



COLLEGE LEAVER DESTINATIONS 2019-20



Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

SFC STATISTICS

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College Leaver Destinations 2019-20: Key Points

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Summary: To inform stakeholders of the publication of the 2019-20 College Leaver Destinations measurements.

FAO: Principals and Directors of Scotland's colleges, students and parents.

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Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic

1. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic was declared in March 2020 by the World Health Organisation part way through the 2019-20 academic year. It impacted on exam and assessment arrangements as well as on students studying at the time and their ability to complete their course and qualification as planned. This had a direct impact on potential qualifiers who form the cohort the College Leaver Destinations (CLD) collection follows.
2. Around 6,897 students deferred from full-time courses which met CLD-inclusion criteria due to the pandemic. Of these, 2,282 subsequently completed successfully and so would have been included in the CLD in a normal session but were resulted too late to be included in this survey. Although the proportion of confirmed qualifiers is again around nine in 10 destinations known, the overall number of qualifiers has been reduced in large part due to pandemic-driven deferrals.
3. Since the CLD examines the period three to six months post-qualification, it is worth noting that this year's CLD survey was carried out during the uncertainty of the second half of 2020 before the vaccination rollout and the first half of 2021 when the country remained mainly in lockdown. The external environment was therefore significantly different which should be considered when comparing years. The national impact on unemployment has been well documented in the media and this is reflected in this year's data.
4. It is evident from the data collected that pandemic-affected employment opportunities and illness have contributed to the distribution of qualifiers this year. However, the data remains robust and this allows observation of how the pandemic has affected qualifiers in comparison to other years. Overall, while employment opportunities were impacted by the pandemic, it was clear that universities offered attractive alternatives to learners with a significant increase in the number of college leavers moving into university.
5. The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has presented data for several years but full consideration should be given to these exceptional circumstances when comparing results over time.

Executive Summary

The Covid-19 Pandemic had a significant impact on both the studies and the destinations for this year's qualifying cohort, reducing the number of qualifiers as well as having a direct impact on available destinations. Employment opportunities particularly were impacted by the pandemic lockdowns, but it is clear that universities offered attractive alternatives to qualifiers as reflected in a significant increase in the number of college leavers moving into university. Overall, positive destinations for this cohort have fared surprisingly well in the unprecedented period of turmoil caused by the pandemic.

The previous section provides more details on the impact of the pandemic.

6. This publication provides information on the destinations of successful full-time college leavers in Scotland. It supports SFC's work with colleges on outcome-based planning through Outcome Agreements and the Scottish Government's skills strategy, *Scotland's Future Skills Action Plan* and *Developing the Young Workforce* – Scotland's Youth Employment strategy, by providing key measurements for progression to further study and employment for all age groups.
7. This is the fifth publication of College Leaver Destinations (CLD) for Scotland's colleges and covers the academic year 2019-20. This publication reports on the destinations of leavers 3-6 months after qualifying.
8. The key focus of this publication centres on **Sector Leavers** with known destinations with the following showing the salient aspects for this group:
 - 16,334 qualifiers with known destinations left the college sector and these Sector Leavers accounted for 39.8% for whom the post-study destination was confirmed (40,996).
 - 84.4% of Sector Leavers found positive destinations despite the pandemic, a decrease from last session's 87.8%.
 - 74.5% of Sector Leavers who achieved SCQF¹ 1-6 went on to positive destinations compared to 80.0% last session.

¹ Where a programme is not formally SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) credit rated a 'broadly comparable' level can be assigned. This has been done by either comparing across to SCQF from other national frameworks if the programme has a level on another framework, or if this is not the case, using the SCQF Level Descriptors to identify the most appropriate level of learning for the programme of study. References to SCQF in this publication should be assumed to reflect this definition.

- 90.3% of Sector Leavers who achieved SCQF 7+ went on to positive destinations compared to 92.6% last session.

9. It is unsurprising that industries such as Hairdressing, Beauty and Complementary Therapies had such large drops in employment: work destinations for qualifiers at SCQF 7+ were down 23.8pp to 55.1% reflecting the closure of salons during the pandemic. However, this same group saw a sizable increase in those moving to university: up 13.5pp to 18.2%. The overall impact on positive destinations was therefore minimised despite the lack of employment opportunities available due to the pandemic.

- 36.7% of Sector Leavers who achieved SCQF 7+ went on to university study (up from 33.3% last session) and 10.2% at SCQF 1-6 (up from 6.6%), an overall increase in movement to university of 7.0pp.
- 15.6% of Sector Leavers were unemployed or unavailable for work compared to 12.2% last session.

The key focus of this publication centres on Sector Leavers with known destinations with the following showing the salient aspects for this group:

16,334 qualifiers with **KNOWN DESTINATIONS** left the college sector and these **SECTOR LEAVERS ACCOUNTED FOR 39.8%** for whom the post-study destination was confirmed (40,996).



84.4% of Sector Leavers found **POSITIVE DESTINATIONS DESPITE THE PANDEMIC**, a decrease from last session's 87.8%.



74.5% of Sector Leavers who **ACHIEVED SCQF 1-6** went on to positive destinations compared to 80.0% last session.



90.3% of Sector Leavers who **ACHIEVED SCQF 7+** went on to positive destinations compared to 92.6% last session.



Unemployment and unavailability for work for Sector Leavers increased to 15.6% from 12.2% last session – although broken down by SCQF the distribution is notable: 25.5% AT SCQF 1-6 (up from 20.0%) compared with 9.7% AT SCQF 7+ (up from 7.4%).

36.7% of Sector Leavers who **ACHIEVED SCQF 7+** went on to **UNIVERSITY STUDY** compared to 33.3% last session.

