

## Board of Management Learning & Teaching Committee

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Tuesday 14 February 2022</b>
<b>Paper No.</b>	<b>LTC3-F</b>
<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>4.6</b>
<b>Subject of Paper</b>	<b>Learning and Teaching Update</b>
<b>FOISA Status</b>	<b>Disclosable</b>
<b>Primary Contact</b>	<b>Dr Claire Carney</b>
<b>Date of production</b>	<b>February 2022</b>
<b>Action</b>	<b>For Discussion and Decision</b>

### 1. Recommendations

1.1 The Committee is asked to note and discuss key elements of Learning and Teaching update.

### 2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on progress on Learning and Teaching and proposals for changes to delivery model for 23/24 and onwards.

### 3. Consultation

3.1 The contents and substance of the paper have been developed, discussed and reviewed with the Student Experience Group (Deans and Director of Student Experience), the Senior Management Team, the Associate Dean Forum, Curriculum Head forum. Consultation was also sought via the Local Negotiation Committee.

## 4. Key Insights

The following sections highlight key Learning and Teaching updates and developments:

- **Structure of the Academic Year:** The Vice Principal Student Experience is leading a project to restructure the academic year from 3 blocks to 2 semesters and accompanying reduction in global course hours at FE and HE levels. Because of the far-reaching complications and the sensitivities of the work a set of key principles have been defined and include:
  - Maintain and enhance quality of learning and teaching through use of Active, Blended and Connected
  - A model that develops students who can adapt and thrive in an increasingly changing world, can flourish in a modern blended and digital working environment. (linked with City Attributes work below)
  - The college calendar once agreed will incorporate Flexibility. Course teams will work within a certain amount of total weeks and global hours and will define thereafter allocation of hours to units.

A working group has been formed and consultation events have been held with key groups to socialise and gather feedback. Work must be complete by mid February 2023 for implementation in academic year 23/24. **See Appendix 1 for full paper shared with the LNC and associated detail on supporting mechanisms.**

- **Portfolio review:** In line with the Student Academic Experience Strategy, every Faculty is reviewing its portfolio to ensure delivery of a relevant work- related portfolio meeting employer and sectoral demands ensuring equality, diversity and inclusivity and integrate sustainability and environmental impact management. The review is being conducted considering changed Faculty structures, expected further reductions in credits and flat cash funding.

## 5. Impact and Implications

**5.1 Systems:** Any proposed changes to the structure of the academic year and delivery of methods will impact across most systems and processes of the College. As such it is imperative that Student Records, Timetabling and Performance are all informed and engaged as early as possible in the planning cycle. Whilst there will be the same quantity of work throughout the year to support curriculum delivery, the processes that are currently repeated 3 times per session (prior to and during each block) will only be necessary twice per annum. This should permit efficiencies through concentration of similar activities twice pa (e.g., enrolment, resulting, timetabling, etc.).

**5.2 Student Outcomes:** We will carefully monitor impact on student experience via the 'My student Experience Survey' and regular student feedback from class reps. In addition, mitigations around catch-up classes will be incorporated to ensure student progress.

**5.3 Staff development:** In early 2023 the LTA will undertake work on supporting curriculum teams through the process of curriculum design. This will comprise a combination of central provision and bespoke sessions for course teams. The particular focus will be on supporting teams to undertake the ABC Learning Design process that allows them to consider the best combination of content, activity and assessment to meet the course learning outcomes. In addition, support will consider how best to facilitate active, blended and connected learning using Canvas as a hub.

**5.4 Financial:** There are potential positive financial implications with reduced hours proposed. Comparing the proposed reduced courses for most courses would potentially save c£3.3m of lecturer cost. The aim stated at 3.16 is to allocate a budget of £500k proportionately to each faculty to support and maximise student performance and outcomes. The potential staff saving will be reduced where specialist lecturers become underutilised.

## Structure of Academic Year: proposed changes for 23/24

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to share and consult with TU colleagues on proposals supported by SMT for changes to the structure of the Academic Year. The paper seeks the views and opinions of our TU colleagues and we would welcome a written response in advance of the next LNC meeting on 26 January 2023.

The paper focusses on the proposed changes for consultation:

1. Adoption of a College two-semester system with an inter-semester week (for staff training and development, and for student 'catch-up').
2. Reduction in Global Course Hours:
  - a. for Full Time FE level: from 531 to 508 (reduction of 23 hours, less than 40 minutes a week over 36 weeks)
  - b. for Full Time HE level from 531 to 486 (reduction of 45 hours which is a reduction of circa 1.25 hours a week over 36 weeks).
  - *Please note that these figures are inclusive of 1 hour guidance per week in each case.*
  - It is important to note that the Academic Curriculum Calendar once agreed will incorporate **flexibility**. Course teams will work within a certain number of total weeks and global course hours and will decide the allocation of those hours to units or modules (section 3.4)
3. The new Academic Curriculum Calendar for 2023/24 (Appendix 1)

The Academic Curriculum Calendar requires approval by the end of January 2023 for implementation in 2023/24 when full-time student recruitment commences to ensure student funding is in place.

The proposals could be considered as part of the 19 Mitigations as there are potential financial savings from their introduction, but the primary aim of semesterisation and introduction of global hours is to adapt the delivery method to create a learning environment that places more responsibility on the learner through independent and asynchronous learning, reducing guided, dependent learning and creating the kinds of learners who will make successful transitions to work and higher education (section 3).

### 2. Consultation

The work has been led by a small working group which has liaised with the Student Experience Group, Faculty leadership teams, the AD and CH Fora and the Students' Association. As the proposals have now been presented by the working group and supported by SMT, consultation will now be sought from our TU colleagues. The following detailed insights provide the relevant detail on the proposals.

### 3. Key Insights

3.1 A key aspect of the Student Academic Experience Strategy is to position students at the centre (City Student) and to develop a set of City Attributes that reflect the professional and personal skills required for dealing with complexity, ambiguity and change. We are mindful of students' needs and expectations and the complex digital and technological world of work and further study they will enter. To develop these kinds of attributes our learning and teaching delivery methods are adapting to ensure they are Active, Blended and Connected.

3.2 Our approach is future facing, and in keeping with developments across the Tertiary Education sector following the adaptations and advances made to learning and teaching delivery methods during COVID. The College made huge advances during this time, investing in an accessible, innovative and adaptable Virtual Learning Environment (Canvas) developing online learning resources and integrating assessments to reduce the assessment burden for staff and students. This development is also in keeping with the new Next Gen HN awards that focus on:

- *Larger and fewer units of learning to significantly reduce assessment load and encourage more integrated learning, teaching and assessment approaches.*
- *Significantly reduced assessment load for both learners and staff.*
- *Digital technology used across delivery to enhance and support effective, flexible and learner-centred assessment, learning and teaching approaches.*

3.3 Further, there is a widely recognised challenge around the transition of students moving from college to university and entering an environment where there is much-reduced contact time and a high reliance on independent learning. Reduced contact time also has the potential benefit of allowing students to continue working or fulfilling other responsibilities, such as caring for relatives, whilst studying.

The College Learning & Teaching Academy, in conjunction with Edinburgh Napier University and Glasgow Caledonian University, is leading a QAA-funded project looking at the learning and teaching experience of students who move from college to university. Early outcomes have identified that major issues in L&T transition are:

- differences in teaching styles between college and university (though this may be necessary in some circumstances);
- the more active, self-directed, independent learning required at university; and
- the enhanced academic and meta-skills required, including information skills, academic writing, critical thinking and self-management.

Our challenge now is to consider how, whilst maintaining a focus on technical skills, we will create a learning environment that places more responsibility on the learner through independent and asynchronous learning, reducing guided, dependent learning and creating the kinds of learners who will make successful transitions to work and higher education.

3.4 Because of the far-reaching complications and the sensitivities of reviewing the structure of the academic year it is important to define key principles. These include:

- Maintaining and enhancing **quality of learning and teaching** through use of our Active, Blended and Connected approach.
- Development of a model that **develops students** who can adapt and thrive in an increasingly changing world and can flourish in a modern blended and digital working environment.

- The College Calendar once agreed will incorporate **flexibility**. Course teams will work within a certain number of total weeks and global course hours and will decide the allocation of those hours to units or modules.
  - Decisions about the best and most appropriate way to do this will vary from curriculum to curriculum, year to year and level to level. That includes decisions about the best blend of online and classroom delivery, and the best split between teaching contact, directed learning that students do as guided by their lecturers outside of the classroom, and assessment.
  - This approach recognises that some units of study are less ‘taxing’ than others with the same credit value, so could be delivered in smaller number of hours

## **Background**

3.5 Currently, the standard allocation of Full Time teaching course hours is 531 hours (including guidance of 36 hours).

3.6 It is often said that the College is ‘funded’ to deliver 40 hours of learning for 1 credit (SFC *Credit Guidance for Colleges AY 2020-21*). It is important to highlight that SFC Funding is provided at a high level: the total value of grant we receive is in return for a total volume of credits delivered. Therefore, funding is not calculated on the basis of credits and curriculum mix, nor is there a direct link between the funding of a credit and the hours allocated to deliver.

3.7 In turn, and importantly, the notional learning hours related to credits (SCQF *Credit Points Explained: Notional Learning Hours 2017*) are a student-focussed measure and include all of the learning activities that are required of them to achieve the learning outcomes, including lecturer contact hours and self-directed learning.

- *Notional learning hours might include activities such as: reading course materials prior to attending a classroom session; using libraries or learning resource centres for reading and research; watching an online presentation; attending and participating in formal teaching sessions; practical work in workshops and other locations; and activities focussed on consolidating what has been learned or on the application of knowledge, understanding and skills within the workplace. It should be noted that this list of suggestions is not exhaustive nor are they activities mutually exclusive.*

3.8 Separately, it must also be noted that in line with the NWPA (effective August 2019), ‘the length of College sessions, the academic year and College timetables will be determined by the College’. In addition, these proposals would not constitute changes to the terms and conditions of employment for our teaching staff as set out in the National Working Practices Agreement NWPA.

## **Move to Two Semesters**

3.9 A working group was formed to undertake investigations and research across the sector. The working group consisted of the VPSE, two Deans, and a number of ADs and CHs from across each of the faculties. The group investigated the implications for delivery for a move to a 2-semester system and reduced global hours. The group first considered the advantages and disadvantages of a 3-block system versus a 2-semester approach. Many had experience of the latter within the College or at other institutions and felt that it offers learners a longer period of learning in which to complete units, thus easing academic stress. A list of advantages and disadvantages for both approaches was developed by the group and is outlined in Table 1.

There was also recognition there are fewer academic administration pressure points (timetabling/resulting, etc.) in the year with a two-semester schedule.

Table 1. Two Semesters versus three Blocks:

Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons
<b>3 Blocks x 12 weeks</b>		<b>2 Semesters x 18 weeks</b>	
familiar system and current College systems	3 sets of 'final' assessment periods for students and therefore over-assessment	longer sustained period of L&T to embed principles and facilitate skills practice both within the contact hours and the total 18-week period of learning.	Impact on current College systems, particularly Enquirer which will need to be adapted
shorter 's spurts': student is motivated by completing a number of units after only 12 weeks - motivated to progress to the next period of learning having achieved a third of the course.	need to develop 3 timetabling periods ie increased administration	provides students with more time to absorb challenging course materials.	less easy to track student progress as resulting is only required at end of teaching period - reduced to 2. Data from Enquirer will not reveal progress until January (as opposed to November). This increases the importance and need for formative assessment and "outcome progress monitoring" within each curriculum area so that early interventions can be implemented where required.
		potentially allows a smoother and longer transition to college and allows students more time to adjust before assessment.	Move will require curriculum design for all courses
		If a student is absent for 1-2 weeks, they have typically missed 2-4 hours of learning per unit as opposed to Block system where learner would have missed 3-6 hours for each unit	
		Reduced resulting – staff have a focus/ pressure on resulting for 2 periods in the year rather than 3.	
		Need for only 2 timetabling periods as opposed to 3, saving CH and administrator time for other activities	
		Potentially increases staff utilisation. Block system necessitates Jan starts commencing week 5/6 of Block 2 - staff member on Jan start TT may be unutilised week 1-5 in Block 2 (awaiting the start of Jan start courses). Semester system permits Jan starts to commence week 1 Semester 2 therefore potentially fully utilising all staff.	

3.10 It is also proposed to have an 'inter-semester' week between Semester 1 and 2 (in January) with some scheduled hours for each course to allow L&T for students who have not achieved as expected during the semester, and to facilitate a period of development activities, preparation and quality enhancement of L&T prior to Semester 2 in January. This is necessary and important to reinforce the College's focus on the development and quality of L&T.

**3.11 Given the range of benefits, it is proposed therefore that the College moves to a two-semester system with effect from AY 23-24.** It is also proposed that an inter-semester week for staff training and development and student 'catch-up' is built into the structure of the academic year.

### **Reduction in Global Allocation of Hours**

3.12 As set out in section 3.1- 3.3, our challenge now is to consider how, whilst maintaining a focus on technical skills, we will create a learning environment that places more responsibility on the learner through independent and asynchronous learning, reducing guided, dependent learning and creating the kinds of learners who will make successful transitions to work and higher education.

3.13 The working group reviewed other colleges' allocation of hours and concluded that this topic is currently under active discussion across the sector, with most colleges looking to reduce allocation of hours. This review demonstrated wide variability but with a general consensus that lower levels of study as defined by the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework require more direct contact time. In addition, the College Development Network is currently assessing delivery hours and methods across every college to bring a level of understanding across the college sector.

3.14 There was agreement within the working group on the need for autonomy within each course for the scheduling of individual units. Synchronous, online, in person, integrated, etc. approaches were all discussed, and the view was that each curricular area should be able to **design the delivery and hours of each course within a set budget of curricular area course hours**. This would permit the splitting of course hours according to course level and the amount of practical/skills practice within the course. This was felt necessary to meet the needs of both the learners and the subject delivery.

3.15 There was general agreement from the working group and from consultation with the AD and CH Fora that FE learners would benefit from having more direct lecturer contact hours than HE learners.

3.16 In addition to global course hours it is proposed that each faculty have a budgeted allocation of hours to assign where appropriate in order to:

- support learners requiring additional tuition to improve outcomes; and
- for the development of new courses and course materials aligned with the priorities outlined in the Student Academic Experience Strategy.

3.17 Proposed Allocation of Hours: The table below (Table 2) shows the academic year with potential scheduling and the associated hours and savings.



**Table 2: Proposals for reduced hours across 3 Blocks and 2 Semesters**

	<b>3 Blocks FT Course</b>	<b>2 Semesters FT FE 23-24</b>	<b>2 Semesters FT HE 23-24</b>
<b>Teaching Hours</b>	531	508.5	486.0
Weeks	36	36	36
Hours for 15 units	495	472.5	450
Average hours for 15	33.0	31.5	30.0
Guidance hours	36	36	36
Standard TT session (mins)		105	100
Standard TT session per unit		18	18
Average teaching mins per unit		1,890	1,800
Average teaching hours per unit		31.5	30.0
Average FT Course hours per week		13.1	12.5
Guidance hours		1.0	1.0
<b>Average total FT course hours per week</b>		<b>14.13</b>	<b>13.5</b>

3.18 For FE courses moving to two semesters the proposal is to reduce global course hours by an average of 40 minutes per week and for HE by 1.25 hours per week.

3.19 The table above is for the 'majority' of courses, but account will be taken of those which are bound by a regulatory body and necessary employer requirement: for example, Nautical students on compressed academic courses who are in class 35 hours per week completing multiple mandatory professional courses and industrial experience (up to 12 months at sea) within a 150-week programme.

**3.20 It is proposed therefore that the College moves to a reduced global allocation of hours for both FE and HE with effect from AY 23-24.**

**3.21 Next steps:**

- The LTA will support curriculum teams through the process of curriculum redesign required by the move to two semesters and how best to utilise global course hours. This will include tools to support integration of active, blended and connected learning into new course designs and will consider the range of activities and assessment options that will facilitate course learning outcomes.
- During inter-block week in March 2023 a series of workshops will be offered to support this process and the Learning and Teaching Conference on 7 March 2023 will address the theme of 'reimagining and transforming learning'. In addition, a series of bespoke workshops will be offered alongside a suite of online resources.

- The working group will also develop a series of exemplar timetables to support curricular teams in designing timetables for next year.

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**DRAFT COLLEGE CALENDAR & CURRICULUM PLANNER 2023-24**

The calendar is a standard framework to plan and deliver the curriculum while recognising flexibility is also required to ensure successful delivery.

Academic Year Weeks	FT FE Block Teaching week	FT HE Block Teaching week	Evening HNC & Cert	Evening units/ leisure	Saturday classes	Holidays - 62	Holidays - 62.5	Holidays - 63	Holidays - 64	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	College Notes / Events / Comments
1										31-Jul	01-Aug	02-Aug	03-Aug	04-Aug	05-Aug	
2										07-Aug	08-Aug	09-Aug	10-Aug	11-Aug	12-Aug	Teaching staff holidays end
3										14-Aug	15-Aug	16-Aug	17-Aug	18-Aug	19-Aug	Teaching staff holidays end
4										21-Aug	22-Aug	23-Aug	24-Aug	25-Aug	26-Aug	FT FE & HE Induction
5	1	1	1	1	1					28-Aug	29-Aug	30-Aug	31-Aug	01-Sep	02-Sep	FT FE & HE Teaching starts
6	2	2	2	2	2					04-Sep	05-Sep	06-Sep	07-Sep	08-Sep	09-Sep	
7	3	3	3	3	3					11-Sep	12-Sep	13-Sep	14-Sep	15-Sep	16-Sep	
8	4	4	4	4	4	1	1	1	1	18-Sep	19-Sep	20-Sep	21-Sep	22-Sep	23-Sep	September Weekend
9	5	5	5	5	5	1	1	1	1	25-Sep	26-Sep	27-Sep	28-Sep	29-Sep	30-Sep	September Weekend
10	6	6	6	6	5					02-Oct	03-Oct	04-Oct	05-Oct	06-Oct	07-Oct	
11	7	7	7	7	6					09-Oct	10-Oct	11-Oct	12-Oct	13-Oct	14-Oct	
12						5	5	5	5	16-Oct	17-Oct	18-Oct	19-Oct	20-Oct	21-Oct	October Week
13	8	8	8	8	7					23-Oct	24-Oct	25-Oct	26-Oct	27-Oct	28-Oct	
14	9	9	9	9	8					30-Oct	31-Oct	01-Nov	02-Nov	03-Nov	04-Nov	
15	10	10	10	10	9					06-Nov	07-Nov	08-Nov	09-Nov	10-Nov	11-Nov	
16	11	11	11	11	10					13-Nov	14-Nov	15-Nov	16-Nov	17-Nov	18-Nov	
17	12	12	12	12	11					20-Nov	21-Nov	22-Nov	23-Nov	24-Nov	25-Nov	
18	13	13	13	13	12					27-Nov	28-Nov	29-Nov	30-Nov	01-Dec	02-Dec	
19	14	14	14	14	13					04-Dec	05-Dec	06-Dec	07-Dec	08-Dec	09-Dec	
20	15	15	15	15	14					11-Dec	12-Dec	13-Dec	14-Dec	15-Dec	16-Dec	
21	16	16	16	16						18-Dec	19-Dec	20-Dec	21-Dec	22-Dec	23-Dec	Students finish 21st
22						5	5	5	5	25-Dec	26-Dec	27-Dec	28-Dec	29-Dec	30-Dec	College closed
23						5	5	5	5	01-Jan	02-Jan	03-Jan	04-Jan	05-Jan	06-Jan	
24	17	17	17	17	15					08-Jan	09-Jan	10-Jan	11-Jan	12-Jan	13-Jan	Students return 8th Jan
25	18	18	18	18	16					15-Jan	16-Jan	17-Jan	18-Jan	19-Jan	20-Jan	
26										22-Jan	23-Jan	24-Jan	25-Jan	26-Jan	27-Jan	Full time catch up
27	1	1	19	1	1					29-Jan	30-Jan	31-Jan	01-Feb	02-Feb	03-Feb	
28	2	2	20	2	2					05-Feb	06-Feb	07-Feb	08-Feb	09-Feb	10-Feb	
29	3	3	21	3	3	2	2	2	2	12-Feb	13-Feb	14-Feb	15-Feb	16-Feb	17-Feb	Teaching staff mid term break
30	4	4	22	4	4					19-Feb	20-Feb	21-Feb	22-Feb	23-Feb	24-Feb	
31	5	5	23	5	5					26-Feb	27-Feb	28-Feb	29-Feb	01-Mar	02-Mar	
32	6	6	24	6	6					04-Mar	05-Mar	06-Mar	07-Mar	08-Mar	09-Mar	
33	7	7	25	7	7					11-Mar	12-Mar	13-Mar	14-Mar	15-Mar	16-Mar	
34	8	8	26	8	8					18-Mar	19-Mar	20-Mar	21-Mar	22-Mar	23-Mar	
35	9	9	27	9		1	1	1	1	25-Mar	26-Mar	27-Mar	28-Mar	29-Mar	30-Mar	
36						5	5	5	5	01-Apr	02-Apr	03-Apr	04-Apr	05-Apr	06-Apr	College closed 7th
37						5	5	5	5	08-Apr	09-Apr	10-Apr	11-Apr	12-Apr	13-Apr	College closed 10th
38	10	10	28	10	9					15-Apr	16-Apr	17-Apr	18-Apr	19-Apr	20-Apr	
39	11	11	29	11	10					22-Apr	23-Apr	24-Apr	25-Apr	26-Apr	27-Apr	
40	12	12	30	12	11					29-Apr	30-Apr	01-May	02-May	03-May	04-May	
41	13	13	31	13	12	1	1	1	1	06-May	07-May	08-May	09-May	10-May	11-May	College closed 6th
42	14	14	32	14	13					13-May	14-May	15-May	16-May	17-May	18-May	
43	15	15	33	15		1	1	1	1	20-May	21-May	22-May	23-May	24-May	25-May	College closed 26th
44	16	16	34	16	14	1	1	1	1	27-May	28-May	29-May	30-May	31-May	01-Jun	College closed 29th
45	17	17	35	17	15					03-Jun	04-Jun	05-Jun	06-Jun	07-Jun	08-Jun	
46	18	18	36	18	16					10-Jun	11-Jun	12-Jun	13-Jun	14-Jun	15-Jun	Full Time Courses End
47										17-Jun	18-Jun	19-Jun	20-Jun	21-Jun	22-Jun	
48										24-Jun	25-Jun	26-Jun	27-Jun	28-Jun	29-Jun	Teaching staff finish 28th
49						5	5	5	5	01-Jul	02-Jul	03-Jul	04-Jul	05-Jul	06-Jul	
50						5	5	5	5	08-Jul	09-Jul	10-Jul	11-Jul	12-Jul	13-Jul	
51						5	5	5	5	15-Jul	16-Jul	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	
52						5	5	5	5	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Jul	25-Jul	26-Jul	27-Jul	
1						5	5	5	5	29-Jul	30-Jul	31-Jul	01-Aug	02-Aug	03-Aug	
2						4	4.5	5	5	05-Aug	06-Aug	07-Aug	08-Aug	09-Aug	10-Aug	Teaching staff return
3									1	12-Aug	13-Aug	14-Aug	15-Aug	16-Aug	17-Aug	Teaching staff return
No of Evenings / Saturdays available per block					Hols	62.0	62.5	63.0	64.0	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	
					1					17	18	18	18		16	
					2					16	18	18	18		16	
										33	36	36	36	0	32	