

Board of Management

Learning and Teaching Committee

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 24 November 2021
Paper No.	LTC2-C
Agenda Item	4.1
Subject of Paper	Learning & Teaching Update Nov 2021-22
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	Dr Claire Carney, Vice Principal Student Experience
Date of production	8/11/21
Action	For Discussion

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. The Committee is asked to note and discuss key elements of Learning and Teaching and Academic Planning arrangements for 2021/2022.

2. Purpose of Paper

- 2.1. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on progress on L&T delivery nearing the end of Block One of the Academic year.

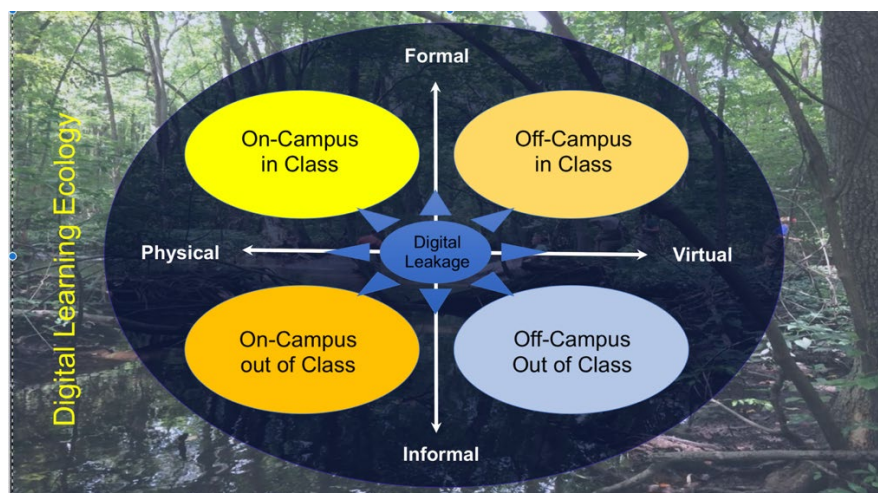
3. Context

- 3.1. The committee was appraised of academic planning arrangements for 21/22 in Sept 2021. As we approach the end of Block 1 it is time to provide an update and review progress and further developments.
- 3.2. The purpose of the guidance was not to be prescriptive, but to provide broad parameters around which curriculum teams can work/adjust according to local and disciplinary differences. We aimed to provide a workable model for the longer term that takes account of the positive aspects of online learning and the pedagogical shift proposed through the Student Academic Experience Strategy. However, as the last 20 months has taught us, the ability to provide absolute certainty in a very complex,

- turbulent and ever-changing environment is difficult and the continued need to be flexible (where possible) will be an ongoing feature for the coming months.
- 3.3. With regards to covid restrictions, at this current point in time, we are operating at a 'beyond 0' level and whilst many of the restrictions have been lifted in across society, certain restrictions remain within colleges and we will continue to adapt and change as guidance is delivered. However, we remain confident in the Learning and Teaching guidance delivered to the Committee and College in May 2021.
 - 3.4. COP26: To minimise disruption to learning and to negate much of the anticipated complexity around travel to and from College, the majority of learning was planned to move online for the duration of COP26 (31 Oct – 12 Nov). The College buildings however, were open and available for staff and students to work and or study. Following the first 2 days of COP and the relative quietness around the city and travel routes, where possible classes resumed onsite. COP26 offered many opportunities for our students to be involved and gain important and relevant experience. This included Hospitality and Event students supporting numerous events at Scholars, as well as Media, Journalism and Photography who covered the whole event with interviews, filming, articles all featuring on the CityLive webpages.
 - 3.5. It is unclear at this point what impact if any COP26 has had on our students and whilst the student experience survey might offer an indication, it will be 'masked' amongst a range of factors, none the least of which is 2 years of disrupted learning.
 - 3.6. These following sections highlight key updates and developments on learning and teaching and academic planning arrangements:
 - 3.6.1. Whilst **Physical distancing** measures are still in place, all teaching areas on site continue to have restricted numbers. However, the College has 'resized' all teaching areas taking account of 1m distancing (rather than 2m) to increase capacity. Therefore, planning for 21/22 is broadly similar to 20/21, with marked increased flexibility to have groups of students onsite for activity beyond learning tasks and assessment which require the use of practical equipment for example small class presentations/tutorials/seminar and collaborative learning tasks, closed book, invigilated assessment which cannot be conducted online and community-building tasks.
 - 3.6.2. Anecdotally, it is clear and evident that students enjoy being back on campus and having that social learning experience, meeting fellow students and being able to engage directly with staff. Equally, as has been evident in the surveys conducted last year and most recently by the Student Association, students also value the positive aspects of online and asynchronous learning. Allowing students, increased flexibility and flexible learning to suit needs and inclusivity.
 - 3.6.3. However, concerns remain about retention. In certain curricular areas and at lower SCQF levels it is challenging to retain students. As has been reported throughout Covid lower-level students have struggled with the nature of online and independent learning coupled with reduced practical 'hands-on' learning, this is now exacerbated by increased job opportunities particularly in hospitality and construction areas offering increased hourly rates which inevitably entice students away from college. In addition, there are further and deeper mental health issues presenting to our student services. The College has been in receipt of mental health funding this academic year and we are in the process of developing a college wide approach (staff and students) to mental health and wellbeing, where we take cognisance of the various impact stressors (eg assessment) and not limit approaches to dealing with consequences of mental health and wellbeing issues. A toolkit on embedding mental health in the Curriculum is being developed for staff and the Student Experience Directorate have

organised a Mental Health Conference on 1 December 2021 where further details on the approach will be shared.

- 3.6.4. My Student Experience Survey is the College internal annual survey. The survey provides a first temperature check for student experience in the first 2 months of learning. The Survey has a section on learner experiences, and this will facilitate the first 'formal' survey of the student experience for 21/22, results will be shared by the Director of Excellence at the next committee meeting.
- 3.6.5. **Blended Learning Fund** – The committee will be aware of the fund developed last academic year to support the development and enhancement of online learning, teaching and assessment resources. The majority of projects are now complete (with the exception of a small number with agreed longer time frames. The fund was very well received and has demonstrated real impact in L&T delivery. It is planned to have a further fund available this academic year and broaden the fundable areas to include new course development. In discussions with Finance, it is proposed to build such a fund into annual finance budgets, so it becomes part of the fabric of the college functions in support and developing curricular offer and delivery.
- 3.6.6. **Learning Spaces:** In order to allow increased onsite teaching and facilitate streaming of classes, the College has 'kitted out' 90 general teaching rooms to including cameras and desktops in rooms. At the very least this will allow 'live' streaming of classes where some disciplines may find this of benefit to students but also allow recording of instructional videos for asynchronous delivery. In addition, Deans have worked with their teams and Estates on how best to re-purpose practical spaces to enhance learning and make use of potential curriculum development opportunities. This will continue to be a key area of activity for the foreseeable future. **Further**, it is important to make best use of our informal learning spaces to facilitate learners coming together in active group and collaborative learning or to study in isolation in a comfortable, welcoming environment. There are many space options available in the college and the VPSE will work with Estates and a small group of Associate Deans to develop more of these for it to be a feature of the Colleges approach to Learning and Teaching.



- 3.6.7. **Digital Access and Student Connectivity:** A continued priority for the College is ensuring that all learners have access to hardware they can use to access learning. Last year, the College invested almost £1.3m on a laptop loan scheme, purchasing 2000 laptops. The College will continue the

laptop scheme again this academic year and have already issued 1,695 laptops to support blended learning AY 21/22. An additional 1,000 Google Chromebooks have been purchased AY 21/22 (in addition to the 457 issued in AY 20/21), from which 250 have been issued to ESOL students to date, with more scheduled over the coming weeks.

3.6.8. **Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)** – Canvas, our new VLE is being rolled out across the college with College staff working through ‘Growing with Canvas’, five modules of content that takes users through everything they need to know about using Canvas at City of Glasgow College. In addition, there is a weekly programme of webinar training sessions to support adoption. Each Faculty has newly appointed Faculty Digital Champions (1 lecturer and 1 curriculum Head) who are timetabled one per day per week to support the Faculty Canvas roll out. Digital Champions are currently building their own skills to support the roll out.

3.6.9. **Staff Support for Digital Delivery:** The Learning and Teaching Academy continue to provide a comprehensive range of developmental activities and resources to support individual staff and curriculum teams. A schedule of activity is available and promoted on the intranet and [relevant webpages](#). In the coming weeks, some on campus face to face sessions will be hosted in the new Fujitsu suite and the recently installed Visual Learning Lab VLL.

4 Impact and Implications

4.1 Covid restrictions will continue to impact on learning, teaching, assessment and student support services for the foreseeable future. The impact of physical distancing will limit numbers of students for on-site activities.

4.2 There will be implications for our physical and digital learning spaces requiring space planning and investment to create a more sustainable and effective environment.

4.3 Continued investment in staff development and supporting student digital skills to navigate and progress in this new environment is imperative and will form part of plans for the coming year.