

Performance and Resources Committee Meeting

Date of Meeting	Monday 9 October 2017
Paper Title	Developing a regional approach to student data management
Agenda Item	13
Paper Number	PRC1-N
Responsible Officer	Robin Ashton, Executive Director
Status	Disclosable
Action	For Noting and Discussion

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To provide members of the Committee with an update on regional executive discussions regarding the development of a regional approach to student data management.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 note** this report and the potential for a regional approach to student data management to contribute to regional policy and national strategy achievement;
- 2.2 provide** feedback on the specified project needs and benefits of a regional approach to student data management; and
- 2.3 request** an update on the further development of proposals at a future meeting of the Committee.

3. Introduction

- 3.1** The individual licenses for all three of the Glasgow College Region MIS systems are due for renewal and there is an opportunity to undertake a procurement exercise across the four Glasgow College Region organisations through the APUC regional procurement team.
- 3.2** Access to, and use of, high quality student data is core to the business of both the colleges and GCRB and underpins effective curriculum planning, learner application, enrolment, and progression services, student support service delivery, and a wide range of aspects of institutional management such as timetabling, attendance and learner outcome recording.
- 3.3** Currently, the three colleges run separate MIS systems, and GCRB has no direct access to regional student data, relying instead on SFC for historic data reports.

3.4 This paper provides an update on regional executive discussions exploring the potential for a more regional approach to student data management and initial thinking on project needs and benefits of such an approach.

4. Developing a regional approach to student data management

4.1 Key development stages of the project to procure a regional data system will be to:

- define the project needs and benefits;
- specify and procure an MIS system;
- develop a project plan and delivery infrastructure;
- manage and monitor project implementation; and
- review project delivery and plan further developments.

4.2 The table below sets out initial thinking on project needs and benefits of a regional approach to student data management. These needs and benefits were jointly developed by the GCRB Executive Director with the newly appointed Regional Leads for Student Data and Student Experience and informed by discussions held at regional operational groups.

Needs and Benefits of a Regional Approach to Student Data Management

Needs	Benefits
<p>The system should support efficient learner journeys, including seamless inter-college progression. The learner should be at the centre of our system delivery and all applicants and enrolments should have a unique record within the regional data set. When a student moves from college to college in Glasgow they should keep their existing student record.</p>	<p>Lessening course progression barriers will support and encourage more students to progress across the full Glasgow region curriculum, extending the range of progression opportunities available to learners and supporting the specialisation of delivery by colleges at higher SCQF levels. A single data set will also open up the possibility to better assess supply and demand at a regional level.</p>
<p>The system should provide more efficient and effective data processing and reporting.</p>	<p>More efficient and effective data collation and reporting will both reduce resources required to meet current data needs and provide additional capacity to extend data functionality within current resourcing levels.</p>
<p>The system should support and inform curriculum planning and monitoring through high quality data reporting which allows analysis of a single data set at college and regional levels. This should encompass the ability to analyse at regional and college levels both current in-year and future-year curriculum plans.</p>	<p>Access to, and use of, high quality data is integral to the effective planning and delivery by the colleges and GCRB of a coherent regional curriculum which meets and responds to economic and social needs. Being able to effectively monitor the efficiency of curriculum delivery is also key to regional and institutional sustainability.</p>
<p>The system should support the development and application of data analytics, particularly to support improved learner outcomes.</p>	<p>Use of analytics can predict and improve service performance, with for example, learner analytics enabling better targeting of student support services to identified learner needs.</p>

The system should integrate well with existing system interfaces.	Integration with existing business flows will allow greater functionality and a wider scope of data-orientated services to be offered to learners, staff and stakeholders (for example effective integration with bursary systems). Integration issues represent a key business continuity risk with potential cost implications so effective integration will minimise risks.
The system should encourage greater standardisation of data across the four Glasgow organisations.	Regional standardisation will support more efficient data recording and reporting and in turn improve the effectiveness and quality of data analysis across the region, particularly with regards to curriculum planning and monitoring. Greater standardisation will also support a more consistent level of service delivery for learners across the region, a key ask highlighted by the recent City Council review of college and lifelong learning.
The system should support opportunities for further regional collaboration on areas such as admissions, student support and timetabling.	Developing a core MIS system which provides capacity for further regional collaboration will support a staged approach to increased regional collaboration and consistent service development.
The system should support future adaptability and develop best of breed functionality for learners, staff and stakeholders, improving the capacity of student data services to impact on the quality of services provided to learners, staff and stakeholders.	Building in future flexibility will enhance the ability for the region to collectively maximise further potential collaborative opportunities and the quality of services provided to all learners, staff and stakeholders.

4.3 Following consideration of the above needs and benefits, it has been agreed by the regional executive that a more detailed project proposal for further consideration is drawn up.

This specification of the project proposal will:

- draw on the project needs and benefits outlined above;
- consider development options and risks, planned delivery timescales and finance and resource requirements;
- be informed by other related and prior work undertaken to date regarding the procurement of a new MIS system, including the recent paper considering technical options; and
- include evidence of stakeholder engagement, both internal college and external, and their views should be reflected in the project proposal.

The regional leads for Student Data and Student Experience will take a lead role in the development of this more detailed project proposal.

4.4 In addition, there is the potential that further support development support can be provided by the Information Services Catalyst team of the Universities and Colleges Shared Service organisation, a sister organisation of APUC, owned by the Colleges and Universities of Scotland.

4.5 Discussions are also taking place with the Scottish Government leads working within the Learner Journey review, to ensure regional developments align to any potential developments related to a national approach to college application.

5. Risk assessment

5.1 The development of a regional approach to student data management is intended to reduce the likelihood and impact of the following GCRB identified risks:

- *opportunities are missed/not resourced appropriately and the potential to add value via the strategic plan is overlooked;*
- *a failure to effectively plan/monitor our educational delivery results in the curriculum not meeting regional economic and social needs; and*
- *failure to achieve the targets set out in the Regional Outcome Agreement lessens our ability to meet regional needs.*

5.2 A recent Audit Scotland report, "*Principles for a digital future: Lessons learned from public sector ICT projects*", stated that it is fundamental at the start to understand the need and clearly define the benefits that you want from an ICT development. The content of this paper seeks to address this and these will be further explored within the more detailed project plan.

5.3 Potential development timescales mean that it is important that the procurement process is initiated by the end of the calendar year at the latest as further delay would push implementation timescales beyond the end of current student data licensing agreements. The proposals outlined within this paper are intended to address this risk and provide a robust basis for a project specification to be drawn up and agreed by the end of 2017.

5.4 In terms of risks related to project delivery, it is recognised that developing a regional approach to student data management would be a significant project, and there will be a wide range of risks to be managed within the delivery of the project. A more detailed project proposal will outline these and planned mitigation strategies.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 No significant legal implications are identified in relation to the specification and procurement exercise. However, the implementation in May 2018 of new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) will have an impact on regional data management.

7. Resource Implications

7.1 There may be some potential savings which can be achieved from a joint approach to both procurement and system development. However, the primary driver for a regional approach

to data management is to deliver a better student data system for learners, staff and stakeholders.

8. Strategic Plan Implications

8.1 Within the Glasgow Region Strategic Plan for College Education, 2017-2011, there is a commitment that regional collaboration activity should prioritise:

- sharing skills and knowledge;
- offering a coherent and consistent student experience;
- developing a regionally responsive curriculum; and
- building efficient regional structures.

8.2 At its May 22 meeting, the GCRB Board approved the strategic plan and requested that a regional operational plan is developed which sets out activities and outcomes in support of these strategic goals. Following regional discussions, a set of high level key objectives have been agreed and within these, a key objective is to:

“Develop a regional approach to student data management to support the quality and impact of this information on services provided to learners and stakeholders, supporting improved learner outcomes. This work will support the development of a regional admissions system, which provides learners with access to, and progression within, the full regional curriculum.”

This regional ambition aligns to aspirations within the Scottish Government’s Learner Journey review which is currently reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of the learner journey for all 15 to 24 year olds. This national review includes a focus on system efficiency, and recognising the work already being taken forward as part of the Commission for Widening Access, improving the ease and equity with which young people can apply to college.

This report therefore provides the potential to directly support achievement of regional and national strategic ambitions.