



ABERDEEN COLLEGE®



# BUSINESS PLAN 2010

## Abbreviations

CPD	Continuous Professional Development
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HMIe	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education
OPITO	Offshore Petroleum Industry Training Organisation
SCQF	Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework
SFEU	Scottish Further Education Unit
SNIPeF	Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
TQFE	Teaching Qualification (Further Education)

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.

## Mission Statement



# BUSINESS PLAN 2010

## Introduction

The Business Plan is a summary of the Strategic Development Plan 2009-2012 and provides an overview of the College's strategic aims and main developments over the planning period. A full copy of the College Strategic Development Plan 2009-2012 is available on the College's website ([www.abcol.ac.uk](http://www.abcol.ac.uk)) or by request to Ms Pauline May, Planning and Senior Management Administrator at the College.

If you require this publication in an alternative format, please contact the Information & Booking Centre (01224 612330) to discuss your needs. The Business Plan can also be requested or accessed online in a number of languages other than English.

## Background: The College

As the largest single provider of vocational education and training in the North-East of Scotland, Aberdeen College plays an important role in meeting the educational and training needs of individuals, employers and communities in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

The College serves an extensive geographical area of around 60 miles north/south and 60 miles westward from Aberdeen itself, with nearly 50% of its students residing outside Aberdeen City. Increasingly, the College is also providing a range of services at a distance, beyond the Aberdeen travel-to-work area, whether within workplaces, in local communities, or by a variety of forms of access.

Each year Aberdeen College, like others, is allocated a fixed level of funding from the SFC in return for delivery of an agreed level of student activity. If a college delivers more activity it is not allocated additional funding. In 2008-09 the College recorded an audited WSUM count of 155,301 against an SFC-funded target of 151,214 WSUMs. The difference amounts to 4,087 WSUMs or 2.7% above target.

Total enrolments during 2008-09 exceeded 34,300, of which 5,534 were full-time students (2,257 were on higher education courses, while 3,277 were full-time further education enrolments), and 28,780 were part-time enrolments. Measured by headcount (the number of different individuals attending) the College served 26,233 people.

## 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 PLANNING AIMS

In meeting the educational and training needs of the community and within the context of the College's mission statement, the strategic aims for the planning period are:

## A Governance and Management

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 eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for learners and staff in all aspects of College life, in relation to gender, race, disability, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation and gender re-assignment to ensure a learning and working environment free from discrimination.



## E Quality and Excellence

To promote a high quality learning experience which incorporates, as appropriate, new technologies and flexible modes of delivery and which is underpinned by effective quality management systems, professional development arrangements for staff and involvement of learners in order that positive learning outcomes are achieved.

## F Wider Access and Participation

To promote education and training opportunities for individuals, communities and employers by offering flexible, up-to-date courses and incorporating 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 learners 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 continue to contribute to local and regional skills capacity building by developing a curriculum which is responsive to demand for vocational education and training embodying, where appropriate, employability and citizenship skills, and supported by partnership working with relevant stakeholders.

## 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.



HND Visual Communication students were set a design brief by Fifth Ring Integrated Corporate Communications to create a campaign raising awareness of healthy school meals.

## 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 learners 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 effective learning and teaching and support services are provided to learners to help them progress and achieve relevant high quality outcomes in terms of qualifications and vocational, employability, citizenship and personal and social skills, and to continue to engage learners, as appropriate, in the life and work of the College.

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

In order to implement its strategic aims, the College has adopted specific objectives in relation to each of the aims.

## A Governance and Management

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, the College will:

- Ensure that Members of the Board of Management and the College's Senior Managers participate in training and development appropriate to support their governance and management responsibilities
- Ensure that the Board and Management of the College operate in an open and transparent way, in terms of access to information for employees, the public and external bodies, within the constraints of commercial confidentiality, personal privacy and statutory requirements
- Ensure that Members of the Board of Management comply with the Board's Code of Conduct and continue to apply principles of ethical behaviour in carrying out the Board's business
- Use a suitable model to assess the effectiveness of governance and management and benchmark with best practice organisations to identify areas for improvement
- Appoint new Board of Management Members with the necessary skills and expertise to complement the existing membership.

## B Finance and Related Issues

To operate a balanced budget, whilst taking opportunities to augment the financial reserves, the College will:

- Establish and operate revenue and capital budgetary controls that support the achievement of the College's strategic aims and objectives
- Meet the agreed targets for College activity with no reduction in the quality of service
- Review the College's portfolio of courses to ensure financial viability
- Increase, year-on-year, the level of profit derived from commercial activities
- Develop procurement arrangements in ways that add to the financial reserves of the College and simplify procurement processes
- Develop electronic approaches to the management of College records to simplify and standardise records management practices
- Develop a business model for the provision and distribution of portable electronic devices to full-time students.



## C Estates and Environment

To implement the College's Estates Development Strategy, and to conduct College business in a manner that promotes positive action and respect for the environment, the College will:

- Progress the implementation of the Estates Development Strategy established by the Board of Management
- Review the room utilisation at main College centres to optimise occupancy and reduce the requirement to use additional locations
- Improve the physical environment of the College in line with the College's Estates Development Strategy
- Promote the environmental sustainability of the College's operation by implementing and monitoring targets for reducing, reusing and recycling to reduce the impact of the College's activities on the environment and to increase resource efficiency.

## D Equal Opportunities

To eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for learners and staff in all aspects of College life to ensure a learning and working environment free from discrimination, the College will:

- Develop a single equality scheme which will cover gender, race, disability, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation and gender re-assignment to ensure a learning and working environment free from discrimination
- Prepare an annual equality action plan, following consultation with staff and relevant third parties, with objectives to promote equality across all seven strands and address any issues identified
- Review all equality and diversity training and ensure it is up-to-date with current legislation and available to all staff and contractors via the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)
- Run staff development sessions on equality and diversity which are mandatory for all staff and contractors and provide regular reports to managers on staff attendance
- Conduct equality impact assessments of any new policies and review all equality impact assessments undertaken to ensure any issues identified have been addressed
- Publish an annual equality report containing the necessary statutory monitoring information.



Congratulations to College staff who were successful in achieving awards.

## E Quality and Excellence

To promote a high quality learning experience for all students, the College will:

- Ensure the College's Professional Development Strategy is implemented so that all staff who impact directly on the learner experience have the necessary up to date skills and qualifications to enable them to deliver high quality programmes and effective support to a diverse student body
- Implement the new post-initial training qualification 'Supporting the Successful Learner' for teaching staff who hold teaching qualifications other than TQFE or who gained a TQFE over 5 years ago
- Ensure that up-to-date teaching methods, including the use of electronic media, are deployed in all curriculum areas by providing appropriate staff training and support
- Ensure that the College continues to meet the requirements of the HMIe Quality Framework and the requirements of SQA and other awarding bodies in order that quality standards are maintained
- Ensure that the Board of Management, Senior Management Team, all departments and curriculum teams undertake an annual self-evaluation to measure College performance against HMIe quality criteria and identify areas for improvement
- Develop the skills and competences of all staff in the use of IT to a level where they have the relevant skills to use computer-based approaches confidently and effectively in the delivery of programmes, or to provide appropriate IT support.



Promotion of lifelong learning through social inclusion initiatives.

## F Wider Access and Participation

To promote education and training opportunities, increase access to lifelong learning opportunities and promote social inclusion, the College will:

- Continue to promote lifelong learning through social inclusion initiatives and increase participation of people located in deprived areas while providing suitable support to ease their transition into College learning programmes
- Participate in Community Learning and Development Planning in ways which promote education and training opportunities to individuals and employers in community locations, while meeting the wider policy objectives of the Scottish Government
- Work with the North Forum for Widening Participation in Further and Higher Education and other partners to promote awareness of and enthusiasm for vocational education amongst pupils in schools and other members of the community
- Work flexibly with Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and other partners to continue to deliver high quality community based learning and training opportunities
- Continue to offer Adult Basic Education (ABE) opportunities as part of the College's mainstream provision and to offer additional ABE above the base level in partnership with the Literacy and Numeracy Partnerships of local councils
- Continue to offer English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) opportunities as part of the College's mainstream provision and provide additional ESOL provision in response to increased demand where possible
- Widen access to the College's curriculum by developing and employing innovative approaches to delivery such as open learning, e-learning and computer-based blended learning
- Investigate the joint development of high quality online teaching materials with relevant partner organisations.

## G Progression and Articulation

To foster easier and faster progression and articulation of students to and within further education and between further and higher education, the College will:

- Work with higher education, employers and local authority partners to reduce needless competition while creating clear pathways for progression in the context of the Scottish Government's agenda for lifelong learning
- Work with both local authorities to provide vocational education opportunities for school pupils within the context of the Scottish Government's 'Lifelong Partners' document and in accordance with available resources
- Maintain a range of access levels to College courses, suited to differing levels of prior experience and learning, in order to provide appropriate progression opportunities within the College to university or to work-based qualifications
- Review the College's portfolio of provision and undertake any necessary realignment in partnership with others to provide progression to degree level study from areas of the curriculum, wherever possible.

## H Local Skills Base

To contribute to local and regional skills capacity building by developing a curriculum which is responsive to demand for vocational education and training embodying, where appropriate, employability and citizenship skills, and supported by partnership working with relevant stakeholders, the College will:

- Ensure that curriculum development and programme design are informed by national evidence and local market research which identifies local and regional skills shortages and skills gaps
- Work with schools, local authorities and other agencies to promote courses in the areas of local skill shortage
- Work in partnership with employers to provide flexible work-based education, training and assessment opportunities
- Review and further enhance the development of essential skills (employability, enterprise, initiative, citizenship etc) within full-time programmes to promote learner progress and achievement and improve the supply of economically valuable skills.

## | Collaboration and Partnerships

To strengthen communication and collaboration with public, private and voluntary sector partners and other providers, the College will:

- Continue to work with university partners to build on existing articulation arrangements and revise arrangements with HEI partners, where necessary, in line with Scottish Government policy
- Extend the scope of the College's relationship with Robert Gordon University to cover a wider range of types of collaboration in accordance with the Associate College Agreement
- Continue to co-operate with local schools to enhance the academic curriculum, to provide vocational opportunities and to promote progression from school to further and higher education and employment
- Continue to contribute to the work of the North Forum for Widening Participation in Further and Higher Education and related initiatives, to ensure the broadest range of progression opportunities for adult learners
- Work in partnership with Scottish and UK Colleges and businesses to improve access, progression, the provision of work-based learning, and the reduction of social exclusion
- Work with the European Union and with institutions in European countries to draw down sources of income to match operational plans, enhance the breadth and scope of the curriculum on offer, and forge mutually beneficial links with European educational partners
- Work with communities, industry and the public sector and identify opportunities to implement and promote environmental sustainability locally and internationally
- Continue to work with Careers Scotland to support learners and potential learners of the College
- Continue to work with partners to meet the support needs of adults and young people who have an additional support need in accordance with the Partnership Matters Agreement.



'Uni-link' degree-link programme – with opportunities for Aberdeen College students to gain an Honours degree with Robert Gordon University.

## J Responsive and Flexible Curriculum

To work with others to improve access to College services, the College will:

- Continue to extend opportunities to work in partnership with other agencies to provide learning opportunities for specific disadvantaged groups
- Work with the relevant departments of the local authorities and other agencies in partnership to ensure that students with additional learning requirements can access the curriculum, drawing upon the support which the College and specialist agencies can provide
- Work with the local authorities and Careers Scotland to ensure appropriate pre-entry guidance is available for all, including people with additional support needs
- Remove as far as is reasonably possible, barriers to access to the curriculum, and progression within it, while maintaining academic and vocational standards
- Promote wider access and inclusion by auditing the range of technologies available in the College that support students with additional needs.

## K Learner Progress and Achievement

To ensure that effective learning and teaching and support services are provided to learners to help them progress, achieve relevant high quality outcomes and engage in the life and work of the College, the College will:

- Develop the current lesson observation process to ensure that all lecturers can aspire to grades of very good
- Embed the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) fully in College programmes



Aberdeen College received a AOC Beacon Award 'for the Creative Production, Adaption and Delivery of Learning Resources'.

Disability Awareness Day was organised to raise awareness of the disabilities faced by some of our students and staff.

- Utilise fully the skills of those dedicated to the training and development of teaching staff to ensure the achievement of agreed goals
- Benchmark Performance Indicator data to identify areas to focus strategies for further improving retention and achievement
- Ensure seamless collaboration between teaching departments and Learner Services
- Ensure students benefit from a range of teaching approaches to enrich their overall experience, especially those concerned with new technologies
- Engage employers fully in programme design to ensure both technical and Soft Skills are built into programmes
- Embed fully contextualised certificated Core Skills units in all vocational programmes
- Review and further develop online Individual Learning Plans as a key tool for monitoring and planning learning
- Further develop 'paperless class' and 'hybrid' approaches
- Develop a range of online assessment techniques, both formative and summative, which allow achievement of the targets set across the College for online assessment
- Implement fully the College's Learner Engagement Strategy.



Students who had successfully completed their HNC, HND and professional qualifications celebrated their success at the Annual Awards Ceremony.



# A WIDER POLICY FRAMEWORK

The College's development plans reflect the wider policy environment within which the further education sector operates. Of central importance in governmental policy over recent years has been the commitment to increase markedly participation in education and training, and to promote wider access to services with the aim of reducing exclusion from educational opportunity.

During the planning period, Aberdeen College will also address a number of important policy themes, including:

- Ensuring people with additional learning requirements have full access to education and training opportunities
- Providing structured learning opportunities for people with dependency problems
- Promoting the development of Soft Skills - citizenship, employability, environmental sustainability
- Measuring, recording and improving the 'distance travelled' by the learner, in terms of Soft Skills and enhanced socialisation
- Increasing participation, retention, attainment and progression of young people who are not active in the labour market
- Contributing to overall skills development, the provision of basic skills training, 'up-skilling', and the closing of skills gaps
- Providing enterprise education, including the development of key employability skills
- Extending vocationally-specific opportunities for 14-16 year olds through collaboration with schools
- Raising adult literacy and numeracy levels
- Embedding the SCQF across College provision and further facilitating the recognition of prior learning
- Helping to address the educational and training needs of migrants to the UK, in terms of language (ESOL provision) and Core Skills.

# OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

## Equality

Aberdeen College is committed to promoting and embedding equality and preventing discrimination in all areas of its work, and to ensuring that the student body and the College's workforce continue to be representative of local communities.

In June 2008 the Government published a White Paper entitled 'Framework for a Fairer Future - the Equality Bill'. The new legislation is designed to declutter and strengthen anti-discrimination law. The new public sector Equality Duty will bring together the three existing areas of race, disability and gender and extend to gender reassignment, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

The College will respond in full to the new requirements. In preparation for the implementation of the new legislation, the College will:

- Develop a single equality scheme covering all equality strands
- Develop a purchasing strategy which includes the requirement for suppliers to promote equality
- Amend recruitment and selection training to include briefing on the new Equality Duty and on issues relating to transsexual people, and the new provisions regarding positive action.

During the planning period, the College will publish its new single equality scheme and will implement annual equality action plans. It will also review how monitoring information is collected and published. Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out for all existing College policies and procedures, and all new policies and procedures will be subject to impact assessment as part of the approval process.

The College will continue to provide training on equality and diversity for all staff and this will be a mandatory element of the College's Staff Development Programme.

Consultation with students and staff on matters relating to equality will continue through the College's Equal Opportunities Committee, equality forums and student and staff discussion groups. The College will also consult students who are under-represented in various curriculum areas to identify any issues which need to be addressed.



Award winning plumbing apprentices at the Construction Crafts Awards Ceremony.



S2 pupils from Torry Academy, Aberdeen at ASPIRENorth 'try it out' day at Aberdeen College.

## Working with Partners

The College will continue to promote a coherent approach to the delivery of education and training services by working with partners from education, business, local authorities, health and the voluntary sector.

During the planning period, the College will:

- Continue to develop partnership arrangements with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, and participate in the development of Community Learning and Development Strategies and Implementation Plans
- Strengthen its network of links with universities and HEIs to ensure maximum recognition of the attainment of College students when they progress to higher education
- Continue to work with individual schools to improve the academic and vocational opportunities available to young people throughout the College's service area
- Work closely with other training providers to strengthen links in order to reduce needless competition and to ensure full utilisation of resources available locally
- Continue to collaborate with Aberdeen Foyer and Aberdeen Cyrenians to provide educational and training opportunities for people from disadvantaged groups
- Work closely with a range of employer bodies and agencies (e.g. Construction Skills, OPITO, the Sector Skills Council, SNIPEF) to explore opportunities for expanding training provision to help redress local and national skills shortages
- Work with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and local firms to increase participation in established programmes such as Skillseekers and Modern Apprenticeships
- Further develop its successful collaboration with the North Forum for Widening Participation in Further and Higher Education
- Further develop its collaborative agreement with Grampian Fire and Rescue Service which enables the College to deliver courses at North-East fire stations
- Work with a variety of partners to address local and national policy aims and objectives for people who are not currently engaged in education, employment or training.

## Quality Improvement

Aberdeen College has a longstanding commitment to ensuring that it provides a high quality education and training service to students and employers. Throughout the planning period, the College's quality improvement strategy will focus on:

- Engaging learners in enhancing their own learning and the work and life of the College
- Ensuring that the quality standards of all awarding bodies are met
- Ensuring that College quality standards reflect the requirements of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) External Quality Arrangements for Scotland's Colleges
- Conducting effective self-evaluation for quality improvement as part of Annual Programme Reviews, Subject Reviews and Sector/Department Reviews
- Dissemination and embedding of good practice
- College-wide effective self-evaluation for quality improvement
- Completion of an annual audit programme
- Achieving key performance targets in relation to student retention and achievement, and lesson observation grades
- Reviewing all business processes to ensure effectiveness and efficiency and to reduce further administrative costs
- Inclusion of quality assurance and quality improvement topics in annual Staff Development programmes.

The College's commitment to quality improvement has been recognised by the achievement of a number of quality standards and awards. During June 2009 the College received confirmation of the following achievements:

- Successful re-assessment for the Customer Service Excellence standard, which was first achieved in June 2008, with a grading of 100% compliance awarded for the second time (The College had held the standard's predecessor, Charter Mark for Customer Service, continuously since 1994).
- Achievement of the BSI Environmental Management System Standard ISO14001:2004, with five areas of good practice recorded in the Assessment Report.
- Accreditation against the matrix Standard for the College's Guidance Service (please see page 18 for further details).

The following achievements in recent years should also be noted:

- The College has been awarded the Investors in People (IIP) standard 5 times. In 2006 the College received an IIP 10 Year Achievement Award and the IIP People Development Award for Scotland, and in 2007 the IIP Recruitment and Selection Standard.
- The College's Complaints Management System is accredited to BS EN ISO 10002:2004.
- Other achievements include a Quality Scotland Foundation Award for Business Excellence a Certificate of Excellence by the European Foundation for Quality Management; 5 UK Beacon Awards and a range of SQA and SFEU awards.

During the planning period the College will continue to apply for a wider range of external awards and standards including standards relating to the promotion of equality and diversity.



The official opening of the Learning Centre Inverurie, (pictured from left to right):  
Rt Hon Alex Salmond MSP  
Ken Milroy, Chair of Aberdeen College  
Sandra Walker, Associate Principal, Aberdeen College  
Douglas Milne, Rector, Inverurie Academy  
Roddy Scott, Vice Principal and Director of Finance & Administration, Aberdeen College.



Student photographer of the year Joanne Cruickshank presents the  
Rt Hon Alex Salmond MSP with a print of her artwork.



The new facility for construction training at Altens Centre, (at a cost of over £15 million).

Image courtesy of Archial Architects.

## College Estates Development

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 SFC with permission given for the College to proceed with Phase One of the strategy. This consists of a new Construction Facility on the Altens site 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.

The Aberdeen College Learning Centre (Inverurie) became operational in August 2009, and was officially opened by the Rt Hon Alex Salmond MSP in September 2009. This new College 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. In response to market research in the local area, courses offered in the new Centre include: IT; Community Sports Leader Awards; PDA Learning Assistants Award, and Introduction to Youth Work. In addition, Skills for Work courses in Care will be provided for school pupils. Discussions are taking place to secure a similar facility to the South of the City.

The new Construction Facility will be built alongside the current Altens Centre, and will contain workshops and classrooms for joinery, electrical and plumbing courses, as well as a new library, learning resources centre, fitness suite, and eating area. Construction courses which are currently delivered at the College's Gallowgate Centre will relocate to the new Altens facility when it opens to students in August 2010.



The Guidance Team at a ceremony to celebrate the success of gaining the matrix Standard.

## Matrix Standard Accreditation of the Guidance Service

In June 2009 the Guidance Team secured the prestigious matrix Standard endorsement for its effective delivery of support services to customers of Aberdeen College. The matrix Standard is the national quality standard for any organisation that delivers information, advice and guidance on learning and work. Rather than focus on paper-based evidence, assessors from matrix use what they see, hear and experience in an organisation to inform them if the eight principles of the Standard are being applied. They focus on what actually happens, noting the tangible outcomes of the organisation's processes, policies and procedures. Accreditation is only made where there is 100% compliance against each of the criteria.

What matrix Standard accreditation means for prospective students is that publicity and marketing materials for the service have been reviewed and revised to ensure that people are directed to the most appropriate personnel for appropriate pre-entry guidance.

What matrix Standard accreditation means for students is that they have access to information, advice and guidance when they need it most either through direct contact, e-mail, the web, telephone, StudentNet or the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

What matrix Standard accreditation means for our partners is that they are aware they are dealing with a first class information, advice and guidance service which is readily evolving and embracing innovative strategies to meet the needs of customers. Good practice will be shared amongst the elite organisations who have successfully secured accreditation.

What matrix Standard accreditation means for the Guidance Team is that a forward thinking, flexible service is provided, which has the confidence and endorsement to develop its practice as a model of effective delivery of information, advice and guidance to all customers of Aberdeen College.

Currently there are only nine education establishments in the whole of Scotland who have been successfully accredited against this national standard - eight universities and Aberdeen College.

# COLLEGE STRATEGIES

## Business Continuity Strategy

The College has developed a Business Continuity Strategy to ensure that it is well equipped to deal with any occurrences that could disrupt its normal activities. The main components of the strategy are to:

- Ensure each College site has a detailed business continuity plan
- Research the availability of alternative accommodation and seek agreement as to its use as a short or medium-term contingency
- Minimise the likelihood of any occurrence through programmes of preventative and remedial maintenance.

## Course Development Strategy

The College is committed to developing a range of provision to meet the identified needs of client groups. In order to ensure this the College will:

- Base new course developments on systematic market research
- Further develop a range of courses as is necessary to meet client need and the viability of which is clear
- Ensure there are appropriate entry level courses and appropriate progression routes in all vocational areas
- Develop further a range of methodologies for course delivery, including computer-based approaches
- Integrate new technology, equal opportunity issues and environmental issues wherever possible and relevant
- Select a form of certification appropriate to the programme and client needs.

## Core Skills Strategy

As part of the governmental initiative to improve the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, the College will work with partner organisations to:

- Extend the availability of existing basic skills provision into new locations and for new clients
- Develop new programmes for developing basic skills, including programmes of computer-based learning
- Train College staff in the diagnosis of the basic skill starting level of individual students and the identification of appropriate teaching approaches to support their learning.

## Estates Development Strategy

The Board of Management has adopted an Estates Development Strategy that identifies the physical resources required to progress the future development of the College. The College will work with the Scottish Funding Council to progress the strategy and establish a programme for development of the College's estates.

## Information and Learning Technologies (ILT) Strategy

The College's commitment to the use of electronic media in the delivery of learning encompasses both its e-learning platform which allows access to learning outwith the College, and the integration of electronic media into mainstream College provision. The College's ILT Strategy establishes the framework within which electronic media are used to provide an effective element in the learning of other student groups.

## Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy

Aberdeen College is committed to the integration of ICT into both its courses and its management and administration processes. Significant aspects of the strategy are to:

- Increase the amount of ICT equipment available for use by students and staff
- Ensure the continual upgrading of ICT equipment in line with technological developments
- Provide a wide range of ICT courses, and constantly review them to ensure currency
- Develop intranet and internet-based services in line with identified need.

## Digital Inclusiveness Strategy

The national policy is to provide access to digitally-based services and facilities and access to online information and services, for as wide a cross-section of the population as is possible. In line with this policy, the College will:

- Ensure the hardware and software it makes available to students are current generation
- Maintain a range of ICT-related training courses, courses designed to promote network literacy and an understanding of the internet and the services which it provides
- Co-operate with local councils in the development of technology and training in community locations
- Develop IT literacy as a feature of College programmes where appropriate
- Provide opportunities for members of the community to develop their use of the internet.

## Learning and Teaching Strategy

The College is committed to providing high quality learning experiences for students, appropriate to their needs and aspirations. The strategy outlines the basic commitments and expectations of the College with regard to how programmes are delivered.

The main elements of the strategy are to:

- Ensure the course development and review process is effective in maintaining a coherent portfolio of high quality provision
- Ensure appropriate methodologies are adopted to meet the needs of individuals and groups
- Provide appropriate learning materials and resources for all types of provision
- Utilise relevant technologies to support effective learning
- Ensure staff are trained and supported in relevant methodologies and skills to provide high quality teaching and support for students.



Purpose-built Multimedia Centre.

## Dissemination of Good Practice in the Curriculum

The College is committed to providing the highest standard of learning and teaching opportunities for all students. In doing so, all teaching staff are expected to demonstrate good and innovative practice in the curriculum.

The main elements of the strategy are to:

- Ensure that all staff can recognise good practice and apply it across the curriculum and in all modes of attendance.
- Ensure staff understand the benefits of sharing good practice with colleagues.
- Assist staff with the identification and dissemination of good practice.
- Facilitate good practice dissemination events for all staff.
- Measure the extent to which the benefits of good practice dissemination are having a positive impact on the student experience.
- Undertake classroom observation to ensure that good practice is implemented in each group and in accordance with the needs of individuals within the group.
- Ensure individual members of staff take responsibility for embedding good practice in the learning and teaching experience of their students.
- Ensure that technology is utilised fully to disseminate good and innovative practice across the curriculum.

## Learning Resources Strategy

The College uses a wide range of learning resources to support students' learning, including paper-based materials and electronic media. In some cases, these are managed centrally, for example, in College libraries, and in others by College Sectors. The purpose of this strategy is to provide a coherent and consistent approach to the development and deployment of these resources in such a way as most effectively to meet the needs of a range of student groups.

## Assessment Strategy

The College recognises that assessment is an integral part of effective learning which identifies the student's starting point, monitors progress, identifies areas for further development, records attained skills and knowledge, and measures the 'distance travelled' towards achieving broader generic skill-sets.

The College's strategy is designed to ensure that assessment in the College is carried out in a systematic way, in line with external and internal quality requirements, and that it is objective and consistent, while making reasonable adjustments to accommodate those with additional needs.

The strategy also establishes the College's commitment to an overall approach to the use of online assessment methodologies, which are of increasing importance in the College's work.



## Retention and Achievement Strategy

The College is committed to developing, offering and delivering programmes that meet the needs of stakeholders (the learner, local communities and employers) using methods that promote accessibility and flexibility and lead to high levels of retention and achievement. The main elements of the strategy are to establish and implement even more effective arrangements relating to:

- Programme design, planning and promotion
- Learning and teaching processes, contexts and planning
- Guidance, support and goal setting for learners
- Attendance management
- Staff development programmes to support the learning and teaching process
- Monitoring and review.

## Learner Engagement Strategy

Learner engagement is embedded in the culture, practices, processes and procedures of Aberdeen College. The Strategy identifies the range of involvement opportunities available to students and potential students can impact upon, influence and enrich their overall College experience, and defines the College's commitment to:

- Recognising existing opportunities for learners to engage
- Recognising the role of Aberdeen College Students' Association in learner engagement
- Identifying potential future opportunities for learner engagement
- Demonstrating how the collective impact of the range of opportunities for learner engagement can be measured.

## Inclusiveness Strategy

The College is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities and inclusiveness agenda in employment and access to the education and training services it provides. The Inclusiveness Strategy sets out how the College will meet its commitment as an employer and service provider to people with disabilities while complying with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and the Race Relations Amendment Act. The strategy will address:

- Services to students
- Improvements to the physical environment
- The employment of staff.

## Soft Skills Strategy

The College recognises that, as well as skills specific to particular vocational and academic areas, there are skills, attitudes and types of understanding which are generic, transferable and relevant to all aspects of life.

These skills are referred to as Soft Skills and have been defined by the College as four clusters:

- Citizenship Skills
- Environmental Sustainability Skills
- Employability Skills
- Study Skills.

The College will develop students' Soft Skills through combinations of learning experiences set in the daily life of the College, discrete areas of the curriculum, cross-curricular experiences and activities involving links with local, national and international partners.

## Environmental Sustainability Strategy

The College is committed to environmental sustainability, where the needs of the present do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and is committed to the dual ethos of sustainability and responsible global citizenship. To promote and develop environmental sustainability, the College will:

- Use both the curriculum and CPD to promote knowledge, attitudes and skills that enable individuals to make informed decisions relating to the impact of their actions on the environment

- Act in ways that promote a sustainable world environment through reducing, reusing and recycling wherever possible, and implementing safe and ethical disposal procedures
- Develop and share good practice in order to influence society in a positive way, seek to engage creatively and diversely, and promote opportunity for all
- Measure, where possible and reasonable, the carbon footprint of the College sites and reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in addition to carbon offsetting.

## Human Resources Strategy

The College's Human Resources Strategy is designed to ensure the College provides a positive learning experience for students while at the same time, making effective and efficient use of staffing resources. As part of this strategy, the College will:

- Focus on achieving an appropriate staffing profile
- Ensure that staff have the appropriate level of academic and professional qualifications and that skills and competencies are updated regularly
- Monitor the continuing professional development undertaken by all staff
- Improve the health and well-being of the College's workforce by working with its occupational health providers to implement a range of health promotion activities
- Provide a comprehensive programme of equal opportunities training primarily covering sex, race and disability discrimination and monitor practice through quality audit
- Provide training and development on child protection issues for all staff to ensure that the College meets its statutory responsibilities.

# CONTACTS

## Principal & Chief Executive

### Vice Principals

- Vice Principal
- Vice Principal

### Associate Principals

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

### Sector Managers

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

### 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

### Useful Numbers

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

## Rob Wallen

Roddy Scott  
Alison Hay

Robert Bellfield  
Charlie Deane  
Sandra Walker  
Frank Hughes

Alisdair Duncan  
Susie MacKenzie Brooks  
David Brooks  
Bill Rattray

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

**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.

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This publication was designed by the Publicity & Marketing Team, Aberdeen College.

This document is available for download at:  
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