

GLASGOW KELVIN COLLEGE**Learning and Teaching Committee – 20 November 2024****Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP)****Report by Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality Enhancement****1. Introduction**

This paper provides an overview of new enhancement arrangements for Scottish colleges and universities arising from the implementation of the new Tertiary Quality System for 2024- 2031.

2. Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP)

Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP) is a four-year cyclical programme in which all colleges and universities will participate in a programme of enhancement activities aligned with the chosen topic. Following sector engagement, the first STEP topic has been announced as "*Supporting Diverse Learner Journeys*".

Further information about STEP and its governance is provided in the attached document.

In the first year of STEP, the sectors will work together to establish a number of collaborative enhancement projects through a series of Discovery Days facilitated by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and the College Development Network (CDN).

Peter Brown, Director of Skills, Apprenticeships and Curriculum and Chantell McCallum, Students' Association President will act as College representatives on the new STEP network and updates on STEP will be provided to the Committee as activity progresses.

3. Impact on Students

National quality enhancement arrangements are intended to drive and support improvements to the student experience and outcomes.

4. Resource Implications

The new quality enhancement arrangements will require participation by College staff and students. QAA have indicated that in 2024-25, each college and university in Scotland will receive £3,000 of funding to support engagement with STEP.

5. Equalities

There are no equality implications arising directly from this report.

6. Risk and Assurance

The new arrangements are based on a four-year improvement cycle and for colleges with mainly one or two year courses, this represents a relatively long timeframe. There are therefore some concerns that the four-year cycle may not be well suited to the

college sector with the STEP activity potentially not having the level of impact it could have had with a shorter timescale.

7. Data Protection

There are no data protection implications arising directly from this report.

8. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

- i. note the contents of this update.

9. Further Information

Members can obtain additional information on the contents of this report from Robin Ashton, Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality Enhancement.

Glasgow Kelvin College

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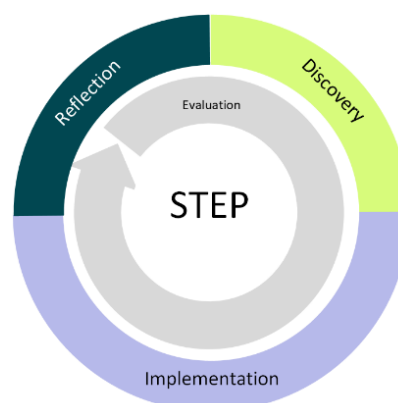
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Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP)

STEP is the new national enhancement programme for the Scotland's colleges and universities. It is designed to enable Scotland's colleges and universities to work together to improve and enhance learning, teaching, the student experience, and staff development across tertiary provision. It is one of the delivery mechanisms of Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework ([TQEF](#)) and is underpinned by the TQEF principles. At the heart of the programme are **collaborative enhancement projects** that will produce outcomes and outputs of value to the entire tertiary sector.

STEP runs on a **four-year cycle** that moves through three distinct phases – **discovery**, **implementation**, and **reflection** - during which projects are designed, delivered, and evaluated. The programme is sector-owned and jointly managed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and the College Development Network (CDN).

The topic for the first cycle of STEP (2024-2028) is **supporting diverse learner journeys**. This topic was determined through extensive engagement with colleges and universities during 2023-24, including sector-wide co-creation events in October 2023 and March 2024, and a sector-wide survey in April 2024. This ensures that the topic will provide a focus for action at a national level and generate impact. Within the overall topic, the four priority areas are:



Supporting diverse learner journeys by...			
Supporting transitions and navigating pathways	Strengthening engagement, community and belonging	Developing skills and capabilities for learning	Delivering tailored, targeted and personalised support

During the **discovery phase** (year 1), staff and students will come together for a series of **discovery days** to establish collaborative partnerships and design projects that will form the core of the programme. Between these days, there will be workshops, networking opportunities, and CPD activities related to the topic to maintain momentum. In developing projects there will be a focus on collaboration, clarity of outcomes and impact, and the formation of a cohesive programme of work that involves every college and university in Scotland.

The focus of the **implementation phase** is to launch and conduct the projects planned during the discovery phase. Project leads and teams will be responsible for taking forward the programme of work identified in their proposals. In each of years two and three, the following activities will take place:

- Facilitated ‘implementation days’, enabling project teams to meet in person.
- A discovery day to support development of further projects on emerging issues.
- Annual conference to share updates, develop networks, and identify new opportunities.
- Topic-related CPD for which a need has been identified.

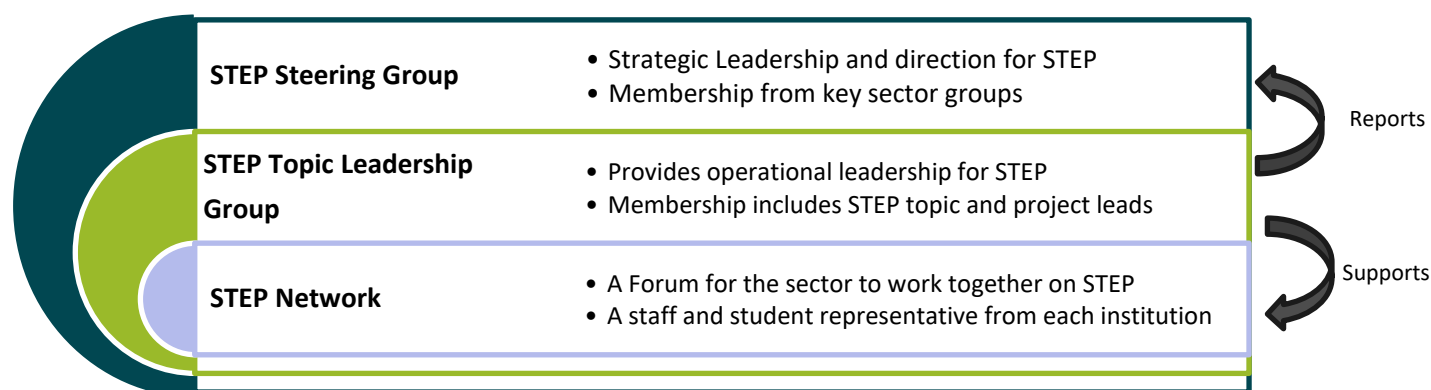
Evaluation will be embedded within each project and undertaken on a continuous basis, with regular reports from each team updating on impact and progress against plans.

In the **reflection** phase summative evaluation of the STEP programme and its constituent projects and additional activities will be undertaken to consider the impact and effectiveness of the work. As projects conclude, the reflection phase allows for the dissemination of project outputs throughout and beyond the sector. More fundamentally, an aim of the reflection phase is to ensure that outputs and outcomes are embedded within the mainstream activities of colleges and universities to become ‘business as usual’.

Built into the reflection phase is consultation on the topic for the next four-year STEP cycle. This process will involve colleges, universities, sector agencies and other stakeholders agreeing on the topic that is most relevant to the Scottish sector at that time.

Governance

Governance of STEP will be the responsibility of three groups drawn from across the sector to ensure that STEP is owned by our colleges and universities.



In **discovery phase**, the STEP Network will engage in the discovery days and workshops. The STEP Topic Leadership Group will provide guidance and expertise for project teams, while the STEP Steering Group will maintain high level oversight of progress and will approve projects to go forward to implementation. In the **implementation phase**, the STEP Steering Group will continue to oversee progress, with the STEP Topic Leadership Group providing guidance and expertise as previously. The STEP Network will provide opportunities for teams to share progress with, and gather input from, across the sector.

How to get involved

The STEP Steering Group will comprise representation from existing groups and networks, and agency representatives. Institutional quality contacts will be asked to nominate a staff and student member of the STEP Network. STEP Topic Leads will be drawn from individuals who are nominated, or who self-nominate for the role, with the STEP Steering Group appointing the Topic Leads for each STEP cycle.

Steering Group	Topic Leadership Group	STEP Network
Nominations from sector groups	Self or peer nomination	Nominations from university and college quality contacts