

Interim assessment of UCAS acceptances by intended entry year, country of provider and qualifications held

UCAS

(2015 cycle, 4 weeks after A level results)

UCAS Analysis and Research

24 September 2015

Summary

This analysis reports UCAS acceptances by intended academic year of entry between the entry years of 2012-13 and 2015-16.

Reporting acceptances by the academic year they are recruited to, rather than by the UCAS admissions cycle in which they were accepted, is a better guide to the change in the number of those starting higher education in a particular academic year.

These statistics reflect the position recorded exactly four weeks after GCE A level results day. Acceptances at this point are usually around 98 per cent of the eventual end of cycle totals over recent cycles. For entry into 2014-15 there was a net increase of 7,950 (+2 per cent) between this point and the end of the 2014 cycle.

The number of acceptances by entry year at this point can differ from the final number of higher education enrolments recorded on statistical returns. This can be due to a number of factors that can vary in their effect from year to year.

Numbers of acceptances reported here exclude those to teacher training courses at providers in Scotland. This is because a large set of teacher training courses in Scotland are being recruited through the UCAS Undergraduate scheme for the first time in 2015, having previously been recruited through UCAS Teacher Training. Reporting this way gives a better 'like for like' comparison between years of entry, particularly when looking at applicants from Scotland and providers in Scotland.

Recruitment of students from all domiciles by entry year

- Acceptances to the 2015-16 entry year at this point are 511,730.
- This is an increase of 12,610 (3 per cent) compared to the 2014-15 entry year (at the equivalent point in the 2014 cycle).
- Acceptances to the 2015-16 entry year are 7 per cent more than to 2013-14 and 16 per cent more than to 2012-13.
- The total increase of 12,610 to the 2015-16 entry year (compared to the 2014-15 entry year) is split as an increase of 10,800 in acceptances to enter HE immediately and an increase of 1,810 in deferred entry (from the previous cycle)
- By country of provider, acceptances to the 2015-16 entry year, and change compared to the 2014-15 entry year:

England:	435,270,	+13,250,	+3 per cent
Northern Ireland:	9,910,	-1,150,	-10 per cent
Scotland:	41,910,	+620,	+2 per cent
Wales:	24,640,	-110,	No change to nearest per cent

- The six largest (numerically) changes by domicile group and provider country are:
 - English domiciled to English providers, +8,650 (+2 per cent)
 - EU (excluding UK) domiciled to English providers, +2,800 (+14 per cent)
 - Not EU domiciled to English providers, +920 (+3 per cent)
 - Northern Irish domiciled to Northern Irish providers, -820 (-8 per cent)
 - Scottish domiciled to Scottish providers, +640 (+2 per cent)
 - Northern Irish domiciled to English providers, +460 (+13 per cent)

Recruitment of UK and EU students by entry year

- UK and EU acceptances to the 2015-16 entry year at this point are 472,670.
- This is an increase of 11,780 (3 per cent) compared to the 2014-15 entry year (at the equivalent point in the 2014 cycle).
- Acceptances to the 2015-16 entry year are 6 per cent more than to 2013-14 and 16 per cent higher than to 2012-13.
- UK and EU acceptances to the 2015-16 entry year (and change compared to the 2014-15 entry year) by country of provider are:

England:	401,150,	+12,330,	+3 per cent
Northern Ireland:	9,720,	-1,080,	-10 per cent
Scotland:	38,490,	+530,	+1 per cent
Wales:	23,310,	+10,	No change to nearest per cent

Recruitment of UK and EU students by entry year, qualification level and type

- UK and EU domiciled acceptances into the 2015-16 entry year are 472,670 at this point. Numbers of acceptances are further divided into those who have achieved ABB+ criteria used by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in previous cycles for student number control arrangements. This analysis reports changes in recruitment by a fixed group of qualifications that approximates the ABB+ grouping in effect for 2013-14. This grouping is common for each entry year reported so that trends in students with a particular attainment level can be seen.
 - For UK and EU domiciled acceptances into 2015-16 entry year:
 - Recorded as holding entry qualifications in the ABB+ set:

161,410, +4,180 (+3 per cent).
 - Not recorded as holding entry qualifications in the ABB+ set:

311,260, +7,600 (+3 per cent).

- For acceptances recorded as holding entry qualifications in the ABB+ set:
 - 90,160 holding GCE A levels, -150 (no change to the nearest per cent)
 - 46,330 holding BTECs, +3,430 (+8 per cent)
 - 13,960 holding SQA Highers or Advanced Highers, +270 (+2 per cent)
 - 3,930 holding an International Baccalaureate, +310 (+8 per cent)
- For acceptances not recorded as holding entry qualifications in the ABB+ set:
 - 156,420 holding GCE A levels, -440 (no change to the nearest per cent)
 - 53,610 holding BTECs, +1,040 (+2 per cent)
 - 10,580 holding SQA Highers or Advanced Highers, -200 (-2 per cent)
 - 1,710 holding an International Baccalaureate, +60 (+3 per cent)
- Of the UK and EU domiciled acceptances for 2015-16, 34 per cent are recorded as holding entry qualifications in the ABB+ set, the same proportion as for 2014-15. Of these 56 per cent met the criteria through A level (compared to 57 per cent in 2014-15) while 29 per cent met the criteria through BTECs (compared to 27 per cent in 2014-15). The proportion of accepted applicants who met the ABB+ criteria in 2015-16 through SQA Highers or Advanced Highers or through the International Baccalaureate was smaller (9 per cent and 2 per cent respectively), and these proportions are unchanged from 2014-15.

Recruitment of UK and EU students by entry year, qualification level and type to providers in England

- For UK and EU domiciled acceptances to providers in England into 2015-16 entry year:
 - Recorded as holding entry qualifications in the ABB+ set:
 - 134,090, +3,650 (+3 per cent).
 - Not recorded as holding entry qualifications in the ABB+ set:
 - 267,060, +8,680 (+3 per cent).

- For acceptances recorded as holding entry qualifications in the ABB+ set (93 per cent are holding A levels or BTECs):
 - 80,590 holding GCE A levels, -240 (no change to the nearest per cent)
 - 43,460 holding BTECs, +3,220 (+8 per cent)
 - 3,410 holding an International Baccalaureate, +340 (+11 per cent)
- For acceptances not recorded as holding entry qualifications in the ABB+ set (71 per cent are holding A levels or BTECs):
 - 139,900 holding GCE A levels, +970 (+1 per cent)
 - 49,480 holding BTECs, +960 (+2 per cent)
 - 1,480 holding an International Baccalaureate, +60 (+4 per cent)

Recruitment of UK and EU students by entry year, qualification level and type to providers in Northern Ireland

- For UK and EU domiciled acceptances into 2015-16 entry year:
 - Recorded as holding entry qualifications in the ABB+ set:
 - 4,040, -10 (no change to the nearest per cent).
 - Not recorded as holding entry qualifications in the ABB+ set:
 - 5,680, -1,070 (-16 per cent).
- For acceptances recorded as holding entry qualifications in the ABB+ set (94 per cent are holding A levels or BTECs):
 - 3,060 holding GCE A levels, -50 (-2 per cent)
 - 730 holding BTECs, +40 (+5 per cent)
- For acceptances not recorded as holding entry qualifications in the ABB+ set (83 per cent are holding A levels or BTECs):
 - 3,540 holding GCE A levels, -860 (-20 per cent)
 - 1,150 holding BTECs, +110 (+11 per cent)

Recruitment of UK and EU students by entry year, qualification level and type to providers in Scotland

- For UK and EU domiciled acceptances into 2015-16 entry year:
Recorded as holding entry qualifications in the ABB+ set:
17,850, +370 (+2 per cent).
Not recorded as holding entry qualifications in the ABB+ set:
20,640, +160 (+1 per cent).
- For acceptances recorded as holding entry qualifications in the ABB+ set (94 per cent are holding A levels, SQA Highers or Advanced Highers):
3,430 holding GCE A levels, +160 (+5 per cent)
13,310 holding SQA Highers or Advanced Highers, +210 (+2 per cent)
- For acceptances not recorded as holding entry qualifications in the ABB+ set (59 per cent are holding A levels, SQA Highers or Advanced Highers):
2,200 holding GCE A levels, -70 (-3 per cent)
10,050 holding SQA Highers or Advanced Highers, -160 (-2 per cent)

Recruitment of UK and EU students by entry year, qualification level and type to providers in Wales

- For UK and EU domiciled acceptances into 2015-16 entry year:
Recorded as holding entry qualifications in the ABB+ set:
5,430, +170 (+3 per cent).
Not recorded as holding entry qualifications in the ABB+ set:
17,880, -170 (-1 per cent).
- For acceptances recorded as holding entry qualifications in the ABB+ set (92 per cent are holding A levels or BTECs):
3,070 holding GCE A levels, -30 (-1 per cent)
1,940 holding BTECs, +170 (+10 per cent)
- For acceptances not recorded as holding entry qualifications in the ABB+ set (76 per cent are holding A levels or BTECs):
10,780 holding GCE A levels, -480 (-4 per cent)
2,770 holding BTECs, -40 (-1 per cent)

How to read these tables

Reporting by entry year compared to reporting by UCAS cycle

UCAS acceptances can be reported by the academic year that they intend to start their course ('entry year') rather than by the UCAS cycle from which they are accepted. Reporting acceptances in this way, rather than by the UCAS cycle in which they were accepted, is a better guide to the likely number of students starting higher education courses at UCAS higher education providers in an academic year.

This is important when using UCAS statistics as an indicator of likely changes in students starting courses over recent years as it takes account of the substantial changes in the proportion of UCAS acceptances who defer their entry to higher education (that is, intend to start their course after a year rather than immediately).

In particular, the number and proportion of acceptances who deferred their entry in the 2011 cycle was lower than usual. The low number of deferred acceptances from the 2011 cycle into the 2012-13 entry year (13,180 acceptances), combined with a partial return in the 2012 cycle to more typical levels of deferred acceptances (24,180 acceptances at the end of the cycle) means that the change in acceptances recorded by entry years differs substantially from that recorded by UCAS cycle in 2012. It is these patterns that account for the differences between these figures and the usual UCAS cycle-based acceptances. There is a similar but smaller effect when comparing changes to 2015-16, resulting from the reduced deferred component from 2011 to 2012-13.

UCAS acceptances can differ from eventual total higher education entrants, even when counted by entry year, due to a range of factors. These include not all acceptances going on to enrol and some enrolments not coming through UCAS, and these factors and their extent can vary from year to year.

Coverage and structure of analysis tables

The analysis tables in the release report the number of acceptances into entry year 2015-16 in the context of the totals for entry into 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15 at equivalent points in the relevant UCAS cycle. To ensure a consistent comparison through time the tables do not include a small number (several thousand) of acceptances to courses which start within a cycle.

The reference point for these statistics is four weeks after the release of GCE A level results (10 September 2015 and the equivalent point in previous cycles). Total acceptances at this point are around 98 per cent of the end of cycle totals over recent cycles. For providers in Wales the proportion of end of cycle total acceptances recorded at this point is typically lower (around 95 per cent). For providers in Scotland in the 2014 cycle there were slightly fewer acceptances at the end of the cycle compared to this reporting point. This was because there were fewer very late acceptances relative to placed applicants who withdrew before the cycle closed.

The table below shows the change in acceptances between the reporting point 28 days after GCE A level results day and the end of 2014 cycle.

Provider country	2014-15 entry year acceptances 28 days after GCE A level results day	2014-15 entry year acceptances at end of cycle	2014-15 entry year change from day 28 to end of cycle	2014-15 entry year percentage change from day 28 to end of cycle
England	422,020	428,920	6,900	2%
Northern Ireland	11,060	11,220	150	1%
Scotland	41,290	41,190	-110	0%
Wales	24,750	25,750	1,000	4%
Total	499,120	507,680	7,950	2%

Numbers of acceptances reported here exclude those to teacher training courses at providers in Scotland. This is because a large set of teacher training courses in Scotland are being recruited through the UCAS Undergraduate scheme for the first time in 2015, having previously been recruited through UCAS Teacher Training. Reporting this way gives a better 'like for like' comparison between years of entry, particularly when looking at applicants from Scotland and providers in Scotland.

There are six sets of analysis tables. The first set (Tables 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d) report acceptances by country of provider and country of domicile.

The second set (Tables 2a, 2b, 2c and 2d) provide a further analysis by categories that relate to attainment and entry qualifications. The attainment categories use information from the UCAS system to approximate the ABB+ categories used by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in previous cycles for student number control arrangements. A common approximation is applied to all entry years for the purpose of comparison. Some examples of the factors which contribute to these being approximations are: to enable point in time comparisons these numbers do not include a small number of acceptances to courses which start within a cycle; a small number of qualification types (eg Access to HE) have not been assessed against the ABB+ categories for technical reasons; and combinations of qualifications included in the ABB+ categories in 2014-15 have not been assessed.

The assessment of entry qualifications uses a number of data sources including information provided by applicants themselves. Acceptances that meet the ABB+ categories use the qualification information provided by the awarding bodies for qualifications awarded in the year of application in combination with information provided by the applicants relating to qualifications awarded prior to the application. This means the ABB+ criteria can be met

solely through the information supplied by the awarding organisations, in combination with applicant supplied information or through the applicant supplied information alone.

It is rare for any applicant to be holding qualifications within the ABB+ set from more than one qualification type. Assignment to the different entry qualification categories for those who meet the ABB+ criteria is done on a hierarchical basis such that accepted applicants are first considered against the ABB+ criteria using any A levels qualifications held. If the ABB+ criteria are not met through A levels then BTEC qualifications are considered next, and if the ABB+ criteria are not met through BTECs then SQA Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications are considered. If the ABB+ criteria are not met through SQA qualifications then the International Baccalaureate is considered, and after that any other qualifications the accepted applicant holds.

Accepted applicants who do not meet the ABB+ criteria are assigned to the not ABB+ category. Assignment to the different qualification categories within the not ABB+ category is also determined according to the qualifications held. Those who hold at least three A levels (either alone or in combination with any other qualification), or who hold one or two A levels not in combination with other qualifications are assigned to the A level category. Assignments to the BTEC, SQA, and International Baccalaureate categories are made only if an accepted applicant holds only that qualification type and no other. Accepted applicants holding combinations of qualifications (other than three A levels in combination with other qualifications, who are assigned to the A level category) are assigned to the other category.

The third, fourth, fifth and sixth set of tables also look at acceptances by categories that relate to attainment and entry qualifications, but do so for acceptances to providers in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales separately.

There are four parts to each set of tables. The first (a) gives the accepted applicant totals to each entry year. The second (b) reports these as the change between the 2015-16 entry year acceptances and acceptances into earlier entry years (reported so that where the 2015-16 entry year acceptances are lower than the comparison entry year acceptances the statistic reported will be negative). This shows directly whether recruitment to 2015-16 is higher or lower than the reference year chosen. The third (c) reports this same statistic as a proportional change from the comparison entry year.

The fourth table (d) splits the acceptances for each entry year by the UCAS cycle that the acceptance was from. So, for example, the acceptances into the 2015-16 entry year are split into whether they were accepted from the 2015 cycle ('immediate acceptances') or from the 2014 cycle ('deferred acceptances'). To give the best picture of acceptances across the 2012-13 to 2015-16 entry years, the deferred acceptances into those entry years are reported using the end of cycle position. This is not possible yet for the deferred acceptances from 2015 into 2016-17, who are reported instead at the reference point. This means that deferred acceptances into 2016-17 are likely to change by the end of the cycle whereas the deferred acceptances into other entry years will not. Last year, deferred acceptances to 2015-16 increased by 3,180 between this point and the end of the cycle.

All tables show acceptances and differences rounded to the nearest 10. Proportional changes are not shown for rows where the base is fewer than 500.