



A subject-based aspect report on provision in Scotland's colleges by HM Inspectors on behalf of the Scottish Funding Council



Sport and leisure
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Introduction

The HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) publication, *External quality arrangements for Scotland's colleges, September 2008*, specifies that HMIE will produce a number of subject aspect reports over the four years 2008- 12. These reports complement in a subject-specific context the generic evaluations of learning and teaching in HMIE's reports of colleges. Colleges should act on the recommendations contained in these reports. College inspectors will monitor action towards implementation of these recommendations as part of their normal dialogue with colleges and will wish to discuss issues arising from subject aspect reports during annual engagement visits.

In preparing this report, inspectors visited a sample of eight colleges, drew on the findings of published HMIE external reviews of colleges and examined other relevant publications and reports. They consulted with key stakeholders, including college staff, learners, employers and professional bodies.

This report evaluates college programmes which lead to vocational qualifications in sports or sport-related industries, offered at levels 4 to 8 of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

Methodology

Each college in the sample of eight was visited twice during the fieldwork. Inspectors observed learning and teaching and discussed issues with staff and learners. The views of a wide range of stakeholders were obtained through face-to-face and telephone interviews. In a number of colleges, areas for development identified by inspectors during the first visit had been addressed by college managers and teaching staff by the time of the second visit. For example, in more than a few colleges, initial visits indicated that teaching staff were not sufficiently aware of national educational strategies including *Reaching Higher*¹, *Healthy Scotland*², and *Curriculum for Excellence*³. Most of these colleges had addressed this by the second visit by inspectors. Where scheduling of activities did not provide an appropriate mix between practical and theory classes, most teaching teams had revised and improved their arrangements by the final visit. A list of the colleges visited for the report may be found in Appendix 1.

This aspect report evaluates current practice and identifies important areas for discussion and further development amongst practitioners. It identifies excellent practice found by HM Inspectors and sets out recommendations for improvement.

¹ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/03/07105145/13>

² <http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/>

³ <http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/>

Sport and leisure provision in Scotland's colleges is characterised by many strengths:

Planning of provision

Strengths

- In almost all colleges, staff work together productively to plan provision to meet the needs of learners and the sports and leisure industry.
- Most sport and leisure departments provide appropriate progression pathways from introductory through to higher education (HE) level programmes.
- All colleges have developed responsive strategies to meet the needs of individuals, communities and employers.

However,

- The majority of teaching staff are not sufficiently conversant with current national educational strategies including, *Healthy Scotland* and *Curriculum for Excellence* to be able to contribute fully to meeting the requirements of these strategies.
- Most programme teams do not have sufficient links with physical education teachers in secondary schools to be able to inform and update them about the types of sports and leisure programmes colleges offer.
- Employers and sport organisations regard Scottish/National Governing Body (S/NGB) awards as a prerequisite for employment in the sport and leisure industry. These awards incur additional costs for colleges and funding arrangements are not sufficiently responsive to support and facilitate accreditation of these awards.

Learning and teaching

Strengths

- Almost all teaching staff are very highly motivated, enthusiastic about their subject and are committed to meeting the needs of learners. They establish very positive and productive relationships with learners and work hard to provide them with a rich, relevant and engaging learner experience.
- Most staff have a teaching qualification and have attained accreditation for their performance in an individual sport. Almost all are actively involved in their sport specialism(s) as performers or coaches.
- Most programme teams are very learner centred and apply responsive and creative approaches to meet the needs of their learners.

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- Almost all staff make good use of their links with employers and S/NGBs, and their deep and current knowledge of their specific sport, when planning programmes.
 - Almost all teaching staff use a wide range of appropriate and responsive learning and teaching approaches to meet different types of learner needs.
 - Staff have very positive and productive relationships with learners and support them well during their programme.
 - Almost all learners are involved in wider sports, college and community activities which provide new challenges, increase confidence and develop vocational and transferable skills.
 - In most colleges, the learning environments for both practical and classroom-based activities are of a very high standard.

However,

- More than a few programme teams do not take sufficient account of sequencing of activities to provide an appropriate balance between classroom and practical activities.
- Too many programme teams do not place sufficient importance on, and do not take sufficient responsibility for, the development of core skills and other aspects of programmes which are delivered by staff from other subject areas.
- In more than a few theory classes, learning and teaching approaches are outdated and insufficiently engaging.
- The majority of sports staff do not use information and communications technology (ICT) and interactive resources sufficiently and effectively to enhance or improve the learning and teaching process.
- Most further education (FE) programme teams do not take sufficient account of the requirements of HE programmes when planning programmes.
- Individual learning plans and arrangements for maintaining them are too often mechanistic and not sufficiently relevant or engaging to be of value to learners
- In a few colleges, the environments used for delivering theory classes are of poor quality and do not have appropriate access to ICT and interactive resources.

Outcomes and impact

Strengths

- Learners gain confidence, independence, and skills for learning, life and work through their programme and their significant involvement in wider college, sports and community activities.
- Many learners on *sports academy programmes* achieve national success in their individual sports.
- Almost all learners gain valuable citizenship and employability skills through their involvement in work-based activities, volunteering and coaching.
- Learners gain useful communication and citizenship skills through leading and facilitating sport activities for people who have additional barriers to learning, disabilities or restricted mobility.
- Almost all learners develop responsibility and self-discipline and increase and extend their fitness and endurance levels.
- Almost all learners make very good progress from prior learning, extend their knowledge and skills and improve their sports performance.
- Almost all learners progress successfully to further learning or employment and most progress to employment related to the sport and leisure industry or uniformed services.
- Many young school leavers, particularly those requiring more choices or more chances, successfully complete their programmes. Some learners attain formal qualifications for the first time.
- Almost all learners achieve skills and attain qualifications and awards which are valued by employers.

Enhancement through self-evaluation and internal review

Strengths

- Within most programme and departmental teams, there is a strong culture of working together to enhance and improve provision continuously.
- Most programme teams review their programmes conscientiously and are proactive in identifying and addressing areas requiring action to enhance and improve the quality of provision.

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- Almost all programme teams and individual staff engage well in evaluating the effectiveness of learning and teaching approaches.
 - Almost all programme teams have established effective processes to engage learners in evaluating the quality of their learning experience.
 - Within programme teams, almost all sports staff proactively and regularly share and adopt effective practice in learning and teaching.

However,

- Most programme teams do not analyse sufficiently the attendance, retention and attainment patterns across all units of programmes, and in particular those delivered by other subject areas.
- Most programme teams do not involve employers and key stakeholders systematically enough in their evaluation processes.
- A few staff are resistant to exploring new or other learning and teaching approaches, and do not participate sufficiently in reviewing and updating their skills and approaches.
- Sharing of effective practice by sports staff with other college departments is not sufficiently widespread. This results in missed opportunities for colleges to harness and extend the many approaches applied by sports staff which exemplify the spirit and principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- Overall, there is a lack of opportunity for college sport and leisure teaching staff across Scotland to share and extend good practice.

The national strategy for sport - *Reaching Higher: building on the success of Sport 21* - articulates Scottish Government's vision to make Scotland:

A country where sport is more widely available to all; a country where sporting talent is recognised and nurtured; and a country achieving and sustaining world-class performances in sport.

The national agency for sport in Scotland, *sportscotland* sets out in its corporate plan 2009- 2011 how its principles, priorities and outcomes contribute to meeting that vision. Its publication, *The Potential of Sport* explains how sport has the potential to contribute to each of Scotland's strategic objectives of a wealthier and fairer, smarter, healthier, safer and stronger, greener Scotland. This publication also illustrates how sport can be captured and included in Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) as part of the Concordat between central and local government.

Curriculum for Excellence opens up opportunities for learners to participate and perform at their highest level in sport and, if interested, pursue careers in the health and leisure industries.⁴ In addition, *Curriculum for Excellence* presents opportunities for sports staff in colleges to work with their colleagues in other subject areas to help promote health and wellbeing across the curriculum. The *Scotland's Colleges Sport* report⁵ of December 2009 reinforced the role of Scotland's colleges in contributing to this wider agenda:

Colleges should recognise the importance of sport and physical activity for their students, staff and community. This is not generally a priority for colleges; however the health and wellbeing component of the Curriculum for Excellence will be a timely driver that heightens the importance of this area.

The report calls for sport and physical activity to be highlighted specifically in college plans, and for sport and physical activity to be integrated into the planning by colleges for the health and wellbeing component of the *Curriculum for Excellence* by 2010-11.

In the run up to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games and the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, Scotland's colleges have an important role to play in preparing for and contributing to these events and to the Commonwealth Games legacy plan which aims to create a healthier Scotland through *Active Nation*,⁶ the Scottish Government's physical activity programme. As part of the preparation for the forthcoming games, the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) has recently developed a National Progression Award (NPA) in *sporting events: personal best* (SCQF level 4) which covers a range of aspects relating to volunteering within a sporting context.

⁴ <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/index.asp>

⁵ <http://www.susport.org.uk/collegesport.asp>

⁶ <http://www.ouractivenation.co.uk/>

*SkillsActive*⁷, the sector skills council for active leisure, learning and wellbeing (which includes sport and recreation, health and fitness, playwork and the outdoors) produced a report titled *Sector Skills Assessment for Scotland (February 2010)*⁸ which describes the current and future skills priorities for the sport and leisure sectors in Scotland. It promotes the role of SCQF to aid understanding in the comparison of qualifications and highlights five skills priorities which are to: improve recruitment (to working in the sector) and retention; professionalise and up-skill the existing workforce; match training supply to employer demand; source funding for training; and increase sector investment (in the workforce). These priorities will be of relevance to colleges that contribute significantly to the sport and leisure industries.



⁷ <http://www.skillsactive.com/>

⁸ www.alliancescotland.org/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.aspx?IID=960&sID

Thirty-six of the 43 colleges in Scotland deliver sport and leisure programmes. Around 20 of these colleges deliver significant levels of provision⁹ which provide opportunities for learners to gain skills and knowledge to progress to employment or further study in the sports industry. A few colleges also offer highly specialised sports programmes aimed at developing professional competence in an individual sport. These programmes attract learners from other parts of the United Kingdom and from overseas. Some colleges also provide sport and fitness programmes which focus on preparation for entry to uniformed services.

The titles of sport and leisure programmes vary across colleges. However, as a guide they generally fall into the following categories:

- **Sports coaching (with development of sport):** focusing on work in sports coaching, sports development and recreation industries;
- **Fitness, health and exercise:** providing a broad experience of sports, health and fitness industries;
- **Sports therapy:** focusing on work with athletes in sports clinics;
- **Sport and recreation management:** focusing on management skills for work within a sporting context;
- **Outdoor pursuits:** focusing on work in outdoor recreational facilities;
- **Preparation for uniformed services:** increasing fitness levels and preparing learners for selection and entry to uniformed services, such as police or army; and
- **Sports science:** focusing on work with athletes performing at elite levels.

Most college programmes consist of SQA units and often include other awards. Colleges which offer a significant range of sport and leisure programmes generally deliver programmes ranging from SCQF levels 4 to 8. Most programmes are offered on a full-time basis and include introductory level FE programmes (SCQF levels 4 to 6) and advanced level HE provision (SCQF levels 7 and 8). A few colleges offer degree programmes. However, most of the colleges also provide flexible opportunities for learners to study part-time, including undertaking Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) in the workplace. Learners successfully completing Higher National Diploma (HND) programmes have the opportunity to progress to year 2 or 3 of a relevant degree programme in Sports Coaching, Sport and Physical Activity or Sports Science at a college or university.

There are over 50 Scottish sport S/NGBs operating in Scotland. These are individual organisations which govern and administer a specific sport and are described by *sportscotland* as the guardians and custodians of their sport. These include well-known governing bodies such as the *Scottish Football Association (SFA)*, *Scottish Swimming* and *Fitness Scotland*. S/NGBs provide formal

⁹ Colleges delivering more than 2,000 SUMS of sport and leisure provision.

accreditation of achievement of a wide range of skills related to their particular sport such as coaching, fitness instruction and performance. Within colleges, most FE and the majority of HE level programmes include S/NGB awards in addition to SQA units to provide learners with the qualifications currently required for working within the sports and leisure industry.

Many programmes involve learners participating in and contributing to national sports projects and initiatives at a local level. These include *Active Schools* which is led by *sportscotland* and aims to give all children and young people the motivation and opportunity to 'get active' and develops pathways to continue their participation in sport outwith school. Learners carry out a range of activities, including coaching school pupils, promoting sport and physical activity and organising events. The recently formed *Scottish Colleges Sport*, which was established in November 2009 as an arm of *Scottish Universities Sport*, is providing greater opportunities for learners to compete and demonstrate their skills at national level.¹⁰



¹⁰ <http://www.susport.org.uk/collegesport.asp>

Planning of provision

In almost all colleges, staff work together productively to plan provision to meet the needs of learners and the sport and leisure industry. Most colleges have effective strategies and arrangements in place to ensure provision provides appropriate opportunities for learners to access programmes suitable to their skill and performance levels and aspirations. Most sport and leisure departments provide appropriate progression pathways from introductory and access programmes (SCQF level 4) through to HND programmes (SCQF level 8) and to further learning.

All colleges have developed responsive strategies to meet the needs of individuals, communities and employers. These include partnerships with S/NGBs and links with schools, local authorities and private leisure providers. Curriculum managers and teaching staff have developed very strong and productive links with employers and use this to good effect to plan and arrange provision. Almost all colleges have been successful in establishing effective links and arrangements with their local authority leisure and education departments to provide placements and contribute to initiatives such as *Active Schools*.

Most college managers and some teaching staff take good account of national educational strategies when planning provision. However, overall, the majority of teaching staff are not sufficiently conversant with current national educational strategies including, *Healthy Scotland* and *Curriculum for Excellence* to be able to contribute fully to meeting these strategies. Most sport and leisure staff teams have not considered sufficiently the potential contribution they could make to assist their college in meeting the health and wellbeing aspect of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

Across all colleges, staff place a strong emphasis on consulting with S/NGBs and employers to identify their projected sport and industry needs, and staff teams make good use of this when planning provision. A few colleges have rebranded sport and leisure as a subject area to link better with industry and convey a more holistic approach to life, health and wellbeing. These approaches show early indications of providing a helpful platform for implementing *Curriculum for Excellence*. Some colleges have created roles and employed staff to promote and coordinate sport and fitness activities across the wider college and local communities. Many colleges make fitness suites and exercise classes available to the wider college population and the general public. All these approaches have raised the profile of sport and fitness within colleges and their local communities.

Due to the wide range and types of sport-related programmes, college staff take good care to inform potential learners and key stakeholders about the differences between programmes. However, most programme teams do not have sufficient links with physical education teachers in secondary schools to be able to inform and update them about the types of sports and leisure programmes colleges offer. This reduces opportunities for school and college staff to collaborate in the planning for

progression from school to college programmes as part of the senior phase of *Curriculum for Excellence*. On full-time programmes, there is a considerable disparity between the number of male learners in comparison to female. Across FE level programmes, approximately only one in four learners are female and at HE level only one in three.

Employers and sport organisations regard S/NGB awards as a prerequisite for employment in the sport and leisure industry. However, these awards incur additional costs and funding arrangements are not sufficiently responsive to support and facilitate accreditation of these awards. This creates a tension between the types of qualifications demanded by employers and the qualifications colleges are currently funded to deliver. This presents significant challenges for colleges in terms of incurring additional costs and in timetabling additional activities to enable learners to undertake and attain S/NGB awards to improve their employment opportunities.



Edinburgh's Telford College: Partnership working to maximise the learner experience: Centre of Excellence for Sports Performance

Sports staff at Edinburgh's Telford College recognised that young athletes from 16 to 22 years of age, who are talented in an individual sport, find it difficult to balance and coordinate their sports training around their broader educational commitments such as a full-time sports programme, or Highers programme. To address this, the team decided to create a Centre of Excellence for Sports Performance to provide opportunities for these young people to develop and extend their performance in sport whilst maintaining other college learning. They also identified a need to incorporate preparation for progression to the Scottish Institute of Sport.

College staff discussed their idea with relevant S/NGBs who worked with the college to establish a Centre of Excellence for Sports Performance Partnership to take forward the idea. These included Snowsport Scotland, Cricket Scotland, Scottish Rugby Union, and the Scottish Football Association. A planning team, consisting of athletes selected by S/NGBs, coaches and college staff, worked together to design a programme which integrates sports performance and S/NGB elements with broader educational aspects of full-time sports or Highers programmes.

In the partnership, S/NGB staff deliver the sport skill components of the programme and college staff deliver strength and conditioning elements, nutrition, sports psychology and sports rehabilitation alongside the other educational components. A programme team consisting of all staff involved in the delivery of the programme meets regularly to monitor the progress and performance of learners, and to ensure individual athlete needs are supported throughout the year.

The athletes, coaches, S/NGBs and college staff have identified significant advances in athlete performance as a result of the programme. In the two years of the programme, seven athletes have gained full-time contracts with Hibernian Football Club. Three cricketers have gained places in the Scottish cricket team, Saltires, and two others have been selected for the National Academy. Two athletes have gained places on the Scottish Football Association girls' football under-19 team. Three athletes have been selected to the Scotland rugby league team and three to the under-20 six nations team. Four athletes have been chosen for the Scottish Alpine Team and the GB Junior Team.

Since the conception of the Centre of Excellence for Sports Performance, effective partnership working has provided valuable opportunities for young people to be able to develop their individual sports performance whilst undertaking broader learning. Other sports bodies are in discussion with the college to extend provision to support young athletes in judo and athletics.

Planning learning and teaching

Almost all sport and leisure staff are very highly motivated, enthusiastic about their subject and are committed to meeting the needs of their learners. They work well together in their programme teams to plan programmes which provide learners with a wide range of relevant learning experiences which prepare them well for progression to employment or further learning.

Almost all staff have relevant, current professional experience and knowledge of their subject and the industry. They apply this experience and knowledge effectively to plan programmes and to enthuse and engage learners. Most staff hold a Teaching Qualification in FE (TQFE) or equivalent. Many have attained formal recognition of their performance in an individual sport, such as *British Association of Snowsport Instructors* (BASi) and are accredited by S/NGBs to deliver awards. Almost all full-time and most part-time staff participate regularly in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities to update their vocational skills and improve and enhance their learning and teaching approaches. Many teaching staff are actively involved in their individual sport specialism as performers or coaches and draw enthusiastically on their ongoing experiences and involvement in their specific sport to plan up-to-date, relevant and realistic learning experiences.

Most programme teams are very learner centred and apply responsive and creative approaches to meet the needs of their learners. They generally take very good account of the starting levels of learners when planning programmes. Many staff teams design introductory and access FE level programmes carefully to enable learners to achieve the appropriate levels of knowledge, vocational, core or essential skills required for successful progression to employment or further learning. However, the standards expected on HE programmes, particularly in relation to writing and research skills, present difficulties for many learners progressing from FE level programmes. In most colleges, FE programme teams do not take sufficient account of the requirements of HE programmes when planning the curriculum of FE level programmes. This inhibits progression and ease of transition to more advanced learning.

The majority of programme teams take care to plan and sequence activities to meet the needs and interest levels of learners. However, more than a few programme teams do not take sufficient account of sequencing of activities to provide an appropriate mix and balance between classroom and practical activities.

In most colleges, staff teams work well together to plan learning activities and link theory with the practical elements of programmes. Within a few programme teams, vocational, communication, numeracy and ICT staff collaborate effectively to plan, contextualise and link core skill elements of programmes to practical activities. However, too many programme teams do not place sufficient importance on, and do not take sufficient responsibility for, development of core skills and other aspects of programmes which are delivered by staff from other subject areas.

Some subject staff work proactively and collaboratively with staff in other areas of the college, including learning centres and learning support, to plan activities to

enhance and enrich the college experience for learners. However, the majority of sports staff do not engage sufficiently with staff in other college departments in planning activities to further enhance the wider college experience.

Almost all staff have regular and productive contact with employers, representatives and staff from S/NGBs and make good use of these links to keep up to date with the priorities, issues, needs and developments of sport and sport-related industries. Many individual staff and programme teams draw effectively on their links with S/NGBs and employers to inform curriculum planning and programme design. This is further enhanced by the deep and current knowledge and understanding staff have of their specific sport or industry.

Programme teams make very effective use of internal and external opportunities to plan activities which develop and extend the skills of learners. These include volunteering, working with different community groups, organising sports events, and participating in fieldtrips and residential experiences. Most staff incorporate useful work placements and work shadowing activities which provide valuable experience of the industry and develop skills for employment. Many sports departments provide public access to fitness suites and exercise classes, and staff involve learners in administering, coordinating and delivering activities to provide them with realistic vocational experiences. Staff make effective use of inter-college and specific sport competitions at area and national level to provide learners with wider sport-related experiences which motivate and improve performance. These activities are very effective in developing teamwork, improving individual performance and consolidating wider skills.

Across all programmes, staff teams devise and incorporate activities and projects effectively to promote equality, diversity and fairness. Programme teams regularly plan activities which require learners to lead and facilitate sports activities for people who have additional barriers to learning, disabilities or restricted mobility.

All programme teams plan and integrate opportunities for learners to review their progress and plan further goals. The arrangements for most learners to discuss their progress with staff are well matched to the needs of individual learner groups and programmes. However, for a few learners these arrangements are not sufficiently scheduled and structured to provide meaningful dialogue and do not focus sufficiently on progression.

In most colleges, the learning environments for both practical and classroom-based activities are of a very high standard. Staff make good use of off-site facilities and community venues to enrich and contextualise learning and strengthen citizenship and employability skills. However, in a few colleges the environments used for delivering non-practical activities, particularly theory classes, are of poor quality and do not have appropriate access to ICT and interactive resources. This reduces the capacity of staff to engage learners fully and productively in learning activities.

Perth College: Involving HE learners in increasing the aspirations of FE learners

Through programme review processes, the sports team at Perth College identified that learners on FE level sports and leisure programmes did not have clear knowledge of the content, requirements and standards of more advanced programmes. They recognised that particularly at the start of programmes, this inhibited the motivation and aspirations of learners to work towards more advanced levels of study in sports. Simultaneously, the HE sports team had identified at their programme review meetings a need to provide learners on HE programmes with more opportunities to use their skills to plan, coordinate and deliver sports events.

The sports teams worked together to identify ways of addressing these needs and collectively devised Sports Superstar which combines approaches to meet the different needs of FE and HE learners. Sports Superstar is an event which takes place in autumn and spring and which is planned, coordinated and delivered by HE learners. The event is held in Perth and Kinross Leisure Centre and HE learners design, plan and deliver a series of sports challenges to FE learners and staff. They also invite partner agencies and potential employers.

Prior to planning the events, HE learners are provided with a project brief which stipulates criteria, including incorporating individual, paired and team challenges and the types of skills FE learners and staff will be expected to develop during the event. These skills include teamwork, confidence, motivation, citizenship and employability.

HE learners work in teams and lead each of the challenges and apply coaching skills and knowledge gained from their programme to demonstrate their proficiency in leading and facilitating sports activities. They use digital cameras to record evidence of their activities. At the end of the event, they are provided with constructive feedback from learner and staff participants about their approach and performance. Teaching staff use the processes involved in planning and delivering the event to assess HE learners in the planning and coaching components of their programmes. The Sport Superstar events provide a range of benefits for learners. FE learners are able to meet and work with HE learners and learn more about advanced level programmes. HE learners develop and apply their event planning and coaching skills to create and deliver a real event. All sports and leisure learners are able to meet employers and representatives from partnership and sports agencies and welcome the opportunity for the entire sports team and learners to work together for the benefit of all.

Delivering learning and teaching

Almost all learners are very positive about their programme and enjoy their college experience. They enjoy and value their interaction with staff, participate well in learning activities and show interest and enthusiasm in their subject. Teaching staff establish very positive and productive relationships with learners and work hard to provide them with a rich, relevant and engaging learner experience. Overall, they are approachable, encouraging and supportive, and take time to personalise and tailor learning activities to meet individual and group needs. They plan lessons well and take good account of the needs of individual learners.

Staff generally provide learners with appropriate levels of challenge. However, in a few FE classes, staff do not encourage more competent learners sufficiently to extend their learning. For most learners, the pace of learning is well judged and staff provide good opportunities for learners to practise and consolidate their skills before moving on to more challenging tasks and activities. They make good use of class discussions and project work to engage learners in learning from and with each other about topics related to their programmes and wider learning experiences.

Sports staff delivering practical classes such as coaching skills, team sports and fitness classes, plan and deliver lessons effectively. They incorporate regular and ongoing opportunities for learners to reflect on and analyse their individual and team performance, and consistently encourage and support learner achievement and progression. This creates a very positive and constructive learning environment where learners and staff feel able to analyse and discuss together the effectiveness of their approaches. However, in more than a few classes, staff do not take sufficient time to introduce and explain the purpose and outcomes of the lesson at the start of classes. In these classes, some learners are less participative and do not engage fully in learning activities.

Almost all sports staff use a wide range of appropriate and responsive learning and teaching approaches to meet different types of learner needs. In almost all practical classes, staff take care to contextualise activities and present learners with real-life scenarios related to the industry and subject area. These approaches are highly motivating and enriching for learners. However, in more than a few theory classes, learning and teaching approaches are outdated and not sufficiently engaging. The majority of sports staff do not use ICT or interactive resources sufficiently or effectively to enhance or improve the learning and teaching process.

A few subject specialists and teachers of *communication*, *numeracy* and *ICT* work well together to contextualise learning and link activities to broader programme aims and themes. This encourages learners to respond well to vibrant, relevant learning activities which build their confidence and extend their learning and employment skills. This is particularly helpful for learners who have weak literacy and/or numeracy skills at the start of their programme or who have previous negative experiences of learning. However, in the majority of programmes, there is insufficient collaboration between sports and core skills staff which often results in these elements of programmes being insufficiently relevant or engaging for learners.

In most classes, teaching staff set high and appropriate standards and convey them consistently and effectively to learners. They take good account of the standards expected within different types of sport contexts such as the expected fitness levels required at club, national and international levels. Staff teaching on preparation for uniformed services programmes communicate effectively the standards applied and expected for working within organisations such as the army and fire and rescue service. However, in more than a few classes at FE level, staff do not set sufficiently high standards in relation to timekeeping and attendance.

Guidance and support

Most sports departments host a range of useful events and information sessions to enable learners to learn first-hand about the programme options available to them. Many staff design and apply appropriate selection and recruitment approaches to help learners make informed programme choices. However, for a few learners, recruitment processes do not provide sufficient opportunity to learn from staff about the content and level of programmes. At the start of programmes, most staff teams vigilantly monitor and further assess the sports performance, fitness and core skill levels of learners. They draw on these processes responsively and effectively to ensure learners are placed on appropriate types and levels of programmes.

All colleges have effective procedures in place to support learners with additional support needs. Teaching staff and learners have good access to equipment and specialist resources and expertise to support learners with additional requirements. Staff make appropriate arrangements to provide an inclusive learning experience for learners from overseas. Colleges which attract high numbers of learners from other countries make good arrangements to support and integrate these learners within the college and wider community.

In all colleges, learners create individual learning plans in which they identify their personal learning goals, record their progress and chart their achievements. However, the quality and value of learning plans and related processes are variable. In a few colleges, staff have devised effective learning planning tools and approaches to engage learners in making improvements in their learning and sports performance. In these colleges, many learners use learning planning processes productively to motivate themselves, plan and adjust their learning and sport performance goals and extend their aspirations. Staff also draw on these activities to engage learners in discussing their progress and wider achievements, exploring options and refining their individual targets. However, in too many cases individual learning plans, and the arrangements for involving learners in initiating, maintaining and using these plans, are mechanistic and not sufficiently relevant or engaging to be of value to learners.

Staff have very positive and productive relationships with learners and support them well during their programme. In almost all programmes, learners have scheduled one-to-one meetings with a member of staff to discuss their progress and plan next steps. However, most learners feel able to discuss with staff any issues which may affect their progress or sports performance at any point in their programme. During programmes, staff provide learners with relevant and useful advice and information

about employment and further learning opportunities. In most colleges, staff arrange presentations from universities, S/NGBs and employers to help learners make more informed choices about their further learning and career options in sport and sport-related industries.



Edinburgh's Telford College: Engaging learners in planning and reflecting on their overall learning and sports performance

The sports team in Edinburgh's Telford College recognised that individual learning plans and associated processes did not take sufficient account of the wider needs and aspirations of learners on sports and leisure programmes. For many learners, success in an individual sport at club or national level is a key goal alongside attaining qualifications and employment in the sports industry. Staff recognised that for learners to achieve high performance in sport, successfully complete their college programme and gain the types and levels of skills required for employment or further learning, they need to be able to plan their sports training and learning effectively. To support this, staff devised Reflective Logs to enable learners to plan and reflect on their sports performance goals, learning and wider skills simultaneously.

A Reflective Log was created for each individual sports programme and each one is tailored and contextualised to reflect the specific characteristics and expected outcomes of the programme. The logs identify the levels of performance in sports, vocational and core skills learners should achieve by the end of their programme. Learners identify their individual sport performance aspirations at the start of programmes and set targets to achieve them, taking account of their programme and assessment requirements. As a result, they are able to schedule their training to fit in with, and complement, their learning commitments. The Reflective Logs include essential skills and specify the types and levels of personal and learning skills learners are required to demonstrate and apply at different points of their programme.

As learners progress through programme levels, the Reflective Logs place incrementally greater demands on their ability to take responsibility for their own training and learning, and development of wider skills. For example, the Reflective Log used by a learner on a higher national (HN) level programme conveys higher expectations of learners' abilities to self reflect, evaluate, understand and communicate compared to the log used by a learner on a national qualification (NQ) programme. This approach prepares learners well for the demands of the next level of programme and therefore eases transition to further learning.

Learners use their Reflective Logs on a daily and weekly basis to chart their achievements, reflect on their performance and set further goals. This provides learners with a clear picture of where they are at any stage in their programme in relation to meeting their individual and programme goals. Learners review and discuss their Reflective Logs regularly with staff and work together to plan strategies to improve performance and plan for progression.

The Reflective Logs are an integral part of all sport and leisure programmes. The holistic approach of combining sports performance with learning and wider skills encourages learners to view each of these components as having parity of esteem. As a result, learners take greater responsibility for achieving in each of these areas and learn to plan, prioritise and balance their activities effectively to meet their aspirations. This prepares them well for adapting to further learning, working and performing in the sports industry.

Learner engagement

In almost all sport and sport-related classes, learners are engaged and motivated in their learning. They participate well in learning activities and show interest and enthusiasm in developing their skills and learning about sports and sports-related industries. They respond well to individual and team challenges and support each other well in learning activities. Learners who were previously disengaged from learning, particularly those requiring more choices and more chances, respond very well to their programme and participate well in college activities.

All colleges have well-established systems in place to enable learners to reflect on their progress. In programmes involving coaching and demonstration of skills, learners reflect in depth on their skills and approaches, and use this to very good effect to improve their performance. They enjoy and participate actively in sharing their experience of real-life work practice with staff and their peers, and make good use of these discussions to widen their knowledge of the industry. Almost all learners make very effective use of a range of peer review processes, including working in pairs, small groups and teams to develop their reflective and critical skills. Through these activities, they increase their confidence in working with others and in conveying their views.

Almost all learners are involved in wider sports, college and community activities, including mentoring and volunteering, which provide new challenges, increase confidence and develop transferable skills. The nature of many of the programmes involves participating in competitions outwith class times, including evenings and weekends. Learners participate actively and enthusiastically in these activities and in competitive inter-college and national sports events such as those organised by *Scottish Colleges Sport*.

Most learners do not access college learning resources outwith classes to further enhance and extend their learning. The majority of staff do not encourage learners sufficiently to utilise these resources to broaden their knowledge and increase their independence and confidence in learning.

North Glasgow College: Engaging learners in providing real-time feedback on their college experience

Sports staff at North Glasgow College recognised many of the learners on sports and leisure programmes did not participate fully in activities to convey their views on what works well in their programme and what could work better. They identified a need to involve learners more systematically and productively in evaluating the quality of their learning experience. As the college was reviewing and formulating strategies to support and enhance learner engagement, sports staff identified an opportunity to consider the types of approaches which would encourage learners to take part in these activities. In discussions with learners, they identified that using ICT, enabling learners to contribute their feedback anonymously and providing them with immediate, easily interpreted feedback on their class responses would improve learner participation in programme and class review activities.

To take this forward, the college purchased an electronic voting system and staff teams worked together to create a presentation which incorporates a series of questions through which individual learners rate the various elements of their programme. Questions range in complexity from requiring Yes/No answers to more detailed responses which ask learners to rank their feedback. Staff teams include additional questions which are specific to individual programmes, to enable learners to focus on particular characteristics of their learning.

At various times of the year, class groups use the electronic voting system to vote on the questions and their collective responses are captured and conveyed to learners as coloured pie charts. Staff make good use of the results to initiate further discussions with learners and to compare and measure learner responses with previous voting activities and with different learner groups. Class responses are posted on the college's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and are accessible to learners and staff. Feedback is stored and used by programme teams in self-evaluation processes and by college managers to identify trends and patterns which require further analysis and action to improve.

This process has been highly effective in directing and supporting learners in conveying their views and contributing to improving the quality of sports and leisure programmes. The anonymity encourages learners to be honest in their evaluations and has produced more robust information for staff to work with. Sports staff are now building on this experience by involving learners on sports and leisure programmes in creating the questions and facilitating voting activities.

Retention and attainment

Most colleges in Scotland delivering sport and leisure programmes have high or very high retention and attainment rates across all FE and HE programmes. In all colleges, early retention is high or very high across all programme areas. However, early retention rates are lower on full-time FE level programmes. Across all colleges, completion rates are high and very high in part-time programmes. Success levels for learners on full-time FE and HE programmes are high. However, on part-time HE programmes, success rates are low and have been declining over the last three years. Further information on retention, attainment and completion rates over three years is included in a summary of data in Table 1 of this report.

Wider achievement

Almost all learners develop confidence, independence and skills for learning, life and work through participation in their programme and involvement in wider college, sports and community events. These include work placements, volunteering and coaching activities. Almost all learners gain a wide range of personal and life skills through assisting, performing and competing in sports events and competitions at local and national level. Many learners on *sports academy* programmes achieve national success in their individual sports.

Most colleges have very effective processes in place to identify individual learner sports goals and aspirations at the start of programmes. Many learners work regularly with staff to redefine their performance targets and adjust training programmes to improve performance and prepare for competitions. Learners combine these targets with study requirements to plan realistic sport and learning goals.

Almost all learners gain valuable citizenship and employability skills through their involvement in work-based activities, volunteering and coaching. In most programmes, learners gain high levels of skills in team working and working with others through participating in projects and activities which involve contact with different types of client groups.

Learners gain useful communication and citizenship skills through leading and facilitating sport activities for people who have additional barriers to learning, disabilities and restricted mobility. These activities are very effective in increasing learners' awareness of others and in developing proficiency and skills in meeting a wide spectrum of needs. This extends and enhances employment options for learners.

Almost all learners gain confidence, responsibility and self-discipline. Almost all increase and extend their fitness and endurance levels, particularly those preparing for entry to uniformed services. Within programmes involving outdoor pursuits and residential activities, learners develop resilience and gain wider life skills, including project planning, cooking, working with others and problem solving.

Progression

Almost all learners make very good progress from prior learning and experience. Almost all progress well in their learning, widen and extend their knowledge and skills, and improve their performance in their specific sports. Almost all progress successfully to further learning or employment and most progress to employment related to the sport and leisure industry or uniformed services.

Most learners progress successfully from FE to HE level programmes. However, the majority find the requirements of HE programmes, and in particular the graded unit, very challenging. In a few colleges, staff do not prepare learners on FE programmes well enough for this transition.

There are many good examples of school leavers progressing from school-link and *Skills for Work* programmes to HE level programmes. Many young school leavers, particularly those requiring *More Choices, More Chances (MCMC)*, complete their programmes successfully and in some cases attain formal qualifications for the first time. However, due to lack of demand from schools, only a few colleges deliver *Skills for Work* in sport.

FE and HE programmes provide learners with realistic experience working in the sports and leisure industry. As a result, learners achieve high levels of skills, experience and attributes which are valued by employers. Almost all learners who complete their programme successfully attain S/NGB awards which assist them in progressing towards and gaining employment in the sports industry.



Colleges have well-established systems for evaluating the effectiveness of programmes and the quality of the learning experience. Within most programme and departmental teams, there is a culture of working together to enhance and improve provision continuously.

Almost all programme teams evaluate their provision systematically, reflect on their practice and set appropriate targets for improvement. Most programme teams review their programmes conscientiously and are proactive in identifying and addressing areas requiring action to enhance and improve the quality of provision. However, most programme teams do not analyse sufficiently the attendance, retention and attainment patterns across all units of programmes, and in particular those delivered by other curriculum areas. These programme teams do not take sufficient responsibility and action to address and improve elements of programmes which are reducing the overall quality of programmes. Most programme teams do not analyse sufficiently the progress and achievements of FE learners who have progressed to HE programmes (in comparison to those who have entered HE directly) to inform programme design of FE programmes.

In almost all cases, programme teams and individual staff engage well in evaluating the effectiveness of their learning and teaching approaches. However, a few staff do not engage sufficiently in this process and do not take enough action to update and improve their practice and methodologies.

Almost all programme teams have established effective processes to engage learners in evaluating the quality of their learning experience. Most use a range of appropriate tools and approaches to gather feedback from learners. These include learner involvement in review processes, tutorials, focus groups, end of class and activity reflection, learner diaries and reflective journals. Sports staff engage learners regularly in discussing what works well in their programme and what could be better. Learners feel able and at ease about forwarding their views and most staff act quickly to address issues.

Most programme teams liaise with their external stakeholders to gauge the effectiveness of their programmes. In most cases, these arrangements are informal and often provide valuable feedback which staff use productively to modify and adapt their programmes and practice. There are a few examples of college and school staff working well together to jointly evaluate programmes for school pupils, sharing and identifying issues and determining actions for improvement. However, most programme teams do not involve employers and key stakeholders systematically enough in their evaluation processes.

Within programme teams, almost all sports staff proactively and regularly share and adopt effective practice in learning and teaching. Many draw well on team teaching situations to improve and develop their skills. However, a few staff are resistant to exploring new or other learning and teaching approaches and do not participate sufficiently in reviewing and updating their skills and approaches.

A few staff teams share their good practice with other college departments on generic activities such as induction, supporting learners in reflecting on learning and methods of developing core skills. However, sharing of effective practice by sports staff with other college departments is not sufficiently widespread. This results in missed opportunities for colleges to harness and extend the many approaches applied by sports staff which exemplify the spirit and principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*. Overall, there is a lack of opportunity for college sport and leisure teaching staff across Scotland to share and extend good practice.

North Glasgow College: Preparing and planning for *Curriculum for Excellence* in sport and leisure programmes

The sports staff at North Glasgow College identified that there was a need to prepare more robustly for the implementation of the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence to ensure their programmes complemented and extended the experience of school pupils and school leavers.

Staff recognised that while their programmes incorporated the spirit and themes of Curriculum for Excellence, the evidence to support this was generally anecdotal and not formally recorded. They identified a need to apply more formal and systematic arrangements to gauge how well programmes met the defined capacities, experiences and outcomes, identify shortfalls and gaps and make adjustments to address them.

To facilitate this, staff created an audit tool based on headings and themes of Curriculum for Excellence senior phase. The audit tool consists of three stages:

- *Stage one involves programme teams using their course profile to identify and map where each outcome and task in the programme contributes to and meets the Curriculum for Excellence key capacities, experiences and outcomes.*
- *Stage two asks teaching staff to draw from the information they have gathered in stage one to highlight the units and parts of units which incorporate and contribute most effectively to meeting the capacities, experiences and outcomes.*
- *Stage three asks staff to use the information from stage two to evaluate the strengths and areas for development within the programme and identify where adjustments are required to fully encompass the elements defined within the senior phase. Staff create an action plan to take forward and address the areas requiring development.*

This process engages teaching staff systematically in producing an overall picture of how well their programme encompasses the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence. Programme teams engage in analysing programme content systematically to chart and record the elements which fulfil requirements and identify where action is needed to adjust the curriculum or incorporate other activities.

Sports staff have applied the audit tool to evaluate their full-time FE level programmes. They have used the process to inform programme design and adjust the curriculum to anticipate and support the further development of school-age learners progressing from Curriculum for Excellence-led activity at secondary school. The audit tool is now being implemented across all sport and leisure programmes.

Scottish Funding Council (SFC) should:

- work with colleges, SQA, S/NGBs and employers to ensure college funding arrangements take account of and support the skills needs of employers.

Scotland's Colleges should:

- draw on the findings in this report to support colleges in taking forward the recommendations; and
- improve opportunities for college sport and leisure staff across Scotland to share and extend good practice.

Skills Development Scotland should:

- work in partnership with colleges to investigate the causes of the significantly low number of female learners undertaking sport and leisure programmes in Scotland's colleges.

Colleges should:

- ensure sport and leisure teaching staff are sufficiently conversant with current national educational strategies including, *Healthy Scotland* and *Curriculum for Excellence*, and provide opportunities for sports staff to share with others their practices and approaches which exemplify the spirit and principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*;
- ensure programme teams establish links with physical education teachers in secondary schools to inform and update them about the types of sports and leisure programmes which colleges offer;
- ensure that within programme planning processes, programme teams sequence activities to provide an appropriate mix and balance between classroom and practical activities;
- ensure programme teams take responsibility for the development of core skills and the parts of their programmes which are delivered by staff from other curriculum areas;
- ensure programme teams take sufficient account of the requirements of HE programmes when planning FE programmes;
- ensure that all teaching staff participate in activities to review and update their learning and teaching skills and approaches, and that in non-practical classes the approaches applied by staff, including use of ICT and interactive resources, are effective and appropriate to learner needs;

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- ensure individual learning plans and arrangements for maintaining them are relevant, engaging and well-matched to learner needs;
 - ensure programme teams analyse sufficiently the attendance, retention and attainment patterns across all units of programmes, including those delivered by other curriculum areas;
 - ensure programme teams involve employers and key stakeholders systematically in their evaluation processes; and
 - ensure the environments used for delivering theory classes are of an appropriate standard and have appropriate access to ICT and interactive resources.

HMIE should:

- continue to monitor the progress made by colleges in taking forward the above recommendations; and
- encourage sports teachers in colleges and schools to collaborate on programme design to ease transition and support implementation of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

Colleges visited in the fieldwork for this report

- Aberdeen College
- Adam Smith College
- Edinburgh's Telford College
- Elmwood College
- North Glasgow College
- Perth College
- Reid Kerr College
- West Lothian College

Appendix 2

**Table 1: Sport and leisure programmes
Summary of data over three years**

The following information, gathered from data submitted to SFC by colleges and adapted as appropriate, relates to the retention, completion and attainment rates of learners undertaking sport and leisure programmes over the last three years. The focus is on the number of full-time and part-time learners on FE and HE programmes. Some individual learners will have enrolled on more than one programme, particularly for part-time provision.

2006-07								
Mode	Level	Enrolled	Funded	Completed	Succeeded	Early Retention	Completion	Success ¹¹
FT	FE	2028	1783	1404	1128	88%	79%	80%
FT	HE	2027	1859	1570	1305	92%	84%	83%
PT	FE	22182	21779	21404	17930	98%	98%	84%
PT	HE	350	333	315	283	95%	95%	70%
2007-08								
Mode	Level	Enrolled	Funded	Completed	Succeeded	Early Retention	Completion	Success
FT	FE	2350	2023	1569	1241	86%	78%	79%
FT	HE	1914	1710	1384	1135	89%	81%	82%
PT	FE	4099	3886	3746	3241	95%	96%	87%
PT	HE	187	176	157	117	94%	89%	75%
2008-09								
Mode	Level	Enrolled	Funded	Completed	Succeeded	Early Retention	Completion	Success
FT	FE	2673	2311	1876	1579	86%	81%	84%
FT	HE	1959	1777	1530	1271	91%	86%	83%
PT	FE	21426	20928	20347	4000	98%	97%	84%
PT	HE	155	148	137	96	95%	93%	70%

¹¹ In 2008-09, SFC revised the definition of success, to take account of programmes which were designed where learners were not to be assessed. This has most impact on part-time FE programmes where many are designed not to include assessment.

Glossary of terms

BASI	British Association of Snowsport Instructors
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
FE	Further Education
GB	Great Britain
HE	Higher Education
HMIE	HM Inspectorate of Education
HN	Higher National
HND	Higher National Diploma
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
MCMC	More Choices, More Chances
NPA	National Progression Award
NQ	National Qualification
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SFA	Scottish Football Association
SFC	Scottish Funding Council
S/NGBs	Scottish/National Governing Bodies
SOA	Single Outcome Agreement
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SUMS	Student Unit of Measurement
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification
TQ (FE)	Teaching Qualification in Further Education
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment