

# Further Education in Northern Ireland

Corporate Plan  
2018

# 2021



**NORTHERN**  
Regional College







## FOREWORD

**The Further Education Sector in Northern Ireland provides skills and opportunities that are essential to building a modern economy and to creating a stronger, more inclusive society.**

Key government strategies – the Programme for Government, the UK and Northern Ireland Industrial Strategies, Further Education Means Success and Local Government Community Plans – all recognise that Northern Ireland's future success is predicated on its ability to access a highly skilled, talented and flexible workforce.

This Corporate Plan 2018-2021, which has been updated each year, represents a collaborative first for the six Northern Ireland Colleges of Further Education. As we move through the period 2020-2021 Covid-19 has completely transformed the way we are living, working and studying. Our plans for the year are also being transformed. As a result of the pandemic our economy has been affected, some sections more than others. The Department for the Economy in its Covid-19 Response Business Plan 2020-21 is responding to the challenges and the Further Education Sector is playing a full part in delivering interventions to help businesses and employees through this crisis. The short-term objectives of the Department supported by the Further Education Sector are no longer about growing our economy, but rather limiting the damage dealt to it in the months ahead.

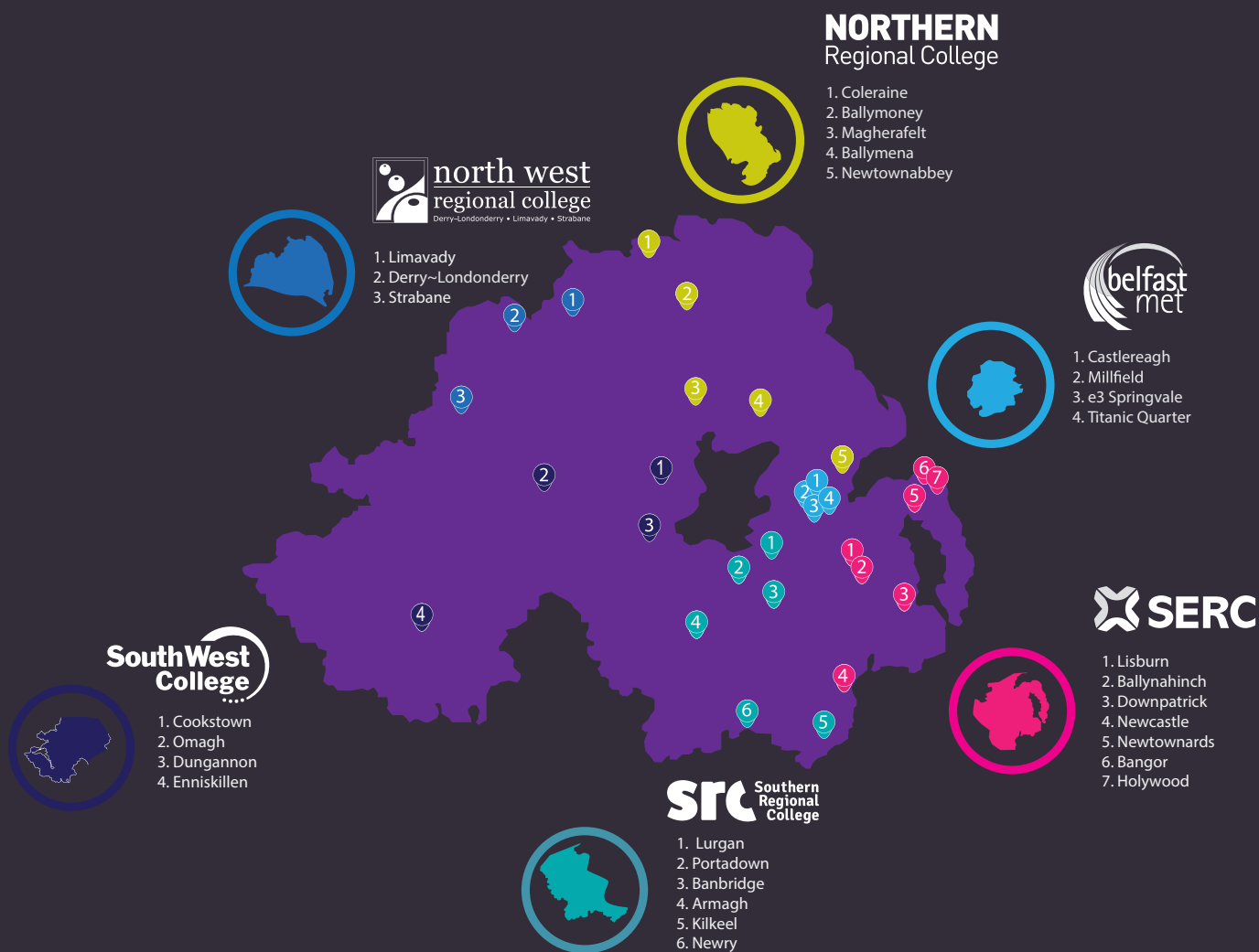
Within the context of EU exit and against a backdrop of uncertainty, this plan sets out the Sector's shared purpose, values and vision, and embodies our commitment to working effectively together in providing skills solutions that meet current and emerging economic demand. At the same time, it supports one of the Further Education Sector's unique strengths: each College's ability to deliver tailored, employer-led, locally responsive provision.

The professional and technical education system in Northern Ireland is among the best anywhere in the world. Each College is a Non-Departmental Public Body and a key delivery arm of the Department for the Economy.

This reflects the growing realisation of the Sector's contribution to shaping the workforce of the future and to ensuring that people continue to update and develop their skills over the course of their lifetime. The critical role of colleges is evidenced through our increasingly agile, innovative, employer led approach that undeniably creates better skills, better jobs and better lives for the people of Northern Ireland. The Sector also has a key task of ensuring that the high quality professional and technical education that has become its hallmark is continued with the least disruption in these challenging times.

The FE Sector clearly sees its role in significantly contributing to the Programme for Government in tackling disadvantage while driving economic growth which we look upon as our dual mandate. With this dual mandate, we play a pivotal role in developing a strong and vibrant economy while providing pathways to work in support of building a more inclusive society. Working with employers FE Colleges in Northern Ireland provide a curriculum that ensures our learners have the professional and technical skills, increasingly at higher levels, to meet employer needs and ensure that our learners are work ready. We reach deep into communities to provide opportunities for all in society: supporting social inclusion by welcoming those who have low or no qualifications, or who have barriers to learning with the skills and qualifications they need to achieve their potential; to become more independent; or, find employment and to become economically active. In parallel, Colleges work with more than 10,000 of Northern Ireland's employers, from the smallest start-ups to multi-nationals, supporting them to reskill, upskill, innovate and grow.

## FE COLLEGES IN NI





We believe that the dedication and professionalism of our staff, and their commitment to realising the potential of our students, will help ensure we achieve our collective ambition.

We look forward to working with government and all our stakeholders in seeking to build a strong, competitive and inclusive economy.

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Our Sector is unique in that we have a dual mandate of economic development and social inclusion. We provide the range of professional and technical skills necessary to help all of our learners achieve their potential, to get a job, keep a job or get a better job, and in doing so support employers to innovate and grow, to compete locally, nationally and internationally.

## OUR DUAL MANDATE

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Supporting employers to:

**Reskill  
Upskill  
Innovate  
Grow**

### SOCIAL INCLUSION

Supporting learners to:

**Gain the Professional and  
Technical Skills they need  
for work.**

**Provide learning  
opportunities for those with  
no or low qualifications  
to gain skills to fulfil their  
potential or become  
economically active.**

## FURTHER EDUCATION IN NUMBERS

**FE is big business.**

We attract over 90,000 learners every year and continually adapt and develop our curriculum to keep pace with shifting economic and skills demands.

We provide employment to over 5,000 people and, each year, inject over £150 million into the economy in salaries and wages.



**Annual Turnover  
£260 million**



**90,000 learners**



**157,000  
Enrolments**



**5,000  
Staff**



**10,000  
employers and  
community  
organisations**



**£156 million  
into the economy in  
salaries and wages**



**£56 million  
goods  
and services**

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1. Annual Turnover £260 million
  2. We serve 90,000 learners every year
  3. 157,000 enrolments onto courses every year
  4. We employ 5,000 staff
  5. We engage with more than 10,000 employers and community organisations
  6. We inject £156 million into the economy in salaries and wages
  7. We purchase £56 million of goods and services



**Based in Kilkeel, Ruach Music Limited is an innovative business focused on designing and manufacturing quality instruments to musicians globally.**

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Keen to establish a robust design and manufacturing process, as well as learning more about how to introduce new products and accessories, the team needed to learn how to use 3D CAD software and learn more best practices insights and knowledge in other areas.

After receiving one to one mentoring from Southern Regional College, Ruach Music gained all the skills it needed to help advance the business and its ambitions to innovate, improve and grow.

In December 2016, Ruach was named one of the 16 most promising micro-enterprises in the UK. The success keeps on coming with the Ruach's CEO being awarded the UK Young Entrepreneur of the Year, 2018.



**The support provided was truly beneficial to our team, we have since been able to design new concepts and products, whilst also identifying the pitfalls in design prior to any prototyping.**

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Jackie Henry,  
MBE, Senior  
Partner, Deloitte.

**Implementing an ambitious growth strategy in Northern Ireland, requires a high level of confidence in our partners to develop the right level of talent to meet our international clients' complex demands and to successfully grow our business.**

**Our strategic partnership with Belfast Metropolitan College provides us with that confidence. What strikes me most about that partnership is the College's flexibility, agility and their commitment to work with us in co-designing world-leading training programmes to help us build the right skills to meet our clients' demands.**

**Latara Kerrigan is one of life's amazing people.**

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She is an exceptional young woman, an accomplished artist and a role model for young people with severe hearing impairments.

Latara, who has been deaf since birth, lets nothing in life faze her despite the many significant challenges she faces on a daily basis.

Latara has completed a course at South West College for Students with Special Needs (STEP) and has now progressed to the BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Art and Design.

**As one door closed, another opened for William Wilkinson in Ballymena.**

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Following the shock announcement in 2014 that JTI Gallaher's factory was to close, William decided to retrain and work towards a career in accountancy at Northern Regional College.

William has been getting experience working with a local consultancy firm and, in the longer term, he plans to continue working towards becoming a Chartered Accountant.



Each College is immersed in its locality and has tailored its offer to meet the skills' needs of its local community.

As six Colleges we share much in common: our common purpose and collective vision is to transform lives.

## OUR VISION

Further Education in Northern Ireland will provide world-class skills and support to business that transforms lives.

**William Campbell**  
Apprenticeship in Carpentry  
and Joinery



**An apprenticeship at South Eastern Regional College was the ideal course for me as I prefer hands-on practical learning. As part of my course I was named UK World Skills champion which looks great on my CV. The tutors are very supportive and encouraging. One day I hope to start up my own business.**

**Joanne Stewart**  
Level 3 Extended Diploma in  
Information Technology



**I started with Belfast Met as a Pathfinders' student. This gave me the confidence to progress to mainstream education. I have Asperger's and so needed extra support. I am so much happier now than I was at school. I intend to progress to University and plan to set up my own software company.**



## OUR MISSION

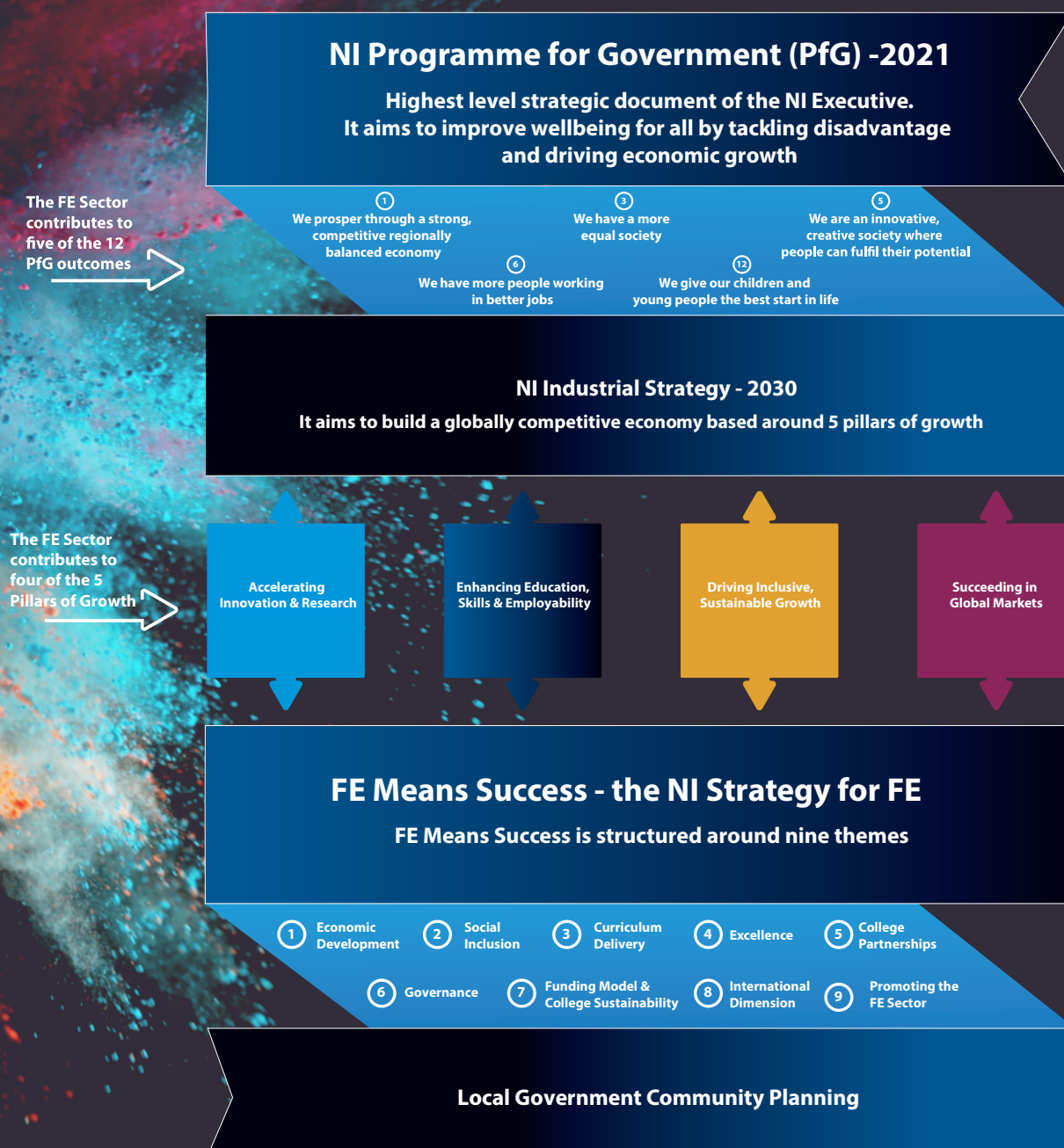
Further Education Colleges positively change people's lives by providing high quality, accessible and relevant skills, education and training which tackles disadvantage and drives economic growth.



## OUR POLICY LINKAGES & ALIGNMENTS

The Department for the Economy's Covid-19 Response Business Plan 2020-21 sets out the strategic objectives and the FE Sector supports Objective 1:

**'Deliver a strong, competitive and regionally balanced economy with more people working in better jobs through all phases of Covid-19 and the subsequent recovery, within the context of EU Exit.'**



**The Programme for Government  
is the highest level strategic  
document of the Northern Ireland  
Executive.**

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It sets out the economic and social priorities for Northern Ireland to 2021. It aims to improve wellbeing for all by tackling disadvantage and driving economic growth.

A key feature of the Programme for Government is its dependence on collaborative working between organisations and groups whether in the public, voluntary or private sectors. It is a programme in which individuals and communities play an active part with a focus on improving the lives of the people of Northern Ireland.

FE Colleges contribute to five of the Programme for Government's 12 outcomes:

1. **We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy (Outcome 1).**
2. **We have a more equal society (Outcome 3).**
3. **We are an innovative, creative society where people can fulfil their potential (Outcome 5).**
4. **We have more people working in better jobs (Outcome 6).**
5. **We give our children and young people the best start in life (Outcome 12).**

The Northern Ireland Industrial Strategy underpins the Programme for Government and FE colleges play a key role in the delivery of Pillars 1, 2, 3 and 4:

- **Accelerating innovation and research (Pillar 1).**
- **Enhancing education, skills and employability (Pillar 2).**
- **Driving inclusive, sustainable growth (Pillar 3).**
- **Succeeding in global markets (Pillar 4).**

**The Northern Ireland Strategy for Further Education: Further Education Means Success is structured around three aims and nine themes:**

**3 Aims**

1. To provide a world class, economically relevant professional and technical education system.
2. To create a globally competitive economy through supporting employers to upskill and become more innovative.
3. To overcome educational disadvantage and support social and economic inclusion.

**9 Themes**

1. Economic development (Theme 1).
2. Social inclusion (Theme 2).
3. Curriculum delivery (Theme 3).
4. Excellence (Theme 4).
5. College partnerships (Theme 5).
6. Governance (Theme 6).
7. Funding model and college sustainability (Theme 7).
8. International dimension (Theme 8).
9. Promoting the Further Education Sector (Theme 9).

In April 2015, the reform of Local Government resulted in the creation of 11 new councils. The new councils were given the responsibility of leading the community planning process for their district.

Community Planning aims to improve

the connection between all the tiers of government and wider society work through partnership working to jointly deliver better outcomes for everyone. Community plans identify long-term priorities for improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of districts and the people who live there.

Community Planning Partnerships have been established in each district. They comprise the council, statutory bodies, agencies and the wider community, including the community and voluntary sector.

The partners will develop and implement a shared plan for promoting the well-being of an area, improving community cohesion and the quality of life for all citizens. The FE Sector is committed to working with partners across central and local government and, the business, community and voluntary sectors toward achieving the outcomes in Community Plans which also in turn, contribute to the achievement of Programme for Government outcomes.

We will provide the skills needed for the economy of today and tomorrow. We will provide opportunities for all people to secure a better future and better life.

We will be ambitious for our learners, employers and communities and, for the contribution they make to improve the competitiveness of the economy of Northern Ireland.



**We will do this by:**

1. Providing an exceptional, high quality learning experience which enhances employment opportunities by providing enterprise skills development across our curriculum.
2. Delivering a relevant and future proof, Priority Skills, STEAM focused curriculum that responds to the local and regional needs of the evolving economy, and offers progression opportunities to further and higher education.
3. Working with industry through designated sector partnerships to ensure that apprenticeships are recognised as being critical to the NI economy. Providing support to businesses to enable them to innovate, develop new products and grow their businesses; offering a range of robust innovation support interventions from tailored skills development support to apprenticeship provision and research development & innovation.
4. Supporting economic development through innovation and upskilling the existing workforce to improve business efficiency and productivity thereby enabling them to grow jobs and improve Gross Value Added (GVA). Continuing to develop an applied research and innovation capability, realising new technologies and solutions for industry based on international collaboration and best practice through increased international engagement.
5. Addressing social inclusion by providing opportunities for those with no or low qualifications or those not in work to enhance their capability to fulfil their potential and gain meaningful employment.
6. Constantly striving for improvement by embedding an effective system of self-evaluation and quality improvement planning, ensuring effective governance, and management of finance and resources.
7. Optimising our resources, maximising the use of digital technologies to support a flexible, responsive, quality approach to education and training provision, leading to solutions that meet learner needs and achieve higher success rates.
8. Investing in our staff to deliver excellence in teaching and learning, to build managerial capability and promote equality and inclusion in the workplace.

Our values influence how we behave and shape everything we do. As six Colleges in Northern Ireland our shared values will support us as we work to achieve our collective ambition and plans:

## OUR SHARED VALUES

**we value**

### COLLABORATION

We work together to forge strong and creative partnerships across government, industry, universities, schools and communities.

**we value**

### EXCELLENCE

We achieve the highest possible standards for our learners, customers and staff and seek continuous quality improvement.

**we value**

### INCLUSION

We provide a world of opportunities for all.

**we value**

### RESPECT

We deliver our promises and value everyone's contribution.

**we value**

### INNOVATION

We are innovative, agile and enterprising in all that we do.

## THE SCALE OF FURTHER EDUCATION'S IMPACT TO 2021

Over the next 3 years, the FE Sector will make the following contribution to the Northern Ireland economy:

191,000  
learners will choose to study with us.

275,500  
qualifications will be achieved.

18,676  
employers will want to do business with us.

4,542  
talented people will want to work for us.

This Corporate Plan is supported by six annual College Development Plans which demonstrate how each College will deliver a tailored, employer-led, locally responsive provision.



**Northern Ireland's further education colleges deliver high quality learning that meets the needs of learners and the economy.**



**Minister**  
Diane Dodds  
(July /August 2020)

**I have made no secret of the fact that I wish to see a very significant increase in the level of investment in skills. Developing a highly effective skills pipeline is key to our economic future as we lay a strong foundation for our economy post Covid-19. I will continue to focus on establishing a world-class skills system which is sustainable and boosts opportunities for everyone across Northern Ireland.**



**Sinead Deeney**  
**HND in Building Studies**

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A former graduate of North West Regional College who completed a Higher National Diploma in Building Studies, is helping raise the profile of female engineers in her new home town of Darwin, Australia.

Sinead Deeney, who went on to complete a degree in Civil Engineering with the Open University, now works with Global giant WSP.

She is also the Chair for Women in Engineering and Future Net, and the Vice President of Young Engineers Australia and her advice to other engineers making their first steps on the career ladder is: 'Aim High.'



**You have to aim high, it's important to keep the push on. Do what you want to do, if you don't put yourself out there it will take longer to happen.**

**Ruarai Corr**  
**Higher Level Apprentice**  
**Sandvik**



Ruarai Corr began his apprenticeship on the GOLD Engineering Programme at Sandvik with South West College. Ruarai had previously chosen the full time university route but this was not for him. His apprenticeship started in Sandvik's Production Engineering side where he was involved in standard operating procedures.

He then progressed onto Manufacturing Engineering where he worked with a team on continuous improvement and lean processes. Ruarai found that this option of apprenticeship where he has been given the opportunity to gain valuable industry experience alongside his studies has awarded him the role and success that he has achieved within Sandvik.

He is a valued employee and gives 100% to both his career and his studies. He now aims to progress to a part time university degree.



**NORTHERN**  
Regional College



For further contact information for all colleges, please follow the link:  
[www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/further-education-fe-colleges](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/further-education-fe-colleges)