Curriculum Strategy

Reviewed: May 2018
Next Review Date: May 2021
Responsibility: Director of Curriculum and Academic Operations
Approved by: Board of Management

1.0   Introduction

The purpose of this strategy is to provide clear direction to deliver the college strategic aim, to:

"Offer a forward-looking curriculum shaped by local, regional and national priorities which meets the needs and aspirations of our students, employers and wider communities".

The strategy has been developed to provide a framework against which the existing curriculum portfolio can be evaluated and developed further, to meet the needs of learners and relevant stakeholders. The strategy will also provide guidance for staff involved in the development of new programmes.

2.0   Curriculum Aim and Objectives

The aim of the curriculum is to prepare learners for work and other positive destinations by developing skills, knowledge and attributes which will improve learners' life chances and generate the skilled workforce needed for economic growth by focusing on job-related skills. Therefore, this strategy provides guidance to achieve the following curriculum strategic objectives:

2.1   Review and approve a flexible curriculum portfolio which includes all full time, part time and commercial programmes and ensures curriculum planning is responsive to workforce and skills planning needs and emerging opportunities.

2.2   Improve the design, alignment and coherence of the learner journey to ensure the learner experience is work relevant, contextualised, appropriate and engaging. A range of cross cutting themes including qualification alignment, types of learning experiences and the extent of progression planning within subject areas will be considered with a focus on delivering equity, raising attainment, promoting equality, tackling inequalities and supporting those with additional needs.

2.3   Strengthen the reputation of the college and raise the college profile in specialist curriculum areas.

3.0   National, Regional and Local Strategic Drivers

The strategy has been developed taking account of a range of relevant educational and economic policy initiatives and drivers including the Highlands and Islands Regional Outcome Agreement, the Single Outcome Agreement and Ministerial Letters of Guidance and Scottish Government policy statements such as:

- ➢ Getting It Right for Every Child;
- ➢ Curriculum for Excellence;
- ➢ Putting the Learner at the Centre
- ➢ 15-24 Learner Journey
- ➢ Developing the Young Workforce: Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy.
- ➢ Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth;
- ➢ Scotland's Economic Strategy
- ➢ Sector Specific Skills Investment Plans

- ➢ Equipping Scotland for the Future
- ➢ A Blueprint for Fairness: Commission on Widening Access
- ➢ The Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Strategy for Education and Training;
- ➢ Education Scotland: Career Management Standards and Work Placement Standards

The College will continue to take full account of any modifications to national priorities and will respond to these wherever possible.

As UHI approaches reaching its HE Undergraduate funded target number, it is expected that from session 18 -19, SFC will begin allocation of its main teaching grant according to student recruitment in subject price groups (1-6). Consequently, a managed approach to HE curriculum development now needs to be considered, in order to redistribute UHI funded numbers to match the price group allocations.

This targeted growth approach requires Moray College UHI to:
- ➢ Prioritise curriculum in price groups 2 and 3, which will include subjects such as Optometry and Engineering.
- ➢ Review and reform all undergraduate programmes to ensure each programme maximises the number of modules coded as price group 2 and 3.
- ➢ Ensure the controlled increase in student numbers permitted by SFC is reached in Nursing, Midwifery, Teacher Education and Early Learning and Childcare. Increases in these programmes will relate to regional workforce planning.
- ➢ Increase recruitment and retention for SIMD20 and SMID40 entrants
- ➢ Increase recruitment and retention for Care-experiences entrants and carers.
- ➢ Increase recruitment and retention for Entrants to STEM subjects.
- ➢ Develop robust and costed plans to recruit RUK and International students
- ➢ Continue to develop full cost recovery programmes.

In developing this curriculum strategy, the college has worked closely with its extensive base of employer and industry body contacts and Community Planning Partners. The strategy draws on up-to-date labour market information, through Regional Skills Assessments and the resultant Highlands, Islands Skills Investment Plan (SIP), and the Moray SIP. This curriculum strategy also supports the work of the Moray Skills Pathway, DYW Moray, the Moray Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP), which aims to "Raise Aspirations", and the Moray Growth Deal programme which:

"Focusses on retaining and attracting young people/families (16 – 29) to live and work in the area, and addressing occupational segregation and gender imbalance".

4.0   Moray College UHI Curriculum Portfolio

Whilst it is important to ensure the college curriculum portfolio is flexible and able to respond to current and emerging opportunities, there is also a need to carefully consider curriculum that will ensure skills are developed to stimulate sustainable economic growth. To achieve this, education and skills development needs to align with economic opportunity and future skills needs of employers. This will ensure every college learner is provided with the entitlement of a positive pathway to a positive destination.

4.1 Priority Subject Areas

Taking account of the key national, regional and local priorities outlined in Appendix 1 and 2, the Moray College UHI curriculum portfolio will prioritise provision in the following sector areas:

4.1.1 Volume sectors

These sectors of the local economy are both major employers <u>and</u> are key parts of the regional infrastructure. Analysis of the Moray demographics shows that the working age population is projected to decline significantly over the next ten years and it is anticipated this will result in an extensive job replacement demand in the following volume sectors:

- ➢ Health and Social Care,
- ➢ Early Education and Childcare (also a key Scottish Government Priority)
- ➢ Construction (Skilled Trades),
- ➢ Engineering (Automotive and Manufacturing)

4.1.2 Growth Opportunity Sectors

These are existing key sectors of the local economy, which either feature in the Moray Growth Deal and related projects, are the result of new investments (Boeing development at RAF Lossiemouth) or have been identified as developing sectors. Curriculum in these key sectors will be prioritised to support the development of future skills requirements:

- ➢ Food and Drink, Tourism & Heritage (Whisky)
- ➢ IT and Creative Digital Industries
- ➢ Renewable Energy/Offshore Wind/Decommissioning
- ➢ Professional, Life Sciences
- ➢ Land Based (Forestry & Nurseries)
- ➢ Financial and Business Services

4.1.3 Specialist Skill Sectors

Moray College UHI has a leadership role for a number of degree programmes across the partnership of the University of the Highlands and Islands. Therefore, these specialist curriculum areas must also have a priority in the college curriculum portfolio:

- ➢ PGDE Teacher Education,
- ➢ Computing
- ➢ Interactive Media,
- ➢ Integrative Health,
- ➢ Fine Art

4.2 Learner Pathways

The Scottish Government's vision is for a learning system, which enables efficient and effective learning journeys *"to ensure all learners are on the right route to the right job, through the correct course via the right information".*
(15-24 Learner Journey).

Project 4 of the 15 – 24 Learner Journey: 'Provisions and Transitions' aims to ensure learners have equal access to the full range of qualifications/awards/pathways required to meet different needs and career aspirations. Taking account of the Moray demographics, this aim should be extended to apply to all learners. There is a real need to focus efforts to provide learning opportunities relevant to all working age people e.g. those who have had an extended break from the workforce and are interested in returning to work, those interested in changing careers, upskilling/reskilling the workforce, those who face additional barriers to finding employment etc.

Given the breadth of the potential learning system, the college will prioritise providing programmes of study that fit into the various linear and non-linear pathways for the following learner journeys:

- ➢ Senior Phase programmes as pathways to college courses, apprenticeships, university and work.
- ➢ College FE programmes as pathways to HN college courses, apprenticeships, university and work.
- ➢ College HN programmes as pathways to degree programmes apprenticeships and work.
- ➢ Retraining or Up-Skilling provision as pathways to re-enter the workplace in a different career or level.

This approach will:

- ➢ See a strengthening of the senior phase offering,
- ➢ Establish a coherent portfolio of foundation apprenticeships, modern apprenticeships and graduate level apprenticeships that align with employer demand.
- ➢ Repurpose National Certificates, VQ and HN qualifications including consideration to co-deliver where appropriate and identification of opportunities for better articulation of prior attainment and prior learning.

Prioritising the curriculum in this way determines the contribution Moray College UHI will make to the achievement of developing a 'Growing, Diverse and Sustainable Economy' identified as a priority area of work in the Moray Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP). Developed by the Moray Community Planning Partnership (CPP), the LOIP has a vision of:

"*Raising Aspirations through Expanded Choices, Improved Livelihoods and Wellbeing".*

Moray College makes a commitment to adopt the CPP priorities:

- • Targeted approaches for those furthest from the job market
- • Pathways to higher skilled employment
- • Choices for the young workforce
- • Apprenticeships at all levels

5.0   FE Curriculum Design Principles

FE curriculum design principles have been developed to take account of the following key policy drivers:

- ➤ Senior phase entitlements of Curriculum for Excellence (Appendix 3)
- ➤ 15 - 24 Learner Journey
- ➤ Developing the Young Workforce
- ➤ Career Education Standards
- ➤ Work Placement Standards

Together, these drivers promote the development of a skills-based curriculum with a clear focus on employment and progression pathways. This is in keeping with the development of the Moray Skills Framework and will ensure programme teams put learners at the centre to ensure courses are planned primarily for the potential benefit of the students.

Moray College UHI expects FE programmes to be designed and developed in line with the following curriculum principles:

Curriculum Aspect	FE Curriculum Design Principles
Programme Rationale	Meets an identified need based on robust labour market intelligence
	Is informed by local and national policy, key strategic drivers and Moray College UHI curriculum priorities
	Uses nationally recognised qualifications wherever available and appropriate
Learning Progression Pathways	Programme entry takes account of prior learning and knowledge obtained through experience and learners are not required to repeat unnecessarily, programmes or portions of programmes of study.
	A wide range of progression routes are identified from the programme of study to further study within the college or beyond and into employment.
Programme Structure	Uses a partnership approach to design and deliver the programme by consulting and gathering the views of learners and external stakeholders.
	Provides learners with opportunities to plan and personalise their own learning, monitor their own progress and record both attainment and wider achievement at a time, place and pace relevant to their particular needs.
	Ensures the SCQF level of the programme is determined by the 'best fit' against the five characteristics of SCQF Level Descriptors.
Skills for Learning, Life and Work	Contextualises learning to have a direct relevance to the learners' lives. Creative, active and experiential learning opportunities with vocational relevance will make the curriculum and its subjects come alive to motivate and engage learners.
	Provides a clear focus on developing the five core skills of Communication, Numeracy, Information and Communication Technology, Problem Solving and Working With Others through integrated learning and teaching approaches, developed in a progressive way.

	Provides learning experiences to enhance enterprise and employability skills and improve digital skills required by the programme sector.
	Provides a strong focus on developing the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to progress to gainful employment in Moray.
	Provides learning activities to promote equality, diversity and positive learning attitudes, taking account of CfE and senior phase entitlements for all 15-18 year old learners. Work with partners will redress the gender balance in some subject areas by positively promoting the full range of curriculum to all 15-18 learners.
	Provides all learners with relevant and engaging STEM learning experiences and in a progressive way across the curriculum, equips them with sector relevant STEM knowledge and skills. Learning opportunities are provided to develop the capability to be scientifically, technologically and mathematically literate citizens
	A wide range of assessment methods and approaches will be used
	Work related learning plays a central role in all FT programmes. All learners will have the opportunity to undertake a work experience/placement.
	Career Education Standards (CES) will be implemented to improve the learner's ability to make informed decisions about future career pathways. Relevant and meaningful activities will develop the leaner's Career Managernent Skills (CMS), which link to the entitlements and expectations within the standards.

6.0   Implementation

Implementation of this strategy will ensure Moray College UHI has a curriculum portfolio and follows curriculum design principles that are fit for purpose, address current national priorities and are designed around the needs of the region and its learners.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the College's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and the Research Impact and Knowledge Exchange (RIKE) Strategy and Action Plan 2018 – 2022.

The strategy will be used as a framework for FE Course review over the next twelve months. Teaching sections will use the strategy as an audit tool (Appendix 4) to determine their current position (at department, programme, unit/subject and lesson level, as appropriate) to assist in the identification of development priorities.

Successful implementation of this strategy will be supported by both formal and informal opportunities for staff development in relation to learning and teaching.

Appendix 1   Key National and Regional Priorities for Curriculum Planning

To ensure curriculum and skills investment planning is based on economic, industry, labour market and demographic evidence, the college curriculum needs to take account of Scottish Government priorities as agreed in the Highlands and Islands Regional Tertiary Outcome Agreement http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/outcome-agreements-1718/uhi-outcome-agreement-2017-18.pdf and updates communicated in the annual Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Letter of Guidance. http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/AboutUs/SFC_letter_of_guidance_2018-19.pdf.

For session 2018 – 19, the following are Scottish Government priorities:

Curriculum Portfolio

a) 'Skills Alignment' continues the work of Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to use the information on labour market demand in order to plan and align curriculum and training to meet the needs of sectors, employers and the economy. Where gaps exist in priority occupations, qualification levels and skills pathways, plans for skills investment should be developed.
b) Expand, enhance and diversify apprenticeships at every level.
c) Build a high-quality, responsive STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) offering to develop specialist STEM skills to gain employment in the growing STEM sectors.
d) Meet the emerging needs of the Creative Industries, in particular working collaboratively to drive growth in the television and film sectors.
e) Continue to put in place arrangements for the up-skilling and reskilling of the existing workforce via the Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF)
f) Through the work of Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) and Employer Engagement, colleges should play a central role in growing the provision of vocational pathways in the senior phase of the Curriculum for Excellence. Through active and effective partnership working between school, colleges and employers, all young people should have access to good quality work-related learning and a range of vocational pathways at a range of SCQF levels (including introductory/taster courses) in addition to provision at level 5 and above.
g) Expand the provision offered in Early Learning and Childcare, specifically at HNC and PDA levels and BA Childhood Practice. In particular, provide more flexibility in how and when courses are delivered for the sector to ensure those wishing to change career have the ability to train in a way that fits around their lives.

Curriculum Design

a) Improve digital skills development across all subject areas for both students and staff so that the curriculum can respond effectively and quickly to the evolving digital skills requirements across all sectors.
b) Widening access to provide every child, no matter their background or circumstances, with an equal chance of going to university by 2030.   Continued progress, at pace, on implementation is very important. Work on access must go beyond entry to higher education to include improved retention and outcomes for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

c) Continue to involve Community Planning Partnerships in the planning and delivery of ESOL to ensure provision meets the needs and type of demand identified from ESOL learners within the region.

d) Continue to identify opportunities to communicate with students and academics from across the world and commit to teaching, research and mobility collaborations with our European and international partners.

e) Engage more fully in the innovation support ecosystem for Scotland's' businesses by an enhanced involvement in FUTUREquipped and the College Innovation Accelerator Fund.

f) Accelerate the work within the framework of the CAN DO Innovation Action Plan.

Appendix 2   Key Local Priorities For Curriculum Planning

In December 2017, the publication of the Moray Regional Skills Assessment (RSA), https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/44079/moray-la.pdf summarised the issues and challenges for Moray, identified gaps in evidence and highlighted key areas of importance for skills planning over the next ten years. The following key issues need to be considered for curriculum planning:

5.1   Moray has an ageing population with fewer young people in the economy and more out-migration than in-migration. Working age population is projected to decline significantly (-16%). Moray is forecast to experience a decline in total employment, compared to employment growth in Scotland.

5.2   Moray is forecast to see limited expansion demand (jobs generated through employment growth) meaning job opportunities will be driven by replacement demand (existing workforce leaving their current job). Where additional or new job opportunities occur, they are likely to be for higher skilled/qualified workers.

5.3   The economy has a high incidence of low skilled/low qualified/low paid jobs (notably in food and drink).

5.4   Notable increases in jobs are forecast in skilled construction and building trades whereas job decreases are forecast in Manufacturing and Public Administration.

5.5   A focus on raising skills in the Tourism and Food and Drink sectors, so those employed in those sectors do not remain low skilled and have progression opportunities

5.6   The need to replace workers in the Wholesale and Retail Trade sector

5.7   A forecast decline in Public Sector employment.

5.8   Rising employment in Professional, scientific and technical services will support more roles for Business and Public Service professionals.

5.9   The fastest growing key sectors in Moray are forecast to be in ICT/Digital, Financial and Business services, Life Sciences and Creative industries (although it is acknowledged that some of these are growing from a very low base).

Other Since the publication of the Moray RSA The recent announcement to locate the UK's new fleet of Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft in a strategic training facility at RAF Lossiemouth, continues the expansion of the base following the recent relocation of three Typhoon squadrons. The MOD suggests that in the next ten years, there could potentially be an additional 3,000 to 4,000 people (military and support personnel and their families). This development will create opportunities for economic growth and the college curriculum will need to be flexible and responsive to needs as they emerge.

The Moray Economic Partnership has developed the Moray Growth Deal bid. The growth deal for Moray focusses on retraining and attracting young people/families (16 – 29 Years) to live and work in the area and also address occupational segregation and gender imbalance. Thirteen projects are being developed as part of the programme. One of the projects is to develop two new Moray College UHI growth hubs.

One hub will focus on business enterprise and innovation and will be run in partnership with local business leaders. This hub will include a centre for skills and

training with a focus on CPD to help up-skill employees and provide access to a wider range of higher education programmes.   The second hub will focus on creative industries to deliver a growth in student activity across creative subjects as well as drive new curriculum opportunities for apprenticeships and higher education programmes.

Appendix 3   Curriculum for Excellence - Senior Phase Entitlements

All learners are entitled to experience a senior phase (ages 15 – 18) where they can achieve qualifications and continue to develop the four capacities to become successful learners, confidant individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society and at work.

All young people in Scotland have an entitlement to a senior phase of education which:

- provides specialisation, depth and rigour
- prepares them well for achieving qualifications to the highest level of which they are capable
- continues to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work
- continues to provide a range of activities which develop the four capacities
- supports them to achieve a positive and sustained destination.

The senior phase, which takes place from S4 to S6 in schools and includes ages 15 to 18 out of school, is the phase when the young person will build up a portfolio of qualifications. It is the stage of education at which the relationship between the curriculum and National Qualifications becomes of key significance.

The curriculum framework and the qualifications system will provide a range of opportunities to meet the needs of all learners, whether aspiring to achievements at SCQF level 1 or at SCQF level 7.
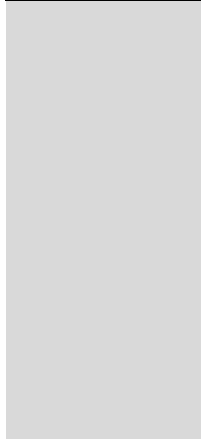
The curriculum in the senior phase comprises more than programmes which lead to qualifications. There is a continuing emphasis, for example, on health and wellbeing appropriate to this phase, including physical activity and opportunities for personal achievement, service to others and practical experience of the world of work.

Education Scotland

Appendix 4   Course Design Checklist

Curriculum Aspect	FE Curriculum Design Principles	Criteria Check
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