



Scottish Funding Council

Promoting further and higher education

December 2011

Flexible entry into higher education

Executive Summary

- At the request of the Scottish Government, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has prepared a report summarising the potential to grow flexible entry routes to higher education (HE).
- The main findings of the report are that the majority of students entering full-time undergraduate education in Scotland do so directly from school and expect to spend four years achieving an Honours degree.
- There are already flexible routes to achieving a degree, including entry to later years of university study following attainment of qualifications at college (articulation) or advanced entry through school qualifications (namely the Advanced Higher).
- With the Scottish Government keen to explore ways of expanding flexible entry routes to both increase learner choice and ensure that public expenditure on the delivery of HE is as cost effective as possible, the SFC has assessed the potential growth for both articulation and advanced entry.
- There is scope to grow both routes from what is currently a low level to a higher, though still modest level.
- The scope of savings will be small in the short term (we estimate c. £5 million over the next two years), showing greater, though still modest savings in future years (up to £12 million by 2015/16). This is against a FE / HE teaching budget of c. £1.4 billion.
- Further consideration of the policies and / or incentives that will need to be offered to universities, colleges and schools is needed by Council, schools, colleges, universities and Government.

Flexible entry into higher education

Section 1: Introduction

- 1 Scotland has a tradition of awarding undergraduate honours degrees to HE students following four years of study. However there are increasingly a number of different routes that students can follow to achieve an undergraduate degree, some of which offer the potential to achieve a degree in a shorter timescale and / or at a lower cost to the public purse.
- 2 These include (but are not limited to):
 - entry to university from college following attainment of a higher national qualification (HNC/D). This is known as articulation and is formally defined by the SFC as: “students gaining entry to second year using a Higher National Certificate (HNC) or to third year using a Higher National Diploma (HND) obtained in a college as an entry qualification.”

The SFC has had a policy on articulation since 2004 and has funded both universities and colleges to ensure full credit progression routes. The SFC’s policy was introduced to widen access and ensure entry to HE for non-traditional learners and our recent work in creating a number of regional articulation hubs and in making articulating student volume a key indicator of outcome agreements with a number of “post-92 universities” has had a very positive impact. The SFC remains committed to ensuring its articulation policy continues to deliver the access benefits it was established for. The good work that the hubs have thus far achieved should be recognised and the SFC welcomes the opportunity to ensure that in delivering the wider access agenda, improvements to the efficiency of the HE system can also be achieved.

- entry into second year study at university following achievement of Advanced Highers at school (S6-UG2) or entry into first year of university directly from fifth year at school (S5-UG1). For the purposes of this study we are using the term advanced entry to describe both these routes;
- achievement of an honours degree in less than the standard four years through accelerated study (eg over the summer recess period); and

- part-time study over a number of years often combined with employment leading to the achievement of a degree.
- 3 The Scottish Government's Green Paper, Building a Smarter Future: Towards a Sustainable Scottish Solution for the Future of Higher Education (Dec 2010), states: *'The four-year degree is and will remain the core offer of our universities...but we want to explore ways in which we could make the learner journey more effective for learners, more efficient for the public purse and how we can make our funding systems more flexible to encourage institutions to be innovative and creative in developing courses that meet the changing needs of a diverse student population and our economy, through recovery and into prosperity.'* (p6).
 - 4 In March 2011 the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning asked the SFC to undertake a project on articulation, advanced entry and accelerated degrees identifying both cost efficiencies and length of time reductions that could be achieved. Part-time study has not been included as part of this review.
 - 5 The primary objective in looking at flexible entry routes in this piece of work has been to identify any potential for cost efficiencies. However, it is not SFC's intention to promote flexible entry as a cost efficiency measure in isolation. The chance to redesign university entrance for a proportion of learners presents a significant opportunity to deliver real improvement across the tertiary education system and it is critical that the cost efficiencies realised are re-invested in the system.
 - 6 It must be stressed that growth in flexible entry (through any route) must be seen in the wider context of education in Scotland. Changes to one route may have impacts / introduce risks in other areas of policy delivery and / or funding mechanisms. We cannot address all these in this single report. However we have tried to identify some of the potential interfaces at policy level in the list below:
 - Schools: Curriculum for Excellence was not introduced to increase flexible entry. Roll out is only just bedding in. Risk is that any change to university admissions policies on the back of increasing flexible entry could impact on CfE;
 - Students Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) funding: Student support funding currently disadvantages HND students in their "final year" of study if progression route is not identified. Earlier identification of a student's intent would enable SAAS to better match funding to need;

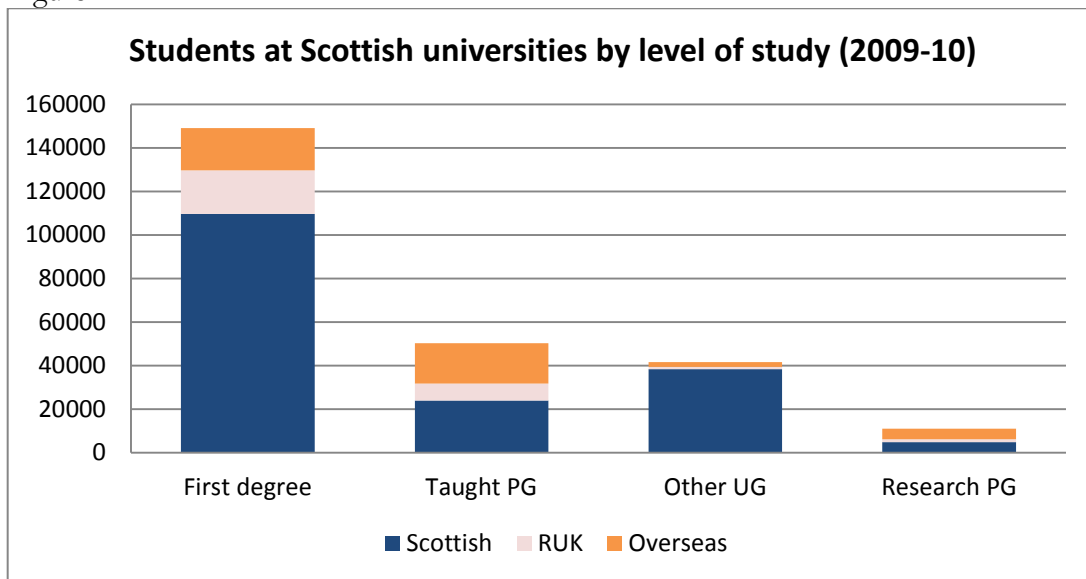
- Skills Development Scotland (SDS): Careers information, advice and guidance is currently being reviewed by SDS. Any increase in flexible entry will rely heavily on improving students' understanding of study pathways and career opportunities at an early stage.
 - Access: increasing articulation as a means of lowering the cost of delivering HE is one outcome that can be achieved. However it must be recognised that articulation is (a) a route to degree achievement that is right for some learners regardless of the savings that accrue and (b) that articulation is not the only mechanism to be used to increase access to both further and HE. Obviously there is a lot of work that has been done on various access routes to further education (FE) and HE including (but not limited to): the schools programme *Access to the professions*, the Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP) and the recognition of prior learning (eg work experience); as mechanisms of ensuring all learners have equality of access.
- 7 Recognising that this piece of work is therefore looking at a specific element of flexible entry, a detailed brief was agreed with the Scottish Government. The scope of the review was extended to include accelerated degrees. A copy of the final project brief is appended to this report (Annex A).
- 8 At the outset of this review it was anticipated that an assessment of current and future demand and supply for each of these three routes would be completed. This report presents an assessment for articulation and advanced entry. Evidence on both the supply and demand for accelerated degrees is significantly more limited. Therefore where relevant and available we have presented this information in the form of a case study.

Section 2: Overview of current university participation

Scottish universities cater for approximately 250,000 learners per annum

- 9 Scottish universities educate approximately 250,000 people per annum at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level. The majority of these students (190,000¹) are studying at undergraduate level and of these students 3 out of every 4 is from Scotland.
- 10 Using data for 2009/10 Figure 1 provides a breakdown of all students both UG and PG level and their country of domicile.

Figure 1



Source: SFC, based on HESA

Note: RUK – Rest of UK, ie England, Wales and Northern Ireland

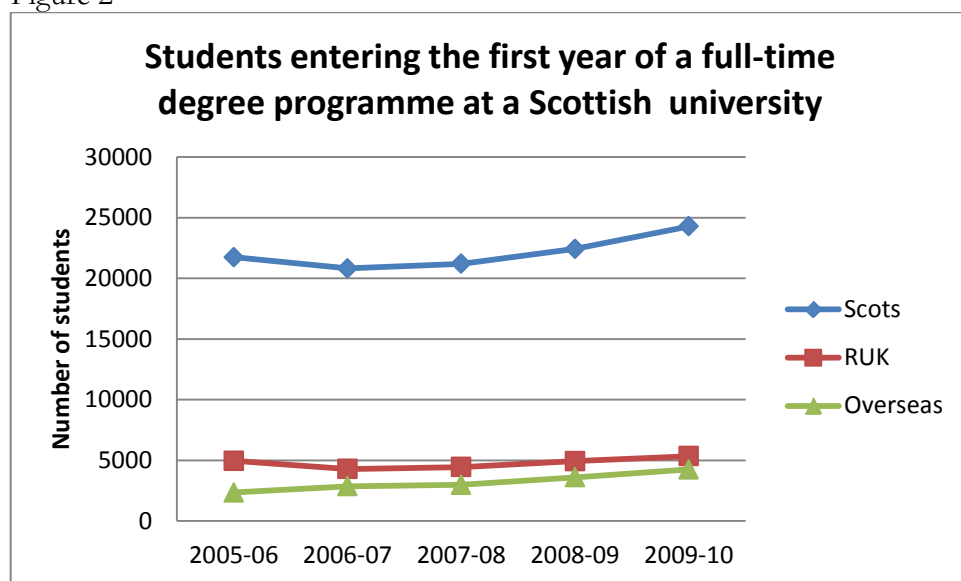
The market for full-time undergraduate study has been increasing over the past decade with certain subjects showing greater than average growth.

- 11 This study focuses specifically on the scope to improve the flexibility of entry to full-time first degree programmes. Full-time is still the dominant mode of study at degree level in Scotland: in 2009-10, 86 per cent of all first degree students were studying on a full-time basis. The Open University accounts for roughly half of all part-time study with the post-92 institutions also providing a large amount.

¹ SFC's total population includes students at the Open University which are not counted in HESA returns. HESA's standard population differs by a further 4% due to different criteria used to generate the standard population.

- 12 In recent years, there has been steady growth in the number of students entering full-time degree programmes. Overall, the market for full-time first year entrants grew by over 20 per cent between 2006-07 and 2009-10 (from around 28,000 to around 34,000). Some of this growth is accounted for by the change in degree provision for nursing students. Prior to 2006/07 the main nursing qualification was a Diploma but this was changed to a first degree from 2006/07 onwards. This accounts for between 3,000-4,000 students per annum with the remaining increase accounted for by the overall annual trend of more students going into full-time HE.

Figure 2



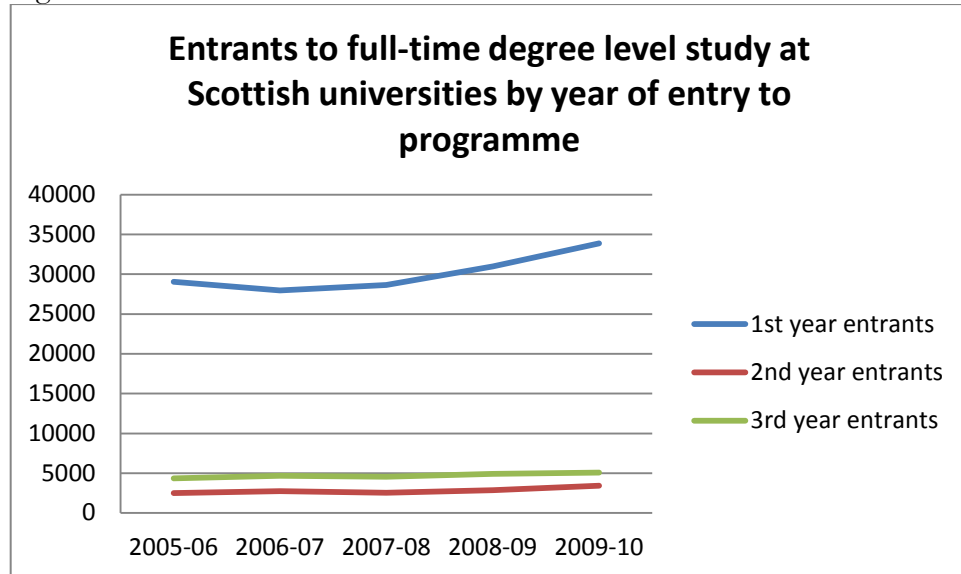
Source: SFC, based on HESA

- 13 The largest growth area during that period was in Subjects Allied to Medicine which includes nursing, allied health professions and other health related subjects. Other high volume subjects which saw significant growth were Engineering, Education, Creative Arts & Design, Mathematical and Computer Sciences and (to a lesser extent) Social Studies.

While most students enter university in first year up to 20 per cent currently enter in later years of study

- 14 The majority (80 per cent in 2009-10) of degree level students at Scottish universities begin their studies in year one of the programme. But a significant number of students enter in year two or three of the programme on the basis of credit and/or experience gained elsewhere.

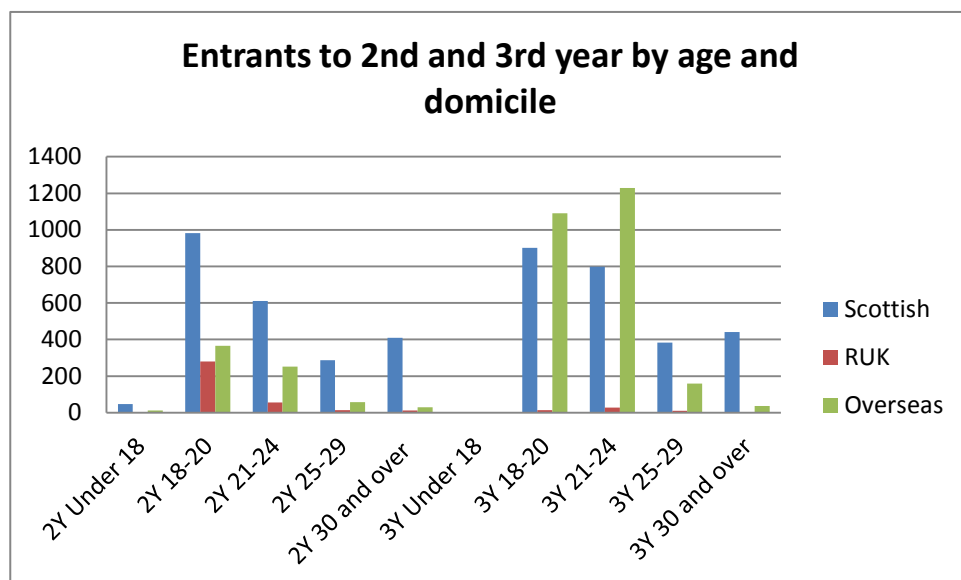
Figure 3



Source: SFC, based on HESA

- 15 Those entering second or third year of university do so through a number of routes. For second year entry the most popular routes are through the achievement of a HNC or HND (around 40 per cent of second year entrants), with advanced entry through school leaver qualifications the second most popular (around 26 per cent of second year entrants).

Figure 4



Source: SFC, based on HESA

- 16 Direct entry into third year is most often achieved by Scottish students progressing with a HND (around 42 per cent) or overseas students

entering with a qualification from their home country (around 37 per cent).

Growing this proportion of students who enter in later years, and / or offering shorter, accelerated degrees could deliver savings in HE and enable more learners the opportunity to access a degree in a shorter period of time.

Section 3: Current demand for and supply of articulation and advanced entry

Articulation

Entry to second or third year of university following achievement of a Higher National Qualification (HNQ) at college can be a less costly option than four years at university but does not reduce the amount of time taken to achieve a degree

- 17 Students can study for a HNC/D (Higher National Certificate / Diploma) at college and following achievement of this qualification can progress to university for further study and achieve a degree.
- 18 The time taken to achieve a degree remains four years but the cost to the public purse of achieving the degree is lower as the delivery of HE within the college sector is approximately three fifths the cost of delivery within the university sector.

| Table 1 – Articulation models: time taken and indicative cost | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Total time to degree/ total cost to degree |
| 1+3 model | 1 st year study at college – achieve HNC | Enter 2 nd year of university study | 3 rd year university study | 4 th year university study - achieve degree | 4 years |
| AVERAGE cost per annum | £5,000 | £8,300 | £8,300 | £8,300 | £29,900 |
| 2+2 model | 1 st year study at college | 2 nd year study at college – achieve HND | Enter 3 rd year of university study | 4 th year university study - achieve degree | 4 years |
| AVERAGE cost per annum | £5,000 | £5,000 | £8,300 | £8,300 | £26,600 |
| Source: SFC (SAAS average cost information) | | | | | |
| Note: SFC has determined the average cost of a year's study by taking an average gross funding cost for a fully funded place and adding the average student maintenance cost. | | | | | |

- 19 Our most recent data shows that in 2009-10 articulation activity, as defined by the SFC, that took place through the five Scottish hubs accounted for approximately 2,000 articulating students – some 25 per cent of all second and third year entrants to Scottish universities in 2009-10. If we include articulating students outwith the hubs the SFC estimates that total articulation in 2009-10 was 2,500 students².
- 20 Over the three year period 2007-10, the subjects where the most articulation activity occurred were³:
- Mathematical and Computer Studies;
 - Business and Administrative Studies;
 - Creative Arts and Design;
 - Engineering; and
 - Technologies.
- 21 The lowest levels of articulation activity were in the following areas:
- Linguistics;
 - European Languages, Literature and related subjects;
 - Veterinary Science, Agriculture and related subjects;
 - Historical and Philosophical Studies; and
 - General and unclassified subjects.

Currently a number of students who are entering university following HNQs at college are actually taking five or six years to achieve a degree as a result of only partial credit being given for their HNQ – that is they are not articulating...they are simply progressing

²Note: The number in *Learning for All* differs as they it is proxy measure using HNC/D or equivalent as the highest qualification on entry to 2nd and 3rd year of a university degree programme. Therefore it includes partial credit as well as full credit, and is higher than the number used in this report where we only consider full credit as articulating.

³ Using data from colleges, universities and Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), the Edinburgh and Lothians articulation hub has created an articulation database. This database has not received its final clearance from the SFC Statistics Branch yet and should not be taken as a final picture. However the most recently cleared data (AY2007-07 to AY2009-10) provides proxy information regarding subjects and articulation activity which we have used in this report.

- 22 Just over 5,500 students complete a HNQ per annum and progress to university. However as noted above only 2,000 of these students are progressing on full credit – that is articulation.
- 23 The remaining students (3,500) are entering HE but are repeating at least one year / credit level of study adding not only time but cost to the achievement of a degree. Table 2 below shows the different models that currently operate for HNQ to degree progression, the time taken and the indicative costs. Based on the data that are currently collected it is not possible to provide a detailed breakdown of students progressing on each route (1+4, 2+3 etc).

| Table 2: Partial credit HNQ entry to HE – time taken / indicative costs | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| Model | Time taken to complete degree | AVERAGE cost to complete degree |
| 1+4 Complete HNC at college but enter year one at university | 5 years | £38,200 |
| 2+3 Complete HND at college but enter year two at university | 5 years | £34,900 |
| 2+4 Complete HND at college but enter year one at university | 6 years | £41,900 |
| Students Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) does not fund first year university study for those students who have achieved a HND. It will however fund second year university study for HND entrants (a repetition of Level 8) and first year university study for HNC entrants (a repetition of Level 7). | | |

- 24 There are likely to be three key reasons for the lack of or partial award of credit to the students with HNQs entering a degree programme:
- Student did not wish to enter at a higher year;
 - Institution did not offer higher year of entry, even where HNQ could have matched if curriculum work has been undertaken; or
 - HNQ did not match due to a change of study path for student (eg HNQ in engineering, degree study in law).
- 25 None of these reasons are insurmountable, but eradicating all partial credit articulation will require significant structural change and information, advice and guidance (IAG) for learners at the point of entry as well as throughout their education. It is likely that there will always be a small percentage of students who change course during

their period of study and these students will not qualify for articulation. However there is a question as to whether this change should be fully funded from the public purse.

- 26 For some subjects, particularly those in professional / chartered fields (eg health, engineering) engagement with accrediting professional bodies will be critical to ensure course work is properly mapped between college and university provision. The SFC is aware of some emerging work in life sciences that demonstrates the added value of the articulation route in terms of the employability of students as on completion of their degree they possess both the technical and theoretical skills required in today's marketplace.

Advanced entry

Increasing numbers of students are staying on at school for sixth year ...but most are receiving acceptance to university based on their results in fifth year

- 27 The vast majority of Scottish school leavers who go on to study at university in Scotland do so after having done a sixth year at school. For the period for which data have been reviewed (2007/08 – 2009/10), there has been a consistently upward trend in the numbers of pupils staying on to sixth year.
- 28 Students in sixth year can either study for additional Highers (SCQF level 6) and / or Advanced Highers (SCQF level 7). In addition, the Scottish Baccalaureate (SCQF level 7) has recently been introduced as an alternative option (albeit take up to date has been low). As the SCQF is presented it is clear that for those students studying at Advanced Higher / Scottish Baccalaureate level and proceeding to first year of university there is repetition of study at SCQF level 7 – however there are differences in both the depth of curriculum and teaching methods offered at school and university.
- 29 Almost all offers from Scottish universities to Scottish students are made on the basis of their Highers results in S5 (SCQF level 6 study), and therefore (because most pupils choose to apply during S6 rather than S5) the offers are primarily 'unconditional'.
- 30 Anecdotal evidence suggests that following receipt of their unconditional offer many students disengage with the remainder of their sixth year studies. Indeed, several of the universities that we spoke to during the course of this study, as well as the main awarding body

SQA, confirmed that this has a resulting negative effect on uptake, retention and achievement at Advanced Higher level.

Although a large number of students are taking Advanced Highers most are not gaining sufficient qualifications to ensure direct entry to second year.

- 31 In 2009-10, there were 24,293 Scots entrants to the first year of a full-time degree level course in Scotland, of which 15,861 were under 19. In the previous year (2008-09), SQA reported 11,984 Advanced Higher candidates. Allowing for Scots school leavers who access HE elsewhere in the UK (of which there were 1,150 in the under 19 age group in 2009-10, 25 per cent of whom achieved 3+ Advanced Highers), we might reasonably conclude that around 70 per cent of first year Scots students in Scottish universities have studied at Advanced Higher level.
- 32 This does not mean that the majority of school leavers are sufficiently qualified to enter with advanced standing: most institutions which offer this route require at least two, if not three, good passes at Advanced Higher or equivalent, and the numbers of candidates taking more than one Advanced Higher is still low. We estimate 1,400 students⁴ achieved 3 or more passes at Advanced Higher level in 2009-10.
- 33 If the synergy between the Advanced Higher syllabus and the university syllabus could be improved, and entry from school into year two could become a standard route into a suitable degree programme (with Advanced Higher, and the Scottish Baccalaureate, also Level 7, as a standard entry requirement for this), with appropriate transitional support built into the system, we believe there would be an incentive for more candidates to take a greater number of Advanced Highers and strive to achieve the results required for second year entry.
- 34 The roll out of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) senior phase is also relevant in this context. The first cohort of students is due to complete sixth year in 2015/16. If CfE delivers the benefits anticipated then these students should be more mature learners capable of individual learning which will make them more ready for direct entry to second year upon achievement of Advanced Highers⁵.

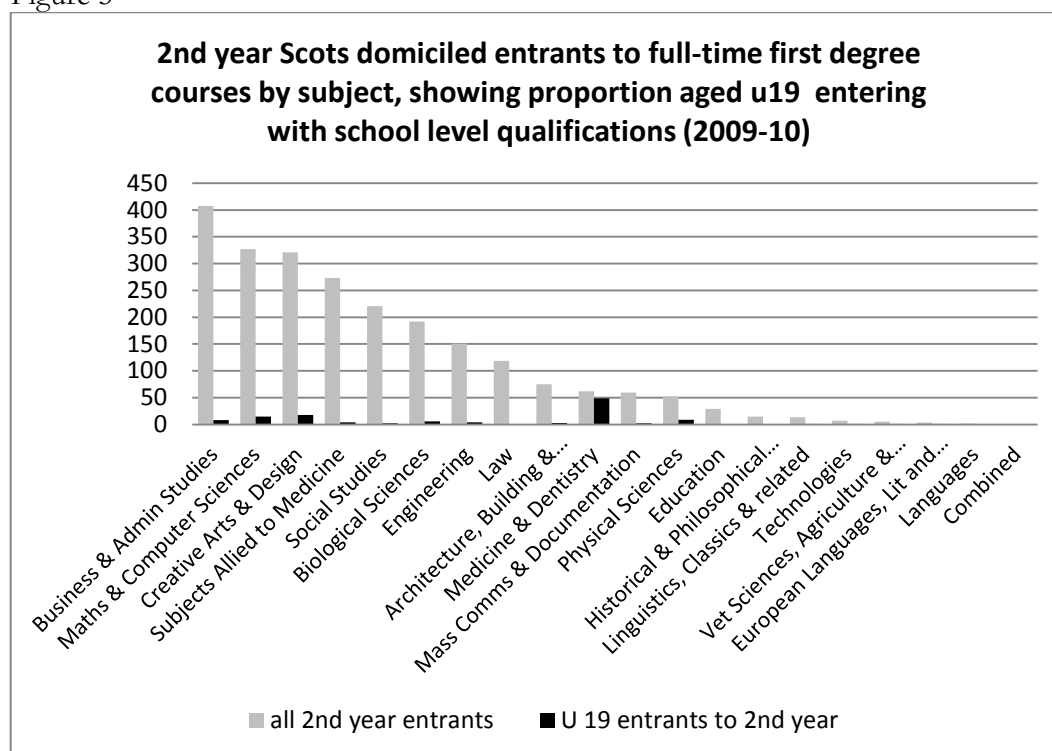
⁴ 2009-10 data for publicly funded school leavers show just under 1,100 gained 3+ qualifications at SCQF level 7 (which we take mainly to be Advanced Highers). We have used 2008-09 data for independent school leavers. Data are not available for students achieving 2+ passes.

⁵ Much of the discussion on CfE is focused on pursuing Highers over a 2 year period which will not necessarily increase Advanced Higher uptake. However it is SFC's view that overall CfE will increase the numbers of students pursuing study at both level 6 and level 7 in schools with the 2 year sitting attracting

Only about 125 school leavers per annum are gaining direct entry to second year based on their school qualifications.

35 The SFC estimate that only around 125 Scots students under 19 enter with advanced standing, and this represents no more than one or two students in any one subject area in any one institution⁶. There are two exceptions to this: Medicine at the University of St Andrews, which we understand routinely, admits students directly in to the programme at SCQF level 8, and Edinburgh College of Art.

Figure 5



Source: SFC, based on HESA

36 We might assume that prospective students in today's market would have an interest in shortening the length time it takes to graduate because of debt implications, but we have found little evidence in the course of this study to suggest that this is the case – evidence from a survey undertaken by SAAS as part of this work found that only 1 in 4 students commented that debt was an issue in choosing a course. The full survey results are presented in an annex to this report.

those students that may not currently consider Highers as an option and with the added flexibility for some to take Highers in a 2 year sitting over fourth and fifth year.

⁶ Our estimate is based on HESA stats showing all u19 entrants entering 2nd year with a school only qualification.

- 37 More commonly, we are told that most school leavers would rather progress with their peer group than follow a non-traditional route. And there is some logic behind this: anecdotal evidence from several institutions suggests that students opting for year two entry often fall back to year one within a few weeks of starting their course, possibly because they find it difficult to assimilate into an already established peer group and possibly because there is not enough synergy in terms of the syllabus.

However some institutions are starting to develop more routes for advanced entry

- 38 As for the institutions themselves, there is some evidence that some institutions are beginning to develop ideas to encourage greater numbers to come through this route. In line with the Scottish Government's Green Paper *Building a Smarter Future*, CfE should enable universities to work with schools to ensure their curriculum is planned to meet the needs of the new generation of learners that are leaving school with a different skill set and method of learning.
- 39 The case study below presents an overview of the work currently on-going at the University of Dundee to develop a degree based on a shared Level 7 curriculum thereby enabling students to complete a degree in only three years.

University of Dundee College of Life Sciences

The University of Dundee's College of Life Sciences (CLS) is intent on improving students' transitions from school or college and ensuring that students have the right encouragement and support to continue on an upward trajectory – in terms of SCQF levels – at these transitional stages. The College's aspiration is that from 2013-14, a significant number of students on its Life Sciences degree programme will enter the programme at level (or year) two, allowing full-time students to graduate with an Honours degree after just three years of study at the university or with an MSci after four years.

Key to this is the notion of a core, or shared, curriculum at SCQF level 7 – developed in partnership with the schools and Colleges, initially locally – which will enable students to access level two of the

degree programme with appropriate level 7 qualifications no matter which route they have come through.

The key academic driver is to better prepare Dundee graduates, developing core key skills which will equip them to adapt to new knowledge in any future work or research setting. To this end, CLS has rewritten the curriculum for level one, and a similar exercise is underway to bring level two of the programme into line. To enable the notion of the core curriculum to work, the revised degree programme will demonstrate a greater focus on the skills-based elements at levels one and two, with more of the subject specialist elements coming into play at levels three and four.

The university also recognises that students, having come through a variety of routes, will have varying needs for transitional support. So, from 2011-12, new entrants to the life sciences programme are invited to

complete an online skills audit prior to the start of the session. This enables the university's advisors of studies, in discussion with each student, to identify gaps in the student's skills or knowledge and to build appropriate support into the student's programme of study. Examples include a dedicated life sciences module and access to open labs, at which students can work on their lab skills in a supported environment. A similar skills audit tool is under development for access into level two.

The university has given one of its lecturing staff a part-time remit to work with the school sector to raise awareness of the option for entry into level two of the life sciences degree. The changes have been received positively by current students on the programme – and from the students' union – giving the university reason to be confident that this will be a popular option. The university is planning for a significant increase in the proportion of students entering the degree at level two in 2012-13 (up from around 10 per cent to 30 per cent

or more), and intends that this trend will continue.

For those interested in using this as a pathway to the MSci, there are the added benefits of being able to access student support for the whole programme (as it is reduced to four years) and of being able, within four years, to achieve a Masters qualification that will stand out in the international market place.

Implementing this model involves an upfront investment of time, but in the medium to long term the university expects to see tangible improvements in student retention and achievement, while the approach to supported transition should reduce the need for remedial support and allow for a more efficient use of academic time.

The success of this approach will be monitored closely, and discussions are already underway with a view to rolling out similar models in the other curriculum areas.

40 All of this suggests that, if we are seeking to change the status quo, this change needs to be driven by schools, colleges and universities and/or incentivised by changes in student support arrangements.

There has been a consistent decline in the numbers of school leavers entering university directly from fifth year

41 There are very few entering degree level courses directly from fifth year. In 2009-10, there were 15,251 fifth year leavers of which 1,312 went straight on to HE.⁷ We estimate that fewer than 500 of those entering full-time degree level courses in Scottish universities are fifth year leavers (NB the remaining c.800 fifth year leavers destined for HE are most likely to be studying at sub-degree level, either in a college or an HEI).⁸ So the fifth year school leaver group now represents less than 2 per cent of the total first year intake of Scots full-time undergraduate students in Scotland. This has been a consistent pattern in recent years.

⁷ From figures provided by Scottish Government Analytical Services. The actual number is likely to be higher, as this figure does not include those from independent schools

⁸ SFC, based on HESA

Section 4: Growing flexible entry routes, how much could they grow?

- 42 This section sets out the potential growth for both articulation and advanced entry. Our forecasts are for ambitious growth in both articulation and advanced entry and reflect what could be achieved if significant structural change is implemented. Section 5 goes on to detail what type of structural change needs to happen to achieve our ambitious growth forecasts.

Improving the synergy between schools, colleges and universities at SCQF level 7 is the key to improving flexible entry to higher education.

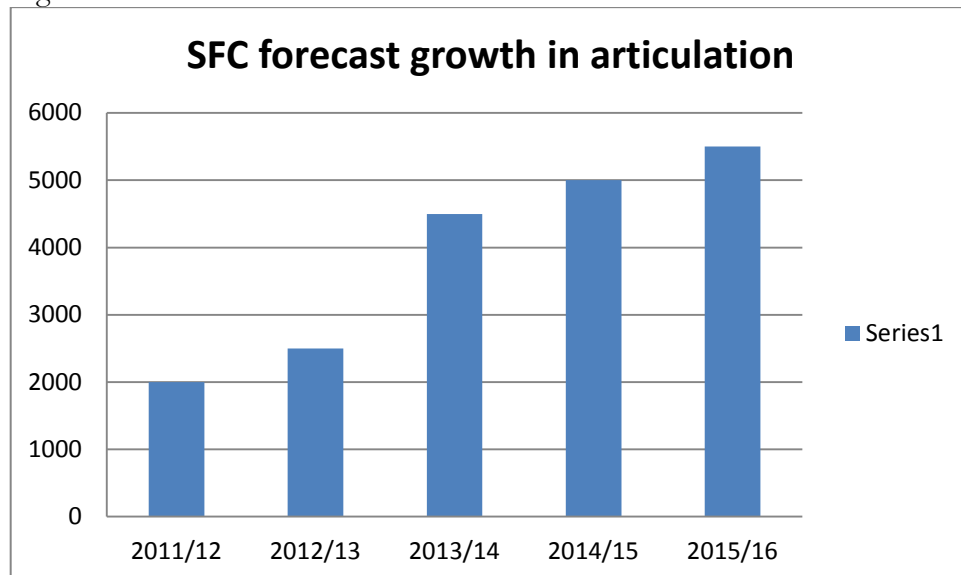
- 43 The key issue on the supply side is that all of the major learning providers – schools, colleges and universities – offer provision at SCQF Level 7, but in many cases there is insufficient synergy built into the system to avoid learners having to repeat Level 7 when they make the transition from one type of provider to another.

There is potential to grow both articulation and advanced entry to achieve cost efficiencies

- 44 Growing articulation in the short term should be achievable by ensuring full credit is given to all HNQ recipients entering HE. The SFC has been pursuing this approach for a number of years through the use of outcome agreements which include articulation student volume as a key indicator, and this has had a significant positive impact. However we recognise that more could be done to build on this approach.
- 45 Some 5,500 qualify with a HNQ per annum and enter HE with only 2,000 of these receiving full credit. As articulation becomes an accepted route to HE there is also scope to increase those pursuing a HNQ prior to entering degree study.
- 46 For these reasons the SFC considers it reasonable to anticipate growth in articulation from the current 2000 students up to a total of 5,500 by 2015/16. This is obviously reliant on the required structural and funding changes, as outlined in the next section, being implemented.
- 47 This growth will occur slowly over the next two years with more significant growth forecast from 2013/14 onwards. The slow growth reflects the time taken to embed articulation and work needed on curriculum mapping / reform and marketing to students. By 2015/16

SFC considers that the intake via articulation could grow to 5,500 per annum.

Figure 6



Source: SFC

48 For advanced entry SFC estimate that this number could grow to 800 students per annum by 2015/16 – see table 3. We have assumed figures for 2012/13 remain broadly comparable with what was achieved in 2009/10. We have then assumed more significant growth if structural changes are made to embed S6 to advanced entry as a more common place route to HE.

| | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Total number of S6 leavers* | 26,600 | 26,200 | 26,400 | 25,700 |
| Total number of Advanced Higher candidates achieving 3+ passes** | 1,400 | 1,600 | 2,000 | 2,000 |
| Total number of Advanced Higher entrants direct from school to 2 nd year | 125 | 200 | 400 | 800 |
| % of Advanced Higher qualified candidates (ie 3+) entering 2 nd year | 12.5% | 12.5% | 20% | 40% |
| * to forecast the number of S6 leavers SFC took the 2009/10 number of S6 leavers and applied the GRO projections for 18 years old to this figure. Figures have been rounded for presentational purposes. The number of S6 leavers could increase in absolute terms if more students stay on from S5. At present we have not included this increase in our figures. | | | | |
| ** approximately 270 of these students, roughly 1 in 5 go to England for university study. | | | | |

- 49 The choice of where to go to university is a complex one and each student will make their decision based on a number of factors including: location (pros and cons of moving away from home); subject choice (reputation of institution in their chosen subject may outweigh a poorer reputation overall or vice versa); cost; parental and peer influence and likelihood of acceptance.
- 50 We have not sought to identify the relative weight of each of these factors in making our assumptions about the increased levels of advanced entry but we have assumed that a similar proportion of Scottish students achieving 3+ Advanced Highers will continue to pursue university study in England.

Direct entry to first year from fifth year is less likely to offer significant growth potential

- 51 The numbers currently leaving fifth year and entering full-time university study are low. This has been the trend for the past three years.
- 52 SFC considers there to be greater potential in encouraging more students to stay on at school for a sixth year and pursue Advanced Highers and then enter 2nd year of university rather than leaving at the end of fifth year and entering 1st year. The former approach is more compatible in age terms with RUK students and those from overseas coming to Scotland to study.

Accelerated degrees will continue to cater for a small proportion of the market offering scope for greater integration between colleges and universities

- 53 The case study below demonstrates how a college is moving forward in terms of delivering HE and working with a university to validate its degrees. This model could be rolled out more widely in subjects where a technical / professional degree is required by the market and students have very clear employment opportunities following qualification.

Motherwell College BA Musical Theatre

The BA (Hons) Musical Theatre is one of several degree programmes offered at Motherwell College. The degree option is a one year programme undertaken on completion of the HND Musical Theatre (making up a three year programme in total). It is validated by Northumbria University.

The college admits between 18 and 20 students to the degree programme each year. 2009-10 was the first year of the programme; it is now in its third year. Entry is competitive (with around five applicants for every place) and involves a rigorous selection process including a practical audition. While many of the college's own HND students are successful in gaining entry to the degree, it is also open to external applicants to apply. The programme attracts students not only from the college's own area but also from other parts of Scotland. The programme does not stand alone from the other provision in the section but rather enhances and informs the rest of the further and higher education portfolio.

This is a highly vocational degree, with a large practical element. The programme is designed to produce multi-skilled, triple threat performers who will meet the demands of current professional practice in the musical theatre industry. Students showcase their performance in both Glasgow and Edinburgh several times throughout the year, and then in London towards the end of the year. This acts as a very positive incentive for the other student groups who see and aspire to a very worthwhile and natural progression in their studies and ultimately in their professional success. The students on the programme are highly motivated, and this is borne out through very high retention and achievement rates. In 2010-11, the vast majority graduated with 2:1 and one student achieved a First Class award. The college's experience is that 90-95% of its students are

successful in signing up with an agent before they graduate: this being one of the purposes of the London experience. The college has also seen its graduates achieve big successes on shows including Britain's Got Talent, the X Factor and Over the Rainbow. Given the nature of the training ethos, learners leave the course motivated, disciplined and with a highly developed sense of independence which serves them well in a variety of employment situations from interview to job performance. Employment destinations to date include teaching and directing as well as performance contracts.

The college believes that key to the success of this programme is its team of dedicated and hard-working teaching staff, who are well connected and bring real practical experience of working within the industry. The size of the class means that students can be well supported by the staff and will quickly build up a rapport with one another. It is not unusual for the group to use the college's rehearsal space well into the night. Students are connected with the validating university too, and the college arranges for the students to visit the university during the first term of the degree year.

The degree level year is funded through the standard college funding mechanism and, from the college's perspective, does not come at a disproportionate cost compared with other programmes. This is one of several degrees offered by the college in partnership with both Scottish and English higher education institutions, and the college envisages that it will continue to offer such opportunities where there is evidence of demand.

This model has been extended in the last academic year to include a BA Honours Acting degree which has already delivered a 100% successful cohort, resulting in 4 First Classes, one 2.2 and the rest of the 16 strong class achieving 2:1.

However, the real gains in shortening the time taken to achieve a degree will come from advanced entry

Section 5: What needs to happen?

Schools must be encouraged to deliver Advanced Highers as a route to advanced entry

- 54 Local authorities and secondary schools need to increase the number of Advanced Highers they offer and encourage students to pursue these as a way of achieving advanced entry to university. The delivery of Advanced Highers is resource intensive (on average 5-6 study periods per week per subject) and will require local authorities to ensure adequate capacity and capability with the current teaching complement.
- 55 Collaboration between schools at the local authority level, such as in Dundee, offers significant opportunities for both students and staff (both teachers and lecturers) to work together to enable greater coherence in the learner pathway.

Case study: Dundee City Campus

The Dundee City Campus involves pupils from the city's schools being taught in a variety of locations at Advanced Higher level. The campus model allows pupils to choose from a wider range of subjects than would otherwise have been on offer to them, and gives pupils and teachers the opportunity to study and work with peers from across the city and in different settings. For the local authority, it offers a cost effective means to improve opportunities for pupils in the face of shrinking budgets.

The campus model has been running since June 2011. It mirrors and extends the local authority's models of partnership working with Dundee College, which offers courses to pupils in S5 and S6 which are not normally delivered in schools, and with the universities of Dundee and Abertay, which for the past two years have supported pupils undertaking the interdisciplinary element of the Scottish Baccalaureate.

The model was developed against the backdrop of a very low uptake of Advanced Highers across the city: in 2010-11, six out of nine of the city's schools had an uptake of 36 or lower at Advanced Higher level – this against a pupil roll of 756 in S6. And

very few pupils took more than one or two subjects at Advanced Higher level. On the other hand, secondary school teachers are keen to teach at Advanced Higher level, and the local authority is keen to do what it can to improve opportunities and raise attainment across the city.

The campus model builds on the successes of the city's approach to the interdisciplinary project, which brings together pupils from across the city to study at the university campuses with the support of university lecturers. All nine secondary schools in Dundee are partners in the campus. A core set of subjects is offered through the campus arrangement – including English, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Computing, Graphic Communication, History and Music – and in addition, some schools will continue to offer subjects to their own pupils which are not common across the city. These include Music (Performing with Technology), Applied Mathematics, Business Management, Classical Studies, Home Economics, Latin, Drama, Product Design and Information Systems.

For each subject (and pupils can opt to take up to three Advanced Highers through the campus), pupils have one afternoon of study within the campus arrangement plus a

tutorial in their own school and two study support periods. This requires joint working between the designated campus teacher and subject teachers within schools, and ensures that subject teachers in the city's schools continue to be involved actively in the delivery of Advanced Higher in their own school setting. Practical subjects are delivered in school locations, while non-practical subjects are delivered on Dundee University's premises in the city centre. Thus the campus model is designed to minimise travel for pupils, and often pupils

will remain in their own school. The cost of any travel is met by the local authority.

It is hoped that the campus model will not only increase the take-up of Advanced Highers in the city's schools, but also that pupils will benefit from the opportunity to study in a new setting and alongside pupils from other schools, that it will give pupils opportunities to take greater responsibility for their own learning and that all of this will help to smooth pupils' transitions from school to college or university.

Universities and schools should work together to develop advanced entry and offer to all qualified candidates

- 56 Universities need to be encouraged to attract a larger number of students into level 8 study (second year) based on their achievement of Advanced Highers. The greatest challenge is to ensure a clear transition between the school curriculum at Advanced Higher (level 7) and the university curriculum for second year (level 8). Schools and universities must develop their curricula and teaching methods in an integrated way. CfE should enable this to take place on a more coordinated basis given the drive towards individual learning pathways at secondary school.
- 57 In addition, this will require student support to be in place to ensure those joining a large cohort coming up from year one are fully integrated to the course and receive the same type of "fresher's week" induction to university as those entering year one.
- 58 Further work is needed between SFC and Scottish Government officials to identify the potential incentives that exist and how these can best deliver an efficient system.

Greater coordination between colleges and universities is required to ensure all HNQ entrants to higher education enter at the credit level appropriate to the qualification already received.

- 59 Greater coordination of curriculum planning and admissions requirements between colleges and universities is needed to ensure students enter university with the knowledge they require to progress directly to year 2 (with a HNC) or year 3 (with a HND). While HNQs can provide a route to HE most have not been specifically designed for this purpose hence some universities reluctance to award full credit.
- 60 SFC's articulation policy has provided funding to ensure that the HNQ curriculum and teaching methods meet university requirements and where this work has been completed it should be rolled out to all colleges and universities, not just those in the hubs. The case study below demonstrates how well this can work in practice.

**Robert Gordon University:
Department of Communication,
Marketing and Media**

Robert Gordon University (RGU) and Aberdeen College have a long-standing partnership in place. This partnership has resulted in the development of several courses that articulate with full credit from Aberdeen College onto either Stage 2 or Stage 3 of an appropriate RGU degree programme.

In particular, two of the undergraduate courses within the Department of Communication, Marketing and Media, based in the Aberdeen Business School, provide excellent opportunities for students studying at Aberdeen College to link with RGU. Students completing HND Communication and Media, HND Public Relations and Advertising and HND Creative Industries Television can articulate with full standing onto Stage 3 of either BA(Hons) Communication with Public Relations or BA(Hons) Media. Additionally students completing HNC Creative Industries Radio can enter Stage 2 of BA(Hons) Media.

The current modelling of this articulation enables cohorts of students to join the programme and bring both parallel and complementary knowledge,

skills and experience to the existing degree cohorts (who began at RGU in first year). It has been noted by the university staff and course team that the vocational skills which the college cohort bring to the degree programme, is highly sought after and creates a classroom dynamic that works well in terms of blending the knowledge of all students. The Communication and Media course team at RGU take advantage to this diversity of knowledge and skills especially within the context of project work, which features heavily within Stage 3. The students are placed in mixed groups and this allows for social integration, as well as sharing of skills. This reflects positively in student achievement and retention rates, and is also commented on positively in informal student feedback. The additional skills of Aberdeen College students (for example in advanced filming and editing) enhance and complement the existing cohorts and allow for a very positive learning environment.

This recognition of differing levels of experience is fundamental in making articulation work effectively – where

students join an existing programme. Largely this is the product of staff commitment and mapping of the courses. Much effort has been made in terms of ensuring that the integration of direct entrants is as smooth as possible, and this extends beyond the content of the curriculum to include events and activities throughout the HND year and beyond entry to the course (see Appendix 1 for full details). The Course Team note that both the careful curriculum design and programme of integration activities have a positive impact on direct entry students and this is reflected in surveys on student experience. Indeed, student questionnaires from Session 2010/11 indicate a 100% overall satisfaction for articulation students on both BA(Hons) Communication with Public Relations and BA(Hons) Media. Articulation numbers for 10-11 were 16 and 8 for those courses respectively, but are currently projecting to be 20-25 for BA(Hons) Communication with Public Relations and 15-20 for BA(Hons) Media for Session 11/12 and the course team attributes this to the strong relations between RGU and Aberdeen College, as well as to the very positive integration activities.

Key to this partnership working is not only commitment from both the college and the university, but also from senior management, Heads of Department and course staff. Whilst a large number of the

developments at RGU since 2008 have been supported by the regional articulation hub funding, RGU has always recognised the need for and benefit of articulation to students, and are keen supporters of it. The investment of course staff time is rewarded by ongoing commitment of and recognition from all institutions involved. Additional costs to this work are largely related to the additional support and integration activities, the regional articulation hub infrastructure, staff support and working within the changing face of HE.

More generally, the partners recognise there is scope for courses to be developed into a full 2+2 or 'top-up' programme. This model may be particularly relevant where, in order to be an effective contributor, graduates require both high quality vocational and professional skills, such as critical thinking and problem solving. RGU and Aberdeen College are already running a Commercial Photography degree on this basis and have recorded extremely positive feedback from students undertaking this route. Tripartite approaches to degree delivery are also beginning to emerge, with Banff & Buchan College delivering an HNC from which students articulate to Aberdeen College for the HND. There is then expected to be a route to degree at RGU. Such developments are the result of the strong commitment of the partners and are supported and driven by the infrastructure created by the North East Articulation Hub.

- 61 SFC is also aware of other work that has been done on specific subjects, notably maths, at HND level to ensure that students wishing to progress to university study have the skills and knowledge required to see them through the full four years of study. Again this work should be rolled out to all institutions.
- 62 At HNC level in particular the curriculum mapping work must address the credit level issue as currently HNCs provide fewer credits than are required for university entry. Many institutions offer top-up programmes (eg over the summer months) to enable students to progress seamlessly. SQA and SCQF need to work together to ensure that this issue is addressed.

- 63 Student support at the point of entry to HNQ study must be improved to enable students to be clear on what options their course of study provides.

Students entering university with only partial credit for HNQs should not be counted towards a university's student number target.

- 64 As with the potential growth forecast for advanced entry, realising this growth in articulation will be highly contentious across the sectors and will require significant Government intervention if savings are to be realised. Improved curriculum and admissions planning between colleges and universities will not deliver increased numbers of articulating students on its own.

- 65 SFC require more discussion with SG officials to determine the options available through changes to the funding of places and the incentives that could be offered to colleges and universities to deliver the potential cost efficiencies. For example options might include setting intake targets for articulation and / or allowing universities to “bid” for articulation places through a centrally held allocation.

- 66 To provide greater incentive for students to seek full credit for their HNQ, student maintenance funding delivered by SAAS should be reviewed to ensure no credit level is funded twice.

Different institutions will improve flexibility in different ways but all should be encouraged to broaden as much as possible

- 67 Implementing a single intake percentage for all institutions for both articulation and advanced entry is unlikely to work given the existing patterns of supply and the mix of markets each institution is catering for. There is also a risk that any blanket percentage will introduce perverse incentives for institutions and Scottish students may risk losing places to full fee paying students.

- 68 The following table summarises the current and potential market for each type of flexible route.

| Table 4 – Summary of current / potential market | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| | Ancients | Pre 1992s | Post 1992s |
| Articulation | Very limited articulation activity at present Could aim to accept up to 5% of the sector's annual articulation target | Some limited evidence but not taken up on a large scale as yet Scope to increase articulating numbers – could aim to accept up 35% of the sector's annual articulation target Scope to increase particularly in engineering and technology subjects | Currently account for 90% of articulation. Could aim to provide c. 60% of the sector's annual articulation target Scope to increase across a range of subjects |
| Advanced entry | Currently pockets of activity with certain institutions and certain subjects Significant opportunities for expansion | Currently pockets of activity with certain institutions and certain subjects Significant opportunities for expansion | Currently low intake through advanced entry More limited scope for growth given current student intake and focus on widening access agenda |
| Accelerated degrees | Institutions should be encouraged to pursue shortened degree options where relevant | Increasing evidence that institutions are introducing new ways of delivering degree programmes | Increasing evidence that institutions are introducing new ways of delivering degree programmes |

Source: SFC

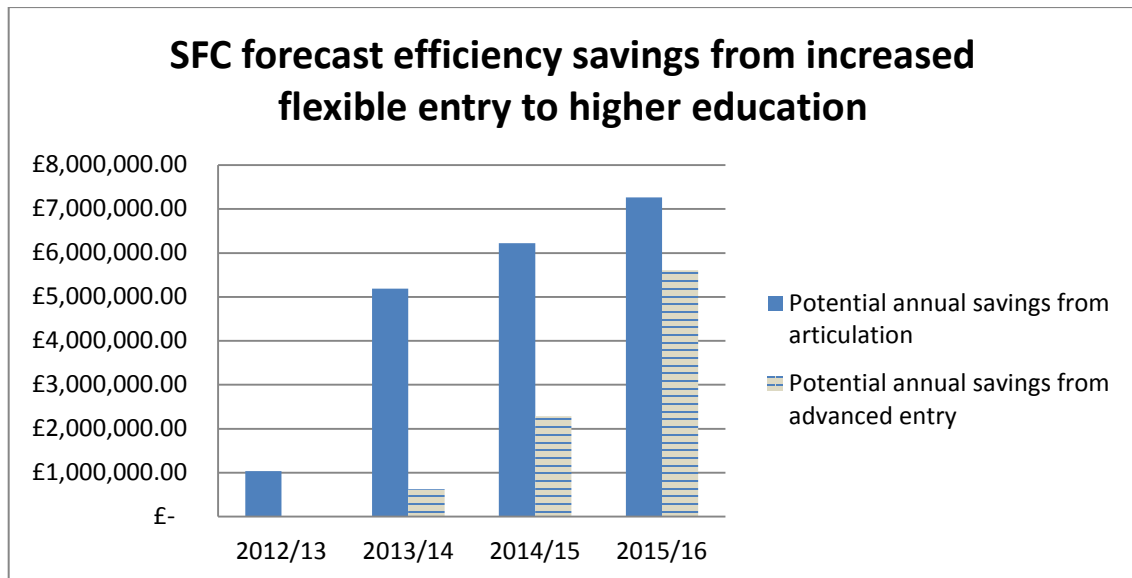
Implementing the changes outlined above and supporting these with the appropriate guidance / legislation will lead to cost efficiencies savings over the coming five year period

- 69 The savings associated with increasing articulation and advanced entry will be small in the initial years but over time should lead to a more efficient HE system. These savings will only accrue if places are taken out of the system and if appropriate incentives are put in place to require 2nd year entry.
- 70 We have assumed the savings from articulation accrue as a result of removing the duplicated study at level 7 and / or 8. For each student currently progressing in the absence of full credit we have assumed this year of study is removed from the system and no longer funded.

Therefore the savings accrue over the four year period of delivering the degree.

- 71 For advanced entry students entering directly into second year we have taken an annual average cost, to the public purse, for a year of university attendance (including tuition fees and student support funding) and assumed this funding is removed from the system.
- 72 In the short term the savings from articulation are greater than those offered through advanced entry given the existing duplication of level 7 / 8 study upon entry to university. With better curriculum mapping, information / advice and guidance (IAG) to students and a shared acceptance amongst institutions that achieving coherent and consistent learner progression is the way forward then these savings should be realised.
- 73 Additional investment in curriculum mapping / reform and IAG will be required in the initial years but this should not be seen as a disincentive to proceed.

Figure 5



Source: SFC

The SFC should monitor and evaluate the success of flexible entry initiatives and develop outcomes that can be used to determine success

74 The SFC should establish a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation programme for flexible entry routes to HE. This programme must look at all routes, not just articulation as currently happens, and work with all institutions – schools, colleges and universities – to ensure integrated learner pathways can be mapped and evaluated over time.

Annex A: Project Brief

| | |
|--|--|
| Project Name: | |
| Increasing the flexibility of full-time higher education provision | |
| Brief Outline: | |
| <p>In his statement to Parliament on 16 March 2011, the Cabinet Secretary for Education & Lifelong Learning said:</p> <p>“I reaffirm my commitment to our four-year degree, although we need greater flexibility in how it is delivered. Learners must have more control over their own learning, choosing whether they want to study over three, four, five or even more years. We must encourage more part-time learning and support better articulation between school, college and university. As part of that, we will continue to develop the Scottish baccalaureate, expanding it into more subject areas and promoting its use to gain advanced entry to university. More specifically, <i>I have asked the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council to take forward a project on advanced entry and articulation. It will report this summer, with recommendations on how further to reduce the length of time that learners spend achieving a degree. It will also consider increasing the role that colleges play in delivering higher education. The conclusions of the study will underpin a new commitment to flexible access and study, and a firmer adherence to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. We will legislate where necessary.</i>” (emphasis added)</p> | |
| Aims: | Scope of Project: |
| <p>To create more opportunities for learners to achieve degree level qualifications in a shorter timescale.</p> <p>To identify efficiencies and financial savings that might be made in institutional funding and student support from academic year 12/13 onwards.</p> | <p>The project has 3 strands, which are to a greater or lesser extent, inter-related:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. articulation between college and university: greater recognition of relevant learning undertaken in colleges and more pathways between college and university; 2. advanced entry: more school pupils (a) entering 1st year from S5 and (b) entering the 2nd year of the undergraduate programme from S6 and, where possible, S5; and 3. accelerated degrees: completing the undergraduate experience in 3 or fewer years. <p>Each strand should include an assessment on how it could improve access to higher education.</p> <p>Part-time study is out of scope. A separate piece of work on this will be undertaken and the necessary connections made.</p> |
| Key Deliverables: | |
| The final (formal) report from the SFC on or before Monday 5 th September 2011, with an (informal) progress report by 4 th July 2011. The final report should cover the following areas: | |

| |
|--|
| <p>(i) an outline of activity already underway and the progress this is expected to achieve;</p> <p>(ii) a realistic assessment of the demand for 1, 2 and 3 above – in other words, how much more flexibility do learners actually want;</p> <p>(iii) recommendations for change, both to the existing student support system operated by SAAS and the institutional funding mechanisms operated by the SFC;</p> <p>(iv) a timeline for implementation of those proposals (including operational implications);</p> <p>(v) an assessment of the efficiencies (including financial savings) which the recommendations might deliver;</p> <p>(vi) an assessment of what change might be needed in the schools, college and university sectors to deliver these efficiencies and the opportunities for creating tertiary provision (and providers); and</p> <p>(vi) recommendations on how progress in these areas should be measured and/or enforced in future.</p> |
| <p>Stakeholder involvement:</p> <p>In the short term (up to July progress report) stakeholders, such as Universities Scotland, Scotland’s Colleges, NUS Scotland and SQA will be consulted on an individual basis and these views fed into the report. A decision on whether to establish a more formal reference panel to test emerging solutions will be made following the interim progress report.</p> |
| <p>Interdependencies:</p> <p>The SFC’s recent review of articulation funding and work on pattern/map of provision; SG work on part-time study; SG work looking at the introduction of Scottish Baccalaureates, Curriculum for Excellence and articulation; SFC’s developing work on funding in both FE and HE; the Roe Review and any further work arising from this.</p> |
| <p>Risks/Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals being seen as ‘more of the same’ by Ministers or being too closely associated with the previous administration. • Achieving consensus on a set of recommendations with both colleges and universities. • Budgets not yet set for FY 12/13 onwards. • This could have a negative impact on institutional stability. • Synchronicity of work with concurrent review activity, especially post-Election. |
| <p>Mitigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A proper assessment of the demand for more flexible full-time higher education opportunities will be crucial. • Ensuring that the interdependencies are properly accounted for in the project. • Completion on time. • Effective stakeholder management. |
| <p>Project Team:</p> <p>SG Lead: Neil MacLennan SFC Lead: Karen Chapman</p> <p>The SG Lead will be responsible for co-ordinating all internal SG interests including those of FAED, Learning Directorate and SAAS. Support from Analytical Services will be organised through Audrey</p> |

MacDougall (if required).

The SFC Lead will be responsible for delivering this piece of work to Scottish Government. The SFC lead will co-ordinate work within SFC, including the Skills team, Access team, Statistics and Finance.

Ways of working:

The Leads will be responsible for setting, agreeing and staffing the work programme in a way which achieves the Key Deliverables. Periodic updates will be provided to Stephen Kerr, Michael Cross, Tracey Slaven and Laurence Howells. Meetings will be arranged in June and August prior to the submission of the interim and final reports.

This piece of work has been identified in the SFC critical programme for 2011-12. Full Council will require regular updates on the work and will be responsible for signing off the final report to Scottish Government. SFC's Skills Committee has asked for an update on the project at their May 2011 Committee and the Access and Inclusion Committee will also need to be kept informed of progress.







Annex B – SAAS survey results

The Student Experience



| Q1. HNC/HND students What was important to you in choosing your course and college? (please tick as many options as you wish) | | | |
|--|--|---------------------|-------------------|
| | | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Gives me the qualifications for my chosen career | | 73.0% | 84 |
| Gives me the qualifications to start a degree | | 34.8% | 40 |
| My course allows me to progress direct to year 2 or year 3 of a degree course | | 27.0% | 31 |
| Able to study closer to home than if I had gone straight into a degree course | | 11.3% | 13 |
| | | answered question | 115 |
| | | skipped question | 103 |

**Q2a. Degree students What was important to you in choosing your course and university?
(please tick as many options as you wish)**

| | | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--|--|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Gives me the qualifications for my chosen career |  | 86.7% | 156 |
| Option to enter at year 2 and finish faster |  | 7.8% | 14 |
| Option to extend into a 5 year undergraduate Masters course |  | 11.7% | 21 |
| Option to take a year abroad/placement year to improve my chances of getting a job |  | 20.6% | 37 |
| Able to live at home – not ready to leave home |  | 10.0% | 18 |
| Able to live at home and finish course with as little debt as possible |  | 26.1% | 47 |
| | | answered question | 180 |
| | | skipped question | 38 |

The Student Experience



Q2b. Degree students Please arrange the following in order of importance (1=most important, 5=least important)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Response Count |
|---|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| Getting a good degree | 71.6% (111) | 14.8% (23) | 1.9% (3) | 1.3% (2) | 10.3% (16) | 155 |
| Getting my degree as quickly as possible by entering from year 2 or 3 if my entry qualifications allow it | 6.3% (9) | 10.5% (15) | 15.4% (22) | 30.8% (44) | 37.1% (53) | 143 |
| Getting my degree as quickly as possible by reducing the amount of holidays I get while at university | 3.5% (6) | 5.8% (10) | 16.3% (28) | 43.0% (74) | 31.4% (54) | 172 |
| Studying hard and playing hard | 7.6% (13) | 31.4% (54) | 34.9% (60) | 9.9% (17) | 16.3% (28) | 172 |
| Finishing my degree with the least possible amount of debt | 21.9% (41) | 35.3% (66) | 27.8% (52) | 8.6% (16) | 6.4% (12) | 187 |
| answered question | | | | | | 191 |
| skipped question | | | | | | 27 |