

## Key points for Further Education (FE) Activity

### **We have fewer enrolments.....**

Over the past five academic years, the number of enrolments at FE colleges decreased by 5.7% from 186,470 in 2010/11 to 175,818 in 2014/15.

### **...but consistent proportions on regulated courses.**

The proportion of regulated enrolments ranged from 78.4% in 2013/14 to 83.4% in 2010/11. Almost four-fifths (79.7%) of all enrolments were regulated in 2014/15.

### **The student population is getting younger....**

Over the 5 year period between 2010/11 and 2014/15, the majority of regulated enrolments were aged '19 and under', with a year-on-year increase from 52.0% in 2010/11 to 58.4% in 2014/15.

### **... the vast majority are part time courses.....**

In 2010/11, 18.3% of all regulated enrolments were full-time and 81.7% were part-time. This pattern of provision remained almost constant across the following 4 years, with 18.9% full-time and 81.1% part-time in 2014/15.

### **....and more studying at level 2.**

Of the 140,137 regulated enrolments in 2014/15 those at 'Level 1 and below' accounted for 21.4% (30,053), 46.2% (64,806) at 'Level 2', 23.7% (33,207) at 'Level 3' and 8.4% (11,722) were at 'Level 4 and above'. This indicates that nearly four-fifths (78.3%) of regulated provision are at level 2 or above.

### **More males studying full-time than females.....**

It is interesting to note that upon examining regulated enrolments by mode of attendance and gender, it illustrates that in part-time provision there is a fairly even split, while in full-time provision, males (57.8%) are in the majority in 2014/15.

### **....and there is variation in gender, in terms of the regulated course subject area.**

In 2014/15, females accounted for the vast majority in 'Health, Public Services and Care' (85.1%) and in 'Retail and Commercial Enterprise' enrolments (77.4%). Male-dominated subject areas included 'Construction, Planning and the Built Environment' (96.8%) and 'Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies' (93.6%).

### **At Northern Ireland level, deprivation is not a substantial factor. However, this differs at college level.**

In 2014/15, regulated enrolments were fairly evenly spread across the five groupings of deprivation.

NWRC had over a third (33.6%) of enrolments from the most deprived areas, however only 2.4% from the least deprived areas. Over half of BMC regulated enrolments are quite polarised in that 55.5% are from either the most or least deprived grouping of areas.

The largest proportion of regulated enrolments for SERC was from the most affluent areas (25.5%). Over 50% of NWRC and SWC regulated enrolments came from the two most deprived grouping of areas.

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**Majority of enrolments are funded through Funded Learning Unit (FLU).**

Of the 175,818 enrolments in 2014/15, over two-thirds (70.0%) were funded through the Funded Learning Unit (FLU), 13.1% were funded through government training programmes, 8.1% were cost recovery and 6.1% through the Entitlement Framework programme. There were a further 2.6% of enrolments where the funding stream was classed as 'Other'.

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**Higher Education enrolments have been increasing year on year.**

Over the past five academic years, the number of HE enrolments at FE colleges increased by 6.5% from 11,004 in 2010/11 to 11,722 in 2014/15. There has been an increase in HE enrolments in each year over the period.

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**Increases in total qualifications are mainly due to increases in SERC, NRC and SWC.**

Between 2010/11 and 2014/15, there were large increases in qualifications for SERC (31.6%), NRC (13.0%) and SWC (11.0%) and a smaller increase in BMC (3.2%). In NWRC there was a decrease of 7.4%, from 11,112 to 10,291 qualifications over the same period and in SRC a decrease of 6.9%, from 17,852 to 16,626 qualifications.

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**Performance of FE Colleges is continuously improving.**

Over the period 2010/11 to 2014/15, the retention rate in FE colleges increased by 1.6 percentage points from 87.7% to 89.3%. This implies that more people are staying on and completing their course in the most recent year when compared to 2010/11.

The achievement rate of FE colleges rose by 8.6 percentage points from 80.3% to 88.9% over the period 2010/11 to 2014/15. This indicates that of those who complete their course, there are more people achieving their qualification now in 2014/15 than in 2010/11.

The success rate (i.e. the proportion of students staying on their course and achieving a qualification) increased from 70.4% in 2010/11 to 79.4% in 2014/15 (9.0 percentage points).

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