

**Scottish
Funding Council**

**Review of
Shared Services
and
Collaborative
Activities in
Scotland's
Colleges**



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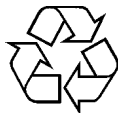
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

1. The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) commissioned York Consulting Limited Liability Partnership (YCL) to undertake this review of shared services and collaborative activities in the college and university sectors across Scotland.
2. Telephone consultations were undertaken with 31 colleges, 19 Scottish universities and six national stakeholder organisations. This report focuses on the college sector; a separate report covers the university sector.

Key Findings

3. Just over 100 examples of shared services and collaborative activities were identified across institutions in the Scottish college sector.
4. There are some key challenges to expanding shared services which include commercial sensitivity, critical mass and the identification of added value.
5. The majority of shared services are delivered through a joint initiative model or with a lead organisation. Fewer examples of more formal structured approaches were identified such as strategic partnerships or joint ventures.
6. UK-wide examples which involve the Scottish college sector include JISC and others.
7. Scotland-wide examples include Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges (APUC), the Association of Scotland's Colleges and the Scottish Further Education Unit.
8. Most of the institution based examples fall into the thematic areas of information technology, procurement, learning delivery, property/facilities management, and student welfare/support/advice. There were fewer examples in the areas of human resources, finance, knowledge transfer, market research/marketing and board member/staff training.
9. Among colleges there are good examples of collaboration outside of the college sector with universities, local authorities and the private sector.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The aim of this study was to review shared services and collaborative activities in the college and university sectors across Scotland. The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) commissioned York Consulting Limited Liability Partnership (YCL) to undertake this review in September 2007.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report, which focuses on the college sector, is to share the review findings with the SFC, Scottish Government, sector stakeholders and institutions themselves. A parallel report covers shared services and collaborative activities across the Scottish university sector, although many examples of universities and colleges working together have been included in the report.

Background and Context

- 1.3 This review adds to the body of knowledge on shared services in the college and university sectors, for example the recent study¹ undertaken by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) covering shared services across the UK university sector.

¹ Shared services in the higher education sector, for HEFCE by KPMG, 2006
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/RDreports/2006/rd15_06/rd15_06.doc

Public Sector Efficiency

- 1.4 The Efficient Government Initiative (EGI) announced in June 2004 was seen as Scotland's response to Sir Peter Gershon's review of public sector efficiency². Savings were to be achieved by means of: moving resources away from 'back office' to frontline services; greater productivity; continuous service improvement; and, cash and time efficiencies. This is summed up as being directed at "*one goal – demonstrably improving the experience of users of public services. Every pound that is used inefficiently is a lost opportunity to provide better public services*"³.
- 1.5 Groups have been established across the college and university sectors to oversee their responses to EGI:
- the **Universities Scotland Efficient Government Group** chaired by Sir Muir Russell, Principal at the University of Glasgow. Two groups have taken forward work on reviewing business processes and shared services;
 - the **Efficient Government Initiative Group** chaired by Linda McKay, Principal of Forth Valley Forth Valley College, advises the Association of Scotland's Colleges (ASC) on all aspects of policy relating to EGI. One sub-group exists which looks at business process improvements.

² Releasing resources to the front line, HMSO, 2004

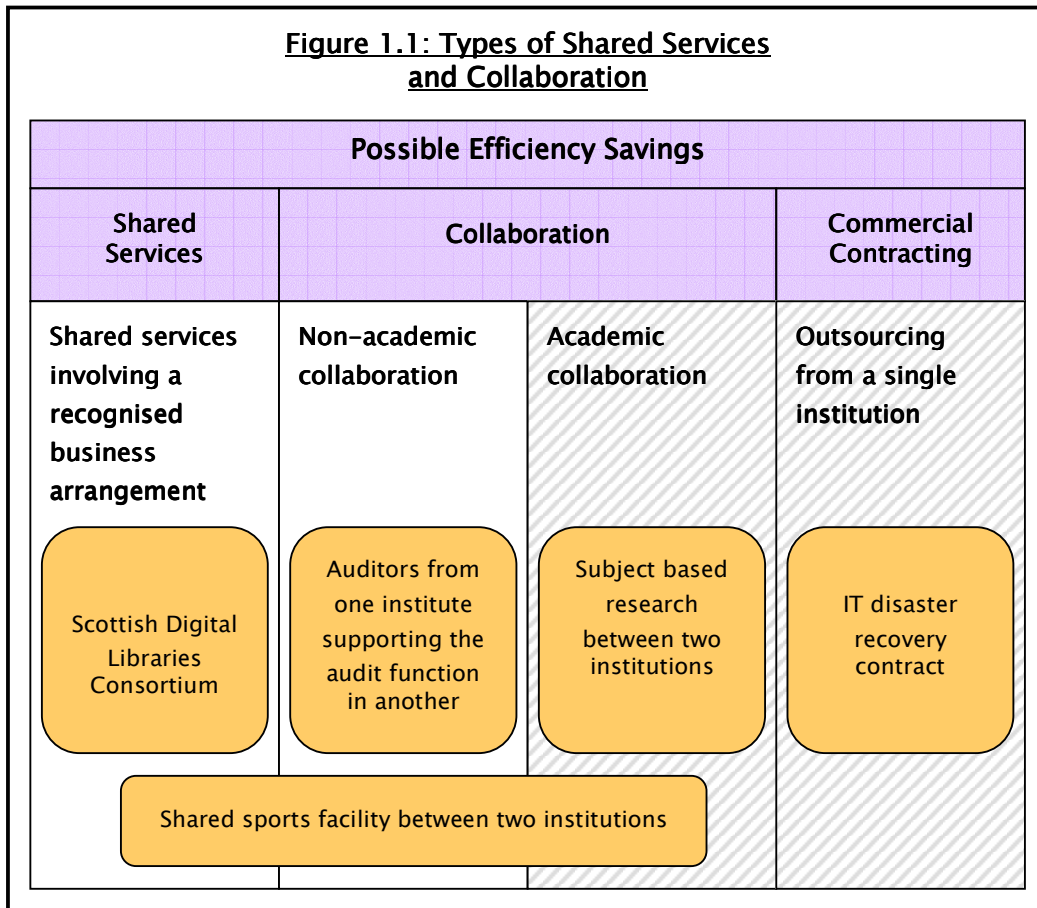
³ Building a better Scotland: efficient government – securing efficiency, effectiveness and productivity, Scottish Executive, 2004

Definition

- 1.6 The HEFCE report⁴ defines shared services as, *“a model of providing services in a combined or collaborative function, sharing processes and technology”*. We have taken this as our starting point for identifying relevant activities. Examples identified by the HEFCE report range from simple collaborations between separate organisations through to the establishment of new organisations, run and managed as *“autonomous businesses”*.
- 1.7 This study specifically looks wider than shared services, conforming to the above definition, to embrace relevant collaborative activities.
- 1.8 The definition of activities is an important and complex process. It has been an iterative process, starting with definitions derived from recent studies (the HEFCE research and Scottish Government definitions). This has been further refined through discussions with the steering group, key stakeholders and institutions themselves.
- 1.9 The range of activities that we have encountered across Scotland is depicted in **Figure 1.1**. This diagram depicts a number of activities which potentially contribute to efficiency savings. Although the focus of the study was on shared services and non-academic collaboration, examples of academic collaboration and commercial contracting were encountered. These examples sometimes overlapped with areas of interest and often proved difficult to position on this range of headings. For example, if three institutions separately contract with an IT supplier to provide IT services, then it was decided this did not constitute a shared service or even collaboration, it was regarded as a form of commercial contracting.

⁴ Shared services in the higher education sector, for HEFCE by KPMG, 2006

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1.10 Some forms of academic collaboration overlap with the other categories. For example, a sports facility which involves investment by more than one institution could be said to be a shared service, could involve non-academic collaboration and may also involve academic collaboration, for example through joint teaching of sports science courses.

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1.11 The Scottish Government is currently in the process of publishing guidance on shared services. That said, consultations during this project with the Scottish Government have helped to frame the approach to this study. From these consultations it is understood that an adaptation of the BuyIT⁵ categories will be used to identify types of shared service arrangements across Scotland, these include:

- unitary: a single organisation consolidation and centralising a business service;
- lead department: an organisation consolidating and centralising a business service that will be shared by other organisations;
- joint initiatives (internal): agreement between two or more organisations/departments to set up and operate shared services;
- strategic partnership (external): contractual arrangement with 3rd party provided for range of services;
- joint venture: joint venture legal entity and between an 'authority' and 3rd party provider;
- outsourcing: 3rd party provider takes full responsibility for managing and operating service. The 3rd party can be another public sector organisation.

1.12 These categories are used to analyse the range of shared services identified in the next section.

⁵ BuyIT Best Practice Network,
http://www.buyitnet.org/Best_Practice_Guidelines/SharedServicesPubSect/index.shtml

Methodology

1.13 Our approach to this work, across both the university and college sectors, has involved the following stages:

- **a literature review** to inform the design of topic guides and the development of an analysis framework. This included SFC information and responses to the Scottish Government consultation;
- **national stakeholder** telephone interviews with the Scottish Government; Scottish Funding Council; Universities Scotland; Association of Scotland's Colleges; Scottish Further Education Unit; Universities Efficient Government Group; and, the Colleges Efficient Government Initiative Group. These helped to provide an early understanding of some shared services and other developments. In addition it helped to minimise the contact time with individual institutions, particularly relating to national initiatives;
- **communication with Principals of all institutions.** A letter was sent by the SFC outlining the purpose of the study and introducing York Consulting;
- **college interviews.** We undertook telephone and face to face interviews with 31 college sector institutions between September and October 2007 (listed at Appendix A). We spoke to a range of people nominated by college Principals. Job roles ranged from Principals, Depute Principals, to Directors of Finance;
- **university interviews.** We undertook telephone interviews with 19 university sector institutions between September and October 2007. We spoke to a range of people nominated by university Principals. Job roles ranged from Deans and Secretaries to Directors of Finance, Corporate Services or Planning.

1.14 A project steering group, led by the SFC, directed the work and received regular reports on progress. The university and college sectors were represented on the steering group.

Acknowledgments

1.15 York Consulting wishes to acknowledge the time and support given by a range of individuals, in particular SFC staff, steering group members, national stakeholders and staff in Scotland's universities and colleges.

Report Structure

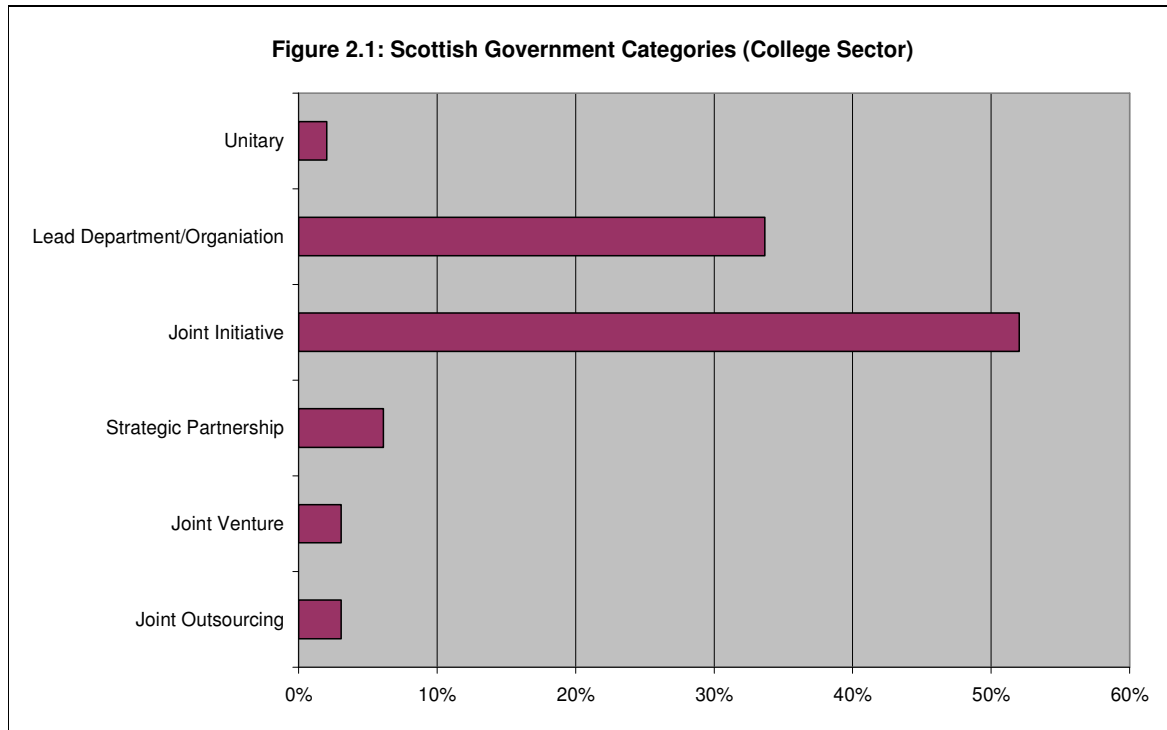
1.16 The structure of this report is as follows:

- **Section 2** describes national activities operating across Scotland and the UK;
- **Section 3** provides a review of shared services and collaborative activities across Scottish institutions;
- **Section 4** describes examples of activities which involve organisations outside of the sector;
- **Section 5** draws together the conclusions from this review.

2 OVERVIEW ACROSS SCOTLAND'S COLLEGE SECTOR

2.1 Our research has reviewed over 100 shared services and collaborative activities linked to the Scottish college sector.

2.2 Mapping against the Scottish Government categories indicates that 'joint initiatives' followed by 'lead organisation' arrangements are the most common formats for shared services within the college sector (**Figure 2.1**).



Source: York Consulting, 2007

Corporate Perspectives

- 2.3 There is a range of institutional perspectives on shared services and collaborative activities, some are quiet honest and have not engaged significantly, others are keen to identify opportunities:

"We will consider any avenue to provide the best service we can."

"Fragmented, to some extent non existent."

"No systematic view of how we approach shared services."

"We don't really have a formal corporate approach to it. It tends to be on a sort of one off ad hoc basis."

"There are informal links between small groups of colleges. Tends to be more along the academic lines."

"We serve a deprived community so try to take a multi-agency approach to address some of the regeneration and learning issues in the local areas."

- 2.4 There are some concerns regarding scale, with questions about what can be achieved in small institutions common: *"A small college has got to do all the same things as a big college has to but with very few resources"*.
- 2.5 There are also some caveats. In particular some consultees explained that partners outside of the education sector do not have a full understanding of all the issues:

"We will collaborate with anybody if there is a benefit to this institution, but we are not going to collaborate just for the sake of it."

"We're not interested in sharing services with people who don't know the environment."

- 2.6 There have been different experiences, both positive and negative, of engaging in shared services and collaborative activities:

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"We have long term arrangements particularly with the local authority for functional services. Happy to discuss anything with anybody, but particularly the local authority, as it is public funds."

"We dropped the local authority from doing payroll as they got it so wrong it generated so much additional work that it was taken in house."

"It's always very difficult actually because people become defensive in what can be fully shared. You might have one or two people dead keen but then the others drop out as time's gone on. Ultimately it comes down to the Principals of the colleges and whether they really want to try and move forward."

"Glasgow Colleges Group now defunct, did try to share approaches to course delivery but ended up as mainly IT."

National Examples

- 2.7 The college sector has a strong coherence at the Scotland level, supported by a number of national institutions. There are a small number of UK-wide structures. Examples of the activities mentioned by colleges are highlighted below.

Scotland-Wide Activities

- 2.8 The Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges (APUC) is an arrangement that has developed out of previous procurement initiatives. APUC will focus on generating efficiency savings across the college and university sectors. It builds on the previously operated system known as Proc-SNI, a joint procurement initiative that covered Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Example 2.1: Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges (APUC)

APUC Limited, is a private limited company, established in response to the McClelland Report on transformation of public procurement in Scotland. It is the procurement Centre of Expertise for Scotland's universities and colleges. APUC's mission is to support the embedding and consistent application of good procurement practice within further and higher education institutions, and to increase significantly the sustainable value for money from institutions' procurement expenditure through the provision of advanced procurement services. The key strategies cover collaborative procurement, procurement policy and guidance and e-procurement. The ultimate benefit to institutions is the embedding of advanced procurement practices and the increased value for money for institutions from their non-pay spend.

- 2.9 The Association of Scotland's Colleges (ASC) is a membership body that represents the Scottish college sector. Institutions believe that without ASC they would experience greater burdens in terms of representation and lobbying.

Example 2.2: Association of Scotland's Colleges

The Association of Scotland's Colleges (ASC) is the policy and representative voice of Scotland's 43 Further Education Colleges. It fulfils this role by informing and advising government, the Scottish Parliament and key audiences about the work of further education, developing sector policy and strategy, and providing information and advice to colleges on a range of issues. ASC helps develop a sense of collective purpose for colleges by bringing colleges together to discuss issues affecting the sector.

The ASC's strategy is focused on three main areas of activity: influence and representation; integration of Scotland's Colleges; and information and support to members. The ASC is funded by an annual subscription from its members. The Association has a Board of Directors, made up of six Principals of Colleges and six Chairpersons of College Boards of Management. These Directors are elected by the whole membership on a rotational basis, with the option of half of the Directors standing down or standing for re-election every two years.

- 2.10 The Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU) is co-located in Stirling with the ASC and College Open Learning Exchange Group (COLEG – see below). SFEU is the key development agency for Scotland's colleges. Services which SFEU provides include: expert advice and consultancy; professional and organisation development; conferences, workshops and seminars which enable the sharing of ideas; and, a central resource and specialist publishing services.

Example 2.3: Scottish Further Education Unit

SFEU contributes to the work of a wide range of national committees and delivers a range of high quality services which promote and support changes in Scotland's colleges leading to excellence in learning effectiveness and in college development. It achieves this through working in close partnership with colleges and maintaining a high level of understanding of the developmental issues facing Scotland's colleges. In addition to work supported by core funding, SFEU undertake a number of project-based activities in curriculum and staff development designed to maintain the position of Scotland's colleges at the forefront of lifelong learning. They operate 12 communities of practice to advance the professional development of staff in support functions across all of Scotland's colleges. These operate on themes of impact, international, business development, marketing, professional development, human resources, secretary to the board, ICT, management information systems, librarians, quality and guidance.

2.11 The College Open Learning Exchange Group (COLEG) produces innovative learning materials working closely with the SFEU. COLEG works in collaboration and partnership with member colleges and other agencies.

Example 2.4: College Open Learning Exchange Group

COLEG produces innovative learning materials, e-learning tools and other practical learning solutions to create an ever-expanding range of high quality products. Formed in 1995, COLEG draws on the learning skills and experiences of staff throughout Scotland's colleges to create a flexible range of products and services which are in tune with current needs and developments.

2.12 Other examples include:

- **representative groups.** A range of forums and groups exist, linked to the ASC, which include: general meetings of the membership; the Principals' Forum; the Chairpersons' Forum (see Appendix B);

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- **Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS)** organises support for students living or studying in Scotland; providing tuition fees, loans and grants which are designed to help students meet costs while at university or college;
- **libraries.** A number of formal and informal arrangements exist between colleges across Scotland and the UK which facilitates referencing and in some cases inter-library loans at below market price cost.

UK-Wide Activities

2.13 There are a number of initiatives wider than Scotland that involve the whole Scottish university sector. One of the most significant is the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), profiled below.

Example 2.3: Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC)

JISC funds initiatives and services to provide expertise, independent advice, guidance and resources to the UK college and university sectors to promote the effective and innovative use of ICT. The most significant aspect is JISC's procurement of the UK-wide Joint Academic Network (JANET). JANET gives all institutions access to a world-class high capacity broadband network which they would not be able to purchase off-the-shelf.

JISC provides access to a range of services which are available free at the point of use by institutions. These include:

- online content and databases, which would otherwise require individual researchers physically travelling to data archives and spending time in libraries consulting physical sources;
- JISC provides discounts on commercial rates for subscription to online journals and data sources, resulting in reduced costs for libraries * not only cheaper subscriptions, but also reduced space costs for storage;
- JISC operates a National Site Licence Initiative to provide discounted

prices for software and online resources;

- JISC provides information and advice free of charge to the sector on a range of operational issues such as advice on plagiarism, legal services and technical issues.

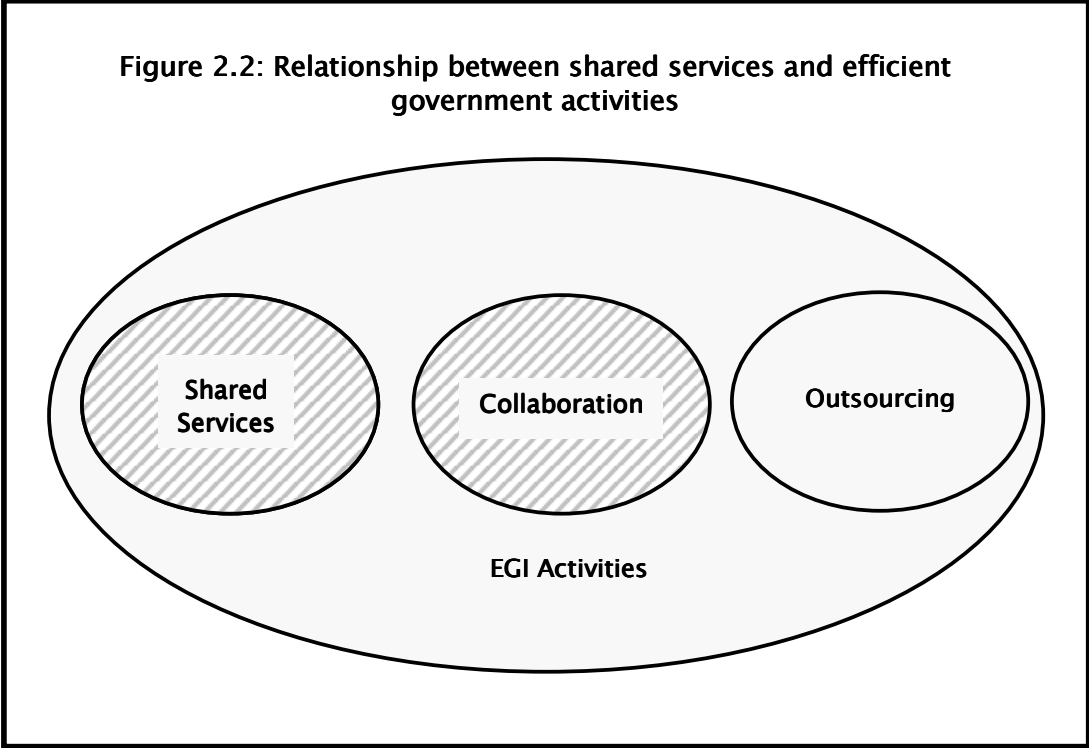
2.14 The other key example in the college sector relates to **Pension arrangements**. Some staff are part of the **local government pension scheme** and the **Teacher's Superannuation Scheme (TSS)**.

Relationship between shared services and efficient government initiative activities

2.15 Throughout this work many examples of activities were cited which have led to efficiency gains. However, not all activities that fall within the efficient government initiative umbrella are necessarily shared services or even collaborations.

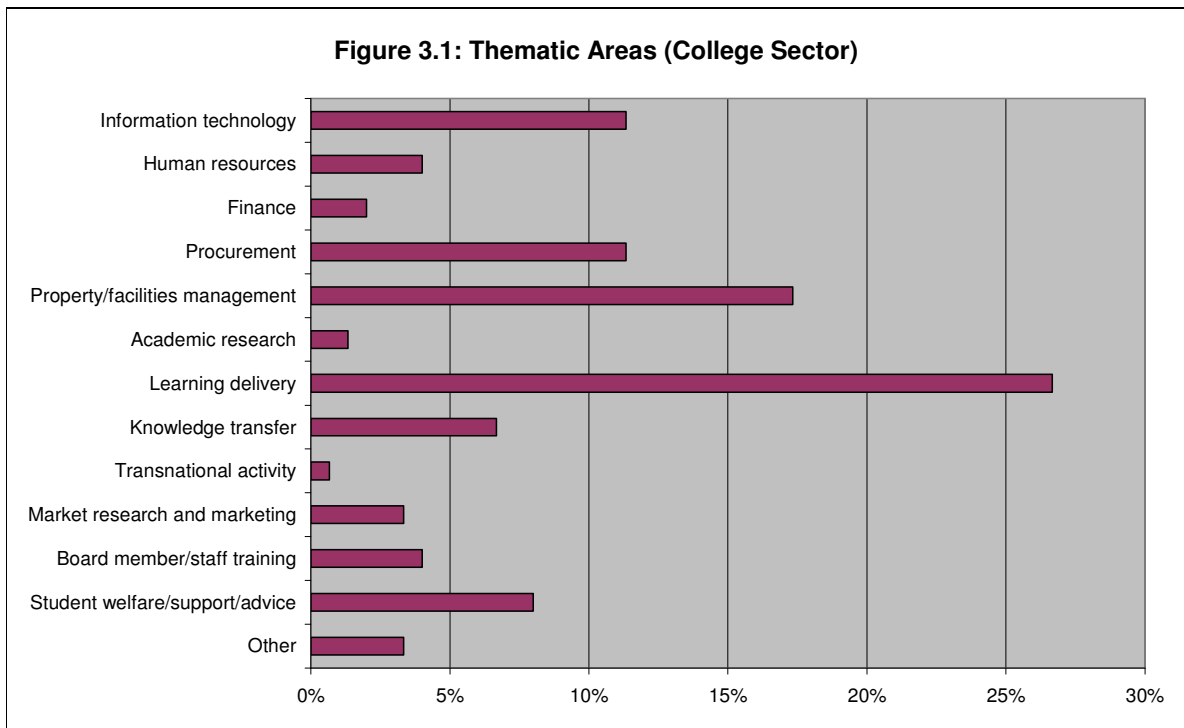
2.16 **Figure 2.2** illustrates this using a Venn diagram and helps to make the point that the services profiled within this report are only a part of the activities which colleges are undertaking in support of improved efficiency.

Figure 2.2: Relationship between shared services and efficient government activities



3 SHARED SERVICES AND COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES BY THEME

3.1 The thematic spread of shared services and collaborative activities across the college sector shows that 'learning delivery', 'property/facilities management' and 'information technology' are the major categories (**Figure 3.1⁶**).



Source: York Consulting, 2007

3.2 The college sector is different to the public sector in general but there are examples of shared services across most key areas.

⁶ Multiple responses

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- 3.3 Research reported in the Scottish Executive's consultation document⁷, identified the most popular areas for establishing shared services in the public sector are in IT, finance, human resources, procurement, properties/facilities management, and legal services.
- 3.4 This section of the report describes the range of shared services and collaborative activities within each of the thematic areas.

Information Technology

- 3.5 The most significant example of shared services between relating to the college sector in the IT field is the JISC network (mentioned earlier), which involves all of Scotland's colleges.
- 3.6 Around one in eight of the activities we have reviewed have a significant IT element. The majority of these relate to the sharing of IT networks between institutions and with local authorities, many involving both colleges and universities. Some of these are focused on basic infrastructure such as the Aberdeen Metropolitan Network example. Similar examples exist in other areas of Scotland.

Example 3.1: Aberdeen Metropolitan Network (AbMAN)

This is an fibre optic high speed IT network system involving Aberdeen University, Banff and Buchan College, the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute, the Robert Gordon University, the Rowatt Research Institute, Aberdeen College, the Scottish Agricultural College, the Fisheries Research Services Marine Laboratory, Banff and Buchan College, Aberdeen City Council, the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology in Banchory, and Aberdeen Science and Technology Park. AbMAN is established as a company limited by guarantee. All members pay a fee to participate, and provide a representative for the management advisory group and technical advisory group. There are future plans to involve the private and voluntary sectors.

⁷ A shared approach to building a better Scotland – a consultation paper on a national strategy for shared services, Scottish Executive, 2005

- 3.7 Other examples are more structured around a specific service such as the IT and Estates On-Line Helpdesk.

Example 3.2: IT and Estates Online Helpdesk

This software was developed by Cardonald College with funding from the DSFC and shared with other colleges at no cost. It is a web based database where staff can log problems for IT staff and facilities staff to prepare work schedules to address them. Until recently Cardonald College had also been supplying software updates and support.

- 3.8 Less common IT examples relate to more specific software applications such as Enquirer, which supports interrogation of management information systems.

Example 3.3: Enquirer

This web based software allows data to be collated from different IT systems eg HR and admissions. Systems support and upgrades are provided as part of the package. It is currently being used by around 12 colleges in Scotland, including the Central College of Commerce, and Forth Valley, Ayr and Lauder Colleges. Other partners include Learndirect Scotland and the Bank of Scotland. In operation since 2002 with funding from the SFC, it has been independently evaluated as a success.

- 3.9 There is interest in shared library systems, to improve access for students.

Example 3.4: Shared Library

Ten colleges in Glasgow share a common library system, including a single database to manage inter-college loans. The system was originally established by the now disbanded Glasgow Colleges Group. Cardonald College maintains the lead interest, providing software updates and IT support.

- 3.10 There are also a few examples of sharing across particular professional disciplines, and the Geographic Information System at Inverness College.
-

Example 3.5: Geographic Information System

UHIMI institutions are able to access the Geographic Information System (GIS) software and expertise and of the School of Forestry at Inverness College, one of the UHIMI partners. The institution also raises funds through running short courses for professionals.

Human Resources

- 3.11 There are limited examples of activities which are primarily focussed on efficiencies in human resources, possibly reflecting the desire to retain close control of staffing and confidentiality in this area.
- 3.12 There has been sharing of staff between institutions where workloads have been insufficient to justify funding a full time post, such as occupational health services, and providing a Clerk to the Board. This has the benefit of creating up to full time equivalent employment for the person employed, aiding job sustainability, in addition to sharing of expertise and experience across the institutions.

Example 3.6: Clerk to the Board

West Lothian College and Stevenson College co-fund a staff member to provide administration services to both institutions. The staff member has the role of College Secretary and Secretary to the Board of Management at Stevenson College, and Clerk to the Board of Governors at West Lothian College. The arrangement allows costs to be shared.

- 3.13 Other shared work has aided the administration related to employing college staff, such as salary benchmarking across the sector.

Example 3.7: College Sector Salary Benchmarking

A number of colleges including Sabhal Mòr Ostaig have been able to access college sector salary benchmarking figures from a study by Dundee University and the Association of Scotland's Colleges. The figures have been useful in informing salary levels at the college.

Finance

- 3.14 Finance examples have tended to focus on use of IT systems to help improve efficiencies. One example illustrates the sharing of local authority knowledge and expertise in processing salaries.

Example 3.8: Salaries Processing

Since 1993 Angus Council finance department have been processing the salaries of staff at Angus College. Joint networked software allows college staff to input data into the council system. The Council issue payslips, and produces end year returns that are uploaded onto the College ledger. The College pays fees for the service on a per payslip basis, and has recently renewed its service level agreement for a further 3 years.

- 3.15 Another example highlights the desire to better manage student information and the processing of bursaries.

Example 3.9: Enrolme Student Database

Langside College is currently making use of this hardware and software developed with the Central College of Commerce. The package has been developed to incorporate electronic class registration (e.g. for EMAs), helping with estate management, and also has uptake analysis tools which allow management of marketing, and calculation of progress towards WSUM target. The College has plans to further develop the system to link to finance management and general student funding in 2008.

Procurement

- 3.16 Procurement is the area most often thought of when considering shared services, and is an area that is well developed through national consortia such as ProcSNI, OGC, and regional consortia such as the Salford University Procurement Consortium.

Example 3.10: Salford University Procurement Consortium

Adam Smith College are partners in the Crescent Purchasing Consortium managed by the Directors of Finance for nine further education colleges based in the Greater Manchester area and operated by the Purchasing Services Department at the University of Salford. The College have used the consortium for the procurement of items such as ICT and stationery; though also find it useful for benchmarking costs against those offered through other alternative procurement routes.

- 3.17 The Scottish Digital Libraries Consortium illustrates a particular thematic consortium approach.
- 3.18 Many colleges are joining, or considering joining APUC (described earlier), the new consortium for the college and university sector established by the SFC.
- 3.19 Several colleges have been benefiting from their close relationships with local authorities. One college had been using the local council photocopying services. Two colleges have also accessed preferential rates from transport providers in their local area. These transport examples illustrate that national level consortia may not always be appropriate, where local provision must be tailored to meet local need.

Example 3.11: Student Transport

Angus College benefits from the preferential rate agreement that Angus Council has negotiated with local community transport providers. The arrangement allows for the transport of school children and college students from local towns, in an area where public transport is limited.

Property/Facilities Management

- 3.20 Perhaps unsurprisingly, property sharing has tended to involve significant scale and investment. A particularly well known example is the co-location at Crichton Campus.

Example 3.12: Crichton Campus

The University of the West of Scotland, University of Glasgow, and Dumfries and Galloway College share the Crichton University Campus in Dumfries. Student services and ICT are jointly funded by the University of the West of Scotland, and the University of Glasgow. Dumfries & Galloway College fund their own services due to different requirements. Teaching is operated by Dumfries & Galloway College. The arrangement has been complicated by funding issues, illustrating the complexity of such large scale sharing, though the Campus has recently received a funding boost to help ensure its sustainability.

3.21 John Wheatley College has also been taking forward significant innovative joint projects with Glasgow City Council, promoting community learning.

Example 3.13: The Bridge

Opened in June 2006, the Bridge is a multi-purpose community facility in Easterhouse. In addition to providing a campus for John Wheatley College, it has a new swimming pool, theatre, arts facilities, cafeteria, public library, flexible learning unit, and offers internet use. The college has an agreement with the council for free use of the library building for 99 years.

Example 3.14: Shared Library Facilities

John Wheatley College has merged its two libraries with those of Culture and Sport Glasgow, the charitable leisure trust of Glasgow City council. The arrangement provides benefits from working from a single management system, economies of scale in purchasing books and learning materials, reduced staffing needs, students being able to requisition any item within any library in Glasgow quickly, and the library being open to the public. Usage figures indicate that the Easterhouse library has moved from 24th to 3rd most used in Glasgow. College library staff have transferred employer, with a service level agreement fee covering their employment costs. The results of a formal evaluation by the Scottish Library Council are soon to be made available.

- 3.22 Aberdeen College has particularly close relationships with the voluntary sector, sharing premises with the Safer Community Trust and Aberdeen Foyer.

Example 3.15: Aberdeen Foyer

Aberdeen Foyer and Aberdeen College share premises and facilities to help young homeless people. The charity supports them by providing housing and emotional support and the college helps them to get educational qualifications that help them into employment.

- 3.23 There were four examples of shared sport facilities, generally offering mixed use in learning delivery and pure recreation. These included the Renfrew Leisure Centre, the Saltire Leisure Centre in Arbroath, the Scottish National Equestrian Centre, and the Sighthill Sports Facility being redeveloped by Napier University and Stevenson College.

Example 3.16: Scottish National Equestrian Centre

The £2.8m Scottish National Equestrian Centre has been established at Oatridge College with funding from Sports Scotland and Scottish Enterprise. In addition to providing a student teaching resource shared by Oatridge, Barony, and Elmwood College HNC/D students, the facility is available for commercial use during evenings and weekends e.g. for exhibitions.

- 3.24 Other examples aimed to improve operational management of facilities, such use of an IT and Estates Database, a joint property maintenance service, and Waste Management Advice.

Example 3.17: Waste Management

UHIMI and other colleges in the Inverness area are considering the joint funding of a workshop by the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges Scotland Branch for a Campus Sustainability Programme (CASPr). CASPr is a Scottish Government/SFC funded programme to promote sustainable waste management.

Learning Delivery

- 3.25 There were many examples which could be considered as promoting sharing in learning delivery. Some involving large scale co-location have been covered under property/facilities management eg Crichton Campus and the Scottish National Equestrian Centre, and hence the focus in this section is on people rather than place.
- 3.26 There are two significant examples of colleges working closely to up skill public health sector workers, at Orkney College, and the West Lothian College Care Learning Centre.

Example 3.18: Care Learning Centre

The centre provides continuous professional development for health and social care workers in West Lothian, including access to Open University mentors/tutors. College staff assess worker needs and deliver appropriate training. Initially joint funded by the West Lothian College and West Lothian Council, the facility is now funded by the council alone.

3.27 The study uncovered six examples of joint work to improve employability at a local level. Several of these highlighted the link between the college and local community. Some used community learning delivery to tackle basic issues of job readiness, such as through the Greater Easterhouse Learning Network, or work with Aberdeen Foyer mentioned earlier. Other examples demonstrate colleges working with relevant employers and agencies to facilitate movement towards employment through the Retail Academy, the Employer Relations advisory groups at Orkney College, or the Building Glasgow's People programme.

Example 3.19: Employer Relations

Orkney College ensures that it is providing appropriate training for local employers through the involvement of 12 employer based advisory groups. The groups meet with the College twice annually to discuss the content and timing of courses delivered. The arrangement ensures that employers can avoid sending their employees for training on the Scottish mainland for extended periods, and that the College can consolidate student numbers, to maximise efficiency. The construction industry has been the main client to date. Funding caps in recent years have reduced the College's ability to offer employers previous levels of flexibility.

Example 3.20: Building Glasgow's People

A training programme which aims to get unemployed socially excluded residents of Glasgow's former SIP areas employed in the construction sector, in direct response to construction skills shortages. It is primarily aimed at young people, who are offered apprenticeship opportunities, personal development and financial support mechanisms funded by the European Social Fund. The programme has been operating since 2003, run by the Colleges Construction Partnership for Glasgow, a unique partnership between Cardonald College, Anniesland College, John Wheatley College, Glasgow College of Building & Printing, North Glasgow College, Stow College, and 9 local economic development companies.

- 3.28 The most significant examples of college and universities working together on learning delivery were the UHIMI's well established link with Lochaber College, and the newer relationship developing between Glasgow Caledonian University and Glasgow Metropolitan College.

Example 3.21: Relationship with Glasgow Met

Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) and Glasgow Metropolitan College (GMC) have a particularly close relationship for sharing teaching and facilities resulting from the formation of Glasgow Metropolitan College. Some former Glasgow College of Building and Printing staff and courses have formally transferred to GCU to develop the department. GCU employ the expertise of GMC teaching staff and tutors in areas such as interior design and building technology using GCU rooms. GMC also have access to specialist GCU facilities such as a lab for the study of concrete, and have been able to commit their former lab to alternative uses.

Knowledge Transfer

- 3.29 The only reported significant example of joint knowledge transfer in the college sector was the Windows to the West arts and culture programme.

Example 3.22: Window to the West

This five-year arts and culture project between the Visual Research Centre of Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, University of Dundee, and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (SMO) began in 2005 and unites experts in contemporary art, Gaelic language and culture, and art history. It includes joint funding a postdoctoral researcher to coordinate the project, and makes use of Fàs, the Centre for Creative and Cultural Industries at SMO, this includes a custom built studio, archive and study facility for visual arts. The project was funded by a grant of almost £550,000 from the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Market Research and Marketing

3.30 There were few examples of joint work in this area, possibly reflecting the competitive element in the sector. The joint marketing approach of the UHIMI colleges might be expected given the aspirations of the 'virtual' entity linked by infrastructure. Scotland's Colleges International is the lead body representing around three quarters of the sector internationally.

Example 3.23: Scotland's Colleges International

Scotland's Colleges International (SCI) works on behalf of all of Scotland's colleges linking with international partners and working in international markets. SCI is a one stop shop providing access to member colleges across Scotland in order to maximise provision of high quality services delivered internationally. An Action Group composed of college principals leads the initiative with an advisory council drawn from across the member colleges helping to set the strategy

3.31 The creation of the 'Scotland's Countryside Colleges' brand can be considered a unique thematic approach in the sector, with independent institutions presenting a united front for common benefit.

Example 3.24: Scotland's Countryside Colleges

Elmwood, Oatridge and Barony Colleges work in strategic partnership to ensure that the skills shortages in land-based industries are addressed in a positive and cost-effective way. The partnership ensures unnecessary duplication and competition within the college sector is eliminated and expensive resources are put to best use. It provides a 'national structure' for Scottish land-based education and training. A key feature is Joint marketing which, amongst other things, involves the colleges attending recruitment fairs and the Royal Highland Show with a joint stand for their publicity materials and prospectuses, thus saving on entry fees and staff resources. Other areas of collaboration include; strategic, collaborative approach to provision planning; development and delivery; collective approaches to Higher Education articulation; facilities development; industry links and student work placements; and quality assurance.

Board Member/Staff Training

3.32 A key example of joint work in this area is the SFEU staff training which covers self-management, leading and managing others, college management/leadership and delivering results, developing and implementing strategy, live project work, and visits/knowledge exchange.

Example 3.25: SFEU Leadership Programme

The SFEU Leadership Programme aims to address the demand for a focused experience that stretches individuals, extends knowledge, builds capability for present and future leadership roles, and builds sector leadership capability. The target audience for the programme is Senior Managers in colleges, both academic and functional specialists. The programme is aimed at enabling senior managers to function effectively as college leaders, as senior team members, and as functional specialists and provides a platform for future college leadership roles.

- 3.33 Other examples include training in UHIMI delivered using IT to reach across a wide geographic area. More traditional delivery has taken place between, the geographically close, Aberdeen College and Banff and Buchan College.

Example 3.26: Joint Management and Development Training

Aberdeen College and Banff and Buchan College jointly provide management and development training for their staff. The training has developed from discussions of need at the local HR Directors' Forum. The Forum also includes participants from the local council, Fire and Rescue, Police, and the NHS. It is supported by a website which allows the sharing of downloadable HR resources.

Student Welfare/Support/Advice

- 3.34 There were only a handful of examples in this area. In one example a college had been sharing accommodation with others in the area.

Example 3.27: Hosting Other Students

QMU have been providing student accommodation to students from Jewel and Esk Valley, Edinburgh Telford, and Stevenson College. QMU students are given priority, however.

- 3.35 Two institutions had been working with other expert partners to provide childcare services to students eg a Gaelic nursery in Glasgow.

- 3.36 As might be expected, UHIMI were offering a single student welfare service across all participating colleges. Edinburgh's Telford College were taking an innovative approach to involving the local authority in particular support for students with learning difficulties.

Example 3.28: Support for Learning Difficulties

Edinburgh's Telford College provides a mainstream approach to supporting students with learning difficulties, by working with staff from the City of Edinburgh Council's Health and Social Care Department in classes within the College. The practice has been commended by HMIE.

4 ACTIVITIES INVOLVING OTHER SECTORS

4.1 In this section we summarise shared services and collaborative activities which have involved other partners outside the college sector.

4.2 A major area of collaboration is with the university sector. Particular examples include:

- national activities such as JISC and APUC;
- the UHIMI involves significant collaboration with colleges both internally to its development and through partnership work with other universities;
- development and joint use of sports facilities e.g. the Sighthill sports facility involving Napier University and Stevenson College;
- development of higher education courses and delivery e.g. Glasgow Caledonian University and Glasgow Metropolitan College;
- sharing of student accommodation e.g. QMU and local colleges (example 3.27).

4.3 Other common types of partner include local authorities, other public sector bodies such as the economic development agencies, and the private and voluntary sectors.

4.4 Joint working involving local authorities includes:

- IT infrastructure developments e.g. AbMAN – Aberdeen Metropolitan Area Network, where the local authority is a full member (example 3.1);
- a strong relationship between Angus College and Angus Council for many services including property maintenance, salary processing (example 3.7), student transport (example 3.11), and sport facilities;

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- staff training e.g. funding the West Lothian College Care Learning Centre for health and social care workers in West Lothian (example 3.17).

4.5 Joint working involving other public sector bodies includes:

- training for people experiencing disadvantage e.g. through the Colleges Construction Partnership for Glasgow's work with local economic development agencies (example 3.18);
- joint management and development training e.g. Aberdeen College and Banff and Buchan College jointly developed training through the local HR Directors' Forum. The Forum also includes participants from the local council, Fire and Rescue, Police, and the NHS (example 3.26).

4.6 Joint working involving the private sector includes:

- knowledge transfer activity e.g. Links at the North Atlantic Fisheries College in the Shetlands working with SMEs;
- development of IT e.g. the Enquirer software used in 12 colleges in Scotland and the Bank of Scotland;
- promoting student employment e.g. through the Employer Relations programme at Orkney College (example 3.19).

4.7 Joint working involving the voluntary sector includes:

- Aberdeen Foyer and Aberdeen College sharing premises and facilities for supporting the homeless (example 3.15).

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 This review has covered a large number of shared services and collaborative activities across the Scottish college sector.
- 5.2 There are clear examples of shared services at the UK level with all Scottish institutions participating in activities such as JISC.
- 5.3 At the Scotland-wide level there are examples of joint working such as APUC and previous procurement initiatives. The work of the ASC, the SFEU and COLEG provides a valuable and effective service which, with out it would be unlikely to occur and would be a greater burden to individual institutions.
- 5.4 At the institutional level there is good evidence of shared services and collaborative activities in the following areas:
- information technology;
 - procurement;
 - property/facilities management;
 - learning delivery;
 - student welfare, support and advice.
- 5.5 Corporate attitudes vary with some institutions more enthusiastic and more advanced than others. Generally there is recognition of the efficiency benefits, but positive engagement requires a clear business logic that added value will result.
- 5.6 There are some key challenges to expanding sharing of services which include commercial sensitivity, critical mass and the identification of added value.

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- 5.7 There is good evidence of joint working with organisations outside of the college sector. In particular, with Scotland's university sector and local authorities (especially where co-terminus boundaries support close working).
- 5.8 The level of collaboration and the large number of examples within and out-with the sector pays testament to a strong network and the recognition of efficient government principles.

**APPENDIX A:
CONSULTEES**

| Interviewee | Role | Institution |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Rae Angus | Principal | Aberdeen College |
| Jackie Howie | Depute Principal | Angus College |
| Jim Wilson | Director of Finance | Ayr College |
| Robert Sinclair | Principal | Banff and Buchan College of Further Education |
| June Stewart | Finance Manager | Barony College |
| David Killean | Assistant Principal | Borders College |
| Fares Samara | Assistant Principal | Central College of Commerce |
| Alan Ritchie | Financial Controller | Clydebank College |
| Derek Banks | Financial Director | Coatbridge College |
| Jim Godfrey | Head of Finance | Dumfries & Galloway College |
| Ben McLeish | Assistant Principal for Finance and Resources | Edinburgh's Telford College |
| Scott Anderson | Deputy Principal | Elmwood College |
| Martin Bell | Interim Director of Corporate Service | Forth Valley College of Further and Higher Education |
| Thomas Wilson | Principal | Glasgow Metropolitan College |
| Niall McArthur | Director of Corporate Services | Inverness College |
| Alan Williamson | Director of Finance | Jewel and Esk Valley College |
| James Gow | Finance Officer | John Wheatley College |
| Sandra Bruce | Assistant Principal | Langside College |
| David Neilson | Assistant Principal and Director of Finance | Lauder College |
| Iain MacMillan | Director of Finance and Corporate Services | Lews Castle College |
| Fraser Hutcheon | Director of Finance | Moray College |
| Raymond O'Connell | Director of Finance | North Glasgow College |
| Donald Macbeath | Depute Principal | North Highland College |
| David James | Principal | Oatridge College |
| Bill Ross | Principal | Orkney College |
| Margaret Munckton | Director of Finance | Perth College |
| Douglas Paxton | Director of Finance | Reid Kerr College |
| Calum Robertson | Head of Corporate Planning | Sabhal Mòr Ostaig |
| David Alexander | Vice Principal of Finance and Resources | Stevenson College Edinburgh |
| Iain Harrington | Assistant Principal (Finance & Resources) | The Adam Smith College, Fife |
| Heather Dunk | Vice Principal | West Lothian College |

**APPENDIX B:
SCOTLAND-WIDE GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS**

| Name | Details |
|--|---|
| Association of Scotland's Colleges – Communities of Practice | <p>SFEU is the key development agency for Scotland's colleges. The Community of Practice programme exists to advance the professional development of staff in support functions across all of Scotland's colleges. Business Development CoP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance CoP • HR CoP • ICT CoP • Impact Group • Librarians' CoP • Marketing CoP • MIS CoP • Professional Development CoP • Quality CoP • Secretary to the Board CoP. <p>http://www.sfeu.ac.uk/communities_of_practice</p> |
| ASC Principals' Forum | <p>The Principals of Scotland's colleges meet on a regular basis to discuss a range of strategic issues. The Principals' Forum invites senior representatives from organisations both within and outwith the sector to discuss initiatives and developments of importance to colleges. The Forum meetings provide principals with the opportunity to discuss and exchange views on a number of strategic topics.</p> |
| Chairpersons' Forum | <p>The ASC Chairpersons' Forum meets three times a year to discuss a range of strategic and governance issues. The Forum meetings provide Chairpersons with the opportunity to discuss and exchange views on a number of strategic topics, particularly those relating to governance and accountability of the college and the further education sector.</p> |
| ASC ad hoc working groups | <p>On issues of particular significance, Short Life Working Groups are formed to consider the matter further. Currently such groups are developing sector views on funding of the sector, visioning, and principals' CPD.</p> |
| Scotland's Colleges Finance Network | <p>The network represents Finance Directors and Managers from Further Education Colleges all over Scotland. It is funded from the proceeds of the annual conference and our sponsorship partners, but is largely supported by the voluntary efforts of its members particularly those involved in the working groups.</p> |

| Name | Details |
|--|---|
| Scotland's Colleges International | Scotland's Colleges International (SCI) works on behalf of all of Scotland's colleges linking with international partners and working in international markets. SCI is a one stop shop providing access to member colleges across Scotland in order to maximise provision of high quality services delivered internationally. |
| Edinburgh and Lothian Colleges Group | Edinburgh Telford, Stevenson, Jewel & Esk, Newbattle Abbey, Oatridge, W. Lothian |
| East of Scotland Staff Development Collaborative | Edinburgh Telford, Stevenson, Jewel & Esk, Newbattle Abbey, Oatridge, W. Lothian, Lauder and Borders |