

**West College Scotland
AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**21 September 2022 at 4.00 p.m.
By TEAMS**

AGENDA

General Business

- | | | |
|---|----------|-------|
| 1. Welcome and Apologies | | Chair |
| 2. Declaration of Interests | | Chair |
| 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2022 | Enclosed | Chair |
| Actions from the Minutes | Enclosed | Chair |
| 4. Matters arising from the minutes not otherwise on the agenda | | |
| .1 None | | |

Main Items for Discussion and/or Approval

- | | | |
|---|----------|----|
| 5. Committee Remit, Membership and Dates of Meetings in 2022-23 | Paper 5 | GB |
| 6. 2021-22 Audit Committee Report to the Board | Paper 6 | GB |
| 7. Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy | Paper 7 | AR |
| 8. Acceptance of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy | Paper 8 | AR |
| 9. Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy and Procedure | Paper 9 | AR |
| 10. National Fraud Initiative 2022 | Paper 10 | VM |
| 11. 2021-22 IT Security / Controls Report | Paper 11 | AM |

External Audit

- | | | |
|--|----------|----|
| 12. 2021-22 External Audit Progress Update | Paper 12 | JB |
| 13. 2021-22 Accounts Direction for Scotland's Colleges | Paper 13 | VM |

Internal Audit

- | | | |
|--|----------|----|
| 14. 2021-22 Internal Audit Report | Paper 14 | SP |
| 15. 2022-23 Internal Audit Progress Report | Verbal | SP |
| 16. Rolling Audit Action Plan | Paper 16 | AR |

Items for Information (to note only)

- | | | |
|--|----------|----|
| 17. 2021-22 Report on Freedom of Information and Data Protection Act Requests / Hospitality and Gifts Register | Paper 17 | AR |
| 18. 2022-23 Schedule of Business | Paper 18 | AR |
| 19. Any other business | | |

Next meetings:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Joint Committee | 22 November 2022 at 4.00pm by TEAMS |
| Audit Committee | 25 January 2023 at 4.00 p.m. by TEAMS |

Shirley Gordon
Secretary to the Committee

AUDIT COMMITTEE

MINUTES: Thursday 26 May 2022.

PRESENT: Graeme Bold (in the Chair), Ronald Leitch.

ATTENDING: Liz Connolly (Principal), Amy McDonald (Vice Principal, Operations), Alan Ritchie (Director of Finance), Vivienne Mulholland (Head of Finance and Student Funding), Charlene Clark (PA to the Principal)

ATTENDING BY

INVITATION: Stephen Pringle (Wylie & Bisset), Kevin McDermott (Wylie & Bisset), Lucy Nutley (Mazars)

APOLOGIES: Grant Lyall, Brian Stobbs (Head of IT)

AM631 ANNUAL EVALUATION OF INTERNAL AUDITORS **Restricted Item**

AM632 CLOSED SESSION REVIEW WITH INTERNAL AUDITORS

The Audit Committee met with Internal Auditors only.

The Internal Auditors confirmed that they had positive open working relationships with all staff who had been engaged in the internal audit processes during the year, and particularly with the Senior Management Team (SMT). Teams within the College were knowledgeable, willing to engage and receptive to the audit reports and points raised. It was recorded that management also challenged themselves and the auditors, which led to improved overall reporting and helped the auditors better understand how the College operated. The Internal Auditors noted the College was proactive in planning ahead and the benefits of the Pentana system the College has in place with no concerns to raise. The Committee welcomed this information and thanked the Internal Auditors for their comments and work of the team.

AM633 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the need for additional members to ensure the Audit Committee is quorate. Apologies were received from Grant Lyall and Brian Stobbs (Head of IT).

AM634 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The standing declarations of interests of members, as available on the Register of Interests on the College website, were noted as current. There were no specific interests declared regarding the items on the agenda.

AM635 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 2 March 2022 **were approved.**

AM636 ACTIONS FROM THE MINUTES

The Committee **noted** the actions taken and outstanding since the last meeting and **agreed** that the completed actions could now be removed.

AM637 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (AND NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA)

- a) No other matters arising were raised that were not already covered on the agenda.

AM638 ANNUAL REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Chair to the Committee led members through the report on the outcomes of its annual effectiveness review. The Committee was pleased to note that this feedback was positive, and members were satisfied with the operation of the Committee and the level of information and assurances it received. Both the Internal and External Auditors confirmed that they were satisfied with the operation and effectiveness of the Committee. The Committee agreed to add to their remit that they are to receive an IT Security / Cyber Resilience Report on an annual basis to ensure the Committee's effectiveness looking at additional controls.

Action: To amend Committee remit to include receipt of annual IT security / cyber resilience report (SG)

The Committee approved the report and would report the outcome as part of the Annual Report to the Board of Management.

AM639 2021-22 EXTERNAL AUDIT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY INCLUDING AUDIT FEE

The Director - Public Services Audit, Mazars LLP (external auditor) presented their 2021-22 Audit Strategy Memorandum and fee proposal for the review of the 2021-22 financial statements.

Ms Nutley reported that the Audit Strategy Memorandum provided the Audit Committee with an overview of their preliminary audit planning procedures and approach in relation to the financial statements of the College for the year ended 31 July 2022. The Strategy also provided an overview of significant risks and key judgement areas and noted the four dimensions of wider scope work which the auditors required to make a judgement. Ms Nutley noted the timeline and aim to complete by 31 December 2022 deadline.

Ms Nutley explained the presumed significant risks in detail, these are of high likelihood and high financial impact and the same across the Sector.

Significant risks:

- Management override of control
- Revenue recognition
- Expenditure recognition

Key areas of judgement:

- Valuation of pension liabilities
- Valuation of land and buildings
- Provisions for voluntary severance

Wider scope work:

- Financial sustainability
- Financial management
- Governance and transparency
- Value for money

Ms Nutley added that Mazars had set its fee for the audit in line with the Audit Scotland guidance and it is consistent across their FE clients.

The Committee discussed the detail of the report, and the following points were clarified:

- The Committee noted this was a balanced approach.
- The Committee raised if there are any additional measures they could put in place in relation to the presumed significant risks. The Auditors noted that support and awareness for the Committee is key. The Sector uncertainty is so great, Auditors are raising a risk to ensure this stays on Audit Scotland's radar to support the position the Sector finds itself in.
- The Committee noted that the SFC are awaiting the Scottish Governments medium-term spending review, due 31 May, which will take time to filter down to college level. This will be discussed with the Board in October/November along with the actions the College are likely to have to undertake to address the financial sustainability challenges.

The Audit Committee approved the content of the 2021-22 Audit Strategy Memorandum and the audit fee.

AM640 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – IT SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATION Restricted Item

AM641 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING

Stephen Pringle explained that, as part of the 2021-22 Internal Audit Plan, Wylie & Bisset conducted an assignment to review whether a formal Business Continuity Plan was in place and communicated to staff including an awareness plan. They reviewed the completeness of the plan and considered areas such as roles and responsibilities, business impact analysis, potential disasters, and their effects as well as the testing arrangements in place.

Mr Pringle presented the scope of the review which concluded:

"We can provide a substantial assurance surrounding the College's Business Continuity Arrangements. We have raised 1 medium grade and 2 low grade recommendations for improvement. We have also raised 11 good practice points".

The College had accepted the three recommendations which covered several areas and Mr Pringle summarised these noting several areas of good practice.

The Committee discussed the detail of the report, and the following points were clarified:

- The Auditors confirmed this was a wider view that was non-IT related and referred to disasters that may cause closure of the buildings e.g. Covid pandemic. The Auditors confirmed they were satisfied there were plans in place for non-related IT disasters.
- The College noted the need to formally record any such events to provide lessons learned and currently taking forward this action. A programme of desk top exercises and a review of plans are carried out with Management which are able to build on the work from the recent pandemic.
- The Committee agreed operating through the pandemic tested the College Business Continuity Planning and that they were comfortable with the good outcome of the audit report.

The Audit Committee considered and noted the contents of the report, accepted the actions, and assigned dates.

AM642 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – STUDENT RECRUITMENT

Stephen Pringle explained that, as part of the 2021-22 Internal Audit Plan, Wylie & Bisset conducted an assignment to review of the arrangements in place surrounding student recruitment. The review considered the suitability of the arrangements for gaining information in relation to courses, access to support, and course enrolment, to ensure that the student experience is effective. The work also reviewed the suitability of the policies and procedures in place surrounding student recruitment.

Mr Pringle presented the scope of the review which concluded:

“We can provide a substantial level of assurance over the College's student recruitment process. We acknowledge that this is an area that the College are reviewing and in the process of improving at present. We have raised 5 recommendations, 3 of which have been graded as medium and 2 as low grade. It should be noted that the main themes of our findings were:

- *Overarching policies and procedures;*
- *Communications with applicants/students;*
- *System capabilities and functionality; and*
- *Standard practices across both sectors and campuses.”*

The College accepted the five recommendations which covered several areas and Mr Pringle summarised these noting several areas of good practice.

The Committee discussed the detail of the report, and the following points were clarified:

- The reference to Sectors in the report refers to the academic areas within the College.
- The College noted this report was helpful and undertaken at a good time to allow for future planning. The Audit report has supported the need to look at consistency across the campuses through a process driven approach and using management data.

The Audit Committee considered and noted the contents of the report, accepted the actions, and assigned dates.

AM643 2021-22 INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL PLAN

Stephen Pringle explained that the Audit Committee approved the 2021-22 College internal audit plan in May 2021 and led the Committee through an update on 2021-22 internal audit activity.

The Committee discussed the detail of the report, and the following points were clarified:

- All Audits have now been completed in a timely manner except for the Estates Strategy which has been agreed to be postponed to 2022-23.

The Audit Committee noted the contents of this report.

AM644 ROLLING AUDIT ACTION PLAN

The Director Finance explained that the purpose of the Rolling Audit Action Plan (RAAP) was to update the Audit Committee on the status of the recommendations made by both the internal and external auditors.

Mr Ritchie led the Committee through the report, summarising the movement in relation to the audit recommendations made since the last meeting and confirmed that the RAAP was reviewed by the staff with responsibility for the implementation of the audit recommendations on an ongoing basis.

Mr Ritchie reported that the College considered good progress had been / was being made in addressing the recommendations made by the internal and external auditors.

The Committee discussed the detail of the plan noting that:

- Eight actions were recommended to be removed.
- Three date extension requests had been made in relation to
 - ❖ CPD – Alignment of CPDR Development Plans
 - ❖ Complaints Handling – Complaints Log
 - ❖ External Comms – Reporting to SMT

The Committee discussed the detail of the report, and the following points were clarified:

- The Committee noted the current plan is now up to date with the removal of 2019/20 recommendations now completed.
- The Committee agreed to the rationale for the date extensions with no risk and approved this request.
- It was noted that the one outstanding high recommendation on the Sustainability Strategy is being progressed. The Strategy is going to the next SMT meeting and thereafter to the Board of Management for approval.
- The Committee noted the paper included detailed information from the Pentana system and those responsible including the Auditors have access to the live database to view any updates and the evidence behind each.

The Audit Committee:

- **Approved the date extension of three recommendations.**
- **Approved the removal of eight recommendations.**
- **Considered and approved the updated Rolling Audit Action Plan.**

AM645 2022-23 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN

The Director of Finance presented the draft internal audit plan for 2022-23 along with an updated Audit Needs Assessment (ANA)

Mr Ritchie summarised the draft internal audit plan for 2022-23 which had been compiled following discussion with the College Senior Management Team and feedback from Audit Committee members. Alongside a detailed review of the strategic risk register, assurance map and other key College documents by the audit team.

Mr Ritchie led the Committee through the report highlighting the seven areas of work which the internal auditors proposed undertaking during 2022-23. The Committee discussed these areas of review for internal audit purposes going forward and

recognised their importance in terms of linkages to the College Strategic Plan 2019-2025 and College Strategic Risk Register.

The Committee recognised that the internal audit plan was developed with the aim of focusing audit resources on the areas of most need and, therefore, not all potential audit areas could be reviewed within the resource available. Members considered, however, the assurance they got from other sources (such as external audit, regulatory reviews, management, etc). The ANA, however, had also been expanded to cover the potential audit assignments to be undertaken during 2023-24 and 2024-25. This was to allow the Committee to assess whether the timing of the planned work was appropriate or should other work be prioritised.

The Committee discussed the detail of the report, and the following points were clarified:

- The Audit Committee had previously confirmed a two-year review on finance matters, however, the SMT have proposed this moves to annual due to the key role finance plays in the operation of the College.
 - Proposed for three financial audits to take place over the next 3 years, with Procurement and Tendering being picked up through an APUC Audit initially in 2022-23.
- It was noted under Students that Safeguarding, Wellbeing and Counselling was reviewed in 2018-19 but will be picked up again due to the impact of the global pandemic.
- The Committee had asked to look at Governance - the College Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures and Overall Governance will be reviewed in 2022-23.
- In line with the need to review financial matters, the College Payroll Procedures and Controls is also proposed for 2022-23.
- The Committee agreed the 5-year view was very useful to get a wider picture.
- The Committee agreed that the following three areas can be carried out later than cyclically planned as no immediate risks perceived. The annual review highlighted the need to address other more key areas first.
 - Travel / Expenses (2023-24)
 - Policies and Procedures (2023-34)
 - Recruitment and Retention (2024-25)
- The Committee noted the offer of training sessions from Wylie & Bisset for both staff and Board members. The College agreed to review this offer in relation to potentially Fraud Awareness and Finance for Non-Financial staff.

Action: To consider what training for Board members might be supported by Wylie & Bisset (SG)

The Audit Committee approved the 2022-23 Internal Audit Plan.

AM646 2021-22 GOVERNANCE COMPLIANCE REPORT

The Head of Finance and Student Funding provided assurance that the College was operating in compliance with the:

- Financial Memorandum with the SFC.
- Scottish Public Finance Manual.
- Code of Good Governance.

The College has completed its own self-assessment in terms of compliance and the detailed documents are available for members and on file for Audits. It was noted

the College are all but one item compliant, *'The institution has an effective policy of risk management and risk management arrangements.'*

The College is still developing the Risk Management process with Senior Management and the policies/procedures continue to be embedded. It is hoped to have this in place for 2022-23.

The Committee discussed the detail of the report, and the following points were clarified:

- The Committee noted the work and progress being made on Risk Management from previous Committee meetings.
- The College noted that through internal and external audit the College are able to provide compliance assurance related to the above three guidance documents and beyond that the Director of Finance reviews and holds evidence in relation to each of the criteria required.

The Audit Committee considered and noted the assurance provided in relation to governance compliance.

AM647 INSURANCE UPDATE Restricted Item

AM648 2021-22 SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS

The Audit Committee noted the 2021-22 Schedule of Business.

AM649 2022-23 COMMITTEE DATES

The Committee noted and approved its 2022/23 meeting dates.

AM650 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) External Auditors

- Mr Ritchie updated that this is the last year of Mazars external audit and Audit Scotland have confirmed the new Auditors will be Azets for the next five year period.
- Mr Ritchie thanked Mazars for a great working relationship, especially during the recent pandemic with effective remote auditing.
- The Committee agreed to have Azets join an Audit Committee meeting at the handover period to ensure a smooth handover and to hear discussions at that time.
- Date of Next meeting: Wednesday 21 September 2022 at 4.00 p.m. by TEAMS

Audit Committee: Actions from the Minutes

Date of Meeting	Min Ref	Matter for Action	Responsible Person	Action Taken	Timescale (where applicable)
26 May 2022	AM628	Amend Committee remit to include receipt of annual IT security / cyber resilience report.	S Gordon	Duly added to remit and presented for approval to Sept 22 Audit meeting	Complete
26 May 2022	AM645	Consider what training for Board members might be supported by Wylie & Bisset.	W Hatton / L Connolly / S Gordon		



Agenda Item 5

Meeting	Audit Committee
Date	21 September 2022
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	Committee Remit, Membership and Dates of Meetings in 2022-23
Presented By	Graeme Bold, Chair
Recommendation to Members	For Approval
Appendix Attached	Yes Appendix A – remit Appendix B – membership Appendix C - Dates of Meetings in 2022-23

PURPOSE

The paper is presented in accordance with **Paragraph 6 of the Committee's** remit:

"6. *Review*

The Remit will be subject to review annually".

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Committee is asked to consider and approve the following:

- Audit Committee Remit (Appendix A)
- Audit Committee Membership List (Appendix B)
- Dates of Meetings in 2022-23 (Appendix C)

Following discussion at the Audit Committee meetings in March and May 2022, it was agreed to add to the Committee remit a commitment to receive an annual report on IT security / controls and their application. This has duly been added to Section 1.5 (first bullet point).

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

3. STUDENT EXPERIENCE

3.1 There are no student experience implications associated with this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no human resources implications associated with this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no reputational implications associated with this report.

7. COMMUNITY/PARTNERSHIP IMPACT

7.1 There are no community implications associated with this report.

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no equality implications associated with this report.

9. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is asked to consider and approve its remit, membership, and dates of meetings in 2022-23.

West College Scotland

Board of Management

Audit Committee

Statement of Purpose

The Board of Management provides the principal governance mechanism through which all activities are managed in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations, as well as ensuring that systems are in place to provide efficiency, effectiveness, and economy. The Board of Management has delegated some of its responsibilities to certain committees.

The role of the Audit Committee is to support the Board in its responsibilities of risk, control and governance by reviewing the comprehensiveness of assurances in meeting the assurance needs of the Board, and by reviewing the reliability and integrity of these assurances through a process of constructive challenge.

1. Remit

.1 General

- To provide advice to the Board on the strategic processes for risk, control and governance.
- To develop and review the assurance framework and receive reports relating to it in order to provide the necessary assurances to the Board or determine any further action or assurances required.
- To review and advise the Board of the Internal Auditor's and External Auditor's assessment of the effectiveness of the College's financial and other internal control systems, including controls specifically designed to prevent or detect fraud or other irregularities as well as those for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness (value for money).
- To advise the Board on the adequacy of the anti-fraud policy and processes, and on the whistle blowing process, and to receive an annual report on any matters raised through these processes.
- To consider and advise the Board accordingly on any arrangements for special investigations and the outcomes of such investigations.
- To advise the Board on its compliance with corporate governance requirements and good practice guidance, and in particular its compliance with the Financial Memorandum with SFC, the SPFM and the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges.
- To consider the College's Annual Financial Statements at a joint meeting with the Corporate Development Committee, and to recommend to the Board for approval.
- To provide an annual report to the Board, timed to support the finalisation of the accounts and the Statement on Internal Control, and summarising its conclusions from the work it has done during the year.
- To report to the Board after each meeting.
- To review its own effectiveness at least annually and to report the results of that review to the Board.

.2 Internal Audit

- To advise the Board on the selection, appointment or re-appointment and remuneration, or removal of the Internal Auditors. The responsibility for selection of

the Internal Auditor may be delegated to a Selection Committee as agreed by the Committee.

- To advise the Board on the terms of reference for the Internal Auditors.
- To review the scope, efficiency and effectiveness of the work of the Internal Auditors and to advise the Board on these matters.
- To agree the Internal Audit Plan and review the Internal Audit Annual Report.
- To review the Internal Audit reports, the management response to them and to review implementation of the actions required.
- To review the Rolling Audit Action Plan at each meeting.
- To encourage appropriate liaison and co-ordination between internal and external audit.
- To establish appropriate performance measures and indicators to monitor the effectiveness of the Internal Auditors.

.3 External Audit

- To receive information on the general terms and conditions of appointment of the External Auditors who are engaged by Audit Scotland to provide audit services to the College.
- To consider the External Auditors report on the Financial Statements and the management letter prior to submission to the Board, and to review the implementation of the recommendations.
- To review the Statement of Corporate Governance prior to finalisation and incorporation into the Financial Statements.
- To review the External Audit strategy and plan.
- To establish appropriate performance measures and indicators to monitor the effectiveness of the External Auditors.
- To consider the objectives and scope of any non-statutory audit work to be undertaken by the External Auditors firm and advising the Board of any potential conflict of interests.

.4 Risk

- To review the Risk Management Strategy and recommend to the Board for approval.
- To consider the Strategic Risk Register and to advise the Board accordingly.
- To consider matters of risk at each meeting and to satisfy itself that risks are being managed, including seeking assurances from internal and external audit on the adequacy of their management, and to report to the Board.

.5 Other

- To receive annual reports on Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts requests; Register of Interests; Hospitality/Gifts Registers; and **IT security / controls and their application.**
- To request any member of the College staff to attend and/or to provide a written report on any matter that falls within the remit of the committee.
- To procure ad-hoc specialist advice at the expense of the College as appropriate and when necessary, subject to budgets being agreed by the Board.

2. Membership

Category

A minimum of three Members of the Board of Management, one of whom will Chair.
The Committee is empowered to co-opt additional members, subject to approval by the Nominations Committee. Such members will normally be appointed for one year, will be subject to annual review, and may be re-appointed annually up to a maximum of 8 years.

In Attendance

Principal
Vice Principal Operations
Director of Finance
Secretary
Internal Auditor (Wylie Bisset)
External Auditor (Mazars)

At least one member should have a background in finance, accounting, or auditing but membership should not be drawn exclusively from people with such a background.

The Committee will **not** include any of the following as members:

- The Principal or other senior post holders.
- The Chair of the Board of Management.
- Members of the Corporate Development Committee.
- Connected parties such as the employee, partner, spouse or family member of the College's solicitors, bankers, auditors, insurers, or other professional advisers.

Committee members may sit privately without any non-members present for all or part of a meeting if appropriate.

Audit Committee members will annually meet with the Internal and External Auditors without the Executive Management Team present.

External and Internal Auditors will have the right to unrestricted and confidential access to Chair of the Audit Committee.

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee will be members of the Board of Management.

Chair, Vice Chair, and members appointments to the Committee will be between 3 to a maximum of 5 years, providing systematic opportunities for Committee members to serve on another Committee.

Members of the Audit, Corporate Development and Learning and Teaching Quality Committees can request to attend other Committees' meetings as observers, providing opportunities to gain more understanding of the respective Committees' issues.

The Committee is empowered to co-opt additional members, subject to approval by the Nominations Committee. Such members will normally be appointed for one year, will be subject to an annual review and may be re-appointed annually for up to a maximum of 8 years.

The Committee is empowered to invite other members of the Executive / Senior Management Team to attend meetings of the Committee.

3. Frequency of Meetings

The Committee will meet at least four times per year.

The Committee will also hold an annual joint meeting with the Corporate Development Committee to consider the Financial Statements and audit reports. Additional meetings will be convened as necessary.

4. Quorum

A quorum will be no less than 50% of Board members on the Committee.

5. Secretariat

The Secretary to the Board of Management.

Papers for meetings will be sent out electronically 7 days in advance of the meeting.

The Committee will report to the Board of Management and the minutes of its meetings will be circulated to the Board for information.

6. Review

The remit will be subject to review annually.

Audit Composition (Para 2 of the Remit)
Meetings – 4 per annum plus 1 Joint Audit / CDC

Category	Name
A minimum of three Members of the Board of Management, one of whom will Chair.	Graeme Bold (Chair) Grant Lyall (Vice Chair) Ronald Leitch
The Committee is empowered to co-opt additional members, subject to approval by the Nominations Committee. Such members will normally be appointed for one year, will be subject to annual review, and may be re-appointed annually up to a maximum of 8 years.	

In Attendance	Name
Principal	Liz Connolly
Vice Principal Operations	Amy McDonald
Director of Finance	Alan Ritchie
Secretary	Shirley Gordon
Internal Auditor (Wylie Bisset)	Graham Gillespie Stephen Pringle
External Auditor (Mazars)	Lucy Nutley Joanne Buchanan

Quorum	A quorum will be no less than 50% of Board members on the Committee
---------------	--

Chair, Vice Chair and members appointments to the Committee will be between 3 to a maximum of 5 years, providing systematic opportunities for Committee members to serve on another Committee.

Members of the Audit, Corporate Development and Learning and Teaching Quality Committees can request to attend other Committees' meetings as observers, providing opportunities to gain more understanding of the respective Committees' issues.

Appendix C

At the Audit Committee meeting held on 26 May 2022, the following meeting dates for the 2022/23 session were approved:

- Wednesday 21 September 2022 – 4 till 6pm
- Wednesday 25 January 2023 – 4 till 6pm
- Wednesday 29 March 2023 – 4 till 6pm
- Wednesday 24 May 2023 – 4 till 6pm

Meeting	Audit Committee
Date	21 September 2022
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	2021-22 Audit Committee Report to the Board of Management
Presented By	Graeme Bold Chair of Audit Committee
Recommendation to Members	Review and comment
Appendix Attached	Yes A - 2020-21 Audit Committee Report to the Board of Management

PURPOSE

To present to the Board of Management the *2021-22 Audit Committee Report to the Board of Management* for its considerations as part of the **College's year end reporting requirements in line with the [SFC Accounts direction for Scotland's colleges 2021-22](#)**

The paper is presented in line with the Board of Management Scheme of Delegation:

'(d) the approval of the year-end Annual Report and Accounts, the Annual Budget, College financial plans, forecasts, delegations and regulations;

(e) Final consideration of the Annual Audit Report;'

The paper is submitted *For Approval*.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Annual Report to the Board of Management details the work conducted by the Audit Committee during the period 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022
- 1.2 The Report was presented for considered at the Audit Committee meeting of 21 September 2022 and will be further considered by the Joint Audit and Corporate Development Committee meeting on 22 November 2022 as part of the 2021-22 financial statement considerations.

2. FURTHER DETAIL ON THE REPORT TOPIC

- 2.1 The Annual Report is a requirement of both the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Financial Memorandum and the Scottish Public Finance Manual. The Annual Report is based upon the guidance laid out in the **Scottish Governments 'Audit and Assurance Committee Handbook,'** which states that the Annual Report should summarise the committee's work for the year past, and present its opinion about:
- the effectiveness of governance, risk management and control.
 - the comprehensiveness of assurances in meeting the Accountable Officer's and Board's needs.
 - the reliability and integrity of these assurances.
 - whether the assurance available is sufficient to support the Accountable Officer and Board in their decision taking and their accountability obligations.
 - the implications of these assurances for the overall management of risk.
 - any issues the committee considers pertinent to the Governance Statement and any long-term issues the committee thinks the Accounting Officer and/or Board should give attention to.
 - financial reporting for the year.
 - the quality of both Internal and External Audit and their approach to their responsibilities.
 - the Committee's view of its own effectiveness, including advice on ways in which it considers it needs to be strengthened or developed.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

4. STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- 4.1 There are no student experience implications associated with this paper.

5. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no human resources implications associated with this paper.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no further legal implications in this paper to those listed above.

7. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no reputational implications associated with this paper.

8. COMMUNITY/PARTNERSHIP IMPACT

- 8.1 There are no community implications associated with this paper.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no equality implications associated with this paper.

10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit Committee is requested to review and make comment upon the draft 2021-22 Audit Committee Report to the Board of Management.

Appendix A

2021-22 AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

1. This report covers the activities of the Audit Committee of West College Scotland for the year 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022. The Committee notes that despite the governance and operational challenges faced by the College due to the global pandemic, the 2021-22 schedule of Committee business was completed within the year.

Terms of Reference

2. The Terms of Reference were reviewed by the Audit Committee on 8 September 2021. The Audit Committee remit was approved by the Board of Management at its meeting held on 22 March 2021.

Membership and Attendance

3. The Audit Committee membership and attendance for 2021-22 was as follows:

Name	Status	Date of Appointment	Appointment End Date	Attendance Possible	Actual
G Bold	Non-Executive Member and Chair of the Audit Committee	1 Feb 2021	31 Jan 2025	5	5
W Wong	Co-opted Member	1 Mar 2019	29 Feb 2022	3	2
G Lyall	Non-Executive Member and Vice Chair of the Audit Committee	1 Feb 2021	31 Jan 2025	5	4
Ronald Leitch	Non-Executive Member	1 Dec 2021	30 Nov 2025	3	3

4. The following were in regular attendance at Committee meetings:
 - Liz Connolly (Principal and Chief Executive)
 - Amy McDonald (Vice Principal Operations)
 - Alan Ritchie (Director of Finance)
 - Vivienne Mulholland (Head of Finance and Student Funding)
 - Shirley Gordon (Secretary to the Committee)

5. The **College's internal auditors, Wylie & Bissett LLP, attended all** Committee meetings during the year. 2021-22 is the second year of their initial three-year appointment to 31 July 2023, with an option to extend the contract for a further two years. As part of the appointment Wylie & Bissett LLP were appointed to undertake the annual audit review of SFC student activity, student support funds, educational maintenance allowances and SAAS discretionary funds.
6. The College external auditors, Mazars LLP, were appointed by Audit Scotland to undertake the review of the Annual Report and Accounts with 2021-22 being their final year. Mazars have attended four out of the five Audit Committee meetings during the year at which they presented their Management Letter and Financial Statement as of 31 July 2021 and subsequently their 2021-22 Audit Strategy Memorandum.
7. The Auditor General and Accounts Commission have approved the appointments for audits of financial years 2022-23 to 2026-27. This follows the audit tender exercise in which they secured six firms to conduct audits alongside Audit Scotland. The Auditor General has written to the College to confirm that the auditor for West College Scotland will be Azets Audit Services. A list of all appointments is available on their [website](#).

Meetings

8. Audit Committee meetings were held on the following dates:
 - 8 September 2021
 - 1 December 2021
 - 2 March 2022
 - 18 May 2022
9. Additionally, a joint meeting of the Audit and Corporate Development Committee was held on 23 November 2021 to approve the Annual Report and Accounts for Board of Management consideration for the year ended 31 July 2021.

GENERAL EFFECTIVENESS REPORT

Assessment of the effectiveness of the College's financial and other internal control systems

10. **Audit Committee members have received assurance on the College's control systems** through the work undertaken by internal and external auditors. The Committee considered the following reports during 2021-22:

- The 2021-22 Internal Audit Plan was approved and update reports on progress were received by the Committee at each meeting.
- The Committee have reviewed all Internal Audit Reports with the audit recommendations being recorded in the Rolling Audit Action Plan. Full details of the reports received and reviewed by the Committee can be found in the Internal Audit Annual Report 2021-22, which was considered by the Committee at its 6 September 2022 meeting.
- 2021-22 year-end reports were received and considered by the Committee:
 - The Annual Internal Audit Report: the auditors were satisfied with the control framework in place.
 - EMA Audit (Education Maintenance Allowance): ~~unqualified audit certificate.~~
 - SFC Aggregated Student Funding Audit: ~~unqualified audit certificate.~~
 - Student Credit Audit: ~~unqualified audit certificate.~~
 - Financial Statements Management Letter: ~~unqualified audit certificate.~~
 - Report and Financial Statements.
- Report on compliance with the SFC Financial Memorandum, Scottish Public Finance Manual and Code of Good Governance.
- The Committee schedule of business was reviewed at each meeting to ensure adherence to and delivery of the Committee remit.

11. Members of the Audit Committee had the opportunity to meet in closed session with the internal and external auditors during 2021-22. This enabled a discussion to take place in relation to audit and governance matters without the College management present. No matters of concern were raised, and the internal and external auditors confirmed their satisfaction with the engagement provided by College management in relation to the audit process.
12. The Audit Committee also met in closed session with members of the College Executive and identified no issues with either the internal / external auditors or audit arrangements.

Fraud and Corruption Policy and Processes

13. **The Committee remit includes a requirement** *'To advise the Board on the adequacy of the anti-fraud policy and processes'* The College Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy was reviewed and approved by the Committee at its September 2021 meeting.

Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy

14. In September 2019, the Committee reviewed and approved the College Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy and Procedure. An annual report is provided to the Committee on the number and type of items reported under the College Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy. The 2021-22 report did not highlight any reportable instances.

Compliance with Corporate Governance requirements

15. The Committee considered the annual report on governance compliance at the 26 May 2022 meeting. This confirmed that the College had complied with corporate governance requirements and good practice guidance and had operated in accordance with the SFC Financial Memorandum, the Scottish Public Finance Manual, and the Code of Good Governance **for Scotland's Colleges. The Committee** welcomed this report and the assurance that it brought and advised the Board of Management accordingly.

16. In accordance with Paragraph D.23 of '[The Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges](#)'

"the board must keep its effectiveness under annual review and have in place a robust self-evaluation process. There should also be an externally facilitated evaluation of its effectiveness at least every three years. The board must send its self-evaluation (including an externally facilitated evaluation) and board development plan (including progress on previous year's plan) to its funding body and publish them online."

17. It was agreed at the 7 February 2022 Board meeting that, for the annual internal Board effectiveness review 2022, the same survey that was used in 2021 should be issued to all Board members again this year. The survey was issued on 1 March 2022 with a closing date of 18 March 2022. The results from the survey, together with the outputs from the Chair and Board members 1:1 discussion held in 2021, will inform the 2022 Board of Management Development Action Plan.
18. A session for Board members was held on Monday 25 April 2022 to discuss the survey results and analysis report and agree the formulation of a 2022 Board of Management Development Action Plan. Both the Effectiveness Review Report and Board Development Action Plan were approved by the Board of Management at its meeting held on 13 June 2022 and, thereafter, forwarded to the SFC and are published on the College website at the following link:
<https://www.westcollegescotland.ac.uk/college/about-us/board-of-management/>
19. The Board last undertook an externally facilitated evaluation of its effectiveness in late 2019 with the feedback report being approved at the Board meeting held in February 2020.
20. Each Board member has an individual review meeting with the Chair of the Board during the year. This allows Board members to discuss any training or development needs and helps identify the training and development programme for the following session. The Chair has an annual review meeting conducted by the Vice Chair of the Board and the Board Senior Independent Member.

Review of Audit Committee effectiveness

21. The key findings of the Audit Committee Effectiveness review were considered at the 26 May 2022 meeting, which confirmed that the members were satisfied with:
- the operation and effectiveness of the Committee.
 - the level and quality of information and assurances it received from a range of sources.

22. The review did not result in any suggestions as to how the Committee could make further improvements

INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE

Provider

23. During 2021-22, the internal audit service was provided by Wylie & Bisset. 2021-22 is the second year of an initial three-year appointment to 31 July 2023, with an option to extend the contract for a further two years. As part of the appointment Wylie & Bisset were appointed to undertake the annual audit review of SFC student activity, student support funds, educational maintenance allowances and SAAS discretionary funds.

Internal Audit Report 2021-22

24. The Internal Auditor Annual Report for 2021-22 was considered at the 6 September 2022 meeting of the Audit Committee, where it was noted the programme of internal audit activity for 2021-22 had been substantially completed as planned, subject to the deferral of the Estate Strategy audit work to 2022-23
25. The Audit Findings section of the Annual Internal Audit Report contains a table of the internal audit reports presented by Wylie & Bisset during the year to 31 July 2022. The Audit Committee has reviewed the key findings of the internal audit reports and considered the recommendations and findings contained therein.
26. There were no unplanned audit assignments undertaken during 2021-22.

Monitoring

27. The Audit Committee, through the Rolling Audit Action Plan, reviews the progress made by the College in addressing the recommendations made by both internal and external auditors. This systematic approach, which sees audit actions monitored at each Committee meeting, ensures progress is maintained in addressing audit recommendations, which is key in maintaining internal control of identified risks.
28. The Audit Committee also reviews and monitors the College identification, management, and mitigation of risk throughout the year and sees this as an essential requirement in providing assurance on audit activity to the Board of Management.

29. The College maintains an electronic register of internal audit recommendations as part of the continuous rolling review process, and this enables the relevant College Director with lead responsibility for each action to update the status of the audit recommendations on a real time basis. This allows the internal auditors to monitor progress continuously and report on the status of all audit recommendations on an ongoing basis, rather than a follow up review being undertaken on an annual basis.
30. The external auditors also review any recommendations made in the prior year external audit reports and confirm progress made in addressing these on an annual basis.

Internal Audit Effectiveness and Performance Review

31. Following a review in May 2022 the Audit Committee confirmed it was satisfied as to the effectiveness of the work conducted by the College internal auditors, Wylie & Bisset, and with their overall performance during the previous year. This conclusion was based upon several factors including delivery of the internal audit plan, number of days used in delivering the plan, interaction with the Committee and College staff and receipt of comprehensive and evaluative reports.

Closed Meeting

32. The Committee met in closed session with Wylie & Bisset at the May 2021 Audit Committee meeting. There were no issues arising and thus no matters to be reported to the Board of Management following this meeting.

Internal Audit Plan

33. At the May 2022 Audit Committee meeting, Wylie & Bisset presented the draft 2022-23 Internal Audit Plan. The Internal Audit Plan was based upon the College assurance mapping process and a risk analysis exercise conducted by Wylie & Bisset in conjunction with the College Senior Management Team. The aim of the Internal Audit Plan is to provide the Board of Management with assurance on the effective **management of the College's key risks. This means that the internal** audit plan considers the full range of systems and risks within the College, not just the financial systems.
34. The May 2022 Audit Committee approved the 2022-23 Internal Audit Plan subject to any implications that might arise from the ongoing review/updating of the College Strategic Risk Register.

EXTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE

Provider

35. Mazars LLP were appointed by Audit Scotland as the external auditors of West College Scotland with effect from 1 August 2016 until 31 July 2022.
36. The Audit Committee received and accepted Mazars Audit Strategy Memorandum for the year ending 31 July 2022 at the May 2022 meeting.
37. The External Auditors presented their Annual Report to the Board of Management and the Auditor General for Scotland on the External Audit for the year ending 31 July 2022 to the Joint Audit and Corporate Development Committee meeting held on 22 November 2022. The external audit annual report had an unqualified opinion regarding the financial statements for the year to 31 July 2022.

Cost

38. The cost of providing the external audit service to the Board of Management for the year to 31 July 2022 was £34,000 (2020-21: £33,500). The agreed external audit fee is within the parameters stipulated by Audit Scotland.

External Audit Effectiveness and Performance Review

39. The 1 December 2021 Audit Committee considered the effectiveness of the external auditors and concluded that they were satisfied with the performance of the external auditors, Mazars. This conclusion was based upon several factors including delivery of the external audit assignment, number of audit days used in delivering their opinions, interaction with the Committee and College staff and receipt of comprehensive and evaluative reports.
40. Closed Meeting
41. In line with best practice, the Audit Committee met in closed session with Mazars and Wylie & Bisset at the 23 November 2021 joint meeting with the Corporate Development Committee. Both sets of auditors confirmed that the information provided to them by the College had allowed them to reach their opinions with confidence. Both audit firms were of the opinion the Senior Management Team at West College Scotland worked together well and were diligent and professional.

Other Audit Coverage

42. Additional audit work is undertaken to validate four mandatory returns required each year by the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) and the SFC. For 2021-22 this work was undertaken by Wylie & Bisset LLP. The College is required to submit audit certificates to the SFC / SAAS relating to:

1. HE Student Support Funds Return

~~Unqualified audit certificated submitted to SAAS in line with required deadline with no recommendations made on the controls operated by the College.~~

2. SFC Aggregate Student Support Return

~~Unqualified audit certificated submitted to SFC in line with required deadline with no recommendations made on the controls operated by the College.~~

3. EMA Return

~~Unqualified audit certificated submitted to SFC in line with required deadline with one low level recommendation made on the controls operated by the College.~~

4. SFC Credit Return

~~Unqualified audit certificated submitted to SAAS in line with required deadline with one medium and four low level recommendations made on the controls operated by the College.~~

RISK MANAGEMENT

43. The College [Risk Management Strategy](#) was reviewed by the Audit Committee during its March 2022 meeting. The Board of Management approved the updated Risk Management Strategy in June 2022

44. The College continues to develop the process of risk management within the College, with several actions undertaken during 2021-22, including:

- The format of the strategic risk register was updated to reflect the needs of the College.
- The Strategic Risk Register continues to be held on the Pentana Management System allowing users on-line access to the register, including both the internal and external auditors. The mitigating controls have been allocated to the relevant members of the Senior Management Team to allow these to be updated as required, including the addition of any new mitigating actions.

- The consideration of risk by the College Senior Management Team continues to be ongoing throughout the year.
- The Board and Committees have continued to consider the strategic risks faced by the College at each meeting, with the Strategic Risk Register updated as required.

OTHER REPORTING

45. During the year, the Audit Committee also received reports on:
- Register of interests for Board and Committee members.
 - Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts requests received by the College.
 - Register of interests for staff members.
 - Hospitality/Gifts Registers for all College staff members.
46. The Audit Committee was satisfied with the content of the reports and had no issues to report to the Board of Management.

2022-23 FORWARD LOOK

47. The Committee maintains a Schedule of Business which is reviewed at the end of each meeting. This enables the members to assess that all areas of the Committee remit are being addressed through the work being undertaken. As part of the Schedule of Business, the Committee also look ahead to establish what work is planned and when it can anticipate receipt of the relevant reports. This ensures the work of the Committee is met throughout the year, ensuring material items are given consideration at the appropriate time
48. The work of the Committee in 2022-23 will include:
- Introduction of new external auditors.
 - Receipt of internal audit reports in line with the agreed 2022-23 Internal Audit Plan.
 - Review of Rolling Audit Action Plan.
 - Review of policies as required.
 - Review of governance compliance.
 - Review of revised Risk Management Strategy and updated risk register.

COMMITTEE OPINION

49. The role of the Audit Committee is to support the Board of Management in its responsibilities of risk, control, and governance by reviewing the comprehensiveness of assurances in meeting the assurance needs of the Board, and by reviewing the reliability and integrity of these assurances through a process of constructive challenge.
50. Based on the assessments and reports provided by the internal / external auditors and the College management, the Audit Committee is satisfied that its responsibilities to the Board of Management have been satisfactorily discharged.

Signed:

Date:

Chair of Audit Committee

Meeting	Audit Committee
Date	21 September 2022
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy
Presented By	Alan Ritchie Director of Finance
Recommendation to Members	For Approval
Appendix Attached	Yes 07(a) – Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy

PURPOSE

This report presents to the Audit Committee the results of the review of the College Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy.

The paper is presented in line with West College Scotland Audit Committee Terms of Reference:

*'To review and advise the Board of the **Internal Auditor's and External Auditor's assessment of the effectiveness of the College's financial and other internal control systems, including controls specifically designed to prevent or detect fraud or other irregularities as well as those for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness (value for money).**'*

The paper is submitted *For Approval*.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Policy has been reviewed against best practice guidance and the following amendments have been made:

- Titles have been updated for both staff and other policy documents.
- P 2 - Policy statement has been updated to bring to the front of the document the College zero tolerance approach to bribery and corruption.
- P 6 – What is bribery section expanded to provide detail on provisions contained within the Bribery Act 2010
- P12 – Responsibilities section update to clearly show Board commitment to zero tolerance approach by taking overall responsibility for the Policy

1.2 The Equality Impact Assessment will be updated after the Policy has been approved.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1. There are no financial implications associated with this paper.

3. STUDENT EXPERIENCE

3.1. There are no student experience implications associated with this paper.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

4.1. There are no human resource implications associated with this paper.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. There are legal implications associated with this paper in that if the Policy is not in place the College is not complying with its regulatory requirements.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1. There are no reputational implications associated with this paper.

7. COMMUNITY/PARTNERSHIP IMPACT

7.1. There are no community implications associated with this paper.

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1. There are no equality implications associated with this paper.

9. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1. There are no environmental implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit Committee is requested to approve the revised Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy.

Policy & Procedure	Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy
Policy Area	Finance
Version Number	5
Approving Committee	Audit Committee
Date of Approval	21 September 2022
Date of Equality Impact Assessment	April 2020
Date of Review	31 July 2024
Responsible Senior Manager	Director of Finance

History of Amendments

Date	Version/Pages/Sections Affected	Summary of changes
10/01/2018	3	Reviewed by Director Finance and Estates
4/3/2020	4	Overall review for relevance
1/8/2022	5	Reviewed and updated in line with best practice

Policy Statement

West College Scotland is committed to carrying out its functions in an honest and ethical manner and to observing the provisions of the Bribery Act 2010, in respect of its conduct both at home and overseas. The Bribery Act creates several bribery and corruption offences and holds the College liable for failing to prevent bribery carried out on its behalf, irrespective of whether the bribe takes place in the UK or overseas.

The College takes a zero-tolerance approach to bribery and corruption and are committed to acting professionally, fairly and with integrity in all College business dealings and relationships wherever it operates and implementing and enforcing effective systems to counter bribery and corruption.

The Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy sets out the College's and staff members responsibilities in observing and upholding the institutional position on bribery and corruption and provides information and guidance to staff on how to recognise and deal with bribery and corruption issues.

Equality Statement

The College is committed to providing equal opportunities to ensure its students, staff, customers, and visitors are treated equally regardless of gender reassignment, race, religion, or belief; disability; age; marriage and civil partnerships; pregnancy and maternity; sexual orientation; sex.

Please note this document is available in other formats, to request another format please email Charlene.Clark@wcs.ac.uk

Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Who is covered by this Policy?	5
3. What is Bribery?.....	6
4. Public Officials.....	8
5. Potential Risk Scenarios.....	8
6. Training Awareness.....	9
7. Gifts and Hospitality.....	10
8. What is Not Acceptable?	11
9. Facilitation Payments.....	11
10. Donations, Gifts and Sponsorships	12
11. Responsibilities.....	12
12. Recordkeeping.....	13
13. How to Raise a Concern	14
14. Third Parties and Transactions.....	14
15. What to do if you are the Victim of Bribery or Corruption	15
16. Protection	15
Appendix 1 - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	17

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The College is committed to carrying out its teaching and business functions in an honest and ethical manner and to observing the provisions of the Bribery Act 2010, in respect of its conduct both at home and overseas.
- 1.2 The provisions of the Bribery Act 2010 apply to all College business. The Bribery Act contains several bribery and corruption offences and holds UK businesses and institutions liable for failing to prevent bribery carried out on their behalf, irrespective of whether the bribe takes place in the UK or overseas. The sanctions for these offences include up to 10 years' imprisonment for the individuals responsible. In addition, if the College is found to have connived in or consented to acts of corruption undertaken in its name, the penalties include personal liability for senior managers and an unlimited fine and significant reputational damage for the College.
- 1.3 In relation to the College, the principal applicable laws regarding Bribery and Corruption are:
- Criminal law in the UK and particularly the UK Bribery Act 2010 which has extra-territorial reach and the implications for all College operations irrespective of their location
 - Other criminal laws, including those that arise in the local jurisdictions of College operations and relations worldwide
- 1.4 This Policy outlines how the College is implementing and enforcing effective systems to counter bribery. The purpose of this Policy is to:
- Set out the College's responsibilities, and of those working for us, in observing and upholding our position on bribery and corruption; and
 - Provide information and guidance to those working for us on how to recognise and deal with bribery and corruption issues.

- 1.5 This Policy should be read in conjunction with other College policies, including in particular:
- Financial Regulations
 - Fraud and Corruption Policy and Procedures
 - Policy and Procedure for the Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality
 - Register of Interests – SMT and Staff Policy
- 1.6 Employees are reminded of the requirement to familiarise themselves with the most recent version of the Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy and all policies referenced within this document.
- 1.7 The College has a zero-tolerance policy towards Bribery and Corruption.
- 1.8 The Audit Committee of the Board of Management will consider the suitability and effectiveness of this Policy. In addition, the Senior Management Team will establish adequate procedures to monitor the implementation of, and ongoing compliance with, this Policy in each geographical location.
- 1.9 The College is committed to providing equal opportunities to ensure its students, staff, customers, and visitors are treated equally regardless of gender reassignment, race, religion, or belief; disability; age; marriage and civil partnerships; pregnancy and maternity; sexual orientation; sex.

2. Who is covered by this Policy?

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all individuals working at all levels and grades, including Board of Management members, Board of Management Committee members, senior managers, employees (whether permanent, fixed term or temporary), consultants, seconded staff, agency staff, volunteers, interns, agents, sponsors, or any other person associated with the College wherever located.

- 2.1 Top-level commitment is an essential feature of compliance of the Bribery Act and staff with management responsibility are expected to share the Board of Management's commitment to observe and implement the spirit and terms of this Policy.

3. What is Bribery?

- 3.1 The UK is a signatory to the UN Convention Against Corruption, which requires participating countries to put in place anti-bribery criminal laws - Bribery Act 2010.
- 3.2 The principal provisions of the Bribery Act include:
- Two general offences covering the offering, promising, or giving of a bribe (active bribery) and the requesting, agreeing to receive, or accepting of a bribe (passive bribery) (sections 1 and 2).
 - A discrete offence of bribing a foreign public official to obtain or retain business or an advantage in the conduct of business (section 6).
 - An offence which can be committed by commercial organisations which fail to prevent bribery committed on their behalf (section 7).
 - Raising the maximum sentence for bribery committed by an individual from 7 to 10 years imprisonment. The maximum sentence for an offence committed by a corporate body is an unlimited fine
- 3.3 A bribe is an inducement or reward offered, promised, or provided in order to gain any commercial, contractual, regulatory, or personal advantage. Acts of bribery or corruption are designed to influence the individual in the performance of his/her duty and incline them to act dishonestly. It is an offence under the Bribery Act to:
- Offer a bribe
 - Receive a bribe
 - Bribe a Foreign Official
 - Consent or connive to the commission of a bribery offence by anyone associated with the College in respect of business carried out on behalf of the College

Examples

Offering a bribe

You offer a potential business partner or client tickets to a major sporting event, on the condition that they agree to do business with you/the College as a result.

This would be an offence as you are making the offer to gain a commercial and contractual advantage. The College may also be found to have committed an offence because the offer has been made to obtain business for the College. (See below for Gifts and Hospitality Guidance).

Receiving a bribe

A supplier gives a member of your family a job but makes it clear that in return they expect you to use your position to influence the chances of obtaining College business or another advantage to them in return.

It is an offence for a supplier to make such an offer. It would be an offence for you to accept the offer as you would be doing so to gain a personal advantage. Suppliers who are found to have committed a bribery offence are automatically debarred from any future public authority tender process.

Bribing a foreign official

An agency responsible for recruiting students pays a small bribe to an education department official to be allowed access to students in a highly rated school. The offence of bribing a foreign public official has been committed as soon as the offer is made. This is because it is made to gain a business advantage for you or for the College.

If the College is found to have connived in or consented to acts of corruption undertaken in its name, the penalties include personal liability for the senior managers and an unlimited fine and significant reputational damage for the College. Penalties from more than one jurisdiction may also apply in a single case of bribery or corruption.

4. Public Officials

4.1 Corrupting a Public Official is a serious legal offence and carries reputational and legal risks. It is prohibited to transfer anything of value, to a Public Official (or to any other individual or government third party at the request or consent of a Public Official) to influence a Public Official.

4.2 “Transfer” means any offer, promise, gift, or payment of anything of value, including a financial or other advantage, or any authorisation or ratification of the foregoing. It is prohibited to accept any Transfer for Anything of Value and incidents should be reported immediately to College Management.

5. Potential Risk Scenarios

5.1 The following scenarios are deemed to be “red flags” as they indicate an increased risk of an offence being committed under the Bribery Act:

- You become aware that a third party engages in, or has been accused of engaging in, improper business practices
- You learn that a third party has a reputation for paying bribes, or requiring that bribes are paid to them, or has a reputation for having a "special relationship" with foreign government officials
- A third party insists on receiving a commission or fee payment before committing to sign up to a contract, or carrying out a government function or process
- A third-party requests payment in cash and/or refuses to sign a formal commission or fee agreement, or to provide an invoice or receipt for a payment made
- A third-party request that payment is made to a country or geographic location different from where the third party resides or conducts business

- A third party requests an unexpected additional fee or commission to "facilitate" a service
- A third party demands lavish entertainment or gifts before commencing or continuing contractual negotiations or provision of services
- A third-party request that a payment is made to "overlook" potential legal violations
- A third-party request that you provide employment, a place on a course, or some other advantage to a friend or relative
- You receive an invoice from a third party that appears to be non-standard or customised
- A third party insists on the use of side letters or refuses to put terms agreed in writing
- You notice that the College has been invoiced for a commission or fee payment that appears large given the service stated to have been provided
- A third party requests or requires the use of an agent, intermediary, consultant, distributor, or supplier that is not typically used by or known to the College
- You are offered an unusually generous gift or offered lavish hospitality by a third party

6. Training Awareness

- 6.1 The Director of Finance will communicate the requirements of this Policy to employees at least once a year. Training and refresher training will be provided to all employees on a regular basis to accompany and supplement this annual communication.

7. Gifts and Hospitality

- 7.1 This Policy does not prohibit normal and appropriate gifts or hospitality (given and received) to or from third parties. However, gifts, hospitality and political or charitable donations will be bribes if they are given or received with the intention of influencing business decisions.
- 7.2 Guidance on the College's accepted practice regarding gifts and hospitality are set out in:
- The Acceptance of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy.
 - The Travel and Subsistence Procedure.
- 7.3 In addition, when giving or receiving gifts, benefits, or hospitality, you should consider whether the following requirements are met:
- It is not made with the intention of influencing a third party to obtain or retain business or a business advantage, or to reward the provision or retention of business or a business advantage, or in explicit or implicit exchange for favours or benefits
 - It complies with any local law
 - It does not include cash or a cash equivalent (such as gift certificates or vouchers)
 - Considering the reason for the gift, it is of an appropriate type and value and given at an appropriate time
 - It is given openly, not secretly
- 7.4 Gifts should not be offered to, or accepted from, government officials or representatives, or politicians or political parties, without the prior approval of the Director of Finance.

8. What is Not Acceptable?

8.1 It is not acceptable for you (or someone on your behalf) to:

- Give, promise to give, or offer a payment, gift or hospitality with the expectation or hope that a business advantage will be received, or to reward a business advantage already given
- Give, promise to give, or offer, a payment, gift or hospitality to a government official, agent, or representative to "facilitate" or expedite a routine procedure
- Accept payment from a third party that you know, or suspect is offered with the expectation that it will obtain a business advantage for them
- Accept a gift or hospitality from a third party if you know or suspect that it is offered or provided with an expectation that a business advantage will be provided by us in return
- Threaten or retaliate against a colleague or third party who has refused to commit a bribery offence or who has raised concerns under this policy
- Engage in any activity that might lead to a breach of this policy

9. Facilitation Payments

9.1 In some countries it is customary practice to make payments or gifts of small value to junior government officials to speed up or facilitate a routine action or process. However, this is not permitted under the Bribery Act and the College does not, therefore, support or endorse the making or accepting of facilitation payments by staff and anyone carrying out business on behalf. *Such payments are illegal.*

9.2 If you are asked to make a payment on behalf of the College, you should always be mindful of what the payment is for and whether the amount requested is proportionate to the goods or services provided. You should always ask for a receipt which details the reason for the payment.

9.3 If a facilitation payment is being extorted, or if you are forced to pay under duress, you must record the payment and report it without delay under the procedure set out in 'How to raise a concern' section.

10. Donations, Gifts and Sponsorships

- 10.1 The College does not make contributions to political parties. The College supports charitable giving and initiatives by students and staff; however, it is only open to the College to make charitable donations at an institutional level in limited prescribed circumstances, and any such requests should first be referred to the Principal.
- 10.2 Charitable donations must not be made for the purpose of influencing Public Officials or in exchange for obtaining or retaining business or other improper advantage for the benefit of the College (or for the improper advantage of any employee, any other entity of person). All College employees and related individuals are required to seek approval from the Principal prior to any donation being made. All college employees must also comply with local laws and regulations on Lobbying including registration and reporting requirements.
- 10.3 College employees must ensure that charitable donations and sponsorships are not made as an inducement for the purpose of obtaining any improper advantage or favour. Therefore charities, organisations or individuals seeking charitable gifts (excluding employees for personal charitable activities) are subject to due diligence or enhanced due diligence as appropriate.

11. Responsibilities

- 11.1 The Board of Management has overall responsibility for ensuring this Policy complies with the College legal and ethical obligations, and that all those working or acting on behalf of the College comply with it.
- 11.2 The prevention, detection and reporting of bribery and other forms of corruption are the responsibility of all those working for or associated with the College. All staff are required to avoid any activity that might lead to, or suggest, a breach of this Policy.
- 11.3 The Director of Finance has primary and day-to-day responsibility for implementing

this policy, monitoring its use and effectiveness, dealing with any queries about it, and auditing internal control systems and procedures to ensure they are effective in countering bribery and corruption.

- 11.4 Effective risk assessment to evaluate and mitigate risk is an essential element of this Policy. Colleagues must assess the vulnerability of their activities, particularly overseas, on an on-going basis.
- 11.5 You must notify your manager and the Director of Finance as soon as possible if you believe or suspect that a conflict with this Policy has occurred or may occur in the future.
- 11.6 Any employee who breaches this Policy will face disciplinary action, which could result in dismissal for gross misconduct.

12. Recordkeeping

- 12.1 The College has a duty to monitor the fact that the terms of the Bribery Act are being observed by employees, workers and those associated with the College. The College is required to keep financial records and to have appropriate internal controls in place which will evidence the business reason for making payments to third parties.
- 12.2 You must declare and keep a written record of all hospitality, **benefits** or gifts accepted or offered in accordance with the Acceptance of Gifts, **Benefits** and Hospitality Policy and/or the Travel and Subsistence Policy. For the protection of those involved, the Director of Finance will maintain a register of gifts and hospitality received by all members of staff where the value is more than £25. The gift register should be updated and maintained on a regular basis.
- 12.3 You must ensure all expenses claims relating to hospitality, gifts or expenses incurred to third parties are submitted in accordance with the Travel and Subsistence Policy and specifically record the reason for the expenditure.

- 12.4 The Director of Finance will maintain a central register of all reports made under this Policy to include a record of the investigation and the outcome of those investigations. All records relating to compliance and the register of incidents will be retained for at least five years from the date of testing/recording.

13. How to Raise a Concern

- 13.1 You are encouraged to raise concerns about any issue or suspicion of malpractice at the earliest possible stage. If you are unsure whether a particular act constitutes bribery or corruption, or if you have any other queries, these should be raised with your line manager in the first instance. If you or your line manager requires further guidance, you should contact the Director of Finance.
- 13.2 Malpractice may be reported by following the procedure set out in the [College's Public Interest Disclosure \(Whistleblowing\) Policy](#).

14. Third Parties and Transactions

- 14.1 The definition of third parties is broad, and could include agents, business partners, service providers, contractors or any individual who is nominated to act on behalf of the company. Whilst the use of agents and business partners can help us to reach our goals, we need to be aware that these arrangements can potentially present College with significant risks.
- 14.2 Risk can be identified where a business partner conducts activities on the College's behalf, so that the result of their action can be seen as benefiting the College. Business partners who act on the College's behalf must be advised of the existence of and always operate in accordance with this policy. Local management is responsible for the evaluation of each relationship and determining whether it falls into this category. Furthermore, a risk assessment exercise should be carried out to determine whether the third-party intermediary is a high, medium, or low risk to the College. Due diligence

checks must be carried out when appointing and retaining third parties and such checks include (but are not limited to):

- An assessment of the rationale for engaging the third-party intermediary
- An evaluation of the third party's ability to deliver the service
- An evaluation of the integrity of the third party, including background checks on publicly available records on individuals/companies
- Financial and credit checks (where appropriate)
- Standard terms and conditions which specify the scope of the work and inform the third party of the College's Anti-Bribery Policy and includes the right to audit, right to exit in the event of a suspicion and/or breach occurring

15. What to do if you are the Victim of Bribery or Corruption

- 15.1 It is important that you tell your line manager as soon as possible if you are offered a bribe by a third party, are asked to make one, suspect that this may happen in the future, or believe that you are a victim of another form of unlawful activity. Any instances of bribery or attempted bribery should also be reported promptly to the Director of Finance. If the bribery concerns your line manager, your concern may be reported directly to the Director of Finance.

16. Protection

- 16.1 Colleagues who refuse to accept or offer a bribe, or those who raise concerns or report another's wrongdoing, are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. The College will support anyone who raises genuine concerns in good faith under this Policy.
- 16.2 The College is committed to ensuring no one suffers any detrimental treatment because of refusing to take part in bribery or corruption, or because of reporting in good faith their suspicion that an actual or potential bribery or other corruption offence has taken place or may take place in the future. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats, or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such

treatment, you should inform your line manager. The College's Organisational Development and HR Department may be contacted for advice and support. If the matter is not remedied, and you are an employee, you should raise it formally using the Disciplinary Procedure for College Staff.

Appendix 1 - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Name of policy/procedure/decision:

Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy

Provide a brief summary of the aims of the policy/procedure/decision and main activities:

The purpose of the Policy is to set out the College's and employees' responsibilities in ensuring compliance with the Bribery Act 2010. It provides information and guidance on how to recognise and deal with bribery and corruption issues.

Assessed By:

Clare Fraser

Date: 23 August 2016

This stage establishes whether a policy, procedure or decision will have a differential impact from an equality perspective on people who share protected characteristics or whether it is "equality neutral" (i.e., have no effect either positive or negative).

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

1. Who will benefit from this (students/staff/stakeholders)? Is there likely to be a positive impact on people who share protected characteristics, and if so, how? Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality "neutral"? i.e., will not have a differential impact on any equality group/s?

It is submitted that this will have a neutral impact on people who share protected characteristics. There is no reason to believe that the policy will apply or be applied differently to people because of their being female, having a disability etc.

It is recognised that there can be a variation of societal cultures regarding corruption and cultural dimensions can influence an individual's perception of ethical situations. This could mean that people from different culture could have different interpretations. However, the Policy itself is very clear and training will be provided.

2. Is there likely to be an adverse impact on people who share protected characteristics? If so, who may be affected and why? Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality “neutral”?

It is not likely that this policy will have an adverse impact on people who share protected characteristics, and it is submitted that this will have a neutral impact on people who share protected characteristics.

3. What action will you take to ensure that you are monitoring the impact of this policy?

No direct monitoring of this policy in terms of equality data is necessary given its neutral impact. Indirect monitoring of the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure will continue to take place.

Meeting	Audit Committee
Date	21 September 2022
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	Acceptance of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy
Presented By	Alan Ritchie Director of Finance
Recommendation to Members	For Approval
Appendix Attached	Yes 08(a) – Acceptance of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy

PURPOSE

This report presents to the Audit Committee the results of the review of the College Acceptance of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy.

The paper is presented in line with West College Scotland Audit Committee Terms of Reference:

'To review and advise the Board of the Internal Auditor's and External Auditor's assessment of the effectiveness of the College's financial and other internal control systems, including controls specifically designed to prevent or detect fraud or other irregularities as well as those for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness (value for money).'

The paper is submitted *For Approval*.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Policy has been reviewed against best practice guidance and the following amendments have been made:

- Titles have been updated for both staff and other policy documents.
- P4 – Introduction strengthened to say refuse if in doubt.
- P10 – New sections
 - Section on acceptance of awards and prizes included to reflect College operations.
 - Section on invitations to spouses, partners and family members included to provide clarification.
- P11 – Authorisation table included to provide clarification to staff on who needs to approve events etc.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1. There are no financial implications associated with this paper.

3. STUDENT EXPERIENCE

3.1. There are no student experience implications associated with this paper.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

4.1. There are no human resource implications associated with this paper.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. There are legal implications associated with this paper in that if the Policy is not in place the College is not complying with its regulatory requirements.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1. There are no reputational implications associated with this paper.

7. COMMUNITY/PARTNERSHIP IMPACT

7.1. There are no community implications associated with this paper.

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1. There are no equality implications associated with this paper.

9. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1. There are no environmental implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit Committee is requested to approve the revised Acceptance of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy.

Policy & Procedure	Acceptance of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy
Policy Area	Finance
Version Number	04
Approving Committee	Audit
Date of Approval	
Date of Equality Impact Assessment	14 September 2020
Date of Review	31 July 2024
Responsible Senior Manager	Director of Finance

History of Amendments

Date	Version/Pages/Sections Affected	Summary of changes
1 August 2017	2	General review by Director of Finance and Estates
19 September 2020	3	General review by Director of Finance
8 May 2022	4	Update in line with current best practice

Policy Statement

The College is committed to maintaining the highest standards and conducts its business in accordance with best practice in further education corporate governance and with the seven Principles identified by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership). It is an offence under the Prevention of Corruption Act 1906 and the Bribery Act 2010 for members of staff to accept any gift or consideration as an inducement or reward for doing, or refraining from doing, anything in an official capacity or showing favour or disfavour to any person in an official capacity.

Equality Statement

The College is committed to providing equal opportunities to ensure its students, staff, customers and visitors are treated equally regardless of gender reassignment, race, religion or belief; disability; age; marriage and civil partnerships; pregnancy and maternity; sexual orientation; sex.

Please note this document is available in other formats, to request another format please email info@wcs.ac.uk

Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Accepting Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality	6
3. Gifts	8
4. Benefits or Other Considerations	8
5. Hospitality	9
6. Awards and Prizes	10
7. Spouses, Partners and Family Members	10
8. Authorisation from Senior Staff	11
9. Registration of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality	11
Appendix 1 – Minimum Information required to be declared by email	12
Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment	13

1. Introduction

1.1 It is an offence under the Prevention of Corruption Act 1906 and the Bribery Act 2010 'for members of staff to accept any gift, benefits or hospitality as an inducement or reward for doing, or refraining from doing, anything in an official capacity or showing favour or disfavour to any person in an official capacity.'

1.2 The guiding principles to be followed by all members of staff must be:

- The conduct of individuals should not create suspicion of any conflict between their official duty and their private interest.
- The action of individuals acting in an official capacity should not give the impression (to any member of the public, to any organisation with whom they deal or to their colleagues) that they have been (or may have been) influenced by a benefit to show favour or disfavour to any person or organisation.
- Dealing with offers of gifts, benefit or hospitality is largely a matter of common sense, **if ever in doubt a polite but firm refusal is the right action.**

1.3 The College is committed to maintaining the highest standards and conducts its business in accordance with best practice in further education corporate governance and with the seven Principles identified by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership). Staff should always conduct themselves with integrity, impartiality and honesty and should maintain high standards of propriety and professionalism. This includes avoiding situations where they could be open to suspicion of dishonesty, and not putting themselves in a position of conflict between their official duty and private interest.

1.4 This Policy sets out the standards of behaviour the College expects from its employees and members of the Board when they are offered gifts, benefits or hospitality by anyone or have personal, financial or other beneficial interests in any transaction between the College and a third party.

1.5 The College has several related policies and procedures already in place, which should be considered in conjunction with this Policy. These include the Financial Regulations and its associated procedures, the policies and procedures concerning staff grievance and discipline; the treatment of fraud, corruption and irregularities; and public interest disclosure.

1.6 It is the responsibility of each member of staff to ensure that they comply with this Policy and its related procedures. Failure to formally register gifts, benefits or hospitality in accordance with this Policy could result in disciplinary action. For the avoidance of doubt, this procedure includes gifts and/or hospitality and/or benefits offered to individuals and/or their spouse/partner, or members of their close family.

1.7 College staff are expressly prohibited from soliciting gifts, benefits or hospitality in return for providing services whether those services should be provided as part of their usual role or are provided because a gift or inducement has been offered. It is a disciplinary offence for staff to accept any gifts, benefit or hospitality as an inducement or reward:

- To take any action or specifically not act in his or her official capacity, or
- To show favour or disfavour to any person or organisation in his or her official capacity

1.8 Such behaviour may also, in certain circumstances, amount to a criminal offence for which the penalty may be a prison term or a fine or both. A member of staff who is convicted of a criminal offence might also be liable to forfeit any compensation or pension rights.

1.9 The procedures contained in this Policy cannot cover every situation that might arise and where it does not, College staff must seek and follow the advice of the Director of Finance. In the case of Board members, they should seek and follow the advice of the Secretary to the Board of Management.

2. Accepting Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality

2.1 Staff may, in certain circumstances and subject to this Policy, accept offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality. However, staff must always be, and be seen to be, acting in a way which is fair, impartial and unbiased. The receipt of gifts, benefits and hospitality can create conflicts of interest and may give rise to an adverse inference as to the integrity of either the donor or the staff member. It is important therefore that employees carefully consider the circumstances in which they accept gifts, benefits or hospitality.

2.2 Some staff necessarily spend time with other organisations where it is normal business practice or social convention to offer gifts, benefits or hospitality. Offers of this kind can place staff in a difficult position: to refuse may cause misunderstanding or offence; however, to accept may give rise to questions of impropriety or conflict of interest.

2.3 The overriding rules governing the acceptance of gifts, benefits or hospitality in such circumstances are:

- The conduct of individuals should not create suspicion of any conflict between their official duty and their private interest.
- The conduct of individuals acting in an official capacity should not give the impression -to any member of the public, to any organisation with whom they deal or to their colleagues - that they have been or may have been influenced by a gift, benefit or hospitality to show favour or disfavour to any person or organisation.
- The individual must not accept gifts, benefits or hospitality – either directly or through a third party that would, or might appear to:
 - Place them under any obligation to an individual or organisation making the offer, or
 - Compromise their impartiality or otherwise be improper.

- 2.4** Before accepting any offers of gifts, benefits or hospitality of **£25** or over in value, staff members should seek the approval of their appropriate SMT member. In addition, gifts, hospitality or other benefits of **£25** or over in value must be formally registered in accordance with this Policy within 28 days of the date of receipt. Where a member of staff receives a series of gifts, hospitality or other benefits from the same source in one year with a cumulative value of **£25** or over when taken together, these too must be formally registered.
- 2.5** It is expressly prohibited for a member of staff to accept any gift, benefit or hospitality from an organisation/individual that is actively involved in a tender process at the College. This prohibition commences at the point that an invitation to tender is published and extends to a period three months after a contract has been awarded. Any offers of gifts, benefits or hospitality during this period must be refused. Where a gift, benefit or hospitality is offered to the College corporately (rather than to an individual employee) during a purchase negotiation, the College's representative in the negotiations should refer to the Director of Finance for guidance.
- 2.6** When it is not easy to decide between what is and what is not acceptable in terms of gifts, benefits or hospitality, the offer should be declined, or advice sought from the Director of Finance. If ever in doubt a polite but firm refusal is the correct course of action.
- 2.7** For the protection of those involved:
- The Secretary to the Board of Management will maintain a register of gifts, benefits and hospitality received by **members of the Board of Management, the Principal and the Director of Finance.**
 - The Director of Finance will maintain a register of gifts, benefits and hospitality received by **all other members of staff.**
 - the gift register should be updated and maintained on a regular basis, ideally no less than quarterly.

3. Gifts

- 3.1** Staff should not accept any gift or reward from any organisation or individual with whom they have contact during their work as an inducement either for doing something or not doing something in their official capacity. Care should be taken about any gift from a person or organisation which has, or is hoping to have, a contract with the College.
- 3.2** Although it is conventional in some parts of the private sector for businesses to exchange seasonal gifts, this is not an acceptable practice in the College. Gifts of a trivial or inexpensive nature (£25 or under) may be accepted, but more substantial or expensive offerings should be declined.
- 3.3** If unsolicited gifts of a substantial nature arrive from contractors, they should be returned with a polite explanation that the College's Policies do not allow their acceptance. If staff have any doubts about whether an offer of a gift should be refused on the grounds that refusal may cause offence, they should consult their relevant SMT member, who in turn should discuss the matter with the Director of Finance to determine whether the gift should be accepted. The Secretary to the Board of Management or the Director of Finance are the final arbiters on the advisability of accepting or refusing gifts.
- 3.4** Where a gift is made to an individual in their official capacity, the gift will be retained by the College and may be put on display.

4. Benefits or Other Considerations

- 4.1** Marketing and promotion by external organisations often involve not only gifts but also offers to individuals of services and goods provided at discount prices. Examples of such practices include:

- free use of company facilities
- use of discount shopping cards provided by the company
- provision of services or goods at a reduced price
- free membership of local clubs or facilities

- participation in foreign trips, either free or at a rate charged to the company's own employees
- financial support or gifts for college activities

4.2 If a staff member receives such an offer of a benefit (or other consideration of a similar kind) either for themselves or a member of their family, in connection with their work, it should be politely but firmly refused with, if necessary, a polite letter explaining the reason for the refusal. Any such offer must be reported immediately to the Director of Finance.

5. Hospitality

5.1 It is accepted that, during their normal duties, staff members will sometimes receive conventional hospitality including, but not limited to:

- Working meals including meals taken during meetings or training schemes.
- Meals provided by other organisations during fact finding or information sharing events.
- Attendance at formal functions as a representative of the College; a formal function is an event promoted by an organisation, for which an official invitation is issued to and accepted on behalf of the College.
- Attendance at formal social functions in relation to which invitations have been issued to several staff members.
- Attendance at information gathering or sharing events such as meetings with representatives of other colleges and organisations for the purposes of sharing good practice.

5.2 Offers of hospitality that exceed this norm should in general be refused. In particular:

- Inducements which could lead to a contractual position between the College and a supplier, contractor or consultant should be avoided.

- Substantial or repeated offers of travel or accommodation or invitations to social functions should only be accepted after careful consideration.
- Substantial or repeated offers of meals or invitations to, and/ or tickets for, sporting, cultural or social events, particularly from the same source, should only be accepted after careful consideration.

5.3 Care should be taken when offered any form of hospitality from a person or organisation which has, or is hoping to have, a contractual relationship with the College. It is expressly prohibited for a member of staff to accept hospitality from an organisation that is actively involved in a tender process at the College, except where this is provided as part of a fact-finding visit or meeting. If staff have any doubt about whether to accept any hospitality offered to them, they should refer the matter to their relevant SMT member, who in turn may discuss it with the Director of Finance.

6. Awards and Prizes

- 6.1** If you are approached by an outside organisation about the offer of an award or prize that is in any way connected with your official duty, you must consult the Director of Finance or a Vice Principal.
- 6.2** You will normally be allowed to accept the award or prize, subject to considerations of propriety or risk of public criticism, and provided the award or prize is:
- offered in recognition of personal achievement., and
 - is not in the nature of, or such that it could be construed as, a gift, an inducement or payment for a publication or invention to which other rules apply.

7. Spouses, Partners and Family Members

- 7.1** Invitations extended to spouses, partners and/or other family members must be declined, unless the invitation makes clear all invitees should be accompanied. The presence of a spouse, partner or family member may then be recognised as being part of your official duties. Prior approval for a spouse, partner or family member to attend events is required in all cases. Such approval must be obtained from the Principal.

8. Authorisation from Senior Staff

8.1 The table below sets out the different categories of hospitality offered and the requirements for registering these.

Event	Approval Required	Record in register
Category A Working meals and meals provided at conferences (ie occasions where business is being transacted)	No	No
Category B Other meals (ie, primarily social functions), formal receptions and cocktail parties	Yes	Yes
Category C Social entertainment such as theatre, concerts, sporting events	Yes	Yes
Category D Any event to which spouse, partner or family member is invited	Yes	Yes
Any invitations to events defined in categories A-D above, issued to employees in procurement or in a tendering exercise	Yes	Yes
Employee Grade	Obtain approval from	
Staff member, Manager	Head of Sector	
Head of Sector	Assistant Principal, Director	
Assistant Principal, Director	Vice Principal	
Vice Principal	Principal	
NB. Invitations covering spouses, partners or family members MUST always be approved by the Principal.		

8.2 In exceptional cases – such as when your duties take you away from the office for an extended period – it may not be possible to obtain prior approval to accept invitations. You should use your own judgment in deciding whether to accept applying the criteria set out in section 5. If you do decide to accept, the circumstances must be reported to your Assistant Principal / Director on your return, and the details (including why prior approval could not be obtained) noted in the hospitality register.

8.3 The Principal does not need to obtain approval to accept any hospitality but must apply the criteria set out in section 5 when deciding whether to accept invitations and record acceptance in the hospitality register.

9. Registration of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality

9.1 Use the form at Appendix 1 to email the required information to the Director of Finance.

DRAFT

Appendix 1 - Minimum information required to be declared by email

This information should be provided as soon as possible after receipt and no later than 28 days after receipt.

Name:
Department:
Date of receipt of gift, benefit or hospitality:
Details of gift, benefit or hospitality:
Estimated value of Gift, Benefit or Hospitality
Organisation/Person providing Gift, Benefit or Hospitality and their relationship with the College:

Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment

Name of policy/procedure/decision: Acceptance of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy

Provide a brief summary of the aims of the policy/procedure/decision and main activities:

This Policy aims to implements arrangements to prevent offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act 1906 and the Bribery Act 2010. It sets out information about how the College maintains registration of gifts, benefits and hospitality and the standards of behaviour the College expects from its employees and members of the Board when they are offered gifts, benefits and hospitality by external organisations or individuals.

Assessed By: Alan Ritchie

Date: 08 May 2022

This stage establishes whether a policy, procedure or decision will have a differential impact from an equality perspective on people who share protected characteristics or whether it is “equality neutral” (i.e. have no effect either positive or negative).

The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

1. Who will benefit from this (students/staff/stakeholders)? Is there likely to be a positive impact on people who share protected characteristics, and if so, how? Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality “neutral”? i.e. will not have a differential impact on any equality group/s?

This Policy is for the benefit of staff and Board of Management members and to provide guidance to external stakeholders if required. It does not impact upon students. The Policy is not directly relevant to the General Equality Duty and it is clear at this stage that it will be equality neutral on staff or Board of Management members who share protected characteristics.

2. Is there likely to be an adverse impact on people who share protected characteristics? If so, who may be affected and why? Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality “neutral”?

It is not likely that this Policy will have an adverse impact on people who share protected characteristics. Given the nature of the content of the Policy (receipt of gifts, benefits or hospitality) it is submitted that if applied the Policy will have a neutral impact on people who share protected characteristics.

3. What action will you take to ensure that you are monitoring the impact of this policy?

An annual report is presented to the Board of Management on the receipt of gifts, benefits and hospitality and any equality concerns would be included within that report. No direct equality monitoring of this Policy in terms of equality data is necessary given its neutral impact.

DRAFT

Meeting	Audit Committee
Date	21 September 2022
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy and Procedure
Presented By	Alan Ritchie Director of Finance
Recommendation to Members	For Approval
Appendix Attached	Yes 09(a) – Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy and Procedure

PURPOSE

This report presents to the Audit Committee the results of the review of the College Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy and Procedure.

The paper is presented in line with West College Scotland Audit Committee Terms of Reference:

'To review and advise the Board of the Internal Auditor's and External Auditor's assessment of the effectiveness of the College's financial and other internal control systems, including controls specifically designed to prevent or detect fraud or other irregularities as well as those for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness (value for money).'

The paper is submitted *For Approval*.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Policy has been reviewed against best practice guidance, reviewed by the Senior Management Team and there are no proposed changes to the content of the Policy.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1. There are no financial implications associated with this paper.

3. STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- 3.1. There are no student experience implications associated with this paper.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. There are no human resource implications associated with this paper.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. There are legal implications associated with this paper in that if the Policy is not in place the College is not complying with its regulatory requirements.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. There are no reputational implications associated with this paper.

7. COMMUNITY/PARTNERSHIP IMPACT

- 7.1. There are no community implications associated with this paper.

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. There are no equality implications associated with this paper.

9. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. There are no environmental implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit Committee is requested to approve the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy and Procedure.

Policy & Procedure	Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy and Procedure
Policy Area	Human Resources
Version Number	04
Approving Committee	Audit Committee
Date of Approval	06 September 2022
Date of Equality Impact Assessment	29 August 2022
Date of Review	06 September 2025
Responsible Senior Manager	Director Organisational Development and HR

History of Amendments

Date	Version/Pages/Sections Affected	Summary of changes
April 2017	1 - whole document	Updated following legal review
September 2019	3 - whole document	Updated based on review of Fraud and Corruption Policy and legal review
August 2022	10 – whole document	Updated details of Contacts

Policy Statement

The Board of Management policy is that any concerns raised under the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Procedure will be taken seriously and that all staff will be afforded the rights set out under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Equality Statement

The College is committed to providing equal opportunities to ensure its students, staff, customers and visitors are treated equally regardless of gender reassignment, race, religion or belief; disability; age; marriage and civil partnerships; pregnancy and maternity; sexual orientation; sex.

Please note this document is available in other formats, to request another format please email info@wcs.ac.uk

Contents

1.	<i>Introduction</i>	3
2.	<i>Interpretation</i>	3
3.	<i>Public Interest Disclosure</i>	4
4.	<i>Confidentiality</i>	5
5.	<i>Procedure</i>	6
6.	<i>External Disclosures</i>	9
7.	<i>Protection From Victimisation</i>	9
8.	<i>False And Malicious Allegations</i>	9
9.	<i>Procedure Implementation</i>	10
10.	<i>Contacts</i>	10
	<i>Equality Impact Assessment</i>	11

Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

This Policy provides guidance to staff, students, Board members and co-opted Board members on how to inform management if they are concerned about serious malpractice, fraud or corruption within the College.

The College has a duty to conduct its affairs in a responsible way with due care for the health and safety of its employees, students and others and to comply with the law. We are committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity, and we expect all staff to maintain high standards. However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct.

An internal Guidance Note for Managers in relation to the handling of disclosures made under the Public Interest Disclosure Act is available on the staff intranet:

<https://intranet.westcollegescotland.ac.uk/reference/reference/Public%20Interest%20Disclosure%20Guidance%20for%20Managers.pdf>

This Procedure does not form part of any Staff Member's contract of employment and the College reserves the right to amend the Procedure at its discretion, as it considers appropriate.

2. Interpretation

In this Procedure 'College' means West College Scotland, and 'Member', 'Chair', 'Secretary' and 'Principal' mean respectively the Member, Chair, and Secretary of the Board and Principal of the College. 'Staff' and 'Staff Member' mean staff employed by the College (which, for these purposes only, includes consultants, contractors, part-time and fixed-term workers, and agency workers). 'Student' means a person currently enrolled as a student of West College Scotland.

3. Public Interest Disclosure

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives protection to employees against being subject to detrimental treatment or dismissal by their employer on the grounds that they have raised a protected disclosure. Detrimental treatment includes disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. Where an individual discovers information which they believe indicates malpractice or wrongdoing or the misuse of public funds within the College, then the information should be disclosed without fear of reprisal and may be made independently of their direct line management. In the instance of allegations of the misuse of public funds being made, the Director of Organisational Development and HR must notify the Scottish Funding Council.

The aims of this Procedure are:

- To encourage Staff, Students and Board members to report suspected wrong doing as soon as possible in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected
- To provide Staff, Students and Board members with Guidance as to how to raise those concerns
- To reassure Staff, Students and Board members that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of detrimental treatment even if they turn out to be mistaken

It is important that Staff, Students and Board members have the confidence to raise concerns about malpractice internally; otherwise they may keep such concerns to themselves. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations occurring and to address them when they do occur.

Examples of matters that should be reported under this procedure:

- Financial fraud or mismanagement
- Criminal activity
- Bribery or corruption

- A failure to comply with or a breach of relevant duties, regulatory requirements, professional obligations or legal obligations
- Damage to the environment
- Danger to the health and safety of any person
- Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information
- Harm or the risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults
- Deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

While Staff, Students and Board members are encouraged to raise concerns, it should be appreciated that raising a concern will not be a qualifying or protected disclosure unless, in the reasonable belief of the person raising the concern, the disclosure is made in the public interest and tends to show that one of the following has taken place, is taking place or is likely to take place:

- Criminal offences
- Breach of any legal obligation
- Danger to the health and safety of any individual
- Damage to the environment
- The deliberate concealing of information about any of the above.

The procedure should not be used in respect of:

- Allegations relating to discrimination or harassment against individuals, which should be dealt with under the Grievance or Bullying and Harassment Procedures; or
- Complaints relating to an individual's own personal circumstances, such as the way they have been treated at work, which should be dealt with using the College's established Grievance Procedure; or
- Collective grievances affecting a number of employees, which should also be dealt with using the College's established Grievance Procedure.

4. Confidentiality

Anyone who raises a genuine concern will have the matter treated in a confidential and sensitive manner.

The identity of the individual making the allegation will be kept confidential unless this is genuinely incompatible with a fair investigation of the allegation or if there is an overriding reason for disclosure.

Individuals are encouraged to put their names to any disclosures they make. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if the College cannot obtain further information from an individual. If they are in any doubt they can seek advice from Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work), the independent whistleblowing charity. Concerns expressed anonymously may be considered at the discretion of the College.

5. Procedure

If an individual wishes to make a disclosure of the type listed in paragraph 3 it is hoped that in many cases staff will be able to raise any concerns with their line manager or Head of Sector/Department. If the disclosure is about the line manager or Head of Sector/Department, then the member of staff should raise their concerns with the Assistant Principal, Director or Vice Principal as appropriate. If the concerns relate to a member of the Senior Management Team, they should be raised with the Principal. Any concerns that relate to the Principal must be raised with the Chair of the Board of Management.

Students should raise their concerns with their Guidance Tutor/Lecturer or Head of Sector in the first instance. If the disclosure is about the Guidance Tutor/Lecturer or Head of Sector, then they should raise their concerns with the Assistant Principal or Vice Principal as appropriate.

Board Members will be able to raise their concerns with the Senior Independent Member/Chair of Audit Committee or with the Secretary. The matter may be reported in person or in writing.

The Line Manager or Head of Sector/Department (or other person identified above) may be able to agree a way of resolving their concern quickly and effectively. A note of any meeting held with the individual concerned will be taken and a copy provided to the

individual. If a meeting is held, the individual will also be given the opportunity to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague, should they so wish. The note of the meeting and outcomes will be forwarded to the Director, Organisational Development and HR for retention as appropriate.

Where the matter is more serious, or if the individual feels that the concern has not been addressed, or they prefer not to raise it with the persons described above, they can refer the matter to the Secretary to the Board. In the event of a matter being reported to the Secretary, the following procedure should be followed:

Stage 1

Initial disclosure should be made directly to the Secretary who will determine in consultation with the Chair of the Audit Committee whether it is a concern that should be investigated. If the Secretary and the Chair of the Audit Committee determine that an investigation is not appropriate, and the disclosure is not to be pursued, the complainant will be advised of this in writing.

If the matters disclosed involve the Secretary to the Board, the disclosure should be made to the Chair of the Audit Committee, who will manage the procedure in place of the Secretary. The Chair of the Audit Committee will determine in consultation with the Chair of the Board whether it is a concern that should be investigated.

Stage 2

If it is decided to proceed with an investigation, the next steps may be:

- an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation. The individual may be required to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information or as part of a subsequent investigation.
- an internal investigation conducted by a manager or managers designated by the Secretary or Chair of the Audit Committee as appropriate.
- an internal investigation conducted by the designated manager or managers in association with the Audit Committee of the Board.

- to refer the matter to the Scottish Funding Council and/or the College's Internal Auditors for it to consider whether external investigation is appropriate.
- to refer the matter to the police.

Any such steps taken will be initiated expeditiously. The list above is not exhaustive. The complainant will be advised, where appropriate, in writing about which steps are to be taken.

Stage 3

The results of any investigation together with any recommendations for action will be formalised in a report which will be brought to the attention of the appropriate authority. In most cases the Principal and Chief Executive of the College will be such an authority, unless the investigation involved the Principal. In other cases, the matter may be appropriately referred to the Audit Committee which will provide a report to the Board of Management.

Where an internal investigation has been carried out, the investigation report may make recommendations. Recommendations may include, for example, that a disciplinary process will be followed. No action will be taken against any individual until or unless that individual has had an opportunity to make representations in relation to the allegations, in any disciplinary process followed.

The complainant will, where appropriate, be advised in writing of the outcome of the investigation. Sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent the College giving the individual who has made the disclosure specific details of the investigation or the recommendations, including any disciplinary action taken as a result. They should treat any information which they are given about the investigation as confidential.

Specific timescales for actions and responses cannot be specified. This recognises the likely variations in the length of time it may take to investigate different issues. However, it is recognised that sensitive and expeditious handling of such disclosures is essential.

The College community is responsible for the success of this procedure and should ensure that it is used appropriately to disclose any suspected danger or wrongdoing.

6. External Disclosures

The aim of the procedure is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing within the College. In most cases, an individual should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for an individual to report their concerns to an external body such as a regulator. In such instances it is strongly encouraged that an individual seek advice, for example, from a solicitor, from the Citizens Advice Bureau or from Protect, before reporting a concern to anyone external. It is possible that a disclosure which has been made externally will not be protected. Protect not only operates a confidential helpline, but they also have a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern and will be able to assist.

7. Protection From Victimisation

Any individual who makes a protected disclosure shall be protected from victimisation. However, as outlined at paragraph 3 above, there are certain conditions which apply before a disclosure is a protected disclosure and this Procedure does not exhaustively set out those conditions. Victimisation includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment where that action or treatment is because the individual has raised a concern. All allegations of victimisation will be dealt with under the College Disciplinary Procedure and if established, are likely to be treated as gross misconduct. Anyone who has raised a protected disclosure must not suffer any detrimental treatment on the grounds that they have done so. Staff must not threaten or retaliate against anyone who has raised a concern in any way. Anyone involved in such conduct may be subject to disciplinary action.

8. False And Malicious Allegations

This procedure is designed to offer protection to those employees or other members of the College who disclose such concerns in the reasonable belief that the disclosure tends to show malpractice and is in the public interest.

The Board wishes to emphasise that no individual(s) will be disciplined for raising a genuine protected disclosure, so long as they follow the procedures laid down in this procedure.

If an individual has made false allegations without a reasonable belief that they are true, then disciplinary action is likely to be taken against that individual.

9. Procedure Implementation

In particular cases, the College may choose to vary the process which is followed, taking alternative or additional steps or omitting steps as it considers appropriate to the facts and circumstances of that case.

10. Contacts

Secretary to the Board	Shirley Gordon 0141 581 2233 shirley.gordon@wcs.ac.uk
Chair of the Audit Committee	Graeme Bold 07702 029 431 graeme_bold@yahoo.co.uk
Senior Independent Member	Fiona McKerrell 07970 840865 fiona.mckerrell1@gmail.com
The College's internal auditors	Wylie & Bisset LLP 168 Bath Street Glasgow G2 4TP Graham Gillespie graham.gillespie@wyliebisset.com
Scottish Funding Council	Scottish Funding Council Apex 2, 97 Haymarket Terrace Edinburgh, EH12 5HD 0131 313 6500
Protect (Independent whistleblowing charity)	Helpline: (020) 3117 2520 Website: Advice - Protect - Speak up stop harm (protect-advice.org.uk)

Equality Impact Assessment



Name of policy/procedure/decision: Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Procedure

Provide a brief summary of the aims of the policy/procedure/decision and main activities:

This Procedure provides guidance to all members of the College community (Staff, Students and Board Members) on how to inform management if they are concerned about serious malpractice, fraud or corruption within the College.

Assessed By: Lynne Harrison

Date: 29 August 2022

This stage establishes whether a policy, procedure or decision will have a differential impact from an equality perspective on people who share protected characteristics or whether it is “equality neutral” (i.e. have no effect either positive or negative).

1. Who will benefit from this (students/staff/stakeholders)? Is there likely to be a positive impact on people who share protected characteristics, and if so, how? Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality “neutral”? i.e. will not have a differential impact on any equality group/s?

It is not anticipated that this Procedure will have a differential impact on people who share protected characteristics. The Procedure has been developed to ensure that WCS complies with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which protection to employees against being subject to detrimental treatment by their employers as a result of raising concerns. This protection should apply to all regardless of gender, age etc.

2. Is there likely to be an adverse impact on people who share protected characteristics? If so, who may be affected and why? Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality “neutral”?

This policy has been developed to comply with UK law and will not have an adverse impact on people who share protected characteristics.

3. What action will you take to ensure that you are monitoring the impact of this Procedure?

Monitoring of this policy will take place through student complaints and HR grievances data.

The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Meeting	Audit Committee
Date	21 September 2022
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	National Fraud Initiative 2022
Presented By	Vivienne Mulholland Head of Finance and Student Funding
Recommendation to Members	For Consideration
Appendix Attached	Yes 10(a) – Self Assessment Checklist

PURPOSE

As reported previously to the Committee the College continues to participate in the National Fraud Initiative (NFI). Audit Scotland's latest report "[The National Fraud Initiative in Scotland 2022](#)", published in August 2022, describes how the NFI has helped to identify outcomes of £14.9m from the 2020-21 exercise, with cumulative outcomes across Scotland since 2006-07 of £158.5m of fraud, overpayments and errors.

The College has now received communication from Audit Scotland to request the continued participation of West College Scotland in the NFI. This report presents an update for the Committee on the NFI process along with the Self-Assessment Checklist (Appendix A) for approval.

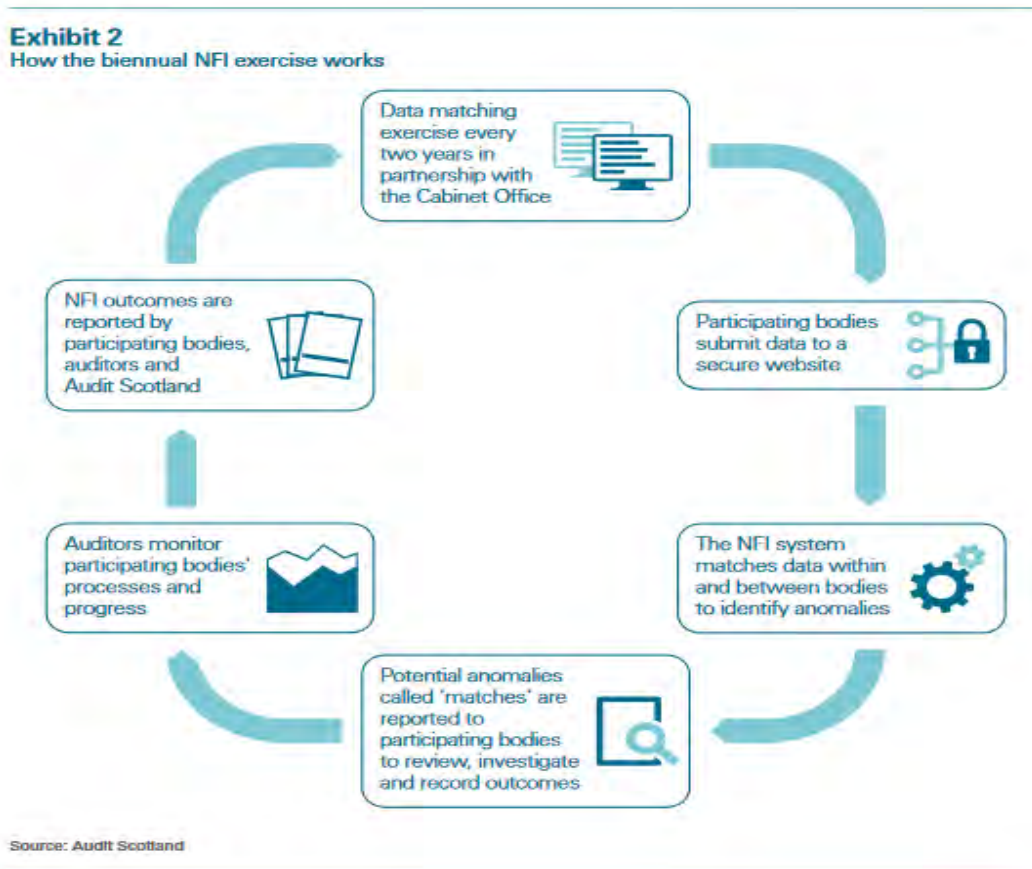
The paper is presented in line with West College Scotland Audit Committee Terms of Reference:

'To advise the Board on its compliance with corporate governance requirements and good practice guidance, and in particular its compliance with the Financial Memorandum with SFC, the SPFM and the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges.'

The paper is submitted *For Consideration*.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The NFI is a counter-fraud exercise across the UK public sector which aims to prevent and detect fraud. The Cabinet Office oversees it, and Audit Scotland leads the exercise in Scotland, working with a range of Scottish public bodies and external auditors.
- 1.2 The NFI takes place every second year. **The NFI's key features as highlighted by the latest [Audit Scotland report](#) are:**
- o Acts as a deterrent to potential fraudsters.
 - o Identifies errors and fraud enabling appropriate action to be taken.
 - o Operates across boundaries and public bodies in different sectors and countries.
 - o Can provide assurances that systems are operating well.
 - o Can identify where system improvements are required.
 - o Represents value for money through centralised data processing and identifying targeted high-priority matches
- 1.3 The diagram below shows how the NFI exercise works:



- 1.4 Public bodies that take part in the NFI in Scotland include the Scottish Government and other central government bodies, all councils, NHS bodies, pension administering bodies, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Police Scotland and colleges.
- 1.5 The NFI process is carried out under part 2A of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. This legislation provides that Audit Scotland may carry out data matching exercises or arrange for them to be carried out on its behalf.
2. 2022-23 Exercise
- 2.1 The National Fraud Initiative (NFI) is a data matching exercise which matches electronic data within and between participating bodies to prevent and detect fraud. The [Code of Data Matching Practice](#) sets out further guidance on data governance which all public bodies participating in data matching must have regard to.
- 2.2 The timeline for the 2022-23 exercise is noted below along with key actions required by the College:

Key Milestones	Actions	Status
29 July 2022	The Cabinet Office publishes the 2022/23 NFI final data specifications and instructions.	For noting
31 Aug 2022	Key Contacts will log in to the 2022/23 web application Data File Upload (DFU), check the list of expected datasets is accurate and advise the NFI Helpdesk of any changes to the list	Completed
30 Sept 2022	Participants submit privacy notice compliance returns in the NFI web application	Completed
18 Nov 2022	Participants extract and submit 2022/23 NFI data to the NFI web application through the Data File Upload facility, in accordance with the data specifications.	To be undertaken
26 Jan 2023	The NFI team makes the 2022/23 NFI exercise matches available for investigation by participating bodies.	Awaiting data matches
Late 2023/early 2024	External auditors will review NFI governance arrangements and progress in reviewing matches.	Pending

Key Milestones	Actions	Status
31 Mar 2024	Audit Scotland will use the outcomes as at this date for its national report.	Pending
Summer 2024	Audit Scotland will publish the 2022/23 NFI report.	Pending

- 2.3 As part of the preparations for the NFI exercise the College has reviewed and updated the Audit Scotland NFI self-appraisal checklist (Appendix A). The College has no issues to raise from this review and no further actions are required.
- 2.4 The Audit Committee are requested to review the self-appraisal checklist and confirm the overall College assessment of its preparedness for the upcoming NFI exercise.
- 2.5 The College will keep the Audit Committee updated on the progress to achieving the above timetable along with the outcomes from the 2022-23 exercise.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications associated with this paper.

4. STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- 4.1 There are no student experience implications associated with this paper.

5. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no human resource implications associated with this paper.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal implications associated with this paper.

7. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no reputational implications associated with this paper.

8. COMMUNITY/PARTNERSHIP IMPACT

8.1 There are no community implications associated with this paper.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no equality implications associated with this paper.

10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit Committee is requested to consider the content of the report and the Audit Scotland self-appraisal checklist.

Audit Scotland - NFI Self-Appraisal Checklist

	Yes/No/Partly	Is action required?	Who by and when
Part A: For those charged with governance			
Leadership, commitment and communication			
1. Are we aware of emerging fraud risks, eg due to Covid-19, and taken appropriate preventative and detective action?	Yes Previous Audit Committee meetings have expressed support for the NFI exercise and endorsed at subsequent Board meetings.	No	
2. Are we committed to NFI? Has the council/board, audit committee and senior management expressed support for the exercise and has this been communicated to relevant staff?	Yes Senior Management Team are supportive of the exercise and privacy notice published to all staff indicating the College is willingly participating in the exercise.	No	
3. Is the NFI an integral part of our corporate policies and strategies for preventing and detecting fraud and error?	Yes Referenced in Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy.	No	
4. Have we considered using the point of application data matching service offered by the NFI team, to enhance assurances over internal controls and improve our approach to risk management?	Yes Considered as part of previous NFI exercise and discounted due to level of College data not justifying time / resource investment in setting up system.	No	
5. Are NFI progress and outcomes reported regularly to senior management and elected/board members (eg, the audit committee or equivalent)?	Yes The Audit Committee will be updated on progress of the 2022-23 NFI exercise as part of the update reports provided to the Committee.	No	
6. Where we have not submitted data or used the matches returned to us, eg council tax single person discounts, are we satisfied that alternative fraud detection arrangements are in place and that we know how successful they are?	Not applicable The College will be submitting the requested data.	N/a	

Appendix A

	Yes/No/Partly	Is action required?	Who by and when
7. Does internal audit, or equivalent, monitor our approach to NFI and our main outcomes, ensuring that any weaknesses are addressed in relevant cases?	Yes The external auditors were requested at the end of the previous process to assess the Colleges response to the initiative. It is assumed that a similar review will take place at the end of the 2022-23 initiative.	No	
8. Do we review how frauds and errors arose and use this information to improve our internal controls?	Yes Should any frauds be detected the College would take action in accordance with the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy which includes implementing lessons learned.	No	
9. Do we publish, as a deterrent, internally and externally the achievements of our fraud investigators (eg, successful prosecutions)?	No The College has had limited instances of fraud and has followed the required reporting guidance from the Scottish Funding Council and Audit Scotland.	No	
Part B: for the NFI key contacts and users			
1. Are aware of emerging fraud risks, eg due to Covid-19, and taken appropriate preventative and detective action?	Yes The College has a robust Risk Management Strategy including a review of emerging risks.	No	
2. Are we investing sufficient resources in the NFI exercise?	Yes The College is investing sufficient resource through the involvement of the Director of Finance, the Head of Finance and appropriate HR and Payroll staff.	No	
3. Do we plan properly for NFI exercises, both before submitting data and prior to matches becoming available? This includes considering the quality of data.	Yes This is now the third time the College has taken part in the NFI exercise and there is a detailed plan as to how the exercise will be initiated and concluded.	No	
4. Is our NFI Key Contact (KC) the appropriate officer for that role and do they oversee the exercise properly?	Yes Key contact is Head of Finance and Student Funding.	No	

Appendix A

	Yes/No/Partly	Is action required?	Who by and when
5. Do KCs have the time to devote to the exercise and sufficient authority to seek action across the organisation?	Yes The planning for the NFI exercise is detailed, with all parties aware of timescales and responsibilities.	No	
6. Where NFI outcomes have been low in the past, do we recognise that this may not be the case the next time, that NFI can deter fraud and that there is value in the assurances that we can take from low outcomes?	Yes Each exercise is treated as a separate incidence and will be resourced accordingly.	No	
7. Do we confirm promptly (using the online facility on the secure website) that we have met the fair processing notice requirements?	Yes This was addressed timeously and submitted by the deadline of 30 September 2022.	No	
8. Do we plan to provide all NFI data on time using the secure data file upload facility properly?	Yes The College has met all previous deadlines and will continue to do so.	No	
9. Have we considered using the point of application data matching service offered by the NFI team to enhance assurances over internal controls and improve our approach to risk management?	Yes Not felt to be required due to low volume of data required to be submitted.	No	
Effective follow up of matches			
10. Do all departments involved in NFI start the follow-up of matches promptly after they become available?	Yes Discussions have taken place with Finance and HR on timescales for undertaking matches once released and subsequent reporting to Committee.	No	
11. Do we give priority to following up high-risk matches, those that become quickly out-of-date and those that could cause reputational damage if a fraud is not stopped quickly?	Yes Once matches are available, those marked as high-risk are dealt with first and by appropriate senior staff.	No	

Appendix A

	Yes/No/Partly	Is action required?	Who by and when
12. Are we investigating the circumstances of matches adequately before reaching a 'no issue' outcome, in particular?	Yes Each match is investigated fully.	No	
13. (In health bodies) Are we drawing appropriately on the help and expertise available from NHS Scotland Counter Fraud Services?	Not applicable	N/a	
14. Are we taking appropriate action in cases where fraud is alleged (whether disciplinary action, penalties/cautions or reporting to the Procurator Fiscal)? Are we recovering funds effectively?	Yes If required any action taken would be in line with the College Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy.	No	
15. Do we avoid deploying excessive resources on match reports where early work (eg, on high-risk matches) has not found any fraud or error?	Yes Each match is investigated fully in line with the NFI requirements.	No	
16. Where the number of high-risk matches is very low, are we adequately considering the medium and low-risk matches before we cease our follow-up work?	Yes Each match is investigated fully in line with the NFI requirements.	No	
Part B: for the NFI key contacts and users			
17. Overall, are we deploying appropriate resources on managing the NFI exercise? Recording and reporting	Yes The resources deployed by the College are proportionate to the risk level and number of matches.	No	
18. Are we recording outcomes properly in the secure website and keeping it up-to-date?	Yes The result of all matches are reported on the secure website and comments shared with 3 rd parties where appropriate.	No	
19. Do staff use the online training modules and guidance on the secure	Yes	No	

Appendix A

	Yes/No/Partly	Is action required?	Who by and when
website, and do they consult the NFI team if they are unsure about how to record outcomes (to be encouraged)?	Staff have reviewed the online training and will where required consult the NFI team		
20. If, out of preference, we record some or all outcomes outside the secure website, have we made arrangements to inform the NFI team about these outcomes?	Not applicable All data will be uploaded via the secure website	N/a	

Meeting	Audit Committee
Date	21 September 2022
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	2021-22 External Audit Progress Update
Presented By	Joanne Buchanan Audit Senior Manager
Recommendation to Members	For Noting
Appendix Attached	Yes 10(a) – Mazars Progress Report

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to provide the Audit Committee with a report on the progress made by Mazars in delivering their responsibilities as the **College's external auditors**.

The paper is presented in line with Audit Committee Terms of Reference:

'To consider the College's Annual Financial Statements at a joint meeting with the Finance and General Purposes Committee, and to recommend to the Board for approval.'

The paper is submitted *For Noting*.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide the Audit Committee with a report on the progress made by Mazars in delivering their **responsibilities as the College's external auditors.**

1.2 The report highlights the following:

- The 2022 audit timetable is on track for completion as planned with no significant issues identified.
- Interim audit work has been completed with no further issues being identified.
- The audit will be carried out remotely.
- **The SFC issued the Accounts Directions for Scotland's Colleges 2021-22.** The College response to this guidance was considered under agenda item 12.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no financial implications associated with this paper.

3. STUDENT EXPERIENCE

4.1 There are no student experience implications associated with this paper.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no human resource implications associated with this paper.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no legal implications associated with this paper.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no reputational implications associated with this paper.

7. COMMUNITY/PARTNERSHIP IMPACT

8.1 There are no community implications associated with this paper.

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no equality implications associated with this paper.

9. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit Committee is requested to note the content of the report.



Audit Progress Report
West College Scotland
Year ended 31 July 2022

September 2022

Contents

- 01** Summary
- 02** Audit progress
- 03** Position statement on 2021-22 audit
- 04** National publications
- 05** Contact details

This document is to be regarded as confidential to West College Scotland. It has been prepared for the sole use of the Audit Committee as the appropriate sub-committee charged with governance by the Board of Management. No responsibility is accepted to any other person in respect of the whole or part of its contents. Our written consent must first be obtained before this document, or any part of it, is disclosed to a third party.

Summary

Purpose of this report

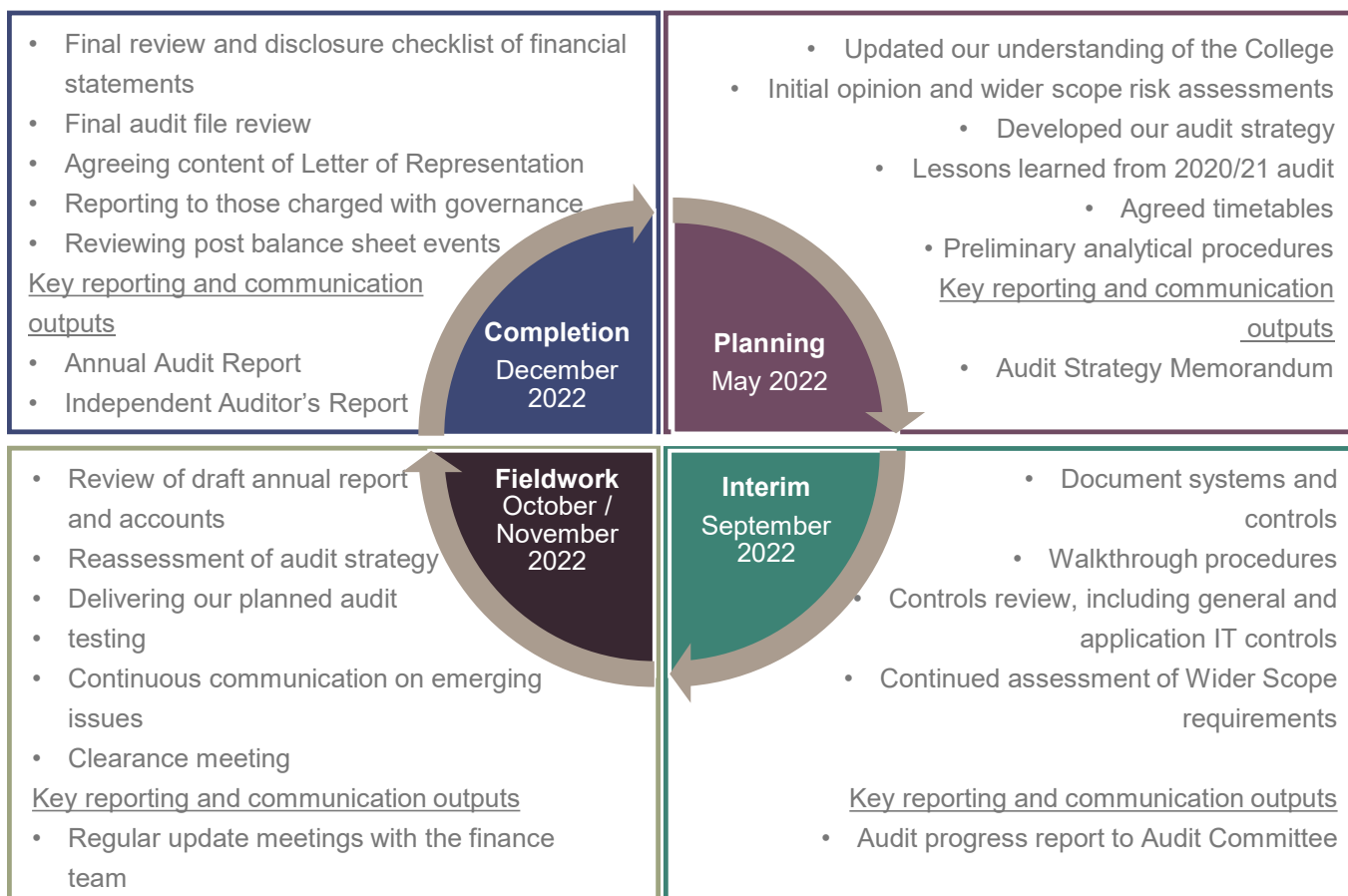
This report provides the Audit Committee with an update on progress in delivering our responsibilities as your external auditor.

National publications and other updates

This section of the report sets out summaries from national publications and other updates which may be of interest to Members of the Audit Committee.

Audit timetable

Our key stages are summarised in the diagram shown below. Overall, work is on track and there are no significant issues arising.



Audit progress

Audit progress

Since the issue of our Audit Strategy Memorandum in May 2022 we have:

- documented key controls and processes on material transaction streams in the accounts with no issues to report;
- attended a College sector update virtual meeting with Audit Scotland;
- developed a draft Accounts final visit project plan setting out the key dates when we plan to undertake our work and the likely documents, working papers and information we will need to review. We will agree this with management in the coming weeks; and
- continued to update our risk assessment for our Wider Scope work conclusion, including review of agendas and minutes for relevant meetings and consideration of reports by external regulators.

Our audit work is on track, and we have no matters to raise with the Committee at this stage of our audit. There are no changes to the risks previously reported in our Audit Strategy Memorandum.

Audit fieldwork

The final audit fieldwork is due to begin on 19 September 2022. As requested by management, we plan to carry out the majority of the audit fieldwork remotely and have prepared accordingly to facilitate a smooth process. Any on-site visits will follow College requirements for external visitors to ensure the health and safety of both our audit team and College staff.

Our remote audit process will be facilitated by setting up secure online portals for sharing information – this ensures easier tracking of information provided and is accessible to all members of the audit and finance team. Detailed arrangements will be discussed and made with the finance team in the coming weeks to ensure the audit is as efficient as possible.

We will report to the Joint Audit and Corporate Development Committee on 22 November 2022 with our Annual Audit Report and draft opinion on the financial statements. The accounts are due to be approved by the West College Scotland Board of Management on 12 December 2022.

Position Statement on 2021-22 Audit

Planned output	Expected completion date	Final report issued to Audit Committee	Comments
2021-22 Audit Strategy Memorandum	By 26 May 2022	26 May 2022	~
Audit Committee Progress Report and Briefing	By 21 September 2022	21 September 2022	~
2021-22 Audit Completion Report, incorporating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opinion on the financial statements • Conclusion on Wider Scope work 	By 31 December 2022	TBC	~

National publications

	Publication
1	Accounts direction for Scotland's colleges 2021-22, Scottish Funding Council, July 2022
2	National Fraud Initiative in Scotland 2022, Audit Scotland, August 2022
3	Scotland's colleges 2022, Audit Scotland, July 2022

1. Accounts direction for Scotland's College's 2021-22, Scottish Funding Council, July 2022

On 19 July 2022, the Scottish Funding Council issued its accounts direction for Scotland's Colleges for the 2021-22 year, along with supporting guidance.

Changes include:-

Performance Report

- An option to produce a summarised performance overview of the College, permitted by the FReM, has been removed
- Performance Analysis section is required to include details of how the College has promoted equality of delivery of service to different groups and had due regard to public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010
- Performance Analysis section should include brief commentary outlining the Fair Work practices that have been developed and progress in their implementation at the College

Remuneration and staff report

- There are significant changes to Fair Pay disclosures with pay multiple disclosures being extended to include upper and lower quartile ratios along with explanations for year-on-year movements.



National publications (continued)

2. The National Fraud Initiative in Scotland 2022, Audit Scotland, August 2022

The National Fraud Initiative (NFI) is a counter-fraud exercise across the UK public sector which aims to prevent and detect fraud. NFI is overseen by the Cabinet Office and led by Audit Scotland for all Scottish public bodies. The exercise takes place every two years. Data sets are submitted by public bodies and computer data matching techniques are used to detect fraud and error.

Overall, the 2020/21 exercise identified outcomes (the value of fraud, overpayments and error detected as well as an estimate of future losses that are prevented) of £14.9m. Total outcomes since NFI began in 2006/07 are now at £158.5m in Scotland.

While no direct outcomes are attributable to Colleges in the 2020/21 exercise, the importance of full public sector data being used in this exercise is illustrated.

<https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/publications/the-national-fraud-initiative-in-scotland-2022>

3. Scotland's Colleges 2022, Audit Scotland, July 2022

The annual overview report produced by Audit Scotland reflecting on the financial and operational performance of Scotland's Colleges in 2020/21. Overall, Colleges have responded well to Covid-19, but changes are required to ensure they remain financially sustainable in the long term and more students complete courses.

Covid-19 funding provided a healthier financial position across the sector, with an overall operating deficit of £47m across all Colleges and an adjusted operating position of £20m surplus. The report recognises these improvements in financial position are due to additional funding in year and the position is likely to deteriorate in the coming academic years. The report clearly sets out the capital funding gap for backlog and lifecycle maintenance costs.

<https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/publications/scotlands-colleges-2022>

Contact details

Please let us know if you would like further information on any items in this report.

www.mazars.co.uk

Lucy Nutley
Engagement Lead
07387 242 052
lucy.nutley@mazars.co.uk

Joanne Buchanan
Senior Manager
07794 031 384
joanne.buchanan@mazars.co.uk

Address:

100 Queen Street
Glasgow
G1 3DN
0141 227 2400

Meeting	Audit Committee
Date	21 September 2022
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	SFC Accounts Direction 2021-22
Presented By	Vivienne Mulholland Head of Finance and Student Funding
Recommendation to Members	For Noting
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

The paper provides an overview of the SFC guidance on the preparation and presentation of the 2021-22 Annual Report and Accounts which was issued on 19 July 2022.

The paper is presented in line with the Audit Committee Terms of Reference:

'To consider the College's Annual Financial Statements at a joint meeting with the Corporate Development Committee, and to recommend to the Board for approval.'

The paper is submitted To Note.

1. CONTEXT

1.1 The College is required to comply with the requirements of the:

- **SFC Accounts Direction for Scotland's College**
- Financial Memorandum with the Scottish Funding Council
- Statement of recommended Practice: Accounting for Further and Higher Education (SORP)
- Government Financial Reporting Manual

in the preparation of the annual report and accounts for the College.

1.2 The SFC annually issue mandatory guidance for the preparation of the annual report and accounts each year. On 19 July 2022 the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) issued specific guidance to colleges for the 2021-22 year-end.

1.3 Page 5 of the Accounts Direction sets out the requirements for the preparation of the annual report and accounts along with the deadline for submission of 31 December 2022. Two copies of the College annual report and accounts also require to be sent to the Auditor General for Scotland by 31 December 2022.

2. CHANGES TO REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

2.1. A summary of the limited changes to the annual Accounts Direction are noted below and the full SFC circular can be viewed [here](#).

2.2. The Performance Report should now include the following:

- Description of the way in which the institution has promoted equality of delivery of service to different groups and had due regard to public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010. This may include a cross reference to separately published reports dealing with Public Sector Equality Duties.
- A brief commentary outlining the Fair Work practices that have **been developed in agreement with the institution's workforce and the progress the institution has made in their implementation.**

2.3 The Remuneration Report requirements have been updated to request further details on fair pay / pay multiples as follows:

- While there was a pre-existing requirement around disclosures of median pay ratios, the 2021-22 FReM introduced new requirements around disclosures of 25th and 75th percentile pay **ratio, their comparison to the remuneration of the College's** highest paid official, percentage changes from the previous year and explanations of any changes.

- The template table for reporting is as follows:

	2021-22 £'000	2020-21 £'000	Change %
Range of workforce remuneration			
Highest paid official remuneration			
Median (Total pay and benefits)			
Ratio			
25 th percentile (total pay and benefits)			
25 th percentile (salary only)			
Ratio			
75 th percentile (total pay and benefits)			
75 th percentile (salary only)			
Ratio			
Explanation of changes (per FreM 6.5.26)			

- 2.4 These additional requirements are on top of the requirement to provide details of the highest paid official and the number of times the median salary this represents. Mazars have provided some additional guidance on this improved reporting requirement.
- 2.5 The College does not foresee any issues with including the required detail in the updated Annual Report and Accounts.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

4. STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- 4.1 There are no student experience implications associated with this report.

5. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no human resources implications associated with this report.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

7. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no reputational implications associated with this report.

8. COMMUNITY/PARTNERSHIP IMPACT

8.1 There are no community implications associated with this report.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no equality implications associated with this report.

10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit Committee is asked to note the changes to the reporting of the Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22 as stipulated in the SFC issued Accounts Direction.

Meeting	Audit Committee
Date	21 September 2022
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	Internal Audit Report 2021-22
Presented By	Stephen Pringle, Wylie & Bisset
Recommendation to Members	For Approval
Appendix Attached	Yes 13(a) – Internal Audit Report 2021-22

PURPOSE

The attached report presents to the Audit Committee the Internal Audit Report 2021-22. This document forms part of the suite of year-end reports and is designed to assist the Board of Management inform its governance statement contained within the College Financial Statements.

The paper is presented in line with West College Scotland Audit Committee Terms of Reference:

'To advise the Board on its compliance with corporate governance requirements and good practice guidance, and in particular its compliance with the Financial Memorandum with SFC, the SPFM and the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges.'

The paper is submitted *For Approval*.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Scottish Public Finance Manual states that:

- Internal audit should provide an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It should provide an appraisal of an organisation's internal control system and take the action needed to provide Accountable Officers with a continuing assurance that the organisation's risk management, control and governance arrangements are adequate and effective. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes. The operation and conduct of internal audit should comply with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.
- Accountable Officers are responsible for ensuring that appropriate internal control systems exist within their own organisations (or parts thereof), and for deciding whether to accept and implement internal audit findings and recommendations. Accountable Officers have overall responsibility for ensuring that prompt and effective action is taken on recommendations, and that the risks resulting from inaction are recognised and accepted. The organisation's Head of Internal Audit should have the right of direct access to the Accountable Officer and the organisation's Audit Committee.
- Internal audit evaluates compliance with an organisation's internal control system - including relevant regulations, guidance and procedures - as part of its review process. However, the primary responsibility for monitoring compliance rests with operational areas and their line management, up to and including **the relevant Accountable Officer.'**

1.2 An annual audit assurance is provided to Accountable Officers through the professional opinion of the Internal Auditor on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control system and the extent to which it can be relied upon. That opinion is contained in the attached Annual Report from the Internal Auditor to the Audit Committee, and forms part of the assurance required by Accountable Officers to enable them to sign a governance statement as part of the accounts for which they are directly responsible.

- 1.3 To meet the above requirements, the attached Annual Report summarises the conclusions and key findings from the internal audit work undertaken at the College during the year ended 31 July 2022, **including the internal auditor's overall opinion on the College's internal control system.**

Scope

- 1.4 The report documents the scope and responsibilities of the Internal Auditors on page 3.

Overall Internal Audit Opinion

Basis of Opinion

- 1.5 The Internal Auditor of West College Scotland are required by Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) to provide the Board of Management with an objective assessment of the adequacy and effectiveness of management's internal control systems. In giving their opinion it should be noted that assurance can never be absolute. The most that the internal audit service can provide is reasonable assurance that there are no major weaknesses in the whole system of internal control.
- 1.6 In assessing the level of assurance to be given, the internal auditors have considered:
- A review and appraisal of financial and other controls operated by the College.
 - A review of the established policies and procedures adopted by the College.
 - An assessment of whether or not the internal controls are reliable as a basis for producing the financial accounts.
 - A review of accounting and other information provided to management for decision making.
 - Compliance and substantive audit testing where appropriate.
 - A review of the College's procedures in place to promote and secure value for money.

Internal Audit Opinion

- 1.7 The internal audit opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of management's internal control systems is stated on page 4:

'We are satisfied that sufficient internal audit work has been undertaken to allow us to draw a conclusion as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's risk management, control and governance processes.

In our opinion, West College Scotland did have adequate and effective risk management, control and governance processes to manage the achievement of the College's objectives at the time of our audit work. In our opinion, the College has proper arrangements to promote and secure value for money. We have only been able to provide a 'Weak' level of assurance from the IT Administration and the Sustainability and Carbon Management reviews.

Our fieldwork was carried out between September 2021 and May 2022 and we have not undertaken any further internal audit assignments at the time of this report.'

- 1.8 The College has taken the appropriate actions to address the weaknesses of control regarding IT Administration and Sustainability and Carbon Management. These actions are monitored as part of the Rolling Audit Action Plan. An update report on the RAAP was considered under agenda item 14.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 There are no financial implications associated with this paper.

3. STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- 3.1 There are no student experience implications associated with this paper.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no human resource implications associated with this paper.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications associated with this paper.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no reputational implications associated with this paper.

7. COMMUNITY/PARTNERSHIP IMPACT

7.1 There are no community implications associated with this paper.

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no equality implications associated with this paper.

9. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit Committee is requested to approve the Internal Audit Report 2021-22.

Meeting	Audit Committee
Date	21 September 2022
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	Rolling Audit Action Plan
Presented By	Alan Ritchie Director of Finance
Recommendation to Members	Approval
Appendix Attached	Yes 15(a) – Rolling Audit Action Plan

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update the Audit Committee on the status of recommendations made by the College internal and external auditors.

The paper is presented in line with West College Scotland Audit Committee Terms of Reference:

'To review the Internal Audit reports, the management response to them and to review implementation of the actions required'

and

'To review the Rolling Audit Action Plan at each meeting'

The paper is submitted *To Approve*.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the progress made by the College in addressing the recommendations arising from the work of both the internal and external auditors.
- 1.2 The report at Appendix A summarises the status of each of the recommendations and includes the latest management comment on progress.

2. FURTHER DETAIL ON THE REPORT TOPIC

Overall Position

- 2.1 The tables at the start of the report summarise the movement in relation to the audit recommendations made since the May 2022 Audit Committee meeting.
- 2.2 The College has completed a further 15 recommendations (44%) which will be subject to review by both the internal and external auditors over the course of September and October 2022. The outcome of this review process will be reported to the next Audit Committee meeting.

Internal Audit

Request to Remove Actions from the Plan

- 2.3 There are no requests to remove any actions.

Extension Requested

- 2.4 The College considers that the due date for the following five recommendations requires to be extended for the reasons noted:

- IA21-22(02) Strategies - Update Corporate Strategy to include aims in relation to sustainability and carbon management

Recommendation:

We recommend that the College considers updating its Corporate Strategy to include mention of its aims in terms of sustainability and carbon management. This will ensure that there is a direct link between the Corporate Strategy and the Sustainability Strategy.

- Due date: 31 December 2022
- Extension requested to: 31 July 2023

Reason

Given the focus of the College over the initial part of 2022-23 will be on the delivery of further staff and non-staff efficiencies there is likely to be limited time to devote to the review of the Corporate Strategy. The College is therefore requesting an extension to 31 July 2023 to allow time for this critical work to be undertaken.

- IA21-22(06) Strategies - Review and amend the reporting lines and resources for sustainability and carbon management

Recommendation

We recommend that the College considers the reporting lines for sustainability and the resources to support the sustainability objectives of the College. We also recommend that the quarterly updates to the Corporate Development Committee are a separate report produced by the Sustainability Officer and reflect the work of the Sustainability Oversight Group. These reports should also include an update **to the figures for the College's emissions**.

- Due date: 31 October 2022
- Extension requested to: 30 November 2022

Reason

The recommendation requires an update report to be provided to the CD Committee. The next meeting of the Committee is the 22 November 2022. The extension is required to allow the CDC to consider the reporting lines and report it will receive.

- IA21-22(07) Strategies - Introduce a process for the collection and recording of data on sustainability and carbon management emissions within the college

Recommendation

We recommend that the Sustainability Officer collates the relevant information on a quarterly basis to enable this to be reported to the Sustainability Oversight Group, the SMT and the Corporate Development Committee.

- Due date: 31 October 2022
- Extension requested to: 30 November 2022

Reason

The recommendation requires an update report to be provided to the CD Committee. The next meeting of the Committee is the 22 November 2022. The extension is required to allow the CDC to consider the reporting lines and report it will receive

- IA21-22(26) IT - Extend the Mobile Device Management and Multi-Factor Authentication functionality to further protect College data

Recommendation

We recommend that the College extends the Mobile Device Management and Multi-Factor Authentication functionality to further protect College data. With these stronger controls in place the College could encrypt every mobile device, including College supplied laptops, and 'remote wipe' the laptop if it were misplaced.

Similarly, Multi-Factor Authentication applies controls that ensure remote access to critical network resources requires further verification of user legitimacy.

- Due date: 30 September 2022
- Extension requested to: 31 January 2023

Reason

The College has a plan for the implementation of MFA for initially the use of Microsoft Office 365 and this will be in place by the end of October 2022. The extension is requested to allow this work to be undertaken. In addition, the College requires to roll out updates to staff laptops to increase the **security of mobile devices to allow a 'remote wipe' should the kit be misplaced / stolen**. The extension to the end of January 2023 is to allow this work to be undertaken on a phased basis.

- IA21-22(28) Student Recruitment - Introduce a standard practice across all sectors and campuses for short listing of applications and the recording of the interview process

Recommendation:

We recommend that a standard practice is put in place across all Sectors and campuses. This should include a standard process for short listing applications as well as all Sectors using the UNIT-e system to record interviews.

We also recommend that the Curriculum Administration is done on a Sector basis irrespective of which campus the course is being offered. This would allow the applicant to be offered the most appropriate location for them. It would also enable one interview to be undertaken for the same course in the different campuses.

- Due date: 31 October 2022
- Extension requested to: 31 December 2022

Reason

The restructure of the curriculum Administrative Staff is due to take effect from 1 October 2023 and the College requires a degree of time to embed the updated processes.

Recommendation Status

2.5 Audit recommendations are graded as noted below:

Grading Classification		
1	High	Major weakness that we consider needs to be brought to the attention of the Audit Committee and addressed by Senior Management of the organisation as a matter of urgency.
2	Medium	Significant issue or weakness which should be addressed by the organisation as soon as possible.
3	Low	Minor issue or weakness reported where management may wish to consider our recommendation.

2.6 The table below summarises the gradings of the outstanding recommendations:

Audit Grading	Low (3)	Medium (2)	High (1)	Total
May 2022 report	9	13	1	23
September 2022 report	14	18	2	34

2.7 The two high recommendations relate to:

- *IA21-22(01) Sustainability Strategy with a due date of 31 October 2022*

A Sustainability Strategy was approved by the September 2022 Corporate Development Committee for presentation to the October 2022 Board of Management considered by the 3 May 2022 Senior Management Team. This recommendation is on track to be completed.

- *IA21-22(25) IT - Create a formal and detailed Disaster Recovery Plan as a way of protecting all the College's business-critical IT resources, with a due date of 31 July 2023*

The recommendation highlighted six milestones to deliver the required actions. The College has undertaken work on the first two of these milestones and considers that the recommendation will be implemented by the due date.

Next Steps

2.8 The College will:

- Update the Rolling Audit Action Plan following consideration by the Audit Committee.
- Continue to monitor the Rolling Audit Action Plan.
- Work with the internal / external auditors to remove the recommendations considered as fully implemented for consideration by the next Audit Committee.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

4. STUDENT EXPERIENCE

4.1 There are no student experience implications associated with this paper.

5. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no human resources implications associated with this paper.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no further legal implications in this paper to those listed above.

7. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no reputational implications associated with this paper.

8. COMMUNITY/PARTNERSHIP IMPACT

- 8.1 There are no community implications associated with this paper.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no equality implications associated with this paper.

10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit Committee is requested to:

- Approve the extension of time relating to five of the recommendations.
- Consider and approve the overall Rolling Audit Action Plan.

Meeting	Audit Committee
Date	21 September 2022
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	Report on Freedom Of Information and Data Protection Act Requests, Register of Interests and Gifts & Hospitality Register
Presented By	Alan Ritchie Director of Finance
Recommendation to Members	To Note
Appendix Attached	1: FOI / DP Summary 2: BoM Register of Interests

PURPOSE

The remit of the Committee requires it to receive an annual report on:

- Public Interest Disclosure.
- Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts requests.
- Register of Interests.
- Gifts and Hospitality registers.

The report provides an update regarding each of the above matters.

The paper is submitted *For Noting*.

1. BACKGROUND

Public Interest Disclosure

- 1.1 The Public Interest Disclosure Act enables and encourages individuals to raise matters of concern that are in the public interest (often referred to as whistleblowing), such as malpractice, impropriety, or wrongdoing within the College, without fear of reprisal, so that they may be investigated and where appropriate acted upon.
- 1.2 A copy of the current College [Public Interest Disclosure Policy](#) can be found on the College website.
- 1.3 The College has not had any Public Interest Disclosure cases during the period 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022.
- 1.4 The Policy was reviewed by the Committee under agenda item (9). On the basis that it is approved by the Committee the website will be updated.

Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts Requests

- 1.5 Appendix 1 provides a summary report on the Freedom of information and Data Protection Act requests compared to the previous year. It can be seen from Appendix 1 that the total number of freedom of information requests received during 2021-22 totalled 18 (2020-21: 19 requests), with data protection requests totalling 27 (2020-21: 12 requests).

Register of Interests

Staff

- 1.6 The Senior Management Team and those members of the College management team with either budget holding and/or procurement responsibilities were requested to provide a register of interest form. A total of 105 forms were issued and all forms were returned. Following a review of the returns by the Director of Finance there are no issues recorded which require to be brought to the attention of the Audit Committee.

Board of Management

- 1.7 A Model Code of Conduct (Code) required by the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 was reviewed and re-issued by Scottish Ministers in 2021. It sets out the principles and rules governing the conduct of members of devolved public bodies and **West College Scotland's (WCS) code of conduct is based on this Code.** Board members are required to disclose and register any financial or other material interest they, close family or friends, have which might impact on their relationship with the College.
- 1.8 In accordance with the Model Code of Conduct for Members of Devolved Public Bodies as issued by the Scottish Government on 5 January 2022, WCS Board of Management adopted and approved its version based on this model at its Board meeting held on 7 February 2022. This received approval from the Public Bodies Unit of the Scottish Government by letter dated 8 July 2022 and a copy of that letter and the approved Code of Conduct for West College Scotland has been passed to the Standards Commission for Scotland and the Commissioner for their records.
- 1.9 In adopting the revised Code of Conduct, the Registration of **Interests requirements and members' reporting form were adapted** to comply with the Model Code. Members must register when they are appointed and whenever their circumstances change. The register covers their current term of appointment. Failure to do so may provide a risk to the reputation of the College or leave members of the Board open to suspicion of impropriety in their conduct of business.
- 1.10 All members of the Board of Management should ensure that they act impartially in accordance with the nine key principles of public life in Scotland and behave in accordance with these principles.
- 1.11 Attached at Appendix 2 is the current Board and Committee Members Register of Interest as of 31 August 2022.

Gifts and Hospitality

- 1.12 The Committee is required to be provided with an annual review of the Gifts and Hospitality Registers, and to highlight that systems are in place to ensure staff members are aware of the need to inform the Director of Finance and complete the forms where gifts or hospitality are received or given to the value of £25 or over.

- 1.13 Under the College Policy on receipt of gifts, benefits and hospitality, all staff are required to register any gifts, hospitality or other benefits received where the value of the item or benefit exceeds an amount of £25.
- 1.14 Details of gifts and hospitality received by staff over the last year are recorded by the Director of Finance. Staff are reminded quarterly via the College intranet about the requirement to register gifts and hospitality.
- 1.15 In line with previous years the College has received a limited number of declarations mainly in relation to gifts from students to staff members. None of these gifts were deemed as excessive or contravened the principles of the Policy. No declarations were received from senior staff members.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1. There are no financial implications associated with this paper.

3. STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- 3.1. There are no student experience implications associated with this paper.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. There are no human resource implications associated with this paper.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. There are no legal implications associated with this paper.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. There are no reputational implications associated with this paper.

7. COMMUNITY/PARTNERSHIP IMPACT

- 7.1. There are no community implications associated with this paper.

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. There are no equality implications associated with this paper.

9. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1. There are no environmental implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit Committee is requested to note the 2021-22 report.

Appendix 1

Summary of Freedom of Information Requests

Categories of Request	2021-22 Requests	2020-21 Requests	Type of information requested	Responses out with statutory timescales	Reason for late response
Student Data	2	3	Number of mature students in GNK, gender of renewables students.	0	N/a
HR Data	4	2	Snr Mgt pay increases, support staff numbers, gender pay gap statistics, instances of violence against staff.	0	N/a
Finance Data	9	9	Payments to suppliers, PR & media costs, community benefits, legal costs, mental health funding, dinner expenses, LGPS and AVC take up, spending on fair trade products.	0	N/a
Other	3	5	Ventilation, types of lighting and carbon management info, IT equipment figures.	0	N/a
Reviews requested	0	0		0	N/a
Total Number of Requests	18	19			

Summary of Data Protection Act Requests

Categories of Request	2021-22 Request	2020-21 Request	Type of information requested	Responses out with statutory timescales	Reason for late response
Student Data	24	8	<p>Attendance, course details, funding details; on-campus incident data; fraud investigations (SAAS), academic course work data.</p> <p>Three requests were extensive, relating to 'all data' centred on incidents, and/or complaints.</p> <p>Two of these requests were right to erasure requests (right to be forgotten). In one case, data was deleted as requested. In the other, no data was deleted, due to a clash with College statutory reporting and financial requirements.</p>	4	In three cases, complexity of request, and time taken to collate, review and authorise release. In the other case, lack of access to relevant staff over summer break.
Staff Data	3	4	Payroll data.	0	N/A
Other	0	0			
Total	27	12			

Appendix 2 – Board of Management Register of Interests

Register of Members Interests 2022/23 - Board of Management and Co-opted Committee Members

Board Member	Remunerated Employment	Other roles	Contracts	Election Expenses	House, Land & Buildings	Shares & Securities	Gifts & Hospitality	Non-Financial Interests	Close Family Members
Waiyin Hatton, Chair	Chair, West College Scotland; Wai Beyond, People and organizational development consultancy	None	None	None	None	None	None	Chair and Board member, Colleges Scotland; Chair, Action Against Stalking	Alf Hatton and Associates
Liz Connolly Principal & CEO	Principal and Chief Executive, West College Scotland	None	None	None	None	None	None	Board Member, Developing the Young Workforce Board; Trustee, West College Scotland Foundation; Member Renfrewshire Economic Leadership Panel; Board Member, Colleges Scotland Board, President, Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce; Board Member, Renfrewshire CPP and West	None

PUBLIC

Board Member	Remunerated Employment	Other roles	Contracts	Election Expenses	House, Land & Buildings	Shares & Securities	Gifts & Hospitality	Non-Financial Interests	Close Family Members
								Dunbartonshire CPP	
Linda Johnston Vice Chair									
Daniel McMahon									
Fiona McKerrell									
Gordon Hunt	Senior Manager: Research & Enhancement College Development Network (CDN)	None	None	None	None	None	None	Chair, Stand Alone UK; Chair, Project Change Scotland; Member, Changing the Chemistry	None
Graeme Bold	Director of Workplace Pensions, Banking/Pensions, Lloyds Banking Group; Trustee, Sight Scotland	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Grant Lyall	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	Member, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland; Fellow,	None

PUBLIC

Board Member	Remunerated Employment	Other roles	Contracts	Election Expenses	House, Land & Buildings	Shares & Securities	Gifts & Hospitality	Non-Financial Interests	Close Family Members
								Chartered Banker Institute	
Jane McKie									
John Leburn									
Mark Newlands	Scottish Enterprise, Economic Development. Head of Global Companies and Capital Investment	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Ronald Leitch	Glasgow Airport Ltd, Airport owner and operator, Operations Director	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Douglas Bayley									
Abbie McGrath	Students Association President	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Sandor Nagy	Students Association Vice President; Sandor Nagy Delivery	None	None	None	None	None	None	Scottish Artists Union – Member; Society of	None

PUBLIC

Board Member	Remunerated Employment	Other roles	Contracts	Election Expenses	House, Land & Buildings	Shares & Securities	Gifts & Hospitality	Non-Financial Interests	Close Family Members
	Driver; Sandor Nagy Visual Artist							Scottish Artists - Member	
Co-opted Committee Members									
David Mark	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	Panel Member Children's Hearings Scotland	None
Mark Hamilton	Student Recruitment Officer, University of Strathclyde - Higher Education Institution	None	None	None	None	None	None	External Trustee, Student Association of the University of the West of Scotland (SAUWS); Member of UNISON	None
Ruth Binks	Corporate Director, Inverclyde Council	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None

As of 8th September 2022

Meeting	Audit Committee
Date	21 September 2022
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	2022-23 Schedule of Business
Presented By	Alan Ritchie Director of Finance
Recommendation to Members	To Consider
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the work of the Audit Committee during 2022-23.

The paper is presented in line with West College Scotland Audit Committee Terms of Reference:

'To review its own effectiveness at least annually and to report the results of that review to the Board.'

The paper is submitted *To Consider*.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The role of the Audit Committee is to support the Board in its responsibilities of risk, control, and governance by reviewing the comprehensiveness of assurances in meeting the assurance needs of the Board, and by reviewing the reliability and integrity of these assurances through a process of constructive challenge.
- 1.2 This report provides a summary of the items which the Committee has considered during 2022-23 in fulfilling the above requirement.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

3. STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- 3.1 There are no student experience implications associated with this paper.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no human resources implications associated with this paper.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no further legal implications in this paper to those listed above.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no reputational implications associated with this paper.

7. COMMUNITY/PARTNERSHIP IMPACT

- 7.1 There are no community implications associated with this paper.

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no equality implications associated with this paper.

9. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit Committee is requested to note the report and whether there are any further assurances required.

REMIT	DELIVERABLES				
	21 Sept 2022	22 Nov 2022 (Joint Meeting)	25 Jan 2023	29 Mar 2023	24 May 2023
1) General					
To provide advice to the Board on the strategic processes for risk, control and governance					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management Strategy Update • Review of Strategic Risk Register • Corporate Governance Statement - Financial Statements • Internal audit reports (see section 2) • External audit report (see section 3) • Remit of Committee reviewed against best practice and governance requirements • Assurance Map Update 	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
To develop and review the assurance framework and receive reports relating to it in order to provide the necessary assurances to the Board or determine any further action or assurances required.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Annual Report 2021-22 • Internal Audit Plan 2023-24 • Assurance Map Update 	Y			Y Y	Y
To review and advise the Board of the Internal Auditor's and External Auditor's assessment of the effectiveness of the College's financial and other internal control systems, including controls specifically designed to prevent or detect fraud or other irregularities as well as those for securing economy, efficiency, and effectiveness (value for money)					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Annual Report 2021-22 • External Audit Management Letter as of 31 July • Internal and external audit reports as received • Report on National Fraud Initiative 2022 	Y Y Y	Y Y	Y	Y Y	Y Y

Public

REMIT	DELIVERABLES				
	21 Sept 2022	22 Nov 2022 (Joint Meeting)	25 Jan 2023	29 Mar 2023	24 May 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement and Commercial Improvement Programme (Late 2023) Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy Public Interest Disclosure Policy Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy (Review date July 2023) 	Y Y Y				Y
To advise the Board on the adequacy of the anti-fraud policy and processes, and on the whistle blowing process, and to receive an annual report on any matters raised through these processes.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Report on Whistleblowing Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy Committee to be made aware of any issues arising during the year (ongoing as required) 	Y Y				
To consider and advise the Board accordingly on any arrangements for special investigations and the outcomes of such investigations					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports to be received as requested (ongoing as required) 					
To advise the Board on its compliance with corporate governance requirements and good practice guidance, and in particular its compliance with the Financial Memorandum with SFC, the SPFM and the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Audit Committee effectiveness Internal Audit Annual Report 2021-22 External Audit management letter as of 31 July 2022 Report on compliance with SFC FM and SG SPFM Assurance Map Update 	Y	Y Y		Y Y	Y Y

REMIT	DELIVERABLES				
	21 Sept 2022	22 Nov 2022 (Joint Meeting)	25 Jan 2023	29 Mar 2023	24 May 2023
To consider the College's Annual Financial Statements at a joint meeting with the Corporate Development Committee, and to recommend to the Board for approval					
<u>2021-22</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> External Audit Management Letter / Letter of representation Audit report on student activity Audit report on student funding activity Audit report on Educational Maintenance Allowances Governance Statement Financial Statements as of 31 July 2022 		Y Y Y Y Y Y			
<u>2022-23</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> External Audit Engagement Strategy 2022-23 including audit fee 					Y
To provide an annual report to the Board, timed to support the finalisation of the accounts and the Statement on Internal Control, and summarising its conclusions from the work it has done during the year					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual report to Board of Management from the Audit Committee 	Y	Y			
To report to the Board after each meeting					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes and verbal update to each Board Meeting Draft Committee Dates 2023-24 	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y Y
To review its own effectiveness at least annually and to report the results of that review to the Board					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Committee remit Annual report to Board of Management from the Audit Committee Annual review of effectiveness of the Committee 	Y Y	Y			Y

REMIT	DELIVERABLES				
	21 Sept 2022	22 Nov 2022 (Joint Meeting)	25 Jan 2023	29 Mar 2023	24 May 2023
2) Internal Audit					
To advise the Board on the selection, appointment or re-appointment and remuneration, or removal of the Internal Auditors. The responsibility for selection of the Internal Auditor may be delegated to a Selection Committee as agreed by the Audit Committee					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of effectiveness of internal audit function 				Y	Y
To advise the Board on the terms of reference for the Internal Auditors					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Audit Plan Update 2022-23 Internal Audit Plan 2023-24 	Y		Y	Y Y	Y Y
To review the scope, efficiency and effectiveness of the work of the Internal Auditors and to advise the Board on these matters					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Report to Board of Management from the Audit Committee Review of effectiveness of internal audit function 	Y	Y			Y
To agree the Internal Audit Plan and review the Internal Audit Annual Report					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Audit Annual Report 2021-22 Internal Audit Update Report 2022-23 Assurance Map Update Internal Audit Plan 2023-24 	Y Y	Y	Y	Y Y Y	Y Y
To review the Internal Audit reports, the management response to them and to review implementation of the actions required					
<u>2022-23</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding, Wellbeing and Counselling IT Strategy Curriculum Strategy Payroll Review 			Y Y	 Y Y	

Public

REMIT	DELIVERABLES				
	21 Sept 2022	22 Nov 2022 (Joint Meeting)	25 Jan 2023	29 Mar 2023	24 May 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estate Strategy Budget / Financial Planning Curriculum Planning and Timetabling Whistleblowing 				Y	Y Y Y
To review the Rolling Audit Action Plan at each meeting					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on Rolling Audit Action Plan 	Y		Y	Y	Y
To encourage appropriate liaison and co-ordination between internal and external audit					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite / attendance at all Committee meeting by both internal and external auditors 	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
To establish appropriate performance measures and indicators to monitor the effectiveness of the Internal Auditors					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review of internal audit function Annual meeting with internal auditor excluding College staff 				Y	Y Y
3) External Audit					
To receive information on the general terms and conditions of appointment of the External Auditors who are engaged by Audit Scotland to provide audit services to the College					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year end audit update by external auditors Introduction of new external auditors (Azets) Annual external audit appointment terms and conditions Approval of External Auditors Audit Planning Memorandum 2022-23 	Y	Y	Y		Y Y
To consider the External Auditors report on the Financial Statements and the management letter prior to submission to the Board, and to review the implementation of the recommendations					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External Auditors report on the Financial Statements 2021-22 		Y			

REMIT	DELIVERABLES				
	21 Sept 2022	22 Nov 2022 (Joint Meeting)	25 Jan 2023	29 Mar 2023	24 May 2023
To review the Statement of Corporate Governance prior to finalisation and incorporation into the Financial Statements.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the statement of Corporate Governance 		Y			
To review the External Audit strategy and plan					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SFC Accounts Direction for Scotland's colleges External Audit 2022-23 Engagement Strategy 	Y				Y
To establish appropriate performance measures and indicators to monitor the effectiveness of the External Auditors.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review of effectiveness of external audit function Annual meeting with external auditor excluding College staff 		Y	Y		
To consider the objectives and scope of any non-statutory audit work to be undertaken by the External Auditors firm and advising the Board of any potential conflict of interests.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As required 					
4) Risk					
To review the Risk Management Strategy and recommend to the Board for approval					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of College Risk Management Strategy 			Y	Y	
To consider the Strategic Risk Register and to advise the Board accordingly					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Strategic Risk Register Assurance Map 		Y		Y Y	Y

REMIT	DELIVERABLES				
	21 Sept 2022	22 Nov 2022 (Joint Meeting)	25 Jan 2023	29 Mar 2023	24 May 2023
To consider matters of risk at each meeting and to satisfy itself that risks are being managed, including seeking assurances from internal and external audit on the adequacy of their management, and to report to the Board.					
• Review of Strategic Risk Register		Y	Y	Y	Y
5) Other					
To receive annual reports on Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts requests; Register of Interests; Hospitality/Gifts Registers; and IT security / controls and their application.					
a. Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts requests	Y				
b. Register of Interests	Y				
c. Hospitality / Gift Register	Y				
d. IT Security / control Report 2021-22	Y				
To request any member of the College staff to attend and/or to provide a written report on any matter that falls within the remit of the Committee					
• As required					
To procure ad-hoc specialist advice at the expense of the College as appropriate and when necessary, subject to budgets being agreed by the Board					
• As required					