College Region Outcome Agreements -
Summary of Progress and Ambitions

14 June 2016
COLLEGE REGION OUTCOME AGREEMENTS
SUMMARY OF PROGRESS & AMBITIONS

SFC is incredibly proud of what our colleges do for tens of thousands of students each year, and for their contribution to strengthening communities and economies across Scotland.

SFC provides the funding that enables them to do this work and stimulates change and development. Our job is to make the most we possibly can of these great local, regional and national assets so that they make the most valuable contribution possible to Scotland’s educational, social, cultural and economic life.

In this report you will see the great work that we and the colleges have been able to do together. Working in partnership with, colleges, universities and many, many others we have made great progress on developing the skills of young people, meeting the needs of employers, broadening and improving what is available to senior phase school children, opening up new routes to university, and creating an efficient regional system of colleges.

In their outcome agreements Scotland’s colleges have demonstrated the outcomes that each of the 13 college regions aim to deliver in return for the Scottish Government’s investment of funding. They have outlined their contribution to delivering key Scottish government priorities and strategies including Developing the Young Workforce and to –

- Meet the needs of the learners and communities in each region.
- Deliver opportunities and outcomes for learners.
- Deliver a better service for employers and industry.
- Make colleges stronger strategic players in their regions.
- Deliver a more efficient and effective college system.

Here we set out what the college sector has achieved in recent years and take a forward look at the commitments the college regions have made for 2016-17 through outcome agreements¹. In addition to highlighting the progress made at a sector level for all the outcome agreement national measures² (where data is available), we have also provided a breakdown for each college region for the key priority national measures² and referred to further analysis in our other publications where available. We have also provided short case studies throughout to highlight good practice.

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¹ Subject to finalisation in a small number of cases
² A list of the 17 current outcome agreement national measures (including 5 key priority national measures) is provided at Annex 1 of this report and full definitions are available in our outcome agreement guidance – Annex E Technical Guidance http://www.sfc.ac.uk/communications/Guidance/2015/SFCGD152015.aspx
Meet the needs of the learners and communities in each region

In their outcome agreements, colleges have committed to providing education that best meets the changing social and economic needs of their regions. Some of the ways they have said they will do this include: widening access; increasing vocational pathways in the senior phase; matching curriculum to regional skills needs; increasing STEM provision; and collaborating with partners in local authorities, schools and employers.

Volume of activity

The college sector has exceeded the SFC-funded activity targets in each of the last 10 academic years. The majority of college regions met their individual activity (WSUMs) target for 2014-15 and the total sector target was met.

Figure 1
College activity (WSUMs) delivered vs target, 2010-11 to 2014-15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>WSUMS target</th>
<th>WSUMS delivered</th>
<th>% against target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>2,322,713</td>
<td>2,380,322</td>
<td>102.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>2,233,140</td>
<td>2,276,834</td>
<td>102.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>2,111,769</td>
<td>2,143,921</td>
<td>101.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>2,266,030</td>
<td>2,279,720</td>
<td>100.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>2,267,905</td>
<td>2,270,024</td>
<td>100.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Further Education Statistics (FES)  

Figure 1 above shows that the College WSUMs targets changed between 2010-11 and 2011-12. This was mainly as a result of the decision to focus school/college courses towards senior phase school pupils as opposed to other school year groups including those in primary school. Furthermore, in 2012-13, the Scottish Government asked colleges to deliver the New College Learning Programme (NCLP) managed by Skills Development Scotland (SDS). SFC’s WSUMs target was reduced by 4% in order to transfer funding to SDS to deliver the NCLP.

Figure 2 below, shows the progress college regions made towards activity targets in 2014-15. Six college regions did not achieve their activity targets in 2014-15 – though in most cases they were very close. The regions that under-delivered in 2014-15 are confident of meeting their AY 2015-16 targets. During 2015, Edinburgh

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3. Weighted Student Units of Measurement (WSUM) is the unit of funding that was used in 2014-15. Since then a new simplified method has been introduced. 1 SUM is equal to 40 hours of learning. WSUMs are derived by multiplying the SUM figure by the ‘weight’ – that is the relative cost to a college of delivering different subjects.

4. SFC administers the collection of data on activity delivered at Scotland’s Colleges in each academic session. This data collection is known as the Further Education Statistics (FES). Colleges submit course/programme and student data as part of this process. For further information: http://www.sfc.ac.uk/guidance/SubmittingStatisticalInformation/FE_statistical_data/Data2014-15/fes_1415.aspx
College agreed with the SFC a reduction in its AY2015-16 activity target, to help it to align provision with regional need, and we have since agreed reallocation of these places for 2015-16 with other colleges/regions. These changes also affect final allocations for 2016-17 and beyond. The regions that received the additional activity are largely ones that are identified by our demographic model as requiring further growth, though we also considered evidence of demand from our experience of reallocating European funding in recent years.

Patterns of demand vary and we are moving in manageable steps towards a needs-based distribution of activity so that regions with greatest demand have a greater supply of college places. As in previous years, we will use a combination of our outcome agreement discussions and demographic modelling to inform this.

From Academic Year 2015-16, SFC implemented a simplified approach to college funding, where WSUMs targets were replaced with Credit targets. Further information on this can be found in the Simplified Approach to College Funding update newsletter⁵, on the SFC website.

We have kept the sector activity targets for AY 2016-17 at the same level as last year. A breakdown of final funding allocations for colleges in AY 2016-17 is available on our

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⁵ A simplified approach to college funding
http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Funding/A_simplified_approach_to_college_funding_December_2014.pdf
European funding

Since 2010-11 SFC has been the national strategic body for managing the college sector’s access to European Social Funding (ESF). In 2016-17, SFC is continuing to allocate additional activity to colleges under the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). This programme is focused on young people aged 16-29 who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) in South-West Scotland.

SFC has submitted an operational application for ESF funding under Developing Scotland’s Workforce (DSW). This intervention will focus on higher level skills to meet regional skills demand by providing courses linked to emerging growth sectors. SFC is seeking ESF grant of £4.5m\(^7\) over academic years 2016-17 and 2017-18.

Through these two programmes SFC is investing around £8 million each year in matched funding allowing access to an additional circa £11.5 million ESF per year.

Working as part of the outcome agreement process, ESF activity is delivered by colleges in addition to their core SFC activity. Activity targets and planned course provision is agreed, reflecting college regional skills plans and their interactions with local Community Planning Partnerships. Using ESF and matched SFC funding, approximately 58,000 additional credits (equivalent to around 3,900 additional full-time places) have been allocated across the college regions in 2016-17.

Widening access

The SFC wants the college and university sectors to demonstrate access excellence. This includes our ambition to increase the intake from our most deprived communities and to increase the numbers of guaranteed articulation pathways on offer to students. We have seen great progress in both of these areas since the beginning of the outcome agreement approach.

As we seek to deliver our access ambitions it is also crucial that we reduce gender imbalances at subject level in colleges.

This report outlines our progress in relation to:

- Growing provision for our most deprived communities.
- Greater equality, including reducing gender subject imbalances and improving opportunities for care-experienced students.
- Supporting Opportunities for All and ensuring the correct level of provision for younger students.

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\(^6\) College Outcome Agreements final funding decisions for 2016-17
http://www.sfc.ac.uk/funding/OutcomeAgreements/OutcomeAgreementsOverview.aspx

\(^7\) this excludes college provision undertaken in the Highlands & Islands through UHI, which is part of a separate ESF application
The Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013 sharpens the focus on meeting the needs of under-represented groups of learners, by placing statutory duties on regional colleges, regional strategic bodies and SFC to widen access.

Through outcome agreements, we expect colleges to make a full assessment of under-representation and need and commitments to improvements, with a view to further improving access, participation and success among specific groups of learners, including those with care experience.

**Growing provision for our most deprived communities**

Colleges continue to devote a significant amount of resource to meeting the needs of learners from the most deprived areas. The proportion of activity going to those in the 10% most deprived postcode areas increased from 16.3% in 2013-14 to 16.8% in 2014-15. That is the biggest annual increase in the past six years. The volume of activity delivered to this group has also increased despite overall activity decreasing.

Although this is very positive we have been monitoring the successful completions of this group which is consistently below their peers and this gap widens when considered alongside additional protected characteristics such as disability and gender.

![Figure 3](image_url)

**Figure 3**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Further Education Statistics (FES)

Figure 4 below highlights wide variation across the college regions in terms of provision for the most deprived areas. There is also variation across colleges within a region, for example in the Glasgow region 29.3% of all activity is delivered to students in the 10% most deprived postcodes with Glasgow Kelvin College delivering 37.7%, Glasgow Clyde College - 28.2% and City of Glasgow College - 24.8%. There is also regional variation in successful completion rates for students from the most deprived postcode areas.
Figure 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Proportion of SUMs delivered to those in the 10% most deprived postcode areas: 2012-13</th>
<th>2013-14</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
<th>2014-15 OA Target</th>
<th>Proportion of population from the 10% most deprived postcode areas 2016-17 OA Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayrshire</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borders</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumfries &amp; Galloway</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundee and Angus</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fife</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forth Valley</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlands &amp; Islands</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanarkshire</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Lothian</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECTOR AVERAGE</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.9%</strong></td>
<td><strong>16.3%</strong></td>
<td><strong>16.8%</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Further Education Statistics (FES) & National Records of Scotland (NRS)

All regions currently deliver a higher proportion of activity to learners from the 10% most deprived postcode areas than the proportion of the regional population from the 10% most deprived postcodes. The majority of college regions (eight out of thirteen) exceeded their 2014-15 outcome agreement targets. The proportion of activity a college delivers to learners from deprived areas depends largely on the size of the regional population from the 10% most deprived postcode areas. Some regions have a very small proportion of the population from the 10% most deprived postcodes e.g. Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire (2.3%) whereas other regions have much higher levels of deprivation e.g. Glasgow (28%).

The outcome agreements for 2016-17 demonstrate that colleges continue to be committed to the needs of those in the 10% most deprived postcodes. We estimate that, collectively, the colleges will target around 17.4% of learning activity towards this group in 2016-17.

**Dundee and Angus College** recruits a significant proportion of learners from the 10% most deprived postcode areas (25.7% in Dundee and 2.7% in Angus in session 2014-15) and has a track record of delivering successfully to this target group, with annual increases in the proportion of students attending the College from these areas. Of major significance, however, is the success of these students once in College. Education Scotland has highlighted that students at Dundee and Angus College from the 10% and 20% most deprived postcode areas are more likely to be successful than equivalent student groups across the college sector as a whole, and are likely to

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8 figures based on NRS 2013 mid-year estimates
9 A small number of targets were extracted from draft outcome agreements before they were formally agreed and may be subject to change
succeed at levels above the average for all students (from deprived and affluent backgrounds) within the college sector. The successful outcome performance for students from the 10% most deprived postcode areas in 2014/15 was 74.3%, significantly above the average for learners from Scotland as a whole.

**Commission on Widening Access**

In the 2014-15 Programme for Government the Scottish Government set out its ambition that every child, irrespective of socioeconomic background, should have an equal chance of accessing higher education. The Commission on Widening Access was established to advise Ministers on the steps necessary to achieve this. The Commission published its interim report\(^\text{10}\) on 12 November 2015, in which it produced much of the evidence for the recommendations it presented in its final report ‘A Blueprint for Fairness’\(^\text{11}\), published on 14 March 2016.

Through ‘A Blueprint for Fairness’ the Commission has set out a clear national strategy for how the First Minister’s vision of equal access can be achieved. The report identifies a number of areas where early learning providers, schools, colleges and universities need to work more closely together to deliver the best provision for learners. The report recommends a system wide solution - colleges therefore have been identified as having a crucial role.

**Greater equality**

Figure 5 below shows in 2014-15 a broadly balanced split between males (48.2%) and females (51.8%) in the college sector reflective of the Scottish population\(^\text{12}\). We also know that this is matched with broadly similar successful completion rates.

This equal distribution at a national level masks some significant imbalances at subject level and gaps are also evident when other protected groups are considered (such as deprivation) which we seek to address through our Gender Action Plan. This is discussed in the next section. The chart also shows growing BME activity rates (we also know that BME students have slightly higher successful completion rates compared to all students). However, the SFC is keen to take forward a deeper analysis of this to understand outcomes by ethnicity and to identify areas of under representation and performance. We will be taking this work forward this year.

The chart also shows increasing levels of activity delivered to those with declared disabilities which although positive does not yet match the reported distribution of working age people with declared disabilities across Scotland which is reported by

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12 According to the population figures in the 2011 census: 51.5% of the population were female, and 48.5% male
the Scottish Government\textsuperscript{13} to be 1 in 5. We also know that there is a 4% gap in their successful completion rates compared to all students. That said our review of Extended Learning Support indicates that colleges can and often do overcome those gaps by targeting the right interventions at the right time. We are keen to build on that by encouraging colleges to use this funding and bespoke provision in more innovative and inclusive ways to help all learners overcome difficulties relating to additional needs and circumstances.

\textbf{Figure 5}

\textit{Trends in college activity (SUMs\textsuperscript{14}) for selected protected characteristic groups}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure5.png}
\caption{Trends in college activity (SUMs) for selected protected characteristic groups}
\end{figure}

\textit{Source: Further Education Statistics (FES)}

\textbf{Ayrshire College} has developed an innovative and inclusive approach in their bespoke access programmes for young people between the ages of 15 and 24 years. This is referred to as the HIVE (Hope Inspiration and Vision in Education) and it is specifically targeted towards young people who have challenges in their lives and who may previously have had negative experiences of education for a range of different reasons. It also delivers programmes in the community for learners who would never have considered coming to College, making learning accessible to them.

\textbf{Tackling gender imbalances}

In February 2016 we published the interim report for our Gender Action Plan\textsuperscript{15}. This built on the expectations of the Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce programme and its Programme Board that across Scotland’s colleges we should seek to ‘increase

\textsuperscript{13} \url{http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Equality/disability}
\textsuperscript{14} Student Units of Measurement (SUM) is a unit of funding. 1 SUM is equal to 40 hours of learning.
\textsuperscript{15} Gender Action Plan interim report \url{http://www.sfc.ac.uk/communications/Corporatepublications/2016/SFCCP022016.aspx}
by five percentage points the minority gender share in each of the 10 largest and most imbalanced superclasses by 2021’. Figure 6 below shows the extent of the gender imbalance in the subjects of focus within the interim Gender Action Plan looking at combined HE and FE levels. It shows the average of participation rates for three years of data: 2013-14, 12-13 and 11-12.

**Figure 6**

**Gender balance at all levels of study in the most gender imbalanced Superclasses**

![Gender balance diagram](image)

Source: Further Education Statistics (FES)

In Outcome Agreements for 2016-17, colleges have set out the subject areas in which they are focusing their efforts to tackle severe gender imbalances and their ambitions for improvement. We will use these ambitions in developing the final Gender Action Plan report due to be published in summer 2016.

We know that progress will only be made by a coordinated effort across the education and early years system and we believe that through this effort severe gender imbalances of over 75% of students on a particular subject being from one gender can be tackled by 2030.

**Fife College** has developed a Gender Equality Plan based on their Public Sector Equality Outcomes creating an integrated institutional approach to tackling gender imbalances, embedded within their broader work to tackle all elements of inequality.

**Ayrshire College** adopt a whole college approach to tackling gender inequality. Whether it is their outreach with schools, their curriculum development, student services or Student Association, efforts to tackle gender inequality are embedded throughout. This is evidenced within both their Strategic Plan and Outcome

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16 Brackets indicate number of students in the subject area.
Agreement in terms of their ambitions to tackle gender imbalances. They have an ongoing programme of events, frequently linked in with annual national campaigns such as the Ada Lovelace day in October and sustained through an ongoing social media campaign to keep the issue alive.

Supporting ‘Opportunities for All’ and protecting provision for younger students

Colleges continue to play 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, also 20-24 year olds. Since 2011-12 colleges have prioritised their resources towards the needs of this group: by 2014-15, this represented 70.3% of learning activity. Figure 7 below shows the proportion of activity delivered to 16-19 and 20-24 year old students for all activity and for full-time courses. When compared with 2013-14 figures, the proportion of activity delivered to 16-19 year olds fell slightly in 2014-15 whereas the activity delivered to 20-24 year olds increased by a similar proportion. Combined activity to 16-24 year olds has largely been maintained.

Figure 7

Proportion of SUMs delivered to learners aged 16-19 and 20-24 and full-time learners age 16-19 and 20-24

Source: Further Education Statistics (FES)

The 2016-17 outcome agreements confirm that colleges will continue to give priority to young people. However, one significant factor is that the size of the 16-24 population in Scotland is declining: a decline that is forecast to continue until 2023\(^\text{17}\). We will work with colleges to ensure that we are striking an appropriate balance.

between provision for those over 24 and those under. In the meantime, through their outcome agreements colleges have already committed to monitor participation rates to ensure groups are not under-represented and that their curriculum offering is broad and accessible to all.

*Additional analysis by age and protected characteristics is available in our College Baseline Report*\(^\text{18}\).

**Care experienced learners**

Students with care experience are under-represented in our colleges and universities and those that are recruited have lower educational outcomes. Working with agencies such as Who Cares? Scotland, CELCIS, NUS Scotland and others we have developed a national ambition to improve this position over the next three years. The national ambition for care experienced learners is provided in Annex H of the Outcome Agreement Guidance\(^\text{19}\).

The SFC has collected data on care experienced learners since 2013-14 so we cannot, at this stage, provide trend data. However, we do know that in 2014-15 there were 591 recorded students with care experience enrolling on college courses (which we believe to be understated). SFC data teams are working with colleges to improve data capture, which will in turn improve analysis (in particular to allow us to monitor progress towards our ambition to increase the number of students enrolling and successfully completing at college from a care experience background from 2016-17 onwards) and also to improve support for those students. Despite these data challenges we have seen clear commitments in the outcome agreements for this group of students.

**West Lothian College** has appointed a Positive Participation Officer, an employee of West Lothian Council, to join their Support for Learning Team. Based at the College, the Officer is working collaboratively with College and Skills Development Scotland staff to identify vulnerable learners, particularly care experienced individuals, who are at risk of negative destinations to offer support into sustained employment, education or training. In addition, the college are taking positive action to identify and further support their care experienced learners and are revising their application form to include a field to guarantee individuals with care experience an interview for their first course of choice.

**Forth Valley College** has developed a detailed project plan to support care experienced students which includes raising awareness of what support is available, providing appropriate individualised ongoing support, reporting and monitoring

\(^{18}\) Baseline Report for Academic Year 2014-15

[http://www.sfc.ac.uk/communications/Statisticalpublications/2016/SFCST022016.aspx](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/communications/Statisticalpublications/2016/SFCST022016.aspx)

\(^{19}\) Annex H: National ambition for care experienced students

[http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/GUI_SFCGD152015_DeliveringCollegeOutcomeAgreementsAY201/Annex_H_National_ambition_for_care_experienced_students_201617.pdf](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/GUI_SFCGD152015_DeliveringCollegeOutcomeAgreementsAY201/Annex_H_National_ambition_for_care_experienced_students_201617.pdf)
processes to highlight early any progress or attendance issues, and ongoing training for staff. The college has set targets to increase their number of students with care experience, both through increasing disclosures and increasing overall numbers of students with care experience as potential students become more aware of the support offered by the College.

**School/college activity**

Figure 8 below, shows that at sector level the proportion of activity delivered to learners at S3 and above as part of school-college provision has remained stable for the past four years at just over 3%. Activity targets were reduced between 2010-11 and 2011-12 for school college provision to focus on senior phase high school pupils. Prior to 2011-12, school-college provision had been delivered to learners in all school years including primary school.

![Figure 8](image)

Source: Further Education Statistics (FES)

Regional data for 2014-15 highlights that nine college regions showed an increase in activity delivered to learners at S3 and above compared to the previous year whereas five showed a reduction in activity.

**Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce**

College regions have committed to continue growing activity for pupils in their senior phase. Colleges have provided commitments to work experience, and employer engagement; and the articulation of each region’s continuing professional development plans to ensure all those who advise learners are providing relevant and up-to-date employment advice.

The status of the regional DYW implementation plans reflect the partnerships’
different starting points and strengths, and the complexity of local contexts, for example where multiple local authorities are involved. Colleges will continue to work with their partners to refine and develop their approaches, and we will ensure that work is enhanced by the learning from the DYW funding provided in 2015-16. It is important that college delivery responds to school and local authority need. We are taking proactive steps to continue to develop DYW plans for future years:

- SFC will publish guidelines for work experience for the College sector. Developed in partnership with Skills Development Scotland, Education Scotland, Colleges, Scottish Qualifications Authority, College Development Network and Scottish Government.
- We have focused closer attention on gender imbalances across subjects within the senior phase.
- The DYW regional plans will be further enhanced by greater emphasis on STEM and ensuring regional demand for STEM is being supported.

A partnership baselining exercise was carried out (July-September 2015) to provide an insight into how partnerships between local authorities, schools and colleges were being further developed in light of the DYW recommendations around senior phase vocational pathways. The questionnaire was designed to capture key quantitative and qualitative information and was tested with a sample of colleges and partner local authorities, before issuing across the country. Although it focused on local authority-school-college partnerships, it also sought to capture information about other key partners with whom authorities and schools work in developing and delivering this activity.

The survey outcomes recognised that local partnerships are at different stages of maturity and that delivering senior phase vocational pathways may mean more change for some than for others. It allowed partnerships to assess where they are now and, used over time, to measure progress as their relationships and activity mature. The standardised format also established a national picture of the different partnership approaches across the country. The main benefits of the exercise has been in identifying and sharing emerging practice and problem solving particular challenges.

**North East Scotland College** has developed a guide to education progression to show in a clear way the different pathways that are available to students in a wide range of employment areas. The pathways sometime involve study at College, sometimes at University and sometimes a combination of both. As well as full-time study routes there are pathways that involve work-based apprenticeship study. A copy of the guide is available on the College’s website - http://www.nescol.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/course-listings/north-east-scotland-aberdeen-and-aberdeenshire-pathways.pdf
**West College Scotland** has developed an enhanced approach to School-College planning. The School-College offerings, scheduling, delivery and promotion has been refined jointly with Local Authorities across the region to aim for an increased recruitment for 2016-17. Successful work to agree a common timetable for college attendance across the region will enable a regional School College prospectus for 2016-17 and more vocational options for young people. Joint planning is also underway for pathfinder Foundation Apprenticeships in 2016-17.

**Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM)**

*Education Working for All*, the Commission for Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce final report, said that an adequate supply of STEM skills is critical to growing Scotland’s key economic sectors and that to secure this supply the number of young people achieving STEM qualifications should be increased. As a primary provider of STEM courses, colleges have a significant role to play in delivering this objective.

![Figure 9](https://www.sfced.gov.uk/downloads/152015.png)

**Figure 9**

Volume and proportion of SUMs delivered to learners enrolled on STEM courses

- 20.3% in 2013-14
- 21.1% in 2014-15

Source: Further Education Statistics (FES)

Figure 9 above shows a slight increase in the proportion of activity (SUMs) delivered to learners enrolled on STEM courses\(^{20}\) over the past four years from 19.3% in 2011-12 to 21.1% in 2014-15.

In our Outcome Agreement guidance we recommend that colleges use the information from Skills Investment Plans (SIPs) and Regional Skills Assessments (RSAs) in addition to their own engagement with local employers to assess the need for provision. Where there is an identified need they should expand STEM courses in their general provision and in developing new senior phase vocational pathways with

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\(^{20}\) A full definition and a list of STEM courses is available in our outcome agreement guidance — Annex E Technical Guidance [http://www.sfc.ac.uk/communications/Guidance/2015/SFCGD152015.aspx](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/communications/Guidance/2015/SFCGD152015.aspx)
local authorities they should prioritise STEM subjects.

A key challenge is to ensure that there is a coherent, robust and progressive approach to developing skills and knowledge in STEM subjects across all parts of the Education and skills system. To support the sector to target and expand STEM provision in a way that is coordinated and impactful, we are working with colleges and other partners to develop a STEM framework. The framework would ensure that the qualifications on the framework evidence a level of knowledge and skills capability that are aligned to the needs of employers. The framework will be aligned with SFC’s work to support the sector to tackle gender imbalances, with many of the subjects of focus within the gender action plan within STEM.

The Glasgow College Region, in collaboration with NEF: The Innovation Institute, has developed a Regional STEM Strategy to support the needs of local schools, universities, industry and stakeholders in order to create one interlinking strategic plan. The Regional STEM Strategy outlines how Glasgow can utilise a unique collaboration between the three colleges, schools and the universities to maximise STEM education and build capacity, thus ensuring a skilled STEM workforce aligned to industry demand. This will develop the capability to deliver new and emerging technology provision that meets the needs of the key regional industry sectors.

**Land-based provision**

The SFC asked Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC), given its status as the National Provider, to lead on the National Strategy for Land Based Education and Training - to plan and implement future provision across Scotland. The National Land-based Strategy Group agree a mechanism by which they collaborate to ensure a coherent spread of provision which meets the needs of the land-based industries in Scotland.

During the Outcome Agreement discussions institutions must review the regional distribution and demand for land-based courses and explore opportunities for collaborative growth or rationalisation with other colleges. SFC expects institutions to continue to engage with the National Land-based Strategy Group to ensure a collective and cohesive approach to land-based education.

**SRUC** is working with Edinburgh College and North East Scotland College to transfer the provision of Animal Care and Veterinary Nursing programmes to SRUC from AY2016-17. Similarly, SRUC are also progressing the transfer of sport provision at Ayr to the University of the West of Scotland (UWS).

**Gaelic**

The SFC’s role in supporting the National Gaelic Language Plan (NGLP) includes encouraging the growth of opportunities within the Scottish college and university
sectors to use and to learn Gaelic. All colleges have been asked to consider in their Outcome Agreements how they will contribute to the aims of the NGLP. Colleges have considered and commented on their approach and the level of response has varied with the local context.

This has encouraged:

- Cross-sector and cross-institutional working.
- Exploration of responses on Gaelic with other local partners, including local authorities and community planning partnerships.
- Exploration of internal demand for opportunities to use Gaelic, including surveys of staff and students.
- Work to consider the role of Scotland’s other languages.

**Improving outcomes and opportunities for learners**

Our core ambition for the college sector is to improve opportunities and outcomes for learners: optimising chances for people to participate in college learning, irrespective of background or personal characteristics; enabling effective pathways to be created between schools, colleges and universities and employers; breaking down barriers to the achievement of qualifications; and equipping learners to progress successfully into employment, further learning or training.

Two of the strongest indicators of the success (or otherwise) of the college sector are:

- The proportion of learners who successfully complete their qualifications (taking into account that, for some learners, there are unavoidable reasons for not completing successfully).
- The proportion of those learners who go on into employment, further learning or training.

Figure 10 below, shows that the sector has delivered steady year-on-year improvement on learner success in recent years. However, in 2014-15 there was a 1.9 percentage point drop in performance for students enrolled in full-time FE and a 0.1 percentage point drop in full-time HE.
Source: Further Education Statistics (FES)

Figure 11 below, shows that the reduction in the FE full-time success rate in 2014-15 is not consistent across all college regions. Seven college regions show continued improvement whilst five show a marked reduction in success rate of over 4%; hence the sector figure in 2014-15 has reduced by 1.9 percentage points to 64.0%. Those colleges have suggested various reasons for their drop in student success in 2014-15 including strike action; concerns among some students about access to bursaries; some students starting courses late; specific changes made to assessment rules and regulations for a small number of programmes; changes to regional curriculum; changes to key processes such as student support; and changes to staffing numbers and structures. Colleges are confident of recovering performance in 2015-16 and have retained ambitious outcome agreement targets for 2016-17.

% of enrolled (full-time) students successfully achieving a recognised qualification, by level and region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>70.3%</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>↓0.2</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FE</td>
<td>65.2%</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
<td>↓4.1</td>
<td>61.9%</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
<td>69.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayrshire</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
<td>↓4.2</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
<td>69.0%</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FE</td>
<td>67.8%</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
<td>↓7.2</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borders</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
<td>75.5%</td>
<td>↓0.4</td>
<td>75.1%</td>
<td>74.0%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FE</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
<td>73.9%</td>
<td>↓4.8</td>
<td>69.1%</td>
<td>74.0%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumfries &amp; Galloway</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>68.0%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>↓1.7</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
<td>78.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FE</td>
<td>63.1%</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
<td>↓1.7</td>
<td>64.0%</td>
<td>64.0%</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^21$ A small number of targets were extracted from draft outcome agreements before they were formally agreed and may be subject to change
SFC has targeted colleges as a whole to increase the FE success rate to 69% and the HE success rate to 72% by 2016-17 as part of our outcome agreement negotiations. Based on the 2016-17 outcome agreements, colleges are forecasting improvement to 69.5% (FE) and 74.1% (HE) by 2016-17.\(^24\)

In addition to this we are aware of further variances by protected characteristic and in particular the impact of deprivation. When considering the successful completion rates by our most deprived communities it is also notable how this is impacted further by protected characteristics such as disability and gender and the variances across subject areas and regions. Addressing these imbalances will be a vital element of our outcome agreement approach in future.

**Additional analysis of student outcomes for each individual college is published annually in our College Performance Indicators report\(^25\).**

### College leaver destinations

In 2013, SFC developed, with the support of the college sector, a national college

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\(^22\) N/A - HE data returned through HESA

\(^23\) Note that the sector FE figures also include data for Newbattle Academy and SRUC

\(^24\) Forecasts are estimates based on the sum of the targets outlined in colleges 2016-17 outcome agreements

\(^25\) College Performance Indicators 2014-15

[http://www.sfc.ac.uk/communications/Statisticalpublications/2016/SFCST012016.aspx](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/communications/Statisticalpublications/2016/SFCST012016.aspx)

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### Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
<th>2013-14</th>
<th>Change between 2013-14 and 2014-15 (percentage points)</th>
<th>2014-15 OA Target</th>
<th>2016-17 OA Target(^21)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dundee and Angus</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
<td>↓ 4.6</td>
<td>72.1%</td>
<td>76.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FE</td>
<td>72.9%</td>
<td>72.9%</td>
<td>↑ 0.3</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>72.8%</td>
<td>74.0%</td>
<td>↑ 1.4</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>74.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FE</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
<td>↓ 5.9</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
<td>68.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fife</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>67.2%</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
<td>↑ 0.8</td>
<td>67.9%</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FE</td>
<td>60.4%</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
<td>↓ 1.8</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td>64.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forth Valley</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>↑ 1.2</td>
<td>78.5%</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FE</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>69.7%</td>
<td>↓ 0.7</td>
<td>70.4%</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>↑ 1.7</td>
<td>74.1%</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FE</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
<td>65.6%</td>
<td>↑ 0.7</td>
<td>66.2%</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlands &amp; Islands</td>
<td>HE(^22)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FE</td>
<td>63.1%</td>
<td>66.3%</td>
<td>↑ 1.3</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanarkshire</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>69.3%</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
<td>↓ 0.9</td>
<td>68.2%</td>
<td>71.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FE</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>↑ 0.6</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
<td>67.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>66.1%</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
<td>↓ 2.8</td>
<td>67.1%</td>
<td>69.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FE</td>
<td>64.9%</td>
<td>65.3%</td>
<td>↑ 0.4</td>
<td>59.8%</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Lothian</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
<td>67.8%</td>
<td>↑ 0.9</td>
<td>71.1%</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FE</td>
<td>65.1%</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>↑ 0.2</td>
<td>63.5%</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECTOR(^23)</strong></td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>70.3%</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>↓ 1.1</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FE</td>
<td>65.5%</td>
<td>65.9%</td>
<td>↑ 1.9</td>
<td>64.0%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Further Education Statistics (FES)
leaver destination survey to collect and report on leaver destination data from colleges. The first publication of College Leaver Destinations (CLD) for Scotland’s colleges was in December 2015 and covers the 2013-14 academic year. The publication reports on the destinations of leavers, 3-6 months after qualifying.

The vast majority of leavers are in a positive destination six months after graduating. Overall, the percentage of leavers entering a positive destination is 95.3% for FE and 94.8% for HE (includes the figures for those only in a ‘known’ destination covering; a positive destination, which includes in employment and in further study). Figure 12 below, shows some variation across regions.

**Figure 12**
The number and proportion of college leavers in a positive destination 3 to 6 months after qualifying, HE and FE, by region, 2013-14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Further Education – Total Positive Destinations</th>
<th>Higher Education – Total Positive Destinations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire</td>
<td>2,468</td>
<td>93.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayrshire</td>
<td>2,963</td>
<td>95.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borders</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forth Valley</td>
<td>1,074</td>
<td>94.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumfries &amp; Galloway</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>93.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundee and Angus</td>
<td>2,198</td>
<td>94.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>3,387</td>
<td>95.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fife</td>
<td>2,102</td>
<td>97.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>4,859</td>
<td>96.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlands &amp; Islands</td>
<td>2,758</td>
<td>95.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanarkshire</td>
<td>3,661</td>
<td>93.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land-based (SRUC)</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>93.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newbattle</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>84.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>2,656</td>
<td>96.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Lothian</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scotland Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>30,789</strong></td>
<td><strong>95.3%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: College Leaver Destinations (CLD) survey for Scotland’s colleges

**SHEP**

The Schools for Higher Education Programme (SHEP) funded by the SFC provides support, advice and guidance in schools which have traditionally low progression

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26 College Leaver Destinations 2013-14 (Experimental Statistics: data being developed)
http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Statistical_publications_SFCST072015_CollegeLeaverDestinations201314experimental/SFCST072015_College_Leaver_Destinations_2013-14.pdf

27 No HE level destinations data is provided for UHI partner colleges (Highlands & Islands) and SRUC (Land based) as these are returned in the Higher Education Statistical Agency’s annual Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey.
rates to Higher Education (HE). The programme also aspires to assist in improving school staying-on rates past fourth year at these schools along with progression to HE in college or university. Further information on the SHEP programme can be found on the SFC website\textsuperscript{28}.

The four regional programmes have always worked with partners in both sectors, however for the 2016-17 outcome agreements, the SHEP national measure was included for colleges as well as universities. Anecdotally, we know that a significant proportion of pupils from SHEP schools choose to progress onto HE courses in colleges.

It is too early to gauge how the colleges have responded to this measure so we will continue to monitor progress made and consider it alongside reporting from the SHEP regional teams.

**Opportunities to “articulate” to degree level study**

As a direct result of close partnership working between colleges and universities there has been a steady increase in the number of learners articulating with advanced standing (full recognition for previous Higher National study): As shown in Figure 13 below, close to 4,000 learners articulated with advanced standing in 2014-15, an increase of 900 students from the 2011-12 baseline of 3,099 students.

*Figure 13*

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number (in thousands)</th>
<th>% Articulating with AS</th>
<th>Total number of HN entrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>3,099</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
<td>6,677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>3,502</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>7,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>3,762</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>7,884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>3,999</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>8,393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17*</td>
<td>4,100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* *SFC national aspiration*

Source: National Articulation Database (compiled from data supplied via FES, HESA and SQA)

\textsuperscript{28} Schools for Higher Education Programme, [http://www.sfc.ac.uk/funding/FundingOutcomes/Access/SchoolsforHigherEducationProgramme/SchoolsforHigherEducationProgramme.aspx](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/funding/FundingOutcomes/Access/SchoolsforHigherEducationProgramme/SchoolsforHigherEducationProgramme.aspx)
There is still room for growth in articulation with advanced standing, with an increased focus on student choice and improving curriculum links between college and university courses. We have been particularly impressed with some of the new approaches and blended curriculum methods adopted through our associate student scheme.

As shown in Figure 14 below, the 2016-17 college outcome agreements project that the number of articulating students will grow to 4,673 by 2016-17, and will considerably surpass our national aspiration of 4,100 by 2016-17.

**Figure 14**
The number of Scottish-domiciled learners articulating from college to degree level courses with advanced standing, by college region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of learners articulating with advanced standing</th>
<th>2016-17 OA Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayrshire</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borders</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumfries &amp; Galloway</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundee and Angus</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fife</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forth Valley</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>1097</td>
<td>1325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanarkshire</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land-based (SRUC)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Lothian</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECTOR TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>3099</strong></td>
<td><strong>3592</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dundee and Angus College aim to increase their articulation to 350 students in 2016-17 from 255 in 2014-15. They have seen significant growth in their articulation agreements and guaranteed places for their students since the beginning of the outcome agreement process. More recently, further growth has been possible as Abertay University have now decided to open articulation routes to all students meeting the agreed criteria.

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29 A small number of targets were extracted from draft 2016-17 outcome agreements before they were formally agreed. Furthermore, the most recent articulation data for 2014-15 was not available to most colleges when setting 2016-17 targets. Targets may be subject to change.
Deliver a better service for employers and industry

Regionalisation and college mergers have created a significant opportunity for the newly formed larger colleges to respond far more effectively to the needs of learners and employers in their region.

Building on progress made in recent years to increase employer engagement, and responding to the Government’s programme for Developing the Young Workforce we have negotiated further commitments from college regions to improve employer engagement. College regions have set out, in their outcome agreements, how they will forge closer links with employers to achieve greater alignment between curriculum planning and employer demand in order to meet skills shortages and create more work placements for learners. They have also set out ambitions to further develop vocational pathways, apprenticeships and workplace learning in partnership with employers.

The majority of college outcome agreements have evidenced the use of information contained in Regional Skills Assessments (RSAs) and Skills Investment Plans (SIPs) to inform their regional context statement. They have identified areas of growth and decline and, in most cases, how the evidence has been utilised in curriculum planning. As well as the emphasis on some key industry sectors, many outcome agreements also focus on meeting provision in the care, hospitality, retail and other sectors that will meet the regional need. We will expect to see further evidence of college use of RSAs and SIPs in their curriculum offering as these planning documents are reviewed and evolve.

Colleges have outlined their commitment to increasing the volume of work placements offered as part of their provision and also to grow apprenticeship activity. Separately, the Scottish Funding Council is leading work on developing a Standard for Work Placements, in relation to colleges, and will consult key stakeholders early in the summer. The standard will set out the expectations for the main parties involved, outlining the expectations in advance of, during and after a placement. The standard aims to raise the quality of the learning that a work placement can offer and to motivate and inspire all those involved.

In support of the SFC/SDS Joint Framework for Action, to deliver the Scottish Government’s Youth Employment Strategy, colleges have a key role in delivering the introduction and scaling of the Foundation Apprenticeships for senior phase pupils. Colleges have submitted bids for 1102 places in 2016-17.

**West Highland College UHI** has created a curriculum from school link programmes, fulltime FE to HE degree level, which combines the outdoors and tourism and celebrates everything about the area. Programmes have been developed in consultation with industry and aim to develop practical skills, increase aptitude and teach the underpinning theory. The approach of working with highly skilled industry experts is a significant factor in retention, student success and student progression to
either employment or further study. This is evidenced over a sustained period of time - 95% or more students successfully achieve Advanced Outdoor Leadership during the last 3 years. An agreement with PGL as a preferred employer for the SQA work experience element of the programme for all students was expanded from only using PGL to one where learners can also choose work placements from other organisations to match their goals. As placement opportunities expand, the visibility of the college programme also increases which helps widen recruitment and also helps broaden the scope for new entrants into the industry.

**Fife College’s** Science Training School is an innovative venture set up as a partnership with NHS Lothian and is an example of successful engagement between education and industry. The Science Training School was set up to address a skills shortage within Scotland’s life science sector by developing a career progression route using the Modern Apprenticeship programme. This enables employed learners within the life sciences sector to enhance their skills and qualifications whilst continuing in employment. The progression pathway includes a part-time degree accredited by the Institute of Biomedical Scientists after completion of the Modern Apprenticeship.

**Making colleges stronger strategic players**

One of the intended benefits of regionalisation was to improve the planning and co-ordination of skills provision in a region. Colleges are evidencing closer alignment to the work of community planning partnerships (CPPs) and their contribution towards priorities and outcomes contained within single outcome agreements.

The latest set of outcome agreements continue to provide evidence of closer integration with Local Authorities – particularly Education Departments as part of the DYW response and schools-college partnership work.

The new regional structures allow for increased coherence and efficiency of partnership working with schools at a strategic level.

Many colleges were well-embedded in their CPPs before regionalisation, but this was not consistent across regions. The new structure has provided clarity around single points of contact and removed unnecessary competition and duplication between colleges and other partners. We will work with the National Delivery Group to survey the experience of Local Employability Partnership LEP) partners within local authorities on their engagement with colleges.

Our recent post-merger evaluations have gathered evidence of a range of wider benefits for learners and stakeholders that are now being realised, including: stronger partnerships with universities; a clearer alignment to community partners planning arrangements; and a closer interface to the needs of employers through industry advisory groups.
**Ayrshire College** enhanced its partnership working with local CPPs, a major outcome of this was the establishment of the Skills Centre of Excellence at Irvine Royal Academy, a shared campus development which will support the delivery of innovative learning and teaching models which blur the boundaries between school and college. The college is working with the three local authorities and schools to support vocational pathways required by Developing Scotland’s Young workforce. It has created a dedicated DYW team in the College which is helping to create a pan-Ayrshire approach, for example an annual Head Teachers conference hosted by the College brings together participants from the three local authorities.

One significant characteristic of the **North East Scotland** region is the highly effective and strengthening partnership between **North East Scotland College and RGU**. The success is rooted in a shared approach to curriculum planning and development that has streamlined pathways and allowed wider participation to degree level study, as well as more efficient use of resources by avoiding duplication and unnecessary competition. The inter-institutional collaboration has also strengthened activity around Developing the Young Workforce, and Regional Skills Strategy and apprenticeship routes. The two institutions, alongside the University of Aberdeen, have also recently started to explore the development of shared services.

**Deliver a more efficient and effective college system**

The Scottish college landscape has fundamentally changed over the past three years. 2014-15 was the first full academic year of the operation of the new regional structure of 10 single-college regions and 3 multi-college regions. The creation of larger colleges operating on a regional basis through merger has led to a reduction in the number of publicly funded colleges from 42 in September 2012 to 25 now.

Throughout this complex period of change the sector has continued to deliver on its key priorities such as widening access, the commitment to courses for young people, and development of new pathways for learners.

In 2015-16, we have continued to monitor the implementation and impact of the mergers through the Outcome Agreement process but also through focused 2 year post-merger evaluations (and one at 3 years post-merger). By the end of June 2016 we will have completed the evaluations of the eight colleges that merged in 2013-14. Although each merger has been unique to its geography, context and pre-merger circumstances there is emerging evidence from all the colleges on how they have negotiated the challenges to create a college of scale for their region which will deliver benefits for learners and all stakeholders.

From the outset there was a clear commitment from the merging colleges that there should be no detriment to the student experience as a result of the merger. Despite the challenges which were outlined by the colleges during the early and more recent post-merger evaluations, the evidence shows that this has been the case. A wider range of benefits for learners and stakeholders are now being realised, including:
• Innovative developments in curriculum to increase flexibility and choice including access level, higher level provision and vocational pathways.
• Building on existing, and developing new, employer partnerships that will allow the delivery of skills and training that meet the needs of industry and local employers and involve employers in the development of the curriculum.
• A strong focus on core skills and provision in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects.
• Stronger partnerships with universities leading to increased opportunities for articulation and progression to higher level study.
• An enhanced senior phase provision through partnerships with secondary schools to support pathways for young people from school to college programmes and into employment.
• Pooling of staff expertise and skills to promote good practice and enhance the learner experience.
• Enhanced opportunities for student engagement both through the colleges’ own learner engagement strategies and through their support for the development of stronger and more sustainable Students’ Associations.
• A clearer alignment to community partners planning arrangements and a closer interface to the needs of employers through industry advisory groups.
• Extending the reach of the college to those potential students who are furthest from the labour market and do not currently participate in college education or training, through an expanded range of community partners and supported learning in the community.

These are colleges of scale taking a lead role in their region. However, the post-merger evaluations have shown that for some colleges the magnitude of the change required by mergers has had consequences for staff and senior managers and may have impacted on the timescale for successful implementation and full delivery of all merger benefits. The challenges and themes, which will be explored in more detail in SFC’s overarching report on the impact of the mergers, include the following:

• The required staff restructuring and harmonisation of conditions are complex processes that take time and impact on staff at all levels across the college.
• The loss of staff expertise and experience, particularly some staff who had worked at their legacy college for a long time, impacts on the day-to-day working of remaining staff who may be in new roles.
• Developing a consistent provision, services and support across campuses is complex and requires commitment from all staff.
• Establishing new college-wide policies and procedures requires linkages with quality arrangements and a clear timescale.
• Operating as a multi-campus college of scale with new structures and teams in place requires staff to learn new ways of carrying out business which impacts on communications, quality and reporting arrangements.
• The impact of changes to ICT infrastructure can affect areas of college operations including admissions, student funding, learning and teaching, data capture and reporting.
• The ability to develop a sense of belonging to the new college supports the emergence of a new culture and way of working.

We will continue to monitor progress in the recently-merged colleges routinely, through our outcome agreement process.

Education Scotland also monitor college performance and found that the degree of structural change to staffing and curriculum in the merged colleges was significant and was in general being carefully managed by colleges. In AY 2014-15, Education Scotland carried out external reviews of six colleges in the post-merger period. Four colleges received Effectiveness judgements. The two colleges who received Limited Effectiveness judgements have subsequently made satisfactory progress against the actions required.

Stronger students’ associations

The 13 college regions all now have functioning Students’ Associations, this includes 4 regions that did not have merger but which have also received financial assistance from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) through the Partnerships for Change initiative to build their Students’ Association capacity, bringing them in line with the merged colleges.

In the past year we have been supporting the development of college Students’ Associations. We have provided NUS Scotland with project funding to develop the College Students’ Association Framework, the purpose of which is to help shape the future development of Students’ Associations and ensure they are making progress towards meeting the new legislative requirement that colleges have strong and independent Students’ Associations.

SFC have also funded the College Students’ Association Development Project which allows sparqs and NUS to offer tailored support, advice and training to college students’ associations, including:

• In-house training for the SA executive teams.
• Strategic planning sessions and follow-up support to create strategic and operational plans.
• Support to review and update SA governance documentation.
• Election support to ensure processes are legally compliant.
• Support for staff that work with the SA.
Although it’s still early days for the Framework (and the associated self-evaluation tools) some progress has been made. From our discussions with students as part of the post-merger evaluations there appears to be a greater awareness and understanding of the role and function of Students’ Associations by the student body and that student associations are generally becoming more involved with the outcome agreement process and developing their own initiatives that contribute towards the delivery of the college’s outcome agreement priorities and targets.

Ongoing intelligence gathering is also showing that there is a year on year increase of the numbers of class reps in the sector since the start of the regionalisation process and a number of institutions are reporting an increase in voter turnout for Students’ Association officer elections. A number of Students’ Associations now have Student Partnership Agreements with their colleges (or are working towards them) which will go some way towards ensuring that Students’ Association legacies and work programmes are becoming more embedded and resilient.

Looking forward, the key challenge for Students’ Associations will be maintaining activity levels once the specific additional development funding ends. SFC will continue to work closely with NUS and sparqs to ensure the progress made so far is maintained and built on.

Although not focussed specifically on Students’ Associations, a national Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey has also been piloted by all colleges in 2015-16 to cover all students full-time, part-time and distance. Colleges have been asked to submit their summary data returns by the end of May. Findings of the pilot will be reviewed and considered later in the year as planning takes place for the full survey roll out in 2016-17.

The Ayrshire College Student Association developed the #ThisAyrshireGirlCan initiative after being inspired by the #ThisGirlCan campaign encouraging and celebrating women in sport. Starting on International Women’s Day 2015 by asking students to make a pledge on standing up for equality for women, the campaign developed with strong leadership from the student President and the College. On International Women’s Day 2016, the First Minister visited the college to launch the film #ThisAyrshireGirlCan, which celebrates 22 women on STEM courses at Ayrshire College – including Modern Apprentices working in companies like GSK, Hyspec Engineering and Spirit Aerosystems. A copy of the film will be distributed to every primary and secondary school in Ayrshire and has been shortlisted for the NUS Scotland Campaign of the Year award and their student President is now NUS Scotland’s Women’s Officer elect.

Edinburgh College Students’ Association have recently won the NUS Education award for their Learner Engagement Framework which links with the college’s self-evaluation processes by providing an ongoing picture of association growth and development, contributing to the sustainability of the association. It will provide institutional memory and give future staff and sabbaticals documentation and
evidence to serve as a base for future work, research and able to identify when issues arise if it has been systemic or raised previously.

**Sustainability**

The college sector is continuing to experience financial challenges. Financial efficiencies over recent years, increases in pay, national insurance and pension contributions and challenging student activity targets are all creating financial pressures. SFC is continuing to monitor closely the financial health of colleges using a combination of financial returns and ‘softer’ intelligence. This will give us an earlier indication of any financial challenges facing particular colleges.

The Government has introduced mandatory reporting on climate change for public bodies (including colleges) for 2016. SFC will play a role in making further progress to reduce the carbon footprint of both sectors.

We will work to help college regions develop their own carbon management plans, including setting projected targets, through the College Capital Working Group. We will review regional targets for 2016-17 onwards and take a view on whether – at the regional and the sectoral level – these are sufficient.

*South Lanarkshire College’s new low-energy teaching facility was officially opened on 24th February 2016. The building is the first in the UK to be awarded a BREEAM ‘Outstanding’ rating for design (under BRE’s 2014 standards) and confirms the building’s low-energy and other environmental credentials. The building’s features will help to embed sustainability within the college’s construction and energy curriculum and deliver a net positive impact for the local community.*

In 2015, *Fife College* was highly commended at the EAUC’s Green Gown Awards for opening the nation’s first vented ‘green’ salon. The salon takes a new and innovative approach to hairdressing, focussing on energy efficient and environmentally friendly practices. This ensures students and clients benefit from a unique learning and customer experience which is environmental, health conscious and sector leading in the profession.
Annex 1 – Outcome Agreement Measures

1. Gross carbon footprint (3 year period)
2. * Credits delivered
3. Volume and Proportion of Credits delivered to learners aged 16-19 and 20-24
4. Volume and Proportion of Credits delivered to full-time learners aged 16-19 and 20-24
5. * Volume and proportion of Credits delivered to learners in the most deprived 10% postcode areas
6. The volume and proportion of Credits relating to learners from different protected characteristic groups and care leavers (where data is available)
7. The volume and proportion of Credits relating to learners with profound and complex needs enrolled on courses involving formal recognition of achievement
8. Volume and proportion of Credits delivered to learners at S3 and above as part of 'school-college' provision
9. Volume and proportion of Credits delivered at HE level to learners from SHEP schools (i.e. Secondary schools with consistently low rates of progression to higher education)
10. Volume and proportion of Credits delivered to learners enrolled on STEM courses
11. * Proportion of enrolled students successfully achieving a recognised qualification
12. * The number and proportion of successful learners who have achieved HNC or HND qualifications articulating to degree level courses with advanced standing
13. * The number and proportion of full-time college qualifiers in work, training and/or further study 3-6 months after qualifying
14. The number of starts for direct contracted apprenticeships (e.g. in construction)
15. Number of full-time learners with substantial “work experience” as part of their programme of study
16. Number of senior phase age pupils studying vocational qualifications delivered by colleges *(data available from 2016-17)*
17. Volume and proportion of Credits delivered to senior phase age pupils studying vocational qualifications delivered by colleges *(data available from 2016-17)*

* Key Priority Measure

Note: Credits were introduced in 2015-16. Prior to 2015-16, activity based national measures were recorded in SUMs. As this report focusses on progress up to 2014-15 the analysis is provided in SUMs.