



REGIONAL BOARD MEETING

Tuesday 17 June 2025 1045hrs
M102, Altens Campus

REGIONAL BOARD

NOTICE OF MEETING

There will be a meeting of the Regional Board of North East Scotland College on Tuesday 17 June 2025 at 1045 in M102 at Altens Campus

AGENDA

Agenda Item		Paper
71-24	Apologies for Absence (S Elston)	
72-24	Declaration of any Potential Conflicts of Interest in Relation to Any Agenda Items (S Elston)	
73-24	Minute of the Previous Meeting (25/03/25) (S Elston)	X
74-24	Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting (25/03/25) (S Elston)	X
	Reserved Presentation(s)	
75-24	ASET Update (J Reid to attend at 1050)	
	Reserved Matters for Decision	
76-24	Financial Budget 2024-25 and Capital Plan (S Thompson)	X
77-24	Financial and Capital Budget 2025-26 (S Thompson)	X
78-24	5-Year Scenario Planning Document (S Thompson)	X
	Matters for Decision	
79-24	Schedule of Meetings AY2025-26 (S Elston)	X
80-24	Strategic Risk Register (S Thompson)	X
81-24	Strategic Plan (R McGregor/R Laird)	x
	Matters for Discussion	
82-24	Graduations 2025 (N Cowie) <i>paper on behalf of P Smith</i>	X
83-24	Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (R McGregor)	X
	Reserved Matters for Information	
84-24	Quality Investigation Update: Altens Engineering team (R McGregor)	verbal
85-24	Credit Activity Update and Forecast (R McGregor)	X
86-24	ETSH Update (<i>Susan G to update Board Members during tour</i>) – <i>paper available for viewing</i>	X
	Matters for Information	
87-24	Quality Activity Interim Update (R McGregor)	X
88-24	ASET Risk Register (S Thompson)	X
89-24	SFC Financial Forecast Return (FFR) (S Thompson)	X
90-24	SFC Funding (S Thompson)	X
	Reports to the Board	
91-24	Report by the Regional Chair (S Elston)	X
92-24	Report by the Principal (N Cowie)	X
93-24	Report by Committee Chairs (S Elston)	X
94-24	Any Other Business	
95-25	Summation of Actions and Date of Next Meeting	
	Private Reserved Matter for Information	
96-24	Update to Principals' Performance Management Objectives (S Elston)	X



Agenda Item 73-24

REGIONAL BOARD

NOTE OF MEETING

DRAFT Minute of the Meeting of the Regional Board of North East Scotland College, held on Tuesday 25 March 2025 at 1000hrs in the Boardroom of Fraserburgh Campus.

Present:

Susan Elston, Regional Chair
Sheena Ross
Caroline Laurenson
David Blackhall
David Anderson
Cindy Dempster
Neil Cowie
Ellie Zemani
Gerry Lawrie
Ewan Rattray
Viktorija Nikitina
Emma MacIsaac
Averil Watt

In Attendance:

Stuart Thompson, Vice Principal, Finance & Resources
Lorraine Garden, Acting Secretary to the Board
Maureen McLean, Minute Secretary

Guest Attendees:

Alesia du Plessis, Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Student Experience
Gwen Watt, Head of Student Support and Engagement
Robert Laird, Head of Planning and Academic Partnerships
Susan Grant, Strategic Lead, Energy Transitions
Linda Taylor, Assistant Principal, Student Services

Regional Chair, S Elston welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

Agenda Item	
45-24	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received in advance from B Hutcheson, M Fotheringham, J Gifford, I Watt, D Cockburn, R McGregor and S Lawrance. L McDermid was not in attendance.
46-24	Declaration of any Potential Conflicts of Interest in relation to any Agenda Items There were no declared potential conflicts of interest raised.
47-24	Minutes of Previous Meeting (11/12/2024) The Minute of the previous meeting was approved as a true and accurate record.
48-24	Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting Members noted the Matters Arising report.
	Reserved Matter for Discussion

49-24	<p>Summary/Overview of Quality Assurance Issue (A du Plessis)</p>
	Matters for Decision
50-24	<p>Equalities Mainstreaming Report (G Watt joined the meeting for this item only) Members considered and reviewed the Equalities Mainstreaming Report for AY25-29, tabled for approval.</p> <p>G Watt provided a brief update on AY21-25 Outcomes highlighting key points and achievements. A full report, Members noted, is available on the College Intranet.</p> <p>The 4 new Equalities Outcomes detailed below were highlighted:</p> <p>EO1: Men's mental health – for both staff & students, Bespoke RESPECT campaign, improve training and participate in national campaign - short to medium term priority.</p> <p>EO2: Students only – increase in demand for mental health support services noted, coupled with the need to look at long term solutions. Wellbeing advisers are currently assisting with referral cases. All staff will receive CPD training in June 2025 as part of Trauma Informed College support.</p> <p>EO3: Race - this is a long-term goal for both staff and students. The new Student Records system will provide a greater understanding of student data.</p> <p>EO4: Care-experienced learners – data shows a 5% decrease in success for these learners. Ongoing Partnership Working with Social Work Services regarding current guidance and support highlighted.</p> <p>The next step to have a fully designed report published by 30 April 2025 was noted.</p> <p>Discussion followed on improving baseline data which is being reviewed during the enrolment period to help understand existing barriers and how to overcome them. Members noted the ongoing Strategic Leadership Team work regarding improving quality data gathering.</p> <p>Dialogue regarding disadvantaged students and the current opportunities available, including the strong partnerships with Aberdeen Foyer, King's Trust.</p> <p>Information regarding ongoing work regarding dis-engagement and the model to co-support learners from Secondary Schools being explored was shared with Members.</p> <p>S Elston thanked G Watt for presenting a full Report for consideration and all members</p>

	<p>agreed to approve this proposal.</p> <p>Decision - Approved</p>
51-24	<p>Governance Manual – Annual Review (S Elston)</p> <p>S Elston presented this item on behalf of S Lawrance. Members were directed to the various updates and changes applied within Appendix 1.</p> <p>A query was raised in relation to a potential conflict with the Remunerations Committee and the Chairs Committee. S Elston advised no conflict exists.</p> <p>Decision - Approved</p>
52-24	<p>Regional Board Succession/Office Bearer Positions (S Elston)</p> <p>Reference was made to the 15/01/25 Governance & Nominations Committee Meeting where Succession and Office Bearers were discussed. Members were tasked with noting the vacancies and continuations identified, and approval of E Ratray as Vice Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee.</p> <p>S Elston acknowledged this as being D Anderon's last meeting and thanked him for being part of the Regional Board for the past 10 years.</p> <p>It was suggested that secondment posts are increased to a period of 2 years. This was agreed by members.</p> <p>The Skills Matrix was reviewed, with Members noting the need to fill the skills gap in relation to finance. Any suggestions for potential Board members are encouraged to get in touch with S Elston.</p> <p>Members approved the recommendation that E Ratray become Vice Chair of F&R Committee.</p> <p>Decision – E Ratray approved as Vice Chair of the F&R Committee Decision – Secondment post duration to be increased to a 2-year period</p>
	Matters for Discussion
53-24	<p>Strategic Plan Update (R Laird)</p> <p>R Laird shared a presentation with Members providing an update on the Strategic Plan for AY25-30.</p> <p>This plan has been developed in conjunction with R Laird, R McGregor & P Smith with a summary of decisions and consultations to date forming part of the overview presented. Members were informed of the plan detail noting the requirement for the use of clear language, the plan format consisting of 5 core objectives and the formation of 6 sub-strategies of high-level areas. Each sub-strategy will be led-on by members of the Strategic Leadership Team with themes cutting across many of the strategies.</p> <p>The inclusive way this plan has been produced was observed with N Cowie endorsing this approach, thanking R Laird for his input.</p> <p>S Elston acknowledged the approach highlighting this method demonstrates the new way to do things and something that fits for NESCol.</p> <p>Discussion followed on the community aspect, the staff experience and retention, the social impact, performance measures, growth, values and the suggestion to use 'we are' as inclusive wording.</p>
	Reserved Matters for Discussion
54-24	<p>ETSH Update (S Grant) (S Grant joined the meeting)</p>

55-24	AY2024/25 Budget and Funding (S Thompson)

56-24	25/26 Budget (S Thompson)
57-24	5-Year Plan (S Thompson)
58-24	ASET Update (S Thompson)
59-24	Data Management System Update (L Taylor)

60-24	Strategic Leadership Team Update (ET)
	Reports to the Board
61-24	<p>Report by the Regional Chair (S Elston) S Elston summarised the key messages contained in the Report.</p> <p>New governance model within Colleges Scotland to streamline Board membership are being put in place.</p> <p>Colleges Employers Scotland – aim for more collaborative environment with Trade Unions, much better meetings and more positive. There is a focus is on closing out issues that have not been dealt with. Aim is to have support Staff pay negotiations deal to be closed by the end of this AY.</p> <p>Upcoming CDN meeting will overview the sector and what's next.</p> <p>Community Planning will look at improvement plans and next stages.</p>
62-24	<p>Report by the Principal (N Cowie) N Cowie highlighted the key takeaways from his submitted Report.</p> <p>British Council – support for Scottish Government and ways to assist the College sector will be discussed further with the Strategic Leadership Team.</p> <p>Extraordinary CPG meeting – waiting for SFC funding announcement on new funding model</p>
63-24	<p>Report by Committee Chairs Members noted the Report by the Committee Chairs, with Chairs from the A&R, F&R, C&Q and HR Committees invited to highlight the salient points from Meetings held.</p> <p>S Elston provided an update of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 26th February 2025 on key points provided by J Gifford who highlighted discussions on the Risk Registers for both the College and ASET, noting the intention to have the ASET Register reviewed to align more closely with the College format.</p> <p>Members noted the A&R Committee's agreement, after discussion, on the proposed Internal Audit Plans for next year and the following years.</p> <p>HR Committee update noted the enhancement plan, the update on reporting by the HR Group and on Committee evaluation feedback.</p> <p>The F&R Committee update recognised the positive paper in relation to the loss to profit surplus last year and lessons learned.</p>
	Matters for Information
64-24	Strategic Risk Register (S Thompson)

	Members noted the Register was discussed by the Audit and Risk Committee at their recent meeting (26.02.25) when the new risk was agreed. Members were invited to note the information pertaining to the risks and agreed risk scores. An update on Job Evaluation was also provided by S Thompson.
65-24	Indicative Funding Allocation AY2025/26 (S Thompson) S Thompson provided a verbal update on the anticipated funding allocation for the new academic year. Members were asked to note the summarised information.
66-24	PREVENT Annual Report (A du Plessis) A du Plessis detailed work undertaken in order to meet NESCol's Prevent Duty responsibilities. Relaunch of PREVENT will be activated once new changes implemented
	Reserved Matters for Information
67-24	Credit Activity Update and Forecast (R Laird)
68-24	Opportunities Register (S Thompson)
69-24	Any Other Business N Cowie informed members of the impact of the Strategic Leadership Team and recent activity, observing the team is in a better place than 5 years ago and feels the College is doing some fantastic work which is shared via good news stories. The Credit Activity provided by R Laird is a great piece of work and this achievement has been recognised.
70-24	Summation of Actions and Date of Next Meeting L Garden provided a summary of the identified actions and confirmed the extra Regional Board Meeting called for Thursday 10 April 2025 at 1030hrs via Teams, and the next in-person Meeting on Tuesday 17 June 2025 at 1000hrs at City Campus. Members noted a possible change of venue to Altens Campus for this, to accommodate the showcasing of the ETSH and the outreach vehicle.



Agenda Item 74-24

REGIONAL BOARD

An update on matters arising from the meeting of the Regional Board of North East Scotland College held on Tuesday 25 March 2025.

Agenda Item	
	There are no matters arising from the March Regional Board Meeting.

Schedule of Meetings Academic Year 2025-26 **DRAFT**

Agenda Item 79-24

Strategy Events

Date	Time	
Mid November (Wed 19th)	TBC	Venue TBC

Regional Board Meetings

Date	Time	In Person:
Wednesday 01 October 2025	1000 hours	G10, Aberdeen City Campus
Wednesday 10 December 2025	1000 hours	M102, Aberdeen Altens Campus
Wednesday 18 March 2026	1000 hours	Boardroom, Fraserburgh Campus
Wednesday 17 June 2026	1000 hours	G10, Aberdeen City Campus

Audit & Risk Committee Meetings

Date	Time	
Wednesday 10 September 2025	1000 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams
*Wednesday 26 November 2025	1000 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams
Wednesday 25 February 2026	1000 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams
Wednesday 27 May 2025	1000 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams

Curriculum & Quality Committee Meetings

Date	Time	
Thursday 27 November 2025	1000 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams
Wednesday 18 February 2026	1000 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams
Wednesday 20 May 2026	1000 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams

Finance & Resources Committee Meetings

Date	Time	
Wednesday 10 September 2025	1400 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams
*Wednesday 26 November 2025	1200 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams
Wednesday 18 February 2026	1400 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams
Wednesday 27 May 2026	1400 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams

Human Resources Committee Meetings

Date	Time	
Wednesday 24 September 2025	1300 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams
Wednesday 04 February 2026	1300 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams
Wednesday 20 May 2026	1300 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams

Annual Chairs Meeting		
Date	Time	
Wednesday 17 June 2026	1 300 hours	Boardroom, Fraserburgh Campus

Governance and Nominations Committee Meetings		
Date	Time	
Wednesday 3 September 2025	1 400 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams
Thursday 27 November 2025	1 400 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams
Wednesday 25 February 2026	1 600 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams
Wednesday 20 May 2026	1 600 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams

**The Audit & Risk Committee and Finance & Resources Committee will jointly consider the College's Financial Statements*

Programme of Meetings - Academic Year 2025-26

Month	Date	Meeting	Time	Venue
2025				
September	03	Governance & Nominations	1400 hours	Virtual
	10	Audit & Risk Committee	1000 hours	Virtual
	10	Finance & Resource Committee	1400 hours	Virtual
	24	Human Resource Committee	1300 hours	Virtual
October	08	Regional Board Meeting	1000 hours	G10 Aberdeen City Campus
	13-24	October Break		
November	19	Strategy Event	TBC	TBC
	26	Audit & Risk Committee*	1000 hours	Virtual
	26	Finance & Resources Committee*	1100 hours	Virtual
	27	Curriculum & Quality Committee	1000 hours	Virtual
	27	Governance & Nominations	1400 hours	Virtual
December	10	Regional Board Meeting	1000 hours	M102 Aberdeen Altens Campus
2026				
January				
February	04	Human Resources Committee	1300 hours	Virtual
	18	Curriculum & Quality Committee	1000 hours	Virtual
	18	Finance & Resources Committee	1400 hours	Virtual
	25	Audit & Risk Committee	1000 hours	Virtual
	25	Governance & Nominations	1600 hours	Virtual
March	18	Regional Board Meeting	1000 hours	Boardroom, Fraserburgh Campus

March/April	30-10	Spring Break		
April	22	Strategy Event	TBC	TBC
May	20	Curriculum & Quality Committee	1000 hours	Virtual
	20	Human Resources Committee	1300 hours	Virtual
	20	Governance & Nominations	1600 hours	Virtual
	27	Audit & Risk Committee	1000 hours	Virtual
	27	Finance & Resources Committee	1400 hours	Virtual
June	17	Regional Board Meeting	1000 hours	G10 Aberdeen City Campus
	17	Annual Chairs Meeting	1300 hours	
July				
August				

**The Audit & Risk Committee and Finance & Resources Committee will jointly consider the College's Financial Statements*

REGIONAL BOARD Meeting of 17 June 2025	
Title: Strategic Risk Register Update	
Author: Stuart Thompson Vice Principal Finance & Resources	Contributor(s): Executive Team
Type of Agenda Item: For Decision <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> For Information <input type="checkbox"/> Reserved Item of Business <input type="checkbox"/>	
Purpose: To enable the Board to review and agreed the updated Strategic Risk Register.	
Linked to Strategic Theme: 5. Leading Sustainability	
Linked to Strategic Risk(s): 5.2 1.5; 5.1; 5.2; 5.5	
Executive Summary: The Audit & Risk Committee met on the 28 th May 2025, discussed and agreed the following paper.	
Recommendation: It is recommended the Board to review and agree the Strategic Risk Register.	
Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable): N/A	
Equality Impact Assessment: Positive Impact <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Impact <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evidence: This report is for information only.	

AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE	
Meeting of 28 May 2025	
Title: Strategic Risk Register Update	
Author: S Thompson, Vice Principal – Finance and Resources	Contributor(s): Strategic Leadership Team
Type of Agenda Item: For Decision <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> For Information <input type="checkbox"/> Reserved Item of Business <input type="checkbox"/>	
Purpose: To enable the Committee to discuss and agree the updated strategic risk register.	
Linked to Strategic Theme: 5. Leading Sustainability	
Linked to Strategic Risk(s): n/a	
Executive Summary: The attached strategic risk register was discussed and agreed by the College Strategic Leadership Team.	
Main Points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to the previous risk scores are highlighted in yellow. • Risk mitigations are included for the changes and red risks. • There are currently no red risks • The risk scoring guide is included. • Each risk is owned by a member of the College Executive Team. • The College Strategic Leadership Team continue to review the strategic risk register once a month and incorporate any relevant changes. 	

Risk Changes

- **4.1** increased Likelihood from 3 to 4 to reflect impact of the removal of the specific funding for counsellors and wellbeing. The funding has expired with limited carry forward to 2025-26 therefore the challenge and impact in 2025-26 will be greater. We are currently planning the 2025-26 delivery balancing student and staff need in an affordable service.

SLT discussion with no change

6.1 Discussed the current score of the risk specifically reflecting on the ongoing malpractice of student assessments and results for Engineering students at the Altens campus. The College has continued to inform stakeholders and have seen limited media enquiries. We have managed to minimise the risk of damage to the College reputation. We recently received the SQA outcome letter which was fair, accepted our proactive actions and did not include any sanction or penalty to the College.

The outcome was the current score is fair reflection of this risk

SLT discussed the impact and risks to the College following the recent court case, ruling and further guidance on gender recognition especially around toilets and changing spaces. Although this a risk and further work is required to review our facilities and potential changes,

The outcome was that this risk is currently effectively being mitigated and does not require escalation to the main strategic risk register.

Recommendation: Agree the risks and risk scores.

Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable): n/a

Equality Impact Assessment:

Positive Impact ☐

Negative Impact ☐

No Impact ☒

Evidence:

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND COLLEGE STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER									
Ref	Objectives and Risks	Risk Owner	Current Likelihood (1 - 5)	Current Impact (1 - 5)	Current Rating (max=25)	Target Likelihood (1 - 5)	Target Impact (1 - 5)	Target Total (max=25)	Prev
1	Strategic Goal 1: Deliver high quality, accessible and inclusive learning and training opportunities, which transform lives and which support the economic and social development of our region. Risk Appetite - Cautious								
1.1	Failure to deliver future skills needs of the region & contributing to regional and national economic growth	VP C&Q	3	4	12	3	3	9	
1.2	Financial pressures causing continued staff reductions negatively impacting on training provision; quality assurance; assessing.	VP C&Q	3	3	9	2	3	6	
1.3	Financial pressures may cause reduced curriculum range, choice and opportunity to the region.	VP C&Q	3	3	9	2	3	6	
2	Strategic Goal 2: Develop the skills, talents and potential of all of the people who come to college either to learn or to work. Risk Appetite - Cautious								
2.1	Unable to recruit, retain and develop appropriately qualified staff, adversely impacting on the learner experience, curriculum delivery and development	Principal	4	3	12	2	2	4	
2.2	If the College fails to adapt quickly and flexibly to changing demands, may not meet delivery targets	VP C&Q	3	4	12	2	2	4	
2.3	If the college fails to improve attainment within identified areas of curriculum then fewer students will go on to positive destinations within work or HE.	VP C&Q	3	3	9	1	2	2	
3	Strategic Goal 3: Work with our partners to deliver positive and sustainable change for the individuals, communities and businesses in our region. Risk Appetite - Open								
3.1	If the College does not successfully engage with employers and other key stakeholders, THEN we will not be able to identify and meet their needs	VP C&Q	3	3	9	2	2	4	
3.2	If the College does not work closely with Local Authorities and Schools, THEN effective learner pathways will not be delivered throughout the region	VP C&Q	3	3	9	1	3	3	
3.3	If competition between the College and University sector continues to intensify then FT HE student recruitment will be negatively impacted	VP C&Q	4	4	16	3	3	9	
4	Strategic Goal 4: Deliver an excellent learning environment and experience leading to successful outcomes for all learners. Risk Appetite - Cautious								
4.1	If the SFC fails to provide adequate funding for counsellors and other targeted health and wellbeing support then student outcomes and experiences will decline.	VP C&Q	4	4	16	2	3	6	3
4.2	IF student outcomes do not improve where required, then reputation and future student recruitment may be negatively impacted.	VP C&Q	3	3	9	2	3	6	
4.3	Insufficient funding to maintain modern fit-for-purpose buildings, infrastructure and equipment negatively impacting the quality of the student experience	VP F&R	3	4	12	2	3	6	
5	Strategic Goal 5: Optimise the use of our available resources to deliver financial and environmental sustainability. Risk Appetite - Averse								
5.1	Funding and increasing cost pressures will reduce the College's ability to achieve a balanced budget and challenge future sustainability	VP F&R	4	4	16	3	4	12	
5.2	If the College fails to achieve planned activity targets then the SFC may clawback funding increasing the financial sustainability challenge	VP C&Q	2	3	6	2	3	6	
5.3	IF ASET do not grow at sufficient rates THEN gift aid will not meet budgeted levels.	VP F&R	4	4	16	3	2	6	
5.4	SG / SFC do not fully fund the cost of implementing the support staff national job evaluation exercise. The estimated national cost is £1m per month back dated to 1st Sept 2018. Current NESCol estimated cost £4.3m.	VP F&R	3	4	12	2	3	6	
6	Other. Risk Appetite - Averse								
6.1	IF staff do not adhere to key statutory obligations and legislative requirements THEN the College may face significant financial penalties and/or reputational damage may occur	Principal	4	3	12	1	3	3	
6.2	IF the College is the victim of a cyber attack THEN the College may experience IT systems outages and/or data security breaches, both resulting in significant business disruption	VP F&R	2	4	8	2	3	6	
6.3	New Energy Transition Skills Hub does not meet the College or economic needs and is not financially sustainable	VP F&R	3	4	12	3	3	9	
PROPOSED SCORE CHANGES					SCORES	0-7	9-19	>19	

5x5 Risk Matrix Scoring Guide

Impact

How severe would the outcome be if the risk occurred?

Probability
What is the probability the risk will happen?

	Insignificant 1	Minor 2	Significant 3	Major 4	Severe 5
5 Almost Certain	Medium 5	High 10	Very high 15	Extreme 20	Extreme 25
4 Likely	Medium 4	Medium 8	High 12	Very high 16	Extreme 20
3 Moderate	Low 3	Medium 6	Medium 9	High 12	Very high 15
2 Unlikely	Very low 2	Low 4	Medium 6	Medium 8	High 10
1 Rare	Very low 1	Very low 2	Low 3	Medium 4	Medium 5

Score	Description of Impact	Reputational	Financial	Operational	External
5	Catastrophic	Sustained national media interest Significant Public reaction (outcry)	Over £1,000,000 impact now or within 12 months in the future Any suspected serious fraud	Significant impact on achievement of strategy or operational activities. Affecting more than 5% of a business units' customers or staff Total failure of a supplier / partner Loss of ability to sustain ongoing operation resulting in cessation of activities at business unit level for more than 24 hours	Significant stakeholder and regulatory concern
4	Major	Regional/national media interest Any event which may affect our standing with regulators Significant loss of confidence	£250,001 - £1.000,000 where impact now or 12 months in future Any suspected fraud	Significant impact on achievement of strategy or operational activities Affecting up to 5% of a business units' customers or staff Partial failure of a supplier / partner Operational or system failure for up to 24 hours	Significant stakeholder concern
3	Moderate	Regional media interest Any event which may tarnish our reputation with a specific customer, group or third party	£50,001- £250,000 where impact now or 12 months in future	Moderate impact on achievement of strategy or operational activities Affecting a small number of customers or staff Deteriorating performance of a supplier / partner Operational or system failure for more than 8 hours	Moderate stakeholder concern
2	Minor	Managed incident Limited customer impact	£5,001 - £50,000	Minor impact on achievement of strategy or operational activities Small Deterioration in performance of a supplier / partner Operational or system failure for less than 1 hour	Limited stakeholder concern
1	Insignificant	Managed incident No customer impact	£5,000 or less	Low impact on achievement of strategy or operational activities	Low stakeholder concern

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND COLLEGE STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

Ref	Objectives and Risks	Risk Owner	Current Likelihood (1 - 5)	Current Impact (1 - 5)	Current Rating (max=25)	Target Likelihood (1 - 5)	Target Impact (1 - 5)	Target Total (max=25)
4.1	If the SFC fails to provide adequate funding for counsellors and other targeted health and wellbeing support then student outcomes and experiences will decline.	VP C&Q	4	4	16	2	3	6

MITIGATIONS

- Engage with SFC & Scottish Government to minimise the impact.
- Refreshed approaches to Workforce Planning & Talent Management.
- Implement refreshed approach to organisational development to support staff
- Explore all option to reallocate resources to provide limited ongoing support
- Engage with Student Association to maximise wellbeing support
- Encourage ideas from staff & students to improve wellbeing
- Assessment recommendations from the Campus Future groups
- Ongoing engagement with Health and Social Care Partnership
- Assessing and maximising the dedicated staffing resource that the College can afford.
- Exploring further collaboration with NHS services.

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REGIONAL BOARD Meeting of 17 June 2025	
Title: Strategic Plan 2025-30	
Author: Robin McGregor, Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality	Contributor(s): Paul Smith, Assistant Principal Communication and Planning Robert Laird, Head of Planning and Academic Partnerships
Type of Agenda Item: For Decision <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For Information <input type="checkbox"/> Reserved Item of Business <input type="checkbox"/>	
Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to present the Strategic Plan 2025–2030 for North East Scotland College to the Regional Board for approval.	
Linked to Strategic Theme:	
Linked to Strategic Risk(s):	
Executive Summary: This paper presents the Strategic Plan for 2025–2030, outlining the development process, the structure and content of the plan, and the thematic sub-strategies that will guide implementation. It provides the Regional Board with a comprehensive overview of how the plan was co-designed through extensive engagement with staff, students, and stakeholders, and how it will serve as both a strategic framework and a communications asset. The paper also sets out the next steps required to finalise and implement the plan, ensuring alignment with institutional priorities and regional needs.	
Recommendation: It is recommended that the Board consider and approve the draft as provided.	
Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable):	



Agenda Item 81-24

Equality Impact Assessment:

Positive Impact ☐

Negative Impact ☐

No Impact ☒

Evidence:

REGIONAL BOARD

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to present the Strategic Plan 2025–2030 for North East Scotland College, outlining the development process, the structure and content of the plan, and the thematic sub-strategies that will guide implementation.

It provides the Regional Board with a comprehensive overview of how the plan was co-designed through extensive engagement with staff, students, and stakeholders, and how it will serve as both a strategic framework and a communications asset.

The paper also sets out the next steps required to finalise and implement the plan, ensuring alignment with institutional priorities and regional needs.

2.0 Development and Process

- 2.1 The Strategic Plan 2025–2030 has been developed through a collaborative and inclusive process, engaging staff, students, stakeholders, and community partners across a range of forums. This has included an all-staff survey, targeted consultations, strategic workshops with the Leadership Team and Regional Board, student workshops across campuses, a Winter Development Day staff session, open information events, and online feedback opportunities.
- 2.2 The insights gathered through these activities have been carefully analysed to identify key themes and priorities, which have shaped the development of a high-level strategic framework. The resulting plan sets out a clear and ambitious direction for the College, underpinned by a strong regional focus, a commitment to sustainability and innovation, and a shared vision for student success and institutional growth.
- 2.3 The steps to develop the plan, with images, have been included at the end of the plan.

3.0 Strategic Plan

3.1 Strategic Plan 2025-2030

The plan is structured with clear articulation of:

Who We Are (an infographic overview)
Why We're Here (mission statement)
What We Stand For (core values)
Where We're Going (vision statement)
How We'll Get There (key objectives)

The design of the Strategic Plan 2025–2030 has been structured to serve as a versatile communications asset and marketing collateral. Its clear articulation of mission, vision, values, and strategic priorities ensures the document can be readily adapted for future College campaigns. Whether used in student recruitment, stakeholder engagement, or community outreach, the plan's language and layout are crafted to resonate across audiences and reinforce NESCol's identity and ambitions.

The plan is attached as Appendix A.

3.2 Sub-Strategies

- 3.2.1 There are 6 sub-strategies, each contributing to the overarching College goals. There are themes that cut across many, if not all sub-strategies (eg innovation, sustainability, efficiency, wellbeing, skills).

Our Region

This sub-strategy focuses on strengthening the College's regional engagement and impact. It encompasses efforts to grow commercial development, ensuring that NESCol remains responsive to the economic needs of the North East. Expanding opportunity and access is central to this ambition, with a commitment to widening participation and removing barriers to education. The alignment of the curriculum portfolio with regional labour market demands ensures that learners are equipped with relevant, future-focused skills. Through targeted skills development and a renewed emphasis on strengthening the College's regional identity, NESCol aims to reinforce its role as a key anchor institution in the communities it serves.

Our Secure Future

This area of focus is designed to ensure the long-term sustainability and strategic positioning of the College, both nationally and internationally. It includes securing diverse and resilient funding streams, enhancing operational efficiency, and growing commercial ventures to support financial sustainability. The strategy also aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), embedding environmental and social responsibility into institutional planning. By advancing national and international ambitions, NESCol seeks to expand its influence and partnerships beyond the region, positioning itself as a forward-looking and globally connected institution.

Our Colleagues

Recognising that staff are central to the College's success, this strategic priority supports the development, wellbeing, and engagement of all colleagues. It includes strategic workforce planning to ensure the right skills are in place for the future, alongside initiatives to promote wellbeing and strengthen internal communications. A positive organisational culture is actively fostered, with investment in learning, development, and talent management to support professional growth and career progression. This approach ensures that NESCol remains an employer of choice and a place where staff feel valued and supported.

Our Spaces

This priority addresses the enhancement of the College's physical and environmental infrastructure. It includes the development and modernisation of estates and facilities to support high-quality learning and working environments. Environmental sustainability is a key consideration, with a focus on reducing the College's carbon footprint and promoting green practices. Health and safety remain paramount, and improvements to the public realm aim to create welcoming, accessible, and inclusive spaces for all users of the College's campuses.

Our Digital Ambition

Driving digital transformation across the College, this strategic priority focuses on optimising digital resources and building digital capabilities among staff and students. Upgrading IT infrastructure and enhancing learning technologies are central to delivering innovative and flexible education. The strategy also encourages a culture of innovation, ensuring that NESCol remains agile and responsive to technological change. Through this work, the College aims to create a digitally confident community and a future-ready learning environment.

Our Student Experience

At the heart of the strategic plan is a commitment to enriching the student experience and improving outcomes. This includes innovating in learning and teaching, partnering with students to co-create solutions, and working closely with the Students' Association. The strategy promotes active learning and engagement, with a strong focus on employability and career readiness. Support is provided throughout the full student journey - from application to graduation - ensuring that every learner has the opportunity to succeed and thrive.

- 3.2.2 Each sub-strategy is being developed by nominated members of the Strategic Leadership Team, using a structured template that includes an overarching ambition, up to five key objectives and initiatives, a high-level action plan, resource requirements, key performance indicators, timelines, risk management considerations, and review mechanisms. This approach ensures that each area of strategic focus is robust, sustainable, and aligned with the overall College objectives.

4.0 Next Steps

The Strategic Plan for 2025–2030 has been developed to guide the College's long-term direction, with sub-strategies now being finalised to ensure alignment with our mission. The final plan, with supporting sub-strategies, will be shared with the Regional Board during Summer. The plan and its components will be shared with stakeholders ahead of implementation in August 2025. A soft launch will coincide with the start of the academic year, followed by a formal launch event in September to highlight key priorities and celebrate collaborative efforts. The plan will also be presented to community planning partners for endorsement, reinforcing our commitment to shared goals and regional impact.



Agenda Item 81-24

Appendix A – Strategic Plan 2025-2030



BRINGING
LEARNING
TO LIFE



STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2030

who we are

Supporting
more than
1000
adults to return to
full-time education
each year



Employing **800** people



Overall student
satisfaction **90% +**



Directly supporting
1,200 businesses



The No.1 choice for **school leavers** in the North East of Scotland

Providing workforce and **professional development** to organisations and individuals

a **£50m**
ORGANISATION

Serving
2,500
square
miles

HOME TO
20,000
STUDENTS



why we are here



Our goal is to give everyone the chance to build the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in work and in life. Putting students at the heart of everything we do, NESCol joins forces with employers to make sure the education and training we shape is what the North East needs. Our teams work hard every day to build strong, inclusive communities as we push for social change and economic growth.

what we stand for



Quality

We are committed to delivering the very best learning experience.



Community

We value the connections we build with students and colleagues as well as in the communities we serve and with our partners.



Inclusion

We take pride in providing opportunities for all in a welcoming and supportive way.



Innovation

We make it our goal to embrace change and new technology to make NESCol a better place to learn, work and visit



Partnership

We work with employers and industry organisations to equip students with relevant skills and paths to rewarding careers.



where we are going



Our ambition is to get even better at what we do, meaning more students leave College with the qualifications and qualities they need, and to provide a high-quality experience for everyone who falls under our wing.



NESCol is the North East of Scotland's first choice destination for training and education – and we want to open up opportunities for even more learners.



To do that we need to build a sustainable future for the College, working efficiently and focusing on commercial goals.



We'll continue to collaborate with employers to equip the workforce with skills for today and for the future, always looking for ways to innovate.

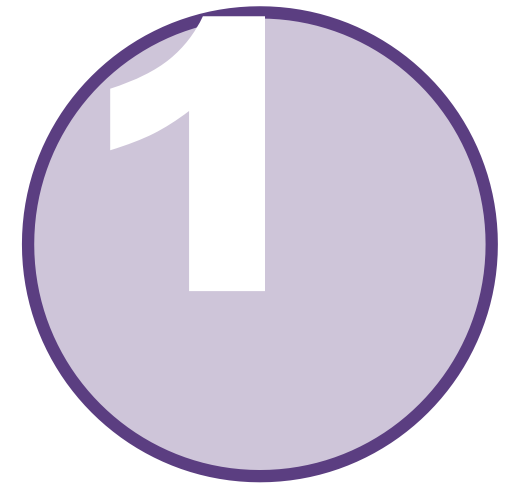


NESCol doesn't work alone and we're proud to be a partner of choice, aiming to build on the strong foundations already in place.



Our role as a progressive employer is important to us and we'll strive to continue to enhance the ways we work.

how we'll get there



Delivering outstanding education and learning

- Delivering high-quality, flexible, and industry-relevant courses that support career progression
- Enhancing digital learning strategies and embracing new technologies to provide innovative teaching
- Prioritising continuous professional development for staff
- Striving for sector leading levels of student success, engagement and feedback.

how we'll get there



Building a better future with students

- Fostering an inclusive, diverse, and supportive learning environment that meets individual student needs
- Developing student support services, including mental health resources and financial assistance
- Strengthening transition pathways from school to college and from college to employment or higher education
- Embracing the student voice and putting those opinions at the centre of decision making.

how we'll get there



Strengthening our region's communities and economy

- Driving regional economic growth by aligning courses with industry demands
- Strengthening partnerships with employers, local authorities, and community organisations
- Raising aspirations and showcasing opportunities
- Supporting social mobility by widening access to education and addressing barriers to learning.

how we'll get there



Building a stronger and more sustainable College

- Implementing green campus initiatives and aiming to become a net zero College
- Promoting sustainable practices in curriculum delivery and operations
- Encouraging innovation through research collaborations and new programme development
- Focusing on financial sustainability, through revenue generation and efficiency.

how we'll get there



5

Striving to deliver institutional excellence and growth

- Aspiring to improve and enhance all that we do
- Maintaining high standards of governance, accountability and compliance
- Improving infrastructure and facilities to enhance the student experience
- Expanding outreach initiatives to increase engagement and reach.

Sub strategies

2025–30



co-creating our new strategic plan

6 sub strategy workshops, involving more than **100** staff and students

2 NESCol Regional Board strategy sessions

Consultation with key stakeholders and community partners

4 student focus groups, featuring representatives from all campuses

Online feedback opportunities for **800** staff and contractors

40 staff workshops

Open staff information sessions





Agenda Item 82-24

REGIONAL BOARD Meeting of 17 June 2025	
Title: NESCol Graduation 2025	
Author: Paul Smith, Assistant Principal Planning and Communication	Contributor(s): Lindsey Hatherley, Events Officer
Type of Agenda Item: For Decision <input type="checkbox"/> For Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reserved Item of Business <input type="checkbox"/>	
Purpose: <p>To update the Regional Board on planning for the NESCol Graduation ceremonies taking place in September and October 2025.</p>	
Linked to Strategic Theme:	
Linked to Strategic Risk(s):	
Executive Summary: <p>This paper provides an overview of the preparation for the ceremonies.</p>	
Recommendation: <p>It is recommended the board note the plans for 2025 and considers the option to include a NESCol Fellowship Award (or awards) in 2026.</p>	
Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable):	
Equality Impact Assessment: Positive Impact <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Impact <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evidence:	

REGIONAL BOARD

1.0 Overview

The NESCol Graduation ceremonies for 2025 will take place on 20 September in Fraserburgh and 7 October in Aberdeen (two ceremonies, AM and PM). The planning cycle began in January and regular meetings are held to bring the Marketing and Communications team together with the wider organising group within the College. Planning is led by Lindsey Hatherley in her role as Events Officer.

The ceremonies are open to students completing HNC and HND qualifications in 2025 as well as to Modern Apprentices who have completed their qualification this year. The MA inclusion was successfully trialled in 2024.

2.0 Projected participation

Planning has been based on the eligible pool of students and modelled on four-year trends for uptake (2024 figures listed for comparison).

Students accepting invitation	Eligible pool	Graduands attended	% uptake	Total guests & students
Fraserburgh ceremony				
2024	193	59	31%	231
2025	166	50 projected	31%	195 projected
Aberdeen ceremonies				
2024 am ceremony	710	128	18%	455
pm ceremony	263	121	46%	435
Total 2024	973	250	20%	890
2025 am ceremony	782	140	18%	497 projected
pm ceremony	284	130	46%	467 projected
Overall	1066	270 projected	25%	964 projected

3.0 Venues and format

The Fraserburgh Ceremony will take place at Fraserburgh Campus. Set-up for 2025 will be similar to previous years but will utilise the recently installed big screen (display equipment previously supplied by an external contractor) and new staging procured as part of the benefactor investment.

The Aberdeen ceremonies will take place at the Music Hall, with a one and half day hire agreed with Aberdeen Performing Arts (allowing for half day set-up).



Agenda Item 82-24

4.0 Guest contributors

Fiona Stalker, of BBC Scotland, has been secured as the host for all three ceremonies.

The guest speaker for the Fraserburgh Ceremony is Victor West, CEO of Associated Seafoods. Victor was guest speaker at the Moray College graduations in 2024, and has served on the boards of DYW Moray and Career Ready as well as a number of regional charities.

The guest speaker for both Aberdeen ceremonies is Myles Edwards, co-founder and director of the Gathimba Edwards Foundation. Myles also serves as a motivational speaker for corporate clients and has a passion for education and the third sector.

5.0 Fellowship opportunity

A NESCol Fellowship Award can be incorporated in to the Fraserburgh and Aberdeen ceremonies. This is at the discretion of the Regional Board and is not a fixed requirement. The decision was previously taken not to incorporate an award in the 2025 event but the board is invited to give early consideration to the merits of inclusion for 2026 and bring potential candidates forward for discussion at future board meetings.

6.0 Future planning

Consideration is being given to the future format of NESCol graduation ceremonies and the potential to expand eligibility beyond the current HNC, HND and MA levels of study. A feasibility paper has been tabled for discussion by the Strategic Leadership Team, to help inform future planning. This takes into account the logistical and financial implications of broadening the base of eligible students. Further information will be shared with the Regional Board.



Agenda Item 83-24

REGIONAL BOARD	
Meeting of 17 June 2025	
Title: Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey AY2024/25	
Author: S Anderson, Acting Director of Quality	Contributor(s): Senior Quality Co-ordinator
Type of Agenda Item: For Decision <input type="checkbox"/> For Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For Information <input type="checkbox"/> Reserved Item of Business <input type="checkbox"/>	
Purpose: To enable the Regional Board, on the recommendation of the Curriculum and Quality Committee, discuss and note the results of the Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey for AY2024-25 student cohort. The survey is a key quality improvement tool used to measure levels of student satisfaction.	
Linked to Strategic Theme: 4. Delivering Excellence and Innovation	
Linked to Strategic Risk(s): N/A	
Executive Summary: Please see following cover paper as submitted to Curriculum and Quality Committee at their recent meeting held in May 2025.	
Recommendation: It is recommended that the Regional Board discuss and note the information	
Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable):	
Equality Impact Assessment: Positive Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Negative Impact <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evidence:	

CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE	
Meeting of 21 May 2025	
Title: Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey AY 2024-25	
Author: Shona Anderson, Acting Director of Quality	Contributor(s): Senior Quality Co-ordinator
Type of Agenda Item: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>For Decision</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/></div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>For Discussion</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/></div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>For Information</div> <div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>Reserved Item of Business</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/></div> </div>	
Purpose: To enable the Committee members to note the results of the Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey for our AY2024-25 student cohorts, a key quality improvement tool used to measure levels of student satisfaction.	
Linked to Strategic Theme: 4. Delivering Excellence and Innovation	
Linked to Strategic Risk(s): N/A	
Executive Summary: <p>The College conducts two key Student Surveys during each academic year, the First Impressions Survey in September/October and the Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey in March/April, which incorporates the Scottish Funding Councils (SFC) 13 mandatory national survey statements. The three-year trend data provided captures student survey outcomes for full-time, part-time, school link and distance/flexible students.</p> <p>The Scottish Funding Council set a sector target of 50% participation rate for the Student Satisfaction & Engagement survey for full-time and part-time further and higher education students. There is no participation target set for the distance/flexible learning students. Overall the College once again achieved a high level of engagement in both student response rates and satisfaction levels.</p> <p>The AY 2024-25 Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey for full-time students recorded 4,050 responses in comparison to 3,917 in AY2024-25. Overall, 90.8% of students are satisfied with the College, a very slight increase of 0.1% in comparison to AY2023-24, and an overall 95.3% of students would recommend the College to others.</p>	

The AY2024-25 Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey for **part-time** students recorded 437 responses in comparison to 431 in AY2023-24. Overall, 89.8% of students are satisfied with the College, a slight decrease of 2.2% in comparison to AY2023-24, and 92.6% of students would recommend the College to others.

The AY2024-25 Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey for **distance/flexible** learning students recorded 89 responses in comparison to 131 in AY2023-24. Overall, 77.1% of students are satisfied with the College, a decrease of 7.3% in comparison to AY2023-24, and 96.6% of students would recommend the College to others.

The AY2024-25 Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey for **school-link** students recorded 430 responses in comparison to 544 in AY2023-24. Overall, 89.3% of students are satisfied with the College, an decrease of 0.7% in comparison to AY2023-24, and an impressive 97.4% of students would recommend the College to others.

A breakdown at Sector, Team and course level can be accessed from the College's Power BI Report Server and is available for all college staff to access. The curriculum and support teams incorporate the data into self-evaluation activities, where it is reviewed, analysed and used as a tool to identifying areas for improvement and good practice.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Committee members note the information provided.

Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable):

N/A

Equality Impact Assessment:

Positive Impact ☒

Negative Impact ☐

No Impact ☐

Evidence:



Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey Report

AY 2024-25

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Overview

The Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey (SS&ES) is a measure of satisfaction relating to college services and experiences issued near the end of the academic year. The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) use this national approach to monitor student satisfaction and engagement across all colleges in the sector. The College is required to submit the outcomes of the mandatory statements to the SFC which informs the full national sector-level satisfaction and response data report. The outcomes of the survey also supports colleges to evidence impact and improvement within outcome agreements.

Participation Target Figures

The Scottish Funding Council set a Student Satisfaction & Engagement survey sector target response rate of at least 50% for full-time (FT) and part-time (PT) further and higher education students. North East Scotland College (NESCol) achieved the following response rates for the AY 2024-25 survey:

- FT Further Education (FE) – 81.11% (AY23-24- 79.74%)
- FT Higher Education (HE) – 76.45% (AY23-24 – 76.92%)

The full-time response target from SFC was exceeded for both FE and HE students. NESCol response rates increased by 1.37% for FT FE, and although exceeding the SFC target, there was a 0.47% decrease in the NESCol response rate for FT HE learners in comparison to AY2023.24.

- PT Further Education (FE) – 57.58% (AY23-24 – 55.28%)
- PT Higher Education (HE) – 68.86% (AY23-24– 72.22%)

The SFC part-time response target was exceeded for both FE and HE learners. NESCol response rates increased by 2.3% for PT FE, and although exceeding the SFC target, there was a 3.36% decrease in the NESCol response rate for PT HE learners in comparison to AY2023-24. Please note for the purpose of internal reporting that the part-time and school link outcomes are presented separately, but are combined for the SFC data submission.

The high levels in NESCol participation rates is credited to the staff who work tirelessly to engage and motivate the students to complete the survey, informing them how important their feedback is for future college delivery.

Although there is no SFC response target set for the distance/flexible learning students the college achieved a response rate of 14.57%, a 0.72% increase in comparison to the 13.85% response rate in the previous year. This mode of student is notoriously difficult to survey therefore the increase in engagement is worthy of note.

Mandatory SFC Statements & NESCol Statements

The Scottish Funding Council provide 13 mandatory statements that must be used in all college student satisfaction and engagement surveys. The data presented in this report has been broken down to display the SFC mandatory statements for each mode of qualification and also includes the statements set by the College, as they are combined into one student survey. The College set internal

levels of satisfaction to allow measures to be determined for improvements and to provide trend data of satisfaction which can be quantified across all service.

The results table show the number of full-time students who answered each of the SFC and college statements and the percentage of positive satisfaction results. Appendices 1-3 provide the satisfaction outcomes for part-time, school link and distance/flexible student results.

The overall positive satisfaction calculates the percentage of students who selected the *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* options in response to each question.

Any results that are below or equal to 85% positive satisfaction are highlighted in either Amber or Red. All satisfaction levels below 85% are addressed by the curriculum and service teams as part of their continuous self-evaluation activities.

College Measure of Satisfaction Level		85.01%+
		75.01-85.00%
		0-75.00%

Overall College Student Satisfaction Outcomes

The overall college satisfaction for the Student Satisfaction & Engagement survey data AY 2024-25 remains high at 90%, consistent over the three-year trend data.

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Overall positive satisfaction	90.0%	89.6%	90.3%

Full Time Student Satisfaction Outcomes

The College continues to maintain a very high level of student satisfaction across the majority of the SFC and college statements, demonstrated in the three-year trend table below.

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Overall positive satisfaction	90.0%	89.4%	90.8%

The percentage of positive satisfaction achieving amber or red levels will be addressed by individual curriculum and support teams during their continuous self-evaluation activities.

Full Time Survey Results

Mandatory SFC Statements	2022-23		2023-24		2024-25	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Overall, I am satisfied with my college experience.	3745	94.8%	3917	93.1%	4050	95.23%
Staff regularly discuss my progress with me.	3741	88.3%	3907	87.4%	4048	89.50%
Staff encourage students to take responsibility for their learning.	3737	97.4%	3904	97.2%	4049	97.88%
I am able to influence learning on my course.	3724	91.6%	3894	90.3%	4046	92.02%
I receive useful feedback which informs my future learning.	3733	91.3%	3903	91.0%	4048	92.02%
The way I'm taught helps me learn.	3726	89.1%	3893	88.0%	4045	90.19%
My time at college has helped me develop knowledge and skills for the workplace.	3737	93.3%	3906	92.1%	4048	93.40%
I believe student suggestions are taken seriously.	3725	85.7%	3893	84.6%	4043	86.54%
I believe all students at the college are treated equally and fairly by staff.	3737	90.2%	3900	90.0%	4049	90.44%
Any change in my course or teaching has been communicated well.	3726	89.1%	3910	85.8%	4046	88.58%
The online learning materials for my course have helped me learn.	3728	89.0%	3904	90.3%	4043	91.79%
I feel that I am part of the college community.	3720	88.2%	3898	88.1%	4049	87.26%
The College Students' Association influences change for the better.	3449	58.2%	3647	57.8%	4020	61.64%
College Statements	2022-23		2023-24		2024-25	
Learning & Teaching	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Teaching and learning materials are helping me learn.	3740	95.9%	3913	95.8%	4050	96.25%
Staff help to motivate me with my learning.	3738	90.3%	3902	90.5%	4049	91.68%
The VLE (Brightspace) is helping my learning.	3729	90.3%	3897	89.9%	4048	87.48%
I am told in advance if there are any changes to my timetable.	3733	86.0%	3899	83.7%	4048	86.51%
Teaching staff make use of a range of digital and multimedia technologies (e.g. online quizzes, videos) to enhance learning and teaching.	3734	92.3%	3900	90.9%	4047	91.75%
Assessment & Feedback	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Lessons prepare me well for assessments.	3735	93.8%	3880	93.0%	4048	93.85%
I am provided with opportunities to plan and personalise my own learning.	3727	89.7%	3894	89.6%	4045	90.88%
Assessment tasks are clearly explained.	3730	90.9%	3897	89.8%	4047	90.73%

I am informed where and when my assessments are taking place.	3724	96.1%	3889	96.0%	4044	96.51%
I know what to do if I don't agree with my assessment results.	3725	84.9%	3890	84.5%	4045	86.65%
The feedback that I receive following assessment is useful and helps me learn.	3729	93.4%	3896	92.4%	4044	93.77%
I receive feedback from assessments in a timely manner.	3728	89.2%	3896	87.3%	4046	88.80%
e-assessment (online assessment) was used as part of my course.	3689	85.0%	3844	85.5%	4045	85.54%
Quality Improvement	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I have had the chance to provide my views on my learning experience e.g. questionnaires, focus groups, class representatives, peer-led review or course committee meetings.	3705	90.0%	3866	88.9%	4034	90.58%
I receive feedback on issues I raise.	3657	86.4%	3824	85.0%	4033	86.98%
Guidance & Support	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I am able to access additional support or advice when I need it.	3723	95.1%	3883	94.7%	4035	95.42%
The information/help/support I am given is useful.	3706	94.1%	3874	93.9%	4032	95.01%
I am aware of the information and/or support available to help me to decide my next steps e.g. continuing education, seeking employment.	3719	91.4%	3880	90.6%	4037	91.85%
I am aware of extra-curricular opportunities within the College.	3718	80.6%	3885	79.8%	4034	84.21%
I am aware of events, activities and opportunities offered by the Students' Association.	3711	81.4%	3877	80.6%	4031	86.43%
Equipment & Facilities	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I have been able to access my College IT account to use Microsoft 365 including: email and OneDrive.	3733	97.2%	3902	97.0%	4037	98.39%
I have been able to access all necessary computer hardware and software for my course.	3729	95.7%	3888	95.4%	4031	96.50%
Once I am connected, the College Wi-Fi network is reliable.	3586	75.7%	3777	78.2%	3888	85.44%
Classroom presentation facilities, e.g. data projector, speakers, interactive whiteboard, are effective.	3676	94.3%	3855	94.6%	3969	96.37%
I feel safe and secure on college premises.	3681	96.0%	3863	95.9%	4006	96.31%
College libraries provide a suitable learning environment.	3564	96.5%	3737	96.0%	3845	96.38%
College facilities are clean, tidy and well decorated.	3688	93.9%	3865	93.2%	4000	93.83%
Equality & Diversity	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%

The College does enough to promote equality and diversity issues e.g. College events, literature.	3726	94.7%	3884	94.3%	4037	95.96%
I am aware of the College's Respect campaign.	3734	88.4%	3886	86.9%	4035	86.67%
I believe that College staff, students and contractors behave respectfully towards each other.	3732	95.0%	3891	94.5%	4035	95.76%
Recommendation	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I would recommend North East Scotland College to others.	3684	96.5%	3855	95.3%	4030	95.26%

SFC Comment Box

In addition to the SFC statements, students are provided with a free-text comment box at the end of the mandatory multiple choice statements. Students are instructed that *"If you have any other comments about learning and teaching at the college, please write them in the box"*. Responding to this question is optional.

In total, 444 students elected to make a comment in the free-text box. All comments have been disseminated to the relevant curriculum and support areas for review, reflection and potential action.

Positive Qualitative Feedback Wakelet

Wakelet is a content curation platform that the College has used to collate and present feedback in an effective visual display. This Wakelet displays instances of positive qualitative feedback provided by students in the AY 2024-25 Student Satisfaction & Engagement survey. The feedback is presented by sector, which hosts the positive feedback provided by full-time, part-time and distance/flexible learning students across all services and can be viewed in the link below.

<https://wakelet.com/spaces/sdZcKMOqAqGTTokRINxBI>

Appendix 1 Part Time Survey Satisfaction

Overall positive satisfaction	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
	93.6%	92.0%	89.76%

Mandatory SFC Statements	2022-23		2023-24		2024-25	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Overall, I am satisfied with my college experience.	333	96.4%	431	96.1%	437	92.91%
Staff regularly discuss my progress with me.	332	94.9%	430	89.1%	437	85.58%
Staff encourage students to take responsibility for their learning.	332	99.7%	429	97.4%	437	98.17%
I am able to influence learning on my course.	331	96.1%	431	94.7%	437	91.30%
I receive useful feedback which informs my future learning.	331	97.0%	431	90.7%	437	91.30%
The way I'm taught helps me learn.	332	94.6%	427	89.9%	436	88.53%
My time at college has helped me develop knowledge and skills for the workplace.	331	95.7%	430	92.1%	437	89.02%
I believe student suggestions are taken seriously.	332	94.9%	430	92.3%	437	88.10%
I believe all students at the college are treated equally and fairly by staff.	332	96.4%	430	97.7%	437	94.05%
Any change in my course or teaching has been communicated well.	331	95.8%	429	90.2%	437	89.70%
The online learning materials for my course have helped me learn.	332	94.3%	427	94.9%	437	92.45%
I feel that I am part of the college community.	332	92.1%	431	90.7%	437	84.67%
The College Students' Association influences change for the better.	312	54.81%	401	66.3%	434	55.30%
College Statements						
Learning & Teaching	2022-23		2023-24		2024-25	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Teaching and learning materials are helping me learn.	333	96.1%	431	96.1%	435	95.63%
Staff help to motivate me with my learning.	333	97.0%	429	93.0%	435	91.72%
The VLE (Brightspace) is helping my learning.	331	92.2%	429	91.4%	435	86.67%
I am told in advance if there are any changes to my timetable.	333	89.2%	430	87.0%	435	87.13%
Teaching staff make use of a range of digital and multimedia technologies (e.g. online quizzes, videos) to enhance learning and teaching.	332	91.6%	430	89.3%	435	88.74%
Assessment & Feedback	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%

Lessons prepare me well for assessments.	332	97.0%	431	96.1%	435	93.56%
I am provided with opportunities to plan and personalise my own learning.	329	93.9%	430	93.0%	435	87.36%
Assessment tasks are clearly explained.	330	97.3%	430	95.4%	435	94.94%
I am informed where and when my assessments are taking place.	331	97.9%	428	97.7%	435	97.47%
I know what to do if I don't agree with my assessment results.	332	94.6%	429	91.6%	435	90.11%
The feedback that I receive following assessment is useful and helps me learn.	332	96.4%	429	93.9%	435	94.48%
I receive feedback from assessments in a timely manner.	331	97.0%	430	95.1%	435	94.02%
e-assessment (online assessment) was used as part of my course.	329	84.2%	428	81.1%	435	77.93%
Quality Improvement	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I have had the chance to provide my views on my learning experience e.g. questionnaires, focus groups, class representatives, peer-led review or course committee meetings.	326	90.2%	426	86.2%	432	84.95%
I receive feedback on issues I raise.	322	93.2%	420	86.7%	432	86.81%
Guidance & Support	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I am able to access additional support or advice when I need it.	332	98.2%	427	96.5%	433	93.30%
The information/help/support I am given is useful.	331	97.6%	427	95.6%	433	94.69%
I am aware of the information and/or support available to help me to decide my next steps e.g. continuing education, seeking employment.	330	94.9%	425	95.8%	433	91.45%
I am aware of extra-curricular opportunities within the College.	332	88.0%	425	83.1%	433	85.91%
I am aware of events, activities and opportunities offered by the Students' Association.	330	88.2%	424	81.8%	433	84.53%
Equipment & Facilities	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I have been able to access my College IT account to use Microsoft 365 including: email and OneDrive.	332	97.9%	428	98.1%	433	95.84%
I have been able to access all necessary computer hardware and software for my course.	330	95.8%	428	98.1%	433	95.61%
Once I am connected, the College Wi-Fi network is reliable	301	83.1%	403	78.2%	389	82.01%
Classroom presentation facilities, e.g. data projector, speakers, interactive whiteboard, are effective	320	96.6%	422	96.2%	422	95.50%
I feel safe and secure on college premises	323	96.6%	424	97.2%	426	97.42%
College libraries provide a suitable learning environment	314	98.1%	407	96.3%	397	95.72%
College facilities are clean, tidy and well decorated	321	93.4%	422	96.7%	427	93.44%
Equality & Diversity	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%

The College does enough to promote equality and diversity issues e.g. College events, literature.	332	97.9%	426	97.9%	432	95.83%
I am aware of the College's Respect campaign.	332	93.4%	426	91.1%	432	87.96%
I believe that College staff, students and contractors behave respectfully towards each other.	331	98.2%	428	98.4%	432	96.53%
Recommendation	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I would recommend North East Scotland College to others.	324	95.4%	421	95.7%	433	92.61%

Appendix 2 Distance/Flexible Satisfaction

Overall positive satisfaction	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
	80.9%	84.4%	77.09%

Mandatory SFC Statements	2022-23		2023-24		2024-25	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Overall, I am satisfied with my college experience.	66	96.7%	131	97.7%	58	96.55%
Staff regularly discuss my progress with me.	60	90.0%	128	91.4%	58	89.66%
Staff encourage students to take responsibility for their learning.	58	98.3%	124	95.2%	58	93.10%
I am able to influence learning on my course.	55	74.6%	118	83.9%	58	79.31%
I receive useful feedback which informs my future learning.	62	95.2%	128	98.4%	58	93.10%
The way I'm taught helps me learn.	58	88.9%	123	94.3%	58	98.28%
My time at college has helped me develop knowledge and skills for the workplace.	55	90.9%	121	95.9%	58	96.55%
I believe student suggestions are taken seriously.	47	91.5%	103	92.2%	58	86.21%
I believe all students at the college are treated equally and fairly by staff.	48	100.0%	101	99.0%	58	96.55%
Any change in my course or teaching has been communicated well.	50	100.0%	113	94.7%	58	93.10%
The online learning materials for my course have helped me learn.	63	92.06%	130	95.4%	58	100.00%
I feel that I am part of the college community.	53	49.1%	104	70.2%	58	68.97%
The College Students' Association influences change for the better.	57	31.6%	112	37.5%	55	30.91%
College Statements	2022-23		2023-24		2024-25	
Learning & Teaching	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Teaching and learning materials are helping me learn.	64	96.9%	126	96.8%	89	95.51%
Staff help to motivate me with my learning.	52	80.8%	119	94.1%	89	84.27%
The VLE (Brightspace) is helping my learning.	44	56.8%	94	79.8%	89	79.78%
I am told in advance if there are any changes to my timetable.	46	89.1%	96	89.6%	89	87.64%
Teaching staff make use of a range of digital and multimedia technologies (e.g. online quizzes, videos) to enhance learning and teaching.	48	83.3%	102	87.3%	89	85.39%

Assessment & Feedback	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Lessons prepare me well for assessments.	56	89.3%	117	96.6%	89	95.51%
I am provided with opportunities to plan and personalise my own learning.	49	93.9%	118	94.1%	89	94.38%
Assessment tasks are clearly explained.	60	90.0%	124	95.2%	89	93.26%
I am informed where and when my assessments are taking place.	54	98.2%	108	99.1%	89	94.38%
I know what to do if I don't agree with my assessment results.	53	83.0%	112	92.0%	89	77.53%
The feedback that I receive following assessment is useful and helps me learn.	60	96.7%	124	98.4%	89	92.13%
I receive feedback from assessments in a timely manner.	63	93.7%	127	97.6%	89	95.51%
e-assessment (online assessment) was used as part of my course.	63	100.0%	123	95.9%	89	89.89%
Quality Improvement	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I have had the chance to provide my views on my learning experience e.g. questionnaires, focus groups, class representatives, peer-led review or course committee meetings.	53	69.8%	102	74.5%	88	63.64%
I receive feedback on issues I raise.	44	88.6%	87	89.7%	88	77.27%
Guidance & Support	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I am able to access additional support or advice when I need it.	58	94.8%	120	94.2%	89	94.38%
The information/help/support I am given is useful.	56	96.4%	115	96.5%	89	92.13%
I am aware of the information and/or support available to help me to decide my next steps e.g. continuing education, seeking employment.	47	83.0%	109	86.2%	89	79.78%
I am aware of extra-curricular opportunities within the College.	44	52.3%	95	60.0%	89	50.56%
I am aware of events, activities and opportunities offered by the Students' Association.	43	46.5%	94	56.4%	89	48.31%
Equipment & Facilities	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I have been able to access my College IT account to use Microsoft 365 including: email and OneDrive.	41	68.3%	88	76.1%	88	67.05%
I have been able to access all necessary computer hardware and software for my course.	49	91.8%	97	89.7%	88	85.23%
Once I am connected, the College Wi-Fi network is reliable	14	92.9%	44	95.5%	28	100.00%
Classroom presentation facilities, e.g. data projector, speakers, interactive whiteboard, are effective	14	92.9%	35	85.7%	26	100.00%
I feel safe and secure on college premises	14	92.9%	38	86.8%	28	96.43%
College libraries provide a suitable learning environment	13	100.0%	32	84.4%	25	100.00%
College facilities are clean, tidy and well decorated	15	100.0%	38	86.8%	29	100.00%

Equality & Diversity	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
The College does enough to promote equality and diversity issues e.g. College events, literature.	38	94.7%	86	91.9%	87	83.91%
I am aware of the College's Respect campaign.	40	65.0%	85	64.7%	87	63.22%
I believe that College staff, students and contractors behave respectfully towards each other.	39	97.4%	84	97.6%	87	90.80%
Recommendation	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I would recommend North East Scotland College to others.	64	98.4%	125	99.2%	89	96.63%

Appendix 3 School Link Survey Satisfaction

Overall positive satisfaction	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
	88.7%	90.0%	89.3%

Mandatory SFC Statements	2022-23		2023-24		2024-25	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Overall, I am satisfied with my college experience.	616	97.4%	544	97.4%	430	98.60%
Staff regularly discuss my progress with me.	617	88.6%	544	91.9%	430	93.26%
Staff encourage students to take responsibility for their learning.	615	97.3%	543	99.3%	430	100.00%
I am able to influence learning on my course.	611	94.4%	538	95.7%	430	93.49%
I receive useful feedback which informs my future learning.	612	89.5%	544	95.2%	430	94.88%
The way I'm taught helps me learn.	617	90.3%	544	93.8%	430	93.95%
My time at college has helped me develop knowledge and skills for the workplace.	617	94.7%	542	95.6%	430	95.81%
I believe student suggestions are taken seriously.	613	91.2%	539	91.7%	430	93.02%
I believe all students at the college are treated equally and fairly by staff.	611	95.7%	541	93.9%	430	93.49%
Any change in my course or teaching has been communicated well.	615	92.5%	540	93.9%	430	94.19%
The online learning materials for my course have helped me learn.	613	89.6%	542	90.2%	430	91.63%
I feel that I am part of the college community.	614	84.5%	536	89.0%	430	85.58%
The College Students' Association influences change for the better.	537	57.5%	467	58.7%	427	62.06%
College Statements	2022-23		2023-24		2024-25	
Learning & Teaching	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Teaching and learning materials are helping me learn.	615	95.6%	543	97.1%	430	96.98%
Staff help to motivate me with my learning.	614	91.4%	541	93.7%	430	92.56%
The VLE (Brightspace) is helping my learning.	610	83.0%	531	85.1%	430	83.26%
I am told in advance if there are any changes to my timetable.	614	89.6%	531	90.0%	430	90.00%
Teaching staff make use of a range of digital and multimedia technologies (e.g. online quizzes, videos) to enhance learning and teaching.	613	90.9%	536	91.4%	430	89.53%

Assessment & Feedback	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Lessons prepare me well for assessments.	614	94.0%	535	94.2%	430	96.05%
I am provided with opportunities to plan and personalise my own learning.	613	91.0%	537	90.1%	430	91.40%
Assessment tasks are clearly explained.	615	93.2%	536	93.8%	430	93.49%
I am informed where and when my assessments are taking place.	610	95.1%	533	95.1%	430	96.74%
I know what to do if I don't agree with my assessment results.	610	83.3%	531	84.9%	430	87.21%
The feedback that I receive following assessment is useful and helps me learn.	611	94.3%	532	95.1%	430	96.05%
I receive feedback from assessments in a timely manner.	610	92.3%	534	92.0%	430	94.88%
e-assessment (online assessment) was used as part of my course.	606	84.3%	521	87.1%	430	82.79%
Quality Improvement	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I have had the chance to provide my views on my learning experience e.g. questionnaires, focus groups, class representatives, peer-led review or course committee meetings.	605	85.5%	530	86.2%	428	86.68%
I receive feedback on issues I raise.	592	87.5%	523	89.5%	428	90.42%
Guidance & Support	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I am able to access additional support or advice when I need it.	605	93.7%	537	95.0%	430	94.42%
The information/help/support I am given is useful.	606	94.7%	535	95.9%	430	96.98%
I am aware of the information and/or support available to help me to decide my next steps e.g. continuing education, seeking employment.	607	91.1%	537	92.6%	430	93.95%
I am aware of extra-curricular opportunities within the College.	602	71.3%	530	74.5%	430	74.65%
I am aware of events, activities and opportunities offered by the Students' Association.	604	71.5%	529	74.3%	430	74.65%
Equipment & Facilities	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I have been able to access my College IT account to use Microsoft 365 including: email and OneDrive.	606	90.6%	529	92.4%	426	91.55%
I have been able to access all necessary computer hardware and software for my course.	607	94.2%	531	93.2%	426	94.84%
Once I am connected, the College Wi-Fi network is reliable	516	83.7%	464	83.6%	338	84.62%
Classroom presentation facilities, e.g. data projector, speakers, interactive whiteboard, are effective	550	95.1%	490	96.5%	378	95.50%
I feel safe and secure on college premises	547	96.2%	483	96.5%	363	98.62%
College libraries provide a suitable learning environment	483	95.5%	440	96.4%	319	96.87%
College facilities are clean, tidy and well decorated	537	95.2%	475	96.8%	355	94.37%

Equality & Diversity	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
The College does enough to promote equality and diversity issues e.g. College events, literature.	606	93.7%	523	92.9%	429	95.10%
I am aware of the College's Respect campaign.	605	76.9%	522	78.9%	429	76.22%
I believe that College staff, students and contractors behave respectfully towards each other.	607	96.1%	527	96.2%	429	96.74%
Recommendation	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I would recommend North East Scotland College to others.	609	97.2%	527	97.2%	428	97.43%



Agenda Item 87-24 - Revised

REGIONAL BOARD	
Meeting of 17 June 2025	
Title: Quality Activity Interim Report AY 2024-25	
Author: Shona Anderson Acting Director of Quality	Contributor(s): Senior Quality Co-ordinator
Type of Agenda Item: For Decision <input type="checkbox"/> For Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> For Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reserved Item of Business <input type="checkbox"/>	
Purpose: To enable the Regional Board to note the interim report provided covering the formal activity undertaken by the Quality department. A full annual activity report will be presented to the Curriculum & Quality Committee at the first committee meeting of the annual session 2025-26.	
Linked to Strategic Theme: 4. Delivering Excellence and Innovation	
Linked to Strategic Risk(s): N/A	
Executive Summary: The team are progressing towards targeted activity for this academic session. There has only been one complaint deadline missed to date (by 24 hours), verifying the robust internal processes in place. The following report provides a full outline of formal activity completed up to the end of May 2025.	
Recommendation: It is recommended that the Board members note the information provided.	
Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable): N/A	
Equality Impact Assessment: Positive Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Negative Impact <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact <input type="checkbox"/>	

Evidence:



Regional Board

Quality Activity Interim Report AY 2024-25

17th June 2025

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*7 additional EV activities have taken place in the last 10 days with the report yet to be received.	10
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1. Focus Groups

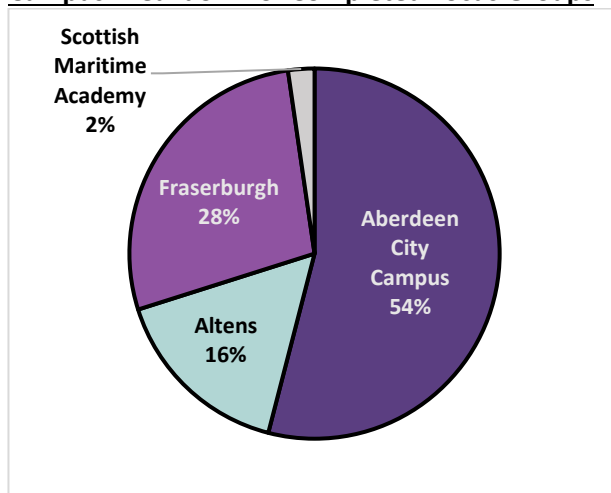
Schedule 2024-25

Focus Groups	Themes	Target	Completed
	Induction	24	24
	Respect	10	10
	Learning & Teaching	29	29
	Student Support	12	12
	Students' Association	6	6
	Well-being	8	8
	Total	89	89

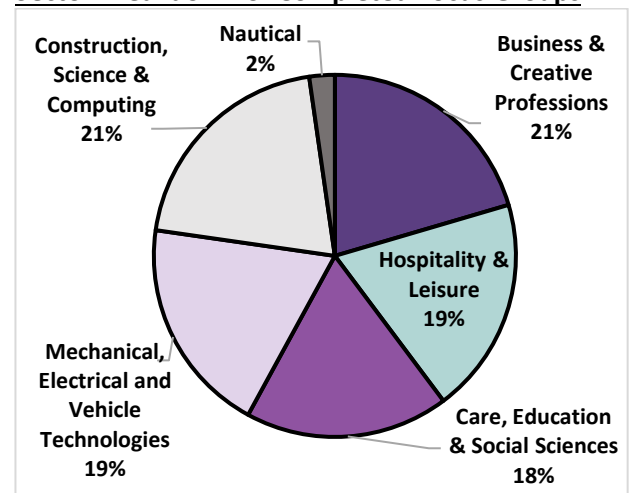
Progress Summary

As of the 27th May 2025, the Senior Lecturers Enhancement (SLEs) have completed 100% of the scheduled focus groups for the year.

Campus Breakdown of Completed Focus Groups



Sector Breakdown of Completed Focus Groups



Focus Group Actions

In total, 89 actions have been identified and allocated to appropriate staff for review and response. The responses are issued to the student cohort via Brightspace announcement by the Academic Tutor (AT). To date there has been 15 instances of good practice identified.

Examples of good practice identified were, external visits and guest speakers were appreciated and enhanced the learning and teaching process, lecturers who are passionate about their subject area, topics being linked well between classes, valuable learning experience opportunities and the library quiet space and activities that are available.

2. Stakeholder Feedback

Complaints Received

The complexity of a complaint will determine the category it is assigned and the timescale the college has to respond. The categories are as follows:

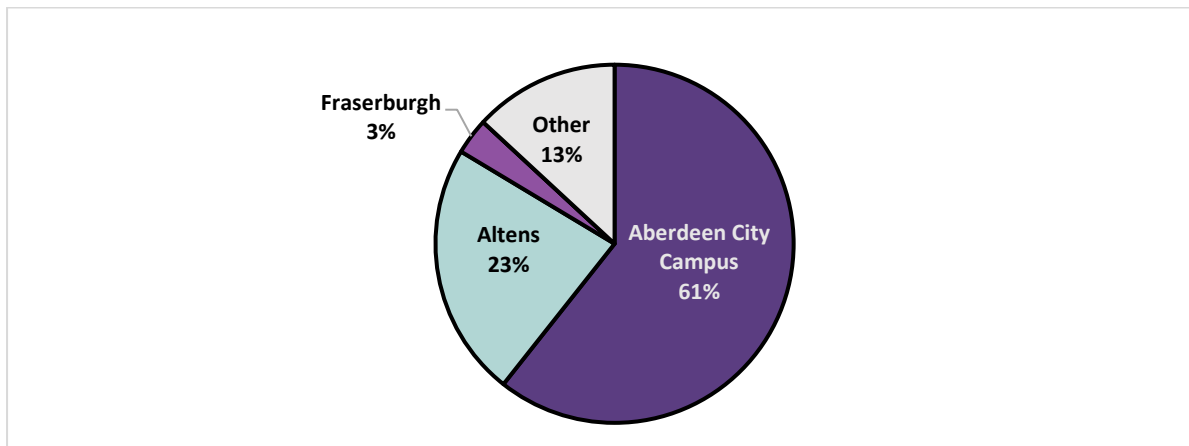
Frontline: the college has five working days to respond from the date the college receives the complaint. A five day extension can also be applied if more time is required.

Investigation: the college has 20 working days to respond from the date the college receives the complaint. This includes complaints that have been escalated from a frontline to an investigation, as well as investigations which have required an extension.

Frontline (including extension and escalations)		Investigation (including extended investigations)	
No. received	59	No. received	2
No. open	1	No. open	0
No. closed	58	No. closed	2
Deadline met + %	98.2%	Deadline met + %	100%
Deadline missed + %	1.8%*	Deadline missed + %	0%

*One frontline complaint deadline was missed.

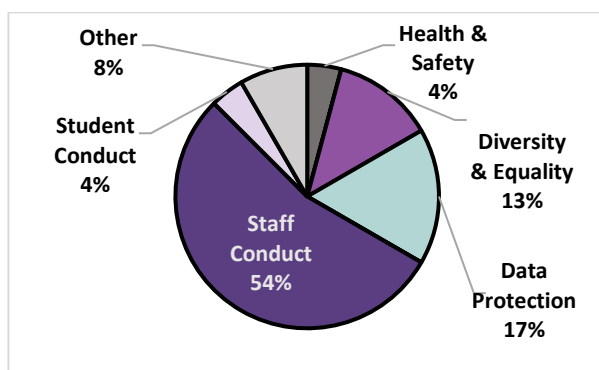
Total % Complaints Received by Campus



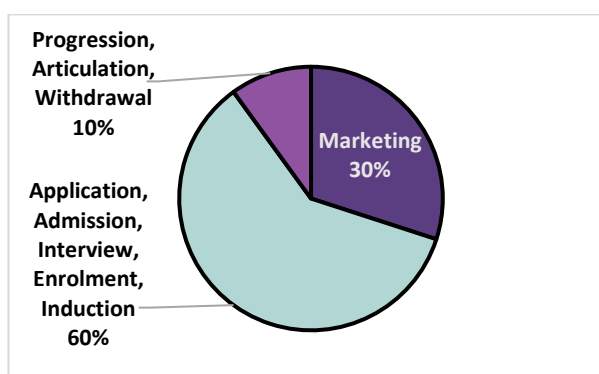
The Aberdeen City Campus has received the highest number of complaints (37) so far in academic year 2024-25. This coincides with the high stakeholder population at this campus. In comparison, the Altens campus has received 14 and the Fraserburgh campus has received two.

A total of 8 complaints have been processed as Other, relating to general college issues. There has been zero complaints received this academic year where we are unable to ascertain which campus it relates to.

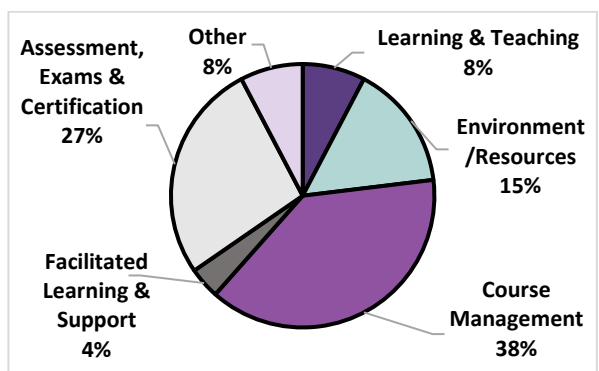
Each complaint is logged against the relevant category or categories according to its content. A summary of the categories logged so far is displayed below:



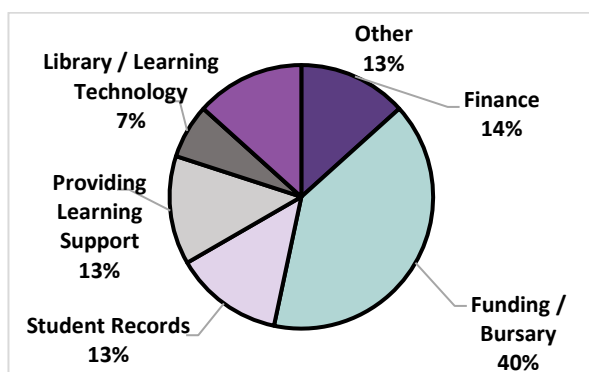
C1: Customer Care	
Health & Safety	1
Security	0
Diversity & Equality	3
Data Protection	4
Environmental	0
Staff Conduct	13
Student Conduct	1
Other	2



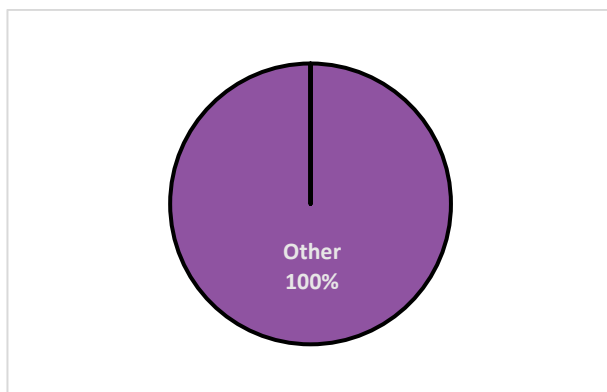
C2: Applications to Progression	
Marketing	3
Application, Admission, Interview, Enrolment, Induction	6
Progression, Articulation, Withdrawal	1
Other	0



C3: Course Related	
Learning & Teaching	2
Environment / Resources	4
Course Management	10
Facilitated Learning & Support	1
Assessment, Exams & Certification	7
Other	2



C4: Services	
Finance	2
Funding / Bursary	6
Student Records	2
Providing Learning Support	2
Library / Learning Technology	1
Quality etc.	0
Other	2



C5: Facilities	
Catering	0
Student Accommodation	0
Maintenance, Lifts, Car Parking	0
Other	2

Complaint Outcomes

The response to a complaint includes a decision about whether the different aspects of each complaint have been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

In line with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman amendments to the further education complaints handling model, a 'resolved' outcome is now required to be reported. A complaint can also be considered 'resolved' when initial actions rectify the complaint, without an investigation of the details taking place.

A breakdown of complaint outcomes is presented in the table below.

Complaint	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Resolved
Frontline	26	19	13	0
Investigation	1	1	0	0
Totals	27	20	13	0

*the totals here are more than the combined total of complaints as some complaints will have more than one point and each point will have a separate outcome.

Compliments/Thank You's

During the academic year to date, the quality department have been notified of six compliments via the NESCol online staff compliments form and e-mails.

The compliments and thank you's were made in relation to various teams across the college, highlighting support provided by staff in curriculum and support areas. Examples of compliments received were, overall team thank you for continued support, praise to member of staff for assisting a wheelchair user who required assistance, compliment to staff for encouraging student to come out of their shell allowing them to make friends and guidance and assistance from staff.

3. Lesson Observations

There are a number of lesson observations undertaken by the Quality department across the academic year ranging from those required for teaching qualifications such as TQFE (TQFE) and Teaching in Colleges Today (TiCT), others to confirm the contractual requirement for the 6-month employment probationary period and the quality lesson observations which are on a three-year cycle across all teaching staff at NESCol.

From September until the end of May 30 quality and 23 probationary lesson observations took place, these will continue until the middle of June 2025. Regarding the other lesson observations 17 TiCT observations have been completed. All of these observations are arranged with the teaching staff member directly (qualifications) or by alert of the week in which the observation will take place (probationary). In addition, a professional discussion takes place with the observee after the observation on the strengths, areas for improvement and on the embedding of the Professional Standards for lecturers within current teaching practice. A full report, and reflective account, is produced by the end of the process.

4. Training sessions with Academic Improvement Leads and Curriculum Managers

Academic Improvement Leads (AILs)

Building on the upskilling and development efforts from last academic year, the Quality department has continued its collaboration with the AIL team to foster continual improvement. As part of this initiative, we have introduced quarterly QA Questions & Updates sessions, held during the AIL Forum. These sessions are designed to promote open dialogue and teamwork, with the shared goal of driving quality enhancements through collective input and collaboration.

So far, three sessions have taken place, and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the value these discussions bring to our shared objectives.

Curriculum Managers (CMs)

Newly promoted Curriculum Managers have a higher level of responsibility for Quality Assurance activities, and to support and develop those management skills the quality department run bespoke sessions with all newly promoted Curriculum Managers. To date 2 most recent appointee's have completed their training, with a further 2 due to start their training in the new academic year.

The training sessions listed below have been completed.

- Curriculum Team Quality site review with SLE - a snapshot for the new CM as to where their team are with IV etc. and how to manage this process
- Curriculum Approval and Validation Process (CAVP) Part 1 – why, when, what, who
- Self Evaluation, Enhancement Plans, OurEvaluation, Stop and Reviews
- Focus Groups, Lesson Observations
- Preparing for end-of-year Internal Verification & pre-delivery block 2
- CAVP Part 2 – understanding the quality assurance required on teaching materials before delivery to students.

5. Staff Training

Introduction to Quality Assurance 101

As part of the re-invigorated induction program for new staff at NESCol, the decision was made to discontinue the previous six-week, in-person Prepare to Teach induction course. In its place, a streamlined Introduction to Quality Assurance 101 session has been introduced. Between August and May 2025, we have had 21.

This concise, three-hour induction covers the following key elements:

- Overview of the QA department
- SLE support, Lesson Observations & Focus Groups
- Role of the assessor
- Standardisation and Internal Verification
- Internal Verification
- Roles and Responsibilities
- External Verification
- Curriculum & Quality Essentials, including the Quality Hub resources.

The purpose of the session is to provide new staff with a core understanding of quality assurance principles and practices at NESCol, equipping them with the essential knowledge and tools to uphold and contribute to the college's standards of excellence.

Teaching in Colleges Today Award

This is a rolling programme across the academic year. There were 19 candidates enrolled, 1 left NESCol and another was withdrawn due to long-term illness. Of the remaining 17 candidates all have completed. The course is for those new teaching staff who do not have any professional teaching qualifications.

Academic Year	No. candidates	No. unable to complete	Remaining no.	No. complete	% complete
24-25 Candidates	19	2	17	17	100%

L&D9Di Award

There were initially nine L&D9Di candidates proposed for the qualification this academic session, three more candidates have been taken on in an additional late-start cohort to support the Modern Apprentice programmes, as they are employed as workplace assessors. Three candidates have completed and we are expecting six others to complete by June 2025 and the later cohort of three to complete in September 2025.

Academic Year	No. candidates	No. unable to complete	Remaining no.	No. complete	% complete
23-24 Candidates	12	0	12	3	25%

L&D11 Award

There are eight candidates enrolled in this academic year. Six candidates have successfully completed and we are expecting the remaining two to complete by the end of June 2025.

Academic Year	No. candidates	No. unable to complete	Remaining no.	No. complete	% complete
24-25 Candidates	8	0	8	6	75%

HN Assessor Award

There were nine candidates scheduled to undertake their qualification this academic session; three candidates have since been withdrawn from the course by their line managers and CPD . Four candidates have completed with the remaining two on schedule to complete by the end of June 2025.

Academic Year	No. candidates	No. unable to complete	Remaining no.	No. complete	% complete
24-25 Candidates	9	3	6	4	67%

HN Verifier Award

There were nine candidates undertaking their qualifications this academic year; one candidate has since been withdrawn from the course by their line manager and a further candidate has been deferred due to long-term absence for health reasons. Three candidates have successfully completed and the remaining four candidates are on schedule to complete by the end of June 2025.

Academic Year	No. candidates	No. unable to complete	Remaining no.	No. complete	% complete
24-25 Candidates	9	2	7	3	43%

6. Curriculum Approval & Validation Panel

Academic Year 2024-25 Submissions

A summary of the submissions for this session to date is presented below:

Group Award Programme (Fast Track)		
Awarding Body	Qualification	Status
CIPD	CIPD L5 Associate Diploma in People Management	Developed
NESCol/SQA	Entry to Construction L5	Developed
Group Award Modification (Code or Name Change Only)		
Awarding Body	Qualification	Status
SQA	HNC Computing NextGen:HN	Developed
City & Guilds	Design and Installation of Domestic and Small commercial electric vehicle charging installations	Developed
NESCol	Musicianship – Proposed Level 6	Developed

Group Award Modifications		
Awarding Body	Qualification	Status
SQA	HNC Petroleum Process Operations and Control Technology	Developed
SQA	HND Media and Communications	Developed
SQA	HND Sports Coaching	Developed
SQA/NESCol	ESOL - Level 3	Developed
NCFE	Certificate for Entry to the Uniformed Services - Level 3	Developed
SQA	Enterprise Skills - Level 4	Developed
SQA/NESCol	Healthcare - Level 5 (City Campus) Social Care - Level 5 (City Campus) Health & Social Care - Level 5 (Fraserburgh Campus)	Developed
SQA/NESCol	Social Science: 21st Perspectives on Society and Culture	Developed
City & Guilds	Level 3 Award in the Requirements for the Design and Installation of Domestic and Small Commercial Electric Vehicle Charging Installations	Developed
SQA	HNC Fashion Business	Developed
SQA	HND Contemporary Arts Practice	Developed
SQA	Access to Software Development Level 6	In Progress
SQA	Introduction to Computing Technologies	Developed
SQA/ City & Guilds/ NESCol	Enterprise Skills Level 4	Developed
SQA	Business, Accounting and Administration Level 5/6	Developed
SQA	NC Applied Science – Level 5	Developed
SQA	NC Applied Science – Level 6	Developed
NESCol	Forensic Science & Biotechnology – Level 6	Developed
SQA	NPA Maritime Studies	Developed
SQA	NPA Musical Theatre	In Progress
SQA/ NESCol	Access to Software Development – Level 6	In Progress
SQA/ NESCol	Advanced Health & Social Care – Level 6	In Progress
SQA/ NESCol	Advanced Social Care – Level 6	In Progress
City & Guilds	SVQ Diploma in Beauty Therapy – Level 6	In Progress
SQA/ NESCol	Business, Accounting & Administration – Level 5/6	Developed
SQA/ NESCol	Creative Graphic Art & Design (School Links)	In Progress
SQA/ NESCol	Advanced Healthcare – Level 6	In Progress
SQA	HND Business (year 1)	In Progress
SQA	HND Legal Services (year 2)	In Progress
SQA	HND Media & Communication	In Progress
SQA	HND Travel & Tourism	In Progress
SQA/NESCol	Photography Portfolio Builder – Level 6	In Progress
Group Award Proposals		
Awarding Body	Qualification	Status
SQA	NPA Events Level 6	Developed
NESCol / SQA	International Travel and Tourism (units Level 6)	Developed

SQA	NPA Engineering L5	Developed
SQA	HNC Sport & Coaching Development	In Progress
NCFE/NESCol	Level 1 Certificate in Food & Cookery Skills	In Progress
NCFE/NESCol	Level 2 Certificate in Food & Cookery Skills	In Progress
SQA/NESCol	Introduction to Care Professions	Developed
SQA	HNC Social Science with Criminology	Developed
SQA	NPA Psychology	Developed
SQA/Fife College/NES Col	Level 5 Health & Social Care	In Progress
College Devised (CDDP)		
Awarding Body	Qualification	Status
NESCol	Fashion Range Planning (Unit)	Developed
NESCol	Music & Sound Course	Developed

7. External Verification Visits

Schedule of External Verification Visits

Awarding Body	Scheduled Visits	Completed Visits
Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)	44	23
City & Guilds (C&G)	12	3
International Leadership Management (ILM)	3	2
Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE)	2	2
Excellence, Achievement and Learning (EAL)	2	2
King's Trust	2	2
Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT)	1	0
Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI)	1	1
Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)	1	0
Teaching in Colleges Today (TiCT)	1	1
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIE)	1	0
OPITO	1	1
Total	72	37

***7 additional EV activities have taken place in the last 10 days with the report yet to be received.**

Outcome Summary for Completed External Verification Visits

Awarding Body	Actions	Good Practice	Recommendation / Improvement
Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)	22	32	24
City & Guilds (C&G)	1	0	1
International Leadership Management (ILM)	0	0	5

Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE)	0	0	N/A
Excellence, Achievement and Learning (EAL)	0	20	0
King's Trust	0	7	0
Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT)	0	0	0
Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI)	3	0	0
Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)	0	0	0
Teaching in Colleges Today	0	0	0
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIE)	0	0	0
Total			

Actions and recommendations are tracked by the Director of Quality. The Heads of Sector, Business Development Managers and Curriculum Managers monitor required responses to ensure they align with awarding body deadline dates for implementation.

REGIONAL BOARD Meeting of 17 June 2025	
Title: ASET Risk Register Update	
Author: Stuart Thompson Vice Principal Finance & Resources	Contributor(s): Executive Team
Type of Agenda Item: For Decision <input type="checkbox"/> For Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> For Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reserved Item of Business <input type="checkbox"/>	
Purpose: To enable the Board to note the updated ASET Risk Register.	
Linked to Strategic Theme: 5. Leading Sustainability	
Linked to Strategic Risk(s): 5.2 1.5; 5.1; 5.2; 5.5	
Executive Summary: The Audit & Risk Committee met on the 28 th May 2025, discussed the following paper.	
Recommendation: It is recommended the Board to note the ASET Risk Register.	
Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable): N/A	
Equality Impact Assessment: Positive Impact <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Impact <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evidence: This report is for information only.	



Agenda Item 46-24

AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE	
Meeting of 28 May 2025	
Title: ASET Risk Register update	
Author: S Thompson, Vice Principal – Finance and Resources	Contributor(s): Strategic Leadership Team
Type of Agenda Item: For Decision <input type="checkbox"/> For Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For Information <input type="checkbox"/> Reserved Item of Business <input type="checkbox"/>	
Purpose: To enable the Committee to discuss and agree the updated ASET risk register.	
Linked to Strategic Theme: 5. Leading Sustainability	
Linked to Strategic Risk(s): n/a	
Executive Summary: The attached ASET risk register will be presented at the ASET Board meeting on the 29 May 2025.	
Main Points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASET have amended their risk register to follow the NESCol template. • ASET have identified 15 strategic risks. • No additional risks are identified. • 20 scores (RED) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3.2 If ASET is unable to effectively manage its' cost base THEN this will further reduce ASET's profitability and challenge future sustainability. ○ 4.2 If NESCol is unsuccessful in renewing the OPITO or ECITB apprenticeships or there is a significant reduction in apprentice numbers THEN this would significantly reduce ASET's revenue and 	

impact on overall activity levels potentially leading to redundancies.

- 4.3 If the credits claimed for the Scaffolding Apprentice programme are insufficient THEN this would significantly reduce the overall revenues of the Scaffolding Department below commercially viable levels leading to the closure of the facility and potential reputational damage from adverse reaction of CITB and local construction industry.

- **16 scores (AMBER)**

- 2.2 If ASET loses specialist/scarce resources employed in specific areas, THEN this will adversely impact on ASET's ability to continue to deliver in these areas.
- 2.5 If key/specialist IT systems are lost THEN ASET will be unable to deliver in these areas while the systems remain unoperational and may incur significant expense to repair/replace.
- 3.1 If ASET is unable to grow its' revenue due to contraction of the Oil & Gas sector; delays in the emergence of Renewables; failure to enter new training markets/sectors; and/or strengthening competition in the training market THEN this may adversely impact ASET's ability to generate a satisfactory level of Gift Aid and challenge future sustainability.
- 4.1 If insufficient funding is available to maintain modern fit-for-purpose buildings, facilities and equipment THEN this will negatively impact the quality of training and delegate experience and ASET's ability to compete effectively in the market.

Recommendation: Review and highlight any issues to be discussed with ASET.

Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable): n/a

Equality Impact Assessment:

Positive Impact ☐

Negative Impact ☐

No Impact ☒

Evidence:

ASET STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

Ref	Objectives and Risks	Risk Owner	Current Likelihood (1 - 5)	Current Impact (1 - 5)	Current Rating (max=25)	Target Likelihood (1 - 5)	Target Impact (1 - 5)	Target Total (max=25)	Prev
1	Strategic Goal 1: Compliance with statutory/legislative, financial, and awarding body requirements. Risk Appetite - Averse								
1.1	If ASET does not adhere to key statutory obligations and legislative requirements THEN ASET may face significant financial penalties and/or reputational damage may occur.	Snr Ops Manager	2	3	6	1	3	3	
1.2	If ASET (NESCoI) is the victim of a cyber attack THEN ASET may experience IT systems outages and/or data security breaches, both resulting in significant business disruption.	Snr Ops Manager	3	4	12	2	3	6	
1.3	If ASET is the victim of a fraud (including cyber crime) THEN ASET may experience financial detriment and be subject to increased audit scrutiny.	Snr Ops Manager	2	3	6	1	2	2	
1.4	If ASET does not adhere to awarding body standards THEN ASET may lose its approved status and suffer reputational damage.	Ops Manager	2	3	6	1	3	3	
2	Strategic Goal 2: Manage Operational risks. Risk Appetite - Cautious								
2.1	If ASET is unable to recruit, retain and develop appropriately qualified staff THEN this will adversely impact on service delivery and quality, company performance, and growth.	Snr Ops Manager	3	3	9	2	2	4	
2.2	If ASET loses specialist/scarcely resources employed in specific areas, THEN this will adversely impact on ASET's ability to continue to deliver in these areas.	Ops Manager	4	4	16	3	3	9	
2.3	If ASET staff are sent to work overseas THEN this may expose staff to risks arising from cultural differences, political instability, and health and safety concerns.	Ops Manager	2	4	8	2	2	4	
2.4	If ASET does not implement satisfactory Health & Safety procedures THEN ASET may be exposed to increased risk of personal injuries to staff, contractors, visitors, resulting in reputational damage and litigation.	Ops Manager	3	3	9	2	2	4	
2.5	If key/specialist IT systems are lost THEN ASET will be unable to deliver in these areas while the systems remain unoperational and may incur significant expense to repair/replace.	Ops Manager	4	4	16	2	3	6	
3	Strategic Goal 3: Management of Financial Risks/Maximisation of Gift Aid to NESCoI. Risk Appetite - Open								
3.1	If ASET is unable to grow its' revenue due to contraction of the Oil & Gas sector; delays in the emergence of Renewables; failure to enter new training markets/sectors; and/or strengthening competition in the training market THEN this may adversely impact ASET's ability to generate a satisfactory level of Gift Aid and challenge future sustainability.	BD Manager	4	4	16	3	4	12	
3.2	If ASET is unable to effectively manage its' cost base THEN this will further reduce ASET's profitability and challenge future sustainability.	Snr Ops Manager	5	4	20	4	3	12	
3.3	If ASET is unable to maintain a healthy cash flow THEN this will adversely impact on ASET's ability to support its' day-to-day operations.	Snr Ops Manager	3	4	12	2	3	6	
4	Strategic Goal 4: Collaborate effectively with NESCoI to deliver a high quality, modern training environment and contribute towards delivery of the future skills needs of the region. Risk Appetite - Cautious								
4.1	If insufficient funding is available to maintain modern fit-for-purpose buildings, facilities and equipment THEN this will negatively impact the quality of training and delegate experience and ASET's ability to compete effectively in the market.	Snr Ops Manager	4	4	16	3	3	9	
4.2	If NESCoI is unsuccessful in renewing the OPITO or ECITB apprenticeships or there is a significant reduction in apprentice numbers THEN this would significantly reduce ASET's revenue and impact on overall activity levels potentially leading to redundancies.	Ops Manager	5	4	20	4	4	16	
4.3	If the credits claimed for the Scaffolding Apprentice programme are insufficient THEN this would significantly reduce the overall revenues of the Scaffolding Department below commercially viable levels leading to the closure of the facility and potential reputational damage from adverse reaction of CITB and local construction industry.	Snr Ops Manager	5	4	20	4	3	12	

PROPOSED SCORE CHANGES

SCORES 0-7 9-19 >19

5x5 Risk Matrix Scoring Guide

Impact

How severe would the outcome be if the risk occurred?

Probability
What is the probability the risk will happen?

	Insignificant 1	Minor 2	Significant 3	Major 4	Severe 5
5 Almost Certain	Medium 5	High 10	Very high 15	Extreme 20	Extreme 25
4 Likely	Medium 4	Medium 8	High 12	Very high 16	Extreme 20
3 Moderate	Low 3	Medium 6	Medium 9	High 12	Very high 15
2 Unlikely	Very low 2	Low 4	Medium 6	Medium 8	High 10
1 Rare	Very low 1	Very low 2	Low 3	Medium 4	Medium 5

Score	Description of Impact	Reputational	Financial	Operational	External
5	Catastrophic	Sustained national media interest Significant Public reaction (outcry)	Over £1,000,000 impact now or within 12 months in the future Any suspected serious fraud	Significant impact on achievement of strategy or operational activities. Affecting more than 5% of a business units' customers or staff Total failure of a supplier / partner Loss of ability to sustain ongoing operation resulting in cessation of activities at business unit level for more than 24 hours	Significant stakeholder and regulatory concern
4	Major	Regional/national media interest Any event which may affect our standing with regulators Significant loss of confidence	£250,001 - £1,000,000 where impact now or 12 months in future Any suspected fraud	Significant impact on achievement of strategy or operational activities Affecting up to 5% of a business units' customers or staff Partial failure of a supplier / partner Operational or system failure for up to 24 hours	Significant stakeholder concern
3	Moderate	Regional media interest Any event which may tarnish our reputation with a specific customer, group or third party	£50,001- £250,000 where impact now or 12 months in future	Moderate impact on achievement of strategy or operational activities Affecting a small number of customers or staff Deteriorating performance of a supplier / partner Operational or system failure for more than 8 hours	Moderate stakeholder concern
2	Minor	Managed incident Limited customer impact	£5,001 - £50,000	Minor impact on achievement of strategy or operational activities Small Deterioration in performance of a supplier / partner Operational or system failure for less than 1 hour	Limited stakeholder concern
1	Insignificant	Managed incident No customer impact	£5,000 or less	Low impact on achievement of strategy or operational activities	Low stakeholder concern

ASET STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

Ref	Objectives and Risks	Risk Owner	Current Likelihood (1 - 5)	Current Impact (1 - 5)	Current Rating (max=25)	Target Likelihood (1 - 5)	Target Impact (1 - 5)	Target Total (max=25)
1.1	If ASET does not adhere to key statutory obligations and legislative requirements THEN ASET may face significant financial penalties and/or reputational damage may occur.	Snr Ops Manager	2	3	6	1	3	3

MITIGATIONS

- Data Protection Officer and legal advice
- Comprehensive policies and procedures
- Staff training and competencies
- Internal audits to review processes and compliance
- External audits to review processes and compliance (awarding bodies and external financial audits)
- Liaison with NESCol staff eg HR, H&S, Information Security
- Legal advice eg Burness Paull, Worknest
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ASET STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

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ASET STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

Ref	Objectives and Risks	Risk Owner	Current Likelihood (1 - 5)	Current Impact (1 - 5)	Current Rating (max=25)	Target Likelihood (1 - 5)	Target Impact (1 - 5)	Target Total (max=25)
2.1	If ASET is unable to recruit, retain and develop appropriately qualified staff THEN this will adversely impact on service delivery and quality, company performance, and growth.	Snr Ops Manager	3	3	9	2	2	4

MITIGATIONS

- Recruitment and selection policy
- Staff induction arrangements regularly reviewed and enhanced
- Create a positive culture and working environment where staff feel valued, supported, and able to contribute effectively
- Competitive salaries and benefits package (pension, sickness, holidays, death in service, income protection)
- Succession planning and promote from within where possible
- Provide opportunities for personal development where possible eg training and development, attendance at events and conferences, involvement in projects, mentorship
- Regular communication and forums for staff to provide feedback to management

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ASET STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

Ref	Objectives and Risks	Risk Owner	Current Likelihood (1 - 5)	Current Impact (1 - 5)	Current Rating (max=25)	Target Likelihood (1 - 5)	Target Impact (1 - 5)	Target Total (max=25)
2.3	If ASET staff are sent to work overseas THEN this may expose staff to risks arising from cultural differences, political instability, and health and safety concerns.	Ops Manager	2	4	8	2	2	4

MITIGATIONS

- Risk assessments carried out prior to travel including review of Foreign Office and media travel advice, and OH requirements
- Staff briefings prior to travel
- Travel, medical and kidnap and ransom insurance policies
- Regular/daily contact with overseas staff
- In-country travel must be with recognised and established local or international travel networks (rail, bus, air, taxi)

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ASET STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

Ref	Objectives and Risks	Risk Owner	Current Likelihood (1 - 5)	Current Impact (1 - 5)	Current Rating (max=25)	Target Likelihood (1 - 5)	Target Impact (1 - 5)	Target Total (max=25)
2.4	If ASET does not implement satisfactory Health & Safety procedures THEN ASET may be exposed to increased risk of personal injuries to staff, contractors, visitors, resulting in reputational damage and litigation.	Ops Manager	3	3	9	2	2	4

MITIGATIONS

- ASET/NESCol Health & Safety policies and procedures
- Health & Safety inductions to all new staff and visitors
- Regular reviews of Health & Safety performance at Operations, Senior Management and ASET Board meetings
- Provision of PPE to ASET staff and contractors
- PPE requirements communicated to delegates via course joining instructions
- Regular planned maintenance of equipment
- Monthly site inspections and reports
- Liaison with NESCol Head of Health, Safety and Security
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ASET STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

Ref	Objectives and Risks	Risk Owner	Current Likelihood (1 - 5)	Current Impact (1 - 5)	Current Rating (max=25)	Target Likelihood (1 - 5)	Target Impact (1 - 5)	Target Total (max=25)
2.5	If key/specialist IT systems are lost THEN ASET will be unable to deliver in these areas while the systems remain unoperational and may incur significant expense to repair/replace.	Ops Manager	4	4	16	2	3	6

MITIGATIONS

- Separate IT Risk Register compiled in conjunction with NESCol IT covering all IT based resources
- Software support arrangements in place where available
- Key Concern 1: Dynamic Positioning Simulator. Current mitigations in place are as follows:
 - * Ongoing Monitoring of Dynamic Positioning Simulator by Head of Marine Department
 - * NESCol IT Team investigating back-up options for the Dynamic Positioning Simulator
- Key Concern 2: Rig Move functionality on Jack-Up Simulator
 - * Liaising with PISYS Ltd to provide software update to address the failures experienced with the JackUp Rig Move functionality
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ASET STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER								
Ref	Objectives and Risks	Risk Owner	Current Likelihood (1 - 5)	Current Impact (1 - 5)	Current Rating (max=25)	Target Likelihood (1 - 5)	Target Impact (1 - 5)	Target Total (max=25)
3.1	If ASET is unable to grow its' revenue due to contraction of the Oil & Gas sector; delays in the emergence of Renewables; failure to enter new training markets/sectors; and/or strengthening competition in the training market THEN this may adversely impact ASET's ability to generate a satisfactory level of Gift Aid and challenge future sustainability.	BD Manager	4	4	16	3	4	12
MITIGATIONS								
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ongoing monitoring and review of market and competitor activity and pricing								
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Annual inflationary increases applied to course fees (while also remaining competitive in comparison to competitor pricing)								
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ongoing review and update of ASET's marketing strategy and marketing plan								
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Conduct market research covering key target sectors								
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Business Development Manager sales targets								
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Investment in staff training and/or equipment to support diversification strategy								
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Collaboration with NESCol eg via the Strategy Working Group								
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Secure external funding to support new market entry strategies								
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Monitor and review the effectiveness of existing partnerships and memberships								
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Explore potential new partnerships and collaboration with the supply chain								
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Monitor impact of US tariffs on ASET's customer base								
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Maintain contact with customers to understand future changes in demand (positive and negative)								
<ul style="list-style-type: none">-								
<ul style="list-style-type: none">-								
<ul style="list-style-type: none">-								

ASET STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

Ref	Objectives and Risks	Risk Owner	Current Likelihood (1 - 5)	Current Impact (1 - 5)	Current Rating (max=25)	Target Likelihood (1 - 5)	Target Impact (1 - 5)	Target Total (max=25)
3.2	If ASET is unable to effectively manage its' cost base THEN this will further reduce ASET's profitability and challenge future sustainability.	Snr Ops Manager	5	4	20	4	3	12

MITIGATIONS

- Ongoing monitoring and review of budgets, forecasts and controls over approval of spend
- Review of financial performance at Senior Management and Board meetings
- Planned relocation out of Clinterty Campus to reduce property overheads
- Review of classroom utilisation
- Development of a formal recharge agreement between NESCol and ASET
- Review of suppliers to ensure value for money
- Monitor impact of US tariff's on ASET's cost base

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ASET STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

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ASET STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

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REGIONAL BOARD Meeting of 17 June 2025	
Title: SFC Financial Forecast Return (FFR)	
Author: Stuart Thompson Vice Principal Finance & Resources	Contributor(s): Executive Team
Type of Agenda Item: For Decision <input type="checkbox"/> For Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> For Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reserved Item of Business <input type="checkbox"/>	
Purpose: To enable the Board to note the recent SFC Financial Forecast Return.	
Linked to Strategic Theme: 5. Leading Sustainability	
Linked to Strategic Risk(s): 5.2 1.5; 5.1; 5.2; 5.5	
Executive Summary: SFC issued the following guidance on the 3 rd June 2025 with a completion deadline of 30 th June 2025. The FFR will be completed based on the approved 2025-26 budget and the 5 year financial planning paper.	
Recommendation: It is recommended the Board note the communication.	
Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable): N/A	
Equality Impact Assessment: Positive Impact <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Impact <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evidence: This report is for information only.	

Financial Forecast Return (FFR) for Colleges 2024-25 to 2027-28



Financial Forecast Return (FFR) for Colleges: 2024-25 to 2027-28

Issue Date:	3 June 2025
Reference:	SFC/CI/05/2025
Deadline	30 June 2025
Summary:	This Call for Information requests colleges to complete a medium-term financial forecast return for the period 2024-25 to 2027-28.
FAO:	Principals, Finance Directors and Board Secretaries of Scotland's Regional Colleges, non-assigned non-incorporated colleges, and Regional Strategic Body for the Highlands and Islands; and the general public.
Further Information:	<p>CONTACT: Andrew Millar / Wilma MacDonald</p> <p>JOB TITLE: Assistant Director / Senior Financial Analyst</p> <p>DIRECTORATE: Finance & Funding</p> <p>TEL: 0131 313 6538 / 0131 313 6565</p> <p>EMAIL: amillar@sfc.ac.uk / wmacdonald@sfc.ac.uk</p>

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Financial Forecast Return (FFR) for Colleges: 2024-25 to 2027-28

Purpose

1. This Call for Information requests colleges / Regional Strategic Bodies to complete a medium-term financial forecast return for the Academic Years (AY) 2024-25 to 2027-28. It includes indicative funding assumptions that will assist colleges in their financial planning.
2. Regional colleges, non-assigned non-incorporated colleges, and Regional Strategic Bodies (RSBs) should send their returns to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) by 30 June 2025.
3. For colleges in the Highlands and Islands region, individual returns will be required from the RSB for each of the assigned colleges by 30 June 2025.

Financial forecast return

4. The financial forecast return (FFR) is an established part of SFC's financial health monitoring framework. Financial projections are a key source of information in enabling SFC to monitor and assess the medium-term financial planning and health of colleges.
5. SFC's Financial Memorandum with colleges and RSBs requires colleges to plan and manage their activities to remain sustainable and financially viable. It is therefore critical that colleges take the necessary actions to balance their adjusted operating position, reflect these actions in their FFRs, and provide a full description of their financial plans in the FFR commentary.
6. Colleges should aim to achieve a balanced budget each year. Where a deficit is forecast in any year, colleges must work towards bringing income and expenditure back into balance over the forecast period. Colleges should provide us with a narrative which clearly sets out the actions that will be required to address financial sustainability challenges, and any resulting adverse impact on staff and students. Please also provide copies of relevant Board or Finance Committee papers; if these papers include the narrative requested, a separate commentary is not required.
7. We expect colleges to review their business models/strategic plans in light of the tight financial environment. Please provide a summary of changes made and/or under consideration. If no review has taken place, please provide the reason for this.
8. **It is important to note that we have no information on Scottish Government funding beyond Financial Year 2025-26 (year to 31 March 2026) so these assumptions are indicative.**
9. This year's return follows the same format as last year's FFR and 2023-24 annual accounts return. We have added a sheet to the return to capture the impacts of an alternative funding scenario that we are asking colleges to model.

Arms-length foundations

10. Arms-length foundations (ALFs) were established to mitigate the impact of incorporated colleges' reclassification as arms-length central government bodies. Colleges are encouraged to maximise ALF funding to support their financial position, where appropriate. Any donations to ALFs should only be made where budget cover is available from net surpluses arising from commercial activity during the Financial Year to 31 March. Government funds cannot be donated in this way. Please contact SFC if your college is considering an ALF donation.

Return of the FFR

11. Finance Directors will receive an individual spreadsheet which we have pre-populated with the 2023-24 annual accounts figures. For assigned colleges in the Highlands and Islands region, we will send the pre-populated return to the RSB.
12. Guidance for completion of the return can be found in **Annex B** below. A blank copy of the spreadsheet return template is published on our website along with this Call for Information. The template is unlocked so that it can be used in preparing the figures for the return. We would request that colleges complete the pre-populated return provided for submission to SFC.
13. Colleges are required to complete the forecast figures for the period 2024-25 through to 2027-28. Please note that the guidance in **Annex B** requests a commentary on the financial forecasts which should cover the context in which the forecasts have been prepared. Your commentary will be as important as the figures you submit, as this will help us better understand the issues facing your college and will support follow-up engagement. Scenario planning is a normal part of financial planning. Please include commentary on any additional scenario planning, working through a range of assumptions and options to show the trade-offs involved, and choices you could make to reach an optimal position for your college.
14. Please enter explanations for significant variances (+/- 5% or over 2% of total expenditure) on the spreadsheet. As with previous forecast exercises, we may come back to colleges with queries and requests for further details following our analysis of the forecast information.

Information requested

15. Please email an electronic copy of the return in Excel format, and the financial commentary to SFC by 30 June 2025. Please also provide copies of the relevant Committee and/or Board papers. If the schedule of governing body meetings makes it difficult to achieve this deadline, please contact us as soon as possible. In that instance, please provide a draft return including the full commentary by 30 June 2025 with the final approved version to be provided as soon as possible thereafter.
16. Because financial returns are essential for SFC's institutional financial health monitoring and reporting, it is important that returns are submitted to SFC by the deadline and are

completed fully. Colleges should also ensure that the forecasts are as accurate and dependable as possible.

17. Where staff restructuring costs are included in 2025-26, colleges should provide a copy of the proposed voluntary severance scheme and details of planned restructuring (where not already submitted to SFC). Colleges should also outline restructuring plans beyond 2025-26, where applicable, in the financial commentary.
18. Electronic copies of the return and supporting documents should be sent to isg-returns@sfc.ac.uk.

Further information

19. Please contact Andrew Millar, Assistant Director, Finance & Funding (tel: 0131 313 6538; email: amillar@sfc.ac.uk) or Wilma MacDonald, Senior Financial Analyst, Finance & Funding (tel: 0131 313 6565; email: wmacdonald@sfc.ac.uk) to discuss any aspect of this communication.

Ursula Lodge CPFA

Deputy Director, Institutional Sustainability & Capital

Annex A

Key FFR planning assumptions

1. We have developed income and expenditure assumptions that should be used in preparing the FFR. These assumptions are provided for the purpose of supporting planning consistency across the sector.
2. It is important to note that we have no information on Scottish Government funding beyond Financial Year 2025-26, so these assumptions are indicative. **Colleges should therefore also develop any additional planning scenarios they consider appropriate for their operating environment/circumstances.**

SFC grant assumptions

Credits and teaching income

3. Core funding for 2025-26 should be based on the [final college sector funding allocations](#) for AY 2025-26 announced on 29 May 2025.
4. If it is anticipated that core credit thresholds will not be met in any year, funding should be reduced accordingly, after mitigations of 2% tolerance and decoupling of 20% of Teaching Funding credit value permitted to reduce planning volatility. All other SFC funds should also be considered as subject to recovery unless agreed directly with SFC.
5. As in previous years, we are providing colleges with guidance on assumptions in relation to SFC grant funding for 2026-27 and 2027-28 that should be used in preparing the FFR. To be clear, **this does not reflect SFC policy and is not an indication of future funding allocations.** These assumptions are provided to support sector-wide planning consistency.
6. In preparing the FFR colleges should assume that:
 - Total SFC core grant funding for the sector for 2026-27 and 2027-28, including funding for lecturers' pay, pension costs and National Insurance costs, remains unchanged from those set out in the 2025-26 final funding announcement.
 - The mitigations included in 2025-26 funding allocations will be unwound with equal annual adjustments over the three academic years 2026-27 to 2028-29. The 2025-26 mitigations are included in the additional table that was provided to colleges along with the indicative funding announcement.
7. Colleges are also requested to provide an alternative funding scenario, assuming SFC grant funding and related credit thresholds for 2026-27 and 2027-28 remain unchanged from those announced for 2025-26.
8. The **Regional Strategic Body for the Highlands and Islands region** will need to advise its

assigned colleges of their funding assumptions over the forecast period to 2027-28.

Student support funding

9. Colleges should assume that all student support funding requirements will be fully met.

Capital Maintenance

10. SFC Capital Maintenance funding should be based on the final 2025-26 funding allocations announced on 29 May 2025. Colleges should assume that this funding must be used for capital expenditure only. SFC continues to engage with the Scottish Government on this matter.

Other assumptions

Non-SFC income

11. Non-SFC income projections should be prepared taking account of local circumstances. Colleges will need to take account of the latest available information from staff with responsibility for securing and delivering non-SFC funded activity while taking account of anticipated levels of demand.

Staff costs

12. Colleges should factor in cost of living pay award increases for all staff.
13. For support staff, colleges should continue to account for job evaluation costs based on Colleges Scotland costings. Job evaluation costs should be included in the 'Other staff costs' line on the Expenditure sheet with a corresponding adjustment being entered in the Adjusted operating result sheet.
14. Public sector pay policy for the three financial years 2025-26 to 2027-28 was published by Scottish Government in December 2024. Colleges should therefore assume a total pay award of 9% over these three years. Incremental pay increases should also be reflected throughout the period, where appropriate. As the lecturers' pay has already been agreed, colleges should assume 4.14% for lecturers in AY 2025-26 with the pay increases in the remaining two years bringing the balance of the total pay award over the three years to 9%.
15. Colleges should demonstrate how they would plan to generate the savings required to implement the above pay guidance.
16. Pension cost forecasts should reflect any known or expected changes to employer contribution rates.
17. For this FFR, colleges should assume that additional funding will be provided to cover the cost of increased employer contributions to the Scottish Teachers Superannuation Scheme which have been implemented from April 2024. Colleges should note that

funding is likely but the Scottish Government has yet to finalise the Barnett consequential of the announced UK Government support for central government funded bodies.

18. Colleges should assume that funding will not be provided for severance costs.
19. FRS 102 pension adjustments should be excluded from the forecasts.

Non-staff costs

20. Non-staff cost projections should be prepared taking account of local circumstances.
21. Colleges should demonstrate where they plan to generate required savings, where applicable.

Estates

22. Estates-related cost projections should be prepared taking account of local circumstances. Forecast utility costs should be based upon local circumstances and latest APUC guidance.
23. For the purposes of planning, colleges should assume that no funding for RAAC remediation will be available.

Disposals

24. On 28 January 2025, the Minister for Higher and Further Education wrote to colleges regarding a new approach to the college asset disposal process. SFC will shortly publish updated disposals guidance, setting out in detail how this new approach will operate in practice. It is important to note that the Minister retains the right to direct use of any proceeds, regardless of amount, as set out in section 18 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992.
25. Forecasts should reflect any planned property disposals and include both expected proceeds and costs of disposal. All proposed disposals, regardless of the level of anticipated receipt and the proposed use of the proceeds, must be notified to SFC who may direct how the proceeds are to be utilised.

Cost savings

26. Forecasts should reflect cost savings required to bring income and expenditure into balance. Colleges may wish to consider the College Transformation Framework as a tool to help bring budgets to balance. We appreciate that some of these savings will have already been identified, but there may be work ongoing to secure the remainder. We have included a text box in the 'Efficiencies' worksheet in the FFR template which should be used to add supporting narrative.
27. The baseline for measuring staff and non-staff cost savings should be the prior year (e.g., 2023-24 actuals for 2024-25, 2024-25 updated forecast for 2025-26).

Cash forecasting

28. Colleges are required to provide high-level cash balances as part of the balance sheet projections for all years in the planning period.

Annex B

Guidance for completion

Structure of the FFR

1. The FFR takes the form of an Excel spreadsheet which has fourteen worksheets. A copy of the spreadsheet is published along with this Call for Information.
2. Thirteen of the sheets require input by the college. We suggest the order of completion is:
 - (i) Pension assumptions.
 - (ii) Arms-Length Foundation (ALF) funding.
 - (iii) Income.
 - (iv) Expenditure.
 - (v) SoCIE.
 - (vi) Adjusted operating result.
 - (vii) Balance Sheet.
 - (viii) Liquidity analysis.
 - (ix) Cashflow.
 - (x) Capital expenditure.
 - (xi) Efficiencies.
 - (xii) Alternative funding scenario.
 - (xiii) Declaration.

Sheets not requiring completion

3. The Summary sheet does not require to be completed. This summarises various key figures from the spreadsheet and is calculated automatically.

Completion of the FFR

Input of financial forecast figures

4. The worksheets in the spreadsheet contain blue highlighted boxes for the input of the actual and forecast figures.
5. Please note that only whole numbers can be input into the return. Please do not link the spreadsheet to another document or change the formatting in the spreadsheet.
6. Please enter explanations for any significant variances (+/- 5% or over 2% of total

expenditure) where appropriate.

Commentary

7. Colleges should also provide a commentary on the financial forecasts. This serves five purposes:
 - To explain how the financial forecasts represent the college's strategic plan.
 - To enable a proper understanding of key aspects of the financial forecast.
 - To explain the actions taken by the college to remain sustainable and financially viable, including financial and non-financial impact of cost saving measures.
 - To explain the impact of any other scenarios considered by the college.
 - To explain any potential alternative options and trade-offs you could make, to reach a more optimal position for your college.
8. It is important that detailed commentaries are provided to support the financial forecasts. This will enable us to prepare a meaningful analysis of the underlying operations of the sector.
9. The following areas should be covered by the commentary:

Introduction

10. This should cover the context in which the forecasts have been prepared. It should include an explanation of how the elements of the college's strategic plan, human resource management strategy and estates strategy are reflected in the forecasts, and how these developments are to be financed.
11. We expect colleges will be reviewing their business models/strategic plans in light of the continuing tight financial environment. Please provide a brief summary of changes made and/or under consideration. If no review has taken place, please provide the reason for this.

Review of financial performance 2024-25

12. Discuss the key features of the latest forecast financial performance in 2024-25, highlight positive and negative variances from the 2023-24 annual accounts and 2025 Mid-Year Return forecast and the main reasons for these variances.

SFC recurrent grant

13. You should confirm that SFC grant income for 2025-26 is in accordance with the AY 2025-26 [final college sector funding allocations](#) issued on 29 May 2025.

Changes in tuition fee income and other income

14. This should include details of the assumptions made regarding student numbers and the reasons for year-on-year movements in other sources of income.

Commercial income

15. You should document plans for commercial income generation and any barriers. Please also confirm what this activity is, how it will be funded and confirm the expected net contribution from such activity.

Changes in staff and non-staff costs

16. Discuss the reasons for year-on-year movements in pay and non-pay expenditure and the impact on non-pay expenditure of price changes and changes in the level of activity.
17. In particular the following areas should be addressed:
 - Assumptions regarding pay awards and their impact on pay expenditure.
 - Assumptions regarding staff numbers.
 - Assumptions regarding staff restructuring including voluntary severance or compulsory redundancies.
 - Assumptions regarding future pension contribution costs.
 - Assumptions regarding inflationary pressures.

Balance sheet – cash position

18. Please provide detailed commentary about the college's operating cash position, especially if this position is deteriorating over the forecast period or in any one year. The commentary should also highlight any expected breach of loan covenants as well as details of negotiated repayment holidays.

Contingency planning

19. Colleges will have prepared contingency plans and potential mitigating actions to respond to adverse movements on income and expenditure. Please supply a copy of your financial contingency plans.

Risk management

20. This should provide details of the key risks identified when preparing the forecast and details of the risk management strategies devised to deal with them. Colleges should describe the corrective actions that would be taken to address identified risks.

Scenario planning

21. Details of financial and non-financial impacts of the alternative funding scenario, as outlined in paragraph 7 of Annex A, should be provided in the commentary.
22. Colleges should also provide details of any additional planning scenarios that have been considered by the college's governing body, and related financial/non-financial impacts.

Any other information

23. This should provide any other information which you feel should be brought to our attention.

REGIONAL BOARD

Meeting of 17 June 2025

REPORT BY THE PRINCIPAL

The purpose of this report is to provide the Regional Board with information relating to the period immediately prior to the Board Meeting; information which may have relevance, significance, priority or challenge for future College activity.

1 NESCol Funding, media coverage and stakeholder engagement

Letters to Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC)

Open and private letters were sent on 15th May to Graeme Dey, Minister for FE, HE and Veterans and Francesca Osowska, SFC Chief Executive respectively. The key points raised in the letters are noted below:

- The region has significant ambition which is being stifled by a funding system which disadvantages those working, living and learning in the North East.
- Due to historic anomalies, the College has been underfunded by around £3m per year when compared to institutions of similar size and with similar reach in other parts of the country.
- In the recent SFC funding review NESCol has been classified in a group of colleges receiving the lowest grant per 'credit'.
- This grouping takes only scale into account and not rurality or operational complexity.
- NESCol has a very large and unique geographic footprint and remains committed to delivering at two rural and two urban campuses.
- The recent indicative funding allocation provides a substantial rural premium to nine Colleges, but not NESCol.
- The indicative funding allocations showed a small increase in funding, and no reflection re. NESCol's rurality funding issue.
- This is unfair and NESCol requests that this unfairness is addressed at pace.

At the time of writing this paper, no reply has been forthcoming from the Minister.

A response from the SFC was received on 29th May from SFC's Tiff Ritchie (Acting Director of Finance), who replied on behalf of the SFC's Chief Executive, Francesca Osowska and Director of Finance, Richard Maconachie.

The key points to note from the reply are summarised below:

- The final funding allocations for all colleges remain unchanged from the indicative allocations.
- The allocations now include institutional allocations of the previously announced £5.5m funding for increased national insurance costs.

- There was an acknowledgement that SFC personnel had previously met with NESCol's Executive Team in advance of the indicative allocations being published.
- There was further acknowledgement that the SFC needed to explore further funding issues with the College and the sector as it considers further evolution of its funding model.
- The SFC is seeking – in order to avoid any 'shocks' to the system – to introduce changes to the funding of colleges on a 'staged basis'.
- NESCOL is still to receive an above average increase from AY 2024-25 (3.1% compared to a sector increase of 2.6%).
- The family grouping that NESCol has been placed in for premium funding has been to the College's advantage.
- The SFC intends to engage with the sector and individual colleges regarding price groups and families, and also additional demand and credits being claimed that do not align with its guidance/strategic priorities. This will be with a view to working with colleges to reprioritise and/or redistribute credits to reflect areas of demand/low participation.

An invitation for the College to meet with the SFC's Chief Executive and other key SFC personnel to discuss this further was offered by the SFC and has been subsequently requested.

Media Coverage

The Press and Journal published (16th May) a front page news story relating to the open letter to the Minister detailing the College's concerns re. its historic underfunding and the proposed future funding of its activities. This article complimented previously articles, published by the Press and Journal in April, along a similar theme.

The most recent article highlighted the financial challenges faced by NESCol and its impact on the local economy. It identified that the College has been underfunded by £30m over the past decade, which has hindered its ability to support the region's economic growth.

Other specific points raised in the article included:

- NESCol has been underfunded thus affecting its capacity to offer educational opportunities and support local industries.
- The lack of funding is putting the future health of the north-east economy at risk. NESCol contributes significantly to the region's economy, and adequate funding could enhance this impact.
- The letter to the Scottish Government highlights the potential benefits of increased funding, including support for sectors like energy transition, life sciences, digital, hospitality, and health and social care.
- More than a third of school leavers in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire choose NESCol, with the percentage rising to 60% in the most deprived areas. The funding shortfall limits the college's ability to accommodate these students.
- The Scottish Funding Council has made recent changes to the funding model, resulting in a 3.1% increase for NESCol. However, college

	<p>leaders argue that this does not address the long-standing funding issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The article underscored the urgent need for increased financial support to ensure NESCol can continue to play a vital role in the region's economic and educational landscape. <p>A link to the Press and Journal article is contained below:</p> <p>https://www.pressreader.com/uk/the-press-and-journal-aberdeen-and-aberdeenshire/20250516/page/1</p> <p>Our story was also covered by STV News. A link to the piece, which was aired on 16th May is highlighted below:</p> <p>https://news.stv.tv/v/this-cant-continue-college-say-they-have-lost-30m-in-funding</p> <p>Political Engagement re. NESCol Funding</p> <p>In tandem with the letters to both the Minister and the SFC's Chief Executive and the related media coverage, College representatives (Stuart Thompson and Paul Smith) hosted, in my absence, a series of engagement sessions with the following politicians:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liam Kerr MSP (Conservative) • A researcher for Michael Marra MSP (Labour) • Kevin Stewart MSP (SNP) • Jackie Dunbar MSP (SNP) • Harriet Cross MP (Conservative) • Miles Briggs MSP (Conservative education spokesperson) • Stephen Flynn MP (SNP) <p>Apart from local MSPs Kevin Stewart and Jackie Dunbar, those who attended were fully supportive of the College and the stance it was taking. In addition, Audrey Nicol MSP had previously met with us and has recently reiterated her support for NESCol.</p> <p>As part of our continuing engagement and lobbying work with RGU, I shall be attending a fringe event for the Conservative Party Conference on Saturday 14th June; an event that aims to highlight the funding challenges facing tertiary education.</p>
2	<p>North East Investment Zone (NESIZ) Steering Group – 5th June 2025</p> <p>A meeting of the North East Investment Zone Steering Group took place on 5th June 2025. The meeting was convened primarily to update Steering Group members of the progress made in the Gateway submission process and to agree the priority projects identified for progression.</p> <p>The key messages from the meeting are noted below:</p>

	<p>Government updates and announcements: It is anticipated that both UK and Scottish Governments will officially endorse the Gateway 2 submission and announce the ongoing work and progress made with NESIZ within the next two weeks. This announcement is likely to include confirmation of the key areas of focus (energy transition and digital technology) along with additional broader information of the work already being undertaken in relation to projects and tax sites.</p> <p>Gateway 2 + 3 Submissions: The tax calculations and arrangements for the areas identified within the Gateway 2 submission have still to be confirmed by Government. This includes confirmation of rateable value and rates. Work on the Gateway 3 submission continues which should conclude soon. It was noted that the Scottish Government has indicated that it has no additional money available to spend on the Investment Zone project.</p> <p>Gateway 4 Interventions: Most of this meeting focused on the approval of the interventions (or projects) initially flagged by EY, and then by a Steering Group sub-committee, as fulfilling the agreed criteria and thus worthy of consideration by the Steering Group. In total there were 14 interventions to consider, two of which related to the College (funding for ETSH and NESA).</p> <p>The key points to note from this interventions discussion include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both NESCol-related bids were approved for further progression (£3m for ETSH and £9m for NESA). • All approved interventions, including the College's, will still need to be developed into full business case (to be submitted in August) for final approval and inclusion on the Gateway 4 submission to Government. • The final draft of Gateway 4 is to be presented to the Steering Group on 12th August. • Those interventions that were approved satisfied a highly prescriptive set of criteria. Additionality, deliverability and impact were all considered within the criteria. • Impacts of all interventions need to be delivered within the first 10 years. • Private sector businesses are to be consulted re. the prioritised list of interventions, prior to the drafting of the final Gateway 4 submission. • A 5 year review of all approved interventions is anticipated. • Profiling and match funding of allocated spend has still to be checked for all interventions. • The funding flow for all final Gateway 4 interventions is likely to commence in 2026.
3	<p>Scottish Affairs Committee (SAC) – 14th May 2025</p> <p>The UK Parliament's Scottish Affairs Committee (SAC) held an oral evidence session on 14th May 2025, focusing on the transition to net zero and its impact on jobs. The session featured two panels of witnesses. The first panel included representatives from NESCol (myself), Energy Skills Partnership (Director – Jim Brown), Forth Valley College (Principal – Kenny McInnes). The second panel included representatives from the energy industry sector including Aurora Energy Services, Veri Energy, and the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB).</p>

The session covered several themes. A summary of these is noted below:

- **Skills and Training Needs:** Panel members emphasised that many skills required for the energy transition already exist within the oil and gas sector. The challenge lies in adapting these skills for new technologies like offshore wind, carbon capture, and hydrogen. Regarding reskilling and upskilling, panel members noted that colleges and industry bodies are working together to reskill and upskill the workforce. Initiatives include fee waivers for training, scholarships, and work-ready programs to support transitions into new energy sectors.
- **Funding Challenges:** There is a need for multi-year funding models to provide stability and allow for long-term planning. Current annualised funding models create uncertainty and hinder the ability to adapt curricula to meet future needs.
- **Government Policy and Project Uncertainty:** Delays in project approvals and a lack of clarity on future job requirements are major barriers. Witnesses called for better communication and collaboration between government, industry, and educational institutions.
- **Strategic Planning:** A cross-departmental government taskforce was suggested to address workforce bottlenecks and ensure a coordinated approach to skills development across different sectors.
- **Economic and Policy Considerations:** The decline in oil and gas jobs is creating a gap that new energy jobs are not yet ready to fill. Witnesses highlighted the need for a managed transition to avoid losing skilled workers to other countries.
- **Policy Clarity:** There is a need for clearer government policies to provide confidence to employers and workers. This includes addressing the fiscal environment and ensuring that new energy projects are financially viable.
- **Regional Focus:** Specific regional initiatives, such as the National Energy Skills Accelerator and the development of the Energy Skills Transition Hub, are helping to address local skills needs. However, more support is needed to ensure these initiatives can scale effectively.
- **Long-Term Opportunities:** The transition to clean energy presents significant long-term job opportunities, particularly in offshore wind and hydrogen. However, the timing of these opportunities is critical, and immediate action is needed to ensure a smooth transition.
- **Role of Government:** The UK and Scottish Governments need to work together to provide the necessary support and funding. This includes addressing the apprenticeship levy, improving the funding model for colleges, and ensuring that strategic investments are made in skills development.

In summary, the session highlighted the importance of a coordinated approach to skills development, the need for clear and consistent

	<p>government policies, and the critical role of funding and infrastructure in supporting the transition to a net zero economy.</p> <p>A link to the entire evidence session is provided below:</p> <p>https://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/a48c163d-54a8-4848-ae80-4d656b4f5b53</p>
4	<p>External engagements, selected key meetings and events attended since the previous Regional Board meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NESIZ Steering Group Meeting (27.03.25.) • Funding discussion with SFC officials ((08.04.25.) • Aberdeen Education Liaison Group Meeting (08.04.25.) • MATMG Meeting (23.04.25.) • Strategic Leadership Team Vision Presentations (24.04.25.) • Meeting with Scottish Affairs Committee (SAC) Clerk (25.04.25.) • Meeting with Audrey Nicol MSP (25.04.25.) • Meeting with P&J Editor and Political Editor (28.04.25.) • Principals' Discussion re. Funding (28.04.25.) • Chairs and Principals' Meeting (29.04.25.) • Scottish Parliamentary Reception (29.04.25.) • Meeting with David Parkinson (Seven Incorporated Trades) (30.04.25.) • Regional Economic Partnership Meeting (01.05.25.) • NESIZ Steering Group Meeting (01.05.25.) • SAC Meetings x2 (07.05.25.) • Meeting with DYWNE Chair (09.05.25.) • SAC Preparatory Meeting with CS Officials (09.05.25.) • SAC Evidence Session (14.05.25.) • Aberdeenshire Lieutenancy Education and Skills Garden Party (14.05.25.) • RSE Conference on Future Funding of Tertiary Education (28/29.05.25.) • DYWNE Board Meeting (02.06.25.) • Meeting with Audit Scotland (03.06.25.) • Open Staff Session (City Campus) (03.06.25.) • NESIZ Steering Group Meeting (05.06.25.) • Go Celebrate! Awards Ceremony (06.06.25.) • Open Staff Session (SMA) (09.06.25.) • Learning Opportunities Talent Show (10.06.25.) • End of Year Art Exhibition (10.06.25.) • Open Staff Session (City Campus) (11.06.25.) • MATMG (11.06.25.) • Meeting with Russell Borthwick (AGCC) (12.06.25.) • Open Staff Session (Fraserburgh) (12.06.25.) • RGU/NESCol Fringe Event (Conservative Party Conference) (14.06.25.)

REGIONAL BOARD

Meeting of 17 June 2025

REPORT BY COMMITTEE CHAIRS											
<p>The purpose of this report is to provide the Regional Board with information relating to business conducted at the most recent meetings of its Committees.</p> <p>Committee Chairs will be provided with an opportunity to bring matters considered at these meetings to the attention of Members. Members will also be provided with an opportunity to seek further information on business that has been transacted.</p> <p>Members are asked to note the new Channel No. 8 within Regional Board Team space – Board and Committee Action Log where actions from all Board and Committee meetings, along with Action updates can be found.</p>											
1	<p>The following meetings have been held since the last meeting of the Regional Board:</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <th></th><th></th></tr> <tr> <td>Curriculum & Quality</td><td>21 May 2025</td></tr> <tr> <td>HR</td><td>21 May 2025</td></tr> <tr> <td>Audit & Risk</td><td>28 May 2025</td></tr> <tr> <td>Finance & Resources</td><td>04 June 2025</td></tr> </table>			Curriculum & Quality	21 May 2025	HR	21 May 2025	Audit & Risk	28 May 2025	Finance & Resources	04 June 2025
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2	<p>Curriculum & Quality Committee – 21 May 2025</p> <p>Summary of Key Business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum Showcase – Creative Industries Presentation • Overview of Activity and Credit Position • AY2025/26 Applications Update • Curriculum Planning Update • Student Support Activity Report • Students' Association Activity Report • Business and Community Development Update Presentation • TQEF Update Presentation • SEAP Feedback Presentation • AY2024/25 Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey Results <p>Agreed Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey Update to be presented at Regional Board Meeting on 17 June 2025. 										
3	<p>HR Committee – 21 May 2025</p> <p>Summary of Key Business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AY2024/25 People Services Enhancement Plan Progress Report • People Services Equalities Action Plan • Employee Voice Group Update • Wellbeing Update • Learning and Development Update Report and Onboarding Demo • National Collective Bargaining Update • Employment Law Changes <p>Agreed Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Colleagues Sub-Strategy outcomes to be shared at next meeting. 										

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement Plan to be reviewed and colour-coding tracking updated to make this clearer for understanding progress. • Chair of Equalities Committee to attend next meeting. Presentation to be jointly provided by G Watt and L Doyle. • K Donnelly to review pension impacts in relation to staff benefits. • Update to be provided on the Fair Working Group at the October 2025 meeting.
4	<p>Audit and Risk Committee - 28 May 2025</p> <p>Summary of Key Business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Reports (Student Engagement, Student Fees, Marketing and Communications, Follow-Up, Progress) • SRR Update • ASET RR Update • Draft External Audit Plan • Partial Breach of Financial Memorandum with SFC • National Fraud Initiative 2024/25 Update <p>Agreed Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An indication of student engagement at Campus-level and at cohort-level is to be secured for information. • Quality Investigation Update to be presented at 17/06/25 RB and a decision to be made at Chairs Committee on next steps in terms of reporting. • Revised ASET RR to be shared for information at 17/06/25 Regional Board. • Once NFI findings report has been produced (likely 2026), this is to be circulated to Regional Board members for information. • Regarding counselling services, College to explore whether any regional or national lobbying exists which it could support, highlighting the reduction in funding and service provision as a wider community planning issue.
5	<p>Finance & Resources Committee - 04 June 2025</p> <p>Summary of Key Business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SFC 2025-26 Indicative Funding • DRAFT 2025-26 Budget (including Capital) • 2024-25 Budget Update • 2024-25 Capital Budget Update • ETSH Update • ASET Update • Opportunities Register • Credits and Enrolment Planning Update <p>Agreed Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upward communication regarding Financial Position with others to be discussed with Assistant Principal, P Smith. • Recommend Draft Budget AY2025/26 be presented to Board. • AY2024/25 Capital Budget approved. • ETSH – sub-station to be highlighted at next Project Meeting (S Thompson). • Pursue response from G Dey regarding recent letter sent (March 2025). • Feedback and thanks to be shared with R Laird and team for the thoroughness and quality of analysis and reporting on credits and enrolments during the AY.

