

Self-Evaluative Summary of the 2020-21 Key Performance Indicators

Despite an exceptionally challenging year, with COVID-19 creating a challenge to planned delivery models and capacity, Edinburgh College exceeded the Regional Outcome Agreement credit target for academic session 2020/21, by 6,053: 194,000 credits were delivered against the target of 187,947, with a minimal adjustment of 35 credits in the October 2021 Further Education Statistics (FES) Return.

Additional funding investment afforded the opportunity to deliver the Young Persons' Guarantee and Transition Training Fund credits to over 700 students, across fifteen areas of provision, on Skills Boost courses aligned to the immediate needs of both students and the economy. A total of 12,874 credits accounted for 1,169 student deferrals at the end of the 2020/21 session; this was 1,580 fewer students than in 2019/20.

The Widening Access Agenda has once again had a positive impact on inclusion, with an additional 2.2% of students enrolled having a declared a disability; this now accounts for 27.5% of our student population. The Access and Inclusion Strategy 2018-22 identifies aims and outlines our commitment to ensuring that students have equality of opportunity whilst studying as part of the Edinburgh College community. The new Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2021-25 provides the narrative on progress made since 2019 and lays out clear milestone targets to be evaluated over the course of the next four years. Recruitment across key groups remained stable, despite the challenges involved during the COVID 'recovery year'. Although 637 fewer students were recruited during 2020/21 than in the previous academic session, the total number of enrolments increased by 240.

A key challenge and priority during the early stages of 2020/21, was to ensure that all students had the digital access required to fully engage with, and complete, their course. The additional finance allocated to resource the Digital Support Fund, along with two successful charitable bids, ensured that the challenge was met. Further withdrawals on all FTFE (full-time further education) and a number of FTHE (full-time higher education) courses, remain the highest priorities. Those on FTFE courses aged 16-19, are most negatively affected. Further withdrawals on FTFE provision were consistently high across all four faculties and not concentrated in any one area of provision, with a range of 4.02% and a mean further withdrawal of 23.9%. This was not the case across FTHE, where the range was 7.58%, albeit with the highest percentage of 17.08% relating to the faculty with significantly fewer students enrolled on those courses.

Cross-College strategies to reduce withdrawals and improve success rates, now include an Action Plan based on the Education Scotland Progress Visit Report presented in March 2022. This covers key themes such as assessment planning, tracking and monitoring as well as renewed focus on Learning Support arrangements.

Work experience was severely and unavoidably impacted by COVID-19 during 2019/20. This continued, albeit to a lesser degree, throughout 2020/21, but largely for extra-curricular work-integrated learning only, and not course-specific, vocationally-assessed and/or regulatory elements.

Despite access to engaging with the Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey becoming increasingly straightforward, participation rates fell further in 2020/21, with overall satisfaction at 82%.

Priority access on campus was granted for those student cohorts subject to deferrals, a number of whom were progressing internally. Campus access was reviewed throughout the session, and aimed to ensure no student was disadvantaged through lack of access. Given the disruption caused to a large number of students, particularly in the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment, teams worked during holidays outside of lockdown periods, to support their students to succeed. This resulted in significantly fewer deferrals across the College at the end of the 2020/21 academic session (1,169: down from 2,749 at the end of 2019/20).