Ayrshire College

**Meeting of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee
to be held on Thursday 06 March 2025 at 4.00pm
by Hybrid Attendance at Kilmarnock campus and via Teams**

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Declarations of Interest

2. Apologies

3. Minutes from meeting held on 28 November 2024   Paper 1 (C/P)
    - Action and Decision tracker   Paper 1a

Part A – For discussion, decision and approval

4. Student Support - **Presentation**   Presentation (P)(WMcC

5. 2024-25 Student Association Report Q3   Paper 2 (P) (DH/CS)

6. Student Association Constitution   Paper 3 (R) (LC/DH/CS

7. 2024-25 First Impressions Survey   Paper 4 (P) (AC/APs)

Part B – Regular reporting and monitoring

8. Performance Dashboard Update   [Link to Dashboard](#) (AC)

9. 2024-25 Employer Engagement and Innovation Report Q3   Paper 5 (R) (ARod)

10. 2024-25 Student Support Funds   Paper 6 (P) (ARi)

Part C – Risk management

11. 2024-25 Strategic Risk Register   Paper 7 (R) (ARi)
                                                                           [Link to Risk Register](#)

Part D – For information

12. **AOB**

    Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 29 May 2025 at 4.00pm

(C/P) Confirmed minutes will be published; (P) Papers will be published on the College website; (R) Papers will not be published for reasons of commercial sensitivity or for reasons of personal data confidentiality.

**Minute of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee Meeting
Held via Microsoft Teams, Thursday 28 November 2024**

Present:

Sharon Morrow	Vice Chair LTQC
Jason Currie	Non-Executive Board Member
Gillian Longmuir	Non-Executive Board Member
Michael Ross	Non-Executive Board Member (From Item 4 onwards)
Jane Grant	Non-Executive Board Member
Chris Boyce	Elected Member, EIS/FELA
Lisa Keggans	Elected Member, Support Staff
Janette Steel	Elected Member, Curriculum Staff (From Item 4 onwards)
Darcie Hamilton	Elected Member, Student President
Connor Skipsey	Elected Member, Student Vice President (From Item 4 onwards)
Angela Cox	Principal, Ex-officio

In attendance:

Anne Campbell	Vice Principal, Skills and Enterprise
Alan Ritchie	Vice Principal, Finance and Infrastructure
Jennifer Anderson	Assistant Principal, Skills and Innovation
Gavin Murray	Assistant Principal, Skills and Innovation
Alistair Rodgers	Director of Enterprise Development
Doreen Wales	Assistant Principal, Student Experience & Quality Enhancement.
Hilary Denholm	Board Governance Advisor
Katelyn Kilbride	Executive Assistant (Minutes)

1. Welcome and Declarations of Interest

Sharon Morrow, Vice Chair of the LTQC, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

There were no Declarations of Interest presented.

The meeting was confirmed as quorate.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Alison Sutherland, Chair LTQC and Senior Independent Board Member, Iain Shearer, Non-Executive Board Member and David Davidson, Vice Principal, People, Performance and Transformation.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 September 2024 *(Paper 1) (C/P)*

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2024 were approved as a correct record.

    Proposed: Angela Cox   **Seconded**: Sharon Morrow

3.1 Action Tracker *(Paper 1a)*

The Committee noted that there were no outstanding actions.

4. Student Association Report Q2 (Paper 2) (P)

D Hamilton highlighted the main activities from the report, and verbally updated the Committee on activities since the report submission.

*M Ross, C Skipsey & J Steel joined the meeting during this Item.

> **The Committee noted:**
>
> - College Class Ambassadors are undergoing a two-phase training programme with Sparqs. It was highlighted that a monthly Summary Note will be used to collate feedback from Ambassadors and Students.
> - The Student Engagement Satisfaction Survey is now live and completion is being monitored / encouraged.
> - Darcie highlighted efforts to celebrate significant dates within the Equalities Calendar, specifically Black History Month in October, International Men's Day in November and Transgender Remembrance.
> - Unfortunately, the College did not reach any finals in the Battle for Scotland Tournament.
> - The gardening club have planted bulbs and fruit trees as part of the Brighten our Campus project.
> - The first Virtual Reality Student Association meeting took place and members discussed planning, including content and zones.
>
> **The Committee welcomed the report, informative updates, noting the report as presented.**

5. Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy *(Paper 3) (P)*

> A Campbell provided committee members with an overview of the strategy.
>
> **The Committee noted:**
>
> - Workshops were held with staff to formulate the four enabling strategies.
> - The draft strategy has been reviewed by the Student Association and feedback has been considered.
> - The strategy has also been shared with the College Leadership Team and the Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Steering Group.
> - College staff have been invited to provide feedback on the strategies by Friday 6 December.
> - Anne highlighted three questions (slide will be circulated) which committee members should consider and then provide feedback on the strategy by Friday 6 December.
>
> **The Committee welcomed the paper and agreed to review the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy by Friday 6 December.**

Action: LTQ46- A01: Committee members to send any further feedback to Anne Campbell by 6 December latest for inclusion in Board submission paper. Katelyn Kilbride to share slide of questions with Hilary Denholm for circulation to Committee members.

7. 2023-24 Interim Ayrshire College Performance Indicator Report *(Paper 5) (P)*

A Campbell updated the Committee on the 2023-24 Interim Ayrshire College Performance Indicator Report and highlighted the delay on reporting due to industrial action in the final months of 2023-24.

Discussions took place on the Performance Indicators and the trend in data which shows Ayrshire College being below sector average in areas such as Business and Computing, Hospitality, Care and Social Subjects.

Anne provided assurance that meetings have been arranged to identify and discuss the reasons for underperformance and to agree specific actions for improvement.

The Committee welcomed the detailed report, noting the report as presented.

8. 2024-25 Performance Dashboard

A Campbell provided an overview of the Performance Dashboard and noted that the College is currently on track in terms of meeting its credit activity target. It was also highlighted that retention across FE Full time / Part time and HE Full time / Part time is trending positively.

The Committee noted the verbal update.

9. Student Support Funds Update *(Paper 8) (P)*

A Ritchie introduced the Student Support Funds paper and provided an updated on the final 2023-24 position and audit outcome, and the 2024-25 financial position and risks.

The Committee noted:

- There is a risk that the SAAS HE Discretionary budget does not allow the College to support all HE learners start / complete their course due to financial constraints.
- There is a risk to FE Students as maintenance rates have not increased in line with the inflation of the cost of living.
- The CAMS platform which the college uses to support the student application process will be decommissioned in 2026 and therefore the College must find an alternative solution. The committee will remain informed.

The Committee welcomed the paper and updates, noting the report as presented.

16. AOB

No AOB noted.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 06 March 2025 at 4.00pm @ Kilmarnock

RESERVED ITEMS ON THE NEXT PAGE

Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee - Action and Decision Log
Meeting No 47 – 06 March 2024

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Reference	Details	Action Owner	Due Date	Action Decision	Open Complete Approved Declined
28.11.24	Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy	LTQ45: D01	The Committee reviewed and approved the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy for recommendation to the meeting of the Board of Management on 19 December subject to consideration of any further feedback.	NA	NA	Decision	Approved
28.11.24	Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy	LTQ45: A01	Committee members to send any further feedback to Anne Campbell by 6th December for inclusion in Board submission paper.	Committee Members	06.12.24	Action	Complete
28.11.24	2023-24 Strategic Risk Register	LTQ45: D02	The Committee reviewed and approved the Strategic Risk Register for consideration and approval to the Board.	NA	NA	Decision	Approved

Ayrshire College   *(Paper 2)*

Title of Meeting:	**Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee**
Date:	**06 March 2025**
Title:	**Student Association Report**
Purpose:	**To provide members with updates on the activities undertaken by the Student Association with particular reference to the two pillars of their work, namely the Student Voice and Student Community, and to further ensure that the student voice is heard in all relevant forums.**
Recommendation:	**To Note**

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1. **Executive Summary**

   The Student Association team consists of two elected officers. The Student President, Darcie Hamilton, and Student Vice President, Connor Skipsey. The Student Association is governed by a Student Executive Committee within which students hold various volunteer officer roles. The work of the Student Association is supported by the Student Association Advisor, Linda Corbett and is overseen by the Head of Quality Enhancement, Ann Heron.

2. **Associated Risks**
   None

3. **Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment**
   None

4. **Publication**
   This paper will be published on the College website.

1. Background

Campaigns and Events

We completed the 16 Days of Action campaign in November 2024. This campaign aims to end violence against women and girls with a focus on providing support to those who need it. The campaign included student communications, a marketplace event on each campus, a social media campaign and our participation in the ReClaim the Night March where the Student President delivered a speech about our work on these matters at the College. We were pleased to work closely in partnership with the Star Centre for this campaign.

For the first year ever, we celebrated International Men's Day which had a focus on health and wellbeing for men and boys. We hosted a table and offered positive affirmations and celebration superhero cookies which we gave to staff and students after they had signed a pledge card with a message of support or a nomination for a positive male role model in their life. The event was very well received.

December saw us deliver our WinterFest Event. The focus was wellbeing and safety throughout the winter period. We offered free hot chocolates, free hats and scarves and as special guests we had Alpacas. One of the main aims of WinterFest is to encourage student engagement and to promote the college as a great place to be. The events were good fun, and we had fantastic feedback from the students.

2. Current Situation

Campaigns and Events

February 2025 will be a busy month as we will have our ReFreshers events at the very start of the month. ReFreshers aims to welcome our new and returning students by offering student freebies, including the always popular Domino's, bags from the Student Association and support from our partnership organisations. We'll also be playing Essential Radio throughout each event.

This will be followed by LGBT History Month which runs for the whole of February. Plans are underway for student communications throughout the month including emails, display boards and social media. We are also exploring some ideas for a grand finale event at the end of the month.

In March we will take part in Neurodiversity Celebration Week. We will be on each campus to offer information, support, words of affirmation and raising awareness. We'll also be offering limited edition celebration wrist bands.

Battle for Scotland will continue with another round of "battles" this February across the 5 different games. Students will have the chance to win a share of £950 for this round and we wish good luck to all our students taking part.

<u>Class Ambassador Programme</u>

The Class Ambassador programme has continued with good attendance at the meetings, excepting January and the feedback has been valuable. We continue to collect and disseminate the feedback through our Class Ambassador Summary note which is shared with the Ambassadors and key departments and colleagues around the College including Heads and Curriculum Quality Managers. Those teams will then review the summary note and extract relevant feedback for their area and action as appropriate.

Regarding the January attendance, we have consulted with the Ambassadors, and all agreed that a change to the programme of meetings for January would be welcome. We will move away from 3 in person meetings plus one online meeting and trial two online meetings which will be supplemented with a feedback collection form. The Student Association Advisor will ensure this is carried forward for January 2026

As part of the programme review and development, the Class Ambassador Mid-Year Review survey is currently open and we will use this as an opportunity to hear from our Ambassadors, get their feedback and look at how we can develop and improve the programme overall.

<u>Projects</u>

The Virtual Reality Students Association project is well underway. We have completed our due diligence work for GDPR and will be progressing with an Equality Impact Assessment. Additionally, the Virtual Platform has been purchased, and work is ongoing to now start building the space. The Student Association are looking at the requirements for launching the space including marketing and resources. It is anticipated that the launch is likely to happen in April 2025.

Brighten our Campus has taken a slight pause over the winter months, with the Student Vice President doing some planning and partnership work with curriculum areas with a view to more physical activities taking place on the run up to the spring.

The Student Association Extra Curricular fund has been extremely successful this academic session. We have had 23 successful applications. The funds were exhausted in early February and the fund is now closed. We have been delighted with the engagement from curriculum departments that hadn't engaged with us before and the uptake for activities relating to our meta skills criteria has been high.

<u>Other</u>

We'd like to note that the Student Association are now members of the newly formed Digital Governance Group. We look forward to representing the student voice on this group and supporting the work of the group.

The Student President has been participating in the SQA NQ25 Strategic group as a college representative, ensuring that students who study at level

5, higher and advanced higher) are having their voices heard and any issues arising within these areas get dealt with by proper procedures.

We had a very productive and helpful meeting with Justin Walker from Sparqs during semester 1 which focussed on understanding the TQEF and how this may impact our work at The Student Association. This was insightful and supporting the teams understanding of the TQEF moving forward.

3.   **Proposal**

The Student Association will move forward with a variety of campaigns throughout semester 2 including Neuro Diversity Celebration Week, International Women's Day, the Pathways of Hope Campaign, Deaf Awareness Week and any other appropriate campaigns that arise.

Additionally, we will put plans in place for the upcoming Student Engagement and Satisfaction Survey including student communications and on campus promotional activity.

The Student Association Advisor will be commencing activity relating to the annual Student President Elections at the end of March 2025.

4.   **Resource Implications**

None

5.   **Consultation**

The Student Association will continue to consult with relevant key stakeholders around the college as required.

6.   **Conclusion**

The Student Association are undertaking a broad spectrum of work that is having a positive impact on students. We continue to look at our development opportunities and engage in meaningful projects.

Darcie Hamilton   *Connor Skipsey*
Student President   *Student Vice President*
06 February 2025   *06 February 2025*

Ayrshire College   *(Paper 4)*

Title of Meeting:	**Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee**
Date:	**06 March 2025**
Title:	**2024-25 First Impressions Survey**
Purpose:	**Analysis of the 2024-25 First Impressions Survey results**
	To provide an update on the results of the 2024-25 First Impressions Survey and actions arising from them.
Recommendation:	**For discussion**

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1. Executive Summary

Student Satisfaction and Engagement activities are organised by the Quality Enhancement Team and the Student Association. They enable students to engage in the life and work of the College and provide feedback which informs planning and evaluation processes.

The gathering of college-wide Semester 1 student feedback is undertaken as a joint enterprise between the Quality Enhancement Team and the Student Association using a set of questions which were jointly developed. The AY 2024-25 First Impressions Survey was available for completion throughout November 2024. A separate survey was made available for school pupils who attend College.

The survey was accessed via students' MyLearning App.

The feedback from the Student Satisfaction and Engagement college-wide survey is analysed by the Head of Quality Enhancement and the Student Association and action plans are agreed to address any areas of concern. Areas of good practice are also identified and shared.

2. Proposals and Recommendations

Current Situation

First Impressions Survey Section 1

Appendix 1 details the responses to the first section of the First Impressions survey. Where the questions correlated with previous years' questions, the percentage of positive responses provided in AY 2022-23 and AY 2023-24 are shown. Those coloured green indicate an improvement in satisfaction levels while red shows a decrease in the satisfaction level.

There was an increase in the number of college student respondents from 1158 in AY 2023-24 to 1217 in AY 2024-25 and 102 school pupil respondents.

17 of the questions that can be compared with previous sessions show an increase in positive responses while 6 show a decrease in positive responses. These results will be shared with the appropriate service and curriculum areas who will be required to undertake further evaluative activity to:

- identify areas of good practice that can be shared across the College; or
- understand the reasons for the decrease and agree improvement actions to be taken.

The highest level of satisfaction (97% for college students and 100% for school pupils) was to the statement 'I felt welcome on my first day at College'. This was followed by 95% and 96%/97% respectively) agreeing that 'I have access to the digital equipment I need to help me learn' and 'I feel my class lecturers are supportive and approachable'.

While the lowest levels of satisfaction (70%) was to the statement 'I was able to apply for and get student funding in time for my course starting' this was an increase of 20% from AY 2023-24.

The largest increases in satisfaction were to the statements 'I know about Inclusive Learning and how to get additional support to help me learn' (26%) and 'I have been able to access the WIFI with ease at college (25%).

While positive responses to the statement 'I know who the Student Association are and what they do' rose from 68% to 78% among college students, it was only 47% amongst school pupils. The Student Association will work with the School/College Partnership Team to improve this.

The positive responses to the statement 'Overall, I am satisfied with my college experience' fell by 1% to 94% but was 100% amongst the school pupils.

First Impressions Survey Section 2

The Student Association wanted to know if there were any other factors that may affect students' ability to remain on their course. As well as the questions above, students were also asked to tell us if, during their first couple of weeks, they were worried about or felt affected by the following:

Money in general	494
The cost of public transport	183
The overall cost of food on the campus	306
Access to childcare	28
Smoking/vaping on campus	107
Anti-social behaviour/respect for others	156

Students were also asked if they had any worries about being able to carry on with their course. The responses were:

Yes, a lot	115
Yes, a little	310
I haven't thought about it either way	355
No, not at all	412

The survey encouraged students to speak to their lecturer if they are worried about being able to stay at college for any reason.

Students were also provided with the opportunity to comment on anything else they would like us to know. These responses will be collated and shared with the appropriate professional services and curriculum areas.

The detailed feedback from the survey is shared with the Executive and Senior Leadership Teams, Heads of Learning and Skills, Curriculum Managers and Service Managers and the Student Association.

The results will be discussed by course and service teams who will use it to agree their teams' actions for improvement and areas of good practice. This will be monitored through the Team Evaluation process.

In Semester 2, the College will deliver the SFC Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey which contains 10 questions which are reported back to the Scottish Funding Council. Focus Groups will be facilitated by Class Ambassadors across all curriculum areas and targeted focus groups are planned around themes arising from the surveys. The feedback from these will inform the College Evaluation activities for AY 2025-26, including the next Sector Evaluative Report and Action Plan (SEAP).

3.   **Associated Risks**

None identified.

4.   **Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment (if applicable)**

EqIA not required.

Anne Campbell
Vice Principal – Skills and Enterprise
6 March 2025

Ann Heron
Head of Quality Enhancement

Appendix 1   **The First Impressions Survey (November/December 2024)**
                   Table of College Results   -   1217 Respondents; 102 School pupils

	2024/25	Schools 24/25	2023/24 and 2022/23
1) I was happy with the Application Process for my course.	98%	98%	90%
2) I was happy with the communication I received from the College before my course started.	93%	92%	79%
3) I felt welcome on my first day at College.	97%	100%	98%
4) I was provided with all the information I needed to successfully start my course.	95%	99%	83%
5) I was able to apply for and get student funding in time for my course starting.	70%		50%
6) I know about Student Services and how to access support to help me to progress.	91%	57%	90%
7) I know what Mental Health Support is available at the College and how to access it.	89%	67%	-------
8) I know about Inclusive Learning and how to get additional support to help me learn.	91%	62%	65%
9) I know about the resources and support available in the LRC.	94%	87%	90%
10) I have access to the Digital Equipment I need to help me learn.	95%	93%	96%
11) I have been able to access the WIFI with ease whilst at College (this could be on your phone, tablet, laptop etc).	78%	56%	53%
12) My Course is well organised.	90%	95%	86%
13) I can access my online course materials easily.	94%	84%	92%
14) I feel my class lecturers are supportive and approachable.	95%	97%	97%
15) There are enough online resources available to support my learning.	95%	91%	95%
16) Lecturers challenge inappropriate behaviour/attitudes/language from students in an appropriate way.	92%	92%	93%
17) The teaching and learning methods used on my course suit me.	90%	97%	90%
18) I feel that lecturers understand my needs.	93%	96%	91%
19) My course is going at an appropriate pace.	92%	97%	89%
20) Lecturers provide clear feedback so that I am prepared for assessments.	95%	96%	93%
21) I know when my assessments are due.	92%	91%	95%
22) I know what I am doing well and what I need to do to improve.	94%	98%	93%
23) I know who the Student Association are and what they do.	78%	47%	68%
24) I enjoyed the Freshers Fayres in September.	71%	---------	56%
25) I know what a Class Ambassador is and does.	81%	---------	74%
26) Overall, I am satisfied with my college experience	94%	100%	95%

Green = increase in % agreeing with the statement from previous survey Red = decrease in % agreeing with the statement from previous survey

Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee, 6 March 2025

Ayrshire College   *(Paper 6)*

Title of Meeting*:*   **Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee**

Date: **06 March 2025**

Subject: **2024-25 Student Support Funds**

Purpose: The paper provides an update on how the College plans to expend the £11m of 2024-25 student support funding.

Recommendation: The Committee is requested to note the content of the paper.

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1.   Executive Summary

2024-25
The 2024-25 funding position remains that the College is operating within its allocated budget subject to the caveats and risks highlighted within the paper. There are no significant risks that require to be drawn to members attention.

2.   Associated Risks

Noted below are the most significant risks faced by the College regarding student funding:

Risk Description	Impact	Rating
There is a risk that the SAAS HE Discretionary budget does not allow the College to support all HE learners start / complete their course.	The potential impacts are loss of students who either do not start or are forced to withdraw during the year.	
There is a risk that FE students are not able to support themselves during their course due to the maintenance rates not keeping pace with the cost of living.	The potential impacts are loss of students who either do not start or are forced to withdraw during the year. In addition, there is a risk that the College is required to use its core funds to supplement student bursary payments.	

There is a risk that the reintroduction of capped study cost expenditure will impact on consumable budgets.	The risk is that the cost of items purchased for students will be more than sectoral averages and total amount permitted to spend, and that the College will be required to use core funds to supplement these costs.	2
There is a risk that the CAMS online application will be decommissioned without an alternative suitable solution being available.	Students will be unable to apply digitally for student support funding. Paper based solution is not effective or efficient and negatively impacts on our carbon footprint. Negative impact on staff resources and service delivery.	

3.   Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment
There is no requirement to conduct an EDIA because of this paper.

4.   Publication
This paper will be published on the College's website.

5. SFC Student Support Funds

In 2024-25 the SFC have provided Student Support Funding of £10,362k and table 1 details the overall support fund position including projected spend for January applications.

Table 1 – Overall Student Support Spend

Student Support Fund	2024-25			2023-24	
	Budget Spend £'000	Forecast Spend £'000	Variance £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Actual Variance %
Bursary	8,290	8,565	(275)	7,920	8
FE/HE Childcare	403	301	102	263	14
FE Discretionary	1,670	1,411	259	1,873	(25)
Total	**10,363**	**10,277**	**86**	**10,056**	**2**

Any unspent funds will be returned to SFC.

Bursary

The following tables provides information on student numbers and level of expenditure.

Table 2 - Bursary funding students supported and spend

Bursary	2024-25 Forecast	2023-24 Actual	Variance %
Number of students offered supported	2,836	2,724	
Projected number of additional students offered supported from January applications	273	NA	
Total number of students supported	3,109	2,724	14
Awarded (£'000)	£8,427	£7,920	6
Projected Spend (£'000)	£138	£0	
Total (£'000)	**£8,565**	**£7,920**	**8**

Table 3 – Care Experienced Students (figures included in table 2 above)

Care Experienced Bursary	2024-25	2023-24	Variance %
Number of students supported	528	497	6
Awarded (£'000)	**£4,184**	**£3,460**	**21**

The College is seeing an increasing number of care experienced students requiring support. The College is supporting 528 care experienced students which is a 6% increase from 2023-24.

Childcare

Table 4 - Childcare funding students supported and spend

Fund	2024-25	2023-24	Variance %
FE Childcare	64	62	3
HE Childcare	25	34	(26)
Projected number of additional students offered supported	10	N/a	
Awarded (£'000)	£284	£263	8
Projected Spend (£'000)	£17	N/a	
Total (£'000)	**£301**	**£263**	**14**

Parents continue to be eligible for Scottish Government childcare funding where they have a child who is 3 or 4 years old (around 30 hours per week). The number of students applying for College childcare funding therefore continues to remain low compared to previous years.

FE Discretionary

Table 5 - Discretionary funding students supported and spend

FE Discretionary	2024-25	2023-24	Variance %
Number of students supported	1,482	1,857	(20)
Projected number of additional students offered supported	502	NA	
Awarded (£'000)	£830	£1,873	(56)
Projected Spend (£'000)	£581	NA	
Total (£'000)	**£1,411**	**£1,873**	**(25)**

The main purpose of this fund is to support students with rent and general housing expenses although other forms of harship are awarded. The figures for 2023-24 include one-off payments in support of cost of living.

The College has continued to support payments to provide additional financial aid for students who need help with rising food, fuel and heating costs. These payments remain in place for 2024-25 with the first payment of £250 made on Friday 13 December 2024. It is anticipated that further payments will be made in April then June, subject to funds being available and SLT approval.

6. Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

EMA funding is provided by the Scottish Government to support eligible 16 to 17 year-old students. The College does not receive an allocated amount but are reimbursed through a monthly reclaim system.

Table 6

EMA	2024-25	2023-24	Variance %
Number of students supported	664	645	3
Total (£'000)	**£583**	**£437**	**33**

7. SAAS Funds provided for Higher Education Discretionary

In 2024-25 SAAS have provided Student Support Funding of £129,203 and table 8 details the fund position.

Table 7

	2024-25			2023-24	Variance %
	Budget Spend	**Forecast Spend**	**Variance**	**Actual Spend**	
HE Discretionary	£126,509	£126,509	£0	£125,228	1
FE/HE International Discretionary	£2,694	£2,694	£0	£2,660	1
Total	**£129,203**	**£129,203**	**£0**	**£127,888**	**1**

SAAS have removed the £3,000 cap for this year allowing the College to align banding levels with FE Discretionary.

8. Further Information

- Preparations are underway for 2025-26 with the CAMS online application rollover date agreed with Inisoft for the week commencing 17 March. Online funding application will be opened to students who have been offered places on courses

for 2025-26 on Friday 21 March.

- Louise Park, Head of Student Funding recently met with Scottish Government colleagues to discuss issues with current council tax legislation and how this negatively impacts students across the sector who engage in full-time courses that are less than 24 weeks. The Scottish Government have agreed to take this forward however it was noted that this is complex, and further discussion would need to take place with key stakeholder such as Scottish Funding Council and all local authorities.

- Online Funding and Application System
    - Work is continuing to move forward with the current student records system provider (ESS) to further develop the College student funding system with the intention that we move over to the newest version for 2025-26.
    - Separate to this ESS are in the first stages of a sectoral gap analysis to support the development of a new online Student Funding application system which they hope to have available to Ayrshire College for testing November 2025.
    - Further system demonstrations of our current funding system have been agreed with New College Lanarkshire visiting on Thursday 20 February, and City of Glasgow visiting on Wednesday 26 February.

Alan Ritchie
Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure
14 February 2025

(Louise Park, Head of Student Funding)