

On behalf of the Scottish Borders Chamber of Commerce, I would like to submit feedback for your review. I appreciate the deadline has passed but we are a voluntary run organisation and as such do not have any full or part time staff able to manage matters such as this. However, on behalf of our members, we feel it's important to submit (in the hope you are able to include the feedback) our views as Borders College is such a crucial stakeholder in both the social and economic landscape of our region.

- a. What do you think works well in the current further and higher education arrangements that we should keep in order to secure Scotland's inclusive social and economic recovery from the current pandemic? How can we best preserve and strengthen those features of education, research and innovation in Scotland that we most prize, in a very challenging funding environment? The link that Borders College has built with the business community works very well. They continually evolve to meet the skill need of the business community meaning our workforce of tomorrow leaves the College and are able to be effective and efficient contributors to the workforces. The College is also very tuned into trends and social/cultural shifts i.e. sustainability and social care, resulting in them anticipating the demands of tomorrow workforce. That fact they are a rural College means they are able to be agile in ensuring the offering fits the need. The spread of offering i.e. full time, part time, apprenticeship or bespoke training offers students and employers every opportunity to find an educational path to suit their need
- b. What do you think colleges, universities and specialist institutions should stop doing, or do differently, in order to contribute effectively to an inclusive social and economic recovery? (You may wish to comment on teaching and skills development, sectoral and employer needs and employability, research, innovation and knowledge exchange, widening access and equalities issues.) Skill development for staff could be a more collaborative approach with business. Blended learning could be more the norm
- c. How can colleges, universities and specialist institutions best support Scotland's international connectedness and competitiveness in the post-pandemic, post-EU membership environment? The dichotomy of being a regional provider but planning and delivering with a national or international mindset is a challenge but acknowledging the need and planning to operate in a connected way would be part of the solution.
- d. What opportunities and threats does the post-pandemic environment hold for colleges, universities and specialist institutions? For institutional leaders, how are you planning to address these challenges and opportunities? We need to ensure we retain our regional College because the needs post-pandemic will be varied and only a regional College can respond to this with curriculum and offering the reflects the need. There will be huge opportunities to further develop upskilling or reskilling other adults (23+ years)

- e. What forms of collaboration within the tertiary education eco-system would best enable a coherent and effective response to these challenges and opportunities? **More collaboration with business for staff development. Those who teach should be very aware of sectoral developments.**
- f. How can SFC, alongside government and other enterprise, skills and education-focused agencies, best support colleges, universities and specialist institutions to make their full contribution to Scotland's inclusive, green and education-led recovery? In particular, you may wish to draw out:
- How scarce public resources should be prioritised to drive recovery: **As we understand it, the College is constrained already in terms of the credit allocation to demand ratio. We feel this is already evidence of a need of priority as each successful student will go on to be part of the recovery**
  - Particular areas of collaboration between agencies that would best support the sectors' contributions **Borders College already collaborate with SBCC and other stakeholders, such as the SCDI. Further work in this area could only be a positive**
  - Adaptations to SFC's funding and accountability frameworks to promote agile and collaborative action by the sectors to build Scotland's recovery **Don't feel adequately informed to answer this**
  - How SFC's funding and accountability frameworks should ensure that equality and wide access to educational opportunity are promoted as key elements of the recovery for younger people and adults **Don't feel adequately informed to answer this**
  - What support SFC and government could give institutions to adapt to a changed environment **Assurance that their position as a regional College is secure and as much autonomy as possible to deliver what is needed to best fit the needs of the Borders. Adequate credits.**