

**21 November 2014**

**A new devolution settlement should encourage international students**

A new devolution settlement should enable Scotland to introduce amendments to the UK immigration policy. The demographic patterns over recent years, and the varying impact of migration, are not uniform across the UK. As such, there is logic in having a different approach in different parts of the UK.

In particular, we believe that Scotland will benefit from the ability to offer international students the opportunity to study. Devolving responsibility for this area would help to promote Scotland, and Scottish Colleges, as a destination for international students.

The abolition of post-study work visas by the UK Government in 2012 has been an issue of concern to Scotland's colleges. These visas allowed recent graduates to work or set up businesses in the UK for 24 months, which retained skilled and educated graduates as part of the labour force. The post-study work visa encouraged international students to come to Scotland as the ability to stay, and work, is an important factor when choosing a place to study.

Shona Struthers, Chief Executive, Colleges Scotland said:

“Responsibility for some immigration powers would give Scotland the opportunity to reintroduce the post-study work visa and attract individuals from around the world to Scotland.

International Students enrich the experience of Scottish learners by providing a more diverse pool of learners, with a broader global perspective. The cultural exchange benefits everyone as well as helping to promote Scotland.”

**ENDS**