

Poor not getting the grades for university

PUPILS from poorer backgrounds are struggling to achieve the grades they need to get to university, figures show.

A report by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) says only 32 per cent of pupils from the poorest communities achieve at least one Higher at school while fewer than seven per cent get an Advanced Higher.

In contrast, 45 per cent of those from the most affluent backgrounds are awarded at least one Higher and 38 per cent go on to get an Advanced Higher.

The SFC report states: "To enter higher education, pupils are generally required to attain more than one Higher or Advanced Higher.

"When looking at the students from the most deprived backgrounds ... only 38.6 per cent of pupils achieved at least one award at these levels. Among the pupils from the least deprived backgrounds 83.2 per cent do so."

The figures highlight the difficulty universities have in opening up places to pupils from poorer backgrounds, who tend to do less well at school because of the impact of poverty on their lives.

The Scottish Government wants all institutions to lower entry grades for poorer pupils.

Professor Sheila Riddell,

from Edinburgh University's school of education, said another crucial issue for schools was ensuring pupils had access to the subjects needed to apply for particular university courses.

She said: "To change this pattern, universities need to be far more generous in the offers they make to students from less advantaged backgrounds."

