A

Curriculum, Quality & Student Experience Committee

Meeting at 4.30pm on Thursday 5 March 2026

TEAMS

Actions

Item	Action	Responsibility and Date	Status
08/26	Corporate Parenting Action Plan – Some activities to align with key points in the annual calendar and post-college pathways to be included.	Director Student Support Services	Completed
16/26	Strategic Risk Register - Risk number 2.1 (Student application numbers low). Likelihood score to be reviewed given that application numbers are ahead on last year.	VP Student Experience	Completed

Curriculum, Quality & Student Experience Committee

Meeting at 4.30pm on Thursday 5 March 2026

TEAMS

<u>Minutes</u>

ITEM	**MINUTES**
Present	Paul Cathrow (Chair) Mark Catto Ray McCowan (Regional Board Chair) Douglas Ormston Hilary Shand Pete Smith (Principal) Nick Sparks
In Attendance	Siobhan Archibald (Wbg) 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)
01/26	**<u>Chair's Opening Remarks</u>** The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
02/26	**<u>Apologies for Absence</u>** Apologies were noted from Cherene Thomson and Joanne George.
03/26	**<u>Minutes of Previous Meeting – 25 September 2025 (Paper A)</u>** The minutes from the previous meeting held on 25 September 2025 were approved as an accurate record.
04/26	**<u>Matters Arising</u>** No items were raised.
05/26	**<u>Declaration of any Conflicts of Interest</u>** No items were raised.
06/26	**<u>Register of Members Interest</u>** Members were reminded to advise the Board Secretary of any changes.

07/26	**<u>Terms of Reference (Paper B)</u>** The Board Secretary outlined the paper which sought approval on the updated Terms of Reference (ToR) which had been updated in line with the launch of the new Skills & Enterprise Strategy. No other changes were raised and the updated ToR was approved.
08/26	**<u>Corporate Parenting Action Plan Update (Paper C)</u>** The Director of Student Support Services outlined the College's Corporate Parenting Action Plan. The paper sought approval of the plan and oversight of the proposed arrangements for delivery, monitoring and reporting. Key points highlighted from the paper included: • The action plan is structured around the following four commitments: ➢ Compassionate Language ➢ Nurturing Relationships ➢ Scaffolding ➢ Sustainability • Discussions around the action plan also took place at the Corporate Parenting Plan launch. Some actions aligned to primarily service teams and emphasised shared ownership throughout the College to ensure the best experience for students. • Individual leads will be invited to provide progress updates through a working group. The Chair advised that it was very encouraging to see Corporate Parenting becoming more embedded across the organisation. It was recommended that some activities be timed to align with key points in the annual calendar, for example, to be completed by Easter. The inclusion of post-college pathways was also highlighted and will be included. **ACTION: Director Student Support Services** A Member asked to what extent the College draws on practice from other colleges and beyond the sector to ensure as broad an approach as possible. The Director that this is already reflected throughout the plan with Who Cares Scotland, which supports multiple agencies, having acted as a critical friend, sharing good practice and providing sense-checking as part of the development process. The Committee approved the Action Plan and commended the work of the Director and team.
09/26	**<u>Performance, Curriculum and Quality Update (Paper D)</u>** The VP Student Experience outlined the paper which provided an update on Performance, Curriculum and Quality.

	The credit position remains very healthy with the target reached by October 2025 with currently 2,029 credits over allocation. Applications for 2026/27 have increased since the paper was written. Part-time FE enrolments are lower due to the reduction in the part-time Rugby BASE Programme; however, overall recruitment is on track to be in a similar position to August 2025/26. Portfolio and pathways work has successfully encouraged students from the Schools Academy to apply. The largest growth area is in computing and cyber courses, supported by the creation of new Level 6 provision. A Member asked at what point over delivering becomes a significant issue. The Vice Principal noted that going over target can be manageable if additional students can be absorbed within the existing staffing structure, however, full capacity has now been reached. Due to regional need, additional provision was offered in January for Christmas school leavers (59 individuals); however, creative approaches were required as it was not possible to provide entirely new courses. The Regional Board Chair commended staff who have taken on additional responsibilities, noting in particular the new January provision and expressed satisfaction with the over-delivery of credits, emphasising that providing more opportunities for more learners while remaining within the existing cost base maximises the funding received. It is hoped that such work will be recognised through future credit allocations. The Principal noted the deliberate effort to grow HE numbers after the drop in 2024/25, with a targeted growth rate of 20% per year. H Shand joined the meeting. The Vice Principal highlighted that a review of courses with outcomes that are below College and national averages has been completed with common themes emerging as outlined in the paper. Feedback from staff found the meetings to be very valuable and well facilitated. The Chair noted reference to the use of AI and a planned College wide event. The Vice Principal advised that AI training will be delivered by the College Development Network and will help to reduce assessment burden whilst ensuring quality assurance and learning and teaching is not adversely impacted. The Assistant Principal advised on planning activity which is underway through a short life working group with schools on the future of the senior phase, which includes early planning for 2028-29. Following a question from a Member regarding part-time FE reducing, the Vice Principal clarified that only 1.5% of credits can sit outwith senior phase delivery. Two years ago, the Base Rugby Programme involved around 1,000 learners; however, following the change in funding rules, the College negotiated with other colleges to take on those learners. The Committee noted the contents of the paper.

10/26	**<u>Skills & Curriculum Planning (Paper E)</u>** The VP Student Experience outlined the paper which provided an overview on how curriculum and portfolio planning is considered at the College. Following a question from a Member regarding how priorities and demands are evaluated, the Vice Principal explained that the College undertakes deep analysis using labour-market data. Requests have been made for the College to provide travel and tourism courses; however, local labour-market intelligence does not indicate a strong requirement. Instead, the College has included travel and tourism within courses as unit-based provision. A Member thought that stakeholders may not always be aware of the extensive data-driven research which the College uses to inform curriculum planning and perhaps this is something which could be highlighted more externally. It was agreed that this is a collective responsibility across the organisation with the College represented on key regional groups such as the Local Employability Partnerships. The Regional Board Chair highlighted the Travel and Tourism example as a demonstration of the College's rigorous approach to curriculum planning and how the team had gone the extra mile to find a balanced solution. The AP Curriculum & Sustainability provided an update on work with schools and careers staff by the Heads of Sectors. This includes the further development of the Schools Academy model, with potential options being explored for delivery on Tuesday's and Thursdays. Members commented that information from schools regarding college options for their own children has been very limited with progressing on to college viewed as a 'second best' option. It was noted that there is a collective responsibility across the College, schools, career advisors, parents, employers and so on to raise awareness of the value of college and the range of provision on offer. The Chair thanked the Vice Principal for the informative paper.
11/26	**<u>Learning Support and Guidance Update (Paper F)</u>** The Director of Student Support Services outlined the Learning Support & Guidance Update paper which provided an overview of current activity and developments. Key points highlighted: • There has been a sustained increase in student contact, support interventions and safeguarding activity. • Complexity of needs has increased with more trauma and mental health disclosures. Homelessness is a larger theme this year. • 136% increase in students receiving support compared to Jan 2025. • 26.7% increase in students with safety plans in place. • Contact logs have increased by nearly 16% reflecting rising demand and complexity. • Around 360 students currently have learning support in place. • 28 students have Disabled Students Allowance support in place.

	• Mental health advisors available in-house. • More than 27 wellbeing workshops have been held across all delivery areas and have been positively received by students. The Committee noted that all statistics are on the rise and that they are reflective of the problems currently being faced by young people. It was noted that staff are dealing with increasingly complex challenges with a wide range of reasons contributing to some sustained staff absences. The Director Student Support Services advised that the service has been reviewing additional support for frontline staff, with managers working hard to provide support. Staff wellbeing is becoming an increasingly high priority through the Trauma Informed Network across the region. Service changes have been implemented to manage and protect staff time. The Chair highlighted the rising statistics and asked how the service can plan effectively for the growing demand. The VP Student Experience advised that one action is to review how students are supported across the curriculum. The potential use of AI is also a potential means to reduce the assessment burden on staff, including those in learning support. A clear definition of the course tutor role and support expectations is also required. The Chair thanked the Director for the informative update.
12/26	**<u>British Sign Language Action Plan (Paper G)</u>** The Director of Student Support Services outlined the paper which provided the Committee with an update on the implementation of the College's British Sign Language (BSL) Action Plan for 2024-2030. The College has a statutory duty under the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 to promote and facilitate the use of BSL. The plan aligns with the long term priorities of the National BSL Plan and is overseen by the BSL Steering Group. It was noted that there are no actions currently assessed as being at significant risk of non-delivery, although resourcing will be required to meet future milestones. Following a question regarding the number of BSL users at the College, the Director confirmed that at present there is one student currently supported. A number of staff have completed BSL training and staff therefore need ongoing opportunities to practise and maintain their BSL skills. Early notification of students who require BSL support is vital to allow effective planning given the challenge of sourcing interpreting provision. The Committee noted the contents of the paper and the positive progress being made.
13/26	**<u>BCSA Update (Paper H)</u>** The Director of Student Support Services outlined the paper which provided an update on the ongoing activity of the Students' Association throughout the current academic year. Key points highlighted included:

	• The first student feedback update was provided to the Learning & Teaching Committee following the dissolution of the Student Experience Committee. • 207 students completed the Sustainability Skills Survey. • A number of events were held throughout the winter including wellbeing bags, January's Blue Monday and fundraising for the campus pantry. • 25 campus pantry kits have been provided since the start of term and work continues with local supermarkets to provide a regular supply of food. • Wellbeing Wednesday – 34 students accessed. • Student President is working with NUS to raise student awareness of Scottish Parliamentary elections in May. • Student President Elections 2026-27 – Nominations are open with voting closing on 2 April. Thanks were noted to U Mbaezue as Returning Officer. The Committee noted the good progress which was being made.
14/26	**Learning for Leading Reports (Paper I)** The VP Student Experience introduced the paper. The following Learning for Leading reports had been received: • Landbased & Rural Skills by D Roberts • MIS and Quality by N Sparks • People Services by R McCowan • H&S Care, Early Education, Sport & Supported Programmes by S Phythian The AP for Curriculum & Sustainability provided updates on the recommendations from the Landbased and Rural Skills visit: • **Intensive practical day/week** – This would incur additional costs. Other financial elements are currently being reviewed such as reducing tractor hire costs. Round robin activities and how class sizes can be split are being considered. • **Social Media/press articles** – This does happen on a regular basis but a focus on joint promotions similar to the hospitality department will be looked at. • **Isolation from main campus** – When asked about this, staff did not feel that this was an issue. It was noted that some staff wished to attend the Andy's Man Club at Galashiels, however, travel time did not allow. • **Availability of costing template for commercial opportunities** – Yes, a costing sheet is available and is standard procedure to be completed for commercial activity. • **Risk Register** – A sector risk register which would be more specific to student activity will be considered. • **Entrance to Newtown Campus** – Improvement works have begun with skips being moved and new signage being discussed with Facilities. Recommendations on the other visits will be reviewed for the next update.
15/26	**Timing of Meetings**

	Members confirmed that the current time of 16:30 on a Thursday remains convenient for 2026/27.
16/26	**<u>Risk Register (Paper J)</u>** The Chair highlighted risk number 2.1 (Student application numbers low) and the likelihood score of 4 which appeared high given that application numbers are ahead on last year. It was agreed that the scoring will be reviewed. **ACTION: VP SE** No other comments were raised.
17/26	**<u>Papers for Publication</u>** All papers will be published with the exception of any draft papers or those containing confidential data.
18/26	**<u>Any Other Business</u>** No items were raised.
19/26	**<u>Date of Next Meeting</u>** The next CQSE meeting will take place **in person** at 16:30 on Thursday 28 May 2026. A joining link will be issued for those unable to attend in person.