NORTH EAST SCOTLAND COLLEGE (NESCol)

About
North East Scotland College is the only further-education college located within the North East of Scotland and provides a wide range of education and training opportunities to meet the needs of individuals, communities and employers across the region. The priority of the College is to ensure high quality education and training opportunities for those across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire in a flexible, engaging and accessible way.

NESCol is a £50M organisation, receiving over £35M from the Scottish Funding Council to plan and deliver further and higher education in the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Region (over 2,500 square miles).

The college has four main campuses, two in Aberdeen (City Campus in Gallowgate and the Altens Campus), one in Fraserburgh plus the Scottish Maritime Centre located in Peterhead. In 2025 the Energy Transition Skills Hub was opened and is set to be at the heart of the region's journey to net zero. ETZ Ltd worked with partners to deliver the facility, which is operated by NESCol. The new facility, the first of its kind in Scotland, is located adjacent to the College's existing Aberdeen Altens Campus and within the Skills Campus of the Energy Transition Zone and provides, Industry-leading workshops and flexible teaching spaces shaped by the needs of employers and Cutting-edge equipment reflecting the latest advancements in the energy sector.

NESCol Strategic Plan 2025-2030 – Bringing Learning to Life
The new Strategic Plan, co-designed through extensive engagement with staff, students and stakeholders, (available here) was launched in early AY2025/26. The plan serves not only as a strategic framework but also as a communications asset, with clear articulation of the mission, vision, values and strategic priorities.

Who we are:
A £50M organisation, serving 2,500 square miles. We are home to 20,000 students, directly supporting 1,200 businesses, employing 800 people. NESCol is the number 1 choice for school leavers in the North East of Scotland and provides workforce and professional development to organisations and individuals.

Why are we here:
Nescol goal is to give everyone the chance to build the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in learning, life and work. Putting students at the heart of everything that we do, NESCol joins forces with employers and other key partners to make sure the education and training we shape is what the North East needs. Our teams work every day to build strong, inclusive communities as we push for positive social change and economic growth.

What we stand for:
Quality: We are committed to delivering the very best learning experience and have an overall student satisfaction rate of more than 90%.
Community: We value the connections we build with students and colleagues as well as in the communities we serve and with our partners, directly supporting 1,200 businesses.
Inclusion: We take pride in providing opportunities for all in a welcoming and supportive way.
Innovation: We make it our goal to embrace change and new technology to make NESCol a better place to learn, work and visit.
Partnership: We work with employers and industry organisations to equip students with relevant skills and paths to rewarding careers.

Where are we going:

NESCol's ambition is to get even better at what we do, meaning more students leave College with the qualifications and qualities they need, and to provide a high quality experience for everyone who falls under our wing.

NESCol is the North East of Scotland's first choice destination for training and education and we want to open up opportunities for even more learners. To do this we need to build a sustainable future for the College, working efficiently and focusing on commercial goals.

We will continue to collaborate with employers to equip the workforce with skills for today and for the future, always looking for ways to innovate. NESCol doesn't work alone and is proud to be a partner of choice, aiming to build on existing strong foundations.

NESCol is a progressive employer which is important and the College strives to continue to enhance the ways in which it works.

How we'll get there:

By delivering outstanding education and learning
- Delivering high-quality, flexible, and industry-relevant courses that support career progression.
- Enhancing digital learning strategies and embracing new technologies to provide innovative teaching
- Prioritising continuous professional development for staff
- Striving for sector leading levels of student success, engagement and feedback.

By building a better future with students
- Fostering an inclusive, diverse, and supportive learning environment that meets individual student needs
- Developing student support services, including mental wellbeing resources and financial assistance
- Strengthening transition pathways from school to college and from college to employment or higher education
- Embracing the student voice and putting those opinions at the centre of decision making.

By strengthening our region's communities and economy
- Driving regional economic growth by aligning courses with industry demands
- Strengthening partnerships with employers, local authorities, and community organisations
- Raising aspirations and showcasing opportunities
- Supporting social mobility by widening access to education and addressing barriers to learning.

By building a stronger and more sustainable College
- Implementing green campus initiatives and aiming to become a net zero College
- Promoting sustainable practices in curriculum delivery and operations
- Encouraging innovation through research collaborations and new programme development
- Focusing on financial sustainability, through revenue generation and efficiency.

By striving to deliver excellence and growth
- Aspiring to improve and enhance all that we do
- Maintaining high standards of governance, accountability and compliance

- Improving infrastructure and facilities to enhance the student experience
- Expanding outreach initiatives to increase engagement and reach.

Within the New Strategic Plan there are six sub-strategies, each contributing to the overarching College goals.

Our Region
Our Secure Future
Our Colleagues
Our Spaces
Our Student Experience
Our Digital Ambition

Learners
In academic year 2024-25, the College enrolled over 20,000 learners on programmes (both full time and part time). With the majority of NESCol students residing in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire with the remainder coming from outside the area.

Curriculum
The College offers a wide range of course levels across a range of different subject areas and aims to deliver inspirational teaching from each of its modern and well-equipped campuses. Subject areas include:

- Art, Design & Photography
- Automotive & Construction
- Business & Management
- Care
- Catering & Hospitality
- Computing & IT
- Cookery & Bakery
- Engineering Skills and Welding
- Engineering Tech & Energy
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Hair & Beauty
- Health & Safety
- Languages
- Maritime
- Music, Drama & Creative Media
- Science
- Social Sciences
- Sport
- Tourism & Events.

Further information on the courses offered can be found online in the Course Guides

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.

NESCol is leading the skills revolution at the heart of energy transition. Expert teams ensure students leave College equipped with the knowledge, technical capability and experience

that are vital in an exciting new area. In addition to the wide range of courses above learning and training is being delivered in a number of key areas including:

- Onshore and offshore wind
- Photovoltaics
- Hydrogen power
- Energy saving and low carbon construction technology
- Electric and hybrid vehicle maintenance

In addition to its full-time provision, the College also delivers a range of Modern Apprenticeship programmes in Care, Engineering, Creative Industries, Business, and Computing. Through the School-College Links Programme, the College offers a range of courses to school pupils across the region. Included within the programme offered are SQA Skills for Work Awards, City and Guilds Awards, National Progression Awards, National Certificate courses, a Professional Development Award and a Higher National Certificate course. Some programmes have been designed to allow pupils to complete an NC Award over their 4th and 5th year, allowing, where applicable, direct progression to HNC/D programmes.

The College plays a pivotal role in developing skills of people across the region. This includes working to integrate the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) initiative and actively addressing skills shortages. Key elements of this work are implemented through the DYW Regional Collaborative Group, led by NESCol, which ensures a region wide approach is taken to all 39 recommendations of the report from the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce. This work is supported through the continued strengthening of partnerships with the two local universities, the two local authorities, and a wide range of employers.

Another important aspect in meeting regional needs is curriculum planning – a continuous process which ensures the curriculum is constantly refreshed and updated to meet the needs of current and prospective learners, employers and the local economy. The College's curriculum planning process is informed by stakeholder engagement, government priorities, labour market intelligence and curriculum analysis.

Attainment

The Scottish Funding Council publish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on Scotland's colleges teaching activity for each academic year. The KPIs inform colleges, their boards, the communities they serve, and stakeholders about the performance of each institution.

NESCol's goal is to give everyone the chance to build the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in learning, putting students at the heart of everything it does. The aim is to deliver inspirational teaching always. It monitors its programmes to ensure they are relevant to both students and employers, offering qualifications from awarding bodies including the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and City & Guilds, to ensure that the qualifications gained are respected and recognised nationally and internationally. Where student performance is below its expectation the College reviews its programmes, teaching methods, recruitment and the support that is given to students to see where improvements can be made.

The College continually monitors the percentage of students achieving their awards on each programme and where a student fails to achieve the award, it examines the reasons for not being successful or why a student has left their programme early. The College follows four nationally recognised performance indicators and these are:

1. Early Withdrawal
2. Further Withdrawal
3. Completed: Partial Success

4. Completed: Successful

The College's KPI Report for academic year 2023-24 are available here on the NESCol website and provides an overview of these four key performance indicators in comparison to the Scottish sector average.

Articulation

North East Scotland College is an Associate College of Robert Gordon University. The agreement between the institutions is viewed as a good practice model for effective working within Scotland between a college and a university. An integral part of the agreement is the 2+2 Degree-Link Programme, which offers North East Scotland College students the opportunity to gain two awards from four years of higher education – an HND and an Honours degree. Offered on a 2+2 basis (two years at College followed by two years at Robert Gordon University), students successfully completing a relevant College HND qualification can obtain entry to the third year of a four year degree. In some cases 1+3 Degree Links area available where students who complete an HNC can enter into second year of the appropriate degree course. Over 350 students progress annually to Robert Gordon University from the College through these arrangements. The publication, Degree Link: Make the connection, can be accessed online.

The College has also established articulation agreements with a number of Universities across Scotland (including University of Aberdeen, Abertay University, Edinburgh Napier University, Glasgow Caledonian University, The Open University, Queen Margaret University and The University of the Highlands and Islands with agreed articulation routes in place for the majority of its HNDs. Information on the College's formal articulation links at course level can be accessed online.

THE REGIONAL BOARD

The following section provides an overview of the Regional Board's role, operation and key functions:

Functions

The Regional Board is responsible for overseeing the business of the College, determining its strategic direction and fostering a safe environment in which the College's vision is achieved and the potential of all learners is maximised through the delivery of high quality learning and outcomes. The Regional Board must also ensure that the College has in place effective management and financial controls to support the student experience within a framework of public accountability and transparency.

The Board must exercise its functions with a view to improving the economic and social well-being of the College's region and have regard to skills, social and economic regeneration needs and social cohesion and social inclusion issues in the locality.

The Board's key functions are to:
- Determine the College's vision, strategic direction, educational character, values and ethos
- Identify strategic priorities and provide direction within a structured planning framework
- Monitor compliance and ensure accountability
- Safeguard the financial and institutional sustainability of the College by ensuring that funds are used as economically, efficiently and effectively as possible, and that effective monitoring arrangements are in place.
- Monitor agreed key performance indicators to determine if the College's vision and values are being fulfilled and the interests of stakeholders are being met
- Work in partnership to secure the coherent provision of high quality fundable further and higher education across the region
- Provide leadership in equality and diversity
- Ensure that the College conducts its operations in such a way, so far as is reasonably practicable, that employees, students and others who may be affected by its activities are not exposed to risks to their health and safety.

Legislation

The Regional Board is constituted as required by the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 (as amended), the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended) and the Post 16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013 and as per the Standing Orders. The Board must also have cognise of all other relevant legislation, including: Bribery Act 2010; Charities & Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005; Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015; Equality Act 2010; and Ethical Standards in Public Life (Scotland) Act 2000.

Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges

The Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges codifies the principles of good governance for learners and learning in Scotland's colleges and promotes accountability and continuous improvement in how colleges are governed. All colleges that receive funding from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) must comply with the Code as a term and condition of grant

The Code is based on five key principles:
- Leadership and Strategy
- Quality of the Student Experience
- Accountability

- Effectiveness
- Relationships and Collaboration.

Colleges have an important individual and collective role to play in promoting economic, social and cultural well-being. The Code provides the essential underpinning to help discharge that role to the highest standards possible.

Membership
The Board is comprised of a full membership of 19 Members, 13 of which are public appointments (non-executive Members). Non-executive Board Members are appointed by the Board, with the approval of its Chair and Scottish Ministers.

The Board also includes the Principal & Chief Executive of the College, two Staff Members (elected by the staff body – one teaching staff representative and one support staff representative), two Student Members (elected by the College's Students' Association) plus two trade union Members (one teaching Union and one support staff Union).

Profiles of current Board Members can be accessed online.

Meetings
Meetings are held throughout the academic year at which Members are asked to consider matters for decision, discussion and information.

In addition to the Regional Board, the following Standing Committees have also been established:
- Audit & Risk Committee
- Curriculum & Quality Committee
- Finance & Resources Committee
- Human Resources Committee.

Board Members usually serve on two Standing Committees.

Four in person Board Meetings are usually held each academic year, with Standing Committee each meet three times. An annual Strategy Event is also held plus an annual development event. In addition to these meetings, there are also opportunities for Board Members to undertake relevant training and attend College events.

The majority of Board meetings are held at the College's Aberdeen City Campus, however at least one Board meeting each academic year will be held at the College's Fraserburgh Campus and Aberdeen Altens Campus. Post pandemic most Committee Meetings are held through the use of the Microsoft Teams online platform with one in person meeting.

Copies of papers considered at Regional Board Meetings can be accessed online.

THE ROLE OF A BOARD MEMBER

The following section provides information on the role, requirements and expectations of a Board Member:

Guide for Board Members in the College Sector has been published and can be accessed online. The Guide provide key information on:

- What Board Members are responsible for
- Who Board Members are accountable to
- What are the main duties of a Board Member
- How are Board Members expected to behave.

The role of a Board member focuses on four key areas:

Strategy   To contribute to strategic development and decision making.

Performance To ensure that effective management arrangements and an effective team are in place at the top level of the organisation.

To help to clarify which decisions are reserved for the Board and then ensure that the rest are clearly delegated.

To hold management to account for its performance in meeting agreed goals and objectives through purposeful challenge and scrutiny; and to monitor the reporting of performance.

Risk   To ensure that financial information is accurate and that financial controls and systems of risk management are robust and defensible.

Behaviour   To live up to the highest ethical standards and comply fully with the Code of Conduct. Board members should also demonstrate through their behaviour that they are focusing on their responsibilities to the Minister, the organisation and its stakeholders

On Board: A Guide for Board Members of Public Bodies in Scotland

Principles of Public Life

Board Members are expected to adhere to the Nine Principles of Public Life and act at all times in good faith and in the best interests of learners:

Public Service
You have a duty to act in the interests of the Council of which you are a member and in accordance with the core tasks of the Council.

Selflessness
You have a duty to take decisions solely in terms of public interest. You must not act in order to gain financial or other material benefit for yourself, family or friends.

Integrity
You must not place yourself under any financial, or other, obligation to any individual or organisation that might reasonably be thought to influence you in the performance of your duties.

Objectivity
You must make decisions solely on merit when carrying out public business.

Accountability and Stewardship
You are accountable for your decisions and actions to the public. You have a duty to consider issues on their merits, taking account of the views of others and must ensure that the Council uses its resources prudently and in accordance with the law.

Openness
You have a duty to be as open as possible about your decisions and actions giving reasons for your decisions and restricting information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty
You have a duty to act honestly. You must declare any private interests relating to your public duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership
You have a duty to promote and support these principles by leadership and example, to maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of the Council and its Members in conducting public business.

Respect
You must respect fellow members and employees of the Council and the role they play, treating them with courtesy at all times.

Length of appointment
Board Members hold office for a period up to four years. Members can demit office at any time. Appointments can be extended, with approval from Scottish Ministers, for a single further period not exceeding 4 years.

Remuneration
The post is voluntary and non-remunerated, however relevant expenses will be reimbursed.

Representation
Board Members serve as individuals, not as the representatives or delegates of forums or organisations.

Training and Development

Induction
The Regional Board recognises that it is important that when new Board Members are appointed they receive appropriate induction training to enable them to discharge their responsibilities with confidence. The Board therefore has in place an 'Induction Policy for Board Members' which aims to:

- assist new Members to familiarise themselves with their roles and responsibilities;
- enable new Members to understand what is expected of them; and,
- provide new Members with key information regarding the operation of the College and its Regional Board, and the College's operating environment.

The College's internal Induction Programme consists of three stages:

Stage 1: New Board Members will meet with the Regional Chair and the Secretary to the Regional Board to be briefed on the terms of their appointment and made aware of the responsibilities placed on them for the proper governance of the College.

Stage 2: Briefing sessions with each Committee Chair to gain an understanding of the remit and business conducted by each of the Board's Committees will be arranged. Meetings with the Principal & Chief Executive, and the two Vice Principals will also be arranged.

Stage 3: Six months following appointment, Board Members will be asked to identify any topics/issues/College processes they feel it would be beneficial to gain a greater awareness and understanding of e.g. curriculum planning, financial reporting. A tailored programme will then be scheduled by the Secretary to the Board.

In addition to the above three stages, newly appointed Board Members will be provided with an opportunity to informally meet with serving Board Members and to benefit from peer mentoring.

Board Members will be required to complete the mandatory National Induction Programme, delivered by College Development Network (CDN) on behalf of the sector. The Programme provides Members with an opportunity to:

- understand what they are accountable for and what their rights as well as duties are
- hear from key national decision makers on what is expected from the college sector and its Boards

- build skills and confidence in the governance role, identifying the 'hard' procedural and 'soft' behavioural requirements of good governance in the college sector
- review key source documents and guidance, exploring crucial lessons from the past
- discuss and share insights into the typical challenges facing Board members in the sector
- build a network of personal contacts from other Boards that can be developed over the years.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Following initial induction Board Members will be provided with ongoing opportunities to undertake training and continuing professional development activities. This will include internal and external training courses, briefing sessions, joint events with other educational institutions, and Board Visits across College Campuses and to various curriculum areas.

Board Members will also have the opportunity to undertake online training and development courses and to attend internal staff development sessions provided by the College's Organisational Development Team.

CPD requirements are discussed at Development Meetings held annually between the Regional Chair and individual Members. Training and development needs captured as part of this process may lead to training opportunities being provided to individuals, the Board as a whole or as part of Committee meetings.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

The Regional Board is mindful of the mix of skills and specific attributes that may be required of an individual filling a vacancy to ensure an effective, representative and widely experience board.

Skills and experience
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Ability to engage in constructive debate and dialogue
- Ability to think strategically
- Ability to challenge constructively and influence decision making
- Understanding of the issues involved in managing people, services and resources
- Ability to contribute to the development of the College's vision, values and objectives.

Personal qualities, behaviours and attributes
- An active interest in further education
- Passionate about promoting better outcomes for Scotland's learners
- Willingness to promote the College externally and within the communities it serves
- Committed to equality and diversity and improving the opportunities of disadvantaged or under-represented groups
- Committed to quality enhancement
- Awareness of standards in public life, public accountability and a determination to abide by them
- Willingness to acquire new knowledge and skills relevant to the role.

Desirable
- Basic understanding of the issues facing the Scottish education sector
- Awareness of the region's key economic drivers and priority sectors, and the current economy challenges currently facing North East Scotland
- Ability to read and understand management and annual accounts
- Knowledge of risk management.

Please note:
Applicants do not need to have previous experience of being a member of a board.

Disqualification
The Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013 identifies criteria that disqualify individuals from serving on the board of a Scottish college - see Appendix 1.

APPLICATION PROCESS

STAGE	DATE
Date appointments advertised	23 January 2026
Opportunity for potential applicants to speak with Regional Chair and other Board Members (by phone, video call or in person) Contact s.lawrance@nescol.ac.uk to arrange	February 2026
Opportunity for potential applicants to speak with Principal & Chief Executive (by phone, video call or in person) Contact s.lawrance@necol.ac.uk to arrange	February 2026
Closing date for applications	Friday 20 February 2026
Shortlisting of applicants for interview (see assessment criteria)	w/c 23 February 2026
Date by which outcome of shortlisting will be relayed to applicants	Friday 27 February 2026
Date for interviews (via Microsoft Teams or in person)	w/c 9 March 2026

The timescales for the next stages of the appointments is dependent upon the length of time required to gain approval for individual appointments from Scottish Ministers. Further information on this will be provided to shortlisted applicants at their interview.

Assessment criteria and methods
The table below details the skills, knowledge and experience that a Member of the Regional Board will require:

CRITERIA SOUGHT	Will be tested at	
	Application	Interview
Essential Skills & Experience		
Analytical Skills 1. Ability to analyse complex material and to reach sound conclusions based on this analysis.	✓	✓
Challenge 2. Ability to challenge constructively within a team environment.	✓	✓
Communication Skills 3. Ability to communicate effectively with a diverse range of stakeholders and build effective networks.	✓	✓
Strategic Planning 4. Ability to contribute to the Board's strategic thinking.	✓	✓
Desirable		
Education Landscape 1. A clear understanding and interest in education.		✓
Corporate Governance 2. An understanding of corporate governance in public, private or charity sectors and of risk management.		✓
Context 3. Good understanding of the needs of the economy, employers, communities and learners, and the challenges of a political environment, at a national and regional level.		✓

Please note: The Board can, where appropriate, take into account whether someone would in its view be able to acquire any sought after skills or knowledge following a period of induction and/or development.

APPENDIX 1 - DISQUALIFICATION FROM MEMBERSHIP

Please note the following, as stated in the Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013:

6 (1) A person is not eligible for appointment as a member of the board if the person—

(a) has within 5 years of the date on which the appointment would take effect, been sentenced (following conviction for an offence in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Irish Republic) to imprisonment for a period of not less than 3 months, whether suspended or not, without the option of a fine;

(b) is an undischarged bankrupt; or

(c) has been removed from office under section 24 of the 1992 Act (in relation to any college) or section 23Q of this Act (in relation to any regional board).

(2) For the purposes of sub-paragraph (1)(b), "undischarged bankrupt" means a person—

a) whose estate has been sequestrated and who has not been discharged (or against whom a bankruptcy order has been made and is still in force);

b) who has granted a trust deed for, or made a composition or arrangement with, creditors (and has not been discharged in respect of it);

c) who is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order, or an interim bankruptcy restrictions order, made under the Bankruptcy (Scotland) Act 1985 or the Insolvency Act 1986;

d) who is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions undertaking entered into under either of those Acts;

e) who has been adjudged bankrupt (and has not been discharged); or

f) who is subject to any other kind of order, arrangement or undertaking analogous to those described in paragraphs (a) to (d), anywhere in the world.