



# Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey 2020-21



Scottish Funding Council  
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

**SFC STATISTICS**

Issue Date: 2 November 2021  
Reference: SFC/ST/08/2021

## Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey 2020-21: Executive Summary

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Summary: To inform stakeholders of the publication of the college 2020-21 Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey outcomes.

FAO: Principals and Chairs of Scotland's colleges, students, parents, guardians and the general public

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## **Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic considerations**

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. The 2019-20 Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES) was cancelled due to fieldwork coinciding with the COVID-19 lockdown period. Although the COVID-19 pandemic continued throughout the academic year 2020-21, it was deemed important to capture the experiences of students during these exceptional circumstances.
2. To enable the capturing of different experiences of students, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the wider use of blended learning approaches, the SSES was broadened to include three additional statements. This development work was led by Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (sparqs) and NUS Scotland towards the end of 2020.

The three additional statements are:

- Any change in my course or teaching has been communicated well.
  - The online learning materials for my course have helped me learn.
  - I feel that I am part of the college community.
3. These will allow for the evaluation of not just the immediate and short-term impact, but also the potentially longer-term effects on students' learning experiences.
  4. During the COVID-19 pandemic colleges did act quickly to move provision online where possible and took steps to address digital poverty. SFC worked closely with colleges to support students to complete successfully and to ensure students did not lose out as a result of the difficult circumstances surrounding their studies.
  5. The 2020-21 results will have been impacted by the COVID pandemic and therefore it is difficult to compare these results with earlier years. Nonetheless it is important to understand the impact COVID may have had on the student experience and we have therefore included some results for earlier years to help us consider the results in context and learn from the experience.

## Executive Summary 2020-21 figures

6. The student satisfaction survey for 2020-21 was carried out over an eight week period between 8 March and 30 April 2021. This academic year was again impacted by COVID with more on line learning than face to face teaching during this survey period.
7. Colleges worked within the lockdown restrictions to prioritise on site learning for those students how who had to develop or demonstrate practical skills such as construction, engineering or hairdressing. Practical innovations were also brought in to help ensure the best student experience; these included sending prosthetic hands to beauty students to help deliver experience of painting nails when such up close experiences weren't available in college or salon settings. The 2020-21 academic year was not a typical year but college students and staff did what they could to make the best of the learning opportunities during lockdown and to make up for lost learning when restrictions eased.
8. We included in the 2020-21 survey three additional statements to enable the capturing of different experiences of students, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. One of these statements was whether the student felt part of the college community and over 80% of full-time FE students either strongly agreed or agreed.
9. Almost nine out of 10 full-time FE students were satisfied with their college experience (88.6%) and for full-time HE students just over 80% were satisfied with their college experience.
10. Satisfaction rates were higher for part-time students standing at 92.2% for Further Education and 84.4% for Higher Education.
11. It is important to understand the impact COVID may have had on the student experience to help us consider the results in context and learn from the situation. Satisfaction rates were higher in 2018-19 when the survey was last carried out (FTFE +4.4%, FTHE +6.5%, PTFE +2.7%, PTHE +4.8%) but are still very high in 2020-21 with 85.9% of all students reporting they were satisfied with their course experience.
12. 98,650 full-time and part-time college students were surveyed, with the following response rates:
  - 28,943 full-time students a 43.2% response rate.
  - 5,766 part-time students an 18.2% response rate.

## Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey 2020-21



98,650  
students surveyed



34,709  
students had their say

### RESPONSE RATE BY STUDENT TYPE



#### COLLEGE HE STUDENTS

Full-time 42.3%

Part-time 18.4%



#### COLLEGE FE STUDENTS

Full-time 44.0%

Part-time 18.1%



HIGHER EDUCATION  
COLLEGE STUDENTS

### 'OVERALL, I AM SATISFIED WITH MY COLLEGE EXPERIENCE'

#### FULL-TIME

Strongly Agree 25.8%

Agree 54.5%

Disagree 15.8%

Strongly Disagree 4.0%

Overall  
80.3%



#### PART-TIME

Strongly Agree 33.4%

Agree 50.9%

Disagree 11.9%

Strongly Disagree 3.7%

Overall  
84.4%



### 'OVERALL, I AM SATISFIED WITH MY COLLEGE EXPERIENCE'

#### FULL-TIME

Strongly Agree 34.4%

Agree 54.2%

Disagree 9.2%

Strongly Disagree 2.2%

Overall  
88.6%



#### PART-TIME

Strongly Agree 41.9%

Agree 50.3%

Disagree 6.4%

Strongly Disagree 1.4%

Overall  
92.2%



FURTHER EDUCATION  
COLLEGE STUDENTS