



College Leaver Destinations 2020-21 Executive Summary



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Summary:	To inform stakeholders of the publication of the 2020-21 College Leaver Destinations (CLD) measurements.
FAO:	Principals and Directors of Scotland's colleges, students and parents, and the general public.
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Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic

1. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the requirement for public health control measures continued throughout 2020-21. The measures put in place to protect staff and students in 2020-21 were stricter and longer lasting than was experienced in 2019-20 and severely limited colleges' ability to deliver learning and teaching activities and student support services on campus. This had a direct impact on potential qualifiers who form the cohort the College Leaver Destinations (CLD) collection follows.
2. In last year's publication we reported that around 6,897 students deferred from full-time courses in the 2019-20 session due to the pandemic. Of these, 2,282 subsequently completed successfully and so would have been included in last year's publication in a normal session but were resulted too late to be included in that survey. This year's publication does now include deferred students, however the number is small enough to have minimal impact on the figures. The CLD data contained here includes 95 qualifiers who were deferred from the 2019-20 academic year. Of these, 77 have confirmed destinations, meaning students deferred from the 2019-20 academic year constitute only 0.2% of students with confirmed destinations reported here for 2020-21. These students were likely forced to defer their studies as a direct consequence of disruptions to work-based or in-person teaching during the pandemic. Most of the deferred students with confirmed destinations qualified at SCQF 1-6 (62 of 77). Almost all of the 77 deferred students reached a positive destination at 94.8% (73 students), with around three quarters continuing in college (75.8.%) and 16.9% finding work.
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 a vastly different economic environment to what 2019-20 leavers faced. Leavers from 2019-20 faced the uncertainty of the second half of 2020 before the vaccination rollout and in the first half of 2021 when the country remained mainly in lockdown. The national impact on unemployment for this period has been well documented in the media and this is reflected in the previous session's data. However, this year, leavers were faced with a far more buoyant jobs market as lockdown restrictions were lifted and those who were previously unable to find work were able to find new opportunities in employment.
4. 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.

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5. The COVID-19 Pandemic had a significant impact on both the studies and the destinations for the 2019-20 qualifying cohort, reducing the number of qualifiers as well as having a direct impact on employment opportunities. For the 2020-21 session however, qualifiers were presented with a vastly different economic landscape as jobs quickly became available again, reducing the number of leavers entering unemployment or being unable to work, while further study at HEIs remained an attractive prospect for many. These factors have resulted in a record high proportion of Sector Leavers in positive destinations for this publication.
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 eighth publication of College Leaver Destinations (CLD) for Scotland's colleges and covers leavers from the academic year 2020-21. 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. Key highlights for this group are as follows:
 - Overall, 39,732 qualifiers had a confirmed destination (including continuing at college). Sector Leavers accounted for 16,653 of these, meaning 41.9% of qualifiers with confirmed destinations were Sector Leavers.
 - 91.0% of Sector Leavers found positive destinations, an increase from last session's 84.4% and a record high.
 - 83.9% of Sector Leavers who achieved SCQF¹ 2 1-6 went on to positive destinations, up from 74.5% 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.

² SCQF 1-6 is sometimes referred to as 'FE level' and SCQF 7+ as 'HE level'.

- 95.4% of Sector Leavers who achieved SCQF 7+ went on to positive destinations, up from 90.3% last session.
 - 40.0% of Sector leavers who achieved SCQF 7+ went into employment, up from 31.5% last session.
9. In last year's publication we reported that industries such as Hairdressing, Beauty and Complementary Therapies saw a large drop in employment, with work destinations for these Sector Leavers at SCQF 7+ down 23.8 percentage points (pp) to 55.1%, reflecting the closure of salons during the pandemic. This figure recovered by 10.9pp to 66.0% for the 2020-21 session as salons reopened, with this group also seeing another year-on-year increase in the proportion moving to university, up 7.6pp to 25.8%.
10. Industries such as Engineering and Hospitality and Tourism have seen a strong recovery in Sector Leavers finding employment since the last session, with the proportion of Sector Leavers at SCQF 7+ finding work up 17.0pp to 57.2% and 14.9pp to 52.5% respectively. The overall growth in positive destinations was driven by more Sector Leavers finding opportunities for employment in a recovering jobs market, coupled with the continued attraction of university study. For Sector Leavers as a whole:
- University study remained an attractive destination for Sector Leavers at SCQF 7+, with 55.4% of qualifiers from this level going on to university study, down slightly from 58.8% last session.
 - With regards to the recovering jobs market, 9.0% of Sector Leavers were unemployed or unavailable for work compared to 15.6% last session, a record low for this publication.

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

16,653 qualifiers with **KNOWN DESTINATIONS** left the college sector and these **SECTOR LEAVERS ACCOUNTED FOR 41.9%** for whom the post-study destination was confirmed (39,732).



91.0% of Sector Leavers found positive destinations, an increase from last session's 84.4% and a **RECORD HIGH**.



83.9% of Sector Leavers who **ACHIEVED SCQF 1-6** went on to positive destinations, up from 74.5% last session.



95.4% of Sector Leavers who **ACHIEVED SCQF 7+** went on to positive destinations, up from 90.3% last session.

55.4% of Sector Leavers who **ACHIEVED SCQF 7+** went on to **UNIVERSITY STUDY** compared to 58.8% last session.



Unemployment and unavailability for work for Sector Leavers has decreased to 9.0% from 15.6% last session - although the gap by SCQF remains notable:

16.1% AT SCQF 1-6 (down from 25.5%) compared with
4.6% AT SCQF 7+ (down from 9.7%).