



 ABERDEEN COLLEGE®

# annual review 2007

## **glossary**

<b>AoC</b>	<b>Association of Colleges</b>
<b>ASET</b>	<b>Aberdeen Skills and Enterprise Training Limited</b>
<b>CMS</b>	<b>Content Management System</b>
<b>CPD</b>	<b>Continuous Professional Development</b>
<b>ESOL</b>	<b>English for Speakers of Other Languages</b>
<b>FE</b>	<b>Further Education</b>
<b>FTE</b>	<b>Full Time Equivalent</b>
<b>HE</b>	<b>Higher Education</b>
<b>HMIe</b>	<b>Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education</b>
<b>HNC</b>	<b>Higher National Certificate</b>
<b>HND</b>	<b>Higher National Diploma</b>
<b>NVQ</b>	<b>National Vocational Qualification</b>
<b>OPITO</b>	<b>Offshore Petroleum Industry Training Organisation</b>
<b>PN</b>	<b>Protocol National</b>
<b>SARU</b>	<b>Student Achievement Ratio by Unit</b>
<b>SCQF</b>	<b>Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework</b>
<b>SPAR</b>	<b>Student Programme Achievement Ratio</b>
<b>SVQ</b>	<b>Scottish Vocational Qualification</b>
<b>TOEIC</b>	<b>Test of English for International Communication</b>
<b>TQFE</b>	<b>Teaching Qualification in Further Education</b>
<b>VLE</b>	<b>Virtual Learning Environment</b>
<b>WSUMs</b>	<b>Weighted Student Units of Measurement</b>

# contents

<b>Coverage</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Learning and Teaching</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	<b>2</b>	(i) Learning and Teaching Strategy	30
<b>Mission Statement</b>	<b>2</b>	(ii) Virtual Learning Environment	30
<b>College Ethos</b>	<b>2</b>	(iii) Soft Skills	31
<b>Strategic Aims</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Widening Access, Progression and Increasing Participation</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Awards and Events</b>	<b>4</b>	(i) Support Services for Students	32
(i) College Awards	4	(ii) Flexible, Open and e-Learning	35
(ii) Student Awards	6	(iii) Adult Literacy and Numeracy	35
(iii) College Events	9	(iv) Collaboration	36
<b>Chairman's Report</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Serving Local Communities</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Principal's Report</b>	<b>11</b>	(i) Lifelong Learning and Community Planning	38
<b>Student Progress During the Year</b>	<b>14</b>	(ii) Improving the Local Skills Base	38
(i) Trends in Enrolments	14	<b>Information Services</b>	<b>40</b>
(ii) Student Achievement	14	(i) Web Services	40
(iii) Course Offerings	15	(ii) Libraries	40
<b>Governance and Management</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>e-Enablement</b>	<b>41</b>
(i) Progression of the Accommodation Strategy	16	(i) IT Systems in Aberdeen College	41
<b>Quality and Excellence</b>	<b>17</b>	(ii) IT in the Business Process	41
(i) Quality Systems	17	(iii) IT in the Student Experience	42
(ii) Awarding Body Requirements	17	(iv) IT in Course Delivery	42
(iii) Internal Audit	18	(v) Training and Support	43
(iv) Lesson Observation	18	<b>Financial Data</b>	<b>44</b>
(v) Quality Improvement	18	<b>Summary Data</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Human Resource Management</b>	<b>20</b>	(i) Enrolments	45
(i) Employee Relations	20	(ii) Age Structure	45
(ii) Staffing	20	(iii) Gender Mix	45
(iii) Staff Welfare	20	(iv) Student Destination	46
<b>Developing Staff</b>	<b>22</b>	(v) Student Origins	46
(i) Professional Development	22	(vi) Retention Rates	46
(ii) Staff Development	23	(vii) Level of Student Activity	46
(iii) Key Staff Development Initiatives	24	(viii) Ethnic/Racial Origin	46
<b>Equal Opportunities</b>	<b>27</b>	(ix) Staff Employment Levels 2006-07	47
<b>Freedom of Information</b>	<b>28</b>	(x) Unit Costs (£ Per WSUM)	47
<b>Child Protection, Vulnerable Adults and Looked After Children</b>	<b>28</b>	(xi) Client Satisfaction Surveys	48
<b>Safety and Health</b>	<b>29</b>	(xii) Complaints Management	49
		(xiii) Compliments	51
		<b>Board Of Management</b>	<b>52</b>
		<b>Transactions with The Board of Management</b>	<b>55</b>
		(i) Related Party Transactions	55
		<b>Contact Details</b>	<b>56</b>

# coverage

This Review covers the academic and financial year 2006-07. The College's year commences on the 1 August and extends to 31 July of the following year.

# purpose

The purpose of the Annual Review is to provide people with information on how the College has performed over the academic year.

# mission statement

To deliver, in partnership with other providers, a high quality education and training service, appropriate to the lifelong learning needs and aspirations of its clients, in a diverse range of settings.

# college ethos

The College ethos seeks to help establish a context for enlightened and effective management, and to help build an appropriate working and learning environment for the College community.

It seeks to ensure that students are treated as mature individuals and are allocated as much responsibility as is possible and practicable, including an active role in decisions that affect them.

In addition to being provided with the best possible learning experiences, students are to be given every opportunity to develop personal and social skills and, generally, to derive the maximum benefits from their College experience.



# strategic aims

In meeting the educational needs of the community and within the context of the College's mission statement, the strategic aims during 2006-07 were:

## **A Governance and Management**

To strengthen the governance and management of the College and to ensure that the major educational policy objectives of the Scottish Executive and national agenda are met at a local level in an open and transparent way.

## **B Finance and Related Issues**

As a minimum, taking one year with another to operate a balanced budget by matching operational income and expenditure, whilst taking opportunities to augment the financial reserves of the College subject to the availability of funding.

## **C Estates and Environment**

To implement the College's Estates Development Strategy, taking account of changes in funding and local circumstances and to conduct College business in a manner that promotes positive action and respect for the environment.

## **D Equal Opportunities**

To promote equality of opportunity for students and staff in all aspects of College life, in relation to gender, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age, and to promote positively race equality, gender equality and disability equality to ensure a learning and working environment free from discrimination.

## **E Quality and Excellence**

To promote a high quality learning experience for all students, offering varied and stimulating opportunities for learning, that take account of individual learning styles and incorporate new technologies and flexible modes of delivery where appropriate, and high quality support services, underpinned by effective quality management systems and professional development arrangements for staff.

## **F Wider Access and Participation**

To promote education and training opportunities for individuals, communities and employers by offering flexible, up-to-date courses and incorporate new technologies and flexible modes of delivery where appropriate; to work with others to increase access to lifelong learning opportunities; and promote social inclusion by removing barriers to learning.

## **G Progression and Articulation**

To work with schools, universities and other providers to foster easier and faster progression and articulation of students to and within further education and between further and higher education, including the provision of appropriate vocational courses for school pupils.

## **H Local Skills Base**

To contribute to the research and development of the local skills base and to address local skills requirements and shortages by collaborating with and responding to employers, other training providers and agencies and to foster employability and enterprise skills, as well as vocationally specific skills, where relevant and appropriate.

## **I Collaboration and Partnerships**

To strengthen communication and collaboration with public, private and voluntary sector partners and other providers in the compulsory, further and higher education sectors by contributing to community planning and promoting a coherent approach to the delivery of education and training services.

## **J Responsive and Flexible Curriculum**

To work with others to improve access to College services by researching, exploring and anticipating the needs of individuals and providing a range of services to support students with additional requirements, thereby promoting social inclusion and social justice, while meeting the needs of employers in all areas served by the College.

## **K Learner Progress and Achievement**

To ensure that high quality tuition and support is provided to students to help them achieve their potential in terms of qualifications and vocational, employability, citizenship and personal and social skills.

# awards and events

## (i) College Awards

### Investors in People (IIP) Recruitment and Selection Standard

In June 2007 the College became the first Scottish FE college to be awarded the IIP Recruitment and Selection national standard. This followed an audit of College recruitment and selection practices against ten indicators, one of which was "The organisation is committed to making sure that recruitment and selection is fair."



### SQA Star Awards

The partnership between Aberdeen College and the St Machar Parent Support Project achieved a highly commended at the 2007 SQA Star Awards. The partnership was devised in response to the interest of some parents to gain a qualification in community work, many of whom had limited previous education. Participants were also supported with transport, study facilities and childcare arrangements.

### Marketing Network FE First Awards 2006

Aberdeen College was awarded 'Highly Commended' in the 'Website First' category. The College website was praised for its innovation, clarity, colour, ease and fluidity of navigation and user-friendliness.

### SFEU and SQA Awards 2006

The College received the SFEU Award for Partnership Working in recognition of the work of the Beauty and Complementary Therapies Team with Roxburghe House. The partnership involves students visiting patients diagnosed with terminal cancer and offering treatments and therapies designed to help with their well-being. The initiative with Roxburghe House was also awarded a bronze medal in the 'Partnership of the Year' category at the SQA Awards. The College presented Roxburghe House with two watercolour paintings by local artist Alan Morrice, to acknowledge the presentation of the SQA Award.

### Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)

For the fourth successive year, Aberdeen College was awarded the RoSPA Gold Award for Occupational Health and Safety. RoSPA Gold Award winners have achieved a very high level of performance, demonstrating well developed occupational health and safety management systems and culture, outstanding control of risk and very low levels of error, harm and loss.

### Adult Learners' Week Awards

The College's HNC Working in Communities class, running in Donbank Primary School as part of the St Machar Parents Support Project Group, received an award in recognition for their efforts in community, youth and childcare work in their local area.

### SFEU Marketing Awards

Aberdeen College won gold in the 'Relationship Marketing' category for recognition of its marketing campaign for the annual North-east Beauty Festival. This included the re-branding of the event and the production and distribution of a stylish and professional suite of promotional materials. The Awards Panel acknowledged the Festival as an excellent example of an activity that nurtures existing links with employers, schools and other bodies, and creates new partnership links with the College. The successful marketing campaign led to an increase in the number of salons taking part.



### **National Business Awards for Scotland 2007**

Aberdeen College was shortlisted for two categories at the 2007 awards – The Atos Origin Award for e-Enablement and The ProjectScotland Corporate Social Responsibility Award.

### **Northern Star Business Awards 2007**

The College was a finalist in three categories of the awards: Commitment to People Development, Best Use of ICT and Best Customer Service.

### **Investors in People (IIP) Ten Year Achievement Award**

In November 2006 the College received this special award at a ceremony held at Stirling Castle. The award was presented in recognition of the College continuously holding the IIP standard for ten years.

**The following awards were presented to the College in November 2007 in recognition of developments and initiatives undertaken in 2006-07:**

### **AoC Beacon Awards 2007**

The College received the Becta Award for e-enabling Organisational Development. The award was presented to the College for its comprehensive range of electronic systems used to deliver the curriculum and to enhance business processes. Aberdeen College was the only Scottish college to win one of the 23 Beacon Award categories, and is the first in Scotland to receive a total of four Beacon Awards.

### **SFEU Awards 2007**

The Award for Partnership Working was presented to the College for its Local Area Partnership. The Partnership involves providing residents local to the College's geographical area with easy, and free, access to practical training opportunities. This includes IT courses for residents of local social housing complexes, a variety of sports and health-related opportunities for local schoolchildren, tailored IT courses for parents of these schoolchildren, and life skills courses designed to help in the rehabilitation of some of the area's most socially disadvantaged residents.

### **Marketing Network FE First Awards 2007**

A 'Runner-up' award in the student newsletter category was presented to Aberdeen College for its fresh and innovative 'Hot' publication. The newsletter, aimed at 15-18 year old school pupils, is based on a typical teen-magazine and uses language young people can relate to. Its targeted distribution successfully heightened the College's profile and contributed to an increase in applications to College courses from specific postcode areas.



## (ii) Student Awards

### Skills Challenge Competitions

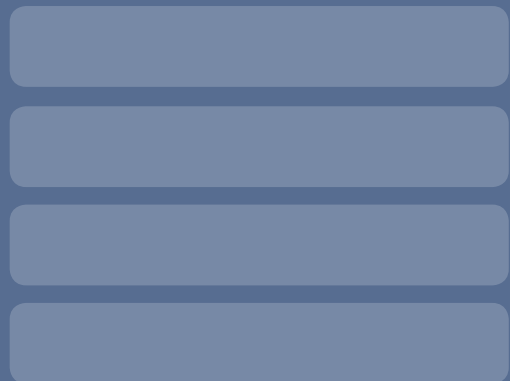
Aberdeen College students yet again maintained a high level of success in both Scottish and UK Skills Challenge Competitions:

- In both the Scottish and UK Photography Advanced category Eva Pazourkova received gold, Barbara Wright received silver and Ruth Robinson received bronze.
- In the Scottish Popular Music category 'Crossfire' received bronze. Band members were HNC Music students Ewan Cameron, Mark Tosh, Ross Turner and Jonathan Park.
- Kelly Greenhowe received bronze in the Cooking Intermediate Regional Heat
- Rosanna Currie, Level 3 NVQ Beauty Therapy student was awarded joint bronze in the Scottish Beauty Therapy Advanced category.



### William Daniels Award

The William Daniels Award, presented by the Wrights and Coopers Incorporation of Aberdeen, was presented to Michael Lambert and Lewis Napier (see below) from HNC Construction Craft. It was the first time in the history of the award that the judges have made a joint award.



### Student Achievement and Community Citizen Awards 2007

Shelley Anderson, HNC Music; Stuart Ewen, TV Operations & Production; Elliot Grant, Renew and Natalie Whyte, Access to Nursing were presented with Student Community Citizen Awards after demonstrating citizenship through worthwhile activities or by helping others.

The following students received Student Achievement Awards in recognition of making significant progress during their time at College:

Diana Macdonald, University Access (Highers) • Jonathan Milne, Introduction to Social Sciences • Jane Petrie, HND Stitched Textiles and Fashion Design • Elaine Watt, HND Legal Services • Calum Wood, HND Communication with Media • Karena Youngson, HND Computer Graphic Design and Production • Adam Horrocks, Access to Nursing • Joseph Harper Innes, SVQ Food Preparation and Cooking Level 3 • Stuart Davidson, Introduction to Information Technology • Colin French, SVQ Performing Engineering Options Level 2 • Katerina Malysheva, Administration • Michael Stewart, Access 1-3 • Rachel Hay, HNC Animal Nursing • Colin Mair, Introduction to Vehicle Service and Repair • Mark Perfect, Introduction to Construction (Crafts).

Recipients of the Student Community Citizen Awards and Student Achievement Awards 2007 each received a certificate and £25 book token at an Awards Ceremony in June.

### **Pitch! (Scottish Students on Screen)**

Sean Gordon won a £1,000 commission to produce a film for the Channel 4 website 4Talent. To receive the prize, Sean had to pitch his film 'Runner' – a documentary that follows the day in the life of a runner of a film set – in front of an industry panel and live audience. Competition was stiff against the other eleven finalists, but Sean's idea was selected after being described as "well-conceived and relevant to the audience".



### **North-East Hair and Beauty Festival 2006**

Over 350 hairdressing and beauty therapy trainees and students took part in the third annual competition, which is organised by the College's Hairdressing and Beauty Team. Aberdeen College students were successful in their classifications and won four gold, seven silver and four bronze medals:

- First Time Freestyle: Gold – Sylvia Traynor, Silver – Hayley Pirie, Bronze – Denise Abel
- Commercial Day Style: Bronze – Chloe Petrie
- Ladies Commercial Cut and Blow-dry: Silver – Stevie Gourdie
- High Fashion Competition: Gold – Louise Ross, Silver – Chloe Petrie, Bronze – Dave Creighton
- Afro-Caribbean: Gold – Stevie Gourdie, Silver – Edith Robertson
- Colour Competition: Silver – Danielle Dunlop
- Commercial Make-up: Bronze – Sarah Mathieson
- Fantasy Make-up: Silver – Natalie Cross
- Manicure Nail Competition: Silver – Cherysh Mitchell
- Total Look Team Presentation: Teams from Aberdeen College won both gold and silver.

### **Granite Awards for Thoughtful Alcohol Awareness (GAFTAA)**

Aberdeen College students received six of the 12 award categories: Ryan MacFarlane, HND Creative Industries, won four categories for his drama 'Pissed': The Mall Aberdeen Award, Best Three Minute Film, Best Direction and Best Ensemble Acting. Classmate Stuart Ewen won two categories for his film 'Deadly Slip': Best Production and Involving Community and Public Services.

### **Association of Hairdressers and Therapists 2007 Scottish Student Competition**

Chloe Petrie won gold and Louise Ross won silver in the Ladies High Fashion category, and Rachel Reid won bronze in Mens Commercial Cut and Finish category.

### **Grampian Chef of the Year**

Jennifer Helmsley won silver and Orry Shand won bronze in the Young Chef of the Year category, while Ricky Nichol received the bronze award in the Seafood category.

### **Spirit of Speyside**

Kelly Greenhowe, a SVQ Level 3 Hospitality Student, won silver in the Whisky Cookery Competition. Kelly had to use whisky in each of three dishes in a dinner menu. For her prize, Kelly received £100 and a bottle of each malt whisky used in her recipes.

### **SQA Star Awards**

Shelley Anderson, an HNC Music student, received Highly Commended in the College Candidate of the Year. Shelley was recognised for her involvement in her local community by organising and performing at a charity gig and offering music tuition to young homeless people.

Camryn Mathers, a student undertaking the OPITO Mechanical Technician apprenticeship at Aberdeen College, was presented with the award after demonstrating excellent practical and written knowledge of engineering and a good attitude towards learning.

## SCOTHOT

Orry Shand, SVQ Professional Cookery Level 3, won the bronze medal in the Hot Gressingham Duck Junior Competition. This competition is open to all junior chefs in the UK.

## Grampian PR Group Best Student Award

Martin Wright, an HND Communications with Media student, received this award for the high level of work produced during his time at Aberdeen College, his excellent attendance, commitment to study and contributions to his class, not only as a student representative, but for being supportive to his fellow class mates.

## SQA Award for Special Educational Study

HNC Working with Communities student, Lilimar Simpson was presented with this award at the annual SQA Awards Ceremony.

## Hospitality Industry Trust (HIT) Scotland Scholarships

Orry Shand, SVQ Professional Cookery Level 3, and Glen Campbell, HNC Professional Cookery were awarded a week's scholarship at Lochgreen Hotel in Ayrshire with Willie Pike, one of Scotland's top chefs. Alfonso Fernandez Alvarez, HND Travel and Tourism, was awarded a scholarship in the Peak District National Park where he was able to job shadow the Park Manager responsible for sustainable development.

## The Royal Television Society's Student Film Awards

Two films produced by Multimedia Centre students were nominated in the factual category. Stephen Ramsay's film 'Orania' discussed racism in a 'whites only' community in South Africa and John Robertson told a moving story of a young boy's adoption in 'Foster Care', a film produced in co-operation with Barnardos.

## Skillbuild Competition 2007

Advanced Craft student Debbie Greig (right) won the painting and decorating category of the Scottish competition and went on to represent the College in the national final.

## Amanda Mills Award

Social Sciences student, Rebecca Smith was presented with this award in recognition of her progress since enrolling at the College. Rebecca will continue her study in 2007-08 on the HND Social Sciences course. This special award, now in its third year, has been made possible by the generosity of the parents of Amanda Mills, who sadly died while she was a student studying social sciences at the College.





## (iii) College Events

### International Day

A day of cultural exchange was held at the Gallowgate Centre in May 2007. Visitors were able to learn about what makes cultures unique from international students representing countries from across the globe. Throughout the day, stands displaying colourful traditional costumes, arts and crafts, photographs and musical instruments were on view and visitors were treated to demonstrations of Samba dancing, Eastern European Music and tasty international cuisine. Representatives from organisations, including Grampian Racial Equality Council (GREC), The International Centre and The Aberdeen Women's Alliance were also present to answer questions.

### Student Showcases

Various events were held to showcase the achievements of Aberdeen College students in 2006-7. These included: The End of Year and Barbie World Fashion Shows, Belmont Cinema Film Showcase, The End of Year Art and Design Show, AC in the Tree 5 – a night of live music, Web Design and Multimedia Showcase, and performances of 'Animal Farm' and 'A Series of Mistaken Affairs'.



### Health and Wellbeing

Several events relating to the health and wellbeing of students and staff were held throughout 2006-07. These included: a student and staff health fair, a recreational programme and awareness days on a variety of topics – healthy eating and fitness, stress, organ donation, asthma, cancer, sexual health, meningitis, dental and oral health, smoking and health related issues, alcohol and substance misuse and travel health and safety advice.

### Adult Learners' Week 2007

In association with a host of education providers, Aberdeen College took part in a very successful programme of activities and events based on the theme of democracy and learning between the 19 and 25 May. The week was organised to encourage adults to return to learning by promoting the wide range of classes which are available locally and to give adult learners of all ages the opportunity to try something new.



### Study Trips

A group of Legal Studies and Travel and Tourism students undertook a study trip to Strasbourg, France in March 2007. The itinerary included visits to the European Parliament, The Court of Human Rights and the Council of Europe. Students were also given the opportunity to visit educational institutions in both France and Germany.

In May 2007, a group of Legal Studies students visited the Scottish Parliament, the High Court and the Court of Session in Edinburgh. This gave students the opportunity to witness law making in action.

### Guest Speakers

Throughout 2006-07, guest speakers from various professions and backgrounds met with students to discuss career opportunities. These included Grampian PR Group, Vox Publications, Grampian Police, Burn and McGregor Solicitors, The Scottish Paralegal Association, Enterprise North East Trust, a top hairdressing stylist and colourist, and a professional musician and songwriter.

# chairman's report

As I begin my first report as Chairman I consider myself to be in a unique and privileged position. My problem is not that of finding positive issues to include but selecting from the many and varied successes which have been part of yet another outstanding year at Aberdeen College. Perhaps the most apposite summary of this and previous years can be found in a reference from Quality Scotland relating to our embedded good practice in people management: Aberdeen College holds to this mantra "Excellence is a habit, not an act."

What does excellence mean in this context?

In the private sector businesses seeking a template for success in today's fast moving world are reminded of the importance of an ongoing willingness to change – something which has been in evidence at Aberdeen College since its first Board of Management was formed on 1 October 1992. Changes wrought during that period have engendered a transformation much envied by other organisations and have set an outstanding example to those in the FE sector seeking improvement.

The template for success also encompasses the importance of staff development and best use of individual skills – another embedded practice in our College often leading to an impressive line-up of national awards. Our Board Members take great pride in these but this success is no huge secret; teamwork and dedication make it happen. Inspirational leadership and hard work always pays off.

It is almost impossible to survive the alarming pace of change in every aspect of our world today without this visionary leadership. Our recent track record has proven that we are in safe hands. The inspector who is to lead our review later this year expressed the view recently that "Colleges should change lives" and there can be little doubt that ours is doing that in a wide variety of disciplines. Focus, a positive attitude and unwillingness by our Principal to accept that something can't be done keeps our ship steadily on course.

As a former teacher I have always been conscious of the value of different kinds of intelligence and the need to accept that individuals matter, whatever their talent. Among the most heart-warming examples of this was the winning of the Wrights and Coopers William Daniels Award by two of our joinery apprentices studying HNC construction last year. Their work, done in their own time, was of such high quality that it was decided to award them both – something which had never happened before.

Talent of this kind is essential to our economy and we are proud to foster it in this and other vocational courses in the College as well as in our expanding outreach facilities. Our planned enhanced collaboration with RGU promises to add an even wider variety of opportunity.

The Board continues to work harmoniously with the Principal and his management team to realise the goals of the organisation. We enjoy this role partly because of our awareness of the passion to excel evident in every sector. The achievements of ASET this year, for example, have been outstanding and an excellent illustration of the resolute teamwork which is the hallmark of our organisation. When we see the results of steadfast effort by staff and students at special achievement awards and graduation ceremonies we celebrate enthusiastically with students, staff and management.

I'd like to close with a quote from Winston Churchill who did not excel in his early education yet somehow found a route to discovering his inner greatness. "You make a living by what you get: you make a life by what you give."

Our College offers routes to success to its students whatever their situation – routes which change lives.

**Margaret Donald**  
Chairman of the Board of Management

# principal's report

Aberdeen College continues to offer a level of service considerably above that for which it has been specifically funded from the public purse. In the year which ended on 31 July, 2007 it was able to extend its service by nearly a tenth above its funding allocation. In practice, this meant that many more people gained educational opportunities than would have been the case had provision simply reflected funding. At the end of that year the College also recorded a cash surplus of £3.8 million which was added to the College's reserves to augment the funding available to it to part-finance an ambitious £100 million accommodation strategy. The highest ratings for financial security and financial health were, of course, retained.

During the year, the Board of the College approved the erection of a £7 million new facility for training construction students on its Altens site. It also gained the approval of the Scottish Funding Council for its plans for a 'dispersed college', which, when complete, will offer people throughout the Aberdeen travel-to-work unrivalled local access to the College's facilities. The plans include the establishment of further and higher education campuses in Inverurie, Stonehaven and Ellon; a new £40 million campus to be built in the Bridge of Don; and, the refurbishment of most of the College's existing sites in Aberdeen City. A new learning centre was also established in Peterhead in September, 2007 to serve local people there, and as a means of meeting the College's commitments to its partnership with Aberdeen Foyer and The Prince's Trust. The excellent condition of all College centres was maintained at a cost for the year of £1.8 million to secure an appropriate physical learning and working environment for students and staff.



The College's wholly-owned subsidiary company, Aberdeen Skills and Enterprise Training Limited (ASET), had its best year ever in 2006-07. The Company, which has provided training in highly-specialised niche markets in over 23 countries, successfully concluded a number of major overseas contracts. As a result of its efforts, ASET was in a position to transfer £1.2 million to the College to help finance the wider work of its parent organisation.

Aberdeen College is Scotland's largest further education college. It is also its most progressive. In 2006-07, considerable progress was made towards making it the best 'electronic college'. Electronic access to courses and means of communication is of growing importance in the educational world. As other aspects of life and work change dramatically, as a consequence of technological developments, colleges need to ensure that their services remain congruent with change. Over the past several years the College has invested successfully in promoting student and staff 'electronic access'. Its Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and Content Management System (CMS) were further developed in 2006-07; some 350 full-time students were equipped with personal lap-top computers for the duration of their courses. Preparations for the introduction of full-time hybrid classes (combining e-learning with formal attendance) were put in hand; and 'smart top desks' were introduced to enable dual-purpose use of classrooms (electronic and traditional approaches to learning and teaching). Investment in systems, equipment and software to promote electronic access was matched by investment in people, with a range of staff development opportunities offered to staff to support them to work effectively using the technology.

Industrial relations were excellent during the period and standard indicators such as sickness absence rates, disciplinary and grievance cases and accident rates remained very low. There were no employment tribunal applications or industrial disputes. The College was also able to reward its staff appropriately. Pay awards varied from 3.4% to lecturing staff to 6% to support staff on lower-paid grades. This differential approach to remuneration reflected the challenges the College faced in recruiting the staff it needed in a tight local labour market.

The Board's approach to pay was supported by its wider efforts to offer its people an excellent reward and support package. The College's constructive partnership with Alpha Health Services was further developed to offer staff a range of health promotion opportunities and preventative care measures. An extensive staff development programme was undertaken with investment in staff development exceeding £1.4 million during the year. Two lecturers completed the Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE) – the initial training certification for teaching staff. The College's Beyond TQFE course (a professional updating, post-initial teaching qualification for lecturers qualified for more than five years), which is the product of a partnership with the University of Aberdeen, was completed by eight lecturers, bringing the total number of awards to 65 since 2003. Twenty three College staff completed Institute of Leadership and Management courses while the College's health and safety efforts secured the fourth consecutive Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Gold Award in 2007, recognising the organisation's efforts in reducing accidents.

Aberdeen College retained all its quality standards without difficulty. The Charter Mark was retained for a 13th successive year with no non compliances. The organisation also retained the British Standards Institute (BSI) CMSAS 86:2000 standard for complaints management. Other awards the College received during the year are available at page 4 of this report. No 'holds' were placed on the College by any certifying body in 2006-07.

The College's mission is "to deliver, in partnership with other providers, a high quality education and training service, appropriate to the lifelong learning needs and aspirations of its clients, in a diverse range of settings." The partnership theme is a strong and abiding one and it is apposite, in a report such as this to offer thanks to those other organisations with which the College works. They include Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Scottish Enterprise Grampian, Aberdeen Foyer, Grampian Motor Training Trust, Grampian Racial Equality, Multi-Ethnic Aberdeen Limited, The International Centre, Aberdeen Cyrenians, The Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB), Construction Skills, Ethos Associates, and the many employers to whom the College is strongly-committed.

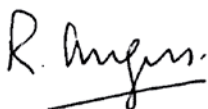
School-College links with Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council were more deeply embedded in the daily work of the College, as Skills for Work and other initiatives were carried forward. The College met the needs of 1,574 school pupils, offering them not only vocational and skills training, but also curriculum enrichment through College-led subjects like psychology and sociology – ones which are not always available in schools – in addition to mainstream 'academic' subjects.

Good progress was also made with the College's longstanding partnerships with The Robert Gordon University (RGU) and The University of Aberdeen. Twenty College HNDs now articulate with 30 RGU degree programmes and seven College HNDs with 34 University of Aberdeen first degrees. These 2+2 arrangements allow students of the College who successfully complete an HND award to progress to the third year of a first university degree. During the review period the College and RGU undertook the preparatory work for a closer working relationship. The Boards of both organisations unanimously endorsed a comprehensive collaboration agreement under which Aberdeen College became an Associate College of the University.

The theme of partnership underwrites many of the College's operations. Without partners, the College's services would be smaller and the poorer. There are few public opportunities enough available to recognise the efforts of organisations with which Aberdeen College works. An Annual Review is one, however. It is appropriate, here, to express the College's appreciation for the sterling work of City of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Councils, university partners, Scottish Enterprise Grampian, the Scottish Funding Council, the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department of the Scottish Executive and its successor, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, the Association of the Scotland's Colleges, the Scottish Further Education Unit, the Scottish Qualifications Authority, The City and Guilds of London Institute, and the many other certificating bodies on which the College and its students depend. The same appreciation is also due to organisations working for the College as contractors providing important, underpinning services. They include Paull and Williamsons, Simpson and Marwick, Sodexo, Pegasus, Protocol National, Mitie, and Currie and Brown.

Colleges are not just places to which students and employers go for courses. They are service organisations where people serve people. An end-of-year Review is also a good place to record the abiding appreciation of the management of the College for the unstinting work and good counsel of the College's governors – its Board of Management. No college has better! This document is also a good place to say thank you for the unremitting efforts of its staff, whether they be front-of-house, at the chalk-face, or who toil in the 'back-rooms' of the organisation.

Aberdeen College welcomes the interest of everyone in its services. As a provider of public services, paid for by tax-payers, it has a duty to inform them and to be accountable to them. The basis on which people who are not well-acquainted with the College can come to a view about it, must be objective information rather than fine words. To help you form your own view about the contribution Aberdeen College makes to the communities it serves, the College offers a range of factual publications of various kinds. They are free, so please do not hesitate to ask for them (contact details are on page 56 of this Review). They are also freely and easily-available from the College's website, [www.abcol.ac.uk](http://www.abcol.ac.uk)



Rae Angus  
Principal and Chief Executive



# student progress during the year

## (i) Trends in Enrolments

Aberdeen College is Scotland's largest college. During the year, the College recorded 163,467 Weighted Student Units of Measurement (WSUMs). Each year Aberdeen College, like others, is allocated a fixed level of funding in return for delivery of an agreed level of student activity. If a college delivers more activity it is not allocated additional core grant funding for it.

Total enrolments during the year exceeded 32,400 of which 5,382 were full-time students (2,130 were on higher education courses, while 3,252 were full-time further education enrolments).

The number of part-time enrolments in 2006-07 was 27,105. Measured by head-count (the number of different individuals attending) the College served 26,677 people.

## (ii) Student Achievement

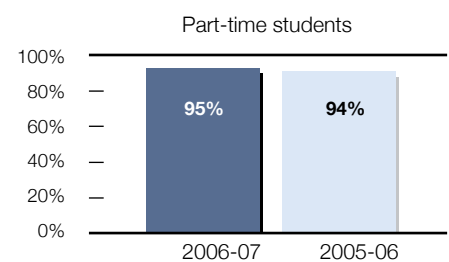
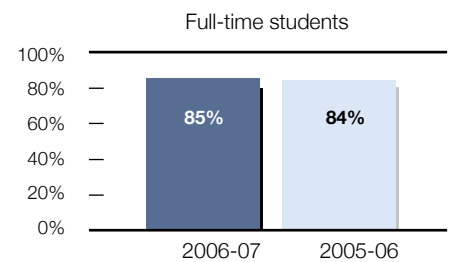
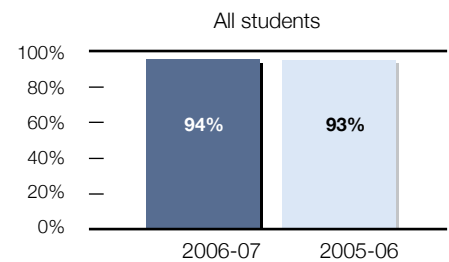
While student 'achievement' can be expressed in a number of ways, clearly the extent to which students 'pass' their courses is of importance in a college providing vocational education: one in which providing access to nationally-recognised vocational qualifications is a core function.

The majority of College courses are composed of 'units' that are assessed by the College and verified and certificated by awarding bodies. When a student achieves a predetermined number and type of units, a group award can be made. Examples of group awards offered are Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) and Higher National Certificates (HNC).

Aberdeen College charts two forms of student achievement using nationally-recognised measures. The first is the Student Programme Achievement Ratio (SPAR). This measures the number of students who are present after 25% of the course and who complete an entire programme of study successfully. The second is known as the Student Achievement Ratio by Unit (SARU). It is the 'pass' (or 'successful completion') rate in terms of individual units of study.

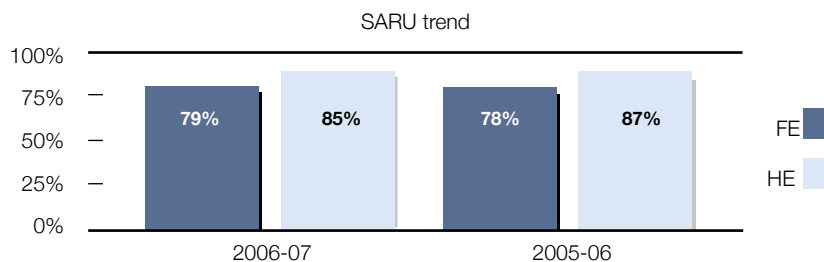
The difference between the two measures can be explained as follows: A student could complete 14 out of 15 units required to complete a programme of study. His/her successes would count towards the SARU. His/her failure to complete all mandatory units of the programme means that his/her achievements would not count for the purposes of the SPAR (his/her results would pull the course SPAR down, as all failures do in these circumstances). When a student undertakes a series of units which, taken together, do not form a recognised programme of study, his/her successes are not taken into account for the purposes of calculating a SPAR (because the measure is only applied to an established programme of study, not just any set of units).

## (a) Student Programme Achievement Ratio (SPAR)



## (b) Student Achievement Ratio by Unit (SARU)

The term 'further education' (FE) covers courses from the most basic to intermediate levels while 'higher education' (HE) is used to denote more advanced study at Higher National Certificate and Diploma and first degree levels, and postgraduate and professional study.



## (iii) Course Offerings

During the review period, a number of new full and part-time courses were introduced.

The full-time portfolio was extended to include: HNC Working with Communities; SVQ Barbering; HND Visual Communication; HNC Animal Nursing; HNC Measurement and Control and SVQ Business and Administration. A number of Advanced courses, across the curriculum, were also updated with new frameworks being introduced as part of SQAs HN Modernisation Programme. In addition, the College enrolled 65 young people on dedicated full-time Christmas Leavers courses for the first time. These focussed on Skills for Work qualifications in areas such as Hairdressing, Construction and Childcare.

Part-time provision was refreshed with the introduction of new courses, including: Hassle-free Holidays; a range of basic Beauty Therapy courses in the Community; Creative Writing; Professional Development for Teachers in Art and Design and Visual Communication, and HNC Management for the Fire and Rescue Service. Taster courses for pupils in third year of secondary school were increased significantly and Skills for Work courses in a variety of subject areas, at different levels, were offered to school pupils. Access level courses promoting employment opportunities for people with additional learning needs were introduced in three new areas during 2006-07, namely: SVQ Level 1 Horticulture; SVQ Level 1 Manufacturing Textiles and Introduction to Retail.



# governance and management

During the year, the Board of Management reviewed all relevant policies and procedures concerned with its activities and operations. It continued to review and assess its performance formally.

As in previous years, the Principal met regularly with large numbers of representatives of support and teaching teams in small open-agenda discussion groups throughout the year. He and other senior managers also met students regularly using similar forums but without staff present. The dialogue resulted in a number of changes to the service offered to students and employer clients. Discussion groups supplemented other formal and informal forums and avenues for consultation and negotiation.

Throughout the review period, the system of monthly core and team briefings for staff was further developed. The aim of the briefings was (and is) to ensure that all staff have ready and timely access to important information in a standard form. A communication survey was also undertaken among staff. It indicated a high level of familiarity with College Policies and Plans and satisfaction with the College's overall communication process.

## (i) Progression of the Accommodation Strategy

In April 2007, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) agreed to the College's plans to establish a 'dispersed College', with centres in Aberdeen City in the Gallowgate (a refurbished South Block only), Altens (with a new c£7 million building for construction training plus major refurbishment where required), Clinterty (refurbishment plus the conversion of the former hostel), Gordon Centre (with the exception of the new Sports Centre, it is intended to completely re-develop the site, including a new c£40 million building). The strategy also has provision for 'mini-campuses' in Ellon, Inverurie and Stonehaven in the first instance.

In 2007-08, the Board will appoint a professional firm to manage implementation of the strategy and to act as advisor to the Board and its Accommodation Committee, which will oversee developments. Tenders will be sought following the establishment of a contract specification.

The SFC has approved the first phase of development, which comprises the erection of the new building for construction training at Altens Centre and the mini-campuses in Aberdeenshire. These works are to be fully financed by the College (from the sale of assets and from reserves).

The fulfilment of the College's plans will be funded by a mixture of the proceeds of sales of assets; borrowings; College reserves and capital funding from the SFC.



# quality and excellence

## (i) Quality Systems

The College's commitment to maintaining and improving quality continued to be a major influence on the activities of managers, teaching staff and support staff throughout the review period. The College continued to implement a framework for quality management, based on Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) Quality Framework.

During the year, the College continued to meet the standards of:

- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE)
- Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)
- Charter Mark
- ISO 10002: 2004 Complaints Management.

## (ii) Awarding Body Requirements

The College also continued to meet the requirements of a wide range of other awarding bodies including:

- AAT - Association of Accounting Technicians
- ACCA - Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
- AMD - Automotive Management Development
- Associated Board of The Royal Schools of Music
- AQA - Assessment and Qualifications Alliance
- BCS - British Computer Society
- CIM - Chartered Institute of Marketing
- CIPD - Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
- CIPS - Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply
- City and Guilds
- EAL - EMTA Award Limited
- ECITB - Engineering Construction Industry Training Board
- EDEXCEL - University of London School Examinations Board
- Guildhall School of Music and Drama
- IAB - International Association of Book-keepers
- ICB - Institute of Certified Book-keepers
- Institute of Logistics
- IMI - Institute of the Motor Industry
- IQA - Institute of Quality Assurance
- LCCI - London Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- OCR - Oxford, Cambridge and The Royal Society of Arts Examination Board
- Rock Schools Ltd.
- SAMB - Scottish Association of Master Bakers
- Thames Valley University
- Trinity College London
- WSET - Wine and Spirit Education Trust

There were 88 external verification visits and external verification events carried out by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and other awarding bodies. In total, 426 College units/portfolios were verified and the College was found to comply with the requirements of the various awarding bodies in 100% of these.

### (iii) Internal Audit

An extensive internal quality audit programme as a means of quality improvement was also implemented during 2006-07, with trained auditors conducting audits across all teams in the College. The scope of teaching team audits was the quality of learning and teaching, and assessment material evidenced in Master Packs. The Quality Assurance Sub Committee carried out a fundamental review of Annual Review content for all support staff teams. The review resulted in new reporting pro formae being designed to help support teams reach the standard of evaluation evidenced in academic teams and Sectors. Thematic audits reviewed the arrangements in place to ensure racial equality in student induction, and work procedures. The complaints process was also subject to internal audit in accordance with the requirements of ISO 10002: 2004.

### (iv) Lesson Observation

The College's lesson observation programme has been in place for nine years and in the year under review, 173 lesson observations were carried out with permanent staff and a sample of 34 temporary lecturers engaged through Protocol National were also observed. The results of the lesson observations together with comparative information over a three-year period were as follows:

#### (a) Permanent Lecturers

Very Good			Good			Fair			Unsatisfactory		
2006-07	2005-06	2004-05	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05
39%	36%	21%	59%	62%	78%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%

In 2006-07, 15 staff were exempt from the lesson observation process as they had consistently received gradings of 'very good' in the previous three years. The level of 'very good' gradings for 2006-07 is, therefore, an underestimate of achievement as the 15 have not been included in the 'very good' grade percentage figure.

#### (b) Protocol National

Very Good			Good			Fair			Unsatisfactory		
2006-07	2005-06	2004-05	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05
12%	12%	14%	82%	88%	82%	6%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%

The lesson observation programme is regarded by the College as a powerful quality improvement tool and structured development plans to support staff who receive ratings of 'fair' or 'unsatisfactory' are implemented and monitored to ensure improvement.

### (v) Quality Improvement

#### (a) Good Practice

Aberdeen College, through SFC funding, has established arrangements with Stow College and Dumfries and Galloway College to share information and good practice and to benchmark practice against a range of key processes. In 2006-07, this included the development of citizenship performance indicators, student induction survey results, student satisfaction question lists and survey results, and self-evaluation processes. In addition, initial subject benchmarking meetings were held. College subject experts met with peers from our partner institutions to benchmark subject and programme data and to share good practice in discrete subject areas.

The College's intranet (AbNet) has also proved to be an excellent tool for sharing information and good practice. The output from good practice groups and examples of good practice identified through internal audit and lesson observation are housed on the intranet and also disseminated at staff development sessions. This enables the best learning and teaching methods and classroom management techniques to be shared and implemented across the College. Good practice networks continued to meet in formal session and the management of these groups was enhanced to enable further improvement to output in 2007-08 and beyond.

## **(b) Improving Learning and Teaching**

The College's two Quality Assurance Advisors (Teaching Practice) have been involved with a good practice benchmarking initiative with colleges in North-west England and plan to build relationships with other identified good practice providers throughout the UK. Good practice observed is used to enhance the lesson observation process and, as a result, the quality of learning and teaching.

Throughout the review period, meetings chaired by the College's Associate Principals were held with each teaching team to discuss national research findings on improving student retention and achievement. Strategies identified were integrated into teaching team development plans.

Staff development lunchtime sessions focussing on learning styles and differentiation within lesson planning were delivered by the Professional Development Tutors to 169 lecturers throughout 2006-07, and ideas generated were incorporated into teaching strategies.

The VLE was used to disseminate information on classroom management, student punctuality, differentiation and the 'wow factor' to teaching teams. Staff completing this short course received a College certificate which contributed to their annual CPD record. The Professional Development Tutors will continue to deliver this programme in 2007-08.

A programme of student focus groups was carried out by the College's five Senior Lecturers (Quality Improvement). Focus group sessions, at pre-planned times of the academic year, were carried out to ascertain and gauge student views about key matters, including induction and learning and teaching. This process has been reviewed and refined and, in 2007-08, the Quality Team will track groups where new initiatives such as 'paperless' classes and hybrid groups have been introduced. Student feedback will be monitored and improvement actions identified.

Members of the Senior Management Team and heads of teaching departments conducted open agenda discussion groups with students throughout the year. Opportunities for improving learning and teaching were identified during these sessions and the findings acted upon, for example, areas where classroom discipline and dealing with younger students were identified as problematic were addressed through staff development sessions for teaching staff.



# human resource management

## (i) Employee Relations

The College successfully negotiated above-inflation pay settlements for both teaching and support staff. In 2006-07 lecturers received a pay increase of 3.4%. Support staff received pay increases ranging from 5% to 6% with staff on lower salaries receiving the higher level of increase.

In 2006-07:

- There were four disciplinary cases, one of which resulted in a dismissal for gross misconduct
- There were no employment tribunal cases
- There was one grievance which was not upheld
- The contracts of three members of staff were terminated following unsatisfactory performance during probationary reviews
- One member of staff was supported using the College's Capability Policy
- There were no requests for workplace mediation.



## (ii) Staffing

In 2006-07, the College employed 679 permanent staff (513 FTE) of which 251 (193 FTE) were lecturers, 56 (40 FTE) were instructors and 372 (280 FTE) were support staff. The teaching staff complement reflected a ratio of 83% lecturers: 17% instructors. The College also engaged 200 (58 FTE) temporary lecturers through Protocol National. The permanent to temporary teaching staff ratio was 77% permanent: 23% temporary.

Sickness absence levels in 2006-07 remained low at an average of 6.22 days lost per employee compared with 8.03 days lost in 2005-06.

Turnover levels in the College in 2006-07 were: teaching staff 15.8% and support staff 16.6%. This compares with 13% for teaching and 16% for support staff in 2005-06. The buoyant local economy with 2% unemployment and the significantly higher salary levels in the oil and gas industry are major contributory factors in the higher turnover levels in support staff posts.

## (iii) Staff Welfare

The College provides a comprehensive occupational health service for its staff by means of a contract with Alpha Health Services. The Occupational Health Team provides advice to the College on:

- the effects which work can have on health
- the actions which the College, as an employer, can take to reduce the effects of work on health
- healthy living
- health promotion activities.

Human Resources staff work closely with the Occupational Health Team to address issues of sickness absence. The proactive approach taken to medical and nursing referrals, support and rehabilitation for staff returning from long-term sick leave and preventive health care measures, such as free annual 'flu vaccinations, have been instrumental in maintaining low sickness absence levels in the College.

The College has worked with Alpha Health Services to develop a wide range of services to its staff which are designed to promote good health. A significant development in 2006-07 was the introduction of a free and confidential counselling service for staff. This service is provided by a qualified counsellor. The table below provide details of key activities during 2006-07:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Staff Numbers Attending</b>
'Flu Vaccinations	200
Pre-employment Health Assessments	127
Well Person Clinics	109
Occupational Health Referrals	230
Counselling	16
Physiotherapy	5

Two Blood Transfusion Service Donor Sessions were held at the Gallowgate Centre with 210 donations collected.

Health promotion to both staff and students continued throughout 2006-07 with the holding of a Health Fair, and 27 awareness days on a wide variety of topics, including:

- healthy eating and fitness
- stress
- organ donation
- asthma
- cancer
- sexual health
- meningitis
- dental and oral health
- smoking and health related issues
- alcohol and substance misuse
- travel health and safety advice.

Information was also provided to staff through a new intranet section entitled 'Your Health and Safety', and through the circulation of four health and two first aider newsletters.

# developing staff

## (i) Professional Development

The College's Professional Development Strategy covers initial and post-initial teacher training as well as training for instructors and professional training for specified groups of staff such as guidance tutors. Two qualified professional development tutors work with lecturers, instructors, temporary lecturers and open and distance learning tutors, and support them to gain the professional qualifications required by the College.

Although there is no statutory or other requirement for people teaching in further education colleges to hold a professional teaching qualification, Aberdeen College is firmly committed to ensuring that it maintains an all-professionally qualified lecturing staff. The College's Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE) programme is delivered in partnership with the School of Education at the University of Aberdeen. Lecturers joining the College who do not hold a teaching qualification are required to undertake the TQFE within a given period of time established by the College.

In 2006-07, 20 lecturers joined the TQFE programme. Since the College established a partnership agreement with the former Northern College (now the School of Education at the University of Aberdeen) in 1999-2000 123 lecturers have been supported to obtain the TQFE.

By the end of 2006-07, 90% of the lecturers employed in the College either held a TQFE or equivalent teaching qualification. This figure reflected that a number of new lecturing staff joined the College during 2006-07. The 10% of lecturers who did not hold a recognised teaching qualification were either working towards one, or were not yet eligible to join the programme (after 1 year's teaching experience). In 2007-08, 21 lecturers will join the TQFE programme.

The College, in partnership with the University of Aberdeen, developed and implemented a post-initial formal training qualification called Beyond TQFE. This was and is the first educational establishment in Scotland to implement mandatory post-initial training for lecturers. The training is delivered over a six-month period and all teaching staff who obtained their initial teaching qualification over five years ago or who hold a teaching qualification other than TQFE are required to undertake this course. In 2006-07, eight lecturers completed the course bringing to 65 the number who have undertaken the course since it commenced in 2003.

The College is committed to ensuring that lecturers undertake continuing professional development in line with current good practice. Accordingly, in 2006-07 we commissioned and developed, in partnership with the University of Aberdeen, a replacement programme for Beyond TQFE. The new programme entitled 'Supporting the Successful Learner' will commence in January 2008.

The College's permanent teaching staff complement is supplemented as required by temporary lecturers provided by Protocol National (PN). Many of the PN associates who work in the College are qualified teachers. However, those who are not, are required to undertake the SQA Advanced Diploma in Teaching in FE – an Introduction, where appropriate. In 2006-07, 100% of PN associates held or were working towards a relevant teaching or assessment qualification.

A commitment to continuous professional development characterises the College's approach to the development of its staff. All lecturers and other professional staff are expected to update their skills and knowledge regularly. In 2005-06, the College piloted the use of a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Log with 50 staff. The purpose of this was to ensure that each member of staff kept an up to date record or log of the activities he/she had undertaken to maintain his/her knowledge, skills and competence. Continuing professional development covers more than formal training and can include any activity which has contributed to the development of knowledge, skills and competence. Use of the log was extended to all College staff in 2006-07 and an internal survey of its success showed that both staff and managers found it to be a valuable tool for the evaluation of staff development activity.

In 2006-07, Aberdeen College employed 56 instructors who supported the learning and teaching process. The College is committed to ensuring that instructors have the necessary skills to deliver high quality training. They are, therefore, required to undertake the City and Guilds 7302 Certificate in Delivering Learning (previously, instructors were required to obtain the SVQ Level 3 in Training and Development). By the end of 2006-07, all instructors held or were working towards either City and Guilds 7302 or relevant equivalent professional development awards.

During the review period, the College expanded its guidance function and as part of the development of a professional team of guidance tutors contracted with the University of Strathclyde for the provision of the Postgraduate Certificate in Adult Guidance. Twenty one staff enrolled on the programme in 2006-07, and these staff will complete the qualification in 2007-08.

## (ii) Staff Development

Each year the College runs an extensive Staff Development Programme covering a range of topics to ensure that priority training needs of staff are met. In 2006-07, 314 internal courses were delivered. Of these, 226 were delivered by in-house trainers and 88 were run by external trainers. Staff were also supported to attend a total of 231 external events.

During 2006-07, the College carried out a review of administrative staffing and established an Administrative Development Programme. Five students were recruited from introductory level courses in Office Administration and IT to undertake the two year programme. The students will be supported to gain an HNC on a part-time basis, with the remainder of their time spent working in various departments of the College providing cover for vacancies, absences and assisting at peak periods. Participants will be paid a competitive salary and after completing the programme will be appointed to permanent administrative posts at the College. It is anticipated that this initiative will benefit the College by reducing temporary staff and recruitment costs, increasing staff retention and providing suitably qualified and experienced administrative staff. Recruitment to the programme will be carried out on an annual basis ensuring that new talent joins the staff of the College each year.



### (iii) Key Staff Development Initiatives

Throughout 2006-07 these included:

- 3D Studio Max
- A1 (Assessment) Update
- Absence Management
- ASDAN INSET
- Assessing Fee Status for International Students
- Assessment Methodologies for SQA Descriptors
- Basic Sign Language
- BlackBoard as a Teaching Resource
- Celcat (timetabling system)
- Child Protection
- College Financial Environment
- Columbus Training
- Copyright Training
- Core Skills
- Core Skills Profiling
- Creating Animated PPT
- Creating Your Own Videos
- Developing Accessible Materials
- DHOC Training
- Diversity in an Inclusive College
- Disability Awareness
- Disability Discrimination Act
- Drugs Awareness
- European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL)
- Education Maintenance Allowance
- Effective Annual Review Writing
- Effective Supervision of Practical Classes
- Emotional Intelligence
- External Verification Training
- Fire Safety
- Fire Warden Briefing
- Flash Training
- Focus Groups Facilitation Skills
- General and Specific Duties on Gender, Race and Disability
- HMle Quality Framework
- HMle Analysing Performance Indicators
- HMle Evaluative Writing Skills
- HMle Smart Objectives
- Induction Review
- Infection Control
- Internal Auditor Refresher Training
- Internal Verifier Training
- Intro to Adobe Photoshop
- Introduction to Gender Impact
- Introduction to the Human Rights Act
- Learning Behaviour Under 18s
- Learning Process Under 16s
- Learning Process Under 16s – e-Learning Context
- Lesson Observation Training
- Introduction to Enabling and Assistive Technologies

- IOSH Managing Safely
- Learning Styles
- Lesson Planning
- Managing Discipline and Grievances
- Managing Disruptive Behaviour
- Manual Handling Techniques
- Material Processors
- Meeting the Customers' Needs
- New to FE
- Online Attendance Training
- Performance Management
- Personal Safety
- Podcasting Training
- Preparing for Next Session BB
- Presenting a Professional Image
- QM Perception Training
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2001
- Recognising and Tackling Harassment at Work
- Recruitment and Selection
- Risk Assessor Training
- School Event and Talks
- Scotland's Mental Health First Aid
- Servicing Learn Opportunities Students
- Sex and Race Discrimination
- SOLAR Training
- Starboard Training
- Stress Management
- Stress Policy Training
- Student Benefit Workshop
- Supporting the Learning Process for Under 16s
- Supporting the Learning Process Within an e-Learning Context
- Teaching Approaches
- Teaching Students on Learning Opportunities Courses
- TQFE
- Using BB Assignment Tools
- Using BB to Create Assessments
- Using BB to Enhance Teaching
- Using BB to Facilitate Team Info
- Using Course Genie
- Using GOLLA
- Using the Inquizitor Software
- Using the Interactive Whiteboard
- Video Production
- VLE Modules
- VLE - ECD and CCC
- VLE - ESOL Team
- VLE Drop-in Sessions
- VLE Training Workshop
- What's New in Blackboard
- Wheelchair Operation Training

### **Lunch and Learn Sessions**

During 2006-07, the College's Professional Development Tutors delivered 'Lunch and Learn' sessions for teaching staff and instructors. These information sessions provided an opportunity to discuss approaches to classroom management, differentiation, student punctuality, the 'wow factor', learning styles and lesson planning via the VLE.

### **The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)**

The College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) was introduced in 2004-05 and a structured programme of staff development covering five modules was implemented for all lecturers. By the end of 2006-07:

- 98% had completed the induction module
- 95% had completed effective design
- 96% had completed creating course content
- 90% had completed assessment and communication
- 91% had completed course support tools
- 90% had completed all five modules.

Arrangements are in place for all lecturing staff to complete the VLE training as part of their induction during the first four weeks of employment. The College, as an approved credit rating centre, intends to credit rate VLE training to ensure that staff who undertake VLE development are formally credited for their achievements.

### **Child Protection**

In 2005-06, the College appointed a Child Protection and Schools Liaison Co-ordinator. Since then policies and procedures have been developed to ensure that the College not only meets its statutory duties but demonstrates good practice in dealing with child protection issues. Central to this has been an extensive training programme which has been implemented for College staff and for the staff of contractors who work regularly in the College. At the end of 2006-07, training had been undertaken for the majority of College staff and for a significant number of contractors' staff as follows:

- 90% of Lecturers
- 81% of Instructors
- 87% of Support staff
- 90% of Protocol National associates
- 40% of other contractors.



### **Drugs Awareness**

A major staff development programme on drugs awareness training has been provided for teaching staff since 2005-06 to highlight the dangers of drug abuse and the College's zero tolerance approach. By the end of 2006-07, a total of 186 staff attended. Similar training was provided to groups of students. It is intended that this training will be repeated for students in 2007-08.

### **Leadership and Management Development**

Over the past three years, the College has invested significant resources in developing its managers. A bespoke leadership programme for all senior, middle and first line managers was provided between 2004 and 2006 and a total of 86 staff with management responsibilities attended. The programme was designed to support and promote a coaching model of leadership for the College. As a follow-up to this programme a competence model for Curriculum Managers has been developed.

The College also worked with Banff and Buchan College to deliver the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) Certificate at Level 2 and Level 3. Seven support staff supervisors gained the Level 2 certificate and 16 support staff managers and Curriculum Managers gained the Level 3 certificate. The Principal participated in the Leadership Development Programme for Scottish FE Principals and spoke at leadership events in Scotland and England.

During the review period the College continued to promote leadership development and managers participated in the following activities:

### **SFEU – SCoPE Programme**

The SCoPE programme has been designed for senior managers in Scotland's FE colleges to help them to develop the necessary skills to enhance their performance in a changing FE environment. The Programme's main key objectives are:

- To reinforce understanding of, and commitment to, the vision for Scotland's colleges in delivering excellence for learners, customers and staff
- To help participants identify, directly influence and lead change within the context of current strategic and organisational changes
- To enhance participants' understanding of and commitment to their role as a leader, including managing the impact of change
- To enable participants to produce and commit to a clear, measurable action plan in relation to learners, staff and customers.

By the end of 2006-07, five managers had undertaken the programme.

### **SFEU – Leadership Development Programme**

The programme is aimed at enabling senior managers to function effectively as college leaders, as senior team members, and as functional specialists, and provides a platform for future college leadership roles. Two members of the College's senior management are undertaking the programme.

### **Centre for Excellence in Leadership – Routes to Success**

The programme is designed for experienced staff currently in middle management, academic and support roles across the further education system who aspire to, and have the potential to reach senior management level within two to five years. The programme provides tailored learning and personal development tools to accelerate participants' development. Currently, one member of staff is undertaking the programme.

# equal opportunities

## Equal Opportunities Committee

The College's Equal Opportunities Committee met four times during 2006-07 and discussed monitoring information on recruitment and selection of staff and recruitment, retention and achievement of students, by gender, racial group and disability. The Committee also discussed:

- Dyslexia in speakers of other languages
- Gender mainstreaming
- Annual International Day
- Plasma screen presentations
- Redress the Balance project
- Employment Equality Age Regulations 2006
- Equalities impact assessment
- Investors in People Recruitment and Selection Standard
- New and revised policies and procedures.



## Policies and Procedures

Changes in legislation led to the introduction of new policies and in 2006-07 the College developed and implemented:

- Disability Equality Scheme
- Gender Equality Policy
- Equal Pay Policy.

The Equal Opportunities Policy was extensively revised and published as the Equality and Diversity Policy.

## Communication

A new Equal Opportunities web page was developed and policies, procedures, notes of Equal Opportunities Committee meetings and other information relating to equality issues in the College are now available on the College's intranet.

The plasma information screens in each College centre have proved to be an effective means of communication and raising awareness of important equality and human rights issues. New presentations on Australia Day, Chinese New Year, Independence Day, Bastille Day, Genocide in Rwanda and Homophobia were all added to the extensive collection of presentations which are shown in the College throughout the year.

## Staff Development

Staff development sessions on equality and diversity were reviewed to ensure currency and an extensive programme of training was delivered throughout the year. This included:

- Handling Equality and Diversity
- Disability Discrimination Legislation
- Equalities Mainstreaming.

Staff development programmes on equalities were made available on the VLE. In order to ensure the training is both meaningful and impacts on the learner experience, staff who undertake the training are asked to prepare three personal action points to promote equality. These are then included in their performance management objectives.

## Impact Assessment

All College policies were reviewed and their impact on race, gender and disability assessed. A new section on equality and diversity was added to all subject reviews. Data on enrolment, retention and achievement was also assessed on the basis of race, gender and disability and actions for improvement identified.

## Job Evaluation

As a follow-up to the equal pay audit which was conducted in 2005-06, the College commissioned an external pay consultant to carry out a job evaluation exercise. The exercise covered all management and supervisory posts to ensure no gender bias and will be complemented by a further equal pay audit in 2007-08.

# freedom of information

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 came into effect on 1 January, 2005. The Act aims to create a greater culture of openness and accountability in Scottish public life by creating a right of access to the information held by public authorities.

During the review period, the College published and updated its publication scheme in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

The College received seven Freedom of Information requests in 2006-07. All requests were responded to timeously and within the statutory timescale of 20 working days. No fees were charged for any responses.

The College continued to train staff on the requirements of the Act throughout 2006-07. This training will be made available online to all existing and new staff through the VLE in 2007-08.



# child protection, vulnerable adults and looked after children

In 2006-07, the College reviewed its policies on Disclosure, Child Protection and Protection of Vulnerable Adults. A policy on Looked After Children was drafted and will be submitted for approval to the Board of Management in early 2007-08.

The College's Child Protection training course was made available on the VLE and by the end of 2006-07, 90% of staff had undertaken this mandatory training.

All staff and contractors who work in the College regularly are subject to an enhanced Disclosure check and this is repeated at three yearly intervals. In 2006-07, the main contractors to the College – Protocol National, Sodexo, Pegasus and Mitie all confirmed that the necessary checks of their staff had been undertaken.

The College has established an arrangement with Grampian Police for the sharing of information on students who are likely to pose a risk to the safety and well being of vulnerable students and students aged under 16 years of age.

Arrangements have also been established with the local Social Work Departments and residential schools to identify vulnerable school leavers who may require additional support to assist them to make a successful transition from school to College.

During 2006-07, 17 child protection referrals were made to the Child Protection and Schools Liaison Co-ordinator.

# safety and health

Aberdeen College is committed to ensuring and promoting the safety and health of students, employees, visitors, and members of the public who use its facilities.

## Proactive Safety

In 2006-07, the College's Safety and Health Team carried out eight safety inspections which included inspections of all teaching centres – Gallowgate, Altens, Gordon and Clinterty. Observations and recommendations were submitted to the relevant managers for implementation and these were monitored in follow-up visits.

## Training and Development

A high priority was given to safety and health training and a number of courses are mandatory for specific groups of staff. Fifteen courses were delivered by traditional methods covering:

- Manual Handling Awareness
- Effective Supervision of Practical Classes
- Fire Warden Training
- Work Placement Briefing
- Designated Head of Centre (DHOC).

The VLE was also utilised to deliver training and proved to be a particularly effective way of delivering short courses to a wide range of staff many of whom work part-time and in community outreach centres throughout Aberdeenshire. Fire Safety and Display Screen Equipment training with accompanying assessments were delivered by this means. The VLE was also used effectively to promote road safety to students through programmes produced by organisations such as BRAKE, the UK Road Safety Charity. Two programmes 'Safe Driving' and 'Too Young to Die' were delivered by this means in 2006-07. The VLE will continue to be used as a training delivery method in 2007-08.

An innovative Occupational Road Risk Assessment and training programme was also provided for all staff who are required to drive as part of their role at the College.

## Risk Assessment

Over the past year an increasing number of school pupils, aged between 13 and 16 attended the College as part of the extended school curriculum. To ensure appropriate safety measures were in place and took account of these younger students a detailed review of all risk assessments was undertaken and suitable controls were implemented.

College Safety and Health staff visited 115 student placement providers in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire to ensure they provided a safe environment for students working on placement.

## Accidents

The College investigates all accidents and encourages staff and students to report accidents no matter how minor. The aim is to raise awareness of safety issues and promote safe working practices. The College has achieved annual reductions in accidents, including instances which must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive.

Academic Year	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05
<b>Total Number of Accidents</b>	67 (including 3 reportable accidents)	102 (including 5 reportable accidents)	99 (including 4 reportable accidents)
Students	53	80	80
Staff	6	15	17
Public	1	2	0
Clients	0	0	0
Contractors	5	3	2
School Pupils	2	2	0

# learning and teaching

## (i) Learning and Teaching Strategy

Aberdeen College recognises the primary importance of learning and teaching as the central aspect of its function and mission. This recognition has been central to the College's approach over many years, but in order to clarify its position the College has adopted a Learning and Teaching Strategy. This is intended to provide a shared understanding among managers and teaching staff as to the key features of good practice with regard to teaching and supporting learning. The Strategy also provides the basis for co-ordinating and directing staff development activities. In the Strategy the College has not tried to impose a single methodology, or range of methodologies for teaching, rather the College has identified the following as the key underpinning features of effective learning and teaching which should be present in all of its programmes:

- Flexibility and adaptability
- Variety of medium and activity
- Active involvement of students
- Interactivity between students
- Opportunity for students to proceed at their own pace
- Study support where required
- A systematic approach
- Reinforcement of key concepts
- Appropriate technical resources
- Respect amongst students and between students and staff
- Access and inclusion
- Encouragement of independence and self-reflection
- An appropriate role for assessment.

The College has developed a comprehensive, sophisticated and integrated range of arrangements to promote effective teaching. These include:

- Initial Teacher Training for all permanent staff
- Refresher courses for staff whose initial qualification was achieved some years ago
- Classroom Observation that identifies and commends good practice and identifies any individuals in need of additional training or support in any aspect of their work
- Continuing Professional Development opportunities for all staff, and bespoke training for those staff with a need for additional support
- A team of Senior Lecturers promoted for their identified excellence and their ability to promote good practice, advise and motivate other staff
- A range of Good Practice Groups at different levels in the organisation to ensure that 'good ideas' and new developments are adopted wherever applicable.

During the year these arrangements were fully implemented.

## (ii) Virtual Learning Environment

The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is one key aspect of the College's approach to the delivery of the curriculum. It is a powerful tool that has the potential to enrich the learning experience and increase its accessibility in a wide range of ways. Nevertheless the approach that the College has adopted has ensured that the VLE is an integral part of an overall teaching and learning experience rather than either a 'bolt on' auxiliary aid or a single approach that replaces all aspects of existing good practice. Feedback from students has indicated that the College's approach has been effective.

With the use of a range of new technologies – digital projectors, interactive whiteboards, wireless enabled laptops, 'smart top desks' – the College has been able to embed the VLE at the heart of the learning experience. In 2006-07, 350 full-time students were issued with wireless enabled laptops on loan for the duration of their course. These enabled the College to operate their classes on a 'paperless' basis – with course materials being supplied electronically and assessments submitted electronically. This approach will be further developed in 2007-08 when some 1,000 students will be issued with laptops in this way. Of these some will be piloting a new 'hybrid' approach to the delivery of full-time courses with the amount of classroom teaching much reduced and instead supplemented by self-study using VLE-based materials.



### **(iii) Soft Skills**

During 2006-07, the College further refined its approaches to the development of Soft Skills.

To ensure clarity of focus in relation to Soft Skills, the College developed its own definition of each cluster of skills – citizenship, employability and environmental sustainability – and identified key understandings and attitudes that are essential underpinning competencies for students in all areas of study. A member of staff was assigned responsibility for leading developments in relation to each of the Soft Skills. In line with the definitions, a knowledge bank of information was collected, and an audit was undertaken in each curriculum area to identify existing good practice in developing Soft Skills and areas for improvement.

A set of learning materials was collated covering each of the Soft Skills along with a suite of generic psychology materials. These materials were made available for use in programmes as relevant and were incorporated into the guidance programme. The College InfoPoints containing links to information relevant to the Soft Skills were updated and presentations on various topics e.g. politics, recycling, human rights, world cultures, were regularly featured on plasma screens in public areas of the College. Equally importantly, the College continued to involve students in the management of their course and the College to encourage the development of attitudes and skills that underpin active citizenship and successful employment.

When undertaking reviews of progress with students, guidance staff discussed issues relating to Core Skills and Soft Skills alongside issues relating to the vocational content of programmes. Student's individual progress in terms of Core and Soft Skills will continue to be monitored throughout 2007-08.

# widening access, progression and increasing participation

## (i) Support Services for Students

In striving to promote wider access and increased participation, and to ensure effective progression, the College recognises the diversity of its many potential client groups. The College is committed to maintaining a clear focus on the needs of customers and to providing effective customer care through a range of ancillary and support services, which support its quality-assured courses. These services are concerned with ensuring students are helped to identify the best programmes for their needs, are assisted with the financial issues relating to college study and are provided with study and personal support while they are at College.

### (a) Pre-entry Guidance

Where clients would like support in choosing a course of study, or in understanding the financial and personal implications of studying at College, they can take advantage of a range of services provided by Learner Services. Students wishing to discuss their study options before applying can request a freely-available appointment with an experienced member of the Student Adviser Team or a member of academic staff.

Guidance staff can also provide information about support for childcare needs, the availability of accommodation in the local area and the type of support that may be available from the College hardship and childcare funds.

Applicants who have been identified as having additional support needs are invited for an Assessment of Needs meeting with staff from the Student Development and Access Centre who will, where appropriate, arrange suitable support. A Personal Learning and Support Plan is completed for each individual with details of the support to be put in place.

The College updated its Progression Guide, which summarises the entry points and progression routes. In order to provide maximum guidance to clients, an extended version of this has developed which indicated the progression into specific courses offered by partner universities, often allowing students completing College programmes to enter Year 2 or Year 3 of the university course.

The College has continued to work closely with local schools both to provide brief 'taster' sessions in College in different vocational areas and to contribute to in-school careers events. Additionally, Guidance Tutors and Student Advisers play a significant role in relaying information regarding study options and support services at a variety of community based events such as job fairs, career seminars, and at College Open Days.

### (b) Bursaries and Other Sources of Finance

The College administers a substantial fund of about £4 million a year to provide bursary support to full-time and part-time students on further education courses. The fund is administered by a dedicated Student Funding Team on the basis of national guidance supplemented by the College's own policies and procedures. The College has also developed arrangements for the Educational Maintenance Allowances which in 2006-07 was extended to include all 16, 17 and 18 year olds.

The College administers substantial hardship funds – the HE Hardship Fund and the HE Childcare Fund - provided by the Student Awards Agency for Scotland, and the FE Hardship Fund and FE Childcare Fund, provided by the Scottish Funding Council. The total value of the funds in 2006-07 was in excess of £1 million. As in previous years, the College has set in place arrangements to assess needs so that the funds have been applied to provide maximum impact on student retention and achievement.

### **(c) Guidance and Counselling**

A revised guidance model was introduced in 2006-07 which saw the creation of a dedicated team of Guidance Tutors to oversee general academic guidance across the College. The provision of academic guidance was removed from the role of a lecturer. The roles of the Student Advisers were also reviewed.

As a result of these changes, the College further strengthened its commitment to supporting students throughout their studies, putting in place a range of complementary support arrangements so that whatever the need – financial, academic or personal – individuals could access professional services to assist them to get the most from their time at College. This included a learner counselling service and timetabled tutorial support.

Electronic Individual Learning Plans continued to provide the focus for the monitoring of the progress of individual students and remained a key prompt for regular discussions between student and guidance tutor.

The induction procedure was revised. Students diaries were again distributed to students and were also made accessible online. A new Learner Services Blackboard site was created, covering all aspects of guidance and support for students across all modes of delivery.

### **(d) Careers Services**

The College continued to provide a Careers Service staffed with College Careers Advisers and Advisers from Careers Scotland. Online support to students seeking entrance through UCAS to university was developed further. Closer collaboration between Aberdeen College and local universities resulted in an increase in the range of support activities offered, and the development of curricula that ease student progression and increase learning opportunities.



### **(e) Other Services for Students**

The Occupational Health Team, contracted from Alpha Health Services, provide information and support on health matters to students. Each year several health promotion activities for students are held at each of the College's main centres.

The College is particularly fortunate in having a team of chaplains who offer support of a personal and spiritual kind to staff and students. The chaplains also continued to monitor the effectiveness of the College's complaints procedures by vetting the way in which the College responds to formal complaints made by students during the year. In 2006-07, all complaints were satisfactorily resolved.

## (f) Supporting Students with Additional Learning Requirements

The numbers of students with a range of additional learning needs attending College has increased over the years and, in 2006-07, numbered over 2,000. Information on reasonable adjustments the College makes continued to be shared among staff and examples of good practice were included in regular reports by Sector and Departmental Managers.

### **Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), Special Educational Needs Disability Act (SENDA), Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act**

The College has been proactive in addressing issues relating to disability and additional learning needs. Developments have included a programme of physical works to improve access, revisions to the curriculum to make it accessible, training for staff, and the maintenance of a Disability Forum.

#### **Access and Support**

The College recognises the need to provide a broad curriculum that caters for the needs of all people. The College has a 'No Barriers to Entry' admissions policy that puts the onus on the person to choose, where, and what level, of the course to study, rather than placing entry qualifications in his/her way. This approach is complemented by effective guidance arrangements to help people make informed and realistic choices about their learning. The College also recognises that it cannot hope to meet the needs of everyone per se, or everyone irrespective of their intellectual ability. To clarify and communicate effectively its position, the College established and publicised its general access statement, which identifies the main criteria required of an individual to be admitted to the College.

#### **Student Development Centre**

The College's Student Development Centre, maintained its service providing additional support for students experiencing difficulty in completing their studies. The service was provided on all College sites and in community locations. Support offered included the provision of a communicator, and one to one sessions with assessors/tutors in Communication, Numeracy and Information Technology. The total number of students supported with their course work in one form or another across the College in 2006-07 was 2,398.

Throughout the review period, the Centre also managed special or alternative exam/assessment arrangements and the provision of various types of in-class support for students with additional needs, including auxiliaries to assist in learning or to provide personal care.

#### **'Link' Staff Scheme**

The College continued to operate a 'Link' staff scheme, where College employees are trained to act as deaf communicators. Like first aid staff they may be called upon at short notice to assist in situations where visitors, students, prospective students or staff who are hearing impaired may require assistance.



## **(ii) Flexible, Open and e-Learning**

Recognising that not all students can take part in timetabled courses, even if provided in community locations, the College has continued to expand the range of flexible provision it has available.

The College's IT Centre has continued to offer its wide range of drop in courses. In addition to non-certificated computer-based, instructor-assisted learning packages for IT skills, the IT Centre now offers a range of business and professional development courses. The range of flexible access courses leading to nationally-recognised qualifications from a variety of awarding bodies also continues to expand.

The College's comprehensive Open and e-Learning services provide the convenience of computer-based learning delivered to the client's own home, workplace or other location. A key innovation in 2006-07 was the introduction of the popular Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) course, a blended learning course aimed at supporting non-native English speakers. Other new additions to the course portfolio included:

- Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) at both core and expert levels
- IC3 (Internet and Computing Core Certification)
- Advanced Psychology
- A range of new HN Units with a focus on IT and Administration.

All e-Learning courses and around 50% of Open Learning courses use the College VLE as a means of learning delivery.

During 2006-07, the range of exams offered by the Assessment Centre – European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) , ECDL Advanced, IC3 (Internet and Computing Core), MOS – was increased to include:

- City & Guilds
- e-Type
- Equalskills
- TOEIC.

In 2006-07, the capacity of the Assessment Centre was doubled. A separate Assessment Centre to meet the specification for City & Guilds online testing for full-time students was also established, and from 2007-08, this Centre will also be used for the testing of Core Skills. These changes form part of the College's ongoing commitment to the development of e-assessment.

## **(iii) Adult Literacy and Numeracy**

The College has contributed to the Scottish Government's aims to improve adult literacy and numeracy by being active in both the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Literacies Partnerships. The very successful Course in Applied Vocational Study Skills (CAVSS) project was extended to a wide range of vocational areas across the curriculum. The project is one in which literacy and numeracy support to students is provided within the context of their vocational practical classes.

In addition, the Core Skills Development in the Community Project, operated by the Community and Lifelong Learning Team, continued to provide literacy and numeracy support for community based learners.

## (iv) Collaboration

### (a) Young and Homeless

#### **Aberdeen Foyer**

Working in partnership with Aberdeen Foyer, the College continued to operate The Prince's Trust and Lifeshaper Programmes in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire during 2006-07. Recognising the need for these programmes in other areas, new programmes were established in Banff.

#### **Aberdeen Cyrenians**

The College has links with Aberdeen Cyrenians and continues to identify opportunities for collaborative working in ways which help homeless people either directly, or indirectly through contributing to the continuous professional development of Cyrenians' staff.

### (b) Students with Extended Learning Support Needs

The Community and Lifelong Learning Team continued to extend its range of courses developed for students with extended learning support needs and/or disabilities. The courses were delivered in partnership with specialist agencies.

### (c) Partners

#### **Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils**

##### **Community Planning**

During 2006-07, the College maintained its Community Learning and Development Partnerships with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils. The College is involved in the implementation of both local authority's Community Learning and Development Strategies, and arrangements are in place for a single point of contact between the authorities and the College.

The College is also an active partner in both the Aberdeenshire Lifelong Learning Theme Forum and the Aberdeen City initiative *Aberdeen futures*, and was represented on the following forums:

- Lifelong Learning Challenge Forum
- Arts, Heritage and Sport Challenge Forum
- Community Engagement Forum
- Environmental Forum.

During 2006-07, the Scottish Executive published 'More Choices, More Chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Number of Young People Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEET) in Scotland'. As set out by the Strategy, the College worked closely with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils and other partners to collectively plan and develop the service infrastructure required to meet the needs of the NEET group and those in risk of becoming NEET.

#### **Links with Universities**

The College continued to develop links with universities, to ensure maximum recognition of the attainment of students at College when they progress to Higher Education Institutions. In many cases, students who completed an HND at Aberdeen College were able to join the third year of a related university programme (people with an HNC were able to join the second year).

##### **The Robert Gordon University**

The Degree Link Programme, which operates in partnership with The Robert Gordon University, continues to offer guaranteed access to Year 3 of 29 degrees, following successful completion of one of the College's 19 related Higher National Diplomas. This means that 78% of the College's HND portfolio has direct access to Year 3 of a related degree at The Robert Gordon University, where 55% of the University's degrees are eligible for this access. In September 2006, Aberdeen College students accounted for 20% of the total intake to undergraduate degrees at The Robert Gordon University. The range of Degree Link opportunities continues to grow and to be updated regularly as a direct result of the commitment of both organisations to strengthen further this highly successful partnership.

## University of Aberdeen

During 2006-07, a Partnership Board was established to manage and develop the articulation agreement with the University of Aberdeen. Within this agreement seven Higher National Diploma programmes at the College provided progression opportunities to Year 3 of 34 degree programmes across a range of disciplines. The agreement also made provision for students to become Associate Students of the University and thereby enjoy access the University's facilities.

### Links with Local Schools

The College is committed to working with local education authorities and individual schools to improve the opportunities available to pupils in the upper years of secondary education. In practical terms, courses at Intermediate 2 and Higher level have been offered where schools have been unable to provide them on their own account. Examples include courses in psychology and sociology.

The College has also continued to offer vocational education opportunities for pupils in school years S3 to S5, such as courses in hairdressing, engineering, construction, sport and recreation and early years care. Classes in the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) have also been provided to pupils in S5 and Information Technology Core Skill to S4.

In 2006-07, the College successfully concluded pilots of the new Skills for Work programmes with Northfield Academy, Cults Academy and Portlethen Academy in the subjects of construction, engineering, sport and recreation at Access 3 and Intermediate 1. Experience gained from the pilots has been used to plan for an expansion in the number and range of programmes to be offered in 2007-08, including full-time Christmas Leavers programmes in construction, automotive engineering, hairdressing, and early year's childcare. In line with the planned expansion, a construction workshop and hairdressing salon were established at the College's Clinterty Centre.

### Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Libraries

The College's Community and Lifelong Learning Department continued to work in partnership with both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Library Services. It offers a range of computer courses using instructor-led and computer-based approaches from introductory IT units to certificated SQA units and the ECDL. During 2006-07, 87 Aberdeen College courses operated in libraries throughout Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, with a marked increase in participation rates (+22%) in courses based in Aberdeenshire Libraries. This has enabled more people in remote locations to access College courses through the Virtual Learning Environment.

### North Forum for Widening Participation in Further and Higher Education

The College is a member of the Executive of the Forum and has taken part in the full range of activities of the Forum. The College's representative on the Executive held the role of Chair during 2006-07, and will continue in this role during 2007-08. The Forum manages a number of projects designed to promote participation in post-school education and training by disadvantaged or excluded groups, and includes all further and higher education institutions north of Perth, as well as other stakeholders such as local authorities and Careers Scotland.

### European Projects

The European Projects Coordinator and the Quality Audit Coordinator participated as the sole UK partners in a Europe wide project on the subject of peer review. The project explored the use of peer review as an instrument of quality assurance and quality development in vocational education and training. This was a 3 year long project coordinated by an Austrian research Institute within which the College was responsible for developing an on-line training course for peer reviewers and for ensuring that gender mainstreaming principles were incorporated in the work packages of the peer review manual.

MEP sponsorship enabled a party of staff and students from Travel and Tourism and Legal Studies to visit the European Parliament, the European Court of Human Rights, the Council of Europe and Universities in France and Germany in March 2007.

Legal Studies students were hosted by MSPs during visits to the Scottish Parliament in May 2007. Students also visited the High Court and the Court of Sessions in Edinburgh.

European funding was secured for a Comenius Language Assistant from the Czech Republic who, in 2007-08, will provide classes in Czech language and culture to front line staff, and French and Italian lessons to students.

# serving local communities

## **(i) Lifelong Learning and Community Planning**

The College is a member of Community Learning and Development Partnerships in both Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City and is represented by an Associate Principal on each Local Authority's Lifelong Learning Forum. The work of the College makes a significant contribution to the Scottish Government's key national priorities for Community Learning and Development, through the provision of community-based education and training for adults and young people.

In addition to the two local authorities, the College continued to strengthen links with its many partners throughout 2006-07, including Aberdeen Foyer, Aberdeen Cyrenians, Careers Scotland, Communities Scotland, Aberdeen City Libraries, The International Centre, Grampian Racial Equality Council (GREC), Multi-Ethnic Aberdeen Limited (MeAL) and AspireNorth.

During 2006-07, the Community and Lifelong Learning Team continued to enhance its services to clients, particularly in relation to the opportunities provided by the integration of Core Skills into a range of community-based College Certificate and SQA programmes. The Community and Lifelong Learning Team also established SCQF credit ratings for a range of College Certificate programmes in order to promote progression to further study or to employment. These approaches have enabled more local people to gain nationally recognised qualifications leading to enhanced employment opportunities. In addition to delivering community-based programmes as part of the successful Community Learning and Development Partnerships, the College delivered programmes in the community independently and with other partners, in response to the identified needs of local people.

## **(ii) Improving the Local Skills Base**

### **(a) The College Company (ASET)**

During the period covered by this review Aberdeen Skills and Enterprise Training Limited (ASET) was very successful in terms of business activity and delivered the most profitable year in the company's history.

The high price of oil helped to maintain satisfactory levels of activity in the UK and overseas. The company positioned itself well to capitalise on market conditions and won some significant training contracts overseas.

ASET continued to develop new technician training courses, and these were well received by the oil industry.

### **(b) Work Based Learning**

#### **Business Development Unit**

The Business Development Unit (BDU) continued to deliver training and assessment in the workplace using vocational qualifications and certificated programmes. Programmes were delivered mainly in the north-east of Scotland in partnerships with local and national employers and private providers. Most vocational qualifications were in the subject areas of management, construction and care – key areas of skills shortage in Scotland. In addition assessor and verifier awards were delivered along with an extensive programme of short certificated programmes in health and safety related topics such as first aid and object handling. In 2006-07, the College maintained its Skillseeker and Modern Apprentice Agency and was subject to successful audit by Scottish Enterprise Grampian.

#### **Ethos Associates**

The College's partnership with Ethos Associates, a provider of work-based and open-learning materials, continued to expand in response to strong demand from employers and employees. The key areas of provision were care, food hygiene, safety, customer care, supervisory management and drugs awareness.

Many of the client groups to benefit from these initiatives were people in low paid employment who generally had no or few formal qualifications and limited access to training and education.

## Multimedia Centre

The College's Multimedia Centre (MMC) continued to expand the range and diversity of its full and part-time provision. The newly introduced HNC Sound Production course was well received with enrolments reaching maximum capacity. Part-time courses in both radio and TV were also highly successful with the new part-time Scriptwriting course encouraging some students to articulate onto the full-time programme. The Evening Film School, targeted at amateur film makers, continued to attract many participants.

The technical facilities in the MMC were further improved in 2006-07. Both the recording studio and television edit suite were refurbished and upgraded to incorporate the latest industry standard technologies, reflecting the College's commitment to maintaining the MMC as a 'Centre of Excellence'.



At the end of 2006-07, the MMC learned that it was being awarded Media Academy status by Skillset – the Sector Skills Council for Audio Visual Industries. The award recognises excellence in the learning and teaching facilities of the MMC, the qualifications offered and the high standard of teaching staff. The MMC was officially awarded Media Academy status in December 2007 as part of the Skillset Creative Loop, a partnership of 6 Scottish colleges.

The Belmont Cinema Aberdeen continued to offer MMC students the 'Showcase' facility as a twice yearly event for students and the wider community. The high standard of achievement of the Centre's students was recognised with the presentation of several awards (examples are featured in the student awards section of this publication).

MMC students continued to be involved in the wider community by producing short videos for Grampian Fire and Rescue Service, Grampian Police and Children 1st and were involved in the BBC radio coverage of the Scottish Elections in May 2007.



## English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Provision

The Scottish Executive's ESOL Strategy was announced in March 2007 to address the pressure on colleges resulting from the enlargement of the European Union.

A new ESOL programme aimed at migrant workers from Eastern Europe was introduced at the College in 2006-07. The incorporation of new SQA ESOL units into the curriculum has increased progression through the different levels of English offered by the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Courses to increase employment opportunities for ESOL learners in areas of local

skills shortage were introduced, such as 'English for Hospitality', 'English for Care Work' and 'English for Engineering and Science'.

Flexible learning opportunities were increased through the introduction of TOEIC, a Business English qualification, offered through the VLE, IT Centre and Open Learning. In addition, software for individual language skills development is available in the IT Centre. Support for students on vocational courses whose first language is not English is also available from the Student Development and Access Centre.

In response to demand for ESOL in the Community, a new full-time course has been developed for community-based delivery during 2007-08.

# information services

## (i) Web Services

AbNet, the College's intranet, continued to be a key source of information for staff providing access to essential policies, procedures, forms etc.

AbNet developments during 2006-07 included:

- Online Course Evaluation for internal continuous professional development (CPD) courses
- Online CPD Logs
- Online booking of multimedia equipment
- Online staff induction
- College Services Section providing information on services to internal customers
- Records Management System for the disposal of College records
- New section on Your Health and Safety.

Increasingly AbNet is also becoming a major source of background information on developments in the College and in the wider FE and education sectors, in particular through its Knowledge Base section. This was expanded during 2006-07 to include new sections on Equal Opportunities, Good Practice, Effective Web Searching, Child protection, e-Portfolios and e-Assessment.

Other Web Services developments during the review period included the redevelopment of the College InfoPoints and a new design for the Student Portal.

## (ii) Libraries

As well as extensive book stocks, the College libraries provide a range of CD, DVD and online information services. During 2006-07, the facilities available in the College libraries were further developed:

- Expansion of Educational Recording Agency Licensing Scheme (ERA) recordings collection to over 800 titles
- Subject specific leaflets developed for each subject area, to highlight available resources for students
- IT provision in site Libraries was significantly improved:
- 32 'smart top desks' added at Altens
- 10 'smart top desks' added at Gallowgate
- Clinterty PCs increased from 22 to 32
- Web searching guidance added to Library area of VLE, and a web-enabled version made available to College staff via AbNet
- Teaching staff were advised and assisted with scanning materials for inclusion in the VLE
- Instruction sessions on how to use online services were provided for students
- Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) was incorporated into the automated library system to allow the online ordering of books
- The Virtual Library, which includes library guides, study skills materials and site of the week, was updated and reviewed regularly to ensure currency and quality of information.



# e-enablement

## (i) IT Systems in Aberdeen College

Aberdeen College is committed to the integrated use of new technologies in all aspects of its activities, where appropriate. These new technologies are intended to improve both the quality and the efficiency of the College's services to students and of the business processes that underpin them.

The College has developed a very high specification of computer hardware and software. This includes:

- Comprehensive intra-site and inter-site networks
- High bandwidth fibre optic network linking all main sites
- Wireless network on all sites (and in area surrounding the Gallowgate centre)
- High bandwidth internet connectivity through Aberdeen Metropolitan Area Network (AbMAN)
- Extensive storage – SATA and fibre-based multi-site replicated storage
- c500 desktop computers for staff use
- c500 laptops for staff use, issued to all teaching staff and senior administrative and management staff
- c1,250 desktop computers for student use
- 2,000 laptops for student use
- 1,100 for loan to full time students in 'paperless' classes
- 500 for loan to students with additional needs
- 400 for use in community locations.



## (ii) IT in the Business Process

The College has developed a series of computer-based management systems to effect improvements in quality and efficiency in its management and administrative services. Examples of these are:

- Unit-e – student records system covering application, enrolment, attendance, results
- Celcat – timetabling system
- Team Spirit – staffing system covering payroll, qualifications, holidays, etc
- Sun Accounts – comprehensive financial management package
- OLIB – automated library catalogue
- AbNet – dedicated staff intranet providing access to policies, procedures, papers, information, forms, etc.

Where appropriate and feasible these systems have been interlinked so that, once captured, data can be reused without re-keying. An example of this interlinking is the daily uploading of data from Unit-e to the VLE allowing students to be automatically given access to relevant areas of the VLE once they have been enrolled. The College's approach, while being innovative, has also been cautious to avoid any risk of system failure through inappropriate linkages.

Based on the platform of hardware and software the College has been able to re-engineer key business processes to improve efficiency and responsiveness. Students are now able to apply for full-time courses online and the revised procedures introduced allow a much improved response time to applicants as well as a reduction in administrative staff. Laptop use by staff and students has allowed 'paperless' approaches to course delivery and document transmission (for example for meetings) with a reduction in paper bought and a direct saving on photocopying costs.

### (iii) IT in the Student Experience

The College has also introduced a range of developments which impact directly on students and potential students of the College:

- The College's external website provides a wide range of information about studying at the College and the types of provision offered
- Applicants for full time courses can apply online
- Pre-printed forms are distributed to students at enrolment to enable short processing times and to provide students with immediate access to email, the VLE and other College IT-based services
- An online interactive induction package to provide students with all the information, in an easily-accessible form, that they require to take a full part in the College
- Student attendance is recorded electronically in class and is immediately available within the student record system, allowing non-attendance to be identified at the earliest stage and guidance support provided where required
- Text messaging is used to advise students of changes to scheduled classes or to query absences
- The student portal, 'S-Portal', provides students with a single log in point to access their email account, relevant course and college information, and curriculum materials, and is the medium through which surveys of students are conducted
- InfoPoints are provided throughout the College to provide students with direct access to relevant online information from external providers to help them deal with personal issues such as those relating to finance, housing, health, diet.

### (iv) IT in Course Delivery

In terms of course delivery, the College has taken steps to widen access for those living in remote locations, or undertaking work for which the shift pattern is irregular and/or 'anti-social' by providing online learning (e-learning) along with paper-based open learning. For both open and e-learning tutorial support is now largely offered online in place of the previous telephone and/or letter-based approaches.

Additionally the College offers, through its IT centres, flexible access to computer-based learning for those students who are able to attend the College premises but for whom regular scheduled timetabled classes are not the appropriate method of learning. These computer-based courses enable students effectively to self-study but with access to tutorial support on the premises as and when required to help them with any difficulties. Many courses are short and not certificated but increasingly, where appropriate materials are available, the College is introducing longer, assessed programmes which lead to nationally recognised certification.

In addition, the College has an online assessment centre which enables students to carry out assessments at times convenient to them which are marked 'by the computer' and results returned instantaneously.

As well as serving to provide additional flexibility for students who are not able to undertake traditional patterns of attendance, electronic technology is now being routinely used to improve and enhance the educational experience of students on 'mainstream' programmes, both full-time and part-time. The technology that has been adopted for this purpose is known as the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

The College's VLE system, Blackboard, provides a sophisticated software environment within which students can:

- Access essential information about their course
- Access a range of course materials
- Communicate with staff and other students
- Submit work online
- Have marked work returned online
- Undertake assessments online
- Access additional resources through the Internet.

Materials for use in the VLE are stored in a customised Content Management System.

The VLE can be accessed within the College through desktop machines or through laptops, and as such can be used in any area of the College through the College's wireless network. (It can also be accessed in the area surrounding the College, for example courses have been delivered to residents of nearby Seamount Court using College wireless-enabled laptops, without the need to attend one of the College's centres.) Students can access the VLE from their own home, providing they have Internet access, as a way of undertaking additional or refresher study for their courses.

During 2006-07, the programme to issue wireless enabled laptop computers on loan to selected classes of students for the duration of their course was continued – 350 full-time mainstream students were issued with laptops (this will increase to 1,100 in 2007-08). The approach allows relevant technologies to be embedded wherever appropriate within the student learning experience, not as the only pedagogical approach but as one of the varied stimulating approaches which should be employed on all programmes.

The College also acquired 'smart top desks' which can be used as conventional flat desks or opened up to become a computer work-station. Rooms were equipped with these resources as a further way of providing access to IT resources whenever and wherever required.

## (v) Training and Support

The College recognises that the rate of change in technology is increasing rather than slowing down and that the likely impact of technologies in both the management of the College and in the way in which learning is supported will change very radically over the coming years.

As such, the College provides extensive training for its staff to equip them with the skills needed for the new environment. All staff undertake the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL), which provides a minimum standard of competence in the use of computers to store and manage information and to communicate, and ensures familiarity with the main Microsoft Office applications.

Additionally staff involved with the VLE have been provided with a range of dedicated bespoke training to enable them to use the new hardware and software and have been offered opportunities to take part in experiences to develop their IT skills such as the e-Olympics and FERL training.

Equally it has been important to provide teaching staff with appropriate support in using the technology effectively. In relation to the use of the VLE as a standard tool in class delivery, a number of support staff have been appointed – VLE Manager, two Content Development Support Co-ordinators and three Senior Lecturers with responsibility for fostering VLE developments.



# financial data

Consolidated income and expenditure account

	<b>Year Ended 31 July 2007</b> <b>£000</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	
SFC grants	26,821
Tuition fees and education contracts	12,090
Other income	552
Investment income	762
<b>Total income</b>	<b>40,225</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
Staff costs	18,869
Exceptional restructuring costs	467
Other operating expenses	15,576
Depreciation	2,072
Interest payable	119
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>37,103</b>
Surplus on continuing operations after depreciation of fixed assets at valuation before tax	3,122

# summary data

## (i) Enrolments

<b>Total Enrolments (Full-time and Part-time)</b>	
2006-07	32,487
2005-06	31,056
2004-05	36,456
2003-04	43,377

## (ii) Age Structure

	<b>Under 18</b>	<b>18-25</b>	<b>26-40</b>	<b>Over 40</b>
2006-07	17%	20%	28%	35%
2005-06	17%	20%	30%	33%
2004-05	16%	22%	29%	33%
2003-04	16%	21%	28%	35%

## (iii) Gender Mix

	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
2006-07	58%	42%
2005-06	57%	43%
2004-05	56%	44%
2003-04	59%	41%

#### (iv) Student Destination

	2005-06	2004-05	2003-04	2002-03
Further Education / Higher Education	80.4%	84%	78%	81%
Related Full-Time Employment	12.5%	9.5%	12%	10%
Unrelated Full-Time Employment	1.9%	1.5%	4%	3%
Short-Term Employment	0.1%	0%	1%	1%
Unplaced	5.1%	5%	5%	5%
No of Full-Time Students Responding to Survey	1,918	2,640	3,640	3,439

#### (v) Student Origins

	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05	2003-04
<b>Aberdeen City</b>	52%	51%	48%	51%
<b>Aberdeenshire</b>	25%	26%	31%	31%
<b>Other</b>	23%	23%	20%	18%

#### (vi) Retention Rates <sup>1</sup>

	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05	2003-04
<b>Full-Time</b>	90%	89%	89%	87%
<b>Part-Time</b>	97%	97%	95%	95%

#### (vii) Level of Student Activity <sup>2</sup>

<b>2006-07</b>	163,467
<b>2005-06</b>	152,050
<b>2004-05</b>	175,577
<b>2003-04</b>	186,165

#### (viii) Ethnic/Racial Origin

	White	Other
<b>2006-07</b>	95%	5%
<b>2005-06</b>	91%	9%
<b>2004-05</b>	95%	5%
<b>2003-04</b>	96%	4%

<sup>1</sup> Number of students staying on courses (SRR1)

<sup>2</sup> Weighted SUMs for fundable activity

## (ix) Staff Employment Levels 2006-07

Type of Contract	Number of Staff (Headcount)			Number of Staff (FTEs)		
	Teaching	Non-teaching (Support)	Total	Teaching	Non-teaching (Support)	Total
College Payroll Staff	251	428	679	193	320	513
Non-College Payroll Staff	350	0	350	58	0	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>1029</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>571</b>

## (x) Unit Costs (£ per WSUM)<sup>3</sup>

	FY2006-07	FY2005-06	FY2004-05	FY2003-04
Staff Costs	100	97	88	86
Non-staff Costs	66	75	54	55
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>141</b>

### Notes:

1. The figures demonstrate that Aberdeen College has a record of achieving efficiency gains.
2. Unit costs for 2006-07 are broadly the same as the previous year in cash terms and have fallen by over 3% in real terms.
3. In 2005-06 and 2006-07, the College acted to bring the level of measured student activity to a point nearer to that for which it is funded. Consequently, as expected, the change in the level of activity in 2005-06 compared with that in 2004-05 has resulted in an increase in the reported level of unit costs.
4. The College has acted to reduce its cost base, although in the short-term costs are by their nature relatively invariable.
5. The College has added to cash reserves and continues to achieve the highest levels of financial security.



<sup>3</sup> At 2006-07 prices

## (xi) Client Satisfaction Surveys

In 2006-07, the College served over 26,000 individuals, over 1,000 employers and over 100 community locations throughout the North-east of Scotland. To ensure that a quality service was provided and a wide range of diverse needs was met, surveys of student and employer satisfaction, using anonymous standard questionnaires, were carried out during the year. This is the 16th successive year, following the establishment of the College in 1991, that such surveys have been undertaken. Results indicated that teaching in the College continued to be purposeful, effective and responsive to client needs, and that the educational approaches were appropriate and varied. The following information offers an overview of satisfaction levels during the review period with comparative data given (percentage satisfied):

### (a) Student Satisfaction Survey

	2007	2006	2005	2004
I feel that I was treated fairly and given equal opportunities	93%	95%	95%	95%
Learning materials (e.g. handouts) were well-produced	95%	95%	94%	91%
Learning materials were up-to-date and enhanced my learning	94%	92%	91%	89%
I received clear feedback regarding my performance	94%	91%	90%	86%
Teachers used a variety of methods, which allowed me to learn effectively	96%	95%	96%	93%
I was encouraged to develop good learning and study skills	96%	94%	94%	91%
My learning was assessed fairly	97%	97%	96%	95%
Assessments were reasonably well-spaced	94%	82%	86%	82%

### (b) Employer Satisfaction Survey

	2007	2006	2005	2004
The courses on offer take account of the previous knowledge and skills of your employees	85%	92%	96%	96%
Each course you use meets your needs	90%	92%	95%	96%
The content of each course is relevant and up-to-date	94%	89%	95%	95%
Each course is available at times and in places which suit your organisation	93%	91%	94%	94%
Each course is well planned, e.g. components are well sequenced	85%	88%	93%	92%
The College's communications systems are effective	72%	85%	86%	86%

## (xii) Complaints Management

### Analysis of Complaints in 2006-07

The College received a total of 166 complaints during the year (compared with 146 in 2004-05 and 184 in 2005-06). It should be noted that as a result of the College's registration and compliance with the British Standards Institute (BSI) Complaints Management Specification statistics have been compiled in accordance with BSI criteria since 2004-05. Previously identical complaints from students were collated and counted as one but these are now allocated a specific file number. However, the complaints numbering is now on a 'like for like' basis. In 2006-07, 12 identical complaints relating to an equipment issue were received as well as eight identical complaints about an aspect of the catering service and six identical complaints relating to heating in part of the College.

The figure 166 represents 0.52% of enrolments (0.42% in 2004-05 and 0.59% in 2005-06).

When analysing complaints received, the College distinguishes between two types of service: education services provided directly to students (mainly tuition), and a range of supporting services such as health and safety, advisory services, catering, administration services, and student funding. Support services are further classified into support services directly provided by the College and those which have been contracted out.

### Summary of Complaints

	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05
Educational services and facilities	83	117	114
Supporting services provided by the College	39	51	18
Supporting services provided by other providers	44	16	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>146</b>



## **Educational Services and Facilities**

83 of the 166 complaints were in this category (117 in 2005-06). They were as follows:

- 5 were about timetabling arrangements, or course cancellation, or change of lecturer (19 in 2005-06)
- 14 concerned the delivery of courses – the teaching provided or the conduct of teaching staff (39 in 2005-06)
- 14 related to the standards of equipment or accommodation (3 in 2005-06)
- 14 criticised information provided about, or communication relating to courses (14 in 2005-06)
- 8 were about assessment and/or certification arrangements or outcomes (16 in 2005-06)
- 1 related to course content (0 in 2005-06)
- 4 were about booking/enrolment administration (5 in 2005-06)
- 5 related to interviews/appointments (6 in 2005-06)
- 6 were received about the Information Technology Centre/Libraries (3 in 2005-06)
- 7 were about the behaviour of students within the College (4 in 2005-06)
- 4 related to sex/race/disability issues (4 in 2005-06)
- 1 related to the Business Development Unit (BDU) (4 in 2005-06).

## **Support Services**

Of the 166 complaints received, 83 were in this category (67 in 2005-06). Subdividing the total of 83, 39 complaints concerned services provided directly by the College (51 in 2005-06), 44 were about contracted-out services (16 in 2005-06).

### **Directly-provided Services**

Complaints about services directly provided by the College were as follows:

- 9 related to equipment and rooms (25 in 2005-06)
- There were no complaints about general College information (2 in 2005-06)
- 13 were on College invoices/refunds or payments (16 in 2005-06)
- 5 relating to the administration of bursaries (1 in 2005-06)
- 5 were regarding health and safety issues (3 in 2005-06)
- 7 related to Guidance/Student Support (4 in 2005-06).

### **Contracted-out Services**

Complaints received about services contracted-out were as follows:

- 16 were about College catering arrangements (9 in 2005-06)
- 10 related to the College security service (0 in 2005-06)
- 5 complaints relating to transport (0 in 2005-06)
- 4 were regarding delivery by contracted teaching staff (3 in 2005-06)
- There were no complaints about janitorial provision (3 in 2005-06)
- 9 were relating to facilities (1 in 2005-06).

## **Specific Outcomes of Complaints**

The College recognises that one of the most effective approaches to ensure a continuing improvement in quality of service is to welcome complaints and thereafter to fully investigate and make whatever changes require to be made.

As a result of complaints received the undernoted are some of the actions taken or responses which were conveyed:

- Web site being modified
- Tutors reminded of log-in procedures for students in order to convey accurate information
- Account taken of ill health and invoice reduced
- Referral to Scottish Qualifications Authority following a student complaint about plagiarism
- Issue of official College 'Travel Cards' in view of non availability of Student Association ID cards
- Counselling/re-training of staff
- Lost wages refunded
- Invoice cancelled
- Offer of places on new course at no cost
- Rail travel substituted for bus travel.

The College appreciates the assistance of Chaplains who give freely of their time to scrutinise how complaints are dealt with and actively monitor the College's compliance with required standards.

## (xii) Compliments

Although the College provides a 'Would you like to say thank you?' form, appreciative comments continue to be received directly by staff. Among the comments received were:

"Just a quick note to thank you for all your help ....."

"I was well supported ..... I would thoroughly recommend ..... and Aberdeen College".

"I have really appreciated the help you gave me over the past year and also for the loan of the textbooks, above and beyond the call of duty I think the term is".

"I improved my communication skills and working skills and also gained so much knowledge by doing this course".

"One lecturer that made a huge impact in my life, subsequently helping to shape my future direction, was ..... and thank him for his wonderful support and guidance in what was a crucial yet hugely enjoyable year in my life one which has never since been equalled or surpassed".

"Thanks for all your help over the two years. I couldn't have done it without you. You're an ace lecturer and a lovely person".

"I found in the last three years the courses and timetables were very well organised. The tutors on the various courses were most helpful and would go that extra mile ....."

"....and I would just like to thank you and all your staff for getting me through the course and helping me achieve one goal (my HNC) which ultimately led to me achieving another (a higher grade, better paid job)".

"College is as good as RGU or Aberdeen University. There are small classes and it is easier to get support".

"Just wanted to say that due to the time and effort that yourself and your staff have put into my education I am now in a position where I have had three conditional offers for RGU. I would just like to take the opportunity of thanking you for putting me in this position. Without everyone's help I would not be where I am today".

"..... I've just had an email from ..... at the university offering me a place into third year, thanks to you. It's really happening. I can't believe it. Thank you for sorting it all out for me so quickly, and providing so much guidance and support over the past two years".

"I have been offered a place ..... at Aberdeen Uni, I am delighted "....." I can't thank you enough for the whole experience of returning to education ....."

"I just wanted to let you know I gained a pass with distinction on the RGU BA (Hons) ..... I could not have achieved this without the support and guidance I received from you and your staff whilst at Aberdeen College. As a mature student I lacked confidence in my abilities and found the experience gained at college to be extremely beneficial. Many thanks for your support and keep up the good work!".



# board of management

The Board comprises people with extensive business expertise and practical experience of education and training. The Board of Management comprises of representatives from industry, commerce and education. The private and public sectors are both represented, as is the College's Senior Management Team (by the Principal), teaching and non-teaching staff, and the student body.

## **Mrs Margaret Donald – Chair**

By profession a communicator and educator, Margaret Donald has enjoyed a varied and successful career in both fields. Having lectured and taught Primary Education, Mrs Donald progressed to live broadcasting and journalism. Media liaison and publicity were the focus of her next professional post as Public Relations Officer for Aberdeen City Council. In 1996, Mrs Donald launched her own company – Mallard Media Services. She has since created and marketed internationally a series of television productions targeted at young children's markets. Mrs Donald's television creations have achieved both critical acclaim and commercial success, and led to her being awarded Scottish Businesswoman of the Year (Most Enterprising Start-up) in 1999.

## **Mr Ken Milroy – Vice Chair**

Born in Dundee, Ken Milroy was educated at Carnoustie High School in Angus. He worked for a year with a surveyors firm in Dundee before taking a place at Moray House College in Edinburgh gaining a Diploma in Youth and Community Work in 1981. He went on to work with the Church of Scotland as a Youth and Community Worker in Hamilton in the early '80s before moving to Grampian Regional Council in 1984 to work as a Community Education Worker. In 1990 he was appointed Assistant Head of the Councils Social Strategy Unit. In April 1996 Ken left local government to be appointed as the first Director of Aberdeen Foyer, a successful, local charitable company working to prevent and alleviate youth homelessness and unemployment. Ken is actively involved in a range of groups and organisations at local, national and UK levels. He is a Board Member of the Foyer Federation and Chair of Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations. In 2004 he was the Scottish winner in the Ernst and Young, Entrepreneur of the Year Award, Social Entrepreneur category.

## **Rae Angus – Principal & Chief Executive**

Rae Angus started his working life as an apprentice gas fitter and subsequently worked in the engineering and the construction industries. He attended Aberdeen University as a mature student and graduated with a degree in Economic History in 1975. He also has a post-graduate degree in Strategic Studies. After working as a research fellow at Aberdeen University, he lectured in Economics at Aberdeen College of Commerce. As Senior Depute of the College he was closely involved in the merger of three further education colleges in the Aberdeen area. He became Principal of Aberdeen College in 1993.

## **Ms Maryanne Beare**

Hailing from the Sultanate of Brunei some 30 years ago, Maryanne Beare has run successful businesses in the Middle East, Far East, Europe and in the UK for the past 20 years. She currently works with her business partner providing Leadership, Management programmes, Coaching, Psycho/Hypnotherapy and Cross-cultural briefings to Companies and Individuals. She is a mother of two young adults. She enjoys swimming, travelling, dancing, walking amongst other things. She lives happily with her black cat Grizzly Beare.

## **Mr Alan Iain Cameron MA BSc**

Alan Cameron was born and brought up in Southend, Argyllshire. After Campbeltown Grammar School, he went to Glasgow University graduating with Honours in Chemistry. He taught in several schools throughout Scotland before becoming Rector of Ellon Academy in 1981. He retired from there in 1996 and returned to Aberdeen University, graduating MA in Gaelic Studies in June 2000. Since 1999 he has been Aberdeenshire Councillor for Ellon Town and is currently SNP Group Leader. Alan is a past president of Ellon Rotary Club and is founder of Gordon Gaelic Choir, Ellon Burns Club and Ellon and District Historical Society.

## **Mr Douglas Duthie**

Doug was born, educated and has always resided in the City of Aberdeen. He is married and has two grown up sons. After leaving school he undertook a pre-apprenticeship course at the then Aberdeen Technical College. He eventually became a cinema projectionist and then in 1967 joined Aberdeen City Police (later to become Grampian Police). Doug served in the force for 30 years, retiring in 1997. Most of his service was served in the Criminal Investigation Department where he reached the rank of Detective Inspector. During that time Doug worked on serious crimes in Aberdeen and spent one year working on the Piper Alpha Disaster both in body recovery and in the mortuary, eventually giving evidence to the Cullen Enquiry. Towards the end of his police career Doug was seconded to the Scottish Executive to undertake a social project involving community safety. On conclusion of the project it became apparent there was a need for a charity in Aberdeen that would have community safety as its core function. Members of the local government, private and statutory sector joined forces and a charity known as the Aberdeen Safer Community Trust was created. Since his retirement to the present day, Doug has been the charity's Co-ordinator.

### **Mr Brian Dunn – Teaching Staff Representative**

Brian has resided in Aberdeen for most of his life and was educated at Hilton Academy. His association with Aberdeen College began in 1980 when he attended the then Technical College as an apprentice plumber. Following his 'bohemian period' where he turned his hand to a variety of jobs including road worker, groundsman, janitor and gravedigger, Brian returned to The Aberdeen College of Further Education in 1991 to complete the NC in Social Sciences before progressing to the HNC in Social Sciences the following year. After gaining entry to the second year at the University of Aberdeen he completed an Honours Degree in Sociology and immediately began teaching for both Aberdeen College and the Department of Sociology at the University. At the College he served a good pedagogical apprenticeship teaching sociology, psychology, history and communication in a variety of learning contexts such as full time college courses, community outreach, various schools, Cornhill Hospital and Craiginches Prison. Following a period as Acting Curriculum Manager he formally took up the post of Curriculum Manager for Social Sciences in 2002. As Curriculum Manager he has been proactive in raising the profile of Aberdeen College and the social sciences nationally through SQA Subject Advisory Groups, Qualification Design Teams and through partnerships with the universities. Brian is a keen music and football enthusiast and lives with his partner on the outskirts of Monymusk.

### **Dr Ian Heywood**

Dr Ian Heywood started his career making rubber chippings from old tyres in 1980! He then moved on to gain a BSc in Geography followed by a PhD. After a short spell with the Police researching the effectiveness of crime prevention initiatives he became a University Lecturer. Between 1985-98 he worked at a number of UK and European Universities. During this time he was active in developing UNIGIS a global consortium of universities delivering Geographic Information Systems courses to a wide range of business professionals. Over this period he became more involved in the areas of skills development, distance learning as well as e-Learning. In 1998 he moved away from Geography and accepted a post at the Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen as Director of the Centre for Open and Distance Learning, where he was involved in the design development and delivery of the Virtual Campus. In 2001 he moved from the University to take up a Directorship with the Aberdeen-based research consultancy BusinessLab. There he led on a number of organisational learning projects for a range of public and private sector organisations before joining Scottish Enterprise Grampian in August 2003 as Director of Skills and Learning.

### **Mr James Hird**

Born in Aberdeen, James was educated at Ashley Road School and Robert Gordon's College prior to serving an apprenticeship as an auto electrician. Following a number of years as an assistant parts manager with Rossleigh Limited, James joined the family business (Albyn Garage) in 1968 until 1999 when he became Training Manager with Grampian Motor Training. He later joined the Scottish Motor Trade Association as their Northern Area Manager with responsibility for the area north of Dundee. During his time at Albyn Garage, he was President of the Scottish Motor Trade Association for two years – the first ever, independent motor trader to have such an honour in the Association's history. His interests are foreign travel, motor-ing memorabilia and the 'old car' movement in general, the highlight of which was when he competed in and completed the Brighton Run in 1998 driving a 1904 Daimler belonging to the National Motor Museum.

### **Ms Alanna Johnstone – Student Association Representative**

Alanna was born in Edinburgh but moved to the Borders where she attended Eyemouth High School. She originally came to Aberdeen to study Nursing at The Robert Gordon University, but after a year decided to change direction and enrolled at Aberdeen College to study Social Care with a view to becoming a Social Worker. A move back to Edinburgh saw Alanna working in a nursing home, but 12 months later she decided that she missed Aberdeen (which she considers her second home), and returned to College – this time to study Business Administration. Alanna ran a successful voting campaign to become President of the Students' Association in March 2007. Alanna is a keen kick-boxer and has been working as a door steward to help finance her way through college, so this is a lady to be reckoned with!

### **Mr William Lawson**

Bill was born in Tyneside in the North-east of England where he initially graduated and worked as a professional electrical engineer. In 1977 he moved to Aberdeen with his wife and two sons to support to the offshore industry during its period of intense development. He remains to date in this place called home and has gained two daughters-in-law and a grand child. In later years he undertook a career change that took him from electrical to safety engineering. This culminated in him achieving a Masters Degree in Process Safety and Loss Prevention in 1996. Since then, Mr Lawson's work has revolved around the enhancement of safety for all those who operate in the industrial environment.

### **Mr Adrian Smith**

An Aberdonian, Adrian attended Cults Primary and Academy. He was recruited into the House of Fraser Management Trainee scheme prior to joining Aberdeen Motors as a Sales Executive. Since 1982 Adrian has headed up Adrian Smith Motors Ltd, which holds the Saab franchise for the Grampian Region, and is now the longest established Saab dealership in Scotland. The Daihatsu small car franchise has recently been added to the portfolio. Also in 1982, Adrian was involved in the creation of Scotia Instrumentation Ltd, which is situated in Aberdeen's Science Park, and is now the largest independently owned instrumentation company in the UK. Adrian is also Chairman of the Grampian Motor Training Trust and Immediate Past President of the Scottish Motor Trade Association [SMTA]. He represents the SMTA on the Council of Automotive Skills, the motor industry Sector Skills Council, and is Chair of the Scottish Employer Forum for Automotive Skills.

### **Karen Stewart**

Karen Stewart was born in Aberdeen, where she attended Harlaw Academy and Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology. After graduating with a BA in Business Studies and a Diploma in Marketing, she pursued a career in accountancy. She qualified as a Chartered Accountant with one of the 'Big Four' international accountancy firms. She is currently a Senior Manager with one of the largest independent chartered accountancy practices in Scotland. She has responsibility for a portfolio of clients in various industry sectors including oil and gas service, leisure and hospitality, construction and education. As a working mum with two young daughters, she combines the role of professional accountant with that of housekeeper, cook and taxi driver!

### **Mr I Roger Taylor – Support Staff Representative**

Roger Taylor served his apprenticeship with a motor vehicle and truck distribution company dealing with General Motors products in Mackay, Queensland, Australia. He then moved into engineering in Mining Production in the Gulf of Carpentaria in Northern Australia and Mine Construction in the then relatively primitive Solomon Islands in the Pacific for three years. During this time, and then the subsequent four years working in some of the developing areas of Southern Africa, the very limited awareness and appreciation of general safety issues for those at work highlighted his desire to work towards addressing these concerns. He came to the UK in 1977 and has worked to advance his profession becoming a Chartered Fellow of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), by examination, and also a Fellow of the Safety Institute of Australia (SIA). Roger has been employed by Aberdeen College since 1997 and as Safety, Health and Environmental Manager since 2001. During this time Aberdeen College has been awarded numerous Safety awards including the prestigious 'Sword of Honour' by the British Safety Council (BSC), annual awards from Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and in 2006, Roger was presented with the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) President's Distinguished Service Certificate for his involvement and support of safety activities both internal and external to Aberdeen College.

# transactions with members of the board of management

Due to the nature of the College's operations and the composition of its Board of Management (being drawn from local public and private sector organisations), it is inevitable that transactions will take place with organisations in which a member of the College's Board of Management may have an interest. All transactions involving organisations in which a member of the Board of Management may have a material interest are conducted at arm's length and in accordance with normal project and procurement procedures.

There were no transactions during the year with non-public bodies in which a member of the Board of Management of the College has an interest and which in aggregate exceeded £5,000.

The College had transactions during the year or worked in partnership with the following publicly funded or representative bodies in which members of the Board of Management hold or held official positions.

Member	Organisation	Position
Mr R Angus	Aberdeen Safer Community Trust	Trustee
Mr A Cameron	Aberdeenshire Council	Elected Member
Mrs M Donald	The Robert Gordon University	Member of the Board of Governors
Mr D Duthie	Aberdeen Safer Community Trust	Trust Co-ordinator
Mr P Hannan	Aberdeen Cyrenians Scottish Enterprise Grampian	Chief Executive Director of Learning and Skills
Dr I Heywood	Banff & Buchan College of Further Education Princess Trust Grampian	Member of the Board of Management Member of the Board of Management
Mr K Milroy	Aberdeen Foyer	Chief Executive

In addition the undernoted individuals were Members of the Board of Management during the year and had no significant transactions with the College: Ms M Beare, Mr R Goodbrand, Mr J Graham, Ms G Griffin, Mr W Lawson, Mr A Smith, Mrs K Stewart and Mr I R Taylor.

## Related Party Transactions

The Board of Management of Aberdeen College is a body incorporated under the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 sponsored by The Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

SFC is regarded as a related party. During the year Aberdeen College had various material transactions with SFC and with other entities for which SFC is regarded as the sponsor department including Students Awards Agency for Scotland, Scottish Enterprise Grampian Limited and a number of other colleges and higher education institutions.

In addition Aberdeen College and its subsidiary companies had a small number of transactions with other Government Departments and other central government bodies.

# contact details

## Principal & Chief Executive of Aberdeen College

### Vice Principals and Directors

- Vice Principal
- Vice Principal
- Director of Learning & Teaching

### Associate Principals

- Associate Principal
- Associate Principal (Data Management & Student Administration)
- Associate Principal
- Associate Principal (Student Support Services)

### Sector Managers

- Arts, Communication & Social Science
- Engineering, Computing & Business Studies
- Care & Service Industries
- Technology, Science, Sport & Leisure

### Other College Personnel

- Corporate Business Development Manager
- Design, Publicity & Advertising Manager
- European Projects Co-ordinator
- Head of Access and Inclusion
- Head of Community & Lifelong Learning
- Head of Educational Programmes & Curriculum Support
- Head of Learner Services
- Head of Online Learning & Information Services
- Head of Quality Assurance & Staff Development
- Marketing, Media, PR & Events Manager
- Safety, Health & Environment Manager

### Useful Numbers

- Aberdeen Skills and Enterprise Training Ltd. (ASET)
- Business Development Unit (BDU)
- College Switchboard
- Information & Booking Centre
- IT Centre
- Learner Services Reception
- Library
- Open & Online Learning
- Student Development Centre & Access Centre

## Rae Angus

Roddy Scott  
Alison Hay  
Rob Wallen

Robert Bellfield  
Charlie Dean  
Sandra Walker  
Frank Hughes

Susie MacKenzie Brooks  
David Brooks  
Bill Rattray  
Alisdair Duncan

Graham Beattie  
Ian McDougall  
Bill Stalker  
Stephen Edgar  
Joan Thorne  
Sandra Allan  
Susan Betty  
David Morley  
David Innes  
Rhonda Fraser  
I Roger Taylor

896196  
612393  
612000  
612330  
612260  
612284  
612138  
612603  
612142

N.B. You can email the above contacts by emailing [enquiry@abcol.ac.uk](mailto:enquiry@abcol.ac.uk) – your email will be directed to the appropriate person. The national telephone code for Aberdeen is **01224**. If telephoning the College from overseas, dial UK Country Code **+44 1224 612000**. Web [www.abcol.ac.uk](http://www.abcol.ac.uk)



The inner text is printed on Revive 75 Silk, a recycled paper containing 75% recovered fibre and is certified to the environmental management system ISO 14001.



ISO 14001  
Produced at a mill that holds  
ISO 14001 certification



NAPM approved  
recycled product



The Aberdeen College Annual Review 2007 was designed by the Publicity & Marketing Team.  
Project Management: Ian McDougall (Design, Publicity & Advertising Manager), Pauline May (Planning & Senior Management Administrator).  
Project Design: Susan McDougall (Graphic Designer).

Aberdeen College, Gallowgate Centre, Gallowgate, Aberdeen AB25 1BN

Tel **01224 612000**

Email **enquiry@abcol.ac.uk**

Minicom **01224 612163**



[www.abcol.ac.uk](http://www.abcol.ac.uk)



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE



CMS 86911



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE