

**NEWBATTLE ABBEY COLLEGE  
OUTCOME AGREEMENT SELF-EVALUATION  
2014-15**

**1.0 Introduction**

As a small national specialist college, Newbattle Abbey sought, through the period of the 2014-15 Outcome Agreement, to develop its distinctive national profile whilst also addressing regional outcomes.

As Scotland's national transformational adult education residential college, we are uniquely positioned to provide a challenging and intellectually stimulating curriculum, within a supportive environment, to adult learners and young people at the point of transition.

The 2014-15 Outcome Agreement sought to be consistent with Scottish Government priorities, including:

- Developing Scotland's Young Workforce
- Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act/Opportunities for All
- Curriculum for Excellence

**2.0 Efficient and Sustainable**

**2.1** We have reviewed and aligned our governance arrangements in line with the new *Code of Governance for Scotland's Colleges*. We currently have 13 Board Members: Chair, Vice Chair, Principal, Support Staff Member, Academic Staff Member, one Student Member and 7 Non-Executive members.

The full Board of Directors meets at least five times per year and each of its Committees has a minimum of three scheduled meetings per year. The Committees are: Chairs, Audit, Planning & Resource and Learning & Teaching. The Board undertakes an annual evaluation process, including Board and Sub Committee self-evaluations.

The college operates under a Governing Deed of Trust, set up in 1937 by Philip Kerr, 11<sup>th</sup> Marquis of Lothian. The College Trustees include the Principals and Vice Chancellors of the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea, Principal of the University of Edinburgh, is the current Chair of Trustees. The Trustees have responsibility for maintaining the ownership of Newbattle Abbey College for the Trust purposes.

**2.2** In 2014-15, Newbattle continued to play a major role in developing a national strategy for adult learning. The college contributed to outcomes through strategic partnerships at national level which have been enhanced through Newbattle's membership of the National Strategic Forum for Adult Learning and the National Gaelic Education Strategy Group.

In 2014 the college was asked by Education Scotland and SCQF to develop National Adult Achievement Awards, which were submitted for credit-rating to Edinburgh Napier University in December 2014. In January 2015 Newbattle became the awarding body for the Adult Achievement Awards which are offered at SCQF Levels 3, 4, and 6. The college is running a cross sectoral pilot programme involving 11

pilots across Scotland during 2015-16. This is a ground-breaking initiative which supports the Statement of Ambition for Adult Learning and accredits adults for their learning in a range of places including community; college; voluntary sector; volunteering; workplace etc.

- 2.3 At a regional level the college made an increasingly significant educational, economic, social and cultural contribution to the local economy through its portfolio of activities. During 2014-15, the college continued to strengthen its excellent reputation for positive collaboration through involvement in the Midlothian Community Planning Partnership (CPP). Newbattle is an active member of several groups linked to Midlothian's CPP including Improving Opportunities for Midlothian (IOM), Midlothian Employment Action Network (MEAN), Midlothian Adult Learning Partnership (MALP) and the Developing Midlothian's Young Workforce Group. Newbattle has chaired MALP since 2014. This partnership with Midlothian Council has led to the delivery of several programmes for marginalised adults and young people at points of transition, as detailed in section 3 of this report.
- 2.4 The ICT shared service with Edinburgh College is working efficiently. The service significantly benefitted from the appointment, in March 2015, of a full-time IT Technician based at Newbattle. Discussions with Edinburgh College to explore options for additional shared services were not possible during 2014-15 due to post merger changes. This option will be revisited by both partners during 2015-16.
- 2.5 University of Edinburgh's recent internal audit of Business Continuity indicated that the college has a comprehensive Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Policy, Procedure and Plan which were approved by Audit Committee and Board of Directors and are periodically reviewed.
- 2.6 The financial strategy for Newbattle Abbey College in 2014-15 focussed on financial security. This remains challenging as no regular grant support is currently available for the maintenance and upkeep of the college's 125 acre heritage estate and main house. Diversification of income to strengthen financial stability was a key objective for 2014-15 and commercial activities developed to support the college's core activities.

The partnership with OSCARS International was expanded during 2014-15 to include an off- season international language contract as well as a Summer School. These contracts occupied 5,200+ bed spaces and delivered 13,300+ meals, representing 18% of the college's annual income for 2014-15.

The development of a college business plan and estates strategy, in partnership with the College Trustees, commenced in November 2014 with initial support and advice from the SFC Further Education Directorate (FED). This included a full condition survey of the main house and residences, which was undertaken by Simpson & Brown Architects in summer 2015. Options for wider estate development will be explored in partnership with the College Trustees and Midlothian Council during 2015-16.

The college annual turnover 2014-15 was £1.4 m. The Scottish Funding Council provided 42% of this income through recurrent grant support for the development and delivery of the curriculum. The college supplemented its income by utilising the estate for commercial purposes.

Newbattle Abbey College received £765,123 from the Scottish Funding Council for AY 2014-15, to plan and deliver further and higher education (recurrent grant £486,951; bursary/ student support £278,172). An additional £180,000 grant funding was awarded for piloting two new national certificate courses. Celtic Studies was also offered as a SWAP course at Level 6. The college also received funding directed through Queen Margaret University for associate student places/ advance standing articulating students.

### 3.0 Right Learning in the Right Place

2014-15 was a period of significant expansion in the college's portfolio of courses. 6 full-time courses and 1 part-time course were offered as detailed below:

- 1 year full-time Access to Higher Education: Arts & Humanities
- 1 year full-time Access to HE/NC: Celtic Studies
- 1 year full-time HNC Social Sciences - Associate Student Programme with Queen Margaret University
- 1 year full-time NC Rural Skills
- 6 month full-time Preparation for FE Course
- 16 week full-time NC Rural Skills, in partnership with Scotland's Rural University College (SRUC)
- 1 year part-time NC Rural Skills Course

Total SFC funded activity delivered in session 2014-15 was 1,460 WSUMS. The college exceeded its activity target of 1,392 WSUMS by 68 WSUMS (5%). Full-time FE represented 100% of SUMS at the college in 2014-15. Almost all part-time provision was funded by other sources outwith SFC.

Actual enrolments against targets for AY 2014-15 are shown below:

Course	Target	Actual student Enrolments	Completed Successfully
Arts & Humanities	45	41 (91%)	67%
HNC Social Sciences	10	18 (+180%)	78%
NC Rural Skills	15	16 (106%)	94%
HE/NC Celtic Studies	15	6 (40%)	100%
Prep for FE	12	10 (84%)	80%

This shows that recruitment for Celtic Studies pilot course did not reach target. This was due in part to a short lead in time between funding approval and course start date.

The student age balance for 2012-15 was as follows:

Age	Proportion of learners		
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Under 16	3%	0%	0%
16-19	16%	22%	28%
20-25	37%	27%	28%
26-40	27%	30%	22%
41 and over	17%	22%	23%

The proportion of students aged 16-19 has increased and now matches the proportion aged 20-25, with these age groups representing more than half of all students. The remaining students are evenly split between 26-40 and the 41 and over age groups.

The student gender balance for 2012-2015 was as follows:

Gender	Proportion of learners		
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Male	62%	73%	60%
Female	38%	27%	40%

In each of the last three years, the majority of students at the college were male. In 2014-15 60% were male, the smallest majority in the last three years.

#### 4.0 High Quality & Efficient Learning

The AEV by Education Scotland took place in December 2014. The following observations were made:

- The college is developing its curriculum to widen access to a broader range of learners in line with current Government policy, whilst staying true to its heritage and core purpose.
- The college balances its local responsibility well with the responsibilities of a national college.
- College leavers continue to have a high rate of progression to higher level programmes, university and employment.
- The college works extremely well with a broad range of partners to meet the needs of its learners and community very effectively.

The college has a quality programme involving all Staff Teams. This includes annually two cross-college Quality Days and an additional Quality Day for the Learning & Teaching Team. These events involve reviewing progress with the college Outcome Agreement and Operational Plan; preparing a progress report related to Education Scotland AEV; preparing for curriculum developments; updating staff on equality and diversity legislation; reviewing self-evaluation action plans. Self-evaluation is at the heart of all college activities involving SMT, college teams and committees, Board, students and a range of external stakeholders.

In 2014-15:

- 77% of full-time FE students completed their programme successfully. This is the highest success rate at the college in the last three years.

- 82% of full-time HE students completed their programme successfully.

In consultation with the equality & Diversity Committee, the SMT continued to involve a consultant to assist in conducting Impact Assessments of a range of college policies relating to equality and diversity. This resulted in the enhanced promotion of equality and diversity in the curriculum, in several policies and in cross-college practices. The involvement of students in this process was extended in February 2015 in class-based activities. In addition the college website, all course information and all promotional materials were reviewed and updated in line with equality legislation.

## 5.0 Developing the Workforce

As detailed at 3.0 above, the college ran full-time and part-time NC Rural Skills courses which provided skills and employability training. These courses were offered in response to the Developing Scotland's Young Workforce initiative.

The Newbattle Abbey Business Park is also part of the college portfolio, involving 38 SME's with approximately 170 employees.

## 6.0 2015-16 Budget and Future Forecasts

6.1 The 2014-15 Annual Accounts indicate a small surplus of £30,000. The 2015-16 and 2016-17 budgets show a break even position against an indicative budget of £1.45m. This budget was presented to the Audit Committee and Board of Directors in June 2015.

## 6.2 Curriculum

The 2015-16 session is progressing well with recruitment as follows:

Course	Target	Enrolments
Access to HE: Arts & Humanities	40	37
HNC Social Sciences	10	12
Access to HE/NC: Celtic Studies	15	8
NC Rural Skills	15	18

Future Plans include:

- To establish Newbattle Abbey College as a national strategic centre for adult learning building on our remit as Scotland's adult education college and the national awarding body for the National Adult Achievement Awards. A business plan will be developed post pilot to sustain the delivery of the awards.
- To enhance the Rural Skills specialism by developing the partnership with SRUC and other external stakeholders.
- To extend access to HE for adults from areas of deprivation by building on the existing Arts & Humanities and HNC
- Explore opportunities to develop additional HN courses in partnership with HE institutions
- To actively seek HE partner for long term development of curriculum
- To develop provision to meet local needs in collaboration with local agencies and Community Planning Partnerships. This includes programmes to implement the Edinburgh region City Deal in partnership with Midlothian Council.

- To promote and consolidate the Gaelic language and culture agenda in south-east Scotland in partnership with Sabhal Mor Ostaig and other agencies.

### 6.3 Estate

The college will continue to prioritise financial security as a strategic objective. This remains challenging as no regular grant support is currently available for the maintenance and upkeep of the college heritage estate.

The College Board and Trustees recognise the importance of planning carefully for the future. Plans to invest in the college estate and buildings including student residences are progressing well and external stakeholders including Midlothian Council and Forestry Commission Scotland are fully engaged in this process.

A full estate Condition Survey was undertaken during 2014-15 and is currently informing the development of a College Business Plan, including an estate strategy, which will be considered by College Trustees and Board in January 2016.