

August 30, 2010

Ministers approve first-ever merger of three colleges **Educational benefits for students lie at heart of decision on City Of Glasgow College**

The merger of three Glasgow colleges has been approved by Ministers with the strong expectation that there will be no compulsory redundancies and that proper engagement with trade unions will be undertaken.

On September 1, Glasgow's Nautical, Central and Metropolitan Colleges will become the City of Glasgow College, the first-ever merger of three colleges.

The educational benefits for students were central to Ministers' final decision. A number of expectations have been attached to the consent, however, based on representations from a wide range of interested parties and due to the complexity and scale of the merger. The Scottish Funding Council will formally oversee the fulfilment of these expectations.

Minister for Skills and Lifelong Learning Keith Brown said:

"Full consideration was given to the complexity of this proposal. We are a listening and open government, which is why we listened to the views of a broad range of interested parties including MSPs, the Scottish Funding Council and the trade unions.

"Ultimately, we agree with the Scottish Funding Council, whose role is to ensure efficient and effective delivery of further education, that the merger will deliver substantial benefits to students in Glasgow. That's why we have given the go-ahead to this historic move.

"We recognise that the college's trade unions would have liked faster progress on the harmonisation of pay and conditions. We have stressed certain expectations around the resolution of such issues, including commitment from the new college to quickly deliver the financial benefits it has projected and to offer greater assurance to staff and unions that there will be no compulsory redundancies. There should be greater engagement with the unions to resolve issues around harmonisation, as well as a positive approach to future partnerships with other colleges, including Stow College.

"While these issues are important and must be resolved in a timely and productive manner, they do not justify denying students of the significant benefits this merger will bring. The City of Glasgow College will be a significant economic boost to the city and will provide an outstanding learning experience for both students and staff."

Background

This is the first ever merger involving three colleges since they were removed from local authority control in 1993.

There have been three previous college mergers, each involving 2 colleges. These

created Glasgow Metropolitan College (2004), Forth Valley College (2005) and The Adam Smith College, Fife (2005).

Ministers have published the main evidence and advice on which their decision has been based. These can be seen on the Scottish Government website at:
www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/UniversitiesColleges/17135/glasgowmerger.

The business case for a redeveloped campus for the three colleges is unlikely to be ready before mid-2011. Ministers have stressed that any proposals for a new campus must take into consideration the current and considerable pressures on public finances.

Contact

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