



**Agenda: NCL Board Curriculum, Student Affairs and Outcomes (CSAO) Committee
1st September 12.30 pm – at Coatbridge Campus and Via Zoom**

- 1. Chair's welcome**
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Declarations of Interest**
- 4. Minute of CSAO Meeting 12th May 2025 (FA) Minutes Posted**
- 5. Matters Arising**
 - 5.1 Green Skills Gap – Industry View Update Verbal Update - JR.**
- 6. Student Association (SA) Report (FI) Papers Posted**
- 7. SEAP Update (FI) Verbal Update – JL**
- 8. Themes and Project Showcases Discussion – JL**
- 9. Committee Updates (FI)**
 - 9.1 NCL Credit and Curriculum Update * Paper Posted – JL**
 - 9.2 NCL Committee and Learning and Teaching Group Update Paper Posted - JL**
 - 9.3 Developing the Young Workforce and Undergraduate School Papers Posted - NM**
 - 9.4 Complaints Report Paper Posted – JL**
 - 9.5 Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey Paper Posted - JL**
- 10. A Vision for the Delivery of Skills, Vocational and Technical Education in Scotland – Professor Joe Little Paper Posted - JL**
- 11. Approval of Publication of Committee Papers (FA) Verbal report - BS**
- 12. AOB**
- 13. Date of Next Meeting of the New College Lanarkshire Board: The scheduled date for the next meeting is Monday 10th November 2025 at the Cumbernauld Campus.**

FA = For Approval FI= For Information; *= non – disclosable item # = published on SLC website ~ = for future publication

Key Abbreviation: NM= Nicola Mulholland, CM = Christopher Moore, JL= Jenifer Lowe, Student President NCL, BS = Board Secretary, DW= Dave Winning; RG – Ronnie Gilmour; ES = Elliot Scott

Minute: NCL Curriculum and Student Affairs and Outcomes Committee (CSAO)

12.30 12 May 2025 at NCL Motherwell and via Zoom

Present: Dave Winning (Chair), Elizabeth Arogbofa, Catriona Blacker (SLC Student President), Fraser Hainey, Stella McManus, Christopher Moore, Barbara Philliben, Joanne Rosie, Julie Webster (NCL Student President)

Apologies: Jennifer Lowe, Tarryn Robertson, Ronnie Smith

In attendance: Ann Baxter, Ronnie Gilmour, Nicola Mulholland, Candy Munro (CDN Governance Associate), John O'Hara (Senior Learner Engagement Officer), Diane McGill, Penny Neish

1. Chair's welcome

Dave Winning (DW) welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that this was the last meeting of the CSAO Committee for Ann Baxter, Catriona Blacker, Stella McManus, and Julie Webster. He thanked them all for their participation and their significant contributions to the Committee. DW also welcomed Candy Munro as an observer. Candy had recently undertaken an External Evaluation Review of the effectiveness of the Board and its committees and will lead a workshop on her major findings immediately following this meeting of the CSAO. Her full report will go to the next meeting of the Board on 9 June 2025.

2. Apologies: as noted above.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minute of the CSAO meeting on 17 February 2025

The Minutes were agreed.

5. Matters arising

5.1 Green Skills Gap – Industry view update. Joanne Rosie (JR) reported that because of the complexity and breadth of the work undertaken by Scottish Power it was proving challenging to find the individual or department with whom the college should make contact. Christopher Moore (CM) welcomed JR's suggestion to discuss how to take this forward.

Action: *Joanne Rosie and Christopher Moore to explore the opportunities for NCL and Scottish Power on green skills*

Regional business

**6. Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) and Self Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP)
NCL**

Ann Baxter (AB) reported to the CSAO: The first quarterly meeting with SFC to discuss the new Outcomes and Assurance arrangements was held on 17 April 2025 and attended by Erica Russell-Hensens, Mairi Mitchell and Linda McLeod.

Topics covered included credits achieved to date, NCL's SDS apprenticeship 2024/25 allocation of new starts, of which NCL used 221 of the 223 allocated, in addition to 96 SECTT and 38 CITB apprentices. Improved retention of students and increased recruitment figures were also highlighted.

The Self-Evaluation and Action Plan was well received and the meeting was described as constructive and good to hear first-hand about recent developments and future strategic direction of the college.

Mairi Mitchell, Institutional Engagement and Outcomes lead contact, will be on maternity leave for the next meeting, and we will be notified in due course who will be taking over this role.

To date there has been no contact from QAA to arrange an Institutional Liaison meeting.

SLC

Stella McManus (SMcM) advised the CSAO that SLC had also now had its first quarterly meeting with SFC and had raised issues regarding the funding allocation, and the gap in credits given against increased demand. SLC has not heard from QAA.

Barbara Philliben (BP) asked about the timeframe for the QAA meetings. AB said they were scheduled to have taken place by March 2025.

BP sought information on any strategic direction given by SFC and was advised that SFC is in listening mode rather than providing guidance at this stage. CM commented that he is keen to seek further information on funding allocations from the Scottish Government but had received no informal follow up from SFC. CM is concerned about the equity of funding across Lanarkshire and considered the situation very unsatisfactory.

7. Themes and Project Showcases

7.1 Theme of meeting: Wellbeing Academies

John O'Hara (JOH) gave his presentation on the Wellbeing Academies at NCL

JOH explained that he had not been able to attend the CSAO's visit to the Wellbeing Academy at Motherwell which had taken place prior to the meeting as he was supporting WorldSkills students competing in Blackpool.

He reported that on a visit to Niagara College in Canada he had been impressed by their holistic approach to education and the wider services provided for students, especially around their wellbeing. He brought the idea back to NCL and put a proposal to the Executive Board who supported his idea and provided a small amount of funding. After a lot of work over the last 2 years this has evolved into NCL's Wellbeing Academies on each of the main campuses. The academies are now flourishing and offer students and staff a range of opportunities to meet with community organisations such as the CAB, mental health groups, and the NHS, as well as providing quiet space where needed.

The academies' strategic direction is focused around 3 major campaigns and are delivered through co-operation with a number of partners and companies:

'Be Well to do Well'

'Be Financially Fit'

'Getting to know you'

All of the 3 campaigns have been running for about 8 months now and are proving to be very successful. 5.5k students have used the facilities to date and demand continues to grow. JOH is working on developing further support for students with an even wider range of partner organisations including physical activities. The feedback from students and staff is very positive.

DW thanked JOH for his presentation and congratulated him on bringing this initiative to NCL. CM commented very positively on the number of students who have engaged in the activities, especially the construction students.

8. Student Association reports

8.1 SLCSA

Catriona Blacker (CB) spoke to the SLCSA report and highlighted:

- The continuing response of students to engage with the SA in all aspects of its work;
- The widening range of activities the SLCSA organises on behalf of the students including Refreshers, Love Your Planet and LGBT+ History Month/Purple Friday;
- The SLCSA's commitment to promote the Student Mental Health Agreement and organise events to enable students to benefit from this project.

- The SA celebrated Care Day for care experienced students by holding an event to encourage those students to discuss their learner experience.

DW thanked CB for her report and again commented on the wide range of activities in which the SLCSA is involved.

8.2 NCLSA

Julie Webster (JW) spoke to the NCLSA report and highlighted:

- A new partnership with the Terrence Higgins Trust as part of the LGBTQ+History Month;
- The appointment of a new Active Campus Co-ordinator who will take up post later in May;
- Passport to Health – a cross campus wellbeing initiative which aims to open the college to the community groups and businesses through a number of events;
- Elections for the Student President 2025 are underway. There are currently 3 Student Presidents, one for each of the main campuses, however as part of a newly revised representation structure, the Students' Association will now include one full-time Sabbatical Officer, who will serve as the Student President for the 2025/26 academic year.
- The recent successful visit by a representative from sparqs who was very impressed by the Wellbeing Academies;
- Herald Higher Education Awards: NCL has been nominated in several categories including:
 - Supporting Student Wellbeing Award: In recognition of the holistic, impactful approach of the College's Wellbeing Academies in supporting student mental health and wellness.
 - Outstanding Contribution from a College Student: Chloe Sandilands has been nominated for her exemplary leadership, dedication to student initiatives, and contributions to the wider college community.
- The visit of Cabinet Ministers to the Cumbernauld Campus

DW thanked JW for her dedication and involvement as Student President over the past year and wished her well for her next steps in education as a student at UWS.

BP asked why it had been decided to change the number of student representatives. AB said that it was as a response from the SA and JOH. It was agreed that there was a need to be mindful of the demand on students' time for the preparation of papers for meetings, etc.

CM added his thanks to JW for attending this meeting of the CSAO as she had recently been very unwell.

SLC Business

9. SLC Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee

Stella McManus (SMcM) spoke to her paper and drew attention to recent activity:

- SLC has, subject to audit, reached its credit target for the current academic year;
- A new curriculum management structure has been established following an 8-week consultation with staff. There will be a focused management tier consisting of one Head of Curriculum, one Depute and eight Curriculum Quality Managers.
- VS application results for academic staff have been published. SLC is still awaiting approval from SFC for a VS scheme for support staff.
- Retention had dropped slightly to 90%, mainly due to withdrawals from full time FE programmes.
- Curriculum highlights include the establishment of Project search and an award winning Painting and Decorating apprenticeship.

NCL business

10.1 Credit and Curriculum update

AB spoke to her paper and reported that the college has achieved 116,847 credits (core target 117,290). NCL remains confident that it will meet its credit target.

Health, Wellbeing and Sustainability continue to be a key feature within a number of programmes, including a staff health and wellbeing event hosted by the Beauty, Aesthetic and Hair Design Department, conservation activities undertaken by students on a variety of science programmes, introduction of digital charting into dental nursing programmes, design of an interactive nutrition course by the sports team, sustainable tourism and visit to the Business school providing an insight into the role of sustainability

The Staff Development Academy has been preparing a plan for staff development commencing in 2025/26. There are two themes:

- Meta-skills – to provide an understanding of meta-skills for staff to support the meta-skills diagnostic tool as part of the “Getting to Know you” campaign and retention strategy;
- GTCS Professional Update – to support staff to start planning and gathering information for their GTCS professional update.

Priority students: Events are planned, “Ready Set Success” aimed at welcoming new priority students. This will contribute to a positive and supported start to their educational journey. (Priority students are identified at the point of application through a unique, evidence-based formula that predicts their likelihood of early withdrawal. Students with a 50% or higher risk rating are flagged as priority. Internal statistics confirm the reliability of this formula, demonstrating a strong correlation between the score and actual withdrawal rates.).

10.2 NCL Committee and Learning and Teaching Group Update

AB spoke to Jennifer Lowe’s paper and highlighted:

- **Lanarkshire Institute of Apprenticeships** was formally launched in March 2025, showcasing NCL’s ambition to become the leading provider of high-quality apprenticeships. A key feature of the initiative is the Alumni Network, designed to connect current and former apprentices with industry professionals.
- **160 years of the Coatbridge Campus campaign** was formally launched on 22 April 2025 when staff and students were invited to an evening of creativity and history via a showcase of artwork created by NCL’s students. A further week-long celebration is planned week beginning 16 June 2025.
- **Awards:** NCL has been shortlisted for the Herald Awards in the following categories:
 - Marketing/PR Campaign of the Year – Cumbernauld Kids;
 - Widening Access – The Undergraduate School;
 - Supporting Student Wellbeing Award – Wellbeing Academies;
 - Outstanding Contribution from a College Student – Chloe Sandilands;
 - Partnership with Schools Award – Having a Ball – A Football Partnership;
 - Outstanding Business Engagement in Colleges – Preparing CAD Students to Step into the Workplace;
 - Outstanding Contribution from a Staff Member – Neil McMullen,
 - Lifetime Achievement Award – Ann Baxter, Deputy Principal for Students and the Curriculum.

10.3 Developing the Young Workforce and the Undergraduate School

Nicola Mullholand (NM) gave a verbal report

School College partnerships

NM gave a brief overview of the ongoing school/college partnerships in place at NCL. NM reported that the college was closely monitoring further withdrawal data to ensure any possible remedial action was taken at the earliest opportunity. There was some evidence that the slight increase in withdrawals had been influenced by the industrial action earlier in the year.

NCL's partnership with North Lanarkshire Council continues to flourish and discussions for next academic year are in hand with some consideration being given to extending the college's work into primary schools. Recruitment is strong currently standing at around 1800. Further details will be provided at the next meeting of the CSAO.

A new qualification in engineering will be certificated by NCL in August; 28 people from North Lanarkshire Council are signed up and there is wider interest in this qualification.

Undergraduate School overview:

- Minimum recruitment target: 339 full-time students
- Currently 306 live applications
- 270 conditional acceptances
- 3 condition offers
- 1 unconditional offer
- 10 unconditional acceptances
- Areas of growth and strength to highlight:
 - Social Science: AY24/25 8 students. Target of AY25/26 IS 12. Currently 21 applications
 - Cyber Security Y2: 28 applications

BP commented that the key to successful recruitment is partially related to the timing of applications to enable informed decision making. NM agreed.

10.4 Complaints Report

AB spoke to her paper.

A total of 21 complaints were received in quarter 3, of which 12 were closed at stage 1, 7 were closed at stage 2, and 2 complaint remains open at time of report. Of the closed complaints, 15 complaints were closed within the required timescale and 4 were closed within the additional permitted time.

Previously when a complainant contacted SPSO (Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman), an investigation of the original complaint would take place by SPSO, however SPSO now can request a resolution-based approach to be taken. There was a stage 2 complaint closed in December 2024 and SPSO were keen for the college and the complainant to consider a resolution-based approach. The college was willing to meet the complaint and respond to the request for further information, however the complainant was unwilling to do so. A written response was provided and to date there has been no further communication. The Ombudsman has been kept up to date.

10.5 College Leaver destination 2022-23

The Scottish Funding Council's [College Leaver Destinations 2022-23 report](#) published 16 April 2025. NCL's qualifier destination confirmation rate had increased and was above the national average. An action plan had been put in place to address this following a 2 year trend in declining confirmation rates.

The report also showed a slight increase in the numbers of college leavers going into work or university and NCL was above the national figure for positive destinations. Progression onto further study for NCL students is also above the national figures.

10.6 Student Survey Report 2024/25

The Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey (SSES), devised by the SFC is a measure to evaluate and enhance college provision in Scotland, has just closed at NCL. A report will be prepared for the next CSAO meeting, however interim figures indicate that overall completion rate is above 50 across full time courses at all campuses.

11. Chair's Update – Counselling Course

AB reported that there had been a whistleblowing incident but following an investigation there were no concerns regarding the qualification of staff.

General Committee business

11. Approval of Publication of Committee Papers:

- i) Agenda for the CSAO 12 May 2025
- ii) Minutes of the meeting 17 February 2025
- iii) SLCSA Report
- iv) NCLSA Report
- v) SLC Learning and Teaching and Student Experience Committee – *via the SLC website*
- vi) NCL Credit and Curriculum update
- vii) NCL Committee and Learning and Teaching Group update
- viii) NCL Complaints Report

12. AOB: there was no other business.

13. Date of Next Meeting: The scheduled date for the next meeting is Monday 1 September 2025 at the Coatbridge Campus and via Zoom

FOR DISCUSSION/INFORMATION			
Meeting:	Curriculum and Student Affairs and Outcome		
Presented by	Jennifer Lowe		
Author/Contact	Jennifer Lowe	Department / Unit	Executive
Date Created	12 August 2025	Telephone	7265
Appendices Attached	College National Pls – 2023 - 24		
Disclosable under FOISA		No	

1. PURPOSE

To update CSAO on NCL KPI performance for 2023 -24 in comparison to others in the sector, by level and mode of attendance.

2. BACKGROUND

Report provided to CSAO to update on progress against targets or achievement.

3. DETAIL

SFC College Statistics 2023-24 which provides an overview of college sector statistics from 2014-15 to 2023-24 can be accessed at: [College Statistics 2023-24 - Scottish Funding Council](#)

4. BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Information will enable discussion of progress made to date and opportunities for improvement going forward.

5. STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The Board retains an overview of NCL activity in the interests of good governance.

6. RISK

College performance included on the Risk Register.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Inability to achieve KPI targets could result in loss of income to New College Lanarkshire.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications.

9. WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no workforce implications.

10. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no reputational implications.

11. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no equalities implications.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

CSAO are asked to note the information contained in this report and discuss the content.

College National PIs – 2023 – 24

College	FEFT 23/24				HEFT 23/24				FEPT 23/24				HEPT 23/24			
	% Completed Successful	% Partial Success	% Non-completion	Total	% Completed Successful	% Partial Success	% Non-completion	Total	% Completed Successful	% Partial Success	% Non-completion	Total	% Completed Successful	% Partial Success	% Non-completion	Total
Scotland	67.1%	12.4%	20.6%	40520	66.9%	16.0%	17.1%	24475	80.4%	12.4%	7.3%	40520	81.7%	12.0%	6.2%	8851
Glasgow Region	61.8%	16.0%	22.2%	7520	64.9%	17.5%	17.6%	9208	77.5%	13.6%	8.9%	13593	75.6%	15.2%	9.2%	1819
Lanarkshire Region	62.8%	13.5%	23.7%	5093	64.7%	16.7%	18.6%	2604	79.9%	13.0%	7.0%	8292	75.0%	15.8%	9.2%	683
Highlands & Islands Region	71.0%	12.1%	16.8%	3787	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	84.8%	9.5%	5.7%	11645	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
Argyll College	56.8%	19.8%	23.5%	81	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	77.4%	13.4%	9.2%	1269	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
Ayrshire College	67.9%	10.7%	21.4%	2299	63.3%	14.8%	21.9%	1427	81.0%	10.4%	8.6%	6520	89.5%	5.6%	5.0%	504
Borders College	70.0%	7.9%	22.1%	796	67.6%	13.1%	19.2%	213	81.9%	8.2%	9.9%	1474	82.3%	3.1%	14.6%	96
City of Glasgow College	59.0%	16.5%	24.5%	2785	65.2%	17.1%	17.7%	6045	79.8%	8.8%	11.5%	3710	76.7%	16.2%	7.2%	557
Dumfries and Galloway College	71.3%	10.4%	18.3%	788	72.3%	11.3%	16.4%	311	90.5%	5.2%	4.3%	2945	89.1%	5.7%	5.2%	192
Dundee and Angus College	70.8%	9.9%	19.2%	2897	74.4%	12.1%	13.5%	1367	78.1%	9.1%	12.8%	3825	84.6%	5.1%	10.4%	415
Edinburgh College	70.5%	10.0%	19.4%	3259	74.1%	11.7%	14.3%	2446	78.3%	15.1%	6.5%	7825	85.3%	9.4%	5.4%	1473
Fife College	62.6%	13.2%	24.1%	3274	62.3%	18.4%	19.3%	1640	85.0%	9.4%	5.6%	4490	84.0%	11.1%	5.0%	1330
Forth Valley College	69.2%	7.1%	23.7%	1807	68.8%	10.5%	20.7%	989	89.4%	6.1%	4.6%	3856	85.3%	10.2%	4.5%	696
Glasgow Clyde College	60.7%	21.3%	18.1%	2842	66.6%	17.3%	16.1%	2193	77.8%	14.0%	8.2%	5987	75.4%	14.4%	10.2%	852
Glasgow Kelvin College	67.8%	7.2%	25.0%	1893	59.1%	20.3%	20.6%	970	74.8%	17.6%	7.6%	3896	74.6%	15.6%	9.8%	410
Inverness College	75.4%	11.2%	13.3%	1034	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	84.8%	10.1%	5.1%	1956	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
Lewis Castle College	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
Moray College	66.8%	8.1%	25.1%	798	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	79.7%	12.0%	8.3%	1275	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
New College Lanarkshire	56.3%	15.6%	28.1%	3543	62.2%	18.2%	19.7%	1959	79.6%	13.0%	7.3%	7054	77.9%	13.3%	8.8%	502
Newbattle College	68.8%	8.3%	22.9%	48	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
North East Scotland College	71.6%	11.1%	17.3%	3679	72.7%	13.9%	13.4%	1965	85.3%	10.6%	4.1%	3985	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
North, West and Hebrides	65.3%	18.5%	16.1%	675	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	81.0%	11.6%	7.4%	2834	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
North Highland College	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
Orkney	79.7%	13.0%	7.3%	123	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	94.0%	4.9%	1.1%	1594	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
Perth College	72.8%	11.4%	15.8%	989	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	80.0%	13.5%	6.5%	1119	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (data below threshold)																
Shetland	82.8%	9.2%	8.0%	87	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	95.5%	1.8%	2.8%	1598	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
South Lanarkshire College	77.5%	8.8%	13.6%	1550	72.2%	12.4%	15.3%	645	81.6%	12.9%	5.5%	1238	66.9%	22.7%	10.5%	181
SRUC Land based	70.4%	15.2%	14.4%	645	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	85.5%	10.4%	4.1%	2051	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
University of Highlands and Islands																
West College Scotland	67.3%	13.9%	18.7%	3414	61.6%	21.4%	17.0%	1672	65.7%	24.5%	9.8%	10011	76.0%	21.6%	2.4%	801
West Highland College	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
West Lothian College	72.7%	8.8%	18.5%	1214	72.4%	15.1%	12.5%	616	93.3%	3.0%	3.7%	3187	88.7%	5.5%	5.7%	505

FOR DISCUSSION/INFORMATION			
Meeting:	Curriculum and Student Affairs and Outcome		
Presented by	Jennifer Lowe		
Author/Contact	Jennifer Lowe	Department/Unit	Executive
Date Created	15 August 2025	Telephone	7265
Appendices Attached	Credit, Curriculum and College Committee Update		
Disclosable under FOISA		Yes	

1. PURPOSE

To update CSAO on NCL credit target and draft KPI performance for 2024-2025 by level and mode of attendance.

2. BACKGROUND

Report provided to CSAO updates on end of year credit and achievement targets.

3. DETAIL

The report includes data submitted to SFC and current draft NCL performance in 2024-2025.

4. BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

This report illustrates the progress made in relation to KPIs measures and gives a greater understanding of departmental activity.

5. STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The Board retains an overview of NCL activity and SELT committee in the interests of good governance.

6. RISK

Credit performance is included on college risk register

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Inability to achieve SFC credit targets could result in loss of income to New College Lanarkshire.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications.

9. WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no workforce implications.

10. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no reputational implications.

11. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no equality implications.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

CSAO are asked to note the information contained in this report and raise or discuss any issues which may prevent publication.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper seeks to provide an update on the credit target for academic year 2024-2025, recruitment, retention, the indicative funding allocation for 2025-2026 and a synopsis of learning, teaching and alternative funding activity.

2. CREDIT, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION 2024-2025

- 2.1 For academic year 2024-2025, New College Lanarkshire was allocated a core credit of 117,290. Foundation Apprenticeships were no longer allocated as additional credits and this activity was incorporated into core funding targets. At the time of writing this report in August 2025, student enrolments had given the college 117,760 credits.
- 2.2 Credit and Performance Monitoring Report was reviewed fortnightly by the Executive Board and Deans.
- 2.3 Subject to credit audit, the college has achieved the allocated credit target for session 2024-2025.
- 2.4 The table below show the college position in relation to overall recruitment, early withdrawal and further on 31 July 2025 - Appendix 2 summarises the position in relation to Departmental Credit and Retention on 31 July 2025.

Table 1

Enrolments, Early and Further Withdrawals – 31 July 2025

Level/Mode	Enrolled	EW	% EW	FW	% FW	Retention
FEFT	4136	260	6.35%	956	23.35%	70.33%
FEPT	6646	296	5.15%	339	5.9%	88.95%
HEFT	1871	81	4.33%	361	19.32%	76.35%
HEPT	496	29	6.07%	32	6.69%	87.24%

3. National Examinations

3.1 SQA results published on 5 August 2025

Table 2

LEVEL	OUTCOME							
NAT 5				24/25	23/24	22/23	21/22	20/21
	FAIL	PASS	Grand Total	%Pass	%Pass	%Pass	%Pass	%Pass
ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES	15	16	31	51.6	72.2	62.5	45.5	81.3
APPLICATIONS OF MATHEMATICS	5	4	9	44.4	90.9	50	66.7	53.3
MATHEMATICS	27	12	39	30.8	64.7	38	47.2	70.5
Total at Nat 5	47	32	79	40.5	71.4	40.5	54.3	71.6

LEVEL	OUTCOME							
HIGHER				24/25	23/24	22/23	21/22	20/21
	FAIL	PASS	Grand Total	%Pass	%Pass	%Pass	%Pass	%Pass
ENGLISH	11	21	32	65.6	72.4	73.3	73.6	96.8
Total at Higher	11	21	32	65.6	72.4	73.3	70.8	95.0

3. National Examinations (cont.)

- 3.2 NQ Appeals 2025 is open and provides candidates who are concerned about their grade with the opportunity to appeal through the college or directly to SQA.

Following deadlines for candidates and centre submissions:

Appeals service opens to candidates and centres on 5 August

Priority appeals service for candidates closes	12 August 2025 at 23.59
Priority appeals service for centres closes	21 August 2025 at 17.00
SQA issues outcomes for priority appeals to centres	1 September 2025 at 09.00
SQA confirms outcomes to UCAS	2 September 2025
Non-priority appeals service for candidates closes	26 August 2025 at 23.59
Non-priority appeals service for centres closes	29 August 2025 at 17.00
SQA issues outcomes for non-priority appeals	October 2025



4. Overall KPI five-year trend for all modes of delivery

- 4.1 In sessions 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, EIS-FELA in addition to taking strike action participated in “Actions Short of Strike Action” (ASOS) that included a resulting boycott, involving members withholding students' results. This is reflected in the number of outstanding results at the end of July.
- 4.2 In sessions 2024-2025, a few results remain outstanding, and includes national results and catch-up with students in August due to health issues. When results are finally submitted and processing achievement reported below will be updated.
- 4.3 KPI five-year trend – Further Education – Full-time

Table 3

Academic Year	Early Withdrawal	Further Withdrawal	Partial Success	Success	Unknown result at end of July
2020 - 2021	5.41%	14.65%	16.1%	63.84%	
2021 - 2022	7.2%	18%	14.7%	60.1%	
2022 - 2023	7.7%	13.9%	0.48%	3.53%	74.3%
2023 - 2024	5.04%	26.6%	-		68.3%
2024 - 2025	6.35%	23.35%	9.18%	59.78%	1.34%

- 4.4 In session 2024-2025, Further Education – Full-time was 57.4% of activity at New College Lanarkshire.
- 4.5 KPI five-year trend – Further Education – Part-time

Table 4

Academic Year	Early Withdrawal	Further Withdrawal	Partial Success	Success	Unknown result at end of July
2020 - 2021	2.89%	5.44%	19.75%	71.92%	
2021 - 2022	4.4%	7.6%	15.52%	72.5%	
2022 - 2023	5.02%	6.52%	4.88%	36.5%	47%
2023 - 2024	5.32%	6.99%	0.86%	12.6%	74.3%
2024 - 2025	5.15%	5.9%	8.64%	76.57%	3.74%

- 4.6 In session 2024-2025, Further Education – Part-time was 17.9% of SFC credit activity at New College Lanarkshire.



4. Overall KPI five-year trend for all modes of delivery (cont.)

4.7 KPI five-year trend – Higher Education – Full-time

Table 5

Academic Year	Early Withdrawal	Further Withdrawal	Partial Success	Success	Unknown result at end of July
2020 - 2021	5.41%	14.65%	16.1%	63.84%	
2021 - 2022	7.2%	18%	14.7%	60.1%	
2022 - 2023	7.7%	13.9%	0.48%	3.53%	74.3%
2023 - 2024	4.44%	18.7%	-	-	76.9%
2024 - 2025	4.33%	19.32%	14.55%	55.91%	5.89%

4.8 In session 2023-2024, Higher Education – Full-time was 22.6% of SFC credit activity at New College Lanarkshire.

4.9 KPI five-year trend – Higher Education – Part-time

Table 6

Academic Year	Early Withdrawal	Further Withdrawal	Partial Success	Success	Unknown result at end of July
2020 - 2021	2.6%	4.5%	20.08%	72.81%	
2021 - 2022	5.21%	4.69%	15.28%	72.4%	
2022 - 2023	9.7%	6.74%	5.87%	14.08%	63.6%
2023 - 2024	5.81%	8.1%	3.1%	2.13%	80.8%
2024 - 2025	6.07%	6.69%	7.19%	59.55%	20.74%

4.10 In session 2024-2025, Higher Education – Part-time was 2% of SFC credit activity at New College Lanarkshire.

5. ALTERNATIVE FUNDING ACTIVITY – MODERN APPRENTICESHIPS AND EXTERNAL FUNDING

- 5.1 Modern Apprenticeship team has a contract allocation for session 2025-2026 (April 25 – March 26) to the value of £1,234,286. NCL's allocation for this year saw a £171k increase in value from last year with an additional 14 new start places. There was no bidding process for 2025-2026 due to the planned changes to move responsibility of MA funding from SDS to SFC.

New Start Allocation for 25/26 – 223 – Dept breakdown:

- Automotive - 55
- Business Administration - 28
- Dental Nursing - 30
- Electronic Fire & Security - 60
- Engineering - 50

Engineering starts have been slightly decreased for this contract year due to ongoing staffing issues and limited achievers – Automotive, Dental and Electronic Fire & Security have been allocated additional starts as a result.

To date we have 55 new starts on the system with a KPI Target of 63 for end of August. Income to date from April 2025 is £350k with a KPI Target of £456k for end of August.

- 5.2 External Funding and International team have secured the following:

- Turing Scheme AY 2025-2026: £204,940.00 to support transnational mobility for 123 students and 28 accompanying staff. £26,940.00 to support unaccompanied mobility of 22 HE students.
- Cycling Scotland: paid secondment of a Campus Cycling Officer to join the Wellbeing Academy
- Vodafone Communities Connect Fund: 50 SIMS for students.

Two applications were submitted to the Scottish Government's Test and Learn Programme (Scottish European Education Programme). One is for NCL alone for a staff mobility to visit the international partners who attended International Week, requested grant is £17,402, the other is cross-sectoral bid on behalf of the CLIC partnership and Strathclyde University which was for £34,835.

Finally, £3000 from North Lanarkshire Council remains of the prize money for students winning the Step-up to Start-Up competition, which will be launched in September.

6. DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES

- 6.1 **Access and Progression department**, in partnership with Support for Learning undertook internal foundation skills competitions, which provided a valuable opportunity to engage at all levels and gain meaningful insight into the competitive environment. For the first time, a Supported Learning student has progressed to the finals within the horticulture category of the World Skills competitions (James Armstrong).

In addition, for the second consecutive year, the department are delighted to announce that a NAT4 Care student has qualified for the finals in their competition (Kate Halsey). The finals will take place in Wales in Friday 28 November.

- 6.2 **Automotive Studies** department over the summer period purchased a DAF CF450 truck which brings the centre up to date with Euro 6 vehicle emissions technology resources and will take delivery as soon as possible.

Department has been in discussion with the Energy Skills Partnership about housing some new equipment which they are purchasing through a Transport Scotland grant. The equipment should bring electric vehicle technology into our HGV centre. ESP are in the phase of making the purchase and the equipment will have approximately a 12 week build time before it can be delivered.

The Motorcycle section have arranged for guest speakers throughout the year, including Police Scotland, The Institute of Advanced Motorists, Scottish Fire and Rescue and Scottoiler. These talks will benefit students by increasing their knowledge of responsible road use and product awareness.

Discussions are underway with a key employer to explore a workplace and training scheme that could offer a pathway to employment for 3rd year light vehicle students. More updates to follow as discussions continue.

- 6.3 **Beauty, Aesthetics and Hair Design** department is thrilled to announce that our Academic Leader, Neil McMullen, has been named a 2025 Silver Winner of The Pearson National Teaching Awards.

This is a truly outstanding and well-deserved achievement and one that the department and the entire college are immensely proud of. Neil's dedication and impact were also proudly recognised in the Scottish Parliament on Thursday, 19 June 2025, bringing further honour to New College Lanarkshire.

As a Silver Award winner, Neil will now be considered for a Gold Teaching Award in his category, with final results to be announced in late November.

This is a fantastic milestone, and we are so proud of Neil's success. We wish him all the very best, our fingers are firmly crossed for November!

6. DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES (cont.)

- 6.4 **Computing and Digital Technologies** department are looking forward to the new academic year, welcoming new and returning students with the aim of developing and improving the student experience. Department is also hoping to engage with the honorary appointees to create and enhance relationships with industry.

The department has also engaged with the wider college community by offering RevivR – a quick, easy, and interactive CPR training course developed by British Heart Foundation. This was led by Academic Leader, Claire McRae within the Wellbeing Academies.

- 6.5 **Construction Trades Technology** department has reviewed accommodation over the summer period and the newly rejuvenated teaching areas were ready for the start of term.

Within Electronic and Fire and Security section, 10 of the pre-apprentices gained a Modern Apprenticeship within the industry and will be returning this academic year to college on the MA course.

The department have been asked to host the SECTT West of Scotland Apprentice of the Year competition in June 2026.

At the end of session 2024-2025, Level 1 Joinery students participated in a community benefits project at St Dominic Primary School in Airdrie. In addition, Timetra provided the opportunity of work placements for 10 of our students from the Joinery courses of which, 2 gained a Modern Apprenticeships and are returning to college this session.

- 6.6 **Culinary Arts** department has undertaken a review of resources for session 2025-2026. Demonstration kitchen/classroom recommissioned enhancing resources and furthering opportunities to partner with employers and public sector offering professional space and opportunities for students. First professional demonstration being facilitated on 14 August 2025, showcasing leading advanced equipment to department staff, developing knowledge and expertise. This activity is facilitated by a former student working for a leading company (thermomix) and will be followed up by an information session on the integration of fair-trade products within the curriculum.

Refurbishment/refresh Kitchen F1 Coatbridge campus (ongoing), which will help support a proposed initiative/unit development to promote Health Improvement Skills for Life to the wider college community. Promotion of skills, knowledge and attributes that can contribute to the health improvement of our college community, leading to a reduction of childhood poverty, enhancing life opportunities and chances.

Scottish Parliament Dinner on 1 October 2025 with students and staff hosting a pop-up restaurant in the Scottish Parliament for invited guests. This is a fantastic opportunity for students to showcase their skills, whilst gaining invaluable experience which is established through collaborative working relationships.

Department Lecturer representing NCL at the Pastry Arts World Competition Seminar November 2025, Limassol Cyprus. Ann Brown will be facilitating a Seminar Instructor role, whilst representing New College Lanarkshire; link below:

<https://worldchefs.org/event/pastry-arts-competition-seminar-limassol/>

6. DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES (cont.)

- 6.7 **Dental, Science, Health and Social Care** department has developed a number of new partnerships including with SSPCA who have guaranteed places to volunteer with them for all our animal care students (Level 5). As a result of this partnership, several students have signed up to become Ambassadors with them and will continue volunteering in future years, helping to make a contribution to the community.

The department has acquired new equipment for deliver a new unit – First aid for Pets: bandages, animal mannequins for simulating handling, bandaging and two dog mannequins to practice CPR on animals. A ‘fake’ dog paw model was also purchased for practicing giving injections/IV to help engage students with their learning.

GoPro cameras have now been purchased for the CLIC project. The cameras will enable us to create 360-degree videos for Virtual Reality headsets, providing an innovative way to develop scenarios that enhance the student experience.

In Dental, the team commence Year 2 of the BSc programme for the first time in in September 2025. The addition of new CAD equipment to support the learning and teaching of scanning patient’s mouths and digital charting, CAD training will ensure that student experience will be sector leading and at times ahead of current practice.

Vicki Gault received the Ann Baxter award for her commitment to social values and the Department are very proud of her.

- 6.8 **Education and Sport** department continues to strengthen partnerships with Local Authorities. Following a successful tender, the Department of Education & Sport will partner with North Lanarkshire Council (NLC) to deliver a one-year Modern Apprenticeship in Social Services (Children and Young People) at our Motherwell Campus. Upon successful completion, students will receive a qualification registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The programme will place particular emphasis on key curricular areas, including Forest Play, Mindfulness, STEM in Early Years, and Froebel training with graduates of the Modern Apprenticeship well prepared to fill a broad range of Early Years roles across the local authority.

This initiative builds on a series of recent opportunities within the department, including a two-year PDA Childhood Practice programme with NLC, and complements a pending 2–4-year degree partnership in collaboration with the University of the West of Scotland (UWS).

The Department also continues to support staff and students Mindfulness. In March 2025, lecturer Deirdre McAuley successfully completed a five-day Mindfulness Teacher Trainer programme with Mindfulness Now, enabling her to design and deliver mindfulness sessions for staff and students across all campuses.

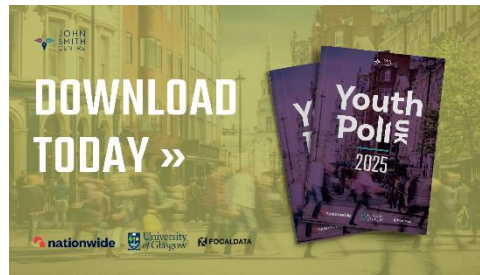
Since qualifying, Deirdre has led an eight-week programme for staff, aligned to the Mindfulness Now framework. She also delivered a workshop at the Child Poverty Symposium and facilitated a range of targeted sessions for both staff and students.

Going forward, Deirdre intends to embed mindfulness within tutorial time to provide students with practical strategies they can apply both within and beyond the College. This approach is expected to support focus, resilience, and overall wellbeing with the potential to contribute positively to student retention.

6. DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES (cont.)

The offer is flexible and can be delivered as a single session or as a structured series of up to eight one-hour sessions for staff and students. We anticipate a wider positive impact, equipping learners with reflective tools that encourage appreciation, progress, and personal growth across all areas of life.

- 6.9 **Humanities** department students on Level 6 Social Science took part in research with the John Smith Institute. [UK Youth Poll 2025 - John Smith Centre](#)



Introduction key findings, themes, actions, blogs and resources. Report can be downloaded at www.johnsmithcentre.com

Humanities department had FE and HE students take part in the Mobilities programme. In particular, the students that were part of the FE VET had a fantastic time in Italy and took a lot from the experience. The experience has enhanced their classroom learning, with the students seeing the relevance in a work-based setting.

A L6 Social Science student from CB secured an internship at Summerlee looking at decolonising their collections.

Breaking the Cycle 3.0 is being planned for November 2025.

- 6.10 **Lanarkshire Business School** is looking forward to welcoming their first group of level 10 (Honours) students on the B.A. degree in Business and Sustainability in our Coatbridge campus. This exciting development will see our students undertake a range of modules including Sustainable Development Goals in a Business Context, Organisational Strategy and Culture and Research Design and Methods.

Delivery of the degree will be mostly based in Coatbridge, however, our students will attend UWS's Lanarkshire campus one day a week where they can take advantage of its many facilities.

In May the Department were delighted to welcome Matthew McDermott from WBG Services in the areas of accountancy, advisory, audit and tax to the Coatbridge Campus of New College Lanarkshire. Matthew is one of the honorary associates within the Undergraduate School and kindly accepted our invitation to join us as a guest speaker. During a highly informative session, he provided our HND and B.A. Accounting students with details of his job role and the wider opportunities available for graduates within WBG Services.

6. DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES (cont.)

Matthew shared with our learners his own personal academic journey and spoke about pathways to professional qualifications, accountants in practice, accountants in industry and induction and starting in the workplace.

- 6.11 **Music and Performing Arts** department has a number of new developments and remains actively engaged in several initiatives that align with their core values and strategic goals:

Academic Programme Developments includes:

- **BA (Hons) Sound Production and Music**, now officially approved and demonstrates strong alignment with industry skill needs and cross-disciplinary pathways.
- **Masters in Performing Arts**. Programme design near completion with targeted launch of August 2026. This programme is Intended for working professionals across performance disciplines.

Events and Showcases continue to feature including:

Dance End of Year Show – Hamilton Town House

- Held at a major venue with high-quality student performances.
- Collaboration with Music department who provided Live Music
- Positive feedback from attendees, including external musicians and educators.

BA Honour's Festival

- Attended by industry specialists from across the UK.
- Students presented original and collaborative work, receiving direct feedback from professionals.

Recruitment and Admissions

- Applications for session 2025/26 are significantly up year-on-year.
- Fast-track processing introduced, with faster turnaround from application to offer.
- Early acceptance rates are high, particularly for performance-based courses.

Community Partnerships

- All existing community partners have confirmed continuation into next academic year.
- Ongoing collaborations include outreach projects, shared performances, and joint workshops.
- New partnership opportunities under discussion to widen student engagement.

Music and Performing Arts department is proud to acknowledge staff achievements including:

James O'Neill

- Recipient of the Ann Baxter Award.
- Recognised for his musical contributions to local communities, including work with adults in recovery and children in deprived areas.
- Frequently volunteers outside of hours to support student performances and build inclusive environments.



6. DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES (cont.)

Alan Currie

- Lead role (Jean Valjean) at King's Theatre in April 2025.
- Part of the national "Let the People Sing" project, which marks 40 years of *Les Misérables*.
- One of several NCL staff and alumni involved across creative and technical roles.

Kieran Young

- Sessional lecturer and musical director for the same production.
- Oversaw auditions from over 300 performers to cast 52 roles.
- Praised the exceptionally high-performance standard and diversity of the final cast.

6.12 **Staff Development Academy** is delighted to open the new academic year with the following activity:

- All Staff Essential Learning 25/26 – launched on the 1 August as requested by Professional services colleagues. This year we continue to keep staff up to date on cyber security and data protection, alongside new modules on fire safety, sexual harassment and safeguarding. A Board Member's version will be ready very soon.
- A programme of professional learning is planned for staff including GTCS Professional Update workshops, "Save a life" CPR Training, Using Clevertouch panels and promoting positive behaviour in the classroom.
- The Staff Development Prospectus is ready with over 75 opportunities for staff to undertake professional learning in 25/26, including certificated courses, bespoke workshops and a range of self-learning programmes.
- On the 1 September the Staff Development Academy will launch phase 1 of the Staff Development Portal which is a tool for all staff to log their professional learning, request bursary to support external development, book workshops, log their Professional Development Discussions and for academic staff to log their evaluation of learning and teaching activity. Phase 2 will include the logging of all qualifications and vocational development and is planned for December. This will ensure a one-stop shop for all staff encouraging them to take up learning opportunities and supporting academic staff with their GTCS Professional Update.
- Professional Services and Academic Leaders monthly workshops are planned for Academic year 25/26 with a range of topics to support currency and their operational role.
- The SDA have supported the Mentorship Programme with Development Sessions for both mentors and mentees – the pilot was launched prior to the summer break.

On a final note all of the above activities have been planned and designed in response to last year's workforce survey and focus groups – "You said, We did". This activity raised the SDA profile and focused the offer of development opportunities for staff.

6.13 **Support for Learning** student Finlay McConnell on the Connect to the Arts programme represented Down Syndrome Scotland at Chelsea Flower show in May 2025. The garden will be place at Palace Rigg Country Park. Through this Finlay raised great publicity for Down Syndrome Scotland and is actively involved with the charity to help raise awareness.



6. DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES (cont.)

- 6.14 **Visual and Creative Arts** department ended the year with an Art & Design - EOY Exhibition in June 2025. HN Art and Design Students showcased their work at Made in Stirling in June. Audrone (Audra) Aleskuta (HNC) was presented with a prize to exhibit & showcase her body of work in the Exhibition and Retail space. Made in Stirling Team highly praised the professionalism of the students and high quality of work presented within the Exhibition.

Art & Design will continue with community links at the Palacerigg Country Park Festival 2026. The Art and Design Team will work together with their Groups and the Palacerigg Community Trust to develop a Curriculum wide project inspired by Palacerigg Country Park and Visitor Centre. The work produced will be exhibited within the Park in a Festival to Launch the Park and Community Trust in March 2026.

Film section will again be delivering The Social Connects in partnership with BBC. The Social includes a series of Masterclasses and guest speakers ahead of students pitching their film ideas to the producers and hopefully being screening on their website.

Sureserve offered an HNC TV student a summer internship in their marketing department and the department will continue collaborating with them throughout the term

HND MUA are designing and creating the makeup FX for Award winning Producer Gary Hewitt's new film, whose most recent series is being screened on STV Player. Shoot starts at beginning of September.

Through our partnership with BPerfect Cosmetics, the company support students with ongoing trends led Masterclasses, interview skills, student discounts in store and online, and provide employment opportunities when they arise. Currently 4 students who were recruited as Christmas temps have been offered permanent employment.

Partnering with MAC Cosmetics at the pro store in Glasgow, they will provide industry led Masterclasses for all students as well as launching their student pro cards with us offering students up to 40% off in store.

7. College Committee Updates Students, Education, Learning and Teaching (SELT)

The Students, Education, Learning and Teaching (SELT) Committee hosted *NCL's Got Talent* at the end of the academic year, showcasing innovation and best practice in learning and teaching across the college. The event was attended by more than 200 academic and professional services staff, generating strong enthusiasm for continuing such opportunities to share practice. Looking ahead, SELT is developing its plans for Academic Year 2025/26, with a focus on three key areas:

Educational Innovation Hub:

- A Hub will be established at the Motherwell campus.
- It will promote best practice in artificial intelligence and wider innovation in learning and teaching.
- The Hub will provide a collaborative space for staff to experiment, share, and embed innovation.

Student Experience Project (SEP):

- SELT will lead NCL's SEP, aimed at improving student outcomes by strengthening processes, technology, people and structures. The project is shaped around:
- Promoting a shared understanding of student experience;
- Using evidence-based approaches beyond the classroom;
- Applying evidence-based practice to curriculum reform;
- Actively caring for students by fostering a strong sense of belonging;
- Drawing on good practice from other SEP or transformation programmes across the sector.

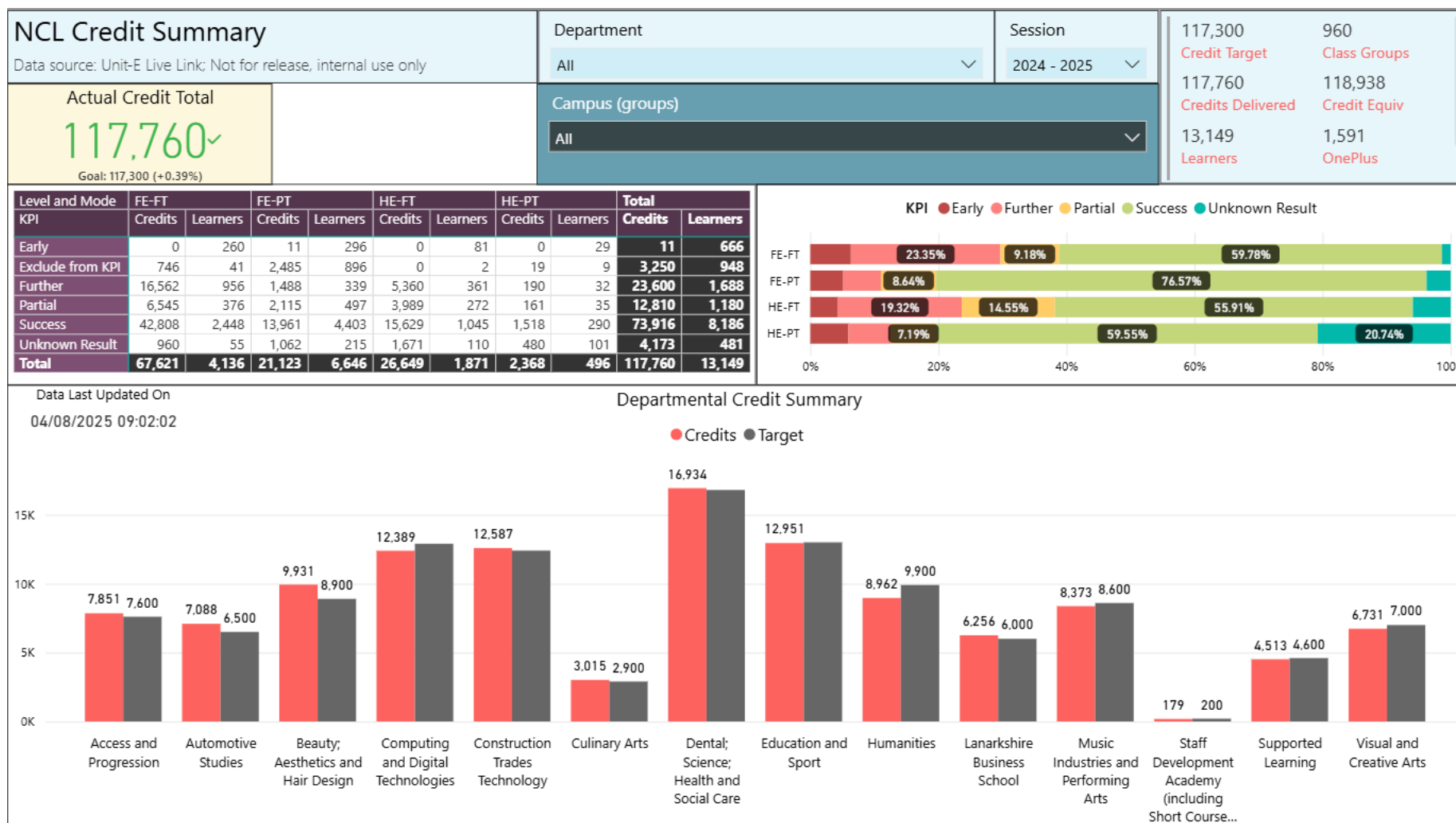
Every Student Campaign

This campaign focuses on ensuring that every Care Experienced student feels supported, valued, and empowered. It is framed around three themes:

- Understanding student context recognising the life circumstances that shape engagement, learning, and success.
- Personalising the educational experience addressing barriers and challenges to student participation and achievement.
- Empowering students enabling students to influence decisions about the services and support that affect their lives.



Appendix 1 – NCL Credit Summary – 31 July 2025



Appendix 2 – Departmental Credit and Retention Summary – 31 July 2025

Department	FEFT Enrolled	FEFT Withdrawn	FEPT Enrolled	FEFT Withdrawn	HEFT Enrolled	HEFT Withdrawn	HEPT Enrolled	HEPT Withdrawn
Access and Progression	363	82 (22.6%)	556	43 (7.7%)				
Automotive Studies	341	88 (25.8%)	336	25 (7.4%)				
Beauty, Aesthetics and Hair Design	501	166 (33.1%)	299	61 (20.4%)	40	13 (32.5%)		
Computing and Digital Technologies	303	99 (32.7%)	423	45 (10.6%)	347	70 (20.2%)	152	10 (6.6%)
Construction Trades Technologies	489	142 (29%)	1186	97 (8.2%)			34	5 (14.7%)
Culinary Arts	146	45 (30.8%)	133	11 (8.3%)	26	8 (30.8%)		
Dental, Science, Health and Social Care	609	157 (33.8%)	460	65 (14.1%)	292	79 (27%)	102	18 (17.6%)
Education and Sport	414	115 (27.8%)	1485	79 (5.3%)	226	67 (29.6%)	34	8 (23.5%)
Humanities	291	118 (40.5%)	392	82 (20.9%)	200	52 (26%)	29	5 (17.2%)
Lanarkshire Business School	149	49 (32.9%)	354	58 (16.4%)	230	64 (27.8%)	97	13 (13.4%)
Music and Performing Arts	106	34 (32.1%)	341	24 (7%)	350	43 (12.3%)	3	-
Staff Development Academy			335	1 (0.3%)			44	2 (4.5%)
Supported Learning	217	9 (4.1%)	183	8 (4.4%)				
Visual and Creative Arts	207	63 (30.4%)	163	39 (23.9%)	160	24 (15%)	1	-

Best in Class!

Undergraduate School Quarterly
Summer 2025 Edition



Hello & Welcome

I am absolutely thrilled to share that the Undergraduate School won a prestigious award at the Herald Education Awards in Glasgow last month. The Widening Access Award, one of a slew for New College Lanarkshire, is validation of our unwavering commitment to transforming lives right here in North Lanarkshire. We've always known that our region deserves better than being second-lowest in Scotland for degree attainment, with just 23.1% of adults holding qualifications compared to the national average of 32.5%. This award proves we're not just talking about change - we're delivering it.

The numbers speak volumes about our remarkable journey since launching in June 2024. While we initially hoped for 50 students, over 180 brave souls took that first leap of faith across our initial seven courses. Today, we're celebrating over 300 students across our expanded programmes - each one a testament to the power of accessible, local higher education.

What makes me particularly proud is who our students are. Nearly 70% are women, and almost 40% come from Scotland's most deprived areas. These aren't just statistics - they represent real people from our communities who are seizing opportunities that might never have existed otherwise.

This award belongs to every student who took a chance on themselves, every staff member who believed in our vision, and every community partner who supported our mission.

You'll hear from some of those staff and students in these pages, and meet some of our new honorary appointees as we gear up for a fantastic year two of the undergraduate school.

Nicola Mulholland

Dean of the Undergraduate School & Academic Partnerships



Shaheen Tariq

Lecturer



Shaheen Tariq's journey from retail and investment banking to New College Lanarkshire' lecturer shows how following your passion can change your life

"I was constantly being pulled into training projects, but I needed a change," Tariq reflects on her banking career. Her transition proved natural: "My passion for politics made the seem like the obvious choice." Starting on a temporary contract she joined NCL in 2019 and quickly fell in love with the job.

What sets Tariq apart is her innovative approach to engagement. "I try to make it visual and do things differently to pull everyone in," she explains. Her hybrid teaching model accommodates older students who need online flexibility, while her use of contemporary examples sparks meaningful classroom discussions.

Teaching in an area of significant deprivation, Tariq understands her students' challenges

intimately. "Many arrive with self-doubt, having been told they'll never amount to anything," she observes. Her response is something her students calls "The Shaheenism method"—providing students with "a platform to be the best version of themselves and tools to succeed."

She describes teaching the Social Science degree at the Undergraduate school over the past year as a brilliant experience. "The students have been great, as has the support from UWS, and we've not had a single drop out."

"I'm very much a people person," Tariq emphasizes, and through listening to students and ensuring "they learn what they need in a fun way," she continues to help student achieve what they thought they couldn't.

Chloe Sandilands

Student President at Motherwell



Chloe Sandilands' journey to winning the Outstanding Contribution from a College Student Award at the 2025 Herald Education Awards began from the most challenging circumstances. When she first enrolled at New College Lanarkshire for her Computing course, Chloe was homeless, having been kicked out of her parents' house and living out of a backpack while sleeping on friends' couches.

Rather than being defeated by these circumstances, Chloe channeled her experiences into extraordinary leadership. After flourishing in her first year and securing accommodation, she progressed to the college's undergraduate school and successfully ran for Student President. Her early struggles instilled a passionate commitment to sustainability and helping others who felt powerless.

As Student President, Chloe has delivered remarkable impact both locally and nationally. She is one of only two students in Scotland chosen by QAA as Topic Leads, working

at national level to shape tertiary quality assurance models across Scottish institutions. Her initiatives include establishing the Buddy Programme for new students, collecting for food banks and running sustainability workshops.

Chloe's leadership extends beyond formal roles. She increased the college's social media engagement significantly, organised cross-departmental events fostering collaboration, and established the Motherwell Student Council. Her work with the Supported Learning Department demonstrates her commitment to inclusivity and has created lasting change.

Colleagues praise her as "incredibly **thoughtful and caring,**" noting her ability to **connect with students from all backgrounds while maintaining infectious humour and positive energy that motivates the entire college community.**

Ministerial Visit



New College Lanarkshire welcomed Graeme Dey, Minister for Further and Higher Education, to its Motherwell Campus in April, where he witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of innovative educational partnerships in widening access to higher education.

Staff and students presented on how the partnership has delivered six new degree programmes, all developed and delivered by NCL, attracting approximately 200 students with an impressive retention rate of 88%.

Significantly, 40% of students enrolled come from SIMD 20 areas, highlighting the programme's success in reaching communities that have traditionally faced barriers to higher education access.

The degree programmes have been strategically designed to align with the specific skills requirements of Lanarkshire, covering critical sectors including:

- Health and Social Care
- Digital & AI
- Cyber Security
- Dental Nursing

During his visit, Minister Dey, who was accompanied by our honorary appointee Professor John McKendrick, praised the undergraduate school repeating his earlier comments that colleges and universities are "doing lots of other things behind the scenes for which they are not given credit" in their efforts to widen the access pool to higher education.

Meet our new Honorary appointees

As the Undergraduate school grows, we are delighted to welcome a new batch of leaders and thinkers who care deeply about Lanarkshire and its future.

David Equi

CEO and Managing Director of Equi's Ice Cream, a much loved fourth-generation Lanarkshire family business.

Yvonne Lindsey

Director of Telecom Networks, a successful telecommunications company, with extensive experience in customer service, sales, and business leadership.

Susan Burn

An experienced business analyst with a passion for charitable work. She is a panel member within the Children's Hearing System Scotland and the Law Society of Scotland.

Jon Burn

Chair of George Taylor and Company, which operates the largest foundry and ironworks in Lanarkshire that can trace its roots back to a humble blacksmith's in 1832.

Cat Boyd

A writer, filmmaker, poet and trade union activist who has become a challenging and insightful voice in Scottish public life.

Louise Long

Chief Executive of NHS Lanarkshire, bringing over 30 years' public sector experience across education, social work, and health and social care.

Gareth McGuinness

A leader in technological adaptation, who is currently Vice President, Technology of Haleon, a multinational Health Care Cpmpany.

Eve Lewis

Director of sparqs (student partnerships in quality Scotland), an agency which puts students at the heart of decisions being made about the learning experience.

David Wood

Appointed as CEO of Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire last year, David is an experienced leader of voluntary organisations in England and Scotland.

Bob Morton

The director of RPM Arts, a Theatrical production company.



**NEW
COLLEGE
LANARKSHIRE**

Undergraduate School

Spring 2025 Edition

Degree	Target	No. of Live Applications
BSc Computer Networking	12	12
BA Childhood Practice	0	0
BA Accountancy	15	13
BA Filmmaking and Scriptwriting	12	7
BA Filmmaking and Scriptwriting	8	10
BA Business with Sustainability	10	15
BA Business with Sustainability Hons	8	9
BEng Cyber Security Y3	15	19
BEng Cyber Security Y2	20	32
BA Social Sciences Y3	12	7
Business Enterprise with Marketing	20	17
BSc Digital Development with...	15	19
BA Music Performance/Sound Production	30	40
BA Music Performance/Sound Production (Hons)	15	15
BSc Dental Nursing Y1	40	56
BSc Dental Nursing Y2	40	26
BSc Dental Nursing Y3	10	7
BSc Collaborative Health and Social Care Y2	30	18
BSc Collaborative Health and Social Care Y3	25	25
Totals	337	347

No. of Conditional Offers	No. of Conditional Acceptances	No. of Unconditional Offers
0	1	0
0	0	0
0	1	0
0	0	0
0	4	0
0	3	0
0	2	0
1	8	2
0	2	0
0	3	0
0	2	0
0	1	0
0	7	0
0	7	0
0	15	0
0	21	0
0	5	0
1	4	1
0	23	0
2	109	3

No. of Unconditional Acceptances	Pre-enrolled
0	10
0	0
0	11
0	7
1	5
3	8
2	5
1	7
4	25
0	5
5	10
3	15
0	29
0	0
3	35
0	4
2	0
1	7
0	0
25	183



FOR DISCUSSION/INFORMATION			
Meeting:	Curriculum and Student Affairs and Outcome		
Presented by	Nicola Mulholland		
Author/Contact	Nicola Mulholland	Department / Unit	SMT
Date Created	September 2025	Telephone	2734
Appendices Attached	Developing the Young Workforce/School College Partnership/ Undergraduate School		

1. PURPOSE

To update CSAO on all School-College Partnership Activity and Undergraduate School Developments.

2. BACKGROUND

This paper gives a detailed overview of the core School-College Partnership Activity that operates across the college. NCL has worked in partnership with local authorities for a number of years to support young people to engage with vocational education and provide opportunities for these individuals to experience work-based learning in a variety of modes.

In addition, the paper will also provide information on the progress and development of the Undergraduate School and all related activities. As a new initiative for AY24/25, the Undergraduate School is a key strategic objective for NCL and building capacity for the future.

3. DETAIL

New College Lanarkshire offer a varied programme to schools in five Local Authorities: North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk and Stirling. Our courses range from level 1 to level 7 and cover over thirty disciplines. For AY 24/25, we had 1946 pupils from 134 class groups, bringing in a current total of 6305 credits and an estimated separate income of circa £300k.

The Undergraduate School offers both full-time and part-time study options across 13 undergraduate course options. Almost all of our higher education students now have a degree pathway at NCL with multiple entry points to support articulation from a variety of different NCs and HNC/Ds. In total, for AY24/25, we had 255 FT students and 59 PT, with an income of circa £1.3M

4. BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Recruitment to FT college programmes.
- Enhanced reputation in our local communities.
- Fulfilling national agenda obligations.
- Participating in the widening access agenda.

5. STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The Board retains an overview of NCL activity in the interests of good governance.

6. RISK

Pupils will not sustain the course which will lead to low PIs.

Pupils will not progress on to full time programmes.

Pupils do not have the correct entry requirements.

Students will not sustain their place on an undergraduate programme.

Competition from partner HEIs.

Challenges with regards to infrastructure across Lanarkshire to allow for travel to our main campuses.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is hoped that these courses will be feeder courses for the full-time programmes of the future.

The Undergraduate School provides an alternative income source for the college and scope for growth both locally and internationally.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications.

9. WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no workforce implications.

10. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Engaging with pupils from our local communities can help to enhance and improve our reputation.

11. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are equalities implications.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

CSAO are asked to note the information contained in this report and raise or discuss any issues which may prevent publication.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper seeks to provide an update on the School-College Partnership Activity and Undergraduate School activity for academic year 2025 – 2026.

2. SCHOOL-COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP 2024 – 2025 KPIs

FE PT

	Number of Pupils	Percentage	2023/2024
Early Withdrawal	121	8.5%	109 (8%)
Further Withdrawal	149	10.4%	206 (15%)
Total number of students	1897		1822

There has been an increase of overall enrolments in 2024/2025 of 75.

There has been an increase in early withdrawals in 2024/2025 of 12 pupils and an overall Credit loss of ~555. Some of this credit loss is due to nature of programme, such courses in Access and Progression. Other areas with high early withdrawals were Early Learning and Childcare, Auto and courses with Beauty, Aesthetics and Hair Design.

There has been a decrease of further withdrawals in 2024/2025 of 57 pupils. Significant improvements in Access and Progression, Construction and Sport.

HE PT

	Number of Pupils	Percentage	23/24
Early Withdrawal	2	4%	2 (3.85%)
Further Withdrawal	5	10%	5 (9.6%)
Total number of students	49		52

There has been a decrease of overall enrolments in 2024/2025 of 3 pupils.

The number of pupils withdrawing early has stayed the same at 2 in 2024/2025.

The number of further withdrawals has stayed the same at 5 in 2024/2025.

3. PROPOSED SCHOOL-COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY FOR 2025 – 2026

SLC

Course Title	Projected Enrolments
Beauty	16
Beauty	16
Beauty	16
Construction A	14
Construction C	14
Construction E	14
Construction B	14
Construction D	14
Construction F	14
Creative and Digital Media	16
EE & Childcare	20
EE & Childcare	20
EE & Childcare	15
EE & Childcare	15
Engineering Skills	16
Engineering Skills	15
Hair & Barbering	16
Hair & Barbering	15
Hair & Barbering	16
Health & Social care	17
Hospitality	11
Hospitality	14
Make-Up Artistry	15
Make-Up Artistry	10
Sport & Recreation	20
Sport & Recreation	14
UES	19
UES	10
FA Engineering Y1	14
SWAP Access to Engineering	8
Winter Leavers	32
	<u>450</u>

NLC

Course	Projected Enrolments
HNC Cyber Security	20
HNC CADD	14
HNC Business	24
HNS Social Science	24

FA Construction	144
FA Social Services Children & Young People	44
FA Social Services Healthcare	23
FA Creative and Digital Media	18
Beauty	68
Hairdressing	16
MUA	16
ELCC	66
Introduction to Scots Law	24
Criminology	20
Engineering Design Challenge	20
NPA Exercise and Fitness Leadership	20
L6 Sports Coaching	13
Football Participation, Coaching and Performance	24
ESOL	20
Construction Winter Leavers	14
	632

NCL ASN

Course	No. of class groups
Robotics	10
Hospitality	10
Digital Media	10
Childcare	10
Sport & Fitness	10
Hairdressing	10
	60

EDC

Course	No. of class groups
Hair and Beauty	34
Football	18
	52

DYW Live

Course	Projected Enrolments
Introduction to Criminology/Psychology	16
NPA Legal Studies	16
	32

We have devised two new programmes to support both North and South Lanarkshire in creating a meaningful pupils experience for those set to leave school in December 2025.

We have worked with our Construction team to devise a programme for this particular cohort in North Lanarkshire which will allow them to continue with their course in January. This creates a seamless transition to college whilst also ensuring a positive destination post-school for these individuals.

For South Lanarkshire, we are working with the Vocational Education Team to support this cohort in preparing to transition to an adult learning environment. From August to the October break, the South Lanarkshire Vocational team will work with individuals on a range of metaskills to support them in being able to successfully attend college. During this time we will assess their career aspirations and look to infill them in to classes which support this from October to December, with a view to these pupils being able to full-time college course in January.

4. EVENTS

NCL attend a large variety of school career events across the academic year.

In 2024/2025, we attended 37 school career events across four local authorities: East Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire and Stirling. Requests are already coming in to college for these events to be supported for 2024/2025, with some events already having taken place.

There are plans for NCL to have a presence at the forthcoming UCAS events in September 2025 to promote our core curriculum and provide pathway information for school-leavers.

We have already identified two provisional dates for celebrations for both North and South Lanarkshire in 2026. These events will take place on Tuesday 24th and Tuesday 31st March from 6pm to 7.30pm. This will be an opportunity to invite parents, carers, teachers and key members from each local authority to our campuses to celebrate the success of their young people in the Senior Phase. Pupils will have the opportunity to showcase what they have learned and achieved as part of their school-college partnership programme.

5. STEM EVENTS

Our annual STEM event in partnership with Developing the Young Workforce regional group for East Dunbartonshire and Lanarkshire will take place on 22nd October 2025. There will be a change to the format for 2025, with pupils only attending for 3 hours in the morning. We are planning for 300 pupils to visit the college in total: 150 S4 pupils and 150 S2 pupils. There will be a mix of workshops, provided by NCL, and an opportunity for pupils to meet with STEM industry leaders.

A further two events are planned for later in the year, in collaboration with Smart STEMs, however, details of this have still to be finalised.

6. NCL's SCHOOLS PRIZE

The NCL Schools Prize competition for S1-3 concluded on 4th of June and the winners were announced as part of our Intergenerational Day to celebrate the 160th Anniversary of our Coatbridge campus.

While the uptake from schools was disappointing, the quality of entries remained high and, once again, the majority of winners were female.

Our Lady's High School Cumbernauld were the winners of the STEM prize and they blew us away with their ingenuity and design skills. Using drone technology, the team created a vehicle for removing carbon dioxide from our atmosphere to support the reduction of greenhouse gases. Their plan included a waterproof coating for their device, taken from natural rubber created from trees. The depth of their research and innovative design was outstanding and clearly demonstrates the bright minds we have in our region.

Greenfaulds High were the winners of the Arts prize and the pupils coupled their artistic creativity with sustainable practices to make ceramic bird baths from reconstituted clay. The designs on the bird baths continued to be inspired by the natural world around us to celebrate the beauty on our planet, but also to remind us of just how critical it is for us to protect it. The pupils plan to sell these bird baths to raise money to contribute towards their own school's Eco Committee or the national Climate Justice

Fund. The pupils kept the focus on suitability by ensuring that the bird baths could be recycled at the end of their life span, truly contributing to the circular economy.

Each of the winning teams received £500 and a trophy.

Consideration will be given as to how we can increase participation in this competition and a paper will be presented to the Executive Board and Deans group in due course.

7. QUALIFICATION DEVELOPMENT

Our inaugural cohort of individuals undertaking our L6 Engineering Challenge Award have all be accredited for successfully completing the qualification and their success captured on Insight to support Grove Academy in evaluating its performance.

Towards the latter part of the academic session in AY24/25, Education Scotland had seconded one of our partner teachers from Grove Academy to travel around Scotland promoting this qualification. Further discussions with other schools across Scotland are planned for the forthcoming months to consider delivery for AY 26/27.

North Lanarkshire Council has adopted this qualification as part of the school-college partnership portfolio for AY25/26, replacing the Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) in Engineering. Recruitment for this has surpassed what we would normally recruit for the FA, pointing to the interest in alternative qualifications for the Senior Phase.

8. SCHOOL-COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP ENROLMENT

Despite trailing a new online system for enrolling school pupils on to school-college partnerships programmes for AY24/25, this proved to be problematic and unsuccessful. Following from this, an internal short-life working group was set up to review processes and procedures. There was representation on this group from Student Records, Academic Departments, the Schools Team and the Information Systems Development Team.

The outcomes from this working group has witnessed an improvement in the enrolment process which will allow pupils to be on registers and access NCL systems, including Moodle, from day 1. In August 2025, over 700 pupils are pre-enrolled for their course ahead of it formally beginning.

9. UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOL RECRUITMENT

Recruitment for the Undergraduate School for August 2024 is outlined in the attached spreadsheet.

10. NEW PROGRAMME

We have been approved to deliver a new programme at SCQF Level 8 (2nd year university). We have been approved to deliver the Y2 programme of the BA Business Enterprise and Marketing degree. This programme articulates directly to the Y3 programme of a similar name and continues to support NCL to deliver entrepreneurial education to those in highly vocational areas.

This programme is enabling NCL to offer those whose vocational qualifications are limited to SCQF Level 7 with a route to degree acquisition, supporting NCL to continue to address the low degree attainment in Lanarkshire, particularly North Lanarkshire.

11. KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE EVENT

A Knowledge Exchange Event took place online between key leads in both UWS and NCL's Student Services teams. This event provided an opportunity for teams in both organisations to come together to share practice and identify opportunities for development to ensure that deliver the best possible support to our Undergraduate School students.

The event was well-received by both teams with colleagues making links and creating networks to better support our students. Some key documents were shared as a result of this event, which will help to better support our students, as well as provide NCL staff with information about key UWS student services processes and procedures.

Other actions have arisen from this event, including the possible development of the UWS student app to focus on supporting the specific student journey of our Undergraduate School students and the creation of a collaborative podcast focused on academic skills to support student success.

12. INDUCTION

As part of this year's induction, our Undergraduate School students will attend West Fest at the UWS Blantyre campus. West Fest is UWS's annual welcome festival and NCL Undergraduate School students will attend on Tuesday 9th September 2025, 11am – 1.30pm.

The students will take part in a welcome session, and have the opportunity to engage in a variety of activities, including games, stalls and freebies. Students will also be able to access information on student support, development opportunities and extra-curricular activities.

Thanks to UWS as they have kindly agreed to transport our students via bus to Blantyre from both our Motherwell and Coatbridge campuses.

13. PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT

Proposals are being finalised for developing some of our degree provision and will be submitted for consideration to the Executive Board and Deans in due course.

Some ideas include adopting the framework created by our Music team with the opportunity for students to undertake core units and then specialise in their particular discipline of interest. In addition, new proposals may include review of pathways from the HNC Schools' Pathway provision.

14. UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOL QUATERLY SUMMER EDITION

The summer edition of our Undergraduate School Quarterly was shared with our Honorary Appointees in August 2025. The main focus of this edition was our success at the Herald Awards in May 2025.

The edition celebrates the success of the Undergraduate School winning the Herald Award for Widening Access, with almost 40% of our Undergraduate School students for AY 24/25 coming from SIMD 20.

Furthermore, we also celebrated the success of our outgoing Student President, Chloe Sandilands, who won Outstanding Contribution from a College Student Award on the same night.

15. NEW HONORARY APPOINTEES

The Undergraduate School celebrated its 1st Anniversary on the 10th June 2025 and we celebrated by inducting new Honorary Appointees to our Undergraduate School.

Our Honorary Appointees from our first year were invited along for a lunch in our MLOne Restaurant, along with our new Honorary Appointees to celebrate the success of the Undergraduate School's first year.

The new Honorary Appointees inducted on the day are as follows:

David Equi

CEO and Managing Director of Equi's Ice Cream, a much loved fourth-generation Lanarkshire family business.

Yvonne Lindsey

Director of Telecom Networks, a successful telecommunications company, with extensive experience in customer service, sales, and business leadership.

Susan Burn

An experienced business analyst with a passion for charitable work. She is a panel member within the Children's Hearing System Scotland and the Law Society of Scotland.

Jon Burn

Chair of George Taylor and Company, which operates the largest foundry and ironworks in Lanarkshire that can trace its roots back to a humble blacksmith's in 1832.

Cat Boyd

A writer, filmmaker, poet and trade union activist who has become a challenging and insightful voice in Scottish public life.

Louise Long

Chief Executive of NHS Lanarkshire, bringing over 30 years' public sector experience across education, social work, and health and social care.

Gareth McGuinness

A leader in technological adaptation, who is currently Vice President, Technology of Haleon, a multinational Health Care Company.

Eve Lewis

Director of sparqs (student partnerships in quality Scotland), an agency which puts students at the heart of decisions being made about the learning experience.

David Wood

Appointed as CEO of Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire last year, David is an experienced leader of voluntary organisations in England and Scotland.

Bob Morton

The director of RPM Arts, a Theatrical production company.



FOR DISCUSSION/INFORMATION			
Meeting:		Curriculum and Student Affairs and Outcome	
Presented by:	Jennifer Lowe		
Author/Contact:	Ann Baxter	Department/Unit:	Executive Board
Date Created:	August 2025	Telephone:	2359
Appendices Attached:	Annual Complaints Report 2024 – 2025		
Disclosable under FOISA:		Yes	

1. PURPOSE

To update CSAO with an update on complaints handling within the college.

2. BACKGROUND

Annual and quarterly reporting required to meet compliance as stipulated by the SPSO.

3. DETAIL

Report shows current college performance in relation to complaints handling for the second quarter.

4. BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity for CSAO members to understand the patterns of activity recorded within CHP.

5. STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The Board retains an overview of NCL activity in the interests of good governance.

6. RISK

That the College does not comply with the SPSO procedures and timelines.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications.

9. WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no workforce implications.

10. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no reputational implications.

11. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no equalities implications.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

CSAO are asked to note the information contained in this report.

Annual Report – Complaints

1 August 2024 – 31 July 2025

Date of Publication: October 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper provides an update on the number of complaints received and outcome for Academic Year 2024 – 2025 (1 August to 31 July 2025).

2. GOVERNANCE

- 2.1 As required to comply with the governance of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO), all complaints received are logged within the college Complaints Handling Process (CHP) and an annual report submitted to the SPSO.

3. COMPLAINTS UPDATE

- 3.1 A total of 78 complaints were received in Academic Year, of which 51 were closed at stage 1, 26 were closed at stage 2 and 1 complaint remains open at time of report.
- 3.2 Of the closed complaints, 45 stage 1 complaints (88.2%) were closed within the required timescale and 18 stage 2 complaints (69.2%) were closed within the required timescale.

4. ANNUAL COMPLAINT REPORT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Standardised reporting template – complaints performance indicators											
Created on: 04/08/2025											
	COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE INDICATORS	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4		YTD	2024/2025
1.0	Total number of complaints received & complaints received per 100 population										
1.1	Number of complaints Received	15		17		21		25		78	78
1.2/1a	College Population and Number of Complaints received per 100 population	10497	0.1	10205	0.2	9257	0.2	8116	0.3	12308	12308
2.0	Number of complaints closed at each stage and as a % of all complaints closed										
2.1/2a	Number of complaints closed at Stage 1 and % of total closed	14	93.3%	11	64.7%	13	61.9%	13	52.0%	51	51
2.2/2b	Number of complaints closed at Stage 2 and % of total closed	1	6.7%	6	35.3%	8	38.1%	11	44.0%	26	26
2.3/2c	Number of complaints closed after Escalation and % of total closed	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0
2.4	Open	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	4.0%	1	1
3.0	Number of complaints upheld, partially upheld and not upheld at each stage and as a % of complaints closed at that stage										
3.0	Stage 1										
3.1/3a	Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 1	3	21.4%	1	9.1%	2	15.4%	1	7.7%	7	7
3.3/3c	Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 1	5	35.7%	5	45.5%	6	46.2%	9	69.2%	25	25
	Number and % of complaints partially upheld at Stage 1	6	42.9%	4	36.4%	4	30.8%	3	23.1%	17	7
3.0	Stage 2										
3.4/3d	Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 2	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	12.5%	5	45.5%	6	6
3.6/3f	Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 2	1	100.0%	3	50.0%	4	50.0%	3	27.3%	11	11
	Number and % of complaints partially upheld at Stage 2	0	0.0%	3	50.0%	1	12.5%	3	27.3%	7	7
3.0	Escalated										
3.7/3g	Number and % of complaints upheld after Escalation	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0
3.9/3i	Number and % of complaints not upheld after Escalation	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0

4.0	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at each stage												
4.1/4a	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 1	56	4.0	44	4.0	28	2.2	30	2.3	158	3.1	158	3.1
4.2	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 2	39	39.0	116	19.3	130	16.2	151	13.7	436	16.8	436	16.8
4b	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints after Escalation	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
5.0	Number and % of complaints closed within set timecales (S1=5 workings days; S2=20 working days ; Escalated = 20 working days)												
5.1/5a	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 5 working days	10	71.4%	9	81.8%	13	100.0%	13	100.0%	45	88.2%	45	88.2%
5.2/5b	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed within 5 working days	4	28.6%	2	18.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	11.8%	6	11.8%
5.3/5c	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 20 working days	0	0.0%	4	66.7%	4	50.0%	10	90.9%	18	69.2%	18	69.2%
5.4/5d	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 20 working days	1	100.0%	2	33.3%	4	50.0%	1	9.1%	8	30.8%	8	30.8%
5.5/5e	Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 20 working days	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
5.6/5f	Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 20 working days	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
6.0	Number and % of complaints closed at each stage where extensions have been authorised												
6.1/6a	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 10 working days (extension)	3	75.0%	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	83.3%	5	83.3%
6.2/6b	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed within 10 working days (extension)	1	25.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	16.7%	1	16.7%
6.3/6c	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 40 working days (extension)	1	100.0%	2	100.0%	4	100.0%	1	100.0%	8	100.0%	8	100.0%
6.4/6d	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 40 working days (extension)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
6.5/6e	Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 40 working days (extension)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
6.6/6f	Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 40 working days (extension)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

5. COMPLAINTS BY CATEGORIES

Category	Complaints in Category
Application, Admission, Interview, Enrolment, Induction	2
Assessment & Exams, Certification	6
Catering	1
Course Management	6
Diversity and Equality	7
Environment/Resources	1
Facilitated Learning Support	1
Funding/Bursary	1
Health and Safety	3
Learning & Teaching	12
Maintenance, Lifts, Car Parking	2
Progression, Articulation & Withdrawal	3
Staff Conduct	16
Student Records	1
Other	15
Total	77

6. EXAMPLES OF LESSONS LEARNED AND ACTIONS IDENTIFIED

- Schools should be encouraged to share as much information about a school pupil coming on a school-college link programme as they can. Schools should be clear with parents that all communication regarding pupils on school-college partnership programmes should go through the school and not directly to the college. Communication and support could be improved to ensure all students receive the guidance and assistance they need.
- Induction days are key to identifying issues early and working on early interventions and that these should be undertaken earlier in the year if possible.
- Improve departmental student induction process whereby students will be instructed to inform staff immediately if they become injured and remain in position until a staff member/first aider can assess the situation.
- Staff will remind students of the code of conduct and the roles and responsibilities within. Staff have been and will continue to be cognisant of personality differences when planning group tasks to support a positive classroom dynamic.
- Parking – students to be encouraged to park with consideration of the community, however if a Resident is blocked in or lost the use of their designated parking bay then it has to be reported to the Police at that time in order for them to deal with the issue. If Estates Staff/College Staff are made aware of a parking issue/anti-social behaviour Police Scotland need to be informed at that time.



FOR DISCUSSION/INFORMATION			
Meeting:	Curriculum and Student Affairs and Outcome		
Presented by	Jennifer Lowe		
Author/Contact	Jennifer Lowe	Department / Unit	Executive
Date Created		Telephone	7265
Appendices Attached	Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey Report Session 2024-25		
Disclosable under FOISA		Yes	

1. PURPOSE

To update CSAO on the output from annual monitoring of student satisfaction.

2. BACKGROUND

SFC require all Colleges to distribute survey as a means to evaluate and enhance college provision in Scotland.

3. DETAIL

The report shows departmental, level and mode of attendance and campus completion rates.

4. BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Information has been shared with staff and actions for improvement identified.

5. STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The Board retains an overview of NCL activity in the interests of good governance.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications.

8. WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no workforce implications.

9. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no reputational implications.

10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no equalities implications.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

CSAO are asked to note the information contained in this report and raise or discuss any issues which may prevent publication.

Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey Report

Session 2024/2025



Contents

Contents	2
Survey Rationale & Methodology	3
Departmental completion rates in 2023/2024 and 2022/2023	3
Level and Mode of attendance completion rates	4
Complete rates in relation to campus	4
Satisfaction rates in relation to individual questions and level of study	5
Actions to take forward	6
Additional questions	7
Satisfaction rates in relation to college devised questions and level of study	7

Survey Rationale & Methodology

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) require all Colleges to distribute the Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey (SSES) as a means to evaluate and enhance college provision in Scotland. The survey provides a national approach to monitoring student satisfaction and engagement in Scotland's College and annual guidance issued by SFC¹ to colleges includes the selection criteria and questions. Statement 1 from the SSES 'Overall, I am satisfied with my college experience' was reported as a national measure.

The survey is directed at students on a programme of study that is four credits or more and includes coverage of full and part-time groups including school pupils. Data collected is analysed on level and student mode of attendance.

SFC do propose online completion of the survey by students and to facilitate this online links are distributed via MyDay App, and Academic Departments, however, for many students who prefer to complete the survey on paper, this is accommodated and data is entered on their behalf. Daily updates on participation levels are provided to the Academic Heads of Departments and Academic Leaders, who in turn encourage class groups to complete the survey. All students who complete the survey are automatically entered into a prize draw to win one of 10 x £50 Love to Shop vouchers.

Departmental completion rates in 2023/2024 and 2022/2023

Department	Actual Response	Possible Response	Response Rate % 2024/2025	Response Rate % 2023/2024
Access & Progression	345	428	80.6	75
Automotive Studies	231	439	52.6	64
Beauty, Aesthetics & Hair Design	325	544	59.7	69.5
Computing & Digital Technologies ²	530	863	61.4	57.6
Construction Trades Technology	584	810	72.1	58.7
Culinary Arts	88	166	53	68
Dental, Health & Social Care				53.1
Dental, Science, Health & Social Care ³	441	875	50.4	
Education and Sport	484	784	61.7	64.9
Humanities	244	564	43.3	45.8
Lanarkshire Business School	226	327	69.1	63.6
Lanarkshire Institute of Science & Technology				65
Music Industries & Performing Arts	228	450	50.7	56.1
Supported Learning	243	274	88.7	79.7
Visual & Creative Arts	223	373	59.8	56.7
Total	4192	6897	60.8	61.1

Many Academic Departments had increased the response rate to the survey, three had a small drop in response rate, but achieved overall target of +50% and one did not achieve target.

¹ [College Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey Guidance 2024-25 - Scottish Funding Council](#)

² Now includes Computer Aided Design and engineering apprenticeships

³ Now includes Science



Level and Mode of attendance completion rates

Level and Mode	Response Rate % - 2024/2025	Response Rate % - 2023/2024
Further Education – Full Time	71.88	66.68
Further Education – Part Time	46.24	50.03
Further Education – Distance/Flexible	31.43	27.33
Higher Education – Full Time	56.97	64.13
Higher Education – Part Time	62.03	66.84
Higher Education – Distance/Flexible	56.14	64.04
Overall Total	60.8	61.1

Complete rates in relation to campus

Campus	Response Rate % - 2024/2025	Response Rate % - 2023/2024
Broadwood	53.7	65.8
Coatbridge	58.7	62.5
Cumbernauld	67.3	64.3
Kirkintilloch	76.1	60.6
Motherwell	59.7	60.5
Online/Various		20.4
Total	60.8	61.1



Satisfaction rates in relation to individual questions and level of study

Percentage of students agreeing with the statement.

Question	FE satisfaction %	HE satisfaction %	Overall satisfaction 2024/2025 %	Overall satisfaction 2023/2024 %
Overall, I am satisfied with my college experience	93.7	92.4	93.3	92.5
Staff regularly discuss my progress with me	88	85.9	87.4	88.8
Staff encourage me to take responsibility for my learning	96.2	95.5	96	95.4
I am able to influence the learning on my course	92.3	86.5	90.6	90.2
I receive useful feedback which informs my future learning	91.9	87.9	90.8	89.9
The way I am taught helps me learn	90.2	87.8	89.5	89.3
My time in college has helped me develop knowledge and skills for the workplace	92.8	91.7	92.5	92.6
I believe student suggestions are taken seriously	87.5	85.2	86.8	84.9
I believe all students are treated equally and fairly by staff	90.4	89.2	90.1	89.3
Any changes in my course or teaching has been communicated well	88.5	86.6	88	86.3
The online learning materials for my course have helped	87.6	89.5	88.2	86.6
I feel part of the college community	89.3	84.2	87.9	86.2
The college Students' Association influences change for the better (including don't know respond)	62.8	47.5	58.3	51.9
The college Students' Association influences change for the better (excluding don't know respond)	94.6	87.4	92.7	91.7

Actions to take forward

All Heads of Academic Departments were aware that the SFC would like all colleges to achieve at least 50% return rate and when this was not achieved feedback was requested from the Department. A summary of the feedback is below:

Are there any actions that the College, e.g. Quality Team/Students' Association/Learner Engagement could have taken that would have helped the Department achieve 50% completion of the survey?

Perhaps, after a period of grace (e.g. a full month from issue), students should have an automatic pop-up reminder to complete the survey.

What additional actions could the Department have taken to enable the Department achieve 50% completion of the survey?

Moving forwards, it would help if course tutors distribute paper copies of the survey in class to ensure completion. Learners were encouraged on an almost daily basis to complete online, but many failed to do so. It seems Humanities students are reluctant to complete online surveys; however, hopefully in future paper copies (face-to-face completion) will yield better results.

Survey opened at an assessment heavy time of the year, with many HNC groups preparing for Graded Unit Closed Book assessments. Class attendance was low over this time, so difficult to catch students face-to-face.

More accurate recording of student completion required. Staff will be encouraged to take note of students who have completed and haven't.

Many of the class groups completed paper copies, however, as the students did not enter their student numbers, the surveys couldn't be recorded on their behalf. This happened with some ESOL groups. Positive feedback from students around the adapted survey for, the groups found this accessible.

Getting the students to complete the survey closer to the live date within the class time. As this is during external exam diets and assessment heavy periods, the attendance of the classes falls quite quickly.

Question 13 – *"The college Students' Association influences change for the better"* is the only question that has a don't know option response. The outcome from the survey was shared with the outgoing Students' Association, as well as the new Student President. For those students who knew about the Students' Association, the level of satisfaction to this question, was comparable to the other questions within the survey.

The profile of the Student Association is changing for session 2025 – 2026, with one Student President covering all campuses. Going forward, it is the intention that a number of events, such as Be Heard, open mic and focus groups will highlight the role of the Students' Association and how they influence change. Other activities organised by the Students' Association will be supported and promoted by the Brand Team, Heads of Department, Deans and Executive Team.

Additional questions

In addition to the survey question from the SFC additional questions were included in the study related to various services within the college. The response to these questions is not returned to the SFC, but shared with staff and can contribute to self-evaluation and review of services.

Satisfaction rates in relation to college devised questions and level of study

Percentage of students agreeing with the statement.

Question	FE satisfaction %	HE satisfaction %	Overall satisfaction 2024/2025 %
The course information on the website accurately reflects the contents of the course I'm doing.	92	92	92
The IT resources and facilities provided have supported my learning well.	91	91	91
The College's MyNCL app is a useful tool in reporting absence, monitoring attendance, results, etc.	91	87	90
The library services (e.g. books, online services and learning spaces) have supported my learning well.	91	87	90
I know about the help I can get if I have a learning problem.	93	89	92
I know that I can get help from Student Services.	92	87	90
The support the college provides for my personal wellbeing is good.	92	89	91
The café/canteen provide a good range of food and service.	85	73	81
The College is an inclusive community where diversity is valued.	95	94	94

A Vision for the Delivery of Skills, Vocational and Technical Education in Scotland



Professor Joe Little
August 2025

1. Executive Summary

This paper from [Professor Joe Little](#) explores the future of skills, vocational, and technical education delivery in Scotland, considering the significant disruption driven by technological advancements, particularly AI, and other global shifts like climate change and changing demographics.

It discusses the role of futurism in preparing for uncertain futures, outlines potential future scenarios related to education and society, and examines the current landscape of colleges in Scotland in the context of these trends.

It looks at what is considered World-Class Vocational and Technical Education and makes recommendations for the sector to consider in planning ahead for the coming decade.

The structural policy environment in nations who are achieving World-Class VET include:

- College **priorities** driven by **government** in consultation with **business** bodies.
- **Alignment** with **economic** or **business growth** ministries. With economic growth being directly tied to the **provision of key skills** within the workforce.
- Recognition that the **college institution** is key to providing **essential national skills**.
- **International marketing** to supplement income or directly meet government skills demands.
- **Direct consultation with business bodies** both internationally and locally to meet their skills needs and supplement their own income making them significantly more **resilient** to financial challenges.
- Provide **hands-on skills development** alongside online **blended capability**, suited to both the **learner** and **employer**.



2. A Futurists Perspective on Skills, Vocational and Technical Education

This paper sets out to explore the **potential future landscapes** impacting Scotland's colleges, particularly concerning skills, and vocational and technical education (VTET) delivery.

I felt it important to understand first of all the science of futurism and if you prefer **Strategic Foresight** when looking at the future of anything. Strategic Foresight is something **expected of leadership** and yet the pressures of just keeping the lights on often starves leaders of the time to really look at what is happening in their sector, let alone what is happening **globally** that will eventually impact them.

Yet a lack of foresight is often cited as the principle **reason for collapse within companies** as key technological, societal, political, environmental, economical, legal and ethical signals and trends move to being mainstream and policy before the organisation has time to restructure or indeed pivot.

Therefore I think it is important to consider that **"The Future You Were Promised Has Been Cancelled"**, the one we believed would happen by now with flying cars, robot secretaries, cloud bases and lunar cities as predicted by "Tomorrow's World" and other publications hasn't happened but some of that did come about through other means.

Crucially - the skills and roles we see now all had a basis in signals 10 years ago and with **reasonable foresight** could have been prepared for.

However, I believe that the coming decade will be **profoundly disruptive** to traditional notions of the workforce, **how work is performed**, and the **necessary skills needed**.

A major driver of this disruption is the **exponential rise of AI** in various forms, impacting all sectors, from industry and research to the creative arts and in turn education and the acquisition of knowledge and skills.



Futurism is "not about prediction as there are no facts in the future". Instead, it is fundamentally "all about preparation for possible futures". Futurism involves looking for signals of the future, identifying patterns, trends, and drivers. Then exploring a range of possible futures that those elements may evolve into. Then planning for them. Futurists come from diverse backgrounds, including corporate strategists, government agencies, artists, educators, sci-fi writers, historians, technologists, entrepreneurs, game designers, and government advisors and have risen to around 10,000 globally.

The key process of building foresight involves 4 steps by:

- preparing (orienting to the future, identifying drivers and signals)
- foresight (drafting forecasts, exploring unexpected possibilities, drawing out consequences, envisioning alternative futures, articulating and personalising the future through headlines and artefacts)
- insight (riding the two curves, mapping cross-impacts, building resilience, prioritising actions)
- action (building roadmaps, testing and learning, rallying a network and identifying assets and gaps).

A 10 year horizon is considered optimal as within that time frame the future will be significantly different but within our own personal agency to change. Predictions beyond that tend to be too different to comprehend for the audience and the personal agency too far out to care enough to change.

Signals aren't always technological as some people may think but can be **Societal, Technology, Environmental, Economical, Political, Legal, or Ethical** in nature. We must also pay attention to the overarching drivers of change which right now are easy to identify as the **climate emergency, social injustice, increasing economic divide, the dramatic impact of technology**, rising youth **mental health issues**, and the increasing frequency of **polycrises**.

In envisioning a range possible futures it is important not to be drawn to wholly utopian or dystopian outcomes as these rarely occur and often alarm but instead to use **Professor Jim Dator's 4 Alternative Futures Scenario Framework**¹, which provides four potential trajectories for the future:

Growth: Systems continue developing along their current path

Collapse: The current trajectory halts, and systems fall apart

Discipline/Constraint: New forms of restraint are imposed to prevent collapse

¹ [1. Dator's Four Futures – The Foresight Guide](#)

Transformation: Entirely new systems emerge, transcending the present order.

These potential futures raise critical questions for education, specifically:

- What skills do we need to teach?
- What jobs will be available?
- What will the labour market want?

Back in 2022, to an audience of Scottish skills educators and administrators (DESG), I cited a statistic suggesting that "85% of jobs that will exist in 2030 haven't been invented yet"² and gave examples of jobs that existed 10 years prior (e.g. meter reader, TV repairs, assembly line workers), jobs that didn't exist 10 years prior (e.g. social media influencer, blockchain engineer), and jobs we can only imagine being around in 10 years (e.g. cultured meat farmers, robot field trainer, planet B scout, remote vehicle pilot) with a number of signals to support our thinking about future jobs: remote operations centers navigating ships from a building resembling a gaming arcade, to scenarios implying a huge influx of climate refugees, and the rapid growth of the space sector.

Jobs that existed 10 years ago and now gone/going	Jobs that didn't exist 10 years ago	Jobs we can only imagine being around in 10 years
Meter Reader	Blockchain Engineer	Quantum Programmer
Switch Board Operator	Mobile App Developer	Climate Change Scientist
TV/VCR Repair Technician	Sustainability Manager	Robotic Design Architect
Electronics Assemblers	Cloud Computing Specialist	Spaceship Pilot
Video Store Manager/Clerks	Autonomous Vehicle Designer	Remote Vehicle Pilot
Dictaphone Operators	AI/Big Data Analyst	Blockchain crypto Specialist
Film Projectionists	YouTube Content Creator	VUI/BCI Consultant
	Social Media Influencer	Environment Ecological Artificial Intelligence Officer
		Climate Refugee Centre Manager
		Meat Addiction Counsellor
		Ambient Intelligence Experience Designer
		Robot Field Manager
		Neuro-net Awareness Officer
		Nascent Data Harvester
		Planet B Scout
		Agribot Engineer

All of these were intended to demonstrate that **Scotland** would indeed be at the **center of significant skills needs** and **dramatic change** in the jobs and roles required in the future.

² [Realizing 2030: Dell Technologies Research Explores the Next Era of Human-Machine Partnerships | Dell USA](#)

At a macro level technology is set to significantly transform the jobs landscape with predictions from IFTF³ and the Future Today Institute⁴ laying out a futures landscape that implies we are already in a **Technology Super Cycle** nominally titled **Living Intelligence**, with the combined advancements in AI, the doubling of 'Internet of Things' connected devices (wearable, industrial and agricultural), and bioengineering potential (organoid Intelligence, bioprinting electronics, tissue engineering) being the key components that will transform how we view ourselves, our planet and our business and industry.

All of which lead to the conclusion that in the **next 10 years AI symbiosis will be a key skill** expected of all employers in much the same way that the use of calculator in the early 80s and symbiosis with the internet in the early 2000s were seen as key skills.

Our access to knowledge and skills have also significantly changed. Long gone are the days when verifying a key fact would require travelling to meet a **sage**, if you were lucky referencing the Encyclopedia Britannica that your parents invested in or travelling across town to the **library** and traversing the library coding system or **microfiches**. Indeed



in the past 20 years we have had closer and faster access accelerate from encyclopedic CD-ROMs in our basement computers to hand held devices a metre away to wrist based and **eye based XR devices** offering AIs with instantaneous knowledge and skills.

This indicates a key shift in desirable skills "**From Know-It-Alls to Learn-It-Alls**", a theme explored recently by the Deloitte Futures team⁵. Where the thesis that machines will do most things humans already know how to do, suggesting the future belongs to those who are **adaptable learners**.

The employment "Waterline" we use to illustrate that core skills ("Dig Holes & Plant Seeds," "Animal Husbandry") are fundamental, but the "Waterline" representing the necessary **level of differentiated skills** has always risen, requiring a move from **depth to breadth**.

³ [IFTF - The Future Is Wide Open](#)

⁴ <https://ftsg.com/>

⁵ [Future of Work | Deloitte UK](#)

We've always been doing this as human beings for centuries and will continue to do so in order to survive. Teaching breadth, acquisition of a broad range of skills and an aptitude towards **lifetime learning** must become core going forward.

The Waterline Has Always Risen



3. The Current Landscape for Colleges in Scotland

From an independent perspective there are several key issues and trends impacting **the landscape for colleges in Scotland**:

- There has been a **reduction in investment and in the parity of investment** for colleges despite previous recommendations in the Cumberford-Little⁶, Fraser of Allander⁷ and Withers reports⁸.
- Limited debate about Higher Education investment levels for colleges within the university funding discussion.
- A **reduction in young people leaving school and entering Further Education (FE)**.
- Lack of **clarity on priorities from the Scottish Government**.
- Uneven **engagement with businesses** and trade bodies.
- **Government funding addressing poverty issues at the grass roots only** but not necessarily focusing on skills for removing individuals from poverty.
- A lack of much needed **capital investment in buildings for safety and security**.
- Little headroom and poor policy conditions to develop **international engagement** nor incentive to do so.
- Limited and uneven college **alumni engagement**.

Yet there are significant drivers and trends impacting the sector and crying out for change.

With technological drivers predicting **AI transformationally impacting all arts, business and industries including education** (an estimated 48% of current jobs being eliminated or transformed in the next 20 years), acceleration in demand for **robotics, BioTech, NeuroTech, SpaceTech, renewable energy and climate tech skills**.

⁶ <https://view.pagetiger.com/inlhij/1/PDF.pdf>

⁷ <https://fraserofallander.org/publications/the-economic-contribution-of-colleges-in-scotland/>

⁸ [Skills review published - gov.scot](#)

There is also a trend indicating that the way work will get done will also change with a movement from appointments to key roles within a hierarchy of a large company to a **focus on tasks** that can be completed by a badged member of staff, contractor, gig-worker, AI or robot and a symbiosis of skills to identify and execute those tasks being key by 2033⁹.



Scotland will also be hit by two further significant global drivers. Namely the **current climate emergency** with increasing severe climate events each year, lack of **building resilience** to climate events, little provision for **climate refugees** (Glasgow is currently the 4th most desired destination in the Cities@risk register¹⁰. Around the world, anywhere between 200m and 1 billion refugees expected to move in the next 20 years) and the rise of **youth mental health issues** already showing an impact in student dropout and a **significant increase in demand for Additional Support Needs support**.



⁹ [Global Workforce Hopes and Fears Survey 2024 | PwC](#)

¹⁰ [Cities at risk - Lloyd's](#)

4. Global Trends in Skills Teaching

In researching this paper and carrying out workshops with college sector leaders I investigated several futures databases and online feeds directly and indirectly impacting the sector and presented around 50 signals I felt should be front of mind for the leadership.

I also connected with a number of global skills experts in the UK, US, Germany and Asia. What struck me was that a number of global trends were impacting all of them and the necessity to evolve to meet these challenges was very much front of mind.

The drivers and trends that were specifically impacting VTET globally included:

- The increase in life expectancy and an aging workforce. This necessitates lifelong learning, with employees potentially needing to re-skill or up-skill multiple times over careers that could last 60 years or more (around 3-5 times with Deloitte predicting up to 12 times).¹¹
- With that in mind employers are seeking alternative online and micro-credentials to retain workers in the workplace and manage costs. Gone are the days when major employers held week long skills courses in dedicated training centres.
- A common theme was that students are increasingly sensitive to the rising costs of full-time education and increasing personal economic pressures.
- In addition to employers recognising the importance of neurodiverse employees in the workforce there is a rise in the need to support learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN).¹²
- To meet this demand a number of commercially available personal skills platforms, mobile learning platforms, and employer skills assessment platforms are emerging for employers and employees.

An additional and striking trend is that universities and colleges are increasingly using online course delivery platforms to extend their reach globally and provide an alternative commercial income stream at considerably less cost.

¹¹ [Skills-based organizations | Deloitte Insights](#)

¹² [Meeting the support needs of learners in Scotland's colleges | National thematic inspections | HM Chief Inspector reports and guidance | Inspection and review | Education Scotland](#)

Further trends¹³ were found following the success of "Serious Games"¹⁴ and the rise of immersive VR/AR training platforms which are finally moving beyond just medical and military skills and finding success in other less obvious sectors where physical training is either risky, costly or simply unsafe to provide. Supporting that are increasingly more micro-credentials platforms being preferred by trade bodies as a mechanism for certification and qualifications.

Globally, commercially focused colleges are rebalancing their focus towards major employers (local and international) for financial viability, and some are closing physical buildings in favour of online digital and hands-on-skills centres.

The trend is moving from lectures to immersion, mentoring, AI integration, and then practical application - described as "blended by default".¹⁵



¹³ [\(PDF\) Global Trends in Vocational Training Education: A Bibliometric Analysis](#)

¹⁴ [Game-Changers: 18 Serious Games That Changed the World - Growth Engineering](#)

¹⁵ [\(PDF\) Hybrid and Blended Learning Models: Innovations, Challenges, and Future Directions in Education](#)

5. What World-class Vocational, Education and Skills Teaching Looks Like

As with the “Entrepreneurial Campus Blueprint” policy document I was keen not to overly focus on the current best practice within Colleges in Scotland but to look at what is considered **"World Class VTET Delivery"** as I believe that provides more valuable benchmark and context to the organisations who will already be aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Through a number of interviews and research I discovered a series of key attributes of these institutions:



- College **priorities** driven by **government** in consultation with **business** bodies.
- **Alignment** with **economic** or **business growth** ministries. With economic growth being directly tied to the **provision of key skills** within the workforce.
- Recognition that the **college institution** is key to providing **essential national skills**.
- **International marketing** to supplement income or directly meet government skills demands.
- **Direct consultation with business bodies** both internationally and locally to meet their skills needs and supplement their own income making them significantly more **resilient** to financial challenges.
- Provide **hands-on skills development** alongside online **blended capability**, suited to both the **learner** and **employer**.

6. A Personal View of the Future of Scotland's Colleges

Throughout this research of the college sector both historically and current state, locally and globally it became clear to me that the sector in Scotland is in **distinct decline** with little chance in the current paradigm to become a growth sector unless it becomes **sustainable with investment** and makes a **significant change from within**.

The current 24 college structure, with most colleges struggling to survive year-on-year and only a few content with their current status and almost no reward for innovation and commercial entrepreneurship within the institutions has led me to the conclusion that a new model is needed that will deal directly with the issues constraining the 24 colleges and provide a more hopeful future for the sector and indeed move from “**survival mode**” to “**recognised as world-class**”.

For colleges:

Provide a More Engaging and Compelling Skills Offering for Students: Colleges should offer a more attractive alternative to expensive university programmes for school leavers, providing **globally recognised skills attainment**. This includes offering **blended training options** better **aligned to educational and special educational needs**. Courses should be immersive, interactive, and engaging, building confidence for real-world work. Colleges should also build **entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial skills** to cope with the increasing need for successful start-ups and foster the soft skills needed for success in all businesses. The aim being to produce **confident, innovative workers** who build connections and businesses and become **proud alumni** willing to return as **practitioners** to mentor and **share real-world experience**.

The importance of a **Digital Learning Resource Centre** is essential to success of this whole sector, providing technical **support for digital transformation**, managing online platforms, developing immersive training environments, training staff, supporting AV suites, and scanning for new technologies. Becoming **future proof** and “**Digital by Default**.”

For the sector voice:

The voice for colleges should be stronger with the Scottish and UK government, industry bodies, international governments and to the students and alumni. This would look like more advocacy with Scottish and UK government, lobbying for clear priorities **aligned with economic growth**, building a case for increased skills training based on **national priorities**, and lobbying for a more **sustainable multi-year funding model**.

One voice advocating for **sustainable skills provision** that is recognised as **world-class within 10 years**, setting out the need for a **skills college** for college staff which provides high quality professional development in new technology and ways of teaching and in turn up-skill themselves, and providing a centralised place that's developing world-class digital classes **aligned to the market needs of employers and students which are shared across the sector**.

Providing expertise to all colleges will help to support them in being **resilient** to the global **climate** change emergency, **financially resilient** to governmental and global changes, and it could carry out the constant task of reviewing global signals and **adapting for the future**. This could come under a brand such as **Future Skills Scotland, Scottish Colleges Alliance, World-Class Skills Scotland** or **Scottish Centre for Future Skills Excellence**. In doing so it would become a more attractive brand to all parties, provide the resources and digital needs to transform efficiently. This organisation could also:

Provide a centralised focus with Industry and Business, more powerfully representing colleges with national businesses and trade organisations, agreeing priorities for skilling/up-skilling workforces, developing **modern blended learning approaches matching employer needs** (accreditation, safety, regulatory), and using **best-in-class digital tools** via a centralised team supporting all colleges in their deployment. The goal being to become the **skills centre of choice** by constantly reviewing global best practices.

Provide a More Effective and Cost Efficient Representation

Internationally: More powerfully representing colleges internationally, marketing the "**Scotland College Brand**" to develop **world-class training** (e.g., engineering, maritime), recruiting international students to Scotland as a **respected vocational skills provider**, and engaging with **international governments** and partners on skills needs. Some colleges have shallow or no resources to do this currently.

Conclusion

My view is that a new model is needed for Scotland that will deal directly with the issues constraining the 24 colleges and provide a more hopeful future for the sector and indeed move from “survival mode” to “recognised as world-class”.

There is a wealth of evidence on global signals and trends for learners, employers and education and training providers. It is clear that these trends will impact Scotland’s students, college staff and colleges as these are truly global changes which are taking place and it would be remiss to think these changes will pass Scotland by. Preparing, being ready to change, and being able to change, are key to success. This will take place in challenging circumstances however because of the lack of available investment.

I would recommend that as much support as possible is afforded to Scotland’s colleges politically, and that colleges work together closely, to achieve success and economies of scale in delivering results for students and society. Colleges have always played a vital role in Scottish civic life and there is a bright future for Scotland’s colleges if far more strategic ambition is put towards their success.

Attribution

Professor Little was commissioned by Colleges Scotland to research global trends and signals in vocational educational delivery which was presented in two workshops to college sector leaders in Spring 2025. The views in this paper are the author’s. No part of the paper or images may be reproduced without prior permission (<https://uk.linkedin.com/in/joelittle1>).