

GLASGOW KELVIN COLLEGE
BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
ACADEMIC BOARD
MINUTE

**Minute of the meeting of the Academic Board held on Friday 01 November 2024 at
1.30pm via MS Teams**

1. Sederunt

Robin Ashton (Chair);
Tracy Leavy (Director of Faculty and Community Engagement);
Peter Brown (Director of Faculty, Apprenticeships and Skills);
Jason Quinn (Director of Digital and Information Services);
James Davidson (Lecturer);
Gerry Harkins (Lecturer);
George McGuire (Senior Curriculum Manager);
Gary Sharp (Student Support Services Manager);
Lesley Phee (Organisational Development Business Partner);
Monica McKerlie (Head of Student Support Services);
Iain Cameron (Lecturer);
Amrit Bedi (Equalities and Inclusion Lead);
Mae Smillie (Head of Student Information Services);
Arlene Sweeney (Learner, Engagement Officer); and
Alastair McGhee (Director of Student Experience and Enterprise)

In Attendance

John Clarke; Senior Curriculum Manager; and
Debbie Friel (Senior Committee Coordinator) (purpose of the minute);

2. Apologies

Ryan Donachie (President, Student Association);
Chantell McCallum (President, Student Association);
Katie McAnenay (Team Leader, Library Services); and
John Gallagher (Quality Enhancement & Development Manager);

3. Academic Board Terms of Reference

R Ashton shared on screen, the draft revised Terms of Reference (TOR). He noted that members had had the opportunity to review the TOR and proposed changes at the Academic Board, held on 30th August 2024. Members reviewed again these proposed changes and acknowledged the additional amendments as follows:

- Replace the terms "President" and "Vice President" with the term "Executive."
- Include reference within the remit to student engagement and learner feedback arrangements, and student advice, guidance, and learner support arrangements.

Members noted that a revised version would be presented to the Learning and Teaching Committee at its meeting scheduled for 20th November, for approval.

4. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

5. Minute of the Previous Meeting held on 30 August 2024

The minute of the meeting was accepted as an accurate record of the business conducted on 30 August 2024, following the amendment noted below:

Item 13: Summary of Student Satisfaction Feedback

M McKerlie requested a correction to the minute, noting that she had queried the 100% satisfaction figure for "Easterhouse Library," not "Student Funding and Finance Services".

6. Matters arising from Minute of Previous Meetings held on 30 August 2024

Item 07 – Education Scotland Annual Engagement Report

R Ashton noted that the New Quality Arrangements would be presented to a future meeting of the Academic Board for review.

Item 11 – Indicative 2022-23 Retention Data and 2023-24 Recruitment Data

R Ashton noted that the Enrolment and Withdrawal Data would be presented during this meeting of the Academic Board.

7. Student Association Priorities Update and Partnership Agreement

The Learner Engagement Officer informed members that the report sought to inform the Committee on the progress of the Student Associations (SA) key initiatives.

A Sweeney reported that all 240 class representatives had been appointed, and SPARQs-led training for them had taken place. She added that in-house training was also planned, pending the arrival of training materials. Additionally, the Halloween challenge, as organised by the SA raised funds of £126.50 which would be contributed towards student flat pack meals for those students currently experiencing financial difficulties due to increased living costs. Members discussed the successful Campus Wardrobe initiative, and L Phee noted that it would be further promoted during the staff development week. A Sweeney informed the committee that a funding application for £400 had been submitted to support the College pantry, with a response anticipated within the next couple of weeks.

She continued to advise, that the Partnership Agreement was presented to the Board of Management at its meeting on 9th October 2024 and is included as Appendix 1 for members' reference. She added that the Partnership Agreement had been revised to include a section highlighting the College and SA's commitment to working together to raise awareness of the SA's profile and support its activities.

R Ashton thanked the Learner Engagement Officer for her report and emphasised his support for in-house training. He highlighted that such training provided a more tailored experience for students and helped maintain consistent engagement throughout the academic year.

Members of the Academic Board agreed to note the contents of the report and its appendix.

8. Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTAS)

The Vice Principal of Curriculum and Quality Enhancement presented the Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Strategy (LTAS). He highlighted the College's commitment to promoting innovative and inclusive educational practices. He added that the strategy aims to support students in achieving their full potential through engaging in digital and blended learning approaches. It focuses on promoting developing essential skills such as literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving. He added that good progress had been made with the Strategy with scope to continue this.

Members discussed the draft strategy and considered teaching staff feedback resulting from a previous consultation session. R Ashton emphasised that some of the feedback underscored that it was essential to have appropriate rooming/teaching spaces, facilities, and resources. In addition, members noted that a further consultation with Student Class Representatives has been arranged and would take place on 5 November 2024.

R Ashton informed members that the LTAS would be presented to the Learning and Teaching Committee for approval at its meeting scheduled for 20th November 2024. He encouraged Committee members to share any additional comments on the Strategy.

Members of the Academic Board agreed to endorse the draft strategy.

9. Teaching Development Activity Update

J Clarke, Senior Curriculum Manager, spoke to the contents of his report and informed members that 2024/25 saw a continuation and expansion of our Teaching Development initiatives. He highlighted that these fell into three main strands;

- **Teaching Development Leads (TDLs):** Lecturers submit project proposals, and selected participants receive reduced teaching hours to develop initiatives beneficial to their students, with some projects carrying cross-college potential. J Clarke noted that the previous report to the Academic Board outlined examples of projects live in 2023/24. Some of these are now complete, with outputs being implemented in 2024/25; others are continuing, and there are three new projects for this AY, Block 1.
- **Teaching Activity Groups (TAGs):** These cross-curricular teams support collaborative development, sharing practices, and exploring innovations.
- **Teaching Exchange Activity (TEA):**
Launched this year, TEA promotes voluntary peer observation to enhance teaching practices. The process was finalised in June 2024, for implementation in 2024/25. The programme is voluntary, though Teaching Activity Group members are being asked to participate throughout AY 2024/25 as a pilot group.

J Clarke informed members that partnerships with Glasgow Clyde College and the University of Stirling offer structured professional development opportunities. He emphasised that these collaborations are integral to the newly established Professional Development Forum, which focuses on continuous improvement in teaching.

Committee members discussed and expressed their support for these initiatives. Ian Cameron informed members of his involvement with the teaching exchange activity group, noting the strong positivity and enthusiasm from cross-faculty groups. He emphasised the value of hearing from other faculty areas and on their innovative and

creative approaches in utilising various materials.

R Ashton thanked J Clarke for presenting his report and asked that a further update on the Teaching Development Activities be provided at a future meeting of the Committee.

Members of the Academic Board agreed to note the contents of the report.

10. Quality Update

The Vice Principal of Curriculum and Quality spoke to the content of the report that sought to provide members with an update on current Quality issues. R Ashton highlighted that during the previous academic session, the College was asked to host the following external verification events:

- 15 regulated qualifications; and
- 39 HNVQ qualifications

R Ashton noted that the majority of these events were conducted successfully, with the verification groups expressing high confidence in the resources, candidate support, and internal assessment and verification processes. He mentioned that some events had been postponed. T Leavy confirmed that two events within her faculty area, Communication and Sport, had been affected but expressed optimism that these issues would be resolved.

R Ashton also mentioned that thirteen regulated qualifications had been selected for external verification in 2024-25, which are outlined in Appendix 1 of the report. Additionally, thirteen group awards were chosen and are listed for members' reference in Appendix 2.

Members noted that J Gallagher would provide an update on the outstanding EVs at the next meeting of the Academic Board.

Members of the Academic Board agreed to note the content of the report and its appendices.

11. Curriculum Review and 2025-26 Curriculum Development Priorities

The Vice Principal for Curriculum and Quality Enhancement presented a report on the curriculum review and development priorities for 2025-26. The review outlined regional employment trends indicating projected demand in health and social care, science, and management roles, with insights from Skills Development Scotland predicting economic stagnation and the growing influence of AI and environmental considerations. Application levels for 2024-25 were consistent with the previous year but showed a 15% decline from historical figures, attributed to course consolidation and a shift in student preferences towards universities.

Despite this, application interest continued to outstrip available places, particularly in health and social care, engineering, and ESOL. Recruitment performance data revealed that some areas met or exceeded class size targets, while others fell short. To improve student outcomes, the College proposed maintaining the split-course model for SCQF level 4 and 5 courses following successful trials. Future curriculum development will focus on aligning course offerings with labour market needs and refining provision where necessary.

R Ashton noted that a productive curriculum planning workshop was held with Faculty management, where valuable insights in subject area level were shared. This

information, which will be distributed among the group, is expected to be highly beneficial for curriculum planning.

M McKerlie pointed out that school leavers typically enroll in level 4/5 courses and questioned whether the college might benefit from adjusting its offerings. Specifically, if there is a shortage of applications for certain courses, she asked if would it be advantageous to develop level 4/5 courses in areas that have higher demand. R Ashton noted that the College was not aiming to reduce its level 4/5 offerings but rather to restructure them into two 18-week model courses, ensuring a continued strong footprint in this area.

P Brown highlighted that this model had been highly effective in his department, particularly for Electrical and Mechanical Engineering courses, which have shown improved outcomes. R Ashton added that one of the College's key priorities in its equality objectives is enhancing results for younger learners. He pointed out that this goal has already seen some promising progress reflected in this year's results.

J Quinn noted the SDS paper on the regional skills assessment, expressing his appreciation for how it was presented and highlighted through the Training, Growth and Improvement Forum (TGIF) Friday meetings with SCMs and CMs. He commended the use of a quiz during the meeting as an effective tool for engaging staff and making the statistics more relatable. This approach, he noted, not only enhanced communication but also had a meaningful impact on staff engagement and future planning strategies.

Members of the Academic Board agreed to consider, discuss and note the contents of the report.

12. Student Outcomes Review

R Ashton presented the Student Outcomes Review paper to the committee, outlining the challenges faced in assessing final student outcomes for the 2023-24 academic year due to industrial action and a subsequent boycott. He noted that results for Further Education (FE) courses had largely been processed, showing an improvement in full-time course retention and overall success rates. However, part-time FE courses experienced a decline in success rates despite better retention. For Higher Education (HE) courses, while retention and partial success improved for full-time courses, outstanding results made it difficult to assess final outcomes. Increased withdrawals in part-time HE courses were highlighted, with reviews underway to address these issues.

R Ashton invited questions or comment.

J Davidson observed that at course level, the start of this academic session, marked by larger class cohorts, has brought a noticeable reduction in student withdrawals. He noted that the post-COVID malaise appeared to be fading, resulting in a more positive atmosphere throughout the College. He further highlighted that the welcoming and refreshed aesthetic of the campus significantly contributed to this upbeat and engaging environment, with many students choosing to stay on campus during breaks. He said that this shift had made a substantial difference, creating a more engaging and supportive atmosphere compared to a few years ago.

I Cameron agreed and noted a similar positive shift among his science students. He remarked that in the period immediately following COVID, there was a pervasive sense of helplessness that was demoralising for both students and staff. However, he observed that this sentiment has now dissipated.

R Ashton remarked that looking at last academic year's results, even amidst industrial action, indicated promising prospects for this academic year.

13. Review of the Quality Arrangements 2023-24

The Vice Principal of Curriculum and Quality reported that the College introduced a new risk-based approach to quality enhancement during the 2023-24 academic year, which focused on improving course outcomes by categorising all programmes as low (Green), medium (Amber), or high-risk (Red) based on students' likelihood of successful completion.

R Ashton spoke on the report which sought to provide an overview of the implementation of this revised approach to risk management across the 2023-24 academic year. He emphasised that overall nineteen of the fifty-two programmes on Impact Plans achieved green status at the end of session 2023-24 and were no longer considered to be at medium Risk. The remaining programmes at medium-risk showed marginal change during 2023-24, although it was recognised that these programmes would likely benefit from an additional year on an impact plan.

J Clarke noted his involvement with the impact process and remarked that it proved to be useful as it added focus and drive.

P Brown emphasised the importance of the quality system approach, which identifies courses facing challenges and at risk. He added that one of the key advantages of this system is its ability to set supportive targets and encourage open dialogue. This dialogue prompts exploration of the underlying issues and potential solutions, such as the adoption of new equipment or strategies. Moreover, applying this approach consistently across all courses is a significant benefit.

R Ashton agreed, noting that the process adopted a more focused approach, which was beneficial for the College.

J Quinn added that, from a non-curriculum perspective, the process had the potential to turn struggling courses into successes, fostering a more positive atmosphere on campus. He highlighted that this is a positive step forward.

Members of the Academic Board agreed to note the contents of the report.

14. Block One Student Feedback

The Vice Principal of Curriculum and Quality informed members that the report sought to provide the student feedback gathered through various channels, including the Stop and Check survey, a "Meet the Managers" session, and upcoming focus groups. The survey, conducted in weeks four and five of Block 1, received 2,075 responses, reflecting overall positive sentiment. Key metrics included 93.4% of students feeling they are on the right course, and 96% understanding course requirements, with high satisfaction ratings for the support and teaching methods provided. He added that the report received over 500 comments from students, which are accessible to the course teams, discussed during their team meetings, and responded to accordingly.

The "Meet the Managers" session, held in collaboration with the Student Association, enabled student representatives to address several concerns, including teaching quality, ICT resources, student support services, and campus facilities. Issues raised included requests for additional academic and career support resources, consistent technology access, and expanded facilities like the gym and library. Campus management is addressing identified challenges such as cleanliness and accessibility.

in facilities, while additional feedback from focus groups will further guide improvements.

R Ashton added that members should be aware that the next stop and check survey is due to be circulated w/c 4 November 2024.

M McKerlie asked that the question regarding student support services should be reworded to encompass all student services. R Ashton expressed his agreement and confirmed that the Quality Enhancement and Development Manager would be asked to review and rephrase the question.

Members of the Academic Board agreed note the contents of the report.

15. Early Withdrawal Update Report

The Director of Digital and Information Services provided an update on early student withdrawals for 2024-25, noting significant progress in retention compared to previous years. Current data shows early withdrawal rates for full-time further and higher education remain low and consistent with 2023-24, marking a substantial improvement over pre-pandemic figures. Key contributors to this success include comprehensive pre-course engagement, enhanced induction activities, and course restructuring aimed at aligning better with student needs. Additional measures, such as increased mental health support, have reinforced retention efforts, demonstrating the College's commitment to reducing early withdrawals. These initiatives have effectively reduced early withdrawal rates, which are projected to remain low.

Members of the Academic Board agreed to note the contents of the report.

Risk, Equality and Data Protection - Discussion

16. Resource Implications – 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.

17. 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.

18. 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.

19. 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.

20. 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.

21. 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.

22. Closure

The meeting closed at 3pm

23. Date of Next Meeting

07 February 2024 - MS Teams