

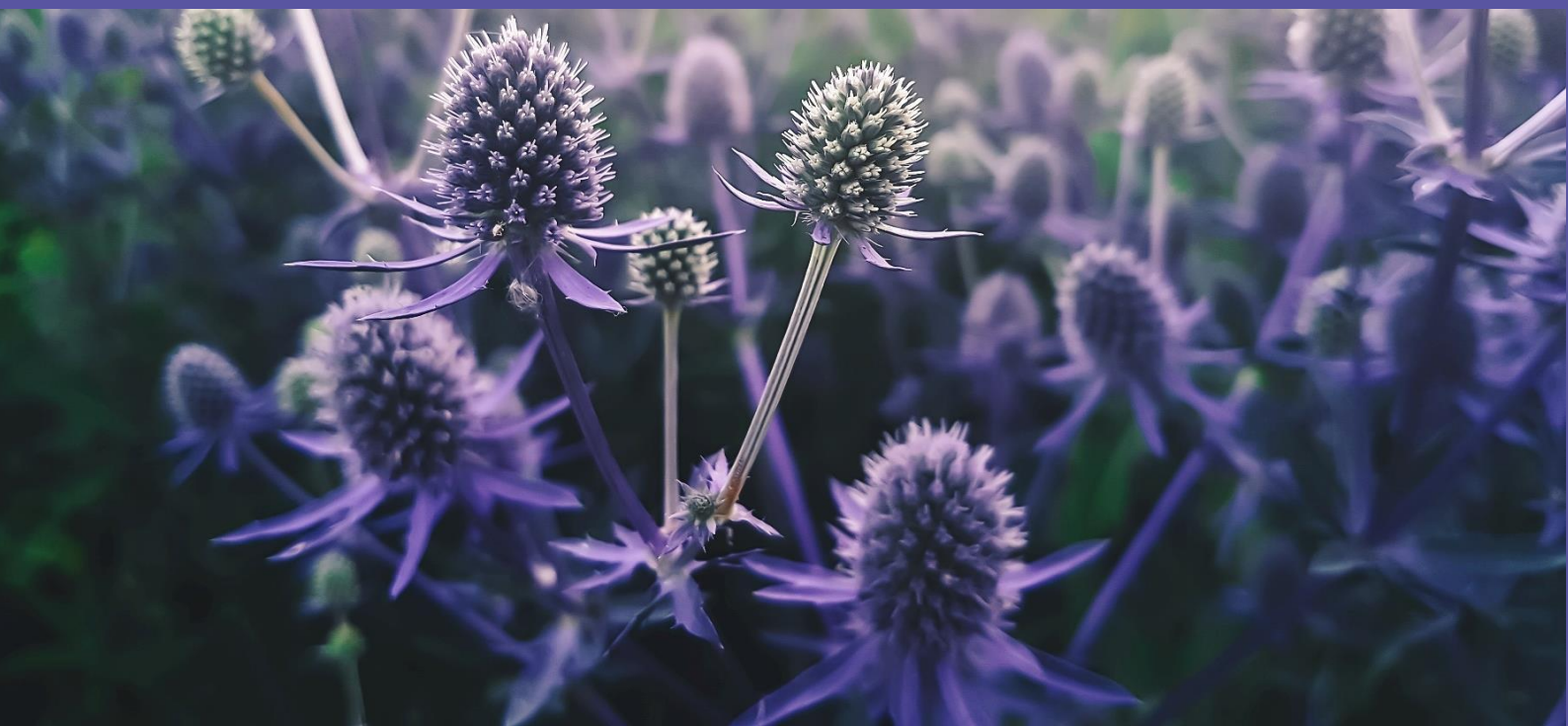
# Glasgow Kelvin College

## Quality Assurance

Internal Audit report No: 2022/07

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|           |                                          | Page  |
|-----------|------------------------------------------|-------|
| Section 1 | <b>Management Summary</b>                |       |
|           | • Overall Level of Assurance             | 1     |
|           | • Risk Assessment                        | 1     |
|           | • Background                             | 1 - 2 |
|           | • Scope, Objectives and Overall Findings | 3     |
|           | • Audit Approach                         | 3     |
|           | • Summary of Main Findings               | 4 - 5 |
|           | • Acknowledgements                       | 5     |
| Section 2 | <b>Main Findings</b>                     | 6 - 8 |

### Level of Assurance

In addition to the grading of individual recommendations in the action plan, audit findings are assessed and graded on an overall basis to denote the level of assurance that can be taken from the report. Risk and materiality levels are considered in the assessment and grading process as well as the general quality of the procedures in place.

Gradings are defined as follows:

|                             |                                                                           |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Good</b>                 | System meets control objectives.                                          |
| <b>Satisfactory</b>         | System meets control objectives with some weaknesses present.             |
| <b>Requires improvement</b> | System has weaknesses that could prevent it achieving control objectives. |
| <b>Unacceptable</b>         | System cannot meet control objectives.                                    |

### Action Grades

|                   |                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Priority 1</b> | Issue subjecting the organisation to material risk, and which requires to be brought to the attention of management and the Audit and Risk Committee. |
| <b>Priority 2</b> | Issue subjecting the organisation to significant risk, and which should be addressed by management.                                                   |
| <b>Priority 3</b> | Matters subjecting the organisation to minor risk or which, if addressed, will enhance efficiency and effectiveness.                                  |

## Management Summary

### Overall Level of Assurance

|             |                                  |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Good</b> | System meets control objectives. |
|-------------|----------------------------------|

### Risk Assessment

This review focused on the controls in place to mitigate the following risk on the Glasgow Kelvin College ('the College') Strategic Risk Register:

- Risk 2 – GKC Identity - Lack of understanding or awareness of the critical part GKC plays in communities; don't communicate USP (residual risk rating: High)
- Risk 3 – People - Not having agile, motivated, well informed, or appropriately skilled workforce (residual risk rating: High)
- Risk 5 – Curriculum Relevance - Curriculum doesn't meet current or future needs of students, employers, or community partners, or the economy (residual risk rating: High)
- Risk 6 – Sustainable Funding - Inability to secure appropriate levels of funding to deliver objectives/Foundation Apprenticeship arrangements changing, redistribution of credit activity for 2021-22, NI costs rising, inflation high, energy prices soaring (residual risk rating: High)
- Risk 7 – Student Experience - Poor student experience (residual risk rating: High)
- Risk 10 – Fail to Recruit or Retain Sufficient students or learners (residual risk rating: High)

### Background

As part of the Internal Audit programme at the College for 2021/22, we carried out a review of the organisation's quality assurance arrangements. Our Audit Needs Assessment identified this as an area where risk can arise and where Internal Audit can assist in providing assurances to the Principal and the Audit and Risk Committee that the related control environment is operating effectively, ensuring risk is maintained at an acceptable level.

As part of the Internal Audit programme at the College for 2019/20 we carried out a review of the College's quality arrangements. The Audit Needs Assessment, completed in November 2017, identified this as an area where risk can arise and where Internal Audit can assist in providing assurances to the Board of Management and the Principal that the related control environment is operating effectively, ensuring risk is maintained at an acceptable level.

During 2017, new and significantly revised quality arrangements and an associated framework were introduced for colleges in Scotland. The framework, How Good Is Our College? (HGIOC), builds on the existing effective internal quality arrangements within colleges and aligns with Education Scotland quality arrangements for other sectors. Through the use of HGIOC, colleges and their stakeholders identify what is working well and what needs to improve. The framework is based on the four high level principles (which in turn are underpinned by challenge questions and quality indicators):

- Leadership and quality culture;
- Delivery of learning and services to support learning;
- Outcomes and impact; and
- Capacity for improvement.



### Background

In responding to these principles, each college was asked to produce an Evaluative Report and an associated Enhancement Plan. These describe the methodology and approaches taken to evaluate and the context in which the evaluation was carried out. Evidence gathered is used to evaluate the accuracy and appropriateness of the college-devised Evaluative Report, Enhancement Plans and associated proposed grading outcomes. Submitted reports are subject to independent scrutiny and endorsement procedures. Individual college reports and associated endorsement statements are published on the Education Scotland website.

During the COVID-19 pandemic the revised quality arrangements and framework were effectively in abeyance as Colleges adapted to new delivery models which allowed teaching to continue. For some areas of the curriculum this presented specific challenges where online learning was not feasible or practical. However, in other areas of the curriculum teaching was switched to remote learning, which necessitated changes in the way that the quality of learning and teaching was monitored to ensure an optimal student experience, whilst also ensuring that mechanisms were put in place to ensure consistent application of new evaluation and moderation approaches to ensure consistency in assessing the work of students in relation to awards.



### Scope, Objectives and Overall Findings (Continued)

The table below notes the objectives for this review and records the results:

| Objective                                                                                                  | Findings |                                  |   |   |                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------|
| The objective of the audit was to obtain reasonable assurance that:                                        |          | 1                                | 2 | 3 | Actions already planned |
|                                                                                                            |          | No. of Agreed Actions            |   |   |                         |
| 1. The College’s quality procedures are being adhered to in key areas.                                     | Good     | -                                | - | - | ✓                       |
| 2. Progress is being made with implementation of the actions identified on the College’s Enhancement Plan. | Good     | -                                | - | - |                         |
| Overall Level of Assurance                                                                                 | Good     | -                                | - | - |                         |
|                                                                                                            |          | System meets control objectives. |   |   |                         |

### Audit Approach

We assessed whether the above objectives have been met through discussion with the Vice Principal for Curriculum and Quality Enhancement, the Head of Quality, and other managers involved in Quality Enhancement, and through review of relevant documentation.



### Summary of Main Findings

#### **Strengths**

- The Head of Quality has operational responsibility for overseeing quality enhancement within the College, with responsibility devolved to individual Senior Curriculum Managers (SCMs) to maintain quality standards within their part of the College. A Quality Forum is in place which allows the Head of Quality to meet with the SCMs weekly with the discussion focused around a rolling workplan which is developed using a template applied for each academic year;
- During the Covid-19 pandemic the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) introduced “special measures”, with the Head of Quality assuming a key role in reviewing and interpreting the revised guidance and identifying the implications for the College. As a result of the revised SQA guidance new processes were documented to gather the evidence required to justify awards, with the Quality Forum playing an important role in developing documentation which met the SQA requirements in a way which could be consistently applied across the College;
- During 2021/22 the College has focused heavily on developing real time data which can be accessed by SCMs via the PowerBI platform. This is supplemented by timetabling and attendance management data captured on the CELCAT software.
- Tailored templates have been developed for PowerBI and although there remains a focus around the delivery of quality enhancement tasks; mid-block reviews and meetings to discuss quality, there is now a much greater focus around real time evaluation.;
- We confirmed that the SCMs and CMs meet to discuss mid-term reviews. This provides an opportunity to examine the data and to decide whether any further reporting is required. Our discussions with individual curriculum areas confirmed that these changes have been well received by SCMs and CMs who previously had to extract and filter the information prior to any discussions around emerging issues and sensible mitigations.;
- All SCMs were asked to meet with their teams four times during the academic year to discuss specific issues which are set out in an agreed fixed agenda. The student representatives also feed into this process to ensure meaningful student engagement in quality discussions. This is informed by the outcomes from student focus groups which allow individual classes to provide feedback;
- The reports arising from the focus groups are initially fed back through the relevant CM, then the SCMs and then ultimately to the Academic Board (where general themes are examined, with a focus on linkages to academic planning);
- Each year a Stop and Check questionnaire is issued in week six in block one, with over 1,000 responses received in academic year 2021/22 (which is marginally down on the prior year). The results from the Stop and Check Survey are distilled down into a report which also provides data on retention levels;
- Students do have the ability to raise a complaint via the MyDay app, but we were advised that complaints about the quality of individual teaching staff routinely make their way to the relevant SCM;
- Within the Quality Improvement Action Plan for 2021/22 there is a specific emphasis on how to make the quality of learning and teaching better. This largely focuses around a shared aspiration to upskill staff within their own discipline, rather than focusing solely on increasing the proportion of staff who have achieved Teaching Qualification for Further Education (TQFE) accreditation;
- The College has invested in a Digital Skills Develop Team to support staff in developing new digital skills. This has been augmented by skills and training materials which can be accessed through the college intranet by staff;
- From our discussions with Faculty teams, and our review of the quality documentation provided, it is apparent that staff feel much more involved in the development of the new quality processes and the Quality Assurance tool which has been developed has been well received by the staff interviewed;
- The new risk framework has also been welcomed by staff who now feel much more involved in identifying and managing risks in their faculty. This has been embedded through the creation of Faculty Risk Registers, which are driving discussions around emerging risks and the actions required to manage these risks at faculty level;
- For academic year 2021/22 the College developed an Enhancement Plan and has been monitoring progress in delivering against the plan throughout the year.



### Summary of Main Findings

#### ***Strengths (Continued)***

- During academic year 2021/22 a meeting was held with Faculty Directors and SCMs to discuss progress with a specific focus around the SCM subject area reports and also the faculty operational plans. Quality Improvement Action Plans were also developed to identify areas where interventions were required to address unsatisfactory pockets of performance;
- It is clear from our discussions with faculty staff and our review of documentation that engagement with employers forms an important facet of the quality enhancement process as the college strives to deliver activity which meets the needs of employers and prepares students for the world of work; and
- Our discussions with faculty staff demonstrated a new level of staff involvement in curriculum development and an increased engagement in quality enhancement, driven largely by data but also recognising the freedom, which staff now have, to explore new ways of delivering learning and teaching.

#### ***Weaknesses***

No significant weaknesses were identified during our review.

### Acknowledgments

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff at the College who helped us during our review.



## Main Findings

### **Objective 1: The College's quality procedures are being adhered to in key areas.**

The Head of Quality has operational responsibility for overseeing quality enhancement within the College, with responsibility devolved to individual Senior Curriculum Managers (SCMs) to maintain quality standards within their part of the College. A Quality Forum is in place which allows the Head of Quality to meet with the SCMs weekly with the discussion focused around a rolling workplan which is developed using a template applied for each academic year.

During the Covid-19 pandemic the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) introduced "special measures", with the Head of Quality assuming a key role in reviewing and interpreting the revised guidance and identifying the implications for the College. As a result of the revised SQA guidance new processes were documented to gather the evidence required to justify awards, with the Quality Forum playing an important role in developing documentation which met the SQA requirements in a way which could be consistently applied across the College. Delays in the issue of guidance around examinations caused uncertainty during academic year 2020/21 but the Quality Forum provided the forum for discussions around how to react to the revised guidance as it was issued.

During 2021/22 the College has focused heavily on developing real time data which can be accessed by SCMs via the PowerBI platform. This is supplemented by timetabling and attendance management data captured on the CELCAT software. Tailored templates have been developed for PowerBI and although there remains a focus around the delivery of quality enhancement tasks; mid-block reviews and meetings to discuss quality, there is now a much greater focus around real time evaluation. The development of the PowerBI data has allowed the College to move to a quality assurance model, where SCMs and CMs utilise the PowerBI data to identify emerging trends. This empowers individual CMs to take appropriate action (for example by contacting a student directly).

We confirmed that the SCMs and CMs meet to discuss mid-term reviews. This provides an opportunity to examine the data and to decide whether any further reporting is required. Our discussions with individual curriculum areas confirmed that these changes have been well received by SCMs and CMs who previously had to extract and filter the information prior to any discussions around emerging issues and sensible mitigations. This allowed SCMs to review their own data and produce annual reporting for their own area for the preceding academic year.

All SCMs were asked to meet with their teams four times during the academic year to discuss specific issues which are set out in an agreed fixed agenda. The student representatives also feed into this process to ensure meaningful student engagement in quality discussions. This is informed by the outcomes from student focus groups which allow individual classes to provide feedback. This process relies heavily on the network of class representatives. There is an established feedback mechanism which ensures that the results of student focus groups are feed back to the Quality Forum to allow collective discussion around the messages arising from the focus groups and agreement on any mitigating actions required to address the issues raised. The groups selected for focus groups are discussed at the SCMs Group, which recommends the groups to be spoken to. This selection process is largely driven by the data made available through PowerBI and CELCAT. Our discussions with faculty staff highlighted very positive engagement with the staff member who conducts the Student Focus Groups and highlighted the use of a standardised toolkit which allows the need for individual CPD to be identified and also allow discussion around the effectiveness of different teaching tools. The reports arising from the focus groups are initially fed back through the relevant CM, then the SCMs and then ultimately to the Academic Board (where general themes are examined, with a focus on linkages to academic planning).



### **Objective 1: The College's quality procedures are being adhered to in key areas.**

Each year a Stop and Check questionnaire is issued in week six in block one, with over 1,000 responses received in academic year 2021/22 (which is marginally down on the prior year). The results from the Stop and Check Survey are distilled down into a report which also provides data on retention levels. These questionnaires capture information on student learning and also other information which can influence learning, such as travel issues and the teaching environment.

Students do have the ability to raise a complaint via the MyDay app, but we were advised that complaints about the quality of individual teaching staff routinely make their way to the relevant SCM.

Within the Quality Improvement Action Plan for 2021/22 there is a specific emphasis on how to make the quality of learning and teaching better. This largely focuses around a shared aspiration to upskill staff within their own discipline, rather than focusing solely on increasing the proportion of staff who have achieved Teaching Qualification for Further Education (TQFE) accreditation. In particular, 2021/22 has seen a particular focus on mirroring developments which are happening in industry. The data around TQFE rates has been examined and specific funding of circa £100K was earmarked in 2021/22 to allow ten members of teaching staff to achieve formal accreditation.

Recognising the changes in delivery models the College has invested in a Digital Skills Develop Team to support staff in developing new digital skills. This has been augmented by skills and training materials which can be accessed through the website by staff. Staff also highlighted the work which has been progressed with Glasgow Clyde College (Project Delta) on the use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for storing information on staff continuous professional development (CPD).

The discussions at the weekly Quality Forum focusses on SCM level trends and College and Faculty level data. This work is supported by the Director of Planning and performance who has fortnightly one to one discussions with SCMs, which then inform the College-wide discussion around emerging quality issues.

From our discussions with Faculty teams, and our review of the quality documentation provided, it is apparent that staff feel much more involved in the development of the new quality processes and the Quality Assurance tool which has been developed has been well received by the staff interviewed. The new risk framework has also been welcomed by staff who now feel much more involved in identifying and managing risks in their faculty. This has been embedded through the creation of Faculty Risk Registers, which are driving discussions around emerging risks and the actions required to manage these risks at faculty level. At the time of our fieldwork work was ongoing to explore how this faculty level risk management activity could be built into the quality processes moving forward.

Therefore, based on the evidence gathered, we are comfortable that the College's quality procedures are understood across all faculties and are being adhered to in practice.

### **Objective 2: Progress is being made with implementation of the actions identified on the College's Enhancement Plan.**

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic Evaluative Reviews were being conducted and the Enhancement Plan was being updated and delivered. However, the onset of the pandemic meant that the previous meetings between the College and the assigned Education Scotland lead ceased and the requirement to conduct the Evaluative Review and update/report on progress in relation to the Enhancement Plan were removed. No instructions were issued to Colleges on how they should reshape their quality activity in the absence of the requirement to conduct the Evaluative Reviews and update/monitor delivery of the Enhancement Plan.

For academic year 2021/22 the College did develop an Enhancement Plan and has been monitoring progress in delivering against the plan throughout the year. Although 'How Good is Our College' (HGIOC) is still in place, the 2021/22 Enhancement Plan made no direct reference to this framework. The plan took into consideration the trade union opposition to the observation of teaching unless these observations were conducted by Education Scotland.

During academic year 2021/22 a meeting was held with Faculty Directors and SCMs to discuss progress with a specific focus around the SCM subject area reports and also the faculty operational plans. Quality Improvement Action Plans were also developed to identify areas where interventions were required to address unsatisfactory pockets of performance. Support was provided by the Head of Quality to SCMs in identifying the areas where further work was required. This process was designed to ensure critical evaluation of learning and teaching practices and also the recruitment of staff into the College.

It is clear from our discussions with faculty staff and our review of documentation that engagement with employers forms an important facet of the quality enhancement process as the college strives to deliver activity which meets the needs of employers and prepares students for the world of work. In particular, the development of the Youth Hub was emphasised as an important step forward, with the college established as a partner organisation. This activity is designed to bring 70 young people into the College with a direct connection to Job Centre Advisers and local employers.

Our discussions with faculty staff demonstrated a new level of staff involvement in curriculum development and an increased engagement in quality enhancement, driven largely by data but also recognising the freedom, which staff now have, to explore new ways of delivering learning and teaching and the link to targets and the risk appetite set by the Board, which allows room for experimentation. There was also a demonstrable ownership in the targets set for 2022/23 amongst the staff at faculty level interviewed.

As described above, faculty staff described an enhanced level of engagement in the quality processes and the level of discussion around the data and the actions required to address areas of underperformance demonstrates a commitment to quality improvement at CM, SCM and Faculty Director levels.



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