

**Meeting of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee
to be held on Thursday 05 March 2026 at 4.00pm
via Microsoft Teams**

AGENDA

- | | | |
|--|--|----------------------|
| 1. | Welcome and Declarations of Interest | |
| 2. | Apologies | |
| 3. | Minutes from meeting held on 27 November 2025 | Paper 1 (C/P) |
| | • Action and Decision tracker | Paper 1a |
| 4. | Modern Apprenticeship Education Scotland Report | Paper 2 (R) (JM) |
| 5. | Student Association Report Q3 | Paper 3 (P) (DH/CS) |
| 6. | 2024-25 SFC Student Satisfaction and Engagement College Sector Benchmarking Report | Paper 4 (P) (SR/APs) |
| Part B – Regular reporting and monitoring | | |
| 7. | Employer Engagement and Innovation Report Q3 | Paper 5 (R) (ARo) |
| 8. | Internal Audit Report – External Communications | Paper 6 (P) (ARo) |
| 9. | Internal Audit Report – Student Voice | Paper 7 (P) (SR) |
| 10. | Student Support Funds position update | Paper 8 (R) (ARi) |
| 11. | Performance Dashboard Link to Dashboard | Verbal (SR) |
| Part C – Risk management | | |
| 12. | Strategic Risk and Opportunities Register | Paper 9 (R) (ARi) |
| Part D – For information | | |
| 13. | AOB | |

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 28 May 2026 at 4.00pm **Kilmarnock**

(C/P) Confirmed minutes will be published; (P) Papers will be published on the College website; (R) Papers will not be published for reasons of commercial sensitivity or for reasons of personal data confidentiality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 at 4pm on Thursday 27 November 2025**

Present:

Alison Sutherland	Chair LTQC
Brian Green	Vice Chair of LTQC
Jane Grant	Non-Executive Board Member
Gillian Longmuir	Non-Executive Board Member
Michael Ross	Non-Executive Board Member
Iain Shearer	Non-Executive Board Member
Chris Boyce	Elected Member, EIS/FELA
Lisa Keggans	Elected Member, UNISON
Darcie Hamilton	Elected Member, Student President
Marko Prorocic	Elected Member, Professional Services Staff
Connor Skipsey	Elected Member, Student Vice President
Janette Steel	Elected Member, Curriculum Staff
Angela Cox	Principal, Ex-officio

In attendance:

Sara Rae	Vice Principal, Skills and Enterprise
David Davidson	Vice Principal, People, Performance and Transformation
Alan Ritchie	Vice Principal, Finance and Infrastructure
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

Alison Sutherland, Chair of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee welcomed everyone to the meeting.

There were no Declarations of Interest presented.

The meeting was confirmed as quorate.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Jennifer Anderson, Assistant Principal, Skills and Innovation, Jason Currie, Non-Executive Board Member and Gayle Watson, Co-Opted LTQC Board Member.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 04 September 2025 (Paper 1) (C/P)

The minutes of the meeting held on 04 September 2025 were approved as a correct record.

Proposed: Jane Grant

Seconded: Angela Cox

3.1 Action Tracker (Paper 1a)

The Committee noted that there were no outstanding actions.

4. Learning, Teaching & Student Experience Strategy Update (Presentation)

Chris Boyce entered the meeting.

Sara Rae introduced the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy presentation and Doreen Wales and Gavin Murray updated the Committee on the following:

- Provided a progress update on the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy 2024–27, confirming objectives are generally on track.
- Highlighted improved attainment rates for care-experienced and vulnerable students, with sector-leading outcomes and ongoing focus on closing completion gaps.
- Reported significant investment in digital learning, including increased use of AI and VR, and wider engagement with virtual learning environments.
- Noted all curriculum teams' participation in professional development and peer review, with new resources and evaluation processes underway.
- Confirmed strong student engagement through established Class Ambassador models and regular feedback mechanisms, with high overall satisfaction rates.
- Outlined continued support for student wellbeing, including targeted mental health workshops and curriculum integration of health and wellbeing topics.
- Detailed employer and industry engagement in curriculum design, expansion of micro-credentials, and new partnerships to enhance job pathways.
- Reported positive destinations for leavers exceeding targets, with ongoing collaboration to further improve outcomes.
- Shared financial highlights: business engagement income and surplus ahead of forecast, with new employer partnerships and programme developments.
- Noted achievements in apprenticeship provision, external awards, and strategic developments in areas such as offshore wind and enterprise initiatives.

A copy of the presentation will be shared with the minute.

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

Darcie Hamilton and Connor Skipsey highlighted the main activities from the report and verbally updated the Committee on activities since the report submission.

The Committee noted activity in relation to:

- The launch of LGBT+ lunch clubs in Kilmarnock and Ayr campuses.
- The International Men's Day Campaign which focused on the tagline 'You okay mate?'
- The 16 Days of Action Campaign which aims to end gender-based violence.
- 'Reclaim the Night' event hosted by local authorities which the Student President will be attending as a keynote speaker.
- The Class Ambassador recruitment has resulted in a total of 269 ambassadors across the College.
- The first survey of the year has concluded with a positive response rate. The 'Pulse Survey' was introduced to reduce the lengthy survey format and avoid survey fatigue.

- The Ayrshire College Student Voice Audit has been an opportunity to showcase current processes, and the initial report has been returned without any issues.
- The Student Association are working closely with Hope by the Roadside to implement pastoral support Ayr and Kilwinning campuses.
- The Student Association have also established a partnership with Andy's Man Club.
- Angela Cox queried recent engagement with the NEXUS, specifically for Modern Apprentices. Darcie Hamilton noted a decrease in engagement however reassured members that action is being taken to encourage use of the platform. Sara Rae highlighted the opportunity for the Student Association to engage with Team Leaders within the Work-based Learning Team.

The Committee welcomed the report and noted informative updates.

6. 2025-26 Pulse Survey Analysis (Paper 3) (P)

Doreen Wales provided an overview of the 2025-26 Pulse Survey analysis.

The committee noted the following:

- The Pulse Survey was introduced this academic year as a method for collecting student feedback.
- The first survey was conducted in October over a two-week period and was promoted across multiple platforms.
- A total of 620 responses were received.
- 98% of students reported feeling welcome on their first day.
- 73% of students reported being able to apply for and get their student funding on time which has increased by 3% from AY 2024-25.
- Overall, feedback was positive.
- The next pulse survey will focus on learning, teaching, and assessment.
- Increasing response rates remains an ongoing priority.

7. Final 2025-26 Self-Evaluation and Action Plan (Paper 4) (P)

Doreen Wales provided an update on the report and the committee noted that the draft version was initially presented at the September meeting, and the action plan component of the report has since been finalised.

The completed report and action plan will be submitted to the Scottish Funding Council week commencing 1st December 2025.

The Committee were satisfied with the document pending a change to the title on the front cover of the report to reflect the following 'Ayrshire College Self Evaluation and Action Plan AY 2024-25.'

Members approved the report for submission to the board for information.

8. 2024-25 Outcomes Framework and Assurance Model Contextual Commentary and Case Studies (Verbal) (P)

Doreen Wales provided a verbal update on the 2024-25 Outcomes Framework and Assurance Model Contextual Commentary and Case Studies report.

Recent guidance from the funding council indicates that, following the quarter 4 engagement meeting with the outcome manager, the college will compile this report. The report will then be reviewed by the outcome manager and, if satisfactory, signed off by the principal, with returns expected by mid or end of January 2026.

Sara Rae will confirm whether the Outcomes Framework and Assurance Model Contextual Commentary and Case Studies require board approval prior to submission.

The Committee welcomed the update.

11. Performance Dashboard

Sara Rae provided an overview of the Performance Dashboard:

The Committee noted:

- FE full-time student retention remains on track.
- FE part-time student retention has slightly decreased however a significant number of students are starting courses in January. The current figure is only 1.5% below target.
- All other areas are on or above target.
- The current credit figure is 96,000 and the target figure for the year is 111,000.
- The credit tracker suggests that the College will achieve the credit target.

13. AOB

No other business noted.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 05 March at 4.00pm at Kilwinning Campus.

(C/P) Confirmed minutes will be published on College Website;

(P) – Paper will be published on the College Website;

® – Paper is reserved, because it contains data or information of a personal nature, which is restricted by legislation, or because it contains commercially sensitive information, and will not be published on the College Website

RESERVED ITEMS ON THE NEXT PAGE

Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee - Action and Decision Log
Meeting No 51 – 05 March 2026

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Reference	Details	Action Owner	Due Date	Action Decision	Open Complete Approved Declined
27.11.25	Strategic Risk & Opportunities Register	LTQ50: D01	The Committee reviewed and approved the Strategic Risk and Opportunities Register for consideration and approval to the Board.	NA	11.12.25	Decision	Approved

Title of Meeting: Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee

Date: 05 March 2026

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

1. Executive Summary

The Student Association team ordinarily 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 Student 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

The Student Association has undertaken a variety of work including student voice activity, student community activities, events and campaigns and projects.

Student Voice Audit

Following the completion of the Student Voice Internal Audit, we are delighted to have achieved the outcome of “Strong – no recommendations”. We’d like to extend our thanks to the auditors for their support with this exercise.

We are conscious that Student Voice is a complex area of work and will continue to strive to develop our activities and practices, particularly in relation to the Class Ambassador Programme.

Student Voice

Our Class Ambassador Programme saw good attendance in Semester 1 with lots of students engaging with us out with meeting times also, which is excellent.

This year, our monthly meetings, have been themed using the Student Learning Experience Model (designed by Sparqs) as part of the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework. This is providing rich feedback which we hope will support Curriculum with their end of year evaluations and subsequently support the development of the SEAP.

Our move to online only meetings in January (where many students may not be on campus) has proven successful, with an increase on attendance compared to last year.

Student Community

Our Clubs, Groups and Societies have continued throughout Semester One and we are pleased to note positive experiences from the students who engage in these activities. Activity for Semester 2 will remain largely the same, however we will engage with students to identify opportunities for other activities.

Our Clubs, Groups and Societies are led and supported by our Student Officers and so we’d like to take a moment to extend our thanks to them for their hard work and engagement.

Campaigns and Events

Since our last update, we have undertaken the following campaigns and events:

- International Men’s Day: We took part in these mini-market place events in collaboration with the Equality, Diversity and Performance Lead and were joined by Andy’s Man Club and our Police Scotland Liaison Officer. The theme was focussed on Men’s Mental Health and ensuring students have access to information, resources and support.
- 16 Days of Action: Our annual 16 Days of Action Campaign focussed on Digital Violence, what this is, how to spot it and how to get help and support. This was really well received by the students and led to some great conversations and awareness raising. Our thanks go to the team

from Right to Ask, Right To Tell (Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme) for taking part and promoting people's rights in relation to domestic violence.

- ReClaim the Night: College Representatives, including The Student Association Team, attended various ReClaim The Night Marches across Ayrshire. Darcie Hamilton, Student President was invited to give a speech at the closing event in East Ayrshire which was organised by our partners at The Star Centre. The speech focussed on Gender Based Violence being a problem every day of the year, and the importance of community and collective action.
- WinterFest: We had great fun engaging with students at WinterFest offering a wide variety of stall holders including lots of organisations covering mental health support and resources. We hosted a pop up photobooth, where students and their friends could dress up and get a fun picture. We also gave away free hats and scarves and chatted about what we offer at The Student Association in the way of clubs, groups and societies.

Projects

The **Student Association Funding Scheme** for Extra-Curricular and meta skills activities has been another great success this year. We ring fenced £6000 this year and were pleased to have 23 successful applications from students from a really wide variety of activities including a Chocolatier Master Class, extra-curricular trips and resources for enterprise activities. Well done to the students for their excellent applications this year. The fund is now closed and will re-open in the next academic year.

We'd like to express our thanks to the **Ayrshire College Foundation** and Ayrshire College for their generous donation of £1400 to The Student Association. These funds were earmarked for use in relation to student hardship. We chose to use the funds to purchase multi-supermarket gift vouchers valued at £25 each and have been working closely with our Engagement and Wellbeing Team to identify students who would benefit from the vouchers. The initial feedback has been excellent with students reporting that it's been a really big help and has support with being able to buy food and household essentials.

ReFreshers 2026 took place during the first week of February, and this was a great opportunity to welcome students back for Semester 2 and to introduce new students to college life. We focussed on promotion of The Nexus and letting students know about our Clubs, Groups and Societies. Our thanks go to our internal departments and external partners who were on hand providing information, resources, advice and support for students. For some entertainment, we were delighted to have secured the services of Award-Winning Magician Steven Blair. Steven provided close-up magic during the events much to the students delight.

2. Current Situation

Events and Campaigns

The Student Association has been gifted £31,853 from **The Walker Trust**. Again, we'd like to express our thanks to the College for their generosity for these monies which will go towards supporting student facing activities. After taking some time to consider these additional funds, we will be aiming spend £1853 in this academic year and will look to spend a further £10,000 per year for a further three academic years. In light of the success of the supermarket vouchers, part of this first year spend will go towards further supermarket vouchers for Semester 2 to the value of £1400 and the remainder of the year one spends will be directed towards student mental health activities.

Preparations for **LGBT History Month** have now been finalised, including a full suite of student communications. This will consist of scheduled emails, social media content and on campus promotional materials such as posters which are informative and give detail of the theme "Science and Innovation". The theme aims to highlight both historical and contemporary contributions of LGBT+ individuals within STEM fields. At the Ayr Campus, arrangements have been finalised for a drag show to take place within the Riverside building 4th floor Theatre. The event will take place on Friday 27th of February from 1pm-14:30pm, refreshments including snacks and juice will be provided for the students. The performance features Drag Queen Mina Lookgood.

For March, we are working with a team in the College including the Principal, the Equality and Diversity Performance Lead and Marketing to collaborate on an event to celebrate **International Women's Day**. The focus will be Women who are under-represented in a variety of Curriculum Areas. From the event, we hope to support the college to establish a network of women who can support each other going forward.

Further March campaign activity will include Young Carers Action Day and NeuroDiversity Celebration week. The team will then look ahead to further campaigns for nearer the end of the academic year including Mental Health Awareness Week.

We are delighted to be Sponsoring the 2026 **Ayrshire College Film Festival**. Our Sponsorship support included a donation of £500 and ongoing support for promotion of the Film Festival. The Film Festival itself is one of the creative department highlights of the year and brings together many classes, is open to all students and provides a platform to showcase student work. The Film Festival will take place in May in the historic Astoria Cinema in Ayr.

We noted in our last paper that we were working with **Hope by the Roadside** to introduce Pastoral Support for students, specifically at our Ayr and Kilwinning Campuses. These services are now up and running with the volunteers being on campus as of the first week of February. The volunteers can be identified through their Student Association branded hoodies, and we have emailed students to let them know the service is available.

Student Voice

At the end of Semester one, we issue our Class Ambassador Mid-Year Review Survey. This is an opportunity for the Class Ambassadors to tell us what has gone well for them and letting us know what could be better. Unfortunately, we have had a very low uptake for the survey this year and will therefore have some conversations around the programme at the February 2026 Meetings including encouraging Class Ambassadors to complete the survey in the hopes of getting more. However, the current limited data and verbal feedback indicates that students are largely happy with how the programme is running including training with some Ambassadors noting that they enjoyed having the opportunity to take part in something that was out with their classes.

Steering Groups

We are pleased to be working alongside colleagues in a variety of steering and working groups and taking the opportunity to represent student views. This includes Promoting Positive Behaviour where we are supporting the implementation of the smoking and vaping shelters across the campuses. We are also working closely with Estates on the Kilmarnock Car Park project, with the Sustainability Group looking at the UN Sustainability goals and integrating activity into the College. A large piece of this work will also be about capturing information on the already fantastic work going on across the College for all three pillars of sustainability (social, economic and environmental).

Student President Elections

The Student Association Advisor is currently in preparatory works for this year's Student President Nominations and Elections, with the elections scheduled for Mid-May.

3. Proposal

The Student Association will continue to focus on Student Voice and Student Community while identifying opportunities to collaborate and work in partnership with key stakeholders.

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 with a view to having a strong student voice, offering a positive student experience and student community. We continue to look at our development opportunities and engage in meaningful projects.

*Darcie Hamilton
Student President
February 2026*

*Connor Skipsey
Student Vice President
February 2026*

Title of Meeting:	Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee
Date:	5 March 2026
Title:	2024-25 SFC Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey Sector Benchmarking Report
Purpose:	The 2024-25 SFC Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey Sector Benchmarking Report is presented to the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee for discussion.
Recommendation:	The Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee is requested to note the content of the report.

1. Executive Summary

- Ayrshire College's **response rate** for **HEFT** was 48.1% (a 3% increase from the previous year). This is 6.1% lower than the sector average of 54.2%.
- For **FEFT**, the response rate was 49% (a 2% decrease from the previous year). This is 10.6% lower than the sector average of 59.6%.

The college target response rate of 50% was not met for either FEFT or HEFT.

- Ayrshire College's satisfaction rate for **HEFT** was 87% (an 8% decrease from the previous year). This is 6% lower than the sector average of 93%.
- For **FEFT**, the satisfaction rate was 95.2% (a 1.6% decrease from the previous year) This is equal to the sector average of 95.2%.

2. Proposals and Recommendations

To note the contents of the paper, discuss and make recommendations if appropriate.

3. Associated Risks

N/A

4. Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment (if applicable)

N/A

5. Publication

This paper will be published on the College website.

SSES Benchmarking Report 2024-25

The SSES survey was completed by students in March and April 2025 with Colleges submitting their collated responses in June 2025. The SFC published their sector report detailing the response rates and overall satisfaction rates for all colleges in October 2025. The Sector benchmarking toolkit which details the satisfaction rates for each question for all colleges was published in December 2025 enabling benchmarking against similar colleges for each question to take place.

Responses and Satisfaction Rates

Ayrshire College's **response rate** for **HEFT** was 48.1% (a 3% increase from the previous year). This is 6.1% lower than the sector average of 54.2%.

For **FEFT**, the response rate was 49% (a 2% decrease from the previous year). This is 10.6% lower than the sector average of 59.6%.

The satisfaction rates are based upon the responses to the statement 'Overall, I am satisfied with my college experience'.

Ayrshire College's satisfaction rate for **HEFT** was 87% against a sector average of 93%.

For **FEFT**, Ayrshire College's satisfaction rate was 95.2% which was exactly the same as the sector average.

Appendix 1 details the satisfaction levels recorded for all Ayrshire College HEFT and FEFT respondents against the sector average, for each statement in the SSES.

Summary of Analysis

When all respondents are considered Ayrshire College's satisfaction rate is above the sector average for 6 statements – Staff regularly discuss my progress with me; My time at college has helped me develop knowledge and skills for the workplace; I believe student suggestions are taken seriously; Any change in my course or teaching has been communicated well; The online learning materials for my course have helped me learn and I feel that I am part of the College community.

However, the satisfaction rate for the 4 statements - Overall, I am satisfied with my college experience; Staff encourage students to take responsibility for

their learning; I believe all students at the college are treated equally and fairly by staff and The College Student's Association influences change for the better are below the sector average.

For HEFT respondents Ayrshire College's satisfaction rate is above the sector average for 4 statements – I am able to influence learning on my course; I receive useful feedback which informs my future learning; I believe student suggestions are taken seriously and Any change in my course or teaching has been communicated well.

However, the satisfaction rates for the 6 statements - Overall, I am satisfied with my college experience; Staff regularly discuss my progress with me; My time at college has helped me develop knowledge and skills for the workplace; I believe all students at the college are treated equally and fairly by staff; The online learning materials for my course have helped me learn and The College Student's Association influences change for the better are all below sector average.

For FEFT respondents Ayrshire College's satisfaction rate is above the sector average for 8 statements - Staff regularly discuss my progress with me; I receive useful feedback which informs my future learning; The way I'm taught helps me learn; My time at college has helped me develop knowledge and skills for the workplace; I believe student suggestions are taken seriously; Any change in my course or teaching has been communicated well; The online learning materials for my course have helped me learn and I feel that I am part of the College community.

However, the satisfaction rates for the statement The College Student's Association influences change for the better is below the sector average.

These results will be shared with Heads of Learning and Skills and Professional Services Heads and Managers to inform their Team Operating and Enhancement Plans and Team Evaluation activities.

The SFC SSES for 2025/26 opens on Monday 2nd March 2026 and runs until Friday 24th April 2026 and will be accessed via the MyAC app, MyLearning and there are paper copies for students with additional support needs who are supported to complete the survey by their lecturer.

To improve response rates the Quality Enhancement Team will continuously monitor rates of return per curriculum area and proactively prompt Curriculum Quality Managers and staff to encourage students to complete the survey. The Student Association will promote the survey and the benefits of completing it via their Teams site, class ambassadors, posters, plasma screens, emails and face-to-face interactions. The SA is, once again, offering a £100 Amazon gift card to one randomly selected respondent per campus. Push notifications will be sent out weekly via the MyAC app and the LRC and Student Experience Teams will also encourage students to complete the survey via QR codes which will be displayed on the walls.

Ann Heron

Head of Quality Enhancement

25/02/26

Appendix 1 – Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey

**AYRSHIRE COLLEGE BENCHMARKED AGAINST THE SECTOR AVERAGE,
PER QUESTION**

*When Don't Know responses are discounted.

Ayrshire College Above Sector Average

Question	Ayrshire College FEFT	SECTOR FEFT	Ayrshire College HEFT	SECTOR HEFT
Overall, I am satisfied with my college experience	95.2%	95.2%	87.0%	93.0%
Staff regularly discuss my progress with me	91.0%	89.9%	84.3%	85.3%
Staff encourage students to take responsibility for their learning	97.1%	97.1%	96.9%	96.9%
I am able to influence learning on my course	92.4%	92.4%	87.2%	86.9%
I receive useful feedback which informs my future learning	93.1%	92.8%	90.9%	89.5%
The way I'm taught helps me learn	91.3%	90.8%	86.0%	86.0%
My time at college has helped me develop knowledge and skills for the workplace	94.6%	94.2%	91.1%	92.0%
I believe student suggestions are taken seriously	89.3%	87.1%	83.1%	81.8%
I believe all students at the college are treated equally and fairly by staff	89.1%	89.2%	87.8%	88.7%
Any change in my course or teaching has been communicated well	88.7%	88.3%	89.1%	83.6%
The online learning materials for my course have helped me learn	90.9%	89.6%	89.3%	90.5%
I feel that I am part of the college community	91.0%	89.1%	83.1%	83.1%
*The college Students' Association influences change for the better	91.8%	93.3%	81.8%	89.0%

Ayrshire College Equal to Sector Average

Ayrshire College Below Sector Average

Title of Meeting: Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee

Date: 5 March 2026

Subject: Internal Audit Report – External Communications - Website

Purpose: The paper provides an overview of the internal audit review of the College's external communications, most notably its website.

Recommendation: The Committee is requested to consider and note the report.

1 Executive Summary

The External Communications - Website Report reviews the external communications methods adopted by the College to liaise with key stakeholders, in particular, the College website.

The assignment formed part of the 2025-26 Internal Audit Annual Plan.

Overall Assurance

- The audit provides a **strong level of assurance** over the College's external communications methods.
- **One low-level recommendation** was raised where it is recommended that the College enhance the Website Management Procedure and Guidance document by introducing clearly defined roles, responsibilities, escalation routes, and compliance requirements, and by establishing a regular review and update process.

The College has accepted the recommendation.

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the assignment was to review the external communication methods adopted by the College to liaise with key stakeholders, in particular the College website.

The review encompassed reviewing the use of external communications channels to understand how the College engages with its stakeholders and how this shapes the Communication Framework.

Good Practices

The report identified several areas of good practice, including:

- The College has a robust Communications Framework aligned with its Strategic Ambition 2024–2027, ensuring consistent and coordinated messaging across all platforms.
- The website, launched in February 2025, is well-structured, accessible (WCAG AA compliant) and governed by a comprehensive management procedure, though this document is pending formal approval.
- Communication channels are diverse (website, social media, events), with strong stakeholder engagement and data-driven performance monitoring.
- Operational controls restrict website editing to authorised personnel, supporting content accuracy and security.

The audit provides strong assurance over the College’s external communications and website management, with minor improvements suggested to further enhance governance and operational effectiveness.

2 Associated Risks

The report provides assurance towards the following strategic risks:

Data Security and Cyber Risk

The audit specifically reviews website governance, access controls and the robustness of external communications, including technical standards, accessibility and security requirements. It highlights the importance of restricting website editing to authorised personnel and having formal procedures for incident handling and security, directly addressing the risk of unauthorised access or cyber incidents.

Reputational Risk (Communications and Stakeholder Engagement)

The audit’s purpose is to review how the College communicates with stakeholders, the effectiveness of its website and the alignment of communications with strategic objectives. It assesses whether the College’s communications framework is robust, inclusive and supports the College’s ambitions, which is central to managing reputational risk.

Compliance and Regulatory Risk

The report reviews compliance with accessibility standards, the existence of formal guidance and procedures and the need for regular review and approval of governance documents. The recommendation to formalise and regularly update the Website Management Procedure is intended to reduce compliance risk.

Strategic Alignment and Operational Effectiveness

The audit evaluates whether the communications framework and website support the College's Strategic Ambition 2024–2027, and whether feedback and analytics are used to drive continuous improvement. This supports the risk register's focus on strategic alignment and operational effectiveness.

3 Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment is not applicable to this paper, given the subject matter.

4 Publication

This paper will be published on the College website.

Alistair Rodgers
Director of Enterprise Development
5 March 2026



(Paper 4(1))

Ayrshire College

Internal Audit 2025-26

External Communications – Website
November 2025

Overall Conclusion

Strong

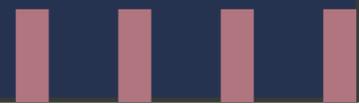


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The matters raised in this report came to our attention during the course of our audit and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all weaknesses that exist or all improvements that might be made.

This report has been prepared solely for Ayrshire College’s individual use and should not be quoted in whole or in part without prior written consent. No responsibility to any third party is accepted as the report has not been prepared, and is not intended, for any third party.

We emphasise that the responsibility for a sound system of internal control rests with management and work performed by internal audit should not be relied upon to identify all system weaknesses that may exist. Neither should internal audit be relied upon to identify all circumstances of fraud or irregularity should there be any although our audit procedures are designed so that any material irregularity has a reasonable probability of discovery. Every sound system of control may not be proof against collusive fraud. Internal audit procedures are designed to focus on areas that are considered to be of greatest risk and significance.

Overview

Purpose of review

The purpose of this assignment was to review the external communications methods adopted by Ayrshire College (the College) to liaise with key stakeholders and, in particular, the College website. This review encompassed reviewing the use of external communications channels to understand how the College engages with their stakeholders and how this shapes their communication strategy.

This review formed part of our 2025/26 Internal Audit Plan.

Scope of review

Our objectives for this review were to assess whether:

- | There was an effective external communications framework in place which operated effectively in line with defined policies and procedures.
- | The College had a detailed communications framework that was designed to allow the College to communicate effectively and meet their core objectives.
- | The College adopted a variety of methods to communicate with stakeholders removing any inherent barriers to information.
- | The communication methods adopted were suitable for the College and allowed for effective operations.
- | The College effectively gathered feedback from their key stakeholders on the methods adopted and ensured actions were raised for areas of improvement.

1 Executive summary

- | The College had robust mechanisms in place to measure their communication strategies through statistical analysis and stakeholder engagement.
- | The College website was robust to ensure sufficient information was provided to key stakeholders.
- | There were appropriate controls in place to ensure only approved personnel could post on the website.

Our approach to this assignment took the form of discussion with relevant staff, review of documentation and where appropriate sample testing.

Limitation of scope

There was no limitation of scope.

Background

Marketing and Communications Team

The College's Marketing and Communications Team (the Team) plays a central role in delivering the College's outward-facing narrative, shaping its digital presence, and reinforcing the College's reputation across campuses and the wider region.

The Team has undergone a period of transition over the past two years, with new leadership appointments providing stability and strategic direction. The recent addition of a permanent Strategic Communications and Policy Advisor has further strengthened capacity. Supported by two Marketing and Events Officers, two Marketing Assistants, and a Creative Marketing Officer, the Team has focused on embedding consistent processes, strategic alignment, and professional standards in all communications activity. Please refer to **Section 3: Observations** for further information.

Communications Framework

The College's Communications Framework provides an overarching structure that shapes and guides all aspects of communication activity. Grounded on the principles set out within the Strategic Ambition 2024–2027, the framework ensures that communication across the College, from student recruitment and stakeholder engagement to internal messaging, is consistent, coordinated, and aligned with institutional priorities. It acts as a cohesive foundation through which the College promotes its values, enhances its reputation, and supports the achievement of strategic goals.

Messaging has evolved to go beyond full-time courses for school leavers, with the Team ensuring equitable promotion across campuses and course areas. Stakeholder engagement remains central to this approach.

With a significant proportion of the student body drawn from the Ayrshire region, the College actively collaborates with Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Ayrshire, local authorities, and regional employers, ensuring that communications and website content reflect both local priorities and the College's strategic objectives. Communication is regarded as a "golden thread" woven through all strategic activity, supported by operational frameworks, 'Tone of Voice' guidance, and structured planning tools.

Website Management and Governance

The College's website is a key vehicle for strategic messaging, officially launched in February 2025 after a year-long development process. The site is supported by a formal Website Management Procedure and Guidance document that outlines governance, ownership, change categories, approval routes, service level agreements, and incident handling, as well as technical standards, accessibility, and security requirements. However, we noted that this document has not yet been formally approved. Please refer to **Section 2: Detailed recommendations** for further information.

Operationally, access is restricted to the main Team and Board Governance Advisor, the latter having responsibility around relevant Board of Management updates.

Clear accountability is demonstrated through designated page ownership and scheduled review dates. Content updates are guided by established principles and aligned with recognised accessibility standards. The current governance approach, coupled with a maturing Communications Framework, provides strong operational control while highlighting the potential benefits of further formalisation in policy, approval, and review mechanisms.

Accessibility, Social Media, and Analytics

The College places significant emphasis on accessibility and compliance, with independent testing confirming adherence to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) AA standards.

The College maintains an active presence across multiple social media channels, including Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), LinkedIn, YouTube, and Flickr, with other platforms under review for future use. Engagement is monitored through Hootsuite, with regular benchmarking against education sector averages.

1 Executive summary

Data-driven insights are embedded in the Team's approach, supported by a monthly performance dashboard, structured planning tools, and routine engagement with department heads. Initiatives such as the 3C Time, 'Collaboration, Consistency and Communication,' ensure that feedback, insights, and learning from internal and external stakeholders are integrated into ongoing communications activity.

Forward Focus and Continuous Improvement

Looking ahead, the College aims to build on recent progress by embedding the Communications Framework under stable leadership, strengthening formal approval and review processes, and expanding the use of storytelling and student-generated content.

Leveraging analytics and emerging technologies, including AI tools, will enhance insight-driven communications, while visual impact improvements, across all external platforms, are planned to increase engagement. Please refer to **Section 3: Observations** for further information.

The College also recognises the need to formalise governance documents to align operational guidance with policy-level oversight. Overall, the strengthened Team, supported by structured processes and strategic alignment with the College's ambitions, positions the institution to further enhance the effectiveness, consistency, and reach of its external communications, reinforcing its reputation and regional role.

1 Executive summary

Work undertaken

In line with each objective, we undertook the following work:

Objective 1: There is an effective external communications framework in place which operates effectively in line with defined policies and procedures.

- | We reviewed the College's Communications Framework and associated documentation to confirm governance, ownership, and alignment with wider strategic objectives.
- | We discussed implementation and oversight arrangements with key members of the Team to assess operational effectiveness.

Objective 2: The College has a detailed communications framework that is designed to allow the College to communicate effectively and meet their core objectives.

- | We assessed how the Communications Framework supports delivery of the College's Strategic Ambition 2024–2027 and other key strategies.

Objective 3: The College adopts a variety of methods to communicate with stakeholders removing any inherent barriers to information.

- | We reviewed the range of communication methods used (e.g., website, social media, newsletters, events) to confirm accessibility and reach.
- | We considered how the College's approach ensures inclusivity and engagement across different stakeholder groups.

Objective 4: The communication methods adopted are suitable for the College and allow for effective operations.

- | We evaluated the suitability of current communication channels in supporting the College's operational and strategic objectives.
- | We held discussions with Team staff to confirm how feedback and performance data inform ongoing improvements.

1 Executive summary

Objective 5: The College effectively gathers feedback from their key stakeholders on the methods adopted and ensure actions are raised for areas of improvement.

- | We assessed the mechanisms in place for gathering stakeholder feedback on communications and website performance.

Objective 6: The College have robust mechanisms in place to measure their communication strategies through statistical analysis and stakeholder engagement.

- | We examined the use of reports and analytics dashboards used by the Marketing and Communications Team to monitor engagement and reach.
- | We verified how performance information (e.g., web analytics, social media data, and benchmarking) is used to inform planning and reporting.

Objective 7: The College website is robust to ensure sufficient information is provided to key stakeholders.

- | We reviewed the structure, content, and accessibility of the College website, including compliance with WCAG AA standards.

Objective 8: There are appropriate controls in place to ensure only approved personnel can post on the website.

- | We examined website access permissions and user roles to confirm editing rights are restricted to authorised personnel.
- | We reviewed the Website Management Procedure and Guidance document to assess approval routes and change control arrangements.

Conclusion

Conclusion

Overall Conclusion: Strong

Following our review, we can provide a strong level of assurance over the College's external communication methods, the use of their website, and their associated policies, procedures, and controls. This is highlighted as we have raised several good practice points, one recommendation for improvement and an observation for consideration. Please refer to **Section 2: Detailed Recommendations** and **Section 3: Observations**, for further information.

Summary of recommendations

Grading of recommendations

	High	Medium	Low	Total
External Communications - Website	0	0	1	1

As can be seen from the above table there were no recommendations made which we have given a grading of high.

Areas of good practice

The following is a list of areas where the College is operating effectively and following good practice.

1.	The College has established a structured external Communications Framework that is clearly aligned to its Strategic Ambition 2024–2027. Strategic alignment is reinforced through the Draft Communications Plan and External Communications Procedure, which detail governance, workflows, and improvement processes.
2.	The College’s Communications Framework provides structured guidance to ensure effective message alignment with their strategic objectives. Clear roles, stakeholder engagement processes, consistent tone, and style guidelines support coordinated communication across all channels, with regular review and analytics used to monitor performance.
3.	The College employs a diverse range of communication channels, including their website, social media platforms, email, and direct engagement at events, ensuring accessibility for all stakeholders. The Team actively tailor messages for different audiences and maintain clear, consistent guidance through their 'Tone of Voice' and writing style documents. This multi-channel approach helps remove barriers to information and supports effective stakeholder engagement across the region.
4.	The College demonstrates a strategic and inclusive approach to communications, ensuring consistency and parity of promotion across all campuses and subject areas. Strong stakeholder engagement, including collaboration with local authorities, employers, and DYW Ayrshire, ensures messaging is relevant, regionally aligned, and supports effective operational delivery.

1 Executive summary

The following is a list of areas where the College is operating effectively and following good practice.

5.	The College has established a structured process to gather feedback and content from stakeholders, including news gathering forms, story plans, and briefing documents for key events. This demonstrates a proactive approach to capturing stakeholder input and ensures that feedback is systematically collected to inform communications and engagement activities. The use of standardised forms and briefing guides help maintain consistency and clarity in how stakeholder insights are captured across the College.
6.	The College has a structured approach to their website and social media analytics. A dashboard tracks monthly website metrics (views, sessions, events), while Hootsuite monitors engagement across Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter, benchmarking performance against other education sites. Social media findings inform recommendations to improve reach. Regular reporting (e.g., impact reports, social media summaries) demonstrates a consistent and data-driven marketing strategy.
7.	The College's website is well-structured and easy to navigate, with its design rigorously validated through 'Tree Testing' for optimal usability. The site meets WCAG Level AA, ensuring broad user access. Regular reviews are in place, with page owners assigned to maintain up-to-date content.
8.	The College has implemented clear operational controls to restrict website editing to authorised personnel, with defined roles for the Team and Board Secretary. The Website Management Procedure provides strong governance over content changes, approvals, and accountability through assigned page ownership and review dates. Complementary guidance, including the Social Media Policy, reinforces consistent and secure communication practices across all digital platforms.

2 Detailed recommendations

Website Management Guidance			
Ref.	Finding and Risk	Grade	Recommendation
1.	<p>The College has developed a Website Management Procedure and Guidance document that outlines key operational controls, including governance, change categories, service level agreements (SLAs), content standards, accessibility, search engine optimisation (SEO), quality assurance, security, and incident management. These elements demonstrate that appropriate controls are in place to manage website updates, ensure content accuracy, and maintain compliance.</p> <p>While we acknowledge that the document is comprehensive, it has yet to be formally approved along with a structured process for version control and periodic review.</p> <p>Our root cause analysis identified that the document has remained at a procedural level as efforts have been directed toward improving website management practices rather than the refinement of formal governance arrangements.</p> <p>Without these additional governance mechanisms, there is a risk that key procedural elements may be overlooked or inconsistently applied, particularly by staff unfamiliar with current guidance. This could lead to delays, errors, or non-compliance with accessibility and privacy standards.</p>	Low	<p>It is recommended that the College enhance the Website Management Procedure and Guidance document by introducing clearly defined roles, responsibilities, escalation routes, and compliance requirements, and by establishing a regular review and update process. Strengthening these elements will help ensure consistency, accountability, and alignment with broader governance frameworks.</p>

2 Detailed recommendations

Management response	Responsibility and implementation date
<p>The College will enhance the Website Management Procedure and Guidance document by introducing clearly defined roles, responsibilities, escalation routes and compliance requirements. An annual review and update process will be established.</p>	<p><i>Responsible Officer:</i> Marketing and Communications Manager</p> <p><i>Implementation Date:</i> 31 March 2026</p>

The following is a list of observations from our review

1.	<p>It was noted that the Team has made significant progress over the past two years in strengthening its communications framework and website management arrangements, despite experiencing a period of staff change. The recent appointment of a permanent Strategic Communications and Policy Advisor will provide appropriate expertise and greater stability to the Team. Now with an established structure and clear strategic direction, the College is well positioned to further enhance the effectiveness and consistency of its external communications. Future improvements should be balanced with recognition of the Team’s ongoing efforts and current capacity.</p>
2.	<p>It was noted that while the Team actively seek out stories and information to promote College activity, the formalised process for collecting feedback or key messages from College staff who attend external or strategic events is not used as extensively as it could be. Moreover, the routine capture of all such relevant information, including at Senior Management level, would help ensure that positive outcomes, innovative practice, and emerging opportunities are effectively amplified through the College’s communication channels.</p> <p>Any improvements or enhancements in this area would allow the College to maintain a steady flow of authentic and timely content, further supporting the Team’s emphasis on storytelling and showcasing the College’s achievements.</p>

The following is a list of observations from our review

3.	<p>It was noted that the College is actively aiming to expand its social media content to improve Instagram engagement and enhance its overall online presence. Plans include increasing video content across all external platforms, to reach a broader demographic.</p> <p>The College use student photographers to help with this content, offering practical learning opportunities and fostering student engagement. There is agreement that involving students in video content creation could further enhance this engagement. While these engagements are commendable, several challenges were identified that may be slowing progress. These include the time required to establish a dedicated student content team and the resources available to manage content creation without overburdening current Team members. While the College has a clear vision and is taking positive steps, further support or resourcing may be needed to fully realise its external communication goals without compromising current workloads. Continued development in this area presents a strong opportunity for growth and student involvement.</p>
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4 Audit arrangements

The table below details the actual dates for our fieldwork and the reporting on the audit area under review. The timescales set out below will enable us to present our final report at the next Audit & Risk Committee meeting.

Audit stage	Date
Fieldwork start	27 October 2025
Closing meeting	3 November 2025
Draft report issued	7 November 2025
Receipt of management responses	20 November 2025
Final report issued	20 November 2025
Audit & Risk Committee	2 December 2025
Number of audit days	5

5 Key personnel

We detail below our staff who undertook the review together with the College staff we spoke to during our review.

Wbg			
Partner	Graham Gillespie	Partner & Head of Internal Audit	gg@wbg.co.uk
Director	Stephen Pringle	Director of Internal Audit	sp@wbg.co.uk
Manager	Siobhan Archibald	Internal Audit Manager	sma@wbg.co.uk
Auditor	Kevin McDermott	Senior IT Auditor	kmd@wbg.co.uk
Auditor	Jessica Eberhardt	IT Auditor	jee@wbg.co.uk

Ayrshire College			
Key Contacts	Michelle Wallace	Marketing and Communications Manager	michelle.wallace@ayrshire.ac
	Alistair Rodgers	Director of Enterprise Development	alistair.rodgers@ayrshire.ac
	Stuart Millar	Head of Employer Engagement	stuart.millar@ayrshire.ac
Wbg appreciates the time provided by all the individuals involved in this review and would like to thank them for their assistance and co-operation.			

A Grading structure

For each area of review, we assign a level of assurance in accordance with the following classification:

Assurance Classification	
Strong	Controls satisfactory, no major weaknesses found, no or only minor recommendations identified.
Substantial	Controls largely satisfactory although some weaknesses identified, recommendations for improvement made.
Weak	Controls unsatisfactory and major systems weaknesses identified that require to be addressed immediately.
No	No or very limited controls in place leaving the system open to significant error or abuse, recommendations made require to be implemented immediately.

A Grading structure

For each recommendation, we assign a grading either as High, Medium, or Low priority depending on the degree of risk assessed as outlined below:

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

Purpose of review

The purpose of this assignment is to review the external communications methods adopted by Ayrshire College (the College) to liaise with key stakeholders and, in particular, the College website. This review will encompass reviewing the use of external communications channels to understand how the College engages with their stakeholders and how this shapes their communication strategy.

This review will form part of our 2025/26 Internal Audit Plan.

Scope of review

Our objectives for this review are to assess whether:

- | There is an effective external communications framework in place which operates effectively in line with defined policies and procedures.
- | The College has a detailed communications framework that is designed to allow the College to communicate effectively and meet their core objectives.
- | The College adopts a variety of methods to communicate with stakeholders removing any inherent barriers to information.
- | The communication methods adopted are suitable for the College and allows for effective operations.
- | The College effectively gathers feedback from their key stakeholders on the methods adopted and ensure actions are raised for areas of improvement.
- | The College have robust mechanisms in place to measure their communication strategies through statistical analysis and stakeholder engagement.

- | The College website is robust to ensure sufficient information is provided to key stakeholders.
- | There are appropriate controls in place to ensure only approved personnel can post on the website.

Our approach to this assignment took the form of discussion with relevant staff, review of documentation and where appropriate sample testing.

Limitation of scope

There is no limitation of scope.

Audit approach

Our approach to the review will be:

- | We will review relevant documentation including policies and procedures relating to external communications, stakeholder engagement records, and evidence of website governance controls.
- | We will perform a walkthrough of the College website to assess the availability, accessibility, and relevance of stakeholder-facing information in line with good practice expectations.
- | We will meet with key staff responsible for communications and digital engagement to understand how communication strategies are developed, deployed, and monitored. This will include exploring how stakeholder feedback is obtained and used.
- | We will review examples of communication across multiple channels (e.g. social media, newsletters, events) to assess inclusivity, accessibility, and alignment with the College's objectives.
- | We will examine access control mechanisms for the College website to verify whether appropriate restrictions are in place to ensure that only authorised individuals can post or edit content.

Potential key risks

The potential key risks associated with the area under review are:

- | Lack of a formal framework may lead to inconsistent messaging, reputational harm, or miscommunication with stakeholders.
- | Without a strategy, communications may be reactive, uncoordinated, or misaligned with strategic priorities.
- | Over-reliance on limited channels may exclude certain stakeholder groups (e.g. digitally excluded or language-diverse audiences).
- | Ineffective methods may lead to misinformed stakeholders, complaints, or operational inefficiencies.
- | Failure to gather and act on feedback may result in stakeholder disengagement and perpetuate poor communication practices.
- | Without measurement, the College cannot assess whether communications are achieving intended outcomes or reaching audiences.
- | A poorly maintained or incomplete website can lead to stakeholder confusion, lack of transparency, or reputational harm.
- | Unauthorised website updates could lead to publication of incorrect, sensitive, or reputationally damaging information.

Title of Meeting: Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee

Date: 5 March 2026

Subject: Internal Audit Report – Student Voice

Purpose: The paper provides an overview of the internal audit review of College student voice arrangements.

Recommendation: The Committee is requested to consider and note the report.

1 Executive Summary

The Student Voice review was undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of the current student voice arrangements and assess the robustness of the governance structures that support their operation and strategic development.

The assignment formed part of the 2025-26 Internal Audit Annual Plan.

Overall Assurance

- The audit provides a **strong level of assurance** over the College's student voice arrangements.
- **No recommendations** were raised.

The College has accepted the recommendation.

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this assignment was to evaluate the effectiveness of current student voice arrangements in place at the College and assess the robustness of the governance structures in supporting its operation and strategic development.

The reviewed aimed to address the following objectives:

- Assess the Adequacy of Arrangements
- Evaluate Effectiveness, Accessibility, and Inclusivity
- Determine Responsiveness and Impact
- Review Support for Representatives
- Benchmark Against Sector Standards

Good Practices

The report identified several areas of good practice including:

Multiple Channels for Student Feedback

The College uses a wide range of channels to capture student voice, including the Student Association, surveys, social media, focus groups and events. This ensures all students have effective means to communicate feedback.

Student Satisfaction as a Strategic Measure

Student satisfaction is recognised as a key strategic measure of success within the College.

Structured Student Association

The Student Association is well organised, with Class Ambassadors, Student Officers, a Student President and Vice-President acting as representatives. This structure supports effective feedback relay to the Board.

Board Engagement

The Student President and Vice-President are full members of the Board and present a Student Association Report at each quarterly meeting fostering a strong relationship between the Student Association and the Board of Management.

Accessibility and Inclusion

The College actively considers accessibility and inclusion when seeking student feedback, including developing focus groups for specific learner types such as British Sign Language users and Student Carer groups.

Responsiveness to Feedback

The College makes improvements in response to student feedback to enhance the overall student experience.

Comprehensive Training for Representatives

Student Representatives at all levels receive thorough training, which encourages strong communication and effective performance in their roles.

Effective Benchmarking

The College benchmarks its student surveys against sector averages and participates in networking groups to identify and adopt good practices within the sector.

2 Associated Risks

The report provides assurance towards the following strategic risks:

Student Experience and Engagement Risks

The audit provides assurance that the College has robust arrangements for capturing, acting on and benchmarking student feedback. This directly mitigates risks related to poor

student engagement, ineffective feedback mechanisms and failure to act on student concerns, which could negatively impact student satisfaction and reputation.

Curriculum Relevance and Quality Risks

By confirming that student feedback is systematically gathered and used to inform improvements, the audit supports the College's ability to align curriculum activity with current and future skills requirements and social/economic needs. This addresses strategic risks arising from a curriculum that does not meet sector or employer expectations.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Risks

The audit highlights inclusive and accessible feedback mechanisms, such as focus groups for specific learner types (e.g., BSL users, carers). This provides assurance against risks of exclusion or lack of representation in decision-making processes.

Governance and Reputation Risks

The report confirms strong governance structures, with student representatives actively involved in Board and committee processes. This mitigates the risks of weak governance, a lack of transparency, and reputational damage from failing to respond to student needs.

Sector Benchmarking and Continuous Improvement Risks

Assurance is provided that the College benchmarks its practices against sector standards and seeks opportunities for innovation, addressing risks of falling behind sector best practice or missing opportunities for enhancement.

3 Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment is not applicable to this paper, given the subject matter.

4 Publication

This paper will be published on the College website.

Sara Rae
Vice Principal - Skills and Enterprise
5 March 2026



(Paper 5(1))

Ayrshire College

Internal Audit 2025-26

Student Voice
November 2025

Overall Conclusion

Strong



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The matters raised in this report came to our attention during the course of our audit and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all weaknesses that exist or all improvements that might be made.

This report has been prepared solely for Ayrshire College’s individual use and should not be quoted in whole or in part without prior written consent. No responsibility to any third party is accepted as the report has not been prepared, and is not intended, for any third party.

We emphasise that the responsibility for a sound system of internal control rests with management and work performed by internal audit should not be relied upon to identify all system weaknesses that may exist. Neither should internal audit be relied upon to identify all circumstances of fraud or irregularity should there be any although our audit procedures are designed so that any material irregularity has a reasonable probability of discovery. Every sound system of control may not be proof against collusive fraud. Internal audit procedures are designed to focus on areas that are considered to be of greatest risk and significance.



Overview

Purpose of review

The purpose of this assignment was to evaluate the effectiveness of current student voice arrangements in place at the College and assess the robustness of the governance structures in supporting its operation and strategic development.

This review formed part of our 2025/26 Internal Audit Annual Plan.

Scope of review

Our objectives for this review were to assess:

- | The adequacy of the arrangements that the College has in place to capture student voice, and the alignment of these arrangements to the College's objectives.
- | The effectiveness, accessibility, and inclusivity of mechanisms in place for capturing and engaging with student feedback across all areas of the College
- | The extent to which student feedback is acted upon in a timely and transparent manner, and to assess the impact of resulting actions on the student experience.
- | The training, support, and resources provided to student representatives and staff involved in student voice processes, confirming they are sufficient to enable effective participation and engagement.
- | Whether the College benchmarks current student voice practices against sector expectations and good practice, identifying areas for enhancement and opportunities for innovation.

1 Executive summary

Our approach to this assignment took the form of discussion with relevant staff, review of documentation and where appropriate sample testing.

Limitation of scope

There was no limitation of scope.

Background

Student Association and Student Representatives

One of the College's keyways in which it can capture and encourage the student voice is through a dedicated Student Association. Each student at the College is automatically enrolled into the Student Association. The Student Association works to support and represent all College students. The College's Student Association is governed by a constitution. This sets out the aims and objectives of the Student Association, its powers, membership, finance and governance. It sets out the arrangements for the structure of the Student Association.

The Student Association is democratically run, with a Student President and Vice-President elected each academic year. Each can serve a maximum of two years where both are full time positions. The Student President and Vice-President are supported by the Student Association Advisor. The Student Association Advisor collaborates with the Student President and Vice-President, and the Executive Committee, providing the resources they need to succeed. The Student Association Advisor works as a link between the College and the Student Association, helping to implement feedback, starting clubs, organising fundraising events, and meeting with student representatives.

As well as the Student President and Vice-President, the Association includes Class Ambassadors and Student Officers. Class Ambassadors function as student representatives across the College. These are volunteer students who are recruited based on interest.

The College's Class Ambassadors work to pass on any feedback their class has on the course, curriculum and other elements of College life. Each Class Ambassador goes through a two-stage training process, which is facilitated by the external organisation SPARQS (Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland). Monthly Class Ambassador meetings are held, where feedback can formally be relayed to the College.

Student Officers work to represent key-areas, rather than representing specific classes. Again, these are volunteer student positions and roles are filled based on student interest, where not every role is filled in every term. Examples include:

- | Online Community Officer
- | Woman's Officer

1 Executive summary

| Wellbeing Officer.

Board and Committee Membership and Reporting

The Student President and Vice-President are both members of the Board and sit on the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (LTQC) & People, Infrastructure and Finance Committee. This provides them with a direct opportunity to put student feedback to the Board and Committees. Both the Board and the Committees meet quarterly.

The Student President prepares a Student Association report that goes to each Board and Committee meeting. These reports provide an update to the Board of the Student Association's activities. These follow a standard format of background, current situation, proposals (if any), resource implications, consultation and conclusion. We reviewed the four most recent Board and LTQC meetings and found that the Student Association report was reviewed and discussed in each case.

Training and Resources

The College ensures that student representatives are provided with training and resources to support them completing their role. The College works closely with SPARQS (student partnerships in quality Scotland) in order to equip their student representatives with sufficient training. Frequent training sessions are attended by the Student President and Vice-President, with other sessions focussed on Class Ambassadors and Student Officers. The College also ensures that student representatives are provided with supporting materials prepared by SPARQS, and other external organisations such as NUS.

Surveys and Focus Groups

The College performs a number of surveys throughout the year as a means of capturing the student voice. Examples of these include the First Impressions survey at the beginning of the year, regular Pulse Surveys throughout the year and the annual SFC Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey. Survey results are reviewed by the LTQC and compared with scores across the sector where possible.

1 Executive summary

The College also run a number of focus groups to gather student feedback on specific areas. These include general student feedback groups, specific focus groups for courses and their content, and focus groups aimed at certain types of learners, such as British Sign-Language (BSL) users or Student Carer groups. This allows students to provide feedback in a comfortable environment alongside their peers.

1 Executive summary

Work Undertaken

In line with our objectives, we undertook the following work:

Objective 1. Assess the adequacy of the arrangements that the College has in place to capture Student Voice, and the alignment of these arrangements to the College's objectives.

- | We discussed the current arrangements in place for capturing student voice with the Head of Quality Enhancement; the Assistant Principal Student Experience and Quality Enhancement; and the Student Association Advisor.
- | We also discussed the current arrangements in place with the Student President to confirm their understanding aligned with College requirements.
- | We reviewed evidence to confirm that the arrangements described reflect the College's practices.

Objective 2. Evaluate the effectiveness, accessibility, and inclusivity of mechanisms in place for capturing and engaging with student feedback across all areas of the College.

- | We assessed the College's arrangements for capturing student voice to confirm these were suitable and cohesive to the effective capture of student feedback.
- | We assessed whether the feedback channels used by the College were accessible and inclusive to all students, and whether the College sufficiently considers these factors in their capture of the student voice.

Objective 3. Determine the extent to which student feedback is acted upon in a timely and transparent manner, and to assess the impact of resulting actions on the student experience.

- | We held discussions with the Head of Quality Enhancement; the Assistant Principal Student Experience and Quality Enhancement; the Student Association Advisor; and the Student President to identify examples of how student feedback had shaped changes at the College.
- | We reviewed evidence to confirm that the College had made improvements in response to student feedback for these examples.
- | We held discussions with the Student President to understand their opinion of the College's response to student feedback.

1 Executive summary

Objective 4. Review the training, support, and resources provided to student representatives and staff involved in Student Voice processes, confirming they are sufficient to enable effective participation and engagement.

- | We held discussions with the Head of Quality Enhancement; the Assistant Principal Student Experience and Quality Enhancement; the Student Association Advisor; and the Student President to understand the training and support provided to the College's student representatives.
- | We reviewed the training materials provided to student representatives to assess the appropriateness and quality of training provided.

Objective 5. Benchmark current Student Voice practices against sector expectations and good practice, identifying areas for enhancement and opportunities for innovation.

- | We reviewed evidence of the College's benchmarking of student feedback ratings with the sector's average ratings.
- | We reviewed the College's benchmarking results, noting that the College performs better than the sector average in 25 of 26 areas covered in the student satisfaction survey.

Conclusion

Overall conclusion

Overall Conclusion: Strong

We can provide a strong level of assurance over the arrangements in place surrounding the College's ability to effectively capture student voice and appropriately act upon feedback raised. This is further emphasised where several good practice points have been identified and no recommendations for improvement have been raised.

Summary of recommendations

Grading of recommendations

	High	Medium	Low	Total
Student Voice	0	0	0	0

As can be seen from the above table there were no recommendations made.

1 Executive summary

Areas of good practice

The following is a list of areas where the College is operating effectively and following good practice.	
1.	The College have a number of effective channels for capturing student voice and feedback, including their Student Association, surveys, social media, focus groups and events. This wide range of channels ensures all students have effective means of communicating feedback.
2.	The College recognises that student satisfaction is a key strategic measure of success.
3.	The Student Association is well structured and encourages the effective relaying of feedback to the Board. This consists of Class Ambassadors, Student Officers, the Student President and Student Vice-President acting as student representatives.
4.	The Student President and Vice-President are both full standing members of the Board and present a Student Association Report at each of their quarterly meetings. This promotes a strong relationship between the Student Association and the Board of Management and its sub-committees.
5.	The College ensures that accessibility and inclusion is considered when seeking student feedback, to encourage feedback from as many students as possible. This includes the development of focus groups aimed at specific types of learners, such as the BSL or Student Carer/Care Experienced groups.
6.	The College works to make improvements in response to student feedback in order to enhance the overall student experience.

1 Executive summary

The following is a list of areas where the College is operating effectively and following good practice.	
7.	The College provides comprehensive training to Student Representatives of all levels, encouraging the strong communication of feedback and effective performance in these roles.
8.	<p>The College performs effective benchmarking of their student surveys, comparing the feedback received against sector averages.</p> <p>The College's Student Association President and Vice-President are also members of networking groups, allowing the College to identify good practice within the sector.</p>

2 Audit arrangements

The table below details the actual dates for our fieldwork and the reporting on the audit area under review. The timescales set out below will enable us to present our final report at the next Audit & Risk Committee meeting.

Audit stage	Date
Fieldwork start	28 October 2025
Closing meeting	6 November 2025
Draft report issued	7 November 2025
Receipt of management responses	17 November 2025
Final report issued	18 November 2025
Audit & Risk Committee	2 December 2025
Number of audit days	5

3 Key personnel

We detail below our staff who undertook the review together with the College staff we spoke to during our review.

Wbg			
Partner	Graham Gillespie	Partner & Head of Internal Audit	gg@wbg.co.uk
Director	Stephen Pringle	Director of Internal Audit	sp@wbg.co.uk
Manager	Siobhan Archibald	Internal Audit Manager	sma@wbg.co.uk
Auditor	CJ Scott	Internal Audit Assistant Manager	cjs@wbg.co.uk

Ayrshire College			
Key Contacts:	Doreen Wales	Assistant Principal Student Experience and Quality Enhancement	doreen.wales@ayrshire.ac.uk
	Linda Corbett	Student Association Advisor	linda.corbett@ayrshire.ac.uk
	Ann Heron	Head of Quality Enhancement	Ann.Heron@ayrshire.ac.uk
Wbg appreciates the time provided by all the individuals involved in this review and would like to thank them for their assistance and co-operation.			

A Grading structure

For each area of review, we assign a level of assurance in accordance with the following classification:

Assurance Classification	
Strong	Controls satisfactory, no major weaknesses found, no or only minor recommendations identified.
Substantial	Controls largely satisfactory although some weaknesses identified, recommendations for improvement made.
Weak	Controls unsatisfactory and major systems weaknesses identified that require to be addressed immediately.
No	No or very limited controls in place leaving the system open to significant error or abuse, recommendations made require to be implemented immediately.

A Grading structure

For each recommendation, we assign a grading either as High, Medium, or Low priority depending on the degree of risk assessed as outlined below:

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

Purpose of review

The purpose of this assignment is to evaluate the effectiveness of current student voice arrangements in place at the College and assess the robustness of the governance structures in supporting its operation and strategic development.

Scope of review

Our objectives for this review are to assess:

- | The adequacy of the arrangements that the College has in place to capture student voice, and the alignment of these arrangements to the College's objectives.
- | The effectiveness, accessibility, and inclusivity of mechanisms in place for capturing and engaging with student feedback across all areas of the College
- | The extent to which student feedback is acted upon in a timely and transparent manner, and to assess the impact of resulting actions on the student experience.
- | The training, support, and resources provided to student representatives and staff involved in student voice processes, confirming they are sufficient to enable effective participation and engagement.
- | Whether the College benchmark current student voice practices against sector expectations and good practice, identifying areas for enhancement and opportunities for innovation.

Our approach to this assignment took the form of discussion with relevant staff, review of documentation and where appropriate sample testing.

Limitation of scope

There is no limitation of scope.

Audit approach

Our approach to the review will be:

- | Reviewing the relevant policies and procedures in place surrounding providing a positive experience to the students.
- | Discussions with management to determine the mechanisms in place for ensuring that the College is delivering a positive experience to its students. We shall evaluate the effectiveness of these mechanisms in practice.
- | Evaluating the College's process for promoting positive student behaviours. We shall assess these for appropriateness and to ensure these are fit for purpose. We shall also consider the arrangements in place if students do not comply with the expected behaviours.
- | Evaluating the College's methods in place to promote student attendance. We shall assess this for appropriateness and to ensure these are fit for purpose and ensure that the College has steps in place for early engagement with any students whose attendance is poor or erratic.
- | Considering the level of impact which feedback has had by assessing any consequential action taken by the Senior Management.

Potential key risks

The potential key risks associated with the area under review are:

- | The College may not have adequate Student Voice Arrangements.
- | The effectiveness, accessibility, and inclusivity of the College's mechanisms in place for capturing and engaging with student feedback may not be sufficient.
- | Student feedback may not be acted upon in a timely and transparent manner, or the resulting actions do not contribute to the student experience.
- | The training, support, and resources provided to student representatives and staff involved in Student Voice processes may not be sufficient to enable effective participation and engagement.
- | Student Voice practices may not be in line with sector expectations and good practice or may not sufficiently identify areas for enhancement or opportunities for innovation.