

23 July 2024

Professor Wayne Powell
Principal
SRUC

Dear Professor Powell

A team of HM Inspectors from Education Scotland visited SRUC on 4th June 2024 to undertake an Annual Engagement Visit. During our visit, we talked to learners, staff and stakeholders, and worked closely with the senior managers.

The team found the following major strengths in the college's work:

Learner progress and outcomes

The overall successful completion rate in AY 2022/23 for learners on full-time further education (FE) programmes is above the sector norm and has improved by 6.8%. Learner withdrawal rates for learners on full-time FE and part-time FE programmes have been better than the sector norm for the last 4 years and continue to be almost 7% below the sector norm. In AY 2022/23, the withdrawal rate for full-time FE learners reduced by 5% and 1.2% for part-time FE learners.

Academic liaison managers and student support tutors make effective use of curriculum team meetings to discuss learners' progress, identify learners who are at risk of withdrawing and coordinate support arrangements. All learners feel that throughout their programme, they have developed skills and gained confidence to progress to further studies or employment. Teaching staff are increasingly applying approaches to develop learners' meta-skills. The Sustainability, Enterprise, Equality and Diversity through Active and Blended Learning (SEEDABLE) project, is successfully raising staff awareness of equity and inclusion within curriculum design and delivery approaches.

Approaches to assuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching including professional updating

Senior managers are continuing to develop the use of performance indicators and survey dashboards to monitor learner progress. Staff are increasingly making effective use of data evidence to make informed decisions and implement improvements. Almost all staff engage productively in peer review and professional dialogue. They consider the peer observation process to be constructive and supportive and use it well reflect on existing practice and develop new approaches to delivery and assessment.

New teaching staff benefit from a comprehensive induction programme and high quality support to achieve the Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE) or Postgraduate Certificate in education (PGCE) to develop their pedagogy. Staff engage actively with industry partners through Industry Led Reviews (ILR) and industry placements to ensure the curriculum reflects industry standards and provides learners with appropriate skills for employment.

Learner Engagement

The SRUC Students' Association (SRUCSA) is represented well on the Board and other key committees, including the Learning and Teaching Committee. In the Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES) the learner response and learner satisfaction rates are above the sector norm. Learners are very satisfied with their programme and have a very positive experience at SRUC. They feel that their lecturers are knowledgeable, approachable, and supportive and are comfortable about seeking help when they need it.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the senior managers:

- There are no effective strategies in place to support an increase in the number of learners from ethnic minority backgrounds and staff are unaware of any initiatives to address this.
- There is insufficient analysis of the impact of additional support services on learner retention and attainment.
- Poor quality student accommodation at the Oatridge campus is impacting negatively on the learning experience.
- In a few programmes, the scheduling of assessments does not support some learners to complete their programme.
- The majority of FE programmes do not have a class representative and less than a quarter have completed training to carry out their role.
- The SRUCSA does not feel that senior management take action or report on progress of actions taken.
- Most learners are not aware of the role and purpose of the SA.

As a main point for action, senior managers should address the under representation of learners from ethnic minority backgrounds.

What happens next?

We are confident that the college has made satisfactory progress and has the capacity to continue to improve. We will continue to monitor progress with regular contact through the link HM Inspector.

Dr John Laird
Managing Inspector