aligned the required minimum student attendance funding dates for full-time students to a shorter period. This means that the College will be able to claim Credits for students who attend 5 weeks of their course compared to previous years where students had to attend for 9-10 weeks before Credits could be claimed. This change, he states was positive and will support the College achieving its Credit target.
- Secondly, the SFC have tightened restrictions on the number of Credits which the College can claim per student, including the removal of guidance time for Higher Education Students. For Further Education level students, the limit is an average of 17 Credits and for Higher Education students the limit is an average of 15 Credits. The impact of this is that both our Further and Higher Education courses will need to be reduced by Credits.

This he noted, as especially challenging as these courses were planned in December 2022 and the change to the SFC rules has been made almost at the point of course start.

The Chair invited comment or question.

C Breathnach enquired about the timeline for this change, to which R Ashton replied that he was confident that the SFC could be assured of significant progress from the College within this year, although he expressed doubts about our approach to the curriculum for the following year.

Members of the Learning and Teaching agreed to note the contents of the report and the attached SFC Credit guidance

At 7pm, the Secretary to the Board asked the members if they were willing to extend the time limit in accordance with the Standing Orders and proceed with the remaining items on the agenda. Members agreed.

14. SFC Guidance to College and Universities on Quality

The Vice Principal of Curriculum informed members that the document sets out the SFC's refreshed expectations on quality enhancement approaches and activity for both colleges and universities over 2023-24, with a particular focus on the shift to a single quality system for the tertiary sector.

He further noted that the refreshed guidance builds on a single set of guidance provided last session for the tertiary sector by enhancing the shared elements across both colleges and university. He continued to provide an elaborate overview on those enhanced elements.

Members of the Learning and Teaching agreed to note the contents of the report and the attached SFC guidance.

15. SFC College Performance Indicators 2021-22

The Vice Principal reported that on 31st May, 2023 the SFC published the attached statistical publication on Performance Indicators across Scotland's Colleges in 2021-22.

He informed members that this report provides an overview of national trends in student attainment levels. The report highlights the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on 2021-22 attainment levels, with an increase in withdrawal rates at both Further and Higher Education levels.

The Chair highlighted an error with the report pertaining to dates.

Members of the Learning and Teaching agreed to note the contents of the report.

16. Guidance for Outcome Agreements for Colleges and Universities AY 2023-24

The Vice Principal informed members that on the 11th May, 2023, the SFC published the attached guidance for Outcome Agreements for Colleges and Universities.

He highlighted that in Glasgow, the Regional Board has responsibility for complying with this guidance, and the GCRB executive liaise with the colleges where appropriate on contributing to the development of the Glasgow Outcome Agreement.

R Ashton noted that the attached SFC guidance states that they recognise that colleges and universities are facing challenges both in terms of recovery following the emergency Covid period and in respect of funding constraints. As such, the SFC states that the outcome agreement arrangements for 2023-24 seek to maintain a streamlined approach and capture at a high level deliverables, impact and outcomes, and to give assurance on the use of allocated funding.

He added that the GCRB Executive Director was leading the process to develop the Glasgow Outcome Agreement for 2023-24. He drew members attention to Appendix B of the report which highlights the figures for Glasgow Kelvin College.

Members of the Learning and Teaching agreed to note the contents of the report.

17. Learning and Teaching Committee – Forward Planning Agenda

R Ashton presented an overview of the contents of the forward agenda, reporting his intention to include a senior phase paper.

18. SFC Report on Widening Access 2021-22

The Chair noted that this item was for information only.

Risk, Equality and Data Protection - Discussion

19. Impact on Students – Issues to be considered as a consequence of the consideration of the above agenda items.

Members agreed that no issues had arisen as a consequence of the business conducted at the meeting.

20. Risk Management – Issues to be considered as a consequence of the consideration of the above agenda items

Members agreed that no issues had arisen as a consequence of the business conducted at the meeting.

21. Equality Management – Issues to be considered as a consequence of the consideration of the above agenda items.

Members agreed that no issues had arisen as a consequence of the business conducted at the meeting.

22. Data Protection – Issues to be considered as a consequence of the consideration of the above agenda items

Members agreed that no issues had arisen as a consequence of the business conducted at the meeting.

23. Environmental and Sustainability – Issues to be considered as a consequence of the consideration of the above agenda items

Members agreed that no issues had arisen as a consequence of the business conducted at the meeting.

24. Closure

The meeting closed at 7.10pm

25. Date of Next Meeting

22 November 2023 – MS Teams