

How student outcomes have changed since 2010

**Student characteristics data: student
outcomes**

**Key findings for students at English higher
education providers between 2010-11 and
2023-24**

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Key findings

This report summarises some of the sector-level trends in the [Student characteristics data: Outcomes data dashboard](#) for UK-domiciled full-time first degree students registered or taught at an OfS-registered provider.

Some of the key findings in the data dashboard include:

- Overall, full-time continuation has either remained steady or decreased across the time period for all the characteristics in this report. The most recent data shows a change in this trend, with an improvement in 2022-23 for all characteristics. For progression, the decline seen in 2021-22 for each of the characteristics has continued in 2022-23.
- Young entrants have higher continuation rates than mature entrants. The differences in continuation rates between young and mature entrants have shown a steady increase between 2014-15 and 2020-21, when it reached 9.4 percentage points. The difference decreased slightly to 9.2 percentage points in 2021-22 and 2022-23.
- Female entrants have higher continuation, completion and attainment rates than male entrants, with the difference in the rate of continuation increasing year on year. For 2022-23 entrants the difference was 4.2 percentage points, up from 4.0 in 2021-22.
- Historically, non-disabled entrants have maintained slightly higher continuation rates than disabled entrants, however this trend has reversed in the last two years. In 2022-23, disabled entrants had a higher continuation rate of 89.0 per cent compared to non-disabled entrants with a rate of 88.3 per cent. This difference increased by 0.3 percentage points from 2021-22.
- Black qualifiers have consistently had lower attainment rates than qualifiers of other ethnicities. The difference between black students and the ethnicity with the next lowest attainment rate decreased from 11.4 percentage points to 9.6 in 2023-24. White students have consistently had the highest attainment rates, although this has narrowed to 3.7 percentage points above mixed students in 2023-24.

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Introduction

1. The Office for Students (OfS) measures student outcomes in four ways. This involves assessing the extent to which students continue and complete their studies, how well they do in those studies, and the type of work they do after they have qualified.
2. Our student characteristics outcomes interactive data dashboard shows sector-level continuation, attainment, completion and progression rates for students by domicile, level of study, mode of study and various student characteristics.¹ We define the four different outcomes measures as follows:

1. **Continuation** – the proportion of entrants that were continuing in the study of a higher education qualification (or gained a qualification) one year and 15 days after they started their course (two years and 15 days for part-time students).
2. **Completion** – the proportion of entrants that were continuing in the study of a higher education qualification (or gained a qualification) four year and 15 days after they started their course (six years and 15 days for part-time students).
3. **Attainment** – the proportion of undergraduate qualifiers that achieve a first or upper-second for their first degree.
4. **Progression** – the proportion of qualifiers that identify managerial or professional employment, further study, or other positive outcomes when they were undertaking the Graduate Outcomes survey.

3. Our student characteristics webpages also include associated datafiles and a technical document providing full definitions of each of the student characteristics together with the methodology we have used to construct the statistics.²
4. The definitions of continuation, completion and progression measures used throughout this publication are consistent with those used by the OfS for other purposes.³ For example, in the:
 - regulation of student outcomes and access and participation
 - Teaching Excellence Framework.

If you have any queries, please contact official.statistics@officeforstudents.org.uk.

¹ See [Student characteristics data: Outcomes data dashboard - Office for Students](#)

² See [Student characteristics data: Outcomes data dashboard - Office for Students](#).

³ These definitions can be found in the 'Description and definition of student outcome and experience measures' document, available at: [Description and definition of student outcome and experience measures - Office for Students](#)

What is in the data dashboard?

Student characteristics

5. The student characteristics outcomes data dashboard includes multiple student characteristics. The characteristics marked with an asterisk (*) relate to one of the characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010.⁴

Age (broad and detailed)*

Adult HE Quintile

Associations between characteristics of students (ABCS) quintiles – access, continuation, completion and progression

Care experience

Disability (broad and type) *

Estrangement

Ethnicity (5 groups and 15 groups)*

Free school meals eligibility

Geography of employment quintiles

Household Residual Income (HRI)

Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)

Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

Individual disadvantage

Parental higher education

Participation of Local Areas (POLAR4)

Religion or belief*

Service child status

Sex*

Sexual orientation*

⁴ For further information on the protected characteristics, see [What does the law say? - Office for Students](#)

Socioeconomic background

Study location

Subcontracted students

Subject of study (broad)

Tracking underrepresentation by area (TUNDRA) MSOA

6. This report looks at the outcomes for students by age, sex, ethnicity and disability as these characteristics are protected characteristics and are used in our core regulatory work.
7. Please visit the dashboard on the OfS website to explore the outcomes for the other student characteristics not covered in this report.⁵

Findings in this report are for UK-domiciled full-time first-degree students who are either taught or registered by an OfS-registered provider. This population is chosen as the largest number of students fall into this category. Other populations are available in the dashboard.

In the report we focus on differences in outcomes in the most recent year of data for each outcome measure. The most recent years of data are:

- **Continuation:** 2022-23 entrants
- **Completion:** 2019-20 entrants
- **Attainment:** 2023-24 qualifiers
- **Progression:** 2022-23 qualifiers.

COVID-19 pandemic impact

8. The sector-level trends reported in the dashboards and key findings include data up to the 2023-24 academic year. Changes in these statistics may be influenced by the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, particularly given that the UK entered three national lockdowns throughout the period March 2020 to July 2021.⁶ For example:
 - a. Any changes to the structure of learning and assessment during this time could have affected students' decisions. It may have had an impact on whether and how they might choose to register on higher education courses, and on whether students continued with their studies.

⁵ See [Student characteristics data: Outcomes data dashboard - Office for Students](#).

⁶ For more information, see www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-12/timeline-coronavirus-lockdown-december-2021.pdf

- b. Many OfS-registered providers introduced a 'no detriment' policy in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years. This typically ensured no student would be awarded a final grade lower than the most recent provider assessment of their attainment.⁷ This may have affected attainment rates in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years.
 - c. The pandemic could have also affected rates across all of the life cycle stages in these years. For example, economic effects, changes to the assessment system and changes in learning methods pre-university during the pandemic.
9. However, users should not automatically interpret changes seen in the data since 2019-20 to have been caused by the pandemic. Other causal factors such as provider actions or the individual motivations or experiences of a student may also have contributed to these changes.
10. The impact of these changes will need to be considered when making comparisons across pandemic-affected years.

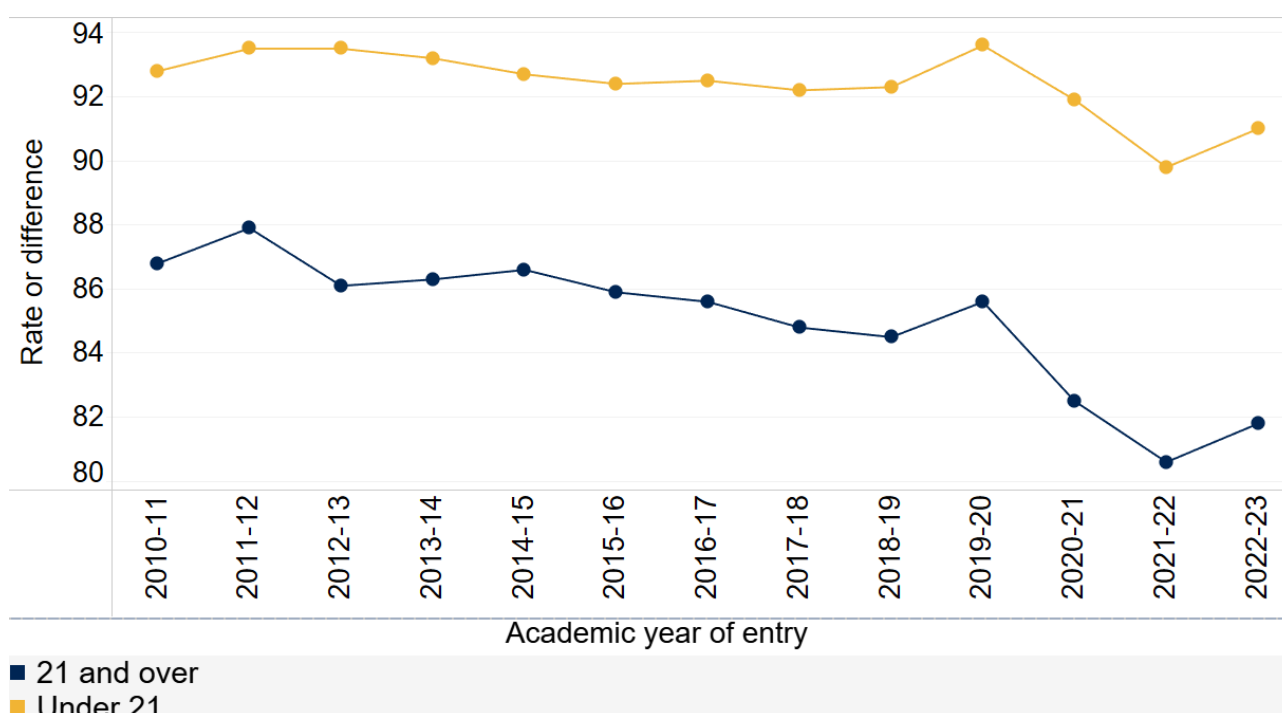
⁷ See [Higher Education Student Statistics: UK, 2020/21 - Qualifications achieved | HESA](#)

Continuation

The proportion of entrants that were continuing in the study of a higher education qualification (or gained a qualification) one year and 15 days after they started their course.

11. Across all age groups, types of disability, ethnic groups and sexes, entrants in 2022-23 had higher continuation rates than entrants in 2021-22.

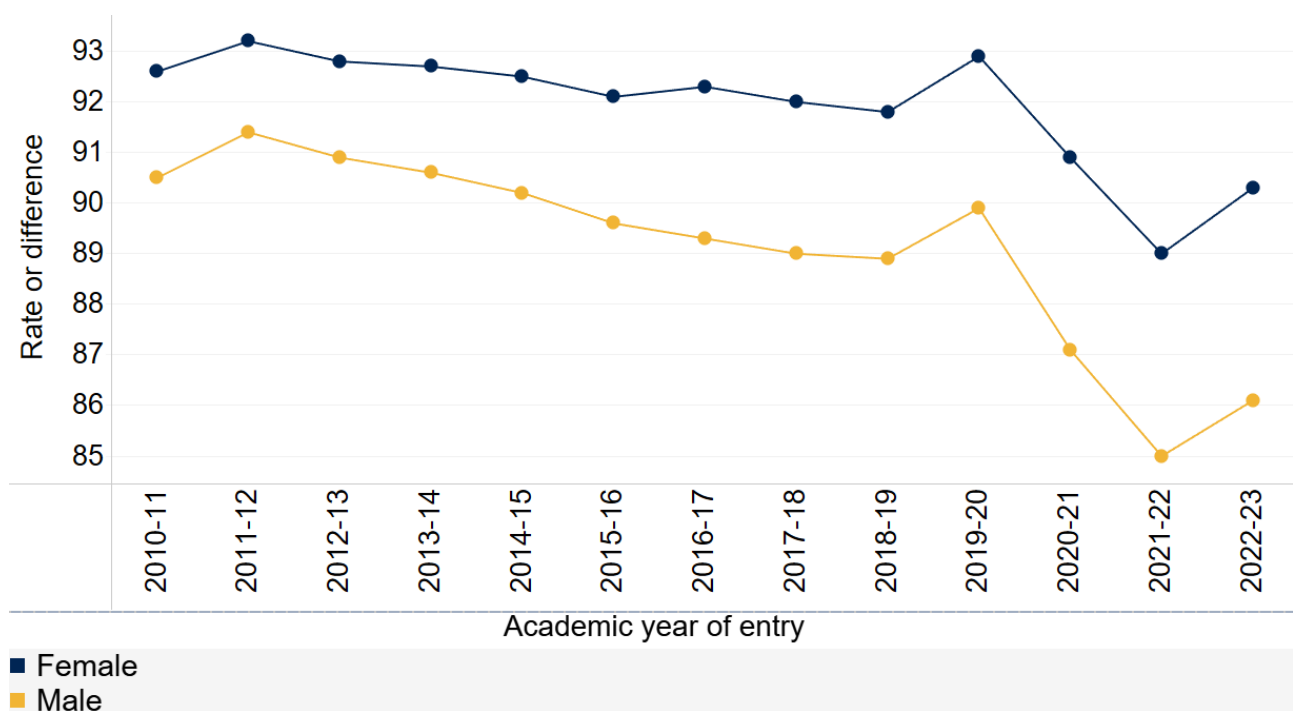
Figure 1: Continuation rates of UK-domiciled full-time first-degree entrants by age from 2010-11 to 2022-23



12. Young students have higher continuation rates than mature students. For both age groups, continuation rates saw a decrease between 2019-20 and 2021-22, but there has been an increase for entrants in 2022-23.

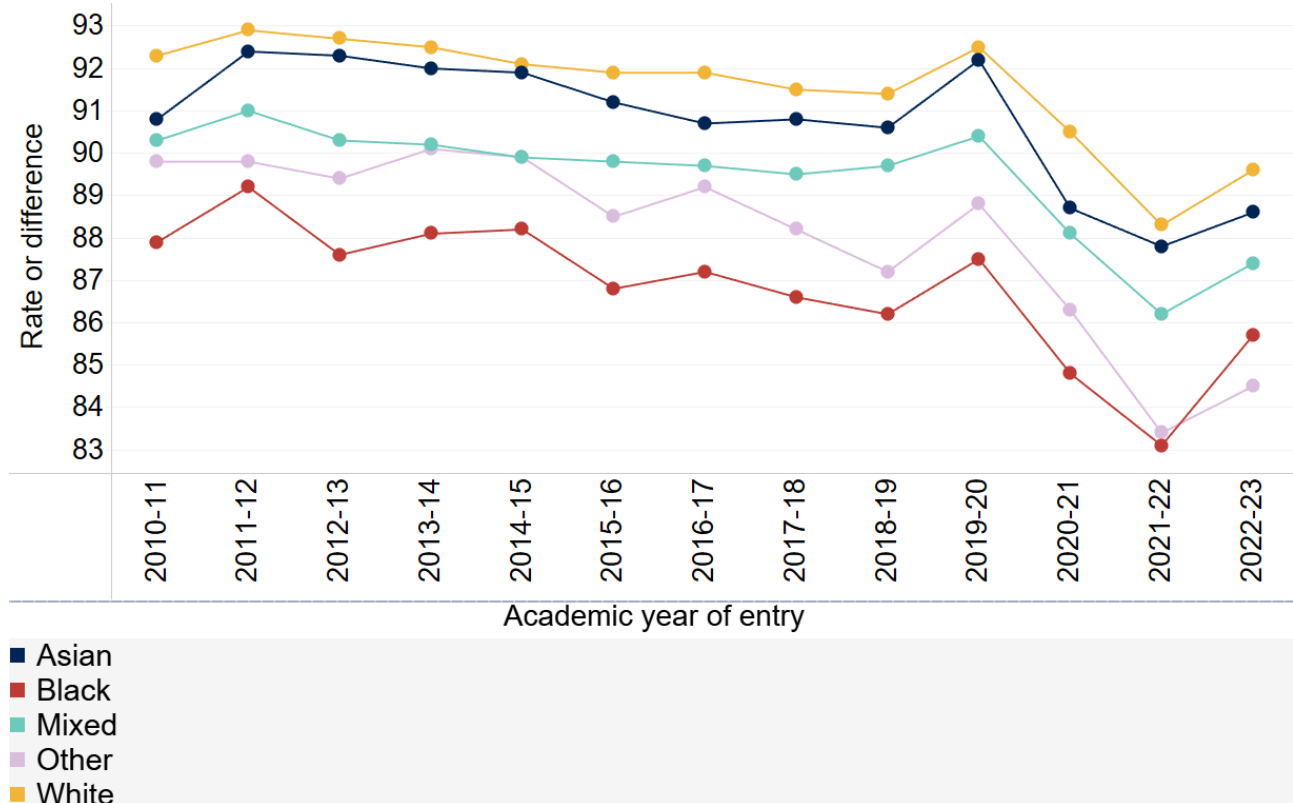
13. The differences in continuation rates between young and mature students increased each year between 2014-15 and 2020-21, with a peak of 9.4 percentage points. This dropped to 9.2 percentage points 2021-22 and remained at this rate for entrants in 2022-23.

Figure 2: Continuation rates of UK-domiciled full-time first-degree entrants by sex from 2010-11 to 2022-23



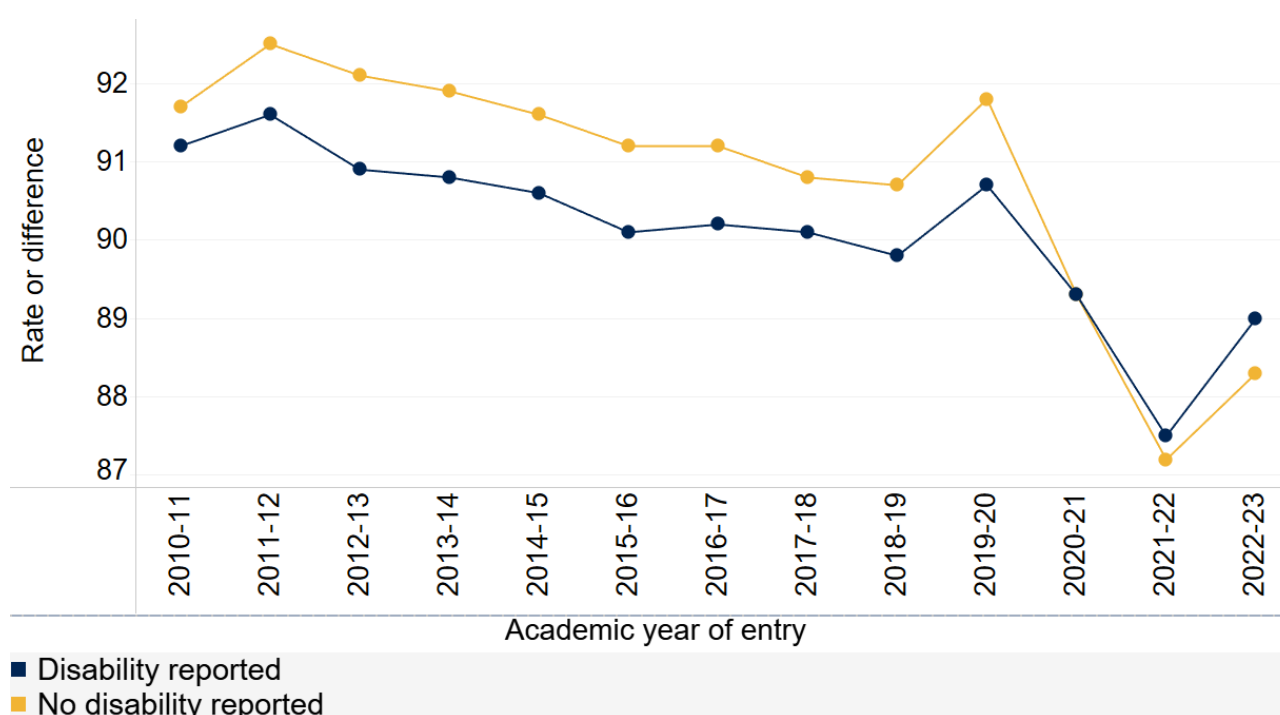
14. While continuation rates for both female and male entrants in 2022-23 are lower than they were at the start of the time series, the rates have increased when compared to entrants in 2021-22. Female students continue to have higher continuation rates than their male counterparts. This gap has continued to increase, rising from 4.0 percentage points for entrants in 2021-22 to 4.2 percentage points for entrants in 2022-23.

Figure 3: Continuation rates of UK-domiciled full-time first-degree entrants by ethnicity from 2010-11 to 2022-23



15. Across the time series, white students have the highest continuation rates in every year, with the continuation rate for Asian students being the next highest. This year, for the first time in the time series, black students did not have the lowest continuation rate. The continuation rate for black entrants in 2022-23 was 85.7 per cent compared to 84.5 per cent for student in the 'other' ethnic group.
16. The gap in continuation rates for black entrants compared to white entrants has decreased for the second year in a row, going from 5.2 percentage points for entrants in 2021-22 to 3.9 percentage points for entrants in 2022-23.

Figure 4: Continuation rates of UK-domiciled full-time first-degree entrants by disability reported from 2010-11 to 2022-23

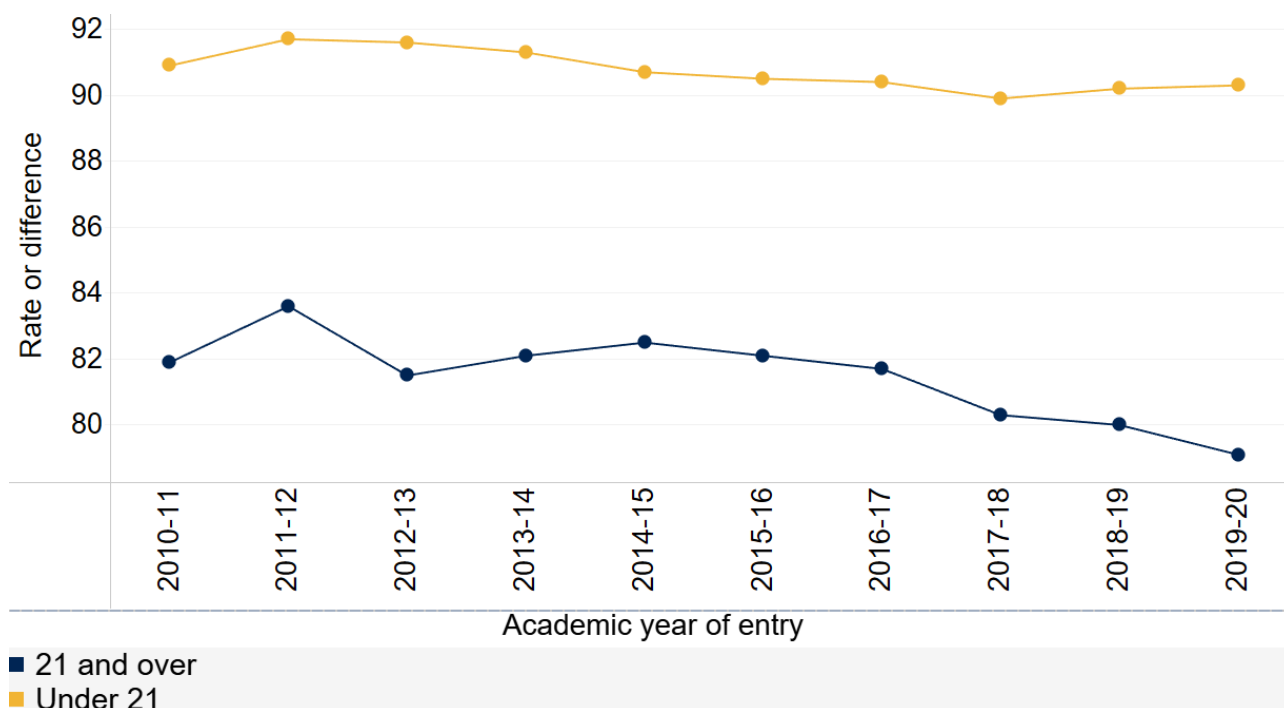


17. Over the last two years there has been a change from entrants with no disability reported having the highest continuation rates to entrants with a disability reported having the highest rate. This gap has increased from 0.4 percentage points for entrants in 2021-22 to 0.7 percentage points for entrants in 2022-23.

Completion

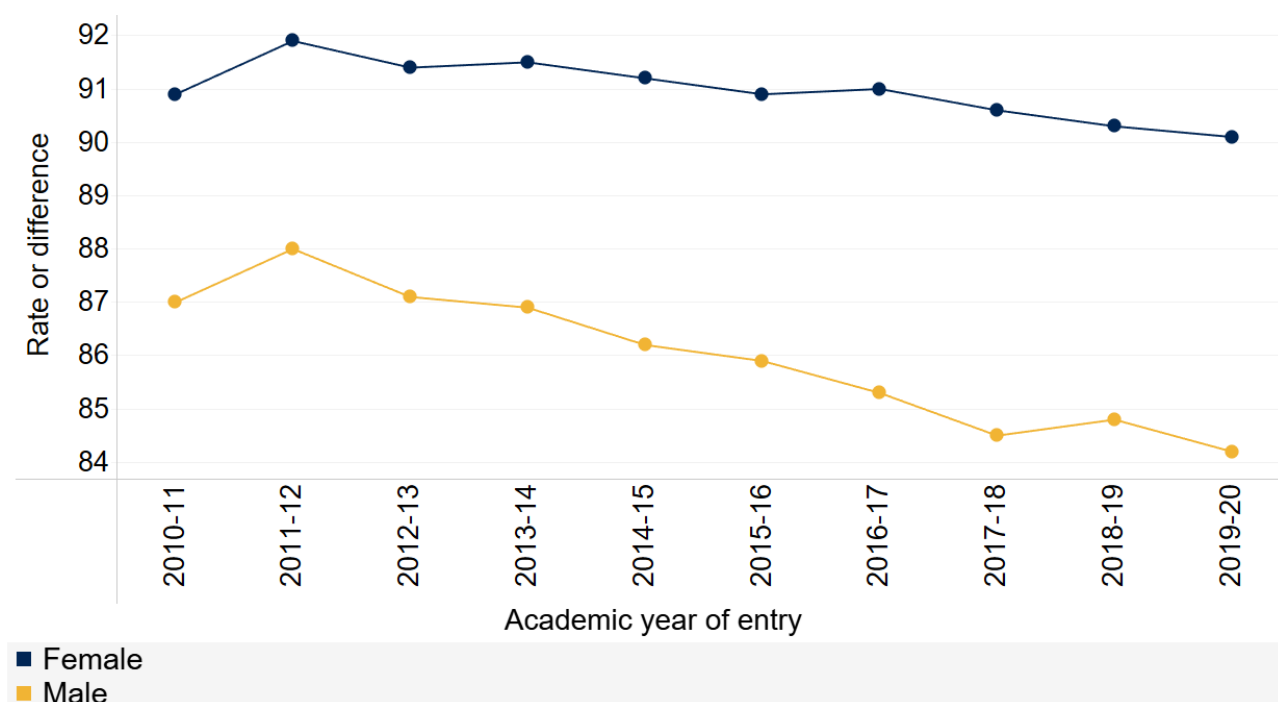
The proportion of entrants that were continuing in the study a higher education qualification (or gained a qualification) four year and 15 days after they started their course.

Figure 5: Completion rates of UK-domiciled full-time first-degree entrants by age from 2010-11 to 2019-20



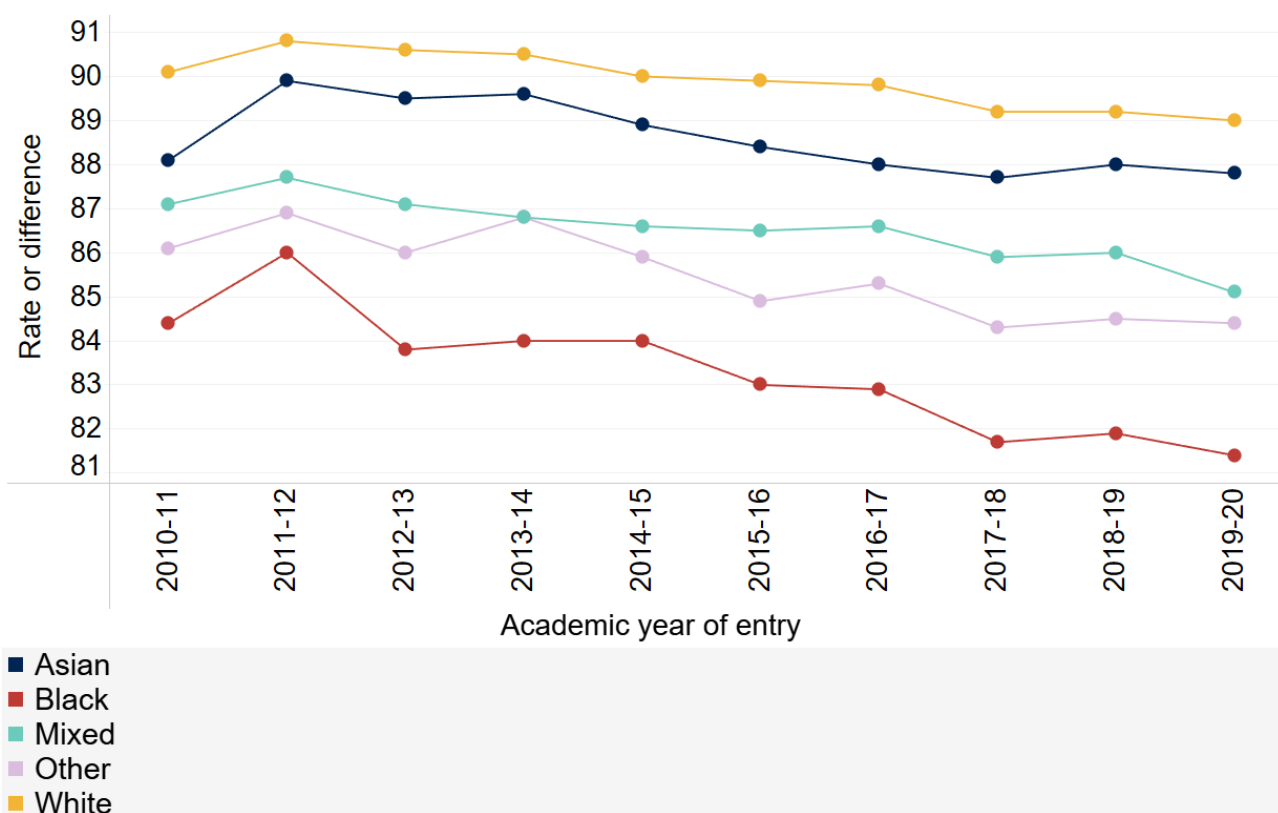
18. Across the entire time series completion rates for young students have remained higher than for mature students. Rates have also remained within two percentage points for young students with only a slight decline since 2012-13. For entrants in 2019-20 the completion rate is 90.3 per cent, a slight increase from 90.2 per cent for entrants in 2018-19.
19. Completion rates of mature entrants in 2019-20 were 11.3 percentage points lower than for young entrants. This continues the trend of a widening gap in completion rates which has been seen across the last five years of the time series.

Figure 6: Completion rates of UK-domiciled full-time first-degree entrants by sex from 2010-11 to 2019-20



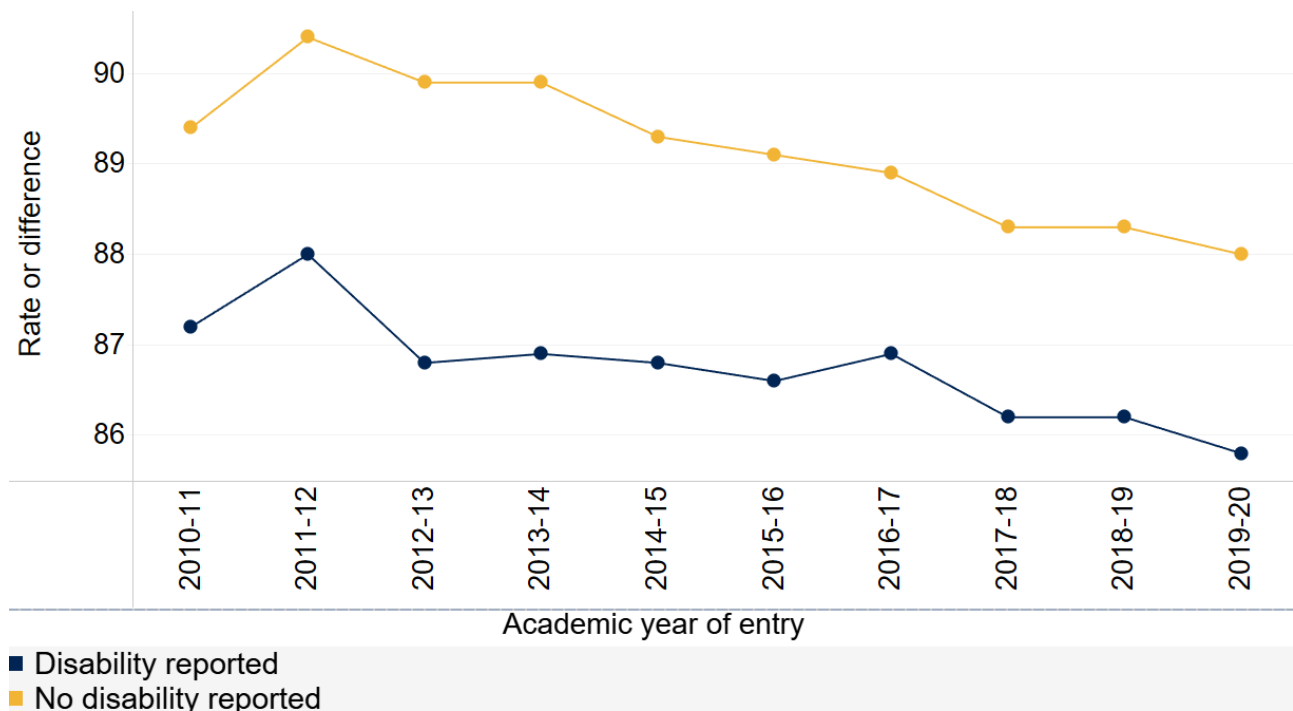
20. Completion rates are higher for female students than for male students. This gap has seen an overall increase across the time series. In 2019-20 the completion rate for female entrants was 6.0 percentage points higher than for male entrants, a difference that has grown from 5.4 percentage points for entrants in 2018-19 but remains lower than the largest gap in the time series (6.1 percentage points for entrants in 2017-18).

Figure 7: Completion rates of UK-domiciled full-time first-degree entrants by ethnicity from 2010-11 to 2019-20



21. Completion rates have seen a slight decline for all ethnic groups between entrants in 2018-19 and entrants in 2019-20. This decrease is most pronounced for students with a mixed ethnic background, decreasing from 86.0 per cent for entrants in 2018-19 to 85.1 per cent.
22. Black students continue to have the lowest completion rates of all the ethnic groups. The gap in continuation rates between white and black students increased between entrants in 2018-19 and 2019-20 and is now the largest we have seen across the time series, at 7.6 percentage points.

Figure 8: Completion rates of UK-domiciled full-time first-degree entrants by disability reported from 2010-11 to 2019-20

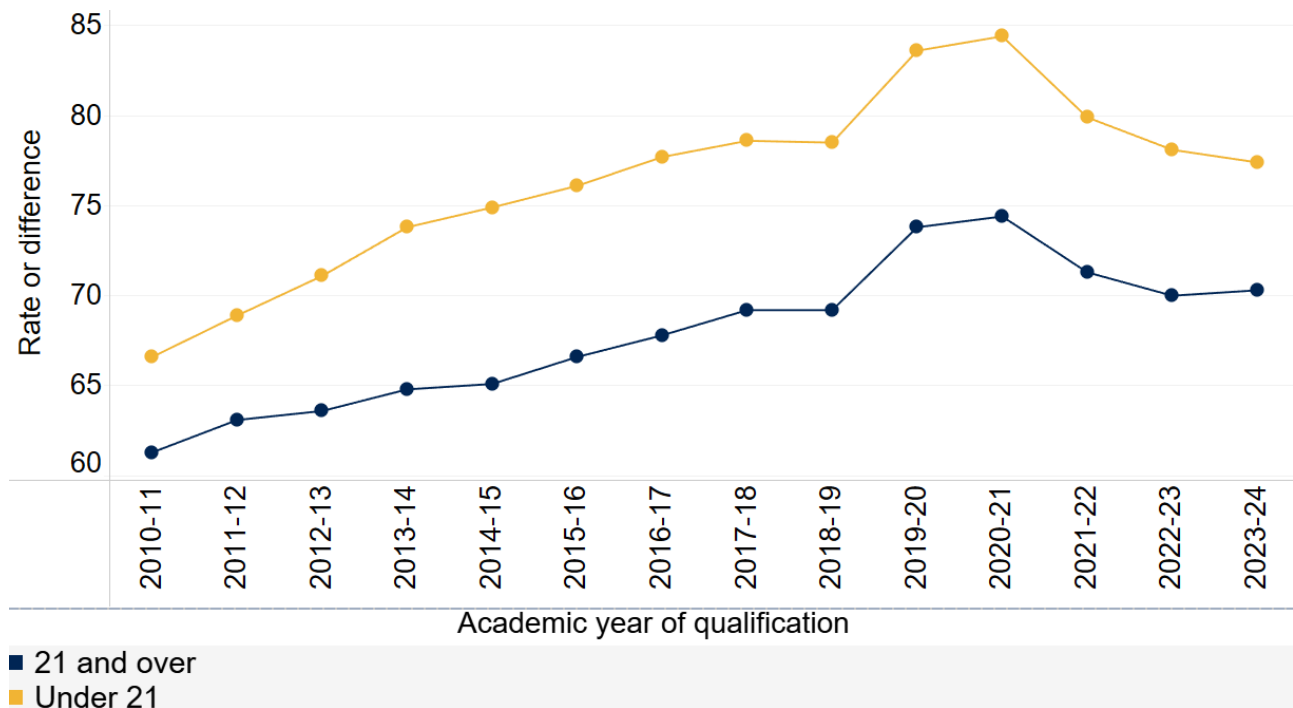


23. Throughout the time series, the completion rates for students with no disability reported has remained consistently higher than for students with a disability reported. While this gap had been closing for entrants from 2012-13 to 2016-17, it has since seen a slight increase. The gap in completion rates for entrants in 2019-20 was 2.1 percentage points.

Attainment

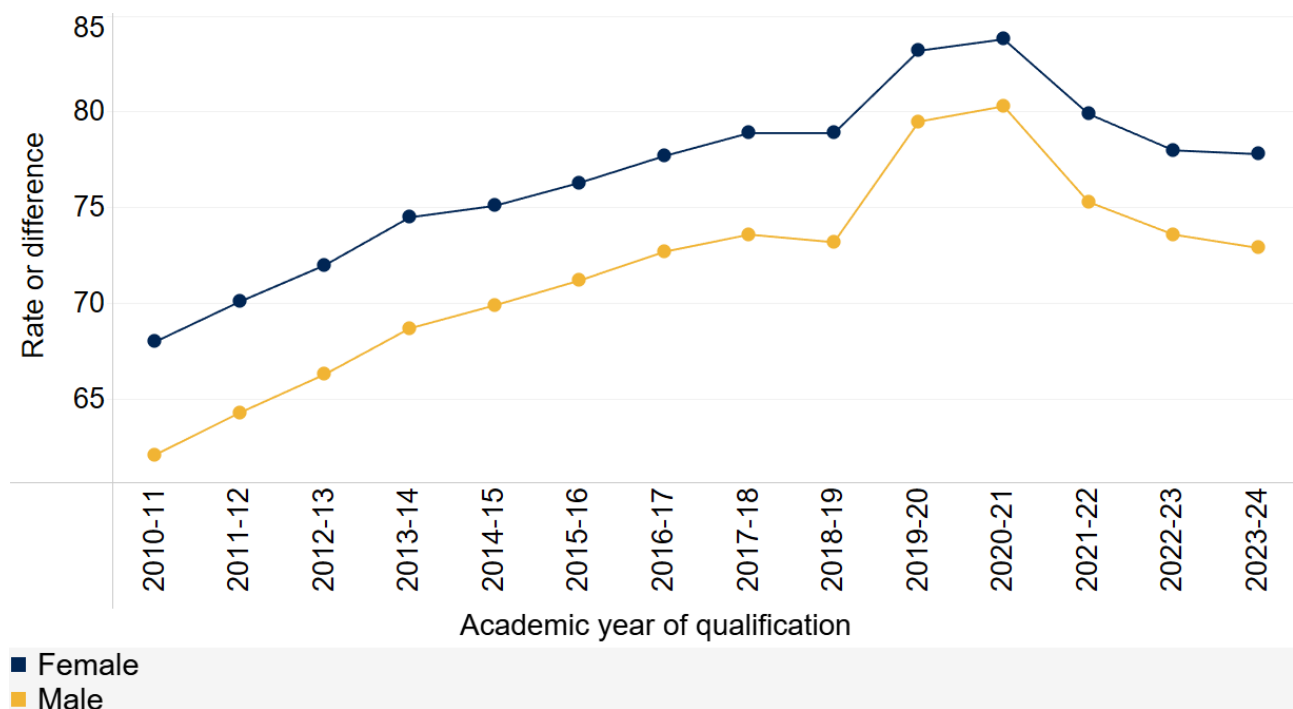
The proportion of undergraduate qualifiers that achieve a first or upper-second for their first degree.

Figure 9: Attainment rates of UK-domiciled full-time first-degree qualifiers by age from 2010-11 to 2023-24



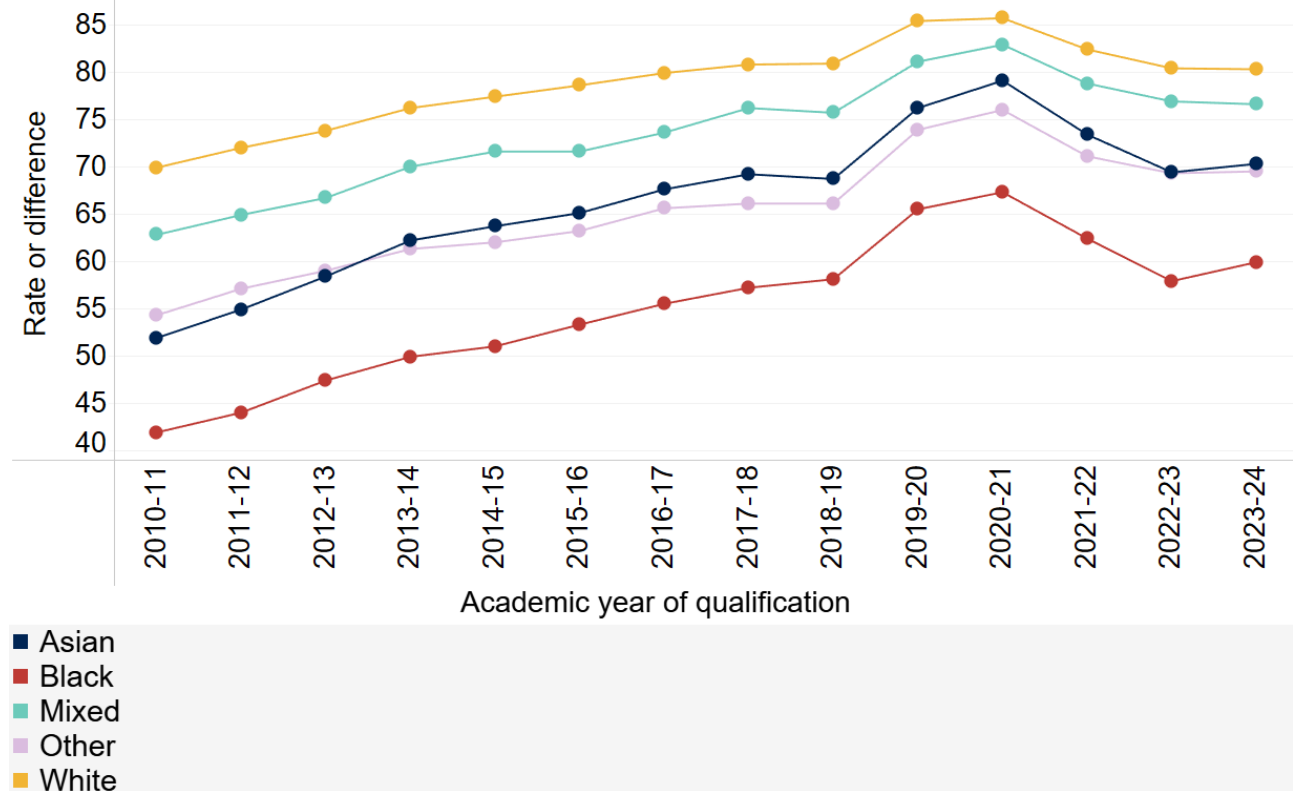
24. Attainment rates for young qualifiers (under 21 at the start of their course) have continued to decline in the most recent year, from 78.1 per cent for qualifiers in 2022-23 to 77.4 per cent for qualifiers in 2023-24. However, this is not true for qualifiers who were 21 and over at the start of their course, whose attainment rate increased from 70.0 per cent for qualifiers in 2022-23 to 70.3 per cent in the following year.
25. This continues the trend of the gap in attainment rate closing between the two age groups, with that gap sitting at 7.1 percentage points. However, the gap is still larger than it was at the start of the time series (5.3 percentage points).

Figure 10: Attainment rates of UK-domiciled full-time first-degree qualifiers by sex from 2010-11 to 2023-24



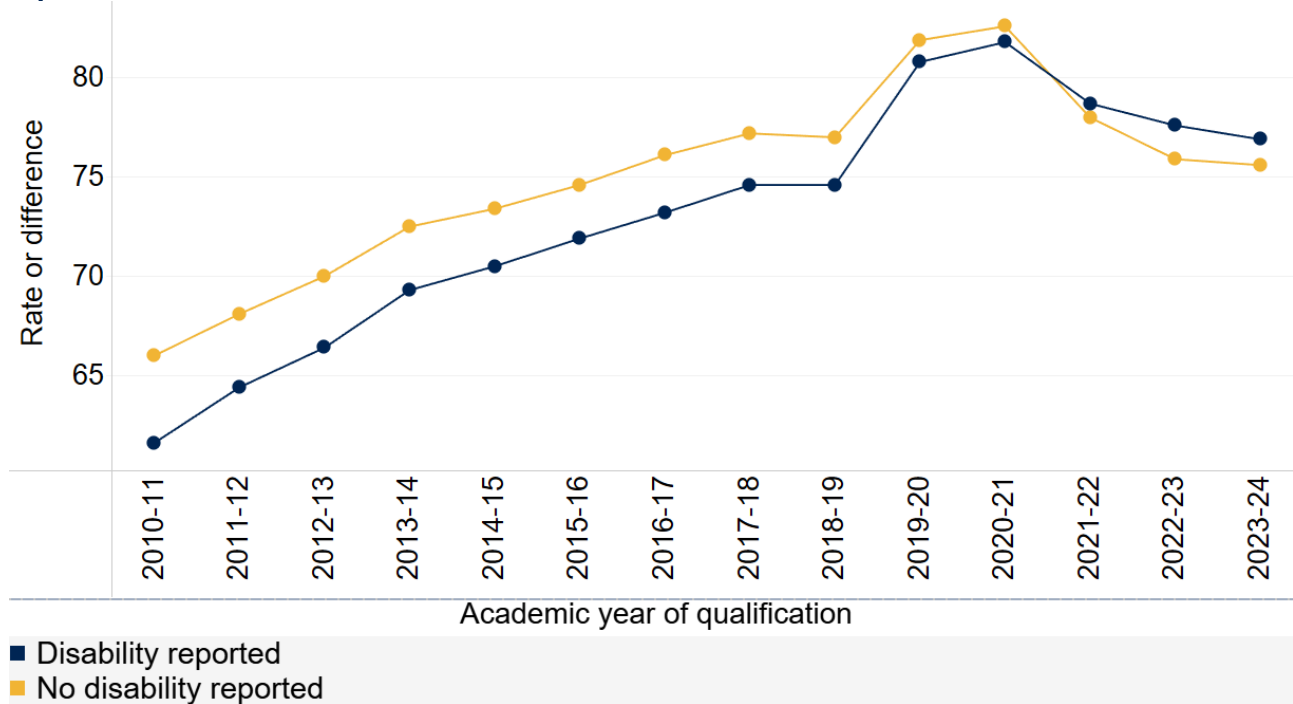
26. Attainment rates for both female and male student have decreased between qualifiers in 2022-23 and qualifiers in 2023-24 (78.0 per cent to 77.8 per cent for female and 73.6 per cent to 72.9 per cent for males). This marks the third consecutive year of a declining trend. While the gap in attainment rates between female and male students saw a decrease through the pandemic years (2019-20 and 2020-21), the gap is beginning to widen again and sits at 4.9 percentage points for qualifiers in 2023-24.

Figure 11: Attainment rates of UK-domiciled full-time first-degree qualifiers by ethnicity from 2010-11 to 2023-24



27. While qualifiers from black, Asian and 'other' ethnic backgrounds saw an increase in attainment rates between 2022-23 and 2023-24, those from white and mixed backgrounds saw a slight decrease.
28. Black qualifiers continue to have the lowest attainment rate of the ethnic groups, with a difference of 20.4 percentage points between white and black qualifiers in 2023-24. However, this is a decrease from a gap of 28.0 percentage points at the beginning of the story and of 22.5 percentage points for qualifiers in 2022-23.

Figure 12: Attainment rates of UK-domiciled full-time first-degree qualifiers by disability reported from 2010-11 to 2023-24



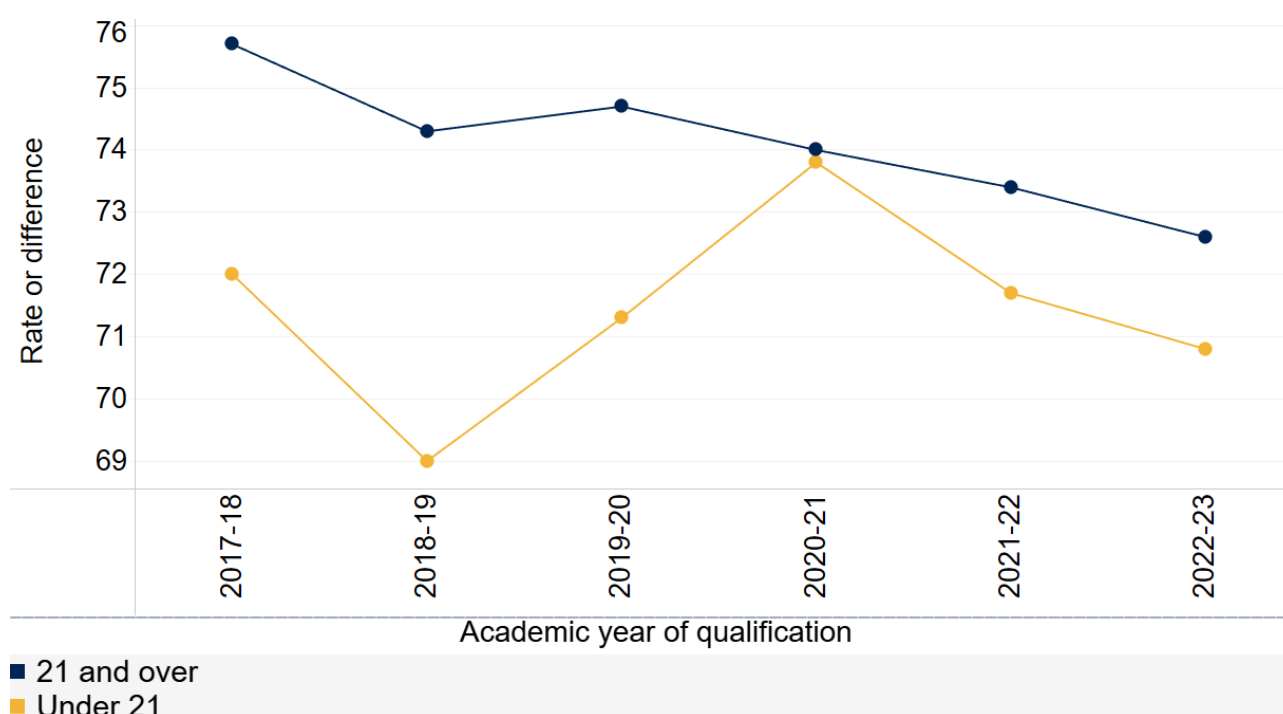
29. As with the previous two years, qualifiers in 2023-24 who reported having a disability had higher attainment rates than those who did not report having a disability (76.9 per cent and 75.6 respectively). However, the gap in attainment rates between the two groups is slightly lower for qualifiers in 2023-24 (1.4 percentage points) than for qualifiers in 2022-23 (1.7 percentage points).

Progression

The proportion of qualifiers that identify that they had a positive outcome when they were undertaking the Graduate Outcomes survey.

30. Across all age groups, types of disability, ethnic groups and sexes, qualifiers in 2022-23 had lower progression rates than qualifiers in 2021-22. There was also a decline in response rates to the Graduate Outcomes survey between those surveyed in 2021-22 and those surveyed in 2022-23.⁸

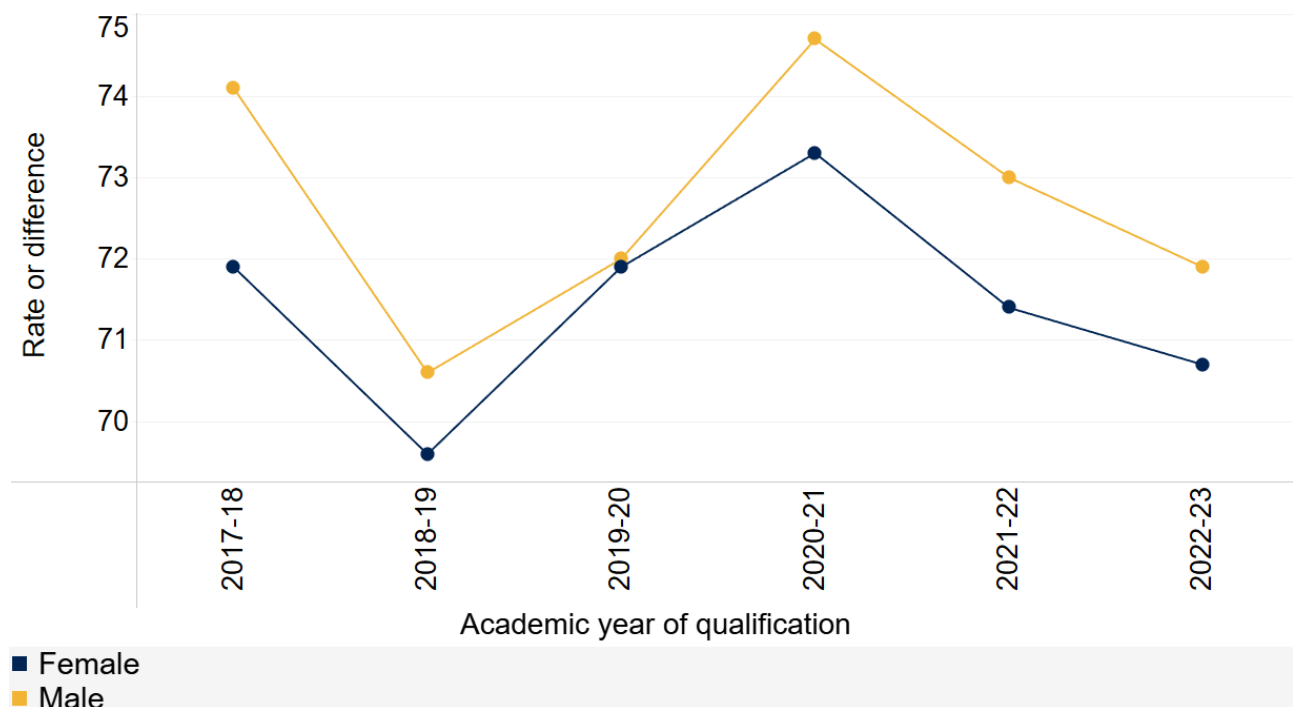
Figure 13: Progression rates of UK-domiciled full-time first-degree qualifiers by age from 2017-18 to 2022-23



31. Over the whole time series, the progression rate for qualifiers who were over 21 at the start of their studies has dropped from 75.7 per cent in 2017-18 to 72.6 per cent in 2022-23. The rate for young qualifiers (those aged under 21 at the start of their studies) has seen also seen a decrease across the time series, although this has been less consistent with significant rises in progression rates between 2018-19 and 2020-21. The progression rate for young qualifier in 2022-23 was 70.8 per cent compared to 71.7 per cent for qualifiers in 2021-22 and 72 per cent for qualifiers in 2017-18.

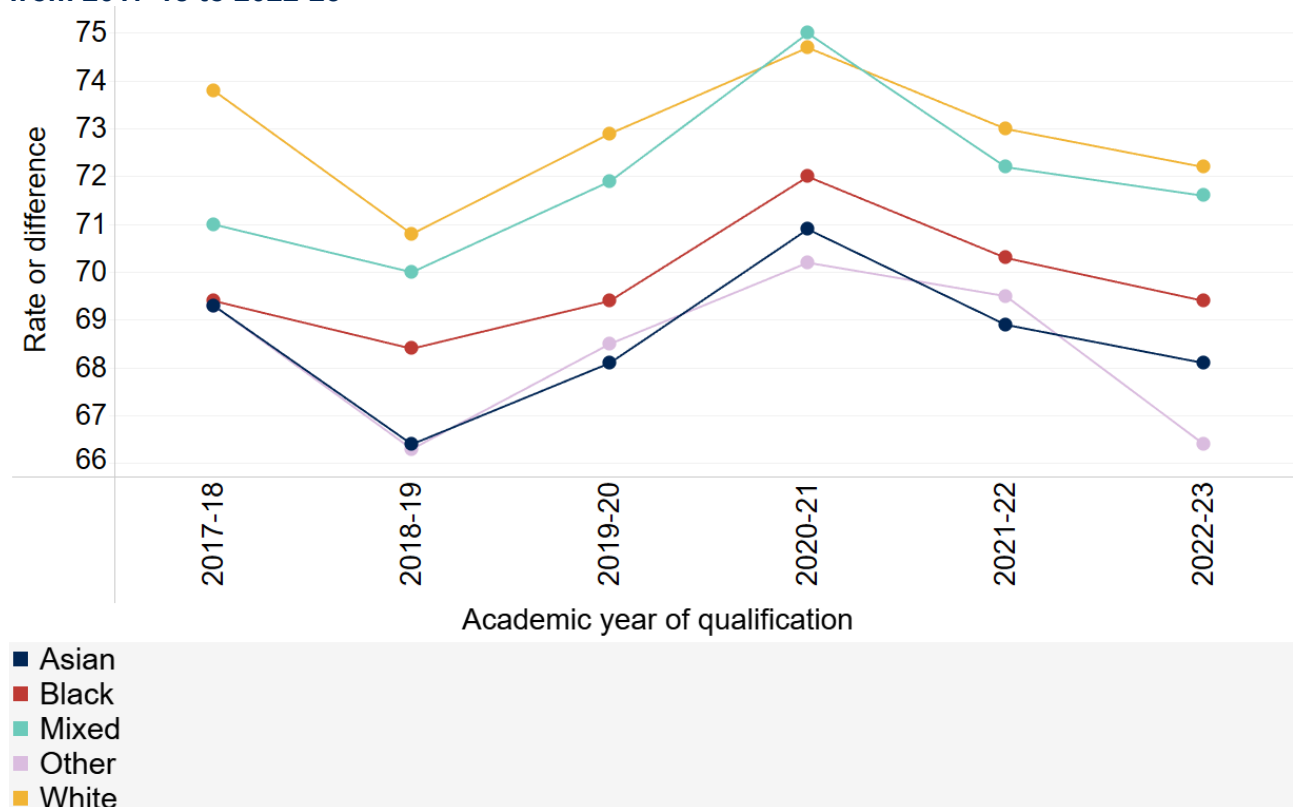
⁸ See [Graduate Outcomes 2022/23: Summary Statistics - Summary | HESA](#) for further details.

Figure 14: Progression rates of UK-domiciled full-time first-degree qualifiers by sex from 2017-18 to 2022-23



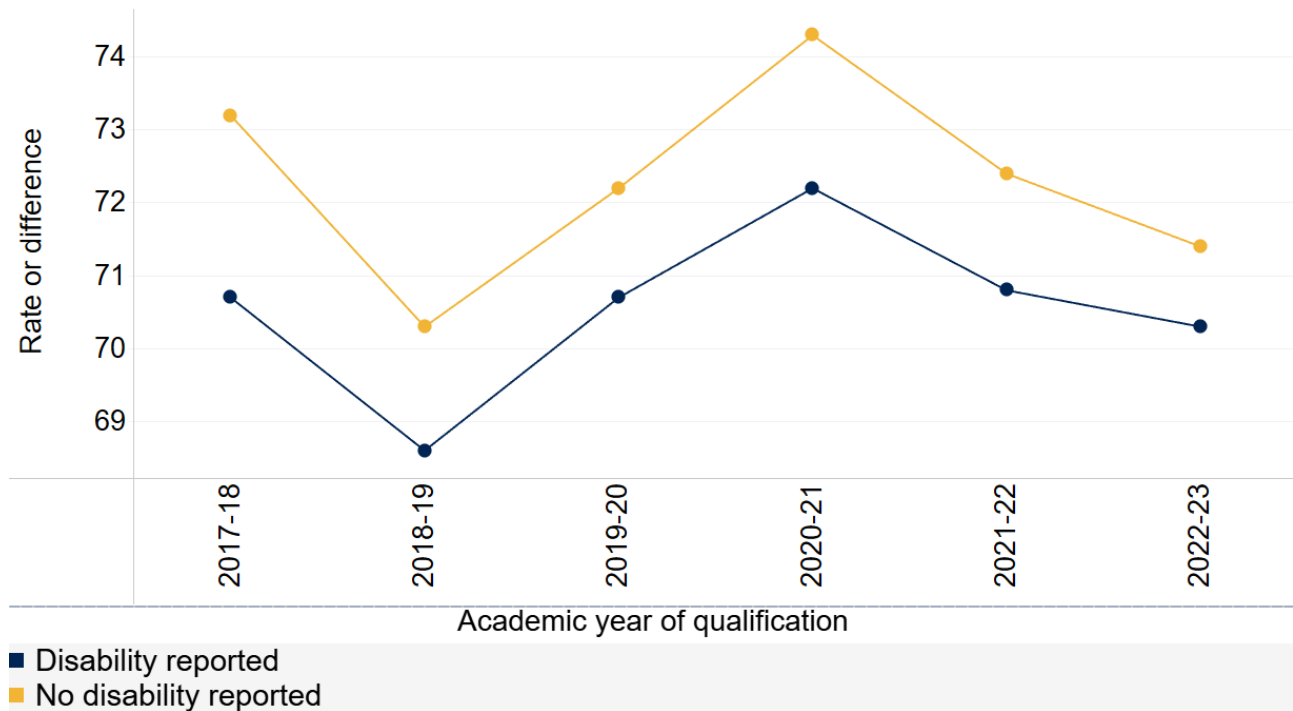
32. Male qualifiers have had higher progression than female qualifiers across the time series, despite the gap coming close to closing in 2019-20. Both female and male qualifiers in 2022-23 had lower progression rates than their counterparts in 2021-22 (71.4 per cent in 2021-22 and 70.7 percent in 2022-23 for female qualifiers and 73.0 per cent in 2021-22 and 71.9 per cent in 2022-23 for male qualifiers).

Figure 15: Progression rates of UK-domiciled full-time first-degree qualifiers by ethnicity from 2017-18 to 2022-23



33. While all ethnic groups saw a decrease in progression rates between qualifiers in 2021-22 and qualifiers in 2022-23, this decrease was largest for those in the 'other' ethnic group (69.5 per cent to 66.4 per cent). White qualifiers have remained the groups with the highest progression rates at 72.2 per cent.

Figure 16: Progression rates of UK-domiciled full-time first-degree qualifiers by disability reported from 2017-18 to 2022-23



34. Unlike in continuation and attainment, qualifiers who reported a disability have consistently lower progression rates than those who did not report a disability. In 2022-23, the progression rate for students with a disability reported was 70.3 per cent compared with 71.4 per cent for those who did not report a disability. While the gap persists, it is now the smallest it has been across the time series at 1.1 percentage points.

Notes

35. This report and associated dashboard include unadjusted rates of continuation, completion, attainment and progression between different student groups.⁹
36. The report does not examine the relationship between different characteristics and students' outcomes after taking other factors into account.
37. Some of these characteristics included in this release apply to small populations. It is important to note that we have not performed significance or sensitivity analysis on the raw rates included here. Small differences in rates may not represent statistically significant differences in outcomes for students with those characteristics.
38. These findings relate to the years covered by the data. They should not be assumed to reflect future performance.
39. Students have been excluded from the calculation of outcomes where information was not provided. If the data is not applicable or is otherwise unknown, this has also been excluded.

⁹ The student outcomes data dashboard can be viewed at [Student characteristics data: Outcomes data dashboard - Office for Students](#).



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