
SFC Data Analysis for Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide the sector with further detail about the data analysis that the SFC will be sharing with the QAA Review team and the institution as part of the Tertiary Quality External Review (TQER) process.

Background - SFC's use of data and evidence

2. As outlined in [SFC's Guidance on Quality for Colleges and Universities 2024-25 to 2030-31](#) it is the continued intention to develop and enhance the use of data and evidence in how we account for public investment in the delivery of high quality learning. SFC holds the responsibility for the published institutional data and will use this to inform:
 - The Assurance Model, including using the data to evidence and inform our understanding of the quality assessment and enhancement through the SEAP and external review, in conjunction with the information we receive from institutions and external quality agencies.
 - Regular engagement with institutions.
 - The external peer review process, through SFC sharing analysis of the data with the TQER review teams.
3. In the college sector, SFC collects and quality assures data on students and the student experience directly from colleges as part of the Further Education Statistical (FES) return. SFC also conducts an annual College Leaver Destination Survey on the destinations of successful full-time college leavers, and the [Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey](#) (SSES).
4. In the university sector, SFC is a statutory customer of the [Higher Education Statistics Agency](#) (HESA) which collects statutory data from Scottish institutions on behalf of SFC. SFC also has access to data from the [Graduate Outcomes](#) (GO) surveys, as well as data from the [Universities and Colleges Admissions Service](#) (UCAS), and jointly owns the [National Student Survey](#) (NSS).
5. Achieving the best outcomes for learning and teaching is dependent on good decisions, shaped from a clear understanding, informed by meaningful analysis. The Data & Analytics teams at SFC are developing self-service management information (MI) to this end, starting with new tools for SFC staff and the ongoing reform of official statistics publications. We will be launching MI dashboards to the sectors over the coming cycles, which will help ensure that the basis of processes such as TQER is a shared understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of institutional learning and teaching activity in the round.

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6. The Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) is an integral part of the Outcome Framework and Assurance Model (OFAM) and provides all the necessary assurance for the High-Quality Learning and Teaching Outcome. As part of the OFAM, a set of core measures has been identified by SFC, which will be used to monitor institutions' contribution towards each outcome. These measures consider previous sector feedback and represent the key information SFC needs to gain an overview of institutions' contribution to each outcome. Where relevant, core measures have been carried over from the previous measures used under Outcome Agreements. Outcome Managers will meet each institution regularly to discuss the outcomes including the core measures. The annual quality engagement (AQE) meeting is one of these engagements and is timed to make best use of the institutional Self-Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP) submission.
 7. The focus of the AQE meeting with SFC will be on institutions' data and performance in the key outcomes described in the SEAP and aligned to the OFAM. The SEAP guidance includes reference to measures related to High Quality Learning and Teaching, Student Interests Access and Success and the Skills and Work-Based Learning Outcomes too, although it is up to the institution whether they include these in their SEAP submission. It is expected that an institution will be prepared to discuss these as part of the AQE discussion and in some instances the same data outcomes will also be discussed in other meetings during the year.
 8. As the OFAM process develops and embeds, it is anticipated that much of the detail that is included in the Data Analysis report will have been discussed with the institution as part of that process as we strive to achieve a greater degree of openness and transparency in the data that is collected, analysed and shared.

Data Analysis for TQER

9. As described in the [TQER Guide for Institutions](#), SFC will be sharing an analysis of data that is relevant to the institution's context at the time of the review, with QAA eight weeks prior to the initial visit. This information will be shared with the institution and the review team by QAA as part of review preparations.
10. As outlined above SFC holds, accesses and/or collects a range of data and it is this data that will be reviewed and analysed by SFC as part of the TQER process. As set out in the SFC Guidance on Quality this may include:
 - Data on student outcomes (quantitative) and how institutions are taking action to improve outcomes (qualitative) for students of all backgrounds, with a particular interest in measures and actions about:
 - Student populations.
 - Retention.
 - Success.
 - Employability.

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- Student survey results (e.g., NSS in universities and SSES in colleges) and how institutions are addressing feedback from such surveys.
 - Programme/course¹ closures and the management of students in flight on those programmes/course.
 - Qualitative information from key stakeholders, such as sparqs, NUS and Student Associations.
 - Staff, student or other feedback (including complaints) on quality and standards.
 - Industry and employer feedback on the preparedness of graduates / leavers.
11. Much of this data and evidence will be collected or be available systematically (e.g., student outcomes data, student survey results, complaints) through existing returns and surveys. Other data and evidence will be utilised as and when it is available or is drawn to our attention (e.g., feedback from industry, employers, and student associations and information about programme/course closures). It is important to note that this data and evidence will be used alongside information from the annual SEAPs and periodic external review reports.
 12. Institutions will not be expected to provide additional data/ reporting to SFC for the purposes of the TQER report. SFC will make use of the range of data and information available through existing reporting mechanisms.
 13. Institutions are expected to comply with the established guiding principles for public information about the quality of educational provision and the student experience. All information should be accurate, honest, accessible, tailored to the intended user, updateable (on appropriate timescales) and re-usable.

TQER Data Analysis Process

14. SFC has identified the key data and evidence that is relevant to the external review process for colleges and universities (see tables below).
15. The analysis of the data will be undertaken as a collaborative process between relevant colleagues across the SFC, including the Outcome Manager for the institution.
16. For each institution undergoing review, there will be meetings of SFC colleagues to explore and discuss the data. The report and associated evidence will be prepared and subject to internal approval prior to submission to QAA.
17. Institutions will have the opportunity to meet SFC to discuss the planned report outline and SFC's reflection of the institution-specific context. Institutions can also ask questions and provide any context that they feel is relevant to the preparation of the report. This meeting will be optional and will not include a discussion about the specific outcomes of the data analysis. The timing of this meeting will be dependent on several factors, but

¹ Programme/course is used to describe a complete programme or course of study and not individual modules (sometimes called courses)

will take place prior to the institutional data analysis report being concluded and submitted to QAA, eight weeks in advance of the initial review visit.

18. Queries about the use of the report in TQER should be directed to QAA.

Indicative measures/data sources to be reviewed in the TQER Data Analysis

19. Please note that these are broadly indicative as some measures may not be relevant to the institutions context while others may be added to help provide greater insight. The combination of demographic information included will vary considerably due to the relative size of an institution and the number of students.

Universities

| Principle: Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment | |
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| Metrics | Example data/evidence to be explored and presented |
| Scope of provision | Evidence Source: HESA student returns. Scope: Number of students enrolled (by FTE ²) across all levels and modes of study across the full range of subject areas, for the five-year period. |
| Entry qualifications | Evidence Source: HESA student returns. Scope: Entry qualifications of students enrolling (across all levels of study and all domiciles) in previous years. Explore any specific trends or changes in entry quals e.g. A/AS levels, Scottish Highers, Higher National Certificate/ Diploma.. |
| Articulation data | Evidence Source: National Articulation Database (NAD). Scope: Main articulation measure (MAM) data for full-time, first-degree entrants for the institution for the past 5 years (rounded to nearest 5). |

² The new Scottish definition of FTE is used; this is consistent between SFC and Jisc. SFC are aware that the change to the way FTE is now derived in the new data futures data model will affect some institutions more than others, depending on how many of their students' studies span academic years. Where SFC believe the definition change may have a significant impact on trends it will be highlighted in the narrative

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| Enrolment data – undergraduate and post-graduate | <p>Evidence Source: HESA student returns.</p> <p>Definition:</p> <p>CAH groupings are used for subjects.</p> <p>Scope:</p> <p>Student entrant FTE by level of study (first degree, taught and research postgraduate) and subject area for over the five-year period.</p> |
| <p>Student retention and attainment</p> <p>Note: Retention and attainment data of post-graduate students is not included. The variety of lengths and types of PG studies makes it difficult to calculate and compare outcomes.</p> | <p>Evidence Source: HESA student returns and HESA qualifier returns.</p> <p>Definition:</p> <p>The measure of retention is based on the T3 non-continuation metric, which is calculated by Jisc on behalf of SFC. Retention statistics are reported for Scottish domiciled entrants to first degree programmes.</p> <p>The trend in outcomes is taken from the HESA qualifier returns and includes students of all domiciles on first degree programmes.</p> <p>Scope:</p> <p>Retention of Scottish-domiciled first-degree entrants for Institution vs Sector Average over the five-year period.</p> <p>Trend in first and upper second class honours for qualifying students at first degree level: Institution vs Scottish sector average over the five-year period.</p> <p>Student retention and degree classifications by demographic including for example disability, care experience, ethnicity, sex, age, SIMD.</p> |
| Apprenticeships | <p>Evidence Source: HESA Student Returns.</p> <p>Scope:</p> <p>Graduate apprenticeship entrant data across all frameworks where this is available and relevant.</p> |

Review SEAPs for references to these metrics

Principle: Supporting Student Success

| Metrics | Example data/evidence to be explored and presented |
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Graduate Outcomes **Evidence Source:** The Graduate Outcomes Survey response data.

Definition:

The definitions are aligned with the HESA published statistics, based on most important activity including interim further study. Figures include UK domiciled graduates of undergraduate degree programmes at the institution, including all modes of study. High skill roles are defined as standard occupational code major groups 1-3.

Figures are grouped by graduate cohort for the five-year period.

Scope:

Response rates (%).

Number and percentage of graduates into employment or study, by level of study, institution vs sector average.

Number and percentage of graduates into “high-skilled” roles.

Percentage of respondents agreeing with each of the three “Graduate voice” questions reflecting on their activities, by level of study, institution vs sector average.

Review SEAPs for references to these metrics

Principle: Student Engagement and Partnership

| Metrics | Example data/evidence to be explored and presented |
|-------------------------|--|
| NSS – Headline Outcomes | <p>Evidence Source: National Student Survey (NSS).</p> <p>Definition:</p> <p>All respondents to the NSS.</p> <p>Scope:</p> <p>Overall student satisfaction rate over the five-year period.</p> <p>Performance against Scottish sector average for all individual questions.</p> |

Review SEAPs for references to PTES/PRES where relevant

Colleges

Principle: Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Metrics

Example data/evidence to be explored and presented

Scope of provision/
enrolment trends

Evidence Source: Further Education Statistics (FES) returns.

Definition:

Students meeting the fundability criteria at Scottish Colleges by academic year.

Scope:

Overall student numbers by enrolment count and full time equivalent (FTE).

Enrolment count split between Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) and by mode i.e. Full Time (FT) and Part Time (PT).

Enrolment Count by FE and HE, subject area and mode (FT and PT).

Student successful
completion, partial
completion and
non-completion

Evidence Source: College Student Outcomes, which are calculated from the annual FES returns.

Definition:

All students within the SFC College Student Outcome population.

In the College Student Outcomes publication, a filter is applied to part-time students to include only those enrolled in courses exceeding 160 hours when showing protected characteristics. For the purposes of the TQER, however, we have included all lengths of course when considering the outcomes by protected characteristic. This approach maximises representation and ensures a broader representation of student experiences across the full spectrum of provision.

Scope:

Overall completion, partial success and non-completion rate for FE full time (FT) and Part time (PT) student enrolments for the period.

Overall completion, partial success and non-completion rate for HE FT and PT student enrolments.

Successful completion rates and trends, FE (FT and PT) and HE (FT and PT) by demographics including disability, ethnicity, care experience, sex, age and SIMD.

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| Student Early Withdrawals | <p>Overall early withdrawal rate for FE full time (FT) and Part time (PT) student enrolments for the period.</p> <p>Overall early withdrawal rate for HE full time (FT) and Part time (PT) student enrolments.</p> |
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Review SEAPs for references to these metrics

Principle: Supporting Student Success

| Metrics | Example data/evidence to be explored and presented |
|---------|--|
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| Apprenticeships | <p>Evidence Source:</p> <p>Foundation apprenticeship data held in FES from 2019-20 onwards.</p> <p>Scope:</p> <p>Foundation apprenticeships – overall number of students enrolled on each Foundation Apprenticeship framework across the period.</p> <p>Modern apprenticeships – currently it is within Skills Development Scotland's (SDS) remit to report on Modern Apprenticeships (MAs), so we will not include any data in these reports.</p> |
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| Partnerships | Review of SEAPs |
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| Outcomes of leavers | <p>Evidence Source: College Leavers Destinations data</p> <p>Definition:</p> <p>Primary classification of leavers.</p> <p>Scope:</p> <p>High level outcomes of the destinations of all qualifiers who responded to the survey, split by the listed destinations.</p> <p>Overview of the primary destinations of those qualifiers who have left the college sector.</p> |
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Review SEAPs for references to these metrics

Principle: Student Engagement and Partnership

| Metrics | Example data/evidence to be explored and presented |
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| Student Support and Engagement Survey | <p>Evidence Source: Student Support and Engagement Survey (SSES).</p> <p>Definition:</p> |
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All students within the SSES sample for the period. The SSES is collected for students with 4 or more credits (nominally 160+ hours of learning).

Scope:

Overall student satisfaction rates over the period.

Inclusion of satisfaction rate by level and mode of study will depend on the underpinning response rates and robustness of the data.

Response rates over the period with possible breakdowns by level and mode of study.

Review SEAPs for references to these metrics

TQER Data Analysis Report

20. The purpose of the report is to share with the QAA Review Team a high-level analysis of the institutional data to inform the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER). The report provided by SFC to QAA for the purposes of the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER) is confidential to the review process and will not be published. SFC will provide the report to QAA who will then share it with the institution.
21. Examples of the report introduction which sets the scene for the Review Team for universities and colleges are included as Annex A and B respectively.
22. The report is not designed to be a fully comprehensive overview of the institution but will give the TQER peer-review team an indication of the scope of activity delivered.
23. This report is only one part of the evidence available to the review team and will be considered by the Review Team within the wider context of the information provided by the institution itself and the in-person discussions with staff and students.
24. Although the scope of the TQER will include all credit bearing activity, SFC can only report on those activities for which it has access to the necessary data and evidence.
25. Where there are restrictions on the data to which SFC has access, or the manner in which it is collected restricts the narrative, this will be noted in the report.
26. It is likely that there will be minor differences between SFC and institutional data, due to differences between the definitions and calculations applied to the institution's data through internal systems, and the information available to SFC through the various returns completed by institutions. This is a known factor and should not ordinarily be a cause for concern.

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27. Further to this (for universities), it is noted (as described in the HESA quality notes for 2022-23³) that the introduction of a new collection system, HESA Data Platform and a new data model for the 2022/23 academic year (also known as the Data Futures project) presented some challenges. As a result, in this first year of collection there have been a larger number of data quality issues than observed in recent years. SFC is cognisant of this and will alert the Review Team to this as and where this is particularly relevant.
 28. When considering the data, the focus will be on the overarching trend over a period of five years (where this is available), not on minor year on year variations in measures. Comparisons with the Scottish sector average may be drawn where this information is available and a comparison is appropriate. Covid-19 significantly affected a lot of the activity in colleges and universities within this period. As and where we believe this has particularly influenced the figures presented, this will be noted in the report.
 29. The five-year period refers to published data available at the time of the data analysis meeting for the individual institution. Where relevant, measures will be considered in the context of student demographics too.
 30. For data protection reasons we implement a strategy in published and released tabulations designed to prevent the disclosure of personal information about any individual. This strategy involves rounding all numbers to the nearest multiple of 5, where any value between 0 and 7.5 is rounded to 5, and suppressing percentages and averages based on small populations. When considering populations, the minimum number must be at least 23 in order to calculate the percentage, where the population is less than 23, the percentage is redacted. Additionally, blank entries indicate the absence of data rather than suppressed.
 31. The final report will represent a factual, evidence-informed view of the institution.

Next Steps

32. The approach to the analysis and compilation of the institutional reports, will be reviewed as part of our TQEF evaluation. If colleagues have any questions about this process, please contact the Learning and Quality team via quality@sfc.ac.uk.

³ [Who's studying in HE? | HESA](#)

Annex A: University Data Report Introduction

Purpose

- 33. The purpose of this report is to share with the QAA Review Team a high-level analysis of the institutional data to inform the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER) in academic year 2025.
- 34. This report is not designed to be a fully comprehensive overview of the institution, but to give the review team an indication of the scope of activity delivered. Institutions will provide a fully contextualised report with their own data to the review, this report supplements that information and enables the review team to triangulate.
- 35. This report is a snapshot at the time of writing and is only one part of the evidence available to the review team. It should be considered within the wider context of the information provided by the institution itself and the in-person discussions with staff and students.

Process

- 36. This data utilised in the report is published annually and shared with institutions and SFC for further analysis. The data used to inform this analysis has been prepared for internal use within SFC and is drawn from HESA returns, the Graduate Outcomes and national student surveys, reference may also be made to institutional Outcome Agreements and/or Self-Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP) Reports. The analysis of the data has been undertaken as a collaborative process between SFC colleagues and has been reviewed and signed off internally prior to sharing.
- 37. Although the scope of the TQER includes all credit bearing activity, SFC will only report on those activities for which it has access to the necessary data and evidence.
- 38. Where there are restrictions on the data which SFC has access to, or the way it is collected restricts the narrative, this is noted in the report.
- 39. It is likely that there will be minor inconsistencies between SFC and Institutional data due to differences between the definitions and calculations applied in internal data systems and reporting at the university, and the information available to SFC through the various returns completed by the university, this is a known factor and should not ordinarily be a cause for concern.
- 40. Further to this, it is noted (as described in the HESA quality notes for 2022-23⁴) that the introduction of a new collection system, HESA Data Platform and a new data model for the 2022/23 academic year (also known as the Data Futures project) has brought with it new challenges, both for Jisc and users of the system. As a result, in the first year of

⁴ [Who's studying in HE? | HESA](#)

collection there have been many challenges to overcome, some of which have resulted in a larger number of data quality issues than observed in recent years. SFC is cognisant of this and alerts the Review Team to this. Note this does not impact on the Graduate Outcomes or National Student Survey (NSS) data.

41. When considering the data the focus has been on the trend over a period of five years (where this is available,) and significant year on year changes, but not on minor year on year variations in measures. Comparisons with the Scottish sector average may be drawn where this information is available and relevant. The five-year period refers to the most recent data available at the time of the data analysis meeting for the institution.
42. Where possible, outcomes have been considered in the context of student demographics but in some instances the numbers included in a particular grouping are too small for reporting purposes. For data protection reasons we implement a strategy in published and released tabulations designed to prevent the disclosure of personal information about any individual. This strategy involves rounding all numbers to the nearest multiple of 5, where any value between 0 and 7.5 is rounded to 5, and suppressing percentages and averages based on small populations. When considering populations, the minimum number must be at least 23 in order to calculate the percentage, where the population is less than 23, the percentage is redacted. Additionally, blank entries indicate the absence of data rather than suppressed data. Totals in the tables are calculated from unrounded figures, therefore figures may not sum to totals due to rounding as well as the inclusion of unknown values.
43. The report is presented in alignment with the headline principles of [Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework - Scottish Funding Council](#) and the allied metrics.

Context

44. The five-year reporting period referenced in this report predominantly focuses on the academic years 2019-20 to 2023-24. A period that has been characterised by external factors which are likely to have had an impact on institutional performance and should be borne in mind when considering this report. These factors include but are not necessarily limited to the following:
 - **COVID-19 Pandemic:** The pandemic had a significant impact on the delivery of college and university education provision, leading to disruptions in teaching, learning and assessment, a rapid pivot to online delivery, and financial challenges for institutions due to reduced income from international students and commercial activities.
 - **UK's changed relationship with the European Union:** The UK's exit from the European Union and its withdrawal from the Erasmus programme has affected student mobility, research funding, and collaboration with European institutions. The loss of EU funding and changes in tuition fee status for EU students posed challenges for Scottish institutions.

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- **Policy Changes:** Changes in UK immigration policy, including restrictions on students bringing dependents into the country have impacted on the number of international students choosing to study in the UK and Scotland.
 - **Financial challenges:** The increased cost-of-living has impacted many aspects of the student experience from choice of institution, work/ life choices and health and wellbeing, all of which have affected students' ability to sustain their studies and successfully achieve the outcomes they are aiming for. Institutions are also operating in a tight fiscal environment which is putting both colleges and universities under pressure.

Annex B: College Data Report Introduction

Purpose

45. The purpose of this report is to share with the QAA Review Team a high-level analysis of the institutional data to inform the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review in academic year 2025.
46. This report is not designed to be a fully comprehensive overview of the institution, but it is designed to give the review team an indication of the scope of activity delivered by the institution. Institutions will provide a fully contextualised report with their own data to the review; this report supplements that information and enables the review team to triangulate.
47. This is a “snapshot” at the time of writing and is only one part of the evidence available to the review team. It should be considered within the wider context of the information provided by the institution itself and the in-person discussions with staff and students.

Process

48. The data used to inform this analysis has been prepared for internal use within SFC and is drawn from FES returns, the College Leavers Destinations and the Student Satisfaction and Engagement Surveys, reference may also be made to Outcome Agreement and/or Self Evaluation and Action Plan reports. This data is collected, analysed and published by SFC annually and shared with institutions for further analysis. The analysis of the data in this report has been undertaken as a collaborative process between SFC colleagues and has been reviewed and signed off internally prior to sharing.
49. Although the scope of the TQER includes all credit bearing activity, SFC will only report on those activities for which it has access to the necessary data and evidence.
50. Where there are restrictions on the data which SFC has access to, or the way it is collected restricts the narrative, this is noted in the report.
51. It is likely that there will be minor inconsistencies between SFC and Institutional data due to differences between the definitions and calculations applied in internal data systems and reporting at the college, and the information available to SFC through the various returns completed by the college, this is a known factor and should not ordinarily be a cause for concern.
52. In 2024, SFC undertook a public consultation on changes to the College Performance Indicators (PI). The outcome of the consultation resulted in several changes to reporting for 2023-24 including changing the name of the annual publication from College Performance Indicators to College Student Outcomes. The primary change to the data is that students who withdraw from their course enrolment ‘early’ are now excluded from the calculation of the success PI, with the definition of ‘early’ withdrawal matching the threshold dates used for SFC college funding. The data in this report has been amended

to reflect the new approach and the College Student Outcomes for 2023-24⁵ and consequently will not match previously published data.

53. When considering the data, the focus is on the overarching trend over a period of five years (where this is available), significant year on year changes but not on minor year on year variations in measures. Comparisons with the sector average may be drawn where this information is available and relevant. The five-year period refers to most recent data available at the time of the data analysis meeting for the institution.
54. Where possible, outcomes have been considered in the context of student demographics but in some instances the numbers included in a particular grouping are too small for reporting purposes. For data protection reasons we implement a strategy in published and released tabulations designed to prevent the disclosure of personal information about any individual. This strategy involves rounding all numbers to the nearest multiple of 5, where any value between 0 and 7.5 is rounded to 5, and suppressing percentages and averages based on small populations. When considering populations, the minimum number must be at least 23 in order to calculate the percentage, where the population is less than 23, the percentage is redacted. Additionally, blank entries indicate the absence of data rather than suppressed data. Totals in the tables are calculated from unrounded figures, therefore figures may not sum to totals due to rounding as well as the inclusion of unknown values.
55. The report is presented in alignment with the headline principles of Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework [Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework - Scottish Funding Council](#) and the allied metrics.

Context

56. The five-year reporting period referenced in this report predominantly focuses on the academic years 2019-20 to 2023-24. A period that has been characterised by external factors which are likely to have had an impact on institutional performance and should be borne in mind when considering this report. These factors include but are not necessarily limited to the following:
 - **COVID-19 Pandemic:** The pandemic had a significant impact on the delivery of college and university education provision, leading to disruptions in teaching, learning and assessment, a rapid pivot to online delivery, and financial challenges for institutions due to reduced income from international students and commercial activities. While this primarily affected academic years 2019-20 and 2020-21, learning and teaching hasn't returned to pre-pandemic normal, for example as progressive cohorts enter college, having experienced earlier disruption to their studies at school.
 - **UK's changed relationship with the European Union:** The UK's exit from the European Union and its withdrawal from the Erasmus programme has affected

⁵ [College Student Outcomes 2023-24 - Scottish Funding Council](#)

student mobility, research funding, and collaboration with European institutions. The loss of the European Social Fund, which supported the “Youth Employment Initiative” and the “Developing Scotland’s Workforce” programmes along with changes in tuition fee status for EU students has posed challenges for Scottish institutions.

- **Policy Changes:** Changes in UK immigration policy, including restrictions on students bringing dependents into the country have impacted on the number of international students choosing and able to study in the UK and Scotland. This is likely to have impacted on those colleges which have UKVI sponsor status.
- **Financial Challenges:** The increased cost-of-living has impacted many aspects of the student experience from choice of institution, work/ life choices and health and wellbeing, all of which have affected students’ ability to sustain their studies and successfully achieve the outcomes they are aiming for. Institutions are also operating in a tight fiscal environment which is putting both colleges and universities and under pressure.
- **Strike action:** during the reporting period, widespread industrial action, driven by a national pay dispute, disrupted teaching and delayed assessments across the college sector. The impact of this industrial action varied significantly across the sector.

Document History

| Version No. | Changes | Date Approved/ Published |
|-------------|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. | First version of data memo for sharing with sector. | Dec 2024 |
| 2. | Updated version following feedback from college representatives on TQSG and representatives from the University Planners Forum | June 2025 |
| 3. | <p>Review and update in line with changes to College Performance Indicators to College Student Outcomes, implemented to student enrolment data in AY 2024-25.</p> <p>Added in additional detail in relation to the wider context that institutions are operating in within the five year period.</p> | November 2025 |
