



REGIONAL BOARD MEETING

**Meeting of 10 December 2025,
held in ETSH Altens at 1000hrs**

REGIONAL BOARD

NOTICE OF MEETING

There will be a meeting of the Regional Board of North East Scotland College on Wednesday 10 December 2025 at 10:00am, in the Exhibition Space of the Energy Transition Skills Hub, Altens

AGENDA

Agenda Item		Paper
25-25/26	Apologies for Absence (S Elston)	
26-25/26	Declaration of Any Potential Conflicts of Interest in Relation to Any Agenda Items (S Elston)	
27-25/26	Minute of the Previous Meeting (30/09/25) (S Elston)	X
28-25/26	Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting (30/09/25) (S Elston)	X
	Guest Attendance – ASET Board Chair J Reid	
29-25/26	ASET Annual Report by Board Chair	
	Reserved Matters for Decision	
30-25/26	Annual Audited Financial Statements 2024-25 as presented to Joint A&R/F&R Committees (S Thompson)	X
31-25/26	Annual Audit Report prepared by Audit Scotland as presented to Joint A&R/F&R Committees (S Thompson)	X
	Reserved Matters for Discussion	
32-25/26	AY2025/26 Budget Update as presented to F&R Committee (S Thompson)	X
33-25/26	Estates Update / Clinterty and Gordon Centre Discussion (S Thompson)	X
34-25/26	ETSH Update (S Grant)	X
35-25/26	Personnel Related Matters (K Donnelly – verbal update)	
36-25/26	DYW Hosting (R Laird)	X
	Matter for Discussion	
37-25/26	Quality Activity Interim Report (R McGregor)	X
	Reserved Matters for Information	
38-25/26	Credit Activity Update and Forecast (R Laird)	X
39-25/26	Strategic Risk Register (S Thompson)	X
40-25/26	Updates on ALF Funded Projects (S Thompson – verbal update)	
41-25/26	Report by the Principal (N Cowie)	X
	Matters for Information	
42-25/26	First Impressions Survey AY2025/26 Results (R McGregor)	X
43-25/26	SA Partnership Agreement AY2025/26 (E MacIsaac – verbal update)	
44-25/26	Report by the Regional Chair (S Elston)	X
45-25/26	Report by Committee Chairs	X
46-25/26	University of Dundee Key Findings Report	X
47-25/26	Any Other Business	
48-25/26	Summation of Actions and Date of Next Meeting	

REGIONAL BOARD

MINUTE OF MEETING

DRAFT Minute of the Meeting of the Regional Board of North East Scotland College, held on Tuesday 30 September 2025 at 10:00am in the Exhibition Space of the Energy Transition Skills Hub, Altens, Aberdeen.

<p>Agenda Item</p>	<p>Present: Susan Elston, Regional Chair Jim Gifford Bryan Hutcheson Iain Watt Sheena Ross Duncan Cockburn Mark Fotheringham Cindy Dempster Neil Cowie Leona McDermid Ellie Zemani Gerry Lawrie Ewan Rattray Emma MacIsaac Mickey Dugan Paul Butters</p> <p>In Attendance: Robin McGregor, Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality Stuart Thompson, Vice Principal, Finance & Resources Susan Lawrance, Secretary to the Board Karen Fraser, Minute Secretary</p> <p>Guest Attendee: Robert Laird, Head of Planning and Academic Partnerships (for Agenda Item 07-25)</p> <p>Regional Chair S Elston welcomed all attendees to the ETSH for the first Meeting of AY2025/26, new Members were introduced, and E MacIsaac's new role was acknowledged.</p>
<p>01-25/26</p>	<p>Apologies for Absence Apologies were received in advance from C Laurenson and A Watt.</p>
<p>02-25/26</p>	<p>Declaration of any Potential Conflicts of Interest in Relation to Any Agenda Items J Gifford declared a transparency statement by virtue of his position with Aberdeenshire Council. L McDermid declared a transparency statement by virtue of her position with Aberdeen Foyer.</p>
<p>03-25/26</p>	<p>Minute of the Previous Meeting (June 2025) The Minute was approved as a true and accurate record.</p>
<p>04-25/26</p>	<p>Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting (June 2025) Attention was drawn to the updates applied to the 5 Matters Arising captured in the shared report.</p> <p>Regarding the action arising from Agenda Item 77-24, N Cowie shared insights from the 29/09/25's ETSH opening and the roundtable event held at RGU, both of which FM J Swinney attended.</p> <p>Action: NESCol to revert back to ECITB in relation to Agenda Item 94-24.</p>

	Matters for Decision
05-25/26	Regional Board Terms of Reference Members were asked to review the shared Terms of Reference. Decision = Approved as presented.
06-25/26	Regional Board Draft Programme of Business Members were asked to consider the proposed Programme of Business for the upcoming AY, recognising that amendments and additions can be applied as necessary. Decision = Approved as presented.
	Guest Attendee R Laird joined the Meeting at 10:16am
07-25/26	Strategic Plan Sub-Strategies (R McGregor/R Laird) The 6 Sub-Strategies were presented to Regional Board Members for approval. The accompanying Paper outlined the mapping process and next steps. R Laird summarised each Sub-Strategy's clear ambition, key objectives, and how these will be achieved. It was noted that both the visuals and the language used differ to that of previous strategic plans, and the existence of operational risk matrices behind these high-level documents was confirmed. The proposed timeline for the formal launch for staff and students was shared, post-approval by Regional Board Members. Teasers of the Strategic Plan taglines and images have already been included in College-wide communications. In response to a query raised regarding maintaining momentum over the 5 years, R McGregor confirmed referencing the Sub-Strategies in annual enhancement plans and team evaluations, normalising their contained language and phraseology, and attaining a staff-wide understanding of individuals' roles in delivering their aims. The ability to monitor progress and provide updates to Regional Board was confirmed because of SLT's collective ownership of and responsibility for each of the Sub-Strategies. Use of the same format when publishing results communication was suggested, in order to facilitate tie-in comprehension. A similar mapping exercise when drawing up Regional Board Meeting Agendas was encouraged. The suitability of the SLE model captured in the Our Student Experience Sub-Strategy was briefly considered. A lack of definition to some of the measurables included in Our Digital, Our Spaces and Our Secure Future, and the implications of monitoring were pinpointed. R McGregor acknowledged that some finesse is still to be applied to some of the "Hows". Further discussion outside the Meeting was welcomed and subsequently scheduled. Within the Strategic Plan, the use of the terminology referencing everyone who "falls under our wing" was discussed. Conversation topics for inclusion at the Regional Board's Strategy Event were noted, recognising the need and intent to incorporate landscape changes in to the 5-Year Plan.
	Guest Attendee R Laird left the Meeting at 10:52am
	Matters for Discussion
08-25/26	AY2024/25 Annual Accounts Update (\$ Thompson)

09-25/26	AY2025/26 Budget Position/Financial Planning (S Thompson)
	Comfort Break 11:37am – 11:51am
10-25/26	Start of Year Position (Including Enrolments and Projected Credits) (R McGregor)
11-25/26	Lessons Learnt Report (TQS) (R McGregor)
12-25/26	SFC Published KPIs AY2023/24 Report (R McGregor)
13-25/26	Health and Safety Annual Report (S Thompson) Reference was made to Appendix 1 which contained detail pertaining to Health and Safety matters throughout 2025. The comprehensive nature and the positivity of the Report was noted, together with an observation put forward regarding the interaction with the Wellbeing Day offers by staff.
14-25/26	ASET Risk Register and Verbal Update (S Thompson/R McGregor)

15-25/26	Strategic Risk Register (S Thompson)
16-25/26	Update on ALF Funded Projects – Tribal EBS Student Records System and Data Analyst Position (S Thompson/R McGregor) Owing to time constraints, this Item was not discussed. Action: To be added to the Agenda of the 10/12/25 RB Meeting.
17-25/26	Report by the Regional Chair (S Elston) S Elston summarised her key messages, in particular, those from engagement with Colleges Scotland and College Employers Scotland.
18-25/26	Report by the Principal (N Cowie)
19-25/26	Report by Committee Chairs (S Elston; J Gifford; S Ross) Members noted the Report by the Committee Chairs, with Chairs from the F&R and the A&R Committees invited to highlight the salient points from Meetings held. Action: J Reid to be invited to share an ASET Update at the 10/12/25 RB Meeting.
20-25/26	Estates Update (S Thompson)
	Matters for Information
21-25/26	Governance Update (S Lawrance) High-level updates were captured in the Executive Summary. S Lawrance confirmed ongoing work with Committee Chairs to arrange one in-person Meeting per Committee per AY and advised of adjustments to some membership lists. An amendment to the HOLD in calendars on 20/01/26 originally for a Strategy Event but now for a Board Development Day was shared. Members were encouraged to familiarise themselves with the External Effectiveness Review on NESCol's website in preparation for the 2026 Review of the same. Members noted the information provided. Action: Gillies Report to be added to the Agenda of the 26/11/25 A&R Committee Meeting.
22-25/26	Any Other Business Presentation of Insurance Policies In response to a query raised regarding Members having sight of insurance policy documents, it was confirmed that these have previously featured on the F&R Committee's PoB. Action: Insurance Policies to be shared for information at 26/11/25 F&R Committee Meeting. DYW Hosting:

23-25/26	Summation of Actions and Date of Next Meeting S Lawrance provided a summary of the identified actions. The next Meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 10 December 2025 at 10:00am, to be held at the ETSH in Altens.
	NESCol staff (including Minute Secretary) and SA Members left the Meeting at 1:20pm
24-25/26	Private Reserved Matter for Discussion Principal's Objectives

Actions from the Regional Board Meeting of 30 September 2025			
Agenda Item	Action	Responsible Person	Deadline
04-25/26	Matters Arising: NESCol to revert back to ECITB in relation to guest presenter attendance at Short SLT/RB Meeting (Agenda Item 94-24).	Board Sec	ASAP
11-25/26	Lessons Learnt Report Update:		
16-25/26	Update on ALF Funded Projects (Tribal EBS Student Records System and Data Analyst Position): to be added to the Agenda of the 10/12/25 RB Meeting.	Board Sec	04/11/25
19-25/26	Chairs Committee Meeting: J Reid to be invited to share an ASET Update at the 10/12/25 RB Meeting.	Board Sec	ASAP
20-25/26	Estates Update:		
21-25/26	Governance: Gillies Report to be added to the Agenda of the 26/11/25 A&R Committee Meeting.	Board Sec	21/10/25
22-25/26	Insurance Policies: to be shared for information at 26/11/25 F&R Committee Meeting.	S Thompson	26/11/25

REGIONAL BOARD

An update on matters arising from the meeting of the Regional Board of North East Scotland College held on 30/09/25.

Agenda Item	
04-25/26	<p>Action: Matters Arising: NESCol to revert back to ECITB in relation to guest presenter attendance at Short SLT/RB Meeting (Agenda Item 94-24).</p> <p>Status: Complete. A meeting was held with NESCol/ECITB to take this agenda item forward.</p>
11-25/26	<p>Action: Lessons Learnt Report Update:</p> <p>Status:</p>
16-25/26	<p>Action: Update on ALF Funded Projects (Tribal EBS Student Records System and Data Analyst Position): to be added to the Agenda of the 10/12/25 RB Meeting.</p> <p>Status: Complete. On Agenda, for information.</p>
19-25/26	<p>Action: Chairs Committee Meeting: J Reid to be invited to share an ASET Update at the 10/12/25 RB Meeting.</p> <p>Status: Complete. On Agenda, for discussion.</p>
20-25/26	<p>Action: Estates Update:</p> <p>Status:</p>
21-25/26	<p>Action: Governance: Gillies Report to be added to the Agenda of the 26/11/25 A&R Committee Meeting.</p> <p>Status: Complete. On Agenda, for discussion.</p>
22-25/26	<p>Insurance Policies: to be shared for information at 26/11/25 F&R Committee Meeting.</p> <p>Status: Complete. On Agenda, for information.</p>

REGIONAL BOARD	
Meeting of 10 December 2025	
Title: Quality Activity Report	
Author: 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 to note the interim report provided covering the formal activity undertaken by the Quality department.	
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, everything planned is on schedule and there have been no complaint deadlines missed to date verifying the robust internal processes in place. The following report provides a full outline of formal activity completed up to the end of November 2025.	
Recommendation: It is recommended that the Regional Board members note the content of the paper.	
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 2025-26

November 2025

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1. Focus Groups

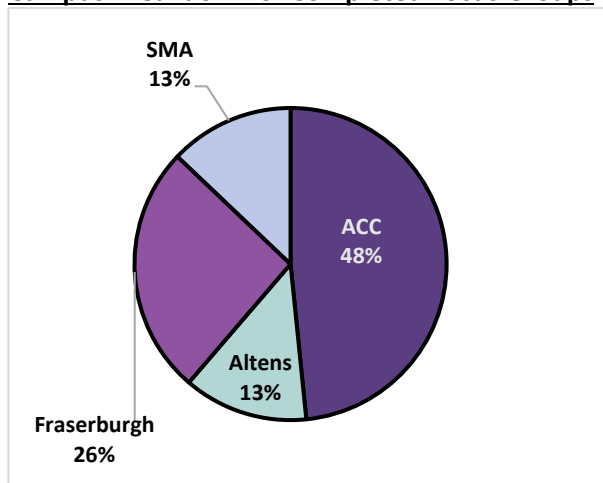
Schedule 2025-26

Focus Groups	Themes	Target	Completed
	Induction	24	24
	Learning & Teaching	38	6
	Student Support	12	0
	Students' Association	6	0
	Equalities, RESPECT & Wellbeing	10	1
	Academic Tutor	8	0
	Total	98	31

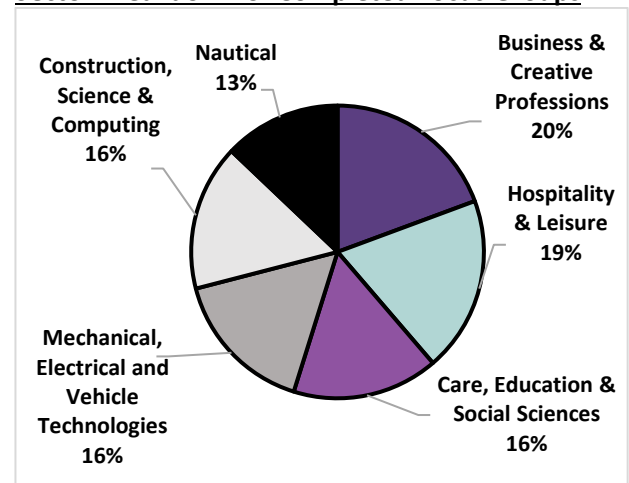
Progress Summary

As of the 12th November 2025, the Senior Lecturers Enhancement (SLEs) have completed 32% of the scheduled focus groups for the year. The Equalities, RESPECT & Wellbeing focus groups have been scheduled to take place in block two of the academic session in order to allow for students to have a good awareness and actively reflect during the focus group meetings.

Campus Breakdown of Completed Focus Groups



Sector Breakdown of Completed Focus Groups



Focus Group Actions

In total, 25 actions have been identified and allocated to appropriate staff for review and response. The report and the responses are issued to the student cohort via MyNescol announcement. To date there has been 3 instances of good practice identified.

Examples of good practice identified were, very good level of information given; Excellent support offered by Student Support, Students' Association Freshers Week activities, Students' Association Initiatives such as the student pantry, Breakfast Club and the friendly and inclusive environment created by staff.

2. Stakeholder Feedback

Complaints Received

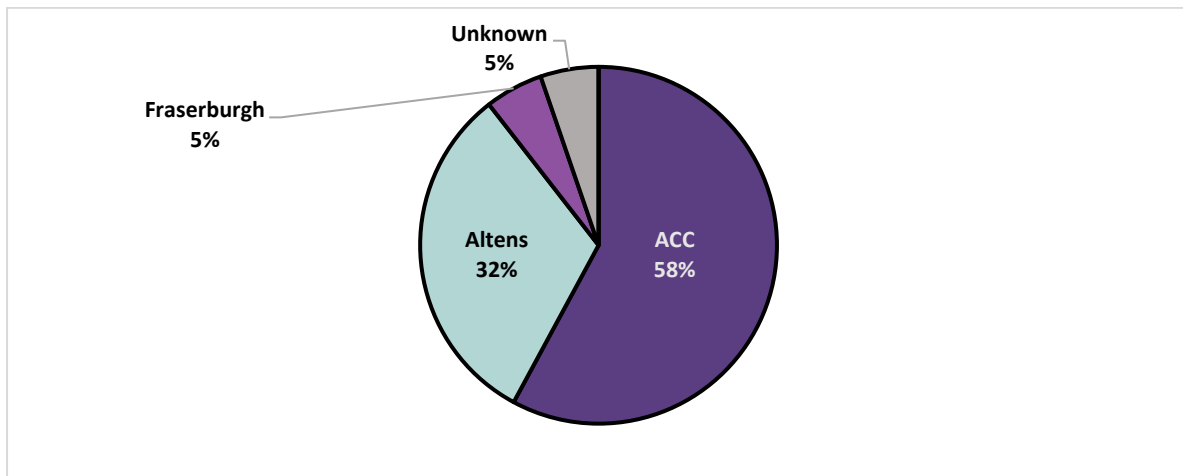
The complexity of a complaint will determine the category it is assigned and the timescale the college has to respond. The categories are as follows:

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)		Investigation (including extended investigations and escalations)	
No. received	15	No. received	4
No. open	0	No. open	1
No. closed	15	No. closed	3
Deadline met + %	100%	Deadline met + %	100%
Deadline missed + %	0%	Deadline missed + %	0%

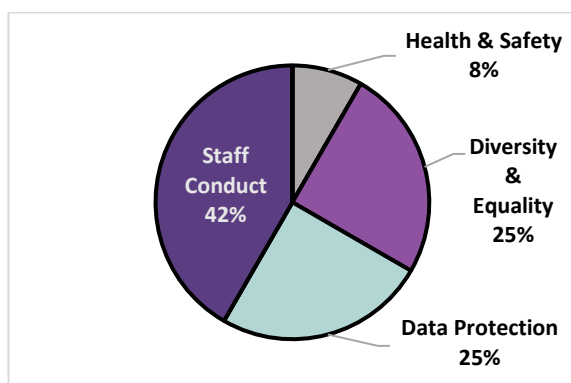
Total % Complaints Received by Campus



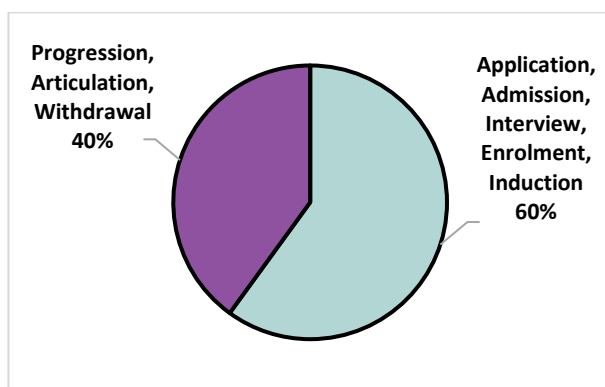
The Aberdeen City Campus has received the highest number of complaints (11) so far in academic year 2025-26. This coincides with the high stakeholder population at this campus. In comparison, the Altens campus has received six and the Fraserburgh campus has received one.

There have been no complaints received to be processed as Other, relating to general college issues. One has been processed as Unknown as there was no indication in the complaint as to what campus the complaint related to.

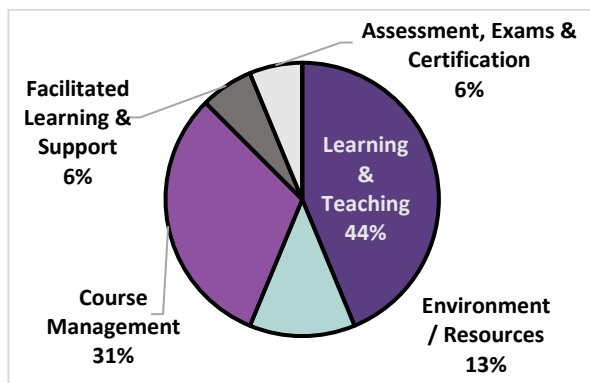
Each complaint is logged against the relevant category or categories according to its content. A summary of the categories logged so far is displayed below:



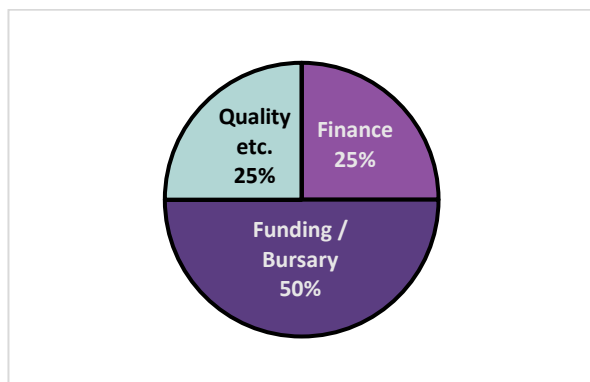
C1: Customer Care	
Health & Safety	1
Security	0
Diversity & Equality	3
Data Protection	3
Environmental	0
Staff Conduct	5
Student Conduct	0
Other	0



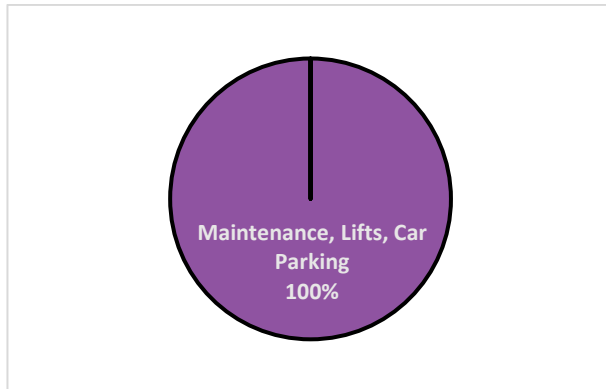
C2: Applications to Progression	
Marketing	0
Application, Admission, Interview, Enrolment, Induction	3
Progression, Articulation, Withdrawal	2
Other	0



C3: Course Related	
Learning & Teaching	6
Environment / Resources	2
Course Management	4
Facilitated Learning & Support	1
Assessment, Exams & Certification	1
Other	0



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



C5: Facilities	
Catering	0
Student Accommodation	0
Maintenance, Lifts, Car Parking	1
Other	0

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	3	5	6	1
Investigation*	0	2	1	0
Totals	3	7	7	1

*One escalated complaint remains open therefore no outcome available.

Compliments/Thank You's

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

The compliments and thank you's were made, highlighting support provided by staff in curriculum and student support areas. Staff were credited to being supportive, kind, patient and very helpful. Both compliments came from students and via the feedback boxes located in the college.

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 Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE) and Teaching in Colleges Today (TiCT), others to confirm the contractual requirement for the 6-month employment probationary period and also the quality lesson observations which are on a three-year cycle across all NESCol teaching staff.

From September to November, 15 quality and three probationary lesson observations took place, these will continue until June 2026. Regarding the other lesson observations four TQFE observations and two 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. 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.

The Quality department are presently undertaking a review of how well the observee utilises and values the student feedback gathered at the time of the observation. This is to enable us to reflect on the viability of the questions being asked to support reflective practice and development of teaching skills. Once completed we plan to undertake a review of the questions, including the purpose and method of gathering the feedback to ensure it is a useful tool. This review will involve the Quality Enhancement Manager alongside student and teaching staff representatives.

4. Training sessions with Curriculum Managers

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 two most recent appointee's have started their training.

The training sessions listed below follows the quality assurance cycle and is designed to provide the knowledge and skills when required to undertake the task.

- 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, TQEF, 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 was created. Between August and November 2025 we have had 8 new members of teaching staff on the course.

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 are 7 candidates enrolled and who have started to undergo the training programme. 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
25-26 Candidates	7	0	7	0	0

Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE)

There are 8 candidates scheduled to undertake the TQFE course this academic session. The course itself is delivered by the University of Aberdeen.

The Senior Lecturer Enhancement is responsible for completing one lesson observation per candidate to gather evidence for the award, and are available as co-tutors should candidates require additional support. The first tranche of observations by SLEs takes place early in November 2025 with the second tranche from March-May 2026 being undertaken by the University lead.

L&D9Di Award

There were initially 12 L&D9Di candidates proposed for the qualification this academic session, one had to withdraw but the others are continuing and we are expecting them to complete by June 2026.

Academic Year	No. candidates	No. unable to complete	Remaining no.	No. complete	% complete
25-26 Candidates	12	0	12	0	0

L&D11 Award

There are five candidates enrolled in this academic year and we are expecting them to complete by June 2026.

Academic Year	No. candidates	No. unable to complete	Remaining no.	No. complete	% complete
25-26 Candidates	5	0	5	0	0

HN Assessor Award

There are 18 candidates scheduled to undertake their qualification this academic session and we are expecting them to complete by June 2026.

Academic Year	No. candidates	No. unable to complete	Remaining no.	No. complete	% complete
25-26 Candidates	18	0	18	0	0

HN Verifier Award

10 candidates are undertaking their qualifications this academic year and we are expecting them to complete by June 2026.

Academic Year	No. candidates	No. unable to complete	Remaining no.	No. complete	% complete
25-26 Candidates	10	0	10	0	0

6. Curriculum Approval & Validation

Academic Year 2025-26 Submissions

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

Group Award Proposals		
Awarding Body	Qualification	Status
SQA	NPA Construction Operations (L5)	In progress
SQA	PDA Painting & Decorating (L7)	In progress
OPITO	OPITO CCUS (L6)	In progress
OPITO	OPITO Wind (L6)	In progress
Group Award Modifications		
Awarding Body	Qualification	Status

SQA	HND Media and Communications	Developed
SQA/NESCol	Photography Portfolio Builder (L6)	Developed
SQA/NESCol	Advanced Social Care (L6)	Developed
SQA/NESCol	Computer Game Design (inc. Introduction to Esports) L5	In progress
SQA	HND Applied Science (L8)	Developed
SQA	HNC Applied Science (L7)	Developed
NCFE/SQA/NESCol	Introduction to the Hospitality Industry (L3/4)	Developed
SQA	SVQ Retail Skills (L4)	In progress
NESCol	Preparation for Work	In progress
SQA	SVQ Business and Administration (L3)	In progress
SQA/NESCol	Fashion Business (L6)	In progress
SQA/NESCol	Science Foundations (L5)	In progress

7. External Verification Visits

Schedule of External Verification Visits

Awarding Body	Scheduled Visits	Completed Visits
Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)	0	0
City & Guilds (C&G)	5	4
International Leadership Management (ILM)	0	0
Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE)	0	0
Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT)	1	1
Excellence, Achievement and Learning (EAL)	1	1
King's Trust	1	1
Total		

Outcome Summary for Completed External Verification Visits

Awarding Body	Actions	Good Practice	Recommendation / Improvement
SQA	0	0	0
City & Guilds	0	0	7
ILM	0	0	0
NCFE	0	0	0
EAL	0	0	0
King's Trust	0	0	0
Total	0	0	7

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 10 December 2025	
Title: First Impression Survey Report AY2025-26	
Author: Acting Director of Quality	Contributor(s): Senior Quality Coordinator
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 results of the First Impression Survey AY2025=26, a key quality improvement tool used to measure levels of student satisfaction.	
Linked to Strategic Theme: 5. Striving to deliver excellence and growth Choose an item.	
Linked to Strategic Risk(s): N/A	
Executive Summary: 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. The First Impressions survey is a measurement tool to allow the College to determine the levels of satisfaction from our full-time students. The First Impressions survey was carried out over a four-week period between 15 September and 10 October 2025. The survey captured student feedback relating to, college induction, curriculum and support services and the overall first impression of college experience. The AY 2025-26 First Impressions Survey achieve a 79% participation rate, representing a 10% decrease from the previous year and a 9% decrease compared to 2023. Nevertheless, 4,744 students completed the survey, providing a robust sample that supports confidence in the feedback received. Overall, 93% of students are satisfied with the College, a slight decrease of 2% on the previous academic year. The First Impressions Survey report highlights the overall College results for the last three years and demonstrates a consistently high level of satisfaction on first impressions of college experience. The College maintained a very high level of student satisfaction across all of the 28	

statements. A breakdown at Sector level has been provided in appendices 3.1. - 3.5. Team and course level can be accessed from the College's Power BI Report Server which is accessible for all college staff.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Regional Board note the content of the report.

Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable):
N/A

Equality Impact Assessment:

Positive Impact ☒

Negative Impact ☐

No Impact ☐

Evidence:



First Impressions Survey Report

AY 2025-26

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1. Overview

The College conducts two key Student Surveys during each academic year, the First Impressions Survey (September/October) and the Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (March/April).

The First Impressions Survey is a measurement tool to allow the College to determine the levels of satisfaction from our full-time students. The First Impressions survey was carried out over a four-week period between 15 September and 10 October 2025. The survey captured student feedback relating to, college induction, curriculum and support services and the overall first impression of college experience.

The collection of student feedback allows for early identification of trends which may present a challenge to student success. The curriculum teams and support departments are provided with all qualitative data received and use this to address issues raised and update future practice to improve service delivery.

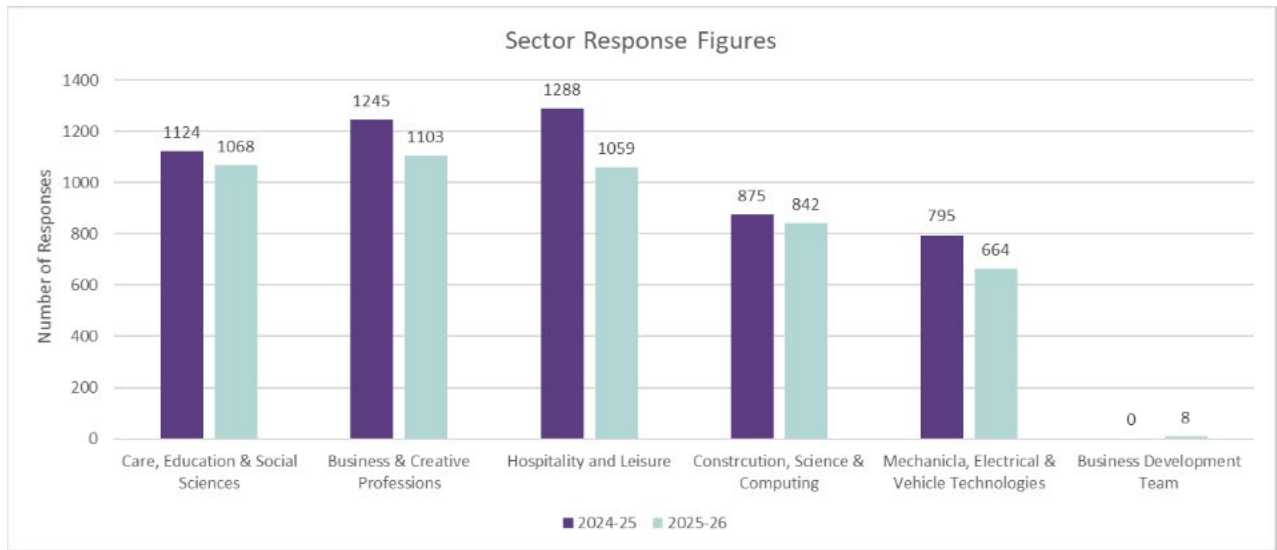
The Heads of Sector and Curriculum Managers are also issued with quantitative data action reports at course level. The action report identifies survey statements where satisfaction levels were 85% or lower, and this allows teams to investigate with individual class groups. The information is also used to support the completion of self-evaluation activities.

Participation Figures

Engagement with the survey is key to gathering data which offers an accurate representation of the student experience. Engagement is monitored across the four-week period the survey is live and this information is made available to managerial staff on a weekly basis. This provides an effective support mechanism to target student groups where engagement is low. North East Scotland College (NESCol) achieved the following participation rates:

Academic Year	2023	2024	2025
Number of Full-time Participants	5,024 (+351 or +7%)	5,322 (+298 or +6%)	4744 (-578 or -10%)
% Participation of FT Students	88% (of 5,721)	89% (of 5,996)	79% (of 5983)

The chart below shows the figures of student engagement by sector.



Sector	2024-25		2025-26	
	Eligible No. Participants	Actual No. Participants	Eligible No. Participants	Actual No. Participants
Care, Education & Social Sciences	1379	1122 (81%)	1353	1068 (79%)
Business & Creative Professions	1400	1243 (89%)	1375	1103 (80%)
Hospitality & Leisure	1311	1288 (98%)	1349	1059 (79%)
Construction, Science & Computing	1020	874 (86%)	1055	842 (80%)
Mechanical, Electrical & Vehicle Technologies	885	795 (90%)	842	664 (79%)

Understanding the Data

The survey results table in section two provides details on the number of students who answered each multiple choice statement and the % positive satisfaction for each one.

The % positive satisfaction results have been colour coded according to their RAG status. The thresholds have been increased this academic session to ensure we consistently strive to achieve continuous improvement across all services for our students.

RAG Colour	Status
Green	% positive of 90.1% or higher
Yellow	% positive between 80.1%-90%
Red	% positive of 80% or lower

2. Survey Results

Quantitative Data

The overall positive satisfaction percentage for the survey data AY 2025-26 is 93.32%. Delivering a quality service to students remains a key priority, however, the full-time student satisfaction has slightly decreased by 1.27% from AY 2024-25.

Academic Year	2023	2024	2025
Overall satisfaction	94%	95%	93%

The College continues to maintain a very high level of student satisfaction, as demonstrated in the three-year trend table below. All 28 statements show positive satisfaction levels, ranging from a minimum of 83% for one question to many questions achieving satisfaction levels in the high 90s percentile.

Overall College Satisfaction Results			
Application Process	2023	2024	2025
Applying for my course was an easy and straightforward process	96%	96%	95%
The College website was easy to use	94%	93%	89%
The College information on social media was helpful	90%	88%	85%
The College prospectus was informative	94%	93%	92%
The College took account of my qualifications and experience when I applied for the course	97%	97%	97%
Induction/Introduction to College	2023	2024	2025
My first day at college was welcoming and informative	98%	98%	97%
My online induction course was welcoming and informative	92%	92%	90%
I am aware of the range of support available to me from the Student Support Team	97%	95%	93%
I know how to access advice about student funding (e.g. bursaries, childcare) if I need it	91%	89%	88%
I know who to contact if I am absent for face-to-face classes or unable to attend online sessions and how to complete the Absence Form when I return	96%	95%	93%
I am clear about the expected standards of work	98%	98%	98%
I am clear about the expected standards of attendance (if required), punctuality and engagement	99%	99%	99%
I know about the College's health and safety arrangements (fire alarms, evacuation procedures, safety online etc.)	96%	95%	94%

I received an introduction to MyNESCol (the College's Virtual Learning Environment) and MyInfo (Student Information System)	95%	95%	94%
I know how to access the online Library e-resources (ebooks, journals etc.) via MyNESCol	88%	87%	83%
I can access my Microsoft 365 account including Email and OneDrive	96%	98%	97%
I have been able to access the relevant software for my course	97%	97%	97%
I know how to access support via the Student IT Helpdesk	95%	95%	95%
I was informed about the Students' Association either at my induction or in the first few weeks at College	94%	94%	94%
I am aware of how the Students' Association can support me during my time at College	91%	91%	90%
When on campus I have been able to connect to the College Wifi easily	73%	88%	84%
My Course	2023	2024	2025
I have enjoyed the teaching on the course so far	97%	97%	97%
Since starting, my course has run smoothly	93%	96%	94%
My timetable was clearly explained to me	94%	94%	91%
I think I have chosen the right course	98%	97%	97%
I believe I am treated fairly	98%	98%	98%
I enjoy attending College on campus and remotely	96%	96%	96%
Overall, I am satisfied with the College	97%	98%	97%

3. Qualitative Feedback – Full Time Students

Overview of Qualitative Response Rates

A free text comment box is included in the First Impressions survey. This allows students to provide qualitative comments to which supports their qualitative feedback.

Of the 4,744 full-time survey participants, 573 (12%) opted to write a comment about their experience.

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 2025-26 First Impressions survey. The feedback is presented by sector, which hosts the positive feedback provided by full-time students across all services.

[Student Feedback First Impressions Survey](#)

Appendices 3.1 – 3.5 provide Sector breakdown.

Appendices

3.1 Sector Data – Hospitality and Leisure

Overall Sector Satisfaction	93.29%						
Application Process	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	Not Applicable	Blank	Overall Satisfaction
Applying for my course was an easy and straightforward process	489	487	66	17	0	0	92.16%
The College website was easy to use	346	580	111	22	0	0	87.44%
The College information on social media was helpful	335	585	125	14	0	0	86.87%
The College prospectus was informative	361	628	64	6	0	0	93.39%
The College took account of my qualifications and experience when I applied for the course	598	418	34	9	0	0	95.94%
Induction/Introduction to College	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	Not Applicable	Blank	Overall Satisfaction
My first day at college was welcoming and informative	739	283	31	6	0	0	96.51%
My online induction course was welcoming and informative	543	437	65	14	0	0	92.54%
I am aware of the range of support available to me from the Student Support Team	541	439	67	12	0	0	92.54%
I know how to access advice about student funding (e.g. bursaries, childcare) if I need it	500	402	124	33	0	0	85.17%
I know who to contact if I am absent for face-to-face classes or unable to attend online sessions and how to complete the Absence Form when I return	633	360	44	22	0	0	93.77%
I am clear about the expected standards of work	705	329	21	4	0	0	97.64%
I am clear about the expected standards of attendance (if required), punctuality and engagement	770	269	16	4	0	0	98.11%
I know about the College's health and safety arrangements (fire alarms, evacuation procedures, safety online etc.)	634	357	55	13	0	0	93.58%
I received an introduction to MyNESCol (the College's Virtual Learning Environment) and MyInfo (Student Information System)	628	377	42	12	0	0	94.90%
I know how to access the online Library e-resources (ebooks, journals etc.) via MyNESCol	454	428	146	31	0	0	83.29%
I can access my Microsoft 365 account including Email and OneDrive	693	321	37	8	0	0	95.75%
I have been able to access the relevant software for my course	618	391	45	5	0	0	95.28%
I know how to access support via the Student IT Helpdesk	617	379	56	7	0	0	94.05%
I was informed about the Students' Association either at my induction or in the first few weeks at College	600	390	56	13	0	0	93.48%
I am aware of how the Students' Association can support me during my time at College	530	425	87	17	0	0	90.18%
When on campus I have been able to connect to the College Wifi easily	576	335	95	53	0	0	86.02%
My Course	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	Not Applicable	Blank	Overall Satisfaction
I have enjoyed the teaching on the course so far	662	363	29	5	0	0	96.79%
Since starting, my course has run smoothly	615	396	40	8	0	0	95.47%
My timetable was clearly explained to me	673	310	59	17	0	0	92.82%
I think I have chosen the right course	723	306	27	3	0	0	97.17%
I believe I am treated fairly	740	291	24	4	0	0	97.36%
I enjoy attending College on campus and remotely	698	324	30	7	0	0	96.51%
Overall, I am satisfied with the College	712	318	24	5	0	0	97.26%

3.2 Sector Data – Construction, Science & Computing

Overall Sector Satisfaction	97.36%						
Application Process	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	Not Applicable	Blank	Overall Satisfaction
Applying for my course was an easy and straightforward process	476	326	34	6	0	0	95.25%
The College website was easy to use	318	417	83	24	0	0	87.29%
The College information on social media was helpful	214	464	129	35	0	0	80.52%
The College prospectus was informative	302	451	73	16	0	0	89.43%
The College took account of my qualifications and experience when I applied for the course	512	297	23	10	0	0	96.08%
Induction/Introduction to College	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	Not Applicable	Blank	Overall Satisfaction
My first day at college was welcoming and informative	617	202	18	5	0	0	97.27%
My online induction course was welcoming and informative	389	353	70	30	0	0	88.12%
I am aware of the range of support available to me from the Student Support Team	455	320	53	14	0	0	92.04%
I know how to access advice about student funding (e.g. bursaries, childcare) if I need it	420	330	63	29	0	0	89.07%
I know who to contact if I am absent for face-to-face classes or unable to attend online sessions and how to complete the Absence Form when I return	541	243	49	9	0	0	93.11%
I am clear about the expected standards of work	613	206	14	9	0	0	97.27%
I am clear about the expected standards of attendance (if required), punctuality and engagement	676	155	10	1	0	0	98.69%
I know about the College's health and safety arrangements (fire alarms, evacuation procedures, safety online etc.)	544	238	40	20	0	0	92.87%
I received an introduction to MyNESCol (the College's Virtual Learning Environment) and MyInfo (Student Information System)	513	256	58	15	0	0	91.33%
I know how to access the online Library e-resources (ebooks, journals etc.) via MyNESCol	410	270	118	44	0	0	80.76%
I can access my Microsoft 365 account including Email and OneDrive	628	188	22	4	0	0	96.91%
I have been able to access the relevant software for my course	577	227	29	9	0	0	95.49%
I know how to access support via the Student IT Helpdesk	533	252	47	10	0	0	93.23%
I was informed about the Students' Association either at my induction or in the first few weeks at College	543	244	39	16	0	0	93.47%
I am aware of how the Students' Association can support me during my time at College	459	282	78	23	0	0	88.00%
When on campus I have been able to connect to the College Wifi easily	443	227	96	76	0	0	79.57%
My Course	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	Not Applicable	Blank	Overall Satisfaction
I have enjoyed the teaching on the course so far	578	236	22	6	0	0	96.67%
Since starting, my course has run smoothly	521	281	33	7	0	0	95.25%
My timetable was clearly explained to me	533	231	56	22	0	0	90.74%
I think I have chosen the right course	615	202	18	7	0	0	97.03%
I believe I am treated fairly	675	151	14	2	0	0	98.10%
I enjoy attending College on campus and remotely	590	212	33	7	0	0	95.25%
Overall, I am satisfied with the College	595	223	21	3	0	0	97.15%

3.3 Sector Data – Mechanical, Electrical and Vehicle Technologies

Overall Sector Satisfaction	91.10%						
Application Process	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	Not Applicable	Blank	Overall Satisfaction
Applying for my course was an easy and straightforward process	301	323	37	3	0	0	93.98%
The College website was easy to use	192	386	78	8	0	0	87.05%
The College information on social media was helpful	148	395	104	17	0	0	81.78%
The College prospectus was informative	177	413	59	15	0	0	88.86%
The College took account of my qualifications and experience when I applied for the course	314	319	24	7	0	0	95.33%
Induction/Introduction to College	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	Not Applicable	Blank	Overall Satisfaction
My first day at college was welcoming and informative	381	249	23	11	0	0	94.88%
My online induction course was welcoming and informative	223	348	64	29	0	0	85.99%
I am aware of the range of support available to me from the Student Support Team	303	307	43	11	0	0	91.87%
I know how to access advice about student funding (e.g. bursaries, childcare) if I need it	252	317	70	25	0	0	85.69%
I know who to contact if I am absent for face-to-face classes or unable to attend online sessions and how to complete the Absence Form when I return	330	274	43	17	0	0	90.96%
I am clear about the expected standards of work	417	234	12	1	0	0	98.04%
I am clear about the expected standards of attendance (if required), punctuality and engagement	449	206	7	2	0	0	98.64%
I know about the College's health and safety arrangements (fire alarms, evacuation procedures, safety online etc.)	374	261	27	2	0	0	95.63%
I received an introduction to MyNESCol (the College's Virtual Learning Environment) and MyInfo (Student Information System)	314	281	55	14	0	0	89.61%
I know how to access the online Library e-resources (ebooks, journals etc.) via MyNESCol	228	302	97	37	0	0	79.82%
I can access my Microsoft 365 account including Email and OneDrive	387	254	19	4	0	0	96.54%
I have been able to access the relevant software for my course	348	286	28	2	0	0	95.48%
I know how to access support via the Student IT Helpdesk	313	305	42	4	0	0	93.07%
I was informed about the Students' Association either at my induction or in the first few weeks at College	266	321	60	17	0	0	88.40%
I am aware of how the Students' Association can support me during my time at College	249	312	87	16	0	0	84.49%
When on campus I have been able to connect to the College Wifi easily	277	274	56	57	0	0	82.98%
My Course	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	Not Applicable	Blank	Overall Satisfaction
I have enjoyed the teaching on the course so far	355	266	36	7	0	0	93.52%
Since starting, my course has run smoothly	297	274	74	19	0	0	85.99%
My timetable was clearly explained to me	313	253	78	20	0	0	85.24%
I think I have chosen the right course	439	212	10	3	0	0	98.04%
I believe I am treated fairly	433	219	10	2	0	0	98.19%
I enjoy attending College on campus and remotely	376	254	24	10	0	0	94.88%
Overall, I am satisfied with the College	365	271	26	2	0	0	95.78%

3.4 Sector Data - Business and Creative Professions

Overall Sector Satisfaction	94.19%						
Application Process	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	Not Applicable	Blank	Overall Satisfaction
Applying for my course was an easy and straightforward process	626	427	41	9	0	0	95.47%
The College website was easy to use	417	560	106	20	0	0	88.58%
The College information on social media was helpful	321	644	114	24	0	0	87.49%
The College prospectus was informative	400	625	66	12	0	0	92.93%
The College took account of my qualifications and experience when I applied for the course	735	340	20	8	0	0	97.46%
Induction/Introduction to College	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	Not Applicable	Blank	Overall Satisfaction
My first day at college was welcoming and informative	824	252	19	8	0	0	97.55%
My online induction course was welcoming and informative	568	444	60	31	0	0	91.75%
I am aware of the range of support available to me from the Student Support Team	569	406	102	26	0	0	88.40%
I know how to access advice about student funding (e.g. bursaries, childcare) if I need it	620	410	50	23	0	0	93.38%
I know who to contact if I am absent for face-to-face classes or unable to attend online sessions and how to complete the Absence Form when I return	771	267	50	15	0	0	94.11%
I am clear about the expected standards of work	807	276	11	9	0	0	98.19%
I am clear about the expected standards of attendance (if required), punctuality and engagement	877	216	3	7	0	0	99.09%
I know about the College's health and safety arrangements (fire alarms, evacuation procedures, safety online etc.)	673	361	53	16	0	0	93.74%
I received an introduction to MyNESCol (the College's Virtual Learning Environment) and MyInfo (Student Information System)	714	334	37	18	0	0	95.01%
I know how to access the online Library e-resources (ebooks, journals etc.) via MyNESCol	532	391	135	45	0	0	83.68%
I can access my Microsoft 365 account including Email and OneDrive	874	210	9	10	0	0	98.28%
I have been able to access the relevant software for my course	805	278	10	10	0	0	98.19%
I know how to access support via the Student IT Helpdesk	732	319	42	10	0	0	95.29%
I was informed about the Students' Association either at my induction or in the first few weeks at College	738	314	32	19	0	0	95.38%
I am aware of how the Students' Association can support me during my time at College	633	376	78	16	0	0	91.48%
When on campus I have been able to connect to the College Wifi easily	597	319	103	84	0	0	83.05%
My Course	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	Not Applicable	Blank	Overall Satisfaction
I have enjoyed the teaching on the course so far	725	349	23	6	0	0	97.37%
Since starting, my course has run smoothly	682	380	35	6	0	0	96.28%
My timetable was clearly explained to me	726	308	55	14	0	0	93.74%
I think I have chosen the right course	813	264	21	5	0	0	97.64%
I believe I am treated fairly	872	218	9	4	0	0	98.82%
I enjoy attending College on campus and remotely	755	312	24	12	0	0	96.74%
Overall, I am satisfied with the College	785	299	13	6	0	0	98.28%

3.5 Sector Data - Care, Education and Social Sciences

Overall Sector Satisfaction	94.63%						
Application Process	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	Not Applicable	Blank	Overall Satisfaction
Applying for my course was an easy and straightforward process	573	455	32	8	0	0	96.25%
The College website was easy to use	451	527	75	15	0	0	91.57%
The College information on social media was helpful	351	583	107	27	0	0	87.45%
The College prospectus was informative	411	581	55	21	0	0	92.88%
The College took account of my qualifications and experience when I applied for the course	716	324	24	4	0	0	97.38%
Induction/Introduction to College	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	Not Applicable	Blank	Overall Satisfaction
My first day at college was welcoming and informative	760	274	25	9	0	0	96.82%
My online induction course was welcoming and informative	524	433	56	55	0	0	89.61%
I am aware of the range of support available to me from the Student Support Team	629	384	48	7	0	0	94.85%
I know how to access advice about student funding (e.g. bursaries, childcare) if I need it	572	390	86	20	0	0	90.07%
I know who to contact if I am absent for face-to-face classes or unable to attend online sessions and how to complete the Absence Form when I return	719	287	53	9	0	0	94.19%
I am clear about the expected standards of work	798	253	17	0	0	0	98.41%
I am clear about the expected standards of attendance (if required), punctuality and engagement	859	198	9	2	0	0	98.97%
I know about the College's health and safety arrangements (fire alarms, evacuation procedures, safety online etc.)	728	291	43	6	0	0	95.41%
I received an introduction to MyNESCol (the College's Virtual Learning Environment) and MyInfo (Student Information System)	733	290	38	7	0	0	95.79%
I know how to access the online Library e-resources (ebooks, journals etc.) via MyNESCol	572	355	109	32	0	0	86.80%
I can access my Microsoft 365 account including Email and OneDrive	837	216	13	2	0	0	98.60%
I have been able to access the relevant software for my course	757	300	11	0	0	0	98.97%
I know how to access support via the Student IT Helpdesk	746	293	26	3	0	0	97.28%
I was informed about the Students' Association either at my induction or in the first few weeks at College	748	279	31	10	0	0	96.16%
I am aware of how the Students' Association can support me during my time at College	661	335	61	11	0	0	93.26%
When on campus I have been able to connect to the College Wifi easily	629	306	90	43	0	0	87.55%
My Course	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	Not Applicable	Blank	Overall Satisfaction
I have enjoyed the teaching on the course so far	685	363	15	5	0	0	98.13%
Since starting, my course has run smoothly	632	359	54	23	0	0	92.79%
My timetable was clearly explained to me	659	317	72	20	0	0	91.39%
I think I have chosen the right course	774	265	24	5	0	0	97.28%
I believe I am treated fairly	829	218	15	6	0	0	98.03%
I enjoy attending College on campus and remotely	723	304	32	9	0	0	96.16%
Overall, I am satisfied with the College	733	310	21	4	0	0	97.66%

REGIONAL BOARD	
Meeting of 10 December 2025	
REPORT BY THE REGIONAL CHAIR	
The purpose of this report is to update the Regional Board on:	
1	<p>Colleges Scotland</p> <p>22 and 24/9 CS Trustee interview</p> <p>Chairs meeting</p> <p>9/12</p> <p>Trustee Meetings</p> <p>30/10</p>
2	<p>College Employers Scotland</p> <p>CES Executive</p> <p>12/11</p> <p>NJNC – Side tables</p> <p>26/11 Lecturers</p> <p>4/12 Support Staff</p> <p>4/12 Central Committee</p> <p>Update</p> <p><u>Job Evaluation</u></p> <p>Following a meeting between SFC and CES there was an indication that the requirement for applying Green Book regulations will remain to bring additional cost and increase timescale by c18 month – there remains the risk that there will be no cash committed to this. CES will await written confirmation of the approach.</p> <p>The new project board established (JEPB – Job Evaluation Project Board) with the first meeting agreed for 16/12/2025. S Elston has agreed to be Project sponsor and will join the project board with the aim to kick start the process.</p> <p><u>NRPA (National Recognition and Procedures Agreement)</u></p> <p>A revised NRPA has now been agreed with all Trade Unions – EIS-FELA, Unison, Unite, GMB. Effectively the NJNC side table will end with the new</p>

	<p>NNC (National Negotiating Committee) established from 2026 – with similar membership. The final Central Committee took place on 4/12/25.</p> <p><u>Funding</u></p> <p>CES is currently funded directly by SFC until end of 25/26 year. SFC will provide a paper to outline potential future funding models (including subscription) due consideration by CES - still outstanding.</p> <p><u>PSS Pay Claim update</u></p> <p>Confirmation from SG for £4.5M additional support funding for pay rise was received. Unison and Unite members approved the offer with GMB outstanding (due 9/12) Enabling a 3-year pay deal for all PSS staff to be implemented.</p> <p>NB EIS-FELA will present their 26/27 pay claim in March 2026.</p>
3	<p>NESCol</p> <p>Weekly Principal meetings</p> <p>ASET Chair Meetings</p> <p>Board Committee Meetings – Joint Finance/ Audit, C&Q</p> <p>27/10 Parminder Kohli (Shell) ETSB hub</p> <p>10/12 Board Meeting</p> <p>19/11 Infinity Business Breakfast</p>
4	<p>Community Planning Aberdeen (CPA)</p> <p>19/11 Board Meeting</p> <p>Focus on LOIP (Local Outcome Improvement Plan) update</p>
5	<p>RGU</p> <p>3/11 Board Meeting and Strategy Day</p> <p>25/11 Audit Risk Committee</p>
6	<p>CDN</p> <p>4/12 Awards Event Glasgow</p> <p>10/12 Board Meeting</p> <p>12/11 Audit Committee</p>

REGIONAL BOARD

Meeting of 10 December 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;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Committee</th><th>Meeting Date</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>HR Committee</td><td>06 October 2025</td></tr> <tr> <td>A&R Committee</td><td>26 November 2025</td></tr> <tr> <td>F&R Committee (met partly in conjunction with A&R Committee)</td><td>26 November 2025</td></tr> <tr> <td>C&Q Committee</td><td>27 November 2025</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Committee	Meeting Date	HR Committee	06 October 2025	A&R Committee	26 November 2025	F&R Committee (met partly in conjunction with A&R Committee)	26 November 2025	C&Q Committee	27 November 2025
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2	<p>HR Committee Meeting – 06 October 2025</p> <p>Summary of key business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Terms of Reference • Committee Programme of Business AY2025/26 • People Services' Management Information (Annual Report) • People Services' Enhancement Plan Update • Equalities and Wellbeing Committee Update + People Services' Equalities Action Plan • Job Evaluation and National Bargaining Update • Committee Function Discussion <p>Agreed Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference wording of the last 2 bullet points under Remit to be adjusted • Job Evaluation to be added as a standing item to Meeting Agendas • HR Professionals Report detailing benchmarking data to be shared if available for the 04/02/26 Meeting • Update on National Bargaining to be provided at 04/02/26 Meeting • Meeting between Committee Chair and AP People Services to be arranged to continue discussion on Committee function 										
3	<p>A&R Committee Meeting – 26 November 2025</p> <p>Summary of key business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25 • Audit Certification of Student Activity and Report AY2024/25 										

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit Certification of Support Fund YE Returns AY2024/25 • Strategic Risk Register • Good Governance Compliance Report • University of Dundee Key Findings Report • Data Protection Report AY2024/25 <p>In conjunction with F&R Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Statements 2024-25 Overview • Draft Audited Financial Statements 2024-25 • Audit Scotland Annual Audit Report AY2024/25 <p>Agreed Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include information on maintenance backlog in the Estates Update at 10/12/25 Regional Board • Reflect upon the inclusion of a Regional Board member on NESCol's Sustainability Committee • KPI access detail to be shared with Regional Board members via email • University of Dundee Key Findings Report responses to be shared with Regional Board members for information
4	<p>F&R Committee- 26 November 2025</p> <p>In conjunction with A&R Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Statements 2024-25 Overview • Draft Audited Financial Statements 2024-25 • Audit Scotland Annual Audit Report AY2024/25 <p>Summary of key business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Fees AY2026/27 • 2025-26 Budget Update • Capital Projects Update • ASET Update • Long-Term Financial Planning • Credits Activity and Enrolments Update • Insurance Policies • Opportunities Register • Sustainability Report AY2024/25 <p>Agreed Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regarding Audit Scotland Audit Report AY2024/25, wording around the responsibilities of the Regional Board for the financial statements to be re-visited to ascertain whether any improvement can be applied, and any suggested changes discussed with S Thompson.
5	<p>C&Q Committee – 27 November 2025</p> <p>Summary of key business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Activity and Credits Position AY2025/26 • BCD Update • Committee Terms of Reference • Programme of Business AY2025/26 • SA Budget AY2025/26 • SA Activity Report and SA Partnership Agreement • First Impressions Survey • Draft KPI Results AY2024/25 • Student Support Activity Report and Equalities and Wellbeing Update • Annual Quality Assurance Report and MA Inspection Update • Student Information System Project Update • Social Science and Learning Opportunities Showcase

	Agreed Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members invited to provide feedback on the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference • Video on EBS System Integration to be presented at 19/02/26 Meeting
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REGIONAL BOARD	
Meeting of 10 December 2025	
Title: University of Dundee Key Findings Report	
Author: Susan Lawrance, Board Secretary	Contributor(s):
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 recently published Gillies Report and the details below regarding the Key Findings.	
Linked to Strategic Theme: Choose an item.	
Linked to Strategic Risk(s): n/a	
Executive Summary: As Regional Board Members are aware in March 2025 the SFC commissioned an independent investigation to determine the causes and contributing factors to the deterioration of the University of Dundee's financial position. The investigation was led by Professor Pamela Gillies and conducted by international professional services firm, BDO. The report detailing the investigation's findings was published in June 2025. https://www.sfc.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Gillies-Report.pdf The report details Lessons that may be beneficial for the wider sector in Scotland. It was felt it would be beneficial for those Lessons to be reviewed and commented on with regard to NESCol's governance arrangements (see Appendix 1 below).	
Recommendation: It is recommended that the Regional Board note this information.	
Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable):	

Equality Impact Assessment:

Positive Impact ☒

Negative Impact ☐

No Impact ☒

Evidence:

Appendix 1

Findings on Lessons that may be beneficial for the wider sector in Scotland from the Gillies Report

Introduction

Members will be aware that in March 2025 the SFC commissioned an independent investigation to determine the causes and contributing factors to the deterioration of the University of Dundee's financial position. The investigation was led by Professor Pamela Gillies and conducted by international professional services firm, BDO. The report detailing the investigation's findings was published in June 2025. <https://www.sfc.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Gillies-Report.pdf>. As part of good governance, the findings have been reviewed drawing comparisons between the University of Dundee and NESCol.

Lessons that may be beneficial for the wider sector in Scotland

General Lessons:

1. *The UEG, or equivalent, should actively consider and challenge the management accounts of the institution from a position of understanding of the totality of operations. There needs to be: – An integrated income & expenditure, cashflow and balance sheet. – Transparent cash reporting and cash management i.e. budgeted and allocated cash, unallocated operational cash. – Control and reporting of capital projects in a way that is not separate to or segregated from the whole university financial reporting; and – Transparent treasury management (especially if RCFs or loan finance is being used or is available)*

Response: The Audit and Risk Committee and Finance and Resource Committee receive regular updates on the monthly management and annual accounts. A robust system of financial reporting exists with regular standing agenda items covering In Year Budget Updates; Annual Accounts Updates and Long-Term Financial Planning (including Capital Projects).

2. *Active and critical appraisal and challenge of the Risk Register;*

Response: The College's Strategic Risk Register is reviewed monthly by the Strategic Leadership Team and is reported, as a standing agenda item, to the Audit and Risk Committee and Regional Board. The Committee also receive, as a separate Agenda item, the ASET Risk Register, (which is discussed at the ASET Board Meeting also).

3. *Where there are obvious sensitivities (high risk rating) on student recruitment or financial sustainability, there should be regular updates to the Finance Committee (or equivalent) as a check and balance on budgets and forecasts.*

Response: Regional Board and Committee receive, as a Standing Agenda Item, an Activity Overview, providing a high-level overview of activity, (f/t and p/t), details of risks, assumptions and caveats relating to the data, plus commentary on actions being taken to achieve SFC Targets and planned activity for the upcoming academic year.

4. *Where there are loan or RCF covenants, depending on headroom these should be reported to UEG on a monthly or quarterly basis (in real time and based on the prior month's management accounts);*

Response: Not applicable to NESCol.

5. *There needs to be a culture (in practice) of the validity and value of questioning at all levels in a way that is without fear.*

Response: An open and transparent culture exists within the Regional Board, Committees and NESCol staff. Regular open staff sessions are held with input from Executive Team and Strategic Leadership Team members. The Board also recently received training (March 2025) on Chairing and Questioning Skills from CDN.

6. *The Chair of UEG (ordinarily the Principal) should be receptive to challenge.*

Response: The Principal has an "Open Door Policy"; the Principal's Objectives are discussed regularly by the Regional Board. The Principal also meets weekly with the Regional Chair.

7. *Curiosity should be encouraged (and whether at UEG, ARC, Finance Committee or Court) – one person's 'innocent question' ("I don't really understand but...") is often a catalyst for another person and the engagement leads to a far richer understanding and potentially uncovering of risks and issues that are worthy of debate;*

Response: Engagement from all Board members is encouraged and this is verbally confirmed at each meeting. Members are reminded they are all "equal" with no such thing as a "daft" question. Additionally, after each agenda item discussion is invited. This culture is replicated throughout Executive Team and Strategic Leadership Team meetings.

8. *There should be clear and unambiguous early communication to Court and its committees regarding matters of importance to the whole university;*

Response: There is open communication with the Regional Board and members of the Executive and Strategic Leadership Team. All Board committee agenda items and minutes, regional board agenda items and minutes are available through the use of MS Teams which all members of the Regional Board have access to. Key reports and national information are also available through the MS Teams area.

9. *Minutes should reflect challenges and not bias. They should also make clear how decisions were arrived at;*

Response: All minutes from Regional Board and Committee meetings are shared through MS Teams space and reflect discussions, for example many minutes state "in response to" highlighting the recording of discussions, especially with regard to decision making.

10. *Both the UEG and all members of Court should live the nine principles of public life*

Response: The nine principles of public life are included in the Regional Board Governance Manual which is annually reviewed by the Board Secretary in conjunction with the Regional Chair and the full Board.

11. *The ARC should be able to stand back on any matter and review or enquire. The ARC should be the conscience of the University – the ultimate back stop for any matter*

Response: The Audit and Risk meet regularly with the Programme of Business discussed and agreed. The Audit and Risk Committee have also the opportunity to meet separately with the Internal and External Auditors.

12. *The University of Dundee had a practice of the Chair of FPC 'in attendance at ARC' and the Chair of ARC 'in attendance at FPC'. This overlap can appear functional in theory but from a best practice perspective often falls over in practice. The respective Chairs can readily get sucked into the detail and, in particular, the Chair of ARC returns to ARC with a pre-set and (likely) biased view. ARC should retain an element of independence in the overall governance and certainly absolute objectivity – this is readily lost. Best practice would be for no overlap – there will be members of the Executive that do attend both and the different lenses are helpful;*

Response: The Audit and Risk Committee meet separately to the Finance and Resource Committee except for one meeting held in November to jointly discuss the production and presentation of the Annual Accounts before these are presented for Approval by the Regional Board in December.

13. *In extremis, and it is seen (UK wide), institutions have a habit of forming a 'Committee of Chairs of Committees' or similar. In doing so, the Chair of ARC automatically loses their objectivity. The 'conscience of the University' is lost and objectivity over new and emerging risks can readily be overridden by a bias from prior (and detailed) consideration in a different context to ARC's considerations;*

Response: The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee does sit on the Chairs Committee. The AR Chair is also Vice Chair of the Regional Board and therefore holds two roles. The Regional Chair does not consider this a "conflict of interest". In terms of risks, the Strategic Risk Register is presented regularly to both the Audit and Risk Committee and full Regional Board for consideration and discussion.

14. *Papers must (not should) be provided in advance of meetings (and regardless of UEG, Court or its committees). Papers should be provided to give members time to read and consider in advance;*

Response: All Committee and Regional Board papers are shared in advance of meetings and area available via the use of the Regional Board MS Teams area where all papers are visible. Late papers are discouraged.

15. *Papers should never be provided retrospectively, this is poor practice, regardless of the considered confidentiality of content – good governance cannot happen in a vacuum and the Executive need to work within the Board and Committee structure of the University;*

Response: No retrospective papers would be considered by Committee or Regional Board.

16. *There are few instances in Scotland where the University Secretary (or equivalent) is the Chief Operating Officer of the institution, but this dual role can create conflicts of interest that are difficult to resolve in real time. While there will be a direct reporting line to the Chair of Court / Governing Body, there will also be a reporting line to the Principal. These two lines often work 'until they do not'. Care should be taken to ensure the primary responsibility is always to the Chair of Court;*

Response: The Board Secretary reports to the Regional Chair and is not a member of NESCol Executive Team.

17. *The FM could usefully be updated for 'responsibilities of the Principal' and in particular in the role as 'Accountable Officer' and the responsibilities of Chair of Court; and*

Response: The Principal's objectives are discussed and if so minded, approved, by the Regional Board. There are clear lines of responsibility for all staff and Regional Board members. The remit of all Committees and the Regional Board are contained within their Terms of Reference which are annually reviewed.

18. *A values-led University culture, which privileges transparency and accountability, is likely to actively support evidence-based collaborative decision making, integrity and openness to challenge and debate.*

Response: NESCol operates under a clear culture of openness and transparency; where collaborative decision making can be actively challenged and discussed.

Conclusion

In listing the responses to the 18 points raised in the report the Board Secretary feels that NESCol's governance arrangements are robust; and that an open and transparent culture exists within the College, the Board and its members.