

Curriculum, Quality & Student Experience Committee

Meeting at 4.30pm on Thursday 6 February 2025
on Teams

Actions

Item	Action	Responsibility and Date	Status
07/25	Equalities Action Plan - How other institutions are addressing gender imbalances will be incorporated into action plan.	Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion Officer	Ongoing
10/25	Performance and Curriculum Update – New delivery of Schools Academy to be included within next cycle of reporting. Future reports will include numerical values along with percentages for better clarity.	Director – MIS and Quality	Ongoing - Sept 2025 CQSE Completed
16/25	Mental Health Strategy – Update on progress to be provided.	Director – Student Support Services	Completed
17/25	Learning for Leading (L4L) Reports – discuss how the process could be more two-way.	Board Secretary	

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Minutes

ITEM	MINUTES
Present	Paul Cathrow (Chair) Chris Alder (Student President) Mark Catto Douglas Ormston Hilary Shand Pete Smith (Principal) Nick Sparks
In Attendance	Hilary Broatch (Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion Officer) Amy Brydon (Director - Student Support Services & Students' Association) Ingrid Earp (Board Secretary/Governance Specialist) Joanne George (Director – MIS & Quality) Davie Lowe (Vice Principal - Curriculum & Sustainability) Anne-Marie Sturrock (Vice Principal - Student Experience) Lorraine Sulo (Minutes)
01/25	<u>Chair's Opening Remarks</u> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
02/25	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> Apologies from Ray McCowan had been received.
03/25	<u>Minutes of Previous Meeting (Paper A)</u> The minutes were approved as an accurate record.
04/25	<u>Matters Arising</u> The status of the previous actions were noted with three items ongoing.
05/25	<u>Declaration of any Conflicts of Interest</u> No items were raised.
06/25	<u>Register of Members Interest</u> The Committee was reminded to advise the Board Secretary of any changes.

07/25	<u>Mainstreaming & Equalities Outcomes Action Plan 2021-25 Final Update & 1st draft of Proposed Equalities Outcomes 2025-29 (Paper B)</u> The Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Officer provided an overview of the papers. The Committee received a final update on the Mainstreaming and Equalities Outcomes Action Plan for 2021-25, confirming that all actions within the four outcomes have been achieved and impact evaluations completed. Actions requiring further advancement or continuation were also identified. A first draft of the proposed Equalities Outcomes for 2025-29 was provided which had also been discussed with the Senior Leadership Team and the College's Equalities & Inclusion (E&I) Committee. Due to the timing of the E&I meeting there are still the potential of some changes, with a full report scheduled to be submitted to the Regional Board in March 2025. The EDI Officer explained that the three proposed outcomes are aligned with the themes of Safety, Curriculum, and Success, focusing on the College's needs and relevant to the National Equality Outcomes (NEOs). It is proposed that four out of the seventeen NEOs will not be considered at this stage, with rationales outlined in the paper and expected by the EHRC. Following final approval of the full paper, an action plan will be implemented through the E&I Committee. Further details on the three proposed outcomes were provided by the EDI Officer. The Committee asked questions in relation to safety – it's a broad area, what does safety look like for us as a College? Reducing the gender imbalance – what are the potential strategies and approaches to this? New approaches to gender imbalance by the College have already led to improvements in agriculture and construction. The Schools Academy provision also plays a crucial role, with the College also participating in open days and career events. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to learn how other institutions are addressing gender imbalances, which would be incorporated into the action plan. ACTION: EDI Officer The Committee approved the outcomes action plan for 2021-25 and the proposed Equalities Outcomes for 2025-29. The Chair thanked the EDI Officer for attending and extended an invitation to stay for the remainder of the meeting, which was accepted.
08/25	<u>Timing of Meetings 2025/26 (Paper C)</u> The Board Secretary outlined the paper which sought feedback on the CQSE Committee's proposed meeting times for the new academic year. After a discussion, it was agreed to adjust the February date to the first week of March 2026 to align with the reporting requirements for non-executive members. The Chair highlighted the importance of maintaining a manageable gap before the March Regional Board meeting. The Committee confirmed their support for holding one in-person meeting annually, during May.

09/25	<u>Risk Register (Paper D)</u> The VP of Student Experience outlined the main points regarding those risks which had been assigned to the Committee: • Risk 2.2 - Borders Young Talent (BYT) funding will cease at the end of March 2025 therefore exploration of new ways to maximise funds to continue to support students is underway. Potential funding through the National Lottery is being explored and a Retention & Achievement Committee has been established. The Chair enquired into the status of the National Lottery application and any potential risk to students regarding a gap in service. The Director of Student Support Services confirmed that the bid is due to be submitted by the end of this month with work underway to mitigate the gap in support to students, which is currently at two months. Student Support Officers (SSOs) are currently being trained to provide support to those students who are receiving BYT mentoring. This is a challenging situation for the College with other funding sources also being investigated should the National Lottery bid not be successful. A Member enquired about the impact on the workload of the SSOs once the BYT support concludes. The Director of Student Support Services acknowledged that there will be an impact with training on coaching and wellbeing plans being provided to SSOs. The College is also liaising with the SB Council's Promise Team. The Committee noted the report.
10/25	<u>Performance and Curriculum Update (Paper E)</u> The Director of MIS & Quality highlighted the key points from the paper, which included: • Withdrawal rates have improved from the same time last year, with the exception of PTFE (Part-time Further Education). The increase in PTFE is impacted by the total enrolment on courses being lower than last year; • The actions of the Student Support department and Retention & Achievement Committee have had a positive impact on withdrawals; • Withdrawal reasons for full-time courses continue to be personal/domestic, mental health issues and entering employment. For PTFE, the highest reason is returning to school with PTHE being leaving current employer; and • 24/25 Credit Position – On target to over trade this year with 95% of allocated credits already achieved and the remainder planned to be delivered before the end of the academic session. Points raised from discussion: • The restructured delivery of Schools Academy will be included within the next cycle of reporting; • Future reports will include numerical values along with percentages for better clarity;

	• Withdrawals and Returning to School – Students decide that college has not been the correct choice at that time and undertake a further year at school before returning to college. Following the evaluation of Schools Academy, schools are keen for rationale of unsuccessful students which is being progressed; and • Post exit survey for those who withdraw has been implemented. ACTION: Director MIS & Quality The Committee were assured that College performance in this area is being well monitored and any issues addressed as much as possible.
11/25	<u>BCSA Update (Paper F)</u> The Student President highlighted the main points from the report which provided an update on the ongoing activity of the Students' Association throughout 24/25 including: • A recent visit by Just Cycle resulted in the distribution of sixteen refurbished bicycles to students and staff. Another visit is being planned for Newtown St Boswells (NSB) campus; and • a litter picking group will be launching in May and will start at Newtown St Boswells campus. In response to a query from the Chair regarding the previously raised concerns about isolation among NSB students, the Committee was assured that in general this has improved with more integration of courses and theory sessions being held at Galashiels to allow greater integration of students. The Committee noted the report.
12/25	<u>Corporate Parenting Plan Progress (Paper G)</u> The Director of Student Support Services highlighted the main points from the paper which provided an update on the College's Corporate Parenting plan and the progress against the agreed actions: • Nine out of ten tasks have been completed with the outstanding task progressing well, which will help with tracking progress and attendance for a range of care-experienced students; • An evaluation of the BYT programme is currently underway, and initial feedback has been positive regarding the support provided, student engagement, and trust in staff. As discussed earlier in the meeting, the College is exploring alternative funding schemes. Additionally, a Trauma-Informed Steering Group has been established to ensure that policies are empathetic and kind; • Partnerships have improved with "No One Left Behind" now having regular weekly sessions on campus. A 10-week course for unaccompanied asylum seeking children is underway with eight participants enrolled;

	• The withdrawal rates for care-experienced students are showing an improvement and currently at 14% compared to a final withdrawal rate of 33% for the previous year. While still high, this is a positive trend with further improvement expected as the year progresses and Committee congratulated everyone involved for the big improvement in this area; and • There is a current focus on future planning with students, and the next iteration of the Corporate Parenting Plan is scheduled for publication in the summer of 2025 with consultations taking place over the next few months. A Member asked about opportunities for staff to undertake CPD as outlined in item 2.2 of the action plan. The Committee was informed that Corporate Parenting modules are part of the College's mandatory modules with training also provided throughout the year to Student Support teams. The Retention and Achievement Committee is particularly focused on this work, and it remains a high priority. The Committee noted the report.
13/25	<u>Student Welfare & Guidance Report (Paper H)</u> The Committee acknowledged the contents of the report agreeing that any salient points had been covered during earlier discussions.
14/25	<u>Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey Results 23-24 (Paper I)</u> The VP of Student Experience outlined the main points from the paper which provided the results from the SFC's 23-24 Annual Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey. The following points were highlighted during discussions: • Overall satisfaction rates are high; however, PTFE and FTHE response rates are below the national average. Measures are in place to address this; • The PTFE response rate has increased from 2% to 8% due to significant efforts by staff to encourage learner participation. Some possible reasons for the still relatively low response rate were discussed such as those attending a one day upskilling course might not receive the survey or see it as relevant to them. The survey has remained the same for some years and was designed by SFC for a traditional delivery pattern; • The response rate is not directly comparable due to credit-bearing courses; • The overall satisfaction rate has decreased to 5.4%, which is disappointing; • Appendix 1 shows improvements in every other question, but the question "Are you satisfied with your course?" scored lower; and • Learners complete other College surveys throughout the academic session, which could be shared with the Committee. The Committee noted the report.

15/25	<u>Quality & Development Update (Paper J)</u> The Director of MIS and Quality highlighted the main points from the report which included: • There has been a decrease in the number of upheld comments compared to the same time last year, with more compliments received; • External verification (EV) activity planning is progressing well with EV visits scheduled to take place over the next few months; • The first TQER (Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review) main review visit is scheduled to take place during 2028-29. Four staff members have been appointed to the review pool; • Update on EV outcomes will be provided at later CQSE meeting; • The Self-evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP) was submitted to the SFC in December with feedback expected shortly; • SFC has arranged the first quality engagement visit; and • The Observation Cycle is underway and making good progress, with a summary to follow at the next CQSE meeting. The Chair thanked the Director for the update and the Committee welcomed the positive report.
16/25	<u>Mental Health Action Plan Update (Paper K)</u> The Director of Student Support Services highlighted the main points from the paper which provided an update on the College's Mental Health Action Plan with all actions having been achieved. It was noted that some points had already been covered under the Corporate Parenting Plan Update. Key areas highlighted included: • Improved Partnerships with local organisations; • Student Wellbeing Coordinator providing dedicated wellbeing support for students (funding from SFC Transitional fund); • Range of resources introduced to support student and staff wellbeing; • Increased disclosures of mental health issues by 70%; • Mental health withdrawal continues to be in the top three of withdrawal reasons; • Additional priority – Creation of more opportunities for students to connect with each other. The provision of a safe environment for neurodiverse students is important; • ASN fund is currently being underutilised; and • 'Mentally Healthier Industries' pilot project will enable students to explore practices to support individuals with poor mental health. Joinery and Hairdressing are participating in pilot. The Director of Student Support Services advised that the next steps involve a review of the current strategy in line with Scotland's new Mental Health Strategy. There is now no formal requirement for the College to have a mental health action plan and the new Scottish Mental Health Strategy does overlap with a number of other areas of College activity. The Committee asked about how the potential overlap in reporting could be reduced and brought together to ensure that it is clear what it means for students as a whole. The Chair

	requested an update on progress as an item for discussion at the next meeting. ACTION: Director - SSS The Student President noted the significant transition in mental health delivery which has been achieved with many other efforts and successes also achieved. The Committee noted the report.
17/25	<u>Learning for Leading Reports & Management Response</u> A number of reports have been received since the last meeting. Board Members generally welcome the opportunity to have more in-depth discussion re particular areas of the College's work, however a Member asked if it would be possible to make the activity more two way rather than just largely a learning exercise for Board Members. Action on the Board Secretary to pick this up with Members and the Board Chair. ACTION: Board Secretary The Committee noted the contents of the report.
18/25	<u>Papers for Publication</u> All papers will be published with the exception of any draft papers or those containing confidential data.
19/25	<u>Any Other Business</u> No items were raised.
20/25	<u>Date of Next Meeting</u> The next CQSE meeting will take place <u>in person</u> at 16:30 on Thursday 29 May 2025 in the Board Room, Scottish Borders Campus, Galashiels.