

Curriculum, Quality & Student Experience Committee

Meeting at 4.30pm on Thursday 29 May 2025

Board Room, Scottish Borders Campus / TEAMS

Actions

Item	Action	Responsibility and Date	Status
27/25	Terms of Reference will be brought back to the February 2026 Committee for review.	Board Secretary	Ongoing - Feb 2026 agenda item
29/25	Mental Health Strategy – Annual review to take place and a framework for evidence to be explored.	Director Student Support Services	Ongoing
35/25	Full Strategic Risk Register to be shared with H Shand.	Board Secretary	Completed
36/25	Learning for Leading - Scheduled opportunities to be arranged to facilitate more direct engagement between SLT and staff.	Vice Principal Student Experience / Assistant Principal	Ongoing

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Minutes

ITEM	MINUTES
Present	Paul Cathrow (Chair) Mark Catto (Teaching Staff Member) Douglas Ormston Hilary Shand (Co-opted Member) Pete Smith (Principal) Nick Sparks (<i>Online</i>)
In Attendance	Ray McCowan (Regional Board Chair - <i>Online</i>) Amy Brydon (Director - Student Support Services) Ingrid Earp (Board Secretary/Governance Specialist) Davie Lowe (Assistant Principal - Curriculum & Sustainability) Anne-Marie Sturrock (Vice Principal - Student Experience) Lorraine Sulo (Minutes)
21/25	<u>Chair's Opening Remarks</u> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting including R McCowan and N Sparks who were joining the meeting remotely. H Shand had advised that she would be slightly late joining the meeting.
22/25	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> Apologies were noted from the Student President, Chris Alder, and Director of MIS & Qualities, Joanne George.
23/25	<u>Minutes of Previous Meeting (Paper A)</u> The minutes were approved as an accurate record.
24/25	<u>Matters Arising</u> A review of the previous meeting actions was completed with the following points noted:
07/25	Equalities Action Plan - The incorporation of how other institutions are addressing gender imbalances was noted as completed. H Shand joined the meeting.
17/25	The Board Secretary confirmed that the Learning for Leading process will be discussed at the June Regional Board as part of the Learning for Leading annual report discussion.

25/25	<p><u>Declaration of any Conflicts of Interest</u></p> <p>No items were raised.</p>
26/25	<p><u>Register of Members Interest</u></p> <p>Members were reminded to advise the Board Secretary of any changes.</p>
27/25	<p><u>Terms of Reference – Paper B</u></p> <p>The Board Secretary asked the Committee to consider if the current Terms of Reference reflect the purpose of the Committee and provide a comprehensive structure for the work of the Committee. An extensive review was carried out in October 2023 and amended again in October 2024 to include oversight of the College’s British Sign Language Plan and to reflect changes in the names of required reports.</p> <p>A Member sought clarification on the constitution and student representation. The Board Secretary confirmed that the Student President is a full member of the Committee in their own right, with a new President set to join for the upcoming academic year.</p> <p>It was noted that the Terms of Reference will require revision in February 2026 to reflect the revision of the Future Skills Strategy and will therefore be brought back to the Committee at that time.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: Board Secretary</p>
28/25	<p><u>Corporate Parenting Plan 2025-2028 – Paper C</u></p> <p>The Director of Student Support Services presented the final draft of the plan, which outlines how the College will meet its legal responsibilities in supporting care-experienced students.</p> <p>The plan has been developed following extensive consultation with care-experienced students and their representatives and provides a strategic framework for the next three years, with the majority of actions already embedded into day to day operations. The document has been written specifically for care-experienced students, using accessible and inclusive language.</p> <p>The plan is underpinned by a vision of a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment, and is structured around four key commitments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compassionate Language 2. Nurturing Relationships 3. Scaffolding 4. Sustainability <p>There is an emphasis on the importance of embedding the plan’s values across the entire workforce. While the plan does not include a detailed action plan, staff teams will develop and implement actions aligned with the framework, which will be brought back to the Committee for oversight.</p>

	<p>Committee comments and questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will there be the availability of an <i>easy-read version</i> for young people? It was confirmed that this is under discussion, and the plan aligns well with <i>The Promise</i>, with the four commitments reflected in a shorter, more accessible format. Compassionate language will be further defined in the supporting materials. • Examples of tangible outcomes for students – what does it mean for students? While the document provides an overview, detailed outcomes will be developed by operational teams. A small working group to better embed and track outcomes will be set-up. • While the statements are powerful, they may not be immediately visible to students, therefore, there should be efforts to raise awareness among the student body. • Had parents of care experienced students been directly consulted? Parents had not been directly consulted, however, groups which support parents had engaged significantly. • In the absence of a formal action plan, the need for staff-led development of actions was highlighted. • The engagement of partners such as Scottish Borders Council was positive with the plan aligning with the Council’s action plan with opportunities to strengthen further which is reflective of plan. • A question was raised regarding young carers and the support they receive. It was clarified that many of the supports for care experienced students are also extended to young carers, with Student Support Services focussing more on this group in the coming year. There is the potential to formally align this work in future iterations of the plan. <p>The document was commended by the Committee and approved.</p>
<p>29/25</p>	<p><u>Mental Health Strategy Update – Paper D</u></p> <p>The Director of Student Support Services provided an update on the Mental Health Strategy, following the previous CQSE discussion on how to effectively demonstrate a more integrated approach to reporting.</p> <p>The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has since confirmed there is no specific requirement to produce a standalone mental health strategy and is encouraging participation in the Think Positive initiative and the development of Student Mental Health Agreements.</p> <p>It is therefore proposed that the College’s Mental Health Strategy is retired and a concise mapping document is developed which demonstrates activity and outcomes related to student mental health, thereby reducing duplication and reporting requirements. The Equalities & Inclusion Committee would have oversight of the work.</p> <p>Committee comments and questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review in 12 months was suggested and accepted. • Given the short-term mental health funding is there the possibility of losing visibility? Given that the outcomes and actions are so well embedded throughout the College there is not a concern of this happening.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a framework to evidence against? Yes, this will be explored further with the Director of MIS and Qualities. <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: Director of Student Support Services</p> <p>The Committee approved the recommendations.</p>
30/25	<p><u>Plans for 25/26 Induction and New Initiatives Presentation</u></p> <p>The Vice Principal provided a presentation on the College's Induction and new initiatives for the new academic year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and planning on the induction process has been conducted, incorporating feedback from students and staff gathered through workshops. Changes implemented were primarily minor adjustments rather than major revisions. • A student survey on induction identified key challenges, including difficulties with funding, accessing student support services, and the need for digital devices. These insights led to process improvements to address concerns. • Staff sessions highlighted limited time for lesson preparation and student engagement. A Committee was established, adopting a "less is more" approach with a focus on clear communication. • A quiet induction period is planned, with an additional week in August allowing staff more time to connect with students. • Induction days will be staggered across faculties instead of being held on a single day, with external agencies actively involved. • Laptop distribution has been streamlined and enhanced. • Key dates have been shared well ahead with staff to support better planning. • Student experience initiatives primarily take place over the summer, with a well-structured induction recognised as crucial to student success. • Essential Information Days are scheduled for June. • Online enrolment will commence in July. • Learning and teaching activities will begin in September. • National Lottery funding is being sought to support mental health initiatives. • The Executive Team continues to personally welcome each class. • BCSA will be located at the Transport Interchange for the first two weeks to welcome and assist students. <p>The Vice Principal advised that the Schools Academy has been shortlisted at for The Herald Higher Education Awards with the ceremony taking place this evening. A bid has also been submitted to the Local Employability Partnership for full-time ESOL courses for unaccompanied asylum seeking children.</p> <p>The Committee commended the work undertaken, noting the significant logistical and practical challenges involved. The importance of onboarding and administrative processes as essential components of the student experience was highlighted.</p> <p>Committee comments and questions:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Schools Academy provision is outstanding and benefits the region as a whole. • Are there any success measures for induction experience? Yes, a review is held at the end of September with the induction survey designed to align with intended outcomes. The survey primarily targets full-time students and those in Schools Academy; most part-time students engage in one-to-one sessions with their lecturers instead. The approach is more outcome-focused and aims to assess whether students recognise and understand what took place during induction. <p>The Chair thanked the Vice Principal for an informative presentation.</p>
31/25	<p><u>Performance, Curriculum & Quality Update (Paper E)</u></p> <p>The Assistant Principal of Curriculum & Sustainability highlighted the key points on behalf of the Director of MIS & Quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In AY 23/24, except for part-time HE learners, there has been an improvement in learner success in all areas. • Withdrawal rates have improved in all modes and level from the same time last year with over 144 more students retained. • Schools Academy performance will be included within the September report following the completion of the 24/25 academic year. • The College has currently achieved 99% of allocated credits with the remaining planning to be delivered. • Overall applications for AY 25/26 have increased by 16% with HEFT up by 41%. • The number of upheld complaints has decreased with full report provided in the appendix. • All External Verifications have been held with a further five completed since the preparation of the paper, with no actions received. • Good progress is being made in the observations process, and it is expected that all will be completed. • Feedback from our Self Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP) was largely positive, highlighting good practice and some suggested data to include in future SEAPs. • In 22/23, more leavers went on to achieve positive destinations, than nationally. A full report will be provided at the September CQSE meeting. <p>Committee comments and questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there the potential to expand Higher Education provision? Yes, weekly meetings are held to explore opportunities and consider viable course options. • Staff are congratulated on the results of the external verification visits and balancing the demands whilst managing regular responsibilities. <p>The Chair commended the paper, noting its effective balance in presenting complex areas clearly.</p>

32/25	<p><u>BCSA Update (Paper F)</u></p> <p>The Chair expressed appreciation for the Student President’s significant contributions to the College. As this was his final meeting, the Committee regretted his absence but acknowledged his hard work, which has left the BCSA in a strong and positive position for the future.</p> <p>The Committee noted the contents of the paper.</p>
33/25	<p><u>Future Skills Strategy Progress (Paper G)</u></p> <p>The Vice Principal for Student Experience provided an overview of the paper, highlighting the number of Global Citizenships nominations to date which are 214 in total with 213 awarded.</p> <p>The paper provided a strong insight into the activities taking place at sector level with several examples of great innovation highlighted which was commended by the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee noted the contents of the paper.</p>
34/25	<p><u>Student Welfare & Learning Support Update (Paper H)</u></p> <p>The Director of Student Support Services highlighted the key points from the paper which updated the Committee on activity within the Student Support Services team between January 2025 and April 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 350 students have learning support in place. • Two thirds of students disclose needs once at College rather than before. How confidence and trust can be built to disclose this earlier is being considered. • There is a rise in disability allowance applications with forty-three this academic year and seventy-nine predicted for 25-26. • Mental health is the top referral for wellbeing support with students experience anxiety and sleeping problems. • Coaching and trauma-informed practice training for staff is being introduced. <p>R McCowan offered his apologies as he had to leave the meeting early.</p> <p>Committee comments and questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people is outstanding. • DSA – Who are Theorise? An organisation who provides support on behalf of College. • Students aged fifteen at enrolment – 38% requested learning support after enrolment. Could there be a different approach? The College is working with schools and building on transitions with a meeting tomorrow to look at better engagement. Individuals are very sensitive of people knowing about their needs and worry about what will happen if they disclose their needs. The majority of those who have withdrawn return to school. • Embedding of coaching skills for staff is excellent and provides a good service to students.

	P Smith offered his apologies as he had to leave the meeting early to attend another event.
35/25	<p><u>Strategic Risk Register (Paper I)</u></p> <p>The paper provided the Committee with an update on the risks assigned to it and details of progress.</p> <p>H Shand observed that the articulation of Risk 2.1 may be doing a disservice by presenting it as a single risk. She noted that it comprises multiple elements that should be disaggregated and managed separately. It was further noted that the risks allocated to the Committee are part of the overall Strategic Risk Register, which will be shared with H Shand to provide greater insight into the interconnections between risks.</p> <p>The Chair acknowledged the significant work undertaken to streamline the Risk Register into a more manageable format. The Board Secretary confirmed that a full review of the Strategic Risk Register is scheduled for the October meeting of the Regional Board.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: Board Secretary</p> <p>H Shand apologised for having to leave the meeting early for another event.</p>
36/25	<p><u>Learning for Leading Reports (Paper J)</u></p> <p>A Member asked whether there is a target or expectation for SLT visits to Newtown St Boswells campus given that this had been an area raised by staff at the Learning for Leading visit. The Assistant Principal advised that he is regularly on site for meetings with the Head of Sector and Programme Leaders, although it was recognised that many staff are also teaching off site during these times. Given the ongoing uncertainty around campus locations, it was suggested that scheduled opportunities be arranged to facilitate more direct engagement between SLT and staff.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: VP SE / AP</p> <p>The Committee noted the contents of the paper.</p>
37/25	<p><u>Papers for Publication</u></p> <p>All papers will be published with the exception of any draft papers or those containing confidential data.</p>
38/25	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>The Vice Principal of Student Experience passed on her apologies for the September CQSE meeting. The Assistant Principal, D Lowe, will present the relevant papers on her behalf.</p>

39/25

Date of Next Meeting

The next CQSE meeting will take place at 16:30 on Thursday 25 September 2025 via TEAMS.