

Performance & Resources Committee Meeting

Date of Meeting	Monday 15 August 2016
Paper Title	Common Applications System Project- Update Report
Agenda Item	11
Paper Number	PRC1-G
Responsible Officer	Alan Sherry, Principal , Glasgow Kelvin College
Status	Disclosable
Action	For Decision

1. Report Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to inform members of developments with regard to the Common Application process.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are recommended to:

- **note** the contents of the report and its appendices;
- **note** that no further development work can be undertaken to provide a Glasgow Region single application portal due to the lack of sufficient resources;
- **endorse** the proposal to provide Glasgow region information on student applications attached as Appendix 1;
- **note** the Glasgow Region Guidance Charter attached as Appendix 2 and the Clearing Procedure attached Appendix 3; and
- **note** that Jisc (the UK further and higher education organisation for digital services) are continuing to explore a national application system for Scotland.

3. Progress Against Action Plan

- 3.1** As members will recall they considered previously a paper which detailed the progress which had been made with developing a single applications portal for the Glasgow Region. In addition members will also recall that they endorsed an

action plan which was designed to address the guidance and other issues which had been identified as part of the review process. The purpose of this report is to apprise members of the outcome of the implementation of the action plan and the review of the outcome of the tasks.

3.2 A stakeholder event was held on 5 April 2016 which involved a number of partners. The key element of this event was to enable partners to review the proposed application portal. Set out below are the key comments made by stakeholders:

- the interface was not sufficiently interactive
- some functions on the application form worked inconsistently
- the search option was not easy to use
- the uploading of personal statements was difficult
- the design of the interface was not intuitive
- further guidance on completing the form was required

Stakeholders also identified a number of other aspects of the portal which would also require to be redesigned and/or reviewed before, in their professional opinion, it would be an appropriate and effective means for student recruitment.

The Project Work Group met to consider the outcome of the stakeholder feedback and concluded that it would not be possible to make the necessary adjustments to the portal without additional resources of circa \$100/150k.

In light of the proposed funding settlement for the Glasgow Region it was considered that there were insufficient resources available to support such expenditure therefore it was agreed that it would not be possible to continue to work on this aspect of the Common Application Project.

3.3 The Project Group was also aware that GCRB had expressed interest in having access to regional applications data and this has informed the technical specification for the portal. Attached as Appendix 1 is a document which sets out how this information will be collected and reported. This data will provide both Regional and individual college data to inform recruitment and curriculum planning.

3.4 As members will be aware there has been considerable public comment with regard to the advice and guidance provided prospective college learners. To demonstrate the commitment of the Glasgow Region to provide appropriate impartial information the senior guidance practitioners have agreed the charter attached as Appendix 2.

3.5 Furthermore the senior guidance practitioners have also agreed a formal Clearing Procedure to seek to enable learners to access provision across all three

colleges should they be unsuccessful in their first choice. The procedure is attached as Appendix 3.

- 3.6** As previously reported Jisc are continuing to explore the development of a national application system for Scottish colleges. To support this work members of the Project Group are scheduled to meet with representatives from Jisc on 24 August 2016 to inform them on work undertaken within the Glasgow Region and to receive an update on the progress of the national project.

4. Risk Analysis

There are no additional risks identified as a consequence of the contents of this report.

5. Legal Implications

The work outlined in this report will inform the development of an Equality Impact Assessment.

6. Financial Implications

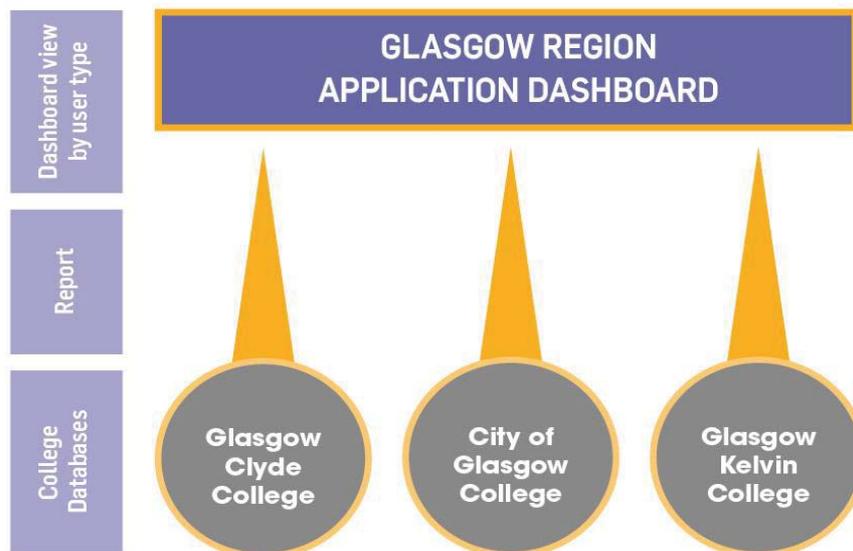
It is not possible to continue with the technical development of the applications portal without additional new resources being provided. The proposed grant-in-aid settlement for Glasgow colleges does not provide them with sufficient resources to fund both the real and opportunity costs of continuing with the applications portal without reducing expenditure in other key areas of provision. In order to continue with the technical developments required GCRB will require to access additional resources over and above that already allocated to the region in order to enable the colleges to continue with this work.

Introduction

Working in close collaboration the three individual colleges within the Glasgow Region have agreed to deliver, as an initial and positive step towards the harmonisation of three applications systems, a technical solution that provides access including a level of detailed reportage focussed on analysing the Regional application data. The technical aspects of establishing a Regional level reporting tool have largely been overcome as a consequence of the collaborative work undertaken as part of the design and analysis necessary to ensure the production of a common application system. Developing a reporting tool focussed on regional demand was a key element of the common application system. This development will provide a regional overview of learner applications and will provide data on Regional demand and support the effective management of student recruitment.

Dashboard Solution

The Colleges in Glasgow Region have processes in place to manage demand for college places. The demand for individual programmes is based on target recruitment and waiting/reserve lists where these are appropriate. At present there is no regional overview of the strength of demand or trends for places on courses. As a consequence of the technical work undertaken to support a common application system there is now a means of utilising existing college databases to provide a regional overview of learner applications. The diagram below sets out how this would operate.



This process will automatically extract individual college data, group that data appropriately (as required) and provide a regional overview through a visual dashboard for representing the admission data collected at the three individual colleges. The Visual Dashboard will draw together the individual data from each college dataset and present a Regional dataset therefore providing both detailed college and regional information for analysis. The three colleges have worked effectively to harmonise the data they gather as part of the common application process. This approach enables the Colleges to work together to harmonise the stages of the admission process and to standardise the reporting across the 3 colleges to ensure data integrity that will provide the foundation for the proposed enhanced visual Dashboard reporting tool.

Dashboard Benefits

The visual Dashboard will provide in real time, an easy to read summary analysis of admission information. The Dashboard will be a key Business Intelligence tool supporting curriculum planning and through an intuitive interactive display provide high level (or any level) application statistics. There will be an ability to analyse information in granular detail by viewing trends, application by SIMD postal code, gender, applications by economic sector and where students have applied to multiple colleges/courses.

Through the use of the dashboard College managers will be able to more effectively and collaboratively to manage demand for places within each college and also across the Glasgow Region. This approach will provide the following benefits:

- manage demand where courses are oversubscribed
- provide opportunities to monitor waiting/reserve lists
- effectively target unmet demand
- identify offers against recruitment target
- offers accepted against offers made
- ratio analysis of 1st choice applications to recruitment target
- visible and available on an accessible Mobile device

Visual Dashboard – Example Only



Guidance Statement

Glasgow Region Colleges are committed to offering free and impartial advice and guidance to enable you to have the best student and learning experience possible.

City of Glasgow, Glasgow Clyde and Glasgow Kelvin Colleges each provide impartial, ethical, learner centred advice and careers guidance services for college students and prospective learners to enable them to make informed decisions. Each College can be contacted for advice and guidance and all enquiries are dealt with confidentially. Services are provided by professional and dedicated staff and individual guidance interviews can be arranged where required.

Glasgow Clearing - a clearing system for Glasgow Regional Colleges.

This process sets out parameters for joint working to ensure that the needs of individual colleges to process applications effectively and recruit to target is the key consideration.

Clearing – definition.

These applicants are defined as those who apply and do not already hold an offer at one or more of the Glasgow Colleges. Applicants are eligible for 'clearing' where they cannot be accommodated at their college of choice and would be rejected (course full) or placed on a waiting list.

Process

- Each Glasgow College prepares a fortnightly list of courses by excel spreadsheet with places available. This will take place from Monday 1st August, 2016 to Monday 19th September.
- Lists are shared between named individuals within Admissions in the 3 colleges.
- Admissions teams contact applicants on their waiting lists (and/or applicants unable to be placed) with information on places available at the other colleges, along with information on how to apply.
- Information on Open Days and courses with places available will be shared and advertised on all three college websites during this period.
- Each college will issue a statement on its website explaining that if a course is full, they may receive information on similar or alternative courses at the other Glasgow colleges.