

# **JARGON BUSTER FOR COLLEGE BOARD MEMBERS**

**2025-2026**



### Accountable Officer

Usually the Principal, the Accountable Officer is responsible for the propriety and regularity of the finances of the college, and for ensuring the college's economic, efficient, and effective use of resources.

### Advance HE

A membership body that supports higher education institutions across the UK and runs a Fellowship programme for staff.

### AGS

The Auditor General for Scotland (AGS) is the public official in charge of Audit Scotland, the body responsible for auditing most of Scotland's public bodies. The Auditor General oversees the scrutiny of how public money is spent by the directorates of the Scottish Government, government agencies, NHS Scotland, further education colleges and most Non Departmental Public Bodies.

### ALF

Arm's Length Foundation.

ALFs were established to mitigate the impact of ONS reclassification in relation to cash reserves and future surpluses. Colleges had the option of establishing a local ALF or participating in the sector 'umbrella' ALF (Scottish Colleges Foundation). (See **ONS** below).

### Apprenticeships

Skills Development Scotland administers Scottish Apprenticeships on behalf of Scottish Government, which incorporates.

- **Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs)** – help young people still at school gain work experience and a qualification
- **Modern Apprenticeships (MAs)** – combine a qualification with on-the-job experience
- **Graduate Apprenticeships (GAs)** – supports employers to provide employees with work-based learning up to master's degree level

### APUC

Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges.

### Assigned College

A college assigned to a regional strategic body. UHI is currently the only regional strategic body in Scotland.

### Audit and Assurance Committee Handbook

Scottish Government publication which provides guidance on the principles and best practice for the organisation of Audit and Assurance committees.

### AY

Academic Year, the session from 1 August to 31 July.

### CBI

Confederation of British Industry.

### CDN

College Development Network – the improvement agency for Scotland's Colleges.

### CIPFA

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, the professional body for public sector accountants.

### CLIC

There are six CLIC innovation centres in colleges across Glasgow and the west of Scotland, launched as part of the College Local Innovation Centres (CLIC) pilot project.

### The Code

Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges.

### Code of Audit Practice

The Code of Audit Practice sets the framework for public audit in Scotland.

### Collective Responsibility

Each board member is collectively responsible and accountable for all board decisions. Board members must make decisions in the best interests of the college and/or region.

### **College Employers Scotland** (Formerly the Employers' Association)

Established in 2016, it is the body through which the Scottish Government's Policy of National Bargaining is delivered and implemented by employers in the college sector, in partnership with the trade unions (EIS-FELA, GMB, UNISON and UNITE). Membership of College Employers Scotland is made up of senior leaders from colleges across Scotland.

### **Conflict of Interest Definition**

Whether a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard the interest as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your discussion or decision making in your role as a member of a public body.

### **Corporate Governance Statement**

Each college board must state its adoption of the Code in the corporate governance statement contained in its annual financial statement.

The chair, on behalf of the board, is expected to report as to how the principles have been applied by the board.

### **Credits**

SFC provides grants to colleges and college regions to deliver a specified volume of activity measured in credits.

One credit is equivalent to 40 hours of learning.

### **CPD**

Continuing Professional Development.

### **CPG**

College Principals Group.

### **CPP**

A Community Planning Partnership (or CPP) is the name given to all those services that come together to take part in community planning.

### **CS**

Colleges Scotland is the membership organisation for colleges across the country: campaigning, advocating, and influencing policy on behalf of the sector.

### **EER**

Externally facilitated effectiveness review.

Each college board must keep its effectiveness under annual review and have in place a robust self-evaluation process. There should also be an externally facilitated evaluation of its effectiveness every three to five years.

### **EIS**

Educational Institute of Scotland.

The Further Education Lecturers' Association (EIS-FELA) is a self-governing organisation within the EIS and is constitutionally autonomous in respect of the distinct interests of their members in the further education sector in Scotland.

### **ELS**

Extended Learning Support – additional support available to students who have a disability or who have learning needs.

### **EMA**

Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) give financial support to eligible 16- to 19-year-olds who want to continue learning.

### **ERDF**

European Regional Development Fund.

### **ESF**

European Social Fund.

### **ESOL**

English for Speakers of Other Languages – the Scottish Government's Adult ESOL strategy aims to give all Scottish residents, for whom English is not a first language, the opportunity to access high quality English language provision.



## External Auditor

An auditor whose main function is to give an opinion on financial statements over a specified period.

## FE

Further Education – further education courses offer a wide range of vocational qualifications below the level of HNCs and HNDs.

Further education takes place in colleges.

## FECs

Further Education Colleges.

## FES

Further Education Statistics – FES are data provided by colleges to the SFC which inform decisions relating to college grant allocations.

## FM

The Financial Memoranda with colleges and universities set out the formal accountability relationship between SFC and institutions, and the requirements that institutions are expected to comply with in return for funding.

## FOI

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides public access to information held by public authorities.

## FFR

Financial Forecast Return (SFC).

## FTE

Full-time equivalent (FTE) – for comparison and funding purposes, numbers of part-time students and staff are converted to full-time equivalents. This is because a direct headcount is often a poor indication of the actual volume of activity.

## FWDF

Flexible Workforce Development Fund.

## GDPR

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

New laws about data protection came into force in the UK in 2018. These laws ensure that:

- organisations can only use personal information when they are legally allowed to
- the public are more aware of ways their personal information can and cannot be used.

## GGSG

The Good Governance Steering Group (GGSG) was established in October 2013 at the request of the Scottish Government initially to take forward the development of the '**Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges**', which was published in December 2014 and from 2025 will be reviewed and reissued on an annual basis.

## Governance Hub

Supported by CDN, the Governance Hub provides members of boards in the college sector, and their staff, with access to the key training courses and supporting resources that they need to fulfil their roles.

The Hub is part of the CDN LearnOnline platform. Board members can set up an account to access the resource.

## Governance Professional

All college board members must have access to a governance professional who has an important governance role in advising the board, the committees and individual board members and supporting good governance.

Also known as Board Secretary or Clerk to the Board.

## GRIGGS

Griggs Review 2011/12 independent review of college governance.

## GTCS

General Teaching Council for Scotland (registration body for teachers and lecturers).

## HE

Higher Education – higher education courses leading to qualifications, or credits which can be counted towards qualifications.

They include HNCs, HNDs, degree courses, and postgraduate courses. Higher education takes place in universities and colleges.

## HEIs

Higher Education Institutions – HEIs is a general term used for education institutions that do not have a university title. However, as with universities, they provide courses that lead to qualifications including HNCs, HNDs, degree courses, and postgraduate courses.

## HESA

Higher Education Statistics Agency collects, analyses and reports on higher education statistics for universities and colleges in the UK.

## HIE

Highlands and Islands Enterprise is the Scottish Government's economic and community development agency for Scotland's Highlands and Islands region. HIE aims to build sustainable economic growth in all parts of the Highlands and Islands.

## HNC/D

Higher National Certificate/Diploma.

## IiP

Investors in People.

## Innovation Centres

There are 4 Innovation Centres in Scotland funded by the SFC which are industry-led to generate research activity and innovation needed by their sector.

## IPR

Intellectual Property Rights protect the creator's right to be appropriately acknowledged for their work, such as an invention or a manuscript.

## Jisc

Jisc is funded by the UK higher education funding bodies to provide world-class leadership in the innovative use of ICT to support education and research.

## Jiscmail

An email list service to facilitate discussion, collaboration, and communication within the UK academic community.

## Job Evaluation

The Job Evaluation project forms part of a national agreement between employers and support staff trade unions – UNISON, GMB and UNITE – to ensure that Equal Pay underpins all aspects of pay and reward for the purposes of National Bargaining. College Employers Scotland and trade unions are committed to joint ownership of this Job Evaluation process

See **College Employers Scotland** above.

## Knowledge Exchange

Knowledge Exchange is the process by which universities, HEIs, and colleges' knowledge, expertise and intellectually linked assets are constructively applied beyond further and higher education for the wider benefit of the economy and society, through two-way engagement with business, the public sector, cultural and community partners.



## KPIs

Key Performance Indicators.

## LMI

Labour Market Information (LMI) is information about the current economic and employment situation. It includes data on graduate destinations, average starting salaries, current trends in employment sectors and recruitment patterns.

## MA

A Modern Apprenticeship is a job which lets people earn a wage and gain an industry-recognised qualification.

For employers, modern apprenticeships help develop their workforce by training new staff, and upskilling existing employees.

## Ministerial Letter of Guidance

Ministerial letters of Guidance from the Scottish Government to the SFC set out their priorities for colleges and universities in Scotland.

Available on the SFC website.

## MIS

Management Information Systems.

## Model Code of Conduct

Issued by Scottish Ministers the purpose of the Code is to set out the conduct expected of those who serve on the boards of public bodies in Scotland and includes the nine principles of public life in Scotland.

Each College will have a Code of Conduct based on the Model Code.

## National Bargaining

See **College Employers Scotland** above.

## National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET)

The National Strategy for Economic Transformation is the Scottish Government's 10-year strategy for economic transformation.

Published in March 2022.

## NDPB

Non-Departmental Public Body – they have a role in national government but are not government departments. They operate at arm's length from Ministers, although Ministers remain accountable to Parliament for their performance.

The Scottish Funding Council is an NDPB.

## NED

Non-Executive Director.

## NES

NHS Education for Scotland.

## NPD

Non-Profit Distributing. A funding source that allows major infrastructure projects to be built. It replaced the PFI model. The NPD model is led by the Scottish Futures Trust.

## NSS

National Student Survey, conducted annually.

## NUS Charity

National Union of Students – a confederation of local student representative organisations in colleges and universities throughout the United Kingdom.

## NVQ

National Vocational Qualification.

## ONS

Office of National Statistics.

ONS reclassification of colleges – colleges in Scotland are now classed as public bodies and hence fall under the accounting requirements of the ONS.

This means that colleges require government consent to borrow funds and from 1 April 2014, colleges could no longer carry forward surplus funds to future years.



## **OSCR**

Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

## **Outcomes Framework and Assurance Model (OFAM)**

Outcome Agreements set out what colleges and universities plan to deliver in return for their funding from SFC.

SFC Outcome Agreement Managers work with institutions to develop their Outcome Agreements.

## **PAC**

Public Audit Committee, part of Scottish Parliament.

## **PAGE**

Partnership Action for Continuing Employment – the Scottish Government's national strategic partnership framework for responding to redundancy situations.

## **PFI**

Private Finance Initiative. A procurement method which uses private sector investment to fund public sector infrastructure and / or services according to a specification defined by the public sector.

## **PIs**

Performance Indicators – a set of indicators produced which measure the performance of institutions in a number of areas (sometimes KPIs).

## **RSB**

Regional strategic body (which is regarded as a fundable body by SFC). UHI is currently the only RSB in Scotland.

## **SAAS**

Student Awards Agency for Scotland – SAAS is a Scottish Government agency. Its purpose is to assess and pay student support for individuals entering and continuing in higher education.

(HNC courses and above.)

## **SCQF**

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework – The SCQF is the national qualifications framework for Scotland which promotes lifelong learning in Scotland. The framework is managed by the SCQF partnership, a registered charity.

For qualifications and learning programmes to be included on the SCQF, they must have their SCQF level and credit formally confirmed. This process is called credit rating. There are a number of SCQF Credit Rating Bodies in Scotland, including the SQA, colleges, universities and approved bodies such as the Scottish Police College.

## **SDI**

Scottish Development International is Scotland's trade and foreign direct investment agency. Their aim is to encourage and support more overseas businesses to set up a location here, invest in Scottish businesses or buy high quality Scottish products and services.

## **SDS**

Skills Development Scotland is the national skills agency of Scotland. It is an NDPB which was created from Careers Scotland, Learndirect Scotland and the skills functions of Scottish Enterprise and Highland & Islands Enterprise.

## **SE**

Scottish Enterprise – an NDPB which encourages economic development, enterprise, innovation, and investment in business.

The body covers the eastern and central parts of Scotland whilst similar bodies, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and South of Scotland Enterprise, operate in north-western and southern Scotland respectively.



### **SEAP (Self-Evaluation and Action Plan)**

An annual document that enables institutions to reflect on their quality assurance and enhancement activities, assess outcomes, and identify key strategic areas for improvement. The SEAP is required by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) as part of the new Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF).

### **SFC**

The Scottish Funding Council is the national strategic body that is responsible for funding teaching and learning provision, research and other activities in Scotland's colleges and universities.

SFC provides grants to colleges and college regions to deliver a specified volume of activity measured in credits (1 credit is equivalent to 40 hours of learning). The SFC is also an NDPB.

### **SG**

Scottish Government.

### **SGLLD**

Scottish Government Lifelong Learning and Skills Directorate – the Directorate is responsible for Scottish Government policy on all aspects of learning that take place after people leave school – from basic employability training through to post-doctoral research.

### **SIPs**

Skills Investment Plans – developed by SDS to identify skills development needs.

### **SLA**

Service Level Agreement – the SLA is a part of a service contract where the level of service is formally defined.

### **SMEs**

Small and Medium Enterprises – SMEs are companies whose headcount or turnover falls below certain limits (defined by the EU).

### **SMT**

Senior Management Team.

### **SoRP**

Statement of Recommended Accounting Practice.

### **SOSE**

South of Scotland Enterprise launched officially on 1 April 2020 as the Economic and Community Development Agency for Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders.

### **sparqs**

Student partnerships in quality Scotland.

### **SPFM**

Scottish Public Finance Manual is issued by the Scottish Ministers to provide guidance to the Scottish Government and other relevant bodies on the proper handling and reporting of public funds.

### **SQA**

Scottish Qualifications Authority – the national accreditation & awarding body in Scotland.

### **SSCs**

Sector Skills Councils are independent organisations developed by employers in industry. They are employer-led and involve trade unions and professional bodies.

### **STEM**

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics subjects.

### **STUC**

Scottish Trade Union Congress – the co-ordinating body of trade unions, and local Trades Councils in Scotland.



### **Student Association**

Students' associations are the representative voice of students.

A strong, effective students' association should enable students to make their voices heard, and to take collective action to change and improve their student experience.

### **SVQ**

Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) are work-based qualifications.

### **TES**

Times Educational Supplement.

### **TQ(FE)**

Teaching Qualification (Further Education).

### **TQEF (Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework)**

The tertiary education sector's new approach to quality assurance and enhancement for colleges and universities.

### **TUPE**

Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981.

### **UCAS**

University and Colleges Admissions Service.

### **WBL**

Work Based Learning.

**www.cdn.ac.uk**

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