

Board of Management

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 1 October 2024
Paper No.	BoM1-G
Agenda Item	3.3
Subject of Paper	Principal's Report: September 2025
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	Dr Paul Little CBE Principal and Chief Executive
Date of production	23 September 2025
Action	For Discussion & Noting

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. To discuss the Principal's quarterly report to the Board of Management.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. To update the Board of Management on the College's work and key matters of interest since the last meeting of the Board.

3. Consultation

- 3.1. In progressing the matters outlined in the report, ELT colleagues in the College and across the sector, as well as regional, national and international partners, have been engaged.

4. Key Insights

- 4.1. The Principal is responsible for the operational management of the College, as outlined in the Scheme of Delegation, subject to the strategic and policy direction of the Board.
- 4.2. The Board has the responsibility of setting the strategic direction of the College. The College's [Strategic Plan 2021-30](#), refreshed in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, outlines our collective Purpose to "Let Learning Flourish" through our City Way of "inspiration, excellence and innovation" of our teaching, student and enabled by our world-class facilities. Our eight Strategic Priorities, are mapped across four Strategic Themes:

- **Students**
Priorities 1 and 2
- **People and Processes**
Priorities 5 and 6
- **Growth and Development**
Priorities 3 and 4
- **Finance**
Priorities 7 and 8



- 4.3. Five supporting strategies – [Student Academic Experience](#), [People & Culture](#), [Corporate Development](#), [Digital](#) and [Sustainability](#) – and detailed Operational Plans have been developed to deliver the Strategic Plan. Progress is measured and tracked through the College's Balanced Scorecard approach and the Principal and Board are responsible for the Level One Scorecard.
- 4.4. By delivering on our strategic priorities, the College will build opportunities for our students, support industry, support our communities and, in so doing, affect positive change in people's lives in the city whose name we are proud to bear as a highly respected anchor institution and beyond as a national % international centre of excellence.

5. Impact and Implications

- 5.1. The Principal's report ensures that Board members are regularly informed throughout the academic year with salient facts on the operations of the College, progress in the delivery of the Strategic Plan and emerging key developments affecting the College and the sector.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Principal's Report

Principal's Report to the Board of Management: September 2025

Strategic Positioning

1. To enhance international recruitment, strengthen strategic partnership building and help secure essential flexibilities to borrow and hold a surplus (important for our planned Innovation campus), we are updating our competitive positioning from Scotland's Super College to Scotland's Polytechnic. Staging a 15th Anniversary Gala Dinner – Thursday 4 September 2025 – enabled the First Minister to clearly differentiate us as a “Polytechnic of our time”
2. The College celebrated 15 years of continued and award-winning success, originally scheduled for our 10th anniversary, but inevitably delayed due to the global pandemic. Over 200 guests attended, including – The First Minister, 2 Ministers, MSP's, Chairs and Board members (past & present), Honorary Fellows, Admirals, Brigadiers, Commodores, Consulates, Superintendents, Councillors, Principals, CEO's, former staff and distinguished Alumni.

Please see link below for a short video showcasing the event:

<https://youtu.be/-yF1fbcivuQ>

3. Following the Honorary Consulate for Japan's participation at our Maritime Security conference, we further extended our international reach with partnership building visits to Tokyo University of Marine Science & Technology and Toba Institute of Technology. We also met with UK embassy staff (trade & investment) and the Scottish Government's Trade envoy. They advised a follow up visit to meet with leading Japanese Corporations and Funding Foundations – one of which has already supported Scotland with £380M. MOUs are currently being discussed with both Japanese tertiary institutions.
4. Our strategic links with the Royal Navy and the Defence industry were deepened further through my invite only attendance at the Pacific Future Forum aboard HMS Prince of Wales in my role as an Hon RN Captain and as a member of the RN's strategic Think Tank (RNSSC). This event was attended by UK and Japanese Defence Minister, UK and Japanese Trade Ministers, UK Ambassador, the Heads of NATO Navies, Global CEOs of BAE and Babcock, top civil servants.
5. We burnished our Institutional credentials both as a world leading centre of Maritime Education & Training and as a pathfinder leader of Technological excellence.
6. On Friday 12th September the College formally opened our brand new £2.5M Maritime Simulation Hub. In partnership with Wartsila and Northern Marine the event was attended by 50 key stakeholders. STV news featured the launch on the Six o'clock news that evening.

Please see link:

<https://youtu.be/vMp9M2KPPS0>

7. Our College is without equal in our assiduous competitive positioning as a valued strategic partner to Scotland's £9Bn Defence sector, to the £3Bn UK Shipbuilding Industry (80% of all naval build is in Scotland) and to the £2Bn UK Shipping Industry. Hence our most recent academic partnership with London International Shipping Week and our Gold Award status for the Armed Forces Covenant.
8. The College further reinforced its Civic Anchor role for the City having been asked by the Civics Office to host Glasgow's Merchant Navy Day ceremony at our Riverside Campus, while George Square undergoes renovation. Our Riverside campus provided a most

fitting venue for this solemn annual commemoration attended by 300 of our MN cadet officers and Cal Mac apprentices, MN veterans and RN representatives.

9. Detailed Operational Plans have now been submitted to the Depute Principal for review for AY25-26.
10. We continue to play a System Leadership role in Colleges Scotland and in College Employers Scotland including influencing political party manifestos for the Scottish elections (May 2026) and in positively influencing the College budget build up ahead of the UK Spending Review in January 2026 and the finalisation of the Scottish budget.

Students

11. Positive trend of increasing enrolment - out-turn 24/25 overall enrolments increased from 23/24 by 1,100 to a total of 25,800.
12. 25/26 70% of full-time enrolments are HE.
13. 25/26 1st choice applications are up 4%.
14. 25/26: to date 96% of projected students have attended College.
15. Positive increase in attainment - Reducing the attainment gap with the rest of the sector for both FT FE and HE when comparing last year's data.
16. Achieved above current sector average performance in terms of the proportion of HE students successfully completing their course.
17. Both full-time Further and Higher education outcomes up by 3 percentage points to 62% for FT FE and 7 percentage points to 72% for FT HE.
18. Student recruitment remains strong with applications up 5% and enrolments up 3%. There are now over 1,000 Apprenticeships in training, up 80% on last year, with new frameworks.
19. Halls of Residence are at more than 95% capacity, with first-year students and international groups well supported.
20. The credit allocation from Scottish Funding Council (SFC) for City of Glasgow College in session 2025-26 is 157,800, consistent with 2024-25 equating to 228 courses and 438 full time cohorts. Enrolment conversion (as of 16 Sept 2025) is at 99% against projection.

Growth & Development

21. IT Network Refresh Contract Awarded.
22. New HR Payroll System tender continuing.
23. HR Project Board is working closely with Project Management Office, Procurement, IT, Finance on the specification and contract to secure the delivery of new integrated HR system.
24. In 2025/26, international recruitment declined by 27% compared with 2024/25, the result of an underperforming overseas partner (AMET). However, new partnerships allow us to pivot with projected recruitment through 1+1 programmes to increase by 75% in 2026/27 compared to 2025/26 levels — representing a 27% increase on 2024/25 figures.

25. Our pipeline of commercial bids worth over £500k is progressing. Innovation activity is scaling up, with external funding of over £400k secured this quarter and strong brand visibility generated through media and digital engagement.
26. On Riverside the installation of our new £2.5M Maritime Simulation Hub was concluded successfully, increasing our simulation capability from 5 to 13. City is now the cutting-edge leader in digital pedagogy with the most technologically advanced simulation hub.
27. On City campus the previous TV video wall, formally a 5x5 grid of 25 individual TVs, was replaced with a new, modern and bright LED wall. This new 6m x 3m display is constructed of 288 small LED panels, giving the appearance of a single large screen.
28. The Learning Spaces Project, jointly led by both IT and Student Experience, has equipped 7 new teaching spaces (6 at City and 1 at Riverside) with new digital technology, including interactive and non-interactive whiteboards.
29. Over the summer we welcomed the UK Transport Minister and the Shadow Education Secretary and several international delegates from China, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Ambassador from Kyrgyz Republic.
30. Amazon Web Services (AWS) held a successful Graduation of the re/Start programme – a cohort-based workforce development training programme that prepares individuals for careers in Cloud Computing. The keynote address was delivered by the Minister for Public Finance, Mr Ivan McKee handing out certificates to almost 30 graduates.

People & Processes

31. Handled fewer complaints last year – 62, the lowest number in the last five years.
32. Remained compliant with external assurance bodies and integrated the new Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) quality arrangements.
33. Prepared a new entry to the Queen Elizabeth Prizes for 2025-26.
34. In response to feedback to the staff survey and to improve staff engagement, the One City event returned in June and two Campus Catch Up coffee mornings were held at the start of the 2025/26 academic term to welcome back staff. One City feedback was extremely positive with survey feedback including:

I had the chance to engage with other staff. Agree 98%

I had the chance to take part in fun activities. Agree 99.5%

I learned something new about the College. Agree 85%

The coffee mornings catered for 300 staff at City campus and 100 staff at Riverside campus.
35. The College achieved high-confidence ratings in SQA verification for SVQ delivery, and UK Visa & Immigration (UKVI) compliance remains within thresholds, with the Basic Compliance Assessment outcome due in December. Staff continue to shape national standards in work-based learning.
36. Recruitment underway for replacement Dean for Faculty of Hospitality & Leisure and for HR Director.
37. Institutional Led Quality Review (ILQR) process in train. 2 panels scheduled for Oct 2025 where Curriculum Heads will be invited to explain measures to enhance Learning & Teaching within their areas.

Finance

- 38. Reported to Finance Committee 2024/25 Q4 forecasted surplus of £55k against original budgeted deficit of £0.5m.
- 39. On track to deliver 100% of 24/25 credit target and 25/26 credit target too.
- 40. Q4 spend was fully compliant.
- 41. 2025/26 Budgets have been submitted for consideration 2025/26, (including capital spend). We continue to lobby the Scottish Funding Council and Scottish Government at the highest levels for an increase to our core credit value/funding and the unfreezing of HE tuition fees.
- 42. Accommodation income is on track, with forecast occupancy above 95%. Secured projects have already delivered an additional £63k, with further bids and tenders in the pipeline worth over £500k. Apprenticeship expansion is expected to drive further income growth. It remains too early in the financial year to assess overall commercial performance against budget.
- 43. Significant increase in the number of students with complex needs that require specialised in class support. The projected increase in costs is substantial from £267,575 in AY 24/25 to approximately £540,721 for AY 25/26.

Forward Look

- 44. Key outcomes are awaited from the Scottish Government Entrepreneurial Fund and UKVI compliance assessment.
- 45. International opportunities are advancing in Japan, Singapore, Angola, India and China, and innovation projects will progress with the *mpact* tool launch in October and the Riverside Innovation Centre business case in September.
- 46. Forecasts suggest 2026/27 could be the strongest year for international recruitment since 2018.
- 47. Development of new Apprenticeship Strategy.
- 48. Remain firmly focused on improving our attainment in both HE and FE.
- 49. More strategic approach to curriculum planning through revised Portfolio Review process.
- 50. **Thanksgiving Dinner – Thursday 6 November 2025.**
- 51. Special guest, President Marc Jerome from Monroe University, The Culinary Institute of New York (CINY) will be in attendance. Secretary of State for Scotland Douglas Alexander MP also invited as VIP Guest of Honour. Donors and potential donors also invited
- 52. **Annual Winter Graduation** ceremonies which will take place at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall **on Monday 24 November.**