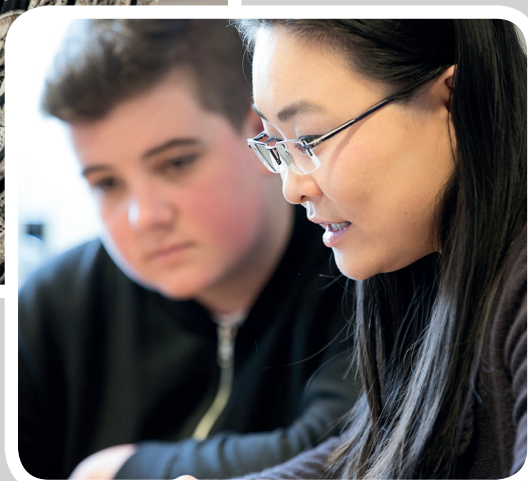


NORTH EAST
SCOTLAND
COLLEGE



STRATEGIC **PLAN**

2018-2021





CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
THE COLLEGE AND ITS REGION	5-7
REGIONAL PRIORITIES AND SKILLS NEEDS	8
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES	9
VISION AND VALUES	10-11
STRATEGIC THEMES AND GOALS	12
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	14-19
DELIVERING THE PLAN	20
MEASURING SUCCESS	21
KEY STRATEGIC INDICATORS	22-23



INTRODUCTION

The Regional Board of North East Scotland College, along with staff, students and a wide range of stakeholders have worked to create this new Strategic Plan for the College which states our intentions and aspirations for the College as we move towards 2021.

This Plan has, at its heart, our key aims: to be responsive to the needs of our region, to develop individuals and businesses, to deliver high quality, innovative and relevant education and training and to promote fairness and equality of opportunity.

We will provide accessible and diverse learning opportunities to enable people in the North East of Scotland of all ages, communities and backgrounds to learn, to succeed and to progress. We are proud of our track record as a college and we will continue to innovate, improve and inspire as we work, with our learners, partners and stakeholders to deliver success for our regional economy and the people who live and work here.

The Plan demonstrates how we will meet the needs of our diverse region, serving Aberdeen City and Shire through the development of focused stakeholder engagement, a differentiated and highly relevant curriculum offer and outstanding levels of support for our students. The Plan also shows how we will respond to key Scottish Government policies and to regional priorities for the North East of Scotland.

We have shared our main aims and objectives and shown how we will measure our success against the targets we have set for ourselves.

This Plan is closely linked to the North East Scotland College Regional Outcome Agreement for the period, which we have agreed with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and there is a strong overlap between the outcomes we have set in partnership with the SFC and the aspirations laid out in this Plan. Copies of the Regional Outcome Agreement and this Plan's supporting strategies can be found on the College website at www.nescol.ac.uk/about/strategic-planning

The Regional Board is entirely committed to delivering this ambitious strategy which will ensure that we remain a responsive and sustainable college delivering an excellent learning experience and successful outcomes for all learners.

Liz McIntyre
Principal and Chief Executive

THE COLLEGE AND ITS REGION

NESCol

North East Scotland College (NESCol) is the only college located within the North East of Scotland. As such, it serves an extensive geographical area, with three main campuses – two in Aberdeen and one in Fraserburgh – and a presence in a number of regional centres, including Ellon, Inverurie, and Peterhead. In academic year 2017-18, the College enrolled approximately 6,800 full-time and 10,000 part-time students.

The College provides a wide range of high quality education and training opportunities to meet the needs of individuals, communities and employers across the region in a flexible, engaging and accessible way. NESCol aims to deliver inspirational teaching from each of its modern and well-equipped campuses, across a range of different subject areas, including Business, Care, Computing, Construction, Creative Industries, Engineering, Leisure and Lifestyle, Science, and Service Industries.

To ensure it continues to meet the demands of current and prospective learners, employers and the local economy, and addresses regional skills shortages, the College has adopted a continuous process to its curriculum planning. The process is informed by stakeholder engagement, Government priorities, labour market intelligence and curriculum analysis with the College's offerings updated and refreshed accordingly. NESCol views itself as a forward thinking, enterprising College and as such learners are provided with many opportunities to engage in work experience, events and discussions to develop enterprise and entrepreneurial skills that are essential for the workplace.

The College plays a pivotal role in developing skills of young people across the region, most significantly in the region's approach to the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) agenda. NESCol's School Links programme offers accredited learning opportunities, including Foundation Apprenticeships, which support pupils from across the region whilst still at school in developing transferable skills and industry relevant knowledge for progression to the College, university or employment. Approximately 38% of the region's school leavers progress to the College.

The College supports access to opportunities for part-time learners, including those returning to learning for up-skilling and re-skilling. Strategic partnerships have also been established which offer opportunities to more vulnerable sections of the community across both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

NESCol is an Associate College of Robert Gordon University (RGU), an agreement which is viewed as a good practice model for effective working within Scotland between a college and a university. Articulation agreements are also in place with a number of other universities across Scotland leading to over 600 NESCol students progressing to university each year, with a significant number of these articulating to RGU (approximately 350).



THE COLLEGE AND ITS REGION

Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire

The North East of Scotland is a region of exceptional beauty, culture and heritage. Aberdeen is the third largest city in Scotland, home to over 220,000 people, and with a population of over 260,000 residing in Aberdeenshire, the region accounts for 9% of Scotland's population.

Between 2016 and 2026, the population of Aberdeen City is projected to increase by 3.2%, the same projected increase for Scotland as a whole. The average age of the population of Aberdeen City is projected to increase as the baby boomer generation ages and more people are expected to live longer. Between 2016 and 2026, the 16 to 24 age group is projected to see the largest percentage decrease (-10.7%) and the 75 and over age group is projected to see the largest percentage increase (+15.5%). In terms of size, however, 25 to 44 is projected to remain the largest age group. Aberdeenshire's population has been steadily increasing since 2001. The age structure of Aberdeenshire varies from the Scottish average, with a higher proportion of people aged 0-17 and 36-68 residing in Aberdeenshire with a significantly lower percentage of residents aged 18-35 compared to the Scottish average.

The region has long since been renowned worldwide due in large part to its North Sea oil and gas industry, alongside its long and successful maritime and agricultural heritage. Because of this, for many years, the North East has played a pivotal role in the economic advancement of Scotland and the UK as a whole.





However the region is facing new challenges after considerable changes in the oil and gas industry with a decline in production and the loss of a significant number of jobs linked directly and indirectly to the industry. A range of initiatives are however in place to stimulate, diversify and broaden the region's economy and to reduce dependence on oil and gas. These include the Aberdeen City Region Deal (which will see over of £504 million injected into the area over the next 5-10 years), and Opportunity North East's (ONE) locally driven economic 'Renaissance'.

Other significant developments in the region include the opening of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) in Autumn 2018, and the completion of the new £333m Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre (AECC) in Summer 2019. The AWPR is forecast to boost the region's economy by generating income through increased sales and reduced costs, bringing over £6 billion to the area, as well as 14,000 jobs over the next 3 decades. New business investment is also anticipated to bring in £105 million and 600 jobs in that period. The new AECC is expected to attract major artists/events and contribute an additional 4.5m visitors, £113m visitor spend and £63m net GVA to Scottish economy over the next 10 years.

In addition to oil and gas, the region supports a number of other key sectors, such as food and drink, life sciences, tourism and creative industries. These contribute to the wealth of the area in terms of jobs and GDP and have positive effects on other supporting sectors, including retail, transport, and property.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES AND SKILLS NEEDS

The College aims to respond to the regional priorities and skills needs as identified through the Regional Economic Strategy, Regional Skills Strategy, and in response to the priorities for the development of the region as identified by Community Planning Aberdeen, and the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership. This Plan addresses these priorities as follows:

Regional Economic Strategy		
Priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive economic growth ('A skilled work-force for the future') Repositioning the skills system 	Contribution: <p>NESCol's wide portfolio of courses, vocational training opportunities and apprenticeships aligned to the region's key sectors and areas of skills shortages is central to encouraging economic growth across the region.</p>	Strategic Objectives(s): <p>1.1, 1.3, 2.7, 3.2, 3.3, 4.7</p>
Regional Skills Strategy		
Priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Realigning the skills system Expansion of workbased learning Enhancing links to employer-education 	College Contribution: <p>The College is well placed to respond to the Strategy though the delivery and expansion of its Apprenticeship Family offer, through partnership working for workforce development planning, and its commitment to enhanced levels of employer engagement.</p>	Strategic Objectives(s): <p>1.3, 3.3, 3.8, 4.7</p>
Community Planning Aberdeen		
Priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aberdeen Prospers: Inclusive Economic Growth Prosperous People: Children are respected, included and achieving Digital City: Digital Skills and Education 	College Contribution: <p>As a lead partner with the two local CPPs the College is working with others to target, through various Local Outcome Improvement Plans and Locality Plans the best way to reach those who are more socially and economically marginalised. It is hoped that this work will improve access to educational opportunity to many who traditionally have found themselves to be educationally excluded.</p>	Strategic Objectives(s): <p>1.1, 2.6, 3.1, 3.4, 3.5</p>
Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership		
Priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing Aberdeenshire's Relationship with Alcohol Reducing Child Poverty Connected and Cohesive Communities 	College Contribution: <p>As a lead partner with the two local CPPs the College is working with others to target, through various Local Outcome Improvement Plans and Locality Plans the best way to reach those who are more socially and economically marginalised. It is hoped that this work will improve access to educational opportunity to many who traditionally have found themselves to be educationally excluded.</p>	Strategic Objectives(s): <p>1.1, 3.1</p>

The College will also seek to align its provision with anticipated demand identified through Regional Skills Assessments for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

There are a number of key Scottish Government priorities which have particular relevance to the college sector. The College, through this Strategic Plan, will respond as follows:

Scottish Government Priority	College Contribution	Strategic Objective(s)
Widening Access	The College will provide access to further and higher education for people of all ages from the widest range of backgrounds.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 3.6, 3.7, 4.4
Gender Balance	The College will address gender inequality at all levels from course choices to boards and senior staff.	1.1, 4.10
Attainment	The College will raise attainment levels and increase the numbers of students who successfully complete courses and achieve the qualifications they are studying.	1.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.10
Employability	The College will improve employment outcomes for young people and provide for support aimed at addressing youth unemployment, in particular those with barriers to work.	1.2, 2.7, 4.5
Enterprise	The College will contribute to driving up levels of business innovation in Scotland by ensuring that its learners are exposed to entrepreneurial thinking.	2.7, 3.7, 3.8
Developing the Young Workforce	The College will play a key role in ensuring that a regional approach is undertaken to growing senior phase vocational pathways by working closely with partners on planning and delivery.	3.4, 3.5
Apprenticeships	The College will build and strengthen pathways into and across Apprenticeship programmes, particularly in key sectors such as STEM, digital skills and early years workforce expansion.	1.1, 3.5
Flexible Workforce Development Fund	The College will help employers to increase productivity and address skills gaps by supporting in-work training of their workforce.	1.1, 1.3, 3.8, 4.7
STEM	The College will contribute to the development of Scotland's STEM talent and capability to generate inclusive and sustainable economic growth by equipping young people with skills for the future.	1.3
Digital	The College will help to address the widening digital skills gap in Scotland through improved digital skills development across all subject areas for both learners and staff.	1.1, 2.6, 4.9, 5.4

VISION AND VALUES

Vision

North East Scotland College will, through the delivery of high quality education and training:

- drive and support innovation and economic prosperity,
- raise aspiration,
- create success, and
- promote diversity, fairness and opportunity for all

providing individuals, businesses and communities in the North East of Scotland with 21st century skills.



Values

The College's values shape our work, influence our behaviours and apply to everyone who comes to the College to learn or work.

Commitment and Excellence

- Understanding and responding to the needs of our students, staff, key stakeholders and customers
- Being business-like and professional
- Maintaining clear focus on our goals and ensuring these are achieved through effective planning and organisation
- Achieving excellence by continually evaluating and improving our services
- Ensuring our processes are consistent, accessible, effective and efficient.

Empowerment and Engagement

- Creating an environment where innovation and creativity are encouraged and can flourish
- Providing clear direction, information and communication
- Providing development opportunities to ensure we have the skills, knowledge and confidence to perform to the best of our ability
- Giving recognition and praise
- Encouraging and supporting collaboration.

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.

STRATEGIC THEMES & GOALS

Our Strategic Plan for 2018-2021 is focused on five Strategic Themes and their accompanying Strategic Goals.

1

BEING RESPONSIVE

Deliver high quality, accessible and inclusive learning and training opportunities, which transform lives and which support the economic and social development of our region.

2

DEVELOPING PEOPLE

Develop the skills, talents and potential of all the people who come to college either to learn or to work.

3

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Work with our partners to deliver positive and sustainable change for individuals, communities and businesses in our region.

4

DELIVERING QUALITY

Deliver an excellent learning environment and experience leading to successful outcomes for all learners.

5

BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY

Optimise the use of our available resources to deliver financial and environmental sustainability.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

For each of our Strategic Goals we have set ourselves some key objectives to achieve during the duration of this plan.

1

BEING RESPONSIVE

Deliver high quality, accessible and inclusive learning and training opportunities, which transform lives and which support the economic and social development of our region.

In order to achieve this we will:

- 1.1 Build a portfolio of courses which:
 - provides efficient and effective pathways for learners which lead to positive destinations in further study, higher education and employment
 - is accessible, inclusive and appropriate for individual need providing learners with the best chance of success
 - offers innovative and flexible modes of study
 - tackles gender imbalance and challenges stereotypes
 - is designed to provide a digitally capable, skilled and qualified regional workforce meeting the needs of existing and emerging businesses
 - supports inclusive growth, builds community capacity and reduces inequality
 - widens access to learning for under-represented groups, particularly those from areas of deprivation and those who are care experienced or disabled.
- 1.2 Provide information, advice, guidance and support to students to enable them to choose and access the most appropriate qualifications.



1.3 Build on the unique and distinctive strengths of our main campus locations to provide relevant and valuable learning opportunities by:

- **Delivering a plan for NESCol at Fraserburgh Campus which:**

- › Grows demand for locally based programmes through community engagement, schools liaison and employer engagement
- › Improves outcomes for learners through the provision of accessible and appropriate programmes and dedicated campus-based student support
- › Optimises the use of the STEM facilities.

- **Delivering a plan for NESCol at Aberdeen City Campus which:**

- › Builds our reputation as pivotal to the renaissance agenda for Aberdeen delivering skills in new and emerging industries
- › Creates a culture of creativity, innovation and dynamism optimising the use of our excellent specialist facilities.

- **Delivering a plan for NESCol at Altens Campus which:**

- › Builds the Centre's reputation as the key provider in the City of Engineering and Construction education and skills
- › Develops increased links with employers, supporting businesses and growing our commercial offer
- › Drives successful outcomes for all learners, at all levels of study.

2

DEVELOPING PEOPLE

Develop the skills, talents and potential of all the people who come to college either to learn or to work.

In order to achieve this we will:

- 2.1** Build a staff team who are creative, confident and highly motivated.
- 2.2** Discover and develop talent in our workforce.
- 2.3** Provide support, development and opportunity to our staff through a refreshed and prioritised approach to organisational development supporting our strategic goals.
- 2.4** Create a positive and supportive culture based on respect, trust, engagement and clarity of shared purpose.
- 2.5** Build a successful, resilient, confident and engaged student body through engagement, co-creation and partnership with the Students' Association.
- 2.6** Build digital skills and capacity in our learners and in our staff.
- 2.7** Build 21st century enterprise, employability and entrepreneurship skills in our learners ensuring that they are fully prepared for the world of work.
- 2.8** Deliver strong and collective leadership and management throughout the organisation by encouraging collaboration, developing leadership roles and building skills.
- 2.9** Provide the highest standards of governance for the College through the high quality operation of a skilled and diverse Regional Board.



3

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Work with our partners to deliver positive and sustainable change for individuals, communities and businesses in our region.

In order to achieve this we will:

- 3.1** Work with Community Planning Partners to deliver on key priorities in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.
- 3.2** Work with regional economic development bodies to support the delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy and drive regional prosperity.
- 3.3** Work with the North East Learning and Skills Partnership to deliver the Regional Skills Strategy, developing individuals with the skills to meet the needs and aspirations of our region.
- 3.4** Work with our local schools in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire to deliver regional plans for Developing the Young Workforce.
- 3.5** Work with schools to develop and deliver effective learning pathways and learner journeys for our young people.
- 3.6** Work with Robert Gordon University (RGU), University of Aberdeen and other university partners to widen access, improve articulation and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the learner journey.
- 3.7** Build and develop the TWO Plus Alliance with RGU to promote innovation, widen opportunity, improve access and develop entrepreneurship.
- 3.8** Develop a new approach to employer engagement which promotes College opportunities, delivers meaningful work placements and supports innovation in our local businesses.

4

DELIVERING QUALITY

Deliver an excellent learning environment and experience leading to successful outcomes for all learners.

In order to achieve this we will:

- 4.1** Deliver outstanding learning and teaching which is exciting, innovative and relevant and which delivers success for learners.
- 4.2** Increase the number of learners achieving successful outcomes and positive destinations.
- 4.3** Encourage a strong student voice, listening and responding to feedback from learners leading to quality improvement.
- 4.4** Deliver support to our students which enables them to build resilience, access their learning, develop their learning skills and achieve success.
- 4.5** Provide student support services which offer financial, welfare and well-being support enabling learners to stay on their programmes and achieve success.
- 4.6** Drive continuous quality improvement through a strong culture of self-evaluation and enhancement planning.
- 4.7** Be recognised as a college, which delivers excellence across all of our courses and services building a reputation as the premier provider of education and skills in the region.
- 4.8** Provide modern, fit-for-purpose buildings and facilities for learning, studying and socialising.
- 4.9** Deliver an ICT service which is accessible, functional and which provides seamless support for our Digital Strategy.
- 4.10** Create an approach to equality and diversity which ensures success for all learners regardless of background or experience and maintains a culture of respect and opportunity for all.



5

BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY

Optimise the use of our available resources to deliver financial and environmental sustainability.

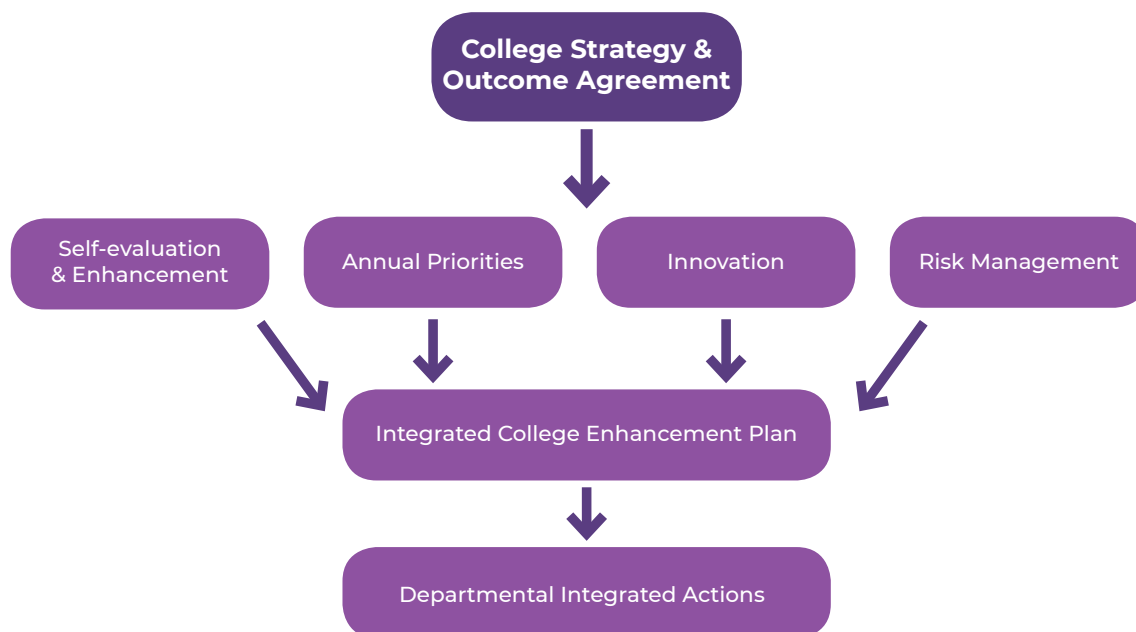
In order to achieve this we will:

- 5.1** Through the delivery of our Outcome Agreement seek to achieve sustainable levels of funding in support of our core activities from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC).
- 5.2** Increase the income we earn from the commercialisation of our courses.
- 5.3** Deliver efficiencies in the operation of our business year on year to allow financial headroom for investment in innovation, staff and facilities.
- 5.4** Use technology and digital skills to develop efficient and flexible models of curriculum delivery and to streamline business processes and systems.
- 5.5** Fully utilise the financial resources available to us and produce annually a balanced budget position.
- 5.6** Continue to reduce the College's environmental impact through outstanding environmental sustainability performance maintaining compliance with BSI 14001 and 50001, striving to meet College targets for carbon reduction.
- 5.7** Embed sustainability in the College culture involving staff and making it core to our structures, decision making and operational processes.

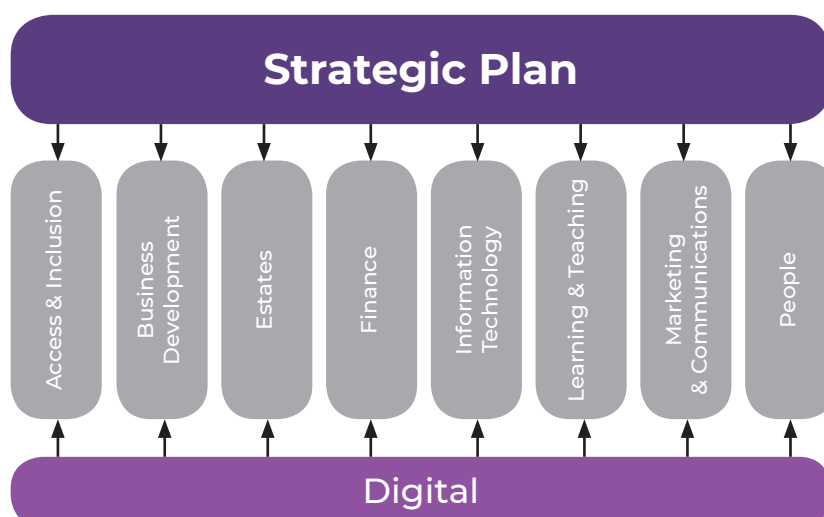


DELIVERING THE PLAN

Actions to deliver our Strategic Objectives will be contained in the Integrated College Enhancement Plan. This Plan enables us to coordinate our activities to respond to a range of ambitions, priorities and risks, and to respond to any areas for development emerging from our self-evaluation.



The following Strategies will support the delivery of our Strategic Plan:



Copies of the College's Supporting Strategies can be accessed online:

www.nescol.ac.uk/about/strategic-planning

MEASURING SUCCESS

Each year we will monitor our progress using the key strategic indicators identified in the next section. A table of our progress against these indicators will be published annually www.nescol.ac.uk/about/strategic-planning

Specifically, at a high level, by 2021 we will have:

- Improved learner success outcomes for all FE and HE full-time learners to levels which are six percentage points above the national average for Scotland.
- Achieved learner success outcomes for disabled students and for care experienced young people, which are equal to those of other students on the same programmes.
- Delivered, annually, balanced budgets fully utilising the resources available to us.
- Increased income associated with the commercialisation of our programmes by 10%.
- Invested in our Campuses at Altens and Aberdeen City to reduce the level of required backlog maintenance and to enhance learning and social space for students.



KEY STRATEGIC INDICATORS (KSIs)

ACTIVITY LEVELS

KSI 1 The total number of credits delivered

This measure is for the entirety of the College's activity funded through the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). Each credit equates to 40 hours of learning or 80 hours of work placement activity. The total number of credits funded is negotiated each year between the SFC and the College as part of the Outcome Agreement process.

KSI 2 The volume of core credits delivered

KSI 3 The volume of ESF credits delivered

LEARNER SUCCESS

KSI 4 - 7 The overall learner success rate

This KSI (along with KSIs 4 to 7) measures the student success rate as well as providing comparative data on the performance of different categories of student. It looks at student performance for both further education (FE) and higher education (HE) programmes studied either full or part time. It also provides comparative data for students who withdraw either in the first quarter of their programme or at a later date, and of those who achieved the programme outcome (e.g. an HND) or partially achieved their programme.

EQUALITY

KSI 8 The overall learner success rate for all students studying for more than 160 hours

This KSI is included as a comparator for the equality KSIs.

KSI 9 The learner success rate for young students studying for more than 160 hours

This KSI provides the success rate for young students by age (between the ages of 16 & 19, and between the ages of 20 & 24). It looks at all young students who are studying either full or part time for more than 160 hours in a year. (160 hours is approximately the equivalent of 1 Higher.)

KSI 10 The learner success rate for students studying for more than 160 hours from areas of deprivation

This KSI uses the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) to identify students who come from the 10% and 20% most deprived postcode areas in Scotland.

KSI 11 The learner success rate for males and females studying on programmes of more than 160 hours

KSI 12 The percentage of care experienced full time students achieving a successfully recognised qualification

KSI 13 The percentage of full time students with a known disability achieving a successfully recognised qualification

The 3 KSIs above provide this information split by further education (FE) and higher education (HE) provision.

STEM CREDITS

KSI 14 The volume of credits delivered to learners enrolled on STEM courses

KSI 15 The proportion of credits delivered to learners enrolled on STEM courses

The 2 KSIs above highlight the College's activity which relates to Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics provision.

OTHER CREDITS

KSI 16 The proportion of credits delivered to learners between the ages of 16 and 19

KSI 17 The proportion of credits delivered to learners between the ages of 20 and 24

KSI 18 The proportion of credits delivered to learners in the most deprived 10% postcode areas

KSI 19 The proportion of credits delivered to male learners

KSI 20 The proportion of credits delivered to female learners

KSI 21 The proportion of credits delivered to students with a known disability

KSI 22 The proportion of credits delivered to students with care experience

LEARNER PROGRESSION

KSI 23 The percentage of successful learners achieving and sustaining positive destinations

All successful learners are surveyed 3-6 months after they leave College to find out what they have been doing since completing their course. This is part of a national exercise undertaken by all colleges, with the results collated and reported on by the SFC. Positive destinations are considered to be either further training or employment.

KSI 24 The number of successful learners achieving entry to university with advanced standing

Advanced standing enables the prior study of College students to be recognised towards their university degree e.g. the granting of credit.

KSI 25 The learner success rate for full time students in their first year of study

The achievement rate of students in their second or subsequent year of study at the College. The year students are most at risk of withdrawing or not achieving is their first year of study.

SUSTAINABILITY

KSI 26 Non-SFC income as a percentage of turnover

KSI 27 Staff costs as a percentage of turnover.



