NORTH EAST SCOTLAND COLLEGE

Board of Management

Learning & Teaching and Student Services Committee

Meeting of 26 November 2013

NOTICE OF MEETING

There will be a meeting of the Learning Teaching and Student Services Committee on 26 November 2013 at 1400 – 1530 hours in Room G25, Aberdeen City Campus.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Ms. A Bell
Ms. S Cormack
Mr. D Duthie (Chair)
Mr. B Dunn
Prof. J Harper
Ms. C Inglis
Mr. J McKendrick
Ms. D Michie
Ms. A Simpson
Mr. R Woods
Mr. R Wallen

OTHER INVITED PARTICIPANTS

Mr. B Cruickshank

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. N Cowie, Vice Principal Organisational Services
Mr. F Hughes, Vice Principal Student Service
Mr. P Sherrington, Depute Principal
Ms. S Walker, Vice Principal Curriculum
Ms. P May, Secretary to the Board of Management

Meeting of 26 November 2013

Agenda

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Report to the Committee by the Principal (paper enclosed)**

3. **Matters for Decision**
   3.1. Suggested Future Business of the Committee (paper enclosed)
   3.2. The Academic Board and its Sub-committees (paper enclosed)

4. **Matters for Discussion**
   4.1. Curriculum Planning Arrangements (paper enclosed)
   4.2. Proposals for Non SFC Funded Activity (paper enclosed)
   4.3. Quality Assurance Arrangements (paper enclosed)
   4.4. Student Support Services Arrangements(paper enclosed)
   4.5. Students' Association Update (oral report)
   4.6. Students' Association Grant AY 2013/14 (paper to follow)

5. **Papers for Information**
   5.1. Student Activity for 2013/14 – standing Item (paper enclosed)
   5.2. Student Performance Indicators – standing Item (paper enclosed)
   5.3. Student Support Funds (paper enclosed)

6. **Summation of Business**

7. **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Report to the Committee by the Principal

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of the Committee about significant developments.

2. North East Scotland College Membership of the 157 Group of Colleges

2.1 In October 2013, Lynne Sedgmore, the Chief Executive of the 157 Group of colleges, contacted the Principal of Aberdeen College to invite Aberdeen College to join the 157 Group. This Group was established originally as a partnership of a number of the larger and demonstrably most successful colleges in England, with a view to being able to influence government policy and strategy in relation to training and to provide leadership for the sector as a whole. Recently the Group decided to include one college from each of the other parts of the UK. Belfast Metropolitan College and Coleg Cambrai (in North Wales) were also invited to join. Ms Sedgmore explained that the choice of Aberdeen College was because of its excellent quality record -- in particular the outcome of its most recent Education Scotland review. Following the merger on 01 November, North East Scotland College was adopted as a member of the Group. Ms Sedgmore visited the Aberdeen campuses of North East Scotland College on 06 November 2013 and said how impressed she was with the facilities and the atmosphere in the College.

2.2 She also identified the working practices in the mechanical engineering workshops at Altens as being a perfect model of vocational training that not only taught a specific skill but also instilled a strong work ethic and a clear understanding of industry best practice standards.

3. Enterprising Britain Award

3.1 On the 22 of November, during Global Entrepreneurship week, the presentation of the College's Enterprising Britain Award will be made at the House of Commons, by Cabinet Minister Michael Fallon, Business & Energy Minister, on behalf of the Department of Business Innovation and Skills.

3.2 The judges at the Enterprising Britain Awards 2013 agreed that the entry from Aberdeen College was the worthy winner in the category of 'The School/FE College in the country that is best at supporting Enterprise ambition in young people'.

3.3 Particularly, the College's submission was based on the whole College approach to developing an enterprising mindset, raising awareness in all areas of the curriculum that students have the potential to turn their learning into earning.

3.4 Two former students of the College, and now successful entrepreneurs, will join Susie MacKenzie Brooks, Sector Manager for Business, Creative Industries and Tourism, with responsibility for promoting enterprise across the College, and Elaine Makein, Team Manager for Creative Industries and Tourism, in representing the College:

- Debbie Greig, former painting and decorating student, successful entrepreneur: DLG Decorating

- Calum Riddell, former photography student, successful entrepreneur: Calum Riddell Photography

4. ASET shines above the rest as it proves it has 'STAR' quality

4.1 ASET International Oil and Gas Training Academy has won the SQA Star Award for International Business.

4.2 Forty-one awards in fifteen different categories were presented at SQA's annual Star Awards (Success; Triumph; Achievement & Recognition) on Friday 08 November at Glasgow Clyde College's Anniesland Campus to congratulate the exceptional accomplishments of individuals, schools, colleges, training providers and employers.

4.3 Atholl Menzies said, "We are delighted to have been presented with a STAR Award in recognition of the work we do internationally. Winning this prestigious award will strengthen ASET's standing when bidding for work internationally in competition with providers elsewhere in the UK and with providers in Canada and Australia."

4.4 The awards ceremony was attended by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, hosted by TV personality Kaye Adams, and was supported by a raft of sponsors, including the Scottish Government — UK Skills, CBI Scotland, Learning and Teaching Scotland and the Federation of Small Businesses, Scotland.

4.5 Dr Janet Brown, SQA Chief Executive, in congratulating all the award recipients said "Scottish education and training is full of inspirational stories and magnificent achievements from students and centres. The response to our invitation for nominations was phenomenal - selecting finalists in each category was very difficult. To all who were entered, and particularly to those who made it through to the awards ceremony, well done. You represent the absolute best of Scotland and should take enormous pride in your achievements."

5. North East Scotland College Open Days

5.1 Hundreds flocked to the first North East Scotland Open Day held on Saturday 09 November. Both Aberdeen City and Altens Campuses were open from 10.00am until 2.00pm with representatives from all teaching sectors on hand to answer questions on courses commencing September 2014 and to pick up their copy of the latest prospectus which was launched on Monday 04 November.

5.2 The Fraserburgh Campus Information Event was held on Thursday 14 November from 4.30pm to 7.30pm.

6. Education Scotland

6.1 It is expected that there will be a full Review of North East Scotland College by Education Scotland during AY 2014/15, between November 2014 and March 2015. Early preparations are already underway for this Review.

6.2 In the meantime, the College will participate in two Aspect Tasks in November of this year, with a follow-up meeting scheduled for the spring. Education Scotland will review the areas of ESOL and Computing/Digital Media. These national tasks include lesson observations, discussions with staff and students and consideration of key performance indicators.

7. Promoted Teaching Structure

7.1 The process of establishing a new structure for the promoted teaching staff of the College is progressing well. To date consultation meetings have been held with the affected staff and constructive and helpful responses to the initial draft structure have been reviewed and considered. A revised structure with the timescale for implementation has been communicated to the affected staff. The intention is to have most of the posts filled by Christmas with the structure fully in place by the end of January 2014.

8. North East of Scotland Shared (NESS) Data Centre

8.1 Earlier this year, work was completed on the North East of Scotland Shared (NESS) Data Centre, a £1.2 million state-of-the-art shared facility to host the IT infrastructure for all of the North East's tertiary educational establishments.

8.2 Collaboration between the University of Aberdeen, Robert Gordon University and North East Scotland College has created a cutting edge, low carbon IT data centre with a clear focus on sustainability.

8.3 In recognition of the environmental and functional benefits of this new facility and the overall success of the project, NESS has won a number of prestigious industry awards, including a Green Gown Award, presented by the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges; a UK IT Industry Award, presented by the British Computer Society; and a Computer Weekly European Users Award.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the contents of this report.

Rob Wallen
Principal

Suggested Future Business of the Committee

1. **Introduction**
   1.1 The purpose of this paper is to outline proposals to the Learning and Teaching and Student Services Committee of the Board of Management for the future business of this Committee.

2. **Background**
   2.1. In accordance with the North East Scotland College Governance Manual, a Learning and Teaching and Student Services Committee has been established.

3. **Rationale**
   3.1. The proposals for the business of the Committee take account of the Board of Management's obligation to:

   - Ensure that the College provides public benefit in Scotland and elsewhere through the advancement of education and training.

   3.2. These proposals also take full account of the Committee's responsibility for monitoring the direction and performance of learning and teaching and the quality of learners' experience at College.

   3.3. The proposed business of the Committee will provide regular information relating to the specific duties as follows:

   - To maintain a strategic overview of the curriculum and the educational direction of the College
   - To monitor quality assurance and enhancement including Key Performance Indicators and actions arising therefrom
   - To approve and monitor the effectiveness of the Learning and Teaching Strategy
   - To advise the Board of Management on matters relating to students in general, including equality issues
   - To ensure that the Board's legal responsibilities with regard to the Students' Association, as outlined in statute, are addressed and complied with
   - To oversee the relationship with the Students' Association and to act as a communication link between the Association and the Board, in order to promote the student voice
   - To support the Students' Association's Operational Plan and monitor the use of resources therein.

4. **Proposals for the Business of the Committee**
   4.1. The completion of tasks assigned to the pre-merger Curriculum Work Stream is now the responsibility of the Vice Principal Curriculum. It is proposed that the Committee will receive a regular progress report as work is undertaken to fully integrate the Curriculum for 2015/16. The current report is attached at appendix 1, with suggestions for dates of subsequent reports detailed at appendix 2.

   4.2. The completion of tasks assigned to the pre-merger Quality Work Stream is now the responsibility of the Vice Principal Organisational Services. It is proposed that the Committee will receive regular progress reports, commencing with the January 2014 meeting, as work continues to develop the most appropriate quality improvement and assurance systems for North East Scotland College.

4.3. It is proposed that the Committee receives regular updates on progress towards meeting performance targets set for the curriculum and student services and that the Committee is provided with information on progress towards meeting the targets set for curriculum, quality and student services as set out in the Regional Outcome Agreement for the College.

4.4. The above information, together with detailed regular reports on key curriculum, quality and student services priorities for the College, will provide the Committee with information and data to support its monitoring role in relation to the delivery of a high quality regional curriculum, underpinned by high quality support services.

5. Recommendation

5.1. It is recommended that the Committee considers the proposals provided in this paper and advises of any further information that would be helpful to members of the Committee in fulfilling their role and function.

Rob Wallen
Principal

Sandra Walker
Vice Principal Curriculum

North East Scotland College

Curriculum Integration Plan – 2015/16

Responsibility – Sandra Walker, Vice Principal Curriculum

Date: 01 November 2013

Formerly: *Curriculum Workstream*
             Workstream Leads SW, NC

	Project/Task	Progress	Deadline	Success Criteria	Owner
1	Developing and implementing a learning and teaching strategy which meets the needs of learners	A Strategy is in place (attached).	Complete	Implementation of an innovative, efficient, harmonised learning and teaching strategy across all College campuses during 2014/15 and in full by 2015/16.	SW
2	Clarify responsibilities between Quality and Learning & Teaching	Responsibility for quality improvement rests with the curriculum managers and teams. Quality Assurance currently sits outside this. Work is ongoing to agree the most appropriate arrangements.	During 2013/14 and in place by August 2014	Advances to curriculum and quality processes that allow for sustainable improvements to student experiences, student retention rates and students success outcomes where required evidenced across all campuses.	SW + NC
3	An effective Academic Board and Sub-committee structure	Review current arrangements and develop a structure which is effective and supports the College's key function – delivery of a high quality curriculum.	Review by 31/10/2013 and implement during 2013/14	An effective Academic Board and support structure.	SW
4	Ensure that procedures are in place to consider and agree new course approvals and curriculum changes	Consideration to be given to the membership and chairing of the CAP as part of the review noted above.	Review by 31/10/2013 and implement during 2013/14	New arrangements in place.	NC
5	Carrying out a comprehensive curriculum mapping exercise	This is part of the regional curriculum planning arrangements	June 2014	A NESCol curriculum in place for 2015/16 that provides the right learning in the right	SW

#	Action	Progress/Detail	Timeframe	Outcome	Owner
	based on the 2013/14 curriculum identifying duplication and local need	for 2015/16 and will be completed by June 2014 in preparation for the 2015/16 Prospectus.		place and that is responsive to the local and regional economic drivers.	
6	Align course content when offered in more than one location	This has started and will be in place for 2015/16.	30/06/14	A NESCoL curriculum in place for 2015/16.	SW
7	A programme in place to develop and implement best practice across all curriculum areas	'Good Practice' events for curriculum staff are being arranged. Staff from both Colleges are involved in joint staff development events.	During 2013/14	The identification, sharing and dissemination of best practice across all college campuses.	SW
8	Develop merged College Course Handbook Guidelines	To be in place for 2015/16 academic year.	By September 2014 to support the 2015/16 curriculum	Consistent curriculum-related information for students and staff.	SW
9	Develop merged College Schemes of Work structure	To be in place for 2015/16 academic year.	By September 2014 to support the 2015/16 curriculum	Consistent schemes of work.	SW
10	Develop merged College Delivery and Assessment Schedules Guidelines	To be in place for 2015/16 academic year.	By September 2014 to support the 2015/16 curriculum	A consistent approach to delivery and assessment scheduling.	SW
11	Integrated policies and procedures for the merged College	Many of these will apply in their current format during 2013/14. These will be prioritised in line with curriculum planning arrangements with a view to the majority being in place for the 2014/15 academic year and fully in place to cover the 2015/16 regional curriculum.	During 2014/15 to support the 2015/16 curriculum	Single curriculum-related policies in place across all college campuses.	SW
12	Effective Progression & Articulation Plans for all areas of the curriculum (including progression to employment)	Being updated as part of normal planning and review. Existing articulation and collaboration agreements have been updated. Internal progression and articulation policy to be reviewed as part of planning for 2014/15 + 2015/16 curriculum.	During 2014/15 to support the 2015/16 curriculum	Robust and meaningful progression and articulation opportunities for NESCol students.	SW
13	Review of Access Level	Discussions have commenced	By June 2014	A NESCol curriculum in place for 2015/16.	SW

No.	Task	Details	Timing	Success measure	Lead
	Strategy and Curriculum, including operational model and key skills policy	between colleagues working with learners who have additional support needs. Further developments on the best approaches to such curriculum delivery will be considered as part of the on-going arrangements for curriculum planning.	to support the 2015/16 curriculum		
14	Plan curriculum strategy (including delivery strategy, programme delivery hours and curriculum structure) over 2013/14; 2014/15; 2015/16. Consideration being given to: The future size of the College; Wsums planned; the new structure and quick wins/minor changes	The curriculum for 2013/14 will be delivered under the existing arrangements of the 2 Colleges. Recruitment in 2013/14 and PIs for 2012/13 will be used to influence the 2014/15 curriculum, which will be a combined – but not fully integrated – offer. Work will commence in 2014 on the North East Scotland College Curriculum for 2015/16. These plans must generate efficiency savings.	To be completed in line with planning and marketing schedules	A NESCol curriculum in place for 2015/16 that provides the right learning in the right place and that is responsive to the local and regional economic drivers.	SW
15	Determine key curriculum themes and KPI targets	Targets for the new College curriculum for 2014/15 will be set following review in September 2013 of the current year's PIs and taking enrolments for 2013/14 into account.	As per SFC	ROA targets met and sustainable improvements to student retention and success outcomes evidenced across all campuses with the focus on areas of under performance.	SW/NC

North East Scotland College

Learning & Teaching and Student Services Committee

Proposed Standard Papers for LTSSC: November 2013 to September 2014

26 November 2013	VP Responsible
For decision	
Academic Board and its Sub-committees	SW
For discussion	
Curriculum Planning arrangements for North East Scotland College	SW
Proposals for non-SFC Funded Activity	PS
Quality Assurance Arrangements for NESC	NC
Students' Association	JMcK
For information	
Student Activity for 2013/14 – standing item	NC
Performance Indicators – standing item	NC
Student Support Funds	NC

21 January 2014	
For decision	
Course Fee Policy	FH
For discussion	
Student Retention update	SW
Progress with Curriculum and Student Services objectives set out in ROA for 2013/14	SW
Learner Engagement	FH
NESC Links with Communities and Employers	PS
2013/14 Enrolment by age and gender	SW
Status report on Pre- merger Quality Work Stream	NC
Students' Association	JMcK
For information	
Student Activity for 2013/14 - standing item	NC
Performance Indicators – standing item	NC
Student Support Funds	NC

18 March 2014	
For decision	
Fee Refund Policy	FH
Remission of Fees Policy	FH
For discussion	
Curriculum Planning Arrangements for 2014/15	SW
Status report on Curriculum Integration 2015/16	SW
IT to support the Curriculum in 2014/15	FH
European Projects	PS
Students' Association	JMcK
For information	
Student Activity	NC

Performance Indicators	NC
Student Support Funds	NC

20 May 2014	
For decision	
College/LA/Schools Partnership Policy	SW
For discussion	
Report on the work of the Academic Board and its sub-committees	SW
OGAS Outcomes and Update on Progress	PS
Status Report on Pre-merger Quality Work Stream	NC
Students' Association	JMck
For information	
Student Activity	NC
Performance Indicators	NC
Student Support Funds	NC

15 July 2014	
For decision	
Criteria to Govern Course Provision Policy	SW
Bursary Policy (SFC National Policy)	FH
Review of Policies: SSS	FH
For discussion	
Student Discussion & Focus Groups	SW
University Progression and Articulation Links	SW
ICT in the Curriculum	FH
Quality Assurance Arrangements	NC
Students' Association	JMcK
For information	
Student Activity for 2013/14	NC
Performance Indicators	NC
Student Support Funds	NC
EMA's	NC

16 September 2014	
For decision	
Students' Association Grant for 2014/15	FH
For discussion	
Student Applications for 2014/15	NC
Learner Progression – First Destination 2013/14	SW
Status Report on Curriculum Integration 2015/16	SW
Survey of Client Opinion	FH
Students' Association	JMcK
For information	
Student Activity for 2013/14 – final count	NC
Performance Indicators	NC
Student Support Funds	NC

The Academic Board and its Sub-committees

1. Introduction

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to enable the Committee to consider how the Academic Board of North East Scotland College and its sub-committees will operate.

2. Background

2.1. The Academic Board provides a forum for the key functions that drive and support the curriculum to be discussed and enhanced.

2.2. The Academic Board oversees the work of its sub-committees and makes recommendations to these groups in relation to their key priorities.

2.3. The Academic Board has an overarching strategic role to communicate government, SFC and other stakeholder priorities across the College and to disseminate good practice.

3. Rationale

3.1. The establishment of North East Scotland College is an opportunity for the Academic Board and its sub-committees to influence the strategic direction of the College and to ensure that the curriculum and the essential functions that support and enhance it are coherent and outcome focused.

4. Functions

4.1. The suggested aims, responsibilities, and membership of the Academic Board and its sub-committees are attached at Appendix 1.

4.2. It is proposed that the Vice Principal Curriculum will be responsible for the Academic Board and that each of its sub-committees will be chaired by the appropriate Vice Principal.

4.3. It is proposed that the Academic Board will be responsible for tendering advice to the Principal on matters relating to the academic activities of North East Scotland College.

4.4 The Vice Principal responsible for the work and outcomes of each sub-committee will report regularly to the Academic Board.

4.5. All College campuses will be represented (as appropriate) on the Academic Board.

5. Recommendation

5.2. It is recommended that the Committee:

5.2.1. Approves the functions of the Academic Board and its Committees outlined at section 4.

5.2.2. Adopts the arrangements for the Academic Board and its sub-committees outlined in the appendix to this paper.

Rob Wallen
Principal

Sandra Walker
Vice Principal Curriculum

The Academic Board of North East Scotland College

Academic Board

Purpose
It is proposed that the role of the Academic Board of North East Scotland College will be:

 "to tender advice to the Principal on matters relating to the academic activities of the College".

Membership
The membership of the Board will include people with specific cross-College roles relating to the delivery of the curriculum and related services (who are 'ex officio' members of the committee by virtue of their posts) together with elected representatives.

Membership of Academic Board
Vice Principal Curriculum (Chair)
Vice Principal Student Services
Vice Principal Organisational Services
Senior staff from the following areas:
ILT
Quality
Part-time Business Solutions
Learner Services
Student representative nominated by the Students 'Association Committee.

Elected Members
Elected members of the Board:

- 2 representatives from each teaching school
- 3 managers responsible for the academic activities of the College.

Meetings
The Academic Board will meet 3 times per year in October, February and June.

Records
The records of the meetings of the Academic Board will be submitted to the Principal and members of Senior Management Team. The records will be made available on the College intranet and paper copies will be available at each campus.

Sub-Committees of The Academic Board

It is proposed that the Academic Board of North East Scotland College is supported by five sub-committees with specific remits.

The sub-committees would report directly to the full Academic Board which will also from time to time consider specific reports on a range of issues such as curriculum development and the College calendar and timetable.

The following applies to all 5 sub-committees:

➢ Quorum
The Sub-committee operates with a 40 percent quorum.

➢ Papers
The notice of meeting and agenda will be distributed to members of the sub-committee not less than five working days before the meeting.

A full report on the work of each sub-committee will be submitted to each meeting of the Academic Board.

Records
➢ Records of sub-committee meetings will be distributed to all members and will be made available on the College intranet.

➢ Sub Committees
The proposed Sub-committees are as follows:

1. Learning and Teaching Development Committee
2. Quality Improvement and Assurance Committee
3. Curriculum Advisory Panel
4. Inclusiveness and Guidance Committee
5. IT in the Curriculum Committee.

1. **Learning and Teaching Development Committee**

   Rationale
   The aim of the Learning and Teaching Development Committee is to bring together a range of groups responsible for key aspects of learning and teaching and curriculum management, including Schools/College Links, Articulation and Progression, Curriculum for Excellence, Essential Skills, Employability and Good Practice Dissemination.

   Purpose
   The Learning and Teaching Development Committee will be responsible for ensuring that all students across the College experience learning and teaching of the highest quality.

   This group will oversee developments in the delivery of the curriculum to effect continuous quality improvement, taking full account of government policy and pedagogical innovation including:

   - Dissemination of good practice
   - Essential Skills Development
   - Curriculum for Excellence
   - Employability skills
   - Schools/College links
   - Articulation and progression
   - Other current policies and priorities affecting the curriculum, as required.

   Membership
   Chair - Vice Principal Curriculum
   Vice Principal Organisational Services
   Head of Learner Services
   2 department managers responsible for learning and teaching
   Senior member of staff responsible for Quality
   Curriculum Leader/Manager responsible for Essential Skills

   Elected Members *
   - One Team Manager(or equivalent) from each teaching school
   - One Curriculum Leader (or equivalent) from each teaching school
   - Staff member responsible for articulation links
   - Staff member responsible for Schools/College Links
   - Representative from Part-time Business Solutions Department
   - Representative of the Students' Association

      * Attendance being dependent on agenda of each meeting

   Meetings
   - The Learning and Teaching Development Sub-committee of the Academic Board will meet 4 times a year in September, November, January and May.

2. Quality Improvement and Assurance Committee

Background
Following integration and merger of quality systems there will be a review of the work of the Quality Assurance Sub Committee carried out by the Vice Principal (Organisational Services) during 2013/14.

Purpose
The Quality Improvement and Assurance Committee is responsible for the annual review of all College provision and key aspects of quality assurance of College programmes and the services that support them.

Each College curriculum team and each support team must carry out a full self-evaluation of each Programme and function each year.

For curriculum teams this process involves detailed analysis of each course using a range of performance criteria and other key information.

The QIAC will ensure that this process is complete and accurate and that robust action plans with deadline dates for completion are in place and being closely monitored.

Courses which are considered not fit for purpose may need to be redesigned or have delivery arrangements altered. Courses may be deleted on the advice of the QIAC

An integral part of the work of the Committee is also to identify good and innovative practice in relation to course delivery, support services or the quality and effectiveness of the self-evaluation reports and to disseminate this widely across the College.

Membership
Chair – Vice Principal Organisational Services
 Senior member of staff responsible Quality
Qualifications and Quality Co-ordinator (or equivalent)

Elected members:
2 representatives from each teaching school and one from support services and one from Part-time Business Solutions.

Meetings
 As required to fulfil the functions of the committee.

4

3. Curriculum Advisory Panel

Purpose
The Curriculum Advisory Panel is responsible for considering and approving or otherwise all new course approvals and amendments to existing approved programmes.

All full-time and many part-time programmes must be sanctioned by the CAP before they can be developed and offered by the College

In each case the appropriate Sector Manager (or equivalent) has to provide the rationale for the programme and demonstrate that it is financially viable and that it can be developed and delivered to a high quality standard

Membership
Chair – VP Organisational Services
Vice Chair – Qualifications and Quality Co-ordinator
VP Curriculum
VP Student Services
Senior member of staff responsible for Quality
Curriculum Leader responsible for Core Skills
Member of staff responsible for University Links

Elected Members
4 Curriculum leaders (or equivalent) and 2 attending as observers
Sector/Dept staff as appropriate at the discretion of the chair

Meetings
Meetings will be held as necessary to fulfil the functions of the committee

5

4. Inclusiveness and Guidance Committee

Purpose
The Inclusiveness and Guidance Committee monitors the arrangements in place to meet the needs of the student body. It also identifies areas for improvement and disseminates good practice approaches to inclusiveness

The committee will identify and develop inclusive practices across the College that foster wider access and participation of learners to include:

- Access to College provision (to include internal progression)
- External progression from College
- Relevant partnership links
- Support for learning
- Issues related to physical access, accommodation, facilities and resources
- Implementation of the College's arrangements for guidance and advice

Membership
Chair – Vice Principal Student Support Services
Member of staff responsible for learner services
Member of staff responsible for Safeguarding and
Representative from each teaching sector/dept
Part-time Business Solutions representative
 ITC and Libraries manager
President of Students' Association
European Projects representative

Meetings
Meetings will be held as necessary to fulfil the functions of the committee

5. IT in the Curriculum Committee

Purpose
The IT in the Curriculum Group is responsible for providing a cross-College perspective on how effectively the use of ICT is being promoted and developed across the curriculum to enhance the student experience.

The committee advises on the development and implementation of IT in the delivery of the College curriculum.

Membership
Chair – Vice Principal (Student Services)
Vice Chair – ILT Manager
Vice Principal (Curriculum)
Member of staff responsible for learner services
IT Services Support representative
Senior staff member responsible for Inclusiveness
Technical Manager

Elected Members
One representative from each Sector/Dept and Business Solutions chosen for their interest in and use of IT in their teaching
One Lecturer (ILT)
One Team Manager (or equivalent)
One Curriculum Leader (or equivalent)
Sector Manager responsible for BYOD
Other Sector/dept staff as relevant at the discretion of the Chair
Student representation, as relevant at the discretion of the Chair

Observer
RM Service Delivery Manager

Meetings
Meetings will be held as necessary to fulfil the functions of the committee

Curriculum Planning Arrangements

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with information on the curriculum planning arrangements for North East Scotland College.

1.2 The priority is to ensure that the College delivers high quality education and training opportunities for students across the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Region so that, "lives can be transformed and ambitions realised".

1.3 The curriculum of the College will be developed in ways that are flexible, accessible and efficient and that deliver positive outcomes through inspirational teaching.

1.4 Central to the delivery of a dynamic and engaging curriculum across all campuses is a commitment to the dissemination of good practice across the region.

2. Background

2.1. Curriculum planning for 2013/14 was based on the target for the region of 179,946 wSUMs as detailed in the Regional Outcome Agreement for 2013/14.

2.2. The full-time curriculum being delivered in the current year was planned separately by the two former Colleges. However, across the region, the focus is firmly on delivering a high quality skills-based curriculum that leads directly to employment or, through the robust Degree Links that both former Colleges have with university partners, onto pathways to employment.

2.3. In relation to the part-time curriculum, the focus is on offering a range of SFC-funded vocational courses, while seeking additional opportunities to increase funding for the new College by offering more courses at full cost.

3. Curriculum Delivery in the Current Year (2013/14)

3.1. During 2013/14 the curriculum that was established independently by each of the former Colleges will be subject to a comprehensive mapping exercise to identify duplication, opportunity for development and local need. Provision will be reviewed during this year in relation to performance indicators, including attainment, student satisfaction and first destinations of learners.

3.2. The purpose of this detailed review is to ensure that the right learning is available and accessible in the right place and that it is being delivered efficiently to the highest possible standards.

3.3. The comprehensive review being undertaken in the current year will also inform the fully integrated regional curriculum for 2015/16.

3.4. This year the region was awarded additional funding from the SFC's Skills Fund. This amounts to £382,323 for the delivery of 2,285 additional wSUMs. The former Aberdeen College will use 1,400 wSUMS to provide extra places in the following areas of demand and skills shortage: Life Sciences; Creative Industries; Events Management and Travel and Tourism. The former Banff and Buchan College will allocate 885 more wSUMs to deliver additional places in Marine Maintenance and Nautical Science.

3.5.   Additional places are also available in 2013/14 to enable 75 more Higher National Diploma students in the areas of Engineering and Business to articulate to Year 3 of the appropriate degree at Robert Gordon University on completion of the HND. This activity, which is excluded from the College's wSUMs count, is funded through the Additional Funded Places Scheme, with planned and guaranteed entry to Stage 3 of the relevant degree for successful students in October 2015.

3.6.   SFC funded places for Schools/College links will be available to Local Authority school pupils across the region at similar levels to 2012/13.

3.7.   The curriculum will continue to equip learners with essential skills for learning, life and work, with increasing emphasis on entrepreneurship, enterprise and sustainability, and to develop those aptitudes that lead to successful learners, effective contributors, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

4.   Positioning the North East Scotland College Curriculum for the Future

4.1.   Curriculum planning is a dynamic and continuous process, managed and shaped initially by curriculum teams. Curriculum plans take full account of the strategic priorities of the external bodies who influence the curriculum, including the Scottish Government, The Scottish Funding Council, Industry Bodies, (such as Sector Skills Councils, OPITO, ECITB, Construction Skills, HABIA etc), SQA and other Awarding Bodies, Skills Development Scotland and local industry. In turn the College will influence the emerging local and national agenda in ways that position North East Scotland College at the forefront of innovation for the benefit of students and to support their progression.

4.2.   The North East Scotland College Curriculum Planning Group, comprising senior staff and chaired by the Vice Principal Curriculum meets monthly to plan, develop and evaluate the curriculum and to take steps to ensure it is as future proof as possible.

4.3.   In planning the College's provision, full account is taken of student satisfaction with learning and teaching. This includes a full analysis of recruitment trends by course, retention, attainment and wider achievement together with learner progression to positive destinations. In this way quality improvement is an integral and vital part of curriculum planning and review.

4.4.   Positioned at the centre, between schools and universities and employers, the region's College is uniquely placed to play a key role in the implementation of the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence to the benefit of students and the local economy.

5.   Towards a fully integrated North East Scotland College Curriculum for 2015/16

5.1.   Due to the lead-in time required for the application process and for prospectus preparation, the curriculum offer for 2014/15 was established pre-merger. Applications for entry to courses for 2014/15 opened on Monday 11 November. As such, applicants for 2014/15 will be directed through a North East Scotland College portal to two separate prospectuses that relate to the two former Colleges. Please see attached at appendix 1, the "brother and sister" style prospectus cover for the 2014/15 curriculum.

5.2.   When applications open in November 2014 for entry to North East Scotland College in August 2015 (AY 2015/16) there will be a single College prospectus for North East Scotland College.

5.3.   The 2015/16 curriculum will be agreed by July 2014 to meet the publication date of the new North East Scotland College Prospectus and to provide prospective applicants and stakeholders with comprehensive information about the regional curriculum in ample time for decisions to be made and for pre-entry guidance to be provided.

5.4. During 2014/15 the new promoted teaching structure will become fully embedded across the College and the associated high quality learning and teaching delivery arrangements will be developed.

5.5. Good practice approaches to curriculum delivery will be disseminated across the College during 2013/14, 2014/15 and beyond. These will be designed to maximise participation of promoted and unpromoted teaching staff, support staff and students across all College campuses.

5.6. To support full curriculum integration and high quality delivery a number of key strategies and policies have been established for North East Scotland College. These include:

- The Learning and Teaching Strategy (attached at appendix 2)
- The External Engagement Strategy (attached at appendix 3)
- The Access and Articulation Strategy (attached at appendix 4)
- The Core and Soft Skills Strategy (Essential Skills for Learning, Life and Work) (attached at appendix 5)

5.7. These new strategies will be communicated to staff by the Vice Principal Curriculum through a series of good practice discussion events being organised for early in the New Year.

5.8. During 2013/14 and 2014/15 further policies and strategies and approaches will be established to support the emerging North East Scotland College 2015/16 curriculum.

5.9. Details of the additional work being undertaken in preparation for the integrated curriculum are included in Paper 5.1 and attached to that paper in Appendix 1: The Curriculum Integration Plan (formerly the Curriculum Work Stream).

6. Curriculum Priorities for North East Scotland College

6.1. The priorities for the College relating to the curriculum are extensive and include the following:

- To provide high quality learning in the right place across the region
- To provide a skills-based curriculum leading to positive destinations, with the focus on 16–24 year olds, while providing a relevant range of provision for other learners, including women returners and people with disabilities
- To deliver high quality education and training through inspirational teaching in order that lives can be transformed and ambitions realised
- To provide clear pathways to education and training for pupils in the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence
- To provide clear articulation routes to further and higher education for all students who seek to progress to further study
- To work with employers to ensure that the skills being developed provide students with the vocational skills and wider core and essential skills which prepare them for seamless progression to employment
- To deliver a flexible, accessible and efficient curriculum that is needs led and delivers high quality outcomes for students
- To contribute to the local and national economy by contributing to the local skills base, particularly in relation to the Oil and Gas and wider Energy sectors
- To contribute to the five ACSEF (Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future) priorities of Energy; Science; Food and Drink; Tourism and Creative Industries.

7. **Implications of the Scottish Government's Letter of Guidance (21st October 2013) for the College Curriculum**

   7.1. The statements relating to priorities for College activity included in the Guidance Letter have been addressed in this paper together with North East Scotland College's approaches to delivering these priority outcomes.

   7.2. These statements (summarised) are as follows:

- High quality, effective learning
- Access to education for people from the widest range of backgrounds
- Learning that prepares people well for the world of work and successful long term careers and in so doing supports our ambitions for economic growth
- A relevant range of provision for other learners – including women returners and people with disabilities - and improvements in learner success
- ....new forms of partnerships between colleges and schools...... with the potential to transform opportunities for young people and create competitive economic advantage for Scotland's employers
- Effective delivery of Opportunities for All relies on individual learners being able to access the right learning and support at the right time
- In partnership with ES you should implement appropriate quality improvement and assurance processes over the next year, particularly in relation to quality assuring newly-merged colleges.

   7.3. The full Letter of Guidance from the Minister is contained in appendix 6 this paper.

8. **Summary**

   8.1. This paper has outlined the priorities for the Curriculum of North East Scotland College in the context of the Scottish Government's expectation for high quality delivery and improved and enhanced outcomes for students, communities and the wider economy.

9. **Recommendation**

   9.1. It is recommended that the Committee notes the information provided in this paper.

Rob Wallen   **Sandra Walker**
Principal   Vice Principal Curriculum

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SCOTLAND
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Aberdeen City Edition

PROSPECTUS

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NORTH EAST SCOTLAND COLLEGE

LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY

Version Date: Approved by Regional Partnership Board 21st October 2013

LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY

1.0   Introduction/Background

1.1   The overall aim of the College's Learning and Teaching Strategy is to enable all students to reach their full potential with maximum achievement of vocational and essential skills for learning, life and work.

1.2   The College is committed to delivering high quality inclusive learning and teaching experiences for students that lead to the attainment of certificated qualifications and progression to or within employment or further study.

1.3   The College will provide high quality flexible and accessible courses responsive to the needs of individuals, employers and communities served by the College.

1.4   The Strategy supports the changing needs, aspirations and expectations of students and addresses developments in learning, teaching and assessment within the context of an immersive ICT environment.

2.0   The Strategy

2.1   The focus of the Learning and Teaching Strategy is to provide inspirational teaching, supported by high quality resources and services to support learning.

2.2   The College will provide high quality learning and teaching through:

2.2.1   Flexible and varied teaching approaches and delivery methods that reflect different learning styles
2.2.2   Active engagement of students at the centre of learning experiences, including the co-creation and co-evaluation of learning as appropriate
2.2.3   A wide range of creative, dynamic and inclusive learning and teaching approaches, promoting creativity across learning with a holistic approach to student engagement
2.2.4   Dissemination of good and innovative practice across the curriculum
2.2.5   The development of core and essential skills for learning, life and work
2.2.6   Commitment to enterprise, independence and self-reflection
2.2.7   Up-to-date, relevant and appropriate programmes that provide students with opportunities to progress to positive and meaningful destinations
2.2.8   Continuous review of quality indicators and awarding bodies to ensure the provision of nationally recognised qualifications that support employment
2.2.9   Availability of high quality resources for learning, including state-of-the-art learning technologies, set within a learning environment, conducive to positive learner experiences and outcomes.
2.2.10   Commitment to access and inclusion to ensure that all those who can benefit from the education and training provided, and progress where appropriate to further study or work, can access the provision, with reasonable adjustments being made as appropriate
2.2.11   Effective programme and lesson planning and review to ensure that programmes are continually improved
2.2.12   Effective assessment approaches, including formative assessment and compliance with awarding body standards
2.2.13   Promotion of mutually respectful relationships between staff and students and between students that provide the appropriate climate for effective learning to take place
2.2.14   Well qualified and trained teaching and support staff.

2.3   The College will provide high quality support for learning through:

2.3.1   Study support for students who require additional support to optimise their opportunities for success

2.3.2   Information and effective communication with students, including the provision of information on university articulation routes and pathways to employment

2.3.3   Guidance at pre-entry stage to ensure the students are matched to the course that best suits their needs and aspirations

2.3.4   On-course Guidance to support retention

2.3.5   Pre-exit Guidance to support progression to work or further study

2.3.6   Opportunities to participate in competitions, awards and prizes and to engage in enterprising, volunteering or citizenship activities that enhance the learning experience and increase the employability potential of students

2.3.7   A comprehensive range of up-to-date technologies appropriate to the curriculum offer

2.3.8   Staff with an understanding of the full range of teaching approaches and available resources, including the latest learning technologies and the ability to use them effectively to meet individual and group needs

2.3.9   Staff with the skills to evaluate their own and their team's performance and to take corrective action, as required, to improve the quality of the student experience

2.3.10   Appropriate and effective staff training to ensure staff remain up-to-date with technology and pedagogy

2.3.11   Lesson observations to ensure that good practice in learning and teaching is being implemented

2.3.12   Management of course provision within the curriculum planning cycle in ways that ensure effective and timely planning, development, delivery and review of learning and teaching

2.3.13   Audits of learning resources to ensure they meet student needs and support high quality curriculum delivery.

3.0   Responsibilities for the Strategy

3.1   Strategic responsibility for the Learning and Teaching Strategy rests with Vice Principal Curriculum.

4.0   Related Documents

4.1   Access and Articulation Strategy
Dissemination of Good Practice in the Curriculum Strategy
Essential Skills for Learning, Life and Work: Core and Soft Skills Strategy
Estates Strategy
External Engagement Strategy
Information Technology Strategy
Student Engagement Strategy
Course Overviews.

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND COLLEGE

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

1.0   Executive Summary

The purpose of this Strategy is to define the framework within which the College will work in partnership with employers and communities to ascertain their learning needs and aspirations and to increase their capacity for learning and the development of skills.

The College's campuses are rooted in the social and economic communities of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

The College provide a range of valuable services to support the skills development of local and national industries, particularly the ACSEF (Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future) priority areas of: Energy; Creative Industries; Tourism; Life Sciences and Food and Drink.

This Strategy links to the Regional Outcome Agreement, and outlines how the College will contribute appropriately and effectively to national and local agendas, including
- Community Planning and Single Outcome Agreements
- Curriculum alignment to key growth sectors
- Responding to employer needs
- Development of skills for local economic growth
- Clearly articulated routes to employment or further study
- National Priorities for Community Learning and Development
- Curriculum for Excellence
- Learning for All.

2.0   The Strategy for Community Engagement

Scottish Government Guidance for Community Planning is:

"In the context of community planning, the main aim of community engagement should be to improve the planning and delivery of services to make them more responsive to the needs and aspirations of communities."

2.1   To ensure that it engages effectively with the communities it serves, the College will:

2.1.1   Participate as appropriate in the formal structures of Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) in the region to ensure that education and training opportunities and the development of skills are taken into account as part of the overall planning for community development.

2.1.2   Participate in a range of Community Planning sub-groups, including Aberdeen Works, in ways that contribute to the strategic aims of the wider CPP.

2.1.3   Contribute to work in partnership with a range of key community groups for the benefit of the communities served by partner agencies. This includes: Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Community Learning and Development; Aberdeenshire Literacies Partnership; Jobcentre Plus; More Choices More Chances; Aberdeen Foyer; Aberdeen Library Service and Skills Development Scotland.

2.1.4   Host Open Days for members of the public in a wide range of locations across the region.

2.1.5   Participate in Community Engagement events hosted by community partners, including Job Fairs and locally based information events.

2.1.6   Provide locally based learning opportunities in a range of community locations across the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire region, optimising the use of ICT as appropriate to increase access to education and training.

2.1.7   Create effective progression and articulation links between community-based learning and more substantial College based provision.

2.1.8   Work with the voluntary sector to develop mutually supportive skills sets between the College and third sector organisations in order to provide effective skills for learning, life and work for fragile or disadvantaged learners, within the context of available funding.

2.1.9   Work with Local Authorities to ensure that the communities of school pupils have the maximum opportunity to benefit from College–delivered programmes as part of their overall educational experience in the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence and to ensure that school pupils are fully informed of the full range of post school opportunities available in the local community/region.

2.1.10   Undertake market research to determine the needs of individuals and communities in order to inform the curriculum planning process.

3.0   The Strategy for Employer Engagement

3.1   To ensure that it engages effectively with the employers it serves the College will:

3.1.1   Respond to local employer need and "Opportunities for All".

3.1.2   Consult with employers and employer organisations to identify and respond to demand for skills to support local economic growth.

3.1.3   Develop provision that is closely aligned to labour market needs.

3.1.4   Liaise with generic Industry Bodies, such as AGCC, SCDI and ACSEF, to ensure that their market intelligence and aspirations are included in the employer engagement arrangements of the College.

3.1.5   Work with Industry Bodies, including OPITO; ECITB; HABIA; SMTA; SNIPEF and ConstructionSkills, to support the emerging training and skills needs of a wide range of industries.

3.1.6   Through the Oil and Gas Academy of Scotland (OGAS) contribute to meeting the challenges faced by the Oil and Gas Sector in relation to the recruitment of an expanding skilled workforce.

3.1.7   Facilitate a number of information events throughout the year to provide employer partners with a forum for articulating their current and future training needs to the College and their education and training partners.

3.1.8   In accordance with the principles of Curriculum for Excellence embed the development of learners' essential skills for learning, life and work across the regional curriculum, to include entrepreneurship and enterprise skills.

3.1.9   In liaison with employer partners seek to secure work placement opportunities for learners, as appropriate, and to facilitate positive destinations, including progression to employment or to further study.

3.1.10 Continue to strengthen links with employers through the teaching sectors and departments at curriculum level by involving them in Course Committees and in setting vocationally specific project briefs for learners.

3.1.11 Work with employers to promote and showcase excellence, including events involving employers in judging competitions and presenting prizes. Examples include: The North East Hair and Beauty Festival; Fashion Shows; Construction Awards and End of Year Art and Photography Exhibitions.

3.1.12 Support employers in a range of activities including: attracting and retaining skilled people; providing continuous professional development for existing employees; attracting apprentices, and providing information about qualifications and skills.

3.1.13 Develop a Regional Programme of provision for employers and communicate the range of provision and services available to them regularly and appropriately.

3.1.14 Undertake market research to determine the needs of employers in order to inform curriculum planning and activity processes.

4.0 Responsibilities

Strategic responsibility for the External Engagement Strategy rests with Vice Principal Curriculum.

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND COLLEGE

ACCESS AND ARTICULATION STRATEGY

ACCESS AND ARTICULATION STRATEGY

1.0   Introduction

1.1   The College is committed to implementing the Government's policy objectives relevant to further education, including those of:

(i)   Increased participation in education and training, particularly for 16 – 19 and 19 – 24 year olds
(ii)   Wider access to education and training
(iii)   Lifelong learning
(iv)   Digital inclusiveness
(v)   Inclusive approaches to meeting the needs of those with additional learning requirements
(vi)   Upskilling the workforce
(vii)   Promoting excellence
(viii) Promoting essential skills for life and work, including core skills, employability skills, entrepreneurship and citizenship, and environmental awareness
(ix)   Promoting equality of opportunity
(x)   Development of the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence in learners
(xi)   Providing articulation and progression opportunities for learners to progress to degree link programmes or to employment
(xii)   Providing positive destinations for school leavers, in liaison with key partners.

1.2   The Scottish Government's paper, "Putting Learners at the Centre" puts the emphasis on increasing opportunities for learners to progress seamlessly to higher education. The College is a member of the North East Articulation Hub and works with the lead organisation, Robert Gordon University, to enhance the portfolio of articulation pathways for learners and to improve the outcomes for these learners at degree level. In addition to its Hub partner, the College has arrangements with a range of other universities across Scotland and locally with The University of Aberdeen.

1.3   The College recognises the financial imperative that courses must be developed and delivered within the context of the funding regime, and must reflect the absolute constraints on funding for the College and the differential funding for various types of provision.

1.4   The range of curriculum offer and range of modes of delivery will be reviewed in light of available funding, taking into account policy priorities as identified by the Scottish Government.

1.5   These policy priorities and financial realities are integral to the College's strategy for widening access and promoting articulation and progression.

2.0   Strategy

The College's broad strategy is to:

2.1   Access

2.1.1   Maintain an appropriate range of choice of subject areas across the region, by delivering the right learning that is sustainable, in the right place.

2.1.2   Provide a flexible and accessible curriculum that enables learners at all levels who can benefit from the vocational courses offered, to access provision that provides clear pathways to sustainable employment or further study.

2.1.3   Ensure that there are entry-level courses in each area of provision wherever possible, and clear and coherent progression pathway into more advanced programmes and articulation into relevant Higher Education provision wherever possible.

2.1.4   Develop new courses in, and convert existing courses into, formats that promote flexible access to learning in order to increase participation.

2.1.5   Integrate new technology, and teaching approaches including those based on new technology, into programmes wherever possible to increase access and fully engage learners in their learning.

2.1.6   Make appropriate use of electronic delivery methods, including the VLE, where appropriate in order to create viable class groups and increase participation.

2.1.7   Make reasonable adjustments where appropriate and where this is financially viable in order to support access to routes to employment for learners and potential learners who have learning or other additional needs.

2.1.8   Select the most appropriate form of nationally recognised certification to meet the needs of learners and employers.

2.1.9   Use the College's credit rating powers to develop certification where no suitable external certification is available.

2.1.10   Ensure that issues of equality of opportunity and environmental awareness are reflected and included within the teaching programme wherever necessary and appropriate.

2.1.11   Ensure that relevant essential skills including core skills, citizenship skills, employability skills, and entrepreneurial skills and attitudes are promoted in all programmes.

2.1.12   Ensure that teaching approaches and materials do not create unnecessary barriers to learning, and wherever possible recognise the variety of learning styles, and anticipate the range of common learning difficulties.

2.1.13   Provide practical entry-level courses in each vocational area suited to the abilities and aspirations of those with additional learning requirements wherever possible.

2.1.14   Ensure that chosen delivery methods are sensitive to the needs of those with additional learning requirements and facilitate the provision of extended learning support where required.

2.1.15   Ensure the curriculum is developed in line with key Government policy initiatives, such as Curriculum for Excellence.

2.2   Articulation

2.2.1   Participate in the North East Articulation Hub to enhance the portfolio of articulation pathways for learners and to improve the outcomes for these learners at degree level.

2.2.2   Jointly undertake course planning; enhancement of articulation routes; shared approaches to learning and teaching and improvement to student support.

2.2.3   Work with university partners to promote and enhance degree link opportunities.

2.2.4   Secure progression and articulation routes for learners across the region by offering seamless pathways from school and on to college, university or sustainable employment, resulting from increased access to degree link choices.

2.2.5   Secure generic Business/Enterprise degree links for learners through partner universities, including The Open University, where there is no direct vocational degree link.

2.2.6   Ensure that in addition to the wider curriculum, the key national specialisms have articulation links to partner universities, thereby providing enhanced opportunities for students in key areas of the Scottish economy.

2.2.7   Provide articulation and progression opportunities for people entering the oil and gas and related energy sector and also for people who require training mid-career through the Oil and Gas Academy of Scotland (OGAS).

2.2.8 Continue to seek opportunities for learners to articulate to degree level study by flexible routes, including part-time in order to widen access to progression routes, by utilising e-learning and other technologies.

2.2.9 Seek learner feedback to identify good practice and support improvements in retention an attainment at degree level.

2.2.10 Review Course Level Agreements annually to ensure the currency of formal articulation agreements and thereby ensure the seamless transition of learners from college to university.

2.2.11 Encourage learners to become Associate Students of the partner University in order to support transition.

3.0   Responsibilities

3.1   The *Vice Principal Curriculum* will be responsible for the monitoring of access and articulation arrangements.

3.2   Each *Team/Sector* will be responsible for embedding the College's arrangements for access and articulation across the region, reflecting the College's overall aims and strategy.

ABERDEEN COLLEGE

Essential Skills for Learning, Life and Work

CORE AND SOFT SKILLS STRATEGY

Version Date: January 2013

Version Date: January 2013

CORE AND SOFT SKILLS STRATEGY

1.0   Introduction

Aberdeen College recognises the importance of not only developing vocationally-specific knowledge and skills, but also in enabling students to develop essential skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work that form the basis of Curriculum for Excellence. These skills have been defined as Core Skills and Soft Skills.

The key importance of the Core Skills of Communication, Numeracy, ICT, Working with Others and Problem Solving, and Soft Skills of Citizenship, Employability, Environmental and Economic Sustainability, Enterprise and Study Skills is reflected in the College's overall range of services. The College is committed to developing the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence across the curriculum in ways that develop in learners the essential skills for life and work beyond college.

The College recognises that the development of a wide range of essential life skills including the promotion of equality and diversity helps learners to secure positive destinations post College.

The College is committed to including Core Skills units and Soft Skills development on full-time programmes, and on part-time programmes where appropriate.

The Essential Skills will be delivered using a combination of discrete unitised, embedded and/or integrated provision according to the vocational context.

The College recognises the need for the integration of these skills into meaningful vocational contexts. The most appropriate method of integration is determined on the basis of the client group and their prior experience. In deciding on the appropriate method of delivery, issues of skill development and skill assessment will be planned.

2.0   Core Skills

2.1   In order to develop the Core Skills of Numeracy, Communication, ICT, Working with Others and Problem Solving in mainstream College provision, the College strategy is to:-

Where appropriate incorporate contextualised discrete Numeracy, Communication and ICT units within course programmes and promote ICT pervasiveness in the curriculum.

- Through programme design and lesson planning, promote the inclusion and development of Working with Others and Problem Solving (and other similar essential skills for life and work) through appropriate learning activities and experiences, and ensure that progress is recorded in individual learning plans.

- Put in place arrangements to allow learners who have already achieved the Core Skills level for the programme to progress to the next level, and to support those whose Core Skill entry level is such that they cannot readily achieve the Core Skills level for the programme.

- Implement a diagnostic approach to establishing Core Skills competency for non-advanced full-time learners (with the exception of ESOL and Learning Opportunities students) to establish and record individual skill levels and promote the full development of Core Skills:

    o   recognition by students of acknowledgement of prior attainment
    o   course overviews and lesson plans to include planning for Core Skills development at individual and class level
    o   early intervention and support for learners with particular difficulties.
    o   further development of learners who are already at the required level and who have the capacity to make further progress.

- o teaching staff to differentiate the learning and teaching experiences of learners to accommodate differing levels of core skills in any class group

- Enabling learners to see the relevance of Core Skills to their overall employability and citizenship skills profile.

- Encouraging curriculum teams to be innovative in their approaches to reflecting on core skills development with learners

- Enabling HE learners to self profile by giving access to profiling software through StudentNet

3.0 Soft Skills

The College has identified four broad clusters of Soft Skills, and for each has identified the key elements in how it will help students to develop them. Each cluster consists of a different mix of skills, essential understandings and underpinning attitudes. However, the College recognises that there is a high degree of integration of these essential skills.

The College has mapped the soft skills to the 4 capacities of Curriculum for Excellence and to the experiences and outcomes to help learners identify the full range of essential skills that they are developing and being credited for.

3.1 *Citizenship Skills: developing Responsible Citizens*

The cluster of skills, understanding and attitudes that enables an individual to be integrated as an active and informed member of local, Scottish, British, European and world society.

- Citizenship will be taken to incorporate both the values of respect for fellow citizens, whilst at the same time constructively participating in and contributing to the life of the local community and wider society.
- Citizenship as a concept incorporates an awareness regarding wider social issues of justice, environmental sustainability and participation in democracy and decision-making.
- The concept of Citizenship furthermore links the individual to competencies of integrity, diligence and punctuality, which are essential values for employability.

3.2 Enterprise and *Employability Skills: developing Effective Contributors and Confident Individuals*

The cluster of skills, understanding and attitudes that (in conjunction with relevant specific vocational skills) enables an individual to enter and sustain paid employment, to create self-employment, to develop entrepreneurship in taking advantage of opportunities for career progression and to remain versatile by adapting to changes in the economy.

The College will develop enterprise and employability skills in students by:

- Setting an example through the professional manner in which it delivers its service and the behaviours of all its employees.
- Reinforcing in students the essential skills and attitudes that underpin enterprise and employability, and developing the capacity for challenging negative behaviours.
- Providing systematic workplace experience, where relevant.
- Involving employers in programmes where appropriate
- Supporting learners to progress to positive destinations

3.3 *Environmental and Economic Sustainability Skills: developing Responsible Citizens*

The cluster of skills, understanding and attitudes that enables an individual to make informed decisions relating to the impact of their actions on the environment and to act in ways that promote a sustainable world environment.

The College is committed to ensuring that all learners develop skills and habits that allow them to become responsible citizens who can and do contribute to the wellbeing of society and the environment

The College is aware of its educational, organisational and social responsibilities, therefore in promoting and developing environmental sustainability the College will:

- Promote sustainability across the curriculum whether it is delivered as a discrete unit in areas such as Science, Construction, Hospitality, Engineering and Travel and Tourism or in projects integrated into the curriculum, such as in Fashion, Photography, Marketing and Hairdressing, it permeates the life of the College.
- Recognise sustainability as an essential skill for life and work
- Use both the curriculum and CPD to promote knowledge, attitudes and skills that enable learners and staff to make informed decisions relating to the impact of their actions on the environment.
- Act in ways that promote a sustainable world environment through reducing, reusing and recycling wherever possible and implementing safe and ethical disposal procedures.
- Develop and share good practice in order to influence society in a positive way, seek to engage creativity and diversity and promote opportunity for all.

3.4   *Study Skills: developing Successful learners*

The cluster of skills, understanding and attitudes that enables an individual to manage their learning effectively and to take maximum advantage from learning opportunities whether in formal or informal contexts.

The College will develop study skills by:

- Providing (subject to the availability of funding) specific courses relating to the use of IT and to information skills for study.
- Ensuring that staff teaching course programmes embed within programmes appropriate methodologies to allow students to learn effective study techniques.

3.5   Soft Skills development will be secured through a range of enterprising approaches to learning and teaching to provide learning experiences set in the daily life of the College, discrete areas of the curriculum, cross-curricular experiences and activities involving links with local, national and international partners. Soft Skills development will be encouraged through:

- Student involvement in College life and management
- Students managing their own learning
- Student involvement in local communities and with charities and other third sector organisations
- Student engagement in economic activity
- Promotion of diversity
- Awareness of global, national and local issues
- Recognition of student achievement.

Essentially the College's approach to Soft Skills involves:

- Leading by example – College staff providing role models to demonstrate the essential skills needed for employment, citizenship, sustainability and study.
- Reinforcing the required skills, behaviours and understanding in our students and challenging inappropriate behaviours.
- Promoting best practice in relation to their delivery and development through the formal good practice in the curriculum dissemination events.

4.0   Implementation and Monitoring

4.1 The College recognises its crucial role in the development of students' Core and Soft Skills underpinning the principles of Curriculum for Excellence and understands that this strategy requires College wide commitment. By developing students' essential skills for life and work, the College is supporting its students to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

4.2 Core Skills profiles to be established prior to starting the course for relevant full time students:

- Lesson observations
- Audits of course materials
- Self-audit checklist for teaching teams
- Documenting students' understanding and development of Core and Soft Skills in Individual Learning Plans
- Core Skills profiling at the start of each academic year for relevant full-time students
- Learner attainment
- First destination statistics, including progression to work or further study
- Employer feedback
- Learner participation in competitions and prizes
- Learner involvement in the life and work of the College and in the wider community, including volunteering and charity work
- The monitoring role of the Curriculum for Excellence Essential Skills Steering group
- Performance Indicator data relating to the impact of embedding Curriculum for Excellence in the curriculum of the College
- A range of self reflection approaches adopted by curriculum teams
- Impact of embedding Curriculum for Excellence across the curriculum, as evidenced by Performance Indicator data.

The College will ensure that students are aware of the essential skills they have gained and accept ownership of their progression, and the recording of the progress made.

4.3 Self-evaluation of each course will take place on an annual basis to review the provision with respect to experiences and outcomes, including essential skills developments. These reviews will be quality assured by the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee of the Academic Board.

4.4 The College's Core and Soft Skills Strategy will be implemented by specialist teaching staff in College Sectors and other departments, and by staff development relating to Core and Soft Skills.

5.0 Responsibilities

5.1 The **Director of Curriculum and Learning** has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Core and Soft Skills Strategy as part of the College's approach to the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence.

5.2 The **Associate Principal (Student Support Services)** will ensure that the College's guidance process supports the delivery of the Core and Soft Skills Strategy.

5.3 The **Sector Manager (SISS)** is responsible for the management of Core Skills profiling results and resulting actions.

5.4 The **Sector Manager (BCIT)** is responsible for leading Enterprise and Entrepreneurship across the College.

5.5 **Teaching staff** will plan lessons to take account of learners' Core and Soft Skill levels in the development of skills for life and work.

5.6 **Guidance Tutors** will discuss learners' progress in relation to Core and Soft Skills with them and will liaise with teaching and LDC staff if intervention strategies are required.

Rùnaire a' Chaibineit airson Foghlaim agus Ionnsachadh Fad-bheatha
Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning
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The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

LEGACY 2014
XX COMMONWEALTH GAMES
GLASGOW

Professor Alice Brown
Chair
Scottish Funding Council
Donaldson House
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21 October 2013

LETTER OF GUIDANCE

1.   I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). I look forward to working with you as I know that your extensive experience will help to forge innovative partnerships between the further and higher education sectors, and beyond.

2.   The Scottish Government has now published its draft Budget proposals for 2014-15, including planned funding for colleges and universities in that year. This letter of guidance to the SFC sets out the Government's priorities for investment in colleges and universities.

Financial Year	College Programme Funding (£m)	University Programme Funding (£m)	College and University Capital (£m)
2014-15	521.7	1060.9	61.4

3.   I want first to record my thanks for the way in which, with the sectors, the SFC has delivered Scottish Government priorities. The progress on mergers and regionalisation in the college sector has been unprecedented, and an outstanding example of public sector reform.   Robust monitoring and evaluation of regionalisation, including restructuring, remains very important. I am keen that the sector, and other areas of the public sector, understands and takes account of the lessons learned through our reforms. In this respect, the continuing evolution of outcome agreements for universities and colleges is a credit to both the SFC and the sectors. I would like you to continue to support the sectors in delivery and in embedding the benefits of reform. To that end, my high level strategic objectives remain to ensure we have:

- highly efficient and effective regional structures for colleges, including structures in multi-college regions, such as the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI);
- high quality, effective learning;
- access to education for people from the widest range of backgrounds;
- learning which prepares people well for the world of work and successful long term careers, and in so doing supports our ambitions for economic growth;
- internationally competitive and impactful research; and
- effective knowledge exchange and innovation including excellent university/industry collaboration.

THE COLLEGE SECTOR

4. I expect the SFC to build on the priorities set out in my letter of guidance in March this year. In particular, young people - specifically the Opportunities for All guarantee group - remain my priority; but I want you also to ensure a relevant range of provision for other learners – including women returners and people with disabilities - and improvements in learner success. I look to the SFC to provide the sector with continuity and stability while maintaining the direction of travel through continued reform, including implementation of the Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013 (the 2013 Act).

5. Your target in relation to the £521.7m funding detailed above is to at least maintain the volume of provision at 2013/14 levels (2,252,791 wSUMs) in AY 2014/15.

6. As I recently made clear, I want to protect college bursaries for AY 2014-15, increasing them by inflation. You should budget accordingly.

7. Maintaining the current criteria and arrangements for the Employability Fund in 2014/15 will be an important contribution to the overall volume target identified in paragraph 5 and will help to provide stability for the sector. The success of this arrangement remains your collaboration with Skills Development Scotland (SDS). I therefore expect the SFC to continue to ensure that its provision is aligned to the Strategic Skills Pipeline, responds to the needs of local employability partners, and retains a strong focus on positive outcomes.

8. Meanwhile, and again in collaboration with SDS and colleges, you should maximise the funding available through the 2014-20 European funding programme.

9. The flexibility you have shown in reflecting the singular circumstances that apply to our rural communities including in negotiating in outcome agreements is very important. You should therefore continue to take account of their distinctive needs.

10. You also manage specific funding designed to support provision for English for Speakers of Other Languages. In 2014-15, I want you to maintain the

existing level of funding for this activity, but you should work with stakeholders over the course of the year to agree a sustainable level of funding in the medium and long terms.

11. The Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, chaired by Sir Ian Wood, has recommended new forms of partnership between colleges and schools. I see this as a significant opportunity, and one with the potential to transform opportunities for young people, and create competitive economic advantage for Scotland's employers.

12. Ministers are currently engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, including the full range of political parties, on the recommendations. A formal Government response to the individual recommendations will follow and I may provide further guidance on the recommendations thereafter. While this process is underway the SFC should engage with sector leaders, COSLA, local authorities, and Education Scotland (ES) to agree how they might take forward the recommendations in the short and medium terms. The resultant plans should be reflected within outcome agreements with colleges, subject to detailed consideration by Ministers and subsequent announcements.

13. As you know, I have been seeking a simplified and 'needs-based' approach to funding for some time. Working with the sector and regional leads we have made good progress on:
    • a simpler system of setting 'prices' for different provision which also takes account of the economies of scale we can expect from large urban colleges compared with smaller rural ones;
    • a rational basis for estimating regional need for college provision based on demographics, thereby moving away from a formulaic approach, but also properly reflecting the different characteristics of different regions, student flows and other factors; and
    • an approach founded on discussion and negotiation of regional funding allocations which ties together funding with needs and delivery.

14. I am particularly pleased that your proposals decisively move away from a rigid formula – as you know, I am convinced that such an approach cannot properly reflect the different characteristics of different regions and the flows of students between different regions.

15. In implementing your new approach, however, you should remain vigilant to the need to achieve value for money; you should continue to provide objective challenge to regions to find new and better ways of doing things, encouraging efforts continually to improve and secure efficiency.

16. Subject to finalising aspects of the model - including in particular, a simpler measurement system to replace the wSUM - you should plan on the basis of introducing the new arrangements from 2014-15. In order to manage the transition, you should ensure that no region loses more than 1% in cash terms from its allocation from SFC in any one year. This will help avoid regions having to face unmanageable changes in their funding from SFC.

17. Effective delivery of Opportunities for All relies on individual learners being able to access the right learning and support at the right time. We know this is best achieved when partners understand the needs of individuals and share relevant, robust and timely information to facilitate their participation and progression.

18. In this context, you will be aware that the 2013 Act received Royal Assent in August, and we are now embarking on the process of implementing its provisions. This includes secondary legislation which will require the SFC to share information.

19. In fulfilling its legal requirements, in relation to information sharing, I expect the SFC also to support key partners – primarily colleges and SDS – to meet theirs. This will provide a rich source of information for the sector which it should use to review its services to best meet regional need.

20. In partnership with ES, you should implement appropriate quality improvement and assurance processes over the next year, particularly in relation to quality assuring the performance of newly-merged colleges. In doing so, you should ensure the practices of the SFC and ES align to inform the negotiation and monitoring of Outcome Agreements, and, with ES, to build the capacity of colleges in undertaking robust self-evaluation. This activity needs to be seen in the wider context of the need for a broader alignment of our quality processes so that they are consistent with, and support, the ambitions of our post-16 reforms.

21. You have already put in place a project team to implement the reclassification of incorporated colleges as central government bodies from 1 April 2014, leading the sector through the initial period of adjustment to the issues arising. You should continue to work constructively with the sector to manage and mitigate the impact of ONS and provide practical advice and support as implementation approaches. In particular the key tasks for the project team are to:

    - communicate and engage effectively with the sector, ensuring a partnership approach is developed;
    - develop and implement the necessary training and guidance for the sector to adjust to the changes to the budgeting and accounting;
    - lead the sector through the establishment of arms-length trusts (or foundations) to mitigate the impact of reclassification on the use of reserves;
    - assess and manage the risks and consequences of this change for our colleges, and in doing so offer advice on wider mitigation and solutions which will allow colleges to continue to deliver my priorities and our reforms; and
    - support the sector in preparing for this change.

THE UNIVERSITY SECTOR

22.   In reaching an agreed SR settlement for universities I have been mindful of the significant progress that has been made over the last two years in ensuring our universities remain internationally competitive, contribute ever more strongly to the Scotland's economy and society, and are accessible to Scottish residents based on their ability to learn not their ability to pay.

23.   The Scottish Government has supported the competitiveness of Scotland's universities through the budget settlement which provides an additional £19.3m in 2014-15. Notwithstanding this settlement, it is essential that the university sector continues its efficiency drive and can demonstrate efficiency and value for money in the use of public monies. As part of that, I would like the SFC to ensure a minimum 1% per annum real terms efficiency saving over the next two years. I expect that the number of funded places – including those additional places in support of widening access, articulation and key sector skills – to be maintained at current levels.

24.   You should continue working with institutions to make further progress on widening access, ahead of the implementation of provisions in the 2013 Act, including striking Widening Access Agreements with the universities. I believe that this would be most efficiently done and monitored by incorporating these agreements within your wider Outcome Agreements with universities. I welcome the national aspiration the SFC has identified and discussed with the sector of 1,100 additional students from poorer areas and other under-represented groups by 2016-17 and the support you have already provided through the additional funded places that have been offered to the sector to help achieve this.

25.   Widening and supporting access to higher education needs to be more than enrolling students and I wish to secure improvements in retention across the sector, but particularly in those universities performing less well. As the universities increase access and articulation this will be a challenge, but it is important that universities make particular efforts to support those entering through these routes.

26.   Outcome Agreements must continue to support real change in the sector, so I would ask you to make sure they are appropriately rigorous, whilst at the same time recognising individual universities' different circumstances. I would therefore be grateful if you would liaise closely with my officials throughout the cycle of developing and monitoring Outcome Agreements, as well as on the detailed content and indicators to be used in these agreements.

27.   The targeting of additional places from 2013-14 to help secure full articulation must be followed-up by continued efforts by the universities to form productive partnerships with the new regional colleges to influence curriculum development in a way that increases the chances of full articulation such as (2+2 or 1+3). The SFC should facilitate this and monitor progress through Outcome Agreements.

28. The SFC should also continue its work with Scottish Government, SDS, the Industry Leadership Groups, the enterprise agencies and the universities to take forward efforts to ensure Scottish graduates have the necessary skills, knowledge and attributes to support key industry sectors and to encourage entrepreneurship.

29. I would ask that the SFC continues to take account of the particular challenges faced by rural and remote communities, particularly in relation to access, skills, employability and local industry needs. I recognise the SFC's continuing support for the University of the Highlands and Islands, SRUC and the Crichton campus in support of this. In particular, I expect the SFC to support the Crichton Campus Leadership Group in developing a shared strategic vision for provision at the campus.

30. I believe that Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have the potential to change the way that learning is delivered. I am aware that the Open University and the UHI already use open learning resources and exploit the power of online curriculum delivery. A number of our institutions are also beginning to exploit MOOCs. I would ask the SFC to take forward a short-term project to further develop and enhance the sector's capacity in online pedagogy and learning technology.

31. Earlier this year I announced the Global Excellence Initiative designed to ensure the continued international competitiveness of our universities. This was in keeping with our established policy of supporting world-leading and internationally excellent research wherever it is found across the sector. I am aware that the REF2014 exercise is reaching a crucial stage with the submissions from institutions due by the end of November 2013. In preparation for future funding decisions, once the outcome of the REF exercise is known, the SFC should review, in collaboration with my officials, the Research Excellence Grant and Research Postgraduate Grant with a view to ensuring that they remain fit for purpose and continue to support research excellence. Only by prioritising funding to the very best can Scotland hope to remain internationally competitive. The SFC should also consider the best way to ensure the continuation of the collaborations established through successful research pools and work with Scottish Government, Scottish Development International (SDI) and Universities Scotland to promote their international engagement and to raise the profile of Scotland's excellence globally.

32. I also want to ensure Scotland's research is being utilised to best effect for Scottish industry. We are beginning to see genuine progress in this area. The Scottish Government recognises the universities as a key sector and their value in contributing to economic development and entrepreneurship in other sectors. The SFC's work in partnership with Scottish Enterprise (SE) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) has demonstrated the potential of concerted joint action with Government and the sector in priority areas. The planned formation of a pilot centre for workplace innovation as a vehicle for bringing together distinctive areas of expertise across partners through joint

priority setting and information sharing, consultancy and applied research would be a further example of this.

33.   This partnership must continue to work to respond to initiatives that promote additional academic and industrial collaboration. The success in securing the Technology Strategy Board's Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult, the Fraunhofer Centre in Applied Photonics, the MSD Life Sciences Fund, the Lead Factory of the Innovative Medicines Initiative and the Max Planck Partnership in Measurements at the Quantum Limit is evidence that reinforces the value of the partnership approach and the excellence of the Scottish research base.

34.   The success of Interface and innovation vouchers, delivery of Easy Access IP, the plans for the Single Knowledge Exchange Office (Innovation Scotland) that I announced earlier this month, and the response of the sector and industry to the opportunity to establish Innovation Centres (ICs) are clear indicators that a major strategic and cultural change, one that will make our universities the preferred partner for industry, is underway and we must continue to push forward in this area.

35.   I endorse the long-term commitment made by the SFC to supporting the Innovation Centres Programme. The SFC and its partners must maintain the highest standards established in selecting the first Innovation Centres and monitor their development robustly. Excellence is no less important in this context. With SE and HIE, SFC must take appropriate action to ensure that the industry-demand led approach remains the driver and that the Centres deliver on their potential.

36.   Where an Innovation Centre appears not to be the appropriate model for a sector, SFC should engage with SE, HIE, the sector or relevant subsections and other partners as appropriate to seek alternative solutions to stimulating innovation. You should also ensure Centres exploit the opportunities they offer for entrepreneurship and employability skills development at all levels.

37.   I would also like to see our universities better harnessing the opportunities offered by Horizon 2020. The SFC's support aimed at increasing the level and value of academic and industry participation should remain a priority, especially in the coming year as the initial calls for proposals are issued. Again coordination of your efforts with SE, HIE, Scotland Europa and Scottish Government should be continued. More widely, I would urge the SFC to work closely with my officials, SDI and Universities Scotland to ensure a Team Scotland approach to promoting Scotland's universities overseas.

BOTH SECTORS

38.   The successful implementation of the 2013 Act requires close working between the SFC and Government. In particular, the SFC should lead the establishment of the new Regional Boards for colleges and support the UHI to put in place suitable procedures and arrangements - that have the confidence of the colleges in the region - to perform its role as a regional strategic body. I
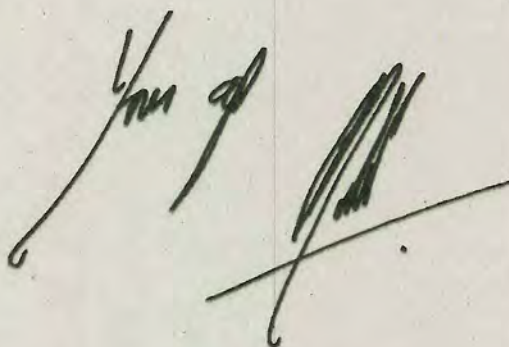
will look to the SFC to advise me when the SFC considers it is appropriate for me to commence the provision in the 2013 Act that will 'designate' UHI as a regional strategic body.

39. I will also be looking to the SFC to identify the principles of good governance for the further and higher education sectors ahead of implementation of these provisions in the 2013 Act.

40. In the context of HE, the SFC, working with the University Sector Advisory Forum, should play a key role in considering the further implementation of recommendations from the Review of Higher Education Governance in Scotland and the development of appropriate governance structures in the sector. I welcomed the publication of the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance in June. However, I also recognise there is scope for further development of some of the detail and a need for clarification or interpretation of some aspects of the Code which may require further discussion with stakeholders.

41. Supporting the enhancement of good governance in both the further and higher education sectors must be an early task and I look forward to hearing more about the SFC's plans in this regard, informed by discussion with my officials in terms of scope, timing and involvement of stakeholders, including student representatives and the representative trades unions. Discussion and negotiation is central to your new approach to funding both sectors and this is encapsulated in the production of Outcome Agreements. I strongly support this approach. I know that you have taken feedback from both sectors about the approach, and are adapting processes in the light of this feedback. I am very pleased with this iterative and responsive approach.

42. You should continue work to improve Outcome Agreements for future years ensuring robust negotiation of commitments. At the same time, you should work with colleges and universities as results from previous Outcome Agreement cycles come through, adopting a proportionate, negotiated and contextualised approach to your consideration of any action that flows from the extent to which institutions have met agreed targets. Above all, this approach should avoid encouraging institutions to become risk averse in setting targets thereby stifling ambition. I recognise this is a difficult balance to strike but nevertheless ask you to seek to strike such a balance.

43. In order to meet the SFC's requirement as a producer of Official Statistics (OS), I am encouraged by your plans to rationalise and align your statistical outputs, working with SG and the Higher Education Statistics Agency. I consider this work to be important and I would therefore like the SFC to continue to improve the content, presentation and timing of its publications. In particular, you should improve the accessibility and clarity of key information; consider how best to report performance against Outcome Agreements at national level (including, for example, the incorporation of Outcome Agreement indicators in routine OS publications); and ensure that the release of publications is done in a way that presents a clear and coherent picture of the performance of both sectors.

44. The many competing demands on the Scottish Government's capital budget limit the amounts available to both sectors in the coming years. The SFC should meet its current commitments, where necessary with transfer to capital from resource. The SFC should also consider setting aside some capital monies for match funding the purchase of large pieces of equipment, shared between institutions, to help attract business investment.

45. Projects of scale that support structural and strategic change and demonstrable economic benefits for Scotland should remain the priority for both sectors. The SFC should engage with my officials to discuss potential opportunities over the coming year.

46. Working with partners, colleges and universities have an important contribution to make to the delivery of better outcomes for communities and many are already actively involved in Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs). Scottish Ministers and COSLA have signed an Agreement on Joint Working on Community Planning and Resourcing. The Agreement places expectations on the public sector to share budget and resource planning assumptions with each other at an early stage and to work together through CPPs to deploy resources towards the jointly agreed priorities set out in each CPP's Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). I expect colleges and universities to consider how they engage with CPPs to suit local circumstances and their contribution to SOAs.

CONCLUSION

47. The past year has been one of very significant achievement, and I re-iterate my thanks for the SFC's part in that success. The challenge now is to build on those achievements, so that we continue to realise our ambition to put learners at the centre. I am confident that, through continued close working with Government and other partners, we will succeed. I am copying as below.

MICHAEL RUSSELL

Copies:

Stewart Maxwell MSP, Convenor of Scottish Parliament Education and Culture Committee

John Russell, Chair, Colleges Scotland

John Henderson, Chief Executive of Colleges Scotland

Liz McIntyre, Convenor of Scotland's Colleges' Principals' Convention

Professor Pete Downes, Convenor, Universities Scotland
Alastair Sim, Director: Universities Scotland

Rory Mair, Chief Executive, COSLA

Bill Maxwell, Chief Executive, Education Scotland

Damien Yeates, Chief Executive, Skills Development Scotland

Grahame Smith, General Secretary, Scottish Trades Union Congress

Mary Senior, Scottish Official, University & College Union

Larry Flanagan, General Secretary, Education Institute for Scotland

Gordon Maloney, President NUS Scotland

Proposals for Non SFC Funded Activity

1. Introduction

1.1. This paper highlights the strategic importance of non-SFC funded activity and suggests a timeframe to review and consider changes to current practice.

2. Background

2.1. Non SFC funded activity currently accounts for approximately 30% of NESC income with aspirations to raise this to 34% by 2014/15 .

2.2. Non SFC income includes:

- major external contracts with for example Skills Development Scotland
- commercial work undertaken by in house College commercial activity (b-Solutions and Business Solutions) and ASET
- community based self funding learning programmes
- other forms of grant.

2.3. There are expectations that this activity will grow and that the College will plan to increase "vocationally relevant learning opportunities to support the skills needs of the North East of Scotland "[1]

2.4. The Letter of Guidance from the Scottish Government to the SFC for 2014/15 makes specific reference to the:

- SDS Employability Fund and its ongoing importance
- The skills pipeline (Modern Apprenticeships)
- The Wood Commission (increased collaboration with schools to support vocational outcomes)
- Opportunities to use European Funding to enhance training opportunities.

2.5. The development of a clear strategy for non–SFC funded work has not been a major feature of the pre-merger work streams. Prior to merger, both Colleges had (and still have) structures, contracts and activity in place that covered, albeit differently, these key areas.

2.6. There is a need to review the current situation.

2.7. The need to review the management of SDS funded activity is the most critical.

2.8. From April 2014 the College will have one contract with SDS and the tenders will be issued very shortly (possibly by the end of November 2013). These tenders will be for Modern Apprentices and the Employability Fund.

2.9. The current level of College engagement with European Social Fund is low, but there may be opportunities particularly related to the skills pipeline that could be considered.

2.10. A medium term review of commercial work should highlight opportunities for increased income.

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[1] *Draft North East Scotland College Outcome Agreement 2014-17*

3. Recommended priorities and next steps

3.1. The Depute Principal, supported by other managers, should bring together all SDS operations under one regional team with effect from December 2013.

3.2. The Depute Principal should consider the implications and actions necessary to engage with the next round of European Funding and report back to appropriate Board meetings in January 2014.

3.3. A working group, chaired by the Depute Principal, should be established to review and reflect on current arrangements for commercial activity delivered by b-Solutions and Business Solutions (taking into consideration the role of the separate College company, ASET) and report back its initial considerations by March 2014.

4. Recommendation

4.1. It is recommended that the Committee considers the content of this paper.

Rob Wallen
Principal

Paul Sherrington
Depute Principal

Quality Assurance Arrangements

1. Introduction

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to provide information to the Committee on the development of quality assurance and improvement arrangements for North East Scotland College (NESC).

2. Background

2.1. The work on developing and implementing quality assurance and quality improvement approaches for the new College had previously been undertaken by the Quality Work Stream of the Interim Leadership Group (ILG). The Quality Work Stream, prior to merger, was jointly led by Aberdeen College's Vice Principal (Human Resources) and Banff & Buchan College's Assistant Principal (Curriculum and Quality).

2.2. The key activities of the Work Stream were initially identified in a Quality Strategy (Appendix 1) which was originally published in the Merger Proposal Document. The strategy seeks to ensure that students achieve both high quality experiences and positive outcomes.

2.3. With the subsuming of ILG activity into the work of NESC's Senior Management Team the responsibility for leading the development of quality arrangements for NESC now resides with the College's Vice Principal Organisational Services (VP OS).

2.4. To date much of the Quality Work Stream activities have been undertaken and managed through the effective collaboration of both Quality Managers from the Aberdeen City and Fraserburgh campuses.

3. Quality Strategy and Quality Work Stream Progress

3.1. A brief description of some of the key activities undertaken since the Quality Work Stream's inception are noted below:

3.1.1. A College Quality Framework – The key quality arrangements of both Aberdeen and Banff & Buchan Colleges have been identified and combined in a single quality framework document. There has been much commonality and good practice identified in both the centres and this document provides the foundation for the development of a single and effective quality framework for NESC. It is anticipated that the implementation of a single quality framework and related quality cycle will take place in time for the start of the following academic year (2014/15)

3.1.2. Quality Policies – A draft Quality Policy for the College is near completion. The development of a draft Assessment and Verification Policy has been completed and consultation on both policies will take place with staff and students during November 2013. It is anticipated that an agreed set of quality policies will be in place for the end of December, 2013.

3.1.3. Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – The student-related KPI information for both Aberdeen and Banff & Buchan Colleges has been published by, and shared between, Quality Managers. A common approach to calculating and reporting student performance indicators has been agreed. This will help develop a consistent approach to developing sustainable improvements in student retention and attainment. Additional work is still required on agreeing other KPI information for NESC Board Members.

3.1.4. Self-evaluation - Work has begun on developing a single self-evaluation framework. Established practice between College centres has been shared and meetings between respective Campus Quality Teams have been scheduled during November and December 2013 in order to establish best practice for quality improvement in the new College. A single self-evaluation framework will be implemented by the end of March 2014.

3.1.5. Student Engagement in Quality Improvement – A review of all student feedback methods has begun. This review encompasses student surveys, student suggestions and student focus group approaches to quality improvement. Once the initial review is completed further consultation with students and staff will begin.

3.1.6. External quality standards – Work has begun on extending the quality standards previously held by Aberdeen College to the new College. Discussions with Investors in People (IiP) have begun and a review at the Fraserburgh campus, for the continuation of the IiP Bronze Award, will be undertaken in the New Year. It is anticipated that a full review for the IiP Gold Award will take place for NESC across all centres in October 2014.

4. Quality Priorities for NESCol

4.1. The VP OS has now met with both the Aberdeen and Fraserburgh-based Quality Teams. Arrangements are also in place to ensure regular meetings take place between the VP OS and the College's two Quality Managers.

4.2. Prior to merger both Aberdeen and Banff & Buchan Colleges had positive reputations within the FE sector for their respective approaches to quality assurance and improvement. In order to capitalise on this staff from the Aberdeen and Fraserburgh Quality Teams will meet soon to share and establish best practice for the new College. This will include consideration of several of the key items highlighted in section 3 of this report e.g. a single quality framework, a single self-evaluation framework and student engagement in quality improvement.

4.3. Currently, no formal proposals have been developed in terms of the management and staffing structure for quality assurance and improvement within the new College. Additional time is required in order to establish a better understanding of existing quality arrangements and structures and how they relate to student experiences and outcomes. Additional time is also required to identify and share best practice between all College campuses. It is, however, anticipated that the formal review of Quality structure will start in February 2014.

4.4 Discussions at SMT have identified the importance of embedding responsibilities for quality assurance and improvement within the new curriculum management roles. This, in turn, will ensure that the College builds the capacity to sustain continual improvements to student experiences and outcomes.

5. Education Scotland Quality Review Arrangements

5.1. Annual Engagement Visits – Prior to Vesting Day Education Scotland (ES) conducted an Annual Engagement Visit (AEV) at Banff & Buchan College. Her Majesty's Inspectors Dr Jan Davidson and Gill Ritchie undertook the visit over two days and fed back their findings to the College's Senior Management Team. An accuracy check of the draft report has been completed and the final report will be made available soon to the College. NESC's first ES AEV has still to be confirmed but may to take during Spring 2014.

5.2. Aspect Task Visits – Staff are currently working with Education Scotland on the preparation for two Aspect Tasks for Computing/Digital Media and ESOL. Each task will be conducted over two visits and different campuses. The Computing/Digital Media Aspect Task will be undertaken at the Fraserburgh Campus on 19 November and at the Aberdeen City Campus on 20 November. The ESOL Aspect Task will be conducted at the Aberdeen City Campus on 19 November with a second visit taking place after the New Year. Each task will involve lesson observations and professional discussions with students, staff and managers.

5.3. Full Quality Review – No written confirmation has been received regarding NESC's first full quality review. The College's ES Inspector, Dr Jan Davidson, has intimated that such a review will be conducted sometime in the next academic year (2014/15),

6. Recommendation

6.1. It is recommended that the Committee note the information provided in this paper.

Rob Wallen
Principal

Neil Cowie
Vice Principal Organisational Services

Quality Strategy

1. Introduction

1.1 North East Scotland College will provide education and training to people in the North East region in a number of different geographical locations and by different modes of delivery. It will ensure that all operate within the framework of a comprehensive quality system. The College will demonstrate a strong commitment to embedding a culture of continuous quality improvement for the benefit of all learners, employers, communities and stakeholders.

1.2 It will ensure that learning and teaching is of the highest quality so that learners across the region, irrespective of mode of delivery or curriculum area, can achieve positive outcomes and sustainable destinations. It will also provide a range of services to support students in their learning and wider achievement.

1.3 In pursuit of excellence, the College will implement a range of quality assurance and improvement policies, procedures and initiatives and will empower staff throughout the organisation to take responsibility for quality improvement. It will also draw on best practice from Aberdeen College and Banff & Buchan College.

1.4 This Quality Strategy aims to ensure that in devising new provision or reviewing existing provision the merged College follows best practice in quality assurance and quality improvement matters.

2. Strategy

2.1 The key aims of the Quality Strategy will be to:

- Implement common curriculum planning and approvals processes to support the implementation of a regional curriculum offer in 2014-15
- Review all quality assurance and quality improvement policies and procedures and develop a common quality framework for the merged College
- Conduct audits of all key quality assurance activities and their impact across the Colleges to establish a baseline for the development of quality improvement objectives
- Develop common customer feedback mechanisms including: student and employer satisfaction surveys, focus groups, student discussion groups and suggestions and complaints procedures
- Develop and implement a single approach to self-evaluation for quality improvement in order that the student experience and student outcome is enhanced
- Disseminate good practice across all areas of activity including curriculum and corporate services
- Maintain and extend existing national standards to cover the whole of the merged College. These include: Investors in People, Healthy Working Lives, Mental Health and Wellbeing, BSI 18001Occupational Health and Safety, BSI 14001 Environment and Sustainability, Customer Service Excellence
- Ensure that standards specified by awarding bodies and Education Scotland are met
- Ensure high quality information, guidance and support services are maintained across the College to help applicants and students make informed choices
- Implement a single approach to the collection, analysis and reporting of data.

2.2 In the time leading to merger, the Colleges will also identify key performance indicators which will form the basis of standard reports to the College Board of Management.

Student Support Services Arrangements

1. Introduction

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to update the Committee on the current and future work of Student Services within North East Scotland College (NESC).

2. Background

2.1. Following merger on 01 November 2013 the area of Student Services was formed under the leadership and guidance of the Vice Principal Student Services.

2.2. Student Services spans the following key functional areas:

- Support services for Students (including guidance, learning support and careers)
- Libraries and Learning Centres (including IT and Assessment Centres)
- Resources for Learning
- IT
- Technical support
- Safeguarding.

It also encompasses aspects such as partnership work, student discipline and the key Senior Manager liaison with the Students' Association.

3. Update

3.1. Essentially the initial work of shaping Student Services was through two merger Work Streams, namely Student Services and ICT.

3.2. The work and future plans of the Work Streams have now become the basis for development plans going forward.

3.3. Handover meetings have been arranged where previous areas of responsibility have moved to other members of the Senior Management Team e.g. Student Funding, Admissions.

4. Achievements to Date

4.1. In terms of the work of the Student Services Work Stream achievements to date include:

- Agreement on a vision statement and a set of underpinning principles, values and behaviours
- Creation of a regional Student Engagement Strategy
- Agreement on how future success will be measured
- Creation of a regional Partnership Matters Group
- Creation of a detailed plan of action for the future.

4.2. In terms of the work of the IT Work Stream achievements to date include:

- Creation of a strategic vision
- Putting interim supporting staffing arrangements in place
- Successful completion of phase one of a common email system across NESC
- Successful completion of phase one of a common telephony system across NESC
- Successful completion of phase one of a common website for NESC
- Agreement on cost to upgrade connectivity between Fraserburgh campus and Aberdeen City campuses
- Options Appraisal carried out for student records system
- Agreement on online student support funding approach
- Upgrade of finance system across NESC.

5. Future Plans

5.1. In terms of structures:

Restructure Student Services Management Team
This has been identified by the Vice Principal Student Services as the first priority area in Student Services to restructure. The rationale for this decision is based on the following:

- Identification of the key functional areas of responsibility of the Vice Principal Student Services, namely:

  * Support services for students (including guidance, learning support and careers)
  * Libraries and Learning Centres (including IT and Assessment Centres)
  * Resources for Learning
  * IT
  * Technical support
  * Safeguarding.

- The need to consider interdependencies between the key functional areas
- The need to ensure efficient alignment of and within the key functional areas
- The need for individual managers to have an input into structures below them ensuring regional direction and leadership
- The need to rationalise the number of current direct reports.

This process will begin in November 2013.

Restructure of key functional areas
Once a management structure has been agreed for Student Services that encompasses the key functional areas, restructuring of each of those areas will take place. It is envisaged that this will be a staged process starting in December 2013.

5.2. In terms of the work ahead the following priorities have been identified across the range of Student Services key functions:

- To develop, implement a Student Support Strategy
- To agree ways of working with the Students' Association to maximise opportunities for engagement and the student voice to be heard
- Working with external partners to establish clear arrangements for collaboration on issues of student support and student progression
- To ensure that the College has arrangements in place to provide high quality additional learning support to students and to meet its legal obligations
- To develop and implementing a Library/Learning Resource Strategy
- Develop common approaches to safeguarding
- To develop and implement an IT/ICT Strategy ensuring that it is in line with the College's Learning and Teaching, and Innovation Strategies
- To ensure effective hardware maintenance and systems development of the College's integrated computer networks and systems
- To tie down revised arrangements for IT governance
- To undertake an Options Appraisal for NESC's Library Management System and Virtual Learning Environment
- To move to complete the student records system and student support funding projects
- To go live with a new finance system
- To move to a common HR and payroll system.

6. Interdependencies Statement

6.1. Within the work of the Work Streams interdependencies on other Work Streams were identified. This was mainly from an IT and technical perspective. It is crucial now to see the wider interdependency between Student Services, Curriculum and Quality to ensure a seamless student journey, effective student engagement, positive outcomes and onward progression into work or further study.

7. Recommendation

7.1. It is recommended that the Committee notes the content of this paper.

Rob Wallen
Principal

Frank Hughes
Vice Principal Student Services

Student Activity

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with information on the current status of student activity for the academic year 2013/14.

2. Background

2.1 For the purposes of securing funding from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) College activity is measured in weighted student units of measurement (wSUMS), which provide a method of aggregating student activity on different types of course and different modes of attendance in such a way that the duration of each programme and its resource demands are approximately reflected in the aggregated totals.

2.2 If the College falls short of its target the SFC would require part of grant-in-aid for the year to be repaid.

2.3 The College monitors the level of enrolments and the rate of retention throughout the year, as well as the projected level of additional activity. These data are important in allowing the College to ensure that activity will at least meet required target levels.

2.4 Differences in approaches to recording and reporting student activity have previously existed at Aberdeen and Banff & Buchan Colleges. Post-merger the harmonisation of these approaches remains a priority. At present, however, the Aberdeen City and Fraserburgh campuses continue to record and report in different ways.

2.5 For ease of comparison and reporting the presentation of this data is by Dominant Programme Group (DPG) i.e. prescribed and SFC-determined categorisations of subject areas.

3. Current Activity Levels AY2013-14

3.1 At this stage in the year, the figures noted below should only be read as an approximation of the current position. The final calculation of wSUMS can only be made at the end of the academic year and is dependent on: the final tally of enrolments for all types of activity across the whole year; student retention rates; and the exact weightings applied by the SFC at the end of the year. As such the data in Table 1 are indicative.

3.2 The Regional Outcome Agreement established with the SFC for 2013/14 sets the College's target for student activity at 179,946 wSUMS. This figure includes the additional 2,000 wSUMs offered by the SFC to Banff and Buchan College in July 2013.

3.3 The current figures for wSUMS for each type of DPG area of activity are detailed in Table 1 of this report. The current and combined total of student activity for the College is currently 145,872 wSUMs.

3.4 Projected additional activity is 31,925 wSUMs.

3.5 As such the current projection for the end of year position is 177,797 wSUMs, representing a shortfall of 2,149 wSUMs. However, it is anticipated that this deficit will be met by wSUMs generated through new part-time activity and Extended Learning Support (ELS).

4. Recommendation

4.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of this report.

Rob Wallen   **Neil Cowie**
Principal   Vice Principal Organisational Services

Table 1 - WSUMs by Dominant Programme Group

DPG	DPG Name	WSUMs end October 2013		
		Aberdeen	Fraserburgh	Combination of WSUMs
1	Agriculture & Horticulture	4723.11	517.89	5241
2	Business & Management	5352.58	1312.17	6664.75
3	Food Technology & Catering	2954.18	1514.5	4468.68
4	Computing	8797.7	1073.78	9871.48
5	Construction	4657.09	2333.76	6990.85
6	Art & Design	13331.85	797.87	14129.72
7	Engineering	18106.78	12674.75	30781.53
8	Health	14445.54	4642.38	19087.92
9	Minerals & Materials	1917.5	0	1917.5
10	Personal Development	59.59	508.06	567.65
11	Printing	0	0	0
12	Science & Maths	3804.48	31.07	3835.55
13	Office & Secretarial	3484.03	1100.43	4584.46
14	Social Studies	12610.5	1440.82	14051.32
15	Social Work	3160.32	49.7	3210.02
16	Sport & Recreation	8016.75	1466.1	9482.85
17	Transport	2580.17	1233.18	3813.35
18	Special Programmes	5751.72	1422.42	7174.14
	TOTALS	**113753.89**	**32118.88**	**145872.77**

Student Performance Indicators

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with information on high level, student-related withdrawal rates and success outcomes for 2010 to 2013.

1.2 This information is gathered from three sources:

1.2.1 The student withdrawal and attainment data gathered individually by both Aberdeen and Banff & Buchan Colleges prior to their merger into North East Scotland College (NESC).

1.2.2 The high level data published in the NESC's Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) Self-evaluation Report for 2012/13.

1.2.3 The Scottish Funding Council's (SFC) data for all Scotland's colleges.

2. Student Withdrawal and Attainment

2.1 Student withdrawal and attainment data has been collected and analysed by both Colleges throughout respective academic years to monitor progress of students and, where appropriate, to take actions to address any concerns that may emerge.

2.2 During, and at the end of, each year the withdrawal and attainment data are analysed by all sectors and curriculum teams as part of the respective course management and self-evaluation processes. This helps to identify strengths, weaknesses and any necessary quality improvement actions that may be required to improve both student experiences and student success outcomes.

2.3 Student withdrawal and attainment data are also reported and published by the SFC on an annual basis.

2.4 Attainment is measured using a definition of 'Complete Success'. This measures the number of students achieving a successful outcome from their programmes as a percentage of all students enrolling on the programmes.

2.5 Table 1 shows both the student withdrawal rates and success outcomes for both Aberdeen and Banff & Buchan Colleges from 2010 to 2013.

2.6 Table 2 shows the combined student withdrawal rates and success outcomes for North East Scotland College as they appear in the Regional Outcome Agreement Self-evaluation Report 2012/13.

2.7 Table 3 shows the sector average student withdrawal rates and success outcomes for Scotland's colleges a whole.

3. Education Scotland

3.1. It has been intimated by Education Scotland that NESC will be subject to a full review during AY 2014/15.

3.2. The withdrawal and attainment student performance indicators for AY 2013/14 will be used as the basis for the forthcoming review. It is therefore important that the College builds on the most recent PI position and provides evidence of sustainable improvements in student outcomes.

4. Recommendation

4.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the information provided in this paper.

Rob Wallen   **Neil Cowie**
Principal   Vice Principal Organisational Services

Table 1 – Aberdeen/Banff and Buchan College Student Data (2010 -13)

FE Full-Time Student Data	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13	
	Aberdeen	BBCFE	Aberdeen	BBCFE	Aberdeen	BBCFE
Early Withdrawal (%)	8	10	9	7	9	6
Further Withdrawal (%)	18	13	18	19	20	13
Partial Success (%)	12	19	11	13	10	9
Complete Success (%)	62	58	62	61	62	72

FE Part-Time Student Data	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13	
	Aberdeen	BBCFE	Aberdeen	BBCFE	Aberdeen	BBCFE
Early Withdrawal (%)	2	1	1	1	2	0
Further Withdrawal (%)	10	4	4	1	4	2
Partial Success (%)	7	32	12	6	10	6
Complete Success (%)	81	63	83	92	84	92

HE Full-Time Student Data	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13	
	Aberdeen	BBCFE	Aberdeen	BBCFE	Aberdeen	BBCFE
Early Withdrawal (%)	5	7	5	6	6	3
Further Withdrawal (%)	17	17	15	15	14	8
Partial Success (%)	10	19	10	15	12	10
Complete Success (%)	68	57	69	64	68	79

HE Part-Time Student Data	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13	
	Aberdeen	BBCFE	Aberdeen	BBCFE	Aberdeen	BBCFE
Early Withdrawal (%)	2	4	3	1	1	1
Further Withdrawal (%)	7	12	6	2	5	1
Partial Success (%)	19	22	19	14	23	10
Complete Success (%)	71	62	72	83	71	88

Table 2 – Regional Outcome Agreement Student Data (2012-13)

		Target	AbCol 2012/13 Actual	B&BC 2012/13 Actual	Region 2012/13
Achievement	HE FT	68%	69%	79%	70%
	FE FT	63%	63%	72%	65%

Table 3 – Scotland's Colleges Student Data (2010 -13)

FE Full-Time Student Data	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Early Withdrawal (%)	27	25	Not yet available
Further Withdrawal (%)			
Partial Success (%)	11	11	
Complete Success (%)	62	64	

FE Part-Time Student Data	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Early Withdrawal (%)	14	14	Not yet available
Further Withdrawal (%)			
Partial Success (%)	14	13	
Complete Success (%)	72	73	

HE Full-Time Student Data	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Early Withdrawal (%)	20	18	Not yet available
Further Withdrawal (%)			
Partial Success (%)	13	13	
Complete Success (%)	67	69	

HE Part-Time Student Data	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Early Withdrawal (%)	11	11	Not yet available
Further Withdrawal (%)			
Partial Success (%)	15	13	
Complete Success (%)	74	76	

Student Support Funds

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with information on amounts allocated for various support funds and comparative spend of AY2013/14 and AY2012/13.

2. Background

2.1 Funds allocated directly to the College

The College receives a range of student support funds mainly from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) but also from the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS). These funds can be grouped as follows:

- bursary funds to support eligible Further Education (FE) students
- discretionary funds to support both eligible FE and Higher Education (HE) students
- childcare funds to support both eligible FE and HE students, now incorporating the Lone Parent Childcare Grant.

2.2 Funds controlled centrally by SFC (as opposed to being allocated directly) but administered by the College on their behalf:

- Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) programme

3. Bursary Funds – general rules

3.1 Both the student and their course of study must be deemed eligible before they can be considered for an award.

3.2 The amount of any award shall be determined by the college and would normally cover the student's maintenance costs, travelling expenses and study costs (within the limits set in national policy).

3.3 The Bursary Fund is cash limited, students who are eligible for support are not automatically entitled to this support.

3.4 Spend on overall study costs must not exceed 15 per cent of the college's initial bursary allocation for AY 2013/14.

3.5 Bursary awards should only be made available automatically for attendance above 90 per cent of planned classroom hours.

3.6 Colleges may use their bursary funds to meet some or all of an eligible student's travelling expenses where they are eligible for inclusion in a travel allowance by securing a transportation agreement with a local transport provider.

3.7 Colleges may spend Bursary Funds on childcare.

3.8 Where SFC have given permission, shortfalls in bursary allocations can be offset by using FE/ HE Childcare Funds or FE Discretionary Funds.

4. Discretionary and Childcare Funds – general rules

4.1 The range of discretionary and childcare funds is as follows:

A. Further Education Discretionary Fund (FEDF) (SFC) – for eligible non-advanced level students to be used primarily for emergency use to cover general living expenses but not for fees where there is a risk to the students continuation on their course.

B. Further Education and Higher Education Childcare Fund (FE/HE CCF) (SFC) which will have two elements as follows:

i) The Lone Parents Childcare Grant (LPCG) element which will be an entitlement payment of up to £1,215 per year to all eligible further and higher education students who are lone parents and who have formal registered childcare expenses while studying. The LPCG is not income assessed.

ii) The Discretionary Childcare Funds which all students may apply to for financial help with formal registered childcare expenses. Payments from the Discretionary Childcare funds will be made at the discretion of the institutions and based on an assessment of need.

C. Higher Education Discretionary Fund (HEDF) (SAAS) – for all eligible advanced level students to be used for general living expenses but not for fees (may be used for registered/formal childcare costs).

5. Childcare Reserve

5.1 The College's Board of Management had set aside a reserve childcare fund in 2011/12 only to allow the previous Voucher Scheme to be phased out yet make an allowance should childcare funds be fully committed. Given both bursary funds and FEDF can be used to supplement any shortfall in FE/ HE CCF then the reserve would only be committed when other funds were fully exhausted.

6. Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Programme

6.1 EMAs form a part of the Scottish Government's agenda of encouraging access to, and participation in post-16 learning by young people from low-income families.

6.2 They are intended to encourage learners to stay on in post-compulsory education i.e. after they are legally eligible to leave.

6.3 Recipients will normally be aged between 16 and 19 years (inclusive).

6.4 EMA funds do not form part of the grant-in-aid to SFC, but are claimed in arrears based on recorded activity in the sector.

6.5 Eligibility for £30 per week will be for those in households of income of up to £20,351 and income of up to £22,403 for households with more than one dependent child.

6.6 Payment is dependent on 100 per cent weekly attendance and progress towards agreed learning targets. Students are however allowed up to 10 authorised absences over the course of the year without this impacting on their 100 per cent target.

7. **Disbursement of Funds in Academic Year 2013/14**

   7.1   Information on the disbursement of funds up to 29 October 2013 is given in the tables in the appendix to this report. Comparative figures have been provided at a similar point for last year.

8. **Recommendation**

   8.1   It is recommended that the Committee note the information provided in this paper.

Rob Wallen   **Neil Cowie**
Principal   Vice Principal Organisational Services

Table 1 – Funds Available

Support Funds	Funds Available £000 2013-14	Funds Available £000 2012–13	Funds Available £000 2011–12
FE Bursary	6,873	6,804	7,149
FE Discretionary	500	494	505
FE/HE Childcare (inc LPCG)	997	1,005	1,025
Total	**8,370**	**8,303**	**8,679**
HE Discretionary	**205**	**210**	**215**
EMA	**601**	**623**	**616**
Totals	**9,186**	**9,136**	**9,510**

Table 2 – Committed Funds

Support Funds	2013-14 Funds Available £000s	2013-14 Funds Committed £000s	2013-14 Funds Available not yet committed £000s	2012-13 Funds Available £000s	2012-13 Funds Committed £000s	2012-13 Funds Available not yet committed £000s
FE Bursary	6,803	6,179	694	6,804	6,010	794
FE Discretionary	500	249	251	494	207	287
FE/HE Childcare (inc LPCG)	997	649	348	1,005	545	460
Total	**8,370**	**7,077**	**1,293**	**8,303**	**6,762**	**1,541**
HE Discretionary	**205**	**56**	**149**	**210**	**24**	**186**
EMA	**611**	**611**	**0**	**623**	**623**	**0**
Totals	**9,186**	**7,744**	**1,442**	**9,136**	**7,409**	**1,727**

Table 3 – Supported Funds

	2013-14	2012–13
FE Bursary Fee Waiver	3,963	3,998
FE Discretionary + Loans	239	290
FE/HE Childcare	79	70
FE/LE LPCG	104	79
HE Discretionary + Loans	39	103
HE Childcare	12	11
EMA Programme	377	492