

# PUTTING LEARNERS AT THE CENTRE: DELIVERING OUR AMBITIONS FOR POST-16 EDUCATION

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## CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
Ministerial Foreword	4
1 Introduction	6
2 Efficient, flexible learner journeys	13
3 Widening access	23
4 Aligning non-advanced learning and skills with jobs and growth	30
5 Maintaining Scotland as a global leader in university research	35
6 Fair and affordable student support	39
7 Effective and sustainable delivery	43
8 Simplifying funding and increasing income generation	50
9 Performance, governance and accountability	56
10 Questions and responding to the consultation	61
11 Summary of proposals	64
Annex A Key Facts and Figures	69
Annex B Respondee information form	73

## MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

According to John F Kennedy “our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource.” This is as true now as it was when he said it. One of the central responsibilities for any Government is to ensure its education systems provide learning that helps citizens develop a wide range of skills for life and work. Education also plays a central role in improving life chances for those from disadvantaged backgrounds and learning in all its forms and settings has a wide reach. At one end of the spectrum, it helps those who are furthest from the labour market move towards employment; at the other, it develops high level skills and produces world leading research.

In Scotland, as elsewhere, an increasingly competitive global economy demands our people develop new and different skills. The financial difficulties we face as a result of the UK Government’s contraction of public spending also means we have to make difficult decisions on how best to provide and deliver post-16 education in the future.

Our approach is to follow our own path, rejecting moves elsewhere in the UK for a wholesale transfer of the financial burden associated with learning from the state to the learner; instead, we want to deliver a unique Scottish solution. Our approach is one endorsed by the people of Scotland in their unequivocal decision to back our manifesto commitments.

During the last parliamentary session I consulted on our ambitions for higher education through ‘*Building A Smarter Future*’<sup>1</sup>. Having listened to the feedback on the proposals and ideas in that paper, this pre-legislative paper sets out the next steps we will take to develop these proposals and how we intend to deliver our manifesto commitments within the context of a wider ambition for learners in Scotland.

It is now clear that if we are going to achieve real reform we cannot look at universities in isolation. For real change to happen, we must not only look at colleges, skills and training, as well but also at how all of these sectors interact – and crucially – how learners move between them. This element of our learning system, the positive link between school, training, college, university or work, is an enormously powerful force in delivering the capability that employers and the economy needs. However, here too, we need to revisit our expectations, recalibrating them to meet the reality we now face.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/12/15125728/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/12/15125728/0)

Reforms of the scale on which we are embarked must have a clear, overriding purpose. To that end, we are clear that meeting the needs of the learner is at the heart of all our proposals. Scotland's ability to flourish as a nation is dependent on its people and I am committed to ensuring that we help maximise each individual's potential.

To achieve these aims, I am working towards bringing legislation forward in the second half of next year which will underpin and facilitate our plans. This paper sets out what areas any Bill may cover in the context of our wider ambitions for reform.

My vision is of a post-16 education sector which plays a central role in improving people's life chances, delivering the best outcomes for learners; which supports and develops a world-class research capability; and which maximises its contribution to sustainable economic growth for Scotland.

This process is without doubt a challenging one. But, through it, we have the opportunity to effect profound and positive change. Thankfully we have strong foundations: the quality and productivity of Scottish research from our universities is ahead of the rest of the UK and USA in terms of citations per head of population; and the capacity we have built in to our further education sector – both in terms of the curricular offer and the college estate mean we are well placed. Reform will allow us to continue to improve the life chances of young Scots and maximise the return on our investment in post-16 education over the long term.

Our reforms will also make a significant contribution to the ambitions of this Government. Education, training and skills at all levels will support our policy ambitions in a range of areas from health and the environment to our Cities Strategy and our Economic Strategy.

This pre-legislative paper sets out the ambitious steps we want to take in partnership with the universities, colleges, training providers, staff, learners, trades unions, business and others to achieve this vision. I am ambitious for the people of Scotland and the proposals contained within this paper will ensure that those ambitions continue to be realised.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Challenges and priorities

1. This Government has made clear its primary purpose is to achieve sustainable economic growth. We believe that should be the underlying theme of our reforms for post-16 education, since a high performing education and skills system is an essential component of building the workforce, and conducting the research activity we need to maintain Scotland's competitiveness. Clearly there are other purposes to education, but we must recognise the difficult economic circumstances we face, with unemployment, and youth unemployment in particular, significantly higher than pre-recession levels. Moreover, we face unprecedented reductions in public expenditure. Turning this around will therefore require a new and different effort from Government and wider 'corporate' Scotland. We need to connect the different parts of post school education – primarily training providers, colleges and universities – in a way we have often spoken about but failed fully to achieve. Our aim in doing so will be to drive forward our nation's economy both at home and abroad. We also believe, in doing this, that we can improve people's life chances by setting them on the road to sustainable employment: we want to ensure that everyone in Scotland – including those furthest from the labour market – can contribute to and benefit from the growth we will achieve. In the current financial climate, this will mean targeting our investment where we need to, driving up outcomes, encouraging more collaboration and securing greater efficiencies.

2. In reforming and refocusing the system, we want to place more weight on young people. Our aim here is radically to enhance our offer. Through Opportunities for All, we want all 16-19 year olds to have a place in post-16 education and training, appropriate to their needs and circumstances. We will also extend that offer as far as we can to those aged 20-24. Together with wider action to improve young people's outcomes, from early years through to early adulthood, we firmly believe this is the best way to give young people the strongest start in working life and to mitigate the risk and harm of youth unemployment.

## The reform

3. The paper sets out for proposals for wide-ranging reform of the full range of Government-funded post-16 education in Scotland - higher education (where we take forward the discussion generated by our Green Paper: *Building a Smarter Scotland*, earlier this year), further education and skills. It also extends to community learning & development which is delivered by local authorities and the Third Sector. But this programme of reform does not extend to schools, as the Curriculum for Excellence reforms are already well underway, and as schools are the responsibility of local government. Neither does it extend to employment support funded by the Department of Work and Pensions. Nevertheless, improving the *alignment* of such provision is an important priority, and is therefore an issue we do address. Irrespective of who commissions, funds or delivers the learning concerned, the primary focus of all of our proposals is on improving learner outcomes through a more integrated and sharply focused post-16 system.

4. In the light of the consultation on *Building a Smarter Scotland*, our policy on **higher education** is already well advanced and this paper sets out the actions we will take as part of our aim to deliver a sustainable future for the sector, drawing on our analysis of the consultation responses. Among other things, it sets out proposals for enhancing our research capability, improving access to higher education and increasing income to the sector.

5. On **further education and skills** we are at an earlier stage in our thinking and planning – though our paper takes account of the recently published Roe Review of vocational training<sup>2</sup>. Our approach therefore is to set out clearly our priorities and to outline a direction of travel in which our recurrent themes are; growing the economy, maximising the return on our investment, improving outcomes and service integration. We also set out a series of policy propositions to that end in dialogue with our stakeholders and we want to develop and refine these over the coming months.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/08/15095448/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/08/15095448/0)

## Legislative intentions

6. Throughout this document, we highlight areas where we think legislation may be required to achieve our aims. In some cases that need is clear now while, in others, we must await the outcome of separate work before establishing what the precise legislative requirement may be. But, as things stand, we would expect a Bill to include proposals on:

- a new duty on widening access to higher education (page 27);
- a new duty on Scottish Ministers and the SFC periodically to review the number and pattern of fundable bodies (that is, colleges and universities); and new Ministerial powers requiring governing bodies of fundable bodies to work with the SFC to respond to any recommendations made by the Council (page 47);
- a cap on the fees institutions can charge to students from elsewhere in the UK (page 51).

7. Other areas that *could* require legislation, depending on the conclusions we reach once we have consulted on this paper and the conclusions of other reviews are:

- a legislative duty, or other statutory solutions, covering articulation and delivering any recommendations from the SFC review of flexible delivery, part-time study, advanced entry and articulation (page 18);
- the creation of an entitlement to non-advanced student support (page 40);
- the implementation, if possible, of an EU management fee (page 52);
- changes to college or university governance (page 57); and
- any changes required to the duties of statutory bodies and delivery agencies.

## The current system

8. The Government's investment in post-16 education amounts to some £2bn each year, comprising around £1.8bn on colleges and universities and around £200m on skills provision and careers advice. The associated student support arrangements for higher education cost another £500m, although a significant proportion of these costs (primarily student loans) are provided by HM Treasury. Additionally, we estimate local government spends around £150m on community learning and development (CLD) provision of which employability is an important component part. So, in resource terms alone, this is an enormous system, consuming some £50m of Government expenditure every week. **Annex A** describes the higher education, further education and skills sectors, and wider post-16 provision, in more detail.

## **Defining our core purpose**

9. The first crucial step in making a good system work even better is to establish its core purpose. What are the Government's expectations of higher education, further education and skills? And, as part of that, what is our vision for the future?

### **Core purpose: role of higher education**

10. Our universities<sup>3</sup> have a centuries old commitment to excellence in teaching, research and knowledge exchange. These advantages must be maintained in times of reducing levels of public expenditure and in a world in which economies, cultures and learning are both inter-dependent and in which competition takes place on a global level. Education and excellence in learning, teaching and research is hard-wired into Scotland's DNA.

11. Higher education in Scotland is the mainstay of our knowledge economy and makes a significant contribution to the economic success of the nation. Yet it is not just about the economy: higher education in Scotland is a civilising force which has had a major influence on creating the country and society we are today. Each of our existing universities<sup>4</sup> plays its own unique role in shaping today's modern Scotland. Taking a wider perspective, the sector provides cultural energy and leadership at home and abroad, acting as an important ambassador for Scotland on the world stage.

12. Our university research is not just world leading but world beating, pushing back the frontiers of knowledge and making significant contributions to solving some of the world's greatest challenges. The diversity of their income, be it from the state, the private sector, charities and philanthropic giving, provides our universities with a unique perspective and allows independent critical thought to flourish.

13. Scotland's history is in many ways defined by its approach to education. Our commitment to a free, inclusive system of providing educational opportunity for all, is a key aspect of our society. That is why higher education in Scotland must always be based on the ability to learn and never on the ability to pay.

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<sup>3</sup> We use the term universities when referring to Scotland's 19 higher education institutions.

<sup>4</sup> We use the term universities when referring to Scotland's 19 higher education institutions.

### **Core purpose: role of further education**

14. Scotland's colleges are the most significant providers of vocational training, and around 28% of what they offer is higher level provision. They teach hundreds of thousands of learners every year in a huge range of subjects at a wider variety of levels. But the college system we have – and in particular its governance and physical configuration – has remained relatively unchanged for a long period. Whilst the incorporation of our colleges has brought some opportunities for growth and innovation, we believe that fundamental change is needed to meet the needs of a very different Scotland and that all objective consideration supports that view.

15. So, as with our universities, we must now make even clearer the Government's expectations of the sector's role in economic growth and improving people's life chances. We suggest the fundamental role of further education is to provide people with the skills they need to get a job (however far they are from the labour market), keep a job, or get a better job and develop a good career. For young people, the fundamental principles for this are established through delivery of Curriculum for Excellence where colleges have a crucial role to play in delivering the right provision and learning environment. And we need to be unequivocal about our expectations to that end. But we also recognise the route to long-term growth and sustainability is not only flexible skills development, but broader social value and a real stake in local and regional development. A fundamental issue is therefore how the sector balances the delivery of crucial economic and social benefits. Greater clarity about delivery partner roles will help in this respect.

16. A strong emphasis on jobs and growth will inevitably mean significant changes in how and with whom the sector works. So we must see a significant shift towards a networked approach in support of local and regional growth, where colleges maximise value through engagement across the spectrum – from learners and local communities, the wide range of learning, employment and economic development services, and employers. That 'public-facing' role will become increasingly important in creating a learning culture, championing learning and skills, responding to what stakeholders want and value, and offering leadership, direction and ambition. One of the main challenges for colleges will be in better supporting employers to take advantage of opportunities for growth.

### **Core purpose: wider skills system**

17. A wide range of private and third sector providers play a critical role in meeting Scotland's labour market needs and responding quickly to changing priorities. The contribution of this part of the post-16 education system ranges from engagement with some of our most disadvantaged young people and adults as they embark on the journey into sustainable employment through to meeting the current and future skills of a substantial proportion of our employer base and workforce. Effective delivery will depend on the capacity of the sector to respond creatively and flexibly to learners and employers; and a strong focus on delivering labour market related outcomes for all participants. Experience shows that even those furthest from the labour market can make rapid progress into work in the right supportive environment. We therefore need providers who are able to demonstrate a strong track record of successful delivery. And we must also ensure our support for unemployed people complements - rather than duplicates - support provided through Jobcentre Plus (JCP) and the Department for Work & Pensions' (DWP) Single Work Programme and wider provision.

18. The expansion of apprenticeships and introduction of new apprenticeships, built around higher level qualifications, together with a renewed focus on supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) will require different levels of collaboration and co-ordination. This provides a fresh opportunity for new, high performing, providers, including colleges, to come into this part of the market system.

19. An effective skills system is not just about provision. Other core components include career information advice and guidance and the qualifications system which are crucial in helping people work to achieve their ambitions in a focussed manner and in assuring employers that job applicants can make a strong contribution to their business.

### **A reformed post-16 education system: guiding principles**

20. In the past, we have tended to look at each sector – higher education, further education and skills – separately. But to deliver our post-16 reform objectives effectively, we need both to maximise the contribution of each sector and strengthen their interconnectedness. This approach allows us to recognise their distinct characteristics and to apply a common set of expectations for the system as a whole. The following guiding principles are designed with that in mind,

21. Post-16 education in Scotland must be:

**Sustainable:** a system that makes optimal use of the resource available.

**Open to all:** our system should give all those who can benefit the opportunity to do so, removing barriers to access where they exist.

**Flexible:** the post-16 system should offer a wide range of provision in different ways to meet the diverse needs of learners and businesses. This will demand increased collaboration and co-operation between and across all sectors that contribute to learner outcomes and meeting employer needs.

**Learner-centred:** funding systems and provision should be designed around the needs of learners and should be simple, transparent and accessible.

**Focussed on jobs and growth:** taking account of employment and wider economic needs.

**Diverse:** we need to encourage and nurture diversity and encourage institutions and providers to focus on the areas where they excel and add most value.

**Excellent:** we set the highest ambition for our learners. It follows that the drive for quality and excellence should be core to all we do. In particular, we must recognise the importance of the link between teaching and research in our universities.

**International:** our work should be recognised internationally and the reputation of our institutions – particularly our universities - should extend their work abroad, contributing to the promotion of Scotland overseas.

**Well-led:** strong, properly governed institutions which are financially stable and who are leading innovation and change across the post-16 landscape must be a key feature of the system.

## **2. EFFICIENT, FLEXIBLE LEARNER JOURNEYS**

### **Our aim**

22. Consistent with our commitment to place learners at the heart of our reforms, our aim is a flexible and fair system that:

- meets the needs of learners and employers,
- results in positive outcomes at all stages of the learner journey, and
- uses public funding to deliver courses, qualifications and degrees as efficiently as possible.

23. This means ensuring all learners – irrespective of their needs and circumstances – can easily access and ‘navigate’ post-16 learning, and do so on the basis of informed decisions about the opportunities that exist across the labour market and the steps needed to access them. Equally, we need a range of vocational qualifications delivered by colleges and learning providers that are easily understood and valued by learners, learning providers and employers alike. This demands a strong employer voice within this part of the post-16 system, where employers understand the contribution they can make, are involved in the design of qualifications, and the bodies charged with representing their needs have high levels of employer recognition and support.

24. We must also ensure a wide range of opportunities are available for learners to progress to higher education from school and colleges. Local authorities, colleges and universities must therefore work together – locally and regionally – to integrate the planning of the curriculum; and, more specifically, to widen the number of students with the qualifications necessary to progress into university with advanced standing. Success in articulation will rely not just on institutions being flexible and adapting their provision to maximise the chances of success, but also in their working together more carefully to manage learners’ transitions between different sectors and styles of learning.

## Current system

25. The introduction of Curriculum for Excellence, and increased emphasis on learning and skills more generally, has seen improvements in access, retention and progression in learning, particularly by young people. But in order to smooth the transition from school to training, college and university, and ensure all learners have the right range of opportunities and flexible pathways to suit their needs, we need to make more progress. To help young people make the right learning and career choices, we need improvements on a number of fronts: in particular, joint working across sectors and institutions, and with employers; opportunities and support for our most disadvantaged young people whose outcomes remain unacceptably poor; closer alignment between schools, other learning provision and community learning & development; and easily available, good quality information on the full range of post-16 provision and labour market opportunities.

26. Even when learners *do* successfully engage with the system, barriers to smooth progression remain. Learners can, for example, experience difficulties in articulation, particularly from college to university; and whilst some progress has been made to overcome these - through formal articulation agreements between some groups of colleges and (usually) the newer 'post 92' universities - articulation opportunities are determined by institutions rather than through a consistent process adopted across the further and higher education sectors. Particularly successful arrangements are in place between colleges and universities such as Glasgow Caledonian, Edinburgh Napier, Robert Gordon and the University of the West of Scotland. We must build on this best practice.

27. The internationally respected Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)<sup>5</sup>, is designed to provide clarity – for learners, providers and employers – about the level of achievement represented by various qualifications. This can help overcome some problems, but, in practice, difficulties can remain. To reduce inefficiency in progression through the system, we want to see institutions make greater use of the SCQF, while recognising that they have a duty to learners to ensure there is curricular fit and a coherent educational experience.

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<sup>5</sup> The SCQF partnership is a limited company established in 2006 to manage the Framework

28. Moreover, the number of qualifications available can seem overwhelming to all users of the system and some publicly funded qualifications have very low take-up rates, with the result that the costs of maintaining such qualifications can be disproportionately high. While this is not solely an issue for Government, as some qualifications are offered by private sector awarding bodies, it does create financial pressures on the public purse when it affects SQA qualifications.

## **Achievements**

29. Curriculum for Excellence has been implemented in all publicly funded Scottish schools and is energising learning and teaching across Scotland and giving young people the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to succeed in learning, life and work. The new curriculum is raising standards for all by making learning and teaching more relevant, engaging, inspiring and connected. As an integral part of the senior phase of CfE (broadly 15-18 years), we have introduced 16+ Learning Choices as the means by which local authorities, schools and their partners ensure that all young people, including particularly vulnerable groups, have a place in post-16 learning that is appropriate to their needs and aspirations. This includes staying in school, going to university or college, participation on one of our national training programmes or community-based learning.

30. We have piloted, and started to roll out, Activity Agreements - bespoke packages of learning and support for those 16/17 year olds who are most at risk of unemployment on leaving school.

31. In its recently published Careers Information, Advice & Guidance (CIAG) strategy<sup>6</sup>, the Government has made a clear commitment to the delivery of universal all-age services, with a particular emphasis on equipping people with the skills they need to manage their careers; the provision of targeted support for those who need it most; and the development of on-line services and resources such as the Skills Development Scotland (SDS) My World of Work interactive website.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/11110615/0>

32. In recent years, we have seen increased demand for, and growth in, Modern Apprenticeship opportunities which reached a record level in 2011/12, with high completion rates. The Government is committed to offering 25,000 work-based apprenticeships in each year of the current Parliament. Additionally we have improved the alignment of pre-employment training with the jobs that are available in a local area.

33. A better learner journey includes making further progress in giving university graduates the best possible skills for employment. To that end, the Government and its partners - including Scottish Enterprise (SE), Skills Development Scotland (SDS), the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Service (AGCAS), and JCP – have been working together to identify how we best help graduates into employment. Developments include:

- the Talent Scotland Graduate Placement Programme (TSGPP) which provides business placements for around 750 graduates and 400 under-graduates (in HIE) in Scotland over a three year period to improve their long-term employability;
- the AGCAS Shared Vacancy System that allows employers to post a vacancy at their local HE Careers Service, sharing it with other universities in Scotland, should they wish; and
- the Centre for Scottish Public Policy (CSPP) has provided over 100 funded internships with businesses in Scotland and matched these with over a100 more funded by businesses.

34. We shall also consider other measures to help graduates develop entrepreneurial skills, including options for further promotion of graduate employability through national and international internship and entrepreneurship programmes.

35. Postgraduate provision is also essential for the development of our economy and we will work with employers and others to establish what our future priorities should be in relation to these higher level skills.

## **What next**

36. We shall maintain our focus on full implementation of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), including the implementation of the new National Qualifications Framework. Universities Scotland will take the strategic lead, working with its members, to establish how best to respond to university entrants who, through CfE, have followed pathways and experienced learning and teaching that differ from their predecessors. To that end, Universities Scotland is leading a Task Group to make recommendations on articulating CfE principles with Universities admissions policies and HE learning and teaching strategies.

37. We will ensure 16+ Learning Choices is fully and consistently implemented for all young people in Scotland, irrespective of where they learn. We will also complete the roll-out of Activity Agreements in order to improve access, retention and progression in learning for our more vulnerable 16/17 year olds. In particular, we will ensure all 16-19 year olds learners have a place in post-16 learning, making that commitment for the first time.

## **Career services**

38. We will modernise careers services in line with the Government's CIAG strategy in ways that take advantage of modern technology, whilst continuing to provide targeted and ongoing face to face support for those who need it most. SDS's interactive web-based tool, My World of Work opens up the wide range of post-16 opportunities that exist across the labour market, and the steps people need to take to access these opportunities. For this to be fully effective, we will ensure it is informed by good quality content from employers of all sizes from all sectors.

## **Vocational training**

39. We are clear those agencies closest to local labour markets are best placed to make decisions on the training interventions that will be most effective in supporting unemployed people back into work and young people into work for the first time. We have made significant progress in this area and will widen and deepen local commissioning of pre-employment training. In doing so, we will give close attention to young people's progression to further post-16 learning and employment and the role of SDS, colleges and others in providing pathways that facilitate this.

40. In developing our apprenticeship programme, we will concentrate on delivering a wider range of progression and articulation opportunities while maintaining high participation and completion rates. This means more high level apprenticeship opportunities, including higher level technical and graduate apprenticeships, that meet the changing needs of employers. Additionally, we will minimise bureaucracy for employers and providers participating in our training programmes and, in doing so, pay specific attention to the needs of small employers in order to increase their participation.

41. We expect our training programmes to be of a high standard and to help individuals to progress towards sustainable employment or further learning. So it is important we continually review the performance of training providers, placing our trust in those with the strongest record of success. In that regard we need to encourage colleges to do more to provide flexible training and undertake long term provision alongside private providers. It is also important that, where appropriate, a significant proportion of funding is linked to outcomes that demonstrably help participants move towards sustainable employment. We will review current funding models and consider how we can use funding to improve performance.

### **UCAS Admissions Review**

42. The UCAS review, involving the university sector and stakeholders across the UK, will examine whether its admissions application system can offer a more effective and efficient service, better meeting the needs of students and universities, while retaining fairness of access for applicants. As part of the review - which will deliver a revised UCAS application process to support entry in 2014/15 - UCAS will consider and consult on the possibility of designing a process to run a post-qualification application system (PQA). (PQA would involve students applying to higher education *once they have received their exam results* rather than using predicted grades.) We will work closely with UCAS and the UK Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) to consider the implications for schools, colleges and university term times and examination timetables in Scotland of any move to a hybrid or other PQA model.

## **Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the learner journey**

43. We will undertake a detailed examination of post-16 learner pathways in order to ensure they meet individual needs and enable learners to progress without unnecessary duplication. This will be informed by work undertaken by the SFC on flexible delivery, part-time study, advanced entry and articulation, and mechanisms for reducing duplication in educational experience, encouraging – and incentivising – progression through the system.

44. Around 3,600 students with an HN qualification enter 2nd or 3rd year at university each year in Scotland. There are also those who, despite holding the qualifications, choose not to progress (as well as some who are not given that option). There is a lack of certainty around the college/university interface which can lead to disappointment for those who start HN courses with the intention of moving on to university.

45. Where there are clear academic links, students who have achieved sufficient qualifications at SCQF level 7 or 8 at HN and who want to progress to a degree should not be required to repeat these levels unnecessarily. We will consider legislation to create a statutory framework guaranteeing articulation from college to university – where there is a clear curricular fit. The legislation could make clear that repetition of a level would be supported only where there is a compelling academic reason to do so. This framework would deliver an additional benefit in terms of widening access because college students - particularly those from disadvantaged areas – would enjoy better access to, and progression within, university. The SCQF should be used more by individuals as a ‘route-map’ to navigate the system and for learners to see their place in it.

46. The academic coherence of the qualifications on offer is central to successful articulation, and institutions must increase collaboration to develop more pathways for learners. To support this work, we shall consider whether the higher national (HN) qualifications need to be refreshed to improve their ability to prepare learners for university, while ensuring their value to employers is also maintained.

47. Similarly, within the schools sector, we must see greater flexibility in routes to, and delivery of, higher education both to improve learners’ educational experience and to achieve greater efficiencies. This will be achieved through further development of the Scottish Baccalaureate and other senior school qualifications and their use to gain advanced entry into higher education.

48. One of the ambitions of Curriculum for Excellence is to raise standards at every level. Building on existing developments within local authorities where school clusters, including partnerships with CLD, colleges and universities, will provide improved access for potentially more young people to a broader range of qualifications in the senior phase. In particular, wider access to Advanced Highers and the Baccalaureates which provide valuable skills for progression on to higher education and employment will provide opportunities for raised attainment. Such arrangements may also achieve benefits through the increased variety of learning journeys and approaches available to meet different learners requirements. Universities Scotland is taking a strategic lead here, working with its members, to establish how best to respond to the new demands created by the first cohort of students who have experienced Curriculum for Excellence. We expect this work to move forward with pace and for the whole sector to engage positively and purposefully with this exciting agenda.

49. Use of part-time learning should also be a greater feature moving forward. This is important and relevant both to school leavers and others. For example, there are access courses for mature learners who have the potential to succeed at university but who may have missed out on higher education earlier in life.

50. There is some excellent practice in recognising prior learning. We want to ensure such practice is adopted as a minimum benchmark across the sector, ensuring that entry to courses happens at Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) levels which properly reflect people's academic and wider experience.

## **Qualifications**

51. The Government is firmly committed to the use of the SCQF as a useful framework for helping individuals and employers navigate an often complex system. We will accelerate progress in terms of its promotion and use within the post-16 education system and beyond, including articulation with advanced standing across different parts of the system. Equally, as well as the refresh of HN qualifications, we will review the uptake of the SQA's vocational qualifications, taking a close look at the cost and priority of low demand qualifications. While users, including employers, could meet the costs of such SQA qualifications, we need to be certain of the case for continued public investment.

## **Student Partnership Agreement**

52. Research conducted by the SFC has shown that, year on year, there continues to be high levels of satisfaction among students with their experience of college and university life, and institutions are expected to demonstrate they are listening and responding to students. We want learners to have a strong voice in shaping their experience of universities, colleges and other learning settings. The current quality frameworks in the college and university sectors already emphasise learner engagement in quality as a key issue, and the SFC has issued detailed guidance on how students should be represented in consultative and decision-making bodies throughout colleges and universities. The SFC has also identified 'learner-centredness' as a cross-cutting theme of its corporate plan.

53. We believe an additional way of ensuring an institution is meeting the needs of its learners is through making student representation even more effective, recognising that methods and models to do this should be appropriate to the individual character of each college and university. To strengthen current arrangements, including the profile of student unions, we shall, in consultation with the institutions and student representative bodies such as NUS Scotland, develop a model of 'student partnership agreements' for each institution. Such agreements would help to maintain and support effective relationships between institutions and student bodies. The agreement would also be expected to lead to clear statements of what each student should be able to expect from their institution; what the student is expected to do in order to fully benefit from their programme of study, and what they can do if things go wrong.

## CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

- How can we ensure delivery of an appropriate place in post-16 learning for **all** 16-19 year olds? What are the priority actions?
- In considering the proposed package of measures for improving the learner journey, where should the focus be to improve pathways for all learners? What actions are required to make progression more coherent for learners?
- How effective is the SCQF in promoting flexible learner journeys? Are there any barriers and, if so, how could they be overcome? How could the SCQF be used more effectively to deliver our aims?
- What more can the Government and its partners do to encourage more articulation between colleges and universities?
- What scope is there to make the transition from school to university more effective for learners, while reducing unnecessary duplication?

### **3. WIDENING ACCESS TO POST-16 LEARNING**

#### **Our aim**

54. We want all young people to stay in learning after 16 because this is the best way of improving their job prospects and their lifetime earnings. People with qualifications are more likely to be in work than those with no qualifications. We also know that qualifications have a significant positive effect on wages. For instance, workers with degrees or HNCs/HNDs earn around 75% more on average than similar workers with no qualifications. Over their lifetime, graduates earn a significant wage premium (estimated to be over £120,000) over those who do not have a degree.

55. Most young people already stay in learning, either staying in school (where the proportion has increased in recent years) or going to college, university or into training. But for some, continued participation in learning is at best sporadic: this can do long-term damage to their employment prospects and wider life chances. We therefore want to continuously improve provision, pathways, and practice for those young learners who have already dropped out of learning into unemployment - or who are at greatest risk of dropping out - recognising that a significant shift is needed.

56. Even for those who do stay in the system, opportunity is not as fairly distributed as we would like. In particular, we want to do more to widen access to higher education, building on the priority set by successive governments and the increase in the number of students from our most deprived areas studying at university since 2000-2001. In the last 10 years we have made progress – but still only 15% of Scottish domiciled entrants to higher education in the UK come from our 20% most deprived areas; and there remain challenges in improving the participation rates of certain groups. There is clearly more to do.

57. We fully recognise the importance that progression through parts of the system – particularly between colleges and universities – plays in widening access. We also know finance can be a significant influencing factor in this as well. These issues are covered elsewhere in the chapters on Efficient, Flexible Learner Journeys and Fair and Affordable Student Support.

## **Current system**

58. Earlier we referred to the Government's commitment to guarantee all young people an appropriate place in post-16 learning, facilitated through 16+ Learning Choices. This is the framework through which local authorities, schools and partners collectively plan and support young people's transitions to post-16 learning – in school, college, training, or in a community-setting - with a focus on particularly vulnerable groups. Implementation is well-advanced but we need to make more and faster progress for young people outwith mainstream school and those who have already disengaged. And we need to make sure that the right provision is in place.

59. An important step in this direction is the introduction of Activity Agreements - bespoke packages of learning and support for 16/17 year olds. This approach, when fully implemented, will ensure local authorities and their partners systematically identify young people who have disengaged from learning or who are most likely to do so; tailor learning and wider provision to meet individual needs; and, provide focused and ongoing support, including careers advice, to ensure they make progress. CLD is a core component of Activity Agreements, together with: data-sharing between the key partners (co-ordinated by SDS); the support of a trusted professional who works with - and on behalf of - the young person; and, for those eligible, financial support through an EMA.

60. CLD, as we have already recognised and in which local authorities make a very significant investment, has an important role in improving people's job prospects, particularly those who have been out of work and learning for a long time, by:

- providing a 'first step' towards employment;
- delivering family learning including raising the literacy levels of parents and carers;
- improving connections referrals between employers, and agencies that support unemployed people, and adult literacy and numeracy providers (given the strong correlation between long-term unemployment and low literacy).

61. The Government is strongly committed to widening participation in both further and higher education. In colleges, all learners are assessed and supported to develop an Individual Learning Plan. This enables the college to guide the student onto the right course, tailor provision for them and provide them with any additional support they need. This is particularly valuable for those learners who may find it difficult to stay and progress in learning – for example, care leavers, those with poor previous experience of education, people with profound and complex needs, and others furthest from the labour market. The challenge for the college sector is then to support rapid progress onto vocational courses leading to qualifications.

62. In higher education, action is being taken on a number of fronts to tackle the main barriers affecting, for example, young people's initial decision to enter HE from compulsory education, and those wishing to enter or return to HE at a later date in life or via an alternative learning route. To ensure steady progress, 'Learning for All'<sup>7</sup>, the SFC's strategy for widening participation provides a framework for stakeholder widening access action plans. Additionally, the SFC - through its Access and Inclusion Committee (AIC) – has developed a new approach to equality, access and inclusion, together with a series of measures designed to demonstrate the direct impact of public investment on widening access to further and higher education.

## **Achievements**

63. The '*Regional Coherence*' project, currently being piloted by the University of the Highlands and Islands and the University of the West of Scotland, recognises some institutions should be supported to deliver coherent provision to their area through articulation from local colleges, better retention and flexible forms of provision. These universities will deliver specific outputs in relation to the recruitment, retention and progression of specific groups, with a particular focus on the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland and increased part-time provision that better meets the regional needs of learners and the economy. This year, the SFC plans to extend this approach to other institutions, including University of Abertay, Edinburgh Napier University, Glasgow Caledonian University, Robert Gordon University, Queen Margaret University and the Open University.

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<sup>7</sup> [www.sfc.ac.uk/access/learningforall/LearningforAll2011.aspx](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/access/learningforall/LearningforAll2011.aspx)

64. In line with CfE, the 'Schools for Higher Education' national schools programme for S3-S6 pupils supports four regional partnerships of colleges and universities to develop a programme of guidance and support for pupils from schools in the lowest quintile for progression to higher education. Activity is targeted on those pupils who are at risk of not achieving and or those who are achieving but who do not recognise the benefits of progressing into higher education.

65. Access to the Professions' where the Universities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, St Andrews and four of the small specialist arts institutions are working collaboratively to encourage disadvantaged but talented young people to get into medicine, law and the creative arts.

66. We have ensured that financial concerns do not create unnecessary barriers to accessing higher education. We abolished the Graduate Endowment Fee and have pledged that no tuition fees, upfront or backdoor, will be introduced under an SNP administration.

### **What next**

67. We will ensure full and consistent implementation of 16+ Learning Choices for our most vulnerable young people, many of whom are educated outwith mainstream schools and in other settings. Additionally, in partnership with local authorities and SDS, we will complete the roll-out of Activity Agreements across Scotland, recognising that alignment with Community Learning and Development is critical to successful implementation. And we will continue to support local authorities and partners to improve transitions planning, including specifically, implementation of the Additional Support for Learning legislation. Together, these are vital component parts of Opportunities for All and delivering post-16 education and training for all 16-19 year olds, appropriate to their needs and circumstances.

68. Working with local authorities, the Third Sector and other partners, we will develop a Community Learning and Development strategy that takes account of its contribution to wider national priorities. Here we will set out our expectations of CLD providers in improving people's life chances by improving their employability and progression to further learning, vocational training and work. We will therefore give close attention improving the alignment of CLD with SDS, JCP and other agencies and ways in which we might better incentivise and measure impact.

69. We recognise that universities' efforts alone cannot redress the circumstances which narrow people's life chances before they reach the point at which they may consider HE. We acknowledge that the key to widening access lies in transforming the life chances of children and their families through effective and ongoing intervention and support from pre-birth through to adulthood: a top priority for Government.

70. In the context of post-16 learning, our aim is to reach back well before the point of entry to start preparing the student and raising our collective ambitions for all our young people much earlier in their school career. This is a responsibility that is shared between parents, schools, Skills Development Scotland, colleges and universities. There are good examples of this working already, primarily with post-92 institutions who have traditionally recruited rather than selected and who have established good links with local schools and colleges. Central to this is our determined focus on raising standards but also equipping young people with the critical skills they need to be successful in every sphere. This will require universities to broaden their approach to selection. Universities Scotland is leading the thinking in this area with detailed proposals planned for early 2012. Looking internationally, there is also valuable experience we can draw from such as the KIPP<sup>8</sup> (Knowledge is Power Program) schools in the United States .

71. The challenge for SDS is to ensure that raising aspirations is central to Career IAG delivery, particular through its services for those needing additional support. The challenge for universities is to extend links with schools and colleges to contribute to raising aspirations from the earliest ages. To achieve this, we will work with NUS Scotland to provide firm proposals on how to deliver some of the ideas set out in '*Building a Smarter Scotland*' around mentoring schemes and school-student buddies. Building on this early intervention, we believe activity in the HE sector should then be focussed in the following areas:

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<sup>8</sup> [www.kipp.org/about-kipp](http://www.kipp.org/about-kipp)

## **New Statutory Duty**

72. Rather than depending on mixed incentives to deliver progress, institutions and the SFC should be required to review patterns of participation and, where there is an imbalance, take action to correct it. We will ask the SFC to develop a Widening Access Outcome Agreement in partnership with lead universities and to introduce financial penalties conditional on achievement (like those that apply in the case of student numbers). The approach would differ from institution to institution so that, for example, local circumstances and sectoral needs would be taken into account. Before finalising, the agreement could be subject to consultation, including with the NUS. Such new arrangements should have, we believe, statutory force.

## **Targeting**

73. Examination grades are a useful indicator of potential but they are not perfect. There is evidence that a pupil with a particular set of results from a low-achieving school can achieve better than a pupil with the same set of results from a high-achieving school.

74. We will consider placing a statutory duty on institutions to seek out those with the greatest potential who would be identified with reference to their grades and their situation. Institutions would then have to demonstrate how they are handling these 'contextualised admissions'. Support would be available from the SFC-funded Schools for Higher Education Programme which would help universities to engage with target schools. A targeting scheme could form one of the ways for an institution to meet the obligations set out in the outcome agreement described above. To assist and incentivise this, we could explore a derogation on the capping system that would allow universities to over-recruit students from MD20 backgrounds.

## **CONSULTATION QUESTIONS**

- What do we need to do to ensure the Government's commitment, through Opportunities for All, to post-16 education and training for all 16-19 year olds is delivered to more vulnerable young people? What are the priority actions?
- What more could the Government and its delivery partners do to improve retention and progression, building on Opportunities for All?
- How can we maximise the contribution of Community Learning & Development to widening access? What examples of good practice can we build on?
- What do we need to do to help more people from the most deprived backgrounds get a place at university? How can we frame this in legislation?

#### **4. ALIGNING NON-ADVANCED LEARNING AND SKILLS WITH JOBS AND GROWTH**

75. This chapter considers how we better align our investment in non-advanced learners and skills with our ambitions for jobs, growth and life chances. We focus specifically on these areas as this is where the opportunity for change is greatest. Elsewhere in this paper we recognise the essential role that universities play in growing our economy, especially their international contribution. To that end, we will continue to work with the sector to encourage an even stronger focus on the contribution graduates can make to productivity. We will also work with universities, employer groups and others to extend and enhance work placement opportunities in order to improve the employability skills of graduates.

##### **Our aim**

76. To compete successfully in a rapidly changing global economy, Scotland's employers need a workforce equipped with a broad range of skills, knowledge and attributes. The post-16 system has a central role to play here: in delivering the technical and core skills, and the qualifications, at all levels necessary for a particular job and for their long-term career; in developing people's ability to think critically; and in building their wider attributes - such as enterprise, initiative, adaptability, and entrepreneurship.

77. Doing this effectively demands a clear, continued and purposeful dialogue with employers about what it is they need – looking as far ahead as possible. We know it is difficult to predict the shape of our labour market in the years ahead but our learning providers need to be as clear as possible about the skills, qualifications and wider attributes learners will need to be successful in the future. And we have a similar duty to learners, so that they focus on the knowledge and attributes we know will be important whatever direction our economy moves in.

78. Against the background of sharply reduced public resource, the Government will focus its investment where it has maximum economic and social return. We know that economies change – so do students' aspirations and circumstances – so all publicly funded courses in colleges must pass the test of developing a broad range of knowledge, skills and attributes that will enhance students' lifelong job prospects.

79. We want to be equally clear that the public funds we invest produce positive outcomes across all areas of the labour market. We shall place particular emphasis on skills development in key sectors and those offering significant job opportunities where demand is strong and where further opportunities are likely to emerge. We shall also explore models to deliver provision efficiently to meet critical skills niches within our economy.

80. Additionally, we shall focus our investment on those people who most need Government support to develop skills for sustainable. Our intention is to prioritise young people – a group we know are disproportionately affected by recession, including, specifically, those who are furthest from the labour market. Those with low or out of date skills will also be a priority for Government funding, given the important role of skills in helping people secure sustainable employment, breaking the cycle between low-paid work and benefits. These choices mean that meeting demand from others (such as adult learners) and for workforce development are likely to require a partnership funding model involving a higher proportion of co-payment from individual learners and employers.

### **Current system**

81. In line with the Government Economic Strategy, we will focus on identifying and responding to the skills needs of those key economic sectors which offer Scotland the opportunity to significantly grow its economy. At the same time, we have maintained a focus on those sectors of the economy which continue to offer significant employment opportunities. In doing so, it is important that we work in partnership with employers and that the post-16 system offers businesses cost-effective opportunities to train their staff and improve their use of skills.

82. There are a number of mechanisms already in place to identify employer needs and to help reflect them in post-16 learning provision. In some cases, the arrangements work well. But these are neither consistently nor comprehensively applied; nor are employers equally good at defining their needs. Employers consider their needs are not sufficiently well articulated; that institutions are insufficiently responsive and flexible in terms of where, how and what is delivered; and, therefore, we are not well placed to anticipate and respond to current and future labour market demand. As a result, they are concerned about the range of skills people bring - and will bring - to the workplace.

83. The system of National Occupational Standards is designed to ensure that the relevance of the qualification system to the workplace is constantly maintained. Both OPITO (the industry led body for the oil and gas sector), and ConstructionSkills are outstanding examples of bodies which speak to the system on behalf of employers and ensure that the people going into their sectors are well prepared. However in other sectors the Sectors Skills Council model is not strong. We will improve this situation, where necessary looking at radically alternative models which put employers in the driving seat.

84. Colleges are expected to plan their provision taking into account the needs of their local economy and in partnership with other local agencies in particular Community Planning Partnerships. Colleges face a difficult challenge in balancing the needs of employers, with the aspirations of students and the economics of running financially viable provision. Particularly in times of financial constraint there is a risk that individual college decisions will lead to avoidable gaps in provision and a narrowing of provision away from more expensive but economically important courses. We believe this requires more coordination of decisions and regional planning, and more explicit expectations on colleges to plan for and address the needs of their area. We return to this point later in the chapter on Delivery.

85. At present, colleges provide a very wide range of opportunities for people to develop skills and obtain recognised national qualifications. In terms of aligning with jobs and growth, a recent Education Scotland report<sup>9</sup> highlights many strengths in this respect, whilst acknowledging the challenges around balancing employer-led and learner demand. These include: provision based on good intelligence about labour market needs; increased emphasis on core skills and work placements, and articulation arrangements with universities. But employer engagement in curriculum planning is not consistently good across all subject areas and all colleges; additionally, there is a need to improve progression and destinations data, and analysis of learner outcomes in relation to national and regional labour market intelligence.

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<sup>9</sup> Preparing colleges for employment or further study, Education Scotland, August 2011

86. Colleges also deliver courses that, whilst certificated, do not lead to recognised qualifications. They often do so for good reasons: for example, to recognise the achievement of students who cannot reach the standard of national awards; and that of students on very short courses. However, the problem is that these non-recognised qualifications can lack currency in the labour market and have had no testing against national standards for employer/vocational needs. That said, we know that *some* of these courses have real value as an access route, as taster courses for school-age pupils or to meet wider needs, including those of people with additional support needs.

87. Our view is that we should protect such provision which genuinely opens up access and leads to progression onto other learning or into employment. Where and by whom that provision is best delivered is another matter - but at a time of financial constraint, we need to take a more critical eye to learning which does not meet these criteria.

### **Our achievements**

88. We have:

- increased the number of Modern Apprenticeship opportunities to a record level of 25,000 in 2011/12;
- introduced Flexible Training Opportunities, a needs-led model with co-investment between the Government and small employers in workforce training; and,
- made a long term commitment to funding for trades unions to help low paid and low skilled workers.

### **What next**

89. We will develop a strategic approach for improving the alignment of Government investment in learning and skills with jobs and growth, consistent with the needs of employers and the wider economy. To make this real for colleges, we will ask the SFC to:

- allocate its resources to meet the needs of regions – taking account of demographics and regional economy – rather than historical allocations based on colleges' past performance;
- identify national provision and resource it to meet national needs (e.g. land based, nautical etc);

- put new expectations on colleges to plan their courses to prepare students for careers in industries where there will be a good chance of them getting a job;
- focus funding on nationally recognised qualifications and units.

90. We are clear that the most effective bodies for representing the needs of employers to the post-16 education system - and for encouraging employer investment in skills - are those funded by employers. To that end, we will develop a range of models – including the introduction of voluntary training levies and greater engagement with trade bodies - to improve the arrangements for those sectors where we think employers needs are inadequately represented.

91. Finally, we will build on the successful blend of education, training and direct work experience delivered through the Modern Apprenticeship Programme by expanding opportunities for practical work experience in other parts of the post-16 education system.

#### **CONSULTATION QUESTIONS**

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of prioritising investment in learning and skills which support jobs in key and high participation sectors?
- How do we best target our resources in support of jobs, growth and life chances? For example, should we focus on level of qualification, age groups or labour market status?
- Do we have the right systems and structures in place for articulating employer needs (locally, regionally and nationally) and those of the wider economy?
- Which of the existing structures are effective and could be applied more widely; which are ineffective and can be improved?
- How can we maximise the contribution of community learning & development to improving people's job prospects? What examples of good practice can we build on?

## **5. MAINTAINING SCOTLAND AS A GLOBAL LEADER IN UNIVERSITY RESEARCH**

### **Our aim**

92. Our aim is to maintain Scotland's world leading position in university research and maximise its contribution to increasing sustainable economic growth. To build upon our successes, we believe the university research we fund should be closely aligned with our national priorities.

93. As part of our ambition we also believe greater collaboration will maximise funding from a range of other sources, such as the UK Research Councils and Europe. There have been welcome developments by a variety of institutions in deepening their engagement with businesses, but now is the time for making a real step change in our approach.

### **Current system**

94. Our university research in Scotland is recognised as being among the best in the world. With 0.1% of the world population, Scottish research received 1.8% of the world's citations. We are ranked first of 27 comparator countries and regions for research impact in relation to GDP. Maintaining that world-leading position allows us to interact with other global generators of knowledge, allowing us to learn from, develop and make use of cutting-edge knowledge developed outside Scotland.

95. In contrast to our university research, business research and development is relatively low by both UK and international standards. This makes Scotland even more dependent on the research activities of our universities to drive innovation.

96. The challenge facing us is how we can sustain an environment in which Scotland's highest quality research is regarded as internationally competitive – how our best is not just the best in Scotland but the best anywhere in the world – and its impact maximised for the benefit of: our domestic economy; our ambitions for economic growth in key overseas markets; and Scottish society as a whole. The future of research within our universities also requires a steady flow of highly trained researchers, from Scotland and beyond, to sustain the quality and vitality of our the research base into the future.

## **Achievements**

97. Scotland has been highly successful in attracting funding from the UK Research Councils. In 2009-10, we attracted 10.8% of total Research Councils' funding, higher than our population share would suggest. In areas of research strength, we were even more successful, attracting 14% of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council's funding.

98. We are working in close partnership with public and private sector stakeholders to support Scotland's engagement in EU research and innovation policy. A series of Scotland-wide consultation events held in the Spring enabled us to submit a comprehensive Scottish response to the European Commission's consultation on the Common Strategic Framework for Research and Innovation (the successor to Framework Programme 7) now known as Horizon 2020.

99. Scotland's research pools are regarded enviously by other countries as an exemplar of effective collaborative research and have helped to attract the best international research talent to Scotland. By facilitating cooperation and collaboration and sharing infrastructure across Scotland, 'pooling' has established a globally competitive critical mass of expertise in areas such as life sciences, energy, and imaging. These pools have also helped to enhance the quality and competitiveness of Scottish research. As our research pools are underpinned by excellence, we are in a strong position to contribute to tackling the global challenges of the 21st century.

100. The development of 'Technology Innovation Centres' (TICs), such as the International Technology and Renewable Energy Zone (ITREZ), the Advanced Forming Research Centre (AFRC) and the highly successful Division of Signal Transduction Therapy in Dundee, all provide models for linking universities directly with business and industry that might be extended to other institutions and sectors, including SMEs.

## **What next**

101. We will ask the SFC to develop proposals to increase the concentration of our funding on research excellence and align our research to national priorities. This will consolidate the majority of our research funding in a smaller number of universities with a track record of world-leading research that leveres the greatest levels of research funding from other sources and maximises economic impact.

102. We will also work with the SFC, Scottish Enterprise, and Highlands & Islands Enterprise to explore the development of 'mini-TICs' to ensure excellent university research is better exploited for the benefit of business, industry and the economy.

103. We will build on our success in attracting UK Research Council funding. We will work with the sector and with the UK Government to ensure continuity of access to Research Council funding during the continuing process of constitutional reform, a position consistent with the deepening of our research pooling and our international performance.

104. We also recognise the importance of continuing to attract funding from Europe. We will continue to engage with our stakeholders, both at home and in Brussels, on the development of Horizon 2020 and encourage our research pools to engage further in Europe, increasing collaboration with their European peers and maximising the opportunities to win research grants and contracts. We will provide additional support for the research pools to compete for EU Framework 7 funding, with engagement with a Scottish business or businesses being expected as part of this. Our funding will foster greater collaboration, greater business (particularly SME) engagement and will help to build further critical mass.

105. In order to support our universities, we will provide a new stream of competitive funding for postdoctoral exchanges with key partner countries in Europe, North America, China and India. We will therefore be allocating a total of £500,000 to the SFC later this year for these two research activities. With an increasing focus on impact, partly as a result of the new Research Excellence Framework, we believe taking these steps will enable us to be better placed to exploit international income streams.

106. We believe that successful experience of research pooling in research training can be further enhanced, not only to continue to attract excellent students to study here, but to ensure the development of high level skills for the public, private and third sectors. Work is currently underway to increase the benefits of collaboration and we expect the SFC to lead consultations on proposed mechanisms with stakeholders in the early part of 2012.

107. We will ask the SFC and the Industry Advisory Groups which Scottish Enterprise supports to identify opportunities for industry and universities to work together to increase the number of PhD students working on industrially-led projects.

108. In recognition of the benefits to our economic and academic skills base, we will also ask the SFC, our universities and the UK Research Councils to build on the graduate schools established by research pools and by individual universities to further increase the quality and coherence of PhD training.

109. Given the importance of coherence in our support for innovation, we will work with the SFC and with the enterprise bodies as appropriate to review our support for knowledge exchange and innovation to ensure it is effective, well aligned and genuinely joined up.

110. As part of our approach to simplify the academic landscape for businesses, we will ask the SFC to develop, with the universities, proposals for a single Knowledge Exchange Office (KEO). The KEO would bring together and co-ordinate these separate functions across Scotland, ultimately creating a single business-facing 'one-stop-shop' with standardised policies and procedures and common terms and conditions for licensing, contract research, consultancies, collaborative research and perhaps also for clinical trials. This would make the exploitation of university research easier, faster and more effective, and have the potential to increase business innovation and productivity. We do not underestimate the challenge in achieving this, but the Government believes that a 'Research Scotland' KEO is a realistic ambition and one which we believe could be achieved within the next 2 years.

#### **CONSULTATION QUESTIONS**

- How best can we maximise the impact of our excellent research?
- How can we help Scottish universities and businesses collaborate more effectively in bidding for European funding?
- How can the quality and coherence of PhD training be improved?
- What would be the main activities of a single knowledge exchange office? What activities are best left to individual universities?

## 6. FAIR AND AFFORDABLE STUDENT SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS

### Our aim

111. In order to improve participation, retention and progression in learning, we want to ensure that student support arrangements are fair and affordable. The Government has made a clear commitment to maintain Education Maintenance Allowances (EMA) and to consider the discretionary nature of FE student support. We are also committed to moving towards a £7,000 minimum income for Scottish full time higher education students, starting with those from the lowest incomes, whilst introducing a system of student support that is simpler for students and parents to understand and more efficient to deliver.

112. Given the current fiscal climate, not least the impact this has had on demand for learning from young people, it is more important than ever that we make the money we have available go as far as it can. This means targeting the available resources to those people most in need. In doing so, we shall need to consider the implications of welfare reform for all forms of student support.

### Current system

113. Various arrangements exist to support learners, each of which have developed over time to meet changing needs:

- maintenance support to learners in *school* is provided through the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) programme, a means-tested entitlement of up to £30 per week, which does not affect any benefit entitlement;
- maintenance support for 16-17 year olds in *college* is also provided through the EMA programme. For most people over 18, support is provided through further education bursaries so long as they are studying full time (although 18-19 years olds may receive EMA instead). Bursaries are scaled, discretionary means-tested payments of up to around £80 per week. Both EMA and FE bursaries are administered locally. There are also discretionary funds designed to relieve hardship and meet additional costs which certain students might face, such as childcare. Full-time learners in colleges, as in universities, do not pay fees; part-time learners who can afford them are charged fees: however those on low family incomes or benefits can have their fees waived;

- maintenance support for full-time students in *higher education* is provided through a means-tested entitlement to grants and student loans, administered centrally by the Students Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS). This provides the poorest students with an income of up to £6,200 each year. Part-time students can receive means-tested grants towards the costs of their tuition fees. There are also discretionary funds designed to relieve hardship and meet additional costs which certain students might face, such as childcare.

114. Additionally, there are other learning opportunities – such as community learning & development – for which Government support for learners is not available although some kind of allowances might be made available locally.

### **Achievements**

115. For 16-19 year olds in school, college and non-formal learning, the Government has already taken a comprehensive and coherent view of financial support<sup>10</sup> and, as a result, has extended EMA to vulnerable young people involved in learning in a community or third sector setting through, for example, Activity Agreements.

116. From 2010-11, higher education student support has grown by an additional £30m. Under these measures, the income of around 75,000 students has risen and independent students are now eligible for grants of up to £1,000. From 2012-13, we will continue to provide loans covering the full cost of tuition fees to Scottish-domiciled students who wish to study in the rest of the UK.

117. Equally, we have boosted funding for college student support by an additional £5m in 2010-11 and £10m in 2011-12, bringing this to a total of £95.5m in 2011-12. We also increased the EMA budget by £2.9m in 2010-11 in response to increased demand.

118. In terms of supporting students who wish to study overseas, we will:

- continue to fund the EU Lifelong Learning Programme and provide opportunities for Scottish students to study overseas through the Study China and Study India programmes;

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<sup>10</sup> 16+ Learning Choices: First Step Activity and Financial Support, Scottish Government consultation paper [date]

- support an NUS Scotland-led “Year of Mobility” project to increase student awareness of the benefits of overseas study and the opportunities available;
- enable Scottish students to undertake technical work placements abroad (and for overseas students to do so here) through the IAESTE<sup>11</sup> programme.

119. For overseas students, we will continue to fund Scotland’s Saltire Scholarships programme; the Fulbright Commission and Commonwealth Scholarships programmes; and North American Recruitment Group to recruit students to Scottish universities and carry out wider promotional work for example around the Saltire Scholarships. On top of this, we will develop a new initiative to promote Scottish universities as a destination of learning choice for international students. We will focus on the quality of the student experience by encouraging integration and affinity to Scotland.

### **What next**

120. The current local administrative arrangements for EMA and discretionary student support, closely linked to face-to-face information, advice, guidance and personal support, offer the highest level of flexibility to enable colleges to meet individual learner needs. We will review these arrangements in order to ensure the right balance between national policy on support for learners and local discretion.

121. We will also consider other factors related to college student support to which we and stakeholders attach priority. That will clearly include the resource available, but will also take into account issues such as eligibility and rates of support. Overall we want to ensure that support arrangements are fairer, simpler and more affordable in order to encourage participation and progression in learning. The pressure on college student support budgets is considerable, and we are addressing that in the current academic year through a real-terms increase of 9.4% in the resources we are providing for that purpose.

122. As noted elsewhere, we will complete the roll-out of Activity Agreements across Scotland in order to improve financial - and other - support for those 16/17 year olds most at risk of unemployment.

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<sup>11</sup> International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience - [www.iaeste.org.uk](http://www.iaeste.org.uk)

123. On higher education, we will establish a working group, including NUS Scotland, to develop proposals for the simplification of the student support system and the options for the provision of a minimum income guarantee of at least £7,000 for the lowest income students. We will outline our final proposals in early 2012 and implement a new system from academic year 2013/14. As part of this we will also consider the support available for postgraduate students through the Postgraduate Student Allowances Scheme (PSAS).

124. We will develop new part-time policy proposals in the first half of 2012 which will take forward the feedback received during the *Building A Smarter Future* and our subsequent discussions with the sector. We will consider along with the major part-time providers and students how we can clarify the balance between student and/or institutional support and better utilise the existing resources available through the two current sources of support: part time fee waiver, and part time tuition fee grant (formerly ILA500).

#### **CONSULTATION QUESTIONS**

- Given the financial constraints, should we prioritise an entitlement-based approach or the level of payment each student receives? What other options are there?
- How can FE bursaries and EMA be targeted fairly and more effectively?
- Should delivery of financial support – irrespective of where people learn - be centralised? What are the pros and cons of this approach?
- Should student support arrangements align with our ambitions for jobs and growth? If so, what might this look like in practice?

## **7. EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DELIVERY**

### **Our aim**

125. Elsewhere we have made clear our strategic priorities and the reforms we believe are necessary to improve the learner journey, guarantee wider access and align Government funding in colleges and skills with jobs and growth. This chapter sets out how we will ensure we have the right delivery - and collaborative - models in place to deliver these priorities and that these are sustainable. In doing so, we will take account of the work the SFC has been doing to map university and college provision which has identified scope for greater efficiencies and improvements to ensure university and college provision is coherent and relevant to local, regional and national skills needs.

### **Current system**

126. We have a college sector that is, by statute, highly autonomous and varies in scale and scope of activity across Scotland. But, as we have made clear elsewhere, this system has remained largely unchanged for 20 years, despite massive changes in society.

127. Whilst the scale and differentiation of the post-16 'offer' has many strengths, work by the SFC shows there is too much duplication and unnecessary competition within colleges and regional universities. Very often different colleges and universities are competing for the same students and similar programmes are being run by institutions within a few miles of each other. Moreover, evidence from recent mergers shows money can be saved and service to students sustained and improved by the creation of larger efficient colleges. The creation of the Adam Smith and Forth Valley Colleges are good examples of where consolidation has brought benefits and the creation of the University of the West of Scotland has similarly saved money and is transforming the former Bell College.

128. At present, decisions on the structure of the system and what is delivered lie solely with colleges and universities. Whilst this has benefits, we have a concern that the current structure of the sectors both in terms of the proportion of overall Government resources that individual colleges and universities are allocated – and the number of colleges and universities is not encouraging the sectors to make the rapid changes we think are needed. What may have served us well in the past is less likely to do so now, and in the future, given the financial constraints we face.

## **Our achievements**

129. Ministers and the SFC have consistently encouraged collaboration within and between the college and university sectors. They recognise that both sectors are capable of supporting the needs and aspirations of the other.

130. One role colleges play is in providing a route to higher education for 'second chance' learners, supporting the commitment by many of our higher education institutions to the inclusion of learners from deprived areas. Ministers have regularly reflected this priority in their Ministerial guidance for both sectors, and, recently, have focused on the need more effectively to meet learner needs through improved joint work between colleges, universities and schools, particularly to strengthen articulation and entry with advanced standing. We discussed this issue in more detail in the chapter on Efficient, Flexible Learner Journeys.

131. There are many individual examples of collaboration between colleges and higher education institutions. A notable recent example involved Scotland's three land-based colleges and the Scottish Agricultural College (one of our HEIs): all four institutions have signed a concordat which identifies agreed specialist areas within the partners and provides for more effective articulation to HE-level study. Other examples include the delivery of degree-level provision by Forth Valley College in collaboration with the University of Stirling. So there is ample good practice on which to build.

132. More widely, the Government has made clear the priority it attaches to improving the alignment of employment and skills provision. Service alignment between SDS and Jobcentre Plus (JCP) has improved significantly over the last few years, resulting in some examples of co-location and integrated referral arrangements at local level. But notwithstanding the flexibility that exists for JCP to tailor solutions in Scotland, there are significant funding, policy and institutional barriers that constrain better progress. As a result, the Government will continue to make the case to the UK Government for devolving JCP employment support services to Scotland in order to allow services to be fully integrated and achieve greater efficiencies. Currently we are working with JCP, SDS, local authorities and the SFC to look at how we can better outcomes for job seekers and employers.

## **What next**

### **Regionalisation of the college sector**

133. The financial pressures we face mean we can no longer afford a system of individual institutions (with all the managerial and academic overheads that entails) serving overlapping areas. Nor is it sensible to allow incoherent and unplanned provision to emerge, as sometimes happens through unilateral decision-making. Moreover, (as we have made clear in the chapter on Aligning Learning & Skills with Jobs and Growth) we need to strengthen the alignment between post-16 learning and jobs and growth. We therefore need colleges, in particular, to come together collaboratively to achieve these benefits through federations, mergers or other innovative means.

134. Given that for many colleges and regional universities, there is a natural regional catchment area they serve, regional planning and funding of provision makes sense for most of the country. We believe there are benefits to be obtained by taking such an approach – by allowing us to take account of real patterns of demand, transport routes or economic, cultural and social factors. A shift to regionalisation would still support local delivery and responsiveness to local need within the frameworks established at national and regional levels. In developing such an approach, we will give specific consideration to mechanisms for protecting access-level provision locally.

135. As we note, regionalisation would take effect in different forms. On balance, we think a series of mergers, over time, to create regional colleges of scale is the best means of securing coherent, relevant provision on a sustainable basis, including access-level and advanced and specialist provision. We recognise, however, that this may not be the best solution in all cases. For example, in the case of the three countryside colleges that specifically serve the land-based industries, an arrangement based on specialism makes more sense than a regional solution and we welcome the discussions that these colleges and the Scottish Agricultural College are having about a structure to support a new strategy for land-based education. In both the Highlands and the south, we recognise that the needs of rural areas may require different solutions from those in more urban areas.

136. In order to determine the optimal regional structure – and groupings of colleges – we propose the following criteria:

- an appropriate breadth and range of courses is available in all the reasonably sized communities in a region including through the use of new technologies – and distance learning – where appropriate;
- provision is responsive and relevant to demography and the social and economic circumstances of the region;
- building on the above, there is capacity to deliver the Government's commitment to post-16 education and training for all 16-19 year olds, and 19-24 year olds where possible, in partnership with other agencies;
- access provision is widely available locally – that is, in more local centres - than advanced or specialist provision;
- there is scope to achieve cost-efficiencies through, for example, back office and management costs, and more efficient organisation of educational provision.

137. On the basis of these criteria, we propose the following regional groupings which would cover most of Scotland except the most rural areas: North East, Fife, Tayside, Glasgow North and South, Lanarkshire, Forth Valley, Edinburgh and Lothians, Ayrshire, and West (consisting of Renfrewshire and Inverclyde).

138. We will ask the SFC to work with the college sector to develop the most efficient arrangements for delivery of college provision in regional groupings, and to reflect such groupings in its funding arrangements. In some cases, mergers are already being planned and we want the SFC and the colleges involved to implement these quickly. In other cases we recognise that it will take time for college boards and the SFC to agree on the best and most efficient structure for serving an area. For this reason we want to move to the new structure of colleges over the next three years and will ask the SFC to draw up a timetable for achieving this.

139. We will ask the SFC to begin the process of funding colleges regionally from academic year 2012-13 – although it may take more time to fully migrate to the new method. In parallel, we will ensure the performance management, governance and accountability arrangements that we develop reflect the importance we attach to regionalisation, efficiency and local delivery.

## **Provision at universities**

140. The University of the Highland and Islands remains at an early stage of development. It has a more limited range of core higher education courses than many other universities with a regional role but plays a vital role in offering provision to the local population. The Crichton Campus also ensures local provision for Dumfries and Galloway – for very different reasons. We believe there is a case for initiatives to strengthen provision at UHI and to seek to grow provision in Dumfries and Galloway, always bearing in mind the limited scale of these student markets and the desire of some students from these areas to move elsewhere for their university education.

141. Around the urban areas of Scotland there are often overlaps in provision between some of the more regional universities. In any approach which involves greater regionalisation, we believe the SFC should be charged to work more closely with universities to consider how such overlaps are best removed through greater collaboration or, where the case exists, merger. We say more about this below.

142. There are increasing efforts by some universities to differentiate themselves, most notably the University of Strathclyde focusing on a niche role as a technological university with particular specialisms in energy. We will continue to encourage such differentiation with institutions focusing on different markets, building on their strengths and achieving excellence in their areas of focus.

143. By and large most subjects are available relatively widely in universities across Scotland. However some subjects (languages, for example) require careful monitoring to ensure that this continues to be the case. There are other subjects, such as nursing, where there is duplication of effort. In the case of languages, a distinction needs to be made between learning to speak a second language and cultural and area studies. Maintaining opportunities to learn to speak a second language is important culturally, economically and to ensure a supply of teachers for our schools. We will therefore ask the SFC and the universities to give particular attention to capacity for language learning and to this overall issue.

## **Institutional landscape**

144. Against this background of the need for more coherent provision, reduced duplication and tightening public expenditure, we have already proposed (in paras 133-139) a regional network of colleges; and, we think there is also some room for some consolidation in the university sector. We therefore want colleges, universities and the SFC to continue to consider the case and opportunity for further structural change and movement of provision in order to meet Scotland's changing needs.

145. We therefore intend to supplement Scottish Ministers' current powers on mergers in two ways. First, to require the SFC periodically to review the number and pattern of fundable bodies (that is, colleges and universities) and make recommendations on implementing changes – including mergers, new fundable bodies or transfers of provision. The test would be the need to improve the value for money and coherence of provision. The SFC would be required to justify its recommendations and publish the evidence base on which it was founded. Second – and following such a review, Scottish Ministers would have the power to require the governing bodies of fundable bodies to work with the SFC to respond to and implement the recommendations.

146. More widely, we will continue to work closely with our delivery partners to integrate skills and employment services to improve access and progression for those further from the labour market. As part of this, we will consider the case for pooling partner funding for pre-employment training programmes (see chapter on Simplification of the Funding System).

147. Consistent with other areas of public service reform, we will consider how new technologies including digital platforms can enable greater use of virtual learning environments in order to enhance learner choice, support larger learner numbers (including those in-work) and extend geographical reach through distance learning.

## **Role of the SFC**

148. Leading and supporting change on a number of fronts – the delivery landscape, arrangements for commissioning, funding and performance (described elsewhere) – has significant implications for the SFC. This will need to be met by changed powers - together with better developed capacity and capability - in order to make more and faster progress.

149. The SFC must also develop a more robust approach to performance management of colleges, as we signal in the chapter on Performance, Governance and Accountability.

150. Overall we believe that the SFC, whilst acquiring more powers of direction, needs to simplify its processes and streamline its bureaucracy. Those requirements will be pursued vigorously.

#### **CONSULTATION QUESTIONS**

- What are the pros and cons of our proposals for the regionalisation of colleges? Are there other criteria we should consider in determining the optimal regional structure?
- What more could the Government and its delivery partners do to improve collaboration between post-16 learning, including CLD and employment support services?
- What are the pros and cons of the new leadership and support role envisaged for the SFC? What lessons can we learn from successful change management elsewhere?

## **8. SIMPLIFICATION OF THE FUNDING SYSTEM AND INCOME GENERATION**

### **Our aim**

151. At a time of unprecedented financial constraint, our top priority is to ensure the sustainability of post-16 learning and - more specifically - to protect the competitive position of the higher education sector in the face of changes to funding arrangements in England and our commitment not to introduce tuition fees for Scottish-domiciled students in our universities.

152. This demands more strategic investment of Government funding in line with our overall objectives for post-16 learning; equally we must consider re-balancing the investment in non-advanced learning and skills by, respectively, Government, employers and, potentially individuals. All this will be underpinned by a simpler, needs-based funding system for further education and vocational training that better reflects the cost of delivery; allows greater responsiveness to changes in demand; and makes the deployment of resource, and what we get for it, more transparent.

### **Current system**

153. The Government currently directly invests in the order of £2bn in post-16 learning. Over £1.6bn of this is allocated by the SFC to universities and colleges, with Ministers' setting a strategic framework and priorities for the expenditure through guidance to the SFC. In recent years, we have worked closely with the sector to align investment more closely with national priorities through, for example, research pooling and the Horizon Fund for Universities. We have also allocated ESF funding to colleges and training providers which they are using to respond to the economic downturn.

154. The system for college funding is based around a funding formula which allocates a grant to a college in return for an agreed amount of teaching activity in which the unit of resource is a SUM ("Student Unit of Measurement"). One SUM is equivalent to 40 hours of notional student learning and is currently priced at just over £200. SUMs are then adjusted ("weighted") for different types of course to reflect the cost of delivery. All this means that colleges receive, on average, just over £4,000 for a full-time student on a non-advanced course.

155. Whilst the SFC funding methodology has supported stability and the improvement of the financial health of the college sector over the last few years, it has been unresponsive to changing needs and demography, has been driven by historical patterns, and has not obviously driven improvements in performance. Moreover, there is a widely held view in the sector that funding for college provision and the rules associated with it are unnecessarily complicated. We agree: the current arrangements additionally, in our view, can lead to waste and do not support achievement of the outcomes we want.

156. Meanwhile, SDS contracts directly with training providers which deliver its National Training Programmes. The Modern Apprenticeship programme also has direct contracting with training providers to cover the Government's training contribution which is, in many cases, topped up by employers (employers meet the wage costs of all employees on the MA programme). A payment to the training provider on successful completion of the apprenticeship constitutes a significant element of the MA funding model.

157. SDS also has a key role in commissioning pre-employment support for unemployed adults and young people struggling to make a successful transition to post-16 learning and work. This is carried out in close consultation with Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) in order to align provision with local needs and labour market opportunities. SDS retains control of the budget, but CPPs are involved in advisory groups responsible for developing and implementing locally a model of co-commissioning. The advantages of this approach are in ensuring what is commissioned aligns local needs with emerging labour market opportunities and gets best fit with existing services, thereby removing duplication and waste.

## **Achievements**

158. We have taken steps to maintain the stability of the higher education sector in Scotland by being clear we will not charge tuition fees for Scottish students. We have also made clear our commitment to fund the sector to retain its competitive position. These steps have been undertaken with the sector and the Tripartite Advisory Group which has also established how well universities perform internationally in terms of generating efficiencies. Additionally, we have worked in partnership to encourage universities to generate more income from other sources e.g. our work to attract more international students.

159. As we made clear earlier in this chapter, the very significant growth in the public resource available to colleges over the last two decades has supported stability and the improvement of the financial health of the college sector over the last few years. Our investment in the capital estate has, additionally, seen 13 new or significantly refurbished facilities being opened in the last four years alone.

160. We have started to address the issue of co-investment with employers, with the introduction of Flexible Training Opportunities, a skills co-investment model for businesses employing 150 people or less, where Government investment is matched pound for pound by the private sector.

## **What next**

### **RUK fees consultation**

161. The first measure we have undertaken as part of the HE reform process was the launch of a consultation on proposals for secondary legislation to allow Scottish universities to set their own fees for students who are resident in other parts of the UK (RUK students) from academic year 2012/13<sup>12</sup>. This consultation recently ended and we are considering the next steps. If we allow universities to set their own fees for RUK students we will introduce a cap of £9,000 through primary legislation for 2013/14, a limit which the sector has agreed to observe in 2012/13 and we will also legislate to ensure Scottish provision is not eroded by a focus on fee-earning students.

162. If universities are able to set their own fees for RUK students, the SFC will no longer count RUK students and therefore will need to revise their student number targets. Reducing funded numbers for these students will create savings but this will need to be reinvested in an number of areas, such as high cost subjects (e.g. science, engineering, veterinary science, conservatoire music etc) where Scotland might otherwise lose its competitive edge. The SFC is working with students and universities to ensure the funds freed up are appropriately targeted. This change will contribute towards a sustainable funding solution for higher education and protect places for Scottish students at Scottish institutions.

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<sup>12</sup><http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/06/27091056/0>

## **EU management fee**

163. It continues to be our intention to introduce a management fee to be paid by EU students. We continue to examine all possible options, within the boundaries of European law, and expect to be able to say more about our plans early next year. This could include possible legislation to allow universities to charge a management fee to cover aspects such as student services and examination fees. Throughout this process we will continue to engage with the European Commission.

## **New income sources**

164. We will continue to work with universities, the SFC and employer organisations to maximise the scope to generate income from philanthropic giving and contributions from business – including funding of bespoke programmes and scholarships at postgraduate level, exploring and identifying examples of good practice in the university sector and elsewhere and considering the impact of match funding.

165. The UK government is undertaking a consultation<sup>13</sup> on incentivising legacy giving by introducing a lower rate of inheritance tax (IHT) where people leave a charitable legacy of 10% or more of their estate. These proposals could provide an additional incentive for people to leave legacy gifts to Scottish universities and we therefore await the results of the consultation with interest.

## **Efficiency savings**

166. Universities Scotland has recently established an Efficiency Task Force, comprising senior managers of university professional services, to identify individual and collaborative action to enhance efficiency. This will take account of recent, expert thinking on public sector efficiency including the Clyde Valley Review, the Christie Commission, the McClelland Report on public sector ICT and the UK-level work on university efficiency led by Professor Ian Diamond, Principal of the University of Aberdeen. We look to that Task Force to propose and support ambitious and radical sector-led plans for reform.

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<sup>13</sup>A new incentive for charitable legacies: A lower rate of inheritance tax when leaving 10% of an estate to charity, HMRC 2011

## **SFC funding methods for higher education teaching and research**

167. The SFC is reforming and simplifying its teaching funding method so that the price it pays for different subjects is more closely aligned to the actual cost of teaching. This process will also reduce bureaucracy by reducing the number of subject groupings, thereby freeing up institutions to respond more flexibly to changes in their markets.

168. To meet the challenges of the future, the SFC must work towards achieving a more strategic approach to funding, as discussed earlier. To achieve this, we will ask SFC to adapt its teaching funding methods so that it can respond to our proposals for reform of the shape and structure of the sector.

169. We will also ask the SFC to revise its funding of research to ensure that world class excellence in this vital field is protected and enhanced, as discussed elsewhere in this document.

## **Reforming funding for higher education, further education and skills**

170. A fundamental next step is to reform our funding mechanisms. Our aim is to offer strategic incentives to providers to deliver our requirements in a way that is sustainable both for the Government and for individual institutions. In doing so, we want a much sharper focus on provision of strategic economic importance (consistent with the direction set in the Government Economic Strategy); and we also want to protect activity for those further from the labour market which might be at particular risk in the current financial climate.

171. Given our wish to shift towards regionalisation of college provision, SFC funding for colleges should in future be based on the needs of a region, taking into account the demographics and economy of the region in question. The SFC should also separately consider if there is specialist provision that should be funded nationally. Regional funding of college provision should be bolstered by new requirements to make sure the needs of individual localities and communities within the region are properly taken into account. There should be a simple, visible and public connection between the funding allocated and the outcomes that should be delivered in return.

172. Returning to university funding, and picking up themes discussed elsewhere on regionalisation, overlap exists in provision and communities served between some universities who are strongly regional in character and the college sector. As we consider further the case for a more regionalised approach (as set out in the Delivery chapter) we will ask the SFC to consider where there is scope to introduce similar regional funding models for these universities as proposed above for colleges. While we recognise that this may be more complex in practice given the reach and different character of the university sector, we believe the case for change should be explored.

173. In order to make more efficient use of public funds, and better align it with our employment strategy, we will work with SDS, the SFC and local authorities to consider the case for pooling budgets for pre-employment training programmes into a new approach to employability funding. This would ensure services commissioned align with local needs and fit with existing services. Each community planning partnership (CPP) or group of CPPs, if they chose to collaborate, would be funded to deliver national and locally agreed outcomes.

174. Working with the SFC and SDS, we will also maximise the leverage exerted by Government funding through co-investment in non-advanced learning and skills with employers – and potentially individuals – where appropriate.

#### **CONSULTATION QUESTIONS**

- What are the pros and cons of the proposed needs-based regional commissioning model for colleges?
- Is there a market for co-investment with employers? If so, how do we select the employers with whom we might co-invest in order to maximise the leverage of Government funding? On what basis should Government funding be made available?
- In what circumstances would it be appropriate and fair to expect people to pay for their learning?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of pooling funding for pre-employment support? What lessons can we learn from examples of pooled funding elsewhere?

## **9. PERFORMANCE, GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

### **Our aim**

175. Our goal is to create a system in which learners and employers are confident Government funding delivers teaching and learning of the highest possible quality at all levels. We need therefore to define the outcomes the Government expects for its funding; incentivise the delivery of those outcomes by providers; and ensure robust accountability for delivery. We specifically want the governance arrangements for higher and further education to be sufficiently transparent to secure learner and taxpayer confidence, balancing accountability for public funds with the right degree of institutional freedom and flexibility.

176. We recognise our approach must be appropriate to each sector, recognising the diversity of our institutions and the different arrangements which govern them, and that they should build on what's already in place. For example, the global success of our universities are based on the solid foundations of academic freedom and the democratic intellect and these will continue to be at the heart of everything we do.

177. The Government has a clear responsibility to support its institutions and providers to continuously improve and innovate, and to replicate the best practice that already exists in many areas of post-16 education. We will therefore focus increasingly on helping them to reach and maintain the highest possible standards, working together to share best practice and improve quality.

### **Current system**

178. Arrangements for performance management, quality assurance and governance differ for higher education, further education and vocational training and have evolved over time to reflect how our institutions are constituted and the environment in which they and providers operate. The SFC is responsible for securing the assessment and enhancement of performance and quality in further and higher education. Its quality assurance responsibilities for higher education in Scottish universities are undertaken by the Quality Assurance Agency in Scotland; and, for further education, by Education Scotland and Scotland's Colleges. SDS has responsibility for the performance management and quality assurance of the national training programmes it funds – its approach is closely linked to outcomes and assessment of employer and participant satisfaction.

179. At present, colleges and universities are subjected to a range of input measures and a smaller number of output measures. But there is insufficient focus on *outcomes*. In addition, much of the data we collect is merely descriptive and is not used for effective performance analysis of our system. This must change: the burdens of the statistical and data collection exercises that much of the existing arrangements represent is a bureaucratic overhead to little end, which we can no longer afford and to which our providers should not be subjected. But that is not to say the Government does not have a clear stake in understanding much more clearly what it buys with the money it invests, and the comparative performance of that investment.

180. The benefits of an autonomous higher education sector is just one of the reasons why our universities punch above their weight internationally. We will protect this when considering any changes where we believe a clear case for change exists. What is less clear, however, is whether, more generally, the current *governance* arrangements for both colleges and universities deliver the right level of transparency and democratic accountability given the level of public funding these institutions receive. As we embark on an ambitious programme of reform, it is right that we consider whether changes in these arrangements are needed for the future in order to meet our objectives.

181. By their very nature, vocational training programmes, such as the Modern Apprenticeship programme, have a clear link between performance and the outcomes at the end. The input of employers in the development of programmes is designed to ensure that training is fit for purpose. We will continue to secure improvements in this area.

### **Our achievements**

182. The FE and HE quality enhancement framework are based on three principles of high quality learning, learner engagement and a quality culture. The distinctive Scottish approach, particularly in relation to universities, is recognised internationally as being successful in sustaining and promoting quality.

## **What next**

### **Governance**

183. We have commissioned independent reviews of college<sup>14</sup> and university<sup>15</sup> governance from Professors Russel Griggs and Ferdinand von Prondzynski respectively, due to report in December. Pending the outcome of the higher education governance review, and in response to stakeholder views on the Green paper, we will consider the functions of the Privy Council in relation to the governance of Scottish universities and whether they should be replaced with a more modern and transparent process.

184. In the light of those reports, we shall consider what further action is necessary, including what action we might take in the event of under-performance, recognising the differences between our colleges and universities. As part of this, we will also explore what legislation, if any, will be required to deliver change.

### **Colleges and training providers**

185. Building on the strengths of the current system, we will develop a more robust and coherent approach to performance management of our institutions and providers by setting them clear outcomes that must be achieved for their funding and rigorously holding them to account for their performance. For colleges and training providers this framework will be based on a set of core indicators which:

- reflect the Government's priorities for post-16 learning – specifically jobs and growth, life chances, and sustainability;
- are measurable;
- are easily understood and transparent;
- can be used to support external scrutiny;
- as far as possible can be collected without imposing unnecessary additional bureaucracy on providers.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/UniversitiesColleges/17135/CollegeGovernanceReview>.

<sup>15</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/UniversitiesColleges/16640/ReviewHEGovernance](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/UniversitiesColleges/16640/ReviewHEGovernance)

186. Where possible, these indicators will reflect and build on those already in use to ensure a degree of continuity. However, they will be streamlined and simplified to focus on those activities which will deliver outcomes for learners and employers and will be sufficiently flexible to reflect the diversity of the post-16 sector.

### **University quality enhancement**

187. The SFC is currently reviewing its quality enhancement framework for universities and colleges with Education Scotland, QAA Scotland, NUS Scotland and other sector bodies in the university sector, taking account of planned changes in England arising from the Higher Education White Paper<sup>16</sup>.

188. For the university sector a new set of public information indicators are being developed in the rest of the UK to help inform student choice. This set of indicators is expected to cover quality, student satisfaction and student employment information. We will consider how this develops and work with Scottish universities to ensure that public information on our universities meets Scotland's needs and supports them to maintain their competitive position within the UK.

### **Enhanced role for Education Scotland**

189. The skills and capabilities of staff and leaders will be crucial to the success of our reform programme and here we need to be clear about how we make best use of our existing investment. We will therefore consider the case for expanding the quality assurance and improvement role of Education Scotland (which already covers schools, the college sector, and Community Learning & Development) in relation to a wider range of post-16 learning and skills, including careers information, advice and guidance. This will include specific consideration of ES – given its broad-ranging role in staff development - taking on responsibility for the continuous improvement activity currently delivered by Scotland's Colleges. We do not propose any change in the quality assurance arrangements for universities.

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<sup>16</sup> [www.bis.gov.uk/news/topstories/2011/Jun/he-white-paper-students-at-the-heart-of-the-system](http://www.bis.gov.uk/news/topstories/2011/Jun/he-white-paper-students-at-the-heart-of-the-system)

## CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

***NOTE: There are already opportunities for stakeholders to contribute to the governance reviews of higher and further education.***

- Given the proposed changes to post-16 provision (non-advanced learning and skills) and delivery set out in this document, what are the key considerations for governance?
- What measures should form the basis of our performance management framework for colleges and training providers in order to improve outcomes for all learners?
- How do we ensure a strong focus on improving outcomes for those furthest from the labour market? What are stakeholders' experiences of this?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of an enhanced role for Education Scotland in supporting continuous improvement in the college and skills sectors?

## **10. QUESTIONS AND RESPONDING TO THE CONSULTATION**

The paper sets out proposals for wide-ranging reform of the full range of Government-funded post-16 education in Scotland - higher education, further education and skills. In the light of the consultation on Building a Smarter Scotland, we have already discussed many of the issues facing higher education and our aim to deliver a sustainable future for the sector. This paper has drawn on our analysis of the responses to that consultation to set out more definite proposals for HE and we are seeking views on how these may best be implemented.

On further education and skills our paper builds on the recently published Roe Review of vocational training and the Skills Strategy. We want to develop and refine our future direction of travel for our policy propositions over the coming months. In order to do so, we hope this paper will stimulate debate on – but not be limited to – the questions above.

### **Responding to this paper**

Accordingly, we want to hear the views of as many people as possible in considering the key questions and policy proposals and as a result we will be circulating this paper as widely as we can.

There are a range of options available for those who wish their voice to be heard.

This consultation paper will be published on the Scottish Government website at [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

The Engage for Education website: [www.engageforeducation.org](http://www.engageforeducation.org) will feature discussion of the key issues and will provide opportunities for people to contribute to the debate online. We will also use the website to promote forthcoming consultation events where there will be an opportunity to discuss the issues in more detail with other interested parties.

More details of these events will be circulated to all who receive this paper and details will also be published on our website [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk). If you would like more information on them please e-mail [post16reform@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:post16reform@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

## **Written submissions**

This paper has deliberately been written to set out a range of issues, so we do not expect respondees to address all the issues in the paper. Written responses should be submitted by **Friday 23rd December 2011**, either by e-mail to [post16reform@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:post16reform@scotland.gsi.gov.uk), or by post to:

### **Putting Learners at the Centre**

Scottish Government –Colleges and Adult Learning - Funding and Policy Division

5 Atlantic Quay

150 Broomielaw

Glasgow

G2 8LU

### **Respondee information form**

All responses (postal or electronic) should include the respondee information form at the end of this paper. This form is vitally important for informing us how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are happy for your response to be made public. If you ask for your response not to be published we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

All responders should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

Where responders have given permission for their written response to be made public and after we have checked that they contain no potentially defamatory material, responses will be made available to the public in the Scottish Government Library. Responses together with any summary reports of consultation meetings will be made available to the public in the Scottish Government Library and on the Scottish Government consultation web pages as soon as possible. You can make arrangements to view the responses by contacting the SG Library on 0131 244 4552. Responses can be copied and sent to you, but a charge may be made for this service.

## **What happens next?**

We will write to you within 14 days acknowledging receipt of your response. Once the consultation has finished, we will analyse the responses and consider what action to take. An official response to the consultation will be published early in the new year.

## **Comments and complaints**

If you have any comments about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, please send them to Colleges and Adult Learning - Funding and Policy Division using the contact details given above.

Thank you for taking part in this consultation exercise. We look forward to receiving your views.

## 11. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

### EFFICIENT, FLEXIBLE LEARNER JOURNEYS

#### We will:

- Ensure all 16-19 year olds have a place in post-16 education and training, making that commitment for the first time.
- Maintain our focus on full implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, including the implementation of the new National Qualifications Framework.
- Ensure 16+ Learning Choices is fully and consistently implemented for all young people in Scotland, irrespective of where they learn.
- Complete the roll-out of Activity Agreements in order to improve access, retention and progression in learning for our more vulnerable 16/17 year olds.
- Modernise careers services in line with the Government's Career Information Advice and Guidance strategy.
- Develop our apprenticeship programme to deliver a wider range of progression and articulation opportunities, including higher level technical and graduate apprenticeships.
- Minimise bureaucracy for employers, particularly Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), and providers participating in our training programmes
- Review the current funding models for training, including how we can use funding to improve performance.
- Consider legislation to create a statutory framework guaranteeing articulation from college to university – where there is a clear curricular fit.
- Consider whether the higher national (HN) qualifications need to be refreshed to improve how they prepare learners for university, while maintaining their value to employers.
- Further develop the Scottish Baccalaureate and other senior school qualifications and their use to gain advanced entry into higher education.
- Accelerate progress in the promotion and use of the SCQF within post-16 education and beyond, including articulation with advance standing across different parts of the system.
- Review the uptake of the SQA's vocational qualifications, taking a close look at the cost and priority of low demand qualifications.

## **WIDENING ACCESS TO POST-16 LEARNING**

### **We will:**

- Ensure full and consistent implementation of 16+ Learning Choices for our most vulnerable young people.
- Continue to support local authorities and partners to improve transitions planning, including specifically, implementation of the Additional Support for Learning legislation.
- Develop a community learning and development strategy that takes account of its contribution to wider national priorities, working with local authorities, the Third Sector and other partners.
- Maintain efforts to reach back well before the point of entry to start preparing the student and raising our collective ambitions for all our young people early in their school career.
- Ensure that raising aspirations is central to SDS's delivery of Career IAG, particular through its services for those needing additional support.
- Support Universities Scotland-led efforts to broaden universities approach to selection..
- Ask the SFC to develop a Widening Access Outcome Agreement in partnership with lead universities and to introduce financial penalties conditional on achievement.
- Consider placing a statutory duty on institutions to seek out those with the greatest potential who would be identified with reference to their grades and their situation.

## **ALIGNING NON-ADVANCED LEARNING & SKILLS WITH JOBS & GROWTH**

### **We will:**

- Improve the alignment of Government investment in learning and skills with jobs and growth, consistent with the needs of employers and the wider economy
- Ask the SFC to allocate its resources to meet the needs of regions; identify national provision and resource it to meet national needs; put new expectations on colleges to plan their courses to prepare students for careers in industries where there will be a good chance of them getting a job; focus funding on nationally recognised qualifications and units.
- Develop a range of employer engagement models – including the introduction of voluntary training levies and greater engagement with trade bodies
- Expand opportunities for practical work experience in other parts of the post-16 education system.

## **MAINTAINING SCOTLAND AS A GLOBAL LEARNER IN UNIVERSITY RESEARCH**

### **We will:**

- Ask the SFC to develop proposals to increase the concentration of our funding on research excellence and align our research to national priorities.
- Work with the SFC, Scottish Enterprise, and Highlands & Islands Enterprise to ensure university research is better exploited for the benefit of business, and the economy.
- Work with the sector and with the UK Government to ensure continuity of access to Research Council funding.
- Continue to engage with our stakeholders on the development of Horizon 2020 and encourage our research pools to engage further in Europe, increasing collaboration and maximising the opportunities to win research grants and contracts.
- Provide a new stream of competitive funding for postdoctoral exchanges with key partner countries in Europe, North America, China and India.
- Ask SFC and Industry Advisory Groups to identify opportunities for industry and universities to increase PhD students working on industrially-led projects.
- Work with the SFC and enterprise bodies as appropriate to review support for knowledge exchange and innovation to ensure it is effective, well aligned and genuinely joined up.
- Ask the SFC to develop, with universities, proposals for a single Knowledge Exchange Office.

## **FAIR AND AFFORDABLE STUDENT SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS**

### **We will:**

- Review a range of factors related to non-advanced student support with a view to developing a more coherent, fairer and sustainable system.
- Establish a working group to develop proposals for the simplification of the higher education student support system and the options for the provision of a minimum income guarantee of at least £7,000 for the lowest income students.
- As part of this we will also consider the support available for postgraduate students through the Postgraduate Student Allowances Scheme (PSAS).
- Develop new part-time policy proposals considering how we can clarify the balance between the student and/or institutional support.

## **EFFECTIVE & SUSTAINABLE DELIVERY**

### **We will:**

- Ask the SFC to move towards regionalisation of colleges, whilst protecting access-level provision locally.
- Ask the SFC to work with the college sector to determine the best regional structure, testing proposals against a range of criteria, including coherence of provision and value for money.
- Support the SFC and the colleges already involved in planning mergers to implement these quickly.
- Move to the new structure of colleges over the next three years.
- Ask the SFC to begin the process of funding colleges regionally from academic year 2012-13.
- Ask the SFC to work more closely with universities to consider how overlaps are best removed through greater collaboration or, where the case exists, merger.
- Continue to encourage universities to differentiate themselves, with institutions focusing on different markets, building on their strengths and achieving excellence in their areas of focus.
- Ask the SFC and the universities to give particular attention to capacity for language learning and to related issues..
- Legislate to require the SFC periodically to review the number and pattern of fundable bodies.
- Continue to work with partners to integrate skills and employment services so as to improve access and progression for those further from the labour market.
- Consider greater use of new technologies to enhance learner choice, support larger learner numbers (including those in-work) and extend geographical reach.
- Ensure SFC has the capacity to lead and support change, whilst simplifying its processes and streamlining bureaucracy.

## **SIMPLIFYING FUNDING AND INCREASING INCOME GENERATION**

### **We will:**

- Introduce a cap of £9,000 through primary legislation for 2013/14, subject to allowing universities to set their own fees for RUK students.
- Reinvest any savings arising from revisions to student number targets in areas where Scotland might otherwise lose its competitive edge.
- Examine options for an EU Management Fee, within the boundaries of European law.
- Continue to work with universities, the SFC and employer organisations to maximise the scope to generate income from philanthropic giving and contributions from business
- Work with Universities Scotland to identify individual and collaborative action to enhance efficiency.
- Ask the SFC to adapt its teaching funding methods so it can respond to our proposals for reform of the shape and structure of the sector.
- Ask the SFC to fund colleges based on the needs of a region, taking into account the demography and economy of the region in question.
- Ask the SFC to consider where there is scope to introduce funding models for regional universities, similar to those proposed for colleges.
- Work with SDS, the SFC and local authorities to consider the case for pooling budgets for pre-employment training programmes into a new approach to employability funding.
- Maximise the leverage exerted by Government funding through co-investment in non-advanced learning and skills with employers – and potentially individuals.

## **PERFORMANCE, GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

### **We will:**

- Pending the outcome of the higher education governance review, consider the functions of the Privy Council in relation to the governance of Scottish universities.
- Develop a more robust and coherent approach to the performance management of our institutions and training providers.
- Work with universities to ensure public information meets Scotland's needs and supports them to maintain their competitive position within the UK.
- Consider the case for expanding the quality assurance and improvement role of Education Scotland in relation to the wide range of post-16 learning and skills

## ANNEX A

### KEY FACTS & FIGURES

#### COLLEGE SECTOR

##### Number of Institutions

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Further Education sector in Scotland consists of 41 separate institutions, which cater for a diverse mix of students and provide a variety of further, higher, vocational and leisure education opportunities.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Scottish Funding Council supports 37 incorporated colleges and four other colleges in Scotland, allocating their largest recurrent grant funding based on a target for total activity. The SFC also provide specific support for deprived and rural colleges alongside support that allows colleges to waive fees for certain students and courses and other funding for student support or strategic changes in the sector.</li></ul>

##### Impact

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In 2009-10 there were roughly 440,000 enrolments for courses in FE colleges, which equates to just under 350,000 students. Around 74% of students studied on a part time FE course, with full time FE students accounting for around 13% of the total. HE study is mainly full time, and accounts for the remaining 13%.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One in ten of the working age population is attending a further education course at a college in Scotland at any one time</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 70% of college leavers are employed</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overall, 65 percent of college students studying FE courses (lasting more than 160 hours of learning) successfully completed their course of study in 2009-10, either gaining a national qualification or progressing to the next year of study.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Tripartite Advisory Group (TAG) report estimates the output generated by Scottish HEI and student expenditure is worth £4bn, and accounts for 55,135 FTE jobs.</li></ul>

##### Participation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 28% of the activity delivered by the sector is in higher education and 72% is further education (ie non-advanced courses).</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 27% of school leavers go on to FE</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 82% of enrolments are part-time</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 25% of enrolments come from Scotland's most deprived neighbourhoods.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 43% of students are under 25.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 55% of students are women.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Around 20,000 staff</li></ul>

##### Funding

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scotland's Colleges have experienced real terms funding increases every year since devolution with the exception of two (03-04 and 08-09). The increase in annual spend in cash terms from 2000-01 to 2009-10 is worth around £334m – equivalent to an increase of 91% over this period.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SFC Funding accounts for 73% of the total income across all colleges. 57% of this is through the main recurrent grant.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff costs account for 2/3 of total expenditure in the FE sector</li></ul>

## UNIVERSITY SECTOR

### Number of Institutions

- Our university sector is currently made up of 19 institutions. This includes 14 campus-based universities, the Open University – a UK-wide distance learning university – and the newly formed University of the Highlands and Islands. The Scottish Agricultural College supports the development of land-based industries and communities and we have two small specialist institutions; The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and Glasgow School of Art.

### Impact

- Scotland has five universities in the top 150 in the world.
- 1.8% of the world's cited research comes from Scotland with just 0.1% of the world's population. This makes Scottish-based research the most cited by GDP in the world.

### Participation

- In 2009-10 there were **237,765** students in Higher Education Institutions
- **49,800** were studying higher education programmes within colleges.
- The Age Participation Index indicates how many young people are likely to enter higher education at any time before they reach 21. The API was 43% in 2008/09.

### Funding

- Until last year, universities had received real terms expenditure increases every year since devolution. The increase in annual spend in cash terms from 2000-01 to 2009-10 is worth around £572m – equivalent to an increase of 90% over this period.
- However, the overall dependency on core funding from the state varies from institution to institution, with the highest being 71% for University of the West of Scotland and the lowest being 27% for St Andrews

## TRAINING AND SKILLS PROGRAMMES

### Impact

Pre-employment programmes such as **Get Ready for Work, Training for Work** and **Targeted Pathways to Apprenticeships** provide opportunities for young unemployed people to access the workplace experience, personal and work-related skills they need to progress into sustained employment.

Work-related training and skills development programmes such as **Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs)** provide additional funding for continued work related training, skills development and lifelong learning.

**Modern Apprenticeships** provide young people in employment with an opportunity for skills development in relation to a specific occupation. The main benefit for the young person is the chance to “*earn while they learn*”.

**Activity Agreements** provide a tailored package of needs assessment and bespoke personalised training and support for young people in or at risk of entering a negative post-school destination with the aim of supporting them into employment or further learning.

### Participation

**Get Ready for Work** – 2010-11 figures show approx 10,000 new starts and approx 10,300 leavers with a positive outcomes rate of 40%

**Training for Work (DWP)** – 2010-11 figures show approx 6,000 new starts and approx 6,700 leavers of whom 54% went into employment (79% of those in employment were in a sustained post – 13 weeks or more).

**Targeted Pathways to Apprenticeships** – in 2010-11 we provided over 1000 opportunities for young people who were otherwise unable to access employment, an apprenticeship, GRfW or an FE/HE place

**ILAs** – 60,512 individuals attended 66,479 courses using ILA funding in 2010-11.

**Modern Apprenticeships** – there were 21,561 New Starts in 2010 -11 and those leaving had a 70% completion rate which is high by international standards.

**Activity Agreements** - the recent evaluation of the pilot of Activity Agreements suggested that approx 1500 young people had been supported across 10 LAs during the 2 year pilot study, of whom approximately 40% progressed on to employment, training or further learning.

## Funding

**Get Ready for Work** – Participants can earn a training allowance of £55 per week. SG spend in 2010-11 was £27 million. There are 9,500 places allocated in the 2011-12 budget.

**Training for Work (DWP)** – Participants are eligible to support of £10 per week in addition to any benefits received. SG spend in 2010-11 was £12 million. There are 5,000 places allocated in the 2011-12 budget.

**Targeted Pathways to Apprenticeships** – Participants entitled to £55 per week training allowance. SG spend in 2010-11 was £1.8 million. No places allocated in budget for 2011-12

**ILAs** – £200 annually available to eligible applicants for approved training. SG spend for 2010-11 was £12 million. Estimated 40, 000 awards allocated for in 2011-12 budget.

**Modern Apprenticeships** – SG contribution rates for MAs are dependent on age and level of study and range from £500 to £9000 per year of participation. SG spend in 2010-11 was £69 million. The 2011-12 budget has allocation for 25,000 individuals to be supported

**Activity Agreements** - £4 million has been made available by SG to support the national roll-out of Activity Agreements across all Scottish LAs in 2011-12.

# Putting Learners at the Centre

## RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

Please Note this form **must** be returned with your response to ensure that we handle your response appropriately

### 1. Name/Organisation

Organisation Name

Title Mr  Ms  Mrs  Miss  Dr  *Please tick as appropriate*

Surname

Forename

### 2. Postal Address

<input type="text"/>		
<input type="text"/>		
<input type="text"/>		
<input type="text"/>		
Postcode	Phone	Email

### 3. Permissions - I am responding as...

Individual / Group/Organisation

*Please tick as appropriate*

**(a)** Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site)?

*Please tick as appropriate*  Yes  No

**(b)** Where confidentiality is not requested, we will make your responses available to the public on the following basis

*Please tick ONE of the following boxes*

Yes, make my response, name and address all available

Yes, make my response available, but not my name and address

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

**(c)** The name and address of your organisation **will be** made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site).

Are you content for your **response** to be made available?

*Please tick as appropriate*  Yes  No

**(d)** We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

*Please tick as appropriate*  Yes  No



**The Scottish  
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