

Board of Management

Learning and Teaching Committee

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 7 September 2021
Paper No.	LTC1-E
Agenda Item	4.1
Subject of Paper	Learning & Teaching Update 2021-22
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	Dr Claire Carney, Vice Principal Student Experience
Date of production	27 August 2021
Action	For Discussion

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Committee is asked to note and discuss key elements of Learning and Teaching and Academic Planning arrangements for 2021/2022.

2. Purpose of Paper

- 2.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the broad planning elements for academic delivery 2021/22.

3. Context

- 3.1 As the Committee will be aware, City of Glasgow College has established through the new Student Academic Experience Strategy that we will continue to develop a Blended Model of Learning for Academic Year 21/22 and the years following.
- 3.2 The Strategy has 3 key elements: City Student; City Learning and Teaching and City Student Journey. Our City Learning and Teaching approach will be Active, Blended and Connected where students will be co-creators of their own learning, challenged with real-life problems and be able to identify benefits to themselves and others. This will ensure that City of Glasgow College is well positioned to take advantage of the Global Education revolution and to be a leading light in shaping Tertiary Education. The coming years will rely on key elements of increased and improved digital provision and capabilities of staff and students and the need to offer an agile, flexible

and responsive curriculum that will respond to economic needs (Cumberford-Little report 2020).

- 3.3 The parallel context is we are very mindful of and adhere to Scottish Government Covid guidance. At this current point in time, we are operating at a 'beyond 0' level and whilst many of the restrictions have been lifted in across society, certain restrictions remain within Colleges and we continue to adapt and change as this guidance continues to unfold. However, we remain confident in the Learning and Teaching guidance delivered to the Committee and College in May 2021.
- 3.4 The purpose of that guidance was not to be prescriptive, but to provide broad parameters around which curriculum teams can work/adjust according to local and disciplinary differences. We aim to provide a workable model for the longer term that takes account of the positive aspects of online learning and the pedagogical shift proposed through the Student Academic Experience Strategy. However, as the last 17 months has taught us, the ability to provide absolute certainty in a very complex, turbulent and ever-changing environment is difficult and the continued need to be flexible (where possible) will be an ongoing feature for the coming months.
- 3.5 This following sections highlight key aspects of learning and teaching and academic planning arrangements:
 - 3.5.1 Whilst **Physical distancing** measures are still in place, all teaching areas on site will continue to have restricted numbers. Therefore, planning for 21/22 is broadly similar to 20/21, with marked increased flexibility to have groups of students onsite for activity beyond learning tasks and assessment which require the use of practical equipment for example small class presentations/tutorials/seminar and collaborative learning tasks, closed book, invigilated assessment which cannot be conducted online and community-building tasks
 - 3.5.2 **Blended learning and Lessons Learned:** Each Faculty has worked to draw together 'learnings' and best practice from the last academic year to devise what works best for their curriculum and Faculty area. This will be supplemented by further guidance developed by Dean, Gus Grubb who led a working group on repurposing the Learning and Teaching guidance from last year (agenda item). In addition, every Faculty should begin to see benefits from the Blended Learning Fund in the development of online Learning, Teaching and Assessment projects.
 - 3.5.3 **Learning and Teaching Conference:** [*Lets get Phygital*](#) The college will host a Learning and Teaching Conference on 14 Sept 2021. This is an opportunity for teaching staff, students and wider stakeholders to share practice in Learning, Teaching and Assessment. There is a comprehensive programme with many presentations from City of Glasgow Staff as a direct result of the Blended Learning Fund but also presentations from other colleges and key sectoral bodies. Keynote speakers include Professor Mark Brown (Professor of Digital Learning and Director of the National Institute for Digital Learning, Dublin City University), and Professor Keith Smyth, University of the Highlands. Sponsorship has been obtained from Intel. Committee members are invited to attend and participate in sessions.
 - 3.5.4 **Induction and Transition:** A blend of online and on campus induction activities commenced week beginning 9 August – 27 August. In addition, all new students benefitted from a comprehensive set of transition activities through the 'Get Ready for College' Faculty microsites. The purpose of which was for students to: familiarise themselves with the teaching team, course content and some sample tasks for students to complete. Learnings from last year would indicate that the College tends to over-estimate the digital skills of our students or generalise all as digital natives. An 'on boarding' guide has

been developed and shared with all students through the 'Get Ready for College' Pre-Entry Programme. We were already aware of the importance of such activities but a key emphasis and learning point from the last year is the absolute importance of engaging students from the outset, creating a sense of belonging within the college and with their peers. The importance of **engaging students** is paramount for students, the 'physical' College experience is so much richer than their college studies per se. It is as much about the social interactivity and engagement with other students, lecturers and the many development opportunities available. Therefore, all students will have timetabled access to the college for essential practical activities, but also active, participative and collaborative experiences in small groups and student support activities.

To support Deans and Associate Deans in the promotion of student engagement, The Vice Principal Student Engagement is hosting a joint session with Student partnership on quality Scotland (sparqs), the Student Experience Directorate, Deans and Associate Deans on September 7 to consider how we might further engage with the Student Engagement Framework. This will promote student engagement at a senior level across the College and foster some cross Faculty and directorate collaboration.

- 3.5.5 **Learning Spaces:** In order to allow increased onsite teaching and facilitate streaming of classes, the College is currently progressively developing general teaching rooms to have a minimum digital 'kit-out' including cameras and desktops in rooms. At the very least this will allow 'live' streaming of classes where some disciplines may find this of benefit to students. In addition, Deans have worked with their teams and Estates on how best to re-purpose practical spaces to enhance learning and make use of potential curriculum development opportunities. This will continue to be a key area of activity for the foreseeable future.
- 3.5.6 **Digital Access and Student Connectivity:** A continued priority for the College is ensuring that all learners have access to hardware they can use to access learning. Last year, the College invested almost £1.3m on a laptop loan scheme, purchasing 2000 laptops. Every student who requested a college laptop, booked a slot and turned up on the day, received a laptop. The College will continue the laptop scheme again this academic year and currently students are collecting devices from campus, the committee will appreciate the massive logistical and extra workload this will be for many areas across the College.
- 3.5.7 **Staff Support for Digital Delivery:** The Learning and Teaching Academy will continue to provide a comprehensive range of developmental activities and resources to support individual staff and curriculum teams. A schedule of activity is available on [webpages](#).

4 Impact and Implications

- 4.1 Covid restrictions will continue to impact on learning, teaching, assessment and student support services for the foreseeable future. The impact of physical distancing will limit numbers of students for on-site activities.
- 4.2 There will be implications for our physical and digital learning spaces requiring space planning and investment to create a more sustainable and effective environment.
- 4.3 Continued investment in staff development and supporting student digital skills to navigate and progress in this new environment is imperative and will form part of plans for the coming year.