

# MINUTES

---

**Meeting:** Academic Quality Committee

**Date:** Monday 6 November 2023 at 3.30pm

**Location:** Microsoft Teams

**Present:** Zoe Thomson (Chair), Pamela Dobson, Taylor Edwards, Stacey Fleming, Evelyn McPhail, Jim Metcalfe, Lorraine Wilkinson

**In Attendance:** Iain Hawker, Dorothee Leslie, Marianne Philp

## 1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting. It was noted that Taylor Edwards was attending a meeting of this Committee for the first time and she was introduced and welcomed.

## 2 Minutes of Previous Meeting: 30 May 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

## 3 Matters Arising / Actions Outstanding

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted.

## 4 Fife College Students' Association (FCSA) Update

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were outlined and noted. Updates were given on:

- Progress with class representatives meetings and training
- Student Engagement Tracker
- Freshers Fayre
- Award nominations

A point for discussion was included in the paper regarding the timing of appointing class representatives and attending programme team reviews. A range of views were expressed about the pros and cons of moving either date. It was suggested that in previous years the timings had been less of an issue and that the particular issues this year were perhaps due to staffing shortages in the FCSA. It was noted that other staff teams were looking at how they could provide additional support to the FCSA to ensure that there are adequate levels of staffing.

It was noted that the themes emerging from feedback received were related to timetabling an issues students had experienced with lecturers. The FCSA were addressing these by having meetings with relevant staff to discuss. Support was offered from Executive Team members and the FCSA was encouraged to raise issues as and when they arose so that support could be provided where possible.

**Decision:** To progress an earlier discussion about having a short life working group to look at additional ways student representatives can feed into programme team reviews.

**Responsibility:** Student Board Member (with C Walker) **Deadline:** 28 May 2024

## 5 Curriculum Update Report

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were outlined and noted. Strategic highlights included:

- The College was within the 2% threshold allowed by SFC for the 2022-23 credits target and therefore the full allocation core funding would be received.
- 92.5% of students were satisfied with their college experience according to the latest survey.
- 84% of the student recruitment targets for 2023-24 had been met, which was a positive position compared with previous years.

It was confirmed that the portfolio review had helped with student recruitment, but that it took time for the benefits of changes to be fully realized. It was noted that in the Faculty of Engineering and Construction, around 100 students had enrolled but did not start their course which had a significant activity on start of term activity and that this faculty had under-recruited at FE/HE when compared to the others.

It was suggested that this report should provide a more strategic overview by including information on recruitment, retention and mitigations such as course structure, upskilling of staff etc and trend information where relevant.

Members were reminded that all information can be drilled down by staff to course level, and can be sliced in any way that is useful for analysis. Each Faculty is required to review their own courses and suggest where improvements can be made.

**Decision:** To look at the format of future reports to give more of a strategic overview of key issues.

**Responsibility:** Vice Principal: Academic Strategy **Deadline:** 28 May 2024

### 5.1 Academic Update: New Campus Project

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted and attention was drawn in particular to the next steps detailed on page 22 of the Boardpack.

It was noted that collaboration was key to success and finding ways that the schools and college could work together on activities which generated real benefits would build momentum.

Members indicated that they were concerned at the slow pace of progress as described in the paper and confirmed that they were supportive of the next steps detailed. Ensuring that everyone could get involved in the collaborative activities was considered to be key.

## 6 Performance Update

### 6.1 Complaints 2022-23 and Early Learner Feedback 2023-24

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. An increase in complaints by 48% compared to last academic year was reported, which was due to the impact of strike and action short of strike activity. Three complaints had been appealed to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman with none of these being further investigated due the comprehensive approach taken by the College during the complaints investigation.

Engagement in learner surveys remained highest in the sector. Committee members suggested that as well as knowing what students were most satisfied with, it would be useful to see areas where they were least satisfied in order to get full assurance.

**Decision:** To provide details of areas where students were least satisfied in future reports in order to give full assurance.

**Responsibility:** Vice Principal: Quality & AP      **Deadline:** 28 May 2024

## 6.2 External Review Update: Education Scotland

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. Members noted the action plan drafted based on feedback from the recent Education Scotland Engagement Visit, and were advised of planned engagement for 2023-24.

An update was given on the Tertiary Quality Project. It was confirmed that the aim was to simplify reporting and to remove duplication between agencies. The new model will replace “How Good is Our College” but the requirements as yet were unknown.

**Decision:** To receive updates on progress made on the Education Scotland action plan at each meeting.

**Responsibility:** Vice Principal: Quality & AP      **Deadline:** 12 February 2024

## 6.3 Performance Data Report

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. The key observations were outlined. It was noted that the number of results to be processed was down to around 1,000. A full update on PIs would be provided at the next Committee meeting.

It was confirmed that each area would be asked to drill down into their results at a course level in order to form action plans for improvements or further actions.

Members commented that the report was challenging to read and it did not give a sense of whether things were improving or were where they needed to be.

**Decision:** To provide an update on Partial and Completed Successful student PIs at the next meeting.

**Responsibility:** Vice Principal: Quality & AP      **Deadline:** 12 February 2024

**Decision:** To consider the format of future reports to include information such as trend analysis and a top-level summary of actions to be taken after each area had reviewed their PIs.

**Responsibility:** Vice Principal: Quality & AP      **Deadline:** 4 November 2024

## 6.4 School and University Partnership Report

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were outlined and noted.

It was suggested that it would be useful to see the reasons for school pupils withdrawing from College courses. It was noted that around 52% of students respond to feedback surveys. In previous years, school teachers had also been asked for feedback but this had been discontinued in 2022-23.

## 7 **Student Early Withdrawals 2023-24: Update**

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. Members were reminded that the early withdrawal date had changed to make it consistent with universities. The current position indicated an improvement in trend.

It remained difficult to get feedback for reasons for early withdrawal as students did not respond after leaving. Main known reasons included:

- Course not as described
- Mental health issues
- Securing employment

The communications process surrounding the withdrawal process was discussed and it was agreed that this required to be supportive and early intervention was key. Examples of where this had not worked well were provided.

## 8 **Learner Voice Framework: Annual Update**

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted.

## 9 **Self-Evaluation 2022-23**

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted.

## 10 **Review of Meeting**

The Chair requested that some points from this meeting be considered:

- Positive work was being undertaken and the Committee would like to support the College to get from good to great
- Information on negative feedback and PIs in order to understand this in future reports would be useful
- Include information on the “so whats” to help give a full understanding

**Decision:** The Chair and Director: Governance and Compliance to pick up off-line to discuss these points and to manage timings to enable focus on the right areas.

**Responsibility:** Chair/Director: Governance & Compliance **Deadline:** 31 January 2024

## 11 **Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 12 February 2024 at 3.30pm