

Board of Management Performance & Nominations Committee

Date of Meeting	Monday 21 September 2020
Paper No.	PNC2-D
Agenda Item	3.4
Subject of Paper	Self-Evaluation Report 2019-20: Board Committees and Conveners
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	Paul Clark, College Secretary/Planning
Date of production	11 September 2020
Action	For Approval

1. Recommendations

1. To note the summary report of the evaluation of Board Committee practice and Convener performance
2. To consider the findings of the report

2. Purpose of report

2.1 To provide the Board of Management with an overall self-evaluative assessment of the Committees' performance and that of the Committee Conveners.

2.2. To highlight any training and development needs emerging from the process.

2.3 To facilitate discussion on the effectiveness of the Board Committees.

3. Context

3.1 While there are regular self-evaluations of the full Board, appraisals of Board members and the Board Chair, as well as the three-year External Reviews of Board effectiveness, the last Committee and Convener self-evaluation was reported to the PNC in January 2018. A review of Board Committees was therefore deemed timely.

3.2 Other measures to plan and monitor the work of Board Committees have been the development of a Board Committee Programme of Work for each Committee, and a record of Committee activities, included in the Committee Annual Reports at the end of each session.

3.3 The College Secretary prepared a proposal and format for Board Committees' self-evaluation for Board consideration in April 2017, and self-evaluation forms for the current self-evaluation were distributed to all Board Committee members for completion in June 2020.

3.5 There are many benefits to a robust peer-led self-evaluation as part of the process of governance, such as:

- It meets the requirements of the Code of Good Governance 2016.
- It has been considered good practice in the sector for some years.
- It is a recommendation of the UK Corporate Governance Code for FTSE 350 companies
- It reflects the College's Strategic Priority 5: "To deliver excellence in performance" (College Strategic Plan 2017-18)
- It follows the EFQM excellence model in respect of ongoing assessment and refinement.

4. Impact and implications

4.1 The self-evaluation process comprises a thorough review of Board performance and effectiveness, informing improvement actions and facilitating development and improvement.

4.2 It will provide reassurance to the Board and its stakeholders, including the Regional Board, that the City of Glasgow College systems of governance are robust, and delivered to a high standard.

4.3 The process mitigates against reputational risk to the College.

4.4 Key Findings:

- Attendance levels overall are considerably improved upon 2018-19 and in comparison to recent years.
- Committee membership levels are satisfactory, and members are content with the levels of experience and expertise within the respective memberships.
- Committee members are generally satisfied that the committees are compliant with regulatory and legal matters, and are addressing matters delegated to them.
- There is generally sufficient training for Board members, however some Committees would benefit from training specific to the Committees remit (i.e. Finance, Equalities).
- Good practice is noted in all committees in respect of internal control.
- Committee members are satisfied with administrative support.
- The Committee Conveners received high scores in terms of performance, with scores indicating a slight improvement on the previous Committee evaluation report. Conveners should be careful not to over-contribute to discussions and be seen to dominate discussions.
- Management of meetings is good, and has improved from the last evaluation.
- The return rate of questionnaires in support of this evaluation was down from the previous report (60% from 72%).

Appendices:**Appendix 1: Committee Self-evaluation Summary Report 2019-20**

Board of Management

Self-evaluation of Committees and Conveners 2019-2020

Summary Report

Response Rate: 60%.

1. Introduction

The Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges (2016) states that:

- “The board must keep its effectiveness under annual review and have in place a robust self-evaluation process”
- “There should also be an externally facilitated evaluation of its effectiveness at least every three years” and,
- “The board must agree a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the board chair and the committee chairs”

(Ref. Code of Good Governance; 2016, D23)

It is universally considered to be a requirement of good governance practice for Boards of Management to undertake some form of self-evaluation on a regular basis, to identify areas for improvement and related development, and thereby enhance performance. This is embedded within the Good Governance Standard for Public Services¹ as “Developing the capacity and capability of the governing body to be effective”, and is a recommendation of the UK Corporate Governance Code for FTSE 350 companies.

An external review of Board effectiveness was undertaken in 2017, with a final report published in March 2017, and further External Review is currently being commissioned in line with the adjusted guidance from the Good Governance Steering Group (2020). The full Board has undertaken regular self-evaluation in line with the Code of Good Governance.

A full evaluation of the Board Chair was undertaken in 2016-17 by the Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board, and has been followed up in subsequent years by GCRB, including in 2020

¹ <http://www.cipfa.org/policy-and-guidance/reports/good-governance-standard-for-public-services>

as part of his re-appointment. Individual Board members have participated in an appraisal process, most recently in 2019-20. However this self-evaluation is specifically focused upon the Board Committees, and their respective Conveners.

In committing to this evaluative process, the Board is confirming a clear message to the College that ongoing performance improvement is a key focus for the whole College - at all levels, and across all functions. It reflects the College's Strategic Priority 5: "To deliver excellence in performance" and Priority 6: "To be efficient, effective, innovating, and vigilant". (CoGC Strategic Plan 2017-27). This process also follows the EFQM excellence model in respect of ongoing assessment and refinement.

2. Evaluation Structure

The self-evaluation questionnaire comprised 21 statements of good practice, grouped into the following topics:

- Composition, Establishment and Duties of the Committee
- Terms of reference
- Compliance with the Law and Regulations
- Internal Control
- Administrative arrangements

Committee members were invited to respond to these statements, expressing agreement or disagreement. The individual Committee self-evaluation reports express these responses as percentages of total responses agreeing or disagreeing with the good practice statement. A summary of these responses, by Committee, is provided below.

3. Attendance Levels

Committee	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Current Member Numbers (Aug 2020)
Audit (Audit and Assurance)	67%	63%	85%	5
Finance & Physical Resources	72%	69%	79%	6
Students, Staff & Equalities	75%	74%	81%	7
Learning & Teaching	67%	73%	93%	9
Development	56%	75%	71%	6
Performance and Nominations	89%	79%	91%	7
Remuneration		83%	89%	6

RAG Key:

- Under 70% - Red
- Between 70 – 79% - Amber
- 80% and over - Green

Attendances over all are significantly improved since the 2018-19 Board of Management self-evaluation where 75% overall attendance was recorded compared to 84% in 2019-20.

4. Evaluation: Key Findings Summary

Committee	Summary of Findings
Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average attendance in 2019-20 was 85% compared to the previous Committee evaluation figure of 63% in 2018-19. This represents a significant improvement, not only upon the previous year, but compared to all years since 2014-15 (all within the range 55-67%). • In 2017, members had recognised that attendance was an issue and it is noted that this is no longer the case. • Matters relating to Committee Composition/duties, Terms of Reference, Compliance, Internal Control, and Administration all scored highly. • The responses indicate that participation in relevant training was high. • The Internal and External Auditors' services were highlighted as providing appropriate advice and opinion. • Excellent evaluation of convener, with comments confirming that the Convener seeks consensus, is precise in his deliberations and observations, is patient with new members, and ensures participation of all members. Average score: 1.3 (scale 1 - highest to 6 – lowest)
Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average attendance in 2019-20 was 71%; this is slightly down on 2018-19 (75%) but higher than in 2017-18 (56%). • Committee members are satisfied with Committee Composition/ Duties, Terms of Reference, Compliance, Internal Control, and Administrative arrangements, which all scored highly. • Members did not identify any specific training requirements. • The convener received high scores in terms of performance, with indications that members had confidence in the Conveners ability to handle discussion and the remit of the Committee, with a relaxed manner encouraging openness. Average score 2 (as per above scale)
Finance and Physical Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average attendance in 2019-20 was 79%, significantly higher than 2018-19 at 69%. This was also negatively affected by the 2 student members taking turns to attend, and so recording absences. • One member noted that there was no training specific to this committee. • Matters of legal and regulatory compliance were covered in training/induction. • Committee members are satisfied with Committee Composition/ Duties, Terms of Reference, Compliance, Internal Control, and Administrative arrangements, which all scored highly. • Excellent evaluation of Convener with members' comments indicating a that the convener is supportive of new members, and ensures the participation of all members. Average score: 1.3 (as per above scale)

Learning and Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average attendance in 2019-20 was 93% compared to the previous Committee evaluation figure of 63% in 2018-19. This represents a significant improvement, not only upon the previous year, but compared to all years since 2016-17 (all within the range 62-73%). • Members noted the high relevance of backgrounds represented in the Committee, with the addition of new members enhancing this. • Members expressed high approval of the current composition of the Committee. • Matters relating to Terms of Reference and Compliance scored highly. • Good practice with regard to Internal Control scored highly, as did Administrative matters. • However, agendas were considered too full, with more focus needed, and there is too much material to get through at meetings. • There was a very positive evaluation of convener. Average score: 2.2 (as per above scale)
Performance, and Nominations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average attendance in 2016-17 was 91% - an exceptionally high level of attendance, and significantly higher than 2018-19 (79%) • Matters relating to Committee Composition/duties, Terms of Reference, Compliance, Internal Control, and Administration all scored highly. • It was noted that there had been a discussion regarding the level of historic detail in Risk Reports. (Now reduced). • Members noted the significant contribution to good governance made by the Committee, with experienced and qualified members made up of Committee Conveners. • Very positive evaluation of convener as knowledgeable and efficient. Average score: 1.3 (as per above scale)
Remuneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average attendance in 2019-20 was 89% - a high level of attendance, and an improvement upon 2018-19 (83%) • Matters relating to Committee Composition/duties, Terms of Reference, Compliance, Internal Control, and Administration all scored highly. • Members noted the experience and qualification within the Committee (as above). • NB this Committee comprises Committee Conveners, as with PNC but not including the Principal. • Positive evaluation of Convener (same Convener as PNC above).
Students Staff and Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average attendance in 2019-20 was 81% which is an improvement upon 2018-19 (74%) and also over the previous 2 years. • It was noted that the Committee could be more diverse in its membership. • Specific training (e.g. Equalities) would be welcomed, although good referrals to CDN opportunities, as well as College wide information and activities was also noted.. • Matters relating to Composition/Duties, Terms of Reference, Compliance, Internal Control, and Administration scored highly among members. • One member noted that Student affairs could be higher up the agenda. • Very positive evaluation of Convener, described as "Generally good and fair". Average score: 1.8 (as per above scale)

5. Convener Evaluation

5.1 The Committee Conveners are key to the success of Board of Management activity and operations, as the committees bear much of the workload on behalf of the Board. It is therefore the level and effectiveness of scrutiny and control undertaken by the committees, as directed by the Conveners, that largely determines the effectiveness of the Board as a whole.

5.2 All Conveners were scored highly across eight performance measures, although in some cases it was recognized that, while their guidance and input to discussions is valued, Conveners must be careful not to dominate discussions. In all cases the added value brought by the conveners to the Committees, and to Board as a whole, was acknowledged by members.

5.3 Average convener scores across performance measures:

Positive	 Tendency (Average scores)	Negative
1. Keeps members on topic and to the agenda	1 1.4 2 3 4 5 6	Tends to criticise the ideas and values of members
2. Summarises discussions and decisions impartially and confirms action points	1 1.5 2 3 4 5 6	Tends to force ideas on to the group
3. Spots likely problems early and states them in a constructive way	1 1.4 2 3 4 5 6	Makes decisions without consulting the group or despite the group's views
4. Suggests solutions	1 1.4 2 3 4 5 6	Leaves decisions 'hanging'
5. Ensures adequate time is given to the different areas of the agenda	1 1.3 2 3 4 5 6	Talks too much and gets too involved
6. Facilitates the expression of all views and opinions	1 1.3 2 3 4 5 6	Allows individuals to dominate discussion
7. Communicates information to Board members appropriately	1 1.6 2 3 4 5 6	Does not communicate with Board members
8. Appropriately supports Board members	1 1.8 2 3 4 5 6	Is too distant or dominating

5.4 Committee members clearly expressed satisfaction, across all measures, with the performance of Conveners. Therefore any meaningful inferences must by necessity be based upon relative deviations in scoring among the responses. Most responses were within the band 1.3 – 1.8 with a few deviations from these averages within Committee member responses.

5.5 The most improved score from the previous Convener evaluation was at measure 4 (to 1.4 from 1.6) and the “lowest” at item 8, which would indicate a very slight increase in tendency to be dominating.

6. Committee Reports

All Board Committees are provided with a high-level review of their activities throughout the previous session within the framework of the respective Committees' Terms of Reference, in the form of a mini-annual report. The review process comprises a review of the Committees activities in the previous academic session, informing strategic direction, and facilitating development, performance monitoring, and improvement.

7. Conclusions

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Paul Clark: College Secretary/Planning; September 2020