



Draft
Budget
Submission

2021/22

November 2020

01

Executive Summary

DELIVERING FOR SCOTLAND – COLLEGES DIRECTLY SUPPORT JOBS AND POSITIVE PLACES FOR LEARNING

The economic effects of the pandemic are only beginning to be felt. Tens of thousands of our people are going to have to change career, reskill and upskill, and thousands of young people are entering a labour market that looks very different from last year. Colleges are the most effective way to stop these medium-term problems becoming a long-term catastrophe for the people affected. College recruitment is still high and during 2018/19 colleges:

- Taught nearly 265,000 learners
- Delivered 70 million hours of learning
- Ensured that 95% of all learning hours led to a recognised qualification
- Enabled 37% of school leavers to move into further education
- Delivered 26% of all higher education in Scotland
- Were the biggest delivery agent of Modern Apprenticeships, supporting 10,650 students.

Colleges act as anchor points of local communities and are learner centred, supporting individuals of all ages and backgrounds to gain skills and qualifications in response to the demands of the labour market. Colleges also provide a positive place for learners to increase their skills and to become more rounded individuals during the economic downturn and until jobs are created, thereby increasing their value to society and preventing individuals from being unemployed. For example, through college participation in schemes such as the Young Person's Guarantee and Pathways to Apprenticeships. Colleges have previously demonstrated the value they add in this regard following the recession after the 2008 economic downturn.

This year's budget is also vital to Scotland's colleges to ensure their sustainability. The college sector was facing significant financial challenges before COVID-19, which have been exacerbated by the consequences of the pandemic. The operational shortfall for 2020/21 is potentially £20.7m, with at least six colleges facing a liquidity crisis. Colleges require funding to protect their critical contribution to social and economic recovery, to continue to skill people for jobs, and to continue to develop Scotland's current and future workforce.

A sustainable and secure college sector will also contribute towards delivery of the outcomes in the National Performance Framework and Scottish Government priorities around areas such as:

- Global competitiveness
- Contribution to society through education and skills
- Equipping learners to be entrepreneurs to ensure thriving and innovative businesses are created and sustained
- Releasing people's full potential
- Tackling poverty by providing opportunities for all
- Supporting health and wellbeing.



ROLE IN ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND RE-BUILDING BETTER

Colleges have a critical role to play in Scotland's recovery, supporting its future and building a more successful country, getting our citizens into and back to work, ensuring an absolute focus on both social and economic recovery, and contributing to the success of the changed economy of the future – in other words playing a vital role in helping us re-build better. Colleges will work with the Scottish Government and its agencies to align the curriculum and its delivery directly to jobs. Further details on how colleges contribute to economic growth is outlined in **Appendix 1**.

WE WANT THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S 2021/22 BUDGET TO DELIVER FOR SCOTLAND

We are asking the Scottish Government to commit to a real term increase in revenue and capital investment. **This would cost £71.2m in revenue and £84.5m in capital in 2021/22.**

Table 1 below sets out our request for additional revenue funding over and above the baseline for the college sector. It should be noted that this table assumes the baselining of previously received funding, for example, for National Bargaining / harmonisation (including all elements for backdating Job Evaluation to September 2018). The request around Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF) is based on the assumption that the total level of funding of £17m for 2020/21 (which is made up from a number of different funding sources), continues to be both available and delivered solely through the college sector.

Table 1

Additional Investment Requirements for Academic Year (AY)	2021/22 £m
Revenue Funding	
Propositions for Growth to provide training for jobs	16.2
Digital Inclusion	4.0
Mental Health and Well-Being Fund	5.0
Extension of Young Person's Guarantee and Transitional Training Fund	14.0
Transformation Investment Fund	10.0
Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF) – see Note 1	3.0
Funding to maintain revenue in real terms (adjusting for inflation) – see Note 2	14.0
Funding to cover deficit funding cash advances from 2021/22	5.0
Total Additional Revenue Request	71.2

Note 1: The figures in the table for FWDF represent the additional amount over and above the funding level of £17m received by the college sector in 2020/21.

Note 2: Inflation adjustment based on GDP quarterly deflator data produced by HM Treasury (September 2020) published 1 October 2020.



Table 2 below sets out our total request for capital funding for the college sector (in addition to non-profit distributing payments and capital funding related to Fife College).

It should be noted that the sector recognises that COVID-19 and the colleges' responses to the crisis has brought forward digital provision and influenced the balance between investment for physical and digital infrastructure. The sector published its Digital Ambition in October 2020. However, given the range and scale of professional, technical and vocational courses, which require on-campus training and assessment, then colleges will always require some physical infrastructure.

There is also an opportunity for the college sector to play its part in the Scottish Government's plan to transition to net zero emissions and environmental sustainability. With the Climate Change Plan update due shortly, and ahead of COP26 to be held in Scotland in November 2021, it is anticipated that further measures will be identified to achieve the Scottish Government commitment. Investment in the college infrastructure will not only help deliver positive outcomes, but also bring wider benefits around upskilling and reskilling and assisting in achieving the outcomes of the National Planning Framework.

Through the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland and the draft Infrastructure Investment Plan, and the impact of the sector's Digital Ambition, further work will lay out the detail of the capital needs and the balance between physical and digital investment required. Colleges will continue to work with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) to scope out this work (with several colleges at or nearing Final Business Case status) and the required investment.

Notwithstanding the above, colleges require continued investment for backlog capital maintenance to ensure that the poor condition of the college estate is tackled and is required to ensure it does not worsen. The figures in the table below for backlog maintenance have been derived from the College Estates Condition survey work previously undertaken by the SFC, which identified an investment of £360m over five years, and takes into account resource already provided towards the very high and high priority requirements.



The approach set out in the table below also takes into account the Scottish Government’s commitment to capital spending. As the draft Infrastructure Investment Plan sets out, there is a need to adjust the balance of investment in favour of renewing and extending the life of our existing infrastructure, both on environmental and value-for-money grounds. As such, the Scottish Government has stated that the Capital Spending Review will target a material uplift in capital maintenance type investment, relative to current levels of investment, working towards doubling such annual investment over the next 5 years(1).

Table 2

Capital Investment Requirements for Financial Year (FY)	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m
Digital Funding			
Lifecycle replacement	25.0	25.0	25.0
Estates Funding			
Backlog capital maintenance	37.5	75.0	112.5
Lifecycle maintenance	22.0	22.0	22.0
Total Capital Request	84.5	122.0	159.5

Colleges require resources to be identified in this Draft Budget and subsequent Spending Reviews for the necessary investment:

- Five major campus refurbishment / replacement projects due to aging and failing buildings to make them fit-for-purpose for 21st century education, with typical values of between **£70m** and **£100m** each.
- Capital projects are also required in the college sector as a result of strategic issues, modifying buildings and curriculum change.
- Investment in developing and extending ICT and digital technologies in the sector.

1 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/investing-jobs-capital-spending-review-framework-2021-22-2025-26/>

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Delivering for Scotland

SUSTAINABLE AND SECURE FUNDING

Colleges Scotland is seeking to move to the provision of a sustainable core budget for the college sector, one that provides a streamlined and simplified approach to funding. This will allow clarity over levels of resource, reduce unnecessary bureaucracy so that resources are maximised for the learner at the frontline, increase our ability to plan effectively, as well as dealing with the inherently unfair starting point for funding the different sectors across the education system. This is work that could be taken forward through the SFC Review and the ongoing work of skills alignment between SFC and Skills Development Scotland (SDS).

COLLEGES SUPPORT HEALTH AND EQUALITIES

Colleges will deliver on the dual Scottish Government priorities around health and wellbeing and the equalities agenda. Colleges help the most disadvantaged and furthest from the labour market, and power regional economies by delivering the skilled workforce and innovative practice needed by business and industry, giving opportunities for all.

College enrolments for individuals from SIMD20 areas account for around one-third of college intake, with a further 20-25% of enrolments from SIMD20-40 areas(2).

The Sutton Trust report(3) identified that 90% of those learners from the most socially deprived background that went to university did so through colleges – underlining the importance of a streamlined learner journey.

Colleges support social cohesion, positive and resilient mental health and wellbeing of both learners and our communities. They provide the necessary pastoral support to students, including preventative mental health services and in-college student support services, which are fundamental to improved retention and attainment rates as colleges continue to deliver on widening access.

SYSTEMS CHANGE

Colleges Scotland is supportive of reviewing key areas of process and governance that currently impact the college sector, in order to maximise the opportunities for colleges to service the regions for regional growth as required and generate an environment that provides the necessary flexibility. These include:

- the funding model
- the Regional Outcome Agreements to ensure they are shortened and focus on deliverables rather than management issues
- the current volume target
- building on the good practice highlighted by the National Articulation Report(4)
- consideration of how Office for National Statistics (ONS) classification impacts the college sector to ensure colleges move beyond the constraints of a one-year planning cycle and have the flexibility to deliver the skills required for their region (as highlighted in both the Cumberford – Little report and the SFC Review Phase 1 report).

2 http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/statisticalpublications_sfcst062020/ROWA_2018-19.pdf p22

3 <https://www.suttontrust.com/research-paper/access-in-scotland-university-participation/>

4 <https://collegesscotland.ac.uk/news/media-releases/1548-final-report-of-national-articulation-forum-2020/file.html>



POSITIVE IMPACTS OF THE INVESTMENT SOUGHT

The benefits of this investment would include:

- Delivery of Propositions for Growth leading to training and reskilling of individuals to directly contribute to the labour market – working through Scottish Government initiatives such as Young Person's Guarantee and the provision of short, focused retraining and upskilling courses – delivering opportunities for 17,000 individuals and 1,900 businesses.
- Provision of spaces for economic placements whilst the labour market recovers – colleges provide a positive place for learners to increase their skills and to become more rounded individuals during the economic downturn.
- A reduced rate of unemployment – additional people in colleges gaining skills increases their value to society whilst jobs are created and prevents individuals from being unemployed.
- Contribution to Scotland's economic recovery – colleges have a critical role to play in Scotland's recovery, supporting Scotland's future, getting our citizens into and back to work, ensuring an absolute focus on both social and economic recovery, and contributing to the success of the changed economy of the Scotland of the future.
- A sustainable and flexible college sector for the future – to capitalise on colleges' strengths maximum flexibility is needed to help quickly address the local and regional skill shortages, unemployment, and to tailor support for industry and business. Colleges have a key role in building and maximising the social capital of Scotland, one that contributes to inclusive economic growth and takes a learner-led approach.
- Delivery on the Scottish Government priority of health – delivery of mental health provision through colleges across the whole of Scotland.
- Delivery on Scottish Government priority of equality – evidenced by the disproportionate number of learners from the most socially deprived backgrounds and that 90% of those learners from these areas that went to university did so through colleges, allowing potential to be fulfilled.
- Provision of greater flexibility – delivery of a learner-centred system that facilitates seamless learner journeys, building on good articulation practice, whilst avoiding duplication and delivering the workforce for the changed economy.



FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF THE COLLEGE SECTOR

There are significant concerns about the financial position of colleges for 2020/21. We need the Scottish Government to commit to an urgent sustainable solution to the financial crisis facing the sector. The current unsustainability of the sector impacts its ability to contribute to Scottish Government priorities, and is highlighted by the following:

- We project a sector deficit of £9.2 million in 2019/20. The operational shortfall for 2020/21 is calculated to be £15.3 million, which increases to £20.7 million if there is no SFC funding available for transformation costs. There is significant regional variation that is not reflected in the aggregate indicators.
- The above deficit figures are after action across the college sector that will deliver £11m of savings in 2020/21, predominantly related to job losses.
- The sector is facing a liquidity crisis for at least six colleges in 2020/21, with the potential increase in staff costs (pay claims, pension and taxes) and inflationary increases in non-staff costs, placing pressure on the limited cash resources which have already been depleted due to the impact of COVID-19 on the 2019/20 operating position. By the end of 2020/21, it is estimated that 33% of colleges will be operating with less than five days cash.
- The current cash advances from SFC from the subsequent financial year is a very short-term response. The ultimate solution is to properly address the underlying financial deficit of the college sector.

SUSTAINABILITY RISKS

There are a number of significant sustainability risks identified for colleges, which include:

- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the student experience, on the costs of delivery, and on our ability to meet Scottish Government targets.
- Navigating the digital revolution – pivoting to online learning, tackling poverty, including in relation to access to broadband, required curriculum development, staff and student training.
- Insufficient funding to meet student support requirements, alongside rigidity in the funding system.
- Changes to the funding model, and the sector's ability to deliver Regional Outcome Agreements and Scottish Government targets.
- The impact of cost efficiencies on the number of staff employed to deliver the upskilling and reskilling of learners, and to provide the necessary support services to aid economic growth. Reduced staff numbers would impact on both the quality of student experience and on the health and wellbeing of college staff, at the very time colleges are needed to train the future workforce.



- Additional staff costs arising from both cost of living pay awards and the outcome of the National Bargaining job evaluation exercise for support staff.
- Increases in employer contributions to Local Government Pension Schemes.
- Challenges of diversifying income and generating additional surplus.
- The balance of portfolio of provision and how that impacts on student numbers.
- Addressing essential and backlog estates maintenance.
- The UK's exit from the European Union, and lack of clarity around the Shared Prosperity Fund.

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The Investment Required

REVENUE FUNDING

Barnett Consequentials

Colleges Scotland has written confirmation from Scottish Ministers that the appropriate Barnett Consequential, from increased spending on the colleges in England by the UK government, will be directed towards the college sector in Scotland. This is required in order to provide the investment required by the colleges to deliver the positive impacts set out above and to secure their contribution to the economic recovery and provision of a suitably skilled workforce.

Propositions for Growth

Scotland's colleges have worked up a suite of propositions to fully capitalise on the college system as a national resource which will deliver positive transitions for young people and adults, and significantly benefit individuals, communities, and employers. The following concepts and ideas are not exhaustive and set out concepts which are either being or could be explored by the Scottish Government.

Get Scotland Learning

This initiative is centered on the concept of generation-based learning, in particular youth and adults collectively creating a 'culture of learning' within the same household. Given that Scotland may see a large increase in both youth and adult unemployment, this initiative will encourage the whole household to collectively undertake upskilling and/or reskilling together.

Collaborative College Digital Network

To enhance and complement the work undertaken as part of the Digital Ambition project, it is proposed that the college sector leads on a collaborative college digital network. This network will see colleges 'pool' existing provision and resources for digital upskilling into one area.

Gateway Programmes

With unemployment rates expected to rise and the demand for reskilling opportunities increasing, it is proposed that a national suite of 'Gateway' programmes are created. Gateway programmes will be aimed at SCQF 4/5 level and target school leavers and adult returners, to give people the entry level skills and knowledge needed to access that sector.

Scale Up

To complement the Re-build Better concept highlighted by the Scottish Government, it is proposed that colleges lead on the 'Scale Up' initiative. This will see colleges provide specific training or support around business improvement and will include providing expertise, training, and support around specific growth areas.

Fresh Futures Initiative

Fresh Futures will feature a college-led bespoke careers, information, advice and guidance service which profiles each individual person and understands their key strengths, sectors they should avoid and sectors that they are suited to.



COST AND BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSITIONS FOR GROWTH

Table 3

Proposition for Growth	Benefits for Year One	Costs for Year One £m
Get Scotland Learning	6,000 individuals	2.0
Collaborative College Digital Network	4,800 individuals	4.0
Gateway Programme	1,400 individuals	3.5
Scale Up	1,900 businesses	4.9
Fresh Futures	4,800 individuals	1.8
Totals	17,000 individuals & 1,900 businesses	16.2

DIGITAL INCLUSION

In order to continue the move to fully supported and available online learning, actions and resource around the following areas are required:

- Allow digital inclusion for all through the provision of equipment and free data access
- Resource for the increased licensing costs associated with the equipment provided
- Resource and time for staff to undertake course development
- Appropriate spaces for learners to have a safe and conducive environment in which to learn
- Additional support for student development to ensure they are able to embrace digital learning.

In addition to the above, fast, secure and consistent connectivity throughout Scotland is required.

The college sector received £2.3m in additional capital funding to help towards the provision of equipment to assist in alleviating digital poverty. Colleges also accessed some resource through Connecting Scotland and supplemented with colleges' own money. However, there is unmet demand for the provision of equipment to ensure everyone has access to appropriate kit for online learning, as well as free data.

Meeting this demand would:

- enable more learners from SIMD10 and SIMD20 postcodes to be able to connect
- support those trying to get back into training or to retrain
- provide equity of access to digital learning.



Based on assumptions around households without access to the internet (from the Scottish Government's Scottish household survey 2018: annual report – Published: 10 September 2019) and those households without access to a laptop (from Ofcom: The Communications Market Report – Interactive data), it can be estimated that the number of learners attending college without access to a laptop and who are unlikely to be able to afford one is approximately 16,500 people.

With the provision of the resource to date, it is estimated that further investment of £2m is required. In order to also ensure colleges can resource course development and training for staff and students, the colleges are seeking a revenue investment of £2m. Therefore, the investment required from the Scottish Government to help deliver digital inclusion in regard to the college sector is **£4m**.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING FUND

Colleges recognise the need to support mental health and wellbeing amongst their staff and students, and also the pressure that this current pandemic is putting individuals under. Colleges Scotland is seeking investment to enhance learner welfare and build capacity for colleges to offer additional mental health interventions (other than additional counsellors currently being funded over a four year period) in order to provide wider mental health support within colleges. The demand for this type of support has existed previously and has only grown over recent months; it is required to ensure adequate support for our staff and learners, and to support the relevant outcomes from the National Planning Framework.

The specific request and associated **£5m** investment need for this fund has been raised with the Minister, who has requested further details and discussion.

EXTENSION TO YOUTH INTERVENTION AND TRANSITION FUNDING FUND

These key interventions to help different cohorts to be retrained and upskilled as a result of the impact of COVID-19 have only been announced until March 2021. Therefore, the college sector will be starting to show the difference that these offerings can provide during the academic year 2020/21. Colleges Scotland is seeking that these two offerings are extended for the 2021/22 year, as colleges can then continue to build on the good start as a result of the initiatives and will be able to undertake much more going forward:

- Young Person's Guarantee funding for 2020/21 of **£10m**
- Transition Training Fund element of **£4m**.



TRANSFORMATION INVESTMENT FUND

The college sector is keen to work with the SFC on the proposed offering of a Transformation Investment Fund which allows for the college sector to take forward initiatives that are not funded elsewhere and are in line with Scottish Government policy. Colleges have seen a reduction in their income, for example, through loss of commercially generated resource, and this fund would allow change in the sector and support colleges.

The college sector is seeking this investment in order to deliver the following key areas:

- Innovation and research – to strengthen the role that colleges play in regional economies, following the successful utilisation of the previous College Innovation Fund and demonstration of what colleges can deliver.
- Voluntary severance – to support restructuring and redevelopment of college staff.

In order to position and equip the college sector, we are seeking investment of **£10m** for the colleges from the Transformation Investment Fund.

FLEXIBLE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FUND (FWDF)

Colleges welcome the opportunity to progress the implementation of the FWDF which has provided a resource to the sector to help increase Scotland's productivity through upskilling the existing workforce. The college sector has demonstrated successful delivery of the fund since its launch, meeting employers training needs and establishing relationships with many hundreds of new businesses.

Employer feedback has demonstrated that the work colleges have undertaken with organisations has positively contributed towards the achievement of significant economic impact and increased productivity as a result of training to support public, private and third sector organisations, supported through the FWDF.

Colleges are committed to maximising the benefit of the FWDF, and welcome the additional monies to help unmet demand and to extend the approach to non-levy paying organisations. The request around FWDF is based on the assumption that the level of funding of £17m for 2020/21 continues to be available to the college sector, from the range of financial sources, with an additional ask for 2021/22 of **£3m**.



SUSTAINABILITY OF THE COLLEGE SECTOR

In order to move towards a position of sustainability for the colleges so that they can continue to contribute to the economic recovery, the following investment is required:

- to offset the impact of inflation, a real terms increase in the funding for the college sector of **£14m**
- to offset the estimated likely cash advance from 2021/22 of up to **£5m**, and which would be in effect a decrease in funding for the Draft Budget period if not provided for.

In addition, employer costs are anticipated to increase for the Local Government Pension Schemes (LGPS) as a result of the impact of the tri-annual revaluation of the LGPS funds, due to take effect from April 2021. Investment to cover these costs is sought in order to mitigate the impacts that would otherwise negatively affect the learner experience.

CAPITAL FUNDING

Digital Revolution

The college sector's Digital Ambition, published in October 2020, has been developed by the sector which will enable it to support the full range of learners accessing college-based learning platforms across Scotland. It will also ensure that colleges can quickly respond to the changing needs of the labour market and deliver skills for the new economy 4.0.

Whilst further work is required to ascertain the level of investment required by individual colleges to embrace and deliver the Digital Ambition, in 2021/22 further investment is required to allow colleges to pivot to the new online learning environment and to provide the required investment for the areas set out above.

Based on both the experience of colleges during the move to online provision and an estimate of the recurring annual costs of maintaining existing provision (from the annual ICT equipment purchase through the APUC call off contract), the sector ask is for lifecycle maintenance of **£25m**.



Backlog Maintenance

The SFC published its Estate Conditions Survey in December 2017, which provided evidence for the level of backlog maintenance costs required by the college sector. Colleges Scotland is requesting sufficient funding to meet the college sector's backlog maintenance requirements.

The survey demonstrated that the cost to bring college buildings to Level B conditions (backlog maintenance) would be £360 million over a five-year period. Taking into account the resources provided to date, the balance required to complete the identified work is **£225m**, taking into account those backlog maintenance costs offset by actual new capital investment. This amount is sought as an increasing amount across the three years 2021/22 to 2023/24 in order to reflect the deliverables and the Scottish Government's commitment to increasing capital maintenance type investment.

Lifecycle Maintenance

Lifecycle costs are required across the college sector estate in order to ensure that assets are adequately maintained, and therefore continue to provide a good learning environment and protect the investment made. The college sector is seeking an adequate and sustainable level of funding for lifecycle costs. The SFC undertook work to provide a more robust evidence base for such costs; this work demonstrated that the annual lifecycle resource required was **£22m** for the college sector. This estimate is to try and ensure that there is no deterioration in the teaching and learning environment in the meantime, and avoid increasing the level of backlog maintenance required.

CONCLUSION

Colleges are the most effective way to stop the medium-term problems as a consequence of COVID-19. The economic effects of the pandemic are only just beginning to be felt. An investment of **£71.2m revenue** funding and **£84.5m capital** funding into the college sector in 2021/22 will help mitigate the long-term impacts and contribute to a strong base for Scotland and its people. This will provide the skilled workforce for the future and support jobs, as well as to assist in delivering equalities and health and wellbeing.

Colleges Scotland
November 2020

Appendix 1 Delivering for Scotland's Economic Recovery and Positive Student Experience

COLLEGES CRUCIAL ROLE IN ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Colleges have a critical role to play in Scotland's recovery, supporting Scotland's future, getting our citizens back to work, ensuring an absolute focus on both social and economic recovery, and contributing to the success of the changed economy of the Scotland of the future – in other words playing a vital role in helping us re-build better. Colleges will work with the Scottish Government and its agencies to align the curriculum and delivery direct to jobs. The key roles that bring benefit to employers, individual and communities are further set out in Colleges Scotland's Statement of Ambition⁽⁵⁾, launched by the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science, in December 2018, and have been further explored by sub-groups of the Colleges Scotland board and other internal groupings. These topic areas are also highlighted in the Cumberland-Little Report: One Tertiary System: Agile, Collaborative, Inclusive report⁽⁶⁾. This document, commissioned by the Scottish Government and launched in February 2020, was co-authored by Edinburgh College Principal and Chief Executive, Audrey Cumberland, and City of Glasgow College Principal and Chief Executive, Paul Little.

Colleges: Delivering for Employers

Colleges make a fundamental contribution to Scotland's labour market, helping to meet employers' needs and ensuring that students have the right skills and training to succeed in the workplace of today and tomorrow. College education contributes to boosting the quality as well as quantity of employment options for students, working closely with both SMEs and large employers.

DELIVERING A POSITIVE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Colleges: Delivering for People

Delivering Skills and Opportunities for All

Colleges already play an important role in supporting learning for life, providing coherent, adaptive, flexible learning and articulation pathways through face-to-face, full-time, part-time, distance and online methods to suit the needs of individuals, including those in both schools and employment-based settings.

Delivering for the Most Vulnerable in our Society

The college sector has a long-established and successful track record of social inclusion and widening access to education, including those groups identified as likely to be the hardest hit through COVID-19 such as women, BAME, the disabled, and those socio-economically disadvantaged.

⁵ <https://collegesscotland.ac.uk/Policy/college-sector-statement-of-ambition.html>

⁶ <https://view.pagetiger.com/inlhij/1>



Delivering for Young People

Colleges play an essential role in providing opportunities for young people and are fundamental to tackling youth unemployment. In partnership with local authorities and schools through the school curriculum, colleges offer clear vocational pathways for Senior Phase pupils, preparing them for employment and helping reduce national skills gaps.

Student Support

For all learners we are seeking a fair and fully resourced system for student support that allows flexibility across both higher and further education learners.

Colleges: Delivering for Communities

Colleges act as civic anchors which help bind communities together by providing local hubs for people to meet and access services, offering campus amenities such as digital access, sports facilities, hair salons, beauty services, and restaurants that are affordable for the people within the local area and supporting skills development in those furthest from the labour market.

Colleges are adept at responding successfully to stakeholder need and have been central partners in many progressive regional initiatives. As key players within Community Planning Partnerships, Regional Economic Partnerships, City and Regional Deals, regional colleges of scale are agile and responsive, and are well placed to play a vital role in the successful delivery of growth initiatives, which support future economic recovery and reform.