



Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience

The Scottish HE Data Landscape

An overview of: Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Outcome Agreements (OA)

Type and scope of the data

Every publicly funded higher education provider in Scotland is required to publish an Outcome Agreement. These documents set out what colleges and universities plan to deliver in return for their funding from the SFC. The agreement comprises a narrative document to explain how the institution will address the Scottish Government's priorities and cross-cutting themes; and a standardised data table in which institutions project, and estimate progress towards, achieving the milestones and targets associated with the priorities and themes of the SFC and Scottish Government. These include retention data (from HESA PIs), student satisfaction (from the National Student Survey) and graduate destinations (from the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey).

Time period of data renewal

Each OA is refreshed annually and the preference of the SFC is that each OA covers a rolling period of three years. The SFC currently offer only one-year funding settlements so many institutions' OAs also cover a one-year period only.

Questions that the data can help to explore or answer

The narrative document can help the reader understand the role each institution will play in enabling the Scottish Government to meet its national objectives, in alignment with each institution's own strategic aims, objectives and context. For some purposes, it may be useful to supplement the information gleaned from the narrative OA document with the institution's published strategic plan. The data provide an overview of how that institution is expecting to perform in relation to Scottish Government aims.

Important caveats, exclusions etc.

It is important to note that the data supplied in the data table are predictions only. In addition, not all items presented in the data table should be considered targets. Some are milestones and indications of a direction of travel, for example, where the measures are only partially within the institution's control. The data are presented at institutional level and should not aggregate the data at a national level, as it is known that each institution will take a different approach to scenario planning and modelling the data in future years.

Publications/analyses which use the data

The data are generally intended for SFC planning purposes, for advising the Scottish Government and in relation to the allocation of funding for institutions.

Where to find the data and any further published analysis

The SFC publishes each institutional OA at:

www.sfc.ac.uk/funding/outcome-agreements/outcome-agreements.aspx