

Education Scotland core strategies

International Engagement

to enhance the skills for learning,
life and work of all Scotland's
learners

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1: Introduction

'It's not just the world that's changing education now. An orchestrated shake-up of every aspect of education is starting to change the world.'¹

Our vision for Scotland is of a nation which is confident, outward-looking, culturally enriched and knowledge-based. To support this vision, learners of all ages need to develop a better understanding of the world in which they live, work and thrive, appreciate the values and cultures of different societies; and recognise the ways in which, as global citizens, they can influence and shape their environment and society. This international strategy seeks to ensure that Education Scotland plays its part in making this a reality across all sectors of education and across all parts of the country.

Our international strategy affirms our commitment to preparing today's learners across all sectors for a global future. It reflects our ongoing work with children, young people and adults in implementing language learning, global citizenship, international education and sustainability programmes. It emphasises the importance in engaging with the international community through international benchmarking activities, and working closely with other countries and international organisations to engage in strategic dialogue, share practice and build the capacity of practitioners.

2: What is the strategy trying to achieve?

Our international strategy provides an overarching framework to integrate international considerations into mainstream policies and existing programmes of work across Education Scotland. This signals our very clear intent that international issues should not be an add-on or afterthought.

Implementing the strategy requires close cooperation and coordination across the organisation. Education Scotland will continue to work with Scottish Government and global partners to promote qualitative improvements in education, to strengthen systems here and abroad, and to promote effective international exchange.

Our international strategy aligns with:

- [The Government Economic Strategy](#) and the [National Performance Framework](#);
- [Scotland's International Framework](#);
- global targets such as the [Millennium Development Goals](#);
- [Working for Scotland: The Government's Programme for Scotland 2012-2013](#);
- [Learning for Change: Scotland's action plan for the second half of the United Nation's Decade of Education for Sustainable Development](#); and
- [Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach](#).

¹ *The Global Fourth Way*, Andy Hargreaves and Dennis Shirley

What do we say in the corporate plan about international engagement?

‘A world-renowned education system’

‘The vision is for education in Scotland to be globally renowned for its success, widely acknowledged as being one of the best education systems in the world’²

Our international strategy is cross cutting delivering across the six strategic objectives of the organisation outlined in our [Corporate Plan 2013-2016](#). The corporate plan contains clear commitments and measures for each of Education Scotland’s strategic objectives.

Strategic objective 1:
Build a world-class curriculum for all learners in Scotland

Strategic objective 2:
Promote high-quality professional learning and leadership amongst education practitioners.

Strategic objective 3:
Build the capacity of education providers to improve their performance continuously.

Strategic objective 4:
Provide independent evaluation of education provision.

Strategic objective 5:
Influence national policy through evidence-based advice.

Strategic objective 6:
Improve our organisational capability and invest in our people.

In talking about international engagement, our corporate plan says that:

We will:

- ensure that the Scottish Learning Festival (SLF) and the Scottish Education Awards programmes are thought provoking, inclusive and innovative, a celebration of both national and international excellence in learning and leadership;
- support the embedding of learning for sustainability (including global citizenship, sustainable development education and outdoor learning) and the modern labour market (including career management skills and enterprise in education) in the practice of practitioners and school leaders in line with the new professional standards;
- work with partners, national and international, to explore new and innovative approaches for building capacity with a focus on improving outcomes through new partnering arrangements that use the education

² *Corporate Plan 2013-2016*, Education Scotland

system's collective expertise, knowledge and skills to maximum impact. This will include the development of School Improvement Partnerships;

- work with partners and providers to develop and deliver inspections and reviews that build further on self-evaluation and international best practice, and increase further the focus on improvement and effective change; and
- develop further our organisational capacity for sourcing, brokering, collating and disseminating well-evidenced national and international research and knowledge.

Education Scotland's international activities are a key component of our core business. They are intended to:

- support all learners to develop the skills, knowledge and experience to compete effectively in the global market;
- promote and highlight Scottish education and lifelong learning on the world stage;
- further strengthen our international reputation, and its positive influence, as a leader of thinking and practice in educational evaluation and improvement;
- contribute to capacity building in Scottish education and across the international education community;
- inform thinking about education and lifelong learning policy within Scotland; and
- provide opportunities for Education Scotland to learn from and with colleagues from other countries; and contribute to career-long professional learning across the organisation and beyond.

This strategy exists to help all Education Scotland staff and our key stakeholders align their work and improve approaches to demonstrate impact.

3: What do we believe about promoting international engagement?

To ensure that 'Scottish learners' progress in one of the most effective education systems in the world', we believe that our international engagement strategy must:

1. increase the global competences of all learners in Scotland;
2. enhance national education policy and practice applying lessons learned from other countries to drive excellence and innovation in Scotland;
3. share practice internationally and engage in partnership working with other international organisations; and
4. contribute to the improvement of education in other countries particularly in the developing world.

The strategy contains clear commitments and measures for each of our four strategic drivers.

Driver 1: Increase the global competencies of learners in Scotland

‘In order for Scotland and its people to succeed and flourish in the globalised 21st century that we live in, we must all become and live as global citizens.’³

We want all Scottish learners to have the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in today’s interconnected world and to be fully engaged in and act on issues of global significance. These global skills are acquired through global citizenship, international education, sustainable development and language learning. Learners are provided with a range of contexts for learning, including [Connecting Classrooms](#), [Games Legacy](#), [Confucius Classrooms](#) and European international school partnerships and projects, which allow them to investigate the world beyond their immediate environment, recognize their own and others’ perspectives, communicate their ideas effectively to diverse audiences and translate their ideas into appropriate actions.

It is in Scotland’s economic interest to have a workforce equipped with the appropriate language skills to enable us to compete successfully in the global market. Speaking another language and understanding the culture that accompanies the study of this language, improves communication and effective working relationships. In May 2012, the Scottish Government published [Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach](#). This model of language acquisition is based on the European Union 1+2 model. The Scottish Government intends to create the conditions where every child will learn two languages in addition to their mother tongue. Improving language learning is a key priority of Curriculum for Excellence. Through changes in pedagogy, Curriculum for Excellence will bring new and exciting opportunities to make language education stimulating and exciting for all learners.

We will:

- support the embedding of 21st century skills by encouraging the adoption of a coherent approaches to global citizenship across education sectors, including early language learning and additional language acquisition, outdoor learning, international education, sustainable development education, human rights and, in particular, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- support practitioners across all sectors, through career-long professional learning, to include a strong global educational dimension as part of the curriculum, enriching the learning experience of learners of all ages;
- work with partners to support the implementation of the recommendations in the [Learning for Sustainability](#) report, published in December 2012;
- work with partners to promote national initiatives and campaigns such as UNICEF’s Rights Respecting Schools and Fair Trade Scotland;

³ Michael Russell, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, Scottish Parliament, 4 March 2010

- promote [Game on Scotland](#) resources to encourage the development of stimulating learning experiences for all learners using the Commonwealth Games as a context for learning;
- use moments from Scotland’s history, culture and contributions on the world stage including: the centenary of the start of the First World War, the Year of Natural Scotland, the Ryder Cup golf event, the Scottish Referendum and the 700th anniversary of Bannockburn in 2014 as a context for learning; and
- provide support for curriculum development related to the 1+2 policy, including the development of a framework for learning a modern language from Primary 1; and the introduction of another modern language during the broad general education at the primary and secondary stages of school education.

How will we know if we are succeeding?

Some of the key activities which will provide evidence of success include:

- feedback from inspections demonstrates an improved quality of learning, teaching and engagement in such issues;
- Education Scotland’s key contacts across all sectors report an increase in levels of activity and engagement in wider global citizenship activities and language learning; and
- evidence from the evaluation of pilot projects, identifying and promoting examples of good practice inform the work of schools and local authorities and support the improvement of language learning - [Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach](#).

Driver 2: Enhance national education policy and practice applying lessons learned from other countries to drive excellence and innovation in Scotland

‘The most significant contribution of international benchmarking is to *enquire into* and *learn from* the exemplary performance of others.’⁴

On our journey from ‘good’ to ‘great’ we will learn from others, share ideas and experiences, and collaborate to raise the educational standards of Scotland’s children and young people. Education Scotland will research and explore what works in other countries and learn more about innovative practices and how they could be applied in Scotland.

This objective will include developing our quantitative and qualitative research programme to ensure that planned and relevant intelligences are fed into the planning of our activities, and evidence of impact is passed to the Strategic Impact Board. Such analysis will also help us to determine which countries we would want to develop formal partnerships and action plans.

⁴ *The Global Fourth Way*, Andy Hargreaves and Dennis Shirley

We will:

- benchmark our own performance against world-class standards, drawing on best practice everywhere;
- focus on reducing inequity in educational outcomes for all learners by working with partners to identify and drive effective strategies to improve achievement and raise attainment, particularly in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing;
- develop our capacity to engage strategically with a wide range of partners across the world including SICI (Standing International Conference of Inspectorates), CIDREE (Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe), the OECD, the European Commission and the British Council;
- collect and promote the use of international knowledge and research to provide clear, succinct advice for practitioners and professional learning communities;
- develop further our organisational capacity for sourcing, brokering, collating and disseminating well-evidenced national and international research and knowledge;
- identify and disseminate good practice in international learning as part of our professional policy advice to Ministers, to ensure that learners of all ages experience high quality international learning as part of Curriculum for Excellence and other relevant policies.

How will we know we are succeeding?

We will use a range of different sources of evidence to assess how well we are succeeding, including:

- inequity in learner outcomes will begin to incrementally reduce as evidenced through analysis of specific vulnerable communities or groups and international benchmarking studies;
- school learner outcomes will improve as measured through the use of relevant senior phase benchmarking information and other national and international benchmarking indicators; and
- work closely with our Knowledge Management team to build our capacity to make best use of information from UK and international research and practice to generate advice and inform development of policy will improve.

Driver 3: Share practice internationally and engage in partnership working with other international organisations

Education Scotland's international engagement includes receiving international visitors, making presentations and providing advice on quality improvement to senior educationists and government ministers from other countries, addressing international conferences, membership of international groups and involvement in long-term international projects including training of policy officers and inspectors. On average, Education Scotland hosts over 130 visitors per year from more than 40 countries. These activities and interactions provide many important opportunities to learn from and share with other countries and to continue to foster strategic relationships.

We will:

- host high-level government officials, researchers and educators who come to learn about current initiatives in Scottish education and share information about their countries' education systems, policy and political contexts;
- strengthen partnership working, including joint development activities, support and skills-sharing with SICI, CIDREE and ICSEI to contribute to international education improvement;
- promote awareness among education professionals of the opportunities for international learning and partnership, which leads to reflection and enquiry about differences in policy and practice; and
- formalise partnership working with the British Council, and agree a number of joint initiatives to support system improvement in Scotland and in a number of targeted countries.

How will we know we are succeeding?

We will use a range of different sources of evidence to assess how well we are succeeding, including:

- routinely seek evaluative feedback from high-level government officials, researchers and educators who come to learn about current initiatives in Scottish education;
- ensure that, overall, benefits and resources, including staffing and other costs, are assessed and taken fully into account in responding to the requests to receive international visitors, and in decisions about travelling to conferences and other events outwith Scotland.

Driver 4: Contribute to the improvement of education in other countries particularly in the developing world

Education Scotland is committed to making a positive contribution to improving the life chances and circumstances of learners living in other countries, including in developing and newly industrialised countries. These include focused, strategic advice and support in high-priority areas such as, national policy and infrastructures, learners' experiences, teacher effectiveness, leadership, the curriculum, attainment and equity.

We will:

- work in collaboration with the Scottish Government Directorates of International Development and Learning to support the delivery of national Statements of Intent, including recent agreements with France and Malawi;
- work closely and in partnership with other key organisations, British Council, the Scotland Malawi Partnership and Creative Scotland to provide appropriate targeted educational support in identified Scottish Government priority countries, including Malawi, Rwanda, Zambia and Tanzania, Pakistan, Bangladesh and a number of Indian jurisdictions;
- formalise and sign an agency to agency high level five year cooperation agreement with the Government of the Republic of Malawi to support

educational improvement and increase the life chances of children and young people; and

- consider commissions to improve key aspects of education in other countries and jurisdictions including approaches to inspection, assessment and undertaking joint reviews.

How will we know we are succeeding?

We will use a range of different sources of evidence to assess how well we are succeeding, including: evidence from the

- feedback from practitioners, providers and our partners will confirm that they feel we are working more effectively and collaboratively with international partners to deliver commissioned work and to support developing and newly industrialised countries to bring about improvement;
- international stakeholders working with Education Scotland, including those in priority countries, significantly Malawi, will make progress in building their own capacity for self-improvement as monitored through their own inspection processes and other joint evaluative activities.

What does this strategy commit our staff to?

Our staff will:

- use the approaches set out within this strategy to work closely with providers and partners to increase international engagement;
- working individually and collectively in teams, have a clear understanding of the approaches set out in this strategy and use the approaches consistently to underpin their work;
- develop our support materials, future frameworks and tools for international engagement using the approaches outlined within the strategy;
- continue to work alongside the Scottish Government, national and international partners and others to seek ways to align and complement other approaches to international engagement; and
- evaluate the impact of this strategy across all aspects of our work to ensure that we have a positive impact.

4: What are the key features of implementation?

This section provides an overview of the key aspects of implementing for this strategy. The detailed actions are held within the associated action plan.

We will:

- develop an action plan which will drive the successful implementation of the strategy. This plan will provide details of how the key features of the international engagement strategy will be taken forward across all aspects of Education Scotland and how this will impact on our engagement with external providers and partners;

- provide professional learning for all staff on the key elements of the strategy and set clear expectations about how this should influence our work going forward. We will also seek opportunities to use the approaches in planning our work through the business planning process and signal in our plans how we will know these are making a difference;
- set up a strategic group with representation across all Education Scotland Directorates that will oversee the implementation and effectiveness of this cross-cutting strategy. This group will consider key issues relating to improvement and provide an appropriate stimulus and catalyst for new approaches as required;
- work closely with teams from across Education Scotland to ensure that their engagement with international providers and partners reflects the key elements of the strategy;
- use the strategy in our engagement with key stakeholder groups and seek ways to emphasise its key messages with stakeholders as appropriate; and
- ensure transparency and openness by placing the strategy on our website as part of our suite of approaches to bring about improvement.

5: How will we evaluate the impact of this strategy?

We will work with teams across Education Scotland and our key international partners to evaluate the impact of the strategy. Working to a Strategic Director, an Assistant Director and a Lead Officer will work with teams to determine the best approach to gathering evidence of impact and to provide appropriate support and challenge as required. We will introduce systems that allow us to evaluate the impact of this strategy through:

- establishing rigorous and systematic approaches for teams to self-evaluate their work against the key components of the strategy and the extent to which they are making a difference;
- seeking feedback from Scottish Government colleagues, our staff and key national and international stakeholders on how the strategy is impacting on their work;
- stakeholders' views on improvements in our ability to identify celebrate and promote effective innovation, leading to improvement in learning and teaching;
- carry out an annual impact assessment on a small number of priority areas to be identified through the business planning process; and
- the strategic group for International Education will report on the impact of the strategy on an annual basis to the Strategic Impact Board.

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Transforming lives through learning

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