Evaluative Report 2017/18

September 2018

Charity Number SC021180

Contents

1. The College and its Operating Context

Borders College is located in the Scottish Borders and offers a wide range of courses to approximately 4670 students each year, from SCQF level 1 to 9, including a wide range of foundation and modern apprenticeships. It also provides a large number of on-the-job training courses for businesses primarily in the Borders.

Courses are offered on a full-time or part-time basis, during the day or in the evenings and at locations throughout the south east of Scotland.

Scottish Borders Campus at Netherdale in Galashiels is the College's main campus, with smaller campuses in Hawick, which is the Centre for Business Development, and the land-based campus at Newtown St Boswells. A Construction Hub at Tweedbank opened in 2017. The Scottish Borders Campus is shared with Heriot-Watt University where both organisations benefit from shared service arrangements for the library, IT and facilities services.

Partnerships have been developed with a number of Scottish universities to provide students with a seamless progression to degree level programmes with opportunities available to progress with advanced standing.

The College has developed its provision in line with local needs and has extensive links with industry and commerce by way of its industrial liaison network. Working closely with its local partners, the College has shaped its curriculum in line with the needs of the local labour market.

Partnership working with other statutory agencies is enhanced by being coterminous with the College. This simplifies involvement within the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) for all organisations and helps in joint planning. These stakeholders have regular input into the College's regional outcome agreement as the College has had opportunity to influence and contribute to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan. The organisational structure of the CPP fits well with the College's purpose with a focus on efficient service, economic development, environmental impact and equalities.

Senior staff and governors are heavily involved in key influencers such as the Edinburgh and South East City Region Deal, the South of Scotland Enterprise Agency and Borderlands, and will help to shape their future. The medium term future of the College is also significantly influenced by national bargaining for staff pay and conditions, and particularly by the Government's response to its impact.

The College's strategy and services continue to be shaped by government strategy and local need. It has responded to both the national strategy and local need to increase STEM provision, with it now accounting for 18.2% of activity. It has monitored its recruitment practice closely with an increased emphasis on providing opportunities for the region's most disadvantaged groups. In recent years, as the College has pursued a policy of widening access, there has been a decline in student achievement; however, a priority focus on improving retention and achievement while maintaining the wider access policy, is beginning to have a positive impact.

2. Methodology used to evaluate the quality of provision and services

This is Borders College's second published evaluative report and enhancement plan.

Education Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) published jointly the guidance on quality assurance and enhancement - *How good is our college? (HGIOC?)* in December 2016. This sets out the requirements placed upon colleges to evaluate the quality of their leadership, practice and outcomes. This report and plan were scrutinised and endorsed by the SFC and Education Scotland prior to publication.

The College has a longstanding practice of using the Education Scotland quality indicators (QI) as the basis for its quality systems and approach to service improvement. From these QIs it produced a self-evaluation toolkit including separate self-evaluation templates for each of its departments and faculties. Through these department and faculty self-evaluations and enhancement plans the College builds a whole-organisation plan for improvement. The toolkit was updated following the publication of HGIOC? to reflect the new QIs.

Assistant Principals consult with both staff and students during the year through course team meetings and faculty councils. They also meet with employers through their employer engagement activities. In each case, the meetings are used to seek views to help shape the content and delivery of the curriculum. The information and feedback they obtain through these activities helps to inform the self-evaluation.

At college level, the managers work closely with the Students' Association to discuss and plan activities for improvement. Many College committees have places for student and staff representation. In this way, evaluation and improvement is an ongoing activity, which is recorded formally in the department, faculty and college evaluative reports and enhancement plan. *HGIOC?* has brought significant change to the evaluative process with a number of new areas of focus. Senior managers at the College have supported colleagues and their teams to interpret these new QIs as they relate to the service they provide. This has been achieved through training days, workshops and one-to-one support meetings.

The Regional Board use a self-evaluation toolkit based on the *Code of Good Governance in Scotland's Colleges* while the Students' Association have made good use of the *Framework for the development of strong and effective college Students' Associations* in undertaking their own self-evaluation.

The College put the first draft of the Evaluative Report and Enhancement Plan out to consultation with staff, students, through the Students' Association, and to external stakeholders. Their feedback was used to create the final draft submitted for scrutiny.

The process has had the ongoing support of Education Scotland, the College HMI meeting with managers, staff and Board to guide the self-evaluation process. A team of HMIs and Associate Assessors undertook classroom observation along with staff and student interviews, and the Student Team Member visited to engage directly with students and provided an additional report. Education Scotland and SFC have supported the College in scrutinising and advising on the early draft prior to formal submission in late October of the final draft, which is endorsed by the Regional Board.

The formal output from this process is three documents including this evaluative report and the accompanying enhancement plan, which are for submission by 31 October and publication in December 2018.

The third document is internal to the College, providing a much more detailed analysis and a working action plan with SMART targets. This draws from a number of important strategic level documents including; *HGIOC?* self-evaluation, the College Equality Outcomes and Action Plan, the Gender Action Plan, the corporate risk register, the College Strategic Plan and its Annual Priorities. In this way, the college produces a single college-wide action plan to drive all areas for enhancement, with evidence made available for scrutiny via a folder shared with Education Scotland. This process also allows for the ongoing monitoring of progress for each of the published enhancement plan aims and the wider aims of the College. Progress against all aims is monitored by the executive team with interim and final reviews during the year.

Each faculty and support department is required to present their self-evaluation and enhancement plan to the executive team. Formal interim and final performance review meetings are held for each area, where progress against the enhancement plan aims is discussed and further actions agreed where this is necessary. Where aims are either partially achieved or not achieved these can be carried into the following year. The monitoring at college, faculty and support department levels allows for good tracking of progress in improving service and outcomes, and helps to inform the next annual self-evaluation.

The College sets targets against each of the Regional Outcome Agreement measures each year. The output against each of these measures is shown in the Annex to this report along with 5-year trends. The College has commented on the most significant points to be drawn from its outputs against these measures within the Annex. Within the Regional Outcome Agreement the College sets out its ambitions in relation to national policy and where appropriate these are commented upon with the text of the Evaluative Report.

3. Outcomes of evaluation

3.1. Outcomes and Impact

3.1.1 Wellbeing, equality and inclusion (QI 3.1)

Areas of positive practice
- The College complies with equalities legislation and has in place comprehensive equality and gender action plans. Equalities legislation is an integral part of the curriculum and is embedded in all care programmes. Understanding of this legislation is vital for learners in work practice.
- The College actively promotes the general duties. CPD sessions have been used for Gender Action planning; staff have developed their understanding of the impact of gender bias and segregation on their vocational area to ensure they are equipped to challenge this issue when required.
- This year has seen a particular focus on Mental Health issues, with a range of campaigns and training designed to improve understanding of the issues for both staff and students and therefore have a positive impact on withdrawal and success rates, including #SmashtheStigma campaign, Mental Health First Aid training, Mental Health Agreement, Healthy Body, Healthy Mind campaign.
- The College takes positive action to ensure that there is a wide and varied curriculum to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities, and this is undertaken in a responsive manner with other key partners. In a few cases, staff ensure that celebration of diversity is included within their curriculum delivery and wider college activity.
- Applications, enrolments and achievements are monitored by protected characteristic, which helps the college identify those most at risk and take action to address any issues; in this way, it continues to take active steps to ensure that it avoids either direct or indirect discrimination.
- Early identification of learning support needs at the application stage continues to allow the Learning Support team to work with applicants prior to enrolment with plans in place for the upcoming session. This helps prepare future students for college and eases transition. Development of the Learning Support Service now means there are dedicated Advisers per department improving consistency of approach.
- Support for young carers and care experienced students is having a positive impact on achievement rates. The college provides a variety of ESOL classes across the Borders Region, successfully engaging with Syrian families in the area.
- The College has met almost all of its agreed targets with the SFC against national Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) measures to improve access for priority and disadvantaged groups.

Areas for development
- The proportion of full-time programmes where one gender makes up more than 75% of the enrolments is currently 80% against the challenging target of 73% set in the college's strategic plan for gender balance on courses.
- The proportion of credits delivered on HE programmes to students from SHEP schools (Schools for Higher Education programme) has fallen back slightly this year after an increase over the past 3 years.

3.1.2 Equity, attainment and achievement for all learners (QI 3.2)

Areas of positive practice
- The vast majority of learners achieve well and progress successfully:
    - There has been significant improvement in learner success in both FE and HE full-time programmes compared to previous years. FEFT at 68.9% is above the sector average of 65.3%, arresting the decline of the previous 3 years. HEFT at 72.5% is back above the sector average of 71.6%
    - Learner success rates for FE and HE part-time programmes are above the sector average. FEPT remains high at 82.7% and almost 6% above the sector average. HEPT at 80.4% is above the sector average and ahead of internal meet or beat targets.
- In most full time courses, learners are achieving their core skills well and in most full time programmes, working with others and problem solving is embedded.
- Total withdrawal is 2% below the sector average for FE full-time at 22.8%, arresting the increase experienced in 2016-17, with improvements in both early and further withdrawal.
- For learners with disabilities on mainstream programmes who also have mental health difficulties, learner success has improved from 56% to 68% in 2017/18; similarly success rates for Sight Impaired and Deaf and Hearing Impaired learners overall have improved. Success rates for part time learners with a disability remain high at 86%.
- The learner success rates for students with mental health issues have improved: full time students demonstrated marked improvement from 40% in 2016/17 to 59% in 2017/18, with rates for part time students remaining high, increasing from 84% to 90%. The most marked improvement is in Creative Industries and Sport, increasing from 33% to 69%.
- The learner success rates for HE full time LGBT+ students remains consistently high at 80% for a second year. This is 7.5% above the overall HEFT rate (72.5%). The learner success rates for school academy LGBT+ students (excluding the schools academy induction programme) has also increased from 48% to 69% (larger numbers, fewer early withdrawals).

Areas for development
- For some groups of students, achievement and attainment rates are lower than for the general College population.   This is the case for 16-17 year olds, for whom withdrawal from programmes also remains higher.
- Achievement and attainment is lower on full time FE programmes for learners who are LGBT+, and gender imbalance in the areas of Hair and Beauty, and Performance Sport persist.
- Success rates for learners with disabilities on mainstream programmes have reduced overall, with some exceptions. In particular, the learner success rates for full time HE students with a disability (excluding those with mental health difficulties), have reduced from 75% to 54%.
- The learner success rates for full time students with mental health issues remains lower than the equivalent success rate (67% in both 2016/17 and 2017/18) for learners with no mental health issues.
- The learner success rates for FE full time LGBT+ students remains 16% below the overall FEFT rate (69%) at 53%; the learner success rates for part time LGBT+ students (excluding schools academy) at 77% has decreased from 88.5% in the previous year.

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- The learner success rate for FE full time SIMD1 students is 56%, down from 59% in 2016/17 and below the overall FEFT rate of 68.9%.

3.2. Delivery of learning and services to support learning

3.2.1 Curriculum (QI 2.2)

Areas of positive practice
- Curriculum has been strongly influenced by national policy whilst designed to meet local need and to create opportunities for progression. In almost all subject areas, progression routes to SCQF Level 7 are available in college or through partnership with HEIs.
- Most subject areas have clear progression routes through HNC/HND. Where there are progression opportunities to higher education these are being maximised to enable more students to progress to university (56 offers accepted, 17 with advanced standing). Faculties review the curriculum offer introducing change where necessary to introduce clearer learner pathways.
- Some portfolio areas have successfully developed positive relationships with Higher Education institutions to provide articulation agreements and guaranteed places on degree programmes. Students are well supported in making their applications through UCAS with increasing numbers applying and attaining places on higher education programmes.
- Almost all curriculum teams incorporate relevant core skills within their course design with the majority of teaching contextualised to the vocational area. The curriculum therefore provides the knowledge and skills enabling the students to be work ready or prepared for the next level of study.
- Curriculum teams plan well in most cases to ensure that their programmes are carefully designed and up to date to meet the requirements of industry. Course teams review programme content regularly adjusting the units on offer to meet student and external stakeholder demand. Employer engagement is well coordinated with events planned in most curricular areas to allow for a sharing of views about curriculum design between employers and college staff.
- Almost all curriculum teams incorporate and plan work-based learning activities to develop employability through designing their curriculum with the inclusion of Work Placement, Simulation or Inspirational activities. A few programmes develop employability skills through the utilisation of Realistic Work Environments or Client-based Initiated Projects
- In some areas, almost all students participate in Work Experience and some students participate in an international placement. Placements are well planned and coordinated ensuring that most students benefit from highly relevant work experience. Many students report achieving employment through work experience.
- Most staff empower students to plan and personalise their own learning, particularly when selecting their placement, project work and with assignments. They are able to select a topic of interest and are encouraged to set study plans to meet the deadlines set. In the best examples of lessons, staff utilise the flipped classroom technique where learners are leading the learning.

Areas for development
- Although curriculum teams are good at meeting local needs, they do not consistently plan over the longer term based on strategic objectives, aims and the future needs of the community and local economy.
- The class representative system and the purpose of Faculty Councils is not well understood by learners and representatives who are not always able to identify change or improvement resulting from their input.
- Curriculum Teams utilise programme level data to improve learner performance rates however, the analysis at unit level is less comprehensive.
- The development or achievement of core and essential skills is not well understood by learners and some staff.

3.2.2   Learning, teaching and assessment (QI 2.3)

Areas of positive practice
- Relationships between teaching staff and learners are positive, resulting in effective development of knowledge, and of skills in the practical sessions.
- Most learners are clear about the programme goals and discuss them with their course tutor regularly.
- Staff use a wide variety of teaching approaches to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding of learners. In the better lessons, where a range of learning and teaching takes place, learners are fully engaged. In practical lessons, effective coaching techniques are utilised by staff resulting in learners developing relevant skills and increasing confidence.
- Questioning techniques are deployed to good effect in better lessons allowing learners to further develop their knowledge and understanding.
- Most lessons include a good range of activities with learners well engaged, particularly within practice classes. Most staff adapt their lessons based on the needs, interests and behaviour of the students within a group. This can be in terms of pace, methods of delivery, classroom activity and content. In many areas, staff make effective use of digital technologies to support and enhance purposeful learning.
- In the majority of areas, staff work with the students well to plan for learning by choosing topics, working in groups, providing staff with feedback on lessons and amending lesson plans accordingly. Many learners are empowered to determine their preferred learning approach in the classroom.
- Learners make effective use of good quality teaching and workshop rooms with some external locations further enhancing the learning experience. Staff optimise the use of the college's excellent realistic work environments and external resources for sport and land-based subjects.
- Almost all staff maintain and apply up-to-date knowledge of industry and workplace practice. Many take steps to ensure their industry and professional practice is kept up-to-date through alternative part time employment or industry specific CPD. Learners value the experience that teaching staff provide based on their own past career experience or their up-to-date knowledge which part-time staff, currently still in industry, add to the learning experience.
- BCSA worked with the Learning and Teaching Development Director to facilitate Enterprise Mind-set sessions with the 2017-18 cohort of Student Officers and Faculty Council Chairs.
- In almost all programme areas, assessments are well planned with students aware of the assessment schedule for their programme and units. Students are provided with

useful and encouraging feedback on their performance and where necessary are provided with clear guidance on what needs to improve.

- Additional Assessment Arrangements are well managed and understood by staff and learners readily identifying when they have a difficulty and require support.
- College staff studying the PDA Teaching Practice in Scotland's Colleges provided excellent Learning, Teaching and Assessment Plans to demonstrate how they use on-going and end-of-unit assessment to promote learning and affirm achievement.
- Managers analyse learner performance at programme level well enabling them to establish actions for improvement, particularly for those full time programmes with the lowest learner success rates. A few staff, particularly those delivering core skills, analyse their performance data at unit level.
- Managers use Faculty Council meetings to provide detailed feedback from learning representatives of the learning experience.

Areas for development

- Only a few lessons observed are highly effective; there is an over-reliance in many on independent learning with sometimes very little intervention by teaching staff during a timetabled lesson and staff operating as facilitators or assessors rather than lecturing.
- Use of online resources, including Moodle, is inconsistent across the curriculum and use of digital resources and access to up to date technologies in some areas is limited. Staff levels of expertise and confidence around digital literacy are inconsistent as is access to training. Some ICT issues early in the academic year had an impact on the learning experience of some students.
- Opportunities for professional dialogue between lecturers are limited therefore sharing of good practice on different teaching approaches is not effectively facilitated; although staff reflect on learning and teaching approaches, they do not record and share this systematically or demonstrate it to students and colleagues. Observation of teaching and learning is limited: the College launched a pilot programme of paired learning & teaching observations during 2017/18 and intends to develop the approach further in 2018/19 incorporating learning from the pilot.
- Evaluation by staff and students at lesson and unit level is limited and lecturers do not always proactively involve students in evaluating the learning experience.

3.2.3 Services to support learning (QI 2.4)

Areas of positive practice

- Almost all full time learners receive a one-to-one meeting each block with their course tutor to discuss their progress and future plans based around their Personal Learning Plan. In addition, the Learning support staff conduct Learner Review meetings with all supported students at the end of Block 1 and Block 2.
- Learners are engaged and actively involved in the recruitment of teaching staff to ensure that appropriate appointments are made improving the learning and teaching experience for students
- The College website is well developed, in conjunction with learners, to provide access to the wide range of programmes of study available and to comprehensive information regarding additional support and services. The printed prospectus is also available and distributed to a wide range of outlets including all Schools in the Borders and South East Edinburgh, SDS, the Council, CLD, Libraries and many of our external support agencies. Additionally, a suite of printed booklets is available, both printed and e-book versions, to promote various areas of study or specialist service deliveries.

- Close liaison takes place with Schools, SDS, Support Agencies such as Through Care After Care teams, Carers Trust, Action for Children and many other specialist support agencies to provide advice guidance and support to potential and current learners to ensure informed decisions. Borders Young Talent Programme supported through the Robertson Trust has provided a valuable support mechanism for vulnerable young people at risk of disengagement by mentoring and advising them through transition from secondary to tertiary education or work.
- Corporate Parenting arrangements are well organised with a close working relationship with other corporate parents in the region and membership of the local Corporate Parenting Operational Group assisting to inform practice.
- A data sharing agreement is in place between SBC and the college to aid sharing of information to ensure appropriate transitions and support is available to Care Experienced students.
- Student Welfare Advisors work closely with Funding team staff to ensure disbursement of funds in accordance with national regulations and appropriate use to support learners with childcare, additional needs, who are care experienced and those in particular hardship. This helps students to maintain their place at college and to complete their studies.
- Attendance policy has been reviewed and updated: steps are in place to understand students' circumstances fully and ensure actions taken do not disadvantage students with particular needs, and therefore have a positive impact on outcomes for learners. The updated supporting process places responsibility with Achievement Coaches to investigate levels of engagement, leading to greater flexibility around attendance where complex circumstances or health issues exist and supported by agreed attendance and participation plans with students, reflected in their personal learning support plans.
- Analysis of Key Performance Indicators relating to learner support is continuing to develop, in terms of attendance, retention and attainment, to provide data for evaluation to highlight changes for improvement, and action.
- Services to support learners applying to university or for more advanced levels of study at college are well organised and timely with almost all students achieving a positive outcome from their applications.

Areas for development
- Without continued and enhanced engagement of the College community with external service providers to ensure individual need is met valuable support services may not be readily available or participation with them encouraged.
- Course Tutors and Achievement Coaches led Learner Induction however, there was some inconsistency in the communication to students around areas of responsibility for support departments.
- The availability of adequate analysis tools or reporting to use the data to its full potential presents a barrier to monitoring and intervention planning, and KPI development is less advanced in a number of areas.
- Implementation of the revised bursary policy and procedure is recent; the impact is yet to be fully evaluated.
- Whilst the Admissions Process was reviewed for the 2018/19 intake, implementation of the revised elements was not consistent, which could have a negative impact on the experience of potential applicants.

3.3. Leadership and Quality Culture

3.3.1 Governance and leadership of change (QI 1.1)

Areas of positive practice

- The Regional Board has a strong focus on learner success. College Strategies are carefully planned and developed to link with its strategic plan (Our Strategy – Towards 2020) and with national priorities. The Board agrees Annual Priorities in pursuit of achieving the strategic goals set out in the strategic plan. It tasks the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) with achieving these priorities and monitors progress towards achievement regularly. The Regional Outcome Agreement includes a detailed analysis of the local and national operating environment that informs its outcomes and outputs.

- The Board has a systematic approach to assuring itself that evaluation and enhancement plans are accurate, with progress reported and reviewed periodically through scheduled reporting by the executive team to the full Board and the Curriculum & Quality Committee, which provides effective scrutiny and challenge to senior managers to improve the services to students and their outcomes.

- The Regional Board engage well with BCSA with the student president and VP Education being active members of the Board and other relevant committees. A Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) between the college and BCSA sets out clear, shared priorities based around improving outcomes for learners. College senior managers work closely with the BCSA to create shared aims, clearly articulated in the SPA and the strategic plan. Collaborative work ensures that ambitions within the partnership agreement are met.

- Regional Board members engage well with staff and students through their Learning for Leading scheme. This improves Board members' understanding of the College's operation and the needs of their students. At the conclusion of visits, members are required to submit a report on their activity, impressions and identification of areas of concern, which are followed up.

- The College reflects its commitment to champion equality and diversity in its aims and values, in its plans and strategy e.g. Corporate Parenting Plan, Equality Outcomes, Gender Action Plan and Access and Inclusion Strategy. This ensures that tackling gender imbalance and poorer outcomes for disadvantaged groups is a high priority.

- The College's vision, aims and values are embedded in staff development, planning and review to promote an inclusive and engaged workforce. The recruitment process now includes values and behaviours questions and all staff are involved in an annual Staff Performance and Development Review (SPDR); it now embeds values and behaviours as a key measure to enhance the learning and teaching environment for students. In addition SLT have commenced a Leadership Development Programme which has focused on values and behaviours and embedding these across all areas of work.

- The BCSA has worked very closely with the student support staff to extend the range and improve the quality of the support services for students, expanding the range of partner organisations, facilitating student drop ins, development and implementation of HelpU and the online Wellbeing Point.

- Managers collaborate well with the BCSA in the design and implementation of shared provision and joint campaigns, supporting on-campus events, initiatives and campaigns designed to meet students' welfare and wellbeing needs. They are proactive in seeking the views of BCSA when considering further changes and developments to

ensure that student opinions are taken into account and changes for the better brought forward by students are implemented e.g. the Aspire Fund.
- DYW is embedded in progression pathways for learners across a range of programmes and levels. Approvals process and panels incorporate work experience.

Areas for development
- Target setting for individuals and teams is not systematic: some targets are not stretching as they are consistently surpassed and a very small number of targets are consistently not met.

3.3.2 Evaluation leading to improvement (QI 1.4)

Areas of positive practice
- There is a range of process review mechanisms which facilitate the College in responding to both internal and external drivers for change e.g. Admissions Review, Enrolment Committee, Digital Development Group, each of which involves student representatives.
- The College has developed a suite of metrics to monitor how we meet the ISLT Strategy to ensure our service is timely and projects are effectively delivered to drive improvement. These and lessons learned, e.g. from major incidents, are used to improve our service. We gain feedback via Student Digital Experience Tracker, Web Service surveys and ISLT/Library User Group meetings.
- The College has good, longstanding and close working relationships with its community planning partners. Regional Outcome Agreement plans are shared with the Community Planning Partnership and college data and plans have helped shape the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP). These close working relationships are helping to improve outcomes for school leavers with all contributing to the high percentage in positive destinations.
- Data-sharing arrangements with local strategic partners have allowed for better analysis of the operating environment and an improved impact assessment of the College's contribution.
- School partnership work is well led by senior managers and involves all secondary schools in the region. This has contributed to the curriculum for senior phase pupils undergoing significant change in line with Developing the Young Workforce, increasing the number of vocational qualifications on offer and the number of pupils involved. The College continues to play a major role in the recently established DYW industry group. This has allowed local employers to become more involved in supporting young people into work experience and employment.
- Managers complete detailed analysis of learner outcomes. The focus is on withdrawal rates and learner success, looking at trends and in-year figures. This includes identifying courses for concern and targeted support for the 10 lowest performing courses which has resulted in all of these courses improving their outcomes compared to the previous year. Analysis includes individual programme review and internal reviews, and leads to detailed plans for improvement. Courses for praise are highlighted with good practice shared throughout the portfolio areas.
- The college uses a range of formal and informal methods, including the Annual Learner Feedback survey, which provide Service Managers with critical sources of information and evaluation to enable monitoring of service delivery and planning for improvements. The College sets targets in the Annual Learner Survey, in terms of student satisfaction with services and learning experience with detailed action plans put in place where

satisfaction levels fall below the benchmark. Staff in most areas are involved in assessing performance and setting plans for improvements.

Areas for development

- The appointment of class representatives and communication of improvements following Faculty Council meetings is inconsistent, and some students in some areas have not engaged in the review process. Without the successful implementation of the Student Representative Committee (the new structure for learner engagement) planned for 2018/19, there is a risk that the learner voice may not be consistently heard or utilised to inform improvements.
- The number of learners engaging with the Annual Learner Survey (47%) was significantly less than previous years. Inconsistency across areas with very low or no responses in some, may inhibit our ability to fully understand the range of views of college learners, on learning and teaching and other aspects, and therefore to target actions appropriately.
- In a few areas of the College staff are not sufficiently involved in the self-evaluation process and planning for improvement. In these cases staff are insufficiently aware of the available data that would help them to analysis performance.
- The availability and access to well-analysed data is limited by the current IT systems and software; although progress has been made, it has been slower than anticipated. Whilst a range of reporting tools and reports have been created and developed to allow the college to analyse performance, there is inconsistent clarity of purpose surrounding these, which may reduce user confidence in the robustness of the data and accuracy of the reports.

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4.   What is our capacity to improve?

The College has significant capacity to improve in a number of important areas of its governance, management and operations.

The Regional Board operates effectively; its meetings are well attended and it has in place a committee structure that provides the right focus and scrutiny of the College's activity. Much of its practice was commended in its commissioned independent evaluative report.

Changes made to the College Management structure in 2017/18 and investment in Leadership Development for all our managers provide us with greater capacity and focus to achieve excellence as a college.

The College's strategic direction and curriculum is influenced by local and national external stakeholders. The College has responded well to Developing the Young Workforce, contributes to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and is significantly involved in the Edinburgh City Region Deal, the South of Scotland Enterprise Partnership (SOSEP) and Borderlands initiatives, planning for the future. This will ensure that we are best placed to respond as required to these future developments.

Recent investment by SOSEP is allowing us to develop our physical and digital resources to provide flexible delivery models and to provide a curriculum that responds to our future skills need. In particular, we are investing in technologies to support training as part of our Care Career Academy, developing a STEM Innovation hub with a focus on Construction and Renewables at our Hawick Campus and working in partnership with Dumfries & Galloway College to create a network of digital learning hubs across the South of Scotland.

Borders College has also launched a 5 year Curriculum Strategy that outlines the future skill demand and delivery models and our response. This includes 30% of all delivery to be available on line in the next 5 years and growing the range of provision, especially at HE level.

The Edinburgh City Region Deal will enable us to invest in the digital upskilling of our staff and embedding digital skills within all sectoral learning. We are also taking advantage of the opportunities to develop our capacity to respond to the shortage of skills in the Construction industry.

Quality systems are operating effectively with internal and external audit identifying much good practice. The self-evaluation process covers all academic and support functions within the College. The College recognises that strategies to improve Learning, Teaching and Assessment are less developed. We have appointed Learning and Teaching Enhancement Specialists with the specific remit to support improvement in this area.

There has been significant improvement in learner success in both FE and HE full-time programmes compared to previous years, arresting a decline in FEFT over the previous 3 years. Learner success rates for FE and HE part-time programmes are above the sector average. There is a continued focus on using data better and to take targeted action to continue to improve.

Student involvement is embedded within many of the College's practices and is actively encouraged and the Principal has a close and meaningful working relationship with BCSA. The alignment of BCSA's strategic planning approach with that of the College, and BCSA's self-evaluation approach with HGIOC? along with the instigation of the Student Representative Committee, are designed to ensure that the learner is at the centre of College activity.

Summary of Grading

Key Principle	Grade
Outcomes and Impact: How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our learners? • 3.1 Wellbeing, equality and inclusion • 3.2 Equity, attainment and achievement for all learners	Very Good
Delivery of learning and services to support learning: How good is the quality of our provision and services we deliver? • 2.2 Curriculum • 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment • 2.4 Services to support learning	Good
Leadership and quality culture: How good is our leadership and approach to improvement? • 1.1 Governance and leadership of change • 1.4 Evaluation leading to improvement	Very Good

5. The Borders College Regional Board Statement of Assurance

On behalf of the Borders College Regional Board, We confirm that the Board endorses the above evaluative report and have considered the College's arrangements for leadership and quality culture, delivery of learning and services to support the learner, and outcomes and impact for AY 2017/18. I further confirm that we are satisfied that the College has the capacity to improve as detailed within this report. We can therefore provide assurance to Education Scotland and to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) that the quality of the learning provision at this institution continues to meet the requirements set by the SFC.

Chair of the Borders College Regional Board   Principal and CEO

Mr Tony Jakimciw   Mrs Angela Cox

Annex - Regional Outcome Agreement: Performance against Measures

The College has achieved almost all of the targets against the measures set as part of the Regional Outcome Agreement. Points to note:

- The College achieved its credit target for the year delivering 25,560 credits.
- The College maintained the percentage of credits delivered to young people over a four year period, with 58% of activity undertaken with those under 20 meeting the targets set in the ROA (58%), and 73.5% of total activity delivered to those under 25 years of age, close to target (74.8%).
- The ethnic profile of the student population is as anticipated in the ROA (1.3%) and in line with the region's population profile with very few students (1.7% compared to 1.4% 2016/17) from a non-white ethnicity.
- The proportion of credits delivered to students with a declared disability remains high and greater than the ROA target (28.1%) having increased from 33.7% to 37.7%.
- The proportion of credits delivered to males has increased from 48.4% in 2016/17 to parity with females at 49.8% exceeding the ROA target of 45.4%.
- The proportion of students identifying as gay male or female is 1.4% (1.3%) and 3.2% (3%) identify as bisexual. 10.2% (11%) of students choose not to share this information.
- The proportion of credits delivered to students who declare that they are a care leaver is 5%. Whilst this is less than was recorded in 2016/17 (7.4%) and is lower than target (6.9%), a review of the data suggests it is a more accurate reflection of the College population.
- The proportion of credits delivered on STEM programmes has continued to increase over the three-year trend analysis, and now accounts for 18.2% (15.5%) of activity, in excess of the target of 17.7%.
- The proportion of credits delivered to school students undertaking vocational study was 3.1% compared to 2.9% in 2016/17 and the target of 2%.
- The total amount of credits delivered on full time programmes to young people under the age of 25 was 64.5% (83%) well short of the ROA target (81.7%).
- Whilst the proportion of credits delivered on HE programmes to students from SHEP schools has increased over the 3 years to 2016/17 at 3.5% of credits it has reduced this year and now accounts for 2.9% of credits.
- Whilst the total number of credits delivered to students from the most deprived postcode zone (SIMD1) increased to 3.9% from 3.5%, this remains 2.5% percentage points below target (6.4%).
- The number of apprenticeship starts, which increased during the previous 3 years to 93, has increased to 175 in 2017/18.

Table: Trends against ROA Target

OA National Measure	Actual 2015-16	Actual 2016-17	**Actual 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-	Target 2020-21
1(a)* The volume of Credits delivered (SUMs prior to 2015/16)						
The volume of Credits delivered (core)	24521	24,521	24,850	25,176	25,176	25,176
Core Credits target (region)	24521	24,521	24,813	25,176	25,176	25,176
% towards core Credits target (region)	100.0%	100.0%	100%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
The volume of Credits delivered (ESF)	667	593	710	478	478	478
The volume of Credits delivered (core + ESF)	25188	25,114	25,560	25,654	25,654	25,654
1(b)(i) Volume and proportion of Credits delivered to learners aged 16-19 and 20-24						
Volume of Credits delivered to learners aged 16-19	14,684	14,960	14,814	14,520	14,520	14,520
Proportion of Credits delivered to learners aged 16-19	58.3%	59.6%	58.0%	56.6%	56.6%	56.6%
Volume of Credits delivered to learners aged 20-24	4,178	4,131	4,013	4438	4438	4438
Proportion of Credits delivered to learners aged 20-24	16.6%	16.4%	15.7%	17.3%	17.3%	17.3%
1(b)(ii) Volume and proportion of Credits delivered to full-time learners aged 16-19 and 20-24						
Volume of Credits delivered to full-time learners	20,240	19,696	19,967	17,188	17,188	17,188
Volume of Credits delivered to full-time learners aged 16-19	13,434	13,275	13,398	11,533	11,533	11,533
Proportion of Credits delivered to full-time learners aged 16-19	66.4%	67.4%	67.1%	67.1%	67.1%	67.1%
Volume of Credits delivered to full-time learners aged 20-24	3,289	3,110	3,160	2,750	2,750	2,750
Proportion of Credits delivered to full-time learners aged 20-24	16.3%	15.8%	15.8%	16.0%	16.0%	16.0%
1(c)* Volume and proportion of Credits delivered to learners in the most deprived 10% postcode areas						
Volume of Credits delivered to learners in the most deprived 10% postcode areas	1,654	890	965	1539	1667	1796
Proportion of Credits delivered to learners in the most deprived 10% postcode areas	6.6%	3.5%	3.8%	6.0%	6.5%	7.0%
1(d) The volume and proportion of Credits relating to learners from different protected characteristic groups and Care Experienced						
Gender -						
Volume of Credits delivered to Male learners	11,392	12,151	12,645	12545	12545	12545
Proportion of Credits delivered to Male learners	45.2%	48.4%	49.5%	48.90%	48.90%	48.90%
Volume of Credits delivered to Female learners	13,777	12,962	12,801	13082	13082	13082
Proportion of Credits delivered to Female learners	54.7%	51.6%	50.1%	51%	51%	51%
Volume of Credits delivered to Other learners	18	0	23	27	27	27
Proportion of Credits delivered to Other learners	0.07%	0.00%	0.09%	0.10%	0.10%	0.10%
Proportion of full time programme where one gender accounts for more than 75% of enrolments		75%	80%	70%	69%	68%
Ethnicity -						
Volume of Credits delivered to BME learners	358	344	336	359	359	359
Proportion of Credits delivered to BME learners	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%	1.40%	1.40%	1.40%
Disability -						
Volume of Credits delivered to students with a known disability	7,122	8,452	5,886	8,466	8,466	8,466
Proportion of Credits delivered to students with a known disability	28.3%	33.7%	23.0%	33%	33%	33%

OA National Measure	Actual 2015-16	Actual 2016-17	**Actual 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-	Target 2020-21
Care Experience -						
Volume of Credits delivered to students with Care Experience	1,683	1,846	1,253	1,950	1,950	1,950
Proportion of Credits delivered to students with Care Experience	6.7%	7.4%	4.9%	7.60%	7.60%	7.60%
2(a)* The number of senior phase pupils studying vocational qualifications delivered by colleges	81	103	158	148	148	148
2(b) Volume and proportion of Credits delivered to senior phase age pupils studying vocational qualifications delivered by colleges						
Volume of Credits delivered to senior phase age pupils studying vocational qualifications delivered by colleges	338.5	578	830	831	831	831
Proportion of Credits delivered to senior phase age pupils studying vocational qualifications delivered by colleges	1.3%	2.3%	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%
2(c) Volume and proportion of Credits delivered to learners at S3 and above as part of 'school-college' provision						
The volume of Credits delivered to learners at S3 and above as part of 'school-college' provision	2,001	1,889	2,341	2,027	2,027	2,027
The proportion of Credits delivered to learners at S3 and above as part of 'school-college' provision	7.9%	7.5%	9.2%	7.9%	7.9%	7.9%
2(d) Volume and proportion of Credits delivered at HE level to learners from SHEP schools (i.e. Secondary schools with consistently low rates of progression to higher education)						
Volume of Credits delivered at HE level	3395	4,947	3,898	5,200	5,200	5,200
Volume of Credits delivered at HE level to learners from SHEP schools	709	865	737	925	925	925
Proportion of Credits delivered at HE level to learners from SHEP schools	20.9%	17.5%	18.9%	17.8%	17.8%	17.8%
3. Volume and proportion of Credits delivered to learners enrolled on STEM courses						
Volume of Credits delivered to learners enrolled on STEM courses	3,536	3,883	4,639	4,541	4,541	4,541
Proportion of Credits delivered to learners enrolled on STEM courses	14.0%	15.5%	18.1%	17.7%	17.7%	17.7%
4(a)* Proportion of enrolled students successfully achieving a recognised qualification						
The number of FT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	693	642	672	723	738	749
The total number of FT FE enrolled students	1,039	979	977	1,040	1,040	1,040
The percentage of FT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	66.7%	65.6%	68.8%	69.5%	71.0%	72.0%
The number of PT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	988	1,325	1,515	1,479	1,589	1,666
The total number of PT FE enrolled students	1,282	1,584	1,851	1,761	1,870	1,960
The percentage of PT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	77.1%	83.6%	81.8%	84.0%	84.5%	85.0%
The number of FT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	163	158	169	197	201	206
The total number of FT HE enrolled students	213	223	233	258	260	263
The percentage of FT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	76.5%	70.9%	72.5%	76.50%	77.50%	78.50%
The number of PT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	108	338	152	431	473	507
The total number of PT HE enrolled students	152	427	196	523	567	607
The percentage of PT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	71.1%	79.2%	77.6%	82.5%	83.50%	83.50%

OA National Measure	Actual 2015-16	Actual 2016-17	**Actual 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-	Target 2020-21
4(b)* Proportion of enrolled MD10 students successfully achieving a recognised qualification						
The number of MD10 FT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	45	23	25	28	34	40
The total number of MD10 FT FE enrolled students	78	39	44	45	51	56
The percentage of MD10 FT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	57.7%	59.0%	56.8%	62.2%	66.7%	71.4%
The number of MD10 PT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	59	45	30	50	56	63
The total number of MD10 PT FE enrolled students	90	51	49	57	63	70
The percentage of MD10 PT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	65.6%	88.2%	61.2%	87.7%	88.9%	90.0%
The number of MD10 FT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	8	3	5	8	8	8
The total number of MD10 FT HE enrolled students	11	4	5	10	10	10
The percentage of MD10 FT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	72.7%	75.0%	100.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%
The number of MD10 PT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	5	9	5	11	12	14
The total number of MD10 PT HE enrolled students	6	12	6	14	15	17
The percentage of MD10 PT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	83.3%	75.0%	83.3%	78.6%	80.0%	82.4%
4(c)* Proportion of senior phase age pupils successfully achieving a vocational qualification delivered by colleges						
The number of senior phase FT FE pupils achieving a vocational qualification	0	14	10	16	17	19
The total number of senior phase FT FE pupils	0	26	21	26	26	26
The percentage of senior phase FT FE pupils achieving a vocational qualification		53.8%	47.6%	61.5%	65.4%	73.1%
The number of senior phase PT FE pupils achieving a vocational qualification	16	62	66	86	106	131
The total number of senior phase PT FE pupils	22	123	137	143	163	183
The percentage of senior phase PT FE pupils achieving a vocational qualification	72.7%	50.4%	48.2%	60.1%	65.0%	71.6%
The number of senior phase FT HE pupils achieving a vocational qualification	0	0	0	0	0	0
The total number of senior phase FT HE pupils	0	0	0	0	0	0
The percentage of senior phase FT HE pupils achieving a vocational qualification						
The number of senior phase PT HE pupils achieving a vocational qualification	13	0	0	15	15	15
The total number of senior phase PT HE pupils	27	0	0	20	20	20
The percentage of senior phase PT HE pupils achieving a vocational qualification	48.1%			75.0%	75.0%	75.0%
4(d)* Proportion of full-time enrolled Care Experienced students successfully achieving a recognised qualification						
The number of CE FT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	46	31	34	38	42	45
The total number of CE FT FE enrolled students	88	57	77	60	63	66
The percentage of CE FT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	52.3%	54.4%	44.2%	64.0%	66.0%	68.0%
The number of CE FT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	6	2	3	3	5	7
The total number of CE FT HE enrolled students	9	2	6	4	6	8
The percentage of CE FT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	66.7%	100.0%	50.0%	75.0%	83.3%	87.5%

OA National Measure	Actual 2015-16	Actual 2016-17	**Actual 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-	Target 2020-21
4(e)* Proportion of full-time FE enrolled students aged 16-19 successfully achieving a recognised qualification						
The number of FT FE enrolled students aged 16-19 achieving a recognised qualification	462	514	447	552	568	572
The total number of FT FE enrolled students aged 16-19	694	801	695	800	800	800
The percentage of FT FE enrolled students aged 16-19 achieving a recognised qualification	66.6%	64.2%	64.3%	69.0%	71.0%	71.5%
5. The number of starts for contracted apprenticeships (including industry bodies such as CITB and SECTT)	183	183	175	200	220	242
6. Number and proportion of full-time learners with substantial 'work placement experience' as part of their programme of study						
Total number of full-time learners		1,202	1,210	1,298	1,300	1,303
Number of full-time learners with substantial 'work placement experience' as part of their programme of study	723	750	953	800	850	900
Proportion of full-time learners with substantial 'work placement experience' as part of their programme of study		62.4%	78.8%	61.6%	65.4%	69.1%
7.* The number and proportion of successful students who have achieved HNC or HND qualifications articulating to degree level courses with advanced standing						
The total number of students who have achieved HNC or HND qualifications progressing to degree level courses		40	56	45	50	55
The number of successful students who have achieved HNC or HND qualifications articulating to degree level courses with advanced standing	8	10	17	15	20	25
The proportion of successful students who have achieved HNC or HND qualifications articulating to degree level courses with advanced standing		25.0%	30.4%	33.3%	40.0%	45.5%
8.* The number and proportion of full-time college qualifiers in work, training and/or further study 3-6 months after qualifying						
Response rate		95.4%	91.9%	96%	96.3%	96.6%
The total number of full-time FE college qualifiers (confirmed destinations)	583	606	559	723	738	749
The number of full-time FE college qualifiers in work, training and/or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	554	546	481	683	693	699
The proportion of full-time FE college qualifiers in work, training and/or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	95.0%	90.1%	86.0%	94.5%	93.9%	93.3%
The total number of full-time HE college qualifiers (confirmed destinations)	130	135	121	197	201	206
The number of full-time HE college qualifiers in work, training and/or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	123	117	98	193	197	201
The proportion of full-time HE college qualifiers in work, training and/or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	94.6%	86.7%	81%	98%	98%	98%

OA National Measure	Actual 2015-16	Actual 2016-17	**Actual 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-	Target 2020-21
9. The percentage of students overall, satisfied with their college experience (SSES survey)						
The percentage of full-time FE students overall, satisfied with their college experience		95.60%	91%	96%	96.50%	97%
Response rate		71.90%	53.45%	75%	78%	80%
The percentage of full-time HE students overall, satisfied with their college experience		93%	79%	95%	96%	97%
Response rate		77.30%	60%	80%	82.50%	85%
The percentage of part-time FE students overall, satisfied with their college experience		96%	95%	96.50%	97%	97.50%
Response rate		62.30%	33.70%	72%	77%	80%
The percentage of part-time HE students overall, satisfied with their college experience		84.60%	100%	90%	92.50%	95%
Response rate		61.90%	45.83%	65%	70%	75%
The percentage of distance learning FE students overall, satisfied with their college experience		92.70%	100%	94%	94.50%	95%
Response rate		33.90%	17.19%	40%	50%	60%
The percentage of distance HE students overall, satisfied with their college experience		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Response rate		44.90%	29.07%	50%	60%	70%
10 Gross carbon footprint (tCO2e)		616	512	546	486	426

** Figures for in the table for 2017/18 are to be audited. They up to date at completion of this report.