30 July 2024

Liz Connolly
Principal & Chief Executive
West College Scotland

Dear Ms Connolly,

A team of HM Inspectors from Education Scotland visited West College Scotland in May 2024 to undertake an Annual Engagement Visit. During our visit, we talked to learners, staff, and stakeholders, and worked closely with the senior managers.

The team found the following major strengths in the college's work:

**Learner progress and outcomes.**

The overall rate of successful completion for learners on full-time further education (FE) programmes have been above the sector norm for the last three years and in AY 2022/23 attainment further improved. The overall rate for learner withdrawals for part-time Higher Education (HE) programmes have been lower than the sector norm for the last three years. Learner withdrawal rates in AY 2022/23 for learners who are from the most deprived postcode areas, or who have a disability, or who are care experienced are lower than sector norms. Success rates for these learners have also improved. Senior managers have continued to invest constructively in support services which help learners complete their programmes. Support services have responded well to an increase in demand for assistance. Success rates for learners from lower SIMD deciles, care experienced learners, learners from an ethnic minority and learners with a declared disability have improved. Senior managers monitor performance indicator (PI) information and learner feedback well and are aware of the areas which need particular support.

**Approaches to assuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching including professional updating.**

Most teaching staff hold the Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE) or equivalent. Lecturing staff are provided with appropriate opportunities to share and learn from good practice, and to access appropriate professional learning activities around learning, teaching, assessment, and support. Managers and staff feel empowered to make changes to programmes and delivery to improve the learner experience. Curriculum teams engage directly with employers and use this autonomy well. They use feedback from employers well to design and deliver appropriate programmes. Staff, in the majority of curriculum areas are making effective use of college data and learner feedback. This is helping staff make informed decisions and implement changes based on evidence. Lecturers in almost all areas have embraced the delivery of meta-skills well.

**Learner Engagement**

The Student Association (SA) area represented on the Board and key college groups. The SA have supported well the recruitment of class representatives, and these are in place for the majority of full-time class groups. The majority of learners are satisfied with teaching staff and speak positively about their lecturers who they find are approachable, helpful, and supportive. This enables learners to seek help when needed and improves their experience and outcomes. In the majority of areas, learners have appropriate opportunities to provide feedback to curriculum teams through informal discussion, surveys, and engagement at curriculum team meetings. Subsequently, student voice is influencing and informing improvements to delivery of the curriculum and the wider learning experience. The Active Sports Coordinator has increased the range of participation opportunities for students and staff. These opportunities are valued and are helping improve the physical and mental wellbeing of students and staff. In addition, it has created a stronger sense of community throughout the college.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the senior managers:

- There are several subject areas where learner retention and success rates are low and require improvement

- Teaching staff are overly reliant on prompting from curriculum and quality leaders (CQLs) regarding learner personal learning support plans (PLSP) information. In a few cases this has resulted in staff being unaware of individual learner needs and therefore not able to make the necessary adjustments.

- Arrangements for the systematic review of learning and teaching are not sufficiently consistent. It is unclear how the college wide development of learning and teaching is progressing.

- College managers and the SA have been unable to recruit and retain an appropriate number of sabbatical officers. This has impacted on opportunities for social activities, campaigns, and the sharing of responsibilities across a wider group of officers.

- Learner participation in the Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey is very low, at 26.9% for FE and 18.9% for HE.

- Most learners are not aware of the role and purpose of the SA

**Main points for action**

- The college should continue to address low rates of learner attainment in part-time FE and full-time HE provision.

- Senior managers should ensure the plans for the improved support for the Students Association are delivered and monitored.

**What happens next?**

We are confident that the college has made satisfactory progress and has the capacity to continue to improve. We will continue to monitor progress with regular contact through the link HM Inspector.

Dr John Laird
HM Inspector

# Annual Engagement Visit Report

## West College Scotland

23 July 2024

| College Principal | Liz Connolly |
|---|---|
| Annual Engagement Visit Date | 21 May 2024 |
| College Nominee | Cathy MacNab |
| Lead HMI | John Laird |

# 1.    Background

Annual Engagement Visits (AEVs) are planned collaboratively between the college, HM Inspectors, and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). During the AEV, the team focussed on the progress made on improvement priorities and the outcomes of previous engagement with HM Inspectors. HM Inspectors met with staff, learners, and other stakeholders. This report outlines the findings from the visit, and includes aspects of positive practice, aspects for improvement, and any associated main points for action. The report will be shared with the college Principal, college Board of Management, and/or Regional Strategic Body. An accompanying short report will be published on Education Scotland's website.

During the AEV the team explored the following overarching themes: learner progress and outcomes, approaches to assuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching including professional updating, and learner engagement.

The team also reviewed progress against actions identified during our engagement in academic year (AY) 2022-23.

# 2.    The college and its context

West College Scotland is a large regional college delivering provision from its four main campuses in Clydebank; Paisley; Greenock Finnart Street; and Greenock Waterfront. The college offers a range of full-time, part-time, and online learning opportunities from Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels 2-10.

The college delivers just over 140,000 SFC credits of activity offering provision to over 25,000 students. The college works with 33 schools in four local authorities and has articulation arrangements with some universities. In the last two years there have been a significant number of changes in management roles and personnel. Over recent years, the college has undergone significant change and has had estates issues to address in some of the buildings.

# 3. Summary of findings

## 3.1 Learner progress and outcomes

### Summary of key performance indicator information

- The overall rate of successful completion for learners on full-time further education (FE) programmes has been above the sector norm for the last three years. In AY 2022-23, attainment rates have improved by 4%.

- The overall rate for learner withdrawal for part-time higher education (HE) programmes has been stable and lower than the sector norm for the last three years. Early withdrawals are at 6.7% for AY 2022/23.

- Part-time HE successful completion rates have increased by five percentage points and are now around the sector norm. Full-time HE completion rates have improved by 2.6%, however, they are still below the sector norm.

- Learner withdrawal rates in AY 2022-23 for learners who are from the most deprived postcode areas; learners who have a disability; and those from a care experienced background are lower than sector norms. Success rates for these groups of learners have also improved.

- The number of full-time FE learners successfully completing their programmes in social subjects, science, performing arts, engineering, construction, nautical studies, science, special programmes, and sport subject areas are all above the sector norm.

- The number of full-time HE learners successfully completing their programmes in science and nautical studies subject areas are significantly above sector norm.

- The overall successful completion rate for learners on part-time FE programmes has been below the sector norm for the last three years by almost 7%.

- The overall successful completion rate for learners on full-time HE programmes has been below the sector norm for the last five years.

- The numbers of full-time FE learners successfully completing their programmes in a few subject areas are significantly below the sector norm.

- The numbers of full-time HE learners successfully completing their programmes in almost half the subject areas are significantly below the sector norm.

**Evaluative commentary**

## Equity, attainment, and achievement for all learners (QI 3.2)

**Areas of positive progress**

- Senior managers closely monitor performance indicator (PI) information and learner feedback to identify subject areas which need particular support. Curriculum review meetings are attended by senior managers and are seen as supportive. During these meetings staff identify areas for improvement and schedule appropriate support arrangements.

- Heads of Sector have assumed a wider range of responsibilities in relation to programme management and performance. Following this change of responsibilities, learner retention and achievement rates have improved in the majority of curriculum areas.

- The majority of curriculum teams design new ways to deliver programmes which are more appropriate for learner groups. The use of online and hybrid learning, family friendly programmes, and on-site delivery are used well in many instances to improve learner retention and success rates.

- Support service teams respond well to increased demand from learners for assistance. For example, the number of care experienced learners has increased from just under 1,000 to almost 1,500 this year. Although demand from learners has increased, success rates for learners from the lower SIMD deciles, care experienced learners, learners from an ethnic minority and learners with a declared disability have improved.

- Senior managers continue to invest constructively in support services which help learners to complete programmes. For example, three wellbeing officers and six counsellors help learners deal with their mental health issues.

- Learners are encouraged to be more collaborative within their class groups and across disciplines. This helps to foster a sense of belonging and is improving learner attendance and retention.

- Staff at all levels engage effectively with employers. In almost all areas, employers are consulted on programme design to ensure they meet employer need. Good use is made of contacts developed through Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) placements, employer forums and through contributions from former learners. These approaches are working well and build upon contacts previously established through the Flexible Workforce Development Fund.

- Staff extended the learner induction timeframe to help learners settle into their programmes. This new approach is working well and has resulted in increased uptake of support services and has supported a positive impact on learner outcomes.

- All curriculum teams engage in review of programmes and use data well to deliver support and monitor learner progression in programmes.

**Areas for development**

- There are several subject areas where retention and success rates are low and require improvement.

- Teaching staff are overly reliant on prompting from curriculum and quality leaders (CQLs) regarding learner personal learning support plans (PLSP) information. In a few cases this has resulted in staff being unaware of individual learner needs and therefore not able to make the necessary adjustments.

## 3.2 Approaches to assuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching including professional updating.

### Leadership for improvement of learning and teaching (QI 1.2)

**Areas of positive progress**

- Managers and staff feel empowered to make changes to teaching approaches and programme design to improve the learner experience. In almost all subject areas there are examples of changes being made promptly in response to learner feedback to help support improvement in retention and success rates.

- Most teaching staff hold a teaching qualification in further education (TQFE) or equivalent, however, a few staff do not undertake an annual professional development review to help identify their professional learning requirements.

- Lecturing staff have appropriate opportunities to share and learn from good practice and to access appropriate professional learning activities around learning, teaching, assessment, and support approaches. They are also supported well to access professional skills updating, build their confidence and extend their industry contacts.

- Curriculum staff feel empowered to engage directly with employers and use autonomy well. In some subject areas such as health care, major national employers are the key target group, and in other areas such as hairdressing, it is small enterprises that are the contact focus. Staff use employer feedback well to design and deliver appropriate learning programmes.

- Managers and teaching teams regularly review programmes to prepare learners for progression into employment or further studies.

- Teaching staff in the majority of curriculum areas make effective use of college data and learner feedback. This helps them make informed decisions and implement appropriate improvement strategies.

**Areas for development**

- College arrangements for review of learning and teaching are not sufficiently consistent. Within individual curriculum teams there are mechanisms for reflection on the quality of delivery, however, it is unclear how the college wide development of learning and teaching is progressing.

## Learning, teaching, and assessment (QI 2.3)

**Areas of positive progress**

- A few subject areas use online and hybrid learning particularly well to ensure efficient and effective curriculum delivery. Within subject areas such as pharmacy and engineering, online approaches allow successful subject delivery to a wider learner group who are in employment or study on a distance learning basis.

- Lecturers in almost all subject areas embrace the delivery of meta-skills well. Almost 1,000 learners use a Meta Performance (MP) tracker to record and reflect on their meta-skills. There are further developments in place to help learners identify meta-skills at the start of their programme. This helps learners to reflect on their learning and develop more effective career management tools.

- Curriculum teams in a few subject areas pilot the new Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) "Next Gen" higher national awards. These include a greater emphasis on meta-skills, and a more coherent approach to learning and assessment. These new programmes in general are going well, with early indications of improved retention and success rates.

- Teaching staff benefit purposefully from attendance at all-staff professional development days where they collaborate, share knowledge, and integrate new teaching strategies into their teaching practice.

- The majority of learners are satisfied with teaching staff and speak positively about their lecturers who they find are approachable, helpful, and supportive. This enables learners to seek help when needed and improves their experience.

**Areas for development**

- None identified

## 3.3    Learner Engagement

## Learners leading learning (QI 1.2)

**Areas of positive progress**

- Class representatives recruitment is supported meaningfully by the students' association (SA). There are class representatives in place for the majority of full-time class groups.

- College managers and the SA have developed a new operating model for the coming year. This was built on reflection on what has worked well, and what requires improvement, within the current year.

- In the majority of areas, learners have appropriate opportunities to provide feedback to curriculum teams through informal discussion, surveys, and engagement during curriculum team meetings. As a result, the student voice is influencing and informing improvements to curriculum delivery and the wider learning experience.

- The Active Sports Coordinator provides helpful exercise and sporting activities for learners and college staff. These opportunities are valued and are helping improve the physical and mental wellbeing of all. In addition, it helps to create a strong sense of community throughout the college.

**Areas for development**

- College managers and the SA have not been able to recruit and retain an appropriate group of sabbatical officers. This has limited opportunities for social activities, campaigns, and the sharing of responsibilities across a wider group of officers.

- Learner participation in the Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey is very low, at 26.9% for FE and 18.9% for HE for session 2022-23.

- Only 25% of the class representatives in place have participated in training to help prepare them for contributing to evaluation and planning for improvement activities.

## Evaluation leading to improvement (QI 1.4)

**Areas of positive progress**

- Programme delivery and performance is reviewed systematically by senior managers. Staff understand the curriculum review and self-evaluation processes well and value the supportive environment that senior staff have created.

- College managers recognise the issues regarding the operation of the SA and have put plans in place to revise and support an improved model for 2024-25.

**Areas for development**

- Most learners are not aware of the role and purpose of the SA.

### 3.4    Update on previous Education Scotland evaluative activities AY 2022-23

Since our last visit, the college has made appropriate progress on most of the identified areas for improvement and have taken steps to address the main point for action. As the college continues to develop new digital initiatives to improve and enhance the learner and staff experience, it now ensures that users benefit from early involvement in the design and implementation process. However, the areas for development relating to part-time FE and full-time HE learner success rates and the operation of the Students' Association have not yet been fully addressed.

## 4.    Main Points for Action

The following main points for action are required:

- Senior managers should ensure the plans for improved support for the students' association are delivered and monitored.

- The college should continue to address low learner attainment rates on part-time FE and full-time HE programmes.

## 5.     What happens next?

We are confident that the college has made satisfactory progress and has the capacity to continue to improve. We will continue to monitor progress with regular contact through the link HM Inspector.

**Dr John Laird**
**HM Inspector**

## Annexe 1 Evaluative Terms

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

| | |
|---|---|
| All | 100% |
| Almost all | 91%-99% |
| Most | 75%-90% |
| Majority | 50%-74% |
| Minority/less than half | 15%-49% |
| A few | less than 15% |

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.

## Full-time FE

| College | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Withdrawal** | **Partial Success** | **Completed successfully** |
| **2019-20** | 20.2% | 13% | 66.8% |
| **2020-21** | 22.7% | 10.6% | 66.8% |
| **2021-22** | 26.1% | 10.6% | 63.3% |
| **2022-23** | 22.8% | 9.9% | 67.3% |
| **National sector performance** | | | |
| | **Withdrawal** | **Partial Success** | **Completed successfully** |
| **2018-19** | 24.7% | 10.1% | 65.2% |
| **2019-20** | 20.8% | 13.2% | 66.0% |
| **2020-21** | 27.3% | 11.7% | 60.9% |
| **2021-22** | 29.3% | 11.7% | 59.0% |
| **2000-23** | 25.3% | 11.1% | 63.6% |

## Part-time FE

| College | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Withdrawal** | **Partial Success** | **Completed successfully** |
| **2020-21** | 12.2% | 17.9% | 69.9% |
| **2021-22** | 11.7% | 18.5% | 69.7% |
| **2022-23** | 10.8% | 20.2% | 69% |
| **National sector performance** | | | |
| | **Withdrawal** | **Partial Success** | **Completed successfully** |
| **2019-20** | 9.5% | 12.5% | 78.0% |
| **2020-21** | 10.1% | 13.7% | 76.2% |
| **2021-22** | 10.7% | 13.0% | 76.3% |
| **2022-23** | 10.6% | 12.2% | 77.3% |

## Full-time HE

| College | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Withdrawal** | **Partial Success** | **Completed successfully** |
| **2019-20** | 18% | 13% | 69.1% |
| **2020-21** | 18.3% | 14.7% | 67% |
| **2021-22** | 23.8% | 19.3% | 56.9% |
| **2022-23** | 24.2% | 16.3% | 59.5% |
| **National sector performance** | | | |
| | **Withdrawal** | **Partial Success** | **Completed successfully** |
| **2019-20** | 14.9% | 11.7% | 73.4% |
| **2020-21** | 17.6% | 10.9% | 71.6% |
| **2021-22** | 23.6% | 13.9% | 62.5% |
| **2022-23** | 20.6% | 14% | 65.5% |

**Part-time HE**

| College | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Withdrawal** | **Partial Success** | **Completed successfully** |
| **2020-21** | 3.3% | 11.5% | 85.3% |
| **2021-22** | 6.5% | 21.7% | 71.8% |
| **2022-23** | 6.7% | 16.3% | 77% |
| National sector performance | | | |
| | **Withdrawal** | **Partial Success** | **Completed successfully** |
| **2019-20** | 8.2% | 13.7% | 78.1% |
| **2020-21** | 9.2% | 9.9% | 80.9% |
| **2021-22** | 9.5% | 11.7% | 78.8% |
| **2022-23** | 9.4% | 12.0% | 78.6% |

| West College Scotland 2022/23 | Enrolled | % Completed Successful | % Partial Success | % Withdrawal |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Care Experienced | 990 | 57% | 18.4% | 24.6% |
| Disability | 3,520 | 60.8% | 17.9% | 21.3% |
| Ethnic minority | 785 | 63.1% | 16.9% | 20% |
| 10% most deprived postcode | 2,815 | 61.1% | 16.8% | 22.1% |
| 20% most deprived postcode | 4,740 | 61.8% | 16.6% | 21.6% |

# West College Scotland Board Meeting
## 07 October 2024

**Annual Engagement Visit**
**Stephen McGregor HMI Education Scotland**

## Context

Annual Engagement Visits (AEVs) are planned collaboratively between the college, HM Inspectors, and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

## Annual Engagement Visit (AEV)

The AEV took place on 21-22nd May 2024 with a team of two HM Inspectors (one being the college link – Dr John Laird, who has regular contact with college), an associate assessor and a student team member. During our visit, we talked to learners, staff, and stakeholders, and worked closely with the senior managers.

The team explored a number of themes and reviewed progress against actions identified during our engagement in academic year (AY) 2022-23

The management team were given informal verbal feedback at the end of the visit.
A report (not published) that outlined the findings was sent to the college.
An accompanying short report is published on Education Scotland's website.

## Main findings

26 areas of positive practice
7 areas for development

**Areas of positive progress**

**Learner progress and outcomes**
- Successful completion for learners on full-time further education (FE) programmes.
- Support services have responded well to an increase in demand for student assistance.
- Success rates for lower SIMD deciles, care experienced, ethnic minority and learners with a declared disability have improved.
- Senior managers monitor Performance Indicator (PI) information.

**Approaches to assuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching including professional updating**
- Teaching Qualification in Further Education & career-long professional learning.
- Managers and staff feel empowered to make changes to programmes and delivery to improve the learner experience.
- Staff making effective use of college data and learner feedback - informed decisions and implement changes based on evidence
- Delivery of meta-skills.

**Learner Engagement**
- The Student Association (SA) have representation on the Board and key college groups.

- Recruitment of class representatives.
- The majority of learners are satisfied with teaching staff and speak positively about their lecturers.
- Student voice is influencing and informing improvements to delivery of the curriculum and the wider learning experience.
- The Active Sports Coordinator has increased helpful participation opportunities for students and staff.

**Areas for development**

- There are several subject areas where retention and success rates are low and require improvement.
- College arrangements for review of learning and teaching are not sufficiently consistent.
- College managers and the SA have not been able to recruit and retain an appropriate group of sabbatical officers.
- The level of learner participation in the Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey is very low.
- Only 25% of the class representatives in place participated in training.
- Most learners are not aware of the role and purpose of the SA.

The college has made appropriate progress on most of the identified areas for improvement and have taken steps to address the main point for action. However, the areas for development relating to part-time FE and full-time HE learner success rates and the operation of the Students' Association have not yet been fully addressed.

## Main Action Points

1. The college should continue to address low rates of learner attainment in part-time FE and full-time HE provision.
2. Senior managers should ensure the plans for the improved support for the Students Association are delivered and monitored.

## Next steps

HM Inspectors are confident that the college has made satisfactory progress and has the capacity to continue to improve.

The college should continue to make progress on its plans, ensuring they are all having the intended impact.

Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework – SFC will be writing to colleges about the new arrangements.

## Questions and/or comments

**Stephen McGregor HMI**
Stephen.McGregor@educationscotland.gov.scot

**Dr John Laird HMI**
John.laird@educationscotland.gov.scot

**WCS Board 7 October 2024**
**Chair's Report**

Welcome back to the new term and to our new Board members George Cooper and John Scott.

The new academic year started with graduations across the three campuses and which were so uplifting to see our graduates celebrate their achievements and start a new chapter.

Due to the end of term of two Board members, the Nominations Committee has been busy with recommendations to the Board on the impact of changes required to the committees and Board roles. The recommendations are under the separate Board paper on Nominations committee Proposals.

I participated in two 'round-tables' hosted by Colleges Scotland, in August on *'Scottish Government's Post-School Education and Skills Reform consultation on legislation'* on their proposal to have a single funding body; and in September on *Widening Access*, following the recommendation for the Scottish Government to consider strengthening the remit of the Commissioner for Fair Access to assume responsibility for advising on fair access to the whole tertiary sector.

I attended the Scottish Government workshop on Cyber Resilience. It was extremely useful and enlightening. I recommend it to any Board member who have not yet had the chance to do so.

It is time for the annual chair and Board members one-to-one, and I look forward to these sessions to see how the year has been for you, understand your aspirations on the Board and to see how I can conduct my role effectively.

Dr Waiyin Hatton
Chair, Board of Management

| Title of Paper | SFC Outcome Framework, Assurance Model and new Tertiary Quality Arrangements |
|---|---|
| Presented by: | Stephanie Gunn |
| Recommendation: | To Note |
| Status: | PUBLIC |

**Purpose / Executive Summary:**

This paper is to provide the Board with information regarding the SFC changes to the annual Regional Outcome Agreement process and to external Quality Review.

The Outcomes Framework and Assurance Model together comprise the revised approach to assurance and accountability for colleges and universities (Tertiary Sector). It will replace the current assurance and accountability arrangements (including Outcome Agreements) from academic year 2024-25.

This is being implemented along with the new Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework and QAA Tertiary Peer Review and Enhancement arrangements.

2024-25 will be a transition year for the Outcomes Framework and pilot year for the new Tertiary Quality arrangements.

Summary details of the Outcomes Framework, Assurance Model, Quality Arrangements and timeframes are included in this paper. The Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee have been kept up to date with the developments, particularly with regard to the changes to quality assurance and enhancement.

For this year we are required to submit:

- a Self Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP), by the end of November.
- a short factual report of up to six pages of self-evaluation against the commitments made in the 2023-24 Regional Outcome Agreement, by 2 December (not including the elements related to Learning and Teaching which will be covered in the SEAP). This report will close off the Regional Outcome Agreement process.
- two case studies on the themes of outcomes for students and outcomes for economic transformation and social renewal, by 2 December

All draft submissions will go to the 27 November Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee.

**Recommendations:**

The Board are asked to:
- Note the changes and seek any clarification as required.

| Implications: | |
|---|---|
| **Financial** | Not applicable for this report |
| **Student Experience** | Not directly applicable for this report although the quality arrangements are designed to enhance the student experience overall. |
| **People** | Not directly applicable for this report, although there may be additional work embedding new internal quality processes and reporting. |
| **Legal** | Not applicable for this report |
| **Reputational** | Not directly applicable for this report although positive peer review and engagement will enhance the college's reputation. |
| **Community/ Partnership impact** | Not directly applicable for this report although the quality processes have the potential to strengthen relationships with HEIs. |
| **Environment** | Not applicable for this report |
| **Equalities** | Not applicable for this report |

# 1. Outcomes Framework

SFC's Outcomes Framework sets out SFC's expectations of colleges and universities in return for the funding that they receive. There are seven outcomes in the Outcomes Framework that apply to both colleges and universities, with an additional two outcomes that apply to universities (Research Excellence and Knowledge Exchange & Innovation). In addition, there are two further outcomes that are cross-cutting and apply across each of the other applicable outcomes for both colleges and universities.
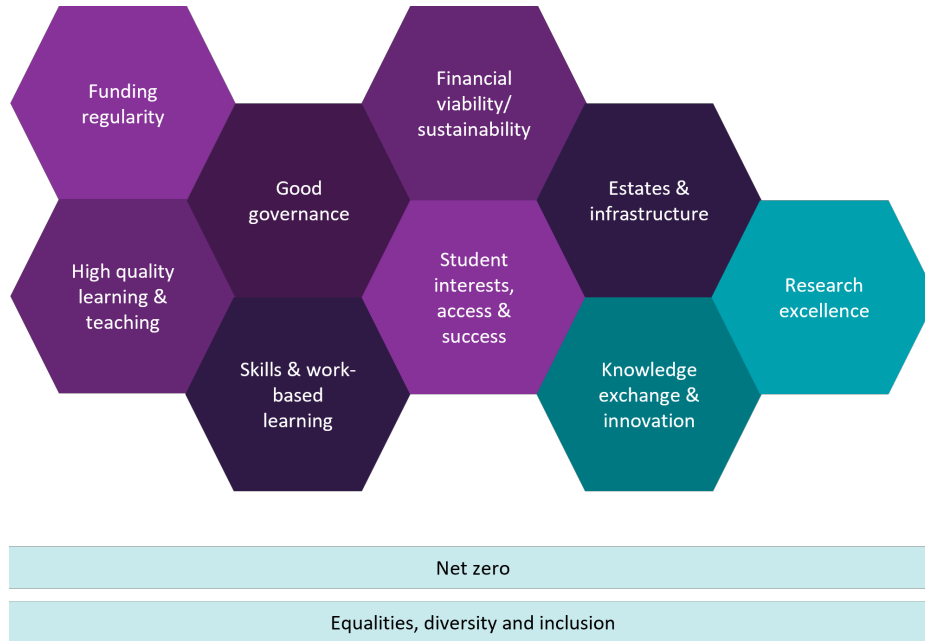


There will be an annual report with contextual commentary (first report due November 2025) which in effect will replace the Regional Outcome Agreement. A key and essential difference from the Regional Outcome Agreement process however, is that the Outcomes Framework does not require SFC to agree in advance with colleges and universities bespoke outcomes and activities that they will specifically deliver in the following academic year. SFC expect Colleges and universities to use their own strategic and operational plans to be forward focused. Rather, SFC will use the Outcomes Framework and Assurance Model to monitor what colleges and universities have delivered in the previous year. SFC state that this will support flexibility for institutions to adapt to changing circumstances during the year while having clarity and year-on-year consistency about the outcomes and expectations against which they will be monitored.

The Assurance Model will enable monitoring that the outcomes have been delivered and this also enables individual institutions' missions, contexts and circumstances to be taken into account appropriately. The monitoring activities will use information that an institution would be using to track its own delivery against these key outcomes.

| Outcome | Definition |
|---|---|
| Funding regularity | SFC funding is used for its intended purpose. Teaching funding is used effectively to deliver high quality coherent provision, with special attention to priority provision, and meeting volume targets and thresholds. Student Support, Capital Funding and any ring-fenced funds are used for their intended purpose. Research, innovation and strategic investments deliver high quality research outcomes. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Good governance | Governing Bodies demonstrate good governance and accountability, including ownership of institutions' performance, compliance with SFC's requirements, proactive risk management, value for money, leadership and integrity in decision making and the way they conduct their business, and having regard to the principles of Fair Work and fair access. |
| Financial viability and sustainability | Institutions are financially viable in the short-term (1-2 years) and hold credible plans for long term financial sustainability to secure a high-quality learning experience and high-quality research and innovation. |
| Estates and infrastructure | Institutions' estates and digital infrastructure are well-managed, well-utilised and effectively support and enable high quality learning and teaching and research. |
| High quality learning and teaching | Students experience high-quality learning and teaching that allows them to engage with and succeed in their studies. Students are effectively engaged with the development of curricula and learning pathways. The quality of learning and teaching and confidence in standards are enhanced through institutions delivering continuous improvement of robust and transparent quality processes. Students are equipped with the skills and knowledge to flourish in employment, further study and lead fulfilling lives. |
| Student interests, access and success | Education is accessible to students from all backgrounds and protected characteristics and, with effective student partnership, students are supported through successful pathways and routes through their learner journey. Students can prioritise their mental health and wellbeing and are part of a safe and supportive institution which allows them to engage and participate in the student experience. |
| Skills and work-based learning | Institutions produce confident and highly capable work-ready graduates, engaging with employers to respond to industry and sector needs, skills alignment and to co-create solutions to challenges. Students are equipped with the skills and knowledge to find employment, flourish in their career, meet employer needs and make a positive contribution to society and the economy. |
| Research excellence (universities only) | Institutions produce excellent research that encourages the exploration of new ideas and thinking, advances current knowledge, and has the potential to change the world around us, including economically and socially. The research environment is flourishing, and research students and staff are enabled to succeed. |
| Knowledge exchange And innovation (universities only) | Institutions generate knowledge which they share to deliver value to Scotland, addressing the green recovery, wellbeing economy and the just transition. Institutions' research and innovation attracts and nurtures talent and entrepreneurship; mobilises collaboration and additional investment; enhances our international reputation; and delivers economic transformation and societal value. |
| Net zero (cross-cutting outcome) | Institutions embed approaches to just transition, green growth and net zero transformation across their strategic functions. |
| Equalities, diversity and inclusion (cross-cutting outcome) | Institutions comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and the National Equality Outcomes to have due regard to the need to: (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. |

Further information:
https://www.sfc.ac.uk/publications/outcomes-framework-and-assurance-model/

## 2. Assurance Model

The Assurance Model is the mechanism by which SFC is assured that the Outcomes in the Framework are being delivered so that those things that matter to students, employers, Scottish Government and other stakeholders are in place.

There are two primary elements to the Assurance Model:
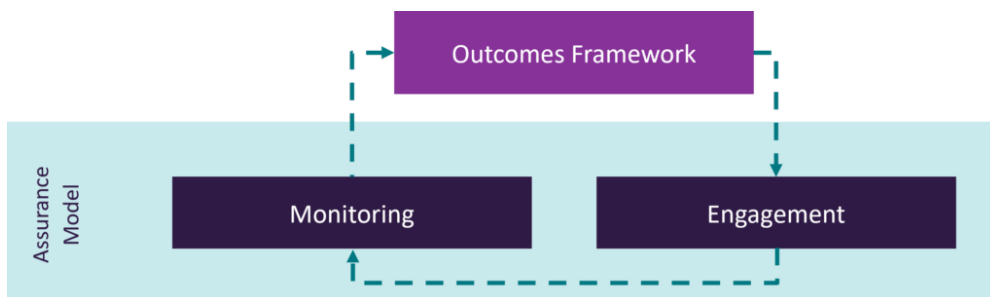


Many aspects of the existing monitoring and data collection will continue and be incorporated into the new arrangements. The monitoring arrangements comprise (currently and in the future):

- Data and information returns that may be regular or ad hoc, as needed to understand emerging issues.
- Thematic reviews into particular areas to gain assurance and identify good practice for wider dissemination.
- **Contextual commentary** in which each institution sets out its narrative account of how it has delivered against the outcomes in the Outcomes Framework – this will supplement the data and information returns and support the institutions in placing context around these. For the outcome High quality learning and teaching, the monitoring will be through the new approach to Quality and the Self Evaluation Report and Action Plan (SEAP).

**SFC will introduce the new Outcomes Framework and Assurance Model from the AY 2024-25, with any new monitoring requirements coming into effect during the AY 2025-26.**

SFC state that this has been informed by engagement with sector groups to understand areas of duplication and opportunities to streamline the monitoring. They believe they have also been cognisant of the need to balance reducing the reporting burden with ensuring they have assurance over the things that matter to students and other stakeholders.

| Outcome | Current Monitoring | New Monitoring |
|---|---|---|
| **Funding regularity** | FES returns<br>External audit opinion on use of funds within Annual Reports<br>Audit of student numbers and student support data<br>Project/strategic funding reports | As current |
| **Good Governance** | Internal and external audit reports<br>Statements of internal control within Annual Reports<br>Annual Reports meeting the relevant Financial Memorandum and sector code of good governance<br>Governance effectiveness reviews | As current |

| Financial viability and sustainability | Annual Reports<br>Financial forecasts<br>Mid-year financial returns<br>External audit reports<br>Borrowing approvals | As current |
|---|---|---|
| Estates and Infrastructure | Estates usage and relevant financial data<br><br>Student feedback through NSS, SESS, PTES and PRES surveys | As current<br><br><br>Contextual commentary |
| High quality learning and teaching | OA forward looking commitments<br>OA self-evaluation<br>Report on institution-led activities<br>Annual assurance statement<br>QAA's 'Quality Enhancement Framework'/<br>Education Scotland's 'How Good Is Our College' | To be replaced by Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework |
| Student interests, access and success | Performance against COWA targets<br>National Equality Outcomes<br>Student participation, retention and outcomes<br>Student feedback through NSS, SESS, PTES and PRES surveys<br>OA forward looking commitments<br>OA self-evaluation | As current<br><br><br><br><br><br>To be replaced by contextual commentary and thematic reviews |
| Skills and work-based learning | Data on placements and work-based courses<br>College Leavers destinations<br>OA forward looking commitments<br>OA self-evaluation | As current<br><br><br>To be replaced by contextual commentary and thematic reviews |
| Net zero (cross-cutting outcome) | OA forward looking commitments<br>OA self-evaluation | To be replaced by evidencing within submissions for other Outcomes (including the contextual commentary) and considered through thematic reviews |
| Equalities, diversity and inclusion (cross-cutting outcome) | National Equality Outcomes<br><br>PSED reports | As current<br>To be evidenced within submissions for other Outcomes (including the contextual commentary) and considered through thematic reviews |

**Implementation of the Outcomes Framework**

No Outcome Agreement or National Measures table will be required for 2024-25 or in future years.

The Outcomes Framework will come into effect from 1 August 2024. Institutions should be prepared to report how they have delivered these outcomes during AY 2024-25 through the Contextual Commentary which they will submit at the end of November 2025. Institutions should also be able to talk to SFC, in particular their Outcome Manager, about what they are doing to deliver these outcomes as part of the ongoing regular engagement which will continue during the academic year.

Institutions will also evidence delivery of the outcomes through the data and information collected through the Assurance Model.

## 3. Closing off the Regional Outcome Agreement process

The Outcome Agreements (OA) for AY 2023-24 were published on 1 February 2024. In order to complete this process, SFC is asking for submission of a short factual report of up to six pages of self-evaluation against the commitments made in the 2023-24 OA.

These reports will not be published and institutions are encouraged to reflect on how well the commitments in the OA have been delivered, identify highlights and challenges from AY 2023-24 and identify any areas for improvement and consider outcomes for all learners. The report should also include early mitigations in place to address challenges moving forward into AY 2024-25.

The report does not need to include evaluation of the learning and quality outcomes in the OAs for AY 2023-24, since this will be covered in the TQEF's Self Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP).

The self-evaluation report should be signed off by the Principal on behalf of the governing body.

## 4. Case studies

Case studies will be used to illustrate how colleges and universities use the funding that they receive. This is helpful in supporting a public articulation of the benefits of such funding and the use of taxpayer money as well as illustrating to Scottish Government and other key stakeholders the importance of continuing to fund Scotland's colleges and universities appropriately.

As part of the completion of the 2023-24 Outcome Agreement cycle, all institutions should provide two case studies on the themes of outcomes for students and outcomes for economic transformation and social renewal.

## 5. Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF)

Over the last 20 years, Scotland's tertiary education sector has used two enhancement frameworks:

- In universities, the Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF) has been in place since 2003, facilitated by Quality Assurance Agency.
- In colleges, How Good is Our College? (HGIOC), has been utilised since 2017 and facilitated by Education Scotland.

Both frameworks have provided robust mechanisms to assure and enhance the quality of learning, teaching, assessment and the overall student experience in Scotland.
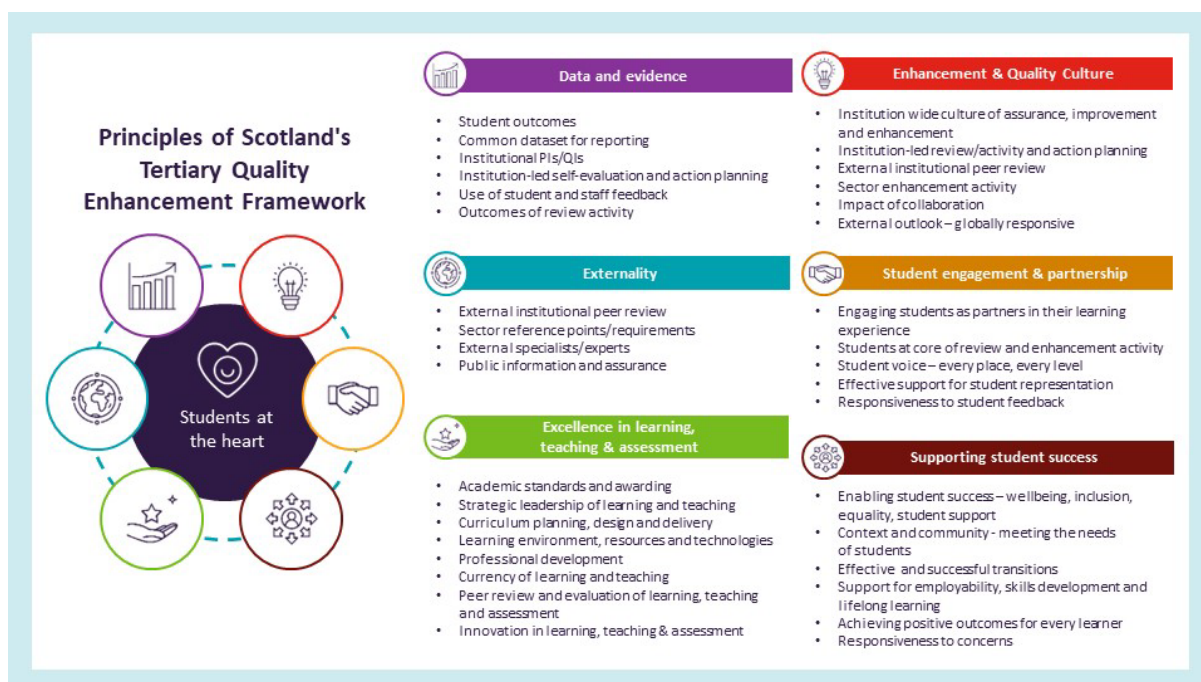
The Scottish Government agreed to the SFC Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability recommendation to explore the development of a single tertiary quality framework for Scotland's colleges and universities. Following the first phase of the work, undertaken in AY 2021-22, SFC committed to developing a common approach to assuring and enhancing quality in the tertiary sector, with the right flexibilities to support sector needs. This work has culminated in the development of **Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF).** West College Scotland has contributed to this development, primarily through Cathy MacNab, Assistant Principal Performance and Skills who has played an active role in developments.

Full details of the initiative are on the SFC website **https://www.sfc.ac.uk/assurance-accountability/learning-quality/tertiary-quality-project/**
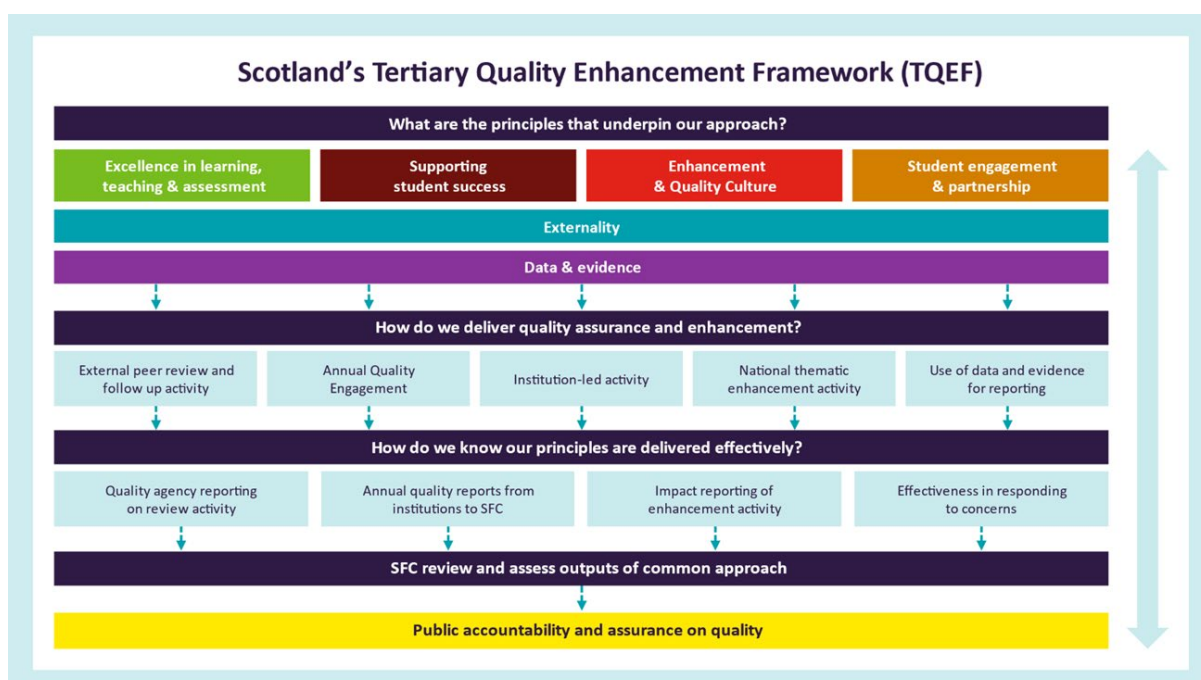
The TQEF is the new quality assurance and enhancement framework for Scotland's colleges and universities. It comprises of a shared set of principles, delivery pillars, and outputs that can be applied to the different contexts of colleges and universities to give assurance on academic standards and the

quality of the student experience, and ensure accountability for public investment in learning and teaching.

In developing TQEF, excellence in learning, teaching and assessment as well as student engagement and partnership have been built into the founding principles.



**Principles of Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework**

Students at the heart

**Data and evidence**
- Student outcomes
- Common dataset for reporting
- Institutional PIs/QIs
- Institution-led self-evaluation and action planning
- Use of student and staff feedback
- Outcomes of review activity

**Externality**
- External institutional peer review
- Sector reference points/requirements
- External specialists/experts
- Public information and assurance

**Excellence in learning, teaching & assessment**
- Academic standards and awarding
- Strategic leadership of learning and teaching
- Curriculum planning, design and delivery
- Learning environment, resources and technologies
- Professional development
- Currency of learning and teaching
- Peer review and evaluation of learning, teaching and assessment
- Innovation in learning, teaching & assessment

**Enhancement & Quality Culture**
- Institution wide culture of assurance, improvement and enhancement
- Institution-led review/activity and action planning
- External institutional peer review
- Sector enhancement activity
- Impact of collaboration
- External outlook – globally responsive

**Student engagement & partnership**
- Engaging students as partners in their learning experience
- Students at core of review and enhancement activity
- Student voice – every place, every level
- Effective support for student representation
- Responsiveness to student feedback

**Supporting student success**
- Enabling student success – wellbeing, inclusion, equality, student support
- Context and community - meeting the needs of students
- Effective and successful transitions
- Support for employability, skills development and lifelong learning
- Achieving positive outcomes for every learner
- Responsiveness to concerns

The TQEF is comprised of the underpinning principles, delivery pillars and outputs that can be applied to the different contexts of our colleges and universities to give assurance on academic standards and the quality of the student experience and ensure accountability for public investment in learning and teaching. The delivery pillars include the external peer review, internal institution-led activity and annual quality engagement, all of which will be underpinned by a strong thread of data and evidence to support these activities. The outputs describe the reporting aspects which will be drawn from the delivery activities and submitted to SFC.



**Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF)**

What are the principles that underpin our approach?

| Excellence in learning, teaching & assessment | Supporting student success | Enhancement & Quality Culture | Student engagement & partnership |

Externality

Data & evidence

How do we deliver quality assurance and enhancement?

| External peer review and follow up activity | Annual Quality Engagement | Institution-led activity | National thematic enhancement activity | Use of data and evidence for reporting |

How do we know our principles are delivered effectively?

| Quality agency reporting on review activity | Annual quality reports from institutions to SFC | Impact reporting of enhancement activity | Effectiveness in responding to concerns |

SFC review and assess outputs of common approach

Public accountability and assurance on quality

## 6. Self Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP)

The SEAP is part of the TQEF and will enable institutions to undertake an annual, high-level, reflection on their quality assurance and enhancement activities and identify key areas of improvement.

These annual institutional reports will be submitted to SFC to provide assurance of the impact and effective delivery of high-quality learning provision in colleges and universities and to support ongoing enhancement. In academic year 2024-25, the SEAP will replace the Evaluative Report and Enhancement Plan (EREP) which formed part of the quality arrangements in colleges informed by the "How Good is our College" framework, but was paused during COVID.

The report should be submitted by the end of November and we have adjusted our LTQ committee dates so that a final draft for 2023-24 can be at the Committee before submission, along with our annual performance reporting for LTQ.

## 7. Quality assurance and Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER)

SFC commissioned QAA to lead the development of a new institutional External Review Method, in collaboration with Education Scotland, CDN and sparqs. QAA Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER) is a peer-led, enhancement-focused approach to review.

For Colleges, the QAA Peer Review process (TQER), will replace our annual engagement with Education Scotland and the TQEF (Tertiary Quality and Enhancement Framework) will replace Education Scotland 'How Good is Our College' evaluation framework.

In July 2024 the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) published Guidance on Quality for Colleges and Universities AY 2024-25 to AY 2030-31. The purpose of the guidance is to inform Scotland's colleges and universities of the quality arrangements for AY 2024-25 to AY 2030-31.

The quality arrangements for colleges and universities are based on the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) and will seek to answer the question 'Is the provision delivered by Scotland's colleges and universities of high quality and does it continue to improve?'

**Roles and responsibilities in TQER**

**a) Scottish Funding Council (SFC)**

Under the 2005 Act the statutory duty for securing provision for quality assurance and enhancement of further and higher education provision in Scotland lies with the SFC. To meet this duty SFC has adopted a partnership approach to develop the TQEF, reflecting our belief that quality assurance and enhancement is best done with institutions and not imposed on them. Nevertheless, SFC is ultimately responsible to Scottish Ministers for the effectiveness of the TQEF and ensuring that the delivery mechanisms and outputs collectively give the necessary assurance on academic standards and the quality of the student experience. SFC will share such outcomes of its analysis of institutions' performance with the QAA that are necessary to support the external review process and public accountability.

### b) Colleges and universities

Colleges and universities have been partners in the development of the TQEF and the Framework can only succeed with their full and active participation. The guidance states that our institutions are autonomous with responsibility for the quality of the provision that they deliver, but they are also in receipt of significant public investment for the delivery of high-quality learning. They must therefore put in place robust arrangements to evaluate and review their provision, appropriate to the context of the institution and within the parameters set out in the Guidance on Institution Led Quality Review (ILQR)

It is expected that all institutions encourage and facilitate their academic, teaching and professional services staff and students to put themselves forward as peer reviewers.

An essential element of an enhancement-led approach to quality assurance is the capacity of institutions for honest self-reflection and evaluation. It is the responsibility of institutions to be open and frank in their engagements and submissions to SFC and the QAA, and clear sighted around their areas for development as well as their strengths.

### c) Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)

The QAA has led the SFC commission to design and deliver a multi-year external peer review method for colleges and universities. The QAA's is autonomous body acting independently of SFC and government. QAA will manage the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER) as an integral delivery mechanism of the TQEF, including recruiting and training a pool of peer and student reviewers; administering the external peer review cycle and follow-up engagements; and maintaining the TQER review methodology guide. QAA will support SFC in its review of SEAPs to provide additional insight and triangulate its own understanding of the submissions, for discussion with the institution as part of SFC's Assurance Model.

### d) Education Scotland

It is recognised that ES and His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIe) have developed a profound understanding of how our colleges deliver high-quality learning. This capacity and insight will be critical to the success of the TQEF, particularly so in the early years of the new cycle. ES will provide briefings and insight to TQER peer reviewers in advance of review visits, ensuring that they are sighted on the outcomes of the recently concluded Annual Enhancement Visit (AEV) and Progress Visit (PV) cycle alongside other relevant intelligence. And while training in the new review method will be delivered by QAA, ES will contribute to this work ensuring that all peer and student reviewers have a complete understanding of the nuances and challenges around quality assurance in the college sector.

During implementation of the TQEF, ES will support QAA and CDN in the development and delivery of a programme of activity to enhance the capacity of college leadership and staff to undertake critical self-evaluation and develop robust internal quality assurance processes.

### e) College Development Network

CDN is the national enhancement agency for the college sector in Scotland, working with the college sector to develop their people and deliver better outcomes for students. In support of the TQEF, CDN will work with the QAA to provide coordinated support to enhance the capacity of college leadership and staff to undertake critical self-evaluation, and develop robust internal quality assurance processes. CDN will also support and facilitate shared learning amongst college peer and student reviewers through the development of support networks and other activities.

f) **sparqs** (Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland)

sparqs is the SFC-funded agency that supports college and university students to engage in enhancing their learning experience and become partners in the decisions made about the quality of their learning experience. sparqs ongoing role in the TQEF will be to develop and maintain the resources to support the model and continue to enhance and facilitate institutions' and students' capacity to engage in, and be partners in, the delivery of the Framework.

g) **Students**

The TQEF is designed to build on and develop Scotland's commitment to student partnership, putting students at the heart of its approach.

For students, this includes:

- Engaging effectively in student voice and student representation activities.
- Participating, engaging and working in partnership with institutions in quality assurance and enhancement activities.
- Participating as student reviewers in internal and TQER review processes, with sparqs supporting QAA in the training and development of a pool of student reviewers.
- Supporting the development of evidence to support internal and external quality review.
- Participating in evidence sessions as part of external quality review visits and meeting with review teams to discuss/update on work.
- Reviewing and reflecting on review reports and contributing to the development of recommendations and areas of positive practice.
- Working effectively in partnership with institutions to develop action planning for enhancement.

## Quality cycle and Timelines

Annex E on Page 65 of the Guidance documents summarized the delivery timelines of a seven-year Quality Cycle.

### Annual Quality Engagement (AQE)

- Self -Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP) submitted annually from November 2024
- SFC engagement through Outcome Managers
- QAA led institutional liaison meetings (ILMs) which will focus on learning and teaching, student experience and student engagement

### Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER)
- 2024- 25 Pilot year with one college and one university participating.
- 2025 – 2030 Every other college and university will have one review, plus follow up activity.
- 2030-31 SFC will undertake comprehensive evaluations of the TQEF at the end of each cycle, seeking advice and guidance from the TQSG and independent experts.

### Institutional Led Quality Review (ILQR)

Internally led quality assurance and enhancement review including annual monitoring and evaluation of college provision. All SFC-funded provision (credit-bearing and non-credit bearing) falls within the scope of ILQR for universities and colleges, although there may be differences between institutions in terms of the extent to which non-credit bearing activity will feature in ILQR.

8. **Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP)**

QAA designing a national approach to enhancement activity for the tertiary sector, engaging with CDN as a key collaborator in the development process. The approach is being developed by a Tertiary Enhancement Activity Advisory Group, which includes student members and will begin in academic year 2024-25.

It is expected that all institutions engage in the STEP programme, identifying aspects of the STEP topic that are aligned with their own mission and context - sharing innovation and good practice across the sector to support better student outcomes.

9. **WCS preparations for changes**

The College is well prepared for the changes ahead and has had ongoing national input into developments. Senior staff (Heads and SMT) have had regular briefings including meeting with QAA representatives. All lecturers were briefed about the quality changes at the start of this session. The Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee have also received regular updates.

We have senior staff who will be engaged as peer reviewers within the pilot year of the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review this session. We are keen to engage in the Tertiary Enhancement Programme themes as appropriate, with the widest range of staff and student engagement as possible.

We are implementing plans to further develop our institutional led quality review processes in line with the TQEF. This is requiring new approaches to evaluating learning and teaching across the curriculum and further inclusion of Professional Services staff in college evaluation. We will continue to work with our Student Association to be partners in quality evaluation.

We are reviewing our data reporting to ensure we build the evidence required for both the TQEF/TQER and for the Outcomes Framework (OF) in preparation for the submission of the Contextual Commentary Annual Report next year, the Self Evaluation Report (SEAP) and for whenever we may have our Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review within the cycle.

This year's SEAP and Regional Outcome Self Evaluation report will be reviewed at the Learning Teaching and Quality Committee before submission.

| **Title of Paper** | Internal Governance Update |
| :--- | :--- |
| **Presented by:** | Susan McDonald, Governance Manager |
| **Recommendation:** | **To Note and Approve** |
| **Status:** | **PUBLIC** |

**Purpose / Executive Summary:**

This paper provides the Board with an update on any governance activities that have taken place since the last meeting.

The report includes an update on the following:
- Membership for 2024/2025 – Board and Committees
- Annual Review of Articles, Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation
- Code of Conduct Review and acceptance
- Role Profile for Senior Independent Member
- Committee Remits – ARC, CDC, LTQ, Nominations, Remuneration
- Self Evaluation of Corporate Development and Learning, Teaching & Quality Committees
- Appointment of Trade Union Board Members
- Board Member training
- Board Register of Interest Summary

**Recommendations:**

The Board of Management is asked to:
- **Approve** the Membership of Committees
- **Approve** the updated Committee Remits
- **Approve** the changes to the Code of Conduct and **agree** acceptance of the Code as a Board Member
- **Approve** the minor changes requested on the Articles, Scheme of Delegation and Standing Orders
- **Approve** the Board Register of Interest Summary for publishing on the College website
- **Note** the updates provided on other governance related matters**.**

| Implications: | |
|---|---|
| **Financial** | Not applicable for this report |
| **Student Experience** | Student Experience is considered on all activities of the College |
| **People** | Not applicable for this report |
| **Legal** | Ensuring proper governance across Board activities |
| **Reputational** | Not applicable for this report |
| **Community/ Partnership impact** | Not applicable for this report |
| **Environment** | Not applicable for this report |
| **Equalities** | Not applicable for this report |

**Membership of Board and Committees**

The Membership for the Board and Committees for 2024/2025 has been added this report. This will be uploaded to the Board Teams for information. (**Appendix 1**)

**Annual Review of Articles, Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation**

Following the annual review, updated governance documents and remits have been included in the Additional Information pack. The proposed changes are noted below and are submitted to the Board for approval:

*Articles:*
2.5.3    adding the annual submission of the Code of Conduct to Board meetings.
2.9      Changes to the appointment of Student Members.

*Standing Orders:*
 5.       Adding that quorum must be 50% non-executive members.
8.3, 8.4, 8.6    Changes to minutes – drafts / approved and for infrequent meetings.
11.3     Adding the Declaration & Management of Interest Policy under conflict of interest.
13.2     Information on committee membership and remit.
14.      The appointment of Senior Independent Member (this is also noted in the Articles).

*Scheme of Delegation*
2j       Added reference to the Code of Good Governance
2k       Election regulations of Student Officers

**Code of Conduct**

Following revisions made by the Standards Commission on their model code of conduct, it has been proposed to add to two sections of the introduction, to further clarify the role of Board Members (1.2 and 1.10). Other revisions noted at this time were not deemed applicable to colleges and therefore not required.

As a recommendation made by the Internal Auditors, the Code of Conduct will now be submitted annually for Board Members to review and confirm they understand and will comply with the code.

**Role of the Senior Independent Member**

A role profile for the position of Senior Independent Member has been developed and will be uploaded to the information section on the Board Teams Library.

**Committee Remits (Agenda Item 16)**

All Committees have reviewed their remits and are proposing the following amendments to the Board for approval:

*Audit & Risk Committee* – one addition, to recommend that Members undertake the CDN governance module for Audit Committee.

*Corporate Development Committee* – minor updates to match sections on remit and previous committee discussions.

*Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee* – minor updates to reflect discussions, adding receiving regular reports from Student Association, review of Curriculum Strategy and objectives, and actions from the Digital Strategy.

*Nominations Committee* – minor changes to job titles etc

*Remuneration Committee* - updated to remove agreement of salary or Governance Professional, statement added on efficient use of public funds, frequency of meetings and secretariat. Further addition to note that the CDN Remuneration Committee module is mandatory for members of this committee.

Copies of all Remits have been included in the information pack.

**Self-Evaluation of Committees**

As per normal procedure, an annual report is submitted from the Audit & Risk Committee to the Board to its December meeting to confirm it has met the criteria according to the terms of reference of the Committee. A draft of this year's report has been discussed and content agreed at the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 11 September 2024.

Both the Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee and the Corporate Development Committee reviewed the work undertaken during the previous academic year and both Committees were assured that the requirements of their terms of reference had been fulfilled.

**Board Member Biographies**

Board Member photographs and biographies are published on the College Website. Members are asked to review their entry and advise if there are any updates required.

**Trade Union Board Members**

The process of appointment of the Trade Union Board Member for EIS continues. There has been no further update from local EIS branch since the last Board meeting. The TU Board Member for Professional Services for WCS Board remains as a vacancy.

**Board Skills / Training**

The summary document of the training requested from the last Board Skills Analysis is available on the Board Library. Any member wishing to be added to the Evolve platform for completion of modules, please let me know and I can arrange this. This would involve your email address being added to the system to allow you to complete these.

In 2024-25 CDN is moving to a new process for inducting and communicating with college board members. Existing board members will also be covered by the new approach. We will be asked to email CDN with details of new board members when they are appointed (names and email addresses only). CDN will then issue each new board member with a 'welcome email' containing:

- A copy of the Guide for Board Members in the College Sector and the Jargon Buster (also available on the Board Teams Library)
- A copy of the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges (also available on the Board Teams Library)
- A link to the online new board member induction module
- Details of how to create a login for the Governance Hub

A mailing list of all board members will be maintained by CDN and updates on key governance issues and new training opportunities will be sent from time to time. *Board members will have the option to be removed from the mailing list.*

CDN is also refreshing its LearnOnline platform during 2024. All board members will be able to set up their own accounts on the system, which will then give access to the Governance CPD materials.

A new online ***Board Member Induction*** module has been launched, which should help new board members to quickly get up to speed with the key elements of the role. A new ***Understanding College Finance*** module will also be launched in Autumn 2024.

***CDN National Governance Programme for 2024/2025*** has been uploaded to the Board Teams Library.   It is hoped that CDN will be able to provide information on which resources have been accessed by Board Members, however, in the meantime, I would be grateful if you could let me know if you have or are completing any of the modules so this can be recorded.

Please note that the ***Remuneration Committee Training*** is **mandatory** for Members of that Committee. It is also **recommended** that members of the Audit & Risk Committee undertake the ***Audit Committee training***.

**Board Register of Interest Summary**

The updated summary report of Board Member's Register of Interest is attached for Members review to confirm its accuracy and **approve** it can be published on the College website. (**15.6)**

**Recommendations**

The Board of Management is asked to:
- **Approve** the Membership of Committees (***Appendix 1***)
- **Approve** the updated Committee Remits (Additional Information pack)
- **Approve** the changes to the Code of Conduct and **agree** acceptance of the Code as a Board Member (Additional Information pack)
- **Approve** the minor changes requested on the Articles, Scheme of Delegation and Standing Orders (Additional Information pack)
- **Approve** the Board Register of Interest Summary for publishing on the College website (***Appendix 3***)
- **Note** the updates provided on other governance related matters**. *(Appendix 2- CDN Governance Programme 24/25)***

**BOARD & COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS AS AT OCTOBER 2024**

Under the terms of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, as amended by the Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013, the membership of the Board of Management shall consist of no fewer than 15 nor more than 18 members. The current membership is:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Chair** | Dr Waiyin Hatton |
| **Vice Chair (Non-Executive Member)** | Linda Johnston |
| **Principal** | Elizabeth Connolly |
| **Teaching staff – 1 elected** | George Rice |
| **Non-Teaching staff – 1 elected** | Fiona McLaren |
| **Students Association – 2 elected** | Jamie McNicol<br>**Vacancy** |
| **Trade Union Members – 2 elected** | **Vacancy** (EIS/FELA)<br>**Vacancy** (UNISON/UNITE) |
| **Non-Executive Members** | Hilary Cameron<br>George Cooper<br>Dr Jillian Couto-Phoenix<br>Terry Dillon<br>Gordon Hunt<br>Linda Johnston<br>John Leburn<br>Ronald Leitch<br>Jane McKie<br>Daniel McMahon<br>Jackie Russell<br>John Scott |
| **Senior Independent Member** | John Leburn |
| **In Attendance** | Nicola Connelly, Director of Finance & Estates<br>Stephanie Gunn, Vice-Principal Educational Leadership<br>Susan McDonald, Governance Manager<br>Nathan Tyler, Director of Communications, Marketing & Student Activities<br>**Vacancy**, Vice-Principal Operations |

| Audit & Risk Committee | Attending Officers |
|---|---|
| T Dillon | Nicola Connelly, Director of Finance |
| Ronald Leitch (Chair) | Liz Connolly, Principal |
| Brian Logan, Co-optee | Susan McDonald, Governance Manager |
| Jackie Russell (Vice Chair) | Vacancy, Vice Principal Operations |
| **Vacancy** | Internal Auditors - Wylie Bisset |
| |    Graham Gillespie & Stephen Pringle, |
| | External Auditors – Azets |
| |    Adrian Kolodziej & David Eardley |
| **Corporate Development Committee** | |
| Hilary Cameron | Attending Officers |
| Liz Connolly, Principal | Nicola Connelly, Director of Finance |
| Dr Waiyin Hatton (ex officio) | Susan McDonald, Governance Manager |
| Linda Johnston | Joe Rafferty, Director of OD & HR |
| John Leburn (Chair) | Brian Stobbs, Head of IT |
| Fiona McLaren, Support Staff Member | Nathan Tyler, Director of Marketing & Communications |
| Daniel McMahon (Vice Chair) | Vacancy, Vice Principal Operations |
| Jamie McNicol, Student President | |
| John Scott | |
| **Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee** | |
| Liz Connolly – Principal | **Attending Officers** |
| George Cooper | Stephanie Gunn, Vice Principal Educational Leadership |
| Dr Jillian Couto-Phoenix | Assistant Principals – as required |
| Dr Waiyin Hatton (ex officio) | Susan McDonald, Governance Manager |
| Gordon Hunt (Chair) | |
| Jane McKie (Vice Chair) | |
| Jamie McNicol, Student President | |
| Janie O'Neill, Cooptee | |
| George Rice | |
| **Nominations Committee** | |
| Jillian Couto-Pheonix (Vice Chair) | **Attending Officer** |
| Dr Waiyin Hatton (Chair) | Susan McDonald, Governance Manager |
| Gordon Hunt | |
| Linda Johnston | |
| John Leburn | |
| Ronald Leitch | |
| Jamie McNicol, Student President | |
| George Rice | |
| **Remuneration Committee** | |
| Dr Waiyin Hatton | **Attending Officers** |
| Gordon Hunt | Liz Connolly, Principal |
| Linda Johnston (Chair) | Susan McDonald, Governance Manager |
| John Leburn (Vice Chair) | Joe Rafferty, Director of OD & HR |
| Ronald Leitch | |
| Jane McKie | |

| Title of Paper | Financial Regulations |
|---|---|
| Presented by: | Nicola Connelly, Director of Finance & Estates |
| Recommendation: | **To Approve** |
| Status: | **PUBLIC** |

**Purpose / Executive Summary:**

The College has undertaken a review of the Financial Regulations based upon current operations and best practice. As there has been no changes in the Scottish Public Finance Manual (monitored monthly by the College) requirements and the Regulations have been reviewed annually, there are a limited number of proposed changes, mainly to the procurement section 17 (pages 54-64). Hyperlinks have also been updated to more recent documents.

These proposed changes do not represent fundamental amendments to the Regulations. Following approval, the updated Financial Regulations will be published on the College website and made available on the Board Library.

The Audit & Risk Committee discussed and agreed the changes and now recommend to the Board for approval.

**Recommendations:**

Following recommendation from the Audit & Risk Committee, the Board of Management are asked to **approve** the changes to the Financial Regulations.

| Implications: | |
|---|---|
| **Financial** | There are no financial implications from the proposed changes to the Regulations. The changes are administrative in nature and do not impact thresholds or authorisation levels. |
| **Student Experience** | Not applicable for this report. |
| **People** | Not applicable for this report. |
| **Legal** | Review of Regulations required annually, therefore having undertaken the review complied with Corporate Development remit. |
| **Reputational** | Not applicable for this report. |
| **Community/ Partnership impact** | Not applicable for this report. |
| **Environment** | Not applicable for this report. |
| **Equalities** | Not applicable for this report. |

**Background**

On review of the procurement section of the Financial Regulations, the following changes are proposed:

17.5 Procurement policy, in conjunction with APUC, has been reviewed and the following amendments are required to be included:

==The procurement department will create a procurement strategy for all tendering activities above £50,000 total contract value', amended from £25,000, in line with previous instruction and in line with common practice in the College sector.==

The note on procurement strategies for contracts £25,000 - £50,000 requiring authorisation from Budget Holder and Head of Finance and Student Funding removed.

17.7 Reference to 'Goods and Services' amended to read 'Supplies and Services.'

Within Tendering Procedures, the following notes to be added within the responsibility columns:
- For Contracts < £5,000 and £5,001 to £25,000 - 'The relevant Framework/ College's Terms and Conditions are to be in place and agreed by the supplier.'
- Contracts £25,001 to £50,000 - 'Where a suitable procurement framework exists, a mini competition or direct award may be carried out.'
- Contracts £50,001 to £500,000 - 'If no suitable framework is available, it will be necessary to carry out an open tender exercise 'Open Tender Procurement falling into this category must be advertised as per the current relevant Procurement Regulations.'
- Contracts > £500,000. As above.

For Works of the Public Contracts the minimum contracts value that require at least 3 written quotations where no current contract/ framework is in place to be amended from <£25,000 to < £100,000. In line with previous direction.

As above Contract Value £25,001 > £500,000 amended to £100,001 > £500,000.

For Works of the Public Contracts, the following notes to be added within the Action columns:
- Total Contract Value £100,001 > £500,000 – remove the notes referring to written quotations via PCS/PS-T or where a tender is not conducted a minimum of 5 suppliers will be invited to attend and amend to 'Open tender via PCS/ PCS – T (endeavouring to obtain at least 3 responses) where no current contracts/ framework is in place.'
- Total Contract Value > £500,000 - As above.

For Works of the Public Contracts, the following notes to be added within the Responsibility/ Notes columns:
- Contract Value < £100,000 - 'The relevant Framework/ College's Terms and Conditions are to be in place and agreed by the supplier.'
- Contracts Value £100,001 to £500,000 - add 'Where a suitable procurement framework exists, a mini competition may be carried out where it is expected that a minimum of 5 suppliers will be invited to response and that a minimum of 3 bids will be assessed.

If no suitable framework is available, it will be necessary to carry out an open tender exercise.

▪ Contracts Value > £500,001 - remove the notes referring to an open tender exercise above a total value of £4m must include provision for achieving Community and replaced with 'Open Tender Procurements falling into this category, above £2,000,000 must be advertised as per the current relevant Procurement Regulations.'

Overarching comment to all procedures to be added 'The exercises should also be carried out in a manner that will allow any resulting contract to be formed on the relevant Framework/Colleges' terms and conditions.

| Title of Paper | Internal Audit 2023/24 Annual Report |
|---|---|
| Presented by: | Stephen Pringle, Wylie & Bisset |
| Decision: | To Note |
| Status: | **PUBLIC** |

**Purpose / Executive Summary:**

The report at Appendix A presents to the Board, the Internal Audit 2023/24 Annual Report. Having caried out the required work and review the overall opinion expressed by the internal auditors is that:

*'We are satisfied that sufficient internal audit work has been undertaken to allow us to draw a conclusion as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's risk management, control and governance processes.*

*In our opinion, West College Scotland did have adequate and effective risk management, control and governance processes to manage its achievement of the College's objectives at the time of our audit work. In our opinion, the College has proper arrangements to promote and secure value for money.*

*Our fieldwork was carried out between September 2023 and June 2024, and we have not undertaken any further internal audit assignments at the time of this report.'*

The paper was also presented to the Audit & Risk Committee

**Recommendations:**

The Board of Management is asked **to note** the Internal Audit 2023-24 Annual Report.

| Implications: | |
|---|---|
| **Financial** | Not applicable for this report |
| **Student Experience** | Not applicable for this report |
| **Human Resources** | Not applicable for this report |
| **Legal** | College is required to have in place effective controls. The annual report confirms the internal auditor's opinion on those controls. |
| **Reputational** | Not applicable for this report |
| **Community/ Partnership impact** | Not applicable for this report |
| **Equalities** | Not applicable for this report |
| **Environment** | Not applicable for this report |

1.    **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1    The Scottish Public Finance Manual states that:

*'Internal audit should provide an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It should provide an appraisal of an organisation's internal control system and take the action needed to provide Accountable Officers with a continuing assurance that the organisation's risk management, control and governance arrangements are adequate and effective. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes. The operation and conduct of internal audit should comply with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.*

*Accountable Officers are responsible for ensuring that appropriate internal control systems exist within their own organisations (or parts thereof), and for deciding whether to accept and implement internal audit findings and recommendations. Accountable Officers have overall responsibility for ensuring that prompt and effective action is taken on recommendations, and that the risks resulting from inaction are recognised and accepted. The organisation's Head of Internal Audit should have the right of direct access to the Accountable Officer and the organisation's Audit Committee.*

*Internal audit evaluates compliance with an organisation's internal control system - including relevant regulations, guidance and procedures - as part of its review process. However, the primary responsibility for monitoring compliance rests with operational areas and their line management, up to and including the relevant Accountable Officer.'*

1.2    An annual audit assurance is provided to Accountable Officers through the professional opinion of the Internal Auditor on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control system and the extent to which it can be relied upon. That opinion is contained in the attached Annual Report from the Internal Auditor to the Audit Committee, and forms part of the assurance required by Accountable Officers to enable them to sign a governance statement as part of the accounts for which they are responsible.

1.3    To meet the above requirements, the attached Annual Report summarises the conclusions and key findings from the internal audit work undertaken at the College during the year ended 31 July 2024, including the internal auditor's overall opinion on the College's internal control system.

1.4    The report documents the scope and responsibilities of the Internal Auditors on pages 4 and 5.

1.5     Wylie and Bisset, as the Head of Internal Audit at West College Scotland are required to provide the Audit & Risk Committee with an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's risk management, control, and governance processes. Having caried out the required work and review the overall opinion expressed by the internal auditors is that:

*'We are satisfied that sufficient internal audit work has been undertaken to allow us to draw a conclusion as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's risk management, control and governance processes.*

*In our opinion, West College Scotland did have adequate and effective risk management, control and governance processes to manage its achievement of the College's objectives at the time of our audit work. In our opinion, the College has proper arrangements to promote and secure value for money.*

*Our fieldwork was carried out between September 2023 and June 2024, and we have not undertaken any further internal audit assignments at the time of this report.'*

1.6     In giving their opinion, it should be noted that assurance can never be absolute. The most that the internal auditors can provide to the Audit & Risk Committee is reasonable assurance that there are no major weaknesses in the College's risk management, control, and governance processes.

1.7     The overall findings and conclusion of each report are highlighted in Section 3 (page 6).

1.8     As can be seen from the summary in Section 3 all areas included in the 2023-24 Operational Plan have been completed except for the Corporate Strategy, which was swapped with the Communications & Marketing Strategy, after agreement was obtained from the Audit & Risk Committee and the Board.

# West College Scotland

Internal Audit 2023/24

Annual Report

July 2024

# Table of Contents

# 1. Introduction

The prime responsibility of the Internal Audit Service (IAS) is to provide the College's Audit & Risk Committee, the Principal & Chief Executive and other Senior Management of the College, with an objective assessment of the adequacy and effectiveness of management's internal control systems.

We conduct our activity within the overarching framework of the Institute of Internal Auditors, Definition of Internal Auditing, Code of Ethics and International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing, together with the UK Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, first introduced in April 2013.

In line with these Standards, we have developed a robust quality assurance process to ensure that each of our activities and reports are of a high and consistent standard. Quality assurance activity includes interim reviews during the internal audit process and an extensive final review before reports are issued to clients and other stakeholders. We actively seek to improve the services we deliver through a programme of CPD, training, networking and engagement with internal peers, as well as by piloting new ways of working.

We had an extensive external assessment undertaken against these standards in November 2023. The assessment was undertaken by the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors who concluded:

"We are pleased to report that the the Wbg Services LLP (formerly Wylie & Bisset LLP) Internal Audit Department conforms with the Standards, as well as the Definition of Internal Auditing, Core Principles and the Code of Ethics, which form the mandatory elements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and the Institute of Internal Auditors' International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF), the globally recognised standard of quality in Internal Auditing".

The Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors also highlighted our compliance with all 64 standards of the IPPF.

This Annual Report should be considered by the Audit & Risk Committee prior to the Committee submitting their annual report to the Board.

A copy of this report requires to be submitted to the Scottish Funding Council not later than 31 December following the financial year-end to which it relates.

# 2. Executive Summary

## Overall Opinion

We are satisfied that sufficient internal audit work has been undertaken to allow us to draw a conclusion as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's risk management, control and governance processes.

In our opinion, West College Scotland did have adequate and effective risk management, control and governance processes to manage its achievement of the College's objectives at the time of our audit work. In our opinion, the College has proper arrangements to promote and secure value for money.

Our fieldwork was carried out between September 2023 and June 2024, and we have not undertaken any further internal audit assignments at the time of this report.

The overall findings and conclusion of each report are highlighted in Section 3. As can be seen from the summary in Section 3 all areas included in the Operational Plan for 2023/24 have been completed with the exception of the Corporate Strategy review which was replaced with the Communications and Marketing Strategy Review.

In forming our opinion, we have carried out the following work:

|   A review and appraisal of financial and other controls operated by the College;

|   A review of the established policies and procedures adopted by the College;

|   An assessment of whether or not the internal controls are reliable as a basis for producing the financial accounts;

|   A review of accounting and other information provided to management for decision making;

|   Compliance and substantive audit testing where appropriate; and

|   A review of the College's procedures in place to promote and secure value for money.

The analysis of performance indicators for the internal audit work carried out in the year is included at section 5.

# 2. Executive Summary (continued)

**Basis of Opinion**

As the Head of Internal Audit at West College Scotland we are required to provide the Audit & Risk Committee with an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's risk management, control and governance processes.

In giving our opinion, it should be noted that assurance can never be absolute. The most that we can provide to the Audit & Risk Committee is reasonable assurance that there are no major weaknesses in the College's risk management, control and governance processes.

In assessing the level of assurance given, we have considered:

| All audits undertaken during the year ended 31 July 2024;

| Any follow-up action taken in respect of audits from previous periods;

| Any significant recommendations not accepted by management and the consequent risks;

| The effects of any significant changes in the College's objectives or systems;

| Any limitations which may have been placed on the scope of internal audit;

| Matters arising from previous reports to the Audit & Risk Committee;

| The extent to which resource constraints may impinge on the Head of Internal Audit's ability to meet the full audit needs of the College;

| What proportion of the College's audit need has been covered to date; and

| The outcomes of our quality assurance processes.

# 3. Audit Findings

**Summary of Work Undertaken**

**The following table summarises the audit work undertaken in 2023/24. The grading structure used in our reports can be found in Appendix A**.

| Area | Planned Days | Actual Days | Status | Overall Conclusion | High Priority Recommendations | Medium Priority Recommendations | Low Priority Recommendations |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Credits | 8 | 8 | Complete | **N/A** | - | - | 1 |
| SSF | 4 | 4 | Complete | **N/A** | - | - | - |
| EMA | 3 | 3 | Complete | **N/A** | - | - | - |
| Procurement and Tendering | 5 | 5 | Complete | **Strong** | - | - | 1 |
| GDPR Compliance | 5 | 5 | Complete | **Strong** | - | - | 2 |
| Corporate Governance | 5 | 5 | Complete | **Strong** | - | - | 3 |
| Estates Strategy | 5 | 5 | Complete | **Substantial** | - | 2 | 1 |
| Total C/F | 35 | 35 | - | - | - | 2 | 8 |

# 3. Audit Findings

**Summary of Work Undertaken** (continued)

| Area | Planned Days | Actual Days | Status | Overall Conclusion | High Priority Recommendations | Medium Priority Recommendations | Low Priority Recommendations |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total B/F | 35 | 35 | - | - | - | 2 | 8 |
| Alternative/ Non SFC Funding Sources | 6 | 6 | Complete | **Strong** | - | - | - |
| Student Admissions/Enrolment | 5 | 5 | Complete | **Strong** | - | - | 2 |
| Continuing Professional Development | 5 | 5 | Complete | **Strong** | - | - | 2 |
| Communications and Marketing Strategy | - | 5 | Complete | **Strong** | - | - | 1 |
| Corporate Strategy | 5 | - | Postponed | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Follow up | 4 | 4 | n/a | n/a | - | - | - |
| Audit Management | 5 | 5 | n/a | n/a | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **65** | **65** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **2** | **13** |

# 4. Benchmarking

We include for your reference comparative benchmarking data of the number and ranking of recommendations made for audits of a similar nature in the previous financial year.

| Area | High | Medium | Low | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Credits** | | | | | |
| Average number of recommendations in similar audits | - | - | 2 | 2 | |
| Recommendations at West College Scotland | - | - | 1 | 1 | |
| **SSF** | | | | | |
| Average number of recommendations in similar audits | - | 1 | - | 1 | |
| Recommendations at West College Scotland | - | - | - | - | |
| **EMA** | | | | | |
| Average number of recommendations in similar audits | - | - | - | - | |
| Recommendations at West College Scotland | - | - | - | - | |
| **Procurement and Tendering** | | | | | |
| Average number of recommendations in similar audits | - | 2 | 2 | 4 | |
| Recommendations at West College Scotland | - | - | 1 | 1 | |
| **GDPR Compliance** | | | | | |
| Average number of recommendations in similar audits | - | 2 | 1 | 3 | |
| Recommendations at West College Scotland | - | - | 2 | 2 | |
| **Corporate Governance** | | | | | |
| Average number of recommendations in similar audits | - | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| Recommendations at West College Scotland | - | - | 3 | 3 | |
| **Summary c/f** | - | | | | |
| **Average number of recommendations in similar audits** | - | 6 | 7 | 13 | |
| **Recommendations at West College Scotland** | - | - | 7 | 7 | |

8

# 4. Benchmarking

| Area | High | Medium | Low | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Summary b/f** | | | | | |
| **Average number of recommendations in similar audits** | - | 6 | 7 | 13 | |
| **Recommendations at West College Scotland** | - | - | 7 | 7 | |
| **Estates Strategy** | | | | | |
| Average number of recommendations in similar audits | - | 2 | 2 | 4 | |
| Recommendations at West College Scotland | - | 2 | 1 | 3 | |
| **Student admissions/ Enrolment** | | | | | |
| Average number of recommendations in similar audits | - | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| Recommendations at West College Scotland | - | - | 2 | 2 | |
| **Continuing Professional Development** | | | | | |
| Average number of recommendations in similar audits | - | - | 1 | 1 | |
| Recommendations at West College Scotland | - | - | 2 | 2 | |
| **Communicating and Marketing Strategy** | | | | | |
| Average number of recommendations in similar audits | - | 2 | 2 | 4 | |
| Recommendations at West College Scotland | - | - | 1 | 1 | |
| **Average number of recommendations in similar audits** | - | 11 | 14 | 25 | |
| **Recommendations at West College Scotland** | - | 2 | 13 | 15 | |

As noted above, West College Scotland has a lower number of recommendations in comparison with the Colleges it has been benchmarked against.

9

# 4. Benchmarking

We have set out below in graphical format an analysis of the Benchmarking totals by grade of recommendation made.
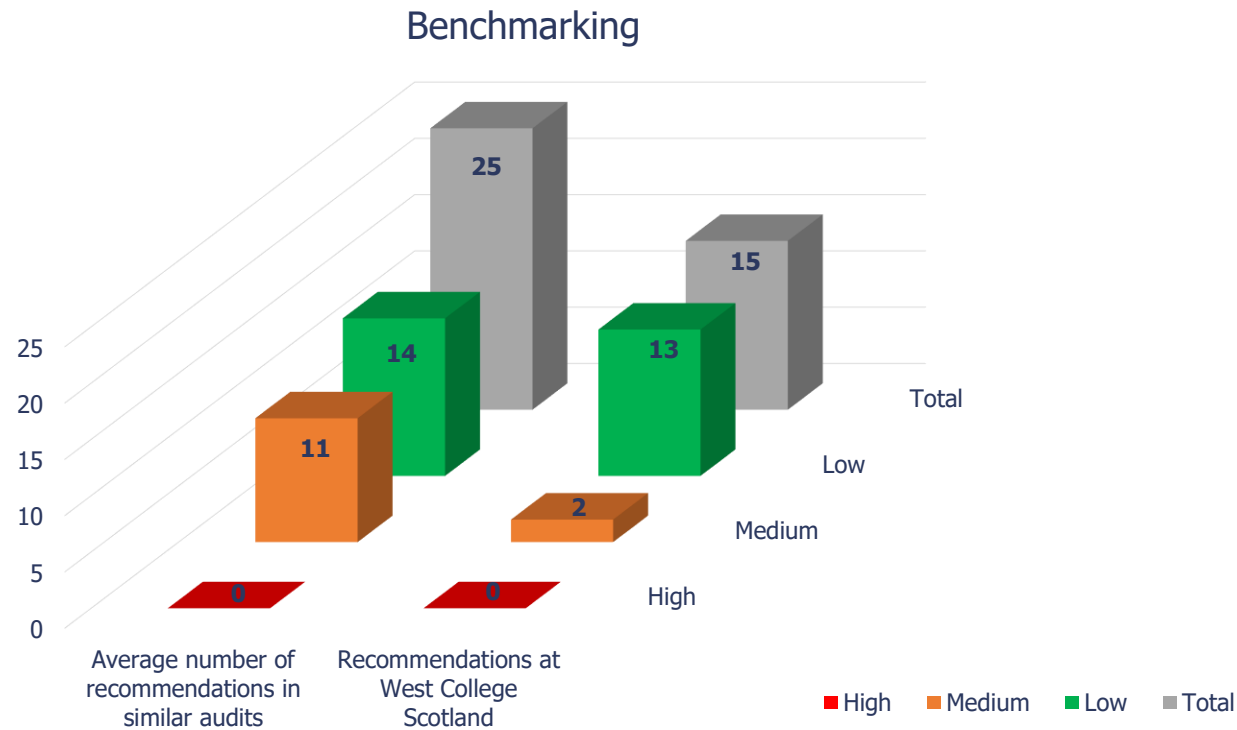


Benchmarking

As noted above, West College Scotland has a lower number of recommendations in comparison with the colleges it has been benchmarked against.

# 5. Key Performance Indicators

| Performance Indicator | Target | Actual |
|---|---|---|
| Internal audit days completed in line with agreed timetable and days allocation | 100% | 100% |
| Draft scopes provided no later than 10 working days before the internal audit start date and final scopes no later than 5 working days before each start date | 100% | 100% |
| Draft reports issued within 10 working days of exit meeting | 100% | 100% |
| Management provide responses to draft reports within 15 working days of receipt of draft reports | 100% | 100% |
| Final reports issued within 5 working days of receipt of management responses | 100% | 100% |
| Recommendations accepted by management | 100% | 100% |
| Draft annual internal audit report to be provided by 31 August each year | 100% | 100% |
| Attendance at Audit & Risk Committee meetings by a senior member of staff | 100% | 100% |
| Suitably experienced staff used on all assignments | 100% | 100% |

# Appendix A

**Grading Structure**

# A. Grading Structure

For each area of review, we assign a level of assurance in accordance with the following classification:

| Assurance | Classification |
|---|---|
| Strong | Controls satisfactory, no major weaknesses found, no or only minor recommendations identified |
| Substantial | Controls largely satisfactory although some weaknesses identified, recommendations for improvement made |
| Weak | Controls unsatisfactory and major systems weaknesses identified that require to be addressed immediately |
| No | No or very limited controls in place leaving the system open to significant error or abuse, recommendations made require to be implemented immediately |

For each recommendation, we make we assign a grading either as High, Medium or Low priority depending upon the degree of risk assessed as outlined below:

| Assurance | Risk | Classification |
|---|---|---|
| High | High risk | Major weakness that we consider needs to be brought to the attention of the Audit & Risk Committee and addressed by Senior Management of West College Scotland as a matter of urgency |
| Medium | Medium risk | Significant issue or weakness which should be addressed by West College Scotland as soon as possible |
| Low | Low risk | Minor issue or weakness reported where management may wish to consider our recommendation |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Title of Paper** | **Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee Chair's Report** |
| **Presented by:** | Gordon Hunt, Chair of LTQ Committee |
| **Recommendation:** | **To Note** |
| **Status:** | **PUBLIC** |

**Purpose / Executive Summary:**

The Chair of the Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee will provide Board Members with an update of discussions at the meeting of the Committee held on 4 September 2024.

**Recommendations:**

The Board is asked to note the update provided.

| **Implications:** | |
|---|---|
| **Financial** | |
| **Student Experience** | |
| **People** | |
| **Legal** | Not applicable for this report. |
| **Reputational** | |
| **Community/ Partnership impact** | |
| **Environment** | |
| **Equalities** | |

1.    **Background**

The Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee met via Teams on 4 September 2024.  Apologies were noted from J McKie, J O'Neill and G Rice.

2.    **Highlights from the meeting**

2.1    Two powerful presentation were given on:
- **Meta Performance** – the concept begins with seeing the person first, rooted in psychology, with the ontological perspective, recognising and nurturing each student's whole being, driving both personal and academic excellence. WCS is noted as sector-leading in this area. The Committee were shown the Meta Performance tracker software which allows students to add evidence of any tasks or activities they have undertaken and match them to 'soft skills' to build up their profile.  Last year 1500 students were actively using the software.  The app now appears on all students My West platform.  Staff are also being trained to show other students how to use it.  The plan is for all FE and apprentices to be using the system this year.
- **TeacherMatic** AI platform, a secure and accurate system used for creating engaging teaching materials in a time efficient manner.  The Committee received a demonstration showing how it can be used to develop lesson plans, step by step tasks, generating multiple choice questions and YouTube based content.  It was noted that AI was here to stay and the need to understand how it can be used to help.  WCS had been part of the pilot in Scotland, and as this had gone very well, the College purchased 250 additional licences. Staff with current licences will be used as peer support to demonstrate to others.  It was also noted, that although the system was called Teachermatic, the software had the potential to be used across all professional services.

2.2    The Committee were advised of the **Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE**) which is a mandatory requirement for GTCS registration. The College supports around 20-25 staff annually to obtain the qualification.   Part of the assessment for the award is the compilation of a 5-minute digital story, which has been reported as an effective timebound and concise assessment. This approach encourages innovation, creativity and critical self-reflection. Examples of the stories were uploaded to the LTQ Teams channel for Members to view.

2.3    An update from the **Students Association** including elections taking place for the second Student Association President; student inductions and the positive feedback received; the new organisation of the SA, introducing communication, department and sector representatives; creation and development of a proposed 3-year student partnership agreement; and an update on the SA budget. The power of the student voice was noted, and the SA were asked to lobby hard on the sector budget and cuts to the public sector.

2.4    The Committee were advised of the major strengths noted throughout all areas and the overall positive **Education Scotland Annual Engagement Visit Summary Feedback Report**, particularly with the student feedback, as the visit had taken place during a period of significant strike action.  Two main points for action are being progressed, with a continued focus on improving low attainment through quality processes and a revised Student Association structure. The note function in the new Civica system will address the sharing of student support information. It is also intended to utilise Civica registers to display the Class Communication Representatives to help encourage more engagement.

2.5     The committee were updated on the implementation of the new **SFC Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF)** and arrangements. The Self Evaluation & Action Plan (SEAP) draft report will be submitted to the next LTQ meeting in advance of its submission to SFC.  The action plan from this next cycle will be used to embed across college and as a base document going forward.  Annual internally led quality reviews examining the curriculum portfolio will also take place.  Academic session 24/25 will be used as a pilot with one college and university for the **Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER).**  From 2025-2030 all other colleges and universities will have one full review plus follow-up. 2030/31 will be used for reflection and evaluation, to review the model.   **Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP)** will have national quality enhancement themes running across both colleges and universities.

2.6     SMT are currently reviewing Risk Register to ensure any new identified risks are included.  Risk Appetite Session has now been re-arranged for Monday 4 November 2024.

2.7     An update given on the **Sustainability Goals annual audit and outcomes**, an increase in interest and activities from staff and students year on year was noted.  The Portfolio Review process will gather further information about the impact of these activities and how they can be developed further and/or shared more widely with other curriculum areas or Colleges.  The recommendations noted will be addressed through 2024/25 and will be reported to the Committee on an annual basis.

2.8     The Educational Leadership update noted the following:
* EIS had now accepted pay offer and industrial action has been suspended
* EIS national issued a 10-day time period for lecturers to submit outstanding results from last session.  WCS extended this to 26 Sept to allow students to complete units they were not able to.   Returning students would complete any missed units during this current year.  Students progressing to university would also complete any missing areas within universities.  No progressing students have had their place rescinded due to this.
* It was noted that around 25% of staff had with-held results due to industrial action, and that around 7,000 students had at least one outstanding unit.
* CIVICA challenges are ongoing.  4000 students have been successfully enrolled but there are some issues with around 1000 students.  These are mainly due to technical issues that CIVICA is working to resolve and improve.   An issue with Microsoft was also noted, due to the delay in processing, leading to a condensed period of emails to be issued, which exceeded MS limits.  No student would be disadvantaged.  Funding would be released for students who were attending but not yet fully enrolled.
* Support to staff teams was highlighted due to the current hefty workloads to deal with backlogs and issues.
* The positive elements to the new system were noted, noting these are outweighed at present by the technical and processing issues.  Advantages will be noted once these are fixed and further review undertaken to inform further improvements.  Feedback is being sought from students and staff in order to inform any changes to the application process for the next round of applications.
* The Committee were advised, that subject to audit, the **College had achieved its credit target** for last year.  Congratulations were noted to the team.

2.9     Quality Standards Committee minutes were also noted.

**3       Recommendations:**
The Board is asked to note the update provided.

| **Title of Paper** | **Audit & Risk Committee Chair's Report** |
|---|---|
| **Presented by:** | Ronald Leitch, Chair of Audit & Risk Committee |
| **Recommendation:** | **To Note** |
| **Status:** | **PUBLIC** |

**Purpose / Executive Summary:**

The Audit & Risk Committee met via Teams on 11 September 2024.  Apologies were noted from B Logan (Co-opted Member).

The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee provides Board Members with an update of discussions at the meeting of the Committee held on 11 September 2024.

**Recommendations:**

The Board is asked to note the update provided.

| **Implications:** | |
|---|---|
| **Financial** | |
| **Student Experience** | |
| **People** | |
| **Legal** | Not applicable for this report. |
| **Reputational** | |
| **Community/ Partnership impact** | |
| **Environment** | |
| **Equalities** | |

**1.     Highlights**

1.1     A private meeting held with Azets, External Auditors, as part of the audit planning is to identify any potential risk areas or concern, that the auditors should consider. They noted the recent significant changes within key finance roles and the external support provided in this area, as well as new staff now coming on board. Financial Sustainability and financial management were discussed noting the unprecedented budgetary challenges to be faced over the next two years. The new Corporate Strategy to be submitted for Board approval in December 2024 would recognise and take cognisance of these pressures. Fraud, risk management and value for money were also discussed, with no major issues being raised by the Committee.

1.2     The Committee reviewed and approved the summary of the recent evaluation of the work of the Committee and of the Internal Auditors. The Committee noted its satisfaction of the work of Wylie & Bisset and of the Committee.

1.3     The Committee agreed the review and update of its Terms of Reference.

1.4     A summary of the legislative compliance was discussed, including approaches to RDEL/CDEL. This would be added to the strategic risk register and a further paper on the impact and mitigations would be received by the Committee at its November meeting. There were no issues to report on the reviews of FOI, Data Protection, Register of Interest or declared Hospitality & Gifts.

1.5     The IT Security Controls report gave an update on the IT re-shaping project undertaken as part of the 'Be the Change approach which is due to be completed by December 2024. No areas of concern or lack of skills within the department were noted, with the structure review ensuring a focus on certain areas, including cyber resilience and security. Cyber security compliance was ensured by members of the IT team being well versed in the cyber resilience framework and the tools of MS365. A dedicated focus in this area will allow further enhancement. There is already in place a Cyber Resilience Recovery Plan as part of the College's overall Business Continuity Plan.

1.6     The use of AI and guidance to staff on usage of tools was raised. It was noted this fell under the remit of a different department and was being taken forward through the Innovative Learning team. Work was underway on guidance around AI for staff and students. WCS had taken part in the recent pilot of the Teachermatic programme, which had recently been presented to LTQ.

1.7     The Committee noted the three-year plan in place for Penetration Testing, with no highly critical areas raised or any areas making the College highly vulnerable. Recommendations noted allowed for an increase in security and all had now been implemented.

1.8     It was noted that the College was positioned above the baseline on the benchmarking for the Cyber Resilience Framework. A brief paper on cyber resilience performance will be submitted to the Nov meeting.

1.9     The Risk Appetite Session had now been re-arranged to take place on 4 November 2024. The Risk Register would be updated with recently identified risks for ongoing review.

1.10 Two updated policies were reviewed and approved – Financial Regulations – with the main changes being to the Procurement section, and a re-write of the IT Administrative Security Policy to include more specifics taken from recent assessments and audit.

1.11 The draft narrative for the performance and accountability section of the Annual Report was considered. It was noted this continues to be a work in progress and the final report would be submitted to the joint meeting of ARC/CDC in November. The Committee requested that some additional information be included on the impact of the sector funding challenges.

1.12 Azets, External Auditors presented their final Audit Strategy Plan for 2023/2024, noting the positive developments since the last meeting and the appointment of the new Director of Finance & Estates and Head of Finance. The Chair noted the ARC could now advise the Board of this positive update.

1.13 The Communications & Marketing Strategy Internal Audit report was received, providing strong assurance, showing 11 areas of best practice, and only 1 low level recommendation.

1.14 The Internal Audit Annual Report for 23/24 noted satisfaction that sufficient internal audit work had been undertaken to conclude that West College Scotland has adequate and effective risk management, control and governance processes to manage its achievement of the College's objectives at the time of the audit work. It was further noted that the College has proper arrangements to promote and secure value for money. There had been no high priority recommendations raised from the individual reviews, with 2 mediums and 13 low level, and that the College benchmarks favourably across the sector.

1.15 The Internal Audit Plan for 2024/2025 was agreed. As the CIVICA (Governance) audit had been added to the plan, it was suggested that Enhancement Planning be postponed until 2025/2026, once the new Corporate Strategy was in place. The order of some of the Audits were re-arranged, with Risk Management being brought forward to w/c 10 March 2025, Recruitment & Retention being swapped with FOI, and the Corporate Strategy and Recruitment & Retention audits now taking place from Tuesday 22 April 2025, due to the Easter holidays.

1.16 Actions on the Rolling Audit Action Plan were noted, with twelve actions requesting extensions, awaiting the new Corporate Strategy and the underpinning strategies.

| **Title of Paper** | **Legislative Compliance Report** |
|---|---|
| **Presented by:** | Nicola Connelly, Director of Finance & Estates |
| **Decision:** | For Noting |
| **Status:** | **PUBLIC** |

**Purpose / Executive Summary:**

This paper, having been discussed at Audit & Risk Committee, provides the Board with updates in relation to the following matters:

- **SFC Accounts Direction**
    - SFC have published the 2023-24 Accounts Direction. The substantive changes are outlined in the report.
- **RDEL/CDEL Treatment**
    - Scottish Funding Council (SFC) announced a change in policy regarding capital / revenue departmental expenditure limits (CDEL/RDEL). There are ongoing discussions around the impact of the changes, the practice around the sector is not to make the SFC suggested adjustment, however there is a risk associated with not making this adjustment.
    - Audit & Risk Committee have requested an update on this item be submitted to the next meeting being held in November 2024.

- **Fixed Asset Valuation**
    - External auditors Azets Holdings Limited have requested a desktop valuation of the College asset portfolio for 2023-24. Ryden's have carried out the work and the results will be included in the Financial Statements as of 31st July 2024.

- **Legal Case**
    - A case has been brought against West College Scotland Foundation for damages from a fall that occurred on College property. It has been raised against the incorrect institution and as such the College are investigating getting the case 're-opened'.

- **Report on Freedom of Information and Data Protection Act Requests, Register of Interests and Gifts & Hospitality Register**
    - The College has continued to deal with Freedom of Information and Data Protection requests as required and are dealt with in accordance with the relevant legislation.
    - The review of staff register of interest did not highlight any issues that require to be brought to the attention of the Audit & Risk Committee.

- o The review by the College of the Board and Committee members register of interest did not highlight any issues.
- o A review of the gifts and hospitality register did not highlight any issues that require to be brought to the attention of the Audit & Risk Committee.

- **Other Reporting Requirements**
  - o The College had no reportable matters regarding its duties under the Public Interest Disclosure Act in the year to 31 July 2024.
  - o There were no significant lapses in data security, i.e., reportable to the Information Commissioner's Office, during 2023-24 or up to the date of this report.
  - o There were no losses arising from fraudulent activities.

**Recommendations:**

Following discussion at the Audit & Risk Committee, the Board is asked to **note** the report.

| Implications: | |
|---|---|
| **Financial** | Impact of revised valuations on financial statements noting non-cash nature of adjustments. |
| **Student Experience** | Not applicable for this report |
| **Human Resources** | Not applicable for this report |
| **Legal** | Outcome of potential legal case being assessed. Compliance report provides assurance that reporting requirements are being adhered to. |
| **Reputational** | Not applicable for this report |
| **Community/ Partnership impact** | Not applicable for this report |
| **Equalities** | Not applicable for this report |
| **Environment** | Not applicable for this report |

## 1.    SFC ACCOUNTS DIRECTIONS

1.1.    The College is required to comply with the requirements of the:
- Financial Memorandum with the Scottish Funding Council.
- Scottish Funding Council Accounts Direction.
- Statement of recommended Practice: Accounting for Further and Higher Education (SORP).
- Government Financial Reporting Manual.

in the preparation of the annual report and accounts for the College.

The SFC annually issue mandatory guidance for the preparation of the annual report and accounts each year. Accounts direction 2023-24.

1.2.    The deadline for submission of the annual report is the 31 December 2024. Two copies of the College annual report and accounts also require to be sent to the Auditor General for Scotland by 31 December 2024.

**Changes to Reporting Requirements**

1.3.    The SFC Accounts Direction for 2023-24 has been published .Accounts Direction 2023-24. The substantive changes in the 2023-24 Accounts Direction cover several areas from changes in narrative disclosure to a direction on the accounting treatment of the support staff and middle management job evaluation exercise:

- **Fair Work Disclosures –** Colleges need to demonstrate how they are compliant with the seven Fair Work First principles.
- **Cash Budget for Priorities –** Colleges are no longer required to provide a breakdown of the Cash Budget for Priorities allocation from Academic Year 2023-24 in the Performance Report.
- **New Governance Code –** All institutions are required to include a statement confirming compliance with the 2022 Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges.
- **Support Staff and Middle Management Job Evaluation Funding and Costs –** The Accounts Direction signals a change in the accounting for the funding and costs of the support staff and middle management job evaluation exercise. The Accounts Direction indicates that a contingent liability, rather than a provision, is the appropriate accounting treatment from 2023-24.

## 2.    RDEL/CDEL

2.1.    There is a current risk to the College surrounding the impact of the change in Scottish Funding Council (SFC) policy regarding capital/ revenue departmental expenditure limits (CDEL/RDEL).

2.2.    The sector is provided with Estate Maintenance Funding to ensure the college estate remains open to deliver learning and teaching. This funding was distributed as Capital Departmental

Expenditure Limit (CDEL) but with the permission of the SFC, colleges have treated over 50% of the funding as Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (RDEL). The RDEL element of the funding has been used to undertake statutory, essential, planned and reactive maintenance work and to cover historic loan interest payments.

2.3.    In late 2023 the SFC informed the sector via email that this practice was no longer acceptable, and that all future estate maintenance funding requires to be treated as CDEL. This change in accepted treatment will have significant consequences on several colleges who have been operating and planning based on being able to use maintenance fund as revenue. In several cases where the previous revenue expenditure cannot be transferred to capital expenditure, the impacted colleges will require to find further savings from either staff or non-staff costs. There is an increased risk to the break-even financial position of several colleges and that the college estate falls into wider disrepair.

2.4.    West College Scotland has annually transferred circa £1,700,000 of estate maintenance funding to revenue to support the ongoing maintenance of the wider College estates.

2.5.    Unlike other colleges, West College Scotland does not have a significant level of maintenance expenditure that it can capitalise thereby mitigating this change in policy (staff costs, maintenance contracts and general repairs).

2.6.    The additional savings / efficiencies to address the required adjustment will be over and above the savings required to be made following the announcement of the 2024-25 funding allocations and will impact the delivery of learning and teaching.

2.7.    The College fully appreciate the need for all publicly funded organisations to make efficiencies because of the challenging fiscal landscape, but do not accept that the blanket approach to the allocation of RDEL/CDEL is equitable when considering the college sector estate.

2.8.    The sector continues to actively lobby for the Scottish Government to allow the SFC to continue to treat the allocation of estate maintenance funding as either RDEL or CDEL in line with their prior practice or to transfer an element of CDEL to RDEL funding.

2.9.    The 2024-25 Budget assumes that the SFC will be allowed to either (a) continue the practice of transferring funds from CDEL to RDEL or (b) an element of CDEL funding will be transferred to RDEL.

2.10.    Should the College not be allowed to treat the funding as RDEL then at least £1,700,000 of additional efficiencies will require to be found in 2024-25 onwards, with the consequential impacts on both learning & teaching and support services.

2.11.    The College has engaged with its external auditors to assess their stance about this matter and the Committee will be updated following the conclusion of these discussions.

## 3.    FIXED ASSET VALUATION

3.1.   At merger, the College adopted a policy of conducting the revaluation of land and buildings owned by the College every 5 years with an interim valuation to be conducted every 3 years. The five-year revaluation was conducted last year for the financial year 2022/23. This year our external auditors Azets have noted that due to continuing challenges and uncertainty in the market a desktop valuation of land & buildings owned by the College would be required to satisfy audit purposes. A copy of the Accounting Policy in relation to Fixed Assets is attached at Appendix A.

3.2.   The purpose of this valuation exercise is to ensure that:
- The values used within the Financial Statements represent a true and fair view of the College assets.
- The replacement values are used in renewing the College insurances portfolio.

3.3.   The desktop valuation is being undertaken by a single firm of valuers (Ryden) who were appointed after a procurement exercise.

Ryden have been instructed to undertake the work and will provide a report covering all land and buildings owned by the College no later than Monday 16th September. The financial statements will be updated accordingly.

3.4.   The revised values will have a non-cash impact upon the College 2023-24 budget and future Financial Statements and these impacts will be considered by the Corporate Development Committee.

**2023/24 Desktop Valuation Exercise – Key Points**

3.5.   The valuations of all the properties for accounting purposes are on a Depreciated Replacement Cost (DRC) basis. This is the appropriate basis of valuation as contained within the RICS Valuation – Global Standards (The Red Book) effective in January 2022. The College concurs with this basis of valuation as being the most appropriate. The DRC basis of valuation is used for specialist properties that are rarely, if ever, sold as part of a sale of the entire operation of which they form part, on the open market.

3.6.   DRC is defined as ""The current cost of replacing an asset with its modern equivalent asset less deductions for physical deterioration and all relevant forms of obsolescence and optimisation."

3.7.   A valuation of a property in the Public Sector using a DRC method should be accompanied by a statement that it is subject to the prospect and viability of the continued occupation and use. The College is satisfied that this is the case.

3.8.   The auditors due to the uncertainty in the market requested a desktop valuation this year. Ryden do not consider the assets which are being appraised to be subject to material valuation

uncertainty as at the valuation date. This is because the properties in the College assets portfolio are specialised, and these have been valued on a Depreciated Replacement Cost basis.

3.9.   As per accounting guidance the values are split as follows:

Land  - stated separately
Externals - stated separately
Building - Building structure
Mechanical and electrical element
Externals

3.10. This split is to comply with the accounting requirement for buildings to be split into components where there is a material difference in the useful life of the various categories of asset. It is therefore normal practice to make an estimate of the costs of such items as boilers and electrical components as these will require replacement before the end of the useful life of the building itself.


## 4.      PENDING LITIGATION AND CONTINGENT LIABILITY

4.1. During the year a legal case was raised against West College Scotland Foundation regarding a fall that happened on campus. The defendant submitted a case for £31k in damages. The College are currently investigating the legal position and if we can get the case 're-opened' due to the case being raised against the Foundation.

4.2. The Committee will be kept updated of the progress and any legal advice procured.

## 5.   REPORT ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND DATA PROTECTION ACT REQUESTS, REGISTER OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS & HOSPITALITY REGISTER

**Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts Requests**

5.1.   Appendix B provides a summary report on the Freedom of information and Data Protection Act requests compared to the previous year. It can be seen from Appendix B that the total number of freedoms of information requests received during 2023-24 totalled 40 (2022-23: 23 requests), with data protection requests totalling 19 (2022-23: 31 requests).

**Register Of Interests**

**Staff**

5.2.   The Senior Management Team and those members of the College management team with either budget holding and/or procurement responsibilities were requested to provide a register of interest form.

5.3.    A total of 68 forms (2022-23: 91) were issued and at the time of writing 35 forms were returned. Following a review of the returns by the Director of Finance it is worth noting that two members of staff have declared being Board members of UHI Argyle College Scotland and Lennox Partnership.

5.4.    A review by the College of the Board and Committee members register of interest did not highlight any issues. The Audit & Risk Committee are requested to review and comment upon the register of Board and Committee members interests.

**Board of Management**

5.5.    The College Code of Conduct sets out the principles and rules governing the conduct of members of West College Scotland. Board members are required to disclose and register any financial or other material interest they, close family, or friends, have which might impact on their relationship with the College. Information on related party transactions is also collated within this Register.

5.6.    Members must register when they are appointed and whenever their circumstances change. Registers should be reviewed and updated if required, at least annually.

        The register covers their current term of appointment. Failure to do so may provide a risk to the reputation of the College or leave members of the Board open to suspicion of impropriety in their conduct of business.

5.7.    All members of the Board of Management should ensure that they act impartially in accordance with the nine key principles of public life in Scotland and behave in accordance with these principles.

5.8.    A copy of the current Board and Committee Members Register of Interest can be found on the College website.

**Gifts and Hospitality**

5.9.    The Committee is required to be provided with an annual review of the Gifts and Hospitality Registers, and to highlight that systems are in place to ensure staff members are aware of the need to inform the Director of Finance and complete the forms where gifts or hospitality are received or given to the value of £25 or over.

5.10.   Details of gifts and hospitality received by staff over the last year are recorded by the Director of Finance. Staff are reminded quarterly via the College intranet about the requirement to register gifts and hospitality.

5.11.   In line with previous years the College has received a limited number of declarations mainly in relation to gifts from students to staff members. None of these gifts were deemed as excessive or contravened the principles of the Policy. No declarations were received from senior staff members.

## 6.     OTHER REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

**Public Interest Disclosures**

6.1.    The Public Interest Disclosure Act enables and encourages individuals to raise matters of concern that are in the public interest (often referred to as whistleblowing), such as malpractice, impropriety, or wrongdoing within the College, without fear of reprisal, so that they may be investigated and where appropriate acted upon.

6.2.    A copy of the College Public Interest Disclosure Policy can be found on the College website. The Policy was reviewed by the Audit Committee in September 2022 with the next review scheduled for September 2025. The Policy and associated procedures were the subject of an internal audit review in April 2023. The report concluded that the College had an overall strong level of assurance surrounding the whistleblowing controls in place.

**Significant Lapses of Data Security**

6.3.    A breach of College data security measures may be accidental, or intentional (e.g., a deliberate or malicious breach of security).

A personal data breach can be broadly defined as a security incident that has affected the confidentiality, integrity, or availability of personal data. In short, there will be a personal data breach:
- whenever any personal data is lost, destroyed, corrupted, or improperly disclosed,
- if someone accesses the data or passes it on without proper authorisation; or
- if the data is made unavailable, for example, when it has been encrypted by ransomware, or accidentally lost or destroyed.

6.4.    The College has an obligation to notify the ICO of a "serious personal data breach" without undue delay. There is not a statutory obligation to report within 72 hours of becoming aware of it, but if notification does not occur within that period, the College will need to include an explanation for the delay when you do notify.

6.5.    The requirement to notify a 'serious' personal data breach means that the College needs to notify the ICO of all breaches that are considered serious. This will require the College to consider:
- the severity of the impact on the rights and freedoms of the affected individuals.
- the scale of the data breach (i.e., how many people are affected).
- the extent of any interference with the right to privacy under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).
- whether the breach involves any personal data whose processing constitutes "sensitive processing."
- the nature of the rights and freedoms which have been impacted (e.g., a breach leading to a risk to the right to life under Article 2 ECHR would be particularly serious).

6.6.   Consequences could be anything which seriously interferes with an individual's rights and freedoms. It is for the College to decide whether a personal data breach meets the threshold to be considered serious.

6.7.   There were no significant lapses in data security, i.e., reportable to the Information Commissioner's Office, during 2023-24 or up to the date of this report.

**Anti-Bribery and Corruption and Anti-Fraud Policies**

6.8.   In line with the requirements of the Policy, there were no incidents of loss due to fraud reportable in the year 2023-24. The Anti-Fraud policy was reviewed by the Audit & Risk Committee in September 2023 with no material changes to the operation of the document being proposed. A further review of this Policy within one year following the appointment of the Director of Finance & Estates Nicola Connelly will take place.

6.9.   The Anti-Bribery policy was reviewed by the Audit & Risk Committee in May 2024 with no material changes to the operation of the document being proposed.

**Appendix A – College Fixed Asset Policy**

**Tangible Fixed Assets**
In line with the FReM all tangible assets must be carried at fair value.

**Land and buildings**
Land and buildings are measured using the revaluation model. Under the revaluation model, assets are revalued to fair value. Depreciated Replacement cost has been used as a measure of fair value for land and buildings, otherwise Market Value has been used.

The College has a policy of ensuring a full revaluation takes place at least every 5 years, with an interim valuation conducted after 3 years, such that the fair value is not materially different to the current value. Depreciation and impairment losses are subsequently charged on the revalued amount.

Finance costs, which are directly attributable to the construction of land and buildings, are capitalised as part of the cost of those assets.

Cost incurred in relation to land and buildings after initial purchase or construction, and prior to valuation, are capitalised to the extent that they increase the expected future benefits of the College.

A review for impairment of a fixed asset is conducted if events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount of the fixed asset may not be recoverable.

Assets under construction are accounted for at cost, based on the value of architects' certificates and other direct costs. They are not depreciated until they are brought into useful lives.

Heritable land is not depreciated as it is considered to have an indefinite useful life. Freehold buildings are depreciated on a straight-line basis over their expected useful lives. 

Depreciation is calculated on a straight-line basis over the expected useful life of the buildings which vary from 10 to 60 years as determined by professional opinion and valuation.

**Buildings owned by third parties**
Where land and buildings are acquired with the aid of specific grants, they are capitalised and depreciated as stated previously.

The related grants are credited to a deferred capital grant account and released to the income and expenditure account over the estimated life of the building on a basis consistent with the depreciation policy.

**Equipment**
Equipment costing less than £5,000 per individual item and motor vehicles costing less than £5,000 are written off to expenditure in the year of acquisition.

All other equipment and vehicles are capitalised and carried at depreciated historical costs, which is used as a proxy for fair value.

Assets of lesser value may be capitalised where they form part of a group of similar assets purchased in the same financial year and costing over £20,000 in total.

Capitalised equipment is depreciated over its useful economic life ranging from between 3 and 10 years on a straight-line basis.

Depreciation methods, useful lives and residual values are reviewed at the date of preparation of each balance sheet.

**Appendix B - Summary of Freedom of Information Requests**

| Categories of Request | 2023-24 Requests | 2022-23 Requests | Type of information requested | Responses out with statutory timescales | Reason for late response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Student Data | 5 | 6 | Care Experienced Accessibility, Headcount for Creative Industries, Impact on strike action. | 0 | N/a |
| HR Data | 12 | 6 | Salary, expenses, pensions, annual leave carryover, Job evaluation, Fair Work agreement, agency spend. | 1 | Annual Leave |
| Finance Data | 5 | 9 | College budgets, legal fees, contractors | 1 | Christmas Break |
| Estates & Buildings | 6 | 0 | RAAC, littering, fly tipping | 1 | Handover |
| IT Provision and use | 4 | 0 | No of IT devices/ IT applications, servers, print arrangements | 0 | N/a |
| Teaching and Assessment | 2 | | Languages, AI | 1 | |
| Other | 6 | 2 | Hate crimes, physical/ verbal incidents, childcare facilities, sanitary products | 0 | N/a |
| Reviews requested | 0 | 0 | | 0 | N/a |
| **Total Number of Requests** | **40** | **23** | | | |

## Summary of Data Protection Act Requests

| Categories of Request | 2023-24 Request | 2022-23 Request | Type of information requested | Responses out with statutory timescales | Reason for late response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Student Data | 16 | 27 | DoB, contact details, attendance<br>Confirmation of study.<br>Whether individual attended College.<br>"Emergency situation;<br>information requested in relation to an attempted suicide."<br>Information related to bursary payments.<br>Contact details, as held by College.<br>Contact details, as held by College.<br>Contact details.<br>Whether individual attending College.<br>All data with name/Student ID.<br>Student record details.<br>Extracts from gifts register, gifts from student to staff member.<br>Latest contact details for student.<br>All data processed during enrolment time.<br>***There was one request for data rectification, which was fully serviced.***<br>***There was one request for data erasure, which was partially serviced: some data had to be retained for statutory purposes.*** | 1 | A solicitor's letter (sent by post), was mistakenly held in the mailroom for some weeks. One other request had the statutory reply date extended due to the complexity of the request. |
| Staff Data | 3 | 3 | Payslips, pension contributions.<br>Copy of payslips.<br>Payslips, correspondence, health details. | 0 | N/A |
| Other | 0 | 1 | | 0 | N/A |
| **Total** | **19** | **31** | | | |