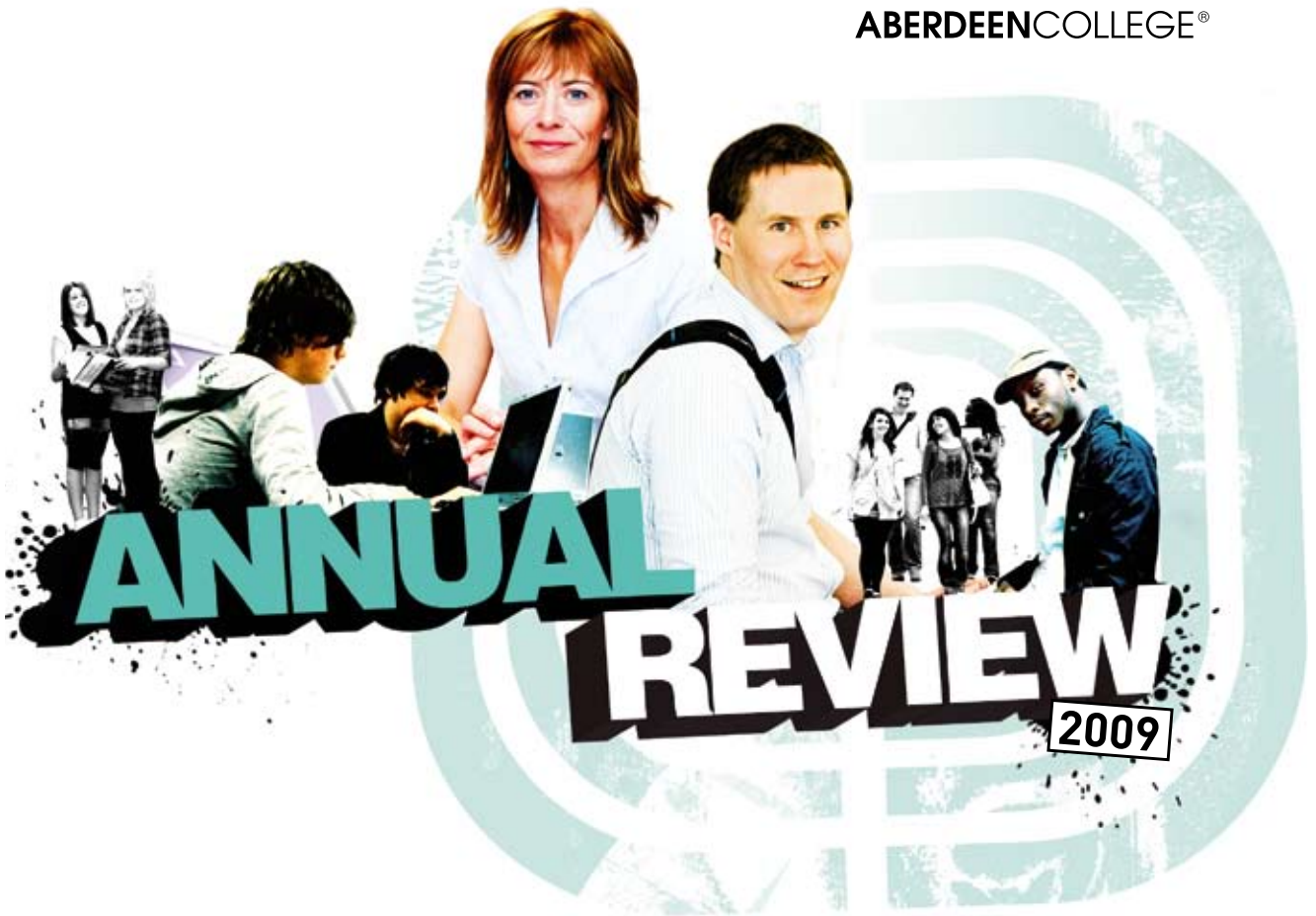




ABERDEEN COLLEGE®



**ANNUAL**  
**REVIEW**  
2009

## Glossary

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



CMS 86911



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



EMS 532235



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# COVERAGE

This Review covers the academic year 2008-09. 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 the College's achievements and performance during 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 and training needs of the community and within the context of the College's mission statement, the strategic aims during 2008-09 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 Government 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.

# A YEAR OF SUCCESS

## (i) College Awards

### **ISO STANDARD FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS**

In June 2009 the College received accreditation to the ISO 14001:2004 Standard for Environmental Systems. The Standard provides a framework for an organisation to control the environmental impacts of its activities, products and services, and to continually improve its environmental performance.

### **MATRIX STANDARD ACCREDITATION**

Following a rigorous assessment in June 2009, the College's guidance service was accredited with the matrix Standard. The matrix Standard is the national quality standard for any organisation that delivers information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work. It consists of eight elements, four focused on service delivery and four focused on service management. Within these eight elements there are forty individual criteria against which the service is assessed. Accreditation is only made where there is 100% compliance against each of the criteria making up each of the elements. Currently there are only nine education establishments in Scotland who have been successfully accredited against this national standard – eight universities and Aberdeen College.



### **SCOTLAND'S HEALTHY WORKING LIVES MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING COMMENDATION AWARD**

In October 2008 the College learned that it had been successful in achieving this award. This Commendation Award sets a workplace standard for good practice in promoting positive mental health and well-being, supporting staff with mental health problems in the workplace, and reducing barriers to recruiting staff with a history of mental health problems. The College is the first educational establishment in Scotland to receive the award, and is one of only eight Scottish organisations who currently hold the award.

### **CUSTOMER EXCELLENCE STANDARD**

The College has held the Charter Mark continuously since 1994, reflecting its commitment to customer service. In 2008 the Charter Mark was replaced by the Customer Excellence Standard. The College first achieved the new Standard following an assessment visit in June 2008, and in June 2009 was successfully reassessed with a grading of 100% compliance awarded for the second time.

### **ISO STANDARD FOR COMPLAINTS HANDLING**

Aberdeen College has held the BSI Standard ISO 10002:2004 for Complaints Handling since 2007. The College is audited annually to ensure it continues to meet the Standard. An audit was carried out in March 2009 which found 100% compliance.

### **INVESTORS IN PEOPLE STANDARD**

The College has been awarded the Investors in People (IIP) Standard four times, and in 2006 received an IIP 10 Year Achievement Award and the IIP People Development Award for Scotland. In 2008-09 the College successfully maintained its Investors in People status.

### **AoC BEACON AWARDS 2008-09**

The College won the FENC Award for Creative Production, Adaptation and Delivery of Learning Resources in November 2008. The award was presented in recognition of the College's development and innovative use of high quality electronic learning in all areas of programme delivery.



### 2009 BECTA NEXT GENERATION LEARNING AWARDS

At the Becta Awards Ceremony in March 2009, the College received a Highly Commended award in the General FE category, and a special award for efficiency and effectiveness in the use of IT.

### ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF ACCIDENTS (RoSPA)

For the sixth consecutive year, Aberdeen College received 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 and harm. In acknowledgment for achieving the award for six consecutive years the College was also presented with its second Gold Medal.

### BRITISH SAFETY COUNCIL (BSC) INTERNATIONAL SAFETY AWARD

The International Safety Awards scheme is devised to recognise and reward organisations that show a commitment to improving corporate health and safety. The awards are acknowledged by the Health and Safety Executive as a powerful motivator for achieving high safety standards. Aberdeen College was presented with this award in February 2009.

### ROSPA MORR™ AWARD

RoSPA MORR™ Awards reward excellence and encourage improvement in managing occupational driver road safety. The College received a silver award in April 2009 after meeting specific criteria including, a satisfactory occupational health and safety management system and culture, action on health issues, and a reduction of accident rates.

### SQA STAR AWARDS 2008-09

At the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Star Awards ceremony held in November 2008 Aberdeen Skills and Enterprise Training Limited, the College's wholly owned subsidiary company, received the International SQA Star Award, which recognises the work of SQA centres delivering SQA qualifications to international candidates in Scotland and abroad.

## (ii) Student Achievement

### WORLDSKILLS UK PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION 2009

HND Photography students Lynn Barraclough and Fraser Stephen were awarded joint gold and Calum Donald received bronze.

### SCOTTISH ASSOCIATION OF TIMBER TRADE TEACHERS CRAFT COMPETITION

Stewart King, 2nd Year HNC Joinery student achieved 4th equal place at the annual competition.

### SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES SPORTS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

This event saw 5,000 athletes from ten colleges across Scotland compete in six different sports. Aberdeen College's Laura Guthrie, HND Sports Coaching with Development of Sport, won the ladies singles badminton competition, while Ross McFarlane, Sport Leisure and Fitness, came fourth in the mens singles. The ladies volleyball team – Dawn Scott, Dani Keith, Natalie Reid, Laura Massie, Keriss Elrick, Kirsty McBain (all HND Sports Coaching with Development of Sport) and Anna Bailey, Sport Leisure and Fitness – achieved second place.



### GRAMPIAN PR GROUP 'BEST STUDENT' AWARD

Lauren Smith, HND Communication with Media, received this award in recognition for the high standard of work produced during her course.

### YOUNG QUALITY SCOT AWARD

Leanne Tait, Acting and Performance, and Sarah Ord, HNC Acting and Performance, received Young Scot Awards in recognition for their participation in voluntary work.

### SCOTTISH PLUMBING APPRENTICE COMPETITION

Jason Cameron, SVQ Plumbing Stage 3, gained second place in the competition and went on to receive fifth place at the UK competition.

### SCOTTISH LEARNING PARTNERSHIP ADULT LEARNERS AWARDS

Mike Rodgers, HND Technical Support, received book tokens and a certificate as a Scottish finalist.

### SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES ENTERPRISING STUDENT AWARD

Kelly Malcolm, HND Mechanical Engineering, was chosen as the North Scotland Regional Winner. Kelly received the award for the successful establishment of her own company, Systematic Integrity Ltd, which specialises in the designing and building of corrosion management systems.

### SQA STAR AWARD FOR SKILLS COMPETITOR OF THE YEAR

Louise Ross, SVQ Hairdressing Level 3, achieved a highly commended award at the SQA Star Award for Skills Competitor of the Year. The award was presented in recognition of Louise's dedication to study and her success in a number of external skills competitions, which has in turn developed her own experience and confidence, whilst raising the profile of her employer.

### ADULT LEARNERS' WEEK 2009 AWARDS

Pearl Cameron, Visual Communication and Photography, won the Arts and Creativity category for the STV North Region at the awards which celebrate outstanding achievements of adult learners.

### 'LIFE AND TIMES OF RABBIE BURNS'

To celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Baird, the Community and Lifelong Learning Department ran a competition in which students were asked to interpret the 'Life and Times of Robbie Burns' visually, written or orally. Five winners were selected from over 80 entries:

- Beauty students group entry – Lynn Burgess, Sarah Currie, Susan Hawick, Jackie Kidd, Dawn McGuinness, Denise Milligan, Denise Morison, Vickie Wood – for their body art based on 'My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose'
- Tracey Lethaby, PDA Learning Assistant, for her 'Hairy Haggis' soft toy
- Gzregorz Hein, English for Speakers of Other Languages, for his electronic portrait of Robert Burns
- Natalie Kirton, Computing, for her poster based on 'A Man's a Man For a' That'
- Irvin McMillan, Drawing and Painting, for his poem 'Oor Rabbie'.



### ART AND DESIGN DIPLOMA SHOW 2009

The work of final year students was showcased in this end of year show. Best Work on the Wall Awards were presented to the following students:



- Art and Design – Radomil Bora'k, HND Art and Design
- Textiles – Karen McKerrall, HND Textiles
- Graphic Design – Scott Robertson, HND Visual Communication
- New Media Design – Matthew Goan, HND Visual Communication
- Photography – Joanne Cruickshank, HND Photography
- The Rocket Print Student Achievement Award – Anne Theresa Ellington, HND Textiles
- Best Overall Student Award – joint prize awarded to Matthew Goan and Joanne Cruickshank.

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

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

- Ronald Adie, Renew
- Michelle Allison, Youth and Community Work
- Marjorie Jane Arthur, HNC Early Education and Childcare
- Kay Coleman, HNC Social Care
- Adam Coutts, HNC Acting and Performance
- Valeria Cruden, Business at Intermediate 2
- Neil Drysdale, HNC Hospitality
- Steven Gordon, SVQ Performing Engineering Operations Level 2 (Mechanical)
- Abigail Greig, HND Visual Communication
- Suzanne Grey, HNC Hospitality
- Blair Hendry, HND Sports Coaching with Development of Sport
- Deirdre Hunter, Community and Lifelong Learning Drawing and Painting
- Christina King, Introduction to Music
- Alex Laverock, HND Art and Design
- Louise Leiper, Further Education Opportunities
- Fiona London, HND Applied Sciences
- Emma McMenemy, NVQ Beauty Therapy Level 3
- Luisa Molina, HND Communication with Media
- Susan Montgomery, HND Visual Communication
- Hanh Huong Nguyen Thi, English for Speakers of Other Languages
- Martyn Nicolson, SVQ Plant Maintenance
- Amber Pirie, HND Advertising and Public Relations
- Mandy Reid, HND Social Sciences
- Lindsay Sharpe, Introduction to Hairdressing
- Alan Stewart, Bricklaying Stage 1
- Jakki Taylor, HNC Creative Industries: Radio
- Daniel Tomczyk, HND Electrical Engineering
- Myles Watt, Introduction to Service Engineering
- Dorothy Wilson, Community and Lifelong Learning Drawing and Painting
- Andrzej Wozniak, HNC Computing
- Kasha Wyness, NVQ Hairdressing.



## COMMUNITY CITIZENSHIP AWARDS

The following students were presented with Community Citizenship Awards after demonstrating citizenship through worthwhile activities or helping others:

- Paola Avalos, HND Accounting
- Hazel Ann Groat, PDA Learning Assistant
- Brenda Manson, Routes to Higher Education
- Hannah Marco, HND Animal Care
- Denise McMillan, PDA Learning Assistant
- Catherine Mercer, Access 1-3
- Sarah Ord, HNC Acting and Performance
- Heather Reid, PDA Learning Assistant
- Leanne Tait, Acting and Performance
- Shanna Taylor, HND Social Sciences
- Lynsey White, HNC Creative Industries: Radio.

## BEST STUDENT APPRENTICE

This award, sponsored by the Scottish Plant Owners Association, was presented to Shaun Warden, SVQ Plant Maintenance.

## CONSTRUCTION CRAFTS AWARDS CEREMONY

The annual Construction Crafts Awards recognised the hard work and achievement of the following students:

### Bricklaying

- Stage 1 – Robert Morris
- Stage 2 – Ashley Forbes
- Advanced Craft – Allan Douglas
- Grampian Construction and Training Group Trophy – Ashley Forbes.

### Carpentry and Joinery

- Stage 1 – 1st Savas Kera, 2nd David Shearer, 3rd Stewart King
- Stage 2 – 1st Sam Cosford, 2nd James Pearson, 3rd Marc Green
- Advanced Craft – Callum Smart
- Gordon Burns Award (Stage 1) – Alan Morrison
- Grampian Building Employers Trophy (Stage 2) – Sam Cosford
- The Rae Brown Award (Advanced) – Callum Smart.

### Painting and Decorating

- Stage 1 – Theresa Wood
- Stage 2 – David Watson
- Scottish Decorators Federation Craft Award – David Watson.

### Plumbing

- Stage 1 (City Plumbing Trophy) – Gordon Grant
- Stage 2 (PTS Trophy) – Iain Urquhart
- Stage 3 (William Wilson Trophy) – Jason Cameron
- Aberdeen and District Master Plumbers Association Shield – Jason Cameron
- William Wilson Lead Craft Trophy – Steven Moir
- SP Education and Training Award – Ryan Walker
- Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering Award – Ian F Mitchell.

### Introduction to Construction Crafts Course

- David Murray (UCATT) Trophy – Martin Braid.



## WRIGHTS AND COOPERS AWARDS

Advanced Carpentry and Joinery students were presented with awards, sponsored by the Wrights and Coopers – one of the seven incorporated trades of Aberdeen:

The William Daniels Award was presented to William Bruce. Runners up were Chris Archibald, Duncan Blackhall and Thomas Whitehead.

The Advanced Craft students listed below received awards for sash windows they had constructed:

- Gold - Alasdair Dornan
- Silver - Sam Cosford, Marc Green, Gregor Moir, Andrew Shepherd, Robert Temple
- Bronze - Christopher Archibald, Duncan Blackhall, Jordan Bragg, William Bruce, Iain Henry, Alan Kammer, Daniel Lawtie, Stuart Massie, Calum McConnell, James Pearson, Lee Sangster, Martin Slesser, Thomas Whitehead, Ryan Woods.

## HOSPITALITY AND TRAVEL AND TOURISM AWARDS 2009

- Most Distinguished Student Travel and Tourism – Danielle Cuthill
- Most Dedicated Student Travel and Tourism – Inguna Upeniece
- Most Distinguished Student HND Travel and Tourism (1st Year) – Rhiannon Jennings
- Most Dedicated Student HND Travel and Tourism (1st Year) – Nicola Fysh
- Most Distinguished Student HND Travel and Tourism (2nd Year) – Hannah Cumming
- Most Dedicated Student HND Travel and Tourism (2nd Year) – Kelly McCormack
- Best First Year Graded Unit HND Travel and Tourism – Emma Carnie
- Best Second Year Graded Unit HND Travel and Tourism – Michael Hradecky
- Most Distinguished Student C&G Diploma Professional Cookery Level 1 – Jamie Havelock

- Most Dedicated Student C&G Diploma Professional Cookery Level 1 – Mark Wilson
- Most Distinguished Student NVQ Professional Cookery Level 3 – Samuel Taylor
- Most Dedicated Student NVQ Professional Cookery Level 3 – Sharon Louise Walker
- Most Distinguished Student HNC Hospitality – Adele Nicole Matthew
- Most Dedicated Student HNC Hospitality – Thora Innes
- Best Graded Unit HNC Hospitality – David Smith
- Most Distinguished Student HNC Events – Claire Louise Lindsay
- Effort and Achievement C&G Diploma Professional Cookery Level 1 – Angela Claire Petrie, Tracy Tomlinson, Kyle Neill Stewart
- Skills for Work – Michael Tate, Zoe Kathryn Littlejohn, Christopher Gray, Rebecca Rae McCulloch, Gary Brian Masson, Fiona McKenna.

### **HAIR AND BEAUTY FESTIVAL**

Hairdressing and beauty therapy trainees and students from across the North-East took part in the fifth annual competition, which is organised by the College's Hairdressing and Beauty Team.

Aberdeen College students were successful in the following categories:

- First Time Freestyle – 1st Ashley Swannie, 2nd Rae Stanford, Joint 3rd Danielle Palompo and Emilia Wrobel
- Men's Commercial Style – 2nd Andrew Smith
- Commercial Day Style – 2nd Emilia Wrobel
- Ladies Evening Style – 1st Rachel Reid, 2nd Nicola McDonald
- High Fashion Competition – 1st Rachel Reid, 3rd Audra Davidson
- Afro-Caribbean – 1st Frances Louses, 2nd Andrew Smith
- Cover Girl Make-up Competition – 3rd Laura Nicol
- Fantasy Make-up – 2nd Laura Nicol
- Manicure – 1st Jody Green
- North-East Trainee Make-up Artist of the Year – Laura Nicol.



### **MUSIC AND PERFORMANCE AWARDS**

The following students were presented with awards in recognition for special achievement in the fields of music and drama:

- Sarah Ord, Sarah Galloway, Lindsey Stewart and Bruce Taylor, HNC Acting and Performance
- Ross Cunningham and David Richardson, HND Music
- Linda Wylie, Music Studies
- Amy Birnie, Introduction to Music Studies.

### **HND APPLIED SCIENCE PROJECTS**

The projects undertaken by the following students were recognised:

- Best Environmental Based Project – Svetlana Losickaja
- Best Biology Based Project – Henrique Ferreira
- Best Chemistry Based Project – Ashton Russell.

### **EMERGING TALENT SCHOLARSHIPS**

Kyle Stewart, Introduction to Professional Cookery Day Release, and Mhairi Macleod, HNC Hospitality, were awarded week long scholarships at the Malmaison Hotel, Aberdeen.

### **INTER-COLLEGE GOLF COMPETITION**

The Aberdeen College Team, consisting of HND Sports Coaching with Development of Sport students – Samantha Leslie, Steven Sharp and Kyle Drummond – performed well at the competition held at Falkirk Tryst Golf Club. Samantha received the award for 'Best Female Performance'.

### **GRAMPIAN POLICE EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

A training partnership between Aberdeen College and Grampian Police was highly commended in the learning category of the Grampian Police Excellence Awards, and was nominated for the National Police Awards. The partnership sees HNC Acting and Performance students performing in police probationers role-play scenarios at the Grampian Police Nelson Street Training Centre. Students are required to realistically portray characters in a number of scenarios, including, offensive weapons searches, domestic violence and missing person enquiries.

### (iii) Events

#### INTERNATIONAL DAY

A day of cultural exchange was held at the Gallowgate Centre in May 2009. 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 various types of dancing and tasty international cuisine.

#### STUDENT SHOWCASES

Various events were held to showcase the achievements of Aberdeen College students. These included 'Super Heroes', 'Countries of the World', and 'Children 1st Restyle' Fashion Shows, performances of Anne Downie's 'The White Bird Passes', an Art and Design Portfolio Exhibition, Belmont Cinema Showcases, and The End-of-Year Art and Design Show.



#### HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Several events relating to the health and wellbeing of students and staff were held throughout 2008-09. These included: a student and staff health fair, a recreational programme, and awareness days on a variety of topics – mental health, eating disorders, organ and blood donation, sexual health, blood pressure, meningitis, and travel health and safety advice.

#### ADULT LEARNERS WEEK

In association with a host of education providers, Aberdeen College took part in a very successful programme of activities and events based on a wide variety of themes between the 9 and 15 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.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY AWARENESS DAY

The College's first Environmental and Sustainability Day was held in November 2008. The aim of the day was to increase students and staff awareness of environmental and sustainability issues. Throughout the event display stands from local organisations provided information on a wide variety of topics, including recycling, energy use and transport. New 'green' College initiatives were also launched along side some 'green' giveaways.



#### COLLEGE AWARENESS WEEK

This annual event was held to raise awareness of the disabilities faced by some Aberdeen College students. The week included a number of presentations by guest speakers and information points staffed by various organisations, including Inspire, Cornerstone, and the National Autistic Society. Workshops were also held throughout the day on sign language, and IT support technology.

### **UNIVERSITY PROGRESSION DAY**

Representatives from Robert Gordon University, University of Aberdeen, Dundee University, Abertay University, Napier University, University of the West of Scotland, the Scottish Agricultural College, and the Open University came to the Gallowgate Centre to take part in a very successful information day for final year students wishing to progress to a university degree programme. A representative from Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) was also available to offer advice on finance.



### **GOOD PRACTICE IN DEGREE LINKS SEMINAR**

This event, jointly hosted by Aberdeen College and Robert Gordon University on 14 May, brought together students, teaching and support staff from both organisations to share good practice in relation to degree links. This included the identification of 2+2 and other articulation opportunities, flexible credit transfer, part-time links, transition arrangements and good practice in learning and teaching. The event culminated in the publication of a Good Practice booklet for dissemination to staff of the College and Robert Gordon University.

### **5TH BIRTHDAY PARTY**

The Birthday Party was held in the College on 18 May to celebrate five years of substantial 2+2 Links between the College and Robert Gordon University. Board Members, invited guests and staff from both organisations attended the event which was themed to reflect the journey a student makes between starting College and completing a Degree at Robert Gordon University. The new Uni-link microsite was also launched ([www.uni-link.org](http://www.uni-link.org)).



### **GUEST SPEAKERS**

Throughout 2008-09, guest speakers from various professions and backgrounds met with students to discuss career opportunities. Speakers included: AVC Media, Fifth Ring, Hampton Associates, The Lung Ha Theatre Company, Northsound Radio, Original FM, The Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust, VSA, and a celebrated Scottish author.

### **FUNDRAISING**

College staff and students raised over £11,800 for charities during 2008-09 through a range of activities, including fancy dress, fitness challenges, and hair and beauty treatments. Charities which benefited included Barnardos, Childline, CLAN, New Arc, PDSA, and Rotary International.





# CHAIR'S WELCOME

I am pleased on behalf of the Board of Management to introduce you to Aberdeen College's Annual Review for 2008-09.

This is the first report I have contributed to in my capacity as Chair of the Board of Management, having only taken up the position from April 2009. I would wish to pay particular tribute to my predecessor, Mrs Margaret Donald, who had a long and valued service as a member of our Board. I was delighted to act as her Vice Chair during her term of office which ended in March 2009. I would also wish to pay tribute to former Board Members, Mr Bill Lawson and Mr Alan Cameron, and to support staff representative Mr Roger Taylor and Students' Association representative Ms Alanna Johnstone, who also stood down from the Board during the year. All five contributed significantly to the discussions, debates and decision making of our Board takes year on year in support of our Principal and Senior Management Team and I offer my sincere thanks to each for their contributions to the work of our College.



Ken Milroy and The Rt Hon Alex Salmond MSP at the opening of Aberdeen College's The Learning Centre – Inverurie

This report will give some insight into yet another very busy year for the College and our staff. You will see how we have continued to deliver a wide array of learning and training opportunities, not only at the College's main buildings at the Gallowgate in Aberdeen, but also at our facilities at Altens, Bridge of Don, Clinterty, Peterhead and now in Inverurie, but also throughout Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire in schools and other community settings, including now a number of local Fire Stations. Increasing access to learning remains a key driver for us. This requires dedication, sound and effective partnerships, a commitment to quality – but most of all clarity of purpose.

As a Board, we are determined to identify the needs of those we serve in communities across the North East, shape the opportunities available and in particular, to align the Colleges provision to the changing needs of business and commerce. At a time of economic recession it is imperative that Scotland's education system and institutions are working hard to equip students with the best skills, knowledge and motivation to support future economic prosperity as well as bringing improved quality of life.

Throughout the year Board Members have taken great delight in the achievement of our students and staff; such success reflects well on us all and for the College as a whole. This has very often been recognised in the array of individual awards and recognition events as well as a growing range of external awards for the College, staff and students alike. Congratulations to them all.

In closing I would wish to record my thanks to Mr Rae Angus, our Principal until February of this year, whose leadership of the College will stand us in good stead for the challenges to come. In September we appointed Mr Rob Wallen as our new Principal. The Board of Management very much look forward to working with Mr Wallen in the months and years ahead in maintaining, indeed building on, the College's excellent record of achievement and success.

Ken Milroy  
Chair



# PRINCIPAL'S REPORT



The purpose of this Review is to provide an overview of the College's performance in academic year 2008-09.

The year was one of both continuity and change.

The College continued to build on its established record of success, as demonstrated by a range of external evaluations of its performance during the year – the Annual Engagement Visit by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education, a range of External Verification visits by awarding bodies, the outcome of two Aspect Reports by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and reviews relating to IIP and Health and Safety.

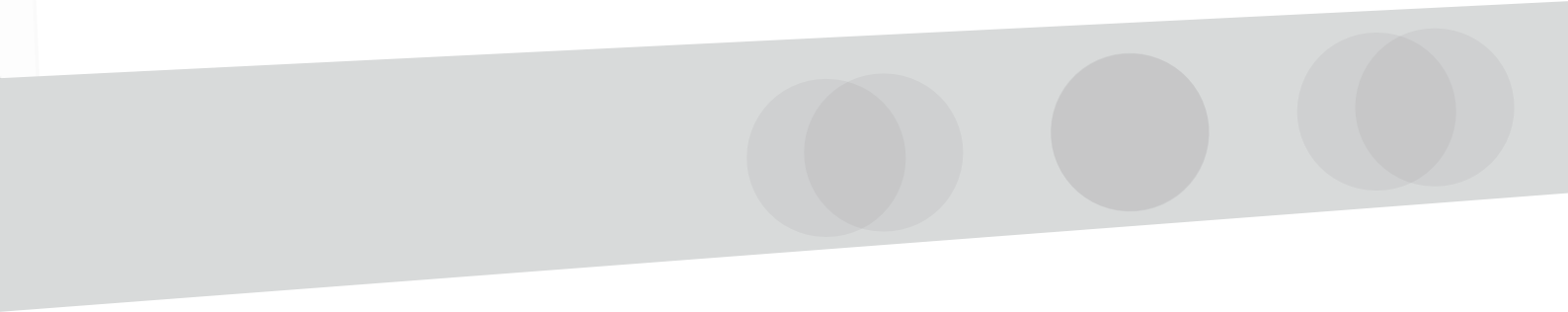
The College was also successful again in UK-wide competitions – winning a Beacon Award for the second year in succession (in this case for the creative production, adaptation and delivery of learning resources), and winning an award from Becta (formerly known as the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency) for efficiency and effectiveness.

Adding to the many prestigious quality marks and standards the College already holds, this year it achieved BS ISO 14001:2004, the quality standard for Sustainability.

Also during this year Aberdeen College was the first in Scotland to achieve the matrix Standard for its student guidance services.

Details of these and other external endorsements of the College's success are to be found in the pages of this review.

The College continued to meet and exceed the student activity target set by the Scottish Funding Council. Against a target of 151,214 weighted SUMs the College delivered 155,603 – in other words it delivered some 2.9% more activity than it was funded to deliver. This was achieved while maintaining the College's financial health. The end of year surplus on the group budget of £45m was £2.1m. However, due to the changing global and national financial circumstances the College's financial position was beginning to come under pressure during the year and as a result, action is being taken in the current year to mitigate the effects of the recession and secure the College's continuing financial health. The College Company, ASET Ltd., had another profitable year and the nature of its business is being re-profiled to meet changing patterns of demand.



The College continued to progress its estates strategy. A new Learning Centre was established in Inverurie, in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council. This Centre was opened by The First Minister, Rt. Hon Alex Salmond in time for the start of the current academic year. Work also continued to identify sites for other planned new buildings.

The partnerships with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Local Authorities and with schools also continued to develop, with c3,000 school pupils continuing to undertake Skills for Work and other vocational or curriculum enhancement programmes as part of their school education.

The College's partnership with Robert Gordon University continued to develop, with a wide range of joint activities in staff development and exchange of good practice. Links were also maintained and expanded with the University of Aberdeen and a number of other higher education institutions across Scotland.

A partnership with Grampian Fire and Rescue Service was also established whereby the College can use the Training Rooms in six Fire Stations in Aberdeenshire and one in Aberdeen City to deliver locally-based education and training.

In addition, the College continued to look further afield for ideas and good practice. Staff and students visited a range of institutions in Germany, Denmark, Sweden, France, and Finland, and the College welcomed visitors from Spain, Germany, Italy, and Bulgaria.

It was also a year of change.

During the year the College said farewell to a number of long-serving members of the Board of Management – including Mrs Margaret Donald who had been Chair since 2007, Mr Alan Cameron, and Mr Bill Lawson. To each one of them – and to the new Chair, Mr Ken Milroy, new Vice Chair, Dr Ian Heywood and all the other continuing and new members of the Board – I would like to offer my thanks for their commitment to the College and the support that they provide. Equally I would also like to acknowledge the support and contributions of a range of partners, stakeholders and contractors which have been integral elements in the College's success.

Mr Rae Angus, who had been Principal of the College since 1993, retired in February 2009. The College owes him a huge debt of gratitude for the energy and vision that he provided in shaping the successful College that we have today. The College is also very grateful to Mr Roddy Scott, Vice Principal and Director of Finance and Administration, who undertook the role of Principal in an acting capacity for some seven months.

I was appointed to the post of Principal and Chief Executive in September 2009 having worked in the College in variety of roles since 1991. I am of course delighted to have been chosen for this post and look forward very much to working with the staff of the College to continue to develop the success of Aberdeen College over the coming years.



**Rob Wallen**  
Principal and Chief Executive

## (i) Estates Development Strategy

The College has well-established plans to develop its estate, with the latest estimate of the cost of fulfilling these plans at c£110,000,000. The College's strategy is one that has the approval, in principle, from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) with permission given for the College to proceed with Phase One of the strategy. This consists of a new Construction Facility at the Altens Centre together with; the establishment of 'mini-campuses' in Ellon, Inverurie, and Stonehaven, and, the development of designs for a new campus in Aberdeen City and the redevelopment of the Gordon Centre.

In August 2009, the Aberdeen College Learning Centre (Inverurie) became operational. The Centre is situated in the campus of Inverurie Academy, but is a separate building with totally independent access and egress. The Centre has been refurbished to the same high standard as the College's other Centres and provides three general purpose teaching and learning rooms and an IT Suite. Integral to the College's overall Estates Development Strategy, this new Centre will enable the College to increase the participation of learners in rural Aberdeenshire. Discussions are taking place to secure a similar facility in the Stonehaven area.

The new Construction Facility will be built alongside the current Altens Centre, and will contain workshops and classrooms for joinery, brickwork, plumbing and painting and decorating courses, as well as a new library, learning resources centre, fitness suite, and eating area. The College is committed to reducing climate change emissions from the new Construction Facility. The new building will incorporate CO<sub>2</sub>-reducing measures, such as, the installation of solar panels, a 25KW wind turbine, natural ventilation, modulated lighting, insulation levels higher than building regulations, and radiant heat in the workshops. Rain water will also be collected and recycled for use in the building. Construction courses which are currently delivered at the College's Gallowgate Centre will relocate to the new Altens Construction Facility when it opens to students in August 2010.

## (ii) Aberdeen College and the Environment

The College acknowledges the importance of playing its role in promoting sustainability and good environmental practice, and promoting these values to staff and students. The College is working to make itself a more sustainable place to work and study through reducing its environmental impact.

In June 2009, the College was awarded the ISO 14001:2004 Standard for Environmental Systems. The Standard provides a framework for an organisation to control the environmental impacts of its activities, products and services, and to continually improve its environmental performance. It applies to those environmental aspects which the organisation can control and over which it can be expected to have an influence. These include the use of natural resources, handling and treatment of waste, and energy consumption.

The Standard was awarded following a two day assessment visit where assessors met with a variety of College staff, visited College sites and reviewed relevant paperwork and records. Within the Assessors Report five areas of good practice were recorded.

During 2008-09, a range of new 'green' initiatives were also launched:

### **ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY DAY**

The College's first Environmental and Sustainability Day was held in November 2008. The aim of the day was to increase students and staff awareness of environmental and sustainability issues. Throughout the event display stands from local organisations provided information on a wide variety of topics, including recycling, energy use and transport.

### **BIKE TO WORK SCHEME**

This Government green transport initiative allows the College to offer employees the option of hiring bicycles and cyclists' safety equipment over a 12 month period without having to pay tax or national insurance on the payments. Following its launch in January 2009, twenty one members of staff have joined the scheme.

### **ECOCAMPUS**

Aberdeen College is the first in Scotland to become part of the EcoCampus Programme. EcoCampus is a national environmental management system (EMS) development programme and award scheme for the higher and further education sectors. The scheme allows universities and colleges to be recognised for addressing key issues of environmental sustainability. The College's participation in the Programme facilitated its certification to the ISO 14001:2004 Standard.

## **TRANSPORT**

The College aims to reduce its overall transport carbon emissions by maximising the opportunities for staff, students and visitors to travel to the College and undertake College business using transport modes other than the car wherever practically possible. In addition to this the College also promotes car share initiatives (e.g. Liftshare), multiple occupancy parking, and the use of videoconferencing, where appropriate.

## **ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY INTRANET PAGES**

A new section on the Environment and Sustainability was added to the staff intranet's Knowledge Base. The section has been developed to provide a number of easily accessible links, general information and advice, on a variety of topics including waste, transport, and energy.

## **UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES CLIMATE COMMITMENT FOR SCOTLAND (UCCCFs)**

In January 2009, the College became a signatory of the Universities and Colleges Climate Commitment for Scotland (UCCCFs) along with 43 other colleges and universities. This requires the College to reduce the overall carbon footprint, and engage in community planning processes to deliver low-carbon solutions. The College is also committed to producing and publishing a five year climate change action plan with targets and timescales to achieve significant reductions in emissions from activities.

As well as the new initiatives listed, the College has continued its good practice towards the environment in a number of other areas:

## **POLICY STATEMENT AND STRATEGY**

The College's Environmental Policy Statement aims to ensure that the College conducts its business in a manner that minimises its environmental impact as far as is practicable. The College also has in place an Environmental Sustainability Strategy and many environmental procedures.

## **COLLEGE BUILDINGS**

A number of sustainability factors are considered when the College undertakes any new builds or renovations. New builds are constructed using the British Research Establishments Environmental Assessment Methodology (BREEAM). This means that specifications must take into account a wide range of impacts in the design, construction and operation of new buildings, including:

- Energy efficiency
- Transport
- Waste use and drainage
- Natural resources
- Ecology
- Community
- Internal environment
- Business opportunities and employment.

The College has committed to the new Construction Facility at Altens obtaining a BREEAM rating of 'Excellent'.

## **WASTE**

The College recycles a wide range of materials, including; paper, cardboard, plastic, timber, metals, fluorescent tubes, lamps, oils, solvents, batteries, and construction waste. Recycling bins for everyday waste can also be found throughout each of the College's centres.

The College also participates in the EU WEEE Directive. The Directive promotes the re-use, recycling and other forms of recovery in order to reduce the quantity of electrical and electronic waste discarded.

## **SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT**

Environmental and social factors are considered in College purchasing decisions with the aim of minimising the environmental and social impacts of the purchases it makes. In 2009-10, the College will establish minimum environmental performance standards expected from contractors, review existing preferred supplier lists and ensure suppliers and contractors are aware of the College's Environmental Policy. Operational procedures to ensure compliance will also be developed.

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CURRICULUM**

The College is committed to ensuring that during their time at College students should be exposed to the concepts of sustainable development in both their lives inside and outside the College environment. Through the curriculum students will receive an understanding and awareness of the fundamental issues of society's relationship to the environment.

# STUDENT LEARNING & SUCCESS

## (i) Student Activity and Enrolments

Aberdeen College is Scotland's largest college, in terms of student activity. This means that Aberdeen College provides more education and training for more people than any other college in Scotland. Levels of student activity are measured in Weighted Student Units of Measurement (WSUMs). During the year, the College recorded 155,603 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. The level of student activity delivered in 2008-09 exceeded the funded level by 2.9%.

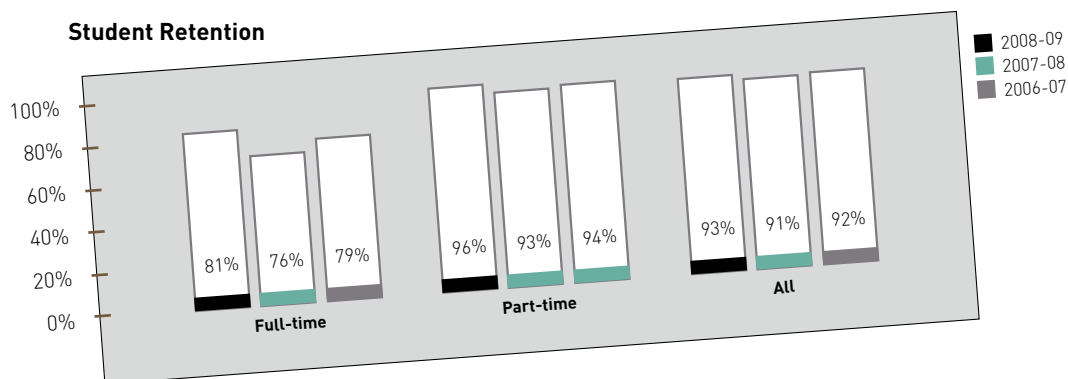
Total enrolments during the year numbered 34,314 of which 5,534 were full-time students (2,257 were on higher education courses, while 3,277 were full-time further education enrolments). The number of part-time enrolments in 2008-09 was 28,780.

The College offers a huge number of programmes to meet the needs of its clients, the demands of employers and the local and regional economy, and the requirements of other partner organisations. From full-time HND's (which on successful completion allow students to join the third year of many degree programmes), to single unit courses related for example to IT skills or safety and health legislation, Aberdeen College offers courses at over 100 community locations, four College sites, via open learning and in the workplace, to over 26,000 people (head count) a year.

## (ii) Student Retention and Attainment

The College identifies trends and areas for improvement by analysing student retention and attainment data.

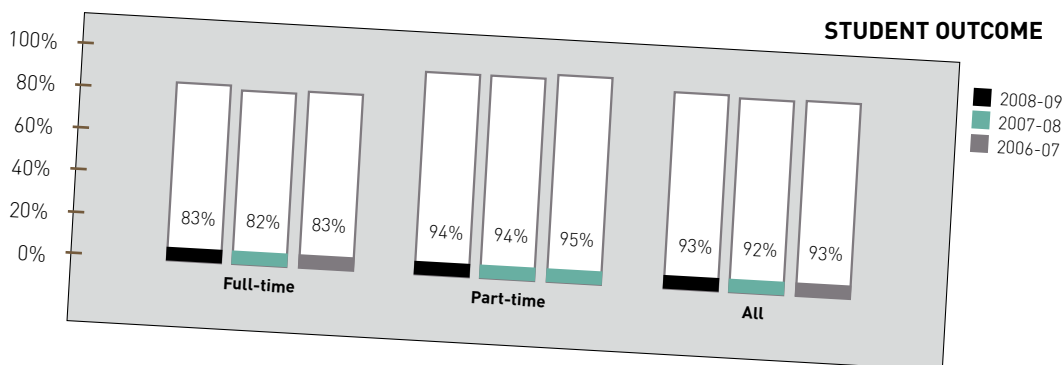
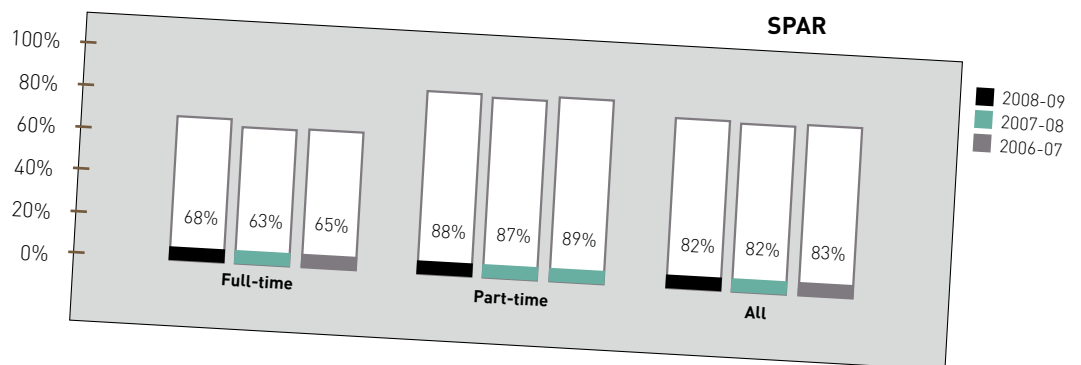
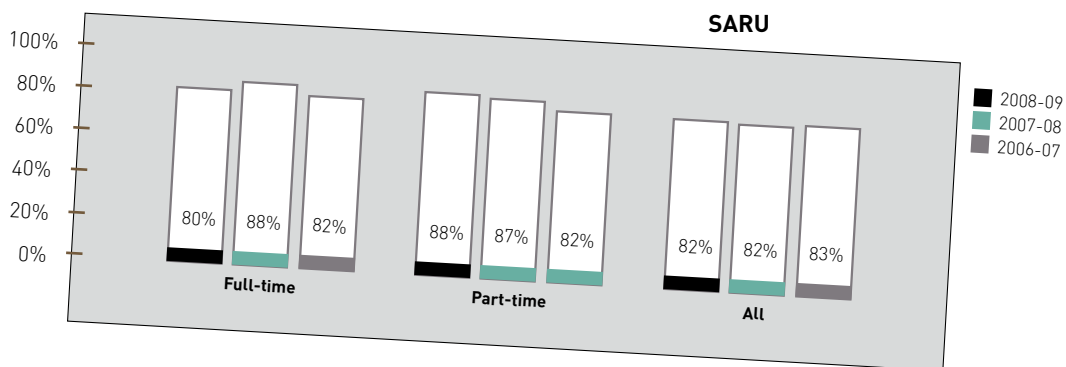
Student Retention measures how many students remain to the end of their courses compared with the number of students who remained after the first quarter of it.



Clearly the extent to which students achieve a successful outcome is of importance to the College and its students. Providing access to nationally-recognised vocational qualifications is a core function of the College and completion rates of these programmes has implications for the availability of skills, locally and nationally.

The College measures a number of criteria related to student attainment using nationally-recognised measures:

- Student Achievement Ratio by Unit (SARU) measures the 'pass' rate in terms of individual units of study. Whilst a student may not complete all the units necessary to attain the course or programme, many students will normally pass a number of units on the course. This partial success of these students is measured as a component of the Student Achievement Ratio by Unit.
- Student Programme Achievement Ratio (SPAR) measures the number of students who are present after 25% of the course and who complete an entire programme of study successfully.
- Student Outcome compares the number of students who are successful in achieving specific outcomes of nationally-recognised qualifications.



The data presented above allows the College to review general performance.

High SARU figures suggest that:

- Lesson plans reflect learning objectives
- Schemes of work are adhered to when delivering subjects
- Policy on assessment is implemented effectively.
- Student's are aware of assessment schedules, and deadlines
- Monitoring and resulting of student work is effective
- Assessment instruments are valid and consistent with unit requirements.

High SPAR and Student Outcome figures suggest that:

- Pre-entry guidance guides students to the correct level
- A programme is well-designed
- Programme delivery is well organised
- Standards set within the course are at a suitable level
- Guidance and support helps students progress through their course
- Accommodation, equipment, materials and staff are sufficient
- Assessment is effective.



# THE CURRICULUM

## (i) Introduction

Aberdeen 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."* In order to achieve this the College recognises the need to ensure that its portfolio of provision is able to meet the needs of a wide range of sections of the community – school leavers, adult returners, those with learning difficulties, employers, and those in employment.

The College also recognises that changes in the needs and aspirations of clients, in the overall economic environment, in the curriculum framework and in the educational and training technology require the College to continually review its range of provision in order to refine existing programmes and introduce new ones.

Much of the College's curriculum remains the same from one year to the next, subject to recurrent updating of programmes. However, the College also makes changes to its overall offer to better meet the needs of clients. This may involve removing some old programmes that are no longer 'fit for purpose', introducing new programmes to meet demand, or changing the awarding body used.

During the review period, a number of new full and part-time courses were introduced. The full-time portfolio was extended to include: HNC/D Animal Care; HNC/D Art and Design; HNC Fashion Make-Up; HNC Health Care; HNC/D Legal Services; HND Music; NC Child, Health and Social Care; NC Early Education and Childcare; NVQ Hairdressing Levels 1/2/3; NVQ Hospitality (Professional Cookery) Level 3; NVQ Land Based Service Engineering Levels 2/3.

Part-time provision was also refreshed with the introduction of new courses, including: PDA Certificate in Early Education and Childcare; PDA Introduction to Tutoring in Adult Literacies Learning; and City and Guilds Diploma in Sport and Leisure. In order to ensure that any change to the College's portfolio of provision is systematic, the College has in place detailed processes of curriculum planning and approval which ensure that new provision is based on thorough market research, has a clear rationale, and meets the requirements of awarding bodies.

The College continues to provide progression opportunities for those leaving school as well as adult returners and those who wish to progress to university programmes. In relation to schools, the College also continues to offer a range of Skills for Work programmes and other certificated programmes for pupils in the upper years of secondary education.

During the review period the College further developed its links with a range of institutions. Links have been formalised with ten HE institutions which provide the opportunity for students completing HN programmes to progress to the second or third year of a degree programme.

In 2007-08 the College developed an agreement with Robert Gordon University to allow students who had completed part of the BA (Hons) Communication with PR degree, but were unable to continue their studies towards the degree, to gain credit for their achievement to date towards the College's HND Communication with Media programme. This proposal was accepted by SQA in 2008-09 and as such became the first example of 'Flexible Credit Transfer' to be approved in Scotland. The arrangement enables the student to obtain maximum credit for their partial achievement at Robert Gordon University towards a HND qualification – with the option, under 2+2 arrangements, to rejoin the degree programme in Year 3, having completed the HND. Following on from this success, the College and Robert Gordon University are working to develop similar arrangements in other curriculum areas, such as Healthcare.

## (ii) The Teaching Sectors

Around 70% of the College's activity is delivered by the four main Teaching Sectors - Business, Computing and Land-Based; Creative Industries; Sport and Languages; Engineering and Construction; and Service Industries and Social Sciences.

Full-time courses from introductory level to Higher National Diplomas and a wide range of part-time courses are delivered by the Teaching Sectors. Following the successful implementation of a new teaching structure in 2008-09, each Sector Manager is now supported by Team Managers who lead identified areas within each Sector. Curriculum Leaders are responsible for the quality of teaching and learning in the curriculum. Evidence of the success of the new teaching structure includes improved retention and attainment levels across the College and an increase in applications for 2009-10.

Sector staff work with cross-College teams, such as Community and Lifelong Learning, The Learning Development Centre, Multimedia Centre and the Flexible Learning Department to provide seamless articulation and progression routes for learners within the College's overall provision and to provide flexible learning opportunities, and appropriate guidance and support for learners.

## (iii) Multimedia Centre

The College's Multimedia Centre (MMC) continued to expand the range and diversity of its full and part-time provision in 2008-09. The newly introduced HNC/D Creative Industries Television and Radio courses continued to be well received with enrolments once again reaching capacity. Part-time courses in both radio and TV were successful, and the part-time Film School, targeted at amateur film makers, continued to attract many participants, some of which articulated to full-time courses. MMC students also continued to be involved in the wider community by producing short videos for Young Enterprise Grampian, Aberdeenshire Action and CLAN, amongst others.

The MMC continued with its Media Academy status awarded by Skillset - the Sector Skills Council for Audio Visual Industries in 2007. The award recognises excellence in the learning and teaching provided by the MMC and the high standard of technical equipment available to students. The status also denotes that Aberdeen College is part of the Skillset Creative Loop, a partnership of six Scottish colleges.

The technical facilities in the MMC were further improved in 2008-09. Both the recording studio and television edit suite were upgraded to incorporate the latest industry standard technologies.

## (iv) Learning Development Centre

The Learning Development Centre has two core activities. The first of these is the management of cross-College support for students who have an identified additional support need and the second is the provision of its own dedicated curriculum portfolio.

In 2008-09:

- 2,348 Personal Learning and Support Plans were created across College to record the support provided to students with additional support needs
- 101 full-time and 296 part-time students, including school link pupils, were enrolled onto dedicated Learning Development Centre programmes
- Over 800 Needs Assessments were completed for Community and Lifelong Learning students
- Special exam arrangements were managed for over 100 students
- Over 450 students attended presentations linked to disability, race, gender and age as part of the College's annual Awareness Week.

Personal care and mobility support was offered through the auxiliary support network with assistance provided both in the classroom and in student social areas at break times.

Recognition was given in the Partnership Matters Document, produced by the Scottish Government, of the College's now established partnership arrangements through the Learning Development Centre with other agencies involved in supporting the transition of young people and vulnerable adults to College.

Specific courses continued to be offered through the Learning Development Centre for students with additional support needs and who were not ready for mainstream courses. These included full-time and part-time courses to develop citizenship and Core Skills, courses for visually impaired students and courses for students on the Autistic spectrum.

Staff development was provided by the Learning Development Centre Team, including sessions on teaching students with additional learning needs such as autism or specific behavioural issues, assistive technologies, and inclusion.

## (v) Community and Lifelong Learning

During 2008-09 the Community and Lifelong Learning Department continued to expand its services to community-based learners across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, delivering over 627 courses during the year, 127 more than in the previous year.

There were 6,088 community-based enrolments in 2008-09. This was an increase of 11% on the previous year and was largely due to the success of the expanding Independent Programme which accounted for 57% of the total community-based enrolments in 2008-09.

The remaining 43% of enrolments were delivered in partnership with a number of voluntary agencies, including Aberdeen Foyer, and with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Community Learning and Development.

The expansion of the Community and Lifelong Learning Programme was also supported by the success of the College's partnership with Grampian Fire and Rescue Service, which generated 469 enrolments and 32 additional courses, during its first year of operation. The Learning Centre in Peterhead also increased its activity in 2008-09, generating 26% more enrolments than in the previous year.

The Community and Lifelong Learning Team continued to allocate Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) credit ratings for a range of College Certificate programmes in order to promote progression to further study or to employment. This enabled more local people to gain nationally recognised qualifications leading to enhanced employment opportunities. In addition, 21 full-time learners were enrolled on community-based ESOL classes in 2008-09.

## (vi) Flexible Learning

In May 2009 the Flexible Learning Department was formed by combining the Business Development Unit (BDU) and the Open Learning Department with Ethos Associates programmes. The new department has three areas of business – Ethos Associates programmes, Care and Social subjects, and Business and Information Technology subjects.

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. In 2008-09, the key areas of provision were food hygiene, dementia care, fire safety, infection control and safe handling of medicines. 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.

The Flexible Learning Department delivers training and assessment in the workplace using vocational qualifications and certificated programmes. Programmes were delivered mainly in the North-East of Scotland in partnership with local and national employers and private providers. In 2008-09, 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.



## (vii) IT and Assessment Centres

The College's IT Centre continued to offer its wide range of courses available via drop in, or through the College's VLE. In addition to non-certificated computer-based packages, instructor-assisted learning for IT skills, a range of business, professional development and multimedia courses were offered. The range of flexible access courses leading to nationally-recognised qualifications from a variety of awarding bodies was also expanded.

During the review period, the College's commitment to the development of e-assessment was furthered by the expansion of the range of exams offered by the College's Assessment Centres. The College also continued to operate two Assessment Centres which meet the specifications for City and Guilds online testing for full-time students.

## (viii) Skillseekers and Modern Apprenticeship Agency

In 2008-09 the College maintained its Skillseekers and Modern Apprenticeship Agency and was subject to successful audit by Skills Development Scotland.

# 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
- c1,500 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 Support

In order to maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of its IT services the College outsourced its IT support function to RM plc. Independent analysis of the outsourcing indicates that the approach has led to significant improvement in the IT support function and its impact on College activities.

During the review period, the IT support function and the College's own retained inhouse IT development staff increased the resilience of College systems and developed the sophistication of online information and functionality.

The effectiveness of the College's approach was recognised at the 2009 Becta Next Generation Learning Awards when Aberdeen College received a 'Special Award for Achieving Efficiency and Effectiveness'. The award was presented in acknowledgement of the College's use of IT in the delivery of the curriculum and the management of underpinning business processes.

## (iii) 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 applications, enrolments, attendance, and results
- Celcat – timetabling system
- Team Spirit – staffing system covering payroll, qualifications, holidays etc
- Sun Accounts – financial management package
- OLIB – automated library catalogue
- AbNet – staff intranet providing access to essential College information.

Where appropriate and feasible, these systems have been interlinked so that, once captured, data can be reused without re-keying. The College's approach, while being innovative, has also been cautious to avoid any risk of system failure through inappropriate linkages.

The introduction of new IT systems and the enhancement of existing IT systems has enabled the College to re-engineer key business processes to improve efficiency and responsiveness. The use of IT systems has also led to reductions in the requirement for administration staff, paper usage, and photocopying costs. During the review period, work on streamlining business processes continued and automated online workflows were implemented in place of traditional paper-based approaches wherever possible.



A range of developments which impact directly on students and potential students of the College have also been introduced:

- The College's external website provides a wide range of information about studying at the College and the types of provision offered
- Applicants can (and increasingly do) apply for courses 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 provides students with essential information, in an easily-accessible form
- Student attendance is recorded electronically 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
- Student results are electronically recorded directly into the student records system, reducing delay and potential for mis-keying
- Automated text messaging is used to advise students of changes to scheduled classes or to query absences
- The Student Portal provides students with a single log-in point to access their email account, relevant course and College information, and curriculum materials, and is a medium through which surveys of students are conducted
- InfoPoints are available throughout the College to provide students with direct access to online information from external providers on personal issues e.g. finance, health.

## (v) 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 to self-study 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. The College has dedicated online assessment centres which enable students to carry out assessments at times convenient to them and where assessments 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.

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. Students can also access the VLE from their own home, providing they have internet access, as a way of undertaking additional or refresher study for their courses.

Over the review period, the College's approach has been to increase the range and sophistication of materials available within the VLE so that a rich resource is provided both for students who need additional support and for those who benefit from extension beyond the core course concepts.

During 2008-09 the programme to issue wireless enabled laptop computers on loan to selected classes of students for the duration of their course was continued: 1,100 full-time mainstream students were issued with laptops (in addition to those loaned to students on other programmes who had an identified learning need that could be improved through the use of IT).

The College also acquired 'smart 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.

These approaches allow 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.



## (vi) Training and Development

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, 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 and have been offered opportunities to take part in experiences to develop their IT skills such as the e-Olympics and FERL training. In the review period selected staff also commenced work towards the European Pedagogical ICT (EPICT) Licence qualification, and this qualification will be offered to a wider range of staff in 2009-10.

Equally it has been important to provide teaching staff with appropriate support in using the technology effectively. The VLE Support Team – VLE Manager, two Content Development Support Co-ordinators, two Senior Lecturers – assist staff in the use of an increasing range of types of software and approaches available within the VLE.

## (vii) Awards

As noted above, the College has received a series of significant awards for its IT provision over the recent past. These include two UK Beacon Awards, open to all colleges in the UK (the Becta Award for e-enabling Organisational Development, and the FENC Award for Creative Production, Adaptation and Delivery of Learning Resources) and a special award from Becta for 'Achieving Efficiency and Effectiveness' through the use of IT. The College's successes provide a clear endorsement of its sector-leading status in the use of IT.

# LEARNING & 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 comprehensive, sophisticated and integrated 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 individuals in need of additional training or support
- Continuing Professional Development opportunities for all staff, and bespoke training for those staff with a need for additional support
- 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.
- The development of Programme Delivery Guidelines for each curriculum area, which provide a focus for clarifying and recording the agreed team approach to the delivery and assessment of the curriculum, and the expectations of staff and students.

During the year these arrangements were fully implemented.

## (ii) Learning and Teaching Group

Following the signing of the Associate College Agreement with Robert Gordon University in October 2007, four joint operational groups were established to progress collaborative developments.

The Learning and Teaching Group plans and implements a programme of activities that leads to sharing and developing good practice in the delivery of the curriculum with a view to improving retention, attainment and progression in the two institutions through enhanced learner engagement. The Group provides an opportunity to share information on quality management and improvement in the curriculum and teaching practice and develop joint approaches, where applicable. The Learning and Teaching Group is chaired jointly by the Director of Learning and Teaching, Aberdeen College, and the Dean of DELTA, Robert Gordon University. A range of staff from both institutions are also involved, including representatives from staff development, educational development, e-learning and quality audit and enhancement.

During 2008-09 the Learning and Teaching Group initiated a number of activities:

- Development of shared guidelines for evaluating the effectiveness of online learning and teaching, and online assessment
- Development of a common questionnaire for obtaining student feedback on the Virtual Learning Environments of each institution
- Joint audit of processes for collecting and responding to student feedback
- Reciprocal access to each institution's staff development programme at no cost
- Shared information on current approaches to e-learning
- Development of protocols enabling Robert Gordon University staff to teach at Aberdeen College and vice-versa
- Establishment of an Innovation Fund to further facilitate creative and collaborative approaches to learning and teaching.

### (iii) 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 desks' – the College has been able to embed the VLE at the heart of the learning experience. In 2008-09, 1,100 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 – course materials supplied electronically and the electronic submission of assessments. This approach will be maintained in 2009-10 when some 1,200 students will be issued with laptops or netbooks in this way.

During the review period, the College extended the piloting of the 'hybrid' approach to the delivery of full-time courses in some of the 'paperless' classes. In this approach the amount of classroom teaching is much reduced and instead supplemented by self-study using VLE-based materials. The approach was focused on groups of students who had the maturity to be able to benefit from this approach to study, and it has proved to be highly effective and popular. The approach will be extended to a further four groups in 2009-10.

The analysis of usage of the VLE during the review period indicated a considerable increase in use by students both in class and outwith classes in 2008-09 compared with 2007-08. Audits of VLE materials also confirmed an increasing sophistication of content used in the Virtual Learning Environment. Awards won during the review period, referred to elsewhere in this publication, reflect the extent to which the College is sector leading in these regards.

### (iv) Core Skills and Soft Skills

During 2008-09, the College further refined its approaches to the development of Soft Skills.

The College continued to use the Soft Skills audit checklist as a way of establishing the extent to which the Soft Skills (citizenship, employability, study skills, personal development, environmental awareness, and the five Core Skills that underpin them all) are embedded in College programmes and to seek opportunities to embed them further. An exercise was also undertaken to map the College's Soft Skills audit checklist criteria against the four competencies of Curriculum for Excellence. This will ensure that the College is in a position to provide effective transition and extension for pupils leaving school and progressing to College.

The knowledge base of materials relating to citizenship and environmental sustainability was maintained and extended to provide a resource for staff teaching in all areas of the curriculum to draw upon 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.

Students continued to be involved 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. Individual progress in terms of Core and Soft Skills will continue to be monitored throughout 2009-10.

At the end of 2008-09 dedicated computer-based Core Skills diagnosis and development materials were acquired. These allow the communication and numeracy skills of students to be measured on first arrival in College and recorded electronically within their Individual Learning Plans. All teaching staff can access the results of each student they teach to ensure that Core Skills levels are considered when planning course delivery. The materials will also allow individual developmental pathways to be prepared for students whose Core Skills starting point is below what would usually be expected.



# LEARNER SUPPORT

Aberdeen College is committed to providing all learners with the maximum support possible during their studies. The following support services continued to be available to students at the College throughout 2008-09:

## (i) Learner Services

In promoting 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 information, guidance, support and advisory services. 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 study and are provided with study and personal support while they are at College.

### **PRE-ENTRY GUIDANCE**

Students wishing to discuss their study options before applying were able to request a freely-available appointment with an experienced member of the Guidance Team or a member of academic staff. Guidance staff continued to provide information about support for childcare needs, the availability of accommodation in the local area and the type of support available from College discretionary funds. In addition to offering impartial pre-entry through attendance at external and internal career events and through appointment systems, Guidance Tutors were focal in scheduled pre-entry guidance and 'warm up sessions' organised by academic staff.

Applicants who were identified as having additional support needs were invited for an Assessment of Needs meeting with staff from the Learning Development Centre who, where appropriate, arranged suitable support. A Personal Learning and Support Plan was completed for each individual with details of the support required.

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

The College updated its Progression Guide, which illustrates entry and exit points for College courses and progression routes to other College and HEI courses. The Guide also indicates progression into specific courses offered by partner universities, where students completing College programmes may be eligible to enter Year 2 or 3 of a university course.

## **BURSARIES AND OTHER SOURCES OF FINANCE**

The College administers a substantial fund of about £4.3 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 available to 16-18 year olds.

The College also administers substantial discretionary funds – the HE Discretionary Fund and the HE Childcare Fund, provided by the Student Awards Agency for Scotland, and the FE Discretionary Fund and FE Childcare Fund, provided by the Scottish Funding Council. The total value of the funds in 2008-09 was in excess of £1 million. As in previous years, the College followed set procedures to assess students' needs to ensure that funds were applied to provide maximum impact on student retention and achievement.

## **GENERAL ACADEMIC GUIDANCE SERVICE**

The Guidance Tutor Team within Learner Services provided a wide-ranging support system to full-time students. All full-time students were allocated a named Guidance Tutor. Guidance Tutors delivered a 10-week induction programme and thereafter followed a schedule of group and individual meetings with learners which incorporated opportunities for Soft Skill development, Core Skills profiling, personal development planning, and career guidance. In addition to pre-scheduled weekly meetings, full-time students met with their Guidance Tutor on an individual basis a minimum of three times during 2008-09 to review and update Individual Learning Plans (ILPs).

## **CAREERS SERVICES**

During 2008-09 the College continued to provide a Careers Service staffed with a College Careers Adviser and Advisers from Careers Scotland. Online support to students seeking entrance through UCAS to university was developed via the VLE (Blackboard) facility. Information was also available on the Learner Services plasma screens. 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.

## **(ii) Other Services**

The Occupational Health Team, contracted from Alpha Health Services, provides information and support on health matters to staff and students. Throughout 2008-09 several health promotion activities for students were held at each of the College's main centres. (Further information on health promotion activities can be found on page 47).

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 continue to monitor the effectiveness of the College's complaints procedures by vetting the way in which the College responds to formal complaints received during the year. In 2008-09 all complaints were satisfactorily resolved.

Throughout 2008-09, the National Autistic Society were in College weekly to offer support linked to social and curriculum skills to both staff and students. This was provided as a confidential service through the Learning Development Centre.

# LEARNER ENGAGEMENT

During the review period, the College remained committed to providing all learners with the best possible educational experience. In achieving this aim, the College recognises the value of listening to learners' views and acting promptly to address any issues which arise.

Throughout the College, learners are given many formal opportunities to air their opinions and to raise any issues which are important to them to various levels of College staff. In addition, a large amount of informal interchange of ideas and views occurs between students and staff on an everyday basis. The formal opportunities afforded to the College's learners include:

## **STUDENT DISCUSSION GROUPS WITH THE PRINCIPAL AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM**

These open forum meetings allow students to raise, directly with the Principal or other member of the Senior Management Team, any issues which may be of concern to them. Once resolved, the results are fed back to the students by way of a formal letter containing confirmation of actions taken. In 2008-09 over 25 of these meetings took place.

## **STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS WITH SENIOR LECTURERS (QUALITY IMPROVEMENT)**

Senior Lecturers (Quality Improvement) (SLQIs) facilitate focus group sessions with specific classes of students. Each SLQI meets with three class groups on three occasions during the academic year. Actions arising from the meetings are assigned to a relevant manager for investigation and resolution. Students are then informed of the course of action taken. In 2008-09 over 130 of these meetings took place.

## **STUDENT MEETINGS WITH SECTOR MANAGERS**

Sector Managers first meet with new groups of students as part of the induction programme. Thereafter meetings are held regularly to discuss issues pertaining to their experience at College, and specifically pertaining to their course. In 2008-09 over 200 of these meetings took place.

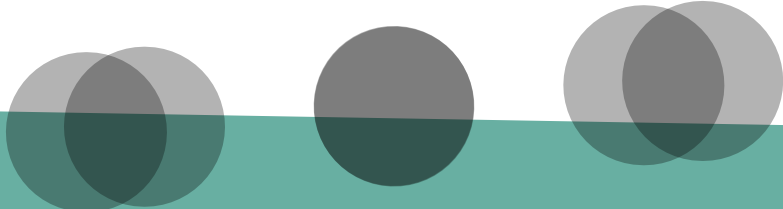
## **COURSE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Course Committee Meetings are held two or three times a year by each teaching team. At these meetings, the student voice is heard via class representatives. The meetings are recorded, and provide the framework for action in relation to the College's self-evaluation process, ensuring that student views are heard, and acted upon as a key process for quality improvement. In 2008-09 over 400 of these meetings took place.

In addition to the formal meetings listed above, the College encourages other forums which allow the learner voice to be heard clearly. Some examples of these are given below:

## **ABERDEEN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

The President of Aberdeen College Students' Association represents students on the College's Board of Management and on several key cross-College committees, such as the Equal Opportunities Committee and the Health and Safety Committee.



### **STUDENT SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS**

Students can submit their suggestions and comments through a standard form. All suggestions and comments received are addressed and responded to by the College's Quality Department.

### **CLASS REPRESENTATIVES**

Every full-time group of students elects a class representative. The class representative meets with the Sector Manager at least three times a year to discuss issues raised by their classmates. The issues raised are recorded, and actions taken are confirmed in writing to representatives.

### **COURSE EVALUATION**

Course evaluation forms are utilised both at individual subject level, and at course level, to identify trends in student satisfaction year on year.

### **LESSON OBSERVATION – STUDENT FEEDBACK**

Student feedback is sought on a routine basis during the lesson observation process. Records of feedback are sent to lecturers and managers, for information and action.

### **LEARNER REPRESENTATION IN COLLEGE POLICIES**

Learners are invited to comment on new or updated College policies and action plans.

### **STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES**

Students in all College classes are surveyed by questionnaire at various stages throughout the academic year. Data from these surveys are analysed and used in self evaluative activities to compare year-on-year findings and to encourage improvements to programmes and services.

### **EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF LEARNER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

- Improvements made to induction letters and materials
- Timetabling of breaks improved
- New group study areas created
- College wayfinding and signage improved
- College maps updated and made more widely available
- External and internal marketing campaigns implemented to address lack of clients for hair and beauty treatments
- Music and Performing Arts students given more access to recording studios and practice space outwith timetabled classes.

# COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIP

## (i) Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils

During 2008-09, the College maintained its Community Learning and Development Partnerships with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils. The College is involved in the implementation of the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Community Learning and Development Strategies and negotiations are underway to establish a single point of contact between the Local Authorities and the College.

The College remained an active partner in Aberdeenshire's Literacies Partnership, and Lifelong Learning Theme Forum, and Aberdeen City's Lifelong Learning Challenge Forum, Aberdeen Works Forum and The Aberdeen City Alliance (TACA).

Throughout the review period, the College continued to work closely with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils and other partners to implement local action plans in response to the Scottish Government's 'More Choices, More Chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Number of Young People Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEET) in Scotland'.

In partnership with Aberdeenshire Council the College secured premises in the campus of Inverurie Academy for the establishment of a Learning Centre to serve the needs of the Garioch area. This Centre opened in August 2009.

## (ii) 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).

### **ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY**

In October 2007 Aberdeen College became an Associate College of Robert Gordon University and entered into an agreement with the University to work more closely in partnership for the benefit of students, employers and local communities. This arrangement offers the College and the University scope to improve efficiency, effectiveness and to extend to students more flexible and easier access to higher education through improved choice and surer progression pathways.

A Strategic Steering Group was established with a remit to realise the aspirations of the Associate College initiative. This Group drives forward the strategic direction of the partnership, and oversees the developing programme of activities between the two institutions. Four Joint Operational Groups are tasked with implementing the decisions and policies made at strategic level - Joint Liaison Group, Learning and Teaching Group, Deans and Sector Managers' Planning Group, and Student Support Group. Each Group met regularly throughout the review period, and the first Annual Report on the impact of the Associate College Agreement was published in May 2009.

Also in May 2009, the institutions celebrated five years of substantial Degree Linking by jointly hosting a 5th Birthday Party, which included the launch of the new uni-link website ([www.uni-link.org](http://www.uni-link.org)). A Good Practice in Degree Links Seminar was also held, culminating in the production of a Good Practice booklet for dissemination to staff of the College and the Robert Gordon University.



During 2008-09 the College worked closely with Robert Gordon University to further strengthen links and to provide additional progression and articulation opportunities for learners. The Degree Link Programme continues to offer guaranteed access to Year 3 of 22 degrees, following successful completion of one of the College's 18 related Higher National Diplomas. In May 2009 a BA Commercial Photography course was validated for joint delivery by the College and Robert Gordon University from August 2009. In partnership with Robert Gordon University the College piloted flexible credit transfer in identified areas. This initiative, approved by SQA, is designed to enable first or second year University students for whom degree level study is proving too demanding, to use credits gained at University to articulate to a related HND. This allows learners to remain in education and training and to gain an HND qualification and/or to ultimately progress to degree level study.

### **UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN**

During 2008-09 the articulation agreement with the University of Aberdeen, established in 2006, was further developed. Within this agreement nine Higher National Diploma programmes at the College provided progression opportunities to Year 3 of 28 degree programmes across a range of disciplines.

The University has now concluded its Curriculum Review which has resulted in changes to the structure and content of its degree programme. In light of these changes the articulation agreement is being reviewed to ensure the new opportunities can be maximised to the benefit of current and future learners.

### (iii) 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.

The College has also continued to offer Skills for Work and other vocational opportunities, in areas such as Hairdressing, Engineering, Construction, Automotive, Early Years Care and Rural Skills, for pupils in school years S3 to S5. The European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL), IT Core Skills and courses in First Aid were also delivered in schools during the review period. In 2008-09, 2,470 school pupils enrolled on Skills for Work vocational or Curriculum Enhancement courses.

### (iv) 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. A range of computer courses using instructor-led and computer-based approaches from introductory IT units to certificated SQA units and the ECDL were offered by the College in a variety of locations. During 2008-09, 59 Aberdeen College courses operated in libraries in Aberdeen City and 8 courses were delivered in libraries in Aberdeenshire. Courses included ECDL and Advanced ECDL, e-Citizen and Desktop Publishing.

### (v) 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, with 77 young people participating in these programmes in 2008-09. During the review period the College's Learning Centre in Peterhead was the venue for both Lifeshaper and Princes Trust courses.

### (vi) Grampian Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS)

The College's partnership with Grampian Fire and Rescue Service was launched in 2008-09 and generated 469 enrolments during the first year of operation. This partnership has facilitated the delivery of College courses to local people in local fire stations, and in 2008-09 32 additional community-based courses were delivered due to the availability of the participating fire stations. Such is the success of this initiative that two additional fire stations will be added to the Partnership in the next planning period. This is understood to be the only collaborative venture of its kind in the UK.

## (vii) European Projects

The College's European Projects Team secures funding from a number of sources such as the European Lifelong Learning Programme, sponsorship from Members of the European Parliament, Scottish Parliament and other local, national and international funds. These funds enable staff and students to experience a European dimension in terms of exchanges, project work, staff training and job shadowing.

Aberdeen College staff and students participated in the following projects during 2008-09:

### **PAVE (PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO STUDENTS EMPLACEMENT)**

Ten multimedia and photography students and two staff members took part in a Leonardo da Vinci mobility project to ESB Medien College in Dresden, Germany. The project included filming and broadcasting from the CYNET ART festival. Staff and students from ESB Medien College participated in a reciprocal visit to Aberdeen College, which included the filming of performances at the Aberdeen International Youth Festival. This project was chosen as an exemplar by the UK National Agency ECOTEC and was showcased at a national Creativity and Innovation in European Collaboration event in July 2009.

### **FAIR (FASHION INSPIRED BY RHYMES)**

This two year Comenius Bilateral project involved an exchange of 20 fashion students and two staff members with IPSIA Cernusco College in Milan. Aberdeen College students visited Milan in June 2008, followed by a reciprocal visit by Italian students in October 2008. This project was also cited as an exemplar by the UK National Agency ECOTEC.

### **ICARUS**

This was a Socrates Grundtvig partnership between Aberdeen College, VEDA Consult PLC in Gabrovo, Bulgaria, and the Alberghiero Panzini Institute in Senigallia, Italy. Eight Aberdeen College HND Travel and Tourism students and two lecturers participated in the project which focused on the production of a website detailing tourism provision in each of the partner areas. The project also enabled the sharing of good practice, and identification of gaps in hospitality and tourism training in the three partner areas. During the project College students visited Gabrovo and Senigallia.

### **MUSILE (MUSIC FOR A WHILE)**

Students and staff from the music and performing arts departments are participating in Comenius funded exchange study visits to Finland and Germany to share teaching methodologies and musical and drama experiences.

### **HERBKEY**

This Comenius partnership with Italian and Slovakian institutes enables biology students to pursue scientific studies of the past and current use of herbs in medicine.

### **ECOSSE (E-COMMERCE OPPORTUNITIES IN SCOTTISH AND SPANISH EDUCATION)**

Following a visit in May 2009 by students and staff from IES Santiago Hernandez College in Zaragoza, Spain, a Leonardo mobility grant was secured for a project entitled ECOSSE. The grant will enable 10 IT and 10 business students, and three staff to visit IES Santiago Hernandez College to collaborate on e-commerce studies.



European funding was also utilised during 2008-09 for the following:

#### **STRASBOURG STUDY VISIT**

Every year, MEP sponsorship is used to enable 20 students and accompanying staff to visit the European Parliament and European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France.

#### **AUSCHWITZ STUDY VISIT**

Two students participated in a study visit, sponsored by the Holocaust Educational Trust, to the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland. On their return, the students gave presentations to staff and students which linked the message of the Holocaust to current day inequalities and racism.

#### **FACT FINDING VISIT**

College staff travelled to five Colleges in Denmark and Sweden to explore and compare learner engagement strategies, methods of increasing student retention, and addressing mismatches between vocational education supply and labour market demand, particularly in the current economic recession. This trip was funded by a Leonardo Preparatory Visit Grant and College funds.

#### **EUROPEAN STAFF**

The College gained an insight into European teaching approaches when two temporary appointments were made to the College's staffing complement. A Finnish Comenius Assistant worked with students with additional learning needs between October 2008 and June 2009, and an Erasmus Teaching Assistant from the University of Munster in Germany taught construction and engineering students at the College between February and June 2009.

# QUALITY & EXCELLENCE

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.

In 2008-09, HMIE carried out an annual engagement visit at the College. During the visit, no development actions or areas for improvement were identified and four areas of excellence were highlighted. The College's Inspector subsequently gave a presentation to the Board of Management on the outcome of the visit.

The College was involved in one HMIE Subject Review which was in the curriculum area of art and design, and in one HMIE Aspect Review on sustainability. In both reviews the College was commended by HMIE on its approach.

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

- Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)
- Customer Service Excellence
- ISO 10002:2004 Complaints Management
- Investors in People (IIP)

In addition to the above, the College also achieved:

- ISO 14001:2004 for its Environmental Management System
- Scotland's Healthy Working Lives Gold Award (making it the only organisation in Grampian to hold both this award and Scotland's Healthy Working Lives Mental Health Commendation Award)
- RoSPA Gold Medal Award for Occupational Health and Safety.

## (i) Awarding Body Requirements

The College 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
- ASET Q

There were 68 external verification visits and external verification events carried out by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and other awarding bodies. The College was found to comply with the requirements of the various awarding bodies and no holds were placed on certification.

## (ii) Internal Audit

The College conducts an annual programme of internal quality audits. In 2008-09 the audit programme focused on:

### The embedding of Core and Soft Skills within the curriculum

Core and Soft Skills were found to be effectively embedded within course delivery, and promoted through systematic lesson planning.

### The extent of the use of the VLE

Internal audit found that the VLE continues to enhance learning and teaching across the College through both routine and innovative use.

### The quality of master packs

This was found to be acceptable in all areas, and very good in a number of areas audited.

### The extent to which equalities issues were addressed during delivery of courses

Evidence showed that equalities issues were addressed during the planning and delivery of courses, particularly in areas where there was an identifiable gender imbalance. There was also evidence of curriculum teams working with school pupils to address inappropriate gender perceptions.

## (iii) Lesson Observation

In 2008-09 lesson observations were carried out with 164 lecturers, 31 instructors and 65 Protocol National visiting lecturers. The results showed a significant improvement on previous years for lessons graded 'very good'.

### Lecturers

	2008-09	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05
Very Good	46% (76)	39%	39%	36%	21%
Good	50% (82)	60%	59%	62%	77%
Fair	4% (6)	1%	2%	2%	2%
Unsatisfactory	0% (0)	0%	0%	0%	0%

### Instructors

	2008-09	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05
Very Good	45% (14)	47%	63%	48%	18%
Good	52% (16)	50%	33%	52%	36%
Fair	3% (1)	3%	4%	0%	0%
Unsatisfactory	0% (0)	0%	0%	0%	0%

In 2008-09 the College engaged Protocol National to carry out a sample of lesson observations of Protocol National lecturers. The Company uses the Ofsted grading system which also comprises four grades with the definitions:

1 – Outstanding, 2 – Good, 3 – Satisfactory, 4 – Inadequate.

It is not possible to compare this information with that of previous years as different criteria were used.

	2008-09
Outstanding	9% (6)
Good	48% (31)
Satisfactory	31% (20)
Inadequate	12% (8)

## (iv) Client Satisfaction

In 2008-09, 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. 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):

### STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

	2008-09	2007-08	2006-07
I was made responsible for my own learning	98%	97%	99%
Lecturers provided support when I needed it	94%	94%	94%
I had opportunities to discuss my progress	93%	93%	94%
My learning was assessed fairly	96%	96%	97%
Teaching equipment (e.g. workshop and lab equipment) were suitable	93%	93%	93%
Learning facilities (e.g. IT facilities) were suitable	95%	97%	96%
Learning Materials were up to date and enhanced my learning	93%	95%	94%
VLE/Blackboard was used well by staff and students	90%	92%	86%
I had access to the resources I needed	96%	97%	96%
Overall I enjoyed this course	94%	95%	94%
Overall the course met my needs	93%	96%	94%
I would recommend the course to others	93%	94%	93%

### EMPLOYER SATISFACTION SURVEY

	2008-09	2007-08	2006-07
Information about the College and its courses is easy to obtain	94%	92%	90%
Information about the College and its courses is helpful to employers	98%	92%	94%
Learner attendance/progress information supplied is satisfactory	94%	90%	83%
Effective arrangements are in place for employers to review the programmes attended by their employees	94%	94%	80%
Courses offered take account of employees previous knowledge and skills	93%	94%	85%
Links between on and off the job learning is effective	90%	90%	88%

## (v) Quality Improvement

### **GOOD PRACTICE**

The College's intranet (AbNet) has continued 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 available 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.

Throughout the review period, good practice groups involving both teaching and support staff at all levels met regularly. Feedback from quality activities such as lesson observations and focus groups has been used to develop further the good practice agenda for academic year 2009-10. A programme of events has been developed and will be delivered by skilled practitioners addressing themes such as lesson planning and using technology in the classroom. Staff will be able to book onto these according to their individual needs.

Good practice identified by external verifiers has also been collated and made available across the College.

### **IMPROVING LEARNING AND TEACHING**

The College implemented a new promoted teaching structure in 2008-09 with the aim of concentrating resources on improving learning and teaching. Additional promoted posts were established and curriculum leaders were appointed in each teaching team with responsibilities relating to supporting lecturers and instructors in their classroom practice. In addition, in consultation with teaching staff, Programme Delivery Guidelines were established to ensure a consistency of approach in classroom management and good practice in learning and teaching.

The College lesson observation results show an increasing number of 'very good' grades. All observations are followed up by an opportunity for the lecturer to discuss and evaluate the lesson with the observer. Strengths are acknowledged and advice given to assist with areas for improvement. From these, individual staff development can be identified and subsequently used to inform the staff development programme. For example, a programme of training on 'Questioning Techniques' has been designed and implemented as a result of a significant number of staff having this identified as an area for improvement in their lesson observation. Staff who have been identified as having particular strengths have been asked to support colleagues through peer observation or team teaching, or to assist with training sessions. This extends the network of staff involved in staff development, recognises excellence in the classroom and increases the opportunities for sharing of good practice.

Throughout the year opportunities for improving learning and teaching were also identified during student discussion and focus groups, chaired by members of the Senior Management Team, or Senior Lecturers (Quality Improvement). Information gained from these groups was also used to inform reviews of academic year 2008-09 and planning for 2009-2010.

The College's annual review documentation was revised in accordance with the new HMIE Quality Framework. The new framework for annual reviews places greater emphasis on learning and teaching and the impact of a range of processes, activities and services on the learner. This, and a revised Course Committee framework, has provided additional tools to direct emphasis on the learning and teaching process. Support teams have also been required to consider the impact of their activities on learners and the learning process in their self-evaluation activities.

# COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS

## (i) Analysis of Complaints in 2008-09

The College received a total of 117 complaints during the year. (This compares with 184 in 2005-06, 166 in 2006-07 and 114 in 2007-08). 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. There was one example in 2007-08 of a 'petition' coming in the form of eight identical complaints.

The figure 117 represents 0.37% of enrolments (0.59% in 2005-06, 0.52% in 2006-07 and 0.35% in 2007-08).

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

	2008-09	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06
Educational services and facilities	47	69	83	117
Supporting services provided by the College	23	30	39	51
Supporting services provided by other providers	47	15	44	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>184</b>

### EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

47 of the 117 complaints were in this category (69 in 2007-08). They were as follows:

- 16 related to the delivery of courses – the teaching provided or the conduct of teaching staff (23 in 2007-08)
- 8 related to information provided about, or communication relating to courses (12 in 2007-08)
- 5 related to assessment and/or certification arrangements or outcomes (6 in 2007-08)
- 5 related to booking/enrolment administration (5 in 2007-08)
- 4 related to timetabling arrangements, or course cancellation, or change of lecturer (6 in 2007-08)
- 4 related to the standards of equipment or accommodation (1 in 2007-08)
- 2 related to the behaviour of students within the College (2 in 2007-08)
- 2 related to the Business Development Unit (BDU) (2 in 2007-08)
- 1 related to Information Technology Centre/Libraries (9 in 2007-08).

### SUPPORT SERVICES

Of the 117 complaints received, 70 were in this category (45 in 2007-08). Subdividing the total of 70, 23 complaints concerned services provided directly by the College (30 in 2007-08), 47 were about contracted-out services (15 in 2007-08).

## **DIRECTLY-PROVIDED SUPPORT SERVICES**

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

- 9 related to guidance/student support (3 in 2007-08)
- 5 related to equipment and rooms (14 in 2007-08)
- 5 related to the administration of bursaries (0 in 2007-08)
- 2 related to health and safety issues (2 in 2007-08)
- 1 related to College invoices/refunds or payments (6 in 2007-08)
- 1 related to general College Information (5 in 2007-08).

## **CONTRACTED-OUT SUPPORT SERVICES**

Complaints received about services contracted-out were as follows:

- 32 related to College catering arrangements (7 in 2007-08)
- 5 related to the College security service (4 in 2007-08)
- 5 related to facilities (2 in 2007-08)
- 2 related to IT services
- 3 related to car parking.

## **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 under-noted are some of the actions taken or responses which were conveyed:

- Alteration to Saturday opening hours of the Information and Booking Centre
- Lecturer counselled
- Personal apology given
- Air conditioning fault rectified
- Heating fault rectified
- Review of delivery of AAT programme
- Access to Open Learning ECDL interactive course materials at no additional cost
- Reimbursement of cost of replacing documents
- Establishment of Student Discussion Groups specifically related to the Catering Service
- Two external audits of the Catering Service carried out
- Access allowed to additional appropriate websites
- Additional student support sessions arranged.

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

## (ii) 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:

*"Thanks very much for the prompt feedback and indeed for your help and friendliness throughout the course."*

*"I would like to thank you for your encouraging comments throughout this course. You have given me so much more enthusiasm to want to carry on. I have enjoyed it so much and that is why I want to take it further."*

*"I want to acknowledge the help and advice given to my wife and I ..... the College is fortunate in having such committed employees."*

*"Would just like to say how much I enjoyed the course, very informative and very well presented"*

*"....they are always willing to help even when they are busy with other tasks."*

*"A most enjoyable evening class - enthusiastic teacher, he goes at just the right pace."*

*"Thanks to the whole Team who made my integration back into education after 12 years very comfortable."*

*"A huge thank you to you all. It was so good of you to arrange and oversee such a marvellous event and especially at such short notice."*

*"Thank you and all your colleagues for the help you have given my son throughout his studies at College."*

*"Thank you very much for starting the course. If you hadn't, I would never have a degree ....."*

*".....has been most helpful and has skilfully appreciated and met my needs."*

*"The service I received went well beyond my expectations."*



# 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 revised, published and maintained its publication scheme in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

The College received 22 Freedom of Information requests in 2008-09. 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 through the VLE on the requirements of the Act throughout 2008-09.

# HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

## (i) Employee Relations

In August 2008 the College successfully negotiated above-inflation pay settlements for both teaching and support staff. All staff received a pay increase of 5%.

The College has a range of policies and procedures for resolving staffing issues. These include; Grievance, Disciplinary, Capability and Harassment Policies. The College's Grievance Policy also includes provision for workplace mediation as a means of resolving issues before instigating the formal grievance procedure. Seven members of College staff are trained as workplace mediators.

The College implements a process of probationary review for all new appointments. Probationary periods last for three months and may be extended up to six months.

Information on numbers of cases in 2008-09 with comparisons from previous years are noted below:

	2008-09	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06
Grievances	0	1	1	1
Disciplinary Cases	4	7	4	0
Workplace Mediation Cases	1	1	0	0
Capability Cases	3	1	1	1
Termination of Contract following Probationary Review	0	1	3	1

## (ii) Staffing

In 2008-09, the College employed 617 permanent staff (490 FTE) of which 257 (217 FTE) were lecturers, 50 (37 FTE) were instructors and 310 (236 FTE) were support staff. The teaching staff complement reflected a ratio of 84% lecturers: 16% instructors. The College also engaged 324 (30 FTE) temporary lecturers through Protocol National. The permanent to temporary teaching staff ratio was 89% permanent: 11% temporary.

Sickness absence levels in 2008-09 remained low at an average of 5.07 days lost per employee. Comparisons with previous years are shown below:

2008-09	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06
5.07	5.81	6.25	8.03

Turnover levels in the College in 2008-09 compared with previous years are shown below:

Category	2008-09	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06
Lecturers	9%	10.9%	15.8%	13%
Support	20.8%	20.7%	16.6%	16%

### (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 - medical and nursing referrals, support and rehabilitation for staff returning from long-term sick leave and preventive health care measures - has been instrumental in maintaining low sickness absence levels in the College. A free and confidential counselling service provided by a qualified counsellor, introduced in 2006-07, has also proved to be beneficial to the College and its staff.

During the review period, Alpha Health Services introduced a systematic recall process for staff health surveillance which resulted in an increase in people attending. The positive notification system ensures identified College, ASET, and Protocol National staff undertake relevant health surveillance in relation to the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974). This includes audiometry; respiratory; skin; visual display screen; driver; and food handler assessments.

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. The table below lists the number of staff who attended key activities during 2008-09 compared with the previous year:

Activity	2008-09	2007-08
Blood Transfusion Service Donor Sessions	135	155
Flu Vaccinations	316	200
HR Referrals	281	372
Pre-employment Health Assessments	47	70
Staff Health Checks	138	142

A Health Fair was held in November 2008 featuring information stands on various health matters, and health checks. Students also participated in the event by offering free beauty treatments and performing scenes on health issues.

Several awareness days on a wide variety of topics were held throughout 2008-09. These included:

- Alcohol and Substances
- Blood Pressure
- Hand Washing
- Healthy Living, Keep Fit and Nutrition
- HIV and AIDS
- Mental Health
- Organ and Blood Donation
- Sexual Health
- Smoking
- World Cancer Day
- Meningitis.

A new College health promotion initiative, 'Live for Life', was also launched. 'Live for Life' is a programme of events centred around seasonal topics e.g. 'Live for Life' Summer includes sun and travel health and advice. The programme also includes activities held in the Galowgate gym, and the Altens and Gallowgate fitness suites.

Throughout 2008-09 health advice and information continued to be provided to staff through the intranet (AbNet), and through the circulation of health and first aider newsletters. Students could also access information via the Student Portal, and plasma screen presentations shown throughout College centres.

# 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. Two qualified professional development tutors work with lecturers, instructors, temporary lecturers and flexible 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 2008-09 twenty five lecturers joined the TQFE programme, and by the end of the academic year 75% 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 the year. Of the 25% of lecturers who did not hold a recognised teaching qualification 14% were working towards one. Of the lecturers waiting to commence TQFE all will have completed New to Further Education and either the PDA Advanced Diploma or the PDA Teaching Children and Young People by the time they join the TQFE. In 2009-10 twenty two lecturers will join the TQFE programme.

In 2003 Aberdeen College became the first educational establishment in Scotland to implement mandatory post-initial training for lecturers. 'Beyond TQFE', developed in partnership with the University of Aberdeen, was a mandatory training requirement for all teaching staff who obtained their initial teaching qualification over five years ago or who held a teaching qualification other than TQFE. In total 75 teachers completed the programme whilst it was running.

In 2006-07 the College developed, again in partnership with the University of Aberdeen, a replacement programme for 'Beyond TQFE'. The new programme entitled 'Supporting the Successful Learner' was introduced in 2007-08 with 11 lecturers gaining the qualification. A further 12 achieved Supporting Successful Learners in 2008-09. It is anticipated that 20 lecturers will complete this course in 2009-10.

The College's permanent teaching staff complement is supplemented as required by temporary lecturers provided by Protocol National (PN). Many of the PN lecturers 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 2008-09, 100% of PN lecturers 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. The College has instituted the use of CPD Logs to ensure that each member of staff keeps an up to date record of activities undertaken to maintain knowledge, skills and competence. An audit of CPD Log usage showed that both staff and managers found it to be a valuable tool for the recording and evaluation of staff development activity.

In 2008-09 Aberdeen College employed 49 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 L10 'Enable Learning Through Presentations' and L11 'Enable Learning Through Demonstration and Instruction' units. In 2008-09 sixteen Instructors completed the L10 and L11 meaning that all College instructors held an appropriate qualification by the end of the year.

During the review period seven of the College's guidance tutors were working towards the Postgraduate Certificate in Adult Guidance through the University of Strathclyde bringing the total number of Guidance Tutors completing this certificate to 30 (88%). A further three staff will join the programme in 2009-10.

## (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 2008-09 over 100 different internal courses were offered throughout the year, with a total of 790 individual sessions delivered. Of these, 85 were delivered by in-house trainers and 15 were run by external trainers. Courses offered covered a range of topics, including, health and safety, equality, IT and media, classroom management, quality improvement, and learning and teaching. Staff were also supported to attend a total of 324 external events.

### (iii) Key Staff Development Initiatives

#### **LUNCH AND LEARN SESSIONS**

During 2008-09, the College's Professional Development Tutors delivered 18 'Lunch and Learn' sessions for teaching staff. These sessions provided support for staff undertaking either the 'Introduction to PDA Advanced Diploma Teaching in FE' or the 'PDA Teaching Children and Young People' qualification.

#### **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 four modules was implemented for all lecturers.

It is mandatory for all Lecturers and Instructors working in the College to complete at least an introductory workshop in using Blackboard. Arrangements are in place for all lecturing staff to complete this VLE training as part of their induction during the first four weeks of employment.

All permanent lecturers are expected to complete a course of four workshops, supported by online materials and computer marked assessment. This course has been credit rated at SCQF Level 5 (Intermediate 2). By the end of 2008-09 all lecturers had completed this programme.

#### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT**

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. Eight managers have so far 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. Four members of staff are currently undertaking the Programme.

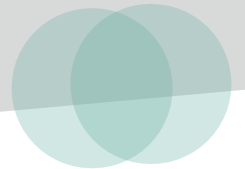
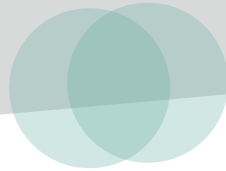
#### **CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP (CEL) – ROUTES TO SUCCESS**

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. Three senior members of staff have completed programmes through CEL.

Following the implementation of a new promoted structure for teaching teams at the beginning of 2008-09 a bespoke management development programme was devised for staff appointed to Team Manager and Curriculum Leader posts. All 37 Team Managers and Curriculum Leaders undertook this programme.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

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. During 2008-09 a further four students were recruited to the programme. The students are 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 are paid a competitive salary and after completing the programme will be appointed to permanent administrative posts at the College. This initiative has been instrumental in enabling the College to reduce support staff costs.



# EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Aberdeen College is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all its students and staff in all aspects of College life to ensure that no-one is discriminated against on the grounds of race, colour, religion, sex, marital status, disability, age, social position or sexual orientation.

The College's Equal Opportunities Committee met four times during 2008-09 and discussed monitoring information on recruitment and selection of staff, and recruitment, retention and achievement of students, by gender, racial group and disability.

During 2008-09, the Committee was also instrumental in the following:

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The College's three Equality Schemes on disability, gender and race were reviewed and updated following consultation with students and staff.

A Transsexual, Transgender and Gender Re-assignment Policy was approved by the Board of Management and was included as an appendix to the College's Equality and Diversity Policy.

## **INFORMATION TO PROMOTE EQUALITY**

The College makes a wide range of information on equality and diversity available to staff and a section of AbNet (the College intranet) is devoted to equal opportunities. This section includes not only copies of all relevant College policies but also information on the membership and work of the Equal Opportunities Committee, action plans, guidance notes on good practice, relevant legislation and related links.

Presentations on equalities issues are regularly displayed throughout the College on plasma screens in all College centres. New presentations shown during the review period included: slavery awareness; mental health; eating disorders; and homophobia.

## **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. Staff development programmes on equalities were also made available on the VLE. Equality and diversity training is mandatory for all staff and at the end of 2008-09 95% of College staff had undertaken this training.

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In 2006-07 an initial impact assessment was undertaken for all College policies. Since then the College has undertaken more detailed impact assessments of over 60% of its policies and will complete the process in 2009-10.

## **JOB EVALUATION**

In 2008-09 the College upgraded the job evaluation system to a new web based tool. A total of 102 support posts have been evaluated. Equal pay audits were carried out in 2006 and 2008, and the introduction of an equal pay modeller in 2009-10 will allow further examination of equal pay coupled with further reviews on posts.

# CHILD PROTECTION VULNERABLE ADULTS & LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Aberdeen College is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning and working environment for all of its students and staff.

## (i) Policy

In 2008-09, a revised Protection of Children and Vulnerable Groups Policy was approved and adopted by the Board of Management.

## (ii) Referrals

The College encourages staff to report any child protection concerns to its Child Protection and Schools Liaison Co-ordinator who then investigates and, where necessary, reports the matter to the relevant agency. The table below shows the annual trends in referrals over the past three years:

2008-09	2007-08	2006-07
23	24	17

## (iii) Risk Assessments

The College continues to be actively involved in effective working arrangements 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.

In 2008-09, four student applications from individuals identified as Registered Sex Offenders were referred to the Child Protection and Schools Liaison Co-ordinator. The co-operation extended to the College by the Offender Management Unit of Grampian Police enabled the College to conduct individual risk assessments for each of these cases. As a result of the risk assessments the decision was taken not to offer places to the applicants on College-based programmes. This decision was taken to ensure the protection, safety and welfare of the main student body and also to ensure that the applicants were not placed in a position likely to increase their risk of re-offending.

Effective arrangements have also been maintained 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. In 2008-09, a total of 29 students were identified as being Looked After or Care Leavers. Of these students five successfully sustained attendance at their courses throughout the year and two will be returning in 2009-10.

## (iv) Staff and Contractor Training

At the end of 2008-09 child protection training had been undertaken for the majority of College staff:

- 98% of Lecturers
- 100% of Instructors
- 97% of Support staff
- 85% of Protocol National Lecturers

Towards the end of 2008-09 a VLE based Refresher Training course in Child Protection was launched. This course will be mandatory for all staff for whom three years have passed since last attendance at Child Protection training.

## (v) Enhanced Disclosure Checks

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 2008-09 the main contractors to the College – Protocol National, Aramark, Pegasus and Mitie – all confirmed that the necessary checks of their staff had been undertaken.

# HEALTH & SAFETY

Aberdeen College is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all students, staff, contractors and members of the public who study at the College or use College facilities. The College's Health and Safety Department is a central College function which oversees and supports occupational health and safety across all College centres and across the whole spectrum of College activities.

## (i) Health and Safety Audits and Inspections

Auditing and reviewing are vital aspects of a successful health and safety management system and are essential to benchmark and assess risk exposure. Areas of the College which were audited by the Health and Safety Department in 2008-09 include Construction, Engineering, Sport and Performance and Computing. The results of these audits were very positive and no significant issues were identified.

## (ii) Accident Statistics

The following table shows the number of accidents as at the end of 2008-09 by comparison with previous years:

	2008-09	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05
Total No. of Accidents	64	65	52	102	97
No. of Accidents Reported to HSE	2	7	3	5	10

## (iii) Risk Assessments

An annual review of department risk assessments was completed in February 2009 by the Health and Safety Department and any additional control measures were instigated within appropriate timescales.

The Health and Safety Department visited over 200 student placement providers in the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire undertaking individual safety inspections of these premises ensuring all workplaces used by students provided an environment as safe as possible and far as reasonably practicable free from risk.

## (iv) Health and Safety Committee

There were four meetings of the Health and Safety Committee in 2008-09. The Committee received reports on a variety of topics, including energy performance surveys, fire risk assessments, and accidents.

## (v) Training and Development

A high priority is always given to health and safety training and a number of courses are identified as mandatory for groups within the College. The courses include:

- Manual Handling Awareness
- Effective Supervision of Practical Classes
- Fire Warden Training
- Work Placement Briefings
- Designated Head of Centre (DHOC) for Emergency Situations
- Risk Assessment
- Health and Safety Induction.

In 2008-09 a number of Health and Safety courses were made available to staff via the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). This enabled staff to undertake courses at times which were convenient to them, and also had a significant environmental reward through the minimising unnecessary travel to and from the Gallowgate Centre to undertake training. By the end of 2008-09, 99% of staff had attended fire safety training and 89% of relevant staff had attended manual handling training.

In 2008-09 the College implemented a new promoted structure for lecturers and 12 new Team Managers were appointed. All 12 of these managers successfully completed the Institute of Occupational Health and Safety (IOSH) course 'Managing Safely'.

## (vi) Awards and Standards

In 2008-09 the College was awarded its second Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Gold Medal, having achieved six consecutive gold awards for the College's approach to accident prevention.

During the review period preparatory work to support the College's application for BS OHSAS 18001:2007 Occupational Health and Safety Management System was undertaken. The final audit against this standard will take place in 2009-10 and this will further ensure that health and safety at Aberdeen College is managed both responsibly and effectively.



# FINANCIAL DATA

## CONSOLIDATED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

Year Ended 31 July 2009

£000

### INCOME

SFC grants	30,255
Tuition fees and education contracts	11,705
Other income	970
Investment income	480

<b>Total income</b>	<b>43,410</b>
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### EXPENDITURE

Staff costs	20,682
Exceptional restructuring costs	66
Other operating expenses	19,674
Depreciation	1,990
Interest payable	53

<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>42,465</b>
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Surplus on continuing operations after depreciation of fixed assets at valuation before tax	945
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# SUMMARY DATA

(i) Level of Student Activity	2008-09	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05	
WSUMs	155,603	162,045	163,467	152,050	175,577	
(ii) Enrolments						
All	34,314	32,609	32,487	31,056	36,456	
Full-time	5,534	5,492	5,382	5,158	5,842	
Part-time	28,780	28,268	27,105	25,898	30,614	
(iii) Headcount						
Students	26,233	23,746	26,677	25,761	22,583	
(iv) Age Structure						
Under 18	19%	19%	17%	17%	16%	
18-25	20%	20%	20%	20%	22%	
26-40	27%	27%	28%	30%	29%	
Over 40	34%	34%	35%	33%	33%	
(v) Gender Mix						
Female	58%	58%	58%	57%	56%	
Male	42%	42%	42%	43%	44%	
(vi) Ethnic/Racial Origin						
White	93%	94%	95%	91%	95%	
Other	7%	6%	5%	9%	5%	
(vii) Student Origins						
Aberdeen City	45%	47%	52%	51%	48%	
Aberdeenshire	32%	30%	25%	26%	31%	
Other	23%	23%	23%	23%	20%	
(viii) Student Retention Rates						
Full-Time	81%	76%	79%	81%	84%	
Part-Time	96%	93%	94%	94%	92%	
All	93%	91%	92%	92%	91%	
(ix) Student Destination						
	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05	2003-04	
Further Education / Higher Education	69.8%	79.5%	80.4%	84%	78%	
Related Full-Time Employment	7.2%	12%	12.5%	9.5%	12%	
Unrelated Full-Time Employment	2.8%	2.3%	1.9%	1.5%	4%	
Short-Term Employment	1.2%	0.4%	0.1%	0%	1%	
Unplaced	19%	5.8%	5.1%	5%	5%	
Respondents (full-time students)	1686	2,132	1,918	2,640	3,640	
(x) Staff Employment Levels 2008-09						
Type of Contract	Number of Staff (Headcount)			Number of Staff (FTEs)		
	Teaching	Non-Teaching (Support)	Total	Teaching	Non-Teaching (Support)	Total
College Payroll Staff	307	310	617	255	236	491
Non-College Payroll Staff	324	0	324	30	0	30
Total	631	310	941	285	236	521

# BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

During 2008-09, the Board of Management reviewed all relevant policies and procedures concerned with its activities and operations, and continued to review and assess its performance formally.

The Board of Management comprises of representatives from industry, commerce and education, and benefits greatly from Members' extensive business expertise and practical experience of education and training. 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.

## **MR KEN MILROY – CHAIR (APPOINTED 1 APRIL 2009, PREVIOUSLY VICE-CHAIR UNTIL 31 MARCH 2009)**

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 the post of 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 to his present post as Chief Executive of Aberdeen Foyer, a successful, local charitable company and social enterprise 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. In 2004 he was the Scottish winner in the Ernst and Young, Entrepreneur of the Year Award, Social Entrepreneur category and was made an MBE in the 2006 New Year's Honours for services to disadvantaged people in Scotland.

## **MRS MARGARET DONALD – CHAIR (RETIRED 31 MARCH 2009)**

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 publications targeted at young children's markets. Mrs Donald's projects 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.

## **DR IAN HEYWOOD – VICE CHAIR (APPOINTED 1 APRIL 2009)**

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. Dr Heywood is now an independent consultant providing strategic advice and guidance on various aspects of learning and development.

#### **MR RODDY SCOTT – ACTING PRINCIPAL & CHIEF EXECUTIVE (FEBRUARY – SEPTEMBER 2009)**

Roddy was born in Aberdeen and attended Aberdeen Grammar School. Following graduation from the University of Aberdeen, he qualified as a Chartered Accountant following training with an international accounting firm. Prior to joining Aberdeen College in 1991, he worked as an accountant in the private and public sectors. Roddy served as a Vice Principal and Director of Finance and Administration before taking up the role of Acting Principal and Chief Executive in February 2009.

#### **MR RAE ANGUS – PRINCIPAL & CHIEF EXECUTIVE (RETIRED FEBRUARY 2009)**

Rae Angus left school at 15 and started his working life as an apprentice gas fitter. He subsequently worked in the engineering and the construction industries. He attended Aberdeen University as a mature student and first graduated in 1975. He also has a post-graduate degree in Strategic Studies and two honorary doctorates. After working as a research fellow, he lectured in Economics at Aberdeen College of Commerce. He became Senior Depute of the College in 1989. Following the merger of three further education colleges in the Aberdeen area he was appointed Depute Principal of Aberdeen College in 1991. He became Principal of the College in 1993.

#### **CAPTAIN JANE ALTON (APPOINTED 1 APRIL 2009)**

Jane Alton was born in Sunderland but grew up in Barrow-in-Furness, where she attended Barrow Grammar School for Girls. She continued her education at Edge Hill College of Higher Education, gaining a Bachelor of Education honours degree. From 1987 to 1997 Jane was a primary school teacher in Durham, before leaving teaching to attend the Salvation Army Training College after which she was commissioned and ordained as a Salvation Army officer (minister of religion). Whilst in her first appointment in Dundee she was a part-time hospital chaplain at Ninewells Hospital and successfully completed further theological studies. After two years she was then appointed to Peterhead Salvation Army, where she was instrumental in a new worship and community hall being built. Whilst leading the Salvation Army in Peterhead Jane implemented a multi-agency community programme. Jane has now been one of the corps officers in Aberdeen for 5 years, overseeing the redevelopment of the citadel building, as well as leading the congregation there. She is also a chaplain at Hanover Street School and Aberdeen College, as well as a member of the Spiritual Care committee for NHS Grampian. Jane is an occasional speaker and lecturer for the William Booth College and the Salvation Army School for In-Service Training and Development. She also writes for national Salvation Army periodicals and leads seminars and retreats within the Salvation Army and other denominations.

#### **MS MARYANNE BEARE**

Hailing from the Sultanate of Brunei some 33 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 runs Inchkey 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 cats Grizzley and Smokey Beare.

#### **MR COLIN BEATTIE – SUPPORT STAFF REPRESENTATIVE (APPOINTED 1 APRIL 2009)**

Born in Aberdeen, Colin was educated at Northfield Academy. He left school at sixteen to become an apprentice joiner. Colin subsequently worked in the plant/machinery hire sectors before transferring to the manufacturing sector with Arjo Wiggins (Fine Papers) at Stoneywood Mill. In the paper mill Colin undertook a range of duties including Colour Technician, Health & Safety Trainer and eventually Assistant Health & Safety Advisor. Colin is now employed by Aberdeen College as the Health & Safety Manager. In 2007 Colin was awarded the National Diploma in Occupational Health & Safety through the National Examination Board and in association with Warwick University. Colin is married and lives in the village of Blackburn on the outskirts of Aberdeen. He is also a keen follower and season ticket holder of Aberdeen Football Club.

#### **MR ALAN IAIN CAMERON (RETIRED 31 MARCH 2009)**

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 with an MA in Gaelic Studies in June 2000. From 1999 until 2007 Alan was Aberdeenshire Councillor for Ellon Town and for the last four years was 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. Currently Alan chairs the Ellon Strategy Forum, and is Chairman of the Book of Deer Project. As a Board Member, Alan chairs the Course Provision Committee and is a member of the Audit Committee. He is also Chairman of the Board of ASET, which is the subsidiary company of Aberdeen College.

### **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 Doug has been the charity's Co-ordinator and now due to a change in legal status to a Company Limited by Guarantee, its Chief Executive.

### **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. Brian then turned his hand to a variety of jobs including road worker, groundsman, janitor and gravedigger. Brian then 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. Following restructuring at the College in 2008, Brian has taken up the promoted position of Team Manager: Social Sciences, Highers and Core Skills. Brian is a keen music and football enthusiast and lives with his partner on the outskirts of Monymusk.

### **PROFESSOR JOHN HARPER (APPOINTED 1 APRIL 2009)**

John was born and brought up in Wick in the North of Scotland before moving to Aberdeen where he studied for both an honours degree and a PhD in Chemistry at the University of Aberdeen. He entered higher education as a lecturer in chemistry at the former Robert Gordon Institute of Technology and subsequently progressed to senior lectureship and then Head of School of Applied Sciences. In this role, John was involved in a range of national activities, including teaching quality assessment, external examining and course development and approval. This contributed to his attaining the award of Fellowship of the Royal Society of Chemistry. John was promoted to the role of Assistant Principal/Dean of Faculty of Health and Social Care before progressing to his current role of Senior Vice-Principal and Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Robert Gordon University. John is a member of a number of national committees associated with institutional quality assurance, quality enhancement and widening participation. He is a QAA Institutional Reviewer and is also a member of the Health Professions Council.

### **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, motoring 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 then 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. A move back to Edinburgh saw Alanna take a break from education for a year, but she missed Aberdeen and returned to College – this time to study Business Administration. Alanna ran a successful voting campaign to become President of the Aberdeen College Students' Association (ACSA) in March 2007 and was then unopposed in her campaign to run the ACSA for a second and final term during 2008-09.

#### **MR WILLIAM LAWSON (RETIRED 31 MARCH 2009)**

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 three grandchildren. In later years he undertook a career change that took him from electrical to safety engineering, culminating in him achieving a Masters Degree in Process Safety and Loss Prevention in 1996. Since then, Bill's work has revolved around the enhancement of safety for all those who operate in the industrial environment and he now works as a freelance Safety Consultant.

#### **PROFESSOR MAUREEN MELVIN (APPOINTED 1 APRIL 2009)**

Born and brought up in Lanarkshire, Maureen Melvin studied at Glasgow University where she gained a BSc (Hons) degree majoring in Biochemistry, then a PhD in Biochemistry. She worked for three years in research laboratories in the USA, at the University of Oregon Medical School and at Harvard Medical School, before coming to Aberdeen as a Research Fellow in the Department of Biochemistry at Aberdeen University. She was appointed as a Lecturer at The Robert Gordon University in 1981, and subsequently was Head of the School of Life Sciences there for almost nine years. During this time she was involved in the design and development of integrated BSc degree programmes with Aberdeen College. Maureen retired in 2008, and was awarded the title of Emeritus Professor of Life Sciences by the University. Throughout her career she was committed to the development of the skills of students and staff to prepare them for their career aspirations, and she is looking forward to continuing with this as a member of the Board of Management of Aberdeen College. She has a wide range of interests, including sports, languages, and travel, which she has more time to enjoy now that she has retired.

#### **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 is also operated from the same site. Also in 1982, Adrian was part of the team which set up Scotia Instrumentation Ltd, now situated in Aberdeen's Science Park, having grown to be the largest independently owned instrumentation specialist organisation in the UK. Adrian is Chairman of the Grampian Motor Training Trust and a Director and Immediate Past President of the Scottish Motor Trade Association [SMTA] as well as being a member of the Executive Board of the Institute of the Motor Industry [IMI].

#### **MRS 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 (RETIRED 31 JANUARY 2009)**

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 a period of 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 and Health 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 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
Mrs M Donald	Robert Gordon University	Member of the Board of Governors
Mr D Duthie	Aberdeen Safer Community Trust	Chief Executive
Prof. J Harper	Robert Gordon University	Senior Vice Principal and Deputy Vice Chancellor
Dr I Heywood	Princes Trust Grampian	Member of the Board
Mr K Milroy	Aberdeen Foyer	Chief Executive

Mr R Angus left the Board of Management in February 2009. Mr A Cameron and Mrs M Donald left the Board of Management in March 2009.

In addition the undernoted individuals were Members of the Board of Management during the year and had no significant transactions with the College: Cpt. J Alton, Ms M Beare, Mr C Beattie, Mr B Dunn, Mr J Hird, Ms A Johnstone, Mr W Lawson (Resigned 31 March 2009), Prof. M Melvin, Mr R Scott, Mr A Smith, Mrs K Stewart and Mr I R Taylor (Resigned 31 January 2009).



# CONTACTS

## Principal & Chief Executive

**Rob Wallen**

### Vice Principals

- Vice Principal (Director of Human Resource Management & Development)
- Vice Principal (Director of Finance & Administration)

Alison Hay  
Roddy Scott

### Associate Principals

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

Robert Bellfield  
Charlie Deane  
Frank Hughes  
Sandra Walker

### Sector Managers

- Business, Computing & Land Based
- Creative Industries, Sport & Languages
- Engineering & Construction
- Service Industries & Social Sciences

Alisdair Duncan  
Susie MacKenzie Brooks  
David Brooks  
Bill Rattray

### Other College Personnel

- Design, Publicity & Advertising Manager
- Environmental & Sustainability Manager
- European Projects Co-ordinator
- Flexible Learning Manager
- Guidance & Support Manager
- Head of Access & Inclusion
- Head of Community & Lifelong Learning
- Head of Learner Services
- Health & Safety Manager
- IT Centre & Libraries Operations Manager
- Marketing, Media, PR & Events Manager
- Multimedia Centre Manager
- Quality Manager

Ian McDougall  
Gillian Forshaw  
Bill Stalker  
Raymond Lovie  
Graeme Swanson  
Stephen Edgar  
Joan Thorne  
Susan Betty  
Colin Beattie  
Kelly Hilton  
Rhonda Fraser  
Paul Adderton  
Susan Grant

### Useful Numbers

- College Switchboard
- Community & Lifelong Learning
- Flexible Learning Department
- Information & Booking Centre
- IT Centre
- Learner Services Reception
- Learning Development Centre
- Library+

612000  
0800 027 0405 (Freephone)  
612603  
612330  
612260  
612284  
612142  
612138

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**.

**Aberdeen College is committed to ensuring that people with additional needs and disabilities are treated fairly. We will, therefore, make reasonable adjustments to ensure that students with additional needs and disabilities are not substantially disadvantaged.**

Aberdeen College is committed to the promotion of equality and the elimination of unlawful discrimination. Copies of the College's Equality and Diversity Policy and its Race, Gender and Disability Schemes are available on the College website.

The information contained in this publication, particularly relating to College Policies, Codes and Regulations, courses and fees, was correct at the time of going to print but is subject to alteration without notice. Anyone wishing to confirm any of the information should write to the enquiry address or check the College website ([www.abcol.ac.uk](http://www.abcol.ac.uk)) which is regularly updated. *Dec 2009*

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