

**Thursday 30 March 2017**

**Comment on the SFC Higher Education Students and Qualifiers at Scottish Institutions 2015-16 Report**

Shona Struthers, Chief Executive, Colleges Scotland said:

“It is encouraging to see an increase in the number of students starting higher education courses in colleges, with entrants to colleges making up 28% of all higher education students. The report highlights the crucial role that colleges play in delivering higher education and progression routes into universities for students who wish to take that path, which underlines that these routes are more likely to see students from disadvantaged backgrounds gaining access to university.

“Colleges are the most accessible path to learning – they deliver the most opportunities for the 23% of students from Scotland’s most deprived areas studying in higher education in colleges. The college sector has always recognised, supported and facilitated alternative pathways for people, helping individuals overcome disadvantage and providing them with a range of relevant work-ready skills as well as qualifications.”

**ENDS**

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