

Board of Management

Meeting of the Learning, Teaching & Student Experience Committee

MINUTE OF 2nd MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 1500 HRS (LTSEC2), CITY CAMPUS, ROOM C.06.106

Present	
Audrey Sullivan (Convener)	Charandeep Singh (Remote)
Ewart Keep (Remote)	Leo Subido
In Attendance	
Claire Carney	Drew McGowan
Sandra Cook	May Miller
Jon Gray	Derek Robertson
Sheila Lodge	
Don MacKeen	Ann Butcher (Minute)
Apologies for absence	
Roddy Gillespie	Josh Taylor
Paul Little	

A Sullivan welcomed D MacKeen at his first meeting of the Committee and S Cook, Head of Learning Support who presented under item 4.1.

Item LTSEC2-1	Apologies for Absence	
Paper No:	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	Apologies were received from R Gillespie, P Little and J Taylor.	

Item LTSEC2-1	Declarations of Interest	
Paper No:	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	There were no declarations of interest.	

Item LTSEC2-3.1	Minute of the Learning & Teaching Committee meeting held on 20 September 2023	
Paper No: LTSEC2-A	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Approve
Decision/Noted	That subject to one minor amendment, the minute was approved. All outstanding actions were considered complete.	

Item 4.4 was taken at this time.

Item LTSEC2-4.4	Academic Performance AY 2022-23	
Paper No: LTSEC2-D	Lead: J Gray	Action requested: Discuss
Discussion/ Matters Arising	The College's performance in AY 2022-23 which provided a detailed breakdown at College, Faculty and Curriculum level was submitted for	

review.

J Gray highlighted that external challenges continue to cause disruptions for both staff and students including the national and local strike action by EIS-FELA which has complicated efforts to ensure certification and progression for students. The disruptions have led to last-minute resulting and the end of year performance figures may be subject to change.

Despite these challenges, the Committee noted that the College had successfully met the Scottish Government's annual target for the volume of learning delivered, had supported a significant number of learners in positive pathways and observed a second consecutive increase in student satisfaction levels. The Committee commended the overall successful completion rate for students particularly considering the challenges faced and praised the dedicated efforts of staff.

The College is now preparing for its annual portfolio review at the end of November 2023. During the review, performance of courses including recruitment, student satisfaction, retention, completion rates, fee income and pathway planning will be assessed with Faculties and recommendations for improvement will be agreed.

J Gray informed the Committee that a thematic inspection by Education Scotland had taken place early in November 2023. The findings of the review are expected in early 2024, with early indications pointing to challenges faced by the Faculties and a downward trend in certain subject areas.

E Keep referred to survey response rates and suggested that certain areas within the College would require an approach to increase engagement with students, especially in parts of the College where a culture of non-response exists. Specific areas may benefit from alternative methods other than electronic questionnaires. He further mentioned that the variations in successful completion rates among different social economic groups should also be explored. The Committee recognised that the current SMID measure of social inclusion was basic and could be more sophisticated however noted that refinement of this measure might significantly impact the reported figures and consequently the College may need to consider how to focus additional support in this area.

Discussion followed on the cost associated with student withdrawals. While it was acknowledged that this cost could be offset through January recruitment and that a certain level of drop out is expected, emphasis should continue to be placed on retaining students. The Committee received assurance that efforts are in place, including the implementation of Faculty alerts through the attendance tracker and interventions facilitated by Faculty business managers. D MacKeen expressed concern about a reduction in the provision of access courses however the crucial role of student services in supporting students seeking access pathways was highlighted.

The Committee also noted the development of reporting of performance data utilising Power-Bi dashboards which will allow curriculum teams to review performance trends.

A Sullivan praised the RAG rated approach emphasising its clarity and

helpfulness in understanding the paper. She expressed her thanks to the performance team and business managers for producing the report.

Decision/Noted

To note the update report.

J Gray left the meeting.

Item LTSEC2-4.1 Presentation: Student Learning Support

Paper No:
Verbal

Lead: S Cook

Action requested: Discuss

Discussion/
Matters Arising

S Cook, Head of Student Development presented an update on the Student Learning Support Service. She informed the Committee that students can access learning support referrals through various channels, including at application, enrolment, through staff referrals or by self-referral. Necessary information is gathered and is passed on to Learning Support and Development Advisors. The 20% increase in referrals during AY 2023-24 compared to last year was particularly noted.

Advisors invite students for a Needs Assessment (showing a 13% increase from last year) and gather relevant evidence. New students receive Personal Learning Support Plans (PLSP) and a rollover process is undertaken for students already at College. Reasonable adjustments are then implemented to ensure students are not disadvantaged in class although it was highlighted that not all students take up the support offered.

A wide range of interventions including private transport, equipment loan and dyslexia testing are recommended. Referrals to educational psychologists, education support workers and mentoring support are also provided along with additional assessment arrangements. Students are also assisted in applying for Disabled Students Allowance.

S Cook advised that students are encouraged to participate in the service through initiatives such as the disabled student's network, providing peer support and offering skills development workshops which allows access to larger group numbers however it is recognised that some more complex student groups continue to benefit from one to one or small group workshops. Monthly student campaigns and targeted communications to small groups provide information on relevant topics. Supportive relationships with students are developed through survey work and focus groups which allows their involvement to make improvements.

Moving forward, opportunities to generate income are being explored along with the provision of a proof-reading service and assistive technology. A Reasonable Adjustments Policy is being produced drawing from best practices in other organisations. A business case is also being developed to create a Sensory/Quiet Room.

S Cook concluded that the Learning Support Service makes sure support systems are in place to ensure students enjoy their College experience and have everything necessary to participate in their courses.

The Committee acknowledged the growing demand for accessing the service recognising its likely continuation and emphasised the importance of considering resource implications associated with this increased



demand.

A Sullivan expressed her thanks to S Cook for her insightful presentation, which provided a valuable perspective on the support and services offered.

Decision/Noted

To note the update.

S Cook left the meeting.

Item LTSEC2-4.2 | Students' Association Update

Paper No:
LTSEC2-4.2

Lead: L Subido

Action requested: Discuss

Discussion/
Matters Arising

L Subido presented an overview of the survey results from the Students' Association (SA) survey on the ongoing dispute. Responses were gathered from 507 students, revealing that 22.9% of students are actively seeking work, exploring alternative courses or are planning to return at a later date. A number of students have also agreed to participate in further focus groups to gain additional understanding of the effects of the disputes.

These results have also been shared with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and EIS-FELA. Following an emergency Student Parliament, students have agreed a list of requests for both, highlighting that their voices are not being heard and suggesting that an option to meet with ELT and EIS-FELA would significantly improve their understanding of the situation.

L Subido further informed the Committee that since the survey was conducted, students have been expressing their concerns and anxiety regarding courses and future prospects. Students have also reported that they feel that their voices have not been heard throughout the industrial action and that communication could be improved to ensure students are informed and reduce anxiety.

C Carney stated that the Senior Management Team (SMT) and ELT were acutely aware of the prevailing fear among students. She acknowledged the challenges in communication, clarifying that the College cannot guarantee the absence of course cancellations or potential qualification issues as the ongoing strike action intensifies the precariousness of the situation.

C Carney informed that a thorough assessment of all courses has been conducted over the past few weeks which has identified areas of concern however the majority of courses have had little or no impact. She assured the Committee that the next steps are in the process of being confirmed and comprehensive advice and options will be communicated to students in the next few days.

Decision/Noted

- To note the update report.
- To note the SA request to meet with ELT and EIS-FELA.
- To note that comprehensive advice and options will be communicated to students.

Item LTSEC2-4.3 Learning, Teaching & Student Experience Update

Paper No: LTSEC2-C Lead: C Carney/D Robertson Action requested: Discuss

Discussion/
Matters Arising

C Carney highlighted key elements in the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience update report noting that a third round of rolling strike action began on 13 October 2023 for a further 5 weeks. It was recognised that the significant impact of industrial action on students was discussed under the previous agenda item – in addition to being considered at the Board’s Strategic Planning Day on 8 November 2023.

The Committee noted that the College was ensuring that students who had been significantly impacted by industrial action, to the extent that their course may not be viable, were being advised of the funding implications and informed of their options ahead of the key SAAS date of 1 December.

As mentioned under item 4.4, annual portfolio reviews will be held next week and will seek to evidence continual improvement and impact through targeted interventions.

The work of City Attributes continues and an online Canvas course for staff and students has been piloted across 3 Faculties with positive feedback received. The proposal to make an application to the Arm’s Length Foundation for funding to continue the pilot and development of resources with full cross College implementation for AY 2024-25 was supported by the Committee.

Work has commenced on the Student Success Framework which is a key part of the Student Academic Experience Strategy (SAES) and will provide a strategic overview of what the College currently implements to ensure success for all students. Initial development work will consider current practice in access, retention, attainment and progression with a view to mapping what the College does successfully and where to focus development.

The Committee noted the annual Learning and Teaching Conference will be held on 23 January 2024 and will centre around the theme of ‘The Inclusive College’. A call for staff to share innovative and inspiring ways of teaching and learning from the past year and how these approached have been adapted to support learning for all has been circulated today (21 11 23).

D Robertson provided an update on lecturer development reporting on the number of staff supported through accredited programmes in learning and teaching including those successfully completing the Professional Development Award (PDA) in Teaching in Scotland’s Colleges, noting that some were delivered for the Scottish Prison Service. Staff were also supported with funded places and mentorship support via the University of Aberdeen. The total number of staff recorded as having a Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE) and registrations with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) were also advised.

Decision/Noted

To note the update report.

Item LTSEC2-4.5 Strategic Risk Review

Paper No: LTSEC2-E	Lead: D McGowan	Action requested: Discuss
Discussion/ Matters Arising	A Sullivan proposed a further review of SR17 (<i>Negative Impact of Industrial Action</i>) risk score which was increased to 20 (Red) at the last meeting of the Committee. As strike action continues, C Carney and S Lodge suggested that the risk score remained unchanged. This was agreed by the Committee.	
Decision/Noted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the risk score for SR17 remain at 20 (Red). • To note the Risk Management Action Plans for risks reported to the Committee. 	

Item LTSEC2-5	Any Other Notified Business	
Paper No: Verbal	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	None.	

Item LTSEC2-6	Disclosability of Papers	
Paper No: Verbal	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	Noted without change.	

Item LTSEC2-7	Date of Next Meeting	
Paper No: Verbal	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	Tuesday 27 February 2024.	

The meeting closed at 1645 hrs.

ACTIONS FROM MEETING

Item	Description	Owner	Target Date
	None		

ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Item	Description	Owner	Target Date
LTSEC1-4.6 20 09 23	Strategic Risk Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That SR1 and SR3 be merged. • That SR17 risk score be increased to 20 (Red). • That the Strategic Risk Review be added to the agenda of the next LTSEC meeting. 	DM DM DM	Complete Complete 21 11 23 Complete