



FORTH VALLEY COLLEGE – COLLEGE AMBASSADOR UPDATE

Forth Valley College is one of the SCQF Ambassador Colleges which joined the scheme in March 2018. Helen Young, Head of Learning and Quality, Rob McDermott, Quality Manager both met up with Fiona Garry, Development Officer from SCQF up to discuss the developments, impact and future plans that the college has made since it gained its Ambassador status.

Developments

Forth Valley College currently serves a broad geographical area serving three communities with a diverse needs spanning the oil & gas sector to the hospitality, tourism and heritage sectors. Falkirk is set to see a new campus opening in November 2019 which will focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering & maths), Care and Sport.

“My visit to Forth Valley College impressed upon me just how busy college life is and the diverse range of learners that the sector serves. The staff were passionate about how the SCQF has been embraced by staff, from induction point, and is now just a common language referred to by staff” Fiona Garry SCQF Development Officer

The colleges Petrochemical Apprentice Skill Enhancement Programmes at SCQF level 6 continue to enable learners to transition smoothly to further SCQF credit rated study with local employers.

“The fact that our apprentices are now given SCQF credits for activities that previously they did as unrecognised additional activity whilst studying an Industry Sector devised qualifications can only be a good thing. The formal recognition and certification of these skills based units will add further increase their employability skills allowing them to move in to further employment” Rob McDermott, Quality Manager

The college has been promoting the SCQF level 6 Foundation Apprenticeship scheme within the region and have increased their intake of students from 186 to an anticipated 450 in session 19/20.

“This is an exciting development for the college, increasing our portfolio whilst further cementing our relationship with our local schools, our local businesses and SDS. The opportunities offered by the FAs will allow young people more life choices and allow them to easily transition between school and further education or employment” Helen Young, Head of Learning and Quality

Helen and her team of Ambassadors at Forth Valley continue to promote the awareness of the SCQF through a number of initiatives:

- Credit rating programmes as a means to creating structured learner journeys within college programmes.
- SCQF levels descriptors are routinely used to develop new programmes and assessments.
- The SCQF Framework is used in the induction of new lecturing staff
- The college is also part of the Regional Learner Passport working group in collaboration with other regional colleges and universities, attempting to map positive progression routes for those undertaking Foundation Apprenticeships and articulation pathways.

Impact

The Ambassador scheme has quickly become simply “the way things are done” at Forth Valley. Staff have embraced the inclusiveness of the SCQF Framework and view it as a tool to create meaningful learner journeys that serve the needs of its learners and the regional economy that it supports.

The work with local schools in promoting the Foundation Apprenticeship scheme will increase awareness of alternative work based qualifications and help engage learners and local employers understand the benefits that a college education can provide.

Future plans for using and promoting the SCQF

The college is continuing to embed the SCQF message to new lecturing staff at point of Induction and holds regular Ambassador Meetings throughout the year. Next steps would be to become more involved with the Student Association to raise awareness of SCQF credits and how these can be used to open doors to further study or employment.