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
244 COLLEGES
IN ENGLAND

- 168 general further education colleges
- 51 sixth form colleges
- 2 art, design & performing arts
- 13 land-based
- 10 institutes of adult learning

(as at February 2020)
STUDENTS
COLLEGES EDUCATE AND TRAIN

2.2 MILLION PEOPLE

1.4 MILLION adults study or train in colleges

669,000 16 to 18-year-olds study in colleges

An additional 69,000 16 to 18-year-olds undertake an apprenticeship through colleges

13,000 14 to 15-year-olds are enrolled in colleges (10,000 part-time; 3,000 full-time)
The average age of college students is 29.
NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN COLLEGES BY AGE (2017/18)

- 16-18: 738,000
- 19-24: 352,000
- 25+: 1,030,000
- UNDER 16: 14,000
HIGHER EDUCATION
137,000 people study higher education in a college.

165 colleges are currently on the Office for Students (OfS) register of English Higher Education Providers – offering undergraduate and/or postgraduate level courses.

One third of English students aged 19 and under who enter higher education through UCAS studied at a college.
COLLEGES DELIVER

82% of Higher National Certificates
82% of Higher National Diplomas
59% of Foundation Degrees
NUMBER OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS IN COLLEGES BY AGE (2017/18)

- UNDER 21: 37,400
- 21-24: 26,700
- 25+: 73,200
APPRENTICESHIPS
There are 264,000 people on apprenticeship provision in colleges, of whom 70,000 are aged under 19.

Colleges train nearly half of all construction and engineering and manufacturing apprentices.
THE AVERAGE GENERAL FE COLLEGE TRAINS 1,300 APPRENTICES
NUMBER OF APPRENTICESHIPS IN COLLEGES BY AGE AND HIGHEST LEVEL, 2017/18³

16-18

- Intermediate Level Apprenticeship: 43,000
- Advanced Level Apprenticeship: 25,800
- Higher Level Apprenticeship: 800

19-24

- Intermediate Level Apprenticeship: 36,200
- Advanced Level Apprenticeship: 51,400
- Higher Level Apprenticeship: 5,100

25+

- Intermediate Level Apprenticeship: 43,200
- Advanced Level Apprenticeship: 44,100
- Higher Level Apprenticeship: 14,100
155,000
16 to 18-year-old students in colleges are doing A Level courses

649,000
students in colleges are taking STEM subjects

193,000
students in colleges retake GCSE English and / or maths
OFSTED INSPECTION
82% of colleges judged **GOOD** or **OUTSTANDING** for overall effectiveness at their most recent inspection⁵
ACHIEVEMENT RATES
EDUCATION AND TRAINING

General FE colleges: 85.9%
Sixth form colleges: 84.2%

APPRENTICESHIPS

General FE colleges: 68.7%
Private training providers: 65.6%
HIGHER EDUCATION - EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND STUDENT OUTCOMES
NINE colleges have foundation degree awarding powers (FDAP) and ONE college has taught degree awarding powers (TDAP)
INNOVATIVE PRACTICE
Each year

OVER 80 COLLEGES

achieve the

AOC BEACON STANDARD

for their innovative practice that has a significant impact and benefit on students and is transferable throughout the FE sector
16 TO 18 PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT
WHERE 16 TO 18-YEAR-OLDS ARE STUDYING OR WORKING

34%  
FE and Sixth Form Colleges

24%  
All state funded schools

11%  
Higher education institutions

6%  
NEET

5%  
Independent schools

8%  
Employment

6%  
Apprenticeships

5%  
Other education and training

1%  
Special schools
EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
16 TO 18-YEAR-OLDS

STUDENTS FROM ETHNIC MINORITY BACKGROUNDS: 26%

FEMALE STUDENTS: 46%

LEARNERS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND / OR DISABILITY: 23%

ADULTS

STUDENTS FROM ETHNIC MINORITY BACKGROUNDS: 32%

FEMALE STUDENTS: 54%

LEARNERS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND / OR DISABILITY: 14%
17% of students in colleges have a learning difficulty and/or disability

99,000 college students are aged 60 and over

16 TO 18-YEAR-OLDS IN COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS THAT CLAIMED FREE SCHOOL MEALS AT AGE 15

16% Colleges

8% Maintained school and academy sixth forms
The average distance between home postcode and learning location for undergraduate students:

- College: 15 miles
- University: 53 miles
HEALTH, WELL-BEING AND SPORT
100,000 students in colleges are doing a sports course

57,000 16-18
43,000 Adults

95 FA College Grassroots Hubs have engaged
62,565 participants and deployed
4,389 student volunteers
1,130 disabled students competed in AoC Sport events

In 2018/19...

over 1,250 teams entered one of the 170 league competitions delivered by AoC Sport, providing weekly competitive opportunities for 15,000 – 18,000 students

over 7,500 students from 172 colleges competed in regional tournaments to qualify for National Championships
52.7% of active students were confident of finding a job within six months of finishing college, compared to just 38.2% of inactive students.

Active students had higher levels of life satisfaction compared to inactive students.

6.8 compared to 5.4
(Personal wellbeing score out of 10)
Over 100 UK COLLEGES have benefited from Erasmus+ funding in the current funding cycle (2014-2018)

The UK vocational sector has received OVER €77M in Erasmus+ funding in the current funding cycle (2014-2020)

UK colleges have delivered OVER 17,000 MOBILITY PLACEMENTS in the current Erasmus+ funding cycle

Colleges say 100% of students who complete an Erasmus+ placement improve their PERSONAL CONFIDENCE
CHINA is the most important market for college international activity

...with ITALY second

The average college income from non-EU international activity in 2018/19 was OVER £1M

LEVEL 3 is the most popular level of study for international students at colleges

The average college that is active internationally has 215 non-EU on-campus international students
61% of colleges say that between 75-100% of their international students progress to HE courses.

College top strengths for the international marketplace include A LEVELS, ESOL and TEACHER-TRAINING.

Colleges are involved in OVER 15 DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY, ranging from student recruitment to professional training and operating campuses overseas.
DESTINATIONS
STUDENTS WHO PROGRESS FROM LEVEL 3 TO SUSTAINED EMPLOYMENT

28% FROM COLLEGES
20% FROM SCHOOLS

LEVEL 3 DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS WHO PROGRESS TO SUSTAINED EMPLOYMENT

26% FROM COLLEGES
19% FROM SCHOOLS

Colleges are responsible for 38% of all the publicly funded HE progression of young people in England (65,791 students progressed to HE from 265 colleges in 2017/18) and 51% of disadvantaged young people progressing to HE.
EMPLOYMENT
Proportion of large employers who train their staff through a college, compared with universities:

- College: 36%
- University: 33%

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

- College: 68%
- University: 58%
COLLEGES EMPLOY 111,000 FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT PEOPLE

- 55,000 teaching staff
- 56,000 non-teaching staff

- 61% are female
- 16% are from an ethnic minority background
- 6% have a learning difficulty and/or disability
FEMALE LEADERS

- College Principals: 48%
- School Head Teachers: 39%
- University Vice-Chancellors: 25%

The average age of college staff: 46 years
The average age of colleges' chief executives and principals: 53 years
11% of college chief executives and principals come from black or minority ethnic backgrounds.

The average (mean) pay for full-time teaching staff:

- Colleges: £31,500
- Secondary Schools: £34,700
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE
The total college income in England is **£6.9 billion** (2017/18)

Staff costs (excluding restructuring) total **£4.3 BILLION**, accounting for **68%** of total college spending (2017/18)
COLLEGE INCOME ANALYSIS®
2017/18

16-18 EDUCATION: 47%
ADULT EDUCATION: 12%
APPRENTICESHIPS: 8%
HIGHER EDUCATION FEES AND GRANTS: 8%
OTHER PUBLIC: 11%
OTHER PRIVATE: 15%
ENDNOTES

1 Age breakdown excludes higher education students taught at colleges that are franchised from a higher education institution

2 Includes non-prescribed higher education and higher level apprenticeships

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 NEET: not in education, employment or training

7 Ethnic minority groups are classified as any group that are non-white British

8 Includes the 16-19 converter academies

9 16-18 education excludes apprenticeships (and includes 14-15)

This document refers to further education and sixth form colleges established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.