

**Office for
Students**



Access and participation data resources

Official Statistics

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Purpose

1. This document accompanies the publication of data designed to make it clearer and easier to assess higher education providers for access and participation. It explains the context and use of the data, which has been published as a set of open data resources at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-dashboard.

Related publications

2. This document supplements and should be read alongside the following documents.

Access and participation data user guide

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/guide-to-the-access-and-participation-data-resources/>

Access and participation data methodology and rebuild instructions

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/guide-to-the-access-and-participation-data-resources/>

Technical algorithms for institutional performance measures

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/guide-to-the-access-and-participation-data-resources/>

Advice and guidance related to access and participation plans

www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/access-and-participation-plans/

Access and participation plan guidance (Regulatory notice 1)

www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-notice-1-access-and-participation-plan-guidance/

How to prepare your access and participation plan (Regulatory advice 6)

www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-6-how-to-prepare-your-access-and-participation-plan-effective-practice-advice/

Summary of published material

3. The data has been published as Official Statistics. The resources can be used to compare different student groups at a provider (for example, disabled students or students by their ethnic background) and their peers, and reveal gaps in access, success and progression.
4. This publication includes measures of performance for each stage of a student's journey through higher education. The coverage of each indicator is discussed in detail within

‘Technical algorithms for institutional performance measures: Access and participation indicators, methodology and rebuild descriptions’. In broad terms, the access and participation data resources cover UK-domiciled undergraduate entrants registered at English higher education providers. A small number of the characteristics included in these data resources are necessarily limited to coverage of English-domiciled undergraduate entrants. The data resources include a limited time series of experimental data on students who were eligible for Free School Meals at Key Stage 4, which will be developed and extended in future refinements of these resources.

5. The publication includes all available data for those English higher education providers that deliver undergraduate provision and have been registered by the OfS. Comparative indicators for the sector as a whole 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 Individualised Learner Record.

Pre-release access

6. To help quality assure the data and make sure that it is accurate and reliable, higher education providers received a copy of their own data to check on 6 March 2019. Besides Office for Students (OfS) professional and production staff, the following post holders are given access up to 24 hours before release:

Office for Students	Director for Fair Access and Participation Head of Access and Participation Head of Institutional Performance Measures Senior Press Officer
Department for Education	Secretary of State for Education Minister of State for Universities and Science Special Advisor to the Secretary of State Press Officer Policy Adviser, Widening Participation Senior Statistical Officer, Higher Education Analysis

Revision schedule

7. The data resources that have been published in this release will be updated on the following dates to include providers who have been successfully registered by the OfS since the last publication. This revision schedule will be updated in July 2019 to confirm the dates of further updates:
 - a. Friday 26 April 2019

- b. Friday 31 May 2019
 - c. Friday 28 June 2019
 - d. Friday 26 July 2019
8. We expect to develop and refine the data resources as additional measures become available, and to accommodate changes in the wider data landscape, including the introduction of the Graduate Outcomes survey (replacing the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey). This revision schedule will be updated to confirm the dates of extensions to the access and participation data resources at the earliest opportunity, and at least one month before the data is published.

What does the data show?

Key concepts

9. The summary of findings given at paragraphs 13 to 27 focus on gaps that exist for different groups, based on the most recent year of available data:
- a. For measures of access (the proportion of entrants to higher education who are from different groups) and attainment (the proportion of higher education qualifiers who were awarded first or upper second class honours degrees), we consider students in academic year 2017-18.
 - b. We assess continuation into 2017-18 for full-time students who started in 2016-17, and for part-time students who started in 2015-16.
 - c. Attainment reflects students obtaining a first or upper second class degree in 2017-18.
 - d. Progression outcomes come from responses to the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey, conducted for the final time for higher education qualifiers in academic year 2016-17¹.
10. When we refer to 'gaps' we are considering the difference between two proportions, which we express in percentage points. Gaps are always calculated as the proportion of the first group being referenced minus the proportion of the second group being referenced. A negative gap means that the first group has a lower proportion than the second. A positive gap means that the first group has a higher proportion than the second. The gaps we refer to in the context of access to higher education are based on the profile of entrants at a provider. In the context of student success and progression, references to gaps consider differences in students' outcomes. For example, the gap between a continuation rate of 98 per cent for non-disabled students and 95 per cent for disabled students would be a positive gap of +3 percentage points, and the gap between an attainment rate of 67 per cent for white students and 71 per cent for black students would be a negative gap of -4 percentage points.

¹ Destinations of 2017-18 and later cohorts of higher education qualifiers will be collected by the Graduate Outcomes survey, which replaces the DLHE. See <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/outcomes>.

11. The summary of findings focuses on gaps between the full-time student groups that form the basis for a number of the OfS' Key Performance Measures (KPMs)² relating to access and participation. It focuses on all undergraduate students. These are the gaps between:
- a. The most and least represented groups, where these use the participation of local areas (POLAR4) classification, which groups areas across the UK based on the proportion of the young population that participates in higher education. POLAR4 quintile 1 areas identify the least represented group, and POLAR4 quintile 5 areas identify the most represented group.
 - b. Non-disabled students and disabled students.
 - c. White students and black students.
12. In the KPMs these groups are considered with reference to a particular stage of the student lifecycle. Here we consider the groups, and the gaps they experience, across multiple stages of the student lifecycle. This means that the findings are relevant to, but not directly comparable with, the OfS KPMs.

Access to higher education

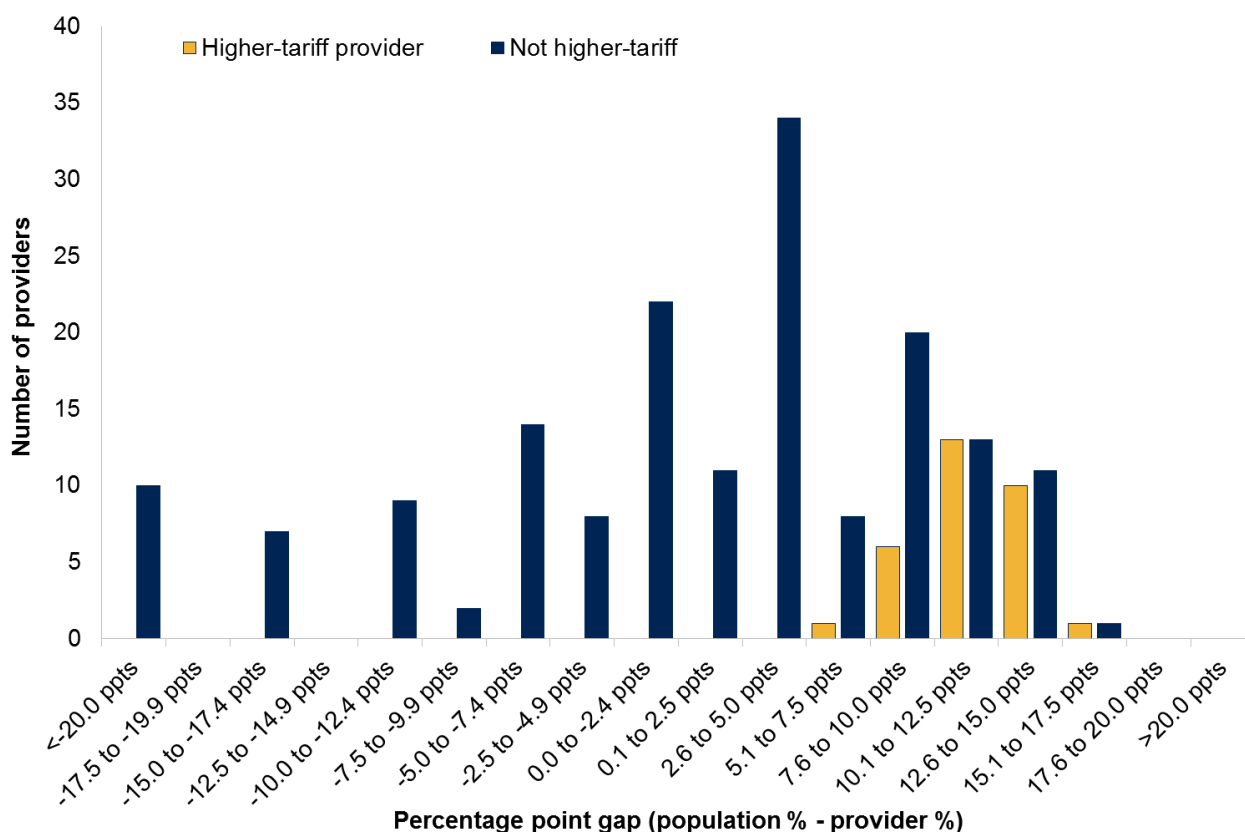
13. In 2017-18, 67 per cent of English higher education providers recruited less than 18.1 per cent³ of their 18 year-old entrants from POLAR4 quintile 1 areas (where young people from these areas are the least represented in higher education). The second OfS KPM⁴ concerns the gap in participation at higher-tariff providers between the most and least represented groups. Figure 1 shows the distribution of gaps between the proportions of the least represented groups in a provider's student intake compared with the UK population, for higher-tariff providers and other providers. The access and participation data resources show that no higher-tariff provider recruited more than 12.6 per cent of their 18 year old entrants from POLAR4 quintile 1 areas.

² See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/measures-of-our-success/

³ 18.1 per cent of 18 year olds in the UK were living in POLAR4 quintile 1 areas.

⁴ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/measures-of-our-success/participation-performance-measures/gap-in-participation-at-higher-tariff-providers-between-the-most-and-least-represented-groups/

Figure 1: Gaps in proportions of least represented 18 year-olds in 2017-18, provider compared with population



14. The distribution of gaps remained similar to 2013-14, when 73 per cent of English higher education providers recruited a lower proportion of their 18 year-old entrants from POLAR4 quintile 1 areas than were in the UK population. In 2013-14, no higher-tariff provider recruited more than 9.9 per cent of their 18 year old entrants from POLAR4 quintile 1 areas.

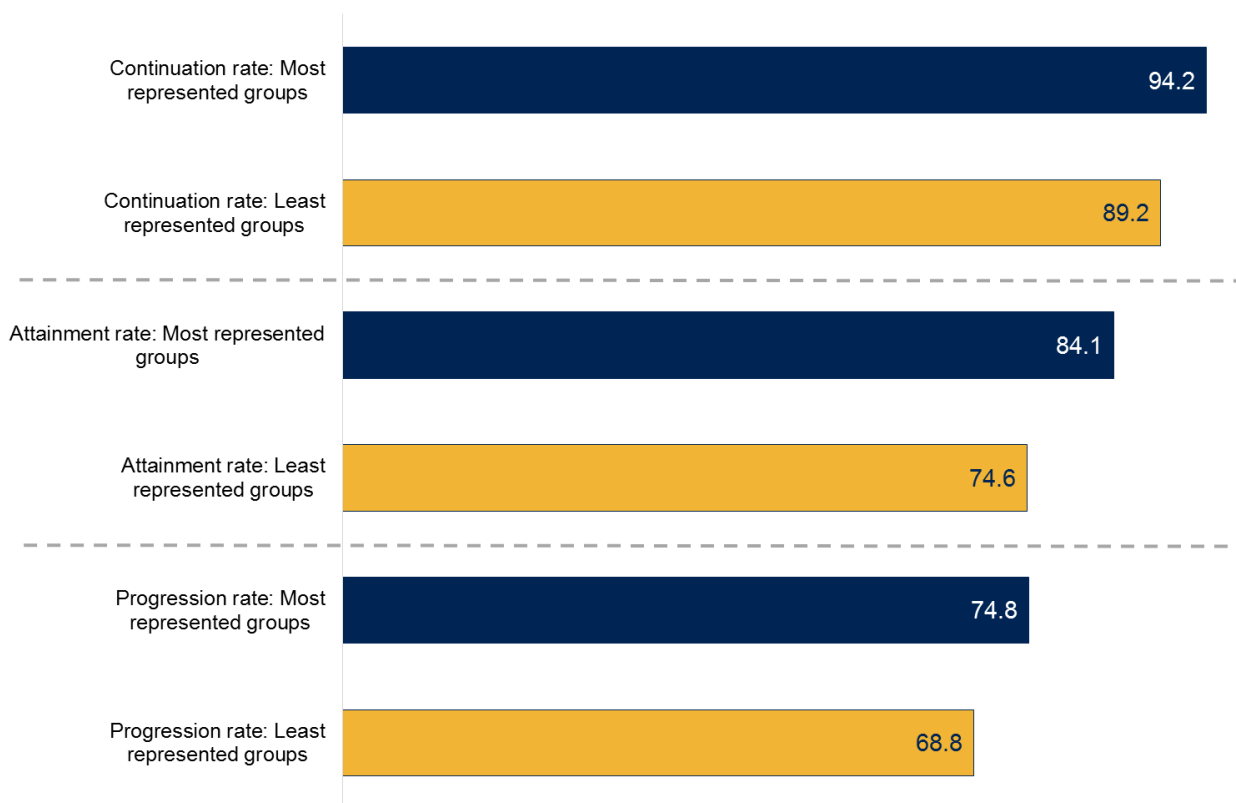
Student success and progression

15. Paragraphs 16 to 27, and Figures 2 to 7, summarise the distributions of gaps in continuation, attainment and progression rates of full-time students at English higher education providers. Differences between higher-tariff providers and others are less prominent in later stages of the student lifecycle so are not drawn out separately.

Most and least represented groups

16. Figure 2 details the overall rates of continuation, attainment and progression for the most and least represented groups at English higher education providers in the most recent year. At each stage of the student lifecycle, outcomes for the most represented groups are higher than those for the least represented groups.

Figure 2: Sector-level continuation, attainment and progression rates (%) for most and least represented groups

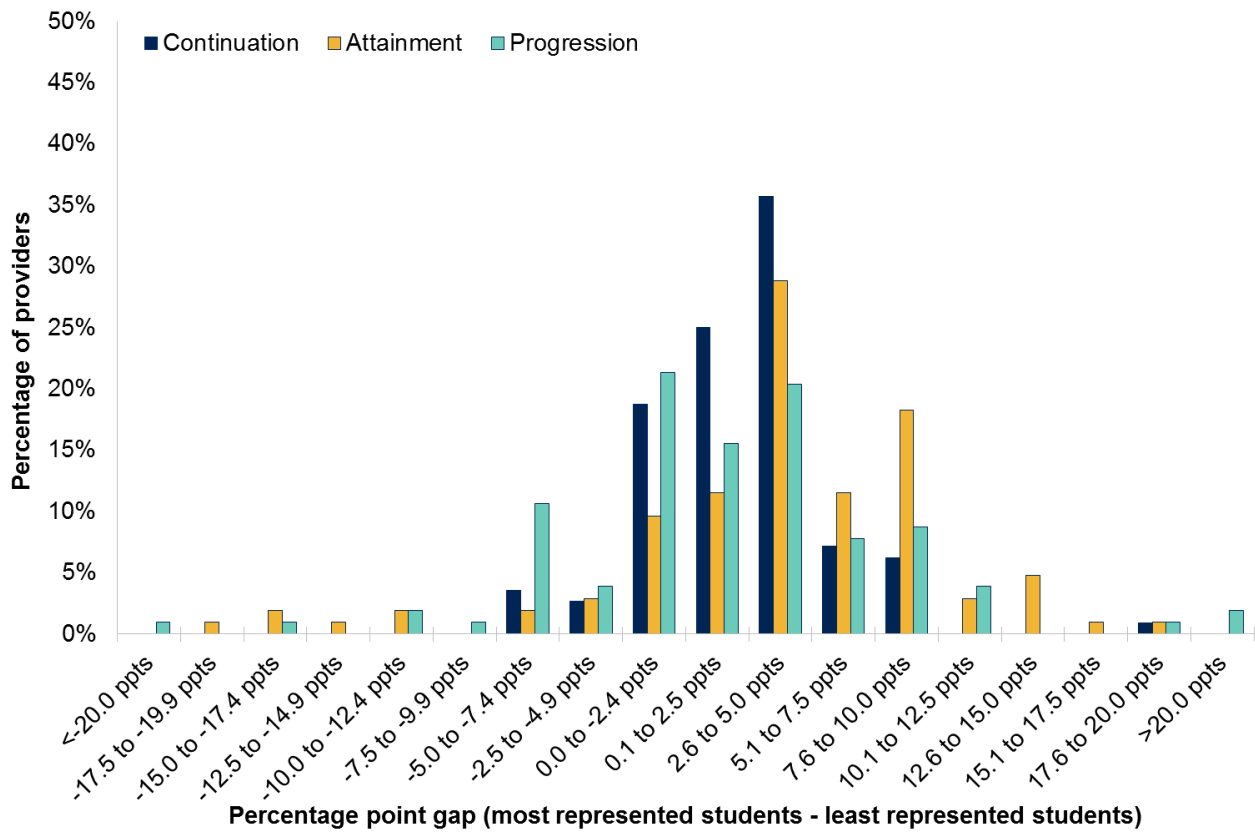


17. Figure 3 shows that gaps in continuation rates between the most and least represented groups were no larger than +/- 2.5 percentage points for 44 per cent of providers in the most recent year. We most frequently observe (for 36 per cent of providers) that continuation rates of the most represented groups were between 2.6 and 5 percentage points higher than the continuation rates of the least represented.

18. 21 per cent of providers had attainment gaps between the most and least represented groups that were no larger than +/- 2.5 percentage points. The proportion of the most represented groups being awarded first or upper second class honours degrees was between 2.6 and 10 percentage points higher than the equivalent attainment rate of the least represented groups for 59 per cent of providers.

19. Gaps in the proportions of students progressing to highly-skilled employment or higher level study (referred to as the progression rate in Figure 3) were no larger than +/- 2.5 percentage points for 37 per cent of providers. Another 20 per cent of providers had a gap between the progression of their most represented groups and their least represented groups of between 2.6 and 5 percentage points.

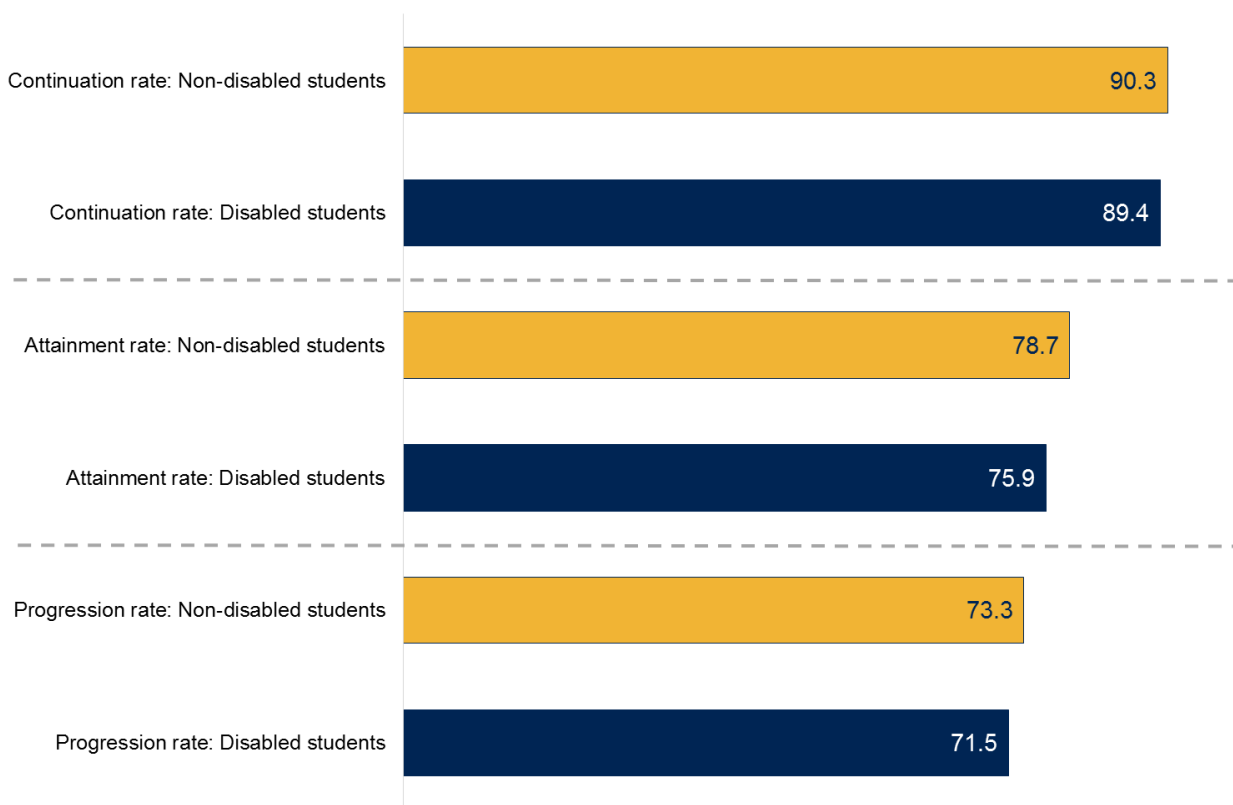
Figure 3: Gaps in continuation, attainment and progression rates between most and least represented groups



Non-disabled students and disabled students

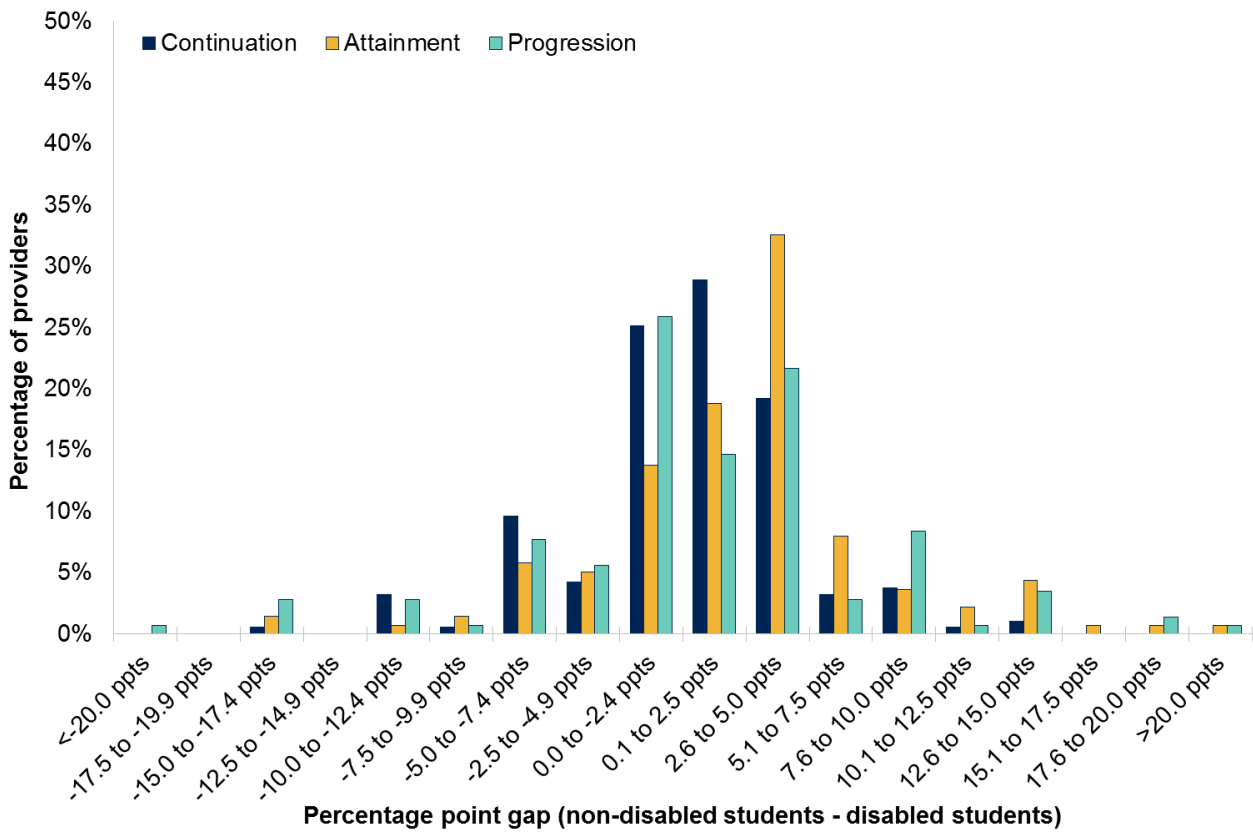
20. Figure 4 details the overall rates of continuation, attainment and progression for non-disabled students and disabled students at English higher education providers in the most recent year. At each stage of the student lifecycle, outcomes for non-disabled students are higher than those for disabled students.

Figure 4: Sector-level continuation, attainment and progression rates (%) for non-disabled students and disabled students



21. Figure 5 shows that gaps in continuation rates between non-disabled students and disabled students were no larger than +/- 2.5 percentage points for 54 per cent of providers in the most recent year. Another 19 per cent of providers had a gap between the continuation of their non-disabled students and their disabled students of between 2.6 and 5 percentage points.
22. 33 per cent of providers had attainment gaps between non-disabled and disabled students that were no larger than +/- 2.5 percentage points. We most frequently observe (for 33 per cent of providers) that the proportion of non-disabled students being awarded first or upper second class honours degrees was between 2.6 and 5 percentage points higher than the equivalent attainment rate of disabled students.
23. Gaps in the proportions of students progressing to highly-skilled employment or higher level study (referred to as the progression rate in Figure 5) were no larger than +/- 2.5 percentage points for 41 per cent of providers. Another 22 per cent of providers had a gap between the progression of their non-disabled students and their disabled students of between 2.6 and 5 percentage points.

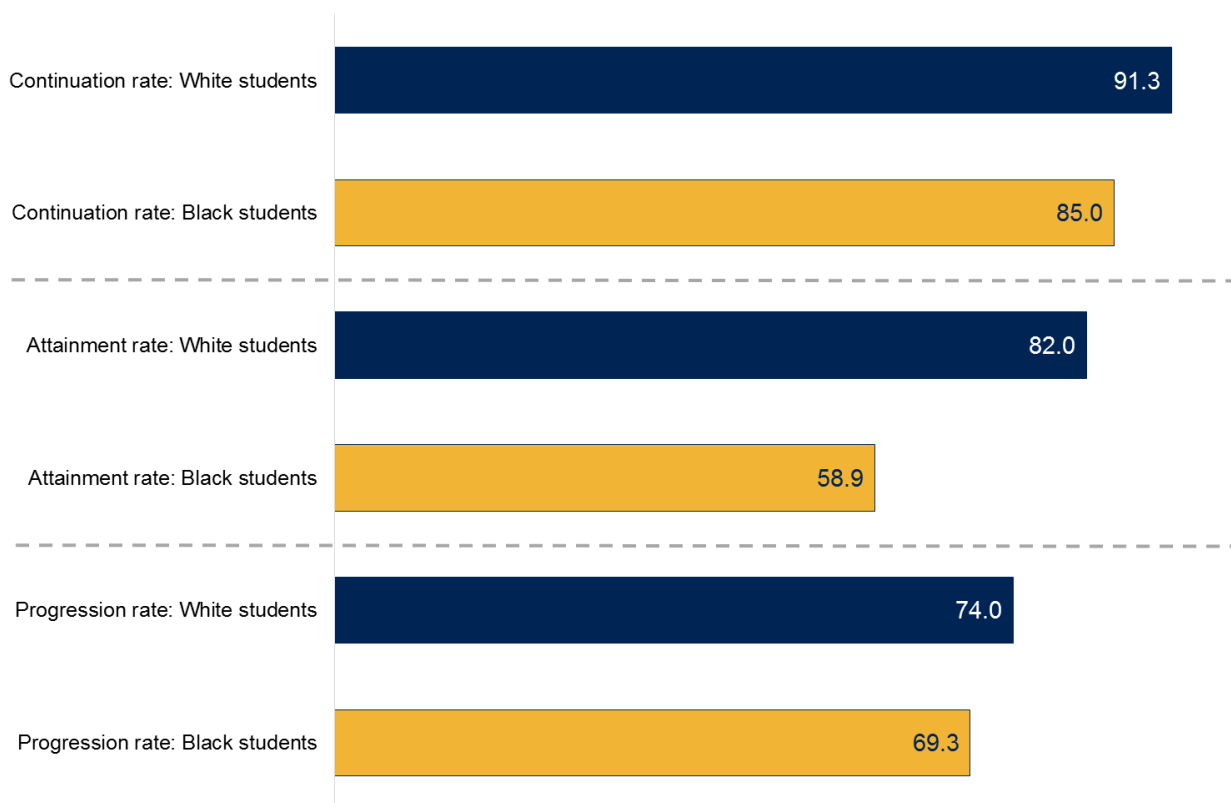
Figure 5: Gaps in continuation, attainment and progression rates between non-disabled students and disabled students



White students and black students

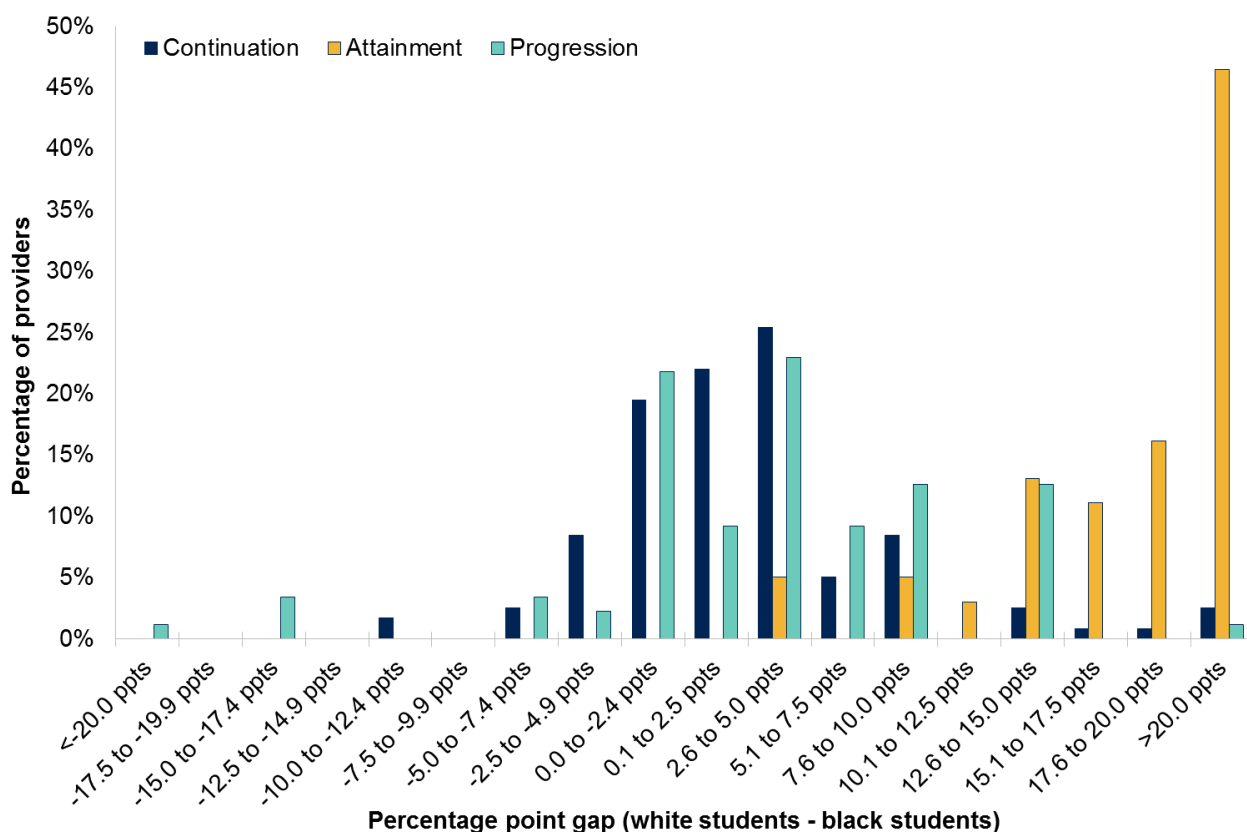
24. Figure 6 details the overall rates of continuation, attainment and progression for white students and black students at English higher education providers in the most recent year. At each stage of the student success and progression lifecycle, outcomes for white students are higher than those for black students.

Figure 6: Sector-level continuation, attainment and progression rates (%) for white students and black students



25. Figure 7 shows that gaps in continuation rates between white students and black students were no larger than +/- 2.5 percentage points for 42 per cent of providers in the most recent year. We most frequently observe (for 25 per cent of providers) that continuation rates of white students were between 2.6 and 5 percentage points higher than the continuation rates of black students.
26. The proportion of white students being awarded first or upper second class honours degrees was at least 2.6 percentage points higher than the equivalent attainment rate of black students for all providers in the sector. The gap in attainment rates between white students and black students was greater than 20 percentage points for almost half of providers.
27. Gaps in the proportions of students progressing to highly-skilled employment or higher level study (referred to as the progression rate in Figure 7) were no larger than +/- 2.5 percentage points for 31 per cent of providers. Another 23 per cent of providers had a gap between the progression of their white students and their black students of between 2.6 and 5 percentage points.

Figure 7: Gaps in continuation, attainment and progression rates between white students and black students



Related statistics and data sources

28. 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.

Metrics, data and provider submissions used in the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework

www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/tef-data/get-the-data/

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/

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/

Technical notes

29. Further technical detail and definitions are included in 'Technical algorithms for institutional performance measures: Access and participation indicators, methodology and rebuild descriptions'. Field naming conventions and valid entries shown in the open data resources are described in the supplementary data definitions file, published alongside this document.
30. 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/.



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