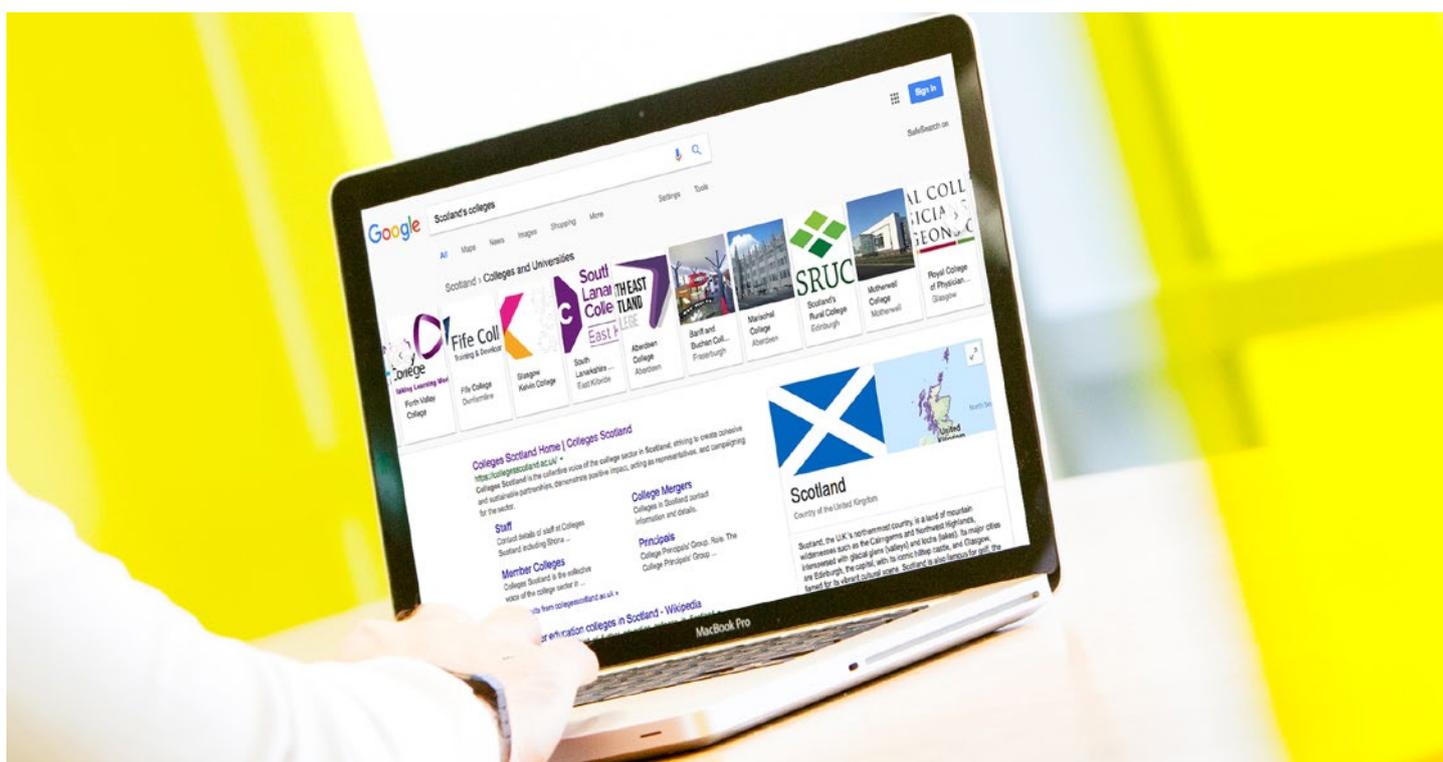


Project scope

Scotland's colleges 2018



AUDITOR GENERAL 

Prepared by Audit Scotland
January 2018

Scotland's colleges contribute to sustainable economic growth by helping to develop a highly educated and skilled workforce. Scotland's colleges operate across 13 regions, delivering a wide range of further and higher education courses to over 220,000 students. These courses provide people with a variety of skills and experience to take forward into the workplace or on to further training or education.

The Scottish Government provides Scotland's colleges with over £550 million a year to deliver agreed levels of further and higher education. In

[Scotland's colleges 2017](#)  we reported that the financial health of the sector had deteriorated and college finances will continue to be central to our audit work this year.

What is the scope of the audit?

This year's overview will consider how colleges are positioned to meet the future challenges – both financial and otherwise. In addition, we will consider how the regional arrangements in the three multi-college regions are helping the sector.

The 2018 audit will build on last year's report published in June 2017. In this year's overview our analysis of the sector will include both incorporated colleges (ie, publicly funded colleges established under the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992) and non-incorporated colleges. The audit will:

- assess how colleges performed over the past year
- review the financial position of the sector and assess how well colleges manage their finances
- assess what difference the regional bodies in the three multi-college regions have made.

How will we carry out this audit?

We will mostly draw information from colleges' annual accounts and audit reports. We will also use information held by organisations including individual colleges, the Scottish Funding Council and the Scottish Government. We will interview senior officials in the sector and consult with other stakeholders, including staff and student unions.

What impact will the audit have?

Our report will examine the financial position of Scotland's colleges and trends in student participation (including student attainment and retention). These two areas have been of significant public interest.

By reviewing all of Scotland's colleges, the 2018 overview will give a comprehensive picture of performance against the Scottish Government's national target for learning activity.

The overview will provide the first assessment of the effectiveness of regional arrangements, with a particular focus on the regional bodies in multi-college regions.

We will also highlight any future challenges the sector faces. Based on this, we will make recommendations for colleges, the Scottish Funding Council and the Scottish Government to support the ongoing performance and financial sustainability of the sector.

Audit timetable

We aim to publish our report in June 2018. Following publication, the Auditor General for Scotland will present the findings to the Scottish Parliament's Public Audit and Post-Legislative Scrutiny Committee. This is one of a range of reports Audit Scotland plans to publish in 2018. Our full rolling work programme can be accessed at www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/our-work/future-work/our-work-programme 

Contact

If you have any questions about this audit, please get in touch with Mark McCabe, Audit Manager, on 0131 625 1806 or by email at mmccabe@audit-scotland.gov.uk .



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