

Board of Management

Learning, Teaching & Student Experience Committee

Date of Meeting	20 September 2023
Paper No.	LTSEC1-E
Agenda Item	4.2
Subject of Paper	Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Update
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	Dr Claire Carney
Date of production	13 September 2023
Action	For Discussion and Decision

1. Recommendations

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

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on progress on Learning, Teaching and Student Experience.

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).

4. Key Insights

The following sections highlight key Learning, Teaching and Student Experience updates and developments:

4.1 Recruitment: The committee is reminded of the 10% credit reduction introduced in academic year 22/23 for academic year 23/24 leaving us with a target of circa 15700 credits reduced from 183000 the previous year. It must be noted that the college has in previous years delivered between 180000 and 190000 credits, so this reduction is significant in terms of student places and courses delivered. Course removals were conducted as part of the annual portfolio review process and reducing cohorts was conducted as part of rebalancing and normal practice in order to achieve credit targets. Every year the college has to balance the numbers, converting applications to enrolment as students can hold multiple offers from different college and not choosing. At this very early stage in the year, the College is expected to meet its projected college credit target

4.2 Induction and Transition: In order to maximise conversion and retention, the College now has a comprehensive and mature approach to induction and Transition. This approach begins once a student has accepted a place from the college and for some this is many months in advance of starting their course, thus the aim is to 'keep students warm' and ensure they convert their offer. The Get Ready for College campaign is a joint approach from the Student Experience Directorate and the Faculties with regular and appropriate communication 'drops'. This culminates over the summer period to induction weeks and merged Freshers Fair jointly delivered with City Student Association.

- *For noting:* This year the Scottish Funding Council has changed funding cut-off dates whereby funding can be claimed for students who remain after just 5 weeks at college. The previous cut off was beginning of November, which had a major impact on finances as no funding was received for student who left before this date (despite the bulk of effort being fore fronted at the beginning of session). This brings us in line with the University sector who have had this in place for a number of years.

4.3 Impact of ASOS and strike action: there is no doubt that Action Short of Strike and local strike action is impacting our students, most directly with those who need certification to progress to or upwards in employments. The college has put in a whole series of mitigations often requiring considerable additional work and effort, for which we are especially grateful of the majority of staff who are doing everything they can for our students. At the commencement of the ASOS action around 30% of full-time results were still to be reported. In most cases, students are awaiting the uploading of results by lecturers. To date the level of results outstanding has reduced to 20%.

As contingency, the College met with SQA early to determine alternative approaches to assessment. In response to their feedback, guidance was issued to all staff establishing extraordinary arrangements for assessment and resulting, where this might be necessary. Adhering to SQA's advice, the guidance set out an approach to holistic assessment and included Collegiate Assessment Teams and Internal Verification through Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) panels as well as parameters for managing internal progression. Meetings with curriculum teams continued to refine the guidance to adapt to local live issues.

Central and local comms with students were coordinated to provide reassurance over completion of courses and the potential for progression. Our starting point was to

ensure a no detriment policy, providing assurance to students they would not be penalised due to the delay in their results and to inform them of their options for catching-up on work that has either not been completed due to industrial dispute, or where a resit is required following a delayed assessment decision. At a College level we have held discussions with the Students' Association, who are also represented within our Committee decision making framework. Student feedback has been collected locally, and through our complaints process. The Principal has written to students on two occasions to provide reassurance in relation to internal progression commitments.

External Progression to University: We typically have in the region of 1500 learners articulating each year, and others progressing to year one of university. All were impacted by the inability to confirm their places. Universities were contacted to alert them to the situation and the College worked with our articulation partner institutions to obtain commitments to honour offers, receiving early confirmation of arrangements from Glasgow Caledonian University and University of the West of Scotland. For those students holding offers with other universities, curriculum teams worked to reach unilateral agreements using predicted grades, where necessary to allow progression. In support of this, 'comfort' letters were provided for students. This was an on-going process, undertaken on a case-by-case basis, involving hundreds of students. All universities to date they have been hugely supportive, operating a no-detriment policy, to ensure no student loses out on a place due to the industrial action taking place in both colleges and universities.

The most problematic area is those students who require certification for onward employment and in these cases, there is little if anything we can do other than provide a 'letter of comfort' indicating the students' engagement at college and their potential for success. A further issue which may arise if the strikes continue is the impact on apprentices. To date employers have been kept informed and hence kept 'onside' but ongoing strike action may see a change in that response.

The Committee is reminded that ASOS is a sector wide issue related to pay negotiations. At a local level the EIS have also began a local strike consisting of 15 days over 4 weeks commencing in week 2 of the academic year. Simultaneously the EIS and Unison both announced national strike dates for 7 and 26 September. The strikes are timed to create maximum impact on new students joining the college from school where they have had 3 academic years of disrupted learning through covid and school strikes.

Our progressing students have had to similarly endure years of disruption through covid and annual college strikes. We await to see the full impact on continuation and attainment of students over the coming weeks, but both are expected to have a negative impact on student work and study progression and financial stability for the college through loss of student fees.

4.4 SAES: City Attributes Following extensive work over academic year 22/23, City Attributes were approved by the Committee in May 2023. The aim this year is to pilot implementation with a number of classes across the College with full cross college implementation for academic year 24/25.

4.5 SAES: Student Success Framework (SSF): The SSF is a key plank of the SAES 'City Student Journey' aim. The purpose of the Framework is to provide a strategic overview of what the College currently implements to ensure success for **all** students. It is a high-level framework but with supporting underpinning activities that are impactful and evidence based. Development of the Framework will be led by Dr Derek

Roberston and a small cross college working group. The work will also help shape the future of the Student Experience Directorate which now encompasses Learning, Teaching and Student Experience.

4.6 Annual Learning and Teaching Conference: The conference will take place January 23 2024. The Conference will focus on inclusivity and once again draw practice from across the college and from the sector. It is a wonderful opportunity for practitioners to get together to share and learn with each other. As usual we have a number of topics of interest including the use of Artificial Intelligence.

4.7 Changes in the Student Experience Directorate: Following the retirement of Gillian Plunkett in May 2023, Derek Robertson was appointed as the Director of Student Experience on 5 June. Alongside this some changes were made to the composition of the directorate. In order to bring all learning and teaching focussed support activity into one directorate the Learning and Teaching Academy (comprising Library, Learning Technology and Lecturer Development) was brought into Student Experience to sit alongside Student Wellbeing and Support and Student Development. Student Recruitment and Admissions were moved into the Finance Directorate. Student Experience are currently going through a consultation period around the business case for organisational change, so the final structure of the Directorate is not yet in place.

4.8 Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE) : Provision of TQFE was moved to the University of Strathclyde following a procurement process over the summer of 2023. The intention behind the move is to initiate a partnership with Strathclyde that covers the delivery of TQFE and other opportunities for collaboration on learning and teaching in tertiary education. This is guided by a Memorandum of Understanding that was signed by both institutions and which includes an opportunity for the secondment of a College lecturer to work directly with the University TQFE team during the first presentation of the course. In total we have 18 students on the TQFE programme, 14 with funded places and 4 who are self funding.

4.9 Learning Support during transition and Induction: In the first weeks of this academic year the Student Development team coordinated a programme of learning support workshops aimed at supporting and promoting the development of study skills for incoming students. Labelled the '5 Steps to Success' the programme was delivered across the Student Development, Library and Learning Technology teams, covering subjects like notetaking, study planning, preparing for digital learning and getting the most from your library. Over Induction and Welcome weeks 16 workshops ran and the programme continues into the first semester, with the subjects changing to reflect the academic calendar.

4.10 Personal learning support plans (PLSPs): The central team of 11 Learning Support and Development Advisors based in Student Development work directly with students to assess their needs and to identify reasonable adjustments that will support their learning experience. The team work alongside students to agree individual support plans and then work with faculty teams to offer appropriate and individualised learning support. This year the number of Advisors has been increased to support the increasing number of students requiring support. To date this academic year, we have identified 2650 who have PLSPs or support referrals.

4.11 Free Breakfasts for Students: To support students during the cost-of-living crisis, the Student Engagement Team have once again instigated the Breakfast Club, providing free breakfasts to students every day at both City and Riverside Campuses. During semester students can select porridge or toast with a hot drink at no cost

between 8.30am and 9.30 am. We will monitor the campaign over the coming weeks to assess uptake.

5. Impact and Implications

5.1 Continual enhancement of L&T is a key aspect of the SAES. A key impact is improving the student learning experience.