

# Manifesto 2017



## Our Key Asks to the Next UK Government are:

- Ensure that any aspect of the **Brexit** negotiations does not result in a negative impact on the college sector in Scotland, but instead provides a base that actively supports colleges in all that they do for learners, the economy and society as a whole.
- Provide proactive interventions in relation to mitigating the impact of both a loss of **EU funding** and access to culturally enriching exchange programmes.
- Introduce a new **Post-Study Work Visa** in Scotland to allow qualified international students who have completed a further and higher education course to stay in Scotland to work and contribute to the economy.
- Provide adequate time for the **Apprenticeship Levy** to become established, whilst working in partnership with the Scottish Government, in order to ensure as far as possible that the original intention behind the introduction of the Levy is delivered right across the UK.

## Introduction

Whilst Colleges Scotland recognises that education is a devolved issue to Scotland, and that there are two different education systems in Scotland and the UK, there are several areas of common concern, issues and challenges faced, and so we consider it appropriate to lay these out from a Scottish perspective.

## Brexit and EU Funding

Colleges in Scotland have a history of attracting staff and students from around the world and leading on key overseas projects and we want to maintain this work and relationships with our European partners at all levels.

Brexit poses challenges for all those in education but it also presents opportunities. Colleges are ideally placed to train and develop the current and future workforce and help move away from a reliance on recruiting people from the rest of the EU.

It is vital that both the Scottish and UK Government's pursue every possible avenue and option to enable our staff, students and projects to continue in the new landscape, following the Brexit negotiations.

Our key ask at this time is for the UK Government to ensure that Brexit negotiators are aware of the huge positive impact of colleges right across the UK and to ensure that any aspect of the Brexit negotiations does not result in a negative impact on the college sector, but instead provides a base that actively supports colleges in all that they do for learners, the economy and society as a whole.

Colleges Scotland is also seeking proactive interventions from both Scottish and UK Governments in relation to mitigating the impact of both a loss of EU funding and access to culturally enriching exchange programmes.

What could this look like:

- Confirm rights to reside and work in the UK post-exit for EU nationals that are working and studying in the college sector.
- Continue access to Erasmus+ and other mobility programmes or the establishing of domestic lead programmes to allow individuals to participate in meaningful exchange projects.
- Develop alternative funding sources to the European Regional Structural and Investment Funds.
- Maintain freedom of movement for EU staff and students, including to protect and create opportunities for the outward mobility of Scottish students after Brexit.

## Post-Study Work Visas

The college sector has the potential to contribute to the international agenda by bringing benefit to the Scottish economy, through inward investment from abroad and by providing opportunities for global learning, innovation and connectivity.

Traditionally, Scotland's colleges have been active players in the international market, both in terms of recruiting international students and pursuing markets to identify commercial opportunities.

International students enrich the experience of Scottish students by providing a more diverse pool of students, with a broader global perspective. The cultural exchange benefits everyone as well as helping to promote Scotland internationally. Colleges Scotland supports the re-introduction of a Post-Study Work Visa, which the UK Government ended in 2012; this would attract overseas students thus enriching the college experience for all, whilst retaining skilled graduates who contribute to our economy.

What could this look like:

- Introduce a new Post-Study Work Visa in Scotland to allow qualified international students who have completed a further and higher education course to stay in Scotland to work and contribute to the economy.

## Apprenticeship Levy

Whilst decisions around utilising the Apprenticeship Levy and developing the delivery mechanism is a devolved issue, it must be recognised that the Apprenticeship Levy was introduced across the whole of UK by the Government in Westminster. The haste of the introduction has not been helpful; however, Colleges Scotland is now seeking a period of stability to embed the Levy.

We are seeking adequate time for the Levy to become established, whilst working in partnership with the Scottish Government in order to ensure, as far as possible, that the original intention behind the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy is delivered right across the UK.

What could this look like:

- The UK Government changing the mechanism that pays across the estimated proceeds from the Apprenticeship Levy to Scotland, in a way that allows hypothecation of the money raised to deliver extra apprenticeship places.