

Colleges Scotland Briefing: Future of Scotland's Economy Debate – Wednesday 20 May 2015

Overall contribution that the college sector makes to the Scottish economy

Colleges make a significant contribution to the Scottish economy both in monetary and employment terms. During 2013/14 colleges delivered 76 million hours of learning to around 238,000 students and employed 10,250 full-time equivalent staff. By 2020, colleges will contribute £1.2bn to the Scottish economy, equivalent to 1% of gross domestic product.

Enrolling in college improves life chances for people and helps those furthest away from the labour market move towards employment. Colleges are a critical part of an integrated system of learning which also includes school, training, university and work.

Every year, students qualifying from college see their collective income increase by £150m. Colleges deliver a wide range of vocational qualifications at all levels for young and adult learners from access courses to degrees. Taking an HND course can boost pay by up to 80% – this increased productivity supports both exports and inward investment.

How the college sector is working with schools to enhance educational attainment

Colleges recognise and 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 by building on existing best practice in 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 to provide young people of school age with access to vocational programmes. 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 should support colleges and local authorities as they involve employers in jointly planning meaningful workplace experiences.

The clear intention of the Scottish Government's implementation plan for its DYW strategy is that vocational pathways will be seen as equally desirable routes to a successful career in employment. School learners will be able to make an informed choice about vocational or academic routes and this will impact positively on attainment for all.

How the college sector is working with employers

Colleges play a key role in developing and enhancing Scotland's workforce. This includes preparing people for work and delivering skilled personnel that meet the needs of industry and supports economic growth. Colleges have extensive experience of working with employers, built up through close links with vocational sectors. While all colleges have been making significant contributions to enhancing the learning experience for school pupils in their regions and communities 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.

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 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 a taste of a range of vocational opportunities to help them 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. In their fifth year pupils use the previous years' experience in their choice of a wide range of Skills for Work programmes.

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.