

## **1. Aim**

- 1.1 This Strategy builds on the previous version of September 2018 to consider the impact of COVID-19 in the short and medium term and the contribution to NESCol becoming Scotland's best College by 2025. The fundamental aim of the Strategy remains unchanged, namely to develop the College's approaches to commerciality and thus increase the College's commercial income in order to reduce the reliance on Scottish Funding Council (SFC) funding. In doing so, this Strategy aims to position commercial income on an equal weighting with credit income, where faculties are recognised and rewarded for commercial successes. However in 2018, COVID-19 was unheard of and Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF) was still in its infancy. Both have a profound effect on the College's commercial ambitions. A 10% growth target is still a realistic ambition for this plan, but needs to be considered against a new baseline from 2019-20.
- 1.2 In addition to the primary aim above, this Strategy seeks to:
- Support the local economic recovery and fulfil the ambitions of the Regional Skills Strategy;
  - Develop enhanced levels, and approaches to, partnership working and employer engagement;
  - Deliver a customer experience which meets expectations and secures repeat business;
  - Develop an innovation culture across College teams;
  - Support continuous curriculum development which addresses employer and stakeholder need;
  - Support the creation of work placements and employability opportunities for College students during and beyond their studies;
  - Build the capacity, in partnership with others, to grow and deliver commercial activity for both regional and national contracts;
  - Exploit the key strengths of individual campuses and their respective staff within their own local environments;
  - Maximise opportunities for delivering courses remotely.
- 1.3 NESCol's wholly owned subsidiary, ASET, operates at arm's length in the delivery of specialist training primarily for the oil and gas sector. Whilst recognising the very important relationship that the College has with ASET, this Strategy relates specifically to the activities of NESCol's Business & Community Development (BCD) and curriculum teams in the delivery of non-SFC funded programmes. The introduction of the Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF) and its subsequent expansion to serve SMEs as well as Apprenticeship Levy payers has enabled closer working relationships to develop with ASET and promotion of cross selling opportunities. This updated Strategy aims to build on this relationship with further complementary activity whilst avoiding competitive situations which disadvantage NESCol as a whole. Specifically, the Strategy will consider opportunities which are within NESCol's capabilities but only where these do not specifically target ASET clients. Ongoing stakeholder management will ensure that College benefit as a whole is the primary driver for decision making.

## **2. Introduction and Context**

- 2.1 In its Strategic Plan 2021-23 the College has identified five Strategic Themes:
- 2.1.1 Strategic Theme 1: Being Agile and Responsive
  - 2.1.2 Strategic Theme 2: Empowering People

- 2.1.3 Strategic Theme 3: Advancing Partnership Working
  - 2.1.4 Strategic Theme 4: Delivering Excellence and Innovation
  - 2.1.5 Strategic Theme 5: Leading Sustainability.
- 2.2 A number of Strategic Objectives have been identified in relation to each Strategic Theme which detail how they will be achieved. This supporting Strategy aims to ensure progress against the following Strategic Objectives:

Strategic Theme 1:

- 2.1.1 Deliver a curriculum and support services that respond to the needs of students and the region by:
  - ensuring students can fulfil their potential in an accessible and inclusive environment.
  - offering innovative and flexible modes of study.
  - tackling gender imbalance and challenging stereotypes.
  - building a digitally capable and highly skilled regional workforce.
  - supporting inclusive growth, building community capacity and reducing inequality.
  - widening access to learning for under-represented groups.

Strategic Theme 2:

- 2.1 Build creative, confident and highly motivated staff.
- 2.2 Provide development opportunities to maximise potential and job satisfaction.
- 2.5 Create a culture, supported by collaborative leadership, that is based on respect, trust, engagement and shared goals.
- 2.6 Support mental, physical and social wellbeing.

Strategic Theme 3:

- 3.1 Work with Community Planning Partners to deliver on key priorities, with a focus on reducing inequality and removing barriers to educational attainment.
- 3.2 Work with regional economic development bodies to support the delivery of the refreshed Regional Economic Strategy.
- 3.3 Work with the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership to deliver the Regional Skills Strategy, developing individuals with the skills to meet the evolving needs of the region.
- 3.4 Work with local schools and other partners to develop and deliver effective learning pathways for young people, including the delivery of regional plans for Developing the Young Workforce.
- 3.6 Work with employers to ensure provision adapts to meet the needs of industry and supports regional economic recovery and development.
- 3.7 Embed an enhanced approach to stakeholder engagement which builds greater understanding of the NESCol offer and strengthens regional relationships in support of shared ambitions.

Strategic Theme 4:

- 4.1 Be recognised as a college which delivers excellence across all courses and services, building a reputation as the premier provider of employer informed education and skills in the region.
- 4.3 Deliver a curriculum and support service which enables students to build resilience, develop essential meta skills and achieve success.

- 4.6 Drive continuous quality improvement through a strong culture of self-evaluation, and the adoption of an evidence-informed approach to decision-making and enhancement planning.
- 4.9 Continue to advance equality of opportunity across the College to ensure success for all students regardless of protected characteristics, background or experience, and to maintain a College-wide culture of respect.

Strategic Theme 5:

- 5.2 Maximise income from commercialisation and other opportunities.
- 5.6 Streamline business processes and systems using technology and digital skills.

### 3. Strategy Themes and Objectives

The College has identified four key themes that will be crucial in ensuring that its strategic ambitions relating to Business Development are achieved:

#### 3.1 Key Theme 1: Employer Engagement

In order to address this Theme the College will:

- 3.1.1 Build new relationships and manage existing relationships with local and national employers identifying opportunities which are mutually beneficial (specifically **FWDF** and **Foundation / Modern Apprenticeships**).
- 3.1.2 Maximise the opportunity from **partnership working** with ONE / SDS / ESP / DWP and others to support local economic priorities including the **Energy Transition Zone, Net Zero initiative** and **Offshore Wind**.
- 3.1.3 Support Heads of Faculty to create capacity for business development and commercial delivery alongside full time programmes.

#### 3.2 Key Theme 2: Brand Awareness

In order to address this Theme the College will:

- 3.2.1 **Work closely with the Marketing and Communications Team** to develop promotional products and communications for social media and other vehicles which supports commercial development.
- 3.2.2 Identify and share up to date **labour market intelligence** which informs the development of new products and services.
- 3.2.3 **Showcase commercial successes** through case studies, press releases and social media updates.

#### 3.3 Key Theme 3: Product and Service Development

In order to address this Theme the College will:

- 3.3.1 **Develop a commercial portfolio** which is attractive in terms of content and delivery medium for Apprenticeship Levy payers and SMEs to maximise the opportunity from the fund.
- 3.3.2 **Enhance its Distance Learning products** to ensure they meet the current needs of employers and third sector partners.
- 3.3.3 Support the College's ambitions and approaches to equality, access and inclusion by **growing sponsored initiatives** that align to College and employer values.
- 3.3.4 Identify opportunities for remote delivery to improve accessibility while COVID-19 restrictions prevent campus access

- 3.3.5 **Develop progression routes** between Foundation Apprenticeships and Modern Apprenticeships to minimise the training time for candidates.

#### 3.4 Key Theme 4: Use of Facilities

In order to address this Theme the College will:

- 3.4.1 **Create high quality commercial training facilities** befitting of the clients that the College seeks to support through training.
- 3.4.2 Encourage employer visits to NESCol campuses to **showcase the range of faculty expertise** and facilities and equipment that are available to employers.\*
- 3.4.3 Promote the availability of NESCol facilities for use by employers and community groups.
- 3.4.4 Identify and implement new opportunities that promote the uniqueness of each NESCol campus within the local economy.
- 3.4.5 Maximise opportunities to leverage commercial income from the College's estate, facilities and assets.

\*In the short and medium term, COVID-19 restrictions will affect the opportunity to implement this.

#### 4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 The Regional Board is responsible monitoring the success of the Strategy and will do so from reports considered by specific standing committees, namely the Curriculum & Quality Committee and the Finance & Resources Committee.
- 4.2 The Executive Team is responsible for achieving the aims of the Strategy, with the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) being its principal sponsor.
- 4.3 The Director of Business Development will collaborate with internal and external partners to ensure the successful implementation of the Strategy.
- 4.4 The Director of Business Development and the Directors of Learning will ensure the implementation, embedding and ongoing review of the Strategy within their respective areas of responsibility.
- 4.5 BCD Managers and Heads of Faculty will support the delivery of the Strategy.

#### 5. Monitoring and Review

- 5.1 The Curriculum, Quality & Student Support Committee will monitor the implementation of this Strategy.
- 5.2 Progress will be monitored through monthly finance reports,
- 5.3 Reports/updates will be submitted to Leadership Team by request.

#### 6. Related Documents

- 6.1 College Strategic Plan and Supporting Strategies
- 6.2 Outcome Agreement
- 6.3 Regional Skills Strategy and related action plan
- 6.4 Regional Skills Assessments

**Approved by:** Curriculum & Quality Committee

**Date of Version:** March 2021

**Date of EIA:** June 2021

**Responsible for Strategy:** Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality

**Responsible for Implementation of Strategy:** Director of Business Development

**Date of Review:**