



Report on Widening Access 2021-22

Executive Summary

SFC STATISTICS

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Summary:	This report presents data relating to the Commission on Widening Access targets, and on Scottish-domiciled entrants to higher and further education in Scotland by socio-economic deprivation, sex, ethnicity, disability, care experience and age.
FAO:	Principals and Chairs of Scotland’s colleges and universities, Scottish Government, students, parents, guardians and the general public.
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Adverse Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

1. The reporting period was impacted by the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic which presented a unique and significant external shock to the further and higher education system in Scotland. Scotland's colleges and universities pivoted rapidly to move learning online from March 2020, but these unprecedented circumstances continued to present the sectors with challenges during 2021-22, notably the ability to deliver practical and work-based learning given ongoing, albeit less acute, restrictions; and the challenges of supporting a cohort of students who had experienced two years of disrupted schooling. Those challenges notwithstanding, colleges and universities continued to work flexibly, creatively and with compassion to support students and staff as they navigated the gradual return to face-to-face teaching and in-person exams.
2. This report covers various points in the learner journey and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic for each is detailed below.

Summary of the impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

Topic	Impact
Students	<p>Throughout the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years, numerous issues had the potential to impact students' ability to complete their qualification, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students may have been medically affected by the pandemic either directly or via their families and/or dependants. • Students with childcare or caring responsibilities may have found it more difficult to complete their course as originally intended.
Qualifiers	<p>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 students who were studying at the time and their ability to complete their qualification as planned. Therefore, some qualifications that were not reported in 2019-20 were carried over in to 2020-21 or future academic years.</p>
University Retention	<p>The proportion of entrants in 2019-20 continuing their studies into 2020-21 being higher than prior or subsequent years could have been influenced by economic uncertainty at the time, extending a desire to continue their degree studies when the labour market was less buoyant.</p>

Topic	Impact
College Leaver Destinations	The report presents statistics on the post-study activities of those qualifying from Scotland's Colleges in 2020-21, 3-6 months after completion of their course. As lockdown restrictions lifted, leavers from that academic year faced a more buoyant jobs market than those leaving in 2019-20 encountered.
University Graduate Outcomes	The report presents statistics on the post-study activities of those qualifying from Scotland's Universities in 2020-21, 15 months after completion of their course. As lockdown restrictions lifted, leavers from that academic year faced a more buoyant jobs market than those leaving in 2019-20 encountered.

Executive Summary

1. In 2021-22, there were 5,595 Scottish-domiciled entrants to full-time first-degree courses from the 20% most deprived areas. That represents an additional 80 students compared to 2020-21 and represents 16.5% of all Scottish-domiciled entrants to full-time first-degree courses in 2021-22. While the overall number increased, the proportion from SIMD20 fell slightly from 16.7% in 2020-21 as recruitment increased at a greater level across some other SIMD quintiles (the 20-40% most deprived areas, and 60-80% least deprived areas).
2. Nonetheless, as it did the previous year, the sector has again achieved the Commission on Widening Access' interim target of 16% of all Scottish-domiciled full-time first-degree entrants being from the 20% most deprived areas by 2021-22.
3. In 2021-22, 45.6% of Scottish-domiciled full-time first-degree entrants from the 20% most deprived areas progressed from a college course. That's up on the 2020-21 figure of 40.4%.
4. When combining all full and part-time undergraduate HE at Scotland's universities and colleges, 19.1% of entrants were from the 20% most deprived areas. When focusing on full-time entrants only, that figure is 20.3%. This indicates that, at tertiary sector level, equality of access is being achieved but with variance in level of representation at institution and sector level.
5. Scotland's colleges made a substantive contribution to the tertiary sector's delivery with 24.2% of their Scottish-domiciled entrants to HE courses being from the 20% most deprived areas in 2021-22.
6. There were 1,720 Care-experienced students entering undergraduate HE courses at Scotland's colleges and universities in 2021-22. That's an increase of 35 on the 2020-21 and represents 2.0% of all undergraduate HE entrants. In Scotland, 1.5% of children under 18 were looked after in 2021.
7. Of the 33,120 Scottish-domiciled full-time first-degree university entrants in 2020-21, 91.5% returned to study in year 2. This is down on the previous year's figure of 93.5%, but remains above the pre-pandemic figure of 90.9% for 2018-19 entrants.
8. Retention rates of the 510 care-experienced entrants in 2020-21 have also reduced to 90.0%, down from 91.0% in 2019-20 - but remained above the pre-pandemic figure of 87.5%. Retention rates of the 5,480 entrants in 2020-21 from the 20% most deprived areas fell to 88.6%, from 90.2% in 2019-20, however also remained above the pre-pandemic figure of 87.5% in 2018-19.
9. In 2021-22, 10.3% of Scottish-domiciled entrants to full-time first-degree courses were of black and minority ethnicity, down 0.3pp from the 2020-21 figure. In the college sector, 8.2% of enrolments to full-time HE courses were of black and minority

ethnicity, up 0.2pp on the 2020-21 figure. In Scotland, 4% of the population are of black and minority ethnicity.

10. In the university sector, there were 1,250 Scottish-domiciled full-time first- degree entrants in 2021-22 combining their studies with caring responsibilities, with 42% being aged 25 and over. In the college sector, 10,935 enrolments in 2021-22 were by those with caring responsibilities, with 56.7% being aged 25 or over.
11. In 2021-22, 8,690 students entered university first-degree courses with an HNC/D qualification achieved in the last three years. Of those, 4,705 (54.1%) entered university straight into year 2 (if they held an HNC) or straight to year 3 (if they held an HND). This is known as Articulation with Advanced Standing (AS). Almost a quarter (23.7%) of those 4,705 students were from the 20% most deprived areas. As noted in paragraph 3, students progressing via the College route with an HNC/D accounted for 45.6% of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree entrants from the 20% most deprived areas in 2021-22.



In 2021-22, there were **5,595** Scottish-domiciled entrants to full-time first-degree courses from the 20% most deprived areas. That represents **16.5%** of all Scottish-domiciled entrants to full-time first-degree courses.



The sector has again achieved the Commission on Widening Access' interim target of **16%** of all Scottish-domiciled full-time first-degree entrants being from the 20% most deprived areas by 2021-22.

In 2021-22, **45.6%** of Scottish-domiciled full-time first-degree entrants from the 20% most deprived areas progressed from a college course.



And **24.2%** of their Scottish-domiciled entrants to HE courses were from the 20% most deprived areas.

When combining all full and part-time undergraduate HE at Scotland's universities and colleges, **19.1%** of entrants were from the 20% most deprived areas. When focussing on full-time entrants only, that figure is **20.3%**.

This indicates that, at tertiary sector level, equality of access is being achieved but with variance in level of representation at institution and sector level.



There were **1,720** Care-experienced students entering undergraduate HE courses at Scotland's colleges and universities in 2021-22.

That's an increase of **35** on the 2020-21 and represents **2.0%** of all undergraduate HE entrants. In Scotland, **1.5%** of children under 18 were looked after in 2021.

In the **university sector**, there were **1,250** Scottish-domiciled full-time first-degree entrants in 2021-22 combining their studies with caring responsibilities, with **42%** being aged 25 and over.

In the **college sector**, **10,935** enrolments in 2021-22 were by those with caring responsibilities, with **56.7%** being aged 25 or over.



In 2021-22, **10.3%** of Scottish-domiciled entrants to full-time first-degree courses were of black and minority ethnicity, down 0.3pp from the 2020-21 figure.

In the **college sector**, **8.2%** of enrolments to full-time HE courses were of black and minority ethnicity.

In Scotland, **4%** of the population are of black and minority ethnicity.

Of the Scottish-domiciled full-time first-degree university entrants in 2019-20, **91.5%** returned to study in year 2. This is down on the previous year's figure of 93.5%.

Retention rates of care-experienced students have also reduced, from 91.0% in 2019-20 to 90.0% in 2020-21.

Retention rates of students from the 20% most deprived areas fell from 90.2% in 2019-20 to 88.6% in 2020-21.



In 2021-22, **8,690** students entered university first-degree courses with an HNC/D qualification achieved in the last three years. Of those, **4,705** (54.1%) entered university straight into year 2 (if they held an HNC) or straight to year 3 (if they held an HND). This is known as Articulation with Advanced Standing (AS). Almost a quarter (**23.7%**) of those **4,705** students were from the 20% most deprived areas.