

**GLASGOW KELVIN COLLEGE**

**BOARD OF MANAGEMENT MEETING OF 13 DECEMBER 2021**

**FOUNDATION APPRENTICESHIP UPDATE**

**REPORT BY VICE PRINCIPAL OPERATIONS AND VICE PRINCIPAL  
CURRICULUM**

**1. Introduction**

The College has offered Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) from the first year of their existence in 2016. It has done so by leading a regional approach with funding provided by Skills Development Scotland (SDS). On behalf of the three colleges, the Glasgow Kelvin employs a team formed of a manager, administrators, and school and employer liaison staff.

The programme structure was initially agreed by Glasgow colleges to support the regional delivery of Foundation Apprenticeships and to provide a single point of contact for local authorities, schools and employers.

This paper provides an update on the current status and ongoing development of the regional Foundation Apprenticeship programme.

**2. Current Status of the Regional Foundation Apprenticeship Programme**

**2.1 Role of the Regional FA Team**

The Regional FA team currently has responsibility for programme recruitment, managing and preparing procurement processes, managing the SDS compliance frameworks on behalf of all regional partners, administering transport with local authorities (who organise student transport), faculty engagement, employer engagement to secure work placements and managing that ongoing process, liaising with schools regarding programme recruitment and ongoing pupil progress and engaging in SDS Community of Practice meetings.

The team is responsible for:

- c450 Level 6 foundation apprentices and around 100 Level 4, a total of around 550;
- Engaging with 60+ schools and parent bodies;
- Engaging with seven local authorities; and
- Engaging with 80+ employers and sourcing 250+ work placements annually

The Regional FA team consists of eight individuals. The structure of the team was initially agreed by the Project Board and the three regional colleges were involved in the recruitment of key individuals. The salary costs of the Regional FA Team are c£320k per annum and these eight staff provide services across the three Glasgow Colleges, alongside liaising with local authorities, funders, employers and other delivery partners.

## **2.2 Change in FA Funding Arrangements**

For this academic year the majority of funding for FAs has moved from SDS to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). This now means that funding for FA delivery flows from the SFC to GCRB and then on to the three Glasgow Colleges in the form of Credits. This is a significant change as previously under SDS funding arrangements, the Colleges were required to meet a number of funding milestones to receive payment for tuition costs, whereas now FAs are funded by Credits in the same way as all other Core funded activity.

In addition, previously there was an explicit overhead provided by SDS which funded the regional team. Whilst SFC have attempted to replicate this through providing additional Credits which do not require to be delivered, the visibility of funding for regional coordination is less visible and more complex to understand.

SDS still continues to fund travel expenses and this means the College is having to continue to provide data returns to SDS and monitoring of these funds as we previously did with full SDS funding. Therefore, whilst the move to Credit funding is welcomed, continuing to be partially funded by SDS means a very significant administrative burden remains as in effect we now have to maintain two monitoring and funding systems for one group of students.

FA programme funding does not cover for the additional costs that all colleges incur, namely curriculum management costs, additional administration costs and other such costs associated with delivering a teaching programme. On top of these costs, Glasgow Kelvin College also incurs significant costs of providing ICT equipment and associated office space, as well as a significant proportion of Director, Vice Principal and Finance team time dedicated to the overall management, financial and risk planning aspects of this significant programme.

With regards to future funding, beyond academic year 2021/22, there is no certainty. It is likely that the programme delivery will be funded via credits although it is unclear whether these will be additional credits as this year or be subsumed within the main allocation. In addition, there is no indication yet as to how the additional administration of the programme required, or associated transport costs will be funded.

## **3. Future Development of the Regional Foundation Apprenticeship Programme**

As the regional approach has now been in place for a number of years Glasgow Kelvin College is leading discussions with the Glasgow colleges and GCRB as to how the regional approach should be developed going forwards.

Colleagues from Glasgow colleges and the three key delivery partners were asked to feed back their views on the strengths and weaknesses of the current arrangements. A summary of these views is contained in the table below.

### Strengths:

- Provides a single front door for students and programme partners, offering a wide range of study options.
- Single point of contact for Glasgow with SDS and SFC.
- Coordinated and collaborative approach means colleges don't compete with each other on frameworks for the same pupils.
- Allows the coordination of applications into viable groups.

- Central handling of SDS planning and reporting requirements, which can be onerous, is taken care of by the central team.
- The arrangement of 400+ placements would be a significant piece of work for colleges to do on their own, particularly for subject areas where placements aren't routinely part of courses, like computing or science.
- The Central Team administrate transport payments to LAs which would be an additional burden for colleges with no additional resource.
- Fixed term contract of FA team allows for flexibility of delivery and opportunities for change

#### Weaknesses:

- Financial cost of regional team – creates a high level of overhead in addition to delivery costs.
- High level of transport costs – this is exacerbated by splitting classes over more than one day and recruiting across 7 local authorities.
- Recruitment levels are too low and could be increased. This impacts on class size viability.
- Lack of direct control by colleges over student numbers means classes can be formed which are not financially viable.
- Not having control over the teaching and placement schedule sometimes commits colleges to delivery models which they would not choose and which can lead to an inefficient use of staff.
- The 'Lead College' model of assigning students to frameworks can freeze other colleges out of delivery in areas they may wish to contribute to.
- Poor retention levels for FAs generally, particularly the 2-year model. This then impacts on viability of cohorts.
- Different delivery models for 1 year and 2 year frameworks makes it tricky to merge classes of both types to make a viable group.
- Students don't always receive mainstream college transition and induction activities.
- Challenges in locating work placements close to an FA's school and students' choices focussed on subject rather than a specific college

These strengths and weaknesses informed a discussion on FA development options at a meeting in November of the Glasgow Colleges Group attended by the three Glasgow colleges and GCRB. There was no consensus across the three colleges on how the regional approach should develop, however there was agreement that Glasgow Kelvin College should provide a paper outlining how the regional team could be reduced with work transferring back to individual colleges where appropriate. This would maintain the single 'front door' for FA learners and partners alongside improve efficiency levels.

The College is therefore considering options for how the regional approach may develop so that over time there is reduced expenditure on a regional team. However, any options will be heavily dependent on our collective operating context going forward and on the funding and reporting demands of SFC and SDS.

There has been no discussion yet about and specific regional staff structure proposals and the College has committed to being fully open with staff should such discussions arise. To support this, the Vice Principal Operations meets with the whole FA Team each month to update them on the current developments.

In addition, the College has emphasised to regional partners their collective responsibility to the staff and the importance of minimising any potential impact on College employees.

We hope that a proposal for 2022/23 operation of the Regional Foundation Apprenticeship team to be agreed by March 2022 at the latest.

#### **4. Resource Implications**

There is a risk that the cost of hosting the regional FA project exceeds the support provided by GCRB and that Glasgow Kelvin is therefore liable for additional costs. The delivery model beyond 2021/22 therefore needs to reflect a revised management structure where costs are either shared regionally or the tasks are shared.

#### **5. Equalities**

There are no equality implications arising directly from this report.

#### **6. Risk and Assurance**

This report provides assurance that the College is continuing to support delivery of FAs.

There are potential people, financial, operational and reputational risks in any possible changes to the regional approach. These will be carefully considered in any future options appraisal.

#### **7. Data Protection**

There are no data protection implications arising directly from this report

#### **8. Recommendations**

Members are recommended to:

- i) note the contents of the report
- ii) note that a further update on the development of the regional FA position will be provided to a future meeting of the Board.

#### **9. Further Information**

Members can obtain additional information on the contents of this report from Jeanette Evans, Vice Principal Operations [jevans@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk](mailto:jevans@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk) and Robin Ashton, Vice Principal Curriculum [rashton@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk](mailto:rashton@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk).

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