

Easy read summary

Scotland's colleges 2026



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The Scottish Government gives money to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

The SFC then give the money to colleges and sets out what each college must do in return for that funding.



19 of these colleges are **audited** by the Auditor General for Scotland and are called incorporated colleges.

Audited means their money records are checked to make sure they are correct.



Colleges teach students to help them get jobs, apprenticeships or go to university.

Colleges train workers to have the skills to meet what communities and employers need.



Training workers supports Scotland's **economy**.

Scotland's **economy** is how much money Scotland has and how we spend that money as a country.



Scotland's colleges are in a difficult situation with money.

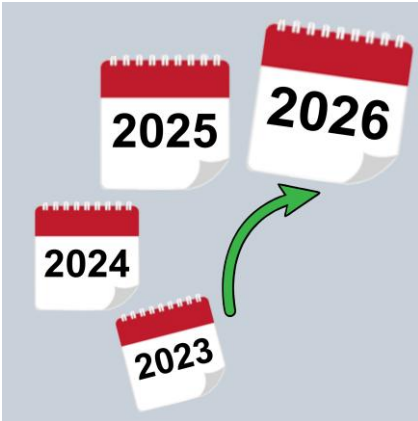
The 19 incorporated colleges spent 5 million pounds more than they were given in the year 2024 to 2025.

This is more than they overspent in the year 2023 to 2024.



In the year 2024 to 2025 the SFC also gave 5 colleges nearly 14 million pounds earlier than planned to help them meet costs.

But it is not always clear when the money will be paid back.



Some colleges need this money over a longer time.

The SFC has said that more than half of Scotland's colleges have a high risk about money.



Colleges expect to spend more money than they get in the next few years.

So they will have to change their plans and spend less money.



Colleges are trying to deal with more money pressures.



For the year 2026 to 2027 the Scottish Government has given more than 7 hundred and 21 million pounds to colleges.

This is 61 million pounds more than the year before.



The Scottish Government says this extra money will help colleges.

Colleges say it is not enough money.



Funding from the Scottish Government is less than 5 years ago.

It is not clear what funding colleges will get in the future.

Colleges think they will have to spend a lot more money than they will be given.



Colleges spend most money on staff.

Colleges are having less staff to try to save money.

But in the year 2024 to 2025 staff costs at incorporated colleges were 10 million pounds more than the year before.



In the year 2024 to 2025 colleges taught 40 thousand less students than in the year 2022 to 2023.

Colleges are doing well:



- they are teaching the amount they are asked to
- students are getting good results
- students are happy with their college experience.



If things are not changed and made better colleges may not be able to give good services to students and employers.



The Scottish Government expects colleges to earn more money if they can but there are not many ways they can do this.

They need help from the Scottish Government and the SFC to change what makes it difficult to earn more money.



The Scottish Government, the SFC and Colleges Scotland are working together on a project called the College Sector of the Future.

It looks at some of the difficult things colleges are dealing with and will share the information it finds out.



They will make **recommendations** to Scottish Ministers by the end of 2026.

Recommendations are what they think should happen.



Last year we made recommendations that have not happened but are still important.

The Scottish Government says these will also be worked on by the College Sector of the Future project.



This work should have started sooner and it now needs to happen faster.

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