

Scotland's Colleges: A Baseline Report for Academic Year 2009-10

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Introduction

Scope and relevance

This report provides information about further and higher education in Scotland's colleges for academic year 2009-10 and shows trends from 2000-2001 onwards.

It is wide-ranging in its content and covers areas such as participation, levels of activity and subjects studied. It will be of value to policy makers, to people working within colleges, to other stakeholders and, more generally, to people and organisations with an interest in tertiary education in Scotland. This is the third report in a series which is now published by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) on an annual basis.

Sources

The report uses information from the Further Education Statistics (FES) records routinely collected by SFC and covers all college activity funded by the SFC. Where appropriate this information is supplemented by ancillary sources such as population estimates from the General Register Office for Scotland

Readers should be aware, however, that FES records are limited in relation to college activity that is not funded by SFC, particularly where colleges recover the full cost of courses from other sources.

Interpretation

While the information that we present in this report gives an indication of trends in further education (FE) in Scotland, we would caution against drawing definite conclusions from isolated figures. The information we present should not be over-interpreted. Student numbers, for example, can fluctuate from one academic year to another and such a change by itself is not necessarily a positive or negative indication regarding the college system as a whole.

Statistical notes

Throughout the report we have provided statistical notes to explain important points about methods of measurement and analysis. These notes are presented in shaded boxes to distinguish them from commentary on the figures.

Main points at a glance

- In 2009-10 there were 347,336 students undertaking courses in the 43 SFC-funded colleges in Scotland;
- The number of full-time students increased by nine per cent;
- The number of students dropped by 27,700 from academic session 2008-09 a decrease of around 7.4 per cent as a result of the move to more full-time courses at the expense of short part-time courses;
- 95 per cent of all activity in Scotland's colleges was for programmes leading to a recognised qualification or for students with learning difficulties;
- 15 per cent of students attending college were registered as having a disability or requiring extended learning support (ELS). ELS (students are on mainstream programmes but receive additional learning support;
- Activity related to FE qualifications, special needs & non-recognised qualifications has risen over the last four years;
- Activity for full-time higher education (HE) qualifications has increased in recent years although part-time HE activity continues to fall;
- Approximately 38 per cent of working age enrolments had a direct link to industry and commerce in 2009-10;
- A further 27 per cent of enrolments were on training schemes, currently in employment (excluding above) or registered unemployed;
- Overall, females account for 55 per cent of students at college;
- The gender gap has been narrowing for the last three years after a peak in 2004-05; however, there are still more females than males attending college;
- 5.3 per cent of college students were from non-white ethnic groups, whilst the 2001 census showed that about two per cent of the general population were from the non-white group; and
- For the last three years the most popular subject of study has been 'Family Care/ Personal Development/ Personal Care & Development'. Students on Special Needs programs are most likely to study this subject.

Part 1: Students in Scotland's colleges

Figure 1 shows that in 2009-10 there were 347,336 students (headcount) studying in Scotland's 43 SFC-funded colleges, accounting for a total of 438,522 enrolments. It should be noted that students may be enrolled on a number of courses in a single academic year. For example, a student may initially enrol on a short course as they take their first tentative step back into education and subsequently enrol on a more substantial programme of study; others may enrol on several short courses rather than on a single programme of study.

Statistical note: Activity

1 SUM is equal to 40 hours of learning. A full-time course is equivalent to 20 SUMs (800 hours of learning). SUMs are referred to as 'activity' throughout the report.

Figure 1: Number of enrolments, students and SUMs 2001-02 to 2009-10

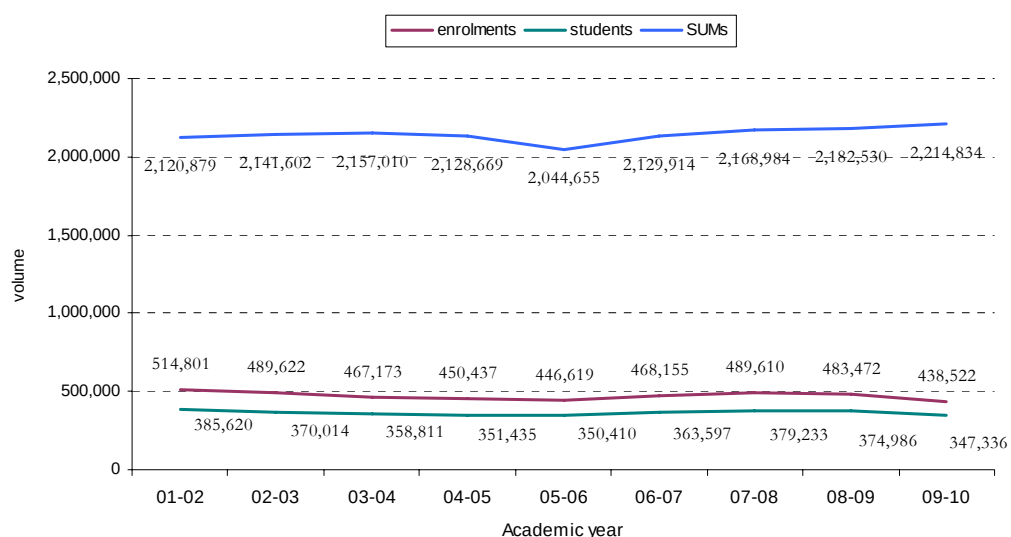


Figure 1 shows that:

- the number of students has dropped by 27,700 in 2009-10;
- activity is slightly higher with a an increase of 1.5 per cent;
- in 2009-10 there were 61,961 students enrolled on more than one programme of study. These students accounted for 148,695 enrolments; and
- due to definitional changes SUMs from 2005-06 onwards cannot be compared to previous data, but in the last five years the number of SUMs has increased.

Statistical note: Measures of activity and discontinuity

In 2005-06 SFC introduced a new method of measuring fundable activity. This has created an inevitable discontinuity in 2005-06 compared with previous years for trends in fundable activity. In 2004-05 a student who studied for as few as 440 hours could qualify as full-time and, as such, the college received full-time tariff funding for that student at a rate equivalent to 840 hours of learning (21 SUMs). Under current rules, a student must now enrol for at least 720 hours of learning in order for the college to qualify for a reduced full-time tariff rate equivalent to 800 hours of learning (20 SUMs). The change has had a substantial effect on activity measurement.

Figure 2: Students by mode of attendance and level of study, 2001-02 to 2009-10

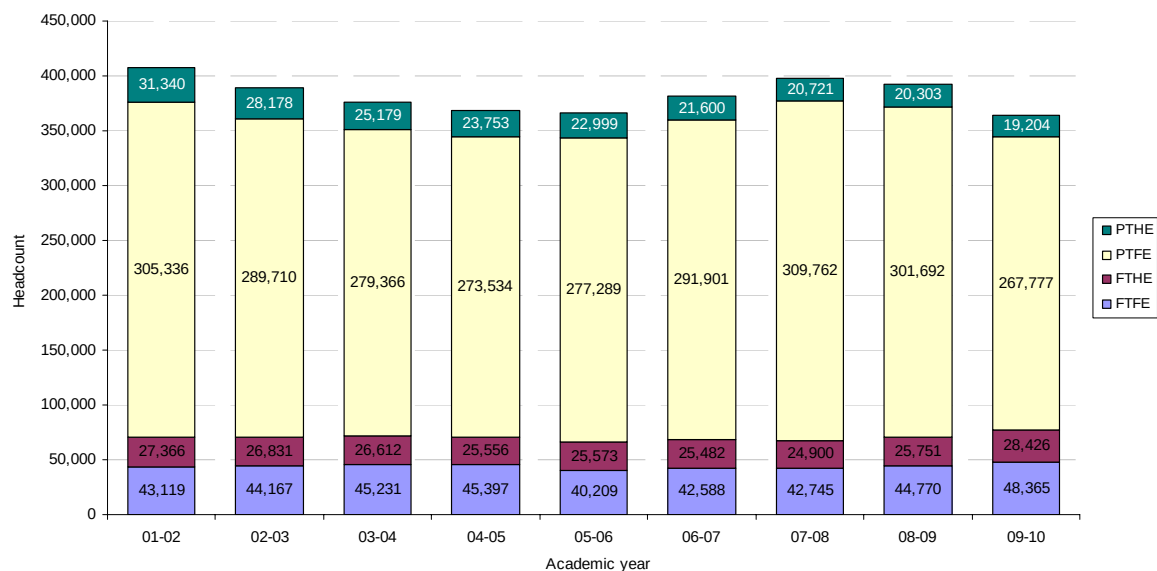


Figure 2 shows that:

- the numbers of students studying full-time FE and HE courses has increased in academic year 2009-10;
- in 2009-10 there were 47,630 students studying on HE programmes in colleges, of whom 60 per cent were enrolled on a full-time programme; and
- at FE-level, in the same year there were 48,365 full-time and 267,777 part-time students, with full-time accounting for 15 per cent of all FE-level students. One of the main reasons for the high proportion of part-time learning at FE level is that many students are also in full-time paid work or have other domestic responsibilities. Such

students are often enrolled on programmes with a vocational orientation.

Statistical note:

Figure 2 shows an estimated headcount of 363,772 in 2009-10 whilst Figure 1 states that there were only 347,336 students in that year. We have already stated that there were 61,961 students enrolled on more than one programme of study. Figure 1 counts these students once but Figure 2 will count these students once for each of the modes and levels of study in which they participated. So, if a student was enrolled on a full-time HE and an additional part-time FE programme then in Figure 2 they will be counted once in each of these categories.

This method of counting is necessary to avoid under-representation of particular categories. Some readers may have a particular interest in part-time FE programmes and would want to know the actual number of students participating at this level, whilst other readers may have a particular interest in full-time HE and want to know the actual number of students participating at that level. This method is used throughout the report when looking at student numbers and can inflate the apparent total number of 'students' depending on the categories used.

**Figure 3: SUMs by mode of attendance and level of study
2005-06 to 2009-10**

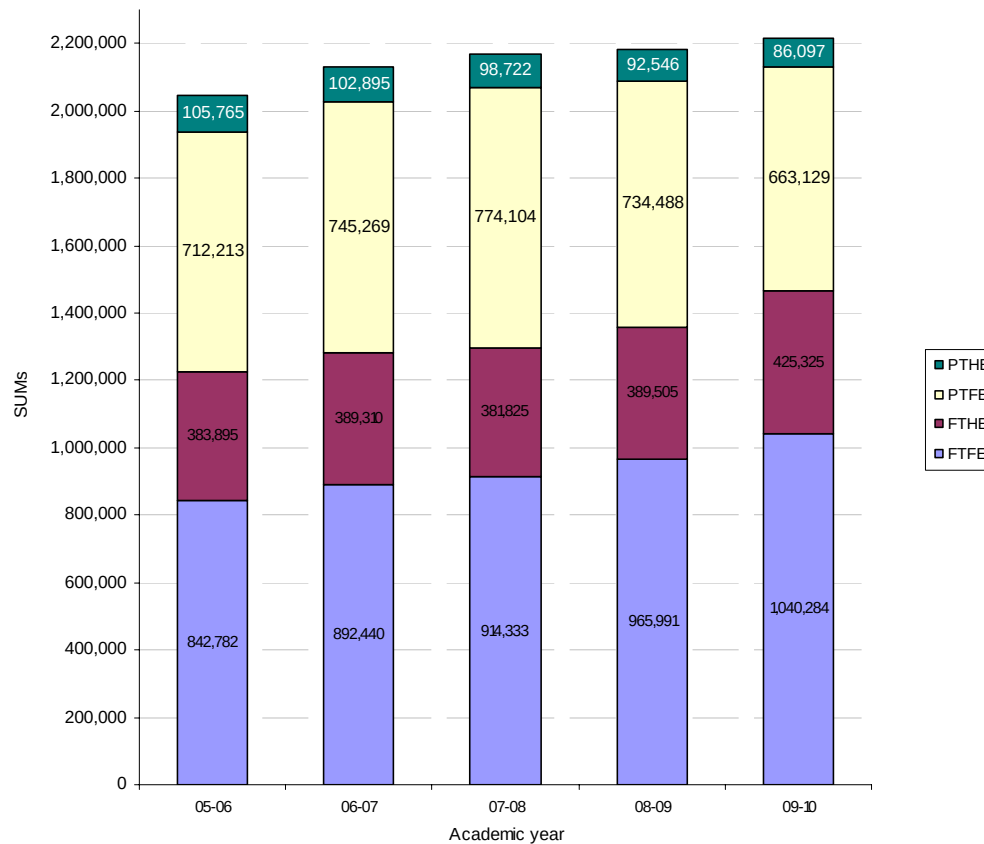
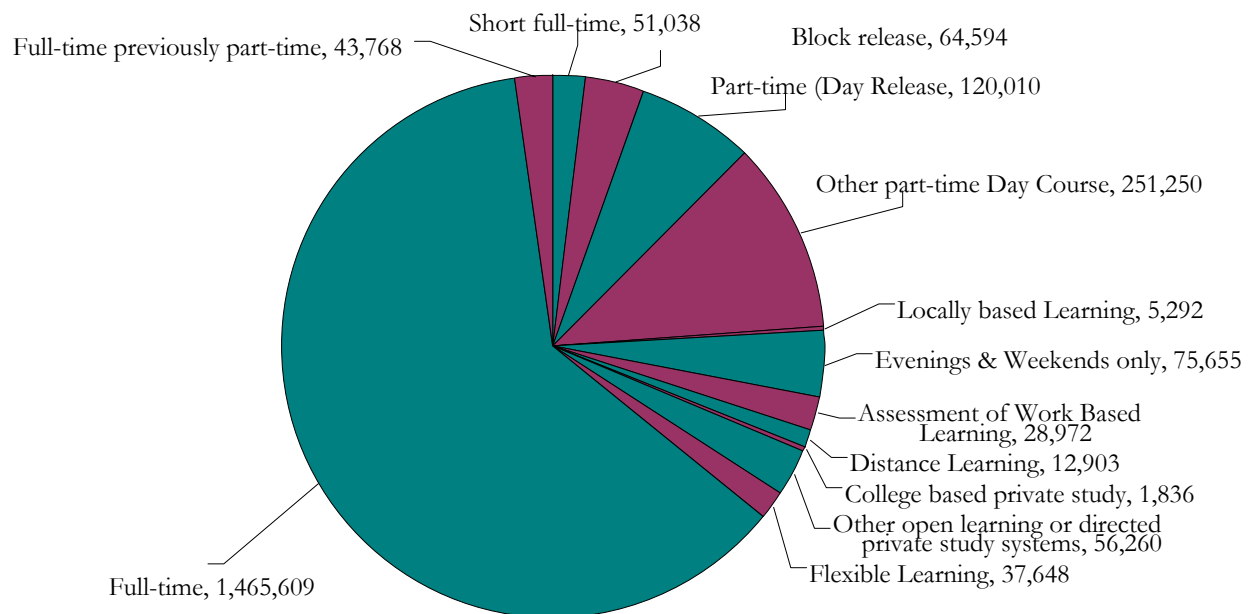


Figure 3 shows that:

- activity has continued to increase over the past four years; and
- FE courses account for most of the activity.

We often draw a simple distinction, as above, between full-time and part-time students, but FES records contain finer detail than this. Figure 4 shows information on enrolments by the detailed mode of attendance for academic year 2009-10.

Figure 4: Student activity by detailed mode of study, 2009-10



We can see from Figure 4 that full-time study accounts for 66 per cent of all student activity with other part-time day being the second most popular mode of study.

Figure 5 provides a breakdown of students by gender over the period 2000-01 to 2009-10.

Figure 5: Students by gender, 2000-01 to 2009-10

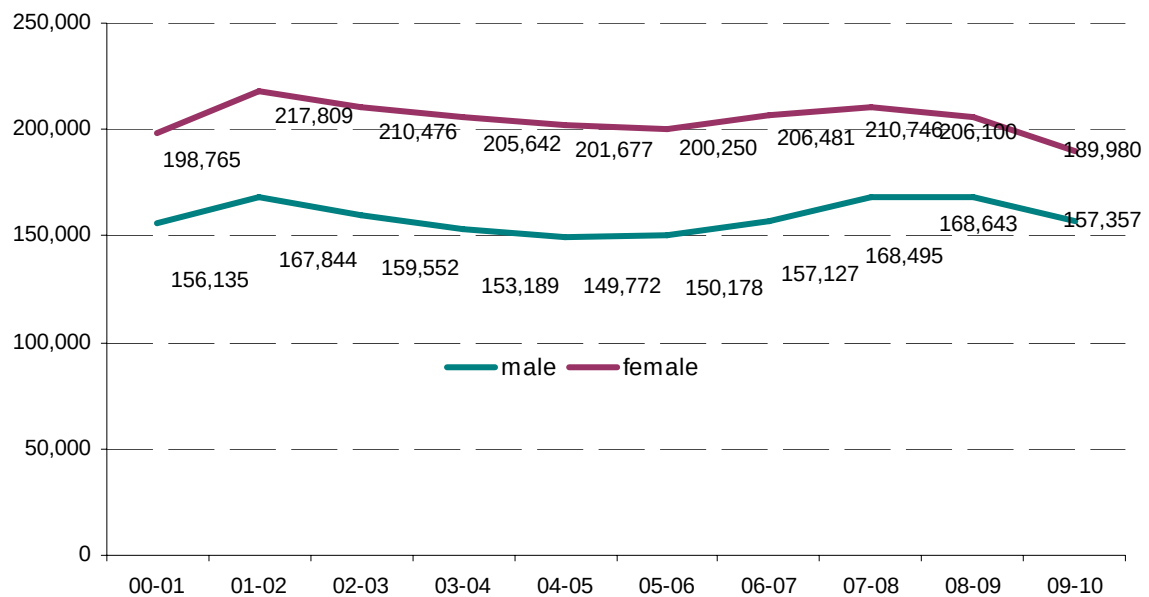


Figure 5 shows that:

- although the number of students has decreased in 2009-10 the female to male gender split in student headcount remains at 55 to 45 per cent; and
- the gender gap is smaller now than at any time since 2000-01.

Scotland's colleges enrol large numbers of disabled students and students with additional support needs. Figure 6 shows that 16 per cent of all students (headcount) have a disability or receive additional support in one form or another. This equates to more than 26 per cent of all activity.

Figure 6: Students with a disclosed disability or receiving additional support, 2009-10

	Students	SUMs
Students with a declared disability	37,263	345,554
Students enrolled on special programmes for students with learning disabilities	12,960	93,880
Students enrolled on mainstream programmes but requiring extended learning support	3,904	132,671
Total students listed above	54,127	572,105
Total in FE colleges 2008/09	347,337	2,214,834
Percentage of students with a disability	16%	26%

Statistical note:

Students have been allocated to the categories in Figure 6 hierarchically, so that a student is counted only once. Students with a declared disability appear only in the first (top) category and so on.

These figures are subject to an element of under-reporting as many students decline to provide information on their disability status or the required data is not collected. In 2009-10 we did not have disability details for about 30,445 students (about 20,000 of these were enrolled on full-cost recovery courses for which disability details are not collected). However, in some cases where the student was recorded as having additional support these have been included in the above statistics

It is estimated that 20 per cent of Scotland's population have a disability, with a higher incidence in the older age groups. The majority of students enrolled in Scotland's colleges are in the younger age groups and therefore the figures above suggest that those with a disability or requiring additional learning support are well represented at Scotland's colleges.

Figure 7: Number of students with a disability by age, 2009-10

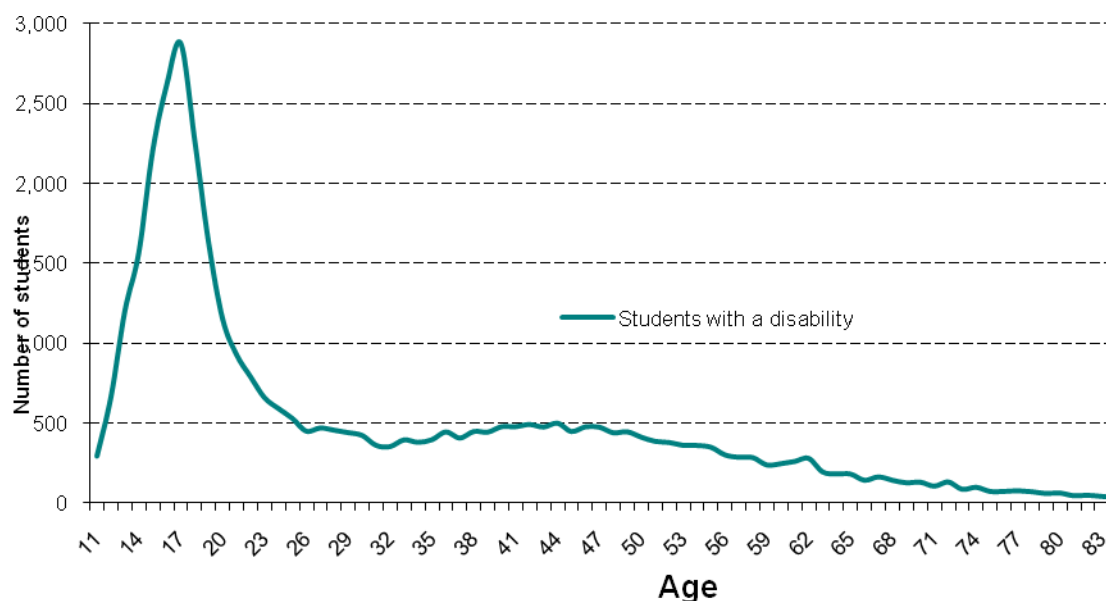


Figure 7 shows that:

- students of all ages with disabilities attend college; and
- the number of disabled students peaks at age 17 at 2,880.

Figure 8: Students by breakdown of recorded disabilities, 2009-10

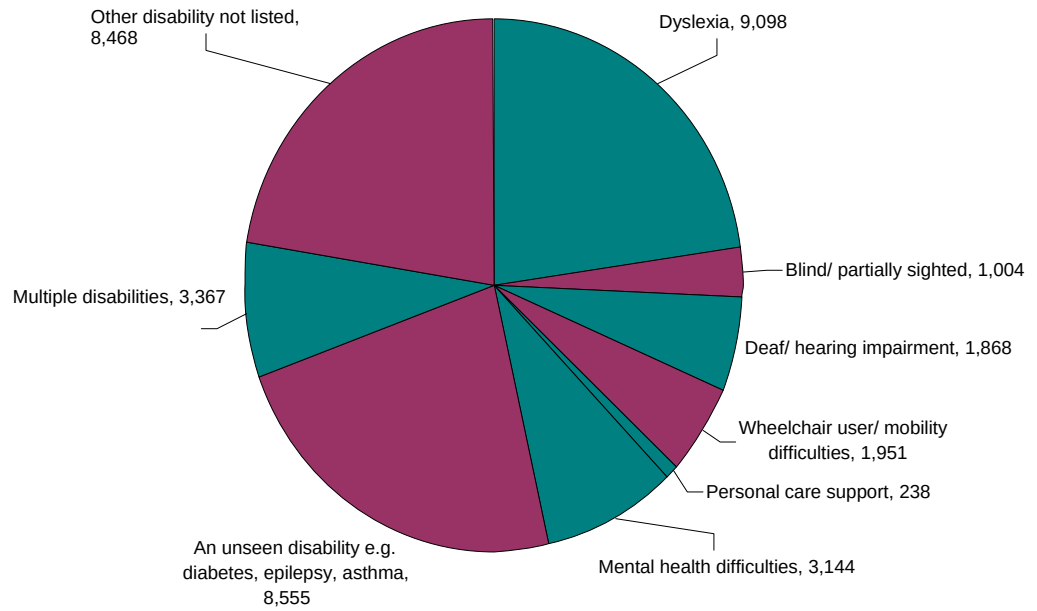


Figure 9: Disability by Qualification Aim Summary, 2009-10

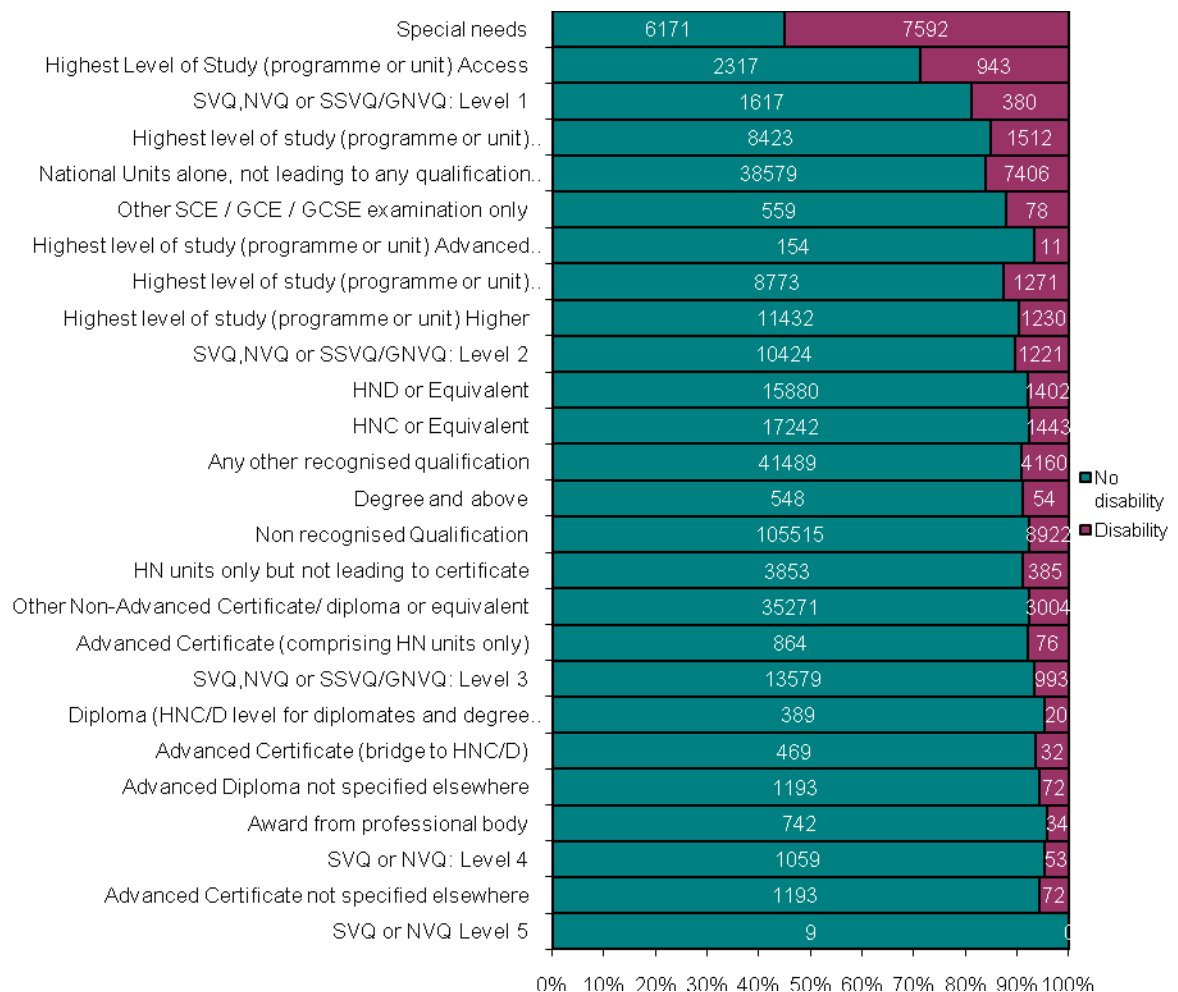


Figure 9 shows that:

- almost 55 per cent of students on special needs programmes have a disability;
- two thirds of students who were recorded as having no known disability were studying towards a recognised qualification. Three quarters of students recorded as dyslexic were studying for a recognised qualification; and
- students recorded as having mental health issues, personal care support or multiple disabilities are more likely to be studying for a non-recognised qualification.

Figure 9a: Qualification aim by disability, 2009-10

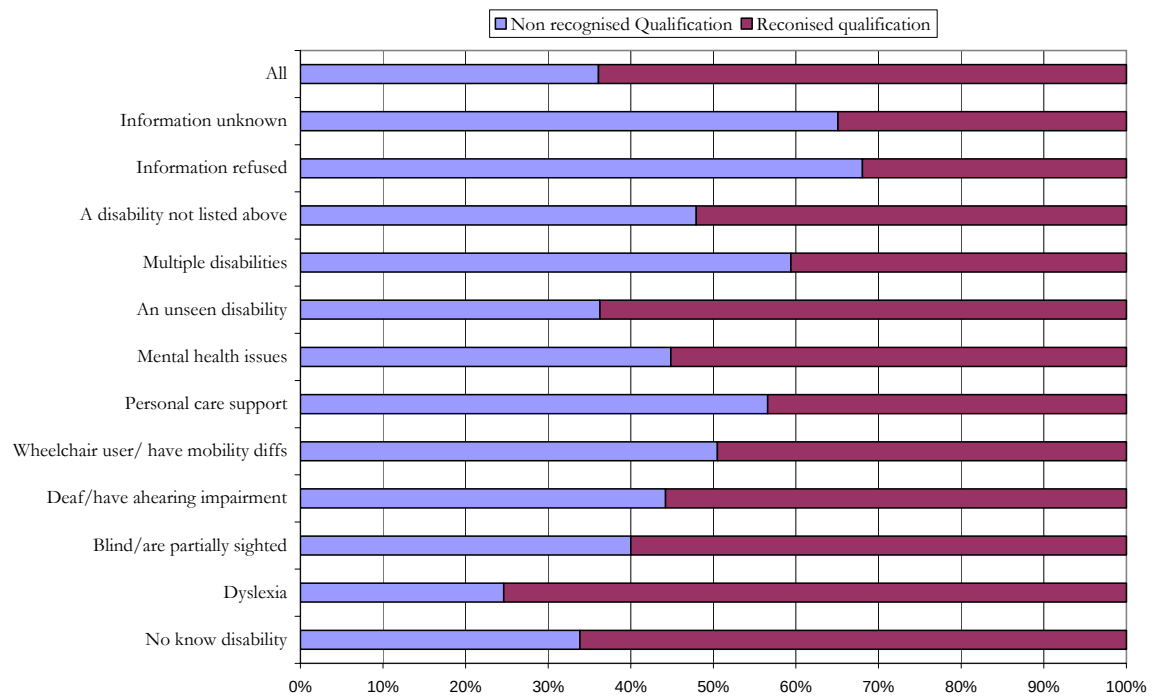


Figure 10 describes the ethnicity of students by ethnic groups other than white in Scotland's colleges for academic year 2009-10. This group of students totalled 16,893 or about 4.8 per cent of all students, which is a considerably higher proportion than the two per cent of Scotland's population recorded in these groups in the 2001 census.

Figure 10: The ethnic background of minority student groups, 2009-10

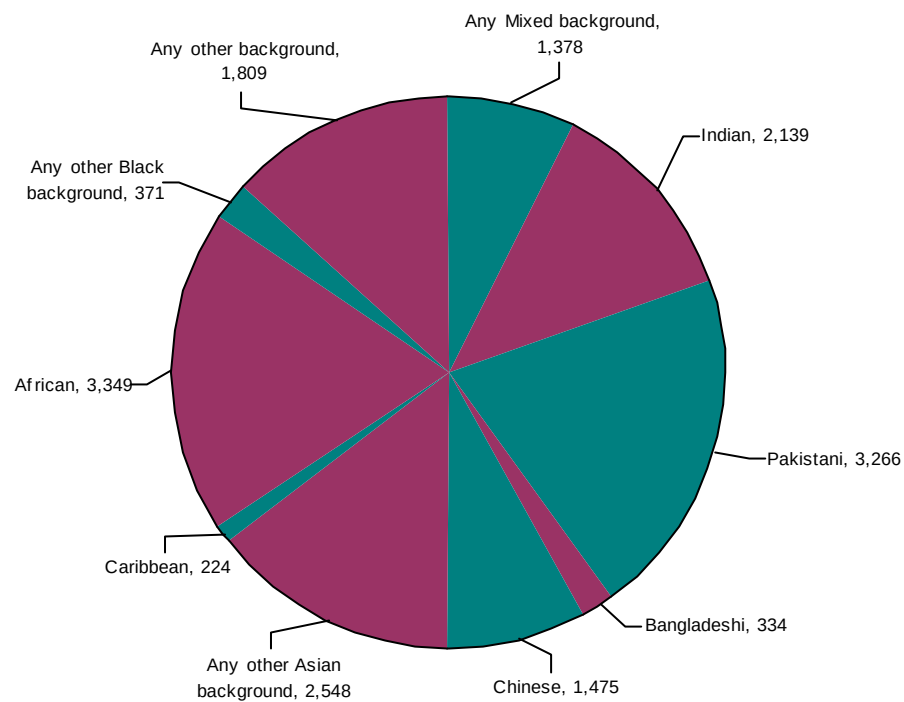


Figure 11: Students by gender and ethnic group, 2009-10

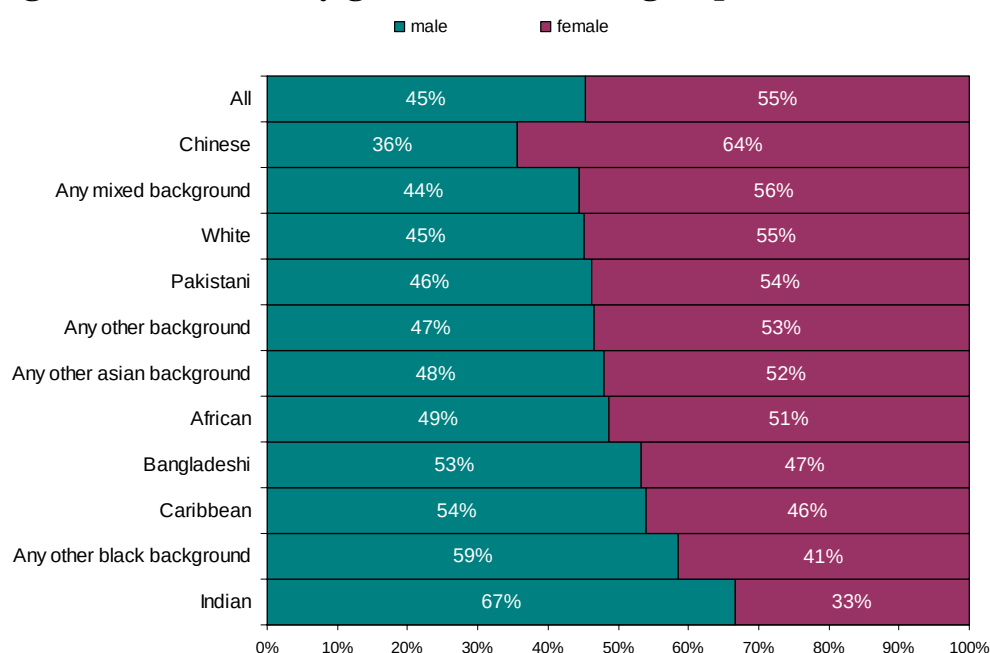


Figure 11 shows the gender balance among students from each ethnic group. The overall gender balance is in favour of females. There are a few ethnic groups where the gender balance is in favour of males. The Indian group has the highest percentage of males at 67 per cent. Please note that volatility due to small numbers in some groups may lead to large percentage changes between years.

Figure 12: Minority Ethnic/ white by subject, 2009-10

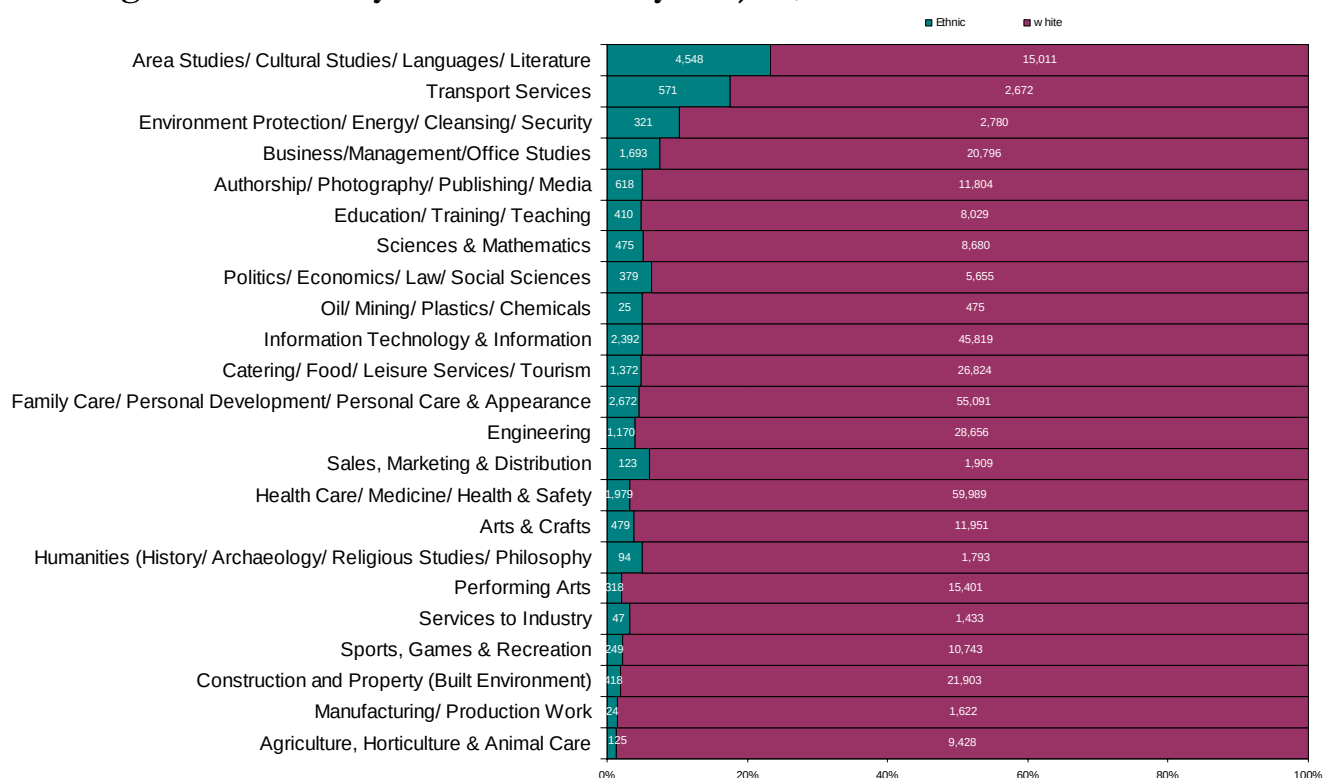
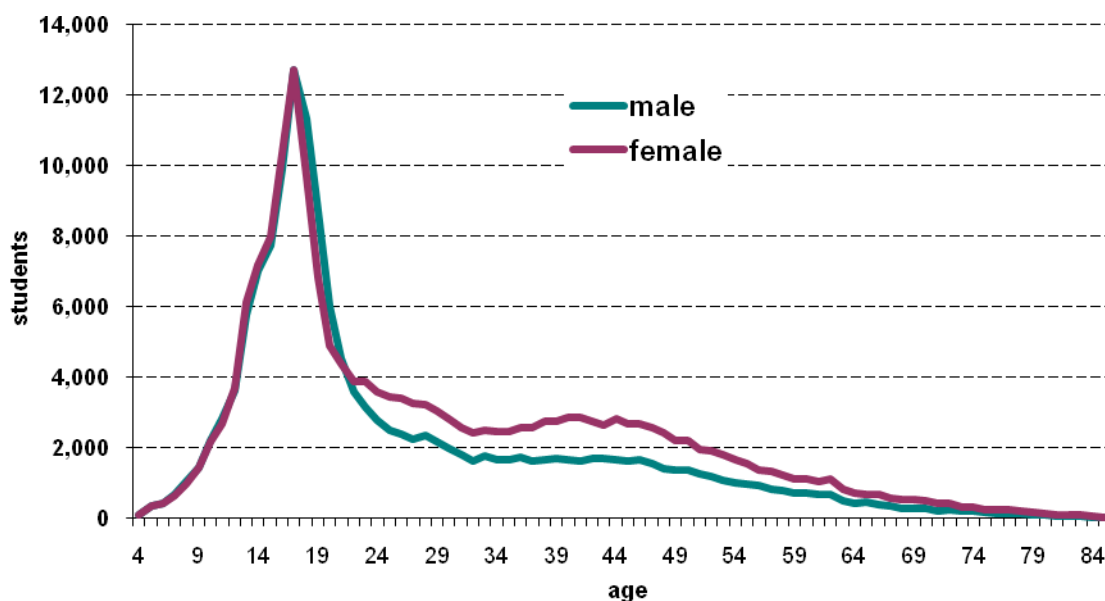


Figure 12 shows that:

- the most popular subject area for non-white students is ‘Area Studies/ Languages/ Literature’, and 23 per cent of all students in this group are from an ethnic background;
- the second most popular subject area for students from an ethnic background is ‘Family Care/ Personal Development/ Personal Care & Appearance’ but this is the most popular subject area in general; and
- the least popular subject area for students of an ethnic background to study is ‘Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care’.

Figure 13a: Students by age and gender, 2009-10

Scotland’s colleges attract students of all ages from compulsory school age to senior citizens. Figure 13a shows the age pattern in Scotland’s colleges by gender in 2009-10.



It can be seen that:

- females slightly outnumber males in the younger age groups;
- females considerably outnumber the number of males in the older age groups; and
- there are substantial numbers of students across the working age population, which gives an indication of the contribution colleges make to lifelong learning in Scotland.

Figure 13b: Cumulative frequency of students by age and gender, 2009-10

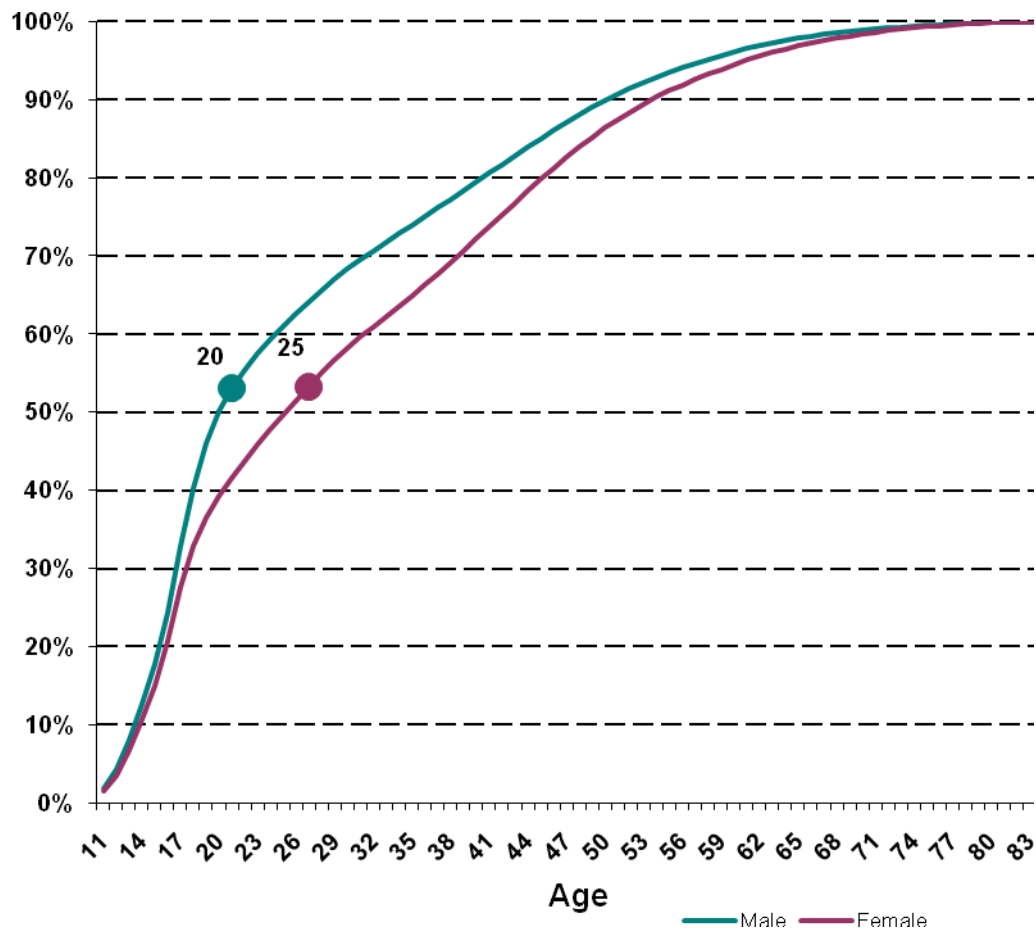


Figure 13b shows that:

- the median age for males is 20; and
- the median age for females is 25.

Figure 14: Students by age and mode of study, 2009-10

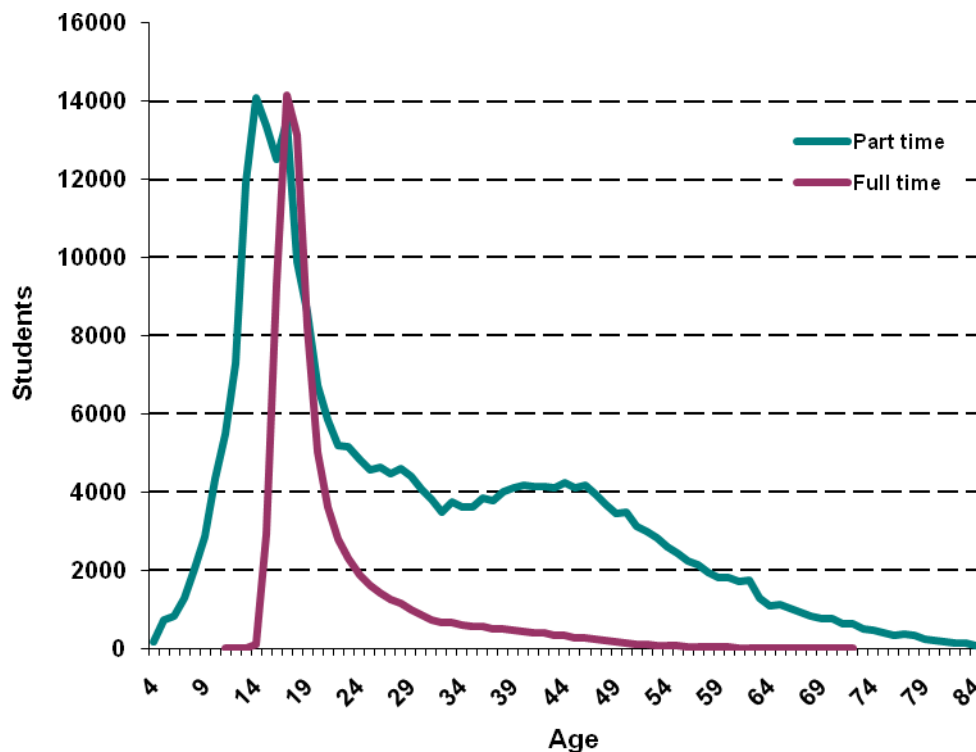


Figure 14 shows the age pattern by broad mode of study. It shows that, while student numbers drop sharply after the age of 20 for both full-time and part-time study, a considerable number of older students study at college on a part-time basis.

There are a small number of full-time students aged under 16 but these students are enrolled in collaboration with their secondary schools or are winter school leavers or school students who have been excluded.

Scotland's colleges contribute significantly to the training of the Scottish workforce. This can be through providing the qualifications required for a particular job, running courses to a company's specification, day release programmes for individuals continuing their professional development or reskilling for those looking to re-enter employment.

Figure 15 below provides an estimate of the number of working age students (aged 18 and over) enrolled on programmes that have a direct link with industry and commerce.

Figure 15: Working age enrolments with a direct link to industry and commerce, numbers and as a percentage of all working age enrolments, 2000-01 to 2009-10

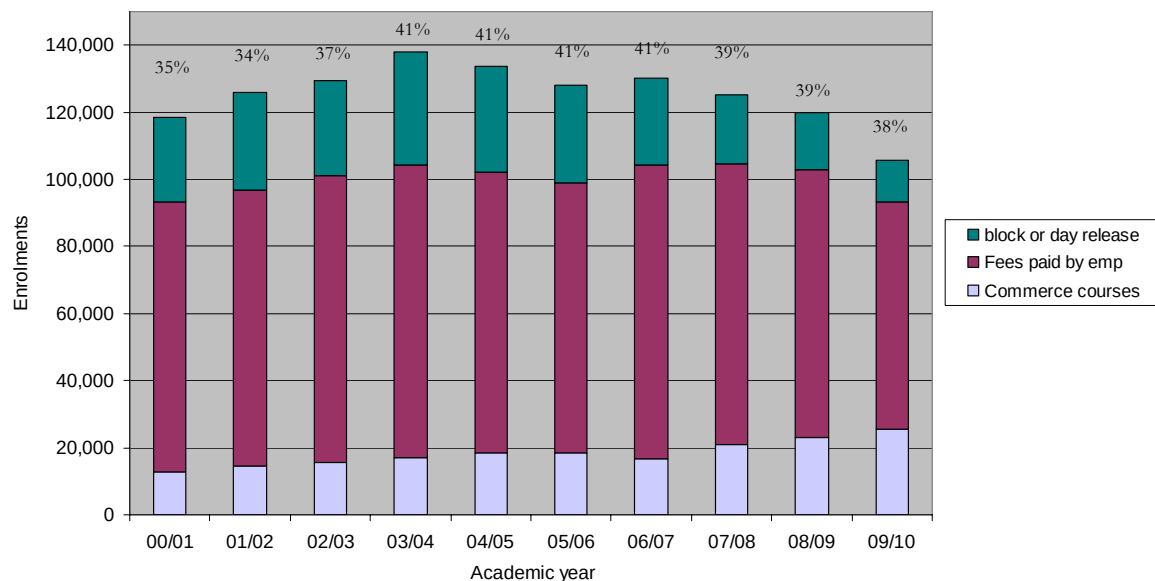


Figure 15 shows that:

- 38 per cent of enrolments, for those of working age, at Scotland's colleges had a direct link to industry and commerce for academic year 2009-10;
- for the last seven years this ratio has remained relatively constant; and
- activity levels have decreased. This maybe due to the economic downturn as employers maybe cutting back on costs.

Figure 15 covers students attending college who are aged 18 or over and who are actually in employment. The figures will therefore underestimate the number of students who attend college to improve their employment prospects but who are not employed at the time of study.

Figure 16 provides a fuller overview of student categories with a link to employment for academic year 2009-10.

Figure 16: Working age enrolments with a link to employment, 2009-10

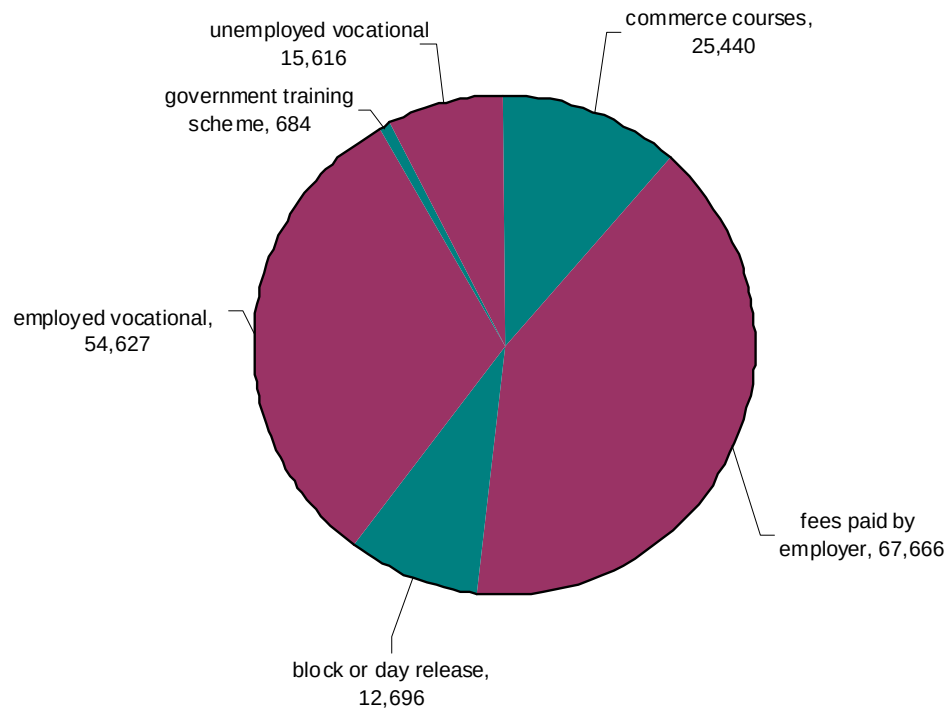


Figure 16 shows that:

- 176,729 enrolments (65 per cent of working age enrolments) are linked to employment; and
- 105,802 enrolments are at least partly financed by the employer.

As well as providing lifelong learning opportunities for those already in employment Scotland's colleges open pathways to employment for those from under-privileged backgrounds who may have traditionally encountered barriers to improving their employment prospects through education. Colleges undertake this role in many ways, offering taster or access courses, and reaching out to students who underachieved in their previous studies or wish to update their skills.

In addition colleges offer financial assistance (from bursary funds) to students to support their studies. This can include assistance with living costs or childcare arrangements as well as support for travel and study materials.

About 96 per cent of all students receiving a bursary in 2008-09 were full-time FE students. Figure 17 outlines the number of students receiving a bursary in 2008-09 and the total amount paid to these students according to the various types of allowance available.

Figure 17: Students assisted from the bursary fund, 2008-09

	Students assisted	Expenditure	Average award per student
Maintenance allowances	18,531	£42,197,022	£2,277
Residence costs	274	£723,494	£2,640
Dependants allowance	24	£44,324	£1,847
Study allowance	33,400	£5,763,453	£173
Travel expenses	32,694	£13,156,263	£402
Alternative travel expenses	3,851	£2,332,273	£606
Special educational needs allowances	2,198	£3,218,134	£1,464
Total	41,243	£67,434,963	£1,635

Figure 17 shows that:

- 63 per cent of bursary funds are used to pay maintenance allowances; and
- 81 per cent of students receiving a bursary receive a study allowance.

Other analyses show that most students receiving bursary support were under 25 and studying full-time. In addition we know that 60 per cent of students receiving bursary funds were female and 40 per cent were male.

Part 2: Qualifications and subject provision

Scotland's colleges had 438,522 enrolments from 347,337 students during academic year 2009-10. These 347,337 students were enrolled across 33,066 individual programmes leading to a range of qualifications.

Statistical note:

Details of most of the qualifications referred to in this chapter can be obtained from the website of the Scottish Qualifications Agency www.sqa.org.uk. Other (specifically vocational) qualifications include City and Guilds (C&G) and Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) awards.

Figure 18 below provides a detailed breakdown of activity for academic year 2009-10 by the qualification aim of the student.

Figure 18: Enrolments, activity and achievements by qualification aim, 2009-10

	Enrolments	Achievements	SUMs
Recognised qualification at HE level			
Degree and above	760	351	5,861
Award from professional body	889	446	3,680
SVQ or NVQ Level 5	9	2	31
Diploma (HNC/D level for diploma and degree holders)	418	208	3,113
HND or Equivalent	17,517	6,153	241,401
HNC or Equivalent	19,171	10,013	222,438
SVQ or NVQ: Level 4	1,212	425	4,229
Advanced Certificate (bridge to HNC/D)	502	353	3,461
Advanced Certificate not specified elsewhere	2,041	1,051	4,604
Advanced Diploma not specified elsewhere	1,539	657	6,803
Advanced Certificate (comprising HN units only)	987	590	3,849
HN units only but not leading to certificate	4,756	2,972	11,952
Recognised qualification at FE level			
SVQ,NVQ or SSVQ/GNVQ: Level 3	15,198	6,950	129,882
SVQ, NVQ or SSVQ/GNVQ: Level 2	12,243	5,719	134,752
SVQ, NVQ or SSVQ/GNVQ: Level 1	2,111	1,335	30,644
Highest level of study (programme or unit) Advanced Higher	168	115	1,207
Highest level of study (programme or unit) Higher	13,202	7,307	162,771
Highest level of study (programme or unit) Intermediate 2	10,347	6,294	123,670
Highest level of study (programme or unit) Intermediate 1	10,333	5,057	54,745
Highest level of study (programme or unit) Access	3,487	2,397	31,817
Other non-advanced Certificate/ diploma or equivalent	43,841	25,326	243,848
Any other recognised qualification	54,711	34,305	144,633
Other SCE / GCE / GCSE examination only	657	373	7,502
National Units			
National Units alone, not leading to any qualification listed above	56,667	31,884	463,338
Special needs			
Special educational needs programme	18,923	2,110	56,993
Non-recognised qualification			
Courses not leading to a recognised qualification	146,833	11,518	117,608
Scotland Total	438,522	163,911	214,834

As you would expect, the number of students that achieve qualifications is smaller than the number that is studying for qualifications as many students will not receive their results within the one academic year or may need to resit some

examinations. Other courses run for more than one year and therefore no qualification will be awarded until the end of the final year.

An achievement in the table above refers to students being assessed and being successful. However, not all courses/ programmes are designed to be assessed, 77 percent of enrolments in special needs programmes were not assessed as the courses were not designed in this way but the students nevertheless completed the programme successfully. Likewise, 82 per cent of enrolments in non-recognised qualification courses/ programmes were not designed to be assessed but the students on those courses still completed them.

Recognised qualifications in this context are national group awards mainly accredited by the Scottish Qualifications Authority. These include awards ranging from National Certificate or Diplomas at the FE level to Higher National Certificates and Diplomas at the HE level. There is also some overlap with the school sector with students studying for 'Highers' at access to advanced levels.

National units themselves are recognised qualifications but those listed in Figure 18 do not lead to a group award. In many instances a programme consisting of national units, but not leading to a group award, will be designed for a particular student or group of students to meet the individual needs of the student and/or their employer.

Special educational needs programmes are designed for students with learning difficulties.

Non-recognised qualifications generally fall into two categories; leisure programmes or locally designed programmes. For example students may attend college to learn a foreign language in preparation for an overseas holiday, while employees might attend locally designed health and safety programmes or specific 'training for work' programmes.

Figure 18 shows that:

- courses leading to a recognised qualification or for students with special educational needs account for 95 per cent of all activity (SUMs);
- SVQs account for seven per cent of enrolments and 14 per cent of activity;
- HNCs account for the highest number of enrolments at the HE level but HNDs account for more of the activity (SUMs). This is because 90 per cent of enrolments on HND courses are full-time whereas only 62 per cent of HNC course enrolments are full-time;

- courses not leading to a recognised qualification account for 33 per cent of enrolments but only five per cent of activity. One reason is that many of these programmes are of short duration;
- 23,221 students gained an HE level qualification in 2009-10; and
- 95,178 students gained a recognised FE level qualification in 2009-10.

Figure 19 below provides a summary of the volume of activity by qualification aim over the period 2005-06 to 2009-10. We have chosen to show Figure 19 by activity (SUMs) rather than enrolments or number of students, as this measure best reflects the resources committed to students achieving these qualifications.

Figure 19: Qualification of study by activity levels, 2005-06 to 2009-10

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	% Change since 2005-06
Recognised qualification at FE level	903,203	957,170	1,011,247	1,028,602	1,065,474	18%
Recognised qualification at HE level	489,660	492,205	481,967	482,051	511,422	4%
Special needs	58,391	66,583	70,172	68,437	56,993	-2%
National Units	478,023	450,098	451,235	468,605	463,338	-3%
Non-recognised qualification	115,378	163,858	149,082	134,835	117,608	2%

Figure 19 shows that:

- recognised qualifications at FE level activity have increased by 18 per cent over the past five years;
- HE level activity increased in 2009-10;
- non-recognised qualifications decreased again nearing the activity level of 2005-06; and
- both special needs and National Units have decreased in 2009-10.

Figure 20 below shows the gender balance by qualification level for academic year 2009-10. It shows that the gender balance is almost 50/50 for students enrolled on special educational needs programmes whilst it is at its widest (in favour of females) for National Units.

Figure 20: Gender balance by qualification level, 2009-10

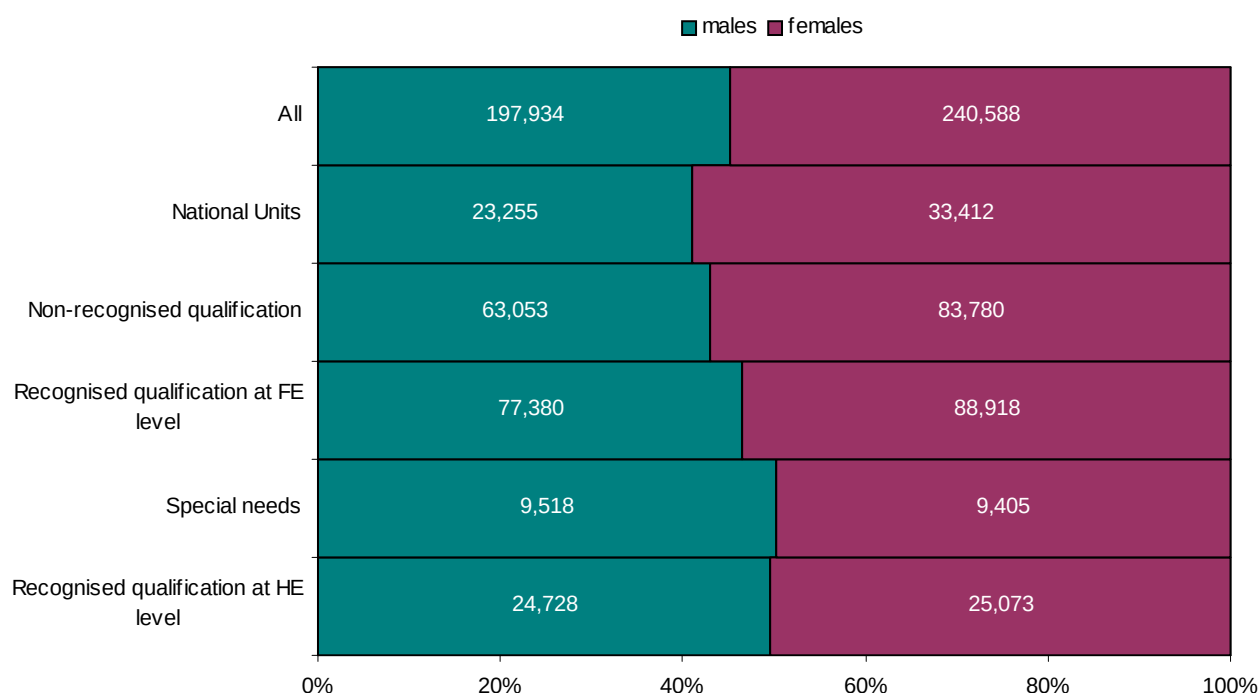


Figure 21 below provides a summary of activity by subject group and shows that:

- there has been change across some subject areas over the period 2005-06 to 2009-10;
- there are patterns of growth in areas such as ‘politics/ economics/ law/ social sciences’, ‘engineering’, ‘family care/personal development/personal care and appearance’ and ‘Area Studies/ Cultural Studies/ Languages & Literature’; and
- other areas such as ‘teacher training’ and ‘information technology’ show a decline in activity levels.

The subject groups in Figure 21 are based on the subject groups applied to individual programmes of study. This can, however, lead to some subject areas being under-reported, as they are more commonly included in programmes as a minor subject. For example, it is common for a mathematics unit to be included in a business or engineering programme.

Figure 22 compares subjects at the programme and unit level and shows that in 2009-10:

- ‘Science and Mathematics’ had activity levels of about 53,000 SUMs at the programme level but 106,000 at the unit level. This is mainly

caused by mathematics units supporting programmes from other subject areas;

- similarly activity from the ‘Services to Industry’, ‘Education/ Training & Teaching’ and ‘Sales, Marketing and Distribution’ subject areas are twice as high at the unit level than at the programme level; and
- ‘Oil, mining, plastics, chemicals’ and ‘Politics/ Law/ Economics/ Social sciences’ activity is over-reported at the programme level compared to the unit level.

Figure 21: Activity by subject area, 2005-06 to 2009-10

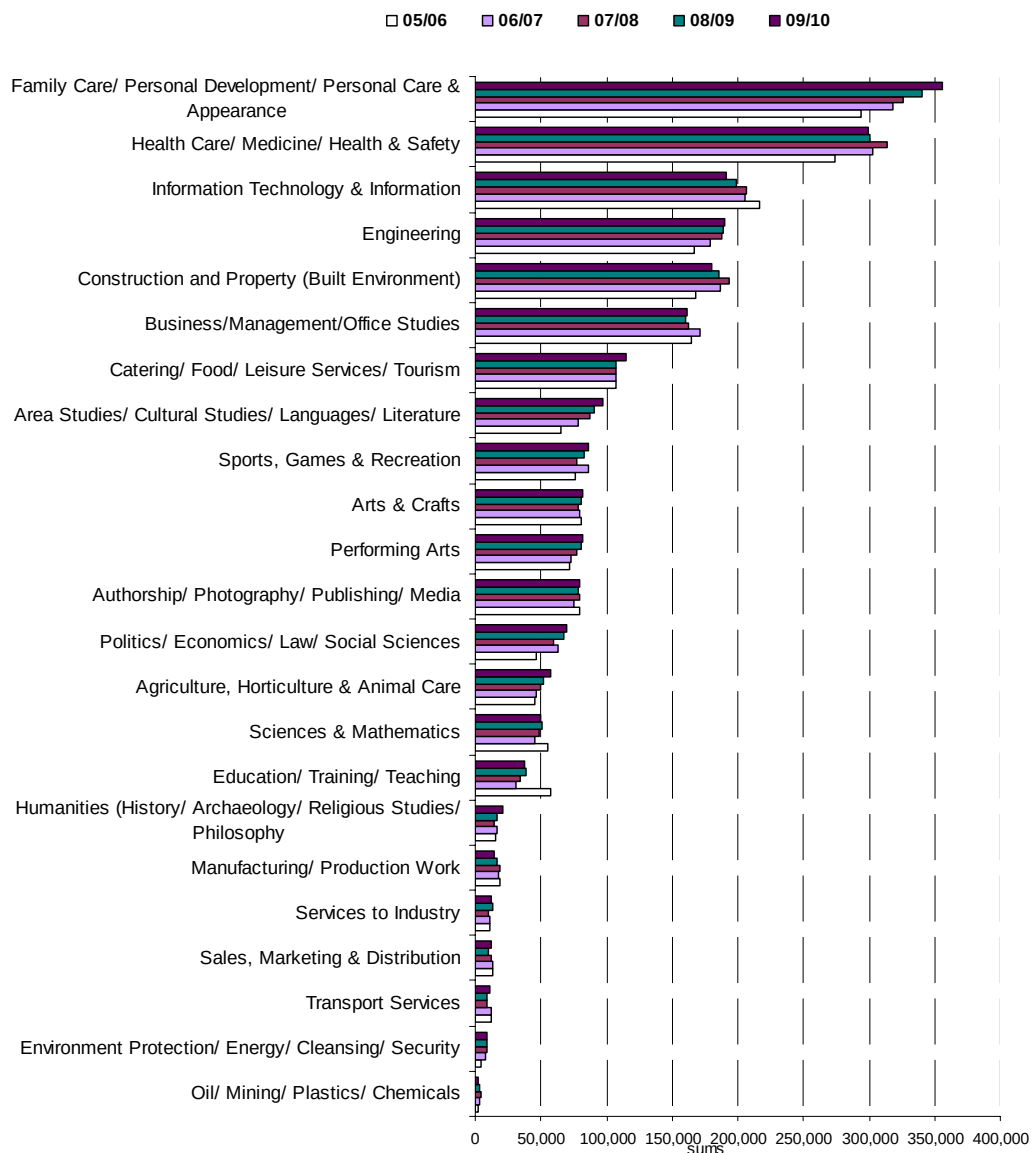


Figure 22: A comparison of subject areas at the course and unit level, 2009-10

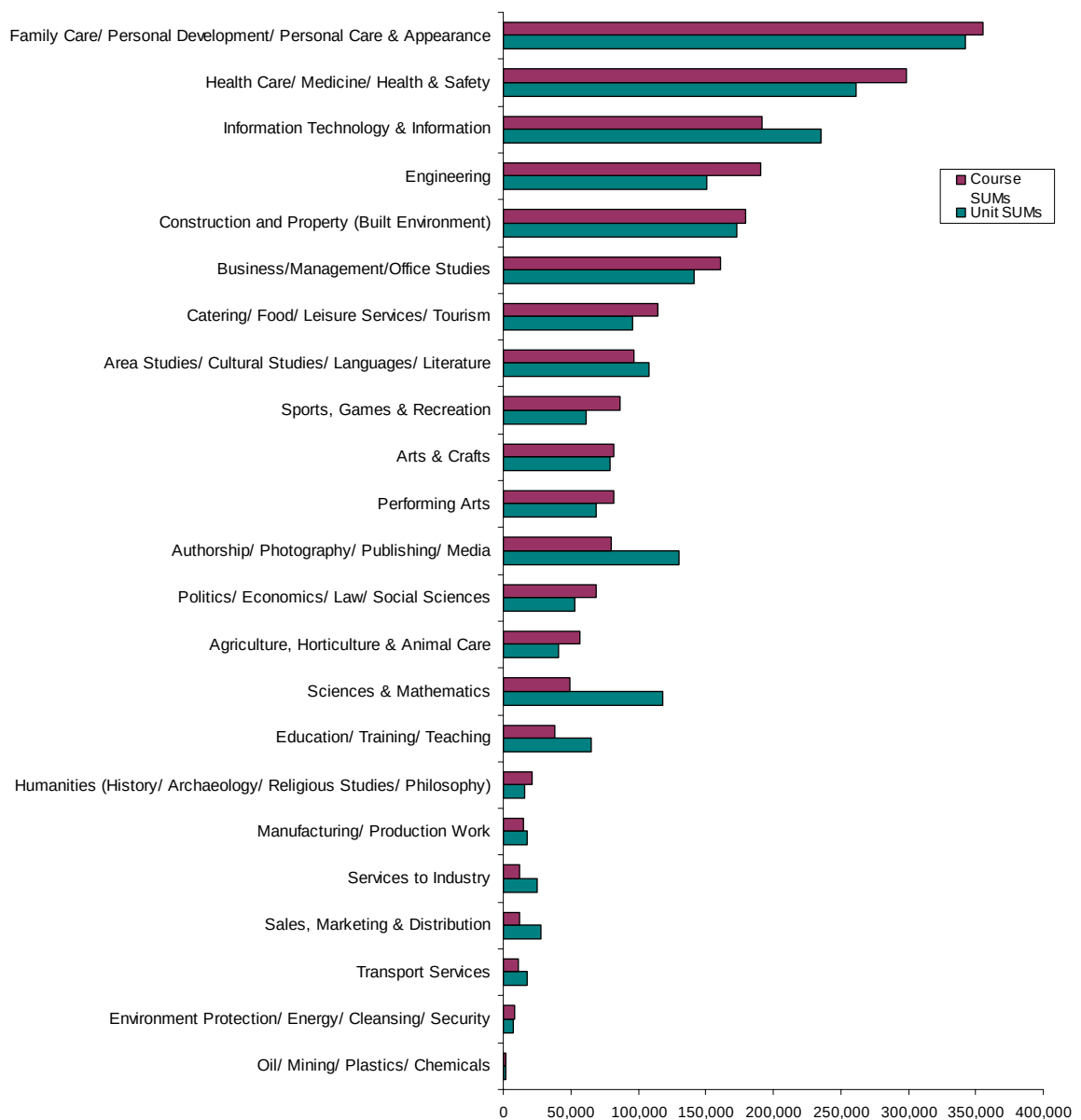


Figure 23: Course subject areas by qualification aim, 2009-10

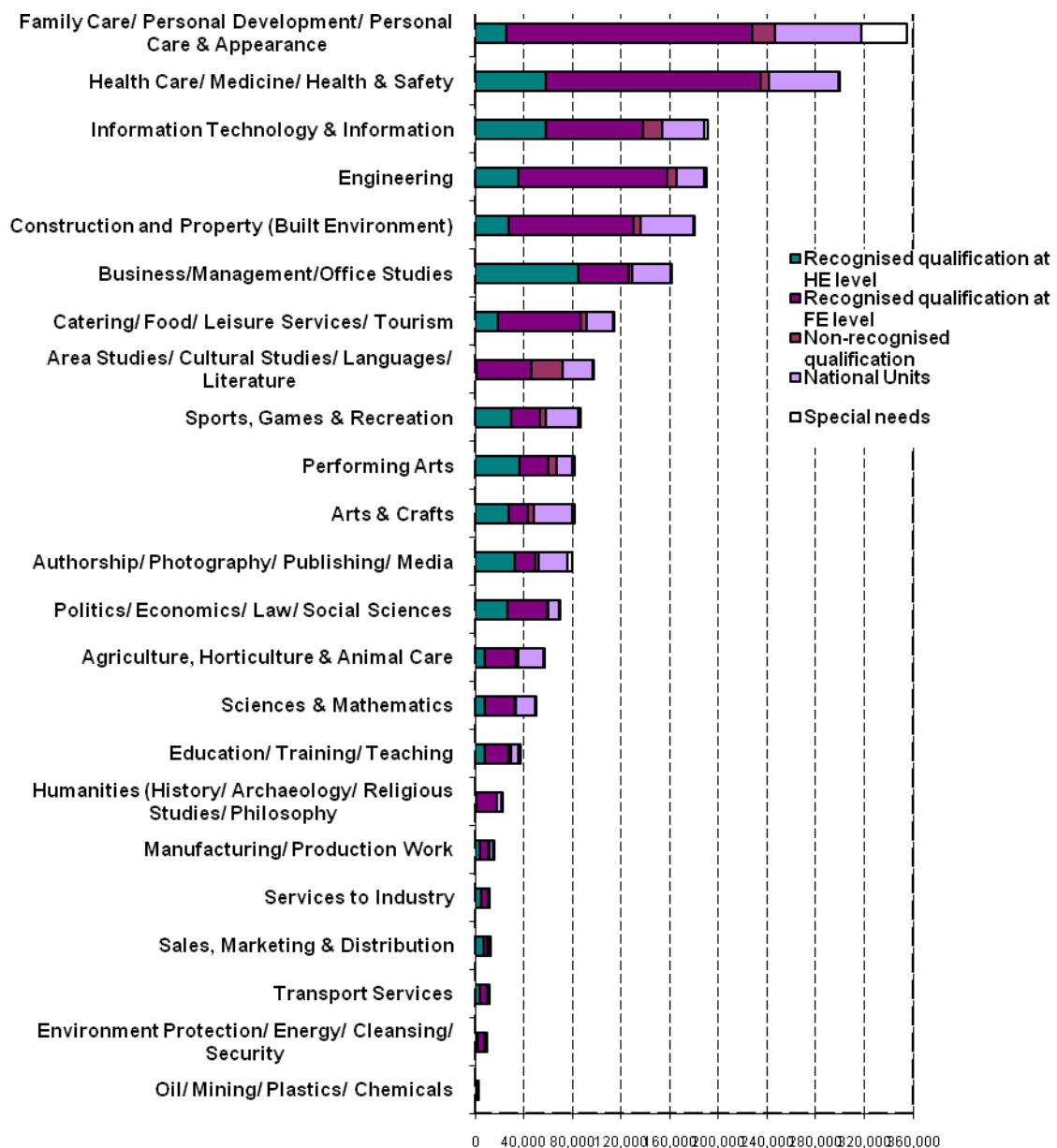


Figure 23 shows that:

- most activity related to the top five most popular subjects is at FE level;
- approximately 50 per cent of activity within the 'Business Management/Office Studies' subject groups relates to HE programmes;

- students with special educational needs are more likely to be enrolled on a course within the 'Family Care/ Personal Development/ Personal Care and Appearance' subject area. 13 per cent of students within this group are enrolled on special educational needs programmes;
- the subject accounting for most activity in the non-recognised qualification group is 'Area Studies/ Cultural Studies/ Languages/ Literature'; and
- the subject for most activity in the National Units qualification group is 'Family Care/ Personal Development/ Personal Care and Appearance'.

Figure 24 describes the gender balance by subject area for academic year 2009-10. It shows the percentage of male and female students and the total number of students for each subject area.

Figure 24: Gender balance by subject area, 2009-10

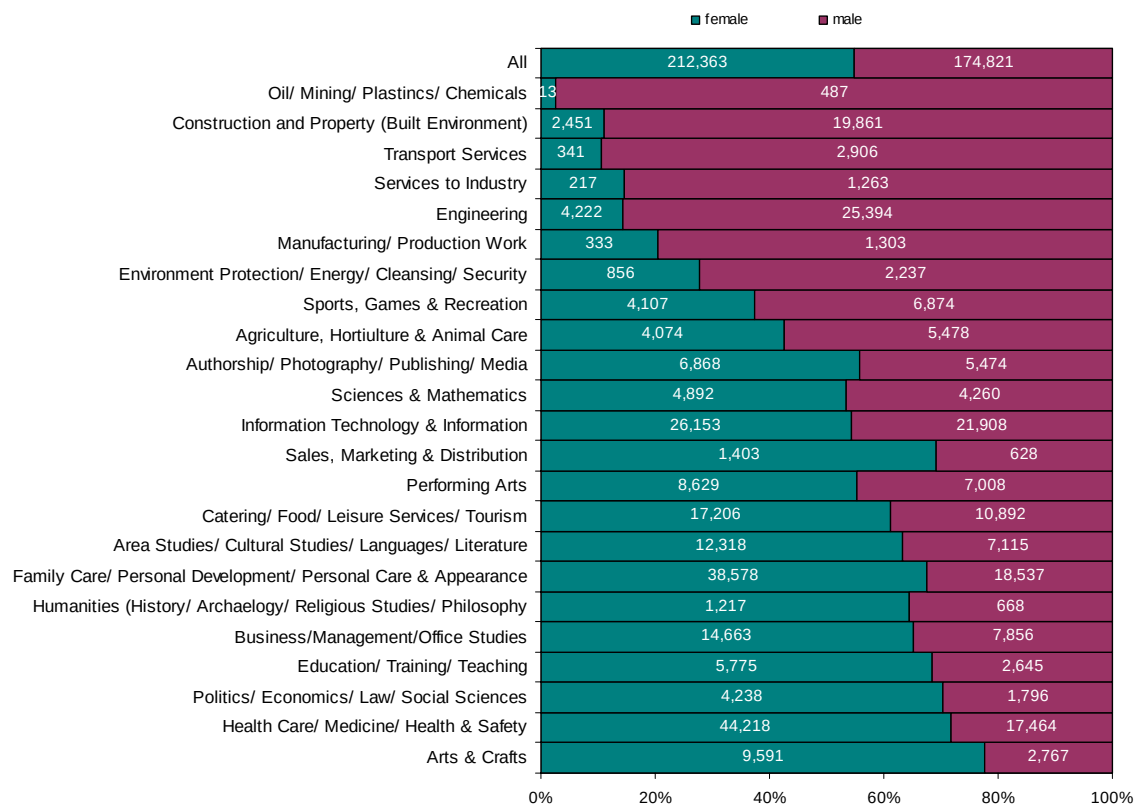


Figure 24 shows that:

- engineering, transport, construction, manufacturing, oil and services to industry subjects are heavily dominated by males (who account for over 80 per cent of activity in these areas); and
- females dominate in arts & crafts, politics and health care subjects (accounting for over 70 per cent of enrolments in all these areas).

Figure 25 describes the qualifications held by teaching staff in academic year 2009-10.

Figure 25: Teaching qualifications (TQ) of college payroll teaching staff, 2009-10

	Permanent and Temporary		
	Full-time	Part-time	Total
TQ (FE) or other equivalent	3,687	2,807	6,494
Certificate: Introduction to Teaching Further Education	119	242	361
Advanced Certificate: Teaching in Further Education	71	106	177
Diploma: Teaching in Further Education	10	31	41
Advanced Diploma: Introduction to Teaching in FE	65	188	253
Advanced Diploma: Teaching in FE	75	103	178
TQ Other	264	642	906
All teaching Qualifications	4,291	4,119	8,410
Qualified but not Teacher Trained	505	2,644	3,149
Unqualified	17	175	192
Total	4,813	6,938	11,751

Figure 25 shows that:

- 89 per cent of full-time teaching staff are teacher trained;
- 99.6 per cent of full-time teaching staff are either teacher trained or qualified;
- 59 per cent of part-time teaching staff are teacher trained; and
- 97 per cent of part-time teaching staff are either teacher trained or qualified.

In addition, other analyses show that 58 per cent of teaching staff full-time equivalents are female, and that 45 per cent of teaching staff are aged 50 and over, with nine per cent aged 60 or over.