Board of Management

Date of Meeting	**23 September 2026**
Paper No.	**BoM1-F**
Agenda Item	**3.1.1**
Subject of Paper	**Board Self-Evaluation Report 2025-26**
FOISA Status	**Disclosable**
Primary Contact	**Marcus Walker** **Associate Director of Governance & Risk**
Date of production	**18 August 2026**
Action	**For Approval**

1. Recommendations

1.1. To approve the Board Self-Evaluation Report for 2025-26, as recommended by the Conveners' Committee.

2. Purpose

2.1 To share the outcome of the Board of Management's annual self-evaluation for 2025-26. The self-evaluation is a requirement of the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges and forms part of the Board's approach to reviewing and improving its effectiveness.

2.2 The report provides an overview of the Board's strengths, areas for development and emerging governance themes. The outcomes of the exercise have informed the Board Development Plan for 2026-27.

3. Consultation

3.1. All members of the Board were invited to complete the self-evaluation during June 2026.

3.2. The Board Development Plan has been reviewed alongside the self-evaluation findings to ensure all key themes identified by members are appropriately reflected within the Board's ongoing development programme.

4. Key Insights

4.1. The Board's self-evaluation framework is aligned to the key principles of the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges.

4.2. The results demonstrate that the Board continues to perform strongly across most aspects of governance, with high levels of confidence in strategic leadership, governance arrangements, governance support, student focus and the effectiveness of the Chair.

4.3. Several recurring development themes were identified:

- Board culture and collective responsibility
- Trustee awareness and governance responsibilities
- Strength of challenge and assurance
- Strategic risk oversight
- Workforce and people assurance
- Board induction and development
- Stakeholder engagement and visibility

4.4. Overall, the findings suggest a Board that is focused on continuous improvement and moving from good governance to governance excellence.

4.5. The outcomes from the self-evaluation have directly informed the Board Development Plan for 2026-27.

5. Impact and Implications

5.1. Maintaining a robust self-evaluation process provides assurance to stakeholders that the Board remains committed to high standards of governance, accountability and continuous improvement.

6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Board of Management Annual Self-Evaluation Report 2025-26

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges outlines the standards of governance and leadership expected of college boards and the individuals who serve on them. Section D.24 of the Code requires Boards of Management to keep their effectiveness under annual review and maintain a robust self-evaluation process. Annual self-evaluation provides an opportunity for Board members to reflect on their effectiveness, identify areas of strength and recognise opportunities for improvement.

1.2 During 2025-26, Board members were invited to complete a confidential self-evaluation questionnaire covering the key principles of the Code:

- Leadership and Strategy
- Quality of the Student Experience
- Accountability
- Effectiveness
- Governance and Risk
- Relationships and Collaboration

1.3. A total of 10 (out of a possible 17) responses were received. Members were also invited to provide qualitative feedback on areas that worked particularly well and opportunities for future improvement. The commentary, together with the quantitative results, provides an overview of Board effectiveness and helps inform future development activity.

1.4. Overall, the results indicate a strong and effective Board which continues to demonstrate high standards of governance, strategic leadership and commitment to students. Members expressed considerable confidence in governance arrangements, Board leadership, governance support and the student-centred ethos of the College. Whilst some respondents identified areas for further improvement around challenge, assurance, Board culture and trustee awareness, the overall opinion is one of a Board performing effectively and seeking to further enhance its impact and maturity.

1.5. Figures 1-6 provide a visual summary of responses across each area of the self-evaluation.

2. Leadership and Strategy

2.1. ***What has worked well?***

2.1.1. Leadership and Strategy continues to be one of the Board's strongest performing areas. Responses demonstrate a high level of confidence in the Board's ability to set and oversee the strategic direction of the College. Members overwhelmingly agreed that strategic priorities are clear, that performance against those priorities is actively monitored and that the Board maintains a strong understanding of the College's long-term direction.

2.1.2. Particularly positive responses were recorded in relation to College values, the Code of Conduct and the Principles of Public Life. This suggests that members have a clear understanding of the behavioural and ethical framework within which the Board operates and continue to demonstrate a strong commitment to good governance.

2.1.3. The results also suggest that progress has been made in strengthening strategic discussions and ensuring greater focus on longer-term priorities. Members demonstrated confidence that

the Board is aligned with regional and national priorities and remains appropriately focused on the significant opportunities and challenges facing the sector.

2.2. ***What could be improved next year?***

2.2.1. Whilst satisfaction levels remain high, the results suggest opportunities to further strengthen strategic leadership. Members identified the value of increasing focus on strategic risk discussions, horizon scanning, and scenario planning. As the College continues to operate within a challenging external environment, members recognised the importance of ensuring sufficient time is dedicated to discussing future risks, opportunities and sector developments.

2.2.2. These observations indicate a Board seeking to deepen its strategic effectiveness rather than fundamentally change its approach.

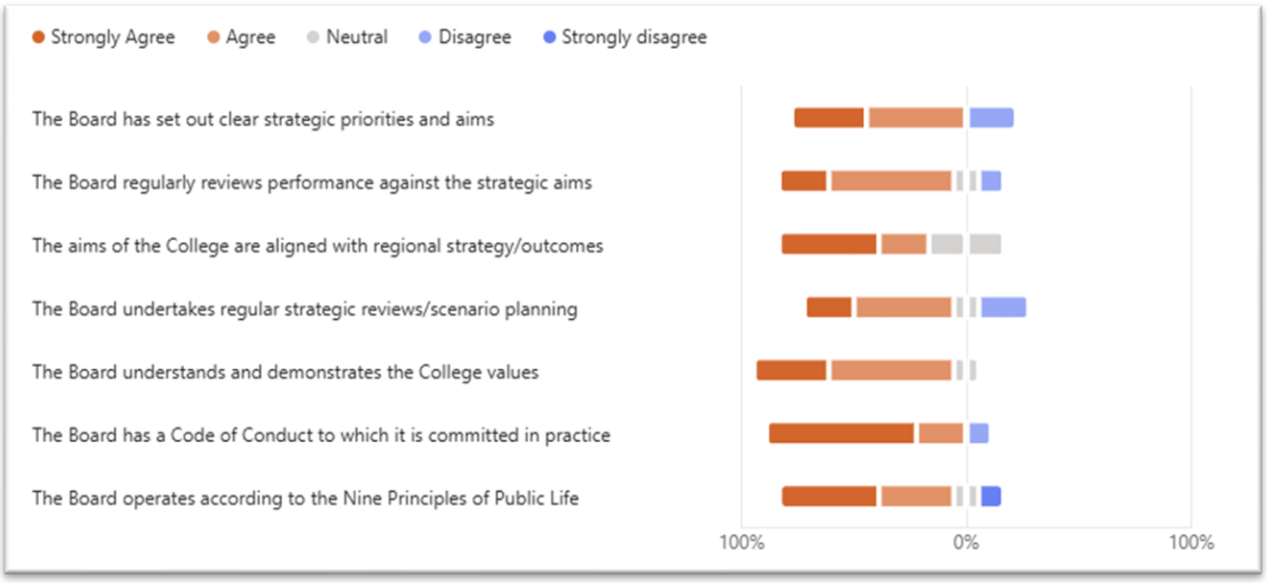


Figure 1: Leadership and Strategy Self-Evaluation Results 2025-26

3. Quality of the Student Experience

3.1. ***What has worked well?***

3.1.1. The student experience remains one of the highest-rated aspects of Board performance. Responses demonstrate strong confidence that student members actively contribute to Board discussions and that regular reporting from the Students' Association provides meaningful insight into student priorities and concerns.

3.1.2. Members expressed positive views regarding the Board's oversight of learning and teaching performance and its commitment to student success. The results suggest that students remain central to Board decision-making and that there is a strong awareness of the impact strategic decisions can have on the student experience.

3.1.3. The continued positive feedback regarding student engagement reflects the significant contribution made by student members and demonstrates the Board's commitment to ensuring that student voices remain visible and influential within governance discussions.

3.2. ***What could be improved next year?***

3.2.1. Whilst overall satisfaction remains high, a small number of responses suggest opportunities to further strengthen the student voice within strategic discussions. Members also highlighted the value of continuing to develop evidence-based discussion around student outcomes, retention, and attainment.

3.2.2. Continued focus on linking Board discussions and decision-making to student impact will help ensure that the student experience remains at the heart of the Board's work.

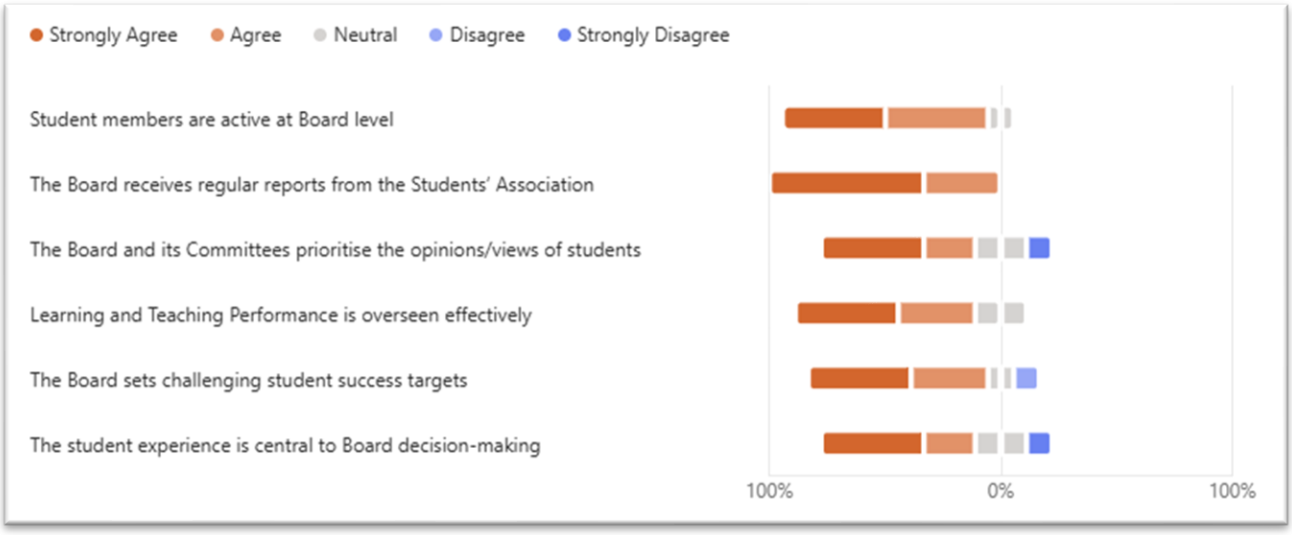


Figure 2: Quality of the Student Experience Self-Evaluation Results 2025-26

4. Accountability

4.1. ***What has worked well?***

4.1.1. The results demonstrate continued confidence in the College's governance framework and accountability arrangements. Members expressed positive views regarding committee structures, audit arrangements, and risk management processes, reflecting confidence that robust mechanisms are in place to support effective governance and oversight.

4.1.2. Responses also indicate that members have a strong understanding of the Board's chain of accountability and consider annual reporting arrangements to be effective. Confidence in staff governance arrangements and the Board's role in overseeing the effective use of resources also remains strong.

4.1.3. The findings suggest that accountability remains a significant strength and that members have confidence in the systems and processes supporting governance and assurance across the College.

4.2. ***What could be improved next year?***

4.2.1. This section generated some of the more varied responses within the evaluation. Whilst only a minority view, several responses identified opportunities to strengthen visibility of challenge and scrutiny within Board discussions and to provide additional assurance around certain areas of Board responsibility.

4.2.2. The results also reinforce the importance of ongoing development around charity trustee responsibilities and governance obligations. Although confidence remains high overall, continued attention in this area would help ensure that all members maintain a consistent understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

4.2.3. The Board may also wish to consider how assurance is provided in relation to financial planning, workforce matters, and executive accountability to ensure members remain confident that appropriate scrutiny is taking place.



Figure 3: Accountability Self-Evaluation Results 2025-26

5. Effectiveness

5.1. *What has worked well?*

5.1.1. The results demonstrate high levels of confidence in the leadership of the Chair and the quality of governance support provided to the Board. Members strongly agreed that the Chair promotes open discussion on strategic matters and creates an environment where strategic issues can be considered effectively.

5.1.2. Governance support also continues to be viewed as a significant strength. Members expressed strong confidence in the advice, guidance and professional support available to the Board, reflecting the importance of robust governance arrangements in supporting Board effectiveness.

5.1.3. The findings indicate that members value the overall governance framework and recognise the work undertaken to strengthen strategic discussion and promote effective Board operation.

5.2. ***What could be improved next year?***

5.2.1. Although most responses were positive, this section highlighted some of the most significant development themes emerging from the evaluation. Feedback suggests that members hold differing views regarding Board culture, collective responsibility, and the overall effectiveness of the Board as a team.

5.2.2. Some respondents also highlighted opportunities to strengthen participation, broaden engagement across all members, and reinforce understanding of Board responsibilities. Whilst these concerns were not universally shared, similar themes appeared elsewhere in the evaluation, suggesting that Board culture and member development should remain a priority area during 2026-27.

5.2.3. These findings do not indicate a weakness in governance arrangements. Rather, they represent opportunities to strengthen relationships, cohesion and collective effectiveness as the Board continues its development journey.

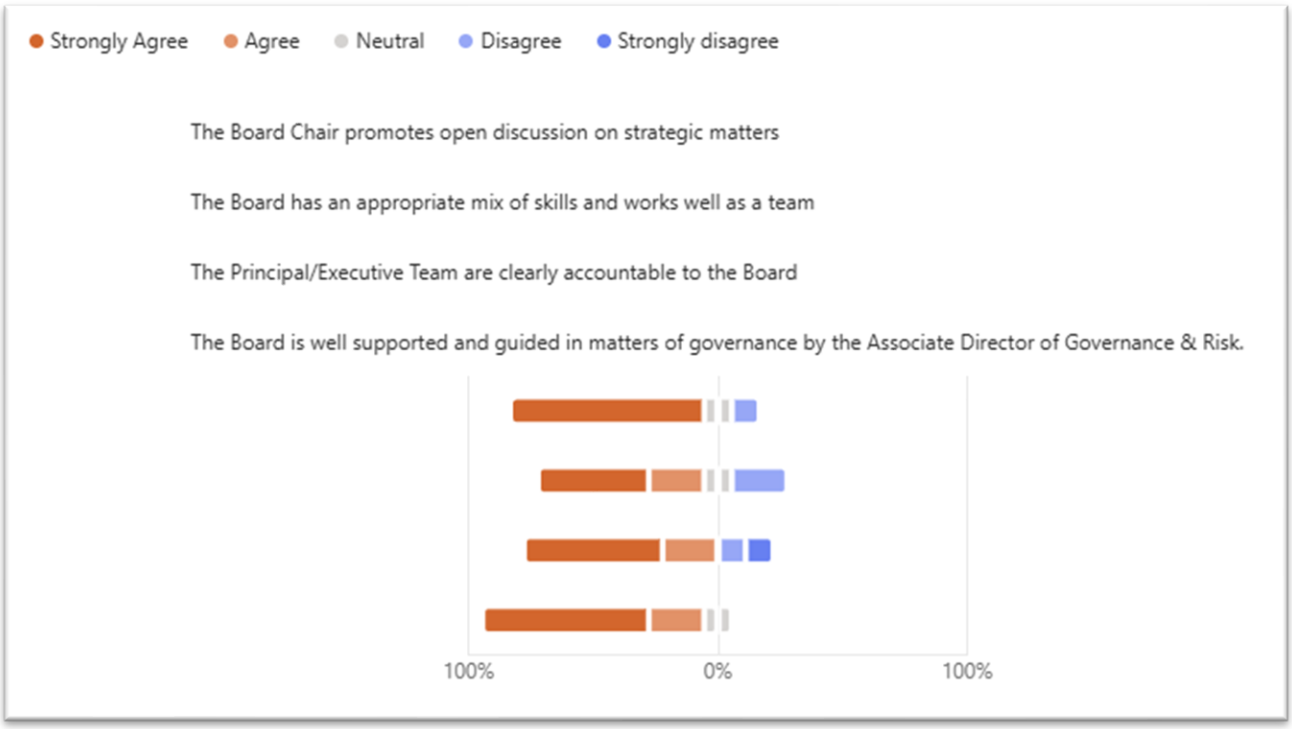


Figure 4: Effectiveness Self-Evaluation Results 2025-26

6. Governance and Risk

6.1. ***What has worked well?***

6.1.1. Governance and Risk continues to perform strongly, with members expressing positive views regarding recruitment, succession planning, and the Board's commitment to reviewing its own effectiveness. Confidence remains high that governance arrangements are proportionate, effective and aligned with recognised standards of good practice.

6.1.2. Members also demonstrated confidence in the systems used to assess Board effectiveness and recognised the importance of continuous improvement activity. Collectively, these findings

reinforce the positive feedback received elsewhere in the evaluation regarding governance arrangements and overall Board performance.

6.2. ***What could be improved next year?***

6.2.1. The most significant development theme within this section relates to Board development and induction. Whilst members recognised that development opportunities are available, the results suggest there is scope to enhance participation and provide more targeted support in specific areas.

6.2.2. Suggested areas of focus include finance, risk, governance responsibilities and committee induction. Strengthening these arrangements will help ensure all members continue to feel confident in discharging their responsibilities and contributing effectively to Board discussions.



Figure 5: Governance and Risk Self-Evaluation Results 2025-26

7. Relationships and Collaboration

7.1. ***What has worked well?***

7.1.1. Responses indicate that members view stakeholder engagement and partnership working positively. There was confidence that learning provision remains aligned with industry needs and that the College maintains effective relationships with employers, stakeholders and external partners.

7.1.2. The results demonstrate recognition of the College's significant contribution within the wider civic, regional, and economic landscape, together with appreciation of the value created through partnership working and stakeholder engagement.

7.1.3. These findings provide assurance that the Board remains confident in the College's external relationships and its ability to respond to the needs of learners, employers and communities.

7.2. ***What could be improved next year?***

7.1. Some respondents identified opportunities to improve visibility of stakeholder engagement activity and the extent to which the Board can monitor and understand the full range of external relationships maintained by the College.

7.3. There may also be value in providing Board members with additional opportunities to undertake an ambassadorial role and engage directly with employers, partners and stakeholders. This would further strengthen understanding of the College's external impact and strategic position.



Figure 6: Relationships and Collaboration Self-Evaluation Results 2025-26

8. Conclusion

8.1 The 2025-26 self-evaluation presents a strong, well-governed and effective Board. The results demonstrate high levels of confidence in strategic leadership, governance arrangements, governance support, student focus and the leadership provided by the Chair. Members continue to recognise the Board's positive contribution to the College and its commitment to continuous improvement.

8.2. Importantly, the evaluation does not identify any significant structural weaknesses in the Board's governance arrangements. Instead, the themes emerging from the evaluation reflect the challenges and opportunities typically associated with a newly constituted Board seeking to enhance its effectiveness and continue its journey towards becoming a 'high-performing' governing body.

8.3. Several recurring development priorities emerged throughout the evaluation:

- Board culture and collective responsibility
- Trustee duties and governance responsibilities
- Strategic challenge and assurance
- Workforce and people assurance
- Strategic risk oversight and scenario planning
- Board induction and member development
- Stakeholder engagement and visibility

8.4. The findings from the self-evaluation have directly informed the Board Development Plan for 2026-27. Progress against the plan will be monitored throughout the year and reported to the Conveners' Committee and Board of Management, ensuring that the insights gained through self-evaluation are translated into meaningful action and ongoing improvement.