

REGIONAL BOARD REPORT REPORT

Subject: College Self-evaluation 2018/19	Purpose: For Approval <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> For Information <input type="checkbox"/>
Prepared by: J Robertson	Date: 14 October 2019
Purpose: To inform the Board of findings from Borders College self-evaluation of academic year 2018/19	
Linked to Strategic Goal 3: Provide a high quality College experience.	
<p>The College reports to Board annually on the findings from our self-evaluation. The Curriculum and Quality Committee have received the full report on 17 October 2019 and the Board's attention is drawn to the Executive Summary and Grading.</p> <p>The attached report includes the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction: includes information on external reporting changes Executive Summary of self-evaluation: by each of seven Quality Indicators from Education Scotland's quality framework, <i>How good is our college?</i>; these were the indicators Education Scotland identified for focus at this time last year Grading: internal, arising out of findings from the self-evaluation exercise <p>The Appendices are provided to the Board for information</p>	
Recommendation: To approve the findings of the report based on the college self-evaluation exercise for 2018/19	
Previous Committee Approvals: Report and appendices discussed at CQC on 17 October 2019	
For publication <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For publication with redactions <input type="checkbox"/>
Not for publication <input type="checkbox"/>	

Report on College Self-evaluation for CQC

Introduction

The College reports to Board Annually on the findings from our self-evaluation and on our enhancement plan. Some information on how we approach this is included in Appendix 1, Methodology.

External Reporting changes

Last year SFC required colleges to complete a full Self-evaluation and Enhancement Plan process for all 12 Quality Indicators (QIs) from How Good is Our College? (HGIOC?). In addition to our detailed internal working documents, this culminated in two reports for publication: a Self-evaluation Report, and an Enhancement Plan Report, on seven specific QIs that the SFC required colleges to focus on.

This year whilst we have not been required to conduct a full process, we have chosen to continue to self-evaluate and enhancement plan annually internally, so that we can continue to monitor progress year on year.

However, the external reporting and review process is not as extensive. SFC requires us to submit a self-evaluative report (5-10 pages) by 31 October, for which guidance is imminent; SFC and Education Scotland have notified us of a 2-day Progress Visit to take place in March for which we will be required to demonstrate progress against our enhancement plan.

Executive Summary of Self-evaluation

Findings from self-evaluation are summarised below against the seven QIs referred to above, and with reference to Education Scotland's grading advice, an extract of which is available at Appendix 2. The commentary focusses on changes from the previous year. More detail on the self-evaluation findings is available in the Evaluative Report at Appendix 3.

QI 1.1 Governance and Leadership of change

The key strengths remain, enhanced by: the Middle Management and Talent Development Programmes' focus on Vision, Values and Behaviours throughout; further improved partnership working between BCSA and the Board; and systematic target-setting being addressed, which was previously an area for development. There are very few areas for development; these arise out of the Staff Engagement Survey and the Annual Learner Survey.

QI 1.4 Evaluation leading to improvement

Key strengths have been further enhanced by: positive feedback from external reviews (SCQF; Modern Apprenticeships); the introduction of Learning and Teaching Observations and improvement actions arising from these; and segmented data analysis of the Annual Learner Survey responses to inform more focussed improvement actions. Several previous areas for development have been addressed, with the introduction of the Student Experience Committee to ensure a more structured approach to incorporating learner voice

to the improvement process and Quality Check Points to target the use of data at a course level and use it consistently to bring about improvement. Progress has been made concerning availability of and access to well-analysed data, however on balance, this remains an area for development.

QI 2.2 Curriculum

There are some additional strengths around responsiveness to learner needs in delivery methods, improved longer term planning and improving gender imbalance. However, whilst actions have been taken to address some previously identified areas for development they have not yet demonstrated impact. For example, the Student Experience Committee and student representative structure has been put in place and is improving the feedback loop, alongside developments in Tracking and Monitoring, however these are in early stages and have yet to fully embed. Similarly, although some work has been done to improve understanding of core skills, it has been observed that this continues to be an area for development, and an Enterprise Officer has been appointed for 2019/20 to support students to enhance their entrepreneurial and enterprise skills.

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

There are several additional or enhanced strengths arising out of the appointments of new posts: the influence of the Learning and Teaching Digital Facilitator on sharing of and confidence in using digital approaches; the application of learning from observations carried out by the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Specialists. In addition, initiatives have been put in place to improve the use of data in monitoring attendance and achievement. These are still in early stages, and signs of progress are encouraging, however they remain areas for development for measurable impact. Additional posts of Independent learning Specialists have been created for 2019/20.

QI 2.4 Services to Support learning

Key strengths in terms of general information to prospective students and those with particular needs have been reinforced. These have been supported by significant improvements to the Admissions process, both front facing and system, and review of Induction; early indications of impact are promising for 2019/20. Whilst use of key performance indicators and data is improving, it is inconsistent and remains an area for development. Some students are harder to reach therefore their voice may not be heard as clearly and they may find it harder to access some services.

QI 3.1 Wellbeing, equality and inclusion

Work to promote the general duties has continued with particular focus on Mental Health, to raise awareness, increase understanding and focus attention, with a range of activities also taking place in relation to other protected characteristics. Early identification and provision of or signposting to support as appropriate has remained a priority. We do not consistently use data well to demonstrate cause and effect. There have been initial positive changes in gender imbalance in some areas. However, there is a related area for development as these are very small changes across a range of subjects across portfolios;

this does not yet demonstrate a trend and in some areas, no change is yet evident. We do not consistently use data well to demonstrate cause and effect.

QI 3.2 Equity, attainment and achievement for all learners

The vast majority of learners achieve well and progress successfully. Overall success rates are above sector average improving significantly for HE part time, which at 85.5% is 5.1% above. However, while most FE part time students achieve and progress (77.3%) it demonstrates a reducing trend since 2016/17. Courses for concern identified have responded to actions taken and in all cases improved learner success. For some groups of students, achievement and attainment rates are lower than for the general College population. For example, learner success for SIMD1 students is high except for FE full time which remains consistently low (58%). Success for care experienced learners, whilst improving, at 50% across all enrolments remains lower than for other students. Success rates for part time LGBT+ are higher than for full time LGBT+ students.

Grading

Last year SFC required colleges to grade their performance based on self-evaluations, against the high-level principles within HGIOC? SFC was content to publish our grades, regarding them as conforming to Education Scotland's grading parameters, and reflecting our performance as described in our reports.

We have reviewed those grades internally this year (see below). Our self-evaluation demonstrates that for Key Principle 1 and 3 we have enhanced existing strengths and there a few areas for improvement. For QI2, we have also enhanced existing strengths and have made significant progress by reviewing and improving our approaches to curriculum planning and review, and to learning, teaching and assessment. However, these remain in the early stages of implementation or are in place and being rolled out for 2019/20, therefore the outcomes and impacts are yet to be fully realised in results. For these reasons, our self-assessment is that performance within Key Principle 2 has improved within the Good grade, but is not yet at the level of Very Good.

<i>Key Principle</i>	<i>2017/18 Grade</i>	<i>2018/19 Grade</i>
3. Outcomes and Impact: How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our learners? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Wellbeing, equality and inclusion 3.2 Equity, attainment and achievement for all learners 	Very Good	Very Good
2. Delivery of learning and services to support learning: How good is the quality of our provision and services we deliver? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.2 Curriculum 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment 2.4 Services to support learning 	Good	Good
1. Leadership and quality culture: How good is our leadership and approach to improvement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Governance and leadership of change 1.4 Evaluation leading to improvement 	Very Good	Very Good

Methodology

Appendix 1

Education Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) published jointly the guidance on quality assurance and enhancement - *How good is our college? (HGIOC?)*, which sets out the requirements placed upon colleges to evaluate the quality of our leadership, practice and outcomes.

At Borders College we have a longstanding practice of using the Education Scotland quality indicators (QI) as the basis for our quality systems and approach to service improvement; we use a self-evaluation toolkit based on the QIs, including separate self-evaluation templates for each of our departments and portfolios.

Departments and portfolios incorporate feedback from staff, students, employers and other stakeholders through meetings, surveys and other activities during the year, into their self-evaluation and enhancement planning.

We work closely with Borders College Students' Association (BCSA) to discuss and plan activities for improvement. Many College committees have places for student and staff representation, and the Student Engagement Committee is integral to this, so evaluation and improvement is an ongoing activity. Both BCSA and the Regional Boards' self-evaluation process are aligned with *HGIOC?*

From the department and portfolio self-evaluations and enhancement plans, we build a whole-organisation self-evaluation and enhancement plan for improvement. We hold a development day, which involves Senior Leadership Team and BCSA, for review and challenge. This results in a detailed internal analysis and working action plan.

The Executive Team monitors progress through the year against actions and targets identified through Management Performance Reviews.

Data

In general, the figures quoted previously in the self-evaluation, enhancement planning and Regional Outcome Agreement processes are not finalised figures from College systems, in the sense that they are unaudited figures, which have still to go through the SFC's FES checking and submission process.

This year, the slightly reduced reporting requirements have enabled some capacity to await and use the exact figures audited and submitted to SFC. The logic behind this is that it will enable our 3-year ambitions in the Regional Outcome agreement to be more sensitive. However, this will be kept under review.

It should be noted that, in the college context, when a grading is applied, it is for the **whole area** and not for individual quality indicators (QIs), or themes. Individual QIs or themes should not be graded. Bear in mind that awarding levels using a quality scale will always be more of a professional skill than a technical process. However, the following general guidelines should be consistently applied:

- An evaluation of **excellent** means that this aspect of the college's work is outstanding with excellent practice worthy of dissemination. The experiences and achievements of all learners are of a very high quality. An evaluation of excellent represents an outstanding standard of provision which exemplifies very best practice, based on achieving equity and inclusion and a deep professional understanding which is being shared beyond the college to support system-wide improvement. It implies that very high-levels of performance are sustainable and will be maintained.
- An evaluation of **very good** means that there are major strengths in this aspect of the college's work. There are very few areas for improvement and any that do exist do not significantly diminish learners' experiences. An evaluation of very good represents a high standard of provision for all learners and is a standard that should be achievable by all. There is an expectation that the college will make continued use of self-evaluation to plan further improvements and will work towards improving provision and performance to excellent.
- An evaluation of **good** means that there are important strengths within the college's work, yet there remains some aspects which require improvement. The strengths have a significantly positive impact on almost all learners. The quality of learners' experiences is diminished in some way by aspects in which improvement is required. It implies that the college should seek to improve further the areas of important strength, and also take action to address the areas for improvement.
- An evaluation of **satisfactory** means that strengths within this aspect of the college's work just outweigh the weaknesses. It indicates that learners have access to a basic level of provision. It represents a standard where the strengths have a positive impact on learners' experiences. While the weaknesses will not be important enough to have a substantially adverse impact, they do constrain the overall quality of learners' experiences. The college needs to take action to address areas of weakness by building on its strengths.
- An evaluation of **weak** means there are important weaknesses within this aspect of the college's work. While there may be some strengths, the important weaknesses, either individually or collectively, are sufficient to diminish learners' experiences in substantial ways. It implies the need for prompt, structured and planned action on the part of the college.
- An evaluation of **unsatisfactory** means there are major weaknesses in this aspect of the college's work which require immediate remedial action. Learners' experiences are at risk in significant respects. In almost all cases, this will require support from senior managers in planning and carrying out the necessary actions to effect improvement. This will usually involve working alongside agencies who can provide support, or with staff in other colleges.

Leadership and Quality Culture

QI 1.1 Governance and Leadership of change

Areas of positive practice

- The Regional Board has a strong focus on learner success. College Strategies are carefully planned and developed to link with its strategic plan (Our Strategy – Towards 2020) and with national priorities. The Board agrees Annual Priorities in pursuit of achieving the strategic goals set out in the strategic plan. It tasks the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) with achieving these priorities and monitors progress towards achievement regularly. The Regional Outcome Agreement includes a detailed analysis of the local and national operating environment that informs its outcomes and outputs.
- The Board has a systematic approach to assuring itself that evaluation and enhancement plans are accurate, with progress reported and reviewed periodically through scheduled reporting by the executive team to the full Board and the Curriculum & Quality Committee, which provides effective scrutiny and challenge to senior managers to improve the services to students and their outcomes.
- The Regional Board engage well with BCSA, appointing a Board Mentor to support student representatives. The student president and VP Education are active members of the Board and other relevant committees. A Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) between the college and BCSA sets out clear, shared priorities based around improving outcomes for learners. College senior managers work closely with BCSA to create shared aims, clearly articulated in the SPA and the strategic plan. Collaborative work ensures that ambitions within the partnership agreement are met.
- Regional Board members engage well with staff and students through their Learning for Leading scheme. This improves Board members' understanding of the College's operation and the needs of their students. At the conclusion of visits, members are required to submit a report on their activity, impressions and identification of areas of concern, which are followed up.
- The College reflects its commitment to champion equality and diversity in its aims and values, in its plans and strategy e.g. Corporate Parenting Plan, Equality Outcomes, Gender Action Plan and Access and Inclusion Strategy. This ensures that tackling gender imbalance and poorer outcomes for disadvantaged groups is a high priority.
- The College's vision, aims and values are embedded in staff development, planning and review to promote an inclusive and engaged workforce. The recruitment process includes values and behaviours questions and all staff are involved in an annual Staff Performance and Development Review (SPDR), which embeds values and behaviours as a key measure to enhance the learning and teaching environment for students. SLT has continued its Leadership Development Programme which has focused on values and behaviours and embedding these across all areas of work, and also incorporated these into the Middle Management and Talent Development Programmes which have run through the year.
- BCSA has continued to work very closely with the student support staff to extend the range and improve the quality of the support services for students, expanding the range of partner organisations, facilitating student drop ins, development and implementation of HelpU and the online Wellbeing Point.

- Managers collaborate well with the BCSA in the design and implementation of shared provision and joint campaigns, supporting on-campus events, initiatives and campaigns designed to meet students' welfare and wellbeing needs. The Student Experience Committee supported by the student representative system for collecting views and information from students, provides a positive forum for well-structured engagement for improvement, between students and staff. Managers are proactive in seeking the views of BCSA when considering further changes and developments to ensure that student opinions are taken into account and changes for the better brought forward by students are implemented e.g. the Aspire Fund, Alumni Association.
- DYW is embedded in progression pathways for learners across a range of programmes and levels. Approvals process and panels incorporate work experience.
- Systematic and SMART target setting for individuals and teams has been rolled out through e.g. SPDR and Management Performance Review Processes to ensure that targets are stretching whilst realistic.

Areas for development

- Some feedback from the Staff Engagement Survey indicates that some staff feel the Vision and steps or journey to achieve the Vision, are not clearly communicated.
- The proportion of participants engaging with the Annual Learner Survey overall (46%) was consistent with the previous year but highlighted the difficulty of engaging part-time and distance learning students. Inconsistency across areas, may inhibit our ability to fully understand the range of views of college learners, including other minority/hard to reach groups, on learning and teaching and other aspects, and therefore to target actions appropriately.

QI 1.4 Evaluation leading to improvement

Areas of positive practice

- There are a range of internal process review mechanisms which facilitate the College in responding to both internal and external drivers for change e.g. Admissions Review, Enrolment Committee, Digital Development Group, each of which involves student representatives. Additional reviews are carried out periodically e.g. Meetings Review, to ensure they remain effective.
- The College participates in external reviews and uses the learning to improve its approaches. This year SCQF conducted a review of our credit-rated provision and Education Scotland and SDS conducted a review of our Modern Apprenticeship provision; the reports for both were extremely positive.
- The College has good, longstanding and close working relationships with its community planning partners. Regional Outcome Agreement plans are shared with the Community Planning Partnership and college data and plans have helped shape the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP). These close working relationships are helping to improve outcomes for school leavers with all contributing to the high percentage in positive destinations.
- The College has engaged in strategic projects such as Borderlands and the South of Scotland Economic Partnership (SOSPEP) to jointly address the needs of the Region. Managers maintain successful partnerships with local employers and other public sector bodies to review and evaluate provision to adapt and improve both the curriculum offer to meet local and national needs.

- Data-sharing arrangements with local strategic partners such as SDS, allows for better analysis of the operating environment and an improved impact assessment of the College's contribution.
- School partnership work is led well by senior managers and involves all secondary schools in the region. This continues to contribute to the curriculum for senior phase pupils significantly changing in line with Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), increasing the number of vocational qualifications on offer and the number of pupils involved. The College continues to play a major role in the DYW industry group allowing local employers to become more involved in supporting young people into work experience and employment.
- Managers complete detailed analysis of learner outcomes. The focus is on withdrawal rates and learner success, looking at trends and in-year figures. This includes identifying courses for concern and targeted support for the 10 lowest performing courses. Analysis includes individual programme review and internal reviews, and leads to detailed plans for improvement. Courses for praise are highlighted with good practice shared throughout the portfolio areas, to encourage improvement. Regular Quality Check Points are now formally included in the agendas of course team meetings with analysis of relevant data at key points through the year.
- Learning and Teaching Observations successfully introduced during the session enable observed teaching staff to reflect on their practice in a structured manner. Discussion with learners is integral to the Observation process and their input supports constructive feedback to teaching staff. In addition, the observers use the data to identify areas for improvement more generally and in partnership with Learning & Teaching Committee, agree actions to bring about improvement e.g. training.
- The college uses a range of formal and informal methods, including the Annual Learner Feedback survey, which provide Service Managers with critical sources of information and evaluation to enable monitoring of service delivery and planning for improvements. The College sets targets in the Annual Learner Survey, in terms of student satisfaction with services and learning experience with detailed action plans put in place where satisfaction levels fall below the benchmark. Development of segmented data analysis conducted by the newly created Data Analyst post enables staff to ensure they take more focussed actions as appropriate in their areas. Staff in most areas are involved in assessing performance and setting plans for improvements.
- The successful implementation of the Student Engagement Committee has provided a well-structured replacement for Faculty Councils, ensuring that the learner voice is consistently heard and utilised to inform improvements.

Areas for Development

- The availability and access to well-analysed data is improving following the new appointment of a Data Analyst. It has been previously identified that insufficient clarity of purpose of existing reports may reduce user confidence in the robustness of the data and the accuracy of the reports, therefore a review is in progress, to improve user knowledge and confidence.

Delivery of learning and services to support learning

QI 2.2 Curriculum

Areas of positive practice

- Curriculum has been strongly influenced by national policy whilst designed to meet local need and to create opportunities for progression. In many subject areas, progression routes to SCQF Level 7 are available in college or through partnership with HEIs. The College is a part of the SOSEP 'Get that Degree' project to increase local learning opportunities at SCQF Level 8. Almost all subject areas have designed their curriculum to include entry-level programmes ensuring a wide access to a range of opportunities for applicants.
- Most subject areas have clear progression routes through the HNC/HND. Where there are progression opportunities to higher education these are being maximised to enable more students to progress to university (18/19 45 offers accepted, 16 with advanced standing; 11 offers made for Nursing through SWAP). Portfolios review the curriculum offer introducing change where necessary to introduce clearer learner pathways.
- Some portfolio areas have successfully developed positive relationships with Higher Education Institutions to provide articulation agreements and guaranteed places on degree programmes. Students are well supported in making their applications through UCAS with increasing numbers applying and attaining places on higher education programmes.
- Almost all curriculum teams incorporate relevant core skills within their course design with the majority of teaching contextualised to the vocational area. The curriculum therefore provides the knowledge and skills enabling the students to be work ready or prepared for the next level of study.
- Curriculum teams plan well in most cases to ensure that their programmes are carefully designed and up to date to meet the requirements of industry. Course teams review programme content regularly adjusting the units on offer to meet student and external stakeholder demand. Employer engagement is well coordinated with events planned in most curricular areas to allow for a sharing of views about curriculum design between employers and college staff. Curriculum teams use the Student Experience Committee to receive feedback from student representatives that helps inform improvements to the curriculum particularly programme design.
- Almost all curriculum teams incorporate and plan work-based learning activities to develop employability through designing their curriculum with the inclusion of Work Placement, Simulation or Inspirational activities. A few programmes develop employability skills through the utilisation of Realistic Work Environments or Client-based Initiated Projects. Student feedback demonstrates they value practical input.
- In some areas, almost all students participate in Work Experience and some students participate in an international placement. Placements are well planned and coordinated ensuring that most students benefit from highly relevant work experience. Many students report achieving employment through work experience.
- Most staff empower students to plan and personalise their own learning, particularly when selecting their placement, project work and with assignments. They are able to select a topic of interest and are encouraged to set study plans to meet the deadlines set.
- Increasingly portfolios offer a range of flexible course provision to meet individual learners' needs through part-time study, evening courses, Schools Academy and apprenticeships.

- Many curriculum teams have improved planning over the longer term based on strategic objectives, aims and the future needs of the community and local economy. Staff make use of information from national events etc. to influence curriculum design and development supported by a more robust approval process for new delivery.
- The college's strategic plan sets challenging targets for gender balance on courses, in response to SFC's national target for no courses to have greater than a 75:25 gender imbalance by 2030. In some programmes there is significant gender imbalance and the proportion of full-time programmes where one gender makes up more than 75% of the enrolments is currently 73% against a target of 77% (amended from 70% for the Enhancement plan and compared to 80% in 2017/18) a positive change of 7% from the previous year.

Areas for development

- The introduction of the Student Experience Committee and student representatives structure that has been put in place is improving the feedback loop, however this is yet to be fully embedded so that learners as well as representatives are more clearly able to identify change or improvement resulting from their input, particularly where the change or the impact of change is in the following academic year.
- Curriculum Teams utilise programme level data to improve learner performance rates however, the analysis at unit level remains less comprehensive. In some areas, use of personal information to highlight learners at risk of withdrawal or not achieving is limited. Whilst an improved approach to tracking and monitoring of progress is being developed this is in the early stages.
- It was observed that the development or achievement of core and essential skills was not well understood by learners and some staff; although some work has been done in this area, internal Learning & Teaching Observations indicate that it continues to be an area for development.
- Opportunities to develop career management skills are not fully maximised in all areas e.g. for some learners studying on full time courses. Further development of strategies to enable students to progress in their entrepreneurial and enterprise skills could enhance their employability, and an Enterprise Officer post has been created for 2019/20.

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

Areas of positive practice

- Relationships between teaching staff and learners are positive, resulting in effective development of knowledge, and of skills in the practical sessions.
- Some staff effectively use a wide variety range of appropriate approaches and resources including digital technologies to support and enhance teaching and learning to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding of learners. In the better lessons, where a range of learning and teaching takes place, learners are fully engaged. In practical lessons, effective coaching techniques are utilised by staff resulting in learners developing relevant skills and increasing confidence.
- The appointment of the new post of Learning and Teaching Digital Facilitator (L&TDF) is having an impact on the sharing of digital skills and increasing confidence of staff to adopt and apply them. In many areas, staff make effective use of digital technologies to support and enhance purposeful learning. Some staff are using a wider range of digital technologies effectively to enhance the learning process. Learning and Teaching Observations have identified that some staff apply these skills very effectively.

- The L&TDF in collaboration with the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Specialists (LTES) and with ISLT and Training & Development colleagues is developing formal and informal sharing networks for Digital and other skills. These will be further enhanced by new appointments identified for 2019/20, of Independent Learning Specialists to support embedding of specific skills, and the PQ Mentor.
- Across all areas, staff adapt learning and teaching material when required to meet the needs of learners, working closely with the Learning Support team, to identify and support appropriate interventions and/or assistive technology. Learning Support provide a consistent point of access to support for students, providing e.g. personal support, support with study skills.
- Questioning techniques are deployed to good effect in better lessons allowing learners to further develop their knowledge and understanding.
- Most lessons include a good range of activities with learners well engaged, particularly within practice classes. Most staff adapt their lessons based on the needs, interests and behaviour of the students within a group. This can be in terms of pace, methods of delivery, classroom activity and content.
- In the majority of areas, staff work with the students well to plan for learning by choosing topics, working in groups, providing staff with feedback on lessons and amending lesson plans accordingly. Many learners are empowered to determine their preferred learning approach in the classroom. Most learners are clear about the programme goals and discuss them with their course tutor regularly.
- Learners make effective use of good quality teaching and workshop rooms with some external locations further enhancing the learning experience. Staff optimise the use of the college's excellent realistic work environments and external resources for sport and land-based subjects.
- Almost all staff maintain and apply up-to-date knowledge of industry and workplace practice. Many take steps to ensure their industry and professional practice is kept up-to-date through alternative part time employment or industry specific CPD. Learners value the experience that teaching staff provide based on their own past career experience or their up-to-date knowledge which part-time staff, currently still in industry, add to the learning experience.
- In almost all programme areas, assessments are well planned with students aware of the assessment schedule for their programme and units. Students are provided with useful and encouraging feedback on their performance and where necessary are provided with clear guidance on what needs to improve.
- Learning Support provide a consistent point of access to support for students, providing e.g. personal support, support with study skills. There is a well-developed process for identifying and putting in place alternative assessment arrangements that meet the needs of the students whilst satisfying the requirements of the Awarding Bodies.
- Learning and Teaching Observations have commenced as part of the annual review process of teaching, learning and assessment, incorporating learner discussion into feedback to individuals and in collated reports that inform training and development. These include opportunities for both students and staff to reflect, and now involve a follow-up meeting with the staff member to support development.
- We have developed a Quality Check Point system, which Portfolio areas implemented in 2018/19 and which is being further expanded for 2019/20. This requires the CLMs and APs to meet with staff teams monthly to closely monitor progress with assessments and attendance and identify appropriate interventions to improve learner success.

- We have developed improved approaches for 2019/20 including a pilot Tracking & Monitoring process to monitor individual students most at risk of withdrawing or not achieving and reviewed roles for Achievement Coaches to support these students in specific curriculum areas.

Areas for development

- Adoption and sharing of digital resources, whilst improving, remains inconsistent across the curriculum. On some sites, lack of internet availability may hinder use of systems to support teaching, learning and assessment.
- During some lessons learners work independently; teaching staff available to facilitate, however opportunities to make the sessions more engaging and vibrant may sometimes be overlooked.
- The use of questioning strategies remains inconsistent, as does the quality of feedback in some areas. In addition, evaluation by staff and students at lesson and unit level is limited and lecturers do not always proactively involve students in evaluating the learning experience. The LTES have incorporated these items as development points in their plans for 2019/20.
- Some staff have expressed interest in spending time with local companies to update their industry knowledge. Better access to and use of industry workplace practice generally could provide an effective way of updating staff knowledge and skills of current practice to incorporate to teaching, whilst building relationships with local employers.

QI 2.4 Services to Support Learning

Areas of positive practice

- Learners are engaged and actively involved in the recruitment of teaching staff to ensure that appropriate appointments are made improving the learning and teaching experience for students
- The College website is well developed, in conjunction with learners, to provide access to the wide range of programmes of study available and to comprehensive information regarding additional support and services. The printed prospectus is also available and distributed to a wide range of outlets including all Schools in the Borders and South East Edinburgh, SDS, the Council, CLD, Libraries and many of our external support agencies. Additionally, a suite of printed booklets is available, both printed and e-book versions, to promote various areas of study or specialist service deliveries.
- The development of a Course Information Tool enables online updates for the website and Admissions processes, facilitating the Curriculum areas in providing timely and accurate information for prospective students.
- The student Admissions process ensures that learners are recruited through a fair and transparent process have a fair opportunity to secure a place on a programme that meets their vocational aspirations and places them on an appropriate level of programme. Information collected regarding individual need is used to resource the learning, wellbeing, welfare or other support and guidance required to help them maintain their place at college and achieve. Significant enhancements have been made supporting streamlining of the process. A refined progression Admissions process exists for students wishing to continue their studies at Borders College to the next level of their learning journey.
- Close liaison takes place with Schools, SDS, Support Agencies such as Through Care After Care teams, Carers Trust, Action for Children and many other specialist support agencies to provide advice guidance and support to potential and current learners to ensure informed decisions. Borders Young Talent Programme supported through the Robertson Trust has provided a

valuable support mechanism for vulnerable young people at risk of disengagement by mentoring and advising them through transition from secondary to tertiary education or work.

- Corporate Parenting arrangements are well organised with a close working relationship with other corporate parents in the region and membership of the local Corporate Parenting Operational Group assisting to inform practice.
- A data sharing agreement is in place between SBC and the college to aid sharing of information to ensure appropriate transitions and support is available to Care Experienced students.
- Student Welfare Advisors work closely with Funding team staff to ensure disbursement of funds in accordance with national regulations and appropriate use to support learners with childcare, additional needs, who are care experienced and those in particular hardship. This helps students to maintain their place at college and to complete their studies.
- Student Induction has been reviewed, led by an AP and involving students, including refresh of the Student Portal for 2019/20 to provide students with timely information, advice and guidance on all aspects of College life including where and how to request and access support to meet their individual needs.
- Analysis of Key Performance Indicators relating to learner support is continuing to develop, in terms of attendance, retention and attainment, to provide data for evaluation to highlight changes for improvement, and action.
- Almost all full time learners receive a one-to-one meeting each block with their course tutor to discuss their progress and future plans based around their Personal Learning Plan. In addition, the Learning support staff conduct Learner Review meetings with all supported students at the end of Block 1 and Block 2.
- Services to support learners applying to university or for more advanced levels of study at college are well organised and timely with almost all students achieving a positive outcome from their applications.

Areas for development

- The number of learners engaging with the Annual Learner Survey (46%) whilst comparable to the previous year, remains on an overall downward trend; response rates from part-time and distance learners are low therefore they are not proportionately represented in the learner voice. Whilst the approach to learner engagement is well established, there remain opportunities for more timely, effective evaluation and follow-up to inform improvement.
- Without continued and enhanced engagement of the College community with external service providers to ensure individual need is met valuable support services may not be readily available or participation with them encouraged.
- Not all staff are aware of or analyse Key Performance Indicators effectively at a team level; Quality Check Points have been put in place to support this process but are a new initiative that is yet to fully embed.
- Curriculum areas have recognised that there is scope to increase the quality, accuracy and use of information around student learning needs to support students to achieve. Students in some areas which are more difficult to reach e.g. evening classes, apprenticeships, do not always have clear guidance on access to Learning Support.
- We have agreed an improved arrangement with SDS to support CIAG to improve the Careers Guidance service through a new SLA and data sharing protocol. This is supporting the recommendations from the national Learner Journey review. We will monitor effectiveness of this new partnership through the year to ensure that Learners are receiving the information, advice and guidance that supports them to attend, achieve and progress.

Outcomes and Impact

QI 3.1 Wellbeing, equality and inclusion

Areas of positive practice

- The College complies with equalities legislation and has in place comprehensive equality and gender action plans; we have reviewed and updated the latter for 2019/20 and updated the Mainstreaming Report. Equalities legislation is an integral part of the curriculum and is embedded in all care/childcare programmes. Understanding of this legislation is vital for learners in work practice.
- The College actively promotes the general duties. For example, we continue to improve transgender awareness through training, provided Autism Awareness training and have developed and published our BSL strategy. BCSA also coordinated a community Diversity Day.
- Mental Health continues to be a significant area of focus. BCSA has signed a Mental Health Agreement with the College. All front-line support staff have undertaken Mental Health First Aid training as well as resilience and trauma and ASIST. We have and procured an online compliance programme, for implementation in 2019/20; this is to improve staff awareness and understanding of Mental Health issues and of how this affects students.
- The College takes positive action to ensure that there is a wide and varied curriculum to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities, and this is undertaken in a responsive manner with other key partners. In a few cases, staff ensure that celebration of diversity is included within their curriculum delivery and wider college activity.
- Applications, enrolments and achievements are monitored by protected characteristic, which helps the college identify those most at risk and take action to address any issues; in this way, it continues to take active steps to ensure that it avoids either direct or indirect discrimination.
- Early identification of learning support needs at the application stage continues to allow the Learning Support team to work with applicants prior to enrolment with plans in place for the upcoming session. This helps prepare future students for college and eases transition. Development of the Learning Support Service now means there are dedicated Advisers per department improving consistency of approach.
- Support for young carers and care experienced students is having a positive impact on achievement rates.
- The college provides a variety of ESOL classes across the Borders Region, successfully engaging with Syrian families in the area.
- The College has met most of its agreed targets with the SFC against national Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) measures to improve access for priority and disadvantaged groups.

Areas for development

- Without further engagement with nurseries, primary and secondary schools on gender bias the significant gender imbalance in some areas of the curriculum may not demonstrate a consistently reducing trend. As recent positive changes in the gender imbalance are based on very small increases in numbers of students of the minority gender across a range of subjects across portfolios, this does not yet demonstrate a trend and in some areas, no change is yet evident.
- We do not consistently use data well to demonstrate cause and effect e.g. growth in activities results in more inclusive opportunities but also impacts success KPIs, as we are working with more individuals with complex needs.

QI 3.2 Equity, attainment and achievement for all learners

Areas of positive practice

- The vast majority of learners achieve well and progress successfully. Overall success rates are above sector average:
 - There has continued to be significant improvement in HE part-time learner success, up 4.2% on the previous year and 5.1% above sector average. HE partial success is 8% below sector average.
 - Most full time students achieve and progress well. Success rates for both HE (72.1%) and FE (68.2%) are above sector average (by 0.8% and 2.1% respectively) and in each case part of an overall increase of over 2% from 2016/17.
- In most full time courses, learners are achieving their core skills well and in most full time programmes, working with others and problem solving is embedded.
- There were a number of full time courses identified as a Course for Concern in 2017/18; all of the courses improved their learner success in 2018-19.
- The learner success rates for part time LGBT+ students (excluding schools academy) whilst fluctuating has increased back to 81%. The learner success rates for schools academy LGBT+ students has increased again to 76% (excluding schools academy induction programme).
- The learner success rate for SIMD1 HE students high although based on very low student numbers. Full time remains at 100% for a second year, with part time at 86%. Part-time FE SIMD1 is also high at 84% where numbers of students are higher (52 of 62 students).
- The learner success rate for care experienced FE full time students has returned to 51% from 44% in 2017/18.

Areas for development

- While most part time FE students achieve and progress (77.3%) this is below the sector average (by 0.9%) and an in year decrease (1.3%) is part of an overall decrease of 4.1% since 2016/17.
- Although withdrawal has improved on the year in both part time HE and FE and in full time HE, each remains greater than the sector average. In the case of part time FE this remains 1.6% over 2016/17, although the overall trend for the others is improving.
- Detailed action plans are to be implemented for courses for concern in 2019/20 to address withdrawal (early and late as appropriate) to contribute to improved partial and full success.
- For some groups of students, achievement and attainment rates are lower than for the general College population. This is the case for 16-19 year olds (66%).
- Success rates for learners with disabilities remain persistently lower than for other learners.
- The learner success rates for students with mental health conditions dropped back notably in most cases (FEFT 49%, HEFT 59%, part time students 79%).
- Success rates for learners with disabilities, for those with mental health conditions, on mainstream programmes have fluctuated to 58% returning to levels similar to 2016/17 (56% from 68% in 2017/18).
- The learner success rates for HE full time LGBT+ students has dropped to 56% (from 80%). Whilst this is based on small numbers, these have almost doubled from 10 to 19 in 2018/19.
- The learner success rates for FE full time LGBT+ students, which demonstrated an improvement last year has dropped back to the 2016/17 level, 48%.
- Learner success rates for FE full time SIMD1 students remains consistently low at 58% (26 of 45 students).
- Success rates for care-experienced learners remain significantly lower than for other students at 50% across all enrolments.