Audit & Assurance Committee

Date of Meeting	**3 June 2025**
Paper No.	**AAC4-K**
Agenda Item	**5.10.1**
Subject of Paper	**Internal Audit Report – Student Admissions, Engagement & Management Information Systems (MIS)**
FOISA Status	**Disclosable**
Primary Contact	**David Archibald, Henderson Loggie**
Date of production	**20 May 2025**
Action	**For Discussion**

1. Recommendations

1.1. The Committee is asked to consider and discuss the report and the management responses to the Internal Audit Recommendations.

2. Consultation

2.1. The Lead Auditor has consulted with the Executive Owner, the College Lead, and the Compliance Auditor.

3. Key Insights

3.1. The Internal Audit for Student Admissions, Engagement & Management Information Systems (MIS) was graded overall as Satisfactory, 'System meets control objectives with some weaknesses present.'

3.2. There are three Priority 3 recommendations arising from the fieldwork, which have management responses.

4.   Impact and Implications

4.1. Internal Audit provides an objective insight into the efficiency of operations, evaluation of risks, and organisational controls.

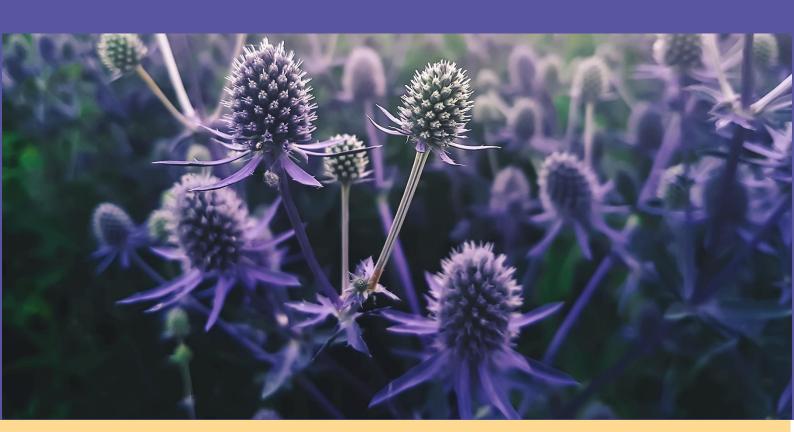**Appendix 1:** Internal Audit Report – Student Admissions, Engagement & Management Information Systems (MIS)

City of Glasgow College

Student Admissions, Engagement & Management Information Systems (MIS)

Internal Audit report No: 2025/04

Draft issued: 12 May 2025

Final issued: 20 May 2025

Henderson Loggie

Contents

Level of Assurance

In addition to the grading of individual recommendations in the action plan, audit findings are assessed and graded on an overall basis to denote the level of assurance that can be taken from the report. Risk and materiality levels are considered in the assessment and grading process as well as the general quality of the procedures in place.

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.

Action Grades

Priority 1	Issue subjecting the organisation to material risk and which requires to be brought to the attention of management and the Audit and Assurance Committee.
Priority 2	Issue subjecting the organisation to significant risk and which should be addressed by management.
Priority 3	Matters subjecting the organisation to minor risk or which, if addressed, will enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

Management Summary

Overall Level of Assurance

Satisfactory	System meets control objectives with some weaknesses present.

Risk Assessment

This review focused on the controls in place to mitigate the following risks on the City of Glasgow College ('the College') Risk Register (as at March 2025):

- SR19 – Failure to achieve operating surplus (Net Score – 16, High).

Background

As part of the Internal Audit programme at the College for 2024/25, we carried out a review of student admissions, engagement, and management information systems (MIS). The Annual Plan, agreed with management, and approved by the Audit and Assurance Committee on 27 November 2024, identified this as an area where risk can arise and where Internal Audit can assist in providing assurances to management and the Audit and Assurance Committee that the related control environment is operating effectively, thus ensuring that risk is maintained at an acceptable level.

Ensuring that student recruitment meets the College's admissions targets is a key component in ensuring that the College's Credit target is met and that there is no financial clawback from the College's share of regional grant-in-aid. To support the College's recruitment goals, it is important that the processing of applications is efficient and that communication with applicants is prompt and customer friendly. This needs to be followed up with systematic monitoring of actual applications received against agreed target figures so that in instances where the number of applications falls below expectations then appropriate targeted marketing activity can be undertaken with a view to increasing applications. Once students have enrolled, the focus then switches to retention, which requires ongoing review of attendance and achievement data in order to initiate follow-up for any students who are showing signs of experiencing difficulties, so that targeted and tailored support can be provided to these specific students.

Scope, Objectives and Overall Findings

Taking account of the regional context, we conducted a review of the adequacy and effectiveness of the processes and procedures for managing and controlling student recruitment and retention, covering the role of Student Support, Student Funding, Marketing, Student Records, and curriculum areas. This included a review of early warning indicators to flag where recruitment targets were not being met or where students were at risk of dropping out of the College.

The table below notes each separate objective for this review and records the results:

Objective	Findings			
The objectives of the audit were to ensure that:		**1**	**2**	**3**
		No. of Agreed Actions		
1. There is appropriate senior management and Board committee oversight, including monitoring and reporting of information on student applications and retention rates against targets to identify areas of poor recruitment and retention, and identify possible actions.	**Good**	-	-	-
2. Clear roles and responsibilities have been established that foster accountability for recruitment and retention.	**Satisfactory**	-	-	1
3. There is an agreed student recruitment and retention strategy taking into account: • College strategic objectives and Scottish Funding Council (SFC) outcomes; • agreed recruitment and retention targets; • equal opportunities; • widening participation; • admissions policy.	**Satisfactory**	-	-	2
4. An annual student recruitment plan is in place to define and coordinate recruitment activity including a recruitment lifecycle. Recruitment / promotional activities are: • planned; • activities are designed to be economic, efficient and effective; • underpinned by recruitment data and market intelligence; • coordinated; • reviewed, monitored and evaluated.	**Good**	-	-	-
5. An annual student retention plan is in place to define and coordinate activities designed to identify students at risk of dropping out at an early stage and provide them with the necessary support to retain them at the College.	**Good**	-	-	-

Scope, Objectives and Overall Findings (Continued)

Objective	Findings			
The objectives of the audit were to ensure that:		**1**	**2**	**3**
		No. of Agreed Actions		
6. Knowledge, skills and training is provided to staff who are engaged in recruitment activity and in helping to retain students who are at risk of leaving the College.	**Good**	-	-	-
7. There are mechanisms to handle recruitment complaints and obtain feedback where possible from students who leave the College prematurely and identify and take remedial action where necessary.	**Good**	-	-	-
Overall Level of Assurance	**Satisfactory**	-	-	3
		System meets control objectives with some weaknesses present.		

Audit Approach

We assessed whether the above objectives have been met through discussions with key staff, including the Chief Finance Officer, Interim Vice Principal Student Experience, together with key leads involved in Performance, Student Support, Student Funding, Marketing, and Student Records, and a sample of Curriculum Heads, and through review of relevant documentation and walkthrough of monitoring and reporting systems.

Summary of Main Findings

Strengths

- Student recruitment follows a well embedded process, with course-specific targets determined by curriculum areas during the Annual Portfolio Review. These targets align with broader funding requirements based on Credit allocations.
- The College's Student Recruitment Plan (SRP) is a well-integrated mechanism, informed by structured processes like curriculum reviews and quality evaluations. The SRP is an iterative document, which involves wide stakeholder engagement to ensure planning is aligned to identified need, is flexible, and reflects the financial and strategic goals of the College.
- The recruitment and admissions processes are coordinated by the Associate Director Student Registration and Funding and Head of Student Recruitment and Funding, who work closely with Curriculum areas to identify any recruitment and admission risks and issues.
- There is comprehensive and transparent oversight of recruitment and admissions data through real-time reporting tools on Enquirer, (e.g. Power BI dashboards and regular updates such as weekly application reports from the Admissions Team). The status of the SRP was noted to be constantly monitored by wider teams, such as Finance senior management, Student Support areas, and Marketing teams. This allows senior management and curriculum management to take an agile approach to recruitment and any further marketing activity required.
- Enrolment conversion trend data is monitored and is utilised to inform recruitment activity.
- There is a robust operational and governance framework, which allows high-level insight across Board Committees on the status of the SRP and any risks to funding.
- The Brand and Communication Teams implement a coordinated programme of physical and digital marketing to support student recruitment, prioritising the use of internal resources (including leveraging information and Open Days and school engagement programmes), and ensuring cost-effective engagement with external consultants and communication services.
- Processes are established for the Admissions Team to process applicants with the necessary qualifications and refer others, who do not clearly align with academic requirements, for Faculty review.
- All applicants are reviewed by the faculties; and where necessary, information sessions (or interviews) are held to ensure that the student is enrolled on the right course to match with their skills and future aspirations.
- The College's Admissions Policy (last reviewed in January 2025) sets out a commitment to fair, transparent, and consistent admissions practices.
- The College actively seeks to attract a diverse range of applicants from varied social, cultural, and educational backgrounds. This commitment is reflected in the College's core values as outlined in the Student Academic Experience Strategy 2021–2030 and the Strategic Plan 2017–2025. Key target groups include carers, those who are care experience, and students from areas identified as SIMD10. Figures on these groups are monitored through Enquirer and are used to inform resource planning in the Student Support team.
- There are procedures established on student induction and enrolment, student management and attendance monitoring to ensure roles and responsibilities are defined. These procedures are available on the MyConnect platform for staff.
- Student retention initiatives begin when students are offered a place. There is a programme of College-wide initiatives to ensure that all students receive the right onboarding information at the right time, including funding application and learner's support. Locally, curriculum areas also develop their own programme of "keeping warm" initiatives, such as information days and pre-enrolment skills assessments.
- Digital tools and reports via Enquirer are used to track student performance and attendance, and curriculum areas are automatically informed when to liaise directly with students after five days of non-attendance.
- Curriculum areas sample tested also maintain spreadsheets on cohorts that detail performance and attendance trends and emerging issues. This allows transfer of knowledge between the curriculum delivery team.

Summary of Main Findings (Continued)

Strengths (Continued)
- Curriculum areas are also supported by Academic Advisors (AA), and an AA Handbook is in place to inform student support initiatives, including the role of the Student Support team, in areas such as Safeguarding and in developing Student Learning Support Plans.
- Courses with ongoing retention challenges are closely monitored by faculties and the Performance Team and are removed from the curriculum offering if no improvement is seen over a three-year period.
- Management interviewed have the necessary skills and training to support student recruitment and retention, with the MyPDR process established to support any areas of improvement.
- Complaints are managed by the Performance Team who liaise with curriculum and service support areas on any issues or concerns. There was one complaint regarding admissions in December 2024 that was not upheld. Otherwise, there were no complaints relating to student recruitment or retention reported over the last 12 months prior to the audit fieldwork.

Weaknesses
- Responsibility for the review of the Academic Guidance and Support Procedures (August 2018), which is due for review during academic session 2025/26, requires to be identified and the procedures updated in line with the review frequency set out in the document version control.
- There is currently no clear guidance, or documented procedures, describing the student recruitment process from end to end (from the Annual Portfolio Review and Curriculum Planning, through the development and implementation of the College's SRP, to application management and recruitment activities). This includes a description of the systems and tools deployed, team roles and responsibilities, and governance arrangements necessary for organisational knowledge. Instead, there is reliance on the accumulated knowledge and the established communication mechanisms which have developed over time amongst the various teams involved.
- A Student Retention Strategy, inclusive of the College's Student Retention Framework, should be developed in order to coordinate current activity, and provide a focus on improvement areas (to ensure compliance with the requirements set out in the Student Academic Experience Strategy 2021-2030).

Acknowledgments

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

Main Findings and Action Plan

Objective 1 – There is appropriate senior management and Board committee oversight, including monitoring and reporting of information on student applications and retention rates against targets to identify areas of poor recruitment and retention, and identify possible actions.

Student Credit targets were previously set out within the Glasgow College Region Outcome Agreement. 2023/24 was the last academic year the Outcome Agreement was required. Following the dissolution of the Glasgow Colleges Regional Board (GCRB), City of Glasgow College (CoGC) will set its own outcome targets from academic year 2025/26 onwards. The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Credit allocation for the 2024/25 academic year for CoGC was 157,800 Credits, which is consistent with the 2023/24 allocation.

The Student Recruitment Plan (SRP) is a key document, established for planning and monitoring student recruitment and admissions, which ultimately informs College financial planning. The figures within the SRP are derived from the annual curriculum review process, which includes formal Faculty Quality Reviews and the Annual Portfolio Review. These processes determine the programme offering for the forthcoming academic year, the delegation of the various components within the overall Credit targets, and these, in turn, inform the SRP.

The SRP evolves through various iterations between January and August, at which point recruitment numbers are finalised and reported to the SFC for funding and performance monitoring purposes. The SRP also present projections relating to student retention. The SRP Summary Report is produced throughout the academic year by the Associate Director of Student Registration and Funding and is shared with the Senior Management Team (SMT) and formally to the Academic Board. It is also made available to the Executive Leadership Team (inclusive of the Principal, Deputy Principal and Vice Principals), as well as to the Deans, Associate Deans and Curriculum Heads, for ongoing planning of recruitment strategies and monitoring of application to offer conversion rates.

Our inspection of the SRP Summary Report for Session 2024/25, Version 3 (January 2025), noted that the target set exceeds the SFC Credit allocation to account for expected student withdrawals during the admissions and enrolment phases. The SRP also includes projections for the January intake. Credit figures are linked to funding claim data to support financial planning and to highlight risks related to fee distribution across faculties and lecturer utilisation. Recruitment for the 2025/26 session was underway at the time of the audit fieldwork, with the Admissions Procedure (2025) and recruitment guidance issued to curriculum areas. Admission projections (March 2025) had been established, with weekly recruitment and selection reports provided to the SMT.

We found that oversight of recruitment and admissions arrangements is robust. Curriculum and course performance data (including numbers enrolled, live, completed, early withdrawal, and further withdrawal) are readily available:

- Curriculum Heads, Associate Deans, Faculty Deans and Senior Management (including Finance and Marketing) have oversight through:
  - Weekly Application Reports, provided by the Head of Student Recruitment and Funding throughout the annual recruitment period. These reports use RAG ratings to highlight areas facing recruitment challenges.
  - Ongoing access to Enquirer / Power BI dashboards on MyConnect, which include live reports such as the Application Tracker, Care Experienced Tracker, Course Enrolments, Course Outcome Monitoring, Course Performance Reports, Partial Success Analysis, Student Absence Tracker, Student Carer Tracker, Underperformance Report, Unit Result Monitoring, and Withdrawal Trends.

Objective 1 – There is appropriate senior management and Board committee oversight, including monitoring and reporting of information on student applications and retention rates against targets to identify areas of poor recruitment and retention, and identify possible actions (continued).

- SMT review of student recruitment reporting (April 2024) and enrolment projections (March 2025).
- The Student Academic Experience Group plays an active role in monitoring recruitment, including admissions, interviews, offers, enrolment figures, and related conversion rates. They receive the same reports as the SMT.
- Annual Portfolio Review, with a Curriculum Enhancement Process (CEP) established for courses underperforming. Courses are closed where they are underperforming for a consecutive period of three years (Principal's Briefing, November 2024). For 2025/26, Faculties have been asked to review course performance in relation to whether 50% or more of students successfully complete their course – those at or below this are underperforming.
- Academic Board is an operational group, which has oversight of Resulting and Student Progress (May 2024), College Academic Performance (October 2024), Student recruitment and Admissions (October 2024) and Summary of Student Recruitment Plan is scheduled for May 2025. Minutes of the Academic Board are provided to the Learning, Teaching & Student Experience Committee.

Governance on recruitment and retention

- The Student Support Committee (formally the Students, Staff and Equalities Committee) reviewed Recruitment and Admissions Performance for the August 2024 intake (as at October 2024). This report presents absolute figures for applications, offers, and enrolments by Faculty, along with the offer-to-enrolment conversion rate (105% for 2024/25 session). It also includes a RAG-rated breakdown of course enrolment rates, comparing the current session to the previous year. This analysis helps identify courses that have shown improvement over time and those that continue to face recruitment challenges. As with the Finance Committee, the Student Support Committee also review the Strategic Risk Register as part of the standing agenda and report its minutes to the Board of Management.
- The Learning, Teaching & Student Experience Committee reviews College Recruitment (as at February 2024), College Academic Performance (as at November 2024) and related impact reports.
- The Finance Committee also receives quarterly Credit Delivery Updates (as at September 2024 and November 2024), which explain the implications of the Credit delivery profiles and other performance indicators relating to percentage of Credits delivered to learners in the lowest 10% SIMD 2020, care experienced learners and number of senior phase age pupils studying vocational qualifications. This allows their review of any risks against those reported to the Committee via the Strategic Risk Register which is a standing agenda item. The Committee also oversees the SFC Financial Forecast Return (as at September 2024) and profiles any financial risks to the College. The Finance Committee minutes are presented to the Board of Management.

We were able to confirm that the data is consistent between key management and governance groups. As part of Objective 3, we have identified two recommendations pertaining to the development of Student Recruitment Guidance & Procedures (**R2**) and a Student Recruitment Strategy (**R3**) to support future student recruitment activity.

Objective 2 – Clear roles and responsibilities have been established that foster accountability for recruitment and retention.

The College maintains, and updates annually, its Admissions Procedure (last reviewed in January 2025), which outlines the processes, roles, and responsibilities involved in the recruitment and selection of candidates for the College's course provision. This includes key responsibilities across finance, curriculum, and support services. The procedure is communicated to all teams involved in admissions and student recruitment activity, as part of the curriculum planning cycle.

Once Credit targets and draft budgets are finalised, and sent to the SFC in August, the focus shifts to enrolment, induction, and the profiling and monitoring of student retention. SRP targets are reported via the College's Curriculum Manager System (Enquirer), by the Admissions team (previously reviewed in our *Timetabling and Staff Utilisation BPR* Report Number 2024/09, issued May 2024). This system is utilised by the Management Information Systems (MIS) team, and by the Head of Student Recruitment and Funding, to monitor applications, offers, and enrolment conversion rates across all faculties and curriculum areas. The Associate Director of Student Registration and Funding also oversees this process, with further oversight provided by the SMT (as of April 2024 for the 2024/25 recruitment cycle), the Academic Board, and the Student Support Committee.

The admissions process is closely linked to student funding to ensure that funding applications are submitted in time for the commencement of the academic session (Note: the student funding element was not within scope for this audit).

Curriculum areas are responsible for assessing student applications referred to them by the Admissions team. Curriculum areas also lead on student information sessions / interviews, local "keeping warm" initiatives that include open days and pre-enrolment information requests, and pre-induction communications. The Student Support team provides successful applicants with "Get Ready for College" and "What to Expect for Session" guidance. Additional guidance for new students is made available on the College's public website.

The College also supports academic staff through a suite of procedures that outline their roles and responsibilities in relation to:
- College Induction and Orientation Procedures (last reviewed June 2024).
- College Enrolment Procedures (January 2025).
- College Student Management and Attendance Procedures (August 2020).
- College Withdrawal Procedures (June 2025).

In addition, the Academic Guidance and Support Procedures (August 2018) define the roles of Academic Advisors, Faculty Business Managers, Curriculum Heads, and Subject Lecturers in supporting the learner journey and monitoring student attendance and performance. This includes a decision-making flowchart.

Objective 2 – Clear roles and responsibilities have been established that foster accountability for recruitment and retention (continued).

Observation	Risk	Recommendation	Management Response	
The Academic Guidance and Progress Procedure (August 2018) were under review at the time of the audit fieldwork, with a review date of January 2025.	A potential lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities of staff involved in the student learner's journey.	**R1 –** The Academic Guidance and Progress Procedure (August 2018) should be reviewed in accordance with the review frequency set out in the version control schedule.	The Academic Guidance and Progress Procedure is being reviewed in line with the Disciplinary Procedures and City Attributes to ensure a consistent approach across the College. **To be actioned by:** Vice Principal Student Experience **No later than:** 30 June 2026	
			Grade	3

Objective 3 – There is an agreed student recruitment and retention strategy taking into account:
- **College strategic objectives and Scottish Funding Council (SFC) outcomes;**
- **agreed recruitment and retention targets;**
- **equal opportunities;**
- **widening participation; and**
- **admissions policy.**

The College's strategic objectives are communicated in the Strategic Plan 2017 – 2025. Strategic recruitment priorities feed into curriculum plans and the SRP, which describes how the strategic priorities will be achieved. This is further cascaded to departments through directorate operating plans and the College's Quality Improvement Plan is considered alongside these to ensure that recruitment activity aligns with the College's overall aims.

Skills Development Scotland provide Regional Skills Assessments for the Glasgow Region, which provide information on regional job demand. Further labour market intelligence is identified through curriculum staff links with local and national industries and Scottish Government economic plans. This market intelligence is built into annual curriculum planning.

2023/24 was the final year in which SFC required colleges to submit Regional Outcome Agreements to describe the range of activities they planned to deliver in return for the funding provided. This has been replaced by an Outcomes Framework and Assurance Model from 2024/25, which sets out the SFC's expectations of colleges and universities in return for the funding they receive. GCRB will be dissolved on 31 July 2025, providing the College with greater freedom in determining its outcomes.

The focus on recruitment is designed to ensure that all courses are subscribed to a level which meets the College's Credit target for funding. College staff involved in the recruitment process aim to ensure that students enrol on the courses that they are best suited to, and are then provided with the support required to improve retention and attainment levels. Entry requirements are reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure they remain optimal in attracting and retaining the right students onto courses. This involves comparison and benchmarking with data from other Scottish colleges.

At curriculum level, enrolment targets are based on several factors including: the minimum number of enrolments required to ensure that the course is financially viable; the College's identification of demand for the course; the resources available including staff, accommodation and equipment; and historical trends in early and later withdrawals. This is set out the Annual Portfolio Review, discussed earlier. From this, a maximum number of places available for each programme is determined which is used as the recruitment or enrolment target. This information is captured in the Curriculum Manager System by curriculum areas as part of the curriculum planning process.

Objective 3 – There is an agreed student recruitment and retention strategy taking into account:
- **College strategic objectives and Scottish Funding Council (SFC) outcomes;**
- **agreed recruitment and retention targets;**
- **equal opportunities;**
- **widening participation; and**
- **admissions policy (continued).**

The SRP sets out the recruitment strategy for the year ahead. It captures funding targets, as well as oversubscription targets for applications to each programme, considering historical enrolment conversion rates. It should be noted that the oversubscription targets are an estimate set by curriculum teams, which takes account of trend data on the number of students historically dropping out of the admissions process. Predicted conversion rates are determined by the Associate Director of Recruitment and Student Funding, based on analysis of previous years' recruitment patterns and anticipated course demand. These projections are refined through meetings between the Deans, Associate Deans, and Curriculum Heads. Our review found that application-to-offer conversion rates vary significantly between programmes, highlighting the importance of curriculum staff expertise in the recruitment forecasting process.

The College actively seeks to attract a diverse range of applicants from varied social, cultural, and educational backgrounds. This commitment is reflected in the College's core values stated its Student Academic Experience Strategy 2021–2030 and Strategic Plan 2017–2025. To support this goal, equalities and priority group data is captured through UNIT-e during the application process. This data is reported through Power BI dashboards, via Enquirer, allowing staff to analyse applicant and enrolment profiles across all courses. These insights can be segmented by location, care experience, age, disability, gender, and other demographic factors. This data drives targeted recruitment activity, which is designed to help widen participation among underrepresented groups. For example, our discussions with Branding and Communications staff highlighted the significant role of school outreach programmes in driving recruitment from priority groups. Student Services also monitor applications to ensure there is appropriate alignment of support services and resources to ensure appropriate support is available for vulnerable students.

The College's Admissions Policy (last reviewed in January 2025) is also published on the MyConnect platform (which is the staff intranet). The Policy contains a commitment to fair, transparent, and consistent admissions practices. The Curriculum Heads we interviewed demonstrated that they were familiar with the contents of the policy.

Objective 3 – There is an agreed student recruitment and retention strategy taking into account:

- **College strategic objectives and Scottish Funding Council (SFC) outcomes;**
- **agreed recruitment and retention targets;**
- **equal opportunities;**
- **widening participation; and**
- **admissions policy (continued).**

Observation	Risk	Recommendation	Management Response
There is currently no specific guidance to describe the end to end process for student recruitment planning and implementation. For example, steps such as portfolio review, curriculum planning and development, setting funding targets, managing the recruitment process and communications, and monitoring the implementation of the SRP, including student applications processes and governance arrangements are not currently mapped out. As a result, roles and responsibilities are not explicitly defined. Instead, there is reliance on the accumulated knowledge and the established communication mechanisms which have developed over time amongst the various teams involved.	Without documented guidance or procedures, there is a risk of inconsistencies and inefficiencies, particularly in the absence of key management currently supporting the process.	**R2 –** Management should develop and document clear guidance, procedures, and role definitions for student recruitment planning to ensure consistency, accountability, and continuity in the end to end process for student recruitment planning and implementation.	A new Procedure will be developed to include the full end to end process, starting at portfolio review. **To be actioned by:** Associate Director Student Registration and Funding **No later than:** 31 December 2025

Grade	**3**

Objective 3 – There is an agreed student recruitment and retention strategy taking into account:
- **College strategic objectives and Scottish Funding Council (SFC) outcomes;**
- **agreed recruitment and retention targets;**
- **equal opportunities;**
- **widening participation; and**
- **admissions policy (continued).**

With regard to student retention, the College's Student Academic Experience Strategy 2021–2030 outlines the City Student Journey. A key component of this strategy is the development of a comprehensive Student Retention Framework, which is built around five core attributes:

- An effective induction and welcome experience to foster a sense of belonging.
- Promotion of health and wellbeing across the student community.
- Enhanced processes for early detection and intervention for students at risk of failure or withdrawal.
- Support for students' transition throughout their college journey and into employment.
- The use of robust data to inform continuous improvement of retention and success strategies.

Courses with ongoing retention challenges are closely monitored by the Faculty Team and the Performance Team and are removed from the curriculum offering if no improvement is demonstrated over a rolling three-year period.

Student Admissions, Engagement & MIS

Objective 3 – There is an agreed student recruitment and retention strategy taking into account:
- **College strategic objectives and Scottish Funding Council (SFC) outcomes;**
- **agreed recruitment and retention targets;**
- **equal opportunities;**
- **widening participation; and**
- **admissions policy (continued).**

Observation	Risk	Recommendation	Management Response
While there are numerous student interventions and programmes in place, to prevent early withdrawal or non-completion, there is currently no documented Student Retention Strategy or Framework, which outlines key performance indicators and areas for improvement. Although the development of a Student Retention Framework was identified as an outcome in the Student Academic Experience Strategy 2021–2030, and was demonstrated to be operating in practice, a cohesive strategy that connects and coordinates these activities has yet to be developed.	Absence of a Student Retention Strategy, which consolidates and coordinates efforts, may impact on the College's effectiveness, and the measurability of initiatives aimed at improving student retention.	**R3 –** A Student Retention Strategy and Framework should be documented and the responsibility for ensuring consistent implementation of the framework should be agreed. Development of the strategy and framework should include consideration of the oversight and governance arrangements required to ensure consistent implementation and the identification and oversight of any risks associated with successful delivery.	A Student Success Framework has been developed and is going to the Learning Teaching Student Experience Committee for approval on the 27 May 2025. This will then be rolled out across the College and be checked in the first semester of 2025/26. **To be actioned by:** Director Student Experience **No later than:** 31 December 2025

	Grade	3

Objective 4 – An annual student recruitment plan is in place to define and coordinate recruitment activity including a recruitment lifecycle. Recruitment/ promotional activities are:
- **planned;**
- **activities are designed to be economic, efficient and effective;**
- **underpinned by recruitment data and market intelligence;**
- **coordinated;**
- **reviewed, monitored and evaluated.**

The College works to a recruitment timeline of core recruitment activities and events throughout the year. This begins with the agreement of the curriculum portfolio, following completion of the quality and portfolio review of the previous academic session. Internal applications to courses on offer are accepted from around November / December each year and external applications from January.

Admissions staff are assigned to each Faculty and work closely with Curriculum staff to support the recruitment and admissions process. For courses where entry requirements are definitive and no interviews or further recruitment activities are required, Admissions can accept applications on behalf of Academic staff. Enquirer is used for managing elements of admissions, such as reviewing applications and making offers.

The status of recruitment is monitored by the Interim Vice Principal Student Experience, Deans and Associate Deans, Faculty Business Managers and Curriculum Heads who review actual figures and make decision on where to flex recruitment strategies or course offerings. Reports on the status of applications and conversion rates are supplied by the Head of Student Recruitment and Funding to the Curriculum Heads, who can also use Enquirer to monitor arrangements. The Interim Vice Principal Student Experience reported the key challenge to the College is striking the right balance when flexing course provision so that recruitment is driven forwards for strategically important courses and courses that add economic value to the region.

Marketing is pivotal in raising College brand awareness, making prospective applicants aware of important dates in the recruitment process, and assisting in the marketing of specific courses that are under-recruiting. The Digital Recruitment Plan is in place, which is focussed on building a brand and identity for the College which attracts suitable candidates online. A range of advertising formats are used, with social media and the College website being key channels for marketing activity as these are economic, efficient and effective because they are readily used by target audiences and advertisements can be targeted within the Greater Glasgow region and specific age groups. This is supported by a physical prospectus that is published early in the academic year so to factor any competition from universities and other further education colleges.

The Branding and Communications Team follows an annual plan that aligns with curriculum planning and student recruitment processes. This ensures that all marketing copy related to products and services reflects the information approved by the curriculum team. They also work closely with curriculum areas to support recruitment efforts, particularly where gaps are identified. Additionally, the team has established targeted strategies to address recruitment needs and budgetary constraints. The outcomes of strategies are monitored closely by the team and reported upon to the SMT. The College has attended various events such as SQA and UCAS events and engages with community groups and schools, to strengthen links and attract potential students.

As previously highlighted, Power BI via Enquirer is used to report on recruitment data throughout the recruitment lifecycle and allows recruitment activity to be targeted where required. The Student Recruitment and Selection – Applications Report is provided weekly by Admissions to all stakeholders and reviewed at Student Experience Committee and Support Services Committee.

Objective 4 – An annual student recruitment plan is in place to define and coordinate recruitment activity including a recruitment lifecycle. Recruitment/ promotional activities are:
- **planned;**
- **activities are designed to be economic, efficient and effective;**
- **underpinned by recruitment data and market intelligence;**
- **coordinated;**
- **reviewed, monitored and evaluated (continued).**

The number of applicants, offers, interviews, acceptances and enrolments are monitored, and Curriculum Managers use their knowledge and expertise to consider the conversion rate for their courses, as this tends to vary based on the nature of each course. Targets are subsequently in place for each stage of the recruitment process. Our review of the Power BI reports confirmed that performance against targets was clear and easily interpreted. We confirmed from discussion with the Associate Director Recruitment and Student Funding and a sample of Curriculum Managers that there was a lot of consultation with curriculum staff during the building of Power BI reports to ensure they met their needs. It was also clear from discussion that the Admissions team welcome feedback from Curriculum staff with regards to any changes they would like to see or any issues they may be encountering as they use the dashboards on an ongoing basis.

There is a clear focus across the College on "keep warm activities" to ensure that prospective students remain engaged and on track to enrol prior to the start of the academic year. These activities vary, depending on the curriculum area, and include open days, sending out electronic induction packs, onsite pre-induction and induction events, inviting applicants to attend skill workshops, and other tailored communications.

Objective 5 – An annual student retention plan is in place to define and coordinate activities designed to identify students at risk of dropping out at an early stage and provide them with the necessary support to retain them at the College.

In practice, responsibility for monitoring retention lies primarily within curriculum areas, with oversight provided by the Interim Vice Principal Student Experience and Deans, Associate Deans and Curriculum Heads. Early intervention is a key driver in identifying any students who may be struggling with their course work. As highlighted under Objective 2, above, established systems and procedures are in place to monitor student attendance and performance, thus providing early warning indicators. For example, attendance within the first few weeks of the course starting, engagement in class, attendance trends, and student feedback on course delivery and quality indicators, which can all impact on course completion rates.

Retention strategies commence as early as the interview stage – ensuring students are enrolled to the right course that meets both their academic ability and employment aspirations. From provision of offer letters, there is weekly engagement activities initiated from March. These include campus tours, regular check-ins, and communications to support students in preparing for college—such as accessing digital platforms and funding resources.

The Student Transition and Induction Group (STIG) coordinates both internal activity and external communications to support a smooth transition. Welcome and Induction Weeks involve detailed planning across all services to ensure students receive ID cards, meet their lecturers at scheduled times, and benefit from campus tours and welcome contributions from across the College. Activities are informed by lessons learned from previous years, reflecting a continuous improvement approach.

The City Attributes programme is designed to develop students' personal, academic, and employability skills alongside their core studies. This includes both hard skills (e.g. study techniques, library use) and soft skills (e.g. managing procrastination), ensuring a holistic approach to student development.

Academic Advisers are assigned cohorts and provide group and one-to-one guidance on eLearning. They will also signpost students to Student Support and Student Funding.

Student Support plays a vital role in providing targeted academic and wellbeing support, with Student Advisers and Named Contacts assigned to priority group, and wider mental health and wellbeing support for the student population. Their activity coordinates funding application support, learning support, mental health and wellbeing, and future career planning advice. Lecturers and Curriculum management can gain information on student personal learning plans (PLPs) via the class attendance module based on restricted information from Enquirer.

Any emerging trends in student support requirements are reviewed annually via the Portfolio Review within curriculum areas, and through Power BI analytics by the Student Support team. The Portfolio Review acts as the key process for identifying problematic courses and developing improvement action plans.

Objective 6 – Knowledge, skills and training is provided to staff who are engaged in recruitment activity and in helping to retain students who are at risk of leaving the College.

As discussed under Objective 2, there are policies and procedures established for Curriculum and Support staff involved in the student admissions and retention processes.

Curriculum Heads take the operational lead in ensuring that lecturing staff within their teams complete mandatory e-learning. This spans topics such as equalities, GDPR, and more (via the MyDevelopment platform). They also provide practical support to new lecturers conducting applicant interviews for the first time and carry out quality assurance checks on interview outcomes. This includes reviewing student applications referred for Faculty Review, helping to ensure that applicants are matched with the most appropriate course from the outset. All interview records are retained by Curriculum Heads to support knowledge retention and continuity. Our discussions with a sample of Curriculum Heads revealed lessons learned from past interview sessions, identifying both effective practices and areas for improvement.

Curriculum Heads also provide ongoing support to lecturers in monitoring student retention, attendance, and performance, with a focus on identifying early signs of potential retention issues. In areas sample tested, centralised Faculty spreadsheets are used for knowledge retention and to track performance and attendance data, enabling the identification of patterns and trends that may signal a concern. This monitoring also ensures there is no single point of failure within curriculum areas should staff be absent.

The Learning and Teaching Academy (LTA) supports staff in developing essential skills in communication, inclusivity, digital engagement, and student experience enhancement. Its programmes are designed to ensure Curriculum staff can effectively address the diverse needs of learners and possess the digital competencies and systems knowledge necessary to deliver high-quality learning and support. Identified training needs are addressed through the College's Continuing Professional Development framework, facilitated via the MyPDR process.

In addition, the LTA delivers mandatory programmes focused on student wellbeing, including Safeguarding, Prevent, and Listening Training. The College's commitment to this area is recognised through the award of the Emily Test Charter, reflecting its work to training staff to ensure ongoing support to individuals affected by gender-based violence.

The Validation and Standards and Quality processes ensure that all courses meet internal and external academic requirements, align with national qualification frameworks, and help to drive continuous improvement. This includes rigorous course validation, ongoing self-evaluation, performance monitoring, and external verification on teaching quality, that – together with the Stop-Check-Support student feedback process - feeds into Portfolio Reviews and staff training requirements via the MyPDR process.

Objective 7 – There are mechanisms to handle recruitment complaints and obtain feedback where possible from students who leave the College prematurely and identify and take remedial action where necessary.

Any student complaints are made in line with the College's Feedback, Complaints, and Appeals Process through the College's public facing website. Details of the process to be followed are defined in the Complaints Handling Procedures: Student Guide 2024 and a user friendly, simplified version (which is entitled, Complaints Handling Procedure: A Guide for Students (dated session 2019/20).

All complaints come through the Performance Team who manage the complaint in line with Scottish Public Services Ombudsman requirements and liaise with necessary staff.

All complaints received are reported quarterly. The latest published Complaints Report (December 2024) reported one complaint relating to admissions, which was not upheld. As noted earlier in the report, Curriculum Heads retain information on the applicant interviews and performance for appeal purposes. Corrective action is taken to reflect any complaints received (in line with expected practice) and trends are reviewed to understand any recurring issues.