

Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board Equality Mainstreaming Report

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Introduction

The Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board (GCRB) is a regional strategic body established by the Further & Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended by the Post 16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013). GCRB's role is to secure the coherent provision of a high quality of fundable further and higher education in the three Glasgow colleges:

- Glasgow Kelvin College
- City of Glasgow College
- Glasgow Clyde College

Our regional approach is designed to build on the colleges' existing strengths and, together, to develop new strengths, influence and flexibility. In October 2017 we launched our first Regional Strategy for College Education: <http://www.gcrb.ac.uk/strategy>. Our overarching regional ambition is to build Scotland's most inclusive, most responsive, and most effective regional college system. This strategy was replaced in 2023 with a refreshed strategy, and associated operating and action plan which takes into account the region's current strategic and operating position and provides a framework for board direction, prioritisation and monitoring.

This is GCRB's third report under the public sector equality duty, which requires GCRB to publish a report every two years. Reporting is proportionate to GCRB's size and its responsibilities in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Our Collective Commitment to Equality Mainstreaming

The Glasgow College Region is collectively committed to creating a regional college system which reflects the diversity of the region. To support a coherent regional approach, the colleges and GCRB have jointly developed the following shared equality outcome themes:

- the diversity of students and staff reflects the communities the college serves;
- all students and staff experience and contribute to a culture of dignity and respect;
- all students and staff benefit from inclusive and accessible spaces, environments and services;
- all students and staff actively engage in fully inclusive and accessible learning; and
- successful student and staff outcomes are increased irrespective of protected characteristics.

Our shared focus on these themes is intended to drive improved accessibility, greater participation from learners from all protected characteristic groups, and challenge stereotypes and under-representation.

We continuously monitor participation and outcomes across equalities characteristics at both regional and college levels.

The Glasgow Regional Equality Group (GREG), consisting of EDI leads from the three colleges, meets regularly and GCRB is invited to attend or receive updates on activity.

COVID-19 has had a major impact on many EDI issues since March 2020. Equality outcome themes are currently being reviewed by the GREG so that these may be renewed. High-level outcomes are set via the regional Outcome Agreement, and reported to both the Performance and Resources Committee and main board of GCRB.

Regional Mainstreaming

Consideration of equalities is integral to a range of regional structures and processes. Equalities impact assessments are integrated into key regional decision making processes and developments. Our Outcome Agreement (OA) sets out our annual plans for the joint delivery of a regional curriculum and an equality impact assessment is undertaken prior to its agreement and finalisation.

Regional operational planning groups have a standing agenda item to consider potential equalities impacts of any decisions made. Our regional Equalities and Access groups meet regularly to share practice and to develop a consensus on regional issues and priorities for action.

At a regional level we consider national performance measures which include participation and attainment levels for ethnicity groups, and age and disability categories. We also undertake similar review of data for other priority groups such as students who are care experienced, or from deprived postcodes (SIMD10).

Our Outcome Agreement commits the Glasgow College Region to working collectively to monitor and work to improve the volume and proportion of Credits relating to learners from the protected characteristic groups relating to gender, age, ethnicity and disability, along with increasing participation of care leavers and learners from deprived postcodes. Our OA also seeks to deliver equality in levels of attainment for learners from these priority groups.

The current Glasgow OA is available at: <http://www.gcrb.ac.uk/publications>

We are supported externally in our regional analysis by the work of the Equality Challenge Unit, and in particular, by their annual statistical reports on equality in colleges in Scotland.

These reports present an equality-focused analysis of further education statistics (FES) collated by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), with data and analysis provided on age, disability, ethnicity and gender, the intersections of these identities, and on the optional protected characteristics religion and sexual orientation. The report also considers students' socioeconomic class, based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and presents high-level regional data analysis.

In addition to national figures, the Equality Challenge Unit also provide corresponding data tables for multi-college regions to support regional benchmarking and assist colleges to identify equality challenges at a regional level. The 2018 national report and Glasgow Region data tables are available at: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/equality-colleges-scotland-statistical-report-2018>

Consideration of regional data and evidence provides a context for information gathered at a college level, and assists colleges in identifying and tackling student equality challenges, alongside embedding equality outcomes within our regional outcome agreement with the SFC.

College Mainstreaming

Each college has a range of strategies and plans which support achievement of our equality themes. These include Equalities Mainstreaming Reports and institutional level access and inclusion strategies and gender action plans. These documents review a range of relevant data and indicators and identify actions to promote inclusion and to monitor the effectiveness and impact of interventions.

The following equality, diversity and inclusion activities are common across each College in the region:

- Staff with specific responsibility for equality, diversity and inclusion are employed.
- Approaches are in place to meet the statutory duties of the Equality Act 2010 and respective reports.
- Collaboration with Equality Challenge Unit on various programmes and attendance at the College Liaison Group.
- Strategic and operational working groups focused on equality, diversity and inclusion issues are convened.
- General equality, diversity and inclusion training and specific training on issues such as mental health is available to staff and students.
- Colleges provide chaplaincy services and quiet reflection spaces.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded into college planning and performance processes.
- Student and staff equality data monitoring systems are aligned to cover all protected characteristics, and campaigns are run to raise awareness of the rationale for and benefits of declaration.
- Inclusive learning and teaching materials and practices are being further developed.
- Colleges are working towards various accreditation standards, such as: Investors in People; Positive about Disability; DisabledGo; LGBT Youth Charter Mark, and Tommy's Pregnancy Accreditation Programme.
- Student and staff evidence from surveys and focus groups inform policy and procedure through EQIA.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion issues are considered in on and offline communications, for example through using diverse images.
- Student data across protected characteristics inform action planning.
- Colleges plan and deliver various local initiatives such as events and campaigns to raise awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion in general and specific issues.

Further detail on individual college approaches and priorities are set out in their equalities mainstreaming reports and associated policies and reports which can be accessed at:

City of Glasgow College	http://www.cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk/edi
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Glasgow Clyde College	http://www.glasgowclyde.ac.uk/about-us/equality-and-diversity
Glasgow Kelvin College	http://www.glasgowkelvin.ac.uk/equality-diversity

Supporting Access and Inclusion

College Access and Inclusion Strategies seek to define the inclusive service our colleges provide, including processes for providing bespoke individualised support, and setting out how college ambitions link up with the ambitions within the region. The strategies also highlight the commitment to effective partnership working and ongoing CPD for staff in relation to access and inclusions ambitions.

The college Access and Inclusion Strategies are available on the links provided above.

Addressing Gender Imbalances

In terms of gender balance, analysis of overall participation rates by gender do not suggest any under-representation. However, when student gender proportions are analysed at subject level, significant variations exist across different subject groupings.

Within their current Gender Action Plans, each assigned college has set clear target outcomes focused on the subjects with the greatest gender imbalances. These focus on addressing gender imbalances in subjects where 90% or more learners are of one gender and are accessible on the links provided above.

British Sign Language (BSL) support

Glasgow's colleges are committed to supporting the implementation of the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015, and will play a role in promoting and delivering the outcomes of the BSL National Plan for Scotland. In particular, as the new legislation is implemented, college level plans will be developed to ensure compliance with the new statutory obligations.

Meeting the Needs of Disabled Learners

Glasgow City has higher than average rates of residents classing themselves as disabled or incapable of work and the Glasgow colleges undertake a range of activity to ensure they identify and remove barriers to participation or reasons for non-disclosure, and this includes work with Community Planning Partnerships and disability support agencies.

Glasgow City Council Education Services have well established arrangements with colleges and a range of specialist centres to ensure pupils with profound and complex needs receive appropriate support from the most suitable providers. Glasgow colleges will maintain a dialogue with the Education Department during the period of this Regional Outcome Agreement and jointly assess the need for any greater level of college support for learners with profound and complex needs. Across the Glasgow colleges, there is an ongoing dialogue with Glasgow Education Services to ensure that

provision continues to be sufficient to meet needs. There is also significant joint planning with the Education Services and the Additional Support Needs Schools to ensure college places on appropriate courses are optimised for the majority of leavers. A large school/college provision is in place for those young people who are still at school and can benefit from college input.

Self-Directed Support improves social inclusion and independence for young people and adults with disabilities and colleges should support learners with additional needs so that they can make informed decisions about their further education. The Glasgow colleges provide tailored information about entry requirements so that pupils and their carers/agencies can make informed choices about their college learning and make best use of the resource provided by self-directed support. Colleges also promote accurate and full information about the support available to students with disabilities to help applicants make well-informed course choices. Working in partnership with appropriate agencies, Glasgow Region Colleges will also ensure that all reasonable support measures are in place before a student with additional support for learning needs accepts their place.

Meeting the Needs of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners

Ethnicity data on population and our colleges' headcounts suggest that the Glasgow College Region broadly reflects and represents the ethnicity grouping of the regional population. However, the impact of migration and resultant demand for English tuition, as highlighted in the 2011 census data, showed that approximately 17,000 Glasgow College Region residents claim to speak little or no English.

Corresponding to these suggested high levels of demand for English tuition, Glasgow Colleges provide a significant level of ESOL tuition. Given the rising numbers of non-UK nationals resident in Glasgow City, its colleges will continue to provide appropriate levels of English language tuition to support integration and access to employment. The region's colleges will play a lead role in the successful delivery of ESOL tuition. This will include delivery through regional partnerships with community-based providers. There remains significant demand for access to ESOL learning in Glasgow, and a cross-colleges working group works in collaboration with local councils and other relevant bodies to seek to deliver a coherent, integrated service, while recognising that demand continues to outstrip supply.

Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board staff equality

The Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board (GCRB) has adopted the HR policies and procedures of Glasgow Clyde College, which provides GCRB with HR support. This is mainly because of GCRB's very small staff establishment. Full information on Glasgow Clyde College's approach to equalities is available on its website at: <http://www.glasgowclyde.ac.uk/about-us/equality-and-diversity/equality-act>

As a very small organisation GCRB is extremely sensitive to changes in staffing. There are six staff members: two male and four female. To protect individual staff members' personal data, it is not possible to provide more detailed analysis although information on other characteristics may be retained where this has been provided.

The Board's Nominations & Remuneration Committee retains oversight of staffing matters where appropriate.

Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board Membership

The overall gender balance of the Board at December 2023 is 44:56% women:men. Non-Executive membership is also 44:56% women:men. There is one vacant non-executive position and one vacant student position. Throughout the period since the last GCRB Equality Mainstreaming report in 2020, overall gender balance has remained within the 40%:60% balance range.

GCRB has complied with the requirements of the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 in relation to non-executive recruitment activity.

The following table provides a breakdown of gender balance across categories of membership at December 2023. It should be noted that the Board Chair is appointed by Scottish Ministers, Staff and Student Members are elected by their respective bodies, and Assigned College Chairs serve on the Board ex officio.

Members	Female	Male	F:M %
Chair	1	-	100/0
Assigned College Chairs	0	3	0/100
Non-Executive Members	4	5	44/56
Staff Members	2	0	100/0
Student Members	0	1	0/100
Totals	7	9	44/56

GCRB approved its first Diversity Succession Plan in October 2017. The plan is reviewed and updated annually. The current plan may be accessed here: <https://www.gcrb.ac.uk/reports-and-publications/governance-documents>. Actions arising from the plan are incorporated into the Board's annual Development Action Plan, progress against which is monitored routinely by the Nominations and Remuneration Committee.

GCRB monitors diversity data during the recruitment of new Board Members using a form that reflects current best practice guidance and submits board gender data annually to the Scottish Government.