

**Resources and General Purposes Committee – 17th February 2025**

**Item 7 NCL College Registrar Update**

**This paper provides a summary of current and planned activity in the areas above to provide an update for the Resources and General Purposes Committee. Where the approval/ratification of the Committee is required, this is highlighted at the appropriate points.**

1. **NCL Strategy 2030**

A detailed proposal for NCL Strategy 2030 was presented by the Executive Board to NCL members of the RSB on 3rd February 2025. The presentation highlighted our external regional and community drivers, reviewed and updated the College’s purpose following a summary of progress made up to 2025, and proposed a relationship-led approach to our culture, recognising that each person may require a different approach to reach their full potential.

Finally, 5 strategic pillars were proposed to ensure focus on:

* delivering close alignment to public, private and third sector need
* being a dynamic collaborator within the Region
* incorporating a clear social good focus and a drive for resource optimisation
* securing financial viability, reputational enhancement and a credible connection to Strategy 2025

Following approval from the Board members, it was agreed that an internal College wide consultation exercise regarding the proposal details would take place during the months of February and March 2025, to run concurrently with external stakeholder engagement. After a period of refinement to the proposal based upon feedback, the intention would then be to seek NCL Board members’ approval to the final Strategy 2030 document by no later than June 2025 and set a formal launch date of 1st September 2025.

1. **Professional Services Review**

Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Professional Services Review are now complete and a summary is provided here. Initial consultation meetings for Phase 3 have taken place, and preparatory work for phase 4 is underway.

Student Services

A key outcome of Phase 1 and Phase 2 has been the creation of a Student Services department, which has brought all student facing departments together into a single coherent team to provide seamless student support. Based in newly-purposed Student Hubs on each campus, the Student Services Department will offer the full range of support services “under one roof”. The Department consists of 7 teams:

* Admissions
* Educational Support (formerly ELS)
* Student Advisory Services (formerly Student Advisers)
* Student Funding
* Student Records (formerly MIS)
* Student Retention (formerly Key Support)
* Student Services (formerly Customer Services)

Systems Development

This team was established in Phase 1 of the Review and, within a short space of time they have already developed and implemented a number of system enhancements and new systems which streamline how we work. These developments are benefitting staff and students alike.

As a College, our use of systems and data is becoming more sophisticated. This brings strength to our evidence-based decision making across the whole organisation. Our systems are only as accurate as the data that they use so, to ensure the accuracy and integrity of data we have introduced a new Data Management Officer role which will provide support across the College in enhancing our use of data.

Professional & Work Based Learning Team

As the funding landscape for FE has changed drastically in Scotland, significant funding streams (including FWDF) which historically underpinned a significant proportion of the work that the P&WBL team undertook is no longer available to the College. As a result of the Review activity, all of the individuals who were previously in this team are now either undertaking new roles or continuing their existing roles elsewhere in the Professional Services structure.

# **College Employers Scotland (CES)**

## **3.1 National Bargaining Update – NJNC Side Table (Support Staff)**

***Job Evaluation***

Following agreement with UNISON, a joint communication about the Job Evaluation Project has been published on 17th February 2025 which summarises the situation:

*“…. discussions between the Support Staff Trade Unions and the employers have continued.  Both sides are committed to making progress and delivering on the commitment to the Job Evaluation Project.*

*All agree that it is unfortunate that the project had become delayed and stalled in unnecessary complications.  Further, both sides agree it is important for there to be a shared objective and outcome for the project before further work is undertaken.*

*On that basis, constructive talks have taken place on the use of the historical Job Evaluation data. In these discussions it has become clear, and supported by advice from experts, that due to the passage of time, the inevitable change in work content, and concerns from historical sampling audits, that the previous evaluation and scoring of roles cannot be considered reliable.*

*It is fundamental to any Job Evaluation Project that the data used must be up to date and an accurate analysis of job content, therefore, employers and trade unions are now exploring options for current data collection and analysis to ensure the integrity of the project.*

*Finally, although it is well understood that Job Evaluation does not equate to the harmonisation of pay for jobs across different employers, work is being undertaken in partnership to aid meaningful negotiations on the appropriate application of Job Evaluation outcomes to pay structures.”*

***Revised Workplan***

Following confirmation on 7th November 2025 that the UNISON Further Education Branch was under regional supervision, the CES Head of National Bargaining and the Business Services Manager have worked closely with the UNISON Regional Officer to create a list of all areas of work requested by the support staff side and have agreed a new workplan which has also been agreed by the Unite Regional Officer. The Workplan was originally 20 items long, but has been reduced to 12, including Job Evaluation.

## **3.2 National Bargaining Update – NJNC Central Committee**

***Covid Circular***

It was agreed, at the December 2023 Central Committee, to re-negotiate *Circular 01/20 – COVID-19 – Guidance on Paid Leave for Lecturing and Support Staff* and that this would take place over an expedited timeframe as part of a Short Life Working Group (SLWG).

Discussions are still ongoing with regards to the content of a revised circular, with the latest SLWG taking place on 16th January 2025. Both sides agreed to seek independent legal advice concerning the potential discriminatory implications of providing special leave to individuals with Covid. At the SLWG, revised wording was agreed and included in the section on Absence and a link to ACAS added. The management side advised that, irrespective of that legal advice, that their position remained and paid special leave will no longer apply for absent staff due to Covid.

***Policy Working Group***

The National Disciplinary Policy was agreed by CES at its November 2024 Business meeting and the Policy Working Group has since focused on the Draft Disciplinary Model Procedure.

The Policy Working Group met on 21st November 2024 where the staff side raised concerns that the draft Disciplinary Model Procedure was too prescriptive for colleges to implement. The Joint Secretaries were tasked with revising the draft.

A revised draft was agreed by the Policy Working Group at its meeting on 30th January 2025, subject to one minor change. The Disciplinary Model Procedure will now be presented to the Central Committee for formal agreement in March 2025.

# **4. Joint Negotiating Committee Update**

## **4.1 JNC Academic**

A meeting of the JNC Academic was held on 12th December 2024.

The meeting focused in the main on two discussion topics:

* ASN Provision

A management response had been provided in writing to the trade union, following the late addition of their paper to the previous agenda. The response had been informed by meeting with Supported Learning staff from all campuses. The trade union remained concerned about the suitability of courses for students in both Supported Learning and Access and Progression. The trade union proposed setting up a meeting separate to the JNC for further discussion.

* Evaluation of Learning and Teaching

Management tabled a draft paper which was designed to reflect the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)’s requirements, now that QAA was replacing Education Scotland. It was noted that peer observation in the classroom is what QAA is looking for. Other colleges and universities carry this activity out currently and see the benefit of it, and therefore it was hoped that the introduction of this practice at NCL would be recognised as a positive way forward, providing professional support and empowering lecturing staff.

The trade union’s view was that the introduction of peer observation indicated that staffare not trusted to teach or reflect their own teaching practices. They also expressed concerns that there would be no option to opt out of this activity. It was agreed that further consultation would be required before the proposal could be put forward to lecturing staff the paper could not be put out to staff in its current form.

Other topics discussed included Registers, collegiate working, H&S training, working in non-designated campuses, the temporary staff agreement and the requirement for additional hours to be subject to an interview process. A separate meeting to discuss progress on the Professional Services Review was set up for 19th December 2025.

The next meeting of the JNC Academic has been scheduled for 27th February 2025.

**4.2 JNC Professional Services**

We are in the process of scheduling a JNC Professional Services meeting, as both UNISON and Unite have requested the recommencement of local meetings with NCL. The JNC Professional Services was last convened on 30th March 2023.

**4.3 Local Recognition and Procedure Agreement**

A new Recognition and Procedure Agreement between the Board of Management of NCL and UNISON Scotland Further Education Branch and Unite was formally signed off by all parties on 22nd January 2025. A copy is included for information as *Appendix 1.*

1. **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) Report**

A paper outlining the College’s key reporting requirements for the next Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) Report is contained in***Appendix 2***. Work is underway to enable publication by 30th April 2025. This includes consultation with staff, students and trade unions to finalise NCL’s next cycle of equality outcomes for 2025-29.

# **Employment Tribunal Update**

There are six claimants in total and the claims remain sisted.

Elaine Turkington

**College Registrar**

February 2025