

Curriculum Quality & Student Experience Committee (CQSEC)

5th March 2026

Skills and Curriculum Planning

1.0 PURPOSE OF PAPER

For discussion

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide members with an overview on how curriculum/portfolio planning is considered and approved at our college.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Portfolio planning is key for our college to successfully deliver a curriculum that meets stakeholder need. Our offer should provide pathways (employment, higher education and articulation), align to regional and national need, is inclusive, flexible (upskilling and reskilling), aligns to national strategies, is future focused, is valid and reliable, meets stakeholders' expectations and of course is delivered within budget.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)/ACTION(S) REQUIRED

- 3.1 I recommend members consider the paper and are confident in our approach to planning.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 At CQSEC meeting 4th September section 46/25 an action was agreed for Vice Principal Student Experience to *'present updates to the next committee meeting regarding curriculum changes planned for 2026/27, including the rationale for the changes and the consideration of external influences'* Committee chair also added the importance of our college recognising known areas of geographic growth (social care) and stated *'It would be helpful to understand how curriculum structures are adapting to reflect these priorities'* This paper provides members with examples on how we plan our provision.

5.0 Borders College Planning Cycle

- 5.1 There are two parts to planning
- 1) The strategic and operational context (what we do on a day-to-day basis)
 - 2) A robust process to agree and record our plan to ensure good governance is applied with our decision-making.

5.2 Strategic and Operational Context

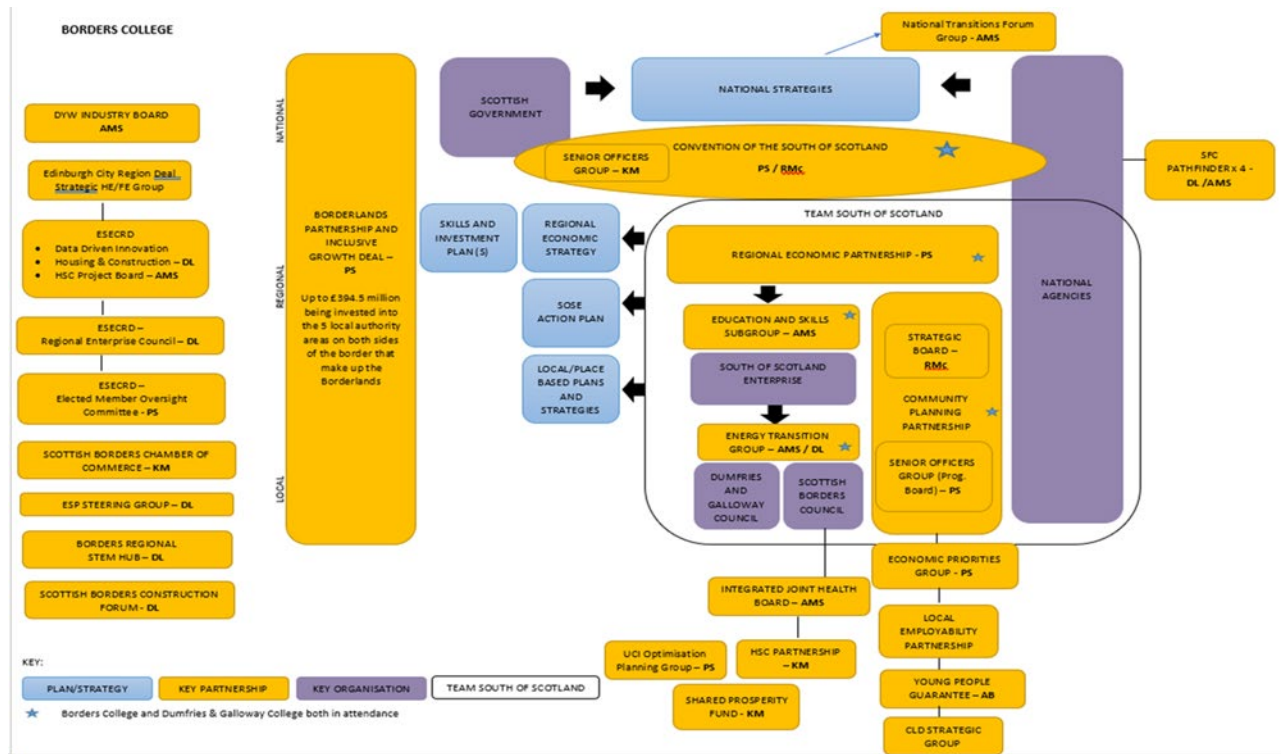
This is the main body of our planning process and of course there are two aspects to this, the planning of our core delivery (usually courses that start in either August or January and finishing in June) and the planning of our commercial delivery. While it is rather difficult to cover every aspect of planning, it is important to note key college strategies such as Vision 20230 and our recently approved Skills and Enterprise Strategy 2025-30. Both strategies set the strategic plan & direction for the college.

A key fundamental to planning is knowledge –

- Regional and national data e.g. employment trends, anticipated number of school leavers.
- Funding opportunities
- Local Labour Market Intelligence (LMI)
- Employers' skills requirements
- Anticipated School Leaver Preferences
- Student Support Needs
- Government priorities
- Government Strategy, Legislation & Policy
- Sustainability

It is essential to have relevant staff representation at key internal and external meetings covering regional and national committees. This ensures we are - a) delivering the right curriculum and skills, b) aware of opportunities and practices c) aware of funding opportunities d) be the voice of students and employers if they are not represented, e) plan effectively f) develop and enhance partnerships.

Below is an example of some of the external meetings executive and senior leadership members attend on behalf of the college which all forms part of our planning and offer.



5.2.1

Key to successful planning is collaboration and healthy relationships (importantly listening) to our students, staff and our regional and national employers on their current and future skills needs. An example of this has been the introduction of the 'Start up' project where entrepreneurial skills was identified as a key skill students require for economic progress. As a result, a funding application was successful and entrepreneurial skills i.e. 'Start up' embedded within key courses.

[Start-Up Competition Making Waves - A success story so far | Borders College](#)

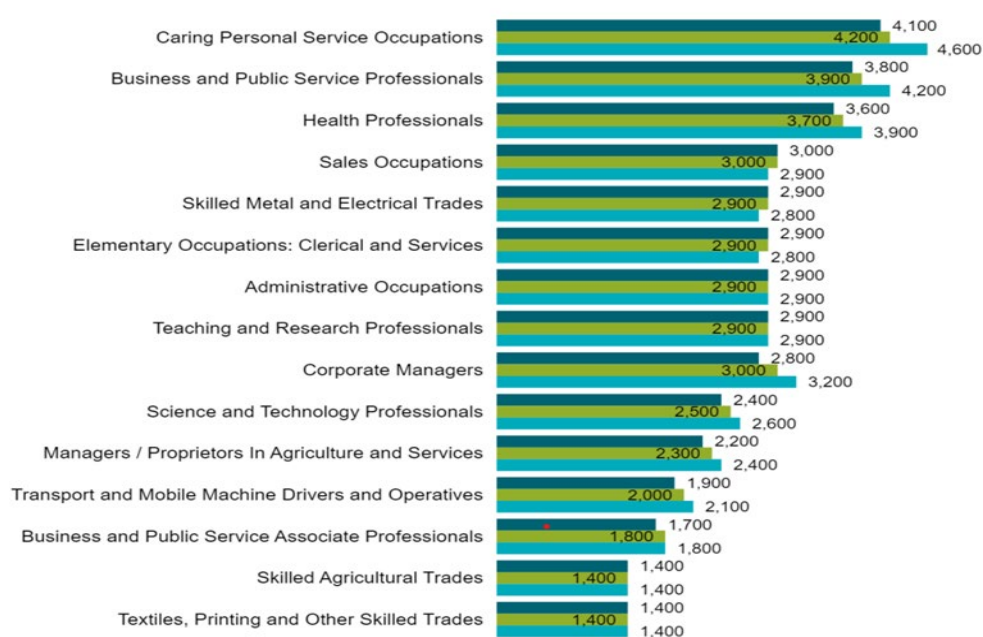
[Start-Up Spotlight: Confidence, Collaboration & Career Moves | Borders College](#)

[borders college start up project - Google Search](#)

5.2.2

Skills Development Scotland, Regional Skills Assessment (RSA), Scottish Borders (October 2025) also is a key driver for our current and future planning. The RSA presents high level (not 100% accurate) data on employment trends (replacement demand, skills and educational level required) for the Borders region. The purpose of the RSA is to *'provide a robust and consistent evidence base to support strategic skills investment planning'*. Our college is central to this, as over 30% of school leavers in the region go into employment and a high percentage of them requiring upskilling and qualifications and almost 27% of school leavers go on to Further Education. The RSA also considers long-term employment trends, and it is important of our interpretation of this document, for example, the need to be future focused. A current consideration of our long-term plan is the predicted growth in social care, childhood practice and health care (Human Health Professions). The chart below demonstrates a predicated growth of an extra 900 jobs required for Human Health Professions by 2035. To address this, encompassing skills and qualifications, the college recently applied to increase our space for delivery for the Human Health Sector. A Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) has been submitted to the Scottish Government as part of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal. This is an ambitious application with a monetary value of £1.5m to create a Human Health Innovation Lab (HHIL) for the region. The purpose of this lab will be to deliver skills such as digital technologies, values and principles, home care, robotics etc. This is an example of being future focused involving a range of stakeholders working together to address or avoid a potential crisis in the Human Health sector (a copy of this application is available for board members if required).

Employment in the 15 Largest Occupational Groups, Scottish Borders



5.2.3 The above two sector examples, provide members on how we address short term and long-term planning. Aligning our offer to planning is the key ingredient here, meaning, what courses do we offer? are they fit for purpose? do the courses provide the skills and knowledge required for either articulation or employment? Are they delivered in partnership? These questions are answered within the curriculum planning process.

5.2.4 Curriculum/Commercial Planning Process

A timeline of the planning process is detailed below. Managers spend a considerable amount of time with their teams, Management Information Systems (MIS) and finance team prior to our annual planning meetings in October. A series of meetings are held to discuss each sectors plan for the following academic session.

Date	Process	Any other relevant information
June	Staff undertake Self Evaluation of Courses	This determines articulation arrangements, student outcome, success of External verification reports
August	Staff review courses and KPIs	Staff are invited to review KPIs, Work experience opportunities, pathways, discuss the course meet stakeholder expectations i.e. students, employers and universities
Beginning of September	September - Head of Sector (HOS) finalise courses from previous sessions	This is necessary for final audit for Scottish Funding Council
End of September	HOS and Assistant Principals (APs) meet with Management Information Systems (MIS) team to input course requirements for following academic session (included within this are; delivery hours, staffing, credits, duration and mode of study)	This is the preparation for planning meetings
By end of 2 nd week in October	HOS upload Course requirements to pro-suite (college digital platform)	An example of this is within this paper
End of October	Individual meetings arranged with college executive for dialogue and approval and agreement of next steps (use of scoring methodology)	Decision methodology used to provide evidence for either discontinuation, continuation or introduction of new full-time/part-time and commercial courses
Middle of November	HOS complete final information on pro-suite for marketing of courses	This ensures that information on website is accurate
Middle of December	Marketing team finalise the college prospectus for the following August Full-time courses and schools' academies	E-prospectus will be distributed to all secondary schools in the Borders region
12 th Jan	All full-time and schools applications open	

During planning meetings all courses are considered and discussed. A tracking system of courses is noted which are colour coded –

- Blue denotes proposed new course.
- Amber denotes approved with some actions required.
- Green denotes course approved.
- Red denotes decision not to offer a newly proposed course or to discontinue a course.

***	25/26	CEL	SHS	Walker, Nikki (3182)	NQSFLW04FT2-001	Skills for Learning and Work - FT Year 2	Live	FT	FE
***	25/26	CEL	SHS	Walker, Nikki (3182)	NUSEAR02FT1-001	Project Search - FT	Live	FT	FE
***	25/26	CEL	SHS	Walker, Nikki (3182)	OSFUTU04FT1-001	Find your Vibe - FT	Live	FT	FE
***	25/26	CEL	SHS	Walker, Nikki (3182)	HCCARP07FT1-001	HNC Healthcare Practice - FT	Live	FT	HE
***	25/26	CEL	SHS	Walker, Nikki (3182)	HCCHIP07FT1-001	HNC Childhood Practice - FT	Live	FT	HE
***	25/26	CEL	SHS	Walker, Nikki (3182)	HCCHIP07FT1-002	HNC Childhood Practice - FT	Live	FT	HE
***	25/26	CEL	SHS	Walker, Nikki (3182)	HCCHIP07FT1-003	HNC Childhood Practice - FT	Live	FT	HE
***	25/26	CEL	SHS	Walker, Nikki (3182)	HCPHAC07FT1-001	HNC Physical Activity and Health - FT	Not Running	FT	HE
***	25/26	CEL	SHS	Walker, Nikki (3182)	HCSOCS07FT1-001	HNC Social Services - FT	Live	FT	HE
***	25/26	CEL	SHS	Walker, Nikki (3182)	HCSOCS07FT1-002	HNC Social Services - FT	Live	FT	HE
▶	25/26	CEL	SHS	Walker, Nikki (3182)	HDCHIP07FT1-001	HND Childhood Practice A - FT - Year 1	Not Running	FT	HE
***	25/26	CEL	SHS	Walker, Nikki (3182)	HDCOAD08FT1-001	HND Sports Coaching and Development - FT Year 1 - BASE Mountain Biking	Live	FT	HE
***	25/26	CEL	SHS	Walker, Nikki (3182)	HDCOAD08FT1-002	HND Sports Coaching and Development - FT Year 1	Live	FT	HE
***	25/26	CEL	SHS	Walker, Nikki (3182)	HDCOAD08FT1-003	HND Sports Coaching and Development - FT Year 1 - BASE Mountain Biking	Live	FT	HE
***	25/26	CEL	SHS	Walker, Nikki (3182)	HDCOAD08FT2-001	HND Sports Coaching and Development - FT Year 2	Live	FT	HE

These meetings also discuss three-year trends known as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) such as success rates, withdrawal rates, hours of delivery, cost of delivery and if there is a work placement. Facilities are considered especially for proposed new courses where there is the potential for capital costs.

Offering Details (HCCARP07FT1-001, HNC Healthcare Practice - FT, 25/26)

DetailsFacilitiesApplication and Enrolment StatsKPIHoursFinancialNew Provision (Executive Use Only)

	AY	Course Code	Applications	Enrolments	Conversion
▶	21/22	HCCARP07FT1-001	50	15	30
	22/23	HCCARP07FT1-001	36	13	36.1
	23/24	HCCARP07FT1-001	38	14	36.8
	24/25	HCCARP07FT1-001	36	7	19.4
	25/26	HCCARP07FT1-001	56	19	33.9
Σ					31.24

New...Delete...

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Offering Details (HCCARP07FT1-001, HNC Healthcare Practice - FT, 25/26)

Offering Details (HCCARP07FT1-001, HNC Healthcare Practice - FT, 25/26)									
Details		Facilities	Application and Enrolment Stats		KPI	Hours	Financial	New Provision (Executive Use Only)	
	Acad...	Course Code	Early Withdrawal	Withdrawal	Partial Success	Learner Succ...			
▶	...	21/22	HCCARP07FT1-...	0	13.3%	0.0%	86.7%		
	...	22/23	HCCARP07FT1-...	1	16.7%	8.3%	75.0%		
	...	23/24	HCCARP07FT1-...	0	14.3%	14.3%	71.4%		
	...	24/25	HCCARP07FT1-...	0	28.6%	14.3%	57.1%		
	...	25/26	HCCARP07FT1-...	0	5.3%	0.0%	0.0%		

New...

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CP KPIs

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A scoring system is applied to all proposed new courses with a score of 1-5 to enable good decision making. If a course is approved to run, the team will then have to go through an approval and development process as all courses offered by an awarding body such as Qualifications Scotland must have centre approval prior to delivery.

On occasion a proposed new course can score high however given our limited funding it may not be possible to run. This can also be due to lack of infrastructure to support the course.

Offering Details (HCPHAC07FT1-001, HNC Physical Activity and Health - FT, 26/27)							
Details	Facilities	Application and Enrolment Stats		KPI	Hours	Financial	New Provision (Executive Use Only)
Regional Need	Pathway to Employment	Articulation Need	Upskilling	Total Score	Decision	Next Steps	
4	4	5	3	16	Yes	Approved b	

Offering Target Details (250858)

Details

Regional Need: 4

Pathway to Employment: 4

Articulation Need: 5

Upskilling: 3

Next Steps: Approved but Business plan requested

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5.2.5

A key change to the planning for academic session 2026/27 is the work undertaken by finance, MIS and Assistant Principal Curriculum where staffing of courses and delivery hours is considered. This enables us to determine if we are fully utilising our staffing establishment or if delivery hours are too high. The graph below demonstrates we need to reconsider some of our delivery hours as we are at risk of going over budget (please note some of these delivery hours are also associated with commercial income).



5.2.6

This planning process has been enhanced over the years. It involves all teams (professional and academic) working together to create the college plan. It links to our website once approved. The system has been developed internally by committed staff working collaboratively. Feedback on the process has been mixed as it can be time consuming and at times disappointing for teams (as some decisions may not be what a team wanted), however feedback has also stated it is a worthwhile process, it enables dialogue, it provides an opportunity to understand external matters such as credit guidance and hours of delivery, its collaborative and supportive.

5.2.7

A number of new courses have been agreed for next academic session, and some (not all) are listed below

- ✓ National Progression Award (NPA) Computer Technology, Scottish Credit Qualification Framework (SCQF) Level 6
- ✓ English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) with Employability SCQF level 3
- ✓ HNC Computing (SCQF Level 7)
- ✓ Skills for work Early Education & Childcare (SCQF Level 5)
- ✓ Mechanical Engineering (SCQF Level 6)

Several courses will not be running next session

- ✓ HND Childhood Practice (SCQF Level 8) three-year trends demonstrates a downward trend in applications
- ✓ HNC Civil Engineering (SCQF Level 7) low uptake in applications

5.2.8

It is also worth noting, for our commercial activity we do not have this process however our commercial planning is just as involved as curriculum planning. The main difference being, requests for commercial courses come in any time during an academic session. This year we are implementing our 'Single Delivery Model' and for commercial planning, our Business Managers, Heads of Sectors and finance team work to establish a financial costing to ensure delivery is efficient and meets stakeholder needs. Thereafter teams work with MIS and marketing to start or advertise a course. We are also involved in several key external committees where funding for upskilling the workforce has yet to be allocated. One example is, involvement in the City Regional Deal, Edinburgh & Southeast Scotland, Integrated Regional Employability Skills (IRES) programme. The IRES committee (with involvement from Borders College staff) have just completed collaborative funding applications for construction & engineering, health & social care and land based and rural skills.

5.2.9

Along with our planning is our continued work with internal and external partners to support our students while attending college. This involves work with Student Support Services, IT & Digital, Finance, People Services & Marketing.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications

- 6.1.1 It is critical the cost of delivery is considered for all our offers to ensure college remains within agreed budgets.

6.2 Learner Implications

- 6.2.1 It is imperative our offer provides students with the qualification and skills for employment and articulation

6.3 Staff Implications

- 6.3.1 Our staff are our greatest asset and investing in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to enrich learning & teaching plus support is key to our success

6.4 Equality and Diversity Implications/Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.4.1 We are on track to becoming a trauma informed college. We have amended key student policies to be more inclusive. We ensure our curriculum and commercial plan has pathways for progression.

6.5 Sustainability/Environmental Implications

- 6.5.1 As mentioned previously, external drivers such as Government Strategies (Scotland's Climate Change Plan – 2026 204 & Just transitions) are key to our planning. Our Assistant Principal Curriculum & Sustainability provided board members with a presentation on how sustainable matters are delivered within our curriculum and wider college.

7.0 RISK COMMENTARY

- 7.1 There are significant risks of not having a robust planning process. Executive members attend all planning meetings and work with colleagues in making a collective decision whether to pursue or cease courses (both full and art time).

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Over the past four years the college have made improvements ensuring our offer is planned, flexible, future focused, aligns to region need, provides a good learning experience, is inclusive, quality driven, compliant & provides pathways to progression. Key to this is our staff and their role in being part of a process that in essence is simple but complex. While this paper does not cover detail on how each department plans, I hope members are confident with our approach.
- 8.2 It should be mentioned that minimum class sizes are considered when deciding to continue to run a course.

- 8.3 I would describe planning as an 'interdependent ecosystem', it relies on partnerships, collaboration, listening & acknowledgement of our funding situation.

Anne-Marie Sturrock

Vice principal Student Experience

11th February 2026

Previous Board or College Committee Approvals:

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