

Scotland Policy Conferences:

Next steps for skills and apprenticeships in Scotland

Timing: Morning, Monday, 26th October 2026

Taking Place Online



SCOTLAND POLICY
CONFERENCES

Draft agenda subject to change

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 9.05 **Quality assurance, standards and confidence in apprenticeship provision in Scotland**
Dr Liz Barron-Majerik, Chief Accreditation Officer, Qualifications Scotland
Ciaran Donaghy, Lead Policy Officer, Devolved Nations, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.50 **Funding reform, institutional capacity and sustainability of the skills system**
implications of Scottish Budget allocations | options for simplifying post-16 skills funding | financial pressures across further and higher education and training provision | long-term sustainability and certainty for colleges, training providers and employers | scope for multi-year planning | funding for higher-cost technical and work-based provision | continuity of contracts and payments as responsibilities transfer | transparency and accountability in public funding | alignment with learner pathways, sector needs and regional priorities | implications for access, choice and delivery capacity
Senior representative, further education
Senior representative, training provider
Senior representative, employer
Senior commentator
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.35 **Implementing skills system reform - governance, accountability and delivery**
Jacqui Brasted, Director, Access, Learning and Outcomes, Scottish Funding Council
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.00 **Chair's closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.05 Break
- 11.15 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.20 **Apprenticeship and qualification priorities - participation, investment and progression pathways**
delivery of the 150,000-apprenticeship commitment | annual, sectoral and regional priorities | balance between Modern, Foundation and Graduate Apprenticeships | implications of the Review of Modern Apprenticeship Contribution Rates | provider viability and employer participation | potential role of an Apprenticeship Accelerator Grant | measuring starts, completion, progression and sustained employment | role of Qualifications Scotland in work-based and vocational qualifications | employer and provider involvement in qualification design | clear progression between vocational, technical and academic routes | widening participation and maintaining learner support
Senior representative, qualifications and awarding
Senior representative, employer
Senior representative, further education
Senior representative, training provider
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.05 **Workforce planning, regional delivery and labour market alignment**
alignment of provision with economic, sectoral and employer needs | workforce shortages in priority sectors | labour-market intelligence, data sharing and workforce forecasting | reconciling national priorities with regional and local needs | place-based planning and regional partnerships | collaboration between employers, providers, local authorities and public agencies | institutional capacity to adapt provision within appropriate timescales | flexibility for differing economic circumstances, including rural and island communities | lifelong learning, reskilling and upskilling for changing workforce needs
Senior representative, employer
Senior representative, union
Senior representative, training provider
Senior representative, local authority
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.50 **Policy priorities and next steps for skills and apprenticeships in Scotland**
Damien Yeates, Chief Executive, Skills Development Scotland
Questions and comments from the floor
- 13.15 **Chair's and Scotland Policy Conferences closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
Sean Cudmore, Scotland Policy Conferences