# **logo_colourBOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

**Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee**

Wednesday 12 February 2025 at 5.00pm **Room K-TO-624, Kingsway Campus** (MS Teams option available)

Minute of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee meeting held on Wednesday 12 February 2025 at 5.00pm in Room K-TO-624 Kingsway campus and via Microsoft Teams.

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| **PRESENT:** | Neil Lowden | Kelly McIntosh |
|  | Laurie O’Donnell | Simon Hewitt |
|  | Helen Honeyman | Kara Ramsay |
|  | Stephen Oakley |  |

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| **IN ATTENDANCE:** | Steve Taylor (Vice Principal / Secretary to the Board) |
|  | Julie Grace (Vice Principal Curriculum and Partnerships) |
|  | Jane Roscoe & Steph Toms (Directors of Curriculum & Partnerships) |
|  | Penny Muir (Board Administrator) |

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|  | **WELCOME**  N Lowden welcomed everyone to the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee meeting. |
|  | **APOLOGIES**  Apologies received from Margo Williamson, Donna Fordyce, Adele Lawrence, Derek Smith, Leann Crichton, and Lee Lappin. |
|  | **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & CONNECTION**  There are no declarations of interest or connection. |
|  | **MINUTE OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** – 13 November 2024  The minute of the meeting held on Wednesday 13 November 2024 was approved as an accurate record.  H Honeyman noted that an action point for the performance of Building Services had been omitted. It was agreed that this concern will be captured as an action item and addressed at the next meeting. **S Toms/L Lappin to progress.** |
|  | **MATTERS ARISING**   * 1. **Behaviour Management Progress Update**   J Roscoe highlighted the various strands of development and noted the range of CPD events undertaken on Staff Development Day to inform practice and support staff. This included practical training led by the Access & Supported Education Team and the Learner & Community Engagement Team, focused on behaviour strategies and their practical application. Feedback from these sessions had been positive, with staff expressing interest in further sessions.  J Roscoe also noted work progressing with the Colleges Development Network (CDN) on the changing learners programme, including two presentations on how learners have evolved post-COVID, with a focus on trauma-informed practices.  J Roscoe stated that in January 2025, L Lappin and the Learner & Community Engagement Team had supported work on positive masculinity focused on mental health issues, neurodiversity and the use of tools to manage learning challenges across the College, including the introduction of physical activity sessions.  The group tutor role was highlighted as highly valued, with a survey conducted to gather insights. Ongoing work is being carried out with EIS around the Development Review process to further enhance the benefits. Drop-in sessions with group tutors are also being examined to understand their effectiveness to build and enhance their impact.  J Roscoe also highlighted the CDN diagnostic tool, which focused on five key features. This tool identifies existing resources used in the College. Staff engagement sessions are scheduled for March 18th and 19th to further develop awareness.  A pilot programme: Submission Squad, is underway to address the extension submission rate by improving communications to students and encouraging timely submissions.  There is an ongoing review of the charter and support packs for group tutors, aimed at better utilising the charter to create and build more significant impact. While progress is being made, more can be done in this area, including reminding/refreshing awareness of the charter.  N Lowden enquired about the collection of baseline data to obtain solid, actionable information. It was acknowledged that this was difficult as there was no direct measure of impact. J Grace noted visible trends in the data, particularly related to student withdrawals, and emphasised the importance of raising questions based on these observations.  N Lowden thanked J Roscoe for the report.   * 1. **NQ Review Overview (Highers improvement)**   S Toms presented the paper, highlighting the distinction between completion and attainment rates, with the attainment rate aligning with those of other FE colleges. S Toms emphasised that withdrawals remain a significant challenge, heavily impacting the college’s overall outcomes for part-time FE level programmes. Additional data collection and further efforts are underway to better understand and address this issue.  It was noted that NQ qualifications are valued within the community, particularly for those undertaken these qualifications that are aged 20 and above. S Toms expressed concern regarding the need to ensure that both staff and students have adequate access to these courses.  S Toms highlighted that actions have already been initiated to improve outcomes, including a more thorough examination of data and ongoing discussions during “Stop and Reflect” sessions. These discussions also include reviewing recruitment practices and informing students about the withdrawal process to reduce withdrawal rates and maximise retention.  S Toms noted the College has discontinued the delivery of Nat 5 Application of Mathematics due to low enrolment numbers. K McIntosh noted an increase in Nat 5 Application of Mathematics enrolment in schools and raised concerns about how universities handle this qualification and its impact on students who need it for admission.  S Toms confirmed that some universities have agreed to accept alternative level 5 qualifications, but challenges remain.  L O’Donnell noted the value of the NQ offer despite the challenges in terms of pass rates and noted that the focus should be on recruiting students who have a fair chance of passing and investing more in intensive support for students. Discussions included the use of pre-testing to ensure students are adequately prepared.  S Toms commented on the demographic challenges, noting that some students have been out of education for some time, making it difficult to judge readiness. However, teams are highly invested in student success, particularly in English and Mathematics. These teams are committed to doing more to support students, and there have been positive discussions and strong engagement on this topic.  K McIntosh noted the benefit of intensive revision courses and the potential use of Scholar to support this. S Toms agreed that this was worth investigating further  H Honeyman enquired whether the impact on potential pathways through apprenticeships and employment have been explored in relation to Nat 5 match, as this was sometimes a requirement to gain the apprenticeship place and job opportunity. J Grace noted that modern apprenticeships offer alternative qualifications to Nat 5, such as SCQF Level 5 qualifications. These courses can be started at any time and offer continuous access, potentially providing more flexible pathways for students.  N Lowden requested the removal of the term "declining" from the paper and thanked S Toms for the update. |
|  | **CURRICULUM REPORT – ABERTAY AND D&A TRANSITIONS ENHANCEMENT PROJECT**  J Roscoe provided an update on STEP (Scotland’s Tertiary Enhancement Programme), which follows a 4-year cycle aimed at fostering quality collaboration between colleges and universities through joint projects. The programme emphasises teamwork and networking, with the first discovery day focusing on exploring diverse pathways. The goal is for all participating institutions to collaborate on defined projects, with an emphasis on creating a sense of belonging for students.  STEP is managed through three key groups: the Steering Group, the Topic Leadership Group, and the Network group. Institutions involved in the programme have had the opportunity to contribute, learn, and have an impact on student success.  J Roscoe stated this initiative has brought together Dundee and Angus College and Abertay University to explore ways of better supporting student success as they prepare for transition. J Roscoe raised a critical question regarding student success: should the focus be on institutional deficits, or should it be on reviewing systematic procedures, particularly in the area of student transitions?  J Roscoe highlighted that Abertay University hosted the first session, which brought together key partners and staff, united by a shared ambition for student success. The session focused on identifying challenges and obstacles, and efforts were made to pinpoint and address these blockers to enhance student success.  The first session, held from October to January 2025, explored what could be done to make a difference. The second session involved sharing experiences and identifying strategies such as adjusting start dates, ensuring students receive SAAS payments before matriculating at Abertay, and enhancing communication with the right stakeholders.  Numerous valuable insights were uncovered during these discussions, including enhancing support for staff and students regarding additional funding and placing schemes, shared recruitment approaches, and the integration of meta-skills and AI.  J Roscoe highlighted a mentoring project designed to support the additional funded place students, which will begin in Spring 2025 and continue for three years, aiming to sustain and build upon the lessons learned through the programme.  Looking ahead, future plans include a shared staff development event scheduled for June 2025, a joint publication, and a QAA discovery event workshop in May.  K Ramsay acknowledged the programme as being highly beneficial for future students and noted the input of A Lawrence as the student representative on the STEP project..  L O’Donnell enquired about the nature of the relationships with Abertay University. J Roscoe described the relationship as more collaborative than competitive, noting that the programme values the contribution of the College and the joint responsibility for student success.  S Hewitt stressed the importance of maintaining a realistic approach to ensure the work remains valuable to students while acknowledging the challenges involved, with careful consideration of Abertay University’s future strategy and potential competition remains a critical aspect of the process.  K McIntosh recognised the need for balance between support and potential competition for students, recognising that Abertay was the college’s largest articulation partner.  N Lowden welcomed the presentation and update. |
|  | **STUDENTS’ ASSOCIATION REPORT**  K Ramsay provided an update on recruitment, noting that 248 class representatives have been appointed, with 200 of them having completed training.  Feedback from class reps highlighted a demand for more inclusive events, additional clubs, and more spaces for students to feel engaged and involved. These asks were being progressed.  The Thrive breakfast clubs, which are held up to three times a week, have been well attended. Additionally, the Christmas Box Appeal was a success, with DASA providing 50 bags filled with wellbeing and festive goodies for students.  K Ramsay reported that DASA received an invitation to nominate a student for participation in Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP), which involves a collaboration initiative with Abertay University, with Adele Lawrence taking up this role.  N Lowden expressed appreciation for the connections made and the work presented in the report, noting a positive feeling about seeing this work firsthand. |
|  | **AUTUMN 2024 LEARNER SURVEY REPORT**  S Taylor reported a positive increase in engagement, particularly over the course of the past calendar year. The total responses had increased by around 350 to over 3.5k, with a notable rise in the satisfaction rate and in the volume of comments received. The satisfaction rate increased by 2%, reaching an overall figure of 90%.  The survey results were also broken down across different teams and courses, with satisfaction scores ranging between 86% and 94%, all reflecting positive feedback. Satisfaction with staff was particularly high at 92%.  The number of comments received increased, offering valuable insights into both the scores and the underlying reasons, providing a clearer understanding of student feedback. This data, particularly when utilised by teams for improvement and reflection, adds significant value. The use of this data is regularly discussed during "Stop and Reflect" sessions.  K McIntosh enquired about the range of questions under the various headings.  S Taylor explained that the questions were high level rather than detailed and designed to assess how individuals felt at the time of the survey, with the number of questions kept to a minimum. The first survey looked at how students were settling in, their early experience and a range of services, with the spring survey focusing more on learner and teaching surveys. It was noted that whole-college surveys were part of a larger feedback process.  Other student survey arrangements and approaches were discussed, including alignment with the Students’ Association Feedback Friday activities.  H Honeyman observed that one of the most common responses to the question about what could be done better was ‘nothing’ and noted that this in itself weas very positive feedback.  S Oakley noted the lower response rate for Access and Supported Education students and asked whether the format was accessible. It was noted that the format had been reviewed by a group to improve accessibility, with sessions being facilitated in a focus group style. The number of participants in these sessions had decreased, however, other approaches were being discussed to ensure that these students could engage.  N Lowden expressed concern about avoiding disproportionate numbers in the data representation. However, J Grace emphasised the importance of focusing on the qualitative comments from students rather than relying solely on numerical data or league tables.  L O'Donnell suggested that including numbers could be beneficial, though it was agreed that the focus should remain on the value of the feedback.  S Hewitt stated that the level of support and evaluation was ongoing and highlighted that this initiative was one of many efforts to generate and assess feedback.  L O'Donnell acknowledged the work of the team, emphasising the value of the survey results.  S Hewitt reiterated the importance of recognising the Directors' efforts, noting the team's strong investment in gathering and acting on feedback, and suggested that more feedback could help drive further improvements.  N Lowden expressed gratitude to everyone involved in the survey. |
|  | **NEW SECTOR QUALITY ARRANGEMENTS – SELF EVALUATION AND ACTION PLAN (SEAP)**  S Taylor provided an overview of the position and role of Self Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP) within the new tertiary quality arrangements, emphasising that SEAP is a core component of the tertiary quality framework.  He stated the document is designed to summarise the college’s current state and inform continuous improvement. The SEAP content is structured around key elements of the quality framework, including data utilisation and the SEAP will evolve annually as part of a reflective review process, with new actions and areas for improvement added each year.  S Taylor stated this is the first iteration of SEAP and similar documents have been produced by all colleges and universities, with variations across institutions. No feedback has been received yet, but input is expected soon from the Funding Council, QAA, and Education Scotland.  S Taylor emphasised that the action plans and key steps have been fully outlined, highlighting the importance of collaboration with the Students’ Association in the drafting of the SEAP content on student partnership.  H Honeyman noted the range of actions and asked if these were feasible alongside everything else taking place across the college. S Taylor confirmed that the SEAP outlines active improvements, with some actions requiring longer timeframes (e.g. two to three years) but that all of the actions were live areas of development and improvement. He noted that the SEAP will be a rolling reflection and enhancement tool, reviewed annually to monitor progress.  K McIntosh highlighted the alignment of SEAP with the curriculum’s operational plan, noting the importance of presenting it in an accessible format. S Taylor emphasised that SEAP fits into the broader quality arrangements across the college and sector. . S Taylor confirmed that the approach and arrangements were different from the school quality improvement arrangements and reporting.  S Hewitt noted that this was the start of the new quality arrangements and that further discussions to ensure that the SEAP evolves into a more meaningful, action-focused tool that supports identification and continuous improvement were planned at a sector level.  S Taylor noted the uncertainty around the approach to be taken by QAA but stressed that the document must hold value for the college, not just be a report for others. Ongoing work will focus on embedding SEAP effectively and reflecting its impact at team level.  S Taylor will report back on feedback from the QAA, the Scottish Funding Council and Education Scotland once received. **S Taylor to progress.**  N Lowden expressed gratitude to S Taylor for the report and the progress achieved. |
|  | **CURRICULUM & PARTNERSHIPS REPORT**  J Grace provided a reflection on recent activities, noting positive outcomes in recruitment and retention, particularly within the full-time portfolio. A whole-college approach to retention is being implemented, with collective efforts focused on re-engaging students. The recent open day was highlighted as a particularly positive event.  Partnership working continues to be beneficial, with ESOL programmes serving as a strong example. Offsite programs were also emphasised for creating nurturing environments, with the physical surroundings having a significant positive impact on how students feel about their education.  Celebrations of success at national awards were also highlighted.  N Lowden congratulated those involved on the national awards, noting that it was great to see such recognition. |
|  | **STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER**  S Taylor explained that while there are no changes to the identified risks, updates have been made to the scoring as a result of revisions to the risk management policy. These changes were still to be discussed and agreed upon through the Audit & Risk (A&R) Committee.  N Lowden enquired about enrolment numbers and related factors, asking whether there has been a statistical decline and if this should be taken into consideration.  J Grace confirmed a gradual decline in line with regional demographics. This wasn’t expressed as a single risk at the strategic level but was included within the risk around meeting regional need.  The changes were approved. |
|  | **LT&Q METRICS**  S Taylor provided the update for information and noting.  Regarding the discussion under the previous item and the final metrics on the credit target, S Taylor reported that the college is close to achieving its credit target for the year and expressed no concerns about meeting the target. |
|  | **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**  Wednesday 14 May 2025 at 5.00pm in room K-TO-624, Kingsway Campus |

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| **Action Point Summary** |  |  |
| **Action** | **Responsibility** | **Date** |
| Share feedback received on the SEAP document once available | S Taylor | 14 May 2025 |