



WEST COLLEGE SCOTLAND

CURRICULUM STRATEGY 2021-26

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE

1.1 **A high quality, well designed, engaging and efficiently delivered curriculum will enable the College to achieve its Corporate priorities, be financially sustainable and fully meet the needs of our students, local communities, stakeholders and employers, thereby contributing to the economic success and wellbeing of the West Region.**

We have high aspirations for our West College Scotland curriculum and aim to provide the very best transformational learning opportunities, which provide the skills to give a competitive advantage for our students when entering or while progressing within the workplace.

The College curriculum is at the very centre of what we do as a College and should drive everything else. This Curriculum Strategy establishes a vision, direction and focus for the design of our College curriculum in the next five years and provides a framework against which the existing curriculum portfolio can be evaluated and further developed. The focus of this Strategy is on shaping the curriculum portfolio across the College and in developing the many different types of learning opportunities we offer.

We recognise the need to continually review and adapt to ensure that our curriculum responds to a constantly changing external environment. This Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis with an associated annual Curriculum Development action plan adapted to respond to the factors which influence our curriculum design. The Strategy forms a key part of our annual Curriculum Planning and Review process and links to other Strategies, including the College [Digital Strategy](#).

The Curriculum Strategy will shape our curriculum portfolio and influence how our curriculum is developed and delivered. Enhancing learning and teaching, and innovatively delivering assessment, will contribute to the aims of both the Curriculum Strategy. Our curriculum will become more skills based, both in focus and design. We will theme learning, teaching and assessment around SDS Meta-skills, highlighting and prioritising the development of specific skills on an annual basis to align to the Strategy. This will be supported by appropriate CPD, strengthening the course team ethos within and across campuses and the sharing and promotion of good practice.

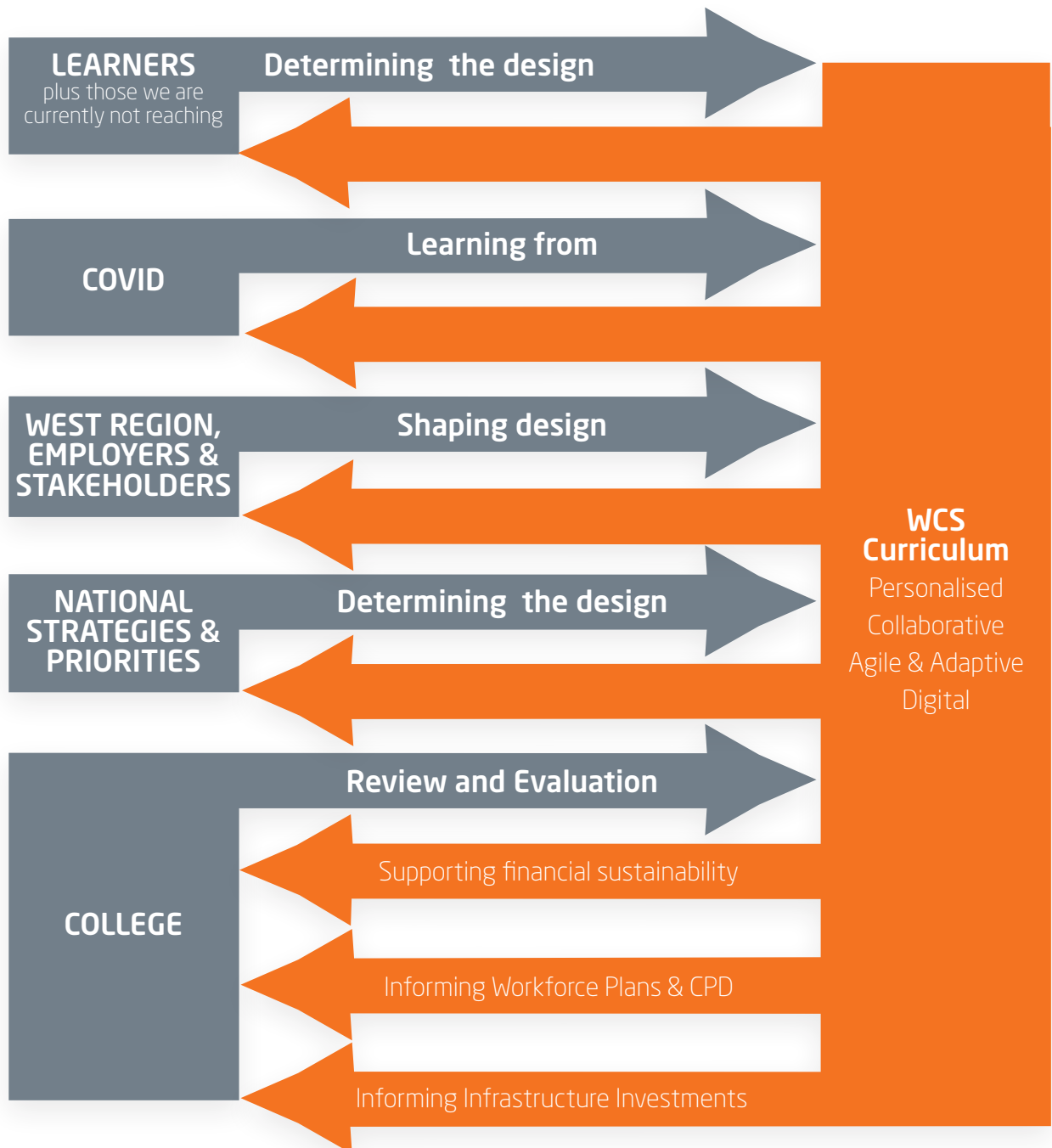
During the period of the Curriculum Strategy, College Lecturers will progress with GTCS registration and undertake formal professional learning and updates to maintain registration. This provides us all with opportunities for transformative self-evaluation that supports professional development of those staff who deliver learning.



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2. KEY CURRICULUM DRIVERS AND OUR CURRICULUM RESPONSE

The key drivers for developing our Curriculum Strategy at this time are:



2. KEY CURRICULUM DRIVERS AND OUR CURRICULUM RESPONSE

2.1 NEEDS OF OUR LEARNERS AND COMMUNITIES

Serving an area of high deprivation, the College has a vital role in providing a highly relevant curriculum which provides valuable, targeted skills development to meet the personal needs of individuals, wherever they are on their learner journey. In recovering from COVID and continuing to address the serious issues with deprivation, health and social inclusion within our Region, the design of our curriculum and our curriculum priorities as outlined in this Strategy, should contribute to improving social wellbeing, closing the attainment gap, tackling gender equalities and contributing to policies such as [No One Left Behind](#) and support the action the Scottish Government is already taking to reduce inequalities through [A fairer Scotland for women: gender pay gap action plan](#) and [A fairer Scotland for disabled people: employment action plan](#).

The College Corporate Plan has a priority of 'Personalisation' and adapting our curriculum in line with this priority is a key aspect of this Curriculum Strategy. To meet the individual student needs, we require introductory programmes to build confidence, skills and aspirations, through to courses to upskill those changing or developing their careers and providing vocational pathways through to employment or progression to higher level study. To meet student needs, courses must have explicit aims and pathways identified, ideally offering flexibility in the modes of study, points of entry and timeframes for completion as well as a breadth of progression routes. We will ensure meaningful career management pathways are in place across all of our curriculum areas.

To ensure students are best prepared for the next level of study and future employment in an increasingly competitive market, our courses must include appropriate employability and Meta skills development, as well as personal development. This must include a focus on developing literacies and digital skills in all courses.

In order to ensure work ready graduates, courses need to be relevant to current employment needs and must include work-integrated learning, either simulated or through placements.

We need to continually review and redesign our curriculum to ensure it remains relevant and fit for the future through analysis of student progression and feedback from leavers, as well as close working with employers and involving students in the design of our courses.

2. KEY CURRICULUM DRIVERS AND OUR CURRICULUM RESPONSE

2.2 COVID

The communities within the West Region have been disproportionately impacted by COVID. It is predicted that the economic impacts of COVID will not be equal among all groups in society and that people on low incomes, women, disabled people, people from ethnic minority groups, lone parents, young people and older people are likely to be particularly affected. Our College must play a critical role in providing opportunities for these key groups.

Post COVID, the shape of our curriculum will need to adapt to ensure that the College contributes to economic and social recovery and meets the specific skills needs of our learners and local employers. The impact of COVID on our region, economy and employment opportunities will require an adapted and more flexible curriculum offering.

Whilst COVID has been a dreadful situation, it has also enabled changes in our curriculum delivery and resulted in significant progress in the objectives of our Digital Strategy. We must capitalise on our experience and the progress made during the pandemic to maximise our future use of digital technology to enhance the shape of our curriculum as well as its delivery. The design of our curriculum must ensure the development of digital skills which are now vital for learning and employment and technology must enable a more flexible offering in the future. Our College COVID response has demonstrated our real ability to adapt as a College and the positive opportunities that a more blended offering will provide for our students.



2. KEY CURRICULUM DRIVERS AND OUR CURRICULUM RESPONSE

2.3 ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND REGIONAL SKILLS NEEDS

The College curriculum must be informed by future skills needs and employment opportunities regionally and nationally. The curriculum must respond to information gained through analysis of available labour market intelligence, in particular that provided by SDS, and through close working with our local employers and within local economic development groups. We must ensure a future-facing curriculum and take advantage of emerging opportunities. To this extent, we must harness a culture where we pivot and respond to change in an agile and timely manner.

Predicted post-COVID unemployment must drive immediate changes to our curriculum portfolio to ensure we have appropriate short upskilling and reskilling provision available to provide opportunities to progress and develop the skills required for any available employment. This response should include the articulation to higher level education at University and graduate apprenticeships, as well as a focus on enterprise and entrepreneurial skills to support new small business development.

Our curriculum must respond to support key local industries and local economic strategies. SDS Regional Skills Assessments predict that the main employment growth in the West Region will be in caring, personal service occupations and health professionals. Additional growth to 2023 is predicted in business administration, public services, science and technology, culture, media, sports and transport. There is a forecasted requirement for 500 people to fill job openings in Childcare activities within education within the Region by 2023. Longer term growth is in the same employment areas, with the greatest requirement for skilled workers with higher education level qualifications (SCQF7+). Replacement job opportunities are likely to be in wholesale and retail, human health and social work. SDS highlights in their [Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan](#) that 'Green jobs' to support Scotland's aspirations on carbon reduction are an area of opportunity for the region.

COVID has highlighted the importance of digital skills and these skills will be critical for our students for both learning and employment. As highlighted in Scotland's Future Skills Action Plan, [Meta Skills](#) form a critical part of Scotland's future skills mix and require to be explicitly developed and accredited for our students.



Community



Economy



Skills

2. KEY CURRICULUM DRIVERS AND OUR CURRICULUM RESPONSE

The West Region is part of the Glasgow City Region and will contribute to the Economic recovery plan which includes a coordinated regional skills programme across the City Region and the development of a case to the Scottish Government for the creation of a Major Green Recovery Job Development Programme, including an energy efficiency refit programme to create meaningful local jobs and cut carbon emissions. Partners in the City Region have committed to support interventions which prioritise key sectors:

- **where jobs growth is most likely: such as health and care and the digital economy;**
- **capitalise upon, and where possible accelerate, inward investment or planned infrastructure: such as financial and business services and advanced manufacturing;**
- **and re-imagine key sectors where redundancies have been most significant: such as retail, tourism and the creative industries.**

Our curriculum must support local Economic strategies and priorities including the [Renfrewshire Economic Strategy-2020-2030](#) with the focus on the development of the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District (AMIDS) and the [National Manufacturing Institute Scotland \(NMIS\)](#). Also, the Ocean Terminal and tourism developments in Inverclyde and the care developments next to the Clydebank Campus with the £250 million Queens Quay waterside regeneration project, including a Health Centre and Care home and a large scale water source heat pump scheme connected to the district heating network to support green energy, plus a £27 million development of 150 new affordable houses and associated infrastructure.



2.4 NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

Our Curriculum Strategy and priorities align with and support Scotland's Future Skills Action Plan which reaffirms the importance of skills in helping individuals reach their potential.

The four themes in the plan are:

- Increasing system agility and employer responsiveness;
- Enhancing access to upskilling and retraining opportunities;
- Ensuring sustainability across the skill system; and
- Accelerating the implementation of the learner journey review.

Key current national strategies to influence our curriculum development include:

- **[Enterprise and Skills Board Strategic Plan](#)** including the outputs to embed a culture of lifelong learning at all stages of an individual's career, including a stronger emphasis on work-based learning, to enable Scotland to better respond to the current and future skills needs of industry and learners and ensuring that we have a demand led skills system that is flexible and highly responsive to industry and learner needs.
- **[STEM Education and Training Strategy](#)** which aims to build Scotland's capacity to deliver excellent STEM learning, and to close equity gaps in participation and attainment in STEM. Aiming to inspire young people and adults to study STEM, and to provide a better connection between STEM education and training and the needs of the labour market in Scotland.
- **[A Digital Strategy for Scotland](#)** to ensure that everyone in Scotland has the skills required to fully participate in our digital nation.
- **[Scotland's AI Strategy](#)** with the aspiration that Scotland will become a leader in the development and use of trustworthy, ethical and inclusive AI (artificial intelligence), building a skilled and diverse workforce.
- The Government's soon to be published **Blue Economy Action Plan** to launch a programme of collaborative projects across the public sector, Scotland's science base, marine industries and the marine environmental sector.
- **[The Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability - Progress Update - March 2021 \(sfc.ac.uk\)](#)** highlights the need to recognise, and credit, both formal and informal prior learning of individuals (RPL).

With a curriculum developed in line with the objectives in [A Blueprint for Fairness - Commission on Widening Access](#) and [Developing the Young Workforce \(DYW\)](#)



2.5 FINANCIAL EFFICIENCIES AND VALUE FOR MONEY

As with all public sector organisations, the College is facing significant financial pressures and our curriculum design and delivery must be responsive to the College financial position. Efficient curriculum delivery and a curriculum designed to meet the needs of students and our local and national economy will be paramount in ensuring we provide excellent value for public money and ensure a financially sustainable college. Generating additional income through our curriculum delivery also will allow the College to invest more in our overall student experience and support key strategic investment.



2.6 COLLEGE RESOURCE INVESTMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Our curriculum and its future development must inform our Estates, IT and Workforce development plans. Providing clarity on likely changes in curriculum can be difficult in a constantly changing and uncertain employment landscape, with shifts in demand for courses and funding available. However, good recruitment and performance trend analysis, critical self-evaluation, competitor analysis and labour market data is vital to the development of short and longer term curriculum planning to inform resource priorities and workforce planning to ensure we have the resources and staff with the skills to deliver.



Potential new estates developments will also require a more developed future vision and plan for our curriculum, particularly in Inverclyde and Paisley.

Our Curriculum Strategy should inform and work alongside our Estates, Digital and People Strategies and our Work Force Plan. It will also shape our annual Learning, Teaching and Assessment enhancement action plans.

3. OUR OVERALL CURRICULUM PRIORITIES AND AIMS

3.1 THE CURRICULUM STRATEGY THEMES

The Curriculum Strategy themes have been developed in line with College's Corporate Plan 2019-2025 which sets the College's strategic direction and priorities. As with the Corporate Plan, the Curriculum Strategy has four key themes and key curriculum aims and main priorities have been developed for each:

- **Personalised:** An impactful curriculum, specifically designed to meet the breadth of individual student, employer and local needs.
- **Collaborative:** A curriculum co-designed and delivered in collaboration with employers and other relevant stakeholders, with explicit progression pathways and not limited by our College curriculum structures.
- **Agile and adaptive:** A curriculum that can easily flex and is regularly adapted and reimagined to respond to Government and Regional differentiated priorities, meet employers' needs and to the College financial context.
- **Digital:** A curriculum to fully develop all student's digital skills, making the very best of digital pedagogy, through both remote and campus-based learning, teaching and assessment.

Priority College actions have been identified in response to our curriculum drivers and Corporate curriculum priorities. Our Curriculum priorities and aims will be used within our annual Curriculum Planning and Review process (CPR) and individual curriculum areas will be required to map their curriculum against the aims and develop their own actions for improvement in line with the College Curriculum Strategy direction.

Our Strategy actions will be updated on an annual basis to ensure alignment with College, local and national priorities.



Personalised



Collaborative



Agile & Adaptive



Digital

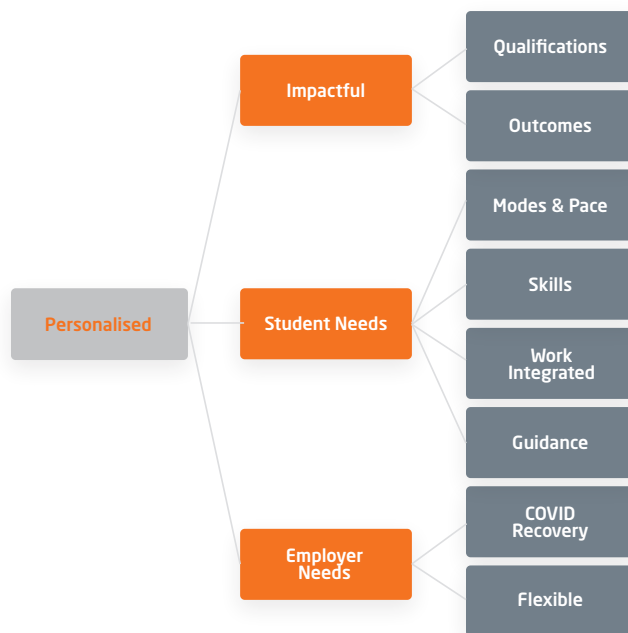
4. OUR KEY CURRICULUM PRIORITY ACTION 2021-26 TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS

Personalised

Aim
 An impactful curriculum, specifically designed to meet the breadth of individual student, employer and local needs.

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- Ensuring all courses have explicit course aims, core skills profile, and meaningful, clear pathways for entry and progression.
- ‘Chunking’ courses to provide more flexible and blended delivery models and developing micro-credentials that are recognised by industry and professional bodies.
- Reviewing alternative industry qualifications available and broadening the selection of qualifications used for College courses.
- Ensuring all courses include work-integrated learning as simulation or placements.
- Ensuring accredited Employability and Meta skills are embedded in all courses through undertaking an essential skills audit and implementing improvements where required.
- Building guidance into course design to support career management and ensure students can make informed choices for progression and have access to additional learning options to meet their personal and career needs.
- Building our flexible portfolio of short course provision designed specifically to meet employer needs.



MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

Measures of success: Revised Course Approval and Reapproval process implemented; WCS design principles used for each level of SCQF delivery; increase in the percentage of part time/flexible courses, new micro-credentials provision available; improved marketing of courses and pathways; increase in SCQF credit rated courses; increase in alternative qualifications available; work-integrated learning in all courses; explicit Essential and Meta Skills development and assessment in all courses; guidance and career management built into all course design; positive student feedback on the design of their curriculum and preparation for employment and next steps; reduction in student withdrawals and improved outcomes and destinations.

4. OUR KEY CURRICULUM PRIORITY ACTION 2021-26 TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS

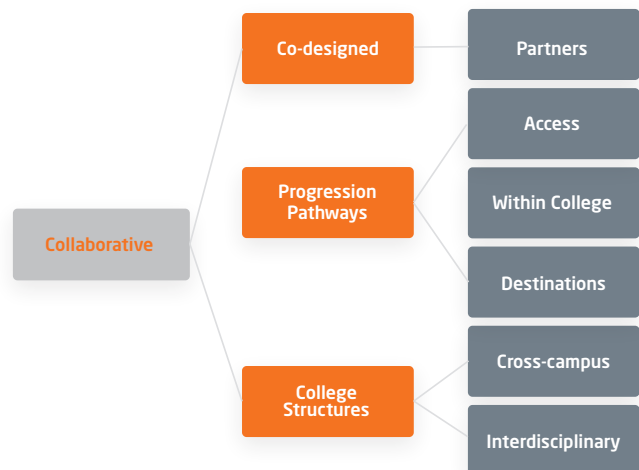
Collaborative

Aim

A curriculum co-designed and delivered in collaboration with employers and other relevant stakeholders, with explicit progression pathways and not limited by our College curriculum structures.

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- Facilitating staff involvement in national curriculum groups to ensure our region is represented and key developments are at the forefront of West College Scotland.
- Ensuring every curriculum area involves employers, labour market intelligence and student progression feedback in the design of the curriculum.
- Standardising and combining SCQF4 provision across the College to ensure more appropriate generic skills development and a breadth of progression options.
- Reviewing and revising School and Community pathways in collaboration with Local Authorities to ensure there is a strategic offering to meet local skills needs and co-creating curriculum.
- Working with HEIs to enhance articulation pathways and develop industry related partnership provision
- Facilitating cross-Sector and interdisciplinary curriculum developments within the College to respond to emerging employment opportunities, encourage innovation and improve efficiencies.



MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

Revised SCQF4 portfolio; clear pathways for students from learning to employment; creation of a new School College Partnership programme with improvements in recruitment, retention, outcomes and articulation to college programmes; increase in student positive destinations; improved articulation; HEI partnership developments; new interdisciplinary curriculum;

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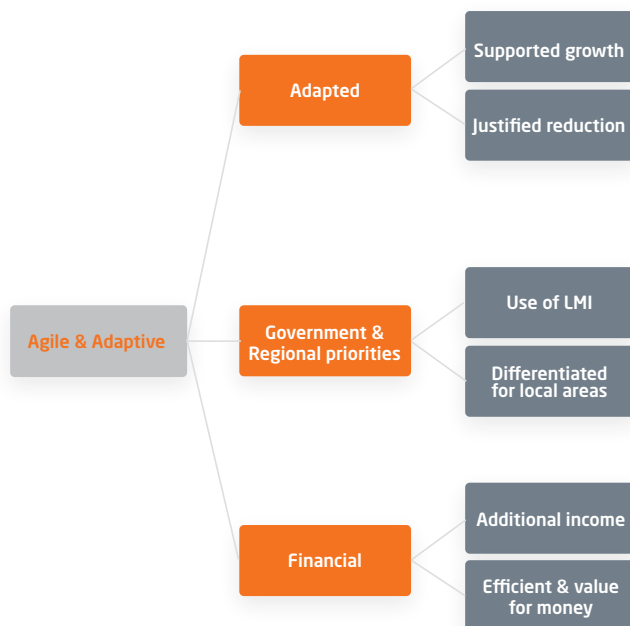
Agile & Adaptive

Aim

A curriculum that can easily flex and is regularly adapted and reimagined to respond to Government and Regional differentiated priorities, meet employers' needs and to the College financial context.

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- Being forward looking, identifying and supporting and investing in strategic growth areas of the curriculum in line with current and emerging regional and national skills needs.
- Growing our work-based learning and Apprenticeship delivery.
- Using trend data and ILM effectively to inform timely changes to the curriculum and remove or revise curriculum failing meet student and industry needs, ensuring value for money and maximum impact for our delivery costs.
- Adapting our curriculum to respond to demand and varying our delivery within the region to meet the specific needs of our individual local authority areas.
- Delivering cross-campus and combined elements of the curriculum to improve student choice and options for students to study more in their local campus, whilst reducing duplication of staff effort and improve efficiencies.



MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

Creation of focus groups with key external stakeholders to inform curriculum revision; evidence of course withdrawal and replacement, clarity of curriculum offering in campuses against SDS information and Local Authority plans; increase in work-based learning and Apprenticeship delivery; increase in the cross-campus courses and units;

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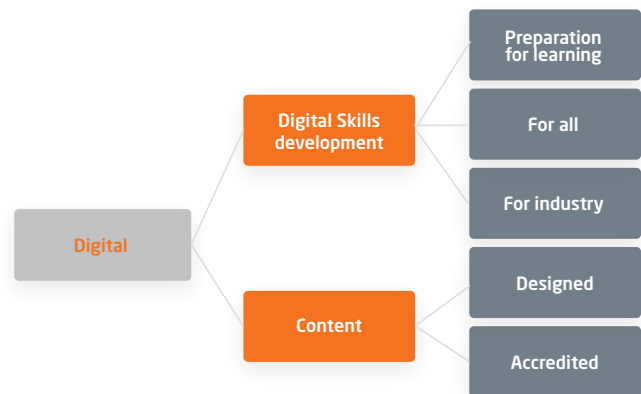
Digital

Aim

A curriculum to fully develop all student's digital skills, making the very best of digital pedagogy, through both remote and campus-based learning, teaching and assessment.

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- Providing appropriate level learning opportunities to ensure all students have the digital skills required for online learning and entry to their courses.
- Ensuring the development of generic and industry related digital skills are included and ideally accredited in every course.
- Including specific curriculum to meet the digital employment and digital industry needs.
- Further developing our online learning courses and online learning elements included within course design, with a sound pedagogical rationale underpinning the design of what may be on campus or online.
- Designing curriculum assessment to utilise digital technology as a default position, with a rationale required for alternatives based on an inclusivity and accessibility for individuals.



MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

student feedback on digital skill development, increased proportions of provision delivered digitally and supported by digital innovation; new online digital skill development courses available as preparation for college and within courses; increased enrolment in Computing and Digital courses; updated course portfolio including in Data Science, Data Analytics, Fintech and coding; digital assessment used as default.



Located on both the north and south banks of the River Clyde, West College Scotland inherits a rich legacy of innovation, enterprise and industry.

We at West College Scotland are inspired by this legacy. We are determined to continue those traditions of innovation and enterprise, and to play our part in helping our communities prosper.

Here we take a brief look at the industrial heritage of the three main towns we serve – Clydebank, Greenock and Paisley.

We look forward to a different future but we are proud of our history and the culture it forged.

2021

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