



PRESS RELEASE

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SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES CALL FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF SKILLS DURING THE RECESSION TO BE HIGHLIGHTED.

Scotland's Colleges will today attend the Scotland's Colleges and Vocational Education Conference, where the importance of the role of colleges in the country's economic recovery will be discussed. Following the launch of Scotland's Colleges '*Skills for a Successful Scotland*' report last week, the importance of the ways in which educational, practical and vocational training from colleges can help drive Scotland out of the global economic slump will be highlighted. Adam Ingram MSP, who is, Minister for Children and Early Years is set to speak at the event, along with Linda McTavish, Convenor of Scotland's Colleges Principals' Convention.

Linda McTavish commented; "Scotland's 43 colleges have a critical role to play in helping Scotland out of this economic crisis. The skills needed by Scotland are very different to those required 20 years ago and colleges are constantly developing, updating and refining courses to suit an ever changing society and economy. Through enhancing links with businesses and communities, colleges serve to find specific and relevant solutions to skills shortages and development. With courses tailored to suit a variety of students, colleges can cater for the majority in areas fundamental to improving the financial stability of Scotland.

"Furthermore, by working in partnership with thousands of businesses, Scotland's colleges are able to prepare the workforce to adapt to changing situations and increase the competition and productivity of organisations. It is also vital that colleges work together with employers to ensure their needs are met by providing a skilled future work force as the economy begins to recover."

However, Scotland's colleges cannot operate in isolation. To make an effective contribution to Scottish skills, they must cooperate with industry, both within the education sector, but also within the business industry, linking with the local community and businesses to respond to the local job market.

Minister for Children and Early Years, Adam Ingram said: "The Scottish Government is doing everything it can to help individuals and businesses deal with the recession and we fully recognise the role that Scotland's Colleges have in supporting economic recovery.

"In-light of the increase in demand for college courses both from young people choosing to go on to further study and the number of older learners who are choosing to go to college to improve their future job prospects the Scottish Government has invested £28.1 million of UK Budget consequential to help Scotland's colleges respond better to the needs of individuals and businesses during the economic downturn.

"Scotland's colleges have a key role in helping people and businesses deal with the impact of the economic downturn and ensuring individuals have the skills and training they need to contribute to this country's future economic success when the recovery comes."

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For more information, please contact:

Sarah Wright, Halogen Communications, (T) 0131 202 0120 (F) 0131 225 3757 (E) sarahw@halogencom.com