

GLASGOW KELVIN COLLEGE

Learning and Teaching Committee – 19 November 2025

Participation in Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP)

Report by Head of Enhancement & Assurance

1. Introduction

Contribution to STEP (Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme) programme is now an SFC funding requirement, and is one of the mechanisms to support TQEF (Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework), along with annual submission of a college SEAP (Self Evaluation & Action Plan) report, undertaking a rolling ILQR (Institution-Led Quality Review, engaging with TQER (Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review) and the SFC's Annual Quality Engagement (AQE).

STEP is composed of a number of different projects, each carried out by a team from Scotland's tertiary education sector, including staff and student representatives from colleges and universities, and each addressing a different theme as identified by STEP members. The over-arching themes for the projects are: Supporting transitions and navigating pathways, strengthening engagement community and belonging, developing skills and capabilities for learning, and delivering tailored targeted and personalised support.

STEP projects run on a four-year cycle:

- Year 1: Discovery (a series of meetings to create groups and design projects)
- Year 2 & Year 3: Implementation (project creation, refining and implementation/ development of further projects/ topic-related CPD as required)
- Year 4: Reflection (summative evaluation of programme and constituent projects)

The projects, as devised by STEP participants in 2024/25, are:

- Regional Enhancement & Collaboration in Tertiary Scotland (REACTS)
- Supporting Access, Progression & Successful Outcomes in Disabled Student Communities (SAPSO)
- Appreciating Belonging & Enabling Change: From Strategy to Practice
- Strategies to Support Student Engagement & Partnership Within an Increasingly Time-Poor and Cash-Poor Student Population
- Transforming Assessment Policy & Practice in Scotland (TAPPS)
- Understanding the Staff Development Landscape Required to Support Diverse Learner Journeys in the Tertiary Sector
- Student Success through Institutional Tertiary Alignment: Pathways, Process and Design to Enable Student Success
- Pedagogy for Transitions: Setting Students Up for Success through Enquiry Based Learning

GKC is part of the SAPSO project.

2. Update and Project Progress

GKC is represented on the SAPSO project (Supporting Access, Progression & Successful Outcomes in Disabled Student Communities). For the purposes of the project, this is defined essentially as all students facing additional barriers to learning, e.g. physical disability, mental health concerns, long-term illness, learning difficulties, neurodiversity etc. This group is led by staff from Edinburgh College and Edinburgh University.

SAPSO: Aims and Objectives

- Identify barriers and enablers affecting the retention and success of disabled student groups.
- Understand student experiences across various learning pathways.
- Provide evidence-based recommendations to improve institutional practices and policies, such as enhancing the student voice; establishing a disability student steering group, involving disabled students in decision-making, support student-led disability networks and events, launch awareness campaigns and accessibility awards and celebrate International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
- Elevate the student voice to inform equitable, inclusive and data-informed decision-making.

This is to be achieved through the following data collection methods: Surveys, Interviews & Focus Groups, College Self-evaluation documents, Case studies and Institutional and national data. Full details are available in Appendix 1: SAPSO Project Proposal.

SAPSO: Proposed Outputs (subject to change)

- Written evidence of findings and proposals for good practice
- Podcasts and case studies (by students for students)
- Others TBC

2024/25 update

During AY 2024/25, GKC was represented by Faculty Director Peter Brown and former Student President Chantelle McCallum. These two college representatives attended a series of meetings during which the projects were conceived and initial design ideas for SAPSO laid out, as detailed above.

2025/26 update

In AY 2025/26, the college's representatives are John Clarke, Head of Enhancement & Assurance and current Student President Jon Craig. There has been one online meeting so far this AY, at which project goals and aims were recapped and restated. Further development was not possible at this time due to both project co-leads being unable to attend the meeting. Work will commence in earnest during the schedule of on-site sessions as detailed below, at which GKC representatives will be present.

- Tuesday 18th November: Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline
- Tuesday 27th January: University of Edinburgh, John McIntyre Conference Centre
- Wednesday 25th March: Forth Valley College, Grangemouth Campus
- Wednesday 27th May: Glasgow Caledonian University

3. Impact on Students

The outputs of SAPSO and all the STEP projects will be available to all tertiary education providers in Scotland and should inform their practice in relation to supporting student success.

4. Resource Implications

SFC funding is in place for member travel and accommodation for STEP in-person sessions. The only other resource implications are staff time for those contributing (Head of Enhancement & Assurance and Student President).

5. Equality

There are no Equality implications arising directly from this paper.

6. Risk and Assurance

Projects risks, as identified by the steering group:

- The student representative turnover in May of each of the 3-year project timeline
- Need to ensure smooth handover and support for new student reps
- Keeping the energy and engagement up across the large group of tertiary institutions in the SAPSO project
- Sharing out of the roles and responsibilities so that equal time and commitment is given
- Administration of travel and accommodation organisation between institutions for the 4 discovery days each year
- Payment system for students through lead Institution

7. Data Protection

There are data protection implications of this paper.

8. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

- Note the college's participation in STEP activity.

9. Further Information

- Further info on the SAPSO project is in Appendix 1: SAPSO Project Proposal
- Further information on STEP available at the following link: [Home](#)
- Members can obtain additional information on the contents of this report from John Clarke, Head of Enhancement & Assurance

Glasgow Kelvin College
JC
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