



Consultation

Articulation for all?

9 November 2007

SFC/05/2007 C



Scottish Funding Council
Promoting further and higher education

Comhairle Maoinachaidh na h-Alba
A' brosnachadh foghlam adhartach agus àrd-ìre

SFC's publications are available on request in other formats and languages (for example large print, braille, community languages etc).



Articulation for all?

9 November 2007

SFC/05/2007 C

http://www.sfc.ac.uk/information/info_consultations/sfc/2007/consultations_2007.html

This consultation seeks your views on policy and funding changes that may influence articulation in Scotland.

FAO: Principals and directors of Scotland's colleges, universities and SFC's other stakeholders

Contact: Anna Thomson, Strategic Development

athomson@sfc.ac.uk

0131 313 6605

Recent SFC documents

9 November 2007

SFC/54/2007

Additional capital funding in 2007-08

9 November 2007

SFC/53/2007

School/college reports

9 November 2007

SFC/52/2007

Strategic dialogue with individual institutions – emerging strategic themes

2 November 2007

SFC/51/2007

Transfers of 2007-08 HEI funded student places

2 November 2007

SFC/50/2007

The 2007-08 HEI early statistics return

19 October 2007

SFC/49/2007

Learning for All: the way forward

28 September 2007

SFC/48/2007

Monitoring, evaluation and accountability (MEA) consultation update

14 September 2007

SFC/47/2007

Main quality research grant: updating minor volume indicators

31 August 2007

SFC/46/2007

Knowledge transfer grant: collection of activity data from higher education institutions

31 August 2007

SFC/45/2007

Student and staff performance indicators for further education colleges in Scotland 2005-06

31 August 2007

SFC/44/2007

Initial teacher education – revised intake targets for academic year 2007-08

Articulation for all?

Purpose

- 1 This consultation paper seeks your views by **25 January 2008** on options for our policies on articulation between colleges and HEIs. The consultation questions are set out on page 35 in **Annex A**.

Background

- 2 This report discusses the evidence on the current pattern of articulation from higher education courses at colleges to first degree courses at higher education institutions (HEIs). It considers where articulation is taking place: by institution, by subject and by characteristics of the students who use this route. It also discusses options for how we might improve articulation arrangements in future; we hope these will stimulate further discussion and debate.
- 3 The report takes forward recommendations in the Council's review of wider participation policy, *Learning for All*, that we should:
 - minimise the time it takes learners who wish to progress to achieve their goals (by eliminating unnecessary delay and repetition);
 - make transitions between learning environments easier;
 - support the development of more effective articulation routes between colleges and HEIs; and
 - work collaboratively to match qualifications along the routes learners are most likely to take.
- 4 It also takes forward the Council's intention to review the basis on which it allocates funding for FE-HE articulation. Since we introduced that funding in 2003 we have allocated it to HEIs on the basis of a survey of articulation activity. This report suggests ways in which our approach could develop.
- 5 The report will also be a key step for the Council in responding to key aspects of the Scottish Government's Skills Strategy, *Skills for Scotland*, published September 2007.
- 6 We will use this report to discuss these issues with colleges, universities and other stakeholders during late 2007 and early 2008 and we will then use the outcome of our discussions to inform our future policies on articulation, including the use of our specific funding to support articulation.

Process

Consultation seminar

- 7 This issue is of direct interest to both colleges and HEIs, but we welcome views from all relevant stakeholders.
- 8 A seminar will be held at the Stirling Management Centre on Monday 17 December 2007. Places will be limited to 80 delegates so those who wish to attend should contact Anna Thomson (athomson@sfc.ac.uk, Tel: 0131 313 6605) by Monday 3 December 2007 to request a place.
- 9 We will also be arranging to meet with relevant groups from the further and higher education sectors.

Next steps

- 10 We will consider the responses to this consultation with the aim that any changes to our policies and funding can be in place for the 2008-09 main grant letters to colleges and HEIs.

Responding to the consultation

- 11 Please send responses to this consultation by **25 January 2008** to:

Anna Thomson
Policy Officer
Learning Policy and Strategy
Scottish Funding Council
Donaldson House
97 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 5HD

email: athomson@sfc.ac.uk

- 12 You can send your response by letter or email. In general, all responses will be published on our website. Therefore, we need to know how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are content for your response to be made public. If you ask for your response not to be published we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly. All respondents should be aware, however, that we are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise. Please mark clearly any parts of your response that we should treat as confidential, subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

- 13 We will acknowledge all responses by email. If your response is sent in hard copy, please include an email address so that we can confirm that we have received it.

Further information

- 14 For further information please contact Anna Thomson, Policy Officer, Strategic Development, Tel: 0131 313 6605, email: athomson@sfc.ac.uk, or John Kemp, Deputy Director, Strategic Development, Tel: 0131 313 6637, email: jkemp@sfc.ac.uk.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Roger McClure'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Roger' and last name 'McClure' clearly distinguishable.

Roger McClure
Chief Executive

Articulation for all?

Executive summary

The key points of the report are that:

- the HNC/D is primarily a vocational qualification and is very successful at preparing people for employment or for progression in their employment. Only a small minority (fewer than 10 per cent) of students studying HNs at college progress to a first degree course at an HEI.
- articulation (by which we mean entry into year two or three of a degree course of an HEI using an HNC or HND as entry qualification) accounts for about seven per cent of entrants to first degrees at HEIs in Scotland;
- significant volumes of articulation are limited to a small number of HEIs. Two universities account for about half of articulation; six (five since Bell College and the University of Paisley merged) account for nearly 90 per cent of articulation;
- there are powerful barriers to spreading articulation beyond the routes that are already well used. Some of these are because course content and objectives do not match, and some are because of the lack of a business case for articulation for those universities that can easily fill places by other means. Market pressures on universities are unlikely to change this picture;
- we still do not know enough about how students articulate. We need to improve the way that we track students, and use this information to inform policy in the future; and
- the report concludes by asking questions about how best the Council should support and help develop articulation.

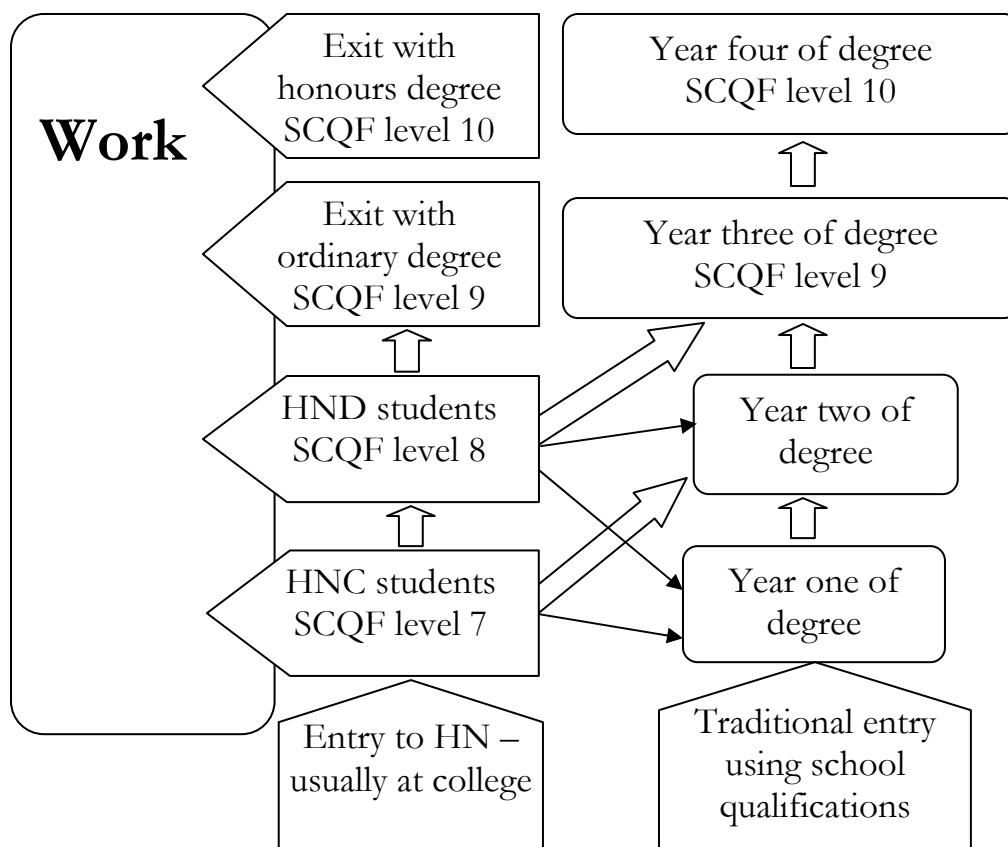
What do we mean by articulation and why are we interested in it?

- 1 By articulation we mean entry to the second or third year of a university degree course using a Higher National Certificate or a Higher National Diploma (HNC/D) gained in a college as an entry qualification. Many students also enter the first year of a degree course using HNC/Ds as an entry qualification. While this may be a valuable route for widening access to university, it is not articulation in the strict sense, because the student repeats a year or more of education at a level or levels of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), for which they have already gained academic credit.
- 2 Often articulation is through an established route agreed between a college and a university. The college and the university sign a formal agreement that students, subject to appropriate academic achievement and sometimes tutor reference, will be offered entry at an agreed advanced level within a relevant course or group of courses.
- 3 Higher National qualifications are long established – they were introduced in 1925 – and are valuable qualifications in their own right. An HNC is a one year course (when taken full-time) at level 7 on the SCQF; an HND is a two year course to level 8. HNC and HND are primarily vocational qualifications.
- 4 The SCQF is intended to help describe programmes of learning that lead to the various qualifications, support the development of routes to progress from qualification to qualification and maximise the opportunities to transfer credit points between qualifications. It was developed in partnership by the Scottish Qualifications Authority, Universities Scotland, Quality Assurance Agency Scotland and the then Scottish Executive and was launched in December 2001. It was adopted by the Council as the credit and qualification framework it would promote, thereby fulfilling a requirement of the 2005 Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act. Further information, including a copy of the framework, is in Annex B.
- 5 The outline below demonstrates the variety of ways in which an articulation route can operate.

	Breakdown of expected study route	
One plus two	One = HNC (SCQF level 7)	Two = second and third years of a degree course (Ordinary degree – SCQF level 9)
One plus three	One = HNC (SCQF level 7)	Three = second, third and fourth years of a degree course (Honours degree – SCQF level 10)
Two plus one	Two = HND (SCQF level 8)	One = third year of a degree course (Ordinary degree – SCQF level 9)
Two plus two	Two = HND (SCQF level 8)	Two = third and fourth years of a degree course (Honours degree – SCQF level 10)

Figure 1 (below) shows these routes diagrammatically. It shows that for some students there are articulation routes that can take them from entry to an HN to obtaining a degree in the same time as a student who entered a degree course directly. But for others the route illustrated in the diagram can resemble a game of snakes and ladders: these students progress to completion of level 8 on the SCQF (HND) then slide down a ‘snake’ that takes them back to start again at level 7.

Figure 1: Route map of articulation and progression



Note: The three arrows, taking students down a level, or back to the beginning of a level they have already completed, are not true articulation.

- 6 The Scottish Government’s Skills Strategy, Skills for Scotland, says:
The SCQF and awarding bodies have a vital role to play in building bridges and links between qualifications to allow individuals to receive appropriate credit for the learning they have achieved and to provide routes into other learning opportunities. This can only work if we have a strong partnership between all the relevant players.
- 7 Further development of articulation will therefore be a contribution towards implementing *Skills for Scotland*.

Our findings

For some students articulation can be an effective route to a degree...

- 8 *Learning for All* highlighted that articulation and progression routes were important for non-traditional learners who may take time to build their confidence and their abilities as they progress their study. For some students who do not have the entry qualifications to go directly into the first year of a degree course at an HEI, articulation is a route that can allow them to develop academically before entering an HEI. For some students articulation to a degree will be an aspiration that develops while studying for the HN qualification or after gaining it, rather than the initial goal. Some students do not want to commit to a full four-year degree course from the outset.

...and for some institutions it is an important method of recruitment.

- 9 The institutions that are most active in articulation are the ‘recruiting’ universities rather than the ‘selecting’ universities. As we see later in this report, in some institutions articulating students account for one in five entrants to first degrees. There is no large untapped reservoir of people with three highers or more who are not already entering university. (About one in three school leavers gain three or more highers and about one in three go directly into HE.) Articulation can provide an entry route for well-prepared students who do not have traditional entry qualifications.

Articulation can be cost-effective for the public purse and the student

- 10 By articulating into an advanced year of a degree, a college student completes that degree as quickly as a traditional school-leaver entrant. This enables more people to complete degrees for a given sum of public funding than would be the case if they had to start again at the same or lower level.
- 11 There are significant financial benefits to the student too. Where the HNC student articulates into year two or the HND student articulates into year three, there is no financial disincentive for the student. But when the articulation takes an HND student into years below year three, then the student is likely to have to incur additional costs, not least, the opportunity-cost of forgone wages during the additional year(s) of education. There is little evidence that young people consciously make these calculations when making their choices, though mature students are more likely to consider the funding and opportunity cost.
- 12 It has been argued that articulation leads only to a limited range of courses and universities, often to institutions perceived by some as having lower status, and

does little to promote movement between social classes¹. The evidence in this report will show that articulation is indeed skewed towards a relatively small subset of universities. We have also heard arguments from some university staff that the experience offered by spending two years at a college followed by perhaps only one year at university is not equivalent to the type of experience offered by three or four years at a university.

- 13 These arguments imply that the traditional university experience – four years straight from school – is best for everyone. The vision for wider access suggested by the Council’s report *Learning for All* (that all should have a genuine equal opportunity to participate in the learning that matches their hopes, talents, efforts and needs) acknowledges that there is no such ‘one size fits all’ model for tertiary education. For many students, including those without the traditional entry qualifications for university, or those who decide while doing an HN that they want to continue to a degree, or those whose circumstances permit only part-time study, direct entry to a degree is not the route that suits them best and is simply not available. The criticism that the range of institutions and subjects that allow articulation is limited, often by pressure of demand from potential students with high qualifications who want to enter direct from school, is a more serious one, and one that we discuss later in this report.

How much articulation is there?

- 14 This section explores the recent evidence on articulation. This is an area that has always been difficult to analyse. Because measuring articulation means tracking students from one education sector, and one set of data, to another it has been difficult to measure accurately how much articulation is happening.
- 15 In the analysis that follows, while we show students who acquired an HNC/D before entering their first degree course, we do not know in which year they obtained their HNC/D and whether it was the qualification that gained them entry to an HEI. Therefore, we cannot be certain how many of these students are, technically, articulating. As a result, any reference to ‘articulating students’ in the analysis should be read as an **estimate** of articulation. We are, however, confident – for reasons we explain in Annex C (technical annex) – that the data we present here gives a fair picture of articulation.
- 16 The analysis presented in this section mostly covers full-time entrants to first degree HEI courses **unless otherwise** stated. We have included analysis of part-time students as well, where the data we have has enabled us to make a reasonable estimate.

¹ John Field, *Articulation and credit transfer in Scotland: taking the academic highroad or a sideways step in a ghetto?* Journal of Access policy and Practice, Spring 2004.

- 17 The Open University (OU) is a major contributor to part-time study in Scotland. However, the year of programme is not recorded by HESA for OU courses, and so it is not possible to differentiate between potential articulating students and other entrants. Most of the analysis in this report therefore excludes the OU, but we present the information that we have available later in this section.
- 18 In looking at these figures we should also recognise that most people who undertake HNC/D study do so because they want an HNC/D, not because they want a degree. The HNC/D is primarily a vocational qualification which prepares people for work. We should not expect all those with HNs to articulate. The data suggests that fewer than 10 per cent of those undertaking HNs at college progress to a first degree course at an HEI².
- 19 With these caveats, what we know is that...

Seven per cent of entrants to first degree courses in 2005-06 were people with an HNC/D entering the year two or three of a degree.

- 20 About two thirds of entrants to HEIs with HNC/D qualifications enter into year two or three. About a third enter the first year of a degree and are thus repeating at least one SCQF level. We are not able to tell from the statistics how many of these entrants were unable to articulate into the later years of a degree because they were seeking entry to a different subject (or one where the curriculum was different enough for their HNs not to provide a proper base for articulation), how many had HNs but did not use them in their entry (because they had other qualifications), and how many would have liked to articulate but were not allowed to do so. We also know that some students who could articulate choose not to do so, for a variety of reasons.

Table 1: Full-time entrants to first degree courses with an HNC/D (or equivalent³), by year of course entered, 2003-04 to 2005-06 (source: HESA)

Year of first degree course entered	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
1	1,114	28	1,751	38	1,213	33
2	872	22	886	19	792	21
3	1,951	50	1,952	43	1,716	46
Total	3,937	100	4,589	100	3,721	100

Notes: Table excludes entry to year four
 Figures cover both Scottish and non-Scottish domiciled entrants

² Based on a comparison of Scottish domiciled articulating students (both full-time and part-time) to a first degree course at an HEI in 2005-06 (2,779 students), and the number of Scottish domiciled students undertaking an HNC or HND in 2004-05 (35,126 students).

³ by equivalent we mean: Certificate or diploma of education (ie non-graduate initial teacher training qualification), BTEC and SCOTVEC equivalents and Dip HE.

Ten per cent of entrants to first degree courses on a part-time basis were people with HNC/Ds entering year two or three of a degree course.

21 About 16 per cent of students who articulated onto a first degree course in 2005-06 were studying part-time. For all other entrants to a first degree course, about 14 per cent were studying part-time.

Table 2: All part-time entrants to year two or three of a first degree course with an HNC/D, as a proportion of all part-time entrants, by type of institution, 2005-06 (source: HESA)

Type of institution	Part-time entrants to year two/three with an HNC/D	All part-time entrants to first degree course	Part-time articulating entrants as a % of all part-time entrants
New	424	2,987	14.2
Old	10	892	1.0
Ancient	13	384	3.4
Other	26	473	5.5
Total	473	4,736	10

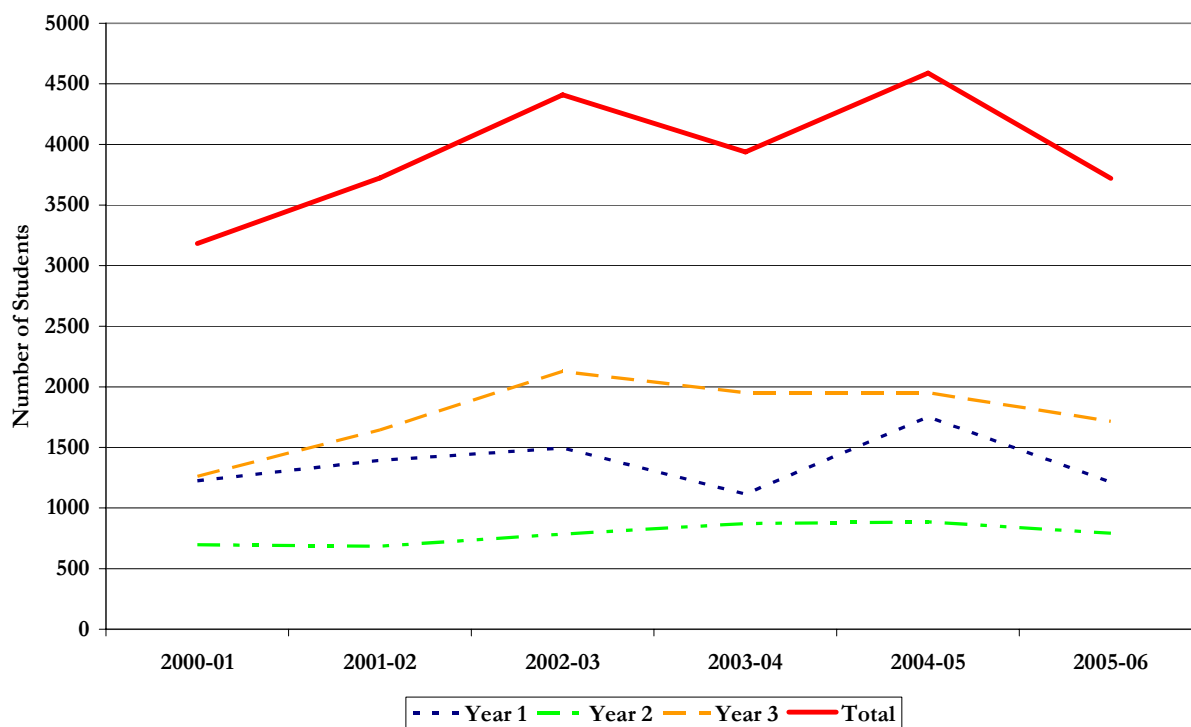
Note: See Table 4 for how the HEIs have been classified by type

22 Anecdotally, some part-time HNC/D students do face particular difficulty in finding a part-time degree course in the subject they wish to articulate to. Unfortunately we do not have data that readily enable us to analyse this. Some of these problems may relate to the availability of part-time options and some to student financial support arrangements. This issue needs to be further explored.

The numbers of students articulating into HEIs has been increasing in recent years.

23 Figure 2 shows the five year trend for students with an HNC/D who entered a full-time first degree course. It shows that the numbers entering at every year of entry have generally increased, although there is considerable fluctuation in numbers between years.

Figure 2: Students entering full-time first degree courses with an HNC/D (or equivalent), by course year of entry, 2000-01 to 2005-06 (source: HESA)



Notes: Figures cover both Scottish and non-Scottish domiciled entrants
Excludes Bell College and UHI Millennium Institute.

24 These figures need to be set against the backdrop that overall numbers of people graduating with HNC/D qualifications have fallen in recent years. The Scottish Government will be investigating the reasons for these trends as part of implementing its Skills Strategy *Skills for Scotland*⁴.

Articulation is not evenly spread across subject groups...

25 Table 3 shows how many students, with an HNC/D, entered into year two or three of a degree course as a proportion of all entrants in that subject. It shows that there is a wide range in the proportion of entrants to different subjects who enter through articulation. To take the extreme examples, one in five entrants to Mathematical and Computing Sciences do; none of the students entering Medicine and Dentistry do.

⁴ *Skills for Scotland*, Scottish Government, September 2007.

Table 3: Full-time entrants to year two or three of a first degree course as a proportion of total full-time entrants (to first degree courses) by subject group, 2003-04 to 2005-06 (source: HESA)

Subject group	Year two or three entrants with HNC/D			Total entrants (first degree)			Articulating students as a % of all entrants		
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Mathematical and Computing Sciences	567	677	483	2,766	2,730	2,487	20.5%	24.8%	19.4%
Librarianship and Information Science	131	160	108	792	773	686	16.5%	20.7%	15.7%
Business and Administrative Studies	767	761	672	5,556	4,731	5,020	13.8%	16.1%	13.4%
Engineering and Technology	448	337	339	3,142	3,053	2,904	14.3%	11.0%	11.7%
Architecture, Building and Planning	100	107	112	1,234	1,162	1,331	8.1%	9.2%	8.4%
Creative Arts and Design	200	218	141	2,185	1,978	1,933	9.2%	11.0%	7.3%
Biological Sciences	219	147	212	3,585	3,584	3,739	6.1%	4.1%	5.7%
Social Studies	169	231	195	3,767	3,605	4,143	4.5%	6.4%	4.7%
Subjects allied to Medicine	100	88	162	2,672	2,608	3,505	3.7%	3.4%	4.6%
Agriculture and related subjects	7	6	10	387	348	376	1.8%	1.7%	2.7%
Combined and general subjects	86	72	52	3,970	3,759	3,416	2.2%	1.9%	1.5%
Education	8	14	10	1,343	1,390	1,375	0.6%	1.0%	0.7%
Humanities	4	4	4	1,024	1,029	1,060	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Physical Sciences	15	13	5	1,716	1,578	1,809	0.9%	0.8%	0.3%
Languages and related subjects	2	3	3	1,199	1,325	1,440	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Medicine and Dentistry	0	0	0	1,238	1,277	1,213	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	2,823	2,838	2,508	36,576	34,930	36,437	7.7%	8.1%	6.9%

Note: figures cover both Scottish and non-Scottish domiciled entrants

...the proportion of entrants with HNC/Ds going into advanced years varies with subject too.

26 The percentage of students with HNC/Ds who go directly into year two or three, as opposed to year one, varies considerably by subject. In some subjects (such as Mathematical and Computing Sciences, Business and Admin and Engineering) over 70 per cent go into advanced years. These are also the

subjects which have large numbers of students articulating: together they account for well over half of those articulating.

- 27 The subjects with smaller numbers of students entering HEIs with HNC/D qualifications tend to have a higher proportion of the students entering year one with HNs.

Articulation is clustered in a relatively small number of institutions ...

- 28 Six of Scotland's HEIs (excluding the Open University) accounted for 87 per cent of the students who articulate into years two or three of a degree course in 2005-06. Just over half of the total number articulate into just two institutions – Glasgow Caledonian University and Napier University. Between them the four 'ancient' universities account for less than two per cent of those articulating into year two or three, though they account for around 34 per cent of all full-time entrants to a full-time first degree courses in Scotland.

...but entry into year one of a course by students with an HNC/Ds is more evenly spread...

- 29 The six institutions that account for nearly ninety per cent of articulation into years two and three account for just over half of entry into year one with an HN. (We do not know to what extent these students are prevented from articulating because of a poor fit between the curriculums covered in the HN and the degree course they are entering. This is an area we need to know more about.) Conversely, the institutions that take fewer articulating students, take a bigger share of those who enter year one: 14 per cent of those entering year one of a course with an HN are entering an ancient university, compared to two per cent of those entering year two or three. The old universities account for 22 per cent of year one entry with an HN, but only six per cent of entry into year two or three.

Table 4: Institutional share of full-time entrants with an HNC/D or equivalent to years one, two or three of first degree course – 2005-06 (source: HESA)

Institution	Year of entry, and institution share of entrants (2005-06)						Years two and three	
	1	% share	2	% share	3	% share	Entrants	% share
New								
Abertay Dundee, University of	74	6.1%	49	6.2%	151	8.8%	200	8.0%
Glasgow Caledonian University	168	13.8%	154	19.4%	581	33.9%	735	29.3%
Napier University	114	9.4%	147	18.6%	377	22.0%	524	20.9%
Paisley, University of	143	11.8%	97	12.2%	192	11.2%	289	11.5%
Queen Margaret University College	49	4.0%	26	3.3%	48	2.8%	74	3.0%
Robert Gordon University	139	11.5%	92	11.6%	155	9.0%	247	9.8%
Total for new HEIs	687	56.6%	565	71.3%	1,504	87.6%	2,069	82.5%
Old								
Dundee, University of	116	9.6%	59	7.4%	12	0.7%	71	2.8%
Heriot-Watt University	56	4.6%	43	5.4%	18	1.0%	61	2.4%
Stirling, University of	27	2.2%	5	0.6%	4	0.2%	9	0.4%
Strathclyde, University of	62	5.1%	12	1.5%	2	0.1%	14	0.6%
Total for Old HEIs	261	21.5%	119	15.0%	36	2.1%	155	6.2%
Ancient								
Aberdeen, University of	37	3.1%	21	2.7%	7	0.4%	28	1.1%
Edinburgh, University of	43	3.5%	9	1.1%	1	0.1%	10	0.4%
Glasgow, University of	44	3.6%	4	0.5%	-	-	4	0.2%
St Andrews, University of	43	3.5%	2	0.3%	-	-	2	0.1%
Total for Ancient HEIs	167	13.8%	36	4.5%	8	0.5%	44	1.8%
Other								
Bell College	18	1.5%	36	4.5%	155	9.0%	191	7.6%
Edinburgh College of Art	13	1.1%	19	2.4%	-	-	19	0.8%
Glasgow School of Art	7	0.6%	1	0.1%	-	-	1	0.0%
Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama	35	2.9%	-	-	1	0.1%	1	0.0%
UHI Millennium Institute	25	2.1%	16	2.0%	12	0.7%	28	1.1%
Total for other HEIs	98	8.1%	72	9.1%	168	9.8%	240	9.6%
Total for sector	1,213	100.0%	792	100.0%	1,716	100.0%	2,508	100.0%

Note: figures cover both Scottish and non-Scottish domiciled entrants

For some institutions articulation provides a substantial proportion of their entrants, for others it is a very small proportion.

30 About one in five of the full-time entrants to first degree courses at Napier University and Glasgow Caledonian University are articulating. For some of the ancient universities, articulating students account for one in a thousand full-time entrants to first degree courses.

Table 5: Full-time entrants to years two and three of a first degree course, with an HNC/D or equivalent as a proportion of all full-time entrants by institution – 2005-06 (source: HESA)

Institution	Entrants to years two and three with an HNC/D	All full-time first degree entrants	Articulating students as a % of all entrants
New			
Abertay Dundee, University of	200	1,386	14.4%
Glasgow Caledonian University	735	3,766	19.5%
Napier University	524	2,646	19.8%
Paisley, University of	289	2,240	12.9%
Queen Margaret University College	74	1,375	5.4%
Robert Gordon University	247	1,844	13.4%
Total for new HEIs	2,069	13,257	15.6%
Old			
Dundee, University of	71	2,593	2.7%
Heriot-Watt University	61	1,583	3.9%
Stirling, University of	9	1,471	0.6%
Strathclyde, University of	14	3,229	0.4%
Total for Old HEIs	155	8,876	1.7%
Ancient			
Aberdeen, University of	28	2,496	1.1%
Edinburgh, University of	10	4,592	0.2%
Glasgow, University of	4	3,971	0.1%
St Andrews, University of	2	1,508	0.1%
Total for Ancient HEIs	44	12,567	0.4%
Other			
Bell College	191	548	34.9%
Edinburgh College of Art	19	418	4.5%
Glasgow School of Art	1	329	0.3%

Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama	1	181	0.6%
UHI Millennium Institute	28	261	10.7%
Total for other HEIs	240	1,737	13.8%
Total for sector	2,508	36,437	6.9%

Note: figures cover both Scottish and non-Scottish domiciled entrants

There are both institution-specific and subject-specific reasons why articulation might be clustered in the way it is ...

- 31 A significant proportion of the provision in post-92 universities is of a more vocational/practical nature than other universities, and can be more closely allied to HN qualifications. We might expect these institutions to be more active in articulation.
- 32 In addition, many of the post-92 universities used to deliver HN provision and therefore their degree courses are already more likely to fit with HNC/D courses. In some cases the university has reduced its HN-level provision as part of an agreement with local colleges, and this has led to high levels of articulation.
- 33 There can also be barriers to articulation from professional bodies, ie in subjects such as law, which will affect the numbers articulating in certain subjects and, by implication, institution. For example, the Law Society deems that HN qualifications cannot be considered equal to the first or second year of a Bachelor of Law (LLB) degree. For HN Legal Studies/Services courses, however, some articulation routes have been agreed onto Bachelor of Arts (BA) Law degree courses.
- 34 Even where there are similarities between subjects studied at HN level and the degree course the student wishes to progress to, there may be gaps in the subject matter covered, the way the subject is taught, and the expectations on students for study at years two or three of a degree which would make it difficult for the student to succeed without some additional study. Some of these factors may be inherent in the fact that the HN and degree courses may have different objectives and course structures. In some cases these difficulties can be minimised by joint design of courses between colleges and HEIs.

...but demand appears the key factor

- 35 The HEIs that tend to do large amounts of articulation are those that have the strongest 'business case' for doing so in that they are less able to attract students with more traditional qualifications. Institutions with high demand for their places also have less of an incentive to adapt their courses to ensure that articulation into later years is possible. Indeed, arguably, it would be poor practice for these institutions if they did not design their courses with the characteristics of the majority of their students in mind. This could explain why so many students with HNs entering institutions which usually ask for high entry grades are entering year one.
- 36 Some degree subjects attract very high demand for places – for example Medicine, Dentistry, Physiotherapy, Conservatoire Music or Art and Design. Some of these courses also have course structures strongly constrained by

professional or regulatory bodies. These factors, particularly when combined, mean that there is very little, if any, articulation into these subjects. For some of these subjects the combination of factors working against articulation are such that it is unlikely that policy interventions by the Funding Council would lead to significant numbers of students being able to articulate. For other subjects there may be ways of removing barriers and significant likelihood that removal of barriers would lead to articulation.

- 37 Similarly some degree subjects suffer from relatively low demand at all institutions – Engineering for example – and for these subjects articulation is more widespread across the range of institutions.

There are many articulation routes that are rarely used.

- 38 Many articulation routes have few students – if any – using them. A survey of institutions in 2003 which was used to influence the current allocation of funding for articulation showed that at that time there were over 2,000 formal articulation links which allowed entry to years two or three of a degree at Scottish HEIs and around 3,500 students entering through these routes. On average, fewer than two students use each available route each year. (In fact, a relatively small number of routes are heavily used, whilst many routes are hardly used at all.) Many institutions had far more ‘theoretical routes’ than they had students using them. We are not able to tell from the data whether this is because students are not attempting to use these routes or because students who attempt to are being turned down.

Both full-time and part-time students who articulate are more likely to be from more deprived areas than those who enter through traditional routes.

- 39 This is true even when compared with other entrants to the institutions that account for most articulation, as table six shows. For example, the table below shows that across the sector as a whole:
- 20 per cent of full-time articulating students came from the least deprived areas compared with 32 per cent of other full-time entrants;
 - 21 per cent of full-time articulating students came from the most deprived areas compared with 11 per cent of other full-time entrants.

Table 6: Full-time entrants with an HNC/D (or equivalent) to year two or three of a first degree course, and other full-time first degree entrants by deprivation quintile and institution type, 2005-06 (source: HESA)

Type of Institution	Percentage of students in each deprivation quintile, 1=least deprived, 5=most deprived									
	1		2		3		4		5	
	year 2 and 3 entrants	Other entrants	year 2 and 3 entrants	Other entrants	year 2 and 3 entrants	Other entrants	year 2 and 3 entrants	Other entrants	year 2 and 3 entrants	Other entrants
New	21%	27%	17%	23%	18%	18%	21%	18%	22%	15%
Old	22%	30%	24%	24%	19%	19%	20%	15%	14%	11%
Ancient	31%	41%	22%	26%	19%	17%	14%	11%	14%	6%
Other	10%	26%	15%	24%	23%	20%	28%	17%	24%	13%
Total	20%	32%	18%	24%	19%	18%	22%	15%	21%	11%

Note: Scottish domiciled students only

Table 7 shows the same comparison for part-time first degree entrants who have articulated.

Table 7: Part-time entrants with an HNC/D (or equivalent) to year two or three of a first degree course, and other part-time first degree entrants by deprivation quintile and institution group, 2005-06 (source: HESA)

Type of Institution	Percentage of students in each deprivation quintile, 1=least deprived, 5=most deprived									
	1		2		3		4		5	
	year 2 and 3 entrants	Other entrants	year 2 and 3 entrants	Other entrants	year 2 and 3 entrants	Other entrants	year 2 and 3 entrants	Other entrants	year 2 and 3 entrants	Other entrants
New	20%	24%	22%	23%	21%	20%	23%	19%	14%	15%
Old	25%	24%	38%	24%	13%	20%	0%	18%	25%	14%
Ancient	43%	33%	29%	21%	7%	18%	14%	19%	7%	9%
Other	22%	12%	11%	28%	11%	32%	31%	21%	25%	7%
Total	21%	23%	22%	23%	19%	21%	23%	19%	15%	13%

Note: Scottish domiciled students only

Retention rates for students who articulate are not very different from other students at the institutions they attend.

40 Students who articulate into year two or three of a degree are less likely, when compared to **all** other entrants to HEIs in Scotland, to continue and qualify at the same HEI. But, given that the majority of articulating students tend to enter around half a dozen HEIs, a more useful comparison is with the retention rates of the other entrants to those institutions. Table 8 shows retention rates for the institutions that account for the bulk of articulation activity, i.e. where students with an HNC/D (or equivalent) are entering directly into the year two or three of a first degree course. It shows that the success rates for articulating students are close to those for other entrants (particularly for Napier, Paisley, and Robert Gordon). Given that articulating students are on average more likely to be from deprived areas than other students at these institutions and retention is correlated with deprivation, this could suggest that articulation works well for such students.

Table 8: Continuation rates for full-time entrants to year two or above with an HNC/D (or equivalent) and other full-time entrants to first degree courses in 2003-04, by institution (source: HESA)

Institution	% who continue or qualify at same HEI		% at other UK HEI		% not in HE	
	Enter year two or later	Other entrants	Enter year two or later	Other entrants	Enter year two or later	Other entrants
Abertay Dundee, University of	91.9%	85.0%	0.0%	2.3%	8.1%	12.7%
Bell College	69.3%	65.6%	2.0%	3.1%	28.7%	31.3%
Glasgow Caledonian University	81.1%	83.9%	1.2%	1.6%	17.7%	14.5%
Napier University	75.4%	77.5%	0.0%	3.8%	24.6%	18.7%
Paisley, University of	77.9%	78.8%	1.1%	2.9%	21.0%	18.2%
Robert Gordon University	82.3%	87.8%	1.0%	2.1%	16.7%	10.2%
Total (for sector)	78.8%	86.6%	1.0%	2.7%	20.3%	10.8%

Note: figures cover UK domiciled entrants

Both full-time and part-time students with an HNC/D who enter a first degree course are less likely, compared to other entrants, to qualify with a first class or upper second class degree

41 Table 9 provides a comparison of qualification achieved for all entrants with an HNC/D⁵ to a first degree course, and all other first degree entrants. The ‘unclassified’ column includes students who graduated with an ordinary degree⁶.

Table 9: Degree classification for students obtaining a first degree from a full-time course, by qualification held on entry to course and by type of institution attended, 2005-06 (source: HESA)

Type of Institution	HNC/D or equivalent					Other entrants				
	First class honours	Upper second class	Lower second class	Third class honours	Unclassified	First class honours	Upper second class	Lower second class	Third class honours	Unclassified
New	5%	21%	19%	3%	52%	6%	27%	20%	3%	44%
Old	7%	25%	21%	5%	41%	9%	35%	22%	4%	29%
Ancient	8%	33%	32%	4%	23%	13%	46%	18%	2%	21%
Other	4%	9%	3%	0%	84%	10%	30%	17%	3%	40%
Total (sector)	5%	21%	19%	3%	52%	10%	37%	20%	3%	31%

Note: figures cover both Scottish and non-Scottish domiciled entrants

42 Table 10 makes the same comparison for part-time first degree entrants (to any year of study) with an HNC/D with all other part-time entrants to a first degree course and all full-time entrants.

⁵ This includes entrants with a HNC/D (or equivalent) to the first year of a first degree course. The figures are not separately available for articulating students.

⁶ The ‘unclassified’ column covers students who graduated with: unclassified honours; an ordinary degree; or a general degree.

Table 10: Degree classification for students obtaining a first degree from a part-time course, by qualification held on entry to course and by type of institution attended, 2005-06 (source: HESA)

Type of Institution	HNC/D or equivalent					Other entrants				
	First class honours	Upper second class	Lower second class	Third class honours	Unclassified	First class honours	Upper second class	Lower second class	Third class honours	Unclassified
New	2%	3%	3%	1%	92%	2%	7%	5%	4%	82%
Old	1%	1%	7%	2%	89%	0%	1%	1%	0%	97%
Ancient	0%	0%	6%	0%	94%	3%	6%	1%	1%	90%
Other	0%	0%	0%	7%	93%	0%	0%	0%	3%	97%
Total (part-time)	2%	2%	4%	1%	91%	2%	5%	3%	2%	88%

Note: figures cover both Scottish and non-Scottish domiciled students

Men are more likely than women to articulate into years two or three of a degree course

- 43 Table 11 shows the entrants to either year two or three of a first degree course. It shows that men were a slight majority of entrants with an HNC/D to year two or three of a first degree course in recent years. This is particularly significant because it is different from the overall pattern in universities where about 60 per cent of students are women.⁷
- 44 The difference could be related to subject: the number of entrants to years two and three of courses in Mathematical and Computing Science and Engineering and Technology are predominantly male and these are the second and third most popular subjects for articulation was nearly five times higher in 2004-05 than in 2000-01.

⁷ For further information on this see *Gender in Scottish higher education: what the issue?* SFC, 2006

Table 11: Full-time entrants to year two or three of a first degree with an HNC/D (or equivalent) by subject of study and gender, 2001-02 to 2005-06 (source: HESA)

Subject group	Entrants to second and third year with HNC/D									
	2001-02		2002-03		2003-04		2004-05		2005-06	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Medicine and Dentistry	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subjects allied to Medicine	21	3	53	53	71	29	81	7	141	21
Biological Sciences	65	29	75	30	97	122	70	77	105	107
Agriculture and related subjects	6	1	10	4	2	5	6	0	9	1
Physical Sciences	5	6	12	17	9	6	7	6	1	4
Mathematical and Computing Sciences	81	190	88	281	128	439	141	536	78	405
Engineering and Technology	104	423	66	411	43	405	27	310	44	295
Architecture, Building and Planning	51	62	35	102	33	67	34	73	46	66
Social Studies	112	26	141	38	144	25	160	71	149	46
Business and Administrative Studies	457	260	595	245	520	247	524	237	464	208
Librarianship and Information Science	47	63	76	65	74	57	95	65	58	50
Languages and related subjects	1	0	0	2	2	0	3	0	3	0
Humanities	1	5	3	2	1	3	2	2	2	2
Creative Arts and Design	28	24	130	159	95	105	126	92	68	73
Education	23	14	20	5	8	0	8	6	6	4
Combined and general subjects	112	103	85	110	60	26	42	30	26	26
Total	1,119	1,210	1,389	1,524	1,287	1,536	1,326	1,512	1,200	1,308
Percentage split	48.0%	52.0%	47.7%	52.3%	45.6%	54.4%	46.7%	53.3%	47.8%	52.2%

Note: figures cover both Scottish and non-Scottish domiciled entrants

Open University students' analysis

- 45 The Open University is a significant route for articulation, but it is difficult to compare the OU with other institutions. All students at the Open University (OU) study part-time. It is not possible using HESA statistics to differentiate between potential articulating students and other entrants to the OU, because year of programme is not recorded for these students.
- 46 The OU operates articulation in a slightly different manner from the rest of the Scottish HE sector. There are no formal articulation agreements with colleges. Instead the OU offers applicants the opportunity, within certain limits, to transfer existing HN qualifications into credits towards their final degree. The content and subject list for their HN qualification is considered against the overall format and content of the degree and credit transfer is awarded accordingly. It is possible for a student with an HND to be awarded 240 credit

points towards their degree, which, with the OU is 360 points in total. This is equivalent to two out of three years' full-time study.

- 47 The number of credit points available to a student will depend on the type of OU degree they have chosen to do. In 2006-07, there were approximately 13,500 credit transfer claims made by OU students at a UK level. Of these, approximately 12,000 credit transfers were awarded. In demographic data compiled by the OU, a decline was noted between 2003-04 and 2005-06 in the total number of students studying with the OU in Scotland who transferred credit from previous study.
- 48 About 29 per cent of entrants from the UK as a whole to a first degree course at the OU in 2005-06 held an HNC/D (or equivalent) qualification. This is considerably higher than for the HEI sector as a whole, where around 15 per cent of all first degree entrants (to all years of study) held an HNC/D (or equivalent).
- 49 The analysis that follows compares OU first degree entrants with an HNC/D to all other OU first degree entrants.

Table 12: Degree classification for part-time first degree entrants with an HNC/D (or equivalent) and other part-time entrants to first degree courses, 2005-06 (source: HESA)

Institution	HNC/D or equivalent					Other qualifications				
	First class honours	Upper second class	Lower second class	Third class honours	Unclassified ⁸	First class honours	Upper second class	Lower second class	Third class honours	Unclassified
Open University	5%	20%	14%	9%	51%	9%	22%	15%	7%	47%
Part-time degree at other institutions	2%	2%	4%	1%	91%	2%	5%	3%	2%	88%
Total (HEI sector)	5%	17%	15%	3%	59%	9%	34%	18%	3%	36%

Table 13: OU first degree entrants with an HNC/D (or equivalent), and other entrants to OU first degree courses by deprivation quintile, 2005-06 (source: HESA)⁹

Institution	Percentage of students in each deprivation quintile, 1=least deprived, 5=most deprived									
	1		2		3		4		5	
	year 2 and 3 entrants	Other entrants	year 2 and 3 entrants	Other entrants	year 2 and 3 entrants	Other entrants	year 2 and 3 entrants	Other entrants	year 2 and 3 entrants	Other entrants
Open University	22%	24%	23%	23%	21%	20%	19%	19%	15%	14%
Part-time at other HEIs	21%	24%	23%	23%	19%	21%	22%	18%	14%	13%

⁸ by unclassified the OU means: ordinary degree

⁹ for the OU the figures reflect levels equivalent to years two and three

50 Tables 12 and 13 show that:

- entrants to first degree courses at the OU with an HNC/D are considerably more likely to graduate with an upper second class, or lower second class degree, than other part-time entrants to first degree courses at other HEIs;
- the profile of degree classifications obtained by first degree entrants with an HNC/D at the OU is similar to the profile for other first degree entrants at the OU; and
- first degree entrants at the OU with an HNC/D are no more likely than other part-time entrants with an HNC/D at other HEIs to be from the most deprived areas.

51 Based on the OU's own UK figures, students who have a credit transfer award account for a third of students who graduate with an Honours degree. An additional factor noted by the OU is the time delay between its students obtaining an HN qualification and then using it for further study with the OU. The OU reports that students typically enrol with them several years after completing their HN qualifications.

Recent activity to promote articulation?

We have funded research

- 52 Articulation has been the subject of a significant amount of research and evidence gathering. This includes the joint SHEFC/SFEFC funded report *Credit Transfer at the FE-HE Interface* (Maclennan, Dundas and Musselbrook, 2001, <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/library/11854fc203db2fbd000000ed4d9245c4/>); and the Mapping, Tracking and Bridging project, led by the Scottish Advisory Committee on Credit and Access (SACCA), (<http://www.sfc.ac.uk/library/06854fc203db2fbd000001002bef96ef/>) 2004. This led to the development of the college2uni website (<https://mapping.qaa.ac.uk/>).

We have funded HEIs to help them support articulation

- 53 From 2004, HEIs have received FE-HE articulation funding (£1.7million per year) based on a survey of the volume of students articulating into the institution. This has stimulated substantial activity in creating and mapping articulation routes, but does not appear to have increased overall numbers articulating (see Figure 2) though it should be remembered this is against a backdrop of total numbers of students taking HNs falling.

We have funded subject-specific work on identifying barriers to articulation

- 54 We funded the four wider access regional forums to undertake subject specific work in eight subject areas from 2005-06:
- Fife and Tayside – Business and Law
 - North – Engineering and Computing
 - South-East – Science and Social Science
 - West – Creative Industries, Healthcare/Nursing and Sports Studies/Sports Science
- 55 This work was focused on specific subject areas, recognising that individual disciplines have specific issues and problems, and that many of the problems can only be resolved on a subject or course by course basis. One of the conclusions from this work was also that progress has often been made by individual members of staff who are enthusiastic about this agenda, and that it would be better to move to more formal and systematic arrangements between institutions.

What should the Council do next?

- 56 The HNC/D is primarily a vocational qualification and it is very successful at preparing people for employment or progression in their employment. Only a minority (fewer than 10 per cent) of HNC/D graduates progress to degree level study. However, articulation from an HNC/D to degree level study is an effective route enabling people from deprived areas and men to progress to university – two groups that are under-represented in the university sector.
- 57 A key question is therefore whether increasing the volume, quality and effectiveness of articulation for learners would make a contribution to widening participation. The evidence from this report suggests that articulation does have a particular contribution to make to people from deprived areas, and given that there is no large untapped pool of people with three highers or more who are not already entering university, better articulation routes are likely to be a key way to widen access to degree-level education. Articulation also seems to provide an alternative route for men through technician level study to study at degree level.
- 58 Articulation is an important route for talented individuals who have taken HNC/Ds and realise later in life an ambition and aptitude for degree level study. All universities should be encouraged therefore to admit such students, provide necessary bridging programmes and minimise the need for students to go over old ground whilst at the same time maximising their chances of academic success.
- 59 A follow-up question is then whether and how such an increase could be achieved by making changes to policies, funding and practices within the further and higher education sectors. A key factor to take into account in considering this will be the overall volume of people taking HNC/D qualifications, which has fallen in recent years.
- 60 Our current policies and activities have largely centred around the creation of new articulation routes. Creating routes and the academic development this process encourages can be important, but the evidence in this report shows that many of these routes are little used. If our goal is to make a real difference to the volume of articulation and the quality of learners' experience, we perhaps need to focus our effort where there is a coming together of:
- a business need from a university to recruit outwith the pool of well-qualified school leavers;
 - a good fit between the university's mission, academic structures, approaches to teaching and learning, and the vocational curriculum of the HNC/D; and

- good co-operation and joint working between colleges and university.

61 Such a more focussed approach to articulation would recognise the significantly different roles that different universities play and accept the reality of the markets in which they operate. However, focusing our resources might make a real difference by:

- supporting **stronger tertiary collaborations**, between the universities most active in articulation and their partner colleges to create more coherent and comprehensive systems. These systems would be focused on meeting the needs of (but not limiting the aspirations of) people from the regions these institutions serve. This would enable better planning between colleges and the hub universities: perhaps better planning for articulation in the university – ending the fact that articulation is often seen as a way of filling places in year two of a degree vacated by direct entry students who drop out in year one. And better planning for the colleges – enabling them to consider where they could adapt their programmes to create pathways to new disciplines they don't currently have articulation routes to. Currently our funding for articulation has been to the HEIs rather than colleges – supporting this model would suggest that we change this and also provide funds to colleges to participate in this;
- building **better relationships between colleges and HEIs**. Articulation tends to take place where there is a business case for it to happen – where a university has to try harder to attract students – and where there is stronger potential for wasteful and distorting competition between universities and colleges. We are aware of tensions between the sectors in some parts of Scotland about this. Sometimes these tensions may be preventing the creation and use of well-designed articulation routes. A coherent approach to articulation might prevent wasteful competition and help ensure that students enter through routes that are right for them; it may also enable better transfer from degree programmes to HNs for students who wish to switch courses after starting a degree;
- **increasing the range of options for articulation**. A more organised approach to articulation based on strong tertiary partnerships may create a business case for colleges and universities to promote HN provision and make it more attractive to students. This approach could also lead to HEIs franchising year one and perhaps two of a degree course to partner colleges, and awarding credits on successful completion of each phase of a degree course, thus allowing for closer collaboration between the partners; and
- **reducing institutional effort on creating routes that are not used**.

- 62 The concentration of support on the small number of HEIs that do most articulation and their networks of associated colleges need not be exclusive. Other universities will want to promote articulation in specific areas and as suggested above, all universities should be encouraged to provide effective routes for talented students whatever their background. For subjects that are not available in the universities that are active in articulation we may want to consider other support. There may be a case for support (or continuing existing support) for developing articulation in subjects where intervention has a realistic possibility of making a difference. Equally there might be a case for focussed work on subjects which all universities find most difficult to recruit to: engineering for example. But in doing this we should be realistic about outcomes; the Funding Council should only invest money and the colleges and universities should only invest their resources where it is likely to have an impact, create well-used routes and to benefit students.
- 63 We still do not know enough about how students articulate. We need to improve the way that we track students and use this information to inform policy in the future.

Conclusion and consultation questions

64 This report has explored some of the evidence and options for policy on articulation. We recognise that we need – together with universities and colleges – to do more work on how to take this forward. We plan to arrange discussions with the key stakeholders later this year. In those discussions, or through responses to this document, we would welcome views on this report and on the following questions.

- should we seek to increase the volume of articulation as a means of widening access to degree level education? What are the implications for this work of recent downward trends in the numbers of people taking HNC/D qualifications?
- if so, how could we increase the volume of articulation and the quality and effectiveness of articulation for learners? What changes to our policies, funding and practices within the sector would be needed to make this happen? What activities should the Council support through its funding? Where should we focus our resources? What might be the unintended consequences of any actions we might take?
- what kind of collaborations would best support articulation? How best could these be organized?
- how should we identify and support articulation into subjects, not available in the universities most active in articulation, where articulation routes are needed? How should such universities cost-effectively provide opportunities for talented individuals who have taken HNC/Ds and realise later in life an ambition and aptitude for degree level study? and
- are there special issues for part-time learners? Are special arrangements needed for them?

65 If you would like to comment please contact Anna Thomson, Policy Officer, Learning Policy and Strategy, Scottish Funding Council, Donaldson House, 97 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5HD (Tel: 0131 313 6605, email: athomson@sfc.ac.uk) by **25 January 2008**.

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

- 1 The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) was developed to meet the needs of Scotland's learners and was created by bringing together all Scottish mainstream qualifications into a single unified framework. It was developed in partnership by the Scottish Qualifications Authority, Universities Scotland, Quality Assurance Agency Scotland and the Scottish Executive and was launched in December 2001.
- 2 It uses two measures to describe qualifications and learning programmes: level and credit. There are 12 levels within the framework which indicate the complexity of learning, and credit points which show the volume of learning undertaken to achieve the qualification. The aims of the SCQF are to:
 - assist people of all ages and circumstances to access appropriate education and training over their lifetime to fulfill their personal, social and economic potential; and
 - enable employers, learners and the public in general to understand the full range of Scottish qualifications, how they relate to each other and how different types of qualifications can contribute to improving the skills of the workforce.
- 3 The SCQF is also intended to help describe programmes of learning that lead to the various qualifications, support the development of routes to progress from qualification to qualification and maximise the opportunities to transfer credit points between qualifications. It will do this by making the overall system of qualifications and relevant programmes of learning easier to understand and providing a national vocabulary for describing learning opportunities.
- 4 The SCQF will also assist in making clear the relationships between Scottish qualifications and those in the rest of the UK, Europe and beyond, thereby clarifying opportunities for international progression routes and credit transfer.

Table of main qualifications			
SCQF level	SQA National Units, Courses and Group Awards	Higher Education	Scottish Vocational Qualifications
12		Doctorates	
11		Masters	SVQ 5
10		Honours Degree Graduate Diploma/Certificate*	
9		Ordinary Degree Graduate Diploma/Certificate*	
8		Higher National Diploma Diploma in Higher Education	SVQ 4
7	Advanced Higher	Higher National Certificate Certificate in Higher Education	
6	Higher		SVQ 3
5	Intermediate 2 Credit Standard Grade		SVQ 2
4	Intermediate 1 General Standard Grade		SVQ 1
3	Access 3 Foundation Standard Grade		
2	Access 2		
1	Access 1		

* These qualifications are differentiated by volume of outcomes and may be offered at either level

Technical annex

- 1 This Annex presents an approach for potentially ‘validating’ the accuracy of the HESA records in identifying students who articulate. As outlined in the main report through the HESA records we can:
 - identify entrants to first degree courses who have a HNC/D (or equivalent) as a qualification upon entry; and
 - identify the year of the first degree course that the student has entered onto.
- 2 But we cannot identify when the student obtained their HNC/D, and therefore whether or not they have ‘technically’ articulated. As a result our analysis can only be presented as an estimate of levels of articulation.

Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) data

- 3 However, it is possible to attempt to verify our figures by comparing with another source: SAAS data. In Table 14, data from SAAS shows the numbers of students who changed their qualification between 2003-04 and 2004-05. The table also shows the year of study which the student was originally in, and their current year of study.

Table 14: Students who changed their qualification aim between 2003-04 and 2004-05, by qualification aim, and year of study (source: SAAS)

Qualification Aim, and year of study, 2003-04	Qualification Aim – First Degree, 2004-05				
	1	2	3	4	5
HND	770	565	1815	10	0
HNC	740	255	20	0	0
Total	1510	820	1835	10	0

- 4 By comparing the results in Table 14 with the HESA data on entrants, with HNC/D (or equivalent), to first degree courses in 2004-05, we can calculate the difference between the two data sets. This essentially acts as a check on the HESA data. Table 15 provides a comparison of first degree entrants who have a HNC/D by the year of the course that they entered.

Table15: Comparison of HESA and SAAS data on entrants to first degree courses with a HNC/D in 2004-05 (sources: SAAS and HESA)

Data source and difference	Year of entry				Total
	1	2	3	Other	
HESA	1,751	886	1,952	18	4,607
SAAS	1,510	820	1,835	10	4,175
Difference	241	66	117	8	432
HESA overestimate	16.0%	8.0%	6.4%	80.0%	10.3%

- 5 The HESA figures are higher, as they will be picking up people who are coming back into the system, whilst the SAAS data shows those who stay in the HE system, but change to a different qualification
- 6 The difference between the two data sets falls as the year of entry increases, suggesting that those who enter in years two or three are less likely to have taken a break from post-compulsory education, and generally the HESA data used previously in this analysis is a reasonable indicator of articulation.



Scottish Funding Council
Donaldson House
97 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh EH12 5HD

t 0131 313 6500

f 0131 313 6501

www.sfc.ac.uk