Modern Apprenticeships in Scotland
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Colleges play a key role in delivering and enhancing Scotland’s workforce working in partnership with schools, universities and local authorities to deliver high quality Modern Apprenticeship (MA) programmes. Evidence over the years demonstrates this is a hugely valuable route to employment for many people, creating a skills pipeline that has delivered a stronger workforce.

Apprenticeships can take between six months and three years to complete and can be delivered in a variety of ways including on-the-job training and block release/day release. Uptake has more than doubled since 2008/9 to 25,691 in 2012/13, with 50% in the 16 to 19 years age bracket, 27% aged 20 to 24 and 23% aged over 25.

We support the Scottish Government’s ambition to see 25,000 new MAs each year until 2015/16. The recommendations within the Commission for Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce of increasing the scale of the MA programme, its profile and better alignment are welcomed and colleges are well placed to deliver on this ambition.

If implemented, these recommendations should help bridge the gap between education and employment opportunities through improved vocational and technical learning opportunities.
Perception of Modern Apprenticeships in Scotland

MAs are highly valued in some sectors as a successful pathway to employment. They offer individuals an opportunity to learn and gain qualifications and skills and secure employment. When combined with appropriate qualifications, this can also create opportunities for advanced college or university entry.

A proportion of employers remain resistant to the cost of providing such pathways, leading to increased reliance on a limited public purse, through further and higher education, and as identified by the Commission for Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce only 13% of employers take on apprentices.
The knowledge of young people, parents/carers and school teaching staff is variable and the historical view is that vocational training is not a young person’s first choice. There is a knowledge gap between perception and reality and key influencers on young people are often unaware of the value of an MA and how it can lead to progression to higher levels of education and a successful career.

We agree that the value and status of MAs is underestimated in Scotland. Reinforcing the clearly defined and rewarding progression routes into industry and higher education alongside a national online application service would be a welcome start.
Scottish Colleges Delivering Modern Apprenticeships

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 in Scotland.

A recent Colleges Scotland survey indicated that although colleges have been directly awarded approximately 10% of the MA programme, they were expecting to be involved in the delivery of a further 12% in 2013/14 through subcontracting. However, this near 25% share could be much greater when colleges ‘hidden’ involvement in delivering part-time courses to students who may not have identified themselves as part of the programme is considered.

• Across Scotland there were 25,691 Modern Apprenticeships started in 2012/13 (50% of these were 16-19 year olds)
• 78% of Scottish employers recruiting college leavers found them prepared for work.

Colleges are ideally placed to bring together the needs of employers and young people on a regional and local level and put in place the necessary training support moving forward.
Working with Employers to Deliver a Skilled Workforce

Businesses are increasingly viewing education and training as an investment. Above any other form of learning, employers value vocational competence as integral to their business strategy. Scotland’s colleges deliver these skills.

Working in partnership with employers, colleges deliver skills and training in key growth sectors with 39% of college enrolments linked to industry. For example, the Energy Skills Partnership is sharing the latest innovations in teaching and equipment across Scotland in the energy sector, providing real support to the skilling of the industry workforce. Such projects should be extended and replicated for other key growth sectors.

MAs are unique within the education system. They are built on the relationship between the employer and the employee and are a powerful vehicle for workforce development.
Key Messages

Colleges can do more

Investing in increased volume of MAs would maximise opportunities for young people and encourage employers to offer entry level jobs. There is an opportunity to grow the offering of colleges, widening access and allowing more learners to progress and benefit from gaining a higher education.

We believe there is a large unmet demand from colleges to be involved in delivering more MAs. In 2012/13 colleges believed they could deliver 56% more MA starts than had been awarded. In 2011/2012 there was a willingness to deliver an extra 84%. Colleges should be given the opportunity to do more.

Better alignment to key national sectors

MAs should be proactively aligned towards providing the long-term skills requirements for economic growth areas as identified in the Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce report. This should include encouraging partnerships across a wider range of sectors.
Need for increased flexibility in the delivery of MAs

There should be greater opportunity to build increased flexibility into structures of MAs, to ensure they bridge across sectors where possible.

Increased interaction between schools, colleges and employers

To meet future needs it is vital that increased interaction between schools, colleges and employers occurs to ensure that the skills and knowledge requirements are matched against vocationally driven education.

Place vocational learning on a par with academic learning

Parity of esteem is a key requisite of an education system which supports learners and businesses to achieve their ambitions. Colleges are often seen as a second choice, rather than THE choice with as much merit as attending university. It’s not well or widely understood that studying in college can lead to careers in some of the most highly paid and highly regarded careers available.
Keyfacts

25,691 MA starts in 2012/13 (50% were 16-19 year olds)

59% of MA students in colleges are aged between 16-19

13% of employers have Modern Apprentices

Over 10,000 students in colleges are on MA programmes

Care has the largest number of enrolments linked to industry

78% of Scottish employers recruiting college leavers found them prepared for work

Colleges work in partnership with employers to deliver bespoke courses
Forth Valley College is making headlines in the media world after being selected to offer Scotland’s first MA in Digital Journalism developed by the National Union of Journalists (NUJ).

The college’s Creative Industries Department, based at the Stirling Campus, will provide the essential theory and practical skills training the apprentices will require to develop in the workplace.

The apprenticeship was developed by the NUJ working with the Sector Skills Council, Creative Skillset, and was facilitated by Skills Development Scotland. It is anticipated that in 2014/15 the Scottish industry will recruit, support, and employ between 30-50 digital journalism apprentices at Level 3 across Newsquest, Johnston Press, Scottish Provincial Press, BBC, STV and Romanes Media Group.

The programme has been designed to embrace the technological changes in the news industry and will develop a wide range of flexible skills which can be used in both print and digital journalism.
At New College Lanarkshire, a successful pilot apprenticeship programme has been running in partnership with RBS. The programme is created from an SQA Higher National (HN) Framework, using core and optional units culminating in an HND award. Alongside the HN units the apprentices are also offered opportunities to gain professional certification.

The programme uses industry and educational qualifications to create a unique bespoke course which meets both the business needs of the employer and provides a clear progression route for each apprentice.

In common with many other companies, RBS realised they had a small, ageing IT workforce and a solution was needed to fill this skills gap. Using an option within the MA framework the Day Release Programme was established.

The programme involves the apprentices coming into the college once a week. Chosen in collaboration with RBS, it uses a range of HN units (both core and optional), which can be different for each apprentice to match the skills required by that apprentice. At the end of two years, the apprentices will gain an HND award and the opportunity to further their education through progressing onto a third year Top-up degree programme with The Open University.

This programme provides a creative and innovative solution to filling the growing IT skills gap in the Scottish economy. It has allowed a relationship to build between the college and RBS, and has facilitated the collaborative working of staff in both organisations.

Together with the college, RBS is now looking at the further progression of the apprentices after the college scheme ends.
Hospitality

Ayrshire College has launched an innovative new training model for the hospitality industry in collaboration with Turnberry, one of Ayrshire’s premier tourist destinations.

The first of its kind for the college locally, the new model allows nine trainees to undertake an MA in Hospitality at both SVQ Level 2 and 3 fully in the workplace. This signifies a break from the traditional learning model of workplace learning combined with college attendance.

Working to meet the needs of the resort’s business, the college devised the new flexible training solution to allow their apprentices to be based solely at the resort, with regular workplace assessments being facilitated by the college.

The MA course gives Turnberry’s trainees the opportunity to see all aspects of the kitchen in operation. By rotating across the different kitchen disciplines, it keeps them focused on what each job involves, refreshes their minds, and keeps them motivated. Learning about industry guidelines gives them proficiency in what they are doing, whilst the resort’s Executive Chef looks for plenty of energy from the trainees throughout the duration of their training.

The college has worked closely with the resort to create a bespoke training solution which meets Turnberry’s needs for employee development, delivered at a time and place to suit their business. Keeping training provision in-house allows the company to train more apprentices at the same time and within a quicker timescale, and demonstrates the college’s commitment to working with partners to devise tailored training which is flexible and responsive to the demands of local industry.
Engineering

Student Hannah Muir (19) from Kirkintilloch is entering her third year apprenticeship at college, having won the enviable honour of Plumbing Apprentice of the Year at the previous two annual college Award Ceremonies.

Emerging from Lenzie Academy with a collection of Standard Grades, Hannah gained a place with Campbell Construction (CCG) to train as a plumber. She is delighted to have this opportunity to learn a trade and has gained hugely valuable experience working at the Commonwealth Games Athletes’ Village in Glasgow’s East End.

‘I wasn’t keen on the idea of university and plumbing was something I really wanted to do. It’s always good to have a trade at your fingertips and, even if I do change direction later, I will always have these skills to fall back on.’

The college’s tutors quickly recognised Hannah’s skills and aptitude and, when an opportunity arose to train on state-of-the-art heating and venting equipment, she was a prime candidate for the training.

Vokera PLC has brokered a partnership with the college which establishes them as the principal provider of customised training on the installation and maintenance of their new energy-efficient flagship combination boiler. The college has already trained all their second year plumbing apprentices on the kit and are looking to roll this out in the coming session.

The college has also introduced Energy Awareness Training across all of its construction and building services engineering programmes. The college works closely with the Scottish Energy Partnership to ensure its students receive industry standard information and training, equipping them for job opportunities and future-proofing their skillsbase, making them very attractive to potential employers.
The Fife Engineering Pathfinder is a partnership approach involving young people and their schools, with Fife College, and Fife employers. Fife College, in partnership with Fife Council and Skills Development Scotland, is offering pupils in S4 and S5, the opportunity to gain a Performing Engineering Operations SVQ Level 2 qualification, whilst also continuing to study in school.

The Engineering Pathfinder involves the delivery of a new approach for vocational engineering pathways in and beyond school, leading to a growth in the advanced level apprenticeships to meet the increasing demands for a more highly skilled and technical workforce for our future economy.

The ambition is to enable all learners to progress to their optimum career potential through the Foundation apprentice, MA and Graduate apprentice pathways, where this is the best option for the learner.

Pupils attend college for two half-days per week for two years, and also complete a placement with an engineering employer. This means that by the time they leave school, they will have completed at least 25% of an MA in Engineering, and will be well prepared for MA or job interviews, college interviews and university applications.

The Engineering Pathfinder fits well with the Fife STEM Strategy, and the ambitions that Fife employers and public sector partners share in increasing the flows of qualified school leavers who are ready and able to take up MA, and higher education opportunities.
Wood Machining

Employer engagement between Orkney College UHI and a local building firm, R Clouston Ltd, has enabled a local apprentice to complete an SVQ Level 3 and Professional Development Award Level 6 in Wood Machining. The success of this joint initiative is highlighted by the apprentice becoming Orkney’s first ever locally-trained qualified wood machinist.

Following enquiries from the local CITB, Orkney College UHI came up with a proposal for running the course, despite not having dedicated wood turning equipment on-site at the college, by working with local employers to provide students with access to machinery.

Orkney College UHI is the only centre north of Falkirk which is approved to deliver the SVQ Level 3 in Wood Machining, which is a massive achievement for Orkney. It highlights the excellent relationship that exists between the college and local employers and their willingness to work with the college to create training opportunities for young people.

The strong links the college has with local employers and the partnership working with key local industries ensures learners are well prepared for the jobs market.
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde (NHSGGC) recognise the importance of employment in tackling poverty and income inequality and have offered 50 young people MAs in a range of areas. These jobs include nursing assistants, clerical workers, receptionist, youth workers, technical officers and engineering. These will last two, three, or four years depending on the role.

To help these young people access good quality training and get a much needed foothold on the employment ladder, the apprentices have signed up to a learning programme with Glasgow Clyde College in addition to the on-the-job training they will receive.

This is an exciting opportunity for NHSGGC, Glasgow Clyde College and for all of the young people involved. One of the recruits is Dylan Taylor (16) from Cumbernauld who said: ‘I have started my new job in the payroll department and have been really enjoying it. When I left school I wasn’t sure of what to do next but knew I was always interested in a career in finance. I feel very lucky to have been given this fantastic opportunity and I know I will really make the best of it.’
Borders College has for the second year taken on 20 Scottish Borders Council apprentices to the Amenity Horticulture Programme, funded through Skills Development Scotland.

Attending Borders College, which is located near their workplace, on a day-release basis means that students can achieve Amenity Horticulture at SVQ Level 2 with minimal travelling, which saves both time and money.

Kenny Thomson, Faculty Head responsible for the course, said: ‘We are ideally suited to offer this provision to Scottish Borders Council with our well equipped facility at Newtown St Boswells. Our ongoing work with the council will develop a skilled workforce for our rural economy’.

Borders College offer a range of apprenticeships, from the traditional trades to office and management based opportunities, from its Borders based location and Edinburgh training suite.
Offering Unique Solutions for the Young Workforce

Colleges:

• Prepare young people for work
• Start and build careers
• Support young people into positive destinations
• Offer credible vocational experience to complement academic study
• Support young people to achieve a higher education
• Directly partner with employers to meet their needs
• Deliver skills at every level for every community
• Deliver strong economic returns across the country.