

Scottish Funding Council



Evaluation of FE College Knowledge Transfer And Employer Engagement Programmes

What our client wanted

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) is responsible for funding and development of the FE and HE sectors. As part of their response to the Scottish Government's economic strategy, SFC created two funding streams – Knowledge Transfer (KT) and Developing Employer engagement Programme (DEEP) to develop value-adding business relationships that will benefit companies, colleges and the Scottish economy. SFC wanted a formative and summative three year evaluation of the two programmes.

What Frontline did

We designed an approach that moves beyond conventional evaluation and has a strong focus on understanding the processes and using learning in the evaluation process to help colleges continuously improve their FT and employer engagement processes, and the business benefits from that work.

The work includes interview programmes with college business development staff, college leaders and companies. These discussions were designed to scope of the nature of the development processes and how that could be improved, and to map and evaluate the range of economic impacts. The objective over the three years was to use the evaluation to both evidence outcomes and drive improvement in the processes and future outcomes

Detailed survey processes were used to map outcomes, intended and unintended, and to help colleges self-assess their capacities. This is being developed as a competence framework to help colleges improve their staff capacities and performance and a maturity model to understand progress from an organisational perspective.

What difference we made

The year 1 findings evidenced a GVA contribution to the Scottish economy of £34m – the first time such impacts had been evaluated. A competence framework was developed for staff in the programmes and a Maturity Model tracking progress as a college organisation has been adopted and is being used to measure progress in years 2 and 3. The SFC have used the economic impact data to demonstrate success to Ministers and the increasing benefits of colleges to the economy. The Scotland's Colleges organisation is working with Frontline to develop and deliver training material that will further improve college performance and benefits for companies and the economy.