

Committee	Audit Committee		
Agenda Item	13		
Date paper prepared	31/08/2022	Date of committee meeting	07/09/2022
Subject	Scotland's Colleges 2022		
Author	Audit Scotland		
Action requested	To Discuss		
Purpose of the paper	<p>Summarise the purpose of the paper, and how it links to strategic objectives, the operating plan, or the business of the university or committee.</p> <p>For example, routine report; business case; revision of policy; new activity; improving student experience etc.</p>		
Brief summary of the paper	<p>Key Messages</p> <p>1 Covid-19 funding contributed to the college sector reporting a healthier than expected financial position in 2020-21. This is forecast to change for the current and next academic years. It will be difficult for Scotland's colleges to balance the delivery of high-quality learning at the volume currently expected and to contribute to other Scottish Government priorities while remaining financially sustainable.</p> <p>2 Colleges have continued to deliver learning in unprecedented circumstances and responded well to the shift to online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the proportion of students successfully completing their course and achieving their intended qualification has fallen. And on average, socially disadvantaged and vulnerable students were less likely to successfully complete their course than their peers. High rates of student withdrawals may affect the life chances of individual students, impact on wider society, and risk not maximising public investment in the college sector.</p> <p>3 Change is needed to ensure more students are successful and that the college sector is financially sustainable in the long term. Wide-ranging recommendations for change made by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) in 2021 need to be implemented at the earliest opportunity. The Scottish Government is due to set out the future role of the college and university sectors in 2023, but it is important that the Scottish Government and the SFC support colleges to plan for change now to make best use of available funding.</p>		

	Interactive data for members to peruse is available on the learner journey from school to work: https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/e-hubs/the-learner-journey-from-school-to-work
Consultation	N/A
Resource implications	None
Risk implications	As detailed in the paper
Link with strategy	Sustainability
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	n/a
Island Community Impact	N/A

<p>Paper status</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open – The paper may be circulated to non-members of the committee and published online without restriction.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Restricted – The paper must not be circulated to non-members or published online until after the committee meeting.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Confidential - The paper must not be circulated beyond the committee members and should not be published online. [Please note papers may still be subject to Freedom of Information requests – see below].</p>
<p><u>Freedom of information</u></p>	<p>Open</p> <p>If closed/ withheld, select date this will become 'open': Enter a date.</p>