Discussion Guide Interim Purpose and Principles for Post School Education, Research and Skills Development

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Contents

About the Purpose and Principles

- The post school education, research and skills ecosystem includes colleges, universities, community learning and development, apprenticeships and employer-led training along with the research that develops the new thinking, systems and products that helps to drive our society at home and internationally.

- The Purpose and Principles set out what we collectively would like this post school education, research and skills ecosystem to deliver. When published, the final version will fulfil the Scottish Government's commitment to publish a statement of strategic intent for the ecosystem following the Scottish Funding Council's (SFC) recommendations in its review "Coherence and Sustainability: A Review of Tertiary Education and Research".

- This document is being published at a significant juncture. The social and economic challenges facing our people, our public services and our economy are far reaching. This work presents a bold opportunity to align the whole ecosystem behind a shared purpose and set of principles which will provide a clear framework for decision making based on the outcomes we want to see.

- Across our society this work will challenge perceptions and cultural expectations of what the ecosystem can deliver. It creates an opportunity to discuss policy reforms that ensure that we preserve what we value whilst reducing expenditure, reducing failure demand and improving outcomes.

Using This Discussion Guide

- This discussion guide sets out the five principles and purpose for post school education, research and skills.

- Through early engagement on the development of the purpose and principles, it became clear that to understand how the principles would operate and support delivery in the ecosystem, a number of policy and practice options would have to be considered.

- The guide takes the principles in turn, asking questions on language and the policy and practice options that have been raised so far.

- We would welcome your feedback on these options, adding information on any others you think need to be considered or explored, and where you think there is best practice or opportunities for improvement, please identify these in your feedback.

Purpose and Principles for Post School Education, Research and Skills - Diagram

High Quality

Transparent, resilient and trusted

Supportive and Equitable

Purpose:
To develop new thinking, products and systems through research and to ensure that people, at every stage in life, have the opportunity and means to develop the skills, knowledge, values and attributes to fulfil their potential and to make a meaningful contribution to society.

Agile and Responsive

Globally Respected

Principle One – High Quality

> High quality opportunities are available for people to enhance their knowledge and skills at the time and place that is right for them

This section will support session participants to consider the principle of "High Quality" and the policy options available to support the delivery of this principle in Scotland today and in the future.

Question 1.1
- Do you agree with inclusion of and language of the principle of High Quality?

Question 1.2
- This principle is about when, where and how opportunities are provided.
- How do you think we can best build a supportive and equitable ecosystem to enable different kinds of user journeys?

Principle One - Facilitators Notes

- Section One allows participants to consider the principle of "High Quality".

- Facilitators are encouraged to support groups to discuss the questions before summarising and sharing the output of their discussions.

- Depending on the group, the two questions could be discussed in turn, or alternatively the participants could be grouped and allocated different questions to explore.

Question 1.1, could be considered in two parts:

- 1.1 (a) Do you agree that this is an important principle that should be included as part of the Purpose and Principles?

- 1.1 (b) Do you have any thoughts on the language or framing of this principle?

In considering question 1.1, participants could be provided with the following scaffolding to support their thinking and any discussion. For example:

- What does high quality mean to you in your role in the broader ecosystem or Scotland's wellbeing economy more generally?

- Is this the right description of the principle of high quality? Is there anything missing that you would expect to see?

Question 1.2, could be considered in two parts:

- 1.2 (a) What kind of delivery options need to be available to individuals to build a supportive and equitable ecosystem?

- 1.2 (b) Do you have any examples of good practice of this principle or identifiable areas for improvement?

In considering question 1.2, participants could be provided with the following scaffolding to support their thinking and any discussion. For example:

- How do we support individuals and their different needs to access and complete journeys through the ecosystem? This may include considering the type of delivery methods, which could include things like digital, blended or in

person learning. It could also consider things like part time, full time or micro credentials.

- How do we provide smooth and easy to navigate transitions between parts of the ecosystem? This may also include consideration of the recognition of prior learning and experience and exploring different integrated degree models.
- How can Fair Work and continuous professional development be supported across the ecosystem to maintain the highest standards of quality in learning, teaching, research and support?
- How can we ensure that people's experience of learning in all environments equips them for productive work?
- How do we build our knowledge and understanding of the benefits and outcomes from different learner pathways?

Principle Two – Supportive and Equitable

People are supported throughout their learning journey, targeting those who need it most.

This section will support session participants to consider the principle of "Supportive and Equitable" and the policy options available to support the delivery of this principle in Scotland today and in the future.

Question 2.1

- Do you agree with inclusion of and language of the principle of Supportive and Equitable?

Question 2.2

- This principle is about how, when, to whom and by whom support is provided.
- How do you think we can best build a supportive and equitable ecosystem to support different kinds of journeys?

Principle Two – Facilitators Notes

- Section Two allows participants to consider the principle of "Supportive and Equitable".

- Facilitators are encouraged to support groups to discuss the questions before summarising and sharing the output of their discussions.

- Depending on the group, the two questions could be discussed in turn, or alternatively the participants could be grouped and allocated different questions to explore.

Question 2.1, could be considered in two parts:

- 2.1 (a) Do you agree that this is an important principle that should be included as part of the Purpose and Principles?

- 2.1 (b) Do you have any thoughts on the language or framing of this principle?

In considering question 2.1, participants could be provided with the following scaffolding to support their thinking and any discussion. For example:

- What does supportive and equitable mean to you in your role in the broader ecosystem or Scotland's wellbeing economy more generally?

- Is this the right description of the principle of supportive and equitable? Is there anything missing that you would expect to see?

Question 2.2, could be considered in two parts:

- 2.2 (a) What kind of delivery options need to be available to individuals to build a supportive and equitable ecosystem?

- 2.2 (b) Do you have any examples of good practice of this principle or identifiable areas for improvement?

In considering question 2.2, participants could be provided with the following scaffolding to support their thinking and any discussion. For example:

- How do we continue to build on the progress of initiatives to tackle widening access? Are we still widening access in the right areas, are we targeting the right people and supporting them in to the right opportunities? How should we

define and measure progress on widening access? Are there any other ideas you have to share on how we should tackle widening access across the ecosystem, not just in universities and colleges?

- What is the right way to provide student support? What should constitute student support? Where should we provide student support services? When should we provide student support, this could include considering different age groups or at different parts of a learner journey. Whom should we be providing student support to? Currently some elements of student support are targeted, should this be continued? If so, what groups do you think we should be targeting?

- Who should pay for what elements of the learner journey? When should they pay this and in what specific set of circumstances? This could include considering the role of student support, government funding, employer funding, direct support provided by education institutions, and instances of individuals funding their own development.

Principle Three – Globally Respected

Research, teaching, innovation and knowledge exchange undertaken in Scotland, must be impactful; enhance and contribute to global wellbeing, addressing 21st Century challenges and attracting inward investment and talent to study, live and work in Scotland.

This section will support session participants to consider the principle of "Globally Respected" and the policy options available to support the delivery of this principle in Scotland today and in the future.

Question 3.1

- Do you agree with inclusion of and language of the principle of Globally Respected?

Question 3.2

- This principle is about the contribution that research in Scotland makes to the world and the role it plays in supporting Scotland's global standing, teaching excellence, prosperity and connectedness.
- How do you think we can best maintain and leverage international respect for Scotland's research, education and skills ecosystem, inward investment and attraction of international talent?

Principle Three – Facilitators Notes

- Section Three allows participants to consider the principle of "Globally Respected".

- Facilitators are encouraged to support groups to discuss the questions before summarising and sharing the output of their discussions.

- Depending on the group, the two questions could be discussed in turn, or alternatively the participants could be grouped and allocated different questions to explore.

Question 3.1, could be considered in two parts:

- 3.1 (a) Do you agree that this is an important principle that should be included as part of the Purpose and Principles?

- 3.1 (b) Do you have any thoughts on the language or framing of this principle?

In considering question 3.1, participants could be provided with the following scaffolding to support their thinking and any discussion. For example:

- What does globally respected mean to you in your role in the broader ecosystem or Scotland's wellbeing economy more generally?

- Is this the right description of the principle of globally respected? Is there anything missing that you would expect to see?

Question 3.2, could be considered in two parts:

- 3.2 (a) What kind of delivery options need to be available to individuals to build a globally respected ecosystem?

- 3.2 (b) Do you have any examples of good practice of this principle or identifiable areas for improvement?

In considering question 3.2, participants could be provided with the following scaffolding to support their thinking and any discussion. For example:

- Recognising the importance of both fundamental and applied research and the range of sources of research funding, how do we or should we decide on what research the Scottish Government should fund? This includes

considering the balance of mission based funding or funding excellence? How can we best leverage public investment in research, innovation and knowledge exchange to crowd-in other forms of investment?

- What type of opportunities exist for international education, partnerships and exchange opportunities? How can we continue to build on this? Are there any exemplars in this area? What are the best ways of leveraging international connections and networks to maximise benefits?

- How sustainable are the more internationally exposed aspects of the ecosystem? This could include considering the attraction of international staff and students, percentage of students on courses who are international fee paying students, and longer term impact of the UK's exit from the EU on the ecosystem.

Principle Four – Agile and Responsive

Everybody in the ecosystem collaborates and delivers in the best interests of Scotland's wellbeing economy

This section will support session participants to consider the principle of "Agile and Responsive" and the policy options available to support the delivery of this principle in Scotland today and in the future.

Question 4.1

- Do you agree with inclusion of and language of the principle of Agile and Responsive?

Question 4.2

- This principle is about the ability of the ecosystem to respond to global and domestic drivers.
- How do you think we can best support the ecosystem to be agile and responsive to the future needs of Scotland?

Principle Four – Facilitators Notes

- Section Four allows participants to consider the principle of "Agile and Responsive".

- Facilitators are encouraged to support groups to discuss the questions before summarising and sharing the output of their discussions.

- Depending on the group, the two questions could be discussed in turn, or alternatively the participants could be grouped and allocated different questions to explore.

Question 4.1, could be considered in two parts:

- 4.1 (a) Do you agree that this is an important principle that should be included as part of the Purpose and Principles?

- 4.1 (b) Do you have any thoughts on the language or framing of this principle?

In considering question 4.1, participants could be provided with the following scaffolding to support their thinking and any discussion. For example:

- What does agile and responsive mean to you in your role in the broader ecosystem or Scotland's wellbeing economy more generally?

- Is this the right description of the principle of agile and responsive? Is there anything missing that you would expect to see?

Question 4.2, could be considered in two parts:

- 4.2 (a) What kind of an ecosystem would we need to have to be agile and responsive to changing demands? What sort of delivery would you expect to see, and in what ways could this be designed so it can be agile and responsive to different types of demands over different timescales, this could be something sudden like a pandemic or something longer term like the transition to net zero or rural and island perspectives?

- 4.2 (b) Do you have any examples of good practice of this principle or identifiable areas for improvement?

In considering question 4.2, participants could be provided with the following scaffolding to support their thinking and any discussion. For example:

- How do we ensure the ecosystem remains sensitive and responsive to local, regional, national and international requirements, including the role of colleges and universities as civic anchors as part of community wealth building?

- How do we ensure the working relationships of the different parts of the ecosystem at all levels allow the ecosystem to initiate, respond and deliver to changing demands?

- How do we support skills alignment in Scotland, including successful skills planning in response to labour market needs?

- How does the ecosystem support the upskilling and reskilling of the workforce? How can this best be delivered and incentivised? Who pays for what and when?

- How can employers best be supported and incentivised to develop apprenticeships, invest in in-work training and development of staff and to build relationships with colleges, universities and community learning and development providers?

Principle Five – Transparent, Resilient and Trusted

> The ecosystem is well governed, financially and environmentally resilient and trusted to deliver.

This section will support session participants to consider the principle of "Transparent, Resilient and Trusted" and the policy options available to support the delivery of this principle in Scotland today and in the future.

Question 5.1

- Do you agree with inclusion of and language of the principle of Transparent, Resilient and Trusted?

Question 5.2

- The principle is about how the ecosystem is structured and ensuring that everyone understands what the system delivers, who is delivering and how that happens.
- How do you think we can best build a transparent, resilient and trusted ecosystem to support successful research and learner journeys?

Principle Five – Facilitators Notes

- Section Five allows participants to consider the principle of "Transparent, Resilient and Trusted".
- Facilitators are encouraged to support groups to discuss the questions before summarising and sharing the output of their discussions.
- Depending on the group, the two questions could be discussed in turn, or alternatively the participants could be grouped and allocated different questions to explore.

Question 5.1, could be considered in two parts:

- 5.1 (a) Do you agree that this is an important principle that should be included as part of the Purpose and Principles?
- 5.1 (b) Do you have any thoughts on the language or framing of this principle?

In considering question 5.1, participants could be provided with the following scaffolding to support their thinking and any discussion. For example:

- What does transparent, resilient and trusted mean to you in your role in the broader ecosystem or Scotland's wellbeing economy more generally?
- Is this the right description of the principle of transparent, resilient and trusted? Is there anything missing that you would expect to see?

Question 5.2, could be considered in two parts:

- 5.2 (a) What kind of structures would need to be in place to have a transparent, resilient and trusted ecosystem? This could include things like governance structures, reporting mechanisms, setting of government policy, representation of staff and students on boards, split of roles and responsibilities between government, agencies and institutions.
- 5.2 (b) Do you have any examples of good practice of this principle or identifiable areas for improvement?

In considering question 5.2, participants could be provided with the following scaffolding to support their thinking and any discussion. For example:

- How do we measure ecosystem level outcomes? How do we ensure these are transparent and aligned to needs? How to move from measuring input into the ecosystem to the impact of the ecosystem? How do we maintain assurance and accountability whilst giving greater flexibility around the form delivery takes?

- How can we make the pathways simpler and more transparent for users and help them to make better informed choices about where they will lead?

- What should governance across and within the ecosystem look like? This could include considering user representation, union representation, ensuring responsibility is happening in the right place.

- How do we support the ecosystem to feel trusted to deliver? How do elements of the ecosystem work together to align delivery? Are people empowered to act to deliver better outcomes?

- How can government and Non-departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) best signal core investment priorities including tackling child poverty, delivering a prosperous wellbeing economy and delivering the transition to net zero? Should we have an investment hierarchy for post-school education, skills and research?

Purpose of Post School Education, Research and Skills

> To develop new thinking, products and systems through research and to ensure that people, at every stage in life, have the opportunity and means to develop the skills, knowledge, values and attributes to fulfil their potential and to make a meaningful contribution to society.

This section will support session participants to consider the purpose of post school education, skills and research and the policy options available to support the delivery of the purpose in Scotland today and in the future.

Question 6.1

- Do you agree with the purpose outlined of the post school education, research and skills ecosystem in Scotland?

Purpose – Facilitators Notes

- Section Six allows participants to consider the purpose of post school education, research and skills.
- Facilitators are encouraged to support groups to discuss the question before summarising and sharing the output of their discussions.

Question 6.1, could be considered in two parts:

- 6.1 (a) Do you agree that this is the purpose of the post school education, research and skills ecosystem?
- 6.1 (b) Do you have any thoughts on the language or framing of the purpose?

Feedback

- Thank you for taking part in this discussion on the interim Purpose and Principles for post school education, research and skills.
- You can work together to complete the question response template that can be found at the end of this guide.
- You may want to use the outputs from this discussion in support of your organisations' wider response to the development of the Purpose and Principles.

- If you require further support in submitting a response, please contact the team at PurposeandPrinciples@gov.scot.

What Happens Next?

- Engagement on the development of Purpose and Principles will finish on 24 March 2023.

- Your responses will be collated and used to inform the development of a final set of Purpose and Principles for Post School Education, Research and Skills. The final version will be published in Spring 2023.

- The publication of the Purpose and Principles will represent the start of a period of wider reform to ensure that our post school education, research and skills ecosystem is sustainable and fit for the future.

- This is an opportunity for you to help us understand what works and doesn't work in the current ecosystem, and how best to change things for the better.
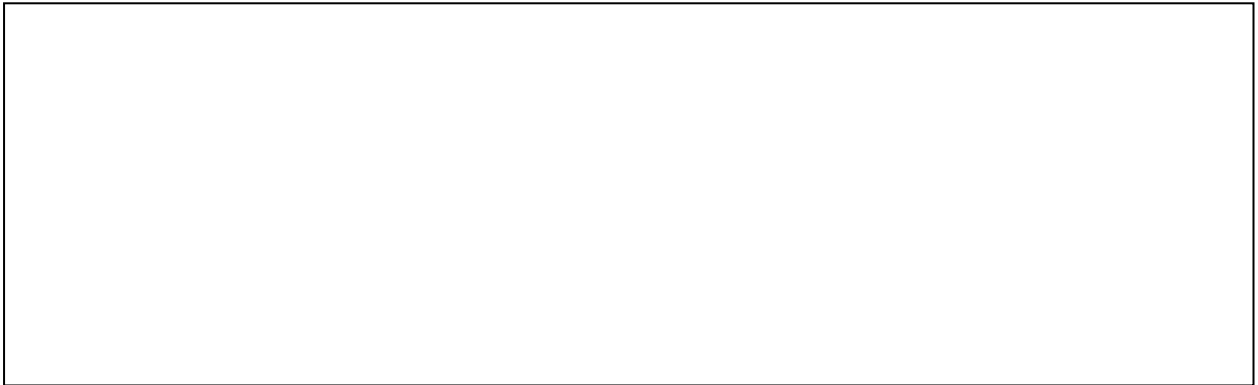
Answer Template

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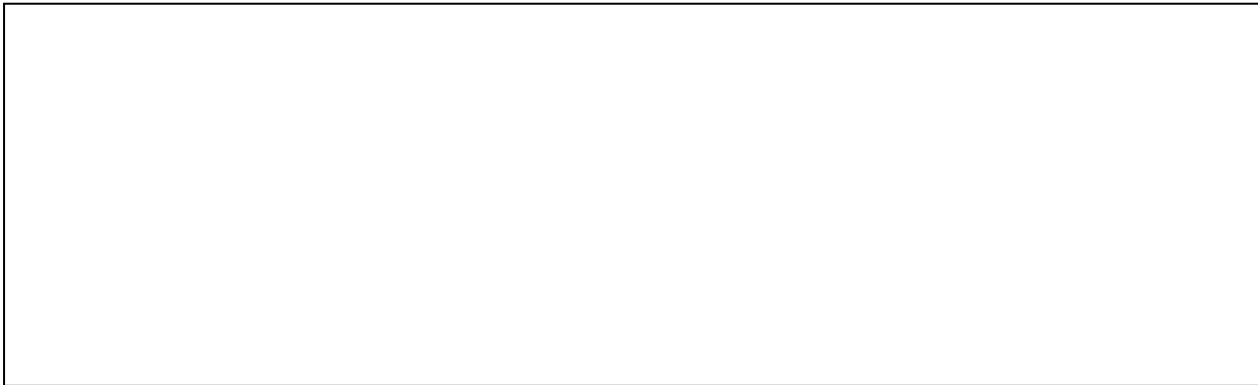
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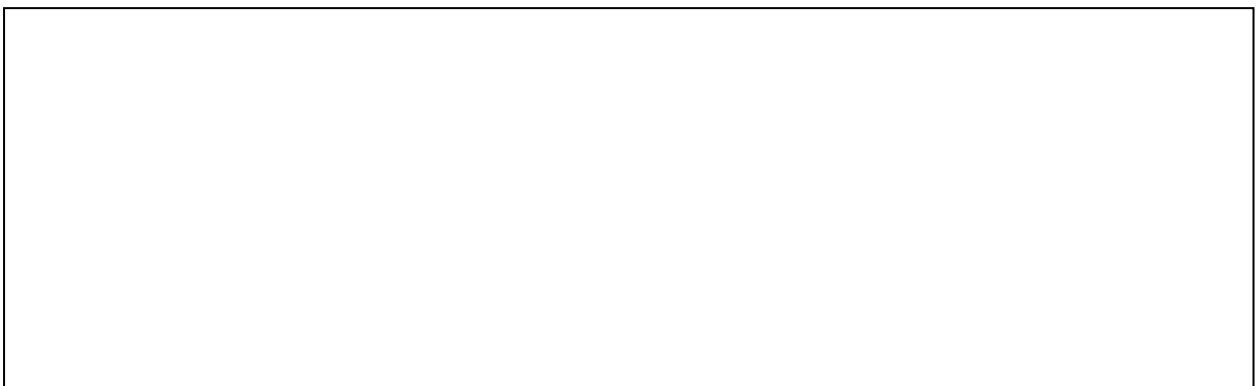
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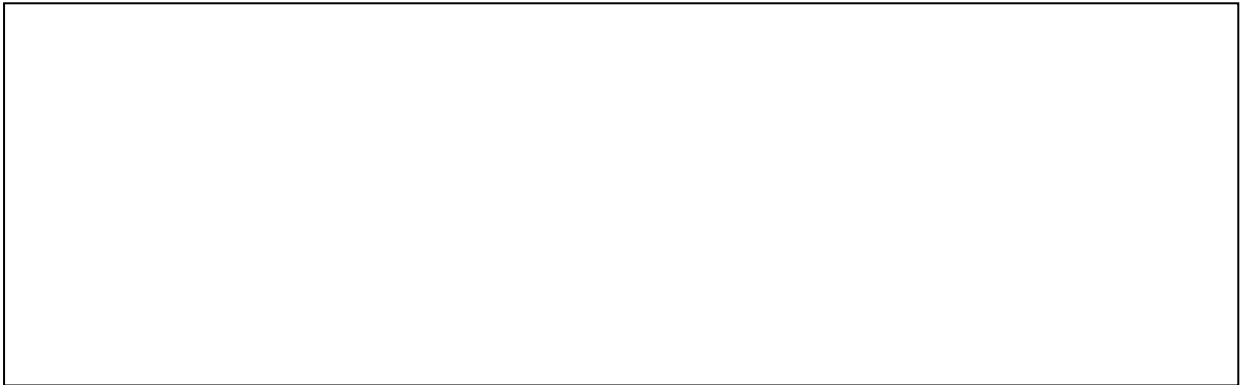
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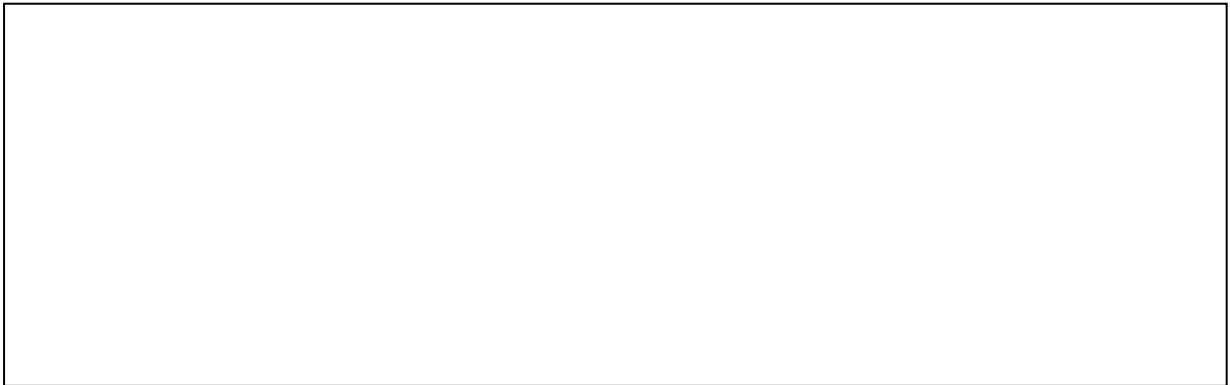
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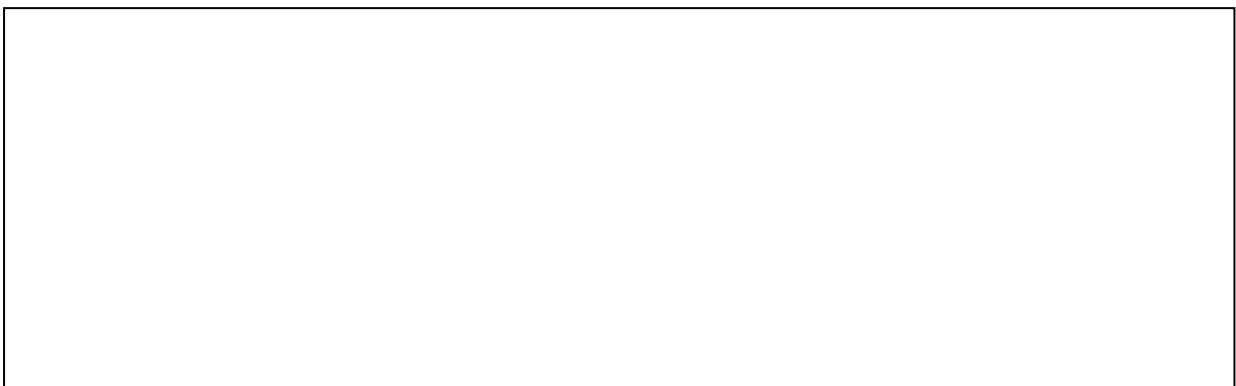
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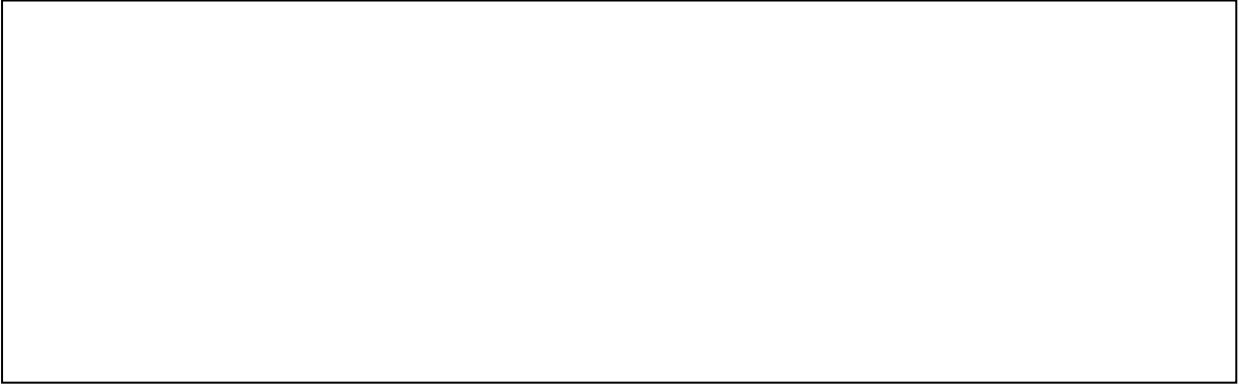
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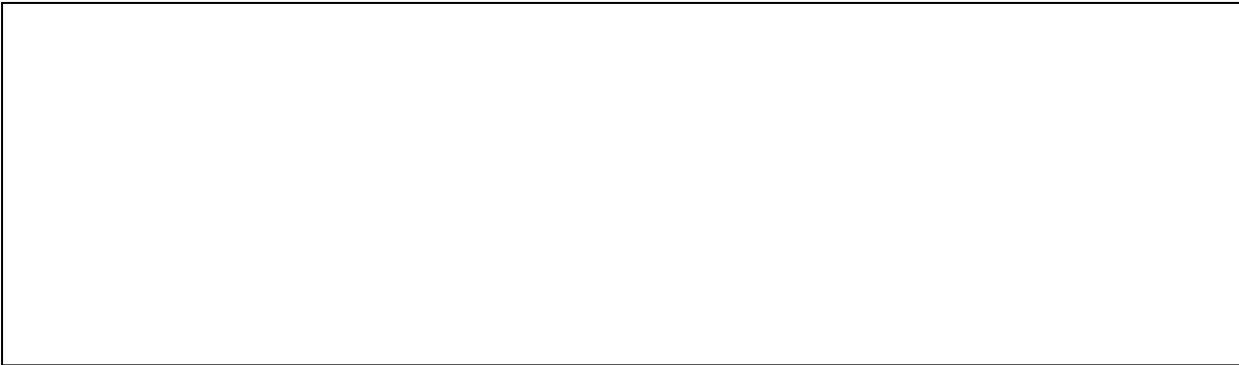
Question 5.1

Question 5.2

Question 6.1

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