

Board of Management Audit & Assurance Committee

Date of Meeting	Thursday 14 March 2024
Paper No.	AAC3-G
Agenda Item	5.3.2
Subject of Paper	Internal Audit Report – Quality Assurance & Enhancement
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	Henderson Loggie
Date of production	6 March 2024
Action	For Discussion and Decision

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 Quality Assurance and Enhancement 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.

LEVEL OF ASSURANCE

Good

City of Glasgow College

Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Internal Audit report No: 2024/06

Draft issued: 20 February 2024

Final issued: 6 March 2024



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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	Fundamental issue subjecting the organisations to material risk which requires to be addressed by management and the Audit and Assurance Committee as a matter of urgency.
Priority 2	Issue subjecting the organisations to significant risk, and which should be addressed by management as a priority.
Priority 3	Matters subjecting the organisations to minor risk or which, if addressed, will enhance efficiency and effectiveness.



Management Summary

Overall Level of Assurance

Good	System meets control objectives.
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Risk Assessment

This review focused on the controls in place to mitigate the following risks on the City of Glasgow College ('the College') Strategic Risk Register (as at December 2023):

- SR1 – Failure to support successful student outcomes and progression (Net Score 20, High);
- SR2 – Failure to establish an optimal pedagogical model (Net Score 5, Low); and
- SR9 – Failure to manage performance and achieve improved performance (Net Score 10, Medium).

Background

As part of the Internal Audit programme at the College for 2023/24 we carried out a review of the arrangements in place for quality assurance and enhancement. The Audit Needs Assessment, agreed with management and the Audit and Assurance Committee on 2 March 2022, identified this as an area where risk can arise and where Internal Audit can assist in providing assurances to the Principal and the Audit and Assurance Committee that the related control environment is operating effectively, ensuring risk is maintained at an acceptable level.

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and Education Scotland (ES) are in the process of refreshing quality arrangements to establish a single tertiary approach to quality assurance, improvement, and enhancement. The new arrangements are expected to commence in the Academic Year (AY) 2024-25.

In the interim, the SFC has published guidance that sets out the arrangements over the AY 2022-23 and AY 2023-24 (*SFC Guidance to Colleges and Universities on Quality AY 2022-23 and AY 2023-24: Refresh* (August 2023)). Recognising that the Guidance covers a period of transition, a few small changes and clarifications were documented.

The culture of quality assurance, improvement and enhancement should be demonstrated through the College's policies and practices.



Scope, Objectives and Overall Findings

This review took a deep dive into policies and practices from the wider College's approach to quality, improvement and enhancement to that of individual Faculties. We also reviewed the College's preparedness for the new quality framework planned for AY 2024-25.

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

Objective	Findings				Actions in Progress
	1	2	3	No. of Agreed Actions	
The objective of our audit was to obtain reasonable assurance that:					
1. The College has documented its approach to quality assurance, improvement, and enhancement with a clear focus for students via its Outcome Agreement and strategies.	Good	-	-	-	
2. Processes and procedures for self-evaluation ensure clear alignment between the strategic approach and day-to-day activity.	Good	-	-	-	
3. Enhancement and improvement activity identified within the College's Self-Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP) and areas identified for improvement by Education Scotland (August 2023) are being progressed.	Good	-	-	-	✓
4. Processes are established for the College to engage with external quality partners.	Good	-	-	-	✓
5. The quality processes ensure student partnership and engagement in line with sparqs' <i>Student Engagement Framework for Scotland</i> .	Good	-	-	1	✓
6. Appropriate governance processes are established to scrutinise the College's approach to quality, improvement, and enhancement.	Good	-	-	1	✓
Overall Level of Assurance	Good	-	-	2	
		System meets control objectives.			

Audit Approach

We assessed whether the above objectives have been met through discussion with the Depute Principal and Chief Operating Officer, the Director of Excellence, the Vice Principal Student Experience, the Director of Student Experience, and the four Faculty Deans. We also met with representatives from the Students' Association and walked through quality and enhancement arrangements with the Performance Team and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and STEM Compliance Manager.



Summary of Main Findings

Strengths

- The College's arrangements for quality assurance and enhancement align with the SFC Guidance to Colleges and Universities on Quality Academic Year (AY) 2022-23 and AY 2023-24: Refresh (August 2023);
- There is readiness for new Tertiary Enhancement and the change from ES to Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) cycle of inspections from August 2024;
- The College takes a strategic approach to quality assurance, improvement, and enhancement and has a dedicated Performance Team that is led by the Director of Excellence, who in turn reports to the Principal, ensuring top-management insight to quality enhancement arrangements;
- The College Strategic Plan 2021-2030 aims '*to deliver excellence in performance*' and aligns with the Glasgow Region's focus around quality, as set out within the Glasgow Colleges Regional Outcome Agreement;
- The College has an Operational Planning Cycle across Faculties and Directorates that ensures delivery of the strategy and links into the quality assurance and enhancement arrangements;
- The College has an established Quality Management Cycle (Procedures updated in November 2023) that involves review and reporting across three quality levels: course, the curriculum area, and Faculties as a whole. Central to the process is the identification of courses that are underperforming, particularly in terms of the successful completion of learners, and progress against the College achieving its Student Academic Experience Strategy;
- Student partnership and feedback is embedded within quality processes at a Faculty and College-wide levels. The College has an active Students' Association and Faculty / Class Rep programme that supports curriculum quality review and enhancement;
- On a day-to-day basis, processes are established for Faculties to self-evaluate to ensure that performance aligns to expected practice;
- Enhancement is central to the College quality culture. A new Curriculum Enhancement Process (CEP) is being introduced for the first time during the current academic year, as documented in the Quality Assurance and Evaluation Committee (QAEC) Quality Cycle Procedure (August 2023). It sets out Faculty requirements, the support provided to teaching staff i.e. key workshops, and the operational and governance framework that includes mid-year reviews of progress with the Vice Principal (VP) Student Experience, Deans and the Performance Team;
- Outcomes from ES inspections and thematic reviews are captured within the College's Enhancement Plan that adopts SMART practice. The latest Enhancement Plan (November 2023) captures the ES Improvements (August 2023) that are known to the College and being progressed and monitored via the quality assurance governance framework;
- There is a culture of continuous improvement. Within Faculties this is evidenced through Internal Verification (IV) which feeds into course refinement or lecturer continuous personal development (CPD). Internal audit processes are established and managed by the Performance Team. This provides a proactive mechanism of self-review of the College's compliance with external partner standards for action planning;
- The AY2023-24 Performance Team Annual Tasks spreadsheet is managed by the Performance Team to track the quality assurance programmes (internal and external) and reporting requirements across the academic year. The tracker includes roles and responsibilities of Performance Team Coordinators and other management staff who should be involved from across the College. This supports resource planning for the Performance Team;
- Our work indicated that the College's arrangements align with sparqs' *Student Engagement Framework for Scotland* and the *Six Features of Student Engagement*, i.e. the College ensures a culture of engagement, student as partners, values the student's contribution, responds to diversity, focus on enhancement and change, and provides appropriate resources and support;



Summary of Main Findings (Continued)

Strengths (Continued)

- There is a robust operational and governance framework established that ensures that quality review outcomes from across the College are reviewed for enhancements and any co-dependency;

Opportunities for Enhancement

No material weaknesses were identified.

However, we noted the following opportunities for enhancement to existing arrangements, in order to improve the transparency of current arrangements in key documentation:

- The Quality Management Cycle procedures (November 2023) should be enhanced by defining the roles and responsibilities of Faculty and Class Representatives and the Students' Association in reviewing quality review outcomes and enhancement plans;
- The question '*Has this report been shared with students?*' on the Faculty Quality Report template should be reworded so that it is more specific to ensure clarity around requirements, such as '*Has the report been shared with students via the Faculty Board?*'. This action was completed at reporting and identified as *fully implemented*.
- The Quality Management Cycle Procedures should also be updated to refer the new CEP and link into its guidance published in August 2023;
- All quality cycle procedures and governance group terms of reference (Academic Board, QAEC, Student Academic Experience Committee (SAEC) etc) should be reviewed to ensure that references to the Performance Committee now refer to the Convenors' Committee;

There is also work underway, led by the Depute Principal and Chief Operating Officer, to re-communicate the purpose and roles and responsibilities of groups within the College quality assurance framework. As part of that activity, the reporting needs of all groups within the quality assurance framework should be assessed to ensure there is no duplication of effort by management and discussions at groups remain efficient and aligned to the group's purpose.

Acknowledgments

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff at City of Glasgow College and the Students' Association who helped us during the course of our audit.

Main Findings and Action Plan

Objective 1 - The College has documented its approach to quality assurance, improvement, and enhancement with a clear focus for students via its Outcome Agreement and strategies.

The College's arrangements for quality assurance and enhancement align with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Guidance to Colleges and Universities on Quality Academic Year (AY) 2022-23 and AY 2023-24: Refresh (August 2023). We were able to demonstrate that the College:

- Has a robust quality and enhancement culture and processes that are led by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and managed by the Director of Excellence (see below);
- Works in student partnership and has an active Students' Association and Faculty / Class Rep programme that supports curriculum quality review and enhancement (see **Objective 5**);
- Self-evaluates its arrangements to ensure compliance with external partner requirements, including its readiness for new Tertiary Enhancement and the change from Education Scotland (ES) to Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) cycle of inspections from August 2024. This includes awareness of the new Self-Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP) reporting arrangements that have a deadline for 30 November 2024;
- Proceeds through improvements identified through thematic review via its Enhancement Plan and Faculty and Directorate Operating Plans; and
- Monitors its own performance against the Outcome Agreement and impact on the student learning experience.

The College takes a strategic approach to quality assurance, improvement, and enhancement. Performance against the SFC student success and Outcome Agreement measures is a key condition of grant funding. While performance variations are to be expected, persistent underperformance can result in closer scrutiny by ES and reduction in funding. Priority 5 of the College's Strategic Plan 2021-2030 aims 'to deliver excellence in performance' and links into the Glasgow Region Outcome Agreement (2022-23 was carried forward for 2023-24).

The College Strategy is underpinned by a suite of sub-strategies. Primarily, the Student Academic Experience Strategy 2021-2030 sets out its plans for Student City Attributes (i.e. metaskills), learning and teaching, and the City Student Journey. It is led by the Vice Principal (VP) Student Experience.

The College has also recently enhanced its Operational Planning Cycle to ensure delivery of its Strategy. At the time of our audit fieldwork, work was in progress to refine draft operating plans using outcomes from the College's Quality Management Cycle. Guidance for Plans for AY23-24 was provided by management (April 2023). Draft Operational Plans for AY24-25 are to be completed by May 2024 for ELT review and approval in June 2024. A planning timeline is established by the Depute Principal & COO to manage delivery of the Operational Plans. An update on progress with the AY23-24 Plans was provided to the ELT in December 2023.



Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Objective 1 - The College has documented its approach to quality assurance, improvement, and enhancement with a clear focus for students via its Outcome Agreement and strategies (Continued).

The College's Quality Management Cycle involves review and reporting across three quality levels: course, the curriculum area, and Faculties as a whole. Central to the process is the identification of courses that are underperforming, particularly in terms of the successful completion of learners, and progress against the College achieving its Student Academic Experience Strategy.

The Quality Management Cycle also informs the College's Annual Performance Review and Reporting process and includes the monitoring of Directorates and the status of the College's Balance Scorecard (See **Objective 6** on governance arrangements). Arrangements are documented within the Quality Management Cycle Procedure (updated in November 2023). A timeline for the Quality Management Cycle for AY23-24 is established and was reviewed and approved by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) in August 2023.

Core to the Quality Management Cycle is the Learning and Teaching and Faculty Portfolio Review. This involves Faculty self-evaluation and review of their past year's performance to identify enhancements for the new AY. Self-evaluation also includes Faculty review of outcomes from their internal verification (IV) and external verification (EV) activities, student surveys, such as the My Student Experience Survey (January 2023), College Leaver Destination Survey (November 2023), and wider operational planning.

At the time of our fieldwork, outcomes from Faculty Portfolio Reviews had been scrutinised by Faculty Deans, the VP Student Experience and Director of Student Experience, the Principal, ELT and wider management via the quality assurance governance framework (see **Objective 6**). For AY 2024-25, nine courses are to cease, 13 cohorts to be removed, 45 course identified for enhancement (i.e. at risk), 23 new courses to be delivered and an additional four cohorts added to other courses. Outcomes were being used to adjust draft Faculty Operational Plans for AY24-25.

A College-wide quality management review process overarches the Faculty Quality Review process. It includes the review of national performance measures contained within the Glasgow Region Outcome Agreement with the SFC. In October each year, the College uses its own internal performance data to inform the annual self-evaluation report that is reported to the Board of Management in October and the SFC in November. The performance of the College is then compared against the sector in the following Spring. It reviews Credits targets (actual, targets and projections), enrolment information, and student completion.

In January 2024, the Director of Excellence reported on the academic performance for AY22-23 to the QAEC. It detailed the College's performance statistics, outcomes from the Faculty and College-wide Portfolio Review, complaints information, student satisfaction and outcomes from ES Thematic Reviews over the period. Information is also fed into the Annual College Quality Report that is published (latest was for AY21-22, February 2023) and SFC Self-Evaluation Report (AY22-23, November 2023).



Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Objective 2 - Processes and procedures for self-evaluation ensure clear alignment between the strategic approach and day-to-day activity.

On a day-to-day basis, processes are established for Faculties to self-evaluate that performance aligns to expected practice, and include:

- Monitoring delivery of the Faculty Operational Plans;
- Monitoring of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) via Power BI dashboards that show the status of Credits, enrolments, and student attendance and attainment;
- Complaints monitoring and reporting by the Performance Team (not audited);
- Adherence to awarding body quality standards. For example, Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) IV, that is managed via the College's Enquirer Platform, and EV action monitoring;
- Internal audit on the College's compliance with external partner standards. This includes a dedicated Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and STEM Compliance Manager who works between the Faculty of Nautical and STEM and the Performance Team. The MCA and STEM Compliance Manager acts as a critical friend to support lecturers understanding of any areas of non-compliance to industry standards or areas of enhancement (note that none have been identified since the internal audit programme was re-established in July 2023 to the date of our audit). These spot-checks allow for continuous improvement within this highly regulated product offering and may trigger continuous personal development (CPD) needs of teaching staff;
- Student feedback from Stop-Check-Support Meetings with Student Class Representatives;
- Escalation process of feedback from the Students' Association to Faculties / Services (see **Objective 5**), and
- Annual CPD of teaching staff (not audited).

Our discussions with the Faculty Deans noted similar operating frameworks are established via:

- Curriculum Heads and Associate Deans. There are regular meetings established within Faculties that allow each Dean insight to emerging issues and risks; and
- Faculty Business Managers who support the monitoring and reporting of performance information from Power BI dashboards to Faculty management. They also manage student feedback from the Stop-Check-Support meetings. Each Faculty should also have two Faculty Representatives who attend the three annual Faculty Board meetings and work closely with the Faculty management teams. Engagement with students is also monitored, such as Personal Academic Tutor meetings.

At a College-level, the AY23-24 Performance Team Annual Tasks detail the plethora of quality assurance monitoring and reporting across the academic year at a weekly level. The Senior Management Team (SMT) / ELT also monitor performance through the monitoring of the Board of Management's Balanced Scorecard, Directorate scorecards, and other quality assurance outcome reporting from the Director of Excellence. The quality governance framework (**Objective 6**) also ensures operational and governance assurance reporting to the SMT, ELT and the Board of Management via the Learning and Teaching (L&T) Committee and Convenors' Committee (was previously called Performance and Nominations Committee).



Objective 3 - Enhancement and improvement activity identified within the College's Self-Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP) and areas identified for improvement by Education Scotland (August 2023) are being progressed.

College Enhancement

The AY23-24 remains a transition year for the College until new tertiary arrangements for quality assurance and enhancement are implemented for the AY24-25. Management have been working closely with the QAA, and other colleges across the Glasgow region, to understand requirements. The College will require to complete an assessment of its quality assurance and enhancement arrangements via a Self-Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP). This is to be submitted to the SFC and the QAA by 30 November 2024. Management involved in the College's Quality Cycle are strongly aware of the changes planned and requirements for submission of its SEAP. Guidance is to be provided by the QAA in Spring 2024 that will include guidance for completing the SEAP.

In the interim, the College Quality Report and Quality Enhancement Plan 2021-2025 cover key themes emerging from external reports from ES, EV and College stakeholders. Senior College management consider the outcomes and impact of actions on the College's performance data and staff / student feedback.

Arrangements for development of the Enhancement Plan are documented in the Quality Management Cycle Procedures (November 2023). It details the linkage of learning and teaching enhancement and support services with overall College enhancement arrangements.

The August 2022 version of the Quality Enhancement Plan 2021-25 was last reported to the L&T Committee in September 2023 together with a report on outcomes from the ES Annual Engagement Visit in April 2023 (report published August 2023). The Enhancement Plan ties into the delivery outcomes for the Student Academic Experience Strategy. Enhancements noted from the ES Report (August 2023) were captured in the Enhancement Plan reported to the L&T Committee in November 2023. All actions adopt SMART practices (i.e. are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timebound). The latest Enhancement Plan (November 2023) captures the ES Improvements (August 2023) that are known to the College and being progressed and monitored via the quality assurance governance framework (**Objective 6**).

Teaching Enhancement

Courses that were considered for targeted improvement action during the Faculty and Portfolio Reviews are monitored through the new Curriculum Enhancement Process (CEP) that is being implemented for the first time this current AY. Arrangements are documented within the QAEC Quality Cycle Procedure (August 2023). It sets out the schedule for CEP, the support provided to teaching staff i.e. key workshops, and operational and governance framework that include mid-year reviews of progress with the VP Student Experience, Deans and the Performance Team representatives. Outcomes will feed into the Faculty Quality Review process where the impact of any enhancements will be monitored with changes brought into future Faculty Operational Plans.



Objective 3 - Enhancement and improvement activity identified within the College's Self-Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP) and areas identified for improvement by Education Scotland (August 2023) are being progressed (Continued).

Support Service Enhancement

Each January, there are challenge sessions established between Support Service Directors, the Principal and Director of Excellence to review the Directorates' performance and delivery of their Operational Plans. Outcomes link into the College's Customer Service Quality status. Understanding that it can be challenging to measure the impact of Support Services, the Director of Excellence is working with management to establish an Impact Assessment to better report outcomes and enhancements to the ELT and Board of Management. This work was in its infancy at the time of our audit fieldwork.

The cycle of Directorate reviews allows for any recommendations that impact Faculty arrangements to be reviewed as part of the Faculty operational planning cycle. The Director of Excellence also works with Faculties and Directorates to understand any co-dependencies before the Operational Plans are submitted to the SMT for final approval.



Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Objective 4 - Processes are established for the College to engage with external quality partners.

The College has a plethora of external partners whom it works with to ensure:

- Quality arrangements are joined up to deliver on the Outcomes Agreement, such as the other Regional colleges and Glasgow City Council;
- Articulation needs from the College are met for domestic or overseas partner universities or learning institutes;
- Regulatory partnership with awarding bodies and supporting ES thematic reviews (will be completed by QAA from August 2024); and
- That the College is meeting regulatory standards or quality certifications.

The College has a coordinated approach to external scrutiny. An External Audit Tracker Spreadsheet is established by the Performance Team to help track the next audit visit from 37 external quality bodies. It details:

- The organisation;
- The standard or framework being audited;
- The frequency of audits, dates of the previous, and next audit visit / estimated timing;
- Outcome from the last audit;
- The College contact and Performance Team Coordinator responsible for managing the engagement;
- Overall status of any actions from previous audit; and
- Additional comments.

The link between the three Performance Team Coordinators, Faculties and Directorates ensures that any future external quality inspections are communicated to help plan any resource requirements for the audit. The Director of Excellence is also a member of the SMT thus ensuring linkage between management.

In line with good practice, the College has a proactive approach to self-evaluation and enhancement, not only noted within the Quality Cycle as reported in Objective 1 but through a programme of internal audits by the Performance Team. The process of internal audits is standardised across the inspection areas, with the Performance Team using the same Internal Audit Reporting template. Walkthrough of the internal audit programme, such as for the Faculty of Nautical and STEM, noted a risk-based approach to internal inspections that is coordinated to ensure non-conformance issues are proactively identified and managed before any re-approval of the course by external bodies, such as the MCA or the Health and Safety Executive. Outcomes from MCA based audits are also used to compare against College outcomes so that any lessons learned can be identified.

There is also a programme of self-inspection, such as for the quality management system standard, BSI ISO9001, by the Performance Team. Over 2023/24, the Performance Team is working with the SMT to update registered policies and procedures that do not evidence recent management review. In November 2023, the Performance Team reported to the SMT that out of the 89 documents held on the College register several were out of date, including five policies (accounting for 20% of total registered policies), 15 procedures (accounting for 30% of total registered procedures), and 2.5 combined policy and procedures (accounting for 18% of total registered combined policy and procedures). Work is underway with the SMT to agree dates for the review of the outstanding documents and to ensure that future review needs are planned within operational plans. A digital tracker has also been developed that will automatically prompt controlled document owners three months in advance of review due dates. Given management awareness and action planning, no further recommendation has been raised.



Objective 5 - The quality processes ensure student partnership and engagement in line with sparqs' Student Engagement Framework for Scotland.

As part of the SFC Guidance discussed earlier, the College is also expected to consider and evidence curriculum developments and the contribution of students and support services to the student experience as part of their own self-reflection on quality. Guidance for this is defined within the sparqs' *Student Engagement Framework for Scotland*. Our work indicated that the College's arrangements align with the sparqs *Six Features of Student Engagement*. In summary:

- **A culture of engagement** – the College has established a Partnership Agreement, and the student voice via Class and Faculty Reps is captured as part of the College's Quality Cycle. There are also class Stop-Check-Support meetings, student surveys, complaint management and the Students' Association's Escalation process where issues that are not complaint related are managed with Faculty.
- **Student as partners and valuing the student's contribution** – Student Representatives attend and present to the Board of Management, its sub-Committees, Faculty Boards, and operational committees, including the Academic Board, QAEC and Student Academic Experience Committee (SAEC) (see **Objective 6**). Discussions also highlighted the close working between the Students' Association and SMT and ELT. There is also external partnership work between other Students' Associations who have worked with SQA, the Mental Health Foundation (MHF), the Glasgow Colleges Regional Board (GCRB), the Glasgow Colleges Regional Student Executive, and the National Union of Students to advocate for students.
- **Responding to diversity** – diversity and inclusivity is central to the College offerings and the College and Students' Association have achieved several awards by external bodies (not audited).
- **Focus on enhancement and change** - There are formal mechanisms for quality and governance that ensure the student voice is captured as part of College enhancement planning.
- **Providing appropriate resources and support** (i.e. resourcing the Students' Association).

sparqs define that one of the features of a college that adopts a culture of engagement with students is that there are processes for coordinating and monitoring student engagement in quality. Student feedback is integral to the Quality Cycle and the attendance of Faculty Reps at Faculty Boards ensures there is input to Annual Faculty Quality Reports before they are finalised. The Students' Association President also attends the Academic Board to ensure wider review of outcomes.



Objective 5 - The quality processes ensure student partnership and engagement in line with sparqs' Student Engagement Framework for Scotland (Continued).

Observation	Risk	Recommendation	Management Response	
<p>The role and responsibilities of student representatives and the Students' Association Presidential Team in the quality cycle is not documented in the Quality Management Cycle Procedures (November 2023), such as within the roles and responsibilities section. While mechanisms for the College to gather student feedback is documented, it is not clear how the students may be involved in the review of quality and performance reporting that is occurring in practice.</p> <p>We also noted that on the front cover of the Annual Faculty Quality Review report, there is a tick box against a comment 'Has this report been shared with students?' In our discussions with Faculty Deans and Performance management, the purpose of this question was not clear, i.e. was the purpose to share the report with all students?</p>	<p>Lack of transparency to the roles and responsibilities of students as quality partners in formal procedures may result in the QAA challenging the level of student engagement in quality review and enhancement planning.</p>	<p>R1</p> <p>(i) The Quality Management Cycle procedures (November 2023) should be enhanced by defining the roles and responsibilities of Faculty and Class Representatives and Students' Association in reviewing quality review outcomes and enhancement plans.</p> <p>(ii) The question '<i>Has this report been shared with students?</i>' on the Faculty Quality Report template cover should be reworded so that it is more specific to ensure enhanced clarity on requirements, such as '<i>Has the report been shared with students via the Faculty Board?</i>'</p>	<p>(i)The role of Faculty and Class Representative and Students' Association will be added to the Quality Management Cycle Procedures.</p> <p>To be actioned by: Director of Excellence</p> <p>No later than: 31 May 2024</p> <p>(ii) The Faculty Quality Report has been updated to show the question as 'Please confirm this report has been informed by and shared with Student Faculty Reps'.</p> <p>Fully implemented</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 10px;">Grade</div> <div style="background-color: #90c040; padding: 10px; text-align: center; color: white;">3</div> </div>	



Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Objective 6 - Appropriate governance processes are established to scrutinise the College's approach to quality, improvement, and enhancement.

The College has a complex operational governance structure that was developed for the purposes of Taught Degree Awarding Powers (tDAP). While seeking awarding body powers is currently not a key priority, the reporting framework is designed so that quality and enhancement assurance arrangements can be reviewed across management and Board levels.

On an operational level, management have established an **Academic Board** that meets at least once per semester. As per its Terms of Reference (ToR) (August 2023), this Board is responsible, as a sub-committee of the L&T Committee of the Board of Management, for overseeing, maintaining, and enhancing the academic performance of the College, in learning, teaching and research; and for advising the L&T Committee on matters relating to the College's educational character and mission. Convened by the Principal, its membership includes ELT and SMT and Students' Association Presidential representatives. It acts as an operational group to ratify decisions from its three sub-committees:

- **Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)** (ToR October 2023) meets once per semester. Its purpose is to assure, maintain and enhance the standards of all types and levels of study within the College, and enhance the quality of all aspects of delivery. Through monitoring performance outcomes, it works to ensure that changes deliver positive impact. It is convened by the Deputy Principal and Chief Operating Officer and attended by members of learning and teaching management, including the VP Student Experience and L&T Team;
- **Student Academic Experience Committee (SAEC)** (ToR not dated) is convened by the VP Student Experience. It has responsibility for the delivery of the Student Academic Experience Strategy and works to develop strategies to enhance the student experience. It also has a quality role in reviewing performance information and learning and teaching outcomes. It has similar membership to the QAEC and meets at least once per semester; and
- **Support Services Committee (SSC)**. Works to convene Directorate leadership for the purpose of reviewing delivery of Operational Plans. It is attended by the Director of Excellence ensuring lineage between the Group, QAEC and SAEC. This Group was not audited.

There are also two sub-groups of the QAEC charged to review **Regulations** and **Ethics**. These groups were not audited.

Feedback from managers interviewed noted that, when combined with other reporting lines within the operational management framework, that the framework above creates another layer of reporting complexity. For example, the same reporting and conversations occurring at the Academic Board, QAEC, and SAEC and lack of clarity where ultimate decision making on strategy initiatives for enhancing the student learning experience should sit.

Further discussions with the Depute Principal and Chief Operating Officer noted that these groups have very distinct and separate roles in the quality assurance framework. There is work underway, led by the Depute Principal and Chief Operating Officer, to re-communicate the purpose and roles and responsibilities of these groups. As part of that activity, the reporting needs of all groups within the Quality Assurance Governance Framework should be assessed to ensure there is no duplication of effort by management and discussions at groups remain efficient and aligned to the group's purpose.

Given management awareness of issues identified, and activity already underway, no further recommendation was raised by us.



Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Objective 6 - Appropriate governance processes are established to scrutinise the College's approach to quality, improvement, and enhancement (Continued).

At a Board of Management governance level, the Quality Management Cycle (November 2023) highlights the role of the L&T Committee in ultimate oversight of the learning and teaching quality arrangements. The Academic Board reports into the L&T Committee.

The Quality Cycle also informs the College's Annual Performance Review and Reporting process. This includes the monitoring of the College's Balance Scorecard and performance reporting to the Board of Management's Performance and Nominations Committee, which is now titled the Convenors' Committee, who are responsible for monitoring 'the overall College performance with reference to the College's Strategic Plan' (Terms of Reference, April 2023).

Observation	Risk	Recommendation	Management Response
<p>The Quality Management Cycle Procedures (November 2023) and Terms of References for QAEC, refer to the Performance and Nominations Committee that is now been renamed to the Convenors Committee.</p> <p>The Quality Management Cycle Procedures (November 2023) also do not refer to the new CEP defined in the QAEC Quality Cycle Procedures (August 2023).</p>	<p>Quality documentation is not kept up to date resulting in confusion to staff, and potentially external quality inspectors, on expectations and transparency to arrangements that are operating in practice.</p>	<p>R2 The Quality Management Cycle Procedures should refer to the new CEP, and link into its guidance published in August 2023 to ensure management awareness.</p> <p>All quality cycle procedures and the Academic Board terms of references (Academic Board, QAEC, SAEC, etc) should be reviewed to ensure that references to the Performance Committee now refer to the Convenors Committee.</p>	<p>The Quality Management Cycle Procedure will be updated to refer to CEP.</p> <p>To be actioned by: Director of Excellence</p> <p>No later than: 31 May 2024</p> <p>The Academic Board terms of reference will be updated to remove reference to the Performance and Remuneration Committee and replace this with the Convenors Committee. The terms of reference will be approved at the next Academic Board.</p> <p>To be actioned by: Depute Principal & COO</p> <p>No later than: 31 May 2024</p>
			<p>Grade 3</p>



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