

EDINBURGH COLLEGE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Minutes of the meeting held at 14:00 on 23 September 2025 in the Boardroom, Granton Campus.

Present: Audrey Cumberford; Fiona Doring; Becky Duff; Mary O'Driscoll; Judit Harangozo; Alan Holligan; Alex Killick; Adam Lowe; Ian McLaughlan; Kate Signorini, Nora Senior (Chair); Paul Smart; Bill Troup

In attendance: Andy Bamberry (minute 6.1 only); Jon Buglass; Mike Jeffrey; Jonny Pearson; Fraser Rudge; Marcus Walker (Clerk); Scott Warden (minute 7.2 only); Alan Williamson

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1 The Board NOTED apologies from Daniel Holland, Derek Hynds, Gillian Laird, and Eleanor Sim.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed Mary O'Driscoll, ECSA Vice President Activities, to her first meeting of the Board of Management, following their appointment as a Student Board Member.
- 1.3 The Chair thanked Mike Jeffrey, Vice Principal Corporate Development, and Scott Douglas, Director of Communication, Marketing & Policy, for their presentation delivered before the meeting on how the College engaged with its stakeholders and industry partners.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 No conflicts of interest were declared.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 3.1 The Board APPROVED the minutes from 10 June 2025 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 MATTERS ARISING REPORT

- 4.1 The Board NOTED the status of actions as detailed in the Matters Arising Report.
- 4.2 The Board NOTED that the Edinburgh College Budget 2025/26 had been approved by members via correspondence on 28 July 2025.

5 CHAIR'S REPORT

- 5.1 The Chair reported on various internal matters and engagements undertaken on behalf of the College as below.
- 5.2 The Board NOTED that the Chair and Principal had recently hosted a meeting with the Chair and the Chief Executive Officer of the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). During the meeting, the Chair and the Principal had raised concerns regarding the lack of parity and equity in funding provided across the tertiary education sector; and on the need to acknowledge how colleges were different from universities.
- 5.3 The Board NOTED that a request was made for the SFC to expedite work to achieve parity. The Chair advised members that, although no formal confirmation had been received, the SFC were expected to approve the College's Transformation Plan and that the Board would be updated on the outcome in due course.
- 5.4 The Board NOTED that the Chief Executive Officer of Colleges Scotland had recently met with both the Chair and the Principal at the College, and the Chair provided a brief overview of the discussion. It was reported that the meeting had been constructive, and that the needs of Edinburgh College had been communicated clearly during the meeting.
- 5.5 The Board NOTED that Ben Macpherson had been appointed Minister for Higher and Further Education in September 2025.
- 5.6 The Board NOTED that, on 2 September 2025, Mark Sheridan (a Non-Executive Board Member) had stepped down from the Edinburgh College Board of Management with immediate effect. The Chair advised the Board that Mr Sheridan's resignation related to his appointment to West Lothian College Board of Management and the conflict of interest this presented.
- 5.7 The Chair acknowledged recent national awards won by the College since the last meeting of the Board. The Board NOTED and commended the following award winners:
 - (i) Three students were victorious at the Association of Photographers Student Awards 2025, which celebrate excellence in photographic education across universities and colleges.
 - (ii) BA (Hons) Professional Photography student Ritchie Elder claimed first place in the International Photography Awards – Portrait category.
 - (iii) Three HND2 Visual Communication: User Experience Design students won a Royal Society for Arts award and have been selected to feature at the RSA Spark 2025 Showcase in London.

6 FOR APPROVAL

6.1 HEALTH & SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25 AND POLICY 2025/26

- 6.1.1 The Board NOTED the Annual Health & Safety Report for 2024/25 and received a brief presentation from the Health & Safety Manager, Andy Bamberry. The Board received an overview of the College's arrangements for monitoring the standard of health, safety, and welfare at the College.
- 6.1.2 The Board welcomed the presentation and DISCUSSED the following:
 - (i) Whether any potential trends could be identified from the number of incident reports recorded for students and for members of staff.
 - (ii) Whether there were any implications associated with the number of fire activations recorded.
 - (iii) How health and safety audit recommendations were tracked and outcomes recorded.
- 6.1.3 The Board DISCUSSED uptake targets for non-mandatory training, and it was AGREED that the Health & Safety Manager would include this information in future reports.
- 6.1.4 The Board DISCUSSED how issues relating to staff and student wellbeing, security incidents, and instances of sexual misconduct were recorded and monitored. The Chief Operating Officer clarified that separate mechanisms at the College existed for these issues, and it was AGREED that the Board would receive further clarification following the meeting through the People & Remuneration Committee.
- 6.1.5 The Board NOTED that minor changes had been made to the 2025/26 Health & Safety Policy, which clarified the role of the Board of Management. The Board DISCUSSED the updated Policy and APPROVED its publication.

7 FOR DISCUSSION

7.1 PRINCIPAL & CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

- 7.1.1 The Board NOTED an update from the Principal on developments across both the College and the wider college sector since its last meeting on 10 June 2025.
- 7.1.2 The Board NOTED that the College had submitted its Transformation Plan to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) in July 2025; and were informed that, while an outcome had yet to be received, discussions with the SFC had been positive and supportive thus far.
- 7.1.3 The Board NOTED that the SFC was due to publish its report on the financial sustainability of colleges in Scotland 2022/23 to 2027/28 on

26 September 2025. The Principal advised the Board that Audit Scotland were expected to publish their 2025 report on the financial sustainability of Scotland's colleges on 2 October 2025.

- 7.1.4 The Board NOTED an update on work to realign the College's Executive Team. The Principal explained that, as part of the ambitions of the Transformation Plan, the Vice Principals remits had been realigned to reflect the College's priorities going forward. The Board NOTED that, to date, the College had operated across four faculties and that it was intended to reposition the curriculum across three centres: to further enhance their distinctiveness, specialisms and staff expertise. The Principal informed the Board that communications relating to the change had been shared with College staff at the start of the academic year.
- 7.1.5 The Board NOTED that the Principal and the Vice Principal Corporate Development had met with members of the Institutional Reform, Lifelong Learning & Skills team at the Scottish Government. The Principal explained that the meeting had been arranged to discuss the College's existing income streams and issues affecting the College's ability to generate income.
- 7.1.6 The Board NOTED that the Edinburgh College Graduation Ceremony would take place on Thursday 6 November 2025 at McEwan Hall. The Principal invited all members to attend one or more of the three graduation ceremonies held during the day.
- 7.1.7 The Board NOTED that a meeting had been held between some local colleges, and universities; where it had been proposed that a partnership be developed to address the skills needs of the South East of Scotland, and to drive economic growth and inclusive education. The Principal advised that, in due course, the inclusion of businesses in such a partnership could be necessary in meeting skills requirements.
- 7.1.8 The Board DISCUSSED the opportunities and challenges associated with such a partnership; which included the different funding models used for further and higher education, and the importance of communicating colleges interests in discussions on funding of tertiary education. Relatedly, the Board DISCUSSED opportunities to highlight the interests of the tertiary education sector as part of the forthcoming Scottish parliamentary elections.
- 7.1.9 The Board NOTED that the Principal had written an opinion piece, on behalf of the sector, for the Scottish Government's National Innovation Week. Separately, it was reported that the Principal had participated as a panel member at the Africa Future of Education Summit 2025 - Bridging Academia and Industry Gap: The Future of Workforce Readiness.

7.2. STRATEGIC DISCUSSION: TRANSFORMATION PLAN

- 7.2.1 The Board NOTED a report and accompanying presentation on revised strategic College KPIs and Transformation Programme Milestones from the Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance and the Assistant Principal Curriculum.
- 7.2.2 The Board NOTED the agreed core aims of the Transformation Programme were to support and enhance: student success; income growth; alignment to regional demand and priorities; financial sustainability; enhancement of reputation; diversity of delivery models; collaboration models which deliver improved outcomes and impact; staff skills and capacity.
- 7.2.3 The Board NOTED that the Transformation Programme Portfolio Board had reviewed the status and milestones of the projects and had given approval for work to commence on three priority areas at the start of the 2025-26 academic year. The Board received a demonstration of the College Strategic KPIs and were informed that progress against milestones would be assessed against live data.
- 7.2.3 The Board NOTED that a Power BI dashboard had been created to provide Board members with assurance on progress, and that members would have sight of the dashboard. The Board DISCUSSED two KPIs used in the dashboard, and it was queried whether alternative KPIs were likely to be requested by the Scottish Funding Council. Separately, it was suggested that the addition of a project timeline to the dashboard would be beneficial.
- 7.2.4 The Board NOTED that good progress had been made toward several milestones, however, it was queried whether the agreed goals were sufficiently stretching. The Board were advised that consideration had been given to the risks associated with each target; and that it had been a significant undertaking by colleagues to achieve the progress reported. The Board DISCUSSED whether it would be beneficial to audit key components or project milestones individually. The Board AGREED that the Executive Team should consider the use of external expertise to effectively benchmark aspects of the Transformation Programme.
- 7.2.5 The Board, reflecting on the level of detail presented, AGREED that it would be helpful for the dashboard to be considered at a future point, alongside key strategic questions posed by the Executive. The Principal advised members that the upcoming Board Strategy Session on 30 October 2025 would be used to revisit the dashboard and to consider the KPIs in detail. The Board AGREED that a drop-in session – led by the Principal and the Vice Principal Innovation, Planning & Performance would be arranged following the meeting to orientate members on the use of the dashboard to take place prior to Board Strategy Day.
- 7.2.6 The Chair commented that the direction and effort associated with the Transformation Programme was to be welcomed.

7.3 EDINBURGH COLLEGE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (ECSA) REPORT

- 7.3.1 The Board NOTED the report from ECSA covering a range of activities at the College since the three full-time Sabbatical Officers were appointed on 1 July 2025; and NOTED the ECSA Priority Objectives for 2025/26.
- 7.3.2 The Board NOTED recent activities and successes as highlighted by the Student President and the Vice President Activities. On behalf of the College, the Principal thanked the ECSA team for their work in successfully delivering a 'Welcome Season' to new students.

7.4 COMMITTEE BUSINESS

7.4.1 Finance, Business Development & Resource Committee

Management Accounts Summary to July 2025

The Board NOTED the financial performance of the College as outlined in the Management Accounts to July 2025.

The Board NOTED an update from the Chief Operating Officer on discussions associated with an ongoing retrospective grant claim to recover the financial costs associated with the College's accommodation support provided to the Dnipro families. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Board that as funding had not been received as expected, discussions were currently being held with the College's external auditors on income recognition.

The Board NOTED that a presentation from the Chief Operating Officer outlining sector-derived information on the financial sustainability of the Scottish college sector.

The Board DISCUSSED recurring costs associated with the increase in employers' national insurance payments; progress made on the national Job Evaluation Scheme; the financial status of the Nursery; and changes in application numbers and associated implications for tuition fees targets.

7.4.2 Governance & Nominations Committee

The Chair provided a verbal update on the meeting of the Governance & Nominations Committee held on 17 September 2025.

The Board NOTED that it had one current, and one upcoming vacancy, for a non-executive member. The Chair informed the Board that the Committee had discussed succession planning and membership capacity and had agreed to commence a recruitment process in November 2025 to fill the current vacancy. Further to this, the Board NOTED that the Committee had agreed to seek a new member with human resources expertise; and to focus on increasing diversity by targeting underrepresented groups and College alumni.

The Board agreed that the recruitment process should be revisited to encourage applications from a diverse array of individuals and improve the Colleges pipeline of prospective Board members and committee co-optees.

The Board NOTED that the Committee had agreed for all committee terms of reference documents to be updated to include a statement acknowledging the annual review of committee operations process. The Board NOTED this addition and the proposal for the finalised wording of the statement to be agreed by the Governance & Nominations Committee.

7.5 GOVERNANCE REPORT

- 7.5.1 The Board NOTED the content of the Governance Report which included; updates on Board membership, College Development Network training, and a new Standards Commission Scotland Advice Note.
- 7.5.2 The Board NOTED that the extant Board Secretary, Marcus Walker, was taking up a position with another college in October 2025. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked Mr Walker for his commitment and contribution to the College over the last 11 years. The Board NOTED that Fraser Rudge, an experienced governance professional, would act as Interim Board Secretary until a permanent appointment had been made.
- 7.5.3 The Board DISCUSSED its secretariat arrangements and NOTED that temporary arrangements had been approved by the Board via correspondence.
- 7.5.4 The Board NOTED that the Risk Management and Assurance Group had met on 2 September 2025 and had considered the Top-Level Risk Register. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Board that the College risk profile remained unchanged from the previous quarterly review.
- 7.5.5 The Board NOTED that its Governance & Nominations Committee had reviewed the Board Improvement Plan 2024/25 and incorporated several actions arising through the annual evaluation process. The Board DISCUSSED the 2025/26 Board Improvement Plan and AGREED its implementation for review its members on a quarterly basis.

8 ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

8.1 AMBASSADOR AWARD NOMINATION 2025

- 8.1.1 The Board NOTED a proposal put forward by the Chair to nominate Marshall Dallas, former Chief Executive Officer of the Edinburgh International Conference Centre, for the Edinburgh College Ambassador Award - which was to be presented at the Graduation Ceremony on 6 November 2025. The Board welcomed the nomination of Marshall

Dallas for the Edinburgh College Ambassador Award and unanimously AGREED to endorse the proposal.

8.2 BOARD REFLECTION / FEEDBACK

- 8.1.2 The Chair invited Board members to reflect on the meeting, and to provide constructive feedback as appropriate.
- 8.1.3 The Board DISCUSSED the awareness of College staff regarding the Transformation Plan; and the Principal provided an update on planned communications, and on communications already shared with staff. The Board AGREED that its members should receive a summary of key information on the Transformation Plan to assist with queries.

9 CLOSED ITEM(S) OF BUSINESS

- 9.1 Items of business were considered by the Board as part of a closed session. Closed items were recorded under a separate minute (Closed Minutes 9.1/23.09.25 refers).

10 FOR INFORMATION

10.1 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

- 10.1.1 The Board NOTED a Freedom of Information (FOI) Annual Report 2024/25, which outlined FOI activity over the academic year.

10.2 GOVERNANCE & NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE MINUTES 17.09.25

- 10.2.1 The Board NOTED the draft Governance & Nominations Committee minutes from the meeting held on 17 September 2025.

11 FOR CIRCULATION

11.1 REGISTER OF INTERESTS 2025/26

- 11.1.1 The Board NOTED its members' registrable interests as published on the Edinburgh College website.

11.2 EDINBURGH COLLEGE BUDGET 2025/26

- 11.2.1 The Board NOTED the College Budget for 2025/26, as agreed by correspondence on 26 July 2025.

11.3 RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT

- 11.3.1 The Board NOTED a Risk Management Summary Report and the Top-Level Risk Register to September 2025.

11.4 BOARD DEVELOPMENT SESSION 12.08.25

- 11.4.1 The Board NOTED presentation slides from its development session on 12 September 2025, as facilitated by the College Development Network.

11.5 BOARD OF MANAGEMENT AGENDA PLANNER 2024/25

- 11.5.1 The Board NOTED an agenda planner for the 2025/26 academic year, which aimed to provide members with an opportunity to review upcoming items of business.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 12.1 The next meeting of the Board of Management will be held on 11 December 2025

The meeting closed at 17:00