Item 07
For Noting

GLASGOW KELVIN COLLEGE

Learning and Teaching Committee – 27 January 2021

2020-21 Learning, Teaching and Assessment Update

Report by Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality Enhancement and Directors of Faculty

1. Introduction

This report provides an update on a range of Learning, Teaching and Assessment matters.

2. Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Curriculum Delivery

Since the start of the new academic year, most teaching activity has been delivered remotely, with on-campus delivery limited to essential activity only, for example where students need to use college facilities and equipment, or where student groups have additional needs. Generally, this has meant that overall around 70% of our provision has been delivered online since August with around 2,800 students per week studying on campus.

With the move to Level 4 restrictions in late November 2020, we further reviewed our curriculum offering to ensure that only learning which is critical and time-sensitive is delivered on campus. This led to additional activity being either postponed or moved online. As a result, courses related to English for Speakers of Other Languages, Supported Learning, Creative Industries, Science and some Widening Access provision became fully online. We also closed our Hair and Beauty salons in line with industry. Courses which continued to contain some delivery still being undertaken on campus included trades and construction, heating maintenance, automotive, performing arts, and provision targeted at vulnerable young people including targeted care experienced learners.

Overall, in this 'Restricted Blended Learning' mode of delivery, approximately 15% of our learners had learning on site, with this equating to around 1,300 learners in total per week over our four college campuses.

With the further lockdown measures announced over Christmas, whilst travel outside the home for education purposes is still allowed, having consulted with trades union representatives and managers, we took the decision to close our campus buildings from Monday 11th January 2021 until, in the first instance, Friday 29th January 2021 inclusive. As such all learning will be delivered on a remote only basis with Restricted Blended Learning restarting from 1st February 2021 at the earliest.

Lecturing staff have managed extremely well to maintain the quality of learning and teaching offered despite the huge challenges these operational constraints have caused, with all courses still continuing, albeit more practical courses significantly constrained in what can be achieved online. However, it is becoming extremely difficult to guarantee that all students can still complete their qualifications this academic year, particularly more practical subjects which require on-site skills development.

3. Scottish Qualification Authority Guidance

In 2019-20, the SQA provided exceptional guidance following the lockdown in March which allowed courses to be assessed on a holistic basis. This meant that lecturing staff did not have to follow detailed unit specifications and instead were able to assess student achievement in relation to course aims, significantly reducing the volume of assessment required to successfully complete a course.

Since before the start of the 2020-21 academic year, a number of representations have been made by the college sector, both to SQA directly and to the Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council suggesting that we continue the holistic approach for assessment for this academic year given the continued very challenging operating environment for our lecturing staff and learners. Whilst there have been some concessions made by SQA such as dropping the requirement for Graded Units from Higher National Qualifications, these changes have been relatively minor and the current approach still requires almost all unit assessments to be completed.

As outlined earlier, as a result of the challenging context we are operating in, it is becoming increasingly difficult to complete courses within the remaining time available, and a move to a more flexible holistic model of assessment is becoming increasingly critical. At the time of writing, no further concessions have been made by SQA but discussions between college sector representatives and SQA are ongoing and it is hoped that a move to a holistic approach is agreed as soon as possible.

4. Student Support Services

Student support services have continued to operate effectively despite the limited access to on-site services. As with teaching delivery, this has mainly been achieved by increasing the capacity of services provided online. As a result, despite the restrictions caused by Coronavirus, the Student Support team are engaging with higher numbers of learners than previous years, as highlighted below.

	Session 2019/2020	Session 2020/2021
Learners declaring disability or support need during application & enrolment	735	1,035
Questionnaires returned requesting support	228	334
Needs assessments completed by January	315	372

In March 2020 the College recruited two mental health counsellors to increase the capacity of services to support learner well-being. These two posts were funded by additional monies from SFC to colleges and universities. A further grant was announced in January 2021 to support the provision of wider mental health and wellbeing services as outlined in the attached circular as Appendix 1. GCRB has indicated that each of the Glasgow colleges will receive a £40k share of the Glasgow Regional allocation.

Care Experienced learners were also encouraged to alert the college of their circumstances at an early stage. 343 learners indicated that they were care experienced on application. These learners were contacted by email alerting them of support available. Learners who indicated that they may require support met with our Action for Children worker to discuss their needs. Action for Children offer tailored one to one support to care experienced students, including assisting with any barriers to engagement, budgeting support, advice with time management issues and support with mental health. In addition, the STAY worker can help learners with ongoing issues out

with college such as housing, employment, homelessness, family disputes and liaising with other professionals. The STAY worker is currently engaging intensively with 33 learners and 28 learners are receiving 'light touch' support.

The College is also working in conjunction with Action for Children on a Glasgow City Council and SDS initiative, which aims to see school leavers in Glasgow supported to stay in positive destinations. The Action for Children mentor is currently engaging with 35 learners referred by Glasgow City Council.

In August 2020 the College also implemented a student support application, 'My Kelvin' designed to offer online and mobile access to college services such as course timetables, library services, attendance registers, and ICT support. The take up of this new app has been very high with extremely positive feedback provided by learners. An overview of the application can be viewed at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jLNdG9ITZ-Q

5. 2020-21 Early Retention Levels

A key performance indicator across Scottish Colleges is 'early retention'. This is a measure of the proportion of students who left their course of study before 25% of the course is completed.

The table below shows early retention levels for the College for this academic year and the two preceding years. The data shows that early retention levels for 2020-21 are comparable to previous years despite the huge changes to course delivery approaches for this year. This provides evidence that the work of lecturing staff to engage learners remotely has been very effective and has maintained normal levels of learner participation.

Mode and Level	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
Full-time Further Education	11.68%	12.57%	10.07%
Part-time Further Education	1.70%	2.99%	2.60%
Full-time Higher Education	6.24%	7.16%	6.33%
Part-time Higher Education	3.40%	4.22%	5.03%

Despite this relatively positive position on early retention in this academic year, going forwards, improving early retention levels will be a key priority of the College's Business Transformation Plan. Colleges are not funded for any learners who do not complete at least 25% of their course of study and therefore our current retention levels represent a significant loss if potential income.

6. Student Satisfaction Levels

In Block 1, the College's Leaner Engagement Officer implemented a 'Stop and Check' Student Satisfaction Survey. Due to Coronavirus related restrictions, the Stop and Check responses were collected using Microsoft Forms instead of the usual paper format and just over 1,000 College students completed the short survey.

Feedback from learners was extremely positive, particularly in the context of the very restricted operational environment and very limited face to face teaching. Overall, 96% of respondents reported that they were satisfied with their college experience to date. This compares favourably to results from previous years.

Of the 44 learners not satisfied with their learning experience, there were a variety of reasons listed, such as learners feeling stressed and anxious about learning online, not being able to motivate themselves or having a poor internet connection.

The tables below provide a summary of more detailed responses:

	Yes	Not Sure	No
Do you feel that you are on the right course?	93.4%	6.2%	0.4%
Do you understand what you will have to do on the course?	95.6%	3.9%	0.5%
Do you know how to get support?	87.7%	10.6%	1.7%
Do you have access to appropriate digital resources? (e.g. laptop, WiFi, etc.)	95.1%		4.9%

	Very well	Quite well	Not well
How are coping with online learning?	30.4%	59.7%	9.9%

Some positive comments from learners were:

"The College has made me feel very safe, they have provided me with so much confidence that I don't feel worried about attending my classes."

"Lectures are making online learning experience more relaxed so students are not stressing over assessments and provide excellent support."

"I think the staff and my fellow students have approached the change to online learning with huge amounts of enthusiasm, skill and patience. While it would of course be preferable to be in the class rooms for all concerned, I feel like the staff are making every effort to ensure we are supported and I am really enjoying the course."

Overall, although the current pandemic has been extremely challenging for both learners and staff, learners responding to this survey seem to have generally adapted well, with 95% having access to appropriate resources and 90% coping with online learning.

7. Credit Delivery Position

To date the College has delivered approximately 71,000 Credits representing almost 90% achievement of the College's total Credit target for 79,093. This is in line with previous year activity levels at this point in the academic year. This represents a very positive achievement as significant areas of our normal delivery such as school partnership and community-based activity have been seriously curtailed due to Coronavirus related restrictions.

To achieve our targeted level of activity, the College plans to recruit for new course provision in January and February developed in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

This will include:

- Additional 'pre-apprenticeship' courses in Engineering and Building Services Engineering for learners keen to start their skills development in trades, but unable to find a paid apprenticeship.

- An employability skills course aimed at providing learners ‘the edge’ in their job-hunting activity. A first cohort successfully completed their course in December with very good feedback provided and a further cohort will be sought for a February start date.
- Access provision including an NQ Introduction to Hospitality, Access to Engineering, Construction, and Science, Pathways to Paramedic Science and Healthcare, Pathways to Humanities and an Introduction to Cyber Security. A number of these programmes were developed in partnership with the Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP). These will provide a route into a number of SWAP courses in August 2021, with successful completion of a SWAP course leading to year 2 study at universities across Scotland.
- Two new courses for further study or work in the creative industry: Introduction to CAD for Jewellery and Self-employment & Business Start-Up Skills in the Creative Industries

In addition to the above new course provision, the College will also deliver additional teaching activity to students to support their mental health and wellbeing, particularly learners at Further Education levels. This teaching delivery will be complemented by increased provision of wider mental-health and wellbeing student support services as outlined earlier in this report.

8. Resource Implications

No significant resource implications are identified as a result of this report. However, as indicated above, the attached SFC circular highlights the allocation to Glasgow colleges of some additional funding for mental health and wellbeing services for students.

9. Equalities

There are no equality implications arising directly from this report.

10. Risk and Assurance

The Credit delivery update information in this report provides assurance that the College is initiating actions to achieve both the College’s Core and ESF Credit targets and maintain the income for these grants.

Should the current online-only approach continue beyond January this will increase the likelihood that students are unable to complete their qualifications within this academic year. Should this be the case, the College will have to integrate deferred students into its planning for the 2021-22 academic year.

11. Data Protection

There are no data protection implications arising directly from this report

12. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

i. note the contents of the report.

13. Further Information

Members can obtain additional information on the contents of this report from Robin Ashton, Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality Enhancement.

Glasgow Kelvin College
RA
15/01/2021

Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

APPENDIX 1

Funding for Student Mental Health and Wellbeing 2020-21

SFC Announcement

Issue Date: 18 December 2020

Funding for Student Mental Health and Wellbeing 2020-21

Issue date: 18 December 2020

Reference: SFC/AN/21/2020

Summary: Announcement of additional funding in Financial Year 2020-21 for student mental health and wellbeing support in colleges and universities.

FAO: Principals/Directors, Finance Directors, Chairs and Board Secretaries of Scotland's colleges and universities.

Further information:
Contact: Fiona Burns
Job title: Assistant Director - Access and Outcome Agreements
Department: Access, Skills and Outcome Agreements
Tel: 0131 313 6517
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Funding for Student Mental Health and Wellbeing

Summary

1. I am writing to announce the allocation of additional funding in Financial Year (FY) 2020-21 to provide additional mental health and wellbeing support for students in colleges and universities. This funding has been provided and allocated by the Scottish Government.

Purpose of the funding

2. We recognise that the current COVID-19 emergency has impacted the mental health and wellbeing of students, particularly those living in campus accommodation and/or in isolation. On Friday, 6 November 2020, the Scottish Government announced additional funding of £1.32 million to help colleges and universities to further support student mental health, wellbeing and welfare at this time.

3. This funding is in addition to and separate from the funding that institutions have received for the recruitment of additional counsellors, announced in September 2020[1]. That funding should continue to be used to build and support counselling provision.

4. We are committed to flexibility in the use of this additional funding. Each institution's needs and circumstances at this time are different, and this funding should be used where it will have the greatest impact for your students. Examples of how you may wish to use this funding include (but are not limited to):

   - Additional wellbeing support for students, which could include:
     - Additional staff time to identify potential welfare issues in students, implement relevant intervention pathways and escalate to clinical intervention if required.
     - Additional welfare support checks. Such checks can identify emerging mental health issues, as well as wider welfare concerns such as access to food deliveries and other necessities.
     - Increased mental wellbeing drop-in chats online. This could also include non-therapeutic Mental Health support phone lines.
   - Proactive and preventative initiatives that help promote positive mental health and wellbeing within the student population, including online social activities in collaboration with Student Associations.

[1] http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/announcements_sfcan162020/Funding_for_counsellors_2020-21.pdf

- Securing access to online or virtual mental health and wellbeing services, including peer support to help prevent social isolation.
- Providing practical welfare support for students. This may include access to food and other necessities for those in isolation; financial advice and support; and increased support for international students to contact family and support services abroad. Institutions should also ensure that they identify more vulnerable groups of students who made need greater access to support, such as estranged and care experienced students, and students with disabilities.
- Increased investment in Residence Life teams in student accommodation, to allow them to provide further wellbeing and welfare support and crisis intervention.
- Specific support for student welfare over the 2020-21 Winter Break is of great importance, with an increased number of students likely to be staying in their university, Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) and college accommodation over that period. All college and university students should receive early, clear advice on staying safe and have the necessary support in place over the holiday period. We expect institutions to have this support in place in anticipation of this funding being received in January.

5. We would encourage institutions to work closely with their Students Associations in developing and providing mental health and wellbeing support for their students, and to co-create services where possible. More than 30 student associations will also be receiving further additional funding to provide welfare support for students in colleges and universities, as announced on 11 December 2020[2]. Further guidance for this funding will be published in the New Year.

6. We recognise the excellent work that is already taking place in colleges and universities to support students' mental health and wellbeing at this time, and that you may already have some of the above actions in place. The purpose of this funding is to further support institutions to enhance the assistance they can offer students and to allow this to be expanded where needed.

7. The total additional funding to be received by the college and university sectors in FY 2020-21 is £1.32 million.

Funding allocations

8. Funding has been allocated to colleges and universities using a similar methodology to the one applied for the additional funding for counsellors in AY 2019-20 and 2020-21.

[2] https://www.gov.scot/news/extra-funding-for-student-associations/

9. These allocations were based on a range of factors including: student numbers, mental health and wellbeing indicators, and geography. The main difference for this allocation is that the previous first step in which each college/region and university is allocated funds to hire at least one counsellor has been removed. However, as a minimum, each institution/region has been provided with at least £500.

10. A breakdown of funding for individual colleges/regions and universities is shown in **Annex A**. The methodology flowchart diagram can be found in **Annex B**.

Conditions of funding

11. This funding must only be used for the purpose(s) for which it is being allocated; that is, for the provision of additional mental health and wellbeing support for students. SFC retains the right to audit relevant institutional documentation to satisfy itself that this is the case and the institution undertakes that it will provide such assistance as SFC reasonably requires.

12. All institutions (or in the case of a multiple college region the Regional Strategic Board) should provide a brief outline plan on how they intend using their funding to Emma Roberts, email: eroberts@sfc.ac.uk. To collect this information, we will update the baseline survey for the Counsellor funding announced in September 2020 for institutions to include a short paragraph on how these separate mental health funds have been used, and their impact on students. This survey will be published early in the New Year, and will provide further details on submission deadlines.

Payment of funds

13. Funding for universities and non-incorporated colleges will be paid in equal instalments in January, February and March 2021. Incorporated colleges should draw down funding from their allocations, as required, over the same period.

Acceptance of grant

14. Institutions are invited to formally accept this offer of funding by writing to Graeme Scotland, Senior Budgeting & Reporting Officer, email: gscotland@sfc.ac.uk by **Friday 15 January 2021**.

Further information

15. Should you require any further information, please contact Fiona Burns, Assistant Director - Access & Outcomes, tel: 0131 313 6517, email: fburns@sfc.ac.uk or Emma Roberts, Policy/Analysis Officer tel: 0131 313 6570 or email: eroberts@sfc.ac.uk.

Lorna MacDonald
Director of Finance

Annex A

Breakdown of funding for individual colleges/regions and universities

Colleges/Region	Total funding allocation*
Ayrshire College	£43,000
Borders College	£19,000
Dumfries & Galloway College	£27,000
Dundee & Angus College	£51,000
Edinburgh College	£53,000
Fife College	£58,000
Forth Valley College	£32,000
Glasgow Region	£121,000
Highlands & Islands Region***	£101,000
Lanarkshire Region	£47,000
Newbattle Abbey College**	£500
North East Scotland College	£46,000
Sabhal Mòr Ostaig**	£1,500
SRUC****	£37,000
West College Scotland	£47,000
West Lothian College	£24,000
Total	**£708,000**

*Numbers rounded to the nearest £1,000.
**Numbers rounded to nearest £500.
*** Includes funding for UHI's HE students.
**** Includes funding for SRUC's HE students.

Universities	Total funding allocation*
Aberdeen, University of	£30,000
Abertay University	£12,000
Dundee, University of	£42,000
Edinburgh Napier University	£30,000
Edinburgh, University of	£76,000
Glasgow Caledonian University	£50,000
Glasgow School of Art	£7,000
Glasgow, University of	£94,000
Heriot-Watt University	£29,000
Highlands & Islands, University of the**	-
Open University Scotland (OUS)	£35,000
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh	£12,000
Robert Gordon University	£26,000
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	£4,000
SRUC**	-
St Andrews, University of	£25,000
Stirling, University of	£30,000
Strathclyde, University of	£66,000
West of Scotland, University of the	£44,000
Total	**£612,000**

* Numbers rounded to the nearest £1,000.
** Funding for UHI's and SRUC's HE students are included within the college/region allocation.

Annex B

Flow diagram of funding methodology

Figure 1: Flow diagram of methodology for student mental health funding allocations