

YouGov / Colleges Scotland Survey Results

Sample Size: 1091 adults in Scotland (18+)

Fieldwork: 29th July - 5th August 2026

August 2020

	Vote in 2024 GE				EU Ref 2016		2014 Indy Ref		Gender		Age				Socio-economic classification (NS-SEC)			
	Total	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	SNP	Remain	Leave	Yes	No	Male	Female	18-24	25-49	50-64	65+	Higher	Intermediate	Routine
Weighted Sample	1091	100	281	78	238	587	230	393	487	524	567	116	419	288	268	373	223	357
Unweighted Sample	1091	106	277	75	247	585	236	362	441	484	607	101	378	318	294	398	241	306
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

In the following questions, by “academic education” we are referring to education that focuses on theoretical knowledge, critical thinking and research. By “vocational/technical education” we are referring to education that focuses on hands-on, job-specific training.

Thinking about education in Scotland today, which of the following comes closest to your view?

Too much value is placed on academic education, and not enough on vocational/technical education	58	73	64	68	57	58	67	55	65	55	61	46	53	60	68	59	62	58
Too much value is placed on vocational/technical education, and not enough on academic education	4	0	3	1	2	2	3	3	3	4	3	6	4	4	1	4	2	4
The current balance between academic and vocational/technical education is about right	22	15	20	19	26	23	14	26	17	23	20	27	23	22	17	21	21	21
Don't know	17	12	13	12	15	16	16	16	15	19	16	21	20	15	14	16	16	17

Still thinking about education in Scotland today, do you think there are too many, too few or about the right number of people entering ...

... university?

Far too many	20	24	20	15	13	15	32	22	20	23	17	15	19	23	20	20	20	20
Slightly too many	26	31	27	42	31	29	26	27	28	26	27	24	24	25	32	30	27	24
TOTAL TOO MANY	46	55	47	57	44	44	58	49	48	49	44	39	43	48	52	50	47	44
About the right number	25	20	25	20	32	28	18	25	24	22	28	36	24	22	26	27	26	23
Slightly too few	9	8	9	8	7	7	7	9	7	9	8	10	11	6	6	7	8	11
Far too few	3	4	5	2	3	3	2	4	3	4	2	5	3	3	2	2	3	4
TOTAL TOO FEW	12	12	14	10	10	10	9	13	10	13	10	15	14	9	8	9	11	15
Don't know	17	13	15	12	14	18	15	15	18	16	18	11	18	21	13	14	16	18

YouGov / Colleges Scotland Sur

Sample Size: 1091 adults in Scotland (18+)

Fieldwork: 29th July - 5th August 2026

	Scottish Region								
	Total	North East Scotland	Highlands & Islands	South Scotland	West Scotland	Central	Mid-Scotland & Fife	Lothians	Glasgow
Weighted Sample	1091	187	89	158	116	130	131	167	113
Unweighted Sample	1091	164	107	164	117	115	138	170	116
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

In the following questions, by “academic education” we are referring to education that focuses on theoretical knowledge, critical thinking and research. By “vocational/technical education” we are referring to education that focuses on hands-on, job-specific training.

Thinking about education in Scotland today, which of the following comes closest to your view?

Too much value is placed on academic education, and not enough on vocational/technical education	58	55	52	66	58	51	66	56	55
Too much value is placed on vocational/technical education, and not enough on academic education	4	6	2	1	4	3	7	3	3
The current balance between academic and vocational/technical education is about right	22	20	33	17	28	24	19	17	22
Don't know	17	19	13	16	11	22	9	24	21

Still thinking about education in Scotland today, do you think there are too many, too few or about the right number of people entering ...

... university?

Far too many	20	17	13	29	16	18	21	22	19
Slightly too many	26	25	27	29	32	25	21	25	27
TOTAL TOO MANY	46	42	40	58	48	43	42	47	46
About the right number	25	25	16	22	33	26	28	25	27
Slightly too few	9	7	11	7	7	9	16	7	6
Far too few	3	3	3	1	3	3	2	3	7
TOTAL TOO FEW	12	10	14	8	10	12	18	10	13
Don't know	17	22	31	12	10	19	12	17	14

Sample Size: 1091 adults in Scotland (18+)
Fieldwork: 29th July - 5th August 2026

	Vote in 2024 GE					EU Ref 2016		2014 Indy Ref		Gender		Age				Socio-economic classification (NS-SEC)		
	Total	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	SNP	Remain	Leave	Yes	No	Male	Female	18-24	25-49	50-64	65+	Higher	Intermediate	Routine
Weighted Sample	1091	100	281	78	238	587	230	393	487	524	567	116	419	288	268	373	223	357
Unweighted Sample	1091	106	277	75	247	585	236	362	441	484	607	101	378	318	294	398	241	306
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
... college?																		
Far too many	5	4	3	0	2	4	11	7	5	6	4	2	7	6	4	5	6	6
Slightly too many	10	10	15	13	7	8	15	10	11	13	7	12	6	11	13	9	9	9
TOTAL TOO MANY	15	14	18	13	9	12	26	17	16	19	11	14	13	17	17	14	15	15
About the right number	37	32	36	34	42	39	28	37	34	32	41	56	35	34	35	39	39	36
Slightly too few	17	21	20	21	17	17	19	16	19	18	16	10	19	14	22	16	15	20
Far too few	6	10	4	7	8	7	7	9	5	6	6	2	6	6	8	7	7	5
TOTAL TOO FEW	23	31	24	28	25	24	26	25	24	24	22	12	25	20	30	23	22	25
Don't know	25	23	20	25	23	25	20	21	26	24	25	18	28	28	19	24	24	24
... apprenticeships?																		
Far too many	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Slightly too many	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
TOTAL TOO MANY	2	0	1	0	2	2	0	2	1	0	2	2	2	0	0	1	0	2
About the right number	8	4	5	3	8	6	2	7	6	7	9	19	10	5	3	7	11	6
Slightly too few	30	27	28	33	35	29	19	28	27	29	31	60	31	20	26	32	26	29
Far too few	47	58	54	56	43	48	66	50	52	50	43	11	38	59	62	46	49	49
TOTAL TOO FEW	77	85	82	89	78	77	85	78	79	79	74	71	69	79	88	78	75	78
Don't know	15	11	12	9	13	15	13	14	14	14	15	7	19	16	9	13	15	14
Now thinking about the next 10 years, which of the following types of qualifications, if either, do you think should be prioritised in Scotland?																		
Academic qualifications	10	7	10	5	8	8	3	7	9	12	8	27	11	7	4	10	10	8
Vocational/technical qualifications	67	84	70	77	68	69	77	71	72	67	67	43	63	72	79	69	71	70
Neither of these	6	5	6	3	8	7	3	4	7	6	7	7	7	6	6	7	3	6
Don't know	17	4	14	14	15	16	16	18	13	15	18	24	19	15	11	14	16	16

Sample Size: 1091 adults in Scotland (18+)
Fieldwork: 29th July - 5th August 2026

Fieldwork: 25th July - 5th August 2020

		Scottish Region								
		Total	North East Scotland	Highlands & Islands	South Scotland	West Scotland	Central	Mid-Scotland & Fife	Lothians	Glasgow
Weighted Sample		1091	187	89	158	116	130	131	167	113
Unweighted Sample		1091	164	107	164	117	115	138	170	116
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
... college?										
	Far too many	5	5	2	12	1	6	7	3	4
	Slightly too many	10	10	6	15	13	7	7	11	7
	TOTAL TOO MANY	15	15	8	27	14	13	14	14	11
	About the right number	37	40	28	30	44	36	41	36	40
	Slightly too few	17	15	19	14	18	18	21	17	18
	Far too few	6	4	8	7	5	6	5	9	6
	TOTAL TOO FEW	23	19	27	21	23	24	26	26	24
	Don't know	25	26	37	22	20	27	18	24	25
... apprenticeships?										
	Far too many	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	4
	Slightly too many	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	0
	TOTAL TOO MANY	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	4
	About the right number	8	9	5	5	12	8	7	7	8
	Slightly too few	30	30	25	22	35	24	40	34	31
	Far too few	47	42	51	64	47	47	40	44	36
	TOTAL TOO FEW	77	72	76	86	82	71	80	78	67
	Don't know	15	19	19	10	6	18	13	12	21
Now thinking about the next 10 years, which of the following types of qualifications, if either, do you think should be prioritised in Scotland?										
	Academic qualifications	10	15	6	9	10	8	8	10	11
	Vocational/technical qualifications	67	62	70	72	67	68	72	65	61
	Neither of these	6	3	8	3	11	8	5	10	5
	Don't know	17	21	15	16	11	16	14	15	23

Sample Size: 1091 adults in Scotland (18+)
Fieldwork: 29th July - 5th August 2026

August 2020

	Vote in 2024 GE				EU Ref 2016		2014 Indy Ref		Gender		Age				Socio-economic classification (NS-SEC)			
	Total	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	SNP	Remain	Leave	Yes	No	Male	Female	18-24	25-49	50-64	65+	Higher	Intermediate	Routine
Weighted Sample	1091	100	281	78	238	587	230	393	487	524	567	116	419	288	268	373	223	357
Unweighted Sample	1091	106	277	75	247	585	236	362	441	484	607	101	378	318	294	398	241	306
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

Generally speaking, do you think attending university or taking a vocational/technical route provides better career opportunities, or are they about the same?

Attending university provides better career opportunities	13	11	15	13	16	14	9	14	12	17	10	18	15	11	11	18	10	11
Taking a vocational/technical route provides better career opportunities	41	43	43	48	38	39	54	45	42	41	40	20	42	44	44	37	48	45
They are about the same	35	36	33	31	40	38	26	33	36	29	41	46	33	33	36	37	34	33
Don't know	11	10	9	8	6	9	11	9	10	13	9	16	10	11	8	8	8	11

And which of the following types of educational qualifications, if either, do you think best prepares people to adapt to future job changes as a result of AI, automation and new technologies?

Academic qualifications	15	13	17	12	20	16	9	16	12	17	13	24	15	13	13	18	10	16
Vocational/technical qualifications	49	53	53	44	43	46	57	51	50	51	47	45	46	50	54	44	57	52
Neither of these	11	17	10	14	13	13	8	10	12	10	13	8	14	9	11	14	10	8
Don't know	25	17	20	30	23	25	26	23	26	22	27	23	26	28	21	23	23	24

From what you know, which of the following, if any, do you think the Scottish Government IS CURRENTLY prioritising when it comes to funding for post-secondary education?

Universities	26	33	27	28	19	20	32	22	27	24	29	47	27	20	23	25	27	26
Colleges	4	6	4	0	4	5	5	5	4	5	3	0	5	5	4	5	3	4
Apprenticeships	10	10	11	8	10	10	8	11	8	9	11	14	12	5	9	9	9	11
All equally	10	3	9	11	19	13	3	14	8	12	9	10	9	11	12	12	12	9
Don't know	49	48	50	53	48	52	52	48	52	49	49	29	47	58	53	49	49	50

Sample Size: 1091 adults in Scotland (18+)
Fieldwork: 29th July - 5th August 2026

		Scottish Region							
	Total	North East Scotland	Highlands & Islands	South Scotland	West Scotland	Central	Mid-Scotland & Fife	Lothians	Glasgow
Weighted Sample	1091	187	89	158	116	130	131	167	113
Unweighted Sample	1091	164	107	164	117	115	138	170	116
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

Generally speaking, do you think attending university or taking a vocational/technical route provides better career opportunities, or are they about the same?

Attending university provides better career opportunities	13	13	9	6	12	20	12	17	18
Taking a vocational/technical route provides better career opportunities	41	35	49	53	45	43	40	31	35
They are about the same	35	40	32	31	37	23	36	43	39
Don't know	11	13	11	10	6	14	12	9	9

And which of the following types of educational qualifications, if either, do you think best prepares people to adapt to future job changes as a result of AI, automation and new technologies?

Academic qualifications	15	12	13	11	12	24	16	14	21
Vocational/technical qualifications	49	54	43	55	49	42	53	47	40
Neither of these	11	8	10	8	15	11	11	14	16
Don't know	25	26	34	26	24	22	21	25	23

From what you know, which of the following, if any, do you think the Scottish Government IS CURRENTLY prioritising when it comes to funding for post-secondary education?

Universities	26	28	18	26	25	20	28	34	28
Colleges	4	5	2	4	5	9	3	3	1
Apprenticeships	10	7	8	10	16	13	6	11	9
All equally	10	10	13	9	13	6	14	8	13
Don't know	49	51	59	50	42	52	50	45	49

Sample Size: 1091 adults in Scotland (18+)
Fieldwork: 29th July - 5th August 2026

August 2020

	Vote in 2024 GE				EU Ref 2016		2014 Indy Ref		Gender		Age				Socio-economic classification (NS-SEC)			
	Total	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	SNP	Remain	Leave	Yes	No	Male	Female	18-24	25-49	50-64	65+	Higher	Intermediate	Routine
Weighted Sample	1091	100	281	78	238	587	230	393	487	524	567	116	419	288	268	373	223	357
Unweighted Sample	1091	106	277	75	247	585	236	362	441	484	607	101	378	318	294	398	241	306
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

And if you had to choose, which of the following, if any, do you think the Scottish Government SHOULD prioritise when it comes to funding for post-secondary education?

Universities	10	13	9	6	12	9	5	10	8	13	8	25	12	5	7	12	6	8
Colleges	8	6	6	15	10	10	4	8	9	9	8	7	9	7	10	10	7	7
Apprenticeships	58	69	65	57	53	58	76	61	64	55	60	35	50	65	72	53	65	66
Don't know	24	12	21	22	26	23	15	22	19	22	25	33	29	23	12	25	21	19

When it comes to providing information, encouragement and opportunity to younger people, do you think schools and career advisers favour academic qualifications or vocational/technical qualifications, or do they give both equal attention?

They strongly favour academic qualifications	33	45	34	26	31	32	39	34	34	30	35	33	36	29	32	34	32	31
They slightly favour academic qualifications	22	20	23	36	21	23	15	20	24	21	24	30	22	16	26	23	24	20
TOTAL FAVOUR ACADEMIC	55	65	57	62	52	55	54	54	58	51	59	63	58	45	58	57	56	51
They give both equal attention	16	21	16	16	18	16	18	17	16	17	14	12	11	20	20	14	17	18
They slightly favour vocational/technical qualifications	2	0	1	0	3	2	3	4	0	3	1	2	3	2	1	2	1	2
They strongly favour vocational/technical qualifications	1	0	1	0	2	2	0	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	3
TOTAL FAVOUR VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL	3	0	2	0	5	4	3	5	1	5	2	3	4	3	3	2	1	5
Don't know	26	14	25	23	25	25	25	25	25	27	24	22	26	32	19	26	26	26

Sample Size: 1091 adults in Scotland (18+)
Fieldwork: 29th July - 5th August 2026

		Scottish Region							
	Total	North East Scotland	Highlands & Islands	South Scotland	West Scotland	Central	Mid-Scotland & Fife	Lothians	Glasgow
Weighted Sample	1091	187	89	158	116	130	131	167	113
Unweighted Sample	1091	164	107	164	117	115	138	170	116
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

And if you had to choose, which of the following, if any, do you think the Scottish Government SHOULD prioritise when it comes to funding for post-secondary education?

Universities	10	12	7	5	10	9	10	12	16
Colleges	8	9	13	7	6	10	6	10	6
Apprenticeships	58	54	55	66	58	57	61	56	52
Don't know	24	25	26	22	25	23	23	22	26

When it comes to providing information, encouragement and opportunity to younger people, do you think schools and career advisers favour academic qualifications or vocational/technical qualifications, or do they give both equal attention?

They strongly favour academic qualifications	33	28	24	38	26	32	32	43	35
They slightly favour academic qualifications	22	24	26	22	30	15	21	17	26
TOTAL FAVOUR ACADEMIC	55	52	50	60	56	47	53	60	61
They give both equal attention	16	15	18	14	19	21	17	13	12
They slightly favour vocational/technical qualifications	2	4	2	2	2	0	2	1	3
They strongly favour vocational/technical qualifications	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	3	1
TOTAL FAVOUR VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL	3	6	2	3	3	1	3	4	4
Don't know	26	28	30	23	22	31	27	23	23

Sample Size: 1091 adults in Scotland (18+)
Fieldwork: 29th July - 5th August 2026

August 2020

	Vote in 2024 GE				EU Ref 2016		2014 Indy Ref		Gender		Age				Socio-economic classification (NS-SEC)			
	Total	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	SNP	Remain	Leave	Yes	No	Male	Female	18-24	25-49	50-64	65+	Higher	Intermediate	Routine
Weighted Sample	1091	100	281	78	238	587	230	393	487	524	567	116	419	288	268	373	223	357
Unweighted Sample	1091	106	277	75	247	585	236	362	441	484	607	101	378	318	294	398	241	306
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

Which of the following, if any, do you think are the most important priorities for colleges in Scotland? Please select up to three.

Delivering the skills needed by employers and the wider economy	49	58	51	60	57	52	57	54	51	46	51	27	44	54	61	55	54	42
Preparing young people for work	46	53	49	51	47	46	47	45	48	43	49	46	42	47	52	46	51	45
Delivering high-quality teaching and learning	34	31	41	41	30	34	35	33	35	36	33	41	29	35	38	37	29	31
Increasing provision of apprenticeships	28	37	36	34	25	28	40	28	32	25	31	10	18	32	47	27	34	29
Supporting adults to retrain or change careers	21	15	20	21	26	20	21	23	19	20	21	23	24	19	17	19	25	20
Supporting economic growth in Scotland	20	31	22	18	21	20	18	18	21	21	18	18	21	19	19	20	19	20
Supporting people from disadvantaged backgrounds	17	13	11	12	23	19	12	20	13	14	20	22	20	12	16	15	17	19
Supporting the needs of their local communities	10	10	12	7	10	8	6	8	10	12	8	19	13	6	6	7	8	10
Supporting Scotland's transition to Net Zero	5	1	5	6	5	4	5	6	3	7	3	7	7	3	3	6	4	4
None of these	2	1	0	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	0	3	2	1	2	1	1
Don't know	14	7	12	9	12	14	11	13	13	16	13	22	18	14	6	13	12	16

How important is it to you, if at all, that people in your local area have access to a college campus within a 20-minute walk, wheel, or cycle?

Very important	11	4	11	8	19	11	11	14	7	10	12	15	11	10	11	10	13	11
Fairly important	40	37	45	38	35	38	38	38	39	40	39	53	37	37	40	38	32	45
TOTAL IMPORTANT	51	41	56	46	54	49	49	52	46	50	51	68	48	47	51	48	45	56
Not very important	28	31	28	36	29	29	24	28	32	28	29	20	28	31	29	32	35	22
Not important at all	12	19	9	13	7	12	17	11	13	14	10	5	14	11	12	11	10	12
TOTAL NOT IMPORTANT	40	50	37	49	36	41	41	39	45	42	39	25	42	42	41	43	45	34
Don't know	9	8	8	6	10	10	10	9	9	8	11	7	10	10	8	9	10	10

*Any percentages calculated on bases fewer than 100 respondents do not represent a wide enough cross-section of the target population to be considered statistically reliable. These figures should not be used.

Sample Size: 1091 adults in Scotland (18+)
Fieldwork: 29th July - 5th August 2026

		Scottish Region							
	Total	North East Scotland	Highlands & Islands	South Scotland	West Scotland	Central	Mid-Scotland & Fife	Lothians	Glasgow
Weighted Sample	1091	187	89	158	116	130	131	167	113
Unweighted Sample	1091	164	107	164	117	115	138	170	116
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

Which of the following, if any, do you think are the most important priorities for colleges in Scotland? Please select up to three.

Delivering the skills needed by employers and the wider economy	49	47	63	53	50	47	44	44	49
Preparing young people for work	46	45	43	47	37	46	48	52	46
Delivering high-quality teaching and learning	34	35	37	33	39	32	34	32	35
Increasing provision of apprenticeships	28	32	30	35	26	21	24	23	31
Supporting adults to retrain or change careers	21	16	12	25	18	17	22	31	19
Supporting economic growth in Scotland	20	18	14	22	20	16	21	18	28
Supporting people from disadvantaged backgrounds	17	22	15	12	20	19	12	17	20
Supporting the needs of their local communities	10	11	14	16	9	4	11	8	6
Supporting Scotland's transition to Net Zero	5	6	6	2	9	1	3	4	8
None of these	2	1	0	0	4	6	2	2	0
Don't know	14	16	13	13	14	20	15	13	11

How important is it to you, if at all, that people in your local area have access to a college campus within a 20-minute walk, wheel, or cycle?

Very important	11	9	9	19	10	11	6	10	15
Fairly important	40	40	30	38	43	40	44	40	38
TOTAL IMPORTANT	51	49	39	57	53	51	50	50	53
Not very important	28	26	40	26	26	27	31	26	29
Not important at all	12	16	12	7	12	11	12	13	9
TOTAL NOT IMPORTANT	40	42	52	33	38	38	43	39	38
Don't know	9	9	9	9	8	11	7	11	10

*Any percentages calculated on bases fewer than 100 respondents do not represent a wide enough cross-section of the target population to be considered statistically reliable. These figures should not be used.