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# REGIONAL OUTCOME AGREEMENT

**2023-24**

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# Campus Information

Community Learning Facilities are located throughout the Scottish Borders.

## College Campuses

### Scottish Borders Campus

Nether Road  
Galashiels  
TD1 3HE

**01896 662600**

### Newtown St Boswells Campus

Newtown St Boswells  
TD6 0PL

**01896 662600**

### Tweedbank Construction Hub

Unit 4:2 Tweedbank Industrial  
Estate

Tweedbank  
TD1 3RS

**01896 662600**

### Hawick Campus

Buccleuch Road  
Hawick  
TD9 0EH

**01450 361030**





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# Introduction

Borders College is the designated Regional College for the Scottish Borders. We provide a wide range of education and training opportunities across the Scottish Borders to meet the needs of individuals, communities and employers. The College has three main campuses at Galashiels, Newtown St Boswells and Hawick with a Construction Hub at Tweedbank. College services are also provided in a number of the region's main centres of population, with spokes based in secondary schools and outreach centres.

For academic session 2023-24, Borders College agrees to deliver 23,891 Credits. In accordance with Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Guidance for 2023-24, we have not identified separately any Credits for Foundation Apprentices.

To support this delivery, the College will receive from SFC Teaching Funding of £9,877,983 and Capital Funding for Maintenance of £413,471.

Core Student Support funding for 2023-24 is £2,205,266.

With the SFC funding levels being held at the same level as 2022-23, albeit with a 10% reduction in our Credit target/threshold, the College is presented with a challenge in ensuring financial sustainability while still providing a broad, need-based curriculum. That said, our plans are designed to deliver a sustainable curriculum targeted to regional need, supported by a resourcing model that is as efficient and effective as possible in the context of the constraints brought about by having relatively small cohorts of students.

The College acknowledges that SFC funding is receivable on the condition that the Regional Board commits to deliver the outcomes detailed within this agreement.



# Borders College Priority Outcomes



As specified within our [Strategic Ambition \(2020-2025\)](#), the purpose of Borders College is to provide innovative, life-changing learning opportunities that prepare our students for global citizenship.

By delivering a comprehensive, innovative and future skills-focused curriculum, we will offer high-quality learning and training opportunities, which are relevant, enabling and flexible. Our curriculum will meet learner and economic needs, improve learner attainment and progression, and embed essential digital and meta-skills at all levels.

In line with our [Future Skills Strategy 2020-2025](#), [Sustainability Strategy 2020-2025](#) and our [Business Growth and Employer Engagement Strategy](#), [Workforce Development Strategy](#) and [Asset Management Strategy](#), we will proactively engage with our communities and stakeholders to ensure our practice provides 'innovative, life-changing learning opportunities that prepare our students for global citizenship'.

We will take a leading role in enabling an inclusive, resilient and sustainable Scotland by embedding into all of our learning programmes the delivery of 'Sustainability & Me', enhancing our curriculum offer in response to the green economy.

We are committed to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. We promote an organisational culture that enables every student and every member of staff to feel included, irrespective of abilities, disabilities, age, race, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation, gender or family circumstances. We embrace the benefits and opportunities that come from having a diverse mix of staff and students in the College environment. We aim to ensure that the College is an environment that is free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Drawing on the above, the College has developed key priorities for academic year 2023-24, to meet our regional needs, as well as addressing the priority areas as specified by the SFC and ensuring a sustainable delivery model.



# Priority Area 1:

## Fair Access and Transitions

We are proud of the range of measures in place in meeting the recommendations of The Commission on Widening Access (COWA). For example, 100% of our part-time higher education care-experienced students achieved their awards.

In addressing the needs of our young people, we engage with our educational partners to provide a diverse curriculum offer through our 'Schools Academies'. This provision ranges from Scottish Credit Qualification Framework (SCQF) levels 3, 4, 5 and 6. This ensures irrespective of SCQF level, a school student may be working towards, there in an individual pathway to college. Our Schools Academy meets the National Schools Programme pillars and includes 'The Schools for Higher Education Programme' (SHEP) and Lothian Equal Access Programmes for Schools (LEAPS). In addressing the challenges of rural travel, some of our school provision is delivered within the students' school, thus avoiding long periods of travel, that might adversely impact on their learning at school.

Borders College is represented at all parent/school information days to ensure students get the opportunity to apply for and access further education. We provide guidance and support to enable students to make an informed decision on their learning.

Last academic session we targeted support to our most vulnerable students (individuals living with SIMD10 postcodes and individuals who are care experienced) to ensure they maximised both financial and pastoral support. The impact of this approach realised more vulnerable students achieving their award with 55.8% of our full-time Further Education Care experienced students successfully achieved a recognised qualification. 62.5% of full-time Further Education SIMD10 students also successfully completed a recognised qualification.

We have increased the number of progression and articulation opportunities to university for our students, by enhancing articulation agreements with our university partners. New opportunities agreed include enhanced educational pathways in rural skills to Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), collaboration with Queen Margaret University (QMU) and building on existing articulation agreement, to include the offer of Allied Health Professions courses and nursing.



Our work with Edinburgh Napier now includes a degree in Business, delivered wholly at Borders College, having 25 students enrolled on this degree session 23/24.

Working in partnership with our local authority and Department of Work & Pensions we continue to offer part-time courses to support adults back into education and ultimately employment.

Borders College Students Association (BCSA) are also key to the success of our students. As a result of receiving feedback from students we now offer 'Stim Bins' for neuro-diverse students, to enable concentration and to aid avoidance of stress and anxiety, during learning.

With the allocation of 'in year' Young Person's Guarantee (YPG) funding, and in collaboration with Skills Development Scotland (SDS), we developed a bespoke programme, 'Find Your Vibe'. This was set up specifically for young people in the Borders region, who may not have achieved many qualifications at school, and were at risk of having no positive destination, upon completion of their secondary education. This course provided taster sessions in vocational areas such as construction, rural skills, health & social care, hair & beauty, computing, engineering & professional cookery. The aim of this course was to enable young people to sample vocational areas and make an informed decision on their future educational and career choice.

For academic session 2023/24 we will:

- Increase the percentage of full-time students achieving a recognised qualification by 2% from 68% to 70%.
- Implement our new 'Academic Calendar' and introduce 'Progress and Achievement Weeks' to target support to our most vulnerable students, who are at risk of not achieving their programme of study.



# Priority Area 2:

## Quality Learning & Teaching

The student is the centre of everything we do at Borders College. We have introduced a number of initiatives and new approaches to learning and teaching, to ensure students experience a high quality, safe and inclusive learning environment. These encompass national and regional priorities, address regional skills requirements, and have been implemented as a result of listening to and responding to our staff and students. They include:

- The creation of a 360-degree immersive classroom to provide our students with an enhanced learning experience. Our construction staff have developed a 360-degree construction site to enable students who can't access sites to experience the virtual wonders of work.
- Through the UK-government funded Turing Scheme, ten students and two staff members visited Centennial College in Toronto, Canada, and attended classes within their subject area of study.
- At the beginning of our academic term we provided all full-time students with resilience training through the 'Survive and Thrive Programme'
- Through our Digital Pathfinder and Regional Skills Analysis, we have introduced new programmes of study in Cyber Security and eSports, as we recognise these as areas of employment growth.
- We have invested in our Borders College Students Association (BCSA), by employing a full-time Students Association Support Officer and two part-time salaried Vice-Presidents, to support our full-time Student President.
- We have a robust quality system to continuously review our approaches and evaluate learning and teaching. Our recent Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Systems Audit noted, 'You have demonstrated excellent use of methods of obtaining and acting on feedback'.
- All our full-time students have been allocated a Student Support Officer (SSO). Our SSO's provide additional pastoral support to address matters such attendance or personal issues impacting on learning.
- Our Global Citizenship campaign recognises the need to ensure a sustainable future for our planet. This is embedded in our programmes of learning, and our staff and students are recognised for their commitment.

Our Annual Engagement report from Education Scotland from November 2022 identified the following areas of positive progress in learning & teaching:

*Staff in curriculum areas have redesigned their programmes to include a range of National Progression Awards (NPAs), employability awards and work placements to motivate learners to continue on their programmes.*

*Achievement Coaches monitor learner progress and attendance through weekly meetings with curriculum staff. This has resulted in changes to delivery and assessment approaches in some areas to support learner engagement and motivation.*





*The implementation of the Future Skills strategy across the college by staff is encouraging learners to reflect on the range of skills they are developing within their programmes. This is supporting learners well to engage with their courses, identify areas of development, and consider environmental, social and economic sustainability as part of their learning.*

*Overall, rates of learner withdrawal are lower than the sector average for both further and higher education (FE and HE) programmes.*

The Annual Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey reported that 94% of our students were satisfied with their college experience.

For session 2023-24 we will:

- Review our Schools Academies provision, move the delivery to a Friday to mitigate against the challenges due to lack of public transport within the Borders Region, and provide our Senior Phase pupils an improved college experience.
- Implement our new 'Positive Behaviour Policy' to address behaviours in a positive and supportive manner.
- Continue to support employers by calling on our expertise in retro-fit and skills for a green economy, to upskill the workforce.

# Priority Area 3:

## Coherent Learning Provision

We ensure our curriculum is inter-connected with our regional, national and international stakeholders. Collaboration is key in providing these inter-connections, we achieve this by having staff representation and influence on national, regional and local committees, e.g. Sport Scotland, Convention for the South of Scotland. These collaborations provide meaningful opportunities to enhance provision, support national objectives and deliver our strategic outcomes. Ongoing monitoring is completed through our self-evaluation processes and feedback as a result of hosting employer forums.

Some examples of this are:

- Engagement with the City Region deal, with a particular focus on sustainable construction, digital skills, and health and social care. This engagement has improved awareness of Sustainable and Renewable practice, across our full-time construction cohorts and increased opportunities for our construction students. The City Region Deal has enabled us to develop digital skills across the curriculum through delivery of Data Science NPA, Data related Business units and computing students undertaking Big Data award.
- In partnership with SRUC, Dumfries and Galloway College, Skills Development Scotland, South of Scotland Enterprise and SFC, we have engaged with two regional and one national pathfinder projects (digital skills, land-based and construction).
- We are collaborating with universities to provide opportunities for Borders residents to study their degree within the Borders region, enabling those universities to deliver from our campus and/or digitally. This is in response to the increased demand for graduate employees.
- We continue to work with regulatory bodies, subject network groups and national organisations such as BTECH, to ensure our curriculum offer is current and meets the needs of industry.
- We collaborate with the 'Integrated Workforce Planning Group' to ensure an effective approach to workforce planning and curriculum offer.
- As part of the Digital Skills Hub that supports employers to develop their digital skills by providing personalised, individual support to address specific, identified digital needs we work alongside Scotland Enterprise and Dumfries and Galloway College, in the delivery of the Sole Trader Project.
- Scottish Borders NHS/SB Cares and Eildon Housing Association, utilise our excellent BTECH (Borders Technology Enabled Care Hub) facilities to upskill and retrain their staff.

For academic session 2023-24 we will:

- Introduce a curriculum planning process that includes a methodology for continuing with, or offering new provision. This methodology is based upon, three-year recruitment trends, three-year performance measures, local labour market intelligence, regional needs analysis and net-zero while encompassing National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET).

# Priority Area 4:

## Work-based Learning and Skills

Our campuses and learning environments simulate industry requirements in order to prepare our students as technically skilled individuals in their chosen industry. Within our BTECH Digital Health Hub we have created a world-class virtual reality classroom and training facility.

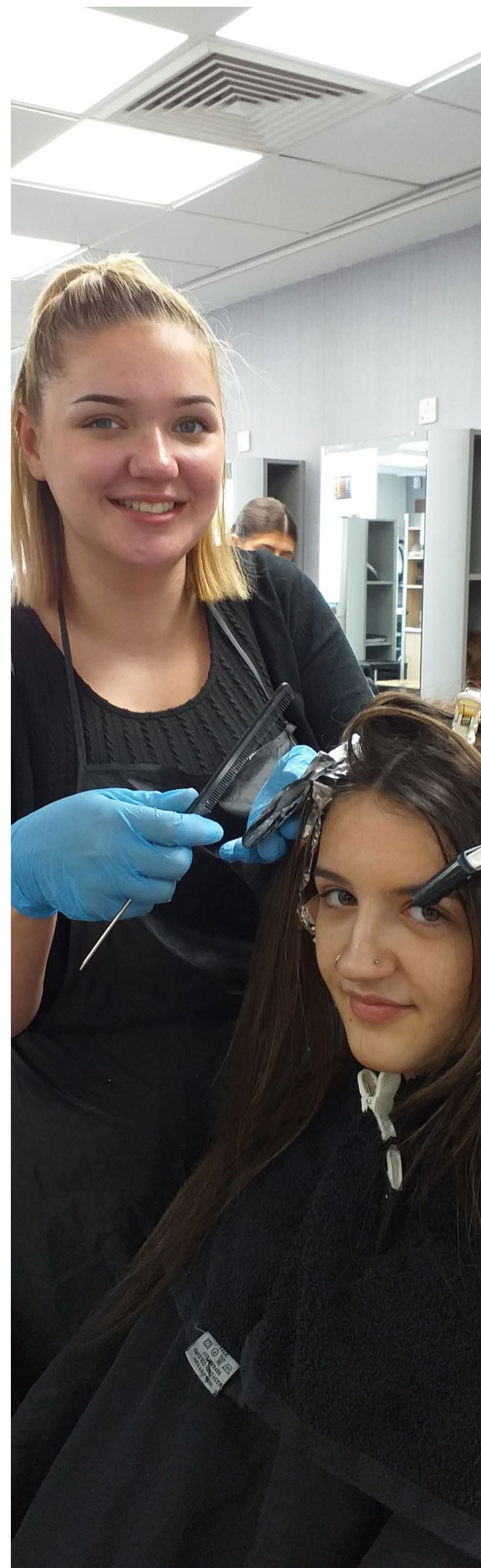
Our Sustainable Construction and STEM sector have created a range of short courses, including Heat Pump training, Modern Methods of Construction, Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery systems (MVHR), Battery Storage and Solar Thermal.

Our Rural Skills courses, based at our Newtown St Boswell campus, provide real work placement opportunities across the region. Students have the opportunity to develop employability skills by working at farms, race horse yards, veterinary practices, and rural estates, where they gain experience of forestry, game-keeping, conservation and horticulture.

Borders College is the largest provider of Modern Apprenticeships in the South of Scotland and has developed a reputation over the years for delivery of apprenticeship programmes that meet employer needs and adapt to the changing labour market.

Our apprenticeship contract has grown year on year and there continues to be high demand for apprenticeships across all subject areas and particularly in Social Services and Healthcare. The apprenticeship programme is reviewed each year to ensure it continues to meet the demands of the labour market and new provision is added in response to employer-led discussions, adding in recent years, boatbuilding, housing, textiles and youth work to the portfolio

In the last academic session, we realised a 52% increase in the number of senior phase pupils undertaking foundation apprenticeships, with construction having the highest intake. We provide campus-based work environments in construction, to enable students to learn the skills required, given the regulations around construction sites.



We work closely with local employers and organisations in both public and private sector to understand their needs and use information from the Regional Economic Strategy, Regional Skills Assessment and other labour market information to inform our programmes. We host employer forums to gather information, feedback and share best practice.

We will continue to review and develop our land based provision in partnership with SRUC and align our curriculum to provide employers the opportunity to upskill, ensuring the curriculum meets regional need, which also enhances progression and articulation.



# Priority Area 5:

## Net Zero and Environmental Sustainability Response

Borders College is committed to working collaboratively to respond to the global climate emergency and the Scottish Government's target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We are a national leader in contributing to making Scotland a net-zero country by 2045.

We adopt ethical, sustainable and social practice in our operations and supply chains. By developing an awareness of, and implementing good sustainable sector practice in all our learning programmes, we influence positive, sustainable behaviours across the wider community.

We have developed a carbon management plan, which is being actively implemented. The innovative partnership with SHARC Energy Systems, to install and operate a wastewater heating recovery system to supply its campus buildings, is the first of its kind in the UK. Other key projects completed include the installation of solar PV system, retrofitting LED lights across the estate, moving all pool cars to electric. All these projects have resulted in a 46% reduction of annual carbon emissions from the 2015 base line.

We continue to work towards the removal of all remaining gas boilers within the Galashiels Campus and are progressing through the Non-Domestic Energy Efficiency Framework towards an application for grant funding to Scottish Government.

We continue to deliver both the "Climate Change" and "Sustainability and Me" modules to students during their induction to college and have developed a baseline of where sustainability is a focus across the curriculum, using the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a reference. Going forward this information will be analysed to identify areas of good practice, that can be shared across the curriculum sectors. This will also allow KPI's to be set and monitored.

The work and progress made has resulted in the College being awarded a national Green Gowns (November 2022) – 2030 Climate Action Award. During July 2023, we were received an International Green Gowns – 2030 Climate Action Award. These awards recognise institutions with clear plans on how they will reach net zero emissions and look for innovative ideas and approaches being taken in its implementation.

Our Sustainability Strategy (2020-25), is supported by dedicated staff working groups on:

- Carbon Management
- Waste Management
- Procurement
- Biodiversity
- Curriculum
- Behavioural Change
- Travel & Transport



We have:

- Begun to decarbonise heating demand on campus by installing the UK's first wastewater heat pump in 2015.
- Completed projects to reduce campus energy demand including solar PV and BMS upgrades.
- Undertaken detailed studies to identify and design further energy efficiency and renewable energy projects on campus, using pre-capital support from the Scottish Green Public Sector Estate Decarbonisation Scheme (GPSEDS).
- A fleet of electric pool cars available for staff use and will adhere to public sector target to phase out new petrol and diesel vehicles by 2030 for the remainder of College vehicles.

We will:

- Benchmark progress against the Climate Action Roadmap for FE Colleges.
- Commit to the climate action through the Race to Zero for Universities and Colleges.
- Be an active partner of the Central & South Scotland College Partnership (CSSCP) with West Lothian College, Forth Valley College and EAUC Scotland to procure additional sustainability resource and expertise.
- Aim to reduce emissions to 50% of 2014/15 baseline (1,550 tCO<sub>2</sub>e) by 2025.
- Adhere to the public sector 2038 target for zero direct emissions from buildings.
- Meet the 2045 public sector target for zero direct emissions.
- Apply for further GPSEDS funding to install energy conservation measures across campus.
- Aim to have over 50% of all staff & student journeys made by public transport, walking, cycling or other sustainable means of transport by 2025.
- Host the first Campus Cycling Officer, funded by Cycling Scotland, in 2023/24.
- Promote engagement with the UN SDGs by Committing to the SDG Accord and completing annual reporting.

# Case studies

## Case Study 1 – Outcomes for Students – Quiet Induction and Quiet Introduction to College

Throughout summer, Borders College hosted a series of Quiet Introduction sessions. The aim of Quiet Introduction was to create an inclusive and accessible welcome for students who typically experience barriers to education, including students with Additional Support Needs.

Our key objectives were to increase awareness of the support available, provide opportunities to become more familiar with the college through student-led tours, develop early positive relationships with key staff, and provide 1-1 sessions for students to enroll and access funding and learning support.

Crucial to the success of the project was the involvement of those with lived experience and their representatives. This was a feature of all aspects of our planning, delivery and design. Autistic staff, students and local disability partners played an invaluable role in shaping supported enrolment through their input and feedback. A team of student ambassadors, all of whom had lived experience of disability, provided quiet campus tours for all visitors. This was particularly beneficial for disabled visitors, who were able to spend time navigating the campus and learning about its accessibility.

### Demographics:

- 42 attendees
- 67% were aged 16-19
- 10% were aged 20-24
- 23% were aged 25+
- 20% disclosed a disability or learning need

### Experience:

- 97% said that the event made them more confident about coming to college
- 97% said the college felt welcoming
- 100% felt that their needs had been met at the event
- 100% left the event aware of the support available to them as a Borders College student





Reasons for attending:

- 33% attended for support with enrolment
- 20% had a disability or learning need and were looking for support
- 16% were looking for help with funding applications
- 11% had been away from education for a while

*"Coming along has made me excited to study here."*

*"It felt welcoming and made me more comfortable starting in August."*

*"As an anxiety sufferer, this was the boost I needed!"*

- The following video documents the reflections of our student ambassadors who volunteered during the supported enrolment sessions. Both students have lived experience of a disability.

<https://youtu.be/fJKEjpkofTw>





## Case Study 2 – Outcome for Economic Transformation

Borders College Department of Enterprise and Business Innovation (DEBI) recently worked with Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) employees who undertook the SCQF Level 6 Professional Development Award in Introductory Leadership and Management.

Funded through the Flexible Workforce Development Phase 2 SME Fund (FWDF), the course was delivered through a mix of online learning and workplace assessment.

The course aimed to provide new and aspiring managers to develop their skills and knowledge and support them to become effective leaders within their organisation. Candidates used an e-portfolio to gather evidence for the award and met with their assessor online and in person to plan work, receive feedback and carry out work place observation.

We will liaise with our student community and student representatives to deliver a range of events and activities that promote and support the wellbeing of the student community and enhance the student experience.



### **Kirsty Summers, the SWA's Head of Workforce and Skills, said of the initiative:**

*"The Scotch Whisky Association was delighted to work with Borders College to use the Flexible Workforce Development (Phase 2 SME) Fund to support our employees' development. We identified employees who would get benefit from the qualification and enjoy their experience and learning journey. I'm really happy to see how everyone is progressing with their qualification, and I was pleased to be able to work with Borders College."*

The SWA team, all of whom are at different stages in their careers and with very different specialisms, all had their own reasons for enrolling on the course.

### **Chris McDade, Head of International Trade at SWA, said:**

*"I was at a stage in my career where I was looking to take on more responsibilities and wanted to pass on some of my experience to younger colleagues joining the team. The Leadership & Motivation course at Borders College allowed me to take time to reflect on the types of management styles I have encountered throughout my career and how this impacted my own motivation and progression. The course combined theoretical learning about concepts such as intrinsic/extrinsic motivation with practical tools such as creating a personal development plan."*

### **Pam Peacocke, Head of Internal Communications and Membership at SWA, commented:**

*"I decided to enrol for the course to learn new skills to lead effectively, including ways to persuade and influence people and to widen my ability to think in innovative and creative ways. I wanted to develop my skills to improve my work performance and to demonstrate to my employer my willingness to grow and learn to progress in the organisation."*

### SWA's Emily Roads, Head of Trade – Asia Pacific, added:

*"I enrolled on this course to improve my skills as a leader, helping me to prepare for the next stage in my career. By completing it, I have been able to reflect on my own preferred approaches, as well as those around me, and incorporate them into how I work now."*

### Rosie Willmott, Communications Manager at SWA, said:

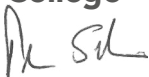
*"For me, the course was about career development. I feel more confident in my role knowing that I have solid training to support me in the decisions I make and the thought process behind them. The course has really helped me to consider how I interact with my colleagues, what their priorities are and what motivates us as a team, which helps me to be a more empathetic and supportive colleague and manager."*

### Alan Elder from Borders College, who was the tutor for the group, commented:

*"It was a pleasure to support the team from SWA. Everyone put a great deal of effort across the award, producing a very high standard of work, and it's heartening to see how much each has taken from the course."*

## Outcome Agreement between Borders College and the Scottish Funding Council for AY 2023-24

### On behalf of Borders College

Signed: 

Print name: Pete Smith

Position: Principal and CEO

Date: 26-10-23

Signed: 

Print name: Ray McCowan

Position: Chair

Date: 26-10-23

### On behalf of the Scottish Funding Council

Signed: 

Print name: Karen Watt





Position: Chief Executive

Date: 15 January 2024



[www.borderscollege.ac.uk](http://www.borderscollege.ac.uk)



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