CITY OF GLASGOW COLLEGE

Board of Management
Audit Committee

Date of Meeting	**Wednesday 21 February 2018**
Paper No.	**AC3-E**
Agenda Item	**8.1**
Subject of Paper	**Internal Audit Report – Teaching Staff Utilisation/Timetabling**
FOISA Status	**Disclosable**
Primary Contact	**Henderson Loggie**
Date of production	**February 2018**
Action	**For Discussion and Decision**

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to consider and discuss the report and the management responses to the internal audit recommendations.

1. Purpose of report

The purpose of this review is to provide management and the Audit Committee with assurance on key controls relating to the curriculum and financial plans in place for City of Glasgow College and their alignment with the regional plan for Glasgow and the college student number targets.

2. Context and Discussion

Following the Audit Needs Assessment undertaken by Henderson Loggie in session 2016-17, and the consequent Internal Audit Strategic Plan 2016-2020, both approved by the Committee in March 2017, an operating plan was created for the year ended 31 July 2017.

This internal audit of Teaching Staff Utilisation/Timetabling provides an outline of the objectives, scope, findings and graded recommendations as appropriate, together with management responses. This constitutes an action pan for improvement.

The Report includes a number of audit findings which are assessed and graded to denote the overall level of assurance that can be taken from the Report. The gradings are defined as follows:

Good	System meets control objectives.
Satisfactory	System meets control objectives with some weaknesses present.
Requires improvement	System has weaknesses that could prevent it achieving control objectives.
Unacceptable	System cannot meet control objectives.

3. Impact and implications

Refer to internal audit report.

City of Glasgow College

Teaching Staff Utilisation / Timetabling

Internal Audit Report No: 2018/02

Draft Issued: 9 February 2018

Final Issued: 15 February 2018

LEVEL OF ASSURANCE

Satisfactory

Content

Level of Assurance

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

Gradings are defined as follows:

Good	System meets control objectives.
Satisfactory	System meets control objectives with some weaknesses present.
Requires Improvement	System has weaknesses that could prevent it achieving control objectives.
Unacceptable	System cannot meet control objectives.

Action Grades

Priority 1	Issue subjecting the College to material risk and which requires to be brought to the attention of the Audit Committee.
Priority 2	Issue subjecting the College to significant risk and which should be addressed by management.
Priority 3	Matters subjecting the College to minor risk or which, if addressed, will enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

1. Overall Level of Assurance

Satisfactory	System meets control objectives with some weaknesses present.

2. Risk Assessment

This review focused on the controls in place to mitigate the following risks on the City of Glasgow College ('the College') Risk Register:

- Failure to achieve improved performance (net risk score: 10);
- Failure to attract, engage, and retain suitable staff (net risk score: 4); and
- Failure to achieve operating surplus via control of costs and achievement of income targets (net risk score: 15).

3. Background

As part of the Internal Audit programme at the College for 2017/18 we carried out a review of teaching staff utilisation, including reviewing whether contracted teaching hours were being utilised and whether staff have appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to effectively and efficiently undertake their teaching responsibilities. The Audit Needs Assessment, completed in March 2017, identified this as an area where risk can arise and where Internal Audit can assist in providing assurances to the Board of Management and the Principal that the related control environment is operating effectively, ensuring risk is maintained at an acceptable level.

Workforce planning is a key component of the College's operations to ensure that staffing levels meet curriculum demands on an annual basis, and also over the longer term, particularly where redeployment and retraining may be required. Every year, after the curriculum portfolio has been set, each Faculty is required to review the permanent staffing it has; identify the level of temporary staff it will need; and consider whether there is the need to recruit new staff or to upskill existing staff where skills gaps are identified.

Full-time College staff have 21 or 24 hours per week (during term time) class contact time, as set out within their teaching contracts, with a proportion of this time available to be set aside for invigilation and other duties (remission).

Curriculum Heads are allocated a group of courses from the approved curriculum portfolio and have access to a pool of lecturers to use in delivering those courses. The Curriculum Heads must timetable and arrange the lecturers for these courses, including reaching agreement on the use of staff from other areas of the College ('servicing'). As an integral part of this process the Curriculum Heads are responsible for ensuring that the number of contact hours the lecturers work is as close to the number of contracted contact hours as possible.

4. Scope, Objectives and Overall Findings

This audit focused on three key areas relating to teaching staff utilisation / timetabling:

- Review of staffing needs, including longer term workforce planning for expected curriculum changes and succession planning;
- Utilisation of permanent contracted teaching hours and how staff are timetabled to maximise use of their contracted teaching hours; and
- Review of class sizes to ensure these are optimised.

The overall objective of the audit was to obtain reasonable assurance that teaching staff are being efficiently utilised.

The table below notes each secondary objective for this review and records the results:

Objective		Findings			
The objective of this audit was to obtain reasonable assurance that:	**Assurance**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**Actions already planned**
		No. of Agreed Actions			
1. The College has staff with the required skills, knowledge and experience for current service delivery	**Good**	0	0	0	
2. Longer term staff needs are identified, and plans put in place for longer term workforce planning to meet expected curriculum changes and succession planning	**Satisfactory**	0	0	0	✓
3. The timetabling system is used to robustly record permanent staff contracted teaching hours and any under-utilisation is monitored and followed-up on a timely basis	**Requires Improvement**	0	2	2	
4. The size of classes is reviewed on a regular basis and decisions are made on a timely basis about merging or cancelling classes	**Satisfactory**	0	0	1	
Overall Level of Assurance	**Satisfactory**	0	2	3	
		System meets control objectives with some weaknesses present.			

5. Audit Approach

We assessed whether the objectives were met by meeting with College managers responsible for the management and monitoring of teaching staff utilisation and timetabling and comparing the current approach to best-practise, including systems and procedures.

6. Summary of Main Findings

Strengths

- A framework is in place for curriculum portfolio and course timetable planning, which identifies staff resources required to provide the curriculum; allocates permanent staff to courses; identifies any shortfall in staffing; and seeks to fill these gaps. Staffing requirements can be met through the use of staff from other areas of the College; through use of temporary staff; through recruitment of staff; or through upskilling of existing staff; and
- A range of activities and initiatives is being undertaken to consider succession planning and longer-term curriculum planning.

Weaknesses

- Although Curriculum Heads are responsible for reviewing staff utilisation there is no formal automated report that compares contracted contact hours by staff member against their timetabled contact hours. In addition, Faculty Directors or the Vice Principal Student Experience do not review comparative information to identify and follow-up any under-utilisation of lecturing staff;
- Although there are high-level checks performed to ensure that the total hours of part-time contracts issued is in line with the budgeted figure set out in the Student Recruitment Plan there is not a full reconciliation to identify areas where timetabled hours for courses may differ from expected hours as set out in the Student Recruitment Plan; and
- Although Curriculum Heads should be reviewing class sizes and seeking to merge classes, where feasible and sensible to do so, there is no oversight of this process to ensure that it is done.

7. Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the College staff for the co-operation and assistance we received during the course of our review

8. Findings and Action Plan

Objective 1: The College has staff with the required skills, knowledge and experience for current service delivery

The 'Glasgow College Region Curriculum and Estates Plan 2015-2020' sets out regional priorities for curriculum provision and informs the annual Credits sector targets for curriculum provision for each college within the Glasgow region. Based on the Curriculum and Estates Plan; knowledge of employer needs in the region; and demand for places, College management agree the College portfolio of courses and expected number of class cohorts. Once this has been set, a calculation is carried out to identify the overall staffing hours required to deliver the portfolio and this is compared to the staffing hours available (permanent staff), with the remainder identified as being covered through temporary staff or recruitment.

The College is split into six Faculties. Within each Faculty there are Curriculum Heads who have overall responsibility for:
- ensuring that timetables are in place;
- resourcing a number of specified courses with allocated lecturers; and
- ensuring that lecturers are being appropriately utilised.

The Curriculum Heads are required to consider the permanent and temporary staff at their disposal and for the allocation of staff with the required skills, knowledge and experience for the subject matter being taught. Curriculum Heads know which lecturers possess the skills and experience required to teach specific subject areas through knowledge of courses previously taught by the lecturers and through discussion with the lecturers themselves, and they will try to play to the strengths of lecturers when allocating them to teach specific units on courses.

We were advised that Curriculum Heads routinely ask lecturers to teach a new unit each year so that they will have more than one lecturer who has experience in that unit, and support will be provided, as requested, to assist the lecturer through their first time in delivering the relevant unit. Course notes are often kept on shared network drives which allows staff teaching an existing unit for the first time to make use of these teaching resources. Lecturers are periodically requested to undertake work experience in industry and this can be used to upskill lecturers and keep them abreast of industry changes. The annual PDR (Performance Development Review) allows the Curriculum Head and lecturers to discuss and agree continuing professional development (CPD) needs for lecturers.

If any issues were highlighted regarding lecturers not being aware of their subject matter, or struggling to deliver effective teaching, then feedback should be provided by the Class Representative to the tutor or fed back through the Course Information Action Meetings. These meetings are attended by Class Representatives, together with tutors and the Senior Lecturer(s). There is also a complaints section on the intranet, MyCity, where complaints can be made.

Objective 1: The College has staff with the required skills, knowledge and experience for current service delivery (continued)

Where a Curriculum Head does not have staff available who possess the skills, knowledge or experience required to teach a specific subject area then they can request 'servicing' from other Curriculum Heads. If there are no suitable staff identified, then the College will seek to employ temporary staff or to recruit externally. We noted that this process is reliant on Curriculum Heads knowledge of the areas staff are capable of teaching. The College Curriculum Heads interviewed considered that the current process works effectively and that any moves to introduce a more formal system would be difficult to implement in practice. We concur with this view based on our experience of practice observed in other colleges.

Where a new course is introduced, the relevant Curriculum Head considers at the time of proposing the course (or after finalising the curriculum portfolio in about November each year) whether the College employs staff with the knowledge, skills and experience required to deliver the course. Normally the Curriculum Head will then agree with staff who will be trained up and, as the portfolio is agreed long before courses commence, this provides a window for this upskilling to be undertaken. If there are insufficient suitable staff for upskilling, a business case for recruiting staff will be put together.

Recruitment of new staff requires the essential and desirable skills for the role to be identified and applications are then scored against these. The shortlisted candidates must provide a 10-minute presentation during the interview process. This is used to identify how effective candidates are in communicating to an audience and can also be used to check their technical knowledge. Once a successful applicant has been selected Human Resources (HR) staff conduct checks to ensure that the applicant has the qualifications declared on their application. References may also be checked to provide independent confirmation that they have the experience stated on their application for the role. The Curriculum Heads interviewed considered that this was an effective process. From our review we also consider this process is appropriate as it considers required skills, checks how effective the person is as a communicator (through the presentation) and provides confirmation that they have the prerequisite technical skills (through checking qualifications, references and through any technical detail covered in the presentation).

Objective 2: Longer term staff needs are identified, and plans put in place for longer term workforce planning to meet expected curriculum changes and succession planning

Curriculum Changes
Longer term staffing needs are difficult to identify and plan for because until the region's curriculum review has been undertaken, or the need for a change in curriculum identified by Curriculum Heads through reviews of industry trends and the like, it is not known what will be added, removed or altered in the curriculum. However, staff may be aware of certain medium to long term sector trends through employer engagement or sector bodies which can highlight the need for change. Staff interviewed during our review advised that they would look to upskill existing staff where this was the case, and an example of this was the upskilling of staff on electricity smart meters so that they could teach courses on these.

Workforce Changes
Given the removal of the statutory retirement age it is now more difficult to determine precisely when staff are likely to leave the College and therefore to undertake structured succession planning. However, from discussion with staff we were advised that succession planning is considered through:
a) Discussions between Curriculum Heads and lecturers: the Head of HR advised that HR Business Partners have been asked to approach Curriculum Heads and Faculty Directors and ask them to raise with lecturers whether any staff are planning to retire at the end of the academic year (which is when most lecturers retire). This will be used to identify any skills gaps that could result and to allow recruitment and staff upskilling decisions to be made earlier;
b) Curriculum Heads may identify areas where there is reliance on one staff member for a subject area(s) and consider appropriate strategies to mitigate against this, such as upskilling other staff or rotating the curriculum provision so that another staff member can gain experience in teaching that area;
c) When recruiting, those with multiple trades or a wide range of knowledge, skills and experience will be sought; and
d) Providing CPD opportunities that allow staff to upskill (both general management skills and also in a particular subject area) so that staff can be internally recruited, particularly for senior management positions.

We were also advised that a paper on staff talent management and succession planning was provided to the Board early in 2017, but that this activity had been postponed due to industrial action. However, there are plans in place to move this agenda forward again.

The Head of HR advised that the only areas where there are recruitment challenges are in: a) the Nautical Faculty (which requires specific maritime skills); and b) in Engineering. The Nautical Faculty recruits foreign nationals working on immigration visas to overcome this issue. For Engineering, the pay for lecturers is not competitive with the wider labour market. However, the People and Culture Strategy incorporates an HR initiative which is aimed at promoting the 'total work package' available to Engineering lecturers, including life / work balance and highlighting the value of pension package available.

Given the difficulties in identifying upcoming changes in the curriculum, and identifying which staff may be leaving, we consider the range of mitigating actions, set out above, to be adequate and appropriate.

Objective 3: The timetabling system is used to robustly record permanent staff contracted teaching hours and any under-utilisation is monitored and followed-up on a timely basis

Given that staffing costs are the College's largest expenditure heading it is important that there is efficient use of academic staff, with regular monitoring of staff utilisation and action taken to reduce any under-utilisation. Full-time staff are contracted to deliver 21 or 24 hours per week contact time (during term time) depending on which legacy college they came from, although a proportion of this time may be utilised for other activities. Temporary staff are deployed to provide teaching resource where permanent staff cannot be identified to teach a course. Temporary staff are an additional direct cost to the College and therefore maximising permanent staff contact hours is an important way to ensure value for money.

The College has software to assist with curriculum planning and timetabling. This software, called Curriculum Manager, is used to capture the planned curriculum to be delivered and is broken into three phases:

- Phase 1 – Course Level: Faculties provide maximum class size numbers (based on room sizes), projections and marketing information for the website;
- Phase 2 – Course Period Level: Faculties provide curriculum portfolio content in terms of dates, units on each course, unit dates and mandatory / optional unit status; and
- Phase 3 – Unit Level: timetabling. The Curriculum Heads assign staff to teach course units and set out the order of units, how long they will be taught for and provides information on any staffing constraints (such as times part-time staff members cannot work). They can also give the proposed time for each unit to be taught over the course of a week. Once submitted, the Timetabling Team uses Resource Manager software to timetable the staff, courses and rooms. Once timetabled the Curriculum Heads may request changes through functionality on Curriculum Manager and these are assigned to a Timetabling Team staff member and then marked complete when actioned.

There is a comprehensive Curriculum Planning Guide and Timetabling Procedures Document, which sets out the precise duties of various staff in delivering each of the 3 phases described above.

HENDERSON LOGGIE
Chartered Accountants

Objective 3: The timetabling system is used to robustly record permanent staff contracted teaching hours and any under-utilisation is monitored and followed up on a timely basis (continued)			
Observation	**Risk**	**Recommendation**	**Management Response**
The Curriculum Heads should be reviewing, by lecturer, the actual annual contracted contact hours on these reports against annual timetabled contact hours and remission (as per HR records) to determine whether they are making full use of lecturers. Although there is a 'Staff Hours' report available on the 'Timetables' section on Enquirer, which is a portal utilised by staff to access Curriculum Manager and other information, this does not present the information in a format which readily allows the Curriculum Heads to review staff utilisation. We did identify inconsistency in the approach taken with some Curriculum Heads maintaining formal spreadsheets to complete this task, while others advised that although they conducted a review, no formal record was kept to evidence this. To allow effective regular review there would be benefit in developing a tailored, automated report that would provide Curriculum Heads with staff utilisation information by comparing the timetabled staff utilisation information against HR contracted contact hours data. Faculty Directors and the Vice Principal Student Experience should then conduct periodic reviews to make sure that the reviews are being carried out consistently by all Curriculum Heads.

It was also noted that Finance staff review the staffing budget, which is influenced by staff under-utilisation, and this could highlight issues around under-utilisation at a high-level. | Although Curriculum Heads should be ensuring there is appropriate staff utilisation there is a risk that they are not systematically carrying out the necessary checks to make sure that permanent staff are fully utilised before part-time staff are brought in. | **R1** Create a standard report showing, by lecturing staff member, their actual contracted contact hours (split into main and additional contracts) against their actual timetabled contact and remission hours. | This recommendation is accepted in full. We will look at adding the necessary information to Unite and build the suggested report. This recommendation needs to be done in conjunction with the HR team in order to satisfy **R4.** **To be actioned by:** VP: Infrastructure **No later than:** August 2018 |
| | | | **Grade** — 2 |
| | | **R2** Faculty Directors and the Vice Principal Student Experience should periodically review staff utilisation reports (as referred to in **R1** above) and follow-up on any under-utilisation noted from this. | This recommendation is accepted in full. Staff utilisation reports to be reviewed quarterly and adjustments to staffing budgets made accordingly.

To be actioned by: VP Student Experience/ Head of Finance

No later than: August 2018 |
| | | | **Grade** — 2 |

Objective 3: The timetabling system is used to robustly record permanent staff contracted teaching hours and any under-utilisation is monitored and followed up on a timely basis (continued)

The Student Recruitment Plan lists all agreed curriculum provision and the number of hours required to deliver this. This is a key tool in ensuring that the College is delivering curriculum in line with the sector Credit delivery set out in the Regional Outcome Agreement and for identifying expected part-time staff costs for budgeting purposes. An allowance is made in the Student Recruitment Plan for sickness and under-utilisation.

Observation	Risk	Recommendation	Management Response
We noted that it would be possible for a Curriculum Head to allocate more than one staff member to a class, such as for practical work, or to timetable a staff member for periods greater than set out in the Student Recruitment Plan. This may be justified in some instances but may be unjustified in other instances. There is a high-level mitigating control relating to this in that the Head of Finance obtains information from HR on the total hours of part-time staff contracts and compares this figure against the total for part-time hours on the Student Recruitment Plan to ensure that these are in line with each other. We discussed the above with the Vice Principal Student Experience and Vice Principal Infrastructure and it was agreed that there would be benefit in implementing a more automated system to check that the Student Recruitment Plan information aligned with the actual timetable information.	A greater number of staff may be employed in delivering courses than approved in the Student Resource Planner.	**R3** Investigate the feasibility of putting in place a more automated process to check that the actual timetabled staff hours for courses agreed to the information set out on the Student Recruitment Plan and to highlight any discrepancies.	This recommendation is accepted in full. Standard reports to be developed in timetabling system that can be reviewed and reconciled with planned staffing budgets and HR system in a more systematic manner. **To be actioned by:** VP Infrastructure **No later than:** August 2018 **Grade** 3

Objective 3: The timetabling system is used to robustly record permanent staff contracted teaching hours and any under-utilisation is monitored and followed up on a timely basis (continued)

Observation	Risk	Recommendation	Management Response
The Timetabling Team are involved in timetabling the deployment of staff and need to be aware of any staff contractual terms and conditions that may have an impact on when they can work, such as having their lunch hour at a certain time or not being able to teach after certain times. From discussion with the Timetabling Manager we noted that the Timetabling Team do not have a list of all the contract terms and conditions for each staff member to ensure that they are timetabling staff for allowed work times.	The Timetabling Team may have to rework timetables if they schedule a lecturer for a teaching slot that is not in line with their employment terms and conditions.	**R4** HR should provide the Timetabling Team with up-to-date information on the terms and conditions of individual lecturers.	This recommendation is accepted in full. We will look at adding the necessary information to Unite and build the suggested report. This recommendation needs to be done in conjunction with the HR team. **To be actioned by:** VP Infrastructure **No later than:** August 2018

				Grade	3

Objective 4: The size of classes is reviewed on a regular basis and decisions are made on a timely basis about merging or cancelling classes

We discussed with Heads of Faculty and Curriculum Heads how they review class sizes and make appropriate decisions about merging or cancelling classes. We were advised that the size of classes is reviewed through a weekly Applications Report which provides the number of applications and enrolments per course prior to the start of term, which the Admissions team email to the Curriculum Heads, Faculty Directors and members of the College Senior Management Team. If there are poor application numbers or enrolments then a course would normally be cancelled before it started, however normally either extra marketing is undertaken which leads to more enrolments; the number of class cohorts is reduced but the course is still run; or the course is cancelled, and students are encouraged to enrol instead onto a similar course which has places available.

Observation	Risk	Recommendation	Management Response
Once the teaching blocks have commenced, low class numbers are identified through Curriculum Heads or Faculty Directors highlighting issues from reports on Enquirer. We discussed with Curriculum Heads the strategies they deploy when class numbers dropped, and they advised that it was often difficult to merge classes, and that in some instances practical work aspects meant that a merged class was not feasible. However, we noted that there was no formal review performed by Faculty Directors or the Vice Principal Student Experience to ensure that low class sizes had been identified and that merging or cancelling of classes had been considered.	Class numbers may reduce significantly leading to classes being run which are not breaking even.	**R5** Implement a process (at appropriate times between blocks one and two, and blocks two and three) for Faculty Directors to undertake a formal review of class numbers, including provision of relevant justification for any classes with low numbers. This analysis should be provided to the Vice Principal Student Experience for their oversight.	This recommendation is accepted in full. A process will be agreed whereby class numbers are reviewed at the beginning of each teaching block to make appropriate resource revisions based on recruitment numbers/attendance numbers. **To be actioned by:** VP Student Experience/Director Student Experience **No later than:** August 2018

Grade	3