

Background

Edinburgh College regularly attracts up to 30,000 applications each year to come and study at one of our 4 campuses or community campuses dotted about the area. Of that number, about 20,000 students get a place and begin their courses.

Unfortunately, the number of students who go on to successfully complete their courses is significantly lower. Last academic year, for instance, almost 7,000 students either dropped out or failed to complete all aspects of their course, meaning that **more than 1 in 4 students who start their course, don't complete it.**

Previous Years

Academic Year	Original Enrolments	Withdrawals	Partial Completion	Successful Completion	Successful Completion %age
2013/14	22,768	2,776	3,040	16,949	74%
2014/15	25,877	3,047	3,499	19,331	75%
2015/16	21,542	3,098	2,657	15,547	72%

Current Research

ECSA are leading a project this year to see why people feel that they can't stick to their course and see how we can make things easier for students to get the right support and information to complete their studies. We have recently launched a survey of current students to see what challenges (if any) people are facing. The preliminary results show that the top 3 reasons students have given about why they are struggling to stay at College are:

1. Not enough money to get by
2. Transport problems getting to and from College
3. Mental ill health, stress & anxiety

We are keen to see if these are likely to ring true with Class Reps at the Conferences as well as discussing specific examples that Class Reps may be aware of and how we might go about challenging these issues. Some things, we may never be able to change ("my bursary is not enough", for instance, as this is legislative), but some things we can use to lobby for change, so any ideas Reps have about solutions are to be encouraged.

Finally, some challenges students may face, could, potentially, be avoided if dealt with early enough. So, let's wrap up the discussion with:

"What is the 1 thing you wish you had known before you started your course at Edinburgh College"

Retention Project *Workshop Questions*

1. Have you or any of your classmates had an issue at College that has made you/them consider dropping out? If so, what was the issue? If not, what do you think is the biggest reason for students struggling to stay on their course?

2. In our survey so far, the top 3 reasons students have given about why they are struggling to stay at College are: 1. Not enough money; 2. Transport problems; 3. Stress & anxiety. How widespread do you think these problems are in your class and why?

3. What do you think the College and/or ECSA can be doing to remove challenges, support more students to stay on at College and be successful?

Additional notes...

