



Scottish Funding Council
Promoting further and higher education

Comhairle Maoinachaidh na h-Alba
A' brosnachadh foghlam adhartach agus àrd ìre

Universities and Colleges: Progress and Ambitions

Highlights of university and college 2015-16 outcome agreements



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UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES: PROGRESS & AMBITIONS

Universities and colleges have renewed their commitment to meeting national priorities and responding to the needs of employers, industry and stakeholders in their 2015-16 outcome agreements. Here we outline their aspirations and achievements in relation to the four priorities for sustainable growth identified within the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy.

INCLUSIVE GROWTH

DISADVANTAGED GROUPS OF LEARNERS

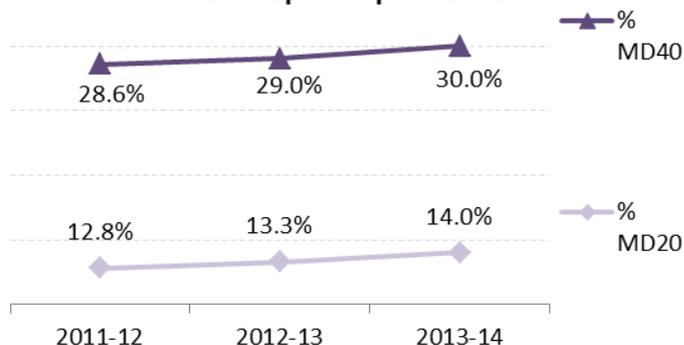
- We continue to work with institutions to ensure barriers to learning and opportunities are removed.
- Colleges continue to devote a significant amount of resource to meeting the needs of learners from deprived areas.
- The proportion of college activity directed towards those in the 10% most deprived postcode areas has increased slightly to 16.3% of all SUMs¹ in 2013-14, and success rates among this group have been improving steadily.
- Universities are steadily making progress to increase participation from the most deprived areas of Scotland, participation from learners in 40% most deprived postcodes has risen from 29% in 2012-13 to 30% in 2013-14.

College entrants from the 10% most deprived postcodes as a % of Total SUMs



*SUM is the unit of funding that SFC uses in its funding of colleges. It relates broadly to the amount of learning activity provided by the college.

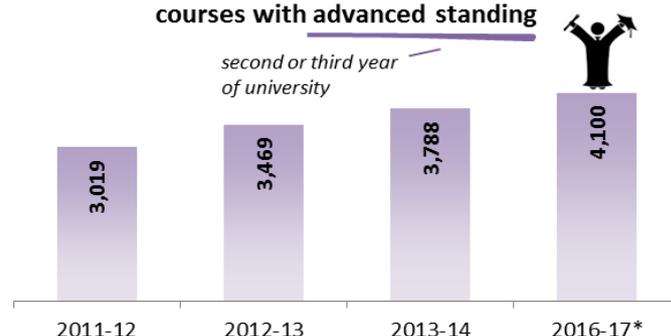
The proportion of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants from the 20% and 40% most deprived postcodes



ARTICULATION

- More students are receiving full credit and recognition for study at HN level and being able to move into a degree programme with advanced standing.
- The number of students articulating from college to university with advanced standing increased from 3,469 in 2012-13 to 3,788 in 2013-14¹.
- If ongoing targets are met articulation numbers will exceed 4,000 students in 2016-17.

The number of Scottish-domiciled learners articulating from college to degree level courses with advanced standing



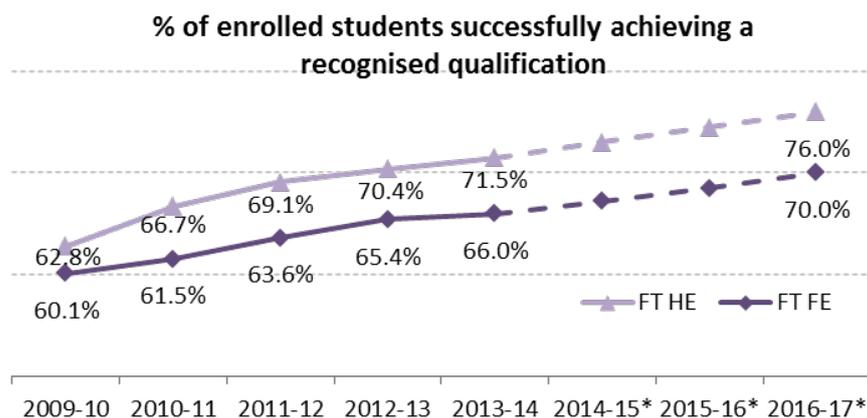
¹ This does not include the additional articulation places launched in 2013-14. Figures for these entrants will not be known until 2015-16.

*Data for 2014-15 and 2015-16 is not yet available. The 2016-17 figure is an estimate based on cumulative 3 year OA aspirations

SUCCESS AND RETENTION RATES

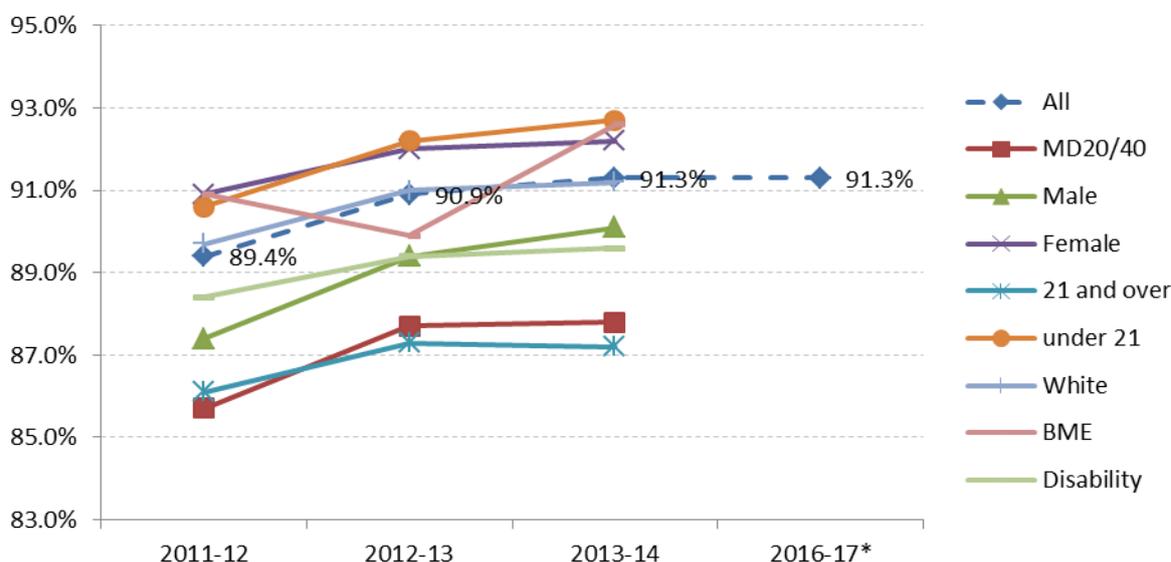
In 2013-14, we have seen improvements in completion rates of courses at Scotland's colleges².

The college sector has shown continued improvement on learner success in recent years. Moreover, this trend looks set to continue. Based on the 2014-15 outcome agreements, colleges are forecasting improvement to 76% (HE) and 70% (FE) by 2016-17. The latest 2015-16 outcome agreements target further improvement.



In universities, the ambition to improve retention³ of all Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants to 91.3% by 2016-17*, has already been achieved in 2013-14. Efforts will now focus on at least maintaining the overall retention rate and refocussing our efforts on improving rates for protected characteristic groups and SIMD20/40 postcodes.

The proportion of full-time first year Scottish-domiciled entrants from different protected characteristic groups returning to study in year two



² especially among courses lasting a greater number of hours.

³ The number of students who return to study in year two.

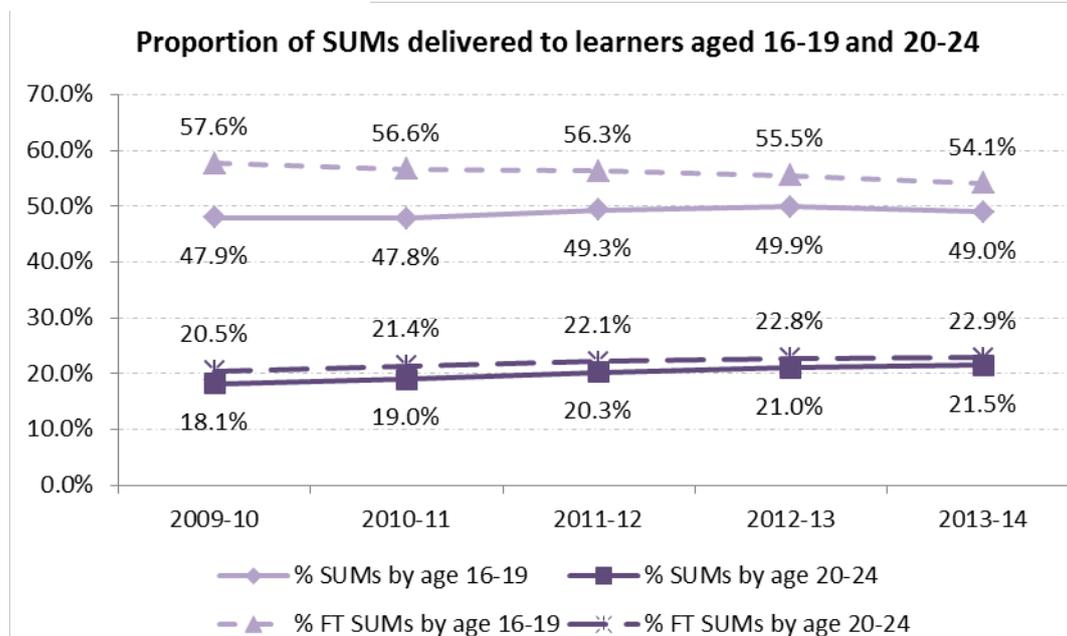
* Data for 2014-15 and 2015-16 is not yet available. The 2016-17 figure is an estimate based on cumulative 3 year OA aspirations

Improving outcomes for care experienced learners - A new initiative for 2015-16 among the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), Who Cares? Scotland, Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland, NUS and others will set a national ambition to improve the intake to college and university of care experienced learners including those in the senior phase and target improvements in the educational outcomes of this group.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE POST-SCHOOL

Colleges are playing a crucial role in delivering Opportunities for All, the Scottish Government's offer of a place in education or training for all 16-19 year olds currently not in education, employment or training, and, where possible, 20-24 year olds. Since 2011-12 colleges have prioritised their resources towards the needs of this group: by 2013-14, this represented 70.5% of learning activity. At the same time, the proportion of school leavers who were unemployed and seeking work continued to drop⁴.

⁴ SFC Learning for All Report -2015

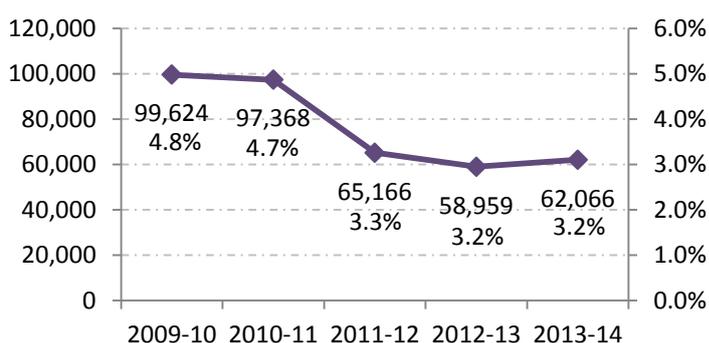


DEVELOPING THE YOUNG WORKFORCE

Alongside their outcome agreements each college region was asked to develop an implementation plan with their partner local authorities as part of the Scottish Government's programme for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce (DYW).

College regions have committed to increases in activity for pupils in their senior phase, demonstrating the ambition to offer a wider range of courses to more than four times as many senior phase pupils in 2015-16.

Volume and proportion of SUMs delivered to learners at S3 and above as part of 'school-college' provision



One of the main priorities will be to grow college provision in schools. The level of commitment from colleges to this activity is impressive and we are confident of overall growth in this area beyond the activity delivered in 2013-14. This growth will be targeted on the most appropriate age groups, introducing new approaches that allow school pupils to begin a vocational pathway as part of their senior phase curriculum, achieve recognised qualifications and progress seamlessly to further learning, training or work. We will be defining school-college activity differently in 2015-16, with greater emphasis on vocational pathways.

DEVELOPING THE YOUNG WORKFORCE (cont)...

Colleges will continue to work with their partners to refine and develop their approaches, and we will ensure that work is supported by learning from the 7 regions which undertook Early Adopter activity in 2014-15.

There is also evidence of universities successfully recruiting students from low progression schools. The proportion of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants from low progression schools taking part in the Schools for Higher Education Programme (**SHEP**) increased from 4.3% (1,414 entrants) in 2011-12 to 4.8% (1,635 entrants) in 2013-14.

Reducing gender imbalances- college regions and universities have outlined their commitment to this area in their 2015-16 outcome agreements. We recognise the need to be more specific and look for a commitment to reduce significant subject imbalances. We will take this forward in 2015-16 as part of the **SFC Gender Action Plan**.

RIGHT LEARNING IN THE RIGHT PLACE

In their outcome agreements, institutions have committed to providing education that best meets the changing social and economic needs of Scotland. Some of the ways they have said they will do this include: offering more opportunities to study STEM subjects, collaborating where possible in relation to nursing provision and supporting the National Gaelic Language Plan.

Land-based provision - SFC has asked Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), given its status as the National Provider, to lead on the development of a National Strategy for Land-Based Education and Training. The aim will be to develop a coherent land-based education and training strategy for the sector. SFC and SRUC expect that the process will allow SRUC and partner colleges to rationalise provision.

INVESTMENT

STEM - Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants (SDUE) to STEM courses in universities have increased from 10,352 (32.5% of all SDUEs) to 12,102 (35.2%), enabled by the additional 300 places released to the sector by SFC in 2012-13. For example, SDUE numbers in Biology have grown from 745 in 2009-10 to 810 in 2013-14, an increase of 9%; and SDUEs in Physics have gone up from 350 in 2009-10 to 425 in 2013-14, an increase of 21%.

Environmental sustainability - Universities and colleges are working towards becoming environmentally sustainable. The majority of Scotland's universities and colleges have signed up to the Universities and Colleges Climate Commitment for Scotland (UCCCfs) and are looking at innovative ways to reduce their carbon footprint.

FINANCIAL BENEFITS OF MORE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT COLLEGE SYSTEM

By targeting resources more effectively and redirecting resources to front-line services, we are expecting the college sector to demonstrate savings of around £50 million by 2015-16. We will measure this through the change in the activity price in real terms, between 2012-13 and 2015-16.

COLLEGES AS STRONGER STRATEGIC PLAYERS IN THEIR REGION

Colleges are evidencing closer alignment to the work of Community Planning Partnerships and their contribution towards priorities and outcomes contained within single outcome agreements.

ESF - Using European Structural Funds (ESF) and matched SFC funding, an extra 3,868 places have been created across the college regions in 2015-16. These additional places are targeted towards addressing regional skills gaps and shortages associated with key employment sectors including higher level skills to support the development of key growth areas, such as the circular economy and low carbon sectors, advanced food and drink production and packaging, life sciences, and creative and ICT sectors. These additional places will also be used to integrate young people not in employment, education or training into the labour market in the South West.

INNOVATION

INNOVATION CENTRES

The first eight centres are up and running supported by the £124m being invested by SFC in the programme over 6 years– these are Digital Health Institute (DHI), CENSIS (sensors), Scottish Aquaculture IC, Construction Scotland IC, Industrial Biotechnology IC, Stratified Medicine Scotland IC, Data Lab (big data) and Oil and Gas IC (OGiC). At this early stage we are already seeing the conclusion of innovative projects such as DHI's 'My little one' in collaboration with industry, the NHS and HEIs and the OGiC brokered project of University of Strathclyde and the company Hydrasun looking at 'well intervention' solutions.

In 2015 SFC plans to launch a £1m Innovation Challenge fund - this will call for action across more than one industry sector stimulating multiple centres to draw collaboratively on the expertise of our world-leading universities and other stakeholders to bring innovative, industry focused solutions to market to benefit the people and economy of Scotland.

European Regional Development Funds – A bid by SFC, aligned with parallel bids by Scottish Enterprise (SE) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) has been submitted to ERDF. The SFC proposal is for £11.5m ERDF, £29m in total including the match funding to cover the period 2015-2018. The funding is intended to enable innovation centres to supplement and extend their activities where industry or user demand exists. This is likely to include more resources for SME-focussed projects, an extension of support to include college partners where this is beneficial to projects, and the resource to develop Innovation Centre defined college level training where industry need is clear.

BETTER SERVICE FOR EMPLOYERS AND INDUSTRY

The Innovation Scotland Forum (ISF) has been working with its partners (SFC, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Government and Universities Scotland) and other stakeholders to identify opportunities to develop and enhance the relationships between employers, industry and academia. The ISF will work closely with the Can Do Innovation Forum to address innovation issues in Scotland.

SFC's Innovation Voucher (IV) Scheme has been highly successful. The scheme supports businesses to develop new products, services or processes by collaborating with a university for the first time. Since the launch of the IV Scheme in 2009, nearly 900 vouchers with a combined project value of over £4.5m have been awarded to Scottish universities and businesses.

Colleges have evidenced how their curriculum offering meets the needs of their region's employers and stakeholders. Curriculum reviews have been undertaken utilising industry advisory boards and labour market intelligence from Regional Skills Assessments and Skills Investment Plans. Large-scale curriculum mapping has also been undertaken successfully within Glasgow Region.

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES DEVELOPING WORK READY STUDENTS

Universities remain committed to *increasing* the proportion of students entering graduate-level occupations, *enhancing* skills for the work place and *developing* students for a competitive international labour market.

The most recent indicators suggest that the universities' initiatives are turning out successful and employable graduates, the percentage of Scottish-domiciled graduates entering positive destinations increased from 93.5% in 2011-12 to 94.2% in 2012-13 (*data for 2013-14 will be available in July 2015*).

For colleges we are developing robust evidence to show what happens to learners after they gain their qualifications, and so by the end of 2014-15 all colleges will have reported on the first destinations (3-9 months on) of full-time learners after they qualify.

STRONGER STUDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS

All college regions now have functioning students' associations. This has put the colleges in a good place to meet the new legislative requirement that colleges have strong, effective students' associations. NUS and *Partnerships for Change* have developed a new Framework for Students' Associations to help shape the future development of students' associations. Several colleges have developed partnership agreements with their students' associations, outlining joint working arrangements and aspirations.

Universities are continuing to grow their reputation for world class research. The UK's ultimate guide to the quality of university research, the Research Excellence Framework (REF), identified world-leading research in all 19 of Scotland's universities. It revealed that Scottish universities were leading the UK in many areas of research as diverse as Physics, Modern Languages and Agriculture.

The findings of REF 2014 confirmed that Scotland's universities are holding their own with those of the other nations of the UK. The collaborative approach to research which Scotland has pioneered – research pooling – continues to show significant contributions to the quality of a wide range of disciplines across many universities.

International collaboration

The universities of Glasgow, Strathclyde, Edinburgh, St Andrews and Heriot-Watt established with their German counterparts the International Max Planck Partnership (IMPP) in December 2013. IMPP links world-leading research in quantum physics in Scotland with five Max Planck institutes. Seed funding of £500k from SFC and £243K by EPSRC/STFC has leveraged funding in the universities in posts and infrastructure exceeding £10m, supporting research related to the IMPP.

Hong Kong Research Partnerships - SFC and the Research Grants Council (RGC) of Hong Kong have jointly committed up to £100k and HK\$1.25m to promote and support collaboration between scientists and engineers in the Scottish Life Sciences Association (SULSA), the Scottish Energy Technology Partnership (ETP) and the University Grants Committee (UGC) funded institutions in Hong Kong.

PECRE funding of £250k a year supports Post-doctoral and Early Career Researcher Exchanges with Europe, North America, China and India, providing research training and development opportunities for the most able postgraduates and early career researchers working within the Scottish research pools, while at the same time building experience of international collaboration with academia and/or industry.

Dumfries and Galloway College and three other colleges that have led on sustainability in UK and Ireland namely South West College, Cavan Innovation and Technology Centre, and the Institute of Technology Sligo established **CREST**- a unique collaboration which pooled expertise, resources and knowledge. It provided expertise and a range of facilities to support entrepreneurs and SMEs to bring innovative and sustainable ideas from concept to reality.