

# Equality and diversity data

## Background

1. This data release contains equality and diversity data for students in higher education at English higher education providers. The data sources are the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record and alternative provider student record, and the individualised learner record (ILR) collected by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).
2. The data reports the number of students in higher education by gender, age, disability, ethnicity and Participation of Local Areas (POLAR) quintile (an area-based measure of background defined by past levels of participation in higher education). This data is updated annually and constitutes Official Statistics.
3. This information is published as part of a broader approach to equality and diversity which includes OfS policies and action plans.

## Populations and methodology

4. This release includes students in higher education in the academic years 2013-14 to 2016-17. The student numbers are available for entrants to higher education (first year of study), all years or qualifiers.

## Findings

### Undergraduate entrants

5. In 2016-17, 61.1 per cent of all entrants to undergraduate courses were under 21 years old. An additional 23.0 per cent were 21 to 29 years old, and 15.8 percent were age 30 and over. The proportion of entrants that are under 21 has been increasing year on year across the reported academic years, from 57.7 per cent in 2013-14 to 61.1 per cent in 2016-17. This change reflects the combined effect of an increase in the number of entrants under 21 from 348,010 in 2013-14 to 380,405 in 2016-17, and the decrease in the number of entrants age 30 and over from 106,850 to 98,425.
6. The proportion of all undergraduate entrants who report a disability has increased from 9.9 per cent in 2013-14 to 12.0 per cent in 2016-17, and amongst UK entrants the proportion is higher (13.4 per cent).
7. Asian students made up 12.0 per cent of the undergraduate entrant population from the UK in 2016-17, black students made up 9.5 per cent, and white students 72.5 per cent. The ethnicity profile of undergraduate entrants changed across the reported academic years, with the proportion of white entrants decreasing from 76.7 per cent in 2013-14 to 72.5 per cent in 2016-17.
8. The gender profile of undergraduate entrants has remained almost unchanged throughout the four academic years reported, 56.7 per cent of entrants were female in 2016-17.
9. The distribution of young undergraduate entrants from the UK by the POLAR4 quintile of their home address was broadly the same in 2016-17 as it was in 2013-14. Just under 12 per cent of

young undergraduate entrants are from the lowest participation (POLAR4 quintile 1) areas compared to just over 30 per cent who are from the highest participation (POLAR4 quintile 5) areas.

## **Postgraduate entrants**

10. In 2016-17, 69.2 per cent of all entrants to postgraduate courses were age 21 to 29 years. Almost all of the remaining entrants were 30 or over. Amongst UK entrants a smaller proportion, 58.7 per cent, were age 21-29, but this has increased from 55.9 per cent in 2013-14.
11. The proportion of all postgraduate entrants who report a disability has increased from 6.0 per cent in 2013-14 to 8.6 per cent in 2016-17, and amongst UK entrants the proportion is higher (12.3 per cent).
12. Asian students were 10.3 per cent of the postgraduate entrant population from the UK in 2016-17, black students were 8.6 per cent, and white students were 75.6 per cent. The ethnicity profile of postgraduate entrants has been changing across the reported academic years with the proportion of white entrants decreasing from 79.1 per cent in 2013-14 to 75.6 per cent in 2016-17. Compared with a year earlier, the proportion of black entrants increased from 6.8 per cent to 8.6 per cent.
13. In 2016-17 59.6 per cent of postgraduate entrants were female, this had increased slightly from 58.0 per cent in 2013-14. This varies by the type of postgraduate study, so that 60.8 per cent of entrants to postgraduate taught courses were female, but only 48.2 per cent of entrants to postgraduate research courses were female. Each year since 2013-14 the proportion of entrants to postgraduate research courses that are female increased.

## **Feedback**

14. If you have any feedback on these statistics, please email Maggie Smart at [gapt@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:gapt@officeforstudents.org.uk).