

Intersectoral relationships within higher education: the FE/HE interface in the UK

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1. Introduction and Background
2. Data Gathering and Findings
3. Conclusions

Table 1. Institutional Components of the Interface between FE and HE

1. The extent of ***exclusive progression*** relationships between individual colleges and universities;
2. ***Multi progression*** of students under partnership or other arrangements between colleges and universities;
3. ***Franchising*** agreements between universities and colleges;
4. ***Validation*** agreements between universities and colleges;
5. Agreements between colleges and universities for the extension of ***apprenticeship programmes*** into degree work

Data Gathering Stage

- Email questionnaire to 301 colleges
- 255 England; 26 Scotland; 14 Wales; 6 N. Ireland
- A total of 130 FE colleges responded: 45 per cent of 2021 active UK colleges
- 89 per cent (106) of FE colleges indicated they had either joint arrangements or direct partnerships with at least one Higher Education Institution
- 10 per cent (13) indicated they had no formal links
- Nine per cent (11) had a missing response

Figure 1: Percentage of Total Colleges Responding by UK Region/ Country

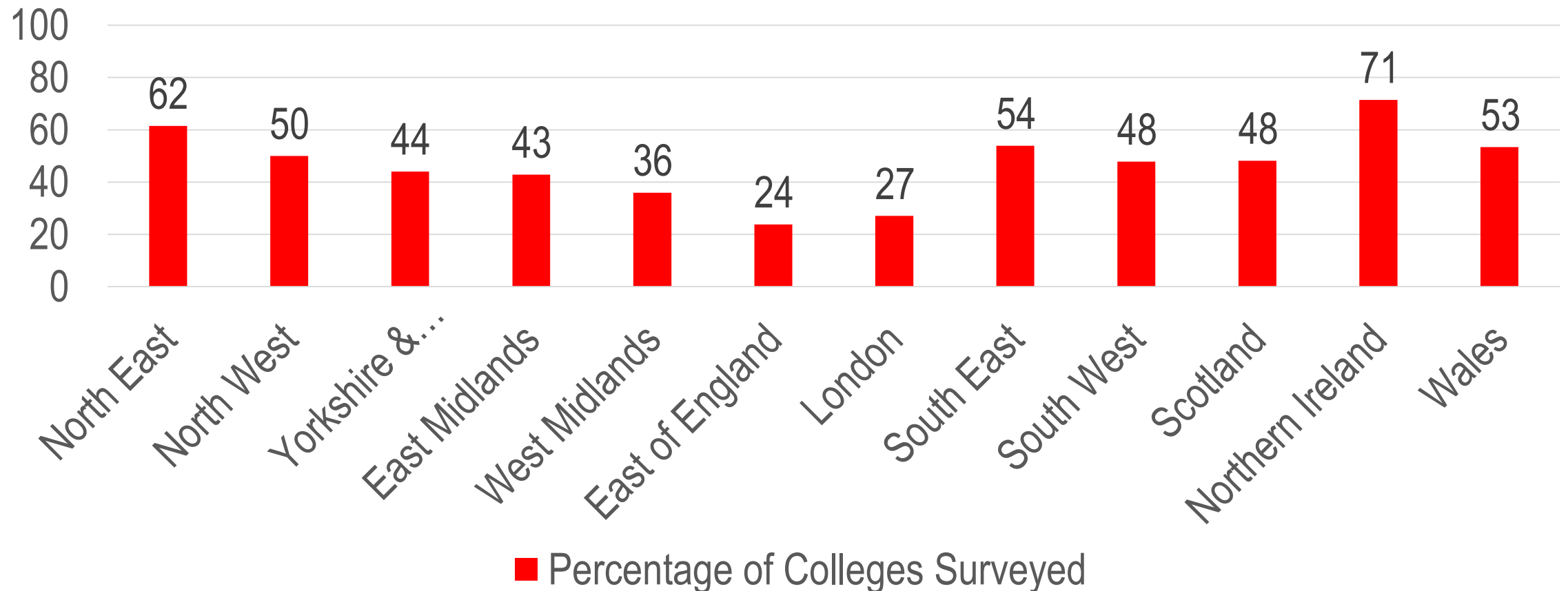


Table 2: The Number of Joint Activities and Direct Partnerships Undertaken in FE Colleges (n = 106)

Type of Arrangement	Numbers of Joint activities
Exclusive Institutional links	15
Multiple Progression links	62
Franchise	50
Validation	63
Apprenticeship	23

The Extent of Joint Activities between FE and HE: HE

Ninety five universities (more than half all UK universities) involved in joint activities and direct partnerships with FE colleges.

Table 3: The Number of Joint Activities and the Percentages of the Number of Universities Involved

University Type	Direct Partnerships Joint Activities	Percentage of Universities
Russell Group	19	5
Pre- 92 Non-Russell Group	77	21
Post- 92 universities	183	49
Post- Post- 92 universities	93	25
Private	1	➤ 1

Subjects involved in the Arrangements

- FE disciplinary spread of the taught activities strongly supports the largely vocational character of the sector:
- STEM subjects comprise over a third **at 36 per cent** of the activities—Engineering and Technology, Computer Science, Medicine and subjects allied to Medicine and Physical and Biological Sciences.
- If other vocational subjects are included such as Business and Administrative Studies and Education (teacher training), the figure for vocational programmes rises to **65 per cent**
- There are particular relationships between certain colleges and universities in Agriculture
- FE also has a special role in Creative Arts where colleges teach for diploma courses which act as an important influence on students as to whether to seek HE places in these fields.

Region/ Country Variations in Arrangements

There are considerable variations in the range of FE activities in the different regions.

- The two regions with the most colleges, the North West and the South East have the highest number of interface activities
- Scotland stands out: combining Exclusive and Multiple Progression Arrangements it has over twice as many student progression arrangements as any other region. This reflects the long standing position that 20% of Scottish HE is delivered in FE.

Table 4: Total Number and Type of FE HE Arrangements by UK Region

Region/ Country	Exclusive & Multiple Progression	Total Arrangements
North East	6	18
North West	21	43
Yorkshire and The Humber	5	22
East Midlands	6	14
West Midlands	16	30
East of England	5	14
London	12	33
South East	28	58
South West	9	17
Scotland	54	74
Northern Ireland	10	29
Wales	9	20

Student numbers involved in joint arrangements and direct partnerships between FE and HE

- 30,229 students involved in total
- Five colleges have over 400 students on franchised programmes
- 16 have over 500 students on programmes validated by universities
- Four have over 1000 each involved in in these programmes: one in Scotland; one in Wales; and two in the North West.

Table 5: Total Student Number by Type of Arrangement

Type of Arrangement	Total Student Numbers	Total Full Time Numbers
Exclusive links	635	573
Multiple links	3428	3009
Franchise	4919	3620
Validation	20028	11807
Apprenticeship	1219	714

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Conclusions