

Scotland Excel

To: Joint Committee

On: 9 December 2016

**Report
by
Director Scotland Excel**

Learning and Development Strategy Update

1. Introduction

This report illustrates the proposed Learning & Development (L&D) strategy to members. This is a progressive strategy fulfilling the needs of the local authority community.

2. Background

Providing L&D leadership to our members has been at the heart of Scotland Excel's strategic direction since inception. The organisation has delivered a national and award winning service throughout this period. Increasingly however, the local government community has highlighted the challenges of educating their workforce in a sustainable manner, supporting their continuous professional development through a mode which delivers practical results in the workplace.

One of the main delivery mechanisms provided by Scotland Excel was provision of one day standalone courses delivered through an external training provider. With this contract having come to an end on the 30 November 2016 and our community asking for a more progressive L&D solution, a new strategy was required.

To inform the strategy, structured interviews were conducted across the local authority community capturing the communities' current and future needs nationally. A 3 month pilot then implemented outcomes from the consultation, followed by multiple lessons learned exercises, which further inform this paper.

3. L&D Strategy

Scotland Excel Academy: [<http://academy.scotland-excel.org.uk>]

We have created an online learning platform through the Scotland Excel Academy, replicating best practice from Scotland’s Higher Education community. Through the Academy, we will deliver a portfolio of multi-disciplinary L&D provision supporting Procurement; Leadership & Management and Project Management knowledge. Image 1 illustrates the Academy.

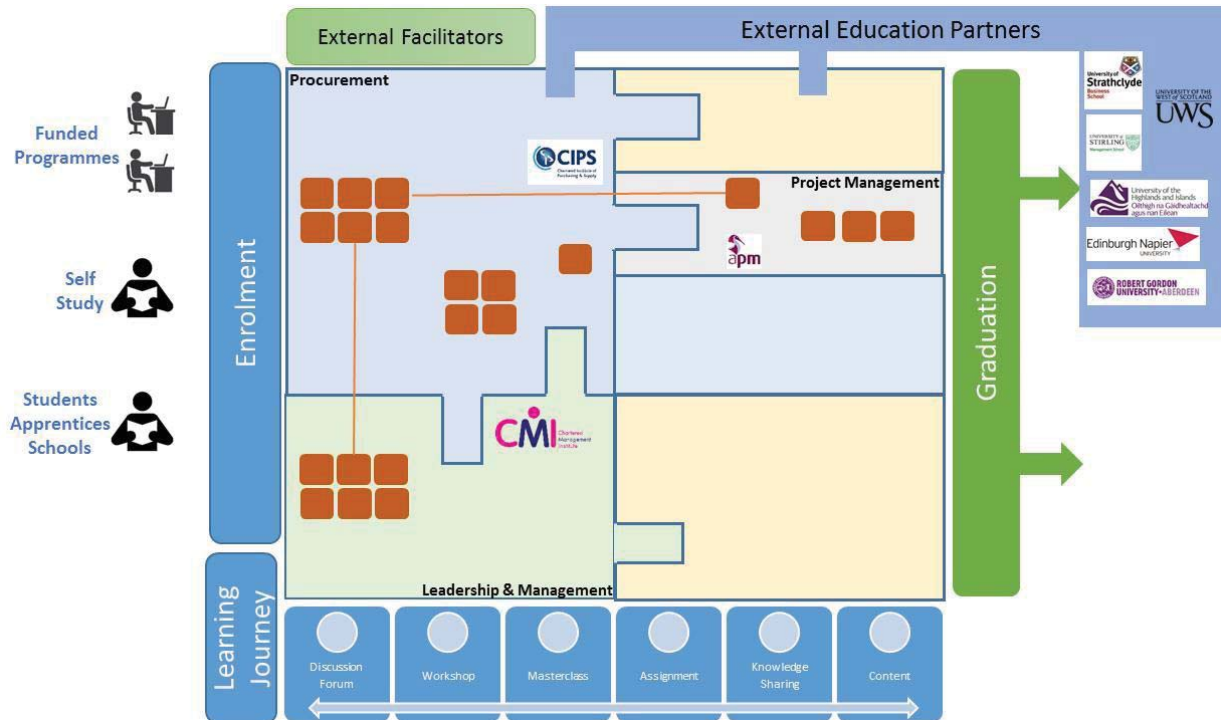


Image1: Scotland Excel Academy

Each L&D programme detailed in image 1 supports a methodology comprising self-directed learning; face-face workshops and work based projects. The overarching objective is to impart practical knowledge to the learners that can be implemented in the learners’ work based practice to realise tangible outcomes.

Partnering with professional bodies and collaborative Scottish business schools, the L&D strategy can incorporate best practice and current thought leadership within its core delivery.

Responding to the communities’ needs, the programmes will be accredited with the professional bodies resulting in the learners earning professionally recognised qualifications in addition to acquiring useful knowledge.

As learners outgrow the Academy, pathways have been established with regional academic partners where learners can continue their continuous professional development and lifelong learning.

Procurement:

Scotland Excel is in discussion with the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) professional body. It is our intention to deliver the CIPS Practitioner and Advanced Practitioner programmes.

Whilst discussions and negotiations at an early stage, current discussions appear promising. Scotland Excel is striving to negotiate a compelling blended learning

proposal as an alternative to the current model of self-directed study and exams. It is anticipated that the price point of the programme may be restrictive, however discussions will continue.

Leadership & Management (L&M):

Scotland Excel has now earned Approved Centre status with the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) and is therefore validated to deliver professional L&M qualifications.

Scotland Excel will deliver Certificate and Diploma programmes in Management & Leadership accredited by the CMI.

This provision also supports two themes of the Scottish Government's Procurement Competency Framework.

Project Management:

Scotland Excel has licensed content from the Association of Project Management (APM) professional body. Therefore project management knowledge can be incorporated into multi-disciplinary modules and programmes (non-accredited).

Scotland Excel also plans to deliver an introduction to project management module and an accredited project management module through our CMI Approved Centre status.

Evolving Strategy:

It is Scotland Excel's intention to evolve and scale this strategy, expanding collaboration with other professional bodies, and external partners, where this fulfils the local authority communities' needs. For example, working towards implementing a commercial best practice programme accredited with one of the finance professional bodies.

Image 2 illustrates a 5 year Academy roadmap across the 3 knowledge disciplines, complemented by regional workshop delivery.

Two other themes are illustrated in image 2. Sustainable change can be realised through blending standalone L&D needs into Scotland Excel's *Leading Change* initiative, resourcing the local authorities' change needs with our Business Change Project Management team.

The Scottish Government's Procurement Competency Framework provides opportunities for Scotland Excel to cohesively support the medium-long term development of the local authority community. Through our Co-Chairing of the Scottish Government's Professional Practice & Development Strategic Forum (PPDSF), we are striving to inform the debate and explore sources of funding to support the wider Procurement Competency Framework L&D needs.

In summary, this strategy creates the Academy online learning platform supplemented with face-face workshops and online debates to deliver a L&D provision that fulfils the communities' needs. Workshops will be delivered regionally

and peer networks will be established both regionally and nationally, supported by the Academy online debates and knowledge sharing.

Multi-disciplinary programmes will develop the community with learners earning professionally accredited qualifications. Acquired knowledge can be implemented in the learners' work based practice. Assessed work based projects enable the learners to deliver tangible outcomes for the benefit of their organisations.

Where learners outgrow the Academy provision, six established regional academic partnerships create pathways for learners to support their ongoing continuous professional development and lifelong learning.

External partnerships provide opportunities to inform the programme delivery with best practice and current thought leadership from subject matter experts.

4. Recommendation

Members are invited to note the progress and approve the recommendation to implement the strategy.

Image 2: Academy 5 Year Roadmap

