About colleges

Further education (FE) colleges provide high-quality technical and professional education and training for young people, adults and employers. They prepare 2.2 million students with valuable employability skills, helping to develop their career opportunities. Sixth form colleges (SFC) provide high-quality academic education to 16 to 18-year-olds enabling them to progress to university or higher level vocational education.
There are 288 colleges in England (as at Sept 2017)

- 189 FE
- 73 SFC
- 2 art, design & performing arts
- 10 Specialist designated
- 14 land-based
Students
Colleges educate and train 2.2 million people.

- 16,000 14 to 15-year-olds are enrolled in colleges
- 13,000 part-time
- 3,000 full-time

1.4 million adults study or train in colleges.
16 to 18-year-olds studying in colleges vs state funded schools\(^1\)

- **Colleges**: 712,000
- **Schools**: 424,000

An additional **77,500** 16 to 18-year-olds undertake an apprenticeship through colleges.
Higher Education
151,000 people study higher education in a college\(^2\)

218 colleges provide undergraduate and postgraduate level courses;

86% teach foundation degrees

One-third of English students aged under 19 who enter higher education through UCAS studied at a college
Colleges deliver

- 85% HNCs
- 82% HNDs

Foundation degrees: 58%
Apprenticeships
Almost every FE college offers apprenticeships.

Colleges train nearly half of all construction and engineering and manufacturing apprentices.

There are 313,000 people on apprenticeship provision in colleges.

The average college trains 1,200 apprentices.
### Number of apprenticeships in colleges by age and highest level, 2015/16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Intermediate Level Apprenticeship</th>
<th>Advanced Level Apprenticeship</th>
<th>Higher Level Apprenticeship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>52,200</td>
<td>25,800</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-24</td>
<td>51,800</td>
<td>52,800</td>
<td>2,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25+</td>
<td>67,400</td>
<td>48,200</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Intermediate Level Apprenticeship**
- **Advanced Level Apprenticeship**
- **Higher Level Apprenticeship**
Courses and qualifications

171,000
16 to 18-year-olds students in colleges are doing A Level courses

672,000
students in colleges are taking STEM subjects

72%
of colleges judged good or outstanding for overall effectiveness at their most recent inspection
Achievement rates

Education and training

- Sixth form colleges: 87.7%
- FE colleges: 82.1%

Apprenticeships

- FE colleges: 68.9%
- Private training providers: 65.5%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37%</td>
<td>FE and sixth form colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22%</td>
<td>All state funded schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Higher education institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7%</td>
<td>Apprenticeships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7%</td>
<td>Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6%</td>
<td>Not in education, employment or training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Independent schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Other education and training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Special schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diversity
90,000 college students are aged 60 and over
The average distance between home postcode and learning location for undergraduate students attending a college is **17 miles** compared to **52 miles** for those at a university.
17% of students on FE and skills provision have a learning difficulty and/or disability.

16 to 18-year-olds claiming free school meals at age 15:

- Colleges: 17%
- Maintained school and academy sixth forms: 9%
Employment
36% of large employers who train their staff do so through a college, compared with 33% who do so through a university.

The average FE college works with around 600 businesses to provide training for their staff.

Proportion of employers that view 17 to 18-year-old education leavers to be well prepared for work:

- College: 68%
- School: 58%
Staff
Colleges employ 120,000 full-time equivalent people of which 60,000 are teaching staff.

There are 6,000 governors in colleges in England; 40% are female and 14% are from an ethnic minority background.
Female leaders

41% College principals
39% School head teachers
20% University vice-chancellors
Income, expenditure and returns to education
The total college income in England is £7 billion (2015/16)
College income analysis (2015/16)

- **50%** DfE 16 to 18 education income
- **25%** DfE adult education & apprenticeship income
- **2%** HEFCE income
- **2%** Local authorities, schools & other funding bodies
- **13%** Tuition fees & education contracts
- **1%** Research grants & contracts
- **7%** Other income

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1. DfE 16 to 18 education income
2. DfE adult education & apprenticeship income
3. HEFCE income
4. Local authorities, schools & other funding bodies
5. Tuition fees & education contracts
6. Research grants & contracts
7. Other income
Staff costs (excluding restructuring) total £4.4 billion, accounting for 68% of total college spending.

FE students aged 19+ generate an additional £70 billion for the economy over their lifetimes.
Economic returns per £1 of Government funding

- Level 3 apprenticeship: £28
- Level 2 apprenticeship: £26
- Full Level 2 course: £21
- Full Level 3 loan course: £21
Endnotes

1 ‘Schools’ refers to maintained school and academy sixth forms

2 Includes non-prescribed higher education

3 16 to 18-year-olds includes a small number of students aged under 16

4 STEM: science, technology, engineering and mathematics

5 Excludes colleges that have merged and not been inspected as a ‘new’ provider

6 Ethnic minority groups are classified as any group that are not white British

7 Includes European Union co-financed and release of capital grants

8 Includes endowment and investment income

9 All Government funded post-19 provision
This document refers to further education and sixth form colleges established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.