

Office for
Students



Access and participation resources

Findings from the data: sector summary

Enquiries to providermetrics@officeforstudents.org.uk

Publication date 24 March 2022

Contents

Purpose	3
Access to higher education	3
Overall trend	3
Figure 1: Number of entrants by mode.....	4
Provider-level patterns	4
Figure 2: Percentage change in the number of entrants to full-time higher education in 2020-21 compared with 2019-20, across providers with more than 500 students	5
Student characteristics.....	5
Table 1: Proportion of 18-year-olds in the UK and entering full-time higher education in England in 2020–21, by characteristic.....	6
Access: Ethnicity.....	6
Figure 3: Gaps in the proportion of 18-year-olds entering full-time higher education compared with the population, by ethnic group	7
Access: Underrepresented areas.....	8
Figure 4: Gaps in the proportion of least represented 18-year-olds entering full-time higher education compared with the population.....	8
Figure 5: Gaps in proportion of 18-year-olds from least represented areas in 2020-21 (in full-time higher education compared with population), across providers.....	9
Continuation	10
Overall trend	10
Figure 6: Continuation rates by mode	10
Provider-level patterns	11
Figure 7: Change in full-time continuation rate since previous year, across providers	11
Student characteristics.....	11
Table 2: Continuation rates for undergraduate entrants continuing into 2020–21, by characteristic.....	12
Continuation: IMD quintile	13
Figure 8: Gaps in full-time continuation rates between the most and least disadvantaged groups.....	14
Continuation: Ethnicity	14
Figure 9: Gaps in full-time continuation rates between white students and students in other ethnic groups	15
Attainment	15
Overall trend	15
Figure 10: Attainment rates by mode.....	16
Student characteristics.....	17
Attainment: Age.....	18
Figure 11: Gaps in full-time attainment rates between young and mature students.....	18
Attainment: Disability.....	19
Figure 12: Gaps in full-time attainment rates between students with no disability reported and a disability reported	19

Attainment: Ethnicity.....	19
Figure 13: Gaps in full-time attainment rates between white students and students in other ethnic groups	20
Figure 14: Gaps in full-time attainment rate between white and black students across providers.....	20
Annex A: Overview of data resources	21
Summary of published materials	21
Impact of consultations on future data resources	22
Related statistics and data sources	22
Annex B: Key data concepts.....	24
Population	24
Indicators.....	24
Student characteristics.....	24
Gaps	25
Technical notes	25
Annex C: List of abbreviations	26

Enquiries regarding the access and participation data resources should be raised with providermetrics@officeforstudents.org.uk, 0117 931 7230.

Any other questions about the role of this data in relation to a provider's access and participation plans should be directed to app@officeforstudents.org.uk.

Any other questions or complaints about statistics produced by the Office for Students should go to Mark Gittoes, Head of Profession for Statistics, official.statistics@officeforstudents.org.uk, 0117 931 7052.

Purpose

1. This document provides a sector-level analysis of the access and participation open data resources that are available at the Office for Students' (OfS's) access and participation data dashboard.¹ We summarise some key findings in access, continuation and attainment at a sector level, focusing on the gaps between full-time undergraduate UK student groups.
2. All the data underlying this report is available through an interactive dashboard. In Annex A we provide an overview of this dashboard and the other access and participation resources we have made available alongside this summary. Annex B provides more explanation of what we mean when we talk about 'gaps'.
3. While other data resources focus primarily on the differences at individual providers, this document highlights the main findings and trends for the English higher education sector as a whole.
4. Findings for part-time students can be found in the table at the start of each section, but unless otherwise stated the focus throughout this document is on full-time or apprenticeship students.²

Access to higher education

5. These measures show the number and profile of students entering higher education at English providers.

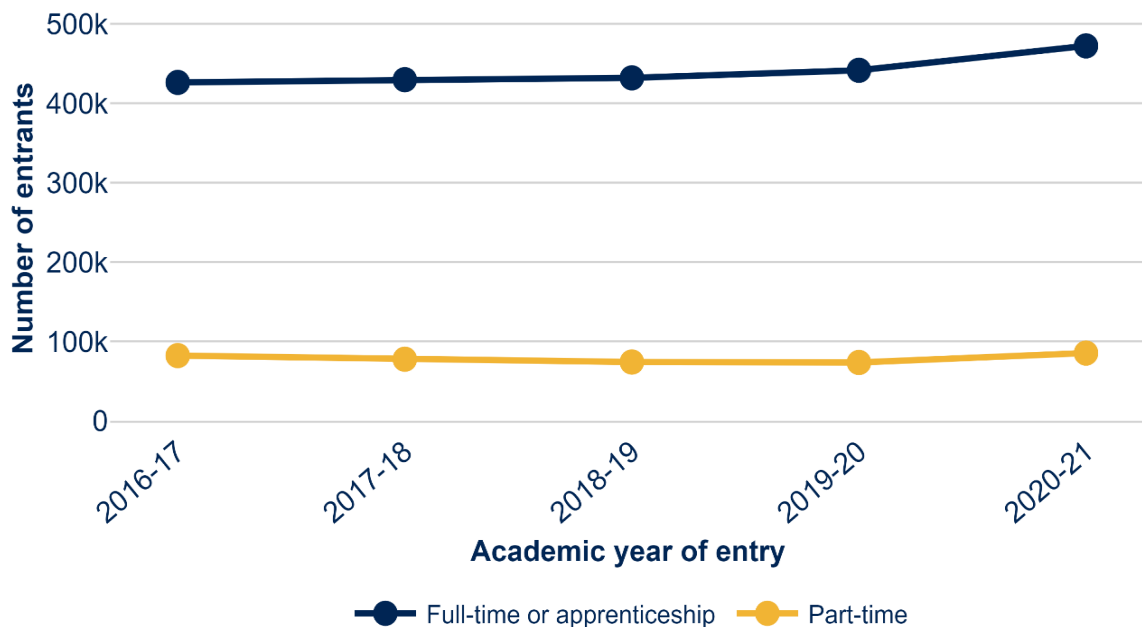
Overall trend

6. Figure 1 shows how the number of entrants to undergraduate courses changed over the last five years. For those studying full-time, the numbers increased gradually over the first four years of the period studied, followed by a noticeable increase in entrants between 2019–20 and 2020–21, taking the total to 472,280. This is likely to be related to the coronavirus pandemic including significant growth in nursing and allied health professions and changes to A-level examination policies. There was also an increase in entrants studying part time to 85,380, enough to overturn the recent pattern of gradual decline.

¹ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/.

² For simplicity, when reference is made to full-time students this includes both full-time and apprenticeship students.

Figure 1: Number of entrants by mode

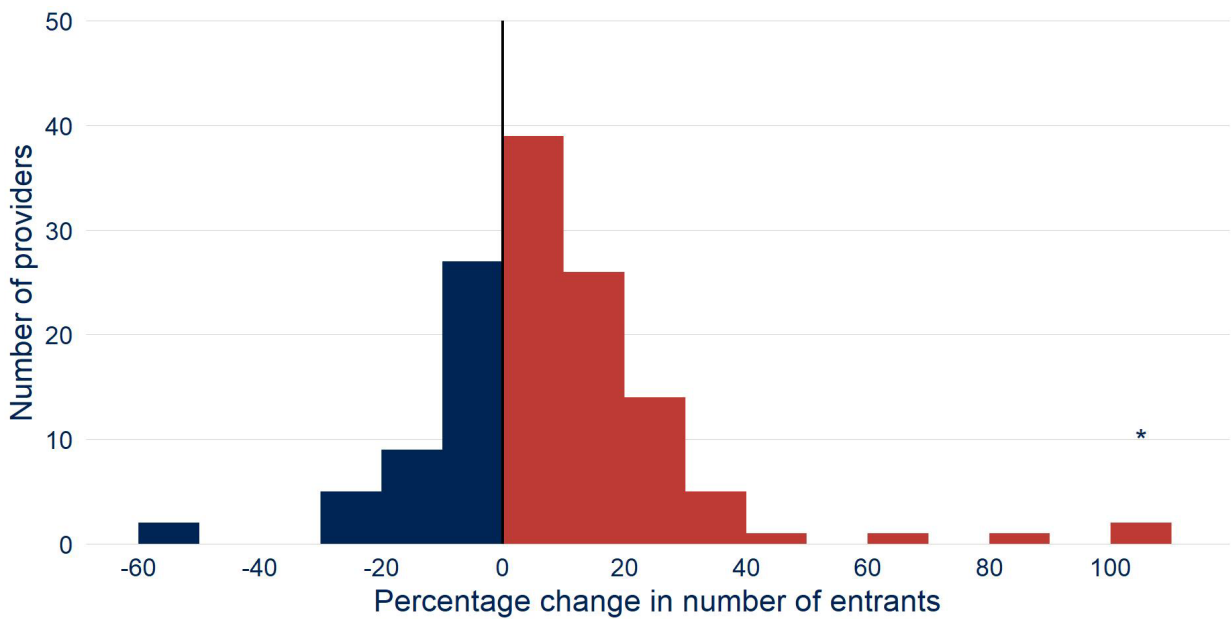


Source: Access and participation dataset (March 2022).

Provider-level patterns

- Figure 2 shows how the increase in the total student body was distributed across providers (only providers with more than 500 students have been included). The most frequent percentage change in the number of entrants was between 0 and 5 percentage points, but there were some providers whose increase in student intake went significantly further, indeed in some cases the number of entrants more than doubled compared to the previous year. However, this increase was not uniform across the whole sector, with many providers reducing the number of entrants.

Figure 2: Percentage change in the number of entrants to full-time higher education in 2020-21 compared with 2019-20, across providers with more than 500 students



Note: Based on 135 OfS-registered providers with more than 500 entrants. All providers with an increase of over 100 have been grouped into this one bar.

Source: Access and participation dataset (March 2022).

Student characteristics

8. In this section we consider access for different groups of the population. To contextualise, for some student characteristics we can compare the proportion of 18-year-olds entering higher education with the proportion of 18-year-olds in the UK population. In this way, we can identify whether there is a gap between the proportion of 18-year-olds in the population and the proportion entering higher education at English providers.
9. Table 1 shows the gap between the proportion of 18-year-olds entering higher education in 2020-21 and the proportion of those in the UK population, for several student characteristics. Where the gap is positive, this indicates that students with this characteristic are underrepresented in higher education. For instance, students from the white ethnic group make up 83.9 per cent of the UK population but just 67.7 per cent of those in higher education: a gap of 16.2 percentage points.

Table 1: Proportion of 18-year-olds in the UK and entering full-time higher education in England in 2020–21, by characteristic

Characteristic	Category	Proportion of 18-year-olds in UK population (%)	Proportion of 18-year-olds in English higher education sector (%)	Gap between population and higher education sector (pp)
Ethnicity	Asian	8.3	17.2	-9.0
	Black	3.6	7.5	-3.9
	Mixed	3.2	5.4	-2.3
	Other	1.1	2.2	-1.1
	White	83.9	67.7	16.2
IMD	Quintile 1	22.1	17.6	4.5
	Quintile 5	19.9	25.4	-5.5
POLAR4	Quintile 1	17.9	12.0	5.8
	Quintile 5	23.8	30.7	-6.9
Sex	Female	48.5	56.0	-7.6
	Male	51.5	44.0	7.6

Note: Because of rounding, the gaps shown in the table might not be the same as the difference between two proportions.

*IMD and POLAR are measures based on the area where students lived before their course, categorising the area based on the level of deprivation (IMD) and participation in higher education (POLAR4). Quintile 1 areas are more deprived or have lower participation.

Source: Access and participation dataset (March 2022).

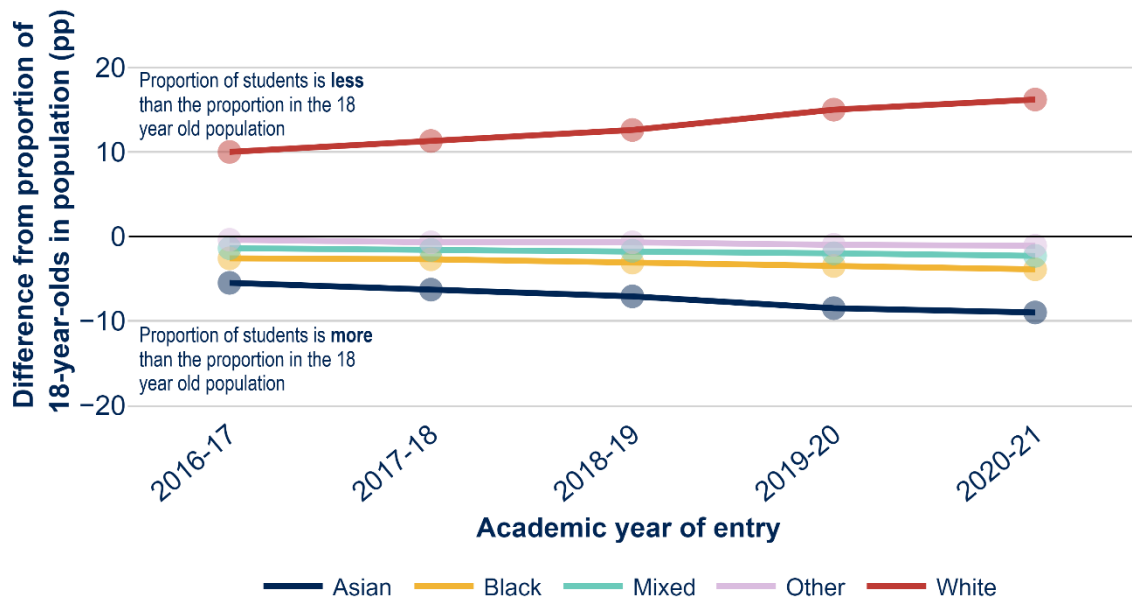
10. In the rest of the Access section we will focus on two of these characteristics in more detail: ethnicity and POLAR4.

Access: Ethnicity

11. Table 1 shows the proportion of 18-year-old white entrants to full-time higher education was 16.2 percentage points lower than the proportion of white 18-year-olds in the UK population. Conversely, in all other ethnic groups, the proportion of 18-year-old entrants to university exceeded the proportion of 18-year-olds in the general population.

12. Figure 3 shows the distribution of gaps for each ethnic group across the last five years. In each year, only white students were underrepresented. This gap in access increased over time, as the absolute number of white 18-year-old entrants to higher education remained relatively constant, despite an increase in the number of 18-year-old entrants as a whole. The Asian ethnic group consistently had the highest level of overrepresentation, and this gradually increased over the last five years.

Figure 3: Gaps in the proportion of 18-year-olds entering full-time higher education compared with the population, by ethnic group



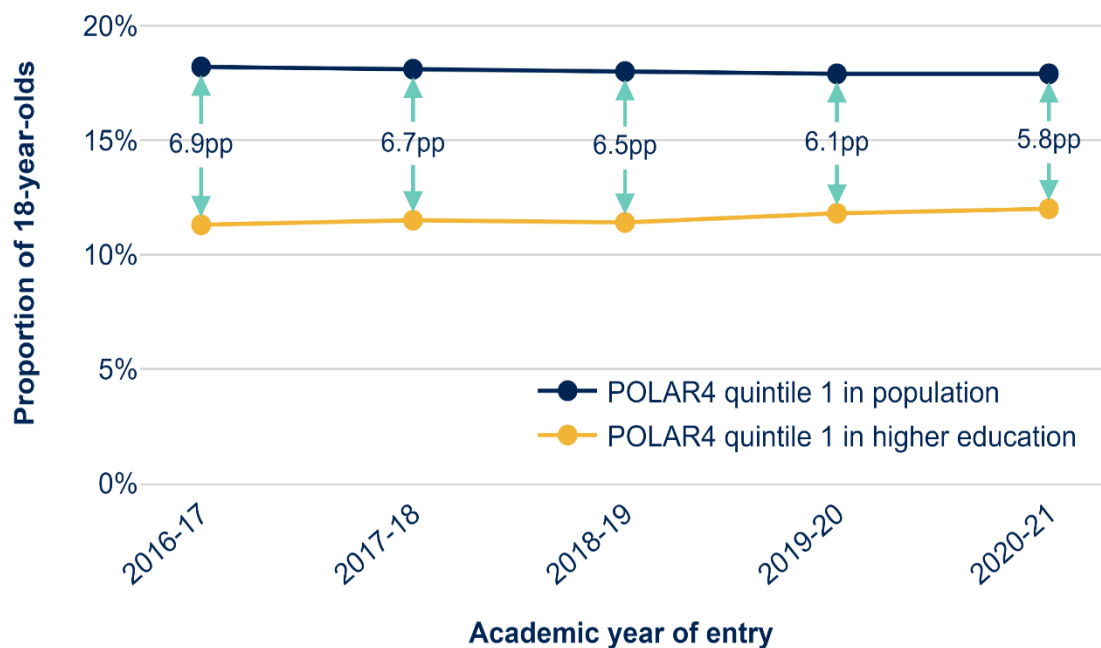
Note: All gaps in this chart are statistically significant at the 95 per cent level.

Source: Access and participation dataset (March 2022).

Access: Underrepresented areas

13. Figure 4 shows the proportion of 18-year-old entrants to full-time higher education from quintile 1 areas (the least represented) and the proportion of 18-year-olds in the UK living in such areas, over the last five years. The gap between these proportions fell slightly across the time series, meaning access improved for these areas.

Figure 4: Gaps in the proportion of least represented 18-year-olds entering full-time higher education compared with the population

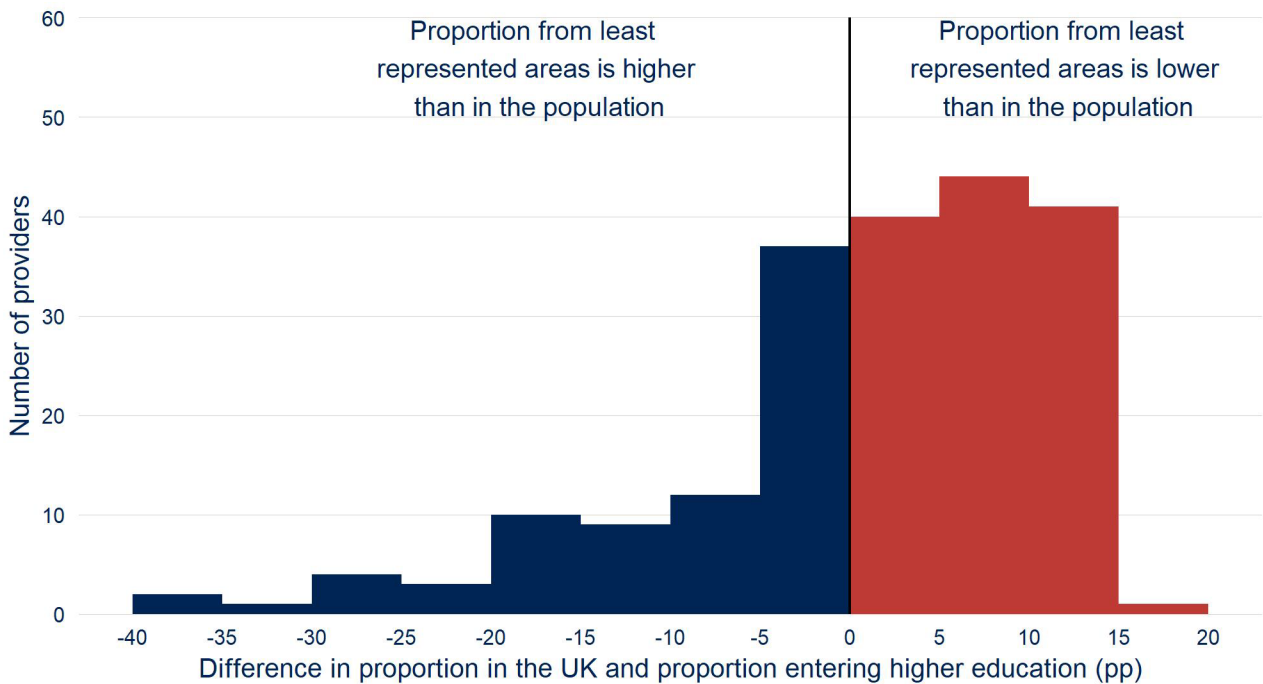


Note: All gaps in this chart are statistically significant at the 95 per cent level.

Source: Access and participation dataset (March 2022).

14. Figure 5 shows the distribution of gaps across providers between the proportion of 18-year-old entrants to full-time higher education from POLAR4 quintile 1 areas and the proportion of 18-year-olds living in these areas in the UK. It shows that for the majority of providers (62 per cent), the proportion of their 18-year-olds entrants that are from these areas was lower than the proportion of 18-year-olds living in these areas in the population. However, there are notable exceptions to this rule, as some providers have a significantly higher proportion of students from under-represented areas.

Figure 5: Gaps in proportion of 18-year-olds from least represented areas in 2020-21 (in full-time higher education compared with population), across providers



Note: Based on proportions for 204 providers.

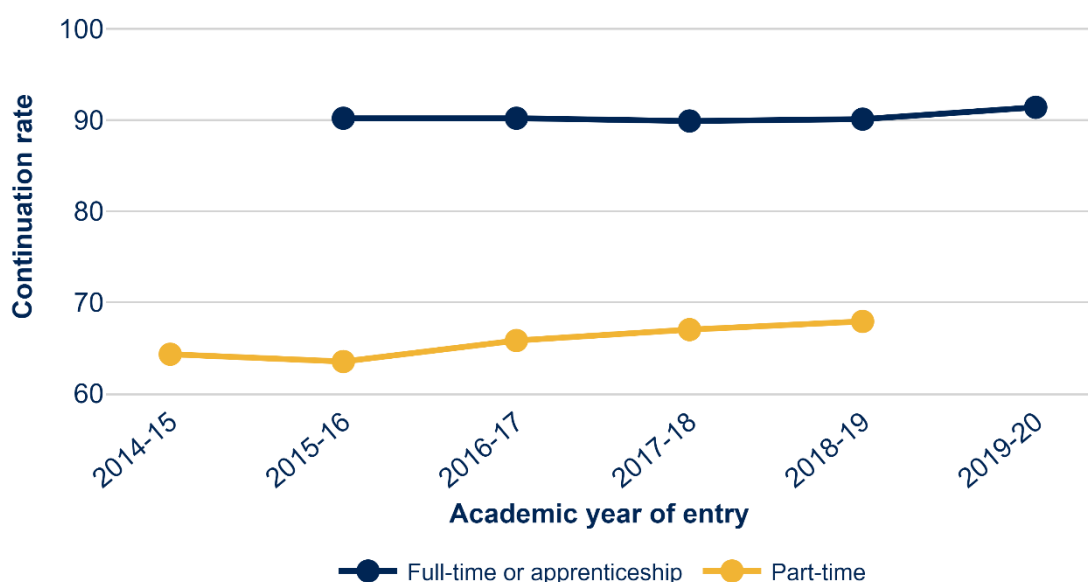
Source: Access and participation dataset (March 2022).

Continuation

Overall trend

- 15. These measures show whether students continue with their studies.
- 16. Figure 6 shows that continuation rates have increased for both full-time and part-time students over the last five years. For full-time students, this increase (up to 91.4 per cent) was mostly in the most recent year. While the majority of these 2019–20 entrants will have experienced an uninterrupted first half of the year, the second half of the year will have seen a great deal of change due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. For different individuals, changes may have included a move to online learning, changes in support and differences in assessment practices. The effects of these changes may have varied for different groups of students.
- 17. The continuation rate for part-time students has also risen over the last five years, having increased from 64.3 per cent for 2014-15 entrants, to 67.9 per cent of those entering in 2018-19 still studying in 2020-21. While the most recent continuation data reported in the dashboard for both full-time and part-time students evaluates their outcomes in 2020-21, for part-time students more of the period considered reflects only the early stages of the pandemic, where alternate options for students were limited. It may therefore take more time for effects of the pandemic to manifest in student outcomes data related to part-time students.

Figure 6: Continuation rates by mode

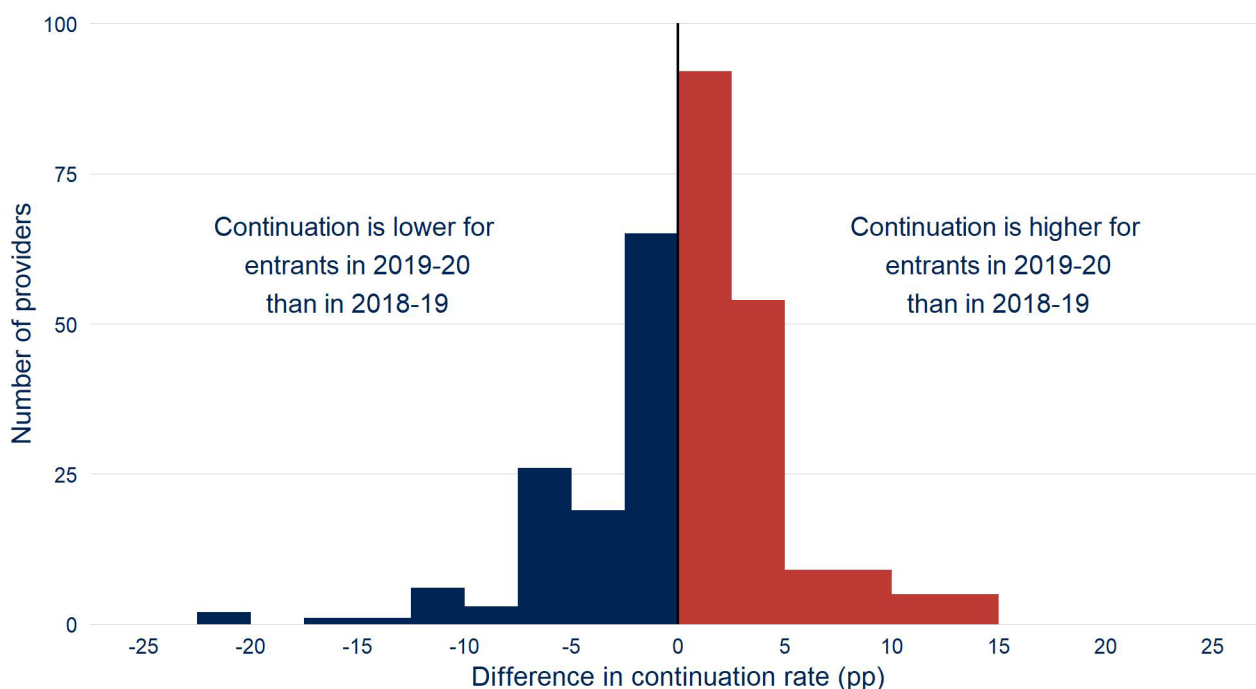


Source: Access and participation dataset (March 2022). 2018-19 is the latest year of entrants shown for part-time students because their continuation is measured over two years.

Provider-level patterns

18. Figure 7 shows how this increase in continuation rates was distributed across providers. Although there were significantly more providers where the continuation rate increased since last year (58 per cent of providers), this increase was not uniform across the whole sector, and there were providers whose continuation rates decreased since last year (41 per cent of providers). Indeed, 58 providers had a decrease in continuation rate of more than 2.5 percentage points.

Figure 7: Change in full-time continuation rate since previous year, across providers



Note: Based on 297 OfS-registered providers with at least 25 entrants in each year.

Source: Access and participation dataset (March 2022).

Student characteristics

19. Table 2 shows the continuation rates for full-time and part-time students for several student characteristics. It also shows the gaps that exist between the rates for students with a selected attribute compared with the rates for students in the reference group for that characteristic. Positive gaps indicate that students with the selected attribute had a lower rate of continuation than the reference group. For example, the continuation rate for mature students (86.1 per cent) was 7.5 percentage points below the rate for young students (93.6 per cent).

Table 2: Continuation rates for undergraduate entrants continuing into 2020–21, by characteristic

Characteristic	Category	Full-time continuation rate (%)	Full-time continuation gap (pp)	Part-time continuation rate (%)	Part-time continuation gap (pp)
Age	Young *	93.6		71.8	
	Mature	86.1	7.5	67.4	4.5
Disability	No disability reported *	91.6		69.0	
	Disability reported	90.4	1.2	62.5	6.6
Disability type	No disability reported *	91.6		69.0	
	Cognitive or learning difficulties	92.1	-0.6	68.9	0.2
	Mental health condition	88.7	2.9	56.8	12.2
	Multiple or other impairments	90.4	1.2	61.4	7.7
	Sensory, medical or physical impairments	90.1	1.5	65.1	3.9
Ethnicity	Social or communication impairment	89.2	2.4	64.0	5.0
	White *	92.0		68.3	
	Asian	92.3	-0.2	67.6	0.7
	Black	87.4	4.7	63.9	4.5
	Mixed	90.6	1.5	65.5	2.9
IMD	Other	89.2	2.8	69.0	-1.0
	Quintile 5 *	94.6		73.7	
POLAR4	Quintile 1	88.1	6.5	63.4	10.3
	Quintile 5 *	95.2		76.0	
Sex	Quintile 1	91.4	3.8	65.1	10.8
	Male *	89.9		68.2	
	Female	92.5	-2.6	67.7	0.5

Notes: Full-time continuation rates are for 2019–20 full-time or apprenticeship entrants continuing into their second year in 2020-21. Part-time continuation rates are for 2018–19 entrants continuing into 2020–21.

Attributes with a * indicate those against which other attributes are compared when deriving gaps. Because of rounding, the gaps shown in the table might not be the same as the difference between two rates.

Source: Access and participation dataset (March 2022).

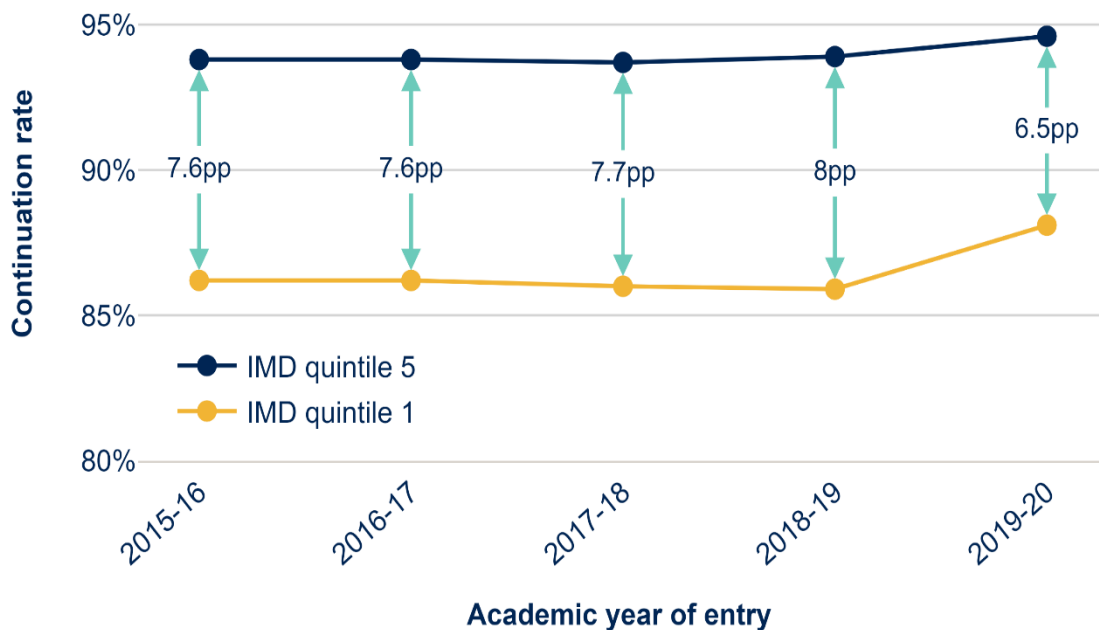
20. Table 2 highlights some gaps between different student groups.

- a. Young full-time students had a continuation rate that was 7.5 percentage points higher than the rate for mature students. This has remained relatively constant over the last five years (but increased slightly from 7.6 percentage points for students who entered in 2015–16).
- b. Young part-time students also had a higher continuation rate than mature part-time students, but the gap was slightly lower, at 4.5 percentage points. This gap has closed significantly since over last 5 years, down from 11.1 percentage points for students who began their studies in 2014–15.
- c. While full-time students with a reported disability had a lower continuation rate than those with no reported disability, the differences are not uniform across different types of disability. For example, students with a mental health condition had a continuation rate gap of 2.9 percentage points, but students with cognitive or learning disabilities had a full-time continuation rate which was 0.6pp *higher* than for students with no reported disability.
- d. The gaps in continuation with respect to disability become more pronounced when looking at part time students. Part-time students with a mental health condition who began their studies in 2018–19 continued their studies at a rate of 56.8 per cent, significantly lower than the average for part-time students without a disability (69 per cent). This gap has grown over the past five years, up from 10.4 percentage points for students who began their studies in 2014–15.
- e. The patterns for students from different IMD quintiles and different ethnic groups are discussed further below.

Continuation: IMD quintile

21. Figure 8 shows the gaps in continuation rates between entrants from the most and least deprived areas in England only (those from IMD quintile 1 and quintile 5 areas respectively) over the last five years. As can be seen on the chart, the gap in continuation rates was lower in 2019–20 (at 6.5 per cent), than it had been in 2018–19 (at 8 per cent). For both groups, there was an increase in continuation rates in 2019–20, but this increase was larger for students from IMD quintile 1.

Figure 8: Gaps in full-time continuation rates between the most and least disadvantaged groups



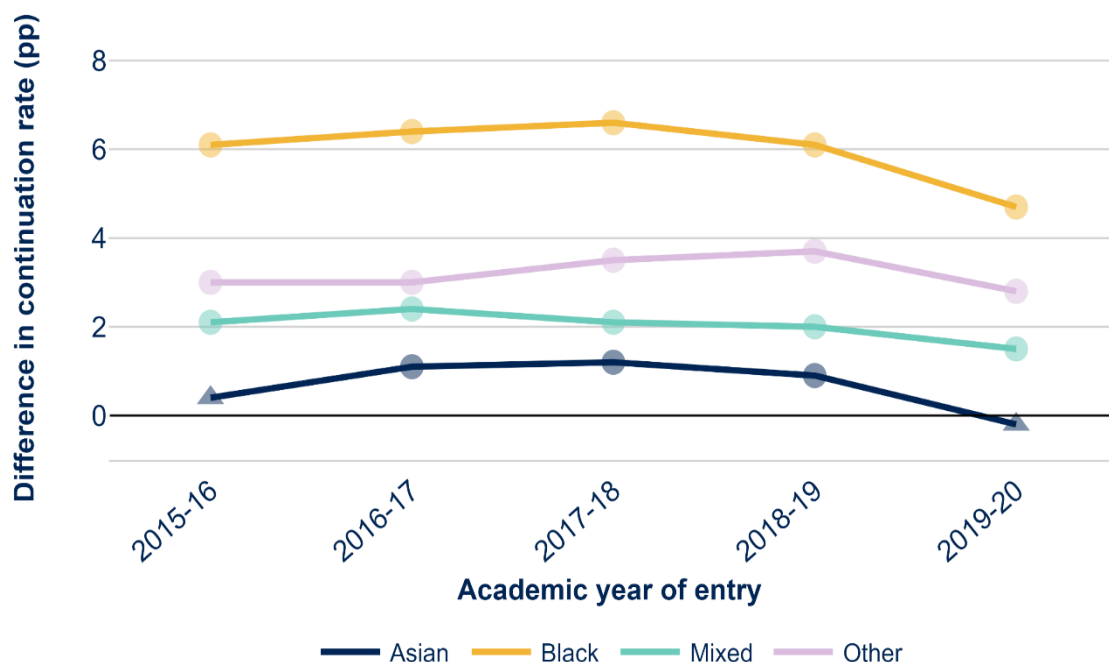
Note: All gaps in this chart are statistically significant at the 95 per cent level.

Source: Access and participation dataset (March 2022).

Continuation: Ethnicity

22. Figure 9 shows the gaps in continuation between the white group and the other ethnic groups. It shows that the continuation rate for white students in 2019–20 was higher than those for students in most other ethnic groups, however, the gaps in continuation rates decreased in all cases. In the case of Asian students, by 2019–20 the continuation gap was no longer statistically significant (at the 95 per cent level). The largest gap was for black students, although it decreased from 6.1 percentage points in 2018–19 to 4.7 percentage points in 2019–20.

Figure 9: Gaps in full-time continuation rates between white students and students in other ethnic groups



Note: Gaps that are statistically significant at the 95 per cent level are indicated by circles; gaps that are not are represented by triangles.

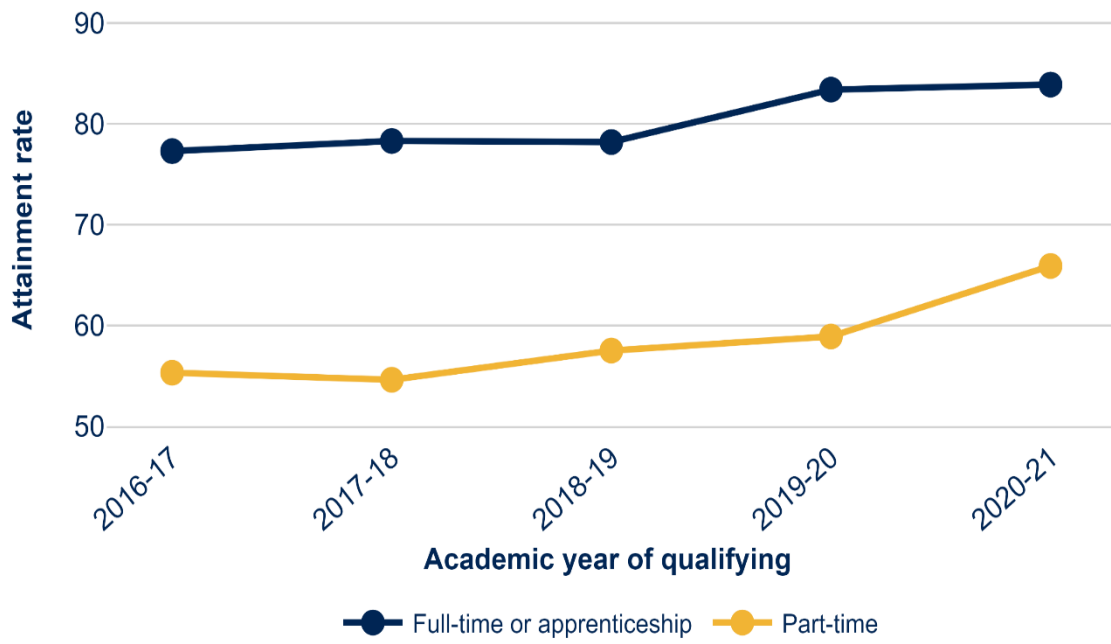
Source: Access and participation dataset (March 2022).

Attainment

Overall trend

23. These measures examine the proportion of graduates who achieved a 1st or 2:1 class degree.
24. 2020–21 did not see the same widespread use of ‘no detriment’ or ‘safety net’ policies as in 2019–20. However, providers continued to make adjustments to assessments and many students who completed their studies in 2020-21 will have benefitted from no detriment policies in 2019–20. As shown in Figure 10, the attainment rate for full time students stayed above its previous baseline, at 83 percent, but was close to the value from the year before.
25. Attainment rates for part time students saw an increase from 59 per cent to 66 per cent. A decrease in the overall number of students completing in 2019–20 and a large subsequent increase in 2020–21 suggests that some groups of students who would normally have completed in 2019–20 were not recorded as completing until 2020–21. This may exacerbate the increase between 2019–20 and 2020–21 as the results from any changes related to the pandemic would not fully appear in the data until 2020–21.

Figure 10: Attainment rates by mode



Source: Access and participation dataset (March 2022).

Student characteristics

26. Table 3 shows the attainment rates for full-time and part-time students for several student characteristics. These are the percentages of students within these groups who achieved a 1st or 2:1 class degree in 2020–21. It also shows the gaps (often referred to as ‘awarding gaps’) that exist between the attainment rates for students with a selected attribute compared to the rates for students in the reference group .

Characteristic	Category	Full-time	Full-time	Part-time	Part-time
		attainment rate (%)	attainment gap (pp)	attainment rate (%)	attainment gap (pp)
Age	Young *	85.8		56.5	
	Mature	76.3	9.5	68.2	-11.7
Disability	No disability reported *	84.1		66.4	
	Disability reported	83.1	1.1	63.5	2.9
Disability type	No disability reported *	84.1		66.4	
	Cognitive or learning difficulties	81.8	2.3	57	9.5
	Mental health condition	84.3	-0.2	65.2	1.2
	Multiple or other impairments	83.7	0.4	65.2	1.3
	Sensory, medical or physical impairments	83.4	0.7	66	1
	Social or communication impairment	80.8	3.3	70	-4.0
	Ethnicity	White *	86.8		70.5
	Asian	81	5.8	50.8	19.7
	Black	69.3	17.4	39.3	31.2
	Mixed	84.2	2.5	60	10
	Other	78.6	8.2	50	21
IMD	Quintile 5 *	89.7		73.6	
	Quintile 1	74.9	14.8	54.2	19.4
POLAR4	Quintile 5 *	89.4		61.5	
	Quintile 1	80.8	8.6	52	9.0
Sex	Male *	82.4		66.8	
	Female	85	-2.5	65.3	1.5

Note: Attainment rate reflects students obtaining a 1st or 2:1 degree in 2020–21. Attributes with a * indicate the reference group against which other attributes are compared against when deriving gaps. Because of rounding, the gaps shown in the table might not be the same as the difference between two rates.

Source: Access and participation dataset (March 2022).

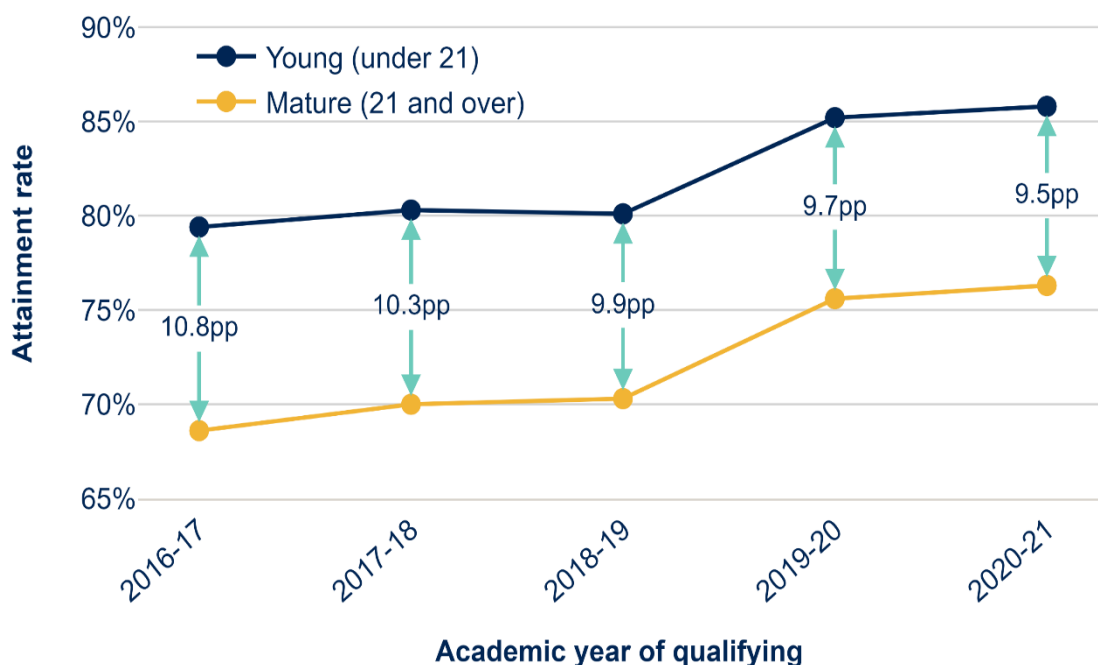
27. Table 3 highlights some differences in attainment rates between different groups.

- a. One of the largest gaps in full-time attainment rates was a gap of 14.8 percentage points between students from the most deprived areas (IMD quintile 1) compared to the least deprived areas (IMD quintile 5). The attainment rate for students from both quintiles increased by a small amount between 2019–20 and 2020–21. The increase was greater for the most disadvantaged students, however, which caused the narrowing of the gap.
- b. The patterns for young and mature students, students from different ethnic groups, and disabled students are discussed further below.

Attainment: Age

28. Figure 11 shows that the attainment rate for both young students (those aged under 21 at the start of their studies) and mature students saw a small increase between 2019–20 and 2020–21. For young students it increased slightly from 85.2 per cent in 2019–20 to 85.8 per cent in 2020–21 and for mature students it increased from 75.6 per cent in 2019–20 to 76.3 per cent in 2020–21. The gap between the attainment rates of young and mature students saw a small reduction across the five-year period, but remained quite large, with young students having had an attainment rate 9.5 percentage points higher than mature students in 2020–21.

Figure 11: Gaps in full-time attainment rates between young and mature students



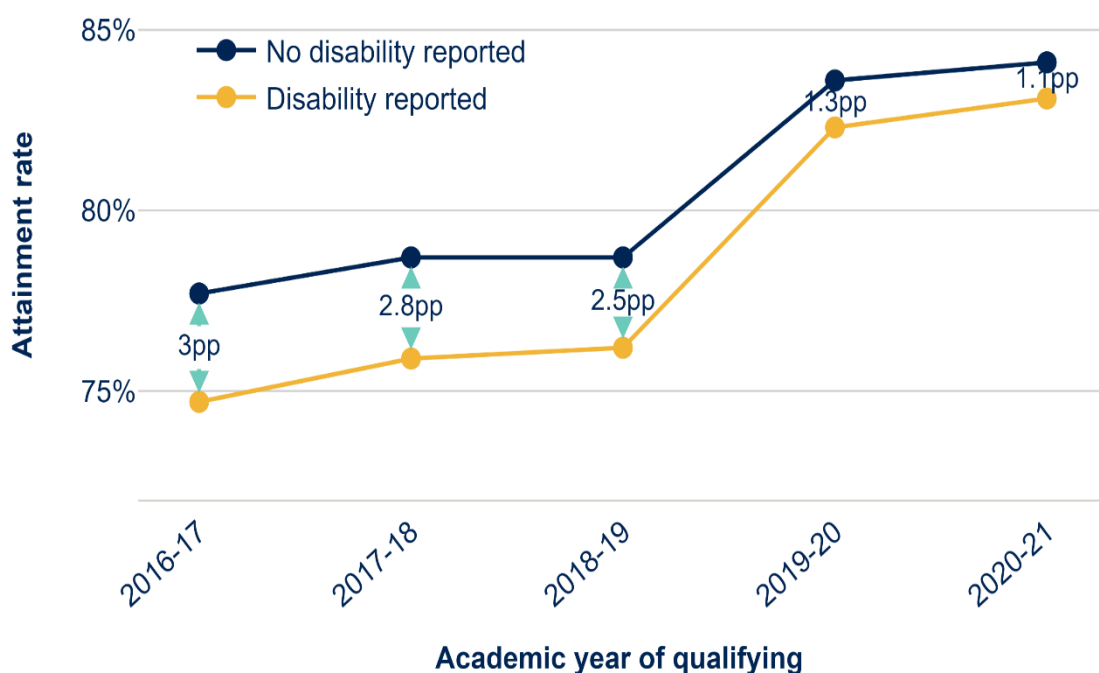
Note: All gaps in this chart are statistically significant at the 95 per cent level.

Source: Access and participation dataset (March 2022).

Attainment: Disability

29. Figure 12 shows that the attainment rate for students with a disability reported was consistently lower than that for students with no disability reported. However, over the five-year time series this gap more than halved, from 3 percentage points in 2016-17 to 1.1 percentage points in 2020-21. In both groups, attainment rates increased slightly between 2019-20 and 2020-21, with the slightly greater increase for students with a disability reported that resulted in the narrowing of the gap.

Figure 12: Gaps in full-time attainment rates between students with no disability reported and a disability reported



Note: All gaps in this chart are statistically significant at the 95 per cent level.

Source: Access and participation dataset (March 2022).

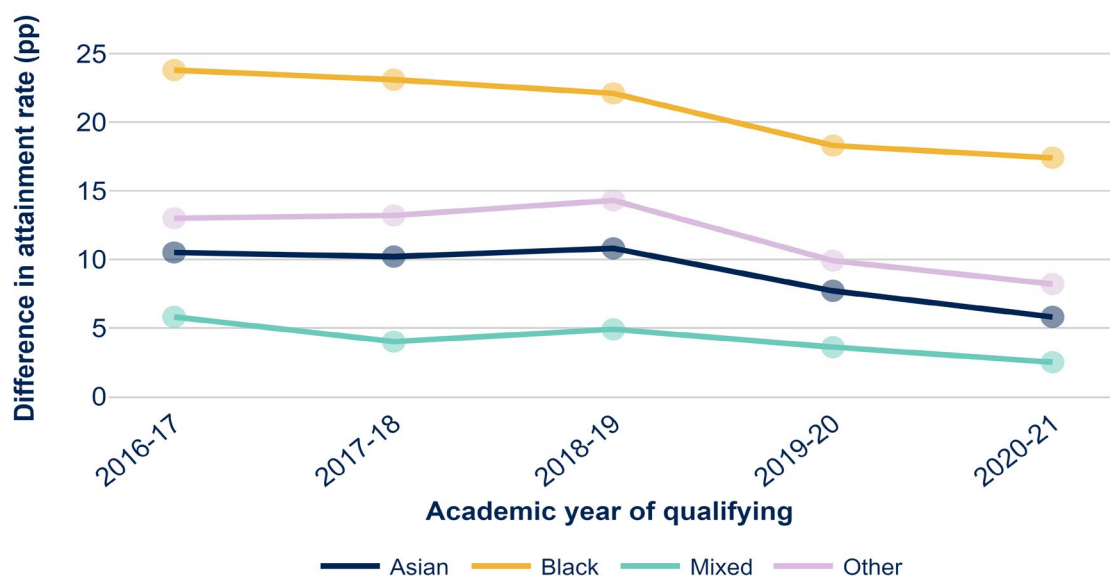
30. There are differences in attainment between the different types of disability reported (see Table 3 above). Students with a mental health condition had an attainment rate which was very similar to students with no reported disability, but for students with cognitive or learning disabilities, the full-time attainment rate is lower, with a gap of 2.6 percentage points.

Attainment: Ethnicity

31. Figure 13 shows that the gaps in attainment rate between white students and those in the other ethnic groups all declined over the last five years. However, attainment rates for these ethnic groups all remained lower than for white students.

32. Of all the ethnic groups, black students had the largest gap in attainment rates. Although the attainment rate between white and black students narrowed in the last five years, it remained large (17.4 percentage points in 2020-21). Attainment rates for both white and black students increased between 2019-20 and 2020-21, the greater increase for black students accounted for the slight narrowing of the gap.

Figure 13: Gaps in full-time attainment rates between white students and students in other ethnic groups

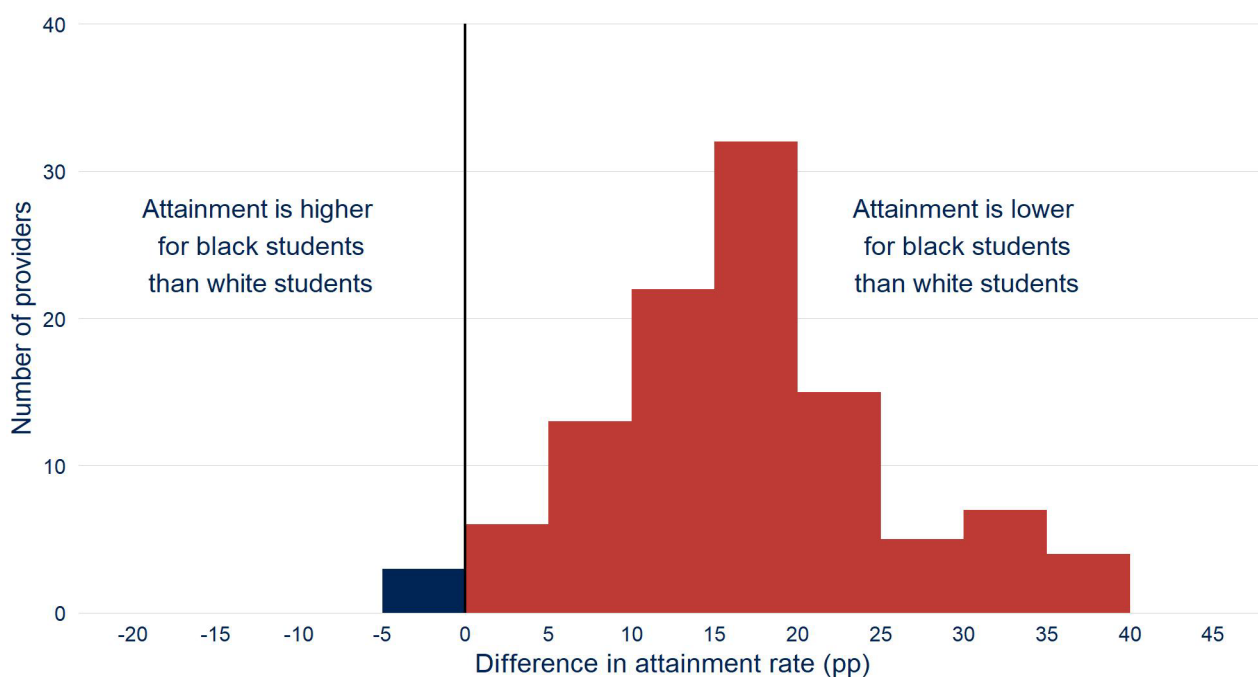


Note: All gaps in this chart are statistically significant at the 95 per cent level.

Source: Access and participation dataset (March 2022).

33. Figure 14 shows that the gap in attainment rate between white and black students existed at nearly every provider in 2020–21. In 97 per cent of the 106 providers, black students had a lower attainment rate than white students. The most common gap was between 15 and 20 percentage points and there were a number of providers where the gap was even larger.

Figure 14: Gaps in full-time attainment rate between white and black students across providers



Note: Based on the attainment rate for 106 providers.

Source: Access and participation dataset (March 2022).

Annex A: Overview of data resources

Summary of published materials

34. We have published access and participation data resources as Official Statistics. The central part is an interactive data dashboard¹ which allows users to explore and evaluate access and participation at specific universities and colleges registered with the OfS. Comparing different student groups (for example, students from different ethnic backgrounds) for each stage of a student's journey through higher education may reveal gaps in access, continuation and attainment at both a provider and a sector level.
35. The access and participation data also includes sector-level information on students' qualifications on entry to higher education, and their subject of study.³ Users can explore this data using the sector-level access and participation data dashboard.⁴
36. Alongside these dashboards, this publication summarises some of the key gaps in access, continuation and attainment at a sector level for different student characteristics.
37. In addition to this summary, we have published supplementary information about the access and participation data dashboard and its supporting data resources. The following documents also explain how we have used individualised student data to produce the measures shown in the dashboard.

Access and participation data dashboard: User guide

Access and participation data resources: User guide

Technical algorithms for institutional performance measures: Methodology and rebuild instructions for March 2022 access and participation data resources

Technical algorithms for institutional performance measures: March 2022 core algorithms for access and participation data resources

These documents provide information about the definitions and methodology we have used in constructing institutional performance measures, including a detailed description of the indicators we currently use for the access and participation data resources.

³ The introduction of the new HECoS system for coding subjects in 2019-20 causes some discontinuity in the subject time series between 2018-19 and 2019-20, which should be taken into account when comparing the distribution of subjects between these years.

⁴ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/sector-level-data/.

38. The following related publications supplement this document.

- [An overview of access and participation plans and advice and guidance](#)
- [Access and participation plan guidance \(Regulatory notice 1\)](#)
- [How to prepare your access and participation plan \(Regulatory advice 6\)](#)

39. The Office for Students is committed to following the Code of Practice for the statistics it produces. Details can be found on the website of the UK Statistics Authority at www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/.

Impact of consultations on future data resources

40. The OfS has recently consulted on a proposed future approach to our regulation of quality and standards, the future of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and how we construct the data underpinning these regulatory functions.⁵ Our consultation on the construction of student outcome and experience indicators for use in OfS regulation set out our intention that the proposals would also apply to the data supporting our regulation of access and participation.⁶ Once outcomes of the consultations are finalised later in 2022, we intend to publish information about changes to the definitions of data and indicators used in our regulation of access and participation.

41. Before finalisation of the consultation outcomes, the access and participation data resources and interactive dashboards that we published in March 2022 have been constructed on the same basis as those published in March 2021. The definitions, coverage and reporting of the data remain unchanged from previous versions of these data resources. Progression indicators shown in the current access and participation resources continue to be based on the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey (DLHE) and have not been updated. These progression indicators will be superseded by versions based on the Graduate Outcomes survey once our recent consultations have concluded their outcomes.

Related statistics and data sources

42. The access and participation data resources draw on nationally collected data, which is used in the construction of related statistics and analysis, including the following:

- Data and analysis about higher education students and providers published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency – www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis
- Data and analysis about higher education students and providers published by the Office for Students – www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/
- National Student Survey results data – www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/student-information-and-data/national-student-survey-nss/get-the-nss-data/

⁵ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/student-outcomes-and-teaching-excellence-consultations/.

⁶ See Proposals 1 and 2 of the consultation at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/student-outcomes-and-teaching-excellence-consultations/outcome-and-experience-data/.

- UK Performance Indicators published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency – www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/performance-indicators
- Higher education graduate employment and earnings data published by the Department for Education – www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-higher-education-graduate-employment-and-earnings
- Analysis of degree classifications over time published by the Office for Students – www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/analysis-of-degree-classifications-over-time-changes-in-graduate-attainment/

Annex B: Key data concepts

Population

43. The access and participation data resources cover UK-domiciled undergraduate entrants at English higher education providers. Some of the characteristics included in these data resources are necessarily limited to coverage of English-domiciled undergraduate entrants.
44. The sector-level indicators include data for all English higher education providers as included in national student data collections by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and the Education and Skills Funding Agency's (ESFA) Individualised Learner Record (ILR). The provider-level data is limited to English providers registered with the OfS.

Indicators

45. The access and participation data resources include indicators for each stage of the student lifecycle:
 - a. Access indicators, looking at students entering higher education. For these measures, the most recent data relates to students who started in the 2020-21 academic year.
 - b. Continuation indicators, looking at whether entrants continue their studies in higher education. The most recent data relates to continuation into 2020-21 for full-time students who started in 2019-20, and for part-time students who started in 2018-19.
 - c. Attainment indicators, looking at graduates awarded 1st or 2:1 class honours. The most recent data for these measures relate to graduates in 2020-21.
 - d. Progression indicators, looking at graduates progressing to highly skilled employment or higher-level study. These measures have not been updated in this March 2022 set of access and participation data resources (see paragraph 41). For this reason, we do not discuss progression in this report, and summary findings related to this stage of the student lifecycle remain as reported in 2020.⁷

Student characteristics

46. The data dashboard allows users to explore and understand patterns identified by these indicators for a range of different student characteristics: Age, ethnicity, disability, disability type, sex, Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD⁸) and Participation of Local Areas (POLAR4⁹).

⁷ See the sector summary of findings from the access and participation data resources published in March 2020, at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/findings-from-the-data/.

⁸ Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019), as calculated for English students only in these data resources (the rest of the UK use a different methodology). It is calculated from multiple different measures which classify areas in England by the level of deprivation. It is presented here as five quintiles, where quintile 1 areas contain the most deprived 20 per cent of the English population, and quintile 5 areas the least deprived 20 per cent.

⁹ An area-based measure, classifying areas according to the likelihood of young people living within them of participating in higher education. Quintile 1 contains the areas with the lowest participation rates covering 20 per cent of the young (18-year-old) population; quintile 5 the highest participating 20 per cent.

47. The student characteristics are reported at both individual provider level and for the sector overall. In each case, they are reported separately for each stage of the student lifecycle and for each mode and level of study, across a five-year time series.

Gaps

48. When we refer to 'gaps', we mean the difference between two proportions, which we express in percentage points (pp). For indicators of access to higher education, gaps are based on the profile of 18-year-old entrants at a provider compared with the profile of all 18-year-olds in the UK. For indicators of continuation and attainment, gaps are based on the differences in students' outcomes.

49. Gaps are always calculated as the proportion of the first group being referenced minus the proportion of the second group being referenced. In most cases there will be a 'positive gap', which means that the first group has a higher proportion than the second. A 'negative gap' means that the first group has a lower proportion than the second.

50. For example, the gap between a continuation rate of 92 per cent for students aged under 21 (the reference group) and 84 per cent for mature students would be expressed as a positive gap of 8 percentage points. The negative gap between an attainment rate of 82 per cent for men and 84 per cent for women would be expressed as -2 percentage points.

Technical notes

51. For more detail on the coverage of the data resources, the measures, the different student characteristics and the calculation of significance, see the Technical algorithms document.¹⁰

52. Field naming conventions and valid entries shown in the open data resources are described in the supplementary data resources data definitions file.¹¹

¹⁰ Technical algorithms for institutional performance measures: Methodology and rebuild instructions for March 2022 access and participation data resources, available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/institutional-performance-measures/.

¹¹ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/about-the-dashboard-data/get-the-dashboard-data/.

Annex C: List of abbreviations

DLHE	Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
ILR	Individualised Learner Record
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
OfS	Office for Students
pp	Percentage point
POLAR4	Participation of local areas
Q1	Quintile 1
Q5	Quintile 5



© The Office for Students copyright 2022

This publication is available under the Open Government Licence 3.0 except where it indicates that the copyright for images or text is owned elsewhere.

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/