

LEARNING, TEACHING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

NOTICE

There will be a meeting of the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience committee on 14 May 2026 at 1730 hours on Teams and in the Boardroom at South Lanarkshire College

AGENDA

Item		Paper	Lead
01	Apologies for Absence	No	VA
02	Declaration of any potential Conflicts of Interest in relation to any Agenda items	No	All
03	Minutes of Previous Meeting (19 Feb 2026)	Yes	JG
04	Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting	No	JG
	Matters for Discussion		
05	Student Association Report	Yes	CB
06	Curriculum Report	Yes	SP
07	Quality and Learning & Teaching Innovation Report	Yes	LD
08	Student Engagement and Partnership Report	Yes	RH
	Matters for Information (No overviews required – questions invited)		
09	Marketing and Communications Update	Yes	RH
10	Quarter 3 Complaints Report	Yes	VA
11	Reserved Item: Commercially Sensitive Key Performance Indicators and Strategic Dashboard	Yes	SP
12	Consultation on the Report on Widening Access	Yes	SP
13	Employer Engagement Plan 26-27	Yes	SP
14	Summation of Actions and Date of Next Meeting 27 August 2026	No	VA
15	Any Other Business	No	JG

Key:

CB	Catriona Blacker	Student Association President
JB	Jamie Beddows	Learning and Teaching Innovation Manager
JG	Prof Jo Gill	Chair – Learning Teaching and Student Experience Committee
LD	Lisa Doonan	Head of Quality and Learning & Teaching Innovation
RH	Rose Harkness	Head of Student Services
SMcM	Stella McManus	Principal
SP	Shona Pettigrew	Vice Principal – Student Experience and Innovation
VA	Vari Anderson	Governance Professional
WMacL	Wilma MacLeod	Head of Curriculum

Unconfirmed LTSE Minutes

LEARNING, TEACHING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

LTSE Committee on 19 February 2026 at 1730 hours in the Boardroom at South Lanarkshire College and via Teams

Present

Catriona Blacker
Douglas Morrison (online)
Heather Meighan
Jo Gill (Chair of LTSE) (online)
Scott Coutts (online)
Scott Gray
Stella McManus
Tarryn Robertson (online)

In Attendance

Lisa Doonan
Rose Harkness
Shona Pettigrew
Wilma MacLeod

Vari Anderson
Christine Clark

AGENDA ITEM

01

Apologies for Absence
None noted.

02

Declaration of any potential Conflicts of Interest in relation to any Agenda items
None noted.

03

Minutes of Previous Meeting – 20 November 2025
Approved as accurate record.

04

Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting
No items in addition to those covered under the agenda items.

Matters for Discussion

05

Student Association Report

The Committee considered the Report, noting the exceptional work and achievement of the overall audit opinion of 'Good' which represents the highest level of assurance available following the Student Association Audit.

Congratulations were extended to the Student Association and all colleagues who support the service, noting the SA Audit Report was also considered during the ARC meeting on 12/2/26.

	<p>ACTION: The Committee commended the ongoing work of the Students' Association to support students, noting in particular the success of the free breakfast and lunch initiatives. They highlighted this as a positive news story and suggested that the Marketing team promote these efforts through local media channels.</p>
06	<p>Curriculum Report</p> <p>The Committee considered and noted the report with highlights on the credit position (following January 2026 intake) and the robust curriculum planning process and market intelligence exercise underway with the team for 2026/27, including specific subjects for diversification and to align with SLC Strategy 2030.</p> <p>The Committee raised a query around the high withdrawal rate for HE Part Time courses and in particular, Early Education and Childcare. Following a deep dive, the Committee were assured that the withdrawal rate was a result of students incorrectly applying for Full Time SAAS funding which was refused due to the course being Part Time. Following refusal of funding, the students thereafter withdrew from the course. The Committee were assured that these students were supported and offered alternatives and that the remaining students on the programme have continued with the part time course.</p> <p>The Committee were pleased to note that feedback from external stakeholders engaging with the College has remained consistently positive. The Committee also reacted positively to the inclusion of carbon literacy within the update.</p> <p>ACTION: Amend typographical error within section 3.1 (2022-26 should be 2025-26) and an update to be provided following SM meeting with SELECT.</p>
07	<p>Quality and Learning and Teaching Innovation Report</p> <p>The Committee considered and noted the report with highlights. In November 2025, the College became a General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS) Approved Centre with all staff working towards registration. Further, it was noted that LD has been appointed as QAA Reviewer and will be deployed over the Spring period.</p> <p>Given the Committee's concerns regarding clarity from the quality assurance process, feedback was invited around how the management feel around clarity starting to emerge and if this is being understood across the sector. Noted progress has been made due to robust internal processes and assurances within the college. In terms of the external landscape, feeling more assured but there are still opportunities for feedback and enhancement at national level. Further feedback will follow on completion of the full review cycle.</p> <p>Plan in place for internal processes and externality (not previously evidenced). Internal processes are mandatory and SLC are focussing on learning and teaching experience. A national review is underway by SFC with the sector collating challenges as inspections take place. SLC's ILQRG Review will take place during 2028/29 and SLC are aiming to be sector leading at the point of our inspection.</p> <p>ACTION: LD to provide an update following completion of the first cycle on the extent to which clarity from the quality assurance process is emerging and being understood.</p>

08	<p>Analysis of Round 1 of the Curriculum Self-evaluation Cycle – The SLC Way</p> <p>The Committee considered and noted the report and highlights provided around two key student voice activities and the identified areas for enhancement. The Student Experience Action Plan (SEAP) college level working document is continuously reviewed and developed.</p> <p>Discussion around the local level student experience survey process replicating the national survey and noted a third-party review, by SAGE, is underway to ensure the national survey is valid and appropriate. The overall question appears to be open to interpretation and changes are expected for 2026/27. An update will be supplied when further details received.</p>
09	<p>Student Engagement and Partnership Report</p> <p>The Committee considered and noted the report, particularly highlights around Section 2.9 (ELS) and discussions with other colleges and universities regarding supporting students. An internal framework to source funds to provide in-class support and build partnerships will be piloted (March-June 2026) including engaging with support agencies. Student Funding and Finance liaising to ensure Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges (APUC) and lessons learned piece followed for full tender process as move into 2026/27.</p> <p>Noted Section 7 with SLC being at the forefront of Gender Based Violence (GBV) prevent support via the Scottish Government National Strategy. SLC produced a strategy which is still live and relevant today. Following an annual review process, SLC are delighted to confirm they have retained chartered status.</p> <p>The Committee thanked RH and the small team who are delighted with the outcome following the huge volume of work involved. Going beyond the mandatory requirements to support students was commended committee members.</p> <p>Reference was made to section 3.2 (Counselling) and the huge demand on the team with concerns around the waiting list. Noted some students requesting specific days/slots; staff absences; plans to recruit 2 student placements (via University of Strathclyde); and engagement with external services, e.g. GP if urgent assistance is required. A robust approach is followed, and emotional support/listening ear is ongoing whilst on the waiting list.</p> <p>ACTION: Small formatting issue on page 8 to be amended – repetition of sentence ‘campus private nursery supports up to 70 preschool children’.</p>
Matters for Information (no overviews required – questions invited)	
10	<p>Marketing and Communications Update</p> <p>The Committee noted the update with reference made to Section 8 and focus on new applicants going through the SLC journey with more focus on careers and opportunities. A few tweaks will complete the implementation for the August recruitment launch. Reference made to Section 17 and excellent work underway by the Interim Marketing and Communication Manager.</p> <p>Discussion included availability of comparative data; how plan and budget is being measured and tracked; other colleges having open events at different times; safe spaces student numbers; mapping requirements and future</p>

	<p>discussion planned with SFC around substantial number of applications / over subscribing.</p> <p>ACTION: Comparative data around social media engagement and attendance at open evenings would be welcomed.</p>
11	<p>The SLC Way - FINAL</p> <p>No questions were raised and the Committee extended their gratitude for the paper, format and detail contained, noting this captures what we are trying to do around framework and interdependencies.</p> <p>Noted work is underway for the 2026/27 framework.</p>
12	<p>Student Association Audit Report SLC 2025-2026</p> <p>The Committee noted the report and acknowledged the cross-committee collaboration with reference to ARC and Henderson Loggie comments and welcomed findings of the audit.</p>
13	<p>LTSE Workplan - Updated</p> <p>The Committee noted the terms of the LTSE workplan as a helpful indication of Committee work.</p>
14	<p>Quarter 2 Complaints Report</p> <p>The Committee noted the Quarter 2 Complaints Report and acknowledged the importance of collecting and reporting of data.</p>
15	<p>Key Performance Indicators and Strategic Dashboard</p> <p>The Committee noted the KPIs and Strategic Dashboard.</p>
16	<p>Summation of Actions and Date of Next Meeting (21 May 2026)</p> <p><i>Item 05</i> - Operational Action Point regarding the good news story regarding the free breakfast and lunch initiative.</p> <p><i>Item 06</i> – Small typographical error in 3.1 (should be 2025-26) and update to be provided following SM meeting with SELECT.</p> <p><i>Item 07</i> – LD to provide an update following completion of the first cycle on the extent to which clarity from the quality assurance process is emerging and being understood.</p> <p><i>Item 09</i> – Small formatting issue on page 8 to be updated – repetition of the sentence ‘campus private nursery supports up to 70 preschool children’.</p> <p><i>Item 10</i> – To consider including comparative figures for social media engagement and attendance at open evenings etc.</p>
17	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>SP – J Jamieson (Depute Head of Curriculum) nominated for Knowledge Exchange Champion category of the Scottish Knowledge Exchange Awards taking place mid-March. Apology noted that this was not included in the Curriculum Report above.</p>

	JG – SLC Graduation Ceremony. Request for diaries to be noted: 10 Nov 2026. Meeting ended: 18.40
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Key:

CB	Catriona Blacker	Student Association President
DM	Douglas Morrison	Chair (Board of Management)
HM	Heather Meighan	Board Member
JG	Prof Jo Gill	Chair of LTSE Committee
LD	Lisa Doonan	Head of Quality and Learning & Teaching Innovation
RH	Rose Harkness	Head of Student Services
SC	Scott Coutts	Senior Independent Member
SG	Scott Gray	Board Member
SMcM	Stella McManus	Principal
SP	Shona Pettigrew	Vice Principal – Student Experience and Innovation
TR	Tarryn Robertson	Board Member
VA	Vari Anderson	Governance Professional
WMacL	Wilma MacLeod	Head of Curriculum



South Lanarkshire College

Students' Association

Board Report

April 2026



South
Lanarkshire
College

Students' Association

**YOUR COLLEGE
YOUR WAY**

Overview

The Students' Association (SA) continues to experience a highly productive and engaging period. Since the previous Board Report, activities have remained firmly focused on priority areas, complemented by the delivery of engaging events and participation in development opportunities, including the EmilyTest LISTEN GBV Risk Assessment session.

Refreshers' Week - January 2026

The SA delivered a successful three-day Refreshers' event from 27 to 29 January, engaging a wide range of stakeholders to connect with students and promote the breadth of local community support services available.

The SA played a central role throughout, providing student hoodies, signposting to internal support services, and facilitating a programme of interactive activities each day. A total of 78 feedback forms were received, with responses highlighting strong student appreciation for the diversity of stalls and activities on offer.

We would like to extend our thanks to Aramark for arranging an on-site food truck, which provided a valued addition to the event experience for both new and returning students. Overall, the event represented a positive start to the term, and we are grateful to all who participated and contributed to its success.

Student Elections

2026/27 Student Elections are currently underway at the College with both the post of the new President and Vice President being promoted. Voting is now open until 12 May.

[CLICK
For SA Report Video](#)

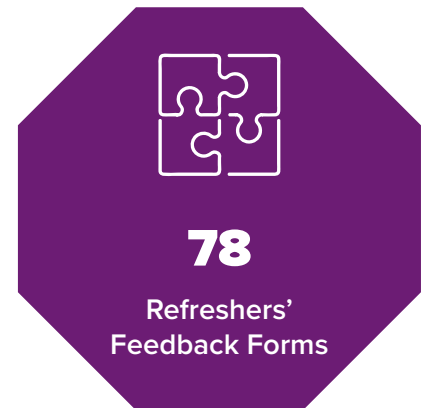
Catriona Blacker, Student President

Jack Whyte, Student Vice President



Headline Activity Report

The following section details the key activities that have informed the Student Association's strategic focus throughout this academic year. Our core priorities continue to centre on advancing student engagement, utilising the student voice to influence meaningful improvement, and promoting the wellbeing and health of the wider student community.



Student Welfare Initiatives

Our Respect Campaign was very positively received by both students and staff, demonstrating strong engagement across the campus. Many individuals took the opportunity to contribute to the Kindness Board by writing encouraging messages for others, thereby fostering a supportive and uplifting environment.

The campaign was extended to align with Valentine's Day, which resulted in a significant number of thoughtful and heartfelt messages displayed. This further strengthened a sense of belonging and mutual support throughout the campus.

Student Representation

The SA hosted an information stall alongside a Care Day lunch for students, inviting them to attend and enjoy refreshments including pizza, snacks, and cake. This initiative provided a valuable opportunity for students to take a break, connect with peers, and engage with the Association. We were pleased with the level of attendance and the positive reception, with participants benefiting from the relaxed and sociable atmosphere.



Events and Engagements

On 5 February, students supported the Time to Talk event, building on the success of a similar initiative delivered in the previous year. This initiative demonstrated a high level of teamwork and commitment, with students raising over £500 in support of Brain Tumour Awareness. In addition, a Comic Relief cake sale generated £389.50, reflecting both the dedication of student bakers and the generosity of participants.

To sustain student engagement throughout the academic year, the SA delivered a range of inclusive and enjoyable activities, such as the annual Easter Egg hunt which students greatly enjoyed taking part in. Alongside these organised events, students play a vital role in fostering a supportive and well-informed college community, often through initiatives such as cake and cookie sales that encourage social connection.



Project Highlights

The SA has engaged in several new initiatives designed to support and enhance the health and wellbeing of our students. We remain committed to continually improving the overall student experience and contributing meaningfully to the successful delivery of the College's strategic objectives.

LGBT History Month and Purple Friday

LGBT History Month took place in February and the SA worked very closely with the College and Student Services to host Purple Friday on the last Friday of the month. Activities included information stalls from the SA, Equality Network, HIPY, LAMH, Terrence Higgins Trust and Lanarkshire Pride. Freebies were handed out to students and we also asked students to send positive messages to each other by signing on the tablecloth.

Staff and students were encouraged to wear purple for the day and it was great seeing so many of the College community take part. We would like to extend our thanks to our Curriculum teams for their support in creating fun activities, including our Hairdressing and Beauty students who provided free purple nails, hair braiding and purple tinsel. Our warm thanks also goes to Aramark for providing free rainbow cupcakes for handing out to students and staff throughout the event.

Sexual Health Promotion

The SA in partnership with Student Services, delivered a Sexual Health and Wellbeing event on Thursday 26 March in the Ground Floor Atrium. Recognising that sexual health is an integral component of physical, mental, emotional, and social wellbeing, a month-long awareness campaign was also implemented, including a toilet door initiative highlighting local sexual health services.

As part of the event, the SA hosted an information stand in the atrium from 10:00 to 13:00, alongside partner organisations including the Terrence Higgins Trust and HIPY. Representatives from the Terrence Higgins Trust also delivered sexual health awareness sessions to class groups, which were very positively received by students.

Love Your Planet Event

The SA worked in partnership with our Horticulture students, alongside community partners such as Biffa, Home Energy Scotland, and Healthy and Active EK, to deliver the Love Your Planet event on Wednesday 1 April. The event provided an excellent opportunity to engage with students on the importance of sustainability.

Students were invited to learn more about sustainability initiatives within the College and were provided with complimentary reusable water bottles and notepads to support environmentally conscious practices. A litter-picking activity had also been planned as part of the event; however, this was postponed due to adverse weather conditions. We extend our sincere thanks to Biffa for their willingness to support the litter-picking initiative and to all our community partners for their valuable contributions in ensuring the success of the event.

Executive Summary

Since the last Board report, the SA has continued to deliver a strong and varied programme of student-led activity focused on engagement, well-being and building a sense of belonging and community.

One of the main highlights was Refreshers' Week, which saw high levels of student participation across the three day event. Students valued the range of stalls, interactive activities and give-aways, with 78 feedback responses highlighting how important it was to have a welcoming and social start to term. The food truck and the visit from Guide Dogs for the Blind were particularly popular and helped create a positive and friendly atmosphere on campus.

Students also showed a strong commitment to charity fundraising and awareness raising. The Time to Talk event on 5 February built on previous success, with students working together to raise money for charitable organisations. These activities demonstrate strong student leadership, teamwork and a shared desire to support meaningful causes, with the 2025/26 NPA4 Hospitality students playing a key role in delivering these events.

Engagement with the Respect Campaign was high, with both students and staff contributing positive messages that promoted kindness, respect and inclusion across the campus. The Care Day lunch also provided students with a valuable opportunity to take time out, connect with peers and engage informally with the SA.

Supporting student wellbeing continues to be a key priority. Ongoing initiatives, such as the Toast Topper Club, provide a welcoming and low pressure space for students to socialise and feel supported. Feedback shows this is particularly important for students who may feel less comfortable attending larger events. Moving forward, the SA will continue to develop and promote inclusive, student-led activities that strengthen belonging and ensure student voice remains at the heart of the College community.

The SA has also played an active role in promoting, and gathering feedback on, the minibus service delivered in partnership with Climate Action Strathaven and funded through South Lanarkshire Council's Community Benefit Fund. A short survey was developed and distributed to students, with SA representatives utilising the minibus service to engage directly with and capture student views. The survey was promoted extensively via an SA information stall and across established communication channels, including the fortnightly newsletter and Teams pages. The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive, with the majority of respondents indicating they would recommend the minibus service to others. Students also rated the service highly in terms of safety, cleanliness, accessibility, and professionalism.



2025/2026 Events

Delivered Meetings & Events (February-April 2026)

Valentines
14 February

Care Day
20 February

Purple Friday
27 February

Easter Egg Hunt
30 March & 3 April

Love Your Planet
1 April

Up-coming Meetings & Events (May - June 2026)

Mental Health Week
11 May 2026

Carers Week
June 2026

CE End of Year Celebration
3 June 2026



LEARNING, TEACHING AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

DATE	14 May 2026
TITLE OF REPORT	Curriculum Report
REFERENCE	Agenda item 06
AUTHOR AND CONTACT DETAILS	Shona Pettigrew shona.pettigrew@slc.ac.uk
PURPOSE:	To provide members with an update on matters relating to curriculum planning and delivery, credits generated and curriculum developments.
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS/ DECISIONS:	Members are recommended to note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current credit delivery and forecast performance for Academic Year 2025–26; • Withdrawal and retention trends, including year-on-year improvement based on live in-year data; and • Planned curriculum developments and enhancements to support delivery in Academic Year 2026–27
RISK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of under-delivery of SFC credits resulting in a funding shortfall. • Risk that in-year changes to learner data or system implementation could impact forecasting accuracy. • Risk of misalignment between curriculum provision and regional or sector skills demand if curriculum planning is ineffective
RELEVANT STRATEGIC AIM:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Experience • Culture and People Development • Growth and Innovation • Sustainability
SUMMARY OF REPORT:	<p>This report provides assurance that curriculum delivery for Academic Year (AY) 2025–26 remains on track, with credits generated and forecast performance aligned to the College’s agreed SFC allocation. Live in-year data indicates a positive improvement in learner retention and reduced withdrawals when compared with the previous academic year, supporting SLC commitments around learner success and efficient use of public funding. The report outlines curriculum growth and diversification plans for 2026–27, together with highlights demonstrating impact on student experience, innovation, sustainability and staff recognition.</p>

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This paper presents a curriculum update aligned with Board of Management approved strategic priorities and key performance indicators for annual year 2025 – 2026. The progress outlined in the following sections reflects the College’s commitments to quality enhancement, regional skills development, financial resilience and improved learner outcomes. The intention is to demonstrate clear and evidenced alignment between ongoing curriculum activity and the strategic objectives set by the board for the forthcoming period, ensuring that operational delivery remains firmly anchored to agreed institutional priorities.

2 TOTAL CREDITS GENERATED 25-26

2.1 The current total credit position for AY 2025-2026 is as follows:

2.2 *Table 1: Credits Generated to Date and Projected, January 2026*

Curriculum Area	Credits Generated to Date	Projected May – Jul 2026	Total Potential Credits
Built Environment and Low Carbon Industries	6,378	0	6,378
Business, Hospitality, Tourism & Legal Services	5,842	0	5,842
Carpentry and Joinery	5,851	0	5,851
Construction Crafts	4,334	0	4,334
Early Education and Childcare	4,927	108	5,035
Hairdressing, Beauty and Creative Industries	4,973	180	5,153
Health, Social Care and Science	6,131	0	6,131
Inclusive Learning	4,679	100	4,779
Learning and Teaching Innovation	12	0	12
ELS Credits	0	250	250
Total	43,127	638	43,765

2.3 Overall credit delivery for the 2025–26 academic year remains strong and is aligned with the College’s agreed SFC credit allocation. As at the current reporting point, the College has generated 43,127 credits, with a further 638 credits forecast for delivery between May and July 2026. This results in total potential delivery of 43,765 credits, representing a small and managed level of over-delivery against the College’s credit target of 43,601.

2.4 The pattern of delivery demonstrates a planned and balanced approach to credit utilisation across the curriculum, supporting the College’s commitments around access, learner success and efficient use of public funding. Strong credit performance continues to be evident within Health, Social Care and Science, Built Environment and Low Carbon Industries, Carpentry and Joinery, and Business, Hospitality, Tourism and Legal Services, all of which provide a stable core contribution to overall credit delivery and reflect sustained learner demand.

2.5 Forecast additional delivery in the latter part of the academic year is concentrated within Early Education and Childcare, Hairdressing, Beauty and Creative Industries,

Inclusive Learning, and ELS provision. This reflects the planned delivery profile of programmes supporting widening access, learner progression and regional skills priorities, rather than reactive or late-stage growth. Curriculum areas showing no further projected credits have largely completed planned delivery for the year.

2.6 The projected level of over-delivery has been intentionally modelled to provide resilience against potential late-year withdrawals or non-completion and supports confidence that the College will achieve its agreed credit allocation within tolerance. This approach is consistent with SFC expectations around robust credit management and avoidance of under-delivery, while maintaining appropriate control over over-commitment risk.

2.7 Taken together, current delivery performance and projections provide strong assurance that the College will deliver its credit target in full, maximise use of allocated SFC funding, and continue to demonstrate effective planning, monitoring and stewardship of public resources. This position supports the College's ongoing financial sustainability and provides a stable platform for curriculum and resource planning into the next academic cycle.

3 WITHDRAWAL AND RETENTION 2025 – 2026

3.1 As previously reported and based on live retention and withdrawal data at the time of reporting, the early and further withdrawal rate for 2025–26 across all courses and modes of delivery shows a measurable improvement when compared with the 2024–25 academic year. While this trend is positive, the position remains provisional, and final outcomes will be confirmed at the end of the academic year following completion of all programmes and SFC data returns.

3.2 Table 2: Withdrawals and Retention, 2024 - 25 v 2025 - 26

AY 2025 -2026

Mode of Delivery	Enrolments	Early Withdrawals		Further Withdrawals		Total Retention
		No.	%	No.	%	
Further Education Full Time (FEFT)	1164	48	4%	113	10%	86%
Further Education Part Time (FEPT)	1636	39	2%	36	2%	95%
Higher Education Full Time (HEFT)	652	9	1%	102	16%	83%
Higher Education Part Time (HEPT)	168	15	9%	6	4%	88%
	3616	108	3%	261	31%	90%

AY 2024 - 2025

Mode of Delivery	Enrolments	Early Withdrawals		Further Withdrawals		Total Retention
		No.	%	No.	%	
Further Education Full Time (FEFT)	1168	52	4%	171	15%	81%
Further Education Part Time (FEPT)	1819	64	4%	112	6%	90%
Higher Education Full Time (HEFT)	658	24	4%	98	15%	81%
Higher Education Part Time (HEPT)	172	13	8%	5	3%	90%
	3817	153	4%	386	39%	86%

3.3 As can be seen from above, based on live in-year data, retention performance in Academic Year 2025–26 shows a positive year-on-year improvement when compared with 2024–25, with reductions in both early and further withdrawals across all modes of delivery. Early withdrawal rates have decreased, indicating improved initial engagement and learner transition, while reductions in further withdrawals have contributed to a headline increase in overall retention from 86% to 90% at this stage of the reporting cycle. This improving trend supports the College’s commitments in relation to learner success and efficient use of credits and provides assurance that the curriculum restructure has not negatively impacted on learner success.

3.4 This data indicates that whilst FE provision is on track to meet retention targets HE retention remains marginally below target. This is attributable to specific programme-level issues, rather than a systemic weakness in HE delivery. Deep dives into specific programmes will be undertaken in 26 – 27, in partnership with the Quality Learning and Teaching Innovation team, with the Institution Led Quality Review Plan detailing specific programmes brought to committee in August 26. These programmes will be addressed through the 2026–27 Quality Review and Enhancement process, with targeted actions in place to ensure that the factors contributing to withdrawal are resolved and do not reoccur in future academic years.

3.5 Appendix A summarises curriculum-level enrolment, withdrawal and retention performance based on live in-year data for 2025–26. Overall retention to date is strong across most provision, particularly within FE part-time delivery, with low early withdrawal rates indicating positive learner engagement. Variability in retention is evident in a small number of curriculum areas and is being monitored through established learner support and performance management processes. All figures remain provisional and subject to confirmation at year-end through formal SFC returns.

3.6 Table 3: 25-26 Withdrawals and Retention, Points to Note

Mode of Provision	Key Points of Note
Further Education Full Time (FEFT)	Overall retention to date remains strong at 87%, with low early withdrawal (4%) indicating effective learner induction and early engagement. Further withdrawals account for the majority of attrition and are concentrated in a small number of curriculum areas, which signals the need for targeted learner support and intervention arrangements. This will form part of both course level review and operational and enhancement plan review.
Higher Education Full Time (HEFT)	Early withdrawal rates are low at 1%, demonstrating improved transition into HE provision. Further withdrawals remain more pronounced in some subject areas, resulting in overall retention of 87% to date, which remains consistent with sector patterns and is subject to continued monitoring.
Further Education Part Time (FEPT)	Retention performance is very strong at 95%, supported by minimal early (2%) and further (2%) withdrawals. This mode continues to provide a stable contribution to learner success and efficient credit utilisation, reflecting the commitment and progression-focused nature of the learner cohort and first and second year modern apprentices falling into this category.
Higher Education Part Time (HEPT)	Overall retention to date stands at 88%, with variability across curriculum areas reflecting specific circumstances previously reported. Early withdrawals are higher than other modes, particularly in a small number of programmes – these will be actively reviewed through engagement and enhancement processes.

4 CURRICULUM GROWTH AND DIVERSIFICATION

4.1 Further to previous reports, a second round of curriculum planning meetings has taken place in April 2026 with additional changes planned for 2026-27 implementation:

4.3 Table 5: Additional Curriculum Changes for 2026-27 Identified in Round 2 Curriculum Planning Discussion

Curriculum Area	New Programmes/ Growth & Diversification	Demand
Built Environment and Low Carbon Industries	NC Level 5 Electrical Engineering	<p>Across Lanarkshire electrical technicians and maintenance electricians are in high demand.</p> <p>Employer difficulties in recruiting entry level and semi-skilled electrical staff.</p> <p>Entry level to Modern Apprenticeships</p> <p>By 2027 an increased number of electrical engineers will be required in Scotland, 58% more than the current workforce.</p>
Construction Crafts	Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS)	Improves employability for students.

		Aligns curriculum provision with employer-led standards.
Health, Social Care and Science	ESOL for Nursing	Supports the NHS Scotland Workforce Strategy. Contextualised ESOL focusses on clinical language and documentation to enhance employability.

5 CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

5.1 Student Experience

HNC and HND Legal students took a step towards their future careers in law by attending the Routes to Qualification Conference hosted by the Law Society of Scotland. The event provided valuable insight into the diverse pathways within the legal profession and enabled students to engage directly with experienced legal practitioners. Building on this experience, learners were further inspired by a presentation from a former student, now Director of the GCU Law Clinic, who shared first-hand career progression. Students applied their learning through participating in a dynamic mock courtroom activity, demonstrating confidence, critical thinking and persuasive argument skills.

5.2 People and Culture

Depute Head of Curriculum, James Jamieson was recognised as a Knowledge Exchange Champion at Interface's Knowledge Exchange Awards. James received this award in recognition of his commitment to strengthening collaboration between education and industry. Through his leadership and drive, he has championed innovative partnerships that support learning and enhance learner employability.

5.3 Growth and Innovation

Following internal feedback, sector trends and student profiles, from August 2026 the College will move from a three-block structure to a two-semester model. This change is designed to enhance the learner experience by enabling shorter, more focused learning sessions, supporting deeper engagement and progression, and reducing assessment pressures through a more balanced assessment schedule. his approach will deliver shorter focus learning sessions, and reduce assessment

5.4 Sustainability

Hospitality students rose to the sustainability challenge by transforming a range of left over ingredients into an impressive selection of high-quality meals. This initiative aligns not only with the strategic aim but supports the United Nations Sustainability Goal: Responsible Consumption and Production, as learners actively reduced food waste, maximised resources, and demonstrated sustainable kitchen practices, consistent with modern hospitality standards.

6 EQUALITIES

6.1 There are no implications for people with protected characteristics or from areas of multiple deprivation which arise from consideration of the report. The College will continue to work to ensure equal opportunities for all in our students' experiences at the college.

7 RISK AND ASSURANCE

- 7.1 That there is a risk of under-delivery leading to shortfall in Scottish Funding Council credit requirements
- 7.2 That the implementation of a new learner management system impacts on accurate forecasting leading to errors that could compromise compliance.
- 7.3 That ineffective curriculum planning may lead to risk of misalignment between curriculum and industry needs, affecting graduate employability.
- 7.4 Credit delivery is actively monitored through monthly performance dashboards and in-year forecasting, with corrective action taken where required.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Members are recommended to note:
 - 8.1.1 the current credit performance;
 - 8.1.2 withdrawal and retention figures; and
 - 8.1.3 the developments in the approach to 2026/27 curriculum launch

Appendix A: Enrolment, Withdrawals and Retention, by Curriculum Area, to Date

Table 1: FE Full Time 2025 – 2026 (to date)

Curriculum	Enrolments	Early withdrawals	%	Further Withdrawals	%	Overall Retention	%
Inclusive Learning	156	2	1%	12	8%	142	91%
Construction Crafts	102	6	6%	4	4%	92	90%
Health, Social Care and Science	127	5	4%	7	6%	115	91%
Built Environment and Low Carbon Industries	174	8	5%	14	8%	152	87%
Hairdressing, Beauty and Creative Industries	179	3	2%	28	16%	148	83%
Carpentry and Joinery	157	10	6%	12	8%	135	86%
Early Education and Childcare	114	6	5%	13	11%	95	83%
Business, Hospitality, Tourism & Legal Services	155	8	5%	23	15%	124	80%
FE FT Total	1164	48	4%	113	10%	1003	86%

Table 2: HE Full Time 2025 –2026 (to date)

Curriculum	Enrolments	Early withdrawals	%	Further Withdrawals	%	Overall Retention	%
Health, Social Care and Science	129	1	1%	22	17%	106	82%
Early Education and Childcare	154	3	2%	19	12%	132	86%
Hairdressing, Beauty and Creative Industries	28	0	0%	8	29%	20	71%

Inclusive Learning	57	0	0%	9	16%	48	84%
Carpentry and Joinery	53	0	0%	3	6%	50	94%
Built Environment and Low Carbon Industries	9	0	0%	1	11%	8	89%
Business, Hospitality, Tourism & Legal Services	222	5	2%	40	18%	177	80%
Construction Crafts	0	0	-	0	-	0	-
HE FT Total	652	9	1%	102	16%	541	83%

Table 3: FE Part Time 2025 –2026 (to date)

Curriculum	Enrolments	Early withdrawals	%	Further Withdrawals	%	Overall Retention	%
Carpentry and Joinery	277	1	0%	1	0%	275	99%
Built Environment and Low Carbon Industries	309	1	0%	4	1%	304	98%
Business, Hospitality, Tourism & Legal Services	89	1	1%	2	2%	86	97%
Health, Social Care and Science	117	2	2%	0	0%	115	98%
Construction Crafts	329	11	3%	3	1%	315	96%
Inclusive Learning	205	9	4%	8	4%	188	92%
Hairdressing, Beauty and Creative Industries	266	8	3%	12	5%	246	92%
Early Education and Childcare	44	6	14%	6	14%	32	73%
FE PT Total	1636	39	2%	36	2%	1561	95%

Table 4: HE Part Time 2025 –2026 (to date)

Curriculum	Enrolments	Early withdrawals	%	Further Withdrawals	%	Overall Retention	%
Built Environment and Low Carbon Industries	14	0	0%	0	0%	14	100%
Business, Hospitality, Tourism & Legal Services	10	0	0%	0	0%	10	100%
Health, Social Care and Science	38	0	0%	0	0%	38	100%
Carpentry and Joinery	83	6	7%	4	5%	73	88%
Inclusive Learning	10	1	10%	2	20%	7	70%
Early Education and Childcare	13	8	62%	0	0%	5	38%
Construction Crafts	0	0	-	0	-	0	-
Hairdressing, Beauty and Creative Industries	0	0	-	0	-	0	-
HE PT Total	168	15	9%	6	4%	147	88%

LEARNING, TEACHING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

DATE:	14 May 2026
TITLE OF REPORT:	Quality and Learning & Teaching Innovation Update
REFERENCE	Agenda Item 07
AUTHOR AND CONTACT DETAILS	Lisa Doonan lisa.doonan@slc.ac.uk
PURPOSE:	To update members on the College quality assurance, quality enhancement and learning & teaching innovation activity, since February 2026.
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS/ DECISIONS:	<p>Members are recommended to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and enhancement activity remains on track, with the SLC Way Cycle 2025–26 adapted to prioritise statutory, regulatory and operational requirements • Student voice and engagement have significantly strengthened, evidenced by improved Student Experience Survey response rates and effective student-led enhancement activity. • Self-evaluation and quality assurance processes continue to provide assurance, with actions embedded within the SEAP, proportionate Institution-Led Quality Review activity, and positive external verification outcomes to date. • Learning and Teaching Innovation is progressing, with professional learning delivery, curriculum enhancement activity underway, and planning in place for further development in 2026–27.
RISK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The College does not meet the quality enhancement requirements of regulatory and scrutiny bodies; • The College does not meet the quality assurance requirements of awarding bodies; • Institution-Led Quality Review/self-evaluation, and the associated action planning activities, do not demonstrate satisfactory progress against College, SFC/Education Scotland and QAA requirements; and • That the College cannot provide a robust learner experience supporting them onto their positive destinations.
RELEVANT STRATEGIC AIM:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Experience • Culture and People Development • Growth and Innovation • Sustainability
SUMMARY OF REPORT:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SLC Way Cycle for 2025-26 has been adapted. • Student voice remains central to the College’s self-evaluation process, and engagement has improved.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluation processes have been, and will continue to be, further developed in response to SFC & QAA requirements; with 2025-26 activity well-underway.• Approval and External Verification/External Quality Assurance planning and activities are on-going.• Quality and Learning & Teaching Innovation continue to engage with internal and external partners to promote enhancement, develop practice and knowledge share.• A programme of continuous improvement underpins The SLC Way, with further enhancement planned throughout 2025-26, and beyond.
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This paper seeks to provide members with an update on the quality assurance, quality enhancement and learning and teaching innovation activity, since February 2026; noting how key activities support the College's strategic aims, and drive enhancement.

2. THE SLC WAY CYCLE 2025-26

2.1 The SLC Way Cycle 2025-26 continues to form a high-level plan to drive enhancement in: student experience, culture and people development, growth and innovation and sustainability.

2.2 The SLC Way Cycle 2025-26, as presented in November 2025, has been further adapted to support the reprioritisation of key mandatory and operational activities. The Quality and Learning & Teaching Innovation Team recruitment process is on-going; therefore, the planned human resource allocation has not yet been fully deployed.

2.3 The SLC Way Cycle 2025-26 will continue to be reviewed in response to the evolving quality landscape. Changes will be reported accordingly throughout the remainder of 2025-26, and into 2026-27.

3 STUDENT VOICE AND EVALUATION - ENHANCING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

3.1 The SLC Way Cycle 2025-26 and the associated evaluation and enhancement activity continues to build on the wealth of feedback from students via a series of mechanisms. The Student Experience Survey: How is it going? 2025-26 was open for 6 weeks from 9th March 2026, as per the Scottish Funding Council's (SFC's) [College Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey Guidance 2025-26](#).

3.2 The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) state that colleges should aim to achieve a target response rate of at least 50% for full-time provision. The college-wide action to achieve a minimum of 70% in the final returns to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES) was put in place earlier in 2025-26, with an internal target of 80% in place to drive enhancement in advance of the final submission. The survey target is 2700 respondents, which is 98 less than the 2024-25 target. Course, curriculum, and college-wide reports will be produced via *QDP Services Ltd.* software, which will inform the final self-evaluation process for 2025-26. Please note that the figures are subject to internal and external cleansing prior to publication.

3.3 The College's response rates had been consistently low. However, great progress has been made in 2025-26. Reporting as on the 28 April 2026, the uncleansed Further Education Full-Time (FEFT) response rate was 75.5%, with Higher Education Full-Time (HEFT) returns of 82.9%, which is an increase of 24.1% and 38.9%, respectively. The internal data cleansing and report building is due to commence week beginning 5 May 2026, further information will be reported in due course.

3.4 The Quality and Learning & Teaching Innovation (QLTI) team continues to provide direct support, advice and guidance to Class Representatives via the *Class Reps. 2025-26* Teams page.

- 3.5 The Compliance and Assurance Officer and the Student President planned and hosted a Student Question Time 2026 event on 21st April 2026, in partnership. This student-led event enabled students from across the college to come together to ask questions directly to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), with members of the Board of Management in attendance. Topics ranged from: catering and student spaces, to course demand and student support; reflecting the issues that matter most to our students.
- 3.6 Actions from the event will inform departmental and college-wide action plans. Over 150 questions were submitted, clearly demonstrating student engagement in the process, with 43 students attending in person. Feedback was submitted by 21/43, which was generally positive with a couple ideas for future enhancement, such as more promotion in advance, students having more time to ask questions, as well as making it freer flowing and aligning the start time to timetabled breaks.

3.7 Table 1: Student Question Time Event Quantitative Feedback 2025-26.

	Relevant to Your Needs	Relevant to College Needs	Did you gain knowledge?	Was it well Organised?
Mean Score (out of 5 5 = most positive)	4.0	4.5	4	4.5

4. SELF-EVALUATION UPDATE 2025-26

- 4.1. The qualitative data from the *Round 1 Course Team Self-evaluation* process has been analysed to identify themes; mapped to the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) high level principles, and to South Lanarkshire College's Strategic Aims 2030, the findings of which were reported to the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience (LTSE) Committee in February 2026. Now approved, the associated college-wide actions have been added to the South Lanarkshire College (SLC) Self-evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP), for Senior Leadership Team (SLT) periodic monitoring.
- 4.2. The Departmental and Curriculum level Operational and Enhancement Plan Progress Review meetings are scheduled for May-June 2026. A high-level report will be shared with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Learning, Teaching and Student Experience (LTSE) Committee in August 2026, the output of which will inform the 2025 - 26 South Lanarkshire College (SLC) Self-evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP).
- 4.3. In May-June 2026, the refreshed Operational and Enhancement Plan process and proforma will be expanded to include individual curriculum areas, which will be cascaded into 2026-27 for periodic progress review.

5. INSTITUTION-LED QUALITY REVIEW

- 5.1. The Institution-Led Quality Review (ILQR) Group, membership remains as planned for 2025-26. Future developments will be reported via the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), and the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience (LTSE) Committee.

- 5.2. The Institution-led Quality Review (ILQR) Group's remit and scope remains the same; delivering a programme of pre-planned and responsive detailed quality reviews. The Institution-led Quality Review (ILQR) Group will retain the authority to set actions and make recommendations; including the requirement to formally include actions within departmental/curriculum area Operational and Enhancement Plans, as appropriate.
- 5.3. On the 17 March 2026, the Quality and Learning & Teaching Innovation team led an SLT workshop to refresh the College's response to Tertiary Quality and Enhancement Review (TQER), the Tertiary Quality and Enhancement Framework (TQEF) and Institution-led Quality Review (ILQR), including a co-creation task which will be used to develop the scope and priorities for the Institution-led Quality Review (ILQR) longitudinal plan. Terms of reference and the proposed plan will be developed and shared with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) for endorsement. The workshop also launched the revised approach to student voice in Institution-led Quality Review (ILQR), and how senior leaders can better drive student-led enhancement activities for 2026-27.
- 5.4. The Institution-led Quality Review (ILQR) Group's 2025-26 is limited to 2 planned mandatory audits.

5.5. *Table 2: Institution-led Quality Review (ILQR) Group's Planned Schedule 2025-26.*

Internal Audit	Audit reason code *see	Proposed Date/ Month	Confirmed Date	Audit Team *Lead writer in bold
EMA (1st audit)	1	November 2025	05/12/2025	AJ , LD
EMA (2nd audit)	1	April 2026	30/04/2026	AJ , LD

Audit Reason codes:
 1- Mandatory requirement
 2- College risk analysis
 3- Awarding body requirement

- 5.6. The 2nd Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Audit was conducted in April 2026, the report will be shared with the Audit Committee via the Vice Principal: Finance, Resources and Sustainability in May 2026.
- 5.7. All 4 of the College's Strategic Aims 2030 will be further supported as the ILQR Group develops throughout 2026-27, and beyond.

6. LEARNING AND TEACHING INNOVATION UPDATE

- 6.1. The Learning and Teaching Innovation Manager delivered a briefing report to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) outlining the refreshed approach to build capacity and provide a robust operational implementation plan for 2026-27. Feedback was positive, with endorsement to move forward with the plan.
- 6.2. The Teaching in Colleges Today (TiCT) professional qualification delivery is underway, with all 8 student-practitioners nearing completion.
- 6.3. The Learning and Teaching Innovation Manager continues to chair the cross-college Core-Skills Group, the initial assessment project is live across 4 curriculum areas,

with a phased all-college adoption plan. To ensure a robust roll-out the Learning & Teaching Innovation Manager has supported the facilitation of initial assessment sessions to promote staff engagement and confidence, as well as assuming responsibility for all of the administrative components of the project. In 2026-27, these responsibilities will be devolved to curriculum teams and facilitated by enhanced digital integration between the initial assessment software and college information systems.

6.4. The Learning and Teaching Innovation Manager has successfully delivered professional boundaries update training to 90% of lecturing staff. The remaining staff are targeted for a “sweep up session” in May/June 2026.

7. QUALIFICATION APPROVAL UPDATE

7.1. There have been 10 qualification approval applications submitted to date in 2025-26. Of these, 8 have concluded including: 1 desktop, 2 non-devolved and 5 devolved Qualifications Scotland approvals. There are 2 remaining applications in progress.

7.2. The applications will further enhance the curriculum by increasing the portfolio of options in travel and tourism, and retail.

8. EXTERNAL VERIFICATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE ACTIVITY

8.1. As on 30 April there are a total of 25 planned activities.

8.2. Qualifications Scotland 2025-26 allocations have been issued for both regulated and self-regulated qualifications, with 22 activities in total.

8.3. The college has not been selected for Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) activity.

8.4. *Table 3: Summary of 2025-26 Activity, as on 30th April 2026.*

Awarding Body	No. of Planned Visits	No. of Complete Visits	Outcome Compliant or High Confidence	Outcome Noncompliant or Reasonable Confidence	Outcome Remediation Actions Completed	Success at 1st Visit Rate
City & Guilds (C&G)	2	0	0	0	0	0
College Development Network via Fife College	1	0	0	0	0	0
Qualifications Scotland	22	2	2	0	0	2

Overall	25	2	2	0	0	2
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8.5. Qualifications Scotland did not request sampling activities of our National Qualifications portfolio in either of the biannual Central Verification selections.

8.6. Further notifications will be reported in due course.

9. KEY ENGAGEMENTS WITH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

9.1. The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Institutional Liaison Meeting (ILM) took place on 22 April 2026. The purpose of the meeting was to consider developments in, and the impact of, the College's enhancement approach, and progress since the last external review. Existing evidence, including the SEAP, was uploaded for review. The College was assured that no additional or bespoke documentation was required to support this annual activity. Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) are aware that the College has been through significant change throughout 2024-25 and 2025-26 and acknowledge plans to further develop the approach to the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework; including the mandatory requirements associated with Institution-led Quality Review. The College is currently awaiting feedback.

9.2. The Head of Quality and Learning & Teaching Innovation is a representative on the SFC's Statistical Advisory Group for Further Education (SAGE). The Statistical Advisory Group for Further Education (SAGE) serves as a critical platform for statistical discussion and collaboration amongst institutions. In Spring/Summer 2026, the College is contributing to a sector-wide review of the Scottish Funding Council's (SFC) Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey, which is being facilitated by Rocket Science UK Ltd. Updates will be reported to the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience (LTSE) Committee as the project progresses.

9.3. The Head of Quality and Learning & Teaching Innovation has been deployed as a Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER) Reviewer; gaining valuable insights and experience in the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) and Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER) quality assurance.

9.4. Throughout 2025-26 and 2026-27 the Learning and Teaching Innovation Manager will continue to collaborate with EIS-FELA representatives with the aim of implementing a developmental learning and teaching mechanism to further develop the culture of excellence in learning, teaching and assessment through peer-to-peer professional discussion, reflection and collaboration. Engagement of the Digital Learning & Teaching Facilitator will enable e-technology solutions to be considered in the design and development of the process.

9.5. The Head of Quality and Learning & Teaching Innovation and the Learning and Teaching Innovation Manager represented the College during a recent educational visit to Station F in Paris, France; together with the Head of Curriculum. The visit to Station F offered a valuable opportunity to observe how sustained engagement with external partners can enhance innovation and organisational development. The environment demonstrated the benefits of close collaboration between education,

industry, entrepreneurs, and investors, creating a vibrant ecosystem where ideas are visible, supported, and accelerated. The opportunity to experience this alongside both internal colleagues and external partners was invaluable.

- 9.6. The Quality and Learning & Teaching Innovation team have quickly built an effective working relationship with the College's new Student Engagement Manager; exchanging ideas for enhancement in advance of the 2026-27 session, with the aim of co-creating a clear student voice and engagement landscape in partnership with the Student Association; and to engage the student body in the national College Development Network/Quality Assurance Agency-led (CDN/QAA) Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP) projects.

10. SYSTEMS AND PROCESS UPDATES

- 10.1 The Learning and Teaching Innovation Manager continues to develop the online, self-directed learning content for staff, with significant progress made since February 2026. The Digital Learning & Teaching Facilitator will further development this project, once in post.

11. TRANSITION TO QUALIFICATIONS SCOTLAND & SYSTEMS VERIFICATION

- 11.1 Given the organisational restructure, the changes in the external scrutiny body and awarding body landscapes, a significant amount of work is required to ensure all associated documentation is compliant. The Institution-led Quality Review (ILQR) Group will be required to begin a programme of document reviews, and redrafts of the associated awarding body materials, prior to the start of 2026-27. An internal Systems Verification will be planned in early 2026-27 as an internal quality control, in advance of the Qualifications Scotland Systems Verification Self-Assessment due later in 2026-27. Qualifications Scotland will review the Systems Verification Self-Assessment submission, meet with internal colleagues and may issue actions and recommendations in response.
- 11.2 A plan for this activity will be shared with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience (LTSE) Committee in due course.

12 RISK

- 12.1 The College does not meet the quality enhancement requirements of regulatory and scrutiny bodies;
- 12.2 The College does not meet the quality assurance requirements of awarding bodies;
- 12.3 Institution-Led Quality Review/self-evaluation, and the associated action planning activities, do not demonstrate satisfactory progress against college, Scottish Funding Council (SFC)/Education Scotland and Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) requirements; and
- 12.4 That the College cannot provide a robust learner experience supporting them onto their positive destinations.

13 EQUALITIES

- 13.1. There are no new matters for people with protected characteristics or from areas of multiple deprivation which arise from consideration of the report.

14 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1. Members are recommended to note:
 - 14.1.1. Quality and enhancement activity remains on track, with the SLC Way Cycle 2025–26 adapted to prioritise statutory, regulatory and operational requirements;
 - 14.1.2. Student voice and engagement have significantly strengthened, evidenced by improved Student Experience Survey response rates and effective student-led enhancement activity;
 - 14.1.3. Self-evaluation and quality assurance processes continue to provide assurance, with actions embedded within the SEAP, proportionate Institution-Led Quality Review activity, and positive external verification outcomes to date.
 - 14.1.4. Learning and Teaching Innovation is progressing, with professional learning delivery, curriculum enhancement activity underway, and planning in place for further development in 2026–27.

LEARNING, TEACHING AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

DATE	14 May 2026
TITLE OF REPORT	Student Engagement and Partnership Report
REFERENCE	Agenda item 08
AUTHOR AND CONTACT DETAILS	Rose Harkness Head of Student Services rose.harkness@slc.ac.uk
PURPOSE:	To provide members with an update on student engagement and partnership activities, specifically the provision of key services and support central to the retention of vulnerable individuals and groups.
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS/ DECISIONS:	Members are recommended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the progress report on the transition of ELS to Student Support; • Note the ongoing recruitment and activity to support the transition of ELS to Student Support; • Note the update on number of ELS referrals and the case management numbers • Note the counselling and wellbeing services update; • Acknowledge the ongoing activity and support for care experienced and other priority groups; • Endorse the College's overview following the self-assessment, assessing their delivery against the Prevent duty benchmarks; and • Note the successful partnership activity through the delivery of the Supporting Successful Transitions webinar to Youth Employability ASPIRE Support Workers.
RISK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption to Learner Experience: Risk that the transition may impact the learner experience if not carefully managed. • Operational Transition Challenges: Potential for short-term disruption during the handover of systems, responsibilities, and workflows. • Staff Capacity and Role Clarity: Risk of role confusion or workload imbalance if responsibilities are not clearly defined post-transfer.
RELEVANT STRATEGIC AIM:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Student Experience • Culture and People Development • Growth and Innovation • Sustainability
SUMMARY OF REPORT:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress report on the continued transition of Educational Learning Support to Support Services

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An update on number of ELS referrals and current case management progress • Counselling and health and wellbeing services update • Support for Care Experienced and other Priority Groups • Launch of the Care Experienced student survey • Update on partnership engagement • Outline of the CONTEST Prevent Assurance Benchmarking submission.
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This paper provides an update on student engagement and partnership activities, specifically the provision of key services and support central to the retention of vulnerable individuals and groups.

2. EDUCATIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT (ELS) PROGRESS UPDATE

2.1 South Lanarkshire College is committed to developing a responsive, high quality Educational Learning Support (ELS) service that is fully integrated with other support services (guidance, counselling, and wellbeing) alongside academic support. This reflects a move towards creating a more cohesive learner-centred support model that embeds a holistic framework to meet the diverse and evolving needs of all learners.

2.2 This activity remains a key priority and will be ongoing throughout the Academic Year 2025 – 2026 and 2026 – 2027, to ensure a successful transition to Student Support.

2.2.1 Staff Recruitment update includes:

- Successful recruitment and appointment of a 0.8 FTE Student Experience and ELS Administrator post (backfill post). This member of staff is now in post as of 14 April. A training programme is in place with the new member of the staff receiving mentorship and learning from the previous ELS Administrator.
- Recruitment is ongoing for 0.3 FTE ELS Advisor. Once complete this will bring the new ELS Advisor team up to a level of 3.0 FTE staffing resource.
- Successful recruitment and appointment of a 1.0 FTE Support Services and Wellbeing Manager. This manager role will have operational oversight of college support services, alongside responsibility for case management and supporting the team as we move forward with our vision of an integrated model. The appointee is expected to take up this new post as of 5 May 2026.

2.3 As of 17 April 2026, there were 443 students registered on the ELS Database. Of these 443, there are 27 priority cases identified. 260 students have successfully been assigned to an Advisor with 183 of these not allocated yet to an Advisor. To note that although 183 have not yet been allocated to an Advisor all students on the ELS register have been contacted and are sitting at various stages of the process such as awaiting evidence, referral to Study Skills or no support required.

2.4 As previously reported, demand for this service continues to increase. Considering this sustained growth, it is essential that a comprehensive review of current ELS systems and processes is undertaken. This review will support continuous service improvement for learners and enable more effective management of student expectations. As part of this work, consideration may be given to reviewing the existing case management approach,

alongside the potential to make ELS resources universally available to all learners, including access to assistive technologies across the College.

2.5 This programme of work includes collaboration with the Digital Innovation Team to deliver enhancements to the ELS database, including improved integration with Power BI reporting. These improvements will strengthen the accuracy, consistency, and reliability of data, and enhance the College's capability to systematically identify, track, and monitor disability related and learning support requirements. Improved data capture will support timely assessment and planning of appropriate interventions, enable more effective allocation of resources, and enhance oversight of demand and emerging trends across learner cohorts. In addition, the Digital Innovation Team will provide targeted training for the ELS team to support more effective use of Microsoft Teams and Adobe applications.

2.6 Professional discussions remain a priority as demand increases and include representation from Support Services and Curriculum and Quality Leads to explore and understand the underlying factors impacting demand. This include reviewing the admissions process (are students being recruited to the correct level of course), understanding where learners are sitting in relation to core skills i.e. literacies, numeracy and problem solving (is the College utilising core skill testing in the correct manner) and upskilling learning and teaching staff (to have increased awareness of ELS and develop classroom strategies to better respond to learning needs). There is a live phased roll-out of core skill testing for new applicants for identified programmes. This is being delivered by Quality Leads in partnership with Curriculum. It is anticipated that this will be further rolled out to all FE students by September 2026 as part of the wider guidance function.

2.7 The ELS team continue to provide outstanding support which is enabling learners to fully engage with learning and is building capacity for personal growth to allow learners to become more independent.

2.8 Some examples of this are as follows:

- The ELS team provided targeted support to a student experiencing significant personal and family challenges, which had adversely affected engagement with school and resulted in frequent absence. At the point of transition to college, there were concerns regarding the student's ability to engage and progress successfully. Through sustained, consistent support from the ELS team including in class assistance and coordinated access to wider support services the student settled positively into the College community. The student successfully completed a National Certificate (NC) programme last year and is currently progressing well through a Higher National Certificate programme. They are now fully engaged in their studies, demonstrate a positive attitude to attendance, and are thriving both academically and personally.
- The ELS team supported a learner who joined the College in academic year 2019-20 from an Additional Support Needs (ASN) secondary school, initially enrolling at SCQF Level 4. Following assessment by the ELS team, an individualised, holistic Personal Learning Plan (PLP) was developed and implemented, alongside targeted in class support. With encouragement and consistent, structured support, the learner flourished and demonstrated sustained academic progress.

The learner successfully progressed through NC Levels 5 and 6, achieved an HNC, and subsequently progressed to a BA programme delivered in partnership with the University of Strathclyde. They are now only weeks away from completing their SCQF Level 8 qualification. In addition, the learner has recently completed a

successful work experience placement and plans to progress to SCQF Level 9 at the University of Strathclyde next year to complete their degree.

This case study provides a strong example of how learners can thrive and realise their potential when appropriate support structures are in place. Progression from SCQF Level 4 to SCQF Level 9 represents a significant personal and academic achievement and demonstrates exceptional commitment, resilience, and determination on the part of the learner.

3 COUNSELLING SUPPORT AND RESILIENCE BUILDING

- 3.1 The College continue to deliver counselling support to those students who would benefit from exploring issues more effectively on a confidential 1:1 basis. Main aims of the service are to provide a 6–8-week model of therapy; offer drop-in sessions for emotional support; and ensure the service is flexible and accommodating by offering telephone, Teams, and face-to-face sessions and to offer twilight cover to support students with young families or those attending evening classes or block release.
- 3.2 As of the 17 April 2026, there were 106 students registered for counselling support in the current academic year. 27 students are currently receiving counselling with 8 on the waiting list. 66 students have completed their sessions. 5 students are on hold; this relates to a pause in their sessions for multiple reasons. The majority of those on the waiting list are those individuals we are waiting for submission or collection of documentation. It is anticipated that all students on the waiting list will be allocated counselling support before the end of the academic year.
- 3.3 The College has successfully recruited a student counselling placement in partnership with Grounded Learning Ltd, an organisation delivering COSCA validated and SQA-accredited Diplomas in Pluralistic Counselling and Psychotherapy. The placement student will receive structured mentoring and support from the College counselling team and will provide weekly counselling support to students within the dedicated counselling space. This appointment will contribute to continuity of counselling provision and support transition planning in advance of Academic Year 2026-27, with the placement running until June 2027.
- 3.4 The existing neuro-affirmative space within one of the counselling rooms has been expanded to include a sensory lamp, multi-fabric bean bags, and textured pebbles. These have been welcomed by students and are proving to be a positive addition to help increase engagement with the therapeutic process. Studies demonstrate the effectiveness of these tools to aid concentration and self-regulation.
- 3.5 The College continues to promote the counselling service through regular features in the Student News4U newsletter and via the Student Health and Wellbeing Team webpages. These activities support the College's commitment to a proactive and preventative approach to student wellbeing and mental health.
- 3.6 The Counselling and ELS Team continue to engage in a range of relevant Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities and has recently completed L.I.S.T.E.N Gender Based Violence (GBV) Risk Assessment training delivered by Emily Test, as part of the College's Charter commitments. This training will strengthen practitioners' capability to develop robust safety and support plans in collaboration with students affected by GBV, enhancing both safeguarding practice and the quality of support provided.

3.7 Plans are now underway to produce the Student Counselling Service Annual Report. This annual report offers significant benefits, ranging from demonstrating clinical effectiveness to improving operational efficiency.

3.7.1 Some of the key advantages are:

- Evidence-based Outcomes: The College use standardised clinical data CORE OM (34) evaluative tool to measure the reduction in distress and improved daily functioning following support.
- Improved Retention and Attainment: The College monitor attainment levels for those students accessing counselling support. By improving mental health this can help boost student performance and give the best opportunity to successfully achieve the course.
- Acting on Feedback and Adapting to Trends: The Annual Report allows for the identification of gaps (e.g., waiting times, student feedback) which leads to actionable plans for improvement. It also identifies emerging trends in student issues such as increasing anxiety due to barriers to learning and demographic data enabling the service to update its delivery model, for example adapting existing workshops to deliver more specialised support.

4 SUPPORT FOR CARE EXPERIENCED (CE) AND PRIORITY GROUPS

4.1 As part of the College's corporate parenting activity the College has named staff contacts (Guidance and Support Team) who provide individualised support to CE students. Alongside CE, the named staff contacts also provide support to other priority groups such as student carers, students who are estranged from family and friends and veterans who have left the armed forces. The Guidance and Support Team are also the point of contact for any learners in the College who need support with any non-curriculum support such as mental health and wellbeing, safeguarding and welfare, funding and crisis support etc.

4.2 The Guidance and Support Team continues to deliver induction presentations to new class groups, with a programme of sessions delivered in January and March. These sessions enable early engagement between students and key support staff, provide a clear overview of the support services available, and support effective signposting to wider health and wellbeing provision, including mindfulness and yoga classes.

4.3 All CE students who receive an offer of a place are proactively contacted by a named member of the Guidance and Support Team to provide tailored transition support. This includes access to campus orientation tours, guidance with funding applications and the enrolment process, and information on the range of support services available. In addition, the Guidance and Support Team continues to welcome priority learner groups, alongside support workers, to the campus for pre-application visits, including tours and meetings with curriculum teams. This activity includes external collaboration with partners such as Routes to Work South Lanarkshire and secondary schools, supporting CE learners as they transition into college pathways.

4.1 The Guidance and Support Team actively engages in external networking across the college and university sector and is a member of the Care Experienced, Estranged and Carers (CEEC) Forum. This forum provides a valuable platform for sharing best practice across the tertiary education sector and for identifying emerging themes and issues that may require a coordinated sector wide response, ensuring the College continues to meet its corporate parenting responsibilities. The next forum meeting is scheduled for 20 April 2026.

4.5 As part of its ongoing corporate parenting commitments, and to support continuous evaluation and service enhancement, the College has developed a short survey for Care

Experienced (CE) learners to gather feedback on their experience of college. This includes insights into transition arrangements, support from curriculum and support staff, and access to available support services. The College continues to take a proactive approach to identifying and removing barriers to improve outcomes for CE learners. The survey is scheduled to launch on 20 April and will ensure that CE learners have a strong and meaningful voice in shaping how the College supports them to achieve.

4.6 The College successfully delivered an on-campus event on 19 February to mark and celebrate Care Day. Care Day 2026 in Scotland focused on recognising and amplifying the rights and voices of care experienced children and young people, while highlighting progress towards the national 2030 commitment to #KeepThePromise.

4.7 As part of the event, the College hosted a We Promise to Care – Pathways for Wellbeing information stall, where Named Staff Contacts highlighted the wide range of support services available to learners. In addition, a celebratory lunch was held for care experienced and estranged students, providing a valuable opportunity for peer engagement and support. Students were also able to engage with Student Association officers, supporting relationship building and strengthening connections across the College community

4.8 As a proud Corporate Parent, the College was also pleased to attend the South Lanarkshire Council Care Day 2026 celebration, held at the Banqueting Hall, Council Headquarters, Hamilton. The event provided a valuable opportunity for Corporate Parents across South Lanarkshire to come together to celebrate Care Day alongside care experienced children and young people, and to strengthen partnership working across the region.

4.9 The College continues to work closely with South Lanarkshire Council's Housing Team, with the Guidance and Support Team providing advocacy for students experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity. This includes supporting learners who require alternative accommodation due to fleeing violence in or near their current home, securing discretionary funding to address escalating rent arrears, and working directly with allocated housing officers to establish affordable repayment plans. In addition, targeted support is provided to Ukrainian students who have been relocated from existing accommodation, including assistance with transitioning to new housing and the set-up of utilities in their new homes.

4.10 Other engagement and activity including attendance at several events include:

- Continue to support the POD (Pathways Opportunity Development) Cambuslang initiative delivering on-site support to clients (various dates)
- STAF (Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Participation Forum) – 29 January with the next forum meeting scheduled for 28 May
- Emily Test GBV L.I.S.T.E.N RA – 25 February, Learning and Insight on Economic Abuse training – 23 March
- SAAS (Student Awards Agency Scotland) HEI Forum – 12 March
- CEEC (Care Experienced, Estranged, Carers) Forum – 20 April
- QAA (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education) - Roundtable 2: Compassionate Communication – 14 May
- CDN (College Development Network) CE meeting – 10 June

5 CONTEST – Prevent Assurance Self-Assessment

5.1 The College is required to complete a self-assessment once every two years, assessing their delivery against the Prevent duty benchmarks. These benchmarks are derived directly from the Prevent Duty Guidance for Scotland and outline the baseline criteria in

line with the statutory requirements in relation to governance, local risk assessment, referral pathways, training, and the management of permissive environments.

5.2 When assessing current activity, it is clear the College demonstrates strong and well embedded compliance with the Prevent Duty, with assurance outcomes consistently meeting or exceeding national benchmarks across all five Prevent themes. Prevent is fully integrated into the College's safeguarding framework, supported by robust governance, clear accountability, comprehensive training, and effective multi-agency partnership working.

5.3 Overall Position:

- All five Prevent benchmarks, noted below, are rated as Exceeded or Met, with the majority assessed as exceeding expectations;
- Prevent is strategically led, operationally embedded, and regularly reviewed through established governance and safeguarding structures; and
- The College evidence a mature and proactive Prevent culture, aligned with national guidance and local risk intelligence.

5.4 Senior Oversight and Prevent Partnership: - Exceeded

- A designated Prevent Single Point of Contact (SPOC) (Head of Student Services) sits on the Senior Leadership Team and is also the College Safeguarding Lead;
- Prevent is routinely discussed at SLT level and formally reported to the Board of Management via committee structures, including an annual safeguarding report;
- Strong engagement with Police Scotland, local and regional Prevent multi-agency groups, and national FE Prevent networks;
- The College actively contributes to sector wide leadership, including chairing the CDN Safeguarding Network; and
- Regular participation in Prevent Multi-Agency Panels (PMAP) engagement routes where appropriate.
-

5.5 Local Risk Assessment Process: - Met

- The College receives and actively considers national, regional, and local threat and risk intelligence, including updates from Police Scotland and the Scottish Government;
- Risk intelligence is disseminated through SLT and the Safeguarding Network, informing safeguarding priorities and responses; and
- Participation in regional multi-agency groups ensure awareness of emerging risks relevant to local communities.

5.6 Referral Pathway: - Exceeded

- Clear, well understood Prevent referral pathways are embedded within safeguarding policies and procedures;
- Staff have access to step-by-step guidance, flowcharts, and the National Prevent Referral Form, supported via a central Teams resource hub;
- A Safeguarding Network with trained representatives across all Curriculum and Professional Services areas ensures consistency and coverage;
- Students can raise concerns via a 24/7 Report and Support platform, with options for anonymous reporting; and
- Prevent arrangements are publicly accessible through the College's safeguarding webpages.

5.7 Training Programme: - Exceeded

- Mandatory Prevent training for all staff and volunteers, embedded within induction, and refreshed biennially;
- Specialist and role specific training provided for Safeguarding Officers, SLT, reception/front facing staff, and the Student Association;
- Training includes Home Office eLearning, Police Scotland Counter Terrorism briefings, extremist ideology awareness (including emerging risks such as incel ideology), and antiterrorism security awareness;
- Prevent is embedded within learner induction, supported by a safeguarding video and guidance materials; and
- Training records are maintained, evidencing compliance and continuous professional development

5.8 Reducing Permissive Environments: - Exceeded

- Strong IT Acceptable Use and Online Safety policies, supported by filtering and monitoring systems and annual risk assessments;
- Clear procedures for managing external speakers, events, and campus use, including risk assessments and senior signoff;
- Venue hire is tightly controlled, with the campus not routinely used by external organisations;
- Safeguarding and Prevent considerations are embedded within estates, digital, curriculum, and student activity processes; and
- Policies are regularly reviewed in line with emerging risks and legislative changes.

5.9 In summary, the College provides strong assurance in-line with Prevent requirements, demonstrating strong leadership, good practice, and sector engagement. The College is well positioned to respond to evolving threats, including forthcoming legislative developments (e.g. Martyn's Law), and continues to play an active and influential role in national FE safeguarding and Prevent networks.

6 SUPPORTING SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS – YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY ASPIRE PROGRAMME

6.1 The Student Services Team delivered an online webinar on the 26 February to ASPIRE programme partners at the local authority, including employability, health and social care, housing, and wider youth support services. The session outlined how the College supports successful transitions from school into further education, particularly for young people who are not yet ready to progress directly into employment, training, or college.

6.2 The presentation highlighted the College's holistic, learner centred transition model, designed to remove barriers, build confidence, and ensure early engagement with support services. Key elements include named staff contact support for priority groups (including care experienced young people, carers, veterans, and estranged students), comprehensive induction and orientation activity, in-house counselling, learning support, and a strong focus on health, wellbeing and inclusion.

6.3 The webinar also emphasised the importance of partnership working, demonstrating how College services align with ASPIRE keyworker support to provide continuity for young people and priority groups such as care experienced. Clear progression pathways, careers guidance, employer links and volunteering opportunities were highlighted to support positive next steps.

6.4 Overall, the session reinforced the impact of getting transitions right, including improved learner confidence, retention and progression, reduced anxiety, earlier identification of

support needs, and stronger learner belonging contributing to improved long-term outcomes in education, employment, and wellbeing. To continue to build positive partnerships and enhance learner transitions, the College will offer additional on-campus workshops during the summer period.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 There are no implications for people with protected characteristics or from areas of multiple deprivation which arise from consideration of the report. The College will continue to work to ensure equal opportunities for all our student at the College.

8 RISK AND ASSURANCE

- Disruption to Learner Experience: Risk that the transition may impact the learner experience if not carefully managed;
- Operational Transition Challenges: Potential for short-term disruption during the handover of systems, responsibilities, and workflows; and
- Staff Capacity and Role Clarity: Risk of role confusion or workload imbalance if responsibilities are not clearly defined post-transfer.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Members are recommended to:

- Note the progress report on the transition of ELS to Student Support;
- Note the ongoing recruitment and activity to support the transition of ELS to Student Support;
- Note the update on number of ELS referrals and the case management numbers
- Note the counselling and wellbeing services update;
- Acknowledge the ongoing activity and support for care experienced and other priority groups;
- Endorse the College's overview following the self-assessment, assessing their delivery against the Prevent duty benchmarks; and
- Note the successful partnership activity through the delivery of the Supporting Successful Transitions webinar to Youth Employability ASPIRE Support Workers.

LEARNING, TEACHING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE (LTSE) COMMITTEE

DATE:	14 May 2026
TITLE OF REPORT:	Marketing and Communications update Paper No. 09
AUTHOR AND CONTACT DETAILS	<p>Marie King, Marketing and Communications Manager Marie.King@slc.ac.uk</p> <p>Grant Costello, Interim Marketing and Communications Manager Grant.Costello@slc.ac.uk</p> <p>Rose Harkness, Head of Student Services Rose.Harkness@slc.ac.uk</p>
PURPOSE:	To provide the Board with a summary of marketing, communications and student recruitment activities that have taken place over the past few months.
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS/ DECISIONS:	<p>Members are recommended to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ongoing success of the College's 26-27 Recruitment campaign. • The strong attendance of the College's March Open Evenings. • Delivery of student and college-focused events, and partnership working goals.
RISKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative press stories remain a risk. • The College is experiencing a challenging financial landscape that will require other sources of funding to be explored i.e. increase of Commercial course offering.
RELEVANT STRATEGIC AIM:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful Students. • The Highest Quality Education and Support. • Sustainable Behaviours.
SUMMARY OF REPORT:	<p>This paper includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College Event Information. • Update on August Recruitment Campaign. • Social Media Summary. • Celebrations and Awards. • Positive News Stories.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of Marketing, Communications and Recruitment activity from the end of January to the end of April 2026. This 3-month period covers the ongoing rollout and delivery of the August recruitment campaign, the delivery of college events, and the promotion of the college which have been the team's key priorities.
- 1.2 There have been a range of activities, events, campaigns, and projects taken place during this period, which are highlighted below.

2. REPORT HIGHLIGHTS (THE PAST 3 MONTHS)

- 2.1 Highlights over the past three months include:
- 2.1..1 Delivery of the College's August recruitment campaign and promotion of 2026-27 courses;
 - 2.1..2 101 attendees at the Open Evening on 10 March 2026;
 - 2.1..3 Success of the College at the Knowledge Exchange Awards and Herald Education Awards.
 - 2.1..4 Delivery of several successful inhouse student-focused College events, alongside the successful celebration of SLC's participation in the CLIC Project.
 - 2.1..5 Focus on supporting the Principalship with partnership working goals and political engagement;
 - 2.1..6 The ongoing roll out of the brand;

3 AUGUST RECRUITMENT

- 3.1 Recruitment continues to be a top priority for the Marketing team, with a focus on expanding avenues to attract students to the College. As part of this expansion effort, the Winter recruitment drive featured new sets of video-based creative content to target social media platforms more effectively.
- 3.2 The College's messaging has been simplified around the College's core themes of "**One College, for all you want to achieve**", "**Make a choice for your future**", and "**Take your career to another level**" to enable a strong visual presence for the college on marketing materials.
- 3.3 August recruitment has moved to a strong geo-location focus, using internal College PowerBI data to focus online advertising in core postcode locations to drive forward applications.
- 3.4 To date (30.4.26), the College has received a total of **3008** applications for August 2026-27 courses, bringing the current recruitment pool in line with the previous 3 years-cycle. The previous 3 years at this time-period showed: - **2025 (2952); 2024 (2905); 2023 (2655)**; with 2026 showing a year-on-year increase over the past three years. These applications are divided into full-time and part-time programs, with 2665 for full-time courses (an increase of 128 compared to the previous year) and 189 for part-time courses. Other applications consist of day release, block release and evening courses.

- 3.5 TikTok has continued to be a focus for direct advertising by the College since our successful use during the 2025 Winter campaign through video-based creative content.
- 3.6 Facebook, Instagram and TikTok paid advertisements are continuously updated to promote courses requiring support. Paid promotion was also attributed to the College's Open Evening in March.
- 3.7 Our paid campaign across social media delivered strong overall results, generating **513,942 impressions** across our META ads and **782,409 impressions** across our TikTok Ads.
- 3.8 The campaign's newly generated artwork styles on Meta continue to see an improvement by generating clickthrough's to the College's website.
- 3.9 Outreach work is on-going with high schools and Skills Development Scotland to develop new marketing materials and links to support school leaver recruitment.

4 EVENTS

4.1 The March Open Evening saw a total of 101 attendees and their families who came to explore opportunities at South Lanarkshire College, tour the campus, and engage in conversations with our staff and students.

4.1..1 Following discussions with student services and curriculum managers, there is an agreement for a review of the College's current Open Evening process. The aim of the review is to identify curriculum areas that can be further highlighted during open evenings.

4.1..2 *Table 1: Overview of number for previous Open Evenings*

DATE	DESCRIPTION	ATTENDEES	NOTE
13 th January 2026	Open Evening for Final Winter Recruitment	214	An extremely well attended open evening, although many attendees were also interested in our August course launch which had not yet occurred
25 th November 2025	Open Evening for Winter Recruitment	167	Strong open evening turnout with a focus on students seeking January starts.
21 st August 2025	Open Evening for August starts	146	-
27 th March 2025	Open Evening for August starts	44	-
21 st January 2025	Open Evening for Winter starts	119	-

- 4.2 Since the last Committee Report there have been a variety of engaging events and activities undertaken by the Marketing team, including the production of internal documents, marketing materials for schools' outreach and supported learning, and to support the on-going promotion of the College's 2030 Strategy document.
- 4.3 The Marketing and Communication team supported the Principalship with welcoming outside partner organisations including Kilbryde Hospice, South Lanarkshire Council and Colleges Scotland, and supported curriculum areas and college staff in building important partnerships with business partners and third sector organisations.
- 4.4 As part of Colleges Scotland Election Team, the College's Marketing and Communication Manager has continued to support Colleges Scotland with analysing party's election's manifestos and securing support for the CS manifesto.
- 4.5 The Marketing and Communication team has supported the promotion and delivery of multiple events operated by other curriculum areas; including the Community Day of Care, Scottish Apprenticeship Week, Step Into Future Jobs, Student Question Time, Foundation Apprentice's Celebration, and the delivery of the planned Celebration of Success event for FE Students.
- 4.6 A celebration event for two successful and award-winning years of the CLIC project were held at Glasgow Clyde College, supported by the College team to recognise the work undertaken by SLC's CLIC team.
- 4.7 The Graphic Design Lead, as part of the CLIC Project, launched the SLC Connected: Capturing and Sharing Real-World Learning Through Industry Collaboration. This college-wide campaign showcases employer visits, donated materials, and alumni engagement through short videos shared across social media platforms. Video content has been captured at locations including Crossbasket Castle for Travel and Tourism and Barclays for Horticulture.
- 4.8 The delivery of the College's ***Building Connections for Future Learners*** was a huge success, welcoming over 30 SDS careers advisors and staff from 8 different South Lanarkshire high schools to discuss strengthening partnership working. The event provided an overview of the College's curriculum offer and our Academic Year 2026-27 offering, highlighted effective practice in supporting learner progression, and created an effective discussion forum between college and schools staff to allow for effective learning.

The event adopted an interactive format and facilitated discussions with a focus on:

- Strengthen collaborative relationships between South Lanarkshire College, schools, and SDS
- Share up-to-date information on curriculum pathways, support services and progression opportunities
- Better understand the information and support needs of schools and careers advisers
- Identify areas of effective practice and opportunities for enhancement in learner engagement and support

- 4.9 Future planned events include:

Table 2

EVENT DATE	TARGET MARKET	PURPOSE
18 May 2026 May Open Evening for August starts	School leavers, influencers, those looking to upskill, retrain and community members	To showcase the campus and facilities and promote courses starting in August 2026.
9-11 June 2026 Celebration of Success Event	FE SLC Students	To showcase and celebrate the journey and success of this year's FE student cohort.

5 CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY

5.1 The following campaign plans (**with a focus on 'Take your career to another level with South Lanarkshire College'**) have taken place in the past 3 months to support recruitment and brand awareness:

- 5.1..1 Continuation and roll-out of the College's August online recruitment campaign, with focus new creatives and video-focused output for video-based platforms.
- 5.1..2 Launch of billboard advertising across South Lanarkshire, with prime spots at East Kilbride and Hamilton Train Stations.
- 5.1..3 Capital Radio advertising – focusing on August course recruitment.
- 5.1..4 Direct Communication with SDS careers advisors, schools, DYW and JCP on current available courses and possible application routes.
- 5.1..5 Open Evening (12 March).
- 5.1..6 Development of in-campus Respect Campaign for students alongside Student Association.
- 5.1..7 Continued promotion of student and staff activity to promote a positive College atmosphere online and in print.

6 STAFF RECRUITMENT

6.1 The Marketing and Communications team structure and output will remain under review over the next quarter, to identify if any other skills gaps exists and if any other appointments are needed to maximise the positive output of the team.

7 DIGITAL AND WEBSITE IMPROVEMENTS

7.1 Internal discussions produced a Phase 1 plan for the website's refreshment, with a focus on guiding new applicants through their "SLC Journey" via development of the ['Browse by Career'](#) section of the website. This will aim to be implemented in time for the College's August recruitment cycle.

7.2 Work continues internally to enhance meta (SEO) data on all pages on the website. This includes research, reporting and input of key words to ensure the website appears as high up the search rankings as possible.

8 BRAND ROLL OUT

- 8.1 The corporate brand identity continues to be rolled out. This remains an ongoing priority for the team, ensuring the College is building a positive customer image and delivering clear, concise messaging linked to the College's vision and strategic aims.
- 8.2 Reviewing messaging on the digital screens throughout the College remains a priority, with plans to standardise both operational information/instructions and key messaging.

9 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- 9.1 The development, support and delivery of a stakeholder engagement strategy, in line with the strategic goals of the College and Principalship, is a planned objective for this annual period of work for the Marketing and Communications team.
- 9.2 In February 2026 the College welcomed South Lanarkshire's Council Leader Joe Fagan to the College to launch the College's community bus partnership with Climate Action Strathaven. The visit allowed for the Principalship to develop a positive relationship with the council leader and promote positive coverage for the College.
- 9.3 As part of the visit and bus launch, a photo-op was arranged with the Council Leader, Climate Action Strathaven and Principalship. The photos were taken by SLC HND photography students and resulted in one of the College's student photographer's photos being published in the East Kilbride News, LanarkshireLive and the Glasgow Evening Times.
- 9.4 In March, the College welcomed the Leaders of the Scottish Green Party to the college to discuss SLC's green skills programmes including the College's Low Carbon House and Heat Pump Vans. The visit also allowed for the Principalship to engage with key national decision makers. The visit resulted in South Lanarkshire College being featured on STV and BBC news coverage, alongside imagery online and in the Daily Record.
- 9.5 As part of the 2026 Scottish Elections, all political parties have been engaged with on an equal and positive basis, having been invited to the College to discuss and engage with the College as a community anchor institution.

10 STAFF COMMUNICATION

- 10.1A fortnightly staff communication continues to be sent by the Marketing and Communications team to update staff on good news stories, events, and activities across the College. All staff can contribute to this newsletter.
- 10.2 New college wide email lists have been established to ensure all staff are receiving internal communications.

11 IN THE PRESS

- 11.1 An ongoing priority for the Marketing and Communications team is to generate as many positive news stories and case studies as possible, to promote courses, relay the key brand messages and to continue to combat any negative press arising from ongoing potential industrial action.

11.2 Examples of some positive press coverage over the past few months include (please note articles are hyperlinked):

11.2..1 [College shortlisted for two Scottish Knowledge Exchange Awards](#) **13 February**

11.2..2 [New eco-friendly bus service helps students get to college](#) **24 February**

11.2..3 [Students show enthusiasm for much-needed social care role](#) **9 March**

11.2..4 [Young Busby barber who started business in parents' garden opens his own shop](#) **20 March**

11.2..5 [South Lanarkshire College secures initiative with Royal Academy of Culinary Arts](#) **25 March**

11.3 There has not been any recurrence of negative press at a national level from the previous committee meeting.

12 SOCIAL MEDIA

12.1 Since January 2026 the following figures have been recorded across SLC's social media platforms (all increase and decrease percentages are in comparison to the November-January period):

12.1..1 Facebook – Views breakdown: Total 925,822 (down 9.7%, from organic 509,360, from ads 416,481, up 58.3%), up overall 11.9% | Viewers 151,964 (down 1.3%) | Content interactions 3,167 (up 1.7%) | Link clicks 6,515 (up 0.5%) | Visits 18,013 (down 4.9%) | New Follows 246

12.1..2 Instagram – Views breakdown: Total 247,988 (down 15.9%, from organic 150,527, from ads 97,461, up 432.3%) | Reach 33,646 (up 139.6%) Content interactions 2,555 (up 12.4%) | Link clicks 502 (up 10.3%) | New Follows 169

12.1..3 Twitter (now X) – access to any free analytics on this platform has now changed so we can only report on followers, which is now 3326. This represents a small increase in SLC's followers however Twitter (now X) is of an important platform due to the reduction in its userbase following concerns over content moderation and political influence from the USA.

12.1..4 LinkedIn – Impressions 41,351 (14.5% decrease from last report) | Followers 196 new followers | Competitor highlights 11.9% more posts and 137.5% more engagement than competitors Scotland's colleges (City Glasgow, Forth Valley, NCL, West Lothian, Fife, Ayrshire, Borders, UHI Inverness & Dumfries & Galloway) | Overall Engagement rate 25.5%

12.1..5 TikTok – Video views 879,635 (from organic 97,226, from ads 782,409), up overall 274.3% | Reached audience 80,899 | Profile views 3,248 | New Followers 86 new follows

12.2 Engagement continues to be high across all platforms, driven by a variety of engaging content. Top performing organic posts include the promotion of credit courses, commercial courses, video and photographic content surrounding graduation and Christmas events, and the launch of the SLC Bus partnership.

12.3 A focus for continuing improvement across digital platforms remains a priority as a key promotional, awareness and conversion tool.

12.4 An ongoing review of the College's content strategy regarding social media will be implemented as part of updating the College's current Marketing and Communications (2022-27) strategy.

13 AWARDS

13.1 In February, the College proudly celebrated SLC's performance at the Scottish Knowledge Exchange Awards. South Lanarkshire College was the only College to be nominated for multiple awards and was **the only college to win** any awards at the ceremony, with the College's **Depute Head of Curriculum winning in the Knowledge Exchange Champion category**.

13.2 In April, the **College secured three nominations at the Herald Education Awards** – two in the Partnership category for the College's work on the *EcoPreneur Project* with Ayrshire and Dumfries & Galloway Colleges, and for the *CLIC Project* with the other Glasgow City Region Colleges. The College was also nominated in the Supporting Student Wellbeing Category for SLC's '*Respect Belongs Here. GBV Does Not*' campaign against gender-based violence and the College successful re-chartering of the Emily Test.

13.3 The award submissions are now open for the next CDN College Awards 2026. Submissions will be compiled by the Marketing and Communications Lead in partnership with the Principalship in advance of the 24 June deadline with the award ceremony taking place on 3 December 2026 at the Radisson Blu in Glasgow.

14 MARKET RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYSIS

14.1 Market research remains a priority for ensuring that our advertising, campaigns, promotion, and curriculum meet the needs of stakeholders.

14.2 Analysis of all campaigns continues to be undertaken to ensure effective return on investment (ROI) is achieved and improvements are made to enhance awareness, engagement, and conversion.

15 MISCELLANEOUS

15.1 The Marketing and Communications Team have supported the streamlining of individual departments social media channels and have provided support to areas including horticulture, the Spa & Salon and photography with the promotion and development of their channels.

16 KEY PRIORITIES

16.1 Some key priorities over the next 3 months include:

- Continued promotion of the College brand and delivery of the College's 2026 August Recruitment Campaign
- Enhance internal and external comms to highlight good news stories to stakeholders.
- Delivery of website refresh to support August Recruitment campaign.

- Continued engagement with curriculum teams.
- Engagement with other Colleges as part of a sector-wide stakeholder engagement during the post-2026 Scottish election period. Seeking engagement with new ministerial appointments.
- Digital improvements on SEO and analytics tracking.

17 RISK

- 17.1 That there is any further negative press due to the historic governance enquiry.
- 17.2 That the College does not achieve recruitment targets.
- 17.3 That there are challenges in meeting key targets due to current staffing resource.
- 17.4 That there are challenges owing to difficult financial circumstances within the sector.
- 17.5 On-going political activity concerning the FE sector following the outcome of the 2026 Scottish elections.

18 EQUALITIES

- 18.1 There are no new matters for people with protected characteristics or from areas of multiple deprivation which arise from consideration of the report.

19 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 19.1 Members are recommended to note:
- 19.1..1 The ongoing success of the College's 26-27 Recruitment campaign The strong attendance of the College's March Open Evenings. Delivery of student and college-focused events, and partnership working goals.

LEARNING, TEACHING AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

DATE	14 May 2026
TITLE OF REPORT	2025-2026 Quarter 3 Complaints Handling Report
REFERENCE	Agenda Item 10
AUTHOR AND CONTACT DETAILS	Vari Anderson Vari.anderson@slc.ac.uk
PURPOSE:	To provide Committee Members with an overview of the: complaints received by the College during Quarter 3 (31 January 2026 to 30 April 2026), and an update on the continuing governance of the complaints handling process.
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS/ DECISIONS:	Members are recommended to note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all complaints are logged on the College complaints handling system; • the College complies with Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) governance; • An issue with the complaints handling system resulted in email notifications no longer being sent to investigators. The Digital Services Team has since developed a new system, which is currently being tested and is expected to be ready for implementation in the near future.
RISK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the College does not deal with complaints within the time scales required by the SPSO resulting in a poor experience for our learners and stakeholders.
RELEVANT STRATEGIC AIM:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Student Experience • People and Culture Development • Growth and Innovation • Sustainability
SUMMARY OF REPORT:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine complaints were received, eight of which were closed within SPSO timescales. One complaint remains ongoing, with a response due by 14 May 2026. • This is an increase in the number of complaints compared to Quarter 3 2024/2025. • The current Complaints System is no longer fit for purpose due to no longer issuing e-mails, Digital Services have developed a new system which is currently being tested. • Lessons learned and actions to improve are identified and addressed. • Two Complaints were upheld, four partially upheld and two not upheld.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This paper provides an overview of the complaints received during Quarter 3 2025/2026, the continuing governance of the complaints handling process and complaint trends

2 DISCUSSION

- 2.1 The College complies with the governance of the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO), ensuring that all complains are recorded and closed within the required timescale. In addition to publishing the four mandatory Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) quarterly, the College also provides reports on complaint trends and any actions taken to improve service delivery.
- 2.2 The Complaints Handling System currently used by the College was created by New College Lanarkshire in partnership with the College Development Network. In December 2025, the Complaints Team were advised that the system would no longer issue automated e-mail acknowledgements to customers submitting complaints. Since receiving this notification, the Complaints Team have manually issued acknowledgements and updates to complainers to ensure continued communication.
- 2.3 The Complaints Team remain proactive in ensuring that complaints are progressed and responded to within the required timescales. However, following reminders issued to investigators, it was identified that the system is no longer forwarding complaints to investigators. This has resulted in a one complaint requiring an extension to allow sufficient time for investigation and response. It is not known when the system ceased forwarding complaint information. Notwithstanding these issues, all complaints have been responded to as a result of the proactive measures taken by the Complaints Team.
- 2.4 The Digital Services Team have developed a new Complaints System which is currently undergoing testing. A meeting was scheduled mid-April to allow the Complaints Team to provide feedback. It is evident that the current system is no longer fit for purpose, and it is hoped that the new system will be ready for implementation in the near future.
- 2.5 The tables below report for Quarter 3:
 - SPSO KPIs
 - category and outcome of complaints with actions to improve; and
 - complaint trends.

2.6 Table 1 Quarter 3 SPSO KPIs

<p>KPI 1: The total number of complaints received and as a % of college population</p> <p>WDENR at 30 April 4,015</p>	<p>KPI 2: The total number of complaints closed at each stage within the required timescale</p>	<p>KPI 3: The average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage</p>	<p>KPI 4: the outcome of each complaint and the % closed at each stage</p>
<p>(0.023%)</p> <p>g*</p> <p>*One Stage 1 complaint ongoing with response due 14 May.</p>	<p>Stage 1 – 4 Complaints Closed</p> <p>Stage 2 – 4 Complaint Closed</p>	<p>Stage 1 – 6 days</p> <p>Stage 2 – 20 days</p>	<p><u>Stage 1</u></p> <p>1 – Partially Upheld</p> <p>2 – Upheld</p> <p>1 – Not Upheld</p> <p>100% Closed.</p> <p><u>Stage 2</u></p> <p>3 – Partially Upheld</p> <p>1 – Not Upheld</p> <p>100% Closed.</p>

2.7 The lessons learned from each complaint are identified and addressed, with follow-up actions managed by the Complaints Handler.

2.8 Table 2: Quarter 3 2025-2026 category of complaint, outcome of complaint and actions to improve:

Complaint Category	Complaints Received	Outcome of Complaint	Actions to improve
Customer Care	6	2 Upheld 2 Partially Upheld 1 Not Upheld 1 Ongoing – response not due until 14 May 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff to uphold consistently professional standards even in challenging situations Value of reflective practice Recognise the impact of behaviour on student experience – students interpret staff behaviour as representative of College’s values Need for clear expectations and regular training
Applications to Progression	1	Partially Upheld	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wording on ‘welcome interview’ e-mail to be updated for clarity. Interviewing staff to be
Course Related	1	Partially Upheld	
Services	1	Not Upheld	
Facilities	0		
Other	0		

2.9 In Quarter 3 of 2025–2026, the total number of complaints rose from 4 in Quarter 2 to 9. This also represents an increase compared with Quarter 3 of 2024–2025, when 5 complaints were recorded.

2.10 Table 3 Quarter 3 2025-2026 and 2024-2025 comparison of complaints received and outcomes:

	2025-2026	2024-2025
Total complaints received	9	5
Complaints received resolved	8	1
Complaints received partially upheld	4	0
Complaints received upheld	2	1
Complaints received not upheld	2	1

Currently being investigated	1	2
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2.11 Of the nine complaints received, six related to the Customer Care category. A comparison of Quarter 3 complaint categories between 2025–2026 and 2024–2025 shows a significant rise in Customer Care complaints, increasing from 1 to 6 over the quarter, while complaints related to courses declined.

2.12 *Table 4 Quarter 3 2025-2026 and 2024-2025 comparison of category of complaints received:*

	2025-2026	2024-2025
Customer Care	6	1
Applications to progression	1	0
Course Related	1	3
Services	1	1
Facilities	0	0
Other	0	0

3 EQUALITIES

3.1 There are no new matters for people with protected characteristics or from areas of multiple deprivation which arise from consideration of the report.

4 RISK AND ASSURANCE

4.1 That the College does not deal with complaints within the time required by the SSPO procedures resulting in a poor experience for our learners and stakeholders.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Members are asked to note:

5.1.1 All complaints are logged on the College complaints handling system; and

5.1.2 The College complies with Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) governance

5.1.3 A new complaints system will be introduced in due course as the current system is no longer fit for purpose.

LEARNING, TEACHING AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

DATE	14 May 2026
TITLE OF REPORT	Consultation on the Report on Widening Access
REFERENCE	Agenda item 12
AUTHOR AND CONTACT DETAILS	Shona Pettigrew shona.pettigrew@slc.ac.uk
PURPOSE:	To brief the Committee on the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) consultation on the Report on Widening Access (RoWA) and to provide an overview of South Lanarkshire College's response, including key strategic considerations relevant to learning, teaching and the student experience.
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS/ DECISIONS:	Members are asked to note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the context and content of the SFC consultation on the Report on Widening Access • Note South Lanarkshire College's response to the consultation • Consider the strategic implications for learner-centred support, retention and progression • Endorse the College's position that widening access success should be defined by positive learner outcomes rather than single progression measures.
RISK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Alignment Risk: National widening access measures may inadvertently incentivise activity that is target-driven rather than aligned to learner need. • Interpretation Risk: Changes in national reporting frameworks may lead to misinterpretation of college outcomes without sufficient contextual narrative. • Equity Risk: Over-emphasis on university-centric measures could under-represent the success of learners progressing through college-based pathways and into employment.
RELEVANT STRATEGIC AIM:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Experience • Culture and People Development • Growth and Innovation • Sustainability
SUMMARY OF REPORT:	This paper provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background on the SFC Report on Widening Access and the associated consultation • A summary of South Lanarkshire College's consultation response • Commentary on the alignment between national widening access targets and learner-centred practice • Consideration of relevance to learning teaching and the student experience

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Scottish Funding Council publishes an annual Report on Widening Access (RoWA), which provides the national evidence base on access, participation, retention, progression and outcomes across Scotland's tertiary education system.
- 1.2 The report tracks progress against the Commission on Widening Access (COWA) targets, including the national ambition that 18% of full-time first-degree university entrants should come from the 20% most deprived communities (SIMD0–20) by 2026.
- 1.3 Alongside the publication of the 2023–24 RoWA, SFC issued a consultation on proposed changes to future reporting arrangements. South Lanarkshire College submitted a formal response reflecting its role as a regional college delivering both FE and HE and supporting a high proportion of learners from SIMD0–20, care-experienced and other priority groups.

2. CONSULTATION OVERVIEW

- 2.1 The consultation sought sector feedback on a range of proposed changes, including:
 - Greater use of interactive Power BI dashboards
 - Expanded reporting across undergraduate qualifications and modes
 - Increased visibility of part-time study
 - Enhanced SIMD and widening access group disaggregation
 - Removal of articulation reporting from the main RoWA into a separate “student journeys” publication
- 2.2 The stated aims of these changes are to improve timeliness, accessibility, and analytical value of widening access reporting.

3. SUMMARY OF SOUTH LANARKSHIRE COLLEGE RESPONSE

- 3.1 South Lanarkshire College is broadly supportive of the proposed changes and welcomes the direction of travel identified by SFC.
- 3.2 Key aspects of the College response include:
 - Recognition of diverse learner pathways: The College emphasised that for many widening access learners, particularly from SIMD0–20 and care-experienced backgrounds, successful outcomes may include completion of FE, HNC or HND qualifications and progression directly into sustainable employment, rather than immediate progression to full-time degree study;
 - Support for improved data usability: The College supported the move toward dashboards, additional disaggregation and enhanced coverage, subject to safeguards around data quality, clear guidance and continued access to downloadable datasets;
 - Contextualised articulation reporting: While supportive of separating articulation reporting to enable earlier publication of the RoWA, the College stressed that articulation should be understood as one positive pathway among many, and not treated as a proxy for widening access success;
 - Caution around narrow success measures: The College expressed concern about over-reliance on university-centric measures, such as full-time degree entry or degree classification, which may not reflect learner aspiration, circumstance or lived experience.

4. TARGETS VERSUS LEARNER NEED

4.1 The College's response included a reflective observation on the role of COWA targets in shaping activity across the sector.

4.2 While national targets have been instrumental in driving progress and accountability, there is a potential risk that activity becomes driven primarily by target attainment, rather than by an assessment of what best meets learner needs.

4.3 For some learners, particularly those experiencing financial pressure, caring responsibilities, disability or instability, the most appropriate outcome may be college-based progression and entry into employment, or non-linear journeys combining work and study. The College therefore encouraged continued evolution of widening access policy so that targets support learner-centred practice rather than direct it.

5. RELEVANCE TO LEARNING, TEACHING AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

5.1 The themes emerging from the consultation align closely with the Committee's remit, particularly in relation to:

- Retention and success of vulnerable and priority groups
- Learner-centred support and holistic service models
- Flexible progression pathways
- Evidence-informed practice

5.2 The proposed changes reinforce the importance of integrating widening access considerations across learning, teaching, support services and data-informed planning.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

- Note the content of this paper and the overview of the Scottish Funding Council consultation on the Report on Widening Access (RoWA);
- Note South Lanarkshire College's response to the consultation and the key themes highlighted, particularly around learner-centred definitions of widening access success;
- Endorse the College's position that widening access activity and reporting should support diverse learner pathways, including college-based progression and positive destinations into employment; and
- Acknowledge the relevance of the consultation outcomes to the ongoing development of learner support, retention, and progression strategies within the College.

7. EQUALITIES

- The content of this paper directly relates to improving outcomes for learners from protected characteristics groups and areas of multiple deprivation, including those from SIMD0–20, care-experienced learners, disabled learners and other priority groups;
- The College's response to the consultation reinforces its commitment to equality of opportunity, inclusive practice and learner-centred support, ensuring that widening

access activity and measures reflect the diverse needs, aspirations and circumstances of learners; and

- No negative equality impacts are anticipated as a result of consideration of this paper.

8. RISK AND ASSURANCE

- Misalignment between curriculum provision and current or emerging industry needs
- Capacity and sustainability of employer engagement activities
- Failure to evidence impact and value of industry engagement

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Members are recommended to note:

- Note the context and content of the SFC consultation on the Report on Widening Access
- Note South Lanarkshire College's response to the consultation
- Consider the strategic implications for learner-centred support, retention and progression
- Endorse the College's position that widening access success should be defined by positive learner outcomes rather than single progression measures.

LEARNING, TEACHING AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

DATE	14 May 2026
TITLE OF REPORT	Employer Engagement Plan
REFERENCE	Agenda item 13
AUTHOR AND CONTACT DETAILS	Shona Pettigrew shona.pettigrew@slc.ac.uk
PURPOSE:	To provide the Board of Management with early sight of proposed direction for employer engagement in 2026–27, in support of curriculum planning and income generation. This paper is presented for information only.
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS/ DECISIONS:	Members are recommended to note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the emerging proposals for employer engagement outlined in this paper; and that a fully developed and costed employer engagement plan will be created in partnership between Curriculum and Business Innovation and Development and presented to the Committee in August 2026.
RISK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of inconsistency or fragmentation in employer engagement activity without a coordinated strategic framework. Risk that opportunities for income generation and curriculum enhancement are not fully realised during transitional leadership arrangements.
RELEVANT STRATEGIC AIM:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Experience Culture and People Development Growth and Innovation Sustainability
SUMMARY OF REPORT:	This paper outlines proposed areas of focus for employer engagement in 2026–27. These proposals reflect current curriculum intent and provide a foundation for further development. The incoming Head of Business Innovation (commencing May 2026) will play a key role in shaping, refining, and operationalising the approach. A complete employer engagement plan will be brought to Committee in August for consideration.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Employer engagement is a critical enabler of high-quality, relevant curriculum provision and a key driver of learner employability and income generation.
- 1.2 At this stage, the College is developing proposals which outline the intended direction of travel for employer engagement in 2026–27. These proposals are shared with the Board of Management for information, rather than approval.
- 1.3 A comprehensive employer engagement plan will be developed jointly by Curriculum and Business Innovation teams in Summer 2026, when the new Head of Business Innovation is in post. This paper therefore outlines the proposed strategic direction for employer engagement, pending the development of a comprehensive delivery plan.

2. PROPOSED EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT DIRECTION

- 2.1 It is the intent of Curriculum to move from a predominantly course-led and variable model to a more structured and consistent approach to employer engagement across all curriculum areas.
- 2.2 It is proposed that this will include the establishment of industry advisory panels aligned to each of the college's eight curriculum areas, meeting on a quarterly basis.
- 2.3 These panels would be expected to provide insight into:
 - Current and emerging skills needs and gaps;
 - Sector trends and future workforce requirements; and
 - Opportunities for curriculum development and growth.

As well as:

- Support new and innovative methods of direct engagement with learners.

3 POLICY ALIGNMENT AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

- 3.1 The proposed employer engagement approach for 2026–27 is directionally aligned with key UK and Scottish Government economic and skills strategies. These proposals reflect national priorities around employer-led skills development, work-integrated learning, and improved labour-market responsiveness, while recognising that a full delivery plan will be confirmed through partnership working.

3.2 UK Industrial Strategy – Skills and Growth Priorities

The UK Industrial Strategy places strong emphasis on:

- employer-informed skills pipelines;
- sector-based engagement mechanisms;
- expanded use of work-based learning, apprenticeships, and industry-led provision to support productivity and economic growth; and
- The proposed development of curriculum-aligned industry panels and structured employer input supports this agenda by creating regular, sector-specific dialogue between education and industry, ensuring curriculum relevance and supporting priority growth sectors.

3.3 Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET)

Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation identifies skills development and employer collaboration as central to delivering a fairer, more productive, and greener economy. The strategy highlights the need for:

- stronger partnerships between education providers and employers;
- curriculum aligned to emerging and replacement workforce needs; and
- a responsive skills system that anticipates economic change.
- The proposed employer engagement model, particularly the establishment of industry advisory input into curriculum planning and review, aligns closely with NSET's transformational programmes on skills, productivity, and fair work.

3.4 Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) and Employer Engagement

Scottish Government evaluation of Developing the Young Workforce highlights the continued importance of systematic employer engagement in providing work-relevant learning, placements, and progression pathways. The proposed intention to ensure consistent employer involvement across all curriculum areas and student cohorts responds directly to these findings and supports improved post-learning destinations.

3.5 Scottish Funding Council – Outcomes Framework and Assurance

The SFC Outcomes Framework places importance on:

- relevance of provision to employer and learner needs;
- effective partnerships; and
- evidence of impact for students, employers, and the wider economy.

3.6 Taken together, these policy drivers demonstrate a clear expectation that colleges adopt more systematic, employer-led approach to curriculum design and delivery.

4 PROPOSED ROLE OF EMPLOYERS IN CURRICULUM ACTIVITY

4.1 Curriculum and Business Innovation colleagues intend to embed employer engagement as a consistent and inclusive feature across all curriculum areas and student cohorts. This approach seeks to reduce reliance on ad hoc arrangements or informal networks. As set out above, industry advisory panels will play a central role in the curriculum planning and review cycle:

- Regular scheduled industry round tables;
- Industry support for curriculum cleansing and planning;
- Employer participation in curriculum co-design, ensuring teaching reflects emerging skills, technologies, and labour market needs; and
- Industry support for quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms such as Institution Led Quality Review (ILQR) and continuous improvement activity.

4.2 In addition to advisory input, it is proposed that employers should contribute to curriculum delivery and engage directly with students in a structured and consistent manner, with innovative contributions aligned to Strategy 2030 and designed to enhance student experience, strengthen employability outcomes, and support progression into work or further study:

- Work placements and industry experience;
- Apprenticeships and work-based learning;

- Site visits and employer-led learning activities;
- Specialist guest lecturers or expert input;
- Live employer briefs or challenges, where employers set real-world problems for students to solve within their curriculum;
- Industry-sponsored projects, integrated into assessment or portfolio work, giving students exposure to current sector practices;
- Virtual employer engagement, such as online site tours, webinars, and hybrid panels, increasing access regardless of geography;
- Employer mentoring and coaching schemes, pairing students with industry professionals for short, structured mentoring cycles;
- Sector insight weeks or themed careers sprints, focused on specific industries and embedded across multiple curriculum areas;
- Enterprise and innovation labs, co-designed with employers to simulate professional environments and workflows;
- Micro-internships or project-based placements, offering short, flexible engagement opportunities aligned with academic timetables;
- Alumni–employer partnerships, leveraging former students as ambassadors, speakers, or mentors within their industries; and
- Teaching staff industry secondments or shadowing, strengthening curriculum relevance and long-term employer relationships.

5 NEXT STEPS AND GOVERNANCE

5.1 The incoming Head of Business Innovation will lead, in partnership with Curriculum, the development of a full employer engagement strategy for 2026–27.

5.2 This work will include clarification of:

- Governance and oversight arrangements;
- Expectations of employer partners;
- Links to income generation and business development; and
- Measures of impact.

5.3 A complete plan will be presented to the Learning, Teaching and the Student Experience Committee in August 2026.

6 EQUALITIES

There are no implications for people with protected characteristics or from areas of multiple deprivation which arise from consideration of the report.

6.2 The College will continue to work to ensure equal opportunities for all in our students' experiences at the college.

7. RISK AND ASSURANCE

- 7.1 Misalignment between curriculum provision and current or emerging industry needs.
- 7.2 Capacity and sustainability of employer engagement activities.
- 7.3 Failure to evidence impact and value of industry engagement.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Members are recommended to note:

- The content of this paper represents initial proposals only;
- The intended direction of travel for employer engagement; and
- That a fully developed and costed employer engagement plan will be created in partnership between Curriculum and Business Innovation and Development and presented to the Committee in August 2026.