

# STUDENT EXPERIENCE

## Introduction

This study will use CDN's Virtual College Expo 2021 round table discussion titled '**Student Experience**', which took place in June 2021, as the initial focal point of current expert thinking within the college sector in Scotland. Prior discussion identified Student Experience as one of four key themes that the sector required to analyse in terms of identifying what if any, changes may be required to form a new perspective on the challenges and opportunities ahead.

The following outlines key areas to focus on over the next 12 months:

## Students' Voices<sup>1</sup>

The panel discussed the importance of listening to and reflecting on student feedback to inform what is happening in relation to student learning. One panel member stated that it is also important to have students on board and involve them in co-creation. Ask students what they would like staff to evaluate, what they care about and collaborate with students to inform how staff carry out evaluation. One panel member also highlighted importance of involving a diverse group of students.

### The main themes to focus on include:

- Reflecting on previous student feedback
- Consultation and collaboration with students
- Involving students in co-creation to develop evaluation materials



### RESEARCH QUESTION 1:

**What can colleges learn from consulting, collaborating and co-creating with students to help improve their learning experience?**

<sup>1</sup> Panel members discussed student involvement in a range of ways – involving students in co-creating the key areas of this research could be a possible approach to consider.

## Mental Health and Wellbeing

The panel discussed a range of issues relating to student mental health and wellbeing. Ensuring safeguarding measures while operating in an online environment was raised in terms of concerns about not receiving as many referrals under the current circumstances. One panel member stated that their college was receiving a similar number of referrals but this was taking place further down the line and closer to crisis point. The panel discussed access to mental health support, suggesting pros and cons to the online system. It was highlighted that some students may prefer accessing support online. One panel member indicated that there are already online resources that students are engaging with. They stated that being online has benefits of 24/7 support and resources and this is something that should be continued going forward. However, the lack of face-to-face interaction may have resulted in some wellbeing concerns not being picked up and it is important to ensure all students are accessing the most appropriate support.

Panel members discussed the importance of planning the curriculum with mental health and wellbeing at the centre.

### The main themes to focus on include:

- Safeguarding students' mental health and wellbeing
- Ensuring access to mental health and wellbeing support
- Utilising online resources
- Planning the curriculum to support mental health and wellbeing



### RESEARCH QUESTION 2:

**How are colleges meeting students' mental health and wellbeing needs? (Consider what methods are proving to be the most effective and what more can be done.)**

## Collaborating and Co-creating with Students to Support Mental Health and Wellbeing

Taking into consideration the panel's discussions relating to students' voices and mental health and wellbeing, another key area to focus on is the ways in which colleges are collaborating and co-creating with students to support their mental health and wellbeing. One panel member discussed feedback from students which suggested that they appreciated the college's efforts to put support in place. However, this did not work for all students. Importance must be placed on working closely with students and getting it right for them. One panel member stated that colleges need to establish students' preferred methods for seeking support. Another panel member suggested that working online allowed for greater collaboration in terms of collecting student feedback and students have been involved in strategy and development.

### The main themes to focus on include:

- Reflecting on student feedback
- Demonstrating evidence of good practice relating to collaboration/co-creation between colleges and students
- Exploring strategic and developmental projects in which students have been involved



### RESEARCH QUESTION 3:

**In what ways are colleges collaborating and co-creating with students/Student Associations to support their mental health and wellbeing needs?**



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