



Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2018-19

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GLASGOW KELVIN COLLEGE

LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Academic Year 2018/19

1. Introduction

Glasgow Kelvin College strives to provide learning which is inclusive and encourages respect for all, is engaging, stimulating and enjoyable, meets national standards and is relevant to needs of the economy and society. It particularly recognises the contribution that skills play in the development of the local, regional and national economy and takes the view that **how** learning, teaching and assessment are delivered is central to developing learners' skills.

This Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy has been developed to encourage and support the development of innovative and creative approaches to learning and teaching that ensure that all learners are enabled to achieve their potential and to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society.

The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy has been developed to compliment the College Curriculum Guidelines. Together they provide a statement of both "how we teach" and "what we teach". They also sit alongside a range of College quality and organisation development processes that support teachers, curriculum teams and support staff to respond to key College enhancement themes, including retention, achievement and employability.

2. Background and Context

The current key policy drivers for the Further Education sector are Getting It Right for Every Child, Curriculum for Excellence, Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, and A Blueprint for Fairness. Collectively they emphasise the importance of:

- all learners developing a full range of skills and capacities and progressing into or towards employment; and
- closing the attainment gap, so that learners from the most deprived areas of the country are as likely to succeed, attain and progress through higher education and into employment, as those with greater socio-economic advantages.

Curriculum for Excellence, the national curriculum reform, seeks to enable all learners to develop skills for learning, life and work and to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) is the national approach to improving the wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland. The

College is committed to playing its part to ensure that the young people and adults it works with are:

- **Safe** - protected from abuse, neglect or harm;
- **Healthy** – supported in learning to make healthy, safe choices;
- **Achieving** - supported and guided in learning and in the development of skills, confidence and self-esteem;
- **Nurtured** – supported to grow and develop in a welcoming environment;
- **Active** – and involved in a range of activities that support their development;
- **Respected** – with the opportunity to be heard and involved in decisions that affect them;
- **Responsible** – having opportunities, encouragement, and support to play active and responsible roles; and
- **Included** – with help where required to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities, and being accepted as part of the community in which they learn.

The Government's *Skills Strategy* recognises that 'skills, when utilised effectively, are one of the key drivers of improvement in productivity' and sets out a broad definition of necessary skills:

- personal and learning skills that enable individuals to become effective lifelong learners;
- literacy and numeracy;
- the five core skills of *communication, numeracy, problem solving, information technology* and *working with others*;
- employability skills that prepare individuals for employment rather than for a specific occupation;
- essential skills that include all of those above; and
- vocational skills that are specific to a particular occupation or sector.

Science Technology Education and Mathematics (STEM) education and training has been identified as having an important role to play in fulfilling the Scottish Government's vision for Scotland to be a more successful and fairer country with opportunities for all to flourish. The STEM Education and Training Strategy for Scotland aims to improve the levels of STEM enthusiasm, skills and knowledge in order to raise attainment and aspirations in learning life and work and to encourage the uptake of specialist STEM skills required to gain employment in STEM sectors of the economy. It identifies challenges and has developed four priority themes to address these challenges; excellence, equity, inspiration and connection. A key focus of the Strategy is children and young people, but it also extends to adult learning which enable people to go into, return to, or progress within STEM careers.

From a more international perspective, the European Reference Framework has been developed to provide a framework to ensure that Europe's citizens acquire the key competencies to enable them to adapt flexibility in the rapidly changing and interconnected world. The Reference Framework sets out eight key competences:

- Communication in the mother tongue;
- Communication in foreign languages;
- Mathematical competencies and basic competence in science and technology
- Digital competence;
- Learning to learn;
- Social and civic competences;
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; and
- Cultural awareness and expression.

There are also a number of themes that are applied throughout the Reference Framework: critical thinking, creativity, initiative, problem solving, risk assessment, decision making, and constructive management of feelings.

Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy has emphasised the importance of colleges focussing on developing modern skills in line with market demand and adding to Scotland's skills and technology base. It also recognises young people's need for significantly enhanced quality work experience while at school and college. These findings are supported by the SFC *Work Placement Standard for FE* and with the Glasgow Regional Outcome Agreement's commitment to workforce development. The College takes the view that the learning experience can, and should, be designed to help learners enhance their employability and enterprise skills – both through experiential learning, inside and outwith the formal College curriculum, and through supported career education, planning and management. It particularly recognises the value of meaningful work experience and believes that learner-centred approaches to learning, which enable learners to develop their self-confidence and motivation and which encourage individuals to take responsibility for their own personal and professional learning and development, are key to enhancing employability.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge and the Commission on Widening Access *Blueprint for Fairness* report seek to raise the attainment of young people from deprived areas and to ensure that learners from deprived areas are equally represented in higher education are of particularly relevance given the geographic and socio-economic context of the College. In support of the Scottish Attainment Challenge Education Scotland are developing a learning and teaching toolkit (based on work done by the Sutton Trust and the Education Endowment Foundation) which evaluates the impact a range of interventions have on progress in learning. This identifies the two interventions with the highest impact as *meta-cognition and self-*

regulation (or “learning to learn”) and *tutor feedback*. Peer tutoring and collaborative learning are also recognised through extensive evidence as having moderate impact at low cost.

The College recognises the *Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland’s Colleges* as central to its aspirations that **all** learners develop a wide range of skills and capacities. These standards, published by the Government in March 2012 (currently under review) detail expected/indicative content for teacher training/education programmes and also set out the professional standards lecturers in relation to:

- guidance and support;
- planning and preparing the learning experience;
- teaching/facilitating learning;
- assessment;
- quality and standards; and
- professional practice and development.

These standards are detailed in the Appendix to this document.

3. Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

Glasgow Kelvin College recognises the importance of all learners developing a broad range of skills for learning, life and work and becoming successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society.

The College takes the broadest view of skills – seeing numeracy and literacy, enterprise and employability skills, digital literacy, in problem solving and working with others, interpersonal skills, and personal learning and planning skills as being equally as important as specific vocational skills.

It is the view of the College that learners develop skills as much as a consequence of how they are taught and learn as what they are taught or learn. It particularly recognises that approaches which develop the ability to learn through planning, implementing and reviewing, which encourage learners to work and learn together as well as independently and which ensure that learners are assessed and receive constructive feedback can have a significant role in closing the attainment gap.

In order to develop these skills and capacities and to raise attainment our strategic aims for learning and teaching are:

- to engage actively learners in enhancing their learning experience at individual, programme and college levels;
- to provide high quality learning experiences which meet the individual needs of learners (blended learning);

- to ensure all learners develop a full range of skills and capacities and also develop independence in learning; and
- to ensure assessment promotes effective learning.

3.1 Aim 1 - to engage learners in enhancing learning at individual, programme and college levels

Learner engagement is central to this strategy. Learners should be effectively engaged in enhancing learning at individual, programme and college levels. The College expects staff to encourage and support learners, as far as is possible within the restrictions imposed by awarding bodies, to:

- contribute to personalising their own learning experience, for example, through selecting appropriate units and/or modes of learning;
- influence and contribute to planning and shaping their own learning through participation in learning activities, project work and self-directed learning;
- influence and contribute to the shaping of learning and teaching approaches within learning activities;
- support each other in extending and enhancing their learning, for example participating in peer review, peer teaching, buddying and/or mentoring activities; and
- take responsibility for their own learning, through recording, monitoring and reflecting on their progress (both in terms of attainment and wider achievement), through the effective use of their Individual Learning Plans and discussions with staff.

Curriculum teams are also expected to make appropriate arrangements to enable learners to engage effectively in providing feedback to staff on how well learning and teaching, programmes and College services meet their needs. Learners will have opportunities to participate in and use the class representative system meaningfully and effectively.

Staff will also ensure that all learners are provided with opportunities and activities that aid the development of the skills required to participate effectively in enhancing the work, life, and reputation of the College.

3.2 Aim 2 - to provide high quality learning experiences which meet the individual needs of learners (blended learning)

The College's strategy is to provide its learners with a blended learning experience which combines classroom/workshop based experiential activity, directed study, self-directed study, group and individual tasks and project work, the use of online activities, work experience and more

traditional approaches and resources in a way which is appropriate to the needs of each individual learner.

Within this approach, assessment is an integral part of the learning experience and process providing learners with feedback on the knowledge, skills and attributes they have developed and promoting self-confidence through a sense of achievement. The College expects that such assessment will also support nationally recognised, SCQF levelled, qualifications (or that they are benchmarked against such standards when no appropriate qualification is readily available).

The College believes that such a blended approach to learning and assessment facilitates appropriate individualisation to enable learners to progress at the pace they can best manage and to accommodate their preferred learning styles. At the same time it provides the re-assurance of both tutor and peer support and the opportunity for the group based activities and sharing of experience which develop learners' essential skills and their personal capacity as contributors and citizens.

The College is also committed to increase its use of digital activities in order to help to embed modern skills as well as to provide learners with up-to-date, accessible and engaging resources. To encourage the natural development, adoption and embedding of digital platforms within the curriculum the College makes no distinction between digital activities and other learning approaches in terms of planning and quality assurance processes.

Quality enhancement is a key focus of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. The College encourages its curriculum teams, individual staff and learners to respond to the enhancement agenda set through evaluation of the Learning Experience and through programme and Faculty self-evaluation and planning processes.

3.3 Aim 3 - to ensure all learners develop a full range of skills and capacities and also develop independence in learning

The College expects that all teaching staff, individually, with colleagues and with their learners, will reflect on how best to plan learning activities to develop learners' essential skills. It particularly recognises that, for many learners, the use of effective project-based and experiential learning activities maintains and increases learner engagement, and helps learners acquire a range of essential skills required for citizenship, employment or further study. Similarly, well planned and integrated activities help learners to focus on and build their essential skills and make connections to other more vocational aspects of their programme. Teachers and course teams are also expected to consider how course related work experience, the wider experience of work that learners already have, and the development of realistic work environments and practices can contribute to their learners' experience.

Individual Learning Plans enable learners, with appropriate staff and where relevant/required partner agency representatives, to set, review and reflect on targets that relate to the development of confidence, and skills for citizenship, enterprise and employability as well as on their certificated learning.

As indicated above, the College takes the view that essential skills include literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, problem solving, working with others, enterprise and employability, STEM skills, and personal and learning skills. It expects that teachers will not only design vocational learning activities in ways which encourage learners to develop these wider skills but that they will reinforce learning by reflecting with learners on the full range of the skills that they have demonstrated.

3.4 Aim 4 - to ensure assessment promotes effective learning

The College recognises that assessment must be planned effectively to ensure maximum benefit for learners and learning, and must therefore ensure that assessment approaches are:

- responsive to learner needs;
- rigorous;
- transparent;
- appropriate;
- fair and consistent; and
- open to appeal.

The College recognises that awarding bodies will often have specific requirements in relation to summative assessment. While taking account of such requirements, the College seek to:

- ensure approaches to assessment are diagnostic and formative, as well as summative, in order to encourage and support effective learning;
- develop greater integration of ICT within the assessment process;
- ensure that feedback to learners is timely, accurate and developmental;
- ensure assessment approaches are designed, available and fairly administered to meet the needs of learners with additional support needs and the needs of those learners for whom personalisation is required due to distance, illness, work commitments or other personal circumstances; and
- take cognisance of prior learning in meeting the assessment needs of learners.

4. Supporting the strategy

The College explicitly supports its Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy in a number of ways:

- the **Class Tutor** role and **Individual Learning Plans** ensure that each learner is supported to plan their learning and review their progress helping to develop their learning skills and ensuring they receive regular and meaningful feedback;
- dedicated **Guidance and Learning Support** services are available to respond to specific individual needs of learners. These can be accessed directly by learners or through referral by tutors;
- **Professional Learning** arrangements have a strong focus on learning and teaching, not only supporting staff to obtain teaching qualifications which reflect the professional standards for lecturers (as described in the Appendix) but also through initiatives such as *Empowered to Take Action and Design Thinking* which have promoted the development of innovative project based approaches to learning and enterprise activities which enhance development of learners' skills. Professional Development and Review processes also enable staff to work with line managers to plan activities in order to enhance their learning and teaching practice;
- **Quality Enhancement** processes involve staff teams in reflecting on how programmes have been delivered and on the changes to learning and teaching which can improve retention, attainment and enhance the development of skills;
- The College provides a wide range of **ICT resources** and other **learning resources** to support learning and teaching. This includes college-wide access to library resources and to wi-fi as well as devolved budgets for resources relevant to specific vocational areas; and
- The full range of **College policies and procedures** are available through the college intranet.

Appendix 1. Professional Standards for Lecturers Guidance and Support

Lecturers should be able to:

- identify learners' needs and provide appropriate guidance and support, referring to specialists where appropriate;
- demonstrate an understanding of the lecturer's guidance and support roles, responsibilities and boundaries and how they relate to the remit of guidance tutors and other specialists;
- promote and facilitate equality of opportunity and access to learning by providing effective guidance and support in line with the College's policies and procedures;
- apply a critical understanding of the principles, nature, purposes and stages of guidance and support; and
- obtain and use feedback from learners to evaluate and develop their own practice in guidance and support.

Planning and Preparing the Learning Experience

Lecturers should be able to:

- plan engaging, inclusive and creative learning opportunities that demonstrate a critical understanding of curriculum design and alignment, theories of learning, teaching and assessment, and knowledge of existing practice;
- plan with learners contextualised learning and teaching taking account of the needs of learners and their development of essential skills;
- design, produce and adapt to learner needs: a range of effective, engaging learning and teaching and assessment activities that builds on existing practice, motivates learners and also takes account of supportive technologies;
- evaluate and select appropriate resources from a wide range of sources;
- design, justify and implement a strategy to promote professional reflection and evaluation of the learner experience; and
- plan strategies to promote sustainable development.

Teaching / Facilitating Learning

Lecturers should be able to:

- create and maintain an interactive, supportive and safe learning environment that promotes learning;
- communicate effectively and develop an ethos of mutual respect with learners, fellow curriculum team members and other professionals and external agencies to promote learning and positive behaviour;

- implement effectively a broad range of strategies to promote active and independent learning at various levels by using different modes of delivery and technologies;
- identify and take appropriate actions to address the collective and individual needs of learners;
- promote positive attitudes to human diversity and global citizenship through accessible learning and teaching resources;
- use learning, teaching and assessment and feedback strategies and resources effectively to meet diverse learning needs; and
- implement a range of strategies to evaluate the quality and impact of teaching on the learning experience and reflect on the implications for future practice.

Assessment

Lecturers should be able to:

- devise suitable assessment strategies based on a critical understanding of the principles, purposes, means and terminology of assessment;
- design, produce and use a range of assessment instruments taking account of individual learners' needs;
- evaluate and justify a range of assessment instruments having taken account of individual learners' needs.
- measure and record progress and attainment of learners;
- use assessment feedback to and from learners to inform practice and promote learning;
- use performance indicators to inform the evaluation of learning and teaching; and
- comply with internal and external policies and procedures for assessment and verification.

Quality and Standards

Lecturers should be able to:

- demonstrate a critical understanding of the principles, purposes and processes of quality assurance and improvement, enhancement and sector good practice;
- implement effectively college arrangements for quality assurance and improvement and enhancement as an individual and as a member of a team;
- contribute effectively to the quality functions of curriculum teams by agreeing targets, formulating action plans (individual and team), following through and evaluating their impact;

- use an appropriate range of evidence to identify strengths and areas for enhancement, weaknesses and areas for improvement at individual, team and college levels; and
- agree targets, formulate individual action plans and contribute to team plans to address identified areas for improvement and enhancement.

Professional Practice and Development

Lecturers should be able to:

- evaluate critically how education is influenced by, and contributes toward, policies that impact upon the wider political, social, economic, cultural and technological context;
- critically reflect on personal values and how they align with and support the values and ethics that underpin professional practice;
- understand the roles, rights and responsibilities of the lecturer and apply them to their professional practice;
- comply with all applicable statutory requirements and relevant codes of practice and apply them to their professional practice;
- promote good practice in relation to equality, social and cultural diversity and the protection and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable learners;
- manage self, relationships and work demands to promote personal, emotional and physical well-being;
- engage purposely in reflective practice; and
- Identify and undertake relevant professional development to enhance practice and maintain currency; develop and commit to personal continuing professional development strategies to achieve individual, team and organisational goals.