CITY OF GLASGOW COLLEGE

Board of Management
Audit Committee

Date of Meeting	**Wednesday 13 September 2017**
Paper No.	**AC1-I**
Agenda Item	**8.5**
Subject of Paper	**Internal Audit Report – Student Admissions/MIS (Business Process Review)**
FOISA Status	**Disclosable**
Primary Contact	**Henderson Loggie**
Date of production	**August 2017**
Action	**For Discussion and Decision**

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to consider and discuss the report and the management responses to the internal audit recommendations.

1. **Purpose of report**

    The purpose of this review is to provide management and the Audit Committee with assurance on key controls relating to the curriculum and financial plans in place for City of Glasgow College and their alignment with the regional plan for Glasgow and the college student number targets.

2. **Context and Discussion**

    Following the Audit Needs Assessment undertaken by Henderson Loggie in session 2016-17, and the consequent Internal Audit Strategic Plan 2016-2020, both approved by the Committee in March 2017, an operating plan was created for the year ended 31 July 2017.

    This internal audit of Student Admissions/MIS (Business Process Review) provides an outline of the objectives, scope, findings and graded recommendations as appropriate, together with management responses. This constitutes an action pan for improvement.

    The Report includes a number of audit findings which are assessed and graded to denote the overall level of assurance that can be taken from the Report. The gradings are defined as follows:

Good	System meets control objectives.
Satisfactory	System meets control objectives with some weaknesses present.
Requires improvement	System has weaknesses that could prevent it achieving control objectives.
Unacceptable	System cannot meet control objectives.

3. **Impact and implications**

    Refer to internal audit report.

City of Glasgow College

Student Admissions / MIS (Business Process Review)

Internal Audit Report No: 2017/04

Draft Issued: 7 July 2017

Final Issued: 5 September 2017

HENDERSON LOGGIE
Chartered Accountants

Content

1. Background

As part of the Internal Audit programme at City of Glasgow College ('the College') for 2016/17 we facilitated a business process review in order to identify areas for possible improvements in working practices relating to:

- Curriculum Manager (the College's in-house developed software for recording approved course information);
- the admissions process (including interaction with Student Records); and
- the creation, review and actioning of Personal Learning Support Plans (PLSPs).

Curriculum Manager is used to: roll forward prior year courses; add and delete courses; record the information about a course that will be shown on the College website; identify the units each course is comprised of; and for timetabling of the courses. Curriculum Manager was rolled out for the 2016/17 academic year and replaced Curriculum Planner, a similar in-house system but which was less integrated. The work for 2017/18 curriculum started on Curriculum Manager in November 2016 when it was used for the first time for rolling forward courses and updating information for the website (the website course information went live in December 2016). In February 2017, the units against each course were required to be input, and in May 2017 Curriculum Manager was opened up for staff timetabling to start taking place. As the staff timetabling section had not started at the time of this business process review we did not cover this in the facilitated session.

The College admissions process covered in this review included the process of: applications being made; assessment of these; interviews; offers (either conditional or unconditional); provision of information in order to turn conditional offers into unconditional offers; acceptance / declining of offers by applicants; and online enrolment. The process is largely undertaken through the College's online application system and the Enquirer system (an in-house developed system used for a range of processes and recording of information). Applicants are required to create an account and then apply for a course online. Applicants may undergo an interview, a group information session, or just be offered a place based on meeting the course entry conditions. Applicants may be rejected if they do not meet the formal course conditions, although previous applicant work experience can be taken into account where appropriate. Applicants can apply for two courses (a first choice and second choice). If an applicant is rejected from their first choice then their second choice course application will be triggered. If they are offered a conditional offer they must provide evidence of meeting these requirements before being offered an unconditional offer. All students are required to accept or turn down their offer and after this, if they have accepted their offer, they are requested to enrol online.

PLSPs are created for any student who has noted on their course application or online enrolment / hard copy enrolment form that they have a disability, where a student has highlighted that they are having difficulties once on the course, or where a lecturer or other member of staff has noted a student who is struggling or has other difficulties. All such requests lead to a PLSP referral being raised, after which a Learning Support Lecturer (who are assigned to each Faculty) will contact the individual and arrange a meeting to discuss their situation and needs. At the meeting, the Learning Support Lecturer will go through the PLSP online form questions, determine what support action is required and then this will be arranged. The Learning Support Lecturers also have formal reviews with the students during the year, where further support actions may be identified.

2. Scope and Objectives

The scope of this assignment was to carry out a review of the current procedures for the various stages of the admissions process (including the interaction between Admissions and Student Records (MIS)), the use of Curriculum Manager and the completion of PLSPs, with a view to identifying and removing waste and proposing procedural improvements.

The objectives of the audit were to ensure that:

- the anticipated outcomes for all internal stakeholders from the admissions process, use of Curriculum Manager and PLSPs are clearly defined;
- the value of services provided as part of the admissions process, use of Curriculum Manager and PLSPs are quantified from a student perspective;
- the steps in the value chain are identified;
- steps that do not add value are identified with a view to eliminating them; and
- steps that create value occur in the right sequence.

3. Audit Approach

Through focus groups and interviews with staff nominated by the College from Admissions, Student Records, Marketing, Learning Support, IT Systems Development and an Academic Faculty, we used a range of business improvement tools to identify internal stakeholder and student needs; identify opportunities for removing inefficiency and waste; and map out revised processes which would create a flow between value creating steps to improve the process.

We then developed an action plan to drive improvement with input from management to prioritise the issues. This action plan considered changes required to existing operating procedures to ensure that any changes are deliverable and embedded across the College.

4. Summary of Main Findings

The review has identified a small number of areas for further investigation or improvement relating to Curriculum Manager and the admissions process. These are included in Section 6 of this report. All of the identified actions are improvement actions designed to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. No issues subjecting the College to material or significant risk were identified during the review.

We noted that management had requested that the IT Systems Development team replace the PLSP system with a new in-house developed system. Rather than reviewing the existing PLSP system for areas for improvement we held a facilitated session to identify the requirements of a PLSP system and map out information flows, required processes, and desired outputs from a new PLSP system. We have provided management with a detailed process map of what was discussed and agreed at the facilitated session to assist them in creating the brief and scoping for a new PLSP system.

5. Acknowledgements

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff at the College who helped us during the course of our visit.

6. Detailed List of Improvement Points Identified from Admissions / MIS Facilitated Session

On 25 May 2017 Henderson Loggie held a facilitated session with staff from Admissions, Student Records (MIS), Marketing, IT Systems Development and a Faculty representative regarding Curriculum Manager and the admissions process. The aim of this facilitated session was to identify areas of waste. All participants were encouraged to provide input and all points raised have been included in tables on the following pages except where these were already being implemented, were not considered practical to implement by the Student Experience Director or of a minor nature. The matters raised were prioritised by the Student Experience Director as 1 = high priority, 2 = medium priority, 3 = low priority.   Of the eight points raised, two have been classed as Priority 1, five as Priority 2, and one as Priority 3.

Within this report we have classified areas of waste using the seven waste categories that Toyota devised. These categories, along with some examples, are given below:

Inappropriate processing
Managers doing work of subordinates
Ineffective use of office floor space

Overproduction
Over ordering of materials
Over servicing of customers
Working unnecessary overtime

Transporting
Transporting of forms
Unnecessary movement of staff between locations

Defects
Manual input errors
Incorrect identification of student needs

Waiting
In process delays

Unnecessary inventory (not applicable for this review)
Level of stock and work in progress

Unnecessary motions
Ergonomics of work stations
Significant staff movement to access scanners/photocopiers

No.	Waste Classification	Area	Short title	Issue / Potential Improvement	Priority
				Priority 1 items	
1	Defects	**Admissions and Student Records**	**Gathering information on why offers were declined**	Applicants with an offer (either conditional or unconditional) are requested to accept or decline their offer on the online application system. Those applicants who decline an offer can provide their reason for declining in a free text box which is analysed. When an applicant declines their offer online it would be better if a list of common reasons for declining is provided and the system allows one reason to be selected. This would allow the data to be more readily analysed and the data may identify weakness in College processes or systems where actions can be taken to mitigate against these weaknesses.	1
2	Waiting	**Admissions and Student Records**	**Further promote the benefits of online enrolment**	Students who accept an offer can also enrol online. Some applicants may not be aware of the importance of enrolment, or why it has to be done. Further information promoting to applicants the reasons for enrolling straight away after accepting their offer should be provided on the online application system.	1
				Priority 2 items	
3	Defects	**Admissions and Student Records**	**Use of focus groups / user testing groups to identify how applicants find the application system**	The College conducts a system wide admissions review each year through survey monkey so is aware of issues being raised by students with the admissions process. Also, it is a live system so people contact the College if there are defects with the system. It would however be useful to: • hold focus groups to find out about applicants experience of the admissions process (including aspects of 'keeping warm' students); and • hold user testing groups which would take potential applicants (such as senior high school pupils) and get them to complete the application form online and ask if there were any issues or queries they had, or areas for improvement that they noted, in the processes used.	2

No.	Waste Classification	Area	Short title	Issue / Potential Improvement	Priority
4	Defects	**Curriculum Manager**	**Enhanced Curriculum Manager User Guide**	There is a Curriculum Manager User Guide that the Head of Student Records has produced. This could be enhanced by including within it: a) a flowchart of the full Curriculum Manager process flow, including highlighting key linkages and dependencies; and b) details of any potential issues and guidance on how to avoid them. There may also be benefit in having further technical information (relating to how the IT side of the application is set up) available for Student Records and Admissions staff.	2
5	Defects	**Curriculum Manager**	**Guidance on good practice course information to be put on Curriculum Manager**	Within Curriculum Manager there should be guidance on how to write a course description in line with good practice (including the layout of entry requirements). This should cover the tone and how to determine what words to include for search engine optimisation. The Marketing Department already has such guidance but it is not available on Curriculum Manager.	2
6	Defects	**Curriculum Manager**	**Clear Course Titles to be included on Curriculum Manager**	Some part-time courses have their title on Curriculum Manager as 'XXXX (day)'. This may be misleading and it would be better to have these renamed as 'XXXX (part-time)'.	2

No.	Waste Classification	Area	Short title	Issue / Potential Improvement	Priority
7	Defects	**Curriculum Manager**	**Optimal class sizes**	Staff are required to input into Curriculum Manager the maximum class size* however staff will be unaware of which room they will be in and the room capacities. The Information and Systems Development Manager indicated that there should be a way to identify broad subject areas and to standardise the maximum class size information for rooms used by these subject areas. Thereafter, the maximum class size for the remaining courses would be provided by the Faculties (particularly for specialist rooms). Note: subsequent to the facilitated session, the Head of Student Records requested that, for Curriculum Manager for 2018/19, Curriculum Manager (phase 1) collects the number of cohorts per year (per course) and the projected enrolment number. * The maximum class size is used to calculate the maximum number of offers that can be given.	2
				Priority 3 items	
8	Defects	**Admissions and Student Records**	**Correspondence with rejected applicants**	Currently any applicant who is rejected (either from their second choice subject, or from their first choice if they only made one choice) is advised of their rejection by email / letter but this email / letter does not give the reason for being rejected. It would be useful to have a list of common rejection reasons to be included on Enquirer and interviewers should be required to select a rejection reason (with possibly the ability to input specific text to provide guidance on future applications to the College and how applicants might work towards gaining a place at a later date).	3