

Job Description

Role:	Policy Officer
Reports To:	Director of Sector Policy
Direct Reports:	N/A

Role Objectives

The postholder will:

- Provide policy support and guidance to help influence and shape policy impacting on the college sector.
- Undertaking research (including environmental scanning) and data analysis to ensure policy work is appropriately informed.
- Provide proactive support to Colleges Scotland's strategic policy objectives by managing, and delivering, agreed areas of the strategic and operational plans.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

- Support the work of the policy team in responding appropriately to policy issues which have strategic implications for the college sector.
- Develop and manage relationships with contacts within the Scottish Parliament, Scottish Government, Scottish Funding Council, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), National Union of Students Scotland, Universities Scotland, COSLA and other key stakeholders, to help influence a range of policy areas affecting the sector.
- Draft policy information and advice to members using a range of effective communication methods e.g. written briefs/reports and presentations.
- Provide support for meetings, briefings and debates, including preparation of discussion papers, drafting reports and submissions and reporting of meetings.
- Consult with members on appropriate initiatives and issues to ensure policy is positively influenced and shaped.
- Work with colleagues to recommend appropriate tactics for influencing key policy changes with policy makers, decision-makers, members and stakeholders.
- Attend key meetings/events and report back on pertinent issues to team members and appropriate stakeholders.
- Support the work of Colleges Scotland's committees and their working groups, including assisting with the preparation of committee papers and briefing documents.
- Ensure the organisation responds appropriately to consultations.
- Translate complex and technical information, including legislation, into plain English and accurate advice.
- Gather appropriate intelligence and information to influence policy development and implementation.
- Act as secretariat for key policy forums and groups.
- Attend conferences and seminars, and report back on relevant issues. Also identify opportunities for national events on policy matters.
- Share information appropriately and within the bounds of confidentiality.
- Support the Director of Sector Policy to deliver the team's operational plan.
- Work effectively as a team member to ensure accurate and timely input to the policy team's work.

In addition to the duties and responsibilities noted above, the postholder will have other duties and responsibilities which will enable Colleges Scotland to fulfil its vision and achieve its mission.

Person Specification

Role: Policy Officer

Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educated to SCQF Level 8 (e.g. HND) or equivalent experience
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience working in a policy role or similar • Advising and providing guidance on a range of policy matters (within an educational context would be advantageous) • Working effectively with a range of stakeholders and building meaningful/lasting relationships • Undertaking research and data analysis work • Creating reports and briefing papers • Successfully multi-tasking and working effectively on several tasks/projects simultaneously. • Working effectively using own initiative and within a team environment.
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy development and consultation processes • Stakeholder engagement • The political framework (within an educational context would be advantageous) • Effective research and intelligence gathering processes • Data analysis and data management processes • Effective mini-project and task management processes.
Key Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective policy advisory skills • Excellent writing skills and the ability to turn technical/complex content into succinct briefings/reports • Ability to translate policy intentions into engaging reports and briefings • Excellent communication skills • Strong research and analysis skills • Ability to support committees, forums and groups • Ability to build and sustain effective relationships • Successfully working to tight deadlines while maintaining quality • Competent in use of Microsoft Office suite (including the ability to create and manage Excel spreadsheets)
Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to work autonomously • Resilient and self-reliant • Team player who can build and sustain relationships with colleagues at all levels • Analytical and enjoys working with detailed information/data • Solutions-focused, self-motivated and determined to succeed • Flexible in approach and able to respond creatively to new developments and to adjust priorities accordingly.