
Glasgow Colleges Regional Board

Date of Meeting	Monday 26 March 2018
Paper Title	College Evaluative Reports and Enhancement Plans
Agenda Item	7
Paper Number	BM4-C
Responsible Officer	Robin Ashton, Executive Director
Status	Disclosable
Action	For Discussion

1. Report Purpose

- 1.1. To provide an update on the implementation within the Glasgow College Region of new national quality arrangements for Scotland's Colleges and to note the publication of validated Evaluative Reviews and Enhancement Plans for Glasgow's colleges.

2. Recommendations

2.1. Members are recommended to:

- **note** the progress to implement new national quality arrangements for Scotland's Colleges within the Glasgow College Region;
- **note** the publication of validated Evaluative Reviews and Enhancement Plans for Glasgow's colleges;
- **note** that the reports provide validated evidence that the three Glasgow colleges are performing well across all elements of the new national quality assessment framework, with no significant areas of weakness identified; and
- **note** the assurance the college plans provide regarding progress to deliver regional strategic learning priorities and outcomes.

3. Background

- 3.1. 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.
- 3.2. For 2017/18, a new quality enhancement framework, '*How good is our college?*', was implemented to integrate evaluation and reporting on Outcome Agreements with reporting on the quality of provision and services.

3.3. The ‘How good is our college?’ framework is available at:
<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/documents/frwk18-how-good-is-our-college151216.pdf>)

3.4. The new national quality arrangements aim to:

- integrate SFC requirements of colleges for the monitoring of outcome agreements with Education Scotland and to plan for improvement;
- establish evaluation and performance reporting which makes appropriate use of core national performance information and reflects a regional context;
- strengthen college ownership and responsibility for evaluation and planning for improvement;
- establish regional approaches which take account of governance arrangements;
- ensure that appropriate challenge is built into college evaluation arrangements through embedding independent, external stakeholder feedback within evaluation processes; and
- enable SFC, Education Scotland and other stakeholders to receive annual, validated assurance on the quality of provision and services and actions being taken to address areas for improvement.

3.5 In terms of implementation of the new framework in multi-college regions, the arrangements stated that they had been:

“...designed to function at the level of the individual college. In single college regions this will align with the single college Outcome Agreement and single Board oversight. In the three multi-college regions, evaluations of provision and services will continue, as before, to function at the level of the individual college. However, there will be a new requirement under the new arrangements to align evaluation and reporting with the regional Outcome Agreement process and governance. The Outcome Agreement and governance arrangements in each of these regions are different, and therefore each of these regions will carry out development work in AY 2016-17 with their SFC Outcome Agreement Manager and Education Scotland College HMIs, to agree how best to align Outcome Agreement evaluation and reporting with individual institutional evaluations and reporting in their regional contexts.” (Arrangements, page2)

3.6 The GCRB Performance and Resources Committee has received regular reports on the implementation of the new arrangements within the Glasgow College Region. An implementation plan was developed (attached as Annex A) which specified that once college reports had been validated, the GCRB Board would receive an update on the reports for noting.

4. The National Quality Framework for Colleges

4.1. ‘How good is our college?’ provides a structure for evaluation and enhancement which colleges and their stakeholders can use to identify what is working well and what needs to improve. It is based on four high level principles. These are:

- Leadership and quality culture.
- Delivery of learning and services to support learning.
- Outcomes and impact.
- Capacity for improvement.

- 4.2. The diagram below illustrates the relationship between the three high level principles and how they contribute to capacity for improvement:



- 4.3. Using the above framework, colleges are asked to evaluate the quality of their provision and services using 12 quality indicators (QIs). These QIs cross relate directly to Glasgow Region Strategic Learning Priorities set out in the 2017-2022 Glasgow Region Strategic Plan for Education (as illustrated in Annex B).

5. College Evaluative Reports and Enhancement Plans

- 5.1. Based on their evaluation of the quality of their provision and services across the 12 quality indicators, colleges are required to produce and submit an annual Evaluative Report and Enhancement Plan to Education Scotland and Scottish Funding Council for formal, independent endorsement.
- 5.2. The **Evaluative Report** answers the following questions for each of the high level principles:
- How good is/are our (for each key principle)?
 - How do we know?
 - How have we gathered and used internal and external stakeholder feedback to inform and substantiate our evaluations?
 - What is working well?
 - What needs to work better?
- 5.3. Colleges should make explicit reference to Outcome Agreement priorities and targets when addressing these questions.
- 5.4. Members should note that in 2018-19, colleges will be expected to identify grades (using a six point scale) within the evaluative report. It is intended that the introduction of grades will provide each college a baseline across each of these three key principles and act as a tool for colleges to measure progress made and distance travelled.

5.5 The **Enhancement Plan** is based on the findings of the Evaluation Report and focuses on answering the following questions for each of the high level questions:

- What are our priorities (for each theme)?
- What are our areas for development?
- What are our main points for action?
- What actions will we take to address these main points for action?
- What do we aim to achieve and by when?
- How will we engage learners, staff and other stakeholders in developing and implementing enhancement activities?

5.6 The reports of the three Glasgow colleges have been reviewed and formally endorsed by SFC and Education Scotland. The validated college evaluative reports and enhancement plans are available at:

City of Glasgow College: <https://education.gov.scot/other-sectors/further-education/688504>

Glasgow Clyde College: <https://education.gov.scot/other-sectors/further-education/811922>

Glasgow Kelvin College: <https://education.gov.scot/other-sectors/further-education/825806>

5.7 The above provide GCRB with validated assurance that the college evaluative reports:

- provide an accurate and appropriate account of the quality of provision and services being delivered by the colleges;
- identify clearly what is working well;
- identify what needs to improve;
- take appropriate account of the views of stakeholders, and
- are supported by appropriately robust sources of evidence.

5.8 SFC and Education Scotland also formally endorse that the enhancement plans:

- are well-informed by and linked appropriately to the findings of the evaluative reports;
- communicate clearly the plans to address areas of provision and services which require improvement; and
- identify clearly what the colleges aim to achieve and by when.

5.9 Board members should note that the college enhancement reports provide an assurance that areas of improvement identified within the 2016-17 Regional Outcome Agreement evaluation are being addressed and, in particular, that the colleges are working to:

- increase rates of attainment in full-time courses, particularly at Further Education levels; and
- Increase levels of inter-region progression to evidence a coherent and joined up regional curriculum offer.

5.10 The reports for the three colleges provide evidence that the three Glasgow colleges are performing well across all elements of the national quality assessment framework, with no significant areas of weakness identified.

- 5.11** Members should also note that the GCRB Executive Director has been involved in the process within each college to develop and finalise the college reports. This included participation in initial planning discussions, and pre-endorsement and validation meetings.

6 Risk Analysis

- 6.1** The reports for the three colleges provide evidence that the three Glasgow colleges are performing well across all elements of the national quality assessment framework, with no significant areas of weakness identified.
- 6.2** 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. To mitigate this risk, the GCRB and Glasgow college executives are liaising closely with the college, SFC and Education Scotland colleagues.
- 6.3** Following year one of the implementation, the Glasgow Colleges undertook a joint review of the process to inform the national evaluation process. The colleges' review report is attached as Annex C and highlights aspects where the colleges feel the arrangements have had a positive impact and areas where they think there can be improvement.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1** The Regional Board has a legal obligation to monitor the quality of delivery of the assigned colleges and these quality arrangements provide a framework to meet this responsibility.

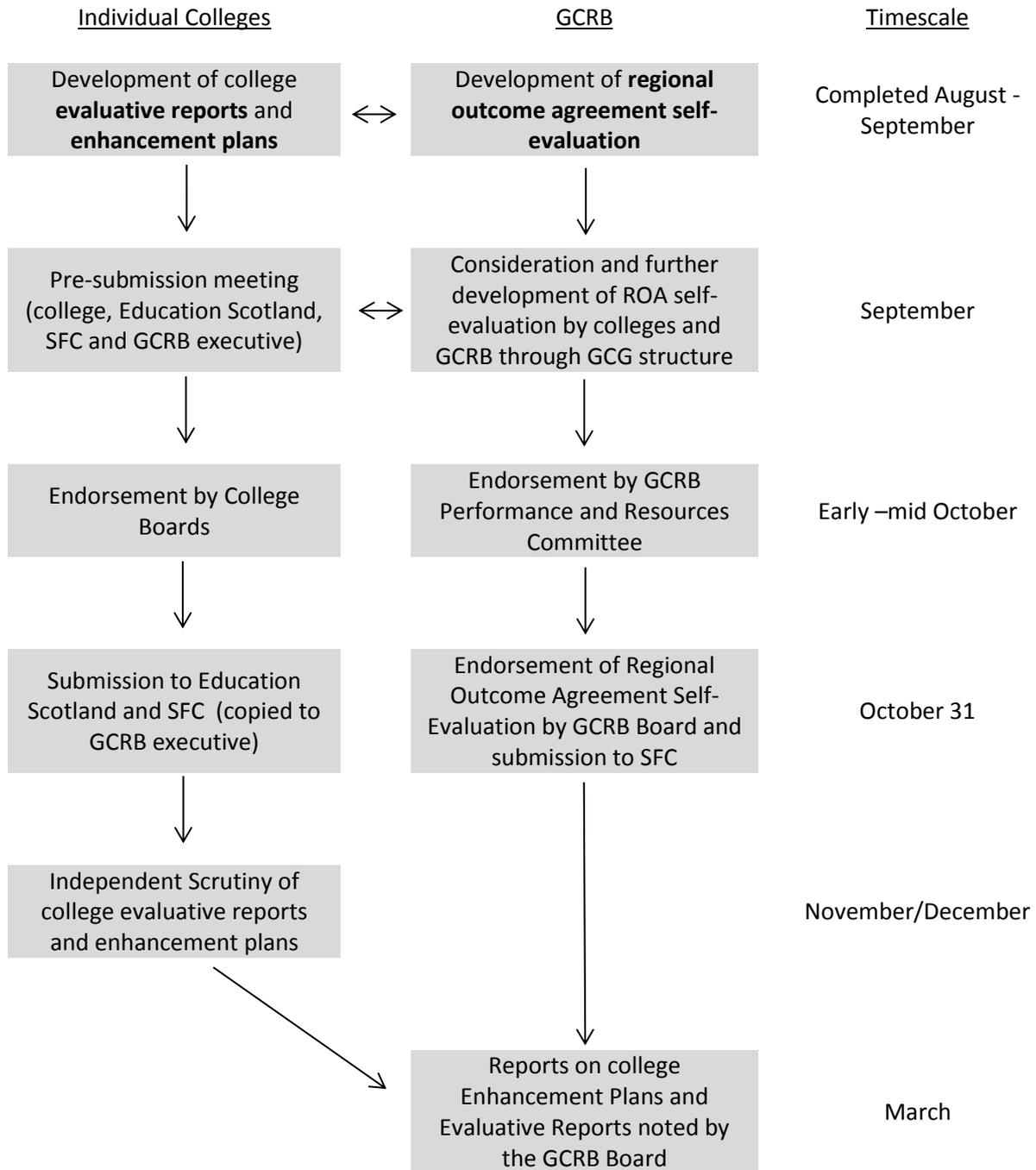
8 Resource Implications

- 8.1** No financial implications are identified.

9 Strategic Implications

- 9.1** Within the 2017-22 Glasgow Region Strategic Plan for Education, seven strategic learning priorities are identified as critical to successfully widening access to life-changing learning. Annex B provides a summary of alignment between these seven learning priorities and the quality indicators within the new national quality arrangements.
- 9.2** In addition, each college evaluative report provides an institutional analysis of the college contribution to the delivery of regional outcomes. The college Enhancement Plans and Evaluative Reviews therefore provide assurance that regional strategic learning priorities and outcomes are being effectively progressed.

Annex A: High Level Schedule of Quality Activity within the Glasgow College Region



Annex B: Cross Reference of Glasgow College Region Strategic Priorities for Learning and National College Quality Indicators

Glasgow Region Strategic Plan Learning Priorities	Leadership and quality culture	Delivery of learning and services to support learning	Outcomes and impact
	How good is our leadership and approach to improvement?	How good is the quality of the provision and services we deliver?	How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our learners?
Engage with all our communities and provide the highest quality facilities and resources for learning.		✓	✓
Offer engaging learning experiences to develop skills for learning, work and life.		✓	✓
Promote high quality and innovative learning, teaching and assessment.	✓	✓	✓
Deliver an inclusive and supportive student experience for all learners. This will include excellent guidance and learner support.	✓	✓	✓
Encourage all students to enhance their learning as individuals, as representatives, and as officers in strong and effective student associations.	✓	✓	
Provide more opportunities for learners to develop their skills in real work environments.		✓	
Offer clear pathways into work and further study; supporting every learner into a positive post-course destination.		✓	✓
	(Note: includes governance, leadership of change, learning and teaching, services to support learning and evaluation leading to improvement)	(Note: includes safeguarding and child protection, curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment, services to support learning, transitions, partnerships)	(Note: includes wellbeing, equality and inclusion, and equity, attainment and achievement for all learners)

Annex C: Glasgow Colleges' Review of Implementation of the New Quality Arrangements (January 2018)

This paper is an overview of the revised quality arrangements from the perspective of the three assigned regional colleges within the Glasgow Region. Feedback has been collated and reviewed through the Glasgow Colleges Group; the Principals Group and the Learning and Teaching Group. Whilst feedback has been mostly positive there are some areas for development which we feel SFC and Education Scotland may wish to consider in any revision to How Good is Our College(HGIOC); specifically support for colleges and the timing and alignment with SFC outcome agreement process.

Timescales and Linkages with Outcome Agreement Process

- An October reporting date is counterproductive to basing decisions on the most up to date performance data and is at odds with publication of college PI data and Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) cycles. A December deadline would be more appropriate and would afford opportunities to examine the ROA measures following publication of ROA guidance. An opportunity to report attainment measures; specifically measures 4(a) – (e), as part of the HGIOC thus avoiding repetition of reporting metrics and aligning the two processes more cohesively.
- There is dubiety regarding what the reporting period covered: a) the totality of the previous academic year to July or b) the point at which it is signed off in September / October. Therefore, there may be unintended consequences in terms of reporting validity.
- The ROA and evaluation document served two discrete purposes therefore it was difficult to amalgamate reporting. The ROA and HGIOC had not been integrated as planned and further work would be required to streamline the process.

Staffing

- The scale of annual review was not sustainable. General consensus has been that it was equivalent to the former four-yearly full inspection albeit reporting is now undertaken on an annual basis. Significant staffing resource had been required to gather evidence but this is not sustainable on an annual basis without significant support from Education Scotland in mobilising appropriate Associate Assessors to support the process.
- Where Associate Assessors had been utilised there was potential for supporting and judgemental roles of AAs to become blurred.
- There were insufficient numbers of Associate Assessors to support the revised model and this was a significant issue going forward.
- Some staff development issues were been highlighted in terms of the need for consistency in the approaches to reporting, language used and professional dialogue with colleagues.

Reportage

- Report writing was inconsistent and variable depending on the approach taken by individual college HMIs.
- The format and word limit of the report restricted the opportunity to include individual college examples of best practice. This was felt to be particularly critical in 2018/19 when colleges are determining grades. It is also a missed opportunity for sharing best practice across the sector.
- Limiting the report to 15 pages was felt to be very restrictive and did not allow adequate capacity to evaluate across the three high level principals in sufficient enough depth.

Student Engagement

- There was less scope in the new arrangements to evaluate student engagement and the general consensus is that further work is required to ensure the student experience is articulated more comprehensively.
- The removal of student review team input did not allow sufficient reflection on student engagement and had also removed an excellent student developmental opportunity.

Grading

- Glasgow Kelvin College had elected to self-grade and publish the grades. Concerns were expressed around the lack of dependency between the high level principles.
- There was a lack of clarity around grading and the impact of grading on the high level principals and QIs. It was felt that there is further guidance required in supporting colleges to make a judgement on assigning grades. The grading process appeared to be intuitive and more work would be needed to develop a grading rationale. There was an inherent danger of a shift in focus from improvement to grades which would be published.
- Lack of benchmark data re grading and learner outcomes.