Scotland's Colleges: Delivering for All

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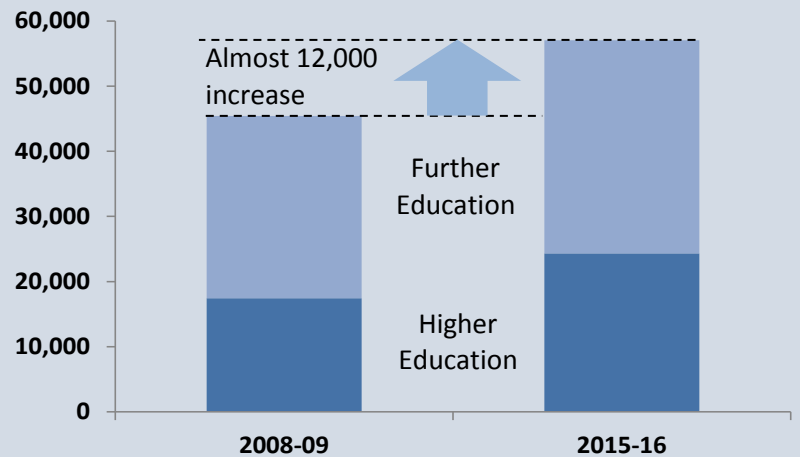
The quality of learning at colleges has never been higher

Percentage of Learning Hours, 2015-16

97.2%
leading to

Recognised Qualifications
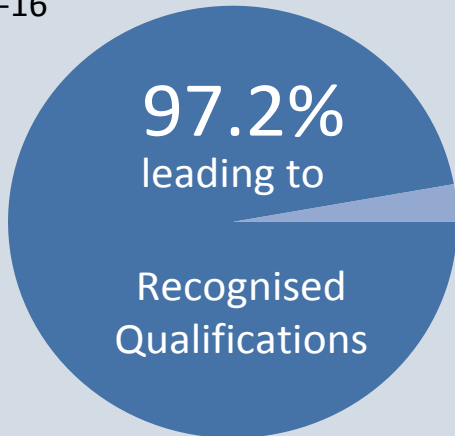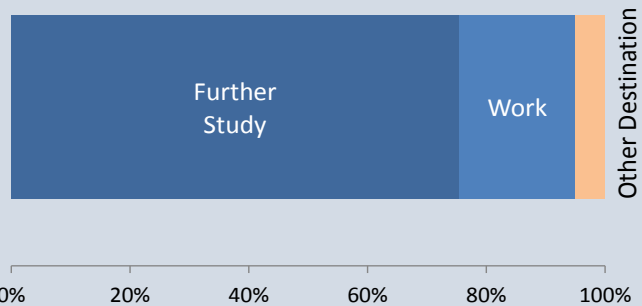
(8.5 percentage point increase since 2006/07)

Full-time college students successfully completed courses, 2015-16

Almost 12,000 increase

Further Education

Higher Education

2008-09   2015-16

Close to 95% of college leavers progress to Positive Destinations, 2015-16

Further Study   Work   Other Destination

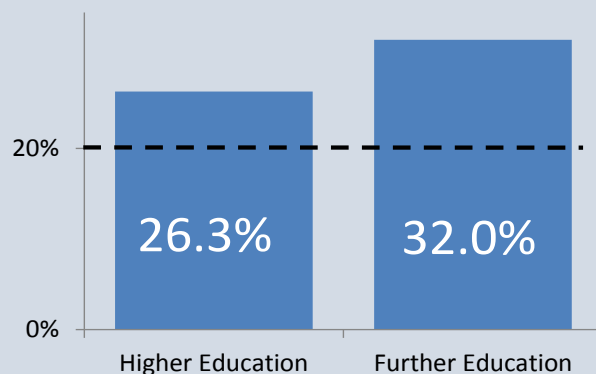0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

The college sector has equality at its very heart

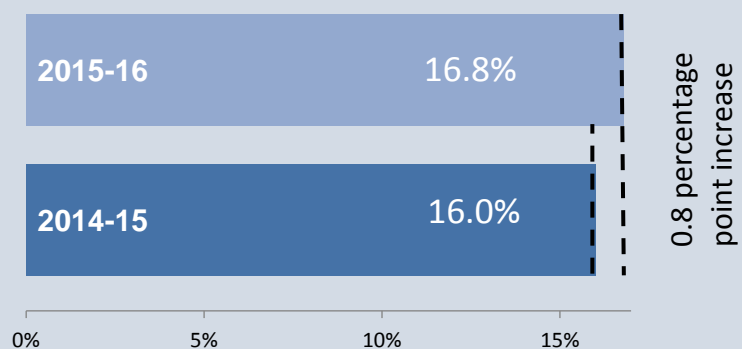Majority of enrolments are on part-time courses, 2015-16
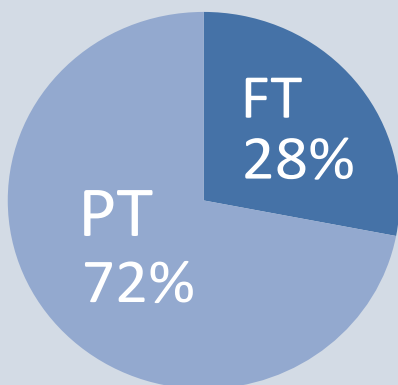
FT 28%

PT 72%

College entrants on courses over 160 hours from Scotland's 20% most deprived areas, 2015-16

20%

0%

26.3%   32.0%

Higher Education   Further Education

Nearly 17% of all learning hours were delivered to students with a declared disability, 2015-16

2015-16   16.8%

2014-15   16.0%

0%   5%   10%   15%

0.8 percentage point increase

Background

Scotland's colleges have implemented the most profound set of public sector reforms in Scottish tertiary education for more than a generation. The reformed college sector is improving people's life chances and generating the skilled workforce needed for economic growth by focusing on job-related skills.

Colleges have built on their tradition of serving the most disadvantaged and those furthest from the workplace. They continue to serve our most deprived communities, as well as those with additional support needs; older learners and women; care-experienced students; and those from a Black and Minority Ethnic background. With equality sitting at the heart of the college sector, there are further ambitions in relation to looked after children and the gender imbalance found in particular subject areas.

Strong partnership working has led to the development of Regional College Outcome Agreements that reflect the economic and skills needs in each region. Colleges are also crucial to Developing the Young Workforce; preparing young people for employment by offering them more choice and flexibility in their learner journey.

Further Education (FE) level students also continue to be supported with record levels of financial support, but rather than being complacent, we are considering the recommendations of the Independent Review of Student Support. The Review aimed to ensure that university and college students, and particularly the most vulnerable, benefit from a fair and effective package of appropriate financial support.

Scotland's college sector is one that continues to evolve and continues to deliver for the people and economy of Scotland.

Our colleges have a strong track record of success
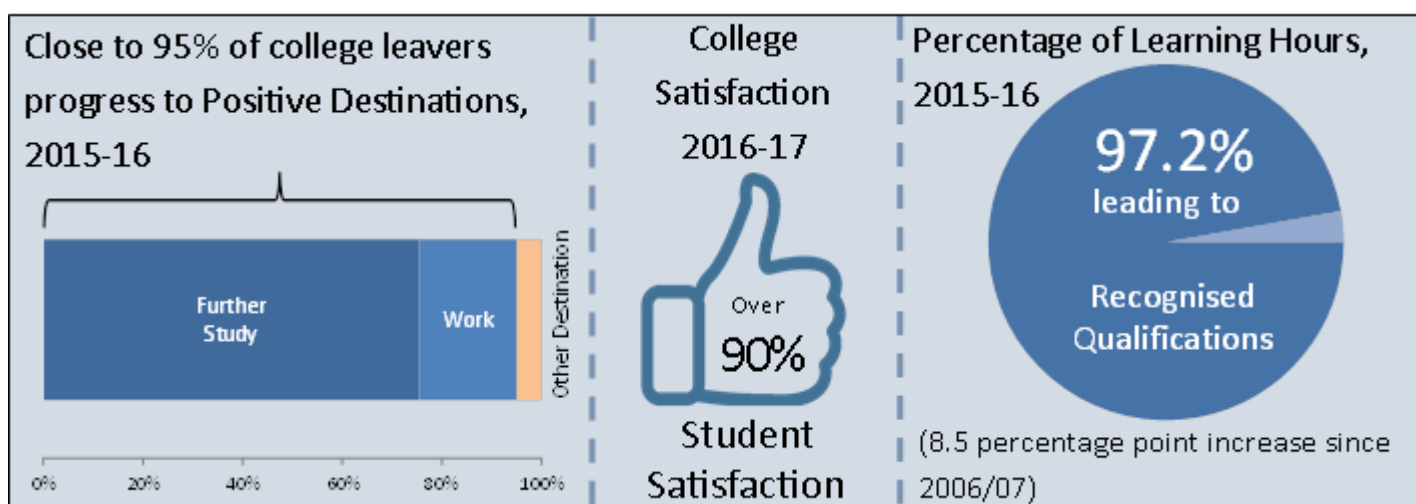
In 2015/16, 97.2% of learning hours were delivered on courses that led to a recognised qualification – an 8.5 percentage point increase from 2006/07.

Source: SFC, College Statistics 2015-16
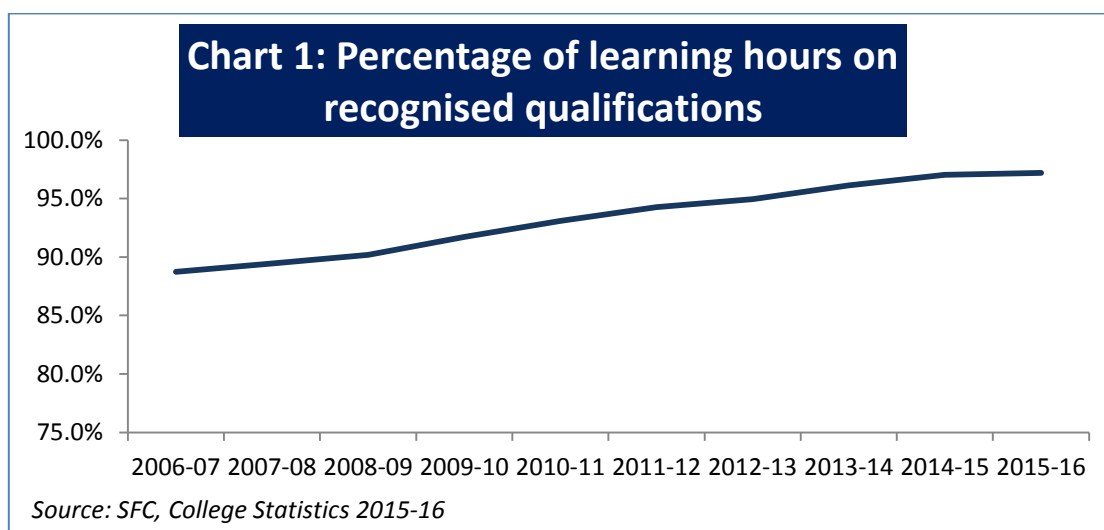
This good work from Scotland's colleges means that of those with a known destination in 2015/16, nearly 95% of college leavers moved on to a positive destination, such as further study, training or employment.

Entrants to college now make up 37% of the total undergraduate students starting in Higher Education (HE), the highest proportion in the last 10 years. Perhaps even more impressive, is that over 41% of all full-time college activity was in HE-level courses in 2015/16, also the highest proportion ever.

College students are very happy with their experience: over 90% of full-time and over 94% of part-time students are satisfied with their college experience. FE students are being supported with record levels of support, with the 2017/18 budget of over £107m in college bursaries, childcare and discretionary funds being a real-terms increase of 32% since 2006/07. Indeed, the non-repayable bursary available in Scotland is the highest level anywhere in the UK.
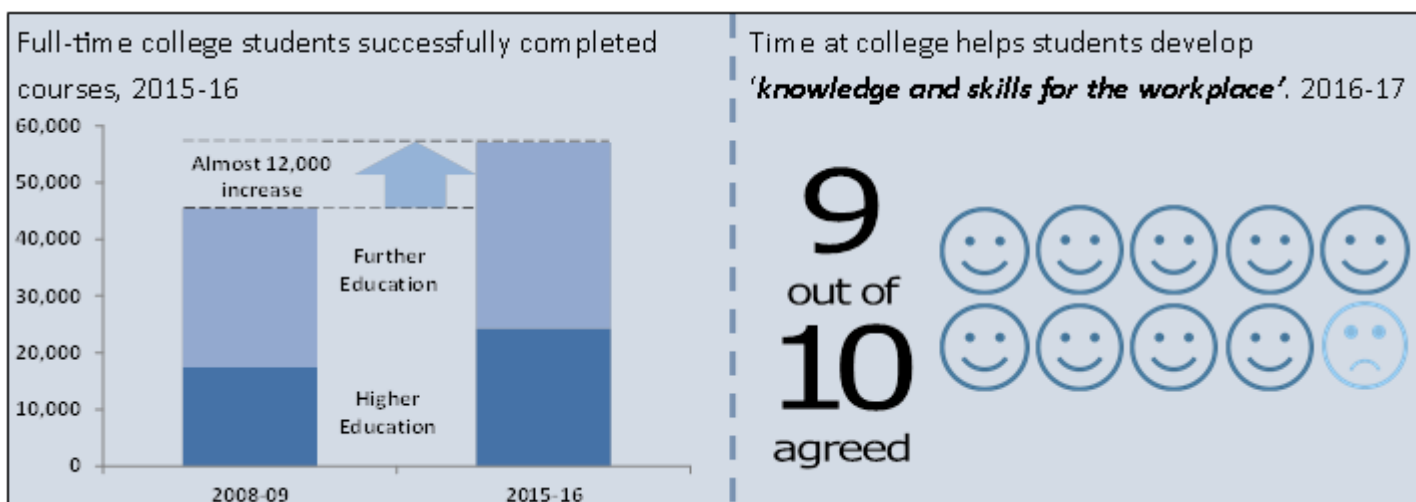
Case study

Dundee and Angus College (Winner at College Development Network [CDN] Annual Awards 2016): The D&A Code Academy
The College has responded to the digital skills shortage by launching the first ever Code Academy. This curriculum concept links the College with local schools, universities, and employers. It increases awareness of the importance of digital skills, and highlights career opportunities in the digital/ICT industries in the region.

The Code Academy offers code camps, workshops for school pupils, coding workshops for adults, and coding clubs for girls. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Computer Science school teachers has also been established, as well as industry master classes, career talks, Foundation and Modern Apprenticeships in Software Development, and a number of industry sponsored events such as an annual Game and App Jam. Over 500 students have benefited from the Code Academy and almost 96% have moved on to further study or employment.

Our colleges produce the workforce of the future

Full-time college students successfully completed courses, 2015-16

Almost 12,000 increase

Further Education

Higher Education

Time at college helps students develop *'knowledge and skills for the workplace'*. 2016-17
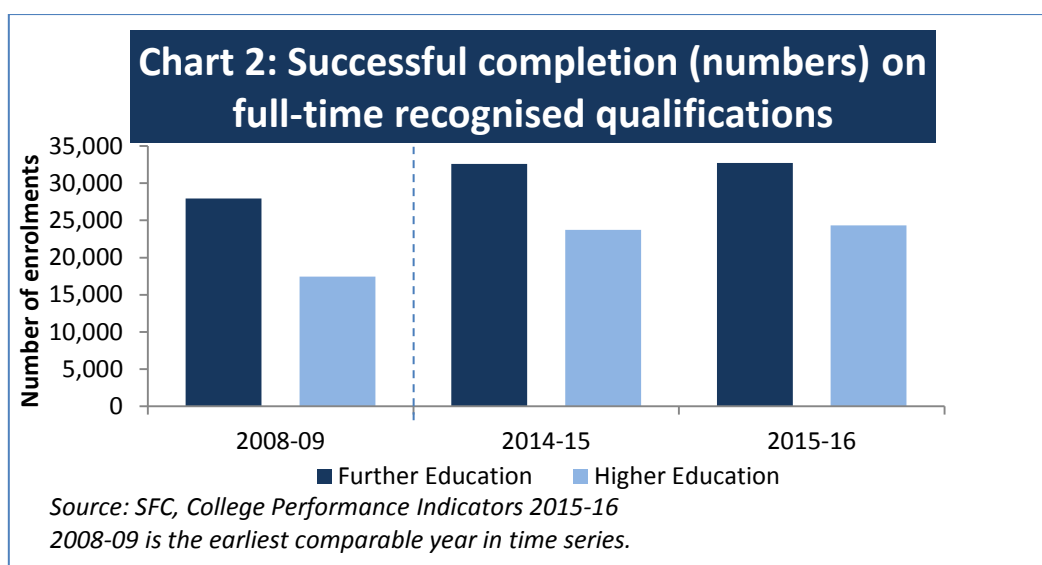
9 out of **10** agreed

Colleges are crucial in bridging the gap between school and industry to create a skilled, employable future workforce which meets the needs of the regions they serve. Colleges are doing this by focusing on purposeful learning opportunities which lead to recognised qualifications.

This approach is clearly working. In 2015/16 almost 12,000 more students in both FE and HE at college successfully completed full-time courses leading to recognised qualifications than in 2008/09 (25.7% increase).

The number of full-time HE students studying for recognised qualifications at colleges has grown by 23.6% since 2008/09, and 2015/16 saw the highest ever number of full-time HE students successfully completing recognised qualifications (over 24,300).

Scottish Funding Council (SFC) statistics show 9 out of 10 of students were satisfied that their '*time at college had helped them develop knowledge and skills for the workplace.'*

Chart 2: Successful completion (numbers) on full-time recognised qualifications

Number of enrolments

■ Further Education ■ Higher Education

Source: SFC, College Performance Indicators 2015-16
2008-09 is the earliest comparable year in time series.

Colleges also make a vital contribution to up-skilling and re-skilling the existing workforce, and that is why short courses leading to employment or progression continue to be funded. Statistics highlight the extent of part-time opportunities available at colleges – indeed, the majority of the total enrolments at college (FE and HE) are still on part-time courses (72.0%).

<u>Apprenticeships</u>
Colleges play an important role in delivering the successful Modern Apprenticeship programme which offers opportunities to gain skills, experience and a qualification while in employment. With a national ambition to have 30,000 Modern Apprenticeships starts by 2020, the key role of colleges in this programme will continue.

Colleges are also the main provider of Foundation Apprenticeships which enable young people to gain industry-recognised qualifications, real-world work experience and access to work-based learning while still at school. There were 351 Foundation Apprenticeship starts in 2016/17, and this will expand to up to 5,000 by the end of 2019.
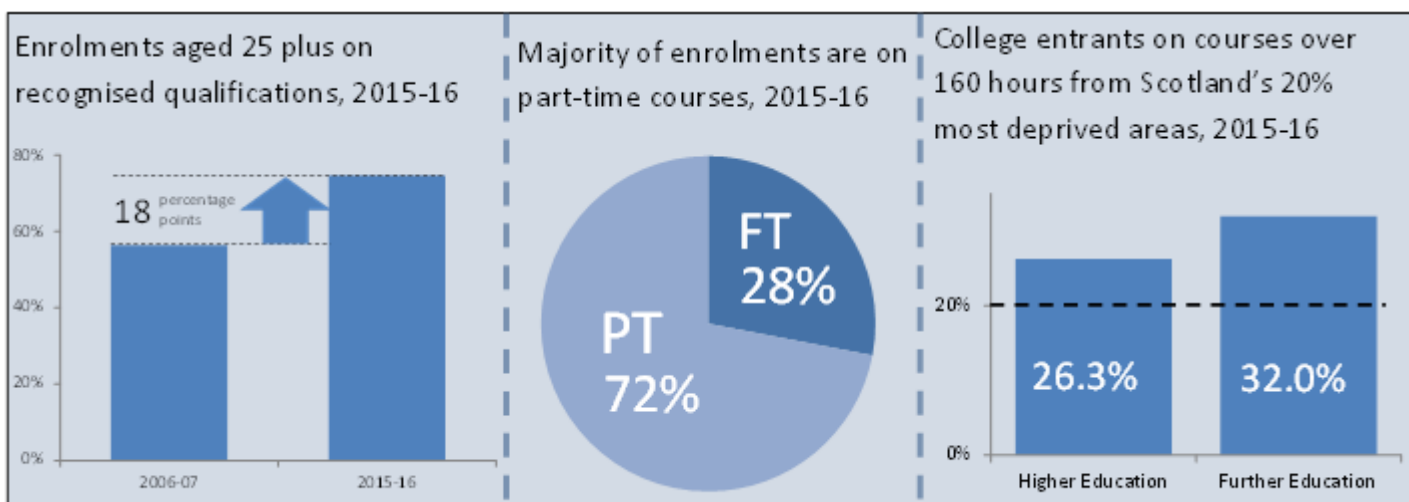
Case study

<u>Forth Valley College (Commended at CDN Annual Awards 2016): Making the Forth Valley Curriculum Work</u>
Forth Valley College has developed, and is delivering on, a sustainable regional curriculum strategy, designed around both the needs of the region and national priorities. Serving the three diverse communities of Falkirk, Stirling, and Clackmannanshire – and with a campus in each of these areas – the College has strategically positioned its key curriculum areas in the campus localities that provide best fit with local economic, business, and industry profiles. This minimises duplication and maximises access to entry-level learning and progression to specialist, industry standard learning facilities.

In developing its curriculum strategy, the College has worked closely with its extensive base of employer and industry body contacts and Community Planning Partners in each locality; and drawn on up-to-date labour market information, through Regional Skills Assessments and Skills Investment Plans. As a result, they have implemented an efficient 'hub and spoke' system of learning provision, which provides access level study in most subject areas across all three campuses, with progression to higher level study centred where it provides best local fit.
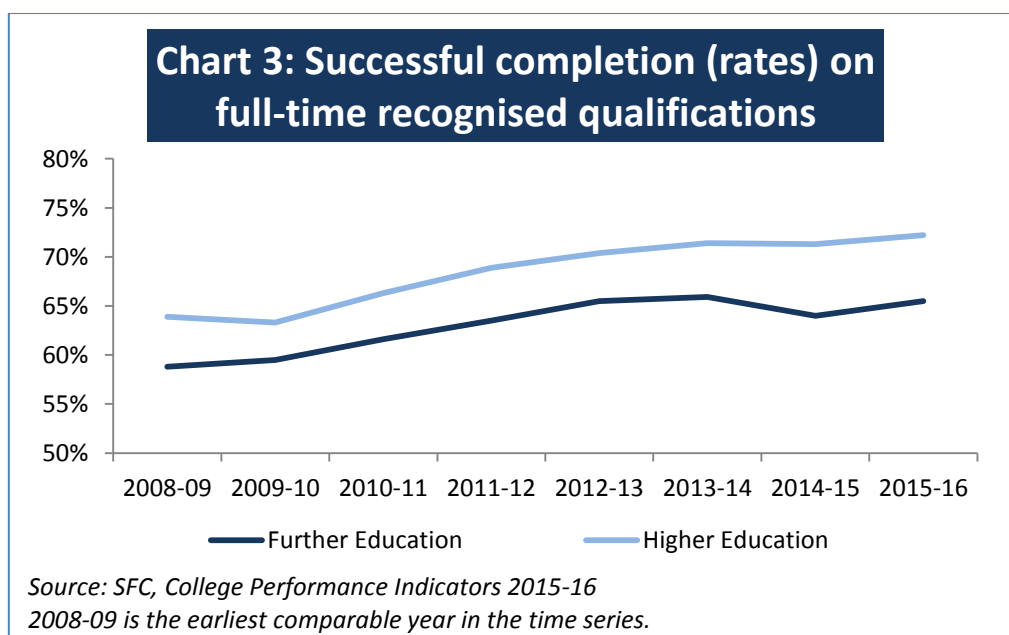
Our colleges give everyone the chance to succeed

Enrolments aged 25 plus on recognised qualifications, 2015-16

18 percentage points

2006-07   2015-16

Majority of enrolments are on part-time courses, 2015-16

FT 28%

PT 72%

College entrants on courses over 160 hours from Scotland's 20% most deprived areas, 2015-16

26.3%   32.0%

Higher Education   Further Education

Our colleges are able to reach out to those furthest from the labour market and education, giving everyone an equal chance of fulfilling their potential, and having equal choices to succeed in life. They do this by delivering learning which is increasingly personalised and flexible, assisted by interactive technologies and tailored to the needs and aspirations of students.
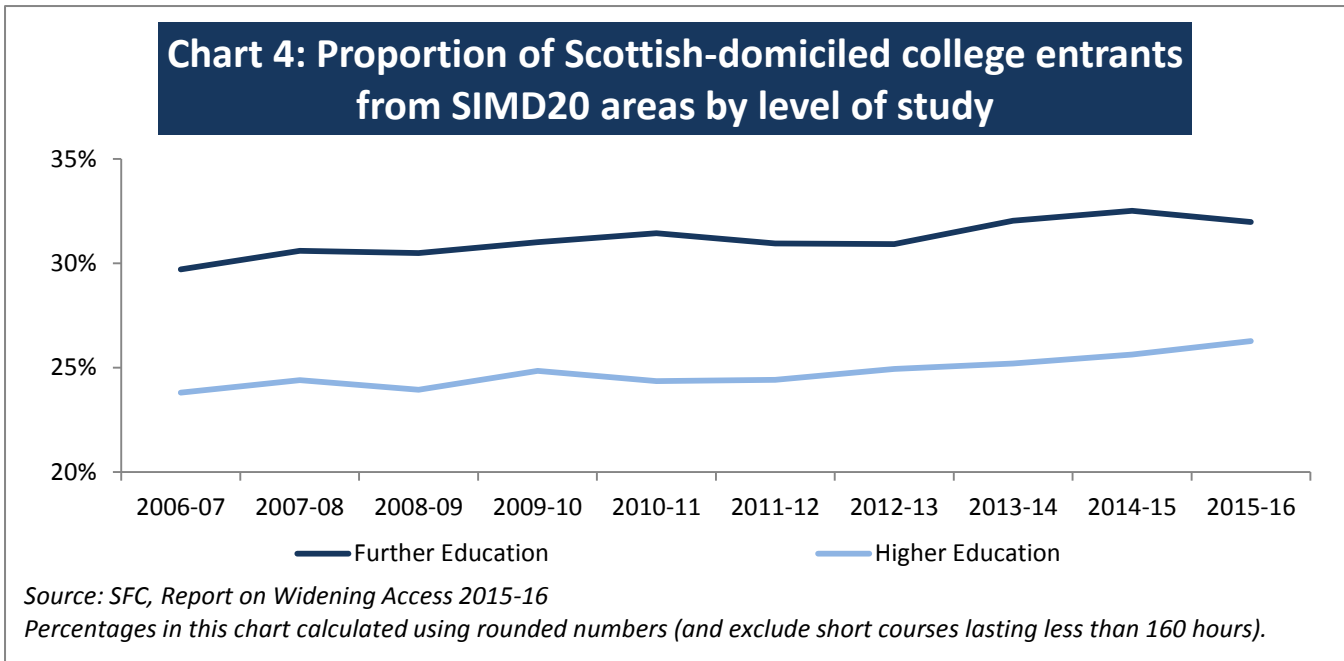
Successful completion rates for all full-time FE students have increased by 6.7 percentage points since 2008/09, while dropout rates have fallen by 2.4 percentage points in the same period.

Successful completion rates for all full-time HE students have increased by 8.3 percentage points since 2008/09, while dropout rates have fallen by 4.1 percentage points in the same period.

Chart 3: Successful completion (rates) on full-time recognised qualifications

2008-09 2009-10 2010-11 2011-12 2012-13 2013-14 2014-15 2015-16

— Further Education   — Higher Education

Source: SFC, College Performance Indicators 2015-16
2008-09 is the earliest comparable year in the time series.

Students from deprived areas

Colleges recruit well from the most deprived areas, with students from SIMD10, SIMD20 and SIMD40 areas overrepresented when compared to the general population. In 2015/16, 26.3% of college entrants in HE, and 32.0% of college entrants in FE, came from Scotland's 20% most deprived areas – this is an increase of 2.5 percentage points and 2.3 percentage points respectively since 2006/07.

Chart 4: Proportion of Scottish-domiciled college entrants from SIMD20 areas by level of study

Source: SFC, Report on Widening Access 2015-16
Percentages in this chart calculated using rounded numbers (and exclude short courses lasting less than 160 hours).

The Commission on Widening Access acknowledged the distinctive role of colleges in serving Scotland's most deprived communities, concluding that *'colleges provide a crucial alternative route into higher education and can play a powerful role in expanding the limited applicant pool resulting from the school attainment gap.'*

Female students

Women are well represented amongst college students, accounting for the majority of college enrolments (51% in 2015/16). The proportion of female students enrolled on recognised qualifications has increased by over 19 percentage points since 2006/07 (rising from 56.9% in 2006/07 to 76.0% in 2015/16).

As part of Developing the Young Workforce, the SFC published a Gender Action Plan in August 2016, setting out actions they will undertake in collaboration with the sector, and other partners, to address gender imbalances and reduce gender gaps in college and undergraduate courses.
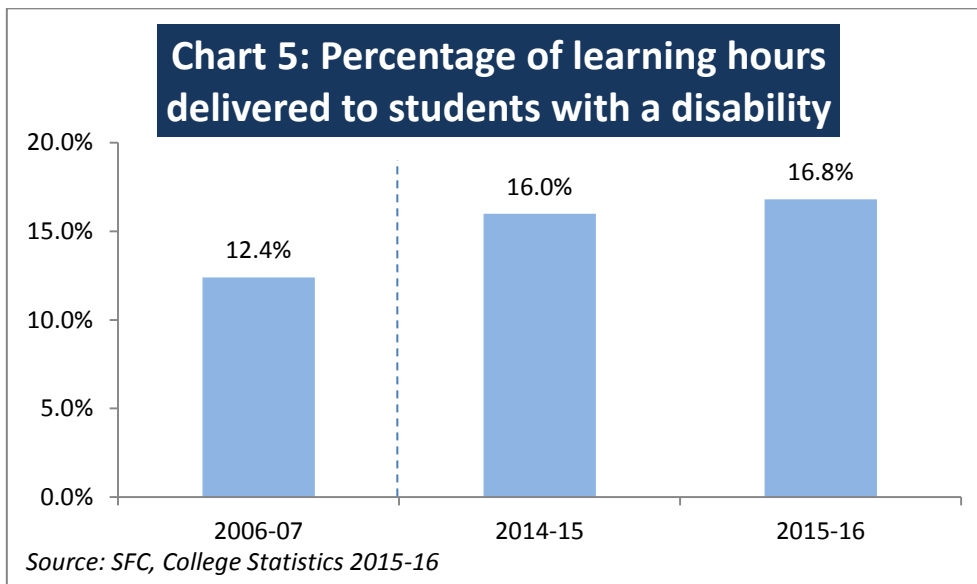
Older learners

There are a wealth of learning opportunities at Scotland's colleges for students aged 25 and over. In 2015/16, 28.7% of all learning hours were delivered to students aged 25 and over, with nearly 43% of all Scotland's college students being within this age group.

Older learners are benefitting from the focus on improving employability through studying for recognised qualifications. The proportion of students aged 25 and over enrolled on recognised qualifications has increased by over 18 percentage points since 2006/07 (rising from 56.3% in 2006/07 to 74.5% in 2015/16).

Students with additional support needs

Nearly 17% of all learning hours were delivered to students with a declared disability in 2015/16 - an increase of 4.4 percentage points from 2006/07.

Chart 5: Percentage of learning hours delivered to students with a disability

Year	Percentage
2006-07	12.4%
2014-15	16.0%
2015-16	16.8%

Source: SFC, College Statistics 2015-16

Colleges have access to ring-fenced funding, via the SFC, to provide specialised support for individual students with specific educational support needs on mainstream courses – a total of £50 million. SFC also provide colleges with funding which supports bespoke provision.

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students
BME students are very well represented in Scotland's colleges. 6.0% of all college learning hours in 2015/16 were delivered to BME students (up from 5.6% in 2014/15 and the highest on record) – this is higher than the corresponding proportion of the population (4% in the 2011 Scottish Census).

This cohort achieve successful outcomes at college. In 2015/16, 71.8% of BME students successfully completed college courses lasting 160 hours or more (up from 70.2% in 2014/15), compared to 69.0% for all enrolments.

Care-experienced students
Considerable work has been undertaken to support care-experienced students at college. A national policy for FE bursaries was introduced in 2016/17 asking colleges to ensure care-experienced students receive the optimum award available taking into account their wider circumstances.

In recognition of the barriers to learning often faced by this group, the SFC set a National Ambition in 2016 with a target for there to be no difference in the outcomes of care-experienced learners comparative to their peers. The target is to improve the numbers of care-experienced students successfully completing full-time FE and HE courses by 5 percentage points by 2018/19.

Data collection has improved in relation to care-experienced students. SFC statistics show that 0.3% (148 out of 50,198) of full-time college qualifiers were care-experienced in 2014/15, rising to 1.1% (571 out of 50,682) in 2015/16.

Case study

West Lothian College (Winner at CDN Annual Awards 2016): ISTILE – Improving Skills through International Learning Exchanges
ISTILE is a two-year project designed to offer disadvantaged learners the opportunity to study and work in an overseas environment. It also offers the teaching team the opportunity to research and report on financial deprivation across Europe, and offer advice and recommendations around best practice when it comes to supporting young people who face barriers to learning caused by financial deprivation.

Our colleges continually strive for improvement

Scotland's colleges must continue to build and grow, innovate and improve, change and develop – just what colleges' success to date has been built on. The SFC's Outcome Agreement process is a powerful lever in ensuring that colleges deliver in return for public investment, and reporting on those measures is now reinforced by Education Scotland's new quality framework, "How good is our college?". There are also a number of other specific ways in which improvement is being sought in Scotland's colleges including:

College Improvement Programme
We want to boost retention and attainment rates among FE students, and particularly for those students currently most at risk of withdrawing without achieving a qualification or moving to a positive destination.

As part of our effort, we have commenced a national college improvement programme to look in detail at individual college level solutions to raise attainment and improve retention. Over the next two academic years the programme will examine and test improvements to overcome the issues and challenges that often contribute to students not gaining a qualification – or, indeed, dropping out. On behalf of the college sector, five colleges will form an improvement team and undertake testing, gather information about what works to share across the sector, contributing to an increase in attainment and retention within and between the five colleges. Their success will also be used to drive improvement across the sector as a whole.

Innovation
There is also a desire for colleges to be more involved in innovation - our economy needs a highly skilled, adaptable and confident workforce, and colleges have excellent links with SMEs.

An action plan has been put in place by the SFC's College Innovation Working Group to ignite collaboration between colleges and businesses. This includes bringing colleges further into the community of Scotland's eight Innovation Centres, while the Scottish Government announced a College Innovation Fund (£500,000 in 2017/18) to support Scotland's colleges to work with businesses on innovation activity.

Case study
West College Scotland: Innovation Voucher (James Frew Ltd)
James Frew Ltd is one of the largest privately owned building services companies in Scotland and was awarded an SFC Innovation Voucher, administered by Interface. This gives the company the opportunity to collaborate with West College Scotland to develop a new innovative training planning process, including the monitoring of certification renewals, development of individual training plans and the measurement of the impact of training through AMI (Achievement Measurement Indexing).

Through this, the College will improve its service delivery in gas engineering and develop a greater understanding of training needs analysis for the building services sector as a result of the collaboration. The project will also enhance understanding of industry within the College and support the development of processes that will make the College more responsive to business needs.

Roddy Frew, Managing Director, of James Frew Ltd, said *'we are delighted to work with West College Scotland on the Scottish Funding Council Innovation Voucher and it has helped us align training plans and enhance our service offer'*.

Summary
The quality of learning at Scotland's colleges has never been higher, with colleges expertly preparing the people of Scotland for work and other positive destinations. This has not, however, been achieved at the expense of equality which remains at the very heart of the college sector and central to everything that it does.

Our colleges continue to evolve and strive for improvement, however, it is important that the many successes of the college sector are recognised and celebrated as it continues to benefit so many in so many ways.

References
All statistics in this publication are sourced from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) or Skills Development Scotland (SDS):

College Statistics 2015-16: http://www.sfc.ac.uk/publications-statistics/statistical-publications/statistical-publications-2017/SFCST032017.aspx;

College Performance Indicators 2015-16: http://www.sfc.ac.uk/publications-statistics/statistical-publications/statistical-publications-2017/SFCST012017.aspx;

SFC Report on Widening Access 2015-16: http://www.sfc.ac.uk/publications-statistics/statistical-publications/statistical-publications-2017/SFCST082017.aspx;

College Leaver Destination 2015-16: http://www.sfc.ac.uk/publications-statistics/statistical-publications/statistical-publications-2017/SFCST072017.aspx;

Student Satisfaction and Engagement 2016-17: http://www.sfc.ac.uk/publications-statistics/statistical-publications/statistical-publications-2017/SFCST092017.aspx;

SFC Infact database: https://stats.sfc.ac.uk/infact/index.htm;

Skills Development Scotland: https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/news-events/2017/march/more-apprenticeship-opportunities-for-scottish-school-pupils/

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