

UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITY: The Difference Scotland's Colleges Make to Learners, the Economy and Wider Society

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Executive Summary

Scotland's colleges contribute to economic prosperity and help tackle poverty and disadvantage. They therefore have a key role to play in delivering the Executive's *Framework for Economic Development in Scotland, A Smart, Successful Scotland, Life Through Learning; Learning Through Life*, and its *Closing the Opportunity Gap* targets.

Colleges receive significant public funds - about £400m from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) in academic year 2004-05 for their general operation plus over £50m from the Council to allow colleges to provide bursaries to students. About 70% of college income is from the SFC, 17% is from tuition fees and education contracts, and 13% from other sources.

On the basis of extremely cautious assumptions, which do not capture all college learning and do not capture any of the other social benefits that such learning would bring, the net economic benefit of colleges through improved qualification levels is at least £1.3 billion. In effect the college sector turns £1 into an asset worth (at least) £3.20 in a year. Colleges transform people's lives and give opportunity in many other ways as set out in the case studies in the report. This represents an excellent return on investment.

In 2004/05 there were over 350,000 students in Scotland's colleges. This amounted to over 450,000 enrolments in courses. The number of vocational enrolments has increased significantly between 1994/95 and 2004/05 - from 234,000 to 394,000; an increase of about 70%.

Colleges support learners in acquiring vocational and life skills. Their curriculum spans much of the range of learning needs, from specialised vocational education and training (such as construction, hairdressing, engineering, information technology, hospitality, and health and social care) through to general educational programmes. Colleges are also involved in wider activities to help develop the knowledge base of business to enhance their capacity to grow.

Colleges are pivotal to the delivery of lifelong learning in Scotland. They cater for the needs of students both in and out of employment at all stages in their lives from middle secondary school to retirement. No other sector can match the range of courses that colleges deliver.

Basic employability and technical skills are central to the benefits learners derive from college, and colleges work closely with the industries concerned, including with Sector Skills Councils, to ensure that the learning they provide is relevant.

There are important links between the acquisition of skills and wider social outcomes, such as improving health, reducing crime and enhancing social cohesion. For example, colleges' role in the community, working in partnership with other agencies including local authority Community Learning

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and Development services, and voluntary and community organisations, helps to promote social inclusion and encourages community activities.

Learner support is an integral part of the delivery of college courses. The range of students with very different levels of previous educational achievement demands that the college focus is on the learner. They provide a full package of learning that seeks to first identify and then meet learners' needs.

Colleges serve, at almost every qualification level, the needs of a diverse range of students across a whole range of ages. They give meaning to lifelong learning.

One of the key roles of colleges is to provide a bridge for **school leavers** to either further learning, training or employment.

Almost 13% of college students have a disclosed or identified **disability**.

About 38% of all Scottish domiciled **higher education** undergraduate students enter study at a college. It is increasingly common for some students to transfer upon the completion of their courses to accelerate their learning in a higher education institution by going straight into second or third year.

Students from the most **deprived areas** in Scotland, where 20% of the population reside, are disproportionately more likely to attend college

Students from **ethnic minority backgrounds** attend college in proportions far above their level in the population as whole.

38% of college enrolments were related directly to **employment** (by employers either paying for the course in whole or part, block or day release or assessment of work based learning). Taking into account activity such as **government training programmes**, about 58% of working age enrolments can be attributed directly to industry links.

Between 2000 and 2004 HMIE reviewed all colleges and 88% of cross-college grades were 'good' or 'very good'. In the 306 individual subject reviews that were also carried out, the comparable figure was 86%.

92% of college students were satisfied with the overall quality of their learning experience and 91% were satisfied with the college as a whole.

81% of workplaces thought that college leavers were well prepared for work in terms of softer, core skills such as communication, team working or problem solving. 80% thought they were well prepared in terms of technical skills.

Over 70% of student enrolments resulted in either a pass or a completed course. A further 10% were enrolments where the student is continuing to the

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next year of study.

All of Scotland's colleges are different. They range from the very small - Newbattle Abbey College, which is an adult residential college with 124 students - to the large - Aberdeen College has for example 25,829 students.

Each offers a curriculum designed to serve its community.

For some that community is very locally defined, such as in Shetland and Orkney. For others, including Glasgow Metropolitan College that 'community' extends regionally and nationally.

Across the sector colleges face differing circumstances in which they deliver their provision. Colleges recognise, though, that there is merit in comparing practice across the sector and adopting or adapting the good practice that exists. This approach of self improvement helps the sector to be efficient and effective.

Colleges work alongside and in partnership with other education and training bodies. Each sector makes a difference. None of the differences below are unique to the college sector, but taken as a whole they describe the unique contribution that colleges make.

The difference colleges make can be attributed to:

- the differences between each college;
- the diversity of the students they serve and the range of learning opportunities that they provide;
- working together with a range of partners across the education and training sector, including employers and the Sector Skills Councils;
- the adult ethos;
- the vocational nature of many college programmes;
- the relevance of the curriculum;
- responding to the needs of the economy;
- the experience and quality of college lecturing staff and the different approaches to teaching that they employ;
- the learning support that colleges deliver;
- the flexibility of colleges and their focus on the learner;
- being at the heart of their community; and
- the quality of the college estate and equipment.

Introduction

This report is the first substantive outcome of the Review of Scotland's Colleges. We - the 'Difference Colleges Make' Working Group - have produced it so that others can gain a better understanding of the breadth of colleges' activities and the difference that they make. We intend in this report to describe the varied work of colleges adding detail to the statistical information found in the Scottish Funding Council's publication [insert name of 'baseline' document].

Skills and knowledge coupled with positive attitudes and behaviours are key to unlocking opportunity. For many learners colleges provide the most suitable environment to acquire them. Together they can enable learners to adapt to the ever-changing demands of the marketplace and provide a route out of poverty. They can encourage individuals to participate actively in society.

Colleges receive significant public funds to achieve this - about £400m from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) in academic year 2004-05 for their general operation plus over £50m from the Council to allow colleges to provide bursaries to students. This funding will increase as a result of the 2004 Spending Review, which is delivering additional funds for Scotland's colleges for the financial three year period from 2005-06. During the period, an additional £128m of capital funding will be available to invest in substantial modernising of the college estate, including the building of significant new campuses. Over the same period, current funding will also increase by £108m supporting growth, further improvements in the quality innovation and innovation of learning, modernisation of the curriculum, development of the Higher National qualification, and enhancements of teaching methods.

We know that colleges on the whole deliver learning consistently well. We can rely on the reports of HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) to demonstrate this. Between 2000 and 2004, HMIE reviewed all colleges and 88% of cross-college grades were 'good' or 'very good'¹. In the 306 individual subject reviews that were also carried out the comparable figure was 86%. We did not therefore need to review the sector to discover how well colleges generally do. We already have confidence in the sector's ability to deliver. A new review cycle began in 2005. As the data sets for each year represent different groups of colleges, we have relied on the last full cycle of report because it is inappropriate to interpret as evidence of sector trends differences in grades in individual years. That said, we are not complacent that problems may arise in individual colleges that require prompt action to bring standards back into line with the sector.

What we have been missing is a sector-wide understanding of the difference

¹ HMIE Reviews of Quality and Standards in Further Education: An Overview: Academic Years 2000/01 to 2003/04, February 2005 www.hmie.gov.uk

that college learning makes to learners, the economy and wider society. This report aims to fill that gap. By understanding the difference colleges currently make, we hope we will help inform discussions about the potential difference they could make in the future.

Information about the Review of Scotland's Colleges, including the remit, work and membership of the Working Group on the 'Difference Colleges Make' can be found at **Annex A**.

Contribution of Colleges

Scotland's colleges contribute to economic growth and help tackle poverty and disadvantage by supporting learners in acquiring skills and knowledge transfer. They have a key role to play in delivering the Executive's *Framework for Economic Development in Scotland (FEDS)*². The framework provides Scotland's overarching economic development strategy, and sets the key factors of competitiveness which will promote economic growth. It sets out a vision *"to raise the quality of life of the Scottish people through increasing the economic opportunities for all on a socially and environmentally sustainable basis"*.

The acquisition of basic education and skills and knowledge transfer are identified as fundamental factors in increasing productivity and the competitiveness of Scotland's economy.

"We must improve the skills of the whole population through further support for the basic education system, by strengthening lifelong learning, and by nurturing higher and further education. This must include a concern for raising our manual and vocational skills. Better skills are the key to improving individual life chances, increasing the flexibility of the labour force and maintaining competitiveness. Scotland has to embrace the knowledge economy and the reality of continual learning if it is to compete in the global marketplace." - FEDS

Within this framework sits the Executive's strategy for *A Smart, Successful Scotland*³ which provides strategic direction to the Enterprise Networks and an enterprise strategy for Scotland. The strategy explains that to achieve the vision outlined in FEDS we need *"a smart, successful Scotland where sustained and sustainable economic growth rests on continuing improvements in productivity"*.

Scotland will:

- have an ambitious and confident population;
- be committed to lifelong learning;
- be excited by and focused on innovation; and

² <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/09/19872/42430H>

³ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/enterprise/sssen-01.asp>

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- embed sustainable development principles in all it does.

The strategy outlines how skills and learning can increase economic growth and close the opportunity gap by:

- improving the operation of the Scottish labour market;
- providing the best start for all our young people;
- developing people who are in work; and
- narrowing the gap in employment and reducing economic inactivity.

Colleges are pivotal to the delivery of lifelong learning in Scotland. As the Executive's strategy for *Life Through Learning; Learning Through Life*⁴ explains lifelong learning policy is about “*personal fulfillment and enterprise, employability and adaptability, active citizenship and social inclusion*”. It is to provide the best possible match between the learning opportunities open to people and the skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that will strengthen Scotland's economy and society.

In this report, we outline how colleges working in partnership are helping to deliver the FEDS priorities on:

- **basic education and skills**, including colleges' partnership working with schools to increase vocational options and with local authorities to help improve literacy and numeracy levels;
- **research and development and innovation**, including developing the knowledge base of business;
- **entrepreneurial dynamism**, including colleges' work to deliver the Enterprise in Education strategy, *Determined to Succeed*; and
- **managing public services resources more effectively**, including through the operation of the Scottish Countryside Colleges' Strategic Partnership.

We explain how colleges and their partners are helping to deliver A Smart, Successful Scotland in each of the three organising themes:

- **Growing business**, including through the custom designed training for companies and through its support of sectors including the biotechnology and creative industries.
- **Learning and skills**, including the development of employability skills as well as high-level technical skills.

⁴ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/lifelong/lism-00.asp>

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- **Global connections**, including promoting Scotland as an attractive place to live and work, as well as exporting knowledge to the rest of the world.

We describe how colleges and others are working to progress the five people-centred goals of the Executive's lifelong learning strategy to realise:

- a Scotland where people have the confidence, enterprise, knowledge, creativity and skills they need to take a full part in economic, social and civic life.
- a Scotland where people demand - and learning providers deliver - a high quality learning experience.
- a Scotland where people's knowledge and skills are recognised, used and developed to best effect in their workplace.
- a Scotland where people are given the information, guidance and support they need to make effective learning decisions and transitions.
- a Scotland where people have the chance to learn irrespective of their background or current personal circumstances.

The report also outlines the role of colleges in:

- developing skills for employment;
- supporting rural development and community regeneration;
- achieving sustainable development and exploiting new business opportunities;
- closing the opportunity gap; and
- equal opportunities.

A key aspect of colleges' work is in developing skills for employment. The following case study explains how colleges engage with Jobcentre Plus and the Local Enterprise Network.

CASE STUDY - EMPLOYABILITY

[Reference to Employability Framework when published]

“Scotland’s colleges provide learners with opportunities to develop personal skills and skills for employment, enabling them to contribute to the economy and the wider social and cultural environment...” **HM Inspectorate of Education – Source *Improving Scottish Education*, HMIE 2006 (www.hmie.gov.uk)**

Scotland’s colleges engage contractually with Jobcentre Plus and the Local Enterprise Network to support national priorities, including:

- Increasing uptake of **Modern Apprenticeship** and **Skillseeker** programmes by widening access to Modern Apprenticeships through pre-apprentice opportunities.
- Investing in Staff Development and resource development for young people under the age of 25 years with additional needs in response to the Beattie Report and more latterly in response to the Special Educational Needs Disability Act (SENDA)
- Promotion of the **Get Ready for Work** programme funding for 16-18 age group.
- Increasing emphasis at a UK level in the New Deals: **New Deal for Disabled Persons and New Deal for Lone Parents**
- Promoting **Individual Learning Accounts**
- Creative use of available ESF **Objective 3 funding** to create innovative vocational training programmes in response to access and inclusion priorities.
- continuing training for **ex-offenders** moving as they return to their communities by promoting take-up of government programmes such as **Training for Work and the New Deal**.
- **Employability** for the 16-19 age group not in employment, education or training encouraged by both SFC and Scottish Enterprise.
- **Promoting Learndirect Scotland’s services to learners** learning campaigns.

A Sketch of Scotland's Colleges

Scotland's 43 colleges⁵ deliver learning in over 4,000 locations. Ninety per cent of the Scottish population lives within 30 minutes of a college location⁶.

Colleges offer a wide range of courses and qualifications at non-advanced and advanced levels. The curriculum spans much of the range of learning needs, from specialised vocational education and training (such as construction, hairdressing, engineering, information technology, hospitality, and health and social care) through to general educational programmes. The level of provision ranges from essential life skills and provision for students with learning difficulties through to higher national certificates (HNCs) and higher national diplomas (HNDs) as well as degree level and post-graduate work.

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is outlined in **Annex B**. The SCQF provides an overview of the range of qualifications available in Scotland and shows how different qualifications relate to each other. The college sector provides education at almost every level: from access courses for those with severe and profound learning difficulties to Professional Development Awards at SCQF level 11.

There is a wide range of courses on offer at a college including:

- vocational and general education, including higher education courses;
- Modern Apprenticeships, Skillseekers and 'Get Ready for Work' programmes;
- school pupil programmes;
- courses in the workplace;
- distance learning;
- access courses;
- courses for students with learning difficulties;
- pre-employment training;
- courses necessary for the registration of public service workers, such as social and health care;
- training for employees, including bespoke training programmes;
- trade union learning;
- evening classes, vocational and non-vocational;
- literacy and numeracy;
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL);
- prisoner rehabilitation; and
- courses for students with additional needs.

⁵ Scotland's Colleges are colleges of further and higher education in Scotland. They are the colleges formerly funded by the Scottish Further Education Funding Council (now funded by the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council).

⁶ Source: Association of Scottish Colleges H<http://www.ascol.org.uk/pdf/keyfacts2003.pdf>H

CASE STUDY - TRADE UNION LEARNING

As A Smart, Successful Scotland explains, "Trade unions promote and provide expertise on developing good workplace practices, which help to encourage a well motivated and productive workforce. Unions also play a pivotal role in encouraging and supporting the skills development of their members".

Over 1,000 union learning reps are now operating in Scotland (Source: STUC).

Stow College is one of the colleges in Scotland commissioned by the TUC to deliver a variety of trade union education courses.

Graeme is 43 and a Unison Health and Safety Representative and Shop Steward. He became a union steward in 1995 and attended his first TUC Education Course at Stow College in the same year. Since then he has progressed through the core TUC course programme. He completed the health and safety stage one in 2000 (10 days day release); stage two in 2001 (10 days day release) and stage three in 2003-04 (36 days day release).

He has commented that *"The most active, knowledgeable and confident representatives in the Unison Social Work Branch are those who have come through the TUC Education Programme at Stow College."*

In February 2003 there was a fire at a retirement home in Uddingston in which 14 people lost their lives. As a result steps were taken to ensure this tragedy could not occur in Glasgow. A partnership agreement/approach involving the union side (fronted and coordinated by Graeme) and management was initiated resulting in joint inspections of 24 children's units and 23 elderly homes. Existing control measures identified through the risk assessment process were checked and recommendations for improvements were made.

"Without the training I received through the TUC Education Programme at Stow College I would never have been able to do this." - **Graeme**

CASE STUDY - COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING

“Many colleges promote a broad range of flexible learning opportunities in various locations. The delivery of programmes at times and in locations convenient to learners encouraged a wide range of participants to enrol in complete programmes of study. Almost all colleges offer distance-learning programmes and are developing an increasing range of online learning materials.” **Improving Scottish Education, HMIE 2006.**

Over 40% of enrolments in 2004/05 were enrolled away from the main college campus.

Dumfries and Galloway College serves one of the biggest catchment areas (2500 square miles) with one of the sparsest populations (58.8 per square mile) in the UK.

To address this the college has developed a network of learning centres throughout the region. They act as a focus for delivery to over 3,000 students.

The centres vary in size from 1 to 20 computers but are all similar in that they are run in partnership with a wide range of agencies. The college may not own or pay for the premises, nor sometimes the resources, but it is responsible for the delivery of the curriculum and provision of the learning material. Much of this is on line and the college has developed a virtual learning environment delivering learning material in all curriculum areas to all students 24/7 across the region, in work, at home or in learning centres.

The number of centres and their locations vary over time in response to demand. However at any one time there are usually between 20 and 30 centres in locations throughout Dumfries and Galloway. They have been located in libraries, schools, community centres, pubs, factories, offices, fire stations and shops and have been supplemented by two related initiatives.

“I had lived as a traveller since returning to the United Kingdom from overseas in 1997, subsisting largely on casual, low-paid employment and found the insecurity of this lifestyle and irregular income increasingly hard to sustain. I was seriously disadvantaged in both researching options open to me and applying for posts or courses. I had virtually no experience of computers and.. no access to..any. The learning centre has provided me with physical access to computers and the education in how to use them. My future employment prospects, in a short space of time, have been transformed, as has my potential to contribute and participate in a wider sphere of society. The knowledge, communication skills and support received at the centre have been essential to me. At the end of this month I shall begin a Postgraduate Certificate in Education.” - **Dan**

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Colleges deliver a wide range of subjects. These include manufacturing, catering, health care, engineering, social sciences, construction, sport and recreation, personal development and media. Some courses support the needs of particular local communities, such as courses for the oil industry in Aberdeen.

Colleges are also involved in wider activities to help develop the knowledge base of business to enhance their capacity to grow. In February 2005, the Scottish Further Education Unit published a report on *Initiating Adopting and Building Knowledge Transfer and Scotland's Colleges*⁷. Colleges activities outlined in that report include:

- support for managers in implementing significant change management processes;
- undertaking audits of operations as part of a review of business systems;
- advising on implementation of ICT infrastructure;
- reviewing skill levels leading to recommendations on learning provision;
- providing learning related to legislative changes and designed to sustain company operation; and
- short course provision on business planning to support business formation.

In 2004-05, there were over 350,000 students in Scotland's colleges. This amounted to over 450,000 enrolments in courses (this is because some students are enrolled in more than one course in the same academic year).

College activity is measured by activity expressed in terms of student units of measurement (SUMs), which are based on a notional 40 hours of student learning time. Most college activity is for programmes leading to recognised qualifications (91% in 2004-05). Courses that do not lead to such qualifications include courses developed specifically for the needs of particular businesses or for individuals such as those with additional support needs.

Enrolments by mode of study, 2004-05⁸:

	% of enrolments	% of college activity
Full-time FE	11%	47%
Full-time HE	6%	18%
Part-time FE	54%	30%
Part-time HE	5%	5%
Short Part-time (<10 hours)	25%	0.3%

⁷

[Hhttp://www.sfc.ac.uk/publications/pubs_other_sfefcarchive/initiating_adopting_building.pdf](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/publications/pubs_other_sfefcarchive/initiating_adopting_building.pdf)H

⁸ Some students may be enrolled studying by more than one mode. These students are therefore included in each category of study.

Figure 1 below shows a further breakdown of enrolments, students and college activity by different types of study.

Figure 1

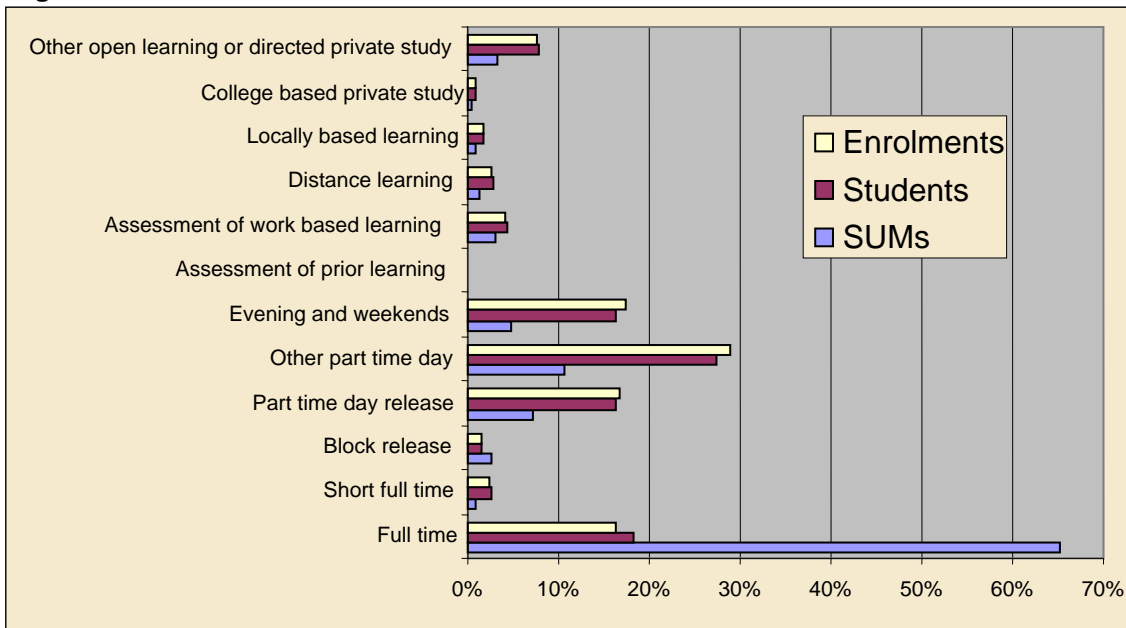
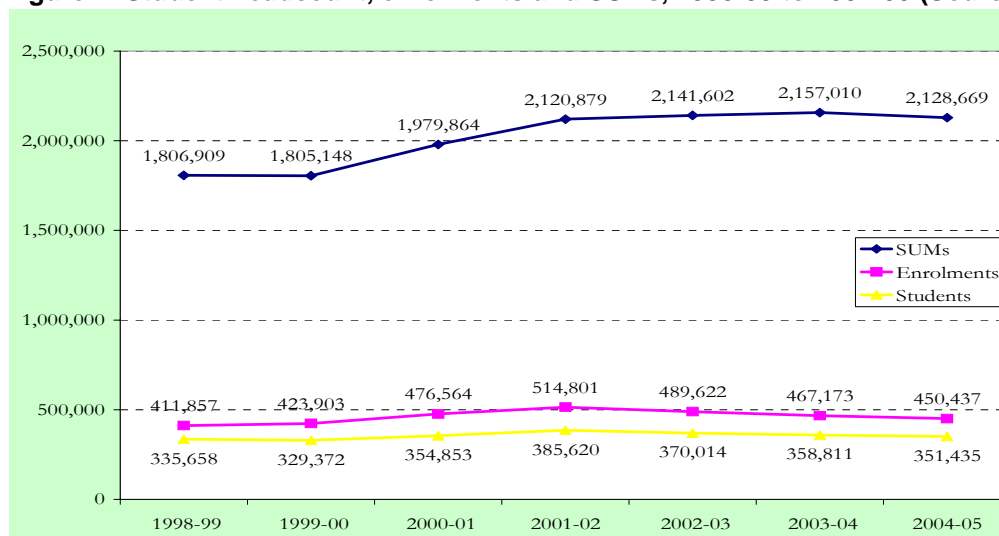


Figure 2 shows the number of college students and the associated number of enrolments and activity from 1998-99 to 2004-05. The graph reflects from 2001-02 onwards the policy of the Funding Council to concentrate on increasing or maintaining (in real terms) the rate at which it funded colleges and ceased funding any expansions in student activity.

While the number of students has dropped by 9% between 2001-02 and 2004-05, college, college activity has grown slightly. This is because of a shift to more intensive courses,

Figure 2: Student headcount, enrolments and SUMs, 1998-99 to 2004-05 (Source; FES)



CASE STUDY – INTERNATIONAL KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

As The Framework for Economic Development explains, internationalisation takes a number of forms, including “*taking Scottish knowledge, skills and ideas to the rest of the world*”.

Elmwood College’s specialist background in land-based and golf-related specialist subjects enables the College to be a major contributor to Scotland’s Colleges’ knowledge transfer agenda. The college delivers a range of specialist short courses aimed at rural and land-based businesses as well as more structured management courses, tailored towards individual business needs.

Elmwood College in China

Elmwood College has been working in China for over six years on a major educational project that aims to transfer expert knowledge on golf-related education to Chinese educational partners. This project is supported by the Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews, whose development committee has provided significant funding over the period.

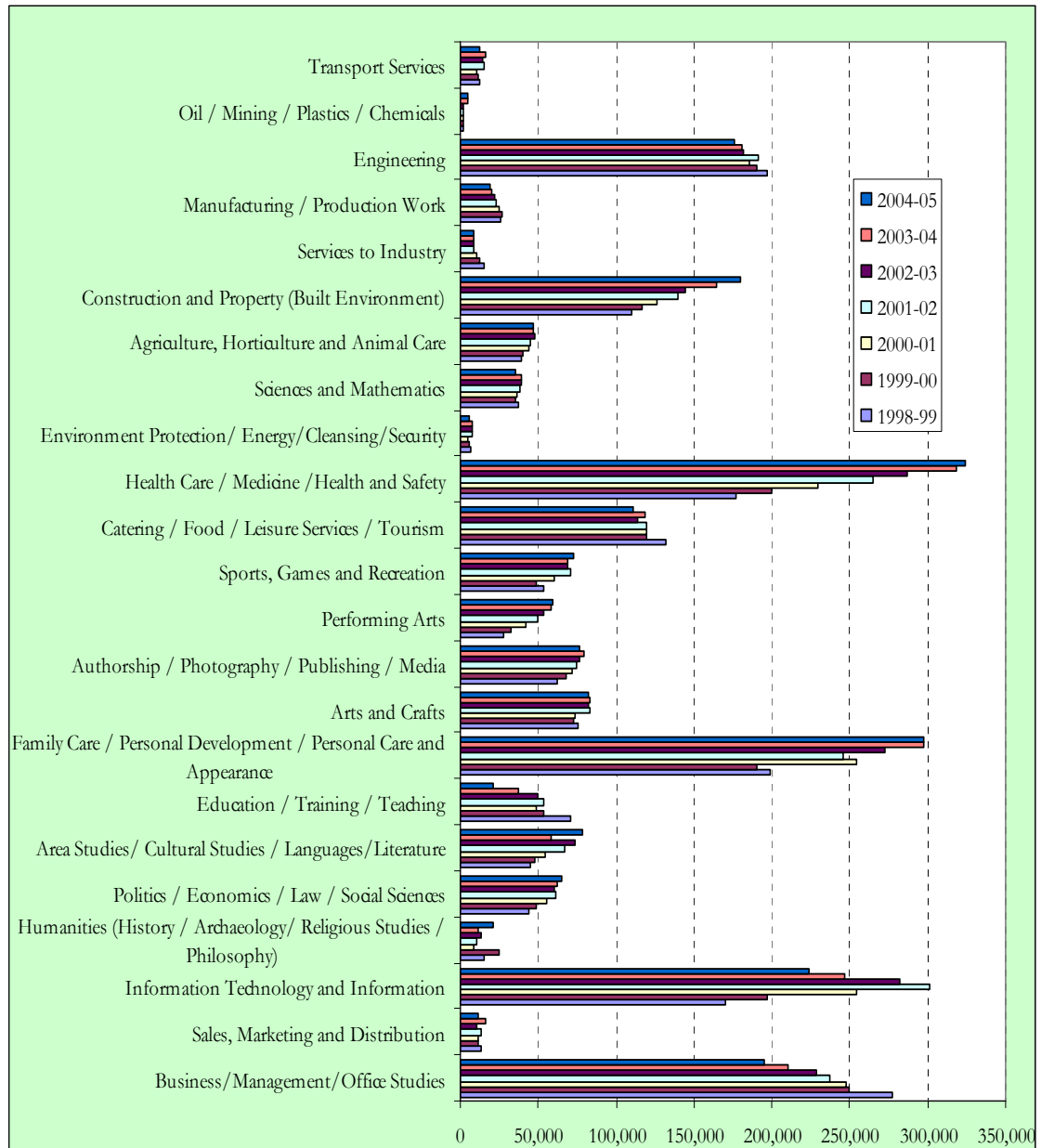
As a result of this project, the College has formal partnership agreements in place with the seven institutions.

These partners are at different stages of development. All currently have or have had lecturers trained at Elmwood College. After undertaking training in Scotland, they return to China and under Elmwood’s guidance, develop their own curriculum equivalent to Professional Development Awards and HNC/HNDs in Golf Course or Golf Facility Management. These qualifications are branded as ‘St Andrews International Golf Qualifications’ and are owned and quality-controlled by Elmwood College.

Qin Yu was one of the first students to complete her HND in Golf Facility Management at Elmwood and, having qualified with merit in the summer has just taken up the position of Director of Golf Operations at the prestigious Suzhou Jinji Lake International Golf Club in Xian province in China.

Figure 3 breaks down the activity (in SUMs) in colleges by subject group from 1998-99 to 2004-05. It shows that *Health Care/Medicine/Health and Safety* and *Family Care/Personal Development/Personal Care and Appearance* are the most popular areas of study. It also shows some large changes over the period. For example, *Health Care/Medicine/Health and Safety* has grown substantially as has *Construction and Property*. On the other hand, *Business /Management /Office Studies* has declined.

Figure 3: Learners by subject superclass (SUMs), 1998-99 to 2004-05 (Source: FES)



The sector employs over 21,000 staff (equivalent to over 12,000 full-time staff).

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UHI Millennium Institute was designated as a higher education institution in April 2001. It provides access to university-level education through a distinctive educational partnership of colleges and research institutions (the UHI academic partners). Eight of Scotland's Colleges are academic partners – Inverness College, Lews Castle College, Moray College, North Highland College, Orkney College, Perth College, Sabhal Mor Ostaig, and Shetland College. The figures elsewhere in this report and in the accompanying baseline report do not include higher education delivered by these partner colleges (because the education is accredited to UHI Millennium Institute rather than the college). That said, an understanding of the breadth of colleges' activities would be incomplete without acknowledging the role colleges play in the delivery of higher education in the Highlands and Islands.

Number of full-time equivalent students of UHI Millennium Institute

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Scotland's Colleges	3,258	2,911	3,183	3,692
Other academic partners	449	349	464	96
Total	3,707	3,260	3,647	3,790

College Funding

Colleges are funded by the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council. Established in October 2005 through a merger of the Scottish Further Education Funding Council and the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council, the Council provides a strategic overview of tertiary education in Scotland to help secure a more coherent system of high-quality learning, teaching and research.

Colleges are funded by the Council for an agreed target of student activity each year. Since academic year 2001-02 colleges, as a sector, have consistently exceeded this target.

In 2004-05, colleges received about 70% of their income from grants from the Scottish Funding Council⁹; 17% from tuition fees and education contracts; and 13% from other sources¹⁰.

⁹ Funding Council grants include programme funds from the Council such as core recurrent grant and fee waiver grant but exclude funds to allow college to provide bursaries to students and a small amount of one off non-recurring current resources provided during the academic year.

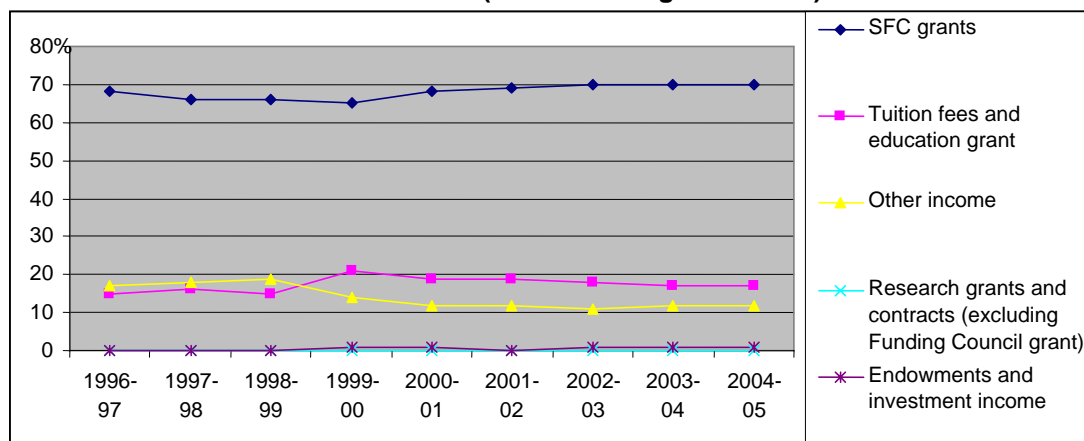
¹⁰ Other income includes residences and catering, European income that does not fall into the other categories, and income generating activities.

Funding 2004-05	(£000)
Funding Council grants	397,924
Tuition fees and education contracts	96,247
Research grants and contracts	855
Endowments and investment income	4,112
Other income	67,101
Total	566,239

Figure 4 below shows the sources of income of Scotland’s colleges as a proportion of their total income from 1996-97 to 2004-05. During that period in terms of the proportion of total income there was a small rise of 2% in both SFC grants and tuition fees and education grant and a corresponding 4% drop in ‘other income’ sources.

In recent years colleges have maintained their income from other sources at around 8.5% of total income. This excludes income from direct European funds (via a bids based process) tuition fees and education contracts. Direct European fund income is around 3% of total income.

Figure 4: Sources of income of Scotland’s Colleges as a proportion of their total income between 1996-97 and 2004-05 (Source: college accounts)



Partnerships

All of Scotland’s colleges have developed partnerships with learners and with organisations such as the Scottish Executive, the Scottish Funding Council and award bearing organisations like the Scottish Qualifications Authority and City and Guilds.

The HMIE report, *Improving Scottish Education*, states that “close links between colleges and a range of partners, including schools, higher education

institutions, community groups, employers and the enterprise networks have created effective learning opportunities and progression routes for learners from a range of backgrounds”.

Colleges also work closely with organisations represented on community learning and development partnerships such as local authorities, voluntary organisations, police, health and social services. These partnerships reflect the geographical and local needs of the area in which the college operates. In addition they liaise with a wide range of partners such as trade unions, lead industry bodies, local economic fora, local enterprise companies, the Skills for Business Network and Sector Skills Councils, other colleges, universities and private training providers to determine appropriate curriculum opportunities.

Colleges work with other partner agencies to provide support for learning, for example, Skill Scotland, and local counselling and support services. In some cases, colleges operate across a number of local authority areas.

They also work closely together. For example, the **Colleges Open Learning Exchange Group (COLEG)** was established in January 1995 to develop learning opportunities through member colleges working together to generate, exchange and promote the use of high quality flexible learning materials. The group’s catalogue spans almost the full breadth of subject areas and is designed to provide open learning, resource and assessment materials and support across a wide range of levels including Higher National and National Qualifications.

As the following case study shows, colleges are also working together with the Scottish Qualifications Authority to modernise all Higher National qualifications. It is a unique partnership model of national curriculum change involving all colleges in Scotland.

CASE STUDY – HIGHER NATIONAL MODERNISATION PROJECT

The Higher National Modernisation Project aims to modernise all HN qualifications to ensure that they continue to provide Scotland with a competent workforce which meets the needs of a modern economy and, in doing so, contribute to the Scottish Executive's policy objectives, particularly on enterprise, employability, inclusion, work force development and lifelong learning.

Achievements of the modernisation process include:

- improving the efficiency of the HN catalogue of qualifications by rationalisation of the range of qualifications offered;
- modernisation of all HN qualifications to ensure 'fitness for purpose' in a global economy;
- strengthening quality assurance arrangements with reduced assessment burdens for students and lecturers;
- supporting the continued professional development of college staff in the design, assessment and delivery of HN qualifications; and
- assisting in the implementation of the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework.

The Scottish Funding Council has dedicated funding to this national curriculum development programme. This funding is allocated via the HN Project Board. This Board has established key funding principles that ensure:

- funding priority is allocated to HN Group Awards that have the widest benefit to the sector;
- funding for Specialist developments will reflect benefits in the sector and the Scottish economy; and
- priority will be given to developments which contribute to rationalisation and collaboration.

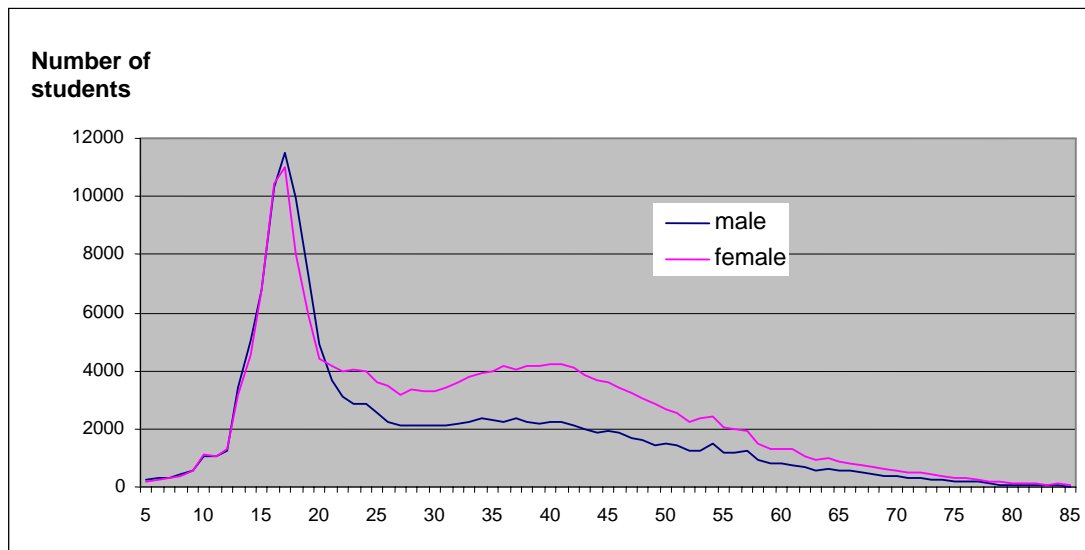
Streams of funding are available to support agencies (COLEG and the Scottish Further Education Unit) who have developed sector-wide initiatives that support the HN Programme.

Who Goes to College?

In each year since 1998 about 7% of the Scottish population enrolled in a college. Nearly 35% of **young people** aged 17 are college students. [\[link to NEET strategy\]](#) The total percentage of the population who will have attended college at some point in their life is therefore considerable.

Figure 5 below shows the age and gender profile of college students in 2004-05. The average age of a student was 32 (29 for male students and 33 for female students).

Figure 5: Number of students (headcount) in colleges by age and gender, 2004-05 (Source: FES)



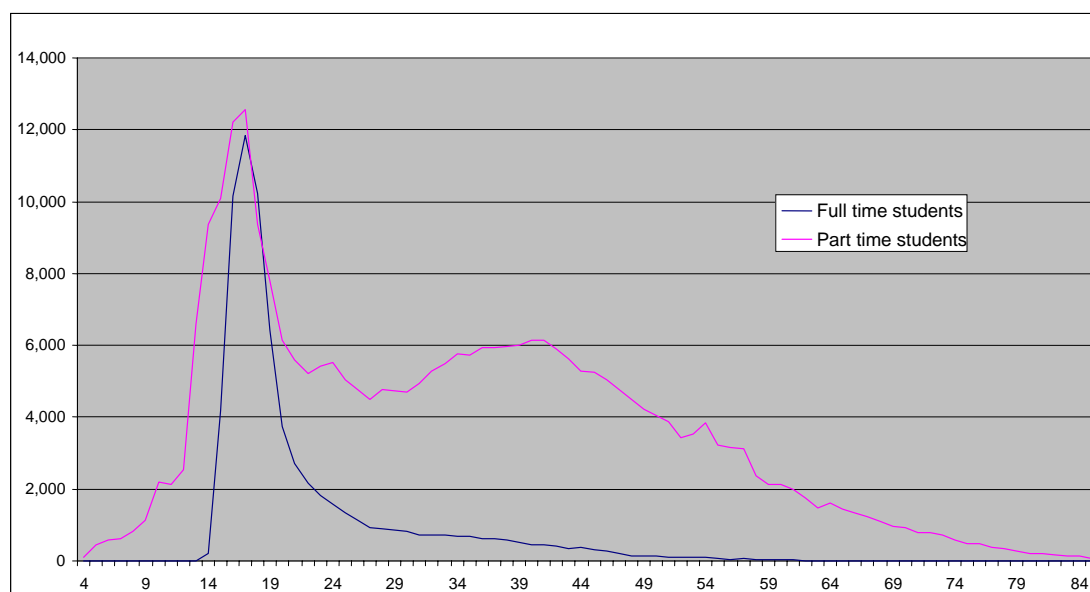
More **women** than men enroll in college - over 57% of college students are women. There has been a continual rise in the proportion of women students since 1998. Women tend to enroll on shorter courses than men.

About 38% of college enrolments were related directly to **employment** (by employers either paying for the course in whole or part, block or day release or assessment of work-based learning).

Unemployed and economically inactive part-time students represent 5% and 12% of all college enrolments.

One of the key roles of colleges is to provide a bridge for school leavers to either further learning, training or employment. As **figure 6** overleaf shows, participation in both part-time and full-time courses peaks for learners in their mid to late teens.

Figure 6: Students by age and mode of study, 2004-05 (Source: FES)

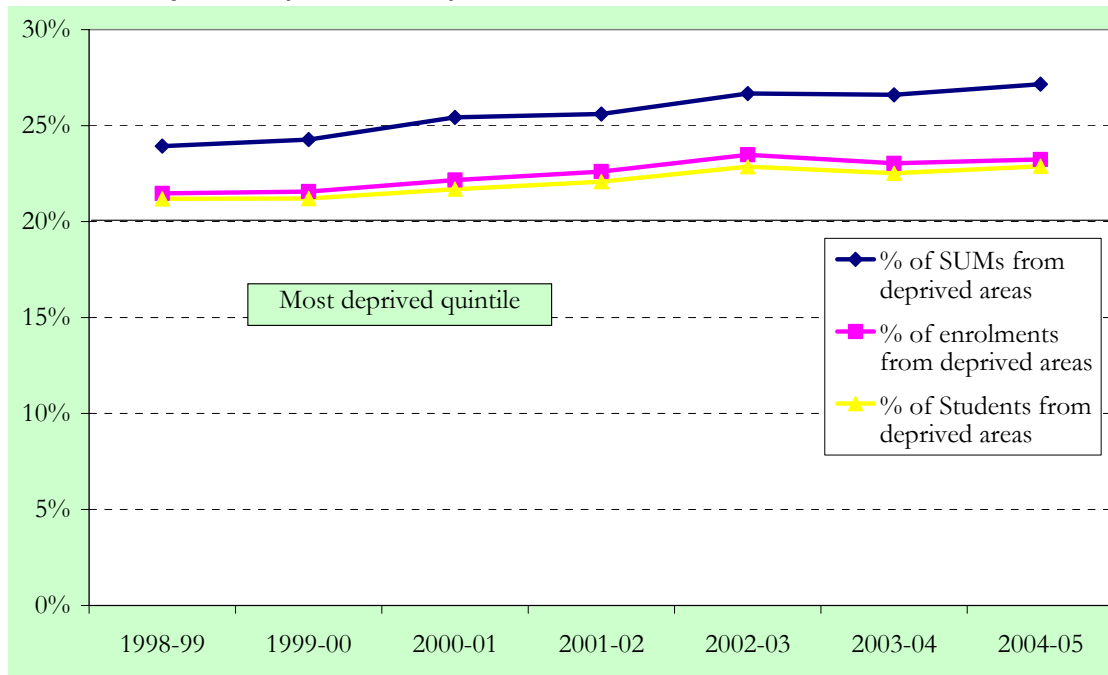


Colleges serve, at almost every qualification level, the needs of a diverse range of students across a whole range of ages (see **figure 11** on page 53 for the range of qualifications available through colleges).

Students from the most **deprived areas** in Scotland, where 20% of the population reside, are disproportionately more likely to attend college. As **figure 7** shows 27% of college activity is devoted to these students. The pattern of high participation for the most deprived has become more pronounced in recent years.

Students from **ethnic minority backgrounds** attend college in proportions far above their level in the population as whole - in 2004-05 4.6% of college students were from such a background, compared to 2.1% of the Scottish population in the 2001 census.

Figure 7: Student activity from the 20 per cent most deprived areas in Scotland 1998-99 to 2003-04 in per cent (Source: FES)



In 2004-05, more than 4,300 students from 116 countries studied at Scotland's Colleges. More than 2,700 of these were from outside the European Union.

CASE STUDY – INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The Executive's *Fresh Talent Initiative*, announced in February 2003, sets out to counter the effects of population decline through greater retention of people and in-migration. In order to attract Fresh Talent to Scotland, **James Watt College** positively promotes the supportive environment offered by further education to potential international students and their parents. The College's recruitment activities focus on the Middle East and South East Asia.

Given its nature as an FE College, the College often attracts young international students (under 18) to foundation and vocational programmes. The College works in partnership with Inverclyde District Council to provide social and curricular activities for young international students and local school pupils to:

- encourage young international students to get to know their peer group in the local community;
- create positive impressions of Scotland as a welcoming country;
- provide opportunities for young people in the area to have a positive cross-cultural experience; and
- foster an acceptance of new and different cultures and promote cultural awareness in the local community.

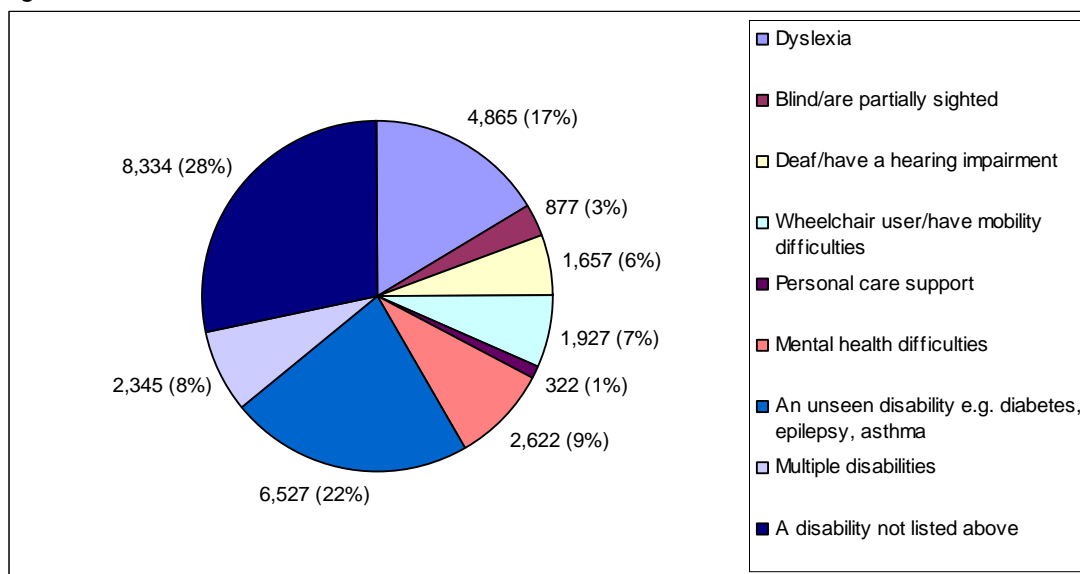
This is achieved by:

- a programme of shared experiences for students and school pupils focusing on celebrating significant cultural festivals from Scotland and from the student's country;
- providing shared sporting and social opportunities for students and Inverclyde school pupils;
- sharing cultural experiences with the community through dissemination via the media; and
- encouraging 'buddying' between international students and Inverclyde school pupils who are themselves studying at the College through a school/college partnership.

Almost 13% of college students have a disclosed or identified **disability**. This figure includes those with a disclosed disability as well as those on special programmes or requiring extended learning support. This equates to about one fifth of all college activity (which takes into account length and intensity of the learning delivered). This compares with around 19% of the working age population who are estimated as having a disability¹¹. Disabled people of working age with no qualifications are twice as likely to be unemployed as non-disabled people with no qualifications¹².

Figure 8 outlines the nature of the disclosed disabilities in Scotland’s colleges in 2004-05.

Figure 8: Learners with disclosed disabilities at colleges, 2004-05 (Source: FES) – legend reads clockwise



A significant development in enabling colleges to meet the wide and diverse range of learners has been the capacity building through Beattie¹³ in all but one of Scotland’s colleges. As a result of this, the college sector is the only sector in Scotland with the staff, skills and resources e.g. through assistive technologies to provide initial assessment.

¹¹ Labour Force Survey, winter 04-05

¹² 76.9% of disabled people (of working age) with no qualifications were unemployed in 2005, compared to 38.3% of non-disabled people with no qualifications (Labour Force Survey Spring 1998,2005, not seasonally adjusted)

¹³ The Beattie Committee was set up in 1998 to take forward the Executive's commitment to promote the participation and attainment of young people in learning post-school and to improve their employability. Its report, **Implementing Inclusiveness, Realising Potential** was published in 1999. A copy of the report can be found on the Scottish Executive's website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library2/doc04/ber-00.htm>.

“Links which colleges have established with schools provide pupils with learning experiences which are not available in school contexts”. –
Improving Scottish Education, HMIE 2006

CASE STUDY - SCHOOL AND COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP

Nearly 48,000 college enrolments in 2004-05 (11% of the total) were for school pupils learning through a school/college partnership. This accounted for 4.4% of college activity.

As A Smart, Successful Scotland explains, “from the earliest years in education, skills, knowledge and attitudes need to be developed that equip individuals to achieve their potential in the workplace”.

Colleges have a crucial role in helping schools broaden educational opportunities to deliver *A Curriculum for Excellence*. They work with secondary schools to offer a range of academic and vocational programmes to pupils primarily in S3 and above- a role that is increasing as a result of the Executive’s strategy for school and college partnership, [Lifelong Partners](#). In 2005-06 28 colleges participated in the pilot for new Skills for Work courses aimed at S3 pupils and above.

Angus College’s primary objectives in offering this provision are:

- to complement the subject choice available;
- to offer vocational tasters to inform career choice; and
- to provide a different environment and experience to enhance employability.

The August 2005 HM Review report of **Angus College** said its approach “broadened academic and vocational curricular choices and enhanced opportunities for progression to vocational awards and qualifications, including Modern Apprenticeships”.

The College works in close partnership with the Construction Industry Training Board Construction Skills. (CITB Construction Skills) Together they promote Construction as a career and encourage participation from both primary and secondary school pupils with an initiative called Construction in the Curriculum.

Following the S2 Open Day in 2002-03 and then a CITB Construction Skills Activity Day, “**Kenneth**” attended the college in S4 one afternoon a week. In 2004/5 he enrolled as a full time student on the Introduction to Construction course. “**Kenneth**” hopes to gain employment with a local employer and go on to complete his Modern Apprenticeship.

*“I’ve always liked working with my hands and quite fancied a career in Construction coming on the taster days was funI enjoyed all the practical hands on work..... the Introduction to Construction course has helped me choose exactly what trade area I would like to work in. Hopefully I can get an apprenticeship in brickwork.” – “**Kenneth**”*

CASE STUDY - IT SKILLS FOR THE OLDER POPULATION

About **6%** of college enrolments are for students who are **pensioners**. This accounted for 1.4% of college activity. Most of these students are enrolled in part-time Information Technology (IT) courses.

Around five years ago **Cumbernauld College** recognised different needs of older adults, including a preference for daytime provision. Courses, such as *Beginners IT*, which is tailored specifically to the needs of the older participants, were developed for delivery within the college's own centres and in collaboration with the local authorities of North Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire in community centres.

Learners on the course felt that it was important for older people to keep up to date with technology, as they felt that otherwise, they would be in many ways disenfranchised within modern living. The use of the Internet as a reference tool and e-mail to keep in touch with friends and families was a major reason for attending the course. Assisting grandchildren with school homework was also cited in several cases.

For some learners in the over 50 groups, who wished to get back into employment, it was felt that IT Skills, were necessary, even for part-time jobs.

One learner stated that *“coming to college on this class, contributes to mental health, otherwise there would be not much else to do this course stimulates the mind and allows people to meet with each other ... introduces other people and they find they work as a team with common interest . This is particularly necessary as people are now living longer”*. This statement was met with unanimous approval by all in the class.

Colleges of the 90s

On 1 April 1993, most further education colleges were 'incorporated' and removed from the control of their local regional council.

Key policy drivers have shaped progress since 1993. These include:

- the development of Higher Still, which provided an integrated curriculum for school pupils and college learners to progress from non-advanced to advanced study;
- modularisation, the process of constructing small units of learning that could be combined by learners into a wide range of programmes suited to individual learners' choices;
- in recent years, consolidation to secure financial stability; and
- the Scottish Executive's Lifelong Learning Strategy that encourages collaboration between providers and focus on the learner.

Colleges of 1993 and Now

Curriculum

- the concepts of *learner choice* and *learner focus* were less prominent, and curriculum planning was less flexible than it is today.

Staffing

- continuing professional development then was neither as comprehensive or well planned as it is now.

Guidance and learner support

- the body of knowledge and support available to meet the needs of learners with difficulties and disabilities, to provide extended learning support where required, and to offer advice on student finance and childcare is significantly greater and more effective today.

Quality Assurance and Improvement

- the concepts of *quality improvement* and *enhancement* and related activities were less well developed and significantly less comprehensive in 1993 than they are today.

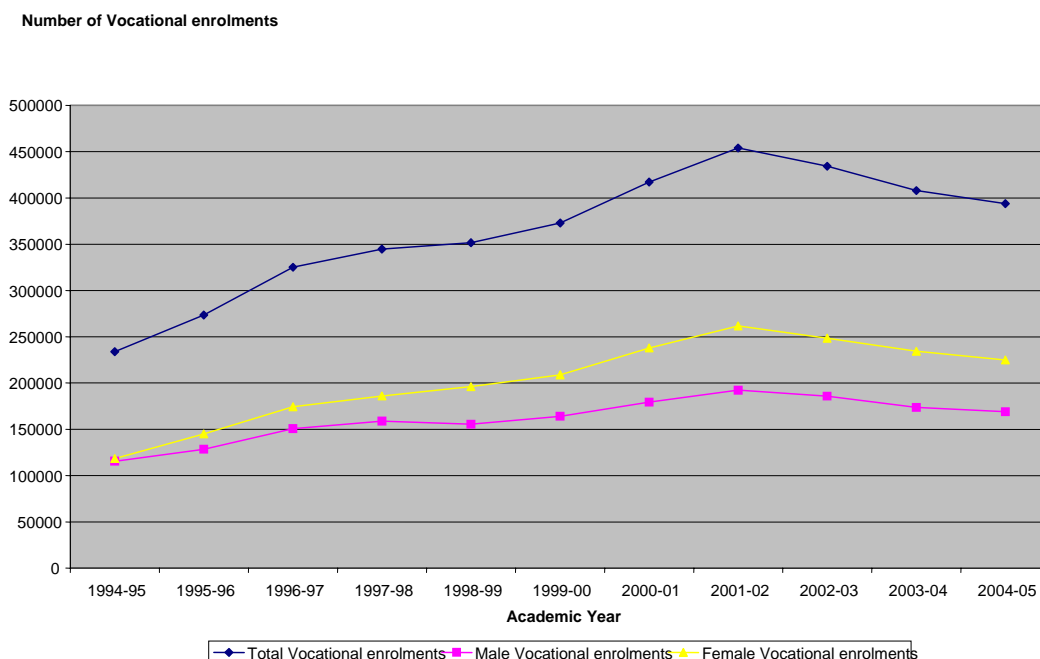
Colleges have also adapted to a changing economic climate. [to be expanded]

Unfortunately, it is not possible to compare statistical information about today's colleges with data gathered in 1993. This is because it was not collected on a comparable basis and is not in a form that allows subsequent changes to the college sector (such as the designation of Bell College as a higher education institution in 2001) to be excluded from the results.

However it is possible to compare data from 1994-95 onwards which excludes Bell College and UHIMI. **Figure 9** overleaf shows the number of college vocational enrolments since that period (other enrolment data is not available).

During the 1990s colleges achieved significant efficiency gains (17% from 1996-1999). However, this resulted in colleges facing financial difficulties.

Figure 9: Time series of vocational college enrolments from 1994-95 to 2004-05



The number of vocational enrolments has increased significantly over the period – from about 234,000 to about 394,000; an increase of about 70%. In 1994-95, the average age of a student was 28 (27 for male students and 30 for female students). This compares with an average age of 32 for students in 2004-05. The most popular subjects were *Business and Administration*; *Engineering and Technology* and *Combined Studies*. Now they are *Health Care/Medicine/Health and Safety* and *Family Care/Personal Development/Personal Care and Appearance*. (Changes in subject areas since 1998-99 are shown in **figure 3** on page 16). As explain on page 14, while the overall number of students has dropped by 9% between 2001-02 and 2004-05, college, college activity has grown slightly. This is because of a shift to more intensive courses,

Economic Value of College Learning

Skills are, in the words of the Leitch Review of Skills¹⁴ “*the key driver of economic growth, boosting productivity and contributing to increased employment. Fundamental changes underway in the global economy make improvements in skills ever more critical*”.

In the Lisbon Council Policy Brief, **the Economics of Knowledge**¹⁵, published in 2006, the author explains that “*evidence shows – consistently, and over time – that countries and continents that invest heavily in education*

¹⁴ http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/leitch_review/review_leitch_index.cfm

¹⁵ **The Economics of knowledge: Why education is key for Europe’s success** by Andreas Schleicher can be found on the OECD website at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/43/11/36278531.pdf>

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and skills benefit economically and socially from that choice. For every euro invested in attaining high-skilled qualifications, taxpayers get even more money back through economic growth. Moreover, this investment provides tangible benefits to all of society – and not just to the individuals who benefit from the greater educational opportunities”.

We have sought to put a monetary value on the contribution that colleges make to enhance the skills of the workforce in Scotland. We have considered so far as possible the measurable value of the output of the sector rather than the economic impact of spending by colleges whether on wages, consumables or buildings. This is because we wanted to understand better the **difference that colleges make**. If resources were not devoted to the college sector then they would be available for spending elsewhere for example in the Health service or on a tax cut, both of which would generate economic impacts through the multiplier. It is therefore of more interest to examine the output, what we are getting for the resources allocated to the sector, rather than the inputs.

The measurable value that we have sought to capture is far from being a value for the full economic benefit of colleges, but it does give us a robust baseline.

We examined the economic gain of a learner increasing their qualification level by marrying information from the Labour Force Survey and data returns from the college sector. This economic analysis, which is at **Annex C**, was unable to capture all college learning (because of the methodology used and problems in data collection), and was unable to consider the value of additional qualifications at the same level, so that for example gains of a learner obtaining a further Higher that would allow them access to University or the benefits of reskilling that required a different but not higher level qualification could not be captured. It did not take into account benefits that arise beyond the increase of a qualification level. This means for example it did not necessarily capture the benefit of an unemployed person obtaining employment as a result of undertaking a course at their existing qualification level but in a different subject. It also did not capture any of the other social benefits that such learning would bring. On the basis of extremely cautious assumptions, the net economic benefit of colleges is at least £1.3 billion. In effect, we are saying that the college sector turns £1 into an asset worth (at least) £3.20 in a year. This represents an excellent return on investment.

A key area of economic development in which colleges play an important role is in supporting workforce development. – Improving Scottish Education, HMIE 2006.

As well as by increasing qualification levels, colleges also make a key contribution to economic growth by:

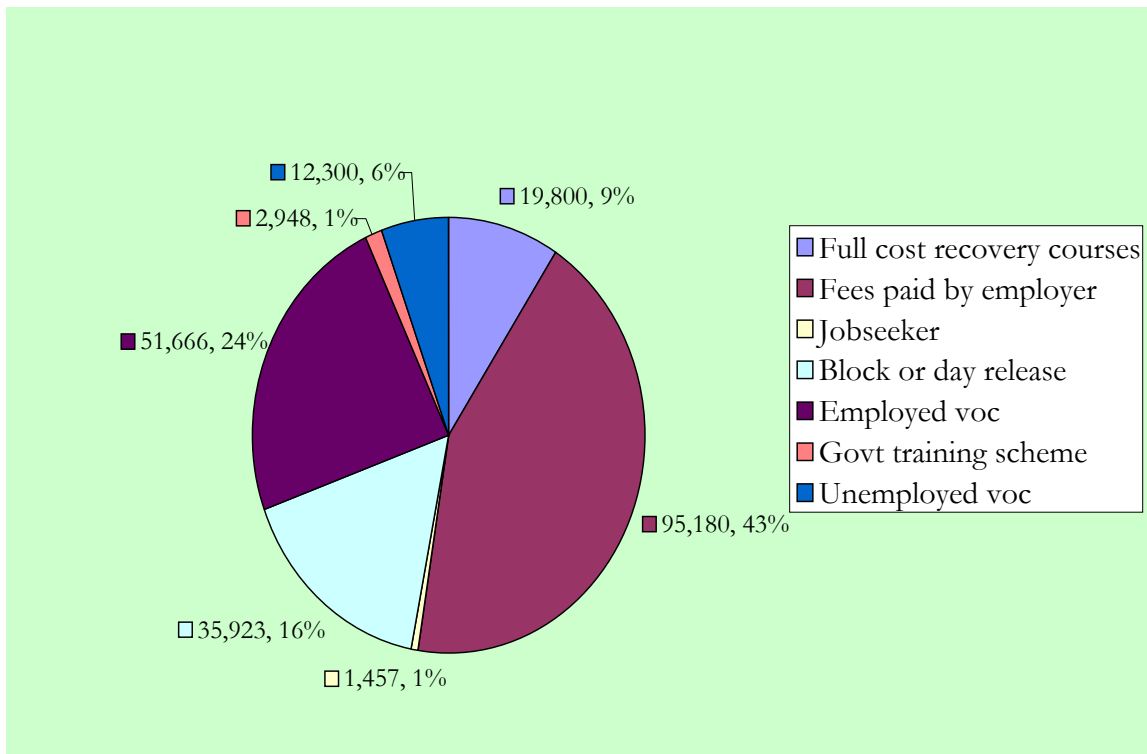
- providing quality learning experiences to develop basic education

and skills;

- developing the knowledge base of business; and
- promoting Scotland.

As previously mentioned about 38% of college enrolments were related directly to **employment** (by employers either paying for the course in whole or part, block or day release or assessment of work-based learning). Taking into account activity such as government training programmes, about 58% of working age enrolments can be attributed directly to industry links. A breakdown of these links can be found in **Figure 10**.

Figure 10: Links with industry (58 per cent of the working age enrolments), 2004-05 (Source: FES)



Many staff in colleges use strong links with external agencies to incorporate work-based experiences, field-work and project work within curriculum delivery. – Improving Scottish Education, HMIE 2006

The case studies in this section describe the approaches a number of colleges have taken to meet the needs of particular sectors of the economy. They illustrate the breadth of colleges work both in terms of the diversity of the sectors supported by colleges (from the 'old' such as printing to the 'new' biotechnology'). The case studies demonstrate the key importance of working closely with the industries concerned to ensure that the learning provided by colleges is relevant to their needs. To achieve this colleges work closely with Sector Skills Councils. Links between colleges and the Councils are numerous. For example:

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Skillsmart Retail is working with Inverness, West Lothian, Lauder and John Wheatley colleges on the development of programmes for older learners, including language skills and IT training;

Financial Services is working with colleges, including Stevenson College, on a course to get people into work in the financial services sector; and

Summitskills is working with Inverness College to provide training to upskill plumbers and electricians in the installation of solar panel systems used as part of the domestic hot water systems.

CASE STUDY - CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Creative Industries in Scotland make up over 4% of the Scottish economy.

As A Smart Successful Scotland, explains “Our education system has a leading role in developing the skills, experience and behaviours which support creativity and entrepreneurship”.

Links between **Cardonald College** and European designers and manufacturers have enabled the college to provide training and support more flexibly to people already working in the sector, as well as offering a direct benefit to full-time students through the development of real time commercial standard projects that introduce the students to the demanding world of work in the creative industries. Examples include:

- developing wall hanging designs for an interior decoration company to be produced in China and sold through major UK retail outlets;
- developing a student documentary project into a half hour programme for the BBC;
- designing a range of tableware accessories for a major Scottish retail outlet; and
- TV project with Govan Initiative enabling local graduates to gain the practical skills necessary to progress in the competitive world of television production and management.

Martin is a skilled joiner and cabinetmaker who felt, at the age of 29, that he wanted to restart his education in the creative sector. He struggled initially on the Access to Design course until staff asked the College’s Key Skills team to help. After being tested and found to be dyslexic Martin was provided with appropriate help.

Martin completed all units in the Access course, then completed a National Qualification in Fashion Technology before deciding to complete his studies in HND Stitched Textiles and Fashion Design.

*“Things are looking good for me, I may be going to University and who knows from there. All this has only been achieved because of the help and support from my lecturers and Key Skills [Department], and a few hours from myself.” - **Martin***

CASE STUDY – BIOTECHNOLOGY

The Life Sciences sector, which includes biotechnology, makes up about 1.4% of the Scottish economy.

As A Smart Successful Scotland, explains “..working with specific sectors can be an efficient and effective way to increase productivity and growth. Support at sector level should focus on understanding industry level issues and opportunities through close co-operation with those in the industry”.

Biotechnology is a sector that has the potential to be key to the economic success of Scotland. This ‘new’ industry has many small or medium enterprises and start-up companies, and has a reported shortage of appropriately skilled, work-ready science recruits.

The Scottish Colleges Biotechnology Consortium (SCBC) was launched in May 2001 to provide high quality technical training for the industry and to develop strategic partnerships with schools. The consortium comprises Forth Valley College, Adam Smith College, James Watt College, Dundee College and Bell College (a higher education institution). The Consortium’s central office is located within **Forth Valley College**.

Working in partnership with industry, the Consortium provides tailored and relevant training programmes. It offers an extensive portfolio of programmes including short tailored courses; technician training; postgraduate upskilling; and industry tailored full-time provision. Training is delivered both on-site and in college. The Consortium has also developed an extensive e-learning resource (supported by the European Social Fund).

A common barrier to technician training in the sector is releasing staff from their employee roles. **Forth Valley College** therefore offer an industry tailored evening programme for HND Biotechnology in addition to day-release, part-time and full-time study. The evening programme is flexible allowing learners to select which units they study and complete the programme at their own pace. A rolling programme allows learner in-take every three months.

“Although I work in a Biotechnology company, my post is not part of the production process. This evening course and qualification will allow me to progress in the company and work in different areas.

“The evening classes are very convenient for me and my employer since they do not interfere with my work. I would not be able to study in working hours as my company is a relatively small enterprise.

“Although the course is challenging, small class sizes mean no one is struggling.” – “Lesley”, Forth Valley College

CASE STUDY – PERFORMING ARTS

As A Framework for Economic Development in Scotland explains "The economic benefits of culture are highly significant and the Scottish Executive's policy is to promote participation in the widest possible range of top quality cultural provision. Young people's exposure to cultural activity helps develop a range of important skills, equipping them for life and the world of work, such as self confidence, creativity and social skills".

Since the decline of traditional industries in Dundee, the creative industries have become established as key drivers of the regeneration of the City. In 2001, **Dundee College** opened *The Space*, a place that provides:

- world class dance and theatre training;
- a venue for professional companies to perform;
- a centre for the wider community to access arts training, and
- a learning experience for students which has performance as its core.

When *The Space* was first conceived, the college ran one stream of NC (National Certificate) Theatre Arts and one stream of Foundation Dance programmes, providing 30 student places. In 2005, Dance and Theatre activity has grown to seven full-time streams, providing over 120 student places on programmes ranging from Introductory, through National Qualification to Higher National Certificate and Diploma level. Recruitment to full-time programmes now extends beyond Scottish borders to include participants from Europe, with interest being shown in international markets.

The college's extensive links with professional companies, which includes activities such as workshops, masterclasses, residencies, guest teachers, and attendance at rehearsals, gives learners the experience of professional standards of work in technique and creative sessions, focusing on regular performance.

"My training ... has more than equipped me for the profession, my creative growth was expertly nurtured ..." – **Laura** (now professional dancer)

CASE STUDY – ENTRY INTO TRADITIONAL AND NEW VOCATIONS

As A Smart, Successful Scotland explains "The ability to identify and respond quickly and flexibly to changing demands from employers is a characteristic of an effective labour market. To achieve this, a culture of lifelong learning amongst those in the market and those involved in supplying the labour market is needed".

Glasgow Metropolitan College has a structure of five academic schools, designed to be business-facing: Built Environment; Communication and Media; Design; Food and Hospitality; and Information Communication Technology, Sport and Tourism.

Each College School has an Advisory Board comprising representatives of industry, academic partners, professional bodies and other relevant organisations. The Advisory Boards assist the College in a variety of ways including that of advice on changing career opportunities, work placements for students and recruitment to industry.

Television

The HN Television Operations and Production course has been running since 1994 when it first started with 20 students in two converted classrooms. The section has expanded to 100 students with state of the art facilities which include, digital edit suites, sound dubbing suites, classrooms with digital edit facilities, digital location cameras and sound kits and a purpose built multi-camera television studio with full digital lighting rig and studio control room.

This has involved substantial investment from the college, sponsorship from industry and the investment and commitment continues apace with the development in technology.

Students work with lecturers who are all from a professional television background and the staff have many years experience in the television industry and in education.

Printing

Glasgow Metropolitan College is the sole provider of print education in Scotland. It offers a broad portfolio of National Certificate, Higher National Certificate & Higher National Diploma qualifications in all areas of printing. This includes Pre-press, Lithography, Screen Process, Digital Printing. All courses have been constructed in partnership with the Printing industry, SQA and the Scottish Print Employers' Federation.

The Modern Apprenticeship course has been designed to permit printing apprentices, who are in employment, to attend college in a block release pattern. Day release courses are also available in some areas of specialism.

One example of an individual student who has benefited and prospered from attendance at this college is **Tom** who, as a litho print apprentice, attended college on a day release basis over a 3-year period.

Tom, after completing his apprenticeship formed his own company. This grew and now as Group Managing Director he currently employs over 400 staff. All of his print apprentices attend college on a block release basis with many of his employees being graduates from HNC/HND Print courses.

CASE STUDY - RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

As The Framework for Economic Development in Scotland explains, "*renewable energy production is important to economic development in Scotland for three reasons - environmental, security and diversity of supply, and for the economic development opportunities it provides*".

In '*Going for green growth: a green jobs strategy for Scotland*', the Executive articulates its vision of a Scotland that develops the next generation of clean, resource-efficient technologies and commercialises and exports those technologies.

Lews Castle College is developing a *Hydrogen Lab* as part of its programme related to renewable and alternative energy in the Outer Hebrides. The project is linked to training in a number of linked technologies, including solar hot water and photo-voltaic installation and maintenance.

Initially the *Hydrogen Lab* will focus on three research and development projects of value to the local economy:

- Use of fuel cells to drive highly-inductive loads;
- Relevant applications of waste oxygen from wind turbine-driven electrolysis; and
- Conversion of large marine engines to hydrogen.

The *Hydrogen Lab* was installed in April 2006. Training for students will start in summer 2006.

The Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership has established an Energy Innovation Zone (EIZ) in response to environmental concerns and a recognition that renewable energy and energy efficiency are sustainable ways of meeting future energy demands. *Greenspace Research* is an important component of the EIZ strategy, and is a bold initiative that will help to transform utilisation of clean energy sources in the construction industry and create a centre of excellence in renewables-related design, management, training and software expertise at Lews Castle College, UHI.

GreenspaceCPD will, from summer 2006, provide an online energy analysis training environment delivered on the internet. It is targeted at construction industry specialists such as chartered surveyors, building design engineers, architects and builders.

Social Value of College Learning

As well as the direct economic benefits that learners derive from college courses, there are wider societal benefits.

Colleges are a community resource whether that be, for example, the home of an emergency control centre for the Isle of Lewis or as a venue in Dundee for community participation in dance and drama.

Also, participating in lifelong learning can help individuals take an active part in civic life, help them lead a more sustainable lifestyle, and improve their health and wellbeing.

College learning can help deliver the Scottish Executive's six *Closing the Opportunity Gap* objectives, which were launched on July 12, 2004, to:

- increase the chances of sustained employment for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups - in order to lift them permanently out of poverty;
- improve the confidence and skills of the most disadvantaged children and young people - in order to provide them with the greatest chance of avoiding poverty when they leave school;
- reduce the vulnerability of low income families to financial exclusion and multiple debts - in order to prevent them becoming over-indebted and/or to lift them out of poverty;
- regenerate the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods - in order that people living there can take advantage of job opportunities and improve their quality of life;
- increase the rate of improvement of the health status of people living in the most deprived communities - in order to improve their quality of life, including their employability prospects; and
- improve access to high quality services for the most disadvantaged groups and individuals in rural communities - in order to improve their quality of life and enhance their access to opportunity.

“Links with community learning and with social work are particularly strong in a number of colleges, and facilitate education in the community for disadvantaged groups of learners.” – Improving Scottish Education, HMIE 2006.

CASE STUDY – CLOSING THE OPPORTUNITY GAP

As A Smart Successful Scotland explains, “economic growth and tackling poverty and disadvantage go hand in hand. If worklessness and poverty are not properly tackled, they will act as a brake on economic growth and the potential contribution to the economy of those currently inactive will remain untapped.”

Coatbridge College has actively sought to collaborate with partners and to involve itself in various projects that encourage those in the ‘Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)’ group into participation. Transition, both into and out of college is a key theme and one which particularly addresses the needs of ‘hard to engage’ clients.

To help the long-term unemployed the College has adopted a ‘Start Anytime’ approach, which tailors courses to the needs of the individual student. Students are encouraged to attend at a time that suits them and agreed indicators of success are used to measure progress. Both Jobcentre Plus and Routes to Work staff work with the college on a formal and planned basis. The overwhelming majority of ‘Start Anytime’ students are on benefits at the start of their college life.

Catherine is a typical example of someone progressing from the NEET group on to college who ultimately wants to gain employment. She joined the college ‘Start Anytime’ course in 2003 after a long absence from study and work following redundancy. She was very unsure of her career path and knew that she would need additional help in order to succeed.

Early in her study **Catherine** was referred to Learning Support and after screening it was confirmed that she had dyslexia. She worked with both the Adult Literacy Tutor and Learning Support Manager in order to help her with written work.

With continued learning support **Catherine** successfully completed other college courses that have led up to her returning in 2005-06 to study for an HNC in Business and Office Administration. She looks forward to gaining employment at the end of her course.

CASE STUDY – COMMUNITY REGENERATION

As The Framework for Economic Development in Scotland explains "Raising economic activity rates in [Scotland's most deprived communities] can contribute to the productive potential of the economy as a whole. Closing the opportunity gap in this way can make a real contribution to economic growth."

John Wheatley College primarily operates in some of Scotland's most disadvantaged communities in Glasgow's East End and Greater Easterhouse. As a consequence of its community development role, it is represented on the Boards of the Greater Easterhouse Social Inclusion Partnership; the East End Social Inclusion Partnership; and the Routes Out (of Prostitution) Thematic Social Inclusion Partnership.

The College's Board of Management dedicates around £500,000 of its staffing budget to address community-based learning. These funds enable local community groups to commission it to provide services which are immediately responsive to community need. The project operates in Glasgow's East End, Greater Easterhouse and parts of North Lanarkshire. It has enabled projects, such as the Hidden History programme run by the Tronda Local History Group to research and to publish an alternative history to Greater Easterhouse.

The College has led in the establishment of an extensive network of community-based learning centres throughout Greater Easterhouse. This is supported by a high quality, high capacity ICT system which is based in the College. This network, the Greater Easterhouse Learning Network, supports initiatives in adult education, vocational training and youth work (provision ranges from provision for local employers in an industrial estate to a joint initiative to support recovering drug users).

In addition the college has operated training programmes for local people that guarantee a job to those who successfully complete their course. For example, a scheme run in association with TESCO specifically targeted those on incapacity benefit (amongst other excluded groups) to prepare them successfully to return to employment in a new superstore in Shettleston. A larger scale project also assisted local people to gain access to jobs created in the Glasgow Fort development. A range of initiatives, run in association with local development companies, enabled local people to secure over 75% of the new retail jobs which were created.

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Colleges' role in the community, working in partnership with other agencies including local authority Community Learning and Development services, and voluntary and community organisations, helps to promote social inclusion and encourages community activities.

As the Scottish Executive's Lifelong Learning Strategy explains, "We live in a society where diversity of background, culture, knowledge and skills should be valued and nurtured. We want a society where people actively engage in their communities, local and national, and learning can enable people to do that. Lifelong learning contributes to the development of society through the achievement of other social goals such as civic participation, sustainable development, improved health and wellbeing, reduced crime and greater social cohesion".

CASE STUDY – PARTNERSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

In November 2000 the first Community Learning Strategy was launched in North Lanarkshire. This first period saw the setting up of the Community Learning Partnership – involving North Lanarkshire Council, local voluntary organisations and a range of other partners – and significant development of partnership activities through joint projects, marketing, celebration of learners achievements, successful joint funding bids and the creation of strategic and local learning plans. **Cumbernauld** College and its partner colleges, **Motherwell** and **Coatbridge**, were instrumental in promoting and supporting these vital early stages of development. HM Inspectorate of Education highlighted this work as good practice as part of its 2003 review of Cumbernauld College.”

“The College participated effectively as a partner in a broad range of courses with a variety of agencies and key bodies. It identified that successful partnerships were those where partners had clear objectives, high levels of trust and potentially productive outputs. For example, the alliance with Community Learning and Development and Careers Scotland in North Lanarkshire promoted access and participation, numeracy, literacy training and employability as essential features of the community learning plan.”

In January 2004 the Scottish Executive released a major publication *Working Together to Build Stronger Communities*. This document identified Community Learning and Development as central to the community planning agenda recognising its role in regeneration activities particularly within the most deprived communities and the need to work closely in a developmental way with local groups. Throughout this period **Cumbernauld College** developed a structure of partnership working, mainly as a result of its location in Central Scotland, recognising the strength of such relationships. HMIE noted further partnerships involving the college across Dunbartonshire:

“The ‘Learning in the Community’ collaborative Project (with East Dunbartonshire Council and West Dunbartonshire Council, Anniesland College and Clydebank College, as well as Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire) demonstrated the value of partnership working underpinned by a close sense of purpose and regular evaluation” – HM Inspectorate of Education.

This level of engagement provided enormous benefits to all participants and supported by Communities Scotland, the work continues to develop and grow in stature. HM Inspectorate of Education concluded its summary of the good practice identified at Cumbernauld College as:”

“Through its extensive engagement with a range of key partners, the College was effective in playing a strategic part in promoting skills development and economic regeneration in the local economies in which it operated.”

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The *Leitch Review of Skills - Skills in the UK: The long-term challenge, Interim Report*¹⁶ found that “*there are important links between skills and wider social outcomes, such as health, crime and social cohesion*”.

The Review concluded that skills can help families manage their finances, and enable parents to help their children with their homework.

They can impact on **health** either directly, by providing information on improving health, or indirectly, by improving income and making a healthy lifestyle more affordable. The review found that health problems, including depression and obesity, are more common in unskilled and low-income households.

Also, offenders are far less likely to have qualifications and hence tend to have poorer pay and employment prospects: more than half of offenders have no qualifications, compared to 15% in the population as a whole. Skills can affect **crime** by improving an individual’s employment, pay and progression opportunities and hence the opportunity cost of offending, and by impacting on income inequality.

The review also found while skills were not the whole answer to **social cohesion** there is “*evidence to suggest that those with higher skill levels have, on average, greater levels of racial tolerance and higher levels of participation in the political process.*”

The case studies in this section illustrate the social value of college in four specific areas of college activity (community regeneration, closing the opportunity gap, support for vulnerable young people and prisoner rehabilitation), though clearly colleges wider activities contribute to the social impact of colleges too.

It is noted that the work of some colleges in promoting community regeneration and in the provision of enhanced learner support is in part currently supported by financial assistance from European Structural Funds (both European Regional Development Funds and European Social Funds) and Local Regeneration Funds. If colleges are unable in the future to access these sorts of funds, it could reduce the capacity of the college to make as much of a difference.

¹⁶ [Hhttp://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/leitch_review/review_leitch_index.cfm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/leitch_review/review_leitch_index.cfm)

CASE STUDY – SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE

As *A Smart Successful Scotland* explains, “there are too many young people who are not in education, employment or training” [Quote NEET strategy when published].

Include number of NEET

Aberdeen College works in partnership with Aberdeen Foyer. Foyers provide, in the short term, housing and ancillary services for vulnerable young people (usually 16-25) – the homeless, those with disabilities, those with a history of offending, those leaving care, those recovering from some kind of habituation or dependency.

In 2004-05, the College catered for 315 Foyer clients. The young people were involved in learning experiences that developed their self-confidence and self-esteem, an understanding of healthy and safe lifestyles, and, where appropriate, employability skills. Wherever possible programmes included certificated outcomes so that the participants achieved recognised qualifications in Core Skills or relevant vocational elements.

In 2004 “**Tracy**” attended a 12 week intensive course designed to increase confidence and stability through lifestyle change. The College delivers training in subjects as diverse as Information Technology training, confidence building, and exercise and fitness to provide routine and develop new skills.

When “**Tracy**” first joined the course, she was extremely nervous about committing to the programme and meeting other students, as she had cut herself off from other people due to a background of prolonged substance misuse. After a few week’s, confidence in her own abilities began to grow, particularly in Information Technology classes, where she went from being a total beginner to someone confidently using word to create her own CV, and in the fitness class where she found the motivation to make regular exercise a part of everyday life.

It was through her newly-discovered interest in fitness that “**Tracy**” took the lead in a number of health initiatives, assisting the health team by providing motivation and support to others.

After successfully completing the programme she returned as an assistant volunteer team leader. “**Tracy**” has now progressed to full-time employment with an agency dealing with clients from a similar background to her own. In her role as an assistant support worker she now has the confidence to help others and is currently engaging in job-related training at Aberdeen College as part of her staff development.

PRISONER REHABILITATION

Gaining the skills and qualifications offenders need to make a positive contribution in society requires that the content and quality of learning programmes in prisons are, where possible, comparable to that of the community. The delivery of 'labour market' relevant, high quality learning, skills and employability education and training within prisons is key to improving this position.

In April 2005 Scottish Prison Service (SPS) contracts were awarded to Motherwell College and Lauder College to deliver programmes in the following areas:

- Adult Literacy and core skills;
- Computing and Information Technology;
- Art and Design;
- Cookery;
- First-Aid;
- Health and Safety;
- General Education;
- Languages;
- Leisure subjects;
- Mathematics, and
- Music.

Approximately 30% to 45% of offenders currently engage in education through prison learning centres at any one time. In addition, limited opportunities are provided for long-term offenders nearing the end of their sentence to attend colleges to undertake day-release courses.

In addition to providing education programmes to meet offenders learning needs, the colleges also provide support to Vocational Training and Physical Education undertaken by SPS officer/instructors. A new addition to the contract from the previous education contract is that contractors are now also expected to provide employability support to offenders in conjunction with key partners such as Jobcentre Plus.