

Board of Management

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 2 October 2024
Paper No.	BoM1-D
Agenda Item	6.4
Subject of Paper	Board Self-Evaluation Report 2023-24
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	Drew McGowan Associate Director of Governance and Risk
Date of production	15 August 2024
Action	For Approval

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. To approve the Board Self-Evaluation Report for 2023-24, as recommended by the Conveners' Committee.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. To share the outcome of the Board of Management's most recent annual self-evaluation. This exercise is a requirement of the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges and is used for members to reflect on the Board's effectiveness.
- 2.2. The report provides a comprehensive overview of the Board's strengths and areas that require development. The insights gathered from this exercise, along with others, inform the ongoing work of the Board and the Board Development Plan.

3. Consultation

- 3.1. All members of the Board were invited to complete the self-evaluation in June 2024. The response rate was 88%, compared to 100% in the previous year. The Conveners' Committee reviewed the draft report and agreed to recommend it to the Board of Management for final approval.

4. Key Insights

- 4.1. Overall, the self-evaluation for 2023-24 records high levels of satisfaction across the 34 measures and five categories – and represents an improved position on the previous academic year. With 38 of 39 measures recording satisfaction of 70% or above, and using high thresholds, only one measure is rated red. Five measures rated red in 2022-23 are now amber, while five amber measures are now green.
- 4.2. Members were also asked to share feedback in each section on what worked well during the academic year and what could be improved in the new academic year. Artificial intelligence was used to summarise these comments into key points and themes.

5. Impact and Implications

- 5.1. Having a robust self-evaluation process in place offers assurance to the College's stakeholders, including the Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board, that the Board is committed to the highest standards of governance and remains committed to continuous improvement.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Board of Management Self-Evaluation Report 2023-24

Board of Management Self-Evaluation 2023-24

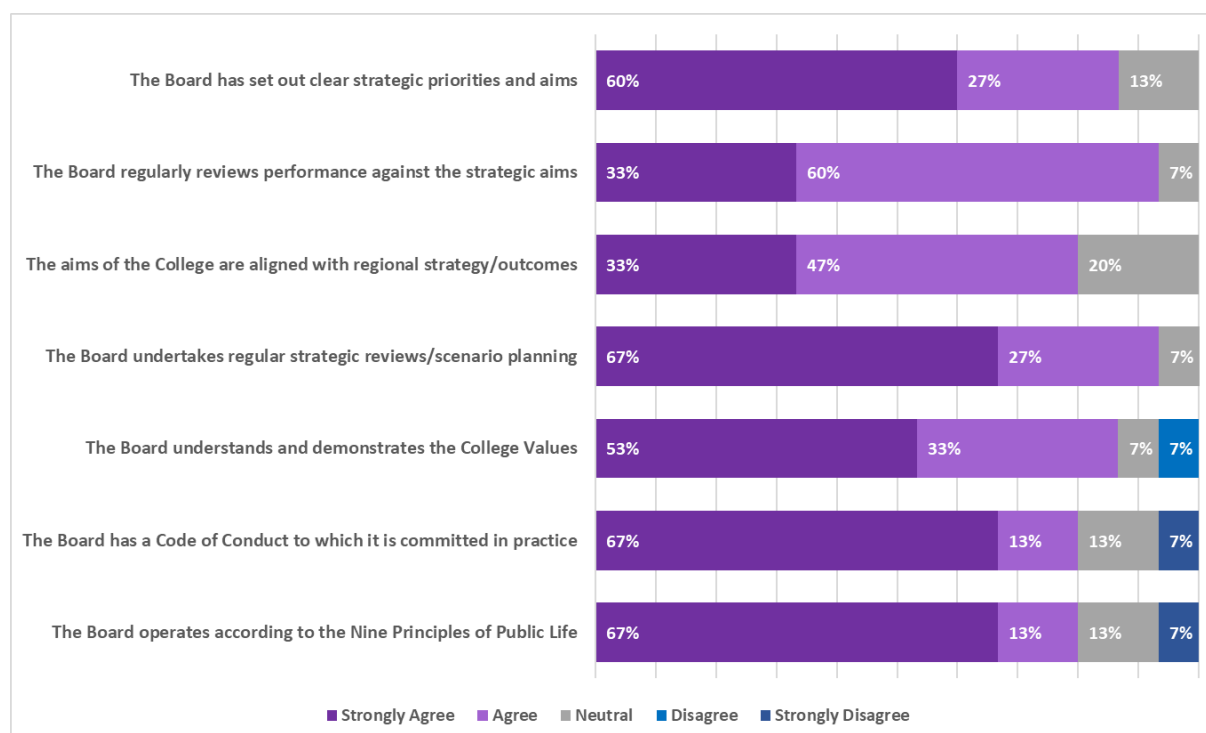
Introduction

1. The Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges outlines the highest standards of governance and propriety that are expected of boards in the college sector and the individuals who serve on them. The Code requires the Board of Management to "keep its effectiveness under annual review and have in place a robust self-evaluation process".
2. Members of the Board are invited to confidentially complete a self-evaluation questionnaire each year by expressing a level of agreement to a series of statements structured around the key principles of the Code:
 - Leadership and Strategy
 - Quality of the Student Experience
 - Accountability
 - Effectiveness
 - Relationships and Collaboration
3. Board members' responses to these statements, along with any comments provided, help identify areas of good governance and strengths of the Board, as well as areas for development. Self-evaluation is one aspect of monitoring Board effectiveness and supporting continuous improvement, with external evaluation and member annual reviews also playing a key role. The feedback gathered from these regular exercises informs the ongoing work of the Board and the Board Development Plan.
4. A five-point Likert scale of "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" has replaced the previous six-option ranking of "low/disagree" to "high/agree". Scores are determined by amalgamating the "strongly agree" and "agree" responses to each statement, producing a cumulative positive response rate. "Undecided/neutral" responses are not stripped out of the scores. While respondents are not expressing dissatisfaction, selecting this option may identify emerging issues, such as around awareness and understanding, in particular areas that the Board should consider and address. The report also provides a year-on-year comparison. Based on these scores, statements are provided with a RAG rating with the following thresholds:
 - 85 – 100%
 - 70 – 84%
 - <70%.
5. Members were also asked to share feedback in each section on what worked well during the academic year and what could be improved in the new academic year. Artificial intelligence was used to summarise these comments into key points and themes.
6. Board members were invited to complete the self-evaluation at the end of the academic year. The completion rate was 88% for 2023-24, compared to 100% in 2022-23.
7. Overall, set against high standards, the results of the self-evaluation for 2023-24 show high levels of satisfaction with the College's governance, leadership and compliance with the Code. Comparing year-on-year results, improvement has been made since 2022-23. Given the unprecedented challenges facing the College and the sector now and in recent years, in addition to changing membership of the Board, these results are encouraging and demonstrate that the Board is diverse and resilient. The feedback from this annual exercise also informs the Board Development Plan.

Leadership and Strategy

Statement	2022-23	2023-24
The Board has set out clear strategic priorities and aims	88%	87%
The Board regularly reviews performance against the strategic aims	81%	93%
The aims of the College are aligned with regional strategy/outcomes	63%	80%
The Board undertakes regular strategic reviews/scenario planning	75%	93%
The Board understands and demonstrates the College values	88%	87%
The Board has a Code of Conduct to which it is committed in practice	81%	80%
The Board operates according to the Nine Principles of Public Life	75%	80%

● 85–100% ● 70–84% ● <70%



Feedback

What has worked well?

- **Membership:** The introduction of trade union members diversifies the Board and, along with nominated staff and student members, this enhances the Board's perspective and discussion.
- **Onboarding:** Effective onboarding processes and planning days have fostered strong relationships and cohesion among new and long-serving members.
- **Sessions:** Full-day sessions focusing on strategy and development were well-received.
- **Support and Communication:** Clear paperwork and excellent secretariat support have facilitated smooth operations. Communication across the Board has been timely, relevant and clear.
- **Decision-Making:** The Board has collectively navigated financial constraints, ensuring the institution's future stability. Structured planning days have provided valuable strategic context and scenario planning opportunities.
- **Transition and Cohesion:** The Board has planned to transition to a new Chair and remains cohesive in decision-making, providing constructive challenge to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), during difficult circumstances.

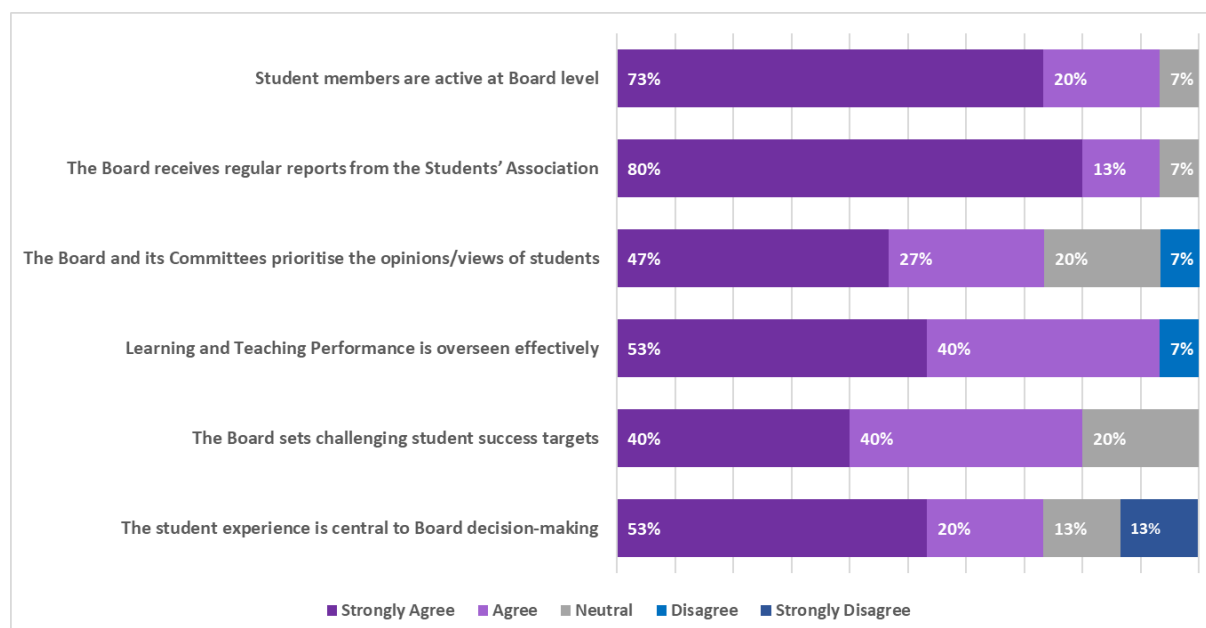
What could be improved next year?

- **Board Dynamics:** Foster a more inclusive atmosphere where all members are respected and reduce tensions between members during robust discussions.
- **Strategy:** Develop a realistic long-term vision for 2030 and continue scenario planning.
- **Focus:** Greater opportunity to discuss issues of importance to the Students' Association and other matters, such as City of Glasgow International Ltd and the College's commercial and international work.

Quality of the Student Experience

Statement	2022-23	2023-24
Student members are active at Board level	94%	93%
The Board receives regular reports from the Students' Association	100%	93%
The Board and its Committees prioritise the opinions/views of students	81%	73%
Learning and Teaching Performance is overseen effectively	88%	93%
The Board sets challenging student success targets	75%	80%
The student experience is central to Board decision-making	81%	73%

● 85–100% ● 70–84% ● <70%



Feedback

What has worked well?

- **Student Engagement:** Active participation from student Board members, including leading a session at the Board Development Day, ensuring student perspectives are central.
- **City Attributes:** The development of City Attributes.
- **Committee:** An effective Learning, Teaching & Student Experience Committee.

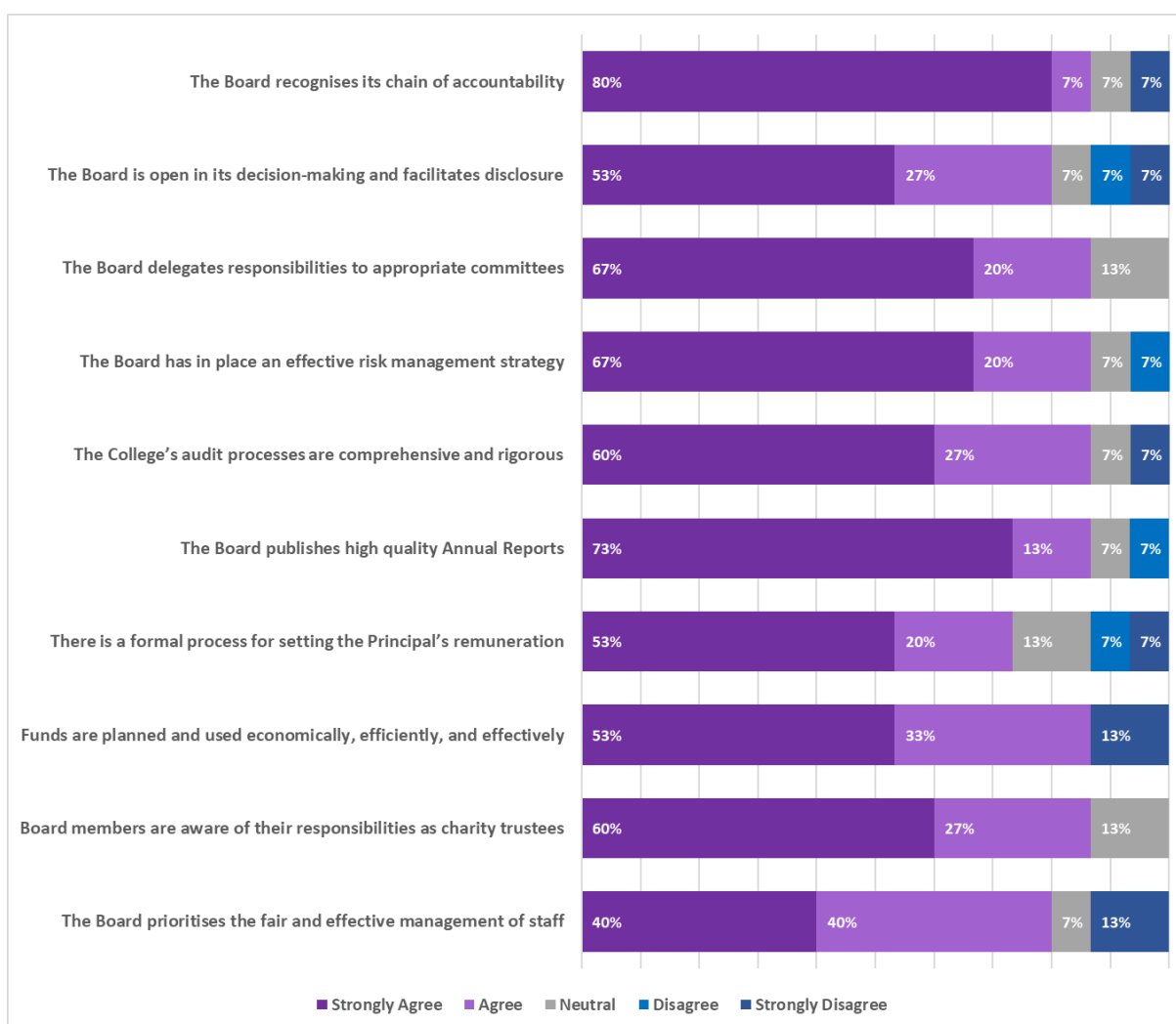
What could be improved next year?

- **Student Experience:** Ensure our diverse student body's perspectives are reflected in discussions. Consider ways of better understanding the student experience and challenges, such as through research with the Student's Association (SA).
- **Student Success:** Addressing concerning trends in student completion and success rates.
- **Support and Engagement:** Support student Board members as they join and introduce more structured engagement between the Chair, Vice Chair and SA team.

Accountability

Statement	2022-23	2023-24
The Board recognises its chain of accountability	81%	87%
The Board is open in its decision-making and facilitates disclosure	69%	80%
The Board delegates responsibilities to appropriate committees	88%	87%
The Board has in place an effective risk management strategy	88%	87%
The College's audit processes are comprehensive and rigorous	75%	87%
The Board publishes high quality Annual Reports	88%	87%
There is a formal process for setting the Principal's remuneration	63%	73%
Funds are planned and used economically, efficiently, and effectively	81%	87%
Board members are aware of their responsibilities as charity trustees	100%	87%
The Board prioritises the fair and effective management of staff	81%	80%

● 85–100%
 ● 70–84%
 ● <70%



Feedback

What has worked well?

- Governance:** Improvements in governance, risk management and audit arrangements, with constructive challenge at a Board and committee level. The External Effectiveness Review of the Board was positive and affirming.

- **Operations:** The College has maintained operations and achieved above-sector-average results despite financial and funding challenges.

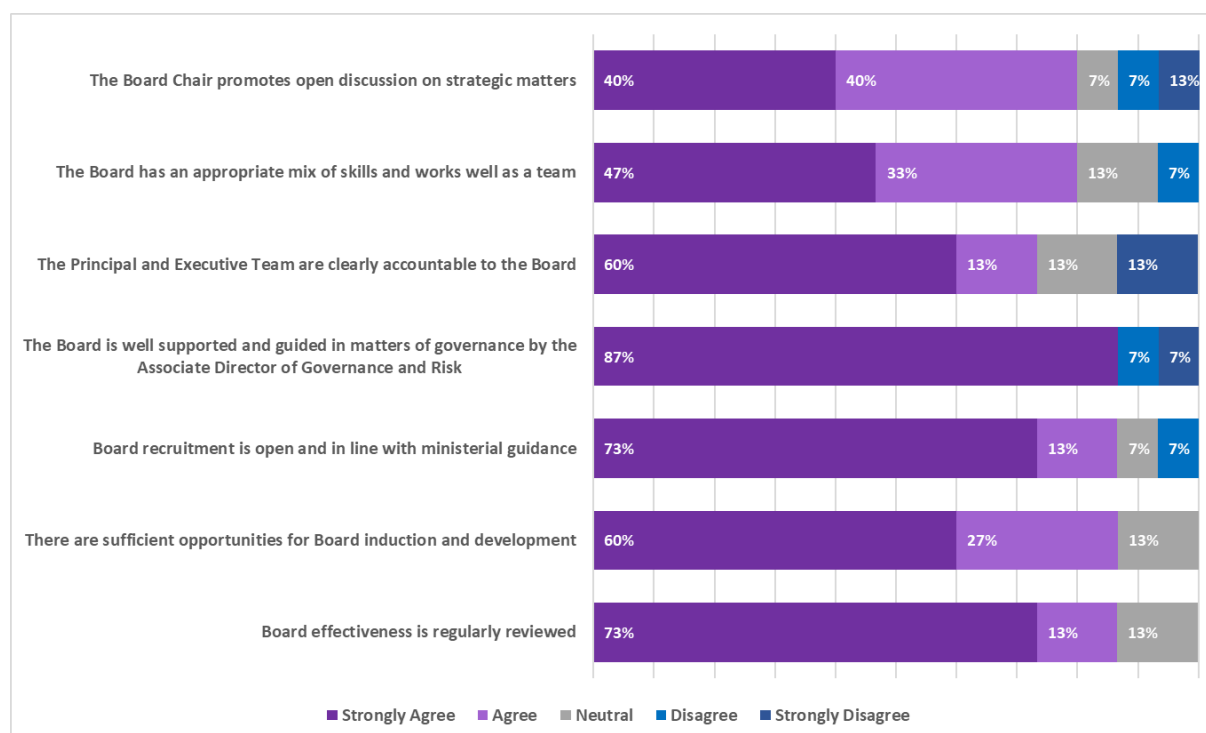
What could be improved next year?

- **Scrutiny and Transparency:** Demonstrably and constructively challenge the ELT and ensure transparency in the Board's decision-making.
- **Committee Responsibilities:** Raise awareness of the responsibilities exercised by the committees, e.g. review of the Principal's remuneration by the Conveners' Committee.
- **Staff Engagement:** Consider how the Board can engage with all staff and demonstrate that their views influence decision-making.
- **Industrial Relations:** There is a need to reset industrial relations at the College in what will continue to be a highly challenging financial environment.

Effectiveness

Statement	2022-23	2023-24
The Board Chair promotes open discussion on strategic matters	63%	80%
The Board has an appropriate mix of skills and works well as a team	63%	80%
The Principal/Executive Team are clearly accountable to the Board	75%	73%
The Board is well supported and guided in matters of governance by ADGR	94%	87%
Board recruitment is open and in line with ministerial guidance	94%	87%
There are sufficient opportunities for Board induction and development	94%	87%
Board effectiveness is regularly reviewed	88%	87%

● 85–100% ● 70–84% ● <70%



Feedback

What has worked well?

- **Recruitment and Induction:** Successful recruitment and induction of new Board members and co-opted committee members.
- **Training:** Effective training and development sessions in place to support members in their roles, with improvements made to the Board Development Day.
- **Collaborative Leadership:** The Chair and Principal have an excellent working relationship and actively support members.

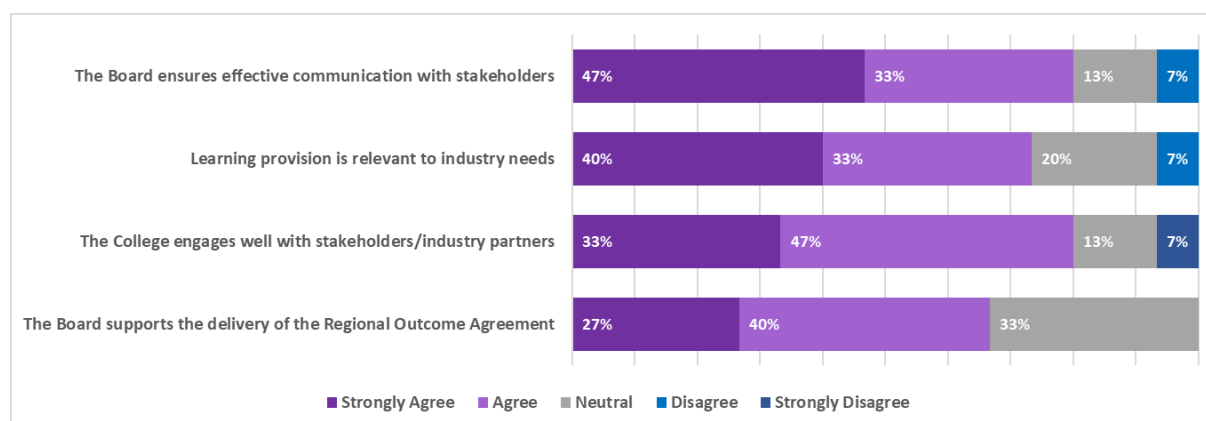
What could be improved next year?

- **Skills and Experience:** Identify and address skills and experience gaps through continuous professional development and recruitment to ensure Board diversity and resilience.
- **Strategic Role:** Ensure members understand the strategic role of the Board and the responsibilities delegated to committees and senior staff.
- **Meetings:** Facilitate meetings where members are given equal opportunities to contribute and that conclude on time. Attendance at committees should be improved.

Relationships and Collaboration

Statement	2022-23	2023-24
The Board ensures effective communication with stakeholders	75%	80%
Learning provision is relevant to industry needs	75%	73%
The College engages well with stakeholders/industry partners	75%	80%
The Board supports the delivery of the Regional Outcome Agreement	69%	67%

● 85–100% ● 70–84% ● <70%



Feedback

What has worked well?

- **Engagement Opportunities:** The range of events that the Board members can attend.
- **Regional Engagement:** Strong relationships with colleges and universities across the region.
- **Industry Relationships:** Strong curriculum aligned with employer needs, particularly in nautical and STEM subjects.
- **Business Symbiosis:** Productive fixed-life group, with Board participation, on the future relationship and partnership working with industry.

What could be improved next year?

- **Industry Engagement:** Bringing industry partners to the Board to share their perspectives on skill needs.
- **Regional Collaboration:** Strengthening relationships with local government, regional organisations and national agencies. Understanding the role of the College within the wider City Region.

Conclusion

8. As the Board continuously pursues excellence and adherence to the highest standards of governance, operating in a challenging environment and with a changing membership, the annual self-evaluation serves as an invaluable mechanism and opportunity for reflection and improvement. The self-evaluation findings provide members with a comprehensive overview of the Board's strengths and areas that require development or attention. As stated at the outset, the insights gathered from these regular exercises inform the ongoing work of the Board and the Board Development Plan.
9. Overall, the self-evaluation for 2023-24 records high levels of satisfaction across the 34 measures and 5 categories – and represents an improved position on the previous academic year. With 38 of 39 measures recording satisfaction of 70% or above, and using high thresholds, only one measure is rated red. Five measures rated red in 2022-23 are now amber, while five amber measures are now green.

Section	2022-23			2023-24		
	Green	Amber	Red	Green	Amber	Red
Leadership & Strategy	2	4	1	4	3	0
Quality of Student Experience	3	3	0	3	3	0
Accountability	4	4	2	7	3	0
Effectiveness	4	1	2	4	3	0
Relationships & Collaboration	0	3	1	0	3	1
Total	13	15	6	18	15	1

10. The Board is confident that the College has a clearly defined strategy and effective governance, risk, finance and audit arrangements. Members have expressed high levels of satisfaction with the College's management of learning and teaching, the contribution of student Board members and the governance advice and support they receive. The results also indicate, as in previous years, that Board members understand their roles and responsibilities and agree that there are sufficient training and development opportunities facilitated to support them in their roles.
11. Members, in participating in the previous self-evaluation, identified a number of areas that the Board should address and improve upon in 2023-24. Broadly, these related to discussions and decision-making at the Board, awareness of committee business and Board members' skills and teamworking. The recent self-evaluation results show that all of these measures have improved. The Board Development Plan for 2024-25 includes actions to maintain progress in these areas.
12. Through the recent self-evaluation exercise, members identified the College's delivery of the Regional Outcome Agreement, collaboration with industry and regional partners and the student experience as areas for development.
13. While no member disagreed that the Board supports the delivery of the ROA, one-third of respondents indicated that they were unsure how this is done. This may be as a result of the significant change of Board members over the past academic year. From the 2024-25 academic year, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) will replace ROAs with a new Outcomes Framework and Assurance Model and a Self-Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAPs) as part of the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework. It is important that these developments continue to be reported to the Board and members understand the new changes and requirements.
14. Two-thirds of the Board agreed that the College's learning provision was relevant to industry needs; however, with one-fifth of participating members indicating that they were unsure and new members joining the Board, this is an area for attention in the new academic year.

15. The measures on prioritising the student voice and experience, while still rated amber, have decreased. It is important that Board members are aware of this trend and that we consciously address it in the new academic year.
16. Finally, while a high proportion of members agreed that the Board are aware of their responsibilities as trustees and the Code of Conduct, rates have either decreased slightly or are rated as amber. The recent changes to the Board's membership may explain these results; however, this also emphasises the importance of regular training and refresher sessions.