
**MINUTES OF THE SEVENTY FOURTH MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
COMMENCING 16:00 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

PRESENT: Mr P Clancy, Committee Chair
Mr B Dougherty
Dr S Fisher
Mrs M Gormley
Mrs O McEleney
Mr L Murphy, Principal & CE
Mr B O'Neill
Mr P Thompson
Ms V Toland

IN ATTENDANCE: Dr C O'Mullan, Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards
Ms G Moss, Head of Client Services
Mrs É Doherty, Secretary to the Governing Body

APOLOGIES: Mr F Smyth

74.1 WELCOME

The Committee Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

74.2 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS/DECLARATIONS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no conflicts of interest declarations. There were no declarations of any other business.

74.3 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4 JUNE 2025

➤ **PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

Draft Education Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2025

The Draft Minutes were taken as read and agreed were a true and accurate record of the meeting.

PROPOSED, Mr B Dougherty

SECONDED, Mr B O'Neill

REPORT 1 MATTERS ARISING – June 2025 Committee Meeting

72.6, Report 2 - Ms G Moss will present the Social Value Report for the November 2025 Committee meeting.

73.4, Report 1 The Governing Body approved that Mrs McEleney, Staff Governor serve on the Education Committee. The Committee Chair welcomed

Mrs McEleney to the Committee.

74.3, Report 1 Dr C O'Mullan brought the Committee through the Engagement Analysis Report in relation to the Outreach Provision for the periods 2020-2025. The analysis provided a breakdown by council ward and location, year, course mode (FT/PT), age group (16-21) and enrolments/individuals.

The key findings lead to recommendations to focus on targeted outreach on the least engaged wards and locations, to sustain high engagement in the current high engagement areas, to develop specific initiatives for the 16-21 age group in the underrepresented areas and to use the data to monitor progress and adjust outreach tactics.

The data will now inform the forthcoming Strategy on Community and Outreach engagement and align with the College mission to serve all communities across the region. The College has made a recent appointment for a Manager of Community and Outreach to help develop this area.

A questions and answer session followed.

73.5 The Draft College Development Plan 2025/26 was approved at the Governing Body meeting held on 18 June 2025.

74.4 COMMITTEE CHAIR'S BUSINESS

The Committee Chair reported that he attended with Dr C O'Mullan, Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards to an event in June 2025 in Southern Regional College (SRC), Banbridge Campus. The purpose of the event was to share the interim findings from the Department of Education's Consultation on the 16-18 legislation. The Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards added it is important that the DfE and Sector be part of the ongoing discussions in promoting the opportunities FE has to offer.

74.5 MANAGEMENT REPORT – Dr C O'Mullan, Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards.

➤ **PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

EC 74.5	Management Report
Report 1	CDP Targets 2025/26
Report 2	Full-time Enrolments 2025/26
Report 3	Correspondence from Ms L Watson, Director of FE Re Skills Competitions Funding 2025/26
Report 4	NWTEC Summary (July-August 2025)
Report 5	Peace Plus Programme Projects
Report 6	NWRC Funding Projects Activity Summary

Report 7	Traineeship and ESK Action Plans, August 2025
Report 8	Draft Essential Skills Sector Quality Improvement Plan 2025/26
Report 9	Draft Sector Traineeship QIP 2025/26
Report 10	Letter to BMC – Announcement of Inspection of Magilligan Prison
Report 11	Correspondence from ETI – SEN in FE Evaluation
Report 12	Academic Standards Committee Minutes

EC 74.5 Management Report

The Director of Curriculum and Academic Standards apprised the Committee on the data within Section 1 of the Report. HE, FE, TFS/AppNI and Essential Skills enrolment figures for 2024/25 all exceeded targets.

HLA for 2024/25 was just below target with actual enrolments 121 against target of 124.

Other enrolment targets set out in the 2024/25 College Development Plan included¹

- Enrolling 4,080 individuals domiciled in areas defined as deprivation quintiles 1 and 2. The College enrolled 4,626 individuals domiciled in quintiles 1 and 2.
- Enrolling 1,071 individuals declaring a disability. The College enrolled 1,347.
- Enrolling 140 individuals on ESOL programmes. The College enrolled 234.
- Enrolling 37 individuals on All Age Apprenticeships. The College enrolled 46.

For the academic year end 2024/25 the total number of individuals was 8,045, with 13,500 enrolments. This was slightly below target (98%) however this was a 6% increase on the 2023/24 figures. The Principal added that the College has been proactive in sourcing additional streams of funding, leading to increased enrolments.

OCNNI Awards - were held at Titanic Belfast on 24 June 2025. NWRC were nominated as Provider of the Year 2025 and two learners had received nominations.

Report 1 CDP Targets 2025/26

The final draft has not yet been approved by DfE. A breakdown of target enrolments for 2025/26 is 13,675 and individuals is 8,405, planning an uplift on 2024/25 activity.

EC 74.5 Management Report - continued

The Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards highlighted the full-time courses per campus that have been formally withdrawn for 2025/26. It was noted the significant withdrawals in the areas of hairdressing, barbering and beauty courses in Strabane Campus. The College will undertake further analysis in this matter.

All students impacted by these course withdrawals were contacted to ensure that they were redirected to another College course.

¹ Data source: CDP Dashboard as at end August 2025 as final Progress Report for 24/25 has not yet been requisitioned by DfE

Additional courses were also added to the 2025/26 provision offer, notably the first Level 6, full-time degree top up, OU Cybersecurity.

Report 2 Full-time Enrolments 2025/26 as at 11 September 2025

- HE enrolments showing 391 against a target of 413
- FE enrolments showing 1640 against a target of 1559
- Traineeship enrolments showing 504 against a target of 563
- AppNI enrolments showing 598 against a target of 658
- Skills for Life and Work enrolments showing 42 against a target of 30
- Showing an estimated 98% actual for full-time provision target at this point.

At this early stage in the academic year, the 2025/26 part-time enrolments for the Entitlement Framework provision has 425 enrolments, ahead of target.

The remaining part-time enrolments are approximately 30% on target, enrolments continue throughout the academic year.

A report will come to the Committee in relation to the Entitlement Framework enrolments from the schools in the geographical area of each Campus.

A further report will be brought through the Committee that includes data on the number of students that undertook Occupational Studies and then progressed to a College course.

EC 74.5 Management Report - continued

The Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards alerted the Committee that DfE advised at the end of 2024/25 that funding would cease for the Advanced Vocational Technical Award (AVTA) Level 3 programmes.

FE Level 1, and 3 programmes were showing an increase in full-time enrolments compared to 2024/25 data. A discussion ensued on the profile of students coming to the College that require additional support however these students do not have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. This brings extra challenges to the College teams.

It was agreed for the Head of Client Services provide a presentation on SEN at a Committee meeting.

Report 3 Correspondence from Ms L Watson, Director of FE Re Skills Competitions Funding 2025/26

The Committee Chair noted the disappointment that the WorldSkills Competitions and WorldSkills Educator Programme will no longer continue in 2025/26 following notification from DfE advising of budget restrictions.

Report 4 NWTEC Summary (July-August 2025)

Report 5 Peace Plus Programme Projects

Report 6 NWRC Funding Projects Activity Summary

The Committee noted the reports.

EC 74.5 Management Report - continued

Essential Skills – Following confirmation that Level 2 Essential Skills will now equate to 0.25 of GCSE to take effect from 2027/28 (to be confirmed). Curriculum Directors have collated sector concerns with the impact on FE learners and potential barriers to their progression pathways. The College has had to undertake an adjustment to implement an increased number of learners undertaking GCSE Maths and English qualification from 2025/26.

Quality Improvement

Report 7 Traineeship and ESK Action Plans, August 2025

The College submitted the individual action plan to DfE Quality Improvement Team on 22 August 2025. There will be Sector agreed Action Plans for both the Traineeship and Essential Skills programmes.

In relation to the Traineeship Action Plan the key matters within the Plan are there is an aspiration across the Sector for the number of learners to achieve the Diploma to be uplifted and to support and increase the progression of traineeships into apprenticeships.

For the Essential Skills Action Plan, the key item is the concern on the outcomes across the Sector in Level 2 Essential Skills Literacy and Numeracy. A series of sector CPD activities are planned for 2025/26.

Report 8 Draft Essential Skills Sector Quality Improvement Plan 2025/26

Report 9 Draft Sector Traineeship QIP 2025/26

The Committee noted the Reports.

Report 10 Letter to BMC – Announcement of Inspection of Magilligan Prison

HMP Magilligan are undertaking a whole prison inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons during week commencing 15 September 2025. NWRC delivery of learning and skills is a component part of this alongside other purposeful activity.

Report 11 Correspondence from ETI – SEN in FE Evaluation

SEN Evaluation - Following a scoping exercise carried out by ETI on 12 June 2025 to ascertain the SEN activity in the College, confirmation was received that a sector evaluation was planned to be undertaken in October 2025. The evaluation is expected to cover transition provision; team teaching; learner support and general arrangements to support learners transitioning from the post primary sector into FE.

EC 74.5 Management Report - continued

The National Student Survey (NSS) has been published for 2024/25 final year HE students. NWRC achieved the highest response rate in the FE sector and the second highest in NI. The College induction survey will launch in October 2025.

Report 12 Academic Standards Committee Minutes

The Director of Curriculum and Academic Standards was pleased to report that validation has been received for a Level 6 in Early Years with Stranmillis University College. This is subject to approval from DfE. It was also noted that ten applications have been received from staff to complete their fellowships.

The Committee Chair thanked Dr C O'Mullan and invited Ms Moss to present her report.

74.6 MANAGEMENT REPORT – Client Services

➤ **PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

Report 1 Equality Report

The Head of Client Services noted the numerous awareness events that are planned for 2025/26. The Head of Client Services was pleased to report ESOL numbers have increased and there are ten international students currently studying at the College.

Other highlights included;

- Discussions are ongoing with the North West Migrant's Forum for the College to host the Black Heritage in NI, Hidden History Project in October 2025.
- The first meeting of the Visibility Better Employer Alliance took place on 11 September 2025 to discuss best practices on removing barriers on the recruitment of people with disabilities.
- Additional external engagement continues with a number of other organisations including a new group, Bready Ulster-Scots.

Report 2 Safeguarding Report – The Safeguarding Report will progress through the November Committee meeting.

74.7 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence received.

74.8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

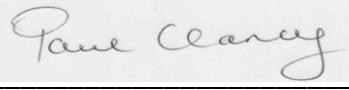
The Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards invited Governors to the 2025 Staff Conference, 'Empowering Improvement – AI: The Future for Further and Higher Education'. The Conference will take place on 27 October 2025 in the Strand Road Campus. Further details will be sent to Governors.

NWRC Governing Body
Education Committee Meeting - 16 September 2025
Minutes Approved – 12 November 2025

74.9 RESERVED BUSINESS – take separately.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 12 November 2025

The Committee Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and attendance and closed the meeting at 17:45.

Signed 

Mr P Clancy, Committee Chair

Date 12 November 2025