



Dumfries and
Galloway College

Board of Management

08 December 2025 (12.45-1630), Dumfries Stem Hub

Agenda

Time	Item	Lead	Paper
13.00	1. Welcome and Apologies 1b. Declarations of Interests and Connections	CS	Verbal
13.05	➤ Derek Hoy, Audit Scotland	DH	Presentation
13.35	➤ Board Sharepoint Session	DM	Presentation
13.50	➤ Safeguarding Training	KG	Presentation
14.30	2. Minutes of Previous Meetings and Matters Arising (Approval) ➤ 6 October 2025 ➤ Action Log	CS LG	Paper 2.1 Paper 2.2
	3. Principal's Report	DD	Paper 3.1
	4. Annual Health and Safety Report	KH	Paper 4.1
	5. Student Association Report	HG/KM	Paper 5.1
For Approval			
	6. Annual External Audit Report	AR/AH	Paper 6.1
	7. Finance Update ➤ Letter of Representation and Draft Financial Statements (For Approval) ➤ Management Accounts	KH	Paper 7.1 Paper 7.2
	8. Audit Committee Annual Report	JR	Paper 8.1
	9. Strategic Risk Register	LG	Paper 9.1
	10. Policies ➤ Whistleblowing Policy	LG KH	Paper 10.1 Paper 10.2

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Disciplinary Policy ➤ Quality Assurance Policy 	PS	Paper 10.3
For Discussion			
	11. Chair's Report	CS	Paper 11.1
	12. Performance Report	PS/KH	Paper 12.1
	13. TQER Update	PS	Verbal
	14. Curriculum Structure	PS	Paper 14.1
	15. Committee Chairs Update (Key business/decisions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ FGP ➤ L&T ➤ Audit ➤ Rem (Confidential to Non-execs only) 	GC AI JR SH	Verbal
Starred items For Information only			
	16. Committee Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Finance and General Purpose ➤ Learning and Teaching ➤ Audit Committee ➤ Remuneration Committee (Confidential to Non-Execs only) 	GC AI JR SH	Paper 16.1 Paper 16.2 Paper 16.3 Paper 16.4
	17. Strategic Impact Analysis Report	PS	Paper 17.1
	18. Deep Dive Cyber Posture and Analogue Planning	KG	Paper 18.1
	19. Estates and Sustainability Annual Report	KH	Paper 19.1
	20. Early Experience Student Satisfaction Report	PS	Paper 20.1
	21. Any Other Business	CS	Verbal
	22. Date of next meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Monday 2 March 2026 	CS	Verbal

Board of Management Meeting

Minute of Meeting held on 08 December 2025 | Dumfries Campus

Present:		
Caroline Stuart (CS) - Chair	Jamie Ross (JR)	Susan McLellan (SMc)
Alastair Irons (AI)	Sharon Hodgson (SH)	Kate Glendye (KG)
Pete Woods (PW)	George Clark (GC)	Kirsty Duncan (KD)
Honor Gibson (HG)	Karen McIntosh (KM)	Sarah Holland
In attendance:		
Douglas Dickson (DD) – Depute Principal	Karen Hunter (KH) – VP Corporate Services	Lorraine Grierson (LG) – Governance Professional
Phil Storrier – Vice Principal Curriculum & Student Experience	Mary Cheetham (MC) – Minute taker	Steven Binnie (SB)
Apologies:		
Gillian Brydson (GB)	Inga McVicar (IM)	

1.

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence | Verbal | Chair C. Stuart

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and the meeting was confirmed as quorate.
- 1.2. Apologies were received as shown above.

1b Declaration of Interest and Connections | Verbal | Chair C. Stuart

- 1.b.1 The Chair reminded Members to indicate any declaration of interest as appropriate throughout the course of the meeting.
- 1.c.1 CS introduced Derek Hoy to the meeting Derek Hoy, Audit Scotland
- 1.c.2 Board Sharepoint Session - Presented by D Morton
- 1.c.3 Safeguarding/Corporate Parenting Training - Presented by K Glendye

FOR APPROVAL

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings and Matters Arising

- 2.1.1. Minute of Meeting held on 06 October 2025 | Paper 2.1 | Chair C. Stuart
- 2.1.2. The minute was approved as an accurate representation of the meeting

2.2. Action Log | Paper 2.2 | L. Grierson

2.2.1. LG provided an update on the progress of the current actions, confirming that all actions were now complete.

2.2.2. **The Board noted all actions.**

FOR DISCUSSION

3. Principal's Report | Paper 3.1 | D. Dickson

3.1 The Principal highlighted key initiatives and challenges.

- Strong progress on preparations for the TQER Review. Staff were thanked for substantial work completed, and the SIA was noted as constructive and reflective.

3.2 CS congratulated the team on the CDN Awards.

3.3 A member queried item 4.6.2 regarding the Jisc report, asking whether QAA would be informed and whether the assessment had been reviewed. It was confirmed the report went to F&GP, and as it represents sector best practice, a request was made for the report to be circulated.

3.4 **ACTION: Jisc report to be circulated - LG**

3.6 **The Board noted the report.**

4. Annual Health and Safety Report| Paper 4.1 | K. Hunter

4.1. The VP Corporate Services provided an overview of the calendar year's key focus, highlighting the introduction of the Smartlog System to give managers instant access to training, risk assessments, and related information. A new Health & Safety action plan for 2026 will be developed and discussed at team level.

4.2. A member queried whether the scale used in the Incidents and Near Misses tables should be adjusted to focus more on peer averages to better illustrate how small we are.

4.3 Clarification was requested on point 3.2.3 regarding the February entry being missing or possibly affected by a holiday; confirmation is required. It was also noted that a comparison against the previous academic year would be useful.

4.4 Action: For future, adjust Scales used in tables in the report to better reflect the low numbers and compare to peer national averages and include previous year's figures. - KH

4.5 **The Board noted the report.**

5. Student Association Introduction and Report | Paper 5.1 | H. Gibson

5.1. The Student Association President took the paper as read and highlighted the following key points.

- Movember total of £1,330.45 raised, with thanks given to the Student VP for her contribution.

- Ongoing student engagement activity, including the Student Experience Committee with Class Reps and associated projects in development.
- Christmas activities currently underway.
- Student President is involved on the STEP Project strand and this is moving forward exploring how financial and time pressures affect student engagement and partnership.

5.2. The Board provided positive feedback on the podcasts, noting how interesting they are.

5.3. **The Board noted the report.**

FOR APPROVAL

6. **Annual External Audit Report | Paper 6.1 | A Reid, A. Hughes**

6.1 AR presented the annual report and updated accounts, confirming an unqualified opinion will be issued following Board approval. The Audit Committee has reviewed the accounts, and they are ready for sign-off pending Board approval.

6.2 Key points included control process improvements from implementation of the new ledger, and responses had been agreed to recommendations. A material asset valuation adjustment of £9m was discussed at Audit, with corresponding amendments made to the draft accounts; an Underlying Surplus of £10k adjustment was unchanged.

6.3 Wider-scope findings noted financial sustainability as a sector-wide risk rather than a college-specific issue. As a small college - capacity within the finance team and competing demands were highlighted, but overall, the accounts are finalised, stable, and the team were commended for their work.

6.4 **The Board approved the report.**

7. **Finance Update**

7.1. **Letter of Representation and Draft Financial Statements (For Approval) | Paper 7.1 | K Hunter**

7.1.1 The VP Corporate Services provided an overview of the report confirming that both FGP and Audit committees had approved the accounts. She confirmed that adjustments related to pensions valuation had been made, reverting figures to their original position with no impact on the balance sheet or operations. The Statements include board structure, college strategic objectives and corporate governance statement.

7.1.2 An overview of the financial statements was presented, noting an improved balance sheet and a small cash surplus.

7.1.3 The Performance Report will set out key details and provide a fair and balanced analysis of performance. An overview of the adjustments made was also provided.

7.1.4 The Letter of Representation is to be signed but provides assurance in line with audit procedures that all information has been provided and for the current year the college is a going concern.

7.2. Management Accounts | Paper 7.2 | K Hunter

7.1.1 The VP Corporate Services confirmed that the management accounts had been approved by the F&GP Committee, noting that the accounts are tracking a break-even position, though uncertainties remain regarding NI, pensions, and funding, with further clarity expected in the New Year. Retention levels have been positive, and capital projects are progressing, including £100K from SFC for fire upgrades, with confirmation of the 4.25% SFC Support Pay Award still awaited. Cash balances were also discussed and will continue to be monitored.

7.1.2 **The Board approved the Financial Statements and Management Accounts.**

8 **Audit Committee Annual Report | Paper 8.1 | J. Ross**

8.1 The Audit Committee Annual Report was taken as read, noting membership and committee details. During the year, Azets provided external audit services, while internal audit services transitioned to Henderson Loggie.

8.2 The RSM internal audit annual report concluded that the college has an adequate and effective framework, reflecting positively on staff performance. Six audits were conducted, with no high-priority findings, six low-priority, and three medium-priority, representing a significant reduction compared to the previous academic year.

8.3 Section 3.7 confirmed that the Audit Committee provides assurance to the Board and ensures compliance with SFC and other protocols, with responsibilities discharged throughout the year.

8.4 A deep dive on cyber was also highlighted, with the work commended and the team encouraged to maintain current performance levels.

8.5 **The Board approved the Audit Committee Annual Report.**

9 **Strategic Risk Register | Paper 6.1 | L. Grierson | Approval**

9.1 It was confirmed that five risks were assigned to the Board of Management for their review: 1, 2, 5, 6 and 12. The Board were advised that after review by ELT, there had been no changes.

9.2 Regarding the previous Board discussions for Risk 12 – Health and Safety and Job Evaluation, the paperwork will be presented at the next meeting in March.

9.3 Risk 11 is over appetite however, a deep dive was conducted by Audit Committee covering Cyber Posture and Analogue Planning, with the associated report attached for noting.

9.4 The Board Approved the Risk Register.

10 Policies

10.1 Whistleblowing Policy | PAPER 10.1 | L. Grierson | Approval

10.1.1 To align the Policy with the standard template, additional narrative at section 5 – ‘Responsibilities’ has been added, together with the Equality Impact Analysis (EIA) at Appendix 1.

10.1.2 The Audit Committee had raised two queries regarding the appeals process and how the College protects whistleblowers and Policy changes are highlighted in yellow for clarity.

10.1.3 Members queried section 6.10, noting that the 15-working-day timeframe for acknowledging concerns seemed long. DD explained that 15 days allows sufficient time to conduct background work and an initial assessment, acknowledging the complexities of whistleblowing cases.

10.1.4 Following discussion, the Board agreed to retain the 15-day timeframe.

10.1.5 The Board approved the Whistleblowing Policy.

10.2 Disciplinary Policy | PAPER 10.2 | K. Hunter | Approval

10.2.1 The introduction of the National Disciplinary Policy forms part of the ongoing harmonisation of people policies across the college sector. The policy has been agreed with LJNC and reviewed through NRPA and FGP, with the Chair of FGP approving the content.

10.2.2 The Board approved the Disciplinary Policy.

10.3 Quality Assurance Policy | PAPER 10.3 | P. Storrier | Approval

10.3.1 The VP Curriculum & Student Experience presented the fully redrafted Policy for approval highlighting it had been updated to align with TQEF and current practice.

10.3.2 A member queried the Early Experience Survey regarding quality and the steps taken if negative feedback is received. PS explained that concerns would be flagged to Curriculum Managers and addressed through the You Say, We Did process, with actions managed by the Performance Team, depending on the area and reporting requirements.

10.3.3 The Board approved the Quality Assurance Policy.

FOR DISCUSSION

11 Chair’s Report | Paper 11.1 | C. Stuart

11.1 The report was taken as read. The Chair highlighted congratulations to Alistair Irons on his appointment as Vice Chair. The Chair also welcomed Sarah Holland to the Board and Steven Binnie as a Co-opted member for the coming year.

12 Performance Report | Paper 12.1 | P. Storrier/K. Hunter

- 12.1 The performance report was noted as read, highlighting achievement of 100.09% of the credit target for the AY reflecting staff effort and dedication. Student success and retention remain positive and show further improvement, while TQEF deadlines have been met with no issues, and preparation for next steps are ongoing.
- 12.2 Replacement funding for FWDF is under discussion; the college anticipates a tight but balanced budget.
- 12.3 A possible Scottish Government transformation fund was discussed with contingency on inter-college cooperation.
- 12.4 A 3-year support staff pay award has been agreed with Scottish Government covering the first two years, with ongoing discussions regarding NI support. Overall, the college is monitoring costs carefully to ensure a stable financial position despite funding and commercial challenges.
- 12.5 **The Board noted the paper.**

13 TQER Update

- 13.1 The VP Curriculum & Student Experience provided a verbal update, noting the SIA document as an interesting piece of work and suggesting that new Board members or colleagues could benefit from a condensed version. Advanced information has been issued with no issues reported.
- 13.2 The QAA post-submission analysis and SCQF assurance report confirmed a high level of confidence in the College's work, with only a few minor lines of enquiry under review. The SFC 30-page data report highlighted no unexpected issues or surprises.
- 13.3 Key dates for the review were outlined and the initial review with students and staff is scheduled for 10–11 February, and the final review for 24–26 March, with preparations beginning in January. The Chair queried whether Board members would be involved; it was noted that initially the review will focus on the Principal, Senior Team, Performance Team, and primarily students.
- 13.4 **The Board noted the update.**

14 Curriculum Structure

- 14.1 The VP Curriculum & Student Experience provided an overview of the paper which highlighted the mapped out key drivers for consideration. The paper proposed an outline plan to review and potentially reorganise the college's curriculum structure to ensure alignment with Mission 2030, strengthen leadership capacity, improve operational efficiency, and enhance the student experience. The current flat structure limits distributed leadership, succession planning, and strategic agility, posing risks to sustainability and staff development. Board approval was sought to progress with the outline plan presented.
- 14.2 The paper has been brought for an initial discussion with a more detailed review planned post-Christmas and brought to the Board meeting in March. Questions and feedback included:

- From the TU perspective they support the paper and career progression opportunities, while noting workload concerns around duty posts. National context shows mixed promoted post structures and broad concerns around workload and opportunities; Options B and C were considered favourable, whereas Option A is not viable due to limited efficiencies and potential savings vs. job losses.
- Board members queried whether all options remained open, how the proposal compared with sector benchmarking, and whether workload and process changes were included. It was confirmed that the Board were being advised of a preferred approach, but all options remain under consideration. An evidence base will be produced, reflecting mixed approaches across colleges, and ongoing work in reviewing and streamlining current systems to support managers

14.3 It was also noted that strict national guidelines across the sector add complexity to the review.

14.4 **The Board approved the paper.**

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

15 Committee Chairs Update Key Business/Decisions

- 15.1 Finance & General-Purpose Committee – The Committee highlighted its focus on ensuring medium-term financial sustainability and closely monitoring the timing of commercial activity to safeguard the cash balance, as well as noting ongoing People & Culture developments, all of which are in a good place.
- 15.2 Learning & Teaching Committee – Reported TQEF had been the main focus and had discussed how the committee can support PS and the team. The Committee approved the Quality Policy and had noted updates to risk statuses.
- 15.3 Audit Committee – The Chair had no further comments beyond those already provided in the Audit Annual Report update.
- 15.4 Remuneration Committee – The Board were informed that the Senior Staff Remuneration Policy has been reviewed with a move away from PRP and to align with lecturers pay structure of cost of living and increment scales. However, some changes are required and this will be brought back to the board for noting.

16 Committee Minutes

- 16.1 Finance & General-Purpose Committee | Paper 16.1 | G. Clark - The paper was noted by the Board.
- 16.2 Learning & Teaching Committee | Paper 16.2 | A. Irons - The paper was noted by the Board.
- 16.3 Audit Committee | Paper 16.3 | J. Ross – the minutes will be distributed to board members
- 16.4 Remuneration Committee (Confidential to Non-Execs only) | Paper 16.4 | S. Hodgson - The paper was noted by the Board.

17 Strategic Impact Analysis Report | Paper 17.1 | P. Storrier

17.1 The paper was noted by the Board.

18 Deep Dive Cyber Posture and Analogue Planning | Paper 18.1 | K. Hunter

18.1 The paper was noted by the Board.

19 Estates and Sustainability Annual Report | Paper 19.1 | K. Hunter

19.1 The paper was noted by the Board.

20 Early Experience Student Satisfaction Report | Paper 20.1 | P. Storrier

20.1 The paper was noted by the Board.

21 Any Other Business | Verbal | C Stuart

21.1 The EIS-FELA "Follow the Money" 2025 report was highlighted, noting a bleak national picture with key concerns and proposals on pages 4, 27, and 32 regarding governance and FELA. The paper was suggested as a discussion item.

21.2 DD noted that, given its governance focus, the paper is more relevant to F&GP than Learning & Teaching and should be tabled there. A member queried its significance, PW advised it has been ten years since the last report. The report consolidates national concerns and aligns with SFC, Colleges Scotland, and Audit Scotland priorities, primarily aimed at political and strategic audiences rather than local action. CS agreed it could be discussed at F&GP, though practical action may be limited.

21.3 PW emphasised the importance of challenging the framework and considering whether college accounts are robust, noting D&G is not directly affected but can be reviewed with a local lens. GC requested clarity on the purpose of the paper, whether it aims to set actionable outcomes for the college or provide contextual discussion for F&GP, to ensure a focused and valuable discussion.

21.4 Action: Provide context or background for discussion at F&GP - PW

22 Date of next meeting | Verbal | C Stuart

22.1 The date of the next meeting is Monday 2 March 2026.



**Dumfries and
Galloway College**

One step ahead

Key

- Ongoing
- Closed
- Overdue

Board of Management Action Log 08 December 2025

No	Meeting Date	Action	Lead	Deadline	Status	Commentary
1	6/10/25	Circulate updated Safeguarding Policy re Vexatious complaints		LG	Closed	Circulated 15/10/25
2	6/10/25	Circulate SA TQER update to BoM		LG	Closed	Circulated 10/10/25
3	6/10/25	Review the Financial Memorandum re limits for reporting to the Board, and present a paper regarding Tender Governance to F&GP		KH	Closed	Tender Governance submitted to FGP on 13 November.

Board of Management		
Agenda Item	4	
Paper Number	BOM1225-4.1	
Date of Meeting	08 December 2025	
Location	Dumfries Campus	
Title of Paper	Health and Safety Performance Report	
Presented by	Billy Currie	
Recommendation	Discussion	
Freedom of Information Disclosure Assessment		
FOI flag:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disclosable <input type="checkbox"/> Non-disclosable	
Reason/s for choice:	Accident information is generally disclosable	
Notes from author: (When will it become disclosable? Has FOI Officer guidance been sought?)		
Further comments/updates after initial submission		
Date added	Added by (name and role)	Comment/detail

Read Time: 8 minutes

1. Recommendation

- 1.1. The Board of Management are asked to note and discuss the contents of this paper.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. 2025 has focussed on the continued growth and adaptation of Smartlog, utilising its full range of applications to enhance Health and Safety compliance.
- 2.2. At the time of writing we do not have the 2025 statistics from the Association of Colleges for a sector comparison. For the purposes of performance, the 2023/24 College stats have been used.

3. Context

3.1. Health and Safety Action Plan 2025

3.1.1 The following table will show progress made to date against the H&S action plan for 2025.

	Action	Timescale	Owner	Dependents	Status
1	Continue to promote and adapt new Health and Safety Management System – incorporate Estates contracts and tasks	Rolling programme with all staff – target of April 2025 for full Estates side.	H&S Advisor	All Staff	Ongoing – SmartLog populated with Estates suppliers. Next stage is to update with all documentation. Visit to Ayrshire College to look at their utilization of system. 21/5/2025 task completed with launch on 26/5. All staff email issued. 18/08. All Estates based contracts have been moved over to SmartLog = with first contract reporting delivered to F&GP in September 2025.
2	Building on the H&S culture in the college – incorporate H&S into enhancement/evaluation framework	August 2025	H&S Advisor	All Staff	H&S Committee meeting due on 5/2/2025 from which actions regarding this item will be progressed. Work ongoing. Simple tasks underway linked to BAE report such as signage boards and college wide training being rolled out. 30/5/2025 – Now included in enhancement meeting agendas – rolled out at All Managers briefing.
3	Compliance and Infrastructure – Departmental level audits/reviews	April 2025	H&S Advisor	All College Management	Ongoing – H&S advisor continuing walk around. Detailed audits due by end of February. Full plan to roll out being developed, tasks being programmed onto SmartLog.

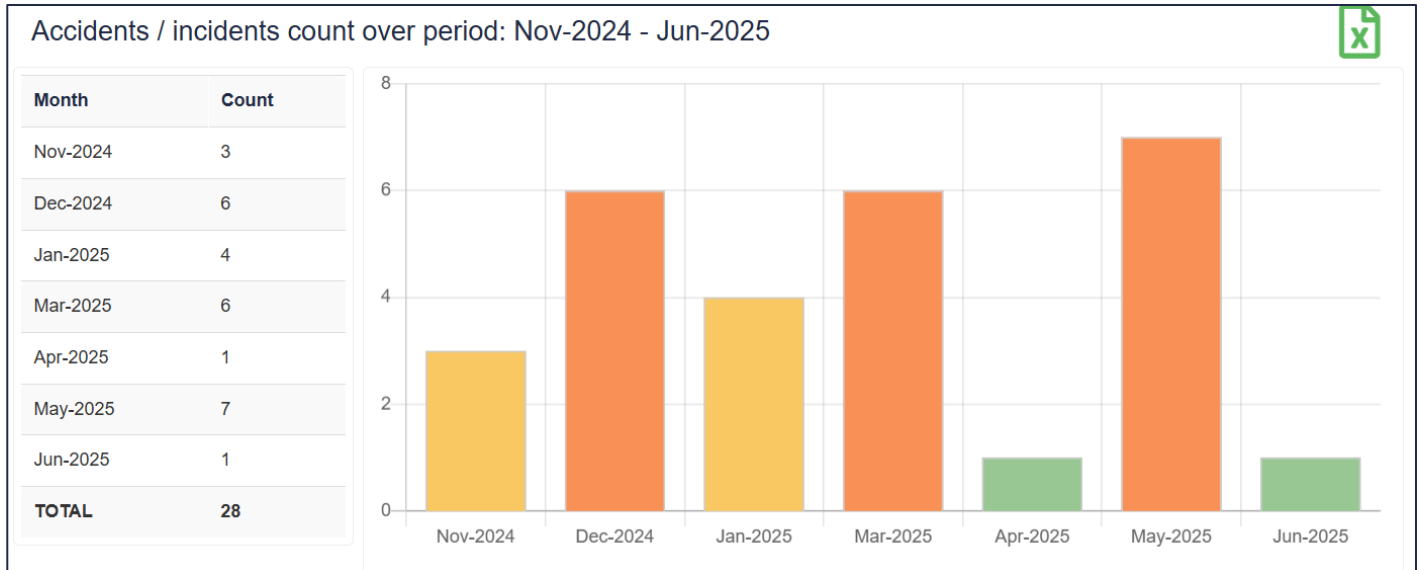
					Complete with tasks now set up and allocated on SmartLog. This also closes minor audit action 21/5/2025.
4	Review H&S training requirements and create H&S training plan – Grow mandatory training through SmartLog	June 2025	H&S Advisor	All College Managers - Learning and Teaching Manager	In progress. All mandatory training now active via SmartLog, induction process updated to suit. H&S advisor creating new training matrix by end of Feb 25 – training matrix on SmartLog, this is now being moved to a more detailed specific training plan. 22/4/2025. 18/9/2025. PRD process to be utilised to identify key additional H&S training for staff.
5	Fire Risk Assessment Update	Interim – Feb 2025 Full - July 2025	H&S Advisor	All College	Met with Boyd group 16/1 – interim walk through being arranged to review previous actions. Interim walkthrough complete, minor actions issued via SmartLog. 22/4/2025. Date of September agreed for full walk round – prefer to do when building is live. 21/5/2025. 18/9. Fire risk assessment visits completed with draft reports being reviewed. 23/10. Awaiting executive summary from Boyd group 20/11/2025 Issued to slt for meeting on 26/11/2025

3.1.2 A new action plan is in progress for 2026 which will focus more on working with staff teams on day-to-day H&S management and focus.

3.2 Incident and Near Miss Statistics

3.2.2 Incidents

3.2.3 The following table will show the accident stats as recorded on Smartlog from the first point of use, November 2024, through to the end of June 2025. This will account for the AY 24/25.



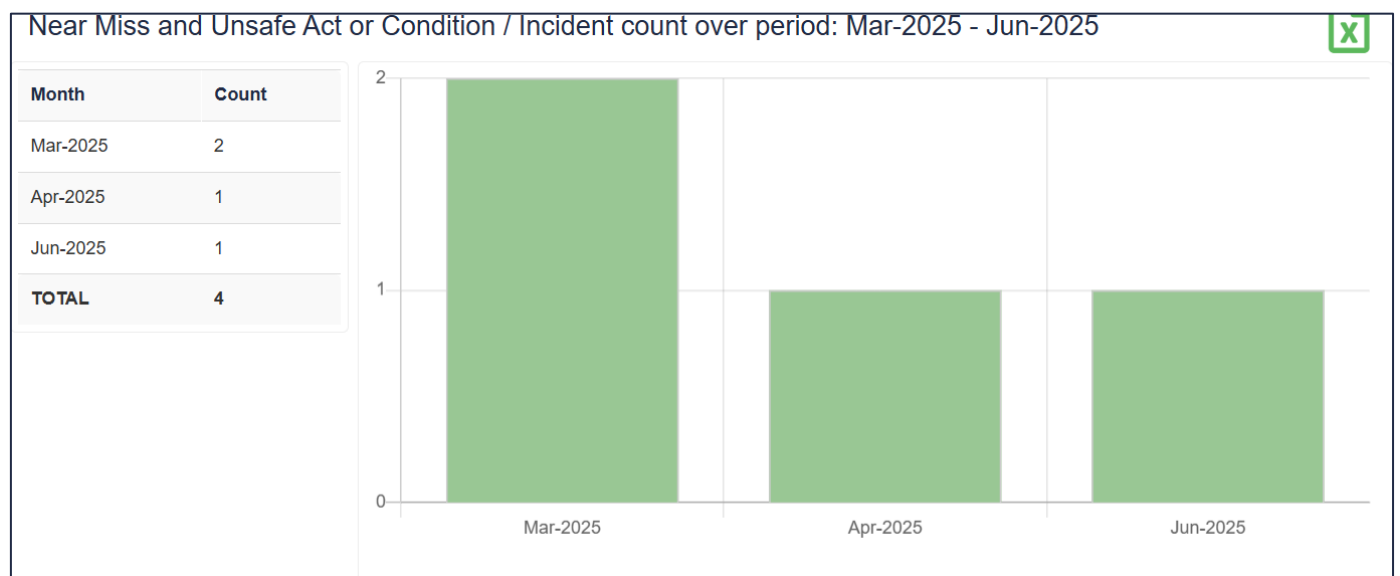
3.2.4 In addition to the above there were a further 16 incidents recorded on the previous reporting system, giving a total of 44 for the AY 2024/25.

3.2.5 In comparison to the above there were a total of 47 recorded incidents in AY 2023/24.

3.2.6 Based on the 2023/24 AOC figures, with an average of 42, D&G College remain consistent with the national averages.

3.2.7 Near Misses

3.2.8 The following table will show the number of near misses or unsafe acts logged on the Smartlog system.



With an AY 2023/24 total of 4 also, this volume has remained consistent. A new method of near miss reporting for students has now been introduced in an attempt to drive up the number of these reports, creating a proactive approach to H&S.

3.3 Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences (RIDDOR)

3.3.1 The College had no RIDDOR reportable occurrences in the AY 2024/25. The following table will show the comparison with the latest AOC report from 2023/24.

DGC 2023/24 Total	AOC 2023/24 Total (Average)	DGC 2024/25 Total
3	4	0

3.3.2 The College follows up on any first aid report to ensure that any potential RIDDOR is followed up and reported. These arise should any working time be lost or an injury be diagnosed as more serious following investigations.

3.4 Health and Safety Compliance

3.4.2 The following data will show the Colleges compliance with tasks as per the Smartlog system.

Check & Test compliance	85.2 / 100%
Allocated checks	142
Overdue checks	21
Show breakdown Show overdue	

3.4.1 Of the overdue checks, only 3 related to maintenance and statutory checks. These are air conditioning, fire doors and legionella checks. All have been instructed however the visit dates are slightly out of sync due to contractor staff availability. They are due to be completed prior to the end of term.

3.4.2 The remainder of the tasks related to ongoing checks from risk assessments. These are not overdue as they are ongoing, however due to the system requiring a date they flag as over.

3.4.3 The Fire Risk Assessment has been completed with the College being noted as fully compliant with Fire Safety standards. A number of minor actions were raised, these having been noted as minor and more preventative in nature.

Dumfries Actions 2025	Dumfries Actions 2025	Stranraer Actions 2024	Stranraer Actions 2025
12	9	10	8

3.4.4 Actions noted include: -

- A continuation of fire door replacements at Stranraer
- Remedial works to fire compartmentation and fire stopping
- Removal of extension leads across the Estate

Actions have been issued and remedial works are in progress.

3.5 Health and Safety Committee

3.5.1 The H&S committee continue to meet on a quarterly basis with its focus on governance oversight. Focus is currently being placed on key topics such as:

- Health participation plans for students
- Provision of first aid

3.5.2 Part of the 2026 H&S action plan will focus on the role of the committee in completing some site audits alongside Union colleagues. This will help drive forward the positive H&S culture.

4. **Strategic Implications**

4.1 This paper is directly linked to Strategic Priority 5, Systems and Infrastructure and Strategic Priority 1 Student Experience

5. **Risk**

Risk	Mitigations
Risk 12. Health and Safety (BOM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reporting and Review procedure including Incidents and Near Miss ➤ Health and Safety IOSH training for staff, H&S training including fire safety for all staff. ➤ Specific communication at time of increased risk eg Covid, building works, adverse weather ➤ Clear channels of communication regarding issues and preventative actions. ➤ Improved compliance management via Smartlog ➤ Dedicated day to day H&S support resource via H&S advisor ➤ Oversight of H&S via H&S committee

6. Implications

Financial	YES	Failure of College H&S processes could lead to financial penalties imposed through actions.
Legal	YES	Failure of College H&S processes could lead to legal proceedings under the Health and Safety at work act
Learning and Teaching	YES	H&S processes ensure the safety of all staff and learners when working in high risk areas.
Equalities	YES	H&S policies and procedures cover all persons utilising our campuses and should be fair and equal for all

Billy Currie

Director of Estates and Sustainability

27 November 2025

Board of Management		
Agenda Item	5	
Paper Number	BOM1225-5.1	
Date of Meeting	08 December 2025	
Location	Dumfries Campus	
Title of Paper	Student Association	
Presented by	Honor Gibson	
Recommendation	Discussion	
Freedom of Information Disclosure Assessment		
FOI flag:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disclosable <input type="checkbox"/> Non-disclosable	
Reason/s for choice:		
Notes from author: (When will it become disclosable? Has FOI Officer guidance been sought?)		
Further comments/updates after initial submission		
Date added	Added by (name and role)	Comment/detail

Read Time: 7 minutes

1. Recommendation

- 1.1. The Board of Management are asked to discuss the contents of this paper.

2. Executive Summary

- Class reps, Lead reps, Class rep conference.
- Events – Halloween, Movember, Christmas – calendar for these available.
- Podcast.
- Student Engagement.

3. Context

3.1. Class representation

- 3.1.1 Class representatives have been chosen, we currently have 107 class reps across the curriculum areas, levels and campuses. We have 11 Lead reps who have stepped up and want to take part more in the wider community of the campus. We look forward to working with these students on 3 projects that will be organised by the Student Experience Committee. College Academy students will have meetings separately w/b 10th November but will be included in the whole community of the campus.
- 3.1.2 During October, the Student Engagement team and the Student Association ran the main Class Rep Training Conferences for the 2025/26 academic year. These workshops successfully trained over 70 newly elected reps, utilising the nationally recognised Sparqs framework. This training is essential for equipping reps with the skills to effectively gather, analyse, and present student feedback on their learning and teaching. Our Class Reps are now actively engaging with their peers and are a vital part of the college's partnership approach to quality enhancement as we prepare for our TQER.

3.2 Events

- 3.2.1 October brought us Wear it Pink and Wear it Yellow – done over both campuses – students and staff dressed in pink and yellow to highlight the causes of Breast Cancer Awareness Month and YoungMinds: A mental health charity for children and young people. We also had activities in the reception hallway for this, and our Youth Worker Michelle held information sessions to let students know what support is available to them within the community.
- 3.2.2 Halloween events took place during the week beginning 27th October (first week back after the October break). Students joined in with activities put on by our Student Vice President in Dumfries, Karen – who also ran a Halloween Costume competition. Students came in dressed up and it was fun to see the spirit of Halloween in the college.
- 3.2.3 We have planned a range of activities for Movember (at the time of the meeting we will be halfway through those). The first week was focussed more on signing students and staff us to join our Movember movement challenge (you can grow a 'Mo or take part in the movement challenge) with a goal of 1250km and working alongside the University of Glasgow and UWS we are hopeful that our target of £1250 will be raised by the end of November to go to the charity and that we raise awareness for men's mental health, and other health problems. They need to know that 'it is okay, to not be okay!' Our Movember activities are also being helped along by the HR team who are posting on

People First to get more of a reach and so that staff are more aware of activities we will be doing, which we are grateful for.

- 3.2.4 We are now planning for Christmas activities – The main event being the Christmas door competition being run again as last year it was such a success. We also have class reps coming along to the Student Association to decorate and make it Christmassy (which should be in the week this meeting takes place).
- 3.2.5 The Vice President has started a podcast which is available to listen to on Spotify search for 'Unplugged by Kaz' – Or follow the Student Association Facebook page to get the link when a new episode comes out.
- 3.2.6 We are collaborating with SDS for Careers Week Scotland and will be hosting a number of primary 7 students from two local schools on the 14th November – they will be workshopping and having a tour of the college.

3.3 Funding

- 3.3.1 Tesco Stronger Starts fund has been utilised and we've gotten a Bookers account to be able to make this money stretch further to be able to help more students.
- 3.3.2 We used £200 of our £1000 that was donated towards maintaining the wellbeing area outdoors to fund some lunch vouchers over both campuses – these are available from student advisors and from the Student Association and names of students in receipt of them are put in a spreadsheet to keep an eye on this. Jo McKellar has these at Stranraer Campus. The team behind the donation gave us permission to use this money for this reason, as it still benefits the wellbeing of the students. We have also put in another request to the Community Benefits Wishlist for £1000 to go towards this, to help us sustain the amount of lunch vouchers we can provide over both campuses.
- 3.3.3 We are just awaiting delivery of our resources for the wellbeing garden which will be started just after they arrive. Confirming logistics with estates and working around the team putting in the new heating system.

3.4 Sparqs/CDN/NUS/QAA

- 3.4.1 The first ILQR session took place with the Beauty team with regard to student engagement and partnership on the 30th October, this session allowed the team to talk with students and the student association about how we can promote student engagement within the college – we are talking about collaborating in activities such as 'wellbeing Wednesday' where the students will be offering nail appointments, hand massages and the likes to staff and students within the college over lunch and breaktimes. There was also discussion of allowing the class reps in the beauty to join the meetings amongst the staff and curriculum leaders to get their opinions and to get their views.

3.5 Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Project (STEP)

- 3.5.1 STEP Project has been given the greenlight from QAA, CDN and Sparqs with funding allocated for this project.

‘Strategies to Support Student Engagement and Partnership Within an Increasingly Time-Poor and Cash-Poor Student Population’

- 3.5.2 This two-year project explores how financial, and time pressures affect student engagement and partnership. It will pilot approaches to make student voice and representation more accessible, as well as create sector-wide resources for learners before arrival and during induction. Honor will be the student lead in ‘Strand 2’ working alongside staff lead Liz Richardson, from UHI: Argyll which looks at prearrival information and conducting research into student needs and creating advice and guidance for students across both college and university campuses.

4 Strategic Implications

- 4.1 The Student Association report to the Learning and Teaching Committee has strategic implications that provide key insights into students’ needs, priorities and campus life. This report shows that the Student Association are bridging the gap between students and decision-makers and how we are aligning student interests with the institutions learning and teaching goals.

5. Risk

Risk	Mitigations
Risk 10. Failure to achieve an effective student experience.	➤ Class Representation

6. Implications

Financial		Failure to sustain funding may affect the activities the Student Association wish to put on.
Legal		
Learning and Teaching		It is important to ensure the student voice is systemically gathered, analysed and used to ensure enhancements.
Equalities		Projects worked on by the Student Association are raising awareness of equality and diversity – allowing for the students to feel accepted and recognised within the college.

Honor Gibson

Student Association President

10 November 2025

Board of Management		
Agenda Item	8	
Paper Number	BOM1225-8.1	
Date of Meeting	8 December 2025	
Location	Dumfries Campus	
Title of Paper	Audit Committee Annual Report	
Presented by	J Ross	
Recommendation	Approval	
Freedom of Information Disclosure Assessment		
FOI flag:	<input type="checkbox"/> Disclosable Non-disclosable	
Reason/s for choice:		
Notes from author: (When will it become disclosable? Has FOI Officer guidance been sought?)		
Further comments/updates after initial submission		
Date added	Added by (name and role)	Comment/detail

Read Time: 12 minutes

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 After consideration and on the recommendation of Audit Committee, the Board of Management is asked to note the work of the Audit Committee during 2024-25 and approve the Annual Report for the year.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Board of Management on the activities and decisions of the Audit Committee during the financial year 2024-25 and to provide opinions on matters specified by the Code of Audit Practice.

3. Report

3.1 Background and Membership

- 3.1.1 It is a requirement of the Code of Audit Practice and the College's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations that the Audit Committee provides the Board with an Annual Report so that all members of the Board can be fully informed of, amongst other things, aspects of the system of Internal Control. The Audit Committee work with the Internal and External Auditors independently of College Staff and report directly to the Board of Directors. Part of the remit of the Audit Committee is to give reassurance that the systems of governance, risk management and internal controls across the College are maintained at acceptable levels.

- 3.1.2 The period covered by this report is the twelve-month period 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025.

- 3.1.3 The membership of the Committee during the period was:

- Gillian Brydson (Chair until September 2024)
- Kirsty Duncan (from September 2024)
- Will Dowson (until March 2025)
- Ann Hill
- Alastair Irons (from September 2024)
- Sue Irving (until July 2025)
- Malcolm MacLeod (until August 2024)
- Jamie Ross (Chair from September 2024)

- 3.1.4 Other attendees at Audit Committee meetings included:

- Joanna Campbell (Principal)
- Caroline Stuart (Chair of the Board)
- Douglas Dickson (Depute Principal)
- Joe McGraw (Vice Principal / Principal)
- Mike Gibson (RSM)
- Aron MacDonald (RSM)
- David Archibald (Henderson Loggie)
- Andrew Reid (Azets)
- Amy Hughes (Azets)
- Alex Elkins (Executive Assistant)

- Lorraine Grierson (Governance Professional)
- Karen Hunter (Executive Director of Finance)

3.1.5 During the period, the Committee’s formal meetings were as follows:

Date of Meeting:	Board members present:
19.09.24	G Brydson, J Ross, A Hill
28.11.24	W Dowson, K Duncan, S Irving, J Ross
13.03.25	W Dowson, K Duncan, A Irons, S Irving, J Ross
29.05.25	A Irons, S Irving, J Ross

3.1.6 There was an average attendance of 3.75 members (55.5%)

3.1.7 The Audit Committee has continued to meet remotely.

3.2 Key work of the Audit Committee during 2024-25

3.2.1 Risk Management is an integral part of the overall governance arrangements of the College, and as such there are specific responsibilities for people and groups undertaking different roles in the organisation. The Board of Management has responsibility to:

- establish the overall culture and ethos in respect of risk and opportunity management within the College as a whole.
- approve major decision affecting the College risk profile or exposure in accordance with appropriate financial strategy and procedures.
- Consider the internal audit service and approved the change in Internal Audit contract to Henderson Loggie from 2025-26 due to RSM’s contract term coming to an end.
- annually review the College approach to risk management, risk appetite and approve changes or improvements as necessary.
- enable the College Executive to discharge their duties in the management of risk.

3.2.2 The Board of Management has delegated responsibility for Risk Management to the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee monitor and report to the Board on internal controls and alert Board Members to any significant emerging issues.

3.2.3 Further work has been completed during 2024-25 following an Internal Audit review the previous year to improve monitoring and reporting on risk matters, ensure appropriate oversight of risks and related mitigations. The College’s internal auditors have highlighted the three reviews completed during the year which are linked to the Risk Register, which all provided a Substantial Assurance opinion.

3.2.4 The Audit Committee continue to monitor and update the Risk Register based on feedback from the Internal and External Auditors. Throughout the year, the Audit Committee review the reports from the Internal Auditors and discuss the findings for each Risk area.

- 3.2.5 The Audit Committee exercises the right to deep dive other risks as appropriate. As the Audit Committee maintain the risk registers, they discuss the potential requirement for any additional deep dives into specific risks regularly.
- 3.2.6 Specifically, during 2024-25, the Audit Committee has overseen the following in order to give reassurance on the levels of risk faced by the College:
- Maintain the risk register and progress for each area
 - Considered the Internal Audit report for 2023-24
 - Considered the individual reports during the 2024-25 Internal Audit reviews
 - Maintained a tracker for implementation of recommendations from the internal audit investigations
 - Considered and approved the internal audit plan for 2025-26
 - Considered the External Audit report and financial statements for 2023-24
 - Approved the plan for the 2024-25 external audit
- 3.2.7 The Audit Committee will review the outcome of the 2024-25 external audit in order to give assurance to the Board of Directors that the College is compliant in its approach to governance, risk and control.

3.3 Internal Audit

- 3.3.1 RSM acted as internal auditors throughout the year to July 2025, with Henderson Loggie commencing their engagement from 2025-26
- 3.3.2 RSM’s Annual Audit Report for 2024-25 was presented at the May 2025 Audit Committee Meeting. The report provides an annual internal audit opinion:

Annual Opinion

For the 12 months ended 31 July 2025, the Head of Internal Audit opinion for Dumfries and Galloway College is:

The organisation has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control and economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.

- 3.3.3 A copy of the full report is detailed in RSM’s ‘Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/2025’.
- 3.3.4 A summary of the internal audits undertaken, and the resulting opinion, is provided below.

Assignment	Assurance level	Actions agreed		
		L	M	H
Curriculum Planning	Substantial Assurance	0	0	0
Health and Safety	Substantial Assurance	1	0	0
Safeguarding	Substantial Assurance	1	2	0
Further Education Statistical (FES) Return	Reasonable Assurance	1	1	0

Student Support Funds	Advisory Review	0	0	0
Board/ Committee Inductions	Substantial Assurance	0	0	0
Payroll	Substantial Assurance	1	0	0
Follow up of Previous Audit Management Actions	Good progress	2	0	0
Total (2024-25)		6	3	0
Total (2023-24)		23	10	0

- 3.3.5 The recommendations are categorised by the auditors according to the level of priority – High, Medium, and Low, and are prioritised to reflect the auditors’ assessment of risk associated with the control weaknesses.
- 3.3.6 In addition, suggestions may be included as part of the Action Plan reported. These are not formal recommendations that impact the overall audit opinion but used to highlight a suggestion or idea that management may want to consider.
- 3.3.7 3 of the recommendations made during the year were categorised as Medium Priority, which was for the previous year. The Safeguarding review raised 2 of the Medium Priority Actions for 2024-25, with 1 Medium Priority action from the FES review. An implementation plan and appropriate timescales have been agreed with Management, and the actions taken to implement the plan within a reasonable timescale will be monitored by the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee will also assess any further actions required as part of the Risk Management processes.
- 3.3.8 No High Priority management actions were made during the year.
- 3.3.9 Where a recommendation is not accepted this is documented in the individual audit reports considered by the Audit Committee. In general, recommendations may not be accepted where it is considered that the benefits of implementation are outweighed by the costs.
- 3.3.10 Factors and Findings which have informed the Internal Audit Opinion were noted in RSM’s report as follows:
- 3.3.11 **Governance** – RSM have taken into consideration the governance and oversight related elements of each of the reviews undertaken as part of the 2024-25 internal audit plan. The Board/ Committee Induction audit resulted in a substantial assurance opinion, with no management actions being identified. Their annual report has stated that ‘There is a sound governance framework in place, and we observed that the Audit committee is effective in monitoring and challenging management and holding them to account’
- 3.3.12 **Risk** – RSM’s report has noted that they have attended all Audit Committee meetings throughout the year and confirmed the College’s risk management arrangements continued to operate effectively in this form. Their risk management opinion is informed by their observation of risk management systems and processes throughout the course of all audits within the internal audit plan. Specific audits linked to the College's risks included:

- Safeguarding
- Curriculum Planning
- Health and Safety

- 3.3.13 **Internal Control** – RSM undertook six audits which resulted in an assurance opinion in 2024-25. From five reviews (83%) they concluded that substantial assurance could be taken, and one review (7%) reasonable assurance could be taken in relation to the design and application of the control frameworks in place.
- 3.3.14 During the year RSM agreed a total of nine management actions across assurance and follow up reviews. Of the actions agreed: six (67%) were 'low' priority and three (33%) were 'medium' priority. They also identified 1 advisory recommendation, and did not agree any 'high' priority actions.
- 3.3.15 Furthermore, the implementation of agreed management actions agreed during the course of the year are an important contributing factor when assessing the overall opinion on control. RSM performed one follow-up review during the year which concluded in a positive opinion (good progress) and confirmed 28 out of 30 actions being marked as implemented. The remaining two actions were marked as partly though not fully implemented.

3.4 External Auditors

- 3.4.1 The external auditors throughout the period were Azets Audit Services, Quay 2, 139 Fountainbridge, Edinburgh.
- 3.4.2 The fundamental objective of the planning, approach and execution of the audit is to enable the auditors to express an opinion on whether or not the financial statements, as a whole, give a true and fair view of the activities of the College since the last audit and of its state of affairs as at the Balance Sheet date.
- 3.4.3 We confirm that the external auditors have been approved by the Auditor General in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice and the letter from the Auditor General dated 20 April 2000 for provision of external audit services for the financial period 2024-25.
- 3.4.4 The external audit of the financial statements for the period ended 31st July 2025 commenced in September 2025, and Azets have issued a draft '2024-25 Annual Audit Report to the Board of Management and the Auditor General for Scotland' as noted below.

3.5 The Financial Statements

- 3.5.1 The College external Auditors, Azets, have issued a Draft 2024-25 Annual Audit Report, which is attached as an Appendix to this report.
- 3.5.2 The draft 2024-25 Annual audit report indicates that Azets intend to provide an unqualified opinion within their independent auditor's report in the financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2025, subject to completion of outstanding matters prior to formal signing.
- 3.5.3 The Annual Audit Report highlights the significant risks regarding financial sustainability due to the financial pressures on the college sector, which require careful management and oversight.

3.6 Other Matters

3.6.1 There are no matters arising from trusts, joint ventures, subsidiary, or associated companies.

3.6.2 There are no incidents of fraud.

3.6.3 There are no foreseeable events that will affect the work of the Audit Committee.

3.7 Opinion

3.7.1 The financial statements present an accurate view of the state of affairs of the College at 31 July 2025 and of the surplus and cash flows for the year then ended and have been properly prepared;

3.7.2 Funds from the Scottish Funding Council and others have been used for the purposes for which they were given.

3.7.3 The College has complied with the Board’s Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and where appropriate, the Financial Memorandum dated December 2014 from the Scottish Funding Council.

3.7.4 The College has appropriate systems in place to record, process, summarise and report financial and other relevant data. We have not identified any significant weaknesses or governance issues in the College’s accounting and internal control systems throughout the period.

3.7.5 We are satisfied that the Board continued to receive sufficient and appropriate information throughout the period to support the effective and timely scrutiny and challenge.

3.7.6 The Audit Committee’s view on the Board of Management’s responsibilities, as described in the responsibilities of the Board of Management Statement, is that they have been satisfactorily discharged.

3.7.7 The Audit Committee believes that the Code of Audit Practice, and the Financial Memorandum, were fully complied with during 2024-25.

4. Strategic Implications

4.1 This paper links into all strategic priorities of Mission 2030.

5. Risk

Risk	Mitigations
Risk 1. Failure of College strategy to meet the needs of Dumfries and Galloway Region and/or national priorities (BoM)	➤ As per Risk Register

6. Implications

Financial	YES	Financial loss and reputational damage and impact to financial sustainability
Legal	YES	Failure to comply with statutory requirements
Learning and Teaching	YES	Failure to provide sustainable learning opportunities and reduced provision
Equalities	YES	Failure to comply with regulatory requirements

Jamie Ross

Chair of the Audit Committee

13 November 2025



DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY COLLEGE

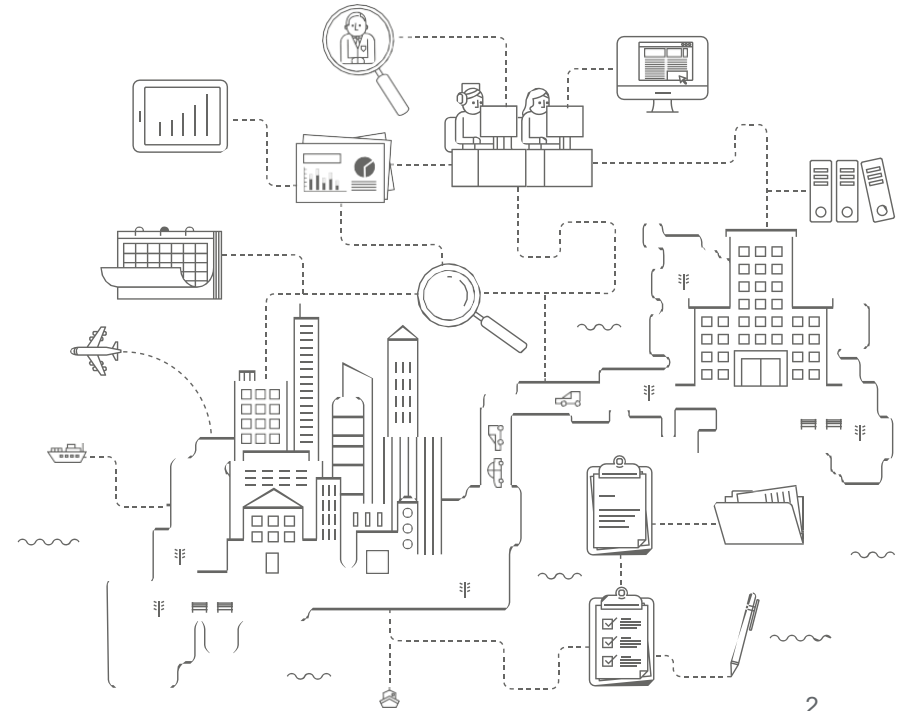
Annual internal audit report

Year ended: 31 July 2025

This report is solely for the use of the persons to whom it is addressed.
To the fullest extent permitted by law, RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP will accept no responsibility or liability in respect of this report to any other party.

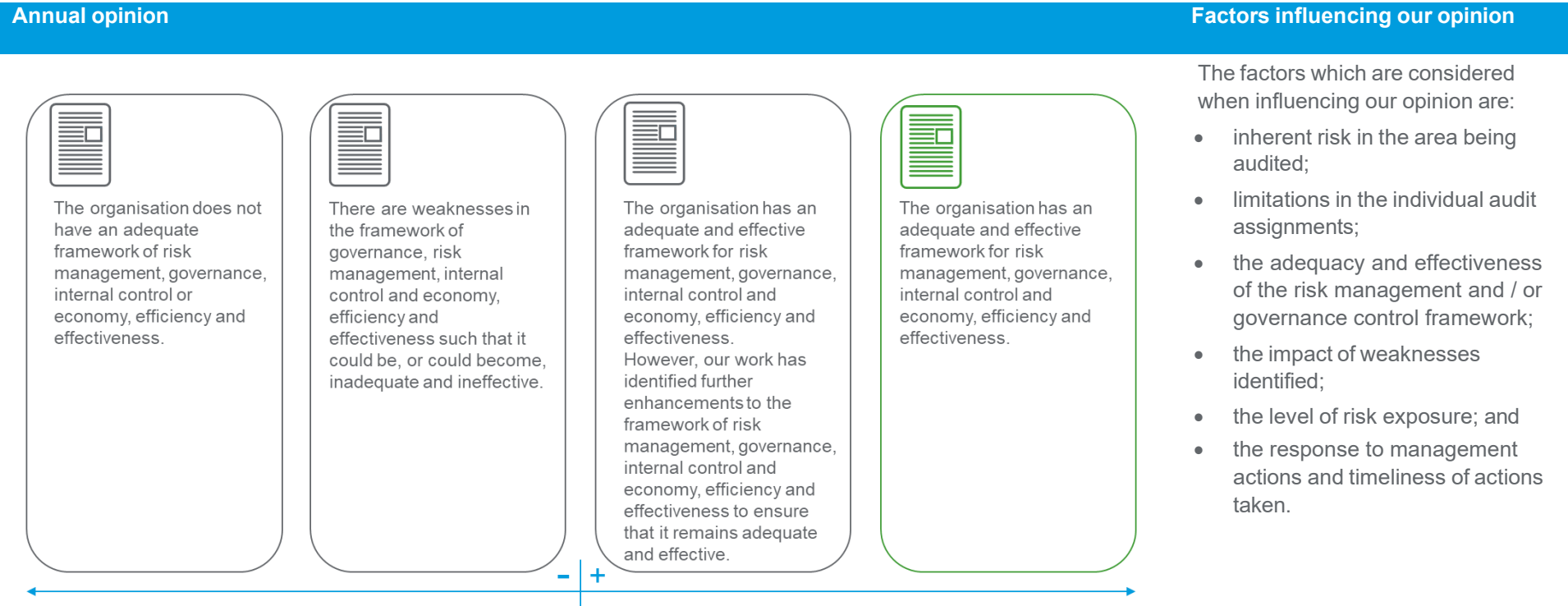
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THE ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT OPINION

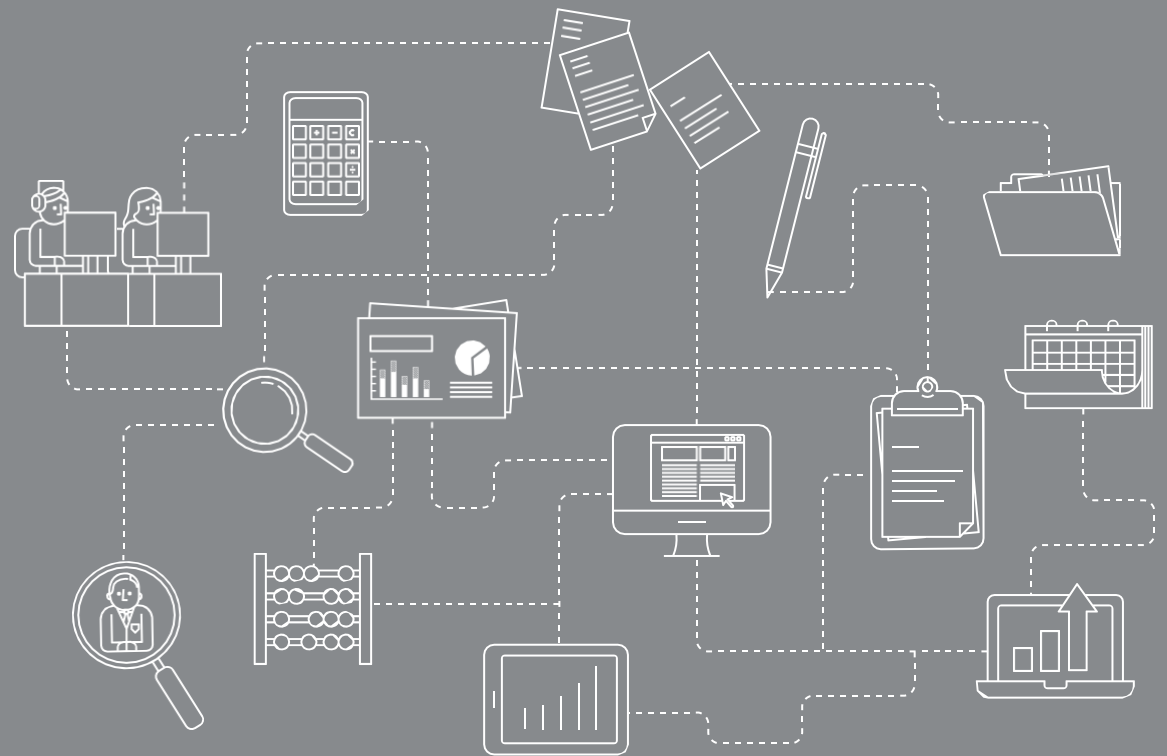
The annual internal audit opinion is based upon, and limited to, the work performed on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the College's risk management, control and governance processes. For the 12 months ending 31 July 2025 the Head of Internal Audit opinion for Dumfries and Galloway College is:



It remains management's responsibility to develop and maintain a sound system of risk management, internal control, governance, and for the prevention and detection of errors, loss or fraud. The work of internal audit is not and should not be seen as a substitute for management responsibility around the design and effective operation of these systems.

Scope and Limitations

01



1 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF OUR WORK

The formation of our draft opinion is achieved through a risk-based plan of work, agreed with management and approved by the Audit Committee, our opinion is subject to inherent limitations, as detailed below.



- Internal audit has not reviewed all risks and assurances relating to the College.
- The opinion is substantially derived from the conduct of risk-based plans generated from a robust and College-led assurance framework. The assurance framework is one component that the Board of Management takes into account in making its annual governance statement (AGS).
- The opinion is based on the findings and conclusions of the agreed work which was limited to the area under review and agreed with management.
- Where strong levels of control have been identified, there are still instances where these may not always be effective. This may be due to human error, incorrect management judgement, management override, controls being by-passed or a reduction in compliance.
- Due to the limited scope of our audits, there may be weaknesses in the control system which we are not aware of, or which were not brought to our attention.
- The opinion is based on the testing we have undertaken, which was limited the area being audited, as detailed in the agreed audit report.
- It remains management's responsibility to develop and maintain a sound system of risk management, internal control and governance, and for the prevention and detection of errors, loss or fraud. The work of internal audit is not and should not be seen as a substitute for management responsibility around the design and effective operation of these systems.
- The matters highlighted in this report represent only the issues we encountered during our work. It is not an exhaustive list of all weaknesses or potential improvements. Management remains responsible for maintaining a robust system of internal controls, and our work should not be the sole basis for identifying all strengths and weaknesses.
- This report is prepared solely for the use of the Audit Committee, Board of Management, and Senior Management of Dumfries and Galloway College.

2 FACTORS AND FINDINGS WHICH HAVE INFORMED OUR OPINION

A summary of internal audit work undertaken, and the resulting conclusions, is provided at appendix B.

Theme – Governance	Theme – Risk Management	Theme – Internal Control
<p>We have taken into consideration the governance and oversight related elements of each of the reviews undertaken as part of the 2024/25 internal audit plan.</p> <p>A Board / Committee Induction audit was undertaken as part of the 2024/25 internal audit plan, resulting in a substantial assurance opinion and no management actions being identified.</p> <p>There is a sound governance framework in place, and we observed that the Audit Committee is effective in monitoring and challenging management and holding them to account.</p>	<p>Risk management is reviewed at the Audit Committee. We have attended all Audit Committee meetings throughout the year and confirmed the College's risk management arrangements continued to operate effectively in this forum.</p> <p>Our risk management opinion is informed by our observation of risk management systems and processes throughout the course of all audits within the internal audit plan. Specific audits linked to the College's risks included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safeguarding – <i>Risk 6: Failure to meet regulatory obligations</i>• Curriculum Planning – <i>Risk 8: Failure to achieve highest academic performance</i>• Health and Safety – <i>Risk 12: Health and safety compliance</i>	<p>We undertook six internal audit reviews which resulted in an assurance opinion in 2024/25. From five reviews (83%) we concluded that substantial assurance could be taken, and one review (17%) reasonable assurance could be taken in relation to the design and application of the control frameworks in place.</p> <p>During the year we agreed a total of nine management actions across assurance and follow up reviews. Of the actions agreed: six (67%) were 'low' priority and three (33%) were 'medium' priority. We also identified 1 advisory recommendation. We did not agree any 'high' priority actions.</p> <p>Furthermore, the implementation of management actions agreed during the course of the year are an important contributing factor when assessing the overall opinion on control. We have performed one follow-up review during the year which concluded in a positive opinion (good progress) and confirmed 28 out of 30 actions being marked as implemented. The remaining two actions were marked as partly though not fully implemented.</p>

As well as the headline findings discussed above, the following areas have helped to inform our opinion. A summary of internal audit work undertaken, and the resulting conclusions, is provided at appendix A.



Acceptance of internal audit management actions

Management have agreed actions to address all of the findings reported by the internal audit service during 2024/25.



Implementation of internal audit management actions

Where actions have been agreed by management, these have been monitored by management through the action tracking process in place. During the year progress has been reported to the Audit Committee, with the validation of the action status confirmed by internal audit on one specific follow up.

Follow up

Our follow up of the actions agreed to address previous years' internal audit findings shows that the College have made **good progress** in implementing the agreed actions. Of the 30 actions followed up (10 medium, 20 low priority), 28 were confirmed to have been implemented, with the remaining two (both originally medium priority) marked as partly though not fully implemented and priorities reduced to low.



Working with other assurance providers

In forming our opinion we have not placed any direct reliance on other assurance providers.



Topics judged relevant for consideration as part of the annual governance statement

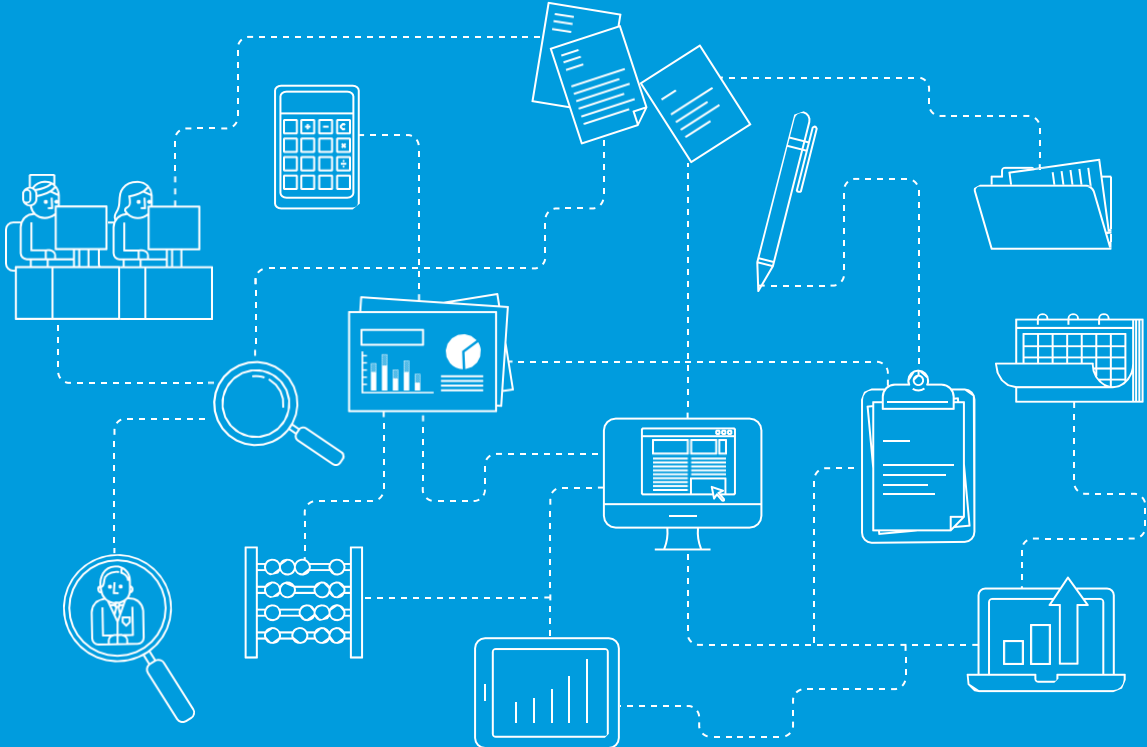
Colleges are required to include a Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control within their financial statements. As your internal audit provider, the assignment opinions and advisory reviews that we undertake and report on during the year are part of the framework of assurances that assist the Board of Management (through the Audit Committee) to prepare an informed statement and provide the opinions required.

There are no specific topics or findings that we feel require consideration as part of the annual governance statement.

Our overall opinion may be used by the Board of Management in the preparation of the 2025 Statement.

Our Performance

03



3.1 Wider value adding delivery

Area of work	How has this added value?
Sector briefings and articles	<p>We have issued a number of sector briefings during the year providing information on key developments, publications and guidance including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Further Education Funding Briefing;• Higher Education News Briefing;• Education Edit Newsletter; and• Further Education Benchmarking Report covering the full 2023/24 academic year. <p>We have also published commentary on the education sector on our website and have been a contributor to FE news articles.</p>
Webinar invitations	<p>We have issued a webinar invitation for management to have the opportunity to attend a Managing Fraud and AI in Education Webinar, to enhance their knowledge of the specific area where updates are prominent.</p>
Flexible annual planning approach	<p>We have remained flexible with our annual planning approach. This enables us to react to changes in priority and risk, to ensure internal audit is focused in the right areas at the right time, to be the best source of assurance where needed in specific areas of risk or control.</p>
1:1 meetings / discussions	<p>Throughout the year we have continued to liaise with management and held operational meetings to obtain and update on College developments.</p>

3.2 Conflicts of interest

During 2024/25, RSM have provided additional reviews for the College, one in relation tax compliance, and one in relation to employment law. Both reviews were conducted by different teams within RSM to the Internal Audit Team and therefore we do not perceive this to be a conflict of interest.

Internal audit remains independent and there have been no threats to our independence when delivering the audit plan during 2024/25.

3.3 Conformance with internal auditing standards

RSM affirms that our internal audit services are designed to conform to the Global Internal Audit Standards, the wider International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF), and the Internal Audit Code of Practice as published by the Global Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) and the Chartered IIA. Our next external quality assessment (EQA) will take place in 2026.

Under the Standards, internal audit services are required to have an EQA every five years. The RSM UK Risk Assurance service line commissioned an external independent review of our internal audit services in 2021, to provide assurance as to whether our approach continues to meet the requirements.

The external review concluded that RSM 'generally conforms*' to the requirements of the IIA Standards' and that 'RSM IA also generally conforms with the other Professional Standards and the IIA Code of Ethics. There were no instances of non-conformance with any of the Professional Standards'.

* The rating of 'generally conforms' is the highest rating that can be achieved, in line with the IIA's EQA assessment model.

3.4 Quality assurance and continual improvement

To ensure that RSM remains compliant with the Global Internal Audit Standards and the IPPF, we have a dedicated internal Quality Assurance Team who undertake a programme of reviews to ensure the quality of our audit assignments. This is applicable to all Heads of Internal Audit, where a sample of their clients will be reviewed. Any findings from these reviews are used to inform the training needs of our audit teams.

As part of the Quality Assessment and Improvement Programme, none of your files were selected for Internal Quality Monitoring programme during 2024/25. From results of the reviews undertaken across our client base, there are no areas which we believe warrant flagging to your attention as impacting on the quality of the service we provide to you.

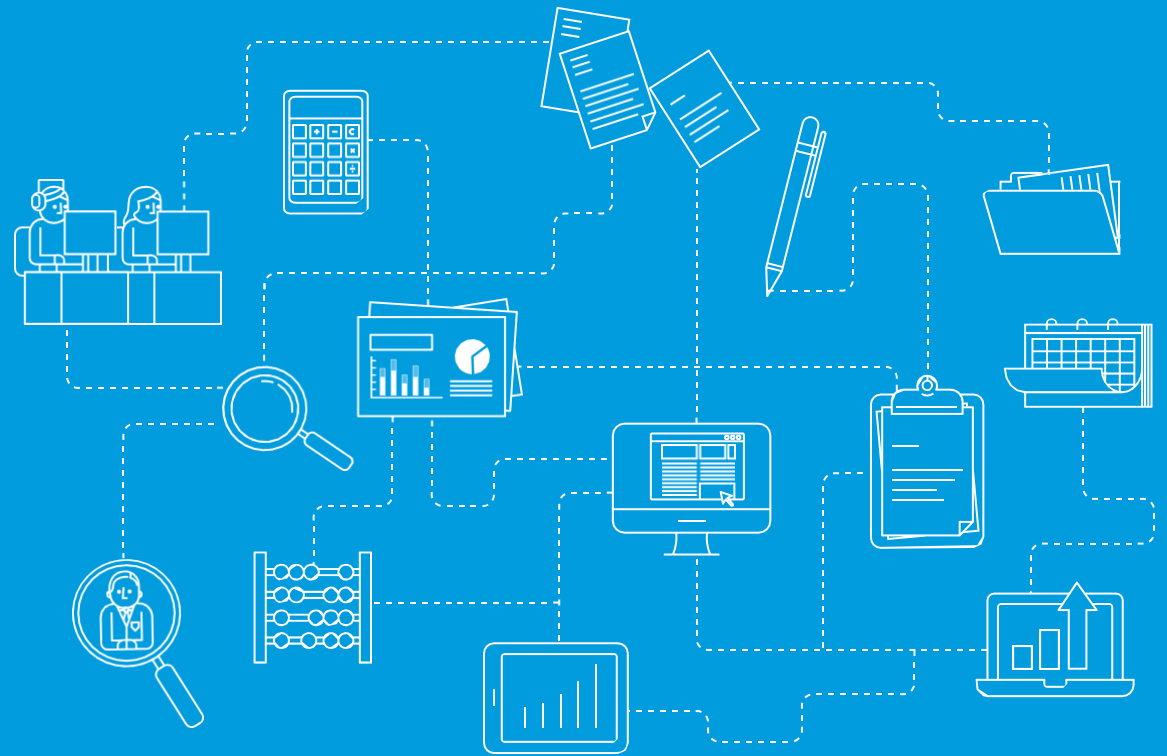
In addition to this, any feedback we receive from our post assignment surveys, client feedback, appraisal processes and training needs assessments is also taken into consideration to continually improve the service we provide and inform any training requirements.

3.5 Performance indicators

	Delivery		Quality		
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	
Audits commenced in line with original timescales*	Yes	Yes	Conformance with IPPF	Yes	Yes
Draft reports issued within 10 days of debrief meeting	10 working days	5 days (average)	Liaison with external audit to allow, where appropriate and required, the external auditor to place reliance on the work of internal audit	Yes	Yes
Management responses received within 10 days of draft report	10 working days	10.6 days (average)	Response time for all general enquiries for assistance	2 working days	2 working days (average)
Final report issued within 3 days of management response	3 working days	1 working day (average)	Response for emergencies and potential fraud	1 working day	N/A

Appendices

04




APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF INTERNAL AUDIT WORK COMPLETED

All of the assurance levels and outcomes provided below should be considered in the context of the scope, and the limitation of scope, set out in the individual assignment report.

Assignment	Lead	Status / Opinion issued	Actions agreed			
			A	L	M	H
Curriculum Planning	Executive Director of Student Experience and Academic Performance	Substantial Assurance	0	0	0	0
Health and Safety	Director of Estates and Sustainability	Substantial Assurance	0	1	0	0
Safeguarding	Executive Director of Student Experience and Academic Performance	Substantial Assurance	0	1	2	0
FES Return	Student Records Manager	Reasonable Assurance	1	1	1	0
Student Support Fund	Student Records Manager	Advisory Review	0	0	0	0
Board / Committee Inductions	Executive Director of Finance and Planning	Substantial Assurance	0	0	0	0
Payroll	Executive Director of Finance and Planning	Substantial Assurance	0	1	0	0
Follow Up	Executive Director of Finance and Planning	Good progress	0	2	0	0

APPENDIX B: OPINION CLASSIFICATION


We use the following levels of opinion classification within our internal audit reports, reflecting the level of assurance the board can take:



Minimal Assurance

Taking account of the issues identified, the board cannot take assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied or effective.


Urgent action is needed to strengthen the control framework to manage the identified risk(s).



Reasonable Assurance

Taking account of the issues identified, the board can take reasonable assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective.


However, we have identified issues that need to be addressed in order to ensure that the control framework is effective in managing the identified risk(s).



Partial Assurance

Taking account of the issues identified, the board can take partial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied or effective.

Action is needed to strengthen the control framework to manage the identified risk(s).



Substantial Assurance

Taking account of the issues identified, the board can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

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Email: Robert.Barnett@rsmuk.com

Anastasia Mullen, Associate Director

Email: Anastasia.Mullen@rsmuk.com

rsmuk.com

The matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during the course of our review and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all improvements that might be made. Actions for improvements should be assessed by you for their full impact. This report, or our work, should not be taken as a substitute for management's responsibilities for the application of sound commercial practices. We emphasise that the responsibility for a sound system of internal controls rests with management and our work should not be relied upon to identify all strengths and weaknesses that may exist. Neither should our work be relied upon to identify all circumstances of fraud and irregularity should there be any.

Our report is prepared solely for the confidential use of Dumfries and Galloway College, and solely for the purposes set out herein. This report should not therefore be regarded as suitable to be used or relied on by any other party wishing to acquire any rights from RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP for any purpose or in any context. Any third party which obtains access to this report or a copy and chooses to rely on it (or any part of it) will do so at its own risk. To the fullest extent permitted by law, RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP will accept no responsibility or liability in respect of this report to any other party and shall not be liable for any loss, damage or expense of whatsoever nature which is caused by any person's reliance on representations in this report.

This report is released to you on the basis that it shall not be copied, referred to or disclosed, in whole or in part (save as otherwise permitted by agreed written terms), without our prior written consent.

We have no responsibility to update this report for events and circumstances occurring after the date of this report.

RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales no. OC389499 at 6th floor, 25 Farringdon Street, London EC4A 4AB.

Board of Management		
Agenda Item	9	
Paper Number	BOM1225-9.1	
Date of Meeting	8 December 2025	
Location	Dumfries Campus	
Title of Paper	Strategic Risk Register	
Presented by	L Grierson	
Recommendation	Approval	
Freedom of Information Disclosure Assessment		
FOI flag:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disclosable <input type="checkbox"/> Non-disclosable	
Reason/s for choice:		
Notes from author: (When will it become disclosable? Has FOI Officer guidance been sought?)		
Further comments/updates after initial submission		
Date added	Added by (name and role)	Comment/detail

Read Time: 25 Minutes

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 The Board is asked to consider and review, in the first instance, Strategic Risks 2, 5, 6 and 12 which are assigned to it.
- 1.2 Approve the whole Strategic Risk Register.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The Principal and Executive Leadership Team routinely review the Strategic Risk Register to reflect the key risks to the College and the mitigations that are applied to each risk. Risks are also circulated to relevant committees for their scrutiny and Audit Committee review high level risks and individual risks for deep-dive scrutiny.

3. Context

- 3.1 Currently there are 3 risks (5,11,12) showing an inherent major risk (red), however after mitigations have been applied, these are reduced to 'moderate' risks.
- 3.2 Risk 3: Failure to achieve institutional sustainability - the inherent risk remains a **fundamental 25 rating** (purple). After mitigations, the residual rating of 20 still remains a **major risk**. This is in line with the current and continued external financial position which is of concern and needs to be monitored closely.

4 The Board of Management

- 4.1 The Board of Management has 4 risks assigned to it for review. All risks have undergone ELT review and been updated accordingly with any amendment by risk owners noted below:

- **Risk 2:** Legal actions; serious accident; incident or civil/criminal breach -**no change**
- **Risk 5:** Business Continuity Incident – Fire, Systems, Emergency Procedures, Health.
 - This risk is above appetite however further mitigations have been added - Work is planned to update the Fire Risk Assessment, and further staff CPD. Further Desktop exercises will be undertaken with staff
- **Risk 6:** Failure to meet regulatory obligations – **no change**
- **Risk 12:** Health and Safety – **no change**
 - It was agreed at the last BoM to remove Risk 12 from the Register as a standalone risk and amalgamate with Risk 6: Failure to Comply with Regulatory Obligations. It is also covered in Risk 2: Legal Actions, Serious Incidents. Recent H&S internal audit reports have provided substantial assurance, and current mitigations will be filtered into Risk 6.
 - Audit Committee have approved this in principle; however, they have asked to see the amended paperwork and this will be brought back to the Board in due course.

3.3 Audit Committee

- 3.3.1 There have been no changes to Risks 4 and 11.

- Risk 11: Failure to achieve and maintain systems and operable and secure ICT –**no changes**.
 - This risk is above appetite, however a deep dive of Cyber Posture and Analogue

Planning was presented to Audit Committee and attached in the Board papers for added assurance. Multiple areas of sector best practice were evident during the JISC review, making the overall IT service delivery at the college among the most impressive seen by them across over 200 infrastructure reviews undertaken across the FE sector.

3.4 Learning and Teaching Committee

3.4.1 There have been **no changes** to ratings for Risks 8,9,10.

3.5 Finance and General-Purpose Committee

3.5.1 There have been **no changes** to ratings for Risks 3,7.

- Risk 1: National Job Evaluation (Emerging) – paperwork pending completion.
- Risks 3 - Failure to achieve institutional sustainability.
 - This risk is above appetite however a balanced budget has been approved for 2025-26, and longer-term plans have been considered to provide a break even. Support staff pay award is currently being negotiated but no final agreement is in place for 2025-26 as yet.

3.6 Emerging Risk Register

3.6.1 Risk discussions take place during Operational Planning, Curriculum Reviews, Support Service Reviews and cross-college Team meetings as well as professional sources. These discussions ensure risk consideration at all levels of the College and help identify significant potential risks and opportunities which can be captured and escalated, if necessary, in line with the College Risk Management Policy.

3.6.2 There are no new items to add to the register for Quarter 2.

4. Strategic Implications

4.1 This paper links into all strategic priorities of Mission 2030 – Pillars 1,2,3,4.

5. Risk

Risk	Mitigations
all	➤ Paperwork attached for reference.

6. Implications

Financial	YES	Financial loss, fraud and reputational damage and impact to financial sustainability.
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Legal	YES	Failure to meet regulatory and compliance obligations
Learning and Teaching	YES	Serious impact to the college's ability to operate and deliver education to students, financial loss, loss of data and reputation.
Equalities	NO	

Lorraine Grierson

Governance Professional

28 November 2025

RISK DEFINITION		ORIGINAL TASK				RESIDUAL RISK				RISK APPETITE	RISK DETAILS
No	Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Risk Level	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Risk Level and trend	above/ below	Links
Responsible Person – Principal											
2	Legal actions; serious accident; incident or civil/criminal breach (BoM)										
		5	3	15		3	2	6	=	Cautious 7-10 ↓	Risk 2 - BoM- Legal DD.docx
Responsible Person – VP Corporate Services											
1	National Job Evaluation (Emerging) (FGP) PENDING										
											Paperwork pending
3	Failure to achieve institutional sustainability (FGP)										
		5	5	25		4	5	20	=	Moderate 11-15 ↑	Risk 3 - FGP- Institutional Sustainability EX DF.docx
4	Financial Fraud (AUD)										
		4	3	12		3	2	6	=	Cautious 7-10 ↓	Risk 4 - AUD - Financial Fraud EDF.docx
6	Failure to comply with regulatory obligations (BoM)										
		3	5	15		5	1	5	=	Cautious 7-10 ↓	Risk 6 - BOM - Regulatory Obligations EX FD.docx
5	Business Continuity Incident – Fire, Systems, Emergency Procedures, Health (BoM)										
		4	4	16		4	3	12	=	Moderate 11-15 →	Risk 5 - BOM -Business Continuity VPP.docx
7	Failure to achieve effective Industrial Relations (FGP)										
		3	4	12		2	3	6	=	Moderate 11-15 ↓	Risk 7 - FGP - Ind Rels VPP.docx
12	Health and Safety (BOM)										

Strategic Risk Register

AUD1125-3.1

	4	5	20		3	4	12	=	Cautious 7-10 ↑	Risk 12 - BoM- Health and Safety VPP.docx
Responsible Person - VP Learning, Skills and Student Experience										
8	Failure to achieve highest academic performance levels (LT)									
	3	4	12		1	4	4	=	Moderate 11-15 ↓	Risk 8 - LT - Acad Perf DPL.docx
9	Failure to adhere to academic compliance arrangements (LT)									
	4	3	12		2	2	4	=	Cautious 7-10 ↓	Risk 9 - LT-Acad Compl DPL.docx
10	Failure to achieve an effective student experience (LT)									
	3	4	12		1	4	4	=	Moderate 11-15 ↓	Risk 10 - LT-Effec Stud Exp DPL.docx
11	Failure to achieve and maintain systems and operable and secure ICT (AUD)									
	4	5	20		3	5	15	=	Cautious 7-10 ↑	Risk 11 -Aud-Sys and IT - VPP.docx

Score		Impact	Likelihood
1-8 Acceptable level of risk subject to periodic review.	Minor: Risks which should be monitored by the Risk Management Group	The risk may cause slight disruption or impact on the College's operations, objectives, reputation, stakeholders or financial sustainability.	Unlikely: the likelihood of the risk occurring is unlikely but still possible. It would be estimated that the risk has a 6-25% chance of happening.
9-15 Moderate level of risk subject to regular monitoring and mitigating actions and plans being in place	Moderate: Risks to be brought to the attention of SLT and Board of Management	Moderate: the risk has a noticeable impact or disruption, affecting the College's operations, objectives, reputation, stakeholders or financial sustainability.	Possible: the likelihood of the risk occurring is reasonable. It would be estimated that the risk has a 26-50% chance of happening.
16-20 Unacceptable level of risk requiring immediate actions and plans to prevent or mitigate.	Major: Risks to be reported to, and monitored by, BoM	Major: the risk has a substantial impact on the College's operations, objectives, reputation, stakeholders or financial sustainability.	Likely: the likelihood of the risk occurring is probable. It would be estimated that the risk has a 51-75% chance of happening.
21-25 Critical level of risk requiring urgent attention and actions to prevent or mitigate.	Critical: Risks to be reported to, and monitored by, BoM	Critical: the risk is a severe threat to the College's operations, objectives, reputation, stakeholders or financial sustainability.	Almost Certain: the likelihood of the risk occurring is highly likely. It would be estimated that the risk has more than a 75% chance of happening.

	5	10	15	20	25
Impact	4	8	12	16	20
	3	6	9	12	15
	2	4	6	8	10
	1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood			

DGC Risk Appetite

Classification	Description
Averse 1-6	Prepared to accept only the very lowest levels of risk, with the preference being for very safe decision-making and strategy implementation, while recognising there may be little opportunity for innovation or the exploitation of new opportunities.
Cautious 7-10	Willing to accept some low risks, while maintaining an overall preference for safe decision-making and strategy implementation, despite the probability that there is restricted potential for innovation and increased outcomes and benefits.
Moderate 11-15	Tending predominantly towards exposure to only modest levels of risk to achieve acceptable, but possibly unambitious outcomes or benefits.
Open 16-20	Prepared to consider innovative decisions and strategic implementation and selecting those with the highest probability of productive outcomes and benefits, even where there are elevated levels of associated risk.
Hungry 21-25	Proactively taking innovative/creative/pioneering decisions and adopting forms of strategic implementation, while accepting the associated substantial risk levels in order to secure highly successful outcomes and benefits.

Impact	5 Averse	10 Cautious	15 Moderate	20 Open	25 Hungry
	4 Averse	8 Cautious	12 Moderate	16 Open	20 Open
	3 Averse	6 Averse	9 Cautious	12 Moderate	15 Moderate
	2 Averse	4 Averse	6 Averse	8 Cautious	10 Cautious
	1 Averse	2 Averse	3 Averse	4 Averse	5 Averse
Likelihood					



Board of Management	
Agenda Item	10
Paper Number	BOM1225-10.1

Date of Meeting	8 December 2025	
Location	Dumfries Campus	
Title of Paper	Whistleblowing Policy	
Presented by	Lorraine Grierson	
Recommendation	Approval	
Freedom of Information Disclosure Assessment		
FOI flag:	<input type="checkbox"/> Disclosable Non-disclosable	
Reason/s for choice:		
Notes from author: (When will it become disclosable? Has FOI Officer guidance been sought?)	Can be disclosed once approved by BoM	
Further comments/updates after initial submission		
Date added	Added by (name and role)	Comment/detail

Read Time: 6 minutes

1. Recommendation

1.1. The Board of Management are asked to **approve** the changes to the Whistleblowing Policy.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 The report attaches the Whistleblowing Policy which was introduced in May 2022 and has now been reviewed in line with the Colleges policy review cycle.

3. Context

- 3.1 Audit Committee Terms of Reference ask that the Committee maintain oversight of the Whistleblowing Policy in line with the College review cycle.
- 3.2 In order to bring the Policy in line with the standard template, no5 – ‘Responsibilities’ has been added together with the Equality Impact Analysis (EIA) at appendix 1.
- 3.3 Whilst reviewing the Policy, Audit Committee raised 2 queries regarding the appeals process and how the College protects whistleblowers. Additional narrative has now been added to clarify and strengthen the Policy in respect of the process of appeals and protection and support for those raising concerns.
- 3.4 All amendments have been highlighted in yellow.
- 3.5 The Board are asked to approve the changes.

4. Strategic Implications

4.1 Mission 2030.

5. Risk

Risk	Mitigations
All risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All risks on the Strategic Risk Register are monitored regularly. ➤ Deep dives for each risk are conducted by Audit committee. ➤ Internal and External Auditor oversight. ➤ Risk Management procedures and oversight in place.

6. Implications

Financial	Yes	Malpractice can impact all areas of College operations and strategy, which can affect reputation, sustainability, student experience and incur potential criminal/civil legal proceedings.
Legal		
Learning and Teaching		
Equalities		

Lorraine Grierson

Governance Professional,
26 November 2025



**Dumfries and
Galloway College**

One step ahead

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Responsibility: Governance Professional

Issue Date:

Equality Impact Assessment:

Version: 2

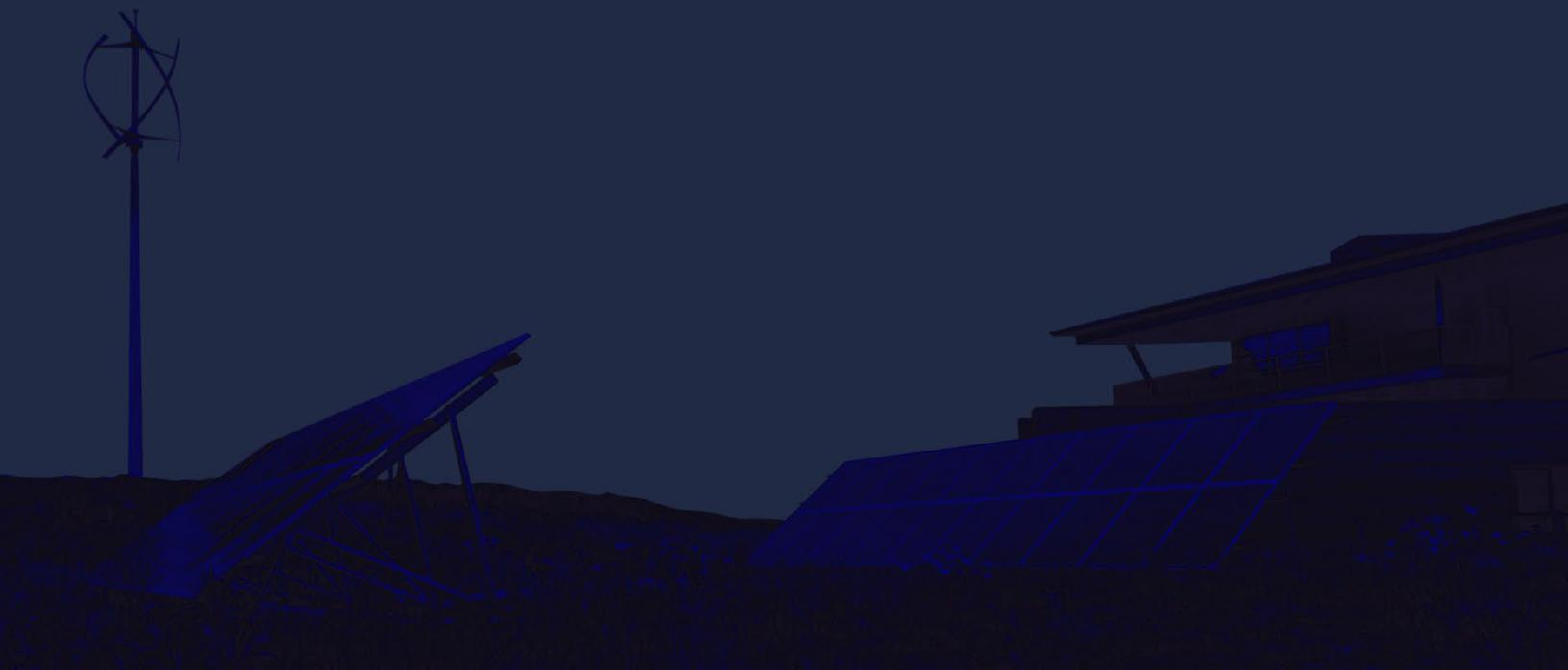


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Whistleblowing Policy

1. Purpose

Dumfries and Galloway College is committed to the highest standards of professional practice and good governance and will treat reports of suspected misconduct seriously.

2. Scope

- Provide ways for employees/workers to raise concerns and receive feedback.
- Inform employees/workers on how to take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the response.
- Reassure employees/workers that they will be protected from detrimental treatment for ‘whistleblowing’ in good faith and in the public interest.

3. *References*

- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

4. *Definitions*

A whistleblower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the issues below. It is not necessary for a whistleblower to have proof misconduct is being, has been, or is likely to be committed – a reasonable belief, suspicion or concern is sufficient. Staff are not responsible for investigating a suspicion or concern – it is for the College to carry out an investigation once it has received a report.

5. *Responsibility*

- The Board of management is responsible for approving this policy and Audit Committee have oversight of its effectiveness.
- The Governance Professional is responsible for compliance of this Policy.
- Every employee has a duty and responsibility to disclose information in good faith, which they believe shows significant malpractice or wrongdoing within the college.
- On receipt of a complaint, the Governance Professional will liaise with the relevant SLT member and select an Investigating Officer.
- The Investigating Officer will undertake the role independently. Initially they will conduct enquiries to determine whether an investigation should take place, findings of which, will be reported to the Governance Professional.

6. *Policy*

This policy is intended to promote the disclosure of information which relates to suspected misconduct or dangers to the College. This may include: –

- that a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed.
- a failure to comply with a legal obligation.

- a miscarriage of justice.
- danger to health or safety of any individual.
- damage to the environment.
- financial or non-financial maladministration and misconduct.
- obstruction or frustration of the exercise of academic freedom.
- academic or professional misconduct of a serious nature.
- improper conduct or unethical behaviour of a serious nature.
- unauthorised disclosure of confidential information.
- breach of the College's internal policies and procedures; or
- the deliberate concealment of information relating to any of the above matters.

The above list of examples is not intended to be exhaustive and there may be other examples of misconduct or wrongdoing which it would be appropriate to consider under this policy. The Whistleblowing Policy is specifically for those types of incidents detailed above, there are other procedures that may be relevant for workplace employment issues and for stakeholder complaints.

For minor issues employees should normally raise concerns with their line manager or, failing whom, another senior manager. Section 4 details how the concern will be dealt with.

The Whistleblowing Policy is expected to be used for serious and sensitive issues or exceptionally serious issues (e.g. corruption, fraud, bribery, unlawful acts) and the first step will be to raise the concern with the Governance Professional who will then raise the matter with the relevant SLT member (unless he/she, or senior management collectively, is the subject of the complaint in that case the Principal should be contacted or failing that the Chair of the Board of Management).

6.1 To raise a concern:

You should contact the Governance Professional -
boardsecretary@dumgal.ac.uk

All issues raised within this policy are treated in confidence. To maintain confidentiality the Governance Professional will support the senior member of staff selected to investigate the concern.

- 6.2 When a concern is raised the Governance Professional should inform the Chair of the Board of Management, the Principal and the Chair of the Audit Committee. If any of those individuals are involved in the concern raised, they will not be informed until it is determined an investigation is necessary.
- 6.3 When you raise a concern, where possible the following should be included:
- 6.3.1 The background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places.
- 6.3.2 The reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation. Those who do not feel able to put their concern in writing can telephone or meet the appropriate officer. The earlier the concern is expressed, the easier it is to take action.
- 6.4 Although employees are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, they will need to demonstrate to the Governance Professional there are sufficient grounds for concern, i.e. they have an honest and reliable suspicion or belief that malpractice or wrongdoing has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen.
- 6.5 Employees should not attempt to investigate the matter themselves. This policy provides an appropriate means to raise whistleblowing concerns and is intended to protect all parties involved in such a process.
- 6.6 Concerns reported under this policy will be taken seriously and investigated. Investigations will be undertaken as quickly as practicable following a report to the Governance Professional to ensure that the quality or depth of the investigation is not affected. Findings will be determined on the balance of probabilities – that is, whether the evidence shows it is more likely than not that the concern raised is valid. The seriousness and complexity of the reported concern will have an impact on the time needed to carry out and conclude an investigation, and in some instances, it may be necessary to refer a matter to an external advisor.
- 6.7 In the investigation, where the issue is referred to an outside body, there will first be a preliminary internal investigation. It is, however, recognised that due to the nature of the concern the member of SLT investigating may inform Police Scotland, the College's Auditors or other relevant external organisations.
- 6.8 All investigations conducted will be undertaken by a member of SLT as identified by the Governance Professional.
- 6.9 Initial enquiries by the SLT member will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or

allegations which fall within the scope of other, existing procedures, will follow the relevant one.

- 6.10 Within 15 working days of a concern being received, the Governance Professional will write to the employee who raised the issue:
- Acknowledging that the concern has been received
 - Indicating how the matter is to be dealt with
 - Indicating whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not.
- 6.11 This policy encourages employees to put their names to allegations. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful, and whether they will be followed up is at the discretion of the Governance Professional.
- 6.12 The amount of contact between the person raising the concern and the investigator will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved, and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information may be sought from the individual.
- 6.13 The employee needs to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, they will receive summary information indicating their concerns have been addressed.
- 6.14 In the investigation of the matter the SLT investigator should reach a decision on the issue raised and should prepare a report which is shared with the Principal, Chair of the Board and should be tabled at the next available Audit Committee meeting.
- 6.15 If the person raising the matter is not happy with the outcome as communicated by the Governance Professional, they have the right of appeal to the Principal. This appeal should be submitted within 10 days of receipt of the College decision. The Principal will normally consider the appeal and their decision is final.
- 6.16 The aim of this policy is to provide a robust internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the College. In most cases employees should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally. However, in some circumstances it may be appropriate for staff to report their concerns to an external body such as a regulator or the police. The College strongly encourages staff to seek advice before
-

reporting a concern to anyone external and, other than in exceptional circumstances, all concerns should be raised internally in the first instance. If an individual believes that they have no choice but to raise a matter externally, caution and responsibility should be exercised in so doing.

6.16.1 The avenues open include:

the Scottish Funding Council (<http://www.sfc.ac.uk/>);

the police (<http://www.scotland.police.uk/>);

Audit Scotland (<http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/>);

• a Trade Union or professional body; or relevant prescribed bodies - [List of prescribed bodies](#)

6.17 Protection and support for those who raise concerns

6.17.2 The College aims to encourage openness and will support those individuals who raise genuine concerns in the public interest under this policy, even if those concerns turn out to be mistaken.

6.17.3 Individuals raising matters must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a concern in good faith. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If the person raising a matter believes that they have suffered any such treatment, they should inform the Governance Professional immediately. If the matter is not remedied to their satisfaction, staff would normally be directed to the College's Grievance Policy and Procedure.

6.17.4 Individuals in the College must not threaten or retaliate against anyone who raises a concern under this policy in any way. Anyone involved in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.

6.18 Malicious and Nefarious Allegations

6.18.1 It should be noted, that if it is concluded that the person raising the matter has made false allegations maliciously, persistently (including using other College policies and procedures), in bad faith or with a view to personal gain, they will be subject to appropriate action, for example, if it is a member of staff, it would be disciplinary action and may constitute gross misconduct.

7. Distribution

All Staff
Repository

8. Revision Log

Revision Log		
Date	Section	Description
18.01.22	All sections	Whistleblowing Policy introduced
	Format	Updated to reflect Document Control layout wit Equality Impact Assessment added as Appendix 1

THIS FORM TO BE UPDATED WHENEVER THERE IS A CHANGE IN ANY SYSTEM DOCUMENT				
Document Name	Document Owner	Revision Number	Date of Issue	Date of Withdraw
Whistleblowing Policy	Secretary to the Board of Management	1	05.05.22	
Whistleblowing Policy	Secretary to the Board of Management	2		
Whistleblowing Policy	Change to title of Secretary to the Board of Management to Governance Professional	3		
	Addition to No 5 Responsibilities Addition of EIA Added narrative regarding appeals and protection and a new heading for Malicious and Nefarious Allegations	4		

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment

Document:	Whistleblowing Policy
Executive Summary:	This Policy provides guidance to all members of College Staff /Workers on how to inform management if they are concerned about serious malpractice, fraud or corruption within the College.

Duties:

1: Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

2: Promote equality of opportunity

3: Promote good relations

* Human Rights to privacy and family life, freedom of thought and conscience, education, employment

PSED Impacts

	Commentary
Age	It is not anticipated that this Policy will have a differential impact on people who share protected characteristics. The Policy has been developed to ensure that DGC complies with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which provides protection to employees against being subject to detrimental treatment by their employers as a result of raising concerns. This protection should apply to all regardless of gender, age etc.
Disability	
Gender	
Gender Based Violence	
Gender identity/ reassignment	
Marriage/civil partnership	
Pregnancy/maternity	
Religion or Belief	
Race	
Sexual Orientation	

Additional Considerations

Care experienced	This policy has been developed to comply with UK law and will not have an adverse impact on people who share protected characteristics. The Policy states that any investigation will be carried out as quickly as possible and in a confidential manner.
Carers	
Mental Health	
Socio-economic status	
Veterans	
Human Rights*	
Lead Officer:	Governance Professional

Facilitator:			
Date initiated:			
Consultation:	Public Interest disclosure Act 1998		
Research:			
Signature		Date	

Board of Management		
Agenda Item	10	
Paper Number	BOM1225-10.2	
Date of Meeting	08 December 2025	
Location	Dumfries Campus	
Title of Paper	Disciplinary Policy	
Presented by	Karen Hunter	
Recommendation	Approval	
Freedom of Information Disclosure Assessment		
FOI flag:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disclosable <input type="checkbox"/> Non-disclosable	
Reason/s for choice:		
Notes from author: (When will it become disclosable? Has FOI Officer guidance been sought?)		
Further comments/updates after initial submission		
Date added	Added by (name and role)	Comment/detail

Read Time: 5 minutes

1. Recommendation

- 1.1. After consideration by FGP Committee, the Board of Management are asked to approve the Disciplinary Policy.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. This paper presents the National Disciplinary Policy and Model Procedure for approval. The policy establishes a consistent and fair framework for addressing issues of misconduct across all colleges, aligned with the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) principles.
- 2.2. The policy aims to:
 - Promote fairness, transparency, and consistency in handling disciplinary matters.
 - Support a culture of improvement, learning, and accountability.
 - Ensure compliance with employment law, the ACAS Code of Practice, and sector-wide expectations.
 - Provide clear procedural standards that all colleges can adopt as a minimum benchmark, supporting good industrial relations and safeguarding staff wellbeing.
- 2.3. The accompanying Model Procedure provides operational detail on how disciplinary cases should be managed, ensuring due process and equitable treatment of employees.
- 2.4. The policy has been developed through national partnership working, with representatives from College Employers Scotland and recognised trade unions. It has undergone full consultation and equality impact assessment to ensure fairness and compliance.
- 2.5. Approval is sought for adoption and implementation of this national policy and model procedure across the college.

3. Context

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1. The introduction of this National Disciplinary Policy and Model Procedure is part of the ongoing harmonisation of people policies across the college sector. The objective is to ensure a consistent approach to employment standards and processes across all colleges, strengthening trust and promoting fairness.
 - 3.1.2. The policy provides a framework to:
 - Support managers and staff in addressing conduct issues constructively and fairly.
 - Promote early resolution of issues where possible through informal discussion.
 - Ensure disciplinary matters are dealt with in line with employment law and good practice.
 - Encourage improvement rather than punitive action, in line with our collegial values.
 - 3.1.3. The model has been co-designed by the national working group, comprising management and staff side representatives, ensuring shared ownership and alignment with sector needs.
- ### 3.2. Job Evaluation
- 3.2.1. Link to the Broader People Strategy.

3.2.2. The Disciplinary Policy complements the wider People and Culture framework, including policies on performance, wellbeing, and inclusion. It underpins the integrity of the forthcoming Job Evaluation and Skills Framework, ensuring behaviour and performance expectations are managed consistently across roles.

3.2.3. It also supports our Fair Work commitments, reinforcing an college culture where staff feel respected, supported, and fairly treated.

4. Risk

Risk	Mitigations
Risk 7. Failure to achieve effective Industrial Relations (FGP)	➤ Policy developed in partnership with national trade unions and College Employers Scotland. Full consultation has taken place through NJNC mechanisms. Implementation guidance and manager training will further mitigate local risk.
Inconsistent application of disciplinary procedures across colleges	➤ Adoption of a national framework ensures consistency. HR teams will receive guidance and oversight mechanisms will be established.
Legal non-compliance or procedural errors	➤ Policy fully aligned with ACAS Code of Practice and current employment legislation. HR Business Partners will provide advice to managers throughout the process.
Perceived unfair treatment or lack of inclusion	➤ Equality Impact Assessment completed. Policy includes commitments to reasonable adjustments and non-discrimination throughout the disciplinary process.

5. Implications

Financial	NO	➤ No direct financial impact. Implementation will be managed within existing HR resources and training budgets.
Legal	YES	➤ Aligns with the ACAS Code of Practice and employment legislation, reducing risk of unfair dismissal claims or procedural breaches.
Learning and Teaching	NO	➤ No direct impact, though fair disciplinary practice supports staff morale and learning environment stability.

Equalities	YES	➤ Equality Impact Assessment undertaken. Reasonable adjustments and safeguards embedded to prevent discrimination and ensure equity.
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Heather Jones

Director of People & Culture

04 November 2025



**Dumfries and
Galloway College**
One step ahead

NATIONAL DISCIPLINARY POLICY AND MODEL PROCEDURE

For Support Staff and Lecturing Staff

Responsibility: Director of People & Culture

Issue Date: October 2025

Equality Impact Assessment: October 2025

Version: 1

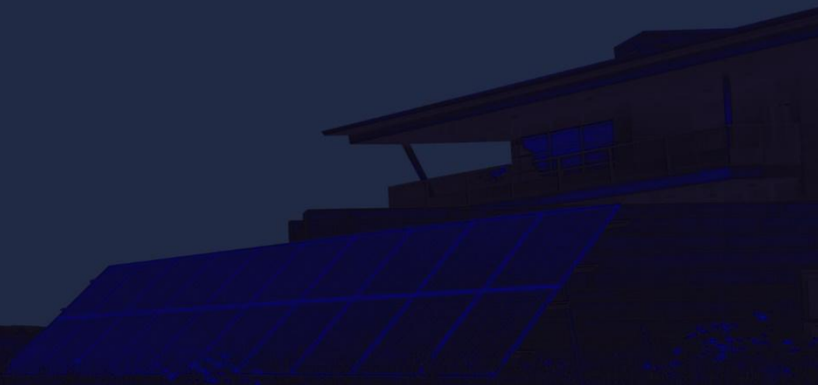


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National Disciplinary Policy and Model Procedure

1. *Purpose*

This policy is designed to help and encourage all employees to achieve and maintain appropriate standards of behaviour and conduct for their, and their colleagues' safety and well-being. The policy provides a framework for dealing with potential misconduct with the focus on encouraging an employee whose conduct is unsatisfactory to improve.

The policy will be applied consistently and fairly to all employees, based on the circumstances of their case. Every case will be dealt with in a fair, transparent, reasonable, equitable and supportive way. This approach should allow employees to feel confident to have open and frank conversations with their manager if there is a concern, rather than fearing blame or repercussions. All disciplinary matters will be dealt in a sensitive and respectful manner, with the confidentiality of those involved maintained.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the model Disciplinary Procedure to fully understand the whole disciplinary process that provides a framework and minimum standards for the colleges to follow.

This policy was developed in partnership and agreement with the College Employers Scotland representatives and recognised trade unions. This policy and model procedure will be reviewed one year from launch date and thereafter every three years or earlier if required under legislative changes.

2. *Scope*

This policy applies to all employees.

In the event of an alleged disciplinary breach by a recognised trade union representative, formal disciplinary action will not be taken until the circumstances have been discussed with a full-time officer of the relevant union.

This policy does not apply where there is:

- An issue of competence or capability, this will be dealt with under the Performance Improvement Policy or equivalent.
- Ill health, this will be dealt with under the Sickness Absence policy or equivalent.

3. *References*

- Code of Conduct Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti Bullying Procedure
- Capability Procedure
- Attendance Procedure
- Grievance Procedure

4. *Definitions*

ACAS	Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Services
HR	Human Resources
SPSO	Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

TUC	Trades Union Congress
Vivup	Employee Assistance Programme

5. *Responsibility*

5.1 All Employees will

- Ensure they are familiar with the standards of conduct expected by the college. This may include reviewing the following policies, or their equivalents. For example: Code of Conduct for Employees, Internet, Social Media, and Email Policies (to be reviewed at a local level).
- Consider seeking advice and support from their trade union representatives at any point of the disciplinary process.
- Treat any information shared with them as part of a disciplinary investigation or part of the disciplinary process as confidential, except for discussing matters with their companion or trade union.

5.2 Managers will

- Ensure that they and their staff are fully conversant with the disciplinary rules and procedures in place and can act in line with the procedures. Managers will make full use of the informal disciplinary stages, when possible, to prevent minor disciplinary problems from escalating unnecessarily.
- Always act promptly to deal with any misconduct on the part of employees. A failure to communicate to an employee that they do not meet the required standards may lead the employee to assume that their conduct is satisfactory.
- Ensure that they undertake appropriate training relevant to their role in the disciplinary process.
- Seek advice from Human Resources (HR) if they are unclear on a potential disciplinary issue.

5.3 HR Representatives will:

- Provide advice and support to managers and employees on the application of this Policy and on all stages of the disciplinary procedure.
- Provide advice and support to Nominated Officer on the processes and legal compliance on employment matters.
- Provide advice and support on consistency of application of the Policy and Procedure.
- Monitor formal disciplinary activity across the college.
- Inform the College Leadership/Management Team if there are areas of concern in relation to the application of this Policy and Procedure.

5.4 Trade Union Representatives / companion will:

- Provide advice and support to the employee throughout the disciplinary process.

6. Policy

6.1 Key Principles

The following key principles will be applied in each situation and will be reflected in college procedures and practices:

- Disciplinary cases must be dealt with promptly without unnecessary delay, sensitively and respect the privacy of those involved.
- Many potential disciplinary issues can be resolved informally with appropriate, suitable support, counselling, or another approach, such as further training, to resolve problems. Managers should seek to resolve misconduct issues at the lowest possible level, and consider informal action, when appropriate, to resolve issues.

Where an issue cannot be resolved informally, or it is not appropriate to do so, the disciplinary procedure must be followed. An employee will be:

- Informed in writing, that they are the subject of a

disciplinary investigation and advised of the disciplinary allegation(s).

- Provided with a copy and/or link to this policy and to the procedure that will be applied.
- Provided details of any Employee Assistance or counselling services available, as well as reviewing and considering the wellbeing of the employee throughout the process.
- Given information on the next steps and indicative timescales for investigation to be completed.

An investigation will be undertaken by an Investigating Officer who will be objective and impartial, to establish the facts relating to the disciplinary allegation(s).

Following conclusion of the investigation, an appointed Nominated Officer will consider the investigation report and decide if a formal disciplinary hearing is required or no case to answer. In any event mutually agreed additional support may be required.

An employee will be informed in writing of the disciplinary allegation(s) against them, along with a copy of the investigation (including statements and any other material information considered) in advance of the hearing.

Employees have the right to be accompanied by: (1) an accredited representative of a trade union; (2) a work colleague; or (3) an official employed by a trade union. All the above will be referred to in the policy and accompanying procedure as the 'companion'.

At the disciplinary hearing, the disciplinary allegations will be outlined (in the invite to the disciplinary hearing). The investigation will be presented, and the employee will be provided with the opportunity to state their case and respond to the investigation before a final decision is made.

Employees will not normally be dismissed for a first offence except in cases of gross misconduct/negligence.

Employees will have the right of appeal against any formal disciplinary action. Information relating to disciplinaries will be destroyed in line with colleges data retention schedule, subject to related legal requirements.

When an employee raises a grievance during a disciplinary process, the disciplinary process may be suspended to allow the grievance to be heard. Where the grievance and disciplinary cases are related, it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently. Each case will be considered on its own merits.

The college will ensure managers have the appropriate training to undertake the roles described in this policy.

6.2 Reasonable Adjustments

Colleges will ensure throughout the disciplinary that they do not discriminate against anyone because of a protected characteristic. For example, adapting procedures to accommodate if required or making reasonable adjustments to procedures to ensure that they do not put anyone with a protected characteristic at a substantial disadvantage. This might mean someone else attending the disciplinary process meetings in addition to the companion (see section 3). For example, a British Sign Language signer, a translator or a support worker or someone with knowledge of the employee's specific needs.

6.3 Further Sources of Information

6.3.1 All employees can access counselling if needed via Employee Assistance Programme, Vivup. www.vivup.co.uk. This is available 24/7 for your convenience. Please contact us if you wish to find out more about this.

6.3.2 Further information can be found here:

- [Acas Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures | Acas](#)
- [Dealing with problems at work | TUC](#)
- [The Model Complaints Handling Procedures | SPSO](#)

6.4 Procedure

6.4.1 Informal Disciplinary Action (Outside the Formal Procedure)

Consideration should be given if the matter can be addressed through informal discussion.

When dealing with a matter informally, the line manager will discuss the matter with the employee and advise them that the course of action is outwith the formal Disciplinary Procedure.

6.4.2 Precautionary Suspension

There may be occasions when it is considered inappropriate for an employee to be at work, due to the nature and seriousness of the alleged misconduct.

Suspension does not mean someone has done something wrong and should not be used to discipline employees.

Guidance should be obtained from Human Resources (HR), prior to an employee being precautionarily suspended or removed from the workplace. Precautionary suspension will always be on full pay inclusive of any regular allowances and/or contractual payments and will be in line with any agreed college procedure.

Precautionary suspension must always be for as short a period as possible, and the employee will be notified in writing if there are any proposed extensions.

Further information about suspension is [here](#).

6.4.3 Grievance Raised During Disciplinary Proceedings

When an employee raises a grievance during a disciplinary process the disciplinary process may be suspended to allow the grievance to be heard. Where the grievance and disciplinary cases are related, it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently. Each case will always be considered on its own merits.

6.4.4 Roles and Responsibilities

The Investigating and Nominated Officers will be fair and objective, independent to the case and available to carry out their role promptly. They will be selected from a list of trained officers.

Investigating Officer	Nominated Officer	Human Resources
<p>To investigate the allegation(s) and establish the facts.</p>	<p>To review the outcome of the disciplinary investigation and be responsible for:</p> <p>Deciding if a case is to proceed to a disciplinary hearing.</p> <p>Hearing the case and ensuring the employee has a fair opportunity to present their case.</p> <p>Deciding on disciplinary action, based on all evidence presented and appropriate level of sanction and/or other supports.</p> <p>Communicating the decision to the employee, including their rationale for their decision.</p>	<p>HR will be involved in the appointment of the Officers within the procedure.</p> <p>The role of the HR representative is to provide advice, guidance, and support to managers and employees on the application of this Policy and at all stages of the disciplinary procedure.</p>

	Explaining the decision at any subsequent appeal.	
Companion		
The role of the companion is to support the employee during the disciplinary process. The employee must be given the right to reply directly to questions and points raised at the disciplinary hearing.		

6.4.5 Disciplinary Investigation

A disciplinary investigation will take place following the decision that alleged misconduct requires to be investigated. The employee will be notified, in writing, that they are the subject of a disciplinary investigation and advised of the allegations of the alleged misconduct along with the possible outcome.

The purpose of carrying out an investigation is to gather all relevant facts relating to the allegation(s), in an objective, prompt and impartial manner. Conducting an objective and thorough investigation ensures that the employee is given an opportunity to explain the circumstances and provide any mitigating factors and that all relevant facts are considered.

6.4.5.1 Establishing Information

If there is any doubt in the information, the Investigating Officer will try to seek corroborating information from other sources. If no information is available, the Investigating Officer will highlight this in their report.

The Investigating Officer will interview witnesses able to provide information on the allegation(s) being investigated.

6.4.5.2 Investigating Officers Report

The Investigating Officer will produce a report detailing the findings and give an indication to the employee when this will be completed. If timescales change the employee will be updated.

The Nominated Officer will review the Investigating Officer's report. They will decide if there is sufficient evidence to proceed to a disciplinary hearing, or if other alternative action needs to be taken.

In some cases, there may be insufficient information to proceed to a disciplinary hearing or allegations may be unfounded. If this is the case, the disciplinary investigation will be destroyed unless the case involves a young person or vulnerable adult.

The employee must be informed in writing of any decision.

6.4.6 Disciplinary Hearing

Where a disciplinary hearing is required, the employee will be provided with a minimum of five working days' notice in writing. The written notification will include copies of the investigation report together with any other evidence to be referred to in the hearing.

The purpose of the hearing is to establish the facts, take account of the findings of the investigation and hear the case presented. The hearing will normally be held in person. In certain circumstances, consideration will be given to holding the hearing in an alternative format.

If the employee or companion is unable to attend the disciplinary hearing, they confirm this so the hearing can be rescheduled.

6.4.7 Non-Attendance of a Disciplinary or Appeal Hearing

6.4.7.1 Due to ill health

Where an employee is unfit to attend the hearing, the absence will be managed in line with the college's Absence/Attendance Management Policy.

6.4.7.2 Failure to attend

Where an employee fails to attend the hearing without a reasonable explanation, then the college will offer a further date for the hearing.

If an employee is repeatedly unable or unwilling to attend a disciplinary meeting without a reasonable explanation, the hearing will be held in the employee's absence and the college will decide on the evidence available.

6.4.8 Conducting a Disciplinary Hearing

At the hearing, the Nominated Officer will:

- a) Make introductions and explain roles.
- b) Explain the purpose and format of the hearing.
- c) Outline the allegation(s) and potential disciplinary action.
- d) Confirm with the employee that they understand the process and are satisfied with the arrangements.

The Investigating Officer will be available to attend a disciplinary hearing if required and requested in advance by either party to provide clarification.

Each witness may be called (if required) and potentially be questioned by the Nominated Officer or the employee. The employee/companion will set out their case in response to the allegation(s) and respond to any questions from the Nominated Officer. The employee will be requested to sum up their case.

6.4.8.1 Reaching a Decision

When the Nominated Officer is reaching their decision, they must consider the nature of the misconduct, any live disciplinary record, and any mitigation provided by the employee and be consistent with action taken in similar cases. They should seek guidance from the HR representative.

6.4.8.2 Communicating the Decision

The decision may be given verbally at the hearing, following an adjournment but must always be confirmed in writing to the employee

within five working days of the hearing. If the employee was represented, a copy of the letter must be issued to their companion.

6.4.9 Disciplinary Hearing Outcomes

The outcomes following a hearing can be no action, written warning, final written warning, action short of dismissal and dismissal.

6.4.9.1 No Action

At the disciplinary hearing, the Nominated Officer will decide whether disciplinary action is required or if suitable support, counselling, or another approach, such as further training, will be more appropriate.

A manager will take note of the meeting, which will be shared with the employee.

6.4.9.2 Written Warning

A first/minor offence may be given a written warning, which should be held on the employee's HR file for a period of six months for disciplinary purposes and will then be removed, along with any paperwork.

A written warning will be held on the employee's HR file for a period of six months for disciplinary purposes.

6.4.9.3 Final Written Warning

A final written warning may be given where:

- a) An employee who has been issued with a first written warning fails to achieve or maintain the required levels of behaviour and/or conduct, or there is a further act of misconduct.
- b) The misconduct or behaviour is considered sufficiently serious, and the action needs to reflect the situation.

A final written warning will be held on the employee's HR file for a period of 12 months for disciplinary purposes.

6.4.9.4 Action Short of Dismissal

This can be used as an alternative to dismissal and kept on an employee's HR file for up to a further period of 12 months.

Action short of dismissal may be given where:

- a) An employee who has been issued with a final written warning fails to achieve or maintain the required levels of behaviour and/or conduct, or there is a further act of misconduct.
- b) The misconduct or behaviour is considered sufficiently serious, and the action needs to reflect the situation.

6.4.9.5 Dismissal

Employees will not normally be dismissed for a first offence except in cases of gross misconduct or where the behaviour is of such a nature that the college is unable to tolerate their continued employment.

6.4.10 Retaining A Record

Where there is an allegation or disciplinary action is taken involving a vulnerable adult or child being put at risk or abused, the disciplinary investigation and related information will be retained in line with legislation.

6.4.11 Appeals

Where an employee feels the disciplinary action taken against them is wrong or unjust, the employee has the right to appeal. They must submit an appeal in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the decision.

The appeal hearing will not normally be a full re-hearing of the case unless there has been a procedural error. The outcome of the appeal hearing will confirm, amend, or withdraw the disciplinary action.

The Appeal Manager will inform the employee in writing of their final decision within five working days of the appeal hearing.

The decision of the Appeal Manager is final, and there is no further right of appeal. Further information about appeals can be found [here](#).

6.4.12 External Referrals

If, at the end of this procedure, a decision has been made to:

- a) Take disciplinary action resulting in the dismissal of an employee.
- b) Take action short of dismissal involves an employee being permanently moved from a regulated role and/or working with children or protected adults.

Or, an employee has left the college's employment, and it was likely that they would have been dismissed. It is essential that consideration is given to the following.

6.4.12.1 Disclosure Scotland

The college has a legal duty to refer any decisions described above relating to the harmful behaviour of any employee to Disclosure Scotland even if it takes place outside of work or after the employee has left employment. This referral must be made within three months of the decision.

Harmful behaviour is defined by Disclosure Scotland [here](#).

The matter should be referred to the Lead Signatory and HR for the college, who may make the referral to Disclosure Scotland.

6.4.12.2 Regulatory Bodies

A decision to refer decisions described at 11. must be considered to ensure the college fulfils its responsibilities to the appropriate regulatory body.

The Nominated Officer will liaise with HR and a referral may be made to the regulatory body. The main regulatory bodies are:

- a) Scottish Social Services Council [here](#).
- b) General Teaching Council for Scotland [here](#).
- c) Nursing and Midwifery Council [here](#).

7. *Distribution*

Repository
All Staff

8. *Revision Log*

Revision Log		
Date	Section	Description
June 2025	Whole document	New Policy/Procedure

THIS FORM TO BE UPDATED WHENEVER THERE IS A CHANGE IN ANY SYSTEM DOCUMENT				
Document Name	Document Owner	Revision Number	Date of Issue	Date of withdraw
National Disciplinary Policy and Model Procedure	Human Resources Department	1	June 2025	

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment

Document:	National Disciplinary Policy and Model Procedure for Support Staff and Lecturing Staff
Executive Summary:	<p>This is a disciplinary policy to be used as the minimum standard for all National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) colleges. There is also a model procedure which NJNC colleges can use, however, colleges can choose to continue to use their own procedure if they wish, providing it meets the minimum standard set out in the model procedure.</p> <p>The policy and procedure provide a framework for dealing with potential misconduct, with the focus to encourage an employee whose conduct is unsatisfactory to improve.</p> <p>A disciplinary policy and procedure are required as employers are legally obliged to have disciplinary procedures in place. It is the employer’s responsibility to set and maintain standards of behaviour within the organisation and to put in place disciplinary rules and procedures to address instances of misconduct.</p> <p>Further, an effective disciplinary policy and procedure is key to good employment relations and to ensure that individuals are treated fairly and consistently in cases where standards of conduct and behaviour fall below an acceptable level.</p> <p>The policy and accompanying procedure comply with the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and meet all current relevant legislation.</p>

Duties:

1: Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

2: Promote equality of opportunity

3: Promote good relations

* Human Rights to privacy and family life, freedom of thought and conscience, education, employment

PSED Impacts

	Commentary
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Age	No known negative impact. We have not identified any evidence that the policy or procedure could disproportionately impact a person on the grounds of this Protected Characteristic.
Disability	<p>Potentially negative. It is possible that an employee's disability could impact on their behaviour at work and result in them facing disciplinary allegations.</p> <p>For example, the appendix of the procedure provides examples of behaviour viewed as misconduct/gross misconduct. The list is not exhaustive but could be taken subjectively. This may cause misunderstanding for example for a person with a neurodiverse disability considers to be obscene, offensive, or reasonable.</p> <p>Articles such as this in Personnel Today highlight employment tribunal cases where employers were shown not to have fully understood the nature of a person's disability before launching disciplinary proceedings that may lead to dismissal. It is possible that an employee's disability could impact on their behaviour at work and result in them facing disciplinary allegations.</p> <p>For example, the appendix of the procedure provides examples of behaviour viewed as misconduct/gross misconduct. The list is not exhaustive but could be taken subjectively. This may cause misunderstanding for example for a person with a neurodiverse disability considers to be obscene, offensive, or reasonable.</p> <p>Articles such as this in Personnel Today highlight employment tribunal cases where employers were shown not to have fully understood the nature of a person's disability before launching disciplinary proceedings that may lead to dismissal.</p>
Gender	No known negative impact*. We have not identified any evidence that the policy or procedure could disproportionately impact a person on the grounds of this Protected Characteristic. Whilst no specific potential negative impact has been identified here, it is recommended that ongoing and relevant Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training is provided for all managers to ensure that they are aware of their role and responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 when dealing with disciplinary matters. This will also assist managers in identifying

	in identifying any mitigating factors arising from this protected characteristic which should be taken into account throughout the disciplinary process.
Gender Based Violence	
Gender identity/ reassignment	
Marriage/civil partnership	
Pregnancy/maternity	
Religion or Belief	
Race	
Sexual Orientation	No known negative impact*. We have not identified any evidence that the policy or procedure could disproportionately impact a person on the grounds of this protected Characteristic. Whilst no specific potential negative impact has been identified here, it is recommended that ongoing and relevant Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training is provided for all managers to ensure that they are aware of their role and responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 when dealing with disciplinary matters. This will also assist managers in identifying any mitigating factors arising from this protected characteristic which should be taken into account throughout the disciplinary process.
* Overall recommendation that equality data is collected from all those undergoing the disciplinary procedure within each college and that this data is analysed on a regular basis to highlight any negative impacts this policy and procedure may have on protected characteristic groups.	

Additional Considerations

Carers	No known negative Impact*. We have not identified any evidence that the policy could disproportionately impact a person on the grounds of caring responsibilities. Whilst no specific potential negative impact has been identified here, it is recommended that ongoing and relevant Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training is provided for all managers to
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	ensure that they are aware of their role and responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 when dealing with disciplinary matters. This will also assist managers in identifying in identifying any mitigating factors arising from this protected characteristic which should be taken into account throughout the disciplinary process.
Care experienced	
Mental Health	
Socio-economic status	
Veterans	
Human Rights*	

Lead Officer:	Director of People and Culture		
Facilitator:	Director of People and Culture		
Consultation and Research:	<p>The development of this policy and procedure originated from the objectives and direction of the NJNC for colleges. A national policy working group subsequently formed a subgroup to progress the development of this policy and procedure.</p> <p>The subgroup has equal representation from management and staff side with secretariat support and input provided by College Employers Scotland. The subgroup has met a number of times from January 2022 to November 2024 to develop the policy, procedure and all related documents collaboratively.</p> <p>Evidence of all national working group meeting minutes, actions and consultation undertaken are available from College Employers Scotland.</p>		
Date initiated:	October 2025		
Signature	H. Jones	Date	October 2025

Appendix 2 – Disciplinary Code

Misconduct

The following list is neither exhaustive nor exclusive but is indicative of the types of misconduct which will normally result in disciplinary action being taken, short of dismissal in the first instance:

- Damage, unauthorised and/or misuse of college property.
- Inappropriate use of the college's IT systems.
- Minor breaches of the college's policies and procedures.
- Unauthorised use of the college's computer systems.
- Health and safety.
- Minor breaches of Health and Safety.
- Breach of confidentiality.
- Unauthorised disclosure of personal information or confidential college information, which breaches the college policies and/or data protection legislation.
- Unauthorised contact with the media.

Other forms of misconduct

- Minor breaches of college policies or procedures.
- Persistent poor time keeping.
- Unauthorised absence from work.
- Abusive or threatening behaviour or offensive language towards any person whilst engaged on college business.
- Refusal to follow reasonable management instructions or carry out contractual obligations.
- Carelessness or negligence in carrying out the duties and responsibilities of the post.
- Being incapable of carrying out the duties of the post due to intake of alcohol or unprescribed use of drugs.
- Smoking in no-smoking areas.

Gross Misconduct

This list is not exhaustive.

- Theft, Fraud and Misrepresentation.
- Theft or unauthorised possession of property or facilities

belonging to the college or someone else.

- Dishonest or fraudulent acts. For example – college records, registers, timetables, reports, accounts, expenses claims or self-certification forms.
- Failing to follow the college financial management policies and/or procedures.
- Deliberate breach of confidentiality.
- Abuse of the role within the college.
- Bribery, fraud and/or corruption.
- Providing false or misleading information or non-disclosure of information, either during the recruitment process or in subsequent employment, which effects the contract of employment.
- Unauthorised/Improper Use of college property and equipment/systems.
- Deliberate and serious damage to property.
- Deliberately accessing internet sites containing pornographic, offensive or obscene material.
- Use the college's internet or email systems for conducting a private or commercial business.
- Intentionally access or transmit information that distributes a computer virus.
- Health and Safety.
- Deliberate breach of Health and Safety.
- Gross Carelessness/Negligence.
- Equality and Fair Treatment.
- Bullying or harassment, sexual harassment and/or victimisation.
- Acts of direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of protected characteristics or trade union membership.

Other forms of Gross Misconduct

- Violent, threatening, or dangerous behaviour.
- Bringing the college into disrepute.
- Being incapable of carrying out the duties of the role due to intake of alcohol or substance misuse.
- Criminal conviction/civil liability or other unacceptable conduct which renders the employee unsuitable to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the role.
- Refusal to follow reasonable management instruction to carry out follow reasonable management instruction to carry out contractual duties.

Board of Management		
Agenda Item	10	
Paper Number	BOM1225-10.3	
Date of Meeting	08 December 2025	
Location	Dumfries Campus	
Title of Paper	Quality Assurance Policy	
Presented by	Phil Storrier	
Recommendation	Approval	
Freedom of Information Disclosure Assessment		
FOI flag:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disclosable <input type="checkbox"/> Non-disclosable	
Reason/s for choice:	Will be made available post approval.	
Notes from author: (When will it become disclosable? Has FOI Officer guidance been sought?)		
Further comments/updates after initial submission		
Date added	Added by (name and role)	Comment/detail

Read Time: 6 minutes

1. Recommendation

- 1.1. After consideration by Learning and Teaching Committee, the Board of Management are asked to approve the contents of this paper.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The college Quality Assurance Policy has been substantially amended to reflect current practices and alignment to recently introduced Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF).

3. Context

- 3.1. Updated to reflect alignment and reference to Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Outcome Framework and Assurance Model; SFC Quality Guidance; TQEF Principles and UK Quality Code for Higher Education.
- 3.2. Responsibilities redefined and updated to reflect current structures.
- 3.3. Clear outline of the TQEF principles which will underpin quality assurance.
- 3.4. The updated policy includes new mechanisms which have been introduced or are being developed including: TQER, AQE, STEP, ILQRs, SEAPs, Student Experience Committee and compliance audits.
- 3.5. Student Engagement activities have been updated to reflect current position.

4. Strategic Implications

- 4.1 Cultural Shift Toward Continuous Improvement: Embedding QA as a core principle will require moving beyond compliance to a culture of proactive enhancement.
- 4.2 Integration with Digital and Data Systems: The policy should leverage digital platforms for real-time evaluation and reporting, ensuring transparency and actionable insights.
- 4.3 Alignment with External Frameworks: Ensure coherence with Education Scotland, TQEF, and awarding body standards to maintain credibility and readiness for external review.
- 4.4 Resource and Capacity Considerations: Increased QA rigor may require investment in staff training, digital tools, and analytical capability. Clear accountability structures and workload planning will be essential to sustain engagement.

5. Risk

Risk	Mitigations
Risk 10. Failure to achieve an effective student experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Curriculum team meetings ➤ Self-Evaluation Reportage – Curriculum ➤ Student early experience survey and Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES) ➤ Student representative meetings ➤ Self-Evaluation Reportage – Support ➤ Complaint Procedure ➤ Observation of Learning process ➤ Portfolio Review 1 and 2

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introduction of Institution Led Quality Review (ILQR) in AY 25/26. ➤ Introduction of SLT Level Self-Evaluation and Action Plans. ➤ Annual Engagement Visit by Inspection Body ➤ Self-evaluation and Action Plan reportage to SFC ➤ Outcome Framework and Assurance Model
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6. Implications

Financial	YES	It may require investment in digital platforms, staff training, and capacity-building to sustain rigorous evaluation processes.
Legal	YES	The policy must align with awarding body requirements and regulatory frameworks to ensure compliance and readiness for external scrutiny
Learning and Teaching	YES	Directly impacted through the embedding of structured evaluative practices, data-driven decision-making, and continuous improvement cycles that enhance curriculum quality and student experience
Equalities	YES	Considerations are essential, ensuring QA processes actively monitor and address barriers to participation, promote inclusive practice, and use analytics to evidence equity outcomes. Collectively, these implications position the policy as a driver of accountability, improvement, and demonstrable impact across the College.

Phil Storrier

VP Curriculum & Student Experience

05 November 2025



**Dumfries and
Galloway College**

One step ahead

QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

Responsibility: Vice Principal, Curriculum & Student Experience

Issue Date:

Equality Impact Assessment: 14/03/2025

Version: 2

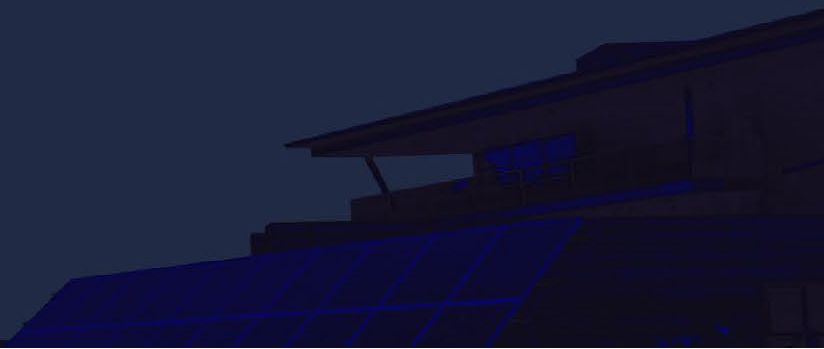


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Quality Assurance Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a systematic and continuous approach to quality assurance and enhancement across the College.

This policy aligns with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) Principles to support excellence in our provision and ensure that quality is both assured and enhanced through structured processes, reflective practice, student partnership, and effective use of data and evidence.

2. *Scope*

This policy describes the requirements and responsibilities of all staff to ensure the implementation, monitoring, and continuous review of quality systems to maintaining high standards in learning, teaching, assessment, and student support services.

3. *References*

- Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Outcome Framework and Assurance Model
- [SFC Guidance on Quality for Colleges and Universities AY 2024-25 to AY 2030-31-1](#)
- [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework \(TQEF\) Principles](#)
- [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review \(TQER\) Guide for Institutions](#)
- [UK Quality Code for Higher Educations 2024](#)

4. *Definitions*

AQE	Annual Quality Engagement
ILM	Institution Liaison Meeting
ILQR	Institution-Led Quality Activity
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
SEAP	Self-Evaluation and Action Plan
SFC	Scottish Funding Council
STEP	Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme
TQEF	Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework
TQER	Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review

5. *Responsibility*

All staff must take ownership of quality processes by adhering to and contributing to the continuous development of College quality systems, policies and procedures.

Curriculum and Support Managers are responsible for ensuring that quality assurance requirements are documented, implemented and integrate the requirements of quality procedures into working practices of the College.

Senior Leadership Team ensures that the College's quality mechanisms align with national requirements, overseeing self-evaluation and performance monitoring, and fostering a culture of continuous enhancement and student partnership. The Team provides strategic direction, ensure compliance with external reviews, and use data and evidence to drive improvement and accountability.

College Management Team ensures that all policies, procedures, and monitoring mechanisms remain fit for purpose and responsive to student, stakeholder and regulatory body needs.

The Performance Team and the Audit Team verify compliance with quality systems, supports the design and implementation of new processes and procedures.

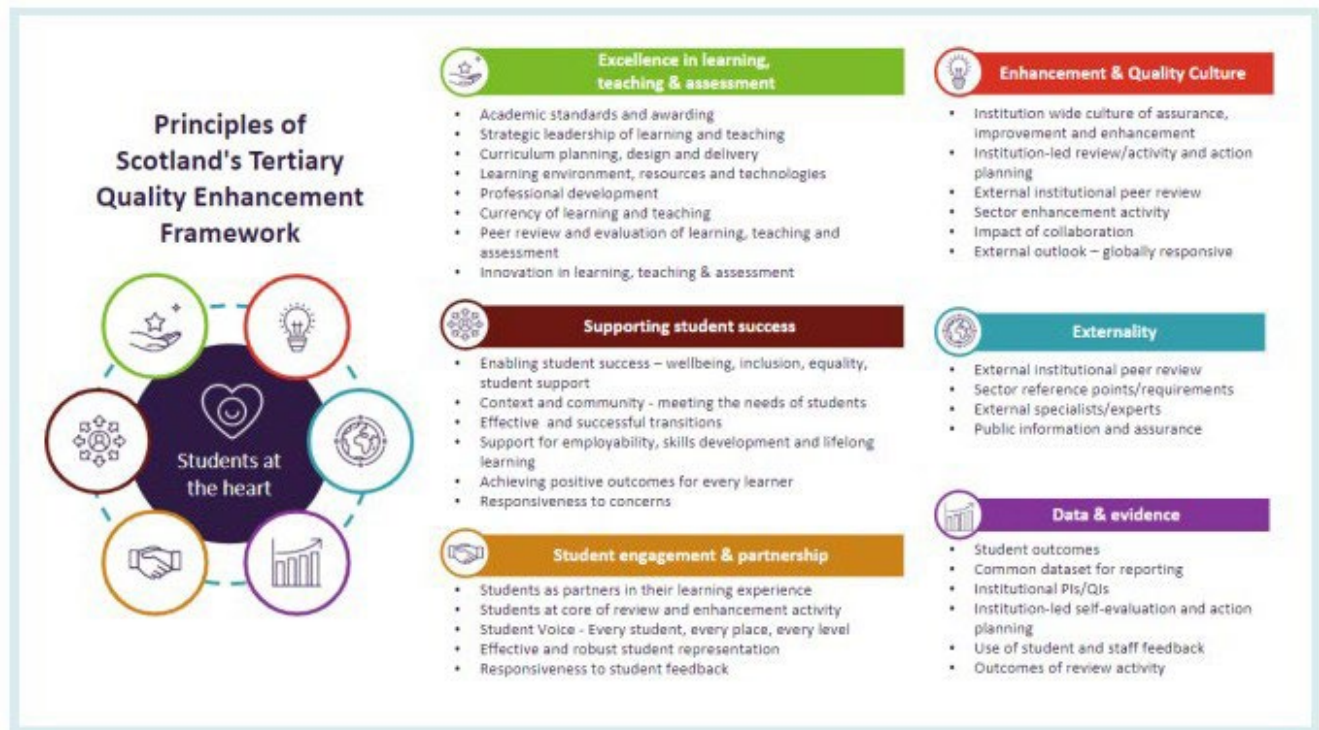
6. *Policy*

The College is committed to delivering high-quality learning, teaching, and assessment that meets the expectations of students, stakeholders, and regulatory bodies. Quality assurance and enhancement are embedded across all aspects of College operations, ensuring that all staff contribute to a culture of excellence, continuous improvement, and student success.

External Frameworks

Our Approach: Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF)

The TQEF is the new quality assurance and enhancement framework for Scotland's colleges and universities. Our approach is built on the six key principles within the TQEF Framework.



External Quality Assurance and Enhancement Mechanisms Include:

- **Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER)** and engagement with Education Scotland

TQER is an external peer-led and enhancement review carried out by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) on a seven-year cycle.

- **Annual Quality Engagement (AQE)** with SFC

Annual Quality Engagement (AQE) supports high-quality learning through two elements: QAA-led Institution Liaison Meetings (ILMs) under TQER, and SFC Outcome Manager-led discussions focusing on quality learning, Self Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP), and their role in the Outcome Agreement and Annual

Monitoring (OF and AM) processes.

- **Participation in Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP)**

Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP) supports collaborative improvement across colleges and universities, enhancing learning, teaching, student experience, and staff development.

- **Use of Data and Evidence Reporting**

DGC are required to collect, analyse, and reflect on data for internal review, using well-developed processes to support quality assurance and enhancement. These should inform both operational and strategic improvements and include evidence from staff, students, and external stakeholders.

Strategic Evaluation

- **Portfolio/Service Review**

All curriculum and support area manager participate in Portfolio Reviews which is the colleges annual monitoring system to ensure quality and enhancement. All curriculum and support area managers have Enhancement Plans which focus on specific themes for curriculum (Horizon scanning, curriculum development and learning and teaching improvement), support (service improvement and stakeholder feedback). Portfolio review happen twice in the academic year. Enhancement plans should also be influenced by student engagement activities, developed themes from DG-SEE and the overall college strategic plan.

- **Institution-Led Quality Activity (ILQR)**

DGC operates systems of periodic Institutional Led Quality Review (ILQR) across all curriculum provision and support services over a six-year period. It is designed to provide an opportunity for teams to promote and support critical reflection. ILQR will be the colleges institutional led review process as expected under the TQEF framework. We want to use this as an opportunity for us to reflect honestly, celebrate success, and collaboratively shape the future of our curriculum and support services. It helps ensure we remain aligned with student needs, sector expectations and institutional goals. All curriculum and support areas will be reviewed within a 3 year cycle.

- **SLT Self Evaluation and Action Plans (SEAPs)**

All members of Senior Leadership Team are asked to complete a Self-Evaluation and Action Plan for their directorates which feed from strategic direction and team enhancement activity. These plans are monitored through SLT Meetings and ELT Leads.

Staff Evaluation

- **Self-Evaluation - DG-SEE (Stop-Evaluate-Enhance)**

DG-SEE is our internal self-evaluation system which has been designed to ensure recurrent reflection across the academic year. All curriculum teams participate in regular self-evaluation activities using a range of relevant in year challenge questions to review the quality of provision and ensure continuous enhancement. DGC is clear that in terms of continuous improvement staff are leaders and that ongoing self-evaluation is a necessary.

During each block teams should work to continuously evaluate and identify critical course related topics focusing on significant areas of good practice with impact or areas for improvement, linked to the key TQEF Principles. We are asking teams to meet periodically across each teaching block to evaluate practice. Enhancement meetings are held regularly and minutes from the meetings recorded whilst ongoing self-evaluation phases are submitted and monitored through the Performance Team.

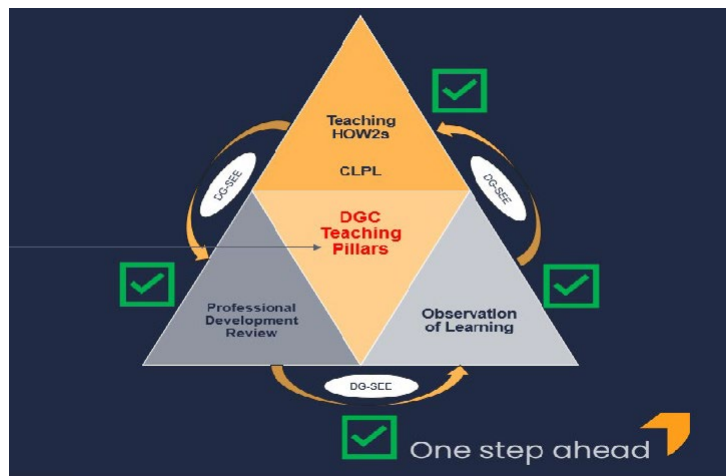
The Performance Team review submissions and identify areas of good practice or areas of to focus enhancement through end of Block reports which are issued to all staff.

The performance team engage with teams in an ongoing basis to enhance the system and ensure relevant staff development support to develop engagement in meaningful self-evaluation.

Our designated DG-SEE platform can be accessed via the Performance section of AdminNet.

- **Teaching for Learning Framework**

We have developed a clear process for development of learning and teaching within the college.



- **Observation of Learning**

As part of Lecturers professional development, they participate in annual observations of practice. Our process will focus on learning in the classroom and allows us to focus specifically on improving the student experience and confidence of staff. A key component in the process is paper observation which allows greater variety in professional discussion and sharing of practice.

- **Evidence Based Teaching Development**

Our ongoing partnership with Teaching How2s provides staff with immediate and evidence-based teaching practices which can be immediately shared post observation and used across the academic year for enhancing and developing areas of practice. We also have a designated teaching and learning site which will develop a wider base of evidence-based research, approaches and resources. Ongoing CPD is also provided specifically linked to teaching and assessment practice.

- **Advanced Practitioners**

We have a small team of Advanced Practitioners who have been appointed based on teaching experience, qualifications and track record in student experience and enhancement. Their primary role is to support the observation of learning process however they also support wider activities included 1 to 1 development

programmes and wider curriculum and teaching development projects.

- **DGC Learning Pillars**

The DGC PILLARS of Learning serve as the foundational principles guiding our approach to Learning, Teaching, and Assessment. These 10 research-informed pillars inform how we develop our teaching practices and curriculum. The full set of Pillars can be found in the Learning & Teaching section on AdminNet.

- **Professional Review and Development PRD**

PRD is a structured, reflective process that supports staff in identifying their strengths, development needs, and career aspirations. It ensures professional learning is aligned with individual goals, college priorities, and relevant professional standards, contributing to continuous improvement in teaching quality and student outcomes. For GTCS-registered lecturers, engagement with the PRD process is also a vital component of maintaining their professional registration through the Professional Update (PU) cycle.

- **Quality Assurance**

Validation and Approval of Delivery – Dumfries and Galloway College must be able to demonstrate that it has effective procedures in place to ensure that all provision is well designed, valid, reliable, fair to meet awarding body requirements. It is essential that ALL members of staff be committed to the quality system at all stages, from course development through approval and resourcing to delivery and assessment. Our Course Proposal Process ensure that our proposed provision meets the requirements of College Strategic Aims and is in line with the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) and [Ambition 2030](#).

To ensure we continue to meet awarding body requirements, digital core packs and pre-delivery checks are in place and monitored through compliance audits. Prior to delivery, all assessment, re-assessment and marking guideline materials, including college devised and awarding body materials and core pack contents, must be internally verified.

Internal and External Verification – Dumfries and Galloway College must be able to demonstrate that it has effective procedures in place to ensure that all provision is well designed, valid, reliable, fair to meet awarding body requirements. Our Internal Verification and External Verification Procedures are in place to ensure

Quality Assurance Policy

that staff within the Centre make consistent and accurate assessment decisions in accordance with the assessment criteria set by external awarding bodies. A summary report of our external awarding body visits is produced each year along with the areas of good practice and recommendations identified. Sharing these practices is crucial as it promotes continuous improvement across the college.

Compliance Audits - A compliance audit is carried out each block to ensure staff are applying our internal verification procedure effectively. An internal report is produced, providing detail of the overall compliance and opportunities for improvement.

Complaints - Our Complaints Handling Procedure reflects Dumfries and Galloway College's commitment to valuing complaints. Complaints give us valuable information we can use to improve student and customers' satisfaction. They give our staff a first-hand account of your views and experience and can highlight problems we may otherwise miss. We seek to resolve customer dissatisfaction as close as possible to the point of service delivery. We also seek to conduct thorough, impartial and fair investigations of customer complaints. The College is required to comply with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's (SPSO) Model Complaints Handling Procedure and report annually on our performance in handling complaints. Full details of our Complaints Handling Procedure can be found in the Performance section on AdminNet. Copies of our annual reports can be found on our website.

Student Engagement

We have a clear structure within our Student Association to provide fair representation across both campus sites and ensure suitable capacity for activities. We have Full Time Student Engagement and Capacity Lead who works directly with the SA and wider college staff to develop student engagement mechanisms and capacities.

- **Student Representation**

We have a Curriculum Rep system in which we identify curriculum level reps for each area. Areas can nominate more than one rep but we expect that all curriculum areas and SCQF Levels have representation. Class representatives are

identified and supported through SPARQs training, class rep meetings and engagement in wider self-evaluation activities.

We also have Lead Reps who are identified to be involved in supporting the wider work of the college in student partnership and enhancement. A key role for Lead Reps is to sit on our Student Experience Committee alongside college staff, managers and senior leaders to co-develop and implement student led enhancements .

- **Student Experience Committee**

The Student Experience Committee has been established to provide a space for meaningful student partnership and is tasked with developing three student led enhancements across the college each academic year.

- **Surveys and Feedback Mechanisms.**

Early Experience Survey – Dumfries and Galloway College Early Experience Student Survey is issued by the Performance Team during weeks 4-6. The survey provides a high-level early indication of how our students feel the first few weeks studying with us at DGC has been and to support teams to identify early issues for intervention or examples of good practice. An internal high-level report is produced, providing detail of the overall satisfaction and opportunities to provide examples of You Said, We Did. Copies of these reports can be found within the Performance section of AdminNet.

Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES) – The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) requires colleges to collect feedback from students relating to their experience and the quality of learning via the Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES). The survey aims to assess student opinion and the data collected from the survey is forwarded to the SFC, who provide an evaluation of student satisfaction and engagement across the college sector. An internal high-level report is produced, providing detail of the overall satisfaction and opportunities to provide examples of You Said, We Did. Copies of these reports can be found within the Performance section of AdminNet.

DG-SEE (Stop-Evaluate-Enhance) Student/Stakeholder Feedback - Student / stakeholder voice is critical to the development of our organisation. Feedback is sought and included as part of our DG-SEE process and is pivotal enhancing the student experience.

Effectiveness is measured through:

- TQER
- Self-Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP)
- Impact reporting of enhancement activity (DG-SEE, STEP)
- Effectiveness in responding to concerns
- Student Voice (including class reps/lead reps, surveys, have your say, meet the Principal)
- Observation of Learning
- Engagement with our DGC Pillars of Learning
- Internal Compliance Audits
- Sector Benchmarking
- Regular reporting at SLT and Board of Management meetings on performance and enhancement.

Summary

Through our strategic approaches, the College ensures that quality is embedded into practice and continuously improved. Staff, students, and stakeholders work collaboratively to support a vibrant, inclusive, and forward-thinking learning environment, where all students can achieve their potential in an ever-evolving tertiary education landscape.

7 *Distribution*

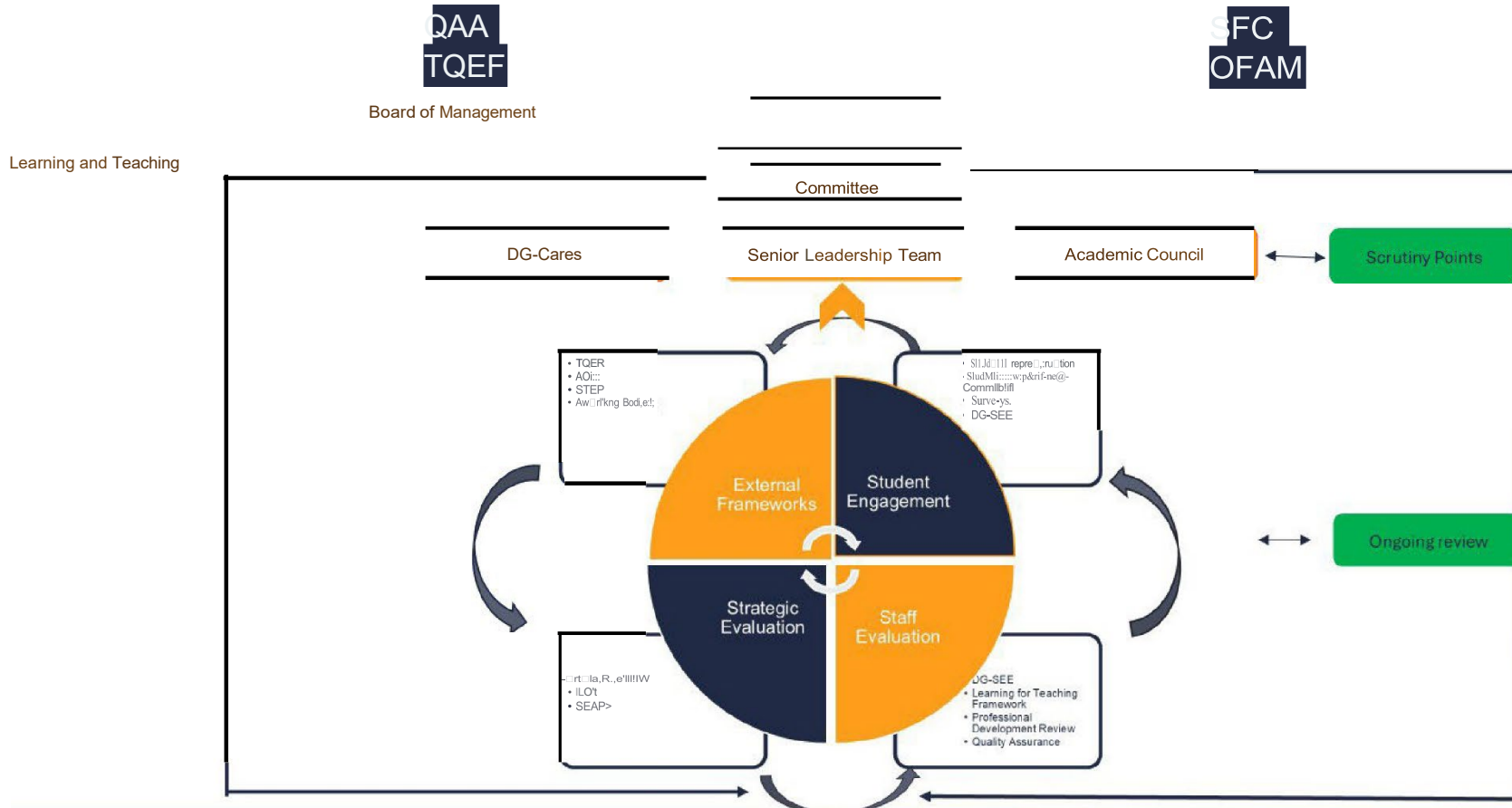
All Staff Repository

8 Revision Log

Revision Log		
Date	Section	Description
August 2020	Throughout the Policy	Job titles updated to reflect changes in organisational structure
	Throughout the Policy Paragraph 3	Learner changed to student Self Evaluation noted as process of continuous quality improvement
October 2021	Responsibility	Responsibility changed from VP Governance and Corporate Services to Director of Student Experience and Academic Performance
October 2021	Distribution	Quality Manual changed to Repository
July 2025	Throughout the Policy	Changes throughout to reflect TQEF

THIS FORM TO BE UPDATED WHENEVER THERE IS A CHANGE IN ANY SYSTEM DOCUMENT				
Document Name	Document Owner	Revision Number	Date of Issue	Date of Withdraw
Quality Assurance Policy	Director of Student Experience and Academic Performance	1	04.05.22	
Quality Assurance Policy	Vice Principal, Curriculum and Student Experience	2	10.07.25	

Appendix 1



Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

Document:	Quality Assurance Policy
Executive Summary:	<p>The policy plays a critical role in maintaining high-quality learning, teaching, and assessment while fostering an environment that actively supports equality, diversity, and inclusion.</p> <p>The policy embeds student-centred decision-making and seeks continuous improvement through evidence-based self-evaluation and feedback mechanisms. This policy ensures that no individual or group is disadvantaged and all can engage equitably in college life and have access to high-quality education and support.</p> <p>Through structured monitoring and engagement, the policy reinforces the College’s statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 by embedding mechanisms that eliminate barriers, promote equity, and advance inclusive practices.</p>

Duties:

1: Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation 2:

Promote equality of opportunity

3: Promote good relations

* Human Rights to privacy and family life, freedom of thought and conscience, education, employment

PSED Impacts

	Commentary
Age	<p>This policy has no indirect or direct impact on any protected characteristic and is accessible to all. Engagement to improve service is an important element in meeting the public sector equality duty.</p> <p>Self-evaluation processes ensure representation and inclusion of diverse staff and student voice.</p> <p>Our data monitoring provides analysis across protected characteristics to identify disparities and inform quality improvement actions.</p> <p>Implementation of this policy and monitoring of our quality systems should ensure positive impacts across all protected characteristics.</p>
Disability	
Gender	
Gender Based Violence	
Gender identity/ reassignment	
Marriage/civil partnership	
Pregnancy/maternity	
Religion or Belief	
Race	
Sexual Orientation	

Additional Considerations

Care experienced	As above
Carers	
Mental Health	
Socio-economic status	
Veterans	
Human Rights*	

Lead Officer:	Vice Principal Curriculum and Student Experience		
Facilitator:	Performance Manager		
Date initiated:			
Consultation:	General Desk Research		
Research:			
Signature	Sonya Rutter	Date	14/03/2025

Board of Management		
Agenda Item	11	
Paper Number	BOM1225-11	
Date of Meeting	08 December 2025	
Location	Dumfries Campus	
Title of Paper	Chair's Report	
Presented by	Caroline Stuart	
Recommendation	Discussion	
Freedom of Information Disclosure Assessment		
FOI flag:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disclosable <input type="checkbox"/> Non-disclosable	
Reason/s for choice:		
Notes from author: (When will it become disclosable? Has FOI Officer guidance been sought?)		
Further comments/updates after initial submission		
Date added	Added by (name and role)	Comment/detail

Time Read: 3 minutes

1. Recommendation

- 1.1. The Board of Management Committee are asked to **note** and **discuss** any points arising from the paper and **approve** the changes to Committee Membership.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Board on the activities of the Chair during the period since the last Board meeting on 6 October 2025. This report covers activity during the period October to December 2025. The Board are invited to note the contents and discuss any matters arising.

2. Activities October to December 2025

2.1 Engagements

- Board Recruitment – Advertising, sifting, interviews
- Built Environment Innovation Centre
- Sue Cook West Lothian College
- Graduation Dumfries
- Janie McCusker
- Colleges Scotland – Budget webinar
- Sharon Hodgeson
- Ann Hill
- Colleges Scotland Chairs Group _ governance lessons learned
- College Chairs Group = Dec Meeting
- Crighton Campus Meeting
- Alzheimer's Scotland

2.2 Board Recruitment

- 2.2.1 As previously intimated, the process of recruiting new Board members commenced post the summer holidays and the interviews take place on Friday 3rd Oct.
- 2.2.2 I am delighted to welcome Sarah Holland to the Board and Steven Binnie as a Co-opted member of our Board for the coming year. We welcome you both and look forward to working with you.

2.3 Vice Chair to the Board

- 2.3.1 After inviting non-executive members to self-nominate for the role of Vice Chair, I am pleased to advise that we received one nomination from Alastair Irons who will take up the role with immediate effect.
- 2.3.2 Due to this, Alastair will come off Audit committee to ensure there is no conflict of interest.

2.4 Committee Membership

- 2.4.1 Sarah Holland will take up position on FGP Committee alongside Steven who will be co-opted to FGP Committee.

2.5 Christmas Message

2.5.1 I am now at the end of my first 4-year term as Chair of Dumfries and Galloway College and what a 4 years it has been. This College has transformed into one of the best in Scotland for students to study at, staff to work in and is one of the best governed. We should all be very proud of the hard work and diligence that has gone into making this College the success it is today. We have a forensic grip on our business and manage by fact. Our move to balance score card style reporting will ensure that we spend our time on the things that matter. The financial outlook remains challenging, but our transformation will continue on in the months and years ahead as we deliver Mission 2030. I am very proud to be your Chair and I want to thank each and every one of you on the Board and all staff in the College for your support, hard work, enthusiasm and dedication. I wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year. See you in 2026!

3. Risk

Risk	Mitigations
	➤ None attached to the paper

4. Implications

Financial	NO	
Legal	NO	
Learning and Teaching	NO	
Equalities	NO	

Caroline Stuart

Chair of the Board of Management

24 November 2025

Board of Management		
Agenda Item	17	
Paper Number	BOM1225 – 17.1	
Date of Meeting	08 December 2025	
Location	Dumfries Campus	
Title of Paper	Strategic Impact Analysis	
Presented by	Phil Storrier	
Recommendation	Noting	
Freedom of Information Disclosure Assessment		
FOI flag:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disclosable <input type="checkbox"/> Non-disclosable	
Reason/s for choice:	Can be disclosed upon request	
Notes from author: (When will it become disclosable? Has FOI Officer guidance been sought?)		
Further comments/updates after initial submission		
Date added	Added by (name and role)	Comment/detail

Read Time: 59 minutes

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 The Board of Management are asked to note the contents of this paper.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Strategic Impact Analysis is a critical document in advance of the College TQER and will set the context and lines of enquiry for our review team.

3. Context

- 3.1 Purpose of the report is to seek final feedback from Committee regarding the SIA which will be submitted to The Quality Assurance Agency on 18th November 25 in advance of our Tertiary Quality External Review.
- 3.2 SIA has been drafted using a range of existing sources drawn from staff self-evaluation, student engagement activities and governance mechanisms.
- 3.3 Additional sense checking was done with a range of partners, college forums and student representative conference.
- 3.4 The document outlines work done, progress made over the last 5 years whilst indicate future opportunities and challenges for the college.

4. Strategic Implications

- 4.1 Embedding an Evidence-Driven Quality Culture - The SIA requires systematic use of data and externality to demonstrate impact across all TQEF principles. This signals a need to strengthen our capacity for data analytics and evaluative practice, ensuring that decisions on curriculum, student support, and enhancement are consistently evidence-based and externally benchmarked.
- 4.2 Deepening Student Partnership in Governance and Enhancement - TQER places student engagement at the heart of quality arrangements. The college will need to resource and formalise structures that enable students to co-own quality processes—such as contributing to self-evaluation, action planning, and strategic decision-making—shifting from consultation to genuine partnership.
- 4.3 Aligning Enhancement Activity with Strategic Risk and Opportunity - The review expects enhancement to be focused, targeted, and measurable, with clear links to institutional priorities and risk management. The college must integrate enhancement planning into its strategic and operational frameworks, ensuring that innovations (e.g., digital learning, curriculum redesign) are supported by robust risk assessment and evaluation mechanisms.
- 4.4 External Validation of Quality and Enhancement - A positive outcome provides authoritative assurance to stakeholders—students, staff, board and partners—that the college meets national expectations for quality and enhancement. This strengthens institutional reputation and competitiveness in a challenging post-16 landscape.

5. Risk

Risk	Mitigations
Risk 10. Failure to achieve an effective student experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Self-evaluation ➤ Student Engagement Mechanisms ➤ Quality Assurance ➤ Complaints handling ➤ Observation of Learning ➤ Portfolio Review ➤ ILQR ➤ TQEF ➤ OF&AM

6. Implications

Financial	YES	The review outcome may influence future funding streams, investment priorities, and resource allocation. A strong result enhances confidence among stakeholders and supports financial sustainability. The quality arrangements place additional resource demands on people across the college.
Legal	YES	Compliance with TQER requirements demonstrates adherence to statutory and regulatory obligations, reducing risk of legal challenge and safeguarding institutional credibility.
Learning and Teaching	YES	The review directly impacts the college’s approach to curriculum design, pedagogy, and student experience. Outcomes will inform enhancement priorities and continuous improvement strategies.
Equalities	YES	TQER places emphasis on inclusive practice and equitable access. The review provides an opportunity to evidence progress on equality commitments and identify areas for further development.

Phil Storrier

VP Curriculum & Student Experience

29 October 2025



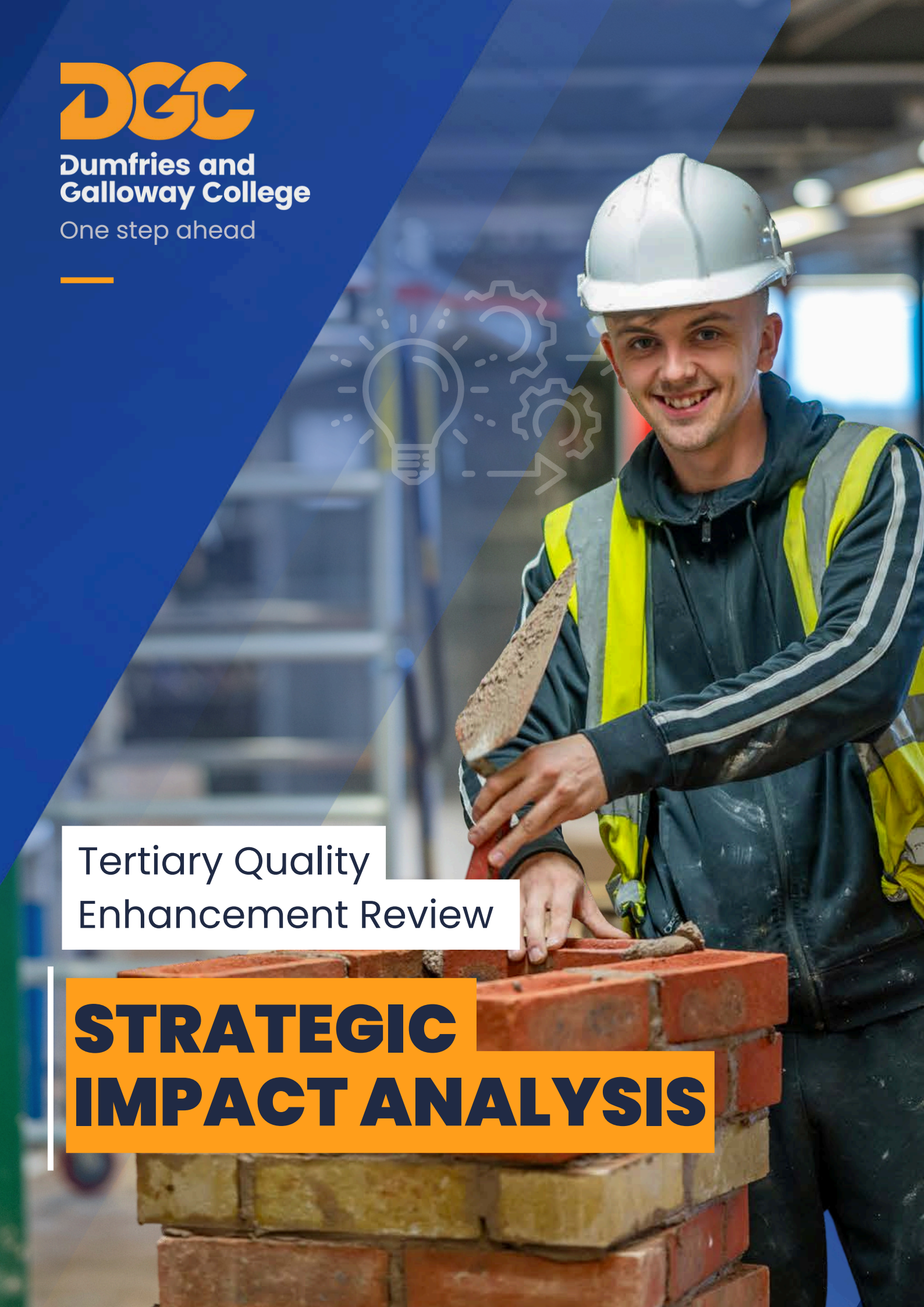
Dumfries and
Galloway College

One step ahead



Tertiary Quality
Enhancement Review

STRATEGIC IMPACT ANALYSIS



Dumfries and Galloway College serves the South West of Scotland through its **campuses in Dumfries and Stranraer**. The College delivers a broad and responsive portfolio of further and higher education programmes, tailored to the evolving needs of learners, schools, apprentices, and employers. While Dumfries remains the primary hub, Stranraer continues to play a vital role in addressing localised demand through targeted, community-focused provision.

In the post-COVID landscape, the College has demonstrated agility by expanding hybrid and online delivery models. This strategic shift has not only enhanced accessibility and learner flexibility but also positioned the College as a regional leader in inclusive, digitally-enabled education.

Strategic Evolution: Mission 2030

The previous strategy, *Ambition 2025*, launched in 2020, delivered measurable gains across key performance indicators. However, retrospective evaluation identified limitations in its responsiveness to national reform and the dynamic skills agenda.

Mission 2030 builds on these foundations with a more sharply defined strategic focus.

It positions the College as:

- A learning organisation committed to continuous improvement
- A developer of staff and student skills aligned to future workforce needs
- A data-informed institution driving evidence-based decision-making
- A financially sustainable organisation leveraging strategic partnerships

This evolution reflects a maturing strategic posture, one that prioritises both internal capacity-building and external impact. Growth is now being driven through income diversification, curriculum innovation, and collaborative resource-sharing with regional and national partners.

How are we contributing to Regional Skills?

Our role in regional skills planning is both strategic and operational. We are an active contributor to key forums such as the Regional Economic Partnership, Education and Skills Committee, and the Convention of the South of Scotland. These engagements ensure our provision is aligned with regional economic priorities. Beyond Dumfries and Galloway, the College is increasingly contributing to national priorities, evidenced by our delivery of strategic funding received to deliver Wind Turbine Training in partnership with Energy Skills Partnership (ESP) and recent success in securing tenders to deliver Health and Social Care training in the Edinburgh region.

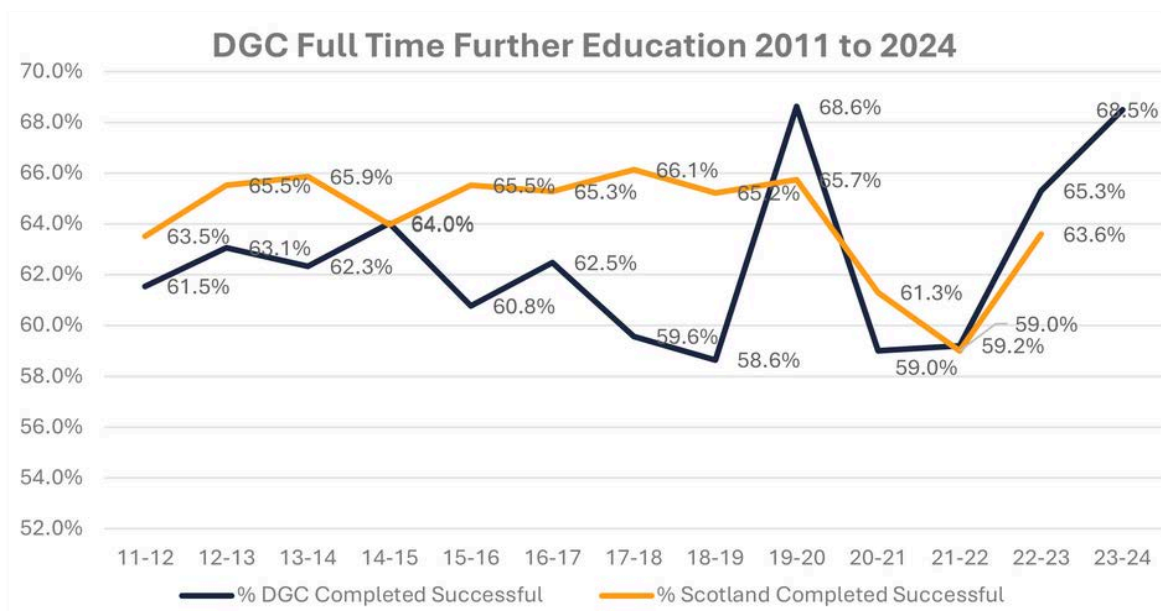
**In academic year 24/25
the College supported
approximately:**



- **5,145** students across multiple modes and SCQF levels (2–10)
- **324** Modern Apprentices
- **400** Senior Phase pupils,
- and an additional **37** students studying at degree level through our collaborative partnership with the University of the West of Scotland (UWS).

Improving student outcomes

Improving student outcomes was a central aim of *Ambition 2025*, particularly in Full-Time Further Education (FT FE), where the College had historically underperformed relative to the sector for 9 out of 10 years.



Since Academic Year 2020/21, FT FE performance has shown sustained improvement, culminating in a 9.5% increase by 2023/24. For the first time in several years, the College moved above the sector average across all modes of study, with interim PIs for 2024/25 indicating continued stability. Senior Phase outcomes have improved markedly, from 49.0% to 86.1% over three academic sessions (+37.1%). These gains are the result of deliberate and sustained interventions, including curriculum redesign, enhanced learner support, and a renewed focus on the quality of learning and teaching.

Strategic Impact

As part of Ambition 2025, the College implemented a two-year curriculum plan (2023–25), targeting growth in areas aligned with national and regional skills priorities. Despite a **10% reduction** in credit allocation in AY 23/24 and an **8.9% reduction** in FTE staffing over the last 3 years and the impacts of industrial action, the College successfully restructured its portfolio to protect and grow strategic provision, consistently meeting its credit targets. Applications **rose by 29% in 2024/25**, a clear indicator of increased learner confidence and market relevance. This growth is attributed to curriculum innovation, improved outcomes, and more effective recruitment. However, it has also created capacity pressures, particularly in Construction and Engineering, where applications (852) significantly exceeded targets (492, excluding apprentices). In 2023, we secured an agreement for the University of the West of Scotland to move into our Dumfries site as a new, bold tertiary campus. This has focused our attention on estate development, becoming one of the key enablers of strategic growth. In 2023/24, the College secured funding for a modular facility to expand engineering provision. A further bid through the Borderlands initiative is in progress to support continued estate development in STEM-focused disciplines. We have also sought to develop our campus sites as community assets and have Skills Development Scotland (based at both campuses), Scottish Enterprise at Dumfries, and Better Lives Partnerships and Lifelong Learning activity based at our Stranraer site, supporting wider economic and community regeneration. Most notably, the College has achieved sustained improvements in student retention, success, and satisfaction over the past three years, clear evidence of the impact of strategic reform and enhancements to operational delivery.

Digital Transformation and Data-Informed Practice

A key strategic priority has been the enhancement of digital infrastructure to support more effective, data-informed decision-making. In 2023/24, the College implemented a major transformation programme, including the rollout of Power BI dashboards focused on student performance, course analytics, and commercial delivery. These tools are now embedded in strategic planning, enabling more timely and targeted interventions. In parallel, the College replaced its payroll and HR systems to improve operational efficiency and data integrity. These changes reflect a broader commitment to streamlining processes, automating routine tasks, and focusing staff capacity on high-impact activity. This digital transformation is not only modernising infrastructure but also reshaping leadership and delivery across the organisation.

Partnerships and Pathways

Partnership working remains a cornerstone of our strategy, driving innovation and widening access. Collaboration with the Local Authority has strengthened the quality and outcomes of the Senior Phase, while its regional reach is expanding through revised online delivery, microlearning, and the exploration of new Foundation Apprenticeship frameworks. Our partnership with the University of the West of Scotland has delivered three co-designed degree programmes - Cyber Security, Business, and Creative Practice - boosting local HE access, with enrolments rising from 37 in 2024/25 to 67 this year alongside new SCQF Level 10 provision. Articulation numbers have decreased in 22/23, reflecting sector trends, but noticeably in Advanced Standing. As the top destination for AS remains SRUC, our next main route remains UWS. Engagement with major regional employers, including the NHS, Stena, and Natural Power, has enabled the co-creation of curriculum solutions aligned with workforce needs and learner aspirations. External recognition is strong; however, the pace of innovation has outstripped systematic impact evaluation, particularly regarding long-term learner progression and employer satisfaction. Future priorities include inclusive engagement with smaller employers and embedding robust evaluation to sustain and scale success.

Our Students in 24/25

Overall, we delivered to **5,145 students** and **27,826 (100.09%)** against a **target of 27,800**

Full-time FE	807 (16%)	Part-time FE	3,679 (72%)
Full-Time HE	307 (6%)	Part-time HE	352 (6%)
Commercial	1,940	Open Learning	845
Senior Phase	400		
Students By Age:	9% U16 / 30% (16-19) 12% (20-24 / 9% (25-29) / 40% (30+)		
Gender	Female (50%)	Male (49%)	Non-disclosed (1%)
Campus	Dumfries (96%)	Stranraer (4%)	



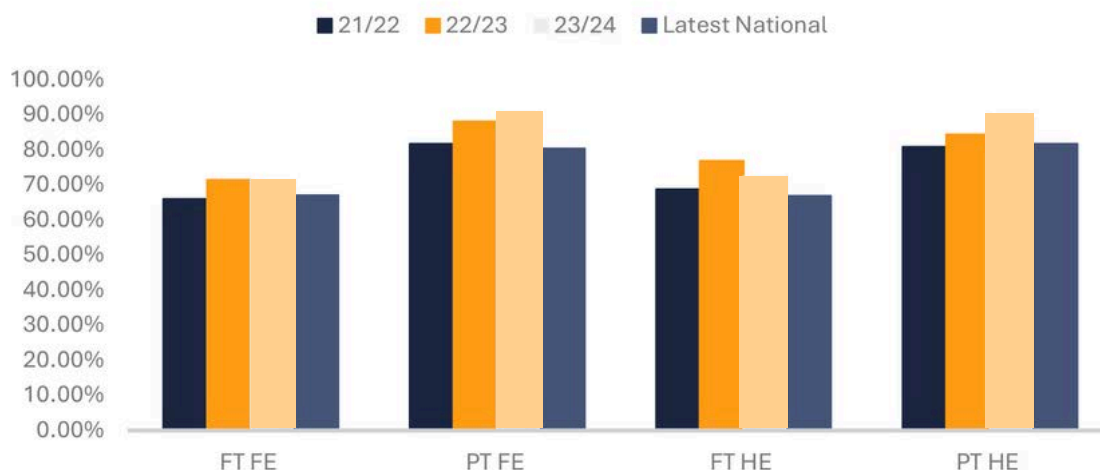
Excellence in Learning and Teaching

How effective is our approach for achieving excellence in learning, teaching and assessment, across all locations, subject areas and modes of delivery, and for assuring and maintaining academic standards?

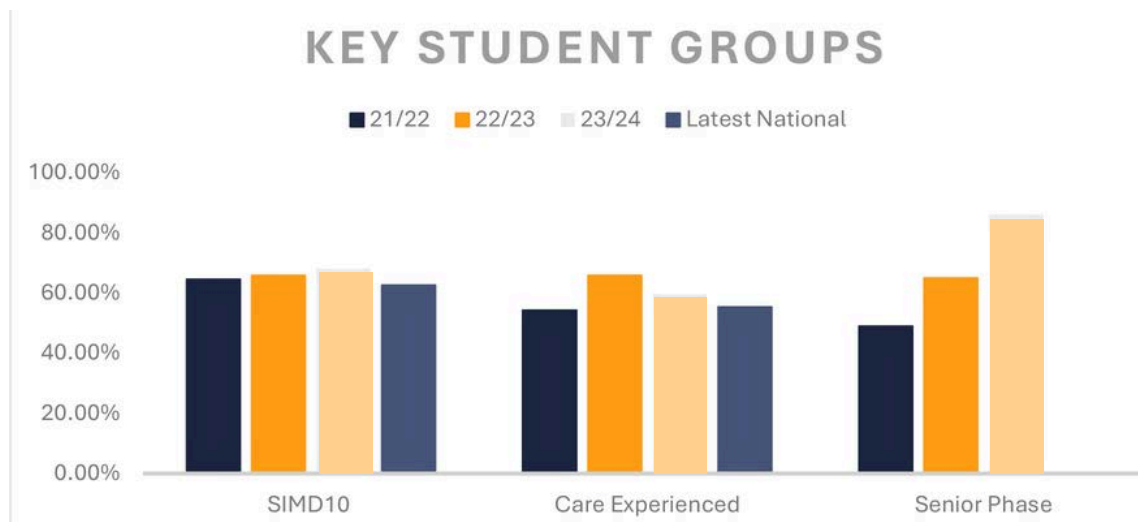
How do we use data and evidence to inform strategic decisions?

Improving Student Outcomes

STUDENT SUCCESS



The College's commitment to excellence in learning and teaching has yielded demonstrable improvements in student outcomes. Education Scotland's May 2024 inspection report highlighted significant gains in student successful completion rates across all modes of study in 2022/23. This sat alongside considerably improved student retention, most notably at FT FE, seeing an 11.4% reduction in student withdrawal over 3 years. Outcomes for priority student groups also improved, reflecting the effectiveness of college-wide approaches and inclusive pedagogical practices. We have also seen improvements in Partial Success, reducing to 10.4% in 23/24, which is 2% below the national sector figures. Despite changes in SFC measurements of Student Success in 23/24, we continued to see stability in FT provision and further improvements in PT.



Curriculum Planning, Evaluation and Enhancement

Our curriculum planning and enhancement approach is grounded in the Quality Assurance Policy and supported by a robust, evidence-informed framework. Portfolio Reviews occur twice annually, using national/regional data, in-year self-evaluation, and student engagement insights. DG-SEE (Stop–Evaluate–Enhance), our embedded self-evaluation model, enables staff to pause and reflect on the student journey themes; engagement has been strong with 70% completion for curriculum teams and 72% for support teams, despite time pressures and high part-time staffing. An internal review highlighted a gap between team reflections and visibility of enhancement planning, prompting digitisation and streamlining of the platform for greater transparency. Education Scotland's 2024 engagement confirmed progress, noting increased use of data in professional discussions and in-year programme adjustments. Additionally, confidence in SCQF Credit Rating powers is growing: since 2022, 14 modules/programmes have been credit-rated (only one third-party project), supporting strategic responses to learner needs through gap analysis and upskilling opportunities.

High Standards of Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Teaching for Learning Framework

Dumfries and Galloway College has established a comprehensive Teaching for Learning Framework aligned with Professional Standards and Professional Update. This model integrates three key pillars: Observation of Learning, Teaching HOW2s, and the DGC Pillars of Learning. Observation of Learning is positioned as a developmental process, fostering reflective practice and peer dialogue rather than performance management. Advanced Practitioners play a central role in leading observations and sharing insights, a strength highlighted by Education Scotland in 2024. Engagement remains high, with over 94% participation and strong satisfaction from staff and students, alongside measurable improvements in technology-supported learning and teaching innovation. Complementing this, the Teaching HOW2s platform provides practical, evidence-informed strategies embedded into CPD and post-observation feedback, with adoption growing from 101 activities in 2023 to 381 in 2025. The DGC Pillars of Learning, launched in 2024, offer a research-based foundation for curriculum design and pedagogy, operationalised through monthly CPD sessions and integration into planning. Work continues to deepen this approach and develop robust measures of impact, ensuring professional learning remains contextual, responsive, and aligned to strategic priorities.

Work-Based Learning

All Work-Based Learning Assessors complete annual peer observations, where a Verifier observes an assessment and provides constructive feedback to both the Assessor and Vocational Group Lead (VGL). If improvements are needed, the VGL arranges training and support, while examples of good practice are shared to drive continuous improvement. To maintain quality assurance, the VGL oversees internal verification so every Assessor and unit across all qualifications is reviewed annually. External Verification reports over several years have consistently shown high confidence in delivery quality.

Professional Development

Dumfries and Galloway College maintain a compliant approach to professional development, aligning GTCS registration and Professional Update (PU) with its PRD Policy to ensure reflective practice and continuous improvement. Currently, 65 staff are GTCS-registered, including 5 with Provisional Conditional status. No staff require PU sign-off in July 2025 or 2026; one deadline falls in December 2025, with further deadlines for 5 staff in 2026, 7 in 2027, and 3 in 2028. GTCS revalidation was completed in September 2025. The PRD process mandates annual and interim reviews, monthly catch-ups, and clear objectives, supported by bite-sized and one-to-one PU sessions. Development themes for 2025/26 include embedding Brookfield's 4 Lenses, strengthening digital pedagogy, and enhancing peer observation and inclusive practices, forming the basis of a college-wide CLPL plan. Strategic partnerships with CDN and the University of Aberdeen further support innovation, including Trauma-Informed College initiatives and inclusive pedagogy training.

Learning Environment and Resources

The 2023/24 JiSC review confirmed strong confidence in Dumfries and Galloway College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for design and functionality. Following this, the Digital Development group created evaluative rubrics and quality guidelines and secured Blackboard Ally to enhance accessibility. Rollout began in 2024/25, with all curriculum areas implementing VLE enhancements supported by the Learning and Teaching Innovation team. Student feedback shows progress: Early Experience Survey scores for learning spaces and platforms rose from 4.3 to 4.5, and SSES results for online materials exceeded sector averages in 2022/23. In 2023/24, satisfaction increased further, with HE FT reaching 95.6% (+5.5%). Despite fiscal pressures, the College prioritises Campus Experience, Building Condition, and Net Zero.

Since 2022/23, upgrades ensured all teaching spaces meet standards for connectivity and interactivity, including full-screen replacement. Strategic investment enabled the redesign of key learning areas, a modular engineering facility, and a Borderlands bid to expand Construction and Engineering. The Early Years space is being reimaged for immersive learning. Student feedback highlighted a lack of quiet study spaces, prompting plans for dedicated areas. The Students' Association is also enhancing outdoor learning and social spaces.

Stranraer

The Stranraer Action Plan represents a strategically grounded and data-informed response to curriculum development and learner engagement in the West of the region, aligned with the College's Mission 2030. The plan demonstrates a clear commitment to improving outcomes through targeted interventions across five priority themes: Learning & Teaching, Curriculum, Partnerships, Estates, and Promotion. 25/26 will see us reset the Action Plan, and we will work to reinvigorate the plan for the future through a more outward-looking and community needs approach. Partnership development has also progressed, with Better Lives Partnership, Skills Development Scotland, and Youth Work Services now co-located on campus. Engagement with the Stranraer Academy leadership team has led to agreed principles for future collaboration, and promotional campaigns are planned to showcase improvements in retention, success, and progression. The inclusion of equality considerations, such as widening access through Project Search and STAR programmes, further strengthens the plan's alignment with inclusive practice. Since 2022/23, upgrades ensured all teaching spaces meet standards for connectivity and interactivity, including full-screen replacement.

Collaboration and Partnership

Senior Phase

A key strategic focus has been collaboration with the local authority to enhance senior phase provision and outcomes. Using DG-SEE and Portfolio Review, we aligned provision with four priority sectors to meet regional economic and learner needs. Nearly 500 young people are enrolled in senior phase programmes across Dumfries and Galloway, but access data shows some schools remain unable to engage due to isolation and travel costs. To address this, we launched three online programmes in 2024/25 as identified through our SEAP, attracting 73 learners and developed a Micro Learning site with 104 enrolments, widening access for remote learners in 25/26. A student experience evaluation will assess the impact of these digital pathways on engagement and progression. We are also exploring the expansion of Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) in Engineering and Social Services, Children and Young People, enrolling on average 40 learners a year. A joint evaluation with the local authority commended our agility, and we agreed on some enhancements in strengthening shared data systems and implementing a parental engagement approach.

University of the West of Scotland (UWS)

Our strategic partnership with UWS has led to the successful development of three new degree pathways in Cyber Security, Business, and Creative Practice, now supporting 67 learners across the region. Recent collaborative evaluations have surfaced valuable insights into both strengths and areas for enhancement. Notably, tutor support, project-based learning, and online delivery approaches were consistently highlighted as effective practices. These have contributed to a strong sense of learner autonomy and engagement. Moreover, communication between institutions has improved, with more responsive and coordinated support for students. However, evidence also pointed to areas requiring attention, including improvement in communication channels between UWS and DGC staff and students and underutilisation of Aula (VLE), limiting the potential for digital engagement.

Work-Based Learning

Dumfries and Galloway College supports 324 Modern Apprentices across multiple programmes, with around 70% in engineering and health and social care—key regional sectors. Delivery is managed by a skills development manager, two coordinators, and team leaders, with lecturers and assessors providing teaching and assessment. The college operates across a dispersed region and subcontracts two frameworks: Automotive (GTG Training Ltd) and Construction: Building (Competence Matters). The college currently has 232 SVQ candidates registered across a diverse range of subject areas, including Health and Social Care, Childcare, Administration, Engineering, and Management. These qualifications are delivered at SCQF Levels 5 to 10, representing some of the highest level of qualification offered. An Education Scotland review (Feb 2025) rated MA delivery “Very Good” in Leadership and Quality Culture, Service Delivery, and Safeguarding. Strengths include a restructured management model improving oversight and success rates, strong employer engagement, and robust onboarding and QA systems. Service delivery uses project-based learning, digital tools, and progress monitoring, ensuring high employer satisfaction and workplace relevance. Safeguarding and learner support are comprehensive. Areas for development: reduce reliance on reflective accounts, improve employer safeguarding awareness, address gender imbalance, and raise completion rates below SDS benchmarks. Inspectors expressed confidence in sustained improvement.

Collaborative Curriculum Development

Our partnership with NHS colleagues stands out as a significant success. By jointly developing new models for upskilling and workforce sustainability, we not only responded to immediate sectoral needs but also gained external recognition, evidenced by winning a Herald Higher Education Award. The co-designed Health Care Foundation Academy, delivered in partnership with the NHS and UWS, has provided a robust senior phase pathway, supporting both progression and retention. Early feedback from participants and stakeholders suggests this model is effective in bridging skills gaps and supporting transition into health careers, though ongoing evaluation will be essential to measure long-term impact. Similarly, our collaboration with Stena in Stranraer to deliver the Ship's Cook provision, certified by the British Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), has enabled us to reach a global cohort of learners.

This partnership has not only enhanced our training offer but also positioned the college as a provider of specialist maritime training. However, sustaining engagement will require continued investment in both staff development and digital infrastructure. Our work with Natural Power to develop a pipeline of wind turbine technicians exemplifies our commitment to supporting the region's transition to a green economy. The recent award of £270k from ESP to expand this provision is a testament to the programme's perceived value and potential. Early indicators suggest strong demand and positive learner outcomes, but scaling delivery will require careful attention to quality assurance and industry alignment.

Academic Standards

Over the past three academic sessions, Dumfries and Galloway College has strengthened its approach to external verification and awarding body engagement, with activities rising from 54 in 2022/23 to 60 in 2023/24 before streamlining to 50 in 2024/25. Most verifications focused on assessment decisions, with SVQ-linked checks remaining significant (25 in 2023/24 and 21 in 2024/25). Corrective actions have reduced markedly: only three activities required further evidence in 2024/25 (down from seven), and recommendations halved from six the previous year. A new model assigning Verification Group Leaders responsibility for EV readiness checks proved effective, with no negative impact on outcomes.

Awarding bodies consistently commended good practice, including high-quality candidate resources, supportive assessor feedback, and innovative methods such as video-based feedback and hybrid delivery. Peer observation in PDA courses and employer-linked learning days were highlighted for enhancing authenticity and engagement. The College's proactive response to feedback, such as improving invigilation records and refining policy-sharing, demonstrates measurable progress in reducing corrective actions, embedding good practice, and safeguarding qualification integrity while advancing strategic aims in quality assurance and curriculum delivery.

How do you know your approach is successful?

Curriculum Planning and Student Performance

Dumfries and Galloway College has demonstrated resilience and strategic agility in improving retention and success despite sector-wide challenges and resource constraints. In 23/24, early retention rose across all modes, with FT FE reaching 96% and PT HE 94%. Overall retention improved in all areas except FT FE, where 34% of withdrawals, primarily due to non-attendance, remain a concern. However, total withdrawals fell by 229 students, and unknown withdrawal reasons reduced significantly, evidencing stronger tracking and intervention. Success rates improved across 12 curriculum areas in 2023/24, notably Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy (+24.87%), while PT FE success reached 85.7%, well above sector norms. SIMD10 learners achieved 72%, College Academy students 82%, though care-experienced learners dipped slightly to 58%, highlighting a priority for support. Operationally, the College delivered 27,249 credits in 24/25 (91% Dumfries campus, 81% FE level) and maintained delivery targets despite an 8.9% FTE staffing reduction and a 10% credit cut by SFC. Enrolments totalled 5,362, showing a slight decline over three years; however, this is attributed to SFC credit reductions. Notably, part-time FE enrolments remain dominant (74%), although all modes have experienced a downward trend, particularly at the HE level. Portfolio Review has been a critical mechanism leading to a 2023–25 Curriculum Plan that provided strategic clarity, identifying Growth, Opportunity, and Stability sectors and allowed us to manoeuvre through recent sector challenges. Priority group engagement remains strong, with care-experienced credits rising to 8.6% and SIMD10 to 10.2%.

At Stranraer, retention improved markedly: overall withdrawals fell 15%, with further withdrawal halved (34 to 17). Hair and Beauty retention rose 85%, and Hospitality withdrawal rates improved similarly. These gains correlate with multi-level programmes and embedded work-based learning, reinforcing the value of contextualised delivery. New curriculum, such as Engineering and Renewable Energy, met recruitment targets, while pilots in hybrid, online, and project-based learning—though low uptake in hybrid HNC Business (5 learners)—signal innovation to address geographic barriers.

The integration of our Teaching for Learning framework has created a coherent framework for professional development and pedagogical enhancement. Observation data from 2023–2025 shows consistently high engagement, with student satisfaction levels above 94% across most indicators. Notably, technology support for learning improved from 86% in 2023 to 97% in 2025, and confidence to ask for help rebounded after a dip in 2024. Staff feedback also reflects strong satisfaction with peer observation and professional dialogue, though engagement with reflective tools like Brookfield's 4 Lenses dipped in 2024, prompting targeted development in reflective practice for 2025/26. The Teaching HOW2s initiative has seen a marked increase in uptake, with 381 staff embedding strategies in 2025, up from 101 in 2023. These bite-sized, evidence-informed techniques have been praised for building confidence and fostering dynamic, student-centred learning environments. We recognise that through Portfolio Review, we have a stubborn challenge across all curriculum areas regarding retention of students aged 16–19. They made up 69% of all withdrawals on Full Time programmes. We recognise specific work will need to be developed both in developing their readiness for learning and our strategies for this cohort. Between 2022 and 2025, Dumfries and Galloway College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) evolved significantly to support strategic ambitions, improving engagement and digital consistency. Although enrolments fell from 5,951 to 5,131, VLE activity surged in 2024/25 to over 1.6 million clicks—tripling the previous year. Average activity per enrolment rose from 82 to 314, indicating more purposeful use. Adoption of Minimum Standards and Rubric improved course consistency, with Welcome Pages increasing from zero to 395 courses. While available activities dropped from 40,387 to 27,189 due to pruning, active assignments remained stable, and structured learning environments expanded. Accessibility improved, with institutional scores rising from 73.4% to 83.8% and content reaching 98.6%, though file accessibility dipped to 56.2%. Overall, 2024/25 marked the strongest year for VLE performance, combining high engagement, improved accessibility, and quality standards—providing a solid foundation for continued enhancement and meeting regional demand for flexible, online learning.

Towards the end of Academic Year 2024/25, the college made a strategic shift to a new open learning provider offering a broader range of subjects through a fully online platform. This transition significantly expanded access to learning opportunities across the region, resulting in a marked increase in online course registrations. Further enhancement introduced a new proctoring system that removed the need for learners to attend college in person for assessments. This innovation unlocked opportunities for individuals who may have previously faced barriers to engagement.

What planning assumptions are you making based on analysis and self-evaluation?

Sustaining and Targeting Student Success

Recent gains in retention and success rates, especially for priority groups, suggest our approaches can deliver incremental improvements if sustained and scaled. However, withdrawals among 16–19-year-olds remain disproportionately high (69% of FT withdrawals), though funding priorities mean this may persist.

Digital Learning and Flexible Learning as a Growth Driver

VLE engagement has surged (1.6M clicks in 24/25), and accessibility scores have improved. We believe that continued investment in digital infrastructure, staff capability, and quality standards will be essential to meet demand for flexible and hybrid learning. As mapped in our SEAP, we will evaluate the impact on senior phase pilots.

Professional Learning Drives Pedagogical Excellence

High participation in observation (94%) and uptake of Teaching HOW2s (381 embedded strategies in 2025) suggests that structured CPD is a key driver of quality. We are confident that embedding reflective practice (e.g., Brookfield's 4 Lenses) and inclusive pedagogy will sustain teaching excellence.

Operating within Constraints Through Collaboration and Innovation

With an 8.9% FTE reduction, flat cash settlements and a 10% credit by SFC cut already absorbed, we assume that future planning must prioritise efficiency, curriculum rationalisation, and digital solutions to maintain quality within fiscal limits.



Key Strengths

Robust Professional Learning Framework - High engagement (94%+) in observation processes, strong uptake of Teaching HOW2s (381 strategies embedded in 2025) aligned with GTCS requirements.

Evidence-Informed Planning and Quality Assurance - DG-SEE model embedded across curriculum and services, and positive Education Scotland feedback on in-year adjustments and data-driven improvement.

Digital and Learning Environment Enhancements - Significant improvements in VLE engagement (1.6M clicks in 2024/25), accessibility scores (up to 83.8%), and consistent application of quality rubrics.

Priority Areas for Improvement

Retention of 16–19-Year-Old Learners - Despite overall improvements, this group accounts for 69% of withdrawals on full-time programmes, indicating a need for targeted readiness and engagement strategies.

Developing critical reflection skills and confidence
Visibility Engagement with reflective tools (e.g., Brookfield’s 4 Lenses) dipped in 2024 – we want to build capacity for critical reflection on practice. Embedding of Pillars and HOW2s across all departments.

Authenticity and immersive experience – increase the quantity and quality of employer based and immersive learning experiences enhancing readiness for employment and to enhance the student experience. This is a continued action plan from our SEAP.

Supporting Student Success

How effective are our arrangements for supporting student success?

How do we use data and evidence to inform strategic decisions?

Student Journey Support

Progress in student outcomes

The 2020/21 restructuring of student support services consolidated key functions—advisers, education support, engagement, and admissions—under a single leadership model, creating a more integrated, student-focused approach. Since implementation, demand for support has grown, yet success rates for priority groups have improved, indicating a positive impact despite increased pressures. Our most recent inspection confirmed significant gains in completion rates across all modes of study in AY 2022/23, alongside reductions in withdrawal and partial success, particularly for care-experienced learners and those declaring a disability. Inspectors also commended the embedding of a ‘Nurture Approach’ and strong collaboration between curriculum and support teams to deliver inclusive learning. We have seen increases in students requiring additional support from 14.8% in 23/24 up to now 19.4% in 25/26, and thus, as we analyse these shifting learner demographics and evolving needs, it presents a strategic inflexion point, requiring a comprehensive review of the support model to ensure sustainability.

KEY GROUP SUCCESS

Student Group	23/24	Latest National Data	22/23	21/22
Experience of Care	59.6%	55.4%	60.1%	54.3%
SIMD10	68.1%	62.6%	65.9%	64.6%
Senior Phase	86.1%	N/A	65.0%	49.0%

Transitions and Retention

The 2023 Education Scotland review highlighted persistent challenges in full-time withdrawal rates, prompting systemic improvement beyond incremental measures. In response, the College introduced comprehensive enhancement actions, culminating in the Onboarding, Retention and Attainment Policy—an evidence-informed approach to student transition and engagement. Key innovations include AI-driven engagement via Purlos, enabling personalised “keep warm” campaigns and freeing staff for high-impact support. Complementary initiatives such as the College Academy Roadshow and summer Welcome Days strengthened pre-entry engagement, while refinements to induction—supported by a digital onboarding portal, new student guide, and early experience surveys—enhanced consistency. In 2023/24, FT FE withdrawal was 18.0%, an 11.4% improvement over three years and better than national performance; FT HE retention improved by 4.1% over four years, also above national averages despite small cohorts. Self-evaluation identified early digital connection issues; in response, single sign-on was introduced, reducing onboarding support requests by 42.6% in 2024/25. JiSC’s infrastructure review praised IT delivery as “among the most impressive seen” across 200 FE reviews, citing multiple areas of sector best practice. These developments reflect a strategic, holistic approach to retention and digital readiness.

Monitoring Progress and Building in Support

Embedding named Student Advisers within each curriculum area has strengthened connections between students and academic teams, enabling proactive, personalised retention strategies. Through the DG-SEE framework, structured retention meetings now provide systematic early identification of at-risk learners and collaborative action planning. This is underpinned by the 2024/25 launch of the Student Retention Report, a data-driven model tracking engagement indicators and generating risk scores for earlier intervention. Demand for educational support has grown by 28% over three years without staffing increases, prompting adaptive strategies such as technology use, group interventions, and self-referral models. Currently, 44.5% of students requiring support are on Full-Time programmes, with 34.5% at SCQF Level 5. Rising numbers of students with English as an additional language led to DG-Pals (Peer Academic and Language Support) in 2024/25, achieving 85% success rates and a 107% engagement increase in year two. Strategic priorities include continuous evaluation using learner feedback and analytics to refine interventions and ensure equity. To address digital access issues, a £50,000 South of Scotland Enterprise investment enhanced wireless infrastructure and provided laptops for rural and low-income learners. This supports Mission 2030 priorities of Empowered Learners and Digital First, fostering inclusion, innovation, and regional growth.

Safeguarding, Corporate Parenting and Wellbeing

Dumfries and Galloway College has continued to strengthen its Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding framework to meet statutory obligations and enhance the student experience. Digital risk registers and systems that flag care-experienced students at key stages have enabled early interventions, while two Trauma Champions are leading the rollout of trauma-informed practices through our DG-Cares team, which was reestablished as a commitment within the SEAP. We have strengthened our safeguarding protocols through a refreshed Safeguarding Policy and also enhanced reporting mechanisms to include decision-making logs and lessons learned from actions. Safeguarding referrals rose in 24/25 to 48 compared to 29 last year, reflecting improved staff confidence and system use. Student support remains robust, with over 530 adviser engagements recorded between August and April, primarily addressing mental health, hardship funding, and additional support needs. In academic 23/24, we introduced a new welfare referral process in response to the evaluation of our counselling data around better access to low-level interventions. Staff and students can submit digital welfare referrals, which go to our adviser team who make decisions regarding the next step, which may include signposting, internal counselling or safeguarding. Counselling referrals have decreased to 60, whilst Welfare referrals have increased to 96 in 24/25, up from 69 in 2023/24, with the highest activity in Early Years, Construction, and Engineering. Strategic implications are significant: strong safeguarding and corporate parenting measures reduce the risk of harm and withdrawal, supporting retention and success, while failure to maintain these systems could negatively impact student outcomes and require additional resources.

Building College Community

The Active Campus programme remains a key wellbeing initiative, delivering 5,365 participations in 2024/25 and averaging 200 weekly engagements, with cumulative engagement now over 7,700. Expansion beyond Sport and Fitness into Construction, Motor Vehicle, and Project Search evidences progress in widening access. Peaks during campaigns confirm effective promotion, though mid-term dips highlight the need for seasonal planning. Persistent gender and curriculum gaps, plus inequity between Dumfries and Stranraer, require targeted interventions. To sustain impact, the next phase will use data analytics to link participation with retention and attainment. In response to rising support needs identified through our SEAP, the College partnered with the local authority to base two youth workers at Dumfries and Stranraer, delivering 215 sessions and engaging 1,471 students in wellbeing activities such as mental health awareness and equality events. Additional support included grants, food parcels, and winter packs. Feedback confirms positive impact on retention and inclusion, though sustainability depends on addressing lecturer awareness, food provision, and governance.

Careers Advice and Employability

We recognise the pressing prominence of digital skills in all sectors and pathways, both for learning and work. Self-evaluation activity also highlighted issues at the start of courses with student gaps in the digital skills required for learning at College. In response to this, we have developed and SCQF Credit Rated a new programme 'Digital Skills for Learning and Work'. We are testing this module across courses in each curriculum area and will use feedback to refine and enhance in preparation to hopefully embed this across all FE programmes initially and as an optional unit for all students. 23/24 saw the development of meta skills development primarily in Construction and Engineering through practical reflective activities. Following successful piloting, this approach is being rolled out across all curriculum areas in 24/25, which will give a baseline to measure engagement and impact. Following the loss of Young Enterprise Scotland and our partnership we have connected with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to support additional work with students around developing meta skill recognition and career readiness. Early data from mid 24/25 was encouraging and SDS staff are now working closely with college staff to increase engagement and participation across all curriculum areas. Through our learning Pillars 6 (Authenticity overall) and 8 (See It, Be It, Believe) we are looking to embed authentic learning and skills development in our courses. Through our learning Pillars 6 (Authenticity overall) and 8 (See It, Be It, Believe), we are looking to embed authentic learning and skills development in our courses. We are already seeing encouraging signs of this in some areas for example, in Health and Social Care completing credits in TURAS learning through the NHS to improve readiness for work skills. We also saw our Computing department embedding CISCO Cyber Essentials qualifications into our SCQF Level 6 programmes while HND students complete Networking Essentials Certification. 2.4.

How do you know your approach is successful?

Supporting Student Outcomes and Satisfaction

23/24	DGC	National Data
SIMD10	71.6%	67.2%
SIMD20	76.0%	68.0%
Care Experience	64.9%	60.5%
Ethnic Minority	81.5%	70.8%
Disability	75.8%	67.2%

Given increased demands on support services coupled with diminishing resource we have made the strategic decisions that we will no longer be able to resource short term and sporadic interventions as we move to a whole college trauma approach to policies, procedures and services will best serve our students moving forward. We are pleased to report that for 23/24 we have seen outcomes for key student groups above sector averages in all groups. We all see improving retention across key groups with retention in 24/25 for care experienced students increasing by 6% up to 78%. For SIMD10 students again retention has improved by 8% up to 84% whilst we also see retention at 80% for those with additional support needs, showing an average retention of 82% over 3 years.

SSES Statement		Avg - All Models
5	<i>I receive useful feedback which informs my future learning</i>	96.5%
7	<i>My time at college has helped me develop knowledge and skills for the workplace</i>	95.9%
12	<i>I felt part of the college community</i>	90.8%
14	<i>I feel digitally confident</i>	91.4

These outcomes from student satisfaction give us some confidence that measures to develop support, community and readiness for next steps are working well. As we have increased flexible learning options we have noted lower responses in some categories for our distance/flexible learners scoring statement 12 at 75.6%, this points to a key development regarding how we can engage more intentionally and meaningfully with distance and flexible learners. 96.1% of students had confirmed destinations in 22/23 (-1.0% 21/22) but remaining 7.1% above the sector average with 85.8% finding positive destinations which was just below the sector average of 86.7%. 59.0% of those positive destinations were to employment which is 10.6% above the latest sector average. This demonstrates strong links with industry and we also see that of our student withdrawals in 24 /25 18.0% of those were into employment with some positive trends particularly in Engineering and Construction with students moving into sector roles and apprenticeships.

What planning assumptions are you making on the basis of this analysis and self-evaluation?

Demand for Support Will Continue to Rise

With students requiring additional support increasing from 14.8% to 19.4% in two years, we believe this upward trend will persist, requiring scalable, technology-enabled and trauma-informed approaches to sustain service quality without proportional staffing increases.

Retention Gains Depend on Early Engagement and Digital Readiness

Evidence from onboarding improvements (e.g., 42.6% reduction in digital support requests) and AI-driven engagement evidence suggests that early interventions are critical. We believe that continued investment in digital onboarding, personalised engagement, and pre-entry activities will be essential to maintain retention improvements.

Equity and Employability Require Whole-College Approaches

Outcomes for SIMD10, care-experienced, and disabled learners are above sector averages, but these groups remain vulnerable particularly given flat cash and reduced funding resource. We believe that maintaining and enhancing effective interventions. Gaps in digital readiness and the growing prominence of meta-skills indicate that embedding these into all FE programmes will be essential for learner success and employer confidence.

Sustainability Depends on Partnerships and Flexible Models

Collaboration with our local authority, SDS, and employers has underpinned success in transitions, employability, and wellbeing. We believe that deepening these partnerships will be necessary to offset resource constraints. Lower satisfaction scores for distance learners (e.g., 75.6% feeling part of the community) suggest that current models do not fully meet their needs. We believe that developing intentional engagement strategies for flexible learners will be critical to avoid widening gaps in experience and outcomes.



Key Strengths

Integrated Support Model - restructuring support services created a single, more connected service for students and developing data-driven interventions improving student retention.

Priority Groups - Outcomes for key student groups are above the sector average.

Onboarding - AI-driven onboarding and refinement of induction systems has improved early retention and reduced barriers such as digital challenges.



Priority Areas for Development

Rising demand v static resource – Increased numbers of students with additional support as well as increased flexible learning models merits a strategic review of student services for the future.

Diverse Groups - Some groups of learners e.g. Apprentices, Senior Phase Learners are less clear on support available and needs to be reviewed.

Employability and Meta Skills – While some progress exists in pocketed activity these initiatives require development of an established framework and embedded in all programmes.

Student Engagement and Partnership

How effective is our approach to student engagement and partnership?

How do we use data and evidence to inform strategic decisions?

Evaluation of Student Engagement Structures and Impact

In response to recommendations from a National Union of Students (NUS) review in 2022, we undertook a phased approach to strengthen student engagement structures across the college. This included the creation of additional Vice-President roles within the Student Association to ensure cross-campus representation at Dumfries and Stranraer and provide greater support to the President. In the academic year 2024/25, we also introduced a Student Experience Committee as a key mechanism to connect student representatives with college leaders and staff, to drive student-led enhancement aligned to college-wide KPIs as outlined below. During 2024/25, we identified key actions through our SEAP to revitalise the class rep system, following Education Scotland feedback, which highlighted insufficient training and limited engagement. While we exceeded our recruitment target for class reps, with over 100% of the target achieved, actual engagement remained low, averaging just 15–20% attendance at class rep meetings. This suggests that recruitment alone is not sufficient; sustained and meaningful engagement requires further development of rep capacity and clearer value propositions for participation. The Student Experience Committee completed 2 of its 3 targeted enhancements during the year. However, progress was affected by inconsistent engagement and turnover among Lead Reps. This highlights the need for more robust support structures and continuity planning to maintain momentum in student-led initiatives. We recognise that embedding student voice across all aspects of delivery is essential. Over the past three years, student and stakeholder engagement has been integrated into our DG-SEE process, with an expectation of activity in each block. While this has taken time to embed, Education Scotland (2024) acknowledged that most curriculum teams now make significant changes in response to learner feedback, citing clear examples. This is further supported by our Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES), where Statement 9 - “I believe student feedback is acted upon” achieved a 95.6% average across all modes. Education Scotland also commended our performance as exceeding sector norms. We have already engaged our key SPAQRQs lead to support in the review of our systems as we develop actions for enhancement into 2025/26, framed around the Student Learning Experience Model and Student Partnership Toolkit. Internally, we recorded that 60% of curriculum teams and 68% of support areas formally documented student engagement and enhancement activity in 2024/25. While this varied across the year (ranging from 40% to 80%), it reflects ongoing efforts to build consistency. We also acknowledge that not all engagement is formally captured, and our SSES data provides reassurance that student voice is being heard and acted upon. Given the evidence developed from self-evaluation, we approved the creation of a new Student Engagement and Capacity Lead, who we appointed to start this academic year. We are keen to see the impact of this full-time role on supporting our identified areas for enhancement.

How do you know your approach was successful?

Evaluating Feedback Mechanisms and Closing the Loop

Student surveys remain a cornerstone of our engagement strategy. Since the introduction of the Early Experience Survey in 2022/23, participation has increased significantly—from 40.5% to 80.0% in 2024/25. This growth reflects a cultural shift across teams, who now place greater emphasis on gathering and responding to feedback. Encouragingly, the average satisfaction score also rose to 4.6 out of 5. Our SSES has similarly improved, with a 62.0% return rate in 2024/25—surpassing the SFC threshold of 50% and marking an 11.4% increase over three years. Overall satisfaction reached 97.4%, indicating strong student approval. However, we remain mindful of disparities in engagement, particularly among smaller cohorts such as part-time and HE students, where response rates remain low (e.g., 20.8%). This presents a potential area of enhancement; however should be noted that PT and HE participation continues to be an issue across the sector. Following the evaluation, we recognised that previous class rep targets were overly ambitious given available resources and the challenge of ensuring meaningful engagement. In 2024/25, we introduced a new Curriculum Rep system, aiming for at least one rep per curriculum area at each SCQF level. This resulted in a target of 42 reps, though we successfully recruited 79—primarily from full-time programmes. Despite this, participation in meetings remained static at 15–20%, suggesting that structural changes alone are insufficient without deeper cultural and developmental support. We appointed 10 Lead Reps (8 from Dumfries, 1 from Stranraer, and 1 remote learner), which was a positive step toward broader representation. However, sustained engagement again proved challenging. Student feedback has highlighted a valuable opportunity to strengthen our communication practices around partnership activity and enhancement. Like many institutions across the sector, our current approach relies on a mix of informal methods and tools, which, while often effective in specific contexts, can lead to inconsistency and missed opportunities for wider engagement. Student association representatives have identified this as an area where we can make meaningful improvements, particularly in ensuring that communication is inclusive, transparent, and accessible to all. By reviewing and refining our communication infrastructure, we have the chance to enhance student awareness and participation in partnership developments, aligning more closely with our commitment to collaborative enhancement and shared ownership of the student experience. This will be an area of focus over 25/26, working with students to identify suitable solutions. Academic year 23/24 saw an overall reduction in complaints of 19.6% with a notable decrease in the number of stage 2 complaints. As an overall population complaint numbers equate to 0.85%. Analysis of student-specific complaints over the last years shows course-related issues remain the most common, especially at Stage 2. Customer Care and Admissions also show higher escalation rates. Facilities and Services complaints are fewer and appear to be declining, and we are pleased to report that no complaints have been referred to SPSO. This data helps us identify where improvements are working and where further attention is needed to enhance the student experience.

Student-Led Enhancements and Impact

In 2024/25, to ensure the effectiveness of the Student Experience Committee, our Executive Director of Student Experience sponsored this work, which was well supported by college managers and senior leaders, enabling the development of two student-led enhancements:

- **Estates and Environment:** In response to concerns about student behaviour in certain areas during break times, student reps proposed lunchtime walkarounds by staff to both engage with students and monitor behaviour. This was endorsed by the Senior Leadership Team and implemented from February 2025.
- **Learning and Teaching:** A collaborative initiative between students and staff led to the creation of QR codes to support students in engaging with employers during development and careers activities in Engineering. This aimed to build student confidence in asking questions and initiating conversations.

These examples demonstrate the potential of student-led enhancement when supported effectively. However, they also underscore the importance of continuity, capacity building, and clear communication to ensure sustained impact. The Early Experience Student Survey process uses a structured approach to close the feedback loop, with returns disaggregated by department and shared with curriculum and service managers.

Integrating evaluation questions into DG-SEE has strengthened accountability, prompting teams to reflect and document actions. College-wide themes identified by the Performance Team enable targeted responses and coordinated enhancement. While 'You Said, We Did' updates are shared across campuses and with student representatives, visibility and timeliness remain areas for improvement. A more proactive, multi-channel communication strategy could maximise impact, ensuring students clearly see how their feedback drives tangible improvements and enhances perceptions of responsiveness.

What planning assumptions are you making based on this analysis and self-evaluation?

Structural Changes Alone Are Insufficient

Despite exceeding recruitment targets for class reps and introducing new structures (e.g., Student Experience Committee, Curriculum Rep system), engagement remains low (15–20%). We believe that capacity building, cultural change, and clear value propositions will be critical to improving participation.

Dedicated Resource Will Drive Improvement

The appointment of a Student Engagement and Capacity Lead is expected to provide the sustained focus and operational support needed to address gaps in training, continuity, and communication. Early indicators suggest that this role is realising enhancement.

Communication Infrastructure Requires Review

Current fragmented communication methods limit transparency and inclusivity. We believe that developing a formal, multi-channel communication platform will be essential to embed partnership principles and improve student awareness of impact.

Student-Led Enhancement Has High Potential if Supported

Examples such as QR code initiatives and estates walkarounds show that student-led projects can succeed with strong SLT sponsorship. We believe that structured support and continuity planning will be necessary to scale these successes. Engagement from part-time, distance, and apprenticeship learners remains low. We believe that targeted strategies and flexible engagement models will be required to ensure equity of voice.



Key Strengths

Improved Survey Engagement and Satisfaction - Early Experience Survey participation rose to 80%, and SSES return rate reached 62% (above the SFC threshold), with overall satisfaction at 97.4%.

Student Led Enhancement – our student experience committee led to meaningful and effective co-designed enhancements and offers potential for genuine partnership.

Resource of dedicated post - appointment of a Student Engagement and Capacity Lead demonstrate commitment to strengthening engagement and partnership.



Priority Areas for Development

Low Engagement in Representative Structures - Despite exceeding recruitment targets for class reps, meeting attendance remains low (15–20%), indicating a need for deeper cultural and developmental support.

Communication Gaps on Partnership Activity - Current fragmented communication methods limit visibility of enhancements and responsiveness, requiring a formal, multi-channel communication strategy.

Equity of Engagement Across Learner Groups - Persistent sector challenges in engaging part-time, distance, and apprenticeship learners but STEP engagement signals opportunity for enhancement.

Enhancement and Quality Culture

How effective is the institution in embedding an enhancement and quality culture across the institution?

How do we use data and evidence to inform strategic decisions?

Continuous Improvement and Self-Evaluation

The College views staff as active leaders of change, not passive participants, and recognises that self-evaluation alone is insufficient for sustainable improvement. In 2021/22, DG-SEE (Stop–Evaluate–Enhance) was introduced to embed real-time, in-year evaluation, enabling teams to address issues and share good practice during delivery. For 2025/26, DG-SEE has been refined with themed prompt questions aligned to TQEF principles and external frameworks, ensuring coherence with internal cycles. Teams meet periodically within each block, with outputs captured digitally to inform curriculum enhancement plans. The Performance Team synthesises these into Block Reports, highlighting effective practice and recurring themes. However, 2024/25 reviews revealed challenges: completion rates averaged 70%, evaluative depth was inconsistent, and staff cited a disconnect between input and decision-making, plus low confidence in applying evaluative principles. While regarded as simple and useful, DG-SEE risks being seen as compliance rather than a driver of improvement. In response, a dedicated platform now links submissions to Enhancement Plans, creating transparency, and “Making Data Work” sessions led by the Vice Principal aim to build analytical capability. Future success depends on raising engagement, improving rigour through structured guidance, and evidencing impact on curriculum decisions to sustain commitment and avoid procedural compliance.

Modern Apprentices

Following a comprehensive review of our Modern Apprenticeship (MA) delivery, the team identified a need to address the number of declined claims and challenges in learner onboarding from SDS. They recognised that communication and information gaps between the delivery team, Assessors, and Lecturers were contributing factors. To tackle this, a weekly RAG reporting was introduced and shared with all relevant stakeholders, improving transparency and coordination. Since implementing this process, declined claims have been virtually eliminated, and reviews are now scheduled well in advance. Additionally, a new onboarding process was developed to ensure alignment between the candidate and employer.

Learning for Teaching Framework

Our focus on enhancing pedagogy and creating spaces for critical discussion remains central to improving outcomes. The Learning for Teaching Framework has opened the door to deeper engagement, supported by our annual Observation of Learning process, which enables sharing of practice across the College. However, sharing alone is not enough; we provide development tools through TeachingHOW2s, offering evidence-based strategies that disrupt and improve practice guided by our DGC Learning Pillars. Staff and student data confirm impact. Education Scotland’s 2024 report praised this approach, noting a “remarkable turnaround” and highlighting the Observation process and HOW2s as major strengths, with no areas for further action. Our work now underpins a new national professional learning programme, CDN’s Elevate LT developed in partnership with TeachingHOW2s and inspired by our success, demonstrating sector-wide recognition of our enhancement efforts.

Dashboard Development

DGC is advancing its data maturity through the development of clear, visual, and accessible reporting tools using Microsoft Power BI. Recognising that effective decision-making and enhancement rely on high-quality data, the College has invested in building in-house analytical capability within its Digital Services Team, with its Systems Analyst recently completing the Microsoft Power BI Data Analyst course. This has enabled the creation of live dashboards at the course level in Curriculum and within the Skills Delivery Team, and across Student Support services, providing staff with the insights needed to drive enhancement, enhance learner outcomes, and support evidence-based strategic planning.

Post-Pandemic Compliance and Quality Assurance

Following the pandemic, the College observed increases in non-compliance issues around internal quality assurance, including incomplete core packs and a rising number of internal “not accepts” across delivery programmes. These trends raised potential concerns. To avoid issues of assurance and quality introduced compliance audits were introduced in 22/23, designed to provide real-time oversight of quality activity and data, enabling early identification and resolution of potential assurance risks. This shift represented a move from reactive correction to proactive monitoring, aligning with the College’s commitment to safeguarding standards. However, audits alone could not address the underlying capability gaps that contributed to non-compliance. Recognising this, the College prioritised staff development as a strategic lever for improvement. A renewed training programme was launched, including the reintroduction of the Internal Verification Online Module and the creation of a dedicated SVQ version. By June 2025, completion rates reached 70% and 77% respectively, indicating strong engagement but also highlighting that full compliance remains an area for continued focus. The impact of these interventions is evidenced by measurable improvements in quality outcomes. In 2024/25, only three activities required further evidence compared to seven in the previous year, and recommendations were reduced by half relative to 2023/24. Internal quality metrics across key delivery quality assurance mechanisms have improved consistently through to 24/25, which provides validity of our approach and justifies the actions taken to assure quality.

Staff Development

In 2023/24, the College repositioned the Curriculum Leadership Group (CLG) as a collaborative forum designed to strengthen leadership capacity and embed a culture of shared responsibility for improvement, moving performance monitoring from an individual compliance exercise to a collective, dialogic process. This approach has supported enhancements in retention monitoring, meta-skills integration, and learner interview practices, signalling progress toward a more cohesive leadership model. 24/25 will see us seek to use this development space to better share learning from curriculum enhancements, but ensure this can lead and drive systematic change and enhancement across the college, whilst developing more effective approaches to evaluation and impact monitoring.

STEP Activity

The College has been keenly involved in the national STEP Programme with our Student Association President, Performance Manager and Vice Principal for Student Experience and Curriculum, all involved in 3 of the national programmes:

- Supporting access, progression and successful outcomes in diverse student communities (as a consultative partner)
- Strategies to support student engagement and partnership for time-poor and cash-poor students (as a collaborative partner)
- Pedagogy for Transitions

The first year of the STEP initiative focused on raising awareness and laying the foundation for projects 1 and 2 through informal promotion, class representative engagement, and a dedicated VLE space for updates. While these actions initiated dialogue and improved staff awareness, formal governance is needed; a cross-college committee will be established in Year 2 to embed STEP strategically. Evaluation highlights networking benefits but notes challenges such as technical barriers and limited opportunities to showcase projects. The Pedagogy for Transitions project, led nationally by our Vice Principal, involves five institutions and will deliver a sector-wide report by January 2026. Looking ahead, priorities include forming the committee, sustaining national involvement, embedding STEP principles into quality policies, and piloting peer-to-peer approaches to enhance engagement and wellbeing.

How do you know your approach is successful?

We know our approaches are successful through measurable improvements in quality assurance, curriculum enhancement, and staff capability. Compliance audits introduced in 2022/23 reduced “not accepts” and halved recommendations by 2024/25, while only three activities required further evidence compared to seven the previous year—clear indicators of strengthened assurance processes. Completion rates for Internal Verification modules reached 70% and 77%, evidencing engagement with capability-building.

DG-SEE has embedded in-year evaluation across all teams, and refinements for 2025/26 (digital feedback loops and themed prompts) aim to increase impact. Power BI dashboards now provide real-time data at course and service level, supporting evidence-based decisions. Case studies, such as the co-designed PDA for Scotland's CLD workforce, demonstrate tangible outcomes: 45 learners enrolled since 2023/24 with retention above 80% and success at 78%, validating our collaborative approach. Staff development initiatives, including the repositioned Curriculum Leadership Group, have improved retention monitoring and meta-skills integration, while national STEP involvement reinforces sector leadership. These indicators confirm progress but highlight the need for deeper engagement and stronger evaluative rigour to sustain a transformative quality culture.

What planning assumptions are you making based on this analysis and self-evaluation?

Enhancement of Self-Evaluation Requires Cultural and Capability Change

DG-SEE completion rates (70%) and variable evaluative depth indicate that engagement will not improve through compliance alone. We believe that capacity-building, leadership visibility, and transparent feedback loops are essential to shift perception from procedural to impactful.

Data Maturity Will Drive Strategic Decision-Making

Investment in Power BI dashboards and analytical capability demonstrates that future planning assumes real-time, accessible data will underpin curriculum enhancement, retention strategies, and quality assurance. Continued resource allocation for digital analytics is critical; however, the capacity for and pace of change are not fully delivering the impact we seek.

Quality Assurance Improvements Depend on Sustained Training

While compliance audits and training have reduced "not accepts" and halved recommendations, completion rates for verification modules (70% and 77%) show further work is needed. We believe ongoing staff development and monitoring will remain a priority to maintain assurance.

Collaborative Leadership and STEP Integration Are Strategic Levers

Repositioning the Curriculum Leadership Group and involvement in STEP projects indicate an assumption that distributed leadership and national collaboration will accelerate systematic enhancement and innovation.



Key Strengths

Innovative Pedagogical Enhancement -

The Learning for Teaching Framework has driven measurable improvements in teaching practice, earning national recognition and influencing sector-wide initiatives.

Data-Driven Decision Making - Investment in Power BI dashboards and analytical capability has advanced data maturity, enabling real-time insights for curriculum enhancement and strategic planning.

Collaborative Leadership and Sector Engagement - Repositioning the Curriculum Leadership Group and active involvement in national STEP projects demonstrate strong commitment to distributed leadership and sector-wide collaboration.



Priority Areas for Development

Inconsistent Engagement with Self-Evaluation

DG-SEE completion rates (70%) and variable evaluative depth indicate that self-evaluation risks being perceived as procedural rather than transformative.

Systematic Evaluation and Scaling of Enhancement -

While autonomy fosters innovation, we recognise a need to improve structured mechanisms to evaluate, share, and scale successful enhancement projects across the institution.

Capability Gaps in Evidence and Data Use

Despite progress, staff confidence in applying evaluative principles and using data effectively remains uneven, requiring sustained capacity-building.



Our Commitment as a College

We are dedicated to fostering an inclusive, innovative, and sustainable learning environment that empowers every student to achieve their full potential. Through strategic collaboration, continuous improvement, and community engagement, we strive to deliver excellence in education and create meaningful impact for our learners, staff, and the wider region.

Douglas Dickson
Principal & CEO

Honor Gibson
Student Association President



Board of Management		
Agenda Item	19	
Paper Number	BOM1225-19.1	
Date of Meeting	08 December 2025	
Location	Dumfries Campus	
Title of Paper	Estates and Sustainability Annual Report	
Presented by	Karen Hunter	
Recommendation	Noting	
Freedom of Information Disclosure Assessment		
FOI flag:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disclosable <input type="checkbox"/> Non-disclosable	
Reason/s for choice:		
Notes from author: (When will it become disclosable? Has FOI Officer guidance been sought?)		
Further comments/updates after initial submission		
Date added	Added by (name and role)	Comment/detail

Read Time: 7 minutes

1. Recommendation

- 1.1. The Board of Management are asked to note the contents of this paper.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. A wide range of works completed in AY 2024/25 working under the 3 key themes of campus experience, building condition and net zero.
- 2.2. The College utilised £2.7m in additional capital funding in 2024/25 from a range of sources including Scottish Government, UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Scottish Funding Council

3. Context

3.1. Estates Update

- 3.1.1. The key piece of work for the estate team in 2024/25 has been to work on moving the estates workflow over to the Smartlog system. The move is aimed to enhance visibility on estates performance in line with set SLAs for calls and planned maintenance activities. This work has come at no extra cost due to the required modules being built into the Smartlog system.
- 3.1.2. Moving across allows the Director of Estates and Sustainability access to live dashboard for key workstreams including:
 - Planned maintenance
 - Reactive works
 - Contract status and spend
- 3.1.3. The data gained from this system will allow the College to accurately target key spend in the coming years in line with the sectoral Colleges Infrastructure Investment Plan.

3.2. Estates Action Plan works AY 2024/25

- 3.2.1. The following works were identified as priority works under the Estates action plan for AY 2024/25. All works were complete within time and allocated budget.

Works	Campus	Status
Classroom upgrades - childcare	Dumfries and Stranraer	Complete
Classroom upgrades – desks and seating across all areas	Dumfries	Complete
Air conditioning upgrades – rooms 0068 and 2009 Dumfries. Construction workshop Stranraer	Dumfries and Stranraer	Complete
External construction project area – Galebreak weatherproofing	Dumfries	Complete
EV Charger upgrades	Stranraer	Complete
External grounds revamp	Stranraer	Complete
Toilet Upgrade - accessibility	Stranraer	Complete
General condition works – summer works plan	Dumfries and Stranraer	Complete

3.3. High Priority Capital Works – SFC Funded

3.3.1. The College was successful in obtaining £360k from the Scottish Funding Councils high priority backlog maintenance fund. This fund is aimed solely at areas of work which are health and safety facing and cannot be complete using a Colleges core funding.

3.3.2. The College bid for 3 separate projects which covered both Dumfries and Stranraer campuses. The projects covered key aspects of H&S whilst being people facing projects that, if not addressed, had the potential to disrupt business operations.

The following table will outline the status of the 3 projects

Project name	Contract awarded	Campus	Status
Fire Door Upgrades	Adman Int	Both	Phase 1 complete
Emergency Light Upgrades	JC Martin	Both	Complete
Ventilation and Extraction	Active Energy Solutions	Both	Complete

3.3.3. The College has been successful in obtaining further funding from the SFC for 2025/25, with the award of £100k to carry out works relating to fire stopping and compartmentation across both campuses.

3.4. UK Shared Prosperity Fund

3.4.1. The College was successful in obtaining £350k from the UKSPF to allow the development of additional classroom space, addressing the growing requirements of the engineering delivery.

3.4.2. A feasibility study, looking at internal and external options, showed the most viable was the utilisation of modular build technology. The decision was based on finance available and time constraints as well as a view to long term sustainability.

3.4.3. EcoSystems Technologies were awarded the contract after a tender process and delivered a high-quality build on time and on budget. The 2 classrooms were brought into use for Academic Year 2025/26.

3.5. Green Public Sector Estates Decarbonisation Scheme

3.5.1. The College was successful in obtaining £4.99m from the Scottish Governments GPSEDS scheme in 2024. The project is aimed specifically at a key Government theme of Heat in Buildings and will focus on the Dumfries campus.

The project comprises of the following key works packages:

- Low Carbon Heat. This package will see the removal of the existing gas fuelled heat and hot water system and replaced with an air source heat pump system. Works are underway with the existing system now offline and temporary heating in place until March 2026
- Main entrance upgrade. To address a key are of heat loss the project will see an new main entrance system installed, replacing the current revolving door and

powered accessible door. The new system will be an air lock style with automatic doors. This will address the key issue of heat loss whilst also enhancing the college user experience.

- Workshop door upgrades. The roller doors in the engineering and motor vehicle departments contribute significantly to heat loss. The project will replace these with new, high insulated doors providing extra comfort in these areas.

3.5.2. The works are being carried out by FES, now trading as OCS, and are due for completion on 31st March 2026. Currently works are on target following the latest project oversight meeting.

3.6. Carbon Management

3.6.1. The annual report is currently being compiled for submission on 30th November. The report will be subject to peer review by sector colleagues prior to submission. At this stage the report is incomplete so no indication of performance can be given.

4. Strategic Implications

4.1 This paper is directly linked to Strategic Priority 5, Systems and Infrastructure. Further links to Priority 4, Finance and Performance.

5. Risk

Risk	Mitigations
Risk 3. Failure to achieve institutional sustainability (FGP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Utilising external funding to carry out improvement works
Risk 10- Failure to achieve and effective student experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure suitable works are identified with L&T colleagues aimed directly at enhancing the on-campus student experience
Risk 12 – Failure to meet regulatory Health and Safety Obligations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reporting and Review procedure including Near Miss ➤ Health and Safety IOSH training for staff ➤ Specific communication at time of increased risk eg Covid, building works, adverse weather ➤ Clear channels of communication regarding issues and preventative actions.

6. Implications

Financial	YES	Continued investment required in estates projects each year to ensure building and facilities are kept in operational condition. External funding eases the pressure on College budgets in 23/24
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Legal	YES	The College must meet statutory requirements in terms of Estates provision.
Learning and Teaching	YES	Estates provision directly affects the provision of high-quality learning and teaching
Equalities	YES	The College estate must always be suitable for all users, ensuring accessibility and fairness for all.

Billy Currie

Director of Estates and Sustainability

04 November 2025

Board of Management

Agenda Item	20
Paper Number	BOM1225 – 20.1

Date of Meeting	08 December 2025	
Location	Dumfries Campus	
Title of Paper	Early Experience Student Survey	
Presented by	Phil Storrier	
Recommendation	Noting	
Freedom of Information Disclosure Assessment		
FOI flag:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disclosable <input type="checkbox"/> Non-disclosable	
Reason/s for choice:	There is no information contained in this report that could not be in the public domain	
Notes from author: (When will it become disclosable? Has FOI Officer guidance been sought?)		
Further comments/updates after initial submission		
Date added	Added by (name and role)	Comment/detail

Read time: 18 minutes

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 The Board of Management are asked to note the contents of this paper.

1.1 Key Points

- 1.1.1 70% of eligible students participated (<10% 24-25)
- 1.1.2 Students rated their overall satisfaction 4.5 out of 5 (<0.1, 2024/25)
- 1.1.3 Curriculum areas Computing (92%) and Business (90%) achieved the highest participation rate
- 1.1.4 Curriculum areas Business, Computing, Health and Social Care, Sport and Fitness and Hospitality increased their participation rate from the previous session
- 1.1.5 The highest participation increase was 16% (Hospitality)
- 1.1.6 Curriculum areas Hairdressing and Computing had the highest overall satisfaction rates (4.9, and 4.7 respectively)
- 1.1.7 Overall satisfaction ratings of 4.5 and above were maintained for all curriculum areas with the exception of Creative Industries (4.3) and Business (4.2)
- 1.1.8 The Curriculum area of Business had one of the highest participation rates (90%) but the lowest overall satisfaction (4.2)
- 1.1.9 Curriculum area of Hairdressing rated their curriculum staff 5 out of 5. This is the first instance the highest rating has been achieved

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report aims to present an overview of the outcomes of the Early Experience Student Survey for session 2024/25.

3. Context

- 3.1 Please refer to the attached report.

4. Strategic Implications

- 4.1 This paper links to Strategic Priority 1, Student Experience

5. Risk

Risk	Mitigations
Risk 10. Failure to achieve an effective student experience.	➤ The results of the Early Engagement Survey are used to improve current student experience and to enhance future services to support students during the first few weeks at college

6. Implications

Financial	NO	
Legal	NO	
Learning and Teaching	NO	
Equalities	NO	

Phil Storrier

VP Curriculum & Student Experience

29 October 2025



**Dumfries and
Galloway College**

One step ahead

EARLY EXPERIENCE STUDENT SURVEY SUMMARY REPORT 25-26

Date: October 2025

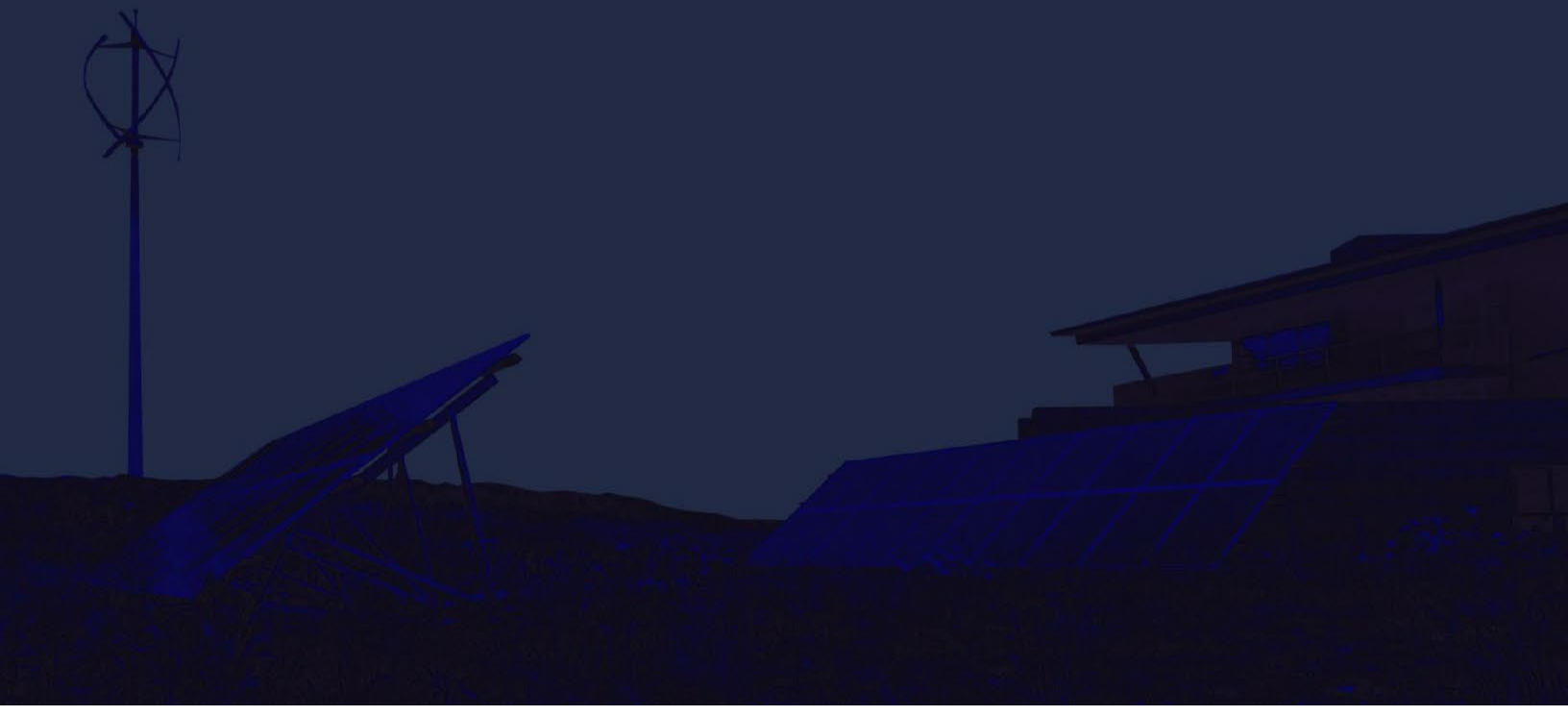


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Introduction

This is a high-level report detailing the overall satisfaction per curriculum area.

For a fourth consecutive year the Dumfries and Galloway College Early Experience Student Survey was issued by the Performance Team to ascertain levels of student satisfaction. The survey was open for three working weeks from 15th September 2025 to 3rd October 2025 and could be accessed by students via a link on LearnNet/Student Portal and was hosted in a Wufoo Survey. Digital screens displaying a QR code were also utilised to promote the survey. Personal Tutors were asked to promote and encourage engagement with the survey. The Admissions team included the survey in their September Purlos Campaign.

Students were invited to rate their satisfaction from 1 star (very poor) to 5 stars (great), and where applicable provide comment. The questions sought feedback in each of the following areas:

- Welcome and Induction (Organisation and Management)
- Community and Belonging
- Curriculum
- Learning and Teaching Delivery, Assessment and Feedback
- Resources, Environment and Technology
- Our Curriculum Staff
- Our Support Staff
- Support and Guidance

The questions for Session 25-26 were revised to reflect the sparqs (Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland) Student Learning Experience Model. Due to the changes, we will not make comparisons to previous sessions.

89% of comments received in relation to Questions 1-8 were positive. This reflects the positive ratings out of 5 received. Question 9 "One more thing" allow students the opportunity free text comments. An analysis of Question 9 is provided further within the report.

Specific curriculum/support area data, including comments, has been shared with the relevant manager. Action grids have been produced to allow opportunity to feedback on the comments raised and to record any cross-college trends. A follow-up to this will take place in December with managers to look at what action has been taken. This will be fed back to class reps and will form part of the College You Said We Did process.

Key Observations

- 70% of eligible students participated (<10% 24-25)
- Students rated their overall satisfaction 4.5 out of 5 (<0.1, 24-25)
- Curriculum areas Computing (92%) and Business (90%) achieved the highest participation rate
- Curriculum areas Business, Computing, Health and Social Care, Sport and Fitness and Hospitality increased their participation rate from the previous session
- The highest participation increase was 16% (Hospitality)

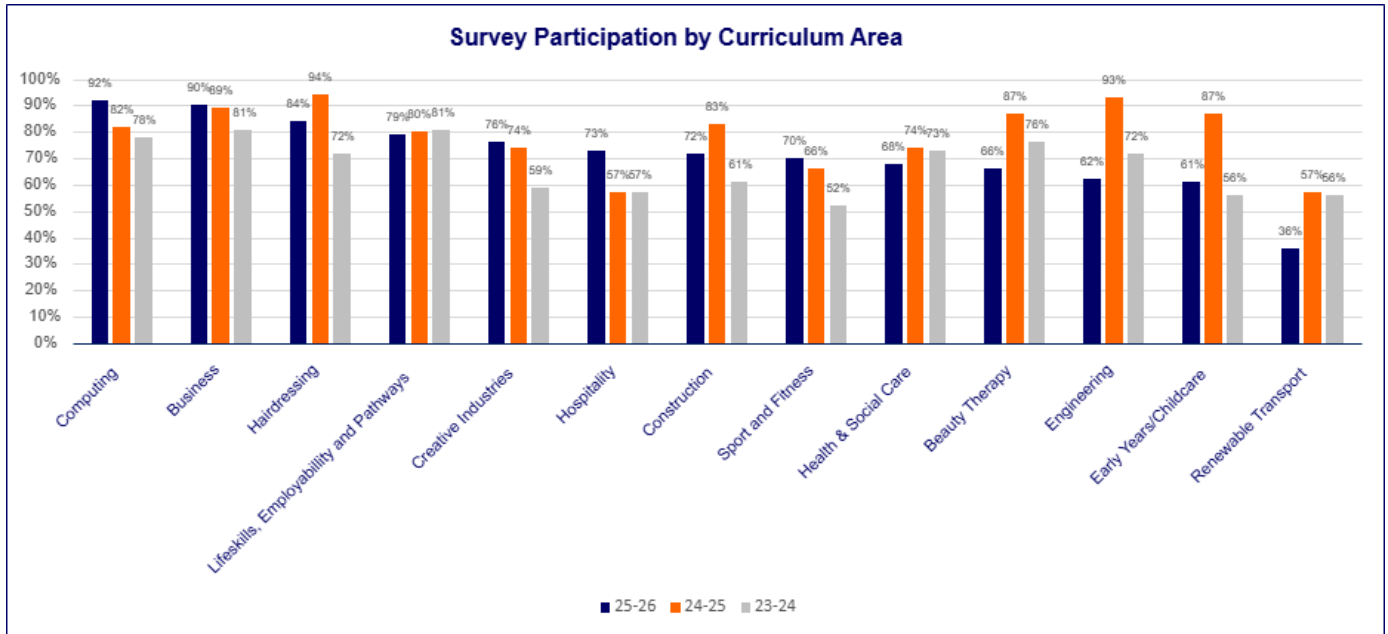
- Curriculum areas Hairdressing and Computing had the highest overall satisfaction rates (4.9, and 4.7 respectively)
- Overall satisfaction ratings of 4.5 and above were maintained for all curriculum areas with the exception of Creative Industries (4.3) and Business (4.2)
- The Curriculum area of Business had one of the highest participation rates (90%) but the lowest overall satisfaction (4.2)
- Curriculum area of Hairdressing rated their curriculum staff 5 out of 5. This is the first instance the highest rating has been achieved.

Survey Participation

Overall participation in the survey was extremely positive with 1252 responses in total. 70% of the total eligible current student population took part.

Session	2025-2026	2024-2025	2023-2024	2022-2023
Responses per session	1252 (70%)	1289 (80%)	1055 (65%)	722 (40.5%)

Chart of Respondents by Curriculum Area

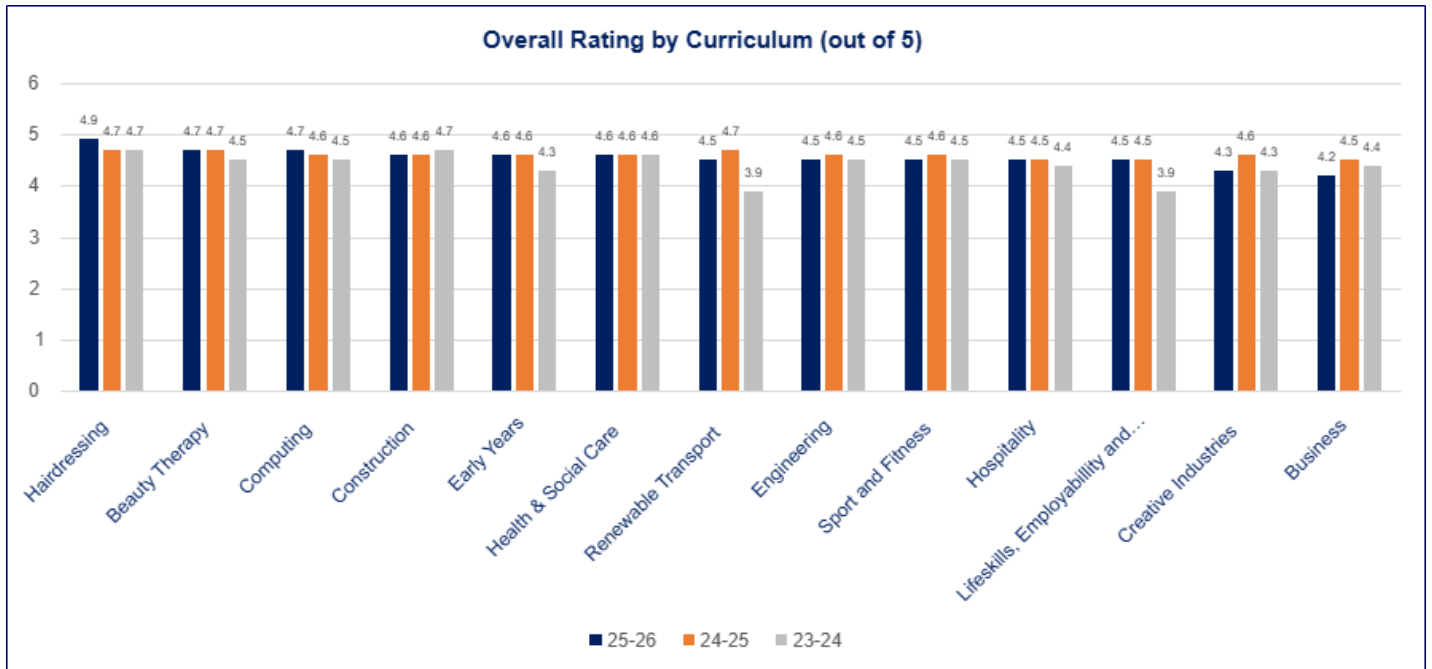


The response rates varied across curriculum teams, with the highest response rates being from Computing (92%) and Business (90%). For eight curriculum areas there was a decrease in the participation rates in comparison to the previous session.

The most significant participation increase was for Hospitality, increasing by 16% from 2024-2025. Computing increased participation by 10%. Participation for Sport and Fitness, Health and Social Care and Business increased minimally, 4%, 2% and 1% respectively.

Overall Results

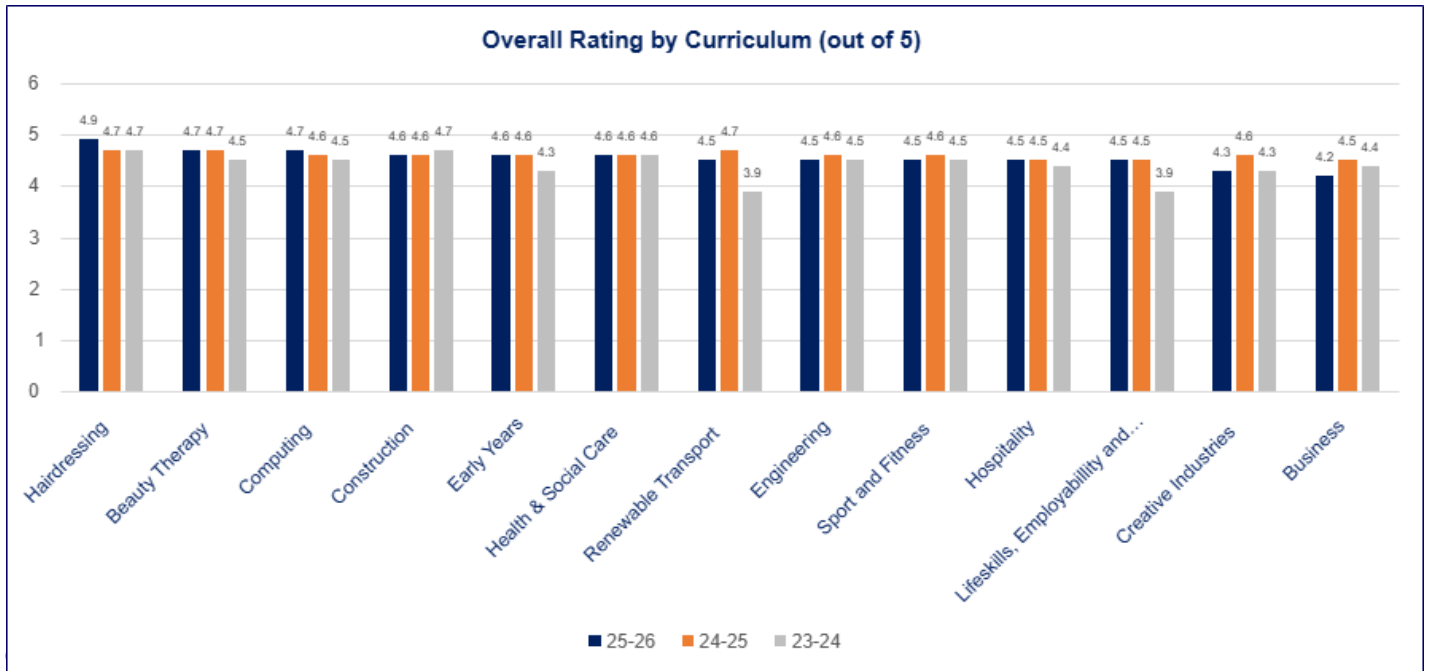
The average overall rating across all 8 questions was 4.5 out of 5, a slight decrease (4.6, 24-25) on the rating achieved in the previous session.



Average rating (out of 5) across all Curriculum areas by Question:



The chart below displays the overall satisfaction rating by Curriculum Areas and by the count of results by each rating (1 to 5):



rating. Seven areas maintained the same rating. Five areas noted decreases in the overall satisfaction rating.

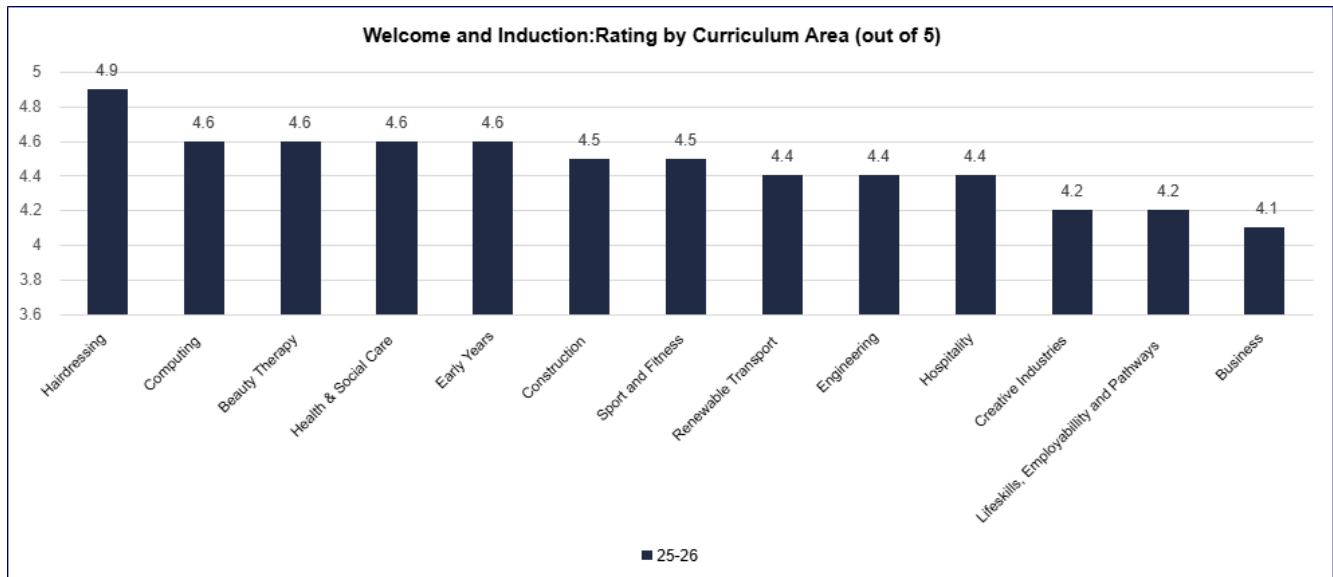
As all ratings are 4.2 and above out of 5, we have continued to maintain a high overall rating across all curriculum areas.

Although the Curriculum area of Business had one of the highest participation rates, they had the lowest satisfaction rate. Further analysis shows that the satisfaction rate of the FE schools groups attributed to this.

Results by Question

Question 1 – Welcome and Induction (Organisation and Management)

Students were asked – things like welcome activities, clear induction process, pre-course communication, advanced notice of timetable How do you feel about this?

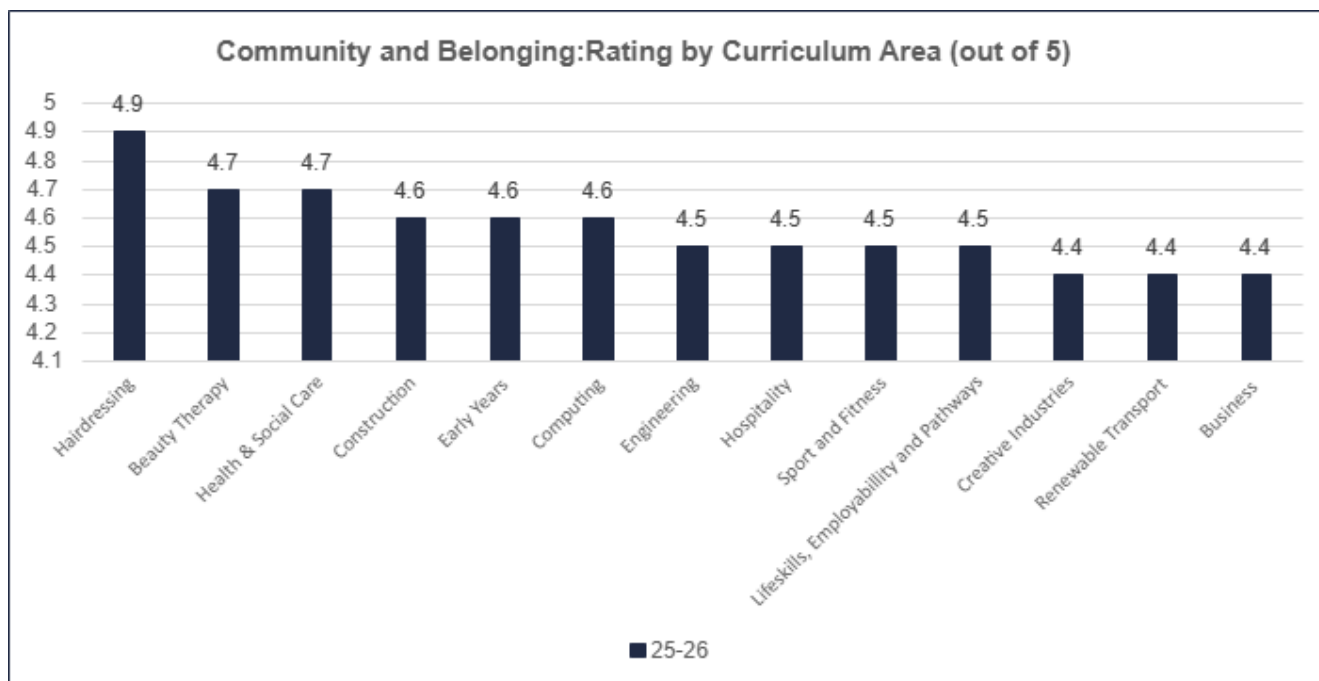


The majority of comments referred to staff being welcoming and that the induction process was positive. A selection of individual comments from the Welcomed and Induction question are:

- 👉 I found the induction clear and well presented, Information regarding my online account and how to access it was easy to understand. I was able to see my timetable through the Student Portal ahead of starting the course.
- 👉 It was easy to understand instructions and where to find course PowerPoints and documents and how to upload any assessments.
- 👉 More notice of the timetable would have helped however everything else was perfect.
- 👉 The introduction to the course was effective in getting us settled in and familiar with the course and its contents.
- 👉 Very good consistent WhatsApp communication from the college, check ins on how you're doing etc. The lecturers are great and really make it a welcoming environment and done an amazing job of explaining the upcoming year and what we will be learning and what's expected of us. You are constantly reminded of services the college offer and how to utilise them.

Question 2 – Community and Belonging

Students were asked – Things like sense of belonging, feeling included, respectful of the diverse community, feeling safe. What is your experience?

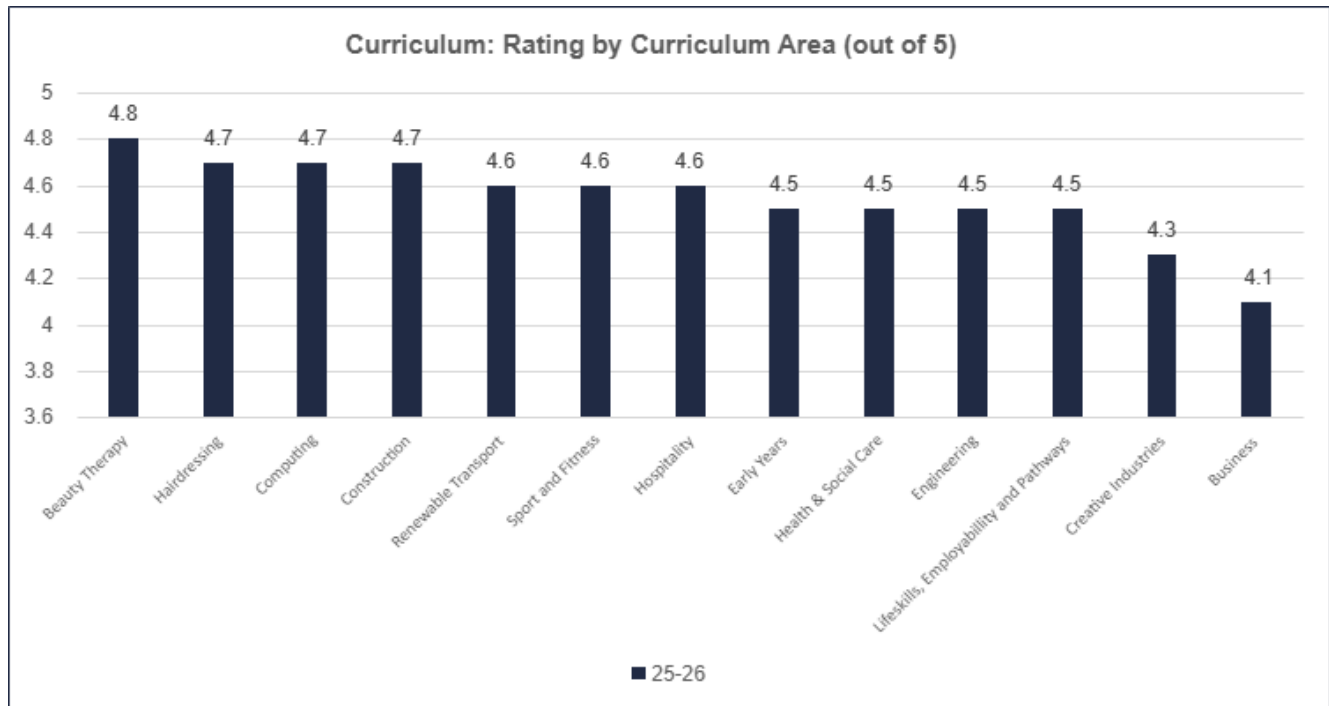


The majority of comments referred to sense of community and belonging being very positive, safe and inclusive. A selection of individual comments from the Community and Belonging question are:

- ▶ A very positive experience. beginning with the people that work in the cafeteria, that were very kind and adjusting to my dietary needs up to being included in DG pals and having contact with other non English speakers
- ▶ Everyone is respectful towards each other therefore I feel safe.
- ▶ The college feels safe, all interactions I've had with staff have been positive and it feels like staff are happy to help and want to help wherever they can which makes you feel included in the community.
- ▶ My lecturer respects my chosen name and honorifics, and she always makes sure that I am doing alright and keeping up/understanding my work. I have also made friends that I can get along with and talk to, so that is good too.
- ▶ Everyone was welcoming and very helpful when needed. Everyone treated equally and fairly.
- ▶ I feel extremely included and respected in my course.

Question 3 – Curriculum

Students were asked – Things like your course content and structure, relevance, accessible and inclusive classes, your expectations. What is your experience?

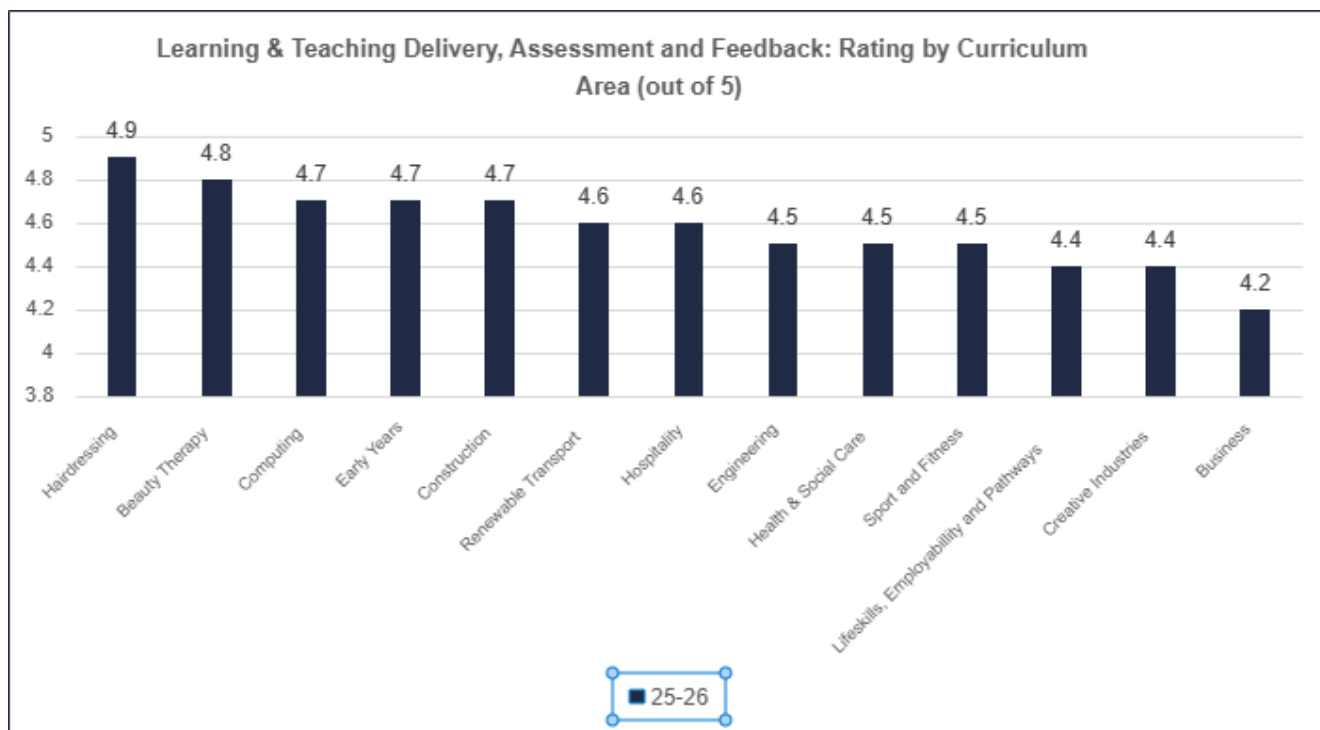


The majority of comments noted that students felt their course content was clear, with easily accessible materials. A selection of individual comments from the Curriculum question are:

- 👉 A lot of information given in the first week but it all comes together as you get into the course, lecturers are always available to answer questions and to guide you.
- 👉 All of the resources I need are there on my courses in my LearnNet, so it is easily accessible, and I am able to work without a hitch on my coursework.
- 👉 Classes are a good balance of note taking and activity work which helps people who have different learning strategies have a course adapted to them.
- 👉 Courses are easy to access, it makes such a difference that the courses are online, helps me keep a proper balance between college, work and personal life.
- 👉 My course is in blocks and we have work to do every week, it's very consistent and ongoing and we work on different units. We were introduced to the units which was very helpful week 1.
- 👉 Positive, all content is relevant and useful for future career choice.

Question 4 – Learning and Teaching Delivery, Assessment and Feedback

Students were asked – Things like effective teaching methods, being engaged, interactive, making progress, helpful feedback, assessment support. What is your experience?

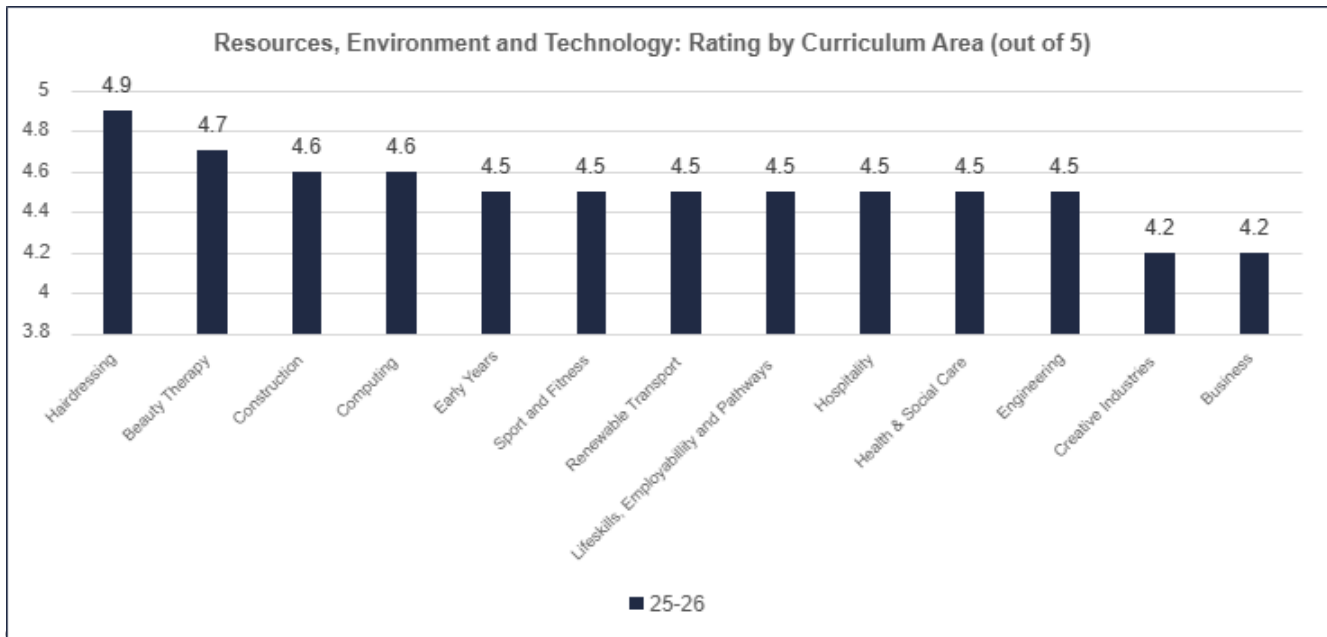


The majority noted that teaching methods were effective, engaging with regular feedback provided. A selection of individual comments from the Learning and Teaching Delivery, Assessment and Feedback question are:

- All the lecturers are very supportive and helpful and always ask how I am and if I am keeping well and have been given options for assessment support as well.
- As advertised , hybrid, a mix of online and in college.
- The teaching methods are affective and ensure everything we learn is relevant. There is often group work making sure we are engaging with others. The feedback and support on assessments allows us to progress.
- Very interactive activities. Everyone’s opinion heard.
- We often have class discussions in which the lecturer can assess whether we are understanding material and we also receive comments on work we hand in.
- Yes I have been engaged and the feedback has been good and my experience has been good.

Question 5 – Resources, Environment and Technology

Students were asked – Things like classrooms, workshops, library, virtual learning environments, individual and group study spaces, physical and digital learning resources. Please tell us about your experience.

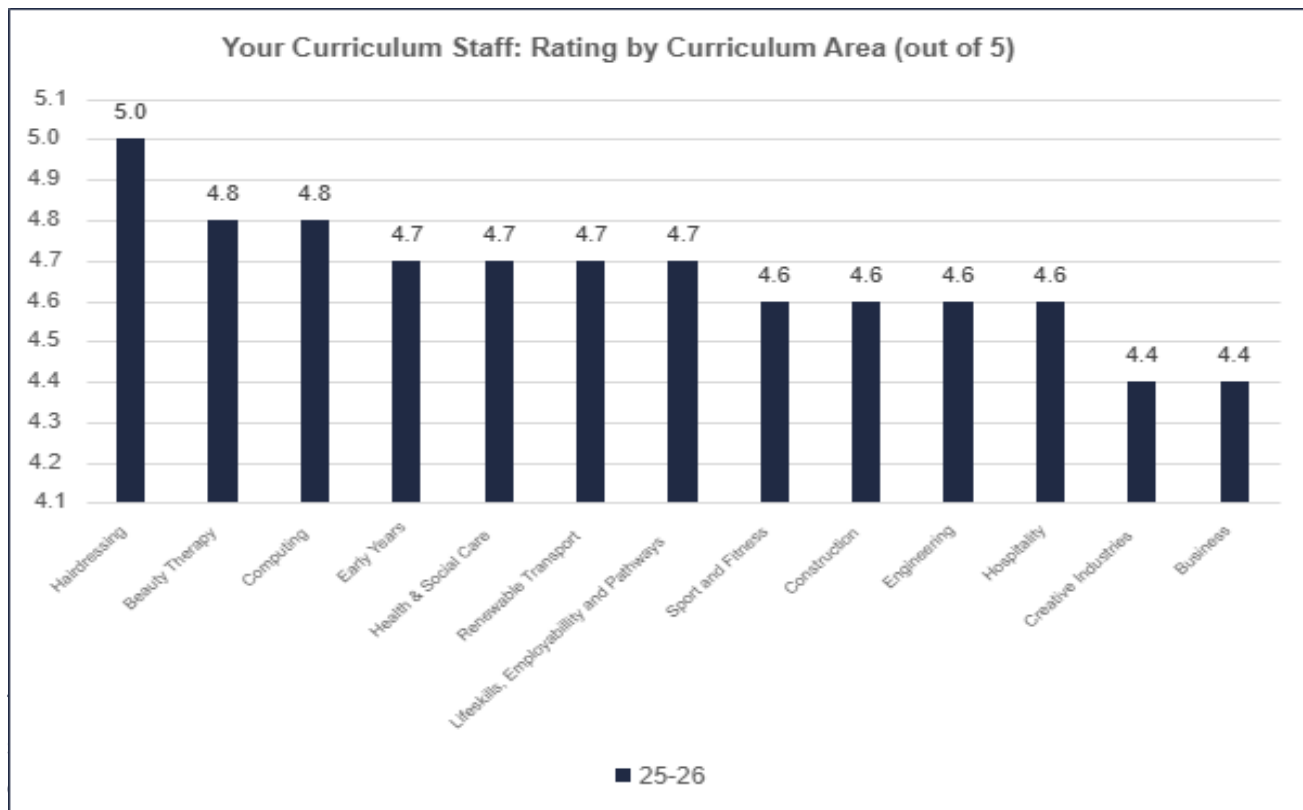


Resources, Environment and Technology question are:

- Classrooms and Kitchen spaces are well equipped. The library and online portals are useful. Both individual and group study spaces are welcoming and support my learning.
- Great environment and nice desks and workstations and computers, learn net is good and easy place to access and do the work.
- I enjoy the classroom and having the freedom to go into study areas if I need quiet time for studying.
- I like the classrooms and work places. However it would be great to have more places to study in the college as it can often be busy. – For example more study pods.
- In my experience, having well-equipped classrooms, workshops, libraries, virtual learning environments, and both individual and group study spaces, along with accessible physical and digital resources, makes learning easier, more productive, and enjoyable.
- Many quiet places to focus and get work done, have a different work space to match everyone.

Question 6 – Your Curriculum Staff

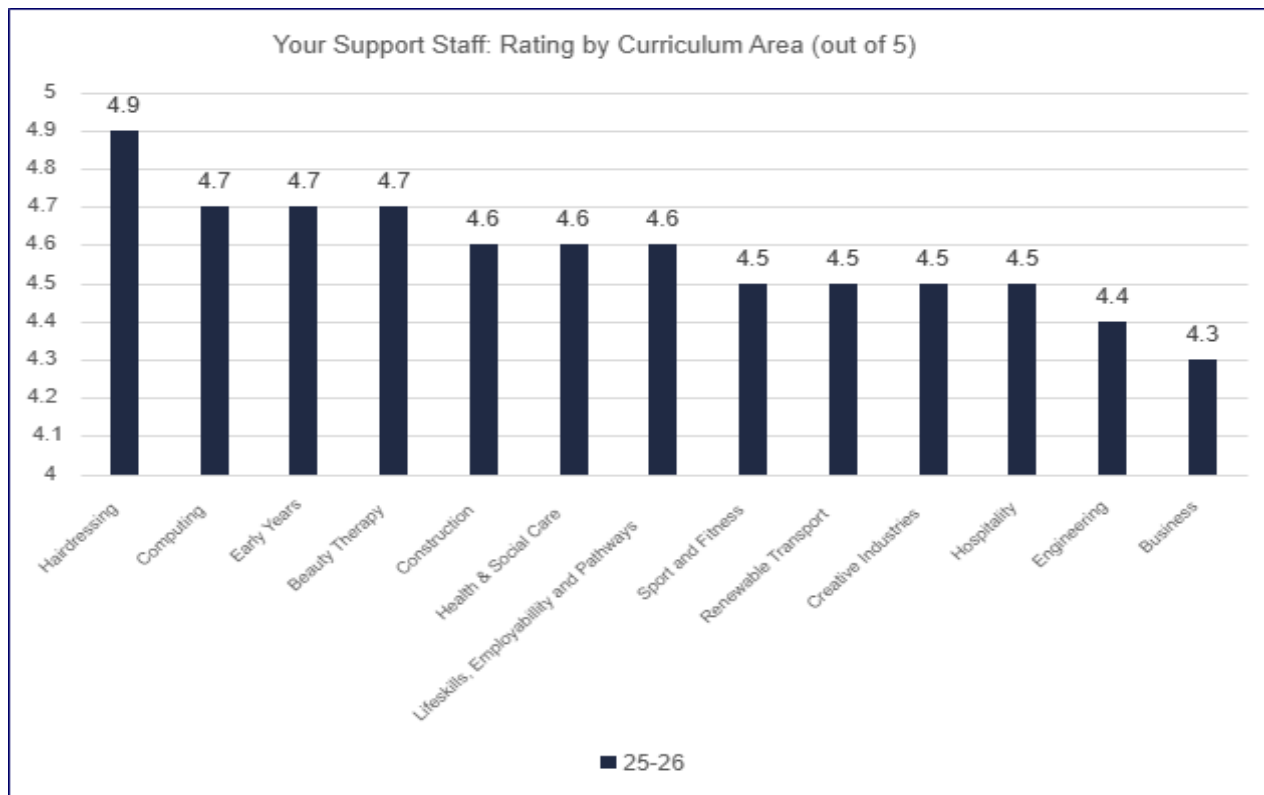
Students were asked – Things like how helpful and approachable are your Lecturers, Personal Tutor, Curriculum Manager. Do you feel supported by Curriculum Staff? How are we doing?



- All my lecturers are very easy to talk to and very understanding. When I've had an issue with my work, they ask me if I understand my task, when I don't they take me through it.
- Curriculum staff are all very easy to talk to and always willing to help out! Even through emails they've been super helpful and give a lot of good advice.
- I could not praise my Lecturers enough. Each and every one of them have been so patient with me and so helpful. If I am ever struggling to understand anything, they will have a one on one with me to go through things again.
- I feel supported by my lecturer and I feel I can talk openly about any problems I may have, Also the lecturer goes above and beyond to make sure we all feel supported.
- Lecturers are very supportive and approachable, I feel well guided by them.

Question 7 – Your Support Staff

Students were asked - Things like how helpful and approachable are support staff. Do you feel supported as a student and as an individual by our support teams? How are we doing?

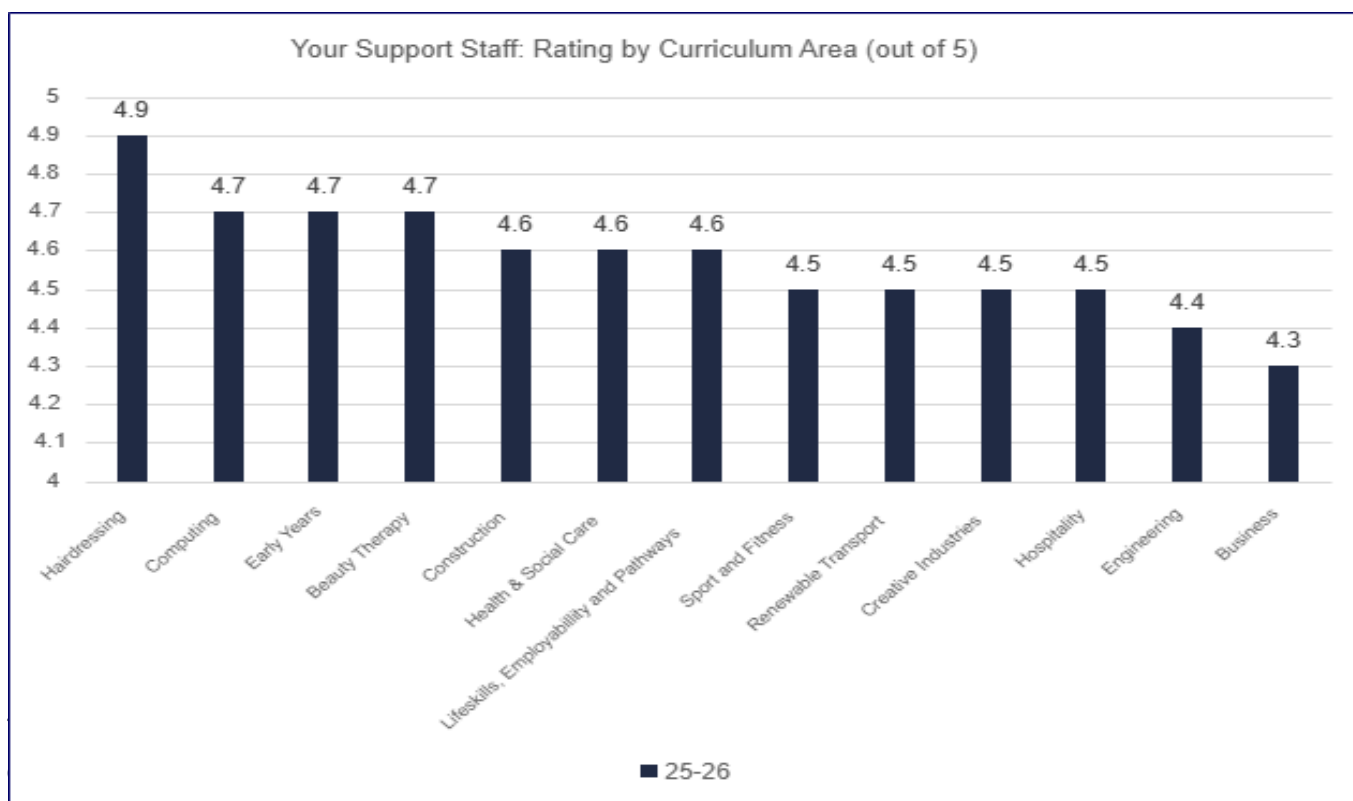


The majority of comments referred to support staff being helpful, supportive and approachable. A selection of individual comments from the Your Support Staff question are:

- 👉 The study services staff are just amazing! The college counsellor is also amazing, such a lovely genuine lady. She really listens to your concerns and provides you with a safe space to talk about heavy topics.
- 👉 Brilliant support services, constantly checked in with and major help when needed.
- 👉 In my experience, when support staff are helpful and approachable, I feel supported both as a student and as an individual. Overall, their assistance makes a big difference in managing challenges and staying motivated
- 👉 I have spoken to them a few times and they are super friendly, and have happily gave me great advice in which makes me feel very safe and respected.

Question 8 – Support and Guidance

Students were asked - How effective are our specialist support services such as the application process, enrolment process, onboarding activities funding, student advisors? Do you feel our support services have enhanced the overall student experience? Please tell us about your experience.



Comments from the support and guidance question are:

- 👉 All been very helpful. Had a lovely experience with student advisors - made me feel comfortable.
- 👉 All of the support services during the application process were very helpful and made the process simpler.
- 👉 Having had some trouble with course funding the student advisors were fantastic at helping me with advice on other services available
- 👉 I feel the support services have helped by making me know they are available whenever we need them, although I haven't personally had to use them yet.
- 👉 It was very accessible and easy for me, it was in a preferred layout method as well as clear emails telling me what to do.

Question 9 – “One thing”

Students were asked - If there is one thing we could do to make your experience at College better what would that be?

A total of 599 students provided a response to this question. Feedback from 280 students indicated they had either no suggested improvements, were unsure at this point in time or their college experience had been positive so far.

There were 319 comments logged, noting specific areas where we could do better. These are free text responses which have been examined for key themes.

Session	25-26	24-25	23-24	22-23
Number of comments received	319	310	359	217

The themes are comparable to the previous sessions and a summary of the most common themes is provided below:

Theme	25-26	24-25	23-24	22-23
Catering provision, choice and pricing	15.1%	21.9%	25.6%	26.7%
Curriculum	42.3%	50.2%	43.7%	34.1%
Estates	12.2%	5.1%	10.6%	13.4%
Digital Services	4.7%	3.5%	6.1%	4.6%
Support/Funding	2.2%	2.3%	2.8%	4.1%
Transport	15.4%	6.8%	4.5%	7.4%
On campus activities	6.0%	9.3%	6.1%	9.7%
Other	2.2%	1.0%	0.6%	0.0%

There has been a slight increase in the number of comments (+9) submitted in relation to ‘one thing we could do better’ in comparison to last session. A number of key themes have been identified and these include the following:

- Online and Hybrid Learning (across all questions we have received comments from those who like it and those who don't)
- Price and availability of bottled water on campus 9 comments (8 comments in 24-25)
- Cheaper Food Prices and Better Options 28 Comments (26 comments in 24-25)
- Bus services to and from college

The number of comments relating to Estates increased by 7.1% from session 24-25 with students commenting on the installation of speed bumps in the college car park and locker provision.

The number of comments relating to Transport increased by 8.6% from session 24-25. This can be attributed to the issues arising following the change of local transport provider.

The comments relating to On Campus activities reduced by 3.3% on comparison to session 24-25. This can be attributed to the Active Campus Co-Ordinator being in post for a second session and many activities are established.

'Other' comments increased marginally by 1.2% from session 24-25 with comments made relating to the provision of lanyards and the quantity of student surveys.

A large quantity of the "One Thing" comments provided positive feedback and were not related to a particular theme. A sample are provided below:

- 👉 College is perfect for me so far
- 👉 I am very happy at college and don't see any changes that would need to be made
- 👉 I think my college experience so far has been ideal so I don't really have a singular thing I could point out to make it better.
- 👉 Nothing that I can think of, thanks for everything
- 👉 Nothing I've had a good experience so far
- 👉 Nothing I can really think of. I enjoy coming here I always have since I started everyone is great.
- 👉 I'm not sure there is anything that would currently improve my experience at the college as I have had a very good experience so far.

One thing' comments relating to curriculum areas are comparable to the previous sessions and a summary of the most common themes is provided below:

Theme	25-26	24-25	23-24	22-23
Number of curriculum related comments	135	156	157	74
Course content/management	46.7%	51.9%	42%	59.5%
Hybrid learning	14.1%	14.7%	10.8%	21.6%
Rooms/tools/facilities	20.0%	14.4%	23.6%	6.8%

Start times/breaks	12.6%	10.3%	17.8%	9.5%
Support	6.7%	8.3%	5.7%	2.7%

Other	0.0%	0.6%	0%	0%
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Feedback from curriculum and support managers will be gathered as part of the College You Said We Did process.

Overall Curriculum Comparison ratings Questions 1 to 8

Curriculum Area	Overall	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6	Question 7	Question 8
Hairdressing	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.7	4.9	4.9	5.0	4.9	4.9
Computing	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.8	4.7	4.6
Beauty Therapy	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.8	4.7	4.7
Health & Social Care	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.7	4.6	4.6
Early Years	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.7	4.5	4.7	4.7	4.6
Construction	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6
Sport and Fitness	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.5
Renewable Transport	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.7	4.5	4.5
Lifeskills, Employability and Pathways	4.5	4.2	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.7	4.6	4.5
Hospitality	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.4
Engineering	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.4	4.4
Creative Industries	4.3	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.5	4.3
Business	4.2	4.1	4.4	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.2

Overall Curriculum Comparison – Participation versus Overall Satisfaction

Curriculum Area	Participation	Overall Satisfaction
Computing	92%	4.7
Business	90%	4.2
Hairdressing	84%	4.9
Lifeskills, Employability and Pathways	79%	4.5
Creative Industries	76%	4.3
Hospitality	73%	4.5
Construction	72%	4.6
Sport and Fitness	70%	4.5
Health & Social Care	68%	4.6
Beauty Therapy	66%	4.7
Engineering	62%	4.5
Early Years	61%	4.6
Renewable Transport	36%	4.5

Further improvement

It was highlighted that this survey has coincided with another student survey over the last two sessions. Both surveys will be combined into one for session 26-27 to avoid survey fatigue for students.

The Performance Team
October 2025