NOTICE OF MEETING

There will be a meeting of the Learning & Teaching and Student Services Committee on Tuesday 17 May 2016 at 1400 hours in G10, Aberdeen City Campus.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
Ms. K Anderson
Mr. D Anderson
Ms. A Bell
Ms. S Cormack
Mr. D Duthie (Chair)
Prof. J Harper
Ms. C Inglis
Ms. S Masson
Mr. R McGregor
Mr. D Russell
Ms. A Simpson
Mr. R Wallen
Ms. K Wetherall

IN ATTENDANCE
Mr. N Cowie, Vice Principal Business Services
Mr. J Davidson, Vice Principal Learning & Quality
Ms. E Hart, Vice Principal Human Resources
Ms. P May, Secretary to the Board of Management
Ms. P Kesson, Minute Secretary
Agenda
Meeting of 17 May 2016

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Minute of Previous Meeting
   2.1 Meeting of 15 March 2016 (paper enclosed)

3. Matters Arising from the Minute of the Previous Meeting (paper enclosed)

4. Principal’s Report (paper enclosed)

5. Matters for Decision
   5.1. Student Code of Conduct and Student Disciplinary Policy & Procedure (paper enclosed)

6. Matters for Discussion
   6.1. Quality Assurance Arrangements (paper enclosed)
   6.2. Regional Skills Strategy (paper enclosed)
   6.3. Opportunity North East (ONE) (paper enclosed)
   6.4. Commission on Widening Access (paper enclosed)
   6.5. Fees for Full-time Students from England, Wales and Northern Ireland (paper enclosed)
   6.6. Students’ Association Update (paper enclosed)

7. Papers for Information
   7.1. Student Activity AY2015-16 (paper enclosed)
   7.2. Key Quality Performance Indicators (paper enclosed)
   7.3. Student Support Funds (paper enclosed)
   7.4. North East Scotland College Students’ Association Conditions of Grant (paper enclosed)

8. Summation of Business and Date and Time of Next Meeting

Reserved Items of Business

9. Matters for Discussion
   9.1. Update on College Provision in North Aberdeenshire
   9.2. SCQF Level 7

10. Summation of Reserved Item of Business
Draft Minute of Meeting of 15 March 2016

The meeting commenced at 1412 hours.

PRESENTE K Anderson, D Anderson, A Bell, S Cormack, D Duthie (Chair), J Harper,
S Masson, R McGregor, A Simpson, R Wallen, K Wetherall
IN ATTENDANCE: J Davidson, E Hart, P May, P Kesson
OBSERVER: I McDougall

Mr Duthie welcomed Mr McGregor to his first meeting of the Committee, and welcomed Mr
McDougall to the Committee as an Observer.

1. Apologies for Absence
Apologies were received from C Inglis and D Russell.

2. Minute of previous Meeting
The Minute of Meeting held on 26 January 2016 was approved.

3. Matters arising from previous Meeting
The Committee noted a paper providing updated information on matters arising from the meeting
held on 26 January 2016.

Members congratulated staff on their success at the recent College Development Network
Marketing Awards Ceremony.

There were no other matters arising.

4. Report by the Principal
The Committee noted a report by the Principal providing information on: National Bargaining;
Foundation Apprenticeships; Two Year Review of the Merger; Open Day; Action Learning Project
on College Evaluation; and supporting the economy in Fraserburgh.

Mr Wallen provided updated information on developments relating to National Collective Bargaining
and forthcoming industrial action by the EIS Union.

5. Matters for Decision

5.1 Students’ Association Conditions of Grant
The Committee considered the Conditions of Grant which would apply to the Students’
Association following the recent agreement of a grant from the College to the Association.
Members noted that the Conditions of Grant are those which had previously applied in
the former Aberdeen College.

Ms Anderson and Ms Wetherall declared an interest in this item by virtue of their roles as
Presidents of the Students’ Association.

Mr Wallen reminded Members that the Association had the services of a full-time member
of College staff to assist them.

After some discussion it was agreed that the Conditions of Grant for the Students’
Association be adopted as proposed, subject to the inclusion of a requirement for the
Association to present quarterly financial statements to the Committee as part of their
regular updates.

Members requested that a copy of the updated Conditions of Grant is included, for
information, in the papers for the next meeting of this Committee.
5.2 Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Strategy
The Committee considered a paper providing information on a Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Strategy.

Mr McGregor declared an interest in this item due to his involvement in developing the Strategy.

Information was provided on the aims of the Strategy; rationale for the Strategy; Strategy Outline; and Strategy Development.

Members noted that the Strategy had been discussed by the College’s Learning and Teaching Development Committee, and by the Academic Board.

Members welcomed the development of the Strategy and approved the document as presented, subject to a minor amendment on page 2 to read “The specific objectives to achieve each aim are described below”.

5.3 Course Fee Policy
The Committee considered a revised version of the Course Fee Policy.

Members noted that the Policy had been the subject of discussion at the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held earlier in the day. Mr Wallen and Mr Harper briefed Members on the discussion which had taken place.

The Committee endorsed the Finance and General Purpose Committee’s request that Mr Wallen investigate the approach of other colleges to course fees for Rest of UK students and report back to a future meeting of the Committee.

Ms Bell left the meeting at this time.

6. Matters for Discussion

6.1 Promoting Enterprise and Entrepreneurship in Learning
The Committee considered and noted a paper providing information on the College’s approaches to developing Enterprise for AY2015-16.

It was noted that partnership working in relation to enterprise and entrepreneurship with RGU was highlighted as an action point at the recent joint Board Event.

6.2 Curriculum Planning Arrangements for AY2016-17
The Committee considered a paper providing information on the curriculum planning arrangements for AY2016-17.

Information was provided on the context of the arrangements; the background to curriculum planning in the College; curriculum priorities for the College in AY2016-17; and positioning the curriculum for the future.

Members noted the information provided in the paper.

Mr Davidson highlighted that the College is yet to receive its AY2016-17 activity target from the Scottish Funding Council but that staff were undertaking curriculum planning activities as best as they can under these circumstances.
6.3 Student Performance Indicators AY2014-15
The Committee considered a paper providing information on high level, student-related withdrawal and student success data for AY2014-15.

The Principal and Vice Principal Learning and Quality provided context to the tables of PI data included in the paper.

It was noted that the process of merger and post merger restructuring with loss of experienced staff through Voluntary Severance may have had some impact on performance – and that now that the merger is complete there was clear evidence that performance was already improving. It was also noted that student retention had in the past been negatively affected by the buoyancy of the regional economy (with students being offered employment mid-way through their studies).

It was also noted that comparison of performance between colleges could be misleading because of different approaches adopted to course design and the choice of end qualification.

6.4 Learner Progression – First Destinations and Progression Pathways
The Committee considered a paper providing information on the progression pathways of the College’s learners and their first destinations in AY2014-15.

Information was provided on the background to the College’s work; progression from NESCol: First Destination Statistics for FE and First Destination Statistics for HE; progression into University Degree Link programmes; and internal progression opportunities at NESCol.

In order to potentially improve response rates, the Students’ Association was requested to promote the completion of future First Destination Surveys to students.

In noting the paper the Committee asked Mr Davidson to investigate if those students who indicated that they are unemployed are from certain curriculum areas.

6.5 Corporate Parenting Plan
The Committee considered the College’s Corporate Parenting Plan 2016.

Members noted that although the Plan is updated every three years it will consistently be a live document.

6.6 Students’ Association Update
The Committee considered and noted a report from the two Presidents of the Students’ Association (SA).

Ms Anderson provided additional information on activities at the Fraserburgh Campus.

Members noted that a meeting of the Trustee Board will shortly take place to discuss the proposed 2-tier SA model to be implemented for AY2016-17.

Mr Wallen commended the Association on the completion of their Schedules, and commented that the Schedules were very detailed and provided reassurance that thorough arrangements are now in place.

In referring to matters of a disciplinary nature Mr Duthie cautioned the Association to be very clear on where the line is to be drawn between an investigation and a criminal investigation.
7. Papers for Information

7.1 Student Activity, AY2015-16
The Committee noted a report providing information on the current status of student activity for AY2015-16. It was noted that this paper was also considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee at its meeting earlier in the day.

Mr Davidson provided updated information to Members and said that, as of 14 March 2016, actual activity to date is 140,797 credits, exceeding the SFC target of 139,549 credits.

7.2 Key Quality Performance Indicators
The Committee noted a report providing information on key performance indicators relating to the Quality function.

Information was provided on: lesson observation; external verification visits; student engagement; complaints; and compliments and thanks.

Members noted the contents of the report and commented how pleasing it was to see the low number of complaints in relation to the total number of students. It was hoped that, going forward, there would be a decrease in the number of complaints in the bursary administration category.

Members requested that the central collation of compliments is highlighted to all College staff to encourage an increase in the capturing of this type of information.

7.3 Student Support Funds
The Committee noted a report providing information on amounts allocated for various support funds and comparative spend of AY2015-16 and AY2014-15.

Information was provided on general rules for bursary funds and for discretionary and childcare funds; Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Programme; disbursement of funds in AY2015-16; and SFC allocation AY2015-16.

Mr Milroy commented that he was aware of major issues with student support in other colleges.

Members noted that it should be possible to reduce the spend on bursaries for BYOD next year as the students who will be returning will not require funding for devices.

7.4 Regional Curriculum Mapping
Members noted and commended the creation of the curriculum maps for IT/Computing and Engineering. Mr Wallen advised that further curriculum maps are currently being prepared for Science, Care, Construction, Business, and Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy.

Mr Wallen reported that the Scottish Funding Council had commented on the usefulness of the maps. Members commented that the maps clearly demonstrated the comprehensive progression opportunities between the College and the two local universities. It was noted that the maps would be a helpful reference for a variety of purposes, including helping to inform course choices for school pupils and their parents.

Additional Item
Members agreed that the update to the Committee on Student Curriculum Activities should remain as a separate paper for information which is issued alongside the papers for each meeting.
8. Summation of Business and date of next Meeting
The next meeting of the Learning & Teaching and Student Services Committee is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 17 May 2016 at 1400 hours.

Reserved Item of Business

9. Matter for Discussion
9.1 Outreach Learning Centre
The Committee noted a paper providing information on the levels of activity in the College’s Outreach Centres including costs and income; together with discussions with Aberdeenshire Council officials. It was noted that this paper had also been considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee at its meeting earlier in the day.

Mr Wallen provided additional information on a proposal to relocate activity currently being delivered at the Macduff Learning Centre to a new facility based at Banff Academy. Members were advised that Mr Wallen had been invited to talk on the issue to a future meeting of the Area Committee for Macduff.

Mr Wallen advised that Mr Cowie is currently working with Council officials to discuss other possible arrangements for consideration.

The meeting concluded at 1545 hours.
Matters Arising from the Minute of the Previous Meeting

1 Introduction
1.1 This paper is to update the Committee on matters arising from the minute of the meeting of 15 March 2016.

2 Matters Arising
2.1 The following provide an update on matters discussed at the last meeting of the Committee:

4 Report by Principal
In relation to EIS industrial action taken on 17 March 2016, 53 lecturers out of the 304 currently employed by the College participated. Protocol Visiting Lecturers and other categories of staff, including instructors, were not involved in any supportive action. Students were not negatively affected by the action with cover provided for classes where needed.

As part of finalising the pay deal with the staff side negotiators, as a gesture of goodwill, an agreement was reached not to deduct pay from those who were on strike on 17 March. The College has taken the decision that in order that other staff who did come into work do not suffer any detriment by comparison with their colleagues who were on strike, all other staff (lecturers and support staff) who did not take part in the strike action will be entitled to an additional day’s leave this academic session. This additional day will be managed as TOIL.

5.1 Students’ Association Conditions of Grant
The updated Conditions of Grant will be discussed under Agenda Item 74.

5.2 Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Strategy
The Strategy was amended as requested and finalised, and is now available to all College staff on AbNet.

5.3 Course Fee Policy
At the last meeting of the Committee Mr Wallen was requested to investigate the approach of other colleges to course fees for Rest of UK students. A paper has been included for discussion under Agenda Item 6.5.

6.2 Curriculum Planning Arrangements for AY2016-17
At the time of writing the College is still awaiting its AY2016-17 activity target from the Scottish Funding Council. An announcement of the College’s funding and activity target for AY2016-17 is expected w/c 9th May.

6.4 Learner Progression – First Destinations and Progression Pathways
At the last meeting of the Committee Mr Davidson was asked to investigate if those students who indicated that they are unemployed are from certain curriculum areas.

Of the 388 students who indicated they were unemployed the percentage per School is listed below:

- 41% - Creative Industries, Computing and Business Enterprise
- 22.5% - Engineering, Science and Technology
- 36% - Service Industries
6.5 Corporate Parenting Plan
The Plan has been disseminated to all staff through Key Comms. Prior to its dissemination the Head of Student Services held a briefing and question session for key managers.

6.6 Students’ Association Update
The proposed 2-tier model endorsed by the Committee at its meeting on 26 January 2016 will be implemented for AY2016-17. At the time of writing, elections for sabbatical positions were underway with campaigning running from 29 April to 10 May 2016. The outcome of the elections will be reported to the Committee by the Regional Presidents under Agenda Item 6.6.

7.4 Regional Curriculum Mapping
Curriculum maps have now been prepared for the following areas:

- Art and Design
- Beauty Therapy
- Business
- Care
- Computing
- Construction
- Engineering
- Hairdressing
- Science
- Social Sciences
- Sport.

9.1 Outreach Learning Centre
This issue will be discussed further under Agenda Item 9.1.

3 Recommendation
3.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of this paper.

Rob Wallen
Principal
Report by the Principal

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

2. Visit by Chief Executive, 157 Group
   2.1. On 21 and 22 April 2016 the Chief Executive of the 157 Group visited the College’s Aberdeen City and Fraserburgh Campuses. Mr Pretty met with the Chair and with most of the Senior Management Team and with representatives of three of the College’s key partners.

   2.2. On 10 May a meeting will take place in Belfast of representatives of the four colleges which are members of the 157 Group but not in England – two from Wales, one from Northern Ireland and one from Scotland. The purpose is to identify commonality of interest in the three parts of the UK with devolved administrations.

3. Lecturers’ Salaries
   3.1. Following a ballot of its members that ended on 20 April 2016 the EIS announced that it had accepted the national pay offer. The key element of the offer was a pay uplift for 2015-16 and 2016-17 that amounted to a combined total of an average 2.5% of the average lecturer salary in the sector.

4. Student Achievement and Community Citizenship Awards
   4.1. The 13th Student Achievement and Community Citizenship Awards Ceremony was held on 05 May 2016 in Gate 63, the Aberdeen City Campus Training Restaurant. This year, 13 students received awards for outstanding achievement and five received awards for demonstrating exemplary citizenship skills. The Amanda Mills Award was presented by Amanda’s parents to Joyce McIntosh in recognition of Joyce’s outstanding achievement in Social Sciences. The History Society Shield was presented by Michael Head, Chair of Aberdeen History Society to Martin Guyan.

   4.2. The winners were announced by Mrs Caroline Inglis of the Board of Management and the prizes were presented by Mr Doug Duthie, Vice Chair of the Board of Management. Mr Rick MacLeod of Ede & Ravenscroft sponsored the prizes this year.

5. Recommendation
   5.1. It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of this report.

Rob Wallen
Principal
Student Code of Conduct and Student Disciplinary Policy & Procedure

1. Introduction
1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide the Committee with an opportunity to consider the updated Student Code of Conduct and Student Disciplinary Policy & Procedure.

2. Background
2.1 Attached at Appendices 1 and 2 are draft copies of the Student Code of Conduct and the Student Disciplinary Policy & Procedure.

2.2 These are intended to replace the existing Student Code of Commitment and Student Disciplinary Code and have been re-written to ensure that they reflect the College’s values, are consistent and that the Disciplinary Policy is in line with curriculum management structures.

3. Detail of Changes
3.1 There are now clear definitions of unacceptable behaviour and gross misconduct which are consistent across both documents.

3.2 Reference to the Prevent Duty has been incorporated.

3.3 The Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure has been updated in line with best practice and now provides clarity over each stage of the process. In this version, curriculum management, are involved in different levels of the process, culminating with the Director of Curriculum’s involvement in the formal process. This change of emphasis aims to give the Curriculum full ownership of, and engagement in, the process whilst retaining the overview of the Vice Principal HR as Chair of the Disciplinary Panel.

4. Next Steps
4.1 Following approval there will need to be awareness raising with Lecturers and Curriculum Managers to ensure a consistent approach.

4.2 Standard documentation will be finalised.

5. Recommendation
5.1 The Committee is asked to consider and, if so minded, approve the Student Code of Conduct and Student Disciplinary Policy & Procedure.

Rob Wallen  
Principal

Elaine Hart  
Vice Principal Human Resources
STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Students attending North East Scotland have a right to study and socialise in a safe, non-threatening environment. This Code of Conduct forms part of your learning agreement with the College and sets out the standards of behaviour expected.

It is supported by our values which apply to everyone who comes to the College to learn or work.

Our Values include:

**Commitment and Excellence**
- Understanding and responding to the needs of our students

**Empowerment and Engagement**
- Creating an environment where innovation and creativity are encouraged and can flourish
- Giving recognition and praise

**Respect and Diversity**
- Valuing the experience and talent of all.
- Treating others with dignity and respect
- Creating an accessible, inclusive learning and working environment
- Being fair, open and transparent to ensure a culture of mutual trust and integrity.

The Principal has final responsibility for the maintenance of good conduct by students. However, it is the responsibility of all staff to take positive steps to help students abide by this Code of Conduct and its meaning will be explained to all students at induction or their first session.

The Code of Conduct equally applies to any residential, study visits or work placements

**Failure to maintain the standards and behaviour set out in this code may lead to action under the Student Disciplinary Policy**

**Expectations of Students**

While attending College, it is expected that you will:

- Treat others with dignity and respect.
- Report inappropriate and unsafe behaviour.
- Behave in a respectful, professional and mature manner.
- Take pride in the College – keep all areas clean, tidy and free from litter.
• Attend all classes.
• Be punctual for all classes and bring essential equipment.
• Ensure that you meet agreed deadlines and submit work on time.
• Participate in all learning activities.
• Seek help when you need it and take up the support offered.
• Pay fees promptly.

Definitions of Unacceptable Behaviour and Gross Misconduct

In general terms, any failure to meet the requirements of this Code of Conduct is unacceptable.

The following are examples of what the College considers to be unacceptable behaviours and/or gross misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. It is not intended that this is an exhaustive list of such behaviours.

Unacceptable Behaviour

• Unacceptable conduct in class or in College
• Failure to follow reasonable instructions of staff
• Unacceptable language
• Deliberate failure to complete and submit work to deadline on a regular basis
• Poor timekeeping
• Breach of attendance guidelines
• Inappropriate use of computers or any other technological device
• Smoking, including e-cigarettes, anywhere other than in the designated area

Gross Misconduct

This is behaviour so serious that it could result in exclusion from College

• Bringing the college into disrepute
• Any form of bullying or discrimination
• Any form of physical, emotional or verbal threat
• Abusive, offensive, aggressive language or behaviour
• Any illegal activity whether carried out on college premises or not
• Participating in any way in actions which could reasonably be expected to be subject to provisions of counter-terrorism legislation
• Acts of violence
• Threatening behaviour
• Carrying of offensive weapons
• Actions that breach the College’s Health and Safety Policy
• Drug, solvent or alcohol possession or abuse
• Disruption to the learning of others
• Plagiarism
• Inappropriate use of IT including social media and cyber bullying
• Use of mobile devices to record images / voice of anyone without their knowledge or permission
• Wilful damage to property

In certain circumstances, a student may be sent home at the discretion of the Faculty Manager. This is not a formal suspension but a short term step to allow consideration of whether further action is appropriate or not.

Where the unacceptable behaviour is of a more serious nature (e.g. gross misconduct) the Faculty Manager may issue a precautionary suspension as part of the formal disciplinary process.

Support

If a student has any concerns, s/he should discuss them with their Guidance Tutor or subject lecturer in the first instance.

Further Information

Through Course Blackboards and Student Net, each student will have access to the following College policies:

• Acceptable Use Policy – Students
• Assessment & Verification Policy
• Bullying Policy
• Complaints Policy
• Student Code of Conduct
• Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
• Copyright for Students
• Data Protection for Students
• Environmental Policy Statement
• Environmental & Sustainability Policy
• Equality & Diversity Policy Staff and Students
• Information, Advice, Guidance & Support
• Social Media Guidelines
• Student Alcohol & Substance Misuse Policy
• Position statement on Extremism & Radicalisation

Approved by: LTSCC
SMT Sponsor: Vice Principal Human Resources
Date of version: March 2016
Responsibility for Implementation/Review: SMT/VP HR
Review date: March 2019
EIA Date: September 2015
STUDENT DISCIPLINARY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Introduction

North East Scotland College’s Vision is to “transform lives and support regional development” and we are committed to providing a learning and working environment which advances equality, diversity and inclusion and where everyone is respected, valued and supported.

This ethos is supported by our values which apply to everyone who comes to the College to learn or work.

Our Values include:

**Commitment and Excellence**
- Understanding and responding to the needs of our students

**Empowerment and Engagement**
- Creating an environment where innovation and creativity are encouraged and can flourish
- Giving recognition and praise

**Respect and Diversity**
- Valuing the experience and talent of all.
- Treating others with dignity and respect
- Creating an accessible, inclusive learning and working environment
- Being fair, open and transparent to ensure a culture of mutual trust and integrity.

The College therefore expects an acceptable level of behaviour and commitment by students relating to these values and specifically in relation to:

- Equality and Diversity
- Attitude to learning and study
- Health and Safety
- Respect for others including the College environment and facilities.

Our aim is to ensure that all students are provided with an accessible, safe and inclusive learning environment and are enabled to derive the maximum benefit from their study. Further details of the College’s expectations of you are provided in the Students’ Code of Conduct.

This Policy and Procedure therefore sets out the types of behaviour which are not acceptable, and the actions which may be taken as a result.

This Policy is separate from any procedure used to deal with issues of attendance and progress at College.
Scope

This Policy and Procedure applies to all enrolled students except for those on any agreed School/College link programme (the disciplinary responsibility here lies with the respective Local Authority).

Prevent Duty

Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on the College to have, in the exercise of its functions, due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This means that the College will have due regard to this duty in the application of this policy.

Unacceptable Behaviour

In general terms, any failure to meet the requirements of the Students’ Code of Conduct is unacceptable.

The following are examples of what the College considers to be unacceptable behaviours and/or gross misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. It is not intended that this is an exhaustive list of such behaviours.

- Unacceptable conduct in class or in College
- Failure to follow reasonable instructions of staff
- Unacceptable language
- Deliberate failure to complete and submit work to deadline on a regular basis
- Poor timekeeping
- Breach of attendance guidelines
- Inappropriate use of computers or any other technological device
- Smoking, including e-cigarettes, anywhere other than in the designated area.

Gross Misconduct

This is behaviour so serious that it could result in exclusion from College. Examples include (this list is not exhaustive):

- Bringing the college into disrepute
- Any form of bullying or discrimination
- Any form of physical, emotional or verbal threat
- Abusive, offensive, aggressive language or behaviour
- Any illegal activity whether carried out on college premises or not
- Participating in any way in actions which could reasonably be expected to be subject to provisions of counter-terrorism legislation
- Acts of violence
- Threatening behaviour
- Carrying of offensive weapons
- Actions that breach the College’s Health and Safety Policy
- Drug, solvent or alcohol possession or abuse
- Disruption to the learning of others
- Plagiarism
- Inappropriate use of IT including social media and cyber bullying
• Use of mobile devices to record images / voice of anyone without their knowledge or permission
• Wilful damage to property.

Disciplinary Procedures

Informal Process

The College will usually try to deal with unacceptable behaviour by informal methods and will only use the formal process when this proves unsuccessful or is inappropriate in the circumstances (e.g. an instance of gross misconduct.)

Stage 1

If a student’s behaviour does not reach the required standard, the relevant lecturer will discuss the problem with the student and agree an action plan for improvement within an appropriate timeframe.

Stage 2

If a student’s behaviour continues to be unacceptable, or where the unacceptable behaviour is of a more serious nature, this matter may be referred to the Curriculum and Quality Manager who will meet with the student to discuss the next steps which could include a further period to improve or referral to Stage 3 of the process.

In certain circumstances, a student may be sent home at the discretion of the Faculty Manager. This is not a formal suspension but a short term step to allow consideration of whether further action is appropriate or not.

Stage 3

If a student’s behaviour continues to be unacceptable, or where the unacceptable behaviour is of a more serious nature, The Faculty Manager may take one of the following actions:

(a) Following a meeting with the student issue an informal written warning explaining the nature of the unacceptable behaviour and actions agreed within a reasonable timescale to improve. The student should be informed that should there be no improvement this will lead to the instigation of the formal disciplinary process.

(b) Where the unacceptable behaviour is of a more serious nature (eg gross misconduct) the Faculty Manager will meet with the student and may issue them with a precautionary suspension if appropriate (see below). The matter will then move into the formal process.

Precautionary Suspension

Where appropriate a precautionary suspension may be imposed on a student by the Faculty Manager. Suspension is a neutral act and should only be imposed where the student presents a risk to the College’s staff, students or property or where the student’s presence in the College would inhibit a proper investigation of the alleged misconduct. The suspension should be of a short duration.

Where the seriousness of the incident justifies, Stage 1 or Stages 1 and 2 may be omitted.
Any investigation as part of the process should be completed in a reasonable timescale.

Formal Process

The Formal process is run by the relevant Director of Curriculum. The Director will review the evidence and may either:

- Remove the suspension and issue a First Formal Written Warning – there will be a right of appeal to the Vice Principal Human Resources against this First Formal Warning
- Refer the matter to the Disciplinary Committee.

Disciplinary Committee

The Disciplinary Committee will comprise: the Vice Principal Human Resources (or another member of the College Senior Management Team), who will act as Chairperson; two members of the College’s staff (unconnected with the alleged breach of discipline), including a member of the College’s Student Services Team; and one representative of the Students’ Association. Three constitutes a quorum, and the Chairperson has a vote. Cases will be decided by a simple majority of those present and voting (the Chairperson will have a casting vote if necessary).

Conduct of Hearings

Prior to the hearing

The Student:

- Will receive written notification of the date, time and place of the hearing at least 5 working days before the date of the hearing
- Will be provided with, in advance of the hearing, any material evidence the Disciplinary Committee will be considering at the hearing (suitably redacted if necessary)
- May choose not to attend the hearing in which case it will be held in her/his absence and the Committee will only be able to rely on the evidence available
- May submit a written statement containing matters which s/he wishes to be discussed, whether or not s/he chooses to attend the hearing.

At the hearing

- The Student may be accompanied by someone for support, this may be a relative/carer or friend or representative of the Students’ Association.

NB: Formal legal representation is not permitted, and an accompanying friend cannot be a qualified Solicitor or Advocate.

- The Director of Curriculum will present the evidence that led to the formal action being taken and may call witnesses as applicable.
The Student will have the opportunity to present their version of events and any mitigating circumstances. Subject to the agreement of the Disciplinary Committee they can question witnesses called by others.

Disciplinary Measures

In the event of the Disciplinary Committee deciding that the student’s behaviour has been unacceptable, it can decide to impose any of the following disciplinary measures:

- A Final Written Warning notifying the student of the behaviour which is unacceptable and the possible consequences of repeated unacceptable behaviours.
- Exclusion from the College.

After the hearing - the student:

- Will receive written notification of the outcome of a hearing within 10 working days following the hearing.

Right of Appeal

- The Student has the right to appeal to the Principal against the decision of the Disciplinary Committee. The appeal must be sent in writing within 10 working days of the date of notification of the results of the hearing. The only permitted grounds of appeal are that the process by which the hearing was conducted was flawed, or that the penalty imposed was disproportionate. The Principal (or in her/his absence, another member of the Senior Management Team who has not been involved previously) will consider the appeal.

- There is no right to a further hearing, although the Principal may request that a person connected with the incident or the decision submit a written report or provide oral evidence.

- In the event that oral evidence is requested the student and his or her companion will be entitled to be present while the evidence is given.

- The Principal, or his/her nominated representative, will respond within 10 working days.

- With the exception of the time allowed to lodge an appeal, timescales given in this Code are for guidance and may be varied if appropriate.
Student Disciplinary Records

Any records of hearings or of disciplinary action taken against the student will be retained by the College under confidential cover and will not be provided to any third parties except where the College is required to comply with statutory and other legal provisions.

Disciplinary decisions will be communicated in confidence to relevant College staff.

Reasonable Adjustments

If you have difficulty at any stage of this procedure because of a disability or other protected characteristic, you should notify the relevant member of staff as soon as possible.

Status: Draft
Approved by: LTSCC
SMT Sponsor: Vice Principal Human Resources
Date of version: March 2016
Responsibility for Implementation/Review: SMT/VP HR
Review date: March 2019
EIA Date: September 2015
Quality Assurance Arrangements

1. **Introduction**
   1.1. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update to the Committee on the Quality Improvement and Assurance arrangements of North East Scotland College (NESCol).

2. **Background**
   2.1. The overall responsibility for leading, developing and implementing quality arrangements for NESCol resides with the College’s Vice Principal – Learning & Quality.

   2.2. Since the start of AY2015-16 much work has been undertaken to further develop and embed quality into the curriculum.

3. **Quality Improvement and Assurance Committee (QIAC)**
   3.1. The QIAC meets on a monthly basis and members of this committee continue to build on best quality practice including:

   - A course approval process;
   - A robust, self-evaluation process;
   - Themed quality audits;
   - Lesson observations;
   - Internal verification;
   - Student feedback mechanisms;
   - Complaints handling;
   - Enhanced PI analysis.

   3.2. The work of the QIAC continues to play a key role as it seeks to evolve quality assurance and improvement practice in order to improve, year-on-year, student experiences and student outcomes.

   3.3. Some of the QIAC’s on-going quality projects are noted below:

   3.3.1. Student Retention and Progression – In AY2014-15 the College’s Key Performance Indicators [KPI’s] was 62% compared to the national average of 64%. A key area of focus for AY2015-16 is focusing on both student withdrawal and progression.

   3.3.2. SQA Quality Framework – SQA conducted a systems visit during AY2014-15 and detailed feedback was given with some recommendations to take forward into AY2015-16. A follow up visit took place on 07 March 2016 to review progress against the recommendations. The auditor commented that the College had made significant progress since the initial development visit.

   3.3.3. Proposed Future QIAC Activity - Whilst work continues on several quality assurance and improvement approaches the QIAC has also identified additional quality-related projects for AY2015-16. These include:

   - The implementation of a revised approach to students’ inclusiveness, equality and diversity through the College’s newly-convened Equality Strategy Group;
   - A review of lesson observation practice;
   - A review of digital practice and the development of Technology Enhanced Learning across all centres;
   - The deployment of the Quality Team’s Senior Lecturers (Quality Development) to better support quality improvement practice in curriculum teams.
The following section of this report documents some of the outcomes that have emanated from the quality approaches adopted and implemented over the previous year.

4. Quality Improvement and Assurance Arrangements – Outcomes

4.1. Lesson Observation
In the current academic year to date there have been 73 observations carried out by staff from the Quality Team – 60 College staff and 15 Protocol staff were observed. In addition, Protocol carried out a total of 20 lesson observations as part of their quality process. As part of TQFE qualifications 14 observations have been carried out by the CPD Team.

The results of observation undertaken this year indicate that the quality of learning and teaching remains high and that excellent relationships between staff and students exist.

4.2 Student Focus Groups
To date, 39 scheduled student focus groups have been carried out in AY2015-16. Focus groups were undertaken on the agreed themes of General Course, Timetabling and BYOD [Bring your Own Device]. Individual actions were identified and allocated to appropriate individuals. No major issues were identified. The vast majority of feedback confirmed learner satisfaction with their College experience. Feedback to learners is recorded and tracked.

4.3 Themed Internal Quality Audits
19 planned internal quality audits have been completed to date, 8 of which related to compliance with internal verification procedures. Revisions to internal verification tracking systems and documentation continue to be implemented. As a result, the quality of the documentation and internal verification procedures in place was commented upon positively by a significant number of external verifiers.

4.4 Student Satisfaction Surveys
The student satisfaction survey is completed in two parts, part one in January/February and part two in April/May. For AY2015-16 response rates were just over 4,000 for the First Impressions Survey. At the time of writing, the second part of the Survey has been completed and the results will be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

4.5 Complaints Management
Responses to complaints carry specific deadlines relating to their categorisation of seriousness. Across all centres the number of complaints recorded to date for AY2015-16 is 100. This compares to 117 from the same period last academic year. Of these, one complaint has been referred to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO).

4.6 Self-evaluation Reports
A rigorous approach to our self-evaluation process is being carried out in AY2015-16 as a result of the Action Learning Project. In addition, the Senior Management Team meet with each of the curriculum schools three times a year with the focus on improving Key Performance Indicators.

4.7 Approval and Validation
In the current academic year to date there have been no instances of issues being raised by awarding bodies with regard to approvals. 46 programme/unit change submissions were considered by the College’s Curriculum Approval Panel (CAP) throughout the year with almost all being satisfactorily concluded within the academic year.

5 Recommendation
5.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the information provided in this paper.

Rob Wallen    John Davidson
Principal    Vice Principal Learning & Quality
Regional Skills Strategy

1. **Introduction**
   1.1. The purpose of this paper is to give the Committee information on the Regional Skills Strategy.

2. **Background**
   2.1. In August 2014 Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future (ACSEF) agreed to commission a Regional Skills Strategy (RSS) to build on the work of the Regional Skills Assessment (RSA) and to tie in with the Regional Economic Strategy (RES).

   2.2. A steering group was established to oversee the process, including representatives of the College, the two local universities and the two local authorities as well as Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce. It was chaired by the College Principal.

   2.3. Skills Development Scotland led the process of developing the RSS, but the detailed work was undertaken by Training and Employment Research Unit (TERU) of the University of Glasgow.

   2.4. A version of the report was agreed by the steering group and then adopted by ACSEF at its final meeting.

   2.5. It was however intended that the RSS would follow, rather than precede, the RES – and as there had been some delay in completing the latter, the publication of the RSS was delayed too.

   2.6. At about this point there was a sudden drop in the price of a barrel of oil and as a result before the document could be published some revision was needed to reflect the changed economic circumstances.

   2.7. A revised version was produced in March 2016. This is attached as Appendix 1 with some comments from the College. The most noticeable omission from a College point of view was the lack of reference to the Developing the Young Workforce initiative in general, and specifically the work being taken forward locally to develop foundation apprenticeships so that young people could begin while still at school to develop specific skills relevant to particular industries and careers as well as the generic skills relevant to any workplace.

3. **Current Position**
   3.1. A meeting of the steering group has been scheduled for 13 May 2016 to discuss the revised draft and to agree a final text.

   3.2. If the final text is available in time it will be circulated to members in advance of the meeting.

4. **Recommendation**
   4.1. It is recommended that the Committee consider the information in this paper.
Aberdeen City and Shire Regional Skills Strategy and Action Plan

March 2016
CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction
In recent years, regional and national partners have undertaken a body of research to develop a picture of the economic and skills landscape across the Aberdeen City & Shire region. This previous work provided some understanding and acceptance of the skills challenges faced by the region. However it highlighted the need to draw together and validate the currency of this evidence, research and knowledge and, crucially, turn this into a focussed action plan to galvanise partners in responding to the current and future skills needs of the region.

SDS and Aberdeen City & Shire Economic Future (ACSEF) partners agreed to work together to develop a skills strategy and action plan for the region, to better coordinate and align skills investment in the region. This approach was agreed at an ACSEF meeting in August 2014, with ACSEF and SDS co-funding the development of the document. Work began in March 2015, following the appointment of the Training and Employment Research Unit (TERU) at the University of Glasgow to provide contracted support around this.

This document contains the Regional Skills Strategy and Action Plan (RSS) for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire 2015-2020 and clearly sets out the priorities for the region along with a concise plan for collectively achieving the objectives set out in the strategy. Looking to the future, the RSS will guide regional partners in aligning their skills investment to ensure that the supply of skills in the region can meet current and anticipated demand from employers.

1.2 Wider Context
The document is cognisant of the wider regional and national context within which it was developed and how these factors may impact on its successful implementation and delivery. The following issues were and will continue to be at the fore:

- **Dominance of the Oil & Gas** – Central to the region’s economic strength is the Oil & Gas industry and its supply chain. However, the drop in oil prices in early 2015 has resulted in significant changes in the industry and uncertainty into the future with the Oil and Gas UK Activity Survey 2015 estimating a 15% fall in jobs the period predating the oil price fall (in industry that supports 375,000 jobs across the UK). Based on tracking of publicly available data Scottish Enterprise estimate that around 8,000 employees have either been made redundant or are at risk.¹

• **The importance of other key sectors** – In developing the strategy, partners wanted to build on existing strengths in the region whilst also supporting the growth aspirations in key sectors for the regional economy. The need to understand and meet the skills needs of all of these sectors is critical to the region due to the roles these different sectors play in helping to ensure the region is a competitive and attractive place to live, work visit and invest in.

• **Policy** – This strategy was developed at a time in which there was significant activity at a regional level including the development of the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) for the North East and the drafting of Aberdeen City Region Deal. There were close links with the development of the RSS through the ACSEF board to ensure alignment. There has also been subsequent organisational change with the formation of Opportunity North East (ONE).

• **Place Competitiveness** – It would be remiss of the RSS to ignore the wider issues of place competitiveness which need to be – and are currently being – addressed in the region. This includes external perceptions of the region, the relatively high cost of living, a limited supply of affordable housing, potential infrastructure constraints and high relative wages in Oil & Gas. Although not issues which can be addressed through the RSS, and indeed they are referenced in the RES and the Aberdeen City Deal Region, they have the potential to impact on the region’s ability to attract and retain the skills it needs. Therefore, it is critical to recognise the importance of these issues and maximise linkages with other activity where appropriate.

### 1.3 Purpose

The RSS aims to bring regional and national partners together, ensuring that there is a **structured, co-ordinated and strategic approach** to the design, development and implementation of the skills system in Aberdeen City and Shire. In turn, this will **maximise the effectiveness and impact of partner investment in skills in the region**. The RSS clearly articulates:

- The RES vision for Aberdeen City and Shire;
- The key **strategic objectives** that the RSS wants to achieve.
- An **Action Plan** which sets out **four priority action areas**, each containing a small number of focussed and specific actions which will be instrumental in delivering the strategic objectives.

In discussions with partners and employers across the region, it became clear that the strategy needs to adopt a pragmatic approach and that this will be key in addressing skills issues in the region. Essentially, the region requires a skills strategy which:

- Has the needs of employers, and the economy at its heart through the development of a more effective demand side response;
- Reflects and articulates the range of existing skills investment already taking place in the region;
Draft Final Regional Skills Strategy (RSS) and Action Plan

- Focuses on filling gaps in the skills system as well as building connections between different parts of this system;
- Highlights the need for additional or transformational responses that will support the ambitions of the partners;
- Contains a range of different actions, some which are new and ambitious and some which are focussed on better coordinating and aligning existing skills investment by key partners across the region; and
- Is built on an in-depth understanding of Aberdeen City and Shire’s comparative advantage, its key employment sectors and the opportunities available to the region. This needs to engage a wide range of stakeholders across public, private and third sector.

Given the importance of the oil and gas sector and the consequences of the downturn and its potential for ongoing cross-cutting impact on the region, demands that the RSS has the capacity to deal with a changing situation. This requires a commitment to further consideration and review going forward.

1.4 Strategic Alignment

The RSS supports the RES for Aberdeen City and Shire. The RES provides an economic investment plan around infrastructure, innovation, inclusive economic growth and internationalisation that builds from a vision of a region that:

- Is known globally as having a strategic advantage from oil and gas and related industries;
- Is maximising economic recovery and exploration activity, supported by innovation and technological developments and infrastructure improvements;
- Is capitalising on the region’s natural heritage, quality of life and a broadened economic base through growth and development in food and drink, agriculture and fishing, tourism, life sciences, business, financial and professional services and creative industries;
- Over the longer term will have sustained and secured the well being of the city, surrounding region and its people, delivering a more balanced and resilient economy and achieved inclusive economic growth.

The RSS needs to **meet the short to medium term needs of employers, individuals, and the economy** of Aberdeen City and Shire whilst also **developing the skills system so that it will produce and sustain a world class workforce for the region over the longer term**. The RSS is set out in Figure 1.1 and is supported by an Action Plan set out in Chapter 5.
Figure 1.1. RSS for Aberdeen City and Shire

REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY

REGIONAL SKILLS STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN TO SUPPORT THE RES

Meeting the short to medium term needs of employers, individuals and the economy

Developing the skills system

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1
To co-ordinate and align more effectively the skills investment in the region

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2
To engage employers more effectively as active participants in the skills system

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3
To deliver more skills development in the workplace

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4
To develop the skills system to better meet the future needs of the economy and respond to change

AGREED PRIORITY ACTION AREAS WITH SUPPORTING SPECIFIC ACTIONS

1. Co-ordinating and aligning skills investment
2. Securing deep and sustained employer engagement in the skills system
3. Developing and enhancing skills in the workplace
4. Developing skills for the future
1.5 How was the strategy developed?
A steering group was established to inform and guide the development of the strategy and action plan. The project steering group included a range of partners with both regional and national remits: Aberdeen City Council; Aberdeenshire Council; Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce; Department for Work and Pensions; North East Scotland College; Robert Gordon University; Scottish Funding Council; Scottish Enterprise; Skills Development Scotland; and The University of Aberdeen.

The RSS and action plan development process involved a number of key stages:

- **Baseline statement**: This involved drawing together existing data, research and strategies to give a snapshot of Aberdeen City & Shire’s current economic and skills landscape.

- **Employer consultations**: A series of consultations through workshops and 1:1 interviews with employers in sectors identified by partners as important to the region. These interviews were key in identifying a range of skills issues, some of which are cross-cutting and others which are more sector-specific.

- **Stakeholder engagement**: The consultants also engaged with a number of stakeholders who have a role to play in delivering skills throughout the region.

- **Drafting the strategy and action plan**: A draft strategy was produced and shared with the steering group then followed up with an action planning workshop, attended by the steering group, to refine the draft strategy and flesh out the action plan in more detail. A final draft document was then produced which incorporated feedback from steering group partners.

1.6 Structure of this document
This skills strategy and action plan for Aberdeen City & Shire sets out a shared understanding of:

- The current economic and skills landscape in the region;
- The current skills challenges facing the region;
- The picture of current provision in the region; and
- An action plan which sets out the collective response to the skills issues identified in the strategy.
CHAPTER 2 – A Snapshot of the Labour Market in Aberdeen City & Shire

2.1 Employment

In 2014, there were 297,600 jobs in the region an increase of 5.2% from 282,900 in 2013\(^2\). Figure 2.1 shows the breakdown of employment by broad industrial sector and shows above average shares of employment in sectors commonly allied to the oil and gas industry including Professional, scientific and technical (13.3% versus 6.6%), Mining, quarrying and utilities (11.7% versus 2.9%) and Manufacturing (9.3% versus 7.7%). However the region has a below average share of employment in Finance and Insurance (0.7% compared to 3.5%), Public Administration and Defence (3.9% compared to 6.0%) and Retail (8.2% compared to 10%).

Figure 2.1 Employment by Industry Sector (2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AC&amp;S</th>
<th></th>
<th>Scotland</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry &amp; fishing</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>37,150</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining, quarrying and utilities</td>
<td>34,775</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>71,200</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>27,600</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>186,500</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>15,450</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>137,000</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor trades</td>
<td>4,850</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>43,625</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale</td>
<td>8,700</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>73,600</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>24,375</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>244,575</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport and Storage</td>
<td>12,950</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>101,050</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation &amp; food services</td>
<td>19,575</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>174,925</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information and communication</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>61,025</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Insurance</td>
<td>2,185</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>86,075</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property</td>
<td>3,175</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>26,625</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific and technical</td>
<td>39,550</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>159,675</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business administration and support services</td>
<td>20,925</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>194,625</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration and defence</td>
<td>11,750</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>146,600</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>18,675</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>190,075</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>36,477</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>402,250</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, recreation, entertainment and other services</td>
<td>9,375</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>100,550</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: BRES 2014

Figure 2.2 focuses in on Scotland’s growth sectors and shows that overall, Aberdeen City & Shire makes a strong contribution – accounting for 15.8% of jobs across Scotland’s growth sectors. Of particular note is that the energy growth sector (due to the dominance of oil and gas) in Scotland is highly concentrated, with 58.2% based in the region, with 46.1% of these in Aberdeen City and 12.1% in Aberdeenshire\(^3\). When

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\(^2\) SDS (2016) Aberdeen City and Shire Skills Assessment.
compared against the Scotland average of 2.8% employment in the sector, the importance of the sector to the region is clear representing 17.3% of employment in Aberdeen City and 7.6% in Aberdeenshire.  

Figure 2.2 Employment in Scotland’s Growth Sectors, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Aberdeen City and Shire</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
<th>ACS as % of Scotland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creative Industries (including digital)</td>
<td>6,300</td>
<td>71,800</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy (including renewables)</td>
<td>41,900</td>
<td>72,000</td>
<td>58.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Business Services</td>
<td>27,300</td>
<td>226,700</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and drink</td>
<td>16,600</td>
<td>119,100</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Sciences</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>16,900</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>196,000</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Growth Sectors</td>
<td>111,100</td>
<td>702,500</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) 2014

However whilst the Energy sector is a driver of productivity and employment within the region and saw jobs growth of 10,000 in the period 2009 to 2014, there was also increase in Food and Drink (+1,000), Tourism (+1,200) and Life sciences (+200).  

Following the onset of recession, the region’s economy remained buoyant and even experienced growth in employment, in direct contrast to the Scottish picture. Between 2009 and 2014, the number of jobs increased by just over 25,000 (9.4%) compared with growth of 1.3% for Scotland. This was driven by particularly strong growth in Mining, quarrying and utilities (+8,000), Professional, Scientific & Technical (+6,300), Manufacturing (+4,300) and Business Administration and Support Services (+3,600). However, the most recent data does not show how recent developments in the Oil & Gas sector have affected overall employment in the region.

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5 All sectors identified as key to the region in the ACSEF strategy.
2.2 Demographics

In recent years (2004-2014), Aberdeen City & Shire has seen an increase in population which has outpaced the Scottish average – increasing by 47,000 (11%), considerably greater than the rate of population growth across Scotland (5%). A significant proportion of this growth has been those of working age, again at a greater rate than the Scottish average.

Figure 2.3. Change in population (2004 – 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AC&amp;S</th>
<th></th>
<th>Scotland</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-15</td>
<td>2,516</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-26,464</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-24</td>
<td>5,612</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>30,303</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-44</td>
<td>10,667</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>-60,414</td>
<td>-4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>7,150</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>109,708</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>7,986</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>67,005</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>13,049</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>143,162</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Age Population</td>
<td>31,145</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>146,602</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>46,980</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>263,300</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: General Register Office for Scotland Mid-Year Population Estimates

Looking to the future, population growth is projected to remain consistently strong over the coming decade with anticipated population growth of 9.1%, more than double that of Scotland at 4%.

2.3 Supply of skills

Aberdeen City & Shire has a fairly self contained labour market, with the vast majority (94%) of the region’s jobs being taken by people living in the region.\(^6\) Given the small number of in-commuters, upskilling the region’s current and future working population must be a priority for skills development in the City & Shire.

In addition, the labour market is also fairly tight, with high levels of employment and low levels of unemployment. Figure 2.4 shows the employment rate in the region to be at 81% in 2014/15 which is considerably higher than the Scottish rate of 76%. The region also has a lower rate of unemployment at 3.1% against the Scotland figure of 4.4%.

\(^6\) 2011 Census Travel to Work data
Table 2.4  Employment Status of Working Age Population (2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>AC&amp;S</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Employment</td>
<td>265,500</td>
<td>81.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>10,200</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Inactive – Want a Job</td>
<td>18,500</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Inactive – Not Want Job</td>
<td>38,600</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Age Population</td>
<td>327,200</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Population Survey October-September 2015

2.4 Qualifications

The region performs strongly in terms of its qualification profile against the national average. A smaller proportion of the working age population have no qualifications (6% compared to 9%). A greater proportion (45%) also has higher level qualification (SCQF Level 7-12) when compared with the national average of 35%.

Table 2.5. Qualifications of Working Age Population (2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>AC&amp;S</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Qualifications</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Qualifications</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCQF 1-4</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCQF 5</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCQF 6</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCQF 7-12</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5 Occupational Profile

The occupational profile of people working in Aberdeen City & Shire shows that the main occupations which people from Aberdeen City & Shire work in are professional (23% compared with 20% nationally) and associate professional and technical (14% compared with 13% nationally). The region also has above average proportion of people working in skilled trades, 12% compared with 11% nationally.
Figure 2.6. Employment by Occupation (2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>AC&amp;S</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Scotland</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Number</strong></td>
<td>%</td>
<td><strong>Number</strong></td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers and Senior Officials</td>
<td>22,500</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>227,000</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>60,100</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>505,500</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professional and Technical</td>
<td>35,900</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>333,500</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and Secretarial</td>
<td>29,600</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>275,400</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Trades</td>
<td>31,100</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>289,900</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring, Leisure and Other Service</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>250,800</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and Customer Service</td>
<td>19,600</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>19,600</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant, Process and Machine Operatives</td>
<td>14,300</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>14,300</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>29,600</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>29,600</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>297,600</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>2,540,200</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Population Survey 2015

2.6 Linking Supply and Demand

Despite the relatively highly qualified working age population in the region, employers in Aberdeen City & Shire have experienced challenges in recruiting the skills they need. In general, employers in the region are more likely to have recruited for staff in the last 2-3 years (this includes school leavers). However, employers in the region are more likely to report that Aberdeen City & Shire school leavers are less well prepared for the world of work (60% compared with 65% nationally) but find University graduates to be better prepared (89% compared with 89% nationally).

Difficulties recruiting can clearly be seen with higher proportions of employers having a current vacancy, having a hard-to-fill vacancy and having a skills shortage vacancy the national average. These all reinforce the fact that Aberdeen City & Shire has a tight labour market.

Amongst the existing workforce, employers are more likely to report a skills gaps. Set against the 7% of the workforce with skills gaps, by occupation skills gaps are most apparent in:

- Caring, leisure and other services (12% of Aberdeen City and Shire employment; 6% Scotland).
- Sales and customer service (10% of Aberdeen City and Shire employment; 7% Scotland).
- Associate professionals (8% of Aberdeen City and Shire employment; 5% Scotland).
## Figure 2.7. Recruitment, Vacancies and Skills Gaps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ACS</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recruitment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% establishments that have recruited in past 2-3 years</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% establishments that have recruited anyone to first job on leaving Scottish school, college or university in past 2-3 years</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work-Readiness of Scottish Education Leavers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% establishments believing recruits from school well or very well prepared</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% establishments believing recruits from college well or very well prepared</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% establishments believing recruits from university well or very well prepared</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vacancies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% establishments with a current vacancy</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% establishments with a hard-to-fill vacancy</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% establishments with a skills shortage vacancy</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills Gaps</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% establishments with skills gaps</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills gaps as a % of the workforce</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: UKCES Employer Skills Survey 2013 (in Aberdeen City and Shire Regional Skills Assessment 2016)*
3. THE SKILLS CHALLENGES FACING EMPLOYERS

3.1 Introduction
The RSS sets out the skills challenges facing employers across key sectors of the region's economy. These are drawn from the existing evidence base at a national level from published sources, at a regional level drawing on the work of partners including local authorities and the Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce and are supported by local employers’ views gathered through workshops and interviews with employers. Collating and reviewing the evidence base highlighted some inconsistencies and gaps, particularly in relation to detailed information around skills shortages and gaps. To support the effective implementation of the RSS this needs to be addressed going forward.

The skills challenges faced by employers in the region can be categorised into **cross-cutting skills issues** that impact on a number of different sectors and **sector specific skills issues**. It is important to note that many of the skills challenges faced by employers in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire are perceived, at least in part, to have their roots in wider economic issues including:

- Wage pressure from the Oil and Gas sector which makes it difficult for employers in other sectors to compete to secure staff in the first instance and to retain them over the longer term, although this is likely to change over time as the result of the recent downturn in the sector.
- The high cost of living in the region (particularly in Aberdeen), with high house prices, which creates challenges for employers in attracting and retaining talent.
- An inadequate transport infrastructure that hinders the operation of the labour market in Aberdeen City and Shire particularly for employers north of the City struggling to attract staff who would need to commute in from the south of the Shire, and vice versa.

3.2 Cross-cutting Skills Issues
Cross-cutting skills issues affect the majority of industry sectors and highlight specific skills shortages and gaps, constraints on the supply of labour available to employers, difficulties around understanding the skills infrastructure and the additional challenges faced by those located in rural or peripheral areas.

3.2.1 Specific skills shortages and gaps
**ICT and digital skills capability**

- There is a strong message from employers across all sectors that ICT and digital skills capability is an increasingly important skills requirement in the work place, for both existing staff and new employees. There is limited information and communications technology (ICT) skills and digital skills capability. Employers report both skills gaps amongst existing employees and skills shortages when seeking to recruit. A quarter of Aberdeen and Grampian businesses report skill shortages in computer literacy and ICT

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7 Research by Design (2014) *Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce Report*
Soft skills

- These were identified across all industries. Soft skills are particularly important for those in customer facing roles to deliver a high quality service. Communication skills are considered the most important skill for businesses by 90% of member businesses of the Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce. 20% reported skill shortages in this area, with a further 16% reporting skill shortages in customer services.\(^8\).

Professional and Technical Skills

- Skills shortages in professional and technical occupations are reported across all sectors.\(^9\)
- The demand for high level skills (at Level 4 and above, required particularly by managers, professionals and associate professionals) is increasing over time, with the total share of employment in these categories projected to rise from 42% to 46% by 2022.\(^10\) Access to high level skills, and particularly those relevant to the current and futures jobs market, are vital to enable organisations to maximise their performance, but employers report significant challenges in recruiting and retaining individuals with these high level skills in the region.

Leadership and Management Skills

- Strong leadership and management skills are a requirement for driving business growth and effective succession planning. Employers reported challenges attracting and retaining staff for senior positions. 38% of Aberdeen and Grampian businesses report skill shortages around leadership and management skills, which are significantly more important to larger businesses than micro/small businesses.\(^12\)

Recruitment of teachers and lecturers

- Difficulties are reported in recruiting teachers, college and university lecturers. School, colleges and universities struggle to recruit across a number of areas key to supporting the regional economy, with particular challenges in STEM subjects, engineering and modern languages.

3.2.2 Constraints on the supply of labour

In a tight labour market any constraints on the supply of labour present a challenge to employers as this reduces the pool of available labour.

- There is a gender imbalance across sectors which needs to be addressed. The perception that some industries, particularly engineering and construction, are male oriented discourages females from considering them as options. Conversely 84% of the social service workforce are female.\(^13\)

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\(^{8}\) Ibid.
\(^{9}\) Aberdeen City Council (2015) Sector Skill Needs Audit
\(^{10}\) UKCES (2014) Working Futures 2012-2022
\(^{11}\) UKCES and Universities UK (2014) Forging Futures: Building High Level Skills Through University and Employer Collaboration
\(^{12}\) Research by Design (2014) Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce Report
Given the relative strength of the regional economy, the unemployed in the region are more likely to fall into the category of ‘furthest from the labour market’, and difficult to engage because of their multiple and complex needs. Nonetheless with the right support they represent a potential pool of labour.

3.2.3 Understanding the skills infrastructure

- There is a perception that from an employers’ perspective the skills funding and supply landscape is overly complex, difficult to understand and requires de-cluttering. A lack of understanding of the skills infrastructure makes it difficult for employers to access appropriate training support customised to their needs.

3.2.4 Specific challenges for employers in rural and peripheral locations.

A rural or peripheral location serves to exacerbate the skills challenges faced by employers. These areas typically have low density populations and employers find it hard to recruit from both the local and wider population.

- Regional research evidence identifies\(^{14}\):
  - Skills shortages across the land-based environmental sector which demands a diverse range of rural skills. There is also limited awareness amongst young people of the types and diversity of roles in land-based environmental sector and the opportunities that it offers.
  - The need for training to maximise the use and value of technological developments. Although the sector’s workforce is highly skilled this is often developed through non-accredited training methods rather than fully accredited qualifications.
  - Barriers to training around its cost, access to funding, location, flexibility and relevance.

- Local employers report:
  - Skills shortages across all levels in land-based operations, but particularly multi-skilled hand skills and technician skills.
  - An ageing population across land based industries coupled with poor perceptions of the industry amongst young people.
  - Challenges around staff training for employers based in more geographically remote areas because they need to release staff to travel to as well as attend training. This presents a particular problem to small and micro businesses. Employers will only engage in skills training if there is a business case.

\(^{14}\) Scottish Land & Estates (2014) Grampian & Cairngorms National Park Rural Skills Audit
3.3 Sector Specific Skills Issues

Drawing on evidence from published statistics, research reports and employer views gathered in workshops and interviews\(^{15}\) a range of sector specific issues can be identified for key sectors important to the regional economy. Partners identified these sectors as Oil and Gas, Food and Drink, Tourism, Health and Social Care, Business and Financial Services, ICT Digital and Chemical and Life Sciences.

### 3.3.1 Oil and Gas

Figure 3.1 highlights skills issues in oil and gas identified through the existing desk based evidence base.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Research Evidence</th>
<th>Skills Shortages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shortage of technology-specific experienced workers(^{16})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Design engineers, mechanical engineers, engineering and professional engineering occupations(^{17})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Mid-career, onshore roles, including design engineering, subsea and drilling engineering, project management and geosciences(^{18}).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Senior-level positions within Technical Safety, Drilling, Geosciences and Business Support(^{19})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• But a changing situation brought about by a downturn in the sector(^{20})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Fewer skills shortages reported in the last 12-18 months; however 70% of companies still experience recruitment difficulties, particularly in relation to senior roles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Research Evidence</th>
<th>Skills Shortages.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• EY research in 2014 shows(^{22})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Nearly three-quarters of Aberdeen based companies report some skills shortages, compared with around half of those based elsewhere in the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>These difficulties are faced by both large companies and SMEs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

15 Partners determined that conducting additional employer consultations in oil and gas would add no value in terms of identifying skills issues given the extent of the existing research base.
16 SDS (2105) Skills Investment Plan for Scotland’s Energy Sector
17 Opito (2014), *Upstream O&G Industry LMI Report*
18 Oil and Gas UK (2013), *Economic Report*
19 Ernst Young (2014), *Fuelling the next generation*
20 ibid
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
Support and services (e.g. catering and facility management, health, safety and environmental services and training) and Wells (e.g. drilling contractors, well engineering consultancies) report the highest level of shortages at 75% and 63% respectively.

- The Oil and Gas Survey 2014\(^\text{23}\) shows
  - Difficulties recruiting managerial staff (43% of operators), technical staff (36% of operators)
  - More than half of all contractors operating in the sector were having difficulty recruiting managerial, professional and technical staff.
  - 45% of companies view a lack of skilled staff as a barrier to realising opportunities in International trade.
  - Employers indicate a reliance on employment agencies as a 'short term fix'.

- But a changing situation brought about by a downturn in the sector\(^\text{24}\)
  - The proportion of operators and contractors reporting recruitment difficulties has dropped sharply over time
    - Operators from 82% in 2013 to 14% in 2014
    - Contractors from 69% in 2013 to 43% in 2014

### Ageing Workforce

- Notwithstanding recent falls in headcount, the age profile of the industry still demands new entrants\(^\text{25}\), although national evidence suggests that the issue of an ageing workforce is not as severe as the widespread perception with over only 10% over 55s (lower than the national average)\(^\text{26}\).

### Global Recruitment

- Aberdeen provides fertile recruitment ground for the global oil and gas industry, presenting a potential challenge in retaining skilled employees\(^\text{27}\).

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3.3.2 Food and Drink

Figure 3.2 highlights skills issues in food and drink identified through existing desk based research evidence and supported by the views of local employers raised in focus groups and interviews.

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\(^{23}\) AGCoC (2014) *Oil and Gas Survey*

\(^{24}\) Ibid.

\(^{25}\) Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire (2015) *Aberdeen City Region Deal: Interim Proposals 2015*

\(^{26}\) EY (2014), *Fuelling the next generation*

\(^{27}\) Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire (2015) *Aberdeen City Region Deal: Interim Proposals 2015*
Figure 3.2 Skills Issues in Food and Drink

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Research Evidence</th>
<th>Skills Gaps(^{28})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Food and drink manufacturers report skills gaps amongst machine operatives and elementary staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Agricultural and fishing employers are more likely to experience hard-to-fill vacancies and skills gaps.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ageing Workforce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Industry is more likely to employ people over the age of 45 than the average(^{29}).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relatively low skilled workforce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Employment is concentrated in relatively lower skilled occupations, with a workforce that holds low levels of qualifications(^{30}).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Succession Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 80% of food and drink businesses are family run(^{31}), presenting a challenge around succession planning. This was also raised as an issue by local employers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Research Evidence</th>
<th>Skills Shortages(^{32})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Employers reported that it is 'very difficult or difficult' to recruit:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Sales staff (63%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Senior managers (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Engineers (59%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Production staff (51%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Employers within the Scottish seafood industry find it difficult to recruit(^{33}):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Fish processors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Specialists (filliters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Maintenance engineers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Local employers report:
- Skills shortages in recruiting engineers and electricians, technicians, senior managers, sales staff, new product development, quality control staff, production line operatives, drivers and bakers.

\(^{28}\) SDS (2013) Skills Investment Plan Food and Drink
\(^{29}\) Ibid.
\(^{30}\) Ibid.
\(^{31}\) AGCoC (2014) North East Food and Drink Sector Survey
\(^{32}\) Ibid.
\(^{33}\) SFDSA (2015) Scottish Seafood Partnership Research
- Skills gaps around the necessary leadership and management skills required in combination with sector expertise and the digital/social media skills demanded by businesses with an online presence.
- Skills retention problems with difficulties around losing trained staff to oil and gas and seasonal tourism jobs that typically pay more.
- A relatively low level of training in the sector alongside training that has a focus on legislation as opposed to business growth.
- Some specific training asks that could support business growth e.g. an MA in Brewing.
- The sector has a poor image as it is seen as a low skill and low paid sector.

### 3.3.3 Tourism

Figure 3.3 highlights skills issues in tourism identified through existing desk based research evidence and supported by the views of local employers raised in focus groups and interviews.

#### Figure 3.3 Skills Issues in Tourism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Research Evidence</th>
<th>Skills shortages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15% of vacancies in the industry are skills shortage vacancies(^{34}). Elementary occupations account for more than a third of all skills shortages (compared to 7% across all occupation). Skilled trade occupations account for over a quarter of skills shortages (compared to 17% across all occupations).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Skills gaps
- Skills gaps in the sector are significantly higher than average with 84 staff (compared to 54) per 1,000 less than fully proficient at their job. More than half of skills gaps are in elementary occupations, 16% in sales and service occupations\(^{35}\).
- 26% of employers report a skills gap. Main skills lacking were planning and organisation, customer handling, and problem solving skills\(^{36}\).
- Team working, customer handling and communication\(^{37}\).

#### Skills Retention
- The sector has high labour turnover at 17%\(^{38}\).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Research Evidence</th>
<th>Skills Shortages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management and leadership skills(^{39}).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

\(^{34}\) SDS (2012) Skills Investment Plan for Scotland’s Tourism Sector
\(^{35}\) UKCES (2012) Sector Skills Insights: Tourism
\(^{36}\) People 1\(^{st}\) (2013) State of the Nation Report 2013 – Scotland
\(^{37}\) SDS (2012) Skills Investment Plan for Scotland’s Tourism Sector
\(^{38}\) People 1\(^{st}\) (2013) State of the Nation Report 2013 – Scotland
\(^{39}\) Aberdeen City and Shire Tourism Partnership (2013) Building on Our Strengths 2013-2020
Skills gaps

- A survey of employers to identify retail industry development needs highlighted potential skills gaps around customer service, local information, digital and IT support, knowledge of markets and customers, cultural awareness, gathering and using feedback and food and drink development/knowledge\(^{40}\).
- Almost half of retail businesses report difficulty in finding staff with the right mix of skills and experience\(^{41}\).

Local employers report:

- Skills shortages in recruiting chefs, general managers, waiting and bar staff, front of house staff and individuals with the language skills to serve present and future markets and ICT skills (critical to support marketing efforts and online booking).
- Skills gaps around soft skills, particularly around communication and customer service, cultural awareness which supports delivering high quality customer experience and expanding into new markets and a lack of interest in and knowledge of products e.g. waiting staff knowing nothing about the food being served in a restaurant.
- The heavy reliance on migrant labour presents some challenges around language skills.
- Skills retention problems in relation to very high turnover rates in the industry making it hard to maintain skill levels and difficulties in keeping graduates who are invariably offered more pay and fewer (or less antisocial) hours in other sectors.
- Accessing appropriate training is a particular challenge for small businesses that require affordable and flexible training options. Many employers want to train in-house as it is very difficult to pull staff off the job (especially if located outside of Aberdeen city).
- The sector has a poor image particularly amongst young people and their influencers including parents and teachers.

\(^{40}\) SDS (2015) *Tourism Customer Experience and Workshops Overview*

\(^{41}\) AGCoC (2013) *North-East Retail Survey 2013*
3.3.4 Health and Social Care

Figure 3.4 highlights skills issues in health and social care identified through existing desk based research evidence and supported by the views of local employers raised in focus groups and interviews.

Figure 3.4. Skills Issues in Health and Social Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Research Evidence</th>
<th>Skills Shortages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professionals across health and social work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mental Health Officers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Skills Gaps

- 28% of employers in health and social work reported a skills gap.
- 14% of employers in the social service workforce report a skills gap. Main skills gaps in planning and organising, problem solving and customer handling skills.
- Management and leadership in health sector.

Skills Retention

- Turnover in the care sector is 19%, higher than all other industrial, commercial and public sector employment areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Research Evidence</th>
<th>Skills Shortages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the care sector:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Adult support workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Care at home workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Social care practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- IT support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Fundraisers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- HR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Not having the right attitudes or values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potential to impact on core NHS services as it is difficult to move patients out of hospital without care staff to support them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Childcare and registered childminders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

42 UKCES (2013) Employer Skills Survey
44 UKCES (2013) Employer Skills Survey
45 Skills for Health (2011) Scottish Skills and Labour Market Intelligence Assessment 2011
46 Centre for Workforce Intelligence (2013) Planning and Developing the Adult Social Care Workforce: Risks and Opportunities for Employers
47 AGCoC (2014) Examining Recruitment and Retention Challenges in the Third Sector
Skills Retention

- Staff turnover in the Aberdeen City and Shire in the care sector was 15% in 2013\textsuperscript{48}. Despite a preference not to do so, using agency staff is now a necessity.

Local employers report:

- Skills shortages in the NHS across consultants, nurses, midwives, allied health professionals, administrators, IT professionals, skilled trades and payroll administrators. There are also shortages in health and social care at all levels and across a range of management positions.

- Skills gaps flowing from increased demand for IT skills to ‘work smarter’ across e-health, e.g. e-learning and video conferencing, coaching skills around appraising, supporting and teaching, customer care and communication. Poorer English language skills needed to support patients and service users were identified within the migrant workforce and the necessary life skills for some roles – e.g. cooking, using washing machine are lacking in some younger applicants.

- The professionalisation of the Health and Social Care sector means that care workers are increasingly being asked for SVQs posing a challenge to both existing staff not keen to study for a qualification and potential new entrants to the sector.

- A poor perception of the sector which is seen by many to offer demanding, low paid jobs many of which require shift work and flexible working. Pre-employment checks can be slow and there are limited opportunities to progress to management positions. This has resulted in small number of ‘committed’ applicants and a high turnover of staff.

- The challenge posed by an ageing workforce is exacerbated by the poor perceptions of the industry amongst young people.

- Challenges in the sector are likely to get bigger over time with increasing demand on health and social care services. The personalisation of care services may lead to increased demands for flexible working to meet individuals’ care needs and providers may have to withdraw from contracts where staff cannot be found and/or retained

\textsuperscript{48} Cornerstone (2014) Examining the Recruitment and Retention Challenges in the Third Sector
3.3.5 Business and Financial Services

Figure 3.5 highlights skills issues in Business and Financial Services identified through existing desk based research evidence and supported by the views of local employers raised in focus groups and interviews.

Figure 3.5. Skills Issues in Business and Financial Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Research Evidence</th>
<th>Skills Shortages&lt;sup&gt;49&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Customer service skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communication skills (especially amongst young people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• IT skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• By Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Accountancy requires specialist skills e.g. pension administrators, corporate tax and governance and risk analysts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Contact centres require customer service advisors with good communication and customer service skills. Some difficulties recruiting senior managers with the image of the sector an issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Business Process and IT Outsourcing require IT skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Research Evidence</th>
<th>Skills shortages&lt;sup&gt;50&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Audit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Accountancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Business analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Accounting processors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Data analyst/scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Governance and risk assurance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Local employers report:

- Skills shortages in business analysts, IT developers (programmers), software engineers, payroll administrators, graduate finance roles, secretarial and clerical roles and languages.

- Skills gaps across ICT (although there is a view that these are often addressed most successfully in-house), communication skills and commercial awareness.

- Challenges around graduate recruitment, with finance graduates increasingly looking at available wages versus the region’s high living costs and perceived place attractiveness. Some employers are recruiting from overseas to address the problem.

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<sup>49</sup> UKCES (2013) Employer Skills Survey
<sup>50</sup> TERU (2015) Skills Assessment for Business Services
<sup>51</sup> Ibid.
• Difficulty with succession planning given a relatively small pool in to draw from in the region, with particular challenges in attracting recruits for senior posts from the central belt (or beyond).

• Limited awareness of what is available and where to go for information about accessing publicly supported training.

3.3.6 Skills Issues in ICT Digital

Figure 3.6 highlights skills issues in ICT Digital identified through existing desk based research evidence and supported by the views of local employers raised in focus groups and interviews.

Figure 3.6 Skills Issues in ICT Digital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Research Evidence</th>
<th>Skills shortages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skills shortages at the professional level – e.g. programmers/software developers; web design/development professionals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Big Data projected to be significant growth area (86% increase in Big Data jobs in Scotland between 2012 and 2013). 77% of employers are reporting recruitment difficulties. Main skills sought for a Big Data analyst are data and technical skills; maths and statistics knowledge; subject-matter expertise; problem solving; collaboration; story telling; curiosity; communication and creativity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Job-related technical skills most commonly cited by employers as hard to find amongst applicants were: .NET, ASP.NET, Dynamics, SharePoint, Visual Basic/Visual Studio, C# with PHP and VMWare.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Research Evidence</th>
<th>Skills Gaps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amongst Scottish workforce, main skills gaps are sales/related, interpersonal and business/related skills; Microsoft (particularly ASP.NET, C and .NET), PHP and Linux skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Local employers report:

• Skills shortages amongst computer scientists, mathematicians, IT developers, commercial and sales roles and have concerns that this situation will worsen in the next 5-10 years.

• Skills gaps amongst graduate recruits where there is a complacency that jobs are easy to come by and they lack a work ethic and a lack of commercial awareness amongst staff more generally.

• The fast pace of the industry demands skills investment to keep up.

• Concerns about the small number of computing science teaching staff within the region’s schools. Computing science needs to be properly resourced and effectively taught to engage young people.

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52 E-Skills (2012) Technology Insights 2012 - Scotland
54 E-Skills (2012) Technology Insights 2012 - Scotland
55 Ibid.
3.3.7 Skills Issues in Chemical and Life Sciences

Figure 3.6 highlights skills issues in Chemical and Life Sciences identified through existing desk based research evidence and supported by the views of local employers raised in focus groups and interviews.

Figure 3.6. Skills Issues in Chemical and Life Sciences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Research Evidence</th>
<th>Skills shortages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|                            | • Life Sciences employers’ skills survey highlights:  
|                            |   - General science or technical skills, including laboratory work and R and D.  
|                            |   - General business and commercial skills.  
|                            |   - Biological and medical skills.  
|                            |   - Core skills.  
|                            | • Chemical Sciences employers\(^\text{57}\) highlight skills shortages and gaps in:  
|                            |   - Technical and professional occupations  
|                            |   - Technical apprentices  
|                            |   - Chemical process technicians  
|                            |   - Engineering posts |

Skills Gaps

- Around half of employers experiencing problems in recruiting for posts requiring STEM skills report concerns about the quality of graduates.
- Difficult to find individuals with the right blend of scientific and business skills.

Workforce Development

- Smaller life sciences companies, especially those without access to an HR function, find it challenging to grow the skills of their workforce.

Regional Research Evidence

- None identified

Local employers report:

- Skills shortages amongst technicians and professional occupations and business and commercial skills (critical for taking products to market).
- Skills gaps particularly amongst graduate recruits who have theoretical skills but lack skills needed for workplace and more general concerns around poor ICT skills.
- A lack of work experience opportunities with insufficient placement opportunities directly linking university students to employers.

\(^{56}\) SDS (2014) Skills Investment Plan for Scotland’s Life Sciences Sector  
\(^{57}\) Ibid.
Chapter 4 – Skills Provision in Aberdeen City & Shire

4.1 Introduction

The RSS has identified the skills issues facing employers in the City & Shire. In developing the action plan to collectively tackle these issues, there has been some preliminary work to establish an understanding of current provision across the region and provide a starting point for more detailed analysis in the future.

The skills infrastructure in the City & Shire includes The University of Aberdeen, Robert Gordon University, North East Scotland College, schools and Skills Development Scotland (through its Modern Apprenticeship and other National Training Programmes etc). Each plays an important role in providing opportunities for people across the region to develop skills in a range of different subjects and at different levels.

Schools, training providers, colleges and universities are not the only providers of skills development in the region. There is also a range of workforce development activity taking place in businesses across the region and this activity is targeted at upskilling the existing workforce. Organisations such as the Department for Work and Pensions as well as those in the third sector also provide skills development for residents of the City & Shire and there are also sector specific projects which aim to develop skills in particular industry sectors. This chapter looks briefly at what we know about levels of workforce development in the region and then goes on to consider key evidence on school leavers, Modern Apprentices and FE/HE students and other skills delivery in the region.

4.2 Workforce Development

There is evidence to suggest that employers in the region recognise the value of workforce development, and when compared with the national average, are more likely to invest upskilling their workforce. Aberdeen City and Shire data from the British Chambers of Commerce Workforce Survey 2014\(^58\) reveals that:

- There is recognition by local employers of the value of skills development, with 87% of the region’s businesses strongly agreeing that training is worthy of investment, against the UK average of 78%.
- By type of training, more Aberdeen City and Shire businesses than the UK average have invested in on-the-job training, technical or job specific training, management or supervisory, and postgraduate or professional qualifications.
- Looking forward, the region’s businesses plan to invest more in training than the UK average in the future.

The notion that Aberdeen City and Shire’s employers are more committed to training and workforce development than the UK average is supported by Annual Population Survey data that finds that the region’s employees are more likely to have received job-related training than the Scottish average. In 2014:

• 12% of Aberdeen City and Shire’s workers received job-related training in the last 4 weeks compared with 10% across Scotland.
• 26% of Aberdeen City and Shire’s workers received job-related training in the last 13 weeks compared with 21% across Scotland.

### 4.3 North East Scotland College (NESCOL)

NESCOL is the largest Further Education College in the North East of Scotland and has a number of campuses based throughout the region. Figure 4.1 shows that the largest volume of students at the College study Engineering followed by Business, Management & Admin, Care and Computing & ICT. However, when compared with provision at the national level, the region has proportionately more full-time students in these three areas, but also in other areas including Social Studies and Languages & English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Areas in which provision is notably lower than at a national level include Care, Construction and Hairdressing, Beauty and Complementary Therapies.

#### Figure 4.1. Full-Time College Provision in Aberdeen City and Shire by Subject Area, 2013/14 (SUMS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AC&amp;S</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art &amp; design</td>
<td>7,016</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>88,855</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business, management &amp; admin</td>
<td>13,665</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>125,682</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care</td>
<td>10,057</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>154,274</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computing &amp; ICT</td>
<td>9,060</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>84,924</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>2,914</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>80,723</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; training</td>
<td>1,669</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>19,718</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>15,541</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>124,656</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairdressing, beauty &amp; comp therapies</td>
<td>8,115</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>126,995</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality &amp; tourism</td>
<td>5,660</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>78,867</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land-based industries</td>
<td>2,862</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>26,336</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages &amp; ESOL</td>
<td>3,741</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>22,698</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>3,332</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>31,324</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nautical studies</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>8,629</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing arts</td>
<td>3,392</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>53,202</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3,457</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>40,353</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social subjects</td>
<td>6,432</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>58,633</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special programmes</td>
<td>981</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>51,898</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport &amp; leisure</td>
<td>4,801</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>66,910</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>103,362</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1,244,676</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Aberdeen City and Shire Regional Skills Assessment (2016)

The College has a critical role in developing the region’s future workforce, and this is clear when you consider that:
The vast majority of the region’s school leavers, 91%, who started a further education course enrolled at North East Scotland College\textsuperscript{59} and;

32% of the region’s school leavers who started a higher education course enrolled with the college.

4.4 Universities

The region is served by two Universities – the University of Aberdeen and Robert Gordon University. Collectively, these two institutions attract some 33% of the region’s school leavers who go on to undertake a higher education course. Figure 4.2 shows a total of 30,625 students studying in the region in 2013/14 and, in terms of provision by subject area:

- The highest numbers of students in the region were studying \textit{business \& administrative studies}; \textit{subjects allied to medicine}; \textit{engineering}; \textit{social studies}; \textit{biological studies} and \textit{law}.

- When compared with the Scottish average, the region has proportionately more university students studying \textit{law}; \textit{education}; \textit{architecture, building and planning}; \textit{engineering}; \textit{medicine} and \textit{dentistry}. However there are fewer students\textsuperscript{60} studying \textit{computer sciences}; \textit{creative arts and design}; \textit{European languages and literature}; \textit{historical and philosophical studies} and \textit{linguistics, classics and related subjects}.

\textsuperscript{59} SDS (2014) Community Planning Partnership Reports
\textsuperscript{60} For subjects with over 5,000 students across Scotland
### Figure 4.2: University Students in Aberdeen City and Shire by Subject Area, 2013/14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>AC&amp;S</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture, Building and Planning</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>5,440</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Sciences</td>
<td>2,238</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>19,329</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and Administrative studies</td>
<td>4,711</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>33,099</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>737</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>5,034</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Sciences</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>9,761</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Arts and Design</td>
<td>939</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>10,435</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>2,359</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>14,213</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>2,901</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>18,898</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Languages, Literature &amp; related</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3,934</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical and Philosophical studies</td>
<td>1,108</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>12,109</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>2,235</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>8,737</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistics, Classics and related subjects</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>6,645</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematical and Computer Sciences</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3383</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Communications and Documentation</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>3289</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine and Dentistry</td>
<td>1,160</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>7,984</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Sciences</td>
<td>1,532</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>10,708</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>2,602</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>19,198</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects allied to Medicine</td>
<td>4,496</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>30,059</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technologies</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Sciences, Agriculture &amp; related</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3,393</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>30,625</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>226,891</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Aberdeen City and Shire Regional Skills Assessment (2016)*

Recent data on graduate destinations shows that a just over half of graduates from the region (53%) found employment in the region immediately following graduation\(^1\) a high level of retention. Unsurprisingly given the industrial make up of Aberdeen City and Shire, graduates from the region were more likely to work in Energy and Utilities (15%) when compared with the Scottish average (3%). Other key employment sectors for graduates from the region were Health & Social Care (16%) and Education (13%) although, in both cases, this picture is in line with the national average.

---

\(^1\) SDS (2016) *Aberdeen City and Shire Regional Skills Assessment*
In terms of employer perceptions of new graduates, 89% of the region’s employers who have recruited university leavers believe they were well or very well prepared for work, which is above the Scotland rate of 85%\(^\text{62}\).

### 4.5 SDS Investment: Modern Apprenticeships

In 2014/15, there were 2,175 Modern Apprenticeship starts in the City & Shire. As a proportion of the Scottish total of 25,247, this represents 8.6% which is below the region’s share of the nation’s jobs (12%) and suggests that there is scope to engage more local employers in offering an apprenticeship.

#### Figure 4.3. MA Starts: 2010/11 – 2014/15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AC&amp;S</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
<th>ACS as % of Scotland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>1,770</td>
<td>22,160</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>2,370</td>
<td>27,090</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>2,260</td>
<td>26,360</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>2,170</td>
<td>25,190</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td>2,175</td>
<td>25,247</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Aberdeen City and Shire Regional Skills Assessment (2016)*

When compared with the national average, a greater share of the region’s MAs are delivered at Level 3. In Scotland, 59% of MAs are at this level but in the City & Shire, the proportion is higher at 68%. This is most likely a reflection of the higher number of engineering MA starts in the region.

#### Figure 4.4. MA Starts by Level (% of All Starts), 2014/15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>AC&amp;S</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Aberdeen City and Shire Regional Skills Assessment (2016)*

In terms of frameworks, when compared with the national average, the City & Shire has a greater share of MA starts in *Engineering and Energy Related; Food & Drink; Automotive; Transport & Logistics; and Hospitality & Tourism*. This is positive as some of these frameworks – Engineering; Food & Drink and Hospitality & Tourism – align closely to the regions identified key sectors.

On the other hand, there are fewer MA starts in *Administration; Management; Construction; Personal Services and Retail and Customer Service*\(^\text{63}\).

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\(^{62}\) SDS (2016) *Aberdeen City and Shire Regional Skills Assessment*

\(^{63}\) For the MA framework groupings with more than 1,000 starts nationally.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>ACS Number</th>
<th>ACS %</th>
<th>Scotland Number</th>
<th>Scotland %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; Related</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>2,595</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Care, Land &amp; Water based</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automotive</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>1,225</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals &amp; Biotechnology Related</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction &amp; Related</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>4,620</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative &amp; Cultural Skills</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering &amp; Energy Related</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>1,780</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Services</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Drink</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>1,140</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality &amp; Tourism</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>3,085</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Manufacture</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services (including ICT professional)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Services</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1,075</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail &amp; Customer Service</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>3,040</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport, Health &amp; Social Care</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>3,200</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport &amp; Logistics</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>1,790</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>2,175</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>25,247</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Aberdeen City and Shire Regional Skills Assessment (2016)
4.6 Schools

The proportion of Aberdeen City & Shire school leavers entering a positive destination is marginally higher than the Scottish average (94% compared with 93% respectively). School leavers in the region are more likely to go into employment upon leaving school (23% compared with 21% nationally) but less likely to go into Higher Education, Further Education and Training. In terms of employer perception of school leavers, 60% of the region’s employers who have recruited school leavers believe that school leavers are well or very well prepared for work, which is slightly below the Scottish average of 65%.64

Figure 4.6. School Leaver Destinations (Initial Destination Figures), 2013/14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ACS</th>
<th></th>
<th>Scotland</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>1,715</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20,632</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further Education</td>
<td>1,369</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14,961</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,021</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>1,031</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11,667</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Work</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity Agreements</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed Seeking</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,912</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed Not Seeking</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,503</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>53,236</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Skills Development Scotland

4.7 Other Skills Provision in the region

There are other providers of skills development in the region which is targeted at specific groups or industry sectors within the population. For example, DWP Jobcentre Plus provides a range of support and advice to working-age people, employers, families, disabled people and vulnerable groups. Skills support is provided through the Work Programme, Work Choice, sector based skills academies and Flexible Support Fund monies. In Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire this has included the provision of support for specific sectors which has included:

• The delivery of care training courses and the possibility of developing a Care Academy in the future.
• Pre-recruitment training in retail and hospitality.

64 SDS (2016) Aberdeen City and Shire Regional Skills Assessment
In terms of youth employment, at the local authority level, the *Aberdeen Youth Employment Activity Plan*\(^{65}\) and *Aberdeenshire Youth Employment Activity Plan*\(^{66}\) are the lead strategy documents and set out the skills provision available to young people across the different stages of the Employability Pipeline. In Aberdeen City, partners have agreed that all activity which supports young people into positive destinations in Aberdeen is promoted using the brand **Aberdeen Guarantees**. This is a citywide commitment to providing all young people aged 14 to 25 year old with opportunities to participate in learning, training and work. There is also a **Providers Forum** led by Aberdeen City Council where providers (city and shire) meet to discuss gaps in provision. This seeks to avoid duplication and gives the providers an opportunity to look at co-funding provision. Currently, work is also underway across the partners to respond to and implement the recommendations of the **Commission for Developing Scotland’s Young Work** through the North East Invest in Youth Group. There is also a range of skills development activity which is targeted at developing skills for specific sectors in the region:

- **Oil & Gas Academy Scotland** (OGAS) brings together Robert Gordon University, Heriot Watt University, University of Aberdeen, North East Scotland College and Forth Valley College and works closely with industry to develop the skills training they need.

- There are plans for the **Digital Skills Academy**, which was introduced in SDS (2014) *Skills Investment Plan for Scotland’s ICT & Digital Technologies Sector*, to have a presence in Aberdeen City and Shire in the next 12 months.

There are also smaller scale employability programmes that aim to support young people into entry level jobs, such as the Prince's Trust Get Into Oil & Gas, Engineering, and Health and Social Care programmes.

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\(^{66}\) Aberdeenshire Council and SDS (2015) *Aberdeenshire Youth Employment Activity Plan*
5. REGIONAL SKILLS STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN FOR ABERDEEN CITY AND SHIRE

5.1 Introduction
An Action Plan has been agreed that sets out what needs to be done to make good progress towards the realisation of the strategic objectives of the RSS. The key principles of the Action Plan are based on:

- Building on existing strengths and activities.
- Learning from elsewhere.
- De-cluttering the landscape.
- Co-designing solutions and joining-up decision making.

However the development process also recognised the challenging financial conditions facing all partners, underlining the need for maximising the impact of existing spend and an acknowledgement that there is little new money within the system.

5.2 Strategic Objectives and Agreed Priority Action Areas
Each of the RSS’ strategic objectives feeds into agreed priority areas with specific actions and commitments that will support their delivery. For each specific action a lead partner (or partners) and a timescale for delivery has been proposed.

5.2.1. Strategic Objective 1: Co-ordinating and aligning skills investment in the Region
This strategic objective will help to meet the short to medium term needs of employers, individuals and the economy of Aberdeen City and Shire and develop the skills system so that it will produce and sustain a world class workforce for the region over the longer term.

The wider challenges in the public sector funding environment means that there is great impetus to ensure that the collective investment in skills is aligned behind the needs of employers and the economy. There is clearly a need to maximise the value of partners’ skills investment spend, building on existing effective mechanisms and approaches and responding with new activity where required. This will require collective action across a number of areas as follows:

- Ensuring that there is robust information from employers on their current and future skills needs;
- Using that evidence effectively to inform the investment choices made in terms of skills provision;
- Ensuring the skills system remains agile in terms of responding to changing circumstances and filling gaps in skills provision.

Priority Action Area: To co-ordinate and align more effectively the skills investment in the region
There is a strong existing body of activity around the agreed priority action area of co-ordinating and aligning skills investment in the region. This includes:

- Pre-school, Primary, Secondary and special needs schools provision.
- Post 16 Education engaging:
  - 32,000 University students
- 18,000 College Students
- 2,200 MAs in the region
  - A strong regional footprint of SIP activity particularly in Energy, Food and Drink and Tourism.
  - A wide range of Work Programme and Employability Provision to support individuals.

To complement this, new activity is proposed as set out below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Lead Partners</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop clear skills investment profiles for key sectors (University / Research / College / Private Training) to</td>
<td>Strategic Skills Group</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inform inward investment and talent attraction work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Basis for joint planning on adapting provision mix</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic expansion of MA provision in North East in line with employer demand (up to 400 more MAs) and seeking to address gender imbalance and participation from other underrepresented groups</td>
<td>SDS</td>
<td>Short to medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roll out of Digital World Marketing campaign</td>
<td>SDS</td>
<td>Short to medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased STEM Careers Promotion in schools - including a focus on addressing equalities</td>
<td>SDS/LAs and OPITO</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.2. Strategic Objective 2: Engaging employers as active participants in the skills system

This strategic objective will help to meet the short to medium term needs of employers, individuals and the economy of Aberdeen City and Shire and develop the skills system so that it will produce and sustain a world class workforce for the region over the longer term.

A key message from the report of the Commission for Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce was the importance of the engagement of employers, as active participants in the skills system. The importance of employer engagement clearly goes beyond young people, however skills providers and employers reported that overall there is limited direct employer engagement and where it exists it tends to be ad hoc and restricted to a small number of committed employers.

A number of areas were identified in which employer engagement could impact positively, particularly in relation to:

- Greater involvement of employers in the design and development of the curriculum in schools, colleges and universities, which offers the potential for a better fit between employer demands and potential recruits.
- Strengthening employer engagement in the skills system to better prepare young people for the world of work, through supporting the development of an industry focused curriculum and to help companies secure a pipeline of future talent.
In Aberdeen City and Shire there are some real strengths and good practice examples on which to build across schools and the college and universities’ sectors. The establishment of the Developing the Young Workforce in North East Scotland, one of the first established in Scotland provides a clear opportunity to develop this work and in particular extend the reach of employers into schools in the region.

Some employers expressed frustration with the pace at which public sector partners are able to respond and the difficulties in obtaining easy access to information and support. The process and administration of much of the support on offer is often ‘too slow’ and ‘the language used is off-putting’. There was consensus that the skills support landscape for employers could be confusing and complex. To maximise the value of the investment on offer employers must be able to understand what is available to help and support them and be able to access this easily and in a timely manner. Whilst these are not issues unique to the north east, there is a willingness amongst the partners to seek to declutter the skills landscape.

Priority Action Area: To engage employers more effectively as active participants in the skills system

There is a strong existing body of activity around the agreed priority action area to engage employers more effectively as participants in the skills system. This includes:

- Good employer involvement in curriculum design.
- The establishment of Scotland’s first regional Invest in Youth Group.
- The development of a pilot database on work experience and school engagement by the CoC and local authorities.

To complement this, new activity is proposed as set out below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New activity</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Lead Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expansion of Careers Advice into P6-S3</td>
<td>Short term</td>
<td>SDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers CPD for teachers</td>
<td>Short term</td>
<td>LAs/SDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding Work Experience opportunities</td>
<td>Short term</td>
<td>CoC/DYW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing CRM / Technology solutions to support expansion of work experience opportunities</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
<td>CoC/DYW/SDS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.3. Strategic Objective 3: Developing and Enhancing Skills in the Workplace

This strategic objective will help to meet the short to medium term needs of employers, individuals and the economy of Aberdeen City and Shire and develop the skills system so that it will produce and sustain a world class workforce for the region over the longer term.

A large proportion of skills development takes place within the workplace, with employers seeking to support staff to develop appropriate skills to meet organisational needs. The demand side consultations identified a number of specific skill gaps within the existing workforce that need to be addressed. There was particular concern raised around:

- Digital skills and ICT capability within the workforce, which is an increasingly important issue for employers across all sectors in the economy.
- The sourcing and development of Leadership and Management skills in businesses, which is crucial to both the growth of individual companies, and the economy as whole. A number of businesses reported that the lack of leadership skills in their business had the potential to present challenges in terms of succession planning.

Priority Action Area: To deliver more skills development in the workplace

There is some existing activity around the agreed priority action area to deliver more skills development in the workplace. This includes:

- A range of workforce development activities developed through earlier ACSEF sector strategies and direct support to companies.
- A range of rural skills provision.

To complement this, new activity is proposed as set out below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New activity</th>
<th>Lead Partners</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North East Scotland College exploring co-location opportunities with</td>
<td>NESCOL</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public sector partners to maintain access to provision in rural areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consolidation of rural skills provision in SRUC</strong></td>
<td>SRUC</td>
<td>Short to medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mapping direct skills support to companies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Review against identified skills needs (Digital / ICT / Leadership and</td>
<td>Strategic Skills Group</td>
<td>Short to medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management / Soft Skills)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Consolidating provision and joint branding and promotion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Establishing CodeClan model based on employer</strong></td>
<td>Codeclan</td>
<td>Short to medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.4. Strategic Objective 4: Developing Skills for the Future

This strategic objective seeks to develop the skills system so that it will produce and sustain a world class workforce for the region over the longer term.

Whilst there are challenges (and risks) in being prescriptive about a view of the future, particularly given the uncertainties in the economic and policy environment, the demand side consultations identified:

- An increasing demand for skills in STEM areas to support economic growth ambitions, which is supported by the evidence base in the Skills Investment Plans for STEM sectors (Life Sciences, Chemical Sciences, Engineering, Digital / ICT and Energy), which also identify challenges around gender imbalance in STEM subjects and the importance of influencing the career choices – and subject choices of young people at an early stage.

- Challenges across the skills system in the North East in terms of recruiting teachers and lecturers, at School, College and (to a lesser extent) University to support the teaching of STEM (and other subjects), making it more difficult to support the acquisition of the right skills.

- Some perceived challenges around capacity in modern languages, which are potentially very important given the increasing focus of internationalisation to the Scottish and North East economy and the importance of tourism to the regional economy.

- The need to be ready with the skills infrastructure and workforce to develop and support entrepreneurial activities and new research innovations which ‘spin out’ from the regions universities or are attracted to region.

Priority Action Area: To develop the skills system to better meet the future needs of the economy and respond to change

There is strong existing activity in this area which includes:

- The development of Sectoral SIPs and Regional Skills Assessments by SDS, Aberdeen City Skills Survey undertaken by ACC and a body of employer research led by AGCoC.

- Work to address difficulties in recruiting teachers, and lecturing staff, particularly in STEM and Modern Languages

To complement this, new activity is proposed as set out below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New activity</th>
<th>Lead Partners</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agreed <strong>rolling programme of skills research for growth sectors</strong> – starting in ICT / Digital skills need in north east</td>
<td>Strategic Skills Group</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish <strong>coherent portfolio of work based learning pathways / Foundation Apprenticeships</strong> (up to 500 by 2020)</td>
<td>SDS</td>
<td>Short to medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop clear proposition around <strong>career conversion</strong> / <strong>retaining new teachers</strong> in the region</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make case to SFC for <strong>expansion of PGCE activity in north east 2016/17</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SFC/LAs</th>
<th>SF/LAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short term</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Awaiting details of the Transition Training Fund operation for inclusion within this section.**
Governance

The implementation of the RSS will be overseen by a Strategic Skills Group drawn from partners who have been involved in the development of the RSS including Aberdeen City Council; Aberdeenshire Council; Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce; Department for Work and Pensions; North East Scotland College; Robert Gordon University; Scottish Funding Council; Scottish Enterprise; Skills Development Scotland; and The University of Aberdeen and industry representation.

The group will be supported by Short Life Task Groups, focused on the delivery of key elements of the RSS. However the governance structure for the RSS should draw on and not replicate existing mechanisms e.g. the NE Regional Invest in Youth Group.

To ensure successful implementation, partners need to agree performance measures for the RSS and Action Plan.
Opportunity North East (ONE)

1. **Introduction**
   1.1. The purpose of this paper is to provide the Committee with information about Opportunity North East (ONE).

2. **Background**
   2.1. At its meeting on 15 March 2016 this Committee requested information on the purpose and organisation of ONE.

3. **ONE**
   3.1. Attached as Appendix 1 to this paper is a brief summary of the purpose and organisation of ONE. This is based on a variety of sources as there is no single document available that provides an overview. Attached as Appendix 2 is supplementary information on ONE provided in the form of a briefing note by Jennifer Craw, Chief Executive of ONE.

4. **Recommendation**
   4.1. It is recommended that the Committee consider information provided about ONE.

Rob Wallen
Principal
Opportunity North East (ONE) is a driver for economic development in North East Scotland.

It succeeds Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future (ACSEF), which had a similar role.

It is led by Sir Ian Wood whose experience, acumen and foresight bring great authority to the organisation.

It includes major private sector leaders and leaders from the major public sector organisations in the region.

It recognises the huge significance that oil and gas has had in the region for the past 40 years – and the resultant de facto position of Aberdeen as the oil and gas capital of Europe.

It also recognises that there is an inevitable reduction in the extraction rates of oil and gas from the North Sea over the next forty years.

It proposes, however, that there is a long term future for the oil and gas industry in the North East through the anchoring in the region of companies which have developed technical expertise in the region but which now export technology and intellectual capital world-wide.

It also embraces the need to promote and enhance the other industrial sectors of the region – particularly those where there is an inbuilt regional geographical strength (food and drink, tourism) and those where there has grown up a thriving industrial sector (e.g. life sciences, digital skills).

It also recognises the current temporary (we assume) decline in the price of crude oil and the temporary challenges that presents in terms of maintaining capacity within the regional industry base to be ready for the opportunities that will arise when the price increases.

In order to address this wide-ranging and complex agenda, ONE has done the following:

- Established a Board made up of as mix of senior figures from industry, the local public sector and the two local universities
- Given its whole-hearted support to the City Region Deal and the Aberdeen City Centre Regeneration programme
- Established groups addressing the main identified regional economic priority sectors – Oil and Gas, Food/drink & agriculture, Tourism, Life Sciences
- Initiated projects to promote innovation and creativity in support of the oil and gas sector.

Through these groups ONE aims to ensure that the potential of the region is fulfilled by supporting the policy and infrastructure developments that they require.

Rob Wallen
04 April 2016
Appendix 2 – Agenda Item 6.3

Briefing note Opportunity North East Ltd

Opportunity North East, ONE is the private sector’s response to the challenge of transforming the region’s economy. It aims to broaden and strengthen the economy of north east Scotland. It is a private-sector led economic leadership board working largely through four sector boards to initiate, invest in and support projects to broaden the North-east economy.

The focus is on investment and action to stimulate economic growth, safeguard jobs and create new employment opportunities over the medium to long term. It will achieve this by providing co-funding and resources to help grow and promote the region’s key business sectors, oil and gas, food, drink and agriculture, life sciences and tourism and bring high-impact projects to fruition in partnership with the private and public sectors.

ONE has been set up with a co-investment fund of operational and project capital from The Wood Foundation of £25m over five years. This funding will catalyse and facilitate co-investment from Scottish Enterprise and other public and private sector sources.

In addition to the main ONE leadership board, there is an Oil and Gas board, Food Drink and Agriculture Board and Life Sciences Board. The chair of Visit Aberdeenshire is a member of the ONE main board. Sir Ian Wood chairs the main and oil and gas board, Patrick Machray chairs the food, drink and agri board and Prof Stephen Logan chairs the life sciences board. Colin Crosby is the chair of Visit Aberdeenshire.

ONE is the private sector partner in the Aberdeen City Region Deal alongside Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council and the regional advisory board to Scottish Enterprise and economic forum for the two councils.

ONE’s sector-specific and outcome-focused agenda will complement the infrastructure and innovation investment proposals within the Aberdeen City Region Deal. ONE boards and sector teams are supporting the development of the innovation projects; the Oil & Gas Technology Centre, the Agri-Food and Nutrition Centre and the Bio-pharmaceutical Innovation Centre.

ONE will develop its activities in line with national key sector strategies and priorities and identify opportunities and strengths, at a regional level, that support accelerated growth.

Projects currently approved for funding and under development include –

Tourism
£795,000 of funding over 12 months to support the creation of the new, combined destination marketing organisation (DMO) Visit Aberdeenshire with the aim of significantly increasing tourism revenues in the region. This is the first significant investment that the ONE’s Economic Leadership Board has approved.

Visit Aberdeenshire brings the marketing of the North East’s world-class tourism offering under a single body for the first time with the aim of increasing UK and international visitors. ONE is backing ambitious growth targets for tourism as part of wider economic development and diversification activity in the region and intends to supply annual funding to Visit Aberdeenshire over the next five years, proportionate to the commitments from the other funding partners, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils and Scottish Enterprise.
Oil and Gas
ONE’s oil and gas sector board and team is supporting the start-up of the Oil and Gas Technology Centre (OGTC) with £250k of funding matched by partners to enable the development of the business plan for the centre, the development and approval of the business case for Aberdeen City region deal funds. The OGTC Board is now in place and the final business case for OGTC will be submitted by late summer. Recruitment is currently under way for the Chief Executive and three solution centre managers.

May 2016
Commission on Widening Access

1. Introduction
   1.1. The purpose of this paper is to provide the Committee with an opportunity to consider the final report on the Commission on Widening Access.

2. Background
   2.1. In 2014 the Scottish Government established a Commission on Widening Access, chaired by Dame Ruth Silver.

3. The Final Report
   3.1. Attached as Appendix 1 is the final report of the Commission that was published in March 2016.
   3.2. The report makes a number of recommendations designed to address the issue of the relatively low participation in higher education of those from less privileged backgrounds and those who are care experienced.
   3.3. The recommendations will obviously need to be considered by the College as we plan our provision for the future.
   3.4. However, the work already undertaken in this region in terms of establishing comprehensive college-university articulation routes and in mapping the whole regional curriculum by subject area provides a very good starting point for further work in this area.

4. Recommendation
   4.1. It is recommended that the Committee consider the information in this paper.

Rob Wallen
Principal
Appendix 1 – Agenda Item 6.4 appears under separate cover
1. Introduction

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to allow this Committee to consider the issue of setting an appropriate fee rate for full-time students from England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This paper will also be considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 17 May 2016.

2. Background

2.1. At its meeting on 26 January 2016 this Committee considered a revised version of the College’s Fee Policy. At its meeting on 22 February 2016 the Board of Management considered a paper relating to credit-based funding. At its meeting on 15 March 2016 this Committee considered the specific issue of setting a fee for full-time students from England, Wales and Northern Ireland – for the purposes of this paper referred to as Rest of the UK (RUK).

2.2. At the meeting on 15 March 2016 it was requested that some research be carried out into the approach adopted at other colleges.

3. Context

3.1. Funding for a college course either comes from “grant-in-aid” paid to the College based on a set volume of activity (with each “credit” (nominal 40 hours of learning) attracting a specific payment from SFC) or from a fee paid by an individual or an employer or an agency – or a combination of the two.

3.2. Changing rules relating to the status of RUK students with respect to eligibility for credit-based funding has meant that there is a need to review the fees paid by these students as the income derived from the College for them is now less than it has been in the past.

3.3. While the numbers of RUK students in the College is very small, and any deficiency of income from them could be “subsidised” by the other categories of students, there is a matter of principle to be considered, and in the future the number of RUK students may increase.

3.4. There is no national guidance on this matter. In response to a request for advice, SFC responded:

- There is no guidance on this.
- The pricing is really up to you, really dependent on the price the market would take.

3.5. This is a matter, therefore, which is at the discretion of this Committee, which has authority in these matters delegated from the Board.

3.6. The OPITO programme is a special case, and not covered by this paper; the students on that programme cover more than one qualification in a year and generate far more credits than a full-time student on other programmes and also attract a commensurately higher fee paid by OPITO. The fee is however, subject to separate negotiation on a commercial basis and advice is being sought from SFC to ensure that there is no change in the basis of charging that might be unsustainable in the current difficult environment for the oil and gas sector.
4. The Current Position and Options for the Future

4.1. Non-advanced full-time provision

4.1.1. Under SFC/SG rules, students recognized as domiciled in Scotland do not in most circumstances pay a fee. The cost of their learning is covered by the grant-in-aid funding provided for the “credits” of learning undertaken by the student. The number of funded “credits” vary depending on the course – but typically a full-time non-advanced course is of 16 credits, but may be as many as 20. The value of each “credit” varies depending on the nature of the course – in a range from £185 to £360 as shown below:

- Band 1: £185 per credit
  - Includes Management, Social Sciences

- Band 2: £216.69 per credit
  - Includes IT, Music, Sport

- Band 3: £260 per credit
  - Includes: Engineering, Construction, Hairdressing, Hospitality

- Band 4: £347 per credit
  - Includes: Agriculture, Vet Services

- Band 5: £360 per credit
  - Additional Needs

4.1.2. Thus a main-stream (i.e. excluding Band 5 Additional Needs provision) full-time non-advanced student may generate income somewhere in the range between £2,960 (i.e. 16 x £185) and £6,940 (i.e. 20 x £347) – with the majority falling somewhere between these two extremes.

4.1.3. However, in practice at NESCol there are very few Band 4 students, and the SFC norm is increasingly for full-time non-advanced programmes to have 16 credits, so a more realistic range is £2,960 (i.e. 16 x £185) to £4,160 (i.e. 16 x £260).

4.1.4. Under EU rules, students from countries of the EU other than the UK (in this paper referred to as Other-EU) must be treated the same as Scottish students – i.e. in most circumstances they pay no fee and the credit-related income to the College is the same as for a Scottish student.

4.1.5. In a very few cases a Scottish or other-EU student may not be classified as fee-exempt and in that case they pay a nationally-set fee of £1,008 towards their learning; this is paid to the College and is in addition to the credit-based funding that the College receives for that student.

4.1.6. Students from overseas pay a fee as established by the individual college – in the case of this College the agreed non-advanced overseas fee has been set at £6,078, irrespective of the number of taught “credits” and the nature of the provision. Other colleges will set different overseas fee rates as these are not controlled by the Scottish Government/SFC.
Status | Fee payable to college | Credit-related income | Total income to college
--- | --- | --- | ---
Scottish | £0 | £2,960 - £4,160 | £2,960 - £4,160
- eligible for no fee | | | |
Other-EU | £0 | £2,960 - £4,160 | £2,960 - £4,160
- eligible for no fee | | | |
Scottish | £1,008 | £2,960 - £4,160 | £3,968 - £5,168
- not eligible for no fee | | | |
Other-EU | £1,008 | £2,960 - £4,160 | £3,968 - £5,168
- not eligible for no fee | | | |
Overseas (i.e. non-EU) | £6,078 | £0 | £6,078
RUK | £1,008 | £0 | £1,008

4.1.7. It will be seen that the total income derived from an RUK student is far lower than the income derived from any other category of student and will in many cases be lower than the direct unit costs of course delivery.

4.1.8. While the numbers of RUK students in the College is small, and in effect the small number could be “subsidised” by the other categories of students, there is a matter of principle to be considered, and in the future the number of RUK students may increase.

4.1.9. By way of comparison, and to show the extent to which there is divergence in the sector as to the appropriate approach to adopt to non-advanced full-time RUK students, the following are the arrangements in two other large regional colleges:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other College 1</th>
<th>Fee</th>
<th>Credit-related income</th>
<th>Total Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RUK</td>
<td>£1,008</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£1,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other College 2</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.10. There are several options regarding full-time non-advanced RUK students:

1) One possible approach is to adopt a fee rate for non-advanced full-time RUK students that is equivalent to the combined fee and credit-related income for a Scottish student eligible for fee-waiver status – that is in the range £2,960 to £4,160 depending on the Band allocation of the programme and the number of taught credits.

2) An alternative approach would be to levy the same fee as is paid by “overseas” students – i.e. £6,078.

3) The third option would be to continue to levy the home fee of £1,008.

4.1.11. If a special higher fee rate is adopted for full-time RUK students, this could be used as the basis for setting part-time fee rates also, based on a pro-rata portion of the full-time fee.
4.2. Advanced full-time provision

4.2.1. Under SFC/Scottish Government rules, students recognized as domiciled in Scotland do not in most circumstances pay a fee for a full-time advanced level course – but the fee of £1,285 is nevertheless paid to the College on their behalf by the Students Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS). In addition the College draws down grant-in-aid funding for the “credits” of learning undertaken by the student. The number of funded “credits” on an advanced level course is in the case of this College nearly always 15.

4.2.2. As with non-advanced provision the value of each “credit” varies depending on the nature of the course – in a range from £185 to £360 – as shown above. However, we have no advanced level Band 4 activity, and so the actual range is £185 to £260.

4.2.3. Thus a main-stream full-time non-advanced student may generate income somewhere in the range between £2,775 (i.e. 15 x £185) and £3,900 (i.e. 15 x £260). This is in addition to the fee of £1,285, which in most cases is paid by SAAS rather than by the student.

4.2.4. Under EU rules, students from countries of the EU other than the UK (in this paper referred to as Other-EU) must be treated the same as Scottish students – i.e. in most circumstances the fee of £1,285 is paid by SAAS and the credit-related income to the College is the same as for a Scottish student.

4.2.5. In a few cases a Scottish or other EU students may not be eligible to have the fee paid by SAAS – in which case they pay the fee themselves – but the level of fee payable is the same as if it were paid by SAAS.

4.2.6. Under the “additional places” scheme, the College delivers HN provision funded not directly by SFC from the FE fund allocation, but funded by RGU from money provided for the purpose by SFC from the HE funding allocation. The fee paid by RGU to the College to deliver this activity is typically the equivalent of £3,000 for a full-time student – with no SAAS fee being claimable.

4.2.7. Students from overseas pay a fee as established by the individual college – in the case of this College the agreed fee is £10,817, irrespective of the number of taught “credits” and the nature of the provision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Fee payable to college</th>
<th>Credit-related income</th>
<th>Total income to college</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scottish - eligible for fee to be paid by SAAS</td>
<td>£1,285</td>
<td>£2,775 - £3,900</td>
<td>£4,060-£5,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-EU - eligible for fee to be paid by SAAS</td>
<td>£1,285</td>
<td>£2,775 - £3,900</td>
<td>£4,060-£5,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish - not eligible for fee to be paid by SAAS</td>
<td>£1,285</td>
<td>£2,775 - £3,900</td>
<td>£4,060-£5,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-EU - not eligible for fee to be paid by SAAS</td>
<td>£1,285</td>
<td>£2,775 - £3,900</td>
<td>£4,060-£5,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Additional places’ student</td>
<td>£5,155</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£5,155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas (ie non-EU)</td>
<td>£10,817</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£10,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUK</td>
<td>£1,285</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£1,285</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.8. It will be noted that as with full-time non-advanced students the total income derived from one RUK advanced level student is much lower than that from any other category of student.

4.2.9. As with non-advanced full-time RUK students there are various options with regard to fees from full-time advanced level RUK students:

1) One possible approach is to adopt a fee rate for advanced level full-time RUK students that is equivalent to the combined fee and credit-related income for a Scottish student – will be in the range £4,060 to £5,185, depending on the Band allocation of the programme and the number of taught credits.

2) An alternative approach would be to charge a fee equivalent to the income to the College for one student funded under the “additional places” arrangements – i.e. £5,000.

3) An alternative approach would be to levy the same fee as is paid by “overseas” students – i.e. £10,817.

4) Another option would be to continue to charge the home fee of £1,285.

4.2.10. If a special higher fee rate is adopted for full-time RUK students, this could be used as the basis for setting part-time fee rates also, based on a pro-rata portion of the full-time fee.

4.2.11. One further factor to consider in this context is the fee charged by a Scottish university for an RUK student. This is an issue because under the 2+2 arrangements a student who completes an HND may have an expectation of progressing to year 3 of a degree programme – and a sudden significant change of fee rate may be seen as unreasonable. Another way of looking at this is that if the College charges an RUK student a fee substantially less than that charged by a university for the equivalent level of provision it could be seen as initiating price competition. The fee typically charged for a year of study at a Scottish university by an RUK student is £9,000 – though a “4 for the price of 3” promotion is adopted in some cases so that the total fee for an RUK student for a (4-year) Scottish Honours degree is no more than for a (3-year) English Honours degree.

5. Summary

5.1. In the case of both non-advanced and advanced level full-time RUK students the current position is that the income derived by the College from other categories of students is such that it does not cover its share of the costs of delivery of the programme.

5.2. The Committee might choose to continue with that situation, or to adopt another fee rate that was more in line with the income derived from other categories of students, along the lines identified above.

6. Recommendation

6.1. It is recommended that the Committee consider the position regarding fees for RUK students on full-time College courses.
Students’ Association Update

1. **Introduction**
   1.1. The purpose of this paper is to enable the Committee to consider a report from the Presidents of the NESCol Students’ Association.

2. **Report from the Presidents**
   2.1. Attached as Appendix 1 to this paper is a report prepared by Karena Wetherall and Kirsty Anderson, Regional Presidents of the NESCol Students’ Association regarding recent activities.

3. **Recommendation**
   3.1. It is recommended that the Committee consider the contents of this report.

Rob Wallen
Principal

Elaine Hart
Vice Principal Human Resources
LEARNING AND TEACHING AND STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

Meeting of 17th May 2016

Students’ Association

1. Introduction

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to provide the committee with an update on the work of the Students’ Association (SA).

2. Background

2.1. Since the last meeting the SA has been busy with events and student engagement. The office was closed for two weeks due to the Easter Break.

3. Update

3.1. Student Engagement

3.1.1. We have had a range of opportunities to engage with the student body through our events and having presence on the campus, these are detailed in Section 3.3.

3.2. Elections

3.2.1.1. Elections are about to take place for 2016-2017 Sabbatical positions. Class representatives have been used as one of the mediums for raising awareness to other students and class representatives were used as a medium for opinion from the Student body on the voting process from a number of possible options presented. Nominations will close on 26th April 2016. Campaigning will run from 29th April to 10th of May when voting opens. The current Presidents will be able to update the Committee of who the Student Presidents for 2016/17 will be at the meeting.

3.3. Events: Events that have taken place align with the current desire in college to support Mental Health awareness and the involvement of the Student Association in these processes and procedures. The events also support the NUS desire to encourage Student voting in the forthcoming elections. These events are also seen as a mechanism for raising awareness of the Student Association to the Student Body and adding to the student experience.

3.3.1. Events that have been held since the last report:

3.3.1.1. Gallowgate held an Election Awareness Day. This event took on a life of its own and we liaised with Publicity and Marketing for additional help. The event concluded with students asking local MSP’s questions, and a number of students registering to vote on the day.

3.3.1.2. Gallowgate held a Welfare Event. We had a number of different stalls attending including the NHS and Bob’s Buddies, a therapy owl business. They have been involved in a number of events in Fraserburgh already and we hope they will attend future events.
3.3.1.3. Gallowgate held a Mental Health Day. There was a “Positive Thinking Board” where students could leave positive notes for others to read. There were a number of stalls with leaflets regarding mental health. We also borrowed mascot costumes, courtesy of RGU, so that we could give “free hugs” to the students.

3.3.2. That are planned:
3.3.2.1. Gallowgate is holding a Retro Gaming Day on the 25th April 2016. Proceeds of the day will go to the Make-A-Wish Foundation. The day is a chance for the SA to show that taking a short break whilst studying is good for you. This is also a chance to gather interest to see if setting up a Retro Gaming Club for the 2016/17 session would be a good idea.
3.3.2.2. Fraserburgh will be holding a Harry Potter themed event on 9th May 2016. This will be the last SA event of the Academic Year, and a chance for students to have a fun day at College, as well as raise money for Bob’s Buddies.

3.4. Conferences
3.4.1. Seven delegates attended NUS Scotland Conference in Dundee. All delegates found the event interesting and gave everyone a better insight into what issues are currently facing the student population of Scotland. Everyone who attended was asked to complete a short form in order to properly show the usefulness of the event.
3.4.2. We also had a number of delegates attend NUS Liberation Conferences during the Easter Break. They will also be asked to complete the form mentioned above, as well as give a brief oral report at the next Executive Committee Meeting on their campus.

3.5. Annual General Meeting (“AGM”)
3.5.1. At the time of writing, planning for the Association’s AGM is underway. Both Presidents have been liaising with each other to try and narrow down a list of possible dates and get the AGM planned. Last year there was not one and we wish to set a precedent in which a large number of students are involved, and all campuses have representation. This will be a chance for all students to voice their opinions and will also reinforce that we may be many campuses, but are one College.

3.6. Any Other Information
3.6.1. The Students’ Association Sabbaticals and SAM have recently met with Stuart McPhail from Education Scotland in connection with Action Learning to look at effective mechanisms for capturing student feedback and opinion on key and wider college curricular issues. This will form the basis of a strategy and Action Plan for the Association for future, looking at processes that are likely to involve Class Representatives. This will be discussed further with Senior Management and involve further discussion and clarification on management of the Class Representatives.

4. Recommendation
4.1. It is recommended that the Committee consider the report provided by the Students’ Association

Karena Wetherall
Regional President
Education and Welfare

Kirsty Anderson
Regional President
Education and Activities

North East Scotland College, Room EG4, Gallowgate City Campus, Aberdeen, AB25 1BN
01224 612024 | 01224 612313
Student Activity AY2015-16

1. Introduction
   1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with information on the current status of student activity for the academic year 2015-16.

2. Background
   2.1 For the purposes of securing funding from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) College activity is measured in credits, with the credits arranged in 5 price bands, which provide a method of aggregating student activity on different types of course and different modes of attendance in such a way that the duration of each programme and its resource demands are approximately reflected in the aggregated totals.

   2.2 Ordinarily, if colleges fall short of target the SFC would require part of grant-in-aid for the year to be repaid.

   2.3 The College monitors the level of enrolments and rates of student retention throughout the year, as well as the projected level of additional activity. These data are important in allowing the College to ensure that activity will at least meet required target levels. A low level of early withdrawal enables the College to secure its SFC funding at an early stage in the year and allows for the curriculum offer to be adjusted to reduce costs in the latter part of the year.

3. Current Activity Levels AY2015-16
   3.1 The figures noted below and presented in Appendix 1 should only be read as an approximation of the current position. The final calculation of credits can only be made at the end of the academic year and is dependent on: the final tally of enrolments for all types of activity across the whole year and student retention rates. As such the data below are indicative.

   3.2 The Regional Outcome Agreement established with the SFC for AY2015-16 sets the College’s target for student activity at 139,549 credits.

   3.3 At the time of writing this report, the College activity level is currently sitting at 140,266 credits – a surplus of 717 credits against the SFC target. A further 3,697 credits are still planned to be generated through Business Community Development (BCD) in order to reach their target. This planned provision will give us a total of 143,963 – a surplus of 4,414 credits. Action will be taken to reduce the amount of additional activity once it has been established that all of the “actual” 140,226 credits to date are admissible.

   3.4 It will be noted that the College’s activity across the 5 credit price bands is close to the profile set by Scottish Funding Council.

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

Rob Wallen    John Davidson
Principal    Vice Principal – Learning and Quality
### Full Time Enrolments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Actual to-date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School of Creative Industries, Computing and Business Enterprise</td>
<td>2,830</td>
<td>2,933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Engineering, Science and Technology</td>
<td>1,501</td>
<td>1,522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Service Industries</td>
<td>2,379</td>
<td>2,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and Community Development</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,710</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,820</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Full Time Retention to-date:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
<th>Early withdrawal</th>
<th>% Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School of Creative Industries, Computing and Business Enterprise</td>
<td>2,933</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Engineering, Science and Technology</td>
<td>1,522</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Service Industries</td>
<td>2,355</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and Community Development</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,820</strong></td>
<td><strong>375</strong></td>
<td><strong>95%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Part Time Retention to-date:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
<th>Early withdrawal</th>
<th>% Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School of Creative Industries, Computing and Business Enterprise</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Engineering, Science and Technology</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Service Industries</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and Community Development</td>
<td>6,930</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11,089</strong></td>
<td><strong>224</strong></td>
<td><strong>98%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Early retention (ALL):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
<th>Early withdrawal</th>
<th>% Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School of Creative Industries, Computing and Business Enterprise</td>
<td>3,510</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Engineering, Science and Technology</td>
<td>4,222</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Service Industries</td>
<td>3,152</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and Community Development</td>
<td>6,940</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17,909</strong></td>
<td><strong>599</strong></td>
<td><strong>97%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Performance Indicators</td>
<td>Students Enrolled (Actual)</td>
<td>Early student withdrawal (withdrawn students as a % of enrolled students)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FT Enrolments</td>
<td>6,935</td>
<td>6,872</td>
<td>6,245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT Enrolments</td>
<td>12,240</td>
<td>11,863</td>
<td>6,371</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credits:--</th>
<th>Target Credits</th>
<th>Actual To-date</th>
<th>Planned Provision</th>
<th>Projected Outturn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School of Creative Industries, Computing and Business Enterprise</td>
<td>44,108</td>
<td>46,308</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Engineering, Science and Technology</td>
<td>37,115</td>
<td>38,861</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>38,861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Service Industries</td>
<td>45,337</td>
<td>44,680</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>44,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and Community Development</td>
<td>13,326</td>
<td>9,836</td>
<td>3,490</td>
<td>13,326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Maritime</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>140,664</td>
<td>140,266</td>
<td>3,697</td>
<td>143,963</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Projected Outturn | 143,963 |

Total SFC Target [incl. 3,035 ESF] | 139,549 |

The College’s profile of provision in 2014-15, and the SFC assumption about the profile in 2015-16 to date are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014-15</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Profile</td>
<td></td>
<td>Actual (as at 18/4/16)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 1</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16.60%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 2</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>45.80%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 3</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>33.30%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 4</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 5</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3.60%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Quality Performance Indicators

1. Introduction
   1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with information on key performance indicators relating to the Quality function.

2. Lesson Observation
   2.1 In the period 01 September 2015 to 18 April 2016 lesson observations processes were reviewed to take into account the self-evaluation requirements implied by the adoption of the Scottish Funding Council Action Learning Project.

   2.2 The revised approach to lesson observation is now well progressed and a total of 60 observations have taken place of College employed staff to date. This will continue in Block 2.

   2.3 Lesson observations are being carried out on agency teaching staff as previously and remain distinct from that of permanent staff. A total of 15 observations have been carried out for 15 Protocol visiting lecturers by the College internal observer. In addition, 20 external observations have been carried out by Protocol.

Protocol National Lecturers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acceptable</td>
<td>100% (42)</td>
<td>96% (48)</td>
<td>100% (31)</td>
<td>98% (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Required</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4% (2)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2% [1]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. External Verification Visits
   3.1 External verification is carried out by all awarding bodies. It is an important quality assurance function, the purpose of which is to ensure the integrity of College assessment decisions and internal moderation (internal mechanism for checking integrity of assessments).

   3.2 If an external verifier is not satisfied with the internal assessment and moderation in a college, he or she can recommend that the awarding body places sanctions on the college. These can range from minor recommendations for improvement through to suspension of enrolment/certification of candidates or ultimately, withdrawal of approval to run courses.
3.3 The following table shows the number of external verification visits carried out in the period 01 September 2015 to 18 April 2016:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awarding Body</th>
<th>Number of Verification Checks</th>
<th>Number of Sanctions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SQA</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDI</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City and Guilds</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCFE</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOCN</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIPD</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VTCT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Development Network</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIIAB</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIQ</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>0 (0%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18 External Verification visits are planned for the rest of the academic year.

4. Student Engagement

4.1 College managers and Quality Team staff regularly meet students to discuss their learning experience with a view to identifying improvements.

4.2 Student discussion groups provide an opportunity for managers to meet groups of students in open agenda meetings to discuss their learning experience. Student focus groups are run by Quality Assurance and Improvement staff and concentrate on identified topics. These focus groups will be carried out between January 2016 and June 2016. To date 26 focus groups have taken place.

4.3 The programme of student focus groups in 2015-16 covers the following topics:

- BYOD – 0 focus groups have taken place to date
- Learning and Teaching – 17 focused groups have taken place
- Timetabling - 8 have taken place.

4.4 The First Impressions Survey was conducted and responses were well received from 4,808 students in AY2015-16. The results of the summary questions are presented below, along with the AY2014-15 result. At the time of writing this report the second part of the Survey is underway and the results will be presented at the next meeting of the Committee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy coming to College</td>
<td>2,842</td>
<td>4,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, I am satisfied with the College</td>
<td>2,842</td>
<td>4,664</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Complaints

5.1 The College monitors all complaints. These are investigated internally and responses provided by appropriate departmental heads.

5.2 The College has received 100 complaints in the period 01 September 2015 to 18 April 2016. At the same period last academic year we had 117. The following table gives details of the complaints with comparisons for the previous two whole years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>2013-14</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CP1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP2</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td><strong>167</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Compliments and Thanks

6.1 The College receives many expressions of thanks from students, employers and visitors.

6.2 The following table gives details of those received in the period 01 September 2015 to 18 April 2016 compared with previous two years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>2013-14</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CP1 Timetabling arrangements/course cancellations/change of lecturer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP2 Delivery of Courses</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP3 Standards of equipment or accommodation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP4 Information provided about, or communication relating to courses</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP5 Course content</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP6 Assessment and/or certification arrangements or outcomes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP7 Booking/enrolment administration by sectors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP8 Arrangements relating to interviews/appointments</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP9 Behaviour of student within the College</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP10 Libraries/Information Technology Centre</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP11 Discrimination - Sex/race/disability/religion or belief/sexual orientation/age</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP12 Behaviour of staff</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP13 Arrangements relating to work placement/experience</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS1 Equipment/rooms – non course related</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS2 Provision of general college information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS3 Financial matters – invoices/refunds/payments</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS4 Bursary administration</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS5 Health and Safety Issues</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS6 College Events</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS8 Guidance/Student Support</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS1 Catering</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS2 Security</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS4 Transport</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS5 Janitorial provision</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS6 Buildings and cleaning services</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS10 IT Services</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS11 Car Parking</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Recommendation

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

Rob Wallen    John Davidson
Principal    Vice Principal Learning & Quality
Student Support Funds

1. **Introduction**
   1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with information on amounts allocated for various support funds and comparative spend of AY2015-16 and AY2014-15.

2. **Background**
   2.1 Funds allocated directly to the College.
   The College receives a range of student support funds mainly from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) but also from the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS). These funds can be grouped as follows:
   - bursary funds to support eligible Further Education (FE) students
   - discretionary funds to support both eligible FE and Higher Education (HE) students
   - childcare funds to support both eligible FE and HE students, now incorporating the Lone Parent Childcare Grant.

   2.2 Funds controlled centrally by SFC (as opposed to being allocated directly) but administered by the College on their behalf:
   - Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) programme.

3. **Bursary Funds – general rules**
   3.1 Both the student and their course of study must be deemed eligible before they can be considered for an award.

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

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

   3.4 Spend on overall study costs must not exceed 15 per cent of the College’s initial bursary allocation for AY2015-16.

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

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

   3.7 Colleges may spend bursary funds on childcare.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Programme

5.1 EMA forms part of the Scottish Government’s agenda of encouraging access to, and participation in post-16 learning by young people from low-income families.

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

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

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

5.5 Currently, eligibility of £30 per week will be for those with a household income of up to £20,351 and income of up to £22,403 for households with more than one dependent child. From the 01 January 2016 there were changes to the income threshold meaning a family with one dependent child earning up to £24,421 would now be eligible, an increase of £4,070 on previous levels. For a family with more than one dependent child, the increase was £4,481 up to £26,884.

5.6 Payment is dependent on 100 per cent weekly attendance and progress towards agreed learning targets. Students are however allowed up to 10 authorised absences over the course of the year without this impacting on their 100 per cent target.
6. Disbursement of Funds in AY2015-16

6.1 Information on the disbursement of funds up to 18 April 2016 is given in the tables in the appendix to this report. Comparative figures have been provided at the end of last year. No funds have yet been vired between funds.

6.2 There are three main bursary payment runs left for this academic year - 18 April, 18 May and the 15 June. The College will still continue to schedule ad hoc runs when required.

To date, the bursary payments have been:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Payment Month</th>
<th>Amount Paid in Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>£591,159.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>£567,056.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>£707,947.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>£595,160.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>£568,146.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>£554,084.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>£541,655.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>£487,836.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April (as of 19 April 2016)</td>
<td>£443,042.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3 If payments continue as anticipated then the College can expect the student support funds to be overspent by some £375k. As well as payments made directly to students this likely overspend of £375k includes a significant element of students-related study expenses and printing costs amounting to £153k which has previously been allocated to central costs and which has now been charged to bursary. In addition a further £92k costs have been charged to the Bursary Fund to cover costs associated with chartered bus services for students travelling to Fraserburgh and Altens as well other mini-bus usage for student-related transport.

7. SFC Allocation 2015-16

7.1 Allocations from SFC and SAAS have, this academic year, been significantly reduced by over £440k from the previous year.

7.2 As noted above the present commitment for Bursary and Childcare payments currently outweighs our allocation. As well as a consequence of the SFC allocation reduction, this is be due to:

- Additional weeks of support paid to students this year compared to 2014/15 (£130k)
- BYOD support (£225k)
- Increased entitlement to all Bursary-awarded students of approximately £1 per week (£80k).

7.3 Fundamentally, as table 3 within the attached appendix indicates, the College is paying considerably more students this year than last.
7.4 Weekly reviews of commitment against allocation are carried out, and will be continued, to monitor the College’s position so that any required action to protect the College and its students is taken as quickly as possible.

Actions already taken to reduce the projected commitment include:

- Allocating £233,000 of College depreciation funds to help off-set the overspend;
- Finalising any adjustments to take into account the BYOD project;
- Investigating the potential to vire funds between underspent funds to overspent funds following Guidance issued;
- Seeking permission from SFC to vire further funds if required;
- Assessing any future students under the age of 19 for EMA payments only;
- Assessing students for course fee waiver only where they are being invoiced for course fees;
- Ensuring awards for withdrawn students are processed as quickly as possible;
- Restricting the number of withheld payments which can be re-instated per student;
- Closing applications for discretionary and childcare funds;
- Implementing a closing date for Funding applications;
- Investigating the possibility of ending bursary payments sooner by finishing courses earlier.

8. AY2016-17

8.1 At the time of writing this report, the College still awaits information on its allocation of student support funds for AY2016-17.

8.2 Whilst the allocation of support funds is critical to the College’s ability to meet its commitment within allocation the Student Funding Team has, across campuses, already discussed how it will improve approaches to the disbursement of student support funds for the following academic year, applications for which can be submitted from 09 May, 2016. Some of these approaches include:

- Improving assessment consistency amongst Team members when calculating bursary and discretionary awards;
- Creating a bank of exemplar applications to assist Team members when determining awards;
- Improve application turn-around time beyond the significant improvements made for AY2015-16;
- Updating student funding software in order to ensure that supporting evidence from prospective students is submitted and processed earlier;
- Maintaining a more consistent approach when re-instating held payments and ensuring that strict adherence to student attendance criteria is maintained throughout the year;
- Ensuring the policies and procedures pertaining to student support funds are clear and disseminated to all relevant College staff;
- Ensuring that all overpayments for bursary, childcare and discretionary funds are reclaimed from the student at the earliest possible opportunity;
- Conducting regular meetings with Guidance Tutors and Student Advisors to support a more consistent approach to advising on, and allocating, student support funds;
- Reducing study costs per student in line with revised SFC Guidance i.e. 6% to 7% rather than this year’s 15%;
- Reporting progress of actual payments, commitment and allocation to SMT on a fortnightly basis;
- Reducing the time students spend in College from 37 weeks to 36 weeks for AY2016-17.
9. **Recommendation**

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

Rob Wallen  
Principal

Neil Cowie  
Vice Principal Business Services
Table 1 – Funds Available

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Funds</th>
<th>Funds Available £000 2015-16</th>
<th>Funds Available £000 2014-15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FE Bursary (Inc. £301k ESF)</td>
<td>6,813</td>
<td>6,908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FE Discretionary</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FE / HE Childcare (Inc. LPCG)</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>1,006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7,967</td>
<td>8,412</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| HE Discretionary              | 200                           | 210                           |
| EMA                           | 210                           | 611                           |
| Totals                        | 8,377                         | 9,233                         |

Table 2 – Committed Funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Funds</th>
<th>Funds Available £000s to date</th>
<th>Funds Committed £000s to date</th>
<th>Funds available not yet committed £000s to date</th>
<th>Funds Available £000s</th>
<th>Funds Committed £000s</th>
<th>Funds available not yet committed £000s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FE Bursary (Inc. £301k ESF)</td>
<td>6,813</td>
<td>6,980</td>
<td>-167</td>
<td>6,908</td>
<td>6,171</td>
<td>737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FE Discretionary</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FE / HE Childcare (Inc. LPCG)</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>-238</td>
<td>1,006</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7,967</td>
<td>8,355</td>
<td>-388</td>
<td>8,412</td>
<td>7,452</td>
<td>960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE Discretionary</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMA</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>8,377</td>
<td>8,752</td>
<td>-375</td>
<td>9,122</td>
<td>8,145</td>
<td>977</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 – Supported Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015-16 Applications Received &amp; Assessed</th>
<th>2015-16 Applications being paid to date</th>
<th>2014-15 Received and Assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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North East Scotland College Students' Association

Conditions of Grant

1. Introduction
   1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide the Committee with an updated copy of the Conditions of Grant to agree for the Students' Association.

2. Conditions of Grant
   2.1 At its meeting of 26 January 2016 the Committee agreed a grant of £80,000 to the Association to support Model D.

   2.2 The Committee also asked that Conditions of Grant were produced and these were provided to the meeting of 15 March 2016.

   2.3 At this meeting the Committee requested that an addition was made to the Conditions of Grant that the Students' Association should provide quarterly financial statements.

   2.4 The updated Conditions of Grant are attached at Appendix 1 with the change highlighted in yellow at Section 4.

3. Recommendation
   3.1 The Committee is asked to review and, if so minded, agree the Conditions of Grant.

Rob Wallen
Principal

Elaine Hart
Vice Principal Human Resources
1. The Board of Management has attached conditions to the payment of grant to the North East Scotland College Students’ Association. Acceptance of grant by the Students’ Association demonstrates that the Association agrees to comply with the conditions set out below.

2. The Student Association Trustee Board shall establish and maintain procedures for the recording of all financial transactions, including:
   • The purchase of goods for sale;
   • The sale of goods;
   • The receipt of funds for facilities/equipment, and;
   • The security of the Association’s assets.

3. The Student Association Trustee Board is responsible for ensuring that these procedures are routinely and consistently implemented.

4. The Students Association shall provide the Learning, Teaching and Student Services Committee with quarterly financial statements in accordance with Schedule 5 (5.12) of the Constitution.

5. The Student Association shall ensure that a Registered Auditor undertakes an annual external audit of its financial statements. The Student Association Trustee Board shall provide externally audited accounts within four months of the end of the financial year to the Secretary of the Board of Management for presentation to the Board of Management.

6. The Student Association Trustee Board shall present a budget income and expenditure account and balance sheet for the subsequent financial year to the Board of Management as part of the Association’s request for funding for that year.

7. The Student Association Trustee Board shall establish and operate separate standing orders for meetings of the Executive and for meetings of the Association. Standing Orders shall include requirements relating to:
   • The frequency and conduct of meetings of the Association and Trustee Board;
   • Timescales and process for drawing up agenda;
   • Timescale for distribution of agenda and papers; and;
   • Process and timescale for preparation and distribution of records of meetings.
8. The Student Association Trustee Board is responsible for the proper implementation of standing orders.

9. The College may suspend payment of grant if the Students’ Association does not comply with Conditions of Grant.

March 2016
Reserved Item of Business - Strictly Private and Confidential
Update on College Provision in North Aberdeenshire

1. Introduction
1.1. The purpose of this paper is to update the Committee on developments in relation to College provision in the northern part of Aberdeenshire. A version of this paper will also be considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 17 May 2016.

2. Background
2.1. At its meeting on 15 March 2016 this Committee considered a paper relating to College learning centres.

2.2. Subsequent to the meeting a paper was prepared and sent to Maria Walker, the Director of Education, and Vincent Docherty, the Head of Secondary Education for Aberdeenshire Council.

2.3. A copy of the paper is attached as Appendix 1.

2.4. Attached as Appendix 2 is a map showing the distribution of activity across the College’s campuses and learning centres.

3. Response from Aberdeenshire Council
3.1. The response received indicated that the proposal in the paper represents an exciting opportunity for the community of Banff, and that the Council would initiate discussions between relevant officials of the authority and the College to agree first steps in developing the provision within the Deveron Centre.

3.2. This, then, provides an opportunity for the College to relocate its activity in that part of Aberdeenshire to the new Deveron Centre.

4. Recommendation
4.1. It is recommended that the Committee consider the proposal to relocate College activity in the Macduff/Banff area to the Deveron Centre at Banff Academy.

Rob Wallen
Principal
Update on North East Scotland College provision in North Aberdeenshire

1. The College’s general approach

1.1. North East Scotland College (NESCol) serves the needs of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, providing a wide range of vocational programmes covering a broad spectrum of skills and knowledge.

1.2. Approximately 35% of all school leavers in the region progress to NESCol when they leave school (whether at the end of S4 or S5 or S6) as full-time students.

1.3. Many others attend College on a block-release or day-release basis as part of their employment or apprenticeship.

1.4. Many “adult returners” also join College full-time programmes to make a change of career direction or to up-skill or to take advantage of opportunities that they were not able to avail themselves of when they were younger.

1.5. In addition the College has a wide range of continuing professional development provision available on a part-time or evening basis.

1.6. The College also provides open, distance, work-based and blended learning for those who cannot attend College-based classes on a regular basis (for example those employed in the offshore workforce).

1.7. The College also has a wide programme of community-based provision, including provision to help individuals back into employment – such as Employability Fund programmes, funded by Skills Development Scotland, and programmes for hard-to-reach individuals, delivered in partnership with Aberdeen Foyer.

1.8. The College has increasingly in the past few years also provided programmes for young people while still at school – either vocationally specific provision (such as Skills for Work and National Certificate and National Progression Awards) or additional academic subjects not available within the school – such as Higher Psychology. These courses are sometimes delivered on school premises and sometimes are available for young people who travel to a College campus (either one of the main campuses in Aberdeen or Fraserburgh or one of the College’s learning centres in Ellon, Inverurie and Macduff).

1.9. This programme has now been developed further in order to fulfill the Scottish Government policy in relation to Developing the Young Workforce – providing opportunities for all young people in school to undertake a vocationally-specific training alongside other learning. In this context the College, in partnership with the local authorities in North East Scotland has bid for and been awarded funding to develop Foundation Apprenticeships. The College’s intention over the medium term is to work with Aberdeenshire
education authority to develop a range of vocational provision for each cluster of schools in the area, based around identified hub schools.

1.10. An example of a regional map to show how schools and the College provide a range of progression routes in one of these subject areas – Computing/IT – is attached (Appendix 3). It shows not only the types of full-time provision available in schools, the College and local universities, but also the school link Foundation Apprenticeship provision and the Modern Apprenticeship and Graduate/Advanced Apprenticeship routes.

2. **Investment on the Fraserburgh campus**

2.1. At the time of the merger that created North East Scotland College the Fraserburgh campus of the former Banff & Buchan College had recently undergone a programme of refurbishing and rebuilding which replaced about two thirds of the original campus with new and improved facilities. However, approximately one third of the campus – the parts concerned with Engineering, Motor Vehicle, Construction, Art & Design and Hospitality – remained unimproved.

2.2. Following merger, North East Scotland College has invested money to upgrade the remaining parts of the campus. Already some £2m has been spent since merger to upgrade the mechanical engineering and fabrication and welding workshops as well as to refurbish the training restaurant and the areas used for art and design.

2.3. A programme of work is now underway to rebuild and extend the areas used for electrical and electronic engineering, for motor vehicle and construction trades (brick-laying, painting & decorating and joinery) and to create, for the first time on the Fraserburgh campus, science laboratories.

2.4. This £8m project will complete the refurbishment of the Fraserburgh campus and provide much improved facilities for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) subjects.

3. **Future provision for school pupils in Fraserburgh**

3.1. The College will offer an increased range of provision for school pupils in the northern part of Aberdeenshire – those of Fraserburgh Academy and others who can be transported to Fraserburgh.

3.2. The intention is that pupils from schools within easy reach of the campus will be able to access provision there one or more days a week as part of their overall school programme. This will include science provision.

4. **Other College provision in the north of Aberdeenshire**

4.1. The College will also provide opportunities for pupils in other schools. This will include the Foundation Apprenticeship in IT/Computing which is already being offered at Mintlaw Academy for pupils of that school and of Turriff Academy.

4.2. The College is in negotiation with Aberdeenshire Education Authority to move into part of the new Deveron Centre on the campus of Banff Academy. This will provide a venue for delivering College programmes for school pupils from Banff Academy – being more convenient than the current
Macduff learning centre because of being on the Academy’s own campus – and for pupils of other schools who can be transported there.

4.3. The venue will also provide much better accommodation than the current Macduff learning centre for community provision for adults. The uptake at the Macduff learning centre has been very disappointing in recent years despite wide publicity. An analysis of the home addresses who have enrolled on courses at the Macduff learning centre shows that the highest number come from Turriff, with Banff as the second largest number and Macduff as only the third.

4.4. The Deveron Centre will therefore be a good location for College provision both for school pupils and for the wider community, and because it will have much reduced recurrent running costs will provide a more sustainable future for such provision.

4.5. The arrangement will be similar to those in Ellon and Inverurie, in both of which locations the College learning centre is on the school campus.

Rob Wallen
Principal
North East Scotland College
North East Scotland College

WSUMS Activity per College Centre (AY2014-15)
Reserved Item of Business - Strictly Private and Confidential
SCQF Level 7

1. Introduction
   1.1. The purpose of this paper is to give the Committee the opportunity to consider the options that exist in terms of delivery of learning at SCQF level 7.

2. SCQF Level 7
   2.1. There has been recent discussion as to whether there should be a review of how learning at SCQF Level 7 is delivered.

   2.2. Attached as Appendix 1 is a detailed paper that examines the issues and the options.

3. Recommendation
   3.1. It is recommended that the Committee consider the information in this paper.

Rob Wallen
Principal
VERSION 06 April 2016

CONFIDENTIAL

SCQF level 7 provision – a concept paper

Background 1: the SCQF

The SCQF is predicated on the notion that within a given field of study/subject area a linear progression can be identified within which the complexity of the concepts and skills of the subject can be disaggregated and stratified into more or less discrete sub-sets.

There is, of course, nothing new in this. Learning has for a long time been arranged on this basis: O level before A level, Ordinary Grade before Higher Grade; first year of the Cambridge University Mathematical tripos before the second year of the Cambridge University Mathematical tripos, Bachelors Degree before Masters Degree, Grade 1 Violin before Grade 2 Violin -- etc etc

The added dimension provided by the SCQF (and similar systems) is to make this hierarchical sequencing more overt across the whole range of available qualifications and to define in a clearer and consistent way the underpinning skill sets that are required for, and are developed by, participation in each stage.

The SCQF is more accessible than many other similar systems in that each “level” corresponds broadly to a “normal” or notional year-long phase of full-time study – though of course we have to allow for the fact that some individuals will take longer to proceed through a certain phase of learning, and that others may accelerate their progression or even miss a phase without any detriment; people are not all the same and one person’s year of learning might take another person several years or no time at all; however, the SCQF is a standardized framework around which exceptions can easily be accommodated and indeed can be quantified.

Background 2: the Scottish education system

The Scottish system that operated in the 1950s and 1960s was that entry to university was based on passing a certain number of Higher Grade subjects (“Highers”) – which were taken when the individual was typically aged 16 or 17 -- and that after sitting Highers an individual would progress straight to university to undertake a 4-year degree programme.

Compared with the system in England, the young person spent a year less in secondary school (and achieved qualifications that were less advanced than the A levels in England) and spent a year longer at university, starting at a lower point. Crudely speaking, Highers were the equivalent of the first year of an A level and the first year of a 4-year Scottish Honours degree was the equivalent of the second year of an A level programme.
The two systems had different transition points between sectors, but had the same end destination.

Because of issues of age and maturity, the norm then became for young people to remain a further year in school – remaining into a 6th year. To fill their time they undertook a Certificate of Sixth Year Studies (CSYS) programme – in practice the qualification had little or no currency, because university entry entitlement was still defined in terms of a number of subjects at particular grades at Higher level – though in the case of some high demand subjects (such as medicine) CSYS could be the “extra mile” that differentiated one candidate from another.

In due course, CSYS qualifications were replaced by Advanced Highers, and these have definitely become recognized as being an almost essential requirement for those hoping to pursue a career in medicine\(^1\). Achievement of Advanced Highers can also be a differential factor in applications for other high demand courses within Scotland. They can also be critical in applications for courses in RUK universities (where a three-year degree rather than a four-year degree is commonplace). However it is still the case that having Advanced Higher (SCQF level 7) qualifications does not generally lead on to an SCQF level 8 course in Scotland (such as year 2 of a Scottish 4-year degree or year 2 of an HND) but only to a SCQF level 7 course (such as year 1 of a 4-year Scottish degree or year 1 of an HND). As such there is a perceived inefficiency in the system – ie a perception that the individual is marking time for a year, and could end up duplicating what has been done previously.

In practice, therefore, for many of the more academically able but less aspirational Scottish students, the “sixth year” at school can appear to be “wasted”. In some cases, either an individual fails to complete (or underperforms on) Advanced Highers (as they are offered entry to a 4-year degree based on their Highers and have no instrumental motivation to apply themselves further on the Advanced Higher studies) or the individual having applied himself or herself assiduously to the Advanced Highers finds that year 1 of university involves an element of repetition of what they know already and may become bored and lazy.

A contributory factor to this situation (and/or a result of this situation) is that many Authorities do not offer a coherent programme of Advanced Highers, because the delivery is not centralised across the Authority but is still delivered by individual schools or small clusters of schools; the result of this is either that there is an insufficient range of subjects available to an individual for the programme to be meaningful in terms of progression, and/or that the delivery is not properly resourced (using teachers who have little experience of teaching at this level and/or allocating less hours than is really needed for the course as the group sizes are so small that more hours cannot be justified/afforded) for the experience to be stimulating or productive.\(^2\)

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1. And this is presumably why AH science subjects have so much more consistent uptake than arts subjects

2. Similarly, those who achieve HNC qualifications (at SCQF level 7) may find they have to enter year 1 of a related Scottish degree programme (at SCQF level 7) rather than at year 2; and those with an HND (an SCQF level 8 qualification) may have to enter year 2 of a related Scottish degree programme (at SCQF level 8) rather than at year 3 (SCQF level 9)
As a result of these various factors, Advanced Highers are seen as having much lower status than Highers which continue to be seen (and referred to) as the “Gold Standard” – and that in turn means that there is no great incentive to improve the delivery system for these qualifications.

This problem can of course be avoided if an individual leaves school after achieving Higher qualifications and moves to a college to undertake an HNC or HND and then progresses into the relevant year (year 2 or year 3) of a degree programme where there is effective articulation; while such articulation arrangements are not available everywhere the approach is increasingly being seen as a normal, rather than an exceptional, one, especially in North East Scotland.

So, the system is not completely “broken” and works well for many individuals in many places.

However, all “sectors” of education (schools, colleges, universities) are competing for a share of the same limited and increasingly constrained public funds. In this context, any unnecessary duplication is in effect a waste of precious resources. It can also arguably be in some cases a waste of private resources – both time and money – as young people can sometimes spend a year longer in education to achieve an Honours degree than is needed (thereby incurring both an additional year of living costs and losing a year of earnings potential).

In other words, it is important that we do not create a two-tier approach that becomes socially exclusive – by making progression direct into university more difficult for those who do not achieve enough Highers in S5 for entry into university.

In the following section are outlined a number of approaches which can be adopted. As will be seen these are not mutually exclusive and it is likely -- or even, scandalously, in some universities may have to enter year 1 of a related degree programme.

(Please note the use of the phrase “related degree programme” – ie where the HNC/D covered more or less the same subject material and skills as the degree programme; it cannot apply if the content match is not there; it is not just a question of credit volume and level, but also of subject content.)
that whatever changes arise in the system will still leave a “mixed model” of delivery.

It must be emphasized, therefore, that these options are related only to the special case where an individual duplicates an SCQF level by undertaking SCQF7 at school and then moving onto a 4 year degree (SCQF levels 7-10) (or less commonly a HNC (SCQF level 7) or HND (SCQF levels 7-8) programme). There are many effective existing arrangements that can continue without any change.

Possible approaches

For those who at school have achieved at SCQF level 6 (ie Highers) in S5 the following are options:

1) Pupils who achieve sufficient Highers in S5 progress directly to a Scottish university rather than spending a sixth year at school

Advantages: it avoids the often ‘wasted’ 6th year at school

Disadvantages: young people aged under 18 are seen by universities – and parents – as being too young to be able properly to adjust to the social demands of modern university life; this would mean that the section of the age cohort who are academically most able and/or have been to the highest performing schools would follow a path different from those who achieve the required number of Highers over two years (and depending on what the alternatives are those who achieve over two years might not have a choice between university or college but might find that college is their only option) so that this might perpetuate social divisions rather than reducing them; if this happened the numbers remaining at school to undertake Advanced Highers (for example so that they could gain entry to a Medicine degree or a degree course in an RUK university) might be completely non-viable and (for state school pupils) social and geographically mobility may be even more constrained.

2) Pupils who achieve sufficient Highers in S5 undertake Advanced Highers in year 6, but with the Advanced Highers given enhanced currency value – as a result of two developments:
   a) an education authority develops a proper systematic approach to the delivery of Advanced Highers. This could take the form of providing one (or more) dedicated center(s) for delivering Advanced Highers in the authority area (either run by the local authority or offered by another education provider or consortium) so that reasonable class sizes can be achieved and suitable staffing allocated. (In fact it could be that an authority developed a specific centre for delivering both Highers and Advanced Highers)
   b) all Scottish universities move to a model where Advanced Highers are the normal required entry qualifications and restructure degree programmes to that end (ie develop three-year degree programmes designed to cater for those who have achieved three relevant Advanced Higher subjects)
Advantages: it avoids the sometimes ‘wasted’ 6th year at school; it concentrates resources and thereby saves money; education authorities can continue to provide the close pastoral support that 17 year olds need

Disadvantages: questioning by universities whether Advanced Higher subjects will be equally demanding as degree year 1 is now; the mismatch between what the Advanced Higher subjects cover and what the first year of the university degree covers, especially in specialist subject areas; questioning by universities whether the quality of teaching of/learning from Advanced Highers in schools will be equivalent to the teaching of/learning from that of degree year 1 is now; there may be a query about what happens to those who fail to achieve Highers in year 5 and whether it is unfair that they would not have access to Advanced Highers and therefore direct entry to a three year degree like those who do (but they can still progress if option 2 and/or 3 is available); the viability of this option may be greater in some geographical areas of concentrated population than in more rural areas (eg it may suit Aberdeen City more than Aberdeenshire); the move to a “two-year Highers” approach may mean this is not feasible for many – and if the norm became entry with Advanced Highers those who had not achieved at that level at school might be denied opportunities for progression to university

3) Pupils who achieve sufficient Highers (SCQF level 6) in year 5 leave school and go to a college to gain an HND (SCQF levels 7 and 8) where a suitable one is available, and then progress to what becomes a 2-year Honours degree (SCQF levels 8-10) (ie following the existing “2+2” articulation pathway) NB it should be noted that success rates of students articulating into year 3 from an HND are as high as for those joining year 1 of degree programmes

Advantages: extremely cost effective (no duplication and the cost of a year of HN delivery by a college is much lower than the cost of delivery of AH or degree programmes); the College environment is different from that of the university – arguably providing greater support and less temptation

Disadvantages: (initially at least) rejection by aspirational parents of the notion that colleges are an acceptable alternative to universities for delivery of learning at SCQF level 7 and 8; (initially at least) rejection by young people of the notion that colleges are an acceptable alternative socially to universities as an immediate post-school destination; rejection by universities of the notion that HND is equivalent to degree years 1 and 2; there are not HND programmes that link into every degree; it may be a perception that not all colleges deliver HNDs equally well so what already works well in some places may never work in other places; vested interests in schools, education authorities and universities may oppose this; the move to a “two-year Higher” approach may work against this

4) Pupils who achieve sufficient Highers (SCQF level 6) in year 5 leave school and go to a college to gain an HNC (SCQF level 7) and then progress to what becomes a 3-year Honours degree (SCQF levels 8-
10) (a “1+3” articulation). NB it should be noted that success rates of students articulating into year 2 from an HNC are as not as good as those who articulate into year 3 from an HND or those who join the degree programme in year 1– and as such a “1+2” route should only be used where a “2+2” route cannot be created

Advantages: extremely cost effective (no duplication and the cost of a year of HN delivery by a college is much lower than the cost of delivery of Advanced Higher or degree programmes); the College environment is different from that of the university – providing greater support and less temptation than university

Disadvantages: the content of HNCs will not always provide a direct match with what is the content of the current university first year; (initially at least) rejection by aspirational parents of the notion that colleges are an acceptable alternative to universities for delivery of learning at SCQF level 7; (initially at least) rejection by young people of the notion that colleges are an acceptable alternative socially to universities as an immediate post-school destination; rejection by universities of the notion that HNC is equivalent to degree year 1; there are not HNC programmes that link into every degree; it may be a perception that not all colleges would deliver HNCs equally well; vested interests in schools, education authorities and universities may oppose this: again the move to a “two-year Higher” approach may work against this; as noted above “1+2” success rates are not as good as those on 4-year degree or 2+2 approaches

5) Pupils who achieve sufficient Highers (SCQF level 6) in S5 leave school and join a one-year “introduction to HE” programme delivered locally by a consortium of local universities and/or colleges at a centre developed for the purpose and branded as being a local HE centre with the endorsement of the local universities and colleges; the content would be designed to align with entry into “year 2” of any related degree programme (and ideally to year 2 of HND programmes); what they achieve would be accepted by universities (and colleges) across Scotland (and in England) as currency towards entry to a 3-year degree programme (or a one-year HND) – and to achieve this recognition would involve the programme being based either around existing recognized qualifications (such as Advanced Highers and/or HNCs) or being based on a newly developed agreed framework that had the support of a wide range of universities and colleges across the UK. In effect this is a variant of option 2.

Advantages: extremely cost effective (there would be no duplication of level, and the cost of delivery could be made cost efficient by volumes of scale); the environment could be different from that of a university – providing greater support and less temptation than university; it would have the cachet of being a university (or universities’) programme albeit delivered in a location separate from the main degree programmes; young people could remain at home while studying this even if they intend to go to a university elsewhere in Scotland/the UK/the world
Disadvantages: not all universities may accept such an arrangement – and if they don’t young people might be constrained in choice of university; a structure would need to be made for the programme – and that would involve a lot of curriculum-design time; it is possible that if the qualification adopted did not have status/value in its own right (ie was not an Advanced Higher or an HNC), a young person who succeeded but decided not to go on to further study may not have any transferable “currency” in the achievement (unlike for example an HNC which is recognized as a qualification for work in its own right); as things stand this arrangement could make it less attractive for the higher achieving to go into HND programmes; vested interests in schools, and education authorities may oppose this; this might work better for Aberdeen City than Aberdeenshire for geographical reasons; again the move to a “two-year Higher” approach may work against this; the availability of this approach may lead to a reduction in those following the 2+2 route which in some areas of Scotland has proved to be highly effective and efficient and with a very positive effect in terms of social inclusion.

Summary of the options

It will be noted that each of the options have some advantages as well as disadvantages.

Based on this analysis we could suggest that some combination of the following routes should be available for those who have achieved appropriate number and range of Highers at school

a) progress to a 4-year degree programme if they are of sufficient maturity (eg if they have taken two years to achieve their Highers)

or

b) undertake Advanced Highers at school or in a dedicated centre in S6 (but only if the Advanced Highers are accorded proper currency by leading to a 3-year rather than 4-year degree programme where there is sufficient match in terms of curriculum content between the Advanced Highers and year 1 of the degree, and where a local authority can deliver this level of learning effectively and at a reasonable cost)

or

c) join an HND programme in a college linked to year 3 of a relevant degree programme (ie a “2+2” articulation programme)

or

c) join an HNC programme linked to year 2 of a relevant degree programme (ie a “1+3” articulation programme) - where a proper 2+2 articulation is not available

or

undertake a locally-delivered and consortium-delivered “introduction to HE” programme at SCQF level 7 (where there is no reasonable alternative
and where a programme can be designed that will have wide-ranging
currency as entry to a variety of degree programmes and HN
programmes)

Possible way forward

So, the actions proposed in North East Scotland are:

1) Ensure school pupils (and their families) are aware that they can
gain entry into HND (and HNC) programmes from S5 if they
have appropriate Highers which will lead to entry to year 3 (or
year 2 for HNCs) -- and thus shorten the learning journey
compared with progression to a four year degree from S6

2) Maintain existing 2+2 articulation as a viable route (and develop
further 2+2 articulation routes where possible)

3) Consider proposals that are brought forward for any new
programme or programme delivery arrangement at SCQF level
7 that would be designed to replace the current degree first
year – where there is no existing accelerated route and where a
programme can be designed that would match in with the
content of a range of degrees and HN provision

Final word

The North East of Scotland has already developed very effective 2+2
articulation arrangements and has seen rapidly developing links between
institutions and sectors that pave the way for a “tertiary education”
realignment.

The relationships between the regional education partners – local
authorities, universities, the college – are strong and could form the basis
for piloting a more substantive (and ultimately transformational) change
of the post-16 learning pathway in Scotland.

Rob Wallen
North East Scotland College
06 April 2016