



PRESS RELEASE

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Scotland's Colleges: Response to 2009/10 Funding Settlement

Scotland's Colleges welcomes the Scottish Funding Council's (SFC) allocation of a 2.5 per cent increase in funding for learning and teaching for Scotland's 43 colleges, which was announced today (Friday, 17 April).

The Grant in Aid settlement distributes £572 million of funding to the college sector, for academic year 2009/10. It means an additional £14 million from last year's total funding for learning, teaching and student support being channelled into colleges. This funding allocation for the next academic year will enable Scotland's colleges to maintain provision and improve student support, ensuring that Scotland's college sector will continue to provide the skills to support Scotland's economic recovery.

The settlement also means an extra 9.3 per cent in bursary support, childcare and discretionary funding for students. This focus on student bursaries is in line with Scotland's Colleges' *Skills Without Debt* campaign to remove student debt from colleges. The campaign, which is in response to the Scottish Government consultation on student support, *Supporting a Smarter Scotland*, aims to provide higher education students with bursary support, in place of student loans.

Chris Travis, Chief Executive of Scotland's Colleges, said: "The increase in funding for colleges is encouraging and takes into account the need to provide increased financial support for colleges and students, particularly in these challenging economic times.

"Scotland's college sector is working hard to minimise the effects of the recession and we are highly aware of the importance of increased student support. While the bursary allocation is positive, we hope to see this increased in future and also see the introduction of bursaries for higher education students, removing the burden of student debt.

"Scotland's colleges are a key vehicle in developing the skills and training necessary to see the economy through the recession, providing a skilled workforce to aid economic recovery. We look forward to working with the Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council to improve the system of student support and bursaries and ensure that every student can come to college without fear of debt or financial constraints."

Linda McTavish, Convenor of the Scotland's Colleges Principals' Convention, said: "The funding settlement awarded to Scotland's college sector is a positive one, especially in this time of national recession. The importance of Scotland's colleges to the economy cannot be underestimated and it is encouraging that the Funding Council recognises this in the settlement.

"We would, however, like to see further increases in student bursary funding, and the introduction of bursaries for college students studying at higher education level. Our *Skills Without Debt* campaign aims to prevent higher education students dropping out of education due to fear of debt."

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