

West College Scotland

People Strategy

2021-2022



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1. Introduction

West College Scotland delivers learning and vocational training to the West Region of Scotland, a catchment area of 1.2 million people, representing 23% of the resident population of Scotland. We have an important presence and deep roots in our main towns of Paisley, Clydebank and Greenock. Our 'footprint' stretches from Oban to Barrhead.

West College Scotland is committed to taking a leadership role in the West of Scotland and, together with partners and stakeholders, tackling significant social and economic deprivation which still characterises many of the towns and communities across the region. The College works across local authority boundaries and engages formally with seven authorities.

As one of Scotland's largest Regional Colleges, we provide education and training to over 20,000 students. The College manages total funds of £70m and we employ almost 1,200 staff.

The College is one of the Region's largest employers and is uniquely placed to help shape the West Region's educational landscape and contributes to its social and economic development. The College adds £13m to the region's annual economic output and spends £47m in salaries every year.

At West College Scotland, we recognise the key role that Organisational Development and HR plays in the development, improvement and success of our College.

2. Strategic Priorities

We are an innovative and ambitious College that wants to play an increasing role in a new landscape that will be re-shaped by changes in technology, demographics, digitisation and automation. We have identified 4 key strategic priorities:

- **PERSONALISATION**

We will deliver the skills solutions that employers are looking for and the learning outcomes that students want, in a way that suits individual students

- **COLLABORATION**

We will build the immersive relationships and make the connections that enhance value for customers and stakeholders by creating learning pathways, developing new delivery partnerships and integrating learning into wider local strategies.

- **AGILE AND ADAPTIVE**

We will develop the capability to respond to shifts in demand and seize new opportunities quickly putting in place specialist delivery capabilities

- **DIGITAL**

We will ensure that the College has the digital capacity and capabilities to deliver in a modern economy

The People Strategy will be implemented and delivered through the following core Organisational Development and Human Resources professional areas:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Learning and Development
- Employee Relations
- Resourcing and Talent Planning
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing

3. Regional Outcome Agreement

The People Strategy also supports the implementation of the College Regional Outcome Agreement 2020-21 in respect of the following areas:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Equalities and Inclusion
- Public Health Emergency

4. Organisational Development and HR Strategic Objectives

4.1. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

4.1.1. Where are we now?

Equality is a fundamental part of everything that we do. We are committed to creating a positive environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, and where stakeholders have an equal opportunity to reach their potential.

The College systematically mainstreams equality, diversity and inclusion in its relationship with staff and students. All policies are Equality Impact Assessed. The College assesses the fairness and effectiveness of equality

policies through workforce monitoring. All staff have a sound understanding of equality and diversity through mandatory training.

4.1.2. Where do we want to be?

We aim to cultivate and maintain an inclusive environment which respects and encourages diversity in all of its activities, as well as ensuring access regardless of an individual's protected characteristics.

4.1.3. How do we get there?

The College will be proactive in removing barriers to enhance a personalised approach which supports how we adapt and respond to our diverse stakeholders. We will survey staff and students to prioritise actions we may need to take.

4.1.4. How will we recognise success?

The College will systematically review and monitor the advancement of equality, diversity and inclusion in all its processes for staff and students. The outcomes will be reported in the Annual HR Report using recognised metrics.

4.2. Learning and Development

4.2.1. Where are we now?

The College has a comprehensive learning and development programme which meets short term business critical requirements and year-on-year is building a long- term structured approach to building the skills capacity of the workforce. This work needs to continue to ensure we create an environment and culture where individuals and teams can achieve their potential and ultimately the success of our students.

4.2.2. Where do we want to be?

As national policies, student and employer demand, and patterns of provision change, the College needs to be able to proactively identify a range of up-to-date and flexible courses which reflect the needs and meet the changing expectations of students and employers, enabling reskilling and upskilling for the future of work and a more digital world. Adapting to such changes in demand poses challenges for staff and managers who need to take responsibility for their own continuing professional development.

We need to ensure that people at all levels of the organisation are motivated to learn, grow and prosper and that they possess and develop the skills, knowledge and experience required to fulfil the ambitions of the College. We support the delivery of the College's strategy through the identification of strategic learning priorities and put plans in place to address them.

The College recognises the need to develop the leadership potential of its managers in order to continue to succeed in an increasingly complex and financially constrained environment and equip them with the necessary skills and behaviours to achieve their potential, ensuring their effective leadership enables all employees to perform to the best of their capability.

4.2.3. How do we get there?

a) Identification of strategic learning priorities

- Determine strategic learning priorities through assessing gaps in workforce ability to deliver against College strategic objectives.

b) Develop Learning and Development Plans

- Collect and analyse data on learning needs and tailor learning offer as appropriate
- Develop an action plan to address agreed strategic learning priorities
- Identify any reskilling or upskilling required for the future of work and put plans in place to address.

c) Design and Delivery of Learning and Development Interventions

- Ensure best use of innovative learning solutions to improve capability
- Provide a diverse learning approach to meet group and individual requirements across the organisation
- Manage learning and a training records system to highlight retraining requirements and safety critical skills in compliance areas.

d) Leadership Development

- Promote a culture in which leadership skills are valued and encouraged and are aligned to the strategic vision and values
- Develop approaches to enhancing leadership and management skills, with an emphasis on change management and preparing for the future of work
- Design and deliver leadership training and other interventions to ensure senior and potential leaders have appropriate experience and capability as individuals and as a Senior Management Team to fulfil the Organisation's strategic ambitions.

e) Talent Management

- Work with employees and management to ensure talent management procedures are embedded at work appropriately
- Identify key roles, determine any gaps in succession planning and put plans in place to address them.
- Ensure succession processes provides fair access of opportunity to all

f) Digital

- Make the JISC Discovery Tool available to all staff in order to self-assess digital capability

- Ensure appropriate training, including online learning, is available to all staff in order to maximise the digital capability of the workforce and to support the delivery of the College Digital strategy
- Provide appropriate pedagogical digital training to facilitate the integration of digital platforms into curriculum offerings
- Embed the JISC Discovery Tool into the Continuing Professional Development Review (CPDR) process

g) Professional Standards

- Embed the Professional Standards for Lecturers into the (CPDR) process for teaching staff
- Source and develop appropriate pedagogical training for teaching staff
- Build further on the Development Journey for Lecturers
- Revise the CPDR process and embed frameworks such as JISC Discovery, Professional Standards for Lecturers, WCS Leadership Standards and a framework for Support Staff development within WCS.

4.2.4. How will we recognise success?

We will evaluate the learning impact. This shall be done by capturing and analysing data from learning and development interventions and through external accreditation.

We will also look for indicators of improvement in Staff Survey feedback. We will monitor candidates appointed internally and externally.

4.3. Employee Relations

4.3.1. Where are we now?

The College has good working relations with recognised trade unions based on the values of mutual respect and trust. Formal channels of consultation and negotiation are based on Local Recognition and Procedure Agreements which include monthly Consultation and Negotiation meetings with trade union representatives during term time. Agreed Committee minutes are posted on the College intranet. These formal arrangements are complemented by regular informal, open agenda meetings with trade union representatives.

The College engages with trade unions at an early stage when proposing changes to procedures, practices and organisational design.

4.3.2. Where do we want to be?

The College wants to maintain positive employee relations at a local level in a challenging financial environment that has been significantly influenced by national bargaining.

The culture of the College reflects the ambitions and expectations outlined in the Building our Collective Future Framework, and this is demonstrated through employee behaviours and actions at all levels in the College.

4.3.3. How do we get there?

Formal collective arrangements complemented by regular informal, open agenda meetings with local trade union representatives will continue. Informal resolutions to disagreements and grievance will always be considered in the first instance.

The College will continue to share sensitive information with trade union representatives in the confidence that they will recognise the best interests of the College and their members.

We work with our recognised trade unions to build and influence the culture in line with the Building our Collective Future Framework.

4.3.4. How will we recognise success?

The College will measure the success of their approach to employee relations by monitoring the use of collective and individual procedures. This will be analysed in the Annual HR Report made available to the Board of Management and staff.

4.4. Resourcing and Talent Planning

4.4.1. Where are we now?

As a publicly funded body, the College has ensured that its recruitment and workforce planning procedures reflect good practice. The College operates a fair and objective recruitment and selection procedure which places emphasis on individual skills, abilities and experience. The College has been awarded the Disability Confident Status, whereby candidates who meet the essential criteria are guaranteed an interview. Selection criteria are reviewed regularly to ensure that it is justifiable and essential for effective performance of the role.

4.4.2. Where do we want to be?

The College wishes to ensure that it secures, develops, retains and effectively manages enough teaching and support staff to provide quality education to students and employer clients within the resources available. It wishes to attract and engage diverse, talented individuals from different backgrounds, heritages, generations and lifestyles. We want to ensure that applicant behaviours and values are given equal importance to qualifications and skills during the recruitment and selection process.

The College wishes to be an “Employer of Choice” by becoming recognised for its strong and participative culture, attractive conditions of employment and as an employer who cares about the health and wellbeing of its people. The College wishes to develop and fully implement a strategic workforce planning framework to underpin and inform the future review and development of curriculum and support functions, taking account of all external and internal factors.

We want our staff to embrace digital technologies and new innovations for enhanced service delivery and effective working practices.

4.4.3. How do we get there?

The College will deliver a comprehensive and developmental induction programme to all new recruits which fully integrates people into our culture and quickly makes new recruits effective employees.

In particular the College recognises that many staff have domestic and other caring responsibilities which means they cannot commit to traditional working patterns. The College will ensure that its employment practices promote provisions for flexible working, part time working and other family friendly procedures in order that staff may achieve an appropriate work life balance.

The College will develop an employer brand by identifying and articulating the organisation’s core values and behavioural expectations. Existing and prospective employees will be advised about the organisations values and behavioural expectations. The college will ensure that the values and behavioural expectations permeate the College procedures and processes. It will develop ongoing communication and engagement plans to ensure that employees and other stakeholders understand and respect the organisations values and behavioural expectations; disseminating key messages. The College will utilise survey feedback tools and software to gather feedback from employees on their experiences, using the information gathered to make evident changes that improve the working lives of our staff.

The College will assess the overall current and future resource and talent levels within Sectors and Departments through workforce planning. This will result in planning to fulfil resourcing and talent needs across the College. The College will implement a Workforce Plan which complies with best practice as defined in Audit Scotland’s Public Sector Workforce Good Practice Guide.

The Workforce Plan will be monitored by the College Executive and HR and the Corporate Development Committee.

The College will implement the outcomes of the National Job Evaluation Scheme for Support staff to ensure an equitable approach to reward management.

4.4.4. How will we recognise success?

The College will provide accurate, easily accessible real time management information through developing the full capacity of the iTrent Payroll and HR System. This will enable less manual analysis of resource data such as absence, turnover, retention, new starts, length of service and age profile. This will be compared against national benchmarks. The information will be analysed in an Annual HR Report which will be made available to the Board of Management and staff.

4.5. Health, Safety and Wellbeing

4.5.1. Where are we now?

The College is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for students, staff, contractors and visitors in accordance with its statutory responsibility.

A Health and Safety Committee chaired by the Director, Organisational Development and HR is in place and includes both trade union and student representatives. Minutes are posted on the College intranet. Health and Safety Sub Committees have been established at the three College Campuses and these are chaired by an Assistant Principal.

The College has also been accredited with the Scottish Government's Healthy Working Lives Gold Award. This scheme is an outcome focused approach to support employers and employees to achieve a healthier and safer environment.

4.5.2. Where do we want to be?

The College will demonstrate that there is a robust system for managing health, safety and risk with clear accountability, to ensure compliance with statutory requirements. The College will maintain the Healthy Working Lives Gold Award accreditation and will continue to support wellness and wellbeing as well as providing supporting mechanisms when employees are unwell. Health and wellbeing initiatives will be provided in partnership with the Student's Association.

People managers are confident to discuss wellbeing matters with their employees and take appropriate action.

Employees believe that their wellbeing is important to, and supported by, the College.

4.5.3. How do we get there?

The health and safety structure, policy and arrangements will be developed in line with the Health and Safety HSG 65 Guidance adopting the principles of Plan, Do, Check, Act.

We will support managers and staff in maintaining and achieving appropriate levels of competency and knowledge in health and safety to enable effective risk management.

The College will implement the Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy to support the delivery of health and wellbeing programmes and initiatives, including upskilling of managers to be more confident to initiate conversations relating to physical, social and mental wellbeing.

4.5.4. How will we recognise success?

The College will successfully maintain the Healthy Working Lives Gold Award and use recognised metrics to measure the success of the approach to health, safety and wellbeing. This will be analysed in the Annual HR Report made available to the Board and staff.

5. Implementation of People Strategy

The People Strategy will be underpinned by a detailed implementation plan which sets out clear actions, timescales and measures of success.

6. Monitoring and Review of People Strategy

The Corporate Development Committee will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the People Strategy on an Annual basis.

When reviewing progress, the Committee should:

1. Ensure that activities are kept within the parameters of the agreed strategic priorities;
2. Ensure that activities are consistent with the College's vision, ambitions, culture and values;
3. Keep under review internal and external changes which may require adjustments to the People Strategy or affect the ability to achieve the objectives.