

**Question 1.** *Have you or any of your classmates had an issue at College that has made you/them consider dropping out? If so, what was the issue? If not, what do you think is the biggest reason for students struggling to stay on their course?*

**1. Childcare Funding**

- a. Complicated process for applying
- b. Delays in getting applications processed
- c. The policy of who can and can't apply excludes self-funded students - creates a barrier to pursuing coming back to college

**2. Course Provision/Travel**

- a. Course provision at Midlothian quite small
- b. Students told before term started certain courses were at risk of moving campus (child care)
- c. Could not afford to travel to other campuses for study

**3. Mental Health Support**

- a. Not enough staff qualified to talk too about mental health
- b. Stigma around declaring mental health issues - staff and students aren't always understanding

**4. Additional Support Needs**

- a. Students till do not have not support in place for learning needs like dyslexia
- b. Some people haven't even been assessed
- c. Time wasted reassessing people assessed the year before
- d. Students either missing exams or submitting coursework without correct support in place. Inconsistent approach to how support seems to be given. Students expressing varying experiences with staff.

**5. Bullying & Gender Balance**

- a. Students at times can feel quite isolated as there is no community here
- b. Class make up can be very gender imbalanced and this causes tension and problems between classmates - tainting the classroom environment

**6. Quality of Teaching**

- a. Lecturers using the same teaching technique of reading from PowerPoints for every lesson
- b. Student felt there was staff being put into cover classes who did not know the subject area

## **7. Course Organisation & staff cover**

- a. The administration and course organisation is all over the place
- b. Both support staff & teaching teams did not seem prepared for the start of term
- c. Assessment dates aren't planned in advance - causes 'assessment bunching'
- d. Feels like everyone is working in isolation within departments and classes
- e. Some students have had no cover for up to 10 weeks, impacting on their placements which is impacting their ability to learn

## **Question 2. *How prevalent/wide spread are these issues identified?***

The students present represented several different curriculum areas. Many of them voiced the same concerns and agreed they had similar experiences personally or had been aware of students facing the same issues.

## **3. *What do you think the College and/or ECSA can be doing to remove challenges, support more students to stay on at College and be successful?***

### **1. Childcare Funding**

- a. Investigate local nursery provision/childcare at this campus
- b. Clearer documentation and signposting for students applying for childcare support

### **2. Course Provision/Travel**

- a. Curriculum review of course provision, ensure routes aren't cut off by course changes when people are midway through studies

### **3. Mental Health Support**

- a. Train frontline staff in mental health first aid
- b. A proactive approach to support students' needs - let's sort more of it out during summer so it's in place for start of the college year!

### **4. Additional Support Needs**

- a. Once students have accepted their place use the summer period to process and get in place as much support as possible before term starts
- b. Ensure support staff and curriculum teams work together
- c. Continuing students to have their needs passed on for the next year - don't waste resources reassessing individuals who feel their support is correct

### **5. Bullying & Gender Balance**

- a. Ensure students and staff are aware of zero tolerance to bullying
- b. Work around ending the stigma around gender imbalances in classes

### **6. Quality of Teaching**

- a. More opportunity for staff to receive training in new teaching techniques
- b. More work to be placed on drawing a base level of minimum standards (still too inconsistent)
- c. Breaking up classes - introduce, quizzes, discussions, group work workshops to make learning an 'active' process

## **7. Course Organisation & Staff Cover**

- a. Clear responsibility for organising and communicating class cover
- b. Ensuring minimum impact on students learning through class cover
- c. A process for organising class cover - 10 weeks is far too long

**Students present 17**