

Performance & Resources Committee Meeting

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| Date of Meeting | Monday 15 August 2016 |
| Paper Title | College Quality Arrangements from AY2016-17 |
| Agenda Item | 10 |
| Paper Number | PRC1-F |
| Responsible Officer | Robin Ashton, Executive Director |
| Status | Disclosable |
| Action | For Information |

1. Report Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide for members' attention a Scottish Funding Council update on the introduction of the new quality and reporting arrangements for colleges from academic year 2016/17 onwards.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** The Committee is invited to **note**:

- the SFC report on college quality arrangements from 2016/17
- the planned new arrangements to be implemented from 2017/18 onwards
- and **request** the Executive Director to work with the SFC, Education Scotland and Senior Managers within the three Glasgow colleges to develop proposals for the implementation of these new quality arrangements within the Glasgow College Region to be considered at a future meeting of the Performance and Resources Committee.

3. Background

- 3.1** The Scottish Funding Council and Education Scotland have been working jointly on new quality arrangements for Scotland's Colleges.

Since 2012/13 there has been overlap between the monitoring of quality by Education Scotland through annual engagement and four-yearly external review and through the evaluations of Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) delivery involving SFC ROA managers.

Following pilot work with three colleges, the attached SFC report provides proposals for new quality arrangements from 2016/17 onwards.

4. New Quality and Reporting Arrangements for Colleges

- 4.1** The SFC proposals intend to integrate Education Scotland and SFC quality monitoring processes into a single set of arrangements. In doing so, the SFC paper suggests that this will allow for more regionally orientated reviews of quality which increase college ownership and responsibility for self-evaluation and improvement. Aligned to this, the SFC propose that college self-evaluations are validated by external stakeholders and endorsed by Education Scotland and SFC.
- 4.2** Key elements of the proposed new arrangements include:
- A new National Quality System Framework for colleges which will provide a single reporting framework encompassing ROA measures and monitoring of learning and teaching quality.
 - Use of this framework to produce annual self-evaluation reports validated and agreed by external stakeholders, Education Scotland and the SFC; and
 - Development of annual college ‘enhancement plans’ setting improvement priorities.
- 4.3** The introduction of a six-point grading scale also currently forms part of the proposals, although at this stage only very limited information is provided as to how this might be implemented.

The SFC paper states that these new arrangements will mean an annual cycle of continuous engagement with Education Scotland and an end to four-yearly external reviews.

In terms of implementation, full operation of these new arrangements is due to take place in 2017/18 with existing arrangements continuing for the forthcoming academic year, whilst preparatory work is undertaken. To support this, August and December 2016, the SFC and Education Scotland will provide further detail on the new quality arrangements.

5. Risk Analysis

- 5.1** The SFC report does not directly address multi-college operating environments and there is a risk that national arrangements are developed which are not fully appropriate to GCRB structures. In particular, there are aspects of the planned integration and reporting timescales which are more complex in a multi-college region. For example, currently in the Glasgow region, ROA evaluation is reported by GCRB to the SFC whereas Education Scotland reviews of learning and teaching are based on individual college evaluations.

To mitigate the risk, the GCRB and Glasgow college executives are liaising closely with SFC and Education Scotland representatives and a Glasgow College Principal is a member of the short life SFC steering group.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1** The Regional Board has a legal obligation to monitor the quality of delivery of the assigned colleges and to report this to the Scottish Funding Council and these quality arrangements will provide a framework to meet this responsibility.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1** No financial implications are identified.

8. Regional Outcome Agreement Implications

- 8.1** These new quality and reporting arrangements will integrate ROA evaluation within a wider review of the quality and learning and teaching.