

Argyll and Bute Council

Vocational Education Expanding Opportunities

January 2009



VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

What are the Drivers?

As stated in the Scottish Government document “Policy Expectations for Local Authority Delivery of Determined to Succeed” the strategic drivers are:

- The Scottish Government’s overarching Purpose and its Economic Strategy make clear the need to ensure our people are creative and enterprising, entrepreneurial and innovative if we are to increase sustainable economic growth;
- The Scottish Government’s Concordat with COSLA, outlining a new relationship between national and local government, founded on mutual respect and partnership. And, within it, the specific commitment to vocational education/skills – working in partnership with colleges, local employers and others as appropriate to give more school pupils opportunities to experience vocational learning;
- *Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy*, which clearly recognises the importance of ensuring our people are equipped with the skills, expertise and knowledge for success;
- *Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)*, which will transform the Scottish education system and which will ensure, through the best possible learning and teaching, that our children and young people are educated to be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors - and have the knowledge and skills they need for learning, for life and for work;
- *More Choices, More Chances* - through CfE the Scottish Government wants improved outcomes for all young people. But we recognise the need to offer more choices and chances for those who are not achieving their potential if we are to increase the proportion of school leavers in positive and sustained destinations; and
- The ring-fenced funding status of DtS within Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) for 2008-2011 (the only funding stream within the Education and Lifelong Learning portfolio which is) to continue to support the same policy objectives and front line activity.

Education should open up a range of opportunities to pupils and give them a variety of social, personal and educational skills that are transferable to many different situations, including the workplace and community life. It should provide opportunities for further learning, training or employment.

Vocational education in schools generally aims to develop pre-vocational or employability skills. When undertaken in the tertiary education or training sectors vocational education is usually oriented towards a specific trade, profession, vocation or element of work. It can involve development of specific technical or professional skills for certain types of job or occupation, or training in general skills and aptitudes relating to an industry. It will also generally involve the development of personal and learning skills, core skills and employability skills.

Vocational education can provide a suitable context, something which may capture pupils' imagination and interest and better engage some pupils to learn. It provides the opportunity to demonstrate the relevance of subjects such as literacy and numeracy in practical ways. For example tiling, a subject which although at first glance may seem relatively straightforward, needs the application of a range of mathematical skills at a relatively high level including trigonometry and geometry. Another example is language study, which can be provided with a vocational focus. This gives pupils the opportunity to learn language skills in a work-related context as part of their studies.

As a country we are generally good at laying the educational foundations for those who train to be professionals such as doctors, lawyers and accountants. Vocational education serves them well. For at their heart, medicine, law and accountancy are by their nature essentially vocational courses. However, our education system currently does not serve as well pupils who want to enter other occupations. We must do more for pupils wanting, for example, to be professional care workers, electricians, technicians and plumbers. There should be parity of esteem across all vocations and all forms - and places - of learning.

In order to enable 14-16 year olds to develop vocational skills and improve their employment prospects or lead to further training the SQA developed Skills for Work courses. As part of a school based curriculum these courses allow young people a nationally recognised alternative to one or more standard grades.

SKILLS FOR WORK COURSES

In keeping with the aims of Curriculum for Excellence and Determined to succeed these courses should be integral to the school curriculum and not be stand alone or an add-on. The most common method of delivery is in partnership with a college, employer or training provider but it may be possible for a school to deliver them.

There is a misconception that these courses only train young people for a specific vocation. Some will pursue a career in that subject area, as these courses provide a solid educational pathway to further learning, training or employment. These courses have value whether they do or not because the core skills are employability skills such as communication and team-working.

Maureen Watt, Minister for Schools and Skills said:

"The Skills for Work pilot has been very successful and these courses are now available in secondary schools across Scotland. Skills for Work courses give pupils the opportunity to develop new skills and knowledge which are directly relevant to the workplace. They help young people to realise their potential, offering them greater diversity and choice of qualifications. Skills for Work complements the existing learning opportunities available in schools and is helping pupils of all abilities to develop new skills."

The SQA's rationale for skills for work courses is:

1. Skills for work courses are designed to help candidates to develop:

- skills and knowledge in a broad vocational area;
- core skills;
- an understanding of the workplace;
- positive attitudes to learning; and
- skills and attitudes for employability.

2. A key feature of these courses is the emphasis on experiential learning. This means learning through practical experience and learning by reflecting on experience. Teaching/learning programmes will include some or all of the following:

- learning in real or simulated workplace settings;
- learning through role play activities in vocational contexts;
- carrying out case study work; and
- planning and carrying out practical tasks and assignments.

Teaching/learning programmes will include some or all of the following:

- preparing and planning for the experience;
- taking stock throughout the experience - reviewing and adapting as necessary; and
- reflecting after the activity has been completed - evaluating, self-assessing and identifying learning points.

3. The Skills for work courses are also designed to provide candidates with opportunities for developing *core skills* and enhancing skills and attitudes for employability. The five core skills are:

- Communication;
- Numeracy;
- Information Technology;
- Problem Solving; and
- Working with Others.

4. The skills and attitudes for employability, including self-employment, are outlined below:

generic skills/attitudes valued by employers

- understanding of the workplace and the employee's responsibilities, for example time-keeping, appearance, customer care;
- self-evaluation skills;
- positive attitude to learning;
- flexible approaches to solving problems;
- adaptability and positive attitude to change; and
- confidence to set goals, reflect and learn from experience.

specific vocational skills/knowledge

- Course specifications highlight the links to National Occupational Standards in the vocational area and identify progression opportunities.

Opportunities for developing these skills and attitudes are highlighted in each of the course and unit specifications. These opportunities include giving pupils direct access to workplace experiences or, through partnership arrangements, providing different learning environments and experiences which simulate aspects of the workplace. These experiences might include visits, visiting speakers, role play and other practical activities.

5. A Curriculum for Excellence identifies aspirations for every young person. These are that they should become:

- successful learners;
- confident individuals;
- responsible citizens; and
- effective contributors.

The learning environments, the focus on experiential learning and the opportunities to develop employability and core skills in these courses contribute to meeting these aspirations.

SKILLS FOR WORK COURSES IN ARGYLL AND BUTE

After the initial pilot we have steadily increased the numbers opting for Skills for Work courses, exceeding our estimated numbers each year. From June 2009 all 10 secondary schools will be offering Skills for work courses.

Argyll College is the Authority's main college partner working with 9 of our secondary schools. In addition partnerships have been developed with both James Watt College and Clydebank College. The building of these partnerships has been key to the success in Argyll and Bute. Even though this collaboration will continue to flourish, if numbers increase at the current rate a saturation point will be reached. If we then want to meet demand we will have to be more creative in the delivery of the courses by using employers and making use of school facilities.

It is recognised by Scottish Government that school/college partnerships and the delivery of Skills for work courses will be challenging in rural communities. As a result Argyll and Bute are part of a Highlands and Islands SQA strategy group that is exploring the issues with both the Scottish Government and SQA.

For our new academic session 2009/10 we will be offering the following range of courses:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| • Construction Skills | Intermediate 1 |
| • Construction Skills | Intermediate 2 |
| • Early Education and Childcare | Intermediate 1 |
| • Early Education and Childcare | Intermediate 2 |
| • Financial Services | Intermediate 2 |
| • Hairdressing | Intermediate 1 |
| • Hairdressing | Intermediate 2 |
| • Hospitality | Intermediate 1 |
| • Hospitality | Intermediate 2 |
| • Rural Skills | Intermediate 1 |
| • Uniformed and Emergency Services | Intermediate 1 |
| • Cosmetology | Intermediate 1 |
| • C&G Motor Vehicles | Intermediate 1 |

SKILLS FOR WORK GROWTH 2007 – 2010

The following table shows the growth of skills for work over a three-year period.

SCHOOL	COURSES	PROVIDER	2007/08		2008/09		2009/10	
			PUPIL NOS	SUMS REQD	PUPIL NOS	SUMS REQD	PUPIL NOS	SUMS REQD
Campbeltown	Construction	Argyll College	10	20	18	36	16	32
	EE & CC		11	22	12	24	0	0
	Rural Skills		2	6	17	34	20	40
	Hairdressing		0	0	0	0	8	16
	Sport & Rec		0	0	0	2	4	
Tarbert	Construction	Argyll College	4	8	6	12	12	24
	EE & CC		0	0	1	2	4	8
	Ent & Employ	School/LA	4	0	4	8	8	16
	Hairdressing	Argyll	0	0	0	0	2	4
	Sport & Rec	College	0	0	0	0	2	4
	Rural Skills		0	0	0	0	2	4
Lochgilthead	Construction	Argyll College	8	16	14	28	12	24
	EE & CC		6	12	10	20	4	8
	Rural Skills		3	6	4	8	4	8
	Hairdressing		0	0	0	0	6	12
Islay	Construction	Argyll College	39	156	24	96	24	96
	Hairdressing		10	40	19	76	20	80
	Cosmetology		7	28	13	52	12	48
	Hospitality	School/LA	0	0	8	32	16	64
	Rural Skills		10	0	12	0	24	0
Oban	Construction	Argyll College	4	8	3	6	0	0
	EE & CC		9	18	19	38	20	40
	Hospitality		0	0	7	14	15	30
	Hairdressing		0	0	7	14	15	30
	Sport & Rec		0	0	10	20	18	36
	Rural Skills		0	0	8	16	15	30
	Financial		0	0	0	0	10	20
	Uni & Emergency		0	0	0	0	10	20
Rothesay	EE & CC	Argyll College	8	16	17	34	17	34
	Rural Skills		8	16	18	36	16	32
	Financial		6	12	16	32	20	40
	Hairdressing	0	0	6	12	12	24	
	Construction	James Watt	0	0	0	0	8	16
	Hospitality		12	24	26	52	24	48
Dunoon	EE & CC	Argyll College	No involvement		10	20	20	40
	Financial		4	8	13	26		
	Construction		0	0	8	16		
	Uni & Emergency	James Watt	0	0	12	24		
	Hospitality		0	0	12	24		
Hermitage	EE & CC	Clydebank College	12	24	36	72	48	96
	Hairdressing		0	0	9	18	19	38
	Motor Vehicle		0	0	11	22	22	44
	Uni & Emergency		0	0	10	20	20	40
Tobermory	Hospitality		No involvement		No involvement		4	8
	Engineering		2	4	4	8		
Tiree	Rural Skills	Argyll College	No involvement		2	4	4	8
TOTALS			173	548	381	866	582	1260

FUNDING

Colleges are able to draw funding SUMS from the national school/college funding budget to deliver Skills for Work courses. For 2009/10 the predicted number of SUMS required and the total value of these SUMS is shown in the following table:

SCHOOL	SUMS REQD	£ VALUE
Campeltown	92	17,480
Tarbert	60	11,400
Lochgilphead	52	9,880
Islay	288	54,720
Oban	206	39,140
Rothesay	194	36,860
Dunoon	130	24,700
Hermitage	218	41,420
Tobermory	12	2,280
Tiree	8	1,520
TOTAL	1260	239,400

The following table illustrates the funding sums being drawn down by each of the colleges for Skills for Work across Argyll and Bute schools during 2009/10:

College	Nos of Schools	No of Courses	SUMS Required	£ VALUE
Argyll	9	45	1006	191,140
Clydebank	1	5	218	41,420
James Watt	2	3	36	6,840
TOTAL			1260	239,400

OTHER COSTS

As of session 2009/10 Clydebank College has introduced a set fee per student studying each of the Skills for Work courses on offer. This fee varies dependent upon the course. For instance in the Hairdressing course the fee covers the cost of buying a head and the necessary cutting equipment. Argyll and Bute Council will be charged the following amounts by Clydebank College:

Course	Nos of Pupils	Cost per Pupil	Total Cost £
Early Education and Childcare	48	£81	3,888
Hairdressing	19	£59	1,121
Motor Vehicle	22	£58	1,276
Grand TOTAL			6,285

TRANSPORT

Due to the geographical location of college facilities and placement providers pupils will need to be transported to and from college/placements. Transport costs are expected to be borne by the Council and are not funded through SUMS. The projected transport costs for 2009/10 is £30,000. This is a threefold increase on 2007/08 costings.

PPE

We also fund the purchase of some personal protective equipment for those schools delivering parts of the courses themselves. These costs will be £5,000 for session 2009/10.

CAPACITY BUILDING TO IMPLEMENT AND SUSTAIN SKILLS FOR WORK COURSES

It is now widely accepted that vocational education should be integral to the learning experience of all young people and not simply a bolt on or alternative for some pupils to their other school subjects. The development of Skills for Work courses has enabled young people to gain and receive formal recognition for the acquisition of appropriate work related skills. The national evaluation of Skills for Work by HMIE has demonstrated the need for local authorities and schools to establish effective and creative solutions to overcome the many barriers to effective implementation of Skills for Work courses. The barriers we have identified are:

- Determined to Succeed Funding - Currently the funding ABC receives for Determined to Succeed is used to meet these additional costs and for development of the Skills for Work programme. However, as of April 2011 the Scottish Government will no longer ring-fence this element of the ABC education budget. ABC will then become liable for these costs – this amount for 2009/10 is £42,000 for the basic costs associated with the programme.
- Geographical isolation – college provision across Argyll and Bute is increasing through effective partnerships with our college and employer partners, which has enabled Skills for Work courses to be established. During the period 2007 – 2009, Argyll College has invested considerable money in opening 4 Construction Skills Centres across the Argyll and Bute area – in Campbeltown, Lochgilphead, Dunoon and Rothesay. In addition, they have adapted college facilities to include Hairdressing and Beauty therapy Salons in Campbeltown and Oban. All of these facilities are available to our school pupils, dependent upon timetable constraints. Clydebank College has also opened a hub centre in Dumbarton which Hermitage Academy pupils access for Hairdressing and Motor Vehicle Maintenance, again this is dependent upon timetable constraints. However, not every school has access to the full range of Skills for Work opportunities available, in fact a number of our smaller schools may only be able to access 1 or 2 courses.

- The schools estate strategy will need to consider the impact of Skills for Work courses in the design of new school buildings in order to make them fully fit for purpose in the 21st Century.

For example: Islay High School used their School of Ambition funding to make a step change in its approach to delivering a curriculum appropriate to the needs of pupils, parents and the community of Islay. This funding enabled the building of two workshops – 1 for Hairdressing and 1 for Construction Skills. During 2008/09, the school, ABC Capital Fund and ABC Determined to Succeed jointly funded the establishment of a Hospitality workshop costing £78,000. The purchase of smaller professional equipment was contributed through partnership working with Argyll College.

- A Curriculum for Excellence – building capacity within each of our schools in order to deliver a balanced Curriculum for Excellence capable of meeting the future needs and skills of ALL our young people should be accorded a high priority.
- Employer goodwill – the valued involvement of employers across Argyll and Bute in work experience and enterprising education events has always been based on the premise of goodwill. The need to identify an ever increasing number of employers to provide Skills for Work partnerships or placements will require a more formal approach to the development of commissioning arrangements to secure the capacity required. The economic downturn could mean that employers will be less willing to offer support at a cost to them. All employers involved in the Skills for Work programme have to undergo enhanced Disclosure Scotland checks and an in-depth Argyll and Bute Council Health and Safety check.
- Argyll and Bute Council – ABC should build its commitment to the Skills for Work programme by ensuring that all of its appropriate departments and services contribute to the capacity building of Skills for Work courses by offering placements and training to S3 and S4 pupils. In addition the Council could create a progression pathway by introducing appropriate Skillseekers and Modern Apprenticeships to young people who successfully complete Skills for Work courses. This could also contribute to the Councils succession planning strategy within the Growing Our Own initiative.
- Equality of Opportunity – young people within Argyll and Bute are missing out on Skills for Work opportunities when compared with the urban areas of Scotland. The Council is working to address the funding gap and lack of provision of services to support Skills for Work as a key partner of Highlands and Islands local authorities experiencing similar problems. Even within Argyll and Bute there is inequality of opportunities to take up the range of Skills for Work courses. Every pupil has the right to access a vocational curriculum and the Council will require to be creative to meet the needs of all its young people.

To allow for growth and development of the Skills for Work programme the ABC Determined to Succeed team has been researching different methods of delivery and the sustainability of these methods. The team is currently working on two pilot ideas.

e.g. Dunoon Grammar School

The school is keen to have some workshop facilities either on site or as close to the school as possible. The DtS team are currently investigating the possibility of using alternative accommodation for a rural skills facility. They are also looking at the possibility of long term portable accommodation for the delivery of construction skills and hairdressing in partnership with Strathclyde University Architectural Department. This would result in something very close to the highly successful Islay High School model where joint funding has resulted in sustainability.

This idea is endorsed in the Scottish Governments report on “Lifelong Partners.....A Strategy for Partnership” where it states:

“Local Authorities, schools and colleges may wish to consider joint-funding of facilities in schools or colleges. Colleges may also wish to consider the possibility of setting up outreach facilities in schools.”

Appendix 1

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