

Glasgow College Region

Outcome Agreement 2023-2024

Empowering Scotland's most inclusive, responsive, and effective regional college system



Outcome Agreement 2023-2024

Context and Direction

The academic year 2023-24 requires a continued focus on stability and recovery; allowing the Glasgow college system to continue to focus on achieving security for the future while building from those foundations to support our wider community – our students, staff, and their communities right across Glasgow – recognising the significant challenges facing the sector, and region. This remains characterised by a significantly challenging financial landscape and wider continuing volatilities and uncertainties. It will be vital, therefore, to maintain a focus on smoothing transitions and providing consistency as well as maintaining progression towards longer-term viability.

Unfettered access to high-quality education will provide a vital route to unlocking potential and opportunity right across our communities, and it is therefore vitally important that the Glasgow college system is focused on meeting that need, supporting those furthest from employment into education and training, contributing to a seamless transition from secondary education into tertiary education and on into employment, creating a fertile ground for lifelong learning to meet existing and emerging needs in the Glasgow city region, cultivating the valued link between college and employers, all set in an agile, flexible and responsive system.

It is important to note that financial pressures on the sector, and region, continue to mean this is a time of considerable instability. A reduction in overall offering of 10%, flat-cash funding, associated cost pressures allied to staffing changes, means that financial stability and viability are key areas for current, and future, delivery.

The actions and activity of the Glasgow college system must ensure that we are responsive to meeting identified needs, with decisions actively seeking to forward these strategic aims and delivery of the *Glasgow Region Strategy 2023*:

- For **learners**, we ensure that they are at the centre of the system, with ensured equality, fairness, lifetime access to learning, skills, qualifications, guidance and information to help find an efficient learner journey; with more right turns, effective progression, and appropriate progress. The Glasgow college system effectively supports those most in need.
- For **communities**, we ensure colleges at the heart of their communities, with effective local decision making, meeting the requirements of those most in need to access effective life-changing education opportunities. Colleges will play a key role in strengthening communities and building partnerships that collectively address the challenges and opportunities for economic and social transformation.
- For **colleges**, as anchor institutions at the heart of the Glasgow eco-system, they are enabled to deliver outstanding learning, skills and qualifications at all relevant levels of the SCQF ladder which enhance Glasgow and Scotland's social and economic prosperity, across multiple modes and levels of study.
- For the **Glasgow college system**, clear and effective strategic structures, direction and relationships deliver enhanced pan-regional planning and collaboration through strategic, coherent, clear governance and management.
- For **Scotland's education system, learners, communities, employers, employees and colleges**, Glasgow's colleges are financially viable for the long term, including through further efficiency gains to secure quality and public value. The Glasgow college system is affordable, efficient in operating at the right scale, and with others to minimise unnecessary duplication, optimise digital technology, and tackle the climate crisis. The Glasgow college system plays an active role in working with partners to support economic and social recovery and development.

This should be maintained to deliver on these key priorities:

- Fair access and transitions
- Quality learning and teaching
- Coherent learning provision
- Work-based learning and skills
- Net zero and environmental sustainability response

In practice, the work, and directed funding, of the Glasgow college region in 2023-24 will include a specific focus on the following:

- A system-wide focus on **economic recovery** and **wider regeneration**, with particular focus on support for targeted programmes and development of a collaborative and cooperative training and skills programme and enhancing opportunities to develop skills
- Ensure **fair access and transitions** to college education as an effective learning opportunity for everyone, whatever their age, ability, or circumstance, and in particular that college education plays a key role in increasing opportunities in Glasgow for those from protected characteristic groups, those furthest from employment, living in deprivation and in SIMD10 postcode areas.
- Delivering a focus on **skills development**, working in conjunction with Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to provide effectively aligned skills provision
- Supporting **innovation and creativity** by deepening links and partnerships with employers, while developing effective pilots to support learners who are better equipped for a complex future.
- Supporting a learner journey of **effective, seamless and coherent transitions** through the education ecosystem, from secondary education in Glasgow into tertiary education and employment
- Support and facilitate greater **pan-regional planning and activity** in Glasgow and the wider economic region to enhance economic and social recovery, promote greater regional partnership work across internal and external stakeholders to deliver an enhanced role in economic recovery and wider regeneration, including exploration of strategic alignment to leverage more effective outcomes.
- Leading the way on **digital transformation**, including the progression of the Digital Ambition for Scotland's Colleges¹ to support learners to access the most effective, high quality learning environments, both physically and digitally
- Progressing the regional and national focus on the **environment and sustainability** in line with Scottish colleges' *Statement of Commitment on the Climate Emergency*² and *Climate Action Road Map for FE Colleges*, affirming a Glasgow colleges-wide commitment to a regional strategic approach through a Glasgow-specific strategy, roadmap and reporting
- All with a clear focus on the fact that none of this can be delivered without a financially viable, sustainable college system aligned to the needs of learners, their communities, business and the region.

¹ <https://www.cdn.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Digital-Ambition-Report.pdf>

² <https://www.cdn.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Scottish-Colleges-Climate-Emergency-Commitment.pdf>

Key Priorities and Commitments: Regional and National

Fair access and transitions: The colleges will continue to maintain a coherent, coordinated policy of fair access, with application systems, digital and physical online open days, information sessions and engagement, student support services, and adherence to monitoring of performance indicators. Transitions are monitored to ensure that access to education at all levels is clear and accessible, with transitions and partial completion facilitated where appropriate and on-going support for all students to achieve the best possible outcomes. Specific transition agreements with partner universities were put in place for 23-24.

Quality learning and teaching: Overall approaches to the planning of learning and teaching are shared collaboratively at the cross-college Glasgow Colleges Group Learning and Teaching Group, with representation from Vice Principals and the GCRB Executive Director, supporting a coherent regional response and communication. Learning and teaching is monitored at individual college level. In addition to reporting to individual college boards, high-level reporting from each college is maintained via the Performance and Resources Committee of GCRB and GCRB Board. In addition, GCRB works closely with the Student Associations of the three colleges and their cross-college regional group to monitor and nurture the student voice, and this continues to provide valuable insight at board level. Individual colleges also monitor the student voice via a series of surveys and overall student satisfaction is measured via the national student satisfaction survey. Glasgow's Student Associations engage directly with GCRB to ensure that they are informed participants in planning, student communication, and national and regional review work. There has been a highly successful ethos of open collaboration across the three colleges' Student Associations, which has led to effective joint presentations to the GCRB board as well as in strong contributions to regional review activity. Students' voices are actively sought, and their insights are acted upon. In addition, the individual colleges have continued to engage via various communication channels as well as further developing student insights with questionnaires to benchmark and identify issues.

Coherent Learning Provision: The 2023-2024 academic year is one characterised by change, with an overall reduction in the Credit target, allied to staffing and structural changes across the Glasgow colleges. High-level performance is monitored by GCRB, and reported on a regular basis, while cross-colleges regional planning is facilitated by the Glasgow Colleges' Learning and Teaching Group, including GCRB and the three Glasgow colleges. Pilot planning of coherent provision was undertaken with Skills Development Scotland, and we will revisit a mechanism for coherent planning in 23-24, including exploration of sector-specific planning pilots.

Work-based learning and skills: The Glasgow colleges work closely with employers and industry at a faculty level to deliver learning with real impact, which supports provision. Where practical in-college work has been required to ensure that learners progress, this was safeguarded during the Covid-19 pandemic and has now increased once more. Partnership work with Glasgow City Council is ensuring that work-based learning opportunities in key areas and industries are progressed, and the council's Just Transitions plan is also informing future direction to ensure a coherent response and maximise college-based opportunities.

Net zero and environmental sustainability response: GCRB included the provision of a coherent Glasgow response to the climate emergency for the first time in the Outcome Agreement of 2020-2021. The commitment to deliver a Net Zero and sustainability plan remains steadfast. Led by a Project Manager (Environment and Sustainability), this cross-colleges role is delivering a consistent regional and strategic approach to the on-going work of the Glasgow colleges to contribute to the city region's ambitious targets. The project convened a cross-colleges leadership group to consider broader developments towards a 'Green curriculum', to create new opportunities for learners and communities, with new qualifications in this area envisioned. The project has a focus on external partnership development and identifying funding opportunities. In addition, individual colleges are developing qualifications, staff, and student CPD and other experiences that begin to shift the focus of the Glasgow college system to a significantly more climate emergency-aware footing. During this session, a co-created regional strategy will continue to be delivered, the Glasgow college system will continue to progress its place on the *Climate Action Road Map for FE Colleges*, including a tailored Glasgow-specific articulation, as well as continuing to deliver on the *Scottish Colleges' Statement of Commitment on the Climate Emergency*.

Fair Work

As a recipient of public funds, the Glasgow college region is committed to Fair Work practices but recognises that this is an on-going process, and that further progress will be required. This agenda is being led for the sector by College Employers Scotland and a draft sectoral Fair Work Statement and articulation of high-level practices is under development.

The statement sets out the sector's commitments via a Fair Work Working Group, which includes membership and contributions from the Glasgow colleges.

The Glasgow colleges have articulated a commitment to partnership working and engagement with Trades Unions, employees, and stakeholders. Relevant Trade Unions are recognised by both GCRB and Glasgow's assigned colleges, and opportunities to provide voice to employees are actively promoted and supported regionally, as well as via appropriate governance vehicles such as committees and boards.

GCRB is committed to maintaining this approach and to prioritising Fair Work in 2023-2024.

Contribution to economic recovery and social renewal

Glasgow is Scotland's largest city region, serving a significant population as well as learners who travel into the city from beyond. Serving just under one quarter of the Scottish college system, we recognise the vital role that Glasgow's colleges continue to play in contributing to economic recovery and social renewal and reassert the vitally important role of college in transforming lives and delivering life chances.

Representing over one fifth of Scotland's college system, the Glasgow colleges are a vital element of delivering the Scottish Government's *National Strategy for Economic Transformation*³, and recognise this as a key guiding principle in shaping delivery, now and for the future.

The Glasgow colleges have long been immersed in the key role of widening access and participation in learning, and we continue to work in close collaboration with partners across various local authorities to provide opportunities for progressing learners, as well as contributing to the planning of regional responses. Members of GCRB and the college are members of key community planning, regional strategic response, and specific response groups with local authorities, and we will continue to ensure that the work of meeting the needs of learners and communities is at the heart of our activity.

Working in collaboration with the city region, providing opportunity for work-based learning, working in partnership with other agencies, and making use of data, we continue to build a curriculum which meets needs locally, regionally and nationally.

³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-national-strategy-economic-transformation-delivery-plans-october-2022/>

Programme of Action 2023-2024

The Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board Programme of Action provides an opportunity to deliver targeted support for projects, partnerships and research to advance the region's ambitions and strategic priorities above, and is specifically designed to deliver on Glasgow regional ambitions with significant impact for our learners and their communities. For 2023-24 the proposed Programme of Action seeks to advance various key elements.

The proposed projects to be taken forward in the academic year are as follows:

Action for Children: For over 60 years, Action for Children has been working with young people and their families who are on the edge of crisis to meet their immediate needs, to ease mounting pressures and support them to access opportunities to change their lives for the better. Their services are primarily located in communities ranked in the top 20% most deprived areas on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. The families they support have low or insecure incomes and rarely have the resources to see them through difficulties. Their services support a range of people experiencing poverty and/or trauma including: fostering and residential resources to find children safe homes; support for those that have been abused, neglected or find themselves homeless; projects that give young people the tools to look after their mental wellbeing; residential breaks and support for young people with disabilities and their families; employability support for young people who are not in education, employment or training and support for young people who offend or are at risk of offending. Action for Children's STAY project works to support college students who are at greatest risk of withdrawal, non-attainment and poor transition, e.g. care experienced students, young carers, young people from the most deprived SIMD areas and those who have experienced an adverse childhood.

This project evidences very strong alignment with the strategic aims of the Glasgow college region, and an increase in funding is allocated in this year to support Action for Children to expand their services and to unlock greater match funding in partnership with the Robertson Trust.

Young Enterprise Scotland: The Bridge 2 Business scheme is Young Enterprise Scotland's Further Education programme, and national funding direct from Scottish Government is processed via GCRB for delivery of the programme to nine colleges across Scotland, including all three Glasgow colleges. In addition to this standard funding, GCRB was able to directly support the Bridge 2 Business+ offer in 2021-22, and again in 2022-23 which allowed it to be more fully rolled out and expanded to a wider cohort of learners in Glasgow. The programme seeks to inspire, connect and support learners in developing a wider practical understanding of business, enterprise and entrepreneurialism. Support for the enhanced offer will allow Glasgow colleges to benefit from the support of a dedicated Programme Executive, and unlock various opportunities enterprise initiatives, social enterprise challenges, workshops, cross-colleges link opportunities, support and mentoring. In 2023-24 we will look to support greater interaction with learners as well as seeking to bring enterprise and entrepreneur opportunities to learners at lower SCQF levels and greater need profiles.

ESOL: English for Speakers of Other Languages is of critical importance in Glasgow, where we have by far Scotland's largest cohort of learners as well as significant additional demand. ESOL is seen as a vitally important element of reaching learners who are often in Glasgow's most deprived communities and with limited or no access to Further Education. It is seen as an important stage in creating opportunities, and in ensuring that Further Education plays a key role in supporting transitions into learning and work. ESOL funding for the Glasgow college system is provided by GCRB to Glasgow Clyde College, and this has created an effective forum for strategic planning and operational delivery, with membership from all three of Glasgow's colleges as well as local authorities, third sector and other delivering agencies and partners. The group is currently working on evolving the offer and partnership to provide a more effective system, and it is proposed that funding is maintained to ensure this effective partnership and evolution is able to continue.

Mental Health and Wellbeing: For 2023-24, GCRB and the Glasgow colleges recognise the vital importance of investing in student-focused mental health support to maximise assistance for our learners and give them the very best opportunity to thrive in a college setting. We will therefore invest in additional counselling and mental health services in the Glasgow colleges. Regional investment in this area has enabled GCRB to facilitate partnership working, deliver training in colleges, and support provision of online support via an online system. Much of this activity is now embedded across the colleges, and is more fully served by direct, specific funding from SFC, so the time is right to explore the evolution of regional opportunities in this space. We continue to

work with the Glasgow Colleges' Student Executives to provide support for student-led mental health and wellbeing initiatives. In addition, we convene regional and national experts to identify additional activity which can be piloted in Glasgow to make positive change in this vital area.

Climate Change and Sustainability: This project will continue into 2023-24 academic year, ensuring that the Project Manager (Environment and Sustainability) post is able to continue. During this time, the Regional Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy will continue to be delivered, linked to college strategies and the national roadmap for FE colleges. In addition, the cross-colleges working model will be embedded and sustained, learning and teaching opportunities will be expanded in collaboration with the colleges, and process and activity will be developed and delivered to identify and pursue external funding opportunities and wider partnerships.

Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board and the Glasgow colleges recognise the climate emergency and seek to lead by example in a number of ways. This includes our regional commitment to the development and delivery of the Glasgow regional climate action strategy and associated roadmap, our commitment to the national Colleges' Climate Commitment, our partnership and membership of EAUC, and in a wide range of projects and commitments right across the Glasgow college system. In addition, work with Glasgow City Council in support of their Just Transition strategy will ensure that the college system is a key contributor to the city's emerging approach in this key area.

Key Performance Indicators

The list of indicators is in line with those approved by the Scottish Funding Council, and seeks to prioritise a stable, managed approach to the delivery of college education across Glasgow as we move beyond the Covid-19 pandemic while recognising the significant financial challenges facing the sector. Continuing to promote success for learners right across our communities remains a key priority, as does monitoring the impacts on our learners and on particular characteristics, including protected characteristics.

In addition to the Key Performance Indicators included, this Outcome Agreement sets out the Glasgow college system's commitment to the *Climate Action Road Map for FE Colleges*, and that a Glasgow-specific road map and associated strategy is developed to provide the regional measure of progress in this area.

Progression from 2022-2023

The Glasgow college system continues to deliver a major contribution to Scotland Higher Education and Further Education tertiary provision, accounting for between one quarter and one fifth of the entire Scottish college education sector.

A total of 374,921 Credits, or 98.24%, were delivered in 2022-23 against an initial ambitious total Credit target of 381,624. This continues to illustrate a significant investment in maintaining college education across multiple levels, and in maximising new opportunities and interventions for Glasgow's learners and communities, as well learners from a wider geographical area. It is also an increased percentage performance over 2021-22, showing some sign of continued recovery in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and its associated impact on learning and teaching.

City of Glasgow College delivered 172,510 total Credits against a target of 175,333 (98.38%). Glasgow Clyde College delivered 124,940 against a target of 126,357 (98.87%). Glasgow Kelvin College delivered 77,471 Credits against a target of 79,934 (96.91%).

There were, however, significant challenges in meeting targets. The delivery of Foundation Apprenticeships was also of particular challenge, and the total Credits delivered was 3644 against a target of 6960 (45.63%). This did, however, constitute some modest growth on the previous year's FA delivery (3176 Credits), but remains indicative of a particularly challenging product to deliver and maintain. This, allied to challenges in delivering to senior phase aged pupils across various qualifications, is identified as a continuing trend in the region, and is subject to review in partnership with the Glasgow colleges and local authorities.

The number of Credits delivered to learners from the lowest SIMD 10% continues to be a success story for the Glasgow college region and is maintained as a core focus.

A total of 104,818 Credits were delivered against a target of 101,000 (3.7% above target), with City of Glasgow College delivering 38,759 against a target of 40,000 (-1242), Glasgow Clyde College delivering 37,148 against a target of 36,000 (+624), and Glasgow Kelvin College delivering 28,912 against a target of 25,000 (+3912).

Similarly, the number of learners disclosing as care-experienced continues to grow. The target of 21,000 Credits was surpassed with delivery of 27,030 Credits (28.7% above target). Glasgow Kelvin College delivered 7990 Credits against a target of 5000, Glasgow Clyde College 9624 against a target of 9000, and City of Glasgow College 9416 against a target of 7000. This constitutes a significant success story in the disclosure and inclusion of care-experienced learners in the Glasgow college system, accounting for an increase in 20,000 Credits delivered per year in the space of the last decade.

For 2023-24, we seek to maintain progress in providing access to life-changing college education across the Glasgow region, meeting overall Credit targets, continuing to develop and safeguard our wider offering, while seeking to have a positive impact on outcomes for students from specific demographic groups and building on our overall student satisfaction. It is important to note that the Glasgow colleges have planned for a 10% reduction in delivery for 23/24 to align with available funding. In-year opportunities to expand delivery will continue to be explored and delivered wherever possible, but targets set in this Outcome Agreement are reflective of the current planned activity of the Glasgow colleges.



Outcome Agreement between Glasgow Colleges Regional Board and the Scottish Funding Council for AY 2023-24

On behalf of Glasgow Colleges Regional Board:

Signed:

Print name: Martin Boyle

Position: Executive Director

Date: 14.12.23

Signed:

Print name: Janie McCusker

Position: Regional Chair for Glasgow

Date: 14.12.23

On behalf of the Scottish Funding Council:

Signed:

Print name: Karen Watt

Position: Chief Executive

Date: 15 January 2024