

Research Summary: Higher National Certifications and the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2009–10 to 2021–22

Date: February 2025

Why did we do this research?

We want to understand the relationship between Higher National (HN) certifications and the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). SIMD is a measure of deprivation by postcode areas in Scotland, where areas are ranked from 1 (most deprived) to 5 (least deprived). This research is updated when new certifications are completed.

What are we trying to find out?

- Do HN certifications completed in 2021–22 follow the same SIMD pattern as other years?
- What is the difference in HN certifications between SIMD quintiles by sector?
- How do characteristics like age or sex of HN certifications show when analysed by SIMD?

How did we do the research?

We analysed SQA data from Scottish centres between 2009–10 and 2021–22. Data on completed HN certifications usually includes SIMD, sex and age, year of completion, and sector of the candidate.

What did we learn?

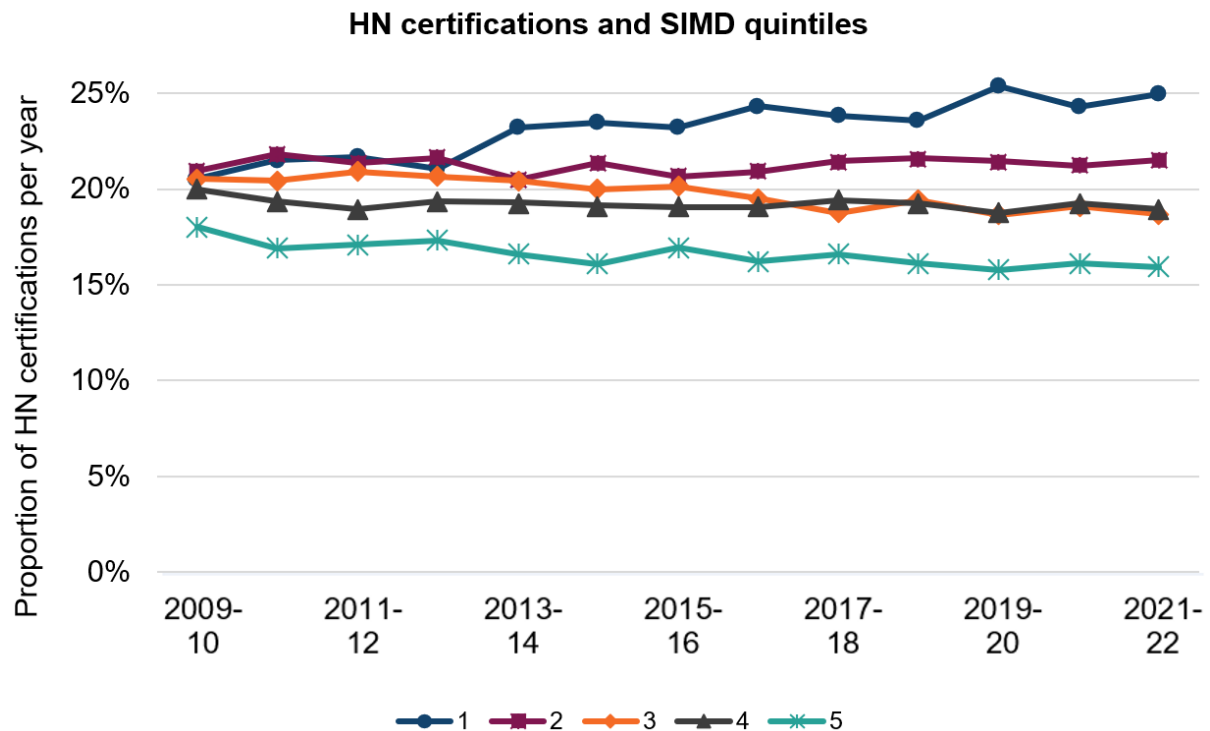
- By 2021–22, more HN certifications have been from the most deprived areas, making up a bigger part of all certifications.
- More HN certifications are female than male.
- More HN certifications that are younger (18 and under) are from the least deprived areas.

What will change because of the research?

We used the findings of this research to begin another piece of research investigating why the number of HN certifications seemed to be decreasing from the pandemic onwards.

Visual summary

Trend of HN certifications between 2009–10 and 2021–22



Read the full report

You can download the [full research report](#) from our website.