

## **Board of Management Audit & Assurance Committee**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Tuesday 5 December 2023</b>
<b>Paper No.</b>	<b>AAC2-E</b>
<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>5.4.1</b>
<b>Subject of Paper</b>	<b>Internal Audit Report – Student Funding Business Process Review</b>
<b>FOISA Status</b>	<b>Disclosable</b>
<b>Primary Contact</b>	<b>Henderson Loggie</b>
<b>Date of production</b>	<b>28 November 2023</b>
<b>Action</b>	<b>For Discussion and Decision</b>

### **1. Recommendations**

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

## 2. Purpose of report

The purpose of this review is to provide management and the Audit and Assurance 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.

## 3. Key Insights

This internal audit of the Student Funding Business Process provides an outline of the objectives, scope, findings and graded recommendations as appropriate, together with management responses. This constitutes an action plan 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.

## 4. Impact and implications

Refer to internal audit report.

# City of Glasgow College

## Student Funding Business Process Review

Internal Audit report No: 2023/12

Draft issued: 27 November 2023

Final issued: 28 November 2023



# Contents

		<b>Page</b>
<b>Section 1</b>	<b>Management Summary</b>	
	• Background	1
	• Scope and Objectives	1
	• Audit Approach	1
	• Summary of Main Findings	2
	• Acknowledgements	2
<b>Section 2</b>	<b>Improvement Points</b>	<b>3 - 9</b>



# Management Summary

## Background

As part of the 2022/23 Internal Audit Plan, City of Glasgow College ('the College') has engaged with Henderson Loggie to conduct a business process review of the systems in place for Student Funding to identify opportunities, and facilitate the agreement of recommendations, for overall process improvements, or more efficient and effective use of the current systems in place.

## Scope and Objectives

The scope of this assignment was to carry out a review of the current procedures for the various stages of the student funding process (from enquiry through to student application, assessment, award and payment) with a view to identifying and removing waste from the process and proposing procedural improvements.

The main objectives of the assignment was to ensure that:

- the anticipated outcomes for all internal stakeholders from the student funding process are clearly defined;
- the value of services provided as part of the student funding process are quantified from a student perspective;
- the steps in the value chain are identified;
- steps that do not add value are identified with a view to eliminating them;
- steps that create value occur in the right sequence; and
- arrangements are in place to deliver consistency in the student funding process by embedding any agreed revisions to the process in updated operating procedures for the College.

## Audit Approach

Through conducting a series of interviews with members from the Student Funding Team, including the Head of Student Recruitment and Funding, Funding Co-ordinator, and Head of Student Support and Wellbeing, we examined the efficiency and effectiveness of core processes relating to further education (FE) student funding. This included the review of processes established to manage FE student bursaries, EMA, Discretionary / Hardship funding, and Childcare funding.

We used a range of business improvement tools to:

- identify stakeholder and student needs;
- identify opportunities for removing inefficiency and waste from the current student funding processes; and
- map out revised processes which will create a flow between value creating steps to improve the process.

We then prioritised the issues, in discussion with the Head of Student Recruitment and Funding, to develop an action plan to drive improvement.

We attempted to seek feedback from representatives from the Student Association; however, no one was available during our audit.



### Summary of Main Findings

The review identified six areas for investigation or improvement and all the identified actions are designed to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. No issues were identified during our review which would subject the College to material or significant risk.

One high priority area for investigation or improvement noted during the review (from the six improvement points identified) was:

- Management to review how TeQuios could integrate with UnitE to improve the flow of information into the student funding system so that there is one-source of truth, and reduce any duplication of action, and therefore resource and time spent, by the Student Funding Team associated with updating information manually, such as course and module information and coding.

### Acknowledgments

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff from the Student Funding Team at the City of Glasgow College who helped us during our business process review.



# Improvement Points Identified from Facilitated Session

We held a series of discussions with members of the College's Student Funding Team with the aim to identify areas of strength and weakness within the current student funding processes and identify areas that could be enhanced to improve arrangements.

Using a range of business process improvement tools, the Student Funding Team were encouraged to provide input, and all points were captured. This includes a walkthrough of the student funding system, TeQuios, and the student funding assessment and student communication processes. We also completed a review of process documentation to allow better understanding of the control environment.

By understanding areas that work well and not so well through detailed review of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats via a SWOT analysis allowed opportunities for improvement to be identified.

Any threats to implementing possible solutions were also identified and discussed.

We also considered wastes in the current processes, falling into the seven waste categories originally devised by the automotive manufacturer Toyota. See below details of the seven wastes and some examples:

- **Transportation.** For example, the unnecessary movement of information, people, and switching between tasks too often, countless interruptions from colleagues;
- **Inventory.** For example, excessive information that takes up valuable time to export, or requires resources to manage it, or manual intervention for system integration;
- **Motion.** For example, unnecessary meetings or extra effort to find information or manual workarounds because of system inefficiencies;
- **Waiting.** For example, waiting for information of checks / sign offs to be completed before progressing to the next stage;
- **Overproduction.** Producing information that no one is going to use;
- **Overprocessing.** The process is doing more than is required; and,
- **Defects.** The production of defective information or delivery of a service that requires either a rework of data. Slow system access impacting the efficiency of completing tasks or bugs in systems.

On 16 November 2023, we discussed the potential areas for improvement with the Head of Student Recruitment and Funding. Improvement recommendations were then prioritised based on the impact (level of efficiency savings or cost benefit that could be obtained) as well as the ease of implementation.



# Improvement Points Identified from Facilitated Session (continued)

This was assessed by scoring improvement points against:

- i. the impact of the issue (1 = little impact on cost / savings, 10 = large impact on cost / savings), and
- ii. the effort required to remedy or change the issue (1= difficult to change / fix, 10 = easy to change or fix).

These scores were multiplied together to identify those items with the greatest potential for the delivery of significant savings and those items which could be changed with minimal difficulty. The priorities for implementing change were then set using a three-point scale.

The session categorised the six points raised as follows:

Priority Category	Number
High	1
Medium	2
Low	3

Details of these recommendations are noted below:





## Improvement Points Identified from Facilitated Session (continued)

High Priority Item			
No	Short Description	Detail	Management Comments
1	<b>TeQuios to interface with UnitE to ensure one source of student and course information</b>	<p>TeQuios, the student funding system, is used to centralise the key student funding application processes, such as for FE Bursaries, EMA, Childcare and Discretionary / Hardship funding. However, the system does not interface with UnitE, the system used to manage student and course information.</p> <p>Consequently, the Student Funding Team require to manually complete numerous information input tasks which is not good use of their time.</p> <p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TeQuios must be updated with course and module information to support the funding review process. However, as UnitE does not integrate with TeQuios, the team complete an exercise to copy and paste details from UnitE reports to TeQuios; and</li> <li>• Where there is a class or module code change mid-year (although instances can be low in number).</li> </ul> <p><b>Risk:</b> Time and resource to manually input information may result in instances of human error and further duplication of actions.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> A review into how TeQuios could integrate with UnitE should be completed to improve the flow of information into the student funding system and reduce the duplication of action by the Student Funding Team.</p>	<p>Inisoft has a module that we could purchase to update Tequios that would import codes and set up courses from UnitE at the start of the funding application process.</p> <p>Regarding in year changes to course codes and titles, we will explore with Inisoft whether the update they provide will assist with any changes.</p> <p>The Head of Student Recruitment and Funding and Funding Co-ordinator will contact Inisoft to meet on various issues including purchasing of module.</p>



## Student Funding Business Process Review

Medium Priority Items			
No	Short Description	Detail	Management Comments
2	<b>Poor system support from TeQuios supplier, Inisoft</b>	<p>TeQuios system is provided by an external provider, Inisoft, who also manage system support and a helpdesk. However, issues raised by the Student Funding Team to Inisoft are not being managed in line with the College's expectations.</p> <p>For example, an issue with uploading the Assessment Proformas for Childcare and Discretionary / Hardship Fund applications has been raised several times to Inisoft. However, despite multiple communications from the Student Funding Team, no resolution or timeline has been provided to staff, resulting in Student Assessment Proformas being stored separately from TeQuios. This is not in line with their contractual agreement.</p> <p><b>Risk:</b> The College does not receive good value from the agreement held with Inisoft and TeQuios is not one source of truth for the College's student funding arrangements.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> A review into the agreement with Inisoft should be completed and the supplier held to account for non-delivery of service support requests. A timeline for the resolution of issues reported should be provided so to set management expectations and where appropriate set in any agreements with the supplier for performance management purposes.</p>	<p>The Head of Student Recruitment and Funding will contact Inisoft for feedback on these issues and whether they can provide clarity on deadline and dates.</p>



## Student Funding Business Process Review

Medium Priority Items (Continued)			
No	Short Description	Detail	Management Comments
3	<b>The annual TeQuios system closure results in some applications being processed manually and offline</b>	<p>TeQuios is not the single source of information on student funding applications and provision. The online application process for applying for student funding closes briefly in February, to allow the Student Funding Team to complete checks on funding status of students receiving funding, and then at the end of March each year when the TeQuios system is closed to new applications. However, funding is still sought by students until the end of the academic year in June. There are also instances where some students cannot apply for Universal Credit during the summer months, such as HND Year 1 students, and therefore rely on funding from the College.</p> <p>Any Discretionary / Hardship funding applications processed after the system is closed are processed manually by the Student Funding Team with information retained on restricted shared files in line with internal funding procedures.</p> <p><b>Risk:</b> Information pertaining to applicant numbers and amounts may be incomplete in TeQuios resulting in reliance on management to identify applicants who are processed offline for inclusion in any management and performance reporting.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Management should review how additional investment into TeQuios modules could provide functionality so that new funding applications can be digitalised during periods when the system is closed e.g., February, when the funding team complete checks on current funding recipients, and from March to August.</p>	Contact Inisoft and see whether they could develop system and process in their system and if so any cost implications.



## Student Funding Business Process Review

Low Priority Items			
No	Short Description	Detail	Management Comments
4	<b>Student College Registration does not integrate with CAMS</b>	<p>When a student registers their place at the College, the course registration process does not include the student's automatic access to apply for funding through the student funding portal, CAMS. Instead, students have to reapply for CAMS via the portal. This results in the student duplicating actions for a process that could be streamlined.</p> <p><b>Risk:</b> The CAMS application process acts as an additional barrier for students accessing funding.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> The course registration process should automate registration for CAMS for all students.</p>	<p>Integration of College systems has been raised at various digital forums in the College and we will feedback recommendations from audit to the relevant group.</p>
5	<b>Ensuring that the student funding system is sustainable and meets the needs of the College</b>	<p>TeQuios does not provide capability to digitalise Assessment Proformas. Reporting from TeQuios is also not efficient, with reliance on the TeQuios system provider, Inisoft, producing the quarterly Further Education Statistics (FES) reports.</p> <p>A review into the future requirements from a student funding system is underway triggered by the five-year contract for Inisoft being halfway completed.</p> <p><b>Risk:</b> Future investment into a student funding system is not fit for purpose or future fit.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> As part of the review into extending the contract with Inisoft, an option appraisal should be completed that examine alternative systems against benefits, risks and costs to the College. This should include a review into the College developing an inhouse student funding system via its Enquirer platform to allow all applications to be digitalised and to ease reporting. Management reported that Enquirer interfaces with all College systems, including UnitE and the College's Finance System and therefore could be leveraged as a source of information to develop an inhouse system.</p>	<p>This will be included in future discussions with Inisoft and College IT systems and developments.</p> <p>Head of Student Recruitment and Funding and Funding Co-ordinator will look to develop process for this.</p> <p>Deadline March 2024.</p>



## Student Funding Business Process Review

Low Priority Items (Continued)			
No	Short Description	Detail	
6	<b>Internal procedures and guide require to be dated</b>	<p>Several internal team procedures and guides were not dated to ensure transparency that the processes and roles and responsibilities described remained applicable for the current academic year.</p> <p>On review no issues were noted with the information documented compared to the processes described and walked through with management.</p> <p><b>Risk:</b> Good housekeeping procedures are not adopted resulting in lack of staff awareness of steps to be followed in the current academic year.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Internal team procedures and guidance should adopt good version control practices i.e. be dated as part of their review for the current academic year.</p>	<p>The Head of Student Recruitment and Funding and the Funding Co-ordinator will review all documents and ensure they are updated.</p> <p>Deadline March 2024.</p>



---

**Aberdeen** 45 Queen's Road AB15 4ZN

**Dundee** The Vision Building, 20 Greenmarket DD1 4QB

**Edinburgh** Ground Floor, 11-15 Thistle Street EH2 1DF

**Glasgow** 100 West George Street, G2 1PP

**T:** 01224 322 100

**T:** 01382 200 055

**T:** 0131 226 0200

**T:** 0141 471 9870

**F:** 01224 327 911

**F:** 01382 221 240

**F:** 0131 220 3269

Henderson Loggie LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in Scotland with registered number SO301630 and is a member of PrimeGlobal, a global association of independent accounting firms, the members of which are separate and independent legal entities. Registered office is: The Vision Building, 20 Greenmarket, Dundee, DD1 4QB. All correspondence signed by an individual is signed for and on behalf of Henderson Loggie LLP. Reference to a 'partner' is to a member of Henderson Loggie LLP. A list of members' names is available for inspection at each of these addresses.

