Transparency return 2019 applications data

Notes and sector summary of 2018-19 applications and registrations

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Introduction

Overview

1. Through the Transparency return 2019, the Office for Students (OfS) collected data relating to applications to begin study in 2018-19; received by higher education providers from individuals (applicants). This data formed part of a provider's transparency information[1] and is hereafter referred to as the 'applications data'.[2]

2. The applications data were collected from higher education providers registered with the OfS on or before 3 June 2019 (362 providers). These higher education providers are collectively referred to as the 'sector' in this document.

3. The applications data collected through the Transparency return 2019 related to:

   - The number of applications that a provider received from UK-domiciled applicants for admission on to courses starting in 2018-19 that would lead to a recognised[3] undergraduate higher education award

   - The number of offers made by the provider in relation to those applications

   - The number of those offers accepted

   - The number of those accepted offers that led to a registration.

4. The applications data were collected by mode of study of the course being applied for (full-time, part-time and study as part of an apprenticeship), and by the following characteristics of the applicant associated with an application:

   - The gender of the applicant

   - Their ethnicity

   - Their socioeconomic background, in the form of the English Index of Multiple Deprivation (EIMD) 2015[4] quintile of their home address.

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[1] Details of the transparency information can be found in the OfS publication 'Regulatory Advice 8: Guidance for providers about condition of registration F1: transparency information' (OfS 2018.52) at https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-8-guidance-for-providers-about-condition-of-registration-f1-transparency-information/

[2] Further details and instructions given to providers on submitting the applications data can be found in 'Condition of registration F1: transparency information Guidance for providers on submitting the Transparency return 2019' available at https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/guidance-for-providers-on-submitting-the-transparency-return-2019/

[3] For definition of 'recognised' see page 34 of 'Funding for academic year 2019-20: Approach and data collection' available at https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/funding-for-academic-year-2019-20-approach-and-data-collection/

[4] Details of the English Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015

5. The analysis presented in this document serves as a high-level sector summary of the applications data collected during the Transparency return 2019. Specifically, the number of applications and registrations, and the percentage of applications that led to registrations for all modes of study combined. These figures are presented for key comparison groups within the applicant characteristics described in paragraph 4, and by provider group. Complete analysis of the applications data, including offers and acceptances, split by mode of study, applicant characteristics and provider group can be found in the <u>Transparency return 2019 applications data dashboard</u>.

Notes on the Transparency return 2019 applications data

6. The applications data contains the number of applications and not the number of applicants. The differences in the number of applications and the percentage of applications resulting in offers, acceptances and registrations between different groups could be due to such groups exhibiting different behaviours in the applications process. For example, one group may see more applications being submitted per unique applicant than another group.

7. The applications data were collected in aggregated form by mode of study and by each separate applicant characteristic listed in paragraph 4. It is therefore not possible to perform an analysis of the application data using combinations of applicant characteristics. For example, it is possible to deduce the number of applications submitted across the sector from female applicants for full-time study or the number of applications submitted across the sector from white applicants for full-time study, but it is not possible to deduce the number of applications submitted across the sector from white female applicants for full-time study (combination of applicant gender and ethnicity).

8. The applications process for the different modes of study can vary significantly. For example, a lot of full-time applications across the sector will have been submitted through the Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS), whereas applications to study for a recognised undergraduate higher education award as part of an apprenticeship programme would usually have been submitted directly to the employer running the apprenticeship program. In the case of the latter, the provider at which the applicant may ultimately register in order to study for the recognised undergraduate higher education award part of the apprenticeship programme would only receive the application once the individual is deemed suitable by the employer. Therefore, the percentage of applications for the different modes of study that result in offers, acceptances and registrations are likely impacted by differences in the applications processes.

9. Working with UCAS, the OfS created and made available to providers a data collection tool which enabled providers subscribing to UCAS to easily incorporate their UCAS data, in the process of compiling their applications data. UCAS provided the gender of an applicant in a provider's data as either 'men' or 'women'. At any point of the application process, a provider may receive updated information regarding an applicant's gender and therefore the provider may hold more accurate data relating to this characteristic for an applicant. As an applicant's characteristic data is most likely to be updated at the point of registration, applications from applicants identifying as genders other than male or female may appear to have elevated percentages or under-reported numbers of applications leading to offers, acceptances and registrations. This may also apply to a provider's internal applications process and other applicant characteristics where the data collected is limited in scope or coverage.

10. As part of this summary and the data in the <u>Transparency return 2019 applications data dashboard</u>, providers have been allocated to the following groups: specialist providers, providers with high average tariff, medium average tariff, low average tariff, or further education colleges (FECs) and other higher education providers. Specialist higher education institutions were identified as institutions where at least 60 per cent of provision is concentrated in one or two subjects. Institutions not classed as specialist or an FEC were then ranked by the average tariff score of their UK-domiciled, under-21, undergraduate entrants in the 2014-15 academic year and then grouped into thirds (high average tariff / medium average tariff / low average tariff). Providers were designated as "other" if they had no entrant data for the 2014-15 academic year.

Sector summary of Transparency return 2019 applications data: applications and registrations

11. All numbers and percentages stated in this summary are available in the <u>Transparency return 2019 applications data dashboard</u>.

Mode of study

12. Just under 2.12 million applications for courses starting in 2018-19 were submitted to providers across the sector, 94.0 per cent of which were for full-time study, 5.0 per cent for part-time study and 0.9 per cent for study as part of an apprenticeship.

13. Of almost 479 thousand registrations to the courses applied for; 82.9 percent were for full-time study, 14.0 per cent for part-time study and 3.1 per cent for study as part of an apprenticeship.

14. Just under one fifth (19.9 per cent) of all applications submitted across the sector to begin full-time study in 2018-19 led to registrations. For part-time study, 62.9 per cent of all applications led to registrations. Almost three quarters (73.9 per cent) of applications submitted to the sector to study as part of an apprenticeship led to registrations.

Ethnicity

15. White applicants submitted most applications to the sector (62.3 per cent) to begin study in 2018-19. Black applicants submitted 8.5 per cent of all applications.

16. White applicants also accounted for most entrant registrations in 2018-19 across the sector (70.1 per cent). Black applicants accounted for 8.8 per cent of all registrations.

17. 25.5 per cent of applications from white applicants led to registrations and 23.3 per cent of applications from black applicants led to registrations.

Gender

18. Female applicants accounted for most applications and registrations (56.9 per cent) to begin study in 2018-19 across the sector. Male applicants accounted for 43.0 per cent of all applications and registrations.

19. For both male and female applicants, across the sector 22.6 percent of applications to begin study in 2018-19 led to registrations.

English Index of Multiple Deprivation (EIMD) 2015

20. Of all applications submitted to providers across the sector to begin study in 2018-19, 20.7 per cent were from applicants with home addresses in EIMD 2015 quintile 5 areas (least deprived areas). Applicants with home addresses in EIMD 2015 quintile 1 areas (most deprived area) submitted 19.2 per cent of all applications.

21. Of all registrations to providers across the sector to begin study in 2018-19, 19.8 per cent were for applicants with home addresses in EIMD 2015 quintile 1 areas (most deprived areas). Applicants with home addresses in EIMD 2015 quintile 5 areas (least deprived areas) accounted for 19.5 per cent of registrations.

22. For applications from applicants with home addresses in EIMD 2015 quintile 1 areas, 23.4 per cent led to registrations, whereas 21.4 per cent of applications from applicants from EIMD 2015 quintile 5 areas led to registrations.

Provider group

23. Over one third (34.7 per cent) of all applications across the sector to begin study in 2018-19 were submitted to high average tariff providers. FECs and other providers received the lowest proportion of applications (6.1 per cent).

24. Registrations at medium average tariff providers accounted for 27.6 per cent of all registrations to begin study in 2018-19. High tariff provider registrations accounted for 23.3 per cent of all sector registrations. Both specialist providers and FECs and other higher education providers each accounted for around 12.0 per cent of all registrations.

25. Of all applications made to FECs and other higher education providers, 43.9 per cent led to registrations, whereas 15.2 per cent applications made to high tariff providers led to registrations.