

Office for
Students

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English higher education 2022

The Office for Students
annual review





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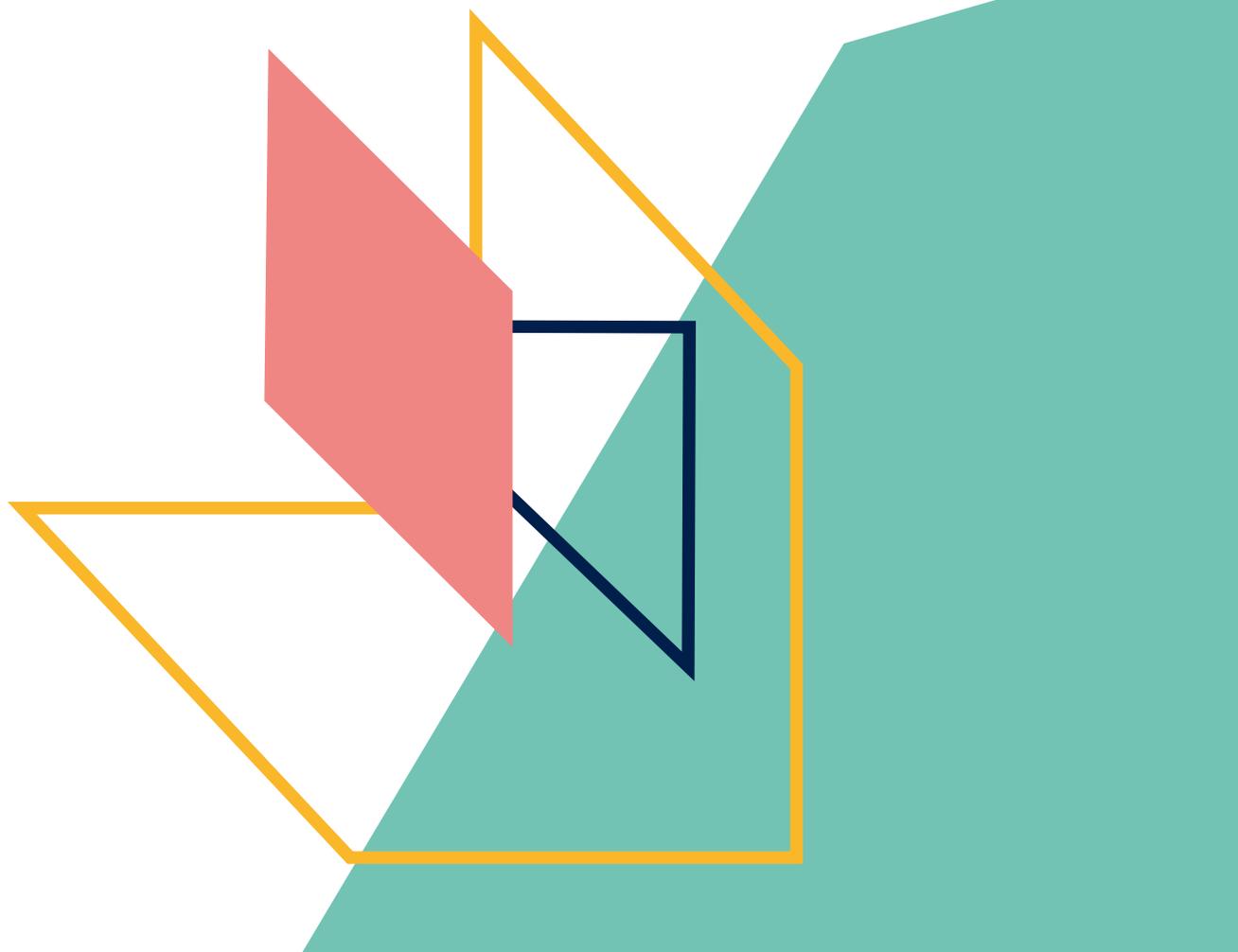
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Foreword



Lord Wharton of Yarm, OfS chair

Every year brings challenges for universities and colleges. 2022 has seen a higher education sector still dealing with the long-term effects of the pandemic, while facing global instability and cost-of-living pressures at home.

Many students beginning their degrees are still affected by the disruption to their school lives over the past three years, while others have literally come from a warzone to study here.

In difficult times, clarity and focus are more important than ever. The OfS's strategy for 2022 to 2025, published earlier this year, reaffirms our commitment to ensuring that universities and colleges continue to serve their students, and the taxpaying public, as they deserve.

During this year we have welcomed the appointment of two senior colleagues, Susan Lapworth and John Blake. Susan was already the OfS's interim chief executive before being confirmed in the post in September, while John joined us

in January as Director for Fair Access and Participation. With the support of their dedicated colleagues, Susan's experience as our former director of regulation and John's expertise in the schools sector have already made and will continue to make formidable contributions to our work.

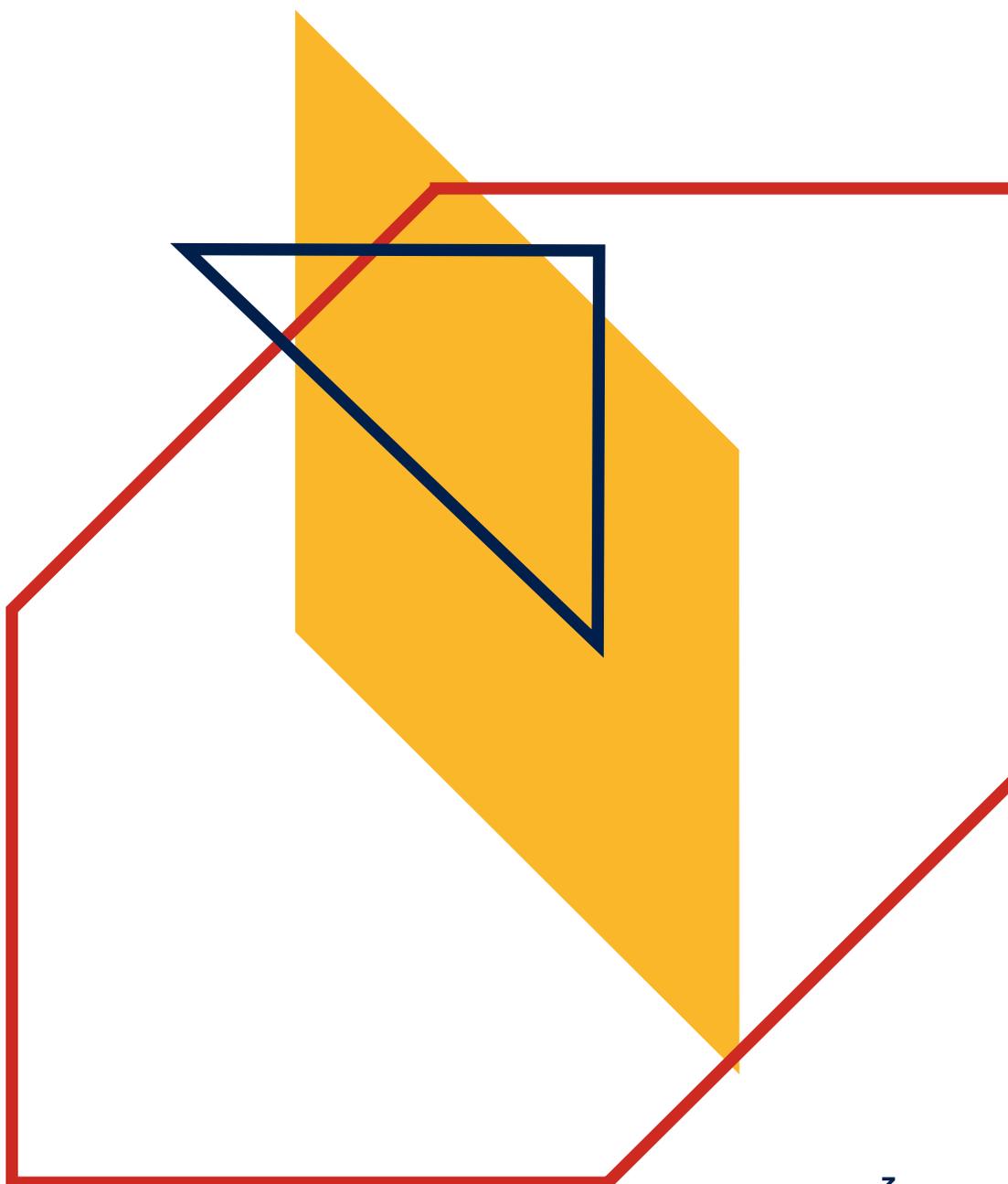
In 2022 the OfS reaffirmed its commitment to quality and standards, in the knowledge that enabling students to succeed on their courses and receive the education they need is the best way to support them in life. Having refreshed our conditions of registration in this area, we have entered a new phase of investigation and enforcement of these conditions.

We will be more rigorous than ever in ensuring that all higher education providers achieve the minimum requirements we expect, while continuing to recognise excellence beyond them. When these minimum requirements are not met – for instance, where we find unjustified grade inflation or pockets of poor quality provision – we will use our powers to intervene and rectify the shortfall.

Meanwhile, we are refreshing our approach to regulating equality of opportunity. Universities and colleges are being encouraged to partner with schools to raise the awareness and ambition of pupils regarding higher education, and to improve their attainment and skills in ways that truly prepare them for study at this level. The more people from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds are enabled to access and benefit from higher education, the more equal and successful society can become.

Once at university or college, students must receive the benefit of the best teaching practice, without the compromises necessitated in recent years by the pandemic. They must experience an environment where they are free from harassment and sexual misconduct. And they must be exposed to a range of ideas, opinions and beliefs, while being free to express their own.

All of these are priorities for the OfS, and the outcome – a well educated and highly skilled graduate population – will benefit employers and the country at large.





Chief executive's commentary



Susan Lapworth, chief executive

Overview of the year

2022 started with the challenges of coronavirus far from over and has concluded with cost-of-living pressures exacerbated by the war in Ukraine. These have both had a significant impact on universities, colleges and their students.

There are 409 higher education providers registered with the Office for Students (OfS), teaching or supervising 2.4 million students.¹ This year we approved a new university for the first time – Northeastern University London – and extended to six further providers the power to award their own degrees, including some offering degree apprenticeships. Data released in 2022 shows noticeable increases in undergraduate and postgraduate student entrants between 2019-20 and 2020-21, for full-time and part-time students and apprentices. This reverses a recent decline in the number of part-time student entrants.²

Despite the combined pressures of the pandemic and inflation, and a changing international market, the higher education

sector has remained financially resilient overall, though we continue to monitor the financial performance of individual providers closely. We concluded in June that universities were well placed to recover from the impact of the pandemic, although we warned of the dangers of over-reliance on particular international markets.³

2022 was also a challenging year for many students, as they sought to enter higher education while still coming to terms with the impact of lockdown and school closures on their learning and wider development. Ensuring fair access in this environment has been a priority for us. Universities and colleges have also been supporting the 775 Ukrainian students studying in England, and those who have come as refugees from the war.⁴

The majority of universities and colleges in England consistently offer high quality courses. A minority, however, do not, and this is where we need to focus our attention. At the start of the year, reports highlighted student concerns that they were not receiving the quality of content or delivery that they expected when they signed up to their courses. Grade inflation remains a topic of significant public concern for the credibility of degrees.⁵ Students from poorer backgrounds continue at a disadvantage; this has been exacerbated by the continued impact of the pandemic on school attainment, where the gap with more advantaged students has widened. And we are starting to focus on whether misunderstandings about the extent of their legal obligations may be having an adverse effect on free speech in our universities and colleges.

In 2022 the focus of the OfS, the independent regulator of higher education in England, has

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been addressing these challenges, and we will continue to tackle them in 2023. As chief executive, I am pleased to have inherited our new strategy for 2022 to 2025, which confirms that our two main areas of focus will be quality and standards, and equality of opportunity.⁶ The OfS's work on quality aims to ensure students receive a high quality academic experience that improves their knowledge and skills. Much provision in the English higher education sector is good, and some is excellent – our focus for intervention is on challenging courses that may fall short.

Through our access and participation work, we continue to emphasise not just who gets into our universities and colleges, but how well they stay the course, graduate and get on afterwards – with a focus on continuation, success and outcomes. Through a recent commitment to consulting on a new condition of registration, and gathering sector-wide data in this area for the first time, we are actively working to ensure that universities and colleges properly tackle harassment and sexual misconduct.⁷

We are clear that quality and equality are mutually reinforcing. Equal access without good outcomes in the form of graduate level jobs or postgraduate study cements disadvantage, rather than helping overcome it.

An improved student academic experience

Revised approach to quality and standards

A focus on quality and standards is at the heart of our work because our first responsibility is to students. They contribute significantly to the cost of courses through their fees and loans. They expect in return a high quality academic experience which broadens their knowledge and skills, equipping them for future work or further study.

This year we sharpened our overall approach to quality and standards, revising our conditions of registration and revitalising the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).⁸ In addition, new legislative provisions mean we are now likely to publish more information about our interventions for individual universities and colleges.

Most universities and colleges, and most courses, are delivering a high quality academic experience. But there is also significant variability in quality, and it is where courses or providers may not be delivering that we focus our regulatory interest.

We have strengthened our quality requirements to ensure registered universities, colleges and other higher education providers run courses that are up to date, challenging, and well delivered, equipping students with the skills they will need after graduation. Students should have the resources and support they need to succeed on their courses and beyond, particularly if they are from disadvantaged backgrounds. Assessment should be rigorous and the standard of qualifications should meet sector-recognised standards. Our interventions during the year have covered particular subjects of study, and we launched investigations into business and management courses where regulatory intelligence suggested there might be a concern.⁹

An important change this year was our introduction of minimum numerical thresholds for student outcomes. Our thresholds set expectations for different types of higher education. Publishing data showing the performance of all universities and colleges registered with the OfS in relation to these thresholds ensures transparency and incentivises compliance without the need for more formal regulatory intervention. It also lets us see, for instance, a growth in the number of higher education apprenticeships and an improvement in apprentices' outcomes, as we chart these separately for the first time.

We will consider the performance of each provider, and the context in which it delivers that performance, in deciding whether further action would be appropriate. The new thresholds are designed to ensure that students from all backgrounds can achieve positive outcomes, and are protected from performance that is below our minimum expectations, whatever, wherever and however they study.¹⁰

The TEF provides an independent assessment of the quality of courses by academic experts and students. This year's changes make it an integral part of our regulatory framework. It will provide an assessment every four years of the teaching and outcomes delivered by universities and colleges. Using Gold, Silver and Bronze ratings, it incentivises universities and colleges to achieve excellence in teaching, learning and student outcomes above and beyond the high quality requirements in our conditions of registration, in a way that recognises the full diversity of higher education courses and the many ways people study. The revised TEF also recognises that some courses and providers will not always be good enough to merit the Bronze rating and will require improvement.¹¹

Blended learning

Outcomes are not the only factor in the success of higher education. The experience of students during their studies is also very important.

Our review of blended learning – the combination of delivery in person and through a digital environment – showed that there is a place for well structured, well resourced digital learning in our universities and colleges. It is important that online lectures are up to date and of good quality, and that students and staff are supported to develop the skills they need to engage effectively in online learning.¹²

However, this high quality delivery was not universal during the pandemic and in

its aftermath. Digital delivery is the norm in many areas of our lives, so it would be surprising if it did not have an increasing and innovative role in our universities. In particular, it is known to play an important role in supporting some disabled students. The danger is that, where digital delivery is poor or used as a cheap substitute for traditional teaching, it undermines the credibility of the good, and can reduce the sense of community that comes from getting together in person. Additionally, poor availability of resources can exacerbate digital poverty. In responding to the blended learning review, we set out practical considerations for universities and colleges if they continue with or adopt blended learning, offering a view of what would and would not be likely to cause us regulatory concern.¹³

Students' perspectives on the quality of courses

During the pandemic many universities rose to the challenge, finding innovative ways to keep students engaged with lectures and tutorials. However, a significant minority of students were disappointed with their academic experience. As face-to-face learning resumed for most courses, the 2022 National Student Survey (NSS) showed a marked increase in the percentage of students in England reporting positively on their access to learning resources. 81 per cent of students agreed with the relevant statements in 2022, compared with 73 per cent in 2021.

In the same survey, 80 per cent of students in England gave positive responses about the quality of their teaching. This is unchanged from 2021, but remains lower than the 84 per cent in 2020. Smaller proportions thought their course was well organised and smoothly run (65 per cent) and that changes in their course were effectively communicated (71 per cent), though both numbers were slightly higher than the 2021 figures.¹⁴



Perhaps sharper testimony to the concern many students feel about getting a good return on their investment is the finding of the Higher Education Policy Institute Student Academic Experience Survey 2022 that just over a third of students (35 per cent) feel they have received good or very good value for money. This represents an increase of eight percentage points since 2021, but is only slightly higher than the 32 per cent who felt they received poor or very poor value.¹⁵

The credibility of higher education qualifications

Whether considered in terms of outcomes or personal experience, the higher education of many students is funded by taxpayers, and it is essential that this investment results in reliable and credible results. Universities and colleges must therefore assess students effectively and award qualifications that are credible and stand the test of time.

Taxpayers may be sceptical that the rise in the proportion of students awarded a first class degree at English universities and colleges, from 15.7 per cent in 2010-2011 to 37.9 per cent in 2020-2021, results wholly from improvement in educational achievement.¹⁶ Our statistical models show that changes in other factors (such as prior attainment or choice of subject) can explain only a small proportion of this increase.

This is not only a matter of quality, but equality – if the credibility of qualifications is called into doubt, they become less useful and effective in supporting students from disadvantaged and minority backgrounds to make their way in their chosen careers. When the rigour of assessment is uncertain, longer-term outcomes tend to rely on subjective factors and advantages derived from background.

The pandemic exacerbated this pre-existing problem, with 'no detriment' policies designed to recognise the challenges students faced during this period. These

increases cannot be accepted as a new normal – that would let down students, devalue the credibility of degrees and fail wider society including employers, by making it hard to judge the real success of graduates.

The higher education sector has started to recognise that grade inflation is a real issue, through the work of Universities UK and GuildHE, on behalf of the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment, and has indicated an intention to return the levels of classifications awarded to students before the pandemic.¹⁷ This alone will not address the longer-term inflation that saw the figure of 7.3 per cent of students gaining firsts in 1995-96 become 29.2 per cent in 2018-19.¹⁸

That is why we launched our first investigations this year into the credibility of awards at individual providers. While increases in higher classifications have been seen across the sector, they have been more marked in some universities and colleges than in others. These investigations allow us to explore the reasons for this and show that we are willing to act where the data suggests that may be appropriate. More generally, we want the sector to bring an urgency to its work on restoring the credibility of degrees.¹⁹

Freedom of speech

Students' academic experience is not just measured through statistics. It is also affected by the approach of each university or college to issues like freedom of speech. We note the frequent press reports of incidents that cause concern in this area, alongside the 60 or so notifications we have received on free speech issues since 2018. This is not simply about high-profile cases where speakers have been barred or turned away on the basis of their public statements, – although a small number of such cases is too many. We are concerned about the perception that attitudes and cultural assumptions in the academic environment mean that discussions aren't mooted, topics

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are tacitly seen as off limits or people who disagree legitimately on issues may feel silenced.

We will gather students' views on this area in the 2023 NSS,²⁰ but recent research from the Higher Education Policy Institute suggests an increased perception among students that universities are becoming intolerant of a range of viewpoints, and that free speech is being inhibited in university debating societies.²¹

Quality and equality

Getting in and getting on

All students, especially those from disadvantaged and minority backgrounds, are likely to see their higher education course as an important step in their journey towards success in their career and life. They expect that their ability and effort will be rewarded with increased knowledge and skills, and that these will help them make more effective and meaningful choices about their lives. High quality courses are therefore particularly important for those groups historically underrepresented in higher education. A course with poor outcomes can seriously affect these students' chances and choices after graduation. This is why we are also refocusing our approach to access and participation.²²

Some of the statistics illustrate that while progress has been made, the challenges remain substantial. Data gathered for our key performance measures shows that, in 2020-21, approximately 282,400 young, full-time students living in England entered undergraduate higher education here, the largest total in the past four years. This included around 51,200 students categorised as 'significantly disadvantaged', the highest number in the past four years.²³

To an extent this reflects attainment in schools, where 28.1 per cent of pupils with free school meals go on to higher education,

compared with 46.8 per cent of their fellow pupils. For the most selective universities, the figures are 12.4 per cent, compared with 4.5 per cent.²⁴

There are also particular challenges for some groups of students. Just 13 per cent of pupils with experience of being in care progressed to higher education by the age of 19 in 2020-21, compared with 45 per cent of all other students. White British male students eligible for free school meals were among the least likely to enter higher education by 19 (13.6 per cent). Black Caribbean students were among the least likely to enter the most selective universities by this age, and had a progression rate into high-tariff universities of 5.4 per cent, less than half of the overall national figure (11.4 per cent). The gap in progression rates from school into higher education between male and female pupils rose from 11.3 to 12.2 percentage points between 2019-20 and 2020-21.²⁵ We know that women made up the majority of full-time undergraduate and postgraduate entrants (56.0 per cent and 56.7 per cent respectively) in 2020-21.²⁶ However, some subject areas are dominated by men (for example, engineering, technology and computing) or by women (for example, education and teaching).

For those from disadvantaged or minority backgrounds, the jobs market can be more challenging, so higher education has a particular responsibility to support their success, both during their time at university and in the longer term. We know that students who come from the most deprived areas of England are less likely than those from the least deprived areas to complete their courses, while those who do get a qualification are less likely to progress from higher education into managerial or professional employment, or further study. The same is true of students in higher education from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, compared with their white peers. The numerical thresholds we have published as part of our approach to

regulating student outcomes are essential to ensure that improvement in quality benefits all students, not just those from more privileged backgrounds.²⁷

The attainment gap

Behind these statistics lies a longstanding attainment gap in schools that has been exacerbated by the pandemic.²⁸ Universities and colleges have an important role in raising the attainment of those with the potential to succeed in higher education. They should ensure that the grades these students gain in school enable them to access the right courses for them, and that the knowledge and skills underpinning those grades are fully understood. Widening the knowledge and understanding of younger students benefits universities by expanding the pool of students eligible to attend, and by giving them a greater chance to perform well when they do. This year we organised an Insight event and published a brief to underline the importance of universities, colleges and schools working together to meet this challenge.²⁹ Advancing attainment is an important part of advancing access and success.

Addressing the attainment gap is therefore an important part of our new approach to access and participation.³⁰ We also want to see more diverse pathways through flexible courses. Access is not just about school leavers; for many who missed the chance to take a degree at 18, the second chance offered by a flexible course while they are working can enable them to fulfil their potential later in life. For others, the opportunity to dip in and out of higher education, gaining credits along the way, is crucial. We have been working with the Department for Education to help test these approaches, as plans for a new Lifelong Loan Entitlement from 2025 have been introduced.³¹

Universities and colleges implemented their own approaches when we first introduced access and participation

plans, and many continued to deliver programmes they considered had been successful over previous years. But evidence on what really works in higher education access has, perhaps surprisingly, lagged behind the information now available on initiatives in schools. Through the Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes (TASO) we are starting to build that evidence in England.³² Good robust evaluation should not be additional to any intervention, but built in from the beginning. This helps all those involved in access and participation to adapt their approach in response to the best available evidence.

Our consultation on equality of opportunity in higher education, including how we regulate access and participation plans, set out our intention to seek a richer understanding of how an intervention has worked (or why it has not and what might work better), through the access and participation plan system. The consultation recently closed, and the responses are being carefully considered before we produce our final regulatory guidance early in 2023.³³

Tackling harassment and sexual misconduct

Improving the chances of those less likely to enter higher education is central to ensuring equality of opportunity. However, it is not the only way that universities and colleges must meet their obligations. There has been a greater emphasis on addressing sexual misconduct within higher education in recent years. This has exposed the need for universities and colleges to have an approach that effectively prevents and responds to all forms of harassment and sexual misconduct affecting students.

In 2021, we published a statement of expectations setting out what an adequate and effective approach would include – proper evaluation; effective training; clear, fair and accessible processes for reporting and for any subsequent investigations; appropriate and effective support for

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victims.³⁴ Some universities and colleges have made real improvements, as a result of this and their awareness of the problem. But the independent evaluation we commissioned found slow and patchy progress: there is still a lot that needs improvement.³⁵

We will therefore be consulting on a new condition of registration to address harassment and sexual misconduct, enabling us to intervene where appropriate.³⁶

The impact of limitations in the data available about the prevalence of sexual misconduct in higher education has become increasingly apparent this year. The Crime Survey for England and Wales found that 11.6 per cent of female full-time students and 4.2 per cent of male full-time students had experienced sexual assault in the previous year (based on combined data from the three years to March 2020), but as a household survey this does not cover those living in student halls of residence.³⁷ We have minimal information about instances of sexual misconduct, and their prevalence in different universities or colleges. We have been looking at approaches in other countries, including Australia and Ireland, which run surveys in this area. As a first step towards filling this information gap we will be running our own survey on the prevalence of sexual misconduct in higher education, starting with a pilot planned for 2022-23.³⁸

Looking ahead: Three areas of focus in 2023

Acting to ensure high quality courses that deliver positive outcomes

Ensuring high quality courses that deliver positive outcomes for students is at the heart of our work and we achieve this through the quality and standards conditions (B conditions) in our regulatory framework.³⁹ We work closely with independent academic experts, where appropriate, in this area. It is also important

that student voices are heard in our work on quality. This is why we incorporated the views and perspectives of students into our review of blended learning in a variety of ways.⁴⁰ Students are also directly involved in the TEF assessment process as full members of the TEF panel.⁴¹

When a university, college or other higher education provider does not meet our requirements, we will want to understand why, and what it is doing to address any shortcomings. We have a range of powers that we can deploy to enforce our conditions – imposing specific conditions to require improvement, or sanctions that could include imposing monetary penalties.

With our revised quality conditions, our focus is ensuring courses deliver a high quality education for students and lead to successful outcomes. In 2023, we will increase our regulatory activity, investigating courses and providers where we are concerned our requirements may not be satisfied. This will include an assessment of performance against our new thresholds for student outcomes, as well as visits to providers by academic experts. We expect to publish reports on our findings.

Our goal is to see improvements not just where we intervene, but more widely across the sector. Like any regulator, we have limited resources and we target them carefully to ensure that our interventions have a ripple effect, leading to improvements elsewhere. We will continue to ensure that our interventions are risk-based, and targeted where they can have most impact.

In some cases we will focus on subjects, as we did with some business and management courses in 2022. We may also intervene on sector-wide issues, as in our investigations of the credibility of awards this year, and our review of blended learning. Not all interventions will lead to sanctions – sometimes we may see rapid change as a result of the regulatory



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spotlight – but through them we expect to see improvement that is of real benefit to students, and increases the value for money for taxpayers who subsidise courses and student loans.

Our quality system works in two parts. The B conditions are designed to secure a high quality baseline of performance for all universities and colleges. Our increase in interventions on quality focuses on ensuring this minimum high quality is met. It ensures that all students – from the UK and overseas – can expect a high quality course and successful outcomes wherever they choose to study.

The TEF is the mechanism we use to drive improvement beyond the high quality baseline. The TEF is a cyclical process – it will run in 2023 and then every four years. Universities and colleges will make a submission in the new year, as will their students if they wish. Judgements will be made by academic experts, with students integrated as full members of the TEF panel. And we expect to publish for each institution the panel's judgement and the reasons for it.

Significantly expanding university-school engagement to improve equality of opportunity

The second area for focus in 2023 is our work on engagement between universities and schools. Our major tool for this work is access and participation plans. How we use that tool for this purpose is currently subject to consultation, and here we seek not to pre-judge that, but to explain why we consider this work so important.

Partnerships and engagement between schools and higher education providers already happen to an extent (73 of the existing access and participation plans mention them) and can lead to useful opportunities for potential students to visit university campuses or to participate in access programmes.⁴² That work can be

valuable and motivating. But it may not always touch the attainment gap that limits access and choice for many school pupils, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. There are examples that go further, such as university-sponsored maths schools or multi-academy trusts.

The persistent nature of attainment gaps between different groups, and the clear evidence of their impact on differential levels of access to, success in and progression from higher education, suggest that we need to do more. Gaps in attainment are apparent in GCSE results, and indeed in statutory assessment at earlier ages, even before compulsory schooling begins. Analysis published by the Education Policy Institute showed that in 2019 there was a disadvantage gap equivalent to 18 months of educational progress. This is for all GCSE subjects and core GCSE subjects.⁴³ The Key Stage 4 disadvantage gap index summarises the relative attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and all other pupils, based on the average grades achieved in English and maths GCSEs. It now stands at 3.84, its highest level since 2011-12.⁴⁴

Our Uni Connect network of 29 partnerships forms a strong foundation on which to build. Uni Connect has engaged over 1 million school students in nearly 3,000 schools and colleges since its inception. Nearly 540 staff funded by the scheme are employed or based in schools and colleges across the country. We have reoriented Uni Connect to deploy the expertise of universities to improve attainment in those schools and colleges.⁴⁵

With practical support in the form of a new attainment raising toolkit developed with the educational charity Causeway Education, the partnerships will help teachers target those students who could most benefit from extra support.⁴⁶ The attainment gap takes root early in children's school lives, so the focus will be as much on the early years of secondary school as on sixth forms and other post-16 settings.

Universities can support partner schools and colleges through improving the skills of existing teachers, providing targeted academic support to school and college students, tackling non-academic barriers to learning, or supporting curriculum development. They could offer funding or personnel, including tutorial help, to provide practical support. The important thing is that the activities are coordinated and coherent, and based on evidence and evaluation to ensure their impact. We are clear that such work needs to be credibly focused on increasing pupils' likelihood of getting into higher education and getting on once there. The variations to current access and participation plans that we are considering this year have given us considerably greater evidence of current and planned interventions in this area.

Students from disadvantaged and minority backgrounds generally share the same aspirations as their peers, but not the expectation that the individuals, institutions and systems around them will support them sufficiently to make real choices about their lives. We aim to ensure that choice and not chance determines who accesses, and succeeds in, higher education.

Ensuring universities secure free speech

Our third area of focus is freedom of speech within the law. Along with academic freedom, freedom of expression is an essential underpinning principle of UK higher education and democratic values. The core mission of universities and colleges is the pursuit of knowledge, and the principles of free speech and academic freedom are fundamental to this purpose. They provide a necessary context for advancing new ideas, encouraging productive debate, and challenging conventional wisdom.

Legislation before Parliament at the time of writing proposes a strengthened role for the OfS in regulating free speech in universities and their students' unions.⁴⁷ Institutions would be required to take steps

to promote free speech within the law, rather just to secure it. However, the OfS has had a role from its inception in regulating how universities address their free speech obligations, and will continue to do so where appropriate in future interventions.

Youthsight polling for the Higher Education Policy Institute showed that 61 per cent of students say that 'when in doubt' their own university should 'ensure that all students are protected from discrimination rather than allow unlimited free speech.'⁴⁸ A poll for the Policy Institute at Kings College London found that 34 per cent of students now believe that free speech is 'very' or 'fairly' threatened at their university, an increase from 23 per cent in 2019.⁴⁹

In 2023, we will gain students' perspectives on freedom of expression at their universities and colleges through the National Student Survey in England, and we will start to use polling to test the experience of academic staff across England.

Universities have important legal obligations relating to freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law, including obligations that relate to their policies and processes. I hope that 2023 will be the year when those looking at our sector will see university leaders proactively focusing on their compliance with these obligations. However, this cannot be achieved without careful consideration of potentially competing legal rights and obligations, such as the framework of protection against unlawful discrimination and harassment set out in the Equality Act 2010.⁵⁰ For example, there is no legal justification for racial discrimination in the name of free speech.



A statistical overview of higher education in England

Introduction

At a time of global political, social and economic change, and with the implications for higher education of the pandemic still playing out, the need for well evidenced analysis to inform policy and practice is more important than ever.

This section offers a statistical overview of key trends and developments in English higher education, using the latest available data. It draws together key findings from a range of OfS reports and data dashboards. It is not a comprehensive overview – the endnotes include information where fuller statistical information is available on the OfS website.

This section focuses on some key statistics relating to higher education in England:

- Higher education providers: The number of providers, diversity of provision and financial sustainability.
- Students in higher education: Entrants to higher education and their experiences of their courses.
- Student outcomes: Continuation, completion and progression rates.

We have included, where this data is available, information on underrepresented groups of students. The OfS considers these to include, among others: students from deprived areas, areas of lower higher

education participation, or both; some black, Asian and minority ethnic students; mature students; and disabled students (whether or not they receive a Disabled Students Allowance).⁵¹

Higher education providers

Registration

There were 2.4 million students studying in the UK at higher education providers registered with the OfS in 2020-21.⁵² On 5 December 2022, there were 409 registered providers, 67 of them in the 'Approved' category and 342 in the 'Approved (fee cap)' category, which allows them to access certain funding and charge fees up to the higher statutory fee limit.⁵³ They include a variety of organisations, and in 2022 we developed a new methodology for grouping higher education providers to help our presentation of sector data.⁵⁴

The OfS Register includes details such as whether a higher education provider has the power to award degrees and at what level, its charitable status and whether it has the right to use 'university' in its title.⁵⁵ On 5 December 2022, there were 160 providers with degree awarding powers (just under 40 per cent of all registered providers). 105 providers (about a quarter) can award research degrees. 124 providers are universities (just under a third of all). 70 are registered as a charity and 268 are exempt charities (which means that they are not registered with the Charity Commission and the OfS is their principal regulator).⁵⁶

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Table 1: Peer group analysis of changes in income, 2020-21 to 2024-25

Total income (year on year change)						
Peer group	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Change 2020-21 to 2024-25
Non-specialist: high average tariff	1.5%	8.4%	3.4%	4.5%	3.3%	21.1%
Non-specialist: medium average tariff	4.3%	4.9%	4.3%	4.4%	4.7%	19.5%
Non-specialist: low average tariff	7.0%	4.1%	6.2%	5.9%	5.4%	23.2%
Non-specialist: unclassified	-22.8%	26.8%	15.3%	15.5%	14.9%	94.2%
Specialist	6.4%	6.7%	6.1%	5.8%	5.6%	26.6%
Sector	3.2%	6.8%	4.3%	4.8%	4.2%	21.7%

Source: OfS, 'Financial sustainability of higher education providers in England 2022 update' (OfS 2022.32), June 2022, page 8.⁵⁷

Note: The 'Non-specialist: unclassified' group consists of 30 financially small providers, where relatively low year-to-year changes can appear as large percentage movements. 2020-21 numbers are actual; numbers from 2021-22 onwards are forecast.

Table 2: Sources of income, 2019-20 to 2024-25

Income £M						
Source	2019-20 (actual)	2020-21 (actual)	2021-22 (forecast)	2022-23 (forecast)	2023-24 (forecast)	2024-25 (forecast)
Income – Course fees and education tracts	19,394	20,811	22,449	23,771	25,117	26,425
Income – Funding body grants	3,905	4,099	3,887	3,743	3,755	3,749
Income – Research grants and contracts	5,188	5,364	5,692	5,835	6,103	6,371
Income – Other income	6,482	5,960	6,967	7,434	7,853	8,138
Income – Investment income	324	287	270	289	304	314
Income – Donations and endowments	851	784	713	696	704	733
Sector	36,145	37,306	39,979	41,768	43,837	45,729

Source: OfS, 'Financial sustainability of higher education providers in England 2022 update' (OfS 2022.32), June 2022, page 9.⁵⁸

A statistical overview of higher education in England

Financial sustainability

We analysed financial data returned by registered higher education providers in England (excluding further education colleges).⁵⁹ The analysis (published in June 2022) concluded that the overall aggregate financial position of universities, colleges and other registered higher education providers remains sound. However, there is significant variation between providers in terms of financial performance and strength. Overall, they reported a moderate increase in total income of 3.2 per cent in 2020-21, compared with 2019-20. On average, sector income is forecast to be 21.7 per cent higher in 2024-25 than in 2019-20 (see Table 1). Table 2 shows the actual and expected sources of income for providers.

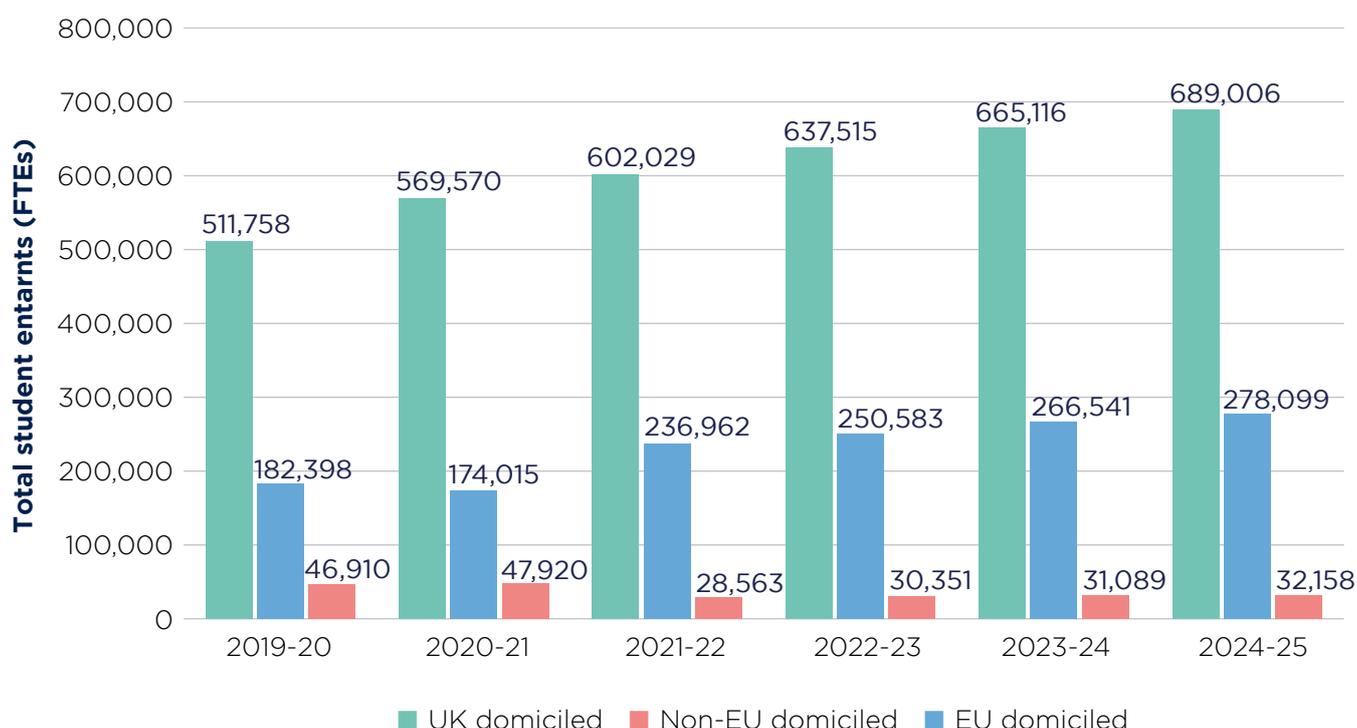
The current and continuing sound financial position reported by the higher education sector is significantly underpinned by providers' assumptions about fee income from overseas students. Overseas (non-EU)

student numbers are forecast by providers to increase by 40.2 per cent from 2020-21 to 2021-22. EU student numbers are expected by providers to decline by 37.3 per cent in the same time period (see Figure 1). This is most likely a consequence of increases in their tuition fees and inability to access student finance since the UK's exit from the EU. However, the increased tuition fees that EU students will pay will partly mitigate any negative financial impact for providers stemming from these decreased numbers.

Reportable events and notifications

Registered higher education providers are required to report to the OfS certain events or matters that could negatively impact their ability to meet ongoing registration requirements. These are called 'reportable events' and are defined in the OfS's regulatory framework.⁶⁰ The OfS received reports of 197 such events in the first and second quarters of 2022, and resolved 172 reportable events in this period.⁶¹

Figure 1: Student numbers and annual growth for total entrants by domicile



Source: OfS, 'Financial sustainability of higher education providers in England 2022 update' (OfS 2022.32), June 2022, page 11.⁶²

Note: 'FTE' = 'full-time equivalent'. 2019-20 and 2020-21 numbers are actual; numbers from 2021-22 onwards are forecast.

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Higher education providers registered with the OfS must meet the ongoing conditions of registration. If students, staff or members of the public believe that a registered provider is not meeting these requirements, they can send us a notification.⁶³ 123 notifications were received and 120 were resolved in the third and fourth quarters of 2021. 103 notifications were received in the first and second quarters of 2022 and 85 were resolved in the same period.⁶⁴

Students in higher education

Profile of students entering higher education

552,860 full-time students, 89,780 part-time students and 21,290 apprentices entered undergraduate education in 2020-21.⁶⁵

Table 3 shows how the number of entrants has changed since 2017-18; for instance, full-time numbers have increased each year. There were noticeable increases in both full-time and part-time student numbers between 2019-20 and 2020-21. For the latter, this increase reversed a decline in numbers in recent years.

Postgraduate student entrant numbers have followed a similar pattern, with increases for full-time students since 2017-18. 287,300 full-time students, 92,560 part-time students and 7,900 apprenticeship students entered postgraduate education in 2020-21. Part-time student numbers declined between

2017-18 and 2019-20. As with undergraduate students, there were notable increases for both full- and part-time postgraduate entrants between 2019-2020 and 2020-21. Students domiciled outside of the UK comprised 18.4 per cent of full-time undergraduate entrants and 55.3 per cent of full-time postgraduate entrants in 2020-21 (see Tables 3 and 4).

The OfS's Key performance measure 5 shows that, in 2020-21, approximately 282,400 young, full-time students domiciled in England entered undergraduate higher education here, the highest total in the past four years. This included around 51,200 students categorised as 'significantly disadvantaged', the highest number in the past four years.⁶⁶

Female students made up the majority of full-time undergraduate and postgraduate entrants in 2020-21 (56.0 and 56.7 per cent respectively; see Table 5). However, these aggregate figures obscure stark differences in the proportions of male and female students in certain course subjects. For example, in 2020-21, 82.9 per cent of undergraduate entrants and 71.5 per cent of postgraduate entrants for engineering, technology and computing were male. Female students made up 86.2 per cent of undergraduate entrants and 71.3 per cent of postgraduate entrants for education and teaching in the same year.⁶⁷

A statistical overview of higher education in England

Table 3: Number of undergraduate entrants by domicile from 2017-18 to 2020-21

Academic year	Domicile	Full-time undergraduate	Part-time undergraduate	Apprenticeship undergraduate
2017-18	UK	412,120	78,330	13,130
	EU	26,270	490	10
	Other international	56,000	600	10
	Unknown	0	0	20
	All domiciles	494,380	79,410	13,170
2018-19	UK	410,790	76,470	18,780
	EU	28,750	470	30
	Other international	60,390	540	30
	Unknown	0	0	10
	All domiciles	499,920	77,480	18,850
2019-20	UK	423,750	75,030	19,550
	EU	29,980	360	30
	Other international	72,880	650	20
	Unknown	10	10	0
	All domiciles	526,610	76,040	19,610
2020-21	UK	451,170	86,930	21,240
	EU	32,100	500	30
	Other international	69,560	2,360	20
	Unknown	40	0	0
	All domiciles	552,860	89,780	21,290

Source: OfS, 'Size and shape of provision data dashboard'. Data from all OfS registered providers.⁶⁸

Note: For each category, student numbers have been rounded to the nearest ten, and totals were calculated using unrounded numbers and then rounded. This means that totals may not match the sum of the categories.

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Table 4: Number of postgraduate entrants by domicile from 2017-18 to 2020-21

Academic year	Domicile	Full-time postgraduate	Part-time postgraduate	Apprenticeship postgraduate
2017-18	UK	102,670	76,420	540
	EU	19,780	2,690	0
	Other international	96,550	3,400	0
	Unknown	0	0	0
	All domiciles	219,010	82,520	540
2018-19	UK	102,710	74,530	3,660
	EU	19,040	2,580	20
	Other international	107,240	3,670	20
	Unknown	0	10	0
	All domiciles	228,990	80,780	3,700
2019-20	UK	104,090	72,600	5,180
	EU	18,780	2,400	20
	Other international	134,120	3,690	50
	Unknown	0	0	0
	All domiciles	256,980	78,680	5,250
2020-21	UK	128,270	85,280	7,840
	EU	18,730	2,710	20
	Other international	140,290	4,560	40
	Unknown	10	10	0
	All domiciles	287,300	92,560	7,900

Source: OfS, 'Size and shape of provision data dashboard'. Data from all OfS registered providers.⁶⁹

Note: For each category, student numbers have been rounded to the nearest ten and totals were calculated using unrounded numbers and then rounded. This means that totals may not match the sum of the categories.

Table 5: Sex of full-time entrants to higher education

Academic year	Proportion of full-time undergraduate entrants			Proportion of full-time postgraduate entrants		
	Female	Male	Other sex	Female	Male	Other sex
2017-18	55.6%	44.4%	0.1%	58.5%	41.3%	0.2%
2018-19	55.9%	43.9%	0.1%	58.7%	41.2%	0.2%
2019-20	55.7%	44.3%	0.1%	57.6%	42.2%	0.2%
2020-21	56.0%	43.9%	0.1%	56.7%	43.1%	0.2%

Source: OfS, 'Size and shape of provision data dashboard'. Data from all OfS registered providers.⁷⁰

Entrants to higher education from underrepresented groups in 2020-21

Data is for full-time undergraduate entrants at OfS registered providers (unless otherwise noted). Where the student characteristic is unknown or not applicable the students are excluded from the calculation of proportions.⁷¹

Socioeconomic background and students from the most deprived areas

22.1 per cent of undergraduate entrants came from the most deprived areas (Quintile 1) and 19.7 per cent came from the least deprived areas in England in 2020-21 (Quintile 5).⁷²

49.2 per cent of full-time undergraduate entrants had parents working in higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations, 28.0 per cent had parents working in routine and manual occupations, and 0.6 per cent had parents who had never worked or were long-term unemployed in 2020-21.⁷³

19.5 per cent of full-time undergraduate entrants were eligible for free school meals at Key Stage 4 or during the prior six years.⁷⁴

Students from areas of low higher education participation

13.4 per cent of England-domiciled undergraduate entrants came from areas of England with the lowest rates of participation in higher education (Quintile 1).

Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

14.8 per cent of undergraduate entrants in 2020-21 were from an Asian background, 10.3 per cent were black, 5.2 per cent were from a mixed ethnic background, and 2.6 per cent were from other minority ethnic groups. (Data is for UK-domiciled entrants only.)

Mature students

Most of the students entering full-time undergraduate courses are under the age of 21 on entry (70.3 per cent of entrants in 2020-21). In contrast, most of the students entering part-time undergraduate courses are mature students, aged 21 or over (84.7 per cent). (Data is for all domiciles.)

Disabled students

14.9 per cent of full-time undergraduate entrants reported having a disability in 2020-21. The proportions of entrants reporting different types of disability are:

- cognitive or learning difficulties: 5.1 per cent
- mental health conditions: 4.3 per cent
- multiple or other impairments: 2.5 per cent
- sensory, medical or physical impairments: 2.1 per cent
- social or communication impairments: 0.9 per cent.

(Data is for all domiciles.)

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National Student Survey findings

The NSS is a survey of final-year undergraduates and provides important information on UK higher education students' opinions on their courses. The response rate in England in 2022 was 68.2 per cent, with 276,344 students taking part in the survey.

In the year when face-to-face teaching resumed for most courses after pandemic-related restrictions were lifted, the 2022 survey results for England show an increase in students reporting positively about access to learning resources. 81 per cent gave positive responses about this in 2022, compared with 73 per cent in 2021. (This data is used for the OfS's Key performance measure 4, 'Students' views on aspects of quality'.⁷⁵) However, the proportion of positive responses about the quality of their teaching was unchanged from 2021, and a decrease from 84 per cent in 2020. More findings from the survey are included in the box below.

Some findings from the NSS 2022 (English higher education providers)

- 80 per cent of students gave positive responses about the quality of their teaching (unchanged from 2021).
- 81 per cent (compared with 73 per cent in 2021) agreed that IT resources and facilities supported their learning well.
- 69 per cent gave positive responses on feedback and assessment (the same proportion as in 2021).
- 84 per cent agreed that staff explained things well, representing no change from last year.
- 65 per cent (compared with 64 per cent in 2021) agreed their course was well organised and running smoothly.
- 71 per cent (70 per cent in 2021) agreed that changes in the course were communicated effectively.⁷⁶





Student outcomes

Continuation

Continuation rates have remained fairly constant for full-time undergraduate students in higher education over the last five years, while rising slightly for their part-time counterparts. Continuation rates are calculated by looking at the proportion of students who continue to study for a higher education qualification (or who have gained one), one year and 15 days after they started their course for full-time students and two years and 15 days for part-time students.

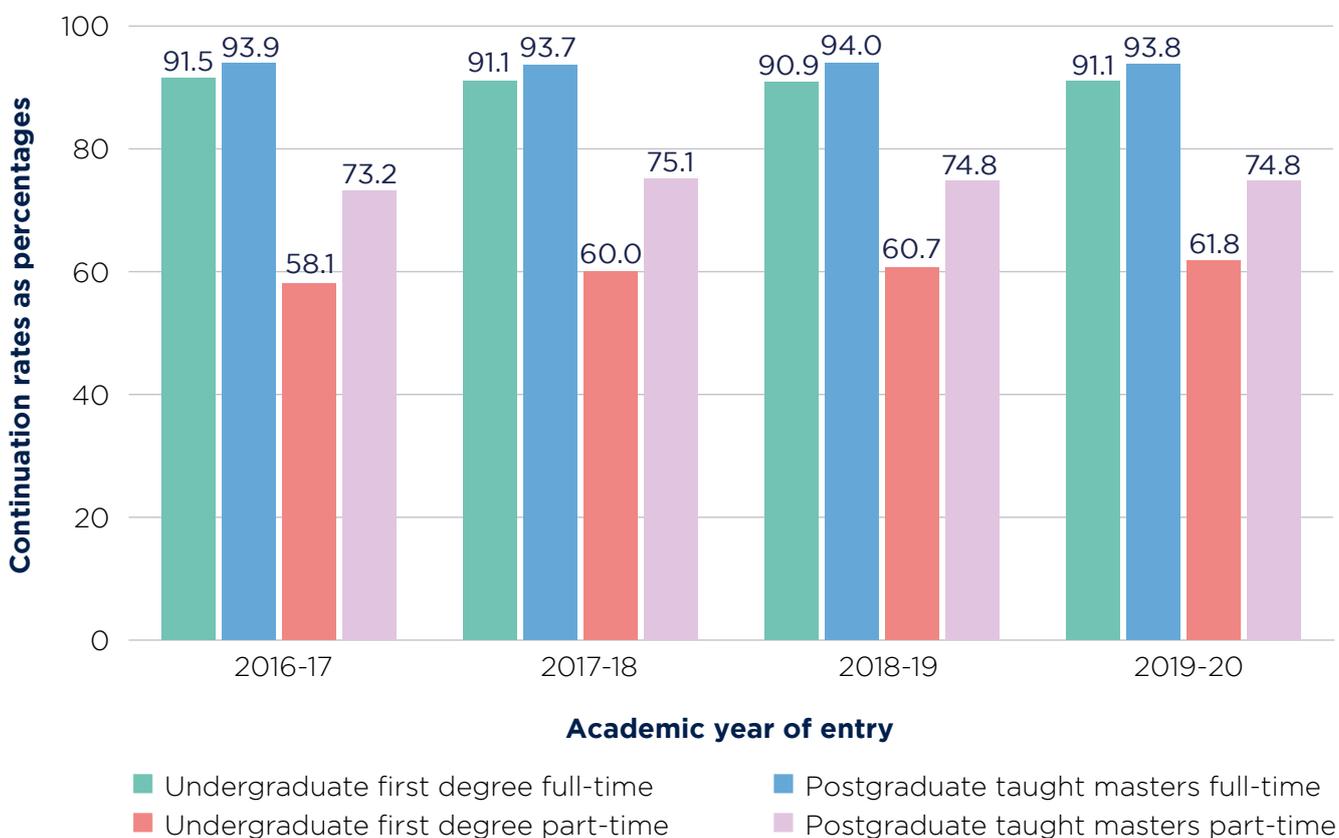
The continuation rate for undergraduate students entering full-time first degrees in 2019-20 is 91.1 per cent. Female full-time undergraduate first degree students have a slightly higher continuation rate than their male equivalents (92.5 per cent and 89.4 per cent respectively).⁷⁷ For postgraduate

students studying a full-time taught masters', the rate is 93.8 per cent. These rates have remained roughly the same for the past four years.

Students studying part-time have lower continuation rates. For part-time undergraduate students entering first degrees in 2019-20 it is 61.8 per cent, an increase of 3.7 percentage points since 2016-17. Postgraduate students studying a part-time taught masters' (having started in 2019-20) have a continuation rate of 74.8 per cent – the same as the previous year but a very slight decrease from 2017-18 (see Figure 2).⁷⁸

The OfS's Key performance measure 1 looks at the extent of poor student outcomes. The proportion of students at providers where the relevant continuation indicator is below our numerical threshold is 5.2 per cent for the most recent year. This decreased from 7.9 per cent over the previous three years.⁷⁹

Figure 2: Continuation rates in higher education



Source: OfS, 'Student outcomes data dashboard'. Data from all OfS registered providers.⁸⁰

Continuation rates for underrepresented groups

Except where otherwise noted, this data is for full-time undergraduate first degree students (all domiciles) and is for four years in aggregate (entrants from 2016-17 to 2019-20). It describes actual differences between the underrepresented group chosen and a reference group. No other factors (for example, entry qualifications) have been taken into account.⁸¹

Socioeconomic background and students from the most deprived areas

Students from the most deprived areas of England (quintiles 1 and 2 measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation) and least deprived areas (quintiles 3, 4, and 5) have continuation rates of 88.2 per cent and 92.8 per cent respectively.⁸² Those students who were eligible for free school meals at Key Stage 4 (or any stage before that) have a continuation rate of 88.6 per cent, compared with 93.3 per cent for those not eligible for free school meals.⁸³

Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

Students from black and minority ethnic groups have lower continuation rates than that for students from a white ethnic group (91.8 per cent).

- Asian or Asian British: 91.1 per cent
- black or black British: 86.9 per cent
- mixed ethnic group: 89.9 per cent
- other ethnic groups: 88.3 per cent.⁸⁴

Mature students

Students whose ages on entry to higher education were 21 to 30 years and 31 years and over have continuation rates of 86.4 per cent and 85.4 per cent respectively. This compares with the continuation rate of 92.6 per cent for students under 21 years.

Disabled students

Students with no reported disability have a continuation rate of 91.3 per cent. Continuation rates are slightly lower for students with one or more reported disabilities (90.2 per cent).

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Completion

Completion rates measure the proportion of students who have gained a higher education qualification (or were continuing in the study of a qualification) four years and 15 days after they started their course (six years and 15 days for part-time students).

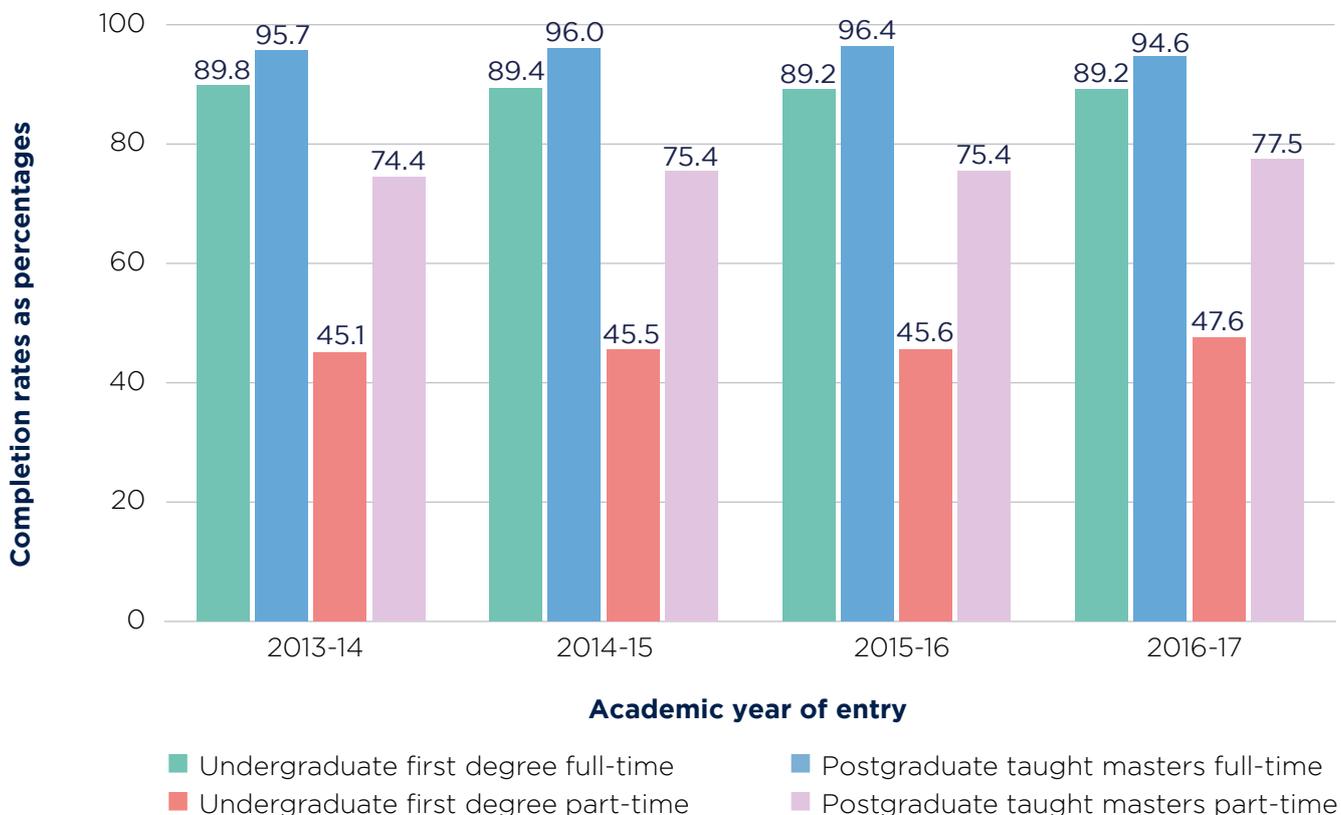
Similarly to the pattern seen in continuation rates, completion rates are higher for full-time students (compared with the rates for part-time students). The completion rate for undergraduate students entering full-time first degrees in 2016-17 (first degree, full-time) is 89.2 per cent (roughly the same as for the previous four years). For their part-time counterparts it is 47.6 per cent (an increase of two percentage points from the previous year). Female full-time

undergraduate first degree students have a higher completion rate than their male equivalents (91.5 per cent and 86.6 per cent respectively).⁸⁵

For postgraduate students starting a full-time taught masters' (full-time) in 2016-17, the completion rate is 94.6 per cent. For part-time students in the same mode of study, it is 77.5 per cent. These rates have remained roughly the same for the previous four years (see Figure 3).⁸⁶

The proportion of students at providers where the relevant completion indicator is below our numerical threshold is 6.7 per cent for the most recent year. This decreased from 9.4 per cent over the previous three years.⁸⁷

Figure 3: Completion rates in higher education



Source: OfS, 'Student outcomes data dashboard'. Data from all OfS registered providers.⁸⁸

Completion rates for underrepresented groups

Except where otherwise noted, this data is for full-time undergraduate first degree students (all domiciles) and is for four years in aggregate (entrants from 2013-14 to 2016-17). It describes actual differences between the underrepresented group chosen and a reference group. No other factors (for example, entry qualifications) have been taken into account.⁸⁹

Socioeconomic background and students from the most deprived areas

Students from the most deprived areas of England (quintiles 1 and 2 measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation) and least deprived areas (quintiles 3, 4, and 5) have completion rates of 85.2 per cent and 91.2 per cent respectively.⁹⁰ Those students who were eligible for free school meals at Key Stage 4 (or any stage before that) have a completion rate of 84.8 per cent, compared with 91.6 per cent for those not eligible for free school meals.⁹¹

Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

Students from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups all have lower completion rates than that for students from a white ethnic group (90.0 per cent):

- Asian or Asian British: 88.7 per cent
- black or black British: 83.7 per cent
- mixed ethnic group: 86.6 per cent
- other ethnic groups: 85.7 per cent⁹²

Mature students

Students whose ages on entry to higher education were 21 to 30 years and 31 years and over have completion rates of 84.1 per cent and 83.6 per cent respectively. This compares with the completion rate of 90.9 per cent for students under 21 years.

Disabled students

Students with no reported disability have a completion rate of 89.7 per cent. Completion rates are lower for students with one or more reported disabilities (86.8 per cent).

English higher education 2022

Progression

Progression rates after higher education use data from the Graduate Outcomes survey that measures the proportion of graduates who progress to managerial or professional employment, or further study or other positive outcomes, 15 months after they have left higher education.⁹³

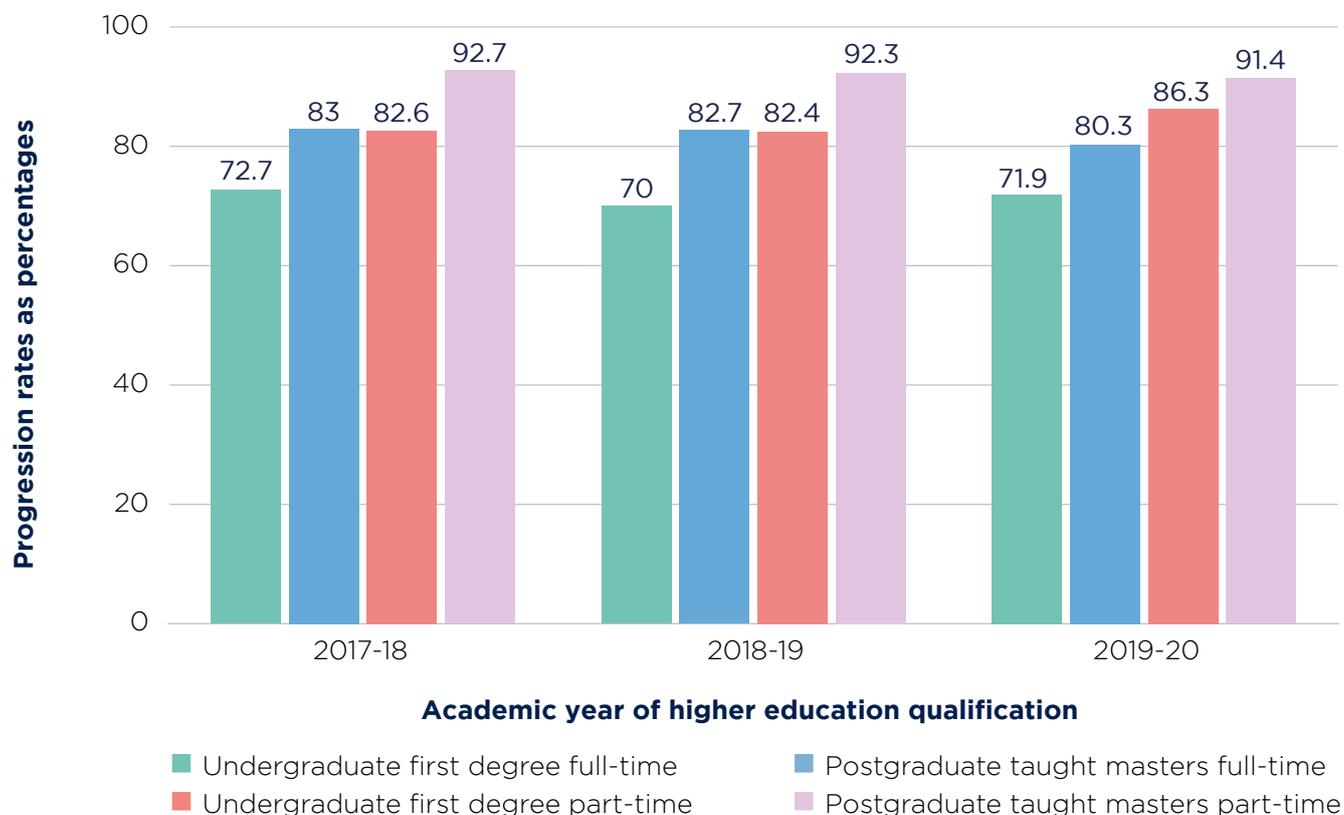
The progression rate for full-time undergraduate students gaining a qualification in higher education in 2019-20 (first degree) is 71.9 per cent (a 1.9 percentage point rise from the previous year). For their part-time counterparts it is higher, at 86.3 per cent (a 3.9 percentage point increase from the previous year). Female full-time undergraduate first degree students have a slightly lower progression rate than male students (71.1 per cent

and 72.2 per cent respectively). It should be noted that these students gained qualifications at a time of related restrictions during the coronavirus pandemic.⁹⁴

For postgraduate students studying a full-time taught masters and gaining a qualification in 2019-20, the progression rate is 80.3 per cent (a slight decrease from the previous two years' figures). Part-time postgraduate students studying a taught masters have a higher rate of 91.4 per cent (also a slight decrease from the previous years' rates) (see Figure 4).⁹⁵

The proportion of students at providers where the relevant progression indicator is below our numerical threshold was 1.6 per cent for the most recent year, a rise from 0.7 per cent two years previously.⁹⁶

Figure 4: Progression rates from higher education



Source: OfS, 'Student outcomes data dashboard'. Data from all OfS registered providers.⁹⁷

Progression rates after higher education for underrepresented groups

Except where otherwise noted, this data is for full-time undergraduate first degree students (UK domiciles only) and is for three years in aggregate (entrants from 2017-18 to 2019-20). It describes actual differences between the underrepresented group chosen and a reference group. No other factors (for example, entry qualifications) have been taken into account.⁹⁸

Socioeconomic background and students from the most deprived areas

Students from the most deprived areas of England (quintiles 1 and 2 measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation) and least deprived areas (quintiles 3, 4, and 5) have progression rates of 67.9 per cent and 73.5 per cent respectively.⁹⁹ Those students who were eligible for free school meals at Key Stage 4 (or any stage before that) have a progression rate of 64.5 per cent, compared with 70.6 per cent for those not eligible for free school meals.¹⁰⁰

Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

Students from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups all have lower progression rates than that for students from a white ethnic group (72.5 per cent):

- Asian or Asian British: 68.0 per cent
- black or black British: 69.1 per cent
- mixed ethnic group: 71.0 per cent
- other ethnic groups: 68.0 per cent

Mature students

Students whose ages on entry to higher education were 21 to 30 years and 31 years and over have progression rates of 73.9 per cent and 76.9 per cent respectively. This compares with the progression rate of 70.8 per cent for students under 21 years.

Disabled students

Students with no reported disability have a progression rate of 71.9 per cent. Progression rates are slightly lower (70.0 per cent) for students with one or more reported disabilities.

Notes

- 1** OfS, 'Size and shape of provision data dashboard' (<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/size-and-shape-of-provision-data-dashboard/>); the OfS Register (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/the-ofs-register/#/). Number of registered providers taken on 5 December 2022.
- 2** Office for Students (OfS), 'Size and shape of provision data dashboard' (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/size-and-shape-of-provision-data-dashboard/data-dashboard/). Figures relate to those studying in the UK at OfS-registered providers.
- 3** OfS, 'Financial sustainability of higher education providers in England 2022 update' (OfS 2022.32), June 2022 (available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/financial-sustainability-of-higher-education-providers-in-england-2022-update).
- 4** See OfS, 'Information for providers on the crisis in Ukraine', April 2022 (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/information-for-providers-on-the-crisis-in-ukraine/).
- 5** The term 'grade inflation' is used to describe a situation where an increase in the awarding of higher grades does not reflect an actual increase in student achievement.
- 6** OfS, 'Our strategy' (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/our-strategy/).
- 7** OfS, 'OfS plans consultation on new condition of registration to tackle harassment and sexual misconduct in higher education, October 2022' (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/ofs-plans-consultation-on-new-condition-of-registration-to-tackle-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct-in-higher-education/).
- 8** OfS, 'About the TEF' (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/about-the-tef).
- 9** OfS, 'Regulator opens investigations into quality of higher education courses', May 2022 (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/regulator-opens-investigations-into-quality-of-higher-education-courses).
- 10** OfS, 'Student outcomes data dashboard' (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/student-outcomes-data-dashboard/); OfS, 'Regulatory advice 20: Regulating student outcomes' (OfS 2022.43), September 2022, (available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-20-regulating-student-outcomes/).
- 11** OfS, 'Regulatory advice 22: Guidance on the Teaching Excellence Framework 2023' (OfS 2022.60), October 2022 (available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-22-guidance-on-the-teaching-excellence-framework-2023).
- 12** OfS, 'Blended learning review: Report of the OfS-appointed Blended Learning Review Panel', October 2022 (available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/blended-learning-and-ofs-regulation/).

- 13** OfS, 'Blended learning and OfS regulation' (OfS 2022.63), October 2022, (available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/blended-learning-and-ofs-regulation/).
- 14** OfS, 'National Student Survey' (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/student-information-and-data/national-student-survey-nss/nss-data-overview). Figures refer to students in England.
- 15** Neves, Jonathan, and Brown, Alexis, 'Student academic experience survey 2022', Higher Education Policy Institute, June 2022 (available at <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2022/06/09/2022-student-academic-experience-survey/>). This survey had responses from 10,142 full-time undergraduate students studying in the UK. Analysis mostly used weighted data.
- 16** OfS, 'Analysis of degree classifications over time: Changes in graduate attainment from 2010-11 to 2020-21', (OfS 2022.22) May 2022, (available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/analysis-of-degree-classifications-over-time-changes-in-graduate-attainment-from-2010-11-to-2020-21).
- 17** Universities UK, 'Universities across UK making strides in tackling grade inflation', September 2022 (<https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/what-we-do/creating-voice-our-members/media-releases/universities-across-uk-making-strides>).
- 18** OfS, 'Maintaining the credibility of degrees' OfS Insight brief #14, July 2022 (available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/insight-briefs); citing data from Higher Education Statistics Agency, Publications archive (www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/publications) and OfS, 'Analysis of degree classifications over time: Changes in graduate attainment from 2010-11 to 2020-21' (OfS 2022.22), May 2022 (available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/analysis-of-degree-classifications-over-time-changes-in-graduate-attainment-from-2010-11-to-2020-21).
- 19** OfS, 'New OfS investigations to examine credibility of degrees', September 2022 (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/new-ofs-investigations-to-examine-credibility-of-degrees).
- 20** OfS, 'Students to be asked about mental wellbeing services and free speech in National Student Survey shake-up', October 2022 (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/students-to-be-asked-about-mental-wellbeing-services-and-free-speech-in-national-student-survey-shake-up/).
- 21** Hillman, N, "'You can't say that!' What students really think of free speech on campus', HEPI, June 2022, (available at <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2022/06/23/you-cant-say-that-new-polling-shows-students-want-more-controls-on-free-expression/>). 1,000 full-time undergraduates were polled via YouthSight, a market research company. 38 per cent believed that universities were becoming less tolerant of a wide range of viewpoints, an increase of 14 percentage points from 2016. Freeman, J, 'No platform: Speaker events at university debating unions', HEPI, October 2022 (available at <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2022/10/13/new-study-finds-quiet-no-platforming-to-be-a-bigger-problem-than-actual-no-platforming/>).
- 22** OfS, 'OfS sets out plans to ensure "choice and not chance" determines success', October 2022 (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/ofs-sets-out-plans-to-ensure-choice-and-not-chance-determines-success).
- 23** OfS, 'Key performance measure 5: Access to higher education', updated November 2022 (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/key-performance-measures/kpm-5-access-to-higher-education/). This figure relates only to those students who could be linked to their school record in their GCSE year.

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- 24** OfS, 'Schools, attainment and the role of higher education', Insight brief #13, April 2022 (available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/schools-attainment-and-the-role-of-higher-education/).
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- 26** OfS, 'Student characteristics data: Population data' (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/size-and-shape-of-provision-data-dashboard/data-dashboard/).
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- 72** Index of Multiple Deprivation data for UK-domiciled students only who have a home postcode in the same country as their provider.
- 73** Data is for UK-domiciled students only and only from providers that submit data to the Higher Education Statistics Agency student record. The collection of the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification data differs depending on the student's entry age. For students aged 21 and over at entry, it is based on their occupation prior to starting their course. For students under 21, it is based on the occupation of their parent, stepparent or guardian who earns the most.
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- 78** Data on continuation rates is for all domiciles and is taken from OfS, 'Student outcomes data dashboard' (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/student-outcomes-data-dashboard/data-dashboard).
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- 81** OfS, 'Student outcomes data dashboard' (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/student-outcomes-data-dashboard/data-dashboard).
- 82** Data is for England-domiciled students only.
- 83** Data is for students under 21 years at age of entry who attended English schools, using information from the National Pupil Database for England.
- 84** Data is for UK-domiciled students only.
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- 89** OfS, 'Student outcomes data dashboard' (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/student-outcomes-data-dashboard/data-dashboard).
- 90** Data is for England-domiciled students only.
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- 92** Data is for UK-domiciled students only.
- 93** See <https://www.graduateoutcomes.ac.uk/>.
- 94** The data for male and female students is for full-time undergraduate first degree students (UK-domiciled only) and for three years in aggregate (qualifiers from 2017-18 to 2019-20).
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- 98** OfS, 'Student outcomes data dashboard' (www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/student-outcomes-data-dashboard/data-dashboard).
- 99** Data is for students domiciled in England only.
- 100** Data is for students under 21 years at age of entry who attended English schools, using information from the National Pupil Database for England.

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