

# OUR STRATEGY - TOWARDS 2020

VISION • VALUE • GOALS

# Strategic Plan

2016 – 2020

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2016 – 2020





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# Introduction

Liz McIntyre – Principal & Tony Jakimciw – Chair

**The Borders College Regional Board, staff and students have worked to create this new strategic plan for the College which states our intentions and aspirations for the College as we move towards 2020.**

It has at its heart the key aims of delivering success for all our learners and of providing high quality education and training which meets the needs of our regional economy, our local communities and the individuals who choose to learn with us.

The plan shows how we will respond to key Scottish Government policies and to regional priorities for the Scottish Borders. We have shared our main ambitions and shown how we will measure our success

against the targets we have set for ourselves.

This plan is closely linked to the Borders College Regional Outcome Agreement for the period which we have agreed with the Scottish Funding Council and there is a strong overlap between the outcomes we have set in partnership with the Scottish Funding Council and the aspirations laid out in this plan.

A copy of the Regional Outcome Agreement can be found at <http://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/college-documents/plans-and-strategy/> and supporting strategies and detailed development plans showing how the plan will be delivered can be found on the College Website at [www.borderscollege.ac.uk](http://www.borderscollege.ac.uk).



The Borders College Regional Board has set a strategy which will build on our strengths as a high quality institution with a strong track record for learner success and financial security. The Regional Board will continue to set targets and challenges for the organisation which will require us to continue to improve, innovate and learn.





# Context and Environment

## The College

Borders College is a small, rural College serving the Scottish Borders Region which covers an area of 1,800 square miles and which has a population of almost 114,000. The College is the largest provider of post-compulsory education in the Scottish Borders and in 2014/2015 enrolled 1,270 full-time learners and 3,950 part-time learners.

The College operates across the region, with the Scottish Borders Campus in Galashiels providing the hub for a number of spokes: two further campuses (at Newtown St Boswells and at Hawick), an outreach centre in Jedburgh and an office in Edinburgh. The College also delivers community-based provision in towns across the Borders. This wide reach reflects and responds to the diverse and dispersed nature of our communities and our landbased and countryside provision, which includes agriculture, gamekeeping, animal care, horse care and horticulture, has been developed to support the rural nature of our environment. The

remainder of the College provision is broad-based and covers business, computing, IT and administration; construction and engineering; art and design, hair, beauty and catering; health and social care; access programmes and a range of community and leisure courses. The vast majority of our students come from the local area (89%) and of our new full-time students each year around 33% are school leavers from local Borders Schools.

Since 2009 the College has occupied modern, fit-for-purpose estates in all three main campuses as a result of the completion of an ambitious estates strategy. In Galashiels the College is co-located with the Heriot-Watt University School of Textiles and Design, which supports our ambition to provide coherent and efficient further education provision for our region. Our innovative and efficient approach to the development and delivery of shared services has supported financial sustainability for our College during a challenging financial period. Borders College is engaged in

a large number of partnerships in the Borders and plays a leading role in learning and skills development in the region. The College is an active member of the local Community Planning Partnership at an operational and strategic level and, as such, contributes to driving forward social and economic development in the area. The College has a pro-active approach to engaging and working with local employers and businesses, which supports and enhances the College's commitment to effective employer engagement, workforce development and skills utilisation.

The College aims to be a highly responsive institution which delivers high quality education, training and skills in response to the needs of the Scottish Borders region and of Scotland. Our strategy for the future is to retain our flexible approach along with our high quality standards, working in partnership to ensure the success of our learners and our communities.



## The Local Area

The Scottish Borders is a rural area with the two main towns of Hawick and Galashiels each having a population of less than 15,000. The rest of the region is characterised by small towns and villages surrounded by large rural areas. Population density is low, providing the challenge to the College of giving good

access to its services to people living in all areas of the region. Economic growth in the South of Scotland has lagged behind Scotland as a whole. The region is more dependent on public services, agriculture, tourism and retail to generate its output than Scotland as a whole. The economy is characterised by a large number of small business and employment has been

falling. The region has had some population growth but there is a decline in school-aged children and people aged between 25 and 44. We expect to see the largest growth in the older population. Although the number of jobs overall in the Borders is falling we have seen a significant decline in unemployment with youth employment in the region almost back to pre-recession levels.

The region has been identified by the Scottish Funding Council as an area with under-participation in further education and the College is committed to working with the SFC to access funding for the region, which will allow the College to grow the number of places it can offer. The College is a significant and critical resource within the Scottish Borders and the curriculum is aligned with local and national priorities. Over the period of this strategic plan we will undertake a significant review of our curriculum to ensure that we provide opportunities which are





aligned to growth sectors such as digital skills, food and drink and engineering.

September 2015 saw the reopening of the Borders Railway

between Tweedbank and Edinburgh, with usage exceeding expectations. The opening of the line provides excellent opportunities in the Scottish Borders for investment in jobs and

infrastructure, and our strategy will focus on ensuring that our curriculum offer enables our learners to take advantage of new opportunities as a result of the railway.



# Regional Priorities and Skills Needs

The College aims to respond to the regional priorities and skills needs as identified through the regional skills assessments conducted in our area and in response to the priorities for the development of

the region as identified by the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership (CPP). This plan addresses these priorities as follows:

## CPP Priority:

Reducing Inequality

The College continues to offer opportunities to a wide range of learners from the most deprived postcodes and to support these learners both financially and educationally to succeed. (Goals one and two)

## CPP Priority:

Economy and Low Carbon

By providing the skills to support inward investment and by working closely with local businesses, the College is a key contributor to the economic success of the region. The College aims to move forward its own low carbon strategy and to continue to improve performance in this area. (Goals four and five)

## CPP Priority:

Future Service Reform

The College aims to maintain the efficient and coherent provision of FE and HE in the Region through the continuation of the co-located campus with Heriot-Watt University and the delivery of efficient shared services. The College will work through membership of the CPP to deliver innovative solutions to the provision of public services. (Goals one and five)

## Regional Skills Assessment Identified Need:

Health and Social Care  
Digital Skills  
Tourism  
Forestry and Agriculture  
Electricity and Gas

The College is already well placed to deal with demand for skills from these priority areas. A curriculum offer review will be completed during the period of the plan and will particularly tackle the issue of digital skills. (Goal one)



# Scottish Government Priorities

The Scottish Government have identified a central ambition “to make real and lasting progress towards true equality of opportunity for all”. Education and the economy are the Government’s key priorities against which they expect their performance to be judged. Colleges across Scotland are well placed to deliver on Government priorities and there is a strong strategic alignment between the ambition of the Government and the key strategic purpose

of Borders College. There are a number of key Government policies and priorities which have particular relevance to the College and this strategic plan responds as follows:

## **Widen access and ensure fair access to educational opportunities**

The College will continue to widen access through the creation of appropriate College programmes and learner pathways. In particular working with universities to create meaningful articulation routes and through work to support learners who are care experienced or from disadvantaged backgrounds to enable access to learning opportunities. (Goals one and two)

## **Maintain college places and focus on the skills and training that help young people into work**

The College has an aspiration to grow the number of college places available in our region and will work with the Scottish Funding Council to ensure that sufficient places are available for young people studying programmes which lead to work and which meet the skills needs of our region. We are committed to delivering high levels of work placement and employability skills and, through our work on “Developing the Young Workforce”, are creating strong vocational pathways for young people in partnership with local schools. (Goals one and three)

## **Close the attainment gap**

The College has its key strategic purpose to deliver successful outcomes and positive destinations for all learners. In particular considering the barriers to learning faced by a diverse group of learners and delivering targeted and appropriate support. Maintaining a relevant, accessible curriculum and ensuring the highest quality of learning and teaching is key to this. (Goals one, two and three)



# Our **Strategy** – Towards 2020





## Strategic Purpose

Borders College will deliver **success for all learners** through:

- Successful qualification outcomes and
- Positive destinations

Borders College will support the economic and social development of the Scottish Borders through:

- The coherent and responsive provision of education, training and skills and
- Excellence in learning and teaching

## Vision

To be a College in which all learners succeed and which inspires growth, creates opportunity, raises aspirations and enhances lives.

## Values and Behaviours

For our learners, our staff, our partners and our communities we will be:

- ✓ Inspiring
- ✓ Collaborative
- ✓ Innovative
- ✓ Supportive
- ✓ Excellent

And to deliver our values we will:

- ✓ Behave as one team with a common purpose – the success of our learners, ourselves and our colleagues
- ✓ Maintain the highest level of respect for each other
- ✓ Value the contribution of everyone working for, learning in and associated with the College
- ✓ Act professionally and with integrity at all times
- ✓ Provide a positive role model for each other and for our learners

# Goals

We have set ourselves five strategic goals to guide our plans towards 2020.

During the period of this plan we will:

-  **1** Respond to the needs of our region
-  **2** Deliver successful outcomes for all learners
-  **3** Provide a high quality College experience
-  **4** Grow our business
-  **5** Build sustainability

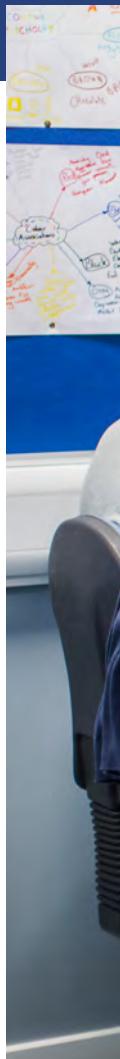


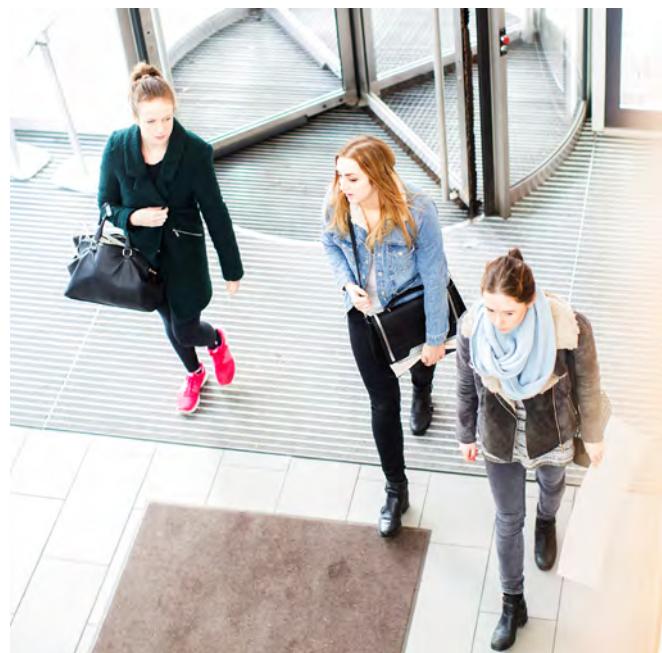
## Goal One

# Respond to the **needs** of our region

In order to achieve this we will:

- Understand our partners and stakeholders through meaningful dialogue and become an innovative and reliable partner delivering priority outcomes for our region.
- Develop and deliver provision to meet national and local priorities, particularly through initiatives to Develop the Young Workforce, widen access to education and reduce inequalities.
- Support economic development and business growth through engagement with employers and through the delivery of recognised workforce qualifications and bespoke, effective knowledge transfer activities.
- Support our communities to build capacity, increase opportunity and reduce inequality.
- Deliver efficient and successful learner journeys through a modern, relevant and coherent curriculum which provides appropriate pathways to positive destinations.





## Goal Two

# Deliver **successful** outcomes for all learners

In order to achieve this we will:

- Provide appropriate, targeted support to learners from all backgrounds and experiences to ensure that opportunities for success are available to all.
- Create a range of definitions and measures for learner success which recognise the achievements and destinations of all students.
- Deliver a range of employability skills for all learners to support success and progression.
- Generate a high expectation culture for learners which raises aspiration and creates confident individuals.
- Deepen student representation and strengthen the student voice.
- Deliver innovative and engaging teaching which enables and supports effective learning.
- Support our teaching staff to reflect on and improve their teaching practice.
- Provide access to the widest range of technology enhanced learning opportunities.



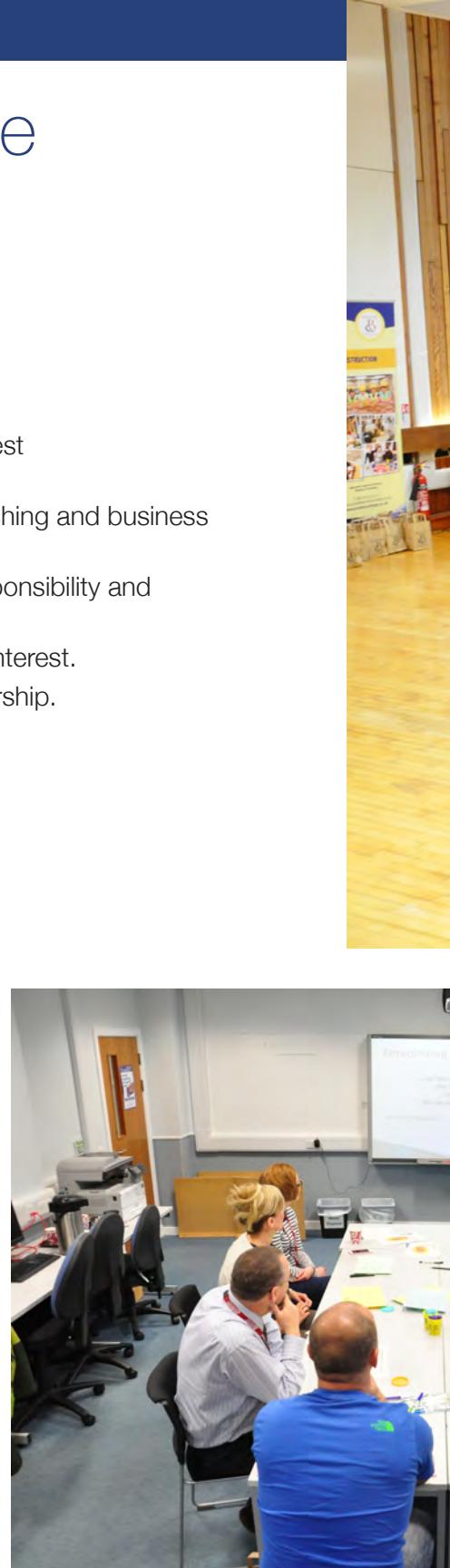


## Goal Three

# Provide a high **quality** College experience

In order to achieve this we will:

- Create a well-supported, highly valued and confident workforce.
- Discover and develop talent in our workforce.
- Create a positive organisational culture and deliver open and honest communication.
- Energise approaches to quality improvement for learning and teaching and business support services.
- Further develop clarity of roles for staff, creating high levels of responsibility and accountability.
- Consult with our students and involve them in matters of mutual interest.
- Maintain high levels of strong and effective governance and leadership.





## Goal Four

# Grow our **business**

In order to achieve this we will:

- Build on our positive local and national reputation.
- Build a systematic approach to market research.
- Build on our niche markets and specialist products.
- Deliver a strong voice in the sector and for the sector to improve the effectiveness of lobbying and build our case for further investment and core growth.
- Develop new markets and opportunities resulting from the Borders Railway.
- Build our commercial portfolio to increase non-SFC funding streams.



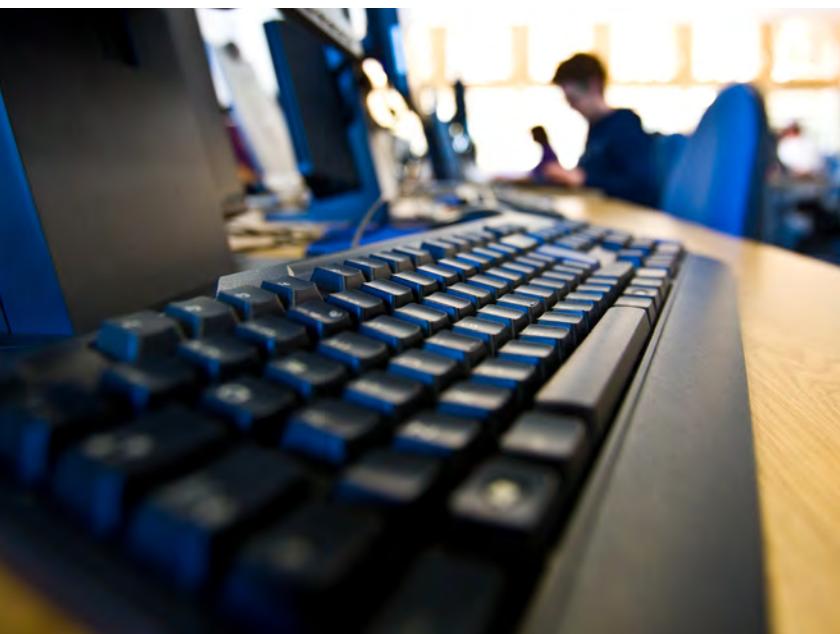


## Goal Five

# Build sustainability

In order to achieve this we will:

- Develop and operate modern, fit-for-purpose, efficient estates.
- Deliver a renewed accommodation strategy to make best use of existing estates and to improve estates and facilities at Newtown St Boswells.
- Implement an ambitious low carbon strategy, building on our sustainable Sharc heating and solar energy projects.
- Deliver an ambitious ICT renewal programme to ensure future-proofed, accessible and highly functioning ICT systems to support learning and teaching and business support services.
- Maintain strong financial management to operate balanced public finance budgets.
- Build a case with the Scottish Funding Council for an appropriate and sustainable level of core and rural funding.
- Increase commercial income to allow for financial headroom and future investment.





# Delivering the Strategy by 2020

This Strategic Plan will drive College action and performance through a range of supporting strategies and through the College Development Plan.

In order to achieve our goals by 2020, annual strategic priorities will be set by the Regional Board for each year of the Strategic Plan.

These priorities will be published and will drive forward the operational actions of the College in each 12 month period.

These actions will be identified, reviewed and monitored through the College Development Plan, which also contains actions to address developments identified through the College's system of self-evaluation.



# Strategies to Support the **Delivery** of the Plan by **2020**

Learning and Teaching  
Strategy

Learner Engagement  
Strategy

HR and OD  
Strategy

ISLT  
Strategy

Employer Engagement  
Strategy

Access and Inclusion Strategy

Estates  
Strategy

Marketing and Communication  
Strategy

Finance  
Strategy

Procurement  
Strategy



- Towards 2020 Strategic Plan
- Supporting Strategies



- Annual Priorities
- Self Evaluation Reports
- Strategic Risk Register



- College-wide annual development plan
- Faculty and Departmental annual development plans



# Our Strategic Indicators

Throughout the period of the plan progress, success and sustainability will be measured using the key strategic indicators (KSIs) described below. These measures have been set in line with national performance measures and to enable our goals to be achieved. Progress against these indicators will be reviewed regularly by the College Management Team and by the Regional Board. A table of these Key Strategic Indicators can be found at [www.borderscollege.ac.uk/strategic](http://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/strategic). In addition to the specific and detailed measures described below the Regional Board will determine the success of the plan by assessing in particular the following high level indicators:

- The number of new and enhanced curriculum programmes on offer in 2020
- Learner success rates for full and part-time further and higher education learners at least five percentage points above the sector average by 2020
- The amount of SFC growth funding allocated and delivered by the College by 2020
- The successful development of the new facility at Tweedbank by 2020
- The delivery of a new and improved ICT infrastructure by 2020
- Financial sustainability for the organisation defined by the operation of balanced budgets by 2020 and allowing for future investment beyond 2020

## 1. Activity Level

### **KSI 1 The total number of credits delivered.**

This measure is for the entirety of the College's activity funded through the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). Each credit equates to 40 hours of learning or 80 hours of work placement activity. The total number of credits funded is negotiated each year between the SFC and the College as part of the Outcome Agreement. This KSI is also National Measure 2 within the College Regional Outcome Agreement.

### **KSI 2 The proportion of credits delivered to students between the ages of 16 and 19 years old.**

There are both national and local priorities to ensure that young people have a positive destination on leaving school, which they will maintain and will lead to improved prospects for a productive and rewarding vocation. The College has set this KSI to ensure sufficient resource is targeted at this priority group. This KSI is also National Measure 3 within the College Regional Outcome Agreement.

## 2. Learner Success

### **KSI 3 The overall learner success rate.**

High level of achievement by our students is paramount for us. This KSI (along with KSIs 4 to 7) measures our student success rate as well as providing comparative data on the performance of different categories of student. It looks at student performance for both our further and higher education programmes studied either full or part time. It also provides comparative data for students who withdraw either in the first quarter of their programme or at a later date, and of those who achieved the programme outcome (e.g. an HND) or partially achieved their programme. This KSI is also National Measure 11 for the College Regional Outcome Agreement.



# 3. Equality

## **KSI 4 The overall learner success rate for all students studying for more than 160 hours.**

This KSI is included as a comparator for the equality KSIs. The College's challenge over the period of this strategic plan is to close the gaps between those identified groups of people that have consistently performed less well in the past. For this plan the College is taking action for all groups where this is the case. For the KSIs it is monitoring closing the gap for deprivation, age and gender. The next three KSIs provide details for these.

## **KSI 5 The learner success rate for young students studying for more than 160 hours.**

This KSI provides the success rate for young students by age (under 18s & 18 to 20 year olds). It looks at all young students who are studying either full or part time for more than 160 hours in a year. (160 hours is approximately the equivalent of 1 Higher.) Previous years' data indicates that these age groups' achievement rates are lower than the College's overall rate and is a priority area for improving overall success. This KSI is one of the measures published annually by all college regions and nationally by the SFC. The aim is to close the gap three percentage points for under 18s and half a percentage point for 18 to 20 year olds.

## **KSI 6 The learner success rate for students studying for more than 160 hours from areas of deprivation.**

Education is recognised as a significant contributor in tackling inequality in our region and nationally. The College has an important role to play in this national ambition. This KSI uses the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) to identify students who come from the 10% and 20% most deprived postcode areas in Scotland. Achievement rates for these groups have been lower than the College's average in the past and therefore are a priority area for improvement. This KSI is also one of the measures published annually by all college regions and nationally by the SFC. The College's ambition is to close the gap by one percentage point to 3% by 2020.

## **KSI 7 The learner success rate for males and females studying on programmes of more than 160 hours.**

Tackling gender inequality is also a national priority. For education this means ensuring equality of opportunity in levels of participation and success and taking action to address variations in these rates by gender. This KSI measures learner success rates by gender. Previous years' data indicates that females outperform males. The focus of the College will be to reduce this gender gap to 1.5% for FE students and 3.5% for HE students by 2020. This KSI is also one of the measures published annually by all college regions and nationally by the SFC.

## **KSI 8 The proportion of full time programmes where one gender makes up more than 75% of the enrolments.**

The SFC interim report on the Gender Action Plan in 2016 indicates that more needs to be done to tackle occupational gender segregation, which is seen as a major factor in the lingering gender pay gap in Scotland. Colleges have an important role to play in promoting all occupations to both genders. At present more than three quarters of the full time programmes offered by the College have enrolments dominated by a single gender, with nearly a third of full time programmes having enrolments from a single sex. The College will work to reduce this gender segregation by vocational training area by six percentage points by 2020.





## 4. Learner Satisfaction and Progression

### **KSI 9 Learner satisfaction rate – the number of responses below 87% level of satisfaction.**

The SFC will issue and analyse a national survey of college students from 2016/17 onwards. The survey instrument was piloted nationally in the previous two academic years. The College will analyse its own results against the national report and put actions in place when the satisfaction rate for any one question falls below 87%. The aim is to reduce the number of questions where satisfaction is below 87% to zero by 2020.

### **KSI 10 The percentage of successful learners achieving and sustaining positive destinations.**

The College surveys all successful leavers 3-6 months after they leave College to find out what they have been doing since. This is part of a national exercise undertaken by all colleges, with the results collated and reported on by the SFC. The aim is to maintain positive destination rates at their current high level with a rate of 97% in 2020. It is also Measure 13 in the College Region Outcome Agreement. Positive destinations are considered to be either further training or employment.

### **KSI 11 The number of successful learners achieving entry to university with advanced standing.**

The Scottish Government recognises that progression from college to university with advanced standing is an important component in improving access to university, particularly for disadvantaged groups; it is a key component in Scotland's access and inclusion agenda. Colleges and universities have been tasked with improving access to higher education and removing repetition from the learner journey through the academic levels. The College will work with its partner universities to increase the numbers articulating with advanced standing to 20 by 2020. This KSI is also Measure 12 in the College Regional Outcome Agreement.

### **KSI 12 The learner success rate for full time students in their first year of study.**

The achievement rate of students in their second or subsequent year of study at the College is high at around 90% in previous years. The year students are most at risk of withdrawing or not achieving is therefore their first year of study. The College will address factors that lead students to withdraw in their first year of study to reduce the gap in success rates by year of study. This is a new measure for the College and doesn't have an equivalent national measure. As such it may require some adjustment as the baseline becomes more established. The target for 2020 is 68% of learners on full time programmes achieving in their first year of study.

## 5. Workforce

### **KSI 13 The percentage of full time permanent lecturing staff with TQFE or equivalent.**

The College believes that having a fully trained workforce is important in ensuring the quality of teaching and assessment. It has a comprehensive programme of training for lecturers, leading to a Teaching Qualification in Further education (TQFE). It will look to maintain the rate of qualified full time permanent staff at 100%. This KSI is also one of the measures published annually by all college regions and nationally by the Scottish Funding Council.

# 6. Sustainability

## **KSI 14 Tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per m<sup>2</sup> of internal floor space.**

This measure has been agreed as an appropriate sector-wide indicator to allow comparison across colleges and also for a college to measure its own progress in reducing its carbon footprint as it relates to size of estate. The College will undertake a number of actions as part of its new Carbon Management Plan. The previous Carbon Management Plan was a joint plan with Heriot-Watt University and focussed on Scottish Borders Campus in Galashiels. That plan targeted a 25% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, with a reduction of 27.5% achieved. The new plan for the period 2016-20 will be developed in line with the College's mandatory reporting requirements and will encompass the College's entire estate. Targets will be agreed in July 2016 as part of that process.

## **KSI 15 Tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per £ income.**

Similar to KSI 14, this measure has been agreed as an appropriate sector-wide indicator to allow comparison across colleges and also for a college to measure its own progress in reducing its carbon footprint, in this case using income as a proxy for activity level. Again, targets will be agreed in July 2016.

## **KSI 16 Number of credits delivered per full time equivalent member of teaching staff.**

This is a measure of how efficiently the College delivers its programmes. It is a long-established measure used by the College for benchmarking. It is influenced by class size, curriculum design and methods of delivery. The College will establish a baseline from the 2015/16 curriculum and look to maintain this level over the period of the plan.

## **KSI 17 Non-SFC income as a percentage of turnover.**

The College plans to grow the proportion of its income coming from sources other than the Scottish Funding Council by three percentage points over the duration of this plan. This helps to diversify the College's income sources reducing its reliance on SFC funding, its single largest source.

## **KSI 18 Staff costs as a percentage of turnover.**

The College plans to reduce the staff costs as a percentage of turnover by two percentage points over the period of this plan. This reduces the risk to the College in terms of percentage variations in its largest area of expenditure. It will be achieved through increasing income and utilising staff resources as efficiently as possible.





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