



COLLEGE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2019-20



Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

SFC STATISTICS
Issue Date: 13 July 2021
Reference: SFC/ST/06/2021

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Summary: Overview of college performance indicators from 2008-09 to 2019-20.

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 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 who were studying at the time and their ability to complete their course and qualification as planned.
2. The significant alterations to the exam and assessment arrangements for Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) awards due to the pandemic in 2019-20, were as follows:
 - For National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses external exams did not take place and as there was no feasible way for SQA to mark coursework and estimated grades became the core element of certification.
 - A joint statement from the SQA and Colleges Scotland ([COVID-19 message to College Heads](#)) directed college course teams to make holistic assessment judgements for student outcomes. The guidance was implemented across all of Scotland's colleges and covered SQA National awards and in HND/C, NC, SFW, PDA, NPA, NQ stand-alone units and non-technical components of Foundation Apprenticeships.
 - In applying the published guidance, each student outcome was based on an estimated attainment of course aims rather than on examinations and/or unit-by-unit outcomes. Enhanced internal college quality assurance processes were established to underpin the decision-making process to ensure the reliability and validity of the holistic assessment decisions.
3. Furthermore, numerous issues impacted students' ability to complete their qualification, such as:
 - Students may have been medically affected by the pandemic either directly or via their families and/or dependants.
 - Students who have childcare or caring responsibilities were also impacted by the pandemic and this may have made it more difficult for these students to complete their course as originally intended.
 - Colleges did act quickly to move provision online where possible, however some students on courses containing a practical element or a work placement 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 quickly took steps to address digital poverty, supported by additional funding, not all students had readily-available access to the necessary equipment to immediately start learning online.
4. In order to provide analysis of student performance in 2019-20, this year’s publication was delayed to allow the inclusion of as many ‘deferred’ student outcomes completed in the next academic year (2020-21). However, unfortunately with the second wave of the pandemic hitting the country in early October 2020, a number of the mainly practically-assessed courses in subjects such as engineering, construction, hair, beauty, social care and childcare could not be completed as on-campus practical activity and essential work placements were again suspended.
 5. In the college sector the number of students unable to complete their course of study in 2019-20 due to the pandemic was 18,457 of which 18,338 (99.4%) were studying recognised qualifications and 119 (0.6%) were on non-recognised (non-vocational/leisure) courses.
 6. By the end of January 2021, 11,440 of the 18,457 students were able to be complete and are included within this publication.
 7. With the return to on-campus teaching in the spring of 2021, it is expected that of the 7,017 students (25% full-time and 75% part-time) still to complete their 2019-20 courses, many will be able to complete by the end of summer. The outstanding ‘deferred’ enrolments from 2019-20 are therefore not counted within this publication but will be updated for next years.
 8. SFC has worked closely with colleges to support students 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 results directly 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.

Executive Summary

9. This report is an overview of college performance indicators from 2008-09 to 2019-20 and 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.
10. 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. This resulted in a reduction in the overall enrolments and reported student outcomes. As a result of these circumstances it is difficult to compare 2019-20 results directly with previous years. SFC has presented data for several years but full consideration should be given to these exceptional circumstances when comparing results over time.
11. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic limiting part-time enrolment in April and May 2020, the college sector delivered in total 117,666 FTE, thereby exceeding the 116,269 places target by 1,397 FTE in 2019-20.
12. Performance indicators exclude those students who deferred in 2019-20 and are yet still to complete their course. The key points from this report for students who have a final result are:

The known results for 45,876 full-time **further education** (FE) students enrolled on recognised qualifications in 2019-20 are as follows:

- For FE full-time students 65.7% successfully completed their course which is 0.5 percentage points (pp) higher than 2018-19.
- A further 13.1% 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.
- The remaining 21.2% of full-time FE students withdrew from their course and are accounted for by 8.7% of students withdrawing before the funding qualifying date (colleges are not funded for these students) and a further 12.4% between this point and the end of the course. Student withdrawals reduced in 2019-20 by around 4pp in comparison to earlier years.
- In 2019-20, of the 26 colleges delivering full-time FE courses, 13 had improved success rates in comparison to the previous year and 13 saw a decline in the proportion successfully completing their course.
- As a result of improving success rates 2,188 additional full-time FE students successfully completed their course in 2019-20 in comparison to 2008-09.

- For large colleges¹ success rates ranged from 58.9% to 72.2% in 2019-20 and for small colleges the success rates ranged from 54.3% up to 75.4%.

The known results for 31,847 full-time **higher education** (HE) students enrolled on recognised qualifications in 2019-20 are as follows:

- For HE full-time students 73.4% successfully completed their course which is a 3.6pp increase on the previous year.
- A further 11.6% 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.
- The remaining 15.0% of full-time HE students are accounted for by 5.2% of students withdrawing before the funding qualifying date (colleges are not funded for these students) and a further 9.9% between this point and the end of the course. Student withdrawals reduced in 2019-20 and this was likely in part a result of the pandemic lockdown restrictions.
- Full-time HE success rates ranged from 68.3% to 82.3% in 2019-20.
- In 2019-20, of the 15 colleges delivering full-time HE courses, 12 had improved success rates in comparison to the previous year and three saw a decline in the proportion successfully completing their course.
- As a result of increases in student numbers and improving success rates 5,939 additional full-time HE students successfully completed their course in 2019-20 in comparison to 2008-09.

Courses over 160 hours:

- Success rates for FE full and part-time subject areas range from 60.5% for social subjects to 80.8% for nautical courses.
- For HE full and part-time courses success rates range from 64.4% for hospitality and tourism to 87.6% for nautical courses.
- The withdrawal rates for male and female students show that females are more likely to withdraw from their programme of study than male students. Females are around 3pp more likely to withdraw over males on FE programmes and around 1pp more likely to withdraw on HE programmes.
- Male students are 0.6pp more likely to successfully complete their FE programmes than female students, while the situation is reversed for HE programmes with a 4.1pp difference.
- Although care-experienced students are less likely to successfully complete and more likely to withdraw when compared to the other reported key

¹ 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 Annex A.

interest groups, the success rate for care-experienced students increased by 0.9pp and withdrawal rate reduced by 3.6pp from the previous year.

- Students in the younger age groups are less likely to complete successfully than those in the older age groups: for example 65.2% of those under 18 compared to 75.8% of those aged over 40 complete successfully.



The known results for 45,876 **FULL-TIME FURTHER EDUCATION (FE) STUDENTS** enrolled on recognised qualifications in 2019-20 are as follows:

65.7%

Successfully completed their course

13.1%

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.

21.2%

Withdrew from their course and are accounted for by: 8.7% of students withdrawing before the funding qualifying date* 12.4% between this point and the end of the course.



The known results for 31,847 **FULL-TIME HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) STUDENTS** enrolled on recognised qualifications in 2019-20 are as follows:

73.4%

Successfully completed their course

11.6%

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.

15.0%

Withdrew from their course and are accounted for by: 5.2% of students withdrawing before the funding qualifying date* 9.9% between this point and the end of the course.



MALE STUDENTS are 0.6pp more likely to successfully complete their **FE PROGRAMMES** than female students while the situation is **REVERSED FOR HE PROGRAMMES** with a 4.1pp difference.



In 2019-20, out of 3,605 full-time permanent teaching staff, **88.8% HELD A RECOGNISED TEACHING QUALIFICATION** (3,202).

This shows a 0.9pp increase in the proportion of teaching staff with a recognised qualification over the reported three academic years.



*Colleges are not funded for these students

Introduction

13. 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. This resulted in a reduction in the overall enrolments and reported student outcomes. As a result of these circumstances it is difficult to compare 2019-20 results directly with previous years. SFC has presented data for several years but full consideration should be given to these exceptional circumstances when comparing results over time.
14. SFC has published PIs on college teaching activity for the past 17 years although PIs are not available on a consistent basis for all years. Links to previous publications going back to 2008-09 are provided and can be found on our website at: [College Performance Indicators](#).
15. The purpose of the indicators is to inform stakeholders about the performance of the sector. The reported PIs allow for the evaluation of performance of students by level of course and hours of study both over time and against other similar colleges. The PIs can be used, for example, to monitor and compare performance of groups of specific interest, such as disabled and care-experienced students, thereby supporting a wider improvement agenda within the sector. HE course qualifications are more likely to be standard across subjects and awards and results can be used more readily than FE courses for sector benchmarking.
16. Performance Indicators are available for colleges (further, tertiary, sixth-form) in other United Kingdom countries but due to the different cohort characteristics and performance indicator definitions these are not directly comparable with the Scottish college sector PIs.
17. The latest information available within the report is for academic year 2019-20. For full-time performance indicators results are shown over the period 2008-09 to 2019-20. For part-time courses results are shown from 2017-18 although earlier years are available from our website.
18. The Performance Indicators report provides a broad coverage of activity on recognised qualifications and includes, in addition to SFC funded student activity, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) funded Foundation Apprenticeship courses and college based university 'Associate' status students.
19. The Scottish college landscape has fundamentally changed since 2010 with the phased creation of larger colleges operating on a regional basis through merger.

This has led to a reduction in the number of colleges from 45 in August 2010 to the 26² colleges today.

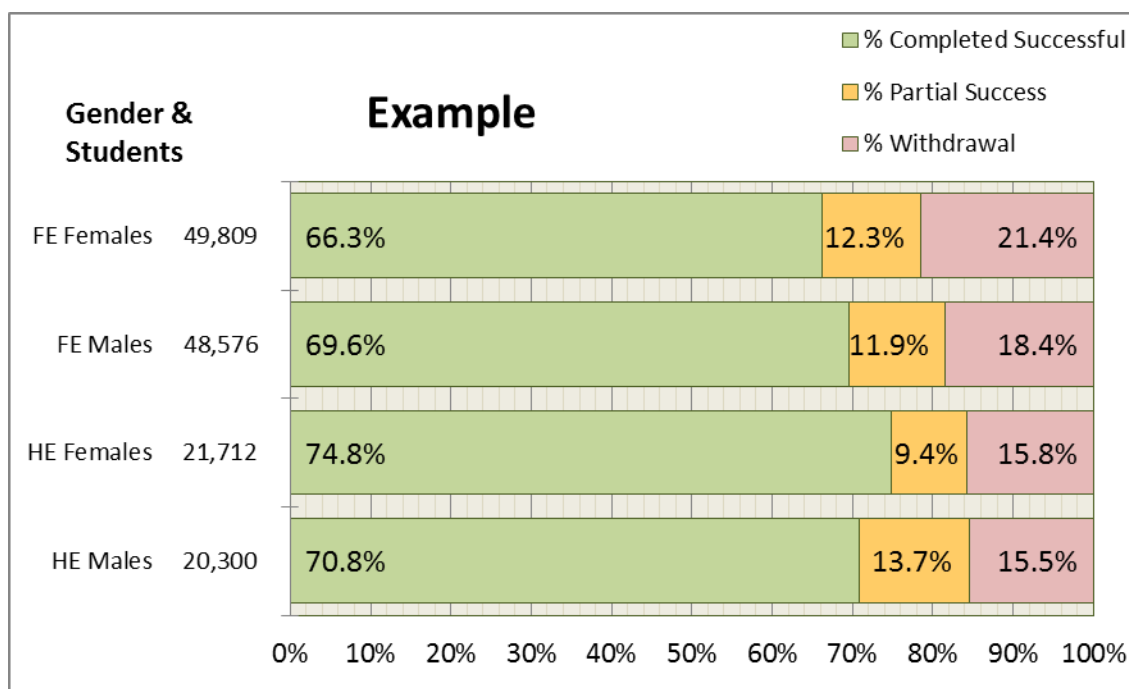
20. Students have a wide variety of personal motivations for studying at college and study across an extensive range of programmes, from literacy and numeracy courses to engineering and agriculture, with awards ranging from courses not providing a recognised qualification to higher national certificates and diplomas or degrees in partnerships with universities.
21. Our method of presentation and breakdown of PIs by subject groups, duration of study, age groups and gender gives a comprehensive view of sector-wide provision and performance, enabling an informed comparison over time.
22. The PIs are based on student records submitted via the Further Education Statistics (FES) system. This is an automated data capture and record system which encompasses built-in iterative quality checks to ensure the data is correct and credible. Only when the data has passed will SFC permit the data to be used for PI purposes. In addition to our checks, every college Principal must also sign off the data as a true and accurate record for their college.
23. As an additional reassurance of consistency and quality, SFC contracts with Education Scotland (ES) to provide external assurance on quality and to support improvement in the college sector. ES publishes colleges' annual evaluative reports and enhancement plans together with a joint SFC/ES endorsement statement and these are available on [Education Scotland's website](#) under Further Education sector.
24. Our analytical team also conducts data quality checks to ensure the student records submitted by colleges are accurate and comparable across the sector.
25. Each of the charts in this publication contains three percentage figures: the first describes the percentage of students who successfully completed the course year; the second is the percentage that completed the course year irrespective of their result; and the third is the percentage of students that withdrew from the course. These values have been calculated as a percentage of all enrolments.

² There are 26 colleges in Scotland plus Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) and all 27 institutions report FE level student activity to the SFC. One college, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (SMO), does not deliver any full-time FE programmes. Sixteen out of the 27 institutions also report their HE level student activity to the SFC and with the other 11 (University of Highlands and Islands (UHI) partner colleges and Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)) reporting their HE level student activity to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), therefore their HE level activity performance is not accounted for in this publication. For individual college and regional categorisation refer to Annex A.

26. For the purpose of improving data quality, this publication now excludes, in the majority of charts presented, students with fewer than 160 hours of study which ensures that the PIs are focused less on short duration courses and more on longer, more vocational courses which are more likely to be formally assessed and accredited.
27. When viewing individual college level PI data, where the number of enrolments is less than 50 in a category the results have been suppressed and are not shown. This avoids spurious statistical accuracy in the published success rates and reduces the risk of incorrect conclusions being drawn from success rates based on small numbers.
28. 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.
29. Links to individual College PIs and a more detailed explanation on and examples of how we calculate PIs can be found in a separate Technical Appendix to this publication.
30. It is our aim to strive for continuing improvement and enhanced usability of this document. We welcome feedback from readers on matters of content and presentation.

How our performance indicators are presented

31. Our college PIs - as exemplified below - show the success, partial success and withdrawal proportions stacked and labelled to show the full cohort³.



32. The bar to the left (green) shows the percentage of students who have completed their course year successfully. This includes students who have progressed to a later year for multi-year courses.
33. Colleges must choose one of 13 student outcome options from our FES 2 guidance notes [Code List J](#) that best describes the student result. The following student outcomes for nationally recognised programmes are considered to have completed successfully:
- Completed programme / course, student assessed and successful.
 - Student has progressed to next year and has achieved 70% of the credits undertaken.
 - Student has achieved 70% of the credits undertaken but has chosen not to progress onto the next year.
 - Student completed first year of a Higher National Diploma (HND) but has chosen to leave with a Higher National Certificate (HNC).

³ Chart proportions in this publication are rounded to one decimal place so total percentage may not always add up to 100%.

- Student is on an interim year of a multi-year VQ programme and is on track and is still participating in the college programme.
34. The middle bar (orange) shows the percentage of students who have completed their course year but are not considered to be fully successful. For example, the student may have failed to achieve one or more units required for the course. The following two student outcomes are considered to have completed (with partial success):
 - Completed programme / course, student assessed but not successful.
 - Student has progressed to next year but did not gain 70% of the credits undertaken.
 35. The combination of these two bars shows the total percentage to have completed the course. For example, the FE Females bars shows that 66.3% of students completed successfully and a further 12.3% irrespective of the result. Therefore 78.6% completed the course in total.
 36. The bar to the right (pink) represents those students who withdrew from their course after enrolment and for FE Females this shows that 21.4% of students withdrew from their course during the academic year.
 37. The number of students enrolled on these courses is shown for each academic year to the left of the bar chart.
 38. The Technical Annex B shows the breakdown of enrolments for nationally recognised programmes for further education and higher education full and part-time courses across each of the 13 possible student outcomes.

Key Performance Indicators charts

Outcomes for FE student enrolments on recognised qualifications

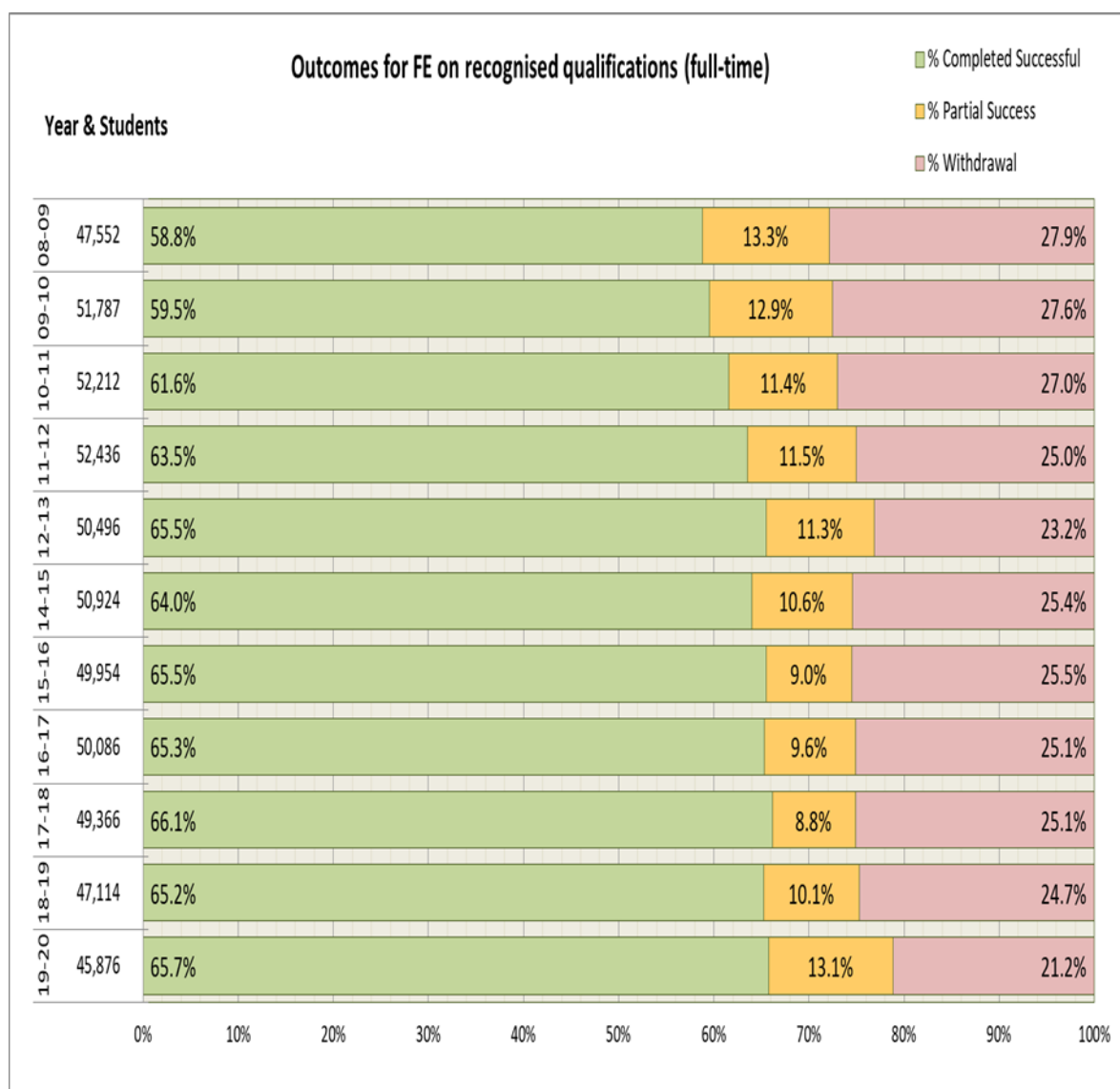
39. Figure 1 provides an overview of enrolments and success rates on full-time⁴ recognised FE programmes from 2008-09 to 2019-20. The figures allow comparisons over a longer timeframe to reduce the risk of basing an assessment of performance on a snapshot of a single year when performance may vary over time.
40. 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 2014-15 to 2018-19 the number of student enrolments reduced by 3,810⁵. In 2019-20 there was a further reduction in student enrolments of 1,238.
41. 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 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.
42. In 2019-20, 65.7% of students on full-time programmes completed successfully whilst a further 13.1% completed irrespective of their final result. In total 78.8% of students completed their course. This is an increase of 3.5pp of students completing their course from the previous year. Student withdrawals reduced in 2019-20 and this was likely in part a result of the pandemic lockdown restrictions.
43. Figure 1 shows the trends in completion rates from 2008-09 to 2019-20. The results for 2019-20 are not directly comparable to previous years due to the alterations to exam and assessment arrangements due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
44. Over the 11 years from 2008-09 there has been a 6.9pp increase in the success rate and represents an extra 2,188 students who successfully completed in 2019-20 in comparison to 2008-09.

⁴ FE full-time programmes of study contain greater than or equal to 600 nominal learning hours.

⁵ 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.

45. FE full-time success rates for large colleges ranged from 58.9% to 72.2% in 2019-20 and for small colleges the success rates ranged from 54.3% up to 75.4%.

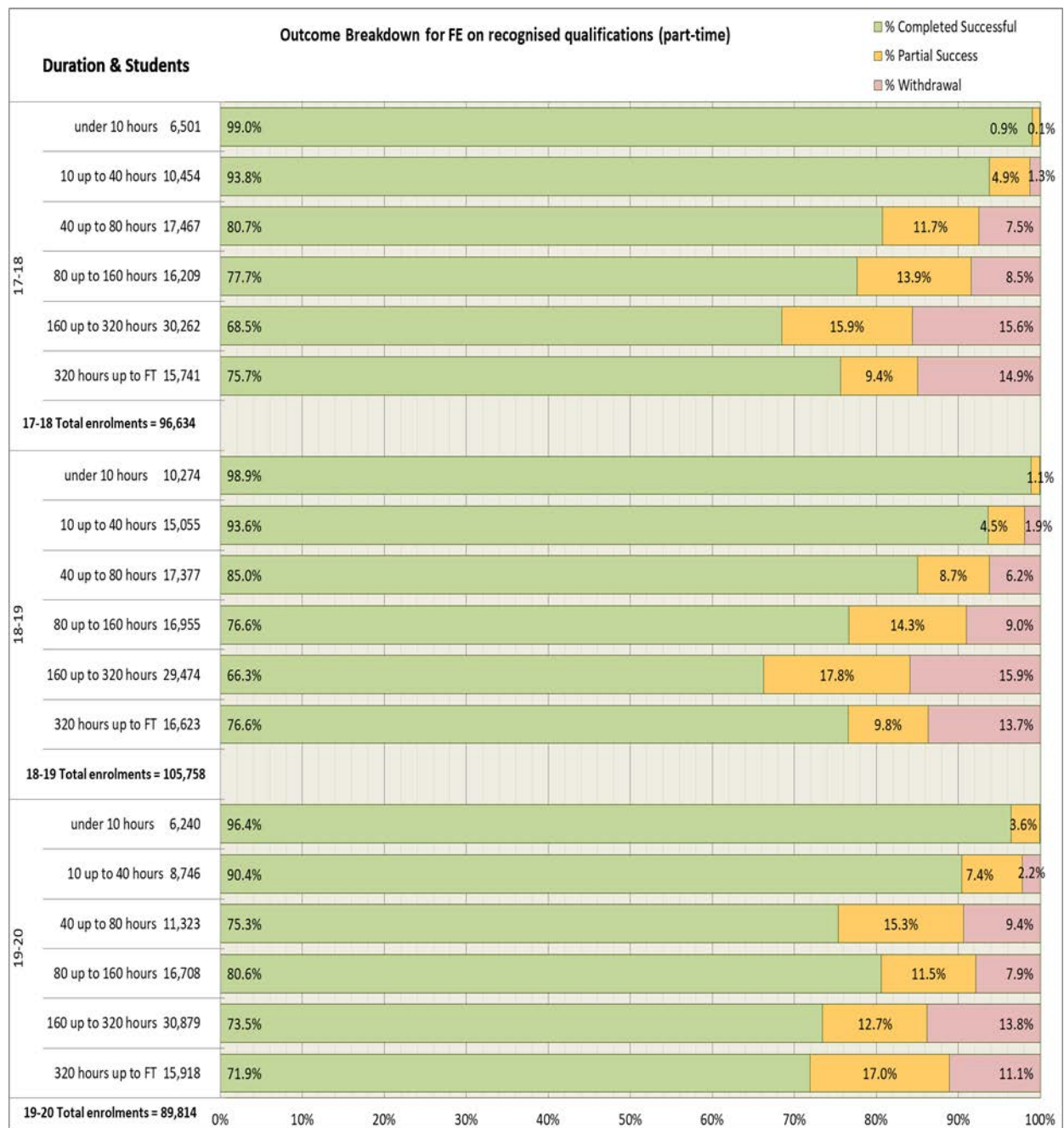
Figure 1: Outcomes for FE student enrolments on full-time recognised qualifications



46. Thirteen colleges show a decrease in FE full-time success rates from 2018-19 to 2019-20 of between 0.3pp and 20.7pp (a small college), whilst 13 colleges show an improvement in success rate of between 1.0pp and 10pp. Note: large percentage point deviation should be treated with caution as small student populations often produce large percentage point changes.
47. Figure 1 also shows that the withdrawal rate in 2019-20 reduced from 2018-19 from 24.7% to 21.2% (a 3.5pp improvement). This is the lowest rate of withdrawal over an 11 year reporting period since 2008-09, and anecdotal evidence supports that there has been fewer withdrawals in these unprecedented times.

48. A further breakdown on the 21.2% of student withdrawals shows 8.7% of students withdrawing before the funding qualifying date and this is the same as the previous year (colleges are not funded for these students) and a further 12.4% between this point and the end of the course.
49. 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 decreased in 2019-20 from the previous year by 15.1pp (15,944). It is the shortest courses that have reduced in number and the pandemic did impact on reducing the short (under 160 hours) part-time enrolments particularly in April and May 2020. Part-time courses over 160 hours, that are the main focus of the PIs, have increased enrolments over the previous year.
50. 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 two hours over one study visit offers less opportunity for withdrawing before the end date than a course requiring attendance three afternoons per week over 36 weeks.

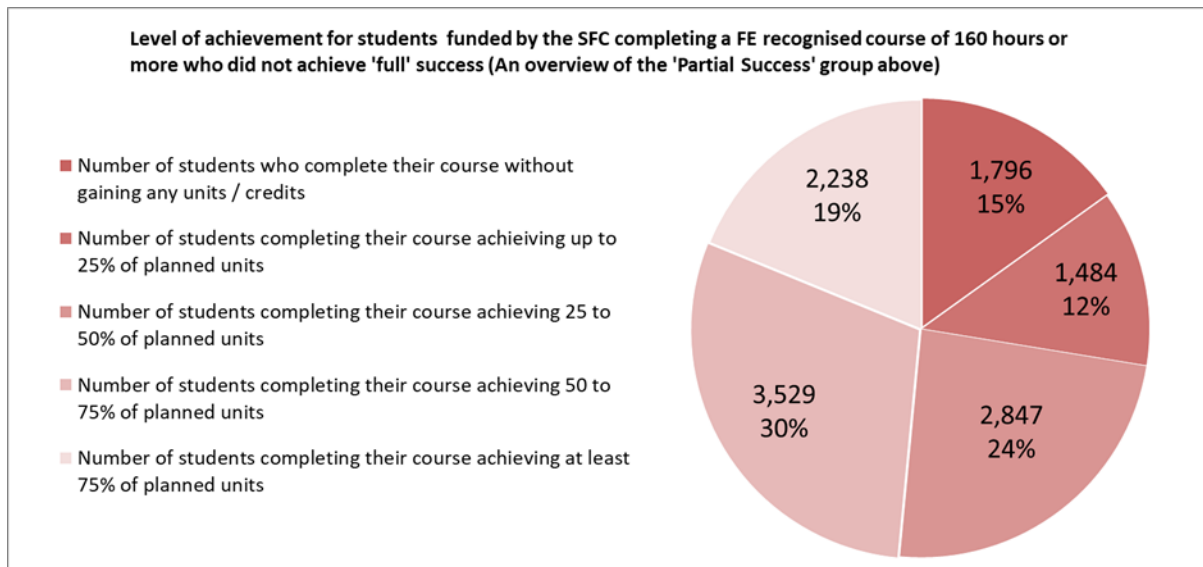
Figure 2: Outcomes for FE student enrolments on part-time recognised qualifications



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

51. Figure 3 below provides more detailed information for the students enrolled on FE programmes in 2019-20 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



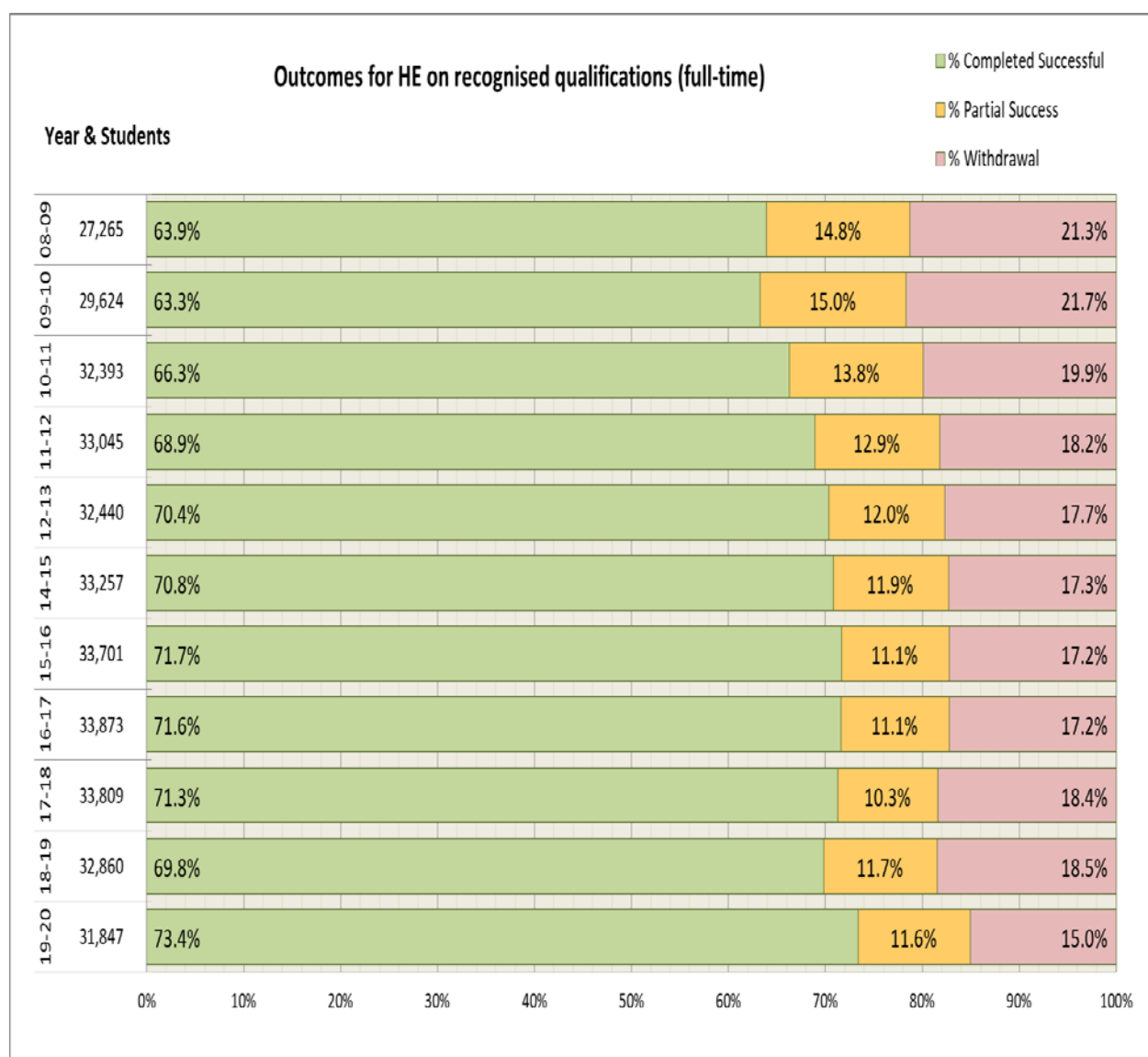
52. There are 11,894 students enrolled on FE programmes in 2019-20 who completed without “full” success. This is a subset of numbers from Figure 1 (full-time) and Figure 2 (part-time) and excludes students below 160 hours and those who were not funded by SFC that are included in the earlier charts. It shows that 19% (2,238) of these students gained at least 75% of the units on their programme and 49% (5,767) of those students who completed their course year but were not fully successful managed to pass over 50% of the units attempted. At the other end of the scale 15% (1,796) of these students failed to achieve any of the units for which they enrolled.
53. The percentage of students who failed to achieve any units for which they enrolled in 2019-20 decreased by 9pp from the 24% in session 2018-19.
54. 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

55. Figure 4 below gives an overview of success rates for full-time⁶ recognised programmes at HE level for academic sessions 2008-09 to 2019-20.

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

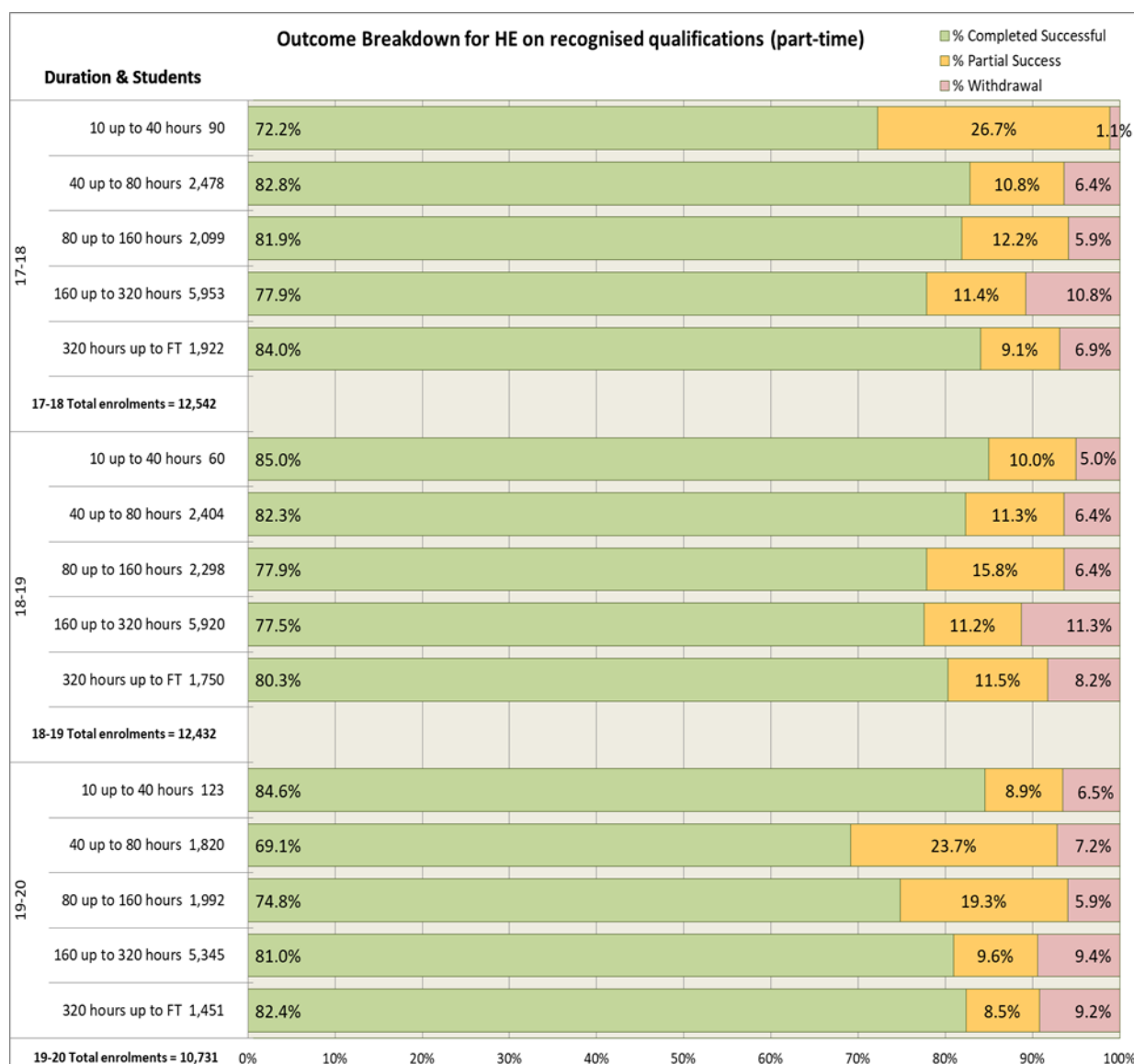


⁶ HE full-time programmes of study contain greater than or equal to 480 nominal learning hours.

56. The number of HE full-time student enrolments on recognised qualifications declined in 2019-20 by 3.1pp (1,013) from the previous year. The decline in the number of young people in Scotland and the fact that more pupils are moving directly to university could be contributing to the reduction in numbers enrolled on HE courses at college.
57. The success rates for HE programmes tend to be higher than FE programmes over the course year and this is reflected above with 73.4% of students on full-time HE programmes completing successfully and a total of 85.0% completing irrespective of their final result, compared with 65.7% and 78.8% for FE programmes.
58. 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.
59. The success rate for full-time HE students at 73.4% in 2019-20 was the highest success rate over an 11 year period from 2008-09 and has increased by 3.6pp from 2018-19 and by around 2pp when compared against academic years 2015-16 through 2017-18. Note: The results for 2019-20 are not directly comparable to previous years due to alterations to exam and assessment arrangements due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
60. The combined effect of an improved success rate and a larger HE student population than in earlier years means that an extra 5,939 students successfully completed in 2019-20, in comparison to 2008-09 (+34.1%).
61. HE full-time success rates for individual colleges with over 50 student enrolments ranged from 68.3% to 82.3% in 2019-20.
62. An increase in the HE full-time success rate in 2019-20 is not consistent across all colleges. Twelve colleges show an improvement in success rate of between 0.6pp and 12.5pp, whilst three colleges show a decrease in success rate of between 1.1pp and 2.2pp.
63. Figure 4 also shows that the withdrawal rate in 2019-20 reduced from 2018-19 from 18.5% to 15.0% (a 3.5pp improvement). Similar to FE full-time this is the lowest rate of withdrawal rate over an 11 year reporting period since 2008-09.
64. 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 decreased in 2019-20 from the previous year by 13.7pp (1,701). The pandemic did impact part-time enrolments, particularly for short course under 160 hours, in April and May 2020.

65. 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.
66. For HE part-time category courses over 160 hours that is the main focus of the PIs, the success rate has improved in both categories over the previous year, 3.5pp for courses of 160 up to 320 hours and 2.1pp for courses 320 hours up to FT.

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

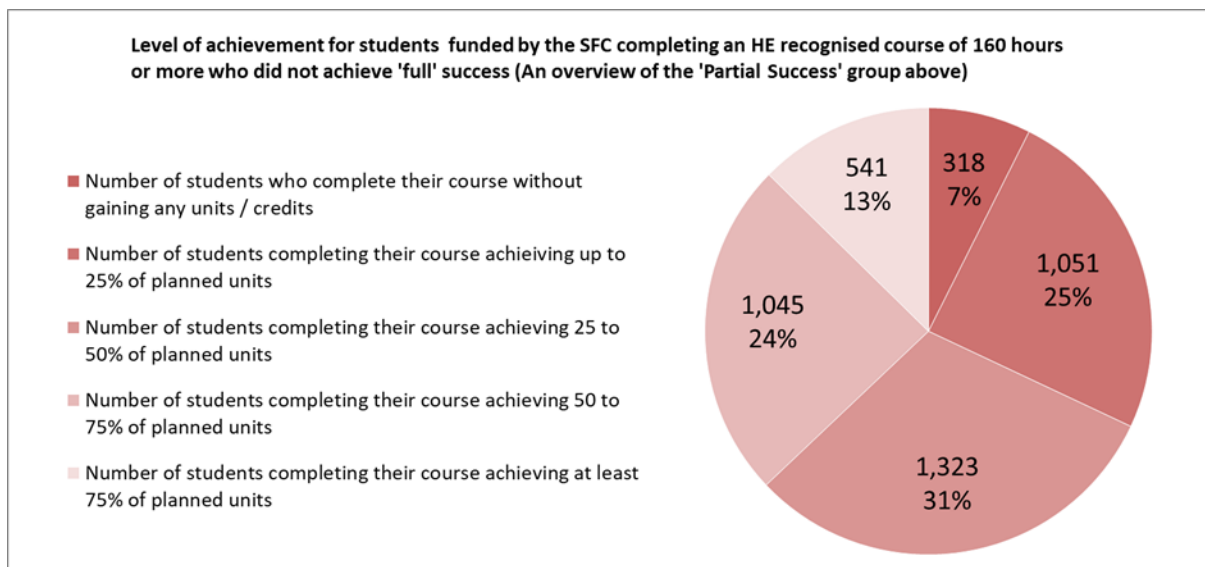


Students completing their HE course who did not achieve “full” success

67. Figure 6 shows that there are 4,278 students enrolled on HE programmes in 2019-20 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 37% (1,586) of these students achieved at least 50% of the units they enrolled on, while 13% (541) of these students achieved at least 75% of the units on their programme. At the other end of the scale 7% (318) of the students failed to gain any of the units for which they enrolled a similar proportion to that seen in the previous year.

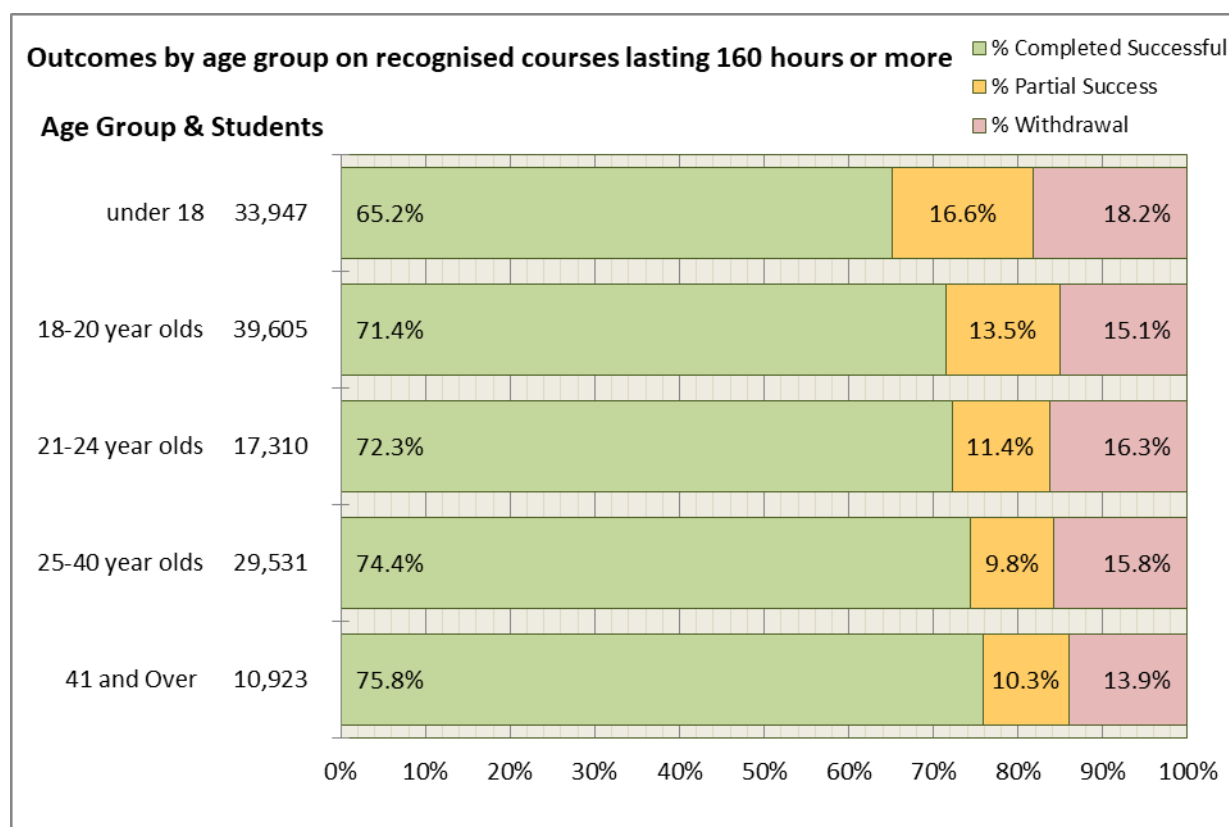
Figure 6: Level of achievement for students completing an HE course of 160 hours or more who did not achieve 'full' success



Outcomes by age group (combined FE and HE courses)

68. 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 65.2% of those under 18 compared to 75.8% of those aged over 40 complete successfully and similarly, 81.8% and 86.1% completing students when including those with partial success.
69. 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.
70. 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

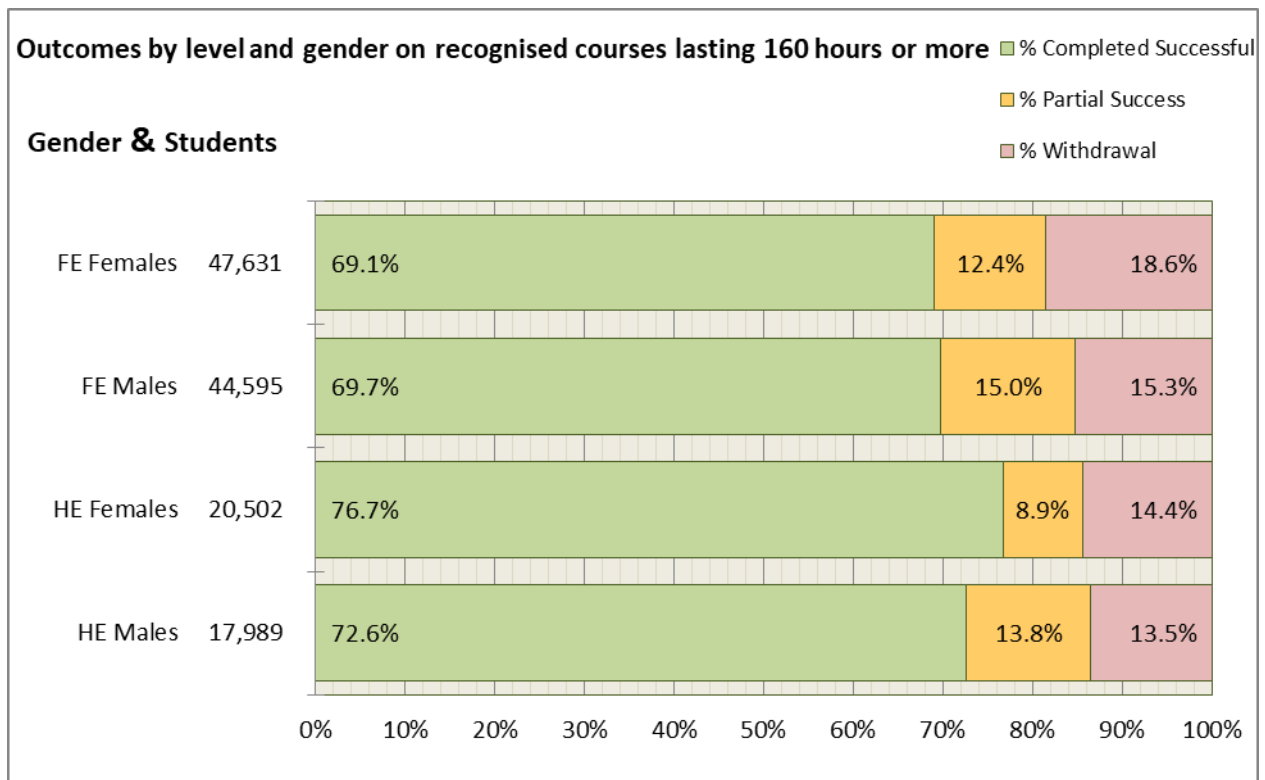


Outcomes by gender and level (combined FE and HE courses)

71. Figure 8⁷ below shows that in 2019-20 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.
72. This suggests that male students are 0.6pp more likely to successfully complete their FE programmes than female students, while the situation is reversed for HE programmes with a 4.1pp difference. The difference in success rate between male and female for FE has decreased and HE has increased compared to last years (2018-19) publication when it was 3.7pp and 3.4pp respectively.
73. The withdrawal rates for male and female students in 2019-20 show that females are more likely to withdraw from their programme of study than male students. Females are around 3pp more likely to withdraw over males on FE programmes and around 1pp more likely to withdraw on HE programmes.

⁷ The gender data excludes those identifying as 'other' or chose 'prefer not to say'.

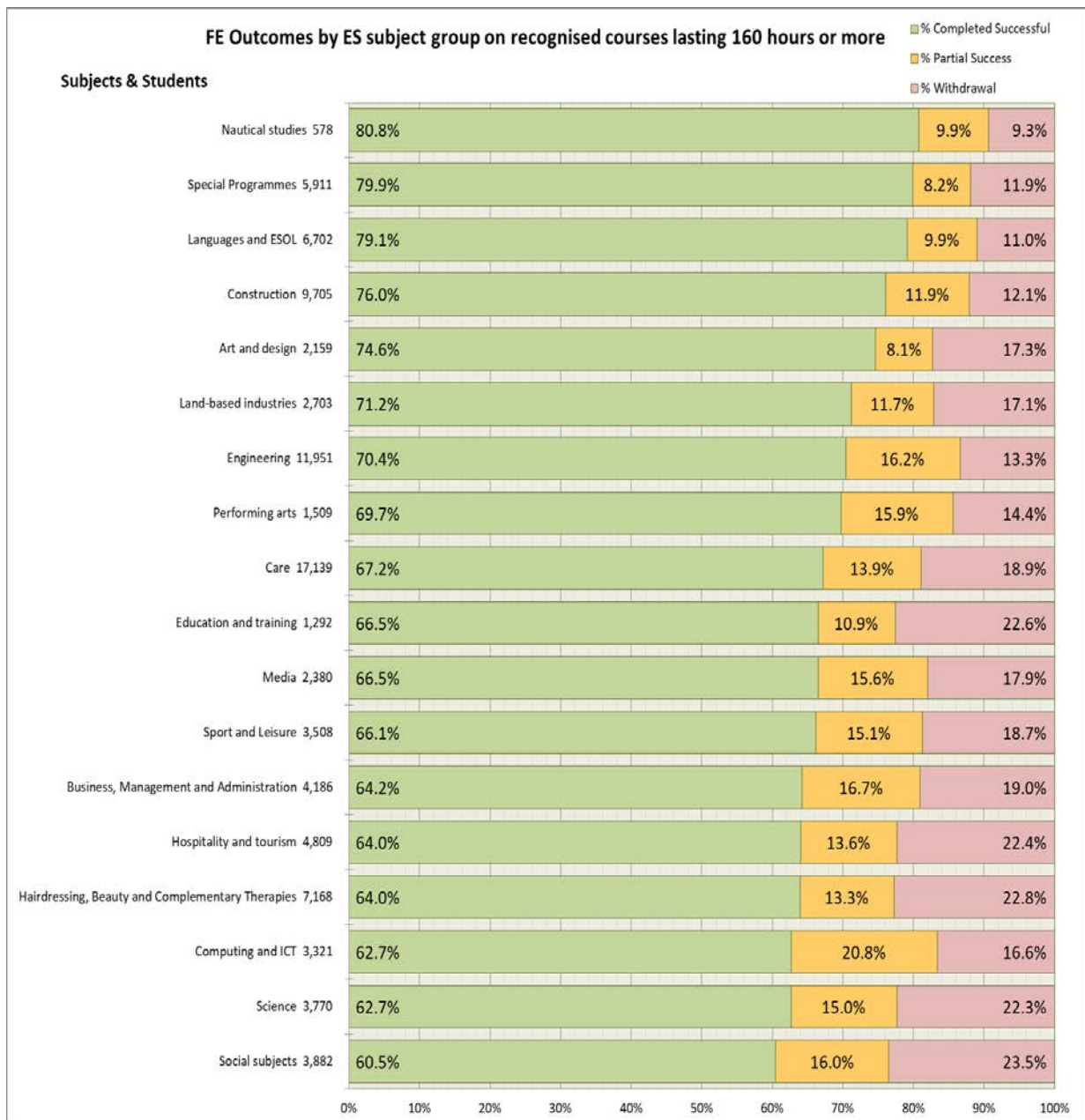
Figure 8: Outcomes by level and gender on recognised courses lasting 160 hours or more



Outcomes by subject groupings on FE courses

74. 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 appendix. 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.
75. 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 over 60% whilst *Construction* stands at 76%. 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.

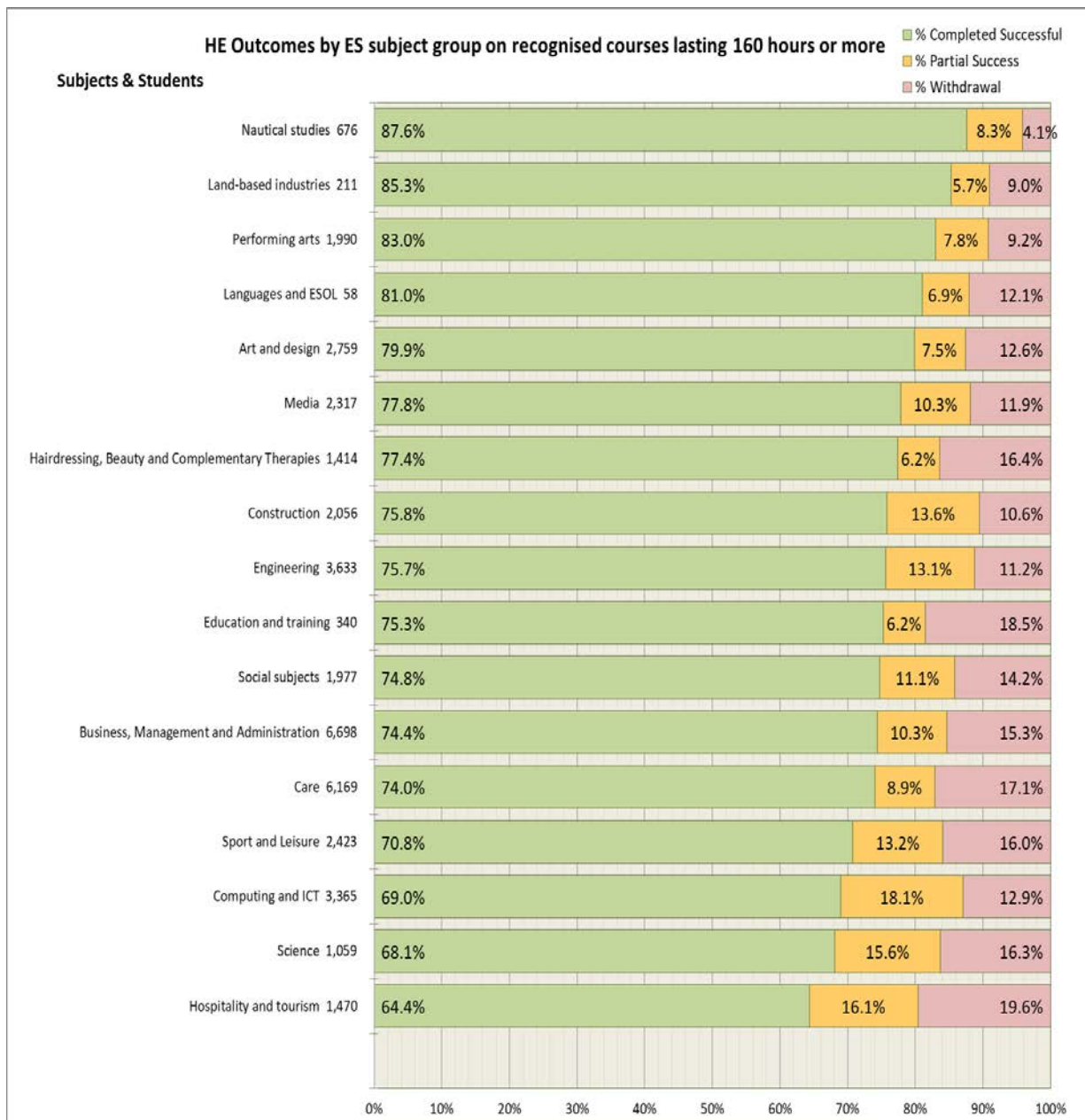
Figure 9: Outcomes by Education Scotland subject groupings on FE courses lasting 160 hours or more



Outcomes by subject groupings on HE courses

76. 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* have 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.

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



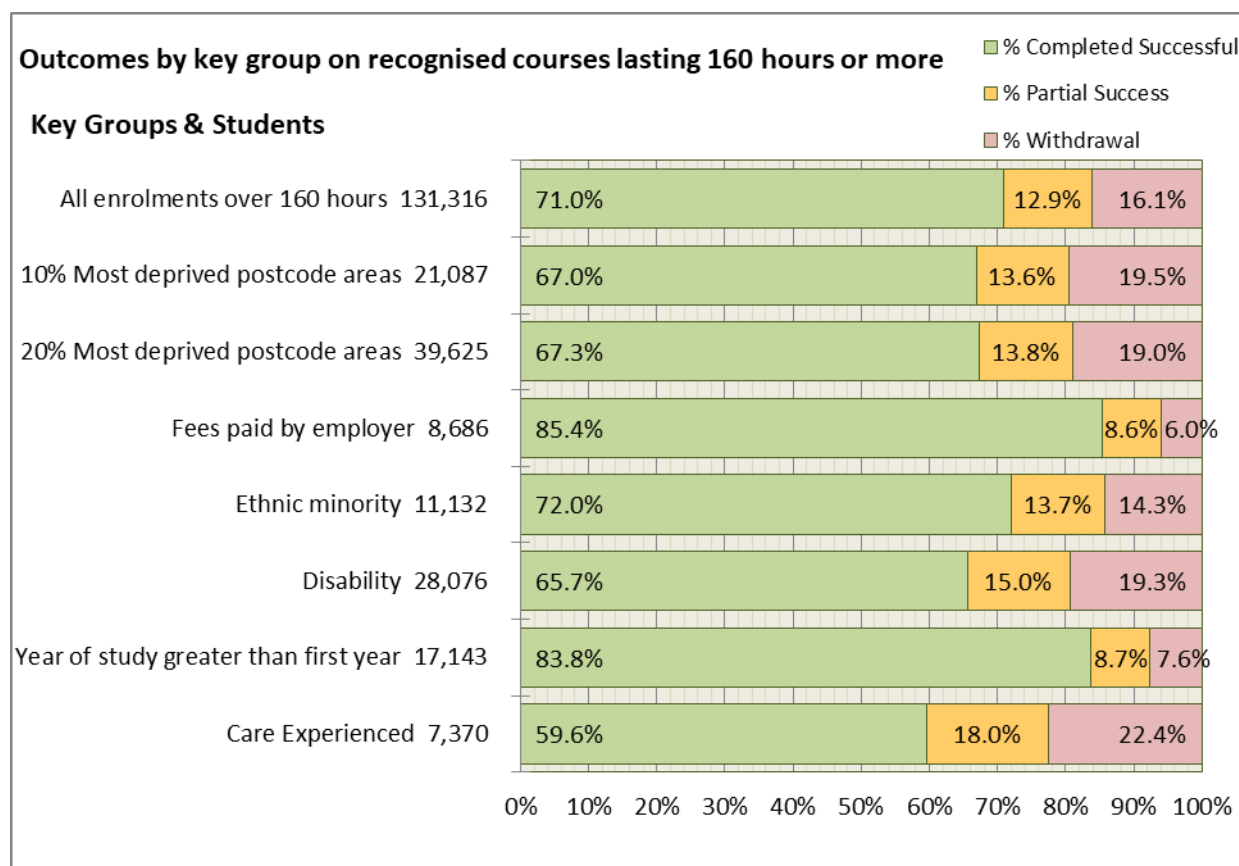
Outcomes by key groups (combined FE and HE courses)

77. 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.

78. Success rates on 160 hours plus courses for students from the 10% and 20% most deprived postcode areas⁸ although similar, 67.0% and 67.3% respectively, fall below the comparator figure of 71.0% for all enrolments over 160 hours (FE and HE combined).
79. 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 all groups apart from care-experienced learners.
80. 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 successfully complete than any of the other reported key interest groups.
81. In 2019-20 there is a much higher reporting rate for care-experienced students up 77% (3,218) from the previous year. This includes 2,668 assessed care-experienced students, between the ages of 16 and 25, who received a higher rate of bursary.
82. Although care-experienced students are less likely to successfully complete and more likely to withdraw when compared to the other reported key interest groups, the success rate for care-experienced students increased by 0.9pp and the withdrawal rate reduced by 3.6pp from the previous year.
83. The higher reporting rate for care-experienced students seen in 2019-20 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.

⁸ Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2016: 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.

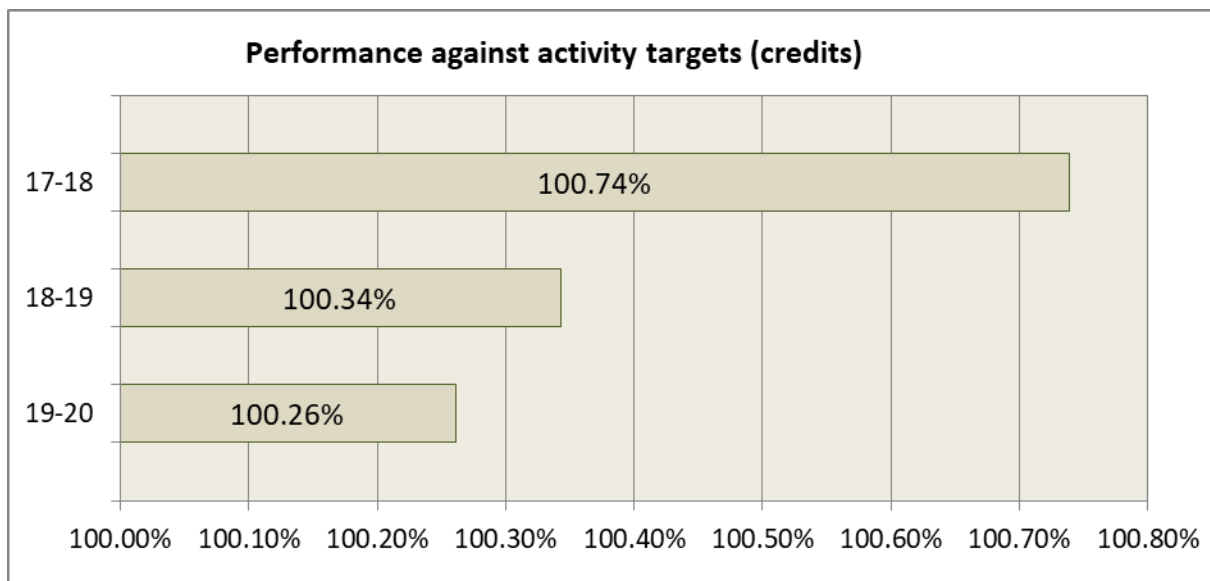
Figure 11: Outcomes for student enrolments by key groups on courses lasting 160 hours or more



Performance against activity targets

84. Colleges receive funding from SFC to deliver a target number of hours of learning (credits). These can be related to college places and at the sector level we expect colleges to deliver 116,269 FTE places (1 FTE = 15 Credits). Despite the COVID-19 pandemic limiting part-time enrolment in April and May 2020, the college sector delivered in total 117,666 FTE, thereby exceeding the 116,269 places target by 1,397 FTE in 2019-20.
85. Colleges delivered in addition to the above an extra 3,478 FTE places through the SFC match-funded European Social Fund (ESF) programme: 'Developing Scotland's Workforce'.
86. The total number of funded FTE places delivered by colleges in 2019-20 is therefore 121,144.
87. Separate to the FTE targets above, individual colleges are expected to deliver a minimum number of credits (1 credit equates to 40 notional hours of learning) and the sector exceeded the 2019-20 target of 1,744,530 credits, including for the ESF programmes (52,176 credits), by 0.26% (1,749,080 total credits), as outlined in Figure 12 below.

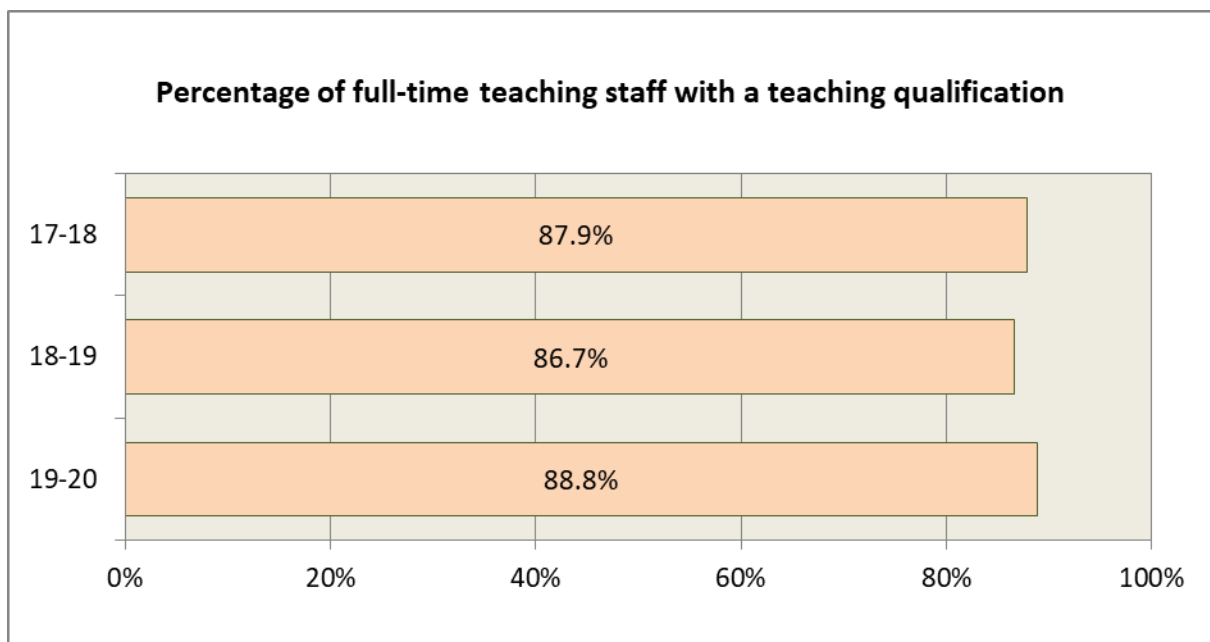
Figure 12: Performance against activity targets (credits)



Qualified full-time teaching staff

- 88. 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.
- 89. In 2019-20, out of 3,605 full-time permanent teaching staff, 3,202 held a recognised teaching qualification (88.8%). This shows a 0.9pp 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

90. The performance indicators are of primary importance to Ministers, College Principals, Governing Boards and Scottish Government officials.
91. 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.
92. Colleges will use the annual PI data on attainment and retention to inform assessment of performance as part of the [College Quality Arrangements](#)⁹. These revised arrangements integrate evaluation and reporting on [Outcome Agreements](#) with reporting on the quality of provision and services.
93. 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 2019-20](#)
94. 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.
95. SFC additionally publishes outcomes from the annual [College Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey](#). The 2019-20 survey was unfortunately cancelled due to the fieldwork coinciding with the initial COVID-19 lockdown period. However, over 44,000 college students responded to the 2018-19 survey which is the fourth 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.
96. The latest (2018-19) College Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey shows that 93% of full-time students studying on further education courses were satisfied with their college experience. That figure climbs to 95% for part-time students. For college students on higher education courses 87% of respondents said they were satisfied with the figure rising to 89% for part-time students.

⁹ 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.

Annex A: Colleges in Scotland

College	Region
North East Scotland College www.nescol.ac.uk	Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire
Ayrshire College www.ayrshire.ac.uk	Ayrshire
Borders College www.borderscollege.ac.uk	Borders
Forth Valley College www.forthvalley.ac.uk	Forth Valley
Dumfries & Galloway College www.dumgal.ac.uk	Dumfries and Galloway
Edinburgh College www.edinburghcollege.ac.uk	Edinburgh and Lothians
Fife College www.fife.ac.uk	Fife
Glasgow Kelvin College www.glasgowkelvin.ac.uk	Glasgow
Glasgow Clyde College www.glasgowclyde.ac.uk	
City of Glasgow College www.cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk	
Argyll College UHI www.argyll.uhi.ac.uk	Highlands and Islands
Inverness College UHI www.inverness.uhi.ac.uk	
Lews Castle College UHI www.lews.uhi.ac.uk	
Moray College UHI www.moray.ac.uk	
North Highland College UHI www.northhighland.uhi.ac.uk	
Orkney College UHI www.orkney.uhi.ac.uk	
Perth College UHI www.perth.uhi.ac.uk	
Shetland College UHI www.shetland.uhi.ac.uk	
West Highland College UHI www.whc.uhi.ac.uk	
South Lanarkshire College www.south-lanarkshire-college.ac.uk	
New College Lanarkshire www.nclanarkshire.ac.uk	
Dundee and Angus College www.dundeeandangus.ac.uk	Tayside
West College Scotland www.westcollegescotland.ac.uk	West
West Lothian College www.west-lothian.ac.uk	West Lothian
Sabhal Mòr Ostaig UHI www.smo.uhi.ac.uk	
Newbattle Abbey College www.newbattleabbeycollege.ac.uk	
Scotland's Rural College www.sruc.ac.uk	

Key:

Large college - delivering activity of greater than 25,000 credits

Small college - delivering activity of less than 25,000 credits

Annex B: Technical Addendums

97. The PIs are based on student records submitted by colleges via the Further Education Statistics (FES) system. There are around 300,000¹⁰ student records in our FES system (in any academic year) and we are constantly working to improve the underlying data quality.
98. The FES returns include the course / exam result for each student funded by SFC and SDS employability fund activity delivered by colleges. [Code List J](#) from our 2019-20 FES 2 guidance outlines the 13 different options to record the outcome for the student on a recognised qualification for the academic year period. This includes options for student withdrawals, transfers, success and failures and continuation to the next stage of the course.

Student Outcome	Enrolments			
	Full time		Part time	
	HE	FE	HE	FE
Transferred to another programme course within the college	27	94	5	76
Withdrawn from programme/course and commenced employment	654	1,302	62	449
Withdrawn from programme/course and now studying in an HEI	38	35	4	45
Withdrawn from programme/course and destination unknown	4,014	8,178	813	7,545
Withdrawn from programme/course and now studying elsewhere (not HEI)	52	112	9	472
Completed programme/course, student assessed but not successful	3,478	5,895	1,309	10,646
Student has progressed to next year but did not gain 70% of the assessed credits undertaken	216	100	145	525
Completed programme/course, student not assessed (student on a recognised qualification but outcome recorded as not assessed)	0	2	10	116
Completed programme/course, student assessed and successful	17,130	27,870	6,103	61,699
Student has progressed to next year and has achieved 70% of the assessed credits undertaken	5,456	1,239	1,871	2,857
Student has achieved 70% of the assessed credits undertaken but has chosen not to progress onto the next year	262	53	73	240
Student is on an interim year of a multi-year VQ programme and is on track and is still participating in the college programme	0	996	327	5,144
Student completed first year of an HND but has chosen to leave with an HNC	520	0	0	0
Totals	31,847	45,876	10,731	89,814

¹⁰ This number includes additional short and non-recognised qualification courses that are not reported in this performance indicator publication.

99. We collect a student record for each funded individual. SFC working with the college sector continues to improve protective characteristics data collection, disclosure, coverage and quality.
100. Colleges submit their returns via our FES Online web tool which performs around 150 separate validations on each record. These validations are updated on an annual basis based on feedback from our statistical advisory and performance indicator groups.
101. As well as performing data validation, our FES Online system provides colleges with management reports which include performance indicators. These reports include the published Performance Indicators for the college which we ask the college to confirm as accurate.
102. Other reports include performance indicators for each course run by the college which enables colleges to evaluate the national PI values by confirming those at course level which are more closely managed by the relevant course teams. Colleges are able to submit files to FES Online as part of an iterative process until they are happy with their data quality and performance indicators. This enables course teams to examine the management reports and update the student records appropriately until they are happy that the results reflect the success rates for their course.
103. SFC consults with our statistical advisory groups and with the College Development Network to provide an annual set of [College Performance Indicators Guidance notes](#) to help ensure student results are coded consistently across the sector.
104. In addition to our FES and current PI guidance notes SFC also provides the performance indicator and student outcome datasets to Education Scotland for use within college evaluations and thematic reviews. This helps ensure the accuracy of our data and provides a richer context in which the results can be reviewed. Education Scotland publishes colleges' annual evaluative reports and enhancement plans together with a joint SFC/ES endorsement statement and these are available on [Education Scotland's website](#) under Further Education sector.
105. SFC conducted a number of college consultations and quality checks before the 2019-20 performance indicators were finalised. These consultations and checks ensure the data quality of the 2019-20 student records to ensure our performance indicators continue to be based on accurate data.
106. SFC allocated £500 million in teaching and fee waiver grant that includes ESF activity, to colleges to deliver learning activity and an additional £138 million to provide financial student support in 2019-20. This excludes additional funding for strategic projects. As a result colleges undergo a significant audit of their student records to ensure these funds are being spent in line with guidance.

These audits include checking that student withdrawals are being properly managed and recorded and that the correct credits are being claimed for students. Our PIs are based on these same records and therefore the robust audit process helps ensure the accuracy of our student records.

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