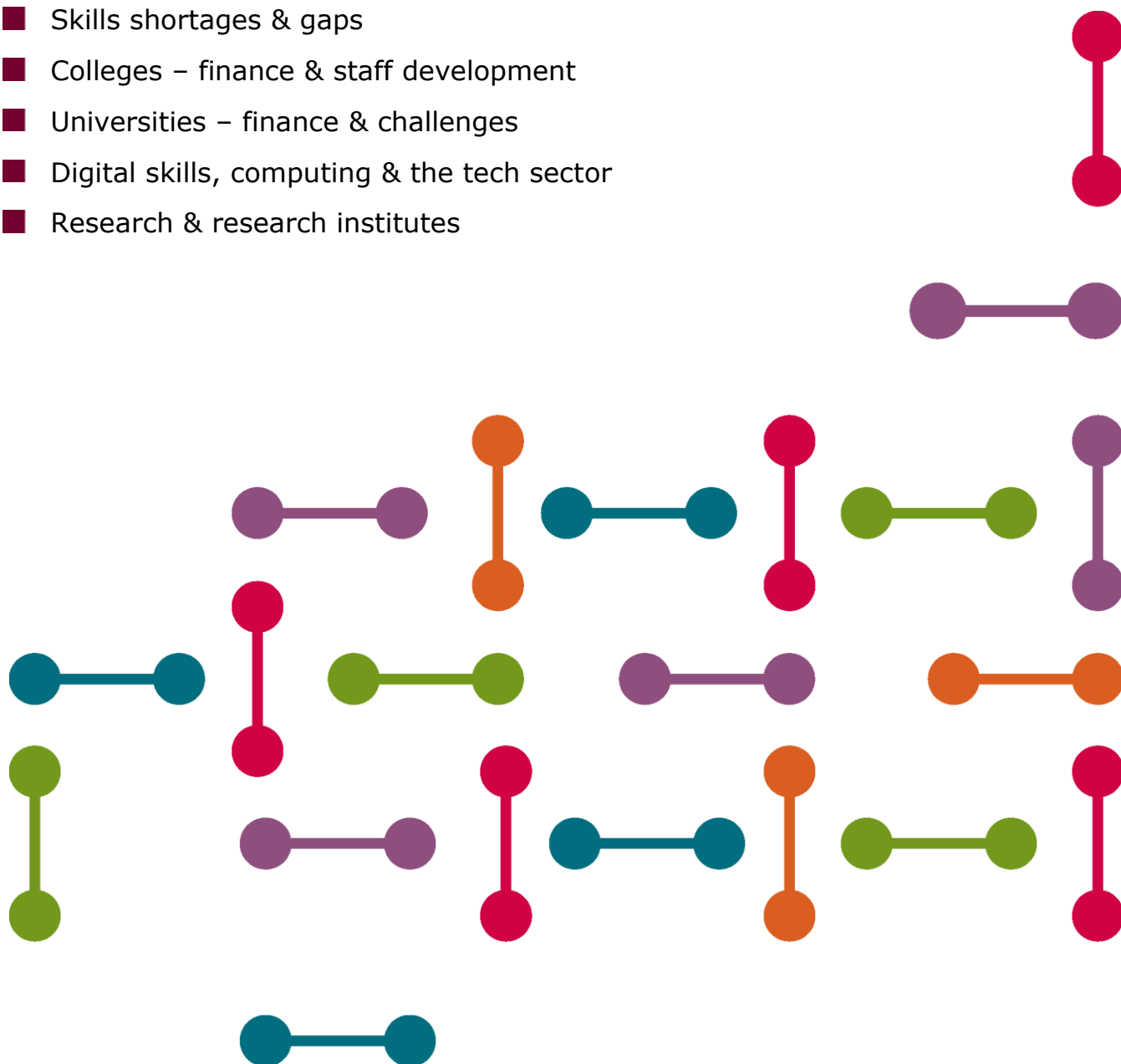


HOT TOPICS

- Scottish Government plans & priorities
- National Qualifications, assessment & certification
- Skills shortages & gaps
- Colleges – finance & staff development
- Universities – finance & challenges
- Digital skills, computing & the tech sector
- Research & research institutes



Produced by

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Informed Scotland is produced in Edinburgh for professionals who need to keep abreast of the world of learning and skills; there are ten issues per year. Every effort is made to ensure that the information presented is accurate, but no liability can be accepted for decisions made on the basis of the information provided. © AJ Enterprises 2021

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Interested in a whole-UK perspective? Contact elaine@emhconnect.co.uk for your free trial copy of [UK DIGEST](#).

PEOPLE

INDRO MUKERJEE

Chair & co-founder, UK Electronics

Skills Foundation, is new CEO,

Innovate UK.

EMPLOYMENT

■ Employment in Scotland from January to March 2021:

- Unemployment was 119,000, down by 4,000 over the quarter at 4.3% (4.8% for UK), and up by 3,000 from 4.1% in 2020 (3.9%).
- Male unemployment was 4.2% (5.0% UK), 4.3% for females (4.5%).
- Employment was 2.663m, up by 26,000 (by 5,000 over the year) at 74.4% (75.2% UK).
- Male employment was 76.7% (78.2% UK), female was 72.2% (72.2%).

■ **Skills Development Scotland (SDS)**

published the May 2021 COVID-19 Labour Market Insights and Dashboard, its latest monthly infographic reports with evidence of the impact on the economy, business, jobs and people.

■ Police Officer Quarterly Strength Statistics 31 March 2021 showed there were 17,283 full-time equivalent police officers (down 148 since 2020).

■ Scottish Government published Scotland's devolved employment services statistical summary.

- As of 31 March 2021, 32,504 joined Fair Start Scotland (FSS) since its launch in April 2018, 67% of those referred; 10,417 participants (33%) started a job after joining.
- 64% of FSS participants reported having a long-term health condition.
- 6,554 received No One Left Behind employability support from its launch in April 2019 to December 2020.

■ The latest RBS Report on Jobs recorded the fastest rise in permanent appointments in April since July 2014; temporary placements rose at a slower pace. Demand increased as vacancies surged and staff availability declined further.

DEVELOPING THE YOUNG WORKFORCE (DYW)

■ Youth unemployment for 16 to 24 year-olds in Scotland from January to March 2021:

- Unemployment was 8.0%, down from 12.0% a year ago (12.5% for UK, up from 11.4%).
- Male unemployment was 7.3% (13.8% UK) compared to 8.6% for females (11.1%).
- Employment was 54.5%, down 0.1ppt (50.7% UK, down 4.1ppt).

In Informed 1 in May 2012, youth unemployment was 23.1% and youth employment was 51.9%.

■ **Office for National Statistics** published Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). From January to March 2021:

- 728k 16–24 year-olds in the UK were NEET (down 43k from 2020), a record low, comprising 10.6% of the age group (down 0.6ppt).
- 43.9% of NEETs were classified as unemployed (up 2.3ppt); the rest were economically inactive (unavailable/not looking for work).

Business

■ **SDS** published the *Monthly Participation Snapshot for 16 & 17 year olds*, on involvement in learning, training & work at national & local levels.

- 95.7% of 106,673 young people were participating – 97.6% of 16 year-olds and 93.7% of 17 year-olds.
- 96.4% of females and 95.0% of males were participating; across all months, females were more likely than males to be participating.
- Those from more deprived areas remain less likely to participate than from less deprived areas.

The May issue is the last until November 2021.

■ **Prospects**, part of **Jisc**, published *Early Careers Survey 2021: Work experience during a crisis*, of 3,276 university (68%) and school & college students in the UK in January–February 2021. 78% were aged 16–24, 74% were female, 65% white & 50% were first generation students.

- 17% had had work experience in the last 12 months – 23% of those with two graduate parents, 17% of first generation students.
- 59% of work experience was unpaid – for 52% of university & 83% of school/college students.
- Despite COVID-19, it was mainly face-to-face.
- ~75% found work experience useful in developing their skills – paid, longer-term and face-to-face experiences were most useful.
- Lack of work experience was the main challenge for job-seeking university students.

■ **Resolution Foundation** published *Double trouble: Exploring the labour market and mental health impact of Covid-19 on young people*. It

suggests a number of structural changes over the past 20 years have made young people particularly vulnerable to the current crisis.

- In January 2021, 19% of 18–24 year-olds who were in work pre-crisis were unemployed (36% of those in insecure work), compared to 4% of 25–54s and 11% of 55–65s.
- In April 2020, 51% of 18–24 year-olds had mental health problems, up from 30% pre-crisis and highest for any age group.
- Young people with a mental health condition in 2010–11 (after the financial crisis) were more likely to be out of work four years later than those without (14% compared to 8%).

■ **Prince's Trust** announced:

- a three-year partnership with **Marvel** (part of **Walt Disney Company**) to offer a programme for 16–30 year-olds interested in working in fashion and product design. A two-week Get Started in Product Design with Marvel course will include mentorship from Disney designers, marketeers and retail teams
- **Ant & Dec's Making it in Media**, a new two-week 'behind-the-scenes' employability course for 16–25 year-olds not in work, education or training. The first is in London, with other UK locations to be announced.

CAREER INFORMATION, ADVICE & GUIDANCE (CIAG)

■ **SDS** published *Delivering Scotland's Career Service 2019/20*, its third annual CIAG report. It outlines the service provided by SDS and the impact of COVID-19 and SDS's response. It includes details on annual service use, satisfaction rates and case studies from the range of clients served.

■ **BBC** is working with **University of the West of Scotland** and **University of Glasgow** on a three-year research project exploring the attitudes and perceptions of Scottish school pupils and parents to working in the screen industries. The aim is to understand the reasons behind a lack of diversity in the Scottish screen sector.

APPRENTICESHIPS & TRAINING

■ SDS published Modern Apprenticeship [MA] Statistics, Q4 2020–2021*.

- Only 18,655 people **started** MAs by end Q4, compared to 27,875 in Q4 2019–20.
- 55.9% of new starts were aged 16–24 (61%).
- 60.3% were male (60%).
- 81.4% were at Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 6+ (75%).
- 13.0% had a disability (15.4%); 2.7% were of an ethnic minority (2.4%); 1.7% were care experienced (1.7%).
- 36,982 MAs were **in training** (38,030).
- 69.1% were aged 16–24 (72%).
- The highest proportion were in construction (32.3%) and sport, health & social care (17.7%).
- 936 were made **redundant** (up 538).
- 15,169 (76.4% of leavers) **achieved their MA** (21,900, 77%).
- 285 Adopt an Apprentice places were approved (up 58).

■ **Scottish Funding Council (SFC)** announced £16.2m funding for work-based apprenticeship programmes in 2021–22, covering 1,370 Graduate Apprenticeship places at universities and 3,160 Foundation Apprenticeships at colleges for senior phase school pupils.

■ **Intertrain**, part of **City & Guilds Group**, is to offer rail traineeships for 19–24 year-olds across the UK, including Glasgow, backed by UK adult education budget funding. The skills development includes a work experience placement and, on completion, trainees will be eligible to progress to an apprenticeship or a job in the sector.

■ SDS published Employability Fund [EF] Statistics Q4 2020/21*; the Fund combines a number of national training programmes that include 'real' work experience.

- There were 7,995 EF starts (8,750 in Q4 2019/20).
- 49.0% were aged 16–17 (down 2.6ppt), 21.6% were 18–24 (down 2.1ppt), 29.4% were 25+ (up 4.6ppt).
- 37.4% were female (up 4.7ppt).
- 25.5% had a disability (down 2.7ppt).
- 4.0% were of ethnic minority (up 0.2ppt).
- 6.1% were care experienced (down 0.9ppt).
- 69.5% of leavers achieved a positive result (down 3.7ppt), e.g. further training, a job, an MA or self-employment.

**NB for MAs and EFs: Comparisons with past data should be treated with caution as 'COVID-19 has fundamentally changed the context'.*

■ **Ayrshire College** is to deliver a free six-week full-time Aircraft Decommissioning Pathway training course at the new Skypath Aero Training Centre, Prestwick, supported by **Chevron**.

- The course is aimed at those aged over 25 who are unemployed or at risk of redundancy.
- It was developed via a partnership also involving **South Ayrshire Council**, **University of Strathclyde** and **National Manufacturing Institute Scotland**.

SKILLS, QUALIFICATIONS, LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

- Scottish Government published *Scottish Employer Skills Survey [ESS] 2020*, based on phone interviews with 3,497 businesses between October and December. Findings include:
 - 11% of employers had vacancies (down 9ppt from 2017).
 - 21% of vacancies were due to skills shortages (down 3ppt).
 - 12% of employers had a skills gap among employees (down 4ppt); the manufacturing sector had the highest density of skills gaps.
 - Main technical skills lacking among applicants to skill-shortage vacancies were specialist skills or knowledge (58%); the main personal skill lacking was self-management (58%).
 - 33% reported employee skills under-use (with qualifications/skills beyond those required) (35%); the highest proportion of the workforce underutilised was in financial services (16%).
 - 59% provided training in the last year (71%); 35% provided off-the-job training (51%).
 - 26% said COVID-19 had had an impact on their training plans.
 - 51% provided training in response to COVID-19 in the past six months.
 - Main reasons for not training were: staff are fully proficient (58%) and COVID-19 (22%).
 - 55% of staff had received some training in the previous year (down 7ppt).
 - 74% had an upskilling requirement (up 5ppt); the main reason was changing workplace practices due to COVID-19 (52%) (96% had changed working practices in some way).
 - 73% of employers that trained, provided online training or other e-learning (up 12ppt).

Good to see this report, after Scotland opted out of [ESS 2019](#) published by England's Department for Education (DfE) in Oct 2020 (see Informed 85), having been included since the first ESS by UKCES in [2011](#). The last ESS that included Scotland was published by DfE in [Aug 2018](#) (Informed 63).

- **SCQF Partnership** published:
 - *Introducing the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework*, to help learners, education providers, employers and parents better understand the SCQF
 - *Operational Plan for 2021-22*.
- **City & Guilds** published:
 - (10 May) *2020-2021 Assessment guidance: Scottish regulated qualifications; Scottish credit rated qualifications*, with adaptations in relation to COVID-19
 - (12 May) *Arrangements for assessment 2021: Vocational qualifications*, slides from a [webinar](#) with key guidance for its UK qualifications, Scottish credit rated programmes and qualifications regulated by **Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)**.
- **National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)** launched *Cyber Security for Small Organisations and Charities*, a new, free e-learning package on reducing the risk of successful cyber attack. *See a new NCSC resource for schools, page 13.*
- **West Lothian College** is working with **Scottish Ambulance Service** to offer a new *Gateway to Health & Social Care SVQ* for staff working in the Service's mobile testing units. *The nine-week course starts in June 2021.*
- **Kineo**, part of **City & Guilds Group**, published *Drowning in data? Exploring seven approaches to data to help you really measure success*, guidance for learning & development teams. The measurement and data approaches covered are: business impact; behaviour change; application; knowledge retention; confidence; engagement; and reaction.

Business

TECH SECTOR

■ **ScotlandIS** published *Scottish Technology Industry Survey 2021*, based on a survey of 200 firms between December 2020 and February 2021.

- 75% are optimistic about the next 12 months.
- The top challenges were staff recruitment and retention (58%, unchanged from 2020) and the current political situation (38%, down 10ppt).
- 74% expect to hire more staff in the next year (down 7ppt).
- 71% of those recruiting expect to hire university graduates (down 10ppt), 44% college graduates (down 2ppt).
- 33% expect to recruit Graduate Apprentices (down 11ppt), 22% Modern Apprentices (down 6ppt), and 12% Foundation Apprentices (down 2ppt).
- 53% expect to host students on work placements (down 13 ppt).
- 57% expected most recruits to be from Scotland (down 13ppt), 20% from the rest of the UK (up 5ppt), 4% Europe (down 5ppt), 6% the rest of the world (unchanged).
- Most in-demand skills are sales & marketing (82%, down 4ppt), data skills (66%, down 13ppt), software & web development (63%, down 14ppt) and artificial intelligence/machine learning (60% down 12ppt).
- Most in-demand technical skills are cloud computing, JavaScript, Python and .NET.
- 63% are offering flexible and 43% part-time working patterns.

In 2020, ~11,240 digital tech businesses were registered in Scotland, 6.3% of all businesses, employing 97k people, 3.7% of total employment.

OIL & GAS SECTOR

■ **Robert Gordon University** published *UK Offshore Energy Workforce Transferability Review*,

finding that over 90% of the UK's oil & gas workforce have medium to high skills transferability. In 2030:

- ~200k people are likely to be needed for the offshore wind, hydrogen, carbon capture & storage and ongoing oil & gas projects in UK offshore energy (compared to ~160k in 2021).
- ~80% of jobs in the sector are expected to be in/as: operations; technicians; engineering; projects; finance; HR; commercial/business development/marketing; procurement/supply management; health, safety & sustainability.
- ~50% of jobs are projected to be filled by those transferring from existing UK sector jobs, new graduates and recruits from outwith the sector.
- 65% of the workforce are projected to support low carbon energy activities.
- **Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce** with **Fraser of Allander Institute** and **KPMG** published the 33rd *Oil and Gas Survey*, describing the sector as 'on the cusp of dramatic transformation' towards 'a low carbon future'.
- 43% reduced FTE employment over the past year; 19% increased their workforce.
- 49% expect to recruit in the coming year.
- Net confidence was +6%, up significantly from -76% in November 2020.
- 75% expect to be involved in renewables in the next three to five years (up 6ppt).
- 40% listed skills shortages as a major constraint to activities (down 3ppt from 2019).
- 83% are considering more flexible working post-COVID; 80% are considering replacing some face-to-face activity with virtual.

Business

ENTERPRISE & SCALE-UP

■ **Scottish University Scale-up Consortium**, involving all 16 business schools, launched E squared (E²), a free online programme to help entrepreneurs teach businesses how to scale-up.

■ Participants will learn how to be more effective in delivering learning in incubators or accelerators, or as entrepreneurs in residence.

■ Developed with **Hunter Foundation**, E² is backed by funding from **SFC, Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE)** and **Scottish Enterprise**.

■ **Scottish Enterprise** published its 2021/22 Business Plan.

■ **Innovate UK** launched Scaleup Peer Networks, a UK-wide peer learning initiative for business leaders, in collaboration with **ScaleUp Institute**. There are ten networks in each nation and region, and four national networks for businesses in Innovate UK EDGE's Scaleup Programme.

■ **Scottish Financial Enterprise** published Scotland's Financial Services Strategy, a five-year strategy under four headings, including developing skills and inclusion – enabling firms 'to recruit, develop and retain diverse, high-performing skills within the industry'.

BUSINESS CONFIDENCE & THE ECONOMY

■ The latest RBS Purchasing Managers' Index saw Scotland's private sector activity continue to improve in April, with new business rising for the first time since August 2020. Companies increased their workforce for the first time since January 2020.

■ **Scottish Engineering's Quarterly Review Q2 2021** reported that orders, output, exports and staffing 'all improved significantly from negative to positive' since Q1. There is a 'welcome and essential' strong intention to invest in training.

■ ICAEW UK Business Confidence Monitor: Scotland Q2 2021 stated that confidence rose to its highest level since Q2 2014, due to the expectation of sharp rises in domestic sales and exports. Employee numbers are expected to increase by 3.5% over the next 12 months.

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE & RESEARCH

■ **National Centre for Universities & Business** and **University Commercialisation & Innovation Policy Evidence Unit** published Innovation and resilience in a crisis: The impact of Covid-19 on business R&D, based on a UK survey of 500 business leaders in September 2020.

■ 81% of businesses had to delay or stop research activity during the pandemic.

■ 96% reported changes to collaborative projects with universities.

■ 25% noted significantly reduced demand for university collaborations.

■ 64% of those who had engaged with universities in the year pre-pandemic had no plans to increase R&D activity with universities in the next year; 25% planned decreases.

■ 28% said insufficient government funding for collaborations was a key reason for changes to projects and interactions with universities.

Business

■ Three UK training centres have been created as part of the Advanced Therapies Skills Training Network to support vaccine manufacturing, and cell and gene therapy, backed by £4.7m UK Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and **Innovate UK** funding.

■ The centre in Scotland is led by **RoslinCT Training Academy**, with **Edinburgh Napier University, Ayrshire College, Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre, SDS, Scottish Universities Life Science Alliance** and **Scottish Enterprise**.

Schools

PEOPLE

JEN CROCKET

Lead Officer, West Partnership, will be new Head of Education: Lifelong Learning & Support, **Argyll & Bute Council**, from end of June 2021.

COVID-19 & SCHOOLS

- Scottish Government published:
 - (14 May) updated [Guidance for school visits and trips](#)
 - (21 May) [Pupil Equity Funding \[PEF\]: National operational guidance 2021](#) to help schools 'plan how they will most effectively spend' their PEF allocation
 - (25 May) updated [Guidance on reducing the risks from COVID-19 in schools](#)
 - (4 June) the latest weekly [COVID-19 Education Recovery Group: Children and young people infographic](#), including COVID-related absences.

See page 21 for other relevant updates. New Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills, Shirley-Anne Somerville, set out priorities for the new parliamentary session – see page 21.

- **Education Scotland** published:
 - (14 May) [Support for the education workforce during COVID-19](#), a new webpage with guidance on professional learning opportunities and resources on health & wellbeing
 - (17 May) additional updated [practical activities guidelines](#) for health & wellbeing and expressive arts subjects
 - (26 May) [Getting it right for all learners during Covid-19: A reflective tool for educators working together across Scotland](#), a self-evaluation tool for staff in all sectors.

See Education Scotland's National Improvement Hub [COVID-19 education recovery](#) section, and the [Supporting remote learning](#) webpage.

- (25 May) **Education Scotland** published [Recalibrating Equity and Social Justice in Scottish Education: Bouncing forward after COVID-19 lockdowns](#), a guide to help schools and local authorities consider how their Scottish Attainment Challenge funding is used. It details six broad principles:
 - Impact of COVID-19 on the achievement gap
 - Prioritise re-engagement for those already facing disadvantage
 - Identify those learners most impacted by poverty and COVID-19
 - Intensify short-term support for these learners
 - Provision needs to be high quality, universal and targeted
 - Long-term strategic vision to close the poverty related attainment gap is still required.

- (14 August) **Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education (SAPOE)** published [COVID-19: Guidance to support the reintroduction of school residential visits](#), for outdoor education centres, local authorities and schools, commissioned by Scottish Government.

Schools

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (NQs), CERTIFICATION & ASSESSMENT

■ SQA published:

- (10 May) [a summary of steps it has taken to address disruption to learning](#)
- (14 May) [NQs 2021: Important message from organisations working across Scottish education](#), highlighting facts about the [Alternative Certification Model \[ACM\]](#)
- (2 June) [2021 Appeals Service](#) for NQs; all [learners](#) will have the right to appeal directly to SQA for the first time, free of charge. Centres will still be able to appeal on behalf of learners if preferred. Three grounds for appeal are: against the academic judgement; against an unresolved admin error; discrimination
- (2 June) [2021 National Qualifications Appeals Process Consultation Analysis](#)
- (2 June) [Research amongst HEIs, colleges and employers](#) by **Ashbrook Research & Consultancy** from February 2021, on the use and importance of NQs, 2021 exams diet priorities, assessing learners and appeals.

There have been calls, including from the Children & Young People's Commissioner, for a 'no detriment policy' for student appeals. Guidance on the appeals service for centres is due by 11 June. Tes Scotland reported that some SQA assessment papers have been shared online. SQA statements, support and resources are [here](#).

■ SQA is running a course for teachers and lecturers on [Determining provisional results at National 5, Higher & Advanced Higher](#). This is in place of its Quality assuring estimates course.

■ **Tes Scotland** [reported](#) that Scottish Government has suspended the collection of Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels data for S3 students in English and maths for 2020–21 due to the pressures of the pandemic. The [Scottish National Standardised Assessments](#) are still available however, and primary pupils' data will still be collected.

■ (2 June) **Education Scotland** published [National review of local authority approaches to quality assurance as part of the alternative certification model](#), carried out in April by HM Inspectors of Education, commissioned by Scottish Government. The review included an exploration of how local authorities are supporting the understanding of standards, and school-level assessment approaches and quality assurance.

■ **Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association (SSTA)** published findings from its [Survey May 2021: National Qualifications 2021 – Alternative Certification Model](#), based on 1,710 responses.

- 90% of teachers had been involved directly and 6% indirectly this term in moderation/verification/quality assurance.
- Only 20% believe the ACM is a fair and reasonable method of assessment.
- 76% said teacher professional judgement should be the major factor in assessment this year; 38% said demonstrated evidence should be the sole factor in allocating grades.
- 64% used the SQA exemplar exam papers in full; 33% used parts of the papers.
- 78% had difficulty collecting evidence that demonstrates pupils' attainment; 75% said their pupils had difficulties providing suitable evidence.
- 36% believe the evidence they have collected truly demonstrates their pupils' attainment.
- **Collection, marking and moderation of evidence:** 98% said it has created substantial additional workload for them, 85% for their pupils; 96% said it has created substantial additional stress/pressure for them, 92% for their pupils.

Schools

TEACHER EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

■ **General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)** has extended the deadline for Professional Update sign-off to 31 October 2021 for the current cohort, in recognition of the extra pressures on teachers and lecturers.

■ A celebration was held to award teachers the **GTCS Standard for Headship** after they had completed the Into Headship programme coordinated by **Education Scotland**.

■ **Education Scotland** opened applications for the Supporting Teacher Leadership programme for those with 'significant experience of leading learning and teaching through practitioner enquiry'. Applications close on 10 June 2021.

■ **Scottish Educational Research Association (SERA)** launched a new Teacher Education Network, open to academics and research students, practitioners and research users. *A recording of the launch is on SERA's YouTube.*

PARENTS & CARERS

■ **Connect** published Parent/Carer Survey: COVID-19 Lockdown 2021 – How are you doing? findings from its fourth online survey during the pandemic, held in February and March.

- 784 responses were received from 31 local authorities.
- 81% of respondents did not have children in nursery or school during lockdown.
- 83% had what their child needed in order to do school work at home.
- Lockdown learning experiences varied significantly between schools and classes.

- School-to-home communication was 'more organised' compared to the first lockdown.
- Parents and children were not consulted often enough for further improvements to be made.
- Existing inequalities in society and education were exposed.
- Children with additional support needs did not receive enough help with school work.
- Most respondents said their child's school/nursery had provided information to support wellbeing; 22% had not.

INTERNATIONAL POLICY COMPARISONS

■ **UNESCO** launched Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews (PEER), a new online monitoring tool that presents 'comparable, systematic and up-to-date' descriptions of over 200 countries' legislation and policies related to the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report themes.

- It aims to explore key trends and facilitate 'peer learning and policy dialogue' between countries on issues central to achieving UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.
- Profiles cover inclusion and equitable finance; non-state actors & climate change will follow.

The UK profile, with links to separate information for the four nations, can be found here.

Schools

DEVELOPING THE YOUNG WORKFORCE (DYW)

■ **Engineering Development Trust (EDT)**
Scotland launched a new, online [Net Zero Virtual Work Experience](#) programme to provide S3–S6 pupils and school leavers with insights into science, technology, engineering & maths (STEM) industry and careers. Participants will learn about Scotland’s path to becoming carbon neutral and receive an [Industrial Cadets Silver Award](#).

■ **Planit** published [Career Pathways](#) resources to help young people see the careers that different subjects can lead to, the academic and vocational pathways available, and the skills and qualities required.

DIGITAL EDUCATION & COMPUTING SCIENCE

■ **DressCode** launched a [Digital Technology Education Charter](#) in response to the declining uptake of computing science and the drop in computing studies teachers in Scotland.

- The charter is run by a team of computer science teachers and industry representatives.
- It calls for individuals, schools, colleges, universities & business to encourage pupils to study the subject and raise awareness of the range of career opportunities available.

■ **NCSC** launched [CyberSprinters](#), a new free educational game and resources for primary schools, clubs and youth organisations to teach 7–11 year-olds how to stay secure online.

Over 100 organisations and individuals have signed up. [DressCode](#) encourages girls into tech.

LEARNING RESOURCES, SUPPORT & PROJECTS

■ **Education Scotland** published:

- [Judy Murray Tennis Resource](#), videos and support materials for PE for 5–18 year-olds, in schools, at home and developing tennis skills sections. Activities are demonstrated that can be adapted to the school space available.
- [COP26 Wakelet](#), a collection of key learning and teaching resources with climate change and the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) as a context.

■ **Education Scotland** opened applications for the [Food for Thought](#) education fund 2021/22 for all schools, offering up to £3k towards a project that educates learners on aspects of food & drink.
The closing date is 24 June 2021.

■ **Glasgow Academy** opened applications for [Partnering Innovative Approaches to Learning](#) (Pineapple), a new innovation fund for anyone wanting to develop an idea (e.g. an app, research into teaching, resources) that will improve education for children in Scotland.

■ Major events:

- **Education Scotland’s** [Scottish Learning Festival](#) will be held from 21 to 23 September 2021, entirely online.
- **Edinburgh International Book Festival** published its [2021 Baillie Gifford Schools Programme](#), online 23–31 August 2021.

Further & Higher Education

PEOPLE

DEBBIE MURRAY

Interim Principal, **North Highland College UHI**, has been confirmed in post.

JULIE ASHWORTH

CEO, Broadreach Leadership Consultancy, is new Senior Governor, lead of the University Court, **University of Aberdeen**.

VICKI STOTT

Executive Director of Operations & Deputy Chief Executive, **Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)**, will be new Chief Executive when **Douglas Blackstock** steps down in autumn 2021.

BETH LAWTON

Chief Digital & Information Officer, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, will be the first Chief Digital & Information Officer, **University of Strathclyde**, from July 2021.

HARRY ADAM

a former HR director, Ian Williams, is new Chair of Court, **University of Stirling**.

UNIVERSITIES: FUNDING, CHALLENGES & ECONOMIC IMPACT

■ **SFC** published *Final university funding allocations for AY 2021-22* – total revenue budget is £1,112.48m (up 5.9%); teaching is £734.7m (up 7.8%); research & innovation is £294.4m (up 1.5%); capital is £58.1m (~unchanged).

■ UK Parliament's Scottish Affairs Committee published *Universities and Scotland* on challenges facing higher education (HE) and the impact of reserved decisions on Scottish universities. Conclusions and recommendations include:

- Expand the Turing Scheme to provide funding for UK placements for international students and opportunities for academic staff.
- Introduce a new/expanded scholarship scheme to attract EU students to Scotland and the UK.
- Increase the representation of Scottish universities on the **UK Research & Innovation (UKRI)** board, and provide a seat for **SFC** on the UKRI executive committee.
- Scottish Government and universities should work with UK Government and universities to find examples of best practice in diversifying income streams away from potentially volatile international student fees.
- Scottish Government should review student mental health services, following evidence of structural underfunding pre-dating COVID-19.

Universities Scotland welcomed the report.

■ **Universities UK (UUK)** published *Universities and the UK's economic recovery: An analysis of future impact*, including for Scotland, by **National Centre for Entrepreneurship in Education**.

~2% of workers in Scotland are employed by a university (1.27% UK). Over the next five years it is predicted that Scottish universities will:

- provide ~£1.3b worth of support and services to SMEs, businesses and not-for-profits
- help establish over 1,000 new companies and charities
- provide the equivalent of 3,490 years of training
- train 22,525 teachers, 21,175 nurses and 9,650 medics
- perform £3.4b worth of research collaboration with non-academic organisations.

A new UUK #GettingResults campaign aims 'to put universities at the heart' of the recovery.

■ **Universities Scotland** published a briefing paper building on the above, to inform a Scottish Government debate on economic recovery. It highlights the contribution of universities to research, meeting skills needs, business recovery and local communities.

Further & Higher Education

COLLEGES: FINANCE

■ **Audit Scotland** published [*Scotland's Colleges 2020*](#).

- In 2019/20, financial challenges continued for many colleges, then the impacts of COVID-19 hit revenue streams further.
- The sector reported an overall deficit of £54m in 2019/20, 7% of total income.
- Colleges received £685.3m revenue funding in 2020/21 (up £70m from 2019/20).
- Overall, the sector has responded well to the pandemic, with governance and financial management continuing effectively.
- COVID-19 increased the need for colleges to determine what buildings and equipment they require.

- Responding to the longer-term impact of COVID-19 will require change.
- A significant number of colleges need increased funding and/or cost cutting to deliver balanced budgets in the future.

There are 26 colleges, 20 are incorporated.

■ **SFC** published [*Final college funding allocations for AY 2021–22*](#) – total revenue budget is £711.8m (up 9.2% from 2020–21); teaching is £527.1m (up 8.2%); capital budget is £33.7m (down 5.9%).

COLLEGES: STAFF DEVELOPMENT

■ **GTCS** reported that almost 400 college lecturers from three pilot colleges – **Dundee & Angus, Forth Valley** and **Glasgow Kelvin** – have joined the register since the [*pilot*](#) began in November 2020.

- The College Lecturer Registration Working Group is managing the programme, involving **Colleges Scotland, EIS-FELA, GTCS**, Scottish Government and universities offering the Teaching Qualification in FE (further education).
- ~4,000 lecturers are due to start the registration process in August 2021 when national roll-out begins.

■ **College Development Network (CDN)** launched two new [*Teaching in Colleges Today*](#) (TiCT) credit rated units for new college lecturers, at SCQF levels 7 and 8. **Fife College** is the current TiCT Credit Rating Body; the units were initially developed with **New College Lanarkshire** in 2013.

The units will be available from 10 June 2021.

■ **CDN** is working with all Scottish colleges on a [*new project*](#) to develop a baseline level of digital skills for FE lecturers. It will build on the [*'Digital capability profiles for different roles'*](#) published by **Jisc** in March 2017.

Findings are due to be published in August 2021.

WIDENING ACCESS

■ **Universities Scotland** published [*Guaranteed offers for care-experienced applicants*](#), a short guide providing more information about the guarantee and what it means for applicants.

■ **Disabled Student's Commission** (managed by **Advance HE**) published [*Post Qualification Admission Principles*](#), setting out eight principles for consideration to ensure disabled students' needs are taken into account in a proposed post-qualifications admissions system.

Further & Higher Education

QUALITY, STANDARDS & ASSESSMENT

■ (7 May) **QAA** published *[A launch pad for future success: Using outcomes-based approaches to scaffold the pandemic year and build for the future](#)*, on what worked well in assuring UK HE quality and standards in the pandemic, and what is likely to endure.

See [QAA COVID-19 support & guidance resources](#).

■ **Jisc** and **Emerge Education** published *[Rethinking assessment](#)*, a follow up to two 2020 reports on the future of assessment. It concludes:

- The 'pandemic has offered a real opportunity for universities to reimagine assessment, to make it more relevant, adaptable and trustworthy'.
- Before a possible return to 'normal' in 2022, HE should undertake wholesale rethinking, involving every individual and department.
- Changes need to be developed in partnership with employers, product providers & students.

RESEARCH & RESEARCH INSTITUTES

■ **SFC**, **Research England**, Northern Ireland's **Department for the Economy** and **Higher Education Funding Council for Wales** are leading a new [Future Research Assessment Programme](#) on behalf of UK and devolved governments. Supported by an [International Advisory Board](#), its work will include:

- Evaluating the [Research Excellence Framework \(REF\) 2021](#)
- Understanding international research assessment practice
- Investigating possible evaluation models and approaches.

It is expected to conclude by late 2022.

■ **Advance HE** published *[Best practice responses to Covid-19 and gender equality within research institutes](#)*, based on a survey of 30 institutes. Recommendations include on harnessing any positives emerging from the pandemic, as well as mitigating against long-term inequalities. The main themes explored were staff health & wellbeing, professional development, remote working and supporting those with caring responsibilities.

[Advance HE published its Strategy 2021–24: Helping HE shape its future.](#)

■ **Higher Education Policy Institute** published *[Regional policy and R&D: Evidence, experiments and expectations](#)*.

- Comparable countries appear to have higher levels of research concentration than the UK.
- Variations within regions can be greater than between regions – in Scotland, the ratio is 8:1 between the sub-regions with the largest and smallest expenditure (~12:1 in London, 3:1 in NW England).
- Recommendations include: set a clear vision and regional metrics for success; build strong inter-regional collaborations and national–regional relationships.
- Ensure financial sustainability for university research.

Further & Higher Education

TRANSNATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

■ (3 June) **UUK International** updated its [Covid-19 and UK universities: International updates and FAQs](#), a hub of information on staff, current and future international students, student mobility and transnational education (TNE).

- **QAA** launched [Quality Evaluation & Enhancement of UK Transnational Higher Education](#) (QE-TNE), a new scheme commissioned by **UUK** and **GuildHE** until 2025–26. QE-TNE:
- aims 'to help UK degree-awarding bodies improve and enhance the quality of their international provision'
 - is open to all UK HE bodies engaging in TNE
 - involves United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Germany in year one, and China, Sri Lanka and Saudi Arabia in year two.

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION & PROJECTS

■ **University of the Highlands & Islands** (**UHI**) [signed an agreement](#) with representatives from **Múlaping**, a municipality in east Iceland, to promote closer connections between their communities. Areas for collaboration include research and enhancing educational provision in Múlaping.

■ **University of Edinburgh** signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with cloud computing company, **Tencent Cloud**, China, to support research and education programmes. Collaboration will include knowledge exchange, digital and classroom training, and research and talent initiatives.

- **University of Aberdeen** School of Education is working with **Leeds Beckett University** and institutions in the Netherlands, Belgium, Hungary, Germany, Portugal and Slovenia on [Reimagining a Positive Direction for Education](#), a two-year digital education project backed by Erasmus+ funding.
- Researchers will pool findings to strengthen inclusivity of education via digital learning.
 - Free online resources will be produced for teachers, families and the wider community.

■ **University of Strathclyde** is one of three UK universities to [sign up to](#) the **UN's University Global Coalition**, involving HE organisations working together and with [UN Institute for Training & Research](#), [Sustainable Development Solutions Network](#) & others, to support the SDGs.

PARTNERSHIPS

■ **Fife College** is to deliver two new degrees in partnership with **Queen Margaret University** from September 2021:

- [BA \(Hons\) Childhood Practice](#), a part-time work-based qualification for those working as early years' practitioners in Scotland
- [BA \(Hons\) Childhood Studies](#), initially full-time, for those with a recent relevant HND.

Further & Higher Education

COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

■ **Open University in Scotland**'s total student numbers in 2020/21 increased by 20% to over 21k from 2019/20. This includes 9k new students in the past year, up from 7k, mainly due to the impact of COVID-19.

■ **Royal Conservatoire of Scotland** has postponed the start of its BA Performance in British Sign Language & English programme until 2022–23 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

■ **Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)** is planning to establish a new vet school at its Aberdeen campus, offering veterinary medicine courses from HND to postgraduate degree level. A working group will take forward the plans.

■ **University of Aberdeen** is to run a new MSc in Sustainability Transitions from September 2021, for leaders 'attempting to mitigate climate change' and address challenges in line with the UN SDGs.

■ **University of Stirling**'s BA Hons Finance has become **Chartered Financial Analyst Institute (CFA)** affiliated, the first undergraduate degree in Scotland to achieve CFA affiliation.

Community & Adult Learning

PEOPLE

MARTIN AVILA

Director, Kinning Park Complex, will be new CEO, **Community Enterprise in Scotland** from August 2021; [Ian Mitchell](#) is now Deputy Director, Scottish Government, leading a Corporate Change Team.

COMMUNITY LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT (CLD)

■ (21 May) Scottish Government updated the [COVID-19: Public libraries guidance](#).

Education Scotland shares 'CLD COVID recovery resources' [here](#).

■ **West Highland College UHI** is working with **NatureScot** (formerly **Scottish Natural Heritage**) to pilot a [Ranger Placement Scheme](#) as a progression for students completing the [NQ Countryside Skills with Ranger Training](#) course.

■ **Education Scotland, Learning Link Scotland, YouthLink Scotland and Glasgow Science Centre** are working together to create a [National STEM Network for CLD](#). The aims include increasing practitioners' confidence in STEM, and their awareness of opportunities and knowledge of resources.

DIGITAL SKILLS

■ **Lloyds Bank** published [UK Consumer Digital Index 2021](#), including a set of [tools and resources](#).

- **In Scotland:** 96% of respondents had used the internet in the last three months (up 1ppt from 2020).
- 35% say their digital skills have improved as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (2nd in UK; London 41%); needing to work from home has been a key driver.
- 63% increased internet usage (2nd; London 68%).
- 88% are confident using the internet (2nd; London 90%).
- 30% have very low digital engagement (3rd; Wales 33%).
- **UK wide:** 1.5m more people have started using the internet.

- 73% of office workers vs 62% of manual workers use the internet to develop professionally and improve work prospects.
- 31% of unemployed people have low/very low digital capability vs 19% of those working.
- 28% have upskilled themselves for work-related reasons.
- 57% said the simplest way to receive digital skills support is via their employer.
- 77% would improve their digital skills if it would directly help them with day-to-day tasks or work, 67% if they knew there was support available when needed, 64% if it would help them progress or get a better job.

The third annual measure of Essential Digital Skills is to be published in autumn 2021.

Community & Adult Learning

ADULT LEARNING

■ **UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning** and partners published *Curriculum globALE: Competency framework for adult educators*. It includes a suggested standard of competencies for adult educators and guidance for train-the-trainer programmes. It aims to 'foster knowledge exchange and mutual understanding among adult educators worldwide'.

YOUTH WORK & CHILDREN'S NEIGHBOURHOODS

■ (24 May) **YouthLink Scotland** published an updated *COVID-19: Guiding framework to support the delivery of youth work services*, developed with Scottish Government and **Public Health Scotland**.
See YouthLink Scotland's [COVID-19 Guidance hub](#).

■ **Children's Neighbourhoods Scotland (CNS)** published its *Annual report 2020/21*. There are currently two CNSs, both in Glasgow – Clydebank and Bridgeton & Dalmarnock.

Government & Wider Society

PEOPLE

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Cabinet members with relevant posts, and Parliament spokespeople for other parties, have been appointed – *see details in the Annex, page 23.*

PROF CATHERINE HEYMANS

astrophysicist, University of Edinburgh, is the 11th **Astronomer Royal for Scotland**, the first woman to hold the post.

STEPHEN PATHIRANA

Deputy Director Trade & Investment Delivery, Scottish Government, is now Director of Advanced Learning & Science.

SCOTT MCDONALD

CEO, Oliver Wyman Group, will be Chief Executive, **British Council** from September 2021.

JUDE MCCORRY

CEO, Scottish Business Resilience Centre, is the first Chair, **CyberScotland Partnership**.

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT PLANS & PRIORITIES

■ Setting out Scottish Government plans for the new Parliament, in her 26 May 2021 Priorities of Government Statement, the First Minister said that 'support for skills and young people is part of our wider mission to create a fairer Scotland'. Relevant announcements include plans to:

- fund 3,500 additional teachers and classroom assistants over the parliamentary term
- take steps to remove charges for core curriculum activities, and for music and arts education, including instrumental music tuition
- establish a Green Jobs Academy
- invest £45m via local partnerships to provide training & employer recruitment incentives
- fund colleges to deliver ~5k more short, industry-focused courses.

■ (3 June) Scottish Government is to reform Education Scotland and SQA as part of its education recovery plans. The reforms will consider their roles, remit, purpose, functions and governance arrangements, and will be informed by the **OECD** review of Curriculum for Excellence, (due on 21 June).

Education Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville described the reforms as 'a key priority' for her. See other announcements on page 10.

■ (5 June) Scottish Government published updated COVID-19 protection levels: What you can do.

EARLY LEARNING & CHILDCARE (ELC)

- Scottish Government published:
 - (17 May) updated COVID-19: Organised [unregulated] activities for children
 - (21 May) updated COVID-19: Guidance on reducing the risks from COVID-19 in ELC settings.
- **Education Scotland** and **GTCS** are offering funded Digital 1:1 Coaching sessions for ELC managers, on 'navigating the current challenges caused by COVID-19'.

■ **Froebel Trust** awarded funding to researchers at **Moray House School of Education & Sport**, University of Edinburgh, to increase understanding of a 'Froebelian' approach to early education and provide training for early years educators. The project will involve collaboration with researchers from the Czech Republic and Greece, and Scottish local authorities. *Part of a £1m project that includes England and New Zealand.*

Government & Wider Society

- **Improvement Service** reported that:
 - 114,222 children were accessing funded ELC at the end of February 2021.
 - 86% were accessing more than the 600 hours statutory entitlement, 65% were accessing the full 1,140 hours.

Local authorities will be required to offer the full 1,140 hours from August 2021.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

■ **Money & Pensions Service** published *Young people and money: A review of young people's use of online information and advice*. The report highlights gaps in the understanding of young people's needs in accessing help with money, and includes learning points for how online money guidance can work best.

- **Children in Scotland** launched a 12-month *Participation Through the Pandemic* peer research project backed by Young Start funding.
 - It aims to gain greater understanding of how being unable to work together in person has changed how 8–24 year-olds share views.
 - Six 14–18 year-olds will be recruited to gather views and experiences of those involved in projects on e.g. outdoor learning, mental health & wellbeing, accessibility and inclusion.
-

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CABINET & PARLIAMENT SPOKESPEOPLE

Scottish Government Cabinet & Ministers with relevant responsibilities

- **Scottish National Party**
 - **Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills**, Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP
 - Minister for Children & Young People, Clare Haughey MSP
 - Minister for Higher Education & Further Education, Youth Employment & Training, Jamie Hepburn MSP
 - **Cabinet Secretary for Finance & the Economy**, Kate Forbes MSP
 - Minister for Just Transition, Employment & Fair Work, Richard Lochhead MSP
 - Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism & Enterprise, Ivan McKee MSP
 - **Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs & Islands**, Mairi Gougeon MSP

Scottish Parliament party spokespersons

- **Scottish Conservatives**
 - **Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills**, Oliver Mundell MSP
 - Higher Education & Further Education, Youth Employment & Training, Pam Gosal MSP
 - Children & Young People, Meghan Gallacher MSP
 - **Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Economy**, Liz Smith MSP
 - Just Transition, Employment & Fair Work, Tess White MSP
 - Business, Trade, Tourism & Enterprise, Jamie Halcro Johnston MSP
 - **Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs & Islands**, Rachael Hamilton MSP
- **Scottish Labour**
 - **Education & Skills**, Michael Marra MSP
 - Children & Young People, Lifelong Learning & Youth Employment, Martin Whitfield MSP
 - **Finance & Economy**, Daniel Johnson MSP
 - Employment & Public Finance, Paul Sweeney MSP
- **Scottish Greens**
 - **Education, Culture & External Affairs**, Ross Greer MSP
- **Scottish Liberal Democrats**
 - **Education & Skills**, Beatrice Wishart MSP