

Briefing note for colleges: progress visits

Please share this information with all staff

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1. Introduction

Education Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) have worked collaboratively to develop Progress Visits (PVs) for assuring and improving the quality of provision delivered in Scotland's colleges.

PV arrangements have resulted from extensive consultation discussions held with the sector. They are predicated on colleges continuously improving the quality of their provision and the services they provide through a cycle of evaluation and enhancement planning. PVs incorporate and signpost links to SFC Outcome Agreement requirements and the Student Engagement framework.

2. What is the purpose of the progress visit?

During PVs colleges can demonstrate how well they are delivering on the targets and milestones identified in their Enhancement Plans (EPs). They allow colleges opportunities to outline any changes to their circumstances resulting in revisions to their original objectives. PVs provide reassurance to key stakeholders on the effectiveness of improvement actions undertaken by individual providers. Whilst undertaking PVs, Education Scotland HM Inspectors (HMIs) take close account of the context and nature of individual colleges.

3. How often do we carry out progress visits?

PVs are scheduled for all colleges annually.

4. What does Education Scotland focus on during a progress visit?

The PV enables college staff, learners and HMIs to discuss and explore the agreed actions from the EP. The team will gather evidence about the progress the college is making towards delivering against the targets and milestones identified within the college EP. The approaches to improving outcomes for learners and the quality of the learning experience will be a core part of the PVs. The team will engage in professional dialogue, review relevant documentation, and where appropriate, undertake observations of learning.

The college EP is informed by the quality improvement framework for Scotland's colleges: How good is our college? (HGIOC?) and the PV will focus on the three key principles of **outcomes and impact, delivery of learning and services to support learning and leadership and quality culture**.

Learner engagement is fundamental to the college's ability to identify areas for development. Colleges should view students as partners in supporting improvement and should have effective processes for engaging students in contributing to the development of the Evaluative Report and Enhancement Plan (EREP).

During PVs, HMIs and Associate Assessors (AAs) will engage in conversations with groups of learners to identify the progress they are making and how effectively they engage in and influence their individual learning experiences.

By focusing on outcome and impact and observing practice and experiences directly, HMIs support college staff to reflect on what is working well and what needs to improve.

5. Who carries our progress visits?

PVs will be led by HMIs, AAs and may include the SFC Outcome Agreement Manager and a where required, a Student Team Member (STM).

PVs will usually be carried out across two to three days. The size of team and duration of the visit will be adjusted to recognise the context of the college.

6. How will we carry out the progress visit?

PVs are planned collaboratively between the college, Education Scotland and SFC. They will focus on the objectives and timelines identified within colleges own EP. Prior to the visit colleges will have the opportunity to provide relevant PV updates, identified through self-evaluation, to reflect the progress made and highlight any changes in circumstances. PVs are informed by the [PRAISE framework](#) which is used to help establish and maintain positive relationships with all involved. Education Scotland recognises that all discussions and engagements are opportunities to share and develop thinking, and to learn from each other.

Throughout the visit, team members will involve managers and staff in professional dialogue, with the aim of supporting improvement. Through this approach Education Scotland personnel will work with college staff and should ensure that the visit experience is a collaborative process.

7. Notification of the progress visit

Colleges will be informed in writing of the agreed date for their PV six weeks in advance of commencement of the visit.

8. What happens during a progress visit?

The starting point will be the college's own evaluation and EP. We will ask the college to outline the progress they have made and the impact it has had on achievement of improvement actions and the experience of learners. Thereafter the team will review relevant documentation, and engage in professional dialogue with managers, staff, student representatives, other groups of learners and, where required, other key stakeholders.

Discussions will focus on their involvement in delivering the targets and milestones set out in the college devised EP. The team will also discuss with learners the impact of improvement actions.

9. How do we share our findings?

At the end of the PV, the team will provide a verbal report of the findings to the principal, senior managers and student representatives including an provisional statement regarding overall progress. For multi-college regions, a representative of the Regional Strategic Body (RSB) will be invited to attend.

10. What happens after the progress visit?

Following our internal quality assurance processes, we will provide each college with a draft report of our findings including statement a regarding overall progress. The college will have the opportunity to comment if they wish within five working days. Three weeks after the PV is completed, a final written report will be provided to the college and shared with the Board. For multi-college regions the report will also be shared with the RSB.

The outcomes of the PV will inform a refreshed Evaluative Report (ER) and EP (2020-23) due to be submitted by all colleges in October 2020.