

Glasgow College Region Memorandum of Understanding: working effectively in partnership to achieve shared strategic goals

1 Purpose and Status

1.1 This Memorandum of Understanding is a commitment by the four bodies which make up the Glasgow College Region to work together as an effective and efficient regional system to:

- achieve their shared strategic goals;
- fulfil their legal and regulatory obligations; and
- realise regional added value.

1.2 While it is not in itself legally binding, the Memorandum of Understanding is a public statement by the four boards of their understanding of the imperative to, and their firm intention to, work effectively in partnership.

1.3 It is intended that the Memorandum of Understanding, in setting out the commitment of the four boards to work together, should also foster effective partnership working among executive management teams and throughout the regional structure.

2 Governance Context

2.1 Governance arrangements for the Glasgow college region are determined by a legislative and regulatory framework that includes:

- the structures, powers and duties set out in the Education Acts, principally the 1992 and 2005 Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Acts, as amended by the 2013 Act;
- the Financial Memorandum between the SFC and GCRB and between GCRB and the Assigned Colleges, and the Scottish Public Finance Manual except where derogations apply;
- the requirements of the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges;
- the Scottish Government's Ministerial Guidance on College Sector Board Appointments.

2.2 GCRB and the Assigned Colleges are bound, as public bodies, to comply with a number of other laws and regulations including the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, the Equalities Act 2010, the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000, the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, and the Data Protection Act 1998.

2.3 The Assigned Colleges have charitable status, and are therefore required to comply with the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.

- 2.4 As public bodies, GCRB and the Assigned Colleges are also subject to other relevant direction and guidance that may be issued by the Scottish Government.

3 Memorandum of Understanding: Joint Commitments to Effective Partnership Working

The four boards recognise that observance of the nine Principles of Public Life in Scotland will underpin effective partnership working and the boards will seek to undertake all their communications and other activities in a manner that is consistent with those principles.

In addition to the nine Principles, the following three overarching commitments will underpin and drive effective partnership working across the four Glasgow College Region boards:

3.1 Open and Proactive Communication

We will facilitate effective communication between board members and the work of the boards, to promote awareness of each other's priorities and concerns, and of developments that may impact on the region as a whole.

The systems and structures developed to achieve this will maximise use of digital and online communication methods and promote transparency and open access to information.

3.2 Collaboration and Joint-Working

We will promote opportunities for collaborative working through short-life groups and longer term arrangements, between:

- boards and chairs of boards;
- board committees and committee chairs;
- other members or groups of members as appropriate;
- college and GCRB executives.

Ensuring staff and student involvement in any relevant groups will be a key consideration.

3.3 Joint Development and Networking

We will actively seek opportunities for joint training, development and networking activities to promote common understanding and build stronger and more effective relationships across the region. This will include joint board development and training events. GCRB will co-ordinate collective activity.

4 Conflict Resolution

- 4.1 We will seek to avoid conflict by positively contributing to collective activity and the building of strong and effective regional partnerships.
- 4.2 Should conflict arise, we will seek to resolve issues of these in a constructive and positive manner, identifying solutions and avoiding escalation of issues.
- 4.3 In cases where informal dialogue has failed to resolve issues, the boards will seek to address issues of concern through appropriate formal regional structures or processes.

5 Implementation and Review

- 5.1 All boards will seek to publicise and promote this Memorandum, the commitments made within it, to all staff and students across the Glasgow College Region.
- 5.2 All boards will consider and make reference to their contribution to effective partnership working commitments made in this Memorandum of Understanding in their annual development plans.
- 5.3 All boards will review the effectiveness of partnership working across the Glasgow College Region in their annual effectiveness reviews.
- 5.4 The Memorandum of Understanding itself will be reviewed and amended by agreement between the four bodies. The first such review date will be August 2018.