

## Board of Management

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Wednesday 19 June 2024</b>
<b>Paper No.</b>	<b>BoM5-I</b>
<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Subject of Paper</b>	<b>Impact of Strike on Learning and Teaching</b>
<b>FOISA Status</b>	<b>Disclosable</b>
<b>Primary Contact</b>	<b>Dr Claire Carney</b>
<b>Date of production</b>	<b>10 June 2024</b>
<b>Action</b>	<b>Discussion and Decision</b>

### **1. Recommendations**

**1.1** The Board is asked to review and consider the impact of prior local and current national action and Action Short of Strike (ASOS) on the delivery of learning and teaching in academic year 23/24.

## 2. Purpose

**2.1** The purpose of this paper is to facilitate discussion on the impact of prior local and current national strike action and the compounding impact of Action Short of Strike (ASOS). The paper is an updated version of papers presented to the Board in September 2023 and March 2024.

## 3. Consultation

**3.1** The paper has been developed in consultation with the Executive Leadership Team, members of the Student Experience Group (Deans and Director of the Student Experience Directorate), Associate Deans and the Curriculum Head forum. The impact of industrial action has also been reported to and discussed at the Learning, Teaching & Student Experience Committee.

## 4. Key Insights

**4.1** To note, there are 171 days available for teaching in the academic year. Seventy-six of those were available before Christmas break and 40 of those 76 (52.5%) were lost to rolling local strike action. It is important to note, however, that not all areas are equally impacted - some areas have had no strike action and therefore no impact, some have 'mixed' impact and some areas where whole teams took and are taking action have had a major impact.

**4.2** No doubt this was a very difficult and unsettling time for curricular teams in managing courses, rewriting timetables, often on a weekly basis, supporting students and guardians and liaising with employers and articulation partners. The pressures were immense and given the circumstances, staff must be commended for maintaining the best possible student experience that could be managed given the circumstances.

**4.3** Separately, national ASOS which consisted of a resulting boycott in place since academic year 22/23 was also resolved, allowing all results and outcomes from 22/23 to be submitted thus allowing students to progress to further education routes and employment.

**4.4** Disappointingly, in January 2024 the EIS-FELA called for further ASOS following the completion of a statutory ballot over pay. ASOS began on Monday 12 February 2024 and is planned to continue until Monday 15 July 2024, or until the pay dispute is resolved. In addition, a programme of discontinuous strike action was staged over last 2 months including: 29 February; 16 April; 22 April and 3 May.

**4.5** To mitigate some of the impact of ASOS each Faculty has ensured full resulting (where possible) for Semester 1. However, the Board is reminded that in those areas most impacted by local strike action in Semester 1, students were deprived in the region of 40 days of teaching and thus significant amount time needs to be 'caught-up' before any assessment can be concluded.

**4.6** However, and again disappointingly, a further round of continuous national strike action (9 days) was conducted throughout May and beginning of June consisting of 2 days, 3 days and 4 days over 3-week period and we are now currently in the middle of a further 12 days of action consisting of 4 days each week from week beginning 11 June to 28 June inclusive. **This will bring the total number of days lost to both local and national strike action to date (in those areas most affected) to 65 out of a total 171 of teaching days or 38% of the academic year.**

## 5. Impact and Implications

5.1 Clearly to a student whether the strike action is local or national is irrelevant as both impact on their studies and progression. Further, as the strike action has been spread across the whole academic year – from the beginning of the academic year in September 2023 to the conclusion in June 2024 and further compromised by a 'resulting' boycott lasting 5 months, the student experience has been far from ideal. The most vulnerable i.e. the student body are the group that is most impacted by the on-going industrial action.

5.2 As the Board is aware, most of our students are from the most disadvantaged areas in Glasgow and beyond, as represented by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. The majority experienced disrupted learning throughout the Pandemic, this disruption has continued into their college experience (year on year) through continued local and national strike action. The impact is keenly felt by our most vulnerable students particularly neurodiverse students as the lack of routine or uncertainty regarding timetables is having a wholly negative impact and only compound existing challenges. In addition, and importantly for many of our students the College is more than the pursuit of a qualification per se but a place of community, 'place' and security. The impact of strike on these students is particularly challenging.

5.3 As previously noted to the Board, support referrals for academic year 2023/24 increased by 11% from the previous year. The central team processed just under 1,400 Personal Learning Support Plans (PLSPs), an increase of 16% on 2022/23. It is anticipated the reason for such an increase, is multiple Covid-19 lockdowns causing a cumulative academic and social impact on our young people as documented in the school sector and that impact is 'rolling' into the college and university sector. It is not yet clear how those individual students with support plans have been specifically affected by strike action.

5.4 Anecdotally we are beginning to see increased behavioural issues – not all 'diagnosable' or 'labelled' or students with PLSPs, these same students whether new to the college or not, face continued disruption to their learning through strike action. The college is therefore embarking on Trauma Informed Practice with the College Development Network to help address some of the issues that are arising. It is clear that students need and deserve continuity and security to develop, thrive and strive in their lives.

5.5 The further impact of on ongoing strike action is demonstrable in relationships with **employers**, particularly with apprentices. Faculties and relevant directorates are working hard to maintain relationships and communications. Additional and further impact include: placement students who require a certain amount of placement time per qualification i.e. childhood practice and Social Services require 60 days placement per year (HNC); international students require campus based teaching for 15 hours to meet UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) compliance standards and schools delivery where we have had a decreased numbers due to local strike action at the beginning of the year. Needless to say, all of the above have reputational and financial implications for the college and limits futures employment and further educational prospects for our students.

5.6 No doubt, the impact of continued strike action will impact on College Performance Indicators (particularly complete success) and as this college has experience more strike action than any other. A real outcome of this is reputational damage and impact on student recruitment bringing further endemic issues (including financial) for the College.

## **College Mitigations:**

**5.7** Throughout the year each Faculty area was empowered to make local decisions to mitigate impact on students and Learning and Teaching. It must be noted that a number of these are based on goodwill and huge additional effort by those who have not taken industrial action. Mitigations included:

- Re-purposing of timetables to have academic courses completed and delaying practical workshops.
- Individual members of staff, Curriculum Heads, and Associate Deans taking classes to ensure that all courses are being kept warm impacting their capability to perform day to day management tasks.
- Delivering large online classes and team/peer teaching large classes onsite.
- Providing access to students have access to CANVAS where course materials are available and have been set project work to complete.
- Using underutilised and appropriately skilled staff to deliver classes.
- Potential to delay end of academic year, compromised by likely unwillingness of staff to teach during holidays and students to 'stay on'.
- Additional teaching (where possible) during inter-semester week/holidays.
- Change units where possible within frameworks/Group Awards that can easily be integrated and mapped assessment. Care required not to compromise the integrity of the qualification in knowledge and skills for employment and articulation

**5.8** Nearing the conclusion of the academic year and the combined impact of ASOS and strike action impact of ASOS the College will reinstate the '**Extraordinary Arrangements for Assessment, Resulting and Progression Guidance**', that sets out how the College will conduct end of year assessment, resulting and manage arrangements for student progression.

**5.9** The aim is to have a 'no detriment' policy for students and do all we can to find a fair solution. There are areas for which these solutions will not be possible for example students on professional programmes - gas assured etc and presents challenges for apprentices and Phase 5 cadets. Clearly, the additional strike action will compound most efforts and once again student progression is potentially compromised. It is possible that students will not finish in academic year and the potential for deferral is increased impacting on student numbers and class sizes in 24/25.

**5.10** For those progressing to university, the University of the West of Scotland and Glasgow Caledonian University have already indicated that it will accept all applications from our students and have written to all applicants. As a reminder circa 1,200 of our students articulate into universities every year to continue their studies, they do so on the basis of achieving required application grades. It is hoped that other universities will follow suit and mitigate the uncertainty and stress for our students.

**5.11** It is regrettable that students and their futures have once again been placed in the centre of an industrial dispute that is beyond their control. It is hoped that at some point their futures and their education will no longer be compromised in what seems to be a never-ending annual round of strike action.

**5.12** Ongoing strike action will continue to have significant impact on the delivery of learning and teaching, attainment and completion. The College will, of course, continue to monitor the impact of industrial action and ensure measures are in place to minimise disruption, support students to progress and mitigate damage to our reputation.