



## **SFC Published Key Performance Indicators AY 2023-2024 Report**

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## Executive Summary

The College's new *Strategic Plan*, supported by a comprehensive suite of new sub-strategies, sets out how NESCol will bring learning to life for our students, staff, partners, and stakeholders over the next five years and beyond. This bold and ambitious strategy positions the College not only as a cornerstone of educational and skills-development excellence in our region, but also as a key contributor within the national tertiary education landscape.

Developed through rigorous analysis, collaborative design with key partners, and a shared vision for the future, the strategy outlines our core priorities, aims, and objectives. It clearly defines the routes through which we will achieve our goals, underpinned by a deep commitment to innovation, inclusion, and positive impact. It is a forward-looking response to the evolving needs of our students, communities, and industry partners, while also anticipating the opportunities and challenges of a rapidly changing educational, industrial and economic environment.

Our Strategic Plan reaffirms the College's dedication to delivering an outstanding student experience, supporting regional economic development, and contributing to national skills priorities that support critical industry sectors. It also marks the beginning of a new chapter for NESCol, defined by aspiration, partnership, and a shared determination to unlock the full potential of our learners and the communities we serve.

We recognise that achieving our Vision depends on the quality of our provision and the success of our students. To this end, we will deepen our commitment to excellence by embedding a culture of continuous enhancement and self-evaluation. Staff, students, and stakeholders will work together with shared purpose to reflect on and improve our curriculum, student experience and student services, ensuring they meet the highest standards and the evolving expectations of today's learners.

Robust quality improvement processes are embedded across the College, including regular review of the courses offered to ensure that they remain relevant to both students and employers. A key aspect of this review is consideration of a number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The College has produced this publication to inform potential applicants, its students, the communities it serves, and its key stakeholders about its performance in relation to students completing their courses and gaining their qualification.

The following pages provide detail of the College's performance in Academic Year 2023-24 against three nationally recognised KPIs:

- Completed Successful
- Partial Success
- Did not Complete

(An explanation of each of the above indicators is provided in the Glossary on page 16)

Information has been provided against a number of key categories including, level of course (Further Education (FE), Higher Education (HE)), mode of delivery (Full-time, Part-time), subject area, and student characteristics such as age and gender. Unless stated otherwise, the information provided relates to NESCol courses of 160 hours or more. For some KPIs, comparative information has been provided for the previous two Academic Years – 2021-22 and 2022-23.

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) publishes information on the performance of all Scottish colleges on its [website](#). NESCol recognises the importance of benchmarking its performance in comparison to others in the college sector to help inform quality improvement and to seek and share good practice approaches. A number of the indicators on the following pages provide sector averages for comparison purposes.

Where the number of enrolments is less than 23 in a category the data has been suppressed and reduces the risk of incorrect conclusions being drawn from pass rates based on small numbers. This is a change to previous year's suppression level of 50 and meets the SFC's recently adopted policy for rounding and suppression thresholds that is based on HESA methodology.

**Figure 1 - Outcomes for full-time students on our non-advanced courses (FE)**

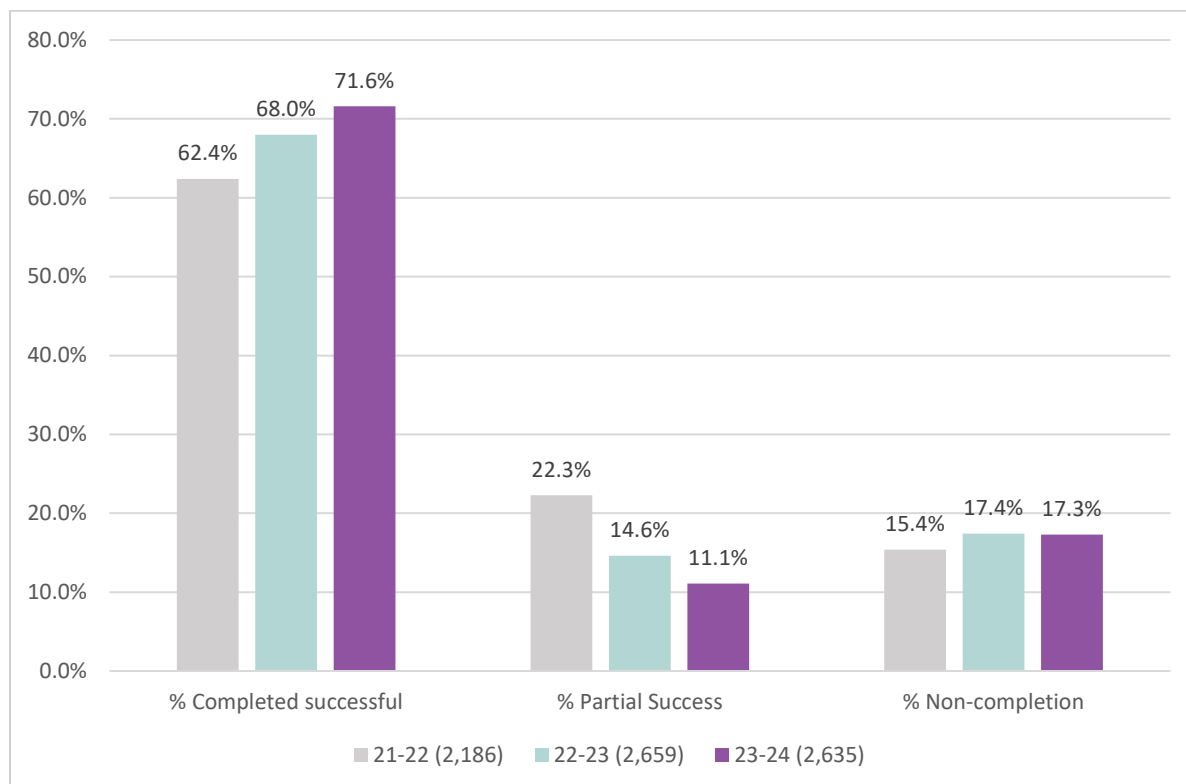


Figure 1 shows the key outcomes for our students studying on full-time non-advanced courses (defined by the number of hours study required to complete the course, over a three-year period).

The graph shows the percentage of students who completed their course successfully, the percentage that stayed at college until the end of the course but did not complete their group award, and the percentage of non-completion, those who withdrew from their course before the end of the academic year.

In Academic Year (AY) 2023-24, the number of students successfully completing their course successfully increased by 3.6% from AY 2022-23, and the level of attainment was substantially higher than the 67.1% sector average.

The College Leadership have an ongoing programme of “Spotlight Reviews” which provide additional focus and support to those areas of the curriculum experiencing the lowest levels of attainment. Working holistically with both curriculum and support services, as part of the whole-college support model, has led to the improvement in outcomes for our full-time FE students, as well as a focus on reducing partial success.

**Figure 2 - Outcome totals for part-time students on our non-advanced courses (FE)**

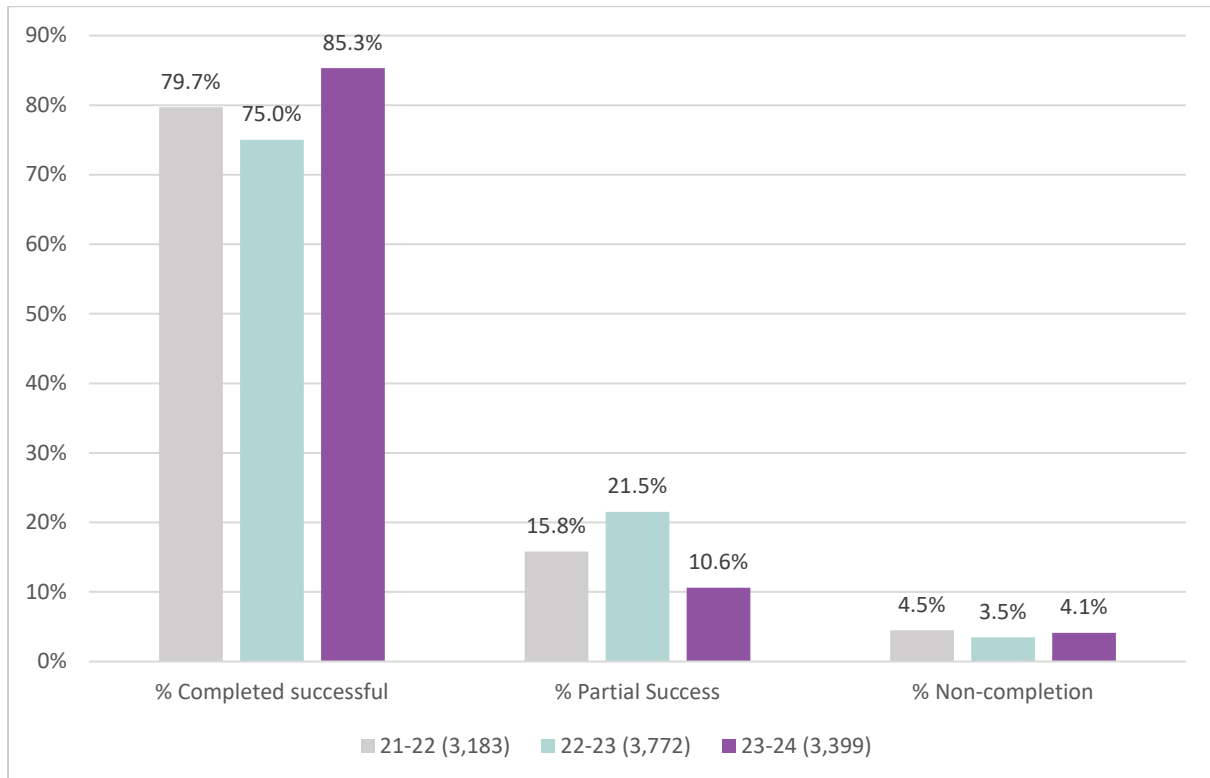


Figure 2 shows the key outcomes for our students studying on part-time non-advanced courses (defined by the number of hours study required to complete the course), over a three-year period.

The achievement on our part-time non-advanced courses has also increased substantially by 10.3% in comparison to the previous academic year. The 85.3% success rate for AY 2023-24 is also 4.9 % above the sector average of 80.4%.

The biggest contributing factor is the reduction in partial success of 10.9% from last academic year. Due to improved management of delivery and resulting processes within some teams a significant number more Modern Apprentices completed their courses in year. The College will build on our success to identify actions to address areas where improvement is required to ensure that it continues to deliver outcomes for all part-time students that are in line with or exceed the sector average.

**Figure 3 - Outcome breakdown for part-time students on our non-advanced courses (FE)**

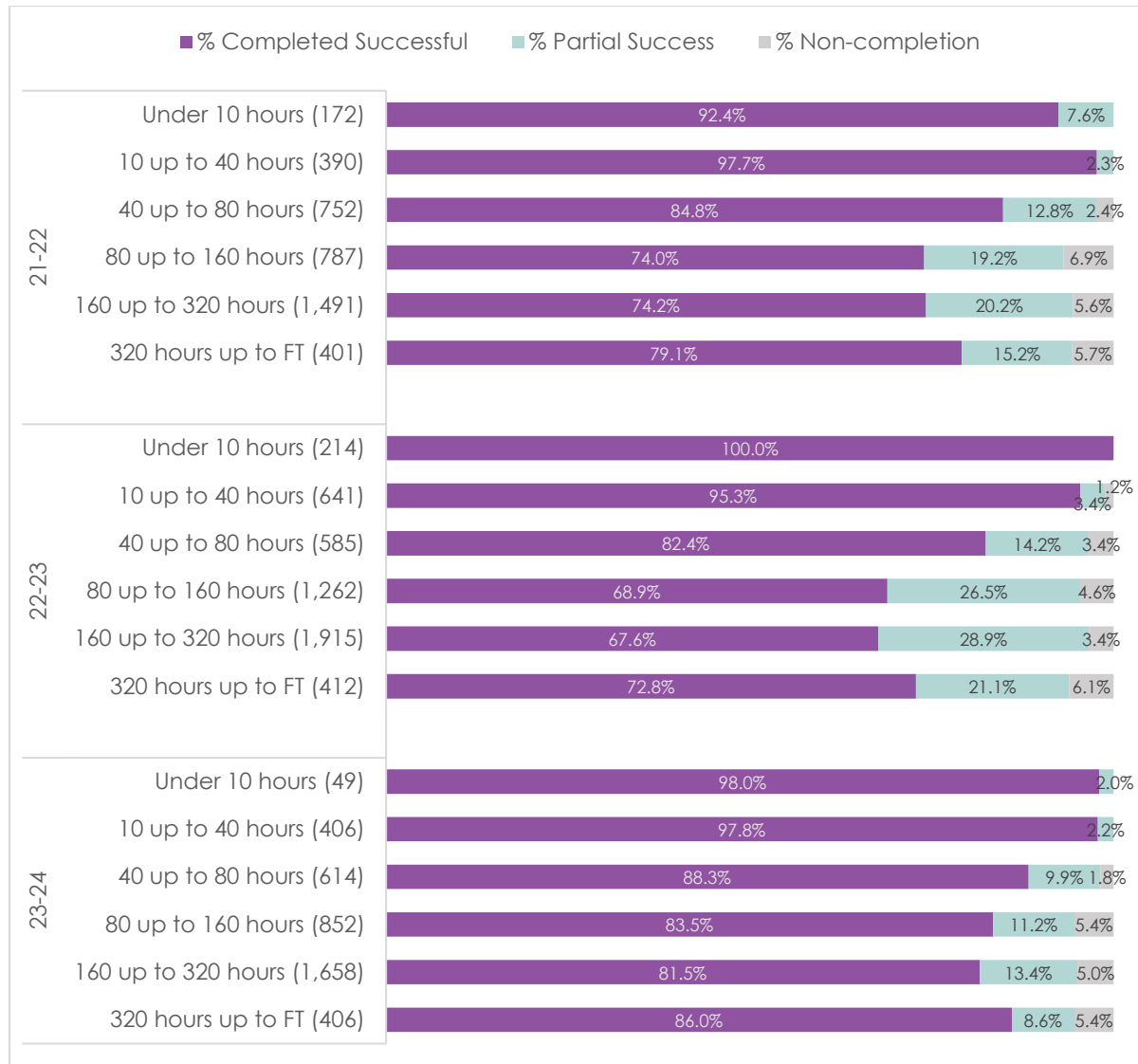


Figure 3 provides a comparison of part-time course performance over a three-year period, categorised by the number of hours study required to complete the course.

Courses of under 10 hours and 10 up to 40 hours have very high levels of success at 98% and 97.8% and are 1% and 2.9% above the sector average of 97% and 94.9%. Our 40 up to 80 hours, has successfully increased by 5.9% on 2022/23 to 88.3% figures and is only 0.9% below the sector average of 89.2%. We have made strong progress this year with short block release programmes, especially the employed students on the Modern Apprentice courses who benefited from increased support from the Modern Apprentice college team. In addition, our school links groups continue to be highly effective and successful.

Our lowest performing courses in AY 2022/23 have seen significantly improved success rates, with an increase of 14.6% in the 80 up to 160 hours 11% above the sector average and the 160 up to 320 hours, an increase of 13.9% on AY 2022/23 and 6.2% above the sector average. We will continue to review and evaluate delivery as part of our internal quality process to capitalise on the improvements implemented as well as ensure ongoing improvements are identified.

**Figure 4 - Outcomes for full-time students on our advanced courses (HE)**

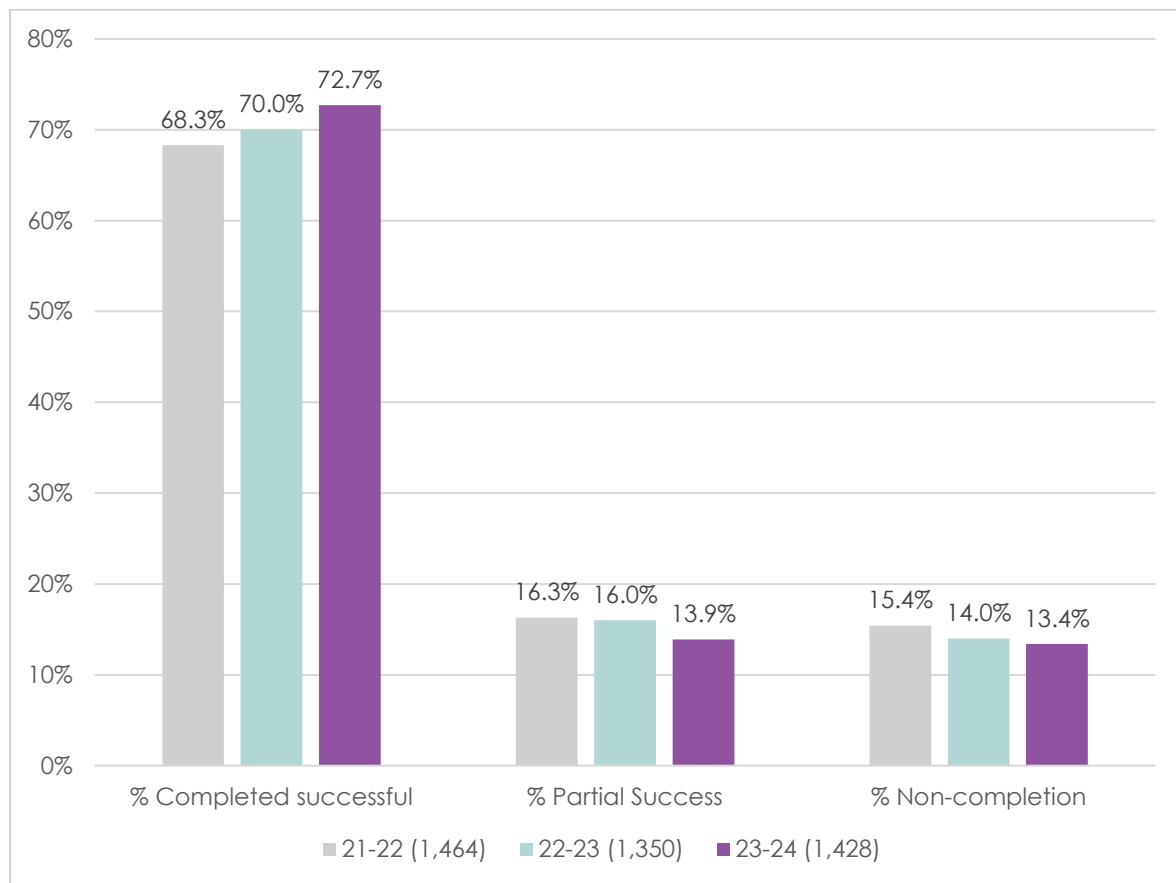


Figure 4 outlines the key outcomes for our students studying on full-time advanced courses (defined by the number of hours study required to complete the course), over a three-year period.

The graph shows the percentage of students who completed their course successfully, the percentage that stayed at college until the end of the course but did not complete their group award, and those who did not complete by withdrawing from their course before the end of the academic year.

In AY 2023-24, the number of students successfully completing their course increased by 2.7% in comparison to AY 2022-23, and the level of attainment is 5.8% above the sector average of 66.9%.



As with the FE outcomes, the focus on reduction of partial success as well as targeted actions for poor performing courses influenced the improvement in outcomes.

**Figure 5 - Outcome totals for part time students on our advanced courses (HE)**

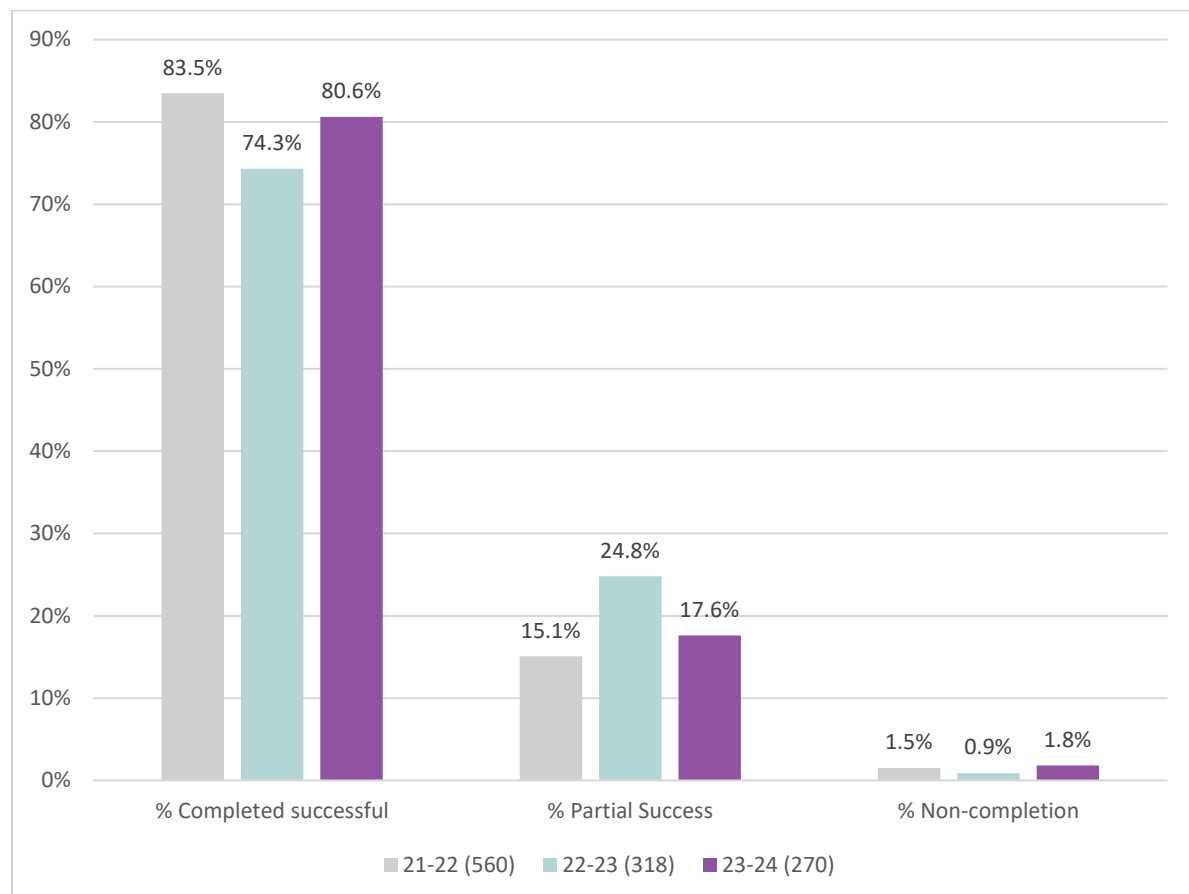


Figure 5 provides a three-year comparison that illustrates the attainment for our students on part-time advanced courses. It also provides a comparison of students who achieved partial success and those who did not complete by withdrawing from their course.

The achievement on our part-time advanced courses has increased by 6.3% in comparison to the previous Academic Year. The 80.6% success rate for 2023-24 is only 1.1% below the sector average of 81.7%.

We will continue to review and evaluate the delivery of these programmes as part of our internal quality process to ensure continuous improvement and the identification of good practice.

**Figure 6 - Outcome breakdown for part time students on our advanced courses (HE)**

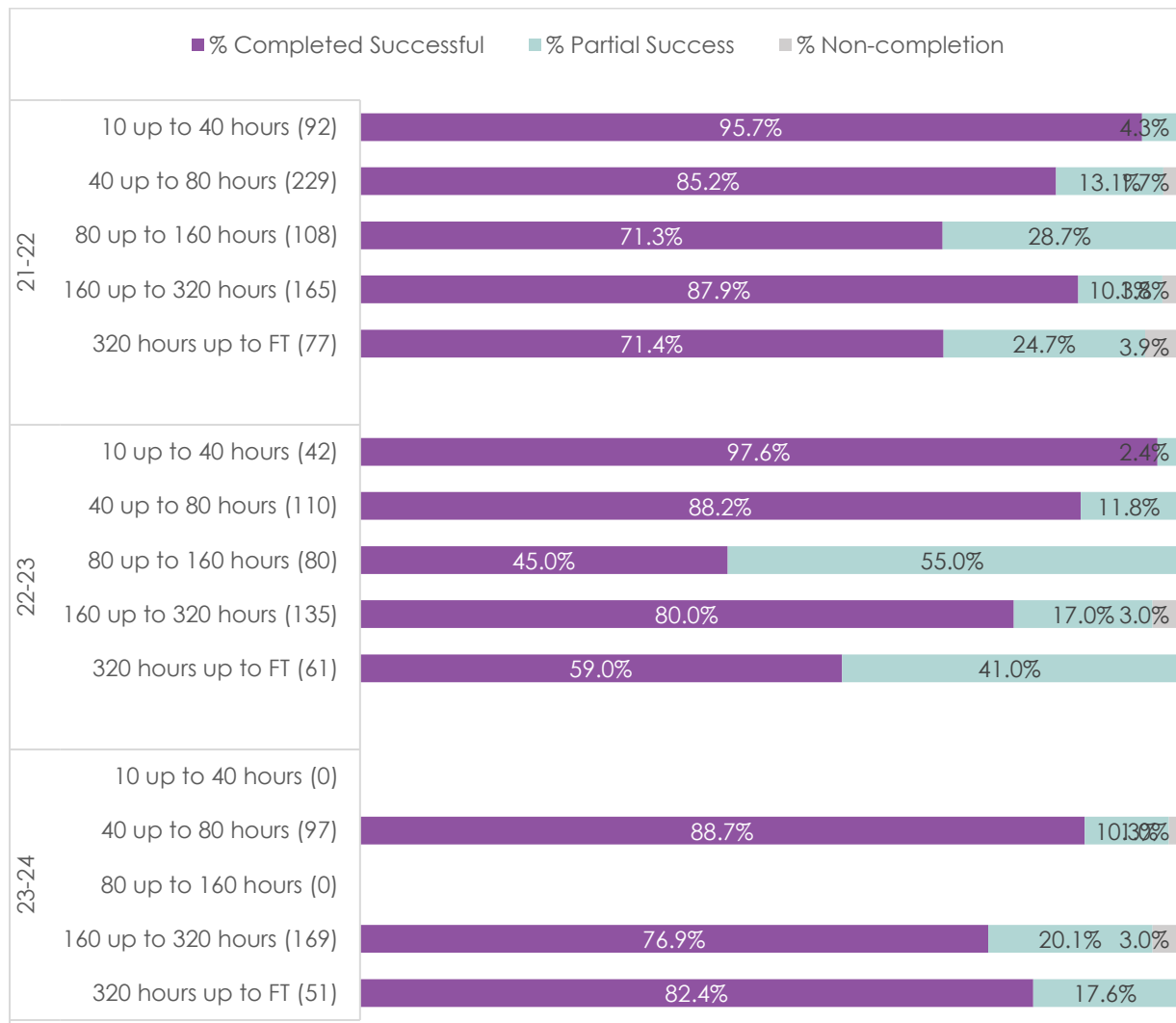


Figure 6 provides a comparison of part-time course performance over a three-year period categorised, by the number of hours study required to complete the course.

Courses of 40 up to 80 hours have a high level of success at 88.7% and 6% above the sector average of 82.7%. Courses of 320 hours up to FT hours are also successful, and sit on par with the sector average of 82.4%. As with non-advanced courses, targeted audience motivation helps to ensure high success rates, with shorter courses requiring less financial and time commitments. Acting on candidate feedback to ensure content is relevant and interesting also plays an important role in maintaining high performance.

Our lowest performing courses are those 160 up to 320 hours with a 3.1% decrease on the previous academic year and 3.9% below the sector averages of 80.8%.

The College will initiate steps to identify where improvement is required to ensure that it delivers an excellent learning experience, leading to successful outcomes for all students.

**Figure 7 - Outcomes by Age Group on courses lasting 160 hours or more**

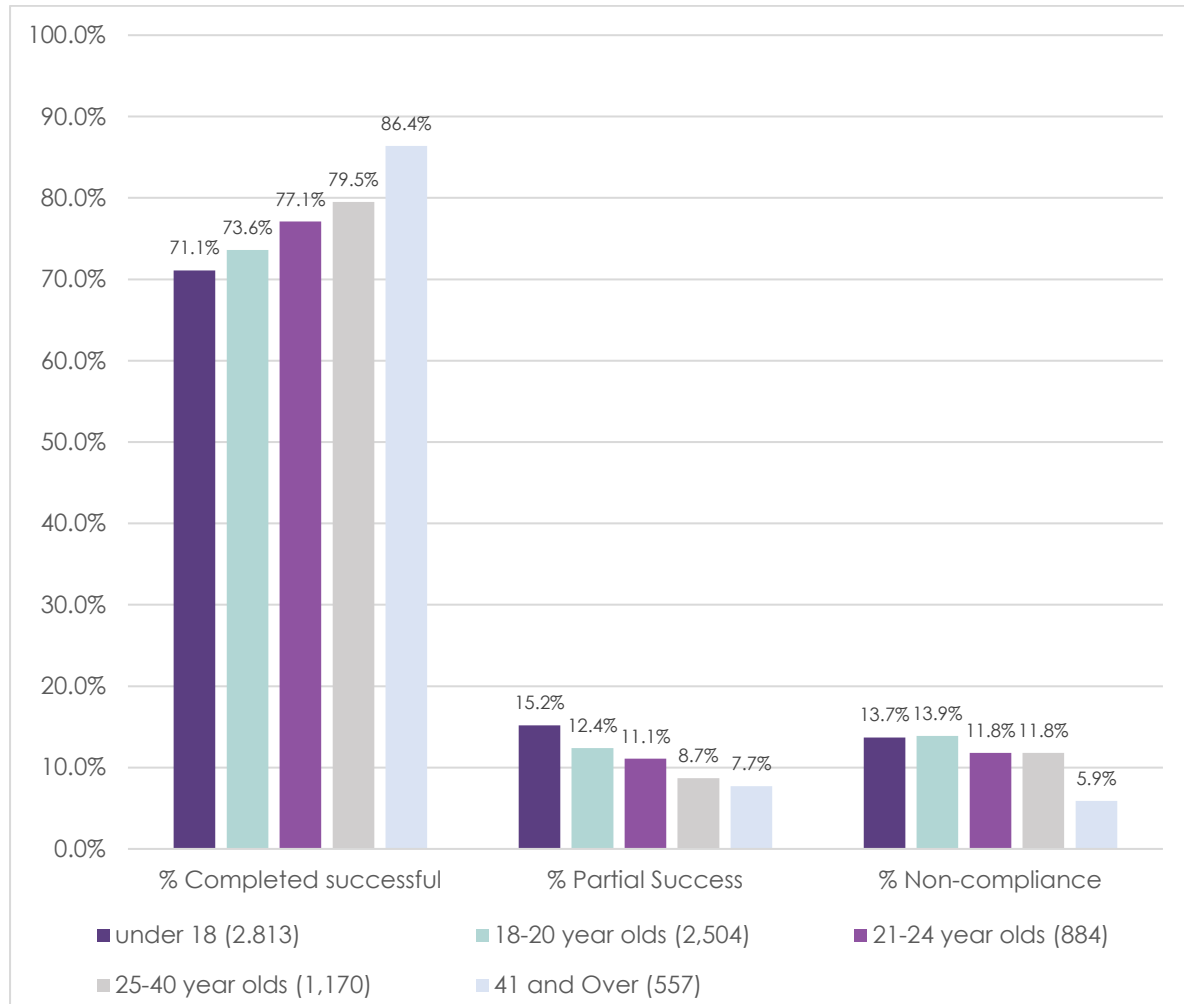
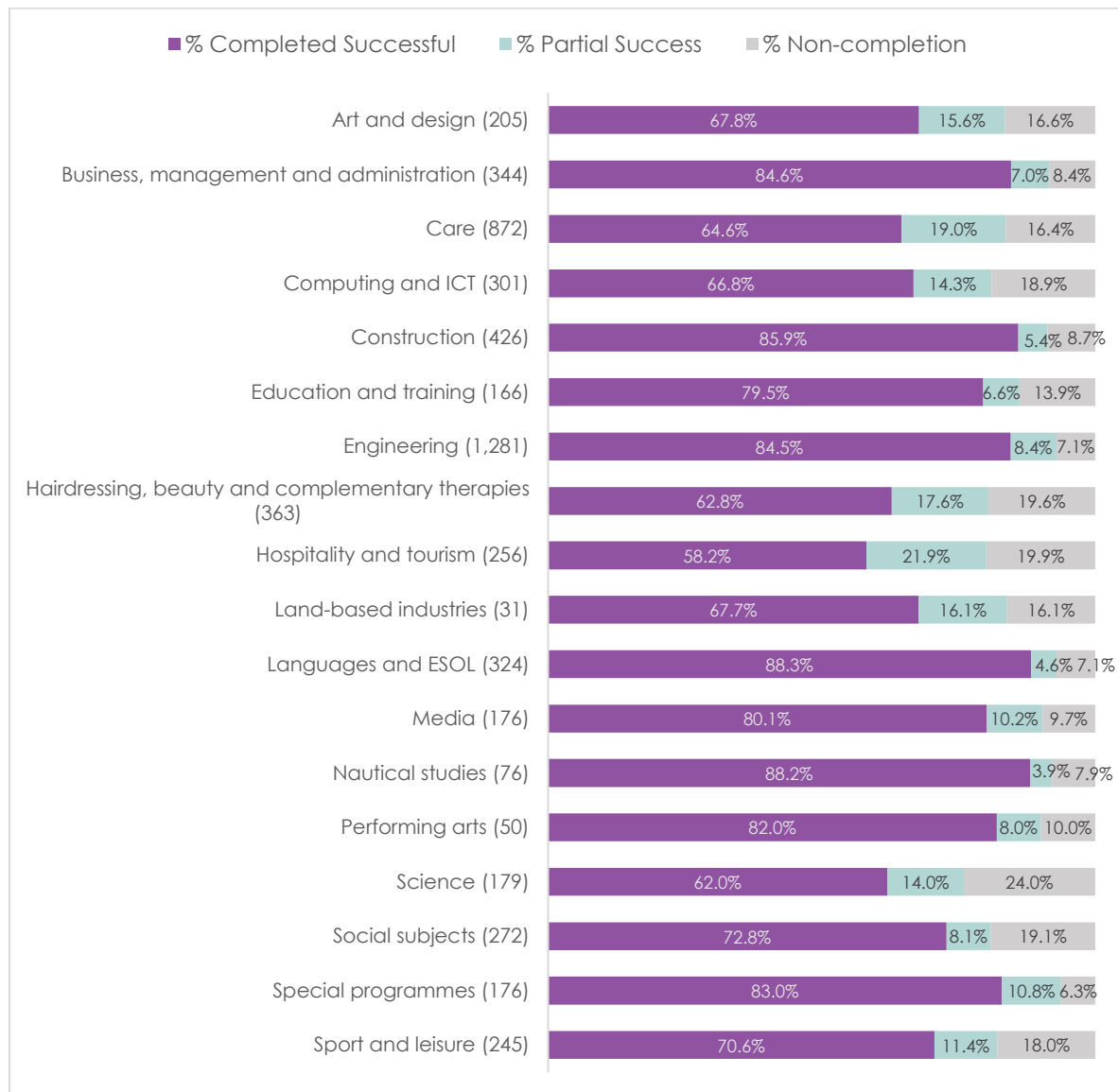


Figure 7 shows the outcomes for our students in AY 2023-24 over five determined age sets. Students in the age group of 41 and over were the highest achieving age group at 86.4%, closely followed by the 25 to 40 year old age group at 79.5%. There was a 14.7% difference between the lowest and highest percentage of student success across all age groups.

The attainment for each of the five age sets are all above the sector average, under 18's (4.3%); 18-20 (3.5%); 21-24 (2%); 25-40 (2.9%) and 41 and Over (7.3%).

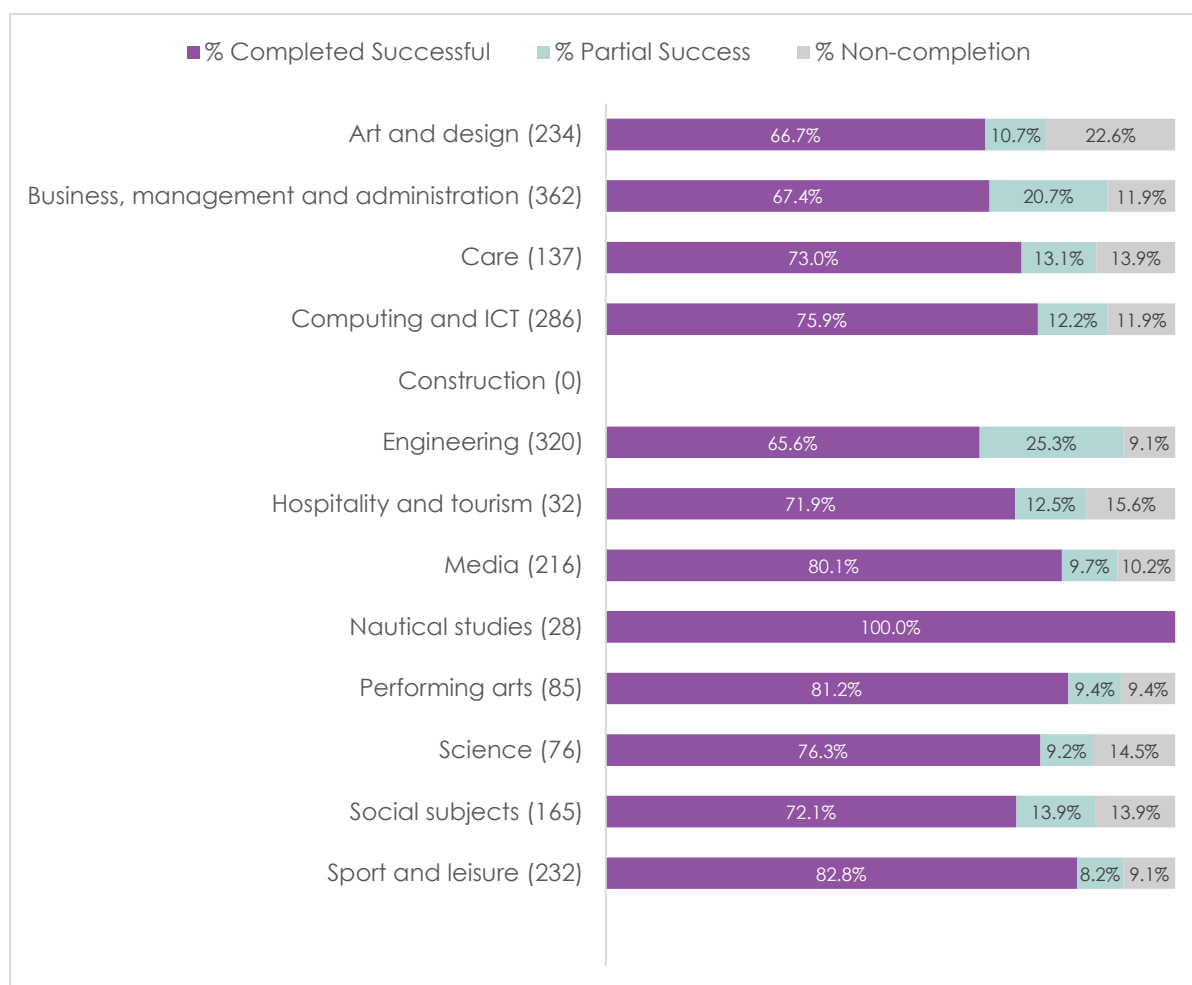
**Figure 8 - Outcomes and Enrolments by Subject Group for non-advanced students (FE)**



11 of our non-advanced subject groups achieved success rates of 70% or above, with Languages & ESOL achieving the highest at 88.3%, which is 8.2% higher than the sector average.

Of the 18 subject areas presented, we performed higher than the sector average for 12 subject groups.

**Figure 9 - Outcomes and Enrolments by Subject Group for advanced students (HE)**



Nine of our advanced subject groups achieved success rates above 70%, with nautical studies achieving the highest at 100%, which was also 23.4% above the sector average. This was followed by sport and leisure, performing arts and media as the highest performers. Of the 12 subject groups presented, nine achieved outcomes above the sector average. Nautical performance consistently scores high because of the nature of the training and the level that candidates are operating at. Career progression in the nautical industry is driven by qualification attainment and therefore candidates are highly motivated. Learners also benefit from relatively small groups and therefore personalised support during their studies.

**Figure 10 - Outcomes by Level and Gender on advanced and non-advanced courses**

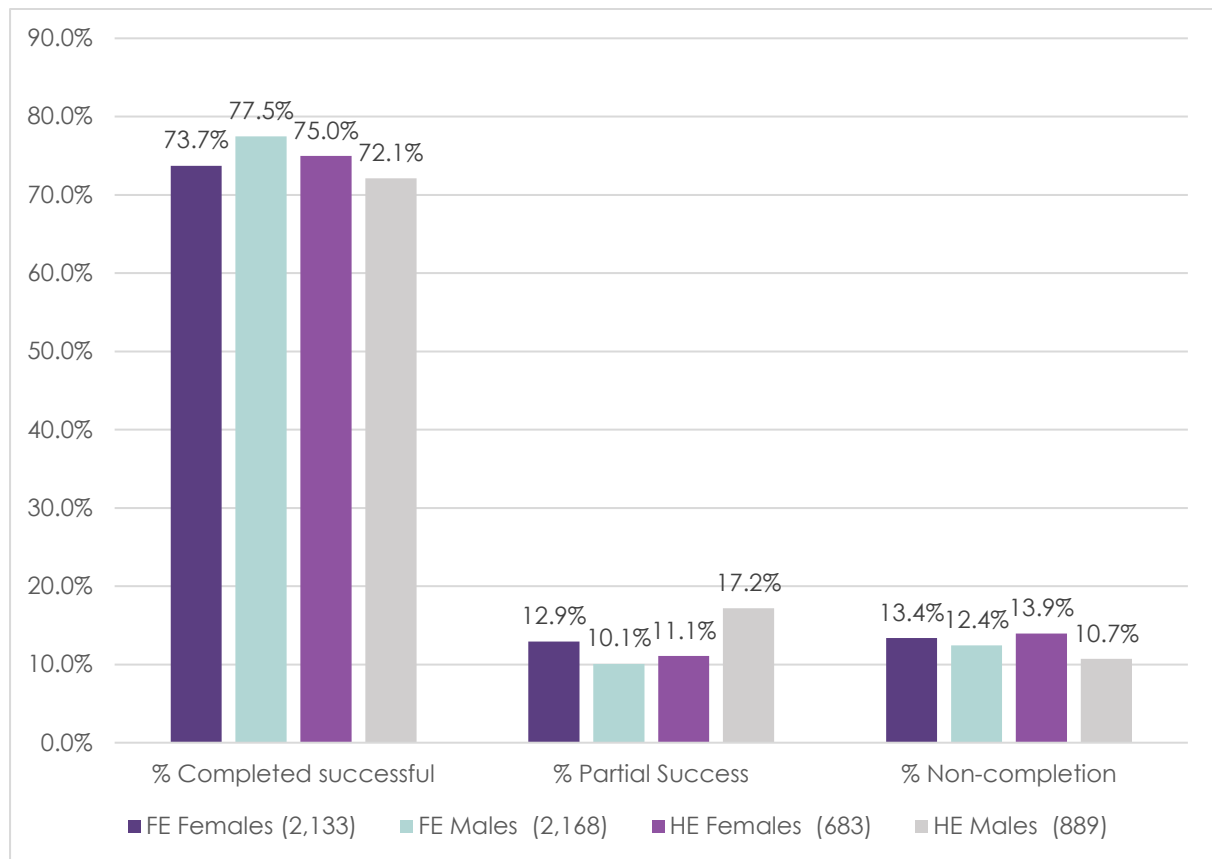


Figure 10 shows the achievement for our advanced (HE) female students is 75%, which is 2.9% higher than their male counterparts are and 3.2% above the sector average. For our non-advanced provision (FE), the success rate for our male students is 3.8% higher than the 73.7% success for the non-advanced females and 2.3% above the sector average.

The outcome gap between males and females on our advanced courses has changed around in AY 2023-24 in comparison to the previous year, where the achievement for male students was 0.9% higher than their female counterparts. With higher success rates for males on FE courses, and females on HE courses, this is now in line with the sector position.

The College has in place an [Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes](#) report. The report and accompanying appendices outline the progress the College is making towards meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and how the College is mainstreaming this duty to ensure that everyone who learns or works at NESCol receives the best possible experience.

**Figure 11 - Outcomes and enrolments by Key Group for part time students**

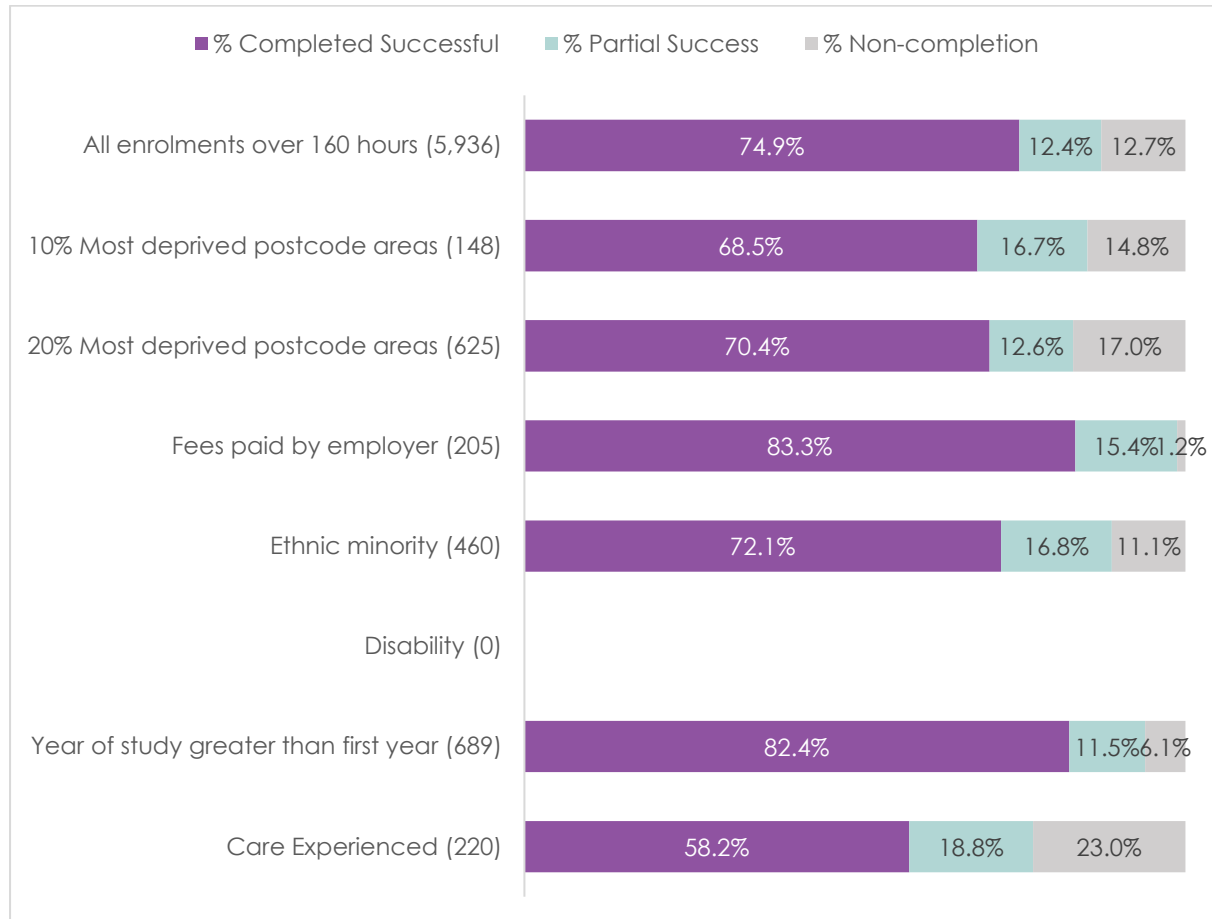


Figure 11 shows the performance in AY 2023-24 of key category groups that align with the measures outlined in our SFC Outcome Framework & Assurance Model.

The high success rates for students who have their fees paid by employers increased on the previous years by 3% to 83.3%.

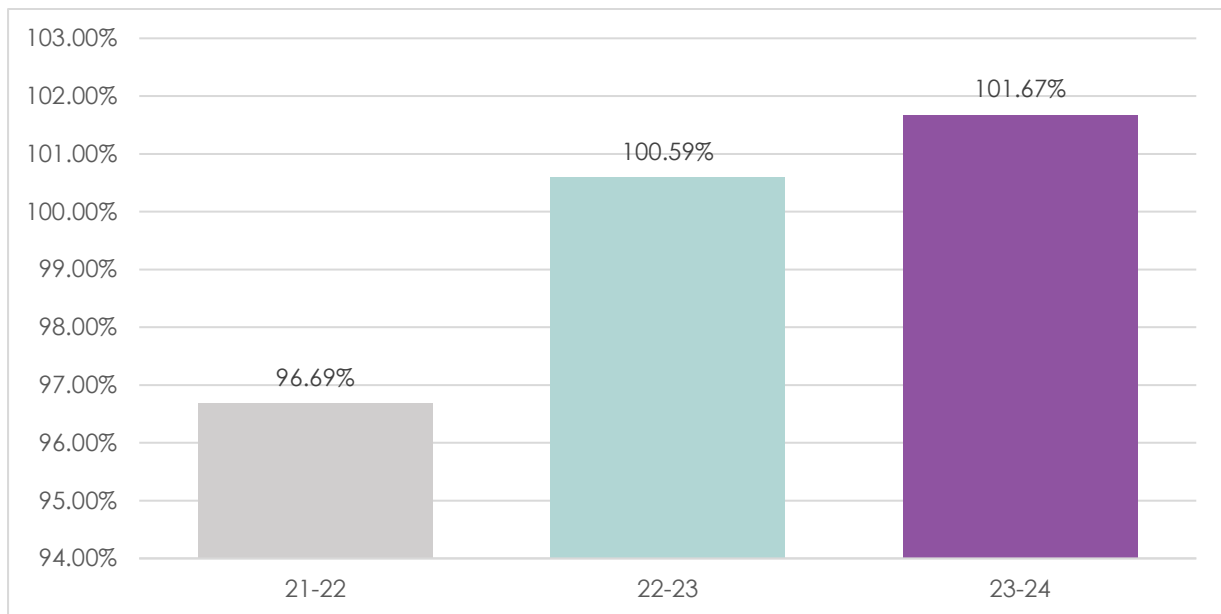
All seven of the key groups improved their outcomes in comparison to the previous year where only three had improved. The most notable of these was 10% most deprived postcode areas by 20.2%; 20% most deprived postcode areas by 12.2% and ethnic minority by 10.4%.

The College however produced lower success rates against the sector averages across three of the seven key groups, Care Experienced (2.3%); Fees paid by employer (4.2%); Year of study other than first (1.9%).

We are unable to compare the key group Disability as the number of candidates did not meet the threshold for SFC to include.

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**Figure 12 - Overall college performance**

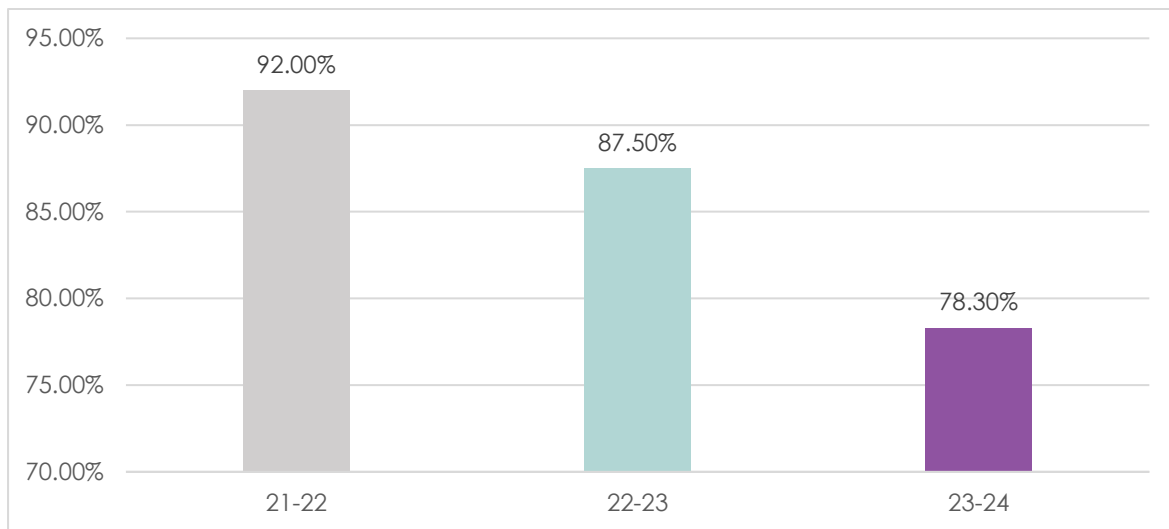


The Scottish Funding Council's annual grant to the college sector allows courses to be provided free to eligible students. In return, the Funding Council expects colleges to provide an agreed level of activity. This activity is measured in Credits, with each Credit equating to 40 hours of study.

The College manages its activity through a process administered by the Curriculum Planning Team and overseen by the College Executive team. In AY 2023-24 NESCol delivered 116,710 Credits, against a target of 115,931, this equates to 101.67% .



**Figure 13 - Full-time permanent teaching staff with a teaching qualification**



The College continues to have a high level of permanent teaching staff with a teaching qualification, however there has been a slight reduction in the number of staff with TQFE or equivalent from 93.4% in AY2021-22 to 92% in AY2022-23 and 78.3% in AY2023-24. This reduction is due to a number of reasons including staff retirement, natural staff turnover, and the targeted restructure of key curriculum areas. A number of new teaching staff have joined the college during this period and we have a plan to ensure they are able to access initial lecturer training and eventually, TQFE as part of their new career pathway.

## Additional information

The following publications provide additional information on the ambitions and performance of North East Scotland College, and the performance of all Scottish colleges.

### NESCol Strategic Plan 2025-30

The Strategic Plan 2025–2030 has been developed through a collaborative and inclusive process, engaging staff, students, stakeholders, and community partners across a range of forums. This has included an all-staff survey, targeted consultations, strategic workshops with the Leadership Team and Regional Board, student workshops across campuses, a Winter Development Day staff session, open information events, and online feedback opportunities.

The insights gathered through these activities have been carefully analysed to identify key themes and priorities, which have shaped the development of a high-level strategic framework. The resulting plan sets out a clear and ambitious direction for the College, underpinned by a strong regional focus, a commitment to sustainability and innovation, and a shared vision for student success and institutional growth.

The plan is structured with clear articulation of:

- Who We Are (an infographic overview)
- Why We're Here (mission statement)
- What We Stand For (core values)
- Where We're Going (vision statement)
- How We'll Get There (key objectives)

There are 6 sub-strategies, each contributing to the overarching College goals. There are themes that cut across many, if not all sub-strategies (eg innovation, sustainability, efficiency, wellbeing, skills):

Our Region – Enhancing regional engagement, commercial development, and curriculum alignment with local labour market needs.

Our Secure Future – Ensuring long-term sustainability through diverse funding, operational efficiency, and alignment with the UN SDGs.

Our Colleagues – Supporting staff development, wellbeing, and strategic workforce planning.

Our Spaces – Improving physical infrastructure with a focus on sustainability, safety, and inclusivity.

Our Digital Ambition – Driving digital transformation and building digital capabilities across the College.

Our Student Experience – Enriching the student journey through innovation in learning, teaching, and support.

### NESCol/SFC Outcome Framework & Assurance Model

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has introduced a new approach to assurance and accountability for Scotland's colleges and universities, replacing the previous Outcome Agreement model with the Outcomes Framework and Assurance Model (OF&AM) starting in Academic Year 2024–25.

At a high level, the Outcomes Framework sets broad expectations for institutions in return for public funding, focusing on areas such as high-quality learning and teaching, financial sustainability, good governance, skills development, and student success. Unlike the previous model, it does not require institutions to agree on specific targets in advance. Instead, outcomes are expressed generally across themes that relate to students, employers, and government stakeholders.

### College Sector Performance Indicators 2023-24

Further information on the performance of all Scottish Colleges in AY 2023-24 has been published by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). Comparative information provided covers areas such as student retention and achievement, staff qualifications and student satisfaction. Indicators are reported at sector and individual college level.

## Glossary

Acronym	Term	Description
	Completed Successful (KPI)	A KPI, which measures students' success –those who enrolled and achieved the full qualification.
	Credits	The SFC provides funding to colleges who undertake to deliver a specified volume of activity measured in credits (1 credit is equivalent to 40 hours of learning). Each college is set an annual Credits target by the SFC for each academic year.
ES	Education Scotland	A Scottish Government executive agency charged with supporting quality and improvement in Scottish education and thereby securing the delivery of better learning experiences and outcomes for Scottish learners of all ages.
FE	Further Education (FE)	Non-school based education below SVQ level 4, SCQF level 7, i.e. below HNC level, non-advanced post school education.
HE	Higher Education (HE)	Education at SVQ level 4 or above, SCQF level 7 or above, for example HNC, HND, degree, postgraduate degree.
KPI	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	A type of performance and quality improvement measurement. KPIs evaluate the success of an organisation of a particular activity in which it engages.
	Level	Indicates if the course is an FE or HE programme.
	Outcomes	Statements that describe significant and essential learning that students have achieved, and can reliably demonstrate at the end of a course.
	Partial Success (KPI)	A KPI that measure students' success – those who completed the course but did not gain all the units to gain the qualification. These students do however receive formal accreditation for the units completed successfully.
SFC	Scottish Funding Council (SFC)	The national, strategic body that is responsible for funding teaching and learning provision, research and other activities in Scotland's colleges and universities and higher education institutions.
	Subject Group	Categories used by Education Scotland and the SFC to group courses from the same curriculum area.
	Withdrawal (KPI)	A KPI that measures those who withdrew from the course and did not gain any qualification.