

# **Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability – College Sector Views – September 2021**

## **Introduction**

Colleges Scotland welcomes the continued opportunities to engage with both the Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), as well as other key stakeholders since the publication of the Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability report in June 2021.

Colleges Scotland recognises the opportunities within the recommendations contained in the report, with the chance to bring about positive change for Tertiary education in Scotland. In order to ensure the full potential of this moment are realised for the benefit of allowing colleges to contribute to Scotland social and economic recovery, the college sector has prioritised those recommendations which are considered key for taking forward.

## **Key Priorities**

The priorities from the Review that we are recommending Scottish Government and SFC take forward first are:

- The longer-term intent and commitment of Scottish Government to be clearly articulated, setting its own vision for the future and commitment to change that will truly benefit learners and the future of college education in Scotland (p11).
- Deliver financial sustainability, including multi-year funding, which would allow colleges to strategically plan and invest for the healthy future of the college sector. These would include:
  - Scottish Government rolls forward the extraordinary measures and funding from AY 2021-22 into AY 2022-23 (p11).
  - Scottish Government sets out multi-year funding assumptions and commitments (p11).
  - Scottish Government provides additional year-end flexibility to assist financial management in colleges and considers the benefits and risks of a different classification of colleges (p15).
  - Mainstreaming the previously received covid response funding, including for Foundation Apprenticeships
- Address the inequality of funding between each student at college as opposed to those at school or university. The Scottish Government needs to provide equality of funding across the whole educational system. (Whilst this is not a specific recommendation in the SFC Review, this ask is fundamental to provide a stable and sustainable college sector.)
- Agreement with the recommendation on overall flexibility and ask that this is remembered and applied consistently for this year and coming years as a core way of working between the sector, SFC and Scottish Government (p 31). Our first asks for areas where flexibility could and should be delivered are:
  - On delivery, i.e., around the current FTE target
  - To enable bespoke provision of business support in the regions
  - Response to demographic changes
  - Scottish Government provides additional year-end flexibility to assist financial management in colleges and considers the benefits and risks of a different classification of colleges (p15).

- Agreement with the recommendations to assist and support the sector in regional planning, including recognition of the role of colleges and involvement in Inward Investment and the importance of regional economies.
- Agreement with the recommendations on Learning Throughout Life and micro-credential development.
- Agreement on the recommendations to ensure a digital learning opportunity for all and to address future digital requirements, as well as tackle digital poverty, ensure equity of connectivity and support the development of digital skills of educators.

## **Conclusion**

Colleges Scotland is now looking to work together with Scottish Government, SFC and other stakeholders to implement these key priority recommendations and co-create realistic actions that can be delivered for the benefit of the college sector in Scotland and to fully maximise its role in supporting the national social and economic recovery from COVID-19.

Colleges Scotland  
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