



Our response to the National Discussion survey on the future of education in Scotland

December 2022

1. What kind of education will be needed by children and young people in Scotland in the future?

The world is changing fast, and we need an education system that is open to new ideas and innovation. We need to be ambitious for all learners, not just children and young people, as people return to education to upskill/reskill to improve employment prospects, return to learning as an adult returner or continue to interact with learning as part of the lifelong learning ecosystem.

Learners in the future will need an education that addresses future environmental, digital, global, economic challenges and acquire the knowledge and skills to thrive. We also need to ensure no one is left behind.

We would see the following principles important:

- A curriculum and education system that is inspiring and motivates learners.
- Qualifications that drive excellence and are respected in Scotland and beyond.
- Innovative qualifications and assessment that develop and enable pathways for future learning.
- Development of skills and competencies for future world of work.
- An education system that is internationally recognised.
- Diverse opportunities and qualifications at a range of SCQF levels to suit different learners.
- Fair and equal access for all.
- Be focussed on problem-solving, risk taking and not being afraid to learn from real-life experiences, both positive and negative.
- Look at real world problems and view these problems with a inter/multi-disciplinary lens.
- Be focussed around experiential learning and involve groupwork and creativity with less emphasis on remembering information, and more focus on data and the critical analysis of information.

2. How do we make that a reality?

- Policy development and effective resource allocation to drive equality and close the attainment gap.
- Invest in CPD and training for teaching staff.



- Ensure qualification and assessment reform allows equal access to opportunities.
- Identify and articulate future opportunities available to all to inspire and motivate.
- Enable a high-quality learning environment, including digital access.
- Develop data metrics that allow for integrated measurements of success.
- Rethink assessment and how these contribute to league tables.
- Enable students to enjoy learning and to try new things, without having to worry about grades all of the time.
- Recognise that making errors is a key part of learning (and life) and provide supported opportunities for this.
- Provide skills that allow students to make connections in an inter-connected world (e.g. cultural appreciation, digital skills, language learning etc).

3. How can every child and young person’s individual needs be supported and addressed in the future?

We do not intend to comment on this question.

4. What is one thing that needs to stay and why?

An education system that is respected nationally and internationally and allows learners to successfully progress on to the next stage of their learning journey.

Universities are a key engine of the Scottish economy, leading innovation, nurturing entrepreneurship and enabling thousands of graduates year on year to develop the skills they will need for careers in a changing workplace. University is one option for learners after school, but universities need learners who are well prepared, have potential to succeed and are motivated for learning.

5. What are the most important priorities for a future Scottish education system?

Our members value an education system that will:

- Develop well prepared students (for university, college, or work) both nationally and internationally.
- Allow universities to make fair, transparent, and equitable admissions decisions.
- Combine robust standards and rigorous assessment to recognise student achievement.
- Ensure qualifications are fair for all learners and assessment opportunities are transparent and available to all.
- Allow for progressive assessment practices but can also prepare learners for future different assessment types.
- Deliver academic content as well as broader skills acquisition.
- Allow for seamless education pathways including progression to university or HN qualifications.
- Provide quality information, advice, and guidance at key stages of the learning journey.



- Ensure Scottish learners are on an equal footing with learners with similar staged qualifications elsewhere to allow a successful transition in the learning journey whether that is in Scotland or beyond.
- Develop plans to make experiential learning a core part of the education system and place inclusivity at the core of these plans.

6. How can we ensure that everyone involved in education in Scotland has a say in future decisions and actions?

We do not intend to comment on this question.

7. How can children and young people be cared for and supported in the future? (i.e., physical and mental wellbeing)

We have no specific comment on this question other than to raise the need to:

- Address current and potential future barriers for children and young people, for example tackling the attainment gap.
- Ensure pathways are available at multiple stages in the education system to allow for and enable seamless lifelong learning journeys.

In order to address and overcome some of the barriers, we should:

- Remove the strain of unnecessary assessment and focus on the joy of learning.
- Allow students to express their learning in ways that suit them, and support and develop teachers to recognise these different styles and contributions.
- Recognise and celebrate different abilities, so that everyone feels valued.
- Ensure that rest, relaxation and reflection is seen as important as work and learning. Make these a feature of the learning week.
- Ensure that young people have the opportunity to develop skills and strategies for dealing with adversity, working with others, and building healthy, meaningful and constructive relationships.
- Ensure proper access to physical activity, resourced by skilled professionals, in order to enable and develop healthy practices, teamwork, and physical and mental wellbeing.
- Continue to review and improve the transitions between different stages of education.

8. How can the right of every child and young person to have opportunities to develop their full potential be achieved in future?

- We point to our submission to the qualifications and assessment review. In this we support the opportunity for learners to have diverse opportunities to meet their needs and interests. We believe that opportunities must be available to all within the curriculum.



- Currently senior phase options can vary substantially across the country, with schools in more disadvantaged areas or rural areas often offering a narrower range of options. We would like to see more equity. This could perhaps be a nationally agreed core offer that schools can add to.
- Be inclusive and value difference by encouraging learners to express their learning and skills in the way that is right for them.

9. How can children and young people be helped to learn about our changing world, so they feel able to positively contribute?

We would support an education system that:

- Motivates and inspires learners to make aspirational choices.
- Supports learners to research and prepare for future career ambitions.
- Makes learning fun and delivers excellence.
- Helps learners develop a curiosity and understanding of an interconnected global society.
- Promotes a positive future.
- Encourages learners to keep learning, which may be important for navigating future careers.
- Engages learners with experiential learning and focuses on real world challenges.
- Provides a wide range of sources of learning, reflecting a global curriculum.

10. Do you have any other comments that you would like to provide about a vision for the future of Scottish Education?

We do not intend to comment on this question.

ENDS

