



Colleges Scotland Member Benefits 2025-26

Who We Are and What We Do

Colleges Scotland is an advocacy organisation, harnessing the diversity of the college sector to have more influence with key stakeholders and produce greater impact for our members. Our organisation helps support members in their delivery of college education, and promotes sustainable core funding, while seeking to develop opportunities for more diverse income streams.

Colleges Scotland is at the heart of a world-class college sector that is recognised, valued, and available to all.

Our vision is that *When Colleges Thrive, Scotland Thrives*. Our Purpose is to promote and exemplify colleges as they deliver world-class education and training to students and to influence the public debate so that colleges are at the forefront of public policy decisions.

As a valued member of Colleges Scotland, you should have clarity about the work we carry out. We are making, and will continue to make, strides in advocacy leading to positive changes in the policy landscape, and we seek to demonstrate our impact effectively to members, decision makers, the media, college students and staff, and the general public.

Our work is carried out within the envelope of our resources, which we make best use of at every turn in providing value for money for members.



Our Recent Successes

Our outcomes are accountable, transparent, and accessible to our members. In the past Academic Year, we have helped deliver the following:

- **Offshore Wind Skills Programme £3m (For AY 2025/26)** – Working with our sector partners, government officials and the renewables industry to create a skills programme to ensure a pipeline of college-trained workers to support energy transition and the offshore wind sector.
- **Active Campus Co-ordinators £1.45m (For AY 2025/26 and 2026/27)** – Continuation of the Active Campus Network, with 18 Active Campus Co-ordinators now in place across the sector, increasing the provision of sport and active wellbeing in colleges across Scotland, following the initial investment committed between 2023 and 2025.
- **College Innovation Funding £700k** – As part of the Scottish Government Entrepreneurial Campus Blueprint initiative to help college students develop business skills and link up with investors.
- **Care Skills Partnership £500k** – Enabling the college sector to develop and deliver a national resource to strengthen colleges capacity to support Scotland's health and social care sector. This initiative will focus on workforce planning, new entry upskilling, and reskilling existing professionals to meet critical staffing challenges.



Our Members

Our members are at the heart of what we do.

In 2025/26, there are 24 members of Colleges Scotland including all incorporated colleges (single region and multi-region colleges), as well as the regional strategic body (UHI), and three associate members (Newbattle Abbey College, Scotland's Rural College and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig).



Governance

In 2024/2025, Colleges Scotland moved to a new governance model. The Board of Trustees will consist of up to ten Trustees. This will include the Chair of the College Principals' Group, one other person who is a Principal, Chair of the College Chairs' Group, one other person who is a Chair, up to four independent individuals, Chairperson, and Colleges Scotland's Chief Executive Officer.

The Audit Committee is an advisory committee to the Board of Trustees with no executive powers. The Audit Committee will have a minimum of three members appointed by the Board of Trustees.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is attended by the Company Members, Associate Members, and the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees are also financially accountable for College Employers Scotland (CES), although it devolves all decision-making authority on National Bargaining matters to CES.

Over Academic Year 2025/26, we will consult with the sector on the governance arrangements required for sectoral decisions.



Strategy

Our previous board set the strategy for Colleges Scotland, which runs until 2026. The strategy sets out five Strategic Aims for the organisation:

- Aim 1 – Lead and Influence Policy
- Aim 2 – Raise the Profile and Enhance the Reputation of Scotland’s College Sector
- Aim 3 – Advocate for the delivery of Increased Sector Resource
- Aim 4 – Be an Enabler, Supporter and Connector of the Sector Membership, both internally and externally
- Aim 5 – Be an Improving Organisation providing Value for Money for our Members.

Colleges Scotland is accountable to the Trustees on the progress, challenges, and successes of the strategy at each Trustee meeting. At each meeting, progress is presented in a Strategy Tracker, augmented by a Chief Executive Report which is transparent and robust.

Member views are represented at a national level as part of our advocacy work which make an impact on policy issues, college financial sustainability, supporting a college sector which is fit for the future. Colleges Scotland also provide support on immediate and urgent issues, such as additional sector funding streams, the climate emergency, and estates investment.

Colleges Scotland also responds to national inquiries, such as the Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry, and at the Scottish Parliament (including the Cross Party Group on Skills, Cross Party Group on Colleges and Universities, and at Parliamentary Committees).

The views of Colleges Scotland’s members are gathered regularly through our advisory groups, and structured discussions and surveys to gather information.



Benefits

Support and Services

Colleges Scotland staff offer 'as and when needed' expertise, support, and advice to members on the following areas:

- Interaction with the Scottish and UK governments
- Discussions with the Scottish Funding Council
- Interaction and briefings with elected MSPs and MPs
- Strategic dialogue with key stakeholders
- Bespoke strategic dialogue with individual boards of management and/or senior leadership teams
- Crisis communications and public affairs advice
- Interviewing for college board member and senior leadership team appointments.

Policy

Members benefit from the work of Colleges Scotland in several policy areas.

College funding and finance is an area of high priority with Colleges Scotland which represents the sector voice at the Tripartite Group, with Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council, informing the college Finance Director network and working closely with members to represent their views, and producing and advocating for increased resources in the annual Budget submission.

A key focus for the policy team is to contribute to the shaping of legislation which comes to the Scottish and UK Parliaments. For example, Colleges Scotland in 2024/25 represented member views on a number of Bills and at Committee, with both written and oral evidence. We also responded to both Scottish and UK Covid-19 Inquiry processes on behalf of the sector.

Colleges Scotland has in-house expertise which is applied to digital transformation, international, climate change, apprenticeships, social issues including student support, poverty, and gender based violence. Your views as a member are invaluable in driving forward strong college positions in all of these areas.



Advocacy, Visibility and Engagement

Colleges Scotland holds strong relationships with key stakeholders and funders to strengthen existing relationships, build new collaborations and networks, and secure partnerships. These relationships help to deliver greater visibility and understanding of the value and impact of colleges on social and economic prosperity.

Member views are taken directly into interactions with the highest levels of government and stakeholders, and used to influence and make an impact on developing policy areas and on funding direction. For example, we liaise with members to progress our annual Budget submission to the Scottish Government's Spending Review which is developed into a compelling document by the Policy team and advocated for by our Communications and Public Affairs team.

Speaking opportunities and participation at events are also shared by Colleges Scotland for sector representatives at conferences, events, and party-political conferences. Where appropriate, Colleges Scotland also shares paid-for sponsorship opportunities with members for consideration at individual college level.

Colleges Scotland regularly produces news and opinion content for broadcasters, traditional media, business to business media, and on digital platforms. This is measured and reported to the Trustees. Colleges Scotland's Communications and Public Affairs team are available out of hours to respond to media queries and provide a professional service to reactive news stories. Crisis communication support is also available, and the team produce an annual event such as our Parliamentary Reception or a national conference.

Members receive a comprehensive Daily Monitoring Report which provides a summary of Scottish and UK further and higher education headlines, education news, relevant activity from the Scottish and UK Parliaments, and important stakeholder updates.

Members also receive a regular Lines to Take document which provides key messages on national sector issues for your own briefings and internal use.

Stakeholder opportunities are offered to members through the regional position of the colleges, and other opportunities as they arise. This could be, for example, to engage with a political party, carry out an influencing opportunity at a conference or event, or to take part in high level strategic discussion on national issues such as poverty, care experienced students, or articulation. Engaging with stakeholders is an important and continually developing part of our work.

Colleges Scotland also publishes an annual Keyfacts publication for stakeholders, Annual Report, Annual Accounts, and makes returns to Companies House and to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.



College Employers Scotland

College Employers Scotland is the body through which the Scottish Government's Policy of National Bargaining is delivered and implemented by employers in the college sector, in partnership with the trade unions (EIS-FELA, GMB, UNISON and UNITE). Membership of College Employers Scotland is made up of senior leaders from colleges across Scotland.



College Employers Scotland also provides the secretariat to the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC), which jointly agrees terms on issues, such as pay and terms and conditions of employment in Scotland's colleges in partnership with the trade unions, and supports employers in the negotiating forum.

College Employers Scotland is grant funded by the Scottish Funding Council and, as part of Colleges Scotland, members have the benefit of joined up knowledge and some limited resource sharing across both parts of the organisation. Full details about the work of College Employers Scotland can be found on their website www.collegeemployersscotland.ac.uk.



Meeting Facilities in Stirling

Colleges Scotland is situated at Argyll Court, Stirling with College Employers Scotland, ESP, and WorldSkills. Our base offers on-site parking and several flexible meeting rooms which are modern and digitally connected for our members to use as a hub, and for non-members to use commercially. Our rooms can be configured for board meetings and conferences, as well as smaller meetings, with our staff available to make sure your event runs smoothly. There is a communal networking space for breaks and lunch. Free Wi-Fi is available to all our guests, with the ability to stage hybrid meetings from our large screen displays in each of our meeting rooms.

To book a room please contact info@collegesscotland.ac.uk.

How Members can Support Colleges Scotland

Member participation in national activity is critical to delivering our strategy, delivering impact, and increasing knowledge across the sector.

Engagement from us all – chairs, principals, senior college staff, and college board members – brings the best results, and we are grateful for the support from our members for the work of Colleges Scotland.

Two-way information sharing is also crucial. Letting us know about Ministerial visits and engagement with elected members, providing case studies around emerging policy issues, and telling us about urgent or emerging barriers to success, all help us progress our Strategic Aims.

When colleges thrive, Scotland thrives.

Contact Us



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