

Tackling trends in Inequality and Access to Higher Education in Scotland

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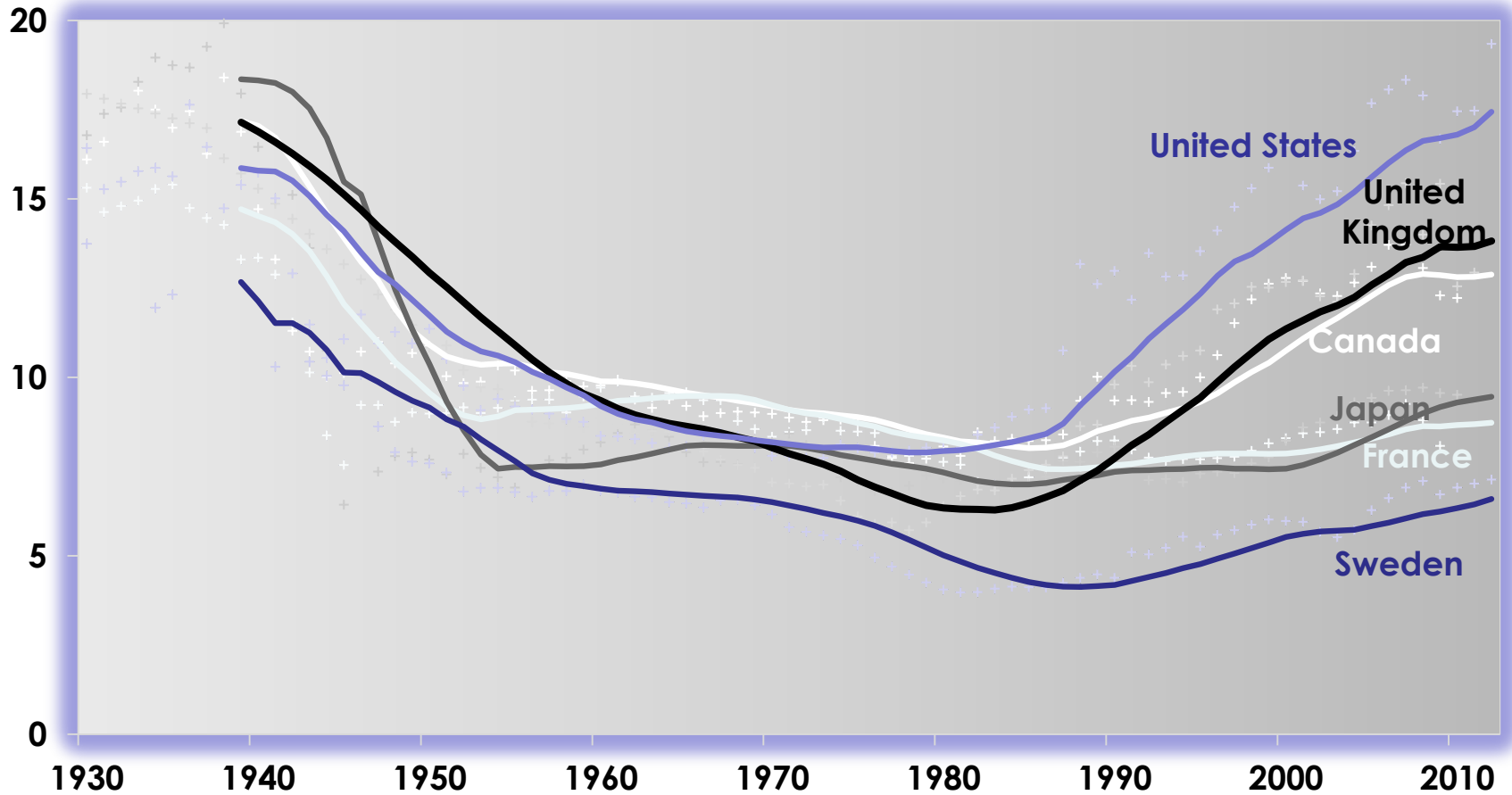


Key Points

- Increasing inequality has been a key issue across industrialised as well as developed economies
- Some theories suggest a close linkage between economic growth, investment in education and inequality trends
- Issues surrounding social mobility and inheritance as a driver of inequality also linked to education.
- Scotland is assessing the importance of improving access to higher education as a route to greater equality, and indeed to promote ‘inclusive growth’.



Top 1 per cent income share. Selected countries, 10 year moving average. Source: World Top Incomes Database and authors' calculations. Muscatelli and Duncan (2014)



Alternative Explanations of Growing Inequality

- International Trade and Globalisation
- Changes in bargaining power and the power of different interest groups
- The race between education and technology

Goldin and Katz (2008)- The race between education and technology

- First, human capital is a key determinant of economic growth.
- Second, technological progress is ‘skills-biased’.
- Third, Investments in human capital through education should help moderate earnings inequality. Conversely, a slowdown in the growth in education participation in the light of a steady pace of technological change should see an increase in inequality.
- Fourth, the USA had a relative leadership in universal education in the 20th century (the Human Capital Century). A position it gradually lost over time.

Goldin and Katz - implications

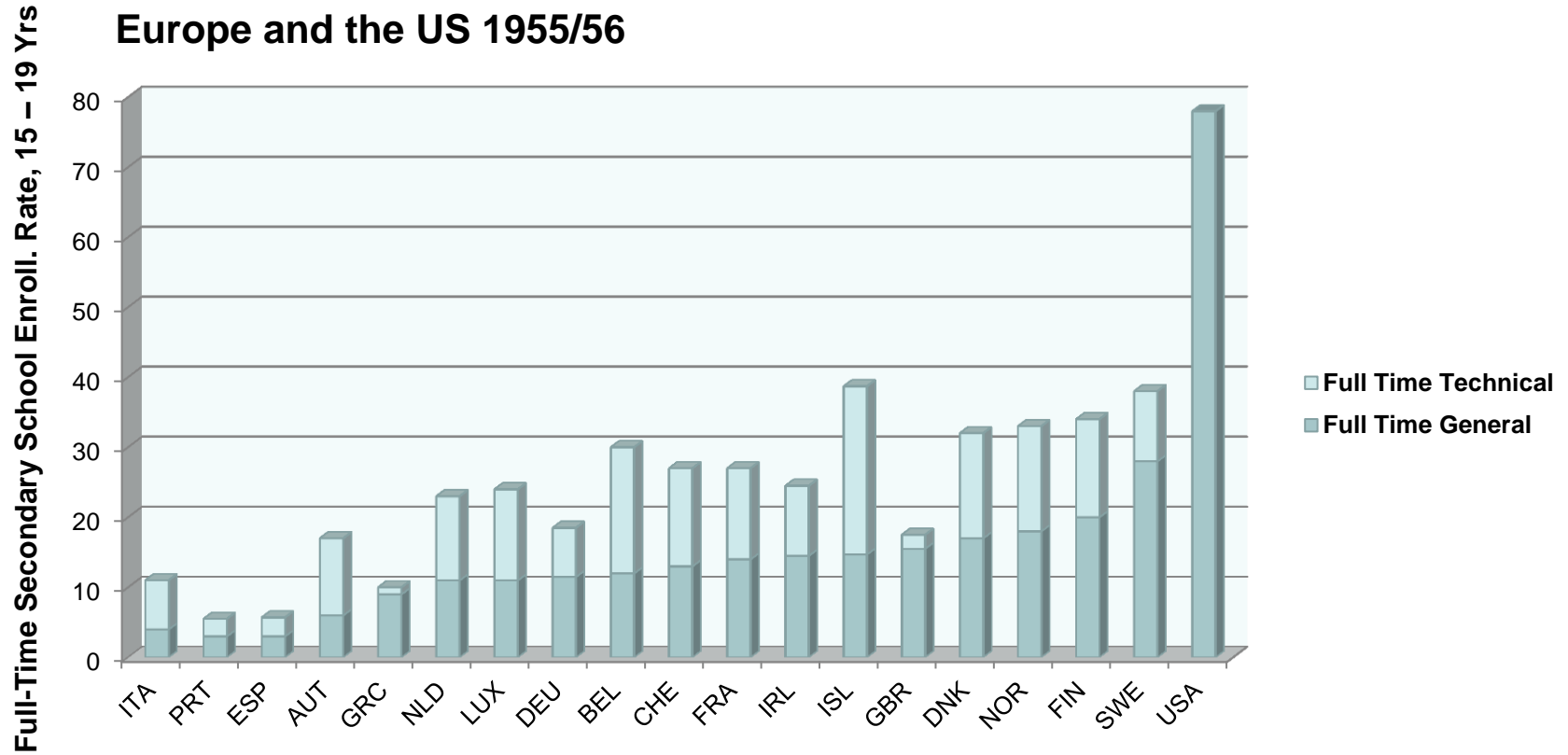
- Growth driven by technology not matched by human capital investment will increase inequality
- Returns to education should increase when inequality rises
- In the middle of the 20th century, income inequality in the United States fell dramatically, consequent to schooling reforms which increased publically funded primary and high school provision to all citizens, regardless of gender or income. In contrast, in Europe, where school access was not freely provided to low-income children, inequality remained high. In recent years, this trend in education has turned, with many European nations providing increased access relative to the United States, and income inequality in Europe rising more gradually than in the United States.

Schooling of 14- to 18-Year-Olds in Great Britain and the United States: 1870 to 1960

British Schooling Attendance Rates (in percent)				US High School Enrollment and Graduation Rates (in percent)		
Year	14-year-olds	17-year-olds	15-to-18 year-olds ^a	Year	Enrollment/ 14- to 17-year-olds	High school graduates/ 17-year-olds
1870	2	1	n.a.	1870	n.a.	2.0
1900 / 02	9	2	n.a.	1900	10.6	6.4
1911 / 12	12	1	n.a.	1910	14.5	8.8
1931	n.a.	n.a.	9.4 – 10.6	1930	51.1	29.0
1936 / 38	38	4	n.a.	1938	67.7	45.6
1950	100 ^b	10.5	12.6 [14.4] ^c	1950	74.5	59.0
1956	100	n.a.	14.9	1956	83.5	63.1
1957	100	9.0	16.0			
1960 / 62	100	15	17.5	1960	86.9	69.5

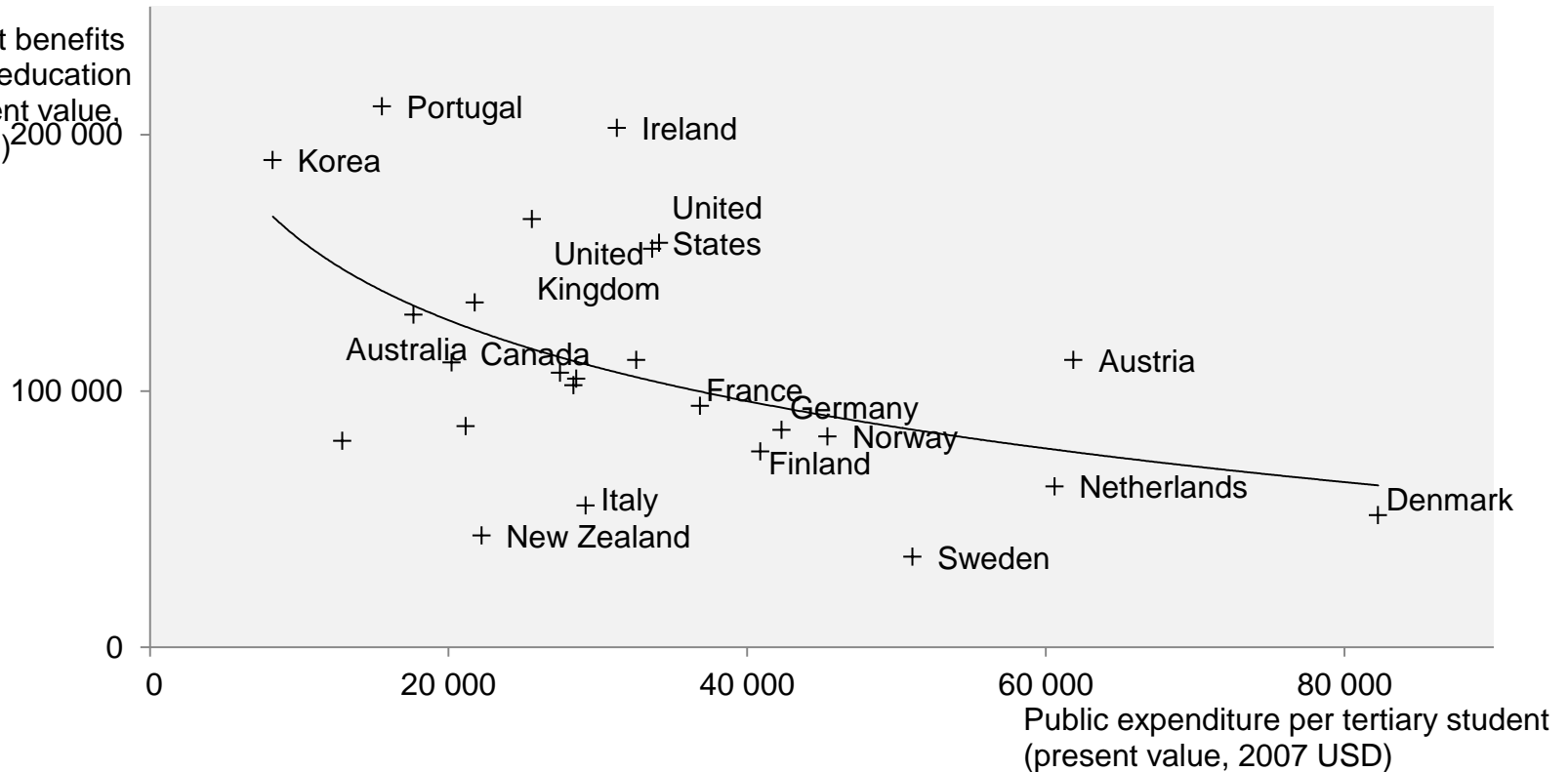
- Goldin and Katz table 1.1

Goldin and Katz Chart



Public spending on tertiary education and private net benefits

Private net benefits
to tertiary education
(Net present value,
2007 USD)



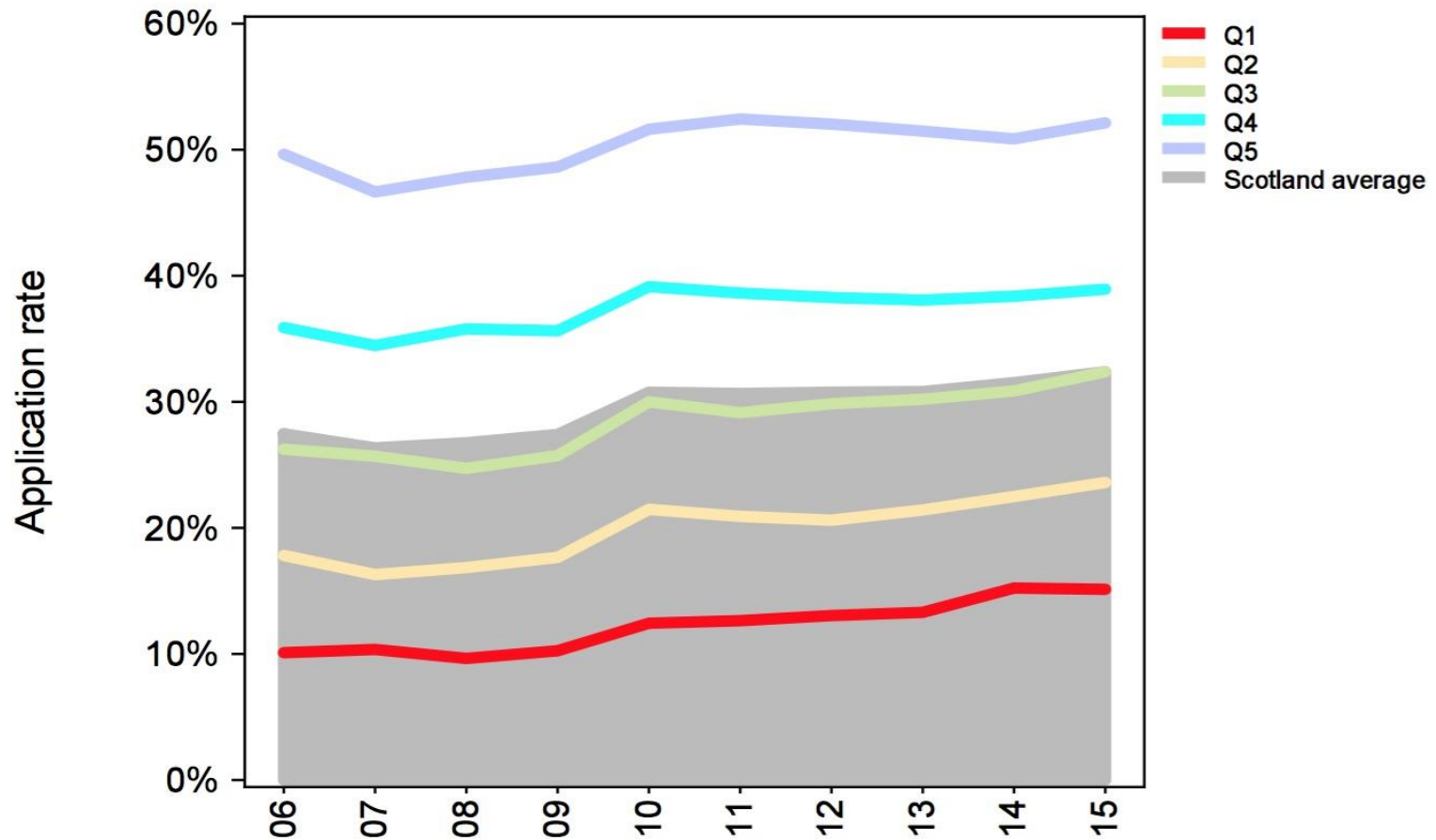
Importance of Widening Access to Scotland

First Minister set up the Commission for Widening Access in Higher Education in Scotland:

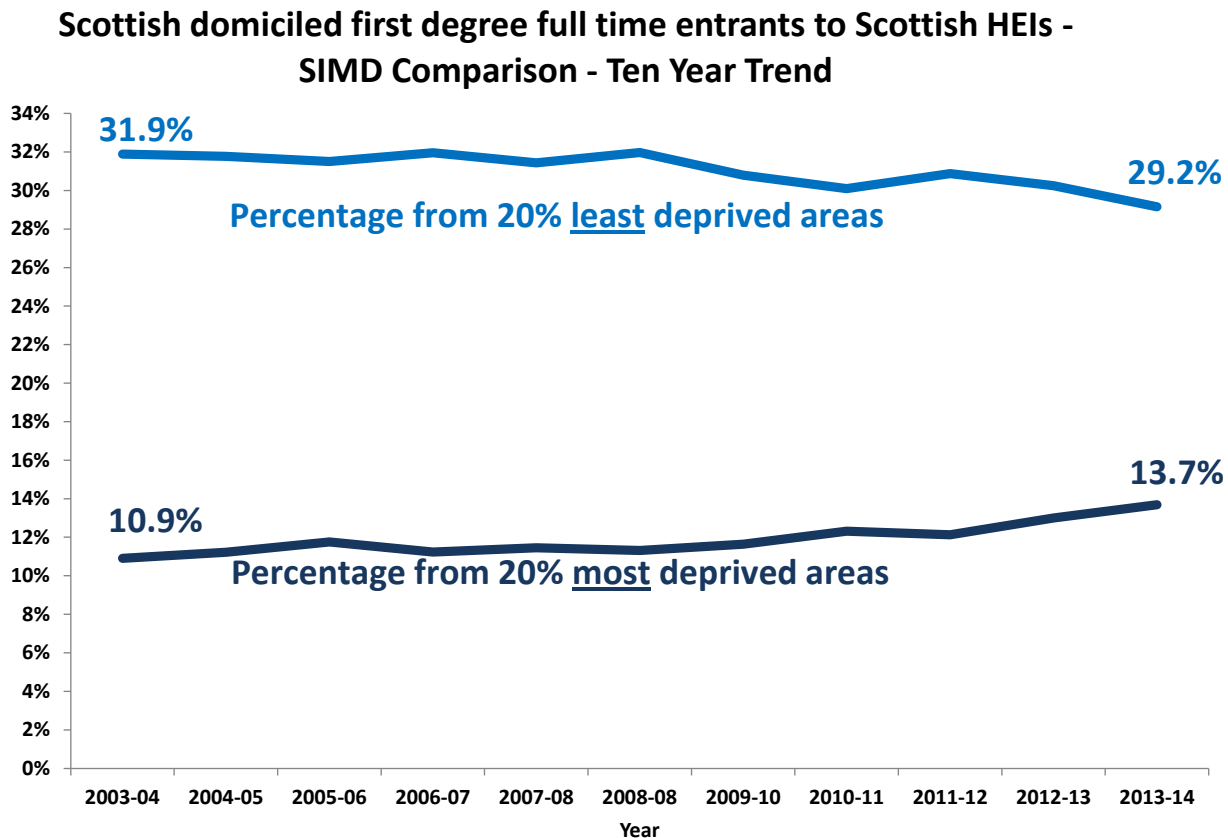
“I want us to determine now that a child born today in one of our most deprived communities will, by the time he or she leaves school, have the same chance of going to university as a child born in one of our least deprived communities.”

**Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister of Scotland, 26
November 2014**

The Size of the Challenge: University Applications

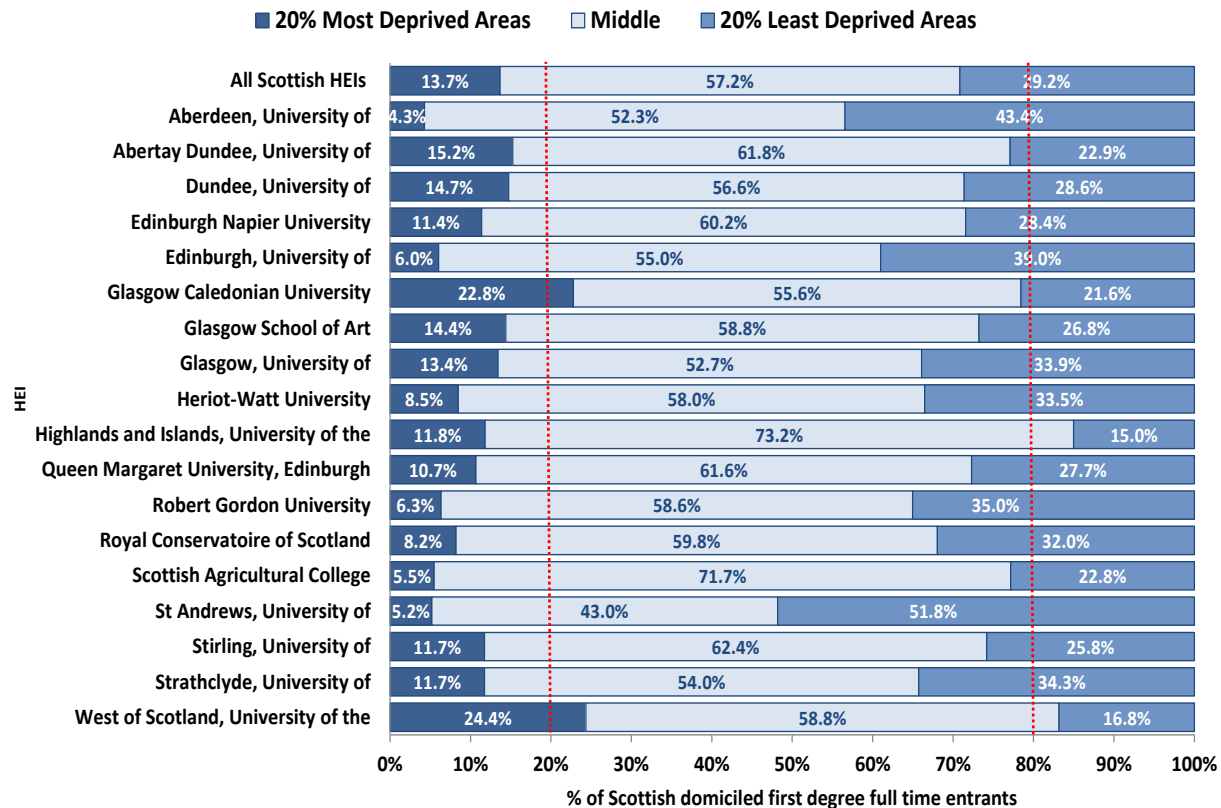


The size of the challenge: entrants to HE



Distribution of populations by SIMD and Universities

Scottish domiciled first degree full time students starting in 2013-14



Barriers to entry include:

- School attainment
- Deprivation and the impact on non-cognitive skills (including effects in early years)
- Subject choice and school guidance
- Admissions Policies (especially in high-demand universities/courses)
- Difficulty in alternative routes into Higher Education (eg through FE and articulation into HE)
- Progression and retention whilst in HE (cultural barriers)
- Financial Barriers (although no tuition fees in Scotland); debt aversion

Widening access programmes already include

- Summer Schools/Top-Up Programmes
- REACH for the high-demand professions
- Widening Access Bursaries
- Support programs within HE

So how do we make progress?

1. Need for better data on socioeconomic characteristics (SIMD or something better?)
2. Better contextualised admissions
3. Greater involvement of HE in Schools to build aspirations, provide advice etc
4. Providing greater articulation routes
5. Scale up initiatives which work well (eg summer schools) – focus public funding on these
6. What about funding of student support?
7. Other funding issues (eg postgraduate education)
8. How do we tackle attainment and subject choice issues?

Will we solve all the problems

We need to remember that access to HE is only one piece of the puzzle in social mobility:

- Access from FE/HE to job market
- Can we deal effectively with barriers in early years and early schooling
- Can we target our policies to individual need?
- How do we deal with possible 'displacement effects' from targeting policies on the lowest socioeconomic groups

Final word: it's about both economics and social justice

“We do this because it is the right thing to do. It's part of our DNA. The culture at Glasgow is rooted historically in the importance of social justice and we want to give students from all backgrounds, regardless of means, access to the very best university education.

But it also makes good economic sense and it contributes actively to the Scottish Government's inclusive growth agenda. Only by tapping all the available talent in the country and by breaking down social barriers can we boost economic performance”

Agenda – The Herald 17 January 2016



University
of Glasgow

**INSPIRING
PEOPLE**

FOR
OVER
550
YEARS

