

## Colleges Scotland Briefing – Building on Scotland’s Educational Success

Scottish colleges continue to deliver high quality courses to meet the future needs of Scotland’s young people. The sector is taking a leading role in the implementation of the *Developing the Young Workforce strategy* by working with schools, universities and employers to ensure that young people have the necessary skills for the future.

Colleges are contributing to Scotland’s educational and economic success through:

- Stronger partnerships with schools;
- Stronger partnerships with employers; and
- Delivering high quality courses which enable our students to secure great futures in employment and gain skills for life.

### How the College Sector Supports the Wider Economy

The recent independent report by Economic Modelling Specialists International (EMSI) demonstrates the ways in which Scotland’s colleges create value including increased earnings for learners; additional tax revenues for government; lower unemployment; upskilling; and increased productivity in the economy.

Scotland’s colleges contribute £14.9bn to the Scottish economy each year, representing 8.8 per cent of the total economic output of the nation, according to a study into the economic impact of the sector in Scotland.

Taxpayers are said to receive £5.70 in benefits for every £1 spent on colleges throughout Scotland, while learners themselves will pocket £6.30 in future higher wages in return for every £1 spent on their college education.

The overall findings from the report show that:

- Every £1 that learners pay for their education at college yields £6.30 in higher future wages. This translates to a 14.8% annual return on their investment.
- Society will receive £6.30 in benefits in return for every £1 invested in Scotland’s colleges. The average annual return on investment is 16.4%.
- Taxpayers see an average annual return of 15.6% on their investment in the sector. The corresponding benefit-cost ratio is £5.70 in benefits returned for every £1 in costs.
- The investment of £1.2bn by learners to attend Scotland’s colleges in 2013-14 will deliver a present value of £7.4bn in increased earnings over their working lives.

The EMSI research is the first piece of research to be commissioned by Colleges Scotland into the wider economic impact of Scotland’s colleges. The sector, which is taking a leading role in creating pathways to work, provides vocationally specific training and apprenticeships to deliver the skills needed by industry and commerce.

### How the College Sector is Working with Schools to Enhance Educational Attainment

Scotland’s colleges welcome opportunities to engage in the development of meaningful and productive vocational pathways for young people. Colleges will continue to play a fundamental and pivotal role in the provision of vocational education through engaging with local and regional

employers, and working in partnerships with local authorities and schools and key bodies such as Skills Development Scotland. Colleges will make a major contribution to the targeted improvements in positive outcomes for young people, including those from minority and ethnic backgrounds.

Most colleges have existing partnerships and collaborations with local authorities and schools. These partnerships can take different forms and models, with a variety of recognised qualifications and experiences on offer to school pupils. The intention of the *Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Scotland's Youth Employment strategy* is that in every local authority area there should be consistent, high quality partnership planning of vocational pathways, which enrich the curriculum offer to pupils in the senior phase. These planning structures support colleges and local authorities as they involve employers in jointly planning meaningful workplace experiences.

### **Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM)**

Colleges Scotland is committed to supporting the Scottish Government's strategy on promoting STEM career choices for people of all ages. Colleges provide a unique learning environment for STEM teaching, with hands-on opportunities to ensure that learners are ready to engage in the workplace or progress on to higher education.

### **Attainment**

Through stronger school-college engagement and provision, we believe that colleges are uniquely placed to make a real difference to attainment levels in Scotland. Scotland's colleges offer young people new settings and valuable opportunities to learn – particularly if they have not been engaged at school. We have an excellent track record of working with vulnerable learners and providing them with the support and guidance they need to successfully gain vocational qualifications.

### **How the College Sector is Working with Employers**

Colleges use their extensive experience of working with employers in vocational sectors to prepare people for work and deliver skilled personnel to meet the needs of industry and support economic growth. While all colleges have been making significant contributions to enhancing the learning experience for school pupils in their regions through school-college partnerships, Colleges Scotland wishes to highlight some college provision that illustrates the potential for different kinds of learning experience and pathways to attainment. These are outlined below.

### **The Edinburgh College Academies**

In 2013 Edinburgh College established the East Lothian Hospitality and Tourism Academy in partnership with a range of employers such as Marriott Hotels and Jurys Inn. Its aims were to create career opportunities for young people in the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence. Employers were involved in the shaping of the work placement contract to give young people a realistic experience of the demands of the industry. This successful model has been expanded into a South East Scotland Academies partnership involving a total of four academies (Tourism and Hospitality Academy; Creative Industries Academy; Food Science and Nutrition Academy; Health and Social Care Academy) and four local authorities with an aim of engaging 1,200 learners by 2019. A fifth academy (Engineering) is to be added in partnership with Edinburgh Napier University.

### **Forth Valley College – SCOTS Programme**

A joint initiative between Forth Valley College and local councils has provided over 200 young people from 14 schools with a taste of a range of vocational opportunities. The initiative aims to help young people make informed choices about their direction after leaving school, whether into employment or apprenticeships, or to encourage them to enrol for full-time college courses. The two year School-College Opportunities to Succeed (SCOTS) programme targets fourth year pupils and provides taster experiences of college courses in eight vocational subjects: Science and Engineering; Construction; Healthcare; Early Education and Childcare; Travel and Tourism; Hospitality; Salon Services; and Broadcasting. Pupils also complete an SQA Employability Award within the school to

reflect on their experiences and are encouraged to apply for a college place on their preferred course for the following academic year.

### **Energy Skills Partnership**

In response to the Scottish Government's *Economic Strategy, Climate Change Targets and Energy Skills Investment Plan*, the college sector has demonstrated a collective capability and capacity to develop a workforce with the technical skills required by employers in the energy sector. The Energy Skills Partnership has developed qualification pathways from school to college and on to university. The provision for pupils in the senior phase includes a Foundation Apprenticeship in Engineering that is being delivered by nine colleges across Scotland, ensuring a standard-based approach to education and training leading to a career in the energy sector.

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