

Board Meeting

Date of Meeting	Monday 28 October 2024
Paper Title	GCRB Risk Register
Agenda Item	10
Paper Number	BM1-E
Responsible Officer	Jim Godfrey, Finance and Resources Director
Status	Disclosable
Action	For Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1** A risk review session, with the internal auditor, is planned for Monday 27 January 2025. The purpose of this session is to consider the current risk register, provide comment on future direction and guidance on activity for refreshing the risk register.
- 1.2** The current Risk Register is presented to board for consideration. The current context of the Glasgow region review and the consultation on the removal of GCRB means some of this has had to be reflected in the risk register given the potential impact on the current regional approach, processes and staff.
- 1.3** In the longer terms, some of the current risks may be removed entirely and board may wish to consider if a new register is required following announcement of the Minister's decision on the future of GCRB.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that board **comment** and **approve** the Risk Register.

3. Report

- 3.1** In line with the agreed process, Tier One risks are considered at each board meeting. Tier 2 risks are considered on a rotating basis in terms of relevance and requirement throughout the year¹.
- 3.2** The following risks and recommendations are presented to board for consideration. Some specific mitigations are likely to require to be considered in due course, particularly in relation to the Glasgow region review.

4. Risks

- 4.1 Risk 1: Financial sustainability and failure to achieve targets is impacted by available funding in the short term.** This risk is currently maintained at the highest level. While the high-level learning and teaching grant is retained for 2024-25, this is a challenging settlement. The budget process (for 2025-26) is now underway, with an initial indicative announcement expected in December 2024. The future financial outlook is extremely challenging. *It is recommended that this risk level is maintained for now.*
- 4.2 Risk 2: System change, including national and regional review, forces GCRB into a position which is against our role and purpose, and reduces regional collaboration.** The review of the Glasgow college system is on-going and GCRB has sought to mitigate impact via a series of positive, constructive meetings and discussions as well as continuing to work closely with Scottish Government and SFC. On 16 May 2024, Graeme Dey, Minister for HE and FE, confirmed in parliament that it is his intention to dissolve GCRB and seek a new collaborative arrangement in Glasgow. The consultation process was launched in June and ended on 20 September 2024. An announcement, of the final decision, is expected soon. At this time, it is our intention to focus on continuing to deliver the core functions of GCRB, progressing the annual funding allocation, maintaining effective monitoring and reporting, and progressing relevant governance and audit activity. Our priorities and focus will inevitably change as we work through this period. The impact of the Minister's intention inevitably means that GCRB is in a significantly changed position in terms of delivering on its current role and purpose, and there is a real risk it disincentivises regional collaboration. *It is recommended that this risk level is maintained at 5/5 in the current context.*
- 4.3 Risk 3: The Glasgow college regional strategy is not effectively and collaboratively delivered.** There remains a regional strategy and monitoring process, for the current year. The activity across College Partnership West and the Programme of Action continue. In addition, we continue to clearly articulate the importance of region-wide programmes to SFC to ensure they are safeguarded wherever possible. The proposed Ministerial outcome of the Glasgow review means that it is likely GCRB's role in regional strategy, as it currently stands, will continue to diminish and there is a strong likelihood this will need to be replaced with a transition strategy in the near future. With that in mind, it is increasingly unlikely that regional strategy can be delivered in its current form

¹ Risk 7 was considered by the Board at its previous meeting. However, it is brought back for consideration again at this meeting due to the proposals contained elsewhere on this agenda.

and there will be challenge in delivering via a change process. *It is recommended that this risk level is maintained at 5/4 in the current context.*

4.4 Risk 4: An ineffective regional curriculum impacts students, communities, and the economy. The regional curriculum is monitored at a regional level via the Glasgow Colleges Learning and Teaching Group. The current data indicates broadly positive current-year progress in terms of recruitment and retention, as well as in providing to access to education for identified groups including those with some protected characteristics. Elements of the curriculum, such as Foundation Apprenticeships, are being impacted by lack of demand, while others remain at risk of impact from an on-going reduction of staff. Progress on the Glasgow region review acts as a disincentive to significant further progress on the coherent delivery of a Glasgow curriculum, and with the Minister's intended decision now known this may be further impacted. GCRB is disempowered to deliver a regional curriculum. *It is recommended that this risk level maintained at 5/4 in the current context.*

4.5 Risk 5: Ineffective collaboration in the Glasgow college system reduces our collective impact and the delivery of a sustainable future model. As per Risk 3, collaborative activity can be evidenced in elements of the curriculum and in strategic and leadership areas, as per some of the activity of College Partnerships West and the Glasgow College Group meetings. Clarity on the intended outcome for GCRB significantly reduces our ability, and role, in delivering a sustainable future model. *It is recommended that this risk level is maintained at 5/4 in the current context.*

4.6 Risk 7: GCRB does not have the necessary capacity and capability to deliver our objectives. There has been a reduction in capacity (from 5.1 to 3.1 FTE) following the departure of the GCRB Executive Director and Programme Manager (Environment and Sustainability) on 31 July 2024. The proposed outcome of the Ministerial review of the Glasgow region may also carry a risk of the loss of further staff or board members, bringing with it the potential for further impact on capacity to deliver. The Board Chair has progressed a proposal to mitigate this risk, and this proposal is for consideration by the Board today. *It is recommended that this risk level is maintained at 4/4 in the current context.*

5. Risk Appetite

5.1 The current numbers are indicative until such a time as they are formally considered by board. The outcome of the Glasgow region review consultation may necessitate a different approach.

6. Risk and Compliance Analysis

6.1 The Risk Register forms an important element of GCRB's approach to good governance, identifying, monitoring and mitigating against risk and empowering board and executive to direct activity and resources appropriately.

7. Financial and Resource Analysis

- 7.1** There are no specific financial and resource implications to the specific questions raised by this paper. More broadly, the Risk Register is one mechanism by which financial and resources risks are monitored.

8. Equalities Implications

- 8.1** There are no specific equalities implications raised by this paper. There is a wider implication regarding GCRB staffing which will require the attention of board. We are currently in the process of seeking appropriate HR guidance to ensure this is appropriately handled in line with Fair Work and equalities.

9. Learner Implications

- 9.1** There are no specific learner implications raised by this paper.

RISK REGISTER

Revised October 2024

STRATEGY Our Strategic Goals	RISKS		EVALUATION OF RISK					Mitigating Actions	MANAGEMENT OF RISK		
	Risk ID	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Net Risk Score	Risk Appetite	Recent Trend		Lead for Risk Management Action Plan	Aim	Update
Tier One											
2	001	Financial sustainability and failure to achieve targets is impacted by available funding in the short term (1)	5	4	20	Medium	➡	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, and enhance, long term financial planning. Collate information and identify funding priorities for lobbying. Strengthen key external relationships (SFC, SG, SDS). Monitor, and assess, the full impact of the budget settlement 2024-25. Individual colleges currently developing plans. Staff reductions, including redundancy, underway in Glasgow Funding allocations for 24-25 approved by the Board in June 2024. 	Finance & Resources Director	Reduce	<p>Latest monitoring information considered by P&R Committee. Engagement with SFC, CS, SG, SQA etc to focus on key emerging issues. On-going challenge sector wide in meeting targets.</p> <p>Recent funding settlements (post-Covid19) have been very challenging. Anticipated reductions in grant funding (for 2025-26) compound the impact of cost increases (as a result of high inflation and wage rises). Budget announcement expected in December 2025.</p>
2, 3	002	System change, including national and regional review, forces GCRB into a position which is against our role and purpose, and reduces regional collaboration (1)	5	5	25	Medium	➡	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure GCRB at board and executive level participates in regional and national environment scanning and scenario planning Board is provided with updates at relevant stages to ensure understanding of processes Board and committee agendas are managed to ensure contribution, augmented by briefing notes and associated material Regional strategic direction is monitored and reviewed External engagement and planning is consistently delivered, led by Chair and Executive Director, working with wide range of organisations including Scottish Government, SFC and other key partners Impact of review is now clear on this risk. 	Executive Director/Interim Chief Officer	Reduce	Chair continues to hold relevant meetings with external links, to monitor and report appropriately
1, 2, 3	003	The Glasgow college regional strategy is not effectively and collaboratively delivered (1)	5	4	20	Medium	➡	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy is shared, and monitored via Chair and board Collaborative planning and delivery opportunities are taken up, working with colleges, Student Associations and external partners such as local authorities. Decision making processes at executive, committee and board are clearly informed by strategy and national direction Collaborative approach is enhanced via GCG and other working groups Strategic direction, expectations and requirements are clearly communicated and shared on a regular basis, monitored and reported. Impact of review is now clear on this risk. 	Executive Director/Interim Chief Officer	Reduce	Board risk workshop scheduled for January, dependent upon Ministerial decision on future of GCRB.
1, 2, 3	004	An ineffective regional curriculum impacts students, communities and the economy (1)	5	4	20	Medium	➡	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with SFC, GCG L&T, QAA and GCRB working group to enhance and evolve data-led monitoring, planning and reporting Maintain shared and agreed cross-colleges regional approach to curriculum planning and delivery via MOJ Work with partner organisations such as SDS and city councils to understand current and emerging needs, enhanced by cross-colleges information sharing Work with Education Scotland to plan and coordinate review processes, and to consider emerging regional review information to form action plan as required Impact of review is now clear on this risk. 	Executive Director/Interim Chief Officer	Reduce	<p>Cross-colleges regional planning continues via GCG L&T group, coordination of OA, and discussion on specific items such as FAs. Progress on-going in developing OA, FA plan etc. Cross-region working in areas such as Just Transition include meetings with council, colleges and other partners.</p> <p>Latest monitoring information considered by P&R Committee. Curriculum change to date generally in line with SFC credit changes and mainly via rationalisation and removal of duplication.</p>
2, 3	005	Ineffective collaboration in the Glasgow college system reduces our collective impact and the delivery of a sustainable future model (1)	5	4	20	Medium	➡	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional inclusion in all activity, with appropriate cross-colleges membership and attendance at governance, executive and functional levels on a regular basis Continued focus on collaborative, cooperative and regional approaches and solutions in all activity from board to functional Support and engagement in the Glasgow College Group committees in support of current, planned and emerging projects Enhance project-led regional approach to delivery of strategic objectives, noting the loss of the 'regional leads' function and associated reduced GCRB capacity Contribute, and lead where appropriate, on collaborative activity with internal and external stakeholders Impact of review is now clear on this risk. 	Executive Director/Interim Chief Officer	Reduce	Effective practice has emerged where collaboration is embedded, effective and unambiguous. The current structures in the region continue to make fully effective collaboration a significant challenge, and it is hoped that the Ministerial guidance will begin to provide a roadmap for future direction.
Tier Two											
3	006	GCRB does not develop and maintain effective external relations (2)	3	3	9	Medium	➡	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications strategy approved by the board, outlining engagement activity and priorities Effective communication with three colleges, supporting and aligning activity Effective communication with board members: manage information flow and board/committee governance; provide regular, relevant updates; promote opportunities for GCRB engagement, utilising board member skills. External engagement plans focused on SG, SFC, key stakeholders and partners, prioritising regional review activity and membership of key decision making and working groups Collaborative communications to promote the benefits of a regional approach and enhance understanding of GCRB's role and purpose Reputation and issues management for GCRB and the Glasgow college region Support stakeholder and partners campaigns Working effectively with Scottish Government and SFC on the impact and implications of review decision 	Executive Director/Interim Chief Officer in conjunction with Communications Lead	Maintain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCRB Exec and Chair continue to work to deliver effective communications and engagement with SG, SFC, three colleges, unions and stakeholders on key areas Effect as review activity, regional finances and financial mitigations. This has included extensive stakeholder engagement and meetings with relevant people and organisations OA work on-going in close adherence to SFC guidelines and working with colleges Communications strategy progress reported via activity report presented to board members Ongoing regular communications meetings with all three colleges, stakeholders and partners. GCRB e-bulletin highlighting the region's continued work and collaborative approach in specific areas
2	007	GCRB does not have the necessary capacity and capability to deliver our objectives (2)	4	4	16	Low	➡	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCRB staffing level is continuously monitored alongside required workflow and reported appropriately Work annual cycle and board and committee cycle are planned and communicated, including consideration of all work requirements High-volume periods, new projects, and anticipated changes are monitored, planned and work allocated appropriately Prioritisation of resource is made in line with regional strategy, identified risk and agreement of Chair and Executive Director/Interim Chief Officer F&W Framework values fully embedded within GCRB's employer duties, and that capacity and core activity are supported through the review process. Monitor capacity to deliver, employee wellbeing, support, training needs etc. regularly monitored with feedback opportunity Specialist requirements at executive and board level monitored, augmented via fixed-term approach and via board capacity review and recruitment processes However, impact of review is now clear on this risk. Reduction in senior capacity with Executive Director departure and there is a recognised risk of loss of other executive and board members Creation of new Head of Service post seeks to mitigate some elements of risk 	Executive Director/Interim Chief Officer & Board Secretary	Maintain	Staffing complement and allocations currently being reviewed to consider appropriate fit with current remit, and to consider potential implications of changed remit dependent on guidance.
2	008	A breach of legislation or regulatory requirements results in a failure of governance (2)	2	2	4	Low	➡	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board secretary role includes clear responsibility in areas of governance requirements, with monitoring, reporting and information sharing on regular basis to committees and board Finance-specific requirements monitored by Finance and Resources Director Effective communication with board members: manage information flow and board/committee governance; provide regular, relevant updates; promote opportunities for GCRB engagement, utilising board member skills. Engagement with appropriate external bodies, including Colleges Scotland, GCG, SFC and Scottish Government ensures GCRB currency in all change programmes and legislative and regulatory requirements 	Board Secretary	Maintain	<p>Updates on requirements continue to be provided at appropriate forums, including executive team meetings, committees, board etc.</p> <p>Relevant issues are monitored effectively, and processes are working well as reported by audit process.</p>
2	009	Inadequate controls and preventative measures result in a breach (e.g. cyber attack, fraudulent activity) (2)	2	3	6	Low	➡	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-colleges IT group shares common information, monitors emerging risk and takes appropriate action, sharing best practice Appropriate cyber security credentials are maintained and reported as appropriate via correct channels GCRB makes use of most appropriate support - including the contracting of external specialist IT support and security to provide assurance and expertise for the organisation independent of any local working arrangements Control measures for other requirements of good governance and sound activity across key areas such as finance, are appropriately planned, reported, monitored and audited Clear line of communication and reporting to Audit Committee is maintained effectively Changes in processes, guidance, law etc are clearly communicated to executive, board, partners etc as appropriate, actioned, and CPD offered as required 	Executive Director/Interim Chief Officer & Finance & Resources Director	Maintain	<p>GCRB has contracted an external company to provide elements of IT support and cyber security, ensuring a high level of assurance, service and baseline business requirements are met.</p> <p>Assurance on other elements of compliance and security are reported to GCRB, shared with other colleges, and reported to committee for information.</p>
2, 3	010	Scenario planning and stress testing is inadequate to mitigate against major emerging risks (2)	2	3	6	Low	➡	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCRB policies and procedures form formal approach to safeguard and mitigate in specific areas Policies are effectively monitored and changed via appropriate governance function New approaches and ways of working developed to meet emerging challenges Approach to scenario planning and stress testing to be reviewed as part of forthcoming internal audit cycle with recommendations developed for action with appropriate committees 	Executive Director/Interim Chief Officer	Maintain	Internal Audit plan now revised pending Ministerial decision on the future of GCRB.
3	011	GCRB is unable to deliver against its regional environment and sustainability strategy (3)	2	3	6	Low	➡	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The three-year sustainability project ended 31 July 2024. The Environmental and Sustainability Lead left the employment of GCRB at the end of the fixed term contract. Delivery of the sustainability strategy now rests with the three colleges. 	Executive Director/Interim Chief Officer	Maintain	Colleges are obliged to report progress against their sustainability outcomes and these reports are provided to GCRB for information.
3	012	GCRB's Programme of Action investment fails to deliver intended outcomes, impact and benefits (3)	2	3	6	Low	➡	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings with delivery partners ensure regular communication and effective feedback loops Informal monitoring processes, including with college partners, allows for in-year iterations Formal monitoring process happens in line with annual cycle of reporting to executive and governance assurance to board POA is effectively linked to regional need and regional strategy, and is appropriately budgeted and planned with board and partners as part of annual strategy and finance development Learner input delivered via regular engagement cycle via Student Unions 	Executive Director/Interim Chief Officer	Maintain	Programme partners are in the process of providing reviews for assurance purposes and consideration. Meetings with partners are ongoing.