



Tuesday, 15 November 2021

Colleges and unis unite for fair budget claim for students

College and university principals have come together to call on the Scottish Government to deliver for Scotland's students in December's budget.

Audrey Cumberland, Chair of College Principals and Gerry McCormac, Convener of Universities Scotland have united in a call to the Scottish Government to deliver funding in the budget on 9 December to ensure college and university students get the best experience possible after what has been a turbulent time in education, the labour market and the economy because of the pandemic.

Audrey Cumberland said: *"There's no doubt that many young people and adults across Scotland studying in colleges and universities have been heavily impacted by the pandemic. At a crucial stage in achieving their aspirations, they have been denied the unique experience many of us took for granted."*

"For a whole cohort of young people who have missed out, the best way to reward their sacrifices is a college and university sector that is there to welcome them, get their learning back on track and prepare them for the future."

Gerry McCormac commented: *"During the pandemic the Scottish Government recognised the serious impact of the pandemic on young people's education and provided additional financial support. As the impact of COVID-19 continues, and to secure opportunities for young people as we emerge from it, it's essential that the good work already achieved isn't lost and funding of colleges and universities is put on a secure footing."*

"Scotland will benefit by giving our young people opportunities to thrive through college and university education that is properly resourced to meet their needs. The post-pandemic economy will be in a position to thrive through the efforts of these highly motivated people, equipped with the skills required for jobs in the 21st century."

"To provide students with those skills, our colleges and universities need financial stability. A three year budget, funded appropriately, to educate and support students and minimise future disruption to students, would allow for better planning and security of recovery for this vital sector."

This year and the next are deemed to be 'emergency years' in terms of funding for the sector according to the Scottish Funding Council.

Audrey Cumberland added: *"During the pandemic, we worked in tandem with the Scottish Government to ensure students were supported. Extra funding was given for mental health and wellbeing services. The pandemic has shone a spotlight on the many inequalities we see across our education system. Additional funding was provided to ensure that students facing hardship could access financial help and receive support to ensure they had the appropriate equipment like laptops so they could study from home. That help was vital and very much welcomed by us and students alike."*

Gerry McCormac concluded: *"We get up every morning wanting Scotland to be the best place in the world to study and learn. We are starting from a position of strength: Scotland's colleges and*

universities individually are the envy of many around the world. Collectively, our system has many attributes that other nations desire: a college and university sector that places the learner at the centre. Our colleges and universities complement each other and that's why we are jointly coming together to ask the Scottish Government to demonstrate it values colleges and universities with a budget that our students deserve."

ENDS

NOTES

- Colleges Scotland budget submission: <https://collegesscotland.ac.uk/Latest-News/Media-Releases/spending-review-submission-2022-25.html>
- Universities Scotland budget submission: <https://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/publications/supporting-universities-contribution-to-recovery-transformation/>

Contact information:

- Colleges Scotland: Jen Johnston, jen.johnston@collegesscotland.ac.uk; 07736 885 497
- Universities Scotland: Duncan McKay, duncan@universities-scotland.ac.uk; 07445 747 222