

SFC Statistical publication

College Performance Indicators 2014-15

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Summary: To inform stakeholders of the publication of the 2014-15 College Performance Indicators (PIs)

FAO: Principals and directors of Scotland's colleges

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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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Executive Summary

1. The sector exceeded its student number target for 2014-15 and in doing so delivered 119,676 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) student places which is 3,407 more than the 116,269 FTEs target.
2. Our Performance Indicator report summarises the results for those students enrolled on courses leading to recognised qualifications.
3. The results for the 50,924 **full-time further education** students enrolled on recognised qualifications are as follows:
 - 4,610 additional full-time FE students successfully completed their course in 2014-15 in comparison to 2008-09;
 - 64% successfully completed their course. This is 1.9% lower than 2013-14 but higher than the proportion successfully completing prior to 2012-13;
 - A further 10.6% completed their course in 2014-15, these students did not achieve the qualification they were aiming for by the end of the academic year but may gain their award at a later time;
 - the remaining 25.4% of full-time FE students are accounted for by 8.6% of students withdrawing before the funding qualifying date (colleges are not funded for these students) and a further 16.8% between this point and the end of the course;
 - Of the 24 colleges delivering full-time FE courses in 2014-15 fourteen had improved pass rates in comparison to the previous year and ten saw a decline in the proportion successfully completing their course;
 - Changes in pass rates for colleges ranged from +13% to -7%.

4. The results for the 33,257 **full-time higher education** students enrolled on recognised qualifications are as follows:
 - As a result of increases student numbers and improving pass rates 6,288 additional full-time HE student successfully completed their course in 2014-15 in comparison to 2008-09;
 - Pass rates increased by 7.4% between 2008-09 and 2014-15 and as a result of these increasing pass rates alone 2,458 additional students successfully completed their course in 2014-15;
 - 71.3% of full-time students successfully completed their course which is very similar (-0.1%) to the previous year;
 - A further 11.4% completed their course in 2014-15, these students did not achieve the qualification they were aiming for by the end of the academic year but may gain their award at a later time;
 - The remaining 17.3% of full-time HE students are accounted for by 4.4% of students withdrawing before the funding qualifying date and a further 12.9% between this point and the end of the course;
 - As stated above the sector success rate only changed by -0.1%, however of the 16 colleges delivering full-time HE courses in 2014-15 six had improved pass rates in comparison to the previous year and ten saw a decline in the proportion successfully completing their course.
 - Changes in pass rates for colleges ranged from +6% to -4%.

5. Links to individual College PIs and a more detailed explanation on and examples of how we calculate PIs can be found in separate Technical Appendices to this document.

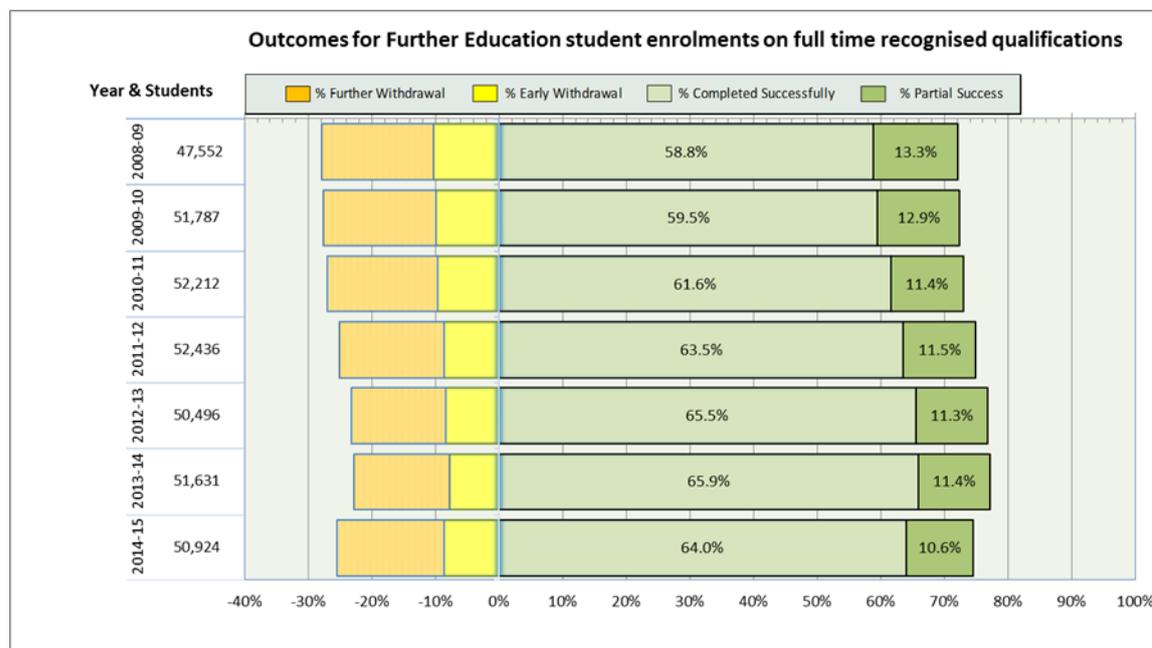
Introduction

1. SFC has published PIs on college teaching activity for the past thirteen years. Links to previous publications going back to 2008-09 are available on our website at: [Student and staff performance indicators for Scotland's further education colleges](#). The purpose of the indicators is to inform stakeholders about the performance of the sector. The reported PIs help colleges evaluate their own performance both over time and against other similar colleges thereby supporting a wider quality improvement agenda.
2. This is the thirteenth annual publication of Performance Indicators for Scotland's colleges and covers the 2014-15 academic year.
3. Following sector consultation, we have included some additional students within the sector Performance Indicators report. The changes provide a broader coverage of activity and will ensure that we include all Skills Development Scotland (SDS) employability fund and college based university 'Associate' status students. The total sector change in numbers for 2014-15 is an additional 8,391 students.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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 the SFC's checks, every college Principal must also sign-off the data as a true and accurate record for their college.
7. As an additional reassurance of consistency and quality, SFC has a contract with Education Scotland (previously HMIE) to perform external quality reviews of college performance. Education Scotland reports are available on the [Education Scotland website](#)
8. Our analytical team also conduct data quality visits to ensure the student records submitted by colleges are accurate and comparable across the sector.

9. Each of these charts contains two percentage figures; the first describes the percentage of students who successfully completed the course year and the second is the percentage that completed the course year irrespective of their result. Both these values have been calculated as a percentage of all enrolments.
10. When viewing individual college level PI data, where the number of enrolments is less than 50 in a category the data has been suppressed and is not shown. This avoids spurious statistical accuracy in the published pass rates and reduces the risk of incorrect conclusions being drawn from pass rates based on small numbers.
11. Links to individual College PIs and a more detailed explanation on and examples of how we calculate PIs can be found in separate Technical Appendices to this document.
12. We welcome feedback from readers about content and presentation. Please pass any comments to: Kenny Wilson; email: kwilson@sfc.ac.uk.

How our performance indicators are presented

13. The chart below shows the actual results for full-time FE students over the period 2008-09 to 2014-15.



14. The blue line highlights the 0% point on the axis. Bars to the left of this line show the percentage of withdrawals before the course has ended. Bars to the right of the line show the percentage of students who have completed their course.
15. The first bar to the right of the blue line 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.
16. Colleges must choose one of 14 student outcome options from our FES guidance notes [Code List J](#) that best describes the student result. The following student outcomes 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).
17. The second bar to the right of the blue line 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.

18. The combination of these two bars shows the total percentage to have completed the course. For example, the 2014-15 bars shows that 64.0% of students completed successfully and a further 10.6% irrespective of the result. Therefore 74.6% completed the course in total.
19. This leaves 25.4% of students unaccounted for. These students are shown to the left of the blue line as withdrawals. The first bar to the left of the line is shown in yellow and shows the number who withdrew before the qualifying date for funding (colleges do not receive funding for students who leave the course before 25% of the course has been delivered).
20. The second bar to the left of the blue line is coloured orange and shows the percentage of students who withdraw after attending beyond the qualifying date but before the programme ends. Colleges are fully funded for these students.
21. The number of students enrolled on these courses is shown for each academic year to the left of the bar chart.
22. Our technical annex in section 6 shows the breakdown of hours of learning and enrolments for each of the 14 possible student outcomes. These include additional outcomes for those students who have completed their programme of study but which are excluded from our PIs.
23. Those coded as 'Completed programme/course, student not assessed as programme/course not designed to be assessed' are excluded from our outcome PIs as this code cannot be used for nationally recognised programmes. Our FES Online submission tool creates errors if this code is used for recognised programmes.
24. Those coded as 'Completed programme/course, student not assessed although programme/ course designed to be assessed. Studying on a flexible open learning programme' are excluded as their result is not yet available. FES Online ensures this code is only used for programmes delivered on flexible learning.

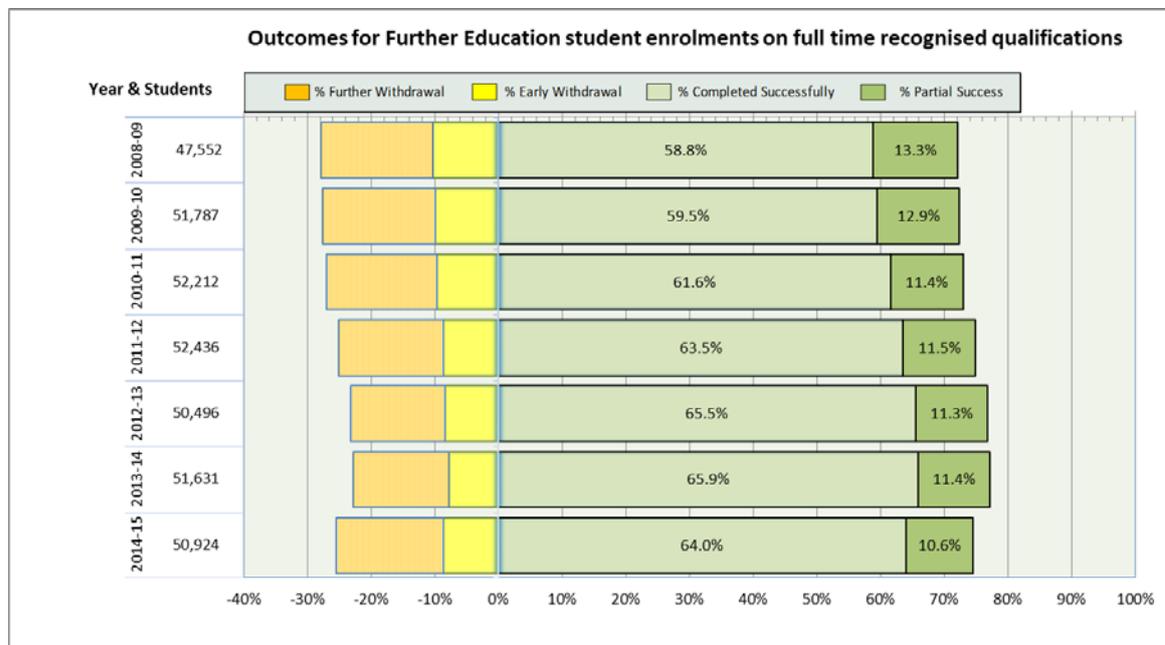
Key performance indicators charts

Outcomes for FE student enrolments on recognised qualifications

25. Chart 1 provides an overview of success rates on full-time recognised FE programmes from 2008-09 to 2014-15. 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.
26. In 2014-15, 64.0% of students on full-time programmes completed successfully whilst a further 10.6% completed irrespective of their final result. In total 74.6% of students completed their course.
27. Perhaps the most important measure is the percentage of students who complete their course year successfully. Chart 1 shows that whilst 58.8% of students completed successfully in 2008-09 and that success rose steadily year on year to 65.9% in 2013-14. In 2014-15 there has been a 1.9 percentage point reduction in success from the high of 2013-14. This represents a 5.2 percentage point increase in the success rate over the 7 years from 2008-09. Although the number of students reduced by 707 in 2014-15, it still means that since 2008-09, an extra 4,610 students have successfully completed, an increase of 16.5%.
28. The reduction in the FE full-time success rate in 2014-15 is not consistent across all college regions. Most college regions show continued improvement whilst there are a number that show a marked reduction in success rate of over 4%; hence the sector figure in 2014-15 has reduced by 1.9 percentage points to 64.0%.
29. SFC has targeted colleges to further increase the success rate to 69% by 2016-17 as part of our [outcome agreement](#) negotiations.

Chart 1

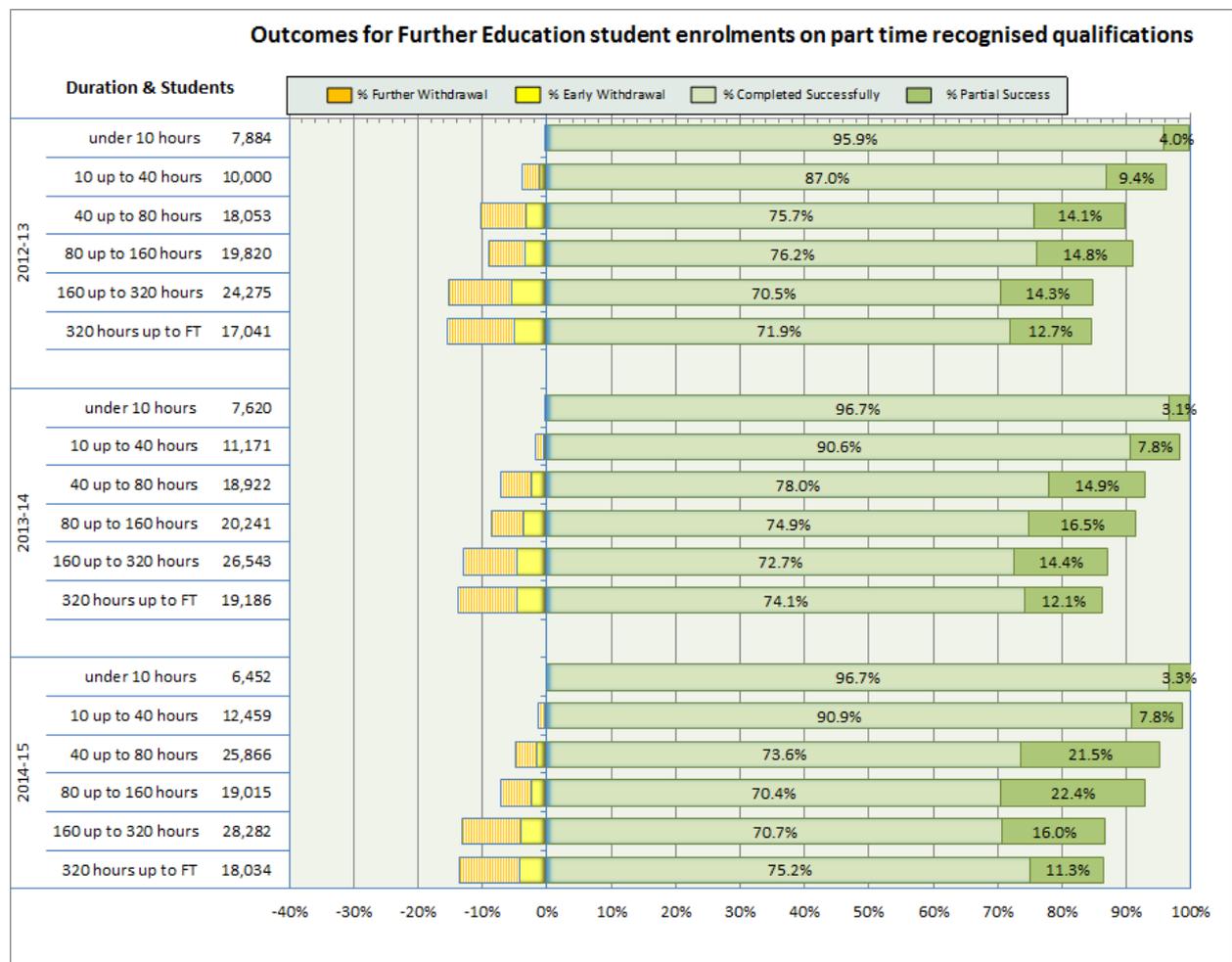
Outcomes for Further Education student enrolments on full-time recognised qualification



30. Chart 1 also shows that the withdrawal rate has reduced over the period from 27.9% to 25.4% (a 2.5 percentage point improvement). Colleges often report that students withdraw from their course early to take up employment opportunities as they arise. These opportunities are more likely to occur with a buoyant job market and a return to these conditions may see an increase in withdrawal rates leading to a reduction in the percentage of students successfully completing their studies. Recent economic data suggests we may be moving into a more positive job market and may partly explain the reduction in the success rate in AY 2014-15.
31. Almost 2% (3,982) students, across all modes of delivery withdrew from their studies in 2014-15 for positive reasons such as, to study at a university or to commence employment.
32. Chart 2 shows the number of FE students on part-time programmes of study have shown an increase from 97,073 in 2012-13 to 110,108 in 2014-15. Pass rates across the study hour bands for part-time further education courses have shown some change but not as markedly as for full-time programmes.
33. The results do show that students 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 2 hours over 1 study visit offers less opportunity for withdrawing before the end date than a course requiring attendance 3 afternoons per week over 36 weeks.

Chart 2

Outcomes for Further Education student enrolments on part-time qualifications



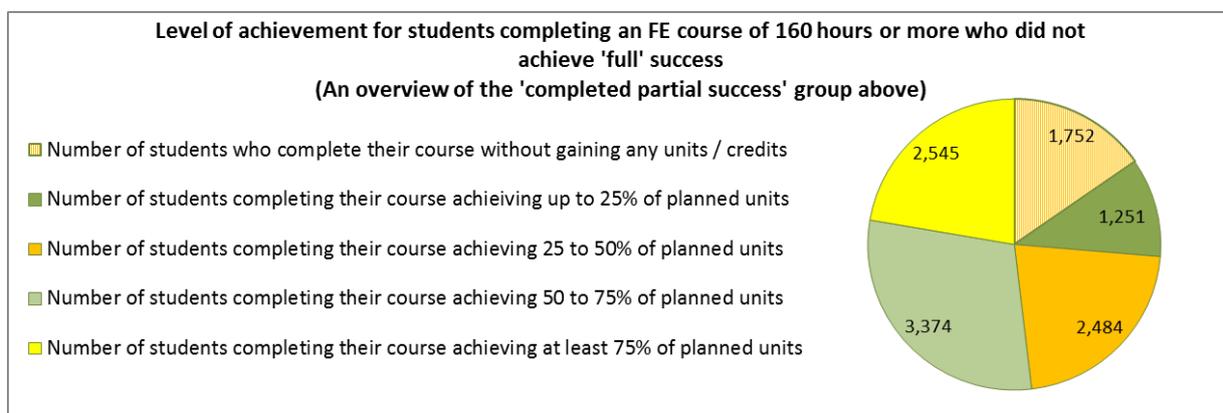
Students completing their FE course that did not achieve “full” success

34. Chart 3 below provides more detailed information for the students enrolled on FE programmes in 2014-15 who completed without “full” success (this includes both full-time FE and part-time students enrolled on programmes lasting for at least 160 hours). 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 focussed less on short duration, recreational courses and more on longer, more vocational courses which are more likely to be assessed and accredited.
35. There are 11,406 students enrolled on FE programmes in 2014-15 who completed without “full” success (as shown in the previous charts). It excludes students with fewer than 160 hours of study and students who were not funded by SFC. It shows that over 22% (2,545) of these students gained at least 75% of the units on their programme and more than 51% (5,919) 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% (1,752) or of these students failed to gain any of the units for which they enrolled. In session 2013-14 this was 36% (6,314) of students. This is a significant reduction in the one year period and demonstrates that colleges are getting better at both monitoring student progress and ensuring those students who are not attending are withdrawn from their course.

Chart 3

Level of achievement for students completing an FE course of 160 hours or more who did not achieve 'full' success

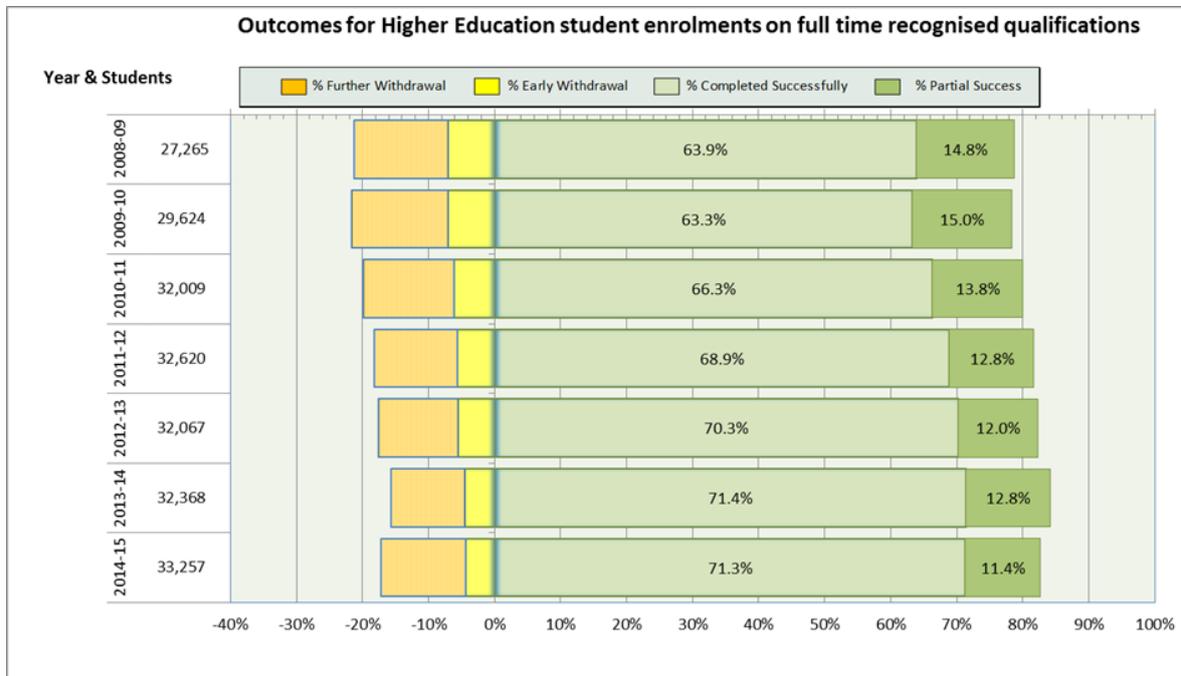


Outcomes for HE student enrolments on recognised qualifications

In terms of full-time recognised programmes at HE level, Chart 4 below gives an overview of success rates for academic sessions 2008-09 to 2014-15.

Chart 4

Outcomes for Higher Education student enrolments on full-time recognised qualifications

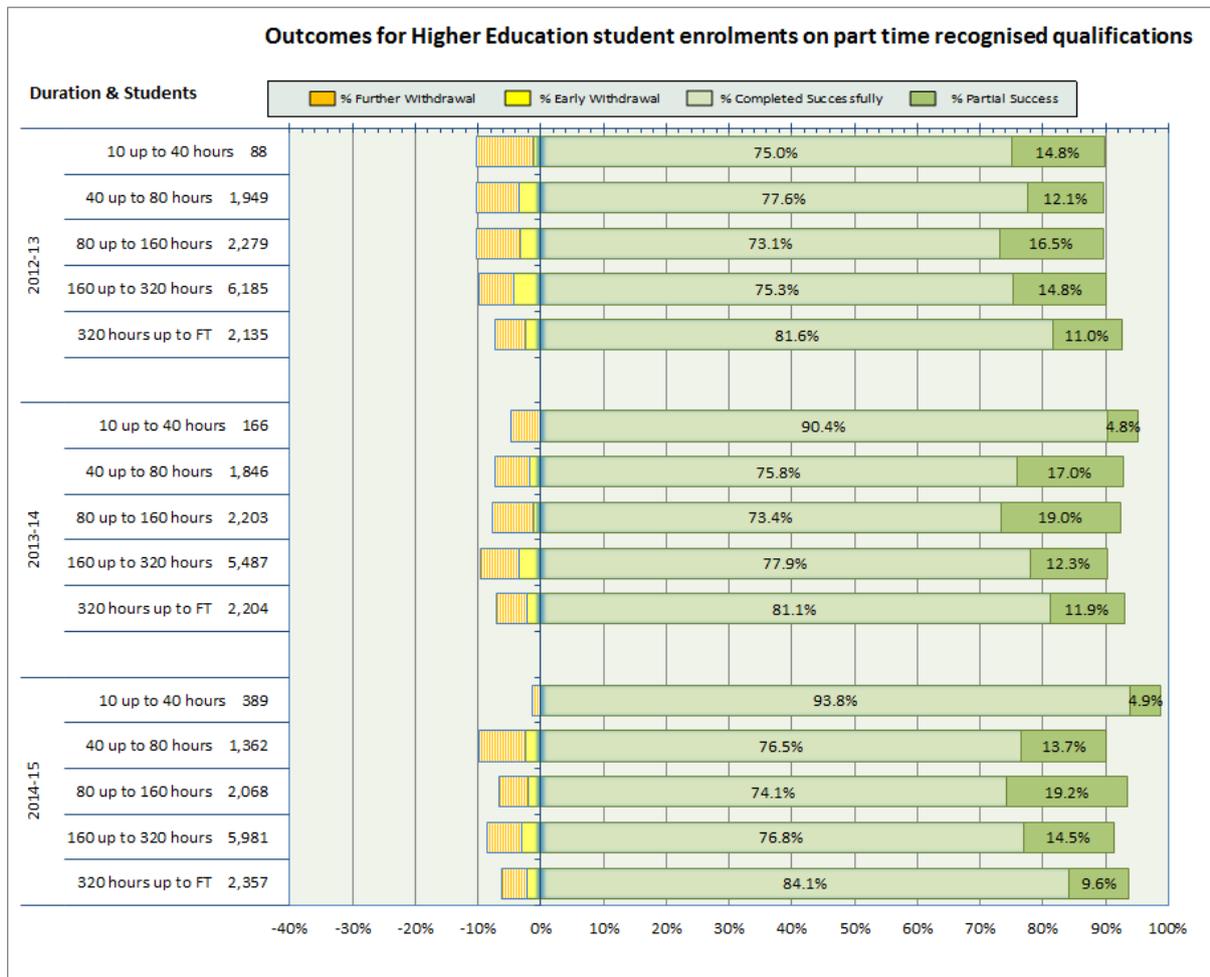


- 36. The pass rates for HE programmes tend to be higher than FE programmes over the course year and this is reflected above with 71.3% of students on full-time programmes completing successfully and a total of 82.7% completing irrespective of their final result, compared with the values of 64.0% and 74.6% for FE programmes.
- 37. 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 gain the qualification for which they enrol.
- 38. Rates of success for full-time HE students have clearly improved over the seven years rising from 63.9 percentage points in 2008-09 to 71.3 percentage points in 2014-15 (+7.4 percentage points).
- 39. The combined effect of an improved success rate and a larger population means that an extra 6,288 students have successfully completed in 2014-15, in comparison to 2008-09 (+36.1%).
- 40. The number of HE students has grown by 21.9% (5,992) over the seven year period and 2014-15 had the highest number of successfully completing HE students (23,717) of all time.
- 41. Numbers of HE part-time students show a slight decline; from 12,636 in

2012-13 to 12,157 in 2014-15. Success rates in most categories have tended to improve, see Chart 5 below.

Chart 5

Outcomes for Higher Education student enrolments on part-time recognised qualifications

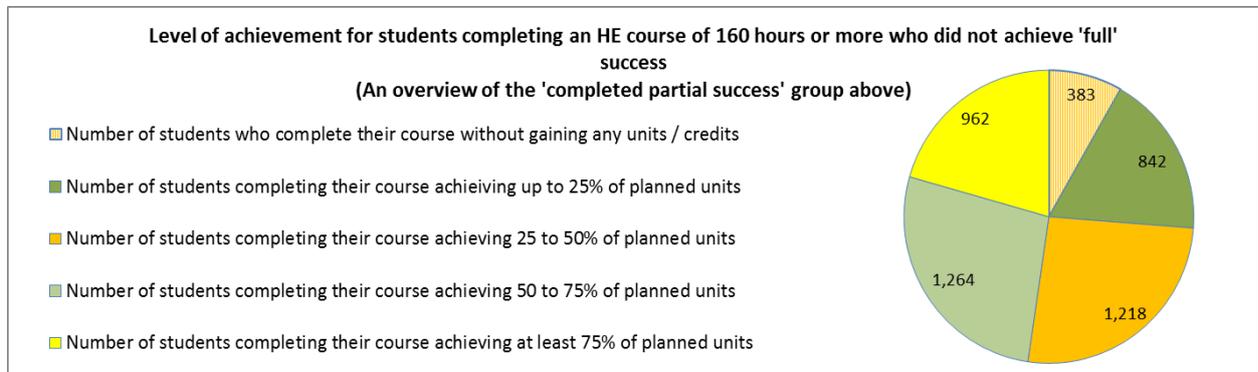


Students completing their HE course that did not achieve “full” success

42. Chart 6 shows that there are 4,669 students enrolled on HE programmes in 2014-15 that completed without “full” success. It excludes students with fewer than 160 hours of study and students not funded by SFC. It shows that over 47% (2,226) of these students gained at least 50% of the units they enrolled on, while over 20% (962) of these students gained at least 75% of the units on their programme. At the other end of the scale 8% (383) of the students failed to gain any of the units for which they enrolled. In session 2013-14 this was 7% (324) of students. The number of partial HE success has only shown a marginal reduction from the previous year and SFC intends to investigate this group in more detail to determine what other factors may be relevant to, or affecting the partial HE success outcome.

Chart 6

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

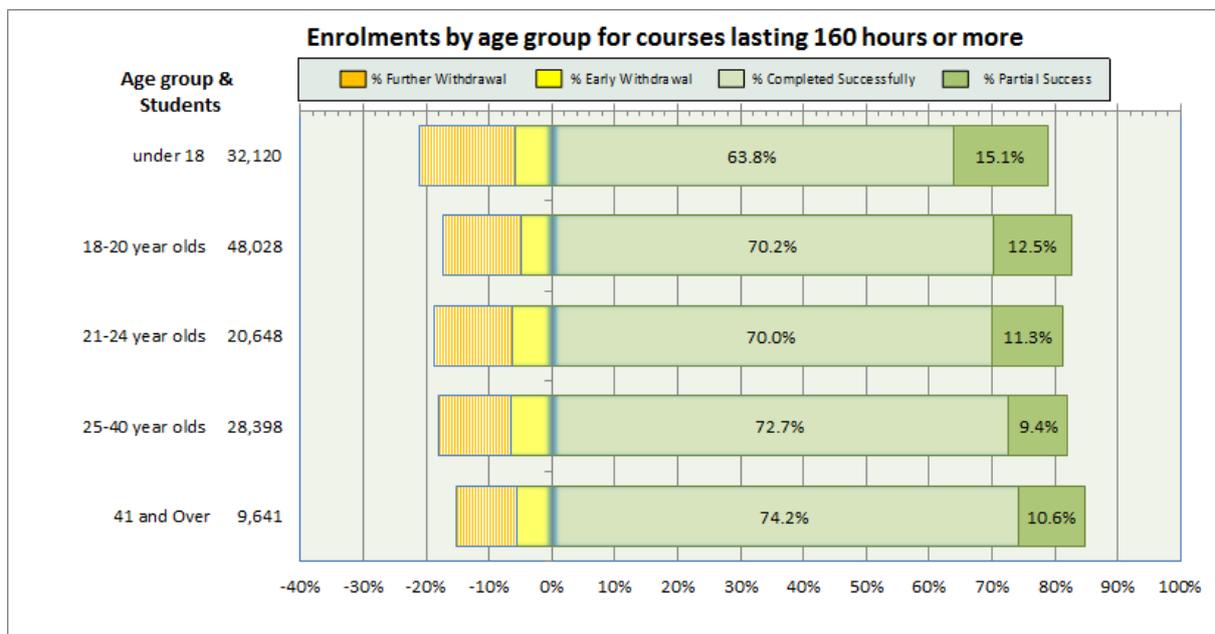


Outcomes by age group

43. Chart 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 63.8% of those under 18 compared to 74.2% of those aged 41 and over complete successfully, and similarly, 78.9% and 84.8% including those with partial success.
44. 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 helps explain the lower pass rates for younger students. The chart allows for a more informed comparison of college activity, but should nevertheless take account of the specific environment in which each college operates.

Chart 7

Enrolments by age group for courses lasting 160 hours or more

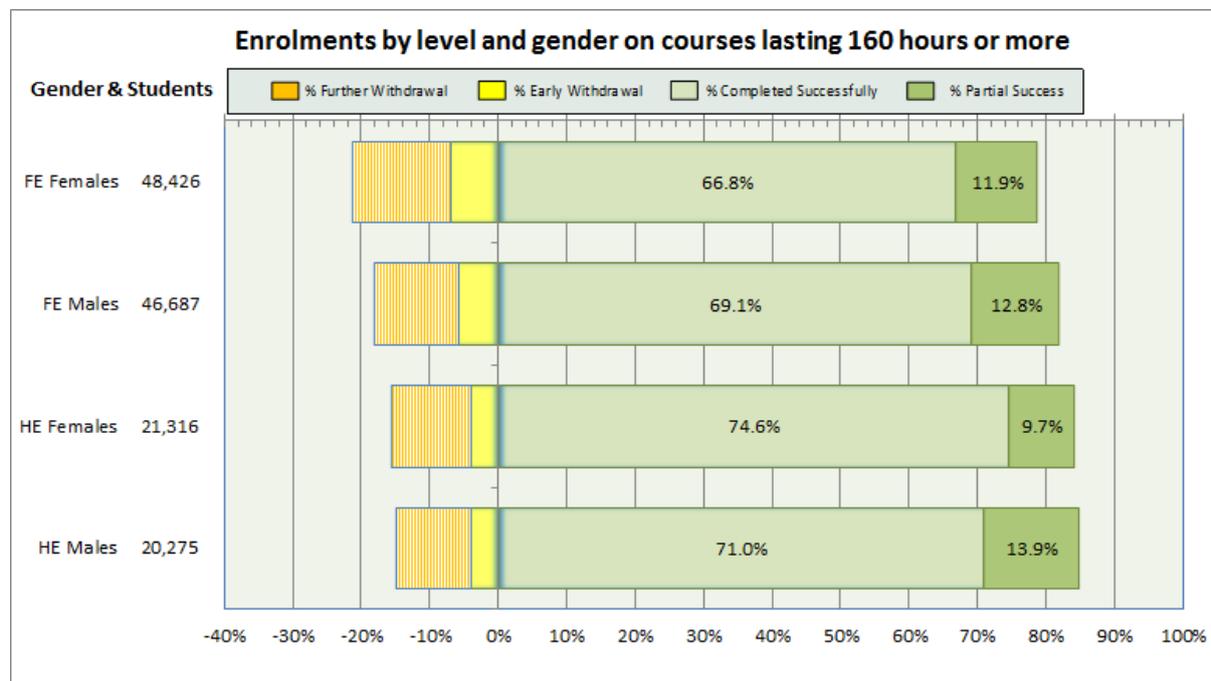


Outcomes by gender and level

45. Chart 8 below shows that in 2014-15 more than two thirds of enrolments relate to students studying FE level programmes. The success rates are different across these groups and provide a more rounded picture of college performance.
46. The chart below suggests that male students are 2.3% more likely to successfully complete their FE programmes than female students, while the situation is markedly reversed for HE programmes with a 3.6% difference. Subjects and modes of study are associated with different pass rates and the 'mix' of these may differ across genders and individual colleges.

Chart 8

Enrolments by level and gender on courses lasting 160 hours or more

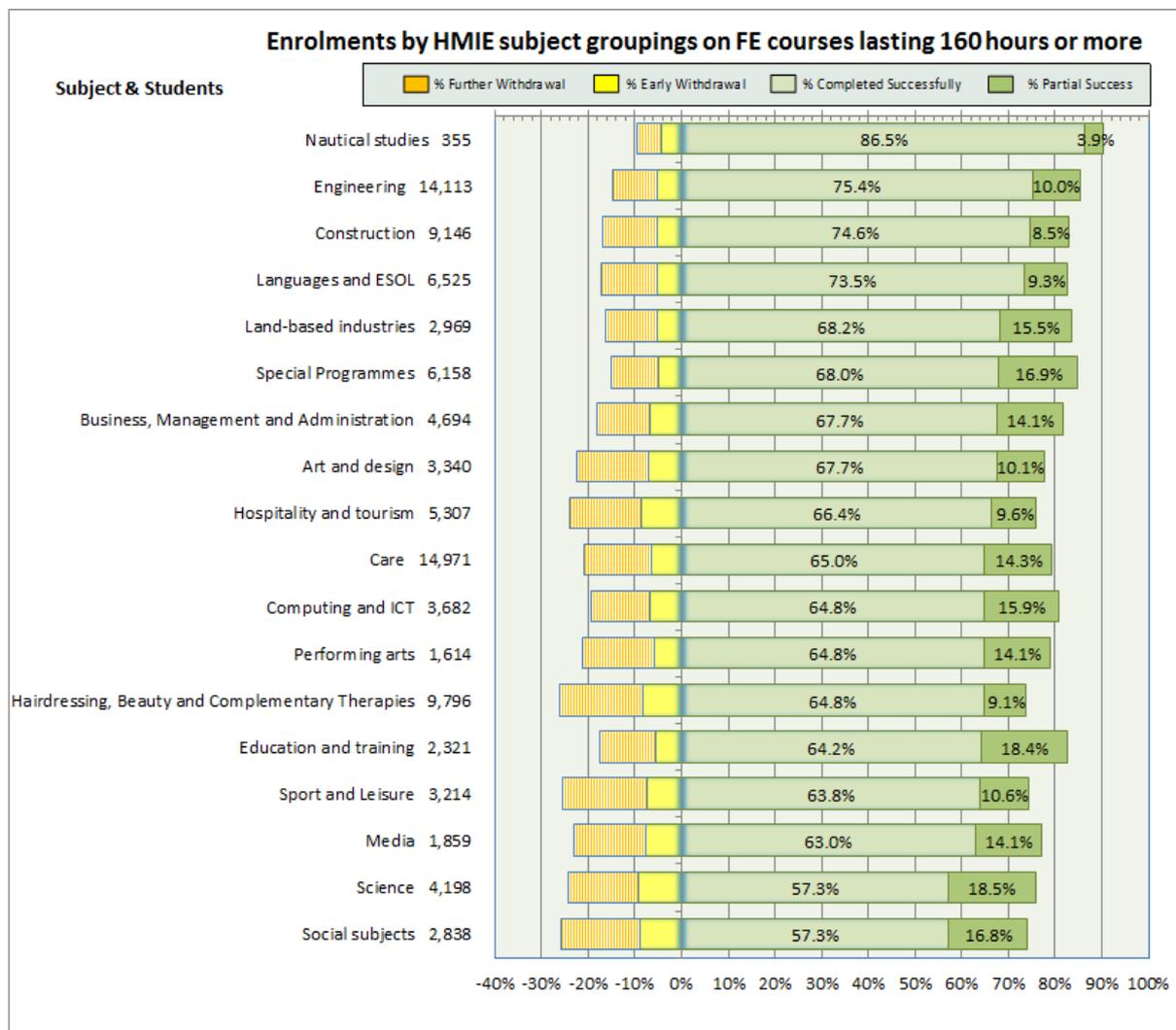


Outcomes by subject groupings on FE courses

47. The subject groupings are based on the subject classification for the course aggregated into areas considered similar by Education Scotland. 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.
48. Chart 9 below for FE programmes clearly shows that some subjects have lower success rates than others. Social subjects and Science, for example, shows a 57.3% success rate whilst Engineering stands at 75.4%. Programmes of Highers are also more likely to fall into the Social subjects and Science group, these pass rates can be influenced by changing priorities amongst students, for example, initially enrolling for four Highers but only completing two as this may sufficient to gain entry to university.

Chart 9

Enrolments by HMIE subject groupings on FE courses lasting 160 hours or more



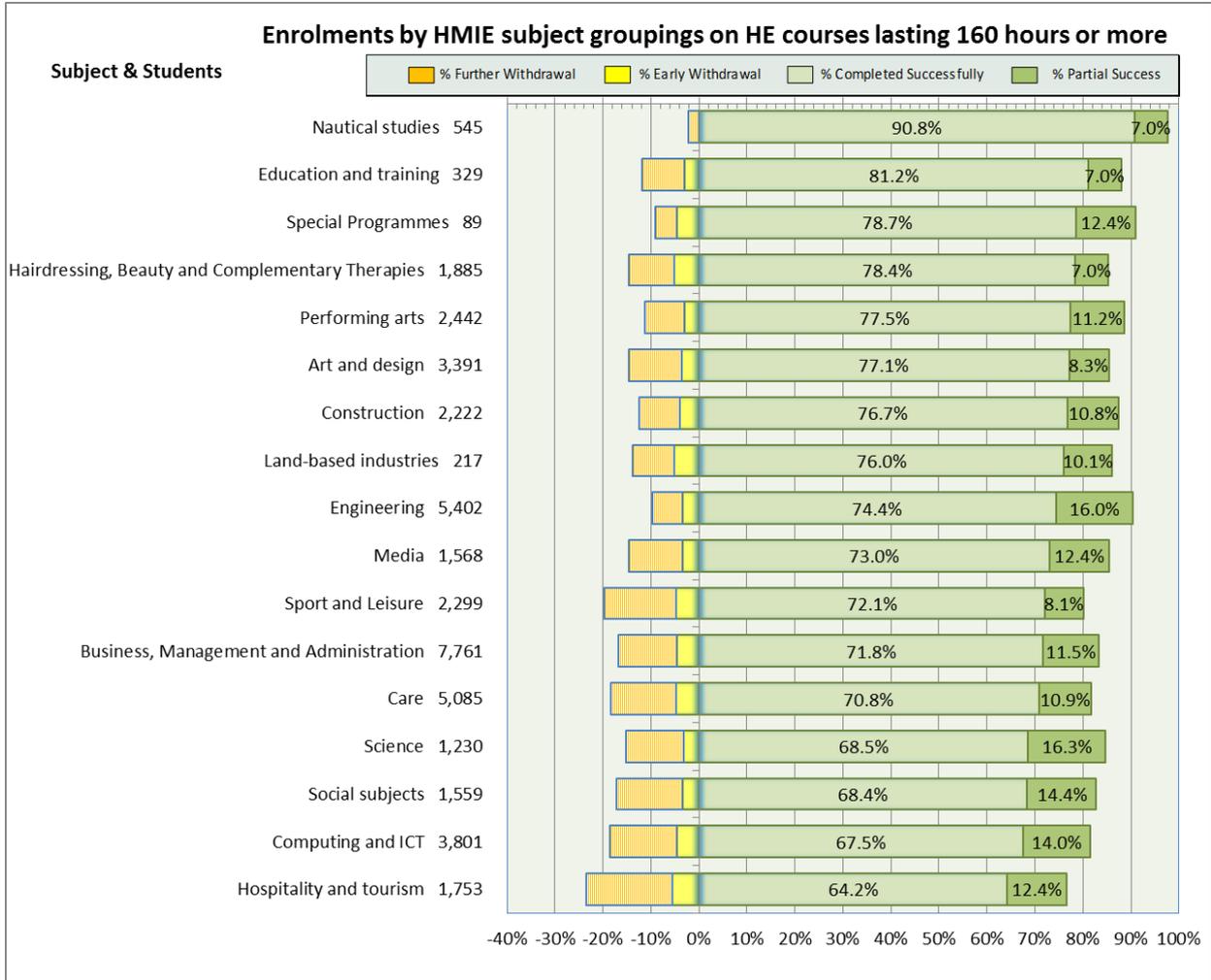
Outcomes by subject groupings on HE courses

49. Chart 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 HE students and has found that; Nautical studies, Engineering and Construction subjects 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. Note that the figures do not include HE activity from 2013-14 from Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC). This has resulted in a reduction in the number of student enrolments in the Land-based industries subject area from 612 enrolments in 2012-13 to 217 enrolments in

2014-15.

Chart 10

Enrolments by HMIE subject groupings on HE courses lasting 160 hours or more

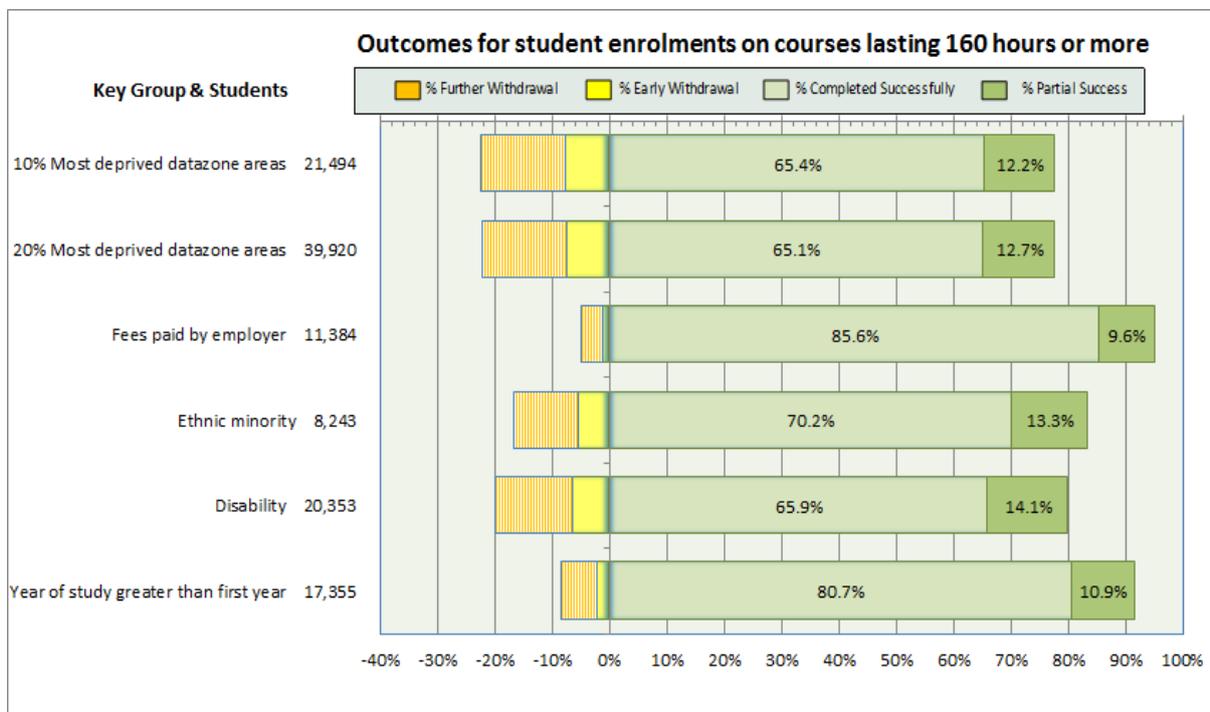


Outcomes by key groups

50. Chart 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 pass rate for these students and this may be enough to affect overall pass rates.

Chart 11

Outcomes for student enrolments on courses lasting 160 hours or more

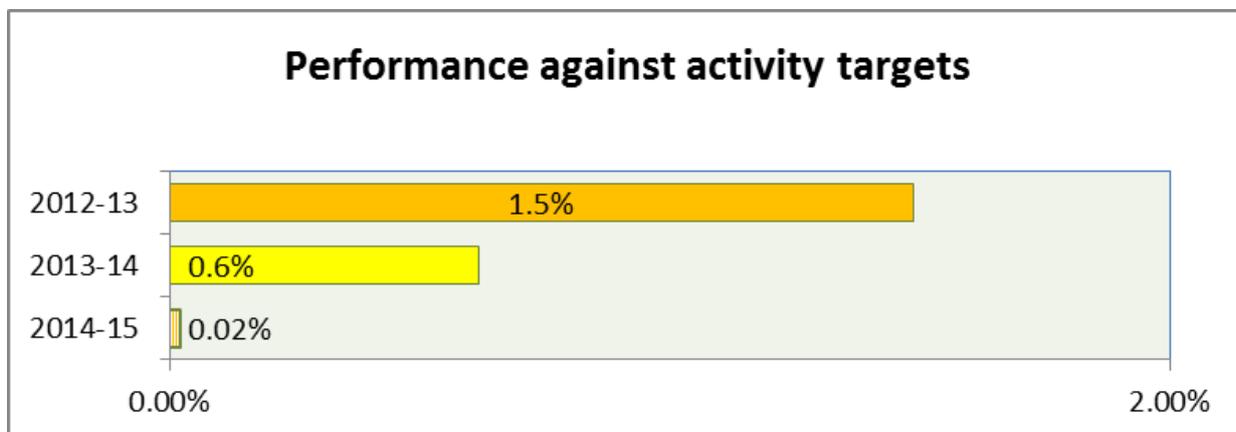


Performance against activity targets

- Colleges receive funding from SFC to deliver a target number of hours of learning (WSUMs). These can be related to college places and at the sector level we expect colleges to deliver 116,269 FTE places. Colleges exceeded the 116,269 places target by 3,407 FTE in 2014-15.

Chart 12

Performance against targets

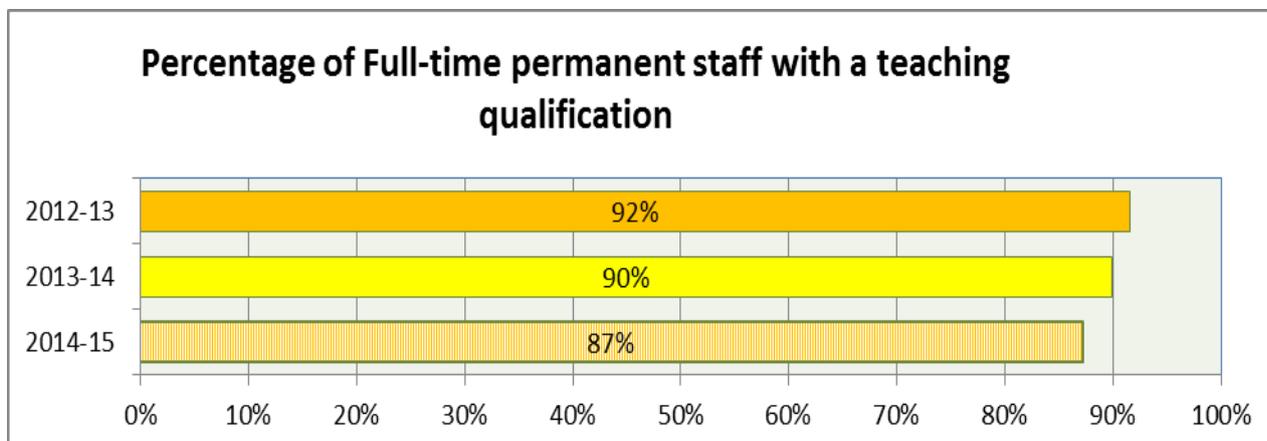


Staff in Scotland's colleges

This chart measures the percentage of full-time teaching staff with a teaching qualification recognised by the General Teaching Council.

Chart 13

Percentage of full-time permanent staff with a teaching qualification



Further information

52. The PIs are of primary importance to Ministers, College Principals, Governing Boards and Scottish Government officials.
53. In order to bring the PIs to the widest possible audience of employers, staff, students and parents, the format has been improved for this publication; the individual college PIs are now hosted by each college on their own website, thereby raising the profile of the figures and making them more useable.
54. Further information from SFC on Scotland's colleges is available on [our website](#).
55. Student numbers may differ across these publications as the reports are prepared for different purposes. For example, the 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 Baseline report for academic year 2014-15.
56. Additional information regarding the destinations of full-time successful college students is available in a separate SFC statistical publication. The most recent publication covering the academic year 2013-14 [College Leaver Destinations](#).
57. Full copies of Education Scotland subject and college reviews, and overviews of provision are available from the [Education Scotland website](#).
58. The Infact database, available on the SFC website, allows for more detailed analysis of provision within Scotland's colleges. Please note that figures on Infact may differ slightly from those presented here. Infact includes figures for students not funded by SFC. Infact can be found on [our website](#).

Technical Annex

59. Our PIs are primarily based on our [further education statistics \(FES\) returns](#) which include the course/exam result for each student funded by SFC and SDS. [Code List J](#) from our 2014-15 FES return outlines the 16 different options to record the result for the student 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 | Hours | Enrolments |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| Not Provided | 2,200 | 7 |
| Withdrawn from programme/course and commenced employment | 1,612,856 | 3,457 |
| Withdrawn from programme/course and now studying in an HEI | 28,748 | 96 |
| Withdrawn from programme/course and destination unknown | 8,910,289 | 24,431 |
| Transferred to another programme/course within the college | 95,337 | 200 |
| Completed programme/course, student assessed but not successful | 8,507,580 | 26,671 |
| Completed programme/course, student assessed and successful | 45,601,096 | 130,610 |
| Withdrawn from programme/course and now studying elsewhere (not HEI) | 112,812 | 429 |
| Completed programme/course, student not assessed as programme/course not designed to be assessed | 8,600 | 17 |
| Student has progressed to next year but did not gain 70% of the credits undertaken | 613,441 | 1,787 |
| Student has progressed to next year and has achieved 70% of the credits undertaken | 7,902,948 | 17,638 |
| Student has achieved 70% of the credits undertaken but has chosen not to progress onto the next year | 168,500 | 465 |
| Student completed first year of an HND but has chosen to leave with an HNC | 379,800 | 640 |
| Total | 73,944,207 | 206,448 |

60. We collect a student record for each individual. Of the 206,448 course enrolments included within our report only 5 records have been returned without a date of birth although there will be some inaccurate dates in the remaining records. SFC working with the college sector continues to improve protective characteristics data collection; coverage and quality. The collection of sexual orientation and religion, religious denomination characteristics will become compulsory from 2016-17.
61. 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.
62. 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.
63. 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.

64. SFC has worked with our statistical advisory groups and with the 'College Development Network' to develop a set of performance indicator guidance notes. These help ensure student results are coded consistently across the sector.
65. In addition to our FES and PI guidance notes SFC also provides the performance indicator and student outcome datasets to Education Scotland for use within their college reviews. This helps ensure the accuracy of our data and provides a richer context in which the results can be reviewed. The Education Scotland reports on college inspection can be found on the [Education Scotland website](#).
66. SFC allocated £394 in teaching and fee waiver grant to colleges to deliver learning activity and an additional £105 million to provide financial student support in 2015-16. This excludes additional funding for strategic projects and £20m for ESF activity. As a result colleges undergo 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 SUMs 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.
67. SFC will complete a cycle of visits to each college before the 2015-16 performance indicators are finalised. These visits will check the accuracy of the 2014-15 and 2015-16 student records and ensure our performance indicators continue to be based on accurate data.