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## Press release

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### Improvements to performance management systems at SFEFC

**A report by the Auditor General says that the Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) has improved its systems for assessing further education (FE) college performance against key ministerial priorities.**

The report notes that SFEFC has improved some of its indicators to produce more reliable information about the quality of further education and how efficient colleges are at delivering it. This is the first year SFEFC has been able to produce reliable information on performance in these areas due to problems with the indicators in previous years.

This means that SFEFC is now able to report on progress against most key ministerial priorities such as widening access, improving quality and financial stability. However the report indicates that the Funding Council has more work to do to be able to assess progress against another of the key priorities which is concerned with equipping students with skills for tomorrow's jobs.

The Auditor General, Robert Black, said: 'The funding council is steadily improving the performance information which will demonstrate to the Scottish Parliament whether further education colleges are delivering against key priorities. This report includes recommendations for developing their systems further.'

SFEFC's information demonstrates that there is evidence of improvement in college performance. Minister's targets for student retention were exceeded in 2001/02 when student attendances increased by 25% compared with 1998 and financial health improved from a £16 million operating deficit in 1999/2000 to a £2 million surplus in 2001/02.

However the report also recommends that the funding council could do more to help colleges compare their costs per student and their student retention ratios.

**For further information please contact Katie Fleming or James Gillies on 0131 624 9970/1**

#### Notes

1. The Auditor General is responsible for securing the audit of the Scottish Executive and most other public bodies in Scotland, except local authorities. He investigates whether spending bodies achieve the best possible value for money and adhere to the highest standards of financial management. The Auditor General is independent and is not subject to the control of the Scottish Executive or the Scottish Parliament.
2. Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000, under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act, 2000. It provides services to the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission.