A

Curriculum, Quality & Student Experience Committee

Meeting at 4.30pm on Thursday 25 September 2025

TEAMS

Actions

Item	Action	Responsibility and Date	Status
42/25	Previous minutes – Action 36/25 wording to be updated to clarify this relates to Newtown St Boswells campus.	L Sulo	Completed
36/25	Learning for Leading Action for Newtown St Boswells Campus – An update will be provided by the Assistant Principal at the March CQSE meeting.	Assistant Principal – Delivery & Sustainability	Update will be provided at March CQSE
46/25	Update the next Committee meeting re curriculum changes planned for 2026/27 and rationale for changes.	VP Student Experience	On March agenda under Skills and Curriculum Planning paper
47/25	Committee Agendas - Risk Register reviews to be scheduled towards the end of committee meetings following main paper discussions.	Board Secretary	Completed
48/25 & 52/25	Committee to receive further details/updates on courses requiring targeted support.	VP Student Experience	Completed within March update.

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TEAMS

Minutes

ITEM	MINUTES
Present In Attendance	Paul Cathrow (Chair) Mark Catto Douglas Ormston Ray McCowan (Regional Board Chair) Pete Smith (Principal) Nick Sparks Cherene Thomson Amy Brydon (Director - Student Support Services) Joanne George (Director – MIS & Quality) Ingrid Earp (Board Secretary/Governance Specialist) Lorraine Sulo (Minutes)
40/25	**Chair's Opening Remarks** The Chair welcomed everyone and informed the group that, due to a prior commitment, he would need to leave the meeting at 17:30. N Sparks would Chair the remainder of the meeting.
41/25	**Apologies for Absence** Apologies were noted from Hilary Shand, Anne-Marie Sturrock and Davie Lowe.
42/25	**Minutes of Previous Meeting – 29 May 2025 (Paper A)** The minutes from 29 May 2025 were approved subject to the following change: • Action 36/25 Learning for Leading – This item was specifically regarding Newtown St Boswells Campus which would be added to the wording on Page 1. **ACTION: LS**
43/25	**Matters Arising** The updates from the previous actions were as noted in Paper A with the following addition:

36/25	Learning for Leading Action for Newtown St Boswells Campus – An update will be provided by the Assistant Principal at the March CQSE meeting. It was noted that the new Head of Sector for Landbased & Rural Skills, Alex Reynolds, was now in post. **ACTION: AP** The Student President joined the meeting.
44/25	**<u>Declaration of any Conflicts of Interest</u>** No items were raised.
45/25	**<u>Register of Members Interest</u>** Members were reminded to advise the Board Secretary of any changes.
46/25	**<u>Annual Report to the Board – Paper B</u>** The Chair thanked the Board Secretary for the preparation of the paper and requested feedback from Members. The Principal noted the good format of the paper whilst suggesting that future reports could be streamlined further by presenting full attendance and non-attendance data in a single table. The Board Chair highlighted ToR 2.2 and feedback he had received from colleagues during recent annual reviews regarding how the College evaluates whether its curriculum is future-focused and innovative. Most of the data currently used is historical, therefore is a more forward-looking approach required? How can the College become more future focussed and innovative rather than responding to existing data sets? The Principal agreed and emphasised the importance of keeping the Board informed on this matter. He noted that the VP of Student Experience would be presenting updates to the next Committee meeting regarding curriculum changes planned for 2026/27, including the rationale for the changes and the consideration of external influences. **ACTION: VP SE** The Chair added that there is sometimes a risk of overemphasis on emerging technologies such as AI and highlighted the importance of recognising known areas of geographic growth, such as social care. It would be helpful to understand how curriculum structures are adapting to reflect these priorities. The Committee approved the paper for submission to the Regional Board.
47/25	**<u>Risk Register – Paper C</u>** On behalf of the VP of Student Experience, the Director of Student Support Services outlined the appendix which detailed the risks assigned to the committee along with agreed actions and progress update. The Board Chair welcomed the reduction in risk levels, noting that all risks were currently within the agreed risk appetite and that mitigation actions had achieved a reasonable level of success.

	The Principal suggested reviewing the order of agenda items for all committees, proposing that the Risk Register be discussed towards the end of the meeting. This would allow any insights or decisions arising from discussions to inform the risk register more effectively. **ACTION: Board Secretary** The Committee noted the contents of the paper.
48/25	**<u>Performance, Curriculum and Quality Update (Paper D)</u>** The Director of MIS & Quality highlighted the key points from the paper, which included: • The publication of sector KPIs is increasingly delayed; the 2023/24 data was released on 1 July, allowing integration into 2024/25 performance. • The College continued to outperform the sector in a number of areas for 2023/24. • Key challenges were in retention of care-experienced learners, and learners from the most deprived postcodes. 24/25 data show care-experienced learners (16.9%) and those from the most deprived postcodes (11.3%) reflected significant progress and an increase in positive outcomes as a result of more targeted support. • FE Learners outperformed the sector in Art and Design, Business, Care, and Construction, however learner success fell below the sector average in some areas including Hospitality & Tourism and Special Programmes for 2023/24. • HE enrolment numbers are low which makes sector comparisons difficult. • Subject level areas for concern – Hair and Beauty, Health and Social Care and Sport. Targeted support packages are being put in place in these areas. • Enrolment for the current year is showing an increase of 18% compared to the same time last year, with HE enrolment up by 42%. • Full-time enrolment for 2025/26 will remain open until the October break. • An update on the impact of credits will be provided at the next meeting. • College Leaver Destination 22/23 - Data for full-time college leavers is published significantly after course completion. 94.9% of leavers progressed into positive destinations (an increase of 0.4% from previous year). Committee comments/questions: • A member pointed out that there is a risk of becoming blasé when reviewing data, particularly when relying on averages as figures can sometimes obscure important details. It was agreed that supporting evidence is essential to validate insights drawn from data. • The potential limitations of using percentages/averages when dealing with relatively low numbers was raised with the publishing of actual numbers more appropriate. Due to the volume of data in the report this had been omitted, however, will be included in future reports. • The College is in the upper quartile across all modes and levels, although subject-level data is not included in this report it will be added to future reports.

	• There is a desire by the College to create more higher education options of further study. • Targeted support had been applied in a number of areas over recent years - what did that support entail? Targeted support has been identified for approximately 12 courses with success rates below 64%. A review is being led by the Vice Principal Student Experience with some known issues already being addressed such as Hair & Beauty being transitioned back to vocational qualifications from NPAs. • How is the College communicating these results, and clear improvements, externally? The intention is to utilise the opportunity as effectively as possible with discussions already having been held between the Principal and the Marketing/PR Team. • Success rates for learners from deprived postcodes – What factors contributed to the improvement and how can we measure for next year and maintain this? The impact of PTFE learners and the Schools Academy had a 7% increase in success rates following the change in delivery to a single day. In terms of measurement and strategy, this is currently being addressed within the evolving Skills and Enterprise Strategy. The Student Support team was recognised for their work with care-experienced learners, where targeted support has been implemented. The Committee welcomed these developments leading to improvement. • How can the College over achieve against its credit target without increasing the cost? The Principal emphasised the importance of filling classes to capacity, with data on the oversubscribed courses being refreshed ahead of the upcoming SFC meeting in November. • Updates will be provided on the targeted support work which is being led by VP of Student Experience and AP of Sustainability & Curriculum. **ACTION: VP SE** The Board Chair acknowledged the substantial work that had gone into the paper, noting significant improvements across all areas of study, particularly in transitions between 2023-24 and 2024-25, which was a tremendous success. He commended the enormous effort being made across the College. The Committee noted the contents of the paper.
49/25	**<u>Future Skills Strategy Progress (Paper E)</u>** The Director of Student Support Services presented the paper on behalf of the Vice Principal of Student Experience. This was the final update for the current strategy with work underway on a new Skills & Enterprise Strategy which will be presented to the Regional Board in December. A couple of key highlights were shared: 694 Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) were supported, making the college the fifth largest provider in Scotland, with the second-best MA achievement rate at 84%. These outcomes reflect significant effort, with a 7.8% increase in student outcomes for the new delivery model of the Schools Academy. Points noted from discussion: • The importance of showcasing such improvements was highlighted along with the suggestion of a one page document which provides key statistics.

	• The limited feedback received from employers was disappointing. Encouraging more meaningful feedback would be a valuable investment. • However, it would appear that employers do recognise the quality of provision through the level of repeat business. • There is no additional capacity to expand provision with people being turned away. The Chair praised the well-presented results, noting the College should be proud and celebrated.
50/25	**<u>BCSA Update (Paper F)</u>** The Student President provided further updates on developments since the plan was last revised: • Class rep elections and VP nominations were underway, with active engagement with students at Tweedbank and Newtown St Boswells. Voting runs from 6–10 October 2025. • A fridge has been sourced for Tweedbank students and the provision of a microwave for Galashiels students is being progressed. • Food donations - Morrisons have confirmed their continued support. The Chair reminded the newly appointed Student President that the Committee is available to offer support as needed. The Committee noted the contents of the paper.
51/25	**<u>Student Welfare & Learning Support Update (Paper G)</u>** The Director of Student Support Services highlighted the key points from the paper which provided an update on student welfare and learning support activities. • Success rates have improved across most support categories with notable progress in reducing withdrawal rates. • Outcomes for students with care experience have significantly improved, which was a key area for development highlighted by Education Scotland. • It is a very challenging funding landscape with a number of external funds withdrawn. However, through collaboration with partners and funding from the Further Education bursary and SAAS, the capacity of the Student Support Team has been able to grow. • Data cleansing will be conducted for student carers to ensure disclosures are accurate and to address potential misinterpretation of carer-related questions on application and enrolment forms. The Chair gave his apologies and handed over to N Sparks to chair the remainder of the meeting. A Member enquired into the outcome of the National Lottery application following the ending of Borders Young Talent funding. The Director advised that the application had been unsuccessful. Feedback indicated that consideration should be given to existing statutory support available through ‘No One Left Behind’ and opportunities through the Local Employability Group which will be explored.

	The Chair highlighted the paper as a great example of the work being undertaken by the College.
52/25	**<u>Committee Self-evaluation Outcomes (Paper H)</u>** All statements in the self-evaluation were scored at either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly’ agree with positive comments in all sections. Members were asked to advise on any particular areas which they may wish to have a ‘deeper dive’. It was noted that a detailed understanding of the targeted support areas, discussed earlier in the meeting would be helpful. **ACTION: VP Student Experience**
53/25	**<u>Skills & Enterprise Strategy – Key Performance Indicators (Paper I)</u>** The Principal advised that the Skills & Enterprise Strategy is scheduled to be presented to the Board in December for approval. However, it was noted that this Committee should have the opportunity to contribute to the development of KPIs prior to finalisation. There is a shared interest in moving towards more measurable outcomes with a range of potential targets included in the appendix, although these figures are not proposed as final. Further work is underway, with the intention to revisit the paper following a more robust discussion with the Heads of Sectors. The Board Chair noted the importance of maintaining a step change in progress, emphasising the need to keep stretching and challenging performance while ensuring a balanced approach. Further feedback would be sent to the VP and Principal next week. The Principal highlighted efforts to support student success, with a particular focus on specific student groups. A baseline for commercial customers is work in progress. Members were asked to forward their views to the Principal and/or VP Student Experience. A Member suggested looking at ranges as opposed to percentages in the performance tables which might make the figures clearer.
54/25	**<u>Learning for Leading Reports</u>** No reports had been completed since the previous meeting.
55/25	**<u>Papers for Publication</u>** All papers will be published with the exception of any draft papers or those containing confidential data.
56/25	**<u>Any Other Business</u>** No items were raised.

57/25	**<u>Date of Next Meeting</u>** The next CQSE meeting will take place at 16:30 on Thursday 5 March 2026 via TEAMS.