

# Summary of equality and diversity data

April 2020

## Background

1. This data release contains equality and diversity data for students at English higher education providers. The data sources are the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record<sup>1</sup>, the HESA student alternative record<sup>2</sup> and the Education and Skills Funding Agency Individualised Learner Record (ILR).<sup>3</sup>
2. The data reports the proportions and numbers of students in higher education by age at entry, disability (broad and detailed), educational disadvantage (POLAR4), ethnicity (2 groups, 5 groups and 17 groups) and sex. Additionally the data is provided by various levels of study, mode of study and subject.
3. This data is updated annually and constitutes official statistics, except for where the study characteristic is set to 'Subject of study (broad)', which constitute experimental statistics. This is because this broad grouping of subjects is newly developed. More information can be found in the associated methodology document.<sup>4</sup>
4. This information is published as part of a broader approach to equality and diversity, which includes Office for Students policies and action plans.<sup>5</sup>

## Population and methodology

5. This release includes students in higher education in the academic years 2010-11 to 2018-19. The student numbers are available separately for all enrolled students, entrants (first year of study) and qualifiers.
6. Details of the methodology and populations used in this data analysis can be found in the methodology document associated with this release.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c18051>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c18054>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ilr-specification-validation-rules-and-appendices-2018-to-2019>

<sup>4</sup> Available from [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-data/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-data/)

<sup>5</sup> For further details see [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/equality-and-diversity/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/equality-and-diversity/)

<sup>6</sup> Available from [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-data/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-data/)

## Findings

7. These findings are for entrants from all domiciles, but data for all enrolled students and qualifiers, as well as UK-domiciled students only, can found in the interactive charts and tables associated with this release.<sup>7</sup>

### Undergraduate entrants

#### Age on entry

8. Full-time undergraduate qualifications are most commonly undertaken by students under the age of 21 (71.9 per cent of entrants in 2018-19) whereas part-time qualifications are most commonly started by students aged 31 to 40 (24.1 per cent of entrants).

#### Disability

9. The vast majority of undergraduate entrants report that they do not have a disability (85.8 per cent). However, the proportion of undergraduate entrants reporting a disability has increased by 6 percentage points since 2010-11.
10. The proportion of undergraduate entrants reporting that they have a mental health condition has increased more than any other type of disability, by 3.2 percentage points since 2010-11, standing at 3.9 per cent in 2018-19.
11. The increase in the reporting of mental health conditions is especially pronounced for students studying humanities and languages or design, and creative and performing arts. 6.7 per cent of undergraduate entrants in these subjects reported having a mental health condition in 2018-19, compared to 1 per cent and 1.2 per cent respectively in 2010-11.

#### Educational disadvantage (POLAR4)

12. In 2018-19, 29.9 per cent of young undergraduate entrants were from POLAR4 quintile 5 areas, whereas those from POLAR4 quintile 1 areas made up 12.2 per cent of entrants.
13. For almost all subjects this pattern of entrants from POLAR4 quintile 5 being the largest group with the proportion reducing across the quintiles until entrants from POLAR4 quintile 1 being the smallest group is repeated, but this pattern is more pronounced for some subjects than others.
14. For example, 45 per cent of undergraduate entrants to medicine and dentistry were from POLAR4 quintile 5 in 2018-19, although this has fallen 5.4 percentage points since 2010-11. By contrast, in 2018-19, there were similar proportions of undergraduate entrants to education and teaching from POLAR4 quintile 5 (19.8 per cent) and POLAR4 quintile 2 (19.7 per cent).

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<sup>7</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-data/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-data/)

## **Ethnicity**

15. The largest broad ethnic group amongst undergraduate entrants in 2018-19 was white (71.2 per cent), although the proportion from minority ethnic groups has increased 7.5 percentage points since 2010-11.
16. There has been a large increase in the proportion of students starting undergraduate courses in medicine, dentistry and veterinary sciences who are from minority ethnic groups, rising 10.6 percentage points from 29.7 per cent in 2010-11 to 40.3 per cent in 2018-19.
17. Note, ethnicity data is only published for UK-domiciled students.

## **Sex**

18. In 2018-19, the majority of undergraduate entrants were female (56.1 per cent).
19. While the proportion of female entrants has been rising amongst full-time undergraduate entrants (by 2.1 percentage points since 2010-11), the opposite is true for part-time undergraduate entrants (falling 4.9 percentage points since 2010-11).
20. The difference in the proportions of male and female students within certain subjects remains large. In 2018-19, 84.3 per cent of engineering, technology and computing undergraduate entrants were male, compared to just 14 per cent of education and teaching undergraduate entrants.

## **Postgraduate entrants**

### **Age on entry**

21. The majority of postgraduate entrants in 2018-19 were aged 21 to 25 (56.1 per cent), 9.6 percentage points higher than in 2010-11.
22. The proportion of full-time postgraduate entrants who are aged 21 to 25 has increased 6.5 percentage points between 2010-11 and 2018-19.
23. Part-time postgraduate study is most commonly undertaken by students aged 31 to 40 (31.6 per cent in 2018-19).

### **Disability**

24. Like undergraduate entrants, the proportions of postgraduate entrants reporting a disability has continued to increase, but to a lesser extent. In 2010-11, 5 per cent of postgraduate students reported a disability compared to 9.7 per cent in 2018-19.
25. The most common type of disability among postgraduate entrants in 2018-19 was cognitive or learning difficulties (3.5 per cent).
26. Reported mental health conditions in postgraduate students have continued to increase, from 0.4 per cent in 2010-11 to 2.4 per cent in 2018-19.

## Ethnicity

27. The proportion of white postgraduate entrants has been dropping. In 2010-11, 80.9 per cent postgraduate entrants were white compared to 74.4 per cent in 2018-19. There has been an equivalent increase in non-white students.
28. During the last eight years, black students had the biggest increase in postgraduate entrance, rising from 5.8 per cent of postgraduate entrants in 2010-11 to 8.1 per cent in 2018-19. However, this proportion has stalled over the last two years (falling 0.6 percentage points).

## Sex

29. In 2018-19, 40.3 per cent of postgraduate entrants were male and 59.5 per cent were female.
30. The proportion of postgraduate entrants who are male has fallen 3.6 percentage points since 2010-11.
31. Similar subject patterns are observed for postgraduate study as in undergraduate study. However, the proportion of engineering, technology and computing postgraduate entrants that are female has risen by 7.8 percentage points since 2010-11, standing at 28.9 per cent in 2018-19.

## Contact

32. If you have any questions or feedback on these pages, please contact Stanley Rudkin at [official.statistics@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:official.statistics@officeforstudents.org.uk).