

SELF EVALUATION 2023-24

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INTRODUCTION

South Lanarkshire College (SLC) Board has set clear, ambitious, goals through our vision to be Scotland's Leading College Delivering Excellence. The College mission of "Preparing students well for their future, in an outstanding learning environment and inclusive community," places a distinctive focus on student progression and destinations, based on an approach which engages students' future employers in the design and delivery of its curriculum.

The Board of Management expectations for priorities to 2025 sit under the following headings:

- Successful Students;
- Highest Quality Education and Support; and
- Sustainable Behaviours

New strategic priorities have been identified for the next five years 2025 -2030 will be:

- **The Student Experience**: To provide a responsive, high-quality and entrepreneurial, destination focussed curriculum, embedding holistic support services, and lifelong learning opportunities for the communities the College serves.
- **People and Culture Development**: To recruit, retain, develop and reward talented staff who will enable students to reach their full potential.
- **Growth and Innovation**: To provide an estate and digital infrastructure for 21st century learning, and to collaborate on innovative and mutually beneficial partnerships.
- **Sustainability**: To be a future proofed independent and financially viable organisation able to invest and collaborate for growth and resilience, and to work towards achieving a Net Zero campus community.

South Lanarkshire College has retained a focus on, and commitment to, coherent educational provision which is aligned to regional and national strategic priorities. The College provision continues to adjust, respond to and reflect the needs of the regional economy and communities served. The College aim is to enable a more equal society, a more successful economy, a high-performing institution and greater innovation in the economy. Within the context of a cost-of-living crisis and student mental health and wellbeing issues, the College has developed successful mechanisms to ensure students are supported in their educational journey to achieve their potential. Our commitment to working collaboratively, both internally and externally, has enabled greater depth of understanding of the key issues to be addressed and the bespoke solutions to achieve the most effective and impactful success.

CONTEXT

South Lanarkshire College (SLC) prides itself on delivering high levels of student success. SLC is an award-winning organisation which is reflective of the skills base and the enthusiasm of both the support and teaching staff. The resulting positive ethos and culture transmits to students and, in turn, enables a positive impact on student outcomes.

College levels of activity for 2023 to 2024 were capped at 43,601 credits. This is within the context of in-year evidence of known further demand and regional market needs. There remains scope for the College to operate with a higher volume of activity levels and offer more curriculum provision. The areas of Building Services Engineering and Health and Social Care remain two of the highest levels of credit bearing activity, with continued in-year demand for ESOL in the region for those whose first language is not English.

The table below shows the final 2023 to 2024 credit position with an outturn position which fell within the SFC tolerance threshold which was carefully managed despite the additional demand as the year progressed, which the College was unable to serve.

Table 1: Final 2023/24 credit activity level and outturn:

2023/2024	023/2024 Credit allocation		Over-activity / %	
SFC Core Target	43,601	44,077	476 / 101.9%	

Alignment to Regional Skills Assessments (RSAs), government priorities and labour market intelligence have established a strategic prioritisation of what the College delivers, resulting in a successful focus, and development in, these key curriculum areas throughout session 2023 to 2024:

- Health and Social Care: With over a third of jobs in South Lanarkshire in health, social work, and nursing, this sector is positioned for consistent growth and sustained demand for replacement workers. Additionally, the increasing use of technology and an aging population necessitate a coordinated response to address evolving care needs and enhance service delivery.
- Construction and the Renewables Industries: There is significant growth in these sectors across South Lanarkshire and the Glasgow City Region, with 47% of employers reporting skills shortages and approximately 11,000 job openings. A local response is essential to meet the demand for new skills, particularly in retrofitting and sustainable construction practices.
- Business, Law and the Financial Services: The demand for skilled professionals in business and public service is increasing, with an anticipated growth of around 11,000 jobs in South Lanarkshire by 2033.
- Travel, Tourism and the Hospitality Industry: In 2023, South Lanarkshire saw 7,000 job openings in tourism and 5,000 in food and drink sectors. Both industries face challenges in recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce.

The College is proactive in serving the needs of the local communities and works proactively with Community Learning and Development teams to provide progression pathways onto mainstream college courses. 48% of students reside in areas which are, according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), in the 5%, 10% and 20% most deprived in Scotland. Students and staff members work collectively supporting communities through projects, volunteering, and fundraising.

The curriculum offer is agile and responsive to change with the College being mindful of impacting factors including:

- a decrease in the number of young people in South Lanarkshire; school leavers progressing predominately on to higher education courses if they choose to continue their studies; a 5% decrease in school leavers entering FE across Scotland in between 2019-20 and 2020-21;
- UK universities being hit by a 40% fall in EU students since Brexit, highlighting
 the pressure on universities to look at the UK market more than ever before to
 meet targets. This is impacting directly on colleges. Especially with regard to
 Higher National provision;
- micro and small business enterprises making up 98% of the businesses in the area;

- more widely across the UK, skills gaps are being felt more acutely in a number of key sectors. In the NHS, 10% of vacancies going unfilled; and
- people having different preferences when it comes to how they like to learn. More than a quarter (26%) want to do so in a way that fits into their schedule according to the Future of Education report.

The agility of the staff teams to respond effectively to these numerous challenges can be seen in our performance success. The College continues to be one of Scotland's higher performing colleges. The Board of Management, Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and staff at South Lanarkshire College retain a robust focus on maintaining our reputation for delivering a high-quality learning experience for students, as evidenced by Education Scotland in the most recent Annual Engagement Visit Report in July 2024 and by our performance indicators.

Table 2: Summary of SLC attainment rates over a 3-year trend and sector benchmarked:

Mode	Completed Successful 23/24	Completed Successful 22/23	Completed Successful 21/22	Completed Successful Sector 22/23
FE FT	70%	73%	58.4%	63.6%
FE PT	83.9%	82%	73.9%	77.3%
HE FT	68.3%	68%	68.1%	65.5%
HE PT	78.1%	74%	72%	78.6%

The national performance indicators for the sector demonstrate the success of the approach to the student experience particularly in relation to the Full Time Further Education (FTFE) offering where the College sits at the top of the national performance outcomes for academic session 2023/24 (Table 3). The College sits in third position at a national level for the FTFE provision delivered. Given the volume of FTFE students (1105) and the comparative scale of the college, this is a significant achievement. The College sits in tenth position for Further Education Part Time (FEPT) provision success; sixth position for HEFT provision and fourteenth position for Higher Education Part Time (HEPT) provision. Action planning continues to take place in session 2024/25 to increase the success levels for these cohorts of students and enable improvements to their educational experience.

Table 3: Summary of National Performance Indicators for Full Time Further Education (FTFE):

College	FE FT <u>-</u> -	No. FE F <u></u>	FE PT % 🔼	FE PT <u></u>	HE FT % <u></u>	No. HE F ■	HE PT% <u></u> ≚	No. HE PT 👱
Newbattle	77.4	41	33.3	4	72.2	13	0	0
Lews Castle	76.4	81	86.3	654	0	0	100	11
South Lanarkshire College	72.8	1105	82	1086	68	537	74	208
Orkney	71.3	62	93.7	1726	0	0	0	0
West Lothian	70.4	762	90.9	3874	67.9	423	90	497
Shetland	69.6	39	93.7	1713	0	0	0	0
Ayrshire	68.6	1929	74.7	5194	65.8	1042	83.4	453
Inverness College	68.5	857	84.7	1865	0	0	100	45
Borders	68.3	597	75.1	1582	65.6	145	87.3	103
Forth Valley	67.9	1161	87.1	3872	69.6	747	83	722
The North Highland College	67.6	282	72.4	631	0	0	0	0
Dundee and Angus	67.5	1986	72.3	3244	72.4	1034	73.2	426
West College Scotland	67.3	2380	69	7365	59.5	1032	77	598
Perth	67.3	750	76.2	885	0	0	35.3	6
University Highlands and Islands	67.2	2706	83.7	10723	0	0	84.9	62
Moray College	66.8	494	78.1	1116	0	0	0	0
Edinburgh College	65.7	2191	76.7	6891	72.4	1912	85.7	2150
SRUC Land Based	65.5	440	85.3	1656	0	0	0	0
Dumfries and Galloway	65.3	619	85.6	2687	74.1	249	82.3	200
North East Scotland College	63.3	2659	72.6	3,772	67	1,350	73.6	318
Glasgow Kelvin	59.2	1370	75	3421	60.5	675	76	339
Glasgow Clyde	59.1	1729	71.1	5794	65.8	1534	73.5	761
West Highland College	58.8	87	81.3	1159	0	0	0	0
Fife College	58.3	2146	78.6	4137	60.8	1059	76.8	1160
New College Lanarkshire	57.8	1711	76.1	7,515	63.7	1,270	60.2	405
City of Glasgow	52.3	1624	75.9	3408	62.8	3865	74.8	717
Argyll College	50	54	75.4	974	0	0	0	0
Scotland	63.60%	27,156	77.3	76,225	65.5	16887	78.6	9119

Priority 01: Fair Access & Transitions

The College's commitment to support students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds to enable fair access and transitions, has resulted both in stronger and increased internal and external relationships and progression routes and higher recruitment levels across many of our programmes.

Closer collaborative working with schools, universities, SWAP West, Who Cares Scotland, Social Work: Adult and Child Services, DWP Job Centre Plus, Armed Forces, Sparqs, Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), STEM, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), community and employers such as NHS, CITB, SNIPEF, Coca-Cola and Police Scotland, over session 2023 to 2024 has led to a heightened mutual understanding of the linkages, support and skills required to engage those who are disengaged, and address smoother transitions for individuals to enhance the talent pipeline into employment. The Scottish Widening Access Programme (SWAP) Health and Social Care operate and collaborate in an immersive manner with college staff and NHS staff proactively developing content together, is a model the College aims to replicate going forward.

Identification of the market needs in Civil Engineering led to scoping meetings with the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) for further development and implementation in 2024. The College's aim of ensuring a variety of access points was achieved in the continued development of robust Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) Programmes, Senior Phase collaborative working and adjustments to the offers in the community through the Rural Academy to shape a provision which offered less duplication and more skills focus.

The level of scrutiny involved in ensuring the effectiveness and appropriateness of the access points and transitions arrangements from both support teams and teaching teams, is underpinned by pertinent data sets, together with feedback on, and from, services to support the student journey. Evidence from the recently published National Performance Indicators for academic session 2022/23 demonstrate that the extensive additional support provided by curriculum and support teams for groups of students facing the greatest barriers to learning has had the following positive impact:

- Students from SIMD10 (350) achieving 70.6% which is 2% above 2021/22 levels;
- Students from SIMD20 (655) achieving 70.5% which is which is 4.1% above 2021/22 levels;

However, an evaluation of the data sets of the below student groups reveals where further action planning is required in session 2024 and beyond to meet the College's strategic commitment to an inclusive culture:

- 228 students who declared they had a disability, completed successfully at 64.2% which is the same level as 2021/22;
- 75 students from a Care experienced background completed successfully at 51.7% which is a slight increase of 0.3% from the 2021/22 levels;
- 32 students from ethnic minority backgrounds completed successfully at 68.4% which is 4.8% below 2021/22 levels.

Further analysis, and action planning, continues around the experience of those students in the key groups of disability, care experienced and ethnic minority to improve their student experience and success on their courses. Attainment rates from session 2023/24 in comparison to 2022/23 indicate FE(FT) has increased by 2% to 69.2%; HE(FT) has decreased by 3.1% to 68.3%; FE(PT) has decreased by 6% to 84.1% and HE(PT) has increased by 10% to 78.5%. The required action planning for HE(FT) and FE(PT) has been carried forward into session 2024.

Priority 02: Student Experience

The effectiveness of the student experience, to ensure positive experiences and positive outcomes, is the focus of all the College does. Across teaching teams, and support teams, the commitment to a responsive, enabled and supported student journey drove, and continues to drive, the evaluative and enhancement activities undertaken. Substantive evidence of this came through the Education Scotland Care Thematic Review in February 2024 and the Education Scotland Annual Engagement Visit in May 2024. Interventions and engagement strategies leading to a successful student experience are embedded within our teaching and support teams' methodology. Some key student metrics can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4: Student measures:

Measure	2023/24 Performance	2022/23 Performance
Student Successful Completion Rate	96.13%	81.3%
Early withdrawal rate	3.9%	4.9%
Further withdrawal rate	8.8%	6.4%
Student Recruitment figures, Full Time (FT) and Part Time (PT)	FT: 2192 PT: 3028	FT: 2375 PT: 3700

A strong focussed team of support staff worked closely with teaching staff teams to ensure students were well supported, respected and valued. The Student Association (SA) have been key to ensuring the voice of the student community shapes their learning experience. In addressing the College's sincere commitment to this, the SA met with the Executive Team monthly throughout 2023 as critical partners in enhancing the student experience. The class representative system harnessed local level views which ensured students were shaping their learning and influencing the approach to their life and work in the college. Informal and formal feedback mechanisms directly impacted the decision making of the college in the last academic session, leading to strong satisfaction levels (Table 5).

Table 5: Student Satisfaction Survey measures

Measure	2023/24 Performance	2022/23 Performance
Overall satisfaction score from	FE: 89%	FE: 88.6%
recent student survey	HE: 82%	HE: 82.8%
Overall satisfaction score from SFC	FE FT: 89%	FE FT: 89%
national student survey	FE PT: 89%	FE PT: 88%
	HE FT: 82%	HE FT: 83%
	HE PT: 98%	HE PT: 89%

Throughout the 2023 to 2024 session, iterative planning, responsive to the changing needs of the students and industry, enabled a proactive approach by teams to tailor general support, counselling, wellbeing, learning, digital, additional learning and financial support needs in as bespoke a manner as possible. The introduction of student feedback systems 'Report and Support' and 'Tell Us' allowed a platform for regular views to be raised and actioned accordingly leading to organisational adjustments or improvements. was introduced to provide students with the ability to report feedback on their student experience. This has directly led to improvements in service across support and curriculum areas to enhance the student experience. The offer of free breakfasts and the launch of the Market Way Shop offering free clothing, were successfully accessed to aid the students' ability to continue on their course of study. The bespoke nature of the bursary appeals system ensured a route for those students struggling financially and requiring specific help to continue at the College. In addressing this need in a cost-of-living crisis, the Bursary Appeals Meetings were adjusted from monthly to 'as required' to ensure a timely and proactive turnaround of this vital student support.

Our data system, PowerBI, holds live and weekly updated vital statistical information to enable teaching teams, support staff and guidance tutors to be proactive in the required interventions to aid student retention and the wider student experience. The data sets and trend information available enabled timely monitoring and reporting of activity and, by implication, the required actions (Table 6).

Table 6: 3-year retention and achievement trend data evidence



Robust analysis of retention is vital to ensure opportunities for effective transitions. The college curriculum Progress Reviews tracked in-year retention rates to implement intervention strategies enabling students to continue their course of study and transition effectively:

- Early Withdrawals (EW) in Further Education Full Time (FEFT) decreased from 9.6% in 2022/23 to 7.03% in 2023/24;
- Early Withdrawal (EW) in Higher Education Full Time (HEFT) decreased from 6.6% in 22/23 to 2.7% in 23/24;
- Further Withdrawals (FW) in FE FT have increased to 16.4% from 12.34% in 22/23;

• Further Withdrawals in Higher Education Full Time (HEFT) increased to 15.2% from 11.4% the previous year.

Action planning continues into session 2024/25 by curriculum teams to understand the reasons behind the withdrawals, support the students to remain on their chosen course of study and to complete their courses successfully. Students who have behavioural challenges, or specific support needs, are encouraged and supported to stay on their programme through a Fitness to Study policy. The cost-of-living crisis and mental health issues remain prominent in overall analysis. However, overall retention remains high at 87% however this is a decrease of 2% on the previous year 2022 – 2023.

Table 5: Enrolments, Retention, Early and Further Withdrawals 2023/2024:

Mode	No. of Enrolments	Early Withdrawals	%	No. of Further Withdrawals	%	Retention %
FE FT	1,153	81	7.03	189	16.4	77
HE FT	659	18	2.7	100	15.2	82.1
FE PT	2,467	76	3.1	88	3.6	93.4
HE PT	321	10	3.1	16	5	92
Overall	4,600	185	4%	393	9	87%

The College continued its robust approach to curriculum planning in 2023/24 to ensure a pipeline of skilled students progress into the communities we serve and into the wider world of work. Curriculum Progress Reviews have concentrated on the appropriateness of the curriculum offer in response to a dynamically changing world and further skills development including skills mapping to the careers of the 21st century. Further detailed evaluation on the Learning and Quality elements can be found in the SEAP.

Finally, 2023 saw our firm commitment to tackling Gender Based Violence (GBV) be achieved and recognised in our being awarded Emily Test Status; one of the first colleges in Scotland to have done so.

Priority 03: Coherent Learning Provision

Partnerships and collaborative commitments have been met and grown over the 2023 to 2024 session with a range of public and private sector stakeholders including the local authority and industry partners. High quality educational experiences have been honed further to ensure suitable skills are being developed to meet all needs.

As a fundamental aspect of our college operational effectiveness, we have invested heavily in our data and systems to ensure live and accurate data, through the PowerBI system. In 2023 it has been developed further and honed to give statistical information and year on year trend analysis to enhance what is required in ensuring a coherent learning provision. Through this, data on improvement gaps have been more readily available for scrutiny and actioning by all teams. 2023 highlighted a specific need for work on this in relation to the Inclusive Learning Curriculum Area to frame the data sets to support our most vulnerable students. Work on this, and work required on further staff training of this system, will take place in the next academic session 2024.

The College relationship with South Lanarkshire Council has grown and we are jointly proud of the valuable work with Developing the Young Workforce (DYW). The partnership working ensured that the College's Senior Phase offer took account of labour market trends and provided clear progression pathways for our young people. The College offer is divided into

four pathway options to Senior Phase pupils from across the Local Authority, delivered either in college or in a school hub. Overall retention for academic session 2023/24 was 87%, which is 9% down on the previous year. Achievement levels were 86% which is 5% better than the previous year. The required actions for improvement and enhancement are being taken forward.

The Health and Social Care Curriculum Team secured a new collaborative agreement with the University of Strathclyde in 2023. The Education & Social Services Degree (BA) responds to the Scottish Government's aspiration for different services to communicate more effectively and to work in a more integrated way to meet the service-user needs of children, young people, and adults. This provides a new learner pathway for South Lanarkshire College students onto degree level study. Collaborations and immersive partnership working, particularly with employers and managing agents undertaken continues to grow, including across New Lanark Heritage Centre, Police Scotland, NHS Scotland, CITB and SNIPEF, to enable a better-quality, fit-for-purpose experiences in developing skillsets for the 21century and beyond. The relevant skillset enables smoother, more effective and successful transitions into employment.

The College delivered The Rural Academy programme as part of South Lanarkshire Council's ESF employability pipeline for coherent provision. The programme had previously delivered a blend of accredited and non-accredited learning and teaching with one-to-one employability support and guidance tying into the Scottish Government's No-one Left Behind agenda. It provided a focus on key priority groups to enhance employability skills linking to our local Routes to Work South (Gateway to Employment and Making it Work) and by the Local Authority (Aspire Works, Supported Employment). Improvements to the delivery model to ensure a lack of duplication in our community upskilling are successfully being taken forward in session 2024/25 and under the jointly agreed new title of The Employability Academy.

Priority 04: Work Based Learning and Skills

The College's commitment to retraining and upskilling Lanarkshire's existing workforce saw enhanced success across multiple programmes in 2023 and our partnerships with local authorities, managing agents and external bodies, to deliver successfully on this agenda, has successfully materialised also.

In addition, vocationally based courses incorporating Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) saw continued demand. College apprenticeship provision has grown over the past few academic years, with the contract with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) peaking at 110 new apprenticeship starts, worth £627k (an increase of £124k on the previous academic year). There is a total of 290 apprentices at the peak of the contract responding to employer demand and economic growth. However, it is to be noted that 2023 new starts equated to 120 candidates, however the 2024 shrinkage to 110 is due to SDS cuts to every provider's allocation by roughly 10%. The Hairdressing framework experienced high levels of early leavers historically but 2023 saw the implementation of an onboarding period which had significant positive impact on increasing the achievement rates. While this may not be practical in certain vocational areas it is still being looked at for 2024.

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Priority 05: Net Zero and Environmental Sustainability

The College, as a member of the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges (EAUC) and a signatory of the "Race to Zero" pledge, is committed to addressing climate change and reducing carbon emissions, with the goal of achieving net zero by 2040. In November 2023, the College reported a consistent year-on-year reduction in carbon emissions, decreasing from a baseline of 3,306 tCO2e in 2009-2010 to the current figure of 904.03 tCO2e.

This progress has been driven by the College Climate Change Action Team (CCAT), which developed a Climate Change Emergency Action Plan (CCEAP). The plan incorporates the five key elements of the UK FE Colleges Roadmap to assess the College's current position and implement a proactive strategy. This strategy involves close collaboration with curriculum areas, departments, and local employers to achieve net zero. In 2023-2024, 19 of the 24 identified actions (79%) were completed. Actions not completed relate to achieving carbon literacy organisation status and installing a business management system to enable live streaming of energy use and data collection.

During 2023-2024, the College partnered with the Energy Skills Partnership and Energy Savings Trust to utilise a mobile training facility. This initiative delivered Air Source Heat Pump courses to rural communities and current students, resulting in an increase in the number of qualified heat pump installers. The College also continues to strengthen partnerships with local suppliers to recycle materials for use as teaching resources. Local employers and other stakeholders are regularly invited to explore the College's sustainable facilities, which promote awareness of sustainable practices and provide CPD opportunities.

At the 2023 College Development Networks Awards, the College proudly received the Sustainability Action Award for its "College Way Market" initiative. This project provides students with access to donated clothing, reducing environmental impact while offering valuable work experience. Additionally, it supports students with limited income, reflecting the College's commitment to sustainability and social responsibility.



Self-Evaluation for AY 2023-24

On behalf of South Lanarkshire College: Stella McManus

Signed: Stata memous

Print name: Stella McManus

Position: Principal and CEO

Date: 10 January 2024

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