

Board of Management Audit & Assurance Committee

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 11 June 2024
Paper No.	AAC4-J
Agenda Item	5.4.2
Subject of Paper	Internal Audit Report – Teaching Staff Utilisation/Timetabling/Space Management Business Process Review
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	Henderson Loggie
Date of production	9 May 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 Teaching Staff Utilisation/Timetabling/Space Management Business Process Review 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.

Appendix – Internal Audit Report – Teaching Staff Utilisation/Timetabling/Space Management Business Process Review

City of Glasgow College

Teaching Staff Utilisation / Timetabling / Space Management Business Process Review

Internal Audit report No: 2024/09

Draft issued: 7 May 2024

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Management Summary

Background

As part of the 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan, the City of Glasgow College ('the College') has engaged with Henderson Loggie to conduct a business process review of the systems in place for Staff Utilisation, Timetabling, and Space Utilisation to identify opportunities and facilitate the agreement of recommendations for overall process improvements or more effective / efficient use of the current systems in place.

Scope and Objectives

The scope of this assignment was to carry out a review of the College's current procedures for the various stages of the processes for timetabling, preparation of staff allocation models, and teaching space utilisation, with a view to identifying and removing waste from the current processes and proposing procedural improvements. It was completed as a Business Process Review.

The main objectives of the assignment were to ensure that:

- The anticipated outcomes for all internal stakeholders from the timetabling, staff utilisation and teaching space utilisation processes are clearly defined and connect to the staffing budget;
- The value of services provided as part of the timetabling, staff utilisation and teaching space utilisation processes are quantified from a student perspective and from the perspective of external stakeholders;
- Steps which do not add value are identified with a view to eliminating them;
- Steps that create value occur in tight sequence and are reflected in an efficient and effective timetabling, staff allocation modelling process and teaching space utilisation; and
- Arrangements are in place to deliver consistency in the timetabling, staff utilisation and teaching space utilisation processes by embedding any agreed revisions in updated operating procedures for the College.

Audit Approach

We walked through the timetabling procedures with the Associate Dean of MIS who also leads the Student Records and Timetabling Teams and walked through the timetabling process with the Timetabling Team Manager.

We also held two facilitated workshops with a sample of Associate Deans and Curriculum Heads, and interviewed the Student President and Head of Student Recruitment and Funding. Through these discussions we identified opportunities for removing inefficiency and waste from the current timetabling, staff utilisation, and teaching space utilisation processes.

We discussed recommendations with the Associate Dean of MIS on 28 March 2024. The agreed recommendations were then prioritised by the Associate Dean of MIS and an action plan developed. The action plan presented in this report considers any changes required to existing operating procedures to ensure that any changes to the timetabling, staff utilisation and teaching space utilisation modelling processes are deliverable and embedded across the College.



Summary of Main Findings

Staff utilisation, space utilisation and overall timetabling processes at the College are robust and data driven.

- The Timetabling Procedures 2024/25 define the timetabling rules and requirements for tracking staff utilisation.
- There is a calendar of key milestones to support faculties deliver timetables for the 2024/25 academic year.
- There is a dedicated Timetabling page on MyConnect for staff to access timetabling information.
- There is a dedicated Timetabling Team with Timetabling Officers aligned to Faculties as timetabling partners.
- There is a culture of continuous improvement in timetabling driven by the Associate Director Student MIS and facilitated through the Timetabling Review Group which acts as a forum to discuss any process improvements.
- The College has used its reporting tool, Enquirer, to track information relating to teaching space utilisation and staff utilisation, and it is the key source for timetabling.
- Information on staffing within Enquirer is fed from the College HR system, iTrent, including working patterns.
- Course and student information is fed into Enquirer from UnitE.
- The use of Enquirer for reviewing staff utilisation is embedded across faculty teams sample tested.
- The Associate Director Student MIS completes timetabling compliance, space and staff utilisation reviews with outcomes reported to faculties for discussion via Faculty Timetabling Reports.
- A Faculty Timetabling Summary Report is provided by the Associate Director Student MIS to each Support Services Committee (SSC), Student Academic Experience Committee (SAEC) and the Academic Board.

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.

No high priority areas for investigation or improvement were noted during the review. There were three medium priority points in relation to:

- Developing guidance for Curriculum Heads on how to manage staff utilisation data on Enquirer during periods of industrial action;
- Ongoing support to Curriculum Heads on timetabling good practices; and,
- Developing guidance with faculties on how best to communicate any delay to publishing timetables to students (and staff) at the beginning of semesters so to set expectations.

Two low priority points were also identified.

Acknowledgments

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff from Faculties, the Timetabling Team, and Students Association at the City of Glasgow College who helped us during our business process review.



Improvement Points Identified from Interviews and Facilitated Sessions

We held a series of discussions with members of the College's Timetabling Team with the aim of identifying areas of strength and weakness within the current timetabling processes and to identify areas that could be enhanced in order to improve existing arrangements.

The Timetabling Team was encouraged to provide input, and all points were captured. This included a walkthrough of the timetabling process on Enquirer to develop our understanding of how student data from UnitE and staff data from iTrent are used by Enquirer to support the timetabling process. We also walked through how Curriculum Heads use Enquirer to track actual teaching hours against those planned, through staff utilisation reporting. We reviewed how compliance reports from Enquirer are used to track any issues in teaching space utilisation or with the overall quality of the timetables produced. We also completed a review of process documentation to allow better understanding of the control environment.

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

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

We also considered wastes to 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 or a scrapping of data. Slow system access impacting the efficiency of completing tasks or bugs in systems.

On 28 March 2024, we discussed the potential areas for improvement with the Associate Dean of MIS. 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 Interviews and Facilitated Sessions (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 five points raised as follows:

Priority Category	Number of Improvement Actions
High	0
Medium	3
Low	2

Details of these improvement points are set out below.



Improvement Points Identified from Interviews and Facilitated Sessions

Medium Priority Item			
No	Short Description	Detail	Management Comments
1.	Global response to managing timetables during periods of industrial action	<p>Academic years 2022/23 and 2023/24 were impacted by periods of industrial action by teaching staff. This resulted in reactive timetabling responses across faculties. Our discussions with a sample of Associate Deans and Curriculum Heads highlighted that there was an absence of a whole-College policy at the time that would describe the response to classes and recording lost teaching hours on Enquirer by Curriculum Heads.</p> <p>Consequently, there was differing responses across faculties. For example, some took a whole faculty view of cancelling classes and others reallocating class groups to classes that were still running. Tracking staff utilisation also differed with some areas not logging striking teaching staff as absent.</p> <p>Risk: Current staff utilisation rates may not be accurate impacting on effective decision making i.e. on future staff budget planning.</p> <p>Recommendation: Guidance for logging teaching hours lost due to industrial action on Enquirer should be established and made available to Curriculum Heads in future periods of industrial action, i.e., as part of business continuity response.</p>	<p>As part of business continuity planning, guidance on recording teaching hours / staff utilisation during periods of industrial action will be distributed to stakeholders should strike action be announced in future.</p> <p>Action Owner: Associate Director Student MIS.</p> <p>Completion Date: 15 August 2024</p>

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Medium Priority Items			
No	Short Description	Detail	Management Comments
2.	Curriculum Heads require further training on new timetabling principles	<p>Over the current academic year, new ways of timetabling have been introduced to Curriculum Heads including the use of global hours and two semester approach. While the Timetabling Policy and Procedures allow for flexibility in the timetabling approach, our discussion with Curriculum Heads noted some inconsistencies in their understanding of arrangements, indicating that further training may be required to ensure timetabling for 2024/25 is efficient. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaches to blended and online learning to enhance the student learning experience and the policy around factoring breaks to classes held online; • Consistency in how Curriculum Heads update Enquirer with amendments potentially impacting the quality of data held on the system; • Absence of Curriculum Heads using compliance reports to review any issues in published timetabling and staff utilisation for planning purposes; • Knowledge of the City Class Catalogue and the information retained on specialised equipment and software; and, • The use of the "Find a Free Room" function and their ability to book through Enquirer without involving the Timetabling Team. <p>Risk: Inconsistency in the core timetabling process leads to further amendments and duplication of effort by the Timetabling Team before timetables are published.</p> <p>Recommendation: As part of the timetabling process, further training or enhanced communication should be provided to Curriculum Heads on arrangements so that there is consistency in the process, where appropriate.</p>	<p>My Connect and the MS Team for Timetabling both contain guidance documents relating to timetabling. These include a Timetabling Procedure, Blended Learning Briefing, Timetabling Systems Guide, Staff Utilisation Guide/Video, Compliance Reports. These existing tools will continue to be promoted through all timetabling communications and through attendance of Associate Director Student MIS at the Curriculum Head Forum. Each session, faculties are invited to rotate their representatives on the Timetabling Review Group to ensure greater knowledge of systems and procedures across teams.</p> <p>No further action required.</p>



Teaching Staff Utilisation / Timetabling / Space Utilisation Business Process Review

Medium Priority Items (Continued)			
No	Short Description	Detail	Management Comments
3.	Timely communication by Faculty areas of any delay to publishing timetables to affected students so to set expectations.	<p>Course Offer Letters state that a student's timetable will be made available to them at induction. However, the Student President highlighted that the most common complaint from students from Stop-Check-Support meetings is not receiving their timetables at enrolment. This is mainly due to student group numbers not being confirmed until the enrolment period is complete, impacting the timeliness of finalising timetables.</p> <p>We found that, rightly, it is the responsibility for faculties to communicate to students if the publication of timetables will be delayed. However, our review of the Timetabling Procedures noted no guidance to Curriculum Heads to ensure timely communication of any delays to affected students and overall consistency with the communication of issues to timetabling across faculties.</p> <p>Risk: Students cannot effectively plan college around other key commitments, such as employment and family care, resulting in frustration and withdrawal.</p> <p>Recommendation: For 2024/25 timetabling, there is a global deadline to ensure that draft timetables will be completed by the end of the academic year in June, with only emergency / necessary amendments made in August. However, guidance should be established so that there is a consistent approach by faculties to communicate any delay to publishing timetables to affected students.</p> <p>Expectations for publishing and amending timetables should be communicated to staff and students so to set expectations for the 2024/25 academic year.</p>	<p>Guidance will be devised and distributed to Curriculum Heads to ensure consistency in communication relating to any delay in publishing timetables. The specifics of the approach will be discussed and agreed with the timetabling review group, inviting the Student Vice President to contribute.</p> <p>Action Owner: Associate Director Student MIS</p> <p>Completion Date: 14 August 2024</p>



Teaching Staff Utilisation / Timetabling / Space Utilisation Business Process Review

Low Priority Items			
No	Short Description	Detail	Management Comments
4.	Student access to timetables on Canvas	<p>Students access the College's VLE, Canvas, daily to retrieve course materials and assessment results. However, the platform currently does not host information on their timetables. Instead, timetables are hosted on their 'My City' platform where the student requires to go through multiple steps and Windows authentication to access their timetable.</p> <p>Feedback highlighted that the Canvas app is accessed easily by all students and would be the preferred platform given that any class updates are communicated through the platform, and it is used daily by students.</p> <p>Risk: Students cannot effectively access changes to their timetable.</p> <p>Recommendation: Digital Skills and Timetabling Teams should review the possibility of adding student timetable information to the Canvas platform, and if so, set a timeline to this update.</p>	<p>It is not technically possible to store timetables on Canvas. The Learning and Teaching Academy Manager will add a topic on the help page which provides a link to City Life for students to access timetable. Students will be required to click the specific tile on City Life to view their My City Account and timetable which may be required to go through multifactor authentication for security.</p> <p>Action Owner: Learning Technologies & Digital Skills Manager</p> <p>Completion Date: 12 August 2024</p>
5.	Information on the location of equipment with specialised software requires to be enhanced to improve the effectiveness of timetabling related classes	<p>Work has been completed to develop a City Room Catalogue that details an image, capacity, and equipment log of teaching spaces at the City campus. Similar work is underway for the Riverside campus.</p> <p>However, Curriculum Heads reported that room information, especially for IT suites, do not detail all information on specialised software available on IT equipment present. Inspection of the catalogue noted it highlights computer suites mainly with CAD.</p> <p>Risk: The process for booking IT suites for the purposes of teaching the use of specialised software is not as effective as it could be resulting in duplication of effort by Curriculum Heads and the Timetabling Team.</p> <p>Recommendation: The City Room Catalogue should be further enhanced with details of the location of equipment with specialised software resources needed for teaching purposes.</p>	<p>IT will provide detail on specialist software installed in General Teaching rooms to Timetabling for inclusion in the City Room Catalogue.</p> <p>Action Owner: Timetabling Manager</p> <p>Completion Date: 12 August 2024</p>



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