

# **INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY IN SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES**

**Provision for learners from non-EU countries**

**A REPORT BY HM INSPECTORS OF EDUCATION FOR THE  
SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL**

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## 1. Introduction

The Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council (SFC) Corporate Plan 2006-2009 gives clear direction to Scotland's colleges and universities on internationalisation. Its *Aim 6* is for *colleges and universities to support Scotland's international ambitions*. The plan exhorts colleges and universities to *respond effectively to globalisation and internationalisation in learning*.

In its March 2007 document, *International Lifelong Learning – Scotland's Contribution*, the Scottish Executive outlined its vision *to position Scotland as world leader in international post-school education* and set out the role of all key players – colleges, higher education Institutions (HEIs), employers, Scottish Enterprise, awarding bodies, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE), the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), and other supporting organisations – in the achievement of this vision.

The Scottish Government remains strongly committed to internationalisation and an outward-looking Scotland, in which all those involved in education, at every stage, from early years to post-school and beyond, will work to promote and preserve Scotland's reputation for educational excellence.

For well over a decade, Scotland's colleges have increasingly identified and responded to the complex challenges inherent in the delivery of education and training in the global context. It has been a journey that has required acute vision, the embracing of risk, meticulous planning and careful management of finite resources by college leaders. Nevertheless, the courage and tenacity of these colleges has had a positive impact for the college sector and for Scotland. The British Council Scotland report: *Tracking the university and college experience in Scotland; what do international students think?* concluded that *85% of college [international] students would recommend the experience to others*.<sup>1</sup>

Very early steps into these uncharted waters may have been competitive, but within the initial stages of this journey, many college leaders sought collaborative opportunities with like-minded colleges in their efforts to enter new markets and promote Scotland's colleges' high quality learning and flexible provision. This effective collaboration resulted in the launch in 2006 of Scotland's Colleges International (SCI), part-funded by SFC grants and supported by the Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU). SCI aims to promote Scotland's colleges worldwide, attract international learners and engage in partnerships with international organisations. The creation of a single sector body, *Scotland's Colleges*, incorporating SCI, SFEU and the Association of Scotland's Colleges (ASC) is likely to enable further integrated support for colleges in their international operations.

The *Final report from Joint Quality Review Group to Council* (August 2007)<sup>2</sup> recognises and promotes the value and role of international learners in the

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<sup>1</sup> Tracking the university and college experience in Scotland:  
What do international students think?

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/scotland-learning-igraduate-international-student-summary-report-26-06-08.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.sfc.ac.uk/about/new\\_about\\_council\\_papers/about\\_papers\\_17aug07/SFC\\_07\\_113\\_ANNEX.pdf](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/about/new_about_council_papers/about_papers_17aug07/SFC_07_113_ANNEX.pdf)

landscape of Scotland's Colleges. Endorsed by the sector, the report calls for periodic surveys of students, including international learners, for enhancement purposes; greater integration between international and home learners in terms of cultural and diversity issues; and quality systems that embrace international learners.

This report examines the successes and challenges for Scotland's colleges in operating in an international context. Its conclusions are drawn largely from the colleges sampled but also draw upon HMIE's wider intelligence. Investigation for some aspects of the report has been problematic, because colleges do not record international activity in a standard way across the sector. Conclusions from the comparison of data are therefore necessarily broad, rather than detailed.

A further complexity emerged with the definition of an *international learner*. The 2007 Scottish Executive strategy document *International Lifelong Learning Scotland's Contribution*, identifies Africa, China, Europe, Gulf States, India, North America and Russia as priority areas for engagement, and most of its case studies relate to non-EU countries. This report therefore focuses on activity related to non-EU learners (learners from countries outside the EU) only. The complexity of the definition was amplified by the significant and increasing level of colleges' activity in the provision of programmes to asylum seekers, refugees and European Union (EU) migrants. These learners, although extremely important to Scotland's colleges, are not included in the scope of this report.

The report also examines issues and challenges related to leadership and management of international activity, learning and teaching, guidance and support, and quality enhancement. It presents case studies from the sector and suggests areas for development.

## **2. Methodology**

HM Inspectors visited ten colleges that had an established track record of operating in international markets and working effectively with international learners. All ten colleges responded to a comprehensive questionnaire, which sought to identify current practice in:

- leadership and management of international activity;
- recruitment and selection of international learners;
- learning and teaching;
- guidance and support;
- quality improvements and enhancement; and
- trends in international activity.

After analysing these responses, HM Inspectors visited all ten colleges and met with groups of international learners, senior and middle managers with responsibility for international work, and staff who taught and supported international learners. Account was also taken of references to international activity in HMIE college review reports, as well as statistics provided by the participating colleges and SFC.

### 3. Summary of findings

- The markets in which colleges operated were wide ranging. Modes of attendance, length and level of programme varied between colleges, dependent on the needs of learners and other stakeholders. Provision included programmes offered in the learner's home country (in-country), as well as in Scotland.
- All of the colleges visited had in place well-developed planning processes for international activity. In a few of them, international work was planned and managed separately from other activities. In all cases, targets were clear and were reflected in operational plans.
- Over the last decade, colleges had successfully built and sustained overseas partnerships, particularly with colleges, universities, agents or representatives and commercial organisations. They had carefully planned significant investment in these partnerships, in terms of finance and staff time. UK-level partnerships were also important in the development of international activity, and all of the colleges visited valued the support of organisations such as SCI, the Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI) and the British Council, amongst others. Collaboration between Scottish colleges was well established, and had been successful in promoting Scotland's colleges as a brand and Scotland as a vibrant place to study. However, such collaboration was found mainly to relate to high-profile and potentially expensive promotional efforts (such as attendance at exhibitions overseas). In these cases, costs could be shared to some extent, and such collaboration would exist only between colleges whose international products (curricular areas and programmes) did not compete with each other.
- Well-embedded selection arrangements, in all of the colleges visited, had ensured that learners and programme leaders agreed appropriate programmes of study. These procedures worked effectively alongside arrangements for domestic learners. However, in many cases, learners' recorded International English Language Testing System (IELTS) scores did not reflect their actual English language skills. Colleges were aware of this issue and continued to put in place measures to provide additional support for learners with the development of their English language skills.
- Staff directly supporting international learners had taken part in appropriate specialist continuing professional development (CPD), overall. This had prepared them well for dealing with specific challenges, including visa applications, currency of overseas qualifications and cultural issues. In general, staff made good use of development opportunities provided by SFEU's International Community of Practice, SCI and the British Council. However, CPD in international and cultural issues for other college staff, who were in contact with international learners, was generally limited to an introduction to a selection of religions and faiths.

- Almost all international learners had a positive learning experience. However, more than a few had difficulties with learner-centred approaches, meeting assessment deadlines, attendance and punctuality. These difficulties were not reflective of the ability of international learners, but rather of the difficulties they faced in making cultural adjustments, and, in particular, those adjustments related to Scottish approaches to learning and teaching.
- All of the colleges visited had negotiated formal or informal articulation arrangements with universities in Scotland or England. This was helpful in attracting learners, as well promoting both the colleges and universities to potential learners.
- In all of the colleges visited, international learners had access to the guidance and support services available to mainstream learners, as well as a wide range of specialist services. Learners and teaching staff valued these support services highly and recognised the importance of them in contributing to retention and attainment. However, overall, international learners were notably more reluctant than Scottish learners to ask for support. This reluctance resulted from cultural issues associated with pride and respect, and was well understood by staff. The colleges visited had implemented proactive arrangements to address this issue.
- Almost all of the colleges visited had an international student representative within the Student Association (SA), although in a few colleges, learners had not been aware of their existence. Almost all of the colleges held regular focus groups for international learners, in order to identify their specific concerns, build on existing good practice and report on actions taken by the college to address previous requests and suggestions for improvement.
- The scope and nature of arrangements for quality improvement and enhancement varied according to the mode of study and type of provision. With the exception of those colleges delivering highly specialised curricula, either in-country or in Scotland, colleges assured and improved quality through normal college arrangements.
- Performance indicator (PI) information was largely collected at mainstream programme level, with the exception of learners following bespoke programmes. In all of the colleges visited, staff teaching international learners stated that they collected and analysed information relating to attainment and achievement by international learners separately, but actions for improvement were not always integrated with the mainstream programme plans. Overall, insufficient information relating to attainment by international learners was available to enable firm conclusions to be drawn.
- The data held by colleges relating to international learner enrolment and headcount figures did not correspond well to that held on the Further Education Statistics (FES) *INFACT* database.

#### **4. Leadership, management and planning of provision for international learners**

All the colleges visited had clear strategic targets relating to international activity. Most targets related to the establishment of new partnerships with overseas institutions, organisations or agents, planned entry into new markets, or expansion of existing markets. There were also clear targets for recruitment numbers from specifically targeted markets, as well as improvements in accommodation, facilities and resources for international learners. The majority of the colleges visited also set softer, less specific operational targets pertaining to cultural issues and covering improved integration of international learners into college life and enhanced support arrangements.

The colleges addressed the setting and monitoring of progress towards the achievement of strategic targets in different ways. The majority of them expressed targets in the current strategic plan and supported actions to achieve these targets with separate, discrete international strategies and/or international marketing plans. A third of them expressed targets in the strategic plan only, and tracked and monitored progress through operational and team plans. More than half of the colleges visited managed international activity through their commercial arm, such as a business development unit or equivalent. In all cases, strategic objectives were supported by clear targets at operational level and often at team level. In more than a few of the colleges, an effective infrastructure of committees focused solely on international activity and the enhancement of the international learner experience. These committees reported to the Board of Management or a sub-committee of it. This approach enabled colleges to focus on all aspects of international activity, as well as considering the impact and benefit of such activity on wider college operations and the learner cohort.

The majority of the colleges visited had expanded their activities and delivered in-country, the main areas being India, China and the Middle East. In most cases, programmes delivered in-country provided access/foundation programmes, which included an introduction to the vocational area of study, but focused mainly on improvement of learners' English language skills. However, programmes delivered in India concentrated on vocational and Scottish cultural issues as well as technical and vocational language. A third of the colleges had opened dedicated offices overseas to aid recruitment and to enable pre-course interaction with learners and their families. All of them had established effective partnerships with overseas commercial organisations or educational institutions, and some employed in-country agents. The roles of partners and agents are further explored in section 5.1.1 of this report. In all the colleges visited, leadership, management and planning of international activity was effective.

The assessment of risk associated with all strategic aims was embedded in the strategic planning processes in all of Scotland's colleges. Colleges were competent in identifying the significance of the risk that strategic aims may not be achieved, as well as measuring the likelihood of those risks occurring. Accordingly, they identified effective control measures. However, the identification of risk and associated control measures was much more problematic in the setting of strategic aims for

international activity. All colleges recognised that factors outwith their control had the potential to impact significantly upon the achievement of strategic aims relating to international activity. For example, unforeseen political unrest in areas identified as target markets, and unanticipated changes in visa regulations for prospective learners impacted negatively on the achievement of targets. All the colleges visited also reported that the reliability of agents in-country, as well as the length of time and investment required to develop and maintain truly effective overseas partnerships, were factors that could seriously militate against achieving targets. As a result, target setting was sometimes aspirational, rather than fully realistic. Some colleges reported that Boards of Management were not always sufficiently well versed in these matters to engage fully and effectively in the review of the relevant targets.

## **5. Operational issues**

The colleges visited had implemented different infrastructures in order to ensure the success of their international activities. Generally, the scale of the infrastructure reflected the level of international activity within the college. All the colleges visited had in place, as a minimum, a middle manager responsible for international work. The majority of colleges had appointed larger teams, with specialist support staff and recruitment/admissions staff. In other colleges, this work was carried out by staff who supported mainstream operations. Nevertheless, all teaching staff reported that relationships with staff recruiting or providing support to international learners were effective, reliable and positive. This view was supported by learners.

### **5.1 Marketing and recruitment**

The level of global competition faced by Scotland's colleges in recruiting international learners should not be underestimated. The main competitor countries are, in order of significance, the USA, England, Australia and Canada. In recent surveys conducted by the British Council, international learners attending Scottish colleges and universities have expressed a higher rate of overall satisfaction than those studying in competitor countries. Although this gap is closing and competition is becoming stronger year on year, it is notable that 91% of international learners in Scotland's colleges and universities consider Scotland a good place to be. This compares with 86% in the rest of the UK and 87% of learners in Europe.<sup>3</sup>

#### **5.1.1 Partnership arrangements**

All the colleges visited emphasised the importance of effective partnership working in successful marketing and recruitment. Almost all of them engaged with partners such as SCI, the British Council (Education UK Partnership), and The Council for International Student Affairs (UKISA). Others, with more extensive international activity, also worked with wider partners, including Scottish Development

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<sup>3</sup> Tracking the university and college experience in Scotland:  
What do international students think?  
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/scotland-learning-igraduate-international-student-summary-report-26-06-08.pdf>



International (SDI) and SCDI. Most of these partner organisations provided staff with up-to-date thinking and information on new legislation and wider issues that were relevant to the recruitment and support of international learners.

Partnerships with overseas schools, colleges and universities were key factors in recruitment for all the colleges visited. Through carefully negotiated memoranda of understanding, the colleges were able to recruit learners from these institutions into Higher National Certificate (HNC) and Higher National Diploma (HND) programmes. Equally significant were industrial, professional and vocational partnerships, such as those sustained by colleges providing for the oil and gas industries, maritime programmes and niche programmes such as golf and golf management.

Some of the colleges visited had used in-country agents or representatives very successfully to augment recruitment numbers, with negotiated rates of commission. However, this use of overseas agents or representatives by colleges had declined. The decline can be explained, in part, by substitution through the Scottish Qualifications Authority's (SQA) initiative to deliver their awards in China. Colleges were also in global competition for agents' loyalty and exclusivity with educational institutions from Scotland's main competitors, such as England, Australia, Canada and the USA. Nevertheless, more than a few of the colleges visited still employed in-country agents, and the use of them remained a significant factor in successful recruitment of international learners, particularly in India, Pakistan and China. The colleges visited were aware of the risk involved in investing in partnerships with agents that might be ultimately unproductive.

Partnerships with UK universities in terms of formal articulation arrangements were a key promotional tool for the colleges visited. Guaranteed progression to years two or three of a degree course, after attainment of an HND award, was a highly influential factor in learners' choice of college programme. As a result, colleges had negotiated a range of articulation arrangements for international learners with universities UK-wide. These arrangements were promoted actively to college learners and their families. However, while these arrangements provided colleges with strong and effective promotional tools, colleges did not record sufficient hard data relating to the numbers of international learners articulating to which HEIs in Scotland and the rest of the UK.

Partnerships with local agencies were often also important. Glasgow colleges made effective use of partnerships with organisations such as the Glasgow Anti Racist Alliance (GARA), the Ethnic Minority Enterprise Council (EMEC) and the Taleem Trust in order to provide additional support for international learners, as well as to maintain their profile in black and minority ethnic communities.

### **5.1.2 Inward and outward trade missions**

The majority of the colleges visited made good use of outward trade missions, which were organised through partners such as SCI, SCDI and the British Council. Missions visited countries which had been identified by partners as viable existing markets or potentially viable emerging markets. Typically, these included countries such as India, China, Pakistan, Russia, areas of the Middle East and some Anglophone countries. However, involvement in missions was dictated by the

compatibility of countries and institutions being visited with the colleges' strategic aims for international activity. Normally, missions were undertaken by the college principal and/or senior staff, because receiving countries often had a cultural need for representatives to be of the highest seniority. These colleges had taken part in collaborative missions with representatives from universities and colleges across Scotland, and, in some cases, UK-wide. The Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI2, launched in April 2006) expressed, in its four interconnected strands, targets relating to strategic partnerships and alliances. In relation to its target to increase the number of international learners coming to the UK, PMI2 made funds available to SCI to support a trade mission to India. This, and other PMI2-funded projects, was welcomed by colleges.<sup>4</sup>

The colleges visited reported that involvement in trade missions was part of a longer-term strategy. As a result, its effectiveness was hard to measure, particularly as adverse political or other situations could arise within countries before the benefit of relationship-building could be realised. Despite the fact that missions did not always result in recruitment of learners, colleges continued to take part in order to maintain their profile, and Scotland's profile, with key influencers and dignitaries in the countries visited. Inward trade missions, normally organised by the same partners, provided a greater number of colleges with the opportunity to raise awareness of their provision amongst key influencers visiting Scotland from target market countries. As the cost of participation in inward missions was less than that of travelling outward, more colleges had been involved.

### **5.1.3 Independent visits**

As well as involvement in trade missions, almost all the colleges visited made independent visits to countries from which they recruited, or planned to recruit, learners. Colleges also used these visits to:

- further relationships with existing universities, agents and representatives;
- source and evaluate potential partner universities, agents and representatives;
- recruit learners; and
- meet with the families of potential and existing learners in order to instil confidence and provide assurances about the experiences and opportunities that learners would have in Scotland.

These visits required meticulous planning by colleges, not least because of the costs involved in terms of travel, accommodation and staff time. Nevertheless, all of these colleges used their visits very effectively and results were positive in terms of relationship building, recruitment and contribution to the achievement of strategic aims. In many cases, college staff also provided support, both in-country and in Scotland, for their international partners in respect of issues of Scottish culture and English language skills.

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<sup>4</sup> Overview of the Prime Minister's Initiative  
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/eumd-pmi-overview.htm>

#### **5.1.4 Promotional materials**

All the colleges visited created attractive and very informative promotional materials to aid recruitment. Materials such as an international prospectus, leaflets addressing cultural and orientation issues, and resources to provide practical information, were attractively and thoughtfully designed. Written in plain English and also available in several languages, these materials were effective promotional tools. All the colleges highlighted the effectiveness of the international section of their websites in reaching global learners and generating individual applications. However, the quality of presentation of, and the usefulness of content in international sections of websites ranged from those that were clear, detailed and comprehensive to those that were lacking in detailed, relevant information, and hard to navigate. All colleges carefully monitored the effectiveness of all their promotional efforts.

#### **5.1.5 Reputational marketing**

Research with international learners undertaken on behalf of the British Council<sup>5</sup> indicates that the greatest influencer for international college learners is word-of-mouth. This is especially true amongst learners from China and India.

All the colleges visited recognised and emphasised the importance of word-of-mouth in recruiting international learners. Often learners' choice of college was determined by testimonies from siblings, family members or friends who had attended that college. All colleges had captured positive testimonies from current learners for use in future publicity materials and the international section of the college website.

#### **5.1.6 Fees**

Colleges set their own fee levels for international learners and they varied according to the programme of study and the level of support available. However, even for similar programmes, such as those with SQA awards, fees differed between colleges. Colleges recognised the importance of fee levels as a major influence in the decision-making process of potential learners and their families, but an equal consideration was that of setting fees on a full-cost-recovery basis.

#### **5.1.7 Selection of learners**

All the colleges had clear selection procedures for international learners who had not been sponsored by an overseas employer. Generally, selection procedures operated independently from those applied to domestic learners and were operated by staff with expertise in issues such as the currency of qualifications from overseas, levels of English language ability and visa applications.

The selection of international learners for National Qualification (NQ) and HNC/D programmes presented ongoing difficulties. The very diverse range of international applicants was a significant factor in as much as applicants ranged from young

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learners (aged sixteen or seventeen) to people who were professionals in their home country. It was generally impossible to interview international learners face-to-face. Understandably, this caused concern amongst the receiving programme leaders about the ability of international learners to succeed on their programmes. In addition to the implications for individual learners, programme leaders were concerned about the potential impact on overall performance indicators (PIs) for retention and attainment.

Ensuring that international learners were adequately equipped for their studies was always challenging, but the colleges worked hard and effectively to ensure that learners were placed on a level of programme where they could cope and benefit. In almost all cases, specialist staff carried out the initial sift of applications, checking applicants' qualifications using information and guidance publications from the National Academic Recognition and Information Centre (NARIC). They assessed each applicant's visa situation or requirements and held a telephone interview with the applicant. A key part of this process was the confirmation of the applicants' English language levels, using the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) scores, or equivalent. Applications were forwarded to programme leaders for consideration and further telephone contact between them and the applicant. These arrangements were embedded effectively within colleges' wider selection procedures.

In a minority of the colleges visited, the majority of their international activity resulted from specialist provision for overseas industries or highly specialist markets, such as the oil and gas industries or maritime studies. In these cases, initial recruitment and selection was undertaken by the international partner.

International learners' enrolments were handled in different ways, but all the colleges had in place procedures to ensure that enrolments and fees were routed through commercial or separate income streams, as international activity is not fundable by the SFC. International learners required a letter of unconditional offer before they could obtain a study visa for entry to the UK. In the past, a few colleges had learned from the negative experience of prospective learners accepting an unconditional place and obtaining a visa but failing to start the programme. As a result, colleges had adopted effective measures to obviate this, including issuing offers of an unconditional place only when fees had been paid in full or part, and liaising closely with the Home Office.

#### **5.1.8 Implication of the points-based system (PBS)**

All colleges stated that they were preparing to register their institutions on the UK Border Agency (UKBA) licensing system. Colleges across the sector were assessing the cost and administrative implications of the PBS. Whilst most of the actions required for registration - updating of college systems, procedures and recruitment materials, and development of staff associated with the changes in the immigration system - need not commence until 2009, colleges were already assessing the suitability of their current arrangements for accommodating the imminent changes. At the end of October 2008, the UKBA published guidance on

the implementation of *Tier 4*.<sup>6</sup> Page 4, paragraph 6 of the guidance indicates that all students must be enrolled on a course at level 3 or above on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)<sup>7</sup>. The NQF sets out the levels against which a qualification can be recognised in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. NQF level 3 equates to SCQF level 6. Those seeking to study English language may only apply for a programme at level A2 or above of the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR). This equates roughly to IELTS level 3, or SCQF level 3 (Access 3). It is difficult to assess the impact on colleges of these changes, but it is likely that colleges will be prevented from recruiting international learners onto NC programmes below SCQF level 6, including specialist programmes. In addition, these requirements appear to disallow international learners from pursuing a bespoke programme at a Scottish college, where the initial components of that programme are at NC level and later components are at HN level. Equally, learners who commence HN programmes, but find they are unable to cope academically or linguistically may no longer have the opportunity or the safety net of changing to NC level study for all or part of the academic year, before progressing to their original choice of programme. As a result, they may have to leave the country.

### 5.1.9 Barriers to effective marketing and recruitment

All the colleges visited reported that the time required to invest in and sustain effective partnerships with agents and representatives, and overseas colleges and universities could be prohibitive. In many cases, it took four or five years to establish a reliable partnership. Some colleges found the high cost of participating in outward trade missions to be problematic.

A few of these colleges perceived that the recent rise in global terrorism, particularly events in London and Glasgow, had impacted negatively on international applications.

While colleges successfully promoted articulation arrangements with UK universities to international learners, learners often found the level of university fees, compared to college fees, to be a prohibitive factor in their planned progression to university. A number ended their studies at HND level for this reason.

### Case studies in marketing and recruitment

**Elmwood College** has successfully engaged in partnership with teachers and trainers in China's golf industry. The main purpose of the project is knowledge transfer/capacity building within educational and training institutions in China to support the developing golf industry. The overall project vision is for the college to play a key role in the establishment of a long-term partnership between Scotland and the People's Republic of China in relation to education and training, greenkeeping and the golf industry. The golf industry in China is only 25 years old and there is limited availability of qualifications in any aspect of the business of golf. By engaging in the training of golf teachers and trainers, the college is enabling universities in China to develop and deliver suitable qualifications, particularly on a part-time basis,

<sup>6</sup> Students under the points based system – (Tier 4). Implementation plan.

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_5967.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_5967.aspx)

for those already working in the golf industry. Learners achieve a certificate of competence.

The college brought teachers and trainers to Scotland for a period of seven months. In that time they undertook a Professional Development Award (PDA) in either *golf course management* or *golf (club) management*. They also engaged in activities to improve their skills in English, vocational education, golf and assessment/verification processes. Once they returned to China and delivered programmes to learners, they undertook the SQA A1 and, in some cases, the V1 qualifications to support the quality assurance processes of vocational education in Scotland. The college has also supported Chinese golf teachers and trainers to continue their studies. In some instances, this has been done through further courses at the college, but mainly through attendance at golf seminars and conferences in China.

This project was funded by the Royal and Ancient (R & A) group of companies (the business arm of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews). The work is sustainable and there are now over sixty trained teachers and trainers in China, who are able to develop and deliver qualifications and courses within their own institutions.

**Central College** had signed a **Memorandum of Agreement with the Business School of the University of Sunderland**. The agreement between both parties resulted from international learners from the college negotiating their own informal articulation to the University of Sunderland to take advantage of a one-year top-up degree programme.

The college had recognised that the key determinant in many prospective international learners' choice of programme and destination was progression to a higher education institution. Although the college had agreements with four Scottish universities, these agreements offered no guarantees of direct progression with advanced standing for successful learners. As a result of careful negotiations with the University of Sunderland, successful international learners are guaranteed entry to the final year of a Business Degree, with the potential for success at Honours level. The agreement allows both international and domestic learners who successfully complete their HND programmes to progress directly into year three (the final year) of the relevant degree. HND programmes which have direct guaranteed articulation into year three include accounting, administration and information technology, advertising and public relations, business studies, human resource management, international trade and business, marketing, retail management, social sciences and tourism.

The agreement had also impacted positively on domestic learners, who had become interested in this articulation route.

As a result of a number of applicants from developing countries failing to obtain visas due to financial issues, the Board of Management of **Anniesland College** has introduced **Commonwealth Scholarships**. These scholarships are targeted at learners from Commonwealth countries, particularly in Africa. Applications to the Commonwealth Scholarship are considered by staff and the senior management team, resulting in two scholarships being awarded each year. Through the scholarship, learners have their programme fees reduced by 50%. The impact of the scholarships had been significant for the learners involved. The first scholarship learner from Uganda had been successful in obtaining a Fresh Talent visa, having completed HND Computing. Other learners' successes included: a learner from Nigeria who was able to afford the diploma year in Business Administration; a learner from Pakistan who was let down by a sponsor but was nevertheless able to pursue an HND Engineering; a learner who was working part-time for a major UK engineering company and who will be sponsored by it for the degree of BSc in Engineering; and a former learner from the Gambia who was completing his degree and acting as an ambassador for the college to promote development in his country through the Leadership Centre he coordinates there.

**Telford College** used monies from its successful application to the *Fresh Talent Supporting International Students Challenge Fund* to introduce the **International student internship programme: HND Hospitality Management**. The aim of the programme was to provide international learners with support and mentoring, to give them a competitive edge in seeking employment in the hospitality industry. In addition, the programme contributed to learners' progression to the *Fresh Talent Initiative (Working in Scotland Scheme)*. The programme enabled learners to undertake a one-year work placement (internship) between their HNC and HND years. The college sourced employers to provide placements and supported learners' progression into the work environment. The college provided learners with further support through the provision of employability training workshops and participation in mock assessment centres. The college had also put in place arrangements for effective communication between the employer, the learner and the college during the internship period.

## 5.2 Staffing

In all colleges, most international learners infilled into mainstream programmes. A few colleges also provided bespoke programmes in college or in-country. As a result, staff development requirements were diverse.

A few of the colleges visited sent teaching staff (as opposed to senior managers) overseas for the purpose of their own individual development, rather than solely for delivery or marketing purposes. One college provided opportunities for all staff, not only those associated with international learners, to undertake continuing professional development (CPD) in basic Arabic and in Chinese languages. All the colleges provided or enabled specialised CPD for staff who specialised in international matters, covering topics such as visa regulations and immigration updates or the use of NARIC (National Academic Recognition and Information

Centre). However, in most of the colleges, CPD for teaching and support staff dealing with international learners was limited to informal, non-mandatory sessions on cultural awareness. In these cases, cultural awareness was limited to an introduction to the basic principles of a selection of religions and faiths.

A few of the colleges had employed staff from overseas to teach or to support international learners. One college employed lecturers from India and Pakistan, while two had employed support staff from overseas to help international learners.

## Case study in staffing

In partnership with SQA, **Langside College** hosted as learners three Chinese lecturers who were working towards the *International Bilingual Teaching Qualification (IBTQ)*. The Chinese lecturers observed classroom teaching, as well as delivering vocational subjects in the college.

The impact of the project was positive for Scottish and Chinese participants. Scottish teaching staff further developed their understanding of the Chinese education system and of Chinese culture, which helped them to teach and support the college's Chinese learners. Chinese participants learned how to use learner-centred approaches. They learned how to engage in self-reflection and recognised the importance of developing learners' enquiry skills and promoting learner engagement in order to create an atmosphere for active learning. They also developed their use of ICT in learning and teaching.

## 6. The learner experience

Research has shown that, across all aspects of the learning experience in Scotland's colleges, 81% of international learners were satisfied. In particular, learners rated expert lecturers, programme content and technology highly. However, international learners were dissatisfied with other aspects of non-academic life, such as financial issues and making friends.<sup>8</sup> All of the colleges visited were highly committed to identifying and meeting the needs of international learners and had arrangements in place to address these needs, which are often very different from those of home learners.

### 6.1 Range of provision

Provision for international learners in Scotland's colleges was wide ranging in terms of location, modes of attendance, length of programme, and curricular areas.

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Tracking the university and college experience in Scotland:  
What do international students think?

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/scotland-learning-graduate-international-student-summary-report-26-06-08.pdf>



Over half of the colleges visited delivered in-country, as well as in college. Delivery in-country was predominantly provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), vocational/business English and cultural aspects of language, such as the Scottish accent and its variations. As noted previously, a few colleges delivered in highly specialised curricular areas, such as oil and gas (India and the Middle East), maritime studies (India) and golf expertise and management (China). In almost all cases, some learners who studied in-country on these programmes of specialised provision subsequently continued their studies in the partner Scottish college.

The provision of English language learning, whether in-country or in college, tended to be shorter programmes of up to six months. These programmes usually formed the first element of a “package” negotiated with the partner organisation or educational institution. Negotiation of such “packages” required a major investment by colleges in terms of time, finance and staff resources. Almost all learners progressed successfully onto their chosen vocational programmes. A minority of the colleges worked in partnership with Scottish-based “English schools”, which operated outwith the college sector. These schools delivered the English language aspects and offered their learners a guaranteed place on the partner college’s vocational programme. However, use of these partnerships by colleges was declining, and colleges had moved to delivering English language programmes themselves. Almost all learners who were not following highly specialised programmes or English language provision, were studying SQA HNC/D programmes, with a few studying at NQ level.

A high proportion of provision for international learners in Scotland’s colleges was for learners who applied independently to the college of their choice. These learners attended college on an infill basis within mainstream full-time programmes. In more than a few cases, these learners also infilled into ESOL programmes that colleges ran for asylum seekers, refugees and migrant worker learners. These arrangements applied either before or during the full-time programme, and, in some cases, both.

Full details of the countries from which colleges recruited learners and the curricular areas in which learners studied are contained in Appendix 2.

## **6.2 Learning and teaching**

In general, teaching staff found international learners to be well motivated and keen to make good progress in their studies. For many international learners, pride and fear of failure were both motivators and disadvantages. For some, the prospect of letting their family down through non-attainment could not be contemplated. However, in other cases, attendance and punctuality of international learners was poor.

Colleges had long recognised that insufficient English language skills represented a potential and existing barrier to effective learning and teaching. However, most colleges found that many international learners also lacked appropriate ICT skills. This had a negative effect on the learners’ ability to study independently and to produce course work of an appropriate standard.

More than a few international learners struggled with the teaching approaches used in Scotland's colleges. In their own countries, their learning styles had developed around a teacher-led approach, rather than a learner-centred approach. Many found it difficult to come to terms with practices such as self-directed learning, independent study, peer assessment and project work. The range of assessment methods was also problematic and the change from reliance on the "learn by rote and reproduce" method of learning and assessment was confusing for learners. In some cases, they felt that Scottish approaches lacked rigour and even that "this was not real learning".

Responding to these reactions, most of the colleges visited had successfully incorporated an introduction to Scottish learning, teaching and assessment methods into induction programmes for international learners. These aspects of induction programmes had had a positive impact, but the issues remained a challenge for classroom teaching staff. Colleges had accepted that learning, teaching and assessment methods used in Scotland's colleges would continue to present potential barriers.

In all the colleges visited, international learners who infilled into mainstream full-time programmes progressed their skills for employability and citizenship, and core skills, within the context of opportunities provided within their programme of study. However, a few colleges had in place additional structured activities to enable learners to gain skills for employability and citizenship. These colleges had successfully applied for monies from the *Fresh Talent – Supporting International Students Challenge Fund*, the focus of which had moved to the promotion of employability and integration, rather than simply cultural awareness. Engagement in these activities was sometimes problematic for learners, due to timetabling constraints and their need to have part-time employment in order to remain financially secure. All the colleges visited made extra support in core skills available to international learners.

Teaching staff were highly enthusiastic about their engagement with international learners. They worked hard and effectively to overcome the potential challenges of having them infilling into their classes. They made good use of opportunities to encourage international learners to share cultural information with their peers. In many cases, teaching staff found international learners to be more demanding than domestic learners, and spent additional tutorial time with them outwith time tabled classroom hours. Relationships between international learners and teaching staff were very positive and learners tended to be respectful and hold their lecturers in high esteem.

In a few cases, the colleges visited had changed the structure and duration of SQA programmes in order to accommodate international learners. For example, one college had extended the duration of the HND Business Management, to three years, adding in additional HN units to support communication in the workplace, and allowing time to build on learners' prior knowledge and experience.

### **6.2.1 Barriers to effective learning and teaching**

Many international learners were reluctant to engage in classroom debates, or to answer questions. This was partly due to difficulties with the English language, and

partly because of their fear of ridicule from their peers. In many cases, they may have understood the meaning of the words within the lecturer's question, but they did not grasp the context or nuance of the question and were unable to discern or interpret what they were being asked. In some cases, this impeded the development of their core skills. In addition, learners often had initial difficulty in understanding certain variations of the Scottish accent.

International learners' IELTS scores presented ongoing challenges to admissions and teaching staff. All of the colleges visited required a minimum IELTS score of between 5.5 and 6.0. In all the colleges, staff found that IELTS scores often did not accurately reflect the English language ability of learners, grading them higher than the ability at which they could operate in learning situations. As a result, teaching and support staff met strong challenges when referring learners for additional support. Learners often refused to admit that support was required, given that they had entered their programme with the appropriate IELTS score, and managing their expectations was difficult. Colleges were optimistic that imminent changes, including the introduction of half-band scores for the writing and speaking elements of the test, would address the issue in part, although they did not anticipate altering the required band scores for admission.

Home-sickness was identified as a significant problem for international learners. As a result, learners were often deflected from their studies and occasionally became depressed. All the colleges visited had developed support measures to address such learners' problems and encourage them to persist with their studies.

Many international learners had to engage in part-time employment in order to finance their living costs and, in some cases, their studies. Typically, monies provided by learners' families had covered tuition fees but were insufficient to support living costs for the duration of their programme. All the colleges had highlighted this strongly in application packs and induction processes, and learners did have access to hardship funds. Nevertheless, the requirement to work during their studies impacted negatively on their progress.

## Case study in learning and teaching

Through its **highly specialised maritime programmes, Glasgow College of Nautical Studies** had attracted a high proportion of Scotland's international learners. It offered three specific types of specialist maritime programmes for international learners:

Learners who wished to gain a seagoing placement as a cadet/trainee ships officer and then progress to the first Merchant Navy (MN) *Certificate of Competency* (the *Officer of the Watch Certificate*) took HND qualifications. All learners were recruited from school with appropriate qualifications in their home country (mainly India, Angola and Pakistan) and followed year one of the HND (Deck or Engineering) with one of the college's partner institutes. Thereafter they progressed to college to complete the HND, after which most gained seagoing employment. Some progressed to related degree programmes.

Serving seafarers followed MN *Certificates of Competency* programmes at either initial or higher level. Many of these were learners who previously attended college as part of the HND group, but learners also came from a wide variety of countries, aiming to gain UK MN qualifications.

The third specific group of international learners also consisted of serving seafarers who attended one of the various specialised short courses offered by the college for the shipping industry. The vast majority of these learners were sponsored directly onto the courses by their employers.

For all of the above groups, the programmes had improved and progressed learners' essential skills, including personal learning skills, core skills, and citizenship and employability skills.

### **6.3 Accommodation and facilities.**

Only a few of the colleges visited owned student residences for use by international learners. The remainder had appropriate arrangements for placing learners with families, in approved rented accommodation, or in halls of residence associated with other institutions. In all of the colleges, international learners shared resources and facilities with other learners and this promoted integration and positive attitudes to social and cultural diversity. However, a few colleges had dedicated accommodation and social spaces for international learners in addition to the main college facilities. All colleges took good account of the spiritual needs of international learners and provided appropriate spaces for contemplation and worship.

### **6.4 Support arrangements**

In all the colleges visited, international learners had access to the guidance and support services available to mainstream learners. However, all of these colleges also had in place varying numbers of specialist staff who had expertise in the specific issues affecting international learners. All colleges had an international officer or manager, who was supported by a team or other individual, according to the extent of international activity. Colleges had recognised the importance of international learners having an anchor person whom they could approach with issues, prior to referral to specialist support, if necessary. Teaching staff and guidance staff liaised regularly and effectively to support learners and most of the colleges had implemented a "buddy" or mentor system with a domestic learner to provide additional support and comfort. All learners valued the work and assistance of these named contacts very highly and they were impressed with the level of proactive academic and pastoral support that was available to them.

Generally, teaching staff liaised closely with guidance and support staff in order to maximise success for learners. Teaching staff valued the work of guidance staff highly.

#### **6.4.1 Induction**

Induction programmes for learners were extensive, tailored and rigorous in all the colleges visited. Some colleges began the induction process in-country, prior to

learners coming to Scotland. The majority of the colleges dedicated a significant period of time (often a week) from the programme of study, to induction. As well as details of the learners' programmes, induction activities in all the colleges included, as a minimum, inputs on:

- history, culture and language of Scotland;
- orientation of the location in which they were studying;
- safety in the community;
- registration with police and doctors;
- setting up bank accounts: and
- finalising accommodation.

In some cases, colleges worked successfully with overseas partners (agents, employers or educational institutions) to deliver induction information. In all the colleges, staff invested significant time in the preparation, delivery and subsequent evaluation of induction programmes.

#### **6.4.2 Monitoring and tracking progress**

In order to monitor and track progress and achievement of international learners, all the colleges visited used Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) or equivalent. All colleges monitored international learners under the same arrangements and procedures as domestic learners, but had additional arrangements in place. These arrangements included one-to-one meetings with the international manager, as well as additional meetings with programme guidance staff. Rigorous monitoring and tracking of international learners' progress and achievement was considered to be essential, as colleges were often subject to requests from the Home Office for reports on learners' progress and status for the purposes of visa renewal. Similarly, colleges were required to alert the Home Office about learners who left their programme of study early or unexpectedly. However, insufficient information relating to attainment by international learners was available to enable firm conclusions to be drawn.

#### **6.4.3 Cultural issues**

In addition to cultural information imparted to learners through the induction process, all the colleges visited had in place structured programmes of events through which international learners could learn more about Scotland and its culture. However, there were few arrangements for learners to learn about each other's cultures, or for planned mixing and socialising of domestic and international learners. Cultural programmes tended to consist mainly of visits to Scottish landmarks and participation in celebrations such as Burns Night. International festivals, such as the Chinese New Year, were also observed and celebrated by international and domestic learners. All colleges had made appropriate arrangements and allowances for learners to participate in key religious obligations and celebrations.

The colleges visited that delivered programmes during which learners were accompanied by their spouses and children, had in place comprehensive arrangements to help them to integrate into the local community. They invested significant time in assisting spouses with issues such as the selection of schools and enrolling children, orientation in the community such as where and how to shop, and introduction to community groups.

#### **6.4.4 Academic support**

International learners often required and received additional academic support. The nature of the academic support included tuition in vocationally related vocabulary, such as engineering terms, terms related to economic and business models and instances where vocabulary from other languages had been imported into the English language. Notably, in a few cases, learners who were otherwise succeeding in their programmes required additional support with the graded unit component of the SQA award.

#### **6.4.5 Extended learning support screening**

Only one of the colleges visited proactively tested international learners for potential extended learning support requirements, such as dyslexia.

#### **6.4.6 Progression and articulation**

Colleges held only limited information about the HE programmes and institutions to which international learners articulated, and other destinations, such as employment, to which they progressed, after attaining their qualification from their college programme.

Colleges invested significant staff time into the negotiation of formal and informal articulation arrangements for their international learners, and such a lack of information is likely to be due to commercial sensitivities surrounding these arrangements, rather than a lack of effective monitoring. Nevertheless, colleges and the sector as a whole may benefit from the publication of hard data relating to articulation, particularly given the strength of the HND to degree articulation enjoyed by domestic learners. Similarly, international learners who have attained an HND level qualification will be eligible for a two-year VISA extension under the new *points-based system*, from 2009. This will afford international learners a distinct advantage over learners in UK institutions outwith Scotland, and colleges may well capitalise on this favourable position for their learners. The recording of such data would, again, be helpful to the sector and to Scottish higher education, as a whole.

#### **6.4.7 Administration**

The colleges deployed considerable administrative effort to support and retain international learners. In particular, the work required to assist learners to obtain and extend visas was considerable. As well as maintaining up-to-date knowledge of Home Office UKBA regulations, specialist staff had to be aware of the changing political situations in learners' home countries in order to assess the likelihood of successful visa applications and the consequent impact of these situations on colleges' recruitment and support efforts.

The new UKBA points-based system was anticipated by colleges to require significant administrative and specialist knowledge input from their specialist staff teams.

#### 6.4.8 Barriers to effective support for international learners

In many cases, as noted previously, learners were reticent about expressing their need for support, particularly in relation to language-related and academic matters. The colleges visited were aware of this issue and had implemented proactive arrangements to detect undeclared support needs. Nevertheless, the extent of undeclared needs remained an unquantified issue.

Despite their comprehensive, multi-faceted support arrangements, colleges occasionally faced situations in which it was difficult to find appropriate specialist support. For example, a learner in one college suffered undisclosed mental health problems and the support ultimately provided and arranged by the college was complex and time-consuming. A learner in another college disappeared, resulting in the involvement of police, UKBA and other agencies.

#### 6.4.9 Case studies in cultural issues and support

**Aberdeen College** held an annual *International Day of Cultural Celebration*. The college had invited all international learners to take part in the celebrations, providing them with an opportunity to share aspects of their cultures with domestic learners. Using displays, maps, posters, artefacts, musical instruments, slides and film shows, learners gave informative displays and presentations about their countries. As well as contributions by learners from Brazil, Mexico, Peru, China, Vietnam and Thailand, the event featured inputs from new EU accession states. Many learners wore their national dress. Other activities included dancing by Brazilian students, music from performing arts learners and make-up demonstrations from beauty therapy learners. In addition, photography and multimedia learners captured the event on film. A number of the college's partners also attended the event, including P7 pupils from a local primary school and representatives from local inclusion organisations. Through the organisation of and participation in these events, international learners had improved their core and citizenship skills, as well as English language skills. Many learners also reported that their confidence had grown considerably as a result of the event.

Through the **Multi-faith spiritual care team, Reid Kerr College** had provided a thoughtful and effective approach to working in close partnership with representatives from a wide variety of faiths providing support to both staff and learners and promoting awareness of equality and appreciation of diversity throughout the college. As a result of the growth in the rich mix of learners attending the college from around the world and from a wide variety of cultures, religions and backgrounds, the *Spiritual Care Team* had developed from a Christian ecumenical team into an interfaith team. The team was made up of volunteer representatives from various religions and cultural backgrounds and aimed to promote awareness of and positive attitudes to diversity within the college community. A core team from within the college including the Student Association, International Student Recruitment Officer, Marketing Manager, and International Student Support Team also supported the team's activities. Therefore, the team was fully integrated into college life and participated in college events, such as the annual graduation ceremony.

The *Spiritual Care Team* worked effectively with staff and learners. Through *Paisley Action Churches Together (PACT)*, a local community group, it connected well with the wider community throughout Paisley. The team offered spiritual care, guidance, understanding and a listening ear irrespective of cultural and religious backgrounds. Engaging learners in the design process, the college had also developed an *International Student Support Centre*, a prayer room, and a multi-faith sanctuary space, which were all well used, and much appreciated by learners.



## **7. Enhancing quality**

### **7.1 Learner engagement**

Almost all the colleges visited had an international student representative within the Student Association (SA), although in a few colleges, many international learners had not been aware of the existence of these representatives. Almost all the colleges held regular focus groups for international learners, in order to identify their specific concerns, build on existing good practice and report on actions taken by the college to address previous requests and suggestions for improvement. However, all these colleges reported that learner attendance at focus groups was sporadic. International learners tended not to use existing class representative arrangements, preferring to raise issues through international peers or their dedicated international support staff.

In some cases, as with domestic learners, international learners had unrealistic expectations of what was possible for the college to do and the timeframes within which issues could be addressed.

Whilst the colleges had in place appropriate arrangements to hear international learners views, the level of participation in all aspects of these arrangements was not high enough for them to be fully effective. In addition, learners' reluctance to express views lest they be perceived as "complainers" was a challenge for staff.

### **7.2 Evaluation and improvement**

The scope and nature of arrangements for quality improvement and enhancement varied according to the mode of study and type of provision. With the exception of those colleges delivering highly specialised curricula, either in-country or in Scotland, colleges assured and improved quality through normal college arrangements. Given that, in these colleges, international learners infilled into mainstream SQA programmes, existing arrangements were adequate overall, but did not necessarily lead to specific improvement for international learners. Some of the colleges had adopted a more focused approach to supplement normal arrangements, which involved international teams contributing to academic quality improvement issues. These colleges had also constructed bespoke end-of-unit and end-of-block evaluation questionnaires for international learners who were infilling into mainstream provision. This enabled the colleges to capture issues specific to these learners.

Those colleges visited that delivered specialised programmes for international sponsors had developed or adopted separate assurance and enhancement procedures. In one or two cases, these procedures were required by the sponsor. One college ran its international operations through a separate commercial company, a wholly owned subsidiary of the college. This college had in place a separate suite of international quality systems and procedures, which it applied to learners following bespoke programmes, as well as infill learners. Colleges which operated overseas also sent staff to the partner institutions for quality assurance and enhancement purposes, often as part of internal moderation exercises. This ensured the quality of overseas delivery and also contributed to staff's CPD.

PI information was largely collected at mainstream programme level. In all the colleges visited, international staff collected and analysed information relating to attainment and achievement of international learners but actions for improvement were not always integrated with the mainstream programme plans. All learners could describe improvements that had occurred because they had taken part in evaluative exercises and they were content that their voice was being heard. However, some learners remained unhappy with their perception that the college had taken excessive time to respond to their issues.

## 8. Trends in international activity

The data made available by colleges relating to international learner enrolment and headcount figures did not relate well to that held on the Further Education Statistics (FES) *INFACT* database. SFC largely collects FES information relating to funded learners and therefore all international learners cannot be identified systematically within these statistics. While possible identifiers may be the *Permanent home location* and/or the *Source of finance* codes, these statistics would only point to a fraction of the international learners in Scotland.

Almost all colleges had separate enrolment systems for international learners that were not FES related. As a result, there was no complete, collated national record of international activity in Scotland's colleges. The data provided by colleges varied in format and completeness and therefore comparisons and collation were difficult. However, the following trends and statistics can be reported:

- The total headcount reported by the ten colleges visited

2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
1469	1564	2061

- In April 2007, the Joint Quality Review Group (JQRG) of SFC<sup>9</sup> published details of the number of international learners in Scotland's colleges and HEIs. The figure above (2061 international learners across just ten colleges) does not sit well with the statistics from SFC's international strategy<sup>10</sup> or with the figures given in the Association of Scotland's colleges *Key Facts 2007*<sup>11</sup> publication that "more than 2100 students" across all 43 colleges come from outwith the EU. This apparent inconsistency may be explained, to some extent, by the fact that this report focuses on a sample of ten out of Scotland's 43 colleges, as well as the different recording methods used by each. Equally, colleges do not define, record and report their statistics relating to international activity consistently across the sector, making the collation and analysis of such data difficult. Nevertheless, this requires further examination.

<sup>9</sup> International students in Scotland: April 2007: JQRG/B/02

<sup>10</sup> International Strategy Scottish Funding Council

[http://www.sfc.ac.uk/about/new\\_about\\_council\\_papers/about\\_papers\\_23nov07/paper\\_sfc07171.pdf](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/about/new_about_council_papers/about_papers_23nov07/paper_sfc07171.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> An Asset for Scotland: Key Facts 2007 <http://www.ascol.org.uk/docs/Key%20Facts%202007.pdf>

In addition, it should be remembered the figures from the SFC report and the figures above represent an extremely small proportion of the population of Scotland's colleges. They also represent a much lower proportion of all learners than the number of international learners in Scotland's universities.

- Data provided on enrolments, as opposed to headcount, was incomplete. Whilst all colleges provided data relating to headcount statistics, not all provided data relating to enrolments. Trends in colleges that did provide enrolment statistics showed total enrolment figures to be almost 18% higher than headcount figures. This can be explained by the fact that learners often enrol for more than one programme (for example ESOL and HNC).
- Trends in growth within the ten colleges visited

	Number of colleges
Increase in numbers	4
Decrease in numbers	2
Steady numbers	1
Previous years' numbers not provided	3

## 9. Recommendations

### Colleges should:

- work collaboratively with SFC and other appropriate partners to develop measures for improved and consistent collection of data relating to international (non-EU) learners, including enrolment, progression and articulation.
- ensure that arrangements for learner engagement encourage and enable international learners to engage with the wider student body, as well as college specialist staff and peers;
- review programmes to ensure consistently effective arrangements to develop international learners' core and employability skills.

### HMIE should:

- liaise with QAA on approaches to reflecting the experiences of international learners in external review reports by HMIE and QAA.

### NUS Scotland/Sparqs should:

- Work with colleges to promote the appropriate representation of international learners.

## **Appendix 1**

### Colleges visited as part of the fieldwork

- Aberdeen College
- Adam Smith College
- Anniesland College
- Central College
- Edinburgh's Telford College
- Elmwood College
- Langside College
- Glasgow College of Nautical Studies
- Reid Kerr College
- Stevenson College, Edinburgh

## Appendix 2

### Non-EU countries in which colleges are internationally active

Scotland's colleges recruit from and operate in a wide and diverse range of non-EU countries. The following list indicates some, but by no means all, of the countries with which colleges deal. India and China have, by far, the highest levels of activity.

Bahrain  
Brazil  
Canada  
China, including Hong Kong  
Dubai  
East African countries  
India  
Iran  
Japan  
Kenya  
Korea  
Kuwait  
Libya  
Malawi  
Oman  
Pakistan  
Russia  
Rwanda  
Saudi Arabia  
Singapore  
South Africa  
Sri Lanka  
Turkey  
Uganda  
Venezuela  
Zanzibar

## Appendix 3

### Glossary

ASC	Association of Scotland's Colleges
BC	British Council
CPD	Continuing professional development
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
EMEC	Ethnic Minority Enterprise Centre
ESOL	English for speakers of other languages
EU	European Union
FES	Further education statistics
GARA	Glasgow Anti-Racist Alliance
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
IBTQ	International Bilingual Teaching Qualification
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
ILP	Individual Learning Plan
NARIC	National Academic Recognition and Information Centre
NQ	National Qualification
PBS	Points based system
PDA	Professional Development Award
PI	Performance indicator
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
SA	Students' Association
SCI	Scotland's Colleges International
SCDI	Scottish Council for Development and Industry
SDI	Scottish Development International
SFC	Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council
SFEU	Scottish Further Education Unit
UKCISA	UK Council for International Student Affairs
UKBA	UK Borders Agency

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**Scottish English Language. Teaching in consortium**

<http://www.seltic.org/>

**Overview of the Prime Minister's Initiative**

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/eumd-pmi-overview.htm>

**Scottish Development International**

<http://www.sdi.co.uk/>

**The Education UK Partnership**

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/eumd-partnership.htm>

**UK Council for international student affairs**

<http://www.ukcosa.org.uk/>

**Students Under the Points Based System – (Tier 4)**

<http://ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk>