

Newbattle Abbey College is committed to offering a range of programmes in the community and in college to learners who are furthest away from learning and employment. Many face several barriers to learning and have significant additional support needs, including mental health issues. Those present challenges in relation to recruitment as vulnerable learners often require additional advice and support before committing to enrolment. Improved recruitment practice in 2019-2020, coupled with extended Support for Learning, contributed to very positive retention rates despite Covid -19 and the restrictions we faced. See related information below.

Retention

In 2019-2020, our retention across all full-time FE courses was 90%. This represents a 2% decrease on our 2018-2019 retention rates of 92%.

The reasons for our strong retention despite the problems faced by the pandemic, included: enhanced recruitment procedures; online support/learning; health and wellbeing support; ESOL support; extended Support for Learning; Individual Learning Plans for all learners; enhanced guidance support and improved assessment schedules. In addition, the Learning and Teaching Team continued to identify and support 'at risk' students. All students with an identified need had a Personal Learning Support Plan (PLSP), which contributed to the above retention figures. Key strengths of the college include the scale and quality of our Support for Learning and Guidance services.

Attainment

Attainment across all courses funded by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) in 2019-2020 was 90.12%, an increase of 16.22% on the previous year. Of these, 12 students (16.44%) were from SIMD 10 areas and 9 students (12.33%) were care-experienced.

Our improved attainment reflects the measures detailed above as well as: additional study skills support; extended assistive technology; collaborative teaching approaches; peer assessment and enhanced support materials. All Learning and Teaching staff were involved in weekly analysis of student attainment and responded to issues identified through weekly guidance sessions.

Progression

96% of students who successfully completed courses funded by SFC had positive destinations to further education, higher education, employment or volunteering. This represents a 4% increase on 2018-19. Over the past four years we have continued to note positive progression from our Preparation for FE Course to Access programmes at Newbattle. In 2019-2020, 90% of students who successfully completed Preparation for FE progressed to our Access programme. This was an increase of 19% from 2018-19. This reflects the college's successful partnership with Midlothian Council and the value of planning and delivering appropriate curriculum pathways from the community to further education.