Equality and diversity data: Methodology

Overview

1. This document provides information on the methodology and the groups of students used in the Office for Students' (OfS) equality and diversity webpages[1].

2. The charts and tables are available for six different student populations:
    - all students – all domiciles
    - all students – UK-domiciled
    - entrants – all domiciles
    - entrants – UK-domiciled
    - qualifiers – all domiciles
    - qualifiers – UK-domiciled

    Definitions of these populations can be found in paragraph 11.

3. The data is further broken down by the following levels of study:
    - All levels of higher education
      - All undergraduate
        - First degrees
        - Undergraduate with postgraduate components
        - Other undergraduate
      - All postgraduate
        - Postgraduate research
        - Postgraduate taught masters
        - PGCE
        - Other postgraduate

4. There is the option to display the data for all English higher education providers or split by mode of study (i.e. full-time/part-time) or subject of study. These options are described as study characteristics.

5. Finally, the statistics are shown by one the following student characteristics:
    - Age at entry
    - Disability (broad)
    - Disability (detailed)
    - Educational disadvantage (POLAR4)
    - Ethnicity
    - Sex

    Detailed definitions of these student characteristics can be found in Table 2.

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[1] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/equality-and-diversity/

Methodology

6. Data was combined from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record[2], HESA alternative provider (AP) student record[3] and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Individualised Learner Record (ILR)[4] for the academic years 2010-11 to 2017-18. Duplicate student instances within each academic year were then removed from the data.

7. The data in this release has been limited to English higher education providers.

8. Over the time series there have been changes to the number of providers that return student data to each record. The number of providers returning data in each year to each data source and included in each population of students is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of providers included in the release returning data to each data source

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
All students								
HESA student	131	131	134	136	133	134	135	136
HESA AP student					62	97	95	98
ILR	138	149	193	199	205	225	219	234
Total	269	280	327	335	400	456	449	468
Entrants								
HESA student	131	131	134	136	133	134	135	135
HESA AP student					61	97	92	95
ILR	133	143	186	191	200	216	212	223
Total	264	274	320	327	394	447	439	453
Qualifiers								
HESA student	131	131	132	136	133	134	135	136
HESA AP student					58	95	95	93
ILR	128	134	155	180	188	199	201	209
Total	259	265	287	316	379	428	431	438

9. Throughout this release, counts have been rounded to the nearest five and proportions have been rounded to the nearest 0.1. Additionally, in circumstances where the combination of study and student characteristics applies to less than 23 individuals, then neither the count nor proportion is presented.

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[2] https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c17051
[3] https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c17054
[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ilr-specification-validation-rules-and-appendices-2017-to-2018

Definitions

10. The majority of the fields used in this release have been defined using algorithms found in the OfS' 'Technical algorithms for institutional performance measures' document[5]. Any field discussed that begins with 'B3MON' is defined in detail in that document.

11. The student populations are defined as follows:
    a. All students – the students that are in the standard higher education registration population (B3MONXPSR), i.e. those that are enrolled during the academic year specified.
    b. Entrants – of the enrolled students, those who began their studies in the academic year specified (B3MONENTRANTS).
    c. Qualifiers – students who were awarded a higher education-level qualification during the academic year specified (B3MONQUALIFIERS). This includes some students that qualify but are not in the standard higher education registration population as a result of being 'dormant' or 'writing up' during the year in which they complete their qualification.

    These populations are further split by student domicile:

    a. All domiciles – all students attending English higher education providers
    b. UK-domiciled – only those students domiciled in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland (B3MONDOM)

12. Level of study is provided at different levels of detail and is based on B3MONLEVEL. At a detailed level, the following levels are represented:
    a. First degrees (B3MONLEVEL: DEG)
    b. Undergraduate with postgraduate components (B3MONLEVEL: PUGD, PUGO)
    c. Other undergraduate (B3MONLEVEL: OUG)
    d. Postgraduate research (B3MONLEVEL: PHD)
    e. Postgraduate taught masters (B3MONLEVEL: PGTM)
    f. PGCE (B3MONLEVEL: PGCE)
    g. Other postgraduate (B3MONLEVEL: OPGR, OPGT).

    For undergraduate students, these levels of study match those used as part of the OfS' access and participation data[6].

13. The detailed levels of study have been grouped into the following broad groups:
    a. All levels of higher education – all
    b. All undergraduate – first degrees, undergraduate with postgraduate components, other undergraduate
    c. All postgraduate – postgraduate research, postgraduate taught masters, PGCE and other postgraduate

14. The study and student characteristics are defined in Table 2. In the charts, subject is ordered by Common Aggregation Hierarchy 1 (CAH1) codes (Table 2). By default, the charts show every third CAH1 subject group (i.e. CAH01, CAH04, CAH07, etc.).

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[5] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/1b177289-43f8-41df-bad8-5eb8bab31acc/ofs-core-algorithms.pdf
[6] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/

Changes

15. This release has some minor differences to previous equality and diversity data publications:

    a. A longer timescale of data is presented dating back to 2010-11 rather than 2013-14.
    b. It is now possible to choose a level of study and a study characteristic rather than one or the other.
    c. The total number of students varies slightly each year for this release compared to last year, as a result of amendments and corrections to the data.
    d. For this release we have excluded students who qualified with a level 3 or below qualification, or with institutional credits, from the qualifier population. This has reduced the number of qualifiers each year by around 30,000 compared to last year's release.
    e. For qualifiers, mode of study is now based on mode at time of qualification and as such, they are only classified as full-time or part-time.
    f. Level of study has been defined in a more detailed way to allow alignment with the OfS' access and participation data[7].
    g. Subjects are grouped in a different way from the previous release and are now grouped based on the HESA Common Aggregation Hierarchy 1[8].
    h. The date used to calculate age at entry has been changed from 30th September in the academic year of entry to 31st August to allow alignment with the secondary school population. This change has caused the number of students under the age of 21 to increase by around 9,500 each year, with an equivalent reduction in the number of students aged 21 and above.
    i. A more detailed age on entry grouping is used in this year's release.
    j. Detailed disability is now included in addition to broad disability.
    k. Students with a sex that is not female or male are included as 'other sex' instead of unknown.
    l. POLAR4 data is no longer displayed for postgraduate qualifications.

Contact

16. If you have any questions or feedback on these pages, please contact William Rimington at william.rimington@officeforstudents.org.uk or the Foresight and Insight team at qapt@officeforstudents.org.uk

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[7] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/
[8] https://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/hecos

Table 2: Definitions of study and student characteristics

Characteristic (and field)	Definition	Categories	Notes
Study characteristics:			
Entire sector	All data for English higher education providers	-	
Mode of study (B3MONMODE)	The mode of study being undertaken	Full-time Part-time	For the 'Qualifiers' population, the mode of study at qualification was used (B3MONEMPMODE)
Subject of study	Subject studied, grouped using the HESA Common Aggregation Hierarchy (CAH) 1[9]	Medicine and dentistry (CAH01) Subjects allied to medicine (CAH02) Biological and sport sciences (CAH03) Psychology (CAH04) Veterinary sciences (CAH05) Agriculture, food and related studies (CAH06) Physical sciences (CAH07) Mathematical sciences (CAH09) Engineering and technology (CAH10) Computing (CAH11) Geographical and environmental studies (CAH12) Architecture, building and planning (CAH13) Humanities and liberal arts (non-specific) (CAH14) Social sciences (CAH15) Law (CAH16) Business and management (CAH17) Communications and media (CAH18) Language and area studies (CAH19) Historical, philosophical and religious studies (CAH20) Creative arts and design (CAH21) Education and teaching (CAH22) Combined and general studies (CAH23)	

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[9] https://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/hecos

Student characteristics:

Age at entry (B3MONAGEBAND31AUG)	Age of student as of 31st August in the academic year of entry	Under 21 years 21 to 25 years 26 to 30 years 31 to 40 years 41 to 50 years 51 years and over	
Disability – broad (B3MONDISABLE)	Indicates whether a student has reported as disabled	No disability reported Disability reported	
Disability – detailed (B3MONDISABLETYPE)	Provides detail of the type of disability a student has reported (if applicable)	No disability reported Cognitive or learning difficulties Mental health condition Multiple impairments Sensory, medical or physical impairments Social or communication impairment	Disability information is recorded on the basis of the student's own self-assessment. Changes in the number of students in this category may occur as a result of changes in data reporting. For a small number of students, a disability has been reported but the type of disability is not known, as such these students are categorised as unknown.
Educational disadvantage – POLAR4 (B3MONPOLAR4)	A measure of the proportion of the population that participates in HE[10]	Quintile 1 – lowest participation areas Quintile 2 Quintile 3 Quintile 4 Quintile 5 – highest participation areas	POLAR4 is used for students under the age of 21 and all other students are assigned to 'Not applicable'. Additionally, we have only included undergraduate students and postgraduate students under 21 have been assigned as 'Not applicable'.
Ethnicity (B3MONETHNIC)	Student ethnicity	Asian Black Mixed Other White	Information on ethnicity is only recorded for UK-domiciled students[11]. All other students are assigned to 'Not applicable'.
Sex (B3MONSEX)	The sex of the student	Female Male Other sex	

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[10] Details of how POLAR4 quintiles are defined can be found here: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/polar-participation-of-local-areas/
[11] https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c16051/a/ethnic