

GLASGOW KELVIN COLLEGE**BOARD OF MANAGEMENT****LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE****DRAFT MINUTE****Minute of the meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee held on
28 February 2024 at 5pm via MS Teams****1. Sederunt**

Dr Elaine Clafferty (Chair);
Dr Marion Allison (Vice Chair);
Derek Smeall (Principal);
Dermot Grenham;
Colm Breathnach;
John McBride;
Calum Campbell
Michael O'Donnell; and
Heather McNeil

In Attendance

Robin Ashton;
Alastair McGhee
John Gallagher;
Jason Quinn; and
Debbie Friel (Senior Committee Coordinator) (purpose of the minute)

2. Apologies

Ian Patrick;
Sonique Noreiga; and
Marie Docherty

R Ashton extended a warm welcome to C Campbell as the newest member of the Learning and Teaching Committee, introducing him as the recently appointed Student Association President for Welfare, Community, and Sustainability.

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/connections were raised by members. The Chair reminded members that they could raise these at any point throughout the meeting.

5. Minute of the Previous Meeting held on 22 November 2023

The minute of the meeting held on 22 November 2023 was accepted as an accurate record of the business conducted.

D Grenham, followed by H McNeil proposed the minute.

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

Declarations of Interest: L Ellison updated members on an advisory note issued by the Standards Commission which was discussed at the Governance Steering Group to gather their perspectives. She noted that due to reasons of conflict of interest, the advisory note appeared to be extremely complex. However, she mentioned that both herself and Lisa Clark, Director of Estates and Corporate Services were presently reviewing the document as it lacked clarity. Additionally, she emphasised that L Clark would attend a workshop in March to seek further clarification.

a) 2023-24 At Risk Review Process Outcomes

The Vice Principal of Curriculum provided an overview of the Risk Review Process as outlined within the paper provided. He informed members of the new quality arrangements which encompassed categories as either Green (low risk), Amber (medium risk) or Red (high risk). He further noted that the courses identified within the Red (high risk) category were subject to an At-Risk Review Process, which encompassed a selected panel. He drew attention to a course that was omitted from the report which should have listed City and Guilds Automotive SCQF4.

Following a question from the Chair, R Ashton clarified that the risk evaluation extended beyond conventional academic metrics to include aspects such as application levels, student demand, employer demand, course type and delivery methods, partnerships, as well as financial aspects such as staffing resources and operational factors.

H McNeil queried if there was any input sought from the student or business cohort in the panels considerations. R Ashton explained the process, highlighting the close collaboration between faculties and course staff. He assured members' that discussions with course teams were paramount in the process, expressing confidence that student feedback was duly considered.

The Chair commented that this was a very important risk-based approach and beneficial to the college for future practice and useful to read the detail within the report. She thanked the Vice Principal for his report.

b) Learning and Teaching Action List

The Chair noted that two live items would be carried forward on the action list and that the following items were presented on the agenda:

- **Education Scotland Report:** presented on the agenda as Item 10; and
- **Curriculum Review:** presented on the agenda as Item 06a.

7. College Admissions Policy

The Director of Digital and Information Systems informed members that in accordance with the agreed Policy and Procedure Review Schedule, the College Admissions Policy was due for review. J Quinn highlighted that the Policy was last approved by the Committee in March 2022 and it is proposed that the next review was scheduled for 2026. He drew members' attention to Appendix 1, which detailed a number of changes, denoted in red text. He stated that it did not alter the original aims or overall processes.

He emphasised that the purpose of this report was to apprise members of the recent policy review and request approval from the Learning and Teaching Committee.

The Chair thanked J Quinn for the report and invited questions or comments.

D Grenham drew members attention to the cover page of the Policy and asked for more detail on consultation with employee representatives, alongside querying the role of academic staff within the admissions process.

J Quinn highlighted that key stakeholders had the opportunity to review and feedback on any comments on the Policy. R Ashton also highlighted that the responsibility for making decisions on entry criteria rests with the Faculties, ensuring transparency and fairness in the admissions process as outlined by the policy. He emphasised that Faculties were fully responsible for their respective courses and admissions.

H McNeil referenced the removal of a limit to the number of applications in an academic year and queried how common this was for the College to receive multiple applications from potential students. J Quinn responded that it was relatively common and also stated the College examined application data, including the applicant count for year-on-year comparisons.

M Allison expressed her contentment upon observing the incorporation of quality elements within the Admissions Policy, in particular, the statements within the disabilities section. Additionally, she felt it was good to note that the College promoted English testing.

Following on from a question raised by M O'Donnell on section 14 of the report, J Quinn informed members that most Policies within the College would be reviewed over a 2 to 3 year period. He gave assurance that any significant changes needing to be brought forward would be highlighted to the Committee.

In response to a query raised by J McBride regarding section 3.2 and references, J Quinn noted that not all courses necessitate references as it can slow down the process. R Ashton elaborated that eliminating references from the process aimed to prevent closing off second chances for students without good references.

The Chair raised a question about section 7.4 concerning in-house language testing, specifically noting that it stated that 'students who do not complete the test will not be offered a place on a course'. She suggested whether it should instead indicate passing the test rather than merely completing it. J Quinn thanked the Chair for her insight, he indicated his intention to revise the sentence for clarity in the language usage. R Ashton informed members that the test is a language levelling assessment rather than a pass or fail scenario.

Members of the Learning and Teaching Committee agreed to Approve the Admissions Policy subject to the changes noted by the Chair relating to section 8.3 of the report.

8. Review of Implementation of the Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy

The Vice Principal of Curriculum informed members that a refreshed Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTAS) was agreed by the Board of Management in October 2021.

He provided an overview of the approaches to supporting the implementation of the LTAS as outlined on page one of the report. Furthermore, he drew members attention to the table

in section three of the report which offered a concise overview of the primary evidence used to evaluate goal implementation. He added that the majority of evidence had stemmed from student feedback, supplemented by student performance data and reports on quality enhancement activities. Members were advised that good progress had been made across all elements of the LTAS, however, he outlined four areas where evidence suggested that the College required to progress further. He further highlighted that the paper was considered and endorsed by the College's Academic Board at its meeting held on 2nd February 2024.

H McNeil thanked R Ashton for the comprehensive report, highlighting its reassuring nature. She was particularly pleased to see an emphasis on enhancing staff input, as well as the inclusion in expanding student participation and the information detailed from the student satisfaction survey results. She enquired as to the average participation levels of the student surveys and R Ashton responded that approximately 55-60% of our full-time students' complete surveys.

C Breathnach raised a point on Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), questioning if we fully understood why students aren't engaging as anticipated. R Ashton agreed that the College would explore more on how we can encourage greater student engagement. **The Chair suggested that the Student Association help explore the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and the factors contributing to students' low levels of participation in the new online ILP system.**

J McBride remarked on the time frame of the Strategy, noting its conclusion in 2024, and expressed positivity regarding the paper. He enquired whether the committee could expect additional updates, emphasising that the report represents an ongoing process rather than a final destination. R Ashton noted and agreed that the strategic goals within the report are long term commitments and that members could be assured that further updates would be brought back to the Committee.

M O'Donnell drew attention to the table and queried the meaning of the colour coding within the grading structure. R Ashton agreed to add a key indicator to the paper, and clarified that green indicated that good progress was being made, and amber indicated that additional evidence was still required to fully assess progress.

Members of the Learning, Teaching Committee agreed to approve the Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy subject to additional narrative being incorporated.

9. 2024-25 Admissions Update

The Director of Digital and Information Services informed members that the report sought to provide an update on student recruitment for the 2024/25 academic year. It showed the most recent admissions data, including applications received and offers made, alongside a comparative analysis with preceding academic years.

The Chair commented that it was helpful to see the processes in place are contributing to the overall positive outputs. She invited comments or questions.

J McBride echoed the Chair's comments that it was positive news. He asked, what assessment has been conducted on impact of removal of the 'at risk' courses on application levels. J Quinn highlighted that at the start of the academic session, the College examined those courses with low demand and build this into forecasts of application levels. R Ashton added that admissions planning included historical analysis of application levels and took account of courses with consistently low demand and poor performance indicators which were removed.

D Grenham observed that in previous years, especially during COVID-19, the College offer had decreased due to universities lowering their entry standards. He enquired whether the College sensed that this trend was now reversing and if Universities had raised their criteria accordingly.

J Quinn responded and noted the ongoing efforts within the College, particularly in branding and student engagement and highlighted the extensive work being done to capitalise on available opportunities, including targeted advertising campaigns aimed at maximising outreach and enrolment. R Ashton stated that additional places offered to universities during Covid were not being offered for 2024-25 so this should support an increase in student demand to colleges. The Chair also noted that whilst Universities maintained their minimum standards for student admission, they have not lowered their academic standards. Rather, they are opting to keep courses open and utilise clearing processes, resulting in a similar outcome of accommodating additional students.

C Breathnach noted that the positive news reflects the desired outcome of hard work by staff. He stressed the importance of identifying primary causes to sustain and improve this trend, particularly in terms of increasing applicants and offers. He proposed evaluating applicant feedback and implementing a review process to pinpoint areas of success and improvement. Additionally, he expressed an interest in evaluating the impact of the College rebranding efforts and advertising effectiveness. J Quinn expressed eagerness to analyse ongoing positive trends and suggested engaging students in discussions to understand their perspectives and identify common themes. Regarding the evaluation of the new branding efforts and advertising effectiveness, it would be necessary to collaborate with the Marketing Team to obtain accurate data for feedback.

R Ashton added that the College had observed promising website usage data and agreed to arrange a comprehensive update at a future meeting. In response, **the Chair requested that an evaluation as to the impact had on Admissions, in relation to the new branding efforts and advertising effectiveness be brought back to a future meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee.**

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

10. Outcomes of Education Scotland Thematic Review

The Vice Principal of Curriculum informed members that the report sought to provide members with an update on the findings of the Education Scotland Thematic Review. He advised that the review was conducted across the Glasgow College Region from 6th to 16th November 2023.

R Ashton remarked that the report was predominantly positive and encouraged comments or questions.

The Principal outlined the sections highlighted in the report as Examples of Highly Effective Practice, identifying four distinct areas. He highlighted the significance of these areas as exemplary models that the College could share with other educational institutions.

The Chair remarked that it is important not to overlook the positives highlighted in the reports, as they represent areas of achievement that we should take considerable pride in.

H McNeil echoed the Principal's comments and requested that this sentiment be recorded within the minutes. She commented on the relevance of the highlighted areas to the learners voice and community engagement, underscoring their significance to the College and their reflection on our identity.

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

11. **Student Association Priorities Update**

The Student Association President, C Campbell, drew members attention to the progress of the Student Association on future priorities and plans as identified within the report provided.

C Campbell informed members that he had started his role as Student Association President on 7th February 2024. He expressed his delight in assisting students and mentioned that his first official duty was attending the College Graduation event.

He made particular reference to "Meet the Managers" event held on 21st February, 2024, informing members that both he and his colleague, S Noreiga, had attended. He observed that the forum, attended by Senior Management, provided a positive platform for students to address concerns and suggest improvements. Furthermore, it highlighted ongoing positive developments, making it an informative event overall for students.

C Breathnach commented on the positives of the report and highlighted that an area seen as significant improvement this session was the establishment of a robust network of class representatives, which further amplifies the student voice and improves on the student representation.

M Allison commented that she was heartened to see from the report, good linkage with mental health support and that connecting with the work of the Active Campus Coordinator.

The Chair thanked the Student Association President for the report and proposed that future reports align with the improvements highlighted within the Education Scotland feedback report, namely the Student Association not being sufficiently visible to learners, and Class Representatives not being fully aware of their role. **The Chair highlighted the significance of the Student reports in addressing these two areas for development and requested the following titles within the report be changed to facilitate ongoing progress reporting.**

- **Modify the title "Class Representative" to "The Role of the Class Representative."**
- **Modify the title "On Going Awareness Raising" to "On Going Student Association Awareness Raising."**

C Campbell agreed to make the changes to reflect in further Student Association update reports.

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

12. Glasgow City Region College Innovation Network

The Director of Student Experience and Enterprise informed members that the report summarised the recent successful multi college bid, led by Glasgow Kelvin College, to the Further Education Innovation Fund (FEIF) which resulted in an award to the Glasgow City Region of £1.2 million to support businesses to become more innovative.

A McGhee welcomed questions or comments.

H McNeil commented that the report provided an excellent example of regional partnership working led by the colleges. She elaborated on the importance of ensuring that positive PR is directed towards highlighting the progress of this initiative, at the appropriate time.

D Grenham conveyed his congratulations to the team for their work on this pilot project. In reference to his query regarding potential risks associated with the partner colleges' contribution, the Principal commented that the advantages of the initiative outweighed any potential risks. He added that there was a significant amount of work involved in building trust with the six regional colleges and he was confident that this would continue. Furthermore, he updated members that A McGhee had invited UKRI staff to have a discussion with the six regional colleges and that a further update would be brought back to a future Board of Management meeting.

C Breathnach asked how this project would impact positively on the local communities which the College serves. He noted that it would be of interest to see if any of the pilot project companies were located in areas of deprivation, in particular those in North East Glasgow, or that they employed people from within those communities. A McGhee reassured members that this aspect has been taken into account. It was noted in the submission that FE colleges possess outreach programmes, reaching communities that may otherwise be disengaged. Additionally, he agreed to feedback this into the Committee to ensure that this had focus.

The Chair, on behalf of Ian Patrick, raised a question in his absence. A McGhee responded that the five clusters were identified in the innovation strategy to concentrate efforts on developing employers within them, he assured members that this approach was not exclusive.

The Chair thanked A McGhee for his report and thanked those involved for their efforts in this project. She noted that the Board of Management would look forward to an update on its progress.

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

13. Curriculum Planning Internal Audit Report

The Vice Principal of Curriculum provided an overview of the report. He informed members that an internal audit of curriculum planning was recently undertaken. He drew members attention to the audit report attached as Appendix 1.

He highlighted that no recommendations for actions were made and that the audit overall level of assurance grading was 'good'. He provided members with an overview of the main strengths contained in the report and noted that there were no weaknesses identified.

The Principal remarked that, in his experience in the College sector, he had never encountered an Audit Report grading all six elements as graded 'Good,' which he found highly reassuring. This, he stressed, reflected on the exceptional level of engagement, positivity, and commitment from staff across all areas of the curriculum structure.

The Chair thanked the Principal for his comments and again noted that these areas of good work and success should not be taken for granted.

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

14. Flexible Workforce Development Funding

The Director of Student Experience and Enterprise notified members that on 20th December, the Scottish Funding Council was informed by the Scottish Government that there would be no Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF) available for 2023/24.

Furthermore, on the 21st December 2023, it was announced that there would be no FWDF for 2024/25 either, removing FWDF from the College business support portfolio and revenue stream for the foreseeable future. He then drew members attention to Appendix 1 of the report, which outlined the communications between the Scottish Funding Council and the sector regarding these decisions. He emphasised that the withdrawal of FWDF undeniably impacts the College and the sector's ability to engage with employers and the numerous benefits associated with such engagement.

He encouraged comments or questions from members.

C Breathnach expressed disappointment on the withdrawal of the FWDF funding. He commended the College for promptly addressing the issue and prioritising job preservation in the affected area. He also requested clarification on section five of the report regarding the impact on students, asking if this applied to all students and how the College planned to mitigate this impact. McGhee clarified that this applied to commercial students engaged in FWDF with the College, emphasising their status as students and the impact on their career development despite their short enrolment duration.

R Ashton added that members should note that this particular group of companies would be prioritised by College for innovation activities. The intention is to reconnect with those employers to extend ongoing training and services through the innovation fund.

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

15. 2023-24 Credit Activity Update

The Vice Principal of Curriculum spoke to the contents of the report. He drew members attention to the College's Credit Delivery Position as highlighted on the data table within page one of the report. Furthermore, he indicated that the College was currently on track to slightly exceed its Credit target based on the most recent planning intelligence. A key supportive factor in achieving this had been the significant improved retention rates which have led to an increase proportion of student being funding.

He continued and informed members that the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), in its credit guidance, requested that colleges limit the number of credits for full time FE and HE. He advised that the College hadn't been able to fully align its delivery with SFC guidance due to the timeframes given and reported that he had engaged in discussions with the SFC funding team to clarify its approach for the academic year.

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

16. 2023-24 Student Withdrawal Update Report

The Vice Principal of Curriculum reported that over recent years, early withdrawals have had a significant impact on the College's performance indicators, particularly for full-time programmes.

He highlighted that during Covid, early withdrawal rates increased substantially and a number of measures have been introduced with the aim of improving early retention.

He directed members' attention to the charts presented on pages one and two of the report, highlighting the comparison between historical withdrawal rates from 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23 against the projected withdrawal rate for 2023-24 within a similar timeframe. He noted that the charts demonstrate an overall improvement in student withdrawal levels, notably showcasing significant reductions in full-time withdrawal rates.

The Chair acknowledged the report's robust statistics and highlighted that the impressive results were a direct result of the diligent efforts of all college staff.

H McNeil noted the College's effective focus on the initial "keep warm" stage and its associated activities. She remarked positively on the College's ability to monitor these activities and assess the resulting success. Furthermore, she noted the College's collective efforts and positive momentum, suggesting that further review at the end of the academic session would be beneficial for further insights.

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

17. 2023-24 Learner Experience Survey

The Quality Enhancement and Development Manager provided an overview of the report. He highlighted that the Student Experience Survey, conducted via Microsoft Forms and distributed through faculty managers, course tutors, email, and Microsoft Teams, gathered 1,597 responses, representing 52% of Full-Time Further Education students and 65% of Full-Time Higher Education students. He continued to provide an overview of all the questions contained within the report and drew attention to questions which focussed on suggestions for improvement and additional feedback. Common themes included the value of interactive learning, group activities, balancing theory with practice, and personalised feedback. Many students favoured on-campus learning for its personalised nature and easier interaction with peers and lecturers. Overall, most students expressed satisfaction with their learning experience or suggested no changes.

J Gallagher invited comment or questions:

The Chair, on behalf of Ian Patrick, raised a question in his absence. He suggested that consideration be given to incorporating the Likert scale into future surveys, to provide more meaningful statistical results.

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

18. College Leaver Destinations 2021-22

The Quality Enhancement and Development Manager provided an overview of the report. He informed members that in February and March 2023, the College conducted a College Leavers' Destination survey as part of the Scottish Funding Council's (SFC) national survey. The purpose of that survey was to identify the next destination for successful full-time college leavers who completed a college course during session 2021-22. Glasgow Kelvin College had 1434 successful full-time leavers in June 2022. The College achieved an 83.4% return which has since been ratified by the SFC.

He drew members' attention to the SFC summary report which was attached as an appendix to the report.

C Breathnach highlighted a key point on page four of the report, emphasising the significant number of GKC FE leavers progressing to HEI programs due to robust access programs. He commended the College's collaboration with the Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP), especially in integrating non-university background individuals into higher education, particularly in fields like medicine, engineering, and social sciences. He proposed exploring additional implementation of the pathways program in the future to enhance opportunities, citing previous success stories with St Andrews University.

H McNeil referred to the data pertaining to the SCQF levels 1-6 and queried the 10% loss of students to City of Glasgow and Clyde Colleges, she asked if this was an issue for the College. J Gallagher informed members that students from GKC pursued a higher-level of study at our sister colleges, adding that it was deemed more appropriate for City of Glasgow to operate at a higher level in some subjects than what was sustainable for Glasgow Kelvin.

The Chair thanked the Quality Enhancement and Development Manager for his update.

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

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.

19. Update on the Development of a Single Tertiary Quality System

The Vice Principal of Curriculum provided an overview of the report which sought to update members as to the proposed Single Tertiary Quality System. He drew members' attention to the Key Qualifications Assurance Agency (QAA) outputs and related timeframes as set within the diagram on page one of the report. Furthermore, he remarked that the QAA's development work should be completed shortly and if approved by the Scottish Funding Council for implementation, this could mean significant changes to the quality arrangements for colleges from 2024-25 onwards.

He noted that once formal documentation was readily available, this would be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

M Allison asked for more information on opportunities for the College to contribute to decision making in relation to these changes. R Ashton explained that the College had participated in the QAA consultation workshops on potential review outcome judgements and that sector representatives were feeding in at a national level.

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

- 20. Independent Review of Community Learning and Development**
- 21. Scottish Government Consultation on Teacher Qualification in Further Education**
- 22. Draft Academic Board Minute – 02 February 2024**

Members raised no questions on item 20, 21, and 22, as they were provided for members information only.

Risk, Equality and Data Protection - Discussion

- 23. 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.

- 24. 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.

- 25. 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.

- 26. 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.

- 27. 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.

- 28. Closure**
The meeting closed at 7.07pm

- 29. Date of Next Meeting**
08 May 2024 – WG1, Springburn Campus