Purpose and Principles for Post-School Education, Research and Skills

Initial Priorities

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Contents

Purpose & Principles

Purpose: To develop new thinking, products and systems through research and to ensure that people, at every stage in life, have the opportunity and means to develop the skills, knowledge, values and attributes to fulfil their potential and to make a meaningful contribution to society.

Principles & Outcomes

Transparent, Resilient and Trusted: The system is financially and environmentally resilient; trusted to deliver, and subject to effective governance.

System Outcomes
- Public funding models for education, skills and research are fair, transparent, and maximise value.
- All parts of the post-school system are trusted to deliver, environmentally and financially resilient and held to account for their impacts on learners, practitioners, local communities, and the wellbeing economy.
- Collaboration across the post-school system is pursued proactively with shared values and a common purpose.

Supportive and Equitable: People are supported throughout their learning journey, particularly those who need it most.

System Outcomes
- The public funding system for student support is perceived as fair, transparent and accessible by learners, providers and employers.
- Learners have access to holistic, person-centred support, empowering them to access, sustain and complete their learning.

High Quality: High quality opportunities are available for people to enhance their knowledge and skills at the time and place that is right for them.

System Outcomes
- A motivated and valued workforce of practitioners are empowered to deliver consistent high-quality learning opportunities.
- Learners have the skills and knowledge they need to secure or progress in sustained employment that is well-aligned to local, national and international economic and social need.
- The system supports a culture of lifelong learning with a 'no wrong door' approach, where learners have equity of access and opportunity to fulfil their interests and potential.

Globally Respected: Research, teaching, innovation and knowledge exchange undertaken by Scotland, must make a difference; enhance and contribute to global

wellbeing, addressing 21st Century challenges such as the climate emergency and attracting inward investment and talent to study, live and work in Scotland.

System Outcomes

- Scotland's post-school system is internationally recognised for research, teaching, and innovation, leveraging substantial funding from international and domestic sources.
- Providers attract and retain a highly trained teaching, innovation, and research workforce with global reach and impact.
- Scotland's internationally competitive economy is underpinned by world-leading research, teaching, innovation and knowledge exchange, driving inward investment and productivity.

Agile and Responsive: Everybody in the system collaborates to deliver in the best interests of Scotland's wellbeing economy.

System Outcomes

- Collaboration between policymakers, employers and providers produces a supply of talent and innovation to help drive Scotland's wellbeing economy.
- Learners, no matter their background or prior attainment, can develop skills to enter and progress in good quality employment and/or realise their potential.
- Scotland has an aligned and responsive regional skills delivery system fuelling a suitably skilled and motivated workforce, increasing productivity and business success at local, regional and national level.

Overview

The Scottish Government is embarking on a widespread programme of reform across the lifelong education and skills system to ensure that it is fit for the future. This is articulated through our Purpose and Principles.

The initial priorities set out in this paper seek to deliver **better social and economic outcomes for the investment that we make in lifelong education, skills and research** and critically – ensuring that this improvement is visible to learners and employers.

Our intention is for the Purpose and Principles to be a constant, setting out what it is always important for us to maintain and work towards as the system continues to reform, adapt and respond to our future needs.

This does not represent the entirety of the work we will undertake to improve the system, but it does highlight areas for early and extensive engagement to develop and deliver the change that is needed.

As part of the Purpose and Principles, we have set system level outcomes, developed in collaboration with stakeholders, that set out our long-term ambition for each principle. We will measure our progress toward these outcomes for Scotland through a new measurement and evaluation framework.

In response to the interim Purpose and Principles we heard that, while they are clear, what they mean in practice is less well understood. This supporting document sets this out, along with the initial steps that government will take, in partnership with stakeholders across the system, to embark on a pathway to reform.

For people the impact will be felt through improvements in access to, progress through and support throughout learning pathways, whatever the starting point.

That means improvements to the quality, quantity and consistency of careers information provided at all ages and stages of life and across all settings. It means a relentless focus on transitions within and between different types of learning. A significant improvement in the ease with which people can navigate the system, whether from school to college, university, employment or an apprenticeship and knowledge of the

support that is available, including for those who are returning to learning later in life.

It means an even more diverse range of options - making the most of new technologies to simulate work environments in classroom settings; support for distance and blended learning where appropriate and a mix of more intensive study with shorter, sharper courses and stackable qualifications and modules that can be built on. It means increasing development of experiential learning, work related and life-skills across pathways.

For employers this means more direct engagement in shaping Scotland's lifelong education and skills system nationally and regionally. It means knowing where to go for support to develop the workforce and, to access research, innovation and knowledge exchange capacity to enhance productivity and to grow the business.

It means understanding the benefits of providing work-based learning opportunities and the responsibility on employers to invest in upskilling their own workforce today, as well as promoting opportunities to the workforce of tomorrow, including the development of recognised pathways into careers in their sector.

For colleges, universities and providers this means greater flexibility in how institutions use the investment that is available and autonomy to set ambitious, stretch targets for delivery, rooted in individual purpose, mission, and context, but with greater accountability for their contribution to Scotland's economy and society at home and abroad.

This means refining and enhancing approaches to assurance and accountability, supported by simplified and more transparent processes and funding models. It means maintaining and strengthening relationships with local employers, clusters and national and regional skills planning functions to ensure the responsiveness of the offer for learners and employers, whilst maintaining a global presence and promoting Scotland as a great place to learn, develop, work, live, study and invest.

It means being responsible for collaboration across the entirety of the system to get things right for learners. This means improvement and simplification of application and admissions processes, maintaining high quality learning, working hard to accommodate and support learning

needs, working more in collaboration than competition for the same students and developing new and more integrated models of delivery.

For Scotland's **research, knowledge exchange and innovation community** this means building on ways of working collaboratively across institutional, organisational and sectoral boundaries. Maintaining and strengthening the quality, value and impact of the research and innovation community that we have in Scotland and recognising the mutually reinforcing relationship between research and learning and teaching.

For Scottish Government this means setting much clearer priorities for public investment in our lifelong education, skills and research system, rooted in evidence, with people at the centre.

This means leading reform of our public bodies landscape, in response to recommendations in the recently published [Independent Review of the Skills Delivery Landscape](#), Independent [Review of Qualifications and Assessment](#) alongside the work underway to reform our education bodies to ensure that we are incentivising collaboration, eliminating competition and driving cohesion with a relentless focus on delivering for Scotland's learners, economy and society.

The approach to reform must reflect a clear expectation that all elements of the lifelong education and skills system will work together as one single system.

This means government taking a much greater leadership role in setting the agenda for national skills planning - and convening a breadth of industry and education system engagement to ensure the approach in areas of national importance like skills for the green economy and the public sector workforce is robust. This needs to be complemented by collaborative regional arrangements, linked to regional economic partnerships and city and region deals to inform provision planning and curriculum development at that level; and enabling the right levels of autonomy to deliver against those regional priorities.

It means across Scottish Government, and the public sector as a whole, we must prioritise working with our colleges and universities first when we think about any investment in education and skills, rather than creating new funds or pots of money as add-ons, introducing further complexity to the system.

This would also support setting out much clearer learner pathways through a single, all age and stage careers service that rationalises and makes best use of digital platforms and enables people to make more informed choices about the pathways they pursue, the support that is available and the likely outcomes that people achieve.

We need to simplify our funding streams both for the provision of education and training across all our pathways and for student financial support. This will reduce duplication and complexity for government, agencies and institutions as well as making the whole system much more accessible to learners and more flexible to align with economic signals.

For public bodies it means continuing to deliver in a challenging time of transformation and change whilst building on the expertise established over years of delivery and working collaboratively with Government and with one another as we re-imagine a system that is fit for the future.

The Purpose and Principles and the delivery priorities outlined in this paper will also support the ambitions for Scotland set out in our National Strategy for Economic Transformation and our National Innovation Strategy, with our lifelong education and skills system providing the critical national infrastructure to deliver shared priorities.

Supporting evidence and information
This document sets out what the principles mean in practice, based on three phases of engagement that have been undertaken to develop the Purpose and Principles.

The case for change that underpins the action that we will take was set out in the interim Purpose and Principles, further developed in the Independent Review of the Skills Delivery Landscape and is set out in the supporting documents to this publication. The full extent of the work that we will do to deliver the Purpose and Principles is intertwined with our overarching approach to lifelong education and skills reform and will be set out in more detail later in the year.

Diversity of provision
The need to better understand what the system is and what it delivers came through clearly during all phases of engagement, with a clear sense that this shared understanding or starting point was something that has been missing. As part of the development of the Purpose and Principles this has been set out in a series of evidence and insight

papers including the summary covering the Diversity of Provision in the system and related papers setting out detail on the components, pathways and connections that make up the post-school education, skills and research system.

Lexicon of terminology
Language has repeatedly come up as a barrier to collaboration and source of confusion. This was also reflected in the skills delivery review and the recommendation to end the division in language and philosophy in this area. To remedy this a shared lexicon of terminology has been developed, in collaboration with different system actors, to enable the speaking of a common language in support of system reform.

System level outcomes
Setting long term, shared system level outcomes has been a priority to give clear direction and will be used to develop common metrics of measurement to track progress over time. These have been developed through logic models, led by Scottish Government analysts and with input from stakeholders and partners across the system. These will continue to be developed and updated as we progress along the road of reform and will be used to shape governance and accountability approaches across the system.

Engagement analysis and methodology
Finally, a detailed analysis of what we heard and the approach to engagement is set out in the write up of engagement paper.
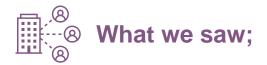
Principle 1 - Transparent, Resilient and Trusted

Transparent, Resilient and Trusted: The system is financially and environmentally resilient; trusted to deliver, and subject to effective governance.

What we need;

- Public funding models for education, skills and research are fair, transparent, and maximise value.
- All parts of the post-school system are trusted to deliver, environmentally and financially resilient and held to account for their impacts on learners, practitioners, local communities, and the wellbeing economy.
- Collaboration across the post-school system is pursued proactively with shared values and a common purpose.

What we heard;

- If you could get the enabling environment right the system would be able to deliver.
- Institutions in the system need to be able to plan for financial sustainability and the stop-start and annualised nature of funding inhibits this.
- The current agency landscape is too complex and too difficult to navigate with blurred roles and responsibilities. This is a barrier to collaboration.
- There needs to be greater flexibility and trust for institutions and providers with this linked to a more effective accountability framework which provides better reassurance that the substantial public funding is delivering for students, knowledge creation, the economy, and the common good.
- Despite high expectations of data collection, there are frustrations in duplicate reporting and ineffective processes to analyse, interpret, report and share.

What we saw;

In spite of the limitations of the system as currently configured, there are already great examples of people operating in the spirit of this principle.

Case study
College to University Pathways
Many learners will choose to follow a learning path that sees them move from college into learning at a university or higher education institution. Navigating the different pathways and articulation routes can present a barrier to some learners.

Throughout our engagement, we heard about a number of agreements in place between colleges and universities to facilitate articulation between further and higher education. Some institutions have chosen to further formalise these arrangements and set out clear opportunities for progression for learners should they wish to pursue further learning including through integrated degree programmes and validated degrees of associate student status. Full partnership degrees with integrated qualification design, teaching and student support are now available. These pathways are fully delivered by a satellite institution and validated by a parent university. Students on these pathways benefit from closer links with the associated university and progression support.

This supports Scotland's colleges and universities to diversify their business model and learning offers but it is also enabling high quality and informed decisions by learners when exploring future steps on their learning journey, with progression routes clearly defined and a supportive experience.

Forth Valley College have partnered with four Scottish universities to offer such pathways and to support industry's need for "work ready graduates":

- The University of Stirling
  - BA Art and Design, BSc (Hons) – validated degree
  - Applied Biological Sciences, BSc (Hons) – integrated degree
  - Software Development with Cyber Security, BA (Hons) - integrated degree
  - Heritage and Tourism, BA (Hons) Digital Media, BA (Hons) – integrated degree

- o Professional Education (Secondary) with Chemistry, BA (Hons) – integrated degree
- o Professional Education (Secondary) with Physics – integrated degree

- Edinburgh Napier University
  - o BEng (Hons) Electrical Engineering
  - o BEng (Hons) Mechanical Engineering

- Strathclyde University
  - o BEng (Hons) Chemical Engineering – integrated degree

- Heriot Watt University
  - o MEng Chemical Engineering – integrated degree
  - o MEng Electrical Engineering – integrated degree
  - o MEng, Mechanical Engineering, BSC (Hons) – integrated degree
  - o Brewing and Distilling – integrated degree

Retention and success rates for these types of degrees tend to be higher as there is greater peer support, people benefit from moving as a tight cohort and people are picking up an HNC/HND level qualification before they start on the university element. This means that even if they leave after 2 years, they leave with a recognised higher national qualification equivalent to the first or second year of a degree qualification. This ensures that there is value from the public investment we are making.

What we will do;

The first steps the Scottish Government will take are:

- To lead the development of a new model of public funding for all forms of provision.
- To investigate the options to deliver a single funding body, including tuition and living cost support, paying regard to issues such as the status and scope of the body's responsibilities
- To include responsibility for overseeing all publicly funded post school qualifications (except degrees) and the underpinning occupational standards and skills frameworks as part of the new qualifications body.

Principle 2 – Supportive and Equitable

Supportive and Equitable: People are supported throughout their learning journey, particularly those who need it most.

What we need;

- The public funding system for student support is perceived as fair, transparent and accessible by learners, providers and employers.
- Learners have access to holistic, person-centred support, empowering them to access, sustain and complete their learning.

What we heard;

- Transition points within a learning journey are crucial times to ensure an individual can progress successfully to the next step in their education.
- Navigating the system is something that learners need assistance with.
- Providing high-quality, tailored, and responsive support is critical in ensuring positive outcomes for students, but it is resource intensive.
- Issues around equity and inclusion often reflect issues in wider society, such as the cost of living crisis, access to mental health services, and rental markets.
- Challenges exist in the system because it deems full-time study to be the norm, as learning models adapt and become more flexible so too should the financial support available to students.

What we saw;

In spite of the limitations of the system as currently configured, there are already great examples of people operating in the spirit of this principle.

Case study
Supporting adult returners through the Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP)

Widening access is important to address existing inequalities within the post-school education system to maximise Scotland's full talent pool and is fundamental to ensure equity of opportunity. Currently, our most deprived communities, those who are care-experienced or are carers are underrepresented in our Higher Education Institutions. The system has underrepresentation also of people with protected characteristics for example there is a lack of people from minority ethnic groups in senior leadership positions within the system. This case study highlights examples of widening access programmes that aim to address these inequalities.

Adults with no or lower qualifications are more likely to have low net household income with 30% of people with no qualifications having an income below £15,000 per year compared to 10% of people with post-school qualifications [1]. Two of the biggest barriers facing adults considering returning to education are caring responsibilities and financial commitments.

The Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP) was established in 1989 and supports eligible adults of all ages to prepare to study a degree course at a partner university or a higher-level qualification course at a partner college. Adults who have a gap in their education of 3 years or more with few or no formal qualifications or have had significant disruption to their secondary school education and have no qualifications above SCQF level 4 are eligible.

SWAP recognises that these adults will have valuable skills and knowledge from personal experiences and employment. 28% of all SWAP students are single parents, some have already had careers and are looking to transition into a second career e.g. from hairdressing to teaching. About 90% of SWAP students are eligible for a college bursary to support with living costs and usually are entitled to have their tuition fees paid for. Full-time study can however impact on benefits eligibility.

The SWAP Programme is run by multiple colleges nationally. The programme is delivered as a full-time 1-year course through most colleges, part-time provision is also available and UHI Perth is offering

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[1] Scottish household survey 2019: annual report - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

on-line SWAP programmes for remote learners, designed for adults living in Scotland who do not have easy access to a college campus.

Adults apply directly to the colleges (support can be sought from the SWAP team and college co-ordinator) where they can study SWAP programmes across multiple disciplines including:

- Science and engineering
- Humanities and Social sciences
- Childhood Practice
- Education
- Social work,
- Nursing, allied health, medicine, pharmacy, dentistry and veterinary medicine.

SWAP offers a range of supports to adults returning to education through the programme including smaller class sizes, guidance and support from tutors and the [Preparation for Higher Education course.](#) The Preparation for Higher Education course is about learning how to learn for those returning to education and includes modules on personal development, growth mindset and time management alongside modules such as how to write and reference reports, taking notes from lectures and thinking critically. SWAP students feel it prepares them well for the transition to Higher Education.

Other examples of good practice in this area:

Early career researchers make a vital contribution to Scotland's excellent research base. It is vital that we create the right research environment and culture to support their development needs and maintain their talent here in Scotland. There are a number of good practice examples in our institutions.

The University of Edinburgh – Stoking the pipeline of diverse and talented future research leaders

The Research Excellence Grant (REG) is a critical part of the University of Edinburgh's plans to attract and retain talent and realise their ambition to deliver a step change in innovation and research.

The University is investing £14m of its REG allocation to appoint 60 new Chancellor's Fellows – the first 30 of whom will join the university over the course of 2023. Aligned to their commitment to diversify their research community, the call for Fellows was opened to both internal

and external applicants, and encouraged candidates with non-traditional career paths, including with a track record in industry and other relevant sectors. As a result, 56% female and 20% black and minority ethnic candidates have been appointed so far. Targeted programmes for future research leaders in Climate Change and Future Health are also in development – again made possible via the University's REG allocation.

To complement the Chancellor's Fellows appointments, the University is also investing £6m in a new Edinburgh Career Development Scheme. The scheme will provide critical 2-3 year fellowships for those immediately post-PhD to help address a significant gap in research career support: the transition from PhD to externally funded post-doctoral fellowship, as well as promotion of interdisciplinary research. The fellowships are targeting under-represented groups, including women, ethnic minority researchers, and those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, who face particular challenges in building research careers. This investment in talent will support researchers to publish their PhD research, exploit impact and commercialisation from their research, further build their research and knowledge exchange skills, and prepare strong applications for prestigious external fellowships, thus stoking the future pipeline of talented people and teams.

What we will do;

The first steps the Scottish Government will take are:

- Within financial constraints, build on manifesto commitments and undertake a review of student support for part-time learners to improve the parity of support on offer, especially for those who are returning to learning and may have other caring or work-related responsibilities.
- Develop a model for student support and engagement that takes account of all provision pathways and not just further and higher education, including considering apprenticeships and CLD.

Principle 3 – High Quality

High Quality: High quality opportunities are available for people to enhance their knowledge and skills at the time and place that is right for them.

What we need;

- A motivated and valued workforce of practitioners, empowered to deliver consistent high-quality learning opportunities.
- Learners have the skills and knowledge they need to secure or progress in sustained employment that is well-aligned to local, national and international economic and social need.
- The system supports a culture of lifelong learning with a 'no wrong door' approach, where learners have equity of access and opportunity to fulfil their interests and potential.

What we heard;

- There is a need to increase awareness of what career opportunities exist and how to access the pathways to enter these careers.
- Opportunities need to be available to all with recognition that senior phase is not currently utilised in the most effective way and there is an increasing need to support people returning to learning later in life.
- What was currently on offer was generally high quality - a variety of innovative teaching methods were utilised, but this was not always consistently applied nor well promoted to learners and there was a general view that there needed to be more opportunities to increase experiential learning and work-related skills.
- Flexible funding models are needed to allow development of short courses and micro-credentials in order to upskill and reskill aligned to business.
- Learner journeys are not always linear, but the system is not currently set up to enable smooth transitions especially for a non-linear learner journey.

What we saw;

In spite of the limitations of the system as currently configured, there are already great examples of people operating in the spirit of this principle.

High Quality Research

The Scottish Government's continued investment in university research and innovation, via core grants provided by the Scottish Funding Council, is crucial to supporting and maintaining our excellent research base. This funding underpins Scottish university research across a range of disciplines and with a number of partners.

The largest of these core grants is the Research Excellence Grant (REG). REG recognises and rewards high-quality research and knowledge exchange in universities across the whole of Scotland and maintains competitiveness to leverage further specific project funding.

REG provides a long-term, stable source of research funding which institutions can use flexibly to develop excellent research as best fits their individual circumstances and ensures competitiveness for leveraging additional funding.

The case study below illustrates some of the ways our universities are using REG and its unique value in the system.

The University of Aberdeen – Translating world-leading environmental research into advice for policy-makers and practitioners

Researchers at the University of Aberdeen's Centre of Excellence in Soil Science are promoting the control of greenhouse gas emissions and sustainable food production.

REG funding has underpinned the development of the Centre and its contributions to environmental science by enabling inclusive investment in people, including research support infrastructure, and contributing to securing large external funding programmes.

The continuity afforded by REG has facilitated work by key figures including Pete Smith, Professor of Soils and Global Change and Prof Jo Smith who together co-lead the environmental modelling group, into soils, land-based ecosystems, carbon cycling, greenhouse gas (GHG)

emissions, agriculture, food systems, bioenergy, nature-based solutions and modelling these for sustainability and actions to mitigate climate change. Prof Smith has pioneered the innovative Cool Farm Tool (CFT), an award-winning free app used by tens of thousands of growers and agri-food businesses worldwide to easily calculate greenhouse gas emissions, soil quality, biodiversity and water use.

REG funding also supports Aberdeen researchers' in-kind contributions to international initiatives under the United Nations including COP, IPCC and IPBES. At a national level, Aberdeen scientists advise on and shape policy through their contributions to DEFRA, NatureScot and Marine Scotland. In 2021, Prof Smith was appointed to the First Minister's Environmental Council of experts to advise the Scottish Government on global best practice in tackling the climate emergency.

What we will do;

The first steps the Scottish Government will take are:

- Build on the work of the recommendations from the Careers Review to consider options for embedding careers advice and education within communities, educational settings and workplaces across Scotland; including options for future delivery of national careers services;
- Build a comprehensive understanding of the post-school qualifications landscape to inform processes for developing, funding, assuring and approving publicly funded qualifications, and actions for wider reform of the qualifications landscape - including improved articulation with the senior phase.
- Lead work to inform our future approach to apprenticeship development and delivery as part of an integrated landscape of pathways.
- Work with institutions, public bodies and unions to ensure that staff at all levels are supported and empowered to deliver the high-quality work required by students, society and the wellbeing economy, in keeping with fair work principles.

Principe 4 – Globally Respected

Globally Respected: Research, teaching, innovation and knowledge exchange undertaken in Scotland, must make a difference; enhance and contribute to global wellbeing, addressing 21st Century challenges and attracting inward investment and talent to study, live and work in Scotland.

What we need;

- Scotland's post-school system is internationally recognised for research, teaching, and innovation, leveraging substantial funding from international and domestic sources.
- Providers attract and retain a highly trained teaching, innovation, and research workforce with global reach and impact.
- Scotland's internationally competitive economy is underpinned by world-leading research, teaching, innovation and knowledge exchange, driving inward investment and productivity.

What we heard:

- Scotland achieves a lot for its size and the high skills, research excellence and impactful knowledge exchange that is prevalent significantly contributes to international attraction.
- The dual funding mechanism for research is critically important. Any erosion of baseline funding will impact on research excellence and the ability to lever additional competitive funding.
- Research intensive universities require long-term thinking and macro vision in their planning.
- Opportunity to develop Brand Scotland to promote Scotland internationally
- Need for greater consistency and predictability in the student visa regime

What we saw:

In spite of the limitations of the system as currently configured, there are already great examples of people operating in the spirit of this principle.

Case Studies
Scottish Government and the Royal Society of Edinburgh –
Creating Connections and tackling global challenges

Global collaborations support and reinforces our commitment to tackling shared, world challenges set out in the NSET, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Horizon Europe themes. Coming into its fourth cohort, the Scottish Government via the Royal Society of Edinburgh launched the Scotland Asia Partnerships Higher Research Fund (SAPHIRE) in 2020 to further support these relations. The small research fund connects Scottish researchers with their counterparts in Asian and Oceanic nations on key areas: Clean Energy and Environment; Digital, Physics and Space, Advanced Manufacturing; Health; Sustainable Cities and Urbanisation.

This multidisciplinary programme has created 32 connections and research projects on an array of topics. Alongside the real-world impact, SAPHIRE produces qualitative benefits for Scotland and the sector. This includes building government-to-government relationships, developing research partnerships, and bolstering our strength in research through leveraging other funding sources, existing research excellence and new networks.

There have been several notable projects which have come out of SAPHIRE. At the height of the pandemic and the global response to it, the University of West of Scotland (UWS) explored the behavioural and mental health impacts of differing lockdown policies between Scotland and Japan, highlighting areas for review on future policies if a pandemic occurs again. UWS is looking to follow-up on this project by exploring the effects of COVID-19 on cognitive ability, chronic illness, and physical health, particularly for those who suffer from long-COVID and other chronic illnesses.

The University of Dundee and the University of Glasgow partnered with Deakin University in Australia and examined how electronic surveillance

laws can better support and protect journalists in the digital age. The University of Dundee has continued working on further policy research and recommendations in this area by working with other professions, e.g. lawyers and medical staff, where confidential and secure information gathering is essential.

New College Lanarkshire International Dental Nursing Partnership
New College Lanarkshire staff have developed international dental nursing partnerships in Mongolia.

Staff visited the country to engage in a series of workshops setting the foundations for the partnership – which follows the recently secured funding through the UK-China Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The BRI funding, an initiative developed by the British Council and China's Ministry of Education, will allow the College to develop its international dental nursing programmes in China, Mongolia and the Philippines.

As well as attending workshops hosted by the Mongolian National University of Medical Sciences, the group developed a scope of practice, agreed professional standards and commenced work on agreeing an occupational framework to standardise dental nursing amongst all partner organisations.

 "This work may provide opportunities for student mobility and has already provided staff mobility which has strengthened partnerships and provided a unique opportunity to experience the different cultures which exist among the countries listed."
Hazel Scott, International Activities Manager, New College Lanarkshire

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What we will do;

The first steps the Scottish Government will take are:

- Use and improve Study in Scotland materials as part of our approach though NSET to talent attraction and retention.
- Take forward a pilot international mobility programme co-designed with sector representatives.

- Continue to seek to influence the UK Government to secure our future association to Horizon Europe and other EU research programmes and ensure Scottish interests are protected regardless of outcome.

Principle 5 – Agile and Responsive

Agile and Responsive: Everybody in the system collaborates to deliver in the best interests of Scotland's wellbeing economy.

What we need;

- Collaboration between policymakers, employers and providers produces a supply of talent and innovation to help drive Scotland's future wellbeing economy.
- Learners, no matter their background or prior attainment, can develop skills to enter and progress in good quality employment and/or realise their potential.
- Scotland has an aligned and responsive regional skills delivery system fuelling a suitably skilled and motivated workforce, increasing productivity and business success at local and regional level.

What we heard:

- A careful balance needs to be struck between agility and responsiveness to the current economy's needs, and long-sighted commitment to developing the knowledge and skills that will be needed within a future economy.
- A range of issues were raised on how to shape demand including the need for lifelong learning, the need for occupational sector specific solutions, the need for better advice and less specialisation at school, and the need for greater flexibility in pathways.
- Mixed views about the extent to which effective collaboration happens at present despite most responses expressing willingness and concluding that it is crucial for there to be good collaboration to identify emerging trends, challenges, and opportunities.
- Current funding model seen as restrictive, formulaic, and inflexible making it difficult to be aligned and responsive.
- Skills planning processes are not fully effective. Many SMEs are in 'survival mode' and encouraging opportunities for employees to upskill is not their priority. Education and skills providers are not

brought into the process of skills planning early enough and government has a role to play here in setting expectations of who should be included and when.

What we saw:

Example Case Studies

Careers and Workforce Development in Health and Social Care

The objective of this project, delivered by Robert Gordon University in partnership with Skills Development Scotland was to create a new staff attraction and development programme for Health and Social care in the North East of Scotland. The project looked to address gaps in current provision and develop new courses to both upskill existing care staff and provide training opportunities for people to transition from other sectors, with the overarching aim of addressing the skills gaps in health and social care, filling vacancies, and increasing employment in the region. The work was supported by funding from the Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council through the North East Economic Recovery and Skills Fund (NEERSF).

The following five courses were designed and developed through consultation with key stakeholders, including: Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership; Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership; Bon Accord Care; Cornerstone; Scottish Care; Scottish Social Services Council and Voluntary Service Aberdeen.
• Personal and professional development
• Digital skills
• Concepts of health and wellbeing
• Health through the lifespan
• Quality improvement

325 participants were supported to either further their career within the sector or transition from other sectors into social care by undertaking the courses. Alongside the courses an interactive online resource was developed for use by practitioners and employers to navigate the existing career development opportunities available to them in the region. The Care to Learn portal is a lasting legacy of the project. A recommendations report was also developed which has been shared with the Scottish Government for consideration of continued support for workforce development within the sector.

Dundee and Angus College and the Tay Cities Region Deal

Dundee and Angus College received £300,000 as part of the Tay Cities Engineering Partnership from Seagreen, a joint venture between TotalEnergies and SSE Renewables set to become Scotland's largest and the world's deepest fixed-bottom offshore wind farm.

The Partnership is a key contributor to regional economic growth bringing together expertise from Angus Council, Dundee & Angus College, Fife College, Perth College UHI, Perth and Kinross Council and Angus Training Group. It is part of the Tay Cities Region Deal which the Scottish and UK Governments agreed to each invest up to £150 million. The Partnership aims to meet the capability needs of the engineering sector and its employers, upskill the region, encourage research and development and promote the opportunities of a career in engineering.

This funding enabled Dundee and Angus College to create [the Skills for the Future Lab](#) (The Lab) which opened in November 2022 as part of Dundee and Angus College's Engineering Partnership Innovation Centre. The Innovation Centre is a state-of-the-art centre for training, demonstration, and product prototyping and develops foundation to graduate level SCQF levels 4-8 upskilling programmes to meet skills demand and enhance employability, career development and staff up-skilling.

The Lab aims to inspire the future workforce enabling students to use the latest offshore wind 3D Virtual Reality software to explore engineering aspects of offshore wind farms whilst promoting STEM engagement in Dundee and Angus. The Lab's Virtual Reality (VR) system enables students to engage with a range of subjects including low-carbon transport, hydrogen and health and safety as part of an immersive visualisation experience into the engineering aspects of an off-shore wind farm.

The Lab will showcase new and emerging technologies and engage students with STEM through interactive STEM exhibits and the latest computer-assisted design technologies. In addition, students and apprentices undertaking the 10 brand new industry-specific courses, including advanced manufacture, robotics, additive manufacture and computer-aided design, will be able to gain hands-on skills experience.

The Lab is also a unique resource for local businesses committed to upskilling or re-skilling their teams as part of the transition to net-zero and facilitating research, development and prototyping.

"As a responsible developer, it is vital that we support the local economy and Scotland's supply chain and that we contribute to the education of the next generation of renewables professionals. We are proud to have funded the Skills for the Futures Lab and I hope that it inspires many of the young people who visit to pursue the much-needed STEM roles we need to fill in order to make the transition to a net-zero Scotland."

Robert Bryce, Director of Asset Management Offshore, SSE Renewables

What we will do;

The first steps the Scottish Government will take are:

- To take responsibility for skills planning – developing an approach at a national level that works with partners to set clear priorities.
- Enhance and embed the role of employers in shaping system planning priorities, pathways and provision.
- This will be supported by a regional approach that builds on existing regional economic partnerships and has employers and local providers, in particular colleges, at the centre.