



**Access Route Planner Project  
2002-2006**

**Final project report for  
The North Forum  
for Widening Participation in Higher Education**

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2006**

## FOREWORD

**The North Forum for Widening Participation in Higher Education is one of four Regional Forums for Wider Access in Scotland, which are funded by the Scottish Funding Council for Further and Higher Education. It was set up in late 1999.**

The Forum is a partnership of all of the Colleges and Higher Education Institutions in the North of Scotland (i.e. the local authority areas of Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Moray, Highland, Eilean Siar, Shetland and Orkney) and other organisations that are interested and involved in lifelong learning, including local authorities. A full membership list is set out at the back of this report.

The Forum's mission statement is: "to work in partnership to increase the number of people from under-represented groups in the North of Scotland who progress on to higher education and to work together to reduce barriers to progression between education sectors."

The overarching aim of the Forum is to develop a strategy to increase the number of people in the North of Scotland from under-represented groups who participate in higher education (i.e. advanced courses and above) and to implement this strategy through a defined work programme. This work programme is made up of projects that are either commissioned by the Executive Group or are the result of bids from partner institutions or organisations.

The Forum recognises that a key element of its work must be the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities throughout its area and the de-mystification of the routes into post-compulsory education. This was the purpose behind the Access Route Planner project. The project was first funded in March 2002 and its funding from the Forum ceased in March 2006. The project has developed from a means of setting out all of the progression routes between institutions in the North of Scotland on paper, to developing a roadshow to develop the understanding of professional staff working with people who are 'difficult to reach' about post-compulsory education opportunities in the area, from informal community education up to degree level study. The website has also developed greatly from the first version. It now provides a 'one stop shop' covering informal and formal educational opportunities in the North of Scotland. The aim of this final phase of work was to ensure that potential learners receive accurate and timely advice and encouragement to pursue their educational aspirations.

This is the final report of the project and, as such, it sets out the detail of the work that it has undertaken and how that work has been done. Forum partners have agreed to maintain the 'Course You Can' website and it is essential that this continues to carry up-to-date information. The Forum will continue to build on the work of the project in its work with communities and with people at transition points between institutions or between modes of learning and it will maintain its interest in the continued development of the 'Course You Can' website, since it offers users a one-stop means of accessing clear information about the educational opportunities in the North of Scotland.

**Rob Wallen, Chair, North Forum  
February 2007**

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This report can be read at or downloaded from [www.scotland-northforum.ac.uk](http://www.scotland-northforum.ac.uk).

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# Introduction

The Access Route Planner project arose as a result of the “Making the Link” FE/HE Transition Conference held in January 2002 at Banff & Buchan College of Further Education. At that conference delegates decided that there was a need for some kind of framework which brought together all the progression routes between further and higher education. Following informal discussions between interested parties, a Steering Group was set up in March 2002. Members of the Steering Group are listed in **Appendix 2**.

## 1. Phase 1

Following a successful bid for funding from the North Forum for Widening Participation in Higher Education (the North Forum) (see page 31 for membership) a Project Officer was employed initially for 6 months in June 2002.

The aim was to gather, collate and distribute information about progression opportunities, largely in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. The Project Officer was tasked to produce paper and web based access route planners covering the providers in the target geographical area.

The planners were designed to be user-friendly guides to the multiplicity of routes available to both traditional and non-traditional students wishing to qualify for entry to Further and/or Higher education. The main target audience for the planners was those without traditional entry qualifications, and those lacking confidence, skills and experience. Additionally, it was considered that prospective students could consult the planners in the company of a careers or guidance adviser.

### 1.1 Information Gathering

Much of the time early in the project was spent gathering and collating information from FE and HE partner institutions which are listed in **Appendix 3**. A key person was identified in each institution and this greatly assisted and simplified the process. As well as discussions with relevant staff, Prospectuses, Articulation Agreements, Access course documentation, recruitment and other literature was consulted.

A large body of complex data was soon amassed and work commenced on collating it into a standardised format. Preliminary work commenced in gathering information on community-based learning opportunities but, it soon became clear that it would not be possible to include this vast range of information and keep within the project timescale. It was therefore decided, in consultation with the Steering Group, to focus on tertiary level provision.

## **1.2 Paper-based planner (Edition 1)**

This booklet, entitled “Discover your Routes” – a guide to Qualifications and how to achieve them - was designed to raise awareness, create interest, motivate, encourage, reassure and stimulate readers to seek more information. In order not to completely overwhelm and alarm the reader it was necessary to be selective in the choice of progression routes to illustrate. At the same time care had to be taken to ensure a reasonable breadth of coverage so that readers would not feel excluded. By showing the reader that progression from various starting points in many subjects is possible, it was hoped that he/she would then have the confidence to seek specific progression route information pertinent to their own personal situation from Careers Scotland or a delivery institution.

Considerable time and effort was spent on the design of the booklet and the presentation of the material. Some currently available planners were heavily text based which it was considered might deter potential readers. Thus the selected routes were illustrated graphically using the minimum of text. Readers are guided step-wise through the booklet so that they are not required to move too far from their personal “comfort zones” too quickly.

Between October and December 2002, 4000 copies of the booklet were distributed to North Forum member institutions in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, Careers Scotland Offices, WEA and Lead-Scotland. In addition, copies were made available in all libraries, community facilities and sports centres in the target area. Schools and schools guidance staff received copies and Community Education and Adult Basic Education Staff received supplies. Booklets were placed in all medical and dental practices in Aberdeen city.

In January 2003 a reprint of 1500 copies was used to replenish depleted stocks in the various outlets.

## **1.3 Web-based planner (Version 1)**

The purpose of the web-based planner was to complement the booklet and to offer comprehensive coverage of provision and more detailed information on individual access points and progression routes. The concept was to allow the visitor to input their personal details, their current educational attainments, if any, their job or qualification aspirations, their selected study location and the site would display graphically, relevant access points and progression routes similar to those in the booklet but tailored to the individual. If desired, the enquirer would then be able to access additional information about specific courses, institutions, study and personal support by using the embedded hot links and drop-down menus.

Links to the Prospectuses and web pages of all the North Forum providers were set up as well as hot buttons to other informative sites. These give visitors access to a glossary, case studies and student profiles, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework and basic information on attending college or University for the first time.

The main objective was achieved and a working prototype was rolled out in November 2002. From this point, the site was subjected to critical appraisal by the Steering Group, partners, potential professional and student users, web design students and others. This generated a large body of useful material which was used

to modify and improve the design, operation and functionality of the site and the presentation of the material.

The much improved and upgraded site was launched publicly in August 2003 with the URL: [www.discover-your-routes.org.uk](http://www.discover-your-routes.org.uk) to match with the title of the booklet.

#### **1.4 Promotion of the booklet and website**

Various activities were undertaken to make sure that the target users and others were aware of the booklet and web site.

A table top poster display was used at Parents' Nights at 15 schools in and around Aberdeen. Many booklets were distributed and contact was established with several prospective students. In addition presentations on the web site and booklet were given at Aberdeen College, Banff & Buchan College and SAC. The poster display was used at the launch of the booklet in November 2002 and at the North Forum Conference in December 2002. As a result of this a report appeared in the Aberdeen "Evening Express"

A4 and A3 posters were distributed to libraries, colleges and other relevant venues to coincide with the launch of the website in August 2003. Beer mats and computer monitor clips bearing the same design became available at the same time and these were used as "freebies" to promote the site.

An article was published in the SFEU Journal "Broadcast" in October 2003.

Hot links were established both to and from all North Forum partner institution websites. In addition, links to the site were established from many local and regional education sites as well as local government and commercial sites.

#### **1.5 Evaluation**

As soon as the Phase 1 booklet was published, a two pronged evaluation process commenced. A process evaluation involving members of the Steering Group analysed the effectiveness of the data gathering, collation and booklet production methods. All members responded and all agreed that the procedures should be used for production of the Phase 2 booklet.

Evaluation of the design, content and effectiveness of the Phase 1 booklet itself was more problematic. Some 35 potential users who had attended Parents' Evenings were contacted by e.mail or mail and asked to complete a very short questionnaire. Unfortunately, no responses were received. Schools Careers/Guidance Staff contacted through their dedicated website failed to elicit any responses. Despite handing out questionnaires to at least 60 staff in various partner institutions only 4 responses were returned.

Two Focus Groups of users were planned by Community Education in Inverurie and Laurencekirk but for various reasons these did not materialise.

Modifications and improvements to the booklet, therefore, were undertaken as a result of personal communications, comments from the Steering Group and comments noted at meetings in the Colleges and Schools.

Evaluation of the website has been ongoing since the site went live in 2003. Much useful comment has come from the Steering Group, from partner institutions and particularly from a group of web design students at Aberdeen College.

An evaluation form was built into the website but even this generated very little feedback.

## **1.6 Challenges**

Very early in the project it became evident that several obstacles would have to be overcome or circumnavigated.

The large volume of data presented a major challenge both in terms of the production of the booklet and particularly in relation to development of the website. This resulted in having to limit the amount of information contained in the booklet to exemplars, and limiting website information to FE and HE providers only.

Differences between FE institutions in terminology for the same levels of programmes required the establishment of an agreed method of presenting the information. This was resolved by extensive discussion with institutional representatives.

Fluidity of both FE and HE institution provision was a barrier to the design of the final systems, as course changes were and are ongoing.

Technology in the form of incompatibility of databases, programming difficulties and loss of material through major breakdown in hardware presented major frustrations and challenges. This resulted in the launch of the site being postponed.

## **1.7 Spin-off effects of the Project.**

Nationally, Phase 2 of the project coincided with an increased national focus on articulation between FE and HE. This wider context meant that colleges and universities were producing more robust and detailed information about articulation and other links, and both these facts enhanced and complemented this project.

There was evidence of considerable rationalisation of programme provision in some institutions. This resulted in simplified course catalogues which were more easily understood by prospective students.

Although many official and unofficial FE/HE articulation arrangements have been in place for some time, activity expanded considerably and the development of the Access Route Planner may have been instrumental in accelerating the process.

## **1.8 Sustainability**

To capitalise on the time, effort and expense expended on producing the Planners a workable and agreed plan to sustain their accuracy and currency had to be devised. A Plan was established, agreed and signed by all partners. Essentially, each agreed to nominate staff to provide updated course and progression details on a regular basis to an appointed person in The Robert Gordon University. The University of Aberdeen agreed to continue to host the website.

## **2. Phase 2**

Phase 1 was regarded very much as a pilot, and benefited only prospective students and organisations in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. Phase 2, which commenced in November, 2002 extended the project to cover the whole of the North Forum area, making it more representative of the Forum's aims and membership. Phase 2 would make the Access Route Planner available to all North Forum Partners and to all potential students in the North of Scotland. It was envisaged that this would encourage those who may have been "turned off" lifelong learning (believing that they had insufficient, or the "wrong" qualifications) to see that it is possible for them to enter the career of their choice through educational opportunities available locally.

### **2.1 The strategy**

In consultation with the Steering Group, and using the limited feedback available, it was decided to pursue the same strategy as in Phase 1. The Phase 1 booklet had attracted positive comment and had been received well by advisers and prospective learners. The website was similarly acclaimed so there seemed to be no need to change approach at this stage.

### **2.2 Data Gathering and Collation**

With the expansion of the geographical area to include all education providers of FE and HE in the North of Scotland the volume of data increased dramatically. Early in this phase there were concerns that collecting, manipulating and in-putting this mass of information would prove difficult. In the event, the systems and procedures developed to handle the relatively small amounts of data in Phase 1 proved to be robust.

As in Phase 1, course, articulation and other relevant data were supplied by the institutions through named contacts, or it was extracted from their Prospectuses and other published materials or their websites. Dealing directly with a named contact was a key factor in accessing current and accurate information.

Information was entered on spreadsheets and this data was then re-manipulated into the relevant web format by the web designer. Accuracy was paramount as a trivial error could have massive impact on the final outcome.

### **2.3 Paper based planner (Version 2)**

Version 2 of the booklet, retained the same name, but was redesigned to include representative and illustrative data from all the North Forum partners in the North of Scotland as well as Angus and Perth Colleges.

The booklet was intended to be a motivational tool providing representative exemplars to encourage the reader to seek more detailed information. It was not designed to provide exhaustive coverage of all progression routes in the North of Scotland. To do this in a paper-based format would have produced a very large, unwieldy and inaccessible document.

Feedback from users was incorporated as far as was possible. The number of illustrated routes was increased from 15 to 25, the proportion of text was reduced considerably and full colour was introduced. The graphic presentation and visual impact were improved dramatically and the overall design was enriched. Finally the booklet became a promotional tool for the website. It was hoped that these improvements would improve its attractiveness, accessibility, usefulness and increase enquiries to provider institutions across the North Forum area.

The Phase 2 booklet became available in early August 2003 and 8000 were distributed to the same outlets as edition 1 but over a much enlarged geographical area. Medical and dental practices were omitted, as the increased booklet specification meant that costs were higher and the print run had to be correspondingly lower.

### **2.4 Web based planner**

Considerable redevelopment of the prototype site followed a critical appraisal by the Steering Group, Partners and others. This generated a large body of useful information and suggestions which resulted in changes to the site to improve its "look", accessibility, navigability, presentation of material and overall functionality.

The upgraded site now contained data from all providers in the North Forum constituency and enquirers from anywhere in the area or outside could access course and progression information for their local area.

Some way into the process of redevelopment it became possible to access direct the databases on the site, make alterations and add new data. This was of great benefit as it made inputting of data much easier and cut dramatically translation errors.

To avoid confusion and to maintain continuity the URL name was retained as [www.discover-your-routes.org.uk](http://www.discover-your-routes.org.uk) and the new, upgraded site was launched in early August 2003 with welcome and pleasing Press coverage.

## **2.5 Promotion of the website**

A number of strategies were used to publicise the site and to bring it to the attention of potential users.

1. The front cover of the booklet had the URL displayed prominently and mention of the site was made in the text to encourage readers to visit the site.
2. A4 and A3 posters were distributed to libraries, colleges, community centres, sports centres etc. to coincide with the launch of the site.
3. Beer mats and computer monitor clips bearing the same design as the website and booklet distributed and used as “freebies” to promote the site.
4. Presentations on the content and use of the site were delivered to guidance, advisory and teaching staff in various institutions in the North Forum area.
5. A table top poster display was used at Parents’ Nights at 15 secondary schools to target parents and school leavers.
6. An article entitled “Access Route Planner: Discover your routes” appeared in the SFEU Journal in October 2003.
7. Reciprocal hot links were established between all North Forum partner institutions, many local and regional education sites and local government and commercial sites.

## **2.6 Evaluation of the version 2 of the booklet and website**

Evaluation questionnaires (**See Appendix 4**) were used to determine the usefulness and effectiveness of the booklet and the website. In addition a feedback form was incorporated into the website.

On each and every occasion that a booklet or website promotional activity took place questionnaires were distributed to participants. Questionnaire fatigue became apparent very early in the process and many responses were not completed adequately or not at all. The overall return was extremely poor.

Much more valuable information for improvement and upgrading was obtained through personal communications with individuals and through the Steering Group.

As the response rate was very poor it was difficult to ascertain who was picking up and using the booklet and website. Equally, little feedback on the usefulness of the site filtered back.

In discussions with professionals in Careers Scotland, the Schools Guidance Service and Guidance and Advisory services in Colleges and Universities the booklet and website were universally welcomed. This positive outcome informed the initial decision to develop the project to cover the whole of the North Forum area and subsequently to produce a scheme to maintain the currency and accuracy of the site.

## **2.7 Sustainability.**

To capitalise on the time, effort and expense that had been expended to date it was essential that the route planners were maintained so that potential students were offered accurate and current information.

A sustainability plan involving all members of the Steering Group was established, agreed and signed. **(See Appendix 5)** Essentially, partners agreed to nominate staff to provide updated course and progression details on a regular basis. The Robert Gordon University and the University of Aberdeen agreed to continue with co-ordination and web hosting roles respectively.

## **3. Phase 3.**

Following the success of the project to date the Access Route Planner was further extended to include the informal/community education sector throughout the North Forum area.

### **3.1 Development of a Strategy**

The informal sector audience is notoriously difficult to reach and to engage. Through discussion with various agencies including Community Learning and Development staff, the Library Service, JobCentre Plus staff, WEA and interested parties in the Tertiary sector, it became clear that a direct approach to potential students might not be particularly successful. It was decided, therefore, to work with those staff who come into contact with and who offer education and learning advice to potential students. Initially, JobCentre Plus advisers and Community Learning and Development staff were targeted and it was planned that Library staff would be included at a later date. To complement this, a poster and leaflet would be produced to target the particular client group. In addition, the discover-your-routes website would be redesigned, updated and expanded to embrace the informal sector.

### **3.2 The Strategy.**

As the situation in FE/HE is changing rapidly, the plan was to provide the adviser groups with up-to-date information and guidance on the FE and HE sectors so that they would be better able to advise clients/customers on a range of relevant issues. This would be done through a Power Point presentation covering a range of relevant topics. It was considered important that this presentation should be highly interactive, engaging, participative and colourful. Each participant would receive a CD of the presentation so that they could revisit the information at any time and/or cascade the material to colleagues. The participant pack would contain a copy of the second edition of the Discover Your Routes booklet and a list of appropriate referral agencies and institutions.

It was generally acknowledged that the Discover your Routes booklet had performed a useful service in assisting potential students to identify possible progression routes to Further and Higher education in an easy to read and understand format. However,

the booklet could not encompass all available options and courses and it was expensive to produce. It was therefore decided, in consultation with the Steering Group, to concentrate on the redevelopment of the website and cheaper options such as leaflets and posters.

A leaflet and accompanying poster would be produced. They would be designed to attract the target client groups and provide just sufficient information to stimulate and motivate the reader. A tear-off reply paid postcard would be included.

In light of the fact that the National Website had come on line it was decided initially to close the Discover-your-routes website. In discussions with users, however, and in course of delivering the presentations to various advisory groups it became clear that the website filled an essential niche and satisfied a definite need. It was decided, therefore, to retain the site and to update, redesign and expand it so that it covered the informal sector as well as the FE and HE sectors.

### 3.3 Implementation

Between March and October 2006 presentations to advisers in the target organisations were delivered as set out in the table below:

**(a) Table 1. Presentations delivered:**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>No of Offices</b>	<b>No of Advisers</b>
JobCentre Plus	14	193
Aberdeen City CLD	3	37
Aberdeenshire CLD	5	69
Western Isles CLD	1	14
Moray CLD	1	24
Highlands CLD	3	29
Aberdeen City Libraries	1	27
Aberdeenshire Libraries	2	35
Moray Library Service	1	31
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>279</b>

**(b) Leaflets and posters.**

**(See Appendix 6)**

Some 7,500 leaflets and 350 posters were distributed to the following organisations in the North Forum area.

North Forum Partners  
JobCentre Plus Offices  
Libraries  
Community Centres  
Sports Centres  
Learning and Outreach Centres

**(c) Reply Paid postcards returned.**

To date 45 cards have been returned. Individuals have been contacted and relevant advice offered. The enquiries have come from a very wide geographical area, some from outside the North Forum area.

### **3.4 Website**

Once the decision was made to retain the site, it was considered appropriate to modify, redevelop and upgrade it. The site name was changed to “Course you can” and it was re-skinned to have the same “look” as the leaflets and posters. In addition a great deal of work was done to improve the operation, functionality, navigability and attractiveness of the site.

The new look website was very much based on the previous “Discover your routes” site. It continued to offer the visitor the facility to input their personal details, their current educational qualifications, if any, their job or qualification aspirations, their selected study location and the site would display relevant access points and progression routes tailored to that individual.

The operational databases were updated to take account of the changes that had taken place since the site was first launched and they were enlarged to include informal/community provision in the NF area. It was decided that only “academic” provision would be included and not courses such as “Macrame for beginners” e.g. as they were considered to have less relevance.

The new site was launched at the end of March 2006 at the SESWARF conference in Dundee. The site can be accessed at [www.courseyoucan.org.uk](http://www.courseyoucan.org.uk)

To advertise and promote the site a postcard (**See Appendix 7**) was produced. These were sent to the same organisations that had received leaflets and posters.

### 3.5 Evaluation

Prior to and after each presentation each participant was asked to complete a questionnaire. (See Appendix 8)

Analysis of this data provided information on the current state of knowledge of the FE/HE system of participants and how it was improved by the presentation.

A follow-up questionnaire (See Appendix 9) was sent to participants 3 to 4 months later to determine how the presentation helped participants deal with queries from potential students.

Analysis of the data from 154 respondents spanning JobCentre Plus Offices, Libraries and CLD offices throughout the NF area is shown below:

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they were **very, fairly, slightly** or **not** confident in advising clients in the listed areas before and after the presentation. Percentage responses in the **slightly** and **not** categories have been combined.

**Table 2 Percentages of respondents in the slightly and not categories before and after presentation**

	% Before	%After
Entering FE/HE	66	6
Progression to HE	74	8
Entry Qualifications	84	14
Institutions	77	6
Courses	82	10
Qualifications	80	11
Referring clients	73	9
Sources of help	71	5
Student support	81	16

It is clear that the presentation had a significant and positive effect and in all categories, staff confidence had increased markedly.

Follow-up questionnaires were sent to individuals in all the organisations in which presentations had been delivered. The return rate was very poor despite email and postal reminders.

In general, respondents indicated that they had found the presentation helpful and they had used the information, but it would not be prudent to extrapolate too much from the very small number of responses.

An email feedback form has been incorporated into the website and visitor numbers can be recorded. To date 600 have visited the site but there has been no feedback.

#### **4. Adoption of the project nationally.**

With the success of the project in the North Forum area and encouraged by interest from another Forum it was felt that there might be considerable benefit to prospective learners, advisers and ultimately to providers if the Planners were rolled out nationally. To this end a proposal was drawn up and circulated to the other Fora.

The paper outlined the history and background of the project and its development over 4.5 years and then went on to describe in some detail the content and operation of the "Course you can" website. Particular emphasis was placed on the facility within the site to offer prospective students graphical presentation of access points and routes to specific qualifications starting from any entry point on the educational continuum.

It was proposed that the website could become a "one stop shop" for learning provision in Scotland and it offered considerable advantages over other sites as it was specific to Scotland, it was based on progression routes rather than simply offering enquirers an end point, it encompassed the whole of the post school educational continuum and it was capable of expansion and development to include other areas such as CPD and work based sectors. The knowledge and expertise in the other Fora could be harnessed to develop a first class product.

A fully-costed plan to do the work and upgrade and further develop the website was presented. Costs, based on the annual funding received by each Forum, were set out.

To date the other Fora have not been able to take this proposal forward.

#### **5. Summing up**

This project, which has been running since 2002, has involved a large number of individuals, educational partners and related organisations. There can be little doubt that it has raised the awareness of Further and Higher education in the North Forum area and may have contributed, to a greater or lesser degree, to increasing participation rates in tertiary education in the North of Scotland.

During the project 13,500 booklets, 7,500 leaflets and 350 posters have been distributed widely throughout the NF area. This blanket coverage must be assumed to have had a positive effect on awareness and hopefully progression rates.

Until this project was undertaken, prospective students, especially adult returners or those from low progression rate areas, were faced with a large quantity of confusing information on courses, access, progression opportunities and institutions. Without help and guidance they may have been deterred from proceeding and thus were lost to the system.

The development of the Access Route Planners allowed this large volume of data to be collected and collated and presented in simple graphic formats which made it much more readily accessible and understandable. Hopefully, this would ensure that potential learners obtained relevant information and were then able to progress their interest and aspirations through an appropriate organisation.

The expansion of the Planners to embrace the provision offered by the informal/community sector will go some way to improving social inclusion and also to addressing the issue of compartmentalisation in the education continuum. Until recently, Schools, Community, FE and HE have been regarded very much as separate entities but these artificial barriers are now being broken and progression routes are now being established between the sectors. In addition, an atmosphere of co-operation between sectors is developing. This can only be of benefit to potential students. Articulation agreements and other arrangements are becoming increasingly common and it may be that the Planners may have had some bearing on this development.

The issue of providing easily accessible information for potential students has been recognised nationally with the development of a national site allowing FE students to access information on progression to HE.

Low levels of evaluation responses have not allowed quantitative data to be presented on the success of the project, but from personal communications, observation and limited feedback it is clear that the Planners meet a need, are being used and are welcomed by potential students and professional advisers.

Sustainability is an issue which requires to be addressed. It is important that the data bases are maintained and that the site is kept relevant and attractive to the target population. Although a sustainability plan has been put in place its success very much depends on the individual organisations submitting updates in a timely fashion. The track record to date is not good. Unless a distinct improvement is effected then the website information will very rapidly become dated and potential students will receive incorrect and misleading information.

Despite the fact that a National website is now in place it covers only a very small part of the education continuum. This project has embraced all education sectors and could be regarded as a “one stop shop” for post school educational opportunities in the North of Scotland. It would be a major achievement if the principles of the Access Route Planner could be applied nationally so that we could have a national “one stop shop”.

## **6. Financial Statement**

The financial statement for the project is attached at **Appendix 11**.

## APPENDIX 1

### THE NORTH FORUM FOR WIDENING PARTICIPATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

#### MEMBERSHIP AS AT MAY 2006

In alphabetical order of institution

INSTITUTION/ORGANISATION	REPRESENTATIVE
Aberdeen City Council	Pete Hamilton Community Learning and Development Manager
Aberdeen College	Rob Wallen (Vice Chair) Director of Learning and Teaching
Aberdeenshire Council	Anne Simpson Community Learning Manager
ASPIRENorth	Janet Rougvie Director
Banff & Buchan College	Gordon Scott External Affairs Manager
Careers Scotland (Highlands and Islands Enterprise Area) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise	Liz Galashan Head of Services to Individuals
Careers Scotland (SE Grampian)	Moira F. Whyte Manager
Highland Theological College	Kevin Sinclair Learning Centre Development Manager
Inverness College	Frances Hunter Assistant Principal (Academic)
LEAD Scotland	Jennifer Third Regional Manager, North
Lews Castle College	Iain Macsween Section Manager, Gaelic, Communications, Arts and Languages
Lochaber College	Dan MacLeod Principal
Moray College	Edna Cameron Project Manager
NAFC Marine Centre	Peter Dryburgh Principal
North Forum*	Alison Watson Administrator
Orkney College	Bill Ross Principal
Sabhal Mor Ostaig	John Norman MacLeod Head of Studies
Scottish Agricultural College	Suzanne Stockwell Student Recruitment Officer
Scottish Funding Councils*	Margaret Dundas National Co-ordinator for Widening Participation
Scottish Funding Councils*	Dr John Kemp Assistant Director
Shetland College	George Smith Director
The Highland Council	Christopher Phillips, Lifelong Learning Manager

The North Highland College	Rosemary Thompson Principal
The Open University in Scotland	Dr Lindsay Hewitt Widening Participation Co-ordinator
The Robert Gordon University	Prof. John Harper (Chair) Vice Principal, Faculty of Health & Social Care
UHI Millennium Institute	Iain Morrison Widening Participation Manager
University of Aberdeen	Julie McAndrews Director, Centre for Lifelong Learning
WEA	Alison Morrison Tutor Organiser

\* Observer status

## Appendix 2

### Members of Steering Group

<b>Lesley Gunn (Chair)</b>	<b>Robert Gordon University</b>
<b>Sandra Allan</b>	<b>Aberdeen College</b>
<b>Kyrsten Black</b>	<b>Scottish Agricultural College</b>
<b>Karen McArdle</b>	<b>Aberdeen University</b>
<b>Karen Thomas</b>	<b>Aberdeenshire Council</b>
<b>Greg Cooper</b>	<b>Moray College</b>
<b>Susan Summers</b>	<b>Aberdeen City Council</b>
<b>Claire Thomson</b>	<b>Aberdeenshire Council</b>
<b>Gordon Scott</b>	<b>Banff &amp; Buchan College</b>
<b>Morag Reid</b>	<b>Aberdeen University</b>
<b>Leanne Wilson</b>	<b>Robert Gordon University</b>
<b>Alison Morrison</b>	<b>WEA</b>
<b>Anne Simpson</b>	<b>Aberdeenshire Council</b>
<b>Moira Whyte</b>	<b>Careers Scotland</b>
<b>Alison Watson</b>	<b>North Forum</b>
<b>Patrick Edward</b>	<b>North Forum</b>

## **List of Project Partners**

Aberdeen City Council  
Aberdeen College  
Aberdeenshire Council  
Angus College  
Argyll College  
Banff & Buchan College  
Careers Scotland  
Highland Theological College  
Inverness College  
JobCentre Plus  
Lead Scotland  
Lews Castle College  
Lochaber College  
Moray College  
North Atlantic Fisheries College  
Orkney College  
Perth College  
Sabhal Mor Ostaig  
Scottish Agricultural College  
Shetland College  
The North Highland college  
The Open University in Scotland  
The Robert Gordon University  
UHI Millenium Institute  
University of Aberdeen  
WEA



(g) possibilities for making informed choices following study of the booklet.

2. What improvements would you like to see in the booklet?

Very many thanks for your help.

Please complete and return as soon as you can to me by e.mail on p.edward@rgu.ac.uk or by mail to Patrick Edward, RGU, Kepplestone Mansion, Viewfield Road, Aberdeen. AB15 7AW

## **Access Route Planner Sustainability Plan**

In order to keep the Access Route Planner updated it is suggested that all members of the Route Planner Steering Group agree formally to:

- (a) Provide the services as specified
  - (b) accept and operate the procedure as detailed.
1. RGU will provide a Reviser to collect, collate and input data and to liaise with the webmaster and website host.
  2. Each partner will nominate a named individual to collect and collate course additions, deletions, changes etc and to communicate these to the Reviser by 31 January and 30 June each year. In addition the named person will report operational difficulties and suggestions for change to the functionality of the site to the Reviser.  
(Where possible, changes relating to course data will be made on an ongoing basis. Only in exceptional circumstances will operational changes to the site be made outwith these dates.)
  - 3 The University of Aberdeen will provide webmaster and web hosting facilities.
  - 4 A group of the nominees from the partner institutions, along with the Reviser and representative from the webmaster and web host will meet annually in January and June to review the status, operation, functionality and topicality of the website and implement necessary changes. This group will also consider re-issuing of the booklet if deemed appropriate.
  - 5 RGU will convene meetings of the above group.

I/We agree to operate the procedure and to provide the services as detailed above.

---

For and behalf of: \_\_\_\_\_

Date. \_\_\_\_\_

Copy of Course you can leaflet.

Discover-your-routes  
North Forum  
CENSA  
FREEPOST AB313  
Aberdeen  
AB10 1GG

The North Forum is a partnership of all education providers in the North of Scotland. It was set up to increase the number of people from under represented groups participating in education at all levels.

The partners are:

- Aberdeen City Council
- Aberdeen College
- Aberdeenshire Council
- Argyll College
- Banff & Buchan College
- Careers Scotland
- The Highland Council
- Highland Theological College
- Inverness College
- LEAD Scotland
- Lewis Castle College
- Lochaber College
- Moray College
- Moray Council
- North Atlantic Fisheries College
- Orkney College
- Sabhal Mor Ostaig
- Scottish Agricultural College
- Shetland College
- The North Highland College
- The Open University
- The Robert Gordon University
- University for Children & Communities
- University of Aberdeen
- UHI Millennium Institute
- WEA



[www.discover-your-routes.org.uk](http://www.discover-your-routes.org.uk)

All institutions are dedicated to ensuring you do not suffer any form of sexual or racial harassment. No discrimination is made on grounds of race, sex or creed when considering applications for places on courses. If you require the information in this booklet in Braille, large print, Audio-tape, or need interpreters for other languages please phone the North Forum for further advice on 01224 262175

DESIGNED AND PRINTED BY THE GATEHOUSE - DESIGN & PRINT CONSULTANCY AT RDU

NO  
STAMP  
REQUIRED



Course  
you can.

[www.discover-your-routes.org.uk](http://www.discover-your-routes.org.uk)



**'I can honestly say it was the most memorable day in my life.'** Eric Sandison

Against the advice of his parents and teachers, Eric (51) left school at 15 without any qualifications.

He then embarked on a variety of jobs including the armed forces, police cadet, crane driver, publican and car salesman before joining the Scottish Prison Service in 1983.

"I was the Training and Development manager when my immediate boss, the HR manager, resigned and I was asked to take over."

"The need for me to gain formal qualifications led me to seek a University Course in Human Resources. Working full time and attending evening classes twice per week certainly takes its toll on enthusiasm but I graduated in 2002. I can honestly say it was the most memorable day in my life."

"The qualification means such a lot to me in that it signifies a lot of self - sacrifice, an abundance of understanding and patience from family, friends and academic staff who helped me. It should also prove to be an effective aid in future employment."

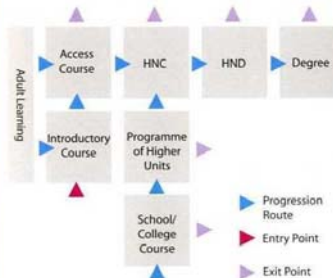
"I am the first person in my family to have attended University and now I have the zeal of a convert and encourage people to return to study no matter what their previous experience. Studying has proved an uplifting and wonderful experience and my only regret is that it did not come sooner in life."

You might be thinking about returning to study - or maybe you've already attended adult learning classes or courses organised by a local college. You may have no qualifications and are wondering where to go now.

Studying can be rewarding whatever your reason. It's never too late and it's never been easier to do it. It may seem like a huge step but with help, guidance and support, people just like you have taken up the challenge and are now seeing the benefits.

If you feel you need information, guidance or help with any matters relating to subjects, courses, entry qualifications, personal and financial arrangements etc, please complete and post the tear off slip opposite and someone will get in touch with you as soon as possible. Alternatively, you may wish to contact relevant staff in any of the institutions listed overleaf.

Routes /pathways:



Please contact me:

- Phone
- E-mail
- AM
- PM
- Evening

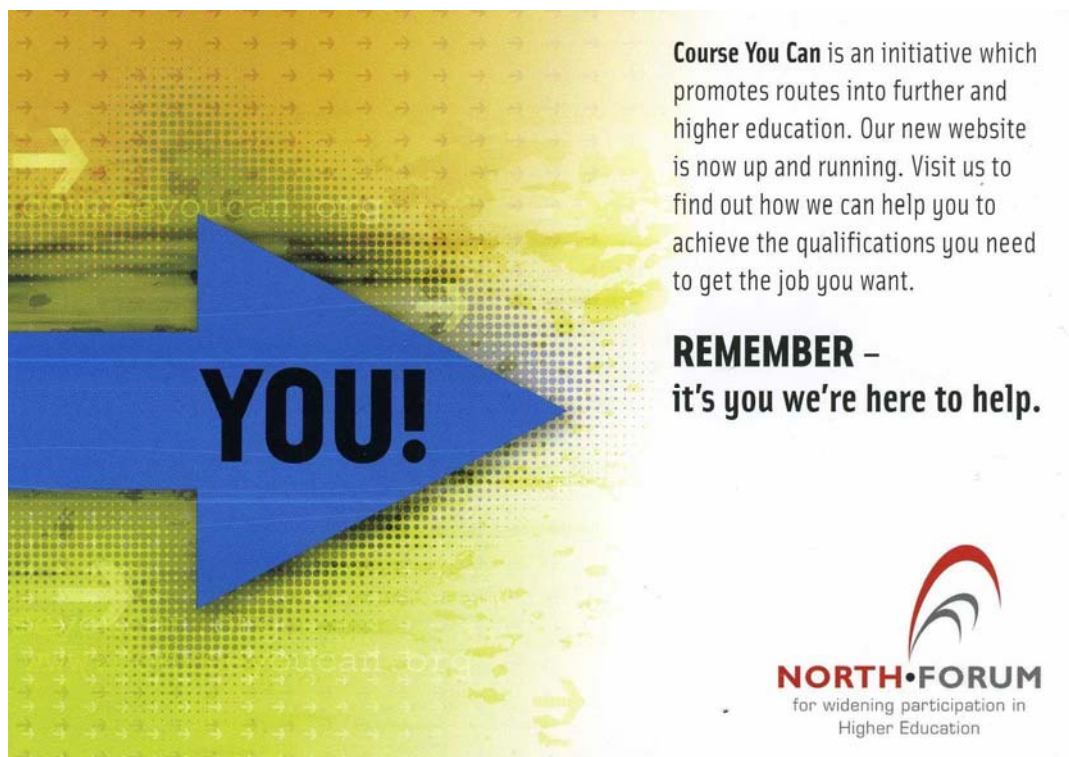


It's the one-stop directory to your future!

Send to:

Name .....  
Address .....  
Postcode .....  
email .....  
Contact tel .....

Copy of promotional postcard



ACCESS ROUTE PLANNER

PRE-PRESENTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Before we start the formal part of the session it would be of great help to us if you could take a couple of minutes to complete the following:

How confident do you feel at this time in advising clients about:

Very Fairly Slightly Not

Entering FE or HE

Progressing to FE or HE

Entry qualifications

The Institutions

Course available

Qualifications on offer

Referring clients

Sources of help

Student support

Thank you

Name..... Date.....

## ACCESS ROUTE PLANNER

### POST SESSION QUESTIONNAIRE

How confident do you feel **now** in advising clients about:

Very    Fairly    Slightly    Not

Entering FE or HE

Progressing to FE or HE

Entry Qualifications

The Institutions

Course Available

Qualifications on offer

Referring clients

Sources of help

Student support.

Note any areas you feel should have been covered but were omitted.

Note any areas that could have been omitted

How would you rate the following:

Excellent    V Good    Good    Poor

The Presentation overall

The Presenter

The Handouts.

How could the presentation be improved

Any other comments would be welcome.

Name.....

Address.....

Email.....

Very many thanks for your help.

## APPENDIX 9

### Access route planner/Course you can Information Presentation - Follow-up Evaluation

I would be grateful if you could take a couple of minutes to complete the questionnaire and return it to me in the envelope provided.

1. Have you spoken to any customers/clients on education issues following the Access Route Planner presentation?
2. If so how many?
3. Would you say you were more confident in advising customers as a result of the presentation. Yes. No To some extent.
4. Which parts of the presentation did you find most useful?
5. Have you used/consulted the CD since the presentation. Yes No
6. Have you passed the CD or other materials to colleagues. Yes No
7. Are there any issues that were not included in the presentation which Would be helpful to you in dealing with customers?
8. Do you feel that you would like to be updated regularly on Education Matters? If so, how best do you feel this could be achieved?  
(eg post, e.mail, telephone, newsletter)

Please use space overleaf to add any additional ideas/comments you may have.

Many thanks for your help.

Patrick Edward.

e.mail [p.edward@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:p.edward@rgu.ac.uk)

Tel: 01224 262040.

## APPENDIX 10

### Contacts in Partner Institutions.

Aberdeen College	Sandra Allan
Angus College	*
Argyle College	*
Banff & Buchan College	Gordon Scott
Highland Theological College	Kevin Sinclair
Inverness College	Frances Hunter
Lews Castle College	Catriona Morrice
Lochaber College	Dan Macleod
Moray College	Heather Henderson
North Atlantic Fisheries College	Rachel Stove
North Highland College	Wendy Leisk
Orkney College	Isla Johnstone
Perth College	Aileen Morrice
Robert Gordon University	Leanne Wilson
Sabhal Mòr Ostaig	Iona Macdonald
SAC	Suzanne Stockwell
Shetland College	Marie Williams
UHI Millennium Institute	Iain Morrison
University of Aberdeen	Morag Reid

\* No representative at present.

## APPENDIX 11

### Financial Statement

#### The Access Route Planner Project: Income and Expenditure 2005-06

Income		Expenditure
<b>Budget Awarded:</b>		<b>Staff/Recruitment:</b>
c/f from 04/05:	£2,193.02	Salaries and costs, other staff time and recruitment costs
Funding 05/06:	£32,650.00	<b>total: £35,709.41</b>
Additional allocation:	£8,365.00	
		<b>Course You Can Development:</b>
		Travel Costs, Web Page Training, Promotional Mailshot, Design and Printing of Postcards
		<b>total: £3,760.25</b>
		<b>Other Admin Costs:</b>
		Including photocopying, telephone and postage
		<b>total: £630.20</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b><u>£43,208.02</u></b>	<b><u>£40,099.86</u></b>

The Project was delivered within the budget allocated for 2005-06.

The main cost of the project in 2005-06 was for staff time. This was for managing the project, disseminating the project through information and training sessions, promoting it at national events and developing and promoting the Course You Can web site. In addition to the Project Manager and Project Officer roles, there was significant clerical and administrative support for this Phase, particularly in arranging events and updating the web site. The web site work was carried out by the Project Administrator instead of outsourcing the work to an external agency as originally planned. Staff in the University's Department of e-Learning were able to act in an advisory capacity.

Additional costs for the project were for staff travel for the dissemination and promotional aspects of the project, training in the use of Dreamweaver for staff updating the web site and there was a small amount of funding allocated to the general administrative costs of the project.

Promotional materials developed during this phase included promotional postcards and leaflets.

## THE NORTH FORUM FOR WIDENING PARTICIPATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

### MEMBERSHIP AS AT MARCH 2007

In alphabetical order of institution/organisation

Institution/Organisation	Representative
Aberdeen City Council	Pete Hamilton Community Learning and Development Manager
Aberdeen College	Rob Wallen (Chair) Director of Learning and Teaching
Aberdeenshire Council	Anne Simpson Community Learning Manager
Argyll College	Michael Breslin, Director
ASPIRENorth	Janet Rougvie, Director
Banff & Buchan College	Paul Sherrington Depute Principal
Careers Scotland (Highlands and Islands Enterprise Area) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise	Liz Galashan Head of Services to Individuals
Careers Scotland (SE Grampian)	Moira F. Whyte, Manager
Highland Theological College	Kevin Sinclair Learning Centre Development Manager
Highland Council	Julie Simmons Adult Literacy Strategy Officer
Inverness College	Donald Leitch, Acting Principal
LEAD Scotland	Sue Mitchell Regional Manager, North
Lews Castle College	Iain Macsween Section Manager, Gaelic, Communications, Arts and Languages
Lochaber College	Laurence Young Chief Executive Officer
Moray College	Edna Cameron, Project Manager
Moray Council	Alexander Ross Learning and Teaching Officer
NAFC Marine Centre	Sue Smith Quality and Academic Manager
North Forum (observer status)	Alison Watson, Administrator
Orkney College	Bill Ross, Principal
Sabhal Mor Ostaig	John Norman MacLeod, Head of Studies
Scottish Agricultural College	Suzanne Stockwell Student Recruitment Officer
Scottish Funding Councils (observer status)	Margaret Dundas National Co-ordinator for Widening Participation
Scottish Funding Councils (observer status)	Dr John Kemp Assistant Director Learning Policy and Strategy
Shetland College	George Smith, Director
The North Highland College	Rosemary Thompson, Principal
The Open University in Scotland	Pete Cannell, Depute Director
The Robert Gordon University	Prof. John Harper Vice Principal, Faculty of Health & Social Care
UHI Millennium Institute	Iain Morrison (Vice Chair) Head of Lifelong Learning, Student Support and Development
University of Aberdeen	Julie McAndrews, Director, Centre for Lifelong Learning
WEA	Alison Morrison, Tutor Organiser