

GLASGOW KELVIN COLLEGE

Academic Board Committee - 01 May 2026

Participation in Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme

Report by Assistant Principal - Performance, Planning & Student Experience

1. Introduction

As outlined in the previous paper on this topic, participation in STEP (Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme) continues to be an SFC funding requirement and a key delivery mechanism of the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF). STEP complements the College's wider quality and enhancement activity, including the annual SEAP (Self-Evaluation & Action Plan), Institution-Led Quality Review (ILQR), engagement with Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER), and SFC Annual Quality Engagement (AQE).

STEP is delivered through a range of multi-year, sector-led enhancement projects involving staff and student representatives from across Scotland's colleges and universities. Each project addresses a nationally agreed enhancement theme aligned with student access, success, and outcomes. The overarching STEP themes are:

- Supporting transitions and navigating pathways
- Strengthening engagement, community and belonging
- Developing skills and capabilities for learning
- Delivering tailored, targeted and personalised support

Projects are delivered on a four-year cycle:

- Year 1 – Discovery: project design and scoping
- Years 2 and 3 – Implementation: piloting, refinement and collaboration
- Year 4 – Reflection: evaluation and dissemination of learning

This paper provides an update on Glasgow Kelvin College's engagement with STEP since the previous report to the Learning & Teaching Committee.

2. Update on College participation

The College remains actively engaged with STEP and is represented on multiple projects. The College has been represented at all in-person STEP events to date, and at the majority of associated online sessions. Engagement continues to involve both senior staff and student representatives, reflecting the partnership ethos of STEP and TQEF.

The College's primary formal project involvement continues to be on the SAPSO project, which aims to use data and sharing of best practice to reduce barriers for 'disabled' students and improve their chances of success in tertiary education. For the purposes

of this national project, 'disabled' is defined as students experiencing physical disability, mental health challenges, long-term illness, learning difficulties and differences, and neurodiversity. Specific aims include:

- Identifying barriers and enablers affecting retention, progression and success
- Understanding student experience across learning pathways
- Elevating the student voice to inform inclusive, data-informed institutional practice
- Developing evidence-based recommendations for policy, support and enhancement activity

The College continues to be represented on the SAPSO project by John Clarke, Assistant Principal: Performance, Planning & Student Experience, and Jon Craig, Student President.

Current planned outputs include video case studies sharing learner stories and journeys to identify successes that may inform practice; as well as research-based recommendations on good practice, based on data provided by participating centres.

Currently around half the planned video case studies have been filmed at volunteer centres, with the other half still to take place. An extension of this part of the project is planned for AY 2026/27, with 10 further centres expected to provide students for interview. The College has volunteered to be such a centre.

The University of Dundee is leading on the capture of data for research and recommendation purposes – further information on this aspect of the project is likely to be available early in AY 2026/27.

In addition to SAPSO, College staff are contributing to other STEP projects, demonstrating broader institutional engagement:

- Senior Curriculum Manager Steven Donnelly has been contributing to the project: *Strategies to Support Student Engagement & Partnership within an Increasingly Time-Poor and Cash-Poor Student Population*.
- **Regional Enhancement & Collaboration in Tertiary Scotland (REACTS)**
 - This project aims to design and test a framework for stronger regional tertiary networks, piloting activity in selected regions and sharing findings as national case studies.
 - Assistant Principal John Clarke represents the College within the South West Scotland REACTS regional network, has attended an inaugural regional meeting hosted at the University of Strathclyde, and has committed the College to engagement with forthcoming pilot activity.

Collectively, this participation ensures that the College is contributing to, and benefiting from, enhancement work at both national and regional level.

3. Impact on Students

While most STEP projects are currently in limited implementation phases, their outputs will be made available to all tertiary education providers in Scotland. The anticipated impact for College students includes:

- Improved institutional understanding of barriers to access, progression and success
- Stronger student voice and partnership approaches
- Evidence-informed enhancement of inclusive practice and support
- Alignment of College practice with emerging national good practice

4. Resource Implications

SFC funding continues to cover travel and accommodation costs associated with STEP in-person sessions. Additional resource implications are limited to staff and student time required for participation and contribution.

5. Equality

There are no negative Equality implications arising directly from this paper. STEP activity explicitly supports the College's commitment to equality, inclusion and support.

6. Risk and Assurance

Previously identified project-level risks remain relevant, including:

- Annual turnover of student representatives
- Sustaining engagement across large, multi-institution project groups

These risks continue to be mitigated through strong coordination at project level and consistent institutional representation.

7. Data Protection

Data protection implications associated with STEP activity, particularly where student experience data is collected, is managed within agreed national project frameworks and institutional policies.

8. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

- Note the College's continuing and expanding participation in STEP activity.

9. Further Information

- Further information on STEP available at the following link: [Home](#)
- Members can obtain additional information on the contents of this report from John Clarke, Assistant Principal: Performance, Planning & Student Experience