
Performance and Resources Committee

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 17 April
Paper Title	Outcome Agreement 2023-24 Progress Report
Agenda Item	6
Paper Number	PRC3-B
Responsible Officer	Martin Boyle, Executive Director
Status	Disclosable
Action	For noting

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This paper, and associated data, provides an update on in-year recruitment, retention, and delivery of the Glasgow colleges against the targets of the Glasgow Region Outcome Agreement 2023-24.
- 1.2 With a few minor exceptions, the Glasgow college region is on track to deliver against targets set for the academic year.
- 1.3 Recruitment and retention have proven to be strong in general, though they will continue to be monitored to ascertain if there is longer-term impact on learners from issues such as strike action and action short of strike action (ASOS). ASOS, in particular, may have a longer-term impact on progression data and on areas such as student satisfaction data.
- 1.4 One area of note which remains challenging is the sustainability, recruitment, and delivery of Foundation Apprenticeships in the Glasgow region. Initial discussion has taken place between the Glasgow colleges and local authority directors of education, and a working group will further consider this product. In the meantime, an initial discussion paper from the group's work is shared with committee for information.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Committee is invited to **note** the progress of the Glasgow college region on delivery of the Glasgow Region Outcome Agreement 2023-24.

3. Report

- 3.1** Data available at this point in the academic calendar provides a snapshot of enrolments for the 2023-24 session. Against a total Credit target of 343,462, we are currently on target to achieve 347,317 – a variance of 3855 and slightly up against the December 2023 measure of 347,147. This continues to illustrate successful student recruitment for the year. It is worth noting that Foundation Apprenticeship figures are now included in this overall figure.
- 3.2** The regional targets for delivery to SIMD10 cohort is also currently on track for delivery above target, projected at 99,592 against a target of 95,300. This means that 28.7% of Glasgow college learners currently enrolled are from the lowest SIMD 10%. The target for delivery to care-experienced learners is also on track for delivery against target, projected at 25,365 against a target of 23,400, equating to 7.3% of all learners.
- 3.3** While there is no separate and distinct target for Foundation Apprenticeship delivery set in 2023-24, the current delivery pattern is reported, alongside the current delivery of vocational qualifications to senior phase age pupils. It is notable that this has been an area of significant challenge, and work is underway in region with the colleges and local schools to explore the challenge further and to consider appropriate next steps. A small number of learners (City 137; Clyde 61; Kelvin 78) are currently undertaking FA qualifications in the colleges.
- 3.4** The available mid-year return data is provided in Annex A. Please note there is no formal Foundation Apprenticeship target for enrolments in 2023-24 as these are included in overall core credit data with FA places offers as 'opportunities' rather than a target.
- 3.5** A paper considering the challenges, implications and opportunities regarding Foundation Apprenticeships is provided as Annex B. Further updates will be provided to committee following meetings with SFC, the Glasgow colleges and local authorities.

4. Risk and Compliance Analysis

- 4.1** Overarching delivery Performance Indicators are monitored, alongside associated learning and teaching elements, to provide assurance and effective planning of provision and delivery in the Glasgow college region.

5. Financial and Resource Analysis

- 5.1** There are no additional financial implications associated with this report. The Scottish budget publication of December 19 and Scottish Funding Council funding allocation published on March 28 set the indicative budget for the 2024-25 year and is considered elsewhere in this committee. The success of the Glasgow college system in enrolling learners to the overarching Credit target is a significant step in safeguarding the overarching approach.

6. Equalities Implications

- 6.1** There are no additional equalities implications associated with this report beyond the data presented. The Glasgow colleges are generally delivering at, or beyond, targets in specific protected characteristic or demographic groups.

7. Learner Implications

- 7.1** The Outcome Agreement monitoring reports provide assurance against learner data such as enrolments and retention in year with final learner outcomes for completion and progression reported at a later stage in the cycle.

Performance Indicators - Mar 2024

	City of Glasgow College			Glasgow Clyde College			Glasgow Kelvin College			Glasgow Region		
	Target	Projected	Variance	Target	Projected	Variance	Target	Projected	Variance	Target	Projected	Variance
Total credits	157,800	158,211	411	113,721	117,165	3,444	71,941	71,941	0	343,462	347,317	3,855
Core credits	157,800	157,108	-692	113,721	116,739	3,018	71,941	71,941	0	343,462	345,788	2,326
Foundation Apprenticeships credits	0	1,103	1,103	0	426	426	0	0	0	0	1,529	1,529
Volume of credits delivered to learners in the lowest 10% SIMD 2020	36,500	36,794	294	33,200	34,225	1,025	25,600	28,573	2,973	95,300	99,592	4,292
Percentage of credits delivered to learners in the lowest 10% SIMD 2020	23.1%	23.3%		29.2%	29.2%		35.6%	39.7%		27.7%	28.7%	
Volume of credits delivered to care experienced learners	8,300	9,093	793	9,100	8,719	-381	6,000	7,553	1,553	23,400	25,365	1,965
Volume of credits delivered to care experienced learners	5.3%	5.7%		8.0%	7.4%		8.3%	10.5%		6.8%	7.3%	
Foundation apprenticeships	TBC	137	#VALUE!	TBC	61	#VALUE!	TBC	78	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	276	#VALUE!
Number of senior phase age pupils studying vocational qualifications at college	400	491	91	340	201	-139	220	103	-117	960	795	-165

EDUCATION DIRECTORS AND COLLEGE PRINCIPALS MEETING

Date of Meeting	05/03/24
Paper Title	Foundation Apprenticeship Report
Agenda Item	
Paper Number	
Responsible Officer	J Rafferty
Status	Disclosable
Action	For Discussion

1. REPORT PURPOSE

This paper provides members with an update on the findings of the GCG Learning and Teaching Committee in their recent investigation into declining FA numbers in the region.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to **DISCUSS** this paper.

3. BACKGROUND

This investigation involved input and data from all 3 Glasgow Colleges and was led by Claire Carney, VP at City of Glasgow College.

This research consisted of the provision of the following questions to 'feeder' schools, these included:

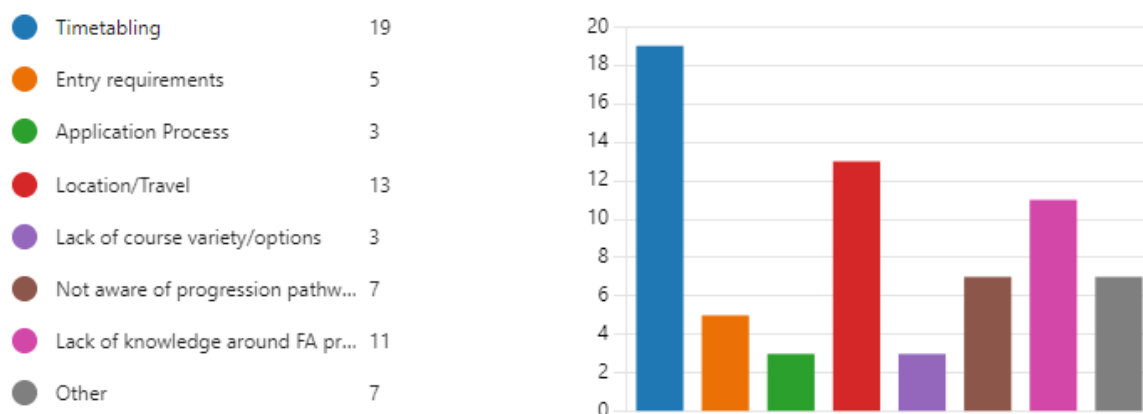
- 1. Over the last year, the number of Learners coming to each of the colleges to do Foundation apprenticeships has decreased, we are interested to know why and what has changed over the last year? Can you share with us why you think numbers have decreased?*
- 2. What would make Foundation Apprenticeships more attractive?*
- 3. How can the college support and encourage more students to apply to Foundation Apprenticeship programmes in the future?*

This paper summarises the data from that report with some additional sections speculating on the reasons for these findings added by John Rafferty, VP for Curriculum at Glasgow Clyde College.

4. MAIN BARRIERS TO FAS

City of Glasgow College (COG) had previously (Oct 2023) conducted a survey of feeder schools in Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire, receiving 27 responses and those responses received from Clyde College and Kelvin have been incorporated into overall findings.

The histogram below represents the main barriers presented by schools as part of the original COG survey (Sept 2023) and is reflective of the collective responses from each of the Colleges. The figure below represents the key barriers preventing students from participating in FAs.



5. TIMETABLING AND TIME OUT OF SCHOOL

It is clear that timetabling is the largest barrier to applications. FAs delivered on the shorter duration delivery model (SDDM) model have enabled pupils to complete their FA at SCQF L6 within one rather than two years and take up two full days of the student's school timetable. As these FAs are traditionally delivered to students in S6, the amount of time out of school has a large impact on their ability to study other subjects.

A further aspect is that Highers as a level 6 qualification take precedence over FAs and students who study at L6 are more likely to select Highers which are more efficient in delivery within school. Many felt that Universities could promote FAs as a viable entry requirement and for parents to understand that requirement.

In addition, student select and begin their subjects in advance of summer holiday and as such an August start is not attractive as students have already made choices are formed social groups in new classes. There was also mention within the responses of students less willing to leave school environment to go to college, post Covid.

Some responses included:

- *"The school timetable does not align with the FA and so pupils are having to give up 2 Highers when they are out of school in order to study for the FA award. This puts pupils off and can be hard for teaching and learning in school because pupils are missing so much coursework."*

- *“Due to the periods/days pupils miss from school it causes them to be behind in their subjects therefore they choose not to take a FA. Some FAs take a two-year commitment and pupils are less likely to do this or indeed, see it through for the two years.”*
- *“My view is that numbers are decreasing as many of the FA courses require a 2-year commitment. This can then potentially decrease the choice and breadth of subjects that a pupil can choose in their final year at school. This issue is compounded by the fact that some pupils change their mind regarding their chosen post school destination after the first year of an FA.”*
- *“Due to the periods/days pupils miss from school it causes them to be behind in their subjects therefore they choose not to take a FA. Some FAs take a two-year commitment and pupils are less likely to do this or indeed, see it through for the two years. University requirements can be strict with Highers required. They do not fit easily into column structures and timetables and therefore can be difficult for pupils to study other subjects.”*
- *“If the balance of time out of school and the qualifications gained from it was reconsidered (from our parents’ perspective). The stumbling block for many parents is worry of the impact being out of school 2/3 days a week to “simply gain one higher”. In their mind, they could be in school and gain 2.”*
- *“Course offers within school have had an impact, as has an increased number within school opting for Advanced Highers. There has been a push to boost Higher results, so some young people have decided to do more Highers in S6 and go to college to support entry to college in Aug 2024.”*

6. TRAVEL

Travel is the second largest reported barrier to students studying FAs, this coupled with time out of school makes the prospect operationally difficult to manage for students, schools and colleges. We are aware, though, that FA Officers have worked with each student individually to ensure that they have the appropriate transport options to get them to campus and their work placement.

Comments included:

- *“Travel time can be an issue due to our location.”*
- *“Our location means our pupils are unable to get to some Colleges.”*
- *“Glasgow City Council putting a stop to all taxis was another barrier for us as meant we couldn’t promote Clyde at all this year for FA or Senior Phase as the distance was just too unrealistic for Senior Phase, they would have to miss too much school.”*

- *“I believe our Foundation Apprenticeships have decreased at Clyde do to the geographical area of our school from the college. Travel is and has always been an issue for Bannerman High School students travelling to Clyde college campuses and we have had young people drop out of courses this year due to this as it is costing them to appropriately travel which is not possible for most of our young people.”*
- *“The Electrical Systems FA at Kelvin and Automotive at Anniesland were popular. The restriction on taxis makes this difficult, although at the moment some pupils are being taken to Clydebank via a different funding model.”*

7. MAKING FAs MORE ATTRACTIVE

Respondents were asked what would make FAs more attractive and the results coalesced around timetabling and making it work as part of the school day; activities promoting the benefits for schools, parents and universities; and sustainable travel options. A different option was to change the name, i.e. to drop the term ‘Foundation’ as it was deemed to be ‘negative’ and inconsistent with the SCQF rating of most of the FA offer.

Comments Included:

- *“The approach needs to be linked up with universities. For example, students who have already done the FA Engineering course and have industry experience before going to university will excel. It would also be good if students who have done the FA and then went to university could come to schools to promote the course.”*
- *“Schools like Notre Dame sees a large number of learners looking at careers in medicine etc (careers in which a university degree is needed for). Whilst universities accept FAs, it would be beneficial if higher education were involved in the marketing for this.”*
- *“More support from Universities would be useful - whilst all Scottish unis have 'accepted' FAs as a qualification on entrance requirements, they could be more explicit here to give the qualification more currency”*
- *“More visibility of the benefits of doing an FA and how they can also be used as a vehicle to get into Higher Education. It would also be helpful to have University testimonies stating that FA’s are seen as Higher equivalents etc. Highlighting the range of benefits and the advantages of doing an FA more clearly.”*
- *“Change the name - drop the word 'Foundation' and pick something else! The word 'Foundation' has educational connotations- particularly with people who are at an age to have experienced Standard Grade qualifications – i.e. the parents of current pupils; FA's are higher level qualifications, but the word 'foundation' will immediately make some parents think of lower level qualifications, and in some ways, de-values the whole thing. Even 'Higher Apprenticeship' is better, off the top of the head.*

8. SOME COLLEGE PERSPECTIVES

As this survey was of school partners, very few touched upon the technical aspects of the qualification and the pedagogical issues that arise in delivering it. The main issues with FAs from a college perspective are:

- That the original qualification was at the wrong SCQF level (Level 6, when the greatest demand would be at level 5.)
- That the level 5 qualifications that were later ushered in to solve this problem were adapted Skills for Work programmes which were limited to subjects that attracted a mainly male audience (e.g. Motor Vehicle Maintenance and Construction.)
- That the range of sector frameworks is too small and some focus on obscure areas (e.g. Hairdressing and Hospitality are not included, while Food Production is, which almost no college could deliver.)
- Some big employers, such as the NHS, do not believe it meets their needs.
- That the subject frameworks vary wildly in length (Care has 4 units in year 1, Engineering has 12)
- That the qualifications use the assessment machinery of MAs on cohorts who are not employees, thus making it difficult for them to be assessed.
- That the qualifications are very expensive to deliver and require a large cast of staff specialists and complex administration to complete.
- That employers in some sectors are more willing to support delivery than others, (e.g. Care sector employers have been helpful, science employers less so.)
- That School and especially College partners were not sufficiently consulted or involved in the design and development of these qualifications, which would have resolved most of these issues.

9. POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR SUDDEN REDUCTION IN INTEREST

Of course, many of the issues raised have been the case since the inception of FAs in 2016. This raises the question of ‘Why *now*?’ Why have FA numbers suddenly dropped in recent academic sessions compared the earlier years of steadily increasing numbers? It is possible that this explained by some or all of the following local and national factors:

- Glasgow Region moved away from a centralised support model for FAs in favour of a cheaper decentralised model, once it was signalled that FAs were moving from an SDS funding model to a credit bearing model.
- This meant that job roles which recruited FAs, supported the administration and sourced placements, were dismantled and taken up by generic staff in colleges.

- FAs were absorbed into routine school partnership recruitment processes at the same time as a notable diminution in national FA marketing support.
- The Covid 19 pandemic interrupted delivery, requiring substantial rewriting of qualifications and exposing certification difficulties not experienced by other qualifications.
- The Covid 19 pandemic also had a significant impact on public sector budgets, leading to the withdrawal of support for existing travel arrangements.
- The Education Scotland Thematic review of FAs was critical of how PIs were gathered for FAs and about progression outcomes in some parts of the country.
- Pressure on college budgets led regional colleges, now freed from a centralised delivery model, to focus only on those frameworks and class sizes which were economic to deliver.
- Greater vocational choice in schools lead to more students taking up local options which were logistically easier to integrate with the rest of their timetable.

It can be argued that FAs were flawed from the outset in their design and that they were kept going by unwavering political support and substantial financial investment. Once this political and financial support was knocked by the global pandemic, the qualifications became increasingly difficult to deliver and support.

10. THE FUTURE OF FAs AND GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

FAs are still taken up by a smaller cohort of pupils at the three Glasgow Colleges. The recent reduction in college budgets means that they cannot afford to subsidise smaller class sizes that FAs sometime yield, and this has happened in tandem with a cooling in interest in FAs amongst school partners, parents and pupils. Furthermore, the bodies which supported and certificated these qualifications, SDS and the SQA, are now currently under review, and could look substantially different in the very near future.

In light of the findings of this research, and this shifting educational landscape, it is recommended that the Glasgow Colleges:

1. Continue to meet existing levels of demand where it is economic to do so, as part of a wider schools' vocational offer.
2. Work with partners to seek out alternative qualifications which meet the concerns and needs expressed by the survey above, where required.
3. Work with SDS, SQA and any other relevant or emerging bodies, to revise or replace FAs with less logistically challenging qualifications which deliver the aspects of FAs valued by students, in a sustainable way.

RISKS

There is a risk that FA levels will continue to decline which will require the college to mitigate any inefficient delivery. This may also make it difficult to meet national credit guidance or ROA guidance relating to FAs.