

John Wheatley College

Curriculum Design Guidelines

1 Introduction

The ethos of John Wheatley College underpins the College's approach to curriculum design. The College seeks to provide innovative and exciting programmes based on learner and employer needs and to offer appropriate support to learners throughout their programme(s). The aims of the curricular programmes offered will be to provide learners with opportunities to develop the skills required for lifelong learning, to contribute to local regeneration strategies and to develop citizenship.

These guidelines have taken into account recent guidance from HMIE, SFEFC, in particular the Learning to Work Report, and Future Skills Scotland. Cognizance has also been taken of the Scottish Executive's Lifelong Learning Strategy and 'Smart, Successful Scotland', which recognise the need to offer opportunities for lifelong learning to promote both social inclusion and employability. Full account will be taken by the College of any modifications to national priorities in this area and will respond to these wherever possible. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the College's Learning and Teaching Strategy.

2 Principles of curriculum design

The College has established a series of key principles to form the basis for the design of its programmes.

1. There is an identified need for the programme based upon robust market intelligence.
2. Nationally recognised qualifications will be offered whenever appropriate.
3. Programmes will be designed to develop the required vocational skills and the core skills of Communication, Numeracy, Information and Communication Technology, Problem Solving and Working with Others.
4. Within all programmes opportunities will be sought to develop citizenship. This will include the promotion of inclusiveness, equality of opportunity, race equality, sustainability and enterprise.
5. Induction and guidance will be included in all programmes. Progress will be monitored throughout via Individual Learning Plans (ILPs). These will record both learner attainment and achievement in order to identify the 'distance travelled' during the college experience.
6. Locally devised programmes will normally offer a range of elective units.

3 Nationally recognised qualifications and Group Awards

The College will seek where appropriate to offer nationally recognised qualifications in addition to recognising the individual achievement of learners.

National Qualifications, awarded by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), will be offered to meet the needs of learners, the community, the economy and employers. The full range of levels of units will be offered from Access 1 to Higher National as appropriate. This will allow for clear progression between and articulation from programmes to further study. Where there is an identified need, the College will offer qualifications from other awarding bodies such as the British Computer Society or City and Guilds.

The College will also offer an appropriate and adequate programme of non-certificated courses. The content of these programmes will normally be based around learning materials and resources designed for SQA units. This approach is intended to support progress to certificated learning. The purpose of this provision will be to facilitate access to the College's more formal provision for unconfident learners and to provide bespoke training to meet the specific needs of local small to medium sized enterprises.

4 Core Skills

All learners will have the opportunity to develop core skills based on their entry profile. Both pre-entry and induction processes will provide opportunities for the identification of competence in core skills.

The five core skills (Communication, Numeracy, Information and Communication Technology, Problem solving, and Working with Others) will be included in all full-time national qualification programmes either as discrete, integrated or embedded units. Furthermore, cognisance will be taken of the need to include employability skills within curriculum design.

Where discrete units are used they will normally be delivered within the appropriate vocational context.

Core skills units will be accessible to all students through flexible approaches to delivery, which may include discrete classroom delivery, combined classroom/workshop and on-line delivery or delivery within the College's Flexible Learning Units.

HN programmes, some of which include discrete core skills units, will provide further opportunity to develop core skills.

All curriculum teams will identify opportunities for incorporating core skills into programmes and the Flexible Learning Units will offer opportunities for progression in core skills levels.

5 Programme structure and choice

The duration of full-time programmes will normally be for one academic session.

The college will structure learning opportunities in such a way as to be available in a variety of modes – full-time, part-time, evening and through flexible learning. Learners will be afforded learning opportunities at a time, place and pace relevant to their particular needs. This flexibility will enable learners to access the widest possible curriculum and range of support. ILPs will be used to set learning objectives, to record attainment and progress towards other identified learning goals and/or achievements.

Induction programmes for full-time NQ learners will offer the formal SQA Induction Unit. In all full-time programmes, a range of introductory activities relevant to the vocational skills and core skills developed by the programme will be included. Provision will be made for recognition of prior attainment, learning and experience. This induction period will also be used to identify individual learning styles, additional support needs and to encourage good practice in study skills.

Part-time learners or those attending short programmes will be offered an induction programme relevant to the programme being followed.

In addition, unit specific induction will be provided for each unit of any programme.

Guidance will be available to enable learners to select units of study most appropriate to their needs and aspirations.

Assessment will be conducted as per the relevant awarding body's criteria.

6 Support for Learners

Learners will have access to a range of support services. These will include:

- Library and Learning Resource services;
- flexible learning;
- learning support;
- extended learning support;
- assistive technologies;
- careers advice;
- guidance; and
- specialist student services.

On-going guidance and regular reviews of progress will be provided by class tutors and recorded on ILPs.

The College does not provide counselling. It does however refer learners on to a range of specialist support services as detailed in the Directory of Caring Agencies/Advice Centres.

7 Quality procedures and review

All programmes will be subject to approval via the College's Programme Planning Group and the associated procedures. All nationally recognised qualifications and units require to be formally approved prior to delivery and assessment. Within each curricular area all programmes will be reviewed on a three yearly cycle as part of the College's self-evaluation and audit processes. A key element of the review process is the feedback from learners undertaking programmes. Learners will contribute to this process through the completion of end of unit and end of programme surveys, focus groups, mid-programme evaluation and formal representation at curriculum team meetings. The President of the Students' Association is a member of the College's Board of Management and of its Academic and General Purposes Committee. The remit of the Academic and General Purposes Committee includes review of the College's self-evaluation processes.

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