

Further Education (FE) Essential Skills Policy

Document Reference Number

Date Approved

Review Date

EIA

Lead Officer

Review Officer

PL/QU/2026/002

23/06/2026

23/06/2029

Yes

TEL - Management, Health & Creative Industries

Curriculum Leader - Computing, Land, Science & Education

Version Control History

Reviewer	Date of Change	Summary of Revisions made
CL – Computing, Land, Science & Education	June 2026	- Updated to UHI Inverness throughout - Legislation and Job Titles updated

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Policy Summary

Overview	This policy is required to set out a regional approach to Further Education Essential Skills for UHI Inverness.
Purpose	This policy sets out a robust and transparent framework for the delivery of Essential Skills in Further Education programmes of study
Scope	This policy applies to all further education programmes of study. Certain courses are exempt, as set out in the policy
Consultation	The policy has been developed by practitioners from across all partners. The policy received feedback from Senior Management Curriculum Team, before being endorsed by Partnership Council. The policy was then sent to Boards of Management for approval.
Implementation and Monitoring	Staff in Academic Partners will be responsible for local implementation.
Risk Implications	Risk will be mitigated by streamlining the student experience of Essential Skills
Link with Strategy	The policy is aligned to the UHI Strategic Vision and Plan 2015-20 whereby the university is committed to continue to meet the needs of students within the region. The policy supports the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy by contributing to the development of values of Learning for Employment, Assessment and Feedback for Learning and Supporting the Learner as an Individual.
Impact Assessment	Equality Impact Assessment: Completed – No action necessary.
	Privacy Impact Assessment: n/a

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The policy sets out to create a coherent and comprehensive approach to support and optimise the delivery of Essential Skills.
- 1.2 Created to meet government policy and facilitate the improvement of outcomes for all students, the policy will raise the profile of Essential Skills amongst both the staff and students. Reinforcement of Essential Skills in the curriculum will highlight the value of these skills and their lifelong role in development and achieving positive destinations.
- 1.3 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) state in their 2013 report, *Skilled for Life*, that: 'Skills transform lives, generate prosperity and promote social inclusion. Without the right skills, people are kept at the margins of society, technological progress does not translate into economic growth, and enterprises and countries can't compete in today's globally connected and increasingly complex world'.
- 1.4 The policy recognises that no single approach or methodology is superior to another, and the optimum delivery will depend on the individual students, subject and local context.

2. Legislative Framework / Related Policies

- 2.1. Publicly available UHI Inverness policies and procedures can be accessed via our website: [About us – Publications](#). Staff and Board Members can access the full range of internal policies and procedures through the Quality SharePoint site.
- 2.2. Legislative Framework:
 - Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Education Scotland – Curriculum for Excellence
 - Skills for Learning, Skills for Life, and Skills for Work (2009)
 - Developing the Young Workforce: Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy (2014)
 - Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy (2007)

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to all further education programmes of study, normally up to and including SCQF Level 6. There are a small number of Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) courses at SCQF Level 7 that are considered as Further Education courses.

4. Definitions

4.1 **Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (“SCQF”)** – SCQF is the national qualifications framework for Scotland. The SCQF helps education and training providers of all kinds to identify the level that has been studied in a particular subject and make it easier to transfer credit point between different learning programmes.

4.2 **Essential Skills** – as set out in *Skills for Scotland*, Essential Skills consists of the following:

- **Personal and learning Skills** that enable individuals to become effective lifelong learners;
- **Literacy, digital literacy and numeracy**;
- **The five Core Skills** (see 2.4);
- **Employability skills** that prepare individuals for employment rather than for a specific occupation;

In addition, Scottish learners should be supported to develop Meta-skills.

4.3 **Vocational skills** are specific to a particular occupation or sector.

4.4 **Core Skills** – As developed by Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), the five Core Skills are the skills most needed in many work environments. In addition to SQA, other awarding bodies may be used for Core Skill accreditation.

Jobs require some level of ability in some or all of these skills. The Core Skills are: Communication, Numeracy, Information & Communication Technology, Working with Others and Problem Solving. Core Skills can be awarded via qualifications between SCQF Levels 3 and

4.5 **Delivery Models** – The delivery model(s) chosen to deliver Core Skills are dependent on available resources and the vocational content of the course. Optimum delivery may involve elements of different approaches.

5. Purpose

5.1 This policy sets out a robust and transparent framework for the delivery of Essential Skills in Further Education programmes of study.

5.2 Development of Essential Skills will be included in delivery across all programmes in the Further Education setting.

5.3 Staff should promote and signpost through planning and delivery ensuring students develop contextually relevant skills, knowledge and understanding to meet their specific vocational and wider skillsets.

- 5.4. Skills development should allow students to meet entry requirements for higher level courses, facilitates pathways into employment and promotes progression in learning.
- 5.5 **Recognition of Prior Learning** – Regardless of the Core Skills requirement of the main course, students will always be encouraged to improve their Essential Skills profile.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- 6.1 It is the responsibility of managers of all levels within the college to enable staff to deliver this policy, where necessary directing resource or facilitating changes to curriculum and teaching. This includes ensuring all staff are appropriately skilled and qualified for their role.
- 6.2 It is the responsibility of vocational teams to design courses that include Essential Skills and Core Skills as appropriate, following curriculum design principles.

7. Compliance

- 7.1. This policy is a college-wide college policy; and all staff must work to meet the requirements outlined within the policy. Compliance with the Policy will be monitored through regular audits, with outcome reports being reported to Student Journey and Experience Committee.

8. Monitoring

- 8.1. This policy will be monitored, and its implementation evaluated, primarily through the following measures reported to Student Journey and Experience Committee.
- Student, staff and employer feedback
 - Student data e.g. success rates, withdrawal rates and partial success with an analysis of the drivers behind this data.

9. Review

- 9.1. This policy will be review on a 3-year cycle OR if any new guidance is published by Scottish Government or relevant national body or any qualification providers that UHI Inverness use.