



Essentials Skills Strategy 2018-19

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Glasgow Kelvin College Board of Management

Essential Skills Strategy 2018/2019

1. Introduction

Glasgow Kelvin College is committed to ensuring that all learners develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work integrated with vocationally-specific knowledge and skills.

The development of learners' essential skills is central to providing inclusive and engaging learning experiences which meet the needs of all our learners and this strategy seeks to ensure that all teaching staff have an understanding of the definition and role of essential skills and that in their practice they promote and develop essential skills effectively.

The definition of essential skills used within the strategy sits within a view of the curriculum as encompassing a wide range of knowledge, skills and attributes required for people to be successful in life, learning and work. As such essential skills is defined as including personal and learning skills, skills in literacy, employability, enterprise, citizenship, sustainability and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) skills, alongside the five core skills of numeracy, communication, problem solving, working with others and information technology.

2. Context

In their Skills for Scotland Strategy, the Scottish Government states that, "*skills, when utilised effectively, are one of the key drivers of improvement in productivity.*" The Scottish Government's 2015 Economic Strategy echoes this importance of skills to improving life chances, and identifies education, skills and health within one of four national strategic priorities; Investment in our people, infrastructure and assets in a sustainable way. This priority has a focus on jobs and growth and seeks to support Scotland's people at all stages in life to ensure we have a well skilled, healthy and resilient population.

The Skills for Learning, Life and Work agenda set out in *Curriculum for Excellence*, in particular in *Building the Curriculum 4*, establishes the key concept of the development of essential skills in our learners as a priority. Within this framework, the College has a key role to play in providing learning opportunities within the senior phase of *Curriculum for Excellence*, in delivering adult literacies, in working with young people and in having a positive impact on family life through developing confidence and skills in all learners.

The Scottish Government's Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, Education and Training Strategy for Scotland sets out the importance of developing STEM skills, knowledge and capability to support the growth of the economy. The

College has a key role to play to support out learners to gain STEM skills required for employment today and in the future.

3. Purpose of the Essential Skills Strategy

This Essential Skills Strategy relates directly to the College's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, and its strategic aim to, "...ensure all learners develop a full range of skills and capacities and also develop independence in learning."

The three strategic aims contained within this strategy seek to underpin this commitment and provide further direction and support to staff in the achievement of this strategic goal.

4. Essential Skills Strategy Aims

Aim 1. To ensure the College curriculum maximises opportunities for all learners to develop essential skills.

Glasgow Kelvin College is committed to ensuring that all learners develop a wide range of skills for learning, life and work. The College's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy expects that all teaching staff, individually, with colleagues and with their learners, will reflect on how best to plan learning activities to develop learners' essential skills.

All programmes should therefore support the development of essential skills and in planning of provision at all levels, whether at programme, course or individual class level, opportunities should be identified for all learners to develop a range of essential skills.

Course teams are expected to work in partnership with employers, public bodies and voluntary organisations to plan and deliver learning. These partnerships should provide additional expertise and information about the work and social environment, enabling effective, relevant and contextualised approaches to learning and teaching. Through this partnership approach, teachers and course teams are expected to consider how best work experience or the development of realistic work environments and practices can contribute to their learners' experience.

The five core skills (communication, numeracy, information and communication technology, problem solving, and working with others) should be included in all fulltime national qualification programmes either as discrete or embedded units, or through integrated learning and teaching approaches.

Aim 2. To utilise a range of integrated essential skills development approaches, appropriate to learner needs.

Glasgow Kelvin College's Essential Skills strategy aims to integrate essential skills development into vocational contexts which are meaningful and relevant to students. Staff should therefore plan and integrate activities in ways which support learners to focus on and build their essential skills through connections to more vocational aspects of their programme.

The most appropriate method of integration will be determined on the basis of learner needs, and in deciding on the appropriate method of delivery, issues of skill development and skill assessment will be planned.

Where college courses include delivery of discrete core skills units, opportunities for contextualisation should be maximised and the core skills units should be delivered in conjunction with staff input and expertise from the related vocational area.

Learners clearly benefit from higher levels of contextualisation within core skills units as they see the relevance of their core skills and understand the benefit of the development of their essential skills not only in the College context but in the context of lifelong learning.

Where discrete delivery of core skills is not thought to be the best approach in terms of engaging learners or improving retention and attainment, one way to address this situation may be to embed delivery of core skills units within vocational delivery with, for example, use of team-teaching, or development of integrated projects. Again, in order for this integration to work well, it is crucial to promote and foster a close working relationship between specialist core skills staff and vocational staff.

For many learners, the use of effective project-based and experiential learning activities maintains and increases learner engagement, and helps learners acquire a range of essential skills required for employment or further study. Similarly, well planned and integrated activities help learners to focus on and build their essential skills and make connections to other more vocational aspects of their programme.

With respect to the five core skills of communication, numeracy, problem solving, information and communication technology and working with others, the College is committed to integrating delivery of these with vocational subject delivery in the most appropriate way as determined by learner needs.

Aim 3. To support learners in evaluating and enhancing their own essential skills.

In considering how to support the development of essential skills across the curriculum it is important to recognise and value the diversity of individuals and their broad range of talents, abilities and achievements.

All learners should have the opportunity to develop their core skills beyond their entry profile, and both pre-entry and induction processes should provide opportunities for the identification of competence in core skills.

This profiling should be used to identify opportunities for skills development, both by teaching staff or where appropriate, learner support staff.

Individual Learning Plans should be used to enable all learners, with appropriate staff and where relevant/required partner agency representatives, to set, review and reflect on targets that relate to the development of a range of essential skills, such as skills for citizenship, enterprise and employability.

College staff should support learners to recognise and articulate how their College learning experience has impacted on their essential skills development both during their course of study and as they progress into employment and/or further study.

5. Supporting the Strategy

The College's Essential Skills Strategy is supported by a range of College policies, procedures and arrangements which are regularly updated and are available to all staff through the College intranet.

In addition, the College's support service delivers direct essential skills development support to learners across college campuses and its learning network centres. Staff also provide professional development support to teaching staff in the delivery of essential skills learning opportunities, enhancing the quality of essential skills content and delivery across the College curriculum.