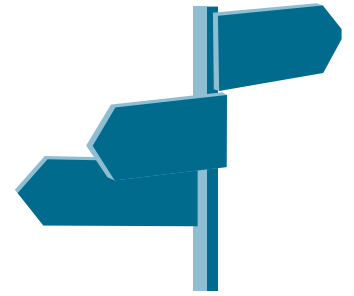



Scotland's colleges 2016

Checklist for college board members



AUDITOR GENERAL 

The following checklist is designed to help board members of colleges, regional colleges and regional bodies with their role. We have used 'college boards' to refer to all three types of body in this checklist. Some questions within this checklist will be more relevant to one or more of these bodies. It is aimed at promoting good practice, scrutiny and challenge in decision-making and provides a basis for discussions in college boards about how they can address current and future opportunities and challenges.

The checklist should be read in conjunction with the report, [Scotland's colleges 2016](#) , published in August 2016. This report analyses the financial performance of the colleges during 2014/15 and comments on the progress of reform, student participation and outcomes, staffing, college governance and the role of the Scottish Funding Council.

The checklist is divided into four sections covering:

- Students
- Staff
- College finances
- College governance

The questions should help college board members seek evidence, and subsequently gain assurance, on their board's approach to dealing with ongoing opportunities and challenges. If the answer to any question is 'no', then we would encourage college board members to speak with the college's senior executive team or the Principal to discuss how improvements can be made.

This checklist supplements the wider work within the college sector to promote good college governance. This includes the support, guidance, information and reports produced by the College Development Network, Scottish Funding Council and the College Good Governance Task Group.¹

1. [College Good Governance: The Report of the Education Secretary's Task Group](#) , Scottish Government, March 2016.

Section 1: Students		Yes/No
<p>1. Do I have a good understanding of trends overall in the following areas, and the reasons for any significant changes for individual courses?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student numbers (part-time and full-time)? • Student demographic data such as gender, age, ethnicity, deprivation? • Level of demand for courses? • Retention, attainment and articulation? 		
<p>2. Do I have a good, overall understanding of the quality of learning provided by the college, through a combination of both qualitative and quantitative information?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am I aware of students' views on the quality of learning provided and actions planned to address concerns? • Do performance reports include a range of performance measures, broken down into different student groupings and campuses that allow a clear understanding of the quality of learning? • Where a performance measure is declining, such as student satisfaction or attainment, do I know if this is a shift or because of a short-term issue? Has the impact of reform been considered in assessing the reason for a change in performance? • Do I know if there have been any changes to the support made available to students and if this has had any impact on attainment, retention, articulation, or satisfaction? • Where performance is improving, can lessons from this be applied to other subjects or campuses? • Do I know how well the college is performing compared to other colleges? 		
<p>3. When reviewing the college's curriculum, is the college using the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The views of students, staff and employers? • Demographic data such as the number of school leavers and employment rates? • Forecasts of student and employer demand? 		
<p>4. Do I understand what impact legislative, policy or curriculum changes may have on students, staff and college stakeholders?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where appropriate, have proposed changes been subject to an equality-impact assessment and do they comply with the Equality Act 2010? • Am I satisfied that appropriate mitigating actions are being taken to limit negative effects? • Has adequate funding been allocated for supporting the students association? 		

Section 2: Staff		Yes/No
5.	<p>Am I confident the college has robust plans for its workforce requirements?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do I have a good understanding of trends in staff numbers (teaching and non-teaching) and costs? Am I confident that current training schemes and recruitment plans will provide the right numbers, skills-mix and grades of staff to meet requirements? Do workforce plans follow the good practice guidance of Scotland's public sector workforce,² including planning for succession, employee development and talent management? Am I aware of staff views on the future shape of the college's workforce? Am I satisfied that actions are being taken to address any concerns? Does the college's approach to voluntary severance follow SFC guidance? Do workforce plans link to the college's financial strategy and curriculum? Are the workforce strategy and plans subject to scrutiny by the board and its relevant committees on a regular basis? Do I understand the implications of national collective bargaining agreements for workforce policies and plans? 	

Section 3: College finances		Yes/No
6.	<p>Do I have a good understanding of the overall financial health of the college?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Am I aware of all significant financial risks and cost pressures facing the college and their implications? Do I have sufficient assurance that the college is financially stable, ie able to meet any short-term obligations? Am I satisfied that appropriate action is being taken to address potential future budget gaps? Do I understand the current underlying financial performance of the college? Do I understand why the college is in surplus/deficit? Is there a long-term financial strategy (minimum of five years) underpinned by medium-term financial plans (covering three to five years)? Does this include scenario planning for the best, worst and most likely future scenarios? Do financial plans allocate resources in a way that meets regional strategic requirements and addresses the regional outcome agreement? Are the financial strategy and financial plans subject to scrutiny by the board and relevant committees on a regular basis? 	

2. [Scotland's public sector workforce](#) , Audit Scotland, November 2013.

College finances (continued)		Yes/No
<p>7. Do financial plans clearly outline all known future cost pressures, such as those arising from reform, contractual commitments, national collective bargaining, national policies and meeting activity targets?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I have a good understanding of the condition of the college's estate and other assets (such as IT equipment) and the risk profile of the backlog maintenance? • Do I understand how the future plans for investment will be funded and their costs? • Am I aware of the long-term financial impact on future budgets of using revenue-finance (such as non-profit distribution) to pay for capital investment? 		

Section 4: College governance		Yes/No
<p>8.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am I satisfied that the board has considered the findings of the College Good Governance Task Group? • Are agendas, minutes and papers for board and committee meetings easily accessible to the public on the college's website within appropriate timescales? • Am I satisfied with the quality of papers and support provided to the board and its committees? • Do I have a good understanding of the college's performance against the regional outcome agreement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Are there local plans showing how colleges will contribute to delivering the regional outcome agreement in multi-college regions? – Are there targets, timescales and milestones to monitor progress toward delivering the regional outcome agreement? – Am I satisfied that the targets being agreed with Scottish Funding Council in the regional outcome agreement are achievable? – Am I aware of progress in delivering the regional outcome agreement? Has appropriate action been taken to improve performance? 		



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