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**CURRICULUM, QUALITY AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

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| **DATE** | 07 May 2024 |
| **TITLE OF REPORT** | Curriculum and Credit Update |
| **REFERENCE** | Agenda item 06 |
| **AUTHOR AND CONTACT DETAILS** | Angela Pignatelli  [angela.pignatelli@slc.ac.uk](mailto:angela.pignatelli@slc.ac.uk) |
| **PURPOSE:** | To provide members with an update against the College’s credit target, the indicative funding allocation for 2024-25 and also update members on curriculum activity taking place across the college. |
| **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS/ DECISIONS:** | Members are recommended to:   * consider and note the progress to the 2023-2024 credit target; * consider and note the indictive funding allocation for 2024-2025; * note the industrial action scheduled to take place from 19 April 2024; * note the update from the recent Education Scotland Care Thematic Review and upcoming Annual Engagement Visit information; * note the work being undertaken by curriculum areas, MIS and Alternative Funding on Commercial Activity (Full Cost Recovery activity); and * note the retention update and actions required; * note the business planning exercise underway to address financial savings; * note the QAA update. |
| **RISK** | * that the College surpasses its overall credit target; * that the quality of learning, teaching and assessment declines impacting on the student experience; * that any potential delay in resulting students hinders student progression opportunities. |
| **RELEVANT STRATEGIC AIM:** | * Successful Students * The Highest Quality Education and Support * Sustainable Behaviours |
| **SUMMARY OF REPORT:** | * the College has successfully recruited healthy numbers of students across August and January start entry points to meet, and surpass, its credit target of 43,600 credits. The College will meet its upper 2% tolerance threshold credit target set by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC); * the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has released the indicative funding allocations for 2023-24 which show similar levels of funding for 2024-2025 as the current year, as expected; * Action Short of Strike and Industrial Action continues to be a challenge in the sector; * Education Scotland conducted the Care Thematic Review in February with highly positive verbal findings being shared with the College until the formal report is published in Spring/Summer 2024; * work has taken place by curriculum teams, the alternative funding team and MIS to create an infrastructure to support a new suit of commercial activity through full cost recovery course offering in order to diversify income streams; * retention has decreased in FE FT and HE FT with curriculum teams working hard to support students to complete their qualifications. |

1. **INTRODUCTION**
   1. This paper provides an update on the credit target for academic year 2023-2024, the indicative funding allocation for 2024-2025, and an overview of learning and teaching activity since the February 2024 Committee.
2. **CREDIT AND RECRUITMENT ACTIVITY 2023-24**
   1. For 2023-24 academic year, the College has a core credit allocation of 43,600 credits.
   2. As of 22 April 2024, there are 4,562 enrolled students which is around 920 students lower than at the same time last year. This demonstrates the reduction in student places between last academic year and this one.
   3. The College has recorded 44,663 credits. Taking account of potential withdrawals leading to a loss of 300 credits, this would lead to an out turn of 44,363 credits for the College by the end of the academic session. This is within the upper 2% tolerance threshold of 44,472 credits.
   4. The College continues to monitor the credit target on a weekly basis and anticipates that it will meet its credit target for the academic year.
3. **INDICATIVE FUNDING ALLOCATION 2024-2025** 
   1. The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) announced the indicative funding allocations for the academic year 2024-2025 on 28 March 2024. The SFC has retained the core credit allocation for the college at 43,600.
   2. For the Lanarkshire Region, the credit level of 160,890 remains the same as academic year 2023-24. The split in credits being retained at 117,288 credits to New College Lanarkshire and 43,601 credits to South College Lanarkshire. At the time of writing, the college has not yet met with the LRSB to confirm the split of credits for academic session 2024 to 2025.
   3. The Associate Principals are working with the curriculum areas to plan credit levels according to the current 2023-2024 credit guidance. This includes continued, demonstrative, moves to reducing credit levels on FE programmes down to 16 credits (averaging 17 credits) and between 12 to 15 credits in HE provision, together with removing credit claims against HE Guidance across all courses.
      1. Exception rationales are being prepared by the Associate Principals for those courses which require exemption from the credit level model indicated above, noting that course in excess of these levels will be subject to further scrutiny by the SFC.
      2. Identified courses to date include HND Childhood Practice; HNC Healthcare Practice; HNC Childhood Practice; SWAP West Access to Humanities; SWAP West Access to Nursing; SWAP West Science given the frameworks stipulate the volume of credit activated required for completion.
4. **ACTION SHORT OF STRIKE ACTION AND INDUSTRIAL ACTION** 
   1. In January 2024, the teaching union, EIS-FELA, announced that they were undertaking ”Action Short of Strike” (ASOS) in relation to the national pay dispute. ASOS commenced on 12 February 2024. Thereafter, full strike days have been announced, taking place on 29 February, 19 April, 23 April and 2 May 2024.
   2. This “working to rule”, involving members withholding students’ results, will have significant impact on students who require their results to progress onto further study or employment.
   3. At the time of writing, less than 900 results had been entered into our system in the last month. The total outstanding is 24,637 results affecting roughly 3,500 students. Block 1 and block 2 result equate to around 4,100 results outstanding. This has come down since prior to Easter to around 27,000 results.
   4. In terms of impact, there is potentially significant disruption to students in relation to smooth transition to their progression pathways. Whether this is university or employment the impact of not being credited with the qualification achieved in a timely manner may cause delays and missed opportunities for transitions to the next stage in their careers.
   5. The £5,000 consolidated pay offer from employers, which includes the offer of a £2,000 pay rise for academic year (AY) 2022-23 and £1,500 for AY 2023-24, together with a £1,500 rise in AY 2024-2025, remains on the table despite the deteriorating financial circumstances facing colleges.
   6. The EIS-FELA notification of the strike action is in the appendix.
5. **EDUCATION SCOTLAND**

***Education Scotland Care Thematic Review***

* 1. On 28 February 2024, the Education Scotland team, comprising of two HMIes and two Associate Assessors, conducted a national one-day thematic review at the college. This focussed on the curriculum areas within the SFC Care Grouping.
     1. The areas involved in this Care Thematic Review included Early Education and Childcare and Health & Social Care. The Review focussed on four key Quality Indicators from the “How Good Is Our College”(HGIOC) Framework. The review team conducted multiple interviews with staff, triangulating information with students & stakeholders and deploying an evidence-based approach.
     2. The review focussed on:
* observations of learning and teaching practices;
* engagements with learners;
* professional dialogue with staff, managers and college leaders;
* discussions with eight employers.
  + 1. The visit was highly positive with Education Scotland expressing that they were “blown away” by the following:
* exceptional utilisation of feedback from partners and key stakeholders;
* effective deployment of meta-skills and questioning techniques, with both students and staff engaged in the learning process;
* a curriculum characterised by flexibility and adaptability, delivering significant value-added benefits;
* outstanding support provided to learner, with seamless integration between curriculum and support services;
* strong endorsements from employers regarding the quality of learners and robust partnerships with organisations such as the NHS resulting in meaningful work placements.
  + 1. There is a total of eight colleges included in the review with Borders College serving as the benchmark college. The final Thematic Review Report will be published in Spring/Summer 2024 with examples of highly effective practice included.

***Education Scotland Annual Engagement Visit (AEV)***

* 1. Education Scotland will conduct the College’s Annual Engagement Visit on 14 May 2024 with feedback taking place on 15 May 2024.
  2. The Quality Indicators (QIs), to which they will refer, will focus on:
* Learner Progress and Outcomes;
* Approaches to ensuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching, including professional updating; and
* Learner Engagement.
  1. Lead Inspector, Sarah Halliwell, replaces the College’s outgoing HMIe, Joe Mulholland, who has successfully secured a post as Head of Scrutiny at Education Scotland. The College wishes to thank Joe sincerely for his support of the College’s work over the years.

1. **CURRICULUM AND ALTERNATIVE FUNDING UPDATE**
   1. The curriculum teams, alternative funding team and MIS have been working to create an infrastructure and course offering to support the ambition of the creation and promotion of a new suit of commercial activity. This offering will operate through Full Cost Recovery (FCR) courses in order to diversify income streams whilst also meeting industry and individual customer needs. This is particularly relevant in light of the Scottish Funding Council funding cuts and the removal of the Flexible Workforce Delivery Fund (FWDF).
   2. The scope, which includes employers both large & small, government & public sector organisations, and individuals, will include the sale of commercial learning and development opportunities, upskilling, reskilling and retraining opportunities, bite size learning, micro credentials, community, and leisure offerings.
   3. The new suite of commercial provision on offer is to be packaged with a distinctive South Lanarkshire College Brand with promotion being both targeted and speculative across the Greater Glasgow Economic Region. The offer will align with the regional skills need to enhance the labour market, strengthen and enhance existing workforces and provide the skills required for the jobs of the future.
2. **RETENTION**
   1. The table below shows the retention and withdrawal figures as of 23 April 2024.
   2. Early Withdrawals in FE FT have increased by 1.04% from 4.56% to 5.6% since reporting in February 2024. Intervention and support actions continue to take place by curriculum areas to support students to remain and complete their courses.
   3. Further withdrawals in FE FT have increased by 6.5% from 7.33% to 13.8% since February reporting. Further withdrawals in HE FT have increased by 6.2% since February 2024 from 7.1% to 13.3%. Action planning is underway by curriculum teams to understand the reasons behind the withdrawals, support the students to remain on course and to succeed.
   4. *Table 1: Enrolments, Retention, Early and Further Withdrawals as of 23 April 2024:*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Mode** | **No. of Enrolments** | **Early Withdrawals** | **%** | **No. of Further Withdrawals** | **%** | **Retention %** |
| FE FT | 1,156 | 65 | 5.6 | 159 | 13.8 | 80.6 |
| HE FT | 661 | 17 | 2.6 | 88 | 13.3 | 84.1 |
| FE PT | 2,423 | 53 | 2.2 | 65 | 2.7 | 95.1 |
| HE PT | 322 | 10 | 3.1 | 8 | 2.5 | 94.4 |
| **Overall** | **4,562** | **145** | **3.2%** | **320** | **7** | **89.8%** |

(A full breakdown by curriculum area can be seen in Annex 1)

1. **BUSINESS PLANNING** 
   1. Given the recent Scottish Funding Council statement regarding the required financial savings to be achieved across all colleges in Scotland, the college is undertaking a reshaping and restructuring exercise.
   2. These structure changes include curriculum realignment, changes to the curriculum offer, changes to the curriculum delivery, staff redeployment, staff retraining and staff upskilling.
   3. Changes to the curriculum offering are based on labour market intelligence regarding market demand, local intelligence regarding recruitment levels on a 3-year basis and a reprioritisation of those areas of significant demand such as ESOL.
   4. The significant demand for ESOL continues to grow in our Region. Currently, there are 150 applicants who we are unable to support. There is an inability to support and meet the current levels of demand due to the credit cap by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and the lack of available staff skillset to meet this need. The intention is to retrain existing under-deployed staff in this area of demand.
2. **QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY (QAA) UPDATE** 
   1. The Scottish Government agreed to the SFC Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability recommendation to explore the development of a single tertiary quality framework for Scotland’s Colleges and Universities. This work resulted in the development of Scotland’s Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF).

The approach is being led by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) with a series of stakeholders inputting from the college and university sector.

* 1. Information relating to the new common approach can be found via the following link: [Tertiary Quality Project (sfc.ac.uk)](https://www.sfc.ac.uk/quality/tertiary-quality/tertiary-quality-project.aspx).
  2. It is acknowledged that there is a need to update the approach to inspection/review within the college sector and the TQEF principles are a starting point for doing so.
  3. There are some concerns and potential risks around the approach and measures in the review process particularly in relation to the lack of clarity on the specific detail, the focus on process rather than impact to learners, the lack of focus on wider skills development including meta skills, the lack of focus on regional and local needs and lack of information on addressing the needs of key groups such as 16 – 19 year olds, community learning, apprenticeships or employer engagement.
  4. There is no clarity around the role of Education Scotland nor the key component regarding who will conduct lesson observations going forward.
  5. There is a risk that the new framework does not adequately meet the specific needs of the college sector and the student experience.

1. **EQUALITIES**
   1. There are no new matters for people with protected characteristics or from areas of multiple deprivation which arise from consideration of the report.
2. **RISK AND ASSURANCE**
   1. that the College surpasses its overall credit target;
   2. that the quality of learning, teaching and assessment declines due to action short of strike impacting on the student experience;
   3. that any potential delay in resulting students hinders student progression opportunities; and
   4. that the new quality framework (TQEF) from QAA does not adequately meet the specific needs of the college sector and the student experience.
3. **COMMUNICATIONS** 
   1. Internal and external communications regarding Action Short of Strike (ASOS) and Industrial Action remain regular, robust and clear. Student communication and updates on ASOS and Industrial Action is regular with in person updates with the Student President and Vice President in regular meetings with the Principal and Vice Principal for Learning Teaching and the Student Experience.
4. RECOMMENDATIONS
   1. Members are recommended to:
      1. consider and note the progress to the 2023-2024 credit target;
      2. consider and note the indictive funding allocation for 2024-2025;
      3. note the industrial action scheduled to take place from 23 April 2024;
      4. note the update from the recent Education Scotland Care Thematic Review and upcoming Annual Engagement Visit information;
      5. note the work being undertaken by curriculum areas and alternative funding on Commercial Activity (Full cost recovery activity);
      6. note the business planning exercise underway to address financial savings; and
      7. note the QAA update.

**ANNEX 1**

*Table 2: Overall Curriculum Area Enrolments, Retention, Early and Further Withdrawals 23 April 2024*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Mode** | **No. of Enrolments** | **Early Withdrawals** | **%** | **No. of Further Withdrawals** | **%** | **Retention %** |
| Building Service Engineering | 418 | 4 | 0.96 | 13 | 3.11 | 95.93 |
| Built Environment | 448 | 38 | 8.48 | 39 | 8.71 | 82.81 |
| Business Management and Media and Accounts | 686 | 25 | 3.64 | 42 | 6.12 | 90.23 |
| Carpentry and Joinery | 365 | 2 | 0.55 | 3 | 0.82 | 98.63 |
| Early Education and Childcare | 481 | 11 | 2.29 | 38 | 7.9 | 89.81 |
| Hairdressing, Beauty and Make Up Artistry | 339 | 12 | 3.54 | 48 | 14.16 | 82.3 |
| Health and Social Care | 448 | 11 | 2.46 | 38 | 8.48 | 89.06 |
| Hospitality, Tourism, Legal and Police Studies | 318 | 22 | 6.92 | 49 | 15.41 | 77.67 |
| Learning Development | 425 | 6 | 1.41 | 24 | 5.65 | 92.94 |
| Life Sciences | 290 | 12 | 4.14 | 22 | 7.59 | 88.28 |
| Wet Trades | 345 | 2 | 0.58 | 4 | 1.16 | 98.26 |

**ANNEX 2**

**Curriculum Good News Stories**

**Minister’s Visit 12 March 2024**

Ms Natalie Don, Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping the Promise visited the College on the 12 March and met with two groups of HNC Childhood Practice students. A range of key sector issues were discussed during the session including the high importance Government placed on the provision of quality early years education. Ms Don emphasised the important role that Early Years Practitioners play and explained that she was delighted to be able to speak to our learners in person to express her personal and professional gratitude for the work that they are doing.

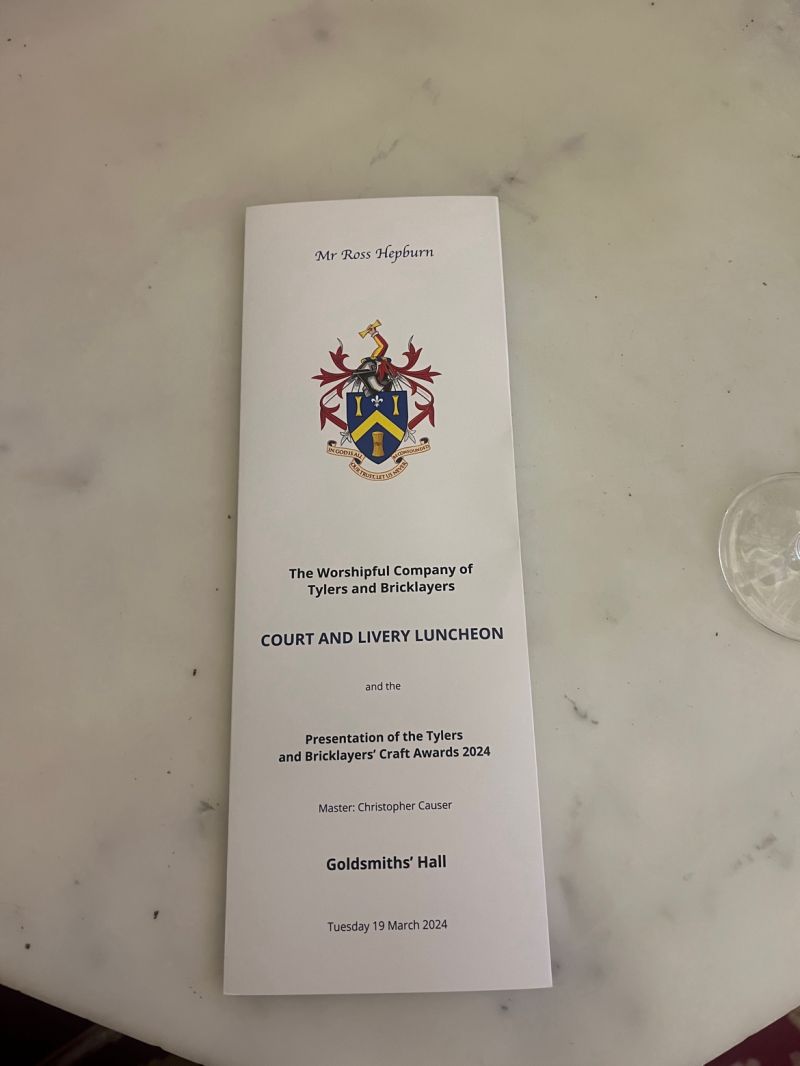
The Minister was interested in hearing about the student experience in college and in placement and was able to offer reassurance around matters such as funding for ‘1140 hours’ and changes in the way this may be delivered for children under three years. She also answered students’ questions on the disparity of salaries between local authority and private establishments and assured the students that Government are making progress under the Fair Work Policy, admitting they still have some way to go.

The college staff shared the work they are doing around the HN Next Gen Childhood Practice programme and their involvement as a Pilot Centre. Ms Don was very interested to hear about this work, and particularly the work around promoting the inclusion of a mandatory Additional Support Needs unit within the new framework. She agreed that this subject specialism is a hugely important one for Childcare Practitioners, especially within the current climate.

**Emma Rodick MSP Visits ESOL Students**

Staff members Pauline Heeley (Curriculum Manager Learning Development) and Mark Sheridan (Lecturer in ESOL) recently welcomed Emma Roddick MSP to the college.

As the Minister for Equalities, Migration, and Refugees, Emma Roddick joined the South Lanarkshire College ESOL class to observe lessons before leading a brief question and answer session with the groups. The Minister came to witness how English classes are aiding refugees and individuals seeking asylum. She spoke of the Scottish Government's  commitment to supporting those fleeing conflict and persecution, and how they intend to help them to rebuild their lives here. The students were highly engaged and expressed their gratitude to the Minister for her time.

**Roofing Students**

Roofing students were, once again, recognised for their achievement with third year student Fraser Cameron collecting one of the first ever bursary awards. Fraser received this award in London at the court and livery luncheon. In addition to this, 4 students have been chosen to participate in the Skill-build heats in Edinburgh and Newcastle. The heats are taking place at the end of June, and we wish them all well.

**Painting and Decorating Students**

Not to be outdone, the Painting and Decorating students swept the board at the recent CITB Painting and Decorating Apprentice of the Year awards including the overall apprentice of the year. Well done to everyone involved including the staff who supported the students.

The college will host this year’s Skill-plumb competition in partnership with SNIPEF. This will see apprentice plumbers from across the sector participating in the Scottish heat, with the winner(s) progressing onto the national finals later in the year.

**A group of people sitting in front of a building

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It is always good to hear from our external partners commenting on our students. Iain Mackenzie CEO New Lanark Heritage Centre. “I just thought I’d drop you a brief note to say that your students who have been at New Lanark all seem to be enjoying their time here and certainly the feedback I’ve received is all very positive. They all seem to be enthusiastic and getting on well with the staff here. Let’s keep it going”. This also resonates with the feedback from the staff and students who took part in the work experience.

A sign next to a train

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Over the Easter break, staff and students from the HNC Police studies programme took part in the training sessions held at Glasgow Queen Street Train Station. Both staff and students were able to participate in a number of scenarios that support the British Transport Police training requirements, whilst giving the students a great insight into what is required when dealing with the public across the rail and airport network.

**Annex 3**

**Formal Notification Letter of Strike Action from EIS-FELA**