



# COLLEGE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2020-21



Scottish Funding Council  
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

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Summary: Overview of college performance indicators from 2008-09 to 2020-21.

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

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The UK Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

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## Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic

1. The ongoing COVID 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 more strict and long-lasting than was experienced in 2019-20 and severely limited colleges' ability to deliver learning and teaching activities and student support services on campus.
2. Students faced significant disruption as a consequence of the pandemic; for example, the academic year started with a mix of in-person and remote learning for most, then between the end of December to February 2021 college campuses were mostly closed and learning, teaching and support services were moved completely online. From February to April colleges operated under temporary lockdown restrictions with only 5% of students permitted on campus. It was only from April and for the last few months of term that students could be back in-person in greater numbers. Even then, the majority of learning remained hybrid/blended. For many students this high level of disruption to learning throughout the academic year limited their ability to complete their course and qualification as planned.
3. Furthermore, numerous issues impacted students' ability to complete their qualification:
  - 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.
  - Some students on courses containing a practical element or a work placement in subjects such as engineering, construction, hair, beauty, social care and childcare, were unable to complete their course as intended and therefore had to 'defer' completing their course and qualification to the following academic year.
  - The entire student population was also affected by the 'softer' impacts of the pandemic on their education, such as losing access to peer support and in-person lecturer support. While institutions continued to take steps to address digital poverty, supported by additional funding, not all students had readily-available access to the necessary broadband and/or equipment to facilitate effective digital learning and assessment.
4. The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses external exams did not take place for the second year running and lecturer estimated grades were used as the core element for certification.

5. Throughout 2020-21 colleges continued to be responsive to developing digital platforms for learning and for innovative ways to engage with learners, together with the ongoing adaptation of assessment through the SQA and other awarding body alternative assessment arrangements.

## Executive Summary

6. This report is an overview of college performance indicators from 2008-09 to 2020-21 with the main purpose to provide an overview of the latest year (2020-21) with contextual trends. The report provides a broad coverage of college teaching activity and presents an analysis of student outcomes for those students enrolled on courses leading to recognised qualifications.
7. The 2020-21 academic year (AY) was impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the requirement for public health control measures that continued throughout 2020-21. The measures put in place to protect staff and students in 2020-21 were more strict and long-lasting than was experienced in 2019-20 and severely limited colleges' ability to deliver learning and teaching activities and student support services in-person. This resulted in a reduction in overall enrolments and reported student outcomes in 2020-21.
8. Those challenges notwithstanding, colleges continued to adapt, taking swift action to protect staff and students' wellbeing and contribute to the national effort to tackle the virus and support vulnerable communities.
9. Although SFC has presented data for several years, full consideration should be given to these exceptional circumstances and direct comparisons between 2019-20 and 2020-21 and earlier years should not be made without due consideration of the context.
10. The pandemic has had an impact in recruitment although the college sector has delivered 117,914 SFC funded FTE thereby exceeding the 116,269 places target by 1,645 FTE in 2020-21.
11. In 2019-20 17, 898 students were unable to complete their studies due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as a result of colleges' efforts to re-engage those students, 90.6% (16,218) had returned by 2021-22. In 2020-21, 13,074 students deferred their studies. By January 2022, 7,447 (57.0%) had returned. Work continues to re-engage the remaining students, although many may have entered into employment given the more buoyant labour market.
12. Those 13,074 students who deferred in 2020-21 and are yet still to complete their course are not included in these performance indicators. Their outcomes will be reported in next year's report.
13. The key points from this report for students who have a final result are:  
  
The known results for 41,989 full-time further education (FE) students enrolled on recognised qualifications in 2020-21 are as follows:

- Withdrawals were around 3% higher than normal, impacted by a more buoyant labour market and continued COVID measures which limited physical attendance and impacted the student experience, particularly in practical and technical subjects such as construction and hairdressing.
- As a consequence of the higher dropout rate as a result of the pandemic, successful completion rates were slightly lower in 2020-21 at 61.3%, a 3.9 percentage point (pp) difference from 2018-19 (pre-pandemic).
- A further 11.0% completed their course but did not gain the qualification they were aiming for. Some of those students may gain their award at a later time.
- For large colleges,<sup>1</sup> success rates ranged from 52.7% to 73.6% in 2020-21 and for small colleges the success rates ranged from 59.7% up to 70.4%.

The known results for 31,925 full-time Higher Education (HE) students enrolled on recognised qualifications in 2020-21 are as follows:

- Success rates increased 2.3pp from 2018-19 to 72.1% and were marginally higher than success rates achieved in earlier years.
- A further 10.2% completed their course but did not achieve the qualification they were aiming for. Some of those students may gain their award at a later time.
- Student withdrawals in 2020-21 returned to pre-pandemic levels. The smaller increase in withdrawals seen for HE full-time over FE full-time in 2020-21 was likely in part a result of HE full-time students being more resilient to the increased digital and self-directed learning requirements in courses during the pandemic.
- Full-time HE success rates ranged from 65.2% to 81.9% in 2020-21.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this publication the college categorisation of 'large' and 'small' is determined by the volume of credits delivered in the academic year. Colleges delivering above 25,000 credits are designated as 'large' and those below 'small'. For individual college categorisation refer to the separate Technical Annex.

Course over 160 hours duration:

- Success rates for FE subject areas range from 58.5% for social subjects to 80.3% for nautical courses.
- For HE subject areas the success rates range from 65.5% for computing and ICT to 90.3% for nautical courses.
- Male students are 0.5pp more likely to successfully complete their FE programmes than female students, while the situation is reversed for HE programmes with a 5.9pp difference.

### **Deferrals from academic year 2019-20**

14. The COVID pandemic has been an unprecedented situation for everyone, but especially for those in education. Learning benefits from momentum which is something which has been very difficult to maintain over the last two years for the reasons outlined above. In addition, many COVID measures prevented the undertaking of the practical elements which form part of many college courses. As such 7.0% of college students were forced to defer completion of their studies into the following academic year. Publication of our performance indicators for 2019-20 was delayed to enable us to include the outcomes of the proportion of deferred students who did manage to complete in the early part of 2020-21 (10,971) but the outcomes of the remaining 6,927 were not included.
15. In 2019-20, 17,898 students (covering 18,457 enrolments) had to defer. Following this group has been a key priority for SFC in our monitoring of the 2020-21 session in order to understand the impact on the deferred students' studies and to make sure any learner who had become derailed in their education could be re-engaged. We tracked the deferred students mid-way through their year in January 2021 and by this point 10,971 of the students had managed to finish their deferred course. As outlined above, we published the results of their studies in last year's Performance Indicators.
16. We continued to follow the remaining 6,927 deferred students and by the end of 2020-21 a further 5,116 had finished their course and are now included in our updated performance indicators for 2019-20.
17. A further 131 came back by January 2021-22 and therefore all but 1,680 had returned to college to continue study, representing only 0.7% of students from the 2019-20 academic year. We will continue to follow these students to ensure they have a chance to complete.
18. We do not show the deferred cohort separately in our main charts but our analysis shows that just over 60% completed successfully which is a slightly higher success rate than for other students and the overall impact is that the

full-time FE success rates in 2019-20 increased by 0.3pp and the full-time HE remained unchanged.

19. Overall, considering the pandemic situation was far greater in the 2020-21 academic year in terms of educational disruption, the colleges and students did extremely well in very trying circumstances caused by the pandemic and hopefully those who did not return can be re-engaged going forward.

#### **Deferrals from academic year 2020-21**

20. The 2020-21 session was disrupted almost entirely by the COVID pandemic. As in the previous year, deferral was the only option for some students and by the end of the academic session 13,074 individuals had deferred from at least one of their enrolments. As with deferrals from 2019-20, we tracked the progress of these students and by the mid-point of academic year 2021-22 we know 7,447 of these students have so far returned to college for further study.
21. This leaves 5,627 students who have not yet returned who we will monitor through to the end of this year and work with the colleges to re-engage as necessary. Every endeavour will be made to track student destinations, and where necessary, ensure learners are supported back into and through the college sector to meet their educational potential.
22. With the return to in-person teaching in spring 2022 and the efforts being made by colleges to re-engage students, it is expected that of the 13,074 students (46% full-time and 54% part-time) still to complete their 2020-21 courses, many will be able to complete by the end of summer 2022. The 'deferred' enrolments from 2020-21 are therefore not counted within this publication but will be updated for next year's.
23. Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the ability of college students to complete their studies. However, SFC has worked closely with colleges to support as many students as possible to complete successfully and to ensure students do not lose out as a result of the difficult circumstances surrounding their studies. Nonetheless, as a result of these unprecedented circumstances it is difficult to compare 2019-20 and 2020-21 results directly or with previous years and in particular for some of the more practical subjects where technical skills were less able to be demonstrated off campus. SFC has presented data for several years but full consideration should be given to these exceptional circumstances when comparing results over time.



The known results for **41,989 FULL-TIME FURTHER EDUCATION (FE) STUDENTS** enrolled on recognised qualifications in 2020-21 are as follows:

61.3%

Successfully completed their course

11.0%

Completed their course but did not gain the qualification they were aiming for. Some of those students may gain their award at a later time.

27.7%

Withdrew from their course and are accounted for by: **7.5%** of students withdrawing before the funding qualifying date\* **20.2%** between this point and the end of the course.



The known results for **31,925 FULL-TIME HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) STUDENTS** enrolled on recognised qualifications in 2020-21 are as follows:

72.1%

Successfully completed their course

10.2%

Completed their course but did not gain the qualification they were aiming for. Some of those students may gain their award at a later time.

17.7%

Withdrew from their course and are accounted for by: **3.9%** of students withdrawing before the funding qualifying date\* **13.8%** between this point and the end of the course.



**MALE STUDENTS** are **0.5pp** more likely to successfully complete their **FE PROGRAMMES** than female students while the situation is **REVERSED FOR HE PROGRAMMES** with a **5.9pp** difference.



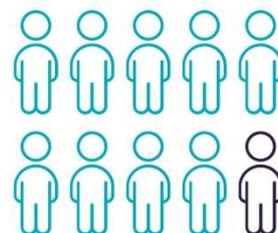
In 2020-21, out of 3,600 full-time permanent teaching staff, **3,124 HELD A RECOGNISED TEACHING QUALIFICATION** (86.8%).

This shows a 0.1pp increase in the proportion of teaching staff with a recognised qualification over the reported three academic years.



**OVER 90%**

of **DEFERRED STUDENTS FROM 2019-20** due to disruptive learning as a result of the Covid pandemic **HAVE RETURNED TO COLLEGE.**



\*Colleges are not funded for these students

## Key Performance Indicators charts

### Outcomes for FE student enrolments on recognised qualifications

24. Figure 1 provides an overview of enrolments and success rates on full-time<sup>2</sup> recognised FE programmes from 2008-09 to 2020-21. The figures allow comparisons over a longer timeframe to reduce the risk of basing an assessment of performance on a snapshot of a single year when performance may vary over time. However, for the reasons outlined above, it is difficult to compare the two most recent years with previous years given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
25. In recent years the number of full-time FE enrolments has declined overall as the number of young people in the Scottish population has fallen over this period. Over the five year period 2015-16 to 2019-20 the number of student enrolments reduced by 3,206<sup>3</sup>. In 2020-21 there were 1,057 fewer FT FE students enrolled on recognised programmes with a further 3,702 excluded from our PIs as they have been unable to complete their studies as yet as a result of the pandemic. More school pupils enrolled directly on FT HE courses as a result of improved school achievement rates.
26. The decline in full-time FE enrolments is also likely to have been driven by the reprioritisation of college activity to be more responsive to the need of learners, employers and the economy, announced by Scottish Government in October 2017. This changed the focus to move away from full-time provision for 16-24s to provide more opportunities for part-time learners, learners over the age of 24 and those returning to learning for upskilling and re-skilling. In 2020-21 as a result of the pandemic restrictions more school pupils opted to stay on at school and more school pupils had secured university places as a result of the increase in SQA Higher grades in 2019-20.
27. Figure 1 below shows that the withdrawal rate in 2020-21 increased from 2019-20 from 20.8% to 27.7% (a 6.9pp increase). Withdrawal rates were around 4% lower than normal in 2019-20 as the pandemic led to fewer withdrawals as lockdown restrictions limited alternative destinations. In 2020-21 withdrawals were around 3% higher than normal and impacted by the increased availability

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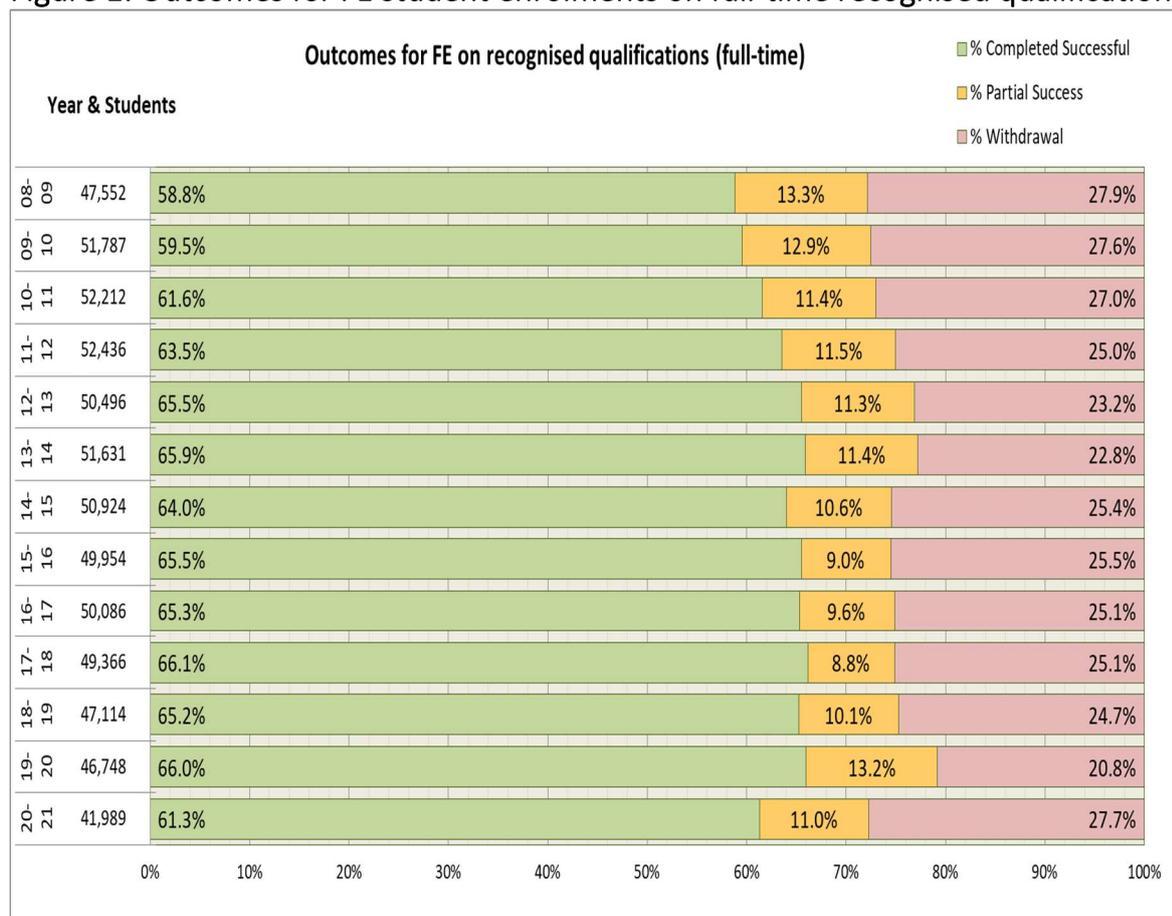
<sup>2</sup> FE full-time programmes of study contain greater than or equal to 600 nominal learning hours.

<sup>3</sup> The numbers in the College Statistics 2019-20 publication differ from the enrolment figures above because of methodology and coverage for example, the College Performance Indicators include students not meeting the funding qualifying date but these are excluded from the College Statistics publication.

of low skilled jobs and continued protective measures that limited physical attendance and impacted the student experience, particularly for practical and technical subjects such as construction and hairdressing.

28. Most of the withdrawals in 2020-21 were weighted to the second half of the academic year. Evidence from colleges suggests that the increase in further withdrawals in 2020-21 was a reflection on the lengthy pandemic restrictions. Some of the reasons given for increased student withdrawal rates are: fatigue with the blended learning model, uncertainty around assessment methodologies, lack of time in-person for practical activities, reduction in work placement opportunities, childcare, caring and other commitments and the lack of opportunity to interact in-person with peers and lecturers.
29. In 2020-21, 61.3% of students on full-time programmes completed successfully whilst a further 11.0% completed irrespective of their final result. In total 72.3% of students completed their course.
30. Figure 1 also shows the trends in completion rates from 2008-09 to 2020-21. The results for both 2019-20 and 2020-21 are not directly comparable to previous years due to the alterations to exam and assessment arrangements due to the COVID pandemic.
31. FE full-time success rates for large colleges ranged from 52.7% to 73.6% in 2020-21 and for small colleges the success rates ranged from 59.7% up to 70.4%.

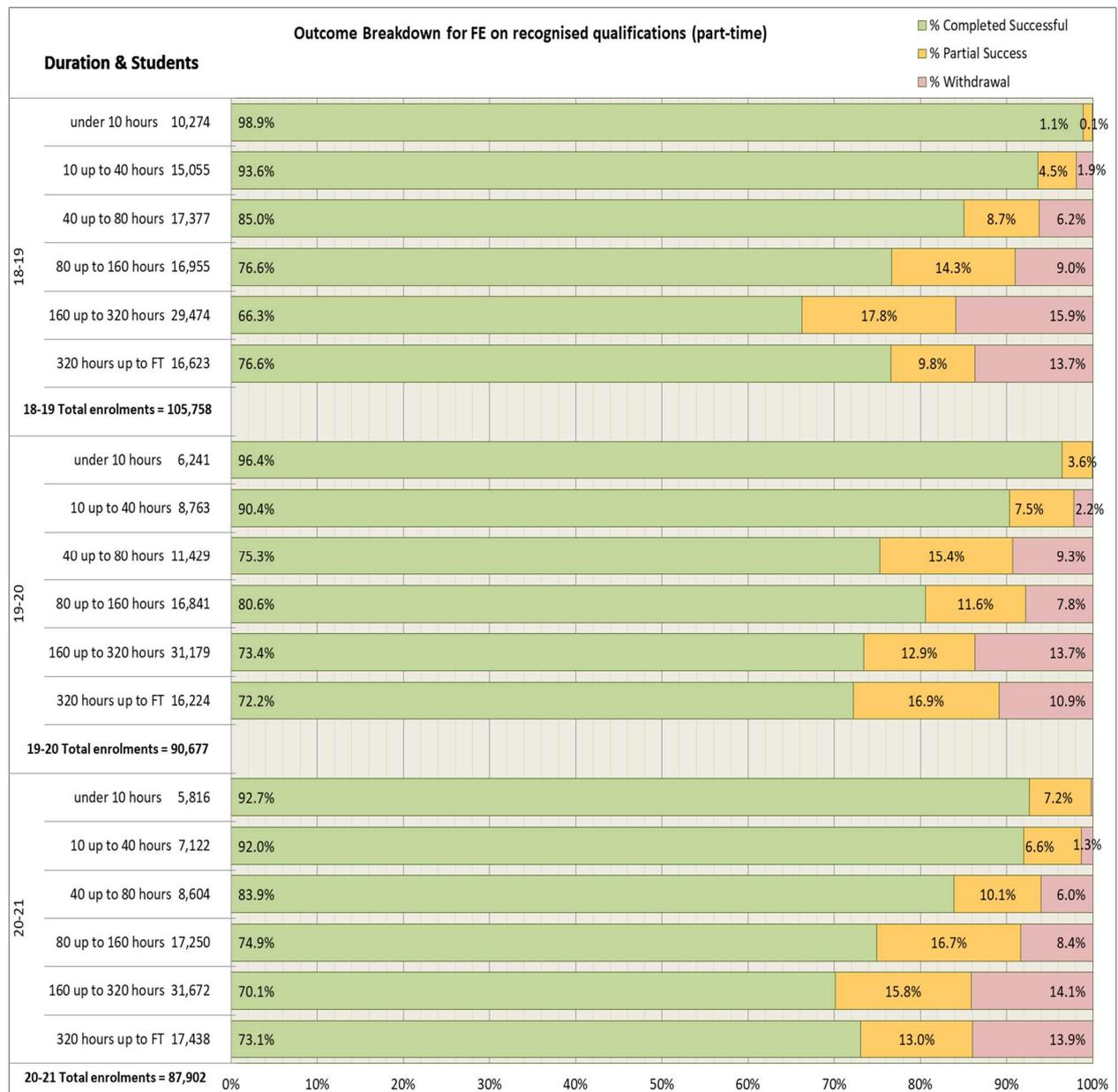
Figure 1: Outcomes for FE student enrolments on full-time recognised qualifications



32. When comparing the FE full-time success rates with the 2018-19 pre-pandemic year, 21 colleges show a decrease of between 0.4pp and 11.4pp, whilst five colleges show an improvement in success rates of between 0.4pp and 3.4pp. Note: large percentage point deviation should be treated with caution as small student populations often produce large percentage point changes.
33. We provide on our website, alongside the publication, a separate [Excel PI Tool](#) which provides an overview of individual college data together with multi-college regional and national data.
34. Figure 2 below presents the part-time FE course breakdown by hour category. This shows that the total number of FE students on part-time programmes of study has further decreased in 2020-21 and by 3.1pp (2,775) from the previous year. It is the shortest courses that have seen the largest reduction in number and the pandemic did impact on reducing the short (under 160 hours) part-time enrolments. Substantive part-time courses over 160 hours, that are the main focus of the PIs, have increased enrolments over the previous year.
35. The results do show that students who enrolled on shorter programmes are more likely to complete their studies irrespective of the result. Intuitively this would be in line with our expectations, for example a student attending a course lasting for a week offers less opportunity for withdrawing before the end

date than a course requiring attendance three afternoons per week over 36 weeks.

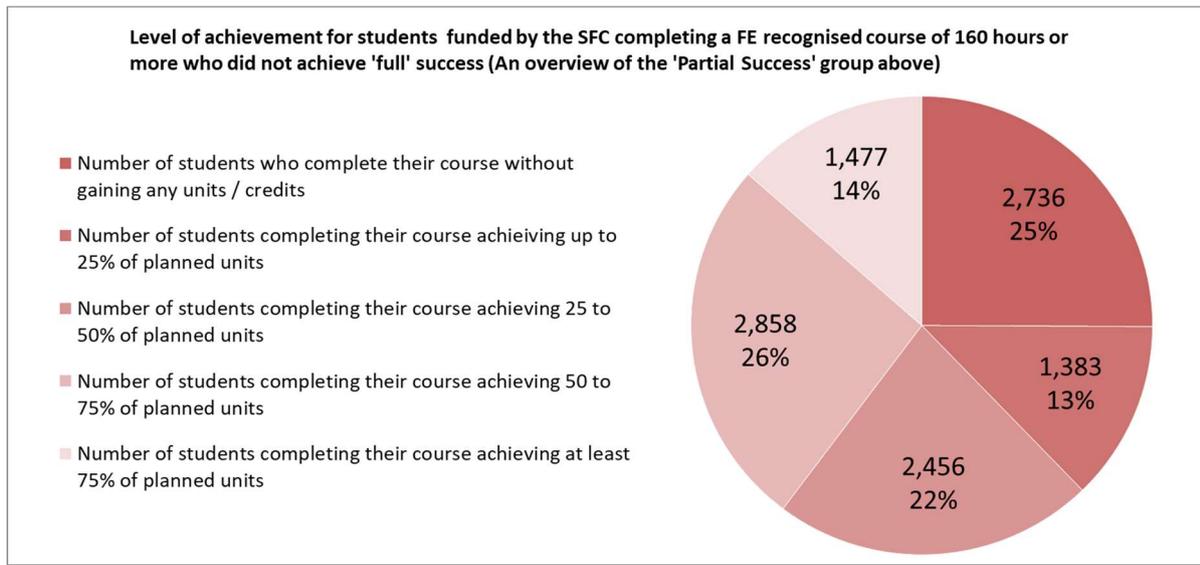
Figure 2: Outcomes for FE student enrolments on part-time recognised qualifications



### Students completing their FE course who did not achieve “full” success

36. Figure 3 below provides more detailed information for the students enrolled on FE programmes in 2020-21 who completed without “full” success (this includes both full-time FE and part-time students enrolled on programmes lasting for at least 160 hours).

Figure 3: Level of achievement for students completing an FE course of 160 hours or more who did not achieve ‘full’ success



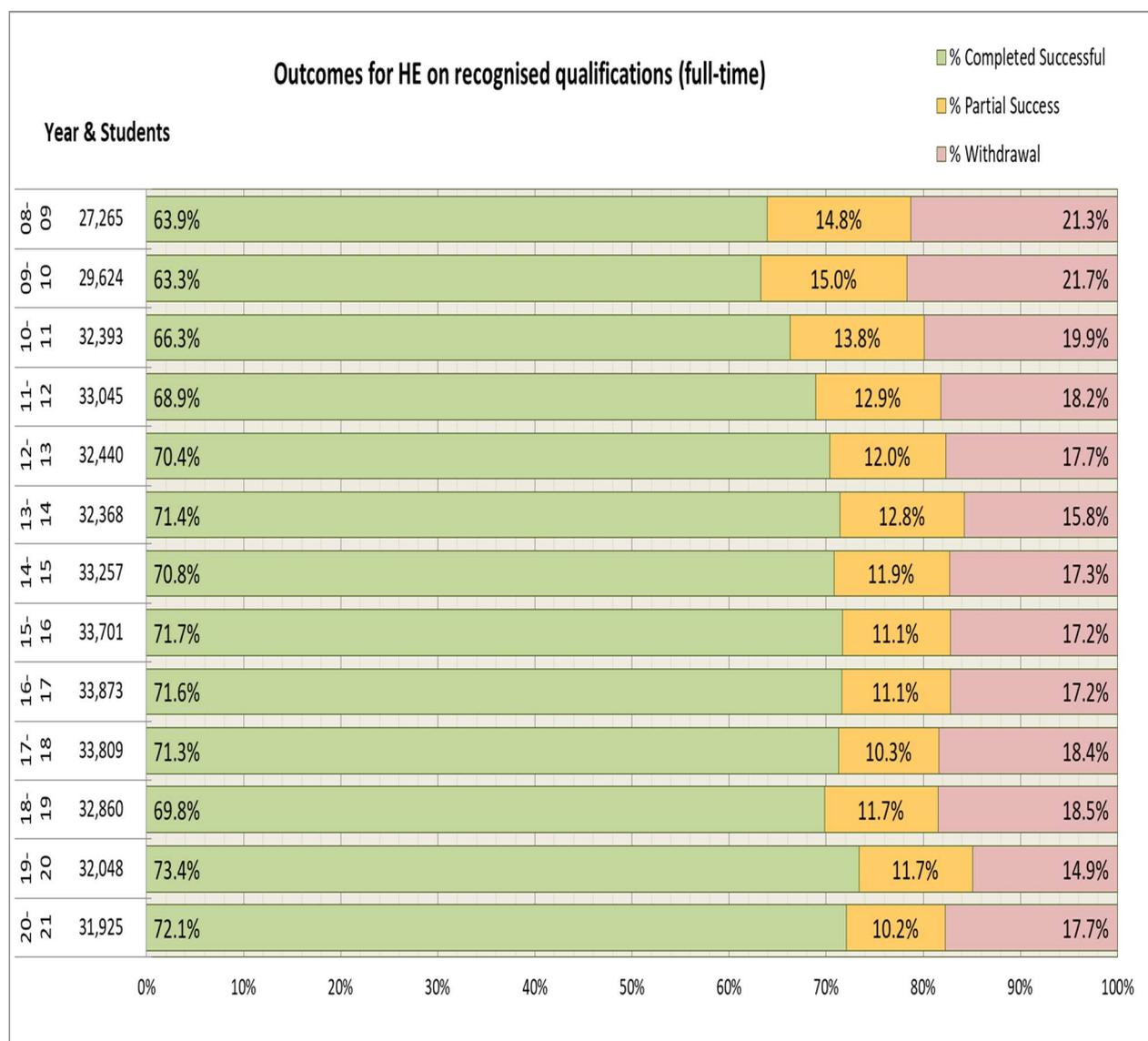
37. There are 10,910 students enrolled on FE programmes in 2020-21 who completed without “full” success. This is a subset of numbers from Figure 1 (full-time) and Figure 2 (part-time) and excludes students below 160 hours and those who were not funded by SFC that are included in the earlier charts. It shows that 14% (1,477) of these students gained at least 75% of the units on their programme and 40% (4,335) passed over 50% of the units attempted. At the other end of the scale 25% (2,763) of these students failed to achieve any of the units for which they enrolled.
38. The percentage of students who failed to achieve any units for which they enrolled in 2020-21 increased by 10pp from the 15% in session 2019-20.
39. Our previous investigations on partial success (zero unit achievement), covering both FE and HE students, revealed a number of underlying factors relevant to the increase in partial success – and more specifically for students who completed their course without gaining any units. Colleges should pay particular attention to:
- Inconsistencies in how vocational work-based qualifications are structured and reported.
  - School/college link programmes and a reluctance of schools to withdraw schools pupils that have poor attendance and attainment.

- Students left on course who were not in attendance and therefore should have been formally withdrawn.
- Students with health issues who had sporadic attendance, were, however, supported to stay on course but unfortunately failed to achieve any units.

### Outcomes for HE student enrolments on recognised qualifications

40. Figure 4 below gives an overview of success rates for full-time<sup>4</sup> recognised programmes at HE level for academic sessions 2008-09 to 2020-21.

Figure 4: Outcomes for HE student enrolments on full-time recognised qualifications

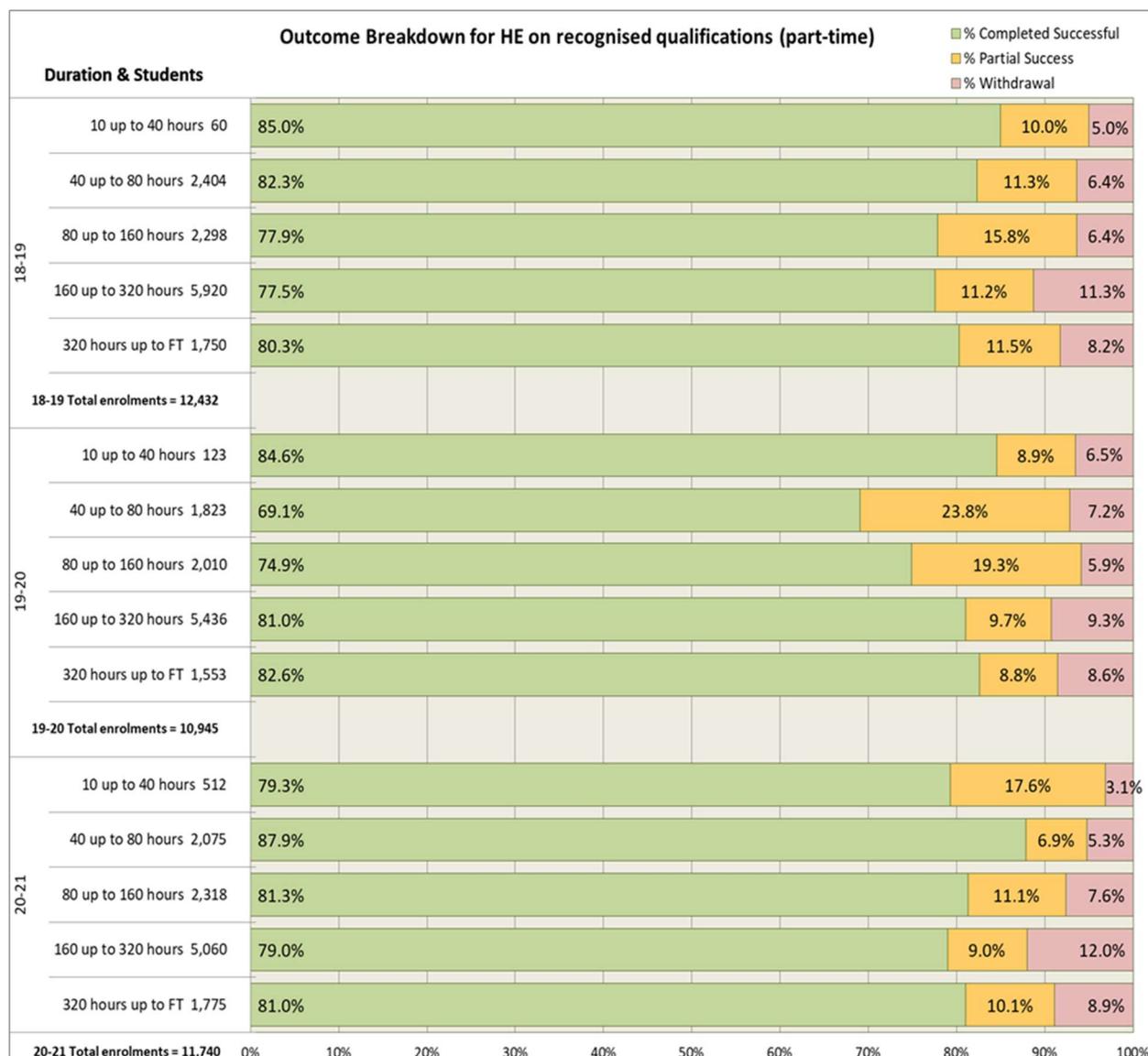


<sup>4</sup> HE full-time programmes of study contain greater than or equal to 480 nominal learning hours.

41. The number of HE full-time student enrolments on recognised qualifications increased by around 1,500 in 2020-21 but shows a small decrease in the above chart because this excludes students deferring into 2021-22.
42. For HE full-time students 72.1% successfully completed their course which is a 2.3 pp increase on 2018-19 (pre-pandemic levels).
43. The success rates for HE programmes tend to be higher than FE programmes over the course year and this is reflected above with 72.1% of students on full-time HE programmes completing successfully and a total of 82.3% completing irrespective of their final result, compared with 61.3% and 72.3% for FE programmes. It should be noted that full-time HE programmes are more likely than FE courses to last longer than a year in duration. As a result this one year snapshot does not fully reflect the likely percentage of students who achieve the qualification for which they enrol.
44. The success rate for full-time HE students at 72.1% in 2020-21, although down by 1.3pp on 2019-20, is the second highest success rate over a 13 year period from 2008-09. Note: The results for 2019-20 and 2020-21 are not directly comparable to each other or to previous years due to alterations to exam and assessment arrangements and differing restrictions to learning due to the COVID pandemic across the two academic years.
45. HE full-time success rates for individual colleges with over 50 student enrolments ranged from 65.2% to 81.9% in 2020-21.
46. An increase in the HE full-time success rate in 2020-21 is not consistent across all colleges when comparing with the 2018-19 pre-pandemic year. Ten colleges show an improvement in success rate of between 0.8pp and 10.2pp, whilst five colleges show a decrease in success rate of between 0.2pp and 1.7pp.
47. Figure 4 also shows that the withdrawal rate in 2020-21 increased from 2019-20 from 14.9% to 17.7% (a 2.8pp increase), however the increase is not as significant as seen for FE full-time (+6.9pp). This was likely in part a result of HE full-time students being more resilient to the increased digital and self-directed learning requirements in courses during the pandemic. The withdrawal rate for HE full-time students in 2020-21 is not dissimilar to that in years 2014-15 through 2018-19.
48. Figure 5 below presents the part-time HE course breakdown by hour category. This shows that the total number of HE students on part-time programmes of study has increased in 2020-21 from the previous year by 7.3pp (795) but is 5.6pp (692) lower than in 2018-19.
49. HE students normally have higher success rates than FE students however, when we look at the shorter duration programmes (under 160 hours) FE students tend to perform better.

50. For HE part-time category courses over 160 hours, the main focus of the PIs, the success rate has reduced in both categories over the previous year, 2.0pp for courses of 160 up to 320 hours and 1.6pp for courses 320 hours up to FT.

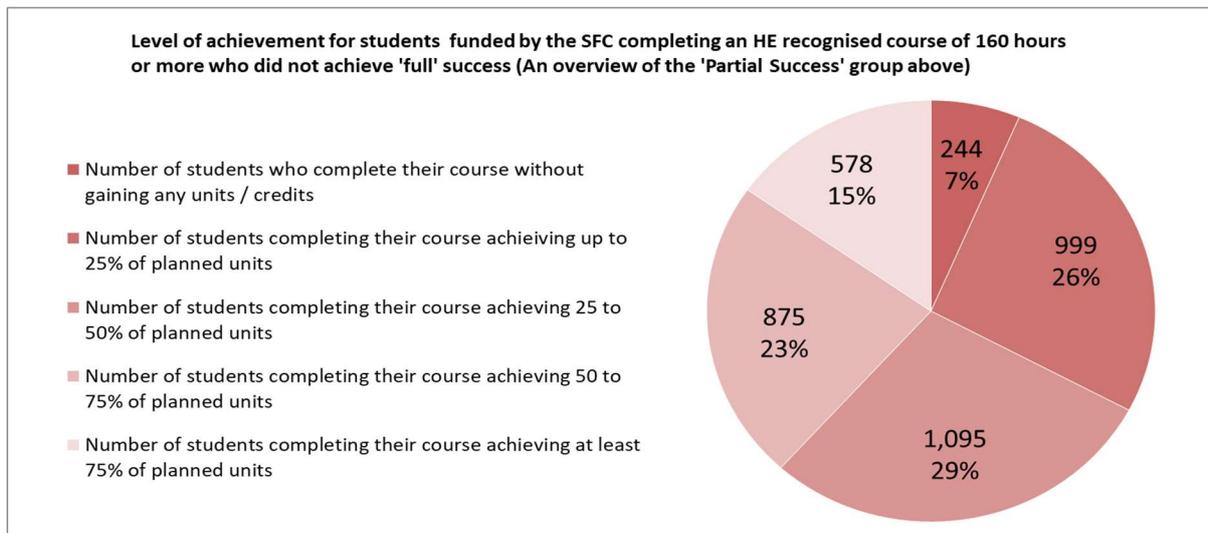
Figure 5: Outcomes for HE student enrolments on part-time recognised qualifications



### Students completing their HE course who did not achieve “full” success

51. Figure 6 shows that there are 3,791 students enrolled on HE programmes in 2020-21 who completed without “full” success. This is a subset of numbers from Figure 4 (full-time) and Figure 5 (part-time) and excludes students below 160 hours and those who were not funded by SFC that are included in the earlier charts. It shows that 38% (1,453) of these students achieved at least 50% of the units they enrolled on, while 15% (578) of these students achieved at least 75% of the units on their programme. At the other end of the scale 7% (244) of the students failed to gain any of the units for which they enrolled a similar proportion to that seen in the previous year.

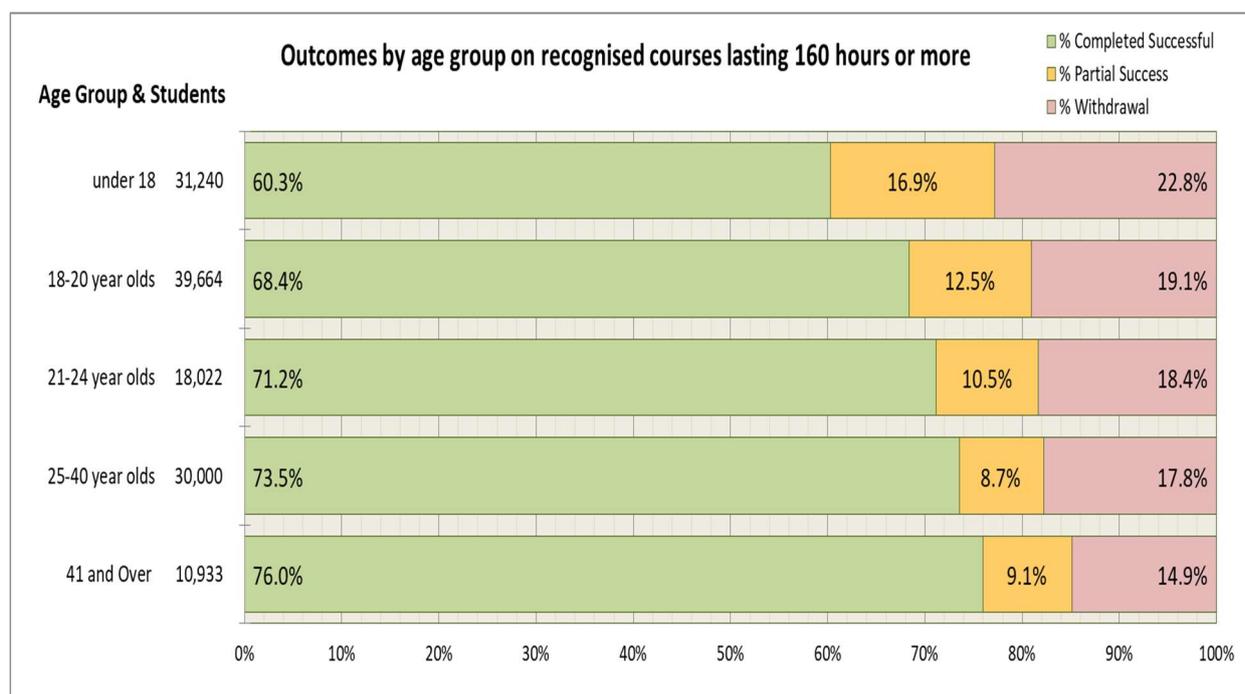
Figure 6: Level of achievement for students completing an HE course of 160 hours or more who did not achieve 'full' success



### Outcomes by age group (combined FE and HE courses)

52. Figure 7 below shows that students in the younger age groups are less likely to complete successfully than those in the older age groups: for example 60.3% of those under 18 compared to 76.0% of those aged over 40 complete successfully and similarly, 77.2% and 85.1% completing students when including those with partial success.
53. Younger students are more likely to enrol on full-time programmes which have a lower pass rate in comparison to part-time programmes and this may partly explain the lower pass rates for younger students.
54. Figure 7 allows for a more informed comparison of college activity, but should nevertheless take account of the specific environment in which each college operates.

Figure 7: Outcomes by age group for recognised courses lasting 160 hours or more



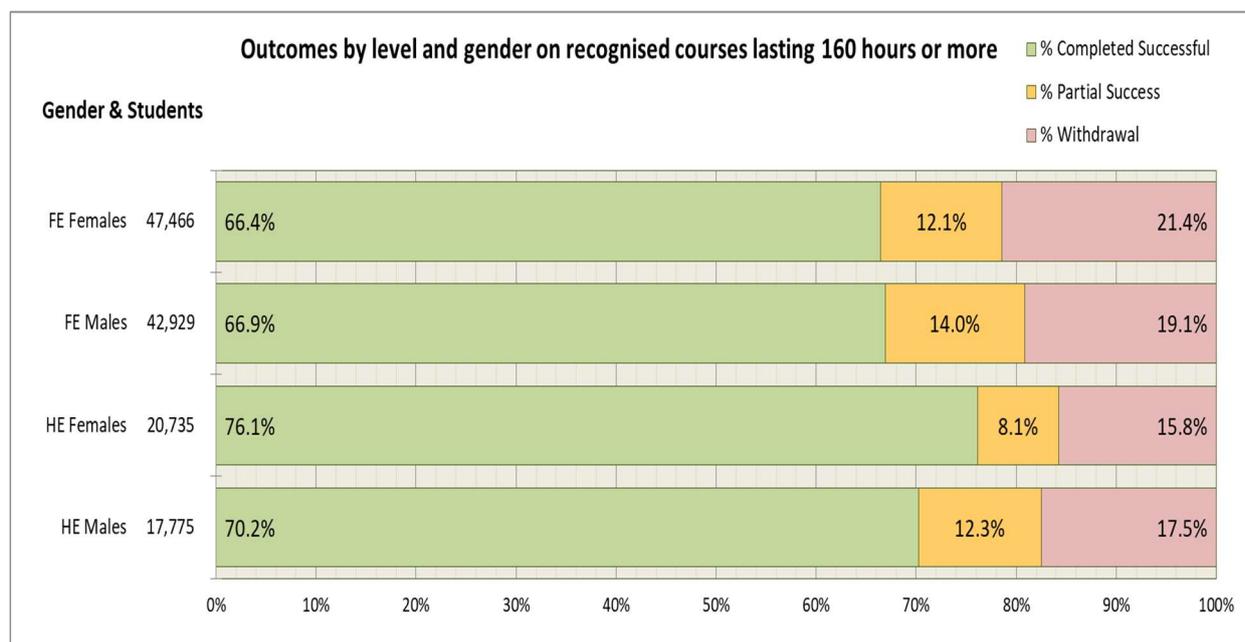
### Outcomes by gender and level (combined FE and HE courses)

55. Figure 8<sup>5</sup> below shows that in 2020-21 just over 70% of enrolments relate to students studying FE level programmes. The subjects and modes of study are associated with different pass rates and the 'mix' of these may differ across genders and individual colleges.
56. This suggests that male students are 0.5pp more likely to successfully complete their FE programmes than female students, while the situation is reversed for HE programmes with a 5.9pp difference. The difference in success rate between male and female for FE has decreased and HE has increased compared to last years revised figures when it was 0.7pp and 4.0pp respectively.
57. The withdrawal rates for male and female students in 2020-21 show that females are around 2pp more likely to withdraw over males on FE programmes and around 2pp less likely to withdraw on HE programmes.

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<sup>5</sup> The gender data excludes those identifying as 'other' or chose 'prefer not to say'.

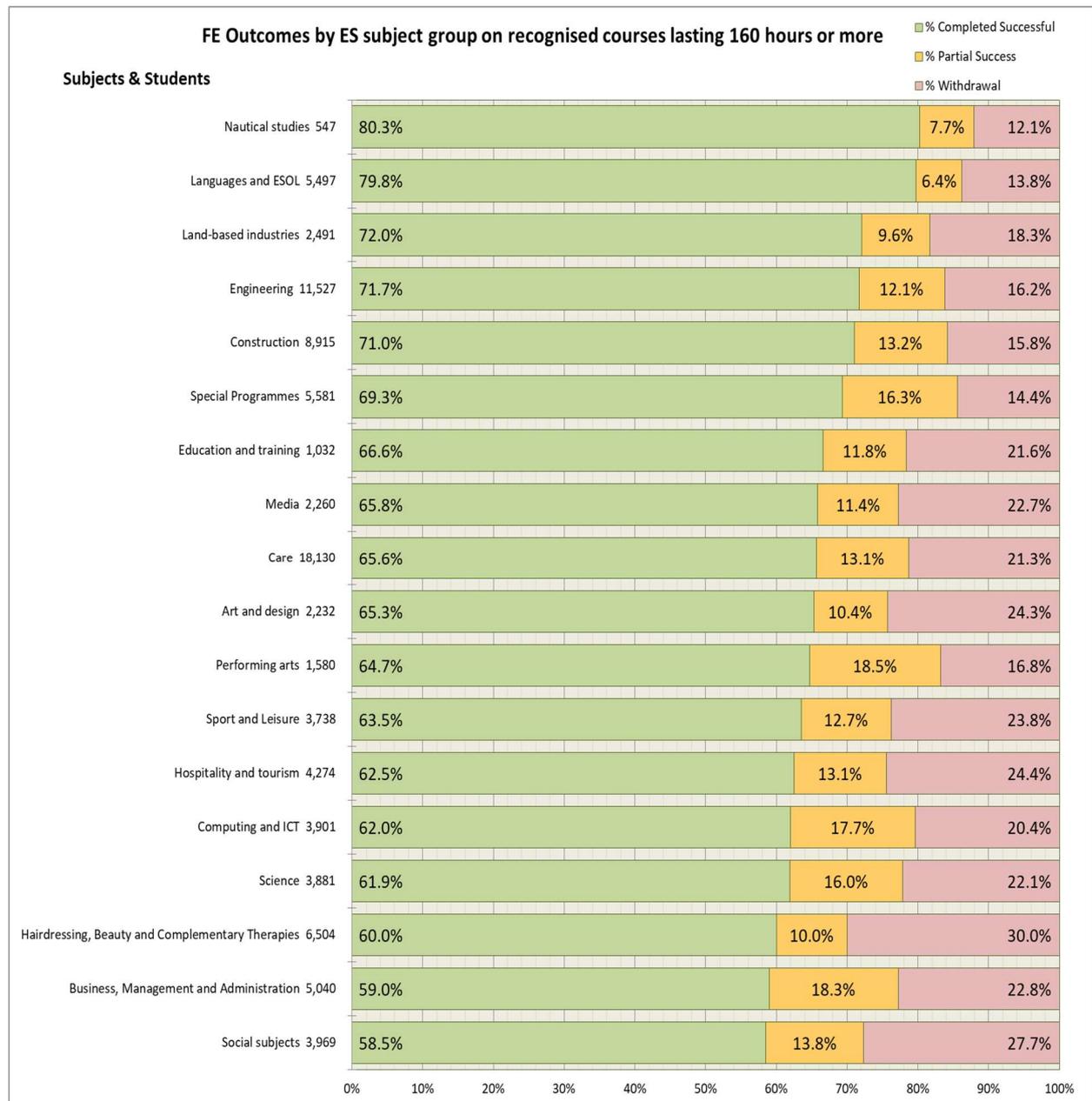
Figure 8: Outcomes by level and gender on recognised courses lasting 160 hours or more



### Outcomes by subject groupings on FE courses

58. The subject groupings are based on the subject classification for the course aggregated into areas considered similar by Education Scotland (ES). A subject mapping can be found in a separate technical annex. There are two charts, one for FE level programmes and one for HE level programmes. Colleges offer a very wide ranging portfolio of courses and subject areas of study to potential students.
59. Figure 9 below for FE programmes clearly shows that some subjects have lower success rates than others. Social Subjects for example, show a success rate of just under 59% whilst Engineering stands at 72%. Programmes such as Highers are also more likely to fall into the Social Subjects, where these pass rates can be influenced by changing priorities amongst students, for example, initially enrolling for a number of Highers but possibly dropping one or more as this may be sufficient to gain entry to a higher level college or university course. The student outcomes (success, withdrawal and deferral) on certain subject areas will have been impacted to a greater or lesser extent, by the pandemic depending on the need for students to undertake more practical and in-person learning activities as part of their course for example in the subject groups, special programmes, construction and care.

Figure 9: Outcomes by Education Scotland subject groupings on FE courses lasting 160 hours or more

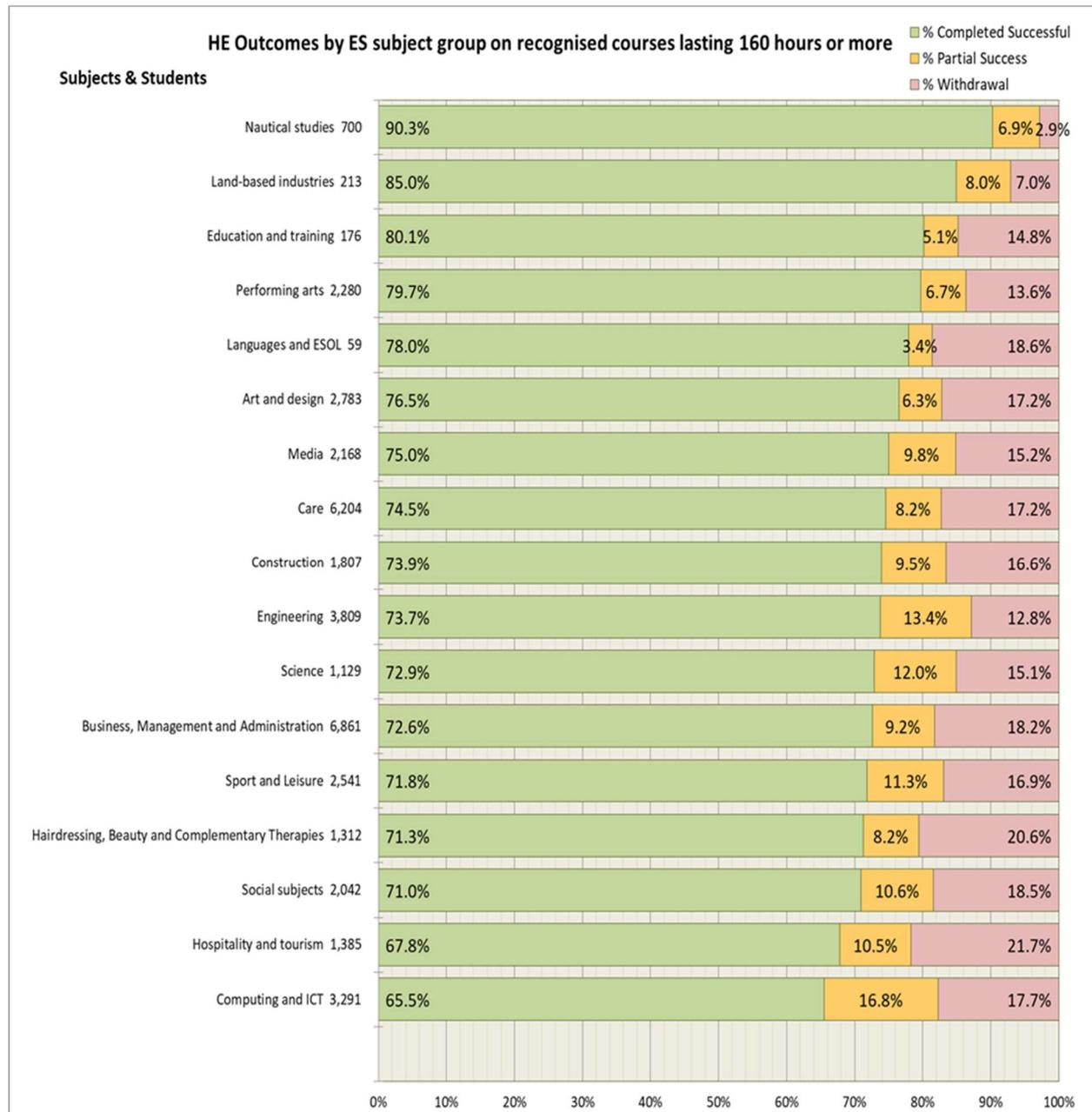


### Outcomes by subject groupings on HE courses

60. Figure 10 below shows that similar issues exist for HE programmes with some subjects being more likely to be made up of students studying on day release from their employer, in which case the student may have extra motivation to do well. Similarly, some of these courses will have a greater mix of full-time programmes or students from younger age groups. SFC has performed some analysis of the outcomes of students and has found that *Nautical Studies* has a much higher proportion of students who have their fees paid by their employers. This appears to have a bearing on their relatively high success rates. As with FE courses the student outcomes (success, withdrawal and deferral) on

certain subject areas will have been impacted to a greater or lesser extent by the pandemic, depending on the need for students to undertake more practical and in-person learning activities as part of their course for example in the subject groups, hair and beauty, care and construction.

Figure 10: Outcomes by Education Scotland subject groupings on HE courses lasting 160 hours or more



### Outcomes by key groups (combined FE and HE courses)

61. Figure 11 below highlights groups of interest to various stakeholders and helps identify factors that may affect the success rates for an individual college. For example, a college with a high proportion of students on day release from their employer or supported by their employer in some other way is likely to have a

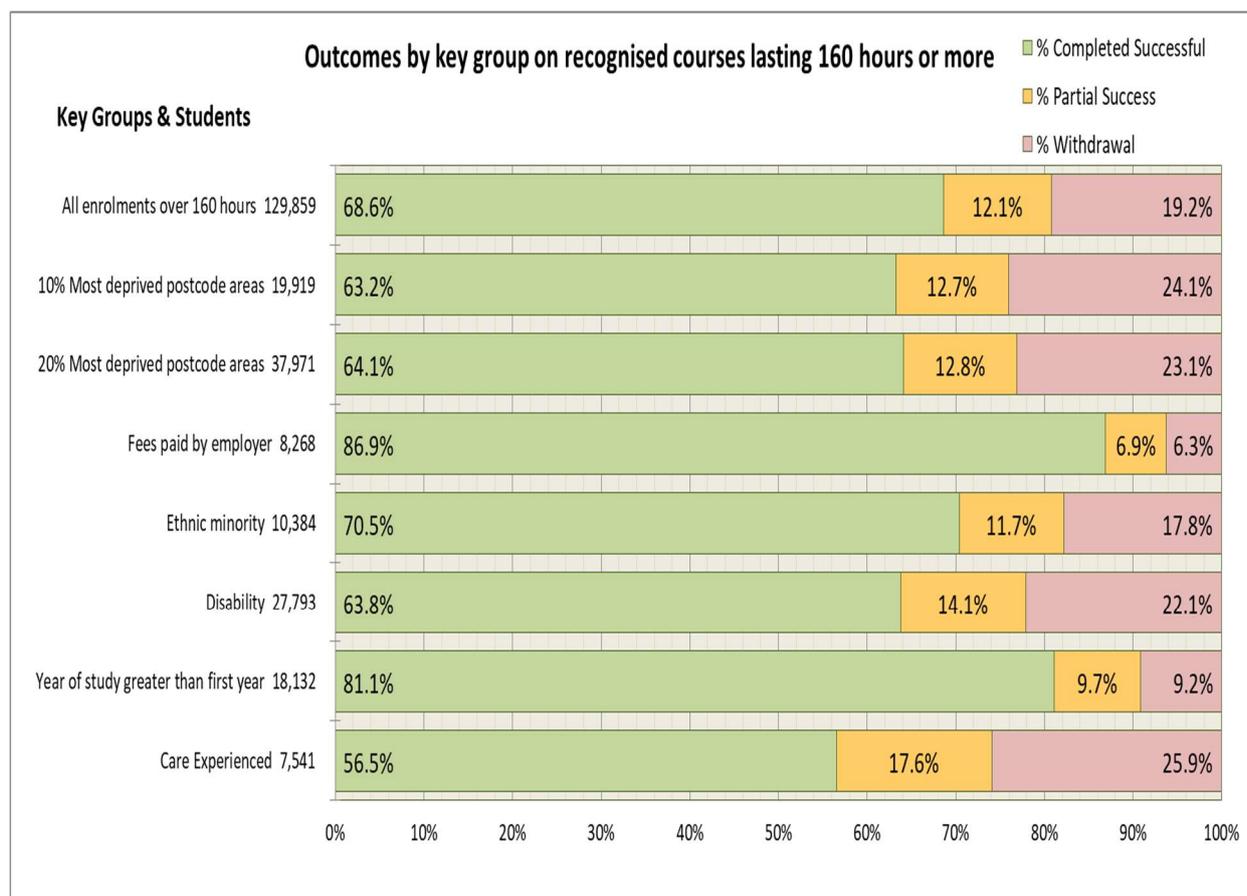
high success rate for these students and this may be enough to affect overall success rates.

62. Success rates on 160 hours plus courses for students from the 10% and 20% most deprived postcode areas<sup>6</sup> although similar, 63.2% and 64.1% respectively, fall below the comparator figure of 68.6% for all enrolments over 160 hours (FE and HE combined).
63. The overall sector figure indicates that those students from an ethnic minority (BME) background outperform the “all enrolments” comparator group and those with a disability underperform against other groups apart from the 10% most deprived and care-experienced learners.
64. There is a national ambition ‘to increase the number of care-experienced learners enrolling and successfully completing at college’. This key group is reported below and it clearly shows from the overall sector figures that they are more likely to withdraw from their course and less likely to complete successfully than any of the other reported key interest groups.
65. In 2020-21, there is an increase in care-experienced students of 1.4pp (106) from the previous year. This includes 3,288 assessed care-experienced students, who received a higher rate of bursary.
66. Care-experienced students are less likely to complete successfully and more likely to withdraw when compared to the other reported key interest groups. In the 2020-21 pandemic year the success rate for care-experienced students reduced by 3.2pp and the withdrawal rate increased by 3.7pp from the previous year. These changes in success and withdrawal rates are not dissimilar to that seen in most of the other reported key groups.
67. The higher reporting rate for care-experienced students seen in 2020-21 includes self-disclosed students and those students formally evidenced as care-experienced and in receipt of the care experience bursary. We continue to work with the sector to improve the quality of reporting for this key group of students.

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<sup>6</sup> Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020: the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is the Scottish Government's official tool for identifying those places in Scotland suffering from deprivation, combining in a single index seven different domains (aspects) of deprivation.

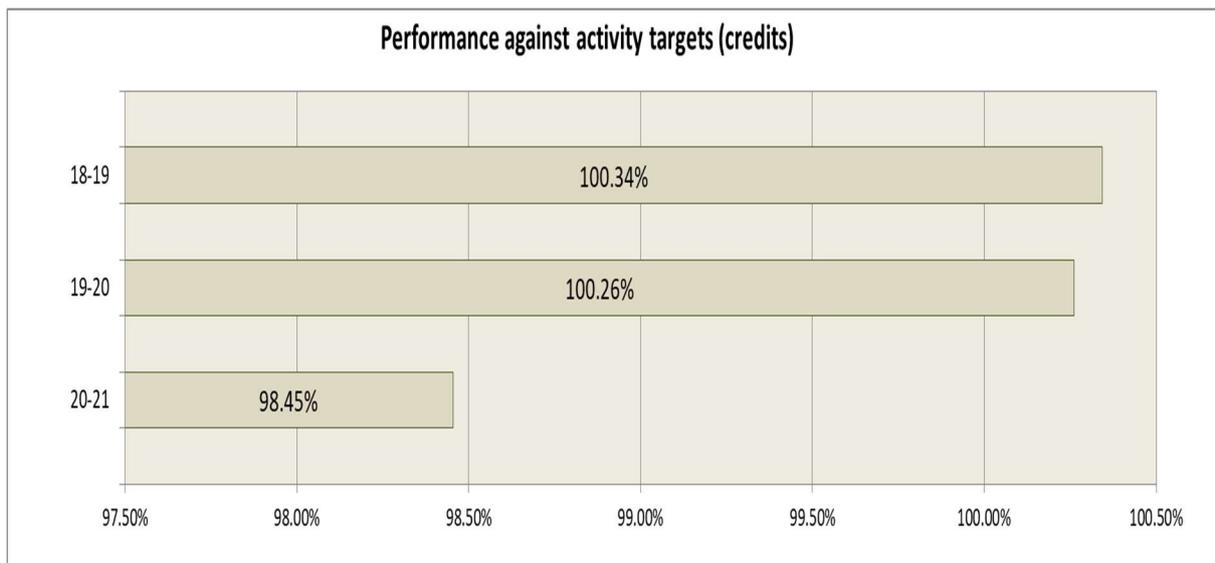
Figure 11: Outcomes for student enrolments by key groups on courses lasting 160 hours or more



### Performance against activity targets

68. Colleges receive funding from SFC to deliver a target number of hours of learning (credits). These can be related to college places and despite the COVID pandemic limiting enrolment, the college sector delivered in total 117,914 FTE in 2020-21. This shows the resilience in the sector and its ability to deliver courses in the challenging circumstances of the pandemic.
69. Colleges delivered in addition to the above an extra 10,645 FTE places through the SFC match-funded European Social Fund (ESF) programme: 'Developing Scotland's Workforce' and other non-government funding sources.
70. The total number of funded FTE places delivered by colleges in 2020-21 is therefore 128,559.
71. Separate to the FTE targets above, colleges were asked to deliver additional places and although they exceeded the 116, 269 FTE target they fell short of the fuller target for 2020-21 including these additional places by 1.55%, as outlined in Figure 12 below.

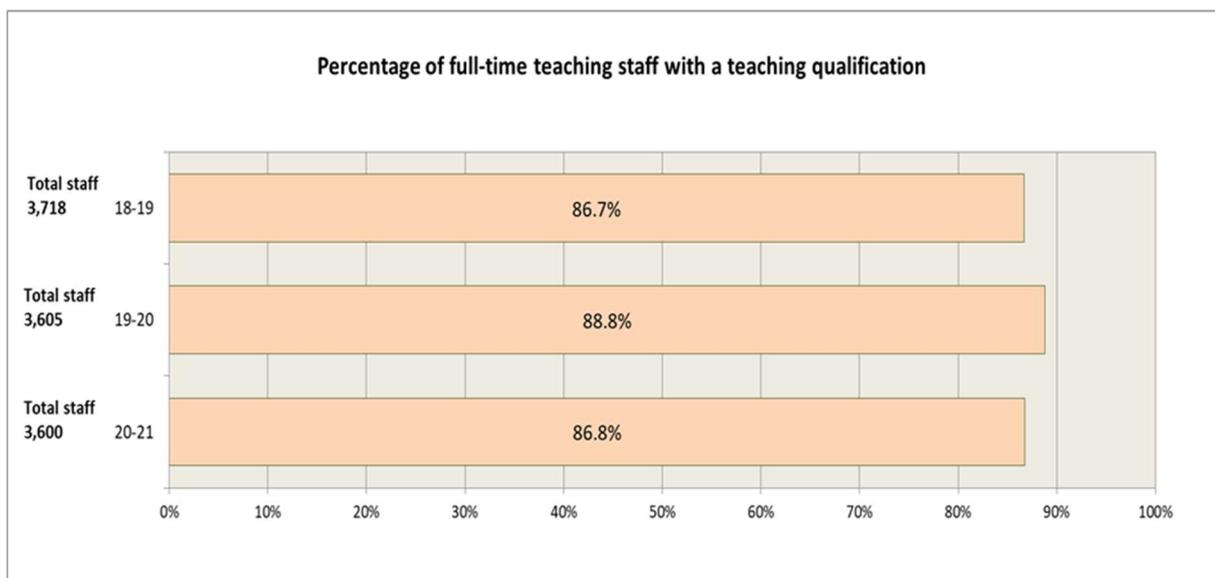
Figure 12: Performance against activity targets (credits)



### Qualified full-time teaching staff

72. Figure 13 below measures the percentage of full-time teaching staff with a teaching qualification recognised by the General Teaching Council for Scotland. This information is collected as part of the annual college staffing return.
73. In 2020-21, out of 3,600 full-time permanent teaching staff, 3,124 held a recognised teaching qualification (86.8%). This shows a 0.1pp increase in the proportion of teaching staff with a recognised qualification over the reported three academic years.

Figure 13: Percentage of full-time teaching staff with a recognised teaching qualification



## Further information

74. The performance indicators are of primary importance to Ministers, College Principals, Governing Boards and Scottish Government officials.
75. In order to bring the performance indicators to the widest possible audience the PIs are also hosted by each college on their own website together with any contextual college statement.
76. Colleges will use the annual PI data on attainment and retention to inform assessment of performance as part of the [College Quality Arrangements](#)<sup>7</sup>. These revised arrangements integrate evaluation and reporting on [Outcome Agreements](#) with reporting on the quality of provision and services.
77. Student numbers may differ across SFC's publications as the reports are prepared for different purposes. For example, this PI report excludes students who begin courses in January and finish in December of the same year, as results will not be available for these students until the course ends. However, activity related to these students will be included in another SFC publication, the [College Statistics report for academic year 2020-21](#)
78. Additional information regarding student enrolments and courses is available via our interactive database. The [Infact database](#), available on our website, allows for more detailed analysis of provision within Scotland's colleges. Please note that figures on the database may differ from those presented here. The database includes figures for all students regardless of who provides the funding.
79. SFC additionally publishes outcomes from the annual [College Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey](#). The 2019-20 Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES) was cancelled due to fieldwork coinciding with the COVID-19 lockdown period. Even though the pandemic continued throughout the academic year 2020-21, it was deemed important to capture the experiences of students during these exceptional circumstances. About 35,000 college students responded to the 2020-21 survey which is the fifth such survey to be carried out by SFC. Over time, the annual Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey will provide a consistent basis for Scotland's college regions to demonstrate the impact they have and the improvements they are making within their outcome agreements.

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<sup>7</sup> The Scottish Funding Council with Education Scotland introduced new arrangements for assuring and improving the quality of provision delivered by Scotland's colleges commencing in AY 2016-17.

80. To enable the capturing of different experiences of students, as a result of the 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.

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.

81. The 2020-21 College Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey shows that 88.6% of full-time students studying on further education courses were satisfied with their college experience. That figure climbs to 92.2% for part-time students. For college students on higher education courses 80.3% of respondents said they were satisfied with the figure rising to 84.4% for part-time students.

82. 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.

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